

**Application No.**  
P/16/0114

**Date**  
11th April 2016

**Determining Authority**  
MTCBC

**Proposed Development**

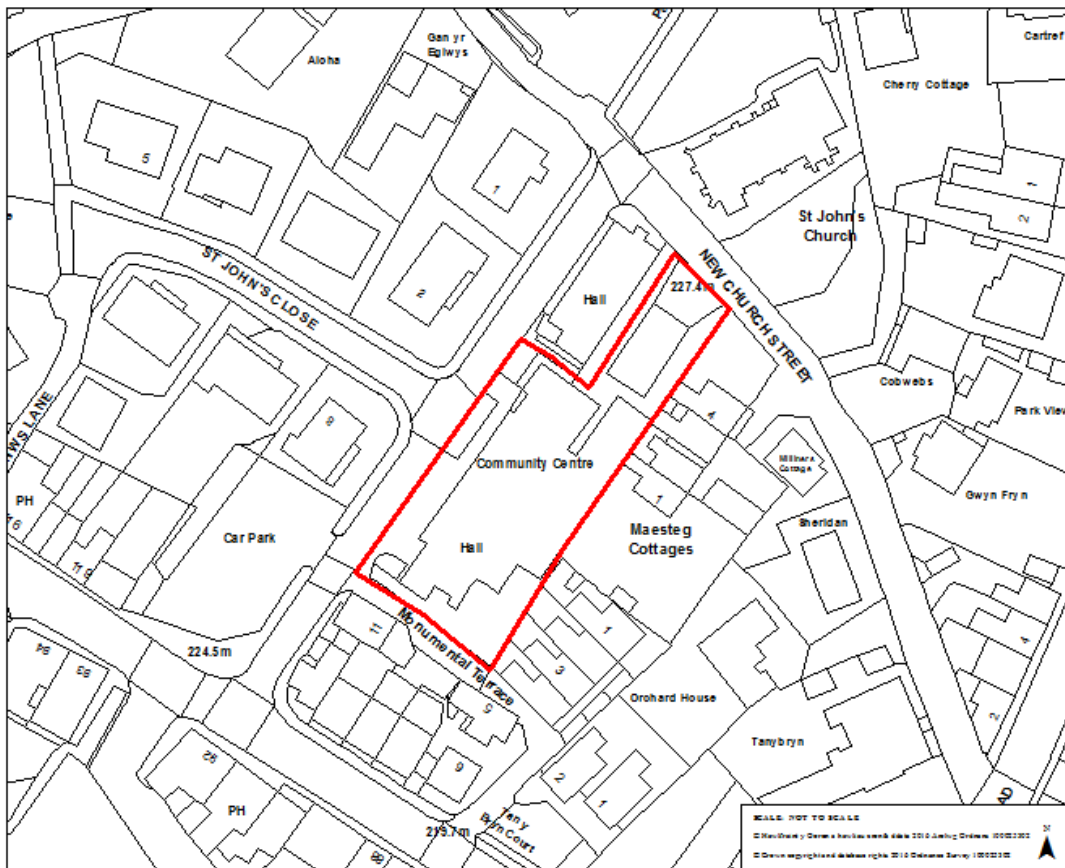
**Location**

**Name & Address of Applicant/Agent**

Change of use of garage to bunk-house and erection of single storey extension (linking garage to community centre)

TA Garage & Cefn Coed Community Centre  
New Church Street  
Cefn Coed  
Merthyr Tydfil

Cefn Coed Community Centre  
c/o Philip Griffiths Architect  
3 St Johns Close  
Cefn Coed  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 2PE



Councillor Mytton wishes the application to be reported to Committee due to the concerns of residents.

**APPLICATION SITE**

This application site relates to a building used as a community centre (Cefn Coed Community Centre) and an adjacent detached building (known as the TA garage) which currently contains a motor vehicle repair business and which was historically used as a vehicle garage by the Territorial Army.

The site is bound by the highway of Old Drill Hall Road (from which the community centre is accessed), and a church hall to the northwest, the highway of New Church Street to the northeast (from which the TA Garage is accessed) and dwellings to the southeast and south west.

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks full planning permission to change the use of the TA garage to a bunk-house. The proposal also includes the erection of a single-storey extension, which would connect the TA garage to the community centre. This connection is necessary to enable the users of the bunk-house to utilise the kitchen and dining room facilities within the community centre.

A first-floor and staircase would be created within the TA garage building. The bunk-house would comprise four en-suite rooms and a corridor containing cycle racks on its ground floor. Its first floor would comprise three en-suite rooms, a lounge and a corridor. The bunk-house would therefore contain seven guest rooms in total. The proposed extension would connect the southwest elevation of the TA garage to the northeast elevation of the community centre and would contain a lobby and laundry.

A number of external alterations would be made to the TA garage as part of the proposal. The roller shutter in the front, northeast, elevation would be in-filled with brickwork (painted white) and four windows inserted in the first floor and a door in the ground floor. The windows would have grey aluminium frames. The windows in the building's northwest side elevation would be replaced by grey aluminium framed windows which would have a solid grey aluminium panel at the same level as the proposed first floor. The windows in the building's southeast elevation would also be replaced with grey aluminium framed windows, and would also include a solid grey aluminium panel at the same level of the proposed first floor. These windows would be fitted with obscure glazing. The roof of the building would have four roof-lights inserted into each of its planes, and would be covered with grey corrugated sheeting.

The proposed extension would measure a maximum of 4.7m long and 7m wide. It would consist of a variety of different roof pitches and have a maximum height of 3.6m. It would have a window and door in its northwest elevation and a door in its southeast elevation. Its walls would be finished in brick-work, and the roof covered with artificial slates. The window and doors would match those of the bunk-house.

The community centre currently benefits from five off-street parking spaces, and the TA garage has three spaces. The proposal includes the provision of a further nine parking spaces to the front of the community centre, resulting in a total of 17 spaces. Seven of these spaces would be for use by the bunk-house and the remaining 10 would be used by the community centre.

## PLANNING HISTORY

P/05/0649 - Erection of single storey rear extension (to the Community Centre)  
Approved 02/12/05

## CONSULTATION

Town Planning Division's Policy & Implementation Group Leader	No objection
Engineering & Traffic Group Leader	No objection
Welsh Water	No objection
Wales & West Utilities	No objection

## PUBLICITY

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

Four letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise from neighbouring residents. Two letters were received from individual households, one letter was signed by four households and one letter was signed by seven households.

The main objections are summarised as follows:

- The area around the community centre (St John's Close and New Church Street) has experienced an increased volume of traffic which has caused constant blockages with car parking and invasive residential issues being a problem.
- The sharp bend at New Church Street is a likely accident spot and interferes with the activities of the church.
- The roads around the community centre are often grid-locked as a result of events such as discos in the community centre.
- Constant traffic problems are affecting the health and well-being of local residents, and the enjoyment of their properties.
- The garages and gates of properties are often blocked by vehicles attending the community centre.
- The volume of parked vehicles around the community centre means that surrounding roads are inaccessible to emergency vehicles.
- Residents are unable to obtain parking spaces due to the amount of vehicles parked on the roads.
- The proposal would result in increased traffic and parking on already congested roads.
- The parking allocation for the proposed bunk-house is inadequate and would result in a further increase in the existing parking problems.
- The proposed development would affect the potential re-sale value of dwellings in the immediate vicinity.
- The proposed use is inappropriate for the residential area.
- The development will result in disturbance from the users of the bunk-house, particularly during the evening and night.
- The disturbance from the proposed use would also affect events and ceremonies at the adjacent church.

- The bunk-house could be used as a party venue due to the close proximity of pubs and restaurants, resulting in further noise and disturbance.
- The two accesses to the building (from Old Drill Hall Road and New Church Street), would result in more disturbance than if the building were accessed from just one entrance.
- The internal layout of the bunk-house results in the rooms being on the side of the building closest to Maesteg Cottages, causing overlooking and greater disturbance than if the rooms were located on the opposite side of the building.
- The proposed parking spaces accessed from New Church Street are steep and difficult to access. As such, users of the bunk-house may park on the adjacent roads, rather than use them.
- The proposed lounge would be located adjacent to New Church Street, resulting in greater disturbance than if it were located elsewhere in the building.

## 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 4.3.1 ‘...The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act establishes a ‘sustainable development principle’ In order to achieve this principle we expect all those involved in the planning system to adhere to:

- Putting people and their quality of life now and in the future, at the centre of decision-making...
- taking a long term perspective to safeguard the interests of future generations, whilst at the same time meeting needs of people today;
- respect for environmental limits, so that resources are not irrecoverably depleted or the environment irreversibly damaged. This means, for example, mitigating climate change, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, minimising harmful emissions, and promoting sustainable use of natural resources...’

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.

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

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 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 BW12	-	Development proposals and transport
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 change of use on the amenity of surrounding residents and the effect on highway and pedestrian safety. The impact of the proposed extension and external alterations on the character and appearance of the area are also an important consideration.

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 proposed extension would be of an acceptable scale, and would be finished in materials to match the adjoining community centre. The majority of the materials would also match the host building. Given its single storey nature and siting between the larger community centre and TA garage buildings (as well as the adjacent church hall and dwellings of Maesteg Cottages) it would not be readily visible from the surrounding area. The external alterations to the TA garage are also considered to be acceptable and would undoubtedly improve the appearance of the building. Having regard to the above points, the proposed extension and alterations are considered acceptable and would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area. As such, it complies with Policy BW7 of the LDP.

Regard has also been had for the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of surrounding residents. In this respect, it is considered that the greatest impacts from the development would be the potential noise and disturbance caused by users of the bunk-house, and overlooking from the bunk-house to the adjacent dwellings of Maesteg Cottages to the southeast.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the change of use of the TA garage to a bunk-house could result in a degree of noise and disturbance, it should be noted that the current use of the

building is a motor vehicle repair garage. This use is not restricted by any planning conditions limiting the specific activities that can be undertaken at the garage or the times it can operate. As such, it is not considered that the bunk-house would generate any more noise and disturbance than the existing use. Indeed, it could be argued that the proposal would improve the amenity of residents by removing an insensitive use from the area. It is acknowledged that there may be increased movements in and out of the building in the evening given the existing uses in the area (e.g. community centre and church hall) but it is not considered that this would result in a significant increase in noise and disturbance to that which is currently experienced.

It is also acknowledged that the change of use could result in overlooking from the rooms of the bunk-house to the garden area of the adjacent dwelling of 4 Maesteg Cottages, and the rear windows of 3 Maesteg Cottages. However, the plans indicate that the windows in the southeast elevation of the bunk-house would be fitted with obscured glazing, which would significantly mitigate any overlooking. Additionally, the windows serving the first floor of the bunk-house would be low-level (floor-level), as well as being obscured, further reducing the degree of overlooking. A suitably-worded condition could be added, to any permission granted, ensuring that these windows be fitted with obscure glazing.

Neither the change of use, nor the external alterations would have a harmful impact on neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light or overbearing impact. Similarly, given its scale and siting, it is not considered that the proposed extension would have any unacceptable impact on the amenities of surrounding residents in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or overbearing impact.

Having regard to the above, it is not considered that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding residents and as such it accords with Policy BW7 of the LDP.

The site currently has parking provision for approximately 8 vehicles (5 serving the community centre and 3 serving the garage). The submitted plans indicate that the proposed development would increase the off-street parking for the site to a total of 17 spaces, 7 of which would serve the proposed bunk-house (one parking space per room). This provision is considered adequate to serve the proposed use. It should also be noted that there is a public car park within 20m of the application site. It is however considered necessary to attach a condition, to any permission granted, requiring the parking spaces specified on the approved plans to be provided before the bunk-house is brought into use and kept available for its users thereafter.

The increase in the amount of parking spaces serving the community centre (from five to ten), should also help to reduce any parking and congestion problems that are being experienced in the area.

Taking the above points into consideration, and noting that the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader has not objected to the proposal, it is not considered that the development would have a detrimental impact on highway or pedestrian safety. As such, it would comply with policies BW12 and TB11 of the LDP.

The majority of the issues raised by local residents have been addressed in the preceding paragraphs. Committee will be aware that the effect of development on the values of

surrounding properties is not a material planning consideration. Likewise, the blocking of accesses is a matter for the police.

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 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 documents:

02B (Site Plan Proposed), 06A (Ground Floor Plan) and 07B (First Floor Plan) received on 11th July 2016, and 08E (Section & Elevations) received on 18th August 2016.

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

3. **Prior to the commencement of development** details, including cross sections and finished surface materials, of the construction of the car parking spaces to the west of the community centre shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

**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.

4. **Prior to the commencement of the development** hereby approved details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the bunk-house and extension 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.

5. **Before the development hereby permitted is brought into use**, the windows in the southeast elevation of the bunk-house shall be fitted with obscure glazing, details of which shall first be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The windows shall be retained as such thereafter.

**Reason** - In the interest of residential amenity and to accord with Policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan

6. **Prior to the bunk-house being brought into use**, the parking spaces allocated for this building, as shown on the approved plans (02B Site Plan Proposed), shall be provided and thereafter retained and made available solely for use by residents of the bunk-house.

**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.

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