

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/22/0142
Site Address:	Store And Premises At Former Ivor Works Ivor Street Dowlais Merthyr Tydfil
Development:	Works to the western gable wall to provide structural support and waterproofing to the top of the wall
Case Officer:	David Cross
Site Visit:	15th June 2022
Application Expiry Date:	20th July 2022
Consultation reply date expired:	27th June 2022

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to the Grade II listed building known as Ammonia House, which was listed (on 11.12.2002) for its special historical interest, as the last remaining industrial building of the former Ivor Iron Works from the pre-British Steel period. The building is located on the south side of the former Ivor Iron Works and north of the junction to Ivor Street, Garden Street and Gwernllwyn Road in Dowlais. This redundant industrial building is situated in an exposed and vulnerable location. The land immediately surrounding the building is flat and generally comprises areas of hardstanding and grassland with a number of scattered trees and overgrown vegetation.

History

Dowlais Iron Works were the largest in the world in the mid-nineteenth century. Ivor was the eldest son of the celebrated iron master Sir John Guest and the Ivor Works opened in 1839 as an extension to the Dowlais Iron Works, initially with four blast furnaces. The building was possibly built as a blast engine house but its most probable origin is as sulphate of ammonia processing plant, constructed between 1922 and 1928. Sulphate of ammonia, crude benzyl and tar were by-products of coke production. The Ammonia House remained in use during the 1930s but at the outbreak of the Second World War the site was taken over by the Admiralty for stores.

The building was converted, between 1930 and 1949, to a “general and electrical stores”. At some time between 1939 and 1948, the building underwent major alterations; a steel-framed concrete first floor construction was inserted across the line of the windows with new window openings cut into the brickwork above and below the original windows. The locations of the steel beams can be seen from the cut-out and repointed brickwork to the north and south elevations.

The building has been abandoned since 1987 and has suffered deterioration and vandalism. It has been secured by blocking up all of the ground floor windows and doors with concrete blockwork. A steel staircase has been cut off near the first floor level and removed.

Description of building

This building exhibits two clear phases of use. The first phase (the eastern part) is characterised by tall round-headed openings (not dissimilar to those in the engine house of the nearby Dowlais Ironworks), suggesting tall interior spaces open to the roof. Although the scale and architectural character of the building in this phase suggest that it was designed as an engine house, map evidence identifies it as a sulphate plant in 1928.

A second phase (the western part) is characterised by openings of reduced height and with concrete lintels, blocking or partially blocking the original windows. Internal floors were inserted as part of this phase, which either could relate to the sulphate plant, or to the later use of the building as a general and electrical stores.

The building is of a red engineering brickwork construction comprising two distinct two-storey sections with slate timber-trussed roofs. The whole building measures approximately 42m in length by 12m deep with the gable ends orientated to the east and west. The eaves are 9.0m above ground on the west section and 11.8m on the east section.

The original tall window brick patterns are clearly visible on the south elevation and discernible on the other three elevations. These window openings feature arched heads formed in two rows of yellow brick-on-edge headers and bull nose brick sills. The circular openings on the gable ends are also surrounded by yellow brick details. Both openings contain the remains of a timber frame, the eastern opening crudely bricked up. The later windows are steel-framed with concrete lintels and sills. The original pattern comprised small panes with a centre opening light. Some of them have been altered or vandalised and every visible pane is broken. None of the original or later doors survived.

The roofs are covered in slate, although it has all been stripped away from the lower western roof. The roof structure to both main sections are formed with timber trusses supporting timber purlins and boarding. The trusses of the western section remain unprotected and exposed to the elements.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks listed building consent to implement protective measures to reduce the further deterioration of the building, in particular the top of the western gable wall, which is exposed to the elements. A recent external survey of the building, undertaken in January 2022 by Lapidier, highlighted that the top of the gable wall, which comprises exposed brickwork, has not been protected by the roof for some time, has been absorbing rainwater and is starting to deteriorate. The inspection raised concerns that if the deterioration of the wall continues and the purlins lose connection with the gable wall, this could then cause the trusses to collapse. This would exacerbate the dilapidation of the listed building.

To reduce the extent of decay to the wall and existing roof structure, it is proposed to mechanically connect the purlins to the wall with twisted metal straps that are screw fixed

to the top of the purlins and the gable end brickwork. Due to the poor condition of the mortar joints, the screws would be drilled into the brickwork to provide the needed fixing strength. To prolong the trusses and gable wall it is proposed that a form of capping (Atto-lead alternative, aluminium) would be placed over the top of the wall and cut/chased around the purlins. This is intended to be a temporary measure, until the building can be fully restored in the future. It is noted in the Heritage Statement that the capping can be easily removed with minimal impact on the existing structure and that any drill holes can be filled using an appropriate filler. Alternatively, the top few courses of brickwork could be removed and replaced to match existing.

PLANNING HISTORY

- P/00/0024 - Residential Development on land at Former Ivor Works.
Outline permission APPROVED on 06.06.2000
- P/03/0250 - Residential development (Renewal of Outline planning permission Ref: P/00/0024).
Planning permission APPROVED on 25.07.2003
- P/07/0517 - Temporary security and protection measures. Provide temporary roof coverings and infill external openings.
Listed building CONSENT on 21.01.2008
- P/07/0642 - Residential development and associated access works.
Outline permission APPROVED on 18.04.2008
- P/07/0647 - Conversion of building to 16 residential units and creation of associated parking spaces and access road.
Planning permission APPROVED on 21/05.2008
- P/07/0648 - Conversion of building to 16 residential units and creation of associated parking spaces and access road.
Listed building CONSENT on 09.04.2008
- P/11/0069 - Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to extend the time for a further 4 years in which to submit an application for reserved matters, and to allow for a further 6 years in which to commence development (or a further 2 years from approval of reserved matters whichever is the later) from the date of permission, in respect of planning consent 07/0642 (Residential development and associated access works at Former Ivor Works).
Outline permission APPROVED on 28.07.2011
- P/13/0031 - Renewal of previous Listed Building Consent P/07/0517 for a further 5 years for temporary roof covering.

Listed building CONSENT on 30.04.2013

P/13/0136 - Renewal of Planning Permission (P/07/0647) for the conversion 16 flats within Ammonia House, plus associated car parking and access.

Outline permission APPROVED on 21.06.2013

P/13/0137 - Renewal of listed building consent P/07/0648 for a further 5 years. (Conversion of building to 16 residential units and associated car parking and access).

Listed building CONSENT on 17.07.2013

P/14/0182 - Residential development with associated access (Renewal of Outline Planning Permission P/11/0069).

Outline permission APPROVED on 18.09.2014

CONSULTATION

The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust - No objection

Civic Trust for Wales - No response

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments - No response

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - No response

Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Trust - No response

The Victorian Society - No response

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning Development Management Procedure (Wales) Order 2012, a press notice was published within the local paper on the 16th June 2022 and two site notices was displayed within the vicinity of the site on the 15th June 2022.

No representations were received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 16. – (1) Subject to the previous provision of this Part, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State may grant or refuse an application for listed building consent and, they grant consent, may grant it subject to conditions.

(2) In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

(3) Any listed building consent shall (except in so far as it otherwise provides) ensure for the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it.

Section 66. - (1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

(2) Without prejudice to section 72, in the exercise of the powers of appropriation, disposal and development (including redevelopment) conferred by the provisions of sections 232, 233 and 235(1) of the principal Act, a local authority shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, listed buildings.

Welsh Office Circular 61/96: Planning the Historic Environment: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Part 1 Paragraph 11 requires local planning authorities considering applications for works which affect listed buildings to have special regard to its character and setting.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021)

Section 6.1 recognises the importance of protecting the historic environment and paragraph 6.1.10 states that *‘For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’*

Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017)

Paragraph 1.25 states *‘The setting of an historic asset includes the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced, and appreciated embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape.’* Paragraph 1.28 explains that there will be cases where a proposal will enhance the setting of a historic asset and this will be treated as a benefit resulting from the development’.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031:

- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking

- Policy CW1 - Historic Environment

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed works to the Grade II listed building are intended to be temporary in nature to reduce the extent of deterioration to the fabric of the building and preserve its current condition until it can be fully restored in the future. In this respect, it is acknowledged that consent has previously been granted for the conversion of the building to accommodate residential units, albeit, this permission has since expired.

The submitted plans illustrate the metal straps, each measuring 1m in length, would be fixed to the existing purlins with three screws and to the gable wall with one screw in the brickwork using a rawl plug. This would involve minimal damage to building fabric and would help to secure the stability of the gable wall and the roof trusses.

Additionally, 12mm plywood would be fixed to the timber studwork with aluminium coping used along the top of the gable wall to prevent the ingress of water, which has been decaying the brickwork. Once a viable scheme is brought forward for the restoration of the building, the proposed measures to protect the building can be removed and any damage to the fabric of the building i.e. the screw holes along the top of the gable wall, could be appropriately repaired or replaced as part of a restoration scheme.

The listed building is currently in a dilapidated condition and without a roof above the western part of the building, it is evident that its current condition will worsen over time. The proposed works would help to reduce the deterioration of the building fabric and thus help to preserve the building and its special architectural and historic interest, until such time that a long-term viable restoration scheme and after use can be secured.

Given the temporary nature of the works, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact on the character, appearance or significance of the listed building. Indeed, the measures to prevent the further dilapidation of the building would help to preserve the appreciation and interpretation of the listed building in the public interest by taking steps to avoid parts of the building from collapsing. In this regard, it is acknowledged that the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust have raised no objection to the positive determination of the application.

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act") has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Accordingly, for the above reasons, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: **LISTED BUILDING CONSENT BE GRANTED** subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development hereby granted consent shall be begun not later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date of this consent.

Reason - To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Dwg No. 1511/PM/22, Proposed Drawing Stage 1, received 25/05/2022
- Dwg No. 1511/PM/22, Proposed Drawing Stage 2, received 25/05/2022

Reason -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE:

4/10/22