

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

05 DECEMBER 2024

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 24/0627/FUL (KL)
APPLICANT: L T Architects Ltd
DEVELOPMENT: Construction of student accommodation (amended plans rec. 27/09/24).
LOCATION: 86 Wood Road, Treforest, Pontypridd, CF37 1RJ
DATE REGISTERED: 25 June 2024
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Treforest

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

REASONS: The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary and within a highly sustainable location where the principle of purpose-built student accommodation is considered acceptable. Whilst the proposed building would be of a three-storey scale, it is not considered that it would have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the site or the surrounding area; or upon the amenity and privacy of surrounding residential properties. Furthermore, it is not considered the proposal would have any detrimental impact upon highway safety in the vicinity of the site.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The proposal is not covered by determination powers delegated to the Director of Prosperity and Development.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought for the construction of a new building to accommodate 8no. units of student accommodation (Sui Generis) on land to the south of no. 86 Wood Road, Treforest.

The new building would be sited fairly centrally within the site and orientated to face an easterly direction to address New Park Crescent. It would have an irregular shaped footprint, measuring a maximum of 10.3m in width by a maximum of 11.3m in depth, with a pitched roof design measuring a maximum of 11.1m in height to the ridge. Externally, the building would be finished with a mixture of red brick (to ground floor, front central gable and rear-most projection) and insulated white render (first and second floors), with

blue/black artificial slate roof tiles, white uPVC windows and grey composite entrance doors.

The accommodation proposed would be arranged over three floors with 3 no. student units being provided at both ground and first floor level and 2 no. student units and a communal space being provided at second floor level. Each unit would have an open-plan living/kitchen area (between 14.5 and 17.5m²) with an en-suite bathroom. A plant room would also be provided at second floor level.

A total of 3no. off-street car parking spaces would be provided within the site with two being sited at the north-western corner of the site (accessed via the service lane to the south-western boundary), and one being situated at the southern corner (accessed directly off New Park Crescent). The existing front boundary wall would be demolished to facilitate the proposed access to the front, whilst part of the existing side boundary wall would be demolished to facilitate access to the two rear spaces. Some ground works would also be required to raise the north-western corner of the site to the level of the adjacent lane.

SITE APPRAISAL

The application site relates to a currently vacant parcel of land which is situated to the south of no. 86 Wood Road in Treforest. The site measures approximately 0.26 hectares in area and is slightly sloping in ground level with an existing stone wall enclosing the south-eastern and south-western boundaries.

The site is bound by the highway at New Park Crescent to the south/south-east and a service lane to the west/south-west. No 86 Wood Road and its associated garden lies immediately to the northern boundary.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character with the nearest neighbouring properties being no. 86 Wood Road to the north, no. 1 New Park Crescent to the west and no. 85 Wood Road (sub-divided into several flats) to the south.

PLANNING HISTORY

09/5692	86 Wood Road, Treforest	4 no. flats or 2 no. two bed residential units	Raise Objections 09/11/09
---------	-------------------------	--	------------------------------

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by means of direct neighbour notification letters and through the erection of site notices at Wood Road and New Park Crescent. One letter of objection has been received and are summarised as follows:

- The site is not large enough to occupy so many tenants.

- There is a parking problem in the area and existing residents struggle to park even though they have parking permits.
- There has been minor traffic accidents due to congestion.
- The proposal is unfair and will make the existing parking issue worse.

The local Member, Councillor Powderhill, has also raised an objection, although no reasons for this objection have been provided.

A further consultation exercise, as detailed above, was carried out upon the submission of amended plans, which set the building further to the south of plot. No further letters of objection were received following that exercise.

CONSULTATION

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water: No objection, condition and advisory notes recommended.

Flood Risk Management: No objection, condition recommended.

Highways and Transportation: No objection, conditions recommended.

Public Health and Protection: No objection, comments received in respect of construction noise, dust, and waste, and the HMO Licencing Scheme.

No other consultation responses were received within the consultation period.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

Members will be aware that the current LDP's lifespan was 2011 to 2021, that it has been reviewed, and that it is in the process of being replaced. The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced provisions specifying the period to which a plan has effect and providing that it shall cease to be the LDP at the end of the specified period. These provisions were commenced on 4th January 2016 but do not have retrospective effect. Therefore, the provisions do not apply to LDPs adopted prior to this date and plans adopted before 4th January 2016 will remain the LDP for determining planning applications until replaced by a further LDP. This was clarified in guidance published by the Minister on 24th September 2020. Subsequently, Members are advised that the existing Plan remains the development plan for consideration when determining this planning application.

Policy CS 2 – Development in the South: emphasis is on sustainable growth that benefits RCT as a whole. This will be achieved by focusing development within defined settlement boundaries and by promoting the reuse of under used and previously developed land.

Policy AW 2 – Sustainable Locations: promotes development in sustainable locations which includes sites that are within the defined settlement boundary that would not

unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses, that have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options and have good access to key services and facilities.

Policy AW 4 – Community Infrastructure and Planning Obligations: details the types of planning obligations that may be sought in order to make the proposal acceptable in land use planning terms and that Community Infrastructure Levy contributions might apply.

Policy AW 5 – New Development: sets out criteria for appropriate amenity and accessibility on new development sites.

Policy AW 6 – Design and Placemaking: encourages proposals which are of a high standard of design, and are appropriate in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, etc.

Policy AW 8 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment: seeks to preserve and enhance the distinctive natural heritage of RCT by protecting it from inappropriate development.

Policy AW 10 – Environmental Protection and Public Health: development proposals will not be permitted where they would cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health and/or local amenity because of land instability, flooding, contamination etc.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design and Placemaking
Development of Flats
Access Circulation and Parking

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications, regard should also be given to the requirements of national planning policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where national planning policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (PPW) was issued on 7th February 2024. PPW incorporates the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out Welsh Government's (WG) policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of all planning applications. FW2040 sets out the National Development Framework for Wales (NDF), WGs current position on planning policy at regional and national level.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is also consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's sustainable development principles through its

contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of driving sustainable development and building healthier communities and better environments.

Given the minor scale of the proposed development and its relationship with only the immediate surrounding area, there are limitations to the extent such a scheme can have in promoting planning objectives at a national scale. As such, whilst the scheme aligns with the overarching sustainable development aims of FW2040, it is not considered the policies set out in the document are specifically relevant to this application.

Other relevant national policy guidance consulted:

PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design
PPW Technical Advice Note 18: Transport
Manual for Streets

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Main Issues:

Principle of the Proposed Development

The application seeks to provide 8no. self-contained units of student accommodation.

The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Treforest and is within an established built-up area which is predominantly residential in character. The site is located within walking distance of both bus stops and a train station, as well as to numerous shops and services within the defined retail zone of Treforest. The site is also located within walking distance of the Treforest Campus of University of South Wales which future residents of the proposed development are likely to attend.

Whilst the use would inevitably be residential in nature, student accommodation falls within the Sui Generis Use Class and has a lower parking requirement than self-contained flats that would fall within the C3 Use Class. As such, the building could not be converted to general C3 without a further planning application.

In light of this, the principle of developing the site for student accommodation is considered to be acceptable.

Character and Appearance

The proposal would result in the construction of a large three-storey building at a site which is typically surrounded by two-storey buildings. Notwithstanding this, the site is situated at the junction between Wood Road and New Park Crescent with level differences between the south-eastern and western parts of the site. As a result of this, the proposed building would be of a greater height than no. 86 Wood Road but would not exceed the height of no. 1 New Park Crescent. The proposed scale of the building is therefore considered acceptable.

Furthermore, the overall design and finish of the proposed building is considered acceptable with the proposed front elevation incorporating a central gable feature which is a typical feature visible in the surrounding area. The building would also be finished using a mixed palette of red brick and white render, which again, are materials visible in the surrounding area.

In light of this, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact it would have upon the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, and the application would therefore comply with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan in visual terms.

Residential Amenity and Privacy

Impact on Existing Residents

The plans have been amended during the course of the application to address a number of concerns raised in respect of the impact of the proposed building on the amenity of no. 86 Wood Road. The building proposed in the original scheme was set more centrally within the plot and closer to no. 86 (separation distance of approximately 3.9m). This, along with the substantial scale of the building (height of 11.1m), the changes in ground level between the site and no. 86 and the position of the site to the south, would have resulted in a significant overbearing and overshadowing impact upon a number of habitable windows in the side elevation of no. 86. Further concern was raised with regards to the proposed access to the new building, which was hidden around the back.

The amended plans received indicate that the building would now be positioned towards the southern end of site which would increase the separation distance between the proposed building and no. 86 to approximately 6.2m. The height of the proposed building would remain the same at 11.1m to the ridge, as would the differences in ground level. The plans also indicate that the main entrance to the building has been relocated to the front with a number of internal alterations being made to facilitate this.

The changes to the proposed access arrangements are welcomed and the previous concern in this regard has therefore been addressed. With regards to the re-siting and re-orientation of the proposed building, the proposed building would be sited closer to no. 1

New Park Crescent; however, it is not considered that it would result in any adverse impact that would harm the amenity and privacy currently enjoyed by its occupants. There is still some concern that the building would result in overshadowing to the side elevation of no. 86; however, this would be reduced with just the two windows towards the rear of the property being affected from around mid-day until around mid-afternoon. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would have such a significant impact upon the amenity of no. 86 that it would warrant the refusal of the application.

Whilst there would be a number of windows within the side elevations, with the exception of one window which would serve a bedroom, these would each serve the en-suite bathrooms and would not raise privacy concerns. The bedroom window would have views towards the side elevation of no. 1 New Park Crescent; however, the view achieved from this window is considered to be oblique rather than direct and it would not be significant enough to warrant the refusal of the application.

Impact on Future Residents

The Council's SPG on the Development of Flats requires proposals for flats to provide good quality accommodation for their occupants. The proposed flats would have adequate space within them for their occupants to carry out day-to-day tasks. Furthermore, they would all have access to a large window which would provide natural daylight and ventilation as well as a reasonable outlook. The occupants would also have access to a reasonable level of outdoor amenity space (shared) and an outdoor storage area for bikes and bins.

No objection has been received from the Council's Public Health and Protection Team in this regard.

Access and Highway Safety

The proposal has been assessed by the Council's Highways and Transportation Officer and no objection has been raised, subject to a number of conditions being added to any grant of planning consent. The response received is summarised as follows:

Access

Primary access to the site is served off New Park Crescent, which has a carriageway width of 7.3m with on-street parking available on the development side of the road and parking restrictions opposite.

An adopted rear lane to the west of the site has a width of 2.7m which is proposed for secondary access to two off-street car parking spaces within the site.

Pedestrian access is via continuous segregated footway links, which are acceptable for safe pedestrian movement.

There is an existing dropped kerb fronting New Park Crescent which will require reinstating in full footway construction and a new crossover provided for the relocated vehicular access.

Parking

The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Access, Circulation and Parking indicates that purpose-built student accommodation requires 1 space per 25 beds for servicing, wardens and drop-off areas and 1 space per 10 beds (for students and/or visitors).

In accordance with the SPG, the proposed 8 no. one bed units would require 1 space for the residential accommodation and 1 space for servicing with a total requirement of 2 spaces. As indicated above, the proposed includes the provision of 3 no. off-street car parking spaces which is considered acceptable.

The provision of the proposed space off New Park Crescent will require a new vehicular crossover and a WPD service pole to be relocated. Conditions are recommended in both respects; however, the relocation of the WPD service pole is a private matter between the Applicant and apparatus owner and, as such, this particular condition is not considered necessary.

Furthermore, the application site is located within a sustainable location, close to both bus and rail stops and within walking distance of the university campus and to a number of local services and facilities which will place less reliance on travel by private motor vehicles.

Other Issues:

The following other material considerations have been taken into account in considering the application, though were not the key determining factors in reaching the recommendation.

HMO Licensing Scheme

The Council's Public Health and Protection team advise that the proposal includes the provision of 8no. self-contained flats with no shared facilities. As such, the proposal will not fall within the definition of an HMO and will be outside of the HMO Licencing Scheme.

Drainage

The application has been assessed by the Council's Flood Risk Management Officer and no objection is raised to the proposal in terms of surface water drainage. The comments indicate that the construction area is greater than 100 square metres and, as such, under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the applicant will be required to submit a separate application to the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) Approval

Body. It is further advised that the applicant will also be required to comply with Part H of the Building Regulations.

It is further advised that the site does not fall in an area of surface water flood risk.

Notwithstanding this, no surface water disposal method statement is provided and a condition is therefore recommended to secure a site surface water drainage strategy to outline the pre and post discharge rate and a general arrangement of the proposed drainage layout. Given that these matters are controlled by both SuDs and Part H of the Building Regulations, it is not considered that the recommended condition is necessary in this instance.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is liable for a charge under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) however, the CIL rate for this type of development as set out in the Charging Schedule is £nil and therefore no CIL is payable.

Conclusion

The proposal would provide 8no. units of student accommodation at a site that is situated within the defined settlement boundary and within an established built-up area that is predominantly residential in character. The site is within walking distance of a number of local services and sustainable transport options and the site can therefore be considered to be a sustainable location.

The proposed building is of a three-storey height; however, due to differences in ground level within the site and surrounding area, it would be set below the ridge line of the neighbouring property to the south and would continue the step-down character of the existing pattern of development.

Whilst concern had previously been raised with regards to the siting and scale of the proposed building, amendments have been made to the layout of the scheme which reduce its overall impact upon neighbouring properties, and it is not considered that the proposal would have such a significant impact on the amenities of the nearest properties that it would warrant the refusal of the application.

Furthermore, the proposal provides for 3no. off-street car parking spaces and no objection has been raised by the Council's Highways Officer in respect of highway safety.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve, subject to conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 17 June 2024 & 27 September 2024, unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent:

- Drawing No. AL(90)01: Site Location Plan
- Drawing No. AL(90)03 Rev C: Proposed Site Layout - Topographical Survey Overlay
- Drawing No. AL(99)01: Proposed Floor Plans. Section
- Drawing No. AL(99)02: Proposed Elevations Drawing No. AL(99)01: Proposed Floor Plans. Section

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be used or occupied for any purpose other than as Student Accommodation (where the term "student" shall mean a student as defined in the Council Tax (Discount Disregards) Order 1992 (or any statutory amendment or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force).

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to define the scope of the permission.

- 4 Before the development is brought into use the means of access, together with the parking facilities, shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the submitted plan AL990)03 REV C and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The car parking spaces shall remain thereafter for the parking of vehicles only.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety/ to ensure vehicles are parked off the highway and in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 5 Prior to works commencing on site, design and detail of the car parking areas tie in with the adopted lane shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to beneficial occupation of the flats.

Reason: In the interests of safety of all highway users and in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 6 The existing crossover on New Park Crescent shall be reinstated in full flexible footway construction and a new vehicular crossover provided for the proposed

parking space in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to works commencing on site. The approved details shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to beneficial occupation.

Reason: In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 7 Prior to the commencement of development, details of traffic management and wheel washing facilities shall be provided on site in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented and maintained throughout the construction period.

Reason: To ensure that mud and debris are not deposited from the construction site onto the public highway in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 8 No development shall take place until details of the boundary treatment to be erected to the front boundary have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

- 9 No development shall commence until a scheme for biodiversity enhancement has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Future Wales requires all development to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

- 10 No development shall take place until a scheme to enable the provision of gigabit capable broadband infrastructure from the site boundary to the dwellings hereby permitted has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To support the roll-out of digital communications infrastructure across Wales in accordance with Policy 13 of Future Wales.