

Aberconwy House Access Statement

Aberconwy House, Castle Street, Conwy LL32 8AY

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Introduction

Tŷ Aberconwy is the oldest, secular domestic building in Wales.

It was initially a Medieval trader's house, or warehouse. Since then it has had a long history of trade from the 1600s to the 1800s. By the turn of the 20th century it was a Temperance Hotel, offering a safe and quiet alternative to the rowdier pubs and inns of Conwy at the time. After running as an antique shop for a number of years it eventually fell into a state of disrepair. To save it from being dismantled and shipped to the USA it was bought by a local man who bequeathed it to the National Trust in 1934. The Trust ran it as a shop and historic visitor attraction up until the covid pandemic.

As a result of the pandemic, the way Aberconwy operated needed to be reviewed. Working with the community, partners and stakeholders, we developed a new operating model. In October 2023 we opened a second-hand bookshop on the lower floor of the house and are currently working on creating a flexible space on the upper floors where arts, history and wellbeing events can be devised and delivered by local community groups and individuals - a relevant and flexible space for as many people as possible.

The building is located at the end of a row of shops in the middle of the busy town of Conwy. There are three levels to the building, the second-hand book shop is in the basement and the ground and first floors are the flexible community spaces. The roads outside are usually busy with traffic and the side road to the right of the building is uphill. The second-hand bookshop entrance can be found at the front of the building, just below ground level. There are 4 historic steps down into the shop from the pavement outside, with a handrail on the right. There is a pelican crossing outside the front of the house which can cause congestion on the pavement at times as people wait for the lights to change.

Points to note:

- The entry and exit point for all three floors is through the second-hand bookshop which can be found at the front of the building, just below ground level. There are 4 historic steps down into the shop from the pavement outside, there is a handrail on the right-hand side of the steps. The double doors open inwards into the shop, there is an open area once inside.
- Due to the historic nature of the building the floors inside the property are uneven throughout.
- Mobile phone reception is generally good for most networks at the property. If assistance is needed, in the case of an emergency please call 01492 592246.

- Assistance dogs are welcome at Tŷ Aberconwy. Dry dogs are permitted in the second-hand bookshop.
- There are low structural historic beams on the ground floor ceiling in the second-hand bookshop across the middle and towards the end of the shop. There is also a stone fox head carving that sticks out of the wall on the right-hand side of the fireplace as you enter at 120 cms from the floor. The space on this floor is fairly large. There is a large central retail table displaying books in the middle of the shop and the till counter is towards the back. Shelving units displaying books can be found against most walls.
- There is no access ramp down into the second-hand bookshop. The property is not suitable for wheelchair users.
- At busy times because of pinch points there may be no access to prams inside the second-hand bookshop.
- At busy times you may be asked to leave large bags and rucksacks behind the counter.
- Street level windows light up the shop as well as ceiling spot lights.
- The floor is carpeted inside the shop.

Arrival, Parking Facilities, Facilities, Reception and WCs

Points to note:

- The site is easy to find in the centre of the walled town of Conwy on the corner of Castle street and the High street. Regular buses run through Conwy. The train station is approximately 400 meters away and is up hill from the property.
- Brown signs are in place directing you from the Deganwy area and also from the A55.
- Ty Aberconwy has no parking facilities of it's own. Paid car parks and street parking can be found across Conwy town. There is curb side short stay parking outside the property on Castle Street for all users, please note this is often busy.
- The second-hand bookshop is open three days a week, checking opening times on the properties website before departure is advisable.
- A staff member will be on hand to answer questions and offer support in the second-hand bookshop during these days. They will be found in the shop by the counter area.
- There are no toilets nor changing places in the second-hand bookshop, there are public toilets nearby on the waterfront.
- There is no catering facilities nor garden at the property.

- Some shop items such as a guide book can be purchased in the second hand bookshop.

Two upper floors

The upper floors of the property are opened in partnership with community groups in the Conwy area. A fire door at the back of the second-hand bookshop leads up to a staircase of 6 steps with a quarter landing leading to another 6 steps to the first floor. A second staircase of 8 steps, then a quarter landing and another 6 steps takes you to the upper floor of the property. Both staircases are two way and have handrails. The upper floor rooms are not furnished historically and the wooden floors are uneven.

Points to note:

- There is a limited amount of soft furnishing in the property, the timber and wattle & dorb construction helps to absorb echoes.
- Both upper floors are lit with natural light from windows and lamps. Lighting is low in some areas. This is being reviewed.
- Some doorways between rooms are low.
- Some doorways have raised thresholds you need to step over.
- There is a toilet with three steps down to it on the first floor, the toilet is not accessible.
- There are no baby change facilities.
- Community seating is available on these floors.
- Both upper floors are not suitable for individuals with mobility issues.

Contact details for more information

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Date

17th October 2023