

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Kate Glover - Development Control Case Officer

Reference: P/26/0097

From: Planning Policy and Implementation Section

Ask for: David James

Extension: 7053

Date: 3rd June

Summary

No objection raised. The development meets the relevant Replacement LDP policies (SW4 & SW13).

If minded to approve in principle, particular consideration should be given to the impact of the development on the character of the Thomastown Conservation Area, the impact on surrounding area and occupiers in terms noise and disturbance, traffic generation and parking provision (policies SW11, SW12 & EnW4). Additionally, the impact on the designated and undesignated historic and natural environment assets, in the vicinity of the site, should be considered (policies CW1, EnW1 & EnW3).

The requirements of Policy SW9 should also be noted.

Observations in respect of the above proposal

1. Proposed Development

An application for the proposed change of use of the existing annexe from café/takeaway (Use Class A3) to a self-contained short-term holiday let (Use Class C6), with no external alterations or changes to the building footprint, at The Croft Shop Queens Road, Merthyr Tydfil.

2. Development Plan Framework

The existing development plan framework in Merthyr Tydfil is provided by:-

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

The relevant LDP Objectives are:-

- *LDP Objective 1 Sustainable Population Growth: To encourage a sustainable level and distribution of population growth.*

- *LDP Objective 2 Welsh Language and Culture: To protect and enhance Welsh language and culture.*
- *LDP Objective 4 Regeneration: To promote the suitable reuse of previously developed land and the continued regeneration of local communities.*
- *LDP Objective 6 Sustainable Design: To promote high quality, sustainable and inclusive design and support measures which mitigate the predicted effects of climate change.*
- *LDP Objective 7 Transport: To support an integrated transport system, promote active travel and ensure new developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport links.*
- *LDP Objective 8 Community Facilities: To support existing community facilities and suitable community led development.*
- *LDP Objective 9 Heritage and Cultural Assets: To protect, enhance and promote all heritage, historic and cultural assets.*
- *LDP Objective 10 Biodiversity: To improve ecosystem resilience and connectivity which support habitats and species of principle importance.*
- *LDP Objective 14 Town and Local Centres: To develop the town and local centres as accessible, attractive, viable and vibrant places.*
- *LDP Objective 15 Leisure, Recreation and Tourism: To support sustainable tourism, leisure and recreation developments and encourage an all year round tourism industry.*

The following development plan policies would apply:-

- *Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries*
- *Policy SW9: Planning Obligations*
- *Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking*
- *Policy SW12: Improving the Transport Network*
- *Policy SW13: Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities*
- *Policy CW1: Historic Environment*
- *Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation & Ecosystem Resilience*
- *Policy EnW3: Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species*
- *Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection*
- *Policy EcW7: Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Development*

The following 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 3: Shopfront Design (May 2013)*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013)*

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Planning Policy Wales provide guidance on matters relevant to this application, namely:

- Placemaking in Action: Good Design Making Better Places
- Strategic Placemaking: Previously Developed Land
- Activities in a Place: Community Facilities
- Productive and Enterprising Places: Tourism
- Distinctive and Natural Places: Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places
- Distinctive and Natural Places Recognising the Environmental Qualities of Places

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

Future Wales provides guidance on matters relevant to this application, including, but not limited to:

- Policy 1: Where Wales will grow
- Policy 2: Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking
- Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

3. Policy Considerations

The site of the proposal is located within the Primary Growth Area , as defined by the LDP, and within the settlement boundary where development will be allowed subject to the proposals compatibility with other plan policies and material considerations (Policies SW4).

Policy SW9 relates to planning obligations. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is chargeable in this part of the County Borough. However, due to the nature of the proposal, CIL would not be chargeable in this case.

Policy SW11 requires new development to, among other things:

1. be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;
2. integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;
3. not result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact, and incorporate a good standard of landscape design;
4. allow access for the widest range of people possible, and demonstrate that any traffic movements will not have an unacceptable impact on local amenity or highway safety and satisfy the Council's parking standards.

Considering the location of the application site, in close proximity to existing dwellings, and with the Thomastown Conservation Area, careful consideration should be given to these issues. The submitted plans indicate that the application site benefits from off-street parking provision. As such, the proposed parking provision should be checked against the Council's current parking standards, and the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy SW12 supports development that encourages a modal shift towards sustainable transport, including the enhancement of pedestrian, cycle, rail and bus facilities, in addition to any necessary road improvements. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy SW13 states that the provision of new and enhanced community facilities will be supported subject to satisfying other relevant LDP policies. And that the Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough's existing community facilities. Development proposals that would result in a loss of an existing community facility will only be permitted where:-

- alternative provision of at least equivalent value to the local community can be provided nearby, or
- it can be demonstrated that existing provision is inappropriate or surplus to the needs of the community and is no longer required, or
- it can be demonstrated there is no longer a viable community use for the facility.

The proposal would result in the loss of a community facility (a café), and as such would not appear to be in accordance with Policy SW13. However, alternative provision is available nearby, at the Household Stores general store, 320m away. It is also noted that planning permission has been granted for a mobile catering unit (P/22/0147), within Thomastown Park, which is located opposite the application site.

Additionally, the café use was granted permission only two years ago (P/24/0143), having previously been a holiday let and annexe to the adjoining dwelling (P/22/0174). This appears to demonstrate that the café use is surplus to the needs of the community and/or no longer viable. It is acknowledged that the annexe had historically been a café and general store, but had been closed for a considerable time prior to 2022. Additionally, the principal of the loss of the community facility and the change of use to a holiday let and residential use has been established by permission P/22/0174. The proposal would therefore, in this instance, comply with Policy SW13.

Policy CW1 advises that the integrity of our historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural importance of our designated historic environment assets. And that, development affecting undesignated historic environment assets including, Locally Listed Buildings or structures, Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Urban Character Areas (UCA) and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas should have regard to their special character and archaeological importance. As such, the views of the relevant Officer or external body should be sought in this regard.

The site is located within the Thomastown Conservation Area, Urban Character Area 2 - Thomastown and Penyard, and the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. The impact of the proposal on the character of the Conservation Area should be particularly considered and, as such, the views of the relevant Officer or external heritage body should be sought, as appropriate, in this regard.

Policy EnW1 seeks to protect nature conservation and ecosystem resilience. Policy EnW3 states that development proposals likely to have an adverse impact on Regionally Important

Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, or Priority Habitats and Species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The need for the development clearly outweighs the conservation value of the site;
2. Adverse impacts on nature conservation features or geological features can be avoided;
3. Appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation measures can be provided; and
4. The development maintains and where possible enhances biodiversity and geodiversity interests.

As such, the views of the Council's Ecologist should be sought.

Policy EnW4 advises that development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural environment from either:

- Pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;
- Land contamination;
- Hazardous substances;
- Land stability;
- Noise, vibration, dust, odour nuisance and light pollution; or
- Any other identified risk to public health and safety.

Where impacts are identified the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures have been incorporated to reduce, or minimise the impact identified to the lowest possible acceptable level. Planning conditions may be imposed or legal obligation entered into, to secure any necessary mitigation and monitoring processes. With regard to flood risk, new developments will be expected to avoid unnecessary flood risk and meet the requirements of TAN 15. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader, and the Environmental Health department, should be sought as appropriate.