



**PARC CENEDLAETHOL BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG
BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK**

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council – David Cross
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Unit 5 Triangle Business Park
Pentrebach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4TQ

Date: 7 July 2020
Officer: Davina Powell
Your Ref: P/20/0121
Our Ref: 20/18749/FRI

Dear Mr Cross,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

Proposal: “Demolition of bungalow, construction of residential development, landscaping, parking and associated works. (Merthyr Tydfil CBC planning reference no. P/20/0121)”

Address: Land To The North Of Crabtree Walk, And To The West Of Sweetwater Park, Trefechan

The Authority welcomes feedback from agents and applicants on the quality of the service received. For further information, please visit www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/planningsurvey to fill in a brief online survey.

Thank you for your consultation received on the 24 June (letter dated 18 June 2020) regarding the above.

We understand WDL Homes Ltd (c/o Asbri Planning) has submitted a full planning application to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council for an unnamed number of residential dwellings on land to the north of Crabtree Walk and to the west of Sweetwater Park, Trefechan.

It is understood that the red outline of the site subject to the above planning application measures 2.8 hectares and submitted drawings show 45 residential dwellings. The site is circa 50m from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (NPA) boundary at its closest point beyond which is a bridleway. The NPA was consulted as part of the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process.

We set out below background on the NPA’s policy and legal context. The letter ends with our comments on the planning application submission made available on your website.

Background

Policy and legal context

Section 63 of the Environment Act (1995) sets out the statutory purposes of the National Park as follows:-

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park

In accordance with section 62(2) of the Environment, any relevant Authority shall have regard to National Park purposes when performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park. Relevant Authorities include public bodies, government departments, local authorities and statutory undertakers. It goes on to state that if it appears that there is a conflict between those purposes, greater weight shall be attached to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area comprised in the National Park.

The Special Qualities of the National Park may be significantly impacted by development proposals on the fringes of the National Park. The Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan 2015-2020 defines the Special Qualities of the Brecon Beacons National Park as follows:

- A National Park offering **peace and tranquility** with opportunities for quiet enjoyment, inspiration, relaxation and spiritual renewal.
- A feeling of **vitality and healthfulness** that comes from enjoying the Park's fresh air, clean water, rural setting, open land and locally produced foods.
- A **sense of place and cultural identity** - "Welshness" - characterised by the use of the indigenous Welsh language, religious and spiritual connections, unique customs and events, traditional foods and crafts, relatively unspoilt historic towns, villages and family farms. The continued practices of traditional skills developed by local inhabitants to live and earn a living here, such as common land practices and grazing.
- A **sense of discovery** where people are able to explore the Park's hidden secrets and stories such as genealogical histories, prehistoric ritual sites, medieval rural settlements, early industrial sites, local myths, legends and geological treasures.
- The Park's **sweeping grandeur and outstanding natural beauty** observed across a variety of harmoniously connected landscapes, including marvellous gorges and waterfalls, classic karst geology with caves and sink holes, contrasting glacial landforms such as cliffs and broad valleys carved from old red sandstone and prominent hilltops with extensive views in all directions.
- A **working, living "patchwork" of contrasting patterns, colours, and textures** comprising of well-maintained farmed landscapes, open uplands, lakes and meandering rivers punctuated by small-scale woodlands, country lanes, hedgerows, stone walls and scattered settlements.
- **Extensive and widespread access to the Park's diversity of wildlife and richness of semi-natural habitats**, such as native woodlands, heathland and grassland, natural lakes and riparian habitats, ancient hedgerows, limestone pavement and blanket bogs including those of international and national importance.
- In the context of the UK, **geographically rugged, remote and challenging landscapes**.
- **Enjoyable and accessible countryside** with extensive, widespread and varied opportunities to pursue walking, cycling, fishing, water-based activities and other forms of sustainable recreation or relaxation.
- **An intimate sense of community** where small, pastoral towns and villages are comparatively safe, friendly, welcoming and retain a spirit of cooperation.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 10) acknowledges the statutory purposes of National Parks and references the "Sandford Principle", whereby if there is a conflict between the statutory purposes, greater weight shall be given to the first purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.

PPW states that "planning authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to National Parks and AONB purposes. This duty applies in relation to all activities affecting National Parks and AONBs, whether those activities lie within, or in the setting of, the designated areas. The designated landscapes should be drivers of the sustainable use and management of natural resources in their areas, and planning authorities should have regard to their identified special qualities in the exercise of their functions and any relevant management plans." (see para 6.3.5) (underlining is my emphasis).

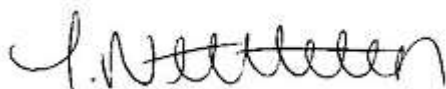
Consideration

We have reviewed the submission and the NPA does not object to the development. We note mitigation planting is proposed along the northern site boundary, which is considered to be an important feature required to assist in assimilating the development into the local landscape (beyond which is the Brecon Beacons National Park boundary). The local planning authority should seek to safeguard the provision of this northern landscaping through appropriate planning conditions/other mechanisms to ensure this is maintained for the future.

Please note that this response has been prepared by Officers, and will not receive formal ratification from Members until 28th July 2020 after which point in time I may provide supplementary response as necessary.

We trust the above comments are of assistance however if you wish to discuss any aspect further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Tracy Nettleton
Planning and Heritage Manager

Yr ydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg. Bydd unrhyw ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg yn cael ei ateb yn y Gymraeg a ni fydd unrhyw gyswllt trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi yn y mater sy'n cael ei drin.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in the matter being dealt with.