

FORMER POST OFFICE
AT
VARTEG ROAD
YSTALYFERA

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE
TO BACK LIVING ROOM

PLANNING APPLICATION
SUPPORT STATEMENT

MARCH 2025

betaConsult
Ystalyfera
Swansea
Sa92hr

Planning application for change of use to convert Post Office Area of premises back to being part of the Private Residence

1] Introduction

1.1] No 54 Varteg Road Ystalyfera is a semidetached two storey property located in the Varteg area of Ystalyfera, a village in the upper Swansea Valley

1.2] The property was built circa 1950-60 as a domestic dwelling by the then Pontardawe RDC local authority as part of the Varteg Road residential development and was let by the then local authority as a dwelling ["council house"].

1.3] The area and properties in this Varteg area and around the dwelling was at time of build residential and nature and has remained generally so to this day

1.4] In 1994 the property was acquired by present owners Mrs Beryl Jones , who then in 1998 applied successfully for approval to covert the front ground floor living area into a small post office to serve the needs of the of the Varteg , following the then closure of a small "corner store" type shop and post office that was at the time located on the corner of Ynysydarren Road and the Varteg . Post office licence was given and the post office opened and has been trading at such until 21st January 2025 .

1.5] Mrs Jones the postmistress and property owner then came of retirement age in 2025 and following liaison with GPO the post office was closed

1.6] As the post office has closed Mrs Jones now wishes to convert the ground floor room that served as the PO back into domestic accommodation and in effect reinstate the front living room of, no54 Varteg Road

1.7] To achieve these aims there will be no alterations to the building structure and form, and eth only measures needed are the removal of the internal trade counters, removal of external signage and then redecoration

1.2] This document has been thus been prepared to support the application for the proposed change of use of the front room of eth property back to domestic living accommodation.

2.0 Planning History -Planning Context

2.1 Planning history

2.2.1 Application to convert front room of dwelling to post office made in 1997 and consented by the Planning Authority in 1998.

2.1. Planning Context

2.2.1 Local policy – The development plan for the site is the Neath Port Talbot local development plan 2011-2016. The Council adopted the plan in January 2016

2.3 Planning Policy

SP15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SP20 Transport Network

SC1 Settlement Limits

SC2 Conversion of Existing buildings

EN6 Important biodiversity and geodiversity sites

M2 surface coal operations

BE1 Design

3.0 Application Site

3.1 The site lies off Varteg Road a residential area in Ystalyfera as shown on the supporting planning application plans.

3.2 The residential areas around the site are well served by local amenities and shops, with ASDA Supermarket within 500 m and the village shopping centre of Ystalyfera, with a supermarket and post office only some 1000mtrs away.

3.3 A public bus service runs between the Varteg area and Ystalyfera and also to nearby Ystradgynlais a village some 3km away where there are shops and again a Post office.

3.4 the site itself consists of the semidetached dwelling and converted front room as shown on the submitted site plans, with a small green /garden area to front and to rear /side.

3.5 The site has no public parking.

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4.0 Supporting Statement

4.1 As indicated above the applicant seeks consent to convert the front room of the building back to domestic living area as the post office has now closed.

4.2] There will be no demolition. no external works and internal works very limited. Redundant Post office signage will be taken down. As such it is concluded a bat survey is not needed

4.3] Policies SC2 and EN5 of the local plan seek to protect community uses and control conversion of buildings

4.3.1] The policy SC2 states that "any proposals that would result in 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

4.3.2] Policy EN5 states that "alteration, extension or conversion of existing buildings will only be permitted " if the existing building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial major external alterations or reconstruction " the policy also deals with residential uses but that part does not apply as the property is primarily a dwelling already and will remain so after conversion of the front room back to a residence

4.3.3 Both SC2 and EN5 require evidence be submitted that the facility is no longer viable before a planning consent is granted.

4.4] In accordance with above policies we note that,

1] Mrs Jones wished to retire and there is no one qualified or able to take the role of postmistress on 2]] Mrs Jones the postmistress did liaise with the Post office regarding the closure and the PO view as the facility was not further viable and that there were alternative Post offices nearby and within walking distance in case of Ystalyfera PO that would take up any residual need

Liaison was also held with local council members and other businesses about trying to take up the role but over a period of over 12 months there was no interest.

4.5] In conclusion it is thus considered that marketing and liaison exercises were carried out and the conclusions reached by the PO owner and by the GPO itself. and thus, policy constraints in SC2 and EN5 are satisfied.

5.0 Summary

5.1 The proposed change of use application does not involve works that will impact on bats and thus accords with policy SP15 and EN6

5.2] The post office business on eth site has been reviewed and marketed but the conclusions reached is that it is not further a viable concern -Thus policies SC2 and EN5 are satisfied

5.3] In conclusion therefore we request that Neath Port Talbot CBC grant change of use for the proposal to turn the redundant post office area in the one ground floor room back to a living room , thus bringing all of the property back fully into residential use [as per its initial purpose use when built]