

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Former Gowerton Primary School,
Gowerton,
Swansea

February 2026

amity
planning consultants



PROPOSAL

SUMMARY

Applicant Squirrel Wood Properties

Location: Former Gowerton Primary School, Mount Street, Gowerton, Swansea, SA4 3EL

Proposal Proposal for the conversion, refurbishment and extension of a former school site to a residential care facility for supported living accommodation for adults with learning difficulties.

Disclaimer This report has been prepared for the use of Squirrel Wood Properties and may not be relied upon by any other party.

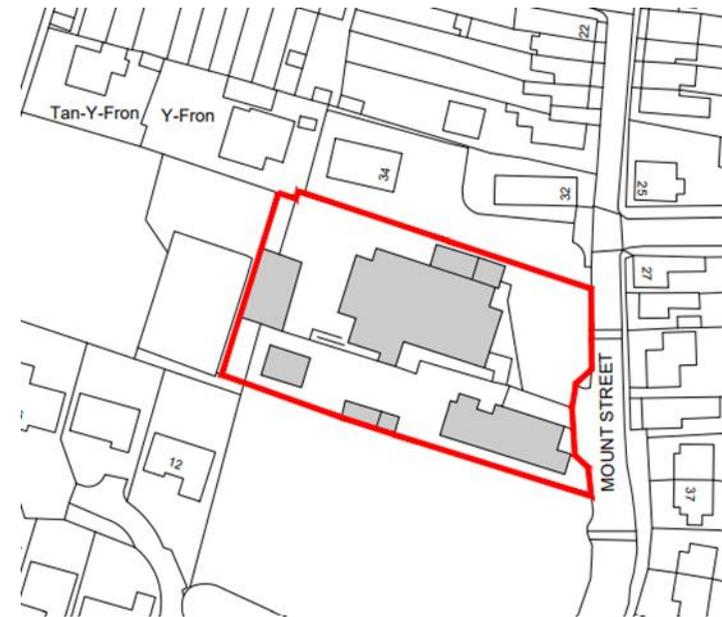
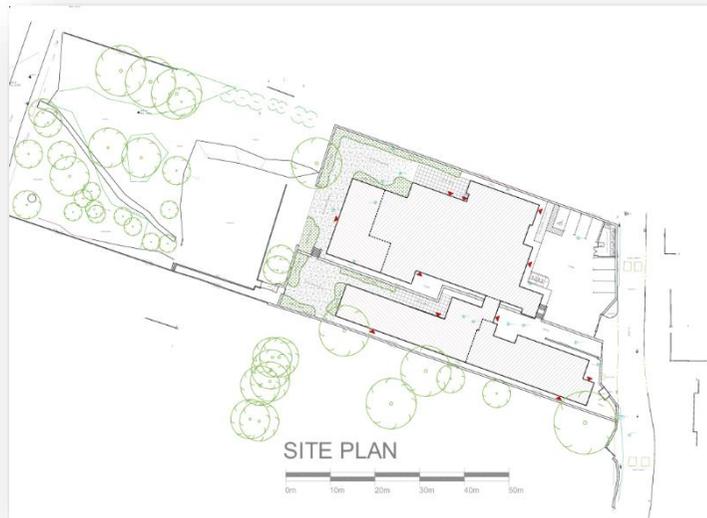
PROPOSAL

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSAL

This document has been prepared by Amity Planning Ltd on behalf of Squirrel Wood Properties. This statement supports the submission of a full planning application for the conversion, refurbishment and extension of the former Gowerton primary school to a care home.

Following the legislative requirements under the Planning Wales Act 2015, the aim of this Design and Access Statement (DAS) is to demonstrate how the principles of good design and placemaking have been applied, as well as how the development proposals have been developed in a thoughtful, logical, and innovative manner, that considers the site, its context, and the character of the wider area.

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 range of stakeholders and demonstrates how we have collaborated with the Local Planning Authority to produce this scheme.



SITE CONTEXT

The proposed site comprises the vacant Tre-gwyr Junior School and is previously developed land. The wider former school site is in three parts. To the south lies a densely wooded area, to the north-west is the former school playground and wooded area, and to the north-east side are the former school buildings.

The general vicinity of the area is surrounded by existing residential properties. The site fronts onto Mount Street, a residential street consisting of mainly two-storey properties. The proposed development site is in an elevated position relative to some dwellings and gardens positioned to the north on Mount Street.

The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of the Swansea suburb of Gowerton and is well located for public services and transport links.

VISION STATEMENT

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

This application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the former Gowerton Primary School into supported living accommodation for adults with learning difficulties. It is proposed to pursue an application for the conversion of the buildings and change of use to a residential care facility, along with external works. It is proposed that fourteen adults will be housed in individual units.

The vision for the development is to provide:

- Conversion of the property into separate units for supported living accommodation;
- Extension to the main school building;
- Demolition of existing dilapidated 1960s block and new build accommodation in grounds;
- Highway works;
- Landscaping.



OBJECTIVES

1. Provide high quality specialist accommodation that delivers a safe and supportive environment for adults with learning difficulties.
2. Integrate the proposal sensitively with the surrounding area by respecting existing scale, character and residential rhythm in order to not create any undue impact on visual amenity.
3. Ensure the site is served by suitable facilities for future occupants.
4. Provide a high-quality landscape setting that enhances the well-being of both existing and new occupiers.



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.

Swansea Local Development Plan 2010 -2025

The site comprises of the former Primary School, which lies within the defined settlement boundary of Gowerton but is unallocated land within the Swansea LDP. The site lies within the Welsh Language Sensitive Area.

The current Swansea County Council Local Development Plan was adopted on the 28th February 2019, an innovative plan that promotes strong placemaking agendas consistent with the Welsh Governments well-being objectives. 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(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, development must be carried out in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

MOST RELEVANT LDP POLICIES

PS1 Sustainable Places	T6 Parking
PS2 Place Making and Place Management	ER2 Strategic Green Infrastructure Network
S16 Provision of New Open Space	ER9 Ecological Networks and Features of Importance for Biodiversity
S18 Community Safety	ER11 Trees and Development
T1 Transport Measures and Infrastructure	EU2 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Technology in New Development
T2 Active Travel	H10 Specialist Housing
T5 Design Principles for Transport	HC3 Development in the Welsh Language Sensitive Area

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) exists to provide further detail on policies and proposals contained within Swansea's 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, is a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Most relevant SPG documents

- Planning Obligation (March 2010)
- Planning for Community Safety (December 2012)
- Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands (October 2021)
- Biodiversity and Development (2011)
- Parking Standards (March 2012)
- Placemaking Guidance for Residential Development (2021)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Planning application, reference 2020/2381/ FUL, for the demolition of existing school and outbuildings and construction of 7no detached dwellings with associated access works was refused with an appeal dismissal on the 11th January 2023. A further amended application, reference 2022/2381/FUL, for demolition of existing school and outbuildings and the construction of 7 no. detached dwellings with associated access works was also refused on 1st December 2023.

The current proposals aim to repurpose and extend the existing buildings and bring this disused building back into active use. This revised approach reflects key placemaking objectives, responds sensitively to the site context and delivers a scheme that meets local needs.

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”.

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 and Affordable Housing (June 2006)

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable and Rural Communities (July 2010)

TAN 12: Design (March 2016)

TAN 18: Transport (March 2007)

TAN 24: Planning and the Historic Environment (May 2017)

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, and;
7. Integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority’s Green Infrastructure Assessment.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The proposals have been designed in response to the pre-application discussions with Swansea City Council. A written pre-application response was received on the 19th June 2025. Details of the pre-application dialogue are provided below:

- The site lies in a sustainable location, and the proposed land use is considered acceptable in principle.
- In terms of design, the proposed increase in footprint, scale and massing is considered acceptable in principle, subject to further details of architectural treatment and materials.
- Consideration should be given for a programme-brief or space-schedule given requirements for particular residents and staff regarding safety and amenity.
- Consideration should be given to include existing built fabric into the redevelopment design.
- Consideration should be taken into reviewing the strategy for private and shared external amenity areas due to the potential shading effect of the higher wooded area directly south.
- Consideration should be given to provide a more direct through connection from the east entrance to the western garden.
- Consideration should be given for enhancing the spatial distribution through more partial demolition and/ or new builds/ extensions.
- Consideration should be given to promoting internal and external landscape views to the North (afforded by the topography).

- Consideration should be given for communal spaces to have generous double height.
- Consideration should be given for the strategy for the green and blue infrastructure for the development.
- Consideration should be given for active travel for visitors and staff to be encouraged through the eastern entrance.
- The contemporary concept approach has the basis to be acceptable and considered a greater potential in terms of functionality and overall visual appearance than the traditional concept.
- Consideration should be given to positioning of habitable windows on the east or west elevations of the proposed extension to prevent overlooking impact upon No 34.
- Consideration should be given to the positioning of any new boundary treatments and ensure they prevent any overlooking impacts to the gardens and habitable rooms of the dwellings to the south.
- Consideration should be to the potential impact upon root systems to the trees on the southern boundary

The matters outlined above are addressed throughout this Design and Access Statement, which demonstrates how the design proposals have evolved in response. The accompanying Planning Statement provides further detailed assessment of policy compliance and other material considerations.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

DESIGN EVOLUTION

The design of this scheme has undergone a full evolution taking on board consultation advice at the pre-application stage.

The initial designs were based on retaining and refurbishing the dilapidated 1960s block. A modern refurbishment was considered, and supported in principle by Placemaking Officers, to contrast with the existing Victorian former school building.

Dialogue with the end users identified a need for a larger block of segregated and purpose built accommodation. A linear single storey layout was designed to accommodate the requirements of the end user, and to suit the constraints of the site. The new building has been designed to complement and align in form with the existing buildings. The outside space has been further improved to provide quality amenity space for residents, along with biodiversity enhancements.



**EARLY SKETCH PLAN OF
MODERN REFURBISHMENT OF
1960S BLOCK**

PROPOSED ELEVATIONS – VIEW FROM MOUNT STREET



THE PROPOSAL

CHARACTER

The proposed scheme has been designed to provide a high quality care facility which meets the needs of its intended occupiers. A full comprehensive analysis of the site and its context have been undertaken, which concludes that there is sufficient capacity to comfortably incorporate the residential facility with no compromise to high quality design standards.

LAYOUT

The site layout has been designed to delineate separation between private residential accommodation, staff operational zones and communal shared spaces, supporting functionality and safeguarding principles.

- The facility is divided into two distinct wings: Korsakoff (upper level) and Mental Health (ground floor). Each wing comprises self-contained units (40-52m²) arranged along circulation corridors providing efficient spatial arrangement whilst responding to the retained historical fabric;
- Dedicated staff spaces will be zoned away from resident units to ensure operational privacy;
- Each wing includes a communal lounge, centrally located to encourage activity and interaction;
- The scheme provides a clear and legible circulation structure, with a continuous route linking the Mount Street entrance and western garden areas. The corridor aligns with the existing building's layout;
- The proposed layout has sought to incorporate areas of usable and communal open space where possible;
- A shared parking court will be provided in the front, with seven parking spaces, eight secure cycle spaces, and a dedicated enclosed bin store.

DENSITY

The application site accommodates fourteen units in total, comprising individual units and ancillary spaces, as well as operational areas.

APPEARANCE AND PLACEMAKING

The proposed development has been shaped by the placemaking principles set out within Swansea Council Local Development Plan, ensuring that the scheme responds positively to its physical, social and environmental context. The design aims to create a coherent, welcoming and sustainable setting that supports resident wellbeing while integrating sensitively with the surrounding neighbourhood.

The architectural approach prioritises continuity with the existing building fabric. The overlay of existing and proposed elevations confirms that the overall massing is broadly comparable to the existing built footprint, with extensions reading as subservient additions. By closely replicating the established scale, massing and roofline, the development maintains visual harmony and avoids introducing structures that would appear dominant or incongruous.

The scheme also responds carefully to the site's topography, to ensure the development sits comfortably within the landscape. Amenity considerations have been central to the design. No development is proposed within the northern portion of the site – an area in previous refused proposals associated with overlooking – thereby safeguarding the privacy of neighbouring properties and enhancing living conditions of future occupiers. The arrangement of the windows, outdoor spaces and circulation routes will align with the retained historic fabric and the existing buildings' layout.

The scheme has been shaped to address specific issues that led to previous planning refusals, ensuring that the new residential facility proposal now represents a well-considered and policy compliant development.

THE PROPOSAL

SCALE AND MASSING

The scheme has been designed to suit the existing character of the surrounding area. The development has been arranged as two clearly defined wings. This approach allows the new built form to sit comfortably within the existing context while maintaining an appropriate sense of scale across the site.

The surrounding context comprises traditional two-storey terraced dwellings with pitched roofs, bay windows and landscaped front gardens. The proposed development responds sensitively to this context by maintaining comparable ridge height and steeping the massing to reflect the gradient of the street. The use of the articulated facades and material choices has been informed by the visual language of the surrounding dwellings and existing built fabric, ensuring that the new built form does not appear overbearing or incongruous when viewed from the public realm. This promotes continuity and avoids abrupt transitions in height and form.

The scale and configuration of the external amenity space have been carefully developed to align with Swansea Council's placemaking priorities, particularly those outlined in Policy PS2 of the Local Development Plan and Residential Development (2021) SPG. The provision provides sufficient spatial expectations for this type of specialist residential scheme, offering a landscape-led environment that supports privacy, therapeutic engagement and ecological enhancements. Its layered planting, with defined zones for passive and active use respond directly to the Council's emphasis on context-sensitive, inclusive design. By integrating accessible pathways, sensory planting and tranquil seating areas, the scheme fosters wellbeing and social interaction, while maintaining a coherent relationship with the built form and surrounding character. This approach not only meets functional requirements but also contributes to a distinctive sense of place.

Overall, it is considered that the scale and massing of the proposed development reinforce the placemaking strategies, ensuring that the development contributes positively to the street scene and respects the visual amenity of neighbouring properties. The development seeks to preserve the character and appearance of the area and will not result in any undue harm to visual amenity.

SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

The site is not within or close to a conservation area, listed building or other historic asset and as such there are no historic assets that will be impacted by the proposed development. However, weight has been given to the character of the building and existing built fabric so that the proposal responds positively to the local context. The proposed layout, design and orientation of the proposed buildings will also provide for an attractive frontage onto Mount Street and the surrounding street scene. The scheme's layout and landscaping have still been designed to respect the area's character, maintaining existing green space and reinforcing boundaries with green corridors.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The development has been designed and orientated to allow for natural surveillance across the site. The positioning of windows, entrances and staff areas ensure clear visibility over communal indoor and external amenity spaces for residents, staff and visitors. This passive surveillance is particularly important in a setting for adults with learning difficulties, helping to create a calm, reassuring and well-overlooked environment.

The site layout is simple and intuitive to navigate, with a singular vehicular access point taken from Mount Street leading directly to the shared parking court and lower-level amenity space. These arrangements provide predictable movement patterns that support resident safety.

THE PROPOSAL

ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

The site is sustainably located in the centre of Gowerton, designated as a district centre (Policy RC5) on the outskirts of Swansea. Its position provides excellent access to a wide range of local services and facilities, most of which are within easy walking distance. This high level of connectivity is particularly beneficial for adults who require supported independence, supervised mobility and ease of access to everyday amenities. The site also benefits from direct links to Swansea, surrounding neighbourhoods and wider destinations across South Wales.

The proposed development fronts Mount Street, a quiet residential street that provides vehicular access into the site. Mount Street connects directly to the local footway network offering short walking routes to public transport. A bus stop is located approximately two minutes from the site, providing regular services to Swansea and neighbouring communities. Gowerton Railway Station lies around a ten minute walk away, offering direct rail connections along the West Wales Line. A new link to the Gowerton Railway Station further enhances the sites sustainable travel credentials.

Gowerton is also located on the National Cycle Network, with NCN Route 4 running through the town. This provides well-established cycling corridors for staff, visitors and more independent residents. Gowerton is well positioned for access to the M4 motorway, enabling efficient regional travel for staff and visitors. Local shops, take-away outlets and everyday services are located approximately five minutes from the site, ensuring that essential facilities are readily accessible.

The provision of a clear and accessible entrance from Mount Street to the eastern entrance area, established with high-quality level access routes and good visibility will encourage the use of access to this entrance.

A transport statement accompanies the planning application which details the sustainability credentials further.

VEHICLE AND CYCLE PARKING

The development provides a total of seven parking spaces, including a disabled parking space, in full accordance with Swansea's County Council's Parking Standards. It is considered that the proposed development is comparable to that of a residential children's home, with parking requirements stated at seven spaces, significantly less than the site's former education use. This will deliver improvements, not only in relation to noise quality, but also reduce the potential for parking obstruction and conflicts with pedestrian movement. A secure and covered cycle unit will be located near the site's entrance, enclosing eight cycle spaces, to encourage the use of active travel from both staff and visitors.

Name of the service or facility	Distance from the site	Length of the journey (by foot)	Length of the journey (by bicycle)
Food stores			
Family Choice	0.3 miles	7 minutes	4 minutes
Co-op Food	0.2 miles	5 minutes	2 minutes
Tesco Express	0.4 miles	8 minutes	3 minutes
Facilities			
Gowerton Library	0.1 miles	3 minutes	1 minute
Mount Street Bus Stop	0.1 miles	2 minutes	1 minute
Gowerton Dental Practice	0.2 miles	6 minutes	3 minutes
Gowerton Medical Centre	0.2 miles	5 minutes	3 minutes
Post office	0.3 miles	6 minutes	3 minutes
Gowerton Park	0.5 miles	11 minutes	4 minutes
Leisure centre	0.5 miles	10 minutes	4 minutes
Gowerton train station	0.4 miles	10 minutes	4 minutes

NEAREST FACILITIES



THE PROPOSAL

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINIBILITY & LANDSCAPING

A landscape strategy has been prepared for the site and supports this planning application.

The landscape concept for the development embraces multi-functionality, combining visual quality, biodiversity enhancement, and sustainable water management. The scheme delivers significant ecological improvements through a nature-focused strategy that is low-maintenance and resource-efficient.

External amenity areas for residents will incorporate planted borders to create a welcoming threshold, introducing structure and colour to provide attractive focal features to the outdoor amenity spaces. The rain garden integrated into the car park layout softens the hardscape and enhances environmental features. Furthermore, it delivers sustainable drainage surfaces, managing surface water naturally and reducing pressure on local drainage systems. Together these elements create a visually appealing and ecologically beneficial setting.

An arboriculture report and method statement have been prepared to support this application. The statement identifies that whilst the site does not fall within a conservation area, a number of trees within W2 are subject to Tree Preservation Order (TPO 655). The assessment identifies several Category A, B, C and U trees. The assessment identifies that no tree removals are required, but that several retained trees, including those within W2, will require minor pruning to prevent potential conflict with the proposed work. Where crowns or RPAs may be exposed to potential disturbance, protective measures have been specified to address these risks. All existing trees and hedgerows have been carefully considered within the layout to retain the site's green framework and ensure continuity of habitats.



ECOLOGICAL IMPACT

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been produced by Just Mammias to identify any potential ecological constraints to development within the site; identify requirements for any additional ecological surveys needed to determine potential ecological impacts; and describe measures to mitigate or compensate for any impacts on the ecological interest of the site. The preliminary ecological appraisal concluded that the building has moderate suitability to be used by roosting bats. Further survey work has been recommended to further investigate the potential presence of bats. The site is considered to be suitable for nesting birds, and as such, any vegetation clearance must be undertaken outside of nesting season. The site is not considered to be suitable for any other protected species. The proposals can be designed to comply with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 by avoiding harm to Priority Habitats and promoting net biodiversity gain through appropriate landscaping and habitat enhancements. With the recommended mitigation and enhancement measures, the development is unlikely to negatively impact local wildlife and offers opportunities to improve biodiversity on site.

CONCLUSION

This document has set out the design and access credentials of the development, demonstrating that the proposal is in accordance with nation and local planning policy.

The scheme proposed in this application aims to deliver a contextually aware building, using natural and sustainable materials, to enable efficient re-purposing of the derelict site. It has also been designed to avoid any negative impacts to neighbouring dwellings.