

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/26/0055

Site Address: Bishop Hedley High School
Gwaunfarren Road
Penydarren
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9AN

Development: Non-material amendment to planning permission P/23/0131 to reduce the scale of the sports hall and changes to the elevations

Case Officer: David Cross

Application Expiry Date: 11th May 2026

Consultation reply date expired:

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to the Bishop Hedley High School, which is surrounded by the residential areas of Penydarren and Galon-Uchaf. The school grounds are split into two distinct areas to the north and south that are separated by Gwaunfarren Road but are connected together by a pedestrian underpass. The northern half of the site accommodates the main high school building and the southern half of the site accommodates a sports hall and playground/pitches.

Permission was previously granted (ref P/23/0131) for the demolition of the former school building and the construction of a new School building, which is currently under construction.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seek consent for a non-material amendment to planning permission P/23/0131 to amend the design and reduce the scale of the sports hall involving changes to the elevations.

The original scheme comprised a large extension to the existing sports hall of which parts were storey in scale and involved over-cladding the existing sports hall to tie in with the new build element. It is now proposed to reduce the overall mass of the extension. The existing sports would be retained as existing and simply refurbished without any additional cladding introduced.

PLANNING HISTORY

P/23/0131 - Demolition of existing school and construction of a new school building within the existing site, including sports facilities and associated landscaping, access and engineering works, temporary staff car park, construction compound and classrooms during construction.

Granted planning permission on 20.10.2023

P/12/0208 - Installation of solar photovoltaic modules to the flat and pitched roofs.

Granted planning permission on 20.09.2012

P/96/0208 - Demolition of existing sports hall and replacement with new one.

Granted planning permission on 26.07.1996

CONSULTATION

Council's ecologist - Noted there is a need to retained the ecological enhancements on the building as previously approved.

PUBLICITY

No publicity exercise is required in this instance.

POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy

The Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11

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

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (September 2009)

TAN 11: Noise (Oct 1997)

TAN 12: Design (March 2016)

TAN 18: Transport (March 2007)

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016 – 2031:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries

- Policy SW9 - Planning Obligations
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW12 - Improving the Transport Network
- Policy SW13 - Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
- Policy CW1 - Historic Environment
- Policy EnW1 - Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW2 - Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- Policy EnW4 - Environmental Protection
- Policy EnW9 - District Heating Area

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

- SPG 2 Planning Obligations, March 2012
- SPG 4 Sustainable Design, July 2013
- SPG 5 Nature and Development, May 2015

Welsh Government Planning Guidance: Approving Non-material Amendments to an Existing Planning Permission (July 2014)

The guidance advises that a non-material amendment will depend on factors such as the context of the overall scheme, the amendments being sought to the original planning permission, the specific circumstances of the site and the surrounding area, which will vary from one application to another.

In deciding whether or not a proposed change is non-material, consideration should be given to the effect of the change, together with any previous changes made to the original planning permission. The guidance also identifies four tests, which local planning authorities may wish to consider when assessing and determining whether a proposed change would qualify as a non-material amendment. These are as follows:

- is the scale of the proposed change great enough to cause an impact different to that caused by the original approved development scheme; and,
- would the proposed change result in a detrimental impact either visually or in terms of local amenity?
- would the interests of any third party or body be disadvantaged in planning terms; or,
- would the proposed change conflict with national or development plan policies?

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issue to consider in this application is whether the proposed amendments to the extension and improvement of the existing sports hall as part of the wider development for the construction of a new school would constitute a non-material amendment.

The notable difference between the approved scheme and the current proposal is that the existing sports hall would be retained as existing and would not be over-cladded to give the appearance of an entirely new building. The retention of the existing sports halls does not in itself require planning permission and it would not amount to any greater impact given its existing presence in the area.

The proposed extension to the side of the building would be notably smaller than the approved scheme. It would be in a similar position although it would not include a linking corridor and it would be of a similar height. However, the previous scheme included a first floor element with classrooms and then plant equipment on the roof. The classrooms have been removed so it would only be used at ground floor, with the first floor area accommodating plant equipment, which has the effect of reducing the height of the building slightly.

It is noted that the external elevations of the extension would be the same grey brickwork (Synthesis S09) as previously agreed.

Other Considerations:

The following have been taken into account in considering the application and in reaching the recommendation set out below.

1. There are no conditions on the original permission which would prevent this non-material amendment.
2. There have not been any other amendments to the originally approved development.
3. It is noted that one objection was received following the original publicity exercise. However, the concerns did not relate to the sports hall or its general design and would not be relevant to the current proposed amendment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed amendment is considered to be acceptable and would constitute a non-material amendment to the originally approved scheme. Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

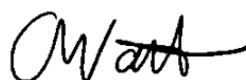
RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED

INFORMATIVES

1. The following documents have been considered in respect of this application and should be read in conjunction the details approved under Planning Application P/23/0131
 - External Materials Tracker
 - General Arrangements Plans Dwg No. BCA-ATK-V2-ZZ-DR-A-011006 Rev P20
 - Sports Hall - GA Elevations and Sections Dwg No. BCA-ATK-V2-ZZ-DR-A-016001

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED

p.p.



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 6th July 2026