

**Application No.**  
P/16/0003

**Date**  
4th March 2016

**Determining Authority**  
MTCBC

**Proposed Development**

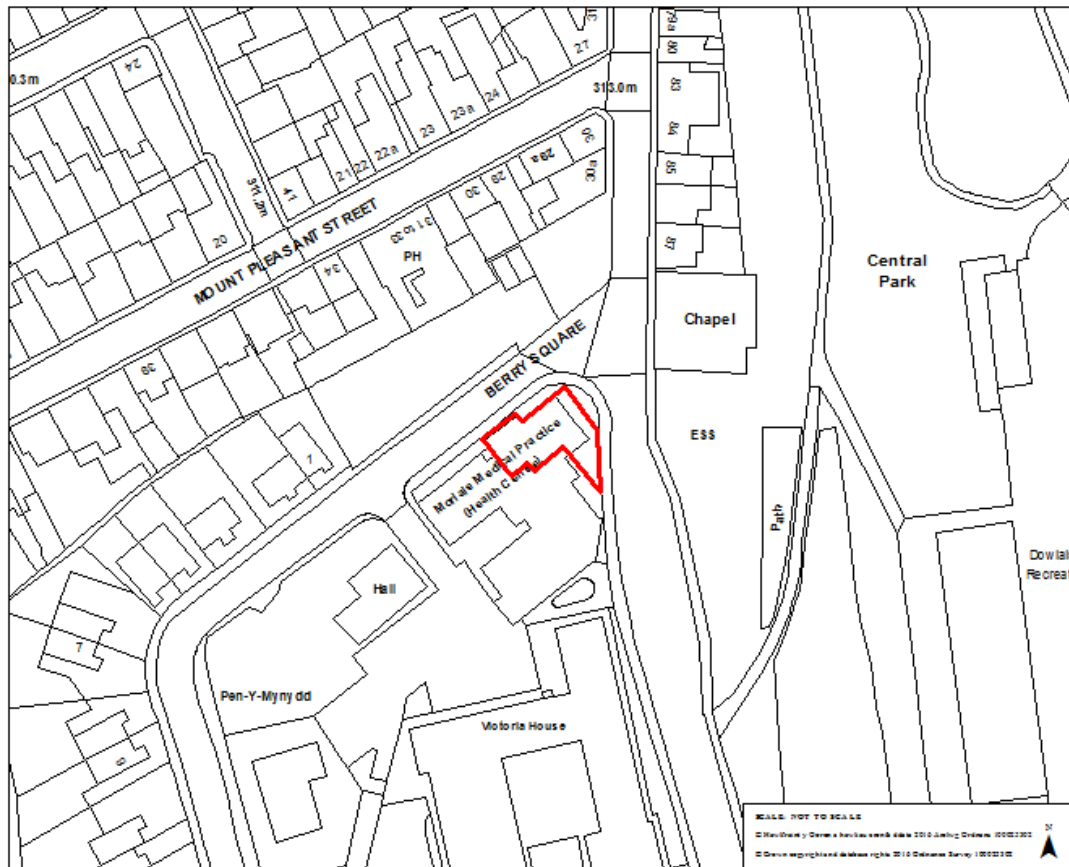
**Location**

**Name & Address of Applicant/Agent**

Change of use of part of the building to a pharmacy (A1 use class), creation of new entrance with canopy and footpath and installation of new external air condenser unit

Morlais Medical Centre  
Berry Square  
Dowlais  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 3AL

Morlais Medical Practice  
c/o Stride Treglown  
F.a.o. Coral Ducroq  
Treglown Court  
Dowlais Road  
Cardiff



Councillor Phil Williams has requested that this application be reported to Committee to fully consider the concerns raised by the objector.

**APPLICATION SITE**

The application site relates to Morlais Medical Centre, a detached building located on a corner plot between Berry Square and Victoria Street, Dowlais. The premises operates as a GP surgery, with 14 consulting rooms, as well as a treatment and minor operation facility. Its main entrance is accessed off Berry Square with a secondary rear access in the western elevation and adjacent to the on-site parking area which provides 18 car parking spaces.

The premises lie to the north of a former nursing home and to the south of the Morlais Tavern Public House/Restaurant. It falls within the settlement boundary – Primary Growth Area, but is outside the retail centre boundary.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to change the use of part of Morlais Medical Centre (Use Class D1) into a medical centre and pharmacy (Use Class A1). The submitted details indicate the proposed use would accommodate 96m<sup>2</sup> of floor space which includes 34m<sup>2</sup> of retail floor space. The proposal would result in the re-location of Pearn's pharmacy, from 30 Victoria Street into the medical centre. It would operate from 08:45 until 18:15 Monday to Fridays and 09:00 until 12:00 on Saturdays. The pharmacy would operate as a separate business to the Morlais Medical Centre.

The information submitted with the application states that the primary function of the pharmacy would relate to the administration and dispensing of medication with a limited retail function of products defined within the Medicines Act 1968, which includes General Sales List Medicine (GSL), Pharmacy Medicines (PM), and Prescription Only Medicine (POM). Furthermore, it has been confirmed that the goods sold from the existing Pearn's Pharmacy would continue to be sold at the proposed pharmacy.

The proposal also involves the creation of a new entrance door with associated canopy and access/pathway (off Victoria Street) and the installation of an air conditioning unit. The proposed new entrance would consist of automatic sliding double doors, finished in dark brown aluminium to match the existing building. A 3 metre wide curved glass canopy, projecting 0.8 metres, would be fixed above the new entrance. The new entrance would be accessed off Victoria Street by a shallow stepped and ramped access with a 1 metre (maximum height) handrail. An air conditioning unit, measuring 0.9 metres, by 0.9 metres with a 0.6 metre depth, would be wall mounted to the eastern elevation, near ground level.

It should be noted that a full planning application, P/16/0001, proposing a single storey extension to the medical centre is also being considered on this Committee agenda.

## PLANNING HISTORY

P/16/0001 – Single storey rear extension – This application appears on this Committee agenda.

P/16/0002 – Erection of two illuminated signs – under consideration.

P/08/0139 – Erection of two-storey rear extension, new vehicular parking access and parking – Approved: 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008.

## CONSULTATION

Engineering and Traffic Group Leader	No objection.
Town Planning Division's Policy and Implementation Group Leader	Objection.
Environmental Health Manager	No objection.

## PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order (Wales) 2012, nearby properties have been consulted and a site notice has been displayed in the immediate vicinity of the site. Six letters of representation have been received (from the same objector) as a result of this exercise. The planning related concerns raised in these letters have been summarised below:

1 - The proposed development would have its own entrance and operate on a Saturday. The hours of opening are greater than any nearby pharmacy. It is not an ancillary function of the medical practice but a standalone retail/commercial unit. It lies outside the local centre and no justification has been provided;

2 - The application does not justify a need for a third pharmacy in close proximity to this location. Three pharmacies are unsustainable and could result in unemployment at existing pharmacies. The limited justification given in the revised DAS does not warrant the relocation of the pharmacy outside the local centre. Retail sales and prescriptions figures are provided and the provision of a reduced retail element in the proposed pharmacy (given that some retail will still have to be provided by pharmacy regulations), reduces public choice and is located further from the centre, which is not a benefit especially to those with reduced mobility.

3 – The justification relating to the sharing of software and staff referred to in the DAS is weak given that both situations do not necessitate the pharmacist being located in the same premises as the GPs. Whilst the Welsh Government guidance supports and encourages relocation of pharmacies within surgeries, this refers to new build developments and not existing surgeries. The development would not meet Welsh Government guidance and should therefore not be a material planning consideration in favour of this application;

4 – The two pharmacies are located within the local centre and well served by the existing public car park. The proposed pharmacy would not be served by off road parking and should therefore be refused on highway safety grounds;

5 - The development is contrary to LDP Policy AS18. No sequential test has been applied or submitted. The proposed pharmacy would still have to provide a retail element as part of the service it provides suggesting it is an A1 use, which is supported by appeal decisions (*R v Maldon District Council ex parte Pattani (1998)*). The revised DAS has attempted to justify the proposed use by an “amateur” sequential test and challenges the adopted boundary of the defined local centre in Dowlais, no reasoned justification has been provided that would support a recommendation departing from Policy AS18 in the adopted Development Plan;

6 – The justification submitted for the proposed location of the pharmacy is weak and challengeable. The viability argument is unfounded as the Medical Centre would not require a pharmacy to make it sustainable. The plans of Pearn’s pharmacy show that it is poorly laid out and operated and the option of extending has not been considered;

7 – The proposed plans indicate a smaller storage area for the proposed pharmacy which suggests increased frequency of deliveries, resulting in an impact to highway safety in terms of parking and use of pharmacy entrance;

8 - The footfall argument is unsustainable as part of the building will be used as a pharmacy which will further increase congestion within the building as the loss of medical rooms to accommodate the pharmacy are not shown to be provided elsewhere;

9 - The location of the existing pharmacies in close proximity to each other provides greater opportunity of choice to the public. Locating one pharmacy within the medical practice will most likely provide less choice;

10 – The siting of the proposed pharmacy will take people away from the recognised retail area and linked trips may not materialise unlike at the moment where both pharmacies are located within the local centre;

11 – The proposal goes against planning practice which recognised the importance of a vibrant local centre, which should not be diminished. This use outside the local centre would disadvantage existing businesses as footfall would be taken away from the centre;

12 – Professional staff will need to be employed at the pharmacy (who are not currently employed by the Medical Centre). The number of new staff and parking requirements would add to the already severely constrained, over capacity, parking requirements of the medical practice as a whole;

13 - The DAS states that the development is in accordance with policies BW17 and TB11 referring to inclusivity and disabled access provision. However a disabled access is already provided at the entrance to the existing medical centre. Since, the development does not incorporate a community benefit it conflicts with Policy BW7 and TB11.

14 – The access and air conditioning unit sited on a street frontage are unacceptable in their appearance and are contrary to policies;

15 - The application is contrary to both the adopted plan policies and Planning Policy Wales. The applicant has not demonstrated that there is a need for the development and it will cause a risk to highway safety which Members should not approve lightly. Should Members be minded to grant planning permission then the access should be solely from within the Medical Practice not via a standalone pharmacy. The access proposed is wholly unnecessary and an incongruous feature in the landscape. The applications will not support the community business.

## POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 8, January 2016)

Paragraph 2.1.2 refers to the consideration of planning applications and states that these must be '*...determined in accordance with the adopted plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise...the LDP should show how places are expected to change in land-use terms to accommodate development needs over the plan period in order to provide certainty for developers and the public about the type of development that will be permitted at a particular location....*'

Paragraph 4.11.9 refers to the appearance of new development and states that *'...the visual appearance of proposed development, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context are material planning considerations. Local planning authorities should reject poor building and contextual designs...'*

Paragraphs 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 refer to retailing and town centres and states that *'... The Welsh Government's objectives for retailing and town centres are: to secure accessible, efficient, competitive and innovative retail provision for all the communities of Wales, in both urban and rural areas; promote established town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing, leisure and other complementary functions; enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres; and to promote access to these centres by public transport, walking and cycling. Wherever possible this provision should be located in proximity to other commercial businesses, facilities for leisure, community facilities and employment. Town, district, local and village centres are the best locations for such provision at an appropriate scale. Such co-location of retail and other services in existing centres, with enhancement of access by walking, cycling and public transport, to provide the opportunity to use means of transport other than the car, will provide the greatest benefit to communities. This complementary mix of uses should also sustain and enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of those centres as well as contributing to a reduction of travel demand...'*

Paragraph 10.1.3 defines vitality and businesses outside established centre. *'...Vitality is reflected in how busy a centre is at different times and in different parts, and attractiveness in the facilities and character which draw in trade. Viability, on the other hand, refers to the ability of the centre to attract investment, not only to maintain the fabric but also to allow for improvement and adaptation to changing needs.'*

Paragraphs 10.3.1 and 10.3.2 refer to Local Planning Authority considerations when determining such applications. *'...When determining a planning application for retail, leisure or other uses best located in a town centre, including redevelopment, extensions or the variation of conditions, local planning authorities should take into account: compatibility with any community strategy or up-to-date development plan strategy; need for the development/extension, unless the proposal is for a site within a defined centre or one allocated in an up-to-date development plan; the sequential approach to site selection; impact on existing centres; net gains in floorspace where redevelopment is involved, and whether or not it is like-for-like in terms of comparison or convenience; rate of take-up of allocations in any adopted development plan; accessibility by a variety of modes of travel; improvements to public transport; impact on overall travel patterns; and best use of land close to any transport hub, in terms of density and mixed use. This approach reinforces the role of centres as the best location for most retail/leisure activities. In contrast to the way in which locations outside existing centres are dealt with, consideration of the need for additional provision is not a matter that should be taken into account when proposals for uses best located in centres come forward. It is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition between retailers within centres...'*

Paragraphs 10.2.10 and 10.3.3 refer to the identification of retail sites. *'...In deciding whether to identify sites for retail and leisure developments, local planning authorities should in the first instance consider whether there is a need for additional provision for these uses. Such need may be quantitative so as to address a provable unmet demand for the provision concerned. Precedence should be given to establishing quantitative need for*

*both convenience and comparison floorspace, particularly as a basis for development plan allocations before qualitative factors are brought into play. Qualitative assessment should cover both positive and negative implications...where need is a consideration, precedence should be accorded to establishing quantitative need. It will be for the decision-maker to determine and justify the weight to be given to any qualitative assessment, as outlined in paragraph 10.2.10.*

- Technical Advice Note 4: Retailing and Town Centres (November, 1996)

Paragraph 8 refers to changes of use and states that '*...sustaining the vitality of town centres depends on flexibility in the use of floor space...*'

Technical Advice Notes (TAN):

Paragraph 1.6 states that the purpose of the TAN '*is to equip all those involved in the design of development with advice on how 'Promoting sustainability through good design' and Planning for sustainable building' may be facilitated through the planning system*'.

### Local Planning Policy

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006-2021

BW4: Settlement boundaries/location constraints.

AS4: Historic landscape.

BW15: Community facilities.

BW7: Sustainable design and place making.

BW8: Development and the water environment.

BW12: Development proposals and transport.

AS18: Retail hierarchy

TB11: Access, parking and accessibility.

- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

SPG Note 4 Sustainable Design (July 2013)

Paragraphs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 refers to layout and connectivity and states that '*...as Merthyr Tydfil's built environment changes through development and regeneration, there continues to be opportunities to plan and design areas in ways that reduce the need to travel and ensure the effective use of more sustainable modes of transport...people's travel choices are significantly influenced by the layout of a development and its links with surrounding street networks...the chosen layout and connection points of a new development should be informed by the findings of a contextual appraisal which considers the range of facilities and services in the neighbourhood; existing public transport services; it is important to consider how to create an inclusive built environment which meets the needs of all people regardless of age or ability. New developments should provide equal and convenient access for all potential users, including disabled people, older people, children and families. Routes should be kept as near to level as possible along their length and width as this will benefit wheelchair and pram users. A legible layout will also make it easier for people with sensory or cognitive impairment to work out where they are and where they are going...*'

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider under this application relate to whether the proposed change of use of part of the Morlais Medical Centre for the provision of a pharmacy would be acceptable in this location and whether the associated new entrance (with canopy above), access/pathway off Victoria Street and the air conditioning unit would be acceptable with regards to their impact upon the character and appearance of the area. The impact of the proposal on residential amenity and highway and pedestrian safety are also important considerations.

The proposed pharmacy would be located within the settlement boundary but outside the local retail centre as defined by the LDP. LDP Policy AS18 seeks to protect the vitality and viability of the local centre for the plan period 2011-2021 and requires an assessment of need to be undertaken for retail proposals that fall outside the Town Centre or local centres. Whilst the assessment should consider both quantitative and qualitative need, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 8, January 2016) is clear in that precedence should be given to establishing quantitative need. A quantitative need is an assessment of, amongst other things, available consumer expenditure to support the proposed floorspace. Qualitative need is a subjective consideration of how well existing facilities meet consumer demands, choice and locational preferences.

The primary function of the proposed pharmacy would be administering and dispensing medicines. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out and defines the three different categories of pharmacy sales (GSL, PM and POM) operating from the existing pharmacy and confirms that these categories of sales would operate from the proposed pharmacy. A recent visit to the existing pharmacy concluded that the goods sold amount to those noted in the above categories. The floor plan of the proposed pharmacy indicates that although the dispensing section would occupy a larger floor area, the designated retail area would be larger than that of the existing pharmacy, and has been calculated as having a retail area of approximately 34m<sup>2</sup> amounting to 35% of the total floor area of the proposed pharmacy. The DAS states that the retail sales associated with the existing Pearn's pharmacy amount to less than 2% of its total business. However, no evidence has been submitted to substantiate this figure and it is reasonable to assume that the retail sales at the proposed pharmacy would increase due to the larger retail area.

In accordance with LDP Policy AS18, an assessment of need and sequential test was requested and submitted on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 (as part of the amended DAS). A quantitative assessment of need was requested and a response was submitted on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The agent also submitted additional information in support of the application on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016. This additional information is summarised below.

### *The amended DAS (received on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016)*

In considering the 'need' for the development the agent points out that Pearn's Pharmacy (at no. 30, Victoria Street) is in poor condition and has a limited floor space of 51m<sup>2</sup>. As such, the agent argues that the premises is failing to meet current demand and is struggling to provide an efficient customer service due to the current volume of business. The agent also confirms that pharmacies are contractually not able to close periodically to allow for refurbishment works. As such, it is stated that the re-location to a larger unit would be necessary in this instance to allow the pharmacy to continue to function. The DAS also

provides further justification for the proposed development by stating that an integrated healthcare system is encouraged by Welsh Government (as highlighted in a 2001 report '*Improving Health in Wales*').

The DAS also confirms that a site visit by the agent on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016 identified that there are currently no existing retail premises in the local centre available to let or purchase. Furthermore, the applicant contends that regardless of the suitability of other sites in the local centre, the aim of this development is to provide an integrated pharmacy within the Morlais Medical Centre in accordance with the above Welsh Government guidance. It concludes that there are no sequentially preferable sites within the boundary of the local centre and that the proposed location of the pharmacy is a suitable and viable option at the edge of the local centre.

*Additional information received on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016.*

The agent points out that a quantitative assessment was not carried out in this instance due to the nature of the proposal and the fact that the customer facing/retail area of the replacement pharmacy would only be 5m<sup>2</sup> larger than the existing pharmacy (increasing from 29m<sup>2</sup> to 34m<sup>2</sup>). The agent has also confirmed that less than 2% of transactions involve a money transfer and as such a detailed breakdown of expenditure of pharmaceuticals was not required because the wider issues are of more significance (e.g. the sustainability of the current pharmacy (Pearn's) should it not relocate and the long term viability of the medical centre without the relocation of the pharmacy). The agent concludes by stating that the viability and vitality of the retail centre would not be harmed as this proposal would result in a more attractive site near the local centre and encourage more development into the area. It is also suggested that as well as retaining footfall, the proposal would encourage linked trips and provide additional choice and competition as well as encouraging an alternative retail use to occupy the existing site (Pearn's Pharmacy).

*Additional information received on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016.*

The agent has pointed out that the anticipated growth in prescriptions would require additional dispensing staff to be employed in order to support the growth of the business and receive practice payment (which all pharmacies are entitled to receive provided they meet minimum dispensing staff levels), which could not be accommodated in the existing building. As such, the agent concludes that '*...prescription volumes in Wales are growing at a rate of 0.8% each year...the pharmacy is therefore limited by the size of the premises and the number of staff they can physically fit into the premises at any one time, and within 5 years, given a growth of 0.8% per annum prescriptions dispensed, they will not be able to provide the staff to receive the full practice payment remuneration they are due. Continued use of unsuitable premises is not a sustainable solution...*' The agent also confirms that the existing pharmacy cannot (due to its size) accommodate the furniture required for dispensary purposes and emphasises (by comparing Pearn's Pharmacy and its relocation into the Morlais Medical Centre) that the dispensing function dominates the use of the proposed pharmacy.

### Assessment of Need

It is acknowledged that the 2001 report, '*Improving Health in Wales*' prepared by the then Welsh Assembly's Health and Well Being Team, encourages the '*... development of a*



*partnership approach to medicines management between the patient, GP's and the pharmacist, a closer working between GP's and community pharmacist to ensure that skills are used in a complementary and synergistic way and develop pharmacy premises to enable the provision of a wider range of services in a confidential way...* Although this report encourages closer working relationships between pharmacies and GP's, it does not state that they have to co-locate to make the connections work successfully. Furthermore, it would appear to be somewhat outdated as it was published in 2001.

Policy AS18, states that since the pharmacy would be outside the local centre a strict application of a sequential test is required to support the application. The application of the sequential test in this instance would mean going through a sequence of 'tests' for site selection to determine the most appropriate location for this retail development. Essentially, this would first require that the retail use is located in the local centre. If this is not possible, the sequential test should demonstrate this, and the retail use should be directed towards an edge of centre location. This aims to ensure that trade is not drawn away from the local centre and therefore that the vitality and viability of the town centre is not adversely affected as a result of this proposal. As noted above, the agent states that the existing site is limited and there are no other suitable sites in the designated local centre for the expected growth, as such, the agent is heavily reliant on the relocation of the pharmacy. However, the agent does not refer to the potential opportunities available for the re-arrangement of the internal layout of the existing pharmacy to create a larger and enhanced layout. In addition, no evidence has been submitted to explore what opportunities, if any, are available for extending the premises. Indeed, a re-configured (internal layout) Pearn's pharmacy is a sequential alternative which exists within the local centre, however, other than this existing site (Pearn's pharmacy), it is accepted (following consideration of the most recent retail survey in October 2015 and a recent site visit) that there are no other vacant units within the local centre. It is therefore considered that a sequential test, albeit weak, has been carried out in respect of this proposal. As such, the proposed development complies, in part, with LDP Policy AS18.

As noted above a quantitative assessment of retail need has not been undertaken as the agent stressed that such an assessment is not considered appropriate due to the small scale and limited retail nature of the proposal. The main consideration in demonstrating qualitative need relates to whether the proposal addresses a current deficiency in the distribution and range of retail stores which meets the needs of the community. The applicant has demonstrated this given that the community is currently served by two existing pharmacies (Pearn's Pharmacy and Dowlais Pharmacy) within the local area. The benefits of relocating the pharmacy to Morlais Medical Centre are not therefore considered to be qualitative need factors in retail policy terms, although are material considerations in making a decision on the planning application. As such, the proposal has not been supported by an assessment of need and therefore fails to comply with of LDP Policy AS18.

Policy AS18, in addition to requiring an assessment of need and sequential test, also states that *'...proposals will then only be permitted where they avoid causing harm to town/local centre vitality and viability...'* The proposed pharmacy would lie at the edge of the local centre, approximately 25 metres from the local centre boundary and 40 metres from the existing Pearn's Pharmacy. The proposed retail element of the pharmacy would be approximately 5m<sup>2</sup> larger than the retail element of the existing pharmacy and the relocation of the pharmacy would lead to the vacancy of a retail unit within the Dowlais local centre. It is considered that the additional retail space within the proposed pharmacy alone is unlikely

to harm the vitality and viability of the local centre. However, it is noted that the relocation of the pharmacy would gain a competitive advantage over the existing pharmacy, given its co-location to Morlais Medical Centre. The use of the proposed pharmacy is therefore considered to result in a concentration of customers outside the local centre. As a result, it is considered that footfall entering the local centre would be reduced and therefore would not result in linked trips due to the combined doctors, prescriptions and retail services which would be available at Morlais Medical Centre.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the vacancy of an A1 unit in the local centre. Whilst there are no other vacant units in the local area, it would seem likely that the unit could be quickly occupied by an alternative business. However this is not guaranteed, particularly given its location on the extreme boundary of the designated local centre. The vacancy of this unit could prevent the upkeep of the building and potentially lead to the decline of the premises overtime, making it less desirable and therefore more difficult to let/sell in the future. It may also lead to applications for residential development to guarantee the upkeep of the building, which if permitted would result in the permanent loss of this retail unit. As a result, the proposed development could result in a vacant retail unit and reduced footfall in the local centre, which would harm the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the Dowlais local centre and therefore fails to comply with LDP Policy AS18.

### Character and Appearance

The design and materials of the sliding entrance door would match the existing fenestration and would therefore adhere to the appearance of the existing premises. This separate entrance would be framed by a curved glass canopy, which would add interest to this elevation and complement the existing building. Although the stepped and ramped access would result in the loss of some landscaping, it would not dominate this part of the building and would be visually acceptable. With regards to the air conditioning unit, this would comprise a standard size unit which would be wall mounted close to ground level. Although proposed to be fixed to a primary façade, this would be screened by the existing landscaping adjacent this eastern elevation and would therefore not adversely impact upon the appearance of the premises.

The proposed development would therefore comply with LDP Policies BW7 and TB11.

### Residential Amenity

Given its location within an existing building and distance from surrounding residential properties, the proposal would not give rise to any significant disturbance or nuisances to residential occupiers. It is noted that there have been no objections in this respect and the Environmental Health Manager has not raised an objection to this application. Thus, the proposed development would not adversely impact upon the private amenities of nearby residents and would comply with LDP Policy BW7.

### Parking and Highway Safety

The proposed change of use would result in an independent pharmacy business operating from part of the Morlais Medical Centre. An on-site parking area is provided to the southwest of the premises, comprising 18 parking spaces (two of which are disabled spaces). This facility would be adequate to cater for the needs of the medical centre and

proposed pharmacy. In addition, the application site lies within a sustainable location and within close proximity to modes of transport other than the private car (e.g. bus routes). The Engineering and Traffic Group Leader has considered the parking and highway safety implications of the proposal, and although the concerns of the objector relating to indiscriminate parking on Victoria Street (by the public, staff and delivery lorries) and its impact on congestion and visibility to other road users are noted, he has raised no objection to the proposal. As such, it is not considered that the proposed change of use and associated works would give rise to highway/pedestrian safety concerns or impinge the free flow of traffic in the area. It would therefore comply with LDP Policies BW12 and TB11.

### Response to Representations

Many of the concerns raised by the objector have been considered above. With regard to the other issues raised, these are addressed below:

With regard to point 2 of the objectors concerns, this proposed development does not necessarily result in the creation of a third pharmacy. The existing pharmacy (Pearn's) could be used for any shop which falls within Use Class A1 without the need for planning permission.

The internal reconfiguration (point 8 above of the objectors concerns) of Morlais Medical Centre (for medical centre use), would not require planning permission.

### Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed external alterations are acceptable in terms of their scale, design and finishes. However, it is considered that the proposed co-location of the pharmacy outside of the Dowlais retail centre boundary, whilst not having raised any significant concerns in terms of highway safety, could have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of local centre and would therefore fail to comply with LDP Policy AS18.

### **RECOMMENDATION: BE REFUSED**

1. The applicant has failed to provide an adequate retail assessment to demonstrate a need for the provision of a pharmacy outside of the Dowlais local centre. As such, the proposed change of use is contrary to Policy AS18 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan as it could cause harm to the vitality and viability of the local centre.
-