

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/20/0036

Site Address: Land Adjacent To
1A Blaen Dowlais
Dowlais Top
Merthyr Tydfil

Development: Erection of a pair of semi detached dwellings
with off road parking

Case Officer: David Cross

Site Visit:

Application Expiry Date: 8th April 2020

Consultation reply date expired: 6th March 2020

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to an area of land measuring approximately 0.04 of a hectare located at the end (north-west) of a row of terraced properties that form part of Blaen Dowlais. The site is characterised as an area of grass land that slopes gradually down from north-east to south-west with some shrub planting. The site is bound by an adopted highway to the north, with two detached properties (Caradoc Place) on the opposite side. To the east is a rear lane with playground and car parking area beyond. To the south-east is an end terraced property (1a Blaen Dowlais) and to the south-west is a main road with the Dowlais Rugby Club opposite.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. This is essentially a re-submission of a previous application (P/19/0216) that was refused on the grounds of poor design, which this application seeks to address.

The proposed dwellings would measure 14.4m wide by 7.4m deep and 8.2m high with a pitched roof. They would be of a modest design with the front doors for each property positioned centrally and close together, with a simple arrangement of windows on the front and rear elevations. The external material finishes would comprise render on the elevations with a slate roof.

The dwellings would be orientated with a frontage towards the main highway (Blaen Dowlais) and setback from the existing carriageway to accommodate a new 2m wide footpath that links to the wider highway network.

Each of the plots would accommodate two off-street parking spaces on hardstanding areas with one provided to the side of the dwellings, which is accessed from the main highway, and the other located to the rear of the properties with access from the rear lane.

Due to the changes in levels, it is proposed that retaining walls would be utilised in the rear gardens and along the northern boundary. Whilst a detailed landscaping scheme has not been provided, the submitted plans indicate a planted area would be provided in the north-west corner of the site, with grassed areas provided in the rear gardens.

PLANNING HISTORY

P/19/0216 - Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings with off road parking (Reserved Matters).

REFUSED permission on 20th November 2019 for the following reason:

- 1. The proposed semi-detached dwellings by virtue of their siting, scale and design, would fail to integrate effectively with the street scene to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposed development does not accord with policy BW7 of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021.*

P/18/0394 - Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings with off road parking (Outline).

Permission GRANTED on 06.02.2019

CONSULTATION

Engineering and Traffic Group Leader - No response.

Welsh Water - No response.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice was displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No representations were received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies within the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031 are relevant to the determination of this application:

- Policy SW1 - Provision of New Housing
- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW9 - Planning Obligations

- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy EnW1 - Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW5 - Landscape Protection

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

- Affordable Housing, March 2012
- Planning Obligations, March 2012
- Sustainable Design, July 2013

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Land use

The application site lies within the settlement boundaries and the Primary Growth Area where the majority of new development is generally supported in principle by policy SW4 of the LDP. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that outline planning permission (P/18/0394) has been previously granted for the erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings within the site. Therefore the principle of development has already been established.

Design

The proposed development would be located at the end of Blaen Dowlais and would be seen as a continuation of the existing street scene, which forms part of an established row of terraced properties that are of a traditional form and appearance. It is acknowledged that there are other properties within the vicinity, which are of a differing design and appearance, in particular the detached properties to the north (Caradoc Place) and the Dowlais Rugby clubhouse to the west of the site. However, these properties are appreciated in a different context to that of Blaen Dowlais.

The proposed dwellings would be set back approximately 2m from the edge of the highway (Blaen Dowlais) to enable the existing footpath to be extended across the front of the site. This would also result in the dwellings being positioned to follow the established building line with the adjacent terraces, which helps to integrate the development and reinforce the continuity of the street scene. As such, the siting of the dwellings is deemed to be appropriate.

In terms of the proposed scale of the semi-detached dwellings, the height and depth of the buildings is considered to be appropriate and would be similar to that of the existing terraces. However, the proposal would present an uncharacteristically wide frontage that fails to follow the more traditional rhythm of the street. The existing properties have narrow frontages, which typically present a window and door at ground level and a single window above. It is acknowledged that the previous proposal (P/19/0216) included gables features and porches which have since been omitted from the scheme. Nonetheless, the wide frontages of the dwellings have been retained which appear inconsistent and would fail to harmonise with the character of the street. This is further emphasised by the fenestration and the centrally positioned front doors that do not reflect the characteristics of the street scene.

The proposed render finish to the elevations of the dwellings is deemed to be appropriate and would complement the neighbouring properties. However, given the prevailing use of brown concrete roof tiles in the immediate vicinity, it is considered that the proposed slate

roofs would be at odds with the character of the area. This concern could be adequately addressed by condition to agree an alternative roofing material.

Whilst a detailed landscaping scheme has not been provided, the submitted plans indicate that a planted area could be provided in the prominent north-west corner of the site. This would help to provide some interest on the main approach to the site, which can improve the quality and visual appearance of the development. Details of an appropriate landscaping scheme could be secured by a suitably worded condition.

For the above reasons, the proposed scale and design of the semi-detached dwellings would have a harmful impact that fails to appropriately integrate with the existing street scene, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policy SW11 of the LDP.

Amenity

The properties that would have the greatest potential to be affected by the proposal are the neighbouring terraces along Blaen Dowlais and the two detached houses (Caradoc Place) opposite the site to the north.

The proposed dwellings would be located to the side of No.1A Blaen Dowlais, approximately 12m away from its side elevation and 3m away from the adjoining garden boundary. There would be no direct overlooking into the neighbouring garden i.e. from side windows. There would also be sufficient separation between the properties not to give rise to adverse overbearing impacts. Similarly the terrace property opposite (82 Blaen Dowlais) would be a sufficient distance away from the development and its front elevation would be off-set with the proposal, which minimises any direct overlooking between properties. The proposed dwellings would be positioned a sufficient distance (approximately 16m-23m) away from the detached houses at Caradoc Place and would be orientated at an oblique angle, which minimises any potential overlooking concerns.

For the above reasons, the development would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. Additionally, it is acknowledged that no objections were raised by the local residents. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy SW11 of the LDP.

Highway

The principal means of access to the semi-detached dwellings would be via Blaen Dowlais, which extends along the south-west (front) boundary. Parking in this area is largely accommodated along both sides of the street, which currently imposes some restriction on two-way traffic movements. Access to the plots would also be provided from the adjoining rear lane (also adopted) to the north-east. A total of two off-street parking spaces would be provided for each plot on driveways, with 1 located to the side of the dwelling and accessed from Blaen Dowlais, and the other located in the rear garden with access from the lane.

It is acknowledged that traffic movements in the general area would be restricted at times, largely due to the presence of on-street parking along both sides of Blaen Dowlais. However, the level of traffic generated by the development would not be significant and could be suitably accommodated within the existing highway network.

The proposed access to the front of the dwellings is acceptable and whilst some reversing manoeuvres may be restricted by parked vehicles on the opposite side of the street, the proposal would not adversely impact on the free flow of traffic in the area. The proposed vehicular access onto the rear lane is acceptable and would not differ to the arrangement of other properties in the vicinity. Furthermore, the development would not impinge on the existing rear access serving 1A Blaen Dowlais.

The development would involve extending the existing footpath along Blaen Dowlais across the front of the site, which would link to another footpath that joins the northern boundary of site, opposite Caradoc Place. This would ensure suitable pedestrian access is provided and it would improve existing links to local facilities, such as the nearby playground/playing fields. It is acknowledged that the layout of the development is essentially the same as the previous application (P/19/0216) which was refused on design grounds. At that time, the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader did not raised any highway safety concerns with the development. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy SW11 of the LDP.

Environment

The majority of the site comprises amenity grassland that is regularly maintained, with an area of scrub located in the northern half, which has the potential to support nesting birds. The development of the site would result in the loss of the scrub land. As such, any clearance works should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which could be secured by condition. Whilst a detailed landscaping scheme has not been provided, the submitted plans suggest that a planted area would be provided along the northern boundary. This would not only improve the appearance of the site at the end of Blaen Dowlais, but would also help to provide new features of ecological interest. Therefore, the proposal complies with policies EnW1 and EnW5 of the LDP.

Planning obligations

Policy SW9 of the LDP considers the requirements for any planning obligations or affordable housing contributions. It is noted that on sites of between 5 and 9 homes a financial contribution towards affordable housing may be sought. Given that the proposal relates to a pair of semi-detached dwellings, no contribution is required in this instance. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy SW9 of the LDP.

CONCLUSIONS

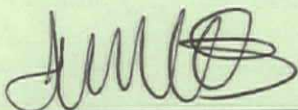
The duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act") has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered, as well as the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

For the above reasons, the proposed development, by virtue of the scale and design of the semi-detached dwellings, would have a harmful impact that fails to appropriately integrate with the existing street scene, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to policy SW11 of the LDP. Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: **BE REFUSED** for the following **REASON:**

1. The proposed semi-detached dwellings by virtue of their scale and design, would fail to integrate effectively with the streetscene to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposed development does not accord with policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Head of Town Planning

DATE:

2/4/20