

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-215**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL  
COMMITTEE  
19 JUNE 2014**

**REPORT OF: SERVICE  
DIRECTOR PLANNING**

	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
<b>APPLICATION RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL</b>	

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined in Appendix 1.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

To refuse the applications subject to the reasons outlined in Appendix 1.

1. Application No. 12/1303 - Rear extension with internal and external refurbishment (works to include increase in number of hotel rooms to 13 and alterations to ground floor bar area and the erection of a low boundary wall around the front beer garden area) (Amended Plan Received 15/05/2014), Cardiff Arms Hotel, 42 Bute Street, Treorchy.

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## **APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR REFUSAL**

**APPLICATION NO:** 12/1303/10 (LE)  
**APPLICANT:** Elite Inns Ltd  
**DEVELOPMENT:** Rear extension with internal and external refurbishment (works to include increase in number of hotel rooms to 13 and alterations to ground floor bar area and the erection of a low boundary wall around the front beer garden area)(Amended Plan Received 15/05/2014)  
**LOCATION:** **CARDIFF ARMS HOTEL, 42 BUTE STREET, TREORCHY, CF42 6BS**  
**DATE REGISTERED:** 09/01/2013  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION:** Treorchy

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Refuse

**REASONS:**

The proposed external design changes to the fabric of this historic building would have a significant impact on the existing character and appearance of the building to the detriment of the visual amenities of the locality. The positive re-use and internal upgrades being proposed are not considered to outweigh the visual concerns raised by the proposal.

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### **APPLICATION DETAILS**

Full planning permission is sought for a number of external and internal works, including the erection of a rear extension at The Cardiff Arms Hotel, Treorchy.

In detail, the proposal includes:

- The internal refurbishment and upgrade of the existing building accommodation to create a 13 bedroom hotel with additional manager's accommodation.
- The enlargement of the existing ground floor bar area with an associated kitchen, reception area and 2 bedrooms being created at ground floor level. At first floor level, the building would be refurbished to accommodate a function/conference room, 4 bedrooms and the manager's accommodation. The second floor of the building (roof space) would be refurbished to solely accommodate bedrooms/guest rooms (7 rooms in total being proposed at this level). It is detailed each bedroom/guest room would consist of two person accommodation.

- The erection of a rear extension, projecting 7.6 metres by 8.9 metres in width and providing accommodation over three levels. The proposed extension would incorporate a pitched roof construction measuring 10.4 metres to its highest point, sloping to 6.6 metres at eaves level. The proposed extension, which would have a rendered finish and tiled roof would accommodate the kitchen and reception at ground floor level. At first floor level it would accommodate toilets and a hall/walkway. The second floor (roof space) of the extension would accommodate one of the proposed guest rooms.
- The replacement of an existing outbuilding (positioned directly adjacent to the siting of the proposed rear extension) with a single storey, monopitched addition that would form a store area directly alongside the larger rear extension.
- Re-surfacing and enclosing the front of the site to create a more useable and defined external amenity/beer garden area. It is detailed a 1.1 metre high, block work wall would be erected toward the front boundary of the site, to enclose the beer garden area.
- The removal of the existing cement render and decorative brick work to the front and side elevations of the building and the replacement of these features with a decorative, stone effect, render overlay.
- Fenestration alterations to the Cemetery Road elevation including the replacement of two existing doorways with window openings. Where necessary, replacement uPVC windows would also be introduced.
- The replacement of the existing ground floor windows within the front elevation of the building and main access doors facing Bute Street with three sets of bi-folding/sliding doors. It is detailed the large access doors would allow easier access between the bar area and the front beer garden.
- The erection of a front canopy across the full width of the front elevation of the building. The canopy would be erected above the new access doors with a width of 13.9 metres, maximum height of 3.8 metres and 0.9 metre projection. The canopy would be finished with roof tiles to match the main building.
- The erection of a central, porch style canopy over the new access doors. The canopy would be open in nature with corner support columns. It would have a pitched roof design to a maximum height of 4.7 metres from ground level. The canopy would project 1.8 metres with 3.7 metres width and again be finished with roof tiles to match the main building.

The planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The application site consists of the Cardiff Arms Hotel, which is prominently located on the junction of Bute Street and Cemetery Road on the main route through the built up area of Treorchy. The building is centrally located and falls within a defined retail centre of the Local Development Plan. The large, three-storey building (including the useable roof space) appears as a distinctive and characteristic building

of the Victorian era. It is notable for its design, scale and use of materials with contrasting render and red brick dressing to its most prominent elevations. The window arrangement of the building has a strong vertical emphasis, mainly consisting of white uPVC window frames. The building has an expansive roof space with large gable features facing Bute Street and four dormer windows on the Cemetery Road elevation. The hotel/guest room facilities over the first and second floor of the building have fallen into disrepair over recent times. To the rear of the main building is an original stable block that benefits from contrasting stone elevations. The ground floor of the building has been somewhat upgraded and remained open as a public house. There is an enclosed yard area to the rear of the building and an open seating/beer garden area directly to the front of the building.

A variety of differing uses are located within the immediate vicinity of the application site. Opposite the application site on the southern side of Bute Street is the former Treorchy Conservative Club and St Matthew's Church. These buildings, including the application property, represent a collection of buildings with a certain historic interest and a collective distinctiveness. Sheppards Pharmacy is situated to the east of the site with terraced residential properties adjoining the west of the site. Beyond the narrow access lane that abuts the rear of the site are further terraced properties.

### **PLANNING HISTORY (most recent)**

89/0794	Cardiff Arms Hotel, 42 Bute Street, Treorchy.	Proposed internal alterations and conversion of living room into kitchen in licensed premises	Granted 28/12/89
89/0634	Cardiff Arms Hotel, 42 Bute Street, Treorchy.	Proposed alterations to bar and new women's lavatory	Granted 04/09/89

### **CONSULTATION**

Transportation Section – raise no objections.

Public Health & Protection – raise no objections, subject to the imposition of a condition restricting the hours of operation when undertaking the construction/conversion works.

Land Reclamation and Drainage Section – highlight limited information regarding the drainage arrangements for the development have been provided. Should planning permission be granted, standard drainage conditions are suggested accordingly. Consultation with Natural Resources Wales is also recommended.

Natural Resources Wales – raise no objections given the scale of the development, although the applicant should be made aware of the potential flood risks of the site (by means of advisory notes) given the site is situated within a flood risk area.

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru – raise no objections, subject to conditions/advisory notes.

Countryside, Landscape and Ecology – following the submission of a bat survey, raise no objections.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application has been advertised by means of direct neighbour notification and site notice. No letters of objection or representation being received.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

The Proposals Map indicates that the site lies within the settlement limits of Treorchy and within a defined retail centre.

**Policy CS1** - aims to create strong, sustainable communities within the Northern Strategy Area.

**Policy NSA2** – permits proposals for residential and commercial development in key settlements (including Treorchy) that amongst others is of a high standard of design and integrates positively with existing development.

**Policy NSA13** - promotes the appropriate rehabilitation and conversion of large buildings within the Northern Strategy Area.

**Policy AW2** - seeks to support development proposals which are in sustainable locations.

**Policy AW5** - specifies criteria for new development. It requires new development to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and no significant impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. It also requires development to be of a sustainable design with good accessibility by a range of sustainable modes of transport.

**Policy AW6** - sets out the criteria for new development in terms of design and place making.

**Policy AW7** - states that development proposals which impact upon sites of architectural or historic merit will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site.

**Policy NSA18** - defines the hierarchy of retail centres in the Northern Strategy Area with Treorchy being identified as a key settlement.

**Policy NSA19** - promotes retail/commercial development in principal towns and key settlements.

## **Planning Policy Wales**

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of National Planning Policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where National Planning Policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Chapter's 2 (Development Plans), Chapter 3 (Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions), Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability) and Chapter 10 (Planning for retail and town centres), set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application.

## **REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

## **Main issues**

### **Principle of the proposed development**

Full planning permission is sought for the general refurbishment and upgrade of the Cardiff Arms Hotel to bring the building back into use as a hotel and public house with significant alterations being proposed to the external fabric of the building including the erection of a large rear extension.

As detailed above, the application building is located within settlement limits and within the boundaries of the retail centre of Treorchy. The building is therefore within walking distance of a number of local amenities and public transport links. Planning policy promotes the re-use of existing buildings in sustainable locations as such proposals can often assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites. The general principle of such upgrade works and the internal refurbishment of such a prominent, centrally located building to maintain and reinstate the original use is therefore considered acceptable, with no in-principle objection being raised against the scheme. Nevertheless, the proposal must also be assessed against more detailed development control considerations as discussed below.

### **Character and appearance**

The application building whilst not listed, forms a prominent and historic building with considerable character and interest. The Cardiff Arms Hotel is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century building that has a significant scale and numerous visual qualities. The building is notable due to its design, scale and use of materials - the contrasting render and red brick dressing being a key and relatively unusual feature of the area. Much of the existing external features of the building have been retained since the building was originally erected with the building sitting on a corner plot in close proximity to other feature buildings, including the former Conservative Club and St. Matthew's Church, that collectively pose a degree of historic and visual interest.

The proposal seeks to undertake substantial alterations to the appearance of the existing building, and whilst no substantial visual concerns are raised in relation to work at the rear of the site including the proposed erection of the large extension, significant concerns are raised in relation to the proposed design changes to the more prominent, key elevations of the building. As detailed, the existing building incorporates the distinctive use of rendered walls with red brick dressings to window and door openings along with attractive hood moulds (above the openings) and decorative string courses. The proposals for the exterior of the building involve the removal of the render and brickwork and their replacement with a stone effect render system. In addition, the ground floor on the Bute Street elevation (facing front) is to be reorganised into three sets of bi-folding doors, beneath a new lean to canopy across the whole elevation, with a central porch projection. Given the existing visual qualities of the building which contribute to the character of the local area, the undertaking of such alterations would cause significant harm to both the appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. This impact is particularly important due to the building being situated in such a prominent, central location.

The application effectively proposes the complete removal of the external features which make the building so distinctive, and their replacement with an unsuitable modern material. The rearrangement of the ground floor facing Bute Street would also be harmful as it would upset the balance and design of this elevation when viewed as a whole. The lean-to canopy and porch would also constitute incongruous additions that would not be in keeping with the building's historic nature. The submitted plans also indicate the rear, former stables block (abutting Cemetery Road) that currently has a natural stone finish and brick detailing would also have a stone effect render finish, with alterations to the window and door arrangement of this aspect of the building also being proposed. Such changes are again unwelcomed, resulting in further loss of the unique features that add to the building's significant character.

Pre-application discussions undertaken with the applicants/agents advised against such design changes and it is considered that such general refurbishment works should be undertaken by repairing and enhancing the distinctive features of the building rather than removing them. Despite further discussions requesting a more sympathetic scheme that better preserves the existing character and external appearance of the building whilst still allowing the internal upgrades, a compromise

has unfortunately not been reached and a determination of the application in its current form is now sought.

To conclude, whilst the re-use of this prominent building is welcomed the proposal in its current form would cause considerable harm to the existing visual appearance of the application building. The merits of the scheme are not considered to outweigh the identified visual harm the external changes would pose to the distinctive character and historic value of the existing building and the surrounding locality.

### **Residential amenity**

With regard to the potential impact of the scheme upon the amenity and privacy of adjacent residents, with primary reference to the proposed rear extension, on balance it is considered the development is acceptable in this respect.

The general refurbishment and upgrade works should not pose any risk to the nearest residential properties, particularly when considering the long established use of the building is effectively not changing. Some concerns are raised about the size and scale of the proposed rear extension and its subsequent impact on the adjacent residential properties. However, following the neighbour consultation process no objections have been raised against the scheme. It is not considered uncommon for historic commercial buildings set adjacent to terraced properties to have significant or differing scale to the residential properties they are sited alongside. The extension also represents the enlargement of an existing annexe positioned to the western side of the rear elevation of the building. The new extension would not project further than the main, large annexe positioned toward the eastern side of the building, and residents of the neighbouring properties would arguably be accustomed to the effect of large rear additions on their garden/amenity space. The proposed single storey addition sited directly on the boundary with the neighbouring property would also replace an existing outbuilding structure at the site. Inevitably the proposed rear additions would have some impact on the levels of amenity enjoyed by the neighbouring residential property, although such harm is not considered significantly harmful to warrant refusal of the scheme, in this regard.

### **Highway Safety**

With regard to the impact of the proposal upon highway safety, following consultation with the Council's Transportation Section, no objections against the proposal have been raised. The Transportation Section note the scheme proposes to increase the number of bedrooms within the existing hotel/public house from 9 to 14 (including the manager's accommodation), and includes the increase in the size of the existing bar area. Collectively, such changes would result in a net increase in the off-street parking requirement for the building with none being provided. When further considering the high demand for parking requirements in this locality, some concerns exist about the impact of the scheme on highway safety in the area. However, the existing use is that of a hotel and public house with the majority of patrons/visitors

using the facility from the local area. Furthermore, the application building is situated within a sustainable town centre location and therefore on balance, no highway objection has been raised.

### **Other Issues**

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation:

#### Ecology

The Council's Ecologist has raised no adverse comments against the scheme with a satisfactory bat survey being undertaken for the application building.

#### Public Health and Protection, and Drainage

The comments of both the Public Health and Protection Division and the relevant Drainage Bodies have been acknowledged and considered for the development proposal. Subject to the imposition of conditions and relevant advisory notes the development is considered satisfactory in these respects.

### **Conclusion**

The determination of this application requires careful judgement of each to the issues that the case raises. Whilst regard has been given to the broader planning merits of the scheme, such merits are not considered to outweigh the identified visual harm the scheme poses to the existing character and appearance of such a key, historic building and its wider setting. Overall, on the basis that the design changes proposed to the most prominent and distinctive elevations of the building are considered unacceptable, refusal of the planning application is recommended.

### **RECOMMENDATION: Refuse**

1. The proposed external works to the key front and side elevations of the building represent unsympathetic and harmful alterations in terms of their impact on the character, visual appearance and historic value of the existing building and its surroundings. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policies AW5, AW6 and AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**as amended by**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**19 JUNE 2014**

**REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR PLANNING**

**REPORT**

**APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED  
FOR REFUSAL**

**OFFICER TO CONTACT**

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**See Relevant Application File**

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