

Internal Memo

To: Rebecca Owen, Planning Officer

From: Moira Lucas, Conservation Officer

Date: 18-12-19

Planning Application: **1 Vulcan Buildings, Brecon Road, Merthyr Tydfil.**

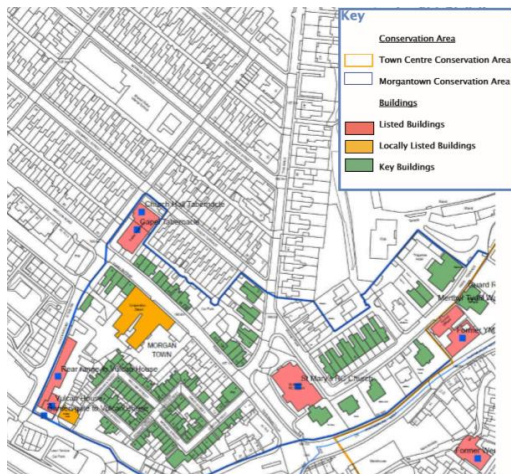
Proposal: Partial change of use of ground floor from residential (C3 Use Class) to takeaway (A3 Use Class) and installation of flue to rear elevation and new shop front to front elevation.

Thank you for consulting me with regard to the above mentioned application. I offer the following observations and comments for your consideration:

The application site lies within the Morgantown Conservation Area, designated 2009.

The Conservation Area designation provides statutory protection for the built heritage and landscape. It is an acknowledgement of the heritage merit of the locality and seeks to ensure that change is managed to protect and enhance the local character of the area.

The Morgantown Conservation Area contains a number of historic elements. This includes the site of the former Vulcan Brewery, which was the oldest independent brewery in Merthyr Tydfil and Vulcan House which was centre to chartist activity in the early 19th Century.



Note: Map does not show changes in the area taken place since 2009

The application site is considered a key building in the conservation appraisal analysis (2009) and is diagonally opposite the listed Capel Tabernacle.

The application for change of use from residential to takeaway includes physical changes to the front and rear elevations of No.1 Vulcan Buildings and forms part of an adjacent commercial front. The change of use is supported as a logical sequence in this particular block within the conservation area.

The existing building retains the last double window roof dormer with decorative barge board on the front elevation within the short block of four buildings. The chimneys, projecting bay window below the roof dormer, along with the ground floor window and door have been altered on the front elevation and a formally modest dormer on the rear of the elevation has been increased to fill the roof scape.



The alterations have taken place prior to the designation of the conservation area and the above photograph gives an indication of original proportions. The rear of the building is poorly altered and lacks visual and symmetrical balance.

The proposed and existing front elevation drawings indicate that the two windowed roof dormer with decorative barge board are to be retained- though this isn't clear and must be confirmed by the applicant, that this is the intent.

The bay window on the first floor and ground floor are loosely described as timber and UPVC. The Bay window is proposed to be vertically divided in the central pane. However, this is shown on the existing drawing, which is not what currently exists on site.

The proposed opening and divided bay window is not acceptable as it alters the proportions of the bay window and overall appearance of the front elevation. A new bay window, properly detailed in timber only would be acceptable. This must include a chamfered and sufficiently detailed corniced head and glazing bars and projecting pediment and base.

The ground floor has been previously poorly altered but retains small elements of original glazing in the transomed upper area of the window. The proposed window is unclear which elements are timber and which are UPVC. The proportions are contemporary and do not relate to the buildings original form or historical commercial sense.

Similarly, the proposed door is contemporary and lacks empathy with the original building.



Should this building have a change of use, it is expected that any new proposal should be in keeping with the character of the conservation area and preserve or enhance the same. As the plans are

unclear in some part, there are concerns that not only are the alterations on the ground floor and first floor proposed but that the roof scape is to be altered too. These details are original and whilst partially cased in cementitious render, they have survived intact. Their loss is not supported.

The rear elevation includes the addition of 6.2m flue that appears to exiting the building above the first floor-is it proposed to run this through the bedrooms on first floor of the rear elevation and travel vertically , finishing just below the roof ridge.

Policy:

Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990

Planning Policy Wales- Edition 10 and Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.

SPG- Merthyr Tydfil Shopfront Design Guide 2013 Shopfronts :

'This guidance clarifies the standard of design that the Town Planning Division will expect from applicants seeking planning permission for alterations to their commercial properties.'

Merthyr Tydfil LDP:

2.4.1 BW6 Townscape and built heritage

"The Council will protect and support the enhancement of the unique built heritage of the County Borough. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character and setting of any of the following:

- *Listed Buildings;*
- *Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest;*
- *Townscape character and the distinctiveness of settlements;*
- *Other historic, archaeological and cultural features of acknowledged importance"*

When assessed against current legislation and local planning policy, it is considered that the application is not in accordance with policy and is not supported.

Way forward:

If the change of use is deemed acceptable in planning terms, and if a picture window in the front elevation is the preferred option, then the inclusion of a proportionate stall riser, fascia and appropriate sub-division of the picture window are required on the ground floor. The bay window must be proportionate in both width and height. It should be sufficiently detailed in the use of cornice and moulding details.

Materials used should be sympathetic to the traditionally built structure- i.e. timber and dressed lead work for the bay window and shop front.

Clarification is required on the retention of the roof dormer as it currently exists.

A link to the shopfront guide is here: <https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/1223/spg-3-shopfronts-may-2013.pdf>

The rear elevation remains unchanged bar the proposed inclusion of the extraction flue. This is visually unacceptable and its route outside residential units is questionable. It is suggested that another solution be researched.

If anything I have written is unclear or requires further explanation, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

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