

Planning Statement

Revised Detached Dwelling Details

Land at Former Windsor Cottages adjacent to Aberfan Social Democratic Club, Angus Street, Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil

Background and Planning Context

On 11 October 2021, Pedw Inspector J Tudor upheld an appeal against a refusal of Merthyr Tydfil CBC to refuse planning permission for a detached dwelling on the above site (P/21/0106).

The Inspector argued cogently that the proposed detached two storey dwelling would complement the character and appearance of the local area. The Inspector in arriving at this conclusion placed significant emphasis on the following characteristics;

‘...the character and appearance of the area is varied.’ For example, the area being characterised by terraced, semi detached houses and dormer bungalows, the three storey former Mack Hotel and the large community centre;

‘Given the land rises up Aberfan Road towards the plot, the scale and height of the new house would be relatively restrained.’

‘...the proposed set back behind the existing building line would not appear discordant’.
‘...’dwellings set back from the road are not uncommon in the area.’

‘the set back of the proposed dwelling would reduce its prominence on the corner and limit its effect on the street scene’.

‘Overall therefore, those (gabled dormer windows) design features would not be out of keeping with the area or cause harm, especially given the generous plot size and separation distances from the adjacent houses. Similarly, while the size and shape of the proposed window openings may not be in exact symmetry with each other, the differences would be minor and not likely to draw the eye.’

‘...while I have considered the Council’s concerns, it seems to me that the proposed design responds reasonably to surrounding built forms, while taking account of the constraints of the site and the topography of the area.’

‘Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Rather, it would successfully integrate with the street scene.’

On 27 September 2022 planning application P/22/0181 for the discharge of conditions 3 (external materials), 4 (levels), 6 (boundary enclosures), 7 (Reptile Mitigation Strategy) and 8 (bird and bat box) of planning permission P/21/0106 (Appeal Reference APP/U6925/A/21/3277092) was approved.

Need for Changes to the Approved Scheme

Subsequent to P/22/0181 and following a further detailed examination of the topography of the site and initial 'setting out', it has become clear that revisions are required to ensure that the scheme provides for safe and convenient disabled access and to ensure that the visual aspect of the dwelling and plot is not dominated by high retaining walls.

Proposed Development

The proposed revisions retain the important set back and orientation of the dwelling which the Inspector found to be entirely acceptable in the street scene. The revisions also retain the generally symmetrical fenestration on the front elevation and the gabled upper floor dormers.

The proposed amendments to P/22/0181 would see the external ground level set at 49.40 and therefore some .95m above the currently approved level. This avoids the creation of high retaining walls surrounding the new dwelling. The slope of the rear garden would remain at present.

The changes would see the finished floor level of the dwelling set at a higher level of some .8m. In terms of the ridge line the increase in height would be equivalent to the increase in floor level and hence an increase of .95m.

It is not considered that this increase in height would so adversely impact on the amenity of the local area to warrant refusal. The ridge height would mean that in street scene terms the new ridge height would sit between the height of the lower building to the north and the proposed dwelling's neighbour to the east. The ridge of the former Mack Hotel would continue to also sit well above the increased ridge height of the dwelling.

The proposed drawings show a brick finished low boundary wall to the front with brick wall and fencing panels to the side. We recognise that the Inspector considered that a timber finish to the southern boundary elevation may not be suitable and while the stronger design element is brick, we look forward to the local planning authority's comments on the wooden infill design.

Conclusion

The Inspector recognised that the '**..the character and appearance of the area is varied.**' And so therefore the fact that the proposed dwelling sits on a higher level than its northern neighbour should not render the scheme unacceptable. The proposal would result in the rise of ridge levels between the residential neighbour to the north, the proposed dwelling, the residential neighbour to the east and the former Mack Hotel to the south reflecting the rise in land up Aberfan Road.

In the Inspector's words the new scheme retains the principle of the **set back of the proposed dwelling would reduce its prominence on the corner and limit its effect on the street scene.**

The elevational design retains the general symmetry and gabled dormer windows which the Inspector found acceptable.

It is considered therefore that while varied from the DOC consent in 2022 the proposal continues to comply with policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (2016-2031) (LDP) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that development is appropriate to its local context, integrates effectively and enhances the general street scene.

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