



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

9 MAY 2019

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLANNING

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 19/0233/15
(CHJ)
APPLICANT: Pontypridd YMCA
DEVELOPMENT: Variation of condition 5 (approved plans) of previous planning application 17/1218/10.
LOCATION: PONTYPRIDD YMCA BUILDINGS, 27-28 CROSSBROOK STREET, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 4TT
DATE REGISTERED: 11/03/2019
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Town (Pontypridd)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS:

The redevelopment of the YMCA is an exciting project that will bring a significant investment to Pontypridd Town Centre.

This scheme (the third iteration of this project) while being of a simpler design than those previously approved, still involves some dramatic alterations and construction work that will mean that it will become a landmark building within Pontypridd.

It achieves this dramatic change while still respecting the Town Centre Conservation Area status and also maintaining the integrity of the setting of two nearby Listed Buildings.

The numerous and varied uses that will take place within the building are entirely compatible with this town centre location.

APPLICATION DETAILS

This is a Section 73 application to modify (remove and replace) Condition 5 of Planning Consent Reference 17/1218.

This condition effectively lists the “approved” plans and documents that comprised the application and states:

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents listed in the letter from Capita Architecture dated 16th January 2018.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and to ensure that the development is carried out in compliance with the approved plans and documents.

This application seeks to change the design of the building by modifying this condition, effectively substituting the previously approved plans and documents for new ones.

The proposed changes apply to the external envelope of the new-build facades. Whilst the effects of the visual massing of the proposal is significant, the gross internal floor area to be created remains largely unchanged.

The only change to the functional spaces within the building is the Fitness Room that was to be located on the lower ground floor along Taff Street is being replaced with a retail unit. This has been made in response to the provision of a large fitness centre currently being built as part of the Taff Vale development opposite.

The currently proposed floorplans will include the following accommodation:

- **Ground Floor:** Café, 1 Retail Unit, Studio Theatre;
- **Upper Ground Floor:** 3 Meeting Rooms, Art Studio, Art's Offices
- **First Floor:** Childcare Facility (Creche), Hot-Desk Area, New Shelley Hall, Roof Terrace.

In a similar vein to the previous applications, the complexity of the design features mean that the principal elevations have been included as **APPENDIX 1** to assist Members' consideration of the changes.

Members are also advised that, in addition, there will also be a number of drawings and “artist's impressions” in the presentation at Committee which clearly show the distinct elements of the scheme as well as their relationship with the Conservation Area and the Listed Buildings.

The main access to the building will be to Morgan Street. The YMCA does not have an elevation or access point that currently faces directly on to Morgan Street. The area was previously occupied by the annex building which was demolished in 2017.

The proposed elevation for Morgan Street is an entirely new fascia and is the outer wall of the new extension, built off the existing north-west elevation of the YMCA

building where access is predominantly at the same level as the adjacent road - although there will be access to the building from Taff Street (to the Cafe) and from the existing entrance onto Cross Brook Street (with a generous lobby area with links to a lift).

The existing north-west (Morgan Street) elevation is itself constructed in a mix of solid brickwork and more modern concrete blocks infilling large old window openings. This wall is to be dismantled as part of the conversion works. It is anticipated that the dismantling of this wall will provide the salvage bricks that will be used for making-good of the walls that are to be retained and refurbished.

The access onto Cross Brook Street, while being architecturally most elaborate, is located on a steep slope rising from Taff Street to Morgan Street therefore it is anticipated that persons with access difficulties will enter the building from the level thresholds of Taff Street or Morgan Street.

In terms of the proposed materials to be used, the external envelope is a combination of the original masonry structure (engineering brickwork and stonework) and new cladding. The upper storey of the building will be finished with a distinctive translucent channel glass cladding. The translucency is generated by the thermal insulation fitted between the glass channels. During the day, this will flood the internal spaces with diffuse daylight (thereby reducing dependency on artificial lighting). At night, the façade will come alive as the internal lighting will make the uppermost parts of the building appear as a lantern helping it to contribute to the town as a landmark building of distinctive character and quality.

The new elevation to Morgan Street will utilize grey brick and reconstituted stone slips in alternating courses. The stone bandings will project forward of the brick and create a horizontal emphasis accentuated by the contrasting textures of the two materials.

On the Taff Street elevation all of the existing brickwork and stonework will be retained, repaired and cleaned. All of the extraneous cables, brackets and fixtures (including the Council's CCTV camera) will be removed in order to allow the masonry to be returned, as close as possible, to its original state.

The same approach will be applied to the Cross Brook Street elevation. On this side however, the capping of the existing light well does mean that the part of the existing wall that is currently within the light well will be concealed from view. The existing lower ground floor windows that currently face into the light well will also be removed. The parts of the window openings that project above the pavement level will be in-filled with salvaged bricks (which will be recovered from the partial demolition works).

The existing main entrance doors to the building are at the upper ground floor level on Cross Brook Street. These doors were built as part of the mid 1990s refurbishment. The door is no longer required as part of the current proposal and it spoils the symmetry of the facade above the light well. The door will be removed as parts of the proposed works and infilled with salvaged brickwork and stone-effect EPS band to replicate the adjacent profile at the existing threshold level.

There is no car parking proposed as part of the development although Members will note that none currently exists and there is insufficient land available around the building to provide any (safely).

Discussions have been held to see whether a “disabled” drop-off bay / mini-bus lay-by can be provided at Taff Street however these do not affect the consideration of the planning application. Any provision that can be made would require amendments to existing Traffic Orders that are in force in this area and are capable of being considered outside of the Planning system.

While the scheme is referred to as the “YMCA”, one of the most innovative aspects of the project is the creative partnership between the Pontypridd YMCA and the Art/s Community. The partnership recognises not just the similarities in the types of spaces that the two organisations need to fulfil their missions, but also the similarities in the goals of the two organisations themselves. Although they will remain two distinct organisations, there is potential for the two partners to combine strengths to deliver their services to the public more effectively and more imaginatively.

The design of the building aims to optimise the opportunities for joint working by providing functional spaces that link easily together through the full height of the building while, at the same time giving each of the two organisations its own discrete identity – the applicants anticipate that the building will continue to be known as the YMCA.

It is intended that there will be no single predominant user group. Pontypridd YMCA and the new Art/s Community arts centre will serve a cross section of the population with staff, visitors and the general public identified as regular users of the facilities. As such, it is anticipated that a broad spectrum of physical, mental, eye-sight and hearing capabilities will need to be accommodated within the development.

The goal of making the building universally accessible is taken as being equally applicable to existing staff members and those that may become disabled during their careers.

To assist all user groups, careful use of colour and / or tonal contrast to maximise legibility and way-finding will be used throughout the development with special attention to measures to assist those who have impaired vision. This will be complimented by an integrated, bilingual signage system provided with accessible detaining to assist way finding.

SITE APPRAISAL

Committee is advised that the YMCA building is not, of itself, a Listed Building however it does fall within the Pontypridd (Town Centre) Conservation Area. It is also adjacent to two Listed Buildings – the Muni Arts Centre and the Municipal Building respectively.

The YMCA has always had a major civic presence within the centre of Pontypridd.

While the north of Taff Street has suffered the most decline within the town centre, the building has remained an important contributor to the public realm and quality of the town centre.

The original YMCA building was designed with two key contextual relationships in mind.

The first of these is at the north-west end of the site. At this point it directly faces the Municipal Building. This was the most important building in Pontypridd in 1920 when the YMCA was built and is still one of the most historic buildings in the town. The YMCA was originally designed to be an appropriately impressive neighbour. The proposed works, which include a dramatic new facade, has also been designed to fulfil this function.

The second key relationship is with Taff Street itself. Until 1910 the site of the YMCA was occupied by an old farmstead which pre-dated the development of the town. The YMCA project was seen as an opportunity to create a building with a suitably grand civic presence at the north end of Taff Street as a counterpoint to the Peniel Chapel thus giving it a strong definition to the Taff Street precinct and making it feel like an important public space. Again, it is intended that the project under consideration will also deliver this civic goals of the original YMCA design.

Committee may be aware that the construction of the YMCA was never completed as the required funds were never raised. It was intended to be two to three storeys higher than is currently the case and it is likely that it would have had its main entrance onto Morgan Street involving a large extension onto the existing building where the existing red-brick annexe was located (which was constructed around WWII). Since Committee previously considered proposals for this site, this annexe has been demolished to make way for the new building works (under the provisions of the previous consent).

Very little evidence exists to confirm, with any degree of certainty, the original design for the building.

PLANNING HISTORY

Committee is advised that there is a substantial planning history at this site many of which are not considered relevant to the consideration / determination of this application. Those of relevance are listed below, the most notable of which are 15/1637 and 17/1218 which were considered by Committee (for a similar redevelopment) around two years ago and one year ago respectively..

96/2005	Repair works to the external fabric, extension to rear, renew roof and wall cladding to top floor, new fire escape to replace existing, new access for disabled.	Approved 28/08/96
96/2157	Replacement of asbestos cladding to the first floor, window and door renewal etc. (Application for Conservation Area Consent).	Approved 28/08/96
15/1637	The remodelling and refurbishment of the interior and exterior of the Pontypridd YMCA which will also include a new build element to the rear of the site.	Approved 15/02/16

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised in the Press and by way of notices placed in the vicinity of the site and Town Centre. No correspondence (objection or support) has been received.

CONSULTATION

As part of the application process the following were consulted in respect of the proposal. A brief précis of responses have been included for Committee's information. Members may wish to note that the responses received are substantially similar to those received for the previous schemes and do not raise any new issues.

RCT Transportation Section – no objection.

RCT Countryside Section – a bat survey was submitted at the time of the previous applications concluding that there was no evidence of bats being present. No objection.

RCT Drainage Section – no objection.

Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water – no objection but advises the applicant to make contact prior to construction to identify the location of existing apparatus.

Pontypridd Community Council – no response received.

POLICY CONTEXT

LDP Proposals Map:

The YMCA site is:

- Inside the settlement boundary of the principal town of Pontypridd;
- Within the boundary of the town centre of Pontypridd;

- Within the defined retail centre of Pontypridd (but outside the primary retail frontages)
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Constraints Map:

The YMCA site is:

- Within the Pontypridd Town Centre Conservation Area;
- Within the setting of two Listed Buildings
-

Core policies:

Policy CS2 - Development In The South

In the Southern Strategy Area the emphasis will be on sustainable growth that benefits Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole. This will be achieved by:

- 1. Promoting residential development with a sense of place which respects the character and context of the Principal Towns and Key Settlements of the Southern Strategy Area;*
- 2. Protecting the culture and identity of communities by focusing development within defined settlement boundaries and promoting the reuse of under used and previously developed land and buildings;*
- 3. Promoting large scale regeneration schemes in the Principal Town of Pontypridd and Key Settlement of Tonyrefail;*
- 4. Realising the importance of the Principal Town of Llantrisant / Talbot Green as an area of social and economic growth;*
- 5. Providing opportunities for significant inward investment, in sustainable locations, that will benefit the economy of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Capital Region;*
- 6. Reducing daily out commuting by private car and promoting sustainable forms of transport;*
- 7. Protecting the cultural identity of the Strategy Area by protecting historic built heritage and the natural environment,*
and
- 8. Promoting and enhancing transport infrastructure services to support growth and investment.*

Area-wide policies:

Policy AW 2 - Sustainable Locations

In order to ensure that development proposals on non-allocated sites support the objectives of the plan, development proposals will only be supported in sustainable locations. Sustainable locations are defined as sites that:—

- 1. Are within the defined settlement boundary or in the Northern Strategy Area, accord with Policy NSA 12;*
- 2. Would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses;*
- 3. Have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options;*

4. Have good access to key services and facilities;
5. Do not permit highly vulnerable development and Emergency Services within Zone C2 floodplain.
6. Support the roles and functions of the Principal Towns, Key Settlements and Small Settlements;
7. Support the development of the 8 Strategic Sites;
8. Are well related to existing water, sewerage, waste, electrical, gas and telecommunications infrastructure and improvements to such services will be provided where necessary.
9. Where proposals relate to existing buildings in the countryside, accord with AW 9.

Policy AW5 - New Development

Development proposals will be supported where:-

- 1) *Amenity*
 - a) *The scale, form and design of the development would have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area;*
 - b) *Where appropriate, existing site features of built and natural environment value would be retained;*
 - c) *There would be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers;*
 - d) *The development would be compatible with other uses in the locality;*
 - e) *The development would include the use of multi-functional buildings where appropriate;*
 - f) *The development designs out the opportunity for crime and anti social behaviour.*
- 2) *Accessibility*
 - a) *The development would be accessible to the local and wider community by a range of sustainable modes of transport;*
 - b) *The site layout and mix of uses maximises opportunities to reduce dependence on cars;*
 - c) *The development would have safe access to the highway network and would not cause traffic congestion or exacerbate existing traffic congestion;*
 - d) *Car parking would be provided in accordance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Delivering Design and Placemaking: Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements.*

Policy AW6 - Design and Place-making

Development Proposals will be supported where:-

1. *They are of a high standard of design, which reinforces attractive qualities and local distinctiveness and improves areas of poor design and layout;*
2. *They are appropriate to the local context in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing;*

3. *In the case of extensions to buildings, they reflect, complement or enhance the form, siting, materials, details and character of the original building, its curtilage and the wider area;*
4. *In the case of proposals for new and replacement shop fronts and signage, they make a positive contribution to the streetscene;*
5. *In the public realm and key locations such as town centres, major routes, junctions and public spaces, the character and quality of the built form is to a high standard of design;*
6. *They include public art;*
7. *Landscaping and planting are integral to the scheme and enhance the site and the wider context;*
8. *They include an integrated mixture of uses appropriate to the scale of the development;*
9. *They include the efficient use of land, especially higher-density residential development on sites in proximity to local amenities and public transport;*
10. *Open space is provided in accordance with the Fields in Trust Standards;*
11. *A high level of connectivity and accessibility to existing centres, by a wide range of modes of sustainable transport;*
12. *Schemes incorporate a flexibility in design to allow changes in use of buildings and spaces as requirements and circumstances change;*
13. *The development reflects and enhances the cultural heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf;*
14. *The design protects and enhances the landscape and biodiversity;*
15. *The development promotes energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy; and*
16. *The design promotes good water management, including rainwater storage, sustainable urban drainage, porous paving etc.....*

Policy AW7 - Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment

Development proposals which impact upon sites of architectural and / or historical merit and sites of archaeological importance will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site.

Southern Strategy Policies:

Policy SSA1 - Development in the Principal Town of Pontypridd

Proposals for residential and commercial development within the defined town centre of Pontypridd will be permitted where the development:-

1. *Reinforces the role of Pontypridd as a Principal Town;*
2. *Respects the culture and heritage of Pontypridd;*
3. *Is of a high standard of design and makes a positive contribution to the townscape in the defined town centre;*

4. *Contributes to the enhancement of Ynysangharad Park;*
5. *Integrates positively with the existing built form;*
6. *Promotes opportunities for new retail, tourism and leisure development;*
7. *Promotes walking and cycling;*
8. *Promotes accessibility to services by a range of sustainable modes of transport.*

Policy SSA16 - The Retail Hierarchy

The hierarchy of retail centres in the Southern Strategy Area is defined as follows:

1. *Principal Town Centres: Pontypridd and Llantrisant (Including Talbot Green);*
2. *Key Settlements: Llanharan and Tonyrefail;*
3. *Local and Neighbourhood Centres: Church Village (Centre);*

Llantrisant Old Town, Pontyclun, Rhydyfelin, Taffs Well, Tonteg (Precinct), Treforest and Tyn-y-Nant.

Proposals for retail development or changes of use to retail uses inside the defined boundaries, which would maintain or enhance a centre's position in the retail hierarchy will be permitted.

Planning Policy Wales 10

6.1.10 – *There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage. For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

6.1.14 – *There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings.*

6.1.15 – *There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds.*

4.3.3 – *The Welsh Government identifies a number of overarching objectives for retail and commercial centres... The planning system must:*

- *Promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop, socialise and conduct business;*
- *Sustain and enhance retail and commercial centres' vibrancy, viability and attractive; and*
- *Improve access to, and within, retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.*

4.3.12 – explains the retail centre hierarchy. *The hierarchy should distinguish between higher order centres which have a wider range of uses and larger catchment areas, and lower order centres which are important for day-to-day needs.*

4.3.30 – *Although (A1) uses should underpin retail and commercial centres, it is only one of the factors which contribute towards their vibrancy.*

4.3.32 – encourages a diversity of uses in retail and commercial centres.

4.3.33 – *Vibrant and viable centres and distinguished by a diversity of activity and uses which should contribute towards a centre's well-being and success, whilst also reducing the need to travel.*

4.3.34 – *Leisure and entertainment, and food and drink uses can benefit retail and commercial centres, and with adequate attention to safeguarding amenities can contribute to a successful evening economy.* In addition to general diversity of uses, mixed use developments, which combine retailing with entertainment, restaurants and, where appropriate, residential in a comprehensive and planned way should also be encourages where appropriate to promote lively centres during both the day and the evening.

4.3.46 – *New or refurbished music or arts venues, galleries and museums can be the catalyst for stimulating regeneration and lead to the establishment of cultural and creative quarters in our centres. These 'quarters' help create further vibrancy and diversity that stimulates wider growth and regeneration.*

5.4.4 – *Wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration.*

Technical Advice Notes

- 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 23 Economic Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- The Historic Built Environment (March 2011)

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 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.

While this is an application made under Section 73, Committee is advised that it falls to be considered in the same way as any other application having regard to the significance of the changes in design although the principle of the redevelopment has been firmly established through the previous two consents.

Members are advised that since the applications were previously considered a new Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10) has been released. The principal elements have been reproduced as part of the POLICY CONTEXT section of this report.

The overarching material considerations in the determination of this application (as in the previously approved schemes) are considered to be:

- the compatibility of the proposed uses with a town centre location,
- compliance with the LDP
- design,
- the effect of the appearance of the scheme on the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings, and
- highway safety.

The compatibility of the proposed uses with a town centre location

The application proposes both the refurbishment of an existing facility as well as a significant new build element. The use of the site as a YMCA has existing in this location since its construction 1920 and has happily co-existed with other uses during that time adapting, as it has, to the evolving requirements of the organisation.

As such the uses proposed by the YMCA (referred to in the APPLICATION DETAILS section of this report) are considered appropriate. Similarly, the co-habitation of the building by the Art/s organisation would also introduce a range of uses which are compatible with the town centre location where, in conjunction with the YMCA will bring a range of activities that will ensure that the town centre is a vibrant location well after the shops have closed.

It will bring with it a diverse range of visitors at various times of the day and week that will bring with it a wider range of economic benefits to the town above and beyond that of the previous incarnation of the YMCA building.

Compliance with the LDP

In principle, the proposals are considered acceptable as:

- The site is in a sustainable location – highly accessible by sustainable transport modes and co-located with other facilities and services;
- The use overall would make a positive contribution to the LDP strategy in several respects: (a) contributing to the vitality of the retail centre of Pontypridd, (b) contributing to the regeneration of the principal town centre and (c) contributing to the LDP strategy of growth in the Southern Strategy Area that benefits the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taf, since Pontypridd serves the lower Rhondda valleys in the Northern Strategy Area.

It is therefore considered to be compliant with the relevant LDP criteria set out in the POLICY CONTEXT section of this report.

Design

The scheme proposes significant and dramatic change to the existing building such that, when constructed, this will become a landmark building in what is a very prominent location within the town centre (it has three distinct frontages).

Committee is advised that “design” can be a very subjective topic and not everyone can always agree on whether something is good or bad design. The design of the current proposal is a “simpler” than previously put forward and is likely to be more universally acceptable than the powerful elevations of the previous iterations. That said, it is fair to say that the proposed design is still striking and not everyone will like the modern appearance however, the design is of a very high standard and the building will become a landmark building within the town and will compliment the modern design of the “gateway” buildings on the Taff Vale development.

Detailed discussions have taken place with the applicants and their Architect to ensure that the materials to be used are of an appropriate quality to compliment the design of the building as well as seeking reassurance that the building will continue to be a feature building within the town without needing excessive maintenance to keep it looking good, especially given its location in a Conservation Area and adjacent to two Listed Buildings. The applicant has submitted details of the materials to be used in the design construction and these are considered acceptable and has removed the need for a separate condition that featured on previous consents..

The effect of the appearance of the scheme on the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings

Although the YMCA building is not in itself designated, its primary significance is in forming part of an historic backdrop to the area. As such, the period detailing and design which remains as part of the original building is key to its integration.

Although the alterations proposed to the YMCA building are overtly contemporary in the design and materials, it is not considered that this will necessarily detract from the historic environment.

The previous outlook to the YMCA's Morgan Street elevation was simple with a diminutive scale of a red-brick curtilage building (now demolished) was unsuited in massing and design for its important location on a high street facing a Grade II* Listed Building. It did however benefit from being subservient and traditional in form.

This accepted, it is not considered that any detailing of notable quality or significance is proposed for replacement on this elevation so that it could be considered detrimental to the setting of either the Listed Building or Conservation Area.

Having now demolished the existing single storey structure, the only question would be of appropriateness of their replacement. In terms of the ethical approaches in responding to architectural context of an important Listed Building - the choice is whether to "contrast" or "conform".

Although the modern design is not 'in keeping' *per se* with the historic outlook, it is considered that the proposed design is an honest intervention of its own distinct age and design, using innovative materials and detailing.

This in itself is not objectionable in principle and avoids the poor alternative of an Edwardian pastiche,(as supported by Section 30 of the Welsh Office Circular 61/96)

Moreover, the proposed development fulfils the spirit of the structure originally intended as part of the original YMCA, in a style which respects the existing window rhythms and proportions, albeit in contemporary fashion.

In so much that the proposed modern architecture is of a high standard, it is not considered that this is to be of detriment to the setting of the Listed Buildings nor the Conservation Area and Committee is advised that this would actively enhance the setting.

The scale of the replacement facade and additional upper floors will not significantly affect direct views of the immediately adjacent Listed Buildings, nor their visual relationship with each other. It should be noted that the proposed design aims to respond to the powerful and well designed facade of the Grade II* Municipal Buildings with its own bold and impressive design.

The integration of new floors into the respective elevations, responds well to the alignment and rhythm of the existing YMCA building by deliberately contrasting in its form and rhythm. However, material finishes will be crucial to the success of the design should will need to be agreed in advance by provision of samples for the less familiar aspects of the design.

The re-working of the Cross Brook Street. elevation is again considered to be generally sensitive and in-keeping with the overall design which successfully juggles the traditional with the modern.

It is therefore considered that while the impact of the alterations and new-build are significant they are acceptable having regard to both the setting of the Listed Buildings and the character of the Conservation Area.

Highway Safety

As part of the application process the Council's Highways and Transportation Section has been consulted.

Access to the upper ground floor is attained through Morgan Street which accommodates for two way traffic.

Morgan Street's high volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is controlled by traffic lights at the amalgamation of Gelliwastad Road and Morgan Street.

Morgan Street contains permanent parking restrictions on both sides of the carriageway.

Access to the lower ground floor is attained through multiple entrances adjacent to Taff Street and Cross Brook Street. Taff Street and Cross Brook Street operates with a one-way system which feeds traffic to Morgan Street. This traffic is controlled at traffic lights at the junction of Cross Brook Street and Morgan Street.

Taff Street incorporates Taxi Parking, Disabled Parking, Loading bays, no loading restrictions to the front of the application site and a Bus Stop along its length along with pedestrian footways on either side of the development.

The development proposes on-street mini bus parking space outside of the proposed adjacent to its access from Taff Street to serve the proposed as a loading bay / mini bus drop off point. The proposal suggests that the loading bay will be used to pick up and drop off members of the YMCA exclusively. However, the loading bay would be located on the public highway and would be available for use by other road users and therefore cannot be guaranteed for use.

Furthermore, the proposed loading bay / mini bus drop off bay will remove the existing parking restrictions which have been put into place to protect Highway Safety and the free flow of traffic.

There is potential to overcome some concerns by amending the existing Traffic Regulation Orders however, this would require consultation with the Traffic Section of the Council and the businesses within the vicinity of the site. The cost of this consultation and to amend the existing traffic regulation orders would be £3500 and as stated above the proposed mini bus parking bay could not be secured for the YMCA only and would be open to parking for any mini bus. This can be concluded outside of the Planning system and need not be part of Committee's deliberations.

- Parking

The proposed suggests internal alterations which do not affect the parking requirement therefore acceptable.

- Sustainability

The proposed development is in a highly sustainable location with a train station (which is due to be upgraded to accommodate 12 trains per hour to/from Cardiff in both directions), bus station, multiple bus stops and local stores all within walking and cycling distance.

The 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 not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusion

The scheme, while smaller and simpler than previously proposed, still represents an exciting investment into the architectural quality of the Town. The building will become a landmark feature and will bring much needed activity throughout the daytime and evening to this end of the town centre. The new “shape” of the building will also help to accentuate the modern designs emerging as part of the Taff Vale development opposite, the construction of which had not begun when the previous applications were under consideration.

The currently proposed development while still being dramatic (especially at night) is, arguably, more coherent in how it will be viewed generally by visitors to the town centre than the previously approved schemes which, while architecturally, were more elaborate may have polarised some opinion. The existing traditional YMCA structure will largely remain and the new build will be of a far simpler modern appearance.

The proposed remodelling and refurbishment of the interior and exterior of Pontypridd YMCA is considered acceptable. Given the sustainable location of the proposed with regards to the availability of public car parks and the close proximity of the proposed to the train station and bus station is considered acceptable.

In combination with the new Taff Vale development, the scheme(s) will bring with it the dawning of a new era the Town.

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. No development shall commence until all relevant matters outlined on the attached Planning Requirements Relating to Flood Risk Management including full drainage details have been approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These details shall indicate how the development is to comply with the requirements of Section 8.3 of Technical Advice Note 15.

Reason: To ensure that drainage from the proposed development does not cause or exacerbate any adverse condition on the development site, adjoining properties, environment and existing infrastructure arising from inadequate drainage.

3. No development shall take place on any identified phase of the development until a site specific Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

The Plan shall provide a construction method statement for:

- a) the means of access to the site for all construction traffic,
- b) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- c) the management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic,
- d) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- e) storage of plant and materials used in construction the development,
- f) wheel cleansing facilities,
- g) 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 with the local planning authority.

The environmental management element of the plan must demonstrate the adoption and use of the best practicable means to reduce the effects of noise, vibration, dust and site lighting. The plan should include but not be limited to:

- Procedures for maintaining good public relations, including complaint management, public consultation and liaison.
- Arrangements for liaison with the Council's Pollution Control Team.

- All works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other place as may be agreed with the Local Planning Authority, shall be carried out only between the following hours:
- 08 00 hours and 18 00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08 00 hours and 13 00 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays.
- Deliveries to and removal of plant, equipment, machinery and waste from the site must only take place within the permitted hours detailed above.
- Mitigation measures as defined in BS 5528:parts 1 & 2: 2009 Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites shall be used to minimise noise disturbance from construction works.
- Procedures for emergency deviation of the agreed working hours.
- Control measures for dust and other air borne pollutants. This must also take into account the need to protect any local resident who may have a particular susceptibility to air borne pollutants.
- Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes.

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

4. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents listed in the letter from Timothy Green (Capita) dated 24th April 2019.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and to ensure that the development is carried out in compliance with the approved plans and documents.

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