

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND SOUTH OF ST MARY'S STREET

WHITLAND

NOVEMBER 2022

amity
planning consultants



PROPOSAL

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

This document has been prepared by Amity Planning Ltd on the behalf of Obsidian Homes Ltd & Whitland Green Park Ltd. This statement supports the submission of full planning application “Proposed residential development and public car park together with associated roads, drainage, landscaping and other infrastructure works”.

The objective of this Design and Access Statement (DAS) is to clearly show how the principles of good design and placemaking have been applied, as well as how the proposed planning submission has been developed in a thoughtful, logical, and innovative manner, that considers the site and its surroundings.

The statement identifies how the scheme responds to the relevant policy and guidance on design and placemaking. The statement also explains how the design evolution has responded positively to the comments and input from a wide range of local authority departments and demonstrates how we have collaborated with



FIGURE 1

1.0 SITE LOCATION PLAN

SITE CONTEXT

The application Site is located at the south of St Mary's Street, and north of the Afon Gronw River. The Site is a predominantly derelict brownfield site leftover from the demolition of the former Whitland Creamery. There are two main points of vehicle access to the site by way of St Mary's Street. This street can be joined from the north via the short B-road, which runs through western Carmarthenshire, or from the west via Station Road. Motorway access is available 29.6 miles north towards the M4 from this road and Whitland Railway Station lies directly adjacent to the site on the south-west boundary.

The application Site is an unallocated parcel of land located just outside of the settlement boundary. The Site is however directly adjacent to the allocated site T2/6/E3 - Whitland Creamery, as set out in the Carmarthenshire County Council Local Development Plan. This adjacent site to the east is allocated for residential, storage and distribution uses.

VISION STATEMENT

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

This application seeks full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site for residential purpose comprising of 43 units, with a mix of 2,3 and 4-bedroom houses and 4 affordable apartments, along with associated strategic landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. The proposals will provide 42 spaces of private parking as well as a replacement public car park of 40 spaces, in accordance with CSS Wales Parking Standards. The parking court will be managed by the developer / town council through a voucher system with bays marked accordingly.

The site forms part of a mosaic of brownfield sites previously occupied by the Whitland Creamery, once the largest creamery in Western Europe. The Creamery was demolished in 2003 following a decade of closure with the hopes to reutilise the derelict sites for housing, community or recreational space. An adjacent part of this site which was also part of the Creamery is already allocated for development in the LDP at present, therefore it is inferred that developments on these premises will also be considered equally beneficial to the community.

The proposed materials palette will be appropriate in-keeping with local character. Full details of a materials palette are provided within an appended House Finishes Materials Layout, which is also depicted within Fig.5 on Page 8. The scheme has been thoughtfully designed in order to create strong frontages and prominent street scenes, inclusive of shared amenity space between plots.

Vehicular access would be obtained from two locations along the St Mary's Street boundary via priority junctions. The southern access junction is located within the vicinity of the site's existing access which currently serves a public car park. It is possible for a vehicle to manoeuvre safely between the two access points with suitable visibility in all directions, including for forward visibility along St Mary's Street.

OBJECTIVES



MEETING HOUSING DEMAND

The scheme proposes an entirely residential development of with the delivery of a mix of dwellings comprising of 2, 3 and 4 bed houses as well as 4 units of affordable housing in the form of apartments, and therefore provides a range of accommodation in response to local demand for both market and affordable housing.



SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

The delivery of a residential scheme within a well-linked and easily accessible area, promoting active travel and well-being.

Delivering appropriate layout and density of housing units informed by site context assessment and Planning Policy Wales overarching objectives.



IMPROVING QUALITY OF LAND

Upgrading a previous parcel of derelict Brownfield land into an area of high-quality housing and infrastructure, drastically improving visual amenity of the Site.

Use of thoughtful and strategic biodiversity measures to raise ecological value of the Site and allow for biodiversity net gain.

PLANNING POLICY

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The planning policies and guidance which are relevant and influential to the design of the proposed development have been identified as follows.

CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006-2021

The site comprises of a parcel of Brownfield Land, which is unallocated under the currently adopted Local Development Plan.

The current Carmarthenshire County Borough Local Development Plan was adopted on the 10th December 2014 and identifies where new developments such as housing, employment, community facilities, and roads, will go. It provides a framework for local decision-making and brings together both development and conservation interests to ensure that any changes in the use of land are coherent and provides maximum benefits to the community. As highlighted within Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, development must be carried out in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless mitigating circumstances warrant consideration.

MOST RELEVANT LDP POLICIES

GP1 - Sustainability & High Quality Design	TR1 - Primary Road Network
GP2 - Development Limits	TR2 - Transport Considerations
GP3 - Planning Obligations	TR4 - Cycling & Walking
GP4 - Infrastructure & New Development	EQ5 - Corridors, Networks & Features of Distinctiveness
H1 - Housing	EP2 - Pollution
SC1 - Sustainable Communities	EP3 - Sustainable Drainage
H2 - Housing within Development Limits	REC2 - Open Space Provision
AH1 - Affordable Housing	REC3 - Proposed new Open Space
EMP5 - Mixed Use Sites	

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) exists to provide further detail on policies and proposals contained within the Carmarthenshire Development Plan. They help ensure policies and proposals are better understood and applied effectively. Supplementary Planning Guidance does not hold the same weight as the adopted Development Plan policies. However, may be related to as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

MOST RELEVANT SPG DOCUMENTS

Affordable Housing - June 2018
Planning & Development Brief - September 2010
Planning Obligations - December 2014
Welsh Language - December 2014
Leisure & Open Space Requirements - September 2016
Nature Conservation & Biodiversity - December 2014
Placemaking and Design - September 2016

PLANNING HISTORY

There is one Planning Application of relevance to the Site under reference W/33572 – Proposed construction of 28 dwellings with new site access road. This application sought to erect 28 dwellings on land adjacent to this Site, however at the time the applicant was also in control of the land being promoted for development within this scheme.

The planning application was approved 17/07/2017 subject to conditions.

PLANNING POLICY WALES

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) forms the overarching national planning policy document within Wales, providing guidance to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) for the preparation of development plans and the determination of planning applications through their development management functions.

Paragraph 2.8 acknowledges that “planning policies, proposals and decisions must seek to promote sustainable development and support the well-being of people and communities across Wales”.

2.0 NATIONAL PLACEMAKING OUTCOMES

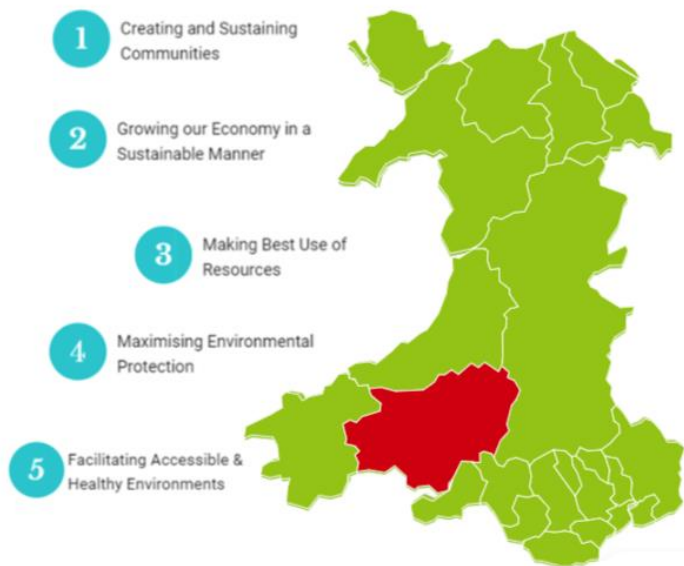


FIGURE 2

FUTURE WALES NATIONAL PLAN 2040

Future Wales is the national development framework and sets out the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system. Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

1. Creating a rich mix of uses.
2. Providing a variety of housing types and tenures.
3. Building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities, and public transport within walking distance of each other.
4. Increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities.
5. Establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development.
6. Promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and
7. Integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority's Green Infrastructure Assessment.

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTES

Planning Policy Wales is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) which provide further national advice and guidance on specific areas of the planning system. The following TANs are relevant to this scheme:

- TAN 2: PLANNING & AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- TAN 5: NATURE CONSERVATION & PLANNING
- TAN 10: TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS
- TAN 12: DESIGN
- TAN 15: DEVELOPMENT & FLOOD RISK
- TAN 16: SPORT, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE
- TAN 18: TRANSPORT

INTERPRETATION

CONCEPT DESIGN

The findings of the site and context analysis, in combination with the content of the relevant policies and guidance provide the framework to deliver the design of the development in line with the vision objectives of the scheme.

1. Residential development with a mix of tenure to cater to the critical demand of housing within the area.
2. Seamless connection to the existing highway infrastructure through highway links that will be adapted to the site constraints, inclusive of two safe points of vehicular access.
3. Provision of a larger replacement public parking court to the south of the Site for use by the local community.
4. Biodiversity/ecology measures to enhance the ecological value of the former Brownfield Site.



FIGURE 4

4.0 STREET SCENE 1 OF 2

FIGURE 3



5.0 STREET SCENE 2 OF 2

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGN

The design of this scheme has undergone an evolution taking on board valuable consultation advice from a pre-application enquiry, subsequent meeting and ongoing officer engagement.

The built form of the site has been adjusted in accordance with consultation advice and there has subsequently been a design iteration of the residential scheme to address the issues highlighted by the Council's internal consultees, to deliver a generous range of housing units whilst integrating the scheme sympathetically into the wider landscape.

The amended scheme is designed in a bespoke way to better respond to the site constraints, whilst maintaining strong streetscapes, with notable elements of place making. The revised scheme also seeks to deliver a smaller number of plots to integrate more sympathetically to the site constraints in response to consultation. The core changes to the scheme are as follows;

- Key biodiversity features incorporated within the scheme such as an "Eco Park" Landscape area to the southeast.
- Reduction in the number of housing units in response to ongoing consultation and site-specific constraints.
- Production of a new Boundaries Plan outlining amended areas of boundary treatment throughout Site.
- Reduction in anticipated density in response to site-specific constraints.
- Production of Transport Proposals in response to pre-application advice to provide opportunity for safe access & vehicular circulation for the Site.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

CHARACTER

The proposed scheme has been designed to provide a diverse mix of residential units to meet local need. A full analysis of the site and its context has been undertaken and it has been thoughtfully concluded that there is sufficient capacity to comfortably incorporate 43 residential units with no compromise to high quality design standards.

Place Making

The scheme is in an ideal location to mesh into the existing settlement and provides a high-quality development which incorporates thoughtful biodiversity enhancements and place making, inclusive of an on-site eco park/landscape area and provision of informal green spaces between, and around plots, to serve as meeting places and areas of visual interest.

The Site itself consists of Brownfield land, and is therefore a sustainable and suitable option for development and in accordance to objectives set out within Planning Policy Wales Place Making guidance. The scheme would result in significant upgrade of this land both visually and through ecological enhancements. Furthermore, careful consideration has been giving to the landscaping of the site, which strikes a good balance between providing sufficient plots and remaining sympathetic to the site's wider constraints.

The site is located within a highly sustainable area, allowing for future occupiers to meet their need through walking, cycling and public transport. Due to this, the scheme notably further encourages active travel and provides the ability for communities to easily interact with their local services and the local community.

Amount & Density

This full application seeks to develop a wide range of housing units on the site, which have been informed by the site's constraints, landscape and ecological value. Amount and density will be sympathetic to these constraints.

The proposed dwellinghouses do not differ greatly in architectural terms from that of the housing units within the adjacent residential settlements, and the external street scenes are in-keeping with the local area with notable green buffer zones.

Streets

The Site is extremely well connected and slots into a clear hierarchy of settlements, which are arranged around the town centre. The attached masterplan proposes a legible hierarchy of streets each with their own strong streetscape, reflecting Manual for Streets Guidance.

Plots are oriented to provide for strong frontages and the finishing materials of the apartment block will also mirror that of the dwellinghouses for seamless integration into the street scene. Street scene details can be seen within Fig.3 and Fig.4 Street Scene Plans.

Spaces & Public Realm

The scheme proposes to replace the existing public car park with a larger upgraded public car park. There will be clear boundary distinctions between public/private parking provision, including parking courts on site to accommodate new residents as indicated within the masterplan, allowing for a good balance of private and shared space within the development.

THE PROPOSAL

Scale & Massing

The scale and massing of the proposed development would be consistent with the scale of development in the area.

The proposed 39 dwellinghouses would be two storeys in height and of typical dimensions for detached & semi-detached dwellinghouse. The scheme also involves the introduction of an apartment block for the purpose of social rented housing provision. This apartment block will however remain only two storeys in height and comprise of 4 flats, remaining sympathetic to the character of the area and not of an imposing size. A full schedule of accommodation can be seen depicted within Fig.5 – Site Masterplan.

Layout

Careful consideration has been given in the development of the layout to ensure that both the internal relationship between proposed dwellings and the external relationship with existing neighbouring residential properties provides a satisfactory level of amenity. The proposal would not equate any overbearing quality or result in loss of light. The scheme is also of a suitable density compared to surrounding developments as to not generate any problematic increase to noise pollution.

Heritage

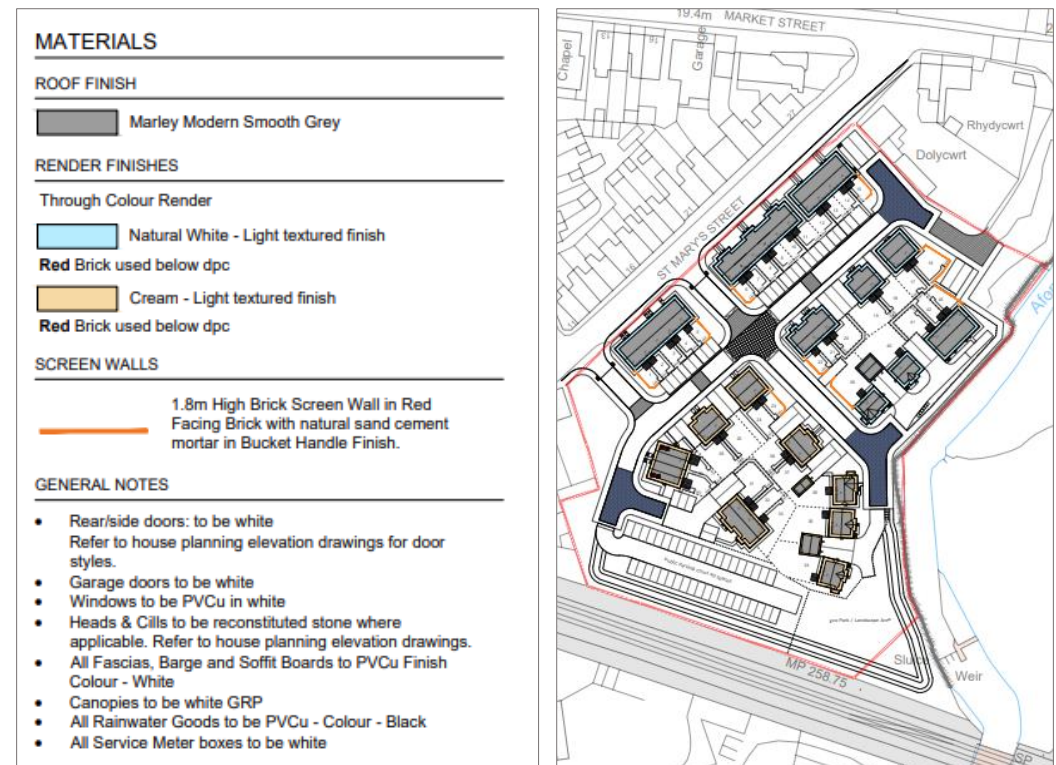
The site has no value in terms of heritage and in its vacant dilapidated state detracts from the character and appearance of the area, as such the proposal would serve to significantly improve the site's appearance.

The Creamery of which this parcel of land once formed a part of was demolished in 2003 following a decade of closure with the hopes to reutilise the derelict sites for housing, community or recreational space

Detailed Design

The proposed materials palette will be appropriate as well as in-keeping with local character. A list of proposed materials is depicted within Fig.6 House Finishes Materials of which will also be attached as part of the full suite of documents for this application.

FIGURE 6



6.0 HOUSE FINISHES MATERIALS

THE PROPOSAL

ACCESS & MOVEMENT

Saint Mary's Street is located along the Site's western boundary. It connects to the B4328 via a priority junction to the north and Park Street via a priority junction to the south. It continues as a one-way route to the south of Park Street.

Vehicular access would be obtained from two locations along the St Mary's Street boundary via priority junctions and both accesses comprise a 5.5m access road which tie into St Mary's Street. Both junctions are provided with 2m footways on both sides and dropped kerb crossing facilities on either side to enable pedestrians to cross safely. Visibility can be provided at 2.4m x 43m in each direction from each junction, which is in accordance with the recommended visibility splays for 30mph streets as set out in TAN18. A refuse vehicle strategy layout has also been provided with this application.

It has been acknowledged by Carmarthenshire County Council in the Pre-Application response that the site is situated in a sustainable location within proximity to the local centre and railway station. The site location is demonstrated to be consistent with the aims of TAN18 and in accordance with sustainable transport policies in Future Wales, PPW11 and the LDP. The site is well situated to benefit from existing walking routes. Suitable footways are provided within the immediate vicinity. Crossing facilities are provided along the local routes to and from the site within Whitland, including dropped kerb crossings at key junctions and raised table and zebra crossings along Market Street and St John Street.

The site is furthermore accessible to the public right of way network via existing footways. Although there are no dedicated cycling facilities within Whitland and the surrounding areas, the roads surrounding the site provide a relatively flat gradient and are considered safe for cycling. The closest bus stops to the site are located on St John Street and Market Street, within a 200 metre walk from the site. Full details of transport proposals can be found within the attached Transport Statement provided for this scheme.

7.0 PROXIMITY TO KEY SERVICES

Facility / Amenity	Distance from site access (metres)	Walking Travel Time (minutes) *	Cycling Travel Time (minutes) *
Community Facilities			
1 Hywel Dda Gardens	100	1	0
2 Pengwinau Back - Little Penguins	190	2	1
3 Boots Pharmacy	230	3	1
4 Whitland post office	240	3	1
5 Whitland Sports and Social Club	260	3	1
6 Cash Machine	280	4	1
7 Whitland Town Hall	300	4	1
8 Whitland Library	300	4	1
9 Whitland Dental Surgery	300	4	1
10 Capel Calfaria	350	4	1
11 Whitland GP Surgery	450	6	1
12 St Mary's Church	500	6	2
13 Whitland Abbey	2900	36	9
Public Transport			
St John Street/Whitland Rail Station Bus stops	170	2	1
Whitland Rail Station	190	2	1
Market Street Bus Stops	200	3	1
Retail			
1 Mark John Butchers	190	2	1
2 Whitland Wholefoods	200	3	1
3 Whitland Local Centre- St John Street	230	3	1
4 Whitland Premier Stores	240	3	1
5 The Cake and Baguette Shop / Bakery	250	3	1
6 Farm Shop	270	3	1
7 Barbershop	270	3	1
8 Co-op food store	400	5	1
Education			
1 Ysgol Llys Hywel (Welsh medium school)	110	1	0
2 Dyffryn Taf Comprehensive School and College	650	8	2
Leisure			
1 Whitland Café	170	2	1
2 station house pub	180	2	1
3 Fish and chip shop	190	2	1
4 Whitland Chinese Restaurant Takeaway	300	4	1
5 Whitland Bowling Club	400	5	1
6 Whitland Rugby Football Club	400	5	1
7 Parc Llwyn Ty Gwyn	1200	15	4
8 Whitland Cricket Club	1300	16	4
Employment			
1 Former Creamery Site	200	3	1
2 Station Road Industrial Estates (south of railway line)	270	3	1
3 Riverlea Tractors Ltd	900	11	3
4 West Street Industrial units - Whitland Engineering	900	11	3
5 Whitland Industrial Estate	1000	13	3

FIGURE 7

THE PROPOSAL

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The design of the scheme has been carefully considered to help design out crime, in accordance with Secured by Design principles. All access into the development would be via the adopted road, which benefits from high levels of natural surveillance. The layout ensures that all streets within the development are afforded a strong active frontage and high levels of natural surveillance.

The on-site green spaces have been located and designed so that they are safely accessible, usable, and desirable, with high levels of natural surveillance from adjacent properties and public areas. Car parking areas are also well overlooked.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & LANDSCAPE

The layout and architecture of the scheme incorporates significant biodiversity and ecological enhancements to protect against the effects of development and improve the overall ecological value of the Site. The scheme also makes every effort to provide sufficient mitigation measures in order to ensure that no detrimental light spill occurs along the river corridor.

Several mature trees are located along the eastern boundary and near to the entrance off the B4328. There is also a line of small trees on railway land to the south. The attached Arbocultural Impact Assessment details a number of category U trees to be removed which have been deemed to have no impact on visual amenity, as they are insignificant landscape features, mostly viewed from within the site.

Landscape planting will provide an overall positive impact on the biodiversity value of the Site and the local area. New habitats will be created through planting small areas of native tree and shrub species within the Site and, over time, gardens will develop.



ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

As the site is an area of concrete and footings, part of the original buildings which have been cleared since Whitland Creamery ceased trading, it is considered that overall, there will be no negative impact on the local or regional ecology through the development of the Site. Mitigation measures will be included to protect the dark river corridor from light spill. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been produced by Habitat Matters Limited to identify any potential biodiversity enhancement opportunities for the Site.

There are no protected sites with a statutory designation close to the site. The Afon Gronw, a tributary of the Afon Taf flows along the eastern boundary; the Taf is designated as the Taf Estuary SSSI approximately 6km downstream.

The site lies within a B-Lines designated area. This is a voluntary UK-wide initiative to create “insect pathways” through the landscape by creating or restoring pollinator habitats to link existing wildlife areas. There are however no trees or buildings within the site that have been assessed to be able to provide a suitable bat roost, or areas of significant ecological or habitat value.

Enhancement measures to be included will have a positive impact on the biodiversity interest of the Site and local area. These will include bird and bat boxes, as well as bee bricks within the new houses, hedgehog gateways, use of pollinator seed mixes in the SUDS area and tree planting along the southern boundary of the site. Light pollution will be effectively managed through a dark corridor controlling any necessary outdoor lighting on the nearest properties with a time / motion sensor to avoid overnight lighting. Lighting along the access road next to the river will also be controlled with a time sensor, directed into the Site and will not remain on overnight.