

REFERENCE: P/16/861/FUL

APPLICANT: Woodgates The Wallich, The Wallich Centre, Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9JF

LOCATION: 12 Park Street Bridgend CF31 4HZ

PROPOSAL: Change of use from Class A2 to Class C4, including the installation of a fire escape stair, additional shower toilet facilities providing 5 bed accommodation and the upgrading of the existing thermal elements of the existing building

RECEIVED: 28 October 2016

SITE INSPECTED: 24 November 2016

APPLICATION/SITE DESCRIPTION

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing building from Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services) to Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation) and to provide a five bed accommodation, with communal/shared facilities such as a kitchen, WC/shower room and a communal lounge.

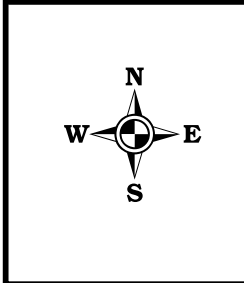
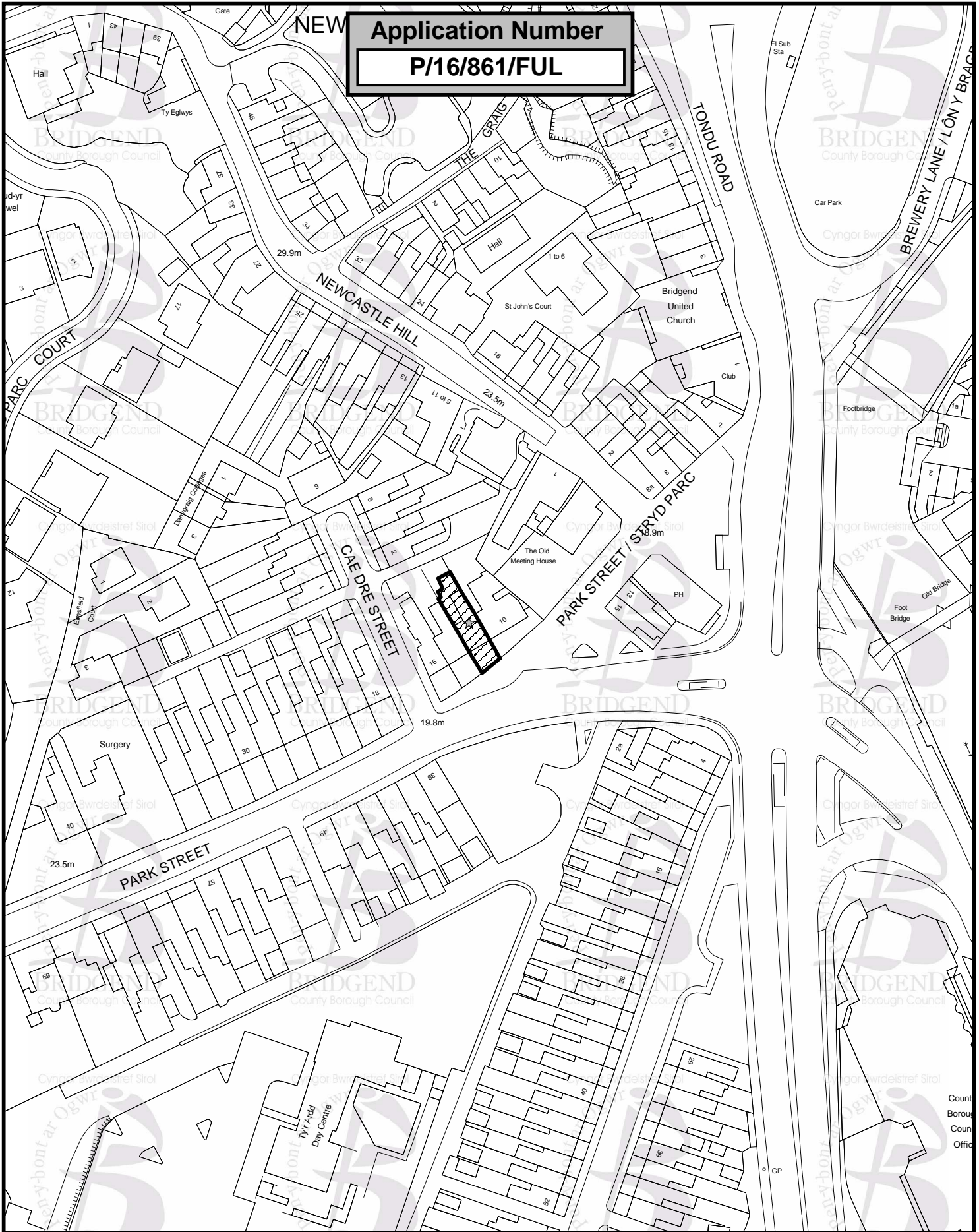
The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Bridgend and the Newcastle Hill Conservation Area. It is located outside of Bridgend Town Centre. The building is currently vacant and was previously occupied by Gaskell and Walker solicitors. The building is Victorian in style and is mainly constructed of stone work, slate roofs and timber sliding sash windows, with stepped accesses to the front and rear of the building. There are car parking spaces provided to the rear of the property and the building is located within a predominantly residential area.

The proposal is to convert the offices to accommodate an office, meeting room, communal area with kitchen and WC on the ground floor, three bedrooms, two shower rooms with shared WC and one emergency bedroom at first floor level and two further bedrooms on the second floor with the upgrade and modernisation of the existing building. The external works include the replacement of windows and doors and the insertion of a doorway and staircase to provide a fire escape in the rear elevation of the property. The proposed floor plan and layout of the building is shown overleaf.

The building is proposed to provide services including a direct access hostel, an emergency night shelter and accommodation for people with multiple, complex needs and people who are often excluded from other services who have difficulty accessing accommodation. The meeting room located on the ground floor will be used to provide training courses, practical workshops and support solely for the occupants of the building as a way of encouraging new skills and re-entry into education and employment.

There is an existing homeless facility located next to the application site at 10 Park Street which is currently run by the Wallich Centre as a drop-in centre for homeless people.

NEW Application Number
P/16/861/FUL



Scale 1:1,250

Date Issued:
12/01/2017

Development-Mapping
Tel: 01656 643176

Mark Shephard
 Corporate Director-Communities

Communities Directorate,
 Bridgend County Borough
 Council, Civic Offices,
 Angel Street,
 Bridgend CF31 4WB.

O/Drive/Plandraw/new MI layouts/
 Committee DC Plan

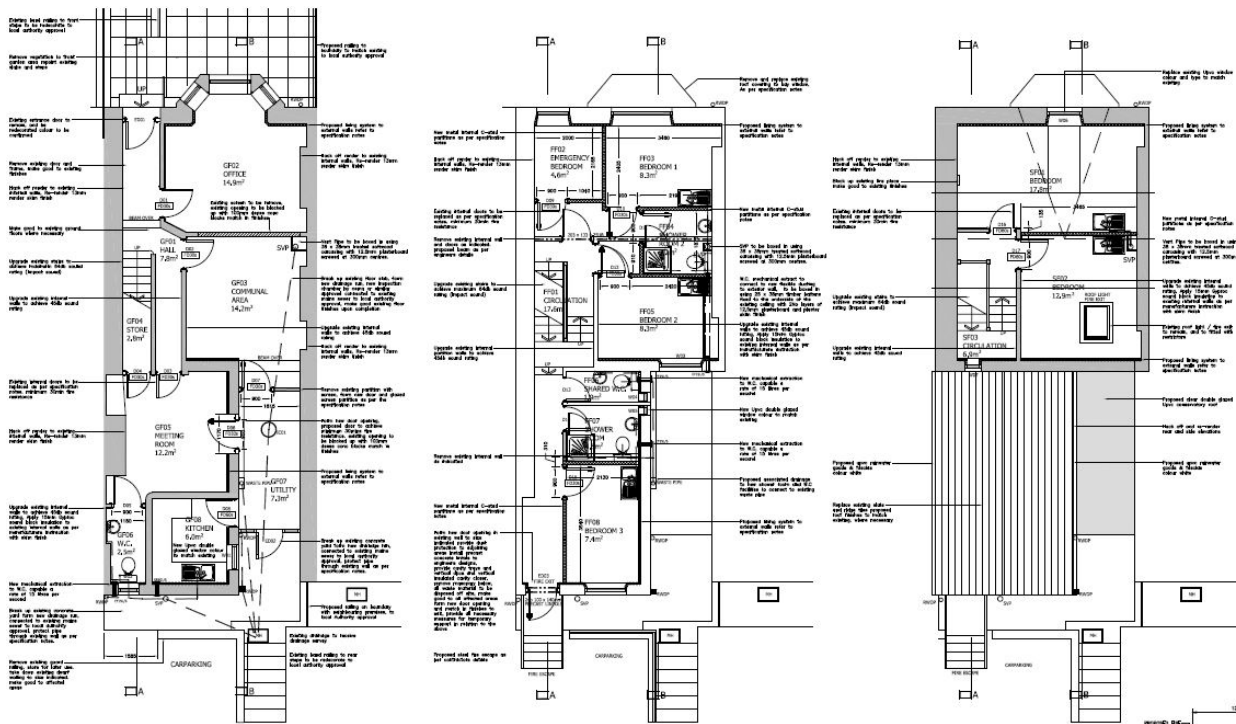
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Proposed Ground, First and Second Floor Plan/Layout:



RELEVANT HISTORY

None

PUBLICITY

The application was advertised on site.
 Neighbours have been notified of the receipt of the application.
 The period allowed for response to consultations/publicity expired on 1 December 2016

PLANNING POLICIES

Local Policies

The Development Plan for the area comprises of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021, which was formally adopted by the Council in September 2013, and within which the following policies are of relevance:

- Strategic Policy SP1 – Regeneration-Led Development
- Strategic Policy SP2 – Design and Sustainable Place Making
- Strategic Policy SP3 – Strategic Transport Planning Principles
- Strategic Policy SP5 – Conservation of the Built and Historic Environment

- Policy PLA1 – Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management
- Policy PLA11 – Parking Standards
- Policy ENV8 – Heritage Assets and Regeneration
- Policy REG5 – Local Retailing and Commercial Development
- Policy COM3 – Residential Re-Use of a Building or Land

Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPG02 – Householder Development
 SPG17 – Parking Standards

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning guidance in the form of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016) (PPW) is of relevance to the determination of this application.

Chapter 4 of PPW deals with planning for sustainability – Chapter 4 is important as most other chapters of PPW refer back to it, part 4.3 and 4.3.1 in particular

4.3.1 The following principles underpin our approach to planning policy for sustainable development and reflect those principles that we expect all those involved in the planning system to adhere to:

- *putting people, and their quality of life now and in the future, at the centre of decision-making;.....*
- *respect for environmental limits, so that resources are not irrecoverably depleted or the environment irreversibly damaged. This means, for example, mitigating climate change, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, minimising harmful emissions, and promoting sustainable use of natural resources;*
- *tackling climate change by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change and ensuring that places are resilient to the consequences of climate change;..”*

4.9.2 Many previously developed sites in built-up areas may be considered suitable for development because their re-use will promote sustainability objectives. This includes sites:

- *in and around existing settlements where there is vacant or under-used land, commercial property or housing;*
- *in suburban areas close to public transport nodes which might support more intensive use for housing or mixed use;*
- *which secure land for urban extensions, and;*
- *which facilitate the regeneration of existing communities.*

Chapter 6: Conserving the Historic Environment is of relevance and seeks to:

- *preserve or enhance the historic environment, recognising its contribution to economic vitality and culture, civic pride and the quality of life, and its importance as a resource for future generations; and specifically to;*
- *protect archaeological remains, which are a finite and non-renewable resource, part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales, and valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy, particularly tourism;*
- *ensure that the character of historic buildings is safeguarded from alterations, extensions or demolition that would compromise a building's special architectural and historic interest; and to*
- *ensure that conservation areas are protected or enhanced, while at the same time remaining alive and prosperous, avoiding unnecessarily detailed controls over businesses and householders.*

Technical Advice Notes:

The Welsh Government has provided additional guidance in the form of Technical Advice Notes. The following are of relevance:

Technical Advice Note 12 – Design (2016):

Paragraph 2.2 states 'The Welsh Assembly 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 - from householder extensions to new mixed use communities.'

Para (2.6) states 'Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to grasp opportunities to enhance the character, quality and function of an area, should not be accepted, as these have detrimental effects on existing communities'

Other Relevant Policies:

Biodiversity/Ecology

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 states that 'every public authority must, in exercising its function, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. This "duty to conserve biodiversity" has been replaced by a "biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty" under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which came into force on 21st March, 2016.

Section 6 (1) states that "a public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions." Section 6(2) goes on to state that "In complying with subsection (1), a public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular (a) diversity between and within ecosystems; (b) the connections between and within ecosystems; (c) the scale of ecosystems; (d) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure

and functioning); and, (e) the adaptability of ecosystems.

Regulation 9 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010 requires LPAs to take account of the presence of European Protected Species at development sites. If they are present and affected by the development proposals, the Local Planning Authority must establish whether "the three tests" have been met, prior to determining the application. The three tests that must be satisfied are:

1. That the development is "in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".

2. That there is "no satisfactory alternative"

3. That the derogation is "not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range"

Given the nature of the development and application site, it is considered that, overall, there will be no significant adverse residual impacts on biodiversity. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended), Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, guidance contained within TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009) and relevant LDP policies."

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with sustainable development principles to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (section 5).

The well-being goals identified in the Act are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The duty has been considered in the assessment of this application. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of the proposed development.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Bridgend Town Council raises no objection to the proposed development.

Head of Street Scene (Highways) raises no objection and states that whilst it is noted that there is a limited quantum of parking on site the proposed change of use is not considered to generate any increase in on-street demand and, as such, the proposal is considered appropriate.

Head of Street Scene (Drainage) states that the building is existing and therefore it is assumed that there are existing connections to dispose of foul and surface water, however the applicant should contact DCWW regarding any additional connection to reduce the risk of hydraulic overload to the system. It is noted that there is no alteration to the existing hardstanding/permeable areas as part of the development; therefore it is considered that there is no proposed increase in flood risk, due to the existing surface water disposal network being utilized. The applicant should be aware of the risks attached to properties in the proximity of the flood risk zone and should make the occupiers aware of this.

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

A petition has been submitted by Janine Boswell of 2 Cae Dre Street which includes 12 signatures from the residents of Cae Dre Street and Danygraig Cottages objecting to the development and raising the following concerns:

- Proposed development will have a significant adverse effect on everyone living in the street;
- Concerns over public safety and security due to the type of people proposed to use the building and the times it is open (24/7);
- Experience of existing problems related to The Wallich Centre for Homeless people – proposed development will just exacerbate these problems;
- Contradiction to Policy REG5 of LDP as the property has not been vacant for at least 2 years;
- Adverse impact on Cae Dre Street with regards to parking. There will not be sufficient parking for the staff involved.

James Beynon, Beynon's Dental Surgery has also signed the same petition as above which includes 9 signatures (including himself and staff working at the dental practice) and has submitted an email raising concerns stating that if the proposed facility proceeds with a 24 hour drop-in centre for the homeless his business will suffer. He also states that his nurses are concerned that the shower block and main drop-in entrance is opposite their car park and frankly they are worried about walking down the dark alley towards their cars waiting for someone to approach them. The site will compromise public safety.

Gary Drury of 1 Cae Dre Street supports the proposed development and states that there has never been any overt drug use or overdoses in the street because of The Wallich Help Centre on Park Street. Residents of the proposed centre will be vetted or will not get a place there. The only concern he may have is the chronic parking problem in the street.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

The concerns raised by the residents have been addressed in the Appraisal section of this report.

The tenure of the service users is not a material planning consideration.

APPRAISAL

The application is referred to the Planning Committee to consider the objections raised by local residents.

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the existing building from a vacant solicitors office to a house in multiple occupation and to provide a five bed accommodation, with communal/shared facilities such as a kitchen, WC/shower room and a communal lounge.

The main issues to consider in this application are the principle of the development, the impact on the character of the area and Conservation Area, impact on the neighbouring amenities and highway safety.

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Bridgend, as defined by Policy PLA1 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006-2021, and, as such, the conversion of this existing and vacant building is considered to accord with the criteria set out in Policy COM3 of the LDP and Planning Policy Wales (2016) which supports the use of suitable previously developed land for housing development as it can assist regeneration and at the same time relieve pressure for development on greenfield sites.

Policy REG5 states that:

'Development proposals, outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres which result in the loss of retail and commercial floor space will only be permitted where there is proven to be other sufficient provision locally or where the premises/floor space has been vacant for at least 2 years and has been activities marketed over that time'

The application site is located outside of the sub regional centre boundary of Bridgend as defined within the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021. It is unclear how long the building has been vacant but the applicant has confirmed that the building has not been vacant or actively marketed for at least two years. However evidence has been submitted from recent searches undertaken with local property consultants which indicates that there appears to be a sufficient provision of office/A2 space within the locality of the existing building. Also, Strategic Policy SP1 seeks to encourage regeneration led development within the settlement hierarchy and it is considered that the proposed change of use of the existing vacant building to residential is acceptable. It is also considered that the proposed development is located within a sustainable location being located close to public transport and local amenities. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed change of use will have little adverse impact upon the retailing and commercial centre of Bridgend.

In view of this, the proposed development is considered to accord with Strategic Policy SP1, Policy PLA1 and Policy REG5 of Bridgend Local Development Plan (2006-2021).

Impact on Character of Area and Conservation Area

The application building is situated in close proximity to the town centre with the area benefitting from a variety of property types including other flat premises and commercial premises including a dental surgery. The existing Wallich Drop-In Centre for homeless people is located next to the application site and, therefore, the proposal would provide

an additional and alternative type of living accommodation outside of the town centre whilst not harmfully eroding the character of the area as a whole - the essential character of the area, given its near town centre location is not derived from its occupation by single households, like a typical suburban, residential cul-de-sac development for example. Furthermore, whilst the adjoining property is a drop-in centre, the proposal is residential and as such will not result in an undue concentration of incompatible uses in this location. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development respects the local character of the area and accords with Policy SP2 (2) of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021.

The proposed development is located within the Newcastle Hill Conservation Area. From assessing the submitted plans, it is considered that the development proposes minimal external changes to the facade of the building with the majority of the works amounting to maintenance and repair of the building. Following comments from the Council's Conservation and Design Officer, amended plans were received which proposed that the old timber sash windows and upper floor UPVC window located on the front elevation will be replaced with white UPVC sash style windows and the existing entrance door is to remain and be redecorated. The new rain water goods and down pipes will also be replaced in black. It is considered that, on the rear elevation, the installation of a fire escape door and stairs will have no significant adverse impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area due to its relatively inconspicuous location and the replacement windows and doors will match existing. The application also proposes the removal of the existing commercial signage located at the front of the property. In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed changes seek to improve the overall appearance of the property and will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with Strategic Policy SP5 and Policy ENV8 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021.

Impact on neighbouring properties

In terms of the likely impact on the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties, with particular reference to the residents of Cae Dre Street, and noting the objections raised against the application, particularly from the adjacent occupier (2 Cae Dre Street), it is considered the proposed use would not unreasonably compromise the level of amenity that is currently enjoyed and can be reasonably expected in such a locality. In view of the location and close proximity of the proposed fire escape, it is considered necessary to attach a condition to ensure that the fire escape is utilised as a means of emergency exit only and not as a useable amenity space, with such a structure unlikely to have significant overbearing or overshadowing impacts on the neighbouring garden spaces. Furthermore, it is considered the level of activity and other likely effects of the use would not significantly exceed what might be expected from occupation of the existing house by a large family.

With regard to neighbour concern over safety and security, the applicant has confirmed that the property will be occupied 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by staff and the current access arrangements of the building will not change with the main access being via the front door with supervision and control-led access of future users of the facility. The application also proposes PIR operated lighting to the rear of the building for increased security and safety.

The objections make reference to current anti-social behaviour problems relating to the drop-in centre and is concerned that this proposal will exacerbate the situation. Any such issues are matters for the police and the proposal, which is primarily a residential use is not considered to give rise to any increase in anti-social behaviour as a result of

the development. The concern of residents is noted, however, and if these incidents continue then they will be investigated by the appropriate authorities.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable as it does not adversely affect the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers and therefore accords with Policy SP2 (12) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG02: Householder Development.

Access and Parking

The site is currently accessed by foot from Park Street and by car via Cae Dre Street. The site is currently served by a small parking area located to the rear of the property. As mentioned above, the site is located within a highly sustainable location being close to Bridgend Bus Station and the train station, both being only a short walk from the property. The Council's Highway Engineer has stated that, whilst it is noted that there is a limited quantum of parking on site, the proposed change of use is not considered to generate any increase in on-street demand and, as such, as the proposal is considered appropriate.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposed development accords with Strategic Policy SP3, Policy PLA11 and Policy SP2 (6) of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG17) – Parking Standards.

CONCLUSION

This application is recommended for approval because the development complies with Council policy and guidelines and does not adversely affect the character of the area or the Newcastle Hill Conservation Area, highway safety, privacy or visual amenities nor so significantly harms neighbours' amenities as to warrant refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

(R02) That permission be GRANTED subject to the following condition(s):-

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

Existing Plan and Elevations Drawing No. HD 1933 A01 received on the 28th October 2016 and Amended Plans, Drawing No. HD 1933 A02 Feasibility received on the 3rd January 2017 and Drawing No. HD 1933 A02 REV.A - Proposed Plans and Elevations received on the 4th January 2017.

Reason: To avoid doubt and confusion as to the nature and extent of the approved development.

2. Notwithstanding the requirements of Condition 1, no development shall take place until a detailed specification for, or samples of, the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the fire escape hereby permitted have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed materials of construction are appropriate for use on the development so as to enhance and protect the visual amenity of the area.

3. The external fire escape hereby permitted shall be used solely for the purposes of emergency fire escape and at no time shall be used for general amenity purposes.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenities.

4. Access into the building shall be via the main entrance fronting Park Street only with no access permitted from the rear of the building.

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties.

* THE FOLLOWING ARE ADVISORY NOTES NOT CONDITIONS

- a. This application is recommended for approval because the development complies with Council's policy and guidelines and does not adversely affect the character of the area or the Newcastle Hill Conservation Area, highway safety, privacy or visual amenities nor so significantly harms neighbours' amenities as to warrant refusal.
- b. The applicant is advised that the proposed development must comply with the necessary and relevant Building and Fire Safety Regulations.
- c. No surface water and or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network.

MARK SHEPHARD
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers

None