

APPLICATION NO: 16/1181/10 (PB)
APPLICANT: Mr K Jenkins
DEVELOPMENT: Conversion, extension and change of use from Public House (A3) to 4 no. student flats with amenity / service area to rear.
LOCATION: THE BRIDGE INN, BRIDGE STREET, TREForest, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 1TE
DATE REGISTERED: 16/11/2016
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Treforest

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS:

Residential conversion and extension of this vacant public house situated within a predominantly residential area is acceptable as a matter of principle, and will secure a sustainable use for a building that is falling into a state of neglect and disrepair. The proposal will not impact unduly on the character and appearance of the area, nor will it give rise to any undue loss of amenity and privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings. Although no off-street parking is provided with the development, the property is situated in a sustainable location within easy walking distance of public transport links and local facilities and services, including the University of South Wales.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The application is reported to Committee at the request of Councillor Powderhill to consider the consequences of the proposal for the character and appearance of the area where a significant number and proportion of properties are in use as houses in multiple occupation.

APPLICATION DETAILS

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion and extension of the Bridge Inn Public to 4 student flats with an amenity / service area to the rear. The proposal will involve the construction of a first floor extension to the single-storey annexe to the rear of the main public house building. The rear annexe also will be increased in width so that its eastern elevation (facing the railway line) will be flush with the eastern gable of the main building. The extension will be constructed to match the eaves height of the main building and the ridge of the roof will just below that the main building but greater than the neighbouring terraced houses. The whole building, as extended, will be reconfigured as 4 self-contained student flats, two on each floor. The ground floor will comprise one 4-bed flat (73 sqm) and one 3 bed flat (60 sqm), and the first floor will comprise one 4-bed flat (85 sqm) and one 2-bed flat (51 sqm). Access to all flats will be via a communal lobby off the Bridge Street frontage.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application property comprises a comparatively large, vacant public house with ancillary living accommodation on the first floor, and is situated in a tightly-knit residential area characterised by small terraced houses and narrow streets. The building is L-shaped and adjoins a pair of terraced houses in Saron Street, which also but right-up against one side of the rear annexe of the public house. There is a small enclosed yard area to the rear of the public house with access off Saron Street. The eastern boundary of the application site is marked by the embankment to the Cardiff to Merthyr railway line.

PLANNING HISTORY

None.

PUBLICITY

Neighbouring properties have been notified of the application which also has been the subject of site notice and a press notice.

No public response has been forthcoming.

CONSULTATION

Transportation Section – no objection subject to conditions.

Land Reclamation & Engineering – no objection, surface water drainage condition recommended.

Public Health & Protection – comments on matters of demolition, construction hours, noise, dust and waste.

Parks, Countryside & Ecology – bat survey protocol may be triggered.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – no surface water from any increase in the roof area of the building / or impermeable surfaces within its curtilage shall be allowed to drain directly or indirectly to the public sewerage system so as to prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

Policy CS2 - sets out criteria for achieving sustainable growth including, promoting and enhancing transport infrastructure services.

Policy AW2 - advises that development proposals on non-allocated sites will only be supported in sustainable locations.

Policy AW5 - sets out criteria for new development in relation to amenity and accessibility.

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

Policy AW8 – protects Rhondda Cynon Taf’s distinctive natural heritage from inappropriate development.

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 5 (Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast), Chapter 7 (Economic Development), Chapter 8 (Transport), Chapter 9 (Housing) set 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 5: Nature Conservation and Planning;
PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport;
Manual for Streets

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Nature Conservation (March 2011)
SPG: Development of Flats – Conversion and New Build.

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:

The application site lies in settlement limits and is unallocated as defined in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP). The key issues in this case are therefore the principle of the development in relation to prevailing planning policies and the consequences of the proposal for the character and appearance of the area, the amenity and privacy of neighbours and for highway safety.

Principle of the proposed development

The Bridge Inn is a vacant Public House in a residential area of Treforest. It is falling into a state of neglect and disrepair and, despite being on the market for quite some considerable time, shows little prospect of re-opening as a public house or similar use. In view of the building's location within a predominantly residential area, its conversion to residential use is the most appropriate alternative to its continued use as a food and drinks venue. Given the large size of the building its proposed conversion to multiple residential units likewise is not unexpected. In general terms, planning policy encourages appropriate, sustainable re-use of redundant buildings, including their adaption and extension where necessary. In principle the proposed development is acceptable unless outweighed by any other material consideration.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

By and large the bulk of the Bridge Inn building will remain intact and unaltered, apart from the insertion of windows and doors to facilitate and reflect the internal reconfiguration. The only significant physical change will be the proposed works of extension to the rear annexe. This is largely screened from public view in Bridge Street behind the main building and similarly in Saron Street behind a pair of terraced dwellings. However, the annexe is visible from vantage point east of the railway line therefore the extension will be likewise. That said, the design and scale of the extension is in proportion with the rest of the Bridge Inn building and will not appear out of context. The proposed residential use of the building also is in keeping with the character of the area. It could be argued that the intensity of the proposed residential use and the fact that occupation of the development is aimed at students could give rise to and exacerbate problems associated with a high proportion of residential dwellings being used as houses in multiple endemic to the neighbourhood. On the other hand the proposal will result in the conversion of a public house not an existing dwelling. Also, the building is of size and design that lends itself to intensive residential use and will relieve, albeit in a small way, some of the pressure for conversion of dwellings to HMOs in Treforest. Therefore, on balance, it is concluded that the development will not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the locality and satisfies LDP policies AW5 and AW6 in this regard.

Impact on residential amenity and privacy

The key issue in respect of this consideration is the impact of the proposed extension to the rear of the main public house building. This extension will be situated directly adjacent to the rear of a pair of terraced houses in Saron Street resulting in the current single storey annexe becoming a two-storey structure that could have a significant overshadowing and overbearing impact. However, from site inspection it is evident that there are no windows in the rear elevation of the dwellings that could be adversely affected. Also the space between the existing annexe and the rear elevations of the dwellings is already extremely small, such that it is doubtful it is capable of beneficial use as amenity space, and will not be made worse by the development. Therefore, despite the extremely close proximity of the public house to two existing dwellings in Saron Street, it is not considered the proposal will impact upon the residential amenity of these dwellings therefore satisfies LDP policies AW5 and AW6 in this regard.

Access and highway safety

In terms of the accessibility of the proposed development Bridge street has a carriageway width of 6.0m, a 1.2m wide footway on the development side and a 1.2m wide footway opposite. The carriageway incorporates a 2.0m wide parking bay limited to 2 hours with no return within 4 hours, with an exception for resident permit holders.

With its existing use as a public house The Bridge Inn has a parking requirement of approximately 22 off-street spaces, based on 1 space per 5 sqm of and bar and serving area, 1 commercial vehicle space and 1 space per 3 staff. The reality of the circumstances are that there is no off-street parking associated with the building and, given its location, it is considered unlikely the public house use ever generated the level of parking demand suggested by the parking requirements set out above.

In accordance with the adopted SPG *Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements* (March 2011), the proposed 4 flats have a combined off-street parking requirement of 14 spaces. There is no off-street parking associated with the development which gives rises to highway safety concerns. However, the development is located in a sustainable location within walking distance of Treforest train station, multiple bus-routes along the B4595, local amenities and the University of South Wales, and that the flats are identifies as student flats which inherently have a lower car ownership rate, the lack of off-street parking provision is, on balance, considered acceptable.

There are existing cellar doors to the front of the proposed development which would need to be removed. There are no details of the removal of these doors and subsequent re-instatement of the footway submitted with the application, but this can be secured via a suitably worded condition in the event of planning permission being granted.

Taking the above factors into account the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its consequences for accessibility and highway safety and has attracted no objection from the Council's Transportation Section. Accordingly, the proposal satisfies LDP policies AW5 and AW6 in this regard.

Other Issues:

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation.

Drainage

Surface water drainage is required to avoid being disposed of to the public sewerage system to avoid hydraulic overloading of the system in the interests of public and environmental health. In the event of planning permission being granted conditions are capable of being attached to secure adequate drainage of surface water from the development.

Ecology

The Council's Ecologist has pointed out the possibility that the application building may host bats, which are European Protected Species. The roof of the main public house building is unaffected by the proposal therefore disturbance to bats is unlikely

to occur there. The rear annexe which is to be extended occupies a very confined space and is largely infested with dense ivy growth which would make it difficult for bats to enter and exit the roof space. Accordingly, it is suggested in the event of planning permission being granted that an informative note is attached advising of the need to be wary of the possible presence of bats and the licensing procedures if discovered during the construction project.

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 £2,058.24.

Conclusion

The proposed residential conversion and extension of this vacant public house situated within a predominantly residential area is acceptable as a matter of principle, and will secure a sustainable use for a building that is falling into a state of neglect and disrepair. The proposal will not impact unduly on the character and appearance of the area, nor will it give rise to any undue loss of amenity and privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings. Although no off-street parking is provided with the development, the property is situated in a sustainable location within easy walking distance of public transport links and local facilities and services, including the University of South Wales. Planning permission is therefore recommended subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Site location plan & proposed block plan (drawing no: PL-00) dated Sep 2016;
 - Existing floor plans, ground & first (drawing no: PL-01) dated Sep 2016;
 - Existing elevations (drawing no: PL-02) dated Sep 2016;
 - Proposed floor plans, ground & first (drawing no: PL-03) dated Sep 2016;

- Proposed elevations (drawing no: PL-04) dated Sep 2016;
- Proposed floor plans flat areas (drawing no: PL-05) dated Sep 2016;
- Existing Survey Extract Existing Drainage (drawing no: PL-06) dated Sep 2016.

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

3. The external materials of the proposed extension shall match as near as possible the materials of the remainder of the existing building.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and adjoining buildings in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. No development shall commence until drainage arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the drainage works have been carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

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. No development shall commence until full engineering design and details of a scheme for blocking off and making good the pavement following removal of the cellar doors on Bridge Street have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of beneficial occupation.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. No development shall take place, including any works of site clearance, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to 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 agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. Construction works on the development shall not take place other than during the following times:
- (i) Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800 hours.
 - (ii) Saturday 0800 to 1300 hours.
 - (iii) Nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the noise emitted from this development is not a source of nuisance to occupants of nearby residential properties in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.