

Rhymney House Hotel

PROGRAMME
OFFICER

5⁰⁶ APR 2010

Barbara Prosser – Programme Officer
Caerphilly County Borough Council LDP Examination
Ty Penallta
Tredomen Park
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF 82 7PG

Thursday 1st April 2010

Dear Barbara

I received your email on Tuesday 30th March 2010, which, among other matters, gave the final date for submissions as April 6th 2010.

On Tuesday 23rd March I met, at the hotel, Patricia Martin, the person responsible for historic/listed buildings in the Caerphilly County Borough Council area. She was supportive of my views. I contacted a colleague of Pat's on Tuesday this week and she is aware of the April 6th deadline. I have not yet received a letter from her.

In essence she agreed:-

1. Should the hotel cease trading it would most likely be subject to arson and the hotel would be lost, leaving an eyesore plus the loss of a historic building.
2. That the development proposed by myself was probably the only long term way to preserve the building.
3. That the "Green Wedge" was arbitrary and its imposition showed no knowledge of the history of the site. The site has provided dwelling houses until relatively recent times and is a brownfield site.
4. She understood that planning permission for one or three properties (planning permission for one property was previously in place/planning permission for three properties has been mentioned in a telephone conversation with the council) was not economically realistic.
5. That the building formed the basis for settlement at Llechryd, Butetown and indeed the town of Rhymney.

As soon as I receive Pat's letter I will forward a copy to you.

Please accept my thanks for your forbearance.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Dunster

Copy to Patricia Martin Caerphilly County Borough Council

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Tuesday 6th April 2010

Dear Barbara

Please find a copy of the letter I received from Patricia Martin.

The letter does not deal with the points we agreed upon in our meeting at the hotel.

I am not surprised – she did not return my telephone calls of last Tuesday (after my telephone conversation with you). She has clearly been told not to “rock the boat” and to “toe the party line”.

I am obviously disappointed and this confirms my developing view that the system is flawed and indeed undemocratic.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Dunster



Pontllantraith House,
Pontllantraith,
Blackwood,
NP12 2YW

Ly Pontllantraith,
Pontllantraith,
Coed Duon,
NP12 2YW

Mr. G. Dunster,

Patricia Martin
01495 235235
01495 235021
FP/LB/N/4
30 March 2010

Dear Mr. Dunster,

**RE: RHYMNEY HOUSE HOTEL, RHYMNEY, GRADE II,
BUILDING OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST.**

I refer to your recent meeting with Patricia Martin, (Conservation & Design Officer) at your premises - Rhymney House Hotel on Tuesday 23rd March 2010.

In principle, there is no objection to the re-instatement of the building from its current use class, as hotel, restaurant back to residential use and converted into flats, however the Council objects to any new residential development within the building's curtilage and the immediately surrounding area, as this would conflict with policies HE1, and HE2 of the Approved Unitary Development Plan.

I understand that you have put forward your objections to both the settlement boundary and to the green wedge status to the land allocated to your area, as defined within the Deposit Local Development Plan up to 2021.

Policy context.

The following comments represent officers' informal comments based upon an analysis of the key policy documents that relate to this issue, i.e. Planning Policy Wales and the Housing MIPPS:

Para. 9.2.9. of the housing MIPPS states that, when deciding which sites to allocate for housing, local planning authorities should consider the 'physical and environmental constraints on the development of land' and the 'compatibility of housing with neighbouring established land uses.' These requirements have been taken into account in the site selection process (as set out in Background Paper 14 : Site Assessment methodology).

Green wedge.

Rhymney house hotel is situated outside the settlement boundary of Rhymney and Llechryd, extending into an area designated as a green wedge SI1.7 in the LDP. This green wedge prevents the coalescence between Llechryd and Rhymney and is important in visual terms having significant landscape value. Both Rhymney and Llechryd have their own strong identity and sense of place, which should be protected for the continued integrity of the settlements and the communities within them.

**Director of the Environment: Anthony O'Sullivan
Cyfarwyddwr yr Amgylchedd: Anthony O'Sullivan**

Settlement Boundary.

In order to ascertain the suitability or otherwise of land for inclusion within, or exclusion from, settlement boundaries, a comprehensive review of settlement boundaries was undertaken to inform the LDP. The location of the settlement boundary is based on a robust and credible assessment and ensures that the future pattern adheres to the LDP's development strategy.

The land to which the site refers is located outside the defined settlement boundary of Rhymney within both the Council Approved UDP and the LDP. The settlement boundary is based on a robust and defensible boundary; in this location the most defensible boundary is the line of existing development north of the site, bordering the Special Landscape Area (SLA) of the Upper Rhymney Valley.

SLA.

The site is contained within the Upper Rhymney Valley Special Landscape Area. The area represents one of the most open upland areas within the County Borough, abutting the Brecon Beacons National Park. The SLA ensures that future development proposals should not see the loss of any historic environment or geological or geomorphologic features present within the landscape.

No evidence has been submitted to date to substantiate the claim that the omission of Rhymney House hotel from the settlement boundary of Llechryd does not comply with test of soundness CE2.

Conclusion

It is concluded therefore, that it is not considered appropriate to include Rhymney House Hotel within the settlement boundary of Llechryd, as the importance and function of the green wedge far outweighs the need for any development in this location.

These are officer comments that are made informally and on a without-prejudice basis. Should you require any further information in the future, please do not hesitate to contact this office again I hope that this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



For Chief Planning Officer.