

**APPLICATION NO:** 13/1251/10 (MJ)  
**APPLICANT:** Mr A Khehra  
**DEVELOPMENT:** The conversion of building E2 of Coed-Y-Lan Comprehensive School to a domestic dwelling.  
**LOCATION:** **BUILDING E2, COED Y LAN COMPREHENSIVE LOWER SCHOOL, TYFICA ROAD, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 2DF**  
**DATE REGISTERED:** 10/12/2013  
**ELECTORAL DIVISION:** Town (Pontypridd)

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

## **REASONS**

The proposed development is considered acceptable and in keeping with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan and national guidance with regard to the impact on the character and appearance of the area and the setting of the listed buildings on the site. The scheme is also considered to be a positive contribution to the area by bringing this vacant, and damaged Listed building back into use, securing its future in the long term. As a result, the application is recommended for approval.

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## **APPLICATION DETAILS**

Full Planning Permission is sought for the conversion of block E2 on the site of the Former Coed y Lan Lower Comprehensive School at Tyfica Road, Pontypridd for residential use to accommodate one, three bedroom dwelling.

The conversion will utilise the existing layout on the ground floor with a new mezzanine floor to provide a bathroom above the kitchen. The existing open plan area on the first floor will be subdivided to accommodate the proposed bedrooms.

The application is also for the replacement of the roof tiles with natural welsh slate and the replacement (or refurbishment where possible) of the windows in all elevations of the building with softwood box sash windows.

No off-street car parking is proposed as part of the proposal.

The application is accompanied by the following:

- Design and Access Statement

The building is attached to another building on the Coed-y-Lan School site which is currently under a separate ownership.

## **SITE APPRAISAL**

The site is within the settlement boundary of Pontypridd and is unallocated. The site forms a prominent feature in the landscape of Pontypridd and can be seen from a distance from the lower levels of the valley. The site is bounded to the west by the existing primary school and to the east by the vacant school buildings and the housing along Tyfica Road. Above and to the north of the school buildings site is a wooded area. Vehicular access to the site is obtained from Lanpark Road, via Tyfica Road.

The application site forms part of land that is the curtilage of the former school. The site is currently laid out in a series of plateaux of various shapes and sizes with steep rises in levels usually supported by retaining walls in between. The site rises generally to the North West. The site can be generally subdivided into two distinct areas, where the upper flat plateau comprising the old playground areas and car parking forms one; and a heavily sloping lower area which contains the existing school buildings. The areas are divided by a strong tree belt slope that forms a visual and physical barrier between the two areas. Block E2 is part of a larger building which commands a prominent position on the front of the site along Tyfica Road.

The lower parts of the site are occupied by the institutional buildings that formed the school which consists of 8 buildings of which several are listed including Block E2. The main school building is finished in local stone and has a slate roof. Large parts of the roof are missing slate/tiles and the building has suffered damage from water penetration.

The school was built in 1893-4 by Arthur O Evans, architect of Pontypridd and opened in 1896 as the County School. It was designed for both boys and girls, who had separate entrances. Additions were made to the school almost as soon as it was open, of which the present science block and gymnasium were built in 1910. It became the Intermediate School in 1911 and in 1913 the girls left for a separate school at Glyntaff (also by A O Evans). After 1945 it was the Pontypridd Boys Grammar School, until 1973 when it became a comprehensive school. The buildings have been listed as an early County school retaining considerable architectural character in a prominent position.

## PLANNING HISTORY

Previous relevant planning applications that have been made on the site are as follows:

13/1129	43 Lanpark Road	Refurbishment	Under consideration
13/0990	Blocks A and B Coed y Lan Comprehensive School, Tyfica Road, Graigwen, Pontypridd	Change of Use and conversion of Block A and Block B, and part of Block D, into 17 Self Contained Units comprising internal and external alterations, and associated works (Full PP)	Under consideration

13/0991	Blocks A and B Coed y Lan Comprehensive School, Tyfica Road, Graigwen, Pontypridd	Change of Use and conversion of Block A and Block B, and part of Block D, into 17 Self Contained Units comprising internal and external alterations, and associated works (listed building consent)	Under consideration
12/1317	Block D, Coed-Y- Lan Comprehensive School, Graigwen, Pontypridd	Change of Use and conversion of former school building into 22 Self Contained Units comprising internal and external alterations, and associated works.	Granted 05/09/13
12/1316	Block D, Coed-Y- Lan Comprehensive School, Graigwen, Pontypridd	Change of Use and conversion of former school building into 22 Self Contained Units comprising internal and external alterations, and associated works.	Granted (listed building consent) 05/09/13
10/1294	Coedylan Comprehensive Lower School, Tyfica Road, Pontypridd	Redevelopment for housing, comprising the alteration and conversion of existing listed buildings and the erection of a new building. (Listed Building Consent)	Withdrawn 29/06/12
10/1253	Coedylan Comprehensive Lower School, Tyfica Road, Pontypridd	Redevelopment for housing, comprising the alteration and conversion of existing listed buildings and the erection of a new building (reserved matters application).	Withdrawn 29/06/12
06/2157	Coedylan Comprehensive Lower School, Tyfica Road, Pontypridd	Redevelopment for housing, comprising the alteration and conversion of existing listed buildings and the erection of new building.	Approved with Conditions 09/12/10
00/2774	P.A.C.E. Building, Coedylan, Tyfica Road, Pontypridd	Roof and rainwater goods alterations.	Approved with Conditions 15/12/00
94/0275	Coedylan Comprehensive	Additional car parking area.	Approved with Conditions

(Lower School)  
Tyfica Road,  
Pontypridd

14/12/94

## CONSULTATIONS

Transportation Section – no objections.

Public Health & Protection Section - raise no objections subject to conditions.

Dwr Cymru/ Welsh Water – no objections subject to conditions.

Land Reclamation & Engineering Section – no objections subject to recommended drainage conditions.

## PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by direct neighbour notification, site notices and a press notice. No response has been received.

## POLICY CONTEXT

The principal policies in the consideration of this application are as follows:

### Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies within defined settlement limits and is not allocated for any specific use.

**Policy CS2** – Development in the South – emphasises sustainable growth that promotes residential development with a sense of place, respects character and context, protects culture and identity.

**Policy AW1** – Supply of New Housing.

**Policy AW2** – states that development will only be permitted in sustainable locations.

**Policy AW4** – Community infrastructure and planning obligations.

**Policy AW5** – New Development – sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

**Policy AW6** – requires development to involve a high quality design and to make a positive contribution to place making, including landscaping.

**Policy AW7** – Protection and enhancement of the built environment – development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site.

**Policy SSA1** – Development in the Principal Town of Pontypridd – Proposals that reinforce the role of Pontypridd as a principal town, respects culture and heritage, is of a high design standard, integrates positively and promotes sustainable transport modes will be permitted.

**Policy SSA13** – Housing development within settlement boundaries.

### 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.

The following chapters set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application:

Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability)  
 Chapter 5 (Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast)  
 Chapter 6 (Conserving the Historic Environment)  
 Chapter 7 (Economic Development)  
 Chapter 8 (Transport)  
 Chapter 9 (Housing)

Other relevant policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing;  
 PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning;  
 PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;  
 PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;  
 PPW Technical Advice Note 22: Sustainable Buildings;  
 Manual for Streets

## **REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION**

The key considerations in this case are whether the proposed development will have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the character and setting of the listed buildings on the site, residential amenity, and highway safety.

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.

The application for the conversion of the building is considered to be in keeping with national guidance which encourages the preservation of listed buildings. It is considered that bringing the building back into use will have a positive impact on the surrounding school site which will encourage the further redevelopment of the site as well as bringing community benefits as a key site of regeneration in the Pontypridd area offering good quality residential development. The existing buildings on the site have deteriorated rapidly in recent years and it is considered that the proposed development will be of benefit to the further development of the wider site and the prevention of further deterioration to these prominent listed buildings.

## **Character and Appearance of the Area**

In terms of the principle of the proposed development and its impact on the character and appearance of the area, residential development has been established as an appropriate use for the site through the approval of outline consent on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010 (ref: 06/2157) and a more recent consent for the conversion of Block D to 22 residential units (ref: 12/1316 and 12/1317). The site is located within a predominantly residential area, therefore residential development on the site is considered to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

Block E2 is considered to be an appropriate size to accommodate a three bedroom dwelling without having a detrimental impact on the character of the wider school site and surrounding area in terms of density and appearance.

The proposed conversion of block E2 is considered to represent a sympathetic and attractive layout which makes the most of the existing features of the buildings without damaging the character or setting of the listed buildings or the wider site.

In respect of the design of the conversion, the external works to the building are fairly minimal and are considered acceptable. Where windows need replacing the plans have indicated the material as softwood.

The proposal represents a positive opportunity to improve the appearance of existing buildings within the site as well as bringing the buildings back into beneficial use without having a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the area. It is also considered that the regeneration of Block E2 has the potential to encourage the development of the remainder of the site, particularly having regard to the fact that Block D is currently being renovated.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with the provisions of policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

## **Impact on listed buildings and their setting**

The proposed conversion and alterations to the building are considered acceptable in that minimal changes are proposed to the exteriors of the building. As with any residential conversion of buildings such as these, internal divisions on a large scale are to be expected. The proposed conversion of the building makes effective use of existing openings within each building with the exception of a small alteration in the side elevation.

Finishing materials proposed will match the existing traditional materials on the site and are therefore considered acceptable. Conditions are recommended below to ensure that samples are submitted to the Council for approval.

The proposed development seeks to preserve the school building on the site through its conversion. The proposal allows the building to be repaired and improved where necessary and also ensures its long-term viability. It is also considered that given

that the site is now privately owned by several different individuals, and is therefore being developed piecemeal, the current proposal represents a positive step towards enabling the redevelopment of the wider site. It is considered that the general character of the site will be preserved and enhanced as a result of the proposal. This will ensure that the layout of the educational buildings on the site can be preserved and the architectural history of the site can be understood in the future.

It is considered that the proposed development will preserve and enhance the existing character and appearance of the site and is acceptable in accordance with policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

### **Residential Amenity**

In terms of the impact of the proposed development on the residential amenity of nearby properties, it is considered that due to the enclosed nature and steep topography of the site, the impact will be kept to a minimum.

No alterations are proposed to the footprint of the building that would significantly increase its impact in terms of scale. It is therefore considered that the scale of the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the levels of amenity currently enjoyed by surrounding residential properties. The distances between the building and existing properties along Tyfica Road far exceed 21m which is considered to be sufficient distance to ensure that overlooking is not to such a degree that is harmful to the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

It is not considered that the location of the building to be converted in close proximity to the existing primary school will lead to any issues of conflict between the uses due to the daytime use of the school.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be in keeping with the provisions of policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan in terms of the effect on residential amenity.

### **Highway Safety**

TAN 18 Transportation in advising on accessible housing development promotes housing development at locations with good access to physical and social infrastructure including public transport, that development should achieve higher densities in places with good public transport, accessibility and capacity. Given the location of the application site and the fact that it is to be redeveloped it would satisfy these key transportation policy objectives even though the proposed development does not have any off-street parking facilities of its own.

In respect of the impact of the proposal on the highway network, it is considered that the development will have an acceptable impact on highway safety. It is noted that the site was previously used as a school and it is considered that at peak times the impact on the highway network is likely to have been worse in respect of congestion than what is likely to be the result of this application for a single dwelling. It is therefore considered that the application is acceptable in this respect and it is not

considered that the impact of the application on the highway is so detrimental to highway safety that it would warrant a refusal of the application.

It is acknowledged that there could be a shortfall in the future of off-street parking that could be provided for the remainder of the Coed y Lan School site (excluding Blocks E2, A, B and D) due to the fact that the site has been sold off in a piecemeal manner. However, any future applications will be assessed on their own merits and the level of parking considered depending on what is being proposed. The applications for blocks A, B and D do provide some excess off-street parking spaces which could be made available for the development of block E2.

The proposal is, on balance, therefore considered to be in keeping with policy AW2 and AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan in that it is not considered that the development will have a detrimental effect on highway safety and the site is situated within a sustainable location.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, and notwithstanding the objections that have been received, the proposed development is considered acceptable and in keeping with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan and national guidance. As a result, the application is recommended for approval subject to the following conditions.

### **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. Construction works on the development shall not take place other than during the following times:

- i) Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800 hours;
- ii) Saturday 0800 to 1300 hours;
- iii) 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.

3. Building operations shall not be commenced until samples of the materials proposed to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all materials used shall conform to the sample(s) so approved.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed

development will be in keeping with the character of the area and adjoining buildings in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected. The boundary treatment shall be completed before the building is occupied. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will in keeping with the surrounding area and to protect residential amenity in accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. No development shall take place until drainage arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure adequate disposal of found and surface water drainage in accordance with policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. No dwelling shall be occupied until the drainage works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure adequate disposal of foul and surface water drainage in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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