

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/25/0135
Site Address:	Horizon Unit 1 7B Pant Industrial Estate Pant Merthyr Tydfil
Development:	Change of use of part of a valet centre to provide a gym
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	21st May 2025
Application Expiry Date:	15th August 2025
Consultation reply date expired:	11th June 2025

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to part of a larger industrial unit on Pant Industrial Estate. The area of the unit which is the subject of this planning application measures approximately 247m² at ground floor level and contains a mezzanine floor which measures approximately 32m².

The site is positioned approximately halfway along the northwest side of the larger unit and is bound to the northwest by an internal access road and on the other side of the access road are areas that are used for parking of vehicles. Additionally, the site is located within the settlement boundary (LDP Policy SW4), a Primary Growth Area and the Pant Industrial Estate Protected Employment Site (LDP Policy EcW2).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of part of the industrial unit from a valet centre (*sui-generis* use) to a gym (Use Class D2). It is noted that the proposal seeks to change the use of part of the existing valet area which would continue to operate although from a reduced area.

The proposed ground floor plan includes a lobby and reception, office, toilets and a new/additional area of mezzanine floor which would measure approximately 114.4m². No changes to the external envelope of the building are proposed. A row of parking spaces, comprising of 21 spaces have been identified for the users of the gym.

The proposed mix of employees is stated as being 2 full and 2 part-time positions. The core opening hours would be 06:00 to 22:00 with hour-long classes which would take place at 06:00, 10:00, 12:00, 16:00, 18:00 and 19:00, and would be when the most

customers would visit premises with approximately 10-12 people attending along with 3 members of staff.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

- P/13/0278 Installation of a new shop front and first floor windows to front elevation and installation of windows, door and roller shutter openings to the side elevation
Approved: 11 Oct 2013
- P/13/0236 Installation of internally illuminated fascia sign
Advertisement Approval: 18 Sep 2013
- P/97/0239 Construction of external loading canopy and ancillary internal alterations.
Approved: 24 Jul 1997

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering and Highways: No objections.

Planning Policy Officer: No objections.

Environmental Health Manager: No objections.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to adjoining properties and a site notice was displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021) (Future Wales)

National Planning Policies

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024).

Local Planning Policies

The following policies of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031 (LDP) are relevant to the determination of this application:

- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking

- EcW2: Protecting Employment Sites
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- SW9: Planning Obligations

In addition, the application will be determined having regard to the advice contained within the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 2: Planning Obligations (March 2012)
- Note 4, Sustainable Design
- Note 5, Nature and Development

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues to consider under the assessment of this application relate to the principle of development, parking and highway safety, visual impact and ecology. Consideration has also been given to planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy.

Principle of Development

Economic Well-being Policy EcW2 (Protecting Employment Sites) states that at ...Pant Industrial Estate... development will be permitted if:-

- It is within Use Classes B1(b), B1(c), B2 or B8; or
- It provides an ancillary facility or service that supports the primary employment use, or
- It is an acceptable complementary commercial service outside class B uses, or
- It is an appropriate waste management facility compatible with existing industrial and commercial activities.

Development proposals for uses other than those stipulated and would result in the loss of employment land / premises will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable change in the nature of the employment site and where the existing use is inappropriate, or the land / premises are surplus to the requirements of the employment market.

The proposal is for the change of use of a unit that falls within Use Class B, to a gym which falls into Use Class D2. The Planning Policy Officer has not raised an objection to the proposed development and notes information submitted in support of the application identifies that there are a number of vacant units on Pant Industrial Estate, which are available for Class B uses and, therefore, indicates that there is a current market surplus. A gym can be considered an acceptable complementary commercial service outside of Class B and, although there are a number of gyms on the estate, overall the proportion of units containing gyms is minor in comparison to the size of the entire industrial estate where the majority of buildings and land remain occupied and/or available for Class B uses. Notwithstanding this, the proposed use would also maintain employment opportunities at the site. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle and in accordance with Policy EcW2, subject to its compliance with other relevant policies.

Parking and Highway Safety

The Head of Engineering and Highways has raised no objection to the proposal and notes that the applicant has provided sufficient information to establish that the parking requirements for the proposed use can be accommodated in the existing parking areas and is unlikely to cause any detriment to the parking requirements or the free flow of traffic in relation to the other businesses which operate from the nearby units and wider industrial site. The Head of Engineering and Highways has also requested a condition to secure cycle parking area is included on any planning permission. It is noted that the site is located within a busy industrial estate and the applicant has indicated that bicycles would be stored inside the gym to prevent any thefts. It is considered that the applicant's approach to the storage of bicycles is acceptable and there is no requirement for the condition to be imposed. Accordingly, the proposal meets with the requirements of Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Visual impact

LDP Policy SW11 which relates to sustainable design and placemaking, seeks to ensure that development is appropriate in its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density. It is noted that no alterations to the external envelope are proposed, and the proposal would not materially affect the character and appearance of the building or the wider industrial estate. Therefore, the proposal meets the requirements of LDP Policy SW11.

Ecology

Policies EnW1 of the LDP which relates to nature conservation and ecosystem resilience seek to ensure that the green infrastructure and the biodiversity interests are maintained and enhanced. The proposal seeks a change of use of the industrial unit with no proposed extensions or significant alterations to the building. Given the scale and nature of the proposal, there are no significant concerns in respect of the potential impacts on the green infrastructure or any protected species or habitats. Given the nature of the proposal, ecological enhancements have not been sought in this instance.

Planning Obligations

The Planning Policy Officer has confirmed that, given the nature of the proposal, on-site provision of affordable housing or open space, or a financial contribution towards affordable housing, would not be sought. Additionally, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would not be chargeable.

CONCLUSION

The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act") has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing Title: Block Plan, Received on 20 June 2025

Drawing Title: Block Plan, Drawing Number 1117.05, Received on 14 May 2025

Drawing Title: Elevations, Drawing Number 1117.04, Received on 14 May 2025

Reason -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

G. Davies

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED

PP

Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 17th July 2025