



Planning, Design and Access Statement

Former Magistrates' Court, Union Street, Pontypridd

May 2018

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	The Proposed Development	3
3.	Site and Context Analysis.....	6
4.	Planning Policy Context	9
5.	Design and Access Proposals	16
6.	Key Planning Issues.....	23
7.	Conclusion.....	31

Appendices

Appendix I 1 – Council’s Pre-application Response (dated 24/04/18)

Prepared By: Edward Parsons MRTPI

Reviewed By: Owain Griffiths MRTPI MRICS

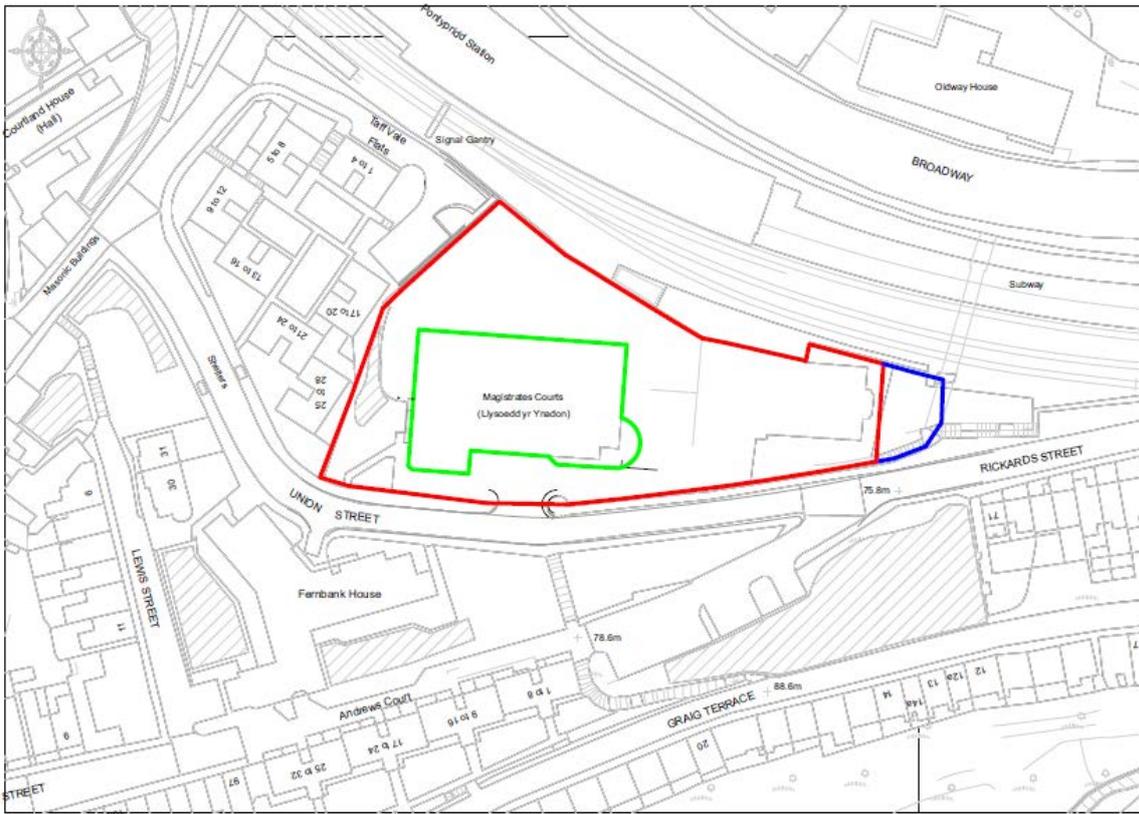
Status: Draft for Deposit

Draft Date: May 2018

For and on behalf of GVA Grimley Limited

1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany and support a full planning application, submitted to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) for the redevelopment of the former Magistrates’ court located on Union Street in Pontypridd to provide a residential extra care facility. The application is submitted by GVA on behalf of Jehu Group. The extent and location of the site is shown on the red line site plan below.



1.2 This statement has been prepared in line with the requirements and recommendations of Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12), RCTCBC’s own guidance on Design and Access Statements (DAS) and having regard to the ‘Design and Access Statements in Wales Why, What and How’ (June 2017) guidance, which builds on that understanding and responds to legislative requirements for DAS under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015.

1.3 This statement seeks to demonstrate the acceptability of the proposed development in the context of relevant planning policy, and to describe and justify the proposed design and access arrangements, taking into account the context of the site and the surrounding form of development. The remainder of the statement is therefore structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a summary of the proposed development and sets out the brief and vision for the site;

- Section 3 provides an analysis of the site and its context;
- Section 4 provides a review of the planning policy context relevant to the proposal;
- Section 5 interprets context and policy analysis into a set of guiding principles for the development of the site before going on to describe the proposed development in greater detail, giving specific details regarding the evolution of the scheme, and design and access considerations (as required by TAN 12);
- Section 6 considers the primary planning issues in further detail, providing a comprehensive analysis of how this proposal conforms with relevant policy and planning considerations, and
- Section 7 provides an overview and concludes the statement.

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 The proposed development, as described on the planning application form is as follows:

"Demolition of the Magistrates' court and redevelopment to provide 60 no. 1 and 2 bedroom extra care apartments and communal facilities for the over 55s, together with associated vehicular and pedestrian accesses, car parking, amenity areas, landscaping, refuse and cycle storage, and other ancillary development."

2.2 The proposed scheme would accommodate 57 no. 1-bed apartments and 3 no. 2-bed apartments within an 'extra care' facility for the over 55s, with on-site assistance available to residents with decreased mobility or other similar conditions.

2.3 The apartment building would be split level, ranging from two to five storeys fronting onto Union Street, with surface-level car parking for 31 no. cars provided within the curtilage of the site. Cycle parking for 6 no. bicycles is also provided. A refuse store is provided directly adjacent to Union Street to allow refuse pick-up to take place without vehicles needing to enter the site itself. Access to the site would be gained from Union Street, utilising the existing vehicular access point, albeit this would be re-engineered.

2.4 The apartments will provide residents with the opportunity for independent living within a secure environment, with a flexible amount of extra care available to suit each resident's specific needs. Each apartment will contain either one or two bedrooms, a lounge/dining area, kitchen, bathroom/toilet and storage space. In addition, the residents can make use of the range of communal facilities, which will include:

- Communal landscaped gardens
- Outdoor amenity facilities including a potting shed and bowling mat
- Laundry facilities
- Cinema
- Buggy stores
- Hair salon
- Dining areas (a commercial kitchen will be included on site)
- Lounge areas
- Guest sleep over
- Roof terrace

2.5 A 'day care centre' with lounge and dining facilities will also be available for members of the general public to utilise.

- 2.6 Approximately 10 staff will be employed at the site. A staff rest room and managers' offices are therefore also provided, along with required facilities such as cleaners' cupboards, IT and electric meter rooms.
- 2.7 As the proposed apartments provide independent living (albeit for the over 55s with extra care), the apartments fall within Use Class C3. The proposed scheme would constitute 100% affordable housing and has been designed in partnership with Linc Cymru Housing Association who would take ownership of the entire development once it has been constructed. The scheme has been designed to meet the specific needs of those people on the Council's housing register for the local area. Within the Agreement between Linc Cymru and RCTCBC, Extra Care is defined as accommodation provided for older people that promotes wellbeing and independence by offering a secure place to live but with care and support on hand 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 2.8 The site to which this application relates is currently occupied by a two-three storey building that was host to the former Magistrates' court. The existing building was built in the 1960s and occupied as a Magistrates' court until recently being vacated by the Ministry of Justice, who has since sold the freehold of the land and buildings to our client. As such, the court building is surplus to requirements and is in jeopardy of falling into a state of disrepair.
- 2.9 The application site comprises previously developed brownfield land and is located wholly within the settlement limits of Pontypridd.

Brief and Vision

- 2.10 As mentioned, the application site was formerly occupied by the Ministry of Justice as a Magistrates' Court. The site is no longer required for operational purposes and given the poor state of the building, the site represents an excellent opportunity for redevelopment to provide much needed affordable housing to the local community.
- 2.11 The brief for the site is therefore to secure planning permission for an extra care facility that will meet the affordable housing need for the area. The facility should be designed in conjunction with Linc Cymru Housing Association and RCTCBC in order to ensure that it will suitably meet the needs of the likely resident group.
- 2.12 The applicant and the project team established the following vision for the site:
- A well-designed energy-efficient solution to allow the delivery of much needed affordable housing that makes efficient and effective use of land;
 - Improving the design and external appearance of the site so that it contributes to the surrounding area;
 - Appropriate levels of car parking and amenity space for future residents;

- A solution which does not over-bear on the closest neighbouring properties or listed train station/conservation area, and
- A suitably-designed interaction with the adjacent railway line, both in design terms, and in terms of the amenity of future occupiers and the operation of the railway.

3. Site and Context Analysis

Location and Description

- 3.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.49 hectares (1.22 acres) and is located on the fringe of the Pontypridd town centre. The site is currently occupied by the vacant Magistrates' Court building and its surrounding curtilage, which includes a car park and some landscaped areas. The site slopes down from south to north and, consequently, the front elevation of the building is two storeys while the rear elevation is three storeys. The building is a 1960s-style flat-roofed office block with a footprint measuring approximately 985 sq.m.
- 3.2 The site is bound by Union Street to the south, residential properties in the form of the Taf Vale flats to the west and the railway line and train station building to the north. The existing site benefits from separate pedestrian and vehicular accesses onto Union Street to the front and side of the courts building.

Context

- 3.3 The site is located adjacent to the southern end of Pontypridd town centre next to the railway station. Therefore, it is considered to be a highly sustainable location, well-placed for residential development. The town is accessed via the A470, while the site itself is located on Union Street. It is located on the 'fringe' of the town centre, which is host to a mix of land uses, including residential, a hospital and commercial uses to the north.
- 3.4 The site is located within the settlement boundary for Pontypridd, as defined by the proposal map which accompanies the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP) (adopted March 2011), wherein the principle of development is usually considered to be acceptable subject to material planning considerations. Whilst the site is not allocated for any specific land-use in the LDP, it represents a suitable and sustainable location for residential development in planning terms, being classed as a windfall site.
- 3.5 Positively, the site is not constrained by any specific policy designations, although the site is adjacent to a conservation area. Despite this, the existing buildings on the site detract from the character and appearance of the area. From a design and place-making perspective, the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes will, therefore, seek to enhance the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area and the surrounding area as a whole.
- 3.6 The immediate character of the area is generally residential in nature, although the main shopping street is located to the north on the opposite side of the railway line, extending along Broadway, High Street and Taff Street. This offers an array of essential shops and services. There

are also a number of community and commercial uses located along Court House Street and High Street, which are both within walking distance of the subject site.

- 3.7 The existing building on the site is not listed, although we note the nearby railway station, platform and canopies are grade II listed. The boundary of the Pontypridd Town Centre Conservation Area also abuts the site to the north.
- 3.8 The site is located within Flood Risk Zone A, as defined by the Development Advice Map contained within Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004), which are areas considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or tidal/coastal flooding. However, parts of the site are likely to be susceptible to surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 3.9 There is limited planning history of relevance to the proposals.
- 3.10 Prior approval was granted by RCTCBC (LPA Reference 17/0374/23) in 2017 for the demolition of the existing Magistrates' Court building.

Pre-application Enquiry

- 3.11 Prior to the submission of the application, pre-application dialogue was undertaken with RCTCBC to discuss the principle of the proposed development and its potential effects on matters of highways safety, ecology, visual and residential amenity.
- 3.12 A pre-application enquiry was submitted to RCTCBC on 14th February 2018 providing details of the proposals. Following this, a meeting was held with Council Officers on 19th February 2018 to discuss the proposals in further depth. The Council's pre-application response is included at Appendix 1.
- 3.13 The key outcomes of the pre-application enquiry were as follows:
- The site lies in a highly sustainable location and the development would contribute to the current shortfall in housing supply;
 - The application submission should address Policy AW11 which requires employment sites to be marketed for 12 months before considering alternative uses;
 - The effect of the development on the adjacent conservation area and listed railway station building will need to be taken into account;
 - The acceptability of issues of contamination and noise (particularly due to the adjacent railway line) will need to be demonstrated in the context of the proposed residential use;
 - The proposed density is not considered to be problematic, and

- The existing access is sub-standard and should be improved to secure 2.4m x 40m vision splays in both directions.

Technical Matters

3.14 The following technical considerations have been assessed as part of the site's analysis:

- Ground investigation;
- Drainage;
- Ecology;
- Noise;
- Vibration,
- Transport.

4. Planning Policy Context

Preface

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The planning policy that supports the proposal exists at a number of levels and extends to a range of guiding documents.
- 4.3 To highlight the site's potential, the following sections record the main provisions of the principal statutory planning documents and strategies of relevance. It establishes the context within which the proposed development will need to be brought forward.
- 4.4 National guidance comprises Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (PPW) (November 2016), as well as a range of supplementary Technical Advice Notes (TANs). At the local level, the development plan comprises the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP, which covers the period 2006-2021. The site is located within the settlement boundary of Pontypridd, which is identified as a Principal Town within the Southern Strategy Area of the County Borough. The site is also just around 70m south of the town centre boundary of Pontypridd.

National Level

Planning Policy Wales

- 4.5 PPW (Edition 9) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government (WG). This contains guidance for the preparation of Local Authority's development plans, development management, and sets out the WG commitment to creating sustainable developments.
- 4.6 Chapter 4 of PPW has been updated to include reference to the statutory purpose for the planning system introduced by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly regarding the use of the well-being goals in the Act in the absence of locally set well-being objectives.
- 4.7 Chapter 4 acknowledges that the land use planning system is central for achieving sustainable development in Wales. It recognises the importance of creating sustainable communities where people can live, work and play and encourages opportunities for land to occupy both commercial and residential uses to derive benefit from co-location. This chapter identifies a number of key objectives for policies and proposal to achieve. These include:

- the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings, wherever possible avoiding development on greenfield sites;
- the location of development in places which minimise the demand for travel, especially by private car;
- ensuring that all local communities – both urban and rural – have sufficient good quality housing for their needs, in safe neighbourhoods;
- promoting access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open and green space, maximising opportunities for community development and social welfare;
- fostering improvements to transport facilities and services which maintain or improve accessibility to services and facilities, secure employment, economic and environmental objectives, and improve safety and amenity;
- fostering social inclusion by ensuring that full advantage is taken of the opportunities to secure a more accessible environment for everyone;
- protecting and improving the natural environment, and the historic environment and cultural heritage resource; and
- contributing to the protection and, where possible, the improvement of people's health and well-being as a core component of sustainable development.

4.8 Chapter 7 of PPW relates to economic development and states that local planning authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood and that these are given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process, and it should recognise that there will be occasions when the economic benefits will outweigh social and environmental considerations.

4.9 Chapter 8 of PPW acknowledges that the land use planning system can help to achieve the WG's objective for sustainable transport and, amongst other matters, sets out a hierarchy that supports development primarily accessible by walking and cycling, followed by public transport and then the private car.

4.10 Chapter 9 of PPW deals with housing and emphasises the need to provide housing of a good quality that will contribute to the development of sustainable communities. It stipulates that the local authorities must make provision for a 5-year supply of land for housing. The site proposed for development falls entirely within the settlement limits of Pontypridd and provides an excellent opportunity to deliver housing in an area that would greatly benefit from such a development.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

4.11 As set out above, PPW is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). A range of these apply to the proposed development, and their specific provisions are addressed through the information submitted in support of this planning application. Relevant TANs include:

- **Technical Advice Note 1 (Joint Housing Land Availability Studies)** was published in 2015 and provides guidance on the preparation of JHLAS. The document states that local authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available to provide a 5 year supply of land for housing. It also states (paragraph 6.2) that the housing land supply is a material consideration in development management decisions, and that in circumstances where the current study shows a land supply below the 5-year requirement, Local Planning Authorities should give considerable weight to the need to increase supply when determining planning applications.
- **Technical Advice Note 2 (Planning & Affordable Housing)** was published in 2006 and requires local planning authorities to include an affordable housing target in the development plan; indicate how the target will be achieved using identified policy approaches, and monitor the provision of affordable housing against the target.
- **Technical Advice Note 12 (Design)** was updated in 2016 and provides detailed advice on how good design in development may be facilitated by the planning system. The guidance states that good design has the potential to assist in environmental sustainability, economic growth and social inclusion. The guidance places particular emphasis on the achievement of sustainable design solutions, sustaining or enhancing character, promoting innovative design solutions, ensuring access for all and promoting legible development.
- **TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004)** advises on development and flood risk together with its impact on sustainability principles. It also provides a framework to assess fluvial and tidal flooding, and run-off from development. The overriding aim of the guidance seeks to locate new developments away from areas identified at high risk of flooding. TAN 15 sets out the tests that highly vulnerable development is required to satisfy in order to be considered acceptable in areas at risk of flooding.
- **Technical Advice Note 18 (Transport)** was published in 2007 and recognises the key role of the planning system to facilitate sustainable travel patterns. As in TAN 12, the guidance aims to influence the location of new development to reduce the need to travel and subsequently promote more sustainable forms of transport which contribute to environmental improvement in the longer term.
- **Technical Advice Note 20 (Planning and the Welsh Language)** was published in October 2013. This provides guidance on how the planning system considers implications of the Welsh language. A TAN 20 Practice Guidance Note was published in June 2014 which should be

read in conjunction with TAN 20, but has been produced to assist local planning authorities in the preparation, monitoring and review of their Local Development Plans.

- **Technical Advice Note 23 (Economic Development)**, was published in February 2014 and focuses on the need to encourage development in order to generate wealth, jobs and income. This TAN recognises the importance of all aspects of development and that planning decisions are made in a sustainable way which balance social, environmental and economic considerations.

Local Level

- 4.12 The site lies within the administrative area of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The statutory Development Plan for the site, in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, is the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP, which was adopted in March 2011 and provides the framework for decisions to be made up until 2021.
- 4.13 The Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP comprises a range of policies against which all planning applications are considered. For clarity, this statement considers in detail only the policies central to the proposed redevelopment at the site.
- 4.14 The LDP sets out the Council's vision and provides a detailed framework of land use objectives at Chapter Three. The objectives of the plan were developed in partnership with the Council's LDP Forum and reflect the inter-relationship between people, activity and land use at the local level. Thereafter, the LDP outlines the spatial strategy for guiding all future development and land use in the County Borough during the plan period. There are area wide topic based and non-site specific policies, which provide a framework against which all future planning. Chapter Six details the 'locally distinct' policies for the Northern and Southern Strategy Areas respectively. The policy objectives for the Northern and Southern Strategy Areas are different and reflect the individual characteristics of the areas. The application site and Pontypridd Town Centre are located within the 'Southern Strategy Area'.
- 4.15 Pontypridd itself is identified as a Principal Town. At paragraph 6.106, the LDP states that

"The town centre of Pontypridd accommodates a range of civic and community uses, a retail offer that includes a mixture of well known high street retailers and a number of smaller independent traders and an historic urban park. The town is served by excellent public transportation links which provide access to all parts of the County Borough and the wider region."

LDP Vision & Objectives

- 4.16 A list of the objectives at the centre of the LDP that are relevant to the consideration of this application is included below for ease of reference.

- **Objective 1** – To provide for the County Borough’s overall housing requirement through a mix of dwelling types catering for all needs to promote integrated and thriving communities and reinforce the roles of the Principal Towns and Key Settlements in the north and south of the County Borough.
- **Objective 2** – To promote integrated communities within the Principal Towns, Key Settlements and other sustainable settlements by ensuring the development of a high quality built environment that provides opportunities for living, working and socialising for all.
- **Objective 5** – To provide an environment in Rhondda Cynon Taf that encourages a healthy and safe lifestyle and promotes well-being through improvement in access to green space in the north, provision of open space in the south, and the protection of recreational space throughout the County Borough.
- **Objective 6** – To reduce the need to travel by car within Rhondda Cynon Taf by promoting residential and commercial development in the Principal Towns and Key Settlements in the north and south of the County Borough where there is a choice of sustainable modes of transport.
- **Objective 10** – To promote the efficient and appropriate use of land, soil and minerals throughout the County Borough by maximising the use of land, promoting the re-use and restoration of derelict land and buildings, reuse of materials and the safeguarding of resources of local, regional and national importance where they occur in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Technical Planning Policy

4.17 Chapter Four of the LDP contains the core strategy and policies which provide a framework for determining where existing and future residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf live, work, shop, recreate and how they travel in between. The core policies include only those elements essential for the delivery of the strategy.

- **Policy CS2 (Development in the South)** – relates to development in the south and promotes residential development with a sense of place in the principal towns, focuses development within settlement boundaries and promotes the use of previously developed land.
- **Policy CS5 (Affordable Housing)** – seeks the provision of affordable housing on suitable sites to contribute to established community housing need.

Area Wide Policies

4.18 Chapter Five of the LDP sets out the area wide policies. We have summarised below the policies of relevance to the proposals.

- **Policy AW1 (Supply of New Housing)** – sets out the housing land requirement for the County Borough and encourages the development of unallocated land within defined settlement boundaries and the provision of affordable housing. It states that residential development proposals will be expected to meet local housing needs.
- **Policy AW2 (Sustainable Locations)** – supports development proposals in sustainable locations and in accordance with the criteria outlined by this policy.
- **Policy AW5 (New Development)** – sets out criteria against which new development will be assessed, particularly in respect of amenity and accessibility.
- **Policy AW6 (Design and Placemaking)** – states that ‘Placemaking’ is a key element of achieving sustainable development through the creation of well-designed places, which are able to stand the test of time.
- **Policy AW7 (Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment)** – stipulates that development proposals that impact upon sites of architectural or historic merit will only be permitted where they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site.
- **Policy AW10 (Environmental Protection and Public Health)** – states that development proposals will not be permitted where they would result in unacceptable harm to health or amenity.
- **Policy AW11 (Existing Employment and Retail Uses)** – the policy provides criteria for promoting alternative uses on existing employment sites. This includes having marketed the site without success for a minimum period of 12 months, or developing underused/vacant land where it will have significant regeneration benefits.

4.19 Chapter Six details the ‘locally distinct’ policies for the Northern and Southern Strategy Areas respectively. The application site is located within the Southern Strategy Area and therefore the following policies apply:

- **SSA11 (Housing Density)** – states that proposals for residential development will be permitted where the net residential density is a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare. Lower density levels may be permitted in accordance with the criteria defined.
- **SSA12 (Affordable Housing)** – states that the provision of 20% affordable housing will sought on sites of 5 units or more.

- **SSA13 (Housing Development within Settlement Boundaries)** – states that development will be permitted within the defined settlement boundaries subject to the criteria outlined within this policy.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

4.20 RCTCBC provides a range of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which comprises detailed guidance on the way in which policies of the LDP will be applied in particular circumstances or areas.

4.21 The following adopted SPG documents are considered to be relevant to the determination of this application:

- **Design and Placemaking (March 2011)**
- **Affordable Housing (March 2011)**
- **Access Circulation and Parking (March 2011)**
- **Development of Flats (June 2015)**

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

4.22 In 2008 the Planning Act was amended to make provisions for local authorities to prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for their own areas (if so desired). This would take the form of a charging schedule that would subsume a lot of matters that are currently secured through the use of Section 106 Legal Agreements which are the usual method for obtaining infrastructure improvements to mitigate the impacts of development proposals. It should be noted that it is not the purpose of CIL to replace Section 106 obligations.

4.23 CIL is intended to directly assist in the delivery of the Council's land use aims and objectives and expands on Strategy Policy SP7 of the LDP. RCTCBC formally adopted its own charging schedule on 31st December, 2014 in accordance with the CIL. The proposed site falls within Residential Charging Zone 2, in which the CIL rate equates to £40/sq.m. of new floorspace created. However, given the proposals are for wholly affordable housing, exemption can be claimed against payment of the levy.

5. Design and Access Proposals

Preface

- 5.1 This section of the statement takes forward the key findings of the appraisal of context, which are firstly interpreted into a set of guiding principles, before the evolution of the scheme’s design is described.
- 5.2 This section then goes on to draw upon the advice and design objectives contained within TAN 12 and consider how the context to the site has informed the evolution of the proposed development. These matters are addressed under the following key topics:
- Character (including considerations of placemaking, amount and density, streets, spaces and public realm, uses and tenure, scale, layout, heritage and detail design);
 - Access;
 - Movement;
 - Environmental Sustainability, and
 - Community Safety.

Interpretation of Context

- 5.3 The development proposals have been informed by the site’s context, which comprises its physical and socio-economic context, as well as the planning policy context, relevant planning constraints, the outcome of the pre-application enquiry and the statutory pre-application consultation exercise.
- 5.4 The key findings of the context analysis are as follows, which have been translated into subsequent guiding principles that have informed the design of the scheme.

Context Analysis Findings	Guiding Principles
The existing Magistrates’ Court building is unsightly and detracts from the character and appearance of the local area. The existing footprint does not maximise the potential of the site.	The site shall be comprehensively redeveloped via demolition and rebuild.
The site is in a highly sustainable location with excellent access to sustainable transport modes.	The scheme’s design shall incorporate a higher than usual density of development to reflect the sustainability of the site.

	Parking provision should reflect the variety of sustainable transport modes available.
The site slopes steeply downwards in a northerly direction.	The proposed building shall have a split level design to overcome this constraint, as with the existing Court building.
The Taf Vale flats closely adjoin the western boundary of the application site and the existing Magistrates' Court building.	The western part of the scheme should be sensitively designed and the layout should seek betterment for the occupiers of the Taf Vale flats, as well as future residents of the extra care facility.
The listed railway station and conservation area designations closely adjoin the north of the site.	Built form in the north of the site should respect the adjacent heritage assets and if necessary the proposed building should 'scale down' towards them.
The adjacent railway line has the potential to cause disturbance to future residents through noise and vibration.	The existing noise and vibration conditions at the site should be properly assessed and mitigation measures incorporated into the scheme's design, where necessary.
The eastern part of the site is affected by localised contamination given its location and historical uses.	Ground conditions should be properly assessed and an appropriate remediation strategy carried out and verified to ensure that the site is suitable for its intended residential use.
Although the number of traffic movements associated with the proposed use is less than the existing use, the existing access may need to be improved.	The access should be improved to current standards as part of the scheme's design.
Parts of the site have a high susceptibility to surface water flooding.	An appropriate drainage strategy shall be incorporated into the scheme's design.

Design Development

5.5 Since the initial proposals for the residential extra care facility were put forward at the pre-application meeting held with the Council on 19th February 2018, there have been several important changes made to the scheme. Key changes include:

- The distance of the four and five storey elements of the building from the adjacent Taff Vale flats has been set back further to ensure no overbearing impact.

- The northern end of the proposed building (adjacent to the railway line) has been reduced from four storeys to three storeys, in response to the Council's request for the building to be 'scaled down' towards the designated heritage assets.
- To account for the above and maintain the required unit numbers onsite, the eastern end of the building has been extended, but the T-shape design is maintained overall.
- There have been various changes made to the internal layout of the building, in response to the discussions held between Linc Cymru and RCTCBC.

Design Standards

- 5.6 The apartments will be required to meet the minimum standards as set out within the Welsh Government, Development Quality Requirements (DQR) Design Standards and Guidance 2005. The apartments proposed are larger than the minimum standard DQR to enable more flexibility for residents who may require assistance or are dependent on walking aids, wheelchairs and hoists.
- 5.7 In addition to DQR, the apartments will meet Lifetime Homes standards and the scheme is to meet Secure by Design criteria. The scheme will also be BREEAM Excellent and has been registered under BREEAM UK New Construction 2014.

Design and Access Proposals

Character

- 5.8 The design process has resulted in a proposed scheme that will contribute to the character of the area in various ways.
- Placemaking – The proposals will dramatically improve the appearance of the site and represent an appropriate land use that will contribute to the surrounding area, both visually and functionally. While various extra care facilities are to be provided within the proposed building to the benefit of residents, the site's location adjacent to the town centre will allow residents to utilise the local facilities and services. Moreover, the proposals include a day care centre available for use by the general public.
 - Amount and density – The proposed scheme includes 60 no. one and two bedroom extra care apartments and ancillary facilities to be located within a single building on the site. This represents a high density of around 133 dwellings per hectare, which is in line with the guiding principles above and policy SSA11 of the LDP. Although on the face of it this density is high, the majority of the apartments are one bedroom to reflect the local need, and the site is an extremely sustainable location.

- Streets – The proposals involve a clear and obvious front elevation onto Union Street that includes the main entrance to the building. Patio areas to include outside seating for residents and users of the day care centre are also included on this elevation to add to the visual interest along Union Street. The site will not include any new adopted highways or 'streets' as such, given the nature of the proposals.
- Spaces and public realm – As above, the patio areas on the front elevation will provide visual interest and a useful facility for residents. Communal landscaped gardens are proposed on the northern side of the building, including some outdoor amenity/leisure facilities.
- Mix of uses and tenure – The site is proposed for residential redevelopment purely for the provision of affordable flats which are exclusively for the over 55s, with flexible extra care available. However, a variety of ancillary uses are proposed to the benefit of future residents. These include outdoor amenity, lounge and dining areas, a cinema, a hair salon, laundry facilities and staff facilities.
- Scale – The scale of the proposed residential development has been carefully considered so that it suits the existing character of the surrounding area and the adjacent forms of development. The apartment building would be split level, ranging from two to five storeys. The two/three storey portions of the building would sit adjacent to Taff Vale Flats (ranging from two – three storeys) and the listed railway station. The four/five storey elements would occupy the middle and east of the site only, seeking to respect the form and design of nearby development as set out in the above guiding principles. Overall, it is considered that the scale and massing of the proposed residential development fully respects the surrounding character and context of the site.
- Layout – The application is supported by a series of elevations, floor plans and section drawings which demonstrate the scale and layout that is proposed on the site. The layout respects the residential properties to the west of the site and the listed railway station to the north by proposing fewer storeys in these locations. The simplistic layout of the existing Court building has been improved; this includes arranging the building in an irregular fashion which responds to the size and shape of the site and maximises the efficient use of land.
- Heritage – As abovementioned, the proposed building has a reduced height in the north of the site adjacent to the listed railway station and conservation area. The east and west proposed elevations and the submitted cross sections demonstrate how the built form is 'scaled down' from the front/centre of the site, through the north of the site to the railway station building. It also demonstrates an appropriate separation distance between the proposed building and the railway station building.

- Detail design – The proposals include the use of durable, good quality, low maintenance materials which are a necessity for housing association projects. However they are appropriate to the local context and respect the character of the area and will largely comprise of buff brickwork, rockpanel weatherboarding and profiled metal cladding. The roof will include black / slate grey tiling. The detail design is considered to be a significant improvement compared to the existing building on the site.

Access

- 5.9 The proposed development will be accessed in the south of the site, via improvements made to the existing access on Union Street. This is an existing access and the proposals do not involve the intensification of its use and therefore no improvements to the access are necessarily required. However given the benefits an improved access will bring to future users of the site, this is included in the proposals.
- 5.10 Given the nature of the proposed use, access for all users of the building has been carefully considered as an inherent part of design. Level access is provided at the front of the site for pedestrians and wheelchair / buggy users, for which storage is provided internally. A secondary entrance is provide on the eastern side of the building to ensure level access to the building is available for users of the lower car parking area.
- 5.11 Long and short stay cycle storage (6 spaces) is provided within and outside the proposed building, in accordance with the Council's standards. In line with the guiding principles above, the level of parking proposed reflects the site's sustainable location and variety of transport modes available. A total of 31 car parking spaces are proposed (of which 3 are disabled spaces). The submitted Transport Statement sets out the maximum parking standards for the scheme, which would comprise of 36 car parking spaces. Given the highly sustainable location of the site, in particular due to its proximity to the town centre, railway station and bus services, this slight under-provision against the maximum parking requirement is considered entirely acceptable.
- 5.12 Network Rail's permanent right of access to the railway through the site will be maintained.

Movement

- 5.13 As mentioned, the site is located adjacent to Pontypridd railway station and is within walking distance of several bus stops. This is explored in more detail in the submitted Transport Statement, but it can be reasonably concluded that the site has very good connectivity by public transport. The site is also within walking distance of the town centre, and within cycling distance of the national cycle route; again this is explored in more detail in the submitted Transport Statement.
- 5.14 The Transport Statement submitted confirms that the proposals are acceptable in terms of highway capacity, given the number of vehicle movements associated with the proposed

development is less than the previous use of the site as a Magistrates' Court, and the sustainable location of the site.

- 5.15 The parking areas and communal areas will be overlooked by the proposed building, allowing natural surveillance. Although the permeability of the site will not be enhanced, this is due to a lack of opportunities for this at the site. The railway line bounds the site to the north and therefore no more direct routes to the town centre for pedestrians or cyclists can be achieved.
- 5.16 Refuse vehicles will not be required to enter the site; they will be able to pull over on Union Street adjacent to the proposed refuse store for collections. This has been discussed and agreed with the Council's Refuse Department.

Environmental Sustainability

- 5.17 The environmental and technical constraints have been fully assessed and accounted for in the design of the scheme.
- Landscape / habitat – Soft landscaping will be introduced across the site for visual enhancement. The focus will be on native planting but a year round multi-sensory interest will be strived for. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been undertaken and confirms that there is limited existing ecological value on the site itself, but that the roof of the lift mechanism should be removed by hand as a precautionary measure in case of the presence of bats. A pre-demolition check for nesting birds should also be carried out. A scheme of Japanese knotweed treatment in the east of the site (outside the proposed application red line boundary) is currently being undertaken.
 - Energy and resource efficiency – The building proposed will be more efficient than the minimum standard required by Building Regulations and a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' is being targeted. The scheme has been formally registered under BREEAM UK New Construction 2014.
 - Water and waste management – Refuse collection has been considered and discussed above. In terms of foul water management, the existing combined public sewer that runs beneath the site will need to be diverted as part of the proposals due to the proposed footprint of the building. Foul discharges will be into this diverted public sewer. In terms of surface water management, the ground conditions are suitable for soakaways, which will therefore be introduced in accordance with the drainage hierarchy. Please see the submitted Outline Drainage Strategy.

Community Safety

- 5.18 As discussed above, the development has been designed and orientated to allow natural surveillance of car parking and other communal areas. The development will be simple to

navigate given its obvious main entrance on the front elevation, short distance from the access point to the parking areas, and that the rear of the proposed building is limited to residents' garden areas.

Response to Planning Policy

5.19 This is addressed in the following section that covers the key planning issues.

6. Key Planning Issues

6.1 The key planning issues pertinent to the consideration of the application are as follows.

- Principle of Development
- Economic Impact
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Impact on Setting of Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity (including noise and vibration)
- Highways and Parking
- Other Technical Matters (including drainage, ecology and ground conditions)

6.2 The issues have been touched upon through the above consideration of design and access proposals. However a summary of each key issue and consideration of any vital planning policies is provided below.

6.3 This is followed by a summary of the relevant planning considerations and material considerations to assist the local planning authority in making a balanced planning judgement.

Principle of Development

6.4 The site to which this application relates is currently occupied by the former Magistrates' court, which is surplus to requirements, vacant and has the potential to fall into a state of disrepair. It is considered that this vacant and derelict building serves no purpose to the community and has no historic or architectural merit that would warrant its retention.

6.5 The application site is wholly located within the settlement limits of Graig and is located on the fringe of the Pontypridd Town Centre, as defined by the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP. The policy context provides a supportive framework for the residential use of the site as it comprises brownfield land that falls within a sustainable location, close to a wide range of local services and facilities. Moreover, the site is a short walk from several bus stops, as well as Pontypridd railway station, making it accessible via a number of means of transport modes.

6.6 The site's overall context provides an ideal setting for residential development that will complement the existing form of development in the surrounding area.

6.7 The site is not specifically allocated for residential purposes within the LDP and, therefore, represents a 'windfall site' which would contribute to RCTCBC's overall housing land supply. This is

considered to be a material consideration which weighs heavily in favour of the development, given the local authority's current housing land supply figure of 1.3 years.

6.8 The residential development of this vacant, derelict, brownfield land will provide the local community with good quality affordable housing that will support the growing population and enrich the visual appearance of the local area. This, coupled with the site's sustainable location and the supportive policy context, means that residential development would meet a range of planning objectives.

Economic Impact

6.9 The site is not allocated for employment use, nor does the lawful use of the land lie within a traditional B-Class employment use, being a Magistrates' Court. It is therefore not entirely clear whether Policy AW 11 of the LDP would be applicable to the application proposals, as the site is not strictly an 'existing employment site'. However, the Council's pre-application advice states that Policy AW 11 of the LDP should be addressed.

6.10 As indicated in the pre-application response, the site is unsightly and its redevelopment would have significant regenerative benefits. It is therefore considered that criterion 3 of Policy AW 11 is satisfied, meaning that criteria 1 and 2 need not be addressed. Notwithstanding this view, we can confirm the following in relation to the marketing of the premises:

- The site was marketed by GVA's commercial agency team for a period of 9 months before it was sold.
- The premises were marketed as a development opportunity due to the specific nature of the building being a Court and the costs / difficulty of conversion (the only realistic prospect for the site therefore being redevelopment).
- All four offers made were on the basis of redeveloping the site for residential use.
- While the previous landowner would have considered the sale of the site for office use or another employment use, there was no interest declared on this basis. This is likely due to the lack of demand for offices in this location.

6.11 Although the site was marketed for 9 months, compared to the 12 months noted in Policy AW 11, this is not considered to have prejudiced the opportunity for operators or developers wishing to purchase the site for employment use. No interest from any such purchasers was had during the 9 months the site was marketed, and it is not considered that an additional 3 months would have given rise to any additional interest.

6.12 Criterion 5 of Policy AW 11 relates specifically to employment sites and does not pose any issues that would warrant the refusal of the application. Provision for an appropriate land bank of

employment sites exists, and the former Magistrates' Court site does not contribute to this. The proposal would not prejudice any adjoining employment land as there is none.

- 6.13 Further to the perceived 'loss of employment land' as addressed above, the development of the site for residential purposes would have some clear economic benefits that are a material consideration in planning terms. These benefits would be in the form of jobs created through demolition of the existing building, construction of the proposed facility and its subsequent operation. Furthermore, the introduction of around 60 residents in this location adjacent to the town centre would support its vitality and viability through additional footfall and spending in local shops and facilities.

Design and Visual Amenity

- 6.14 The design of the proposals has been fully justified through the consideration of design and access matters in the preceding chapters of this report. The layout of the scheme responds to the topography and shape of the application site, as well as constraints including surrounding residential properties and heritage assets.
- 6.15 The site is in a very sustainable location and this has been taken into account in the design of the scheme in order to maximise the effective and efficient use of land. The proposed building ranges from two to five storeys and is split over two levels (like the existing building). As discussed in the design and access section, the five storey elements of the building are proposed in the centre of the site, away from the Taff Vale flats and adjacent listed building.
- 6.16 The proposal responds to the scale of adjacent developments, including Fernbank House, which is five storeys and sits in an elevated position compared to the application site. The height and scale of the proposed building is considered to be entirely justified in this location adjacent to the town centre.
- 6.17 The building will have pitched roofs and will also have gable fronts in various places to provide visual interest. The palette of materials proposed are low maintenance but will provide visual interest and break up each façade through the use of brickwork, weatherboarding and cladding. The varying number of storeys also helps to achieve this.
- 6.18 The existing Magistrates' Court building is of low architectural quality and is in a poor state of repair. It is considered that the proposal will improve the visual appearance of the site and is in accordance with Policies AW 5 and AW 6 of the LDP.

Impact on Setting of Heritage Assets

- 6.19 The site is located directly adjacent to Pontypridd Town Centre Conservation Area and a Grade II Listed Building (the railway station main platform). However, neither of these designations affect the site itself.
- 6.20 The Pontypridd Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (November 2011) states that the “*prominently sited railway station with high quality platform buildings*” is a key characteristic of the Conservation Area. Key opportunities noted for this part of the Conservation Area are the improvement of the station’s relationship with the rest of the town centre and maintenance works on the station.
- 6.21 The Listed Building description for the railway station states that it is listed for the following reason:
- “Listed for architectural interest as a fine Edwardian railway station retaining original character, and for group value with other listed railway items in the centre of Pontypridd.”*
- 6.22 It is considered that the existing Magistrates’ Court building, which can be viewed in the context of the listed station from certain viewpoints, detracts from the character and appearance of the adjacent heritage assets. It is a 1960’s style flat-roofed building of low architectural quality. The site is now also vacant and in a poor state of repair, which is also detracting from the views of the surrounding area to be had from within the railway platform itself.
- 6.23 The proposed building will be sited closer to the designated heritage assets than the existing Magistrates’ Court. However, in response to the Council’s comments at the pre-application meeting, the building has been scaled down from Union Street towards the station. The northern wing of the proposed building includes less storeys adjacent to the station so not to be overbearing.
- 6.24 The submitted cross-sections and 3D visuals demonstrate how the proposed building will sit in the context of the railway station. It is considered that the railway line provides a suitable buffer between the site and the platform building so that the proposals will not harm the character and appearance of the designated heritage assets. The Taff Vale flats on the adjacent site are already sited a similar distanced from the listed building and are of a similar scale and mass as the northern end of the proposed building.
- 6.25 While modern materials will be used in the construction of the proposed building, the external facades will largely comprise of buff brickwork. The proposal is considered to provide more visual interest than the adjacent Taff Vale flats.
- 6.26 Overall, given the poor appearance of the existing Magistrates’ Court building, the existing proximity of the Taff Vale flats and the ‘scaled down’ approach to the design of the building in

the north of the site, the proposed development is considered to enhance the character and appearance of the Pontypridd Town Centre Conservation Area and the Grade II Listed railway station. This complies within the provisions of LDP Policy AW 7.

Residential Amenity

- 6.27 The nearest dwellings to the application site are comprised in the flatted development known as Taff Vale, which adjoins the application site's western boundary. The site upon which these flats are located has a similar topography to the application site, sloping down towards the railway line. The adjacent flats are therefore also split level; two storeys fronting Union Street and three storeys backing onto the railway line.
- 6.28 Opposite the southern boundary of the site is another flatted development, known as Fernbank House. This measures five storeys and sits in an elevated position to the site on the opposite side of Union Street.
- 6.29 Given that the application site sits at a lower level to those dwellings located opposite, there will be no conflict between the existing and proposed developments. In relation to Taff Vale Flats, located adjacent to the site, sufficient separation distance has been allowed to improve upon the existing situation and avoid any undue harm to privacy or amenity by way of overlooking or overbearing impact. As discussed in the above design and access section, the development is 'scaled down' towards the western boundary.
- 6.30 The scheme includes shared amenity areas located within the confines of the site, including landscaped gardens, a bowling mat and a potting shed. As such, the scheme provides plentiful amenity space to serve future occupiers of the proposed apartments. Ynysngharad Park is also located a short walk away, which offers formal and informal recreational space/facilities.
- 6.31 The proposed layout provides an active street frontage onto Union Street, which is in keeping with the character of the surrounding form of development. Overall, the scheme offers a good level of residential amenity in accordance with Policy AW5 of the LDP.
- 6.32 Furthermore, due to the proximity of the railway line to the proposed residential development, noise impact and vibration assessments have been undertaken. While the vibration levels assessed are within acceptable standards, and therefore no mitigation measures are required, noise mitigation is required to achieve local authority requirements and the relevant British Standard. The mitigation measures proposed relate to the proposed fabric construction and ventilation provisions. These have been incorporated into the final design of the scheme and the proposals therefore comply with Policy AW 10 of the LDP, as there will be no unacceptable harm to residents from noise pollution.

Highways and Parking

- 6.33 As previously outlined, vehicular access to the site will be achieved from Union Street onto which there is an existing point of access which served the Magistrates' Court. Sufficient visibility is achievable in either direction along Union Street and a footpath already exists along the site's frontage onto the highway. It is proposed to reuse and amend this access and egress point to serve the site.
- 6.34 Level pedestrian access would also be achieved from Union Street, leading to the shared amenity space and the car park and bin storage.
- 6.35 Chapter 8 (Transport) of PPW and TAN 18 (Transport) are the national planning policy considerations in respect of highway safety matters. At a local level, LDP Policy AW5 (New Development) and the Council's 'Access, Circulation & Parking Requirements' SPG are applicable. In particular, Paragraph 8.1 of PPW states that:
- "The Welsh Government aims to extend choice in transport and secure accessibility in a way which supports sustainable development and helps to tackle the causes of climate change."*
- 6.36 The proposed development comprises the erection of 60 no. extra care apartments for the over 55s. In view of the fall-back position in planning terms, it is not considered that the residential redevelopment of the site will lead to excessive traffic generation that would result in harm to highway safety. This is considered in more detail in the submitted Transport Statement; it is considered that the scheme will have a negligible impact upon the capacity of the existing highway network.
- 6.37 The site is located on a main bus route (bus stops being located on Union Street), within a short walk of the railway station and in close proximity to Pontypridd Town Centre, which is host to a range of services and facilities.
- 6.38 A total of 31 no. car parking spaces are proposed onsite, which given the site's sustainable location is considered sufficient. In accordance with the Council's SPG, there would be a maximum requirement of 36 no. spaces and the number proposed is not considered unacceptably lower than this maximum requirement.
- 6.39 Overall, the proposed development would not be likely to result in undue pressure on on-street parking and that, having considered the site's sustainable location, the extent of available parking in the surrounding area and the fall-back position for the site in planning terms, the level of parking provision proposed is acceptable.

Other Technical Matters

Drainage

- 6.40 The existing Welsh Water combined sewer that crosses the site will need to be diverted in part, due to the proposed location of the apartment building. Foul discharges will utilise this sewer.
- 6.41 All current surface water discharge into the combined sewer will be removed. A combination of soakaways and discharge into the existing drainage culvert (using attenuation) is proposed due to the low infiltration rates observed onsite.
- 6.42 For more information please see the submitted Drainage Strategy.

Ecology

- 6.43 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been undertaken and confirms that there is limited existing ecological value on the site itself, but that the roof of the lift mechanism within the existing building onsite (to be demolished) should be removed by hand as a precautionary measure in case of the presence of bats. A pre-demolition check for nesting birds should also be carried out. A scheme of Japanese knotweed treatment in the east of the site (outside the proposed red line boundary) is currently being undertaken.

Ground Conditions

- 6.44 A site investigation report has been submitted in support of the application. This makes various recommendations for the proposed development and also recommends that further investigations are carried out. Some of this further work is dependent on the demolition of the existing building and therefore cannot be undertaken at this stage.
- 6.45 Overall, as long as the recommendations are followed and additional survey work is undertaken where required, and a suitable scheme of remediation is put in place, there should not be any reason why the site cannot be redeveloped for residential purposes.

Summary and Planning Balance

- 6.46 The site is in a highly sustainable location within settlement boundaries, adjacent to Pontypridd town centre and the various associated sustainable transport modes this location provides. The proposed development makes effective and efficient use of land to reflect the site's sustainable location, but also makes appropriate provision for outdoor amenity space for residents and a level of car parking that takes account of the public transport options available.
- 6.47 The proposals introduce a building of greater height and scale than the existing Magistrates' Court building, but will significantly improve the visual quality of the site through careful design

and the introduction of features of visual interest. The parts of the proposed building adjacent to neighbouring occupiers and designated heritage assets have been sensitively scaled in order to retain the density of development required, but respect the site's constraints.

- 6.48 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon the highway network, biodiversity, visual impact, impact on heritage assets and the residential amenity of neighbours and future occupiers of the apartments. As such, the proposed development is compliant with both national and local planning policy and should be granted planning permission.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany and support a planning application for the residential redevelopment of the former Magistrates' Court site on Union Street in Pontypridd. An 'extra care' affordable housing scheme (over 55s) is proposed and will be operated by Linc Cymru Housing Association once complete. A lengthy design process has been undertaken involving the appointed architects and the consultant team, Jehu, Linc Cymru and RCTCBC's planning and housing departments.
- 7.2 The existing Magistrates' Court building lacks architectural quality and is no longer in use. In fact, the site has been vacant for some time now, which has led to its visual appearance deteriorating even further, and the landowner (our client) is incurring significant building costs and empty rates. The site is in desperate need of redevelopment and the extra care scheme proposed will improve the visual appearance of the site, particularly benefitting adjacent residents and members of the public, as well as enhancing the setting of adjacent heritage assets. The scheme will also bring residents' spending to the town centre and offer a day care facility to the benefit of local people.
- 7.3 The supply of land for housing and the delivery of new homes is a serious challenge in the County Borough. The opportunity the proposals provide to contribute to the supply of land for housing simply has to be taken, particularly given the assessed local need that would be met through the provision of an extra care facility.
- 7.4 Applications for planning permission which are in accordance with the development plan should be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise. On balance, as described in this Planning, Design and Access Statement, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms and permission should be granted.

Appendix I

1 – Council's Pre-application
Response (dated 24/04/18)

Mr O Griffiths
GVA
One Kingsway
Cardiff
CF10 3AN

Fy Nghyf/My Ref:
18/5023/41

Gofynnwch am-Please ask for:
Gareth Davies
01443 281128

Dyddiad/Date:
24/04/2018

DATBLYGIAD Proposed residential development for extra care independent
ARFAETHEDIG/ living accommodation.
PROPOSAL :
LLEOLIAD FORMER MAGISTRATES COURTS, UNION STREET,
/LOCATION: GRAIG, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 1SD

I refer to your correspondence received on 14/02/2018, concerning the above and your request for pre-application advice.

Having considered the nature of the submission I can respond as follows.

Local Context and Constraints

The proposed development site lies close to Pontypridd town centre and is bounded by the railway line and station to the north and residential development of varying age elsewhere, the topography of the site and the surrounding area slopes downwards in a broadly northerly direction and this has caused the existing magistrates court to be developed on a split level basis. The site context is adequately described in the correspondence accompanying your submission and is subject to the following constraints.

- The eastern part of the site has been identified as potentially contaminated land.
- The adjacent railway line will be a persistent source of noise.
- The site lies adjacent to the listed Pontypridd railway station a recognised historical asset.
- Though not located in a floodplain the site is noted as having low and high vulnerability to the risk of surface water flooding.
- The existing access arrangement is considered sub standard.
- The site has some potential for bat roosts

Please note that this information is based on our current records and is, as far as

possible, accurate. Nevertheless we reserve the right to advise you of any additional constraints that may be identified at the time of your application.

Relevant Planning History

17/0374 – Prior notification of demolition – No objections 26th April 2017.

Relevant Planning Policies

In addition to national guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales, any application would be considered against the Policies within the adopted Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan, details of which are available on the Council's website by visiting www.rctcbc.gov.uk/ldp. The relevant policies would include:

Core Policies

Policy CS 2 – Development in the South

Area Wide Policies

Policy AW 1 – Supply of New Housing

Policy AW 2 – Sustainable Locations

Policy AW 5 – New Development

Policy AW 6 – Design and Placemaking

Policy AW 7 – Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment

Policy AW 10 – Environmental Protection and Public Health

Policy AW 11 – Existing Employment and Retail Uses

Southern Strategy Area

Policy SSA 11 – Housing Density

Policy SSA 12 – Affordable Housing

Policy SSA 13 – Development within Settlement Boundaries

Analysis of Proposal

The proposed development site lies within defined settlement boundaries on the edge of the defined town centre of Pontypridd and occupies a highly sustainable location. In terms of much of planning policy there is consequently much that favours the redevelopment of the site for the use proposed. This position is strengthened further by the current housing land supply being in shortfall and the fact that the redevelopment of the site could make a contribution to that shortfall weighs heavily in favour of the current proposals.

Local Development Plan Policy AW11 requires evidence of 12 months marketing of employment sites before allowing an alternative use unless the site is unsightly or its redevelopment would have regenerative benefits. In this case the specific nature probably also affects its marketability and its poor appearance can be taken into account. In any event any planning statement submitted in support of a future planning application will need to address the requirements of policy AW11.

The effect of the proposed development on the adjacent conservation area and listed railway station will need to be taken into account with regard to any proposals that might be brought forward. The illustrative plans submitted show a larger building than the one which currently occupies the site and the increase in bulk and massing will have to be demonstrably balanced against an improvement in appearance and finishes if such an arrangement is to be deemed acceptable in planning terms.

We have identified contamination as an issue for at least part of the site and any future proposals will be expected to address this issue in the context of its acceptability in terms of the proposed end user. Similarly, as the intended end use is residential then it will be necessary to demonstrate that the effects of noise on future residents, particularly from the adjacent railway can be attenuated to World Health Organisation (WHO) for residential development.

It is noted that the proposed design has been brought forward in a manner that aims to minimise its impact on the nearest adjacent established residential properties by reducing the number of storeys where it sits closest to them. This is an acceptable approach, though any formal submission will need to be supported with sufficient detail to illustrate the acceptability of this approach and proposed arrangement. Subject to this, issues of density should not prove problematic.

As the proposal would in effect be a 100% affordable housing scheme this would meet policy requirements.

From a highway authority perspective there is some concern at the sub standard nature of the existing access with Union Street which could create hazards for vehicles emerging from the site. However the frontage of the site has the potential

for 2.4m x 40m vision splays to be attained and you are encouraged to address this in the submission of any future proposals. Additionally details submitted to date do not include details of the proposed staffing levels at the proposed development which would enable a full assessment of the proposed parking arrangements to be made. Though the 31 spaces shown on the illustrative layout are considered a little low the sustainable location of the development is noted.

It is noted that ecological work relating to the site has been undertaken previously and that found that despite having potential there was no bat habitation at the site. Whilst the information being relatively recent is still considered valid the situation should be continuously monitored through the redevelopment of the site and if bat habitation is established appropriate mitigation undertaken.

Required Supporting Documentation

We would encourage you to submit your application electronically via www.planningportal.gov.uk

Having regard to the nature of your proposal and the information that has been submitted it is considered at this stage that in addition to the submission of standard mandatory supporting documentation such as application forms and plans, any application for the above development should also be accompanied by the following additional documentation:

- Transport statement
- Planning statement and Design and Access statement
- Drainage strategy
- Noise assessment and mitigation strategy
- Site survey identifying existing ground levels, plus details of proposed levels including sections / cross sections.
- Contaminated land survey

If any subsequent application fails to include the information above, there is a chance it may not be registered and, in any event, it is likely that an application will either be refused or will not be progressed until its satisfactory submission.

It is also recommended to applicants that detailed information is submitted at application stage to ensure that, in the event of planning permission being granted, that 'pre-commencement' conditions (which require approval of details prior to work starting on site) can be minimised. You are therefore encourage to ensure that your initial submission incorporates as much information as possible (for example materials, boundary treatment, ecology mitigation, Construction Management Plan, Travel Plan etc.), and address all matters raised in the advice given above.

Detailed guidance on the use of the national standard application form for planning

permission and other associated consent regime; and the information which must accompany a planning application so that the Local Planning Authority can determine the validity of the application, can be found as follows:

"Guidance on the use of the standard application form ('1app') and validation of applications":

<http://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/1appguidance/?lang=en>

The Town and Country Planning (Development Procedure)(Wales) Order 2012 :
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2012/801/contents/made>

How we will deal with your planning application

Once your application has been received it will be allocated a reference number and case officer. We will check the application to make sure it complies with the statutory requirements and we will contact you by phone or email to advise you of any discrepancies. We will also work with you to address any outstanding concerns, including amendments required to make your proposal acceptable.

Once we are happy with the validity of your application, we will formally consult neighbours and relevant consultees. Provided there are no significant matters of concern resulting from such consultations we will seek to determine your application as swiftly as possible after the expiry of the statutory publicity period, and aim to do so within the 8 week statutory period.

While officers endeavour to ensure you are aware of the progress of your application, we would encourage you to contact the case officer or our Planning Process team to discuss any matters further.

Building Control

The Planning and Building Control teams work closely to assist developers in improving the quality of their development and ensuring compliance with all appropriate conditions and Regulations. In particular, Building Control provides a competitive and highly professional service and seeks to actively engage with developers at the earliest stage of their project. You are therefore encouraged to contact the Building Control team on (01443) 494746 or by emailing BuildingControl@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Request for further advice

Following receipt of this initial advice, should you wish to discuss your scheme prior to a formal submission, please contact the case officer on the direct number or email given above. Further charges may apply.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Gareth Davies
GD

Please Note:

The advice given in this response represents an informal opinion, provided in accordance with the Council's Planning Pre-Application Service. In particular, it is emphasised that while this pre-application advice will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on an application, the final decision on any application that you may make can only be taken after we have consulted local people, statutory consultees and any other interested party. It does not therefore prejudice any decision which the Local Planning Authority may make should an application be submitted.

Contact Details

Enquiries

Edward Parsons MRTPI
02920 248996
edward.parsons@gva.co.uk

Visit us online

gva.co.uk

GVA

One Kingsway, Cardiff CF10 3AN

GVA is the trading name of GVA Grimley Limited, an Apleona company

© 2018 GVA Grimley Limited

Our offices

Birmingham
Bristol
Cardiff

Dublin
Edinburgh
Glasgow

Leeds
Liverpool
London

Manchester
Newcastle