REFERENCE: **P/21/101/FUL**

APPLICANT: Mr M Hiddlestone
Unit 2, Garth Drive, Brackla Industrial Estate, Bridgend CF31 2AQ

LOCATION: **Unit 2 Garth Drive, Brackla Industrial Est, Bridgend CF31 2AQ**

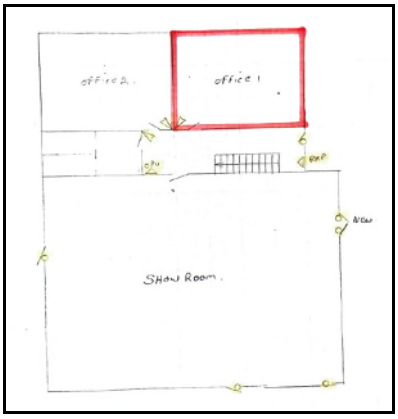
PROPOSAL: Transform unused office space into a hair salon

RECEIVED: 11 February 2021

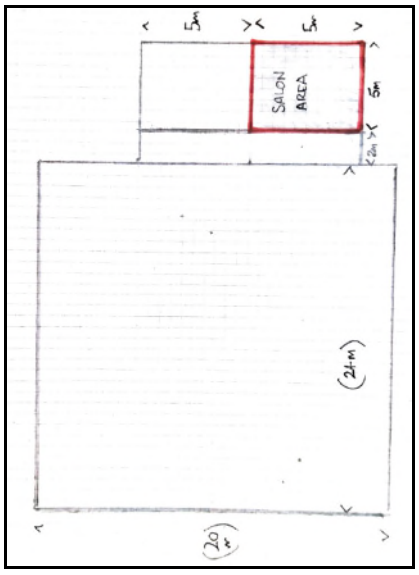
SITE INSPECTED: 26 February 2021

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
This application seeks full planning permission for the partial conversion of Unit 2, Garth Drive, Brackla Industrial Estate to Class A1 (Hair Salon) as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

The proposal comprises the change of use of 20 square metres of internal floor space within Unit 2 which was previously operated as an ancillary office space for Hiddlestone and Son Ltd, as shown below:



Existing Floor Plan



Proposed Floor Plan

The proposal comprises the introduction of a hair salon within the former ancillary office space which is proposed to operate between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 16:00 on Saturdays.

The hair salon will employ two full-time members of staff.

No external alterations are proposed as part of this planning application.

The application is a resubmission of a previous planning application (P/20/911/FUL refers) which was refused on 11 January 2021 for the following reasons:

1. *The partial use of the building as a 'hair salon' facility falling within Class A1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 conflicts with Policy REG1 (18) which allocates and protects the land for employment purposes (Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) and it is considered that the use is not complimentary to or ancillary to the industrial uses on Brackla Industrial Estate. It would also be sited within relatively unsustainable location that is not accessible by a range of transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport leading to an excessive reliance on the private car. Therefore, the proposal does not comply with Policies SP2 and REG2 of the Local Development Plan (2013), Supplementary Planning Guidance 21: Safeguarding Employment Sites and guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018).*

2. *Insufficient information has been submitted in respect of highway safety and parking provision to enable the implications of the proposed scheme to be properly evaluated by the Local Planning Authority, contrary to criteria (9) of Policies SP2 and SP3 of the Local Development Plan (2013) and guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018).*

This application seeks to address the previous reasons for refusal and is supported by a Planning Statement written by the applicant and a letter of support from Councillor A Williams.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site lies within the Primary Key Settlement of Bridgend as defined by Bridgend County Borough Council's adopted Local Development Plan (2013). It is situated within Brackla Industrial Estate which is allocated and protected for employment development falling within B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes by Policy REG1(18) of the adopted Local Development Plan (2013).

The site is accessed from a secondary access road off Garth Drive which runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site. It comprises a two storey building which faces the north west and is positioned towards the north western corner of the application site with parking at the rear. The site lies within an established Industrial Estate and is surrounded by other units operating within a mix of use classes, predominantly B1, B2 and B8.

RELEVANT HISTORY

Application Reference	Description	Decision	Date
91/1129	5 industrial units	Conditional Consent	14/11/1991
P/20/911/FUL	Partial change of use of office within retail establishment to hair salon	Refused	11/01/2021

Condition 3 imposed upon the original Planning permission (91/1129 refers) states the following:

> *The use of the units shall be limited to Classes B1, B2 and B8 as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order).*
>
> *Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the extent of the permission granted.*

The applicant has argued that the unit has only been used to retail kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms and has not been used for manufacturing since the original Planning consent was implemented.

The Authority consider that the premises particularly the part to be used as a hairdressers operates within a B1/B8 Use Class and as no subsequent permissions have been granted since the original Planning consent was granted in 1991, the use of the premises as solely A1 is disputed. The Authority consider that lawfully the premises can operate within a B1, B2 and B8 Use Class and therefore Planning permission is required for the partial change of use to a hair salon under an A1 use. The application must be considered on its merits with regard to the existing Development Plan policies and national guidance.

PUBLICITY
This application has been advertised through direct neighbour notification and the erection of a site notice. No third party representations have been received within the consultation period which expired on 26 March 2021.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	**COMMENTS**
Coity Higher Community Council 11 March 2021	Supports the application.
Highways 15 March 2021	No objections.

RELEVANT POLICIES
The relevant policies and supplementary Planning guidance are highlighted below:

Policy PLA1	Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management
Policy PLA3	Regeneration and Mixed Use Development Schemes
Policy SP2	Design and Sustainable Place Making
Policy PLA11	Parking Standards
Policy REG1	Employment Sites
Policy REG2	Protection of Identified Employment Sites

Supplementary Planning Guidance 17	Parking Standards
Supplementary Planning Guidance 21	Safeguarding Employment Sites

In the determination of a Planning application, regard should also be given to the local requirements of National Planning Policy which is not duplicated in the Local Development Plan. The following Welsh Government Planning Policy is relevant to the determination of this Planning application:

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11
Planning Policy Wales TAN 12 Design

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015
The Well-being of Future Generations 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 comprising 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 well-being goals/objectives as a result of the proposed development.

APPRAISAL
This application is presented to the Development Control Committee at the request of Councillor A Williams who is supportive of the scheme.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT
The proposed development seeks a partial change of use of an existing office area to a hair salon. In determining the previous Planning application, the development was considered to be contrary to the provisions and aims of the Local Development Plan (2013) and was refused.

The Planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest contributing to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and as stated in paragraph 1.2 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021) (PPW11).

The adopted Local Development Plan (2013) seeks to focus development in four strategic regeneration growth areas with the objective of delivering more sustainable patterns of development. In order to meet the varying requirements of business and to provide access to employment and training for all residents of the County Borough, a range and choice of vacant sites on 120 hectares of land are identified and protected for employment (B1, B2 and B8 uses) purposes. This is inclusive of Brackla Industrial Estate which is allocated and protected for employment development falling within B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes by Policy REG1(18) of the adopted Local Development Plan (2013). Development proposals which seek to change the use of existing employment building to uses within Class A1 are assessed against Policy REG2 of the Local Development Plan (2013).

Policy REG2 states that proposals which result in the loss of existing or proposed employment (B1, B2 and B8) land or buildings on sites identified in Policy REG1 will not be permitted. Exceptions will need to be justified on one of the following grounds:

1. In appropriate locations, a limited number of those uses regarded as complementary and/or ancillary to the main use of the land for industrial purposes; or
2. In appropriate locations, those sui generis employment uses which are suitably located on employment land.

Paragraph 3.3 of Supplementary Planning Guidance 21: Safeguarding Employment Sites (SPG21) states that there are a limited number of non B1, B2 and B8 uses which could be considered as acceptable on employment sites as they would provide a service to employees and their clients and contribute to the efficiency of the employment site. Such acceptable uses are identified within SPG21 as being hotels with conference facilities, banks, post offices, public houses, cafes, newsagents, bakeries, gyms and crèches.

Notwithstanding the strict controls generally applied to uses within the allocated employment sites, the Council is conscious that there is significant interest and pressure to allow A1 uses to operate within these areas.

In support of this application, the applicant has provided a Planning Statement which highlights this pressure stating that *multiple existing clients (local residents) expressed a need for a hair salon within the Brackla/Coity/Parc Derwen areas* and that *the location of our upcoming salon is ideal for all housing estates that surround it. Brackla Industrial is well within walking distance from Parc Derwen (0.7 miles), Coity (0.8 miles) and Brackla Housing Estate (1.2 miles).*

The application has also been supported by Councillor Williams who has provided a letter which states the following:

> *I write in support of the planning application for a partial change of use to a hair dressing salon at Unit 2, Garth Drive, Brackla Industrial Estate, Bridgend.*
>
> *I am the Borough Councillor for Coity, which is the ward that this falls within. When I was initially sent the original plans I confirmed I had no objection. I understand that no other objections were received, including no objection from the Community Council.*
>
> *I am extremely surprised that the original application was rejected for the following reasons:*
>
> 1. *That a hairdresser is not one of the businesses that should be sited on an industrial estate and is better suited for the town centre.*
> 2. *That there is no highway assessment to support such an application.*
>
> *Firstly, as a member of the Development Control Committee we are regularly shown details of BCBC's master plan for Bridgend Town Centre which involves switching the focus to a more residential hub rather than a traditional town centre. Therefore the surrounding areas for the town will need to adapt to support those residents. In addition, we are continuously being told of the need to reduce vehicular movement and encourage public transport, cycling and walking. Unfortunately the very limited bus service was removed from Coity several years ago and since then an additional 1800 houses have been built. This means that the only real access out of Coity is by car and many residents are trapped within Coity. Despite this massive growth, there has been no*

movement in building any shops as was initially promised. Therefore, resident would strongly welcome a hairdresser's close on their doorstep, many of who would be able to walk there easily.

I have lived in Coity since 2004 and before that I grew up in nearby Litchard and so I am very familiar with the industrial estate and its decline over the years with businesses leaving empty properties. However, there has been movement recently to increase employment and services in the estate. Incidentally, a gymnasium K2 has opened up on the estate, which houses a hairdressers and has been successful over the years. The footfall to the gym is quite significant as it is very popular and yet there were never any concerns raised by Highways when this went through planning and neither has the hairdressers ever been questioned.

I also noted on a walk to the site that there is a dog groomers advertised two doors down from this premises and there are a number of food outlets and takeaways.

In addition, early February a One Stop shop is opening on the estate, again another premises that does not fall within a B1, B2 or B8 use. I foresee, given the lack of surrounding shops that this will be very busy with continuous traffic to and from it as well as parking on the road as there are parking restrictions of only 30 minutes in the car park and it will increase vehicular movement given that doing a larger shop will require transport. This will generate far more vehicular movement than a hairdressers.

I've also reviewed BCBC's assertion that a hairdressers is not appropriate in an industrial estate and I have identified that a hairdressing bus was given planning permission on Bridgend Industrial Estate. This bus has been on the estate for many years and it services those who work on the estate as well as people travelling to it. My husband and sons have driven to it on many occasions. I have attached a photograph of the location of this bus and the double yellow lines next to it, highlighting that there are no parking facilities for visitors to the bus.

In addition to this, BCBC have again gone outside their policy when granting planning permission for a swimming pool on Bridgend Industrial estate. I was a member of the committee when this was approved and it was primarily for private lessons thus encouraging more vehicular movement outside of the purpose of B1, B2 and B8 premises.

Finally, with Covid 19, well-being is at rock bottom in the community and it has highlighted how such businesses as hairdressers are important for wellbeing, which for me is a further reason as to why it is so important to have one sited in such an accessible position for the whole of Coity. In addition, it will offer employment at a time when unemployment is at record highs.

When considering the highways impact, I have walked to the site from my home and taken photographs (attached). It was easily accessible by foot and a walk that I would allow my teenage sons to do for a haircut rather than me having to drive them into town. There is also adequate parking at the site and no traffic restrictions. I am therefore at a loss as to how an application was declined due to a lack of a highways assessment, when the first port of call should have been to the applicant to submit additional information. I do feel that individual business

holders are not offered the same support as larger businesses and it is these smaller businesses that we need to encourage in our borough.

I am more than willing to discuss this further or meet at the site should it be necessary and if officers are minded to reject this new application then I would like the application to be discussed at Development Control Committee.

Whilst the hair salon may serve communities within the vicinity of the wider industrial estate, the policies of the adopted Local Development Plan (2013) are intended to identify and protect land for employment in order to meet the varying requirements of business and to provide access to employment for all residents.

Exceptions to the traditional B1, B2 and B8 uses on the allocated industrial sites can however, be considered where they are complementary or ancillary to the main industrial uses or where a sui generis use is suitably located on employment land. The reference to other businesses within Brackla Industrial Estate operating outside of the traditional B1, B2 and B8 uses is noted however, public houses, cafes, gyms and crèches are uses which are identified within SPG21 as being uses which contribute to the efficiency of the employment site as a whole and are therefore considered to be acceptable additions.

In addition, each application is considered on its own merits and the provision of hairdressing facilities on other allocated sites does not set a precedent for the approval of this Planning application.

It should also be noted that the One-Stop-Shop did not require Planning permission as it was a former garden centre (Mole Country Stores) and whilst a hairdresser was in situ in K2 Gymnasium until 1 February 2020, the current operator of the facility has no plans to have a hairdresser in the building again.

The introduction of a hair salon is not considered to be complementary nor ancillary to the use of the site as an industrial estate and is certainly not a sui generis use. Therefore whilst the comments within the Planning Statement and from Councillor Williams are noted, the provision of a hair salon will not contribute to the efficiency of the Industrial Estate nor is it considered to be an exceptional form of development which will help to protect the site for employment uses within B1, B2 and B8 Use Classes. As such, it is not considered to be acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.

The Planning Statement refers to loneliness and well-being and directly refers to the Covid-19 pandemic stating that *hair salon experiences and overall well-being are significantly related which is evident from countless online forums, social media posts, and even news broadcasts, discussing the detrimental effects of shutting salons for customers during COVID.*

Planning Policy Wales states at paragraph 2.22 and 2.23 that the Planning system should *ensure that a post-Covid world has people's well-being at its heart* and that Planners play a *pivotal role…in shaping our society for the future* prioritising placemaking, decarbonisation and well-being. As society emerges from the pandemic the needs of communities must be recognised and the Planning system has a role to play in ensuring development is appropriately located to provide both physical and mental health benefits, improve well-being and help to reduce inequality.

Building Better Places: Placemaking and the Covid-19 recovery (July 2020) (BBP 2020) recognises that the Covid-19 lockdown has resulted in retail and commercial centres

becoming deserted and that town centres should become places where a variety of retail, employment, commercial, community, leisure, health and public sector uses come together in a hub of activity to make them viable as go-to destinations once more. It is essential now more than ever, that allocated employment sites are retained to support a prosperous Wales and to ensure that employment land is available in the Covid-19 economic recovery. Therefore whilst the arguments put forward by the applicant in support of the Planning application are noted, on balance the proposal is not considered to be compliant with National Planning Policy.

As the proposed development comprises the change of use to a hair salon which operates within an A1 Use Class, the application is not compliant with Policy REG1(18) of the Local Development Plan (2013). In consideration of the proposal, it is considered that on balance the proposed development does not comply with Policy REG2 of the Local Development Plan (2013) and is therefore contrary to the provisions and aims of the Plan. Therefore, it is out of accord with the Local Development Plan (2013) and considered to be unacceptable from a Policy perspective.

DESIGN CONSIDERATION
The proposed change of use will not impact the character or appearance of the building or wider area as no external alterations are proposed as part of this development. As such, the design of the proposal is not considered to be relevant in this instance.

AMENITY
The proposal will not impact the existing levels of amenity afforded to the wider area given its location within Brackla Industrial Estate and therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable from an amenity perspective.

HIGHWAYS
Policy PLA11 of the Local Development Plan 2013 stipulates that all development will be required to provide appropriate levels of parking in accordance with the adopted parking standards.

In consideration of the previous Planning application, no supporting information was provided in respect of off-street parking provision and consequently an assessment of the impact of the proposed change of use to a hair salon could not be undertaken.

The applicant has now submitted floor plans which demonstrate that the loss of the ancillary office space to provide a hair salon results is a nil detriment situation in terms of off-street parking provision. Accordingly, the Highway Authority raises no objection to the scheme and considers that it is acceptable from a highway safety perspective.

CONCLUSION
The policies of the adopted Local Development Plan (2013) identify and protect land for employment in order to meet the varying requirements of business and to provide access to employment for all residents. Exceptions to the traditional B1, B2 and B8 uses on the allocated industrial sites can however be considered where they are complementary or ancillary to the main industrial uses or where a sui generis use is suitably located on employment land.

In assessing this application against the aforementioned policies, it is considered that the hair salon is neither complementary nor ancillary and is certainly not a sui generis use. Furthermore, the proposal does not fully accord with the criteria of Policy REG2. as it will not contribute to the efficiency of the wider industrial estate and is best located within an existing town or local centre which is accessible by a range of transport

modes. In consideration of the scheme, it is contrary to Policy and does not comply with the provisions of the Local Development Plan (2013).

For the reasons outlined above, on balance it is considered to conflict with Policies SP2, SP3, REG1 and REG2 of the Local Development Plan (2013) and is therefore recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION
(R30) That permission be REFUSED for the following reason:-

1. The partial use of the building as a hair salon facility falling within Class A1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 conflicts with Policy REG1 (18) which allocates and protects the land for employment purposes (Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987) and it is considered that the use is not complementary to nor ancillary to the industrial uses on Brackla Industrial Estate. It would also be sited within a relatively unsustainable location that is not accessible by a range of transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport leading to an excessive reliance on the private car. Therefore, the proposal does not comply with Policies SP2 and REG2 of the Local Development Plan (2013), Supplementary Planning Guidance 21: Safeguarding Employment Sites and guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021).

Janine Nightingale
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers
None