

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/23/0029
Site Address:	Trinity Chapel Wesley Place Merthyr Vale Merthyr Tydfil CF48 4RS
Development:	Conversion to an Artists Studio (B1 use class) and Short Term Holiday Let (C6 use Class)
Case Officer:	Marlene Ferreira
Site Visit:	16th February 2023
Application Expiry Date:	27th March 2023
Consultation reply date expired:	2nd March 2023

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to the former Trinity Chapel and a former office building located to its rear. A courtyard/recreational ground adjoins the former chapel to the north, which also forms part of the application site. The former offices, located at a significantly lower ground level, was previously used as the Welsh Assembly Communities First Office and then subsequently as a day nursery. The former chapel and offices have been used as an artist studio with associated residential accommodation, following the granting of planning permission P/20/0171. However, recently the former office building has been used to provide holiday accommodation since approximately the end of 2020.

The site does not benefit from any on-site parking to the front, other than un-restricted on-street parking along Wesley Place and Cardiff Road. Approximately five on-site parking spaces (although not formally laid out) are available adjacent to the former office building located to the rear of the site and accessed off Tram Road (an adopted highway which runs between these properties and the railway line). This parking area however, has not been included in the application site.

The site lies within the established residential area of Merthyr Vale, which forms part of the Other Growth Areas Settlement Boundary, as designated within the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks retrospective planning permission to change the use of former Trinity Chapel and office building to provide an Artist's Studio (B1 use class) and short term holiday lets (C6 use class).

This is very similar to the recently approved application (P/20/0171) for the provision of an Artist Studio with associated living accommodation (B1 use class), which was conditioned as follows:

'The premises shall be used as an artist studio with associated accommodation only and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in class B1 of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or in any provision equivalent to that class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification).

Reason: *In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.'*

However, the site is currently being used to provide holiday accommodation not in association with the Artist Studio, which does not accord with the above mentioned condition. This application therefore seeks to regularise the use of the former chapel and offices as an Artist Studio and Holiday lets, of which each of these uses could be operate independently of one another.

Trinity chapel, at lower ground floor, would be used as an artist studio and an office area with a WC. The lower ground floor of the chapel would be used as accommodation with a kitchen/diner, shower room and a store area. Similarly, the former office building would also provide accommodation facilities. The ground floor would comprise a dormitory, two bedrooms, a kitchen and a shower room. The first floor would provide two bedrooms, a lounge/diner, a kitchenette and a shower room. Since works were carried out as part of the previous application P/20/0171, the internal modifications have already been undertaken.

Externally, the plans indicate that Trinity Chapel would remain unaltered as a result of this proposal. The former office building however seeks to have 4 new window openings. Two new windows, each measuring 1m(w) x 1.2m(h), would be located on the front elevation and would serve the two proposed bedrooms at first floor. Two new windows, each measuring 1m(w) x 0.7m(h), would be located on the rear elevation and would serve two of the bedrooms at ground floor.

PLANNING HISTORY

The following application is relevant to the consideration of this application:

P/20/0171 - Convert the ground floor of the chapel into an artist studio with associated accommodation in the lower ground floor of the chapel and within the office building to the rear – Approved: 17th September 2020

CONSULTATION

The following consultations were undertaken and the responses have been noted as follows:

Head of Engineering and Highways

No objection.

Planning Policy Officer

No objection.

Ecology Officer	No objection.
Environmental Health Manager	No objection.
Welsh Water	No objection.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to the nearby occupiers and two notices were displayed in 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)

Policy 1 – Where Wales Will Grow

Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 4 – Supporting Rural Communities

Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

National Planning Policies

- Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11 (February 2021)

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 6.4.3 discusses biodiversity and states that *‘...the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement...’*

- TAN's (Technical Advice Notes)

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009) – This TAN provides guidance on how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

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 deliver environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion at every scale throughout Wales.

TAN 13: Tourism (1997) – This TAN discusses tourism and states that *‘...tourism makes a major contribution to the Welsh economy, provides employment in a wide variety of*

occupations and can bring benefits to local economies and communities in urban and rural areas...'

Local Planning Policies

- The Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031

Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries

Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking

Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience

Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to be considered in the assessment of this application relate to whether the proposed development would be acceptable in this location and whether it would be acceptable in respect of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the amenities of the nearby occupiers, ecology, parking provision and highway safety.

Principle of Development

The application site lies within the settlement boundary where new development is supported under LDP Policy SW4, provided it complies with the relevant policies and any other planning considerations. Indeed, a very similar use, as discussed above, has recently been approved under planning permission P/20/0171.

Character and Appearance

The proposed development as mentioned previously, would not include any external alterations other than the addition of 4 new windows, 2 to the front and 2 to the rear of the former office building located off Tram Road. Generally, windows are required to be of a similar scale and design to other existing windows and evenly spaced out so as to ensure an attractive fenestration arrangement. In this instance however, these are considered low key alterations located on a building which has been subject to unsympathetic alterations over time. Furthermore, the premises is located off a rear adopted highway and as such, these works would not appear prominent in the wider area. Given the nature of the external alterations proposed, the character and appearance of the immediate area would therefore remain unaffected. It should be noted however, that the occupation and re-use of these buildings would ultimately ensure their continued maintenance over time and prevent them from falling into disrepair. The proposed development is therefore welcomed and complies with LDP Policy SW11.

Residential Amenity

The proposed development would not include any new extensions or alterations, other than the addition of 4 new openings and windows to the front and rear of the former office building. Given the location of the proposed new windows, the siting of the former office building at a significantly lower ground level than the properties along Cardiff road, and the absence of any existing properties to the front of the office building, these new windows would not result in any loss of privacy to the amenities of these nearby residential occupiers. Similarly no impact would be caused to the neighbours either side of Trinity

Chapel, particularly 1 Wesley Place and 3 Hill View Terrace, given that no external alterations are proposed to the chapel.

In regards to the change of use element, it is noted that such applications (Artist Studio and holiday accommodation) also have the potential to cause other harmful and detrimental impacts to surrounding residents, such as noise and disturbances, i.e. the comings and goings of visitors. Whilst the site is now being used as an artist studio and holiday accommodation, the nature of these uses would not cause any greater nuisances or disturbances upon the nearby residential occupiers than the previous uses as a chapel, offices and a nursery. It should also be noted that no objections have been received from nearby residents. Similarly, no concerns have been raised by the Environmental Health Manager. The proposed development is therefore acceptable and complies with LDP Policies SW11 and EnW4.

Ecology

The proposed development, as noted previously, does not include any internal or external alterations, other than the addition of 4 new windows. As such, the Council's Ecologist has not requested any survey work. The development therefore accords with LDP Policy EnW1. However, enhancement works requiring the installation of a bat box have been requested in line with LDP Policy EnW1 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Since the development largely relates to a change of use without any substantial external alterations, it is not deemed necessary or reasonable to request such enhancement works under this application.

Parking and Highway Safety

The development would not be served by any on-site parking. However, unrestricted on-street parking is available to the front, along Wesley Place and Cardiff Road. Undesignated parking provision can also be provided to the rear along Tram Road. Furthermore, the site lies in a sustainable location, being located within a short walking distance of local facilities and public transport. Thus, the Head of Engineering and Highways has not raised any objections to the proposed development. As such, the development accords with LDP Policy SW11.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development, for the reasons discussed above, is considered acceptable and should therefore be approved.

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITION:**

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Drawing no.3 as existing, received: 30th January 2023;
- Drawing no.6 as proposed, received: 30th January 2023;
- Drawing no.7 as proposed, received: 30th January 2023.

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

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

P.P.

DATE: 24.03.2023