



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2 AUGUST 2018

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLANNING

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 18/0620/12
(JAW)
APPLICANT: Rhondda Housing Association
DEVELOPMENT: Listed Building Consent for demolition of the former Woodworking Block and construction of a replacement building comprising 6 no. apartments. Refurbishment and conversion of former Caretakers House into 2 no. apartments to include demolition and replacement of single storey extension. Construction of two storey glazed link between the buildings, works to existing boundary wall to relocate pedestrian access and associated external works.
LOCATION: **WOODWORKING BLOCK AND CARETAKERS HOUSE, FORMER COED Y LAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL, LANPARK ROAD, PONTYPRIDD**
DATE REGISTERED: 18/06/2018
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Town (Pontypridd)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASON:

Whilst it is accepted that demolition should always be the very last alternative and the loss of any curtilage listed building is always regrettable. Given the information presented it is considered the impact of the proposed demolition and rebuilding of 'block F' (former woodworking block) with a building of the same footprint and dimensions, with a similar fenestration and using materials that complement the historic and new buildings on the site, together with the sympathetic restoration of the former Caretaker's house will have a positive impact that will offer the listed group a future whilst protecting its intrinsic character and appearance. It is for these reasons that the proposed development is considered acceptable and in accordance with chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 24.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

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

APPLICATION DETAILS

Listed Building Consent (although the buildings themselves are not listed in their own right but are curtilage listed) is sought to:

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

The application is accompanied by the following:

- Heritage Impact Assessment dated June 2018 prepared by Expedite.
- Demolition Justification Statement of former Woodworking block dated June 2018 which includes the following appendices:
 1. Listing Description
 2. CoBRA Report (Graham Frecknall Architecture & Design, June 2006)
 3. Structural Appraisal (Bradley Associates Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers, December 2015)
 4. Follow Up Report (Bradley Associates Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers, October 2016)

5. Structural Condition Report (Austin Partnership Consulting Engineers, May 2017)
6. Structural Appraisal summary (Lodestone Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers, 16th May 2017).
7. Assessment of Structural Repairs Required to Block F (Morganstone Ltd, 19th April 2017)
8. Principal Designer Report (Chris Stevens, May 2017)
9. Further response (Chris Stevens, 15th June 2017)
10. Further response (Morganstone Ltd, 20th June 2017)
11. Concluding Report (Bradley Associates Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers, September 2017)

An application for planning permission has also been submitted under reference 18/0618/10, which includes a bat daytime scoping survey dated July 2018, prepared by Hawkeswood Ecology. The bat issue will be addressed under planning application 18/0618/10.

SITE APPRAISAL

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

The original school was built in 1893-4 by Arthur O Evans and opened in 1896 as the County School. The school was built in the wake of the 1889 Welsh Intermediate Education Act, and cost over £1,000 raised by subscription. It was designed for both boys and girls who had separate entrances. Additions were made to the school almost as soon as it was open. The Caretaker's house was constructed as part of the original build and Block F was added later, along with the gymnasium and science block, understood to be around 1910.

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

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

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

The wider school site is broadly linear in nature, with the majority of the buildings fronting onto and following the form of Tyfica/Lanpark Road. The application buildings lie to the east of the listed school. The front elevation of the former caretaker's house faces west across the site, to the rear of which is 'block F'. A 3-4

storey flat development comprising two buildings has recently been completed to the rear (north).

PLANNING HISTORY

Relevant and recent

17/0555 Listed building consent for demolition of 'block F' (former woodworking block) – Application deferred at a meeting of Committee on 5th April 2018 as Members were minded to refuse the application contrary to officer recommendation.

17/0286 Non-material amendment to planning reference 15/0711/10 to include alterations to block C2 and 'block F'. Alterations to 'block F' to accommodate an additional unit to first floor (from one 2-bed flat to two 1-bed flats) with no external alterations. New entrance to ground floor flat by filling in existing doorway to side elevation (stonework to match) and existing window to street elevation to be enlarged (vertically) to accommodate new access door – Approved 13/04/17

17/0104 Non-Material Amendment to 'block F' to accommodate 4 no. 1 bedroom units (redesign of first floor from 1 2-bed unit to 2 1-bed units) – Withdrawn 22/02/17

15/0751 Proposed demolition of former gymnasium block and erection of 18 Class C3 units, change of use of 'block F' to provide 3 Class C3 units, car parking, landscape and associated works – Granted listed building consent 21/12/15

15/0711 Proposed demolition of former gymnasium block and erection of 18 Class C3 units, change of use of 'block F' to provide 3 Class C3 units, car parking, landscape and associated works – Approved 12/05/16

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by means of a press notice, site notices and neighbour notification letters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Consultation

The Victorian Society – no representation received.

Georgian Group – no representation received.

The Twentieth Century Society - no representation received.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings – no representation received.

Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments for Wales – no representation received.

Ancient Monument Society – no representation received.

Council for British Archaeology Wales/Cymru - no representation received.

POLICY CONTEXT

Planning Policy Wales

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 following chapters set out the Welsh Government's policy (Edition 9, November 2016) on planning issues relevant to the determination of the application:

Chapter 6 Conserving the Historic Environment

Para. 6.5.14 advises occasionally, applications will be made for the demolition of a listed building. These must be fully justified and scrutinised before any decision is taken. The demolition of any listed building should be considered as exceptional and require the strongest justification.

Para. 6.5.17 in all applications for alteration or demolition local planning authorities should consider, whether to make the archaeological recording, analysis and publication of features that would be destroyed, obscured or temporarily revealed by the works a condition of listed building or planning consent. This archaeological programme should be proportionate to the scale of the works being undertaken.

Other relevant policy guidance consulted:

Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017)

Para. 5.13 advises when determining a listed building consent application, the local planning authority should consider the following issues:

- The importance and grade of the building and its intrinsic architectural or historic interest.
- The physical features of the building which justify its listing and contribute to its significance, (for example its form and layout, materials, construction and detail) including any features of importance such as the interior, which may have come to light after the building's inclusion on the list.

- The contribution of curtilage and setting to the significance of the building, as well as its contribution to its local scene.
- The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the building.
- The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial community benefits for example, by contributing to the area's economy or the enhancement of its local environment.

Para. 5.15 advises an application for the demolition of a listed building should be made in exceptional circumstances and only as an option of last resort. Consent for demolition should not be given simply because redevelopment is economically more attractive than the repair and re-use of a historic building. The following factors need to be considered:

- The condition of the building, the cost of repair and maintenance in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use. Where a building has been deliberately neglected, less weight will be given to these costs.
- The efforts made to keep the building in use or to secure a new use, including the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building for sale at a fair market price that reflects its condition and situation.
- The merits of the alternative proposals for the site, including whether the replacement buildings would meet the objectives of good design and whether or not there are substantial benefits for the community that would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

Policy AW7 protection and enhancement of the built environment states "development proposals which impact upon sites of architectural and/or historic merit and sites of architectural importance will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site".

However, para. 6.5.10 of PPW advises that there is no statutory requirement to have regard to the provisions of the development plan when considering applications for listed building consent.

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 16(2) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Main Issue:

Acceptability of the proposed development on the special architectural and historic merit of the buildings, which are curtilage listed.

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

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

Impact on Listed Buildings and their setting

Three of the original buildings within the curtilage of the site are Grade II listed, which comprise the main school building, the rear science block and gymnasium listed in February 2001. The Cadw listing identifies that the buildings were listed "as an early County school retaining considerable architectural character in a prominent position overlooking the town". 'Block F' and the former caretaker's house are not listed in their own right but are considered to be curtilage buildings.

'Block F'

In terms of 'block F' the Heritage Impact Assessment that supports the application advises in terms to the overall significance to the school building that 'historically 'block F' was an integral part of the structure and function of the school and its materials at least to Lanpark Road enabling it to be read as part of the group. Its presence in the streetscape is important although it is not read alongside the other historic school buildings, other than the former Caretaker's house. In aesthetic terms 'block F' has coursed ashlar stone limited to its south east elevation facing Lanpark Road; all other elevations comprise stone rubble, although retaining the yellow brick quoins and window surrounds. 'Block F' is not read against the principal listed buildings due to their visual separation. However, it is considered a prominent structure in its own right in the streetscape.

Paragraph 6.5.14 of Planning Policy Wales states that 'occasionally applications will be made for the demolition of a listed building' it goes on to advise that such proposals must be fully justified and scrutinised before any decision is taken'.

Guidance published by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) contained within Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017) expect authorities to address the following considerations in determining applications where the proposed works would result in the total or substantial demolition of the listed building.

- The condition of the building and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use.

- The efforts made to keep the building in use or to secure a new use, including the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building for sale at a fair market price that reflects its condition and situation.
- The merits of the alternative proposals for the site, including whether the replacement buildings would meet the objectives of good design and whether or not there are substantial benefits for the community that would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

Given its curtilage listing these considerations are still relevant.

Condition of 'block F'

'Block F' has been vacant since July 2005 and has been subject to extensive deterioration in that time. It is evident that a structural survey was prepared for the previous owners of the site in November 2015 (not originally part of any planning submission) which set out the findings and recommendations with regards to the condition of the building. However, a follow up report dated October 2016 (not originally part of any planning submission) was prepared when it was noted that "the work undertaken was generally of poor quality and much of it should be revisited". As a result of the concerns outlined in the report a comprehensive structural survey of the building was undertaken, which identified 'block F' is subject to "numerous significant structural defects" and is "seriously weakened". The report goes on to identify that the building 'has deteriorated to such an extent that not only is the remedial work previously recommended in the November 2015 report no longer feasible, but the external wall on Lanpark Road is now at imminent danger if collapse'.

At this point the Council requested (under reference 17/0555/22) that a further report be produced by a person with either conservation accreditation or with at least 10 years experience in this field. A further report was therefore commissioned from Bradley Associates dated September 2017, who state have 'over 30 years experience working with listed buildings'. The report concludes that the building in its current state is vulnerable to collapse and large sections of the external rear wall are unrestrained with a sizable portion of stonework missing. The decayed timber within the wall fabric is still in place which is weakening the overall structure. It is common for these types of buildings not to have any foundation and the external walls are extremely porous. Prior to any remedial work, it is paramount that an extensive scheme of temporary work designed by specialist subcontractors should be implemented to ensure the building is safe and the workforce is protected from any falling masonry'.

The Council's Structural Engineer advised under reference 17/0555/22 that the safer option would be to demolish completely or to reduce to a safe lower level (ground floor cill height). It is considered that there has been no change in circumstance to the condition of the building since the previous application to conclude a different view.

Demolition justification of 'block F' and replacement building

As part of a Demolition Justification statement a number of options to retain the building have been explored, these include:

- Do nothing – ‘the health and risks associated with the potential collapse of the building are such that this is not a feasible option.’
- Minimal intervention – would involve basic work required to ensure that the public safety risks associated with the potential collapse of the building are minimised. This approach would offer the benefit of the retention of the building in the short-term. However, would give rise to significant on-going cost liability accumulating over time and without more intervention works, the building would continue to deteriorate.
- Permanent shoring up – would involve works and costs to make the building secure, safe and watertight on a long-term basis. This approach would secure the retention of the building on a more permanent basis, however, would prove extremely cost intensive.
- Sale of building to a third party developer for open market residential use or commercial office use – the cost risks are such that no private developer is likely to take on such a liability.
- Conversion to affordable housing – this approach would retain the building, would reinstate the building’s aesthetics and would secure its long term future; however, the cost is not a viable option for the applicant or any other social housing provider.
- Demolish and reinstate the site with landscaping – this is the option put forward in the previous application 17/0555/22 however it was not considered acceptable to Members.

The above options were considered as part of the previous application reference 17/0555/22, the current application has also considered the following additional option, which is the option that forms the current proposal:

- Demolish ‘Block F’ and rebuild to similar appearance and restore the former Caretaker’s house – this approach would create a building that meets modern standards but would also enhance the appearance and character of the area. The applicant has advised that whilst the initial outlay would be significant the increased rental revenue over the mortgage period would off-set a significant proportion of this. Whilst this would still result in a net loss, unlike the conversion options the viability would not be financially crippling to the applicant/Housing Association.

It should be noted that the economic viability of carrying out works to a curtilage listed building is known as “heritage deficit” as the works tend to be undertaken by specialists and as demonstrated in this case are often costly. Members will note the view of local residents’ and the Local Member is that the original planning permission to convert ‘block F’ to flats is the option that should be taken forward. However, it must be noted that to retain the building for any future use would require taking the building down to at least ground floor cill level questioning what historic value would remain in the remodelled building?

The Heritage Impact Assessment has advised that salvage of the existing materials from ‘block F’ has been considered, however, due to variations in stone (the Lanpark Road elevation is coursed ashlar blocks and the other elevations are rubble) and due

to the general percentage loss of stone during salvage this is not considered practicable. The proposed materials of the replacement building is therefore proposed to match the lower floors of the completed buildings to the north, that is, the same stone and yellow brick detailing as the historic buildings. The windows will be painted timber and the roof covering Welsh or Canadian slate. The fenestration pattern will change slightly in order to accommodate the six new flats. The impact on the listed building will be through the loss of historic fabric that makes up 'block F', which forms part of the curtilage listing. However, against this loss has to be balanced the benefit of reconstructing a building with the same footprint, scale and massing and with external materials that complements both the historic and new buildings on the site. It is considered that the proposal to re-build 'Block F' to the same footprint and overall appearance as existing will provide continuity in the street scene.

Former Caretaker's house

As discussed earlier in the report to make the scheme viable the current application also proposes to incorporate the existing adjacent building on the site, the Caretaker's house into the scheme. The Caretaker's house dates from the same time as the original school, unlike 'block F' it is not in a significant state of disrepair, however, it has been significantly and inappropriately modernised, including a new artificial slate roof, UPVC windows, fascias and soffits throughout which have aesthetically damaged the character of the building. In terms of the contribution the former Caretaker's house makes to the overall significance of the school buildings, historically it had a secondary but related function to the overall running and structure of the school and is read as part of the group. It is considered that the refurbishment of the building will enhance the building through the replacement of inappropriate materials with traditional timber windows, fascias and soffits and metal rainwater goods. It is considered that the loss of the front door to the front elevation (west) and replacement with a sash window to match those existing, the addition of a new ground floor window in the side (road facing) elevation and the rebuilding of the lean-to extension with more appropriate materials to match the existing would enhance the building by using more appropriate materials and offer it a viable future.

It is proposed to access all 8 apartments via internal communal stairs in the new building that will be joined to the lean-to at the former Caretaker's house by a two storey glazed link. It is considered that the glazed link would be appropriate as it will assist in retaining the visual appearance/separation of the two buildings.

Other matters not relevant to Listed Building considerations:

- The petition received from residents of Lanpark Road refers to their privacy being best served by a conversion of the existing building. The planning merits of the proposed development is discussed under the planning application, reference 18/0618/10. However, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable degree of loss of privacy to residents directly in front of the site in Lanpark Road.
- Residents and the Local Member have requested/indicated that the representations made under reference 17/0555/22 should be allowed to stand

in relation to the current proposal. However, as it is a new application with a new scheme to provide a replacement building to 'block F' and incorporate the former Caretaker's house residents have been advised that new submissions are required.

- Due to the health and safety risks associated with 'block F' the housing association have taken the decision not to allow the 18 units in the recently completed development in the two blocks to the rear of the site to be occupied until such time as the safety of 'block F' has been satisfactorily addressed. This is clearly having an impact on current levels of affordable housing delivery in the area and having a financial impact on the housing association.

Conclusion

Having regard to the above it is considered that the impact of the proposed rebuilding of 'block F' and the restoration of the former Caretaker's house will offer the listed group a future whist protecting its intrinsic character and appearance.

Consequently, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve, subject to favourable referral to Cadw.

1. The development hereby granted consent shall be begun not later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

2. The consent hereby granted relates to the following plans:

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

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

3. Notwithstanding the details on the approved plans before work starts, the design and details of the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning:

- rainwater goods;
- roof lights;
- soffits and fascias;
- boundary treatments;

- timber windows;
- stone and bricks
- materials of glazing link and its attachment to caretaker's house

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building; in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. All disturbed fabric shall be made good to match the existing building.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the listed building in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. Certification showing the roofing slates to 'block F' shall be Welsh or Canadian to A1, S1, T1 standard, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the proposed works will be in keeping with the special architectural and historic character of the (curtilage) listed buildings in accordance with Policy AW7 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. No demolition shall take place until copies of plans and/or a photographic record of 'block F' is deposited by the applicant in the Royal Commission's archive.

Reason: To retain a record of the building to accord with para. 6.5.17 Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

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