
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

FORMER MERTHYR HOSPITAL, HIGH STREET, MERTHYR, CF47 0RX

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT TO CREATE 30 NO. 1 AND 2 BED SELF
CONTAINED APARTMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support our Client's application for the proposed redevelopment to create 30 no. 1 and 2 bed self contained apartments at the former Merthyr Hospital, High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 0RX.

The site is allocated for 20 dwellings within the LDP (Policy SW3.15), reflecting a planning permission on the site dated 2016. The principle of development is considered acceptable, and a satisfactory existing highway access is available.

This statement explains the concept and principles of the development in relation to accessibility, character, community safety, environmental sustainability, movement and assesses the proposal against the relevant Planning Policy framework.

This statement demonstrates the proposal accords with relevant National and Local Planning Policy and other material planning policy considerations

This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans and illustrations comprising the application submission, and the following professional documents;

- Ecological impact Assessment
- Transport Note



Existing Site Plan

SITE & SURROUNDINGS

The Merthyr General Hospital was built in 1888 by Lord Merthyr, with the financial support of the Marquess of Bute and public subscriptions. The new hospital had two ten-bedded wards and a small four –bedded children's ward.

In June 1931 the Lord Buckland Memorial Hospital was opened and was connected to the General Hospital by a corridor, where a lift and a stairway provided access to the upper floors..

The hospital remained a voluntary hospital until 1948, when all hospitals were transferred to the Ministry of Health.

During the 1960's many improvements were made, including a new theatre and an extension to the children's ward, which was later used as the Special Care Baby Unit.

In the 1970's Prince Charles Hospital was built, and the large, modern hospital had inevitable repercussions for all the other hospitals throughout Merthyr. When the first phase of Prince Charles Hospital opened in 1978, the General Hospital closed and was adapted to receive several departments from St Tydfil's Hospital, while it was being refurbished.

In 1980, the Maternity and Special Baby Care units were transferred to the Buckland Hospital and the department for the Care of the Elderly was transferred to the main hospital.

In 1986, with the refurbishment of St Tydfil's complete, the Care of the Elderly department was relocated there, and the main building of the General Hospital closed.

The building was converted to a nursing home and used for a number of years before itself closing.

Planning permission was granted in 2016 to turn the 23,000 sq ft building into 23 homes.

The Former General Hospital is a prominent building both in terms of location and architectural style. Sitting on an elevated position at the junction of Alexandra Road and Gwaelodygarth, the main elevation look out over High Street to the south.

The building is locally listed, due to its architectural merit; and it is considered a building of special interest; in terms of social history and architectural quality.

The Former General Hospital is within the Town Centre Conservation Area.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, with the site bound to the north by dwellings on Heritage Court. Penydarren Park, Thomastown Park and Whitey / Newland Park are all within walking distance of the site.

The site is within a highly sustainable location, approximately 1 km from the centre of Merthyr. Cyfarthfa Shopping Park and Trago Mills are readily accessible.

Gwaunfarren Primary School is located some 300m to the north of the site, with a number of other primary schools nearby. Cyfartha High School and Ysgol Gymraeg Santes Tudful are within 1 km to the south east.

Public transport is readily accessible from the site, with bus stops located on High Street and Gwaeloygarth linking to the Town Centre, Abregavenny and Bargoed. Merthyr Tydfil train station is within approximately 1km of the site, linking to the National rail network

Constraints / Opportunities

A full assessment of the physical characteristics of the site and its context in relation to surrounding development was undertaken to identify opportunities and constraints presented by the site.

The key opportunities/constraints the site presented were considered to be:

- Redevelopment should be sympathetic to the heritage asset and character of the conservation area.
- The building envelope should be retained, whilst the removal of modern extensions would be welcomed.
- The redevelopment is constrained by the size of the site.
- Ease of access to public transport and local facilities
- Ease of access to local highway and footpath networks
- The full potential of the curtilage has not been maximised



PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Planning History

The following planning history is relevant to the site:

- P/96/0290 Residential Development(Renewal of Outline Consent) Approved 06.09.1996
- P/16/0033 Conversion and extension of former nursing home to accommodate 23 dwellings. Approved 13.10.2016

National Planning Policy

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (which came into force on 1st April 2016) requires “public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle”. The Act sets out seven ‘well-being’ goals as follows:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsive Wales

National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

The National Development Framework: Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 was published on 24th February 2021. ‘Future Wales’ sets out the Welsh Government’s strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, 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. As stated above, the National Development Framework has Development Plan status.

Future Wales sets out its overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales by means of 11 Outcomes. As set out on Page 52 of Future Wales, the 11 Outcomes are collectively a statement of where the Welsh Government aspire Wales to be in 20 years’ time, as follows:

A Wales where people live:

1. ...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
2. ...in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
3. ...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth
4. ...in places with a thriving Welsh Language
5. ...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth

6. ...in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted

7. ...in places where travel is sustainable

8. ...in places with world-class digital infrastructure

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

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

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

Placemaking

Placemaking forms a key concept upon which many national planning policies are based. Policy 2 of Future Wales is of key relevance in terms of placemaking, which states the following. Key placemaking principles are summarised below:

- Mix of uses
- Variety of housing
- Walkable scale
- Density
- Street network
- Plot-based development
- Green infrastructure

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11 was published on 24th February 2021. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Placemaking

In accordance with the National Development Framework, placemaking is also at the heart of PPW. Placemaking is defined as follows: “Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well being in the widest sense. Placemaking considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings”.

A set of ‘national sustainable placemaking outcomes’ are outlined within PPW, which it advises should be used to inform the assessment of development proposals. The national outcomes are defined as follows:

- Creating and Sustaining Communities
- Making Best Use of Resources
- Maximising Environmental Protection and Limiting Environmental Impact

- Growing Our Economy in a Sustainable Manner
- Facilitating Accessible and Healthy Environments

Good Design

The importance of good design in development proposals is highlighted within PPW. Good design must enable development proposals to address the issues of inclusivity and accessibility for all. In addition, it is highlighted that good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals.

Good design is also about avoiding the creation of car-based developments by minimising the need to travel and reliance on the car, whilst maximising opportunities for people to make sustainable and healthy travel choices for their daily journeys.

Technical Advice Notes

The following Technical Advice Notes (TANS) are of relevance to the development proposal.

TAN 12 Design (2016) , TAN 2 - Planning and Affordable Housing, TAN 4 – Retail and commercial development, TAN 18 – Transport are all considered relevant to the site.

Local Planning Policy

The current Development Plan is the Adopted Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development .Plan 2016 – 2031 the objectives of the plan are:

- 1 - To encourage a sustainable level and distribution of population growth
- 2 - To protect and enhance Welsh language and culture.
- 3 - To ensure the sufficient provision of land for the delivery of a range and choice of housing and affordable housing to address local housing needs.
- 4 - To promote the suitable reuse of previously developed land and the continued regeneration of local communities
- 5 - To ensure that community infrastructure and open space supports the regeneration of local communities.
- 6 - To promote high quality, sustainable and inclusive design and support measures, which mitigate the predicted effects of climate, change.
- 7 - To support an integrated transport system, promote active travel and ensure new developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport links
- 8 - To support existing community facilities and suitable community led development
- 9 - To protect, enhance and promote all heritage, historic and cultural assets.
- 10 - To improve ecosystem resilience and connectivity which support habitats and species of principle importance
- 14 - To develop the town and local centres as accessible, attractive, viable and vibrant places

- 16 - To promote renewable and low carbon energy
- 18 - To promote the efficient use of materials and resources and ensure an integrated network of waste management facilities.

LDP policies of relevance to the application site are:

- Policy SW1: Provision of New Homes
- Policy SW2: Provision of Affordable Housing
- Policy SW3: Sustainably Distributing New Homes (15 – Former General Hospital)
- Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW9: Planning Obligations
- Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW12: Improving the Transport Network
- Policy CW1: The Historic Environment
- Policy EcW8: Renewable Energy

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance provides further advice and information on certain policies and proposals within the LDP and are a material consideration in determination of planning applications. The following SPG's are relevant to the development proposals:

- Guidance Note 1 – Affordable Housing
- Guidance Note 2 – Planning Obligations
- Guidance Note 4 – Sustainable Design
- Guidance Note 5 – Nature & Development

PROPOSAL

In line with our Client's development brief, the Key Design Principles of the development were identified as:

- Demonstrating the highest urban design principles that would include clearly demarcating what is private and what is public space, an outward looking development promoting natural surveillance of the adjacent area and secure private areas.
- A modern, high-quality development that avoids an 'institutional feel' and utilises a combination of traditional and contemporary materials to give a strong sense of place, whilst retaining the historic asset and preserving the character of the conservation area
- Development options should provide accessible one and two bedroom flats.
- A development that utilises its form and the configuration of its building elements to thoughtfully give visual interest and high quality composition.
- A development that meets Welsh Government's DQR (Development Quality Requirements) standards and Lifetime Homes

The site is approximately 0.2 Ha in area, comprising the former Merthyr General Hospital forming the southern junction of Alexandra Street and Gwaelodygarth fronting High Street.

This statement is intended to provide a broad indication of design access philosophy in respect of the scheme at planning stage which will be augmented and amended as the detailed design progress to Building Regulation approval

The detailed design proposals have been developed following a full assessment of the site and surrounding areas including the physical, social and economic context.

The application submission proposes the demolition of the rear former hospital building, retaining the original front façade and extending the building to create 30 self contained apartments.

In line with the Client's mandate, the proposal envisages the creation of a sustainable modern residential development, which provides a contrast between the former hospital building, existing residential dwellings whilst preserving the character of the conservation area.

The existing front façade and elements of the building will be converted to provide 2 lower ground floor units, 6 ground floor units and 4 first floor units. A new build extension to the rear will provide a further 18 units over 3 floors..

Each unit will comprise an open plan kitchen / living / dining room, 1 or 2 bedrooms and a bathroom.

At lower ground floor, future residents will benefit from extensive dedicated secure cycle storage (44 No.) and communal refuse facilities, which will be accessible from both the outside of the building and within the communal areas.



Second Floor Plan

**Proposed Redevelopment
Former Martha's Hospital
High Street, Martha's Vineyard
MA 01913**

**Site
Sketches and Second Floor Plans**

**Scale
1/4" = 1'-0"**

**Architects
Environmental & Urban design**

**Town Planner
Environmental & Urban design**

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The proposed rear new build extension, whilst modern in appearance, compliments and reflects the scale, elevation treatment and character of the existing building, utilising a mix of red brown and grey facing brickwork and grey composite panels.

Windows will have a vertical emphasis, reflecting the scale and prominence of the original building.

As the proposed elevations illustrate, the rear building has predominantly been set below the level of the existing fence lines along 19 - 23 and 29 - 30 Heritage Court, with no habitable room windows overlooking the adjacent properties.

The demolition and rebuilding of the rear element of the site allows for the setting back of properties from existing residential dwellings and curtilages, ensuring potential privacy and overlooking issues are minimised.

Pedestrian access to the building will be via the existing main entrance fronting High Street into the communal foyer and hallway. The existing central lift and staircase will provide access to all floors, whilst a secondary staircase will be located to the rear of the building.

Vehicular access to the site will be via the existing access point onto High Street, providing forecourt parking for 5 vehicles along with adequate space for the collection of refuse bins.

The position of the site on the junction of Alexandra Street, High Street and Gwaelodygarth presents no potential access problems for pedestrians and car borne visitors.

Residents will all have access to the communal garden areas surrounding the building, whilst apartments at 2nd floor level will have access to private dedicated balconies.

The site is within a highly accessible location and is easily accessed by foot, cycle, bus and train. The development of the site for residential accommodation would serve to minimise the need to travel to the town by car and future occupiers would benefit from a wide range of services, shops and facilities all within walking distance of the site.

The redevelopment of this long-term vacant building would ensure its future as a building of significant heritage value and history within the Merthyr area, whilst providing much needed residential accommodation. The retention of the main façade of the former hospital would both preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.

Environmental sustainability

The development will be designed to minimise its potential impact on the environment and its CO2 footprint.

PPW11 and TAN12 provide guidance on creating sustainable developments.

The proposed development aims to meet and exceed, where possible current regulations.



Front (South) Elevation



Rear (North) Elevation

Proposed Redevelopment Former Merthyr Hospital High Street, Merthyr CF47 0RX	Job No. 22_058	Rev. B
Title Sketch Elevations 1 of 2	Drawn WS	Scale 1:125 & @ A3 1:250 & A1
Date 20/07/22	Drawn WS	Scale 1:125 & @ A3 1:250 & A1
C2 Architects · Town planners Environmental & Urban design		
Unit 10, Commerce Enterprise Park, Park Road, Cardiff, CF10 1AT		



COMMUNITY SAFETY

The position of the site within an established residential, area and the design and orientation of the proposal affords the opportunity for natural surveillance of the building entrances, whilst ensuring the privacy of adjacent residential properties.

The main entrances to the building are well positioned within a defined secure defensible space and lit to ensure a strong sense of personal safety.

The established nature of the area creates a sense of community and 'ownership' discouraging anti-social behaviour.

Windows and Doors

All ground floor windows to be BS 7950:1997 Specification for enhanced security performance of casement and tilt and turn windows for domestic applications. Accredited with (UKAS) accredited test facilities.

No habitable windows are proposed to the northern elevation.

Perimeter wall

The development will be defined by enhanced existing and new boundary enclosures.

Lighting

The site will be lit to BS5489 and be positioned to ensure an even spread of light over the pedestrian accesses

HIGHWAY SAFETY

The application is supported by a Transport Note which concludes that the site location will encourage and promote sustainable travel behaviour, attract residents who choose not to own a car or have low car ownership and is fully in accordance with transport policies in Future Wales, PPW11, TAN18 and the LDP.

The on-site parking provision is fully in accordance with the objectives for encouraging sustainable travel and reducing car use as set out in PPW11 and Future Wales. It would not have a material impact on parking stress, inconsiderate or illegal parking given the availability of on-street parking in the surrounding streets.

CONCLUSION

The scheme makes efficient use of the site, responding to the Client's Design Brief and LDP Policy, creating a sensitively designed development which integrates well with its surroundings.

The proposed development is located in a highly sustainable location with good access to local and city centre based facilities by foot and regular public transport.

The development aims to seek a balance between creating a high quality development fit for its purpose, without impacting unnecessarily upon the environment in which it is located.

The proposal would utilise a brownfield site, alleviating the current pressure placed on greenfield sites in accord with the objective of Planning Policy Wales.