

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises of a detached building consisting of ground floor hairdresser (use class A1) with a first floor flat (use class C3) located at 2A Victoria Road, Port Talbot.

Though not located in a retail centre, the immediate surrounds have some of the characteristics of a local centre with the adjacent property to the west being a café, to the east a convenience store and pharmacy and to the south and rear a tyre fitter and a welfare club. The wider streetscene also features a mix of residential properties interspersed with a small number of cafes, takeaways and retail units.

The application site is located within of the settlements boundary as defined by Policy SC1 of the NPTCBC LDP.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This is a full planning application to change of use a hairdresser (use class A1) with first floor flat above (use class C3) to an education & training centre (use class D1). Alterations are also proposed to a rear door, the installation of a pitch roof to a rear outbuilding and to provide a permeable hard surfaced area for bicycle and bin storage at the rear of the site.

The training centre would consist of a reception, training room and ancillary facilities on the ground floor and rooms for counselling, beauty therapy, play therapy and a quiet room on the first floor. The intention of the applicant is to provide training and skills development for victims of domestic abuse.

For the main building only internal alterations are proposed aside from on the east facing elevation of the rear extension where a new entrance door is proposed to serve an accessible WC.

In the rear garden area, 1.1m from the existing rear extension, there is an existing outbuilding currently without a roof with a footprint of 3.3m by 3.3m. It is proposed to install a pitched roof to this outbuilding to have an eaves height of 2.2m and a ridge height of 3.1m. At the rear of the site a permeable hard surface area measuring 45m² is proposed including space for bicycle parking and an area for bin storage.

NEGOTIATIONS

Alterations to surfacing and layout of rear parking area.

PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has the following relevant planning history: -

T1984/4880 - The conversion of house into shop. Approved 7/10/84

P2010/0886 – Replacement shopfront. Approved 16/11/10

P2023/0834 - Change of use from hairdressers (class A1) to a single 4no. bedroom residential dwelling (class C3). New front access and front alterations, replacing

window with a door at rear ground floor level, and parking to the rear Refused
14/11/24

CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health (Noise) – No objection

Environmental Health (Land Contamination) – No objection

Natural Resources Wales – No objection

Highways – No objection

Local Lead Flood Authority - No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

The neighbouring properties were consulted via letter on 1/7/26.

A site notice was also displayed on 1/7/26.

In response, to date no representations have been received.

REPORT

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or wellbeing) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation set out below, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

National Planning Policy:

[Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#) is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. The development plan sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The following policy is of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

[Planning Policy Wales \(Edition 12, February 2024\)](#)

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty. A well-functioning

planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places

PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities. It encourages a wider, sustainable and problem-solving outlook which focuses on integrating and addressing multiple issues rather than on an approach which is fragmented, un-coordinated and deals with issues in isolation. It provides an opportunity to remove any actual or perceived problems in current approaches and stimulate and support innovative and creative ideas as well as high standards of evidence and assessment to underpin the preparation of development plans and strategies and individual proposals. Monitoring and learning from development outcomes so as to drive sustainable improvements in planning practice is also important.

The following is of particular relevance in the assessment of this planning application:

4.3.1 Retail and commercial centres are hubs of social and economic activity and the focal point for a diverse range of services which support the needs of local communities. They are highly accessible to different modes of transport and are the most sustainable locations for new development.

4.3.2 Retail and commercial centres should be identified in development plans and include established city, town, district, local, village and neighbourhood centres, which provide a range of shopping, commercial and leisure opportunities as well as places of employment, education, civic identity and social interaction. Opportunities to live in these centres, combined with their good public transport links, make them the most sustainable places.

4.4.1 Community facilities perform various functions which cover a broad range of activities and services that can be delivered by the public, private and third sectors. Community facilities contribute to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places. They can include schools, cultural facilities, health services, libraries, allotments and places of worship.

4.4.2 Planning authorities should develop a strategic and long-term approach to the provision of community facilities when preparing development plans based on evidence. When considering development proposals planning authorities should consider the needs of the communities and ensure that community facilities continue to address the requirements of residents in the area.

PPW12 is supported by a series of more detailed [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs), of which the following are of relevance: -

- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 4: Retail and Commercial Development
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development

Local Planning Policies

The Local Development Plan for the area comprises the [Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan](#) which was adopted in January 2016, and within which the following policies are of relevance:

Strategic Policies

- **Policy SP3** Sustainable Communities
- **Policy SP12** Retail
- **Policy SP15** Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Policy SP16** Environmental Protection
- **Policy SP20** Transport Network
- **Policy SP21** Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Topic Based Policy

- **Policy SC1** Settlement limits
- **Policy R2** Proposals within Retail Centres
- **Policy EN6** Important biodiversity and geodiversity sites.
- **Policy EN7** Important Natural Features
- **Policy EN8** Pollution and Land Stability
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New development
- **Policy BE1** Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application: -

- [Design](#) (July 2017)

Issues

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this application relate to the principle of development, together with the impact on the visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring residents, and highway safety.

Principle of Development

The application site lies within the settlement limit as defined by Policy SC1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan. Policy SC1 stipulates that development within settlement limits that is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy will be acceptable in principle.

Though not located in a designated local retail centre, the proposal is an existing commercial unit, located in an established commercial area. The immediate surrounds have many characteristics of a local centre with the adjacent property to the west being a café, to the east a small supermarket and pharmacy and to the south and rear a tyre fitter and a welfare club. The wider streetscene also features a mix of residential properties interspersed with a small number of cafes, takeaways and retail units.

The application would occupy a currently vacant commercial space and there are several other vacant premises along Victoria Road. With the reuse of a previously vacant site, it is considered the proposed development will help enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness area, as well as helping to promote the Welsh Government's objectives of the sustainable use of land and buildings. Since the proposal seeks to introduce a D1 use on the varied street, it is not considered that the change of use would result in the over dominance of D1 uses to the detriment of the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the area. The proposal would therefore be generally acceptable in policy terms.

Impact on Visual Amenity

From a visual perspective the frontage of the property would not be altered externally and is therefore considered to be in-keeping with the commercial context of the neighbouring properties at this location. With regard to the works to the rear, being the reroofing of an outbuilding, replacement door and hardstanding, the siting of the development to the rear of the application property dictates that it would be for the most part hidden from a public vantage point, screened by the original building and neighbouring properties. No materials were proposed for these works so it is recommended that a suitable worded condition be imposed such that they match the existing building.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would subsequently accord with Policy BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Impact on Residential Amenity

With regards to the potential impact upon residential amenity in terms of noise and disturbance, the property is located on one of the main classified roads through Sandfields with the ground floor having an existing commercial use. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be any noise or nuisance issues to the neighbouring properties above and beyond the existing use and that of surrounding commercial and cafe uses. The authority's environmental health officers were consulted on the potential noise impact of the proposal on neighbouring properties and offered no objection to the proposal.

The applicant has requested opening hours of 8:00 to 21:00 Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 18:00 on Saturday and 10:00 to 18:00 on Sunday and Bank Holidays. The current use and that of the neighbouring café and vacant supermarket are unrestricted and other uses in the wider vicinity have operating hours restricted between 8:00 and 22:00 on weekdays. Given the nature of the proposal, its surrounds and the operation of nearby businesses it is considered that there would not be an unacceptable adverse impact from permitting the requested opening times though it is recommended that a suitably worded condition be imposed so that the use does not operate beyond this into anti-social hours.

The lack of any external alterations or structural proposals to the fabric of the main building eliminates the development's ability to overbear, overshadow or overlook any neighbouring properties over and above what is currently experienced on site.

An obscurely glazed side window on the ground floor of No. 2 Victoria Road located immediately on the property boundary faces northeast towards the proposed new roof on the rear outbuilding with the potential for overshadowing. However, it should be noted that this is a secondary window with glazed patio doors serving the room facing the southeast. It should also be noted that a boundary fence up to 2m in height could be erected immediately adjacent to this window under permitted development rights without requiring planning consent.

In light of the aforementioned information, it is not considered that the proposed use would detrimentally impact upon the residential amenity of the surrounding properties. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies BE1 & EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Parking and Access Requirements and Impact on Highway Safety

The authority's highways section was consulted regarding the proposal and offered no objection to the proposal. They noted that the site was located in "an established commercial area, where a high level of on-street parking is already available, it is considered that the proposed change of use would not have a detrimental impact on parking provision within the surrounding area. As such, no formal off-street parking is required to serve the development, although the provision of additional off-street parking would represent an improvement."

It is therefore considered that the proposed change of use would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety, and would subsequently be in accordance with Policy TR2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Contaminated Land

The Authority's Environmental Health section was consulted on the proposal with regard to the potential of land contamination at the site and the environmental health officer responded offering no objection.

Flood risk

The property is within the Natural Resources Wales flood map for planning zone 2 and 3 flood zone for seas; partially within a defended zone 2 for rivers and partly within flood zone 2 for surface water and small watercourses. A flood consequences assessment was submitted along with the application and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) were consulted regarding the proposal.

NRW offered no objection to the proposal as the proposal was for a less vulnerable development. This advice was subject to the developer being made aware of the potential flood risks and consequences and it is recommended that a suitable informative is added to any consent. It is therefore not considered the proposed use would have a detrimental effect on any flooding issues in the area.

The LLFA commented that the proposed rear hardstanding area was permeable and that the proposal is not considered likely to increase surface water runoff rates or volumes from the site and is not expected to increase flood risk elsewhere. The

LLFA officer further commented that a SAB application would not be required due to the limited extent of the proposed works.

It is therefore not considered the proposed use would have a detrimental effect on any flooding issues in the area.

Biodiversity / Ecology

As identified above, Policies EN6 and EN7 of the Local Development Plan will be of relevance insofar as there is a need to ensure any impacts on biodiversity/ natural features are appropriately assessed and, where applicable, mitigated.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 sets out that;

The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.

A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15 of PPW 12) has been applied.

A green infrastructure statement was submitted stating the development will provide a bird box to be affixed at eaves height on the southeast facing elevation of the rear outbuilding and a bug box on the eastern rear boundary wall which will be secured by a suitably worded condition.

CONCLUSION

The decision to recommend planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011–2026) adopted January 2016.

It is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development that would have no unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area, the amenities of neighbouring residents and highway safety. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies SP3, SP12, SP15, SP16, SP20, SP21, SC1, R2, EN6, EN7, EN8, TR2 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

It is further considered that the decision complies with Future Wales - the National Plan 2040, specifically Policy 2 (Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking) and the Council's well-being objectives and the sustainable development principle in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.