

24 March 2022

Denbighshire council considers plans for £6.5 transformation of iconic riverside hotel in Llangollen

If planning is approved, the Royal Hotel would be redeveloped by One Hundred Knights - the company behind upmarket local wedding venue Tyn Dwr Hall and The Three Eagles bar and grill

Denbighshire County Council is considering ambitious plans to redevelop the iconic Royal Hotel in the heart of Llangollen.

If the council approves the plans, the Royal Hotel - which has been empty since 2019 - would be redeveloped by One Hundred Knights, the Welsh company that is the driving force behind local success stories at the nearby Tyn Dwr Hall wedding venue, the Three Eagles, Bar & Grill, and The BLK Sheep Baa & Grill. All are award winning and highly regarded North Wales hospitality venues.

The planning application for the Royal Hotel - which is Grade II listed and dates back to 1752 - has been submitted by local business partners Tom Bellis and Matt Jones. They have owned the hotel since 2019.

Mr Jones says the proposed redevelopment would conserve many of the historic characteristics of the hotel, and that refurbishment and development work would be undertaken with expert guidance from the Welsh historic environment service Cadw.

The proposed development would include an extensive refurbishment of the hotel's interior, with the addition of an upscale bar and bistro, as well as a flagship new luxury spa wing. The spa wing would include plunge pools on a cantilevered super-structure, with spectacular elevated views over the River Dee. The total investment would be in the region of £6.5m.

Iconic Llangollen landmark

With a beautiful riverside location adjacent to the Grade I listed Llangollen Bridge - one of the Seven Wonders of Wales - the 18th century Royal Hotel is a key part of the visual identity and heritage of the popular North Wales holiday town.

The future Queen Victoria was a guest at the hotel with her mother in 1832, just five years before she succeeded to the throne. More recent visitors include the late Italian operatic superstar, Luciano Pavarotti.

With its proximity to beautiful walking country as well as a thriving community of creatives, independent shops, and great places to eat, Llangollen remains one of the most popular overnight destinations in Wales.

Llangollen canal is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site along with the monumental Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, which lies just a few miles to the east. The dramatic hilltop ruins of the medieval Castell Dinas Bran look out over the town, and the local landscapes form part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Llangollen is equally popular with thrill-seekers for its whitewater rafting, kayaking, and mountain biking, as it is with those looking for something a little more relaxing and sedate. The town hosts an annual summer Eisteddfod, as well as a popular autumn food festival. The steam heritage railway in the centre of town is also a significant visitor draw.

The new Royal Hotel development would include 45 bedroom suites, and is likely to generate in the region of 65 jobs and six apprenticeships per year. Mr Jones says that if planning is approved, he could reopen the hotel to guests as early as summer 2023.

“The Royal is a gem of a building and location, and has drawn visitors to Llangollen for more than 250 years. Our redevelopment plans would help to ensure that it is still bringing visitors to our town for many more generations to come.

“For a long time The Royal was considered one of the most prestigious hotels in Wales, but now it needs significant investment and development to help it shine again. We believe our plans can deliver a landmark hotel for the region, drawing new visitors to Llangollen and Denbighshire, and creating sustainable year-round jobs.”

Mr Jones says that his company is in the process of setting up the One Hundred Knights hospitality training academy in partnership with Coleg Cambria, and says the hotel would take on six hospitality apprentices per year.

Jim Jones, CEO of North Wales Tourism said: “It’s great to see such an ambitious company as One Hundred Knights producing major plans for transforming the iconic Royal Hotel in Llangollen.

“The company has a track record of investing in quality, such as their restaurant The Three Eagles Bar and Grill also in Llangollen, which won the best eatery at the Go North Wales Tourism Awards in 2021. I wish them the best of luck with the planning application and look forward to working with them.”

A decision on the planning application is expected from Denbighshire County Council in the coming weeks.