

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/23/0051
Site Address:	Cyfarthfa Castle Cyfarthfa Park Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8RE
Development:	Install new timber door and 2 flues on the front elevation of boiler room at Cyfarthfa Castle
Case Officer:	Marlene Ferreira
Site Visit:	3rd March 2023
Application Expiry Date:	21st April 2023
Consultation reply date expired:	6th April 2023

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to Cyfarthfa Castle, a Grade I Listed Building. Cyfarthfa Castle is located within the Cyfarthfa Park Conservation Area and is within a Registered Park and Garden, Cyfarthfa Park, Grade II*. Specifically, this application relates to the boiler room, a separate building located to the rear northeast of the castle.

Cyfarthfa Castle is located at the centre of 160 acres of mixed parkland, on a plateau overlooking the former site of the Cyfarthfa Ironworks on the north-western end of the town of Merthyr Tydfil. To the rear of the Castle is woodland, while to the front is a car park and then grassland with occasional trees down to a lake on the western edge. The park is bound by Brecon Road to the west, Gurnos Road, and residential streets to the east and south. The park slopes down to the west, towards the River Taff.

Cyfarthfa Castle was designed by the London architect Robert Lugar in 1824-1825 in the Picturesque style. The building is constructed from coursed ashlar masonry set beneath a crenelated parapet. The castle layout is rectangular in shape, though the arrangement of the buildings is asymmetrical with the family rooms located on the south-east side of the building and the former school on the north-west. The Castle Museum also occupies part of the building.

The two main elevations of the castle remain unchanged from their initial construction and therefore are of high architectural and symbolic value. However, the overall value of the building is reduced by the extensive changes made to both the interior and exterior of the building in the early 20th century.

The boiler room itself, as referred to above, is located in the separate rear building. It has a wooden vented door in poor condition. The interior has a poured cement floor. The south-west and south-east walls are of red brick, the north-east wall is of aerated blocks, and the north-west of rubble stone. The ceiling is of concrete beams supported by two central brick columns and two steel H-beams. The door and a blocked window on the south-west wall have concrete lintels. The existing boiler and pump frames are set into the floor. Pipes run around the north-west wall at high level. This is a later addition to the Cyfarthfa Castle site.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks listed building consent to replace the existing boiler plant system and automatic control system, whilst retaining the heating system, pipework, and gas detection system in the boiler room (and pump room in the basement level at the rear of the house). Externally, this would involve the installation of two plastic outlets and the erection of a new timber door to the front, southwest elevation of the boiler room building.

Overall, the schedule of internal and external works proposed would include:

- The removal of existing crane pump sets and replacement with new LTHW circulating pumps;
- The removal of existing air inlet ducts and flues and replacement with new stainless steel boiler flues with two plastic outlets to the front, southwest elevation;
- The removal and replacement of the boiler room access door to the front, southwest elevation;
- The removal of existing heating and water services pipe work, pumps, valves, and fittings. The pipework is generally to be retained and renewed unless replacements are needed;
- The removal of existing gas fired boilers and frames and replacement with new rig/framed mounted gas fired condensing boilers.
- The removal of existing control panel. Existing controls are to be removed and replaced with BEMS Trend controls system, alongside new sensors, and field wiring.

The proposed replacement of an existing inadequate boiler system with a new up to date and more efficient system, would allow the rooms of the former school to be brought back into use. These necessary works would allow for the continued use of the listed building, which would ensure its longevity and reduce costly maintenance issues that arise from the rooms being left vacant and unused.

The proposed works have been supported by a Mechanical Engineering Services Specification Report for the boiler replacement.

A Heritage Impact Assessment has also been submitted in support of the application which assesses the level of works proposed, their impacts and any proposed mitigation required.

CONSULTATION

The following consultations were carried out:

The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust	No objection.
Civic Trust for Wales	No response.
The Victorian Society	No response.
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments	No response.
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	No response.
Historic Park and Garden	No response.
Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Trust	No response.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with statutory publicity requirements, site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site on the 3rd March 2023 and a press notice was published within the local paper on the 9th March 2023. No letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

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.

National Planning Policy - 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)

- *Section 5.13 When determining a listed building consent application, the local planning authority should consider the following issues:*
- *The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest.*
- *The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance, (for example its form and layout, materials, construction and detail) including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list.*
- *The contribution of curtilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene.*
- *The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building.*
- *The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits for example, by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of its local environment.*

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

Policy SW11 – Sustainable design and Placemaking
Policy CW1 - Historic Environment

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This application relates to works proposed in Cyfarthfa Castle, a Grade I listed building. The main issues to consider under this application relate to the effect of the proposed works upon the listed building and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

As previously discussed, the works proposed relate to the boiler room, a separate building to the rear of Cyfarthfa Castle. Cyfarthfa Castle itself has extensive architectural value however, the separate rear building was not constructed in any form with the original building. This rear structure was initially built sometime between 1850 and 1875 and its enlargement appears to date back to the 20th century. This building has been enlarged again at some point between the school alterations as shown on the 1919 Ordnance Survey map. Most of the building now consists of yellow brick, some rendered in cement. The bricks, render, and style of windows suggest that this later extension/alteration was carried out around the 1960s. With the exception of the lower wall and cast iron pillars supporting the walkway, this part of the castle, which includes the boiler room, has very low architectural and symbolic value.

The separate yellow brick building to the rear, which includes the boiler room, is not in keeping with the original building. Indeed, it somewhat detracts from the grand rear view of the castle, as seen by visitors when walking around the park.

The proposed works have been summarised above and largely relate to the removal of redundant equipment/plant/machinery/wiring/pipework/valves/sensors/control panels and their replacement with a more efficient and update boiler system. These works would be mainly contained within the rear structure, in the boiler room (with the exception of the removal of redundant heating pumps and related pipework from the Pump Room in the basement level of the house, with no other works proposed within the pump room). Externally, no alterations are proposed to the boiler room, other than two plastic outlets which would serve the replacement flues proposed and the replacement of the timber access door with a new timber door. The boiler room, as previously explained, and as detailed in the description of its construction materials, is a building constructed in the mid to late 20th century and is considered of little historic significance. Whilst the stone-built north-west wall of the boiler room may relate to an earlier structure and is of historical significance, none of the works proposed would have any impact on the fabric of this wall. It should also be noted that the existing underground pipework between the Boiler Room and Pump Room will be retained and as such, no new excavation works would be required to be carried out in association with these proposed works. These proposed works would therefore not cause harm to the architectural interest of Cyfarthfa Castle.

The installation of the new boiler flues would have the most impact on the building and would involve creating new holes in the fabric of the structure. However, the proposed exit point for the flues is the south-west elevation, which is a mid/late 20th century addition and of little historic value as previously stated. The flue pipe work would be stainless steel. Whilst a cast iron option has been explored, this would not be adequate to withstand high temperatures. The two flue outlets would be finished in black plastic. An alternative material would be more a sympathetic solution; however, these are very small scale and would have a minimal projection beyond the elevation of the brick wall and as such, would be considered acceptable in this context. This addition would therefore not be considered detrimental to the historical value and architectural appearance of Cyfarthfa Castle.

Similarly, the proposed boiler room access door is timber door and in a poor state of repair. The existing door is of no historical significance or architectural value. The replacement door would be a timber door of a similar design. This would improve the appearance of the building without adversely impacting on the architectural or historic interest of Cyfarthfa Castle. As such, these works would also be considered acceptable.

CONCLUSION

The proposed works, for the reasons discussed above, are necessary works to Cyfarthfa Castle, which could be carried out whilst preserving the special interest and architectural merit of the building.

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, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED 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:

- Heritage Impact Assessment, received: 24th February 2023;
- Flue/outlet photo, received: 24th February 2023;
- Block Plan, Drawing no: 05P, received: 24th February 2023;
- Plan: Proposed South-East Elevation Drawing No. 2022-066;004P, received: 24th February 2023;
- Plan: Proposed Side North-West Elevation Drawing No. 2022-066;003P, received: 24th February 2023;
- Plan: Proposed South-West Elevation Drawing No. 2022-066;002P, received: 24th February 2023;
- Plan: Proposed Mechanical Services Schematic Drawing No. HTP-3218 M201, received: 24th February 2023;
- Plan: Proposed Mechanical Services Site Plan and Basement Pump Plant Room Drawing No. HTP 3218 M102, received: 24th February 2023;
- Plan: Proposed Mechanical Services Layout Drawing No. HTP 3218 M101, received: 24th February 2023;
- Report: Mechanical Engineering Services Specification Particular Specification, received: 24th February 2023.

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

INFORMATIVES

1. This planning permission does not provide consent to undertake works that require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence.
All bats and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb a bat or to recklessly damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places.

If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. on 0300 065 3000 or at <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/apply-for-a-protected-species-licence/bat-licences/?lang=en>.

If work has already commenced and bats are found, or if any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost is found, work should cease and NRW should be contacted immediately.

Under these circumstances, an EPS licence is likely to be required to undertake the works within the law.

2. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

If works to any trees, hedgerows and/or other nesting bird habitat (including buildings with suitable features) are to be undertaken, they will take place outside of the bird nesting season. If the works must be undertaken during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a breeding bird survey will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified will be protected until the young have fledged.

Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1>) is involved, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, will be devised and implemented.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE:

18/4/23