

Planning statement

23rd November 2025

Revision -

Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a Retrospective Planning Application for the demolition of the existing two-storey rear annexe and side extension and change of use from club and dance hall to residential dwelling together with external alterations at 5 Heol Y Felin, Seven Sisters, Neath, SA10 9BD.

Background and Context

The subject property previously benefited from full planning permission (P2020/0714, dated 30th November 2020) for the "Demolition of existing flat roof two storey extension and rear staircase structure and change of use from club and dance hall to residential dwelling together with external alterations including new rear link wall and external openings."

This previous approval imposed a restriction on the use of the substantial 314 sqm Gross Internal Floor Area rear annexe/workshop, limiting it to incidental use associated with the dwellinghouse only, and explicitly prohibiting any industrial, commercial, or business use.

Rationale for Demolition

The applicant considered the following factors and decided that the demolition of the annexe was the most appropriate course of action:

- **Restrictive Use Condition:** The condition severely limited the building's potential utility and financial value.
- **Poor State of Repair:** The building was in a dilapidated condition, requiring significant and costly works to bring it up to a suitable standard.
- **Impact on Saleability:** The retention of a large, restricted-use structure was assessed to negatively impact the market appeal and saleability of the main residential dwelling.

Oversight of Planning Control

The applicant sought and received approval from the Local Authority Building Control for the demolition works. However, the applicant was regrettably unaware that a separate, specific Planning Consent for Demolition was also required.

The applicant acknowledges this unfortunate oversight, sincerely apologises for this breach of planning control, and has been fully committed to cooperating with the Council to resolve this matter swiftly and appropriately through this retrospective application.

The applicant would like to thank the local authority planning department for their assistance in providing planning advice and their patience whilst agreeing the best approach for all parties.

Planning Benefits of Demolition

The removal of the rear annexe has resulted in significant planning and amenity benefits for the site, the new dwelling, and its neighbours. These benefits include:

- **Improved Amenity:** Significantly improves the view/outlook from the newly created house and for surrounding neighbours.
- **Enhanced Private Amenity Space:** Creates a large, usable private garden area for the residential dwelling.
- **Improved Vehicular Movement:** Creates a better parking and car turning area on site.
- **Reduced Overlooking:** Eliminates overlooking from the former two-storey annexe windows into the neighbouring properties on Marigold Place.
- **Reduction of Overbearing Mass:** Removes the overbearing issue caused by the structure on the adjoining residential dwelling, No. 5A.
- **Noise Mitigation:** Removes any potential noise issues previously associated with the restrictive workshop use permitted under the previous consent.

Ecology Considerations

An Ecological Bat Survey was undertaken by “Ecology and Wildlife Services” in September 2019 as part of the previous planning application (P2020/0714).

- **Survey Findings:** The report confirmed No bats were observed emerging or returning to the former British Legion building (the annexe and main building). Bats emerging from the adjacent house did not forage around the site.
- **Conclusion:** The report stated there were no constraints to the redevelopment of the site from bats.
- **Mitigation Measures:** Due to the proximity of a known bat roost on the adjoining site, the report recommended that:
 1. External lighting be no higher than 3m and pointed downwards (downlighters only).
 2. At least two bat boxes be provided on the site.

Compliance During Demolition

- The applicant undertook the demolition works in the knowledge that the previous survey found no evidence of bats using the property as a roost.
- Crucially, at no point during the demolition works were bats seen exiting or entering the annexe or the main building.

Current Status and Proposed Mitigation

Given that the demolition works are fully completed, a retrospective survey of the annexe is not possible. Similarly, as the repair works to the main building are complete and no further works to the roof or structure are planned, a new survey on the main dwelling would not contribute to any planned works.

The applicant confirms that, in line with the original bat report recommendations:

- Any external lighting on the site will be restricted to downlighters only.
- Two bat boxes have been included on the site to provide alternative roosting/sheltering opportunities.

Boundary Treatment

The existing boundaries consist of a mixture of timber fences, concrete panels, blockwork, and brickwork, many of which are already 1800mm or higher.

To maintain and enhance the privacy of the gardens and prevent overlooking, additional timber fences will be installed along the rear boundary as where necessary to the side boundaries if the existing is below 1800mm.

In line with best practice for Green Infrastructure, the new fences will include small openings at their base to allow for the passage of wildlife, specifically hedgehogs, thereby maintaining connectivity across the site for local fauna.

Drainage

A separate drainage statement has been prepared to illustrate the benefits of demolishing the rear annexe, and reducing surface water entering the public sewers.

Conclusion

The demolition of the redundant, dilapidated rear annexe, while carried out without prior consent, has ultimately improved the quality and sustainability of the residential conversion approved under P2020/0714. The resulting development provides a high-quality residential dwelling with substantial private amenity space, excellent outlook, and reduced negative impacts on neighbouring properties (overlooking, overbearing, and noise).

The applicant has demonstrated a commitment to resolving the planning breach and has fully incorporated the previously required ecological mitigation measures. The retrospective works are considered to represent a demonstrable enhancement to the amenity and character of the site and the wider residential area. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Local Planning Authority grant retrospective planning permission for the works, thereby regularising the development and securing a positive final outcome for the site.

