

**From:** MIKE SMITH < **Sent:** Sunday, September 1, 2024 2:51 PM  
**To:** Reynolds, John (Elected Member)  
**Subject:** PLANNING COMMITTEE Wednesday 4th Sept. Planning Application  
24/0524

Dear Chairman,

You will be aware that the above application will be before the Committee on Wednesday. I am a former Elected member of Monmouthshire County Council and a Member of the Planning Committee for 11 years, as well as a former Chairman of that Committee so I don't come to this application without some experience, and I am not acting as a Planning Consultant or such like. Friends of the family, knowing of my experience on MCC asked me to take a look at the application and offer some advice and guidance. My interest in this application is simple, the building has historic merit and should be conserved and restored. I would ask you to read my comments contained in paragraph 6.2.

It is unlikely that I will be allowed to speak in support of the application, hence this e-mail. The Planning Officers (PO) report is lengthy and detailed, but in many respects it is inaccurate and misleading, in many respects her comments are simply wrong and the Architect/Agent for the applicants will address those on Wednesday. There are numerous errors in her report which he will address, not least of which is her misuse of the Planning Inspectors comments relating to the previous application. This is NOT a resubmission of 23/0242 and it is erroneous to state in para 1.2 "*This application was also dismissed at appeal*". The application before you on Wednesday is totally different in design and layout.

It is not a "conversion", it is a restoration of a former dwelling, and it is definitely NOT a barn, despite the PO's erroneous reference to it as such, and it is definitely not therefore "*an urban intrusion in the landscape*". The building has historic merit, and that is the main point that I want to make to you. The inglenook fireplace and the integral stone bread oven are of historic importance and according to my source in the Welsh Folk Museum, "a rare find". I am of the view that this building is probably unique in the area because of those two features alone and it should be conserved and restored. It is listed in the 1845 Tithe Plan and therefore, arguably, approaching some 200 years old, certainly 180 years old. I can confidently state that if this application was 3 miles further down the road in Monmouthshire, I would be arguing

for and persuading my colleagues to approve the application, so I am not asking you to do something that, in the same circumstances I wouldn't do myself.

If I could have got to Penhow Community Council before they considered the matter and told them of the historic features in the building I am sure their view of the matter would have been different, however, they are not formally objecting.

If nothing is done, the building will eventually fall into ruin, it is not a ruin at the moment despite the PO's description of it as such, and if falls into ruin and a pile of stones then the bats will have lost their home anyway and

Newport will have lost a building of historic merit. You have one chance to save this building and this is it. The applicants should be commended for seeking to save this and be prepared to live in a two-room house in order to do so.

As I'm sure you know, Planning Officers do make mistakes and they get things wrong, they sometimes miss the wider picture and the historic significance of some developments. This application falls very squarely into your Committees remit, "***The decisions made are expected to benefit the City and its communities by allowing good quality development in the right locations and resisting inappropriate or poor quality development in the wrong locations.***"

In your consideration of this application I hope you will see the wider historical merit of this application and take the opportunity to secure its future by APPROVING the application. I have written in similar terms to your colleagues.

Thank you for your time,

Kind regards,

Mike Smith

former Elected Member, Monmouthshire County Council 1995-2008

