

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9 March 2023

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 22/0314/12 (BJW)
APPLICANT: Savoy Theatre (Tonyrefail) LTD
DEVELOPMENT: Retention of small dressing room block and the addition of an extension to its front, and retention of a wooden shed in side yard. Proposed installation of a gate to a side alley; three removable bollards to front driveway; a 4 inch high disabled ramp with handrail to the side. Repair and restoration of the Grade II listed facade. (Application for Listed Building Consent).
LOCATION: SAVOY BINGO HALL, COLLENA ROAD, TONYREFAIL
DATE REGISTERED: 13/05/2022
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Tonyrefail East

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW AND SUBJECT TO A FAVOURABLE REFERRAL TO CADW:

REASONS:

The works would be sympathetic and consistent with the special historic and architectural importance of the listed building and would have no adverse impact on its special significance.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

Three or more letters of objection have been received.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Listed Building Consent is sought, partly in retrospect, to undertake a range of works to land at the Savoy Bingo Hall.

The building has been operating as a theatre since 2015, having been converted to this purpose following a long period as a bingo hall. Prior to that the site accommodated a cinema.

The proposed works can be summarised as follows:

- retain and extend a single storey dressing room block and its covered connection to the southern side elevation of the theatre
- retain a small timber shed for tool storage and workshop purposes
- construction of a 10cm high disabled ramp and handrail to the existing double fire doors within the southern side elevation, which can also be used for loading access
- installation of three removable bollards at the front of the yard to prevent unauthorised access and to maintain a clear fire escape route
- installation of a gate to the side alley leading to School Street
- repairs and renovation of the front façade of the building and reinstatement of windows to basement, installation fascia for sign, lights to sign and lights to either side of the main entrance
- the replacement of the asbestos pitched roof over the existing garage with a flat roof to form part of that connecting to and enclosing the dressing room block

Planning matters other than those which relate to the listing status are considered as part of the concurrent application for full planning consent (22/0313/10).

In addition to the plans and elevation drawings accompanying the application, the following supporting documents have been submitted:

- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Impact Statement
- Supporting Background Statement

SITE APPRAISAL

The application site comprises land adjacent to and within the curtilage of the Grade II listed Savoy Bingo Hall which is located on the junction of Collenna Road and School Street, Tonyrefail.

The building was listed in 2000 for its architectural and historic interest as an exceptionally rare example of an early cinema, with a particularly strong and prominent facade. The building dates from 1914 and was converted to a bingo hall in 1983. As the description of the development notes, the building was converted to a theatre following the grant of full planning permission and separate listed building consent for this purpose in 2013.

Conversely, the side and rear elevations have a rendered finish, with access doors and escape stairs being located on the southern elevation. To the south of the building is an irregular parcel of land measuring approximately 210m². This currently accommodates the detached garage, dressing room block and timber shed included within the scope of the application. The remainder of the space is utilised as a parking/delivery area, accessed via Collenna Road.

There are a variety of differing uses within the vicinity of the site, to the north, the area is residential in character, with a number of dwellings being located along Collenna Road and School Street. To the south, the site is bounded by the rear of properties sited along High Street, which is the main commercial street through the town. To the rear (east), the site is bounded by 'Capel Y Ton', which is also listed, but is in a ruinous state having suffered significant fire damage.

PLANNING HISTORY

The most recent or relevant applications on record associated with this site are:

- 22/0313/10:** Retention of small dressing room block and the addition of an extension to its front, and retention of a wooden shed in side yard. Proposed installation of a gate to a side alley; three removable bollards to front driveway; a 4 inch high disabled ramp with handrail to the side. Repair and restoration of the Grade II listed facade. Decision: TBC
- 12/1228/10:** To convert former cinema/bingo hall for use as a community theatre/performing arts centre, and to incorporate a one bedroom dwelling for use by owners as live-in guardians. Decision: 10/05/2013, Granted.
- 12/1214/12:** Change of use from a former bingo hall into a community theatre/arts centre, to include a one-bedroom dwelling for use by the owners as live-in guardians - Listed Building application. Decision: 06/06/2013, Granted.
- 09/0399/12:** Conversion from Bingo Hall to 8 No. (2 bed) residential units with associated parking. Repairs and maintenance to front facade of building. Decision: 22/12/2010, Granted.
- 09/0395/10:** Conversion from Bingo Hall to 8 No. (2 bed) residential units with associated parking. Decision: 06/09/2010, Granted.
- 08/0295/13:** Erection of one detached dwelling. Decision: 16/01/2009, Refused.

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by direct notification to fourteen neighbouring properties and notices were displayed on site.

Eight letters of support and six letters of objection have been received in respect of both applications.

However, since none of the issues raised relate specifically to whether Listed Building Consent would be acceptable it is appropriate that these representations are recorded and considered within the report for the concurrent full application 22/0313/10.

CONSULTATION

The Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies were consulted.

Theatres Trust:

The dressing room block utilises a former garage which has been converted and linked to the original building through a new structure in between. This provides three dressing rooms, a back of house WC, a store room and a further room. We have no record of the Savoy having been anything other than a cinema and therefore we assume it was built without any particular back of house facilities and that fitting them within the existing footprint would be problematic without interrupting original form and the layout and volume of the auditorium. Provision of dressing rooms is a necessary addition to allow this building to function as a theatre.

Whilst no images appear to be available of the side or rear of the Savoy, these tend to be less-sensitive elevations which are necessarily utilitarian and therefore harm from new additions is minimised. The fact the Savoy is able to provide three dressing rooms is particularly important given its use by local amateur groups because this is the minimum needed for safeguarding purposes where performances may include children and young people. The Savoy had been vacant for a prolonged period prior to being returned to use. Theatre represents one of limited potentially viable and compatible uses for this heritage asset. Therefore, the public benefits of positive active use without need to alter plan form and its sensitive front elevation also justify the need for this extension and mitigates any harm that arises.

Repair and restoration of the front facade is also included within these applications. In principle this would be supported because it will help conserve this important heritage asset into the future and again help provide the theatre with the additional functionality it needs to successfully operate. The addition of signage and lighting for example will help improve prominence, although it will be important to ensure that this is sensitively designed and applied.

No other responses have been received.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

Members will be aware that the current LDP's lifespan was 2011 to 2021, that it has been reviewed and is in the process of being replaced. The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced provisions specifying the period to which a plan has effect and providing

that it shall cease to be the LDP at the end of the specified period. These provisions were commenced on 4th January 2016 but do not have retrospective effect. Therefore, the provisions do not apply to LDPs adopted prior to this date and plans adopted before 4th January 2016 will remain the LDP for determining planning applications until replaced by a further LDP. This was clarified in guidance published by the Minister on 24th September 2020. Subsequently, Members are advised that the existing Plan remains the development plan for consideration when determining this planning application.

The application site lies within the settlement boundary for Tonyrefail.

Policy CS2 - The policy emphasis in the Southern Strategy Area (SSA) is on creating sustainable growth within the Southern Strategy Area, particularly the concentration of development within the defined settlement boundary.

Policy AW5 - Identifies the appropriate amenity and accessibility criteria for new development proposals. It expressly states that the scale, form and design of the development should have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. There should also be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and should, where appropriate, retain existing features of natural environmental value. Additionally, the development would require safe access to the highway network and provide parking in accordance with the Council's SPG.

Policy AW6 - Supports development proposals that are of a high standard of design that reinforce attractive qualities and local distinctiveness, and which enhance landscape and biodiversity.

Policy AW7 - Development proposals which impact on sites of architectural or historical 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 SSA4 - Promotes residential and commercial development within the key settlement of Tonyrefail that (amongst others) supports and reinforces the role of the centre as a key settlement and promotes the beneficial re-use of vacant and underused floor space.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design and Placemaking
- Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements
- The Historic Built Environment
- Nature Conservation

National Guidance

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 Edition 11 (PPW) was issued on 24th February 2021 in conjunction with Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (FW2040). PPW incorporates the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out Welsh Government's (WG) policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of all planning applications. FW2040 sets out the National Development Framework for Wales (NDF), WG's current position on planning policy at regional and national level.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is also consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's sustainable development principles through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of driving sustainable development and building healthier communities and better environments.

It is also considered the proposed development is compliant with the NDF, with the following policies being relevant to the development proposed:

- Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow – Employment / Housing / Infrastructure
- Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth – Sustainability / Placemaking

SE Wales Policies

- Policy 33 – National Growth Areas Cardiff Newport & the Valleys – SDP/LDP/large schemes.

Other relevant national policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;

PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment;

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 16(2) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that 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.

Main Issues: acceptability of the proposed development on the special architectural and historic merit of the building.

Listing Details

As noted further above, Cadw's listing description (ref. no. 24275 Bingo Hall) identifies that the reason for its designation is due to "its architectural and historic interest as an

exceptionally rare example of an early cinema, with a particularly strong and prominent façade”.

In terms of the exterior, the listing notes the following details:

“Long range with gable-end facade in free classical style. The 3-bay facade is set at an angle to the auditorium, respecting the road lay out, and slopes down from north to south. Large square pilasters constructed of ashlar (painted pink) divide and flank the bays. Between the pilasters, the bays are rendered and whitened. The facade is built upon a plinth of rusticated dressed stone, higher at the downslope end. The central bay is the widest and has a moulded round arched head, and a moulded string course at 1st floor level. The upper storey has a central flat-headed window with moulded sill, flanked by smaller narrower windows with eared and shouldered architraves. These windows contain 4-pane horned sashes. Under the arch and framing the central window is a stylised festoon with long drops. Beneath the string course are two 2-light windows with moulded sills and aprons, each light containing a horned sash.

The pilasters have recessed panels to each face and high plain capstones. At the top of each recess is a cartouche with ribbons, framed by a roll moulding with foliate decoration and ribbons. The outside bays have full-width segmental arches, moulded with dentils. That to the left is over the recessed entrance, which has late C20 double panelled half-glazed doors reached by steps. The arch to the right is infilled and contains a 2-light window in moulded surround. Above each arch is an oculus in a moulded surround with a high keystone which forms the centre point of a stylised festoon. The keystones project above a moulded string course to plain parapets.

The sides and rear are rendered and contain few openings. Two small vents to north side, no openings to rear. The south side has 2 fire-escape doorways at 1st floor level reached by open metal staircases. That to the left has an angled head, and that to the right a segmental head. Between, at ground floor level is a further doorway with segmental head. All contain boarded doors.”

Regarding the interior the listing notes than the plan form of the building has been retained but modernised.

Consideration

Firstly, with regard to the proposed development other than that to the façade:

It is noted that the works to retain and extend the dressing room and incorporate this within the footprint of the garage, with the whole extent to be enclosed by a single flat roof, would be set back from the front of the site i.e., the boundary with Collenna Road, by around 18m.

In general design terms, this would be considered to be an improvement to what currently appear as a small cluster of unrelated structures and would provide a more attractive and visually cohesive block of ancillary accommodation. Although the timber

shed would continue to stand separately to the front of this block, it shares the same external painted finish and does not appear particularly intrusive.

This additional space provided by the above buildings are required to enable the Savoy to operate effectively as a theatre and would provide separate dressing room space as well as a workshop area and room for storage.

In terms of the historic designation, these works and the ancillary buildings would not be considered to cause harm to the key features of the Savoy, namely the façade, due to their being set so far back from the front of the building and where they would have no noticeable impact on the street scene.

Furthermore, considering the context of their setting, alongside the sizeable side elevation of the Savoy and in an area constrained by neighbouring structures and boundary fences, the single storey ancillary buildings would appear of a much lesser scale.

The other works propose the addition of a gate to prevent unauthorised access to a path at the northern side of the building, the principle of which would be considered to be acceptable, subject to a condition requiring the approval of details; it is also understood that a gate formerly hung there.

The proposed disabled ramp to serve an existing side fire exit would be of a minimal height and be provided with handrails which again, is considered to be acceptable, subject to a similar condition; whilst the proposed removable bollards, not being a permanent feature and being small in number and size, would be unlikely to detract from the façade.

Secondly, concerning the proposed restoration of the façade, reinstatement of windows, and external lights/advertising.

It is noticeable that the fabric of the façade is in a poor condition or decorative state, and some earlier repairs have taken place to cladding, for example, which do not respect the existing materials. Clearly it is in the interest of both the building and the public realm to ensure that its restoration is undertaken using appropriate materials and methods and that the reinstated windows are also of an appropriate form and finish. It is considered that these details can be secured by condition.

Lastly, no details/specification of the proposed lights to be hung either side of the main entrance, or those above the new fascia sign, have been provided, other than in general terms. Again, there is no objection in principle to either, hence a condition is recommended for the submission and approval of those details.

In light of the above, it is considered that all of the works have been assessed and justified by the application submission, as detailed by the Applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment and Design and Access Statement. Consequently, the proposal is

considered not to be detrimental to the listing and is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the range of conditions outlined further below.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusion

It is considered the proposed works to the façade are necessary to protect the integrity and fabric of the building and the main reason for its listing. In addition, the siting, design and scale of the proposed dressing room block, shed and other works as described above are not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the site or street scene.

Subject to the recommended conditions below, the application is considered to be acceptable and would preserve the character and appearance of the site in accordance with LDP Policy AW7.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW AND SUBJECT TO A FAVOURABLE REFERRAL TO CADW:

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 Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be completed in accordance with the approved drawings and documents:

- Site location plan
- Plan DR/003/CR new layout
- Plan DR/004/FE front elevation

unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. No further development shall commence until a scheme for the installation of the proposed external lighting and fascia board have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include full specification of the proposed lights, including their design, height, position and angle; the means of fixing; proposed hours of operation and lighting levels; and shall demonstrate that no obtrusive light pollution, glare or spillage shall be caused. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. No further development shall commence until a method statement for the restoration of the façade, to include the type, finish and colour of external materials, and methods of repair and construction, has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The restoration shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

5. No further development shall commence until details of the general arrangement/specification of the proposed basement windows, including, where appropriate: mouldings; rebates, cavity width, cavity finishes, transoms, mullion and glazing bars and means of securing the windows, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed general arrangement/specification shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. No further development shall commence until design and construction details of the proposed side gate and fire exit disabled ramp have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed

building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. Within six weeks of the date of consent details of the external finishes of the dressing rooms, their extension the garage and the shed, to include roof, window and elevation materials, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

8. All disturbed fabric shall be made good to match the existing building.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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