

Application No.
P/16/0108

Date
7th April 2016

Determining Authority
MTCBC

Proposed Development

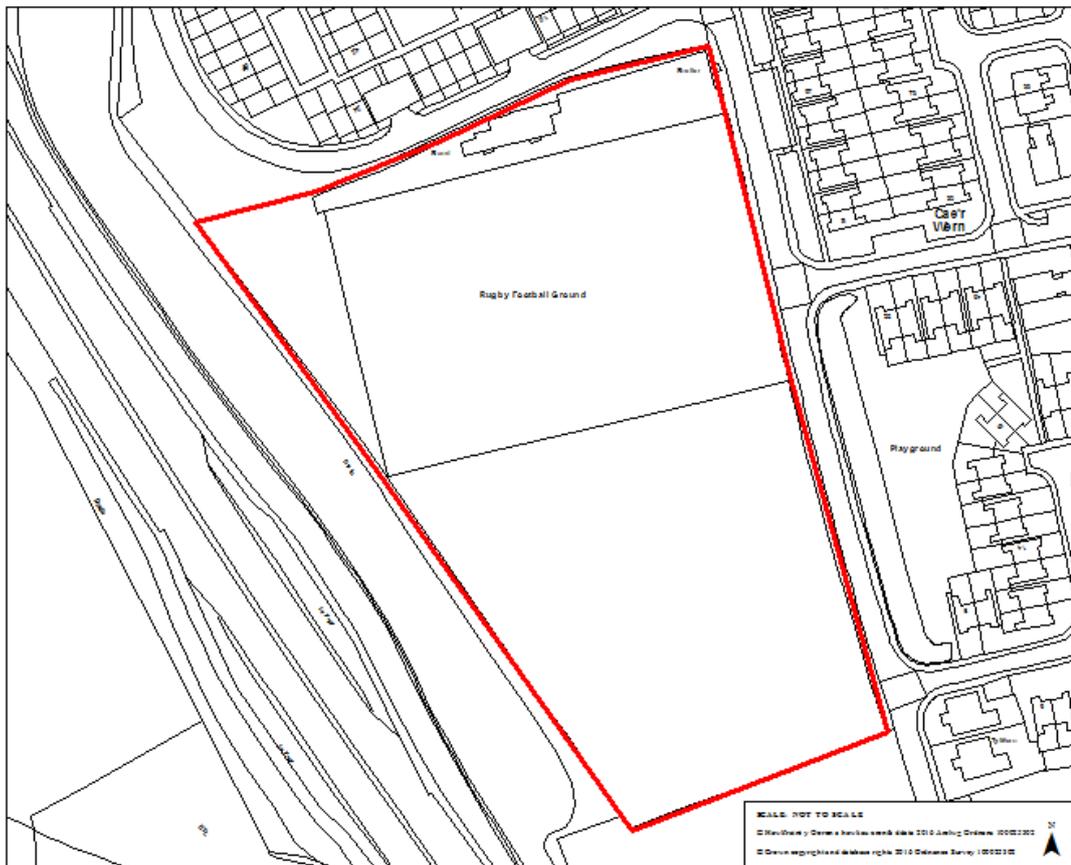
Location

Name & Address of Applicant/Agent

Retention of spectator stands with associated toilet facilities and concrete path, erection of training building, installation of artificial training surface, erection of floodlights and dug outs, creation of hard surfaced parking areas and two new access points

The Wern
Ynysfach Road
Ynysfach
Merthyr Tydfil

Merthyr Tydfil Rugby Club
c/o Mr Paul Thomas
Utopia Design
5 Amberton Place
Penydarren
Merthyr Tydfil



APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to a site known locally as the Wern Field. It is an enclosed site, which is used as the home venue for Merthyr Tydfil Rugby Football Club.

The site is bound by the highway of Penlan View to the north, the highway of Ynysfach Road to the east, and wooded and grassed areas to the south and west. The land is flat. It currently consists of:

- Two grassed pitches at right angles to each other.

- A covered, tiered spectator stand (with changing rooms) and a single-storey detached hospitality suite to the northern boundary.
- A 78m long, ground-level spectator stand to the eastern boundary.
- A hard-surfaced parking area (for approximately 31 cars) to the east of the main stand, accessed via Ynysfach Road.
- Nineteen flood-lights.
- Two enclosed and tiered spectator stands (which form part of this application).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This is a partially retrospective application which seeks full planning permission for the retention of two enclosed and tiered spectator stands. The proposal also includes the erection of a single-storey training building, two dug-outs, the installation of an artificial surface to one of the pitches, the siting of two portable toilets, the creation of a concrete footpath, and the provision of parking areas with associated accesses.

Committee will be aware that the majority of these proposals have already been granted planning permission (P/15/0103 & P/15/0339). This application seeks to combine (with minor alterations), these previous permissions whilst also proposing a training building and associated revised parking area to the northwest of the site. A summary of the proposal is outlined below:

- The two spectator stands, which have already been constructed, are located adjacent to each other, between the existing grassed pitches, and allow spectators to view the northern pitch. They each measure 24.2m long, a maximum of 6m wide and have ridged roofs with a maximum height of 5.2m. They contain tiered seating and each has the capacity to accommodate 336 spectators. The stands are constructed of a steel frame with an open front, and a canvas covering which forms the side and rear walls and roof.
- The proposed training building would be located to the northwest of the site. It would measure 18m long and 12m wide, and would have a ridged roof with a maximum height of 4.8m. It would have four windows and a door in its front (northeast) elevation, double doors in its rear (southwest) elevation, and two roof-lights in each of the planes of its roof. Its walls would be constructed of block-work and covered with profiled steel cladding, its roof would be covered with profiled steel cladding, and its windows and doors would be constructed of upvc.
- The portable toilets would be sited between the spectator stands. They would measure 1.1m wide, 1.1m deep and 2.3m in height, and would be constructed of glass fibre.
- The proposed concrete path would be located to the west, east and between the spectator stands, and would allow access between the stands and to an existing path on the eastern boundary of the site. It would be constructed in a similar position to an existing concrete path.
- The two dug-outs would each measure 3.3m in length and 1.8m in depth, and would have mono-pitched roofs measuring a maximum of 2.4m in height. They would be positioned in front of the proposed spectator stand and would face south toward the

rugby pitches. Two existing dug-outs, in similar positions to those proposed, would be demolished.

- The installation of artificial surfacing to the northern pitch. This pitch would also be slightly re-positioned, 3m to the north and 1m to the east of its current position.
- The creation of hard-surfaced parking areas to the northwest, south and west of the site. The parking area to the northwest of the site would incorporate 24 spaces and the area to the west would incorporate 15 spaces. A larger parking area with 151 spaces (including two spaces for coaches) would be created to the south of the site.
- The re-positioning (turning by 90 degrees) of the southern pitch. Its new position would be orientated in the same direction as the proposed artificial pitch.
- The creation of two new vehicular accesses: one positioned in the north-western corner of the site and the other in the south-eastern corner.
- The erection of flood-lights. The site is currently served by 19 flood-lights, which would be reduced to 17 as part of the proposal. Some of these would be re-positioned as a result of the siting of the spectator stands, the creation of the new parking areas and the re-positioning of the southern pitch.

The existing spectator stand, on the eastern boundary of the site, would be retained.

PLANNING HISTORY

- P/15/0339 - Retention of two spectator stands with associated toilet facilities and concrete path, and creation of hard surfaced parking areas and gated accesses
Granted permission 03/12/15
- P/15/0103 - Erection of spectators stand including hospitality suite, training area and changing rooms, installation of artificial playing surface, erection of floodlights and dug-outs, creation of hard surfaced parking areas and 2 new access points
Granted permission 15/10/2015
- P/09/0285 - Retention of covered terrace and seating area
Granted permission 15/01/2010
- P/08/0447 - Erection of covered terrace and seating area
Granted permission 22/01/2009
- P/97/0246 - Development of an all-weather, flood-lit playing area, new perimeter fence, renovation of existing building and drainage of playing fields
Granted permission 25/09/01
- P/97/0214 - Erection of first floor extension, new external balcony and other associated external works
Granted permission 17/11/2010

CONSULTATION

Town Planning Division's Policy & Implementation Group Leader	No objection, subject to conditions
Town Planning Division's Landscape Officer	No objection, subject to conditions
Town Planning Division's Countryside Officer	No objection, subject to conditions
Engineering & Traffic Group Leader	No objection, subject to conditions
Corporate Property Manager	No response
Welsh Assembly Government Transport Division	No objection, subject to a condition
Coal Authority	No objection, subject to conditions
Welsh Water	No objection, subject to conditions

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring residents, four site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales Edition 8, January 2016

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

Section 8.7.1 – Development Management and Transport – Sets out the criteria that should be considered where transport implications may occur, such as impacts on local travel demand, public transport provision, accessibility and highway safety.

Section 11.1.3 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation – The Welsh Government supports the development of sport and recreation, and the wide range of leisure pursuits which encourage physical activity. These activities are important for the well-being of children and adults and for the social and economic life of Wales.

Technical Advice Note (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 deliver environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion at every scale throughout Wales.

TAN 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space advises on the role of the planning system in making provision for sport and recreational facilities and informal open spaces, as well as providing existing facilities and open spaces.

TAN 18: Transport provides advice on how to integrate land use planning and transport and how transport impacts should be assessed and mitigated.

Local Planning Policy

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021

Policy BW1	-	Development Strategy – Primary Growth Area
Policy BW4	-	Settlement limits
Policy BW7	-	Sustainable design and place making
Policy BW8	-	Development and the water environment
Policy BW12	-	Development proposals and transport
Policy BW16	-	Protecting/enhancing the network of leisure facilities
Policy TB11	-	Access, parking and accessibility of local facilities

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

SPG 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013)

Other guidance:

CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations in the assessment of this application are the impact of the spectator stands, training building, other structures and parking areas on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the impact on surrounding residents and effect on highway and pedestrian safety.

The site is located within settlements, and within the Primary Growth Area, as defined by policies BW1 and BW4 of the LDP. Therefore the principle of the development is considered acceptable, provided that it satisfies other relevant planning policies and material planning considerations. The proposal is located within the boundaries of the Wern Field, which has historically been used for rugby purposes. The proposed development, in terms of the continued use of the site as a sports venue, with associated facilities is therefore considered acceptable and indeed encouraged by the Welsh Government.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The design of the spectator stands, training building, dug-outs and portable toilets is simple and typical for these types of structure. The main visual impact is from the stands and training building. However, given the scale, design and siting of the stands (within the centre of the site) and their relationship with the other built development that supports the facility, they do not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, these have previously been granted planning permission (P/15/0339). The proposed training building would be sited in the northwest corner of the site and in close

proximity to the dwellings of Penlan View. It would be viewed against the backdrop of mature trees to the west of the site, and the spectator stands, hospitality suite and changing facilities which surround the main pitch. Its shallow roof pitch and simple design would fit in with the appearance of other structures within the site and, as such, it is not considered that it would have an unacceptable visual impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The dug-outs would be of modest dimensions and would be located within the site, screened by the boundary fence and spectator stands. As such they would have little impact on the character and appearance of the area. It is also noted that these have previously been granted planning permission (P/15/0103).

The proposed artificial surface that would be installed on the northern sports pitch would have a similar appearance and colour to a natural grassed surface. The proposed hard-surfaced parking areas would have a greater visual impact than the grassed areas that they would replace. However, as they would be located at ground level, they would not have a significant visual impact when viewed from the surrounding area. The large car parking area to the south of the site would have the greatest visual impact. In order to reduce and soften this impact, the Town Planning Division's Landscape Architect has suggested that landscaping (trees and hedges) should be incorporated into the layout. If Committee are minded to permit this application, this can be secured by an appropriately worded condition. Committee will also be aware that the principle of the artificial pitch and car parking areas has also been accepted by granting planning permissions P/15/0339 and P/15/0103.

The re-positioning of the existing flood-lights within the site is considered acceptable in terms of their impact on the visual amenity of the area and on surrounding residents. Indeed, the reduction of the number of the flood-lights, from 19 to 17, is considered to be a visual improvement.

The presence of boundary fencing, trees, and the existing stands to the north and west, would also somewhat mitigate the visual impact of the development from outside the site. Having regard to the above points, the proposed development is considered acceptable and would not have an adverse impact on the character or visual amenity of the area. As such, it complies with Policy BW7 of the LDP.

Impact on residential amenity

Regard has also been had for the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of surrounding residents. It is considered that the spectator stands and training building are the part of the proposed development that would have the greatest impact on residential amenity. The impact of the spectator stands on neighbouring residents was found to be acceptable when considering planning application P/15/0339.

The training building would be located at least 30m from the nearest dwelling, and its windows and doors would not face toward them. As such it is considered that it would not have any detrimental impact on the amenities of the surrounding residents in terms of loss of privacy, loss of light or overbearing impact. Additionally, as it is an enclosed facility, and would be used for activities similar to those currently carried out at the site (sports training). It is not considered that it would result in an unacceptable impact on surrounding residents in terms of noise and disturbance.

Similarly, it is not considered that the other proposed development included in the application (dug-outs, artificial surface, portable toilets, concrete path, accesses and hard-surfacing), would have an adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residents.

The aim of the proposed development is to encourage greater use of the site. This is clearly encouraged by both national and local policies. However, greater use could result in increased noise and disturbance to local residents. This would be particularly evident on match days. However, this intensification of the use of the site would likely be confined to a limited time period on certain days of the week. Additionally, given the proposed increased car parking provision, users of the facility would be able to park within the site rather than on the highways of Ynysfach Road, Cae'r Wern or Penlan View. This would move the activity further away from the dwellings, thus limiting noise and disturbance in these areas.

Having regard to the above points, and given the lack of objection from local residents, any impact on local residents from noise and disturbance would not be significant enough to warrant refusal of the application. As such, the proposal accords with Policy BW7 of the LDP.

Highways/Parking

It is acknowledged that the improved facilities at the sports ground could increase traffic movements on the adjacent and surrounding highways. In this respect, it is considered that the highway network serving the site can accommodate the increase in traffic.

The site currently has parking provision for approximately 31 vehicles. The submitted plans indicate that the proposed development would include provision for a total of 221 parking spaces (including 2 coach spaces). This is considered adequate for a venue of this size, in this location, and complies with the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008.

The installation of two new gated vehicular accesses (one at the northwestern end of the site and accessed from Penlan View, and the other at the southern end of the site and accessed from Ynysfach Road), which would serve separate parking areas, would improve pedestrian and vehicular access to the site. This would meet the access needs and mobility requirements of a greater proportion of the community and would contribute to reducing congestion into and out of the site.

The area surrounding the site currently suffers from high levels of indiscriminate on-street parking, particularly during sporting events, resulting in congestion and disruption on the adjacent highways of Penlan View, Ynysfach Road and Cae'r Wern. The provision of significant off-street parking provision within the site would help to alleviate this issue, to the benefit of highway and pedestrian safety in the surrounding area.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Transport Division has recommended that an informative be attached, to any approval granted, requiring that flood-lights are appropriately shielded and directed away from the adjacent A470 trunk road, so as not to affect users of the road. Given that the amount of flood-lights within the site would be reduced from 19 to 17, and that the re-positioned flood-lights would not face toward the A470 trunk road, it is unlikely that any light would spill onto the A470. Nevertheless, an informative could be added to any permission granted.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with policies BW12 and TB11 of the LDP, and it is noted that the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader has not objected to the proposal. However, in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity, it is recommended that further details of the parking and access arrangements (including gradients, materials, demarcation and visibility splays) are submitted, which could be achieved by the imposition of a suitably worded condition to any approval granted.

Drainage

The Engineering and Traffic Group Leader has advised that further drainage details are required. A suitably worded condition could be attached to any permission, which requires the submission and approval of these details, before works commence.

Other considerations

The application site lies within an area of 'High Risk', in relation to historical mining. A Mining Risk Assessment report was considered by the Coal Authority who concurred with the recommendations of the report and raised no objection, provided that suitable site investigations are undertaken. A site investigation report has been submitted to the Coal Authority who considered it to be inadequate to establish the coal mining legacy of the site. As such, the Coal Authority has recommended that a condition be attached, to any permission, requiring the submission and approval of a scheme of intrusive site investigations, and that any required remediation works are undertaken in accordance with the findings of the report.

As mentioned above, previous planning applications granted permission for developments at this site, which could be undertaken in addition to the current proposal. Notably, a spectator stand with hospitality suite which was granted permission (P/15/0103) in October 2015 could be constructed in combination with the proposals the subject of this application, without causing any significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area, highway safety or residential amenity.

Accordingly the development is considered acceptable and complies with relevant LDP policies. Therefore, the following recommendation is made:

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

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

WERN BARN/14 (Proposed Plans & Elevations) received on 7th April 2016, WERN BARN/14a (Proposed Plans & Elevations of Dugouts & Stand) received on 5th July 2016, and WERN BARN/15b (Proposed Site Plan) received on 6th July 2016.

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

2. **Prior to the construction of the training building hereby approved** details (including colour) of the external cladding of the training building shall be submitted

to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and adjoining buildings in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

3. Notwithstanding the submitted plans and, **prior to the construction of the southern car parking area**, there shall be, submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, a scheme of landscaping for the site. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason - To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity and to accord with Policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

4. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, **no development of the car parking areas or accesses shown on approved plan WERN/BARN15 shall take place** until details of their construction (including levels, drainage and finished surface details) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details; and the car parking spaces shall remain available for their designated use in perpetuity.

Reason - To ensure that vehicles are parked off the highway in the interests of road safety in accordance with Policies BW12 and TB11 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

5. **Within 2 months of the date of this permission**, a site investigation shall be carried out in accordance with a methodology first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The results of the site investigation shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 4 months of the date of this permission. If any land instability issues are found during the site investigation, a report specifying the measures to be taken to remediate the site to render it suitable for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Remedial measures shall be carried out in a time-scale which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - The site may be unstable and as such in the interests of safety remedial measures may need to be carried out.

6. If during the course of development, any unexpected land instability issues are found which were not identified in the site investigation referred to in condition 5, additional measures for their remediation in the form of a remediation scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The remediation

of the site shall incorporate the approved additional measures which shall be retained in perpetuity.

Reason - The site may be unstable and as such in the interests of safety, remedial measures may need to be carried out.

INFORMATIVES

1. The floodlights shall be appropriately shielded and directed away from the adjacent A470 trunk road, so as not to impact highway users.
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