

OFFICER REPORT

Application Number: P2022/0663

Site Address: Former Constitutional Club 1-3 Office Place Glyncorrwg
SA13 3DH

Proposal: Change of use from social club to dwelling (C3 use) and associated works

Applicant: Mr Gareth Tomlinson

Agent: Mr Ronald Bagshaw

Ward: Glyncorrwg

Application Type: Full Plans

Valid Date: 3rd August 2022

Statutory Expiry Date: 27th September 2022

Ext. of Time / PPA date:

Publicity Expiry Date: 16th September 2022

RECOMMENDATION - Refused

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is located at the Former Conservative Club, Glyncorrwg.

The application site measures approximately 0.11 hectares in area and comprises a two-storey detached building, plus a single-storey outbuilding to the rear. To the north is a small complex of dilapidated single storey buildings and Afon Corrwg Fechan, to the east some dilapidated single storey buildings, to the south is an unclassified road followed by Afon Corrwg, to the west is a single storey garage building followed by a small bridge which crosses Nat Ddu river.

The application site is located within the C2 flood zone, and the western part of the site is located in flood zone 3 and the remainder of the site is located within flood zone 2 of the Rivers and Sea Zone, and directly to the north of the building is located within flood zone 2 of Surface Water and Small Watercourses Zone.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

This is a full planning application for the change of use of the former Conservative Club to a residential dwelling and ancillary works.

The proposal includes external alterations consisting of the replacement of the rear door with a pair of French doors, the insertion of a pair of French doors on the south-west elevation, the enlargement of the most westerly rear window and addition of a balcony, and the creation of parking and access.

NEGOTIATIONS

None

PLANNING HISTORY

No relevant Planning History

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Engineering & Transport (Highways): No objection, subject to conditions.

Head of Engineering & Transport (Drainage): No objection, subject to conditions.

Natural Resources Wales: Objection on planning policy grounds.

Biodiversity Department: No objection, subject to conditions.

REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was also displayed on 26.08.2022

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 policies are of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 4 – Supporting Rural Communities

Policy 5 – Supporting the rural economy

Policy 8 – Flooding

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

[Planning Policy Wales \(Edition 11, February 2021\)](#) outlines the Welsh Government's commitment to the importance of 'places' and 'place-making', the importance of using previously developed land wherever possible in preference to greenfield sites, and the recognition of the health and wellbeing related benefits by creating a sense of place and improving social cohesion. PPW 11 confirms that the environmental components of places are intrinsically linked to the quality of the built and natural environment and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work and play there. It emphasises the importance of creating sustainable communities and reducing reliance on the private car as part of a package of measures to reduce the country's carbon footprint and help tackle the climate emergency.

PPW11 is supported by a series of more detailed [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs), of which the following are of relevance: -

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 11: Noise (1997)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18: Transport (2007)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development (2014)

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 SP1** Climate Change
- **Policy SP2** Health
- **Policy SP3** Sustainable Communities
- **Policy SP7** Housing Requirement
- **Policy SP8** Affordable Housing
- **Policy SP10** Open Space
- **Policy SP15** Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Policy SP20** Transport Network
- **Policy SP21** Built Environment and Historic Heritage
- **Policy SP4** Infrastructure

Topic Based Policy

- **Policy SC1** Settlement limits
- **Policy H1** Housing
- **Policy AH1** Affordable Housing
- **Policy OS1** Open Space provision
- **Policy EN06** Important biodiversity and geodiversity sites.
- **Policy EN07** Important Natural Features
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New development
- **Policy BE1** Design
- **Policy I1** Infrastructure Requirements

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following SPG is of relevance to this application: -

- [Parking Standards](#) (October 2016)
- [Design](#) (July 2017)

- [Development and the Welsh Language](#) (July 2017)
- [Landscape & Seascape](#) (May 2018)
- [Biodiversity and Geodiversity](#) (May 2018)
- [The Historic Environment](#) (April 2019) (incl. [Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance](#) and [SPG: Schedule of Designated Canal Structures](#))

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, highway safety.

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the settlement limits as defined by Policy SC1 of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP).

Policy SC1 states 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*’ subject to compliance of other material considerations and policies.

Policy SC2 (Protection of Existing Community Facilities) states that:

“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.”*

The supporting text to the Policy states *“where a facility performs (or has performed) an important or central function in the life of the local community, any change to a non-community use will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer viable or needed by the community and that there is no potential that the building can be used for an alternative or shared community use.”*

Information should be provided demonstrating how the facility is no longer viable or needed by the community as part of the planning application process.

3.0.22 The type of evidence required will vary depending on the type of facility under consideration, but may include details of why the building is no longer in use, what alternative provision there is locally, what other community options have been considered for the building and evidence to show that reasonable efforts have been made to market the facility for sale or lease for its existing use.

At the time of writing this report, this required information has not been provided. Neath Port Talbot's Business Rates Officer has confirmed that the building was taken out of rating from 1st September 2018, and Google Maps dates the closure of the premises to at least May 2011, over 11 years ago.

As such, whilst the proposal is within the settlement boundary and appears to have not been in use for over 10 years, the required demonstrative evidence has not been provided as part of the planning application, the proposal in contrary to Policy SC2.

Impact on Visual Amenity

It is noted that the proposed external alterations are minimal, new openings and a balcony on the rear elevation and the raising of the single-storey side extension.

Whilst the property would potentially be changing from commercial to residential, it is considered that this would not adversely impact the character of the wider area, which has a mixture of residential properties, churches, chapels and a community hall.

Impact on Residential Amenity

In respect of overlooking, whilst it is noted that the property is currently vacant, the nearest neighbouring dwelling is approximately 30 metres away; and that is separated by an unclassified road and a river, more than the minimum distance recommended by the Design Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). And the proposed balcony is located approximately 45 metres from the neighbouring dwelling, which is considered acceptable.

With regards to potential overbearing and overshadowing, due to the fact that no extensions are proposed, it is considered that the proposed change of use would not create any unacceptable issues in these regards.

Parking and Access Requirements and Impact on Highway Safety

The proposal includes the provision of six parking spaces and an access onto the road. The Highways Department have been consulted on the proposal, they have offered no objection subject to conditions requiring the drive being a minimum of 8.8 metres in width and 10.8 metres in length, and prohibiting the drive any closer than 2.5 metres to any boundary and a vision splay of 2.4 metres.

It is therefore considered that subject to these conditions, the development would have no detrimental impact upon highway or pedestrian safety.

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) 11 sets out that “planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. This means that development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and must provide a net benefit for biodiversity”. This policy and subsequent policies in Chapter 6 of PPW 11 respond to the Section 6 Duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Biodiversity Team have been consulted, and as the proposal is for the change of use with minimal internal alterations, provide no objection to the scheme subject to the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements in the form of bird boxes.

Flood risk / Drainage

The application site is within both Zone C2 of the Development Advice Map contained in TAN 15, and Flood Zone 2/3 Rivers of the Flood Map for Planning.

It is a change of use from a low vulnerable development (social club) to a highly vulnerable development (residential). As such NRW have been consulted on the proposal, they have stated that they will not review the submitted Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) unless they are notified of overriding reasons to consider granting planning permission, and advises that the Authority should refuse the planning application on planning policy grounds.

Reasons the proposal meets the tests as set out in TAN 15 were requested on the 16th and 30th August 2022, and have not been received.

Other Matters

None

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity or upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and there would be no adverse impact upon highway and pedestrian safety.

Notwithstanding this however, it is noted that the proposal is for a change of use from a low vulnerable development to a highly vulnerable development within a Flood Zone. The proposal fails to meet the ‘refined’ tests in Section 6 of TAN 15, refusal is therefore recommended.

Additionally, evidence has not been provided demonstrating how the facility is either surplus to requirements or the existing use is no longer viable and as such the proposal is not in accordance with Policy SC2 of Neath Port Talbot Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Refused

Subject to the following conditions/reasons, which have been imposed for the reasons stated:-

- 1 The proposed change of use of the former Constitutional Club to a residential dwelling would result in highly vulnerable development within a C2 Flood Zone. The proposal fails to meet the 'refined' tests in Section 6 of Technical Advice Note 15: Development of Flood Risk (TAN 15) and would represent an unjustified form of development in the flood zone and would be contrary to the guidance in TAN 15

- 2 The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the former social club is surplus to requirement or is no longer viable and as such the proposed development would result in the loss of an important community facility and is therefore contrary to Policy SC2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Case Officer

Kittie Powell

Telephone No. 01639 686730

Date of Recommendation 27th September 2022