

CORN EXCHANGE NEWS

Update September 2016

By Corn Exchange Crickhowell Ltd

PLANNING DECISION DUE FOR CORN EXCHANGE

Our plans to convert The Corn Exchange in Crickhowell High Street into shops and flats for rent will be decided by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority planners on October 4th.

So far, the applications have been well received – with 8 members of the public supporting our plans and no-one objecting to them.

Most significantly, The National Parks Senior Heritage Officer commented: “the proposals will not have a detrimental impact on the special character or historic fabric of the building and therefore can be supported from a built heritage perspective.” This is

in contrast to last year’s application to turn The Corn Exchange into a convenience store, which the same department said would “destroy any historic value the building has left”.



The yellow planning and listed building notices on the front of The Corn Exchange

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DETAILED DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE

There have also been no objections from statutory consultees like Crickhowell Town Council, Powys County Council, or Crickhowell Civic Society.

Corn Exchange Crickhowell Ltd's Managing Director, Dean Christy said: "The enthusiasm with which our proposals have been received is significant and positive and is something for which our architects, Gil and Karen, need to be congratulated"

There have been ongoing discussions on the detail of the application with the BBNPA planning officer, strategic planning officer and conservation officer that have been positive and constructive.

It has been decided, given the overwhelming level of interest shown in the future of The Corn Exchange, that the application will have to be decided by a full meeting of the Brecon Beacons National Parks Authority planning committee. The application will go before the next meeting which starts at 10am on October 4th - we don't know precisely when during the meeting our application will be heard. Members of the Corn Exchange Crickhowell Ltd board will be attending this meeting and Dean Christy will be speaking on behalf of the shareholders. The public has the right to attend these meetings and any supporters who wish to attend would be most welcome.

"The proposals will not have a detrimental impact on the special character or historic fabric of the building and therefore can be supported from a built heritage perspective." – BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARKS AUTHORITY HERITAGE

GETTING READY TO START WORK

We very much appreciate that the planning process has taken longer than expected but, given the history of the building, its condition and the complexity of our plans, we are confident that it is moving as fast as possible. Cadw will need to be consulted after planning permission is obtained but we still hope to complete the purchase of The Corn Exchange in late October, start stripping out the building in November and begin the construction phase in January.

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Work going on behind the scenes



We have been investigating and revealing the structure of The Corn Exchange

We have not waited for the planning process to be complete before making preparations for the stripping out and refurbishment of the The Corn Exchange to begin.

Investigating the structure of The Corn Exchange

After obtaining three quotes, we have had The Corn Exchange surveyed for asbestos, under the guidance of our architects. There is asbestos present (which was to be expected for a building of this type and age) but it can be carefully managed and does not present a risk to the project. The only impact will be that where it has to be removed, this will need to be done by specialist contractors – which will have cost

implications.

We have had a structural surveyor inspect the building but we have not as yet commissioned a full structural survey as we wait for planning permission to be granted and wish to restrict our exposure to costs at this stage of the project.

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Finding a builder

We approached a number of builders who have been recommended to us for their skill in working with listed buildings – and received five expressions of interest. Following that process we have entered into discussions with our preferred contractor for the first of two distinct phases of the project – Phase 1 the clearing and stripping out and Phase 2 is the conversion of the building. The reason for splitting the contract is that it gives us an opportunity to see what the stripping out reveals of The Corn Exchange before deciding how to approach its refurbishment.

Our Neighbours

We have held informal discussions with our neighbours and we will continue to liaise with them as the planning and refurbishment processes continue. The project will inevitably disrupt the High Street, but we will do everything we can to minimise this.

Finding New Tenants

The six potential tenants who had previously expressed an interest in the three shops have now been asked to fill out an initial contact form so we can keep in touch with them as the project progresses. We have also had two expressions of interest in the flats. We are confident that interest will increase once the new retail and residential spaces take shape and we are able to photograph and video them.

However, following representations from shareholders, and as a further protection against national chains wanting to move into Crickhowell's uniquely independent High Street, the following line has been added to Corn Exchange Crickhowell Ltd's tenancy policy:

“In the event that a National Chain applies, and it is the only option that we have to fill a Tenancy, we will put it to the Shareholders to decide on a majority vote basis.”

If you know anyone who may be interested in renting the shops or flats, please ask them to contact us on info@cornexchangecrickhowell.co.uk

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THE BIG CORN EXCHANGE CLEAROUT

Before that, and as soon as possible after the building is ours, we will hope to clear the building of all useable furniture, fixtures and fittings. We've made an inventory of everything that is in The Corn Exchange – from tables and chairs to plant pots and fridges – which can be sold, donated or disposed of. The big clearout is something in which we hope to involve shareholders, local people and community groups – some of whom have expressed an interest in some of the old pub furniture. If you have access to somewhere where we might be able to store some of the contents until they can be disposed of, please get in touch.

REGULAR UPDATES

We will continue to keep you informed of developments and expect to issue a further newsletter shortly after our planning application has been presented to the Brecon Beacon National Park Authority on the 4th of October 2016.

In the meantime, if you want to contact us, you can do so via our email, info@cornexchangecrickhowell.co.uk or via our website – the address for which is at the bottom of this page.



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