DESIGN ACCESS STATEMENT

PLANNING DOCUMENT REF: 26-501/301-RevB
SITE ADDRESS: 2A Station Road, Sandfields, Port Talbot, SA12 6AB
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT: Change of use from Hair Salon (Class A1/C3) to an Education/Teaching Facility (Class D)

INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by SEAGREY Property Design in support of an application for a commercial property that has recently been purchased. The change of use proposal from a Hair Salon (Class A1/C3) to an Education/Training Facility (Class D1) which is run by Physical Empowerment CIC *.

*What is a CIC?

CIC's (Community Interest Companies) are limited companies which operate to provide a benefit to the community they serve. The purpose of a CIC is primarily one of community benefit rather than private profit.

Examples of a CIC could be a direct welfare service to vulnerable people, or an activity that generates profits which are used to support a specific purpose such as a running a cafe where all profits generated are used to benefit the community.

A CIC operates in the same way as any other company. It has all the well understood characteristics of a limited company such as a separate legal identity; the ability to enter into contracts and own assets in its own name; and flexibility in borrowing and fund raising. The separate legal identity means that a CIC will continue to exist despite changes in ownership or management. The directors can be paid or unpaid and have the same rights and duties as any other directors.

CIC's will become established as a brand of company that the public recognises and trusts and whose social purpose they understand.

i) BACKGROUND OF PROPERTY

The original building is circa early 1905 and is located at the end of a row of domestic properties, between a pharmacy, a (closed) supermarket on one side and a café (closed) on the far side. The front of the building opens onto the pavement close to the traffic lights on Victoria Road, at the junction crossroads of Hospital Road and Newbridge Road. To the rear there is an alley wide enough for one vehicle, and behind that is the Port Talbot Gas Welfare Club, which has its own parking area (fenced).

Previously the building was used as a Hair Salon (GINO'S) for many years and is classed as having accommodation on the First Floor although there is no evidence of this in the property. The back garden does not seem to have been used much at all for a very long time – the new owners are keen to transform this as a useful area for the women who attend their classes, to improve their horticultural skills.

SUNBEDS
Wax ng · Nai
Spray Tanning
Hair Extensions
GINO'S

ii) DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

We believe this detached property was built around 1905 - the early part of the 20th Century and is built in the style of an Edwardian Villa. The front consists of large, open windows and a central door with aluminium framing, with the name of the previous occupant GINO's over the door. There is a small, side access alley between the buildings which leads to the large, private, back garden, which has walls on one side and fencing boundaries on the other. Currently the rear boundary is open but there are plans to fence this area for further privacy and security, and to provide some parking spaces off the back alley, which runs behind the property.

EXISTING SITE DETAILS

The building is in the densely populated area of Sandfields East; there is generally street parking on the main road and within the surrounding side streets, as well as the two spaces to be provided on the site in the back garden.

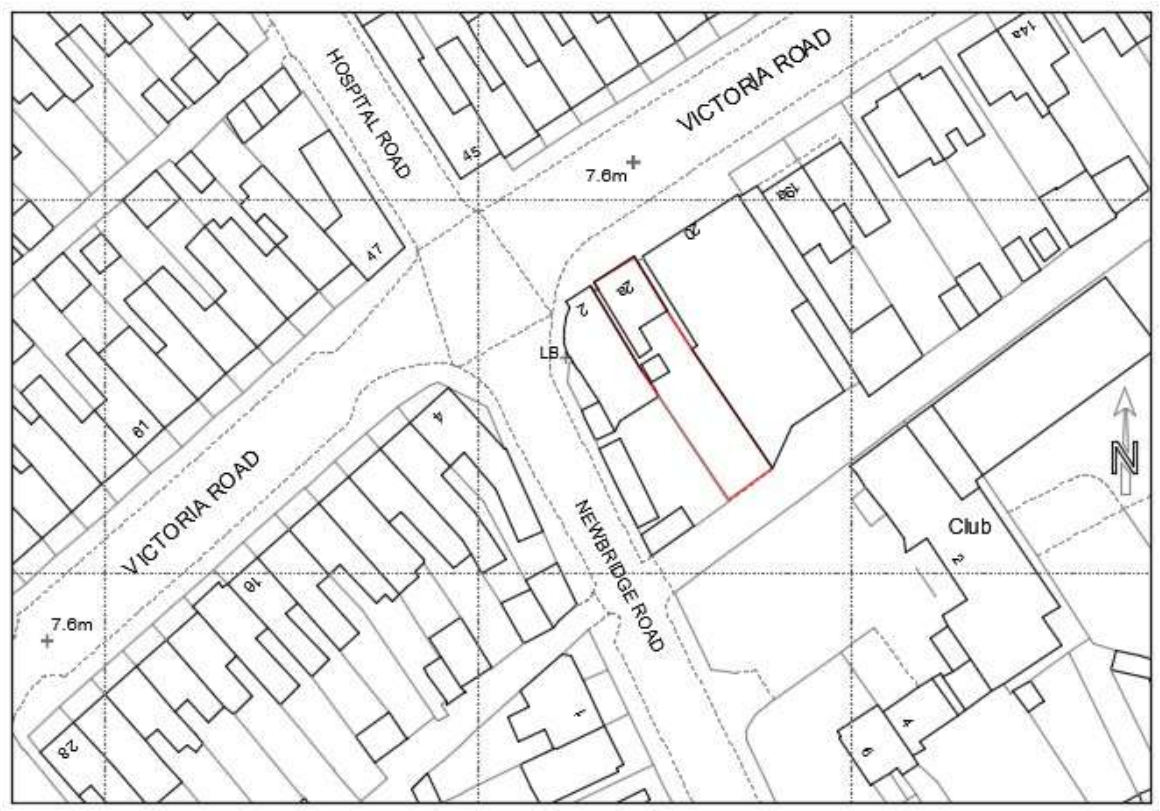
The site is very accessible for pedestrians or cyclists and is located on a main Bus Route No.82 which is convenient for those coming to use the facilities at the renamed "ELEANOR'S".

The rear garden is enclosed by boundary walls to the left side (no access) which are formed mostly by the walls of the adjacent building, (which was formerly a small convenience shop) that has been closed for several years. The right-hand side has a narrow access to the side of No.2a, with the wall of the building on the end of the row, known as Woody's Café (currently a closed business). There is also some dilapidated brick walling on this side and a timber fence approx 1.8m high but set at a higher level than the ground level of the garden at No.2a.

Internally, the Ground Floor is reasonably open where the Salon operated its services – the proposals are to create the main Training Room on the left-hand side by introducing a timber partition and door to

separate it from the reception area and the rest of the building. Upstairs, the rooms will remain as existing, however the wall (which has been removed by the previous owner) around the WC will be replaced with stud partitions and a wash basin will be installed. The sink in the original “bathroom” will be replaced for that room to be allocated to Beauty Therapy. Another sink (with cupboards) will be added to the Art Therapy room for use with art materials and cleaning brushes etc.

SITE POSITION ON LOCATION MAP



VISION

The vision is to create a safe haven for learning and developing skills for women who have come out of abusive relationships and need to rejoin the workforce. The CIC will help them learn new skills, understand how to write CVs, and how to navigate the jobs market.
The location is on a main route into Aberavon, on a main transport route, so it is ideally placed to be accessible for those who must use public transport.

Physical Empowerment CIC has previously used several bases in the area, but their lease has come to an end so this property will centralise their services with a permanent home, specifically dedicated to the women and children who need their services.
As well as 2 permanent/2 part-time members of staff, there are at least 24 volunteers who help to ensure this endeavour gives a real service to those who are in greatest need of support.

PROPOSALS

The existing interior fittings will remain intact, with the addition of a stud wall to divide the main Ground Floor space into two separate rooms, and a second stud wall to re-form the First Floor WC area with the addition of a wash-handbasin. The larger Ground Floor room will be the main Training Room with other rooms on the First Floor as ancillary facilities for individual counselling, Computer, Beauty and Art studies.

The main façade will remain as existing, with a change of name from GINO'S to ELEANOR'S, which is more fitting to the new purpose. No other changes are proposed other than the removal of the rear chimney due to damp issues, and some new roofs will eventually be provided to the rear existing extension and the back shed.

In the future the owner intends to develop the garden area as part of the training for the attendees, and they will create a community garden with raised growing beds to nurture and produce their own vegetables. This will create an environmentally friendly area for everyone to enjoy and will encourage many insects to help pollinate the plants.

PROPOSED VISION

Physical Empowerment CIC's vision is to create a safe haven for learning and developing skills for women who have survived domestic abuse and / or sexual violence. We will help to rebuild their self-confidence, and they will require support to enable them to volunteer in the community or rejoin the workforce. The CIC empowers women through an initial course (encompassing mental, emotional and physical self-defence) and then longer-term support including learning skills such as public speaking, active listening and CV writing.

The CIC is looking to join forces with a community company (Keep Wales Tidy - https://keepwalestidy.cymru/nature/garden-packages/food-garden/) who will provide the means and advice for setting up the vegetable garden – they will help with the building of the planters and setting up the water collection from existing downpipes to use in the garden. There will be accessible pathways between the planters and storage for the equipment required once a new roof has been installed on the existing shed – turning it into a garden room and storage.

THE PHYSICAL EMPOWERMENT CIC AIMS ARE:

1. To help people reintegrate into society through helping them to empower themselves.
2. To give people opportunities to be the best they can be.
3. To promote women and men working together to end Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG).
4. To create a wider awareness of the use of self-defence as a trauma rehabilitation tool.

COMMUNITY

As this is a Community Interest Company, the local community will be very important to the purpose of this endeavour. Many of the volunteers and attendees live in the locality and it would be hoped that the

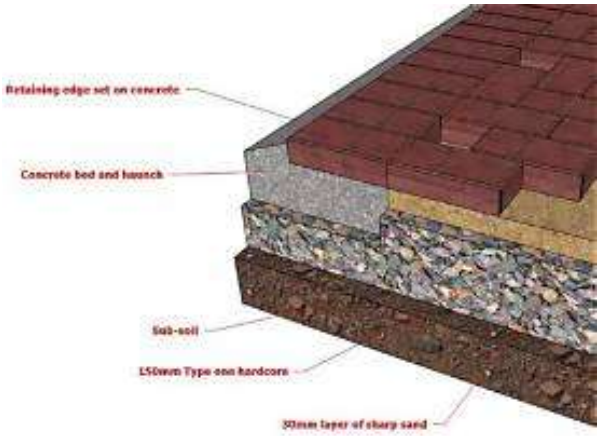
nearby community will embrace and support the company to assist with their aims and potential once they are established in their new premises.

BIN STORAGE

An area for Bin Storage has been indicated on the Proposed Site Plan next to the Parking bays at the rear – it is estimated that the facility will produce no more refuse than a standard household as there are no actual inhabitants of the property, and the small kitchen will mostly be used as a tea/coffee-making location, or for light meals like lunch or breakfast. The company will also undertake to recycle as much of their waste materials as possible.

PARKING DETAILS

Parking for attendees of the facility will be in the local streets; however, most of the attendees will be travelling by walking or public transport, therefore not requiring parking. There will be 2No. parking places created to the rear of the site (off the back lane) for staff parking – with a SUDS Compliant Permeable paved Driveway with permeable base, joints and a permanent edging along the joint by the road surface to contain the paving and prevent the blocks from sliding. A fence and gate is to be installed for security and access to the back garden – there will be provision for bike parking behind the fence as shown on the Site Plan.



This system will provide a permeable surface as there is no drainage available in this part of the property. As the existing fencing is temporary, we will be able to take advantage of the low wall to the neighbouring property with a visibility splay towards the main road, however, the other side is part of a building owned by a neighbouring property and so a visibility splay would be impossible to provide. The rear access road, although adopted with street lighting, serves only approximately 13 properties, not all of which have Garages or driveways, and is a dead end - so no through traffic and the number of passing cars is very light. The area is also reasonably quiet, and cars will be moving through the access road at a low speed, so accidents are unlikely to occur once people know there are likely to be cars exiting that parking area. A Convex Traffic Mirror would be provided to increase visibility to the left, with consent from the adjacent PTG Welfare Club.

CONCLUSION

This shop unit has been left empty for several years, there have been at least two applications to change the property into flats, which were refused. This change of use keeps the property in commercial use and is not proposing major changes to the façade or any of the other elevations, aside from some cosmetic finishes such as painting and general maintenance.

The owners intend to create an open and inclusive environment for their attendees, and to continue to provide a much-needed service to the community.

We are making this Application with the view that this scheme will gain a favourable response from Neath Port Talbot to improve this currently unloved and unused retail property.