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31st May 2024

Planning West Team
Planning Department
Neath Port Talbot Council
The Quays, Brunel Way
Neath
SA11 2HZ

Dear Sir / Madam,

Address: 29 Church Street Pontardawe Swansea Neath Port Talbot SA8 4JB

Proposal: Change of use of property from A3 Hot Food Takeaway (ground floor) with single upper floor flat (C3) into a single dwellinghouse (C3)

Please find enclosed a planning application relating to the above mentioned property and proposal. A duly completed application form and existing/proposed plans are included and please treat this letter as a **Planning Statement & Green Infrastructure Statement** in response to the policy requirements.

Proposal

As set out on the drawings the scheme involves the removal of the A3 Hot Food Takeaway (known as Rainbow House) to be replaced by living accommodation in association with the existing upper floor residential use. There is no operational development proposed to the property save for the removal of the advertisement/signage associated with the takeaway as indicated on the submitted drawings. There is no net gain in residential units.

Principle of Development

As set out in the pre-application response issued on 22nd April 2024 the site lies within the settlement limits of Pontardawe and the proposal is therefore acceptable in principle. Reference is made to Policy SC2 which seeks to protect 'Existing Community Facilities' with criteria setting out that any proposals which would result in the loss of an important existing community facility will only be permitted where the facility is surplus to requirements or the existing use is no longer viable. The pre-application letter doesn't set out the basis upon which this policy is strictly relevant to the loss of a hot food takeaway as is the case in this instance. The supporting text to the policy describes community facilities being a vital part of the life of a community and that they can help create cohesive communities where people are able to meet and participate in activities. Arguably a hot food takeaway does not present itself as a facility that provides a valuable community purpose in the spirit of the supporting text to the policy which focuses on facilities such as community halls, libraries, local or village shops, public houses and places of worship. Evidently it

can do quite the opposite and create local disturbance, particularly from a highways/parking perspective and late night noise nuisance with potential for associated odour impacting on existing residential occupiers.

Whilst the supporting text makes clear that 'any facility that serves a community purpose' can be defined as a community facility in this instance the loss of the ground floor hot food takeaway (A3) does not provide a beneficial community purpose. Nevertheless if considering the proposal does offer community purpose there are material planning considerations that weigh in favour of its loss including:

1. Pontardawe has a number of existing evening/late night takeaway units which are largely located in the town centre including;

Herbert Street - 2 No. Chinese Takeaways (Golden Triangle and Oriental Garden), 3 No. Indian Takeaways/Restaurants (Cardamon, Tamarind, Indian Cottage), 1 No. late night fast food (Emmas), 1 No. Chip Shop

Brecon Road/High Street – 2 No. Indian takeaways (Ponty Tandori, Ricksha), 1 Chinese takeaway (Hing Tai), 1 No. Chip Shop, 1 No late night fast food (Flames).

The loss of a single A3 unit (which is not located within the town centre itself) will not harm the existing offer of A3 hot food takeaways in the locality.

2. With the redevelopment of the former Gilbertson Suite/Clubhouse into housing, Church Street is now primarily residential. To that effect an A3 takeaway use is a non-confirming use within the residential context and the removal of the use will removal potential for noise/disturbance, highway disruption or odour issues for existing and future residents.
3. The strategy within the LDP is to direct commercial 'A' type uses to town, district and local centres. In the case of Pontardawe A3 uses should primarily be directed to the town centre, as is the case demonstrated above. The proposal directly complements Policy R2 and para 5.2.47 which states *"Uses under Class A2 and A3 (in particular hot food takeaways) have caused concern in some cases, and the policy consequently seeks to limit the number of such uses to avoid detrimental effects through over dominance."* In this instance the proposal will reduce the number of hot food takeaway uses in the area.

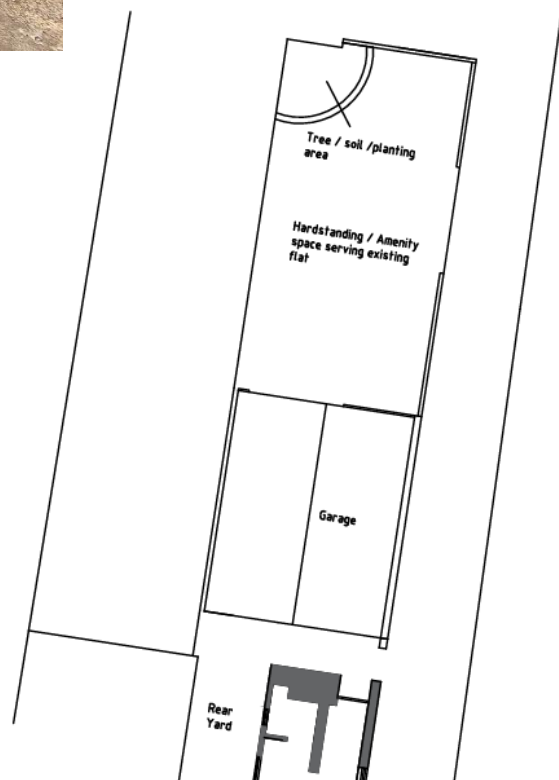
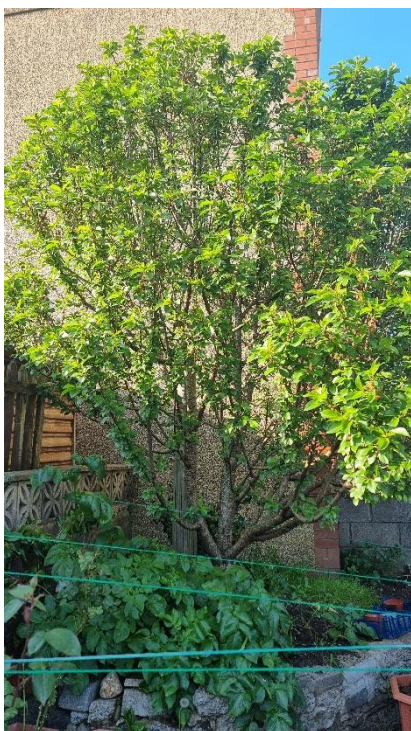
Summary

In summary of the above the loss of the commercial A3 hot food takeaway will raise no adverse impact upon existing community facilities, will reduce the number of A3 units which are well catered for within the town centre and remove a non conforming use from the residential area. Accordingly the change of use is acceptable on its planning merits.

Green Infrastructure Statement

The property comprises of a semi-detached stone property that fronts onto Church Street where it adjoins Quarr Road. The property comprises of a ground floor shopfront window with access into a ground floor Chinese hot food takeaway. From the side there is a further access which provides an entrance to the current first floor flat. To the rear (fronting onto Quarr Road) is a path to the rear of the property and also a vehicular access providing access to a hardsurfaced area, a soil area with tree and a single garage.

The nature of the proposal is such that there is no operational development being proposed. Other than a corner soil area which accommodates a tree (see below), there is no existing green infrastructure on site nor is there opportunity to provide any meaningful connection to other green infrastructure given the constraints of the surrounding land. As indicated on the drawing the proposal will incorporate retention of the existing soil/tree area as part of the change of use of the property which is reasonable and proportionate to the scale of the development.



Ecological Enhancement

A single bird box will be erected on the rear wall of the property in the approximate position marked below:



Conclusion

On the basis of the minor scale of development (change of use), alongside the fact that the development will have no impact upon green infrastructure, and through the provision of the retention of the existing planted areas and the provision of a bird box on site the development proposal will both maintain and enhance biodiversity at the application site in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales.

Yours faithfully,

Liam Jones MRTPI