

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/25/0257
Site Address:	62C High Street Cefn Coed Merthyr Tydfil CF48 2PL
Development:	Erection of a first floor extension, change of use to an office and associated external works including new shopfront
Case Officer:	Rebecca Owens
Site Visit:	8th October 2025
Application Expiry Date:	25th November 2025
Consultation reply date expired:	29th October 2025

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to a single storey retail unit located in the local centre of Cefn Coed and within the settlement boundary. The area comprises of a mixture of retail, commercial and residential uses. The site is bound by a highway to the front, commercial units on either side (that may provide first floor living accommodation) and is attached to an annexe to the rear which does not form part of the site.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a first floor extension, change of use to an office and associated external works including new shopfront.

The first floor extension would overhang the existing front elevation by 1.8m. The main floor area would be 9.5m in width by 11.2m in depth and this would have a pitched roof with a ridge height of 15.1m. To the rear of this the first floor extension would extend over a single storey rear annexe and would be 6.7m in depth by 4.3m wide with a flat roof 11m in height. The extension would feature two first floor windows and roof lights in the front and rear roof plane and in the flat roof. It would have an artificial slate roof and the elevations would also be finished with painted render.

A new aluminium shop front is proposed at ground floor level which would comprise of a door and three window panes. There would also be an external roller shutter installed with the shutter box concealed within the overhang of the first floor extension. Around the shopfront at ground floor level the front elevation would be finished with painted render.

It is proposed to use the whole of the extended building as an office and thus a change of use is sought from the current A1 retail use.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

P/24/0243 Erection of a first floor extension, change of use to an office and associated external works including new shopfront
Refuse planning permission on 24 September 2025 for the following reason:

“The proposed extension by virtue of its unsympathetic external finish and inappropriate front fenestration would represent a discordant addition which would be visually harmful and fail to respect the character area, contrary to Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.”

CONSULTATION

The following bodies were consulted and their responses are presented below:

Head of Engineering and Highways	No objection
Planning Policy Officer	No objection
Ecologist	No objection
Environmental Health Manager	No objection

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring properties and two site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No letters of objection were received following the publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (February 2021) sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

National Planning Policies

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Local Planning Policies

The following policies of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031 are relevant to the determination of this application:

- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW9 Planning Obligations
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- SW12 Improving the Transport Network
- SW13 Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
- CW1 Historic Environment
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW2 Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- EnW3 Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species
- EnW4 Environmental Protection
- EcW4 Retail Allocation
- EcW5 Town and Local Centre Development

In addition, the application will be determined having regard to the advice contained within the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 2, Planning Obligations.
- Note 3, Shopfront Design
- Note 4, Sustainable Design.
- Note 5, Nature and Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle

The application site is located within the settlement boundary where development is acceptable in principle subject to other relevant policies and material planning considerations.

In this respect it is noted that the application site is located in the Cefn Coed local centre and as such Policies EcW3 and EcW5 are relevant.

Policy EcW3 advises that Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre is the favoured location for retail, leisure, and other complementary development, being situated at the head of a retail hierarchy, and being followed by the designated local centres including Cefn Coed. Proposals for new and enhanced retail, leisure and other complementary provision in these centres will be permitted where they improve the vitality and viability of the centre(s) concerned. Policy EcW5 also promotes development that would enhance the vitality and viability of the Town and Local Centres. It specifies that within local centres, the change of use of the ground floor to a 'non-A' use classes will only be permitted where:-

- It is demonstrated through active and appropriate marketing that the existing use is no longer economically viable; and
- The proposal would not result in an over concentration of non-A1 uses that would be detrimental to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the local centre; and

- The proposal would not result in the creation of a dead window frontage; and
- The proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity and viability of neighbouring uses, having regard to the 'agent of change principle'.

The proposal would result in the loss of an A1 retail use. However, this is limited in both the size of the unit and its current use, which only operates for a limited time during the year. The proposal would replace this with an A2 use (offices). This is considered to be an appropriate use within a local centre that would increase the variety of services operating within the local centre, thereby improving its vitality, attractiveness and viability. The proposal would also provide an active frontage which also contribute to the aims of these policies, which is preferable to the current arrangement where it is closed for a significant period of time and providing no contribution to the streetscene or local centre. As such, the proposal should bring the property back into full-time beneficial use. It is also noted, that an A2 use is permitted to change to an A1 use without the need for a planning application. Taking the above into consideration, the proposal would adhere to policies Ecw3 and EcW5.

It is also recognised that the proposal would result in the loss of a community facility with the loss of the A1 unit. Policy SW13 states that the provision of new and enhanced community facilities will be supported subject to satisfying other relevant LDP policies and that the Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough's existing community facilities. However, development proposals that would result in a loss of an existing community facility will only be permitted where they meet certain criteria. In this respect it is noted that there are a number of other shops within the local centre and that the proposed office use could provide an alternative community facility. Furthermore, as noted above the shop is of limited size and is largely closed thus providing no benefit to the local community for the majority of the time. Thus taking the above into consideration, it is concluded that the proposal would satisfy Policy SW13.

Design and Visual Amenity

The application site is located on the main highway through the settlement of Cefn Coed and within the designated local centre. The street is mainly characterised by traditional, two storey, terraced properties that have a mixture of uses including ground floor retail and commercial units. However, within the immediate vicinity of the site it is recognised that there are a variety of different properties present which vary in their design, materials and fenestration although these are mainly of a traditional appearance. Even within this context, the application building itself is somewhat distinctive in that it is single storey and set back from the main front building line. The proposal would introduce a first floor to the existing unit so it is more akin to the height of other buildings along the street and whilst this would overhang the existing front elevation, the extension would align with the building line established by the other properties on either side, giving the appearance of a recessed shopfront to the ground floor. It is therefore considered that its scale and general design is acceptable and the proposed shopfront and fenestration is also considered to be appropriate. Furthermore, whilst it is recognised that there are a mixture of finishes visible within the area, the elevational treatments tend to comprise of stone, render and brickwork. Thus the proposed render finish would also be in keeping with those in the area and as such the proposal would have an overall sympathetic appearance which would not be visually harmful to the character of the area. Accordingly, the development would be comply with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Residential Amenity

Whilst the application site is situated in a local centre where there are a mixture of uses, the area also has a large proportion of residential properties and regard has been had for the impact of the proposal on the residential amenities of neighbouring occupants. It is noted that the proposed first floor extension would be located in close proximity to the properties on either side of the site. However, having regard to the modest size of the extension and its position alongside the flank elevations of these adjoining properties which are two storey in height, it is not considered that it would have a significant overbearing impact or result in any harmful loss of light or overshadowing. It is also noted that the only window would be located within the front elevation where they would not give rise to any overlooking or loss of privacy. It is recognised that roof lights are also proposed but these would not allow for any harmful views into the neighbouring properties.

It is recognised that the use as an office would result in a level of activity from comings and goings and as such may create some noise and disturbance. However, it is not considered that this would be any greater than that of a shop. In addition, it is located in a local centre where there a certain level of activity is to be expected given the other commercial uses in the area. In this respect it is also noted that no objections were received from the Environmental Health Manager. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity and would comply with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Parking and Highway Safety

The application site does not benefit from any off-street parking and none is proposed as part of this application. However, given the scale of the building and its location within a sustainable location, where there are good transport links, it is not considered that the lack of parking would have an adverse impact upon the existing highway network or highway safety. It is also recognised that its current use as a retail unit would generate a parking demand. As such no concerns are raised within this respect and no objection has been received from the Head of Engineering and Highways.

Ecology

A bat survey report has been submitted in support of the application. This sets out the results of a Preliminary Roost Assessment and a dusk activity survey. No evidence was recorded of bats using the building and bats (and roosts) were therefore considered likely absent. In addition, whilst it has been noted that the building supports limited features that could be exploited by nesting birds, no active nest was identified during the survey visits. A number of recommendations and enhancements are outlined within this report which are considered to be appropriate and the local planning authority's Ecologist has not raised any objection to the development subject to these being met. This can be controlled via condition.

It is recognised that chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 12) requests that applications be supported by Green Infrastructure Statements (GIS). This was requested but has not been forthcoming. However, in this instance, due to the scale and nature of the development, which only includes a first floor extension above an existing unit and a change of use and having regard to the conclusions and recommendations proposed within the Bat Survey Report, the submission of a GIS is not considered necessary to determine the application. It is considered that there is limited biodiversity value to the existing site and the extension would not likely result in any significant loss to this. With

the proposed enhancements which can be secured by condition, it is considered that there would be a net benefit to biodiversity which would contribute to the wider green infrastructure objectives. The proposed development would therefore comply with LDP Policy EnW1.

Conclusion

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:

Drawing Title: Plan (proposed ground floor), Drawing Number: 1061.04B, Received 9 October 2025

Drawing Title: Section (proposed section), Drawing Number: 1061.05B, Received 30 September 2025

Drawing Title: Elevation (proposed front and rear elevations), Drawing Number: 1061.06D, Received 9 October 2025

Drawing Title: Elevation (proposed side elevation), Drawing Number: 1061.07C, Received 30 September 2025

Drawing Title: Elevation (proposed side elevation), Drawing Number: 1061.08C, Received 9 October 2025

Drawing Title: Plans (proposed first floor), Drawing Number: 1061.12B, Received 30 September 2025

A Bat Survey Report, Document Reference: LT258-BAS-25, Version 3, Produced by Little Wing Ecology, Received 1 December 2025

A Precautionary Working Method Statement for Bats, Document Reference: LT383-MS-25, Version 3, Produced by Little Wing Ecology, Received 12 December 2025

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

3. **BEFORE** the development hereby approved is brought into beneficial use, integrated bat and bird boxes shall be provided in accordance with drawing numbers 1061.06D and 1061.08C. These shall be retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason - To protect the natural environment in accordance with Policies EnW1 and EnW2 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

4. Demolition or construction works shall not take place outside the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 09:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

Reason - To ensure that the noise emitted/activities are not a source of nuisance to occupants of nearby properties in accordance with Policies SW11 and EnW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

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: 16.12.2025