

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
FOR A PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE

THE TREE TOPS GUEST HOUSE
282 NEATH ROAD
BRITON FERRY
NEATH

M T H ASSOCIATES
7 VINCENT STREET
SANDFIELDS
SWANSEA
SA1 3TY

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed change of use

THE TREE TOPS GUEST HOUSE

282 Neath Road

Briton Ferry

Neath

to Residential Care Home

DESIGN

SITE ANALYSIS

- The property is a three-storey semi-detached unit with a tiled roof over masonry rendered walls. A two-storey annexe extends from the rear constructed of brick and masonry under a tiled roof.
- Tree Tops Guest House traded historically catering for the lower end of the market demographic. It has however been closed for a number of years with two different operators failing to make it viable.
- In the last few years' new hotels have opened across the area providing clean modern accommodation more in keeping with the vibrant image that the area seeks to project. Many of the traditional hotels and guesthouses in the area are unable to compete with these new purpose built hotels. In recent years the profile of guests using the guesthouses has also changed to tradesmen working locally during the week and returning to their homes at weekends. Weekend visitors and tourists now seek a higher standard of accommodation catered for by the newer purpose built venues. It has proved uneconomic to continue trading as a guesthouse with insufficient income to cover operating costs. Both the original and most recent operators failed to make it viable and the ventures closing as a result.
- Tree Tops closed some two years ago and attempts to market it as a guesthouse have not met with success. Our client's now seek to convert the property into a residential care home working closely with Neath Port Talbot Social Services to provide for local underprivileged children within the 8-16 age group.
- It would also provide an opportunity to redevelop a vacant outdated run down property bring it back into productive use.
- The guesthouse is located at the north end of Neath Road in a row of semi and detached properties with a mix of residential and commercial properties on its south side.
- East and West of the site are further residential properties.

- Due north of the site is a pedestrian access link to Old Road. Ysgol Cwrt Sart is also located a short distance away. The surrounding streets are predominantly residential properties interspersed with the odd shop and public house.
- Rising approximately 700mm above Neath Road the site levels allowing access for those with walking difficulties. Low access thresholds allow wheelchair access to the ground floor.
- The area around the building is hard surfaced in tarmac and laid out to provide 7 parking spaces. At the rear is a small shed and amenity space.
- There is currently no form of landscaping within the site boundaries.

ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS

- There are a few commercial buildings in the area these comprise of a shop, rugby club, motor repairs, public house and café.
- South from the site are numerous shops and services. These include convenience store, florists, post office, hair salon, cafe and takeaway,
- Melin local primary school is located North (1300m) away at Mile End Row.
- Cwrt Sart secondary school is also a short distance (300m) north of the site.
- Located on a bus route there are bus stops (200m) north of the site on Cwrt Sart road.
- A short distance away is Neath town centre with its shops, restaurants, bars and railway station. All within walking, cycling distance or via public transport.
- A474 Neath Road passes the site linking the Town Centre (1.25miles) north and the M4 motorway south (1.0mile). This route provides excellent links to Port Talbot, Cardiff, Swansea and the Gower Peninsular. It is possible to walk, cycle or reach these destinations by public transport removing dependency on private car journeys.
- A bus route links with Port Talbot and major hospital at Baglan.
- A short drive south the M4 motorway provides access to the national road network.

POLICY CONTEXT

- NPTs Planning Policy sets out to make best use of existing and brown field sites within clearly defined settlement boundaries. There is also a clear objective to make use of public transport links and move away from private car use. The site would satisfy both of these objectives located as it is within an existing settlement and within walking distance of public transport.
- Strategic Policy SC1 of the LDP seeks to ensure sustainable development of high quality and design that enhances the landscape. It is proposed to make use of an existing building that is unused in its present form.
- SP7 Highlights the need for homes to fit in with communities making use of sites within existing development boundaries. They should infill and round off developments making use of established transport links. All of these

requirements are met utilising an existing site with good access to local facilities all within walking distance.

- Established leisure facilities are available locally at Ysgol Cwrt Sart.
- The residents will benefit from having access to local education and health care facilities. These are all available within walking distance of the site with residents benefiting from additional in house educational support and resources if required.
- SP20 Improve accessibility. This is well catered for as local transport stops are situated a short walk north of the site. Cycling and walking to local services is easily achieved, as all facilities are available within a half-mile radius.
- SP20 Favours developments that make use of local transport links. As stated above these are available within walking distance of the development. Thus reducing dependency on private car journeys. Both staff and residents will be encouraged to make full use of the local transport services.
- Rail and Airport links. The first transport facility is close to the site being available from Briton Ferry (350m) and Neath (1.5miles). The second is available less than an hour from the site by public or private transport.
- The proposal is both modest and makes use of an existing building. It is not proposed to change the façade nor causes loss of amenity to adjacent properties. Public transport is available within walking distance and occupants will be able to reduce their personal transport needs.
- All services are connected to the structure already and many will see a reduction in their demand with a new more efficient boiler. No additional water runoff will occur as no new structures are proposed
- Level access threshold at its intersection with the footpath will allow access for all at ground floor level. Off-street parking will be retained and there will be a reduction in traffic visiting the site with the loss of visiting guest vehicles.
- SP13 The Guest House has been unoccupied for two years. No longer viable as a business is has faced stiff competition from more modern purpose build developments. Both previous operators of the Guest House failed to make it a success resulting in its closure. When last in operation it attracted an undesirable element resulting in a number of visits by armed Police Officers causing alarm and distress to neighbours.
- The building owners have been marketing the building as a Guest House for two years with no interest and no prospective purchasers.
- Our client seeks to provide an opportunity to bring the building back into beneficial use. The proposal to convert it into a Care Home for under privileged young children aged 8-16 years of age. These less fortunate children will receive the care and support that has been missing from their lives.
- The development will also create up to 20 local skilled jobs in the care sector.
- A team of qualified carers will support and nurture residents 24 hours a day. Providing a learning and family orientated environment with pastoral support regardless of race or culture. They will be given opportunities to engage in local social, leisure and charitable activities. Providing them with the necessary tools to become valued members of society with good future prospects.

- The building lends itself to conversion with little structural change required.
- The buildings appearance will be enhanced with refurbishment of windows, doors and redecoration.
- The development will see a reduction in vehicles accessing the site by staff and visitors. Staff changes will occur at 09:00am that will feel like a normal working day and at 18:30pm for overnight working at the property. Parking for seven vehicles will be retained, although company policy is to recommend car shearing or public transport use wherever possible.

INVOLVEMENT

- Our clients have been made aware of Local concern and have engaged with neighbours and the Local Ward Member. They are arranging further meetings through the Local Ward Member to engage with the Local Community detailing the homes ethos and aims for the children. Innovative Care understands the importance of this and aims to provide answers to address the concerns of local people.
- It is our clients wish to provide a better environment working with the local community and its immediate neighbours. With a regular routine for shift changes and no vehicles visiting the site at odd hours it will provide a safe and secure environment. Children will be encouraged to join local groups and activities building a strong social network of support and integrating with the local community.
- Our clients have met with the Neath Port Talbot Social Services who are keen to be involved in the children's care and provide support where necessary. Following a recent meeting with them the proposed number of children at the home is being reduced to 4 to accommodate an education space for residents should it be required. The age group has also been adjusted as recommended by them with the age rising to 16 years. This is to ensure residents are supported throughout their formative years and not disrupt their progress by rehoming them at 12 years of age.

ACCESS

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

- A substantial semi detached building covering three floors at the front and two storeys at the rear with approximately 25% of the available site given over to buildings. The external space has been unsympathetically surfaced in tarmacadam to provide off street parking and improve its potential as a Guest House.
- Following consultation with our client an area at the rear will be given over to soft landscaping to provide amenity space for the children to play. A range of play equipment will be installed for their enjoyment with a picnic area and quiet corner. This area is to be screened to ensure no loss of amenity to its

neighbours. The tarmacadam forecourt and rear yard area will be reduced slightly whilst retaining parking for staff cars. Company policy is for staff to car share or use public transport wherever possible.

- Innovative Care would provide around 20 jobs for the local area, with staff provided with an opportunity to gain qualifications up to Degree level at no cost to the individual.
- Many residents in this area like its sense of community and it is our clients wish to become part of this community providing as normal an upbringing as possible for these vulnerable young people.
- The front access will benefit from the introduction of a gate adjacent the building line providing a safe and secure environment for the young residents to enjoy.

LAYOUT

- The area is a mix of residential comprising of terraced, detached and semi-detached dwellings with a few commercial properties Housing close to the site is a mix of social and private housing with the benefit of good community spirit.
- The application is for a change of use to a residential children's care home with alterations limited to repair externally and upgrading and repair internally.
- Its location allows access to facilities that can be reached on foot reducing dependency on private car use.
- Rooms are to be arranged to provide a kitchen, bathrooms, education, reception/leisure facilities, staff and bedrooms for a maximum of four young people.
- Windows of habitable rooms will be retained maintaining the domestic scale of the openings.
- Doors providing access to the dwelling will be 900mm wide to provide improved clearance for wheelchair users in excess of the minimum required by Building Regulations. Internal doors will be 838/762x1981 again wider than the minimum required for those in wheelchairs.
- Wheelchair access will be possible throughout the ground floor to suit those with walking difficulties.
- Electric power points will be 450 above floor level and light switches 1.000 above floor level.

SCALE

- With the exception of the demolition of the rear storage unit no changes are proposed to the footprint of the building.
- There will be a slight reduction in the rear tarmacadam area to provide amenity space for residents to enjoy.

APPEARANCE

- Existing buildings in the immediate area are terraced two or three storeys in height with rendered walls under pitched tiled roofs. Outbuildings are a mix of timber, blockwork and cladding. The external walls of the development are to be repaired and redecorated.
- New white pvcU double-glazed windows with energy efficient glass will replace rotted timber and defective windows.

LANDSCAPING

- There is limited open space within the site but a new soft landscaped play area is to be introduced at the rear. Residents will be encouraged to help plant and maintain raised beds, planters and potted plants that will comprise of a variety of species.

ACCESSABILITY

- Level access thresholds will provide clear access for those with walking difficulties or mobility problems. Signage will indicate the location of the office for visitors to ensure the residents safety.
- A security gate adjacent the front of the building will help ensure the safety of residents with access for authorised staff and guests only. This will provide further safeguarding of the youngest residents, safe from traffic and unwanted intrusion.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- The property fronts onto A474 Neath Road close to its junction with Tucker Street. Neath Road is the main thoroughfare between Neath town centre north of the site and Port Talbot to the south. An open gateway provides safe and direct access to and from the highway.
- A gate will be introduced at the building line to insure resident safety but still allow unimpeded access to and from the highway.
- Pedestrian conflicts will be restricted to vehicles entering and leaving the site. Pedestrians are visible to emerging vehicles travelling at walking pace to ensure their safety.
- Guest's vehicles will no longer visit the site seeking short term parking and creating parking issues.
- Staff shift changeovers will occur twice daily between 09:00-11:00am and 18:30-20:30pm with no requirement for vehicles to access the site at odd hours through the day. Company policy encourages the use of car sharing and public transport use wherever possible.

MOVEMENT

- A 1.800m wide pavement abuts the front of the property affording safe passage for pedestrians.
- Pedestrians are visible to vehicles immersing onto the highway ensuring their safety. There is also good visibility along the highway in both directions.
- Vehicles entering the site have an unobstructed view along the highway and onto the forecourt ensuring pedestrian safety.

DESIGN EVOLUTION

- The Guest House failed as a business venture and has been on sale for two years with no offers or interest in its continued operation. It had proved unviable for two previous operators in the face of stiff competition from new purpose built hotels. A substantial building it is falling into disrepair and our client seeks to bring it back into beneficial use. The redevelopment would allow its repair enhancing the structure, its surrounds and the street scene.
- Surrounding properties were taken into account so that any development is similar in scale with no additional construction necessary.
- The propose change of use would suit its immediate surroundings without causing loss of amenity to its neighbours. The proposal would if anything improves the quality of life with security that 24-hour care will provide. It will prevent the anti-social behaviour that was associated with the previous guesthouse that blighted the area.

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY

- Any new elements will utilise the latest insulating materials producing significant levels of carbon savings. The change of use and upgrading will mean savings to the properties energy consumption.
- Thermally efficient double-glazed windows and doors will replace the inefficient single glazed softwood casements.
- Rockwool insulation products produced in South Wales will be used to insulate the walls, floors and roof. Their use will cut down on the need to use fossil fuels and they would only need to be transported short distances reducing the carbon emissions.
- New thermally efficient gas-condensing boilers will provide heating and hot water.

COMMENTS

Our client seeks to provide a safe and secure future for young children that have not had the parenting and home life that most of us benefited from. This development looks to providing that environment for children in the 8-16 age group. With the aim to intake at the ages 8-9, giving them a safe place to grow and develop at their own

pace within a safe and secure environment. They need the security and support that this setting will provide. A team of professional carers and support staff will provide a fully inclusive service to these young people with positive adult role models.

The in house team will consist of a house manager and deputy manager with Level 5 qualifications in Health and Social care. Two senior members of staff with Level 3 qualifications, one of who is a QCF Assessor to assist with training of all staff.

Twelve residential care workers including two with Teaching Assistant qualifications, all of who will participate in training programs designed to achieve their Level 3 qualification. The team have more than 15 years experience in the care sector, with a proven track record and understanding of how to successfully run a residential care home. An experienced Care Consultant will ensure external support is also in place.

All staff will hold certificates in conflict management, child protection, safeguarding, COSHH training, drug and alcohol awareness, first aid, anger behavioural management, trauma recovery, suicide and self-harm awareness, professional boundaries and sexual harmful behaviour.

Innovative Care focuses on the models of care using the trauma recovery model and PACE parenting care, all training will be provided by Noble Training Solutions, an award winning training company, including behavioural management training company of the year 2021.

It is our client's intension to provide a warm family type inclusive environment with opportunities to engage in social, leisure and charitable activities. Participating in local community activities promoting enjoyment, achievement and fun. Thus building strong, compassionate and considerate young people. They will seek to maximise an individuals strengths as well as their needs as a one size does not fit all. Much of the work lies within task focused approaches to positive behavioural support and management, setting each achievable goals identified by a deep understanding of the individuals needs, wants, wishes and dreams. Supporting their personalities, abilities, aspirations and celebrating their achievements so that they become valued members of society with ambition and a future.