

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/23/0260
Site Address:	Guest Bowls Club Garden Street Dowlais Merthyr Tydfil CF48 3LJ
Development:	Change of use from storage shed to changing rooms
Case Officer:	Marlene Ferreira
Site Visit:	16th November 2023
Application Expiry Date:	27th December 2023
Consultation reply date expired:	27th November 2023

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to the Guest Memorial Bowls Club, located off Garden Street, in the area of Dowlais. The bowls club is served by a club building to the west of the bowling green and an ample parking area to the northwest of the club building (off Garden Street), with additional grassed areas provided to the north and east of the bowling green.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to change the use of an existing building located to the north of the bowling green.

The existing building, finished with rendered elevations and a mock slate roof (with corrugated metal to western gable elevation) and 2 roller shutters to its front elevation, is currently subdivided into two separate areas and used as a storage shed in association with the existing bowls club. The proposed building would continue to be used separately, with one area used as a home changing area and the other area used as an away changing area. The home changing area would be accessed by one of the existing roller shutter doors whilst the away changing area would be accessed by the other existing roller shutter door. As such, there are no internal alterations proposed to the building.

Externally, there is little change proposed, which would include the re-rendering of the elevations of the building.

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering and Highways	No objection.
Policy Officer	No response.

Ecology Officer

No objection, subject to the submission of additional survey work.

Environmental Health Officer

No objection, subject to conditions.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to nearby occupiers and two site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site. No letters of representation have been received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

- Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

National Planning Policies

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Local Planning Policies

- Merthyr Tydfil Replacement local Development Plan 2016-2031

Policy SW4 – Settlement Boundaries

Policy SW11 – Sustainable Design and Placemaking

Policy SW13 – Protecting Community Facilities

Policy EnW1 – Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience

Policy EnW4 – Environmental Protection

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider in the assessment of this application relate to whether the proposed development would be acceptable in principle in this location and whether it would be acceptable in respect of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, ecology and highway safety.

Principle of Development

The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary and Primary Growth Area where new development is supported provided it complies with other relevant policies. As such, the proposal would accord with LDP Policy SW4.

The application site is also recognised as a community facility. As such, LDP Policy SW13 is also relevant. This policy seeks to protect and improve local community facilities. It states that ‘...*the provision of new and enhanced community facilities will be supported subject to satisfying other relevant LDP Policies. The Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough’s existing community facilities...*’ The proposed

development, which seeks to provide changing areas to serve the users of the bowls club, would be considered to enhance the provision of facilities at the club. As such, it would accord with LDP Policy SW13.

Character and Appearance

The proposed development has been considered in respect of its impact upon the character and appearance of the area. In this instance, the proposal, as discussed above, would not include any internal or external alterations, other than the re-rendering of the building. As such, the appearance of the building would remain unchanged. The proposed development would therefore not have any adverse impact on the character or appearance of the building or the wider area and would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

Residential Amenity

The proposed development has been considered with regards to its impact upon the amenities of nearby occupiers. It should be noted however that the proposed changing rooms would be used to serve the existing users of the bowls club and as such, this proposal would not intensify the use of the existing bowls facility and cause additional disruption to nearby residents. Indeed, the nearest residential property is located over 30 metres away, to the southeast. As such, any noise or disturbance which could result from the proposed development would not be considered significantly more harmful than that which currently arises from the use of the site, as existing.

The proposed development would therefore not be deemed to have any significant or adverse impact upon the amenities of nearby residential occupiers. In this respect, it is noted that no objections have been received from nearby residents/occupiers or the Environmental Health Section. The proposal would therefore accord with LDP Policies SW11 and EnW4.

Ecology

In respect of ecology, the Council's Ecologist has considered the proposed development and requested the submission of a PRA report. An ecology report was submitted in support of the application which concluded no evidence of bats internally, in the form of bat droppings, staining or insect remains. Similarly, externally, the survey found no evidence of bats, including no bat droppings, staining or insect remains. There was therefore no evidence of a maternity roosts. Likewise, the survey found no active bird nests or breeding birds in the building. There was therefore no evidence of bird nesting.

The report also discussed the condition of the building, namely, the cracks in the render and the brickwork, missing mortar under ridge tiles, misaligned bargeboards and gaps between the corrugated metal and soffit. For this reason, the report also concluded that the building offered moderate potential for use by crevice and non-crevice roosting bats. As such, the ecology report recommended that dusk emergency/dusk activity observations be carried out.

Following consideration of the ecology report by the Council's Ecologist, and having noted the conclusions and recommendations of the ecology report, additional survey work/information was requested from the applicant. However, it has not been forthcoming. Whilst it is recognised that the ecology report recommended further survey work, it is also recognised that the proposed works do not seek to alter the building in any way, other than

the re-rendering of its elevations. Indeed, no other alterations or refurbishment works are proposed, in the form of new window openings, extensions or addition of new roof. Furthermore, the re-rendering of the building would amount to maintenance works on the premises, which would not normally require planning permission. Thus, in this instance, having considered that the additional requested survey work has not been submitted, that the proposed re-rendering would not require planning permission, and the fact that the ecology report found no evidence of bats inside or outside the building, it would be deemed unnecessary to delay this application any further. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on protected species and the proposed development would therefore accord with LDP Policy EnW1. Consideration has been given to the need to provide ecological enhancements. In this instance given the nature of the proposal with limited works to the building and the continued use of the building as part of the wider Bowls facility, no ecological enhancements have been sought.

It is also noted that chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 12) requests that applications be supported by Green Infrastructure Statements. However, in this instance, due to the nature of the development, which relates to a change of use only with no loss of or impact on the existing green infrastructure, such a request would be deemed disproportionate and unreasonable in this instance.

Parking and Highway Safety

The proposed development has been considered by the Head of Engineering and Highways, and no concerns were raised in respect of this proposal. Indeed, it is not considered that the proposed changing rooms would result in the intensification of the existing use. Furthermore, the existing facility is served by a large on-site parking area to the northwest of the club house, and there is unrestricted parking along the front highway, Garden Street. The site also lies within walking distance of bus stops along Victoria Street. The proposed development would therefore not give rise to any highway or pedestrian safety concerns and would accord with LDP Policy SW11.

CONCLUSION

The development, due to the reasons discussed above, is therefore considered acceptable and would accord with the relevant policies and guidance.

Finally, the duty to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, under section 3 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ("the WBFG Act") has been taken into consideration when determining this application. In reaching the following recommendation, the ways of working set out at section 5 of the WBFG Act have been considered and thus the proposal is in accordance with the sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out as required by section 8 of the WBFG Act.

Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the following **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason - To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Existing Plans, Elevations and Sections Drawing No. GBOWLS CR01, received: 1st November 2023;
- Proposed Plan Drawing No. GBOWLS CR02, received: 1st November 2023.

Reason -To ensure compliance with the approved plans and clearly define the scope of the permission.

INFORMATIVES

1. This planning permission does not provide consent to undertake works that require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence.

All bats and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb a bat or to recklessly damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places.

If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. on 0300 065 3000 or at <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/apply-for-a-protected-species-licence/bat-licences/?lang=en>.

If work has already commenced and bats are found, or if any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost is found, work should cease and NRW should be contacted immediately.

Under these circumstances, an EPS licence is likely to be required to undertake the works within the law.

2. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

If works to any trees, hedgerows and/or other nesting bird habitat (including buildings with suitable features) are to be undertaken, they will take place outside of the bird nesting season. If the works must be undertaken during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a breeding bird survey will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified will be protected until the young have fledged.

Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1> is involved, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, will be devised and implemented.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 03.03.2026