

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/20/0271

Site Address: Community Centre
Greenwood Close
Twynyrodyn
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 0SY

Development: Convert first floor of community centre into 2, 1 bedroom flats

Case Officer: Marlene Ferreira

Site Visit: 17th November 2020

Application Expiry Date: 30th December 2020

Consultation reply date expired: 1st December 2020

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to the first floor of the existing Greenwood Close Community Centre, located off Wheatley Place in the area of Twynyrodyn. The first floor area of this community centre is currently vacant, but was formerly used as a warden's flat. The warden vacated the flat in June 2013 and the flat has therefore remained vacant for a significant period of time. Although it was used by the Autistic Society charity from March 2017 to March 2019 (and underwent internal alterations), this was an unauthorised use which had not been granted planning permission and as such, the use class is still C3. The premises is served by on-site parking via a communal parking area to the north of the building, accessed off Wheatley Place.

The community centre and first floor flat is surrounded by terraced and semi-detached bungalows, which back on to grassed communal areas. To the east and west of the bungalows the site is surrounded by semi-detached two-storey properties.

The application site lies within the settlement boundary – primary growth area, as designated within the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to change the use of the first floor of the community centre into 2, 1 bedroom self-contained flats. This scheme has been submitted by Merthyr Valley Homes and seeks to provide two affordable housing units.

The existing first floor flat has been internally altered to serve the charity formerly occupying the premises, and currently includes a kitchen, playroom, living room, small playroom, lobby area, WC and bathroom. The proposed flats would be accessed at first

floor, from an existing internal path into a lobby area (on the eastern elevation). The lobby area would provide access to both flat 1 and flat 2. Each flat would be served by a kitchen/living/dining area, a bedroom and a bathroom. Externally, no changes are proposed as a result of this development.

PLANNING HISTORY

The following planning history is relevant to this site:

P/15/0239 – Conversion of first floor flat into two flats, to include new access ramp and windows – Approved: 15th September 2015

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering	No objection.
Planning Divisions Policy Section	No objection.
Environmental Health Officer	No response.
Welsh Water	No objection.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order (Wales) 2012, nearby occupiers were consulted and four site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site. No letters of representation have been received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policies

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 10, December 2018)

Paragraph 3.3 refers to good design and states that '*...design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surroundings area...*'

Paragraph 3.9 refers to character and states that '*...the special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations. A clear rationale behind the design decisions made, based on site and context analysis, a strong vision, performance requirements and design principles, should be sought throughout the development process and expressed, when appropriate, in a design and access statement...*'

Paragraph 3.14 refers to context appraisal and states that these '*...should be used to determine the appropriateness of a development proposal in responding to its surroundings. This process will ensure that a development is well integrated into the fabric of the existing built environment...*'

Paragraph 3.51 states that '*...previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome. It is recognised, however, that not all previously developed land is suitable for development...*'

Paragraph 4.2.17 goes on to state that '*...maximising the use of suitable previously developed and/or underutilised land for housing development can assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites...*'

- TAN (Technical Advice Note)

TAN 12: Design (2016) – This TAN advises that the Welsh Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment, which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion at every scale throughout Wales.

Local Planning Policies

- The Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031

Policy SW1: Provision of New Homes;
Policy SW3: Sustainably Distributing New Homes;
Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries;
Policy SW9: Planning Obligations;
Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking;
Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection;

- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

SPG 1: Affordable Housing (March 2012)
SPG 2: Planning Obligations (March 2012)
SPG 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The application site lies within the settlement boundary as defined by the LDP Proposals Map. Full planning permission (P/15/0239) has been previously granted for the conversion of one flat into two flats at this site. Whilst the application recently expired, the principle of development is considered acceptable and is generally supported by LDP Policies SW1, SW3 and SW4, provided that the proposal is compatible with other relevant policies and material planning considerations. Thus, the main issues to consider when assessing this application relate to whether the conversion of one flat into two flats, would be acceptable with regards to their impact upon the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, parking provision and highway safety.

Character and Appearance

The proposed change of use from a wardens flat into two self-contained flats would not result in any external alterations to the building. As such, the proposed development would not cause any adverse impact upon the appearance of the premises, nor would it adversely affect the character of the street scene. Thus, the development would comply with LDP Policy SW11.

Residential Amenity

In respect of the impact of the proposed development upon nearby occupiers, it is noted that the proposal includes the creation of an additional residential unit. However, given that the site is surrounded by residential bungalows and two-storey properties, it is evident that this site is predominantly residential in character and as such one additional flat would not be considered to cause any significant increase in noise or disturbance which would adversely impact upon the amenities of surrounding residents. Furthermore, no external alterations are proposed and the development would therefore not detract from the privacy or amenities of nearby residents and would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

Parking and Highway Safety

The application site benefits from a communal parking area as noted previously. This area contains four car parking spaces. There is also additional unrestricted on-street parking available along the adjacent highways, Wheatley Place and Jowett Avenue. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in respect of parking provision and highway safety. Thus, the Head of Engineering has not raised any objections to this proposal, which would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

Planning Obligations

Policy SW9 relates to Planning Obligations for on-site provision of affordable housing, open space, or a financial contribution towards affordable housing. In this instance, given that the development seeks to provide affordable housing and is only for two units, this would not be a requirement.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in this location and would not adversely impact upon the character or appearance of the area, nor would it be detrimental to residential amenity or highway safety. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable and would comply with the relevant policies.

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 and documents:

- Project no: 9055, Drawing no: 03, Rev: B, received: 4th November 2020;
- Project no: 9055, Drawing no: 04, received: 4th November 2020.

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

INFORMATIVES

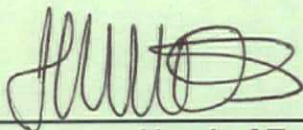
1. All bats and their roosts are protected against disturbance under UK and European legislation. If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. They must be given reasonable time to advise as to whether the works should be carried out and, if so, the method to be used.

If work has already commenced and bats are found, or if any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost is found, work should cease and NRW should be contacted immediately.

2. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Works to any trees, hedgerows and other suitable nesting bird habitat which are to be removed or pruned as part of the proposal should only be carried out outside the bird breeding season. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.

If any vegetation removal or site clearance works are scheduled to commence in the bird nesting season it is advised that the advice from an Ecologist is sought. Any active nests will need to be protected until the young have fledged.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Head of Town Planning

DATE: 16/12/20.