



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 19/0680/10 (GH)
APPLICANT:
DEVELOPMENT: Conversion of hotel into 9 no. one, two and three bedroom flats.(Amended plans reducing number of units from 11 to 9 received on 29/5/20).
LOCATION: OLD GLANDWR COURT HOTEL, YSTRAD ROAD, PENTRE, CF41 7PY
DATE REGISTERED: 29/05/2020
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Ystrad
RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

REASONS:

The development would enable the beneficial re-use of a redundant building in a sustainable location. The site is close to a range of services and shops within Ystrad and the surrounding area and has access to bus and rail transport links.

Furthermore, in addition to its contribution to the regeneration of the local area the refurbished building would result in an improvement in the appearance of the street scene, whilst providing a mix of additional housing units.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The proposal is not covered by determination powers delegated to the Director of Prosperity and Development.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning consent is sought to convert the former Glandwr Court Hotel, Ystrad Road, Pentre, to provide nine flats.

Members may recall that this application was approved at a previous Committee meeting on 7th November 2019, for conversion of the building to 11 self-contained flats, subject to a Section 106 affordable housing contribution.

However, the S106 process was not completed and in the intervening period the Applicant has advised that he has had to reconsider the financial viability of the project

and this, in particular, has resulted in the scheme having to be amended whereby the basement conversion has been removed.

Therefore the application has been reported back to Committee to allow Members to consider the amended proposals prior to final determination. Furthermore a S106 agreement would not now be required as this would only apply, in the Northern Strategy Area, to developments of 10 units or more.

As now proposed the accommodation would be arranged over three floors to include the following:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Basement: | Storage |
| Ground Floor: | 2 x one-bed flats, 1 x two-bed flat and 1 x three-bed flat |
| First Floor: | 4 x two-bed flats and 1 x three-bed flat (all extending into attic space) |

To enable the development there would be a small number of external changes, to include the removal of three small lean-to ancillary type structures, and revisions to fenestration, so that all habitable rooms would benefit from natural light. This includes the attic rooms which would be served by roof lights.

The limited amenity space to the rear of the property would be laid out for the parking of four vehicles and a communal drying area. In addition, a designated bin area would be positioned adjacent to the boundary with Gelli Crossing, where there is an existing vehicular crossover into the site.

The application has been accompanied by a bat survey.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application property is a three storey L-shaped Victorian building, including a basement, which is located mid-way between the settlements of Ystrad and Gelli. Formerly a hotel, it is understood that the building was previously subdivided into four self-contained flats, but is now in a significant state of dereliction.

Occupying a prominent site at the junction of Ystrad Road and Gelli Crossing, the principal elevation of the building, which appears as two-storey, faces north and is immediately adjacent to the highway.

A vehicular crossover provides access to a rear yard on the western side and this is retained by a substantial reinforced retaining wall, on account of the Rhondda River abutting the site to the south.

Other than the existing flats, neighbouring properties include a row of terraced dwellings immediately to the east, further dwellings to the south and north, with Gelli Primary School to the west.

PLANNING HISTORY

The most recent or relevant applications on record associated with this site are:

19/5003/41: Proposed refurbishment of Glandwr Court Hotel into eleven flats.
Decision: 08/02/2019, Raise no objections.

PUBLICITY

Initially the original application was advertised by direct notification to six neighbouring properties and notices were erected on site.

One letter of objection was received from a property on the opposite side of Ystrad Road with the following observations:

- The premises have been decaying for years and require demolition or significant repair. The rear part of the building is a health hazard.
- The building accommodated flats and bedsits from the 1980s into the early part of the 21st century.
- Previous tenants damaged the amenity of other residents with bad language and behaviour at all times, and discarded bottles, cans and needles thrown into neighbouring gardens.
- It would be good to see the property developed responsibly, but not if it allowed the premises to be occupied in the same manner as previously.
- Concerns in respect of parking where that on-street parking is limited by existing demand and a bus stop.

Following receipt of the amended floor plans a full reconsultation was undertaken and although no further comment had been received at the time of writing, any late representations will be reported directly to Members during the Committee meeting.

CONSULTATION

Highways and Transportation

A condition is recommended in respect of the extended vehicular crossover, together with informative notes regarding street naming and numbering, and work within the public highway.

Waste Management

Notes that the bin storage area is inside the property, adjacent to the kerbside collection point.

Natural Resources Wales

An advisory note is recommended with regard to the position of the site partially within C1 Flood Zone. NRW also advises that although they do not consider that the development is likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the identified bat population, a European Protected Species Licence will be required.

South Wales Police

No objection and a list of safety recommendations has been provided for the benefit of the developer.

Public Health and Protection

Conditions are recommended in respect of noise from construction, dust, waste, demolition and hours of operation.

With the exception of the latter issue, given the proximity of neighbouring dwellings, it is considered that the other matters can best be dealt with by an informative note.

Wales and West Utilities

A plan of underground assets and list of general conditions has been provided for the benefit of the applicant.

Western Power Distribution

A new connection or service diversion will require consent from WPD.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

A condition is recommended in respect of additional surface water flow to the public sewer and the marking out of the sewer location on site, together with an informative note.

Drainage

A condition in respect of surface water drainage details is required and the external works would require an application for SuDs approval.

Countryside – Ecologist

No objection, subject to a requirement for a pre-demolition survey for the presence of barn owls.

No other consultation responses have been received within the statutory period.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies within the settlement boundary for Pentre

Policy AW1 – The policy outlines how the housing land requirement will be met, and includes the development of unallocated sites within the defined settlement boundaries

Policy AW2 – The policy ensures that development proposals are only supported in sustainable locations. This includes sites which: 1) Accord with Policy NSA12; 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; and 6) support the roles of key settlements.

Policy AW5 – The policy sets out criteria for appropriate amenity and accessibility on new development sites.

Policy AW6 – The policy encourages proposals which are of a high standard of design, and are appropriate in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, etc.

Policy AW10 – The policy prevents development which could cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health or local amenity due to land instability, contamination, or any other identified risk to local amenity and public health.

Policy CS1 – the emphasis is on sustainable growth in the northern strategy area, and is to be achieved by promoting residential development in locations which support and reinforce the roles of Key Settlements.

Policy NSA10 – The policy stipulates that the net residential density must be a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare, and lists criteria where lower density levels are permitted.

Policy NSA12 – The policy permits development within settlement boundaries if they demonstrate that infrastructure and car parking will not be adversely affected.

Policy NSA13 – The conversion of large buildings within the Northern Strategy Area will be permitted where there is no economically viable alternative use for the building.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Delivering Design and Place-making
- Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements
- Development of Flats

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.

The Welsh Government published Planning Policy Wales 10 on 5th December 2018, and the document aims to incorporate the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into Town & Country Planning.

It is considered that this proposal meets the seven wellbeing of future generations goals inasmuch as they relate to the proposed development and that the site has been brought forward in a manner consistent with the five ways of working.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking as set down in Chapter 2 People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking, of PPW10 and is also consistent with the following inasmuch as they relate to the development

Chapter 1 (Managing New Development)

Chapter 2 (Maximising Well-Being and Sustainable Places through Placemaking)

Chapter 4 (Active and Social Places)

Other policy guidance considered:

PPW Technical Advice Note 12 – Design

PPW Technical Advice Note 15 – Development and Flood Risk

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 proposed development

Policy AW1 supports residential development on unallocated land within the settlement boundary and the conversion of suitable structures to provide housing.

The site is in close proximity to the Key Settlement of Treorchy and accordingly, any application should set out how this residential development would support the role of this Key Settlement, as encouraged by LDP Policies CS1 and AW2. Nonetheless, the location of the site, within the settlement boundary and with good access to sustainable transport, evidences that it would be considered a sustainable location in accordance with Policy AW2.

Currently, the building is in a poor state of repair and does not make a positive contribution to the surrounding streetscape. The development proposal would resolve the degree of dereliction by making beneficial re-use of the site, which is supported by Policies CS1 and NSA13. However, although the latter Policy requires evidence that there are no other viable commercial uses for the site, this is considered unnecessary given the length of time that the building has been vacant.

The plans include provision for four car parking spaces to the rear of the building. Policy NSA12 seeks that residential development does not have an adverse effect on the provision of car parking in the surrounding area, meanwhile Policy AW5 requires development proposals to make car parking provision in accordance with the Council's 'Delivering Design and Placemaking: Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements' SPG. These matters are considered further below.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The application details show that save for the three projecting extensions to the rear of the property its main structure and overall form would be unaltered. In addition, the changes to fenestration within all elevations of the property would not be disproportionate in scale or quantity such that its character would be harmed.

Indeed it is considered that the recommissioning of the building and its curtilage would bring about a welcome improvement, since its current state of dereliction is ugly and greatly detracts from the street scene.

Therefore the development would represent an improvement to the appearance of the building as a whole and would be a positive enhancement to the public realm.

Impact on neighbouring occupiers

Most of the properties close to the application site are residential and comprise a mix of older and more traditional dwelling types. In the absence of any significant development the relationship between neighbouring properties, in terms of their built form, has been largely unchanged.

For this reason, since the conversion of the building to flats would involve mostly internal construction work, the development would not be likely to alter the outlook of other residents, except for an evident improvement to the fabric of the property and its curtilage.

Although not an issue identified by the closest residents to the east of the site, there was some concern at the window openings within the side elevation of the former hotel, which directly face the gardens of the adjoining houses. In theory, it might be possible for there to be direct views towards neighbour's habitable rooms.

Nonetheless, whilst the concern is material, the applicant's fall back position is one of a residential land use and the building, together with the windows, could be restored and re-glazed, with the same intrusive views towards neighbouring dwellings.

Furthermore, the current application would represent an improvement to the status quo, since only three would be retained, two of which would serve bathrooms and would thus likely be obscure glazed.

There is sympathy for the problems caused by past occupants of the building and how their behaviour was harmful to the wellbeing of neighbours, as highlighted by a nearby resident during the original consultation period.

However, unless the proposed development would fall into a different residential land use, such as a secure institution for example, neither the behaviour of the likely future occupiers nor the tenure of the accommodation can be considered as relevant to planning.

As a result it is considered that the development would not cause detriment to the amenity and privacy of neighbouring occupiers and is therefore acceptable in this regard.

Highways and accessibility

Access

Primary access for 8 of the flats would be from Ystrad Road (A4058) which, excluding the bus stop lay-by fronting the site, has a carriageway running width of 8.6m. The site is also adjacent to Gelli Crossing which has a carriageway width of 6.1m and would provide primary access to the remaining 1 flat.

There is concern that the 2.4m x 11m visibility to Gelli Crossing on the left is sub-standard, given that off-street car parking would be served from this access. However, taking into account that the critical visibility is to the right and in excess of 2.4m x 40m the additional traffic using Gelli Crossing would be acceptable on balance.

Pedestrian access.

Pedestrian access along Ystrad Road is gained by continuous 1.8m pedestrian footways which are acceptable. Conversely Gelli Crossing, which is to be used for access to the car parking area and rear flats, has 1.5m wide sub-standard footways with the existing vehicular access forming a trip hazard in the footway; especially for partially sighted residents.

The Council's Highways and Transportation Section considered that there is potential to overcome this by providing a standard vehicular crossover, which should be sought by a condition.

Parking

No floor plans of the existing upper floors of the hotel have been submitted to assess the existing car parking requirement for the established use. However, the proposed change of use to 9 apartments requires up-to a maximum of 22 spaces (including visitors) with 4 provided which is of concern.

The Council's SPG for Access, Circulation & Parking advises that the maximum off-street car parking can be reduced where a site is sustainably located. Taking into account the proximity of local facilities, bus stops and train services the proposed car parking can be reduced by 1 space per apartment, with short term visitor parking taking place on-street. On this basis, the total off-street car parking requirement would be 9 spaces with 4 provided.

Therefore there is concern with regard to the shortfall of off-street car parking provision; however, taking into account the proposal brings a derelict building back into use and that the previous use would have generated a greater car parking requirement, the proposal is acceptable on balance.

Flooding

As the consultation response from NRW states, part of the application site lies within an area designated as a C1 flood zone, and where a residential land use would only be supported subject to compliance with a number of qualifying criteria. This relates to a small area of the rear yard and outside of the footprint of the building.

Nevertheless, NRW has recognised that the established use of the building is a residential one and since the proposed conversion does not represent any increase in the vulnerability of use it does not require a Flood Consequences Assessment.

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 however, the application site lies within Zone 1 of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Residential Charging Zones, where a nil charge is applicable and therefore no CIL is payable.

Conclusion

The development would enable the beneficial re-use of a derelict building in a sustainable location, close to the key services and shops and wider public transport links.

Furthermore, in addition to its contribution of additional housing units the refurbished building would result in a great improvement in the appearance of the street scene, and be a compatible use with the surrounding residential development.

Therefore, being located within the settlement boundary and having benefitted from a previous residential use, the development is considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

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 development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings entitled 'Proposed conversion of Glandwr Hotel to 9no Apartments', and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 25th June 2019 and 1st June 2020, unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. No development shall commence, including any demolition, until a survey has been undertaken to check for the presence of barn owl(s). Should barn owl(s) be found then no work shall be undertaken until a method statement, detailing appropriate mitigation, has been submitted to and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any mitigation measures shall be implemented as approved and maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation in accordance with Policy AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. The dwellings shall not be occupied until:

i) details for the improvement of the existing vehicular footway crossover have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; and

ii) the improved crossing has been implemented in accordance with the approved details

Reason: In the interest of highway and pedestrian safety in accordance with Policies AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. No development shall commence until details of a scheme for the disposal of 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 beneficial use of the development and retained in perpetuity.

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, in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. During the construction phase of the development the hours of work shall be restricted to the following:

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Monday to Friday | 08.00 to 18.00 hours |
| Saturday | 08.00 to 13.00 hours |
| Sunday and Bank Holidays | Not At All |

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of other residents, in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.