

Application No.
P/15/0103

Date
9th April 2015

Determining Authority
MTCBC

Proposed Development

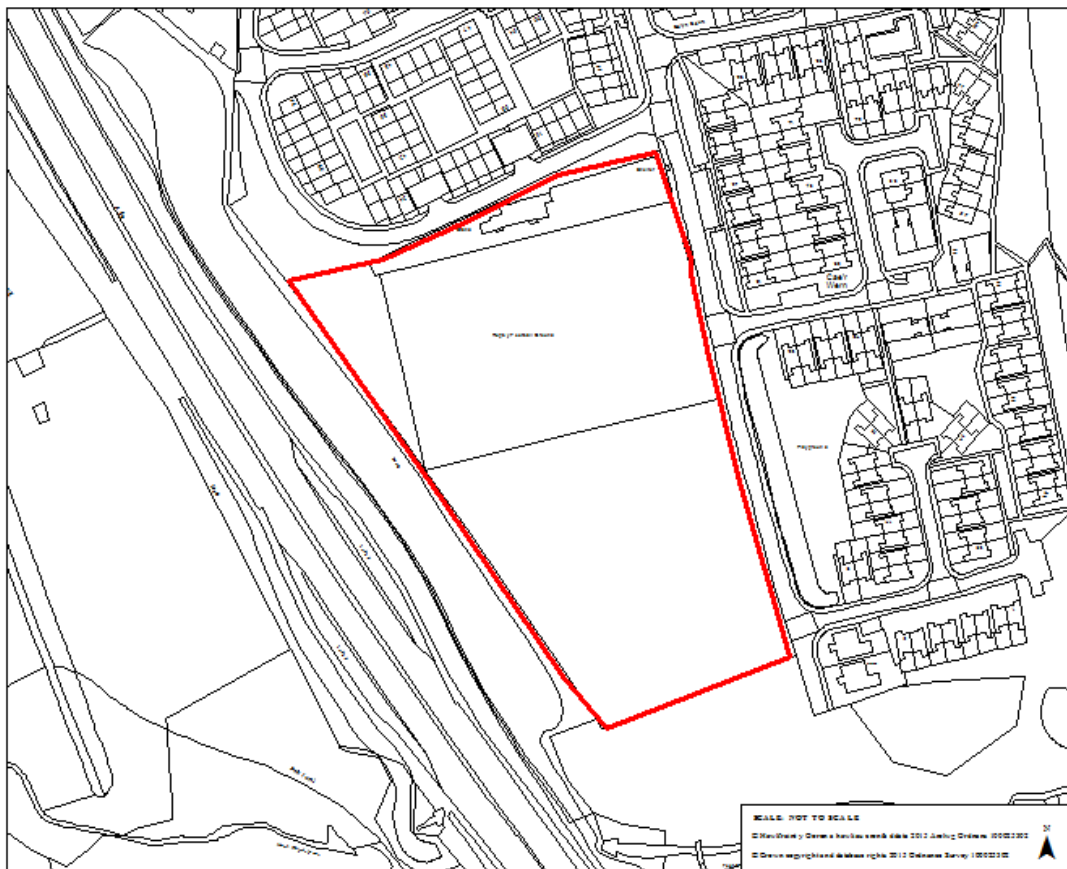
Location

Name & Address of Applicant/Agent

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

Merthyr Tydfil Rugby Football Club Ltd
Wern Field
Caerwern
Ynysfach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8RF

Merthyr Tydfil Rugby Football Club Ltd
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 32 cars) to the east of the main stand, accessed via Ynysfach Road.
- Nineteen flood-lights.

It is noted that two additional spectator stands have been erected in the centre of the site between the two existing pitches. This development is unauthorised and does not form part of the application the subject of this report. However, following discussions with the applicant, a retrospective planning application is awaited in an attempt to rectify this breach of planning control.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the re-development of the site, which would comprise:

- The construction of a new covered tiered spectator stand that would incorporate a two-storey clubhouse. The existing tiered spectator stand, and single-storey hospitality suite building would be demolished to accommodate the new building. It would measure 51m in length, a maximum of 16m in width and would have a mono-pitched roof (which would also form a canopy over the spectator stand) with a maximum height of 9m. The stand would face south toward the pitches, with the seating being accessed via four external staircases on the front elevation of the stand. The front elevation would also incorporate two entrance doors, seven windows and bi-folding doors (comprising 16 glazed panels) at ground floor level. The west side elevation would incorporate an entrance door at ground floor level. The east side elevation would have two entrance doors and a roller shutter at ground floor level and a window at first floor level. The rear elevation would have 14 windows at ground floor level and 8 windows at first floor level. The stand would have the capacity to accommodate 677 people.

The building would be triangular in shape and be constructed externally from rendered block-work with a steel profiled roof. The windows and doors would be Upvc. The ground floor would accommodate the changing rooms, function rooms, kitchens and offices. The first floor would provide a storage area and gym.

- The erection of two dug-outs. These 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 south and west of the site. Two parking areas would be created to the west of the site, one incorporating 34 parking spaces and the other 15 spaces. A larger parking area with 154 spaces 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 to serve one of the parking areas and the other in the south-eastern corner to serve the other two new parking areas.
- The erection of flood-lights. The site is currently served by 19 flood-lights, which would be reduced to 15 as part of the proposal. Some of these would be re-positioned as a result of the siting of the new spectator stand, the creation of the new parking areas and the re-positioning of the south pitch.

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

PLANNING HISTORY

P/09/0285	-	Retention of covered terrace and seating area Granted permission on 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 Officer	No objection
Town Planning Division's Countryside Officer	No objection
Town Planning Division's Landscape Architect	No objection, subject to condition
Engineering & Highways Manager	No objection, subject to condition
Corporate Property Manager	No response
Welsh Assembly Government Transport Division	No objection
Coal Authority	No objection
Welsh Water	No objection, subject to condition
Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust	No objection

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, and a press notice was published in the Merthyr Express newspaper on 21st May 2015.

One letter of objection was received from the owners of Ty Rygbi, Cae'r Wern, Ynysfach. In summary, the following objections were raised:

- The proposed development would destroy the views currently enjoyed from the property that looks out onto the rugby field. The view would instead be of the proposed car parking area.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales Edition 7, July 2014

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 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 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 proposed building, 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 comprises the re-development 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 hospitality and changing facilities is therefore considered acceptable and indeed encouraged by the Welsh Government. It is also noted that the Planning Policy and Implementation Group Leader has not objected to the proposal, stating that the proposal would improve sports facilities at Merthyr Tydfil Rugby Football Club and as such, complies with Policy BW16 of the LDP. This policy seeks to support the enhancement of the County Borough's network of leisure facilities in order to ensure their continued use for recreation and amenity.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed spectator stand/clubhouse building would be 6m longer than the combined length of the existing main stand and hospitality building, a maximum of 0.3m wider and a maximum of 1.2m higher. Whilst it is acknowledged that the building would be of a larger size and mass, its scale is considered acceptable. The presence of boundary fencing and trees to the northern boundary, would somewhat mitigate the visual impact of the rear of the building. Its design is simple and typical for this type of structure. The external walls would be rendered (painted white) and it would have a steel profiled roof (light grey). Its design and size is therefore considered to be acceptable.

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.

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 large car parking area to the south of the site (gravelled finish) 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) should be incorporated into the layout. If Committee are minded to permit this application, this can be secured by an appropriately worded condition. This will clearly result in some spaces being lost to landscaping.

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 15, is considered to be a visual improvement.

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 stand/clubhouse would be the part of the proposed development that would have the greatest impact on residential amenity.

The stand would be located on the northern edge of the site, and opposite the dwellings of 16-26 Penlan View. Given its size, it is acknowledged that the proposed stand could result in some loss of light and have some overbearing impact. However, the submitted plans indicate that the new stand would be erected at a ground level which would be 2.1m lower than the dwellings in Penlan View. It would also be positioned at least 13m away from these dwellings. Given this, and the fact that the spectator stand/clubhouse would not be significantly higher than the existing stand (approximately 1.2m higher), it is considered that any loss of light would be minimal. In arriving at this conclusion, it is appreciated that there would be greater impact to additional properties in Penlan View given the size of the spectator stand/clubhouse.

Similarly, it is acknowledged that the new building would result in an increased degree of over-bearing impact on the dwellings of Penlan View. However, as highlighted above, the separation between the dwellings and the stand (at least 13m), and the fact that it would be constructed on a lower ground level, would reduce any overbearing impact to an acceptable degree.

The spectator stand/clubhouse has the potential to result in over-looking to houses in Penlan View. The rear elevation of the existing stand faces toward these dwellings but does not have any windows. However, the proposal would have windows at ground and first floor level. Given the difference in levels, the ground floor windows would not have any unacceptable impact in terms of loss of privacy by virtue of overlooking. To prevent any overlooking from the first floor windows to the houses in Penlan View, they have been positioned 1.8m above the internal floor level. This means that anyone standing within the proposed building would not be able to overlook these properties.

It is not considered that the other built development included in the application (the dug-outs, flood-lights, accesses, hard-surfacing and artificial playing surface), would have an adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residents.

As stated above, the flood-lights would be re-positioned and reduced in number (from 19 to 15). The number of lights facing toward the dwellings of Cae'r Wern, to the east of the site, would be reduced. Therefore, it is not considered that the re-positioning of the lights would have any greater impact, in terms of light spillage, than the existing flood-lights.

The aim of the proposed development is to encourage greater use of the site. This is clearly encouraged by both central government and LDP 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 on these grounds 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 234 parking 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 northern 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 increased 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.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with policies BW12 and TB11 of the LDP, and it is noted that the Engineering and Highways Manager 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.

Ecology

The proposed development is confined to the established boundaries of the Wern Field. Additionally, the submitted plans do not indicate that any trees within the site would be removed to accommodate the proposal. As such, the Town Planning Division's Countryside Officer has not raised an objection to the application as it would not have any ecological impact.

Drainage

Following the submission of a drainage scheme, the Engineering and Highways Manager has not raised an objection, but 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 has been received and the Coal Authority have concurred with the recommendations of the report and raised no objection, provided that suitable conditions are attached to any permission, to ensure that intrusive site investigations are undertaken.

Finally, it is noted that one letter of objection was received following the publicity exercise undertaken, from the owners of the nearby dwelling of Ty Rygbi. The objection relates to views from the dwelling, which would be negatively affected by the introduction of a hard-surfaced parking area. Committee will be aware that the impact of a proposed development on views is not a material consideration. However, as stated above, it is anticipated that the additional landscaping would break up the mass of hard-surfacing.

Accordingly the proposed 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 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. **No development shall commence** until further details of a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface water have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained in perpetuity.

Reason - To ensure adequate disposal of foul and surface water drainage in accordance with Policy BW8 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan.

3. Notwithstanding the submitted plans, **no development or site clearance shall take place** until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping for the car-parking area to the south of 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 shall take place** until details of the construction of the car park and the accesses (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. **No development shall take place** until a site investigation has been 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 before any development begins. 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 prior to the first beneficial use of the development in accordance with the approved details and 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.

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.
