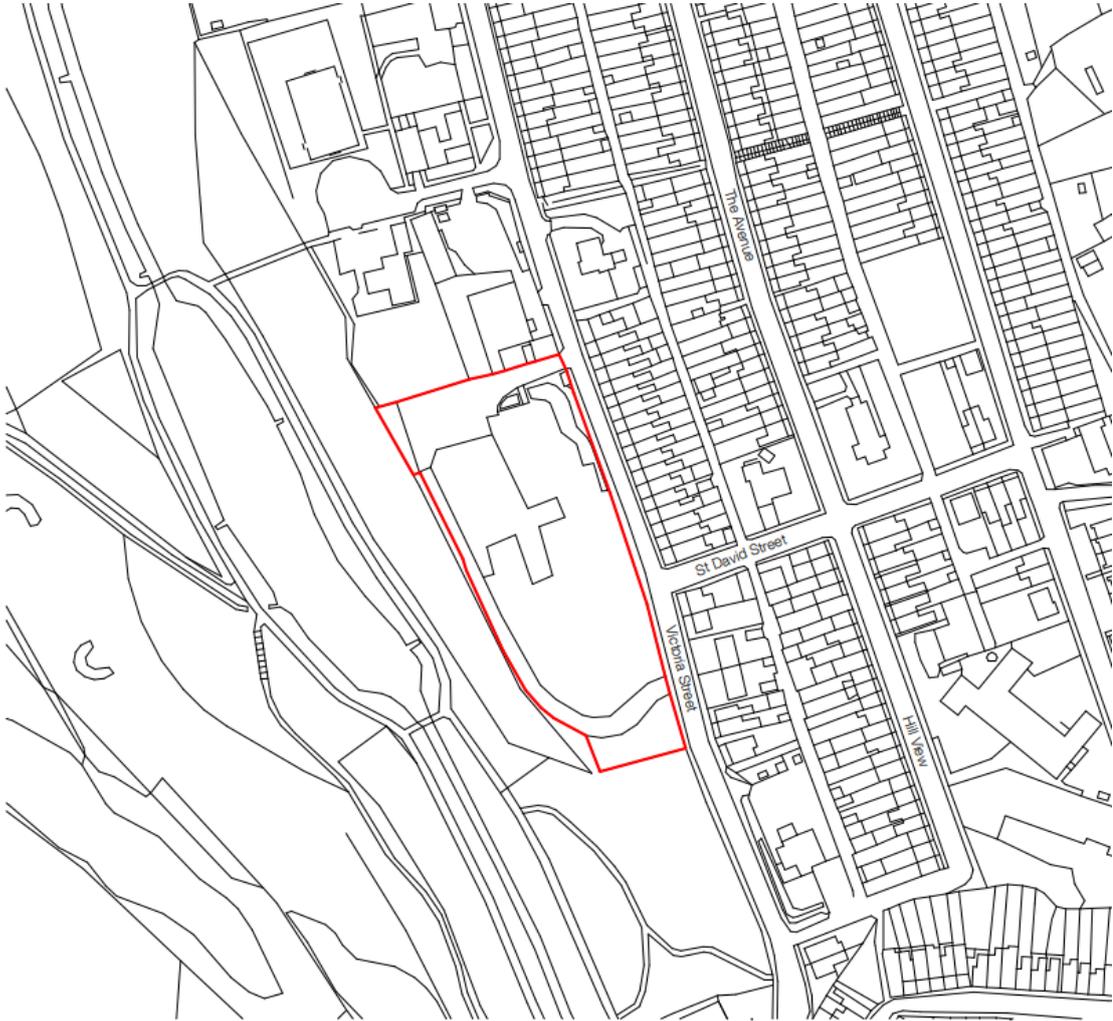


Planning, Design and Access Statement

Land North of the CO-OP Store and West of
Victoria Street, Pontycymer

August 2021



Introduction	
Client	This statement has been prepared on behalf of Kyle Spiller Ltd.
Scope	This statement accompanies the following application: 'Outline Planning Application for the Erection of 21 Dwellings With All Matters Reserved, Other Than Access.'
Site Details	
Site Address	Victoria Street, Pontycymer.
Site Location	<p data-bbox="288 607 507 636"><i>Fig.1 Application Site</i></p>  <p data-bbox="288 1688 512 1713"><i>Site Location Plan Extract</i></p>
Site Description	<p data-bbox="288 1720 1570 1962">The application site comprises an area of land measuring approximately 0.75 Hectares, which is bordered to the east by Victoria Street. The site is within the settlement boundary of Pontycymer. The site is brownfield land and was previously occupied by several buildings which formed part of the Ffaldau Colliery. The site has been vacant for many years and until recently was overgrown with vegetation. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and narrows towards the southern boundaries of the site. The site broadly slopes away from Victoria Street and has steeply sloping embankments to the western and southern boundaries.</p>

Relevant Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales

Planning Policy Wales (11th Edition, February 2021)

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. It is considered that the following PPW chapters are pertinent to the determination of this application:

PPW 11 identifies that planning policies, decisions and proposals should:

- Promote resource-efficient and climate change resilient settlement patterns that minimise land-take through preference for the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings;
- Support the need to tackle the causes of climate change;
- Maximise well-being and create sustainable places through placemaking;
- Minimise the risks posed by, or to, development on or adjacent to unstable or contaminated land and land liable to flooding;
- Play an appropriate role to facilitate sustainable building standards;
- Play an appropriate role in securing the provision of infrastructure to form the physical basis for sustainable communities;
- Contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment;
- Help to ensure the conservation of the historic environment and cultural heritage, acknowledging and fostering local diversity;
- Maximise the use of renewable resources, including sustainable materials;
- Encourage opportunities to reduce waste and all forms of pollution and promote good environmental management and best environmental practice;
- Promote quality, lasting, environmentally-sound and flexible employment opportunities; and
- Support initiative and innovation and avoid placing unnecessary burdens on enterprises so as to enhance the economic success of both urban and rural areas.

Paragraph 3.55 emphasises the preference of previously developed land as opposed to greenfield sites. The paragraph advises that *‘Previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land (see definition overleaf) should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome’*.

Housing

Paragraph 4.2 states that: ‘Planning authorities must understand all aspects of the housing market in their areas, which will include the requirement, supply and delivery of housing. This will allow planning authorities to develop evidence-based market and affordable housing policies in their development plans and make informed development management decisions that focus on the creation and enhancement of Sustainable Places. New housing development in both urban and rural areas should incorporate a mix of market and affordable house types, tenures and sizes to cater for the range of identified housing needs and contribute to the development of sustainable and cohesive communities.’

Transport

Paragraph 4.1.1 aims to reduce the need to travel, especially by private car, by locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling. It also supports the locating of development near related uses to encourage multi-purpose trips and reduce the length of journeys.

Para 4.1.9 states that:

'The Welsh Government is committed to reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. Delivering this objective will make an important contribution to decarbonisation, improving air quality, increasing physical activity, improving the health of the nation and realising the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act'.

Planning Policy Wales and Placemaking

Para 2.17 -2.20 states:

'In responding to the key principles for the planning system, the creation of sustainable places and in recognition of the need to contribute to the well-being of future generations in Wales through placemaking, development plans and development proposals must seek to deliver developments that address the national sustainable placemaking outcomes.

The national sustainable placemaking outcomes for Wales seek to outline what a sustainable place will look like, characterised by the planning principles they relate to.

Every development plan must take forward the national sustainable placemaking outcomes and use them to develop an overarching set of outcomes. Each development plan will consider the scale at which they will contribute, through policies and allocations, to achieving an outcome. Collectively, the focus on achieving these outcomes across all development plans will ensure the planning system plays its role in delivering sustainable places.

Not every development or policy proposal will be able to demonstrate they can meet all of these outcomes, neither can it necessarily be proved at the application or policy stage that an attribute of a proposal will necessarily lead to a specific outcome. However, this does not mean that they should not be considered in the development management process to see if a proposal can be improved or enhanced to promote wider well-being. It is for developers and planning authorities to identify these opportunities and act upon them.'

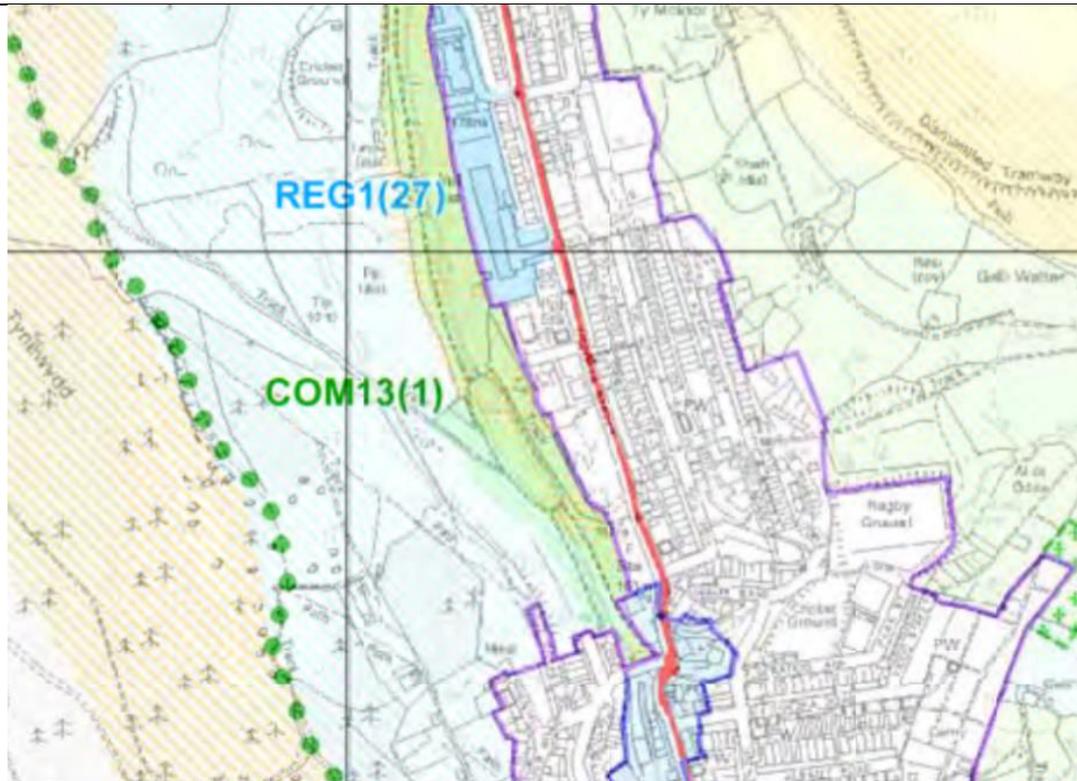
Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

'Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

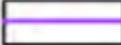
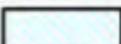
The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure. Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

- creating a rich mix of uses;*
- providing a variety of housing types and tenures;*
- building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;*
- increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities;*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;</i> • <i>promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and</i> • <i>integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority’s Green Infrastructure Assessment.</i> <p><i>Planning authorities should use development plans to establish a vision for each town and city. This should be supported by a spatial framework that guides growth and regeneration, and establishes a structure within which towns and cities can grow, evolve, diversify and flourish over time.’</i></p>
<p>Technical Advice Notes</p>	<p>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. Of particular relevance to this application are the following TANs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAN 2: ‘Planning and Affordable Housing’ (June 2006); • TAN 5: ‘Nature Conservation and Planning’ (September 2009); • TAN 10: ‘Tree Preservation Orders’ (October 1997); • TAN 12: ‘Design’ (March 2016); and • TAN 18: Transport (2007).
<p>Development Plan</p>	<p>In accord with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, development must be carried out in accordance with the development plan (in this case the adopted Cardiff Local Development Plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>The Development Plan for the area comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006 to 2021, which was adopted September 2013. <p>The LDP Proposals Map extract on the following page shows that the site is within the settlement boundary of Pontycymer, adjacent to the Blaengarw and Pontycymer Linear Park (to the west) COM13 (1) ‘<i>Blaengarw and Pontycymer Linear Park</i>’, adjacent to a Strategic Road (to the east) and immediately to the north of the boundary with a Retail & Commercial Hierarchy (Sub Regional, Town & District and Local Service Centres) (SP10).</p>



LDP Proposals Map Extract

-  Settlement Boundary (PLA1)
-  Retail & Commercial Hierarchy (Sub-Regional, Town & District and Local Service Centres), (SP10)
-  Highway Network - Strategic Road
-  Transportation Proposal - Walking and Cycling (PLA7(1-13))
-  Outdoor Recreation Facilities (COM12, 13 and 14)
-  Secondary Coal Resource Safeguarding Area (ENV9)

The following policies are considered to be of direct relevance to the assessment of the proposed development:

- (i) Policy PLA1 'Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management':

The Policy states that *'Development will be permitted within settlement boundaries at a scale commensurate with the role and function of settlements as set out in the hierarchy.'*

The Policy proceeds to categorise Pontycymer as a 'Local Service Settlement'.

(ii) Policy SP2 'Design and Sustainable Place Making'

Strategic Policy SP2

Design and Sustainable Place Making

All development should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places which enhance the community in which they are located, whilst having full regard to the natural, historic and built environment by:

- 1) Complying with all relevant national policy and guidance where appropriate;
- 2) Having a design of the highest quality possible, whilst respecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness and landscape character;
- 3) Being of an appropriate scale, size and prominence;
- 4) Using land efficiently by:
 - (i) being of a density which maximises the development potential of the land whilst respecting that of the surrounding development; and
 - (ii) having a preference for development on previously developed land over greenfield land;
- 5) Providing for an appropriate mix of land uses;
- 6) Having good walking, cycling, public transport and road connections within and outside the site to ensure efficient access;
- 7) Minimising opportunities for crime to be generated or increased;
- 8) Avoiding or minimising noise, air, soil and water pollution;
- 9) Incorporating methods to ensure the site is free from contamination (including invasive species);
- 10) Safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure;
- 11) Ensuring equality of access by all;
- 12) Ensuring that the viability and amenity of neighbouring uses and their users/occupiers will not be adversely affected;
- 13) Incorporating appropriate arrangements for the disposal of foul sewage, waste and water;
- 14) Make a positive contribution towards tackling the causes of, and adapting to the impacts of Climate Change; and
- 15) Appropriately contributing towards local, physical, social and community infrastructure which is affected by the development.

LDP Objectives: 1f, 1g, 2a, 2b, 2c

(iii) PLA4 Climate Change and Peak Oil

Policy PLA4
Climate Change and Peak Oil

All development proposals will be required to make a positive contribution towards tackling the causes of, and adapting to the impacts of Climate Change and Peak Oil issues. Means of achieving this may include:

- 1) Having lower carbon energy requirements by reducing energy demand, and promoting energy efficiency;
- 2) Utilising local materials and supplies wherever feasible;
- 3) Encouraging the development of renewable energy generation;
- 4) Having a location and layout which reflects sustainable transport and access principles, thereby reducing the overall need to travel;
- 5) Having a design, layout and landscaping which:
 - (i) helps wildlife and habitats to adapt to the changing climate;
 - (ii) assists cooling of the urban environment, including the use of passive building techniques where appropriate;
- 6) Using resources more efficiently, and minimising waste water use and pollution;
- 7) Avoiding or minimising the risk from flooding and/ or adapting to the increased risk of flooding, coastal erosion and warmer annual mean temperatures; and
- 8) Promoting sustainable building methods and drainage systems where appropriate.

(iv) Policy SP3 Strategic Transport Planning Principles Policy

Strategic Policy SP3

Strategic Transport Planning Principles

All development proposals should promote safe, sustainable and healthy forms of transport through good design, enhanced walking and cycling provision, and improved public transport provision.

Land-use transportation solutions will therefore be required to deliver a more effective, efficient and accessible transport system according to the following principles:

- 1) Improves public transport links between the Primary Key Settlement of Bridgend and the main settlements of the County Borough, and links with Cardiff and Swansea;
- 2) Develops the roles of Bridgend and Maesteg as 'Transport Hubs';
- 3) Favours development which is located close to public transport facilities;
- 4) Reduces congestion, the need to travel, and reliance on the private car;
- 5) Reduces the negative impact of road freight transport;
- 6) Improves road safety;
- 7) Makes better use of the core, strategic and local highway network;
- 8) Encourages rail freight movement within the County Borough;
- 9) Provides appropriate standards of car parking;
- 10) Maximises the potential for sustainable transport infrastructure and services; and
- 11) Provides strategic lorry parks at appropriate locations in the County Borough.

LDP Objectives: 1f, 1g, 2b, 4b

- (v) PLA11 Parking Standards

***Policy PLA11
Parking Standards***

All development will be required to provide appropriate levels of parking. This should be in accordance with adopted parking standards.

- (vi) Policy ENV5 Green Infrastructure

***Policy ENV5
Green Infrastructure***

Green infrastructure will be provided through the protection and enhancement of existing natural assets and the creation of new multi-functional areas of green space. Green infrastructure corridors will connect locations of natural heritage, green space, biodiversity or other environmental interest. They will be safeguarded through:

- 1) Not permitting development that compromises their integrity and therefore that of the overall green infrastructure framework;
- 2) Using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to their quality and robustness;
- 3) Investing in appropriate management, enhancement and restoration, and the creation of new resources.

- (vii) Policy ENV 6 Nature Conservation

***Policy ENV6
Nature Conservation***

Proposals for development or redevelopment will be required to:

1. In the first instance, retain, conserve, restore and enhance wherever possible existing:
 - a) Woodland;
 - b) Trees;
 - c) Hedgerows;
 - d) Wetlands;
 - e) Watercourses;
 - f) Ponds;
 - g) Green Lanes/Wildlife Corridors;
 - h) Geological Features;
 - i) Other Natural Features or Habitats.
2. Where this is demonstrated not to be possible, suitable mitigation or compensatory measures will be required to secure biodiversity including future management programmes.
3. Avoid or overcome harm to nature conservation assets and/or species of wildlife which may be either resident, in-situ or which can be demonstrated to have frequented habitats within the site on a migratory basis.

(viii) Policy ENV 7 Natural Resource Protection and Public Health

Policy ENV7
Natural Resource Protection and Public Health

Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they would not cause a new, or exacerbate an existing, unacceptable risk of harm to health, biodiversity and/or local amenity due to:

- 1) Air pollution;
- 2) Noise pollution;
- 3) Light pollution;
- 4) Contamination (including invasive species);
- 5) Land instability;
- 6) Water (including groundwater) pollution;
- 7) Any other identified risk to public health or safety.

Development in areas currently subject to the above will need to demonstrate mitigation measures to reduce the risk of harm to public health, biodiversity and/or local amenity to an acceptable level.

(ix) Policy SP14 Infrastructure

Strategic Policy SP14

Infrastructure

Applications for development should include material proposals which deal with the fair and reasonable infrastructural requirements of the development, and which help to mitigate any negative impacts that may arise as a consequence of the development. Where appropriate, such proposals will be secured by means of planning agreements/obligations.

The requirements for such agreements will include consideration of and appropriate provision for:

- Affordable housing;
- Educational facilities and/or their upgrades;
- Outdoor recreation;
- Renewable energy and low carbon technologies;
- Improvements to the highway network, including walking and cycling routes and public transport;
- Protection, enhancement and management of the natural, historic and built environment;
- Community facilities and/or their upgrades;
- Waste management and recycling facilities;
- Initiatives to manage and mitigate the impact of climate change; and
- Improvements to the public realm.

LDP Objectives: ALL

(x) Policy SP12 'Housing' :

Strategic Policy SP12

Housing

Provision will be made for the development of 9,690 new dwellings in Bridgend County Borough up to 2021 which will be distributed in accordance with *Strategic Policy SP1, Regeneration-Led Development*.

The new dwellings will be delivered in the following 5 year periods:

2006-2011	2,085 dwellings
2011-2016	2,888 dwellings
2016-2021	4,717 dwellings

An appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and tenure including approximately 1,370 units of affordable housing will be delivered through the planning system to meet the needs of the County Borough.

LDP Objectives: 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 4c

(xi) Policy COM3 'Residential Re-Use of a Building or Land' :

Policy COM3
Residential Re-Use of a Building or Land

Residential developments within settlement boundaries defined in Policy PLA1 on 'windfall' and 'small scale' sites for the conversion of existing buildings, or the re-use of vacant or under-utilised land will be permitted where no other LDP policy protects the building or land for an existing or alternative use

(xii) Policy COM4 'Residential Density' :

Policy COM4
Residential Density

On sites exceeding 0.15 hectares in size new residential developments will be built at a density of at least 35 dwellings per hectare. A lower density level may be accepted as a requirement of design, physical or infrastructure constraints or where it can be demonstrated there is a particular lack of choice of housing types within a local community.

(xiii) Policy COM5 'Affordable Housing' :

**Policy COM5
Affordable Housing**

Where a local need is demonstrated, the Council will expect an appropriate element of 'affordable housing' to be provided on sites capable of accommodating 5 or more dwellings or exceeding 0.15 hectares in size.

The Council will seek the following affordable housing Market Area targets*:

30% affordable housing in Porthcawl and Rural;
20% affordable housing in Bridgend, Pencoed and Hinterland;
15% affordable housing in the Western Settlements, Ogmore, Garw and Upper Llynfi Valleys.

Such affordable housing will be implemented through the use of appropriate planning conditions and/or obligations/agreements and/or through contractual agreements between the Council, developers and Registered Social Landlords.

* Affordable Housing Market Areas shown in Plan 3 and broken down into settlements and post codes in Appendix 4.

(xiv) Policy COM11 'Provision of Outdoor Recreation Facilities' :

**Policy COM11
Provision of Outdoor Recreation Facilities**

Provision, or the equivalent value of a satisfactory standard of outdoor recreation space will be required for all new housing developments.

A satisfactory standard of recreation will be based on:

1. 1.6 hectares per 1,000 population for outdoor sport;
2. 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population for children's playing space;
3. 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population for allotment provision;
4. No person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest area of accessible natural green space.

The above range and type of provision is subject to negotiation and may be provided on or off site. The alternative is to provide equivalent value to the above standards in developer contributions. These contributions can be used to improve existing provision by:

- (a) making an area more accessible to the community;
- (b) better management for biodiversity and/or for passive enjoyment;
- (c) enhancements through more usable equipment, or better space or ancillary facilities;
- (d) increase in playing capacity;

or a combination of the above.

Bridgend Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Council has also produced the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) which is relevant to this proposal:-

- SPG07: Trees and Development;
- SPG17: Parking Standards; and
- SPG19: Biodiversity and Development.

Flood Risk

The latest NRW Development Advice Maps (extracted below) identifies the site as being adjacent to but outside of a Flood Zone C2 area and on land which is known to have previously flooded. The site broadly slopes from a high point in the east down to the west.



Fig 4. DAM Map Extract

Planning History

Planning History

The following planning history is of relevance:

P/99/212/OUT – Outline planning permission for a housing development was granted on 3rd August 1999. It should be noted that although outline planning permission was granted, the use of the existing access to serve the development was opposed on highway safety grounds on the basis that vision at the junction was deficient. Modifications to this access were also discouraged on the basis that they could affect the protected trees. The permission was granted on the basis that a new point of access could be provided at the southern end of the site, although this would require extensive engineering due to the difference in site levels.

P/98/340/OUT – an application to demolish the former pit head baths & buildings & the construction of community foodstore car park & environmental improvements was refused planning permission on 17th July 1998.

P/97/1112/OUT – planning permission was refused on 24th February 1998 for demolition of former pit head baths and outbuildings for supermarket and car parking, 91/0667 – planning permission was granted on 4th July 1991 for the construction of two machinery pits, raise roof by 2 metres. 80/0194 – planning permission was granted on 21st August 1980 for alteration of access onto a classified road at junction off Victoria Street to Ffaldau Colliery 77/1111 – planning permission was granted on 1st December 1977 for change of use, manufacture of rotationally moulded containers and storage to extrude and grind raw materials.

Analysis

Land Use Planning and Design

The principle of the proposed development of the site for residential purposes is sound from both a National and local planning policy perspective. The site is an overgrown and untidy brownfield site, which is located within settlement boundary. Furthermore, the redevelopment of the site would provide much needed additional housing. The most recently published JHLAS was published on 1st August 2019 and this recorded a housing land supply of 2.9 years. This represents a shortfall in housing land provision of 2.1 years when assessing supply against the TAN 1 requirement of 5 years. The proposals comply with the provisions of LDP Policy COM3 'Residential Re-Use of a Building or Land'.

The application for consideration is for Outline permission for 21 dwellings, with all matters other than access, reserved for subsequent consideration at the Reserved Matters application stage. Notwithstanding this, an indicative, Concept Layout Plan has been produced and is submitted in support of this application. The Concept Layout shows the 21 dwellings to be a mix of 2,3,4 and 5 bed dwellings. The dwellings are shown to run either side of a new road which will extend from the existing access from Victoria Street and extend to the south (broadly adjacent to Victoria Street). All dwellings are indicated as being two storey in height and to have a maximum ridge level of between 8 and 8.7 metres in height. An extract of the Concept Layout Plan is provided below for reference:



Concept site layout

	<p>The site slopes away significantly from Victoria Street. Therefore, the difference in levels between the site and the dwellings on the eastern side of Victoria Street will assist in minimising any impact upon existing the neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, setting the properties back from the boundary with Victoria Street by a minimum of 5 metres will further minimise any potential impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers. Clearly this is a matter which will be scrutinised at the Reserved Matters application stage, in due course.</p> <p>The Concept Layout shows an area of Public Open Space in the north-eastern corner of the site, immediately to the south of the access from Victoria Street. The provision of POS within this area will not only address on-site requirements for open space but will also ensure the long-term protection of the adjacent protected trees. It is worthy of note that the site is also ideally located for access to the Blaengarw and Pontycymer Linear Park, which runs immediately to the west of the site and would provide an attractive amenity for residents of the development.</p> <p>The site is of sufficient size to provide a development of 21 dwellings, which is suitably laid out to ensure high standards of privacy and appropriate provision of private amenity space, whilst achieving sustainable levels of housing density. Accordingly, the proposed development complies with the provisions of Policies PLA1 'Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management' and SP2 'Design and Sustainable Place Making' of the LDP.</p>
Trees	<p>The application is informed and supported by a Tree Survey (dated February 2021) and Tree Constraints Plans, which are both provided by Treescene.</p> <p>There are a group of trees in the north eastern corner of the site, immediately adjacent to the existing vehicular entrance to the site which are the subject of a Group Tree Preservation Order. The TPO was issued in 1998 and the report states that the trees (Group A1) are: <i>'Consisting mainly of Ash, Birch, Elder, Apple, Willow, Hawthorn, Oak and Cherry.'</i></p> <p>The Tree Survey recently undertaken shows that the health of a number of the trees within the group TPO has declined over the past few decades. The report recommends the removal of some of these trees, which are suffering Ash Dieback and decay. The removal of some of these trees would enable the widening of the access. The trees of quality within this portion of the site will be retained, including the category 'A' Oak (T17). The submitted indicative layout shows the portion of the site adjacent to the protected trees to be used as Public Open Space, with dwellings further to the south constructed outside of the RPAs of these trees.</p>
Ecology	<p>A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken by Just Mammals in May 2021. The Survey included an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. This survey led to a recommendation by Just Mammals for a Reptile Survey to be undertaken. The submitted report concludes:</p> <p><i>'1.3Most of the site consists of early successional vegetation growth with hardstanding and fragmented areas of coarse grassland. None of these on-site habitats represent notable or Section 7 habitats, and are all locally common and nationally widespread. None of these habitats therefore represent a significant constraint to any future onsite development.'</i></p> <p><i>1.4 Reptile survey was undertaken in suitable weather conditions in spring 2021, and following recognised guidelines. A total of 20 refugia were distributed on site and checked on a total of seven occasions. In total of 8 slow-worms were found under the refugia during the survey, with a maximum count of 2 animals found on a single visit. With reference to the Froglife reptile survey advice sheet 10, the site is assessed to support a 'low' population.'</i></p>

1.5 Slow-worm is afforded legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): it is also a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and included on the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 7. The extent of the proposed works will result in disturbance and potential harm to reptiles. It will therefore be necessary to design and create mitigation habitat for the animals, and this must be included in the planning proposals. Furthermore, a reptile fence must be installed and an Ecological Method Statement written with avoidance measures employed in order to ensure that no animals are killed or harmed. Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement are also made for the site, retaining and providing additional features and habitats for reptiles.

1.6 As per the initial Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report dated March 2021. The steep-sloping area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland to the immediate west of the site, as well as the area of marshy grassland to the south, are possibly Section 7 habitats. These habitats are more ecologically valuable than any of the on-site habitats and represent a more important constraint to development because of their sensitivity to indirect impacts. Typical construction-phase impacts must be avoided by the design and implementation of a robust Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

1.7 The large retaining wall along the eastern boundary has, at least, a 'medium' level of suitability for day-roosting bats in accordance with best practice guidelines. However, since no follow-up nighttime surveys have been completed, the presence of any bat roosts is currently unknown. It is proposed that the wall will be retained, protected and safeguarded throughout the construction and operation phases of a future development, therefore further survey work for bats is not considered necessary at this time. If plans change, and the impacts to the wall cannot be avoided, further survey work will be required. Recommendations are provided regarding how a future layout may avoid direct and indirect impacts completely.'

In accordance with the recommendations of the report the Concept Site Layout illustrates how the site is capable of being developed whilst maintaining a 5 metres gap between development and the boundary wall along Victoria Street and a reptile grassland mitigation area, which runs adjacent to the southern and western boundaries and extends to no less than 450 square metres.

Highways Impact

Acstro Highway and Transport Planning Consultants have produced a Transport Statement, which is submitted in support of the planning application. In summary the Transport Statement demonstrates that:

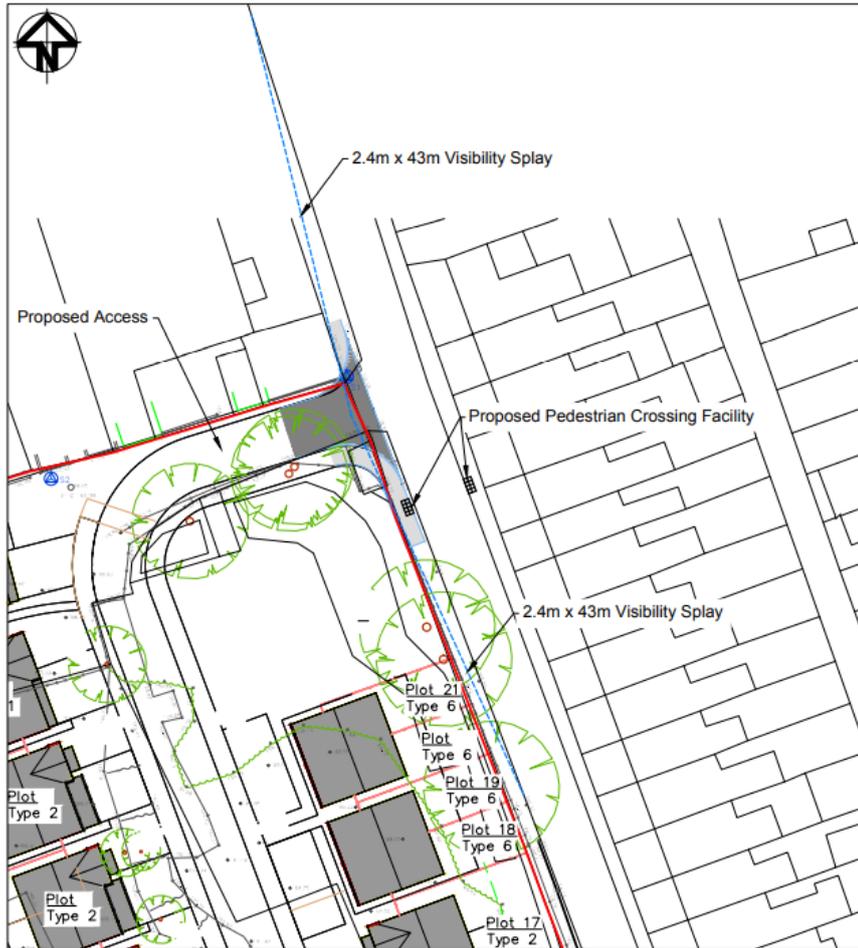
- *'The site's location is closely related to the services and facilities available within the Pontycymer and Blaengarw;*
- *The site is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists and is well connected to the existing active travel network.*
- *The site is accessible to public transport users with a bus stop located adjacent to the site;*
- *A safe and appropriate access, that meets current design standards, can be provided to the site from Victoria Street;*
- *A pedestrian crossing of Victoria Street will be provided allowing for the safe movement of pedestrians to and from the site. The pedestrian crossing will also benefit existing users of the street.*
- *The estimated traffic generation of the proposed development is considered to be insignificant compared to the traffic generation of the existing use of the site and will have no material impact to the safe operation of the surrounding highway network.*

As such it is considered that the site meets planning policy requirements in terms of being in an appropriate location that is safely accessible by all forms of transport and that the impacts of the development on the continued operation and safety of the surrounding highway network would be acceptable.

It is concluded therefore that there are no transport related issues that should prevent planning permission for the proposed development.'

Below is an extract from the Proposed Access drawing, which shows:

- (i) The existing access to the site will be improved to provide a 5.5m wide carriageway and 2m footway;
- (ii) The provision of a 2.4 x 43m visibility splay, which will be achieved by realigning the boundary wall of the adjacent rugby club (as per an agreement with the landowner); and
- (iii) The provision of a pedestrian crossing of Victoria Street.



Proposed Access Drawing

Drainage

The residential scheme would be designed to be SABS compliant at the Reserved Matters stage. The submitted proposed site plan is indicative but it does show a scheme which would be capable of supporting a SABS compliant surface water drainage scheme.

Design and Access Statement

Site Analysis

The application site comprises an area of land measuring approximately 0.75 Hectares, which runs adjacent to and is bordered to the east by Victoria Street. There is one sole access point into the site and this is from Victoria Street (to the east), by an existing combined vehicular and pedestrian access. The boundary to the east of the site with Victoria Street is predominantly a stone retaining wall. The remainder of the boundaries to the site are a mixture of railings and vegetation. The site is brownfield land and was previously occupied by several buildings which formed part of the Ffaldau Colliery. The site has now been vacant for many years and until recently was overgrown with vegetation. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and narrows towards the southern boundaries of the site. The site broadly slopes away from Victoria Street and has steeply sloping embankments to the western and southern boundaries. The site presents an opportunity

for redevelopment of a brownfield site and the opportunity for regeneration within an economically deprived area. The biggest constraint of the site is the topography and the requirements for ground works to facilitate the residential development.

Context Analysis

To the north of the site is a Blaengarw Rugby Club's large flat roofed building, to the east are terraced dwellings on the opposite side of Victoria Street, to the south is the COOP supermarket and to the west of the site lies the Blaengarw and Pontycymer Linear Park. The site and the surrounds to the south and west form part of a land reclamation scheme following the closure of the Ffaldau Colliery in November 1985. Following the closure of the colliery and the loss of many jobs the local area has suffered from long term decline. The proposed scheme will be the next step in the reclamation and restoration of the site to provide much needed investment and new homes in the community.

Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11 – February 2021) PPW sets out the land-use policy context for the consideration and evaluation of all types of development. As a general rule, a presumption in favour of sustainable development is promoted when preparing development plans and in the determination of planning applications. PPW sets out a number of principles that those involved in the planning system are expected to adhere to. These include, inter alia:

- taking a long-term perspective to safeguard the interests of future generations, whilst at the same time meeting needs of people today;
- respect for environmental limits, so that resources are not irrevocably depleted or the environment irreversibly damaged. This means, for example, mitigating climate change, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, minimising harmful emissions, and promoting sustainable use of natural resources;
- tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change and ensuring that places are resilient to the consequences of climate change;
- taking account of the full range of costs and benefits over the lifetime of a development, including those which cannot be easily valued in money terms when making plans and decisions and taking account of timing, risks and uncertainties. This also includes recognition of the climate a development is likely to experience over its intended lifetime.

PPW describes Design and Access Statements as a communication tool that explain how the objectives of good design have been considered from the outset of the development process. It encourages applicants to take an integrated and inclusive approach to sustainable design, proportionate to the scale and type of development proposed.

Technical Advice Note 12: Design TAN12 provides guidance on how good design should be achieved through the planning process. The diagram overleaf, extracted from the document, sets out the key objectives of good design and the various considerations that should be taken into account in the appraisal of development.



Figure 8: Objectives of Good Design (PPW 11)

Design Analysis

Character and Context

The below photograph shows the Ffaldau Colliery site prior to the demolition of the colliery buildings. This photograph is taken looking north along Victoria Street. This allows comparison with a Streetview image from a similar location on the following page:



Photograph 1: Photograph of Ffaldau Colliery Following Closure in November 1985



Photograph 2: Streetview Image in Similar Position to Photograph 1

The photograph below shows the colliery when operational with Victoria Street visible to the top left:



Photograph 3: Photograph of Ffaldau Colliery When Operational

The character of the site and surrounds has changed significantly in recent decades. The closure of the colliery and the land reclamation has wiped the obvious visual cues to the industrial past. The subtle grandeur of buildings secreted around Pontycymer provides a glimpse of the former industrial heritage within the area. The terraced dwellings on the eastern side of Victoria Street, which face toward the site have changed little over the decades and still retain their character.

The design of the proposed dwellings is not for consideration as part of this Outline application. However, there should be scope for consideration of different forms of design considering the varied architecture within close proximity to the site. The submitted scale parameters are a matter which is more appropriate for consideration at this stage. The parameters indicated are typical for modern dwellings and should be considered acceptable for this site, considering its separation from existing built form.

Access & Movement

Access into the site will remain in the same position. However, the standard of the access will be significantly improved, with a wider entrance with appropriate visibility splays provided. The access will also be provided with a dedicated footway to encourage walking and improve safety. The submitted Transport statement examines the ease of access of the site and the connectivity of the site to public transport and the attractiveness of walking and cycling as a means of transport.

Community Safety

The site is currently vacant and there was evidence on site of dumping of waste and general anti social behaviour around the peripheries of the site. The proposed development would provide quality housing to the site which would result in the remediation of the site and the creation of both public and private areas. The development would also greatly improve natural surveillance within the area and accordingly this should have a positive impact upon anti-social behaviour and crime.

Environmental Sustainability

The proposal is for the restoration of a vacant, brownfield site to provide much needed housing. The principle of the environmental sustainability of the scheme is unquestionable. The site is also located within a short walk of public transport and the services and facilities available within Pontycymer and Blaengarw. The site is also accessible to pedestrians and cyclists and is well connected to the existing active travel network. The detail of the environmental sustainability of the scheme to be delivered in terms of renewable energy technologies and materials and building construction methods will be for consideration at the Reserved Matters application stage.

Conclusion

The proposed development would enable the sustainable redevelopment of an area of brownfield land, which has remained vacant and largely overgrown since the demolition of the Ffaldau Colliery. Furthermore, the proposals would make a meaningful contribution towards housing land supply and play an important part in the regeneration of Pontycymer.

The proposed development adheres to the provisions of National policy in the form of PPW and all relevant TANs. Furthermore, the development adheres to the policies of the Bridgend LDP and the guidance contained within the adopted SPGs.