

Iles, Nicholas (ESNR-Planning) ATISN 14865 ITEM 002

From: PS Minister Housing & Local Government
Sent: 16 December 2020 18:43
To: Correspondence mail - JJ
Cc: PS Minister Housing & Local Government
Subject: FW: Planning Applications Call-In Request - Letter from Ruperra Conservation Trust
Attachments: Email to Hefin David cc.docx

Importance: High

For you please Khiz

Thanks
Paige

From: [REDACTED] (Staff Cymorth yr Aelod | Member Support Staff) [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 December 2020 17:34
To: PS Minister Housing & Local Government <PSMHLG@gov.wales> [REDACTED] Special Adviser)
[REDACTED]
Cc: David, Hefin (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd) <Hefin.David@senedd.wales>
Subject: Fw: Planning Applications Call-In Request - Letter from Ruperra Conservation Trust
Importance: High

Dear both

Further to my e-mail below on behalf of the Ruperra Conservation Trust, please find attached a similar letter from the Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust, which makes similar objections to the planning application being made to Caerphilly County Borough Council, and likewise which requests a Ministerial call-in.

The latter Trust have asked us to pass this information on to the Minister and we would be grateful if you could bring it to her attention.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Senior Adviser to Hefin David MS

From: [REDACTED] (Staff Cymorth yr Aelod | Member Support Staff) [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 December 2020 16:35
To: PSMHLG@gov.wales <PSMHLG@gov.wales>; [REDACTED]
Cc: David, Hefin (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd) <Hefin.David@senedd.wales>
Subject: Planning Applications Call-In Request - Letter from Ruperra Conservation Trust

Good afternoon

We would be grateful if the attached letter and supporting document from Ruperra Conservation Trust could be brought to the Minister's attention.

A copy was originally sent to the Chief Planner, Welsh Government.

Kind regards

A black rectangular redaction mark covering a signature.A black rectangular redaction mark covering a name.

Senior Adviser to Hefin David MS

Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust
Ymddiriedolaeth Diogelu Castell Rhiwperrau

Patron / Nodwr [REDACTED] Deputy Lieutenant of Gwent.
President / Llywydd [REDACTED] Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent.

To: Hefin David MS

15 December 2020

Dear Hefin,

REQUEST TO CALL IN PLANNING APPLICATIONS : RUPERRA CASTLE

We would be pleased if you would forward this letter to Julie James MS urging her to consider calling the planning applications for conversion and listed building consent for outbuildings at Ruperra Castle, Caerphilly namely:

**19/0787/ COU and 19/0788/LBC Conservation Repairs to the Former Dairy and Laundry and Change of use to the Stables and Coach House Building; and
19/0789/COU and 19/0790/LBC Ruperra Castle Greenhouse Store.**

All four planning applications raise planning issues of more than local importance in terms of heritage, as well as nature conservation, habitats, climate change and the Wellbeing of Future Generations. We consider that it - if Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) do not refuse them - it would be appropriate for them to be called in and determined by the Welsh Ministers for the following reasons:

(i) National importance of the heritage, landscape and ecology in combination - in an area relatively untouched by development: These proposals would have an unacceptable adverse impact on an area with a unique combination of heritage buildings in an unparalleled landscape setting, which provides relatively undisturbed habitats for a number of protected species. Its landscape has been recognised as outstanding, and its national importance has been recognised by its layers of heritage and ecological designations, and latterly by its inclusion in an area identified as Green Belt in the Plan for Wales.

(ii) Unacceptable adverse heritage impact: Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust (RCPT) has been highlighting the plight of the nationally highly significant heritage site at Ruperra Castle for 25 years. In that time the Listed Buildings and Registered Park and Garden have all deteriorated significantly, with few repairs having been undertaken by successive owners. Although conversion may appear relatively innocuous and might be assumed to "preserve" a few of the outbuildings, these proposals are a classic case of planning creep. The Stables and Bothy conversions are described as Phase 1, but come with no publicly available overall plan for what is left of a once grand, historically and culturally significant estate. Moreover what is described as Phase 1 should be described as Phase 2, as a manege has been given

permission and has been built - already damaging the setting of the SAM and Grade 2* Listed Castle.

(iii) Unacceptable adverse ecological impact: Phasing to minimise ecological impact is specifically prohibited under EIA Regulations.

There is a significant risk that the work involved in construction, and the noise and light disturbance arising from occupation, would impact adversely on the Greater Horseshoe Bat colony in the Grade 2 listed Generator Block. The colony is currently increasing only slightly each year. The Generator Block links to a dark corridor of vegetation adjoining ancient woodland, the former kitchen garden and fields where they forage. However, substantial clearance around the outbuildings and in the Registered gardens in Summer 2018 by the current owner led to his NRW licence being withdrawn before the first work since 1941 to repair the Castle could be finished. Further clearance work in this area would disturb the Greater Horseshoe Bat colony and as a result they could be lost forever. Local bat experts say that the applicant's proposals for a new bat house as mitigation are wholly unsuitable.

To our knowledge no repair work has been undertaken on the Generator Block since its unsafe chimney was demolished, despite bats needing warm and dry conditions in their roosts. The tarpaulin which covers part of the roof was placed there by the Valleys Bat Group, not the owner.

(iv) Health and safety of future occupants: The Castle is in a dangerous condition, as acknowledged in the applicant's Heritage Impact Statement and in CCBC's Buildings at Risk Register. The south-east tower has collapsed already, and the north west tower - the one nearest to the parking area - has substantial cracks. There would clearly be significant risks to future occupants and visitors if these developments were permitted.

For all the above reasons we urge the Minister to call in these applications.

Yours sincerely,



Trustee, Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust

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