



94 Pontmorlais West , Merthyr
Tydfil CF47 8UH (formally
known as)
Ethan Arcade 92 - 94 High Street
Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8UP)

**Design and access statement
and Heritage report for consent to
convert building into 6 studio flat& 6
holiday let units.**

Issued for Full planning
August 2021

Barcode, 92-94 Pontmorlais West , Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8UH (Also known as
Ethan Arcade 92 - 94 High Street Merthyr Tydfil CF47
8UP

1.0 Introduction

This statement is prepared, on behalf of the applicant , to support a full application for consent for the adaptive re-use of the upper floors of 92-94 Pontmorlais West, Merthyr Tydfil and should be read in conjunction with the documents and drawings that form this application:

The intention is to create 6 self contained studio apartments and 6 studios for holiday lets. The buildings are within the Pontmorlais Heritage quarter within the conservation area. It is also within the Pontmorlais commercial area at the northern end of the Merthyr Tydfil Town centre conservation area. This area is predominantly commercial, with residential at upper stories above shops or businesses.

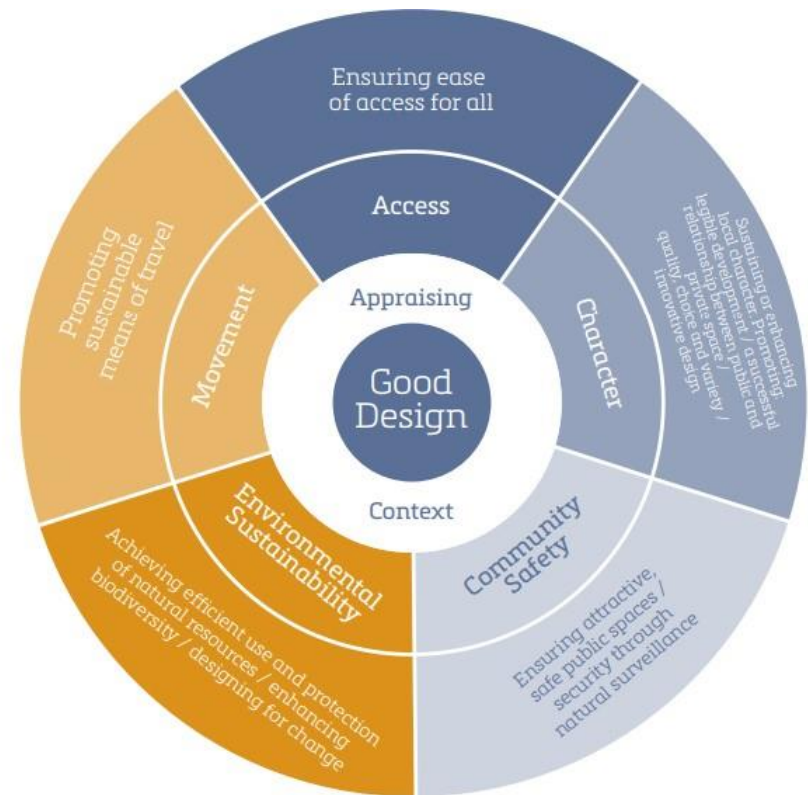
This is an opportunity to bring empty floors back into beneficial use as much needed flats for rental, within the town centre. It is proposed to apply for a development grant from Merthyr Tydfil council to assist in the restoration and improvement of these buildings.

This statement comprises a design and access statement in support of the application proposal and has been prepared in accordance with Welsh Assembly Guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 10, December 2018)

National planning policy guidance contained in PPW identifies the objectives of good design and these are shown in the extract from the central policy guide to the right. This statement examines the development in terms of Access and movement , community safety, environmental sustainability and local character.

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2.0 Access and inclusivity

The application site is within a sustainable location, within the city centre. Merthyr train station is approximately 0.3 of a mile or approximately 7 minutes by foot. The bus station is within 0.2 Miles and 7 minute walk. Public transport links give access from the town centre to further afield as well as local settlements. In terms of parking and access arrangements , the building does not have dedicated off street parking provision but permit holders parking is available in the street. The current use at ground floor level is as a bar, and this use is to remain. The site is situated within a sustainable area as public transport is all within walking distance and Highways have not raised any concerns relating to safety.

The policy therefore complies with BW12, TB11 of the LDP.

“Good design is inclusive design”

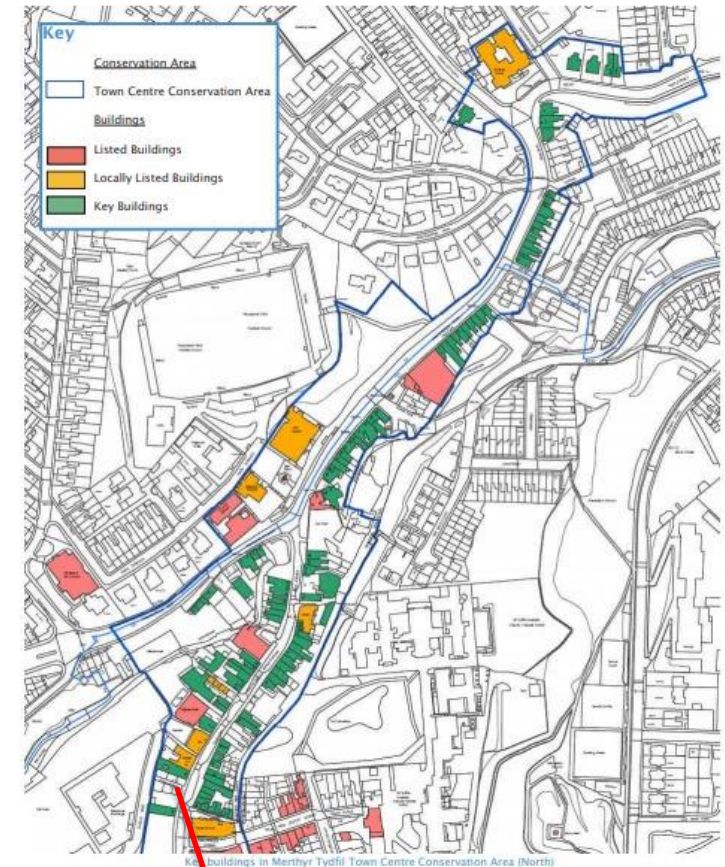
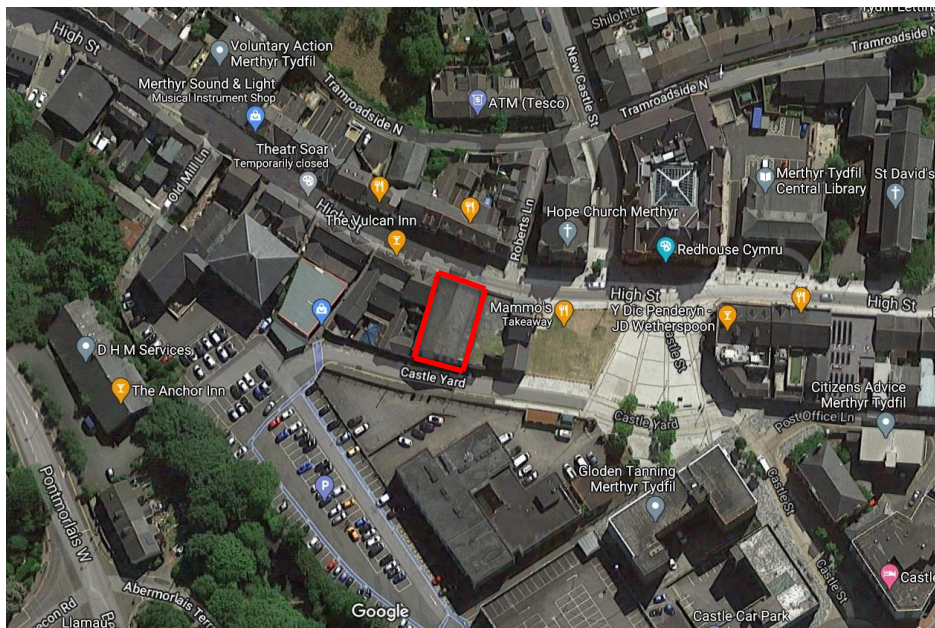
The design has been considered so the flats are convenient to use and enjoyable to all. Consideration has been taken to ensure the access to both buildings is easily navigated, corridors and hallways are large and easily accessible. The spaces are well lit and sign posted and staircases designed with this in mind. Flats are located at first and second floor only due to the flood zone the building is situated in.

3.0 Character & Context

Barcode is a large property, fronting the high street, built in the late C20th. It is located within the area of Pontmorlais. The application site is on the high street, and backs onto Castle Yard.

The buildings are bounded by commercial premises with a mix of residential to upper storeys. To the north lies the Hope Church and to the south parking associated with office use. In terms of planning designations, the application site is within the defined settlement boundary.

Merthyr town centre was formed during the 18th and 19th century due to the industrial development of the area and rapid population growth. This area of the town demonstrates a variety of uses to the neighbouring buildings, social, spiritual, commercial which is reflected in the external appearance and design of the architecture.



SITE

3.0 Existing site context

Barcode, 94 High Street is located at the southern point of the Merthyr town centre conservation area C3.

It is located within the Merthyr Tydfil town centre conservation Area. It is positioned at the southern end of the Pontmorlais High street commercial area, with the street primarily made up of shops, fast food takeaways and pubs.

Merthyr train station is approximately 0.3 of a mile or approximately 7 minutes by foot. The bus station is within 0.2 Miles and 7 minute walk.

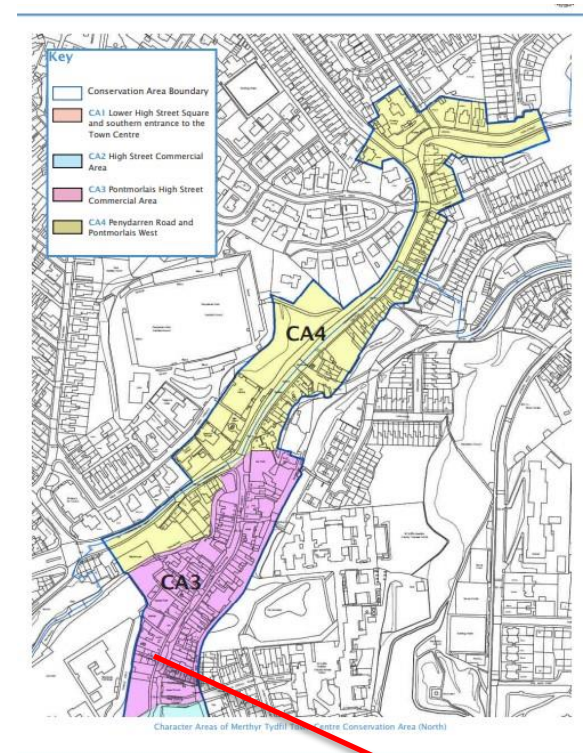
The property is within a flood zone C2.



View from junction of Robert's Lane



View looking South



Merthyr conservation area SITE

3.0 Existing Building condition:



Rear elevation-looking south



Rear elevation



4.0 Community safety

Community safety:

The site entrance will be protected during the works to prohibit access to people off the street and only to contractors working on the site. There are no public rights of way or private foot paths through the site. The application site is located in the residential area of Thomastown which is well located to the surrounding towns. The site is within a short distance of train and bus services and trains to larger towns.

Consideration has been given to safety and security. The proposal has no adverse implications for crime and disorder and meets local policy requirements. The conversion to flats and holiday lets makes best use of this empty redundant floors above the bar. Being occupied will assist with restricting criminal activity as will assist natural surveillance. The design will not compromise the security.

In considering health and safety during the construction , work is up to roof height of 12 metres and work can be undertaken via a fixed scaffold, with protective boarding and netting.

The site entrance will be protected during the works to prohibit access to people off the street and only to contractors working on the site. There are no public rights of way or private foot paths through the site.

5.0 Environmental sustainability:

The buildings will be converted to modern standards with noise and insulation provisions to appropriate standards.

The building will be heated via a electric radiators and hot water via emersion heaters.

The building will be insulated and ventilated.

Windows will be replaced with double glazed units, bringing all existing building elements up to new regulations.

Energy efficient lighting will be installed.

Local contractors will be employed to carry out the works, and it is our intention to try and source locally available materials. This will assist in the reduction of the carbon foot print.

In planning terms the proposal would not have any adverse impact on the natural or built environment. The following have been considered;

Flood risk: The property is within a floor risk area C2, and a flood risk assessment is attached with the application.

Archaeology: The site is not known to be in a recognised area of archaeological significance.

Transport: The site is ideally located for public transport and should not adversely affect the local neighbouring properties in terms of parking.

Trees: The proposal does not involve the removal or damage to any trees

Ecology: The application is supported by an initial bat inspection survey of the building undertaken by Arbtec Ltd The report is attached with this application and additional dawn to dusk surveys are being undertaken.

6.0 Movement:

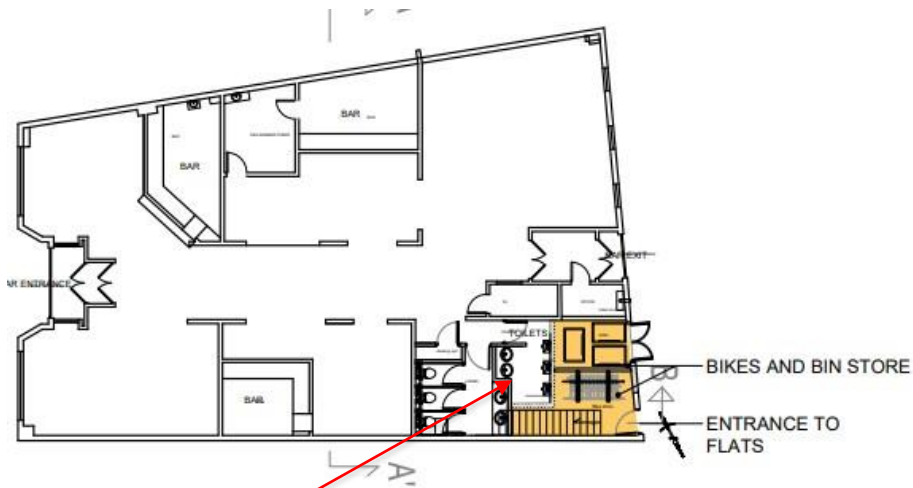
Movement to and from the application site is critical to its success and function. The existing building is already in situ and existing patterns of movement and linkage within the wider site remains unaltered.

7.0 Design process:

Key factors of the design:

- a) ***Character of the area, including local land uses.*** The original character has been retained and the new design has not affected any of the surrounding buildings. The area is predominantly commercial mixed with some residential.
- b) ***The functional and practical solution to turning these buildings into residential units.*** The floors above Barcode have sat empty for many years. Converting to residential will provide a sustainable use for these buildings. The size is suitable and can practically be divided to provide one bed studio and holiday flats.
- c) ***Public views from the street scene.*** The street scene is unchanged in terms of design but the buildings are restored and will become a positive contribution to the street scene.
- d) ***Private views from neighbours.*** The insertion of two extra windows to the front elevation will not worsen existing situation.
- e) ***Opportunity to improve the appearance of the building and the street scene.*** The buildings will be redecorated, windows replaced and the roof stripped and re-covered, improving the overall street scene.
- f) ***Minimalization of criminal activity.*** The building will be fitted with suitable lighting, secure windows and door entry system.

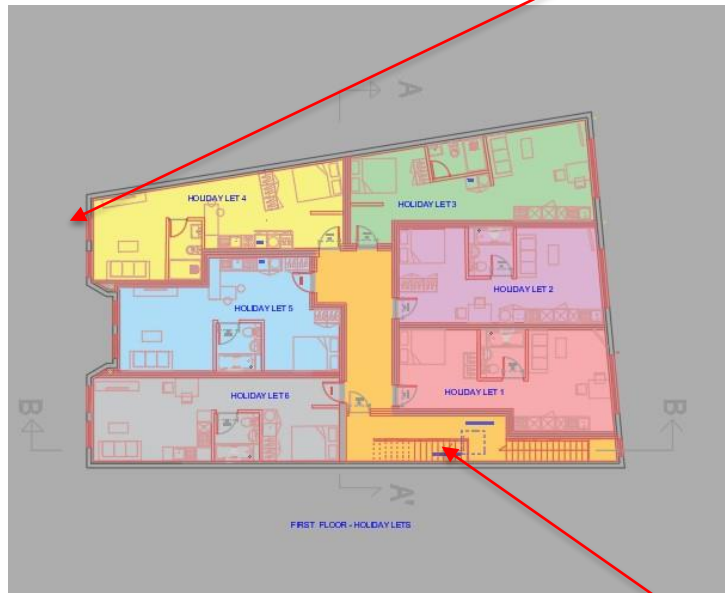
Design Process:



Toilets reconfigured to provide room for staircase, bike store and bin store.

Main source of light to front- secondary glazing to ensure sound reduction from street

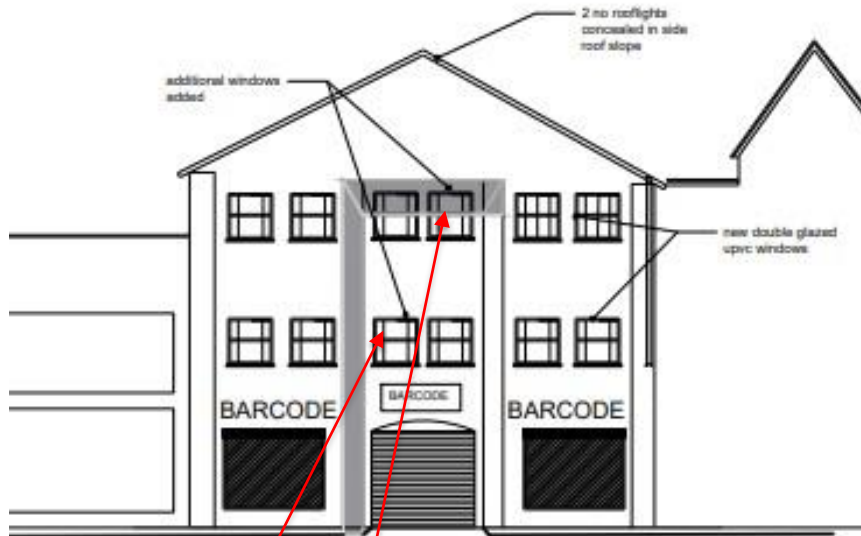
Windows enlarged and rearranged to rear elevation



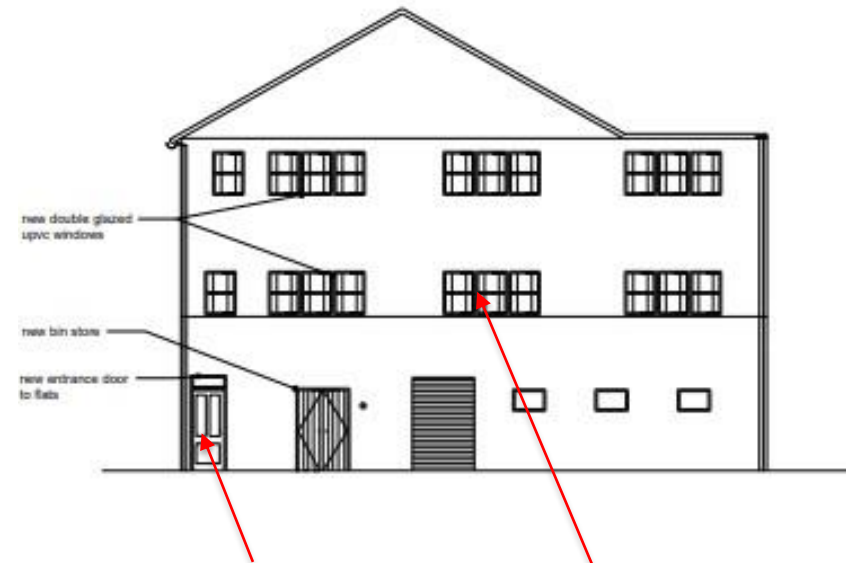
Main staircase separated in terms of sound and fire



Design Process:



One additional window to each level to provide greater natural light into flats



Entrance to flats to quiet area to rear

Windows enlarged and rearranged to rear elevation

Planning history:

•Change of use of building to Public House/Bar (A3 use)Ref. No: P/06/0187 | Status: Full Approval

•Vary opening times under condition 1 of P/06/0187, until 01.30 am on Thursdays, Fridays and SaturdaysRef. No: P/19/0127 | Status: Withdrawn

•Change of use from furniture retail and fireplace sales/display to ground floor restaurant/cafe with new entrance and security systemRef. No: P/98/0431 | Status: Full Approval

•Change of use of ground floor use from retail to leisure use (AlternativeRemedy and Relaxation Centre Spa Club).Ref. No: P/04/0331 | Status: Full Approval

•Change of use from retail (A1) to licensed premises (A3)Ref. No: P/03/0292 | Status: Refusal

P/98/0431 1988 change of use from furniture retail and fireplaces sales/display to ground floor restaurant/café with new entrance and security system

• **Planning Policy Considerations:**

- “Government guidance states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Merthyr Tydfil development plan and national planning policy establishes a presumption in favour of residential development within settlement boundaries subject to several criteria. The application proposal is for a sympathetically designed development and attractive improvements to these buildings. The development ensures that there are no adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity or the natural band built environment. There are no adverse affects on highways and is a small scale development that does not affect the local amenities.”
- “The Welsh Government seeks to proactively support sustainable economic development to deliver new homes and to create economic growth to create jobs and prosperity. The scheme will provide attractive residential accommodation within a sustainable urban location and will provide employment opportunities in the construction sector during the build phase. These factors are important material considerations in favour of the development proposal.”
- “PPW advises that design is taken to mean the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and that to create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social , environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management and its relationship to its surroundings.”

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Paragraph 72 – (1) In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10):

Paragraph 6.5.17 recognises the importance of protecting the historic environment and states that:

“Should any proposed development conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission”.

The impact of this application on the character and setting of the Conservation Area is therefore a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

Conservation document – section 4

“There is a long term vacancy of listed and unlisted buildings and apparent lack of viability converting vacant building”

This proposal puts back into use two empty floors of a buildings that have struggled to be occupied and need care and attention and an investment of money to bring them back into use.

The Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021:

Policy BW1 and BW4-

The proposal would bring a redundant building back into viable use. It is a use class that will integrate with the local residential area.

. The proposed development is within the settlement boundary and primary growth area shown in the LDP which generally encourages development of this nature and would be in place with the existing housing stock of surrounding streets.

Townscape and Built Heritage is addressed in Policy BW6:

The building sits within a conservation area and aims to enhance its existing appearance.

The design considers its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;

Sustainable design and place making is addressed in Policy BW7:

‘The Council will support good quality sustainable design and require new development to: -

be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;

sensitively relate to existing settlement patterns and take account of natural heritage and the historic environment on site and in terms of potential impact on neighbouring areas of importance;

Conclusion :

This design and access statement has been produced to accompany this planning application for changing the two floors above Barcode into residential flats and holiday lets.

The objectives of good design in Tan 12 and the local LDP policies have been considered and met.

The proposed development protects social inclusion by uplifting the appearance of the building, which positively contribute to an improved street scene.

The proposed development has taken account of the site characteristics and wider residential context. The scheme provides a high quality design for the occupants for the development and makes best use of the buildings and brings two historic buildings back into a beneficial condition.

The proposal will improve the appearance of the building on the street scene, provide valuable residential accommodation, provide much needed holiday rental units and provide employment during the build and after to manage the letting units.

A recent Townscape Initiative Scheme has seen the regeneration of a number of properties within the Pontmorlais High Street Area which has already had a positive impact on the surroundings. This development will add to this improvement of the street scene.

The scheme hopes to address social and economic problems in areas and improve the quality of the environment for all who live, work or visit there.

The design has considered the following policies;

TAN 5 : Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 12: Design

TAN 15: Development & Flood Risk

TAN18: Transport The Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031 sets out the local planning policies, of which the following are deemed to be relevant for the proposed residential scheme:

Policy SW4 – Settlement Boundaries

Policy SW9 – Planning Obligations

Policy SW11 – Sustainable Design and Placemaking

Policy CW1 – Historic Environment

Policy EnW1 – Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience

Policy EnW4 – Environmental Protection

Policy EcW7 - Tourism, Leisure and Recreation Development

The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

documents would also be material considerations:

SPG 4 – Sustainable Design, July 2013

SPG 5 – Nature and Development, May 2015

The proposals support the LDP ;

“LDP policy EcW7 to read as follows: 6.8.54 Tourism, leisure and recreation is vitally important to the economy of Merthyr Tydfil contributing to making it both productive and enterprising. Our location, its environment and distinctive natural and built heritage assets, together with the development of our activity tourism offer and traditional day visits, provide opportunities to build our reputation as a welcoming 365 day visitor destination. The strategy Plan supports the delivery of the Council’s ‘Destination Management Plan’17 by supporting a variety of high quality tourist, leisure and recreation facilities and complementary uses, such as visitor accommodation.”

Bibliography :

Merthyr Tydfil local development plan

Merthyr Tydfil town centre conservation area character appraisal

Design and access statements in Wales

Alan George website

Pontmorlais heritage quarter and conservation area Management plan