



Planning and Design and Access Statement

In Support of a Full Planning Application

Project: Cambrian Community Centre

Site Address: Cambrian House, West Market Street, Newport, NP20 2AU

Proposal: Change of Use from Office (Class B1) to Community Centre (Class D1)

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1.0 Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for Cambrian House on West Market Street. The proposal seeks to secure the Change of Use of the property from an Office (Class B1) to a Community Centre (Class D1).

The centre is designed to serve as a vital and inclusive hub for the local Newport community. It will provide a wide range of services including educational mentoring, community welfare activities, and initiatives focused on learning and understanding different cultures and religions, available to the wider neighbourhood regardless of background.

The proposal represents the sustainable and beneficial creation of a community asset within a highly accessible location, bringing a vacant or underutilised commercial floorplate back into active, positive use.

2.0 Site and Surrounding Context

The application site is a commercial property situated on West Market Street.

- **Previous Use:** Prior to the proposed change of use, the property operated as an Office (Class B1).
- **Surrounding Context:** The immediate context is robustly mixed-use. **Crucially, there are no residential properties immediately adjacent to the building.** To the north of the site lies a designated Play Area, while an existing D1 building is located to the south. To the east, across West Market Street, is a large superstore, and public car parking is situated directly behind the property to the west (Drovers Mews area).
- **Access Arrangements:** The principal pedestrian entrance faces West Market Street, offering direct, level access from the public footway.

3.0 Planning Policy Framework

The proposal has been rigorously developed to accord with the strategic objectives of National and Local planning policies, demonstrating significant social value, sustainable placemaking, and economic regeneration.

3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

All planning decisions in Wales must demonstrate compliance with this Act. The proposed community centre directly contributes to several of the seven statutory well-being goals:

- **A Wales of Cohesive Communities:** The core purpose of the D1 use is to provide a safe, inclusive hub for education, welfare, and social integration. By actively promoting the learning and understanding of different cultures and religions, the centre will foster a stronger, more connected, and harmonious local neighbourhood.
- **A Healthier Wales:** By offering social support, wellbeing mentoring, and community interaction, the centre actively supports the mental and social well-being of the Newport community.
- **A More Equal Wales:** The centre's open-door policy for welfare advice and free educational mentoring ensures that vital support services are accessible to all residents, regardless of socio-economic background.

3.2 National Policy: Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) & Future Wales (2040)

- **Strategic Placemaking & Town Centres First:** PPW 12 and Future Wales Policy 2 emphasise that town and district centres must evolve beyond traditional retail and office uses to become diverse, experiential hubs. The proposal aligns perfectly with this approach by bringing a community-focused use into an established urban centre, driving footfall, and contributing to the area's vitality.
- **Sustainable Use of Existing Building Stock:** PPW 12 mandates the sustainable use of resources. By repurposing an existing building rather than constructing a new facility, the proposal inherently capitalises on the building's embodied carbon, representing a highly sustainable, low-impact development.
- **Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN 15) (2025):** The site is located within Flood Zone 3. While a general D1 Community Centre is typically classified as "Less Vulnerable," the applicant has proactively applied "Highly Vulnerable" safety standards to account for the children's educational sessions. Publicly available hydraulic modelling for this exact streetscape (Newport Planning Ref: 25/1014) establishes the extreme 1-in-1000 year plus climate change tidal flood level at 9.31m AOD. All highly vulnerable activities will be strategically located on the first floor (approximately 10.62m AOD), providing over 1.31 metres of dry freeboard.

Furthermore, as a change of use within an existing footprint, the development does not displace floodwater or increase flood risk elsewhere.

- **Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 & TAN 24:** The site sits within the Lower Dock Street Conservation Area. As no external alterations or extensions are proposed, the proposal strictly adheres to national duties to preserve the character and appearance of the historic environment.

3.3 Local Policy: Newport Local Development Plan (2011-2026)

The proposal is strongly supported by the following LDP policies:

- **Policy SP12 (Community Facilities):** The LDP actively encourages the development of new community facilities in sustainable locations. The proposal fulfils this by providing much-needed charitable, educational, and cultural outreach within the city centre.
- **Policy SP18 (Urban Regeneration):** The proposal supports urban regeneration by bringing an existing, underutilised building into active, community-focused use, preventing the blight of vacant commercial properties.
- **Policy GP2 (General Amenity):** Strict operational hours and internal noise management strategies have been designed to ensure the use will not adversely impact the wider area.
- **Policy T4 (Parking):** Situated in Parking Zone 1, the proposal leverages the site's highly sustainable location to minimise private vehicle reliance.
- **Policy CE7 (Conservation Areas):** The retention of the existing façade ensures the aesthetic contribution of Cambrian House to the Lower Dock Street Conservation Area is maintained, proactively preserving the historic streetscape.

3.4 Principle of Development & Justification of Use

The principle of converting this B1 office into a D1 community centre is firmly established by local planning policy and the profound social and economic value the facility will deliver to the Newport area.

- **Social Value and Civic Engagement:** In accordance with Policy SP12, the facility will act as an inclusive welfare and educational hub, providing mentoring programmes, adult education, and workshops dedicated to cross-cultural understanding, open to the wider community.

Furthermore, active daytime and evening use increases natural surveillance, helping to deter anti-social behaviour in the surrounding district centre.

- **Economic and Regeneration Benefits:** The facility will bring up to 25 visitors into the West Market Street area during class times and events, generating linked trips to the adjacent retail superstore, local cafés, and surrounding commercial businesses.
- **The "Fall-back" Position (B1 vs. D1 Impact):** A modern B1 office of this size could lawfully accommodate a dense workforce operating 5 to 6 days a week, generating constant daily trip generation. In contrast, the proposed community centre relies on a minimal core staff (1 full-time manager), with visitor capacity largely restricted to specific, timetabled sessions. Therefore, the change of use will not result in an over-intensification of the site.

4.0 Description of Development

4.1 Scope of Works

The application seeks consent purely for the Change of Use. No external operational development, extensions, or loss of green space are proposed. The existing structure will simply be repurposed internally to accommodate community and educational activities.

4.2 Operational Use and Activities

The centre operates on a structured timetable. The primary function is educational and charitable; any daily prayers are a secondary function ancillary to these activities and take place strictly within opening hours.

Staffing Structure: The staffing model is designed to minimise intensity, utilising part-time and volunteer roles:

- **Full-Time:** 1 x Centre Manager (Mon-Fri, 09:00-17:00).
- **Part-Time (Evening):** 1 x Teacher (Mon-Sun, 19:00-20:00).
- **Volunteers (Term-Time Only):** 5 x Volunteer Teachers (Tue, Wed, Thu, 17:00-19:00).

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday: 09:00-22:00.

Schedule of Educational & Training Projects:

- **After School Children's Education:**
 - o Timings: 17:00-19:00 (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday only).
 - o Note: Operates during term time only.
 - o Capacity: Max 20-25 attendees.
- **Adult Education:**
 - o Timings: Evening classes lasting 1.0-1.5 hours.
 - o Content: Cultural studies, learning and understanding different religions, and community integration.
- **Training Sessions:**
 - o Content: Lifesaving skills, Mental Health Awareness, and First Aid.
 - o Access: Open to the whole community.

Community Welfare Projects:

- **Social Isolation (Coffee Mornings):** It is intended that these sessions be held fortnightly during term time to provide a "Warm Space" for social integration and mental wellbeing, specifically tackling loneliness among the elderly and isolated.
- **Interfaith & Cultural Collaboration:** The centre aims to hold regular sessions to promote cross-cultural understanding and community cohesion, providing a space for different faiths and backgrounds to engage with one another.
- **Future Expansion:** The centre hopes to partner with the Council in the future to run extended coffee morning sessions and lunch clubs for the wider community.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** It is intended that the centre will act as a local Litter Picking Hub, with the aim of organising regular sessions to improve the local streetscape.
- **Charitable Partnerships:** The centre intends to act as a collection point for local fundraising efforts for secular and international charities.

4.3 Kitchen, Waste & Access

- **Kitchen:** Domestic use only (warming food/drinks). No commercial frying/extraction required.

- **Waste:** A dedicated internal bin storage area has been provided on the ground floor to accommodate the strictly segregated waste streams required by the 2024 Workplace Recycling Regulations, ensuring direct, level access to the highway for commercial collection without cluttering the street frontage. Bins are stored securely and presented on West Market Street only on collection days.
- **Access:** Level access compliant with Part M and an accessible W.C. are provided.

5.0 Transport Management Strategy

In compliance with local transport policies, the following measures are in place:

5.1 Availability of Parking

The site is located within Parking Zone 1. Because the property is centrally located, kerbside parking and nearby public car parks (such as the adjacent superstore and the public parking immediately behind the property) provide ample capacity. Parents dropping off children can utilise this capacity without displacing local residents.

5.2 Managing the "School Run"

The traffic impact is mitigated by the specific schedule of the children's education classes:

- **Limited Days:** The "school run" traffic occurs only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (Term Time only).
- **Marshalling:** A staff member will monitor the frontage during changeovers to ensure parents park responsibly and do not block the highway or adjacent commercial accesses.
- **Local Catchment:** The majority of attendees are local to Newport and will arrive on foot or via public transport.

5.3 Parking Standards (The "Fall-back" Position)

- **Previous Use (B1 Office):** Under Zone 1 standards, the previous office generated a nil parking demand.
- **Proposed Use (D1):** With 4-6 staff during peak hours and a maximum of 25 visitors, the SPG demand remains at nil non-operational spaces.

- **Net Impact:** The difference is negligible. The available public parking behind the site, combined with the limited days of operation for children's classes, ensures no severe impact on highway safety.

5.4 Cycle Parking

To promote active travel, secure cycle storage (2 Sheffield stands accommodating 4 bikes) will be provided internally or within the site curtilage, ensuring weather-proof security for staff and visitors without cluttering the historic street frontage.

6.0 Impact on Residential Amenity

A significant material advantage of this site is that there are no residential properties immediately adjacent to the host building. The surrounding immediate uses are commercial, recreational (Play Area), and civic (existing D1 building). This layout provides a natural buffer against noise.

Nevertheless, the applicant recognises the presence of residential properties in the wider surrounding area and has implemented strict operational controls to ensure their amenity is proactively protected.

6.1 Operational Controls

- **External Areas Curfew:** To prevent potential noise travelling to the wider neighbourhood, any external areas will not be used for gatherings or activities after 20:00. Access will be limited to arrival and departure only during these hours.
- **Visitor Management:** Management will actively educate participants about the importance of minimising noise disturbances when arriving and leaving.
- **Signage:** Permanent signage will be installed to discourage gatherings in the rear public parking area during night-time hours.

6.2 Justification of Operating Hours

The proposed operating hours of 09:00 to 22:00, Monday to Sunday, are essential to facilitate the evening adult educational classes and community welfare services.

It is noted that a nearby property (White Heart House) recently received planning consent for a D1 Children's Nursery with restricted operating hours (07:30–18:00). However, the proposed community

centre has a fundamentally different operational and acoustic profile. Unlike a children's nursery, this proposal does not generate intensive early-morning traffic peaks from parent drop-offs, nor does it involve any outdoor children's play, which typically dictates stricter amenity controls.

All evening activities at the proposed community centre will be contained entirely indoors and consist of quiet, small-scale adult education and mentoring.

Most importantly, unlike the nursery site, there are no residential properties immediately adjacent to the proposed site. The risk of disturbance to residential amenity is therefore exceptionally low.

The site is also situated within a vibrant, established commercial environment. It is in close proximity to the Commercial Road district centre, which hosts numerous businesses operating late into the night, as well as a large ASDA supermarket that operates until 22:00 from Monday to Saturday. This establishes a clear baseline of evening footfall, vehicle movements, and ambient commercial activity in the immediate vicinity. Given this established late-night context, the lack of immediate residential neighbours, and the low-intensity, indoor nature of the proposed evening classes, the 22:00 closure time is entirely appropriate and will assimilate seamlessly into the existing environment.

6.3 External Lighting

Any external security lighting will be limited to low-level, downward-facing units with PIR sensors to prevent light spill into neighbouring properties.

7.0 Flood Risk & Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS)

- **Flood Risk (TAN 15):** As detailed in Section 3.2, the applicant has proactively applied "Highly Vulnerable" standards to this development. The highly vulnerable areas (children's education) will be strategically located on the first floor, providing over 1.31 metres of dry freeboard above the extreme 1-in-1000 year climate change flood level. Furthermore, a site-specific Flood Emergency Plan will ensure the facility is safely closed and evacuated during NRW warnings prior to any flood event.
- **No Net Loss of Green Space:** Because the application relies entirely on the conversion of an existing building, there has been zero loss of permeable soil or grassed areas as a result of the development.

8.0 Approach to Technical Assessments & Conditions

The applicant has provided a Transport Management Strategy and Operational Management details considered proportionate to the scale of use. However, should the Local Planning Authority require further validation, the applicant is willing to accept Planning Conditions for operational noise management or travel plans.

9.0 Conclusion

The Cambrian Community Centre utilises an existing commercial plot effectively to provide a much-needed, inclusive community facility. The proposal demonstrates a strong alignment with national and local planning policy, evidenced by its open-door policy for mental health training, educational support, and initiatives that promote understanding across different cultures and religions.

In terms of technical impact, the application demonstrates that:

1. **Traffic is Managed:** The Zone 1 location, nearby public parking, and class marshals eliminate parking accumulation.
2. **Amenity is Protected:** The lack of immediate residential neighbours provides a natural buffer, while strict operational controls ensure the peace of the wider neighbourhood is preserved.

The proposal represents a sustainable, low-impact use that provides significant social value to Newport. As such, it complies with the Newport Local Development Plan, and we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.

Appendix A: Sustainable Travel Awareness Campaign

 **HELP KEEP NEWPORT FRESH!** *A Community Guide to Greener Travel for the Cambrian Community Centre*

 **1. WALK TO US** Most of our visitors live right here in Newport. Walking to the centre is a great way to:

-  **Connect:** Meet your neighbours along the way.
-  **Unwind:** Clear your mind before or after a session.
-  **Stay Active:** Keep your heart healthy with a daily stroll.

 **2. HOP ON THE BUS** We are perfectly located near major city centre bus routes.

-  **The Benefit:** Zero parking stress and absolutely no fuel costs!

 **3. CYCLE TO THE CENTRE** We have dedicated, secure cycle storage available on-site for your convenience.

-  **The Benefit:** Bypass the traffic jams completely and enjoy the fresh air.

 **4. IF YOU MUST DRIVE...** We understand that some journeys require a car. If you do need to drive, please be a **Community Champion**:

-  **Car Share:** Offer a lift to a neighbour or friend to help reduce the number of cars on our local roads.
-  **Park Smart:** Please utilise the public car park behind the property or the adjacent superstore. *Crucially, please ensure you do not block access to our neighbouring businesses or restrict the highway.*
-  **Engine Off:** Please turn off your engine while waiting (no idling) to keep the air clean and safe for our children.

 *"Every step, pedal, and bus ticket helps us be a better neighbour."*