

## [Design and Access statement](#)

### [1.0 Introduction](#)

This report has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for the conversion of the former RAFA Club located at London Road, Neath. The proposed development involves the adaptive reuse of the existing building to provide seven self-contained, one-bedroom affordable apartments, alongside associated communal facilities. The scheme is brought forward by Tai Tarian Housing Association and seeks to deliver 100% affordable housing in a manner that is sensitive to the context and built form of the existing structure.

### [2.0 Site and Context](#)

#### [2.1 Location and Setting](#)

The application site occupies a prominent corner location at the junction of London Road and The Ropewalk, within Neath town centre. It forms part of an established residential neighbourhood characterised by a traditional urban grain and coherent streetscape. The building itself, of late Victorian or early Edwardian origin, is non-designated but contributes positively to the townscape. The wider area comprises a mix of terraced and semi-detached properties, with nearby civic and commercial uses.

#### [2.2 Heritage and Cultural Context](#)

Whilst the existing building is not statutorily listed, it is located within close proximity to key heritage assets including Neath Castle (Grade II\*) and St David's Church. These historic structures form part of the town's cultural identity. The proposed development seeks to conserve the character of the area by retaining and sensitively modifying the existing building.

### [3.0 Design Development](#)

The scheme proposes the conversion of the existing structure to residential use. Internal reconfiguration will provide seven apartments with some additional communal space on the ground floor. A modest extension is proposed in order to achieve the required floor area and also accommodate a new lift. The existing architectural form will be preserved where practicable.

### [4.0 Environmental Considerations](#)

The site lies partly within Flood Zones 2 and 3. A Flood Consequences Assessment has been undertaken, confirming the development can proceed with minimal risk. Ecological enhancements will include bat and bird boxes, in line with policy obligations.

### [5.0 Accessibility and Transport](#)

The site benefits from excellent accessibility via public transport and local infrastructure. Pedestrian access is retained and enhanced. Cycle storage and limited on-site parking will be provided in accordance with local standards.

### [6.0 Environmental Performance](#)

The development targets EPC Rating A and incorporates a fully electric energy strategy, low-carbon heating systems, and rooftop photovoltaic panels. The scheme is designed to comply with Lifetime Homes standards and the Welsh Development Quality Requirements.

### 7.0 Placemaking Objectives

The proposal contributes to placemaking through appropriate scale, massing, and materiality. It enhances the public realm, supports active travel, and ensures a high standard of amenity. The adaptive reuse of the RAFA Club will maintain a sense of place while supporting community vitality.

### 8.0 Summary and Conclusion

The proposed development represents a sensitive and sustainable reuse of a prominent building within Neath. It delivers affordable housing aligned with identified needs and contributes to the regeneration of the town centre. The design respects the local character while ensuring environmental performance and social inclusion.