



PLANNING STATEMENT

**Conversion of a Former Café (Use Class A3)
to a Health Studio (Use Class D2)
at 31 Commercial Road, Port Talbot, SA13 1LN**

**On behalf of
Mr R. Herbert**

Our Ref: 1687.b
Date: December 2025
Prepared by: Shannon Stone

Approved by: Jason Evans

1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
2.0	SITE DESCRIPTION	4
2.1	THE SITE	4
2.2	THE SURROUNDING AREA	7
2.3	PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLES	9
	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	10
3.0	PROJECT OVERVIEW	10
3.1	GENERAL SCALE AND DESIGN	10
3.2	EXTERNAL FINISHES	11
3.3	INTERNAL LAYOUT	11
3.4	MEANS OF ACCESS AND PARKING	12
3.5	DRAINAGE	12
3.6	BIODIVERSITY	12
4.0	LOCAL PLANNING POLICY	13
4.1	POLICY R2 – PROPOSALS WITHIN RETAIL CENTRES	14
4.2	POLICY TR2 – DESIGN AND ACCESS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT	15
4.3	POLICY BE1 – DESIGN	16
5.0	CONCLUSION	18

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Evans Banks Planning Ltd. has been instructed by Mr R. Herbert (the Applicant) to prepare a full planning application for the conversion of a former café (Use Class A3) to a health studio (Use Class D2) at 31 Commercial Road, Port Talbot, SA13 1LN.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement therefore forms part of the submissions of the application to be considered by the Authority, and provides information on the following points:
- A brief description of the site and surrounding area
 - A description of the proposed development
 - Consideration of relevant local planning policy

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE SITE

2.1.1 The site location plan for the proposed development at 31 Commercial Road is presented in Figure 1 below.

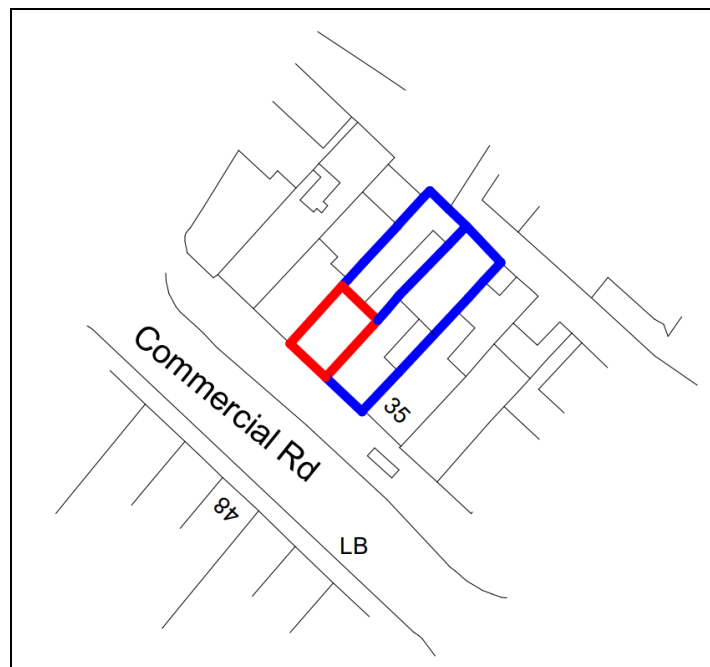
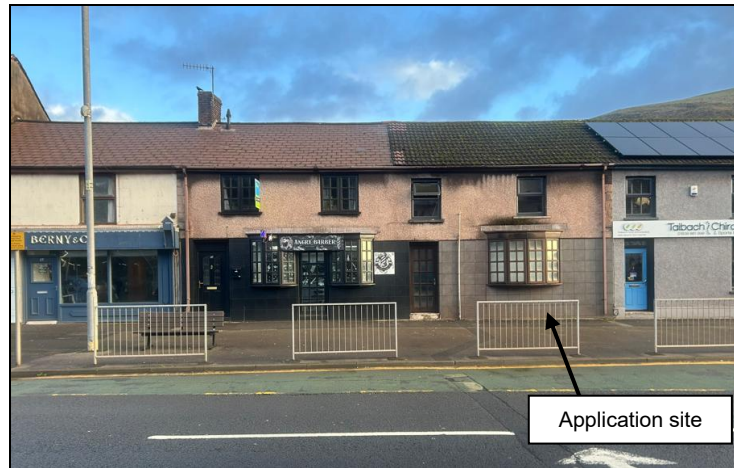


Figure 1

2.1.2 The application site comprises **solely the front section of the ground-floor level** of 31 Commercial Road in Port Talbot. Photograph 1 below shows the application site as viewed from across the street.



Photograph 1

- 2.1.3 As can be seen in Photograph 1 above, the application site is situated directly adjacent to the Taibach Chiropractic Clinic and a barber's shop.
- 2.1.4 Notably, the **rear section of the ground floor** forms a separate **storage area**, which is **not included within this planning application**. This area is used solely for storage purposes and does not form part of the proposed change of use. Significantly, the rear storage area **cannot be accessed via the main entrance to the application site on Commercial Road**. Access to this storage area is **only available from the rear lane** that runs behind Commercial Road.
- 2.1.5 Photograph 2 illustrates the rear access to the property via the lane located to the rear of Commercial Road.



Photograph 2

2.1.6 Photograph 3 and 4 show views of the circulation yard that serves the rear commercial storage building.



Photograph 3



Photograph 4

2.2 THE SURROUNDING AREA

2.2.1 In the immediate sense, the application site lies within the town of Port Talbot, situated within a district centre according to the LDP map. Figure 2 below displays a Google Earth aerial image of the application site, highlighting the application site and illustrating its location within the immediate area (captured in September 2022).

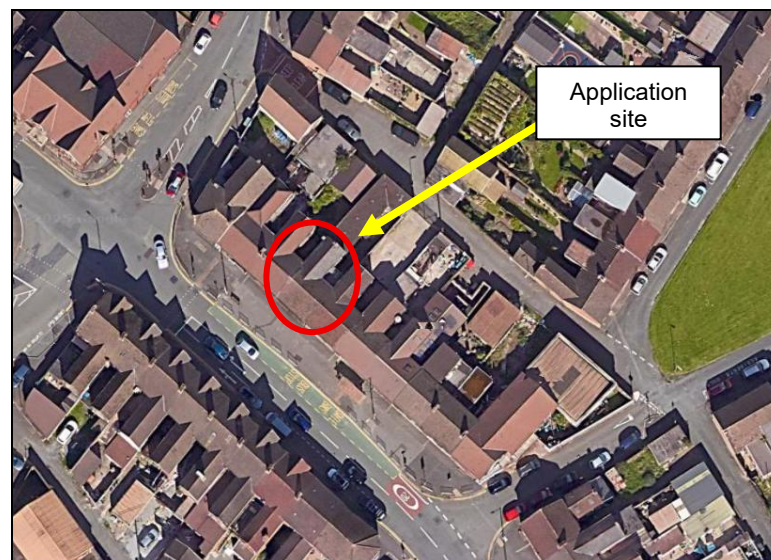


Figure 2

2.2.2 Photographs 4 and 5 below show views along the adjoining highway opposite the application site.



Photograph 4



Photograph 5

2.2.3 As can be seen in the photographs above, the application site is situated along a busy street, surrounded by other businesses. Notably, a bus stop is located directly outside the application site, making this a highly accessible and sustainable location.

2.2.4 An Ordnance Survey Map is shown in Figure 3 below which shows the surrounding areas.

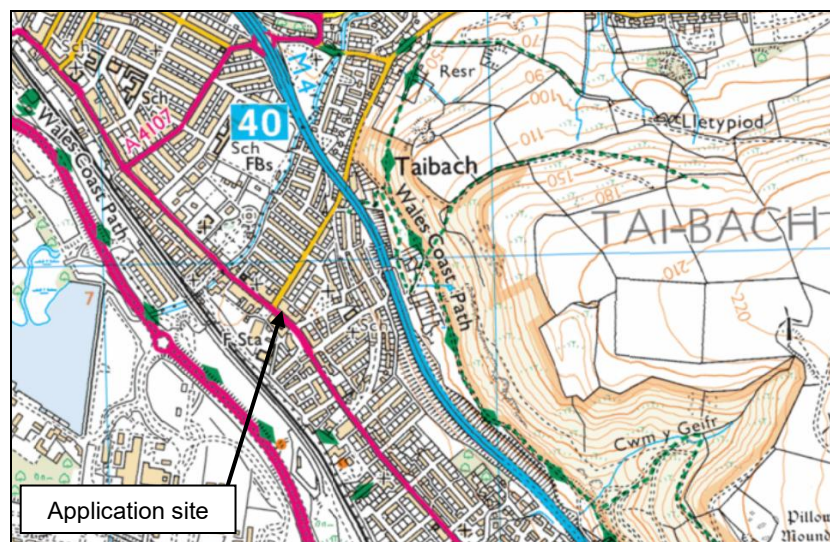


Figure 3

2.2.5 As mentioned, the application site is centrally located within a district centre in the town of Port Talbot, benefitting from convenient access to a diverse mix of uses, including commercial, residential and retail premises. These include restaurants, pubs, cafés, takeaways, high street shops, a pharmacy, post office, and an Aldi supermarket.

2.2.6 Furthermore, the application site is well served by public transport, with regular bus services providing a variety of connections to nearby settlements such as Neath, Margam, Swansea and Bridgend. Additionally, Port Talbot Parkway railway station is situated 1 kilometre from the pre-application site and provides direct services to Swansea, Carmarthen, Pembroke Dock, Fishguard Harbour, Cardiff Central, Milford Haven, Manchester Piccadilly and London Paddington.

2.3 PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLES

2.3.1 As a result of the local context and the aspirations of the Applicant for the property, the following design principles and parameters influenced the design of the proposal subject of this planning application:

- **Scale** – To retain the existing scale and massing of the existing building.
- **Design** – To preserve the existing architectural character of the property while reconfiguring the internal layout of the ground floor to support health studio use.
- **Access** – To maintain existing access arrangements.
- **Drainage** – To utilise the existing drainage system which is fully compliant with current regulations.
- **Biodiversity** – A bird box will be installed on the rear elevation of the property as a simple enhancement measure to support local wildlife and contribute to biodiversity gain.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

- 3.1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the change of use of part of the ground floor of 31 Commercial Road from its former café use (Use Class A3) to a health studio (Use Class D2). The proposed health studio will **accommodate low-impact health and fitness activities** such as yoga and Pilates and will also accommodate occasional **health-related events** such as seminars.
- 3.1.2 It is noteworthy that 33 Commercial Road, immediately to the south-east of the application site, is also owned by the Applicant and currently operates as a chiropractic clinic.
- 3.1.3 Furthermore, on 26th September 2025, the Applicant was granted full planning permission for the *“conversion of a first-floor residential flat (Use Class C3) to provide additional facilities for a chiropractic clinic (Use Class D2) serving the adjoining chiropractic clinic”* at 31A Commercial Road, which occupies the first-floor level directly above the application site.
- 3.1.4 The proposed change of use of the former café to a health studio is intended to **complement and support the Applicant’s existing chiropractic practice**, allowing for the expansion of associated health and wellbeing services within the local area.

3.2 GENERAL SCALE AND DESIGN

- 3.2.1 Notably, the application site comprises solely part of the ground-floor level of 31 Commercial Road. The proposal does not include any extension or increase in the building’s height; consequently, the overall scale, form, and external appearance of the structure will remain entirely unchanged, as shown in the block plan presented in Figure 4 below.

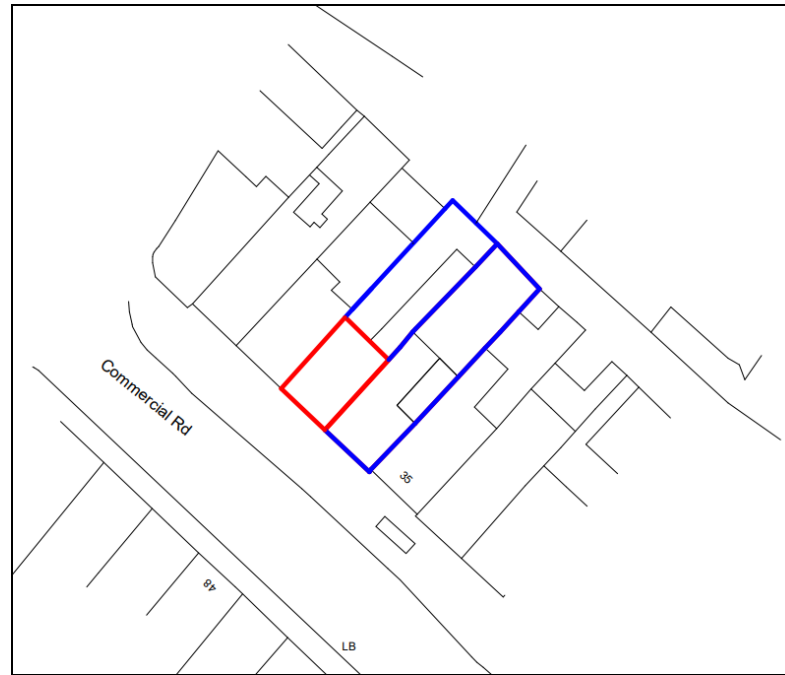


Figure 4

3.3 EXTERNAL FINISHES

- 3.3.1 No alterations are proposed to the external finishes of the building. The existing rough-textured, light brown concrete render dash on the upper level and the dark tiles on the lower portion will be retained, ensuring consistency with the local architectural character. The large, wooden-framed windows at ground-floor level will also be retained as part of this application, as well as the roof which is clad in brown tiles.

3.4 INTERNAL LAYOUT

- 3.4.1 The existing ground-floor café elements – comprising two rooms and two separate WCs – will be largely unaltered beyond general cosmetic means, as illustrated in the plans below.

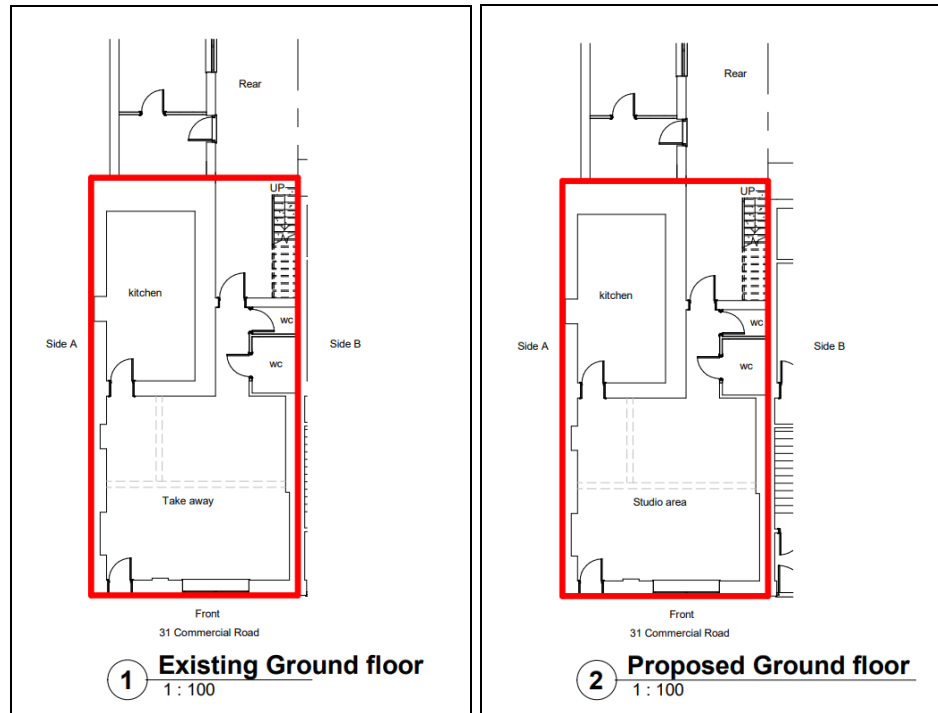


Figure 5

Figure 6

3.5 MEANS OF ACCESS AND PARKING

3.5.1 No changes are proposed to the existing access arrangements. Although the application site does not include dedicated customer parking, it benefits from a highly accessible location, with a bus stop situated directly outside the property. In addition, numerous parking options are available in the immediate vicinity, including on-street parking along Commercial Road and several larger public car parks nearby. Therefore, the existing access continues to serve the site safely and effectively.

3.6 DRAINAGE

3.6.1 Foul drainage will be managed via the existing system, and surface water will continue to be disposed of via existing soakaway systems already in place on the site.

3.7 BIODIVERSITY

3.7.1 Although no external alterations are proposed, biodiversity enhancements will be introduced through the installation of a bird box on the building.

4.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.0.1 In terms of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the adopted development plan for the area within which the application site is positioned is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP). As such, the policies contained within this document have been carefully considered in the preparation of this planning application. The proposal has been assessed with particular reference to the following relevant policies:

- **Policy R2** – Proposals within Retail Centres
- **Policy SC1** – Settlement Limits
- **Policy SP3** – Sustainable Communities
- **Policy TR2** – Design and Access of New Development
- **Policy BE1** – Design

4.0.2 Figure 7 below displays an extract from Neath Port Talbot's LDP map, highlighting the location of the application site.

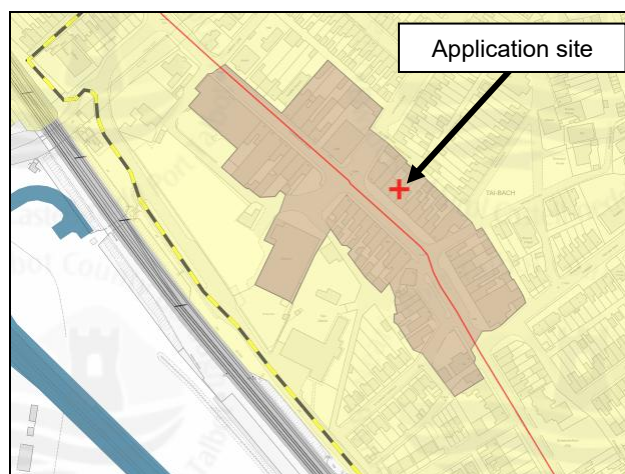


Figure 7

4.0.3 As illustrated in Figure 7 above, the application site lies within the defined Settlement Limits (Policy SC1) for Port Talbot and is also located within the Taibach District Centre. Additionally, the Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies Commercial Road

as part of the 'core road network', and the Wales Coastal Path runs directly to the southwest of the site.

- 4.0.4 Accordingly, particular attention has been paid to Policy R2 and Policy TR2 which are considered of key relevance to this application. The following sections provide a detailed assessment of the proposal against the specific requirements of these policies.

4.1 POLICY R2 – PROPOSALS WITHIN RETAIL CENTRES

- 4.1.1 Policy R2 of the LDP supports development proposals within designated retail centres that enhance the vitality, viability, and attractiveness of the area. The policy encourages development that strengthens retail character, makes effective use of upper floors, and maintains a vibrant and attractive street frontage. It also provides criteria for assessing conversions or redevelopment of existing premises to ensure such proposals contribute positively to the community and townscape.
- 4.1.2 The application site is located within the designated retail centre of Taibach, a defined commercial area in Port Talbot. The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use of part of the ground floor of 31 Commercial Road from a café (Use Class A3) to a health studio (Use Class D2). The proposed use will **complement the existing chiropractic clinic** operating at first-floor level above the application site and at the adjoining property, 33 Commercial Road. Significantly, the proposal does not involve any alterations that would diminish the property's frontage or accessibility.
- 4.1.3 The proposal fully accords with *Criterion 1)* of Policy R2, shown below:
"Within the designated retail centres, uses that would enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the centre, including uses in classes A and D will be permitted where:
a) The proposal integrates with and strengthens the layout, retail character and pedestrian flows of the centre; and
b) Does not prejudice the effective use of upper floors; and

c) Maintains a vibrant and attractive shopping street frontage.”

- 4.1.4 The proposal clearly satisfies *Criterion 1)* of Policy R2. In respect of *Condition a)*, the development strengthens the layout and commercial role of the Taibach District Centre by **bringing an underused former café unit back into active use and introducing a further health-based business at this location**. This reinforces pedestrian activity and contributes to the vitality of the centre.
- 4.1.5 Regarding *Condition b)*, **the proposal relates solely to part of the ground floor** and therefore does not prejudice the use of the upper floors. Rather, it actively complements the existing first-floor chiropractic use.
- 4.1.6 Finally, with regard to *Condition c)*, the development **fully retains the property’s existing frontage** since no changes are proposed to the external façade or shopfront, ensuring the appearance and vibrancy of the shopping street is maintained. This also ensures adheres to the requirements of Policy BE1.
- 4.1.7 In summary, the proposed change of use supports all three criteria of Policy R2 by enhancing commercial use, ensuring efficient use of space, and preserving the active retail frontage within the district centre.

4.2 POLICY TR2 – DESIGN AND ACCESS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 4.2.1 Policy TR2 requires that new development proposals demonstrate safe and efficient highway use, adequate parking and access arrangements, and connectivity to a range of transport modes.
- 4.2.2 With respect to *Criterion 1)*, the proposal does not compromise the safe or efficient use of the highway network. It involves internal reconfiguration only, with no intensification of external access or changes to the building footprint. As such, there will be no adverse impact on highway safety or significant increase in traffic generation.

- 4.2.3 In line with *Criterion 2*), while no dedicated customer parking is provided on-site, the site benefits from surrounding on-street parking and several nearby public car parks.
- 4.2.4 The site fully meets *Criterion 3*), being highly accessible by a range of transport modes. A bus stop is located directly outside the property, and the surrounding area includes safe pedestrian footways and local cycle routes. The Wales Coastal Path, located just to the southwest, further reinforces pedestrian connectivity.
- 4.2.5 As the proposal is modest in scale and will not generate significant additional traffic, a Transport Assessment or Travel Plan is not required under *Criterion 4*).
- 4.2.6 Overall, the proposal fully complies with Policy TR2, maintaining highway safety, ensuring accessibility, and supporting sustainable modes of travel.

4.3 POLICY BE1 – DESIGN

- 4.3.1 Policy BE1 requires all development proposals to demonstrate high-quality design that considers the natural, historic, and built environment, contributing to attractive, sustainable places. Proposals will only be permitted where all relevant criteria are satisfied.
- 4.3.2 In line with *Criterion 1*), the proposal retains all existing elevations of 31 Commercial Road, preserving its scale, height, massing, and appearance. No alterations are proposed to the shopfront or façade, ensuring the character and commercial frontage of the Taibach retail centre is maintained and enhanced. This further aligns *Criterion 3*), as all existing materials are retained, ensuring the building continues to harmonise with surrounding properties.
- 4.3.3 With respect to *Criterion 2*), the development respects the local context and townscape. The change of use complements the adjoining chiropractic clinic and neighbouring commercial units, enhancing the active street frontage without adversely affecting the character or appearance of the area.

- 4.3.4 In regard to *Criterion 4*), the proposed change of use will not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety or the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Access is maintained via the existing entrance, and the low-impact health and fitness activities such as yoga and Pilates, will not generate noise or disturbance (*to avoid unnecessary repetition, please refer to Section 4.2 – Policy TR2 for further details regarding highway safety*).
- 4.3.5 Consistent with *Criterion 5*), the proposal does not affect important local features, green spaces, or biodiversity and retains the functional layout of the building, supporting sustainable use of existing facilities. The application site relates solely to the building, and no existing green infrastructure assets are present. Nevertheless, a **bird box is proposed on the rear elevation to enhance local biodiversity**, with further details provided in the accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement.
- 4.3.6 With respect to *Criterion 7*), the site benefits from excellent connections to local pedestrian routes, public transport, and community facilities.
- 4.3.7 Consistent with *Criterion 8*), the proposal makes efficient use of previously developed, brownfield land by repurposing the former café unit.
- 4.3.8 Finally, in regard to *Criterion 9*), there are no alterations to drainage systems, and the proposal will not increase surface water runoff or flood risk.
- 4.3.9 In summary, the proposed change of use fully satisfies the relevant criteria of Policy BE1 by delivering a high-quality, contextually appropriate design that is safe, accessible, sustainable, and enhances the character and vitality of the Taibach retail centre.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of part of the ground floor of 31 Commercial Road, Port Talbot, from its former café use (Use Class A3) to a health studio (Use Class D2). The proposal will complement the existing chiropractic clinic at first-floor level above the application site and the adjoining property, 33 Commercial Road.
- 5.2 The proposal represents a modest but effective intervention that brings a former café space back into active use, supporting the expansion of local health business provision in the area. The application enables operational growth without the need for external extensions or alterations to the building, preserving the character of the site and surrounding streetscape.
- 5.3 The proposed change of use is both sustainable and appropriate, ensuring the effective use of ground floor space, preserving the commercial character and active frontage of Commercial Road, and reinforcing the vitality of the Taibach District Centre. No adverse impacts on highway safety, amenity, or local services are anticipated, and the site remains well connected by public transport, walking, and cycling routes.
- 5.4 The development aligns fully with key policies of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, including Policies R2 (Retail Centres), TR2 (Design and Access), and SC1 (Settlement Limits). It reflects good planning practice by supporting an existing business, optimising land use within a defined commercial area.
- 5.5 In light of the above, and the proposal's compliance with local planning policy and sustainable development principles, we respectfully request that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.