

Design and Access Statement

Change of design from an approved two bedroom two storey dwelling to a single storey dwelling suitable for ambulant disabled occupation.

Site Address

Junction of Clare Street/ Warlow Street and rear of 57 Ernest Street, Merthyr Tydfil.



Prepared by

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This Design, Access and Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for a modification to the design of the existing approved planning permission Number P/15/0366.

Originally this planning approval was for the erection of a single dwelling of two bedrooms and two storeys on land containing 3 garages and included the overgrown land behind Ernest Street and fronting the junction of Clare Street and Warlow Street in Merthyr.

The modification is to reduce the size of the dwelling to a one bedroom bungalow, intended for ambulant disabled use and retain one existing Garage.

The core sections of policy that this document addresses are

- Planning policy context
- Site content
- Local character
- Design concept
- Character

2. BACKGROUND

This application has been prepared after a re evaluation of the existing planning approval for an erection of a two bedroom detached house. There was an initial refusal of the first submitted scheme for this site (application 15/0019) but subsequent approval of the revised scheme (application P/15/0366). This scheme was approved having addressed planning reservations on the first scheme which were generally its poor design in a prominent and visible location. Further to this there was a requirement to a discharge of conditions 2 (external finishes) , 3, (Boundary details), 4 (Drainage, 5 (retaining Walls) and 7 (Landscaping). These were subsequently discharged and concluded. Construction work commenced on this scheme on 22 November 2016. Email confirmation from Building Control dated 10 February 2017 confirmed construction works commencement. The new revised scheme intends that these original conditions will remain generally unchanged. It is intended to to amend the approved scheme to this detailed design submission which, as far as possible mirrors the existing approval but retains one of the existing garages.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Development Plan Policies.

The following policies of the plan 2006 to 2021 (adopted 25th May 2011) and Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016 - 2031 (adopted January 2020) are considered relevant to this application.

BW4 settlement boundaries/ Local constraints.

Settlement boundaries are defined on the LDP proposals map in order to define the area which development will be allowed providing it is compatible with other relevant plan policies and material planning considerations. Under policy SW1 there is currently a requirement for 2,250 dwellings in the next 15years.

BW7 suitable design and placemaking.

The Council will support good quality sustainable design and require new development to:

- To be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layouts, form, mix and density.

- Integrating effectively with adjacent spaces and the public realm to enhance the general streetscene and create good quality townscape.
- Not result in unacceptable impact on local community in terms of Visual Impact loss of light or privacy disturbance and traffic movements;
- Incorporate a good standard of Landscape Design;
- Sensitively relate to existing settlement patterns and take account of natural heritage and the historic environment on site and in terms of potential impact on neighbouring areas of importance;
- Foster inclusive design by ensuring the development allows access for the widest range of people policy possible;
- Contribute to the provision of usable open and outdoor play space ensuring its accessibility and connectivity to have a green infrastructure, footpaths and cycleways;
- Incorporate resource efficient adaptable buildings and layouts using sustainable design and construction techniques including the reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste on site and energy and water conservation / efficiency measures;
- minimise the demand for energy and where appropriate, utilise the renewable energy resource through appropriate layout, orientation, mix of uses, density of development, landscaping, optimal use of local topography and a corporation of renewable energy technologies;
- Incorporate facilities for the segregation, recovery and recycling of waste and provide a safe environment by addressing issues of security, crime prevention and the fear of crime in the design of buildings and the space and routes around them

BW8 Development and the Water Environment

Proposals for the built environment will only be permitted where:

They avoid identified river floodplains in order that these areas continue to fulfill their flood flow and water storage functions:

They do not have an adverse effect on the quality and/ or quantity of surface waters or groundwater resources, and where opportunities exist they incorporate measures to improve existing water quality;

Adequate water and sewage systems exist, or reasonably accessible, or a capable of being provided prior to the development becoming operational without placing an acceptable pressure on existing capacity of causing an acceptable environmental harm.

BW12 Development proposals and Transport

Where appropriate the council will expect all development proposals to demonstrate how they will:

- Help reduce the need to travel;
- encourage the use of transport other than the private car;
- avoid increasing traffic to unacceptable levels;
- avoid causing or exacerbating highway safety problems;
- transport assessments would be required for development likely to result in significant trip generation.

TB 11 Development and the Water Environment

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- adequate water and sewage systems exist or a reasonably accessible or a capable of being provided prior to the development becoming operational without placing an acceptable pressure on existing capacity or causing an acceptable environmental harm.

4. ACCESS

The design of the dwelling and external garden and parking area is specifically so it is accessible for all. This revised dwelling plan has been particularly designed for an ambulant disabled user as it has been considered to comply with the approved document M (access and use of buildings) of the Building Regulations and and so:

- The main entrance is flush to ground level on the front ensuring that there are no restrictions due to obstacles on entry/ exit
- The rear entrance is flush to ground level to the patio and garden ensuring that there are no restrictions due to obstacles on entry.
- the design of allows a person to approach and gain access to the building from the point of lighting a vehicle.
- The design allows a motorised scooter to drive straight into the hallway, and is accessible even if a car is parked on the visitor park area
- Power points for electric scooter charging are incorporated in the design
- Window openings are designed to be opened with low level handles.
- Boiler and its room controls are designed to be located at eye level

5. MOVEMENT

Viewing the proximity plan on submission drawing #002 it is clear the site is perfectly located for minimal vehicular requirements as it is a 5-10 minute walk from Merthyr town centre and the proximity plan shows it approximately 200 metres from the Aldi supermarket as well as the Applegreen petrol station, with access to a bus stop 1 or 2 minute walk away. There is easy access to the High Street and there is very easy, level and well paved pedestrian and and mobility scooter access via a pathway to the Aldi roundabout and then on into town. The location of the site has the benefit of having above average public transport links within a short walk to the High Street/ Plymouth Street as the local bus stops on the Plymouth Street/ Warlow street junction are only about 75 metres away. There is also include an easy, relatively level walk to the local bus station and Merthyr railway station. With regards to the use of private motor vehicles the site is well connected to the A465 Heads of the Valleys and the A470.



6. COMMUNITY SAFETY.

The areas around the development site, and in particular the under arch footpath and access lanes are areas which are generally considered threatening spaces with little or no natural surveillance available from the associated surrounding dwellings. Referring to the sightlines plan on dwg #002 it is clear the development of this site provides an opportunity to increase the lighting at the start of the back lane and visually survey almost its entire length thus reducing the possibility of anti-social behaviour over the whole length of the the Lane from the bedroom window southwards. The development of this site also provides an opportunity to increase the lighting at the start of the lane from spill over lighting from the living room and bedroom above and thus reduce the possibility of anti-social behaviour.

Furthermore the site includes an area of overgrown Wasteland which has in the past been used for fly-tipping and is currently an on-going health hazard as despite frequent clearups by the site owner, dog walkers have been using it as a convenient location to dump their polythene bags of dog excrement. It is therefore considered as an overall the development of this site provides an opportunity to improve community health and safety in the area.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

The proposed dwelling will be constructed with a view to reduce energy usage and carbon reduction by the implementation of sustainable construction method methods. It is intended the structure will be of Timber gables on top of a rendered Timber Framed construction that will meet or exceed current Building Regulation heat loss requirements and will seek to minimise energy usage and minimise water usage; The rest of the structure will be constructed of sustainable and energy efficient building materials, some of which are to be recycled, such as the stone for the retaining walls.

8. CHARACTER.

As previously mentioned the character area of the area is a mix between residential, historical industrial, industrial and modern commercial. The initial character on entering Warlow Street is clearly residential/ mixed commercial and garages however as you move beyond the Ernest Street junction towards Clare Street the character changes. This distinct character change from residential to more industrial character is brought about by the lack of residential units and the presence of the imposing stone Facade of the Railway Arches and commercial properties that occupy converted space beneath the arches.

As you move towards 'Wedgwood' bungalow the character return to that of a residential area with an area of garaging. This transition in character will be softened by the presence of a well designed residential unit on the development site and it is therefore considered that the overall character of the area will be improved considerably by developing the site.

9. LOCAL NEED.

The dwelling is specifically designed for the use of an ambulant disabled occupant and it is intended to be built and offered for rent to a local occupant in need.

Research shows that in the Merthyr area are a substantial number of potential users many of whom are currently registered with Social Services and the Housing Department. Research discussions with Merthyr Borough Council Housing Officers have indicated that there are long waiting lists of suitable people who need this specialist accommodation and the Housing Department needs more properties such as this for their clients. A proportion of these potential occupiers are single and often live in unacceptable accommodation given their specific needs. It is intended that the dwelling will be rented to such a user in need.

10. DESIGN

The application is to change an existing approval of a two bedroom two storey house to a single bedroom bungalow suitable for ambulant disabled use. There is a large need for specific properties of this type in the Merthyr area and many potential occupants are living in unsuitable

accommodation that simply does not meet their needs. The property is to be built specifically for a less able user.

The principle behind the design approach taken for this application was to follow as closely as possible the design of the approved planning permission. This was approved on resubmission after recognising the fact that there is a very limited relationship with the surrounding properties of Warlow Street, Clare Street and Ernest Street. The approved design therefore did not seek to replicate any surrounding development in terms of the existing Dwellings. It is the view of the designer that this amended design is as close and harmonious with the design of this approved dwelling, but retaining one of the garages which has been an established feature on this site since the 1960s. This will be reformed and refurbished, but is generally in perfect structural condition, and matches the design of many of the garages in the area.

This amended design is similar to the existing approval in character and is an individual stand-alone dwelling which will slot into the site within minimal disruption to the character and appearance of the area.

The drawings to the elevations show that the proposed dwelling matches the approved design in height and retains the similar design concepts of the approved design. Note that elevations drawings below are each at the same relative scale, although are not to scale due to the scanning process.

Front Elevation:

The front elevation of the proposed design is very similar to the approved design, however the elevation as proposed is not as wide and a timber fence is substituted for the open metal fence to give the occupier a private rear garden that they can enjoy without being viewed by passers by. The fence will also give security to the back yard for pets and other items left in the yard such as bicycles and contents of outside storage bins.

On this revised application, the roof windows have been omitted for energy conservation reasons and the lower windows and door will be the same design as that already approved.

It is envisaged the front elevation will be render coated and painted a neutral cream colour to match the rendered elevations prevalent in the area. Roof covering is to be agreed with the Local Authority. The proposed door cill has been lowered from the approved elevation so it forms a flush threshold for entry to the hall.

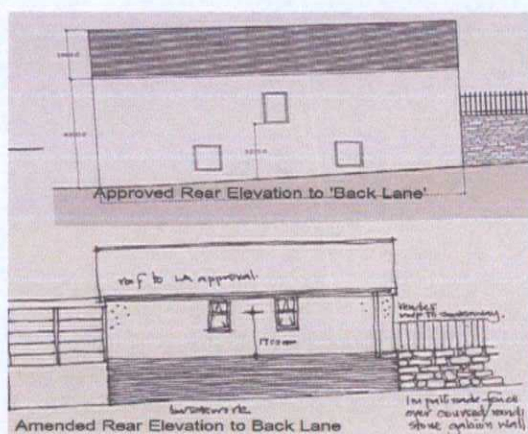


Rear Elevation over Back Lane

The rear elevation whilst not as wide as the existing approved retains the same ridge height and fascia height as the approved scheme. The rain water gutter is designed to discharge directly into the existing soakaway on site.

The bottom floor of render in the approved design is now substituted for brickwork as it is felt that this will reduce the likelihood of graffiti and the gabion stone retaining wall will be installed so its height will be level with the garden behind. Over the retaining wall will be a 1m high fence to give privacy from the lane below.

The windows overlooking the back lane are reduced from 3 to two and they will have obscure glass. The opening lights will be a minimum of 1700mm above the finished floor level of the living/ bed rooms, meeting the planning approval requirements of the previous scheme.



Side elevations:

The proposed Elevation overlooking the garden has the same ridge height as the existing approved plans and the rear access door and window is retained though repositioned.

The proposed Elevation overlooking the allotments has the same ridge height as the existing approved, but is substantially obscured by the existing Garage. The window from the bedroom on this elevation gives excellent visual surveillance down the back lane (refer to drwg #002 'Sight Lines Plan')

As the visitor approaches the site through Warlow Street it is clear that they are entering a mixed use and residential area of Garage, a car repair shop, a bric a brac shop and housing. But as the visitor passes Ernest street and heads in the direction of Clare Street there is a clear street feel of approaching a mixed residential/ industrial area. This atmosphere is largely influenced by the strong and dominant Facade of the stone arches underneath the railway line, but tempered by the strong elevation and garage of Wedgewood Bungalow. The fact that these arches have been converted to commercial units just adds to the obvious change in the street scene. Due to the change in character and the fact that the site has a very limited relationship with the Dwellings in the area it is considered that it is wholly acceptable to introduce a subtly different architectural design into the locality. The dimensions of the site, limited physical constraints and the reasons for refusing the first application P/15/019 made it clear from the start that any proposed the approved dwelling would need to be of limited size and height and actively improve the

streets, particularly when approaching from Walnut Street. This amendment has kept well within the approved building envelope and so there will be no overlooking concerns from neighbouring residents. The orientation of the building is such that there will be no overshadowing issues of neighbouring houses. Given that the development site is currently occupied by garages and situated between two rear access lanes which both have numerous garages, it was considered that they should actively influence the design of the new dwelling. So it was decided to incorporate one of the garages into the design.

As a homage to the strong elevations and timber gables of Wedgewood Bungalow, Timber gables have been incorporated into the design. These also give an interesting high level element to what would otherwise be unfeatured gable ends.

Thus the design of the dwelling cleverly uses the space available increasing the overall height of the building from the approved plans. The bedroom is located to the rear of the building and is situated to benefit from the morning sunshine, and the the kitchen is to the front elevation so ensure adequate visual surveillance of the Clare street view. There is a dual entry shower room, and the living / dining area is in open plan with the kitchen and has direct access to the garden so the living space can spill over to the outdoors during the summer months.

11. Conclusion.

The amended design proposed by this application seeks to erect a contemporary single level style dwelling suitable for disabled use upon a site which has multiple physical and imposed constraints.

By reducing the size from the two bedroomed two storey dwelling currently approved to a single bedroom dwelling, it reduces any potential of intensification of use of the site particularly with regard to:

- Number of vehicles on site
- Vehicular visits
- Sewerage load
- Rainwater disposal
- Utilities loading

and at the same time it makes a positive addition to the area by:

- Increased visual surveillance of the area
- improving the view at the junction of Clare street and Warlow street
- retaining the scale and finishes of surrounding buildings
- Increasing the health and safety of surrounding properties
- Adding a specialist disabled friendly home in a residential neighbourhood
- Reducing the number of vehicles accessing or using the site

This ambulant disabled dwelling design is now proposed to reduce the original approval to a single level and is intended to maximize the usable space on the site for occupants amenity use, in particular if they are at home full time whilst also minimise the physical impact of the dwelling. The ground area plan size of the proposed dwelling is therefore reduced by 8% to a ground footprint 8.7m by 6.2m from the 10.8m by 6m in the existing approved application, and remains the same in terms of ridge height ensuring any impact upon the rear of properties in Ernest Street is unchanged, particularly as one existing garage is retained.

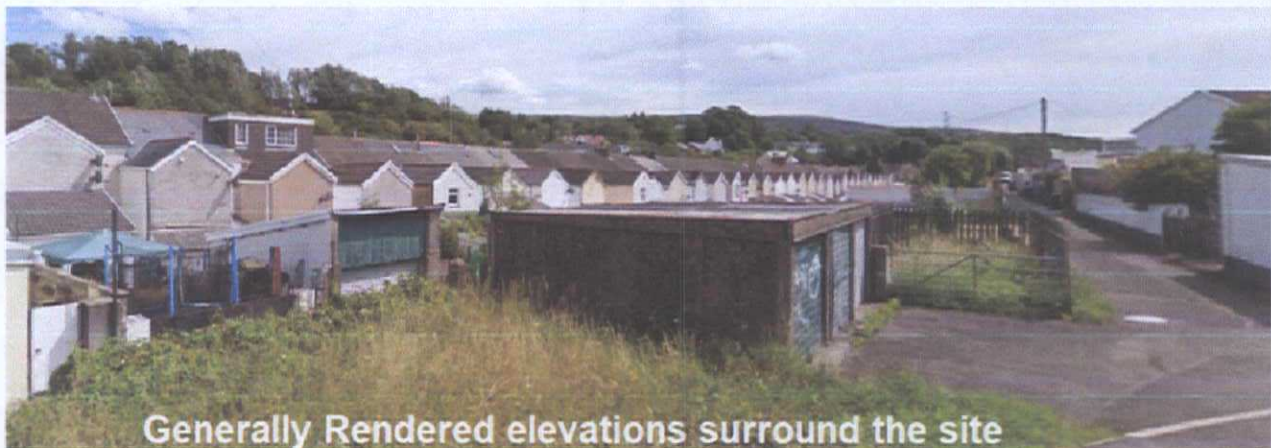
The restricted height of the dwelling means that the proposed dwelling will not have an overbearing impact on these Ernest Street properties and the two top hung ventilation windows overlooking the rear of these properties will be installed as double glazed obscured glass. The

openers will be situated a minimum of 1700mm above the finished floor level of the room to meet the conditions in the previous planning approval P/15/0366.

With regard to the boundary of the site it has been identified previously that an important feature will be the impact on the street scene, particularly when approaching from the direction of Warlow Street. In light of this the design retains the existing wall boundary around the section which will complement the strong dominant stone facade of the Railway arches. The stone wall will be further complemented with a 1m high timber fence over a granite capping to the wall giving a private garden to the space behind.

The proposed boundary will improve the overall street scene and the mixture of hard boundary treatment with soft landscaping to the side and to the front of the dwelling will provide privacy as well as semi private and private defensible space that will be visually appealing and enhance the look of the dwelling.

It is considered that due to the location of the site and the fact there's no strong local design influence to follow the introduction of the design which is broadly similar to what has previously been approved is wholly acceptable. As previously approved, this building has been designed so it appears at first glance to be similar in scale to the block of garages and this is achieved through limiting its height on the front elevation. The rendered insulated external walls will match the character of the area as this surface treatment is prevalent in the character of many overlooking properties having rendered elevations.



Generally Rendered elevations surround the site

To the back lane there is a clear respect of the visual privacy of neighbouring properties with the use of obscured glazing to the windows with restricted openers overlooking the lane. Limited scope views from the dwelling also have ensured windows are positioned for crossflow room ventilation and visual surveillance particularly down the back lane.

In conclusion it is considered that this is an unusual site with little or no relationship to any other dwellings in the locality the introduction of this design solution is fully acceptable, particularly as the neighbouring property is also a rendered dormer bungalow. As this dwelling is a reduction of the site use these proposed plans provide a smart development solution which will produce a dwelling for underserved members of our community, improve the street scene, help mitigate the risk of any security issues locally and successfully integrate the transition in character to the residential element of the area.