

## FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER TREDEGAR JUNCTION HOTEL, PONTLLANFRAITH

### 1. Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted on behalf of GHR Developments Ltd for the proposed residential redevelopment of the former Tredegar Junction Hotel Pontllanfraith for the purpose of building 35no. affordable homes.

The proposals are for a total of 35 affordable residential apartments along with 27 car parking spaces, 42 cycle parking spaces, a refuse store, landscaping and sustainable drainage.

The following documents are submitted with the pre-application:

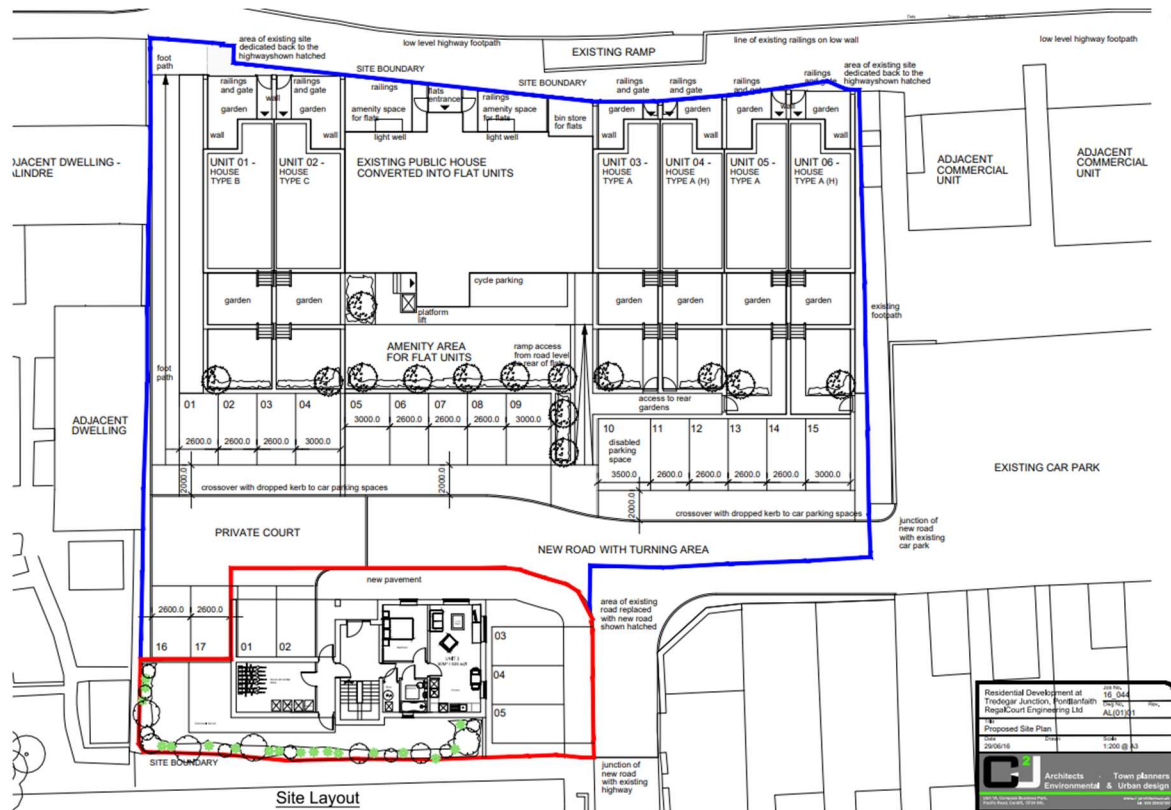
- Plans and CGIs, C2J
- Documents and Reports:
  - Planning, Design, Access and Green Infrastructure Statement, Highlight Planning
  - Pre-application Consultation Report, Highlight Planning
  - Transport Note, Apex Transport Planning
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Soltys Brewster
  - Green Infrastructure Statement, Highlight Planning
  - Drainage Strategy, Vale Consultancy
- Forms and Notices:
  - Application Form, Highlight Planning

### 2. Planning History

The key planning history of relevance to the site is set out below:

- 18/0594/NCC: Extend the period of time for implementation of Planning consent 12/0787/FULL (Convert former public house into 7 No. flat units (change of use) including demolition of southern single-storey annexe and construct 6 No. new terraced houses to include new site access road, car parking, external works and landscaping) for a further five years – Granted 21/08/18
- 21/1165/NCC: Vary condition (01) of planning consent 16/0607/FULL (Construct 4 self-contained apartments with on site car parking, cycle, refuse and amenity facilities) to extend the commencement by a further five years – Granted 15/03/22

In summary, the above permissions enable the construction of 13no. dwellings at the site's frontage and 4no. dwellings at the rear of the site, as shown on the extract from the Site Layout for 21/1165/NCC below:



21/0655/NCC Site Layout Extract



21/0655/NCC Elevations Extract



18/0594/NCC Elevations to Ivor Road Extract

### 3. Site Context

The site is circa 0.15ha and comprises a vacant public house and vacant parcel of land to the side and rear. The site benefits from planning permission for residential development. To the south of the site lies a residential dwelling known as the Lodge, to the north lies a local convenience retail unit and car parking to the rear, to the west lies the public highway of Gelligroes Road and to the east a car garage lies at a lower level.

Constraints and opportunities are shown below:



#### 4. Planning Policy Context

Policies of relevance are as follows:

- National Policy and Guidance:
  - Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12)
  - Technical Advice Note (TAN) 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (2006)
  - TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
  - TAN 12: Design (2016)
  - TAN 18: Transport (2007)
  - TAN 23: Economic Development (2014)
- Development Plan:
  - Future Wales – the National Plan 2040;
  - Caerphilly LDP – policies:
    - SP2: Development Strategy in the Northern Connections Corridor
    - SP4: Settlement Strategy
    - SP15: Affordable Housing
    - SP6: Placemaking
    - CW1: Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion
    - CW3: Design Considerations – Highways
    - CW15: General Locational Constraints
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):
  - LDP1: Affordable Housing Obligations (Updated November 2020)
  - LDP5: Car Parking Standards (2017)
  - LDP6: Building Better Places to Live (2017)
  - Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan SPG (Draft January 2024)

#### 5. Design and Access Statement

This section is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

##### Use

The proposals are for the redevelopment of the former Tredegar Junction Hotel, a long-vacant brownfield site, to deliver 35 affordable apartments. The use is residential (C3), entirely consistent with the site's settlement context and surrounding land uses.

##### Amount

The scheme comprises:

- 35 apartments (24 x 1-bed, 11 x 2-bed);
- 27 on-site car parking spaces;
- Secure cycle parking in accordance with standards;
- Landscaped amenity space and refuse storage.

##### Layout

The building fronts onto the highway, re-establishing an active street frontage, while parking and servicing areas are located discretely to the rear.

##### Scale

The massing reflects previous consents and the scale of surrounding development. The building ranges between three and four storeys, ensuring it integrates sensitively while providing efficient use of the brownfield site.

**Appearance**

The architecture adopts a contemporary style with brick and render detailing, varied fenestration, and balconies to provide visual interest and articulation. Materials have been selected to reflect local character while ensuring durability and energy efficiency.

**Landscaping**

A comprehensive landscape strategy is proposed, including:

- Communal green space;
- Tree planting and native species planting;
- SuDS features with biodiversity benefits;
- Bird and bat boxes integrated into the scheme.

This enhances the ecological and visual quality of the site, contributing to placemaking.

**Design Evolution**

The scheme has evolved in response to pre-application feedback from Caerphilly County Borough Council. The following changes were made to address the issues raised:

- **Increased car parking provision:** spaces increased to 27.
- **Reduction in top-floor massing:** the fourth-storey element was reduced to lessen visual impact and improve integration with surrounding built form.
- **Enhanced communal amenity space:** additional landscaped space incorporated to ensure adequate provision for residents, improving quality of life and compliance with Policy CW10.
- **Amended unit mix:** the proportion of 1-bed apartments increased (24 units) to respond directly to Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) evidence of high demand for smaller affordable units.

These changes demonstrate that the design has been shaped by constructive dialogue with officers and stakeholders, ensuring a scheme that responds to local needs and policy requirements.

**Access****Vehicular and Servicing Access**

Pedestrian access to the building is taken from Commercial Street, utilising the existing site frontage. The layout allows safe vehicular access, manoeuvring, deliveries and emergency access to the rear. 27 parking spaces are provided.

**Pedestrian and Cycle Access**

The site is highly accessible by foot and cycle. Dedicated pedestrian routes link the building to the street and parking areas. Secure cycle storage is provided in line with standards, promoting active travel.

**Public Transport**

The site is within walking distance of local bus stops with services to Blackwood, Caerphilly and Cardiff. Shops, schools, health facilities and leisure uses are all accessible by sustainable transport.

**Inclusive Access**

The design ensures inclusive and equitable access for all residents and visitors:

- Step-free entrances;



- DQR-compliant units throughout;
- Level thresholds;
- Parking spaces located close to entrances, including accessible bays.

### Summary

The proposals adopt a placemaking-led approach to design, delivering high quality, affordable housing on a derelict brownfield site. The scheme integrates sensitively with its surroundings, provides safe and inclusive access for all, and incorporates landscaping and SuDS that enhance biodiversity and amenity.



The evolution of the scheme demonstrates responsiveness to pre-application feedback, resulting in a more balanced, policy-compliant development. Accordingly, the scheme meets the requirements of PPW, TAN 12 (Design), and Caerphilly LDP Policies SP6, CW1, CW2 and CW3.

## 6. Analysis

### Principle of Development

The application site is a brownfield site located in the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC). Policy SP1 states that proposals in the NCC should have regard to the social economic functions of the area, reduce car borne trips, make the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and protect natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development. The development of 39 affordable homes on previously developed land which is underutilised should therefore be supported and accords with Policy SP1.

Policy SP4 (Settlement Strategy) defines the settlement hierarchy for towns and villages across the county borough and identifies those areas where development would be supported and enhanced based on the specified role and function of a particular area. The Strategy seeks to concentrate new

development to respond appropriately to the economic, social and environmental needs of individual settlements and thus settlement boundaries are identified accordingly to indicate the potential areas where development is likely to be permitted. Pontllanfraith is identified as a residential settlement and the LDP is therefore supportive of further residential development, such as that proposed in this application.

The site's previous use as a public house has been lost through the previous permissions granted at the site and the proposals therefore comply with Policy CW8.

Chapter 4 of PPW covers the theme of active and social places. With respect to transport the planning system should enable people to access jobs and services through shorter, more efficient and sustainable journeys, by walking, cycling and public transport. The site is within walking distance of a number of local facilities including community, education, health services, leisure provision and recreational spaces together with public transport provision to the town centre of Blackwood. Please refer to Apex Transport Planning's Transport Note for further information in respect of the site's sustainable location.

### **Affordable Housing**

There is a significant need for affordable housing in Caerphilly, and the redevelopment of this site presents an excellent opportunity to meet this need – being a development site sustainably located within settlement.

With regards to housing need, Policy SP14 (Total Housing Requirements) made provision for 10,269 new dwellings in the County Borough between 2006 and 2021 in order to deliver the 8,625 new dwellings required to meet the moderate growth strategy of the LDP. This equated to an annual requirement of 575 dwellings per annum. The most recent Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) of the LDP was approved in October 2022 and includes a housing trajectory of the 15 year plan period up to 2021 plus 6 years. This shows that the number of dwellings completed has been below the annual requirement of 575 dwellings per annum since 2008/09 and is forecast to continue to be below this requirement for most years up to 2026/27. There is just one exception in the year 2023/24 where the number of dwelling completions is forecast to be 635 units. The affordable housing target of delivering at least 964 affordable units between 2006 and 2021 associated with Policy SP15 (Affordable Housing) has also not been met and the AMR continues to recommend that proposals for residential development should be considered on their relative merits on a site-by-site basis, having regard to the need to increase the housing land supply.

The proposals would make a meaningful contribution towards addressing the significant number of households on the Common Housing Register seeking affordable housing in Pontllanfraith and the wider Northern Connections Corridor. The 2024 Local Housing Market Assessment identifies a substantial net need for approximately 167 one-bedroom general-needs units annually in the Northern Connections Corridor alone—by far the largest requirement for any bedroom size or tenure type in the area. These proposals directly respond to that pressing need by prioritising one-bedroom accommodation, aligning clearly with the LHMA evidence base. Furthermore, the scheme will be delivered in partnership with a Registered Social Landlord, who will manage the properties over the development's lifetime to ensure their long-term affordability and effective integration into the social housing stock. The proposed residential development would provide much needed affordable homes and would make a substantial contribution to the overall provision to the supply of new affordable housing within the County Borough. Accordingly, the proposed residential development would meet the requirements of Policies SP14 and SP15.

### **Placemaking**

In line with national planning policy, SP6 (Place Making) requires development proposals to contribute to the creation of sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features. The site is currently underutilised and given its vacant

nature, detracts (rather than contributes) to its local context and place. Should it remain undeveloped it would further deteriorate. Its development for affordable housing complements the surrounding area, will enhance the area's vibrancy, increase foot traffic to local businesses and contribute to the creation of sustainable places.

Policy SP6 requires new development to incorporate resource efficiency and passive solar gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation and where appropriate through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). In that the proposed development exceeds more than 100 square metres of floor space the development will require SAB approval. The proposed building will be modern, attractive, and energy-efficient, with high-quality materials used throughout. The design also incorporates landscaping and SuDS further enhancing the site and its surrounding context.

The scale of the proposals sits comfortably within the site's context at a level similar to that previously approved at the site, as shown on the submitted section drawings.

Pre-application Consultation is undertaken to ensure that the local community are involved in the development of the proposals for the site.

It is therefore considered that the proposed residential development is compliant with Policy SP6.

### **Transportation**

Policy CW1 (Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion) requires development proposals that have the potential to generate a significant number of trips (either as an origin or a destination) to be designed to ensure that car borne trips are kept to a minimum. It is therefore important to ensure that provision is made within the development to actively encourage walking and cycling and that appropriate infrastructure is included in the layout to facilitate short trips on foot. The site is sustainably located within the full range of facilities and amenities within Pontllanfraith with Blackwood town centre further afield. The proposals incorporate 27 car parking spaces and secure and covered cycle parking for 42 spaces to the south of the site.

Please refer to the submitted Apex Transport Planning Transport Note for further information in respect of the site's sustainable location and the level of parking provision proposed.

Policy CW3 (Design Considerations - Highways) requires development proposals to have regard for the safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network. The submitted Apex Transport Planning Transport Note includes swept path analysis for servicing and deliveries.

Accordingly, the proposed development is considered compliant with Policy CW3.

### **Ecology and Landscape Impacts**

The proposals are located on a development site. A planning application will be supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, although it is anticipated that the results will align with those which formed part of the previous permissions at the site. The proposals will deliver biodiversity enhancements through the provision of landscaping (and SuDS) along with the potential bolstering of landscaping around the site's perimeters (to be secured by condition) and the provision of bat and bird boxes.

In landscape terms, the following is considered to be the case:

- The Site is not within any designated landscape or a Conservation Area.
- With the Site being embedded within the urban area of Pontllanfraith, the proposed land use is entirely in keeping with the urban landscape character.
- The vacant nature of the existing building and site does not contribute positively to the landscape character of the area.



- The proposed footprint, scale and mass is comparable with the existing building and the previous permission granted at the site.

It is accordingly concluded that the proposed high-quality housing development would make a positive and sustainable contribution to the 'sense of place' of this part of Pontllanfraith with no unacceptable adverse landscape and visual effects.

### **Leisure and Open Space Provision**

Policy CW10 requires all new housing sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings or exceeding 0.3 ha to make adequate provision for useable open space, appropriate formal children's play facilities and adequate outdoor sport provision to meet the needs of the residents of the proposed development. There are play facilities and sports pitches within walking distance. As such, it is considered that the proposed residential development would meet the requirements of Policy CW10.

### **Residential Amenity**

Policy CW2 (Amenity) requires new development to be compatible with surrounding land-uses. The proposal is for residential development immediately adjacent to residential areas with adequate separation provided to King David Tyres to the rear. The submitted plans demonstrate that the development can be accommodated within the site comfortably together. The proposed development does not have any unacceptable overbearing or overshadowing impacts. On that basis it is therefore considered that the proposals would not have any unacceptable impact on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and accordingly, the proposal would meet the requirements of Policy CW2.

## **7. Green Infrastructure Statement**

The scheme has been designed in line with PPW's **stepwise approach** to green infrastructure:

### **Avoidance**

- Redevelopment of a brownfield site avoids loss of greenfield land.
- The layout maximises retention of space for landscaping and amenity.
- No encroachment or direct impact on nearby designations (River Sirhowy SINC, Memorial Park Meadows SSSI/LNR).

### **Mitigation**

- Sensitive lighting strategy to protect foraging/commuting bats.
- Demolition/vegetation clearance to be scheduled outside the bird nesting season, or under ecological supervision.
- Two-stage clearance methodology for scrub/grassland to safeguard reptiles, amphibians and hedgehogs.
- SuDS designed to manage surface water and safeguard water quality downstream.
- Hedgehog-friendly fencing (if required).

### **Compensation**

- Provision of replacement roosting features if bats are confirmed within existing buildings.
- Installation of nest boxes (House Sparrow, Swift, Jackdaw) to replace any lost nesting habitat.

### **Enhancement**

- Native tree and shrub planting, with pollinator-friendly SuDS planting.

- Integrated bird and bat boxes to increase ecological carrying capacity.
- Creation of a landscaped area providing accessible green space for residents.

## Conclusion

The proposals deliver a net benefit for biodiversity through new habitats, ecological features and green space, while also enhancing visual amenity and placemaking. The scheme therefore complies with PPW, TAN 5, Future Wales Policy 9, and LDP Policies CW4, CW5, CW6 and NH3.

## 8. Conclusions and Benefits

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that the proposed redevelopment of a vacant underutilised development site for the delivery of 35 affordable homes accords with the Development Plan and is supported by national planning policy.

The proposed development will have numerous benefits for Pontllanfraith and Caerphilly County Borough – including:

- The provision of much-needed affordable housing, which is well-designed, modern and energy efficient;
- The redevelopment of an underutilised site with a high quality scheme that enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Supporting the vibrancy of the area through an increase in local residents and foot traffic to local businesses;
- The provision of biodiversity enhancements;
- Improvements to the local surface water drainage regime through the provision of SuDS;
- The creation of jobs during construction – estimated to support the employment of approximately 121 people.