



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3 SEPTEMBER 2020

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 20/0293/10 (GH)
APPLICANT: Mr G McDonagh
DEVELOPMENT: Rebuild pottery building (original building damaged by fire). Revised site plan, showing access and parking, received 17th July 2020; Supporting statement received 6th August 2020
LOCATION: SOUTHCLIFFE POTTERY, CREIGIAU ROAD, LLANTWIT FARDRE, PONTYPRIDD, CF15 9NN.
DATE REGISTERED: 17/07/2020
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Llantwit Fardre

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

REASONS:

By virtue of its scale, design and appearance, the proposed rebuilding of the pottery would create an attractive structure of low visual impact, which would be sympathetic to its countryside location and the history of the site. In addition, the manufacture and sale of pottery would provide a unique and interesting tourism and leisure attraction which would be beneficial to the rural economy in this area and the Borough as a whole.

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 complete the reconstruction of a building at the site of the former Southcliffe Pottery, Creigiau Road, Llantwit Fardre.

It is proposed that the building would be rebuilt to its existing footprint for the purposes of the manufacture and sale of pottery. The original pottery studio was set up in 1947 as the Southcliffe Ceramic Company, and was renamed Creigiau Pottery the following year.

Creigiau Pottery was well known for its copper-glazed style and was a popular location for visitors to experience traditional skills. The business continued to operate into the 1980s until significant damage was caused by a fire in July 1989.

Despite the fire damage all of the foundation slab and some of the walls were extant, although it was evident from a site visit that the elevations had been reconstructed to eaves height and that clearance of the once overgrown site had already taken place.

The submitted plans show that the rebuilt single storey structure would contain a combined workshop and sales area, together with toilet facilities. On account of its setting and historical context external finishes would comprise elevations faced with natural stone, and a tin sheet roof.

The site access is currently via a field gate in the south-eastern corner, although it is proposed to relocate this a few metres to the north where an existing kerb-line suggests the entrance once was.

In addition to the plans and elevation drawings accompanying the application a coal mining report and supporting statement has been submitted.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application property consists of the remains of a former pottery and shop, which is located in the open countryside to the south-west of Efail Isaf. The site is adjacent to the western side of Creigiau Road, with which it shares a gated access and is north of the Caesars Arms Public House.

With an area of approximately 0.13 hectares, the site had been left such that it had become overgrown since the fire although, as noted above, the ground around the site has been cleared and a degree of rebuilding has taken place.

The overgrown remains of the kiln and chimney stack are located in the south-western corner of the site, as is an old static caravan in a poor state of repair. Between the closure of the pottery and its purchase by the current owner it is understood that the caravan had been unofficially occupied.

The adjacent land to the west comprises a former landfill site, now restored for grazing, whilst the closest dwellings to the site are approximately 239m to the south-east and 284m to the north. The aforementioned Public House lies around 200m to the south and is just within Cardiff Council's administrative area.

PLANNING HISTORY

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

97/2695/13: Renewal of Outline Consent 56/92/0448 – rebuild existing building damaged by fire. Decision: 26/02/1999, granted.

92/0448/13: Pottery for the making and retail sale of pottery. Decision: 25/09/1992, granted.

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by direct notification to five neighbouring properties and notices were displayed on site.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order (Wales) the relevant press notice was published identifying that the proposal would be considered a departure from the Local Development Plan.

Three letters of objection or representation have been received from one party, in respect of poor access and visibility, adequacy of space for parking, loading and turning. In addition concerns were raised about building work having already started and access to mains water and drainage.

CONSULTATION

Transportation Section

No objection subject to conditions in respect of access engineering tie-in details, traffic management and wheel washing and parking provision.

Drainage

No objection or condition is recommended in relation to surface water flood risk for this application since this will be adequately managed by both Building Regulations and Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Public Health and Protection

Conditions are recommended in respect of demolition, noise, dust, waste and hours of operation, together with an advisory note in respect of previous land uses. However, given the location of the site and existing public health powers, it is suggested that such conditions would be unnecessary.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

The application form suggests a foul connection into the public sewerage system will be sought however, it appears as though the application site is located in an area not served by public sewers. In light of this a condition is recommended for the submission of drainage details, together with an informative note.

Western Power Distribution

A new connection or service alteration will require a separate application to WPD.

Countryside – Ecologist

No objection subject to a condition for hedgerow enhancement and management works.

The Coal Authority

On the basis that the developer is building off the original slab and that there are no groundworks, the nature of development is listed as exempt from Version 5, 2019 of the Coal Authority's Resources for Local Planning Authorities. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment would therefore not be required.

Any further consultation responses received will be reported during the Committee meeting.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies outside of the settlement boundary within open countryside.

Policy CS2 - emphasises sustainable growth in the Southern Strategy Area (SSA) that protects the culture and identity of communities by focusing development within defined settlement boundaries. Emphasis will also be on protecting the cultural identity of the strategy area by protecting the natural environment.

Policy CS10 - seeks to protect resources and to contribute to the local, regional and national demand for minerals, but makes reference to national guidance which advises that sandstone should not be extracted within 200m of settlements.

Policy AW2 - supports development proposals in sustainable locations which are within the settlement boundary; would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses; and have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options.

Policy AW5 - identifies the appropriate amenity and accessibility criteria for new development proposals. It expressly states that the scale, form and design of the development should have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. There should also be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and should, where appropriate, retain existing features of natural environmental value. Additionally the development would require safe access to the highway network and provide parking in accordance with the Council's SPG.

Policy AW6 - supports development proposals that are of a high standard of design that reinforce attractive qualities and local distinctiveness. Additionally proposals must be designed to protect and enhance landscape and biodiversity.

Policy AW8 - seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment from inappropriate development.

Policy AW9 - renovation of existing buildings outside defined settlement limits for purposes of employment, community or tourism use will be supported if the existing structure is structurally sound or is capable of being made so without substantial major external alteration or reconstruction.

Policy AW10 - development proposals must overcome any harm to public health, the environment or local amenity as a result of flooding.

Policy AW14 - seeks to safeguard mineral resources including sandstone from any development that would unnecessarily sterilise them or hinder their extraction.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design and Placemaking
- Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements
- Nature Conservation

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 Edition 10 sets out the Welsh Government's current position on planning policy, which incorporates the objectives of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act in to 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 Chapters inasmuch as they relate to the development proposed:

Chapter 1 (Managing New Development)

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

Chapter 4 (Active and Social Places)

Chapter 5 (Productive and Enterprising Places)

Other national policy guidance considered:

PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design

PPW Technical Advice Note 13: Tourism

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

The application relates to the reconstruction of a pottery containing a workshop and a retail area. The original pottery burnt down some time ago and it appears that very little would have remained of the original structure, save for its substantial foundations and part of the elevations.

With regard to the previous outline applications to rebuild the pottery, which were submitted and granted consent in the 1990s, the report to the Planning Committee advised Members that “There is little doubt in my mind, by virtue of the dilapidated condition of the structures on the site, that the reconstruction of buildings on the land for the purposes of the manufacture and retail sale of pottery would be tantamount to new development in the countryside”.

Consequently, whilst it is acknowledged that the site once contained a building and was previously developed land, given the timescale and the reclamation of the site by nature, this matter is afforded little weight and Policy AW9 is not relevant. Thus it is reasonable that the current application is also considered in the same manner, as new development in the countryside.

Furthermore although the earlier applications were approved by Members, in line with the Officer’s recommendation, another change in circumstance is the advent of the LDP and various iterations of Planning Policy Wales. Therefore, whilst many of the material considerations will not have changed, the application must be judged against current policy framework.

The site is in the Southern Strategy Area and outside of the settlement boundary. The proposal seeks to replace the pottery indicating that this will attract visitors and teach traditional skills. In addition to the supporting statement, the application form and subsequent conversations with the Applicant have confirmed that the purpose of the development is for pottery to be made on site to be sold. This is relevant inasmuch as the Local Planning Authority would not support a standalone retail unit outside of the settlement boundary and in an unsustainable location.

Since the proposal would have tourism/leisure/education benefits with an ancillary retail element alongside, the two key considerations are the location of the site outside the settlement boundary and any weight that can be afforded to the potential tourism benefit that the proposal may hold.

The LDP requires that all developments on non-allocated sites are located in sustainable locations. Policy AW2 defines these locations to include those which are inside the settlement boundary, accessible via a range of transport modes and have access to a range of services and facilities. Therefore it must be considered whether there are any mitigating circumstances for an exception to be made to Policy AW2.

Firstly, it can be argued that it would be difficult to find a property within the settlement boundary that could accommodate such a use. Indeed, traditional small craft potteries, that will bring benefits to tourism, are most likely to be found in rural locations such as the application site and would not be a suitable land use for a town centre or within a residential area.

Secondly, the supporting documentation identifies that the pottery is intended to attract visitors and thus provide a tourist or leisure attraction which would be important to the rural economy. Such an attraction would accord with the Council's wider aims to unlock the economic and regenerative potential of the County Borough as a tourist destination.

With the exception of Policy AW9 the LDP refers little to tourism uses, so it is necessary to defer to national guidance. Planning Policy Wales is very supportive of tourism proposals in appropriate locations, that are sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment, and recognises the positive role that tourism plays in contributing to a strong and diverse economy.

In particular, paragraph 5.5.3 of PPW advises that tourism-related development in rural areas is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy, whilst paragraph 5.5.7 advises that planning authorities should adopt positive approaches to proposals which utilise previously developed or disused land and water bodies for tourism uses.

With this in mind the application is considered to accord with National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes in that the proposal would foster economic activity; offer a cultural experience; provide employment; be of high quality materials; prioritises the use of previously developed land; preserves a historic manufacturing site; and can bring forward improvements to green infrastructure and wildlife connectivity.

In conclusion the proposal to reinstate the pottery with an ancillary shop, primarily as a tourism use with education benefits, is considered to be acceptable in principle and is supported by national policy. However condition 2, which reflects the unique circumstances of the proposal and its location, is recommended to ensure that future use of the site is restricted to the purposes intended.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The proposed development is located on Creigiau Road, which connects the A473 Church Village bypass with the A4119 to the south of Creigiau village.

The northern section of the road, which is within the RCT boundary, maintains a largely rural character, although a number of residential, agricultural and commercial properties, some more prominent than others, gain direct access from it.

Notwithstanding that the pottery operated at the site for many years, together with a quarry on the opposite side of the road a little further to the north, it is considered that any proposals to reuse the site should be sympathetic to its surroundings and have a low visual impact.

From what has been reconstructed so far, it appears that the development would be of high quality and the applicant has sought to maintain the scale of the original single storey building, by restricting it to the same footprint.

The external finishes, faced with natural stonework and with cills of natural, rather than reconstituted stone, suggest that the appearance of the property would befit the location, whilst the tin roof, like the stonework would age and colour well, and be likely to best assimilate with the setting.

Just as relevant to the appearance of the building is the outward appearance of the site, and the planning authority would be keen to avoid any boundary treatments that introduced an urban or formal quality. For that reason a condition in respect of boundary treatments is proposed, and subject to this and the above, the development is considered acceptable in these terms.

Impact on neighbouring occupiers

The countryside location and its distance from neighbouring properties, one of which is a well-established public house and restaurant, means that the small scale of the building and the nature of the activities at the site would be unlikely to cause harm to the amenity of third parties.

Therefore there are no objections in this regard.

Access and highway safety

The proposed development would be served directly from Creigiau Road, which is sub-standard in terms of width, forward vision, provision of segregated pedestrian footway facilities, adequate highway drainage and street lighting. However, considering that the site was previously developed the principle of access is considered acceptable.

The amended plan indicates that the existing gated access is to be removed and a new access created in the centre of the plot. This acceptable in principle; although the submitted plan lacks sufficient detail with regard to its construction and tie-in with the public highway. The new access should also be at least 4.5m wide to facilitate 2-way traffic flow with provision of a demarcation kerb between the public highway and private land. Nevertheless, the Council's Transportation Section has advised that these issues can be addressed by a condition.

The amended plan also indicates the proposed parking provision, which includes a 7m wide aisle width. The proposed internal layout is sufficient to allow expected visiting vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

It is noted that the proposal for a small scale pottery workshop and retail area would have a floor area of circa 57m². The retail area is presumed to be ancillary to the workshop and as such is not expected to result in significant trip generation. For the purpose of assessing parking requirements the development is considered as 'general industry'.

For such premises with a floor area of less than 235m² the Council's SPG: Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements stipulates an off-street parking requirement of 1 van space plus 2 parking spaces, resulting in a total requirement of 3 spaces.

The amended parking layout submitted includes provision of a dedicated oversized delivery space and 9 no. 2.4m x 4.8m parking spaces. As such, the proposed off-street parking provision exceeds the SPG requirement, and gives no cause for concern.

In light of the above, and subject to the recommended conditions, the development is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Ecology

The Council's Ecologist has advised that the Transportation Section's requirement for a 4.5m visual splay across the entrance of the site has been very helpful in removing any concern that the application might require considerable hedgerow removal.

Having visited the site and reviewed photographic detail, the Ecologist is of the view that additional removal of vegetation for the highways access will not affect any significant dormouse habitat, and that to be removed is of low quality shrubbery. Therefore a survey or a European Protected Species Licence would not be required.

However, to ensure that the redevelopment of this site does not create a physical block for dormouse movement along the roadside hedgerows of Heol Creigiau and the connecting habitat either side of the road, it is suggested that the western boundary of the site, which has a tree/hedge line, has the potential to act as connectivity habitat along which dormice may occasionally move. This would tie in with the hedgerow to the north and hedgerows and woodland south of the site. Therefore, subject to a condition for details of hedgerow enhancement works, through a scheme of sympathetic management and enhancement for its use as wildlife corridor (with particular reference to dormice), this will provide an appropriate consideration of dormouse potential use of this site and the immediate surrounds.

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

By virtue of its scale, design and appearance, the proposed rebuilding of the pottery would create an attractive structure of low visual impact, which would be sympathetic to its countryside location and the history of the site. In addition, the manufacture and sale of pottery would provide a unique and interesting tourism and leisure attraction which would be beneficial to the rural economy in this area and the Borough as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:

1. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawing numbers GM01-1 and GM01-2 155B and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th March 2020, 17th July 2020 and 6th August 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.

2. The development hereby approved, shall be used solely for purposes of the manufacture of pottery, including visiting members of the public for educational or tourism reasons, together with related ancillary retail sales.

Reason: By virtue of its location, historical context and benefit to tourism from the proposed pottery use, the site would not be suitable for other industrial or standalone retail development, in accordance with Policy AW2 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

3. Beneficial use of the development shall not take place until:

i) A scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority indicating:

- a) The positions, height, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected, and;
- b) The provision of a hedgerow enhancement and long-term management scheme, for use as a wildlife and dormouse corridor, along the western site boundary.

ii) The approved boundary treatments and hedgerow scheme have been implemented in accordance with the approved details.

The boundary treatments and hedgerows together with the approved long-term management scheme shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the natural environment in accordance with Policies AW5, AW6 and AW8 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. Beneficial use of the development shall not take place until a drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall demonstrate how the site will be effectively drained; what the means of disposal of surface water will be; and it shall also indicate how foul flows will communicate to the public sewerage system. This shall be confirmed by a sewer trace undertaken by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water staff upon request of the developer, to accurately locate the asset and confirm its status/ownership. Thereafter, the scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to beneficial use

of the development and no further surface water or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage system.

Reason: To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment in accordance with Policies AW6 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. Beneficial use of the development shall not take place until:

i) Full engineering design and detail of the proposed means of access together with the tie-in with the public highway have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of traffic management and wheel washing facilities to be provided on site during construction of the access, and;

ii) The site access and tie-in have been completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the adequacy of the proposed development, in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. The off-street parking spaces indicated on drawing number GM01-2 155B shall be provided on site in permanent materials prior to beneficial use of the development and shall be retained for the purpose of vehicular parking only thereafter.

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