

**APPLICATION NO:** 13/0409/10 (LE)  
**APPLICANT:** Mr N Ham  
**DEVELOPMENT:** Change of use from former Public House and part residential to full residential use, comprising of 6 no. flats with associated rear parking. Works to include demolition of existing side and rear extension (in part) and erection of new rear extension. (Amended Plan Received 30.9.2013)  
**LOCATION:** CROWN HOTEL, YNYSWEN ROAD, YNYSWEN, TREHERBERT, TREORCHY, CF42 6EG  
**DATE REGISTERED:** 28/05/2013  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION:** Treorchy

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**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

**REASONS:**

The application is considered to represent a compatible conversion of an existing vacant premise to residential use. The scheme is acceptable in principle and unlikely to have a harmful impact on the existing character and appearance of the area or the residential amenity of those living closest to the site.

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**APPLICATION DETAILS**

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the Crown Hotel, Ynyswen Road, Treorchy into six residential units (flat accommodation). A number of external alterations to the rear and side elevations of the existing building are proposed including the erection of a two-storey extension following the demolition of an existing single storey extension and the excavation of the rear of the site to provide 7 off-street car parking spaces. No significant changes are proposed to the front facade of the building.

In detail it is proposed to create six, self contained units across the three-storeys of the existing building (including the roof space). Three units would be created at ground floor level and three units created on the first floor and roof space of the building. In total, three, single bed flats and three, two-bedroom flats would be created. It is detailed that pedestrian access to the new units would be available from Ynyswen Road via the existing main access to the building that would serve as a central foyer/staircase area for the new accommodation.

The key external alterations proposed to the existing building include the demolition of a narrow extension with steeply sloping roof design to the eastern side of the building, and the demolition of the car port/single storey extension to

the western side and rear of the building. The demolition of these structures would allow a narrow vehicle access to be created around the building to serve 7 off-street car parking spaces being proposed to the rear of the site. In order to accommodate 4 of the proposed 7 car parking spaces the existing rear amenity area would be excavated and retained through the erection of a 3.0 metre high retaining wall. A two-storey extension is also proposed to the rear of the building, replacing in part, the existing single storey rear extension to be demolished. It would be erected alongside an existing, larger two-storey extension, measuring 2.7 metres by 2.5 metres with a flat roof design. An existing rear chimney stack would be removed as part of the works and a number of sky lights would be introduced to the roof planes of the main building following its re-tiling as part of the works (two skylights to the front and six skylights to the rear). The rear window and door fenestration would be amended as part of the works with an additional ground floor window being inserted within the eastern side of the building.

The applicant's supporting information highlights the premise has been vacant for over two years, although the building has experienced limited investment over the course of several years and is entering a state of disrepair. Whilst a range of possible options for the regeneration of the building have been examined, a conversion to solely residential use appeared to offer the best option to retain the existing building and offer a viable and sustainable future for the site. The intentions are to preserve an important element of the urban landscape for the long term, whilst providing multiple residential apartments for the locality.

The planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The application site consists of the Crown Hotel Public House that is prominently located on the busy Ynyswen Road, within the built up area of Treorchy. The large, two-storey building (with large roof space) appears as a distinctive and characteristic building that acts as a counterpoint to the surrounding residential properties in the locality. The attractive front elevation of the building has an elaborate terracotta finish (in the main) and is set back approximately 1.5 metres from the pedestrian and vehicle highway fronting the site. The side and rear elevations of the building have a more simple, rendered finish. There is a narrow addition to the east of the main building and a car port structure, accessed via a steel roller shutter, positioned to the western side of the main building. There are flat-roofed and pitched roof, two-storey extensions positioned toward the rear of the main building.

The rectangular curtilage of the building covers an area of approximately 720 square metres with a large although poorly maintained amenity/garden area positioned to the rear. The rear topography of the site climbs substantially from the ground level of the building and is defined by high boundary walls. There is a

semi-detached property situated to the west of the application site with a new housing development positioned to the east. More traditional terraced properties are positioned opposite the application site on the southern side of Ynyswen Road.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

No recent relevant planning history attached to the site.

## **PUBLICITY**

The application has been advertised by direct neighbour notification letters and the posting of site notices in the immediate area. Nine letters of objection have been received against the planning application from local residents. The concerns raised are summarised as follows:

- The proposal would exacerbate parking and highway safety in an already busy locality.
- Access and egress to the development site is dangerous, would reduce existing on street parking capacity and has limited visibility.
- There are a number of schools within close proximity to the site and there have been recent accidents in the area. The new junctions would only add further traffic safety issues to the area.
- More traffic would mean more vehicle movements and associated noise disruption.
- The applicant has requested the neighbour remove boundary walls to increase visibility and allow safer access to the site.
- Comments are raised about Fire Brigade access and whether the site has the relevant water power ratio required in relation to a fire situation.
- More drainage pressures on the area.
- Overdevelopment on Ynyswen Road – particularly the development of social housing schemes, resulting in more chaos and tensions for existing residents.
- The scheme represents residential overcrowding and would de-value the community.
- Already numerous rented problems in the area.
- Flats are out of keeping with the character of the area.
- Unsuitable use that would be detrimental to the lives of people in the community.
- Residents are unsure about who would occupy the flats.
- Limited garden space for the properties.
- Alternative community use should be sought for the building.
- Concerns are also raised about the adjacent new build development, in relation to the nature of the occupants and drainage issues.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Transportation Section – raise no objection. It is stated the parking requirement for the use of the building as a public house is significantly higher than the proposed use for six residential units. Whilst on-street car parking demand is high within the area, the proposed seven off-street car parking spaces are considered acceptable with the application site being situated on a bus route and the size of the proposed units being generally small.

The two vehicular access/egress points are acceptable to the highway authority and would mitigate against the potential of reversing movements out onto Ynyswen Road. The proposal also provides for a granite rumble strip at the exit point to reduce speed of vehicles exiting the car park in the interests of pedestrian safety, although a condition is suggested to ensure a rumble strip is also introduced at the access point and therefore reduce the speed of traffic crossing the footway into the site. There is some concern that on-street car parking could potentially obstruct visibility out onto Ynyswen Road however the concern is not substantial to warrant a highway objection. The proposal would require the significant excavation of the rear amenity area and as such the highway authority would require a conditions survey of the footway and carriageway in close proximity to the site to be undertaken and any damage caused as a result of the development should be rectified by the developer/or compensation appropriately paid to the Council.

Public Health & Protection - raise no objection, subject to a condition restricting hours of operation during the construction phase of the development.

Fire Service – raise no objection although advise the developer should consider the need for provision of adequate water supplies on site and access for emergency fire fighting appliances.

Countryside Landscape and Ecology - raise no objection, following the submission of a thorough and competent bat survey that concludes the application building is not occupied by roosting bats.

Natural Resources Wales - raise no objection.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site is within the settlement boundary and unallocated.

**Policy CS1** - emphasises the need to build strong and sustainable communities in the Northern Strategy Area.

**Policy AW1** - sets provisions for the creation of new housing throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf between 2006 – 2021. AW1.5 refers directly to the conversion of suitable structures to provide housing.

**Policy AW2** - supports development proposals in sustainable locations including sites within the defined settlement boundary.

**Policy AW5** - sets out criteria for new development.

**Policy AW6** - supports development that involves high quality design and makes a positive contribution to place making.

**Policy AW7** - states that development proposals which impact upon sites of architectural or historic merit will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site.

**Policy NSA12** - seeks to encourage housing development within and adjacent to settlement boundaries (subject to criteria).

**Policy NSA13** - supports the rehabilitation and conversion of large buildings for residential purposes that are situated within the settlement boundary.

### **Planning Policy Wales**

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of National Planning Policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where National Planning Policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Chapter's 2 (Development Plans), Chapter 3 (Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions), Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability) and Chapter 9 (Housing), set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application.

### **REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

### **Main Issues:**

### **Principle of the Development**

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the Crown Hotel to form independent residential units. The scheme seeks to provide six flats, ranging from single to two bedroom units, within the fabric of the existing building following the demolition of two-existing side additions and the erection of a small two-storey rear extension at the site. The building itself is located within settlement limits and within reasonable distance of the retail centre of Treorchy and within walking distance of a number of local amenities and facilities within the surrounding built up area. The application site is also situated on Ynyswen Road that is a main bus route. Furthermore, the proposal would result in the positive re-use of a vacant, slowly decaying building with planning policy promoting the re-use and conversion of existing buildings in sustainable locations, as such proposals can often assist regeneration and at the same time, relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites. In this instance, the proposed residential use of the building is considered compatible with surrounding land uses and is an acceptable form of development in principle.

### **Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

In terms of the impact of the scheme on the visual appearance and character of the area, in order to convert and subdivide the building, it would be necessary to carry out alterations to the building, although the majority of these alterations would be undertaken to the less prominent rear and side elevations of the building, and contained within the interior of the property. Importantly the proposal involves no significant external changes to the key front elevation of the building. The historic and visually distinctive frontage of the building that positively contributes to the variety and relief in the townscape of the area would therefore be retained in its current form to the benefit of the visual amenity of the street scene. It is acknowledged the scheme was subject to pre-application discussions that were undertaken with the Councils Conservation Officer who welcomed a scheme that provides a viable future use for the building whilst retaining the existing building, particularly the key frontage.

The removal of the existing side additions would have no significant or harmful impact on the overall appearance of the building. The creation of the rear turning and parking areas would require a degree of engineering works and the erection of a high retaining wall, although there is already a high retaining wall positioned to the rear of the building, with the rear of the site also being well screened. Such a retaining wall would therefore not form a visible or incongruous feature and would also allow a level of shared garden space to be retained at the site. Furthermore, with six individual units being proposed (and pre-application discussions held with the applicant advising against a proposal to convert the building to a larger number of units), it is not considered the scheme would lead to either overdevelopment or an over-intensive use of the site. In summary, it is therefore considered that the proposed re-use of the building for residential purposes would have no unacceptable impact on the character or appearance of the locality.

### **Impact on residential amenity and privacy of neighbouring residential properties**

It is not considered the re-use of the building for residential purposes would unduly compromise the amenities of nearby residents. It is noted the site has historically traded as a public house (with associated living/guest accommodation at one point) and would have operated into the late evening and potentially resulted in a degree of noise and disturbance being experienced by local residents when patrons entered and left the public house premises. In comparison to the previous use, it is therefore considered the proposed residential use would be more compatible with neighbouring residential uses.

It is acknowledged that the building forms a significant feature in the street scene and a number of the window openings, serving the front of the building in particular, are situated within close proximity and direct site of the front elevations of neighbouring residential properties (situated on the southern side of Ynyswen Road). However, this is a situation that neighbouring residents would have been accustomed with and this is a common arrangement between terraced properties within the locality. In addition, no alterations are proposed to the existing window arrangement within the front elevation of the property, with the rear windows of the building overlooking the proposed parking and rear amenity area associated with the application building. The additional window proposed in the eastern side of the building would be introduced at ground floor level and face directly toward a high boundary wall. The habitable room windows toward the western side of the building (that already exist within the building) face toward the blank, gable elevation of the adjacent semi-detached property. It is therefore unlikely that the proposal would have any adverse overlooking impact in comparison to the existing arrangement at the site (comments raised from neighbouring residents raising no concerns in relation to direct overlooking or overshadowing as a result of the proposal).

Whilst some concern is raised in relation to the potential disturbance that may arise as a result of vehicle movements to and from the proposed rear parking area, in the main, the parking area is well screened from adjacent residential properties with the scale and level of vehicle movements unlikely to have a harmful impact on the amenities currently enjoyed by neighbouring properties. Comments that have been raised by neighbouring residents in relation to such matters as the likely occupiers of the building, the number of flats and rented properties in the area, and the negative impact such a use would generally have on the community are all acknowledged, although are not considered to be reasons to warrant refusal of the scheme, particularly when balanced against the planning merits of the proposal.

### **Highway safety issues**

It is relevant to consider the potential impacts of the development upon highway safety in the vicinity of the site, with consideration to the comments raised by local residents in this regard. Following consultation with the Council's Transportation Section, no objections to the proposal have been raised. Their assessment has taken into account the existing permitted use of the premises as a public house, and the parking requirements and traffic movements that such a use could potentially generate. It is concluded that the impacts resulting from this use, or any other A3 use to which the building could revert, would be greater than that of the residential units being proposed. Their comments acknowledge that the proposal also includes the provision of seven off-street car parking spaces at the site, and whilst on street parking demand is high in the area, such off street provision is acceptable for the six units being proposed. There is limited visibility for vehicles exiting the site due to the boundary wall of the adjacent development, although given that speeds are likely to be slow due to the narrow width of the exit point and the proposed introduction of a rumble strip, on balance, no highway objections are raised against the scheme. There is some concern that on-street car parking could potentially obstruct visibility out onto Ynyswen Road, however the concern is not substantial to warrant a highway objection. Overall, it is not considered the proposal would have a harmful impact upon highway safety that would be so adverse to warrant refusal of the planning application.

## **OTHER ISSUES**

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation:

### **Ecology**

The Council's Ecologist has raised no adverse comments against the scheme with a satisfactory Bat survey being undertaken for the application building and no records of statutory protected species from immediate vicinity according to SewBrec data.

### **Public Health and Protection, and Fire Safety**

Following consultation with the Councils Public Health and Protection Division and the Fire Service no objections have been raised against the scheme.

## **CONCLUSION**

The determination of this application requires careful judgement of each of the issues that the case raises, with particular regard to balancing the merits of such a proposal against any harmful impact such a scheme may pose. Representations have been received against the application from several local



residents with a key material concern being the likely impact such a proposal would have on general highway safety issues within the locality. Some reservations do exist in this regard, nevertheless, due regard must be given to the historic use of the site that would have generated significant levels of visitors and parking requirement (and would again do so should the building re-open for A3 planning purposes). The proposal does cater for the provision of off-street spaces and the broader merits of the scheme, which would bring about the re-use of a prominent yet poorly maintained building whilst retaining the key front facade, are considered to outweigh any negative impact of the scheme.

Having taken account of all of the issues outlined above, the application proposal is considered to comply with the policy framework of both the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and Planning Policy Wales, and therefore recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION: Grant**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Before the development is brought into use the means of access, together with the parking and turning facilities, shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with submitted plan PL-02 Rev B and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development.

3. Surface water run-off from the proposed development shall not discharge onto the public highway or connected to any highway drainage system unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to prevent overcapacity of the existing highway drainage system and potential flooding in accordance with Policy AW 10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development, a report indicating a methodology for undertaking a conditions survey of the footway and carriageway 25m either side along Ynyswen Road affected by the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report should include: the timescales for undertaking the surveys and the method(s) of reporting the findings to the Local Planning Authority; comprehensive photographs; and potential compensation arrangements. The development shall not be brought into

use until the final survey on completion of the development hereby approved and any compensation arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the extraordinary traffic use arising from the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on highway safety.

5. Prior to the development being brought into use, a vehicular footway crossing shall be provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any development on site commencing.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development.

6. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, before the development is brought into use two rumble strips one on the access and one on the egress point, shall be constructed in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any development commencing on site.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety in accordance with policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development.

7. Prior to the commencement of development, details of traffic management and wheel washing facilities shall be provided on site in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented and maintained throughout the construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that mud and debris are not deposited from the construction site onto the public highway, in the interests of highway safety.

8. Prior to the commencement of development, full details and design calculations of the proposed rear retaining wall structure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development, hereby permitted, shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure the stability of the development in the interests of public health and safety in accordance with policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

9. Construction works on the development shall not take place other than

during the following times:

- Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800 hours;
- Saturday 0800 to 1300 hours;
- Not at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the noise emitted from this development is not a source of nuisance to occupants of nearby residential properties in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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