

# CARDONNEL COURT, SKEWEN

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



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# 01

# INTRODUCTION

Preface

Introduction

Project Team

INTRODUCTION

CW Architects have been contracted to prepare designs and a design and access statement for this site. Full consent for a 16-bed care home here has been approved by N&PTC in June 2023.

A DAS is a planning validation requirement for major developments and sets out the design principles which have informed the proposed development. In accordance with legislative requirements and associated guidance including Welsh Government’s ‘Design and Access Statements in Wales’, published in June 2017, the DAS is structured as follows:

Section 2: Site Description and Location - sets out where the site is located, a description of the site itself, its immediate surroundings, as well as the context of the wider surrounding area and nearby local facilities and access to public transport links.

Section 3: Planning Policy - details the national and local planning policies that are relevant to the proposal.

Section 4: Planning History and Pre-Application Advice - explains the relevant recent planning history at the site and also summarises the recent pre-application response from the Local Planning Authority.

Section 5: Proposed Development and Design Principles - provides a detailed description of the proposed development and explains the key considerations and guiding principles that have informed the development proposal.

Section 6: Conclusions - this section concludes the DAS.



PROJECT TEAM

CWA - Architects



DPLA - Landscape Architects



ArbTS - Arboricultural



Quorum Consulting - Engineers



Amity Planning - Planning Consultant



Squirrel Wood Properties - Applicant



02

## BRIEF

Vision

Aims



## VISION

The 16-bed approval does not meet the needs of the current occupier and provider market.

This application seeks to amend this to a 23-bed unit to suit current health needs in the area.

The designs intend to use roof space for rooms to alleviate the need for extra height.

The new design sits within the footprint of the current consent, observes the same spatial disposition and separation distances as the 2023 approval and is approximately the same height.

## AIMS

Redesign former scheme to include extra bedrooms within footprint

More contextually aware external treatments

Reduce encroachment into stream buffer zone



Semi aerial view of the site looking north

# 03

## THE SITE

Context and Site Analysis

Local Context

Local Amenities



## CONTEXT

### SITE ANALYSIS

The site is located in the settlement of Skewen in the administrative authority of Neath Port Talbot Council (hereafter referred to as NPTC). Skewen is approximately 2 miles to the west of Neath and 8 miles to the east of Swansea city centre and has excellent links to the M4 motorway, located immediately off junction 43 of the M4 motorway. The site is located to the south of the Skewen settlement in a predominantly residential area.

More specifically, the Site is a roughly triangular shaped parcel of land measuring approximately 0.5ha. The Site has varying ground levels with the highest levels at the Site access point, off Cardonnel Road, and the lowest level along the eastern boundary resulting in the eaves of the existing building being broadly at the same level as Cardonnel Road as it curves around the southern boundary of the Site.

The site is currently empty but previously comprised of a 39-bed care home and associated car parking. The existing care home building is 'T' shaped, single storey, in a poor state of repair and its footprint occupies the majority of the Site. In the western portion of the Site is a car park area with capacity for around 7no car parking spaces and turning area. The site is almost entirely enclosed by trees and vegetation with the exception of an opening to enable the access point.

The site is bounded to the north, south and west by residential properties, with Cardonnel Road curving around the western and southern boundaries. The east of the Site is bounded by a planted bank which leads to a mineral railway line.

Access to the Site is gained via Cardonnel Road which in turn is accessed from either Pale Road or Bosworth Road via Burrows Road.

To the northeast of the Site is the Tennant Canal, Skewen Cutting and tramroad bridge which is an Ancient Scheduled Monument. There are no public rights of way that cross the Site or run along its boundaries. The Site is not affected by flooding.



Google Earth Aerial of the Site (site outlined in red)

LOCAL CONTEXT

The area surrounding the Site is predominantly defined by existing residential properties. In terms of residential character, there is no uniform architectural form, style or urban grain in the area surrounding the site as shown in the images taken from the locality below. To the north of the application site are the seventeen properties on Bendle Close that were constructed in approximately 2014/15. Bendle Close comprises modern two storey properties that are either semi-detached or terraced and finished in buff brick with grey tiled roofs.

To the west and northwest of the site are the residential properties located on Cardonnel Road. These properties vary in terms of their design, age, scale and architectural detailing/ materials.

As can be seen on the images previously there is no defined property type along Cardonnel Road with a mixture of single storey and two-storey, detached and semi-detached properties present. Given the lack of uniformity in terms of the scale, form, or design of these nearby properties, there are no set design parameters from the character of the surrounding area which would dictate the design of the proposed development.



Dwellings along Cardonnel Road showing the variety of forms/styles



Dwellings along Cardonnel Road showing the variety of forms/styles



LOCAL AMENITIES

The whole of the urban area of Skewen is within a 10-15minute walking distance from the site, and pedestrian provision throughout the village is generally of good quality and benefits from street lighting. Skewen has many local facilities and amenities including:

A number of regular bus services run near the site. The No. 204 has a bus stop located at the Rock & Fountain Inn which is located within a 5-minute walk from the application site. This service runs every 30 minutes to Neath Town Centre via the Tesco Superstore. Also located within a 10 minute walk of the site is the bus stop at the Colliers Arms. From this bus stop runs the No. 34 and No. 38 bus services. Between them, these services offer a bus route to Swansea City Centre and Neath Town Centre every 15 minutes during the week.

Skewen Train station is located within a 15-minute walk from the application site. From the train station there are regular train services linking Skewen to Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot, Bridgend and Cardiff. Skewen has a Primary School, with 2 comprehensive schools situated within a 2.5-mile radius of the village (Dwr Y Felin and Birchgrove). Within the village are a surgery, pharmacy, library, large public park, one stop food store, cricket club, rugby club and several public houses. Within 1 mile of the site is M4 Junction 43 (Llandarcy). This provides quick and easy access to Swansea and Cardiff city centres.

Skewen is positioned within 2.5 miles of the larger principle town of Neath, which has a large commercial centre and associated facilities. Skewen is also located with 7 miles on Swansea City Centre and all of the facilities and services associated with a city, including hospitals.

The Site is extremely sustainable being very well served by services and facilities, which can be accessed by foot, cycle or public transport.



# 04 | POLICY

Policy Context

Planning Context



LEGISLATION

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Planning Act (Wales) 2015 states that Local Planning Authorities must exercise their function in relation to the determination of planning applications “...as part of carrying out sustainable development in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (annex 2), for the purpose of ensuring that the development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.” (PA(W), Sec.2(2))

The Act identifies seven well-being goals. The Act makes it clear that the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not only one or two.

NATIONAL POLICY

Future Wales - The National Plan 2040

Future Wales - The National Plan 2040, adopted in February 2021 as the national development framework, sets out the direction for development in Wales up to 2040. The document provides a strategy to address key national priorities through the planning system, including developing a vibrant economy, developing strong ecosystems, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience and improving the health and wellbeing of communities. It sets out a total 11 outcomes of Future Wales comprising the vision for Wales in 2040.

Future Wales divides Wales into 4 regions with Neath Port Talbot (NPT) falling within the Southwest Region, and the relevant policies have been taken into account as part of the proposed development.

Planning Policy Wales (2024) Ed. 12

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the Welsh Government’s land use planning policy for Wales and has a strong focus on placemaking and sustainable development to deliver the wellbeing goals and inform planning decisions.

It sets out the key planning principles of ‘achieving the right development in the right place’. The principles include growing our economy in a sustainable manner; facilitating healthy and accessible environments; creating and sustaining communities; and maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact. The National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes underpin each of these principles.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

Technical Advice Notes (TANs) support national planning policy and help to inform new proposals. TANs that are relevant to the proposal are as follows:

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning - This TAN provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The key principles of planning for nature conservation are set out.

TAN 12: Design - The TAN provides advice on the design of development and advises on the planning system can deliver sustainability through good design. It outlines the core design principles that any development proposal must follow to help create a sustainable environment and exhibit a high level of design quality. These core design principles are as follows;

Access - Ensuring ease of access for all

Movement - Promoting sustainable means of travel

Character - Sustaining of enhancing local character; promoting legible development; promoting a successful relationship between public and private space; promoting quality, choice and variety; and promoting innovative design

Community Safety - Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces and security through natural surveillance

Environmental Sustainability - Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources and enhancing biodiversity

RELEVANT LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

In addition to national guidance contained within Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales, and the relevant TANs, any application would be considered against the Policies within the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP). The relevant policies would include:

Policy SP1 – Climate Change

Policy SP2: Health

Policy SP3: Sustainable Communities

Policy SP4: Infrastructure

Policy SP15: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy SP16: Environmental Protection

Policy EN8: Pollution and Land Stability

Policy SP20: Transport Network

Policy TR1: Transport Proposals

Policy TR2: Design and Access of New Development

Policy SP21: Built Environment and Historic Environment

Policy SP10: Open Space

Policy BE1: Design

Policy SP18: Renewable/Low Carbon Energy

Policy SP19: Waste Management

Policy W3: Waste Management in New Developments

Whilst the current LDP’s lifespan was 2011 to 2021 and Local Planning Authority are currently reviewing the Local Development Plan, the existing Plan will remain the relevant development plan against which planning applications will be determined until the new Local Development Plan is in place.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Further advice is contained in the following Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Planning Obligations (2019)

Affordable Housing (2016)

Landscape and Seascape (2018)

Open Space & Green Space (2017)

Biodiversity & Geodiversity (2018)

Pollution (2016)

Renewable & Low Carbon Energy (2017)

Parking Standards (2016)

Design (2018)

Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance (2019)

Development & the Welsh Language (2017)



## POLICY CONTEXT

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### PLANNING HISTORY

A planning history search on the NPTC website indicated there is no recent planning history relevant to the site but indicates a number of historic planning applications in relation to the care home use, establishing the sites use as a care home, and these are summarised below:

N1986/0583 - Nursing Homes 20 patients – approved

N1989/0261 - Single storey extension to provide 6 number bed spaces and bathroom facilities – approved

N1993/0254 - Single storey extension to provide 7no. single bedrooms -- approved

N1993/0550 - Extend and re-arrange interior to provide single rooms in accordance with health authority guidelines – approved

P/1999/0098 - Amendment of condition 3 planning approval no.2/3/93/0550/03 to show 40 bedspaces not 36. (approved plans show 40 bedspaces) – approved

P1999/0462 - Agree to condition 1 of planning approval no p/99/0098 regarding car parking scheme – approved

P2023/0499 - Approval for a 16-bed care home with conditions

### PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

A planning pre-application enquiry has been made for this design and a response received. This enquiry related to the current proposal, i.e. construction of a new 23-bed care home. The following key points were raised in the response

Scale and Appearance - In terms of the scale and appearance of the building, the planning officer was in general agreement with the pre-app, the case officer provides little feedback other than comments relating to the siting of the building and potential. Subject to the development having no unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of nearby properties, and the proposal not resulting in the requirement to fell any trees, the case officer confirms that a two-storey building with rooms in the roof appears to be acceptable.

Access and Highway Safety - In terms of access and highway safety, the case officer confirmed that the Council's highways officer raised no objection in principle to the proposal subject to appropriate levels of off-road car parking provision to serve the development.

Drainage - Given the size of the development, i.e. over 100sqm, SAB (Sustainable Drainage Systems approval body) permission will be required, and this will be dealt with separately from the planning process.

Trees - In terms of impact on existing trees, the application is supported by a tree survey that demonstrate the development is acceptable.

# 05

## CHARACTER

Design Evolution

Amount

Layout

Scale

Appearance



CHARACTER

LAYOUT AND AMOUNT

The proposal includes the development of an almost ‘L’ shaped building which is sited along the southeastern boundary of the proposal site. To the northwest of the proposed building (in the same position of the existing car park) is a reconfigured car parking area, as well as the only vehicular and pedestrian access into the site. An extract of the Proposed Site Layout is shown to the right. The layout of the proposed building is in a similar location to the former (demolished) building footprint and 2023 consent, to maximise efficiency of the site use, but also ensures the proposed building is offset from the site boundaries to protect neighbouring amenity whilst also protecting the trees and hedgerows along the site boundaries.

- The proposed building accommodates the following:
- 23no. residential apartments which include a bedroom and ensuite bathroom
  - Five small communal lounges
  - One craft room
  - One sensory room
  - 2no. ancillary offices
  - Larger communal Dining room / lounge
  - Three assisted bathrooms

Other ancillary facilities including plant room, kitchen, laundry room, shared W.C facilities, a chef’s office, reception area, cleaning rooms and stores.

Externally, the proposals include maintaining the existing pedestrian and vehicular access via Cardonnel Road to the west of the site, with the car parking to be retained in its current location, i.e. between the proposed replacement building and the site access. 13no. parking spaces are proposed. Delivery vehicles which will likely be vans will use either space 13 or 2 on an ad hoc basis.

The external layout also includes the creation of three new garden amenity spaces around the building in locations when the new building footprint will occupy less space than the existing building. These areas are primarily at the southern and northeastern corners of the site. A full landscape scheme is submitted with the proposal.

The proposed development is similar in form to the 2023 approval in terms of its scale. Given the distinct lack of uniformity in the surrounding area, which is defined by predominantly residential dwellings in small plots, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in its ‘valley’ setting and in keeping with the character of the area.

Furthermore, the previous building and 2023 approvals appearance differs to the surrounding context which further establishes the site as being capable of accommodating a development which differs, yet complements, the surrounding residential use and form. It is typical that a care home facility would be nestled in and amongst residential areas.



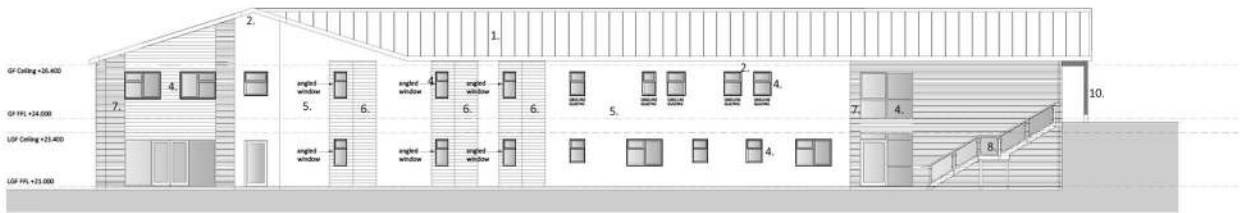
CHARACTER

SCALE

The building floor space totals 1783m2; the lower and upper ground floors having 631m2 floorspace each. The proposed development is two storeys in height with rooms in the roof, which replicates the scale of the consented development. The proposal development has been carefully designed in terms of its location on the site and scale to ensure it does not appear incongruous or out of scale in its setting.

APPEARANCE

The appearance of the proposed building has been carefully designed to be traditional in terms of its form and roofscape. The proposed materials include facing brick, render, reconstituted stone and timber cladding to the walls. The varying materials will add interest and texture to the building’s appearance and complements the varied materials palette throughout the settlement of Skewen. The proposed roof material will be a cement fibre roof and the windows and doors will be dark grey. The exact material palette has not yet been selected by the applicant to enable flexibility and it is requested this is controlled via planning condition. The proposal ‘L’ shaped building together with the materials palette ensures a high-quality proposal which is well designed, modern yet in keeping with its setting.



Proposed Side Elevation - North East



Proposed Rear Elevation - South East  
Previously consented scheme



Proposed Rear Elevation  
South-East



Proposed Side Elevation  
South-West

Proposed Elevations



06

# ACCESS

Access

Movement



## ACCESS

The consideration of access to the site includes the following which will be covered in turn below:

- Transport Impact
- Vehicular Access
- Walking and Cycling Access
- Parking
- Accessibility
- Movement

### TRANSPORT IMPACT

The impact of the proposed 23-bed care home should be considered in relation to the existing lawful use of the site as a 39bed care facility. Clearly the traffic associated with the proposed use will be significantly less than the previous, lawful use, i.e. the 'fallback position', and on that basis the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a traffic generation and impact on the local highway network perspective.

### VEHICULAR ACCESS

Vehicular access to the development site will be provided via the existing access point that previously served the 39-bed care facility. The access is in accordance with the required design standards to ensure a safe access into and out of the site. The access junction and internal road layout is designed to ensure that an ambulance and fire tender can arrive and depart the site in a forward gear, as shown on the submitted plans.

Refuse collection will be kerbside

### WALKING AND CYCLE ACCESS

The internal road arrangement is designed to ensure low speeds and good visibility so that all road users can share the space resulting in the creation of a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. As outlined above, the site is very well located in relation to existing services and public transport links, and the proposals are considered to fully support and encourage a modal shift towards walking and cycling the use of the private car.

### PARKING

As stated above, the proposed development, i.e. a 23-bed residential care home, will require significantly less parking that the former use of the site, i.e. a 39-bed residential care home, and on this basis the level of parking proposed is considered to be acceptable. The sustainable location of the application site should also be accounted for in accordance with the possibility to secure a parking reduction in accordance with Appendix F of the Council's car parking SPG.

### ACCESSIBILITY

The proposed development has been designed to maximize accessibility for those with physical and/or mental disabilities, including:

- A lift to provide access to both floors
- Level access into the building and throughout internally
- Widened corridors and larger rooms to facilitate wheelchair users
- The creation of three new areas of outdoor space for enhance mental wellbeing

The proposed building will be in compliance with the requirements of the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice "Rights of Access: Services and Premises" and Part M of the Building Regulations, where applicable and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.



## **MOVEMENT**

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The approach taken in developing the layout plan is founded on delivering a development that represents an efficient use of land, whilst also providing amenity space enhancements for future residents by virtue of creating three new outdoor garden spaces around the proposed building. Also, and as outlined, the site is located in close proximity to the multitude of facilities in Skewen, and future residents and staff will be able to comfortably access these facilities by foot or bicycle.

### **WALKING**

The design and layout of the scheme will allow future residents to walk in and around the new facility in a safe environment, away from vehicular traffic. This will provide better scope for effective integration with the existing built-up areas and offer the levels of accessibility that are a necessary part of sustainable development. The proposed development will have limited car trips, as discussed above, and drivers within the site will naturally drive slower given the nature of the site and minimal internal road. This will ensure that cyclists, pedestrians and car users can effectively and safely use the site.

The pedestrian network leading to the Site is good, benefitting from existing 2.0m wide footway that links the Site to Skewen village centre. The services and facilities within the Skewen village centre are located approximately 300m from the site, which is a convenient walking distance.

### **CYCLING**

The Site is in close proximity to National Cycle Network Route 47, which is a mainly inland route starting at Newport and finishing at Fishguard passing through Neath and Carmarthen. Route 47 is around 3.2km to the southeast of the Site.

Based on the Welsh Government's 'Active Travel Act Guidance July 2021' which suggests journeys up to 8km are suitable, travel to and from the Site to Neath town centre is possible.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

The proposed development site is conveniently located to access public transport. As outlined above closest bus stops are within 300m of the Site. Frequent bus services serve these local bus stops and are available online: <https://www.traveline.cymru/#>.

Skewen also benefits from a railway station that provides regular services to Swansea city centre and beyond and is around 1km walking distance from the Site.

07

# LANDSCAPING

Biodiversity

Green Infrastructure

Landscape

## LANDSCAPING

### BIODIVERSITY

Whilst the Site is brownfield and predominantly developed upon, and the proposed redevelopment seeks to utilise the existing building footprint and associated hardstanding, there are opportunities to enhance biodiversity features within the building fabric, i.e. bat and bird boxes, and through the landscaping proposals. An ecological report will be submitted with the planning application, along with any survey requirements. A full landscape scheme and G.I statement are provided as part of this application.

It is acknowledged the Site has a watercourse along the northeastern boundary. The pre-application response stated that 'any development will need to avoid any negative impacts upon this watercourse' and confirmed that all watercourses in NPTC are designated as watercourse SINC along with a 7m buffer either side. The existing watercourse is poorly managed with significant Japanese knotweed growth within it, which diminishes its ecological value. Furthermore, the existing building encroaches upon the watercourse buffer area by 235m<sup>2</sup> and the proposed building will have a lesser encroachment on the buffer of just 132m<sup>2</sup>. The proposals offer significant betterment to the existing by reducing the building encroachment on the watercourse buffer zone together with a comprehensive eradication plan and method statement to remove Japanese knotweed from the Site. The proposals will enhance the ecological value of the watercourse as it flows through the Site and ongoing management which will ensure its value is maintained long term.

To further support biodiversity, site boundaries will be maintained as far as possible and incorporated into the wider landscape proposals. It is appropriate to condition a landscaping proposal.

The applicant is committed to providing biodiversity enhancements as part of the proposed development. The intention is to discuss the best form of enhancements with the council ecologist during the life of the application and either update the plans accordingly. Biodiversity enhancements can be achieved on site by, for example, better site management, increased areas of soft planting with carefully considered planting to maximise biodiversity and bat and bird boxes on the building.

### LANDSCAPE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The proposed development ensures that the existing site boundaries will be protected and enhanced as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme, including TPO trees in proximity of the site. By virtue of the proposed development footprint being smaller than the existing development, there is opportunity to enhance these planted boundaries and give them more space to improve their resilience as well as incorporating planting into the 3no. garden areas proposed to serve future residents.



08

## SUSTAINABILITY

Energy Efficiency/Carbon Reduction

Waste Management

Community Safety

SUSTAINABILITY

ENERGY EFFICIENCY/CARBON REDUCTION

The following measures will be undertaken where possible to maximise energy efficiency and carbon reduction of the development itself and during its construction:

- Maximise use of daylight in key rooms through fenestration
- Use of solar panels to facilitate and energy circle and suitable sustainable systems
- Use local products wherever practical
- The building will be insulated beyond current Building Regulations
- Energy efficient internal and external lighting units will be installed
- Recycling to be undertaken at site by staff
- Providing facilities and connections to encourage walking and cycling, as discussed earlier in this statement.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

A recycling and refuse store will be provided on Site next to the vehicular entrance point. The access road has been designed to ensure a refuse vehicle can access the Site and turn safely adjacent to the bin store, ensuring the Site can be appropriately serviced from a waste management perspective.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The proposed development will bring a current vacant site back into beneficial use which will improve community safety. This would be a significant improvement to community safety since the site is currently subject to vandalism and trespass. Furthermore, the following design features are included to ensure the safety of future occupants and staff and existing neighbouring properties:

- Windows overlooking the parking area
- Defensible site boundaries
- Appropriate lighting

It is considered the proposed development will significantly improve community safety of the site and the surrounding area



Plenty of landscaping throughout the site to promote biodiversity



P.V panels where possible



Adequate accessible cycle parking provisons



Spacious rooms with plenty of natural light

# 09

## PROPOSALS

Proposed view from the car park looking south

Proposed view from 57 Cardonnel Road looking east

Proposed view from Cardonnel Road looking north

Proposed aerial view looking north

Proposed aerial view looking east

Proposed aerial view looking west



Proposed view looking south from the car park



Proposed view looking east from 57 Cardonnel Road



Proposed view looking north from Cardonnel Road



Proposed aerial view looking North



Previously consented scheme



Proposed aerial view looking east



Previously consented scheme

Proposed aerial view looking west

**10**

**CONCLUSION**

## CONCLUSION

This Design and Access Statement has been completed on behalf of SWP SPV3 Limited to support a full planning application for the construction of a 23-bed specialist residential care facility with associated works on at the former Cardonnel Court Nursing Home, Cardonnel Road, Skewen.

The site is located within the settlement boundary of Skewen and was previously occupied by a 39-bed care facility, the principle of the development is established.

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

The scheme proposed in this application builds on the previous proposal to deliver a contextually aware building, using more natural and sustainable materials, while also using the site more efficiently. It has also been designed to avoid any negative impacts to the neighbouring dwellings.

As such, it is respectfully requested that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council approves this application

Architecture

Urban Design

Interiors

Masterplanning

# CWArchitects

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