

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0165
Site Address:	Bishop Hedley High School Gwaunfarren Road Penydarren Merthyr Tydfil CF47 9AN
Development:	Non-material amendment to planning permission P/23/0131 relating to the layout of the building associated with the plant area.
Case Officer:	David Cross
Application Expiry Date:	23rd September 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	13th 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 together 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

This application seeks permission for a non-material amendment to the layout of the buildings associated with the plant area, located in the northern part of the site, approved under the P/23/0131 permission for the redevelopment of the site to accommodate a new high school building.

The proposed amendments comprise a reduction in the size of the sprinkler and hydrant compound to accommodate the reconfiguration of tanks and revised access requirements, a slight increase in the size of the domestic and rainwater plant room, and an enlargement of the substation area. There is also a change in the material finish to the plant enclosure to replace some of the brickwork walls with 2m high fencing.

PLANNING HISTORY

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

No consultation exercise is deemed necessary

PUBLICITY

No publicity exercise is deemed necessary

POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy

The Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (September 2009)

TAN 11: Noise (Oct 1997)

TAN 12: Design (March 2016)

TAN 18: Transport (March 2007)

Local planning policy

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

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW9 - Planning Obligations
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW12 - Improving the Transport Network
- Policy SW13 - Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
- Policy CW1 - Historic Environment
- Policy EnW1 - Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW2 - Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- Policy EnW4 - Environmental Protection
- Policy EnW9 - District Heating Area

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

- SPG 2 Planning Obligations, March 2012
- SPG 4 Sustainable Design, July 2013
- SPG 5 Nature and Development, May 2015

Welsh Government Planning Guidance: Approving Non-material Amendments to an Existing Planning Permission (July 2014):

The guidance advises that a non-material amendment will depend on factors such as the context of the overall scheme, the amendments being sought to the original planning permission, the specific circumstances of the site and the surrounding area, which will vary from one application to another.

In deciding whether or not a proposed change is non-material, consideration should be given to the effect of the change, together with any previous changes made to the original planning permission. The guidance also identifies four tests, which local planning authorities may wish to consider when assessing and determining whether a proposed change would qualify as a non-material amendment. These are as follows:

- is the scale of the proposed change great enough to cause an impact different to that caused by the original approved development scheme; and,
- would the proposed change result in a detrimental impact either visually or in terms of local amenity?
- would the interests of any third party or body be disadvantaged in planning terms; or,
- would the proposed change conflict with national or development plan policies?

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The key consideration in this case is whether the proposed amendments to the layout and reconfiguration of the plant area are non-material.

The approved plans illustrated an 'L' shaped building that would accommodate domestic and rainwater plant and sub-station and gas plant. Attached to this on the northern side there is a sprinkler tank, hydrant tank and sprinkler pump which would be enclosed by a boundary wall.

The proposal involves the enlargement of the 'L' shaped building to a square footprint to accommodate the plant equipment. The water tanks and pump on the northern side would

be reconfigured so that its enclosure sits parallel with the school building. This has a minor effect on the alignment of the access road into the site

The original scheme illustrated the plant equipment would be largely enclosed by a brickwork wall up to 4m in height with sections enclosed by ventilated cladding. The main rainwater plant building would remain unchanged with a facing brickwork finish. The 4m high facing brick wall to enclose the substation would remain and would be extended to square-off the compound. A 2m high close boarded fence would be used on the eastern side incorporating a double gated access into the area.

It is noted that the sprinkler tanks and water pumps would be positioned at a lower ground level within the plant area due to the sloping nature of the site. A 2m high fence would be positioned around the perimeter, which would screen the sprinkler pump house and part of the sprinkler tanks. It is noted that the sprinkler tanks were not entirely screened previously and we a visible element to the scheme alongside the plant building, which further screens the tanks from the public area.

It is acknowledged that the enclosure to the plant area has changed in some areas from brickwork to fencing. Whilst the plant facility in general is quite visible given its position in relation to the school building, the changes to the approved scheme do not give rise to greater visual impact. It would largely be of a similar scale, siting and layout. Nor would it give rise to any greater impact on the amenities of nearby properties.

Other Considerations:

The following have been taken into account in considering the application and in reaching the recommendation set out below.

1. There are no conditions on the original permission which would prevent this non-material amendment.
2. It is noted that a NMA application has previously been agreed to change the scheme associated with the sports hall on the southern part of the site – Ref P/26/0055. This has no bearing or cumulative impact with the changes proposed in this application.
3. There are no publicity concerns raised previously that may be prejudiced by the changes.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the proposed amendment is considered to be acceptable and would constitute a non-material amendment to the originally approved scheme. Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED

INFORMATIVES

1. It should be noted that the following amended plans, approved under this application, shall be read in conjunction with planning permission P/23/0131:

Elevations 1 of 2, Drawing No. BCA-ATK-V3-ZZ-DR-A-013010 CR1

Elevations 2 of 2, Drawing No. BCA-ATK-V3-ZZ-DR-A-013011 CR1

Floor and Roof Plan, Drawing No. BCA-ATK-V3-ZZ-DR-A-011001 CR1

Landscape General Arrangement, Drawing No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-423001 C03

Landscape GA - North Site, Drawing No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-423002 C03

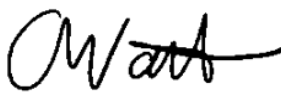
Landscape GA Secondary Entrance Drawing No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-423008 C03

Landscape Site Wide Fencing GA Drawing No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-423009 C03

Landscape Fencing GA - North Site Drawing No. BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-423010 C02

Landscape Planting Plan North Site Drawing No, BCA-ATK-XX-XX-DR-LA-423014 C02

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED

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Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 21st August 2026