

Planning Permission Proposal – 2 Bed Cottage Merthyr Vale

Outline

1. This proposal is for a 2 bed cottage to act as accomodation in the corner of a 6 acre small holding plot at Merthyr Vale.
2. This proposal will:
 1. Create a small affordable dwelling next to the settlement area of Merthyr Vale.
 2. Improve biodiversity.
 3. Improve the visual appearance of the site.
3. The plot was previously used for grazing horses and is now used for horticulture by the applicant.

Site Location and Planning Policies

5. The cottage site would be located within a special landscape area situated between SINC 45 and the settlement area of Merthyr Vale. The site does not fall under any other constraints and is not in a flood risk area. *See Location Maps 1 - 3.*
6. The West of the site is next to Cardiff Road (A4054). To the South of the site are terraced houses. To the North and East of the site are fields. On the opposite side of A4054 road are the back gardens of houses on Mount View Road.
7. A large advertising sign is next to the site. The advertising sign is leased to Emerge Advertising who arrange the licensing and management. A small stable exists within the site boundary further up the slope. A small garden greenhouse (10ft by 6ft) also exists further up the slope.
8. With regards to policy SW4. I require a longer term solution for accommodation on the site to allow me to work on the land. Currently I live 80 miles away in Powys and have a long commute and have to use uncomfortable temporary accomodation in the stable when I work on the land. Though this site is not in a settlement area defined in the current LDP, the site is right next to the designated secondary growth area of Merthyr Vale and when you look on the map the site is actually between two parts of Merthyr Vale. The site is next to the A4054 and is very close to public transport and cycle links. I have checked with service providers and water, sewage, power and communications all run along the A4054 on the correct side of the road. The accommodation would be affordable by virtue of its small size. With the exception of being on a slight slope the site is a very good place for a dwelling. *See sewer water and power maps. Note the Power map has an overlay of a hypothetical installation at the top of the plot, please ignore this.*
9. With respect to Enw5 and SW11, justification is required for the proposal. The alternative to building permanent accommodation on the site is to continue to use temporary accommodation in the existing stable. As the stable was never intended

for human habitation it limits the maximum time I can stay on the small holding before it becomes unhygienic. The stable is not suitable to house any workers (even with significant modification) and does not come close to meeting HSW regulations. The other option is a large caravan but I think this is a worse long term solution and would adversely impact the character of the area.

Appearance and Architecture

10. The size and elevation of the proposal is small to minimise visual impact and terracing work. *See Elevations, Floor Plan and Layout diagrams.* The design of the cottage is in keeping with stone terraces and farm houses in the area and will utilise reclaimed stone in the exterior walls and a slate roof. The colour of the stone will be predominantly grey and there will be red coloured brick trim on the windows and doors. The trim and fascia colour will be dark brown and black. *See Photo 8 - example of external appearance.*
11. The roof design has been chosen to reduce the ridge height but allow a steep roof slope suitable for solar power.
12. The cottage would be located between existing structures so the change in view from the road would be minimal. The existing advertising sign will obscure most of the cottage when approaching from the North and the existing terrace houses will obscure most of the cottage when approaching from the South. When viewed from the cycle bridge in Merthyr Vale the ridge line of the house will not appear much above the existing ridge line of the Mount View Road houses. *See photos 1 - 5.*
13. The existing fence next to the road would be changed to a large mixed hedgerow which would improve the appearance of the site from the road side. Four small trees would be planted in front of the existing stable to help obscure it from the road. A sizable green space further up the slope is already part of the site and being used as a garden.
14. A gravel path will surround the house and connect the drive, front entrance and back garden path. The porch will have a shallow gravel ramp to allow wheelchair access and the front door will be extra wide for improved accessibility.

Ecology and Environmental Aspects

11. Enw1. A Preliminary Ecology Assessment (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out for the site and the adjacent SINC45 area in 2021 by ARBTECH. *See PEA and PRA report.* It was found that the current biodiversity and ecological value of the site was limited. The site was used for grazing for a very long time and bracken had dominated many areas. No evidence of priority species were found. Taking into account the recommendations of this assessment this proposal would:
 1. Introduced a 40m long, 2m high mixed hedgerow in place of the existing fencing and brambles next to the road. This would provide habitat and increase biodiversity.
 2. Plant 4 Small cherry trees in front of the existing horse shed. This would provide habitat and food for bird life.

3. Fix 8 bird boxes to the walls of the cottage to the specification given in the PRA report.
 4. Use Gabion walls which will provide habitat for reptiles, insects and small mammals.
 5. Not use solid or fine mesh fences which would block wildlife routes.
12. Enw3. The PEA reports makes recommendations to minimise disturbances to wildlife during construction. Excavation would take place between autumn and winter to avoid the primary nesting period of birds. Unfilled trenches during construction will have gangways and exits for small wildlife.
13. Enw4. The main risk to others is surface water run off onto the A4054 during winter periods. Run off naturally occurs from the site and surrounding area which in the past has resulted in some light flooding on the A4054. The council recently improved the drainage on a number of main road gutters to help the situation. The aim of this proposal is to improve the surface water run off characteristics by doing the following.
1. Keeping the constructed area of the cottage small, that is below the 100sqm SUD limit.
 2. Increasing the existing Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) on the stable from 2500 litres to 5000 litres capacity.
 3. Use gabion walls and permeable gravel surfaces in contrast to concrete and tarmac.
 4. Fitting a small capacity (1500 litre) RWH system on the cottage.
 5. Creation of a bog garden to accept any additional stable and cottage run off.

Sustainability

14. Policies EcW10 and EcW13 were referenced in the pre planning advice. This is a small scale construction using standard materials from local suppliers and hence I have not considered any further details because the design contains nothing out of the ordinary in terms of construction or materials.
15. The cottage will combine solar power (10m square West facing system) and solar heating (6m square South facing system) for primary electricity, hot water supply and central heating. Main powers will be a secondary source and also needed during winter and for EV charging. The fall back for heating is a solid fuel burner linked to the hot water and central heating system.
16. An EV charge point will be located next to the parking area.
17. There is adequate space for recycling and waste collection alongside the main road as is done for the existing terraced houses in Merthyr Vale. There would be storage space for wheelie bins and recycling boxes at the back of the cottage.
18. The cottage will use modern standards of insulation and glazing and also utilise a raised floor with crawl space for improved insulation from the ground. Windows on the North side of the cottage design have been kept small to minimise heat loss on the cold side of the cottage. External shutters will be fitted to the South facing windows to keep the bedrooms cool in Summer without the need for Air Conditioning.

19. The proposal contains a bike shed at the entrance of the cottage and the site location is within 200m of the Taff Trail. The site is within 50m of the nearest bus stop and 1km walk to the nearest railway stop and convenience store.

Road Access and Parking

20. The pre planning advice raised the requirement for safe vehicle access and parking. These requirements were; a 43m visibility splay, parking for 2 vehicles, and means to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. This proposal will meet these requirements by:
1. The left hand visibility splay will be increased by moving the fence line/hedge and removing the unused posts. The right hand visibility splay is 30m, so a minimum of 13m is needed on the LHS to meet the 43m requirement. *See photos 6 and 7.*
 2. Changing the design of the entrance gate to open away from the road rather than towards the road.
 3. Moving the entrance gate away from the road sufficiently to allow a normal vehicle to drive off the main road completely before having to open the gate.
 4. Create a gravel turning/parking area large enough to meet the requirement.

Minimising Construction Disturbances

21. The drive and turning area would be complete first to allow all further material deliveries and plant to be easily dropped off directly on the site minimising disturbance to road users.
22. As this is a single storey design only low level scaffolding and small plant is needed.
23. The main unavoidable disturbance would be connecting of mains water supply and sewage services. The current service maps show this running alongside the A4054 where local residents typically park cars. Any new connection will involve some digging up of the road and disruption to the on road parking used by residents.

N CHILDS

Jun 2022