



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2 AUGUST 2018

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLANNING

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 18/0618/10
(JAW)
APPLICANT: Rhondda Housing Association
DEVELOPMENT: Demolition of former Woodworking Block and construction of a replacement building comprising 6no apartments. Refurbishment and conversion of former Caretakers House into 2 no apartments to include demolition and replacement of single storey extension. Construction of two storey glazed link between the buildings, works to existing boundary wall to relocate pedestrian access and associated external works.
LOCATION: **WOODWORKING BLOCK AND CARETAKERS HOUSE, FORMER COED Y LAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, LANPARK ROAD, PONTYPRIDD**
DATE REGISTERED: 18/06/2018
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Town (Pontypridd)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS:

Given the information presented it is considered the impact of the proposed demolition and rebuilding of 'block F' (former woodworking block) with a building of the same footprint and dimensions, with a similar fenestration and using materials that complement the historic and new buildings on the site, together with the sympathetic restoration of the former Caretaker's house will have a positive impact that will offer the listed group a future whilst protecting its intrinsic character and appearance.

The proposal is also considered acceptable in terms of its impact on the occupiers of neighbouring properties and on highway safety and parking.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

- The application is not covered by determination powers delegated to the Service Director Planning, as three or more letters of objection have been received.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Members may recall application reference 17/0555/22 to demolish 'block F' was deferred at a meeting of Committee on 5th April 2018 as Members were minded to refuse the application contrary to officer recommendation. Members were of the view that the impact of the proposed demolition would be unacceptable in terms of the special architectural and historic interest of the building and that it would reduce the 5 year supply of housing. (Minute No. 164 refers).

Having regard to Members concerns the current scheme proposes a re-placement building to 'block F' with a building of the same footprint and dimensions with a similar fenestration and using materials that is aimed at respecting both the historic and new buildings within the site. In order to make the development viable the applicant has incorporated the restoration and conversion of the former Caretakers house into their scheme.

Planning permission is sought to demolish and rebuild the former woodworking block ('block F') and to refurbish and convert the former Caretaker's house to create 8 no. apartments. 'Block F' will contain six apartments comprising 5 no. 1-beds and 1 no. 2-bed and the Caretaker's house will comprise 1 no. 1-bed and 1 no. 2 bed apartments.

The proposal will include:

- Demolish the former woodworking block ('block F') and to re-build to the same footprint and dimensions. The proposed stone and brick will be the same as used on the base of the new buildings to the rear. The fenestration pattern of the new building will change slightly in order to accommodate 6 new flats; two per floor over three floors. The windows will be constructed in painted timber and the roof covering will be Welsh or Canadian slate.
- The former Caretaker's house will be converted to two flats, one per floor. It is proposed to replace the existing front door (west facing) with a sash window. A new ground floor window will be inserted in the Lanpark Road elevation proposed to alleviate the blank facade and the existing single storey lean-to will be re-built in yellow brick to match the existing rear wing, two roof lights will be inserted into the sloping roof.
- A two storey glazed link is proposed to join the two buildings to provide access to all the flats from a central core. Access to the ground floor flat in the Caretakers building will be via an existing door in the rear wing and it is proposed to access the first floor flat by replacing the first floor window with a door.

- Alterations will be made to the existing boundary wall using natural stone along Lanpark Road which will include the formation of a new opening to provide a level access to the proposed glazed link from the footpath alongside the site frontage.

The proposal is to create two additional parking spaces located close to the site entrance.

The application has been accompanied by:

- A bat scoping survey dated July 2018, prepared by Hawkeswood Ecology.

An application for Listed Building Consent has also been submitted under reference 18/0620/12, which includes a Heritage Impact Assessment dated June 2018 prepared by Expedite and a Demolition Justification Statement.

SITE APPRAISAL

The site is within the settlement boundary of Pontypridd outside of the Graigwen Conservation area and is unallocated. The building forms part of the former Comprehensive School, which was in use until July 2005.

The original school was built in 1893-4 by Arthur O Evans and opened in 1896 as the County School. The school was built in the wake of the 1889 Welsh Intermediate Education Act, and cost over £1,000 raised by subscription. 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. The Caretaker's house was constructed as part of the original build and 'block F' was added later, along with the gymnasium and science block, understood to be around 1910.

Three of the original buildings within the former Coed-y-Lan School complex are Grade II listed; these comprise the main school building, the rear science building and the original gymnasium. Listed as '*an early county school retaining considerable architectural character in a prominent position overlooking the town*'

Neither of the application buildings is listed in their own right but they are considered to be curtilage buildings to the Coed-y-Lan school, which was listed Grade II in February 2001.

The two buildings within the site share similarities with the principal building on the site in the coursed grey stonework facings and yellow brick detailing, although both are of a simpler design with plain fenestration and simple pitched gables.

The wider school site is broadly linear in nature, with the majority of the buildings fronting onto and following the form of Tyfica/Lanpark Road. The application buildings lie to the east of the listed school. The front elevation of the former Caretaker's house faces west across the site, to the rear of which is 'block F'. A 3-4 storey flat development comprising two buildings has recently been completed to the rear (north).

PLANNING HISTORY

Relevant and recent

- 17/0555 Listed building consent to Demolition of 'block F' (former woodworking block) – Application deferred at a meeting of Committee on 5th April 2018 as Members were minded to refuse the application contrary to officer recommendation
- 17/0286 Non-material amendment to planning reference 15/0711/10 to Includes alterations to block C2 and 'block F' - (former woodworking block). Alterations to 'block F' to accommodate an additional unit to first floor (from one 2-bed flat to two 1-bed flats) with no external alterations. New entrance to ground floor flat by filling in existing doorway to side elevation (stonework to match) and existing window to street elevation to be enlarged (vertically) to accommodate new access door – Approved 13/04/17
- 17/0104 Non-Material Amendment to 'block F' (former woodworking block) to accommodate 4 no. 1 bedroom units (redesign of first floor from 1 2-bed unit to 2 1-bed units) – Withdrawn 22/02/17
- 15/0751 Proposed demolition of former gymnasium block and erection of 18 Class C3 units, change of use of former woodworking block to provide 3 Class C3 units, car parking, landscape and associated works – Granted listed building consent 21/12/15
- 15/0711 Proposed demolition of former gymnasium block and erection of 18 Class C3 units, change of use of former woodworking block to provide 3 Class C3 units, car parking, landscape and associated works – Approved 12/05/16

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by means site notices and neighbour notification letters.

One letter has been received which raises an objection to the proposed development on the following grounds:

- Reside in Pontypridd House which has been successfully converted from a school to flats. As a listed building (curtilage) feel more could have been done to preserve and develop the existing building, rather than demolish and build another structure of similar style and footprint instead.

A petition signed by 17 residents of Lanpark Road who object to the proposed demolition on the following grounds:

- 'Block F' is of significant importance in maintaining the character of the area and the list site.

- The demolition of 'block F' would have an adverse impact on the character of the local area. The proposed replacement building would not replicate the character and importance of the existing building. 'Block F' lies directly behind our properties in Lanpark Road and forms part of the character of our view and is architecturally pleasing.
- The current application is based on the proposition that the building is not restorable. A representative of the Housing Association advised in a meeting with local residents that the building can be restored but that they do not wish to restore it. When the building was purchased they would have carried out a full survey and been fully aware of all the restoration costs before submitting the original planning application. Object to the demolition of 'block F' and its modern replacement and wish to see the existing building restored and converted.
- Would like to state that the 300 signatories against demolition should still stand as they objected to the demolition of a historically, culturally and architecturally important building.
- Vehemently oppose any demolition and believe the character of the area and residents privacy is best served by the conversion of the existing building into housing.

Councillor Fychan - raises objection to the proposal to demolish this historic building and replace with a new build. All reasons previously submitted in relation to reference 17/0555/22 still stand and were successfully upheld by the Planning Committee. The desire of the majority of residents would be to see this historic building restored as outlined in the initial plans. It is disappointing that they have not been adhered to, and rather the building has been allowed to continue to deteriorate. 'Block F' is salvageable, and could be restored and converted and it is frustrating that the Housing Association have not acted earlier to do so. It is also frustrating that the new homes nearby are lying empty, depriving people of much needed homes.

The community have lost all faith in the Housing Association and fear that they would either not rebuild or choose to submit a different design should they be successful in obtaining planning permission for demolition.

This is a Grade II listed building and is integral to the historic landscape of this area. Very much hope this deadlock can be resolved and that the original plans are progressed.

Consultation

Highways – no objection subject to conditions.

Drainage – no objection subject to condition.

Public Health and Protection – no objection subject to conditions.

Natural Resources Wales – no objection.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – no objection and note surface water is proposed to be discharged to an existing watercourse.

Western Power Distribution- no response received.

Wales and West Utilities – provides information with regard to the location of their apparatus in proximity to the application site and safe working practices to be adopted when working in close proximity to it.

Countryside Section – no objection.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The site is within settlement boundaries as defined by the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and is unallocated.

Policy CS2 - sets out criteria for achieving strong sustainable communities including: promoting residential development in locations which support the role of principal towns and key settlements; provide high quality, affordable accommodation that promotes diversity in the residential market; and ensuring the removal remediation of dereliction by promoting the re-use of under used and previously developed land and buildings.

Policy AW1 - residential development proposals will be expected to contribute to meeting local housing needs and the supply of new housing will include the conversion of suitable structures to provide housing.

Policy AW2 - development proposals will only be supported in sustainable locations, including sites within the defined settlement boundary, which would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses, have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options, have good access to key services and facilities and support the roles and functions of the Principal Towns.

Policy AW5 - sets out criteria for new development and requires the scale, form and design of new development to have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area and existing features of the built environment to be retained. Development must have no significant impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties, be compatible with other uses in the locality and to design out the opportunity for crime and anti social behaviour. Development must be sustainable, have safe access and provide car parking in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

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.

Policy AW10 - development proposals must overcome any harm to public health, the environment or local amenity.

Policy SSA13 - permits development within the defined settlement boundaries provided it does not adversely affect the provision of open space and car parking in the surrounding area, the land is not contaminated or subject to land instability and is accessible to local services by a range of modes of sustainable transport, on foot or by cycle.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Access Circulation and Parking

Design and Placemaking

Development of Flats – Conversion and New Build

National Guidance

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 2 (Development Plans), Chapter 3 (Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions), Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability), Chapter 6 (Preserving the Historic Environment), Chapter 7 (Economic Development), Chapter 8 (Transport) Chapter 9 (Housing) and Chapter 13 (Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution) sets out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application.

Other relevant policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 11: Noise;

PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;

PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport; and

Manual for Streets.

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.

Principle of the proposed development

The proposal is to demolish and rebuild the former woodworking block ('block F') and to refurbish and convert the former Caretaker's house to create 8 no. flats. 'Block F' will contain six flats comprising 5 no. 1-beds and 1 no. 2-bed and the caretaker's house will comprise 1 no. 1-bed and 1 no. 2 bed flats. In policy terms, the buildings are located within the settlement boundary as identified in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and in a predominantly residential area, where a number of buildings have recently been converted or redeveloped as flats.

The site is in a central location of Pontypridd close to local shops, facilities and public transport links. This fulfils a number of the policy criteria required for a sustainable location.

Therefore it is considered the principle of the proposed residential use would be acceptable subject to the following material planning considerations.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

Members will note the listed building application under reference 18/0620/12 where consideration of the proposed development is addressed in detail.

Given the information presented it is considered that the impact of the proposed demolition and rebuilding of 'block F' with a building of the same footprint and dimensions, with a similar fenestration and using materials that complement the historic and new buildings on the site, together with the sympathetic restoration of the former Caretaker's house will have a positive impact that will offer the listed group a future whist protecting its intrinsic character and appearance.

Consequently the proposals are considered acceptable in this regard.

Impact on residential amenity

The concern from residents of Lanpark Road that the privacy of residents is best served from a conversion of the existing building is acknowledged. The principle of the residential use of both buildings has been established through previous use/permissions. It is considered that the four windows in the side elevation (similar to that existing) of the replacement building to 'block F' and the addition of a ground floor window in the Lanpark Road elevation of the former Caretaker's house would not result in an unacceptable degree of overlooking or loss of privacy to the rear gardens and elevations of dwellings in Lanpark Road. The proposed glazed two storey link will also be acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

For the above reasons it is considered that the development would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupiers of dwellings/flats in the surrounding area.

Access and highway safety

The site lies in close proximity to the town centre and public transport links and as such it is considered a sustainable location where occupiers may use alternative means of transport to a private car.

For the purposes of assessing this application, consideration has been given to the number of proposed flats over and above current levels/existing permission for the buildings, which are four one bedroom flats for 'block F' and a dwelling (former Caretakers house). The proposal is for 8 no. units thereby creating an additional 3 flats. The proposal includes an additional 2 parking spaces to be provided within the site curtilage, accessed from the private access road that is shared with the two blocks to the rear (north).

Having regard to the sustainable location of the site, together with the flats being proposed as affordable units where car ownership is often at lower levels than

private flats it is considered that the level of car parking proposed, that is, two additional spaces for 3 additional flats is acceptable.

No objection has been raised by the Transportation Section.

Other issues

Protected Species

A bat scoping survey and observations report dated July 2018 undertaken by Hawkeswood Ecology has been submitted with the application. No bats were confirmed as entering or emerging from the Caretaker's House during the current survey, however, it was noted that a substantial amount of mitigation works had been undertaken including access to the ridges, wall tops and tears in the under felt allowing direct access to the roof space under a European Protected Species License (EPSL). However, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have advised that the mitigation works should have been installed on 'block F' instead (the Council and the applicant were not aware of this). The report concludes that the Caretaker building is not currently used by bats for roosting.

A soprano pipistrelle bat was identified roosting in 'block F' in an earlier survey (2011). A survey in 2014 found the site (former gymnasium block and 'block F') to be utilised by the same species, but with no evidence of 'block F' being used for roosting purposes by bats. One common pipistrelle bat was recorded leaving 'block F' during the recent survey. The report advises that pipistrelle bats are roosting in 'block F', possibly as a night roost or occasional opportunistic roost. The report therefore recommends that a license will need to be obtained from NRW before any work proceeds on site.

The report concludes that if a licence is obtained from NRW and appropriate compensation provided as recommended in the report then there are no ecological reason that would prevent the proposed development from going ahead. The Council's Ecologist agrees with the recommendations of the report.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) do not consider the development is likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range. Therefore, NRW do not object to the proposal, but in line with the 'Dear CPO' letter issued by Welsh Government on 1st March 2018, request an informative is attached to any grant of planning permission requiring a European protected species Licence for the development.'

Public Health Section Comments

Whilst the comments raised by the Public Health and Protection Section are appreciated, it is considered demolition, hours of construction, noise, dust and waste are matters that can be more efficiently controlled by other legislation. An appropriate note can be added to any permission regarding these issues.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is liable for a charge under the CIL Regulations 2010 as amended. The application lies within Zone 2 of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Residential Charging Zones, where there is a liability of £40 / sqm for residential development.

The CIL (including indexation) for this development is expected to be £25,249.54. However, social housing relief may be claimed for this development.

Conclusion

The application is considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan in respect of the principle of development, the impact on residential amenity, the impact on the character and appearance of the area and highway safety (Policies AW2, AW5 and AW6 and Supplementary Planning Guidance Development of Flats).

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE BELOW CONDITIONS:

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. The consent hereby granted relates to the following plans:

Drag No. A001 – Rev. A –Site Location Plan
Drag No. A002 – Rev. A –Existing site layout
Drag No. A003 – Rev. A –Caretakers block existing plans
Drag No. A004 – Rev. A –Proposed site layout
Drag No. A005 – Rev. A - Proposed ground floor plan
Drag No. A006 – Rev. A - Proposed first floor plan
Drag No. A007 – Rev. A - Proposed second floor plan
Drag No. A008 – Rev. A - Proposed Elevations: sheet 1
Drag No. A009 – Rev. A - Proposed Elevations: sheet 2

Reason: In order to define the extent of the consent granted.

3. Should demolition take place between March 1st and 31st August no development shall commence until a method statement is received that sets out how a pre-check for nesting birds will take place with appropriate working methods if nesting birds are found. Demolition shall take place in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: In the interest nature conservation in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. No development shall commence until details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the residential use of the

development and retained for the lifetime of the development.

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

5. Building operations shall not be commenced until samples of the finishing 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.

6. 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 any building is first occupied. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. No development shall take place, including any works of site clearance, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for:

- the means of access into the site for all construction traffic,
- the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- the management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic,
- loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- wheel cleansing facilities,
- the sheeting of lorries leaving the site.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the development process unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and free flow of traffic in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

8. No HGV deliveries shall take place during the construction period between the hours of 08:00 am to 09:30 am and 15:00 pm to 16:00 pm on weekdays to and from the site.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and free flow of traffic in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

9. The 2 no. parking spaces shown on submitted drawing no. "A004" shall remain for the purpose of the parking of vehicles only unless agreed otherwise in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure vehicles are parked off the public highway, in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

10. The affordable housing shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme and shall meet the definition of affordable housing in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006) or any future guidance that replaces it.

Reason: To contribute to the supply of affordable housing in the area in accordance with Planning Policy CS5 and SSA12 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing (March 2011).

11. No development shall commence until details of bird brick and other nesting provision is submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To provide bird mitigation and enhancement measures in accordance with policy AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

12. The development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations and conclusions of the bat report prepared by Hawkeswood Ecology dated July 2018.

Reason: In the interests of protecting and enhancing the ecological value of the site and wider area, in accordance with policy AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

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