

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/24/0010
Site Address:	The Green Trefechan Merthyr Tydfil CF48 2EU
Development:	Change of use for a section of the building which is known as 'The Green' from a Youth Centre to a Flying Start provision
Case Officer:	Adam Foote
Application Expiry Date:	20th March 2024
Consultation reply date expired:	14th February 2024

APPLICATION SITE

The application site comprises a section of the ground floor of a building known as 'The Green'. The building occupies a prominent location within Trefechan opposite an area of open space. The upper floors of the building consist of residential units whilst the ground floor is arranged as commercial units. The building is currently undergoing renovations and is largely vacant. Most recently the unit has been used as a youth club however this use is no longer in operation from this location.

The application site is within the defined settlement limits as identified by Policy SW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) and is identified as a primary growth area. The site is within the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest.

BACKGROUND

The landowners, Merthyr Valley Homes have undertaken a public consultation where childcare provision was the preferred option for the use of the unit, additionally, the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2022) evidenced the need for childcare in the area.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks consent for the change of use of the unit from a youth club to a Flying Start Provision. Flying Start helps families with children under 4 years old in disadvantaged areas of Wales. Help available includes; part-time childcare for 2 to 3 year olds, an enhanced Health Visiting service, access to parenting programmes and support for children to learn to talk and communicate. No physical alterations are proposed to the exterior of the building as part of this consent.

PLANNING HISTORY

N/A

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering and Highways:	No reply
Planning Policy Officer	No objection
Estates:	No reply
Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water:	No objection subject to a condition

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, x3 site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site. No representations have been received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

The Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 (February 2024)

Local Policy

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

Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries
Policy SW9: Planning Obligations
Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
Policy SW13: Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
Policy CW1: Historic Environment
Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation & Ecosystem Resilience
Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection

Supplementary planning guidance is applicable:

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2:
Planning Obligations (March 2012)
Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4:
Sustainable Design (July 2013)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The primary considerations in the determination of this application are; the principle of the development, the impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, impact upon highway safety, ecology and drainage.

Principle of the development

The application site is within a primary growth area and within the settlement boundary as identified by LDP Policy SW4 where there is a presumption in favour of development and the efficient use of land is encouraged. The unit has most recently been used as a youth club and forms part of a row of commercial/non-residential units, as the unit would remain as a community facility this is not considered to constitute a loss and therefore accords with the requirements of LDP Policy SW13. Given the above no objection is raised to the principle of the development.

LDP Policy SW9 relates to planning obligations, in this instance given the proposed use no planning obligations would be sought nor would any Community Infrastructure Levy be chargeable.

Character/Appearance & Residential Amenity

The proposed development seeks a change of use of the unit only, as no alterations are sought to the exterior of the building there would be no different visual impact, accordingly no objection is raised to the proposed development in this respect and no conflict with LDP Policy SW11 has been identified. The site falls within the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest, given the extent/nature of the proposed development no adverse impact upon the landscape character has been identified.

The change of use from one community facility to another in a row of commercial uses raises no concern in respect of the impact upon the character of the area.

The proposed use is not considered to result in a level of noise and disturbance that would have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or have a significantly greater/different impact to the use of the building as a youth club. Given the proposed use it is not expected to operate at antisocial hours that would result in any disturbance of neighbouring occupiers nor is it considered necessary to limit the use to certain hours given the use which is sought consent for. No conflict with LDP Policy EnW4 has been identified.

Highway Safety

The proposed change of use from one community facility to another is not considered to generate a significantly different level of traffic that would warrant concern, additionally, parking provision is available in the immediate vicinity to serve the wider development. The amount of parking provision already available is considered to be sufficient to support the proposed development.

Notwithstanding the above, the application site is within the settlement boundary and is within a sustainable location which is readily accessible via both sustainable and public modes of transport. Planning Policy Wales 12 advocates for development within sustainable locations to facilitate the modal shift to sustainable modes of transport from private motorcars. Welsh Government recommend that childcare should be within 15 minute pram pushing distance from parents homes, given the location of the site a 15 minute walking radius would encompass most, if not all of Trefechan.

Ecology

LDP Policy EnW1 seeks to ensure that green infrastructure is protected, enhanced and the effects of climate change mitigated, such requirements accord with policy and guidance within Future Wales 2040 and Planning Policy Wales. The proposal raises no significant concerns in this regard given the existing context and nature/extent of development proposed. The Local Planning Authority have a duty to take action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of the afore mentioned features and to mitigate against the effects of climate change, however, in this case there would be no significant adverse impact and it is considered unlikely that any meaningful enhancement could be provided within the red line boundary for the site therefore it is not considered proportionate to obtain an enhancement or to condition that one be submitted for consideration.

Drainage

This application seeks a change of use of an existing commercial building only and would not result in any increase to the footprint or increased roof area as such it is not considered that there would be any different impact in respect of drainage as a result of the proposal. As there would be no change to the built form it is not considered that the condition requested by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is necessary and therefore will not be carried through any grant of planning consent.

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.

Having regard to the policy context above, the proposal is considered acceptable and planning permission is recommended subject to conditions.

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:

Block Plan 2023-078-03P, Location Plan 2023-078-04P, Proposed Plans and Elevations 2023-078-02P, Existing Plans and Elevations 2023-078-01P

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

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 05.03.2024

PP