

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0148
Site Address:	Bishop Hedley High School Gwaunfarren Road Penydarren Merthyr Tydfil CF47 9AN
Development:	Erection of external dining area canopy
Case Officer:	David Cross
Site Visit:	15th July 2026
Application Expiry Date:	1st September 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	20th August 2026

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to the Bishop Hedley High School, which is surrounded by the residential areas of Penydarren and Galon-Uchaf. The school grounds are split into two distinct areas to the north and south that are separated by Gwaunfarren Road but are connected by a pedestrian underpass.

The northern half of the site accommodates the new high school building recently constructed under the P/23/0131 permission with associated landscaped play areas and is bound by Galon Uchaf Road to the west and allotments to the east. The southern half of the site accommodates additional classroom buildings, a sports hall and playground/pitches and is largely surrounded by residential properties with Gwaunfarren Primary School to the south-west.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of an external dining area canopy within the playground situated on the eastern side of the new school building.

The canopy would appear similar to two large umbrellas joined together supported by two columns. The canopy would be constructed from a tensile fabric with steel frame/supports. The overall structure would measure 15m wide by 9m deep and 6m high. The submitted drawings indicate a total of 12 picnic style benches could be accommodated under the canopy.

PLANNING HISTORY

- P/26/0165 - Non-material amendment to planning permission P/23/0131 relating to the layout of the building associated with the plant area.
Currently under consideration.
- P/26/0055 - Non-material amendment to planning permission P/23/0131 to reduce the scale of the sports hall and changes to the elevations.
Granted permission on 06.07.2026
- P/23/0131 - Demolition of existing school and construction of a new school building within the existing site, including sports facilities and associated landscaping, access and engineering works, temporary staff car park, construction compound and classrooms during construction.
Granted planning permission on 20.10.2023
- P/12/0208 - Installation of solar photovoltaic modules to the flat and pitched roofs.
Granted planning permission on 20.09.2012
- P/96/0208 - Demolition of existing sports hall and replacement with new one.
Granted planning permission on 26.07.1996

CONSULTATION

- Head of Engineering and Highways - No response
- Council's Ecologist - No objection
- South Wales Fire and rescue Services - No response

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, a site notice was displayed within the vicinity of the site.

As a result of this publicity exercise 1 representation was received, which raised the following concerns:

- The development has impacted on the resident as a result of dust, parked lorries, machine noise.
- The developers on site have been undertaking works on Saturday and Sundays which is affecting the resident's amenity.

It appears that the concerns raised are related to the wider management for the development of the Bishop Hedley School and are not specific to the current proposal for a canopy in the playground. Complaints in relation to the management of the development would need to be addressed as a separate matter.

In this instance, the concerns raised are not deemed to be relevant to the current proposal, which would be located approximately 125m away from the resident and screened entirely by the new school building. As such the canopy would not have any meaningful impact on the resident, nor would it give rise to or exacerbate the concerns raised in respect of the wider school development. Given the nature of the concerns, it is considered in this instance that concerns raised are not material to the considerations of the current proposal.

POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy

The Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016 – 2031:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy EnW1 - Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The application site lies within the settlement limits where new development is generally supported by Policy SW4 of the LDP. The proposal would provide additional facilities that would serve the Bishop Hedley School with the provision of sheltered outdoor space.

The canopy is of typical design for such structures incorporating a tensile canvas covering with supporting columns fixed to the ground. It is proposed that picnic benches could be placed underneath to provide an area for children during lunch breaks. This structure would be positioned in the playground on the eastern side of the school building where it would not be visible from any public area. The structure would be to a large extent screened by the new school building and a wooded corridor along the eastern boundary, which includes allotments beyond. The use of canopy structures within school grounds is not an uncommon feature to find and so would not appear out of context. It would also have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such the proposal complies with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Given the location of the structure away from any residential property, it would not have any impact on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers. Additionally, the use of the canopy in the playground would not give rise to any notable increase in noise associated with outdoor activities, which would likely be attenuated by the school building. As such the proposal complies with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

The canopy would have no ecological impacts, given that it would be located on an area of existing hardstanding and would not result in the disturbance or loss of any habitats. There

is also no external lighting proposed that may otherwise have some impact on bat activity in the area. As such the proposal complies with Policy EnW1 of the LDP.

CONCLUSIONS

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.

For the above reasons, the proposed development is deemed to be acceptable, and 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.

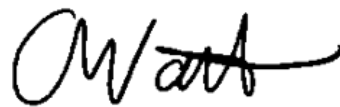
2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- General Arrangements Elevations 1 of 2, Dwg No. BCA-ATK-V1-ZZ-DR-A-012092 P1
- Landscape General Arrangement - North Site, Dwg No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-401002 P01
- Dining Area Canopy Detail, Dwg No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-404001 P01

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

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED

p.p.



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 21st August 2026