



The main part of the application site, which measures approximately 0.3 of a hectare, is a grassed field that slopes fairly steeply from west to east. The northern boundary of this field is lined by mature Ash and Oak trees which are subject to a woodland Tree Preservation Order (TPO). These trees, which form part of the West Aberfan Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, are not within the application site. The southern boundary of the field is lined by 3 groups of mature trees which also consist of a mixture of Ash and Oak trees. These trees are also subject of a TPO. The eastern boundary abuts land to the rear of 3 fairly recently constructed detached dwellings which front Kingsley Terrace. The western boundary of the field adjoins a steep embankment which eventually meets the A470 trunk road.

From the field the application site forms a 'y' shape to the north west of 5 Woodland Drive, before it meets with the private road which serves the remainder of the dwellings in this street. Either side of this private road and to the front of 1 and 2 Woodland Drive, the application site includes a small area (approximately 1.2 – 2.0 metres wide) of verge. To the east and below the level of this part of the site are the terraced properties (2 – 9) in Pleasant View. A strip (approximately 2 metres wide) of the side and rear garden (including boundary wall) of 1 Pleasant View is also included in the application site along with approximately a 5 metre by 12 metre rectangular shaped area of the western part of this property's garden. On the opposite side of the private road from 1 Pleasant View is a detached property.

In contrast to Pleasant View, which mainly consists of two long terraces, Woodland Drive is made up of large red brick detached houses some of which have large detached garages.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of two detached dwellings (one with a detached garage and one with an integral garage). The houses would be constructed on the grassed field located to the north of 5 Woodland Drive and accessed via a driveway (which splits into two to serve each dwelling) that would run to the west of this property and eventually join a private road to the east of 4 Woodland Drive. This driveway would be finished with tarmacadam.

The smaller dwelling with integral garage would be constructed in the south western part of the field. It would be 'L' shaped and measure a maximum of 18 metres deep by 12 metres wide. It would have a gabled roof with a maximum ridge height of 9.06 metres. The garage would be provided in a front gable projection with the remainder of the ground floor consisting of a hall, kitchen/diner, lounge, study, utility room and toilet. Four bedrooms (two with en-suites) and a bathroom would be provided at first floor. The roof would allow space for a play room and games room. Seven roof lights would provide light to these rooms. The external walls of the dwelling would be constructed from red/brown brick and the roof would be covered with brown tiles. The windows and doors would be upvc (light Oak). Vehicular access to this dwelling would be gained via the upper arm of the driveway which would run between a cluster of mature trees before ending in a large brick paved hardstanding area to the front of the dwelling. The main garden area would be to the rear (north) of property which would be grassed and secured by a post and wire fence.

The larger dwelling would be constructed at a lower level and to the north east of the other dwelling. It would be constructed in a much bigger plot and have a large detached garage

located to its side (western) elevation. The dwelling would measure a maximum of 13.2 metres deep by 14.95 metres wide. It would have a gabled roof with a maximum height of 9.57 metres. A central gabled projection would extend 1.5 metres from the front of the property. The double door entrance in this projection would be framed by a Georgian feature portico. The ground floor would consist of a large hallway, kitchen/dining/family room, study, lounge, utility room and toilet. Four bedrooms (two with en-suites) and a bathroom would be provided at first floor. The roof would allow space for a further bedroom with en-suite, a store and a games room. Nine roof lights would provide light to these rooms. The external walls of the dwelling would be constructed from red/brown brick and the roof would be covered with brown tiles. The windows and doors would be upvc (light Oak). Vehicular access to this dwelling would be gained via the lower arm of the driveway which would also run between mature trees before ending in a large brick paved hardstanding area to the front of the dwelling and detached garage. The main garden area would be to the rear (north) and side (east) of the property and would be grassed. The rear and side boundaries of this property would be secured by post and wire fencing (to the rear and part of the western boundary) or metal vertical bar fencing with top circular detailing (to the eastern and part of the western boundary). The detached garage would measure 9 metres wide by 9 metres deep. It would have a gabled roof with a maximum height of 5.5 metres and be constructed from the same external materials as the house. Its size enables sufficient space in the roof for a storage area which would be accessed via internal steps.

The topography of this part of the application site is such that in order to accommodate the development a significant cut and fill operation would have to be undertaken. Section details have been submitted with the application which indicate that gabion basket retaining structures would be introduced in three locations throughout the site. Their locations would be along the north eastern boundary of this part of the site, on part of the boundary between the two houses and to the west of the dwelling on the upper level. The gabion baskets would have a maximum height of 2.5 metres.

To accommodate the two additional dwellings, part of the existing private road would be upgraded to adoptable standards. Notably, the existing road in front of 1 and 2 Woodland Drive and to the south of 1 Pleasant View would be increased in width (to 5.5 metres) and a footpath (2 metres wide) introduced. These changes would require the construction of a new boundary wall along the southern boundary of 1 Pleasant View. This wall, for the majority of its length, would be 1.5 metres high and its outer roadside elevation faced with golden pea dashing to match the existing property. A section of the boundary enclosure would have 500mm high wrought iron railings on top of a similarly faced 1 metre high wall. The other three properties in Woodland Drive and the two proposed dwellings would be served by the remaining stretch of private road.

The final part of the proposed development is for the construction of a single garage and driveway (accessed off Woodland Drive) to the extreme western rear garden of 1 Pleasant View. The garage would measure 4 metres wide by 5.75 metres long and have a gabled roof with a maximum height of 3.7 metres. It would be constructed with its side facing Woodland Drive and its roller shutter door entrance facing the rear of 1 Pleasant View. Due to the slope of the land the site would need to be levelled which would result in the boundary behind the garage being retained by a 2.1 metre high wall. The external materials used in the construction of the garage would match those of 1 Pleasant View (i.e. rendered walls dashed with golden pea and black/dark grey tiles).

The application has been supported by:

- A design and access statement.
- Gabion retaining wall structural calculations.
- Soakaway calculations.
- A construction management plan.
- An Initial Arboricultural Survey Report and Impact Assessment (Cardiff Treescapes February 2016)

## PLANNING HISTORY

P/00/0491	Layout of roads, sewers and services (in connection with proposed residential development of 5 No. houses)	Approved 14.03.2001
P/00/0380	Outline application for the erection of 5 dwellings	Approved 06.11.2000
P/00/0078	Outline application for the erection of five dwellings	Refused 13.09.2000

## CONSULTATION

Engineering and Traffic  
Group Leader

- No objection.

Town Planning Division's  
Policy & Implementation  
Group Leader

- No objection.

Town Planning Division's  
Countryside Officer

- No objection subject to a conditions.

Town Planning Division's  
Landscape Architect

- No objection subject to conditions.

Town Planning Division's  
Design, Heritage and  
Conservation Officer

- No objection

Environmental Health Manager

- No objection subject to conditions.

Welsh Government  
(Transport Division)

- No objection

Welsh Water

- No objection

## PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring properties on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and three site notices were displayed in locations surrounding the site on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

As a result of this publicity exercise no responses have been received.

## POLICY CONTEXT

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 8 (January 2016) sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government. The most relevant sections to the proposal are:

Section 2.6.1 – Planning applications must be considered in light of the strategy and policies in the adopted development plan.

Sections 4.11.9 – 4.11.12 sets out the principles of good design in new development proposals, which should take into account its relationship to its surrounding context. Regard should be given to the appropriate scale, appearance, landscaping and the quality of building design, as well as its accessibility.

Section 5.2.9 – Trees, woodlands and hedgerows are of great importance, both as wildlife habitats and in terms of their contribution to landscape character and beauty. Local planning authorities should seek to protect trees, groups of trees and areas of woodland where they have natural heritage value or contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.

Sections 5.5.1 – 5.5.3 note that the impact a development proposal may have on wildlife or the landscape is an important consideration in determining applications. Where ever possible adverse effects on the environment should be avoided or acceptably minimised.

Section 8.7.1 sets out the criterion that should be considered where transport implications may occur, such as impacts on local travel demand, public transport provision, accessibility and highway safety.

Section 9.2.16 discusses Authority wide affordable housing targets.

The policies in PPW are supported by Technical Advice Notes (TANs). The most relevant TANs to this application are as follows:-

TAN 2 - Planning and Affordable Housing provides advice on provision of affordable homes.

TAN 5 - Nature Conservation & Planning provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

TAN 12 - Design advises that the Welsh Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment, which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development, and social inclusion at every scale throughout Wales.

The following policies within the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP) 2006-2021 are relevant in the determination of this application:

- Policy BW3 - Development strategy –Other Growth Areas
- Policy BW4 - Settlement boundaries / location constraints
- Policy BW5 - Natural Heritage
- Policy BW7 - Sustainable design and place making
- Policy BW8 - Development and the water environment
- Policy BW12 - Development proposals and transport
- Policy BW17 - Securing community infrastructure benefits
- Policy BW19 – Affordable housing target
- Policy AS22 - Affordable housing contributions
- Policy TB11 - Access, parking and accessibility of local facilities

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

SPG1 - Affordable Housing, March 2012  
 SPG2 - Planning Obligations, March 2012  
 SPG4 - Sustainable Design, July 2013  
 SPG5 - Nature and Development, May 2015

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The application site is located within the settlement boundary as defined by the LDP Proposals Map. Therefore the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable and would comply with Policy BW4 of the LDP. The main issues to consider in assessing this application are considered to be:

- The overall impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- The highway/pedestrian safety implications of the development.
- The impact of the development on protected trees.

### The overall impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

The widening of Woodland Drive to provide a wider carriageway and footpath would have little impact on the character and appearance of the area. Indeed, it could be argued that the creation of an adoptable stretch of highway and a new boundary wall to 1 Pleasant View would have a positive impact on the visual qualities of this part of Aberfan. Likewise, the introduction of a single garage to the rear of 1 Pleasant View, although visible in the street scene, would be viewed against a back drop of larger garages which have been constructed to the front of properties in Woodland Drive. Its modest scale and use of external materials, which would match those of 1 Pleasant View, would also ensure its appearance would be sympathetic to the immediate area.

The proposed dwellings, due to their scale and siting would form a visible addition to the landscape. They would be particularly noticeable from some cross valley vantage points. Although it is appreciated the traditional form of development in this area was primarily relatively small terraced properties, this part of Aberfan is now characterised by a variety of different house types. In particular, Woodland Drive consists of large detached brick houses set in fairly generous plots. This diversity in the size of properties is not only evident when travelling to the application site but more so when viewing the site and its surroundings from the other side of the valley. Given this mixture, it is considered that the site can

accommodate the proposed dwellings without causing harm to the character or appearance of the immediate or surrounding area. The existing landscaping, much of which is protected by TPO's, would also help to soften the appearance of the development on this site. Furthermore, when viewing the site from below or cross valley, due to the siting of the proposed dwellings (i.e. one behind the other) their visual impact would be further mitigated. This would also be the case for the large detached garage which would be hidden from such views by its host dwelling.

Not only does the size of houses in the area vary considerably but also their designs are very inconsistent. The position of the proposed dwellings, in a relatively isolated location on the very edge of the settlement boundary, enables the introduction of house types that could draw reference from a variety of styles. In this case, the applicant proposes Georgian style houses which are designed around symmetry and the vertical and horizontal arrangement of well-proportioned windows and doors. The design of both houses are considered acceptable and it is noted that the Design, Heritage and Conservation Officer has not raised any objection to the proposal in this respect.

Finally, the proposed boundary treatments and use of gabion basket retaining walls are also considered acceptable. Much of the retaining structures would only be visible from within the site due to them being masked by the proposed houses. Those that may be visible from outside the site are not of a scale that would significantly harm the visual appearance of the area.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal complies with policy BW7 of the LDP.

#### The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Given the boundary of the closest proposed dwelling is over 35 metres away from the nearest existing house (known as Ty Saer), this part of the proposed development would not result in any overbearing impact, loss of light or loss of privacy to any neighbouring residents. Likewise, the proposed garage to the rear of 1 Pleasant View, due to its size and siting, would not cause any loss of residential amenity. Although it is appreciated that there would be some disturbance as a result of the proposed road improvements, these would be short term and the benefits of enhancing highway and pedestrian safety far outweigh such harm. As Committee will note, there have been no objections received in respect of these issues. Therefore, the proposal has an acceptable impact on local amenity and complies with policy BW7 of the LDP.

#### The highway/pedestrian safety implications of the development.

The improvements to the existing road and access and parking arrangements for both dwellings has been assessed by the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader who has raised no objection to the proposal. It is however necessary to ensure that the road improvements are completed prior to the occupation of any of the proposed dwellings. If Committee are minded to approve this application this could be secured by a suitably worded condition. The Engineering and Traffic Group Leader is also satisfied that the proposed retaining structures are acceptable.

It is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on highway/pedestrian safety or the free flow of traffic in the area. Therefore the proposal is compliant with policies BW12 and TB11 of the LDP.

#### The impact of the development on protected trees..

As stated above, the application has been supported by 'An Initial Arboricultural Survey Report and Impact Assessment'. This primarily considers the impact of the development on the trees subject to a TPO and recommends conditions and procedures that must be undertaken before, during and after construction to ensure their protection. The report also, following an assessment of the health of each tree, recommends works (e.g. deadwood removal) to improve their condition. The Town Planning Division's Countryside Officer has considered the report and is satisfied that if the development is undertaken in accordance with the recommendations within the report then there would be no significant impact upon the protected trees. He has also concluded that there would be sufficient protection to the West Aberfan SINC. Therefore, if Committee are minded to permit this application, compliance with the above mentioned report can be secured by a suitably worded condition. Given the above, the proposal complies with Policy BW5 of the LDP.

#### Planning obligations

Policies BW17 and AS22 of the LDP consider the requirements for planning obligations and affordable housing contributions respectively. In this instance, no planning obligations for the provision of affordable housing or any other contributions have been sought as this would likely render the development financially unviable. In order to come to this conclusion, an assessment has been carried out using the Three Dragons Toolkit.

#### Conclusion

The application site is located within the settlement boundary where new development should be located. The proposal is appropriate to its local context and would integrate effectively with the surrounding area. The impact on neighbouring residents in terms of loss of amenity is negligible and there would be no significant impact on protected trees. The proposal is also considered acceptable in terms of highway and pedestrian safety. On this basis, the following recommendation is made.

**RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED** subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

**Reason** - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details:
  - WW/A/MT/PD/WE/4
  - WW/A/MT/PD/WE/5A
  - WW/A/MT/PD/WE/6
  - WW/A/MT/PD/WE/8
  - WW/A/MT/PD/WE/10

- WW/A/MT/PD/WE/13
- WW/A/MT/PD/WE/15
- 1/PV/A/MT/WE/1
- 1/PV/A/MT/WE/2
- 16-02-03/C
- 16-02-02/B
- 16-02-04/C
- 16-02-05/C
- 16-02-06/D
- Plans 1, 2 and 3 and photographs 1, 2 and 3 received on 3rd June 2016.

**Reason** -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in strict accordance with the Initial Arboricultural Survey Report and Impact Assessment (Cardiff Treescapes) received on 3rd May 2015.

**Reason** - In the interests of visual amenity and to afford protection to existing trees in accordance with Policy BW5 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of schedule 2, part 1, classes A, B, C and E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended for Wales) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification), no extensions, roof additions/alterations or buildings within the curtilage of the dwellinghouses shall be erected other than those expressly authorised by this permission.

**Reason** - In the interest of visual amenity and to protect the existing trees in accordance with Policies BW5 and BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

5. Prior to the occupation of any dwelling, hereby permitted, Woodland Drive shall be widened and improved in accordance with the details shown on drawing numbers WW/A/MT/PD/WE/6 and 1/PV/A/MT/WE/1 and the boundary wall to the south of 1 Pleasant View shall be completed in accordance with the details WW/A/MT/PD/WE/15.

**Reason** - In the interest of highway and pedestrian safety and visual amenity in accordance with Policies BW7, BW12 and TB11 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

6. Construction works shall not take place outside the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 09:00 to 14:00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

**Reason** - To ensure that the noise emitted/activities are not a source of nuisance to occupants of nearby properties in accordance with Policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

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