

**Proposed Change of Use from Retail
with Residential Over
to
Restaurant and Bed & Breakfast Accommodation Over
at
5 – 15 Herbert Street, Pontardawe**

Access & Design Statement

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VISION

The premises is a well established commercial premises comprising 5 commercial units at ground floor level with four residential flats over, located in the centre of the Pontardawe retail area. Currently no. 5 is unoccupied and has been vacant since 2015 as have the first floor flats. Units 7 & 9 are occupied by the Cooperative Funeral Service and 13 & 15 by Sweet William a Gift Shop.

Our client has established that there is a need for an upmarket fish restaurant in Pontardawe together with additional Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

The proposals are to be contained within the existing premises without any extension thereto, maintaining the external elevations with only minor adjustment to the access doors and windows.

Despite being within the flood plain of the Upper Clydach River our geotechnical consultants have previously spoken to the Environment Agency and established that provided bedroom accommodation is not provided at ground floor level there should be no objection to the proposals.

INTRODUCTION & SITE LOCATION

The application is for a restaurant with Bed and Breakfast accommodation over.

The site is in the centre of the town retail area and has been used as shops and offices at ground floor level with four residential flats at first floor level.

Planning Permission was granted on the 6th January 2010 for an additional four self contained flats within the roof space (application no. P2008/1483) but this approval was never implemented.

The site comprises some 0.042ha in area and is flat and has level access from adjacent roads and pavements.

SITE ANALYSIS

Access to the property is directly from the pavement fronting Herbert Street. Deliveries will be made via the rear yard accessed from the lane between no. 3 Herbert Street and the Dillwyn Arms Hotel which will also be used for arrivals and departures of guests of the Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

The property has 2m, high close boarded fencing to the rear and side boundaries and abuts the pavement at the front.

CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

Pontardawe connects to the M4 via the A4067 and acts as a transport hub with access to Neath and Swansea and is also a gateway to the valleys and beyond. Pontardawe sits at the foothills of the Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountain and is situated alongside the River Tawe that winds its way through the valley towards the open sea at Swansea.

Pontardawe functions as a town centre for the valley communities, providing a varied range of retail services, leisure facilities, education establishments and employment opportunities.

Policy SP13 indicates that the Local Authority is in favour of encouraging growth in the tourist sector.

The site is located in the centre of the town retail area and has a well established business use.

There is a variety of retail shops, hot food takeaways, restaurants, public houses, convenience

stores, post office, butchers, greengrocers, hair dressers, chemists, opticians, insurance offices, hair dressers, charity shops, funeral directors, etc. in close proximity which trade between the hours of 9am and 5.30pm. In addition there are several public houses, clubs and hotels in the vicinity.

There are three municipal car parking facilities off Herbert Street, together with parking at the rear of the Castle Public House on High Street all in close proximity to the premises.

There are excellent bus facilities providing easy access to Swansea, Neath, Ystradgynlais and Ammanford and there are railway stations located at Swansea, Neath and Ammanford.

POLICY CONTEXT

Consideration of the topography of the site whether there is contamination, instability or impact upon amenity of adjacent properties. In this instance the site is level and not contaminated and lies within a shopping street the proposed use being entirely compatible with the adjacent properties.

Policy 1 Calls for all development proposals to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historical and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places. Development must complement and enhance the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment. The proposal must respect the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it must take into account the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges. The proposals must use materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporate hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate. It should not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community. Such local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are to be retained and enhanced as far as possible. The development must achieve and create attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking into account of the "Secured by Design" principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement). The scheme must play a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interest of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensure linkages with the existing surrounding community. The scheme must use resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area of a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area. The layout and form of the development should not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land. The development of brownfield land is preferred to greenfield land where possible. The design should minimise building exposure whilst maximising solar gain. The drainage system must be designed to limit surface water run off and flood risk and prevent pollution. The layout and design of the development must achieve inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.

The proposals require only minor adjustments to the external appearance of the premises is required to accommodate the change of use.

Despite being within the flood plain of the Upper Clydach River our geotechnical consultants have previously spoken to the Environment Agency and established that provided bedroom accommodation is not provided at ground floor level there should be no objection to the proposals.

All infrastructure and services are existing within the premises.

The premises is accessed from back of pavement.

INVOLVEMENT / CONSULTATIONS

There has been no consultation prior to this application as it is felt that the proposal is not in the least contentious.

DESIGN

The proposals have been designed in order to minimise the alterations to the appearance of the existing building.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The CTV cameras will be provided covering both the front and rear of the property to ensure security of the premises and will facilitate security on Herbert Street.

CHARACTER

As the alterations to the premises are minor there will be little or no change to the local environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The alterations will not involve any material changes to the structure of the property.

The materials to be utilised in this development are to comply with the BRE Green Specification Guide with regard to materials and construction methods to ensure sustainability.

It is proposed to use best quality insulating materials to provide insulation standards greater than required by current Building Regulations and to achieve a SAP rating in excess of 80.

Windows and doors are to be retained..

Consideration is to be given to the installation of solar panels in the roof to provide hot water for the premises and a heat recovery system is to be installed in Kitchens and Bathrooms.

The property is to be heated by gas fired central heating using a high efficiency condensing combination boiler with Datatherm Intelligent Heating Controls to minimise the energy required to heat the premises. The hot water taps to baths are to be controlled by using TMV taps complying with BSEM1287/BSEN1111 to limit bath water temperatures to 48 degrees C.

All rooms are to be provided with low energy light fittings and external lights are to be fitted with solar and movement sensors.

Consideration is to be given to the introduction of a rainwater recycling system which would provide water for w. c. flushing cisterns, garden watering, car washing etc.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

All access ways are designed to satisfy the part M requirements of the Building Regulations.

The only servicing required by these facilities will be normal domestic refuse collection and deliveries of food and drink via the lane between no. 3 Herbert Street and the Dillwyn Arms Hotel

CAR PARKING PROVISION

The town of Pontardawe grew over the Victorian period well before the advent of the motor vehicle

and accordingly the development did not cater for this later innovation. Indeed the Cross Hotel (later the Cross Community Centre) was a coaching inn with stabling in what is now the Ponty Project Community Centre adjacent to the current development site.

The existing development premises is over 120 years old and the use as a commercial property with living accommodation over was established from the outset.

In the latest planning approval dated 6/1/2010 the accommodation was to include 5 Ground Floor commercial units with 8 self contained residential flats at First Floor and Second Floor levels. This would have required 16 car parking spaces for the residential element of the development and at least 5 staff car parking spaces for the commercial units in order to satisfy the parking criteria applicable at that time. Accordingly there is precedent for the relaxing of parking standards.

The majority of commercial and residential properties on Herbert Street and High Street have no or limited parking provision for staff, residents and clientele (including the Local Authority owned and operated Arts Centre).

The town however has generous municipal car parking facilities with 20 spaces in the car park at the rear of the Castle Inn, 44 spaces in the Bye Pass car park, 36 spaces in the Herbert Street Upper car park and 20 spaces in the Herbert Street Lower car park all of which are easily and conveniently accessible to this property. The car park at the rear of the Castle Inn and the Bye Pass car park are readily accessed via the canal side footpaths adjacent to this block of property.

As earlier intimated the lane between no. 3 Herbert Street and the Dillwyn Arms Hotel, provides a convenient drop off point for residents using the Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

Research has shown that the Swansea Valley is very popular with cycling and motorcycling holiday makers. Although on site car parking cannot be provided, due to the 1700mm frontage onto the side lane, at least 7 secure guest motor cycle parking spaces as well as space for refuse bin storage and deliveries to the business can be provided.

With regard to precedent for the reduced car parking standards we would point out the following examples:-

- The Dinefwr Arms which is a Public House with Bed & Breakfast accommodation has approximately two parking spaces
- The Pink Geranium again a Public House with Bed & Breakfast accommodation has one parking space
- The Ranch a Restaurant has two parking spaces
- The Indian Cottage a Restaurant has no car parking provision
- The Cardomn a Restaurant has approximately no parking provision
- Bishop's Restaurant has no parking provision

In addition the New Swan in Gurnos Road, Ystalyfera, a Public House with a Restaurant and Living Accommodation over was granted Planning Permission in 2005 to convert part of the first of the first floor to Bed & Breakfast accommodation with one car parking space and three motor cycle parking spaces and this was further reinforced by permission being granted on 5th November 2014 Approval no. 2014/882 for an additional letting Bedroom again with no additional parking requirement. This is particularly significant in that Ystalyfera has no municipal parking facilities in the village only on street parking.

GENERAL COMMENTS

We anticipate that further improvements will be made to the scheme prior to and during construction as required by the Welsh Assembly Government guidelines.

Car Parking Provision in Pontardawe

LEGEND

Location	Site	Spaces
1	Castle Car Park	20
2	Bye Pass Car Park	44
3	Herbert St. Upper	36
4	Herbert St. Lower	20

