

Design and Access Statement

Introduction

This Statement relates to Planning Application P/22/0074 Land to the rear of the Bothy, Cyfarthfa Park, CF48 2SE

The ‘full planning’ proposal comprises to create a community garden managed by volunteers for use by schools and adult groups with the proposed development.



The proposal has been subject to some pre-application discussion with Caroline Pulley (Planning Officer) and has been assembled further with her advice.

The planning application comprises

A change of use to create a charity garden with beepod, greenhouse, apiary, raised beds, fruit trees, compost bin, water butt and associated pathway access for all.

The curtilage area is 1240 square metres with a maximum dimensional length of 13.5 metres and a maximum width of 13.5 metres.

Statement from the developer:

“In general terms, the design of the development will have the main elements of small buildings, raised beds and pathway access, tucked away in the north-west direction of the park.

The development is for a community market garden managed by volunteers that has beehives and allows us to run school projects and introduce adults to bees and biodiversity. The site will not have free access to the public. The volunteers will all be inducted in the use and access to the site, all the interaction with the bees will be led by experienced bee keepers. Everyone will be welcome to join in or come and experience the bees and beekeeping, but that access will be with a trained leader. Access to the site will be through the pedestrian access from the council compound and immediately away from the road/vehicle access. This has been agreed with the parks department.

The site is secure being within the council compound, having security cameras (CCTV) already on the site and is within the patrol area covered by park security”.

Local Context

In line with the guidance set out in Technical Advice Note 12: Design, the surrounding buildings will be approximately 4 metres higher than the proposed new buildings.

It is acknowledged that the way in which this development relates to its urban or rural landscape context is critical to its success.

The vicinity of the application site is characterised to the east and north east by industrial building types of steel profiled sheets and up to 7 meters from ground level to ridge level. Further afield, sporadic detached buildings, external storage area and car parking are present.

The surrounding landscape is relatively undulating and is typical of the area. Dense woodland is prominent to the west and north of the proposed plot.

It is fair to say that the context provided by the surroundings has had a significant impact upon the proposed garden by being neatly tucked away in an available yet unobtrusive area of the park.

It is proposed to reflect the character of the buildings within a wooded backdrop.

Policy Context

1.4 PPW sets out the Welsh Government's land use planning policy in respect of 'Promoting sustainability through good design' and 'Planning for sustainable buildings', which includes the role of local planning authorities in delivering good sustainable design.

The Design and Access Statement (DAS), in line with the requirements of *Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design*, must explain the design concepts and principles applied to the development. A DAS accompanying a planning application must explain the concepts and principles in relation to:

- Accessibility
- Character (including amount, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping)
- Community Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Movement to, from and within the development

In terms of its role, the DAS is a communication tool showing that objectives of good design have been considered from the outset of the development process. This Statement will attempt to achieve this and in doing so will address each of the above issues in turn.

Accessibility

TAN 12 Objective:

- *Ensuring ease of access for all.*

It is considered that the proposed development has adopted inclusive design principles that would include adequate provision for all, including those with mobility impairments.

The proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety as a result of being tucked away in the corner. The site will be directly accessed from the park road and is considered that more than adequate provision is available in terms of parking capacity and highway safety for visitors.

The application site is on a slight slope. However, the gradient of the intended pathway would not exceed 1 in 12 fall as a result.

Due to its location, it is considered that the proposed access arrangement would not inhibit or restrict access to the site by larger emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire engines, nor would it restrict access to the site by refuse vehicles.

The application site is located within a public park area with public transport facilities, namely the local bus stop some 600m along Brecon Road, into nearby Merthyr Tydfil which is located some 1.5 miles away and Brecon 20 miles away. The nearest railway station is located in Merthyr town centre which also provides a park and ride facility.

In addition, it is considered that the proposed development would not contradict the requirements of the Development Plan, which relates to access for special needs groups. The access needs of all members of the public, especially those with special needs, are adequately satisfied and, moreover, would not be adversely affected as a result of the proposed development. It is proposed to use 'permeable' surface materials that would not affect or impede wheelchair users and those with mobility impairments.

The inaccessibility of land, buildings and other facilities can put the safety of certain members of the community at risk and may also prevent the disabled, the elderly and those with young children from playing a full role in society. Therefore, the Authority requires that all new development intended for use by employees or members of the public should be designed to be safe and fully accessible.

It is considered that the access arrangements referred to above, with its intended accessible level surfaces, parking provision and proximity to sustainable modes of transport, would not contravene the accessibility requirements of planning policy. Therefore, the proposed development would be acceptable in access terms and would comply with the requirements of the accessibility related policies of the LDP.

Environmental Sustainability

TAN Objectives:

- *Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources*
- *Enhancing biodiversity*
- *Designing for change*

Applications are expected to show how issues relating to sustainable design have been addressed. Guidance on which and advice on the required content of a Sustainability Statement.

Appendix 1 (The Sustainable Design Matrix) of the Sustainable Design Guide suggests that energy, materials and resources, water, landscape and biodiversity, place and local distinctiveness and robust building must be considered as part of the application process.

In terms of energy, only lighting in the winter months would be required. It is considered that opportunities for solar gain can be provided due to its distance from other properties.

Only recycled water for watering the plants will be required as no WC facilities' are needed within this site.

At a smaller scale, composting facilities are provided. Bicycle parking facilities can be provided. It would also be reasonable to insist that all building materials are sourced locally to reduce transport emissions, and used and recycled materials are used where possible.

Furthermore, it is considered that the provision of 'in keeping' materials would serve to maintain a sense of place and local distinctiveness within the park site.

Much of the environmental sustainability potential for the site should be discussed and agreed during the Reserved Matters stage. However, it is considered reasonable that the developers should consider energy efficiency and sustainability when creating the garden.

Character

TAN Objectives:

- *Sustaining or enhancing local character*
- *Promoting legible development*
- *Promoting a successful relationship between public and private space*
- *Promoting quality, choice and variety*
- *Promoting innovative design*

Amount

It is proposed as part of this scheme to develop the site for wellbeing of visitors purposes. Due to the size and shape of the application site and the density and pattern of surrounding buildings and woodland, it is considered reasonable to suggest that a garden would represent the maximum in terms of 'amount' for this designated plot as well as the most appropriate in density terms.

Layout

It is also considered that the application site would provide good connectivity to the local highway network and nearby public transport facilities. The application site would be accessed directly from the public highway as detailed above within the 'Accessibility' section of this statement.

The site slopes slightly as all of Cyfarthfa Park does. Its layout has been designed to blend in with these topographical challenges, which is often the case in this locality. Nevertheless, negotiation will be encouraged with the Local Planning Authority in terms of the most appropriate siting of the buildings and layout of the site generally. Notwithstanding this, an indicative layout plan has been submitted which illustrates the approximate location of the proposed buildings.

Scale

The application site measures approximately 1240 square metres. However, it would be acceptable should the Local Planning Authority seek to amend the scale of the proposed buildings to be comparable to those in close proximity to the site.

Due to the distance of the site from existing neighboring buildings, the topography of the site and existing boundary trees it is considered that the proposed development would not have a material adverse impact upon the amenities of neighboring occupants by way of a loss of sunlight, loss of privacy or overbearing impact. It is considered, therefore, that the proposal would comply with these requirements.

Appearance

As above, the appearance of the proposed buildings has been considered with timber to blend in with the wooded backdrop.

Landscaping

In terms of soft landscaping, lawned areas shall be provided to private amenity space areas.

In terms of the hard landscaping, the pathways will be surfaced with a permeable material therefore natural soakaway, or equivalent, with the needs of individuals with learning difficulties, as well as those with mobility and sensory impairments, taken fully into account. It is considered, therefore, that the proposal would comply with these requirements..

Community Safety

TAN Objectives:

- *Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces*
- *Security through natural surveillance*

It is considered that the proposed development would provide opportunities for safe physical activity that would meet the needs of all members of society.

It is suggested that the proposal would foster a definitive sense of ownership and responsibility for every part of the development. It is considered that the proposal would comply with these requirements. It is clear from the submitted layout plan that no conflicts of uses would occur as a result of the proposed development. The garden would be clearly enclosed, ensuring that space is clearly defined. Moreover, the position of the garden would be set back from the highway reinforcing this sense of 'invites only' space.

It is also considered that the nature of the proposed scheme and the undulating topography of the surrounding area would foster and allow a natural surveillance that would create a good level of security within the development. It is also considered that the park has security lighting at night and park wardens, ensuring that natural security is not unduly compromised during this time.

Movement to, From and Within the Development

TAN Objectives:

- *Promoting sustainable means of travel*

In terms of accessing the site, a driver should turn north west directly into the park from Brecon Road. The access road is a relatively inclined highway that climbs northwards to the top end of the park. However, within the garden the access to and within the site is slightly sloping to accommodate a 1:12 gradient in line with both the general and access specific policy.

Within the development, it is considered that the proposals would achieve a successful relationship between the public and the private space. It is envisaged that flat public and private spaces will be provided for users of all abilities.

Whilst in policy terms it is considered important to reduce the reliance upon the private motor vehicle, it is still considered imperative to provide adequate off-road parking facilities. It is considered reasonable to suggest that at a minimum, the car park lying south of the garden would be more than adequate.

When leaving the site by car good visibility is achieved. It is considered that the access to the site would meet the needs of the Authority in highway safety terms as visibility is adequately achieved.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development would comply with all relevant local planning policies and would not have a material adverse impact upon the amenities of nearby occupants, upon the visual amenities of the area nor upon highway safety. Accordingly, the Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant their approval to the scheme.