

**SWYDDFA'R ARWEINYDD
OFFICE OF THE LEADER**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM35461

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 22nd September 2016

Mike Hedges AM
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Phil Bale
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Annwyl / Dear Mike

Petitions Committee - Save Cardiff Coal Exchange

Thank you for your letter requesting an update on progress to safeguard the future of the Coal Exchange.

I would be very pleased if you would advise the committee that in the relatively short time since they considered the matter in July, that there has been considerable and very tangible progress in respect of saving the building.

Cardiff's Planning Committee Granted Planning Permission for the Change of Use of the Building to a hotel and nominated ancillary uses on 15th July 2016. The planning application established the use of the building in land use terms and provided comfort to funders/investors.

Subsequent to this a number of Listed Building Consent Applications have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority to progress the works necessary to fully survey the building, and to gain a better understanding of its condition, and to progress a conservation plan to inform future repairs, refurbishment and alterations as detailed below:

- Application 16/01879/MJR discharged conditions 20 and 21 of Planning Permission 16/01024/MJR and initiated a room by room and elevation referencing of the building and provided a point in time photographic record.
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/01727/MJR proposes the demolition of the stairs and access ramp and the removal of the balustrade and surfacing material associated with the 1970s reinforced concrete car park to the south (front) elevation of Coal Exchange to allow for the building to sit in an enhanced landscape setting. This application is currently with Cadw.

- Listed Building Consent Application 16/1764/MJR seeks Listed Building Consent for the strip out of modern fabric from the building to allow access to the historic structure of the building to assess its condition. Soft stripping of the building has revealed significant wet rot and dry rot and fungal decay but there are still further affected areas which are currently masked by intervening fabric. This application is also currently with Welsh Government (Cadw).
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/01935/MJR seeks Listed Building Consent for the fit out of three rooms within the building as show pieces of future intentions for the building. The application will allow a better understanding of the practicalities of providing hotel guest rooms within the existing building and working with historic fabric. The application is currently with Welsh Government (Cadw).
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/02026/MJR is one of a number which will seek Listed Building Consent for topic based repair works and covers the management of stonework repairs to the building and currently with the local planning authority for consideration, and will be referred to Cadw upon expiry of the statutory consultation period.
- Listed Building Consent Application 16/02037/MJR seeks Listed Building Consent for the management of window repairs to the building and similarly is currently with the local planning authority for consideration, and will be referred to Cadw upon expiry of the statutory consultation period.

Details of all of the above applications are available on the Council's website, have been advertised on site and in the Local Press , and made available for public comment.

Outside of regulatory processes, the Council's Planning Conservation Officer has been in regular contact with Signature Living and their contractors to oversee soft stripping works and to advise on the removal of decayed fabric; repair works; and more generally to provide advice on conservation matters. Signature Living also advise that their conservation consultants are near completion of the conservation plan for the building which will hopefully be forthcoming in the next few weeks. Given the short space of time that Signature Living have had control of the building and their opportunity to investigate its condition, I find this quite remarkable and would applaud their commitment to realising such a plan. To date dialogue between Council officers and Signature Living suggests that the renovation/conversion of the building interior will likely be undertaken in 2 phases, with an application to undertake the first phase of works concentrating on the restoration of the main hall and ante rooms and the fire damaged SE wing to be submitted very shortly; the second phase, which will relate to the northern areas of the building will follow on from this, thereby prioritising the restoration of the best architectural and historic elements of the building in terms of protection and restoration and re-establishing the structural integrity of the building as first priorities. Moreover, Signature Living's plan is to make their commercial scheme work within the existing frame of the building, and as far as is possibly this will also include the retention of the existing internal frame.

I therefore remain convinced that the use of the building as a hotel is the most appropriate use to secure its future, and that Signature Living have both the best interests of the building at heart; and the greatest potential to deliver what they have proposed.

I trust this is sufficient to reassure your Committee that the Council's activities in managing any danger to the public presented by the building, and in encouraging proposals for its development and restoration have been completely appropriate and have provided the best possible outcome for the building in the given circumstances.

The Local Authority will continue to manage the development in accordance with due regulatory process.

Yn gywir,
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Bale', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**CYNGHORYDD / COUNCILLOR PHIL BALE
ARWEINYDD, CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD
LEADER, THE CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL**

