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By email: tomos.evans@wsp.com

Ein Cyf/Our ref: qA2281116
Eich Cyf/Your ref: P/24/0260
Dyddiad/Date: 14 March 2025

Dear Tomos Evans

**HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2023
LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS (PROCEDURE AND INTEREST
RATE) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2024
CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT FOR DEMOLITION OF 34-38 HIGH STREET
MERTHYR TYDFIL CF47 8DE
APPLICATION NO. P/24/0260**

1. Consideration has been given to the above application for conservation area consent submitted on behalf of your client Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The application has been considered in accordance with the provisions of regulations 19 and 24 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Procedure and Interest Rate) (Wales) Regulations 2024.
2. I am authorised by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning to determine your application.
3. The application seeks conservation area consent for the demolition of numbers 34 to 38 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, to redevelop the site as part of the Merthyr Interchange Link project.
4. In considering an application for conservation area consent, the decision maker is required by section 160 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 ("the 2023 Act")

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to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

5. Policies relating to the conservation of the historic environment are set out in Chapter 6 'Distinctive and Natural Places' of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024). Paragraph 6.1.14 summarises the general presumption in favour of the preservation of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings. Paragraph 6.1.17 advises when considering an application for conservation area consent, account should be taken of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the architectural, archaeological, or historic interest of the conservation area as a whole.
6. Paragraphs 6.10 to 6.14 of chapter 6 of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017) provide detailed guidance on the consideration of applications for conservation area consent. Paragraph 6.13 states, "There should be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area". Paragraph 6.13 also sets out a number of factors to be considered when assessing proposals for the demolition of buildings within a conservation area and advises consent for demolition should not be given without acceptable and detailed plans for the reuse of the site unless redevelopment is itself undesirable .
7. Cadw's Inspector of the Historic Environment has considered the information submitted with this application and has provided the following assessment in relation to the demolition works proposed.

The work is necessary to facilitate the proposed New Merthyr Interchange Link between the High Street and Railway Station. The buildings are not listed, but form part of the characterisation of the Merthyr Town Centre CA, although there are other listed buildings nearby. The buildings themselves would appear to be of low architectural merit because of being left empty and unused for some years, which has allowed the buildings to deteriorate to a very poor condition, detracting from the special character of the [conservation area].

8. The Inspector goes on to say:

The proposed redevelopment of this area to provide a new route through from the Railway Station to the High Street, creating a new Public Transport Interchange, incorporating more green spaces, with the use of sympathetic building material, will help enhance this area of the [conservation area], making it more accessible to all and the town centre more visible.

In my opinion, from the information submitted, the proposed demolition of the 3 No. buildings, 34-38 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, and new build, on the site of No. 38, former Monique's Shop, would only have a minor-moderate impact on the character and setting of the [conservation area] or the integrity of its surroundings. Hence, I do not feel that there would be any significant visual impact/intrusion or detrimental appearance to this part of the [conservation area] in general.

9. Your submissions indicate the buildings proposed for demolition have failed to attract private sector investment in order to preserve their contribution to the conservation area, and the failure of substantive proposals for use of these buildings has led to their

decline. You also indicate that these buildings contribute little to the character of the area, and that their removal is necessary to implement the broader Interchange Link project, which is itself integral to plans for regeneration of Merthyr Tydfil town centre.

10. I have considered the relevant submissions with the application, and I can find nothing in the information before me to lead me to disagree with Cadw's assessment in respect of the effect of the works on the conservation area.

Decision

11. For the reasons given above, and in exercise of the authority referred to in paragraph 2, I hereby grant conservation area consent as set out in application P/24/0260, subject to the following condition:

- (1) The works to which this consent relates shall be begun not later than 5 years from the date of this letter.

Well-being of Future Generations

12. The Welsh Ministers must, in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("WFG Act"), carry out sustainable development. This includes taking all reasonable steps to meet their well-being objectives.
13. I have considered the extent to which granting conservation area consent meets the Welsh Government's well-being objectives. I recognise there will be some temporary negative environmental effects during demolition. There would be a limited negative effect on the objective of making our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work. Overall, however, the decision would have a positive effect on this objective through the enhancement of the conservation area. The effect of this decision on the other objectives is neutral.
14. In reaching my decision on the application, I have taken into account the ways of working set out in section 5(2) of the WFG Act and 'SPSF1: Core Guidance, Shared Purpose: Shared Future – Statutory Guidance on the WFG Act'.

Looking to the long-term

15. This decision would contribute towards the long term regeneration and sustainability of Merthyr Tydfil Town centre.

Involving people/Collaborating with others

16. Within the framework of a statutory decision-making process, which is governed by prescribed procedures, the application was subject to consultation with statutory bodies with responsible for protecting our built heritage and their representations were taken into account in determining this application.

Taking an integrated approach

17. The decision has taken account of the interaction between the regeneration and built heritage protection policy areas.

Prevention

18. The decision takes account of the need to prevent decline in the economic future of a town centre important for sustainable living patterns while protecting our areas of celebrated built heritage from further decline and decay.

Reasonable steps

19. I have considered whether, having regard to the Welsh Ministers' wellbeing duty, it would be reasonable to take a different decision. I note the alternative decision would be to refuse conservation area consent. This would negatively impact on the objective to making our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work. The effect of this alternative decision on the other objectives would be neutral. Consequently, I consider the decision to grant planning permission subject to conditions is a reasonable step in meeting the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

Other consents

20. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, bye law, order or regulation other than under Section 8 of the 1990 Act, which is applied for the purposes of Conservation Area Consent by Section 74(3) of the 1990 Act.
21. A copy of this letter has been sent to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Cadw for information purposes.

Yours sincerely,



Kris Hawkins

Y Gangen Gwaith Achos Cynllunio I Planning Casework Branch

Y Gyfarwyddiaeth Gynllunio | Planning Directorate

Arwyddwyd o dan awdurdod yr Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio; un o Weinidogion Cymru.

Signed under authority of the Cabinet Secretary of Economy, Energy and Planning; one of the Welsh Ministers.

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