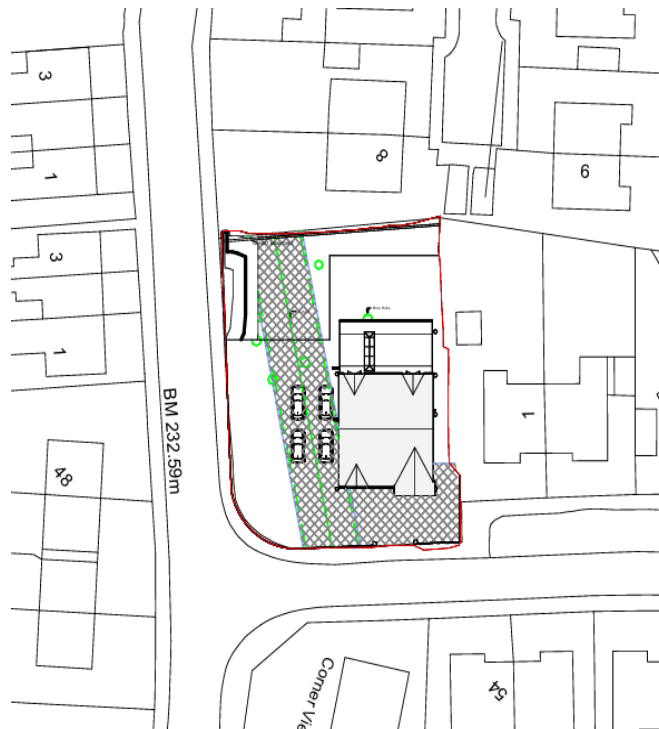


## Planning Supporting Statement

**1. Introduction** This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for development land adjacent to Heolgerrig Road and Six Bells Estate, Heolgerrig. The proposal seeks to construct a new residential dwelling. This statement provides an overview of the development proposal, assesses its compliance with relevant planning policies, responds to the Pre App advice dated 28 November 2024 and demonstrates its benefits to the local area.

**2. Site Description** The application site is located at Heolgerrig Road and Six Bells Estate, Heolgerrig, within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC). The site currently comprises vacant undeveloped land. It is bounded by public highways to the west and south and residential development to the north west and north east. The site sits at a lower level than the two adjoining dwellings at 1 Six Bells Estate and 8 Martins Close. The site has a vehicular access off the public highway serving Six Bells Estate.

Siting of dwelling within plot



**3. Proposed Development** The proposal involves the development of a detached 4-bedroom dwelling. The development aims to provide a high-quality, modern-style dwelling in keeping with the surrounding character of the area albeit to modern design standards. The design has been carefully considered, following pre-application advice from the local planning authority, providing compatibility with the surrounding area and contributing positively to the local character.

Proposed front elevation



## Planning History

The site has the flowing planning history

The following is a summary of the relevant planning history of the site:

| Planning Reference | Development Description                                                                                          | Decision                         |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| PA/24/0039         | Pre-Application for a three-bedroom dwelling including 1-bedroom granny annex\flat dwelling with attached garage | Officer advice issued 28/11/2024 |
| PA/22/0046         | Pre-Application for 3 dwellings                                                                                  | Officer advice issued 18/11/2022 |
| PA/17/0071         | Pre-Application for five terraced dwellings                                                                      | Officer advice issued 15/12/2017 |
| P/17/0177          | Full application for 5 terraced dwellings.                                                                       | Withdrawn                        |
| P/15/0155          | Outline Application for new dwelling with attached garage                                                        | Approved 20/08/2015              |
|                    |                                                                                                                  |                                  |

**4. Planning Policy Context** This section outlines how the proposal aligns with relevant national, regional, and local planning policies, including:

- **National Planning Guidance - Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Notes:** The proposal supports sustainable development having regard to PPW and TAN 12 Design.
- **Local Development Plan Policies:** The scheme aligns with policies set out in **Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031**, particularly:
  - Policy SW1 Provision of New Homes
  - Policy SW3 Sustainably Distributing New Homes
  - Policy SW4 Settlement Boundaries
  - Policy SW9 Planning Obligations
  - Policy SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
  - Policy BW12 Development Proposals and Transport
  - Policy EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
  - Policy EnW4 Environmental Protection
  - BW18 Contaminated Land
  - TB11 Access, Parking and Accessibility of Local Facilities

**Other Relevant Guidance:** The proposal also considers Supplementary Planning Guidance produced by MTCBC, including:

- SPG1 Affordable Housing
- SPG2 Planning Obligations
- SPG4 Sustainable Design
- SPG5 Nature and Development

**5. Design and Sustainability** The design of the development has been guided by key principles, including:

- **Layout & Appearance:** The proposed design respects the local context while introducing high-quality architecture and materials. The design avoids any direct overlooking of habitable rooms or private amenity areas.
- **Access & Transport:** The development ensures good connectivity with existing transport infrastructure and promotes sustainable travel options.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** The scheme incorporates energy-efficient measures, biodiversity enhancements, and sustainable drainage systems where applicable.

## 6. Impact Assessment

- **Heritage & Conservation:** The site is not located within or near a conservation area or listed buildings and has been designed to respect the character of dwellings in the area.
- **Highways & Parking:** Transport implications have been considered to ensure minimal traffic impact, and adequate off-road on-site parking provision has been made.
- **Ecology & Biodiversity:** The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Green Infrastructure Statement. The ecological assessment confirms that the development will not have an adverse impact on local wildlife and includes biodiversity enhancements including the removal of noxious weeds.

- **Flood Risk & Drainage:** The site lies outside the floodplain and is not susceptible to historic flooding. The site is crossed by a known culvert, and suitable mitigation measures have been incorporated informing design and ensuring site resilience.

## 7. Response to Pre App PA/24/0039

Pre Application advice PA/24/0039 (Pre App) dated 28th November 2024 advised that the main planning issues to be considered as the principle of development at this location, and whether it would be acceptable in respect of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, ecology, parking provision and highway safety.

### Principle of Development

The Pre App identifies that the site is located within the settlement boundary – Primary Growth Area and as such the principle of residential development is acceptable and supported by LDP Policies SW1, SW3 and SW4, provided compatibility with other policies and material planning considerations. Residential use of the land is accepted in principle and it is noted that outline consent was granted for a dwelling and garage under reference P/15/0155.

### Character and Appearance

The Pre App identifies that the site lies in a prominent corner plot adjoining the boundary with 8 Martins Close and 1 Six Bells Estate. The Pre App goes on to state that the building line is given by 8 Martins Close and 1 Six Bells Estate. It is stated that this is a strong and consistent building line.

Upon further analysis of the building lines in the vicinity it is clear that the building line is not consistent and varies depending on material planning considerations. The Pre app also considers that the overall building form is that of a dormer bungalow which should dictate the design on the site. Both matters are discussed below.

### Building Line / dormer design

While the identification of the dormer bungalow form may be a useful reference, it should not be considered a strict or limiting design framework. The diversity of architectural styles in the surrounding area suggests that there is flexibility in how the site can be developed. Focusing solely on the dormer bungalow form may overlook the opportunity to introduce a more contemporary or distinctive design that still respects the neighbourhood's evolving character. The design should be guided by a broader understanding of the area's context, incorporating elements that reflect both the existing and potential future character of the neighbourhood, rather than being constrained by one particular architectural style.

Properties 1 and 2 Six Bells Estate are semi-detached bungalows, neither of which are dormer bungalows, indicating that there is no singular architectural style dictating the character of the area. The proposed dwelling is aligned parallel to the building line of these properties but is situated further forward due to material planning considerations related to ground conditions and the culvert crossing the site. Additionally, the proposed dwelling is parallel to the building line of 8 Martins Close, and the built form surrounding these properties demonstrates that the building line has adapted to accommodate the known culvert, either in front or to the rear of properties.

It is also important to note that 1 and 2 Six Bells Estate are set back several metres from the public highway, which influences the building line for 3 and 4 Six Bells Estate, particularly as

the road curves around. This variation in the building line further supports the notion that a parallel building line for the proposed site is appropriate and acceptable.

Focusing solely on the dormer bungalow form may overlook the opportunity to introduce a more contemporary or distinctive design that still respects the neighbourhood's evolving character. Therefore, the design should be guided by a broader understanding of the area's context, incorporating elements that reflect both the existing and potential future character of the neighbourhood, rather than being constrained by one particular architectural style.

This is illustrated by the plans and photographs of nearby properties below. The photographs clearly illustrate the diverse range of architectural styles within the immediate vicinity. While dormer bungalows are present in the area, they do not constitute the dominant design typology and, therefore, should not be the sole determinant in shaping the design for this site. The surrounding properties include a mix of two-storey detached houses, two-storey terraced dwellings, bungalows, dormer bungalows, and both detached and semi-detached properties.

Six Bells Estate 2 Storey dwelling next to a bungalow



Six Bells Estate 2 storey semi-detached dwelling next to a converted 2 storey Dorma bungalow



Six Bells Estate Dorma conversion styles



Martins Close 2 storey dwellings opposite dormer bungalows

## LAND OFF HEOLGERRIG ROAD



New builds in the area

Colliers Row, Heolgerrig



Harlequin House, Heolgerrig



99 Heolgerrig High Street, Heolgerrig



The applicant contends that the dormer bungalows do not exhibit the closest relationship to the pre-application site, and as such, the design approach should reflect a broader consideration of the surrounding architectural context rather than being limited to one specific style.

The previous design, the subject of the Pre App, was considered awkwardly positioned within the plot, with the overall scale and design resulting “in a poor relationship with the adjoining properties, and as such would not appear sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.” The Pre App goes on to state that “the dormer bungalow properties would have the closest relationship with the proposed dwelling..”. “the 8.65m high two storey dwelling, approximately 2m from the boundary of 1 Six Bells estate, would appear at odds with this neighbouring property and fail to reflect scale and appearance.” The previous design was considered grand, with three front projecting gables featuring large windows and balcony areas resulting in “an unreserved and elaborate design which would appear completely at odds with the appearance of the adjoining low-lying modest dormer bungalows. Likewise, when viewed from the surrounding streets, the development would appear dominant and incongruous and would further harm the character of the area.” The Pre App goes on to state that the granny annexe and garage was overly prominent and at odds with the street pattern. The Pre App considered that the proposed development “failed to respect its immediate context and would not accord with LDP Policy SW11”

The applicant, in an attempt to work with the planning authority has redesigned the proposed dwelling taking on board the Pre App advice where it is considered necessary. As referred to above the applicant does not consider that the dormer bungalows have the closest relationship with the pre application site and that the existing building line of 1 and 2 Six Bells Estate should strictly dictate the building line of the proposed dwelling for the reasons given above evidenced by the photographs provided.

The redesign has reduced the scale of the dwelling, removed significant front gabled glazing elements removed garage and granny style annexe. The proposed has worked within the historic mining and culvert easement constraints on the site. This has dictated where any buildings can be built. This is reflected by the extent and location of the flat roof gym building to the rear of the main property.

Regarding the main dwelling then this has reduced the glazing element at the front elevation. The dwelling is still two storeys but because of the culvert and mining constraints sits to the north east of the site. The site is a corner location fronting the main highway through Heolgerrig. However, it should be noted that the site is at a lower level than the properties and public highway on Heolgerrig Road. The dwelling sits at a lower level and set back within the plot from Heolgerrig Road from which most views would be visible especially as one drives up Heolgerrig Road. So, whilst the site is prominent the proposed dwelling is sited and of a scale so that it would not over dominate the site causing harm to the street scene and character of the area. It is considered that the proposed dwelling would enhance what is currently an undeveloped and prominent parcel of land.

The inclusion of a landscaping scheme, controlled via planning condition with all details to be agreed before beneficial occupation of the dwelling, to include boundary treatment and planting would further minimise any visual impact of proposed development.

For the reasons referred to above, it is considered that the revised proposal having considered the Pre App advice, would contribute to the creation of an attractive and sustainable place through high quality, sustainable and inclusive design.

The proposed development would not be incongruous, harming the character of the area but instead it would be appropriate to its local context in terms of modern design, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density. The proposed dwelling would enhance the general street scene in the area.

It is not considered that the proposed dwelling fails to respect its context and is in accordance with Policy SW11 in the LDP.

### Residential Amenity

The proposed dwelling is located within the plot, set at a lower level than adjoining properties and designed so that there are no overlooking concerns to neighbouring properties and garden areas, there are no overbearing issues to adjoining properties. As such it is considered that the private amenities of neighbouring properties are not adversely affected.

The relationship between the proposed development and existing dwellings is in accordance with LDP Policy SW11.

### Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) have been undertaken by a professionally qualified ecologist. These reports are submitted as part of the application documents.

### Parking Provision and Highway Safety

As previously indicated the proposed development would be served by its own vehicular access directly off Six Bells Estate road. Sufficient off road parking and turning area is available such that vehicles can enter and leave the site in a forward gear whilst allowing for off road parking of several vehicles. The Head of Engineering had previously considered the highway safety and capacity to be acceptable. The highway requirements regarding parking provision and highway safety, can similarly be met with this revised application, and in accordance with LDP Policy SW11.

### Other Considerations

#### Culvert

There is a known culvert traversing the site. The proposed dwelling is designed with regard to a 6m easement. This easement is identified on the block plan. The building does not adversely impact on the easement. Vehicles are allowed to cross and park over the culvert and easement areas either side. A structural engineer has provided the groundworks design and is submitted as part of the application documents.

#### Planning Obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

It is noted that the application for one dwelling would not invoke the need for on site provision of affordable housing or open space, or a financial contribution towards affordable housing. The Pre App advises that CIL is chargeable in this part of the County Borough, at £25 per sq. m.

#### Japanese Knotweed and High Risk Mining Area

The extent of the Japanese Knotweed present on the site is established and a programme of eradication has been established. The Japanese Knotweed report along with further professional advice is submitted as part of the application documents.

A Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA) has previously been undertaken and a further report from a qualified mining engineer has provided written advice and guidance regarding areas of the site that are constrained by historic mining and/or ground conditions that may be affected. The mining report is submitted as part of the application documents. A structural engineer has provided the groundworks design and is submitted as part of the application documents.

The location of the proposed dwelling has considered both the Japanese Knotweed on site and previous coal mining activities and underlying geology.

## 8. Conclusion

In conclusion, whilst the informal officer opinion, in the latest pre app response, was perceived as incongruous and out of keeping with the character of the area, it's important to recognise that architecture evolves and that innovation can coexist with tradition. The design offers a fresh perspective that, over time, has the potential to enrich the neighbourhood's aesthetic and appeal. By thoughtfully integrating elements that complement the surrounding environment, the project can serve as a positive example of how modern design can enhance and rejuvenate the community without compromising its historical or cultural essence and local vernacular. Embracing thoughtful dialogue between preservation and progress ensures that future developments continue to respect the character of the area while allowing for growth and renewal.

Incongruous residential design is often viewed as a reflection of personal expression and creativity, embracing the idea that beauty and function are subjective. What may appear unconventional or mismatched to one observer can evoke a sense of charm, uniqueness, and even playfulness for another. This subjective interpretation opens the door to a wider range of design possibilities, allowing individuals to break free from traditional norms and experiment with bold, diverse styles. In this way, incongruity can be seen as a celebration of diversity and individualism in architecture, where the blending of contrasting elements can result in unexpected harmony, telling a distinctive story of the homeowner's personality, tastes, and vision. Ultimately, it reinforces the idea that design should reflect the rich variety of human experience, rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all approach.

It is considered the proposed development would not be incongruous, harming the character of the area but instead it would be appropriate to its local context in terms of modern design, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density. The proposed dwelling would enhance the general street scene in the area.

In summary, the proposed development at Land off Heolgerrig Road represents a well-designed and sustainable scheme that aligns with local and national planning policies. The proposal will deliver a new modern, sustainable residential dwelling within the settlement boundary while ensuring minimal impact on the surrounding area.