



SPRINGFIELD RISE, TREHARRIS

Design and Access Statement

Prepared by LRM Planning Limited on behalf of Holbrook Homes
and Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

December 2021





Site location



Site

Twynygarreg

Springfield Rise

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Figure 1 - View across the site



Figure 2 - View towards the west of the site



1

Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by LRM Planning with input from Pentan Architects on behalf of Holbrook Homes and Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association as part of a full planning application for the construction of 23 residential dwellings, comprising 10 one-bedroom walk-up apartments, four two-bedroom walk-up flats, 6no. two-bedroom house, 2no. three-bedroom house, and a four-bedroom house. The proposals also include diversion of existing Public Right of Way, completion of existing estate road, landscaping, car parking and associated works.
- 1.2 The application site comprises a vacant triangular shaped parcel of land situated to the north of Springfield Rise, in Treharris.
- 1.3 The application site did benefit from an outline planning permission for 9 dwellings (Ref: P/15/0276). Groundworks had commenced pursuant to this permission, however work ceased at the site and it has remained vacant ever since.

- 1.4 Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association now wish to bring the site forward for a 100% affordable housing scheme in partnership with Holbrook Homes.
- 1.5 This Design and Access Statement and accompanying documentation justify how the proposed development aims to make use of this vacant brownfield site which sits amongst a predominantly residential context.

Purpose

- 1.6 TAN 12 defines a Design and Access Statement as '*a communication tool which outlines how the design of the proposal has been considered from the outset of the development process and how the objectives of good design have been used to inform this.*'
- 1.7 The purpose of this document is to analyse the context of the site in respect of planning policy and the local character of the area, whilst having regard to each of Welsh Government's five

objectives of good design.

Aim

- 1.8 The aim of this document is to:
- Provide an overview of the site context, which has aided in shaping the proposals;
 - demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
 - explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
 - explain the policy or approach adopted for access and how policies relating to access in the development have been taken into account; and
 - explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

Figure 3 - Groundworks on site



Figure 4 - View across the site from the west



2

Site description and context analysis

Location

- 2.1 The application site is located to the north of Springfield Rise, an existing self-build development to the north of Treharris. The settlement of Treharris is located in the Taff Bargoed Valley to the southern extent of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. Trelewis lies to the east, with Quakers Yard to the south, Edwardsville to the west and open countryside to the north.

Features

- 2.2 The site comprises a triangular parcel of vacant land which extends to approximately 0.69ha. It is characterised by unimproved grassland and scrub.
- 2.3 The site is elevated above the neighbouring properties to the south- and south-east. It rises steeply from the existing access road to the south to the northern and central parts of the site, which appear to be formed by made-up

ground with hardcore rubble and soil.

- 2.4 The site is bound to the north-east by a tree lined private track which serves Reservoir House, an existing residential property situated to the north of the site. An area of vacant land is located immediately to the south-west of the site, separating Reservoir House from a number of large self-build plots along Springfield Rise to the south. These large dwellings continue along the southern and western boundaries of the site along Twynygarreg.
- 2.5 In terms of the wider site context, an area of informal open space is located east of the site, with the built-up area of Treharris to the south, Treharris Park to the west and open countryside to the north. In addition, a public right of way runs within the site along the south-eastern boundary.

Access

- 2.6 There is an existing vehicular and pedestrian

access located off Springfield Rise which serves the site to the south.

- 2.7 In terms of public transport provision, there are three bus stops located within 150m of the site along Twynygarreg. These stops provide at least two services per hour to Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd. Quakers Yard Rail Station is also located within 2km of the site to the west providing access to destinations between and including Penarth and Merthyr Tydfil, via Cardiff Central and Pontypridd.

Local facilities

- 2.8 In terms of access to local services and facilities, a number of local convenience stores, a hairdressers, building society, church, community centre, doctors surgery and a hot-food takeaway are located within 700m to the south of the site along Fox Street.
- 2.9 In addition, a wider retail and employment offering are available in Pontypridd, just a

20-minute bus journey from the site, operating at regular intervals throughout the day.

- 2.10 With regards to education, Treharris Nursery School, and Trelewis Primary School are located within 750m and 1.7km of the site respectively, with Welsh medium primary education available at and Ysgol Rhyd y Grug 7.4km from the site. Secondary education is available at Ysgol Uwchradd Afon Taf High School located 8.3km north of the site in Troedyrhiw.

Local architectural context

- 2.11 The local vernacular within the immediate surrounding area is varied recent detached self-build plots of Springfield Rise to the east/south-east. The mid-20th century housing estate of Twynygarreg lies to the south beyond more recent semi-detached dwellings of Springfield Rise. The local vernacular of Twynygarreg comprises predominantly two-storey post war semi-detached dwellings finished in a roughcast render of various brown and grey colours. They front directly onto the street with no on-plot parking and have small rear gardens. The dwellings have minimal features, with a small porches and dual pitched roofs.
- 2.12 The larger dwellings of Springfield Rise demonstrate more variety being self-build plots. These properties are finished in a combination of buff brick, smooth render and red brick. The dwellings are typical of late 90s, early 00s construction, with a mix of roof types, gable fronts and dormer windows. These properties benefit from large gardens and on plot parking.

- 2.13 Detached plots of Springfield Rise, back onto Twynygarreg, and are split level to the south of the road, measuring two-storey to the front onto Springfield Rise, and three-storey to the rear towards Twynygarreg. The rear is set above the street with the retaining wall measuring between 2m and 3m in height.

- 2.14 The semi-detached dwellings of Springfield Rise, immediately south of the site front towards Twynygarreg and are set above the street with a retaining wall measuring approximately 2m in height. Parking is provided to the rear of the dwellings towards the development site.

Ecology and trees

- 2.15 A band of vegetation runs along the eastern edge of the site and a hedgerow runs along the western edge of site, these features will be retained throughout the development works.
- 2.16 There are areas of semi improved grassland across the proposed development site. The scrub and trees within the proposed development site has the potential to be used by nesting birds. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal also noted that the proposed development site is thought to have at least medium potential for use by reptiles.
- 2.17 A subsequent Reptile Survey identified a maximum of one slow worm and two common lizards were found during any one survey visit including adults and a juvenile, the maximum number of adults being 2 (one slow worm, one common lizard). Mitigation and compensation measures for the presence of low numbers

of common reptile species within the development proposals will be required. Otherwise the site has low potential to support protected and priority species.

- 2.18 In relation to conservation designations, the proposed development does not sit within or lie directly adjacent to any non-statutory protected sites. There are a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) within 2km. The closest such site is Coed Cefn-fforest & Cwm Cothi which lies approximately 140m to the east of the site.
- 2.19 A tree line is present along the north-western boundary of the site. Species include hawthorn and hazel trees. Scattered trees are present to the south-east of the site and include willow, hawthorn and birch. Scrub habitat is present along the tree line and scattered across the eastern areas of the site. The scrub is mainly woody with young bramble, buddleja and birch saplings noted. Species including ragwort, creeping thistle and bracken were also noted.
- 2.20 All 15 individual and groups of trees on site, 12 of which line the north-western boundary, were assessed as Category C which denotes trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of 10 to 20 years, or young trees with a stem diameter below 150mm.

Flooding

- 2.21 Welsh Government's TAN 15 Development Advice Maps, as hosted by Natural Resources Wales, shows that the site is in Flood Zone 1

Figure 5 - Site constraints

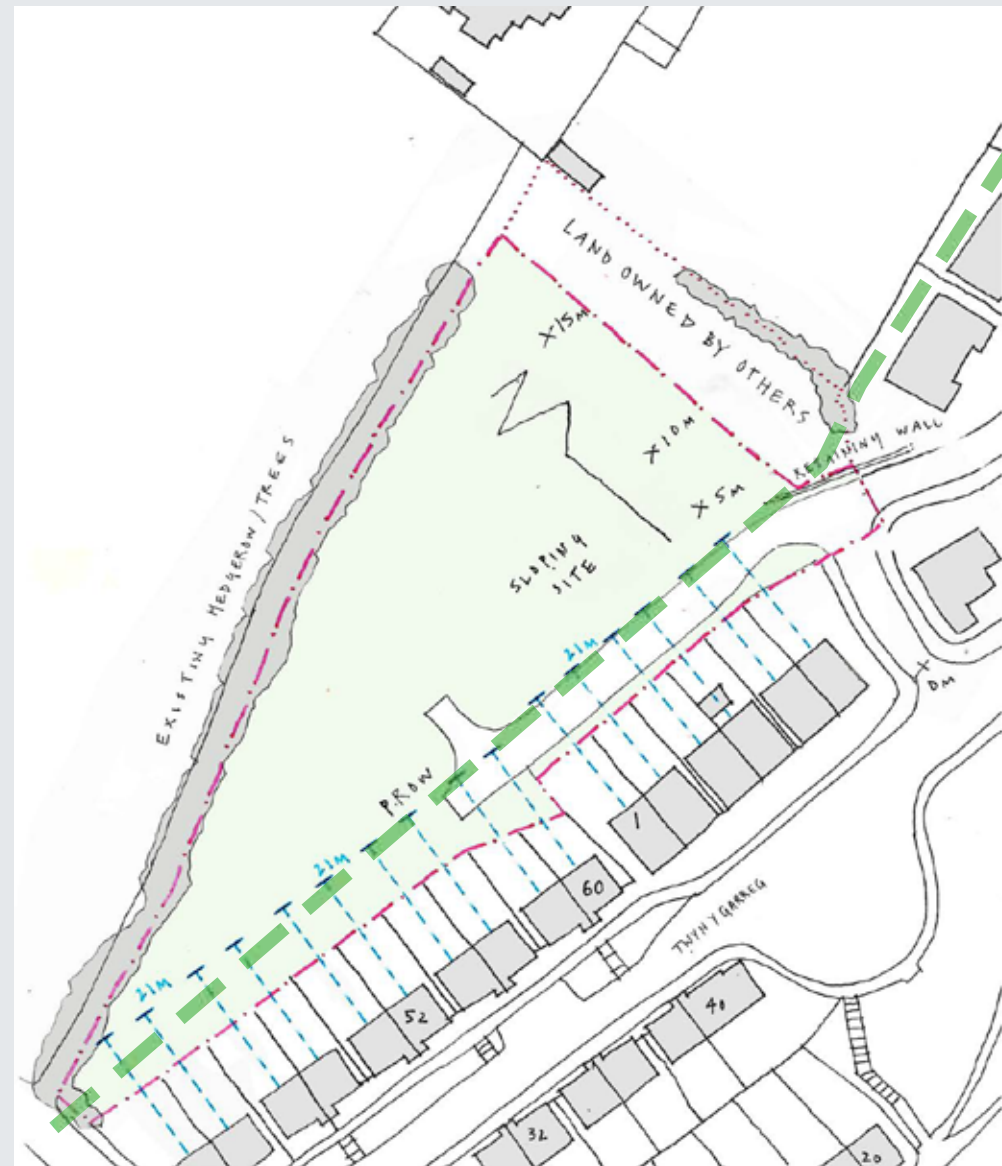
and therefore not at risk from flooding.

Heritage context

- 2.22 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks or Gardens or any other heritage assets within the site boundary or within the immediate vicinity. The site is however located in close proximity to the Treharris Conservation Area, this has been considered as part of the design of the proposed dwellings.

Planning history

- 2.23 The local authority website indicates that the site has the following planning history. Of note, the site had planning permission for residential development (ref: P/15/0276).
- P/04/0029 – Residential development 26 plots (outline) – Approved September 2004.
 - P/05/0476 - Drainage, road access and plot layout (to serve residential development consent ref: P/04/0029) – Approved September 2005.
 - P/15/0276 – Erection of 9 detached dwellings (Full Application) – Approved 27th November 2015.
- 2.24 A planning application currently being decided on land immediately north-east of the site for a four-bedroom detached house is also of relevance to the proposal, referenced P/21/0260.



SITE CONSTRAINTS

- Sloping Site (indicative levels shown)
- North-western ecological boundary
- 21m planning constraints
- PROW



SITE CONSTRAINTS

Figure 6 - Groundworks on site



Figure 7 - Shrubs on site





Figure 8 - Semi-detached dwellings of Springfield Rise south-east of the site



Figure 9 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 10 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 11 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 12 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 13 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 14 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 15 - Dwellings of Twynygarreg south of the site



Figure 16 - Dwellings of Springfield Rise east of the site



Figure 17 - Dwellings of Twynygarreg south of the site

3

Interpretation and design development

Pre-application engagement with Local Authority

3.1 A pre-application meeting was held with Principal Planning Officer David Cross on 9th October 2020 with subsequent written response received on the 13th October 2020. At this time, two drawings were tabled. The preferred option was decided upon in the meeting which formed the basis of the written response. The key principles of preferred option of 23 dwellings remains the same as the proposals at hand. The meeting comments in respect of the proposals can be summarised as follows.

- The principle of residential development on site was accepted, especially in the context of significant groundworks having been undertaken for the 2015 consent for 9 dwellings.
- It was noted that the scheme presents an increase in the number of dwellings

from the previous consent however the infill proposal presents an opportunity to make good an otherwise abandoned site and to complete the initial Springfield Rise residential scheme.

- Overall, the general layout of the development and the siting/scale/orientation of the dwellings and flats was deemed to be acceptable and would provide an appropriate response to the context of the area.
- A reconfiguration of the south-west corner was suggested to accommodate the public right of way (PRoW) that crosses the site from south-west to the north-east. It was considered that the PRoW would provide a convenient link for residents to gain access to the countryside to the north-west of the site. Section details were requested for the south-western plot to assess whether it is overbearing on the PRoW.

- To encourage a high-quality street environment, it was advised that boundary walls should be constructed to enclose the rear/side garden areas, particularly where the boundary treatment would be visible from the public realm.
- It was suggested that there are opportunities to provide planting schemes on the bend leading to the upper plateau, around the parking areas and within the front gardens.
- A shared surface to serve the south-western part of the site was suggested to increase the garden space to the front of the properties and avoid the need to construct a footpath. A change of material would help break up the row of parking in this area.
- A plan setting out the location of the retaining walls and, where appropriate, any boundary fencing above, together with



details of their height and material finishes was requested.

- Due to the altitude of the site, it was noted in the meeting that there would be a preference for the dwellings to be constructed with a brickwork finish as opposed to rendered elevation. Whilst the external finishes of the existing dwellings in the general area vary, it is considered that the use of brickwork would be appropriate for the site and would integrate well with properties in the immediate vicinity.
- Regarding the design, it was considered that the development would be seen in close relation to the existing properties adjoining the site, and therefore the development should draw some reflection to these properties.
- Noting the designation under Policy EnW5 as a Special Landscape Area (SLA - Gelligaer & Craig Fargoed) to the north and west of the site it was considered that the proposal would not necessarily be visually prominent within the landscape and would be seen as a continuation/infill of the existing built environment.
- Highway and engineering considerations included upgrading the access road to meet adoptable standards, full details of which

are requested to be submitted with the full application.

- The highway engineer confirmed that additional traffic movements as a result of the proposed development are not deemed to be excessive and would not adversely impact on highway safety.
- Two parking spaces for each of the two/three-bedroom dwellings and one parking space for each of the one/two-bedroom flat was deemed acceptable to ensure that the streetscene is not dominated by parking.
- Spaces on street to accommodate visitor parking was accepted.
- Ecological constraints including the mature hedgerow, new vegetation following site clearance and nearby Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation will need to be considered within a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report to accompany any application.
- As the development provides 100% affordable housing it is not anticipated that any other planning obligations would be sought.

3.2 A second pre-application meeting was held with Principal Planning Officer David Cross on the

15th November 2021 to review the scheme.

- 3.3 It was agreed to review the design of the apartment building (Block A). As a result of the amendments the block has been reduced in scale with the eaves and ridge of the units being reduced below that of block B (front/southern elevation). As a result the top floor accommodation of block A is situated within the roof void of the building. Other changes to the design of this block, including fenestration changes and changes to the siting, have been made to ensure the units comply with relevant space and amenity standards. Furthermore, the changes have allowed for additional floor space to be created allowing a change in the mix of accommodation with less one bedroom and more two bedroom units proposed. The overall number of units remains the same.

Interpretation of context and design evolution

- 3.4 The above context analysis has aided in framing a series of principles from which the current proposals have been derived.
- 3.5 The constraints to development, set out in the above section, provided fundamental parameters within which the proposals had to be designed. Chief amongst these are the site's topography which drops from north to south/south-east, Special Landscape Area designation, mature



hedgerow and the PROW running along the south-eastern boundary.

3.6 Given the nature of the site and that the constraints were known at the outset, early iterations were very well-informed, with initial iterations of the layout accounting for the above constraints from an early stage. Subsequent amendments to the proposal include the following:

- Laying dwellings across the slope, with the highway layout accommodating the slope, and the building lines of existing properties reflected.
- The configuration of the more recent dwellings on Springfield Rise, with parking area to the rear, towards the site, and garden areas to the front with views towards the valley, ensures that no overlooking concerns arise the apartment. Figure 21 demonstrates the layout of neighbouring dwellings, highlighting garden and parking areas.
- Amending the south-eastern corner of the site to accommodate the PROW to allow it to run unobstructed through the site.
- An 2m ecological buffer is provided to the mature hedgerow along the north-western

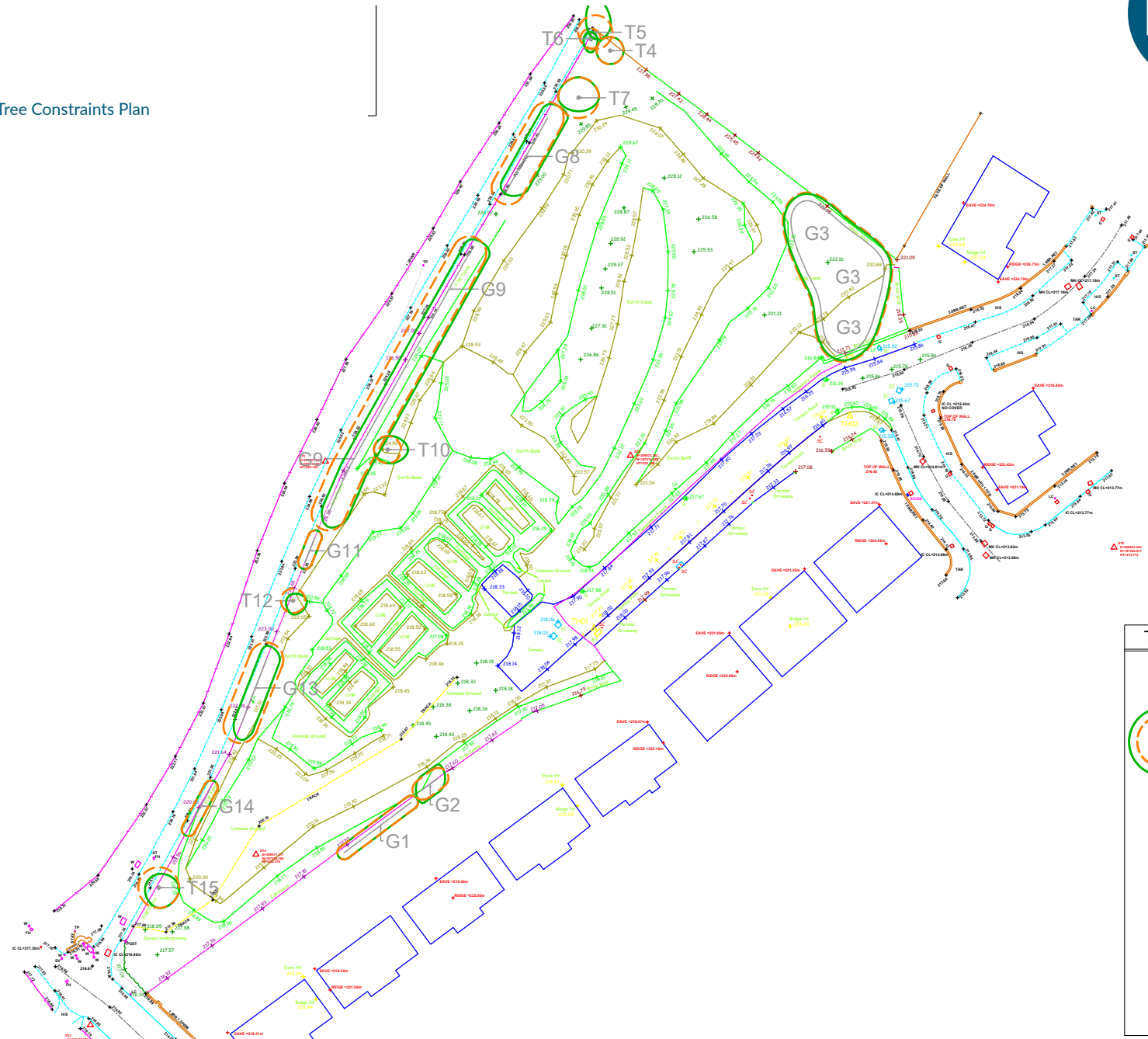
boundary.

- Similarly, neighbourly relationships with existing dwellings has been a key part of the design process, to ensure that positive surveillance is achieved, whilst overlooking, overbearing and privacy concerns are avoided.
- Engineering issues resulted in amending the layout along the north-western boundary to include four dwellings as opposed to five tabled at pre-application stage, with the pair of dwellings to the northern corner re-adjusted to back onto the northern boundary.





Figure 19 - Tree Constraints Plan



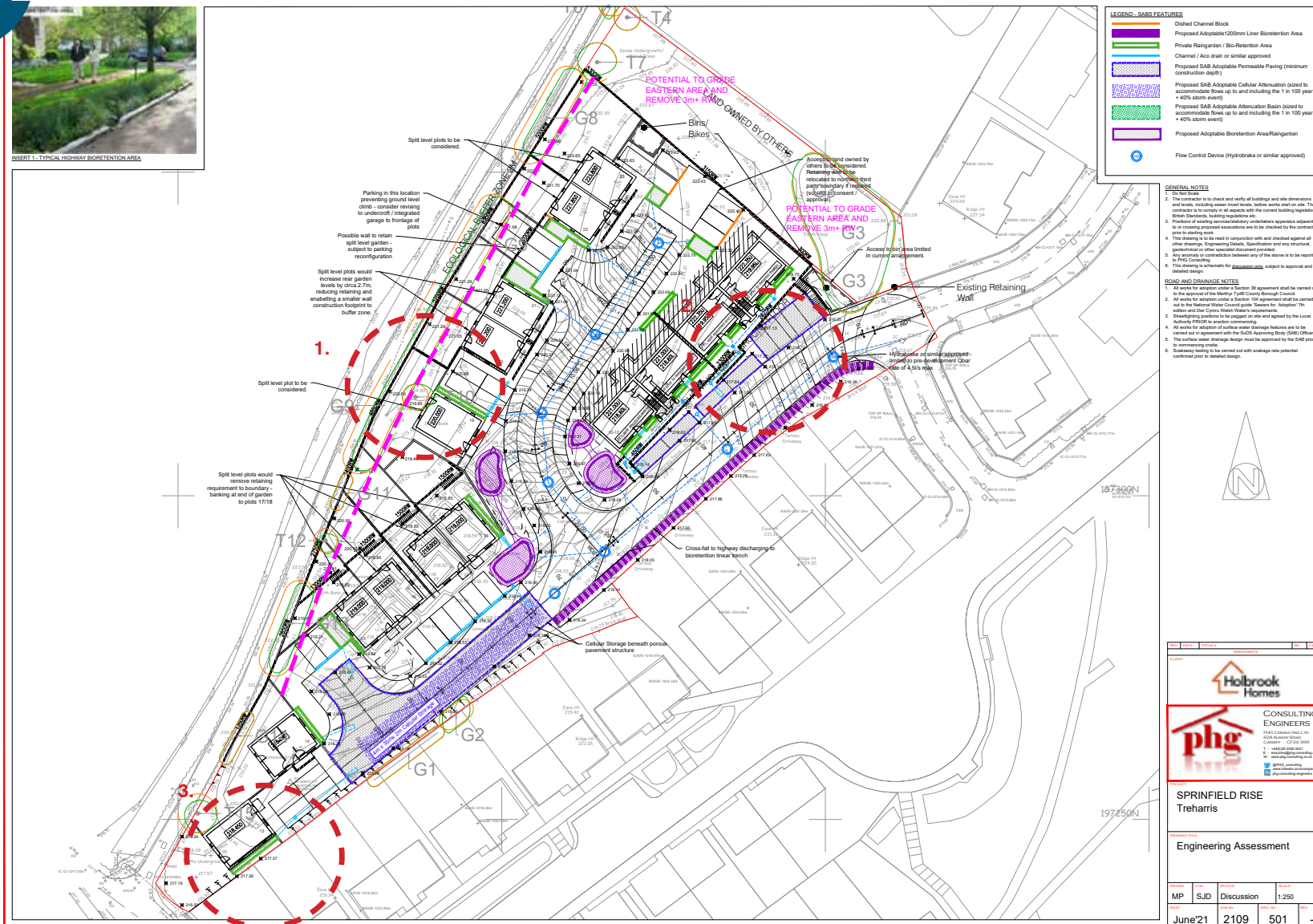
Tree Constraints Plan

Root Protection Area
Tree Category
Tree Number
Canopy Spread

Category A Trees
Category B Trees
Category C Trees
Category U Trees

Scale 1:600 @A3
06/2021

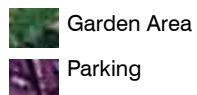
Treescape
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



Response-

- Proximity of large retaining wall along ecological buffer.
Loose 1 no. unit along run and amend units to narrow plan and wide frontage. Provide side gardens like to benefit from southern sun.
- Height of retaining wall at point of introduction to the site.
Utilise underbuild for ground floor level apartments and provide positive street frontage.
- Proximity and height of proposed unit compared with sunken existing dwelling(s).
Loose 1no. unit and step house appropriately to respond better to existing dwelling/ levels.

Figure 21 - Parking / Garden analysis



Rear gardens comprise of parking spaces/ car ports and steps to usable garden area.



Ecological Buffer

Response-

1. Proximity of large retaining wall along ecological buffer.
Loose 1 no. unit along run and amend units to narrow plan and wide frontage. Provide side gardens like to benefit from southern sun.



Figure 22 - Access road off Springfield Rise



Figure 23 - Access road leading towards the site



Figure 24 - Parking area to the rear of neighbouring dwellings



Figure 25 - View west from the site entrance

Figure 26 - Junction of Twynygarreg



Figure 27 - View up Twynygarreg



Figure 28 - Bus stop at Springfield Rise



Figure 29 - View east from the site entrance



Figure 30 - Access to Reservoir House along the site boundary and mature hedgerow



4

Planning Policy Context

Overview

- 4.1 The planning policy context for the determination of this application is provided by national and local planning policy guidance. National guidance is set out within Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales, and its accompanying Technical Advice Notes.
- 4.2 Local policy comprises the adopted Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council First Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031, and its supporting Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 4.3 Future Wales is Welsh Government's top-tier national development framework. It is a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system over the next two

decades, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems, and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

- 4.4 It is a spatial strategy which does not seek to take decisions that are most appropriately taken at the regional or local level, but does provide a strategic direction for all scales of planning and sets out policies and key issues to be taken forward at the regional scale. One of the key aims of the document is to address issues which Welsh Government consider to be a priority at this time, with affordable housing identified as a critically important issue throughout Wales.
- 4.5 The document follows a sequential structure, with each section building on the previous one as follows, 'Wales: An Overview', 'Setting and achieving our ambitions', 'Strategic and Spatial Choices: Future Wales' spatial strategy' and 'The Regions'. These sections and their relevance to the proposals at

hand are set out as follows.

Wales: An Overview

- 4.6 This chapter provides a broad overview of the country and its intricacies. It is a very high-level overview of the country, however it identifies housing, particularly affordable, as a key issue to address throughout the country, stating that '*Good quality affordable homes are the bedrock of communities and form the basis for individuals and families to flourish in all aspects of their lives. Future Wales provides evidence of the need for housing across Wales at both a national and regional level. This evidence demonstrates the need for a focus on increasing the delivery of social and affordable homes.*'

Setting and achieving our ambitions

- 4.7 A focus of Future Wales is to provide quality development in the right places for the right reasons. 11 Future Wales Outcomes are set

out within the chapter, which collectively are a statement of where Welsh Government wants Wales to be in 20 years. Every part of Future Wales is written with the intention of achieving these Outcomes.

- 4.8 Each Outcome commences with the prefix 'A Wales where people live...' building on the statement to provide a vision of Wales in 2040. Of particular relevance to the proposal are the following outcomes, all following the prefix 'a Wales where people live':

1 '*...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places*,'

3 '*...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth*,'

5 '*...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth*,'

7 '*...in places where travel is sustainable*,'

9 '*...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution*,'

10 '*...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems*,' and

11 '*...in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient*'.

Strategic and Spatial Choices: Future Wales' spatial strategy

- 4.9 One of the opening paragraph's states that "*the spatial strategy supports the Future Wales Outcomes. Decisions taken at a national level, including Welsh Government investment choices, will reflect the principles of the strategy and make positive contributions towards the national placemaking objectives.*" Cities and large towns are identified as the main development areas through co-locating homes, jobs, and services in these areas, aiming to utilise untapped potential of places and their infrastructure.

- 4.10 Among the places identified to achieve this growth, referred to as National Growth Areas is the Valleys, identified in Policy 1, 'Where Wales will grow' within the same National Growth Area as Newport and Cardiff. A total of 19 policies are identified within this chapter. These include 'Strategic Placemaking', 'Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration', and 'Delivering Affordable Homes', among others. The latter notes that providing homes in Wales at levels which meet our needs is a key priority and shift in delivery is required to meet this basic human need.

Planning Policy Wales

- 4.11 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal national planning policy document which sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government (WG) against which development proposals should be assessed. The latest version is the eleventh edition, published in February

2021.

- 4.12 The main thrust of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Placemaking lies at the heart of PPW, with policy and development management decisions required to seek to deliver development that adheres to these principles.
- 4.13 In a bid to ensure placemaking is prioritised, and in order to aid in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act, policy topics within PPW have been grouped under four themes, namely 'Strategic and Spatial Choices'; 'Active and Social Places'; 'Productive and Enterprising Places'; and 'Distinctive and Natural Places'. Each of the four headed chapters is supplemented by detailed and interwoven policy, which seeks to work together in delivering sustainable places.
- 4.14 PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities. In this regard it seeks to achieve WG's well-being goals. All statutory bodies in Wales carrying out a planning function must exercise those functions with the principles of sustainable development as defined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Accordingly, paragraph 1.18 of PPW states emphatically that '*legislation secures a*

presumption in favour of sustainable development’.

- 4.15 Figure 4 of PPW covers the Key Planning Principles of WG in seeking to achieve “*the right development in the right place*”. Development proposals must seek to deliver development that addresses these outcomes, albeit paragraph 2.20 recognises that not all of these outcomes can necessarily be achieved under every development proposal.
- 4.16 Another Key Planning Principle of WG is facilitating accessible and healthy environments, stating in Figure 3 that “*Our land use choices and the places we create should be accessible for all and support healthy lives. High quality places are barrier-free and inclusive to all members of society. They ensure everyone can live, work, travel and play in a way that supports good physical and mental health.*”

Strategic and Spatial Choices

- 4.17 It is indicated within PPW that the first stage of the assessment of proposals must take place in respect of Strategic and Spatial Choices. In this regard it is stated that “*Effective strategic placemaking requires early collective consideration of placemaking issues at the outset... when developing specific proposals*”.
- 4.18 Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.18 of PPW highlight the importance of good design in “*creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise*”.

To achieve good design development, proposals need to meet the five overarching aims of design which comprise of access, character, community safety, environmental sustainability, and movement.

- 4.19 Accessibility is covered between paragraphs 3.49 and 3.52, wherein it is stated that the overarching aim of spatial strategies should be minimising the need to travel, reducing reliance on the private car, and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- 4.20 PPW seeks to ensure that proposals achieve a broad balance between housing, community facilities, services, and employment opportunities. Major generators of travel demand, such as housing, employment, retailing, leisure and recreation, and community facilities should be sited within existing urban areas or areas which are, or can be, easily reached by walking or cycling, and are well served by public transport.
- 4.21 PPW indicates at paragraphs 3.61 to 3.63 that development should be located so that it can be well serviced by existing or planned infrastructure.

Active and Social Places

- 4.22 A key theme of PPW is creating places that are active and social, this includes sustainable

transport provision for housing development. The opening paragraphs to this chapter include the following aspiration of PPW:

“New development should prevent problems from occurring or getting worse such as the shortage of affordable homes, the reliance on the private car and the generation of carbon emissions.”

- 4.23 PPW places importance on locating development so as to minimise the need to travel and increasing accessibility by modes other than the private car.
- 4.24 In terms of car parking, paragraph 4.1.50 indicates that “*A design-led approach to the provision of car parking should be taken, which ensures an appropriate level of car parking is integrated in a way which does not dominate the development. Parking provision should be informed by the local context, including public transport accessibility, urban design principles and the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. Planning authorities must support schemes which keep parking levels down*”.
- 4.25 With respect to housing, the WG recognise the importance of a home to people’s lives and indicates that the planning system must:
- “*identify a supply of land to support the delivery*



of the housing requirement to meet the differing needs of communities across all tenures;

- *enable provision of a range of well-designed, energy efficient, good quality market and affordable housing that will contribute to the creation of sustainable places; and*
- *focus on the delivery of the identified housing requirement and the related land supply."*

4.26 Paragraph 4.2.5 states that "Planning authorities should plan for a mix of market and affordable housing types to meet the requirement and specifically consider the differing needs of their communities."

4.27 Paragraph 4.2.25 states that "a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which must be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and determining relevant planning applications."

Productive and Enterprising Places

4.28 This section relates primarily to economic development, tourism, infrastructure, the rural economy, energy, and waste, and is thus less directly applicable to this proposal.

Distinctive and Natural Places

4.29 This chapter of PPW covers a range of topics, including cultural heritage matters, natural

assets, and environmental quality. The opening statement of the chapter states that:

"Development proposals should be formulated to look to the long-term protection and enhancement of the special characteristics and intrinsic qualities of places...Problems should be prevented from occurring or getting worse. Biodiversity loss should be reversed, pollution reduced, environmental risks addressed and overall resilience of ecosystems improved."

4.30 Paragraph 6.2 relates to Green Infrastructure and notes that "at a local scale, [green infrastructure] might comprise parks, fields, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks." Green infrastructure provides multiple benefits for social, economic, and cultural as well as environmental resilience. These benefits are important in domestic environments where they can facilitate health and well-being related benefits.

Technical Advice Notes

4.31 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are of relevance in the consideration of these proposals.

4.32 TAN 2, published in June 2006, is of relevance

to affordable housing developments, providing practical guidance on the role of the planning system in delivering affordable housing.

4.33 TAN 12 relates to Design and was updated in March 2016. It provides advice and information on a number of related areas including the definition of design for planning purposes; design considerations in planning decisions; and local planning authority design policy and advice.

4.34 TAN 18, which was published in March 2007, deals with Transport matters, and advocates locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling; generally advocating development at sustainable sites.

Well-being of Future Generations Act

4.35 The Well-being of Future Generations Act imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with the sustainable development principles, and to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Its content is sought to be delivered through the planning system via the intertwining of the Act through PPW.

Local Development Plan

- 4.36 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.37 The statutory development plan for this site is the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council First Replacement Local Development Plan (2016 - 2031) (LDP) which was adopted in January 2020. The LDP vision for the City is to *"To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil's position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys within the Cardiff Capital Region, to encourage a sustainable level of population growth and be a place to be proud of where:*
- *People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions;*
 - *People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life; and*
 - *People visit, enjoy and return.."*
- 4.38 In order to achieve the vision, LDP objectives have been identified having regard to local issues which address social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being outcomes and provide a framework for the detailed planning policies and proposals to deliver the Plan's Vision for Merthyr

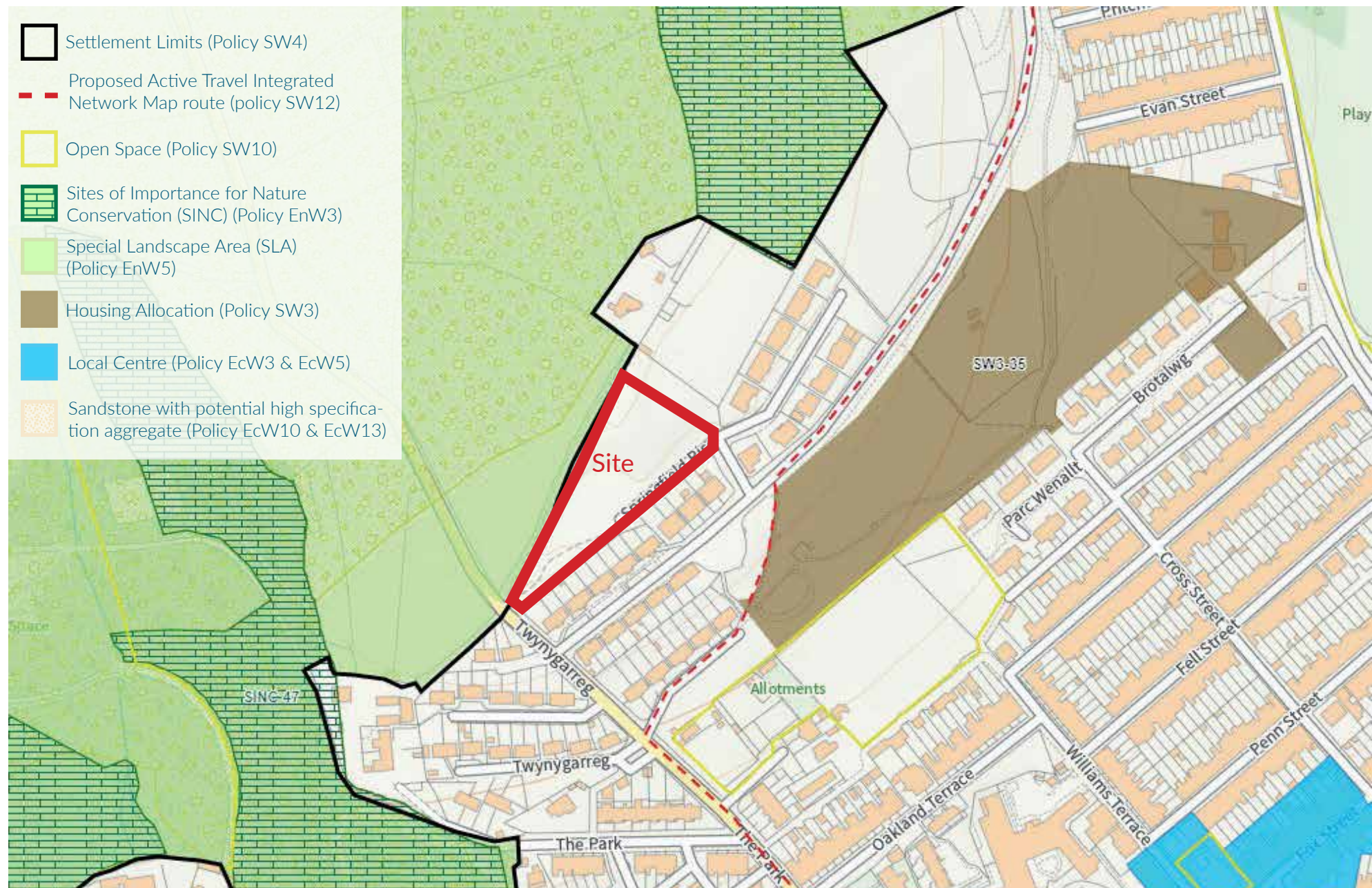
Tydfil.

- 4.39 The LDP proposals map shows that the site is located within the settlement limits of Treharris, in the 'Other Growth Area' as outlined within the LDP. The site is not subject to any designations, see figure 31, an annotated extract of the LDP Proposals Map, displaying the status of the site therein.
- 4.40 Policies with a prefix of SW are policies directed towards improving the social well-being within the County Borough. Policy SW1 relates to the provision of new homes and confirms the need for 2,250 of new homes within the county over the plan period with an allowance made for 572 dwellings through windfall sites. The LDP states that *"the components of supply for the 2,821 homes in the Replacement LDP will be:*
- *Allocations for housing land listed in Policy SW3: Sustainably Distributing New Homes (2,196 dwellings).*
 - *A windfall contribution allowance (572 dwellings).*
 - *Actual windfall completions between 01.04.16 and 31.03.18 (53 dwellings).*
- 4.41 Policy SW2 relates to the provision of affordable housing. It notes that 5% affordable housing contribution is expected from sites within Other Growth Areas. *"These requirements are reflected in*

Policy SW9: Planning Obligations and indicate the levels of affordable housing that can be provided through the planning system in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough."

- 4.42 Policy SW3 entitled Sustainably Distributing New Homes aims for approximately 70% of new homes to be directed towards Merthyr Tydfil (Primary Growth Area), with the remaining 30% directed towards our other settlements, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Vale and Aberfan, Bedlinog, Edwardsville, Quakers Yard, Trelewis and Treharris (Other Growth Area).
- 4.43 A gross density figure of 30 dwellings per hectare has been used to reflect the Council's aspirations to make more efficient use of land in accordance with sustainability principles.
- 4.44 Policy SW4 is another social well-being policy and relates to Settlement Boundaries. It encourages development within urban areas, with Treharris defined as a settlement within Other Growth Areas of the county borough. Policy SW4 goes on to state, *"Containing development within the urban area promotes sustainably located development which can assimilate with existing services and facilities and also encourages the re-use of previously developed land in accordance with Planning Policy Wales"*.
- 4.45 Policy SW11 is a broad design policy that covers sustainable design and placemaking. It

Figure 31 - Local Development Plan Proposals Map



requires development proposal to “contribute to the creation of attractive and sustainable places through high quality, sustainable and inclusive design.”

4.46 Policies with the prefix CW relate to cultural well-being. Policy CW1 aims to ensure that the integrity of the historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced, and states that “development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural importance of our designated historic environment assets.”

4.47 Policies beginning with EnW are environmental well-being policies which provide policies to protect, enhance and promote the natural environment and countryside of the County Borough. EnW1, entitled Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience, requires development proposals to promote the resilience of ecosystems. Development proposals should demonstrate that the need for development outweighs the biodiversity value of the site and the impacts of the development can be satisfactorily mitigated and acceptably managed through future management regimes.

4.48 Policy EnW4, Environmental Protection, requires schemes to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural

environment.

4.49 Policy EnW5 relates to Landscape Protection, and notes Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), including SLA5: Gelligaer and Taf Bargoed. It states that “Development proposals will be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:

- It would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and quality of the landscape setting of the County Borough;
- Development within Special Landscape Areas are sensitive to their special characteristics;
- Development respects the local distinctiveness and historic character of the landscape;
- Development will safeguard local landscape character and landscape features, including views, which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of the locality;
- Development secures the enhancement of the character, appearance and quality of the landscape, through restoration, management or enhancement where possible;
- There is no satisfactory alternative and the benefits associated with the development can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm; and

- Where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided appropriate mitigation has been secured.”

4.50 Policies relating to Economic well-being are of lesser relevance to this proposal.

4.51 A summary of the pertinent LDP policies is provided below:

LDP Policy	Relating to
Improving our Social Well-being	
SW1	Provision of New Homes
SW2	Provision of Affordable Housing
SW3	Sustainably Distributing New Homes
SW4	Settlement Boundaries
SW9	Planning Obligations
SW11	Sustainable Design and Placemaking
SW12	Improving the Transport Network
Improving our Cultural Well-being	
CW1	Historic Environment
Improving our Environmental Well-being	
EnW1	Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience



EnW4	Environmental Protection
EnW5	Landscape Protection

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

4.52 The following SPG documents are applicable in consideration of the proposed development:

- SPG 4 – Sustainable Design, July 2013; and
- SPG 5 – Nature and Development, May 2015

5

The proposal & assessment against objectives of good design

- 5.1 Planning Policy Wales breaks 'design' down into five key objectives Access, Movement, Character, Community Safety and Environmental Sustainability. This section of the Design and Access Statement will explain how the scheme meets each of the objectives of good design and is illustrative of how the site could be developed.

Character

- 5.2 The design, by Pentan Architects, has sought to provide a development that adheres to modern principles of placemaking and construction, and will result in the creation of a complementary streetscape that takes into consideration the wider setting.
- 5.3 The development proposes 23 affordable dwellings comprising 10 one-bedroom walk-up apartments, four two-bedroom walk-up flats, six two-bedroom house, three three-bedroom house and one four-bedroom house. The scheme comprises a two-storey houses,

in predominantly semi-detached form and a split level four-storey apartment to the north-east of the site. The scheme also comprises sustainable drainage proposals, landscape planting, car parking, cycle store and associated infrastructure.

- 5.4 The scale of the buildings is considered to be appropriate in that the two-storey dwellings and the four-storey split level apartment building, with top-floor accommodation located in the roof void, adhere to the prevailing character. The apartment building is sited, designed and orientated so as to have minimal impact on existing neighbours.
- 5.5 In this regard the apartment building is located at the site entrance on the lower level of the site, to the north-east. It will utilise the underbuild of land to provide a positive street frontage avoiding the usual unfriendly large retaining walls. It also steps down to three-storeys to accommodate the site levels. It is located away

Figure 32 - Welsh Government's Objectives of Good Design
(source: Planning Policy Wales)



Figure 33 - Site Layout



N.B. Not to scale - see submitted plans for scaled versions

Figure 34 - Walk Up Flats Block A Floor Plans

from existing properties, with highway and car parking area to the rear of Springfield Rise dwellings ensuring no overlooking concerns arise. The varying scale improves the character and legibility of the development.

- 5.6 The houses are set along the existing slope of the site, west of the apartments. In broad terms, these face onto the rear of existing dwellings along Springfield Rise/Twynygarreg. The access road extends along the rear of Springfield Rise, and forks within the site to serve dwellings to the north of the site.
- 5.7 Due to combination of siting, scale and context, there are considered to be no amenity concerns arising. Neighbouring properties back onto the development and the proposed dwellings are sited as far as practicable to minimise overlooking impact with the proposed access road and parking spaces as well as parking area to the rear of existing dwelling separating the dwellings from existing properties of Springfield Rise/Twynygarreg. Whilst the neighbouring plot to the north, on which an application for a dwelling is currently being determined, would appear to be below usual separation standards. It is orientated toward the side elevation of the proposed dwelling, and this front to side relationship is considered to be acceptable.
- 5.8 The elevational treatments of the proposed buildings are contemporary in nature and



N.B. Not to scale - see submitted plans for scaled versions