



Manettes 95-96 High Street
Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8UP)

**Design and access statement
and Heritage report for consent to
convert building into 6 studio flat at 1st
and new 2nd floor (within roof
space)Shop space divided into two units**

Issued for pre- planning
Oct 2021

Manettes, 95-96 High Street Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8UP

1.0 Introduction

This statement is prepared, on behalf of the applicant, to support a planning for consent for the adaptive re-use of the upper floors of 95-96 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil and should be read in conjunction with the following documents and drawings that form this application:

The intention is to create 6 self contained studio apartments and convert the ground floor into two A3 use spaces. The buildings are within the Portmorlais 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/night club , and this use is to remain, with previous use was as a shopping arcade. 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.

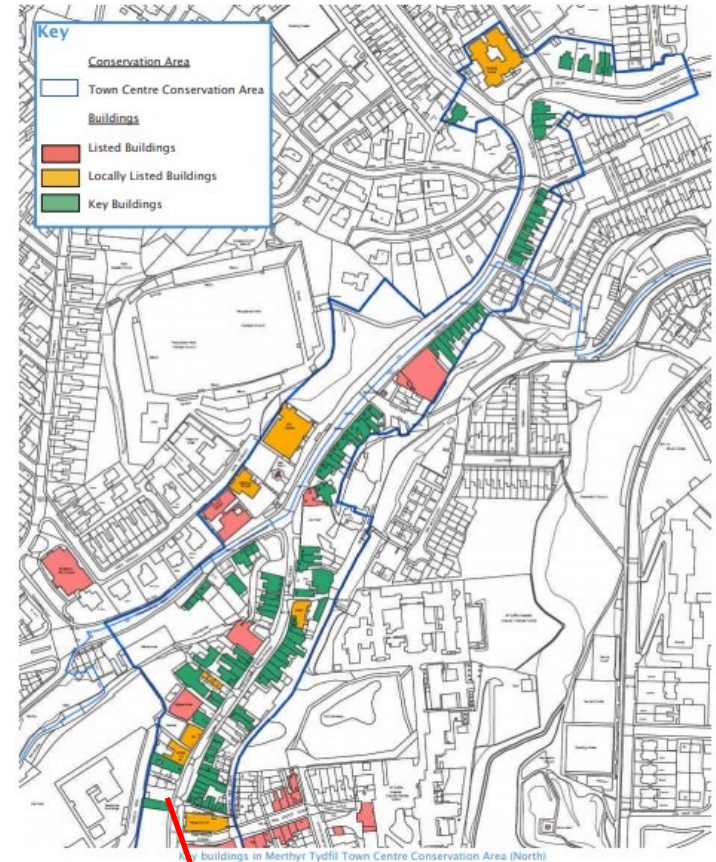
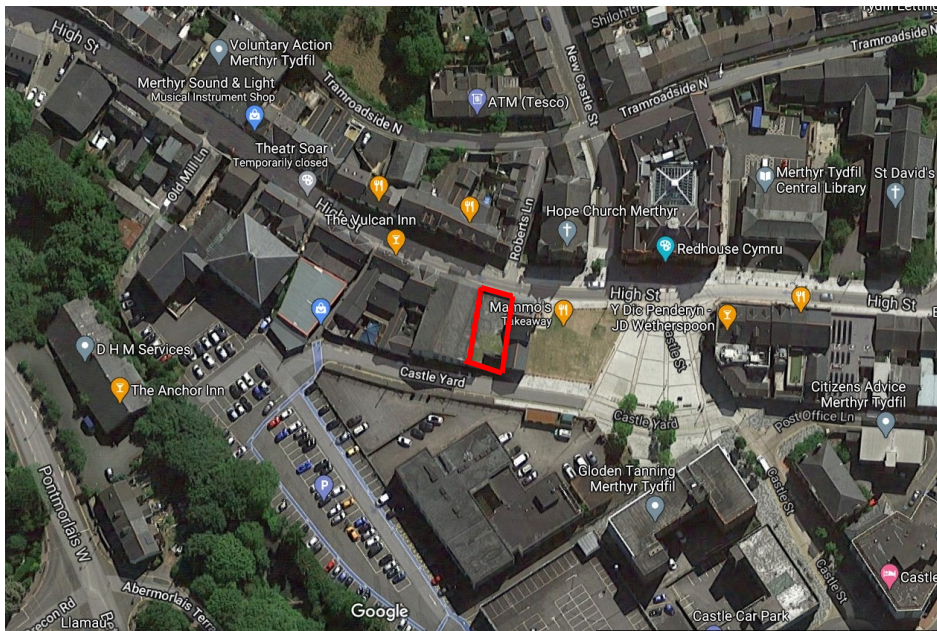
“Good design is inclusive design”

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. A lift will be provided to allow access to all areas, and be suitable for disabled use.

3.0 Character & Context

Manette's is a large property, fronting the high street, built in the late Circa 1960. It is located within the residential area of Portmorlais. 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.



The site

3.0 Existing site context

95-96 High Street is located at the southern point of the Merthyr town centre conservation area C3. It sits directly opposite the Hope Church and backs onto the carpark on Castle Yard

It is located within the Merthyr Tydfil town centre conservation Area. It is positioned at the southern end of the high street commercial area, with the street primarily made up of shops, fast food takeaways and pubs. Manettes sits in a prominent site, directly opposite Hope Chapel.

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.

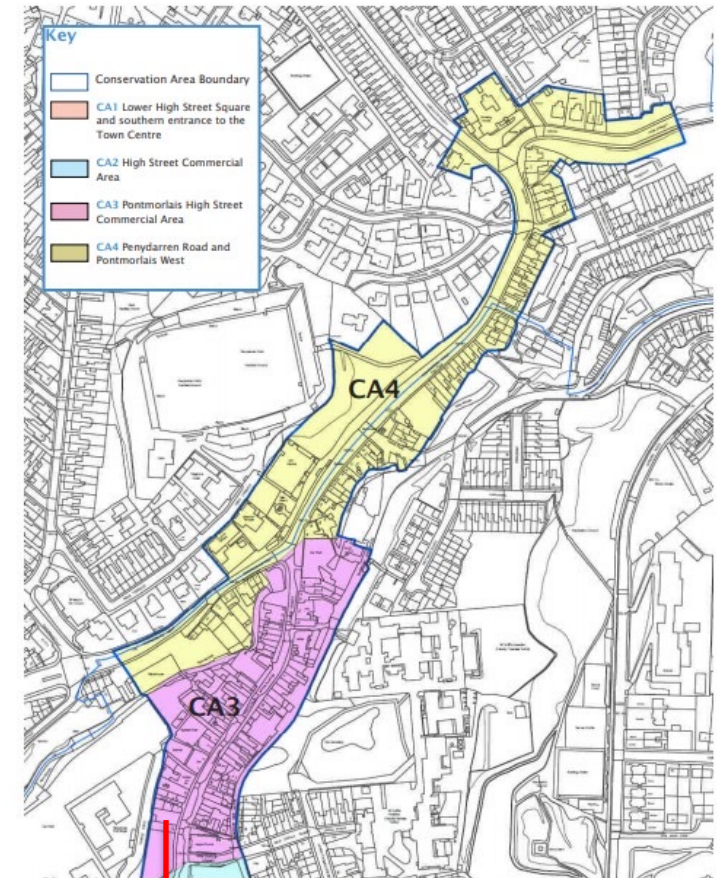
The property is within a flood zone C2?.



View from High Street

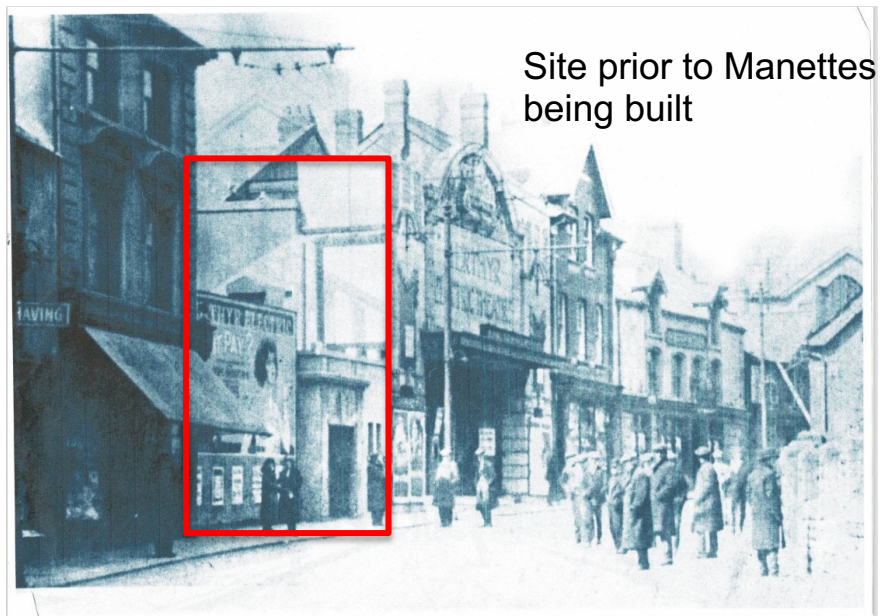


View from High Street



Character Areas of Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area (North)

The site



Site prior to Manettes
being built



Manettes prior to
closure



1960/70's view

4.0 Community safety

Community safety:

In considering health and safety during the construction , work is only up to roof height of 6 metres and work can be undertaken via a fixed scaffold.

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 makes best use of this empty redundant former chapel and house. Being occupied will assist with restricting criminal activity as will assist natural surveillance. The design will not compromise the security.

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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 boiler 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 without damaging the historical building fabric and architectural design.

Energy efficient lighting

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 flood risk zone. There is a flood risk assessment attached to this 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 by Arbtec. The report is also followed by a flight path survey- to be forwarded on completion.

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:

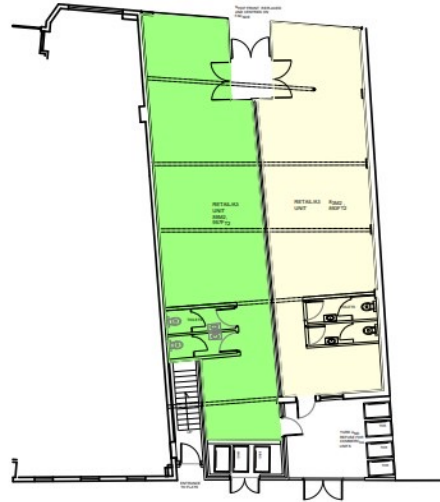
Key factors of the design:

- 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 residential in nature.
- b) **The functional and practical solution to turning these buildings into residential units.** These buildings have not been let out as since Manettes closed. By Converting to residential it will provide a sustainable use for these buildings. The size is suitable and can practically be divided to provide one bed flats. The ground floor is a very large unit , and in todays market would be best suited to two smaller units.
- 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 windows does not cause any over looking to adjoining properties.
- e) **opportunity to improve the appearance of the building and the street scene.** The buildings will be restored, improving the street scene.
- f) **Reflect the buildings former use and historic value within the design layout of the flats.** The original 1960's façade will be restored the design and layout of the flats will work around the existing window transoms and heights.
- g) **Design seeks to inform the new occupants of its historical references.** The large sheets of glass at first floor and restoration of the shop front will emphasize its former use.
- h) **Minimalization of criminal activity.** The building will be fitted with suitable lighting, secure windows and door entry system.

Design:

The ground floor retail unit has been split into two smaller units, as this is a very large unit for one retail outlet and by providing 2 smaller units gives more possibility of renting the units.

The flats are laid out to optimise the light from front and rear of the building, utilising circulation spaces within the unit areas. The addition of rooflight to assist quality of light to the top floor flats.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1:200



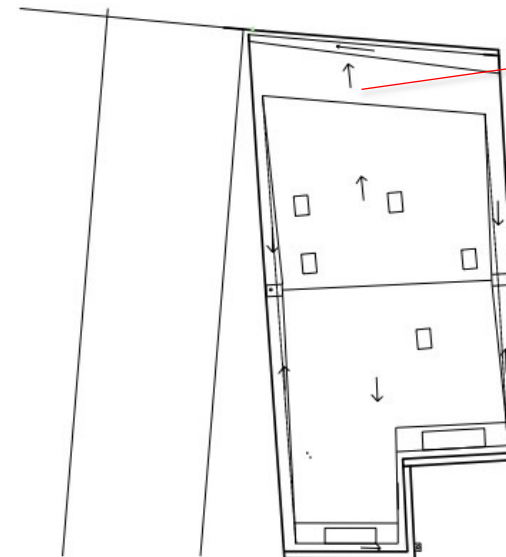
2 FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1:200



3 SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1:200



Flat roof set back from façade

4 ROOF PLAN

Scale: 1:200



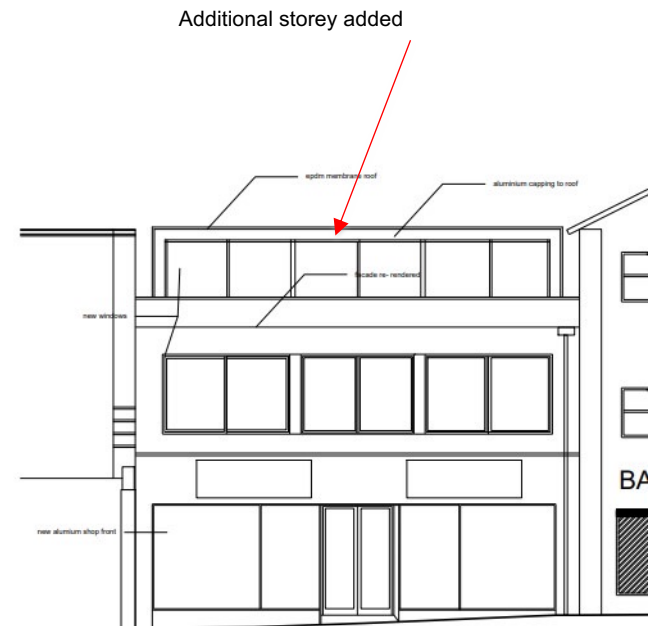
Sketch concept
of additional
storey

Design to be in spirit of the era it
was built but with a contemporary
addition to the roof . Glazing to
make reference to its 1960/70's
origins



EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION

Scale: 1:100



2 PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

Scale: 1:100

Planning Policy Considerations:

“Many commercial premises appear to have vacant upper floors. The lack of use of these spaces represents a failure to exploit the value of the building stock and is likely to result in the deterioration of buildings through a general lack of the appropriate maintenance”;

“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 listed 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 crate 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.

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 Council will protect and support the enhancement of the unique built heritage of the County Borough. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character and setting of any of the following:

Listed Buildings;

Scheduled Ancient Monuments;

Conservation Areas;

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest;

Townscape character, and the local distinctiveness of settlements;

Other historic, archaeological and cultural features of acknowledged importance”.

The development will preserve two listed buildings as well as restoring them to preserve the character and quality of these buildings and their setting. The new design would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character and setting of a listed building. 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;

The proposals aim to recreate the original fenestration to the facades and will not affect the visual appearance of the building, only improve it. The interior design has considered its historic use and is sympathetic to the building. The development is of an appropriate design for its local context and does not result in unacceptable impacts on local amenity.

Regard should therefore be given for the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

Treharris Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2009) further states that preservation of the Conservation Area is a priority and identifies Listed Buildings, locally listed buildings and buildings that are considered to add positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

BS 7913:2013 Guide to the conservation of historic buildings:

– provides general background information on the principles of the conservation of historic buildings and best practice.

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.

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 listed buildings that have struggled to be occupied and need care and attention and an investment of money to bring them back into use.

Heritage report.

The following heritage impact assessment details the results of a desk based assessment and site survey of 94 Portmorlais, which aims to define and record the objectives of the proposed adaptive re-use of the building. The report commissioned by Lumina Ltd has been undertaken to support a pre- planning application for a scheme to adapt the building for re-use. The objective of the heritage assessment is to establish the historic development of the site and the setting and provide a valuation of the significance of the building to inform the development of an appropriate sympathetic scheme for the site.

This is in accordance with the guidance set out in the welsh governments draft heritage impact assessment in Wales document 2016.

Structure of the heritage- impact assessment. The document follows the structure recommended by Welsh Government and has been set out in five main sections. The objectives underpinning the proposal are explained in the first section, followed by a statement of significance describing the heritage asset in detail.

The statement of significance section summarizes the key information known about the building and its location –its historical development and principle phases and its method of construction. It builds upon our understanding of the heritage and seeks to make judgements about the worth of the asset in various contexts.

The proposals aim to recreate the original fenestration to the facades and will not affect the visual appearance of the building, only improve it. The interior design has considered its historic use and is sympathetic to the building. The development is of an appropriate design for its local

Conclusion :

This design and access statement has been produced to accompany this planning application for converting the empty first floor above Manette's into residential flats and constructing an additional storey on top to create a further 3 flats and converting the existing retail unit into two units.

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.”

Conclusion continued....

Ecology:

An initial bat survey was undertaken by Arbtec, and no bat droppings or evidence of bats was found. The adjoining building was having a flight path survey undertaken so we took the opportunity of including this building at the same time, which also confirmed that there were no roosting or bats visiting the property.

Acoustics:

We will be preparing an acoustic study to include in the full application

Flood risk:

As the property is within the flood plain, the residential accommodation has been kept at 1st and 2nd floor only. A flood report will be undertaken for the full planning application.

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