

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

NEATH WORKING MEN'S CLUB, WIND STREET / HIGH STREET, NEATH

PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 36 APARTMENTS WITH CYCLE STORAGE, REFUSE STORAGE AND COMMUNAL AMENITY AREAS



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared to support our Client's application submission for the proposed demolition of existing building and construction of residential development comprising 36 apartments with cycle storage, refuse storage and communal amenity areas at Neath Working Men's Club, Wind Street / High Street, Neath.
- 1.2 This statement explains the concept and principles of the development in relation to accessibility, character, community safety, environmental sustainability, movement and assesses the proposal against the relevant Planning Policy framework.
- 1.3 This statement demonstrates the proposal accords with relevant National and Local Planning Policy and other material planning policy considerations.
- 1.4 This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans and illustrations comprising the application submission.



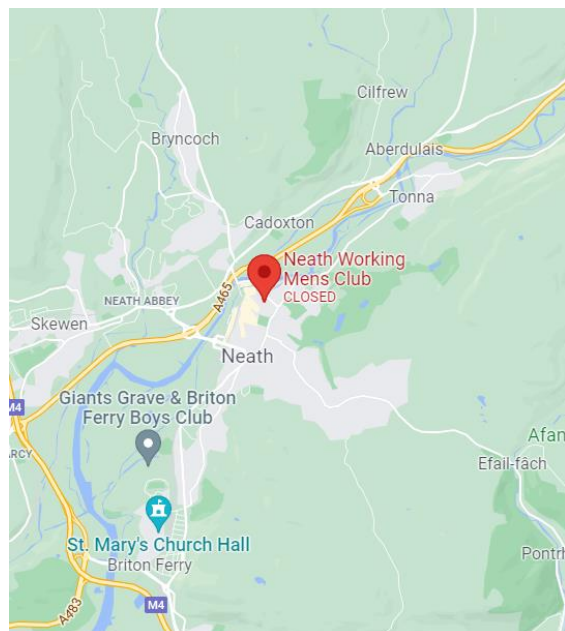
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2.0 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises the Neath Working Men's Club located on a rectangular parcel of land between Wind Street and High Street, Neath. The club has closed, and the building has become vacant.



- 2.2 The property is a 2 storey building comprising bars, lounge, skittle alley, concert hall and associated facilities bound by existing retail units fronting Old Market Street to the west, Wind Street to the south, High Street to the north and Prince of Wales Drive to the east. The site is within the designated town centre of Neath (Policy R2).



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- 2.3 Directly adjacent to the site are a row of retail units, including Iceland a café bar and clothing store, which make up the primary shopping street of Old Market Street. The site is within the retail centre (Policy R2), where uses that would enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the centre, including uses in classes A and D will be permitted.
- 2.4 To the north of the site is a church and car park, and to the south, within an area identified as within the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area (CCRS1), which is a mixed use regeneration scheme (Policy R1/1), the site is currently under construction and includes a new leisure centre, with swimming pool, gym, health suite and ancillary café over 2 floors providing 3,345.8 sq m, together with 6 commercial units, at ground floor, and public library at first floor.
- 2.5 Neath historic town centre is located to the west of the application site and comprises a range of local independent shops, supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and national retail outlets, restaurants and entertainment venues.
- 2.6 The town centre conservation area bounds the application site to the west but does not include it. As identified within the attached image, the application site is located adjacent to a chapel which has been identified as a Building of Local Importance, whilst there are several Listed building along Old Market Road.





- 2.7 The site is located within close proximity of the A465, providing ready access to the local network and the M4 motorway, local and National rail networks and public transport facilities.
- 2.8 The area is served by regular public transport links with main bus routes along Alfred Street / Orchard Street to the south and Gnoll Park Road to the east. Neath train station is located some 500 m to the south west of the site providing rail links to the local and National rail networks. A taxi rank is located on Wind Street.



2.9 Extensive leisure and recreational facilities are within close proximity of the site with Victoria Gardens a short walk to the south, Neath Leisure centre and Tennis centre, The Gnoll rugby ground and Gnoll Country Park to the east. The new retail and leisure complex on the neighbouring site is currently under construction. The River Neath runs along the northern and western sides of the town.

Constraints / Opportunities

2.10 A full assessment of the physical characteristics of the site and its context in relation to surrounding development was undertaken to identify opportunities and constraints presented by the site.

2.11 The key opportunities/constraints the site presented were considered to be:

- No distinct character or design pattern,
- Ease of access to public transport and local facilities,
- Ease of access to local highway and footpath networks,
- The full potential of the curtilage has not been maximised.



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Key

	2 Storey Building		4 Storey Building		Pedestrian Access
	3 Storey Building		Application Site		Vehicular Access



Residential Development at Neath's Working Men's Club Castell Group	Ref No: 22.001	Rev: 001
Site Context Plan	Design: AL(9)02	
Date: 05/01/22	Drawn: WJ	Scale: 1:1000 @ A3
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3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Planning History

3.1 The application site has the following planning history:

- **2012/0863**

First floor open side smoking shelter, and raised parapet walling to facilitate use of roof area, together with the enclosure of the external staircase - Approved 08.01.2013

3.2 Applications relevant to the development of the site include:

- **P2021/0535**

Retention of ground floor retail (A1) unit and creation of 8no self contained flats on ground and first floor
46 Wind Street Neath SA11 3HA - Approved 03.12.2021

National Planning Policy

3.3 **The Wales Spatial Plan *People, Places, Futures*** sets a strategic framework to guide future development and policy interventions. It integrates the spatial aspects of National strategies for social inclusion and economic development, health, transport and environment, translating the Assembly Government's sustainable development duty into practice.

3.4 **Planning Policy Wales (PPW Edition 11) February 2021** sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes. Procedural advice is given in circulars and policy clarification letters.



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- 3.5 Section 3 states '*Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. Meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales.*'
- 3.6 With regard to environmental sustainability, PPW states '*Good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals. Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution.*'
- 3.7 Section 4 states '*The planning system should enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport. The Welsh Government is committed to reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. The planning system has a key role to play in reducing the need to travel and supporting sustainable transport, by facilitating developments which:*
- *are sited in the right locations, where they can be easily accessed by sustainable modes of travel and without the need for a car;*
 - *are designed in a way which integrates them with existing land uses and neighbourhoods; and*
 - *make it possible for all short journeys within and beyond the development to be easily made by walking and cycling.*
- 3.8 With regard to housing, section 4 continues '*New housing development in both urban and rural areas should incorporate a mix of market and affordable house types, tenures and sizes to cater for the range of identified housing needs and contribute to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities. Maximising the use of suitable previously developed and/or underutilised land for housing development can assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites.*'
- 3.9 Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12: Design, sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's detailed advice on how to achieve good design in all development at every scale throughout Wales.



3.10 The guidance sets out the Assembly's objectives for good design, namely

- Access – ensuring ease of access for all.
- Character – sustaining or enhancing local character. Promoting legible development. Promoting a successful relationship between public and private space. Promoting quality, choice and variety. Promoting innovative design.
- Community safety – ensuring attractive, safe public spaces. Security through natural surveillance.
- Environmental sustainability – achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources. Enhancing biodiversity. Designing for change.
- Movement – promoting sustainable means of travel.

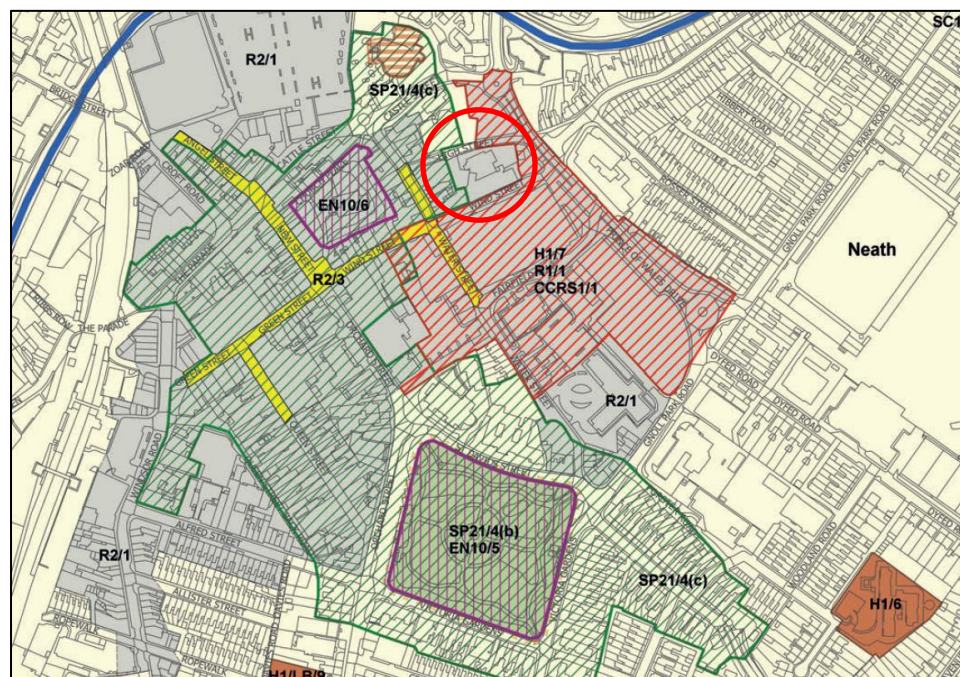
3.11 **TAN 18 – Transport** is all considered relevant to the site.

Local Planning Policy

3.12 The current Development Plan is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP 2011-2026), adopted in January 2016.

3.13 The following Policies are considered relevant to this application.

- Policy SP3 Sustainable Communities.
- Policy SP7 Housing Requirement.
- Policy SP8 Affordable Housing.
- Policy SP10 Open Space
- Policy SP 21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage
- Policy SP22 Welsh Language.





- Policy SC1 Settlement Limits.
- Policy CCRS1 Coastal Corridor Regeneration Schemes
- Policy H1 Housing Sites
- Policy BE1 Design
- Policy BE2 Buildings of Local Importance
- Policy AH1 Affordable Housing
- Policy OS1 Open Space Provision
- Policy R1 Retail Allocations
- Policy R2 Proposals Within Retail Centres.
- Policy RE2 Renewable and low carbon energy in new development.
- Policy W3 Waste management in new development
- Policy TR2 Design and Access of New Development; and
- Policy WL1 Development in Language Sensitive Areas.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

3.14 Supplementary Planning Guidance provides further advice and information on certain policies and proposals within the LDP and are a material consideration in determination of planning applications. The following SPG's are relevant to the development proposals:

- Planning Obligations (October 2016)
- Parking Standards (October 2016)
- Affordable Housing (October 2016)
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity (May 2018)
- Open Space & Greenspace (July 2017)
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (July 2017)
- Design (July 2017)



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- Development and the Welsh Language (July 2017)

Policy Justification

- 3.15 Policy SC1 States "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." The application site is located within settlement limits and therefore is considered acceptable in principle.
- 3.16 Policy SC2 states "Any proposals which would result in the loss of an important existing community facility will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
1. The facility is surplus to requirements; or
 2. The existing use is no longer viable."
- 3.17 The former Working Man's Club ceased use due to the Club becoming increasingly unviable over the last decade. The Club subsequently went into liquidation and liquidators were appointed to deal with the Club's assets.
- 3.18 There is an abundance of public houses within Neath Town Centre that are more appropriately located, in terms of accessibility and footfall. In addition, there are several venues, including the Neath Town Hall and Community Centre, that offer event space for hire for the local community.
- 3.19 In line with Policy SC2, the former member's club was surplus to requirements and financially unviable.
- 3.20 The site lies within the Neath Town Centre Retail Centre (Policy R2) which indicates that proposals should enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the centre by strengthening the layout, retail character and pedestrian flows of the centre and should maintain a vibrant and attractive shopping street frontage.



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3.21 Criterion 2 & 3 of Policy R2 clearly state that proposals can be acceptable:

- if it is demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable or appropriate in the location;
- and the proposal would result in the redevelopment of derelict, unsightly, underused and vacant land / premises for alternative uses which would have significant social, community or regeneration benefits.

3.22 The LPA recently granted planning consent for the change of use of the ground floor of the adjacent building, No.46 Wind Street, from retail to residential. This is a material consideration to the proposed application, as the majority of Wind Street will now be residential in nature. Whilst the Applicants considered the inclusion of a ground floor commercial unit, it was concluded that this would lead to an isolated unit which would go against the grain of the recently consented development in the area and would not be appropriate in the location.

3.23 The proposal would also utilise a vacant premises, whilst offering significant social (100% affordable housing) and regeneration benefits for the area. The Applicants therefore consider the proposed application adheres to Policy R2.

3.24 In accordance with Policy SP8 and AH1, Affordable housing is required. The proposed scheme would be 100% affordable housing and therefore the obligation is considered to be met within this proposal.

3.25 As identified within this document, there are several listed buildings and a building of local importance within the proximity of the site. The policy framework for the historic environment in Neath Port Talbot is set out in Chapter 5.5 of the Local Development Plan (LDP) entitled Culture and Heritage. Policies SP21, BE2 and BE3 set out the local policy framework. Policy SP21 being the strategic policy that sets the context for the subsequent detailed policies. Policy SP21 aims to deliver LDP Objectives OB2, OB23 and OB24, OB23 being of relevance to the historic environment: 'Protect and enhance the County Borough's historical heritage, built environment and identity'.



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- 3.26 In developing the scheme, the Applicants were conscious of the historic environment. The building seeks to assimilate within the environment, respecting the scale and mass of the built form. As illustrated within the proposed elevations, the scale of the building is in keeping with the adjacent listed building, namely the Grade II Neath Mission Hall.
- 3.27 In line with Policies SP21 and BE2, the high quality design standard of the building would enhance the built environment and setting of the listed building.



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4.0 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

4.1 In line with the Applicants' development brief, the Key Design Principles of the development were identified as:

- Demonstrating the highest urban design principles that would include clearly demarcating what is private and what is public space, an outward looking development promoting natural surveillance of the adjacent regeneration area and secure private areas.
- Castell Group are seeking a modern, high-quality development that avoids an 'institutional feel' and utilises a combination of traditional and contemporary materials to give a strong sense of place.
- Development options should provide accessible private one and two bedroom flats, with access to attractive outdoor areas to encourage interaction between residents.
- A 3-4 storey development comprising a mix of 1 and 2 bed private accessible flats compliant with Welsh Government DQR standards (circa 80%- 85% x 1 beds and 15% - 20% x 2 beds), with no less than 35 flats in total.
- A development that utilises its form and the configuration of its building elements to thoughtfully give visual interest and high quality composition.
- A development that meets Welsh Government's DQR (Development Quality Requirements) standards and Lifetime Homes



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5.0 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

- 5.1 The Applicants entered into pre-application discussions with the LPA in February 2022. The pre-application submission sought the LPA's view on the proposed demolition of existing building and construction of residential development comprising 37 apartments with cycle storage, refuse storage and communal amenity areas at Neath Working Men's Club, Wind Street / High Street, Neath.
- 5.2 Following a pre-application meeting and the formal response from the LPA, the scheme was amended to include additional architectural detail to the prominent eastern elevation, whilst the footprint of the scheme was amended to allow the inclusion of a dedicated maintenance and delivery bay.



6.0 PROPOSAL

- 6.1 The scheme proposes the demolition of the existing building and construction of residential development comprising 36 apartments with cycle storage, refuse storage and communal amenity areas at Neath Working Men's Club, Wind Street / High Street, Neath.
- 6.2 In line with the Applicants mandate, the proposal envisages the creation of a sustainable modern residential development, which provides a contrast between the existing residential dwellings and adjacent commercial developments.



High Street Elevation 1:200



Wind Street Elevation 1:200



Rear Internal Courtyard Elevation 1:200



Side Elevation 1:200

- 6.3 The historic town centre conservation area will not be affected by the application proposal.



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- 6.4 As the application drawings illustrate, the new building will provide 36 one and two bed self contained apartments, dedicated refuse and cycle storage facilities and communal amenity areas.



Site Plan
1:250



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- 6.5 Accommodation will be set over 4 floors, with each unit comprising an open plan kitchen / dining / living area, 1 or 2 bedrooms and a bathroom. Each ground floor unit will have its own private entrance and garden area, whilst upper floor units will all benefit from a balcony.
- 6.6 The proposed units will all have access to the communal gardens, cycle and refuse facilities at ground floor level.



- 6.7 The contemporary architectural style results from the advice given in the Local Authority's Design Brief, which sought a 'modern, high-quality development that avoids an 'institutional feel' and utilises a combination of traditional and contemporary materials to give a strong sense of place.'



- 6.8 The site is within a highly accessible location and is easily accessed by foot, cycle, bus and train. The development of the site for residential accommodation would serve to minimise the need to travel to the town by car and future occupiers would benefit from a wide range of services, shops and facilities all within walking distance of the site.



6.0 ACCESS & MOVEMENT

- 6.1 The site is flat with level access to the adjacent public footpaths on Wind Street and High Street. Accordingly, the site is not considered to provide any potential barriers to accessibility. Pedestrian access points to the buildings are clearly illustrated on the submitted application drawings.
- 6.2 As highlighted within the supporting Transport Statement, the proposal does not compromise the effective, safe and efficient use of the adjacent highway network and does not adversely affect highway safety.
- 6.3 The design approach adopted by the applicant is 'to provide a barrier free environment for all'.
- 6.4 Access will be interpreted to include access into and within buildings and the curtilage of the application site.
- 6.5 This statement is intended to provide a broad indication of design access philosophy in respect of the scheme at planning stage which will be augmented and amended as the detailed design progress to Building Regulation approval
- 6.6 The detailed design proposals have been developed following a full assessment of the site and surrounding areas including the physical, social and economic context.
- 6.7 The position of the site along Wind Street / High Street presents no potential access problems for pedestrians and car borne visitors. The site is within a highly accessible location and is easily accessed by foot, cycle, bus and train.
- 6.8 The scheme will include a dedicated maintenance and delivery bay accessed from High Street.
- 6.9 As the proposal drawings illustrate, pedestrian access to the site is achieved via the existing footpath network abutting the site.



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- Parking provision/setting down points
Shared secure cycle storage facilities are provided within the curtilage of the site.
- Circulation routes – motor vehicles/cyclists/pedestrians
The scheme is accessible to motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Visibility of entrances and access to buildings
The principal entrances to the site have dedicated lighting.
- Emergency vehicles
The scheme has been designed to provide access for emergency vehicles to all parts of the development.
- External lighting
Adequate external lighting is provided to assist pedestrian access from outside the site and on-site.

6.10 As highlighted within the Transport Assessment, the site is served by regular public transport links with main bus routes along Alfred Street / Orchard Street to the south and Gnoll Park Road to the east. Neath train station is located some 500 m to the south west of the site providing rail links to the local and National rail networks. A taxi rank is located on Wind Street.

6.11 The site is located within close proximity of the A465, providing ready access to the local network and the M4 motorway, local and National rail networks and public transport facilities.



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7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 The position of the site within an established residential, commercial and retail area and the design and orientation of the proposal affords the opportunity for natural surveillance of the building entrances.
- 7.2 The main entrances to the building are well positioned within a defined secure defensible space and lit to ensure a strong sense of personal safety.
- 7.3 The established nature of the area creates a sense of community and 'ownership' discouraging anti-social behaviour.

Windows and Doors

- 7.4 All ground floor windows to be BS 7950:1997 Specification for enhanced security performance of casement and tilt and turn windows for domestic applications. Accredited with (UKAS) accredited test facilities.

Perimeter wall

- 7.5 The development will be defined by new boundary enclosures.

Lighting

- 7.6 The site will be lit to BS5489 and be positioned to ensure an even spread of light over the pedestrian accesses.

Environmental sustainability



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- 7.7 The scheme will have Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) designed to reduce the potential impact of the development on surface water drainage discharges and subsequently reducing the risk of floods and pollution.
- 7.8 The development will be designed to minimise its potential impact on the environment and its CO2 footprint.
- 7.9 PPW11 and TAN12 provide guidance on creating sustainable developments.
- 7.10 The proposed development aims to meet and exceed, where possible, current regulations.
- 7.11 The scheme makes efficient use of the site, responding to the Local Authority's Design Brief, creating a sensitively designed building which integrates well with its surroundings.
- 7.12 The proposed development is located in a highly sustainable location with good access to local and city centre based facilities by foot and regular public transport.
- 7.13 The development aims to seek a balance between creating a high quality building fit for its purpose, without impacting unnecessarily upon the environment in which it is located.
- 7.14 The proposal would utilise a brownfield site, alleviating the current pressure placed on greenfield sites in accord with the objective of Planning Policy Wales.



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London Office



8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The application seeks planning permission for the proposed demolition of existing building construction of residential development comprising 36 apartments with cycle storage, refuse storage and communal amenity areas at Neath Working Men's Club, Wind Street / High Street, Neath.
- 8.2 The development would contribute to the ongoing regeneration and economy of the area and town and would provide a highly sustainable form of accommodation without the need for reliance on car based transport. The proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon highway and pedestrian safety.
- 8.3 The proposal would create an attractive and vibrant sustainable development which would utilise an existing site, alleviating the current pressures placed on greenfield sites in accord with the objectives of Planning Policy Wales and Policies SC1, SC2, SP4, SP8, SP10 and R2 of the LDP.
- 8.4 The proposed application adheres to National and Local policies and guidelines and does not adversely affect the highway safety or residential amenities of the area as to warrant a refusal.



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