

CADW say plans should be called in

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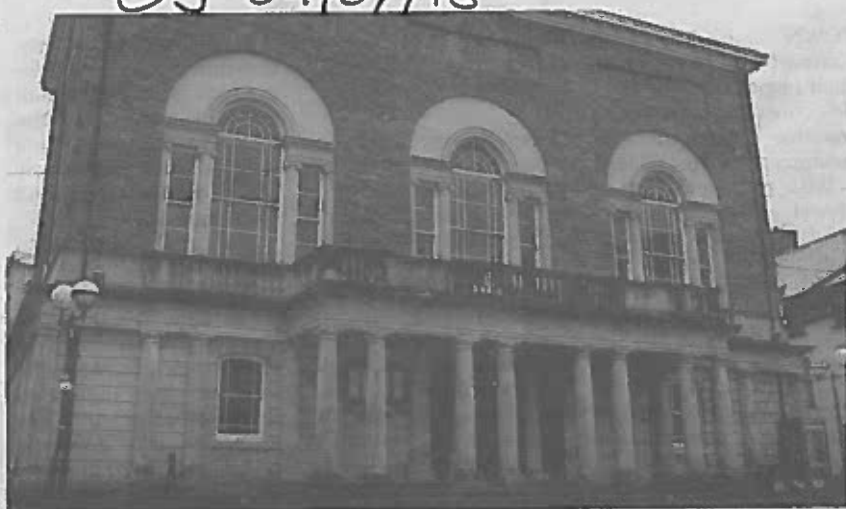
HERITAGE chiefs at Cadw have recommended that Welsh Government ministers should determine if Carmarthen's historic Guildhall can be turned into a cafe bar and restaurant.

Cadw has been considering issues surrounding the development of the grade one listed building in the town as part of a £1 million venture. It said the building is one of Wales's most historically important. However, Swansea-based developer Nextcolour Ltd will make representations to Welsh Government in due course.

Planning permission was granted in April by Carmarthenshire Council and James Morse at Nextcolour said he is desperate to start the work but claims he has not heard anything from Cadw since initial talks months ago - which saw him agree to alter the scheme to meet its concerns.

Mr Morse revealed plans to modify the 18th Century building in December.

It is hoped to be part of the Lounges chain, which operates branches all over



The Guildhall, Carmarthen.

Picture: Carolyn Evans

the UK including Zinco Lounge in Swansea and Croeso Lounge in Mumbles.

However, in a statement, Cadw said it reached a decision last month about the Guildhall plans and that the final say about whether or not the scheme will be allowed to go ahead sits with Welsh ministers.

It added: "Cadw's role is to consider whether to recommend to the Welsh Government's Planning Directorate that the application should be called in.

"Cadw completed its assessment on June 12 and has recommended

that the application should be called in for determination by the Welsh Ministers."

The Guildhall was a courthouse until 2016, but planners at Carmarthenshire Council gave the new project the green light in April.

Mr Morse said: "Even before plans were approved by the county council I spoke to Cadw and changed the plans to meet their concerns at the time. We hoped to have the venture open this summer, by September.

"The Guildhall and Nott Square areas need regeneration and we want to

help that, coupled with S4C headquarters moving to town with a young workforce, it all helps to keep the town vibrant and attractive."

He wants to redevelop, but retain much of the building's character and original features, together with returning some which have been hidden due to development work over the decades.

Also as part of the plans, the crown court on the first floor will remain untouched but will be able to be viewed by customers and still open to educational school visits and TV and film opportunities.