

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/25/0087
Site Address:	Cyfarthfa Castle Cyfarthfa Park Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8RE
Development:	The repairs, replacement and installation of new drainage pipes, attenuation tank and manholes.
Case Officer:	Mr Gareth Davies
Site Visit:	3rd April 2025
Application Expiry Date:	26th May 2025
Consultation reply date expired:	22nd April 2025

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to Cyfarthfa Castle and its grounds. Cyfarthfa Castle is a Grade I Listed Building located within the Cyfarthfa Park Conservation Area. The grounds and surroundings of the property is also on the Cadw ICOMOS Register of Listed Registered Parks and Gardens with a grade II* listing.

Cyfarthfa Castle is located within 160 acres of mixed parkland, on a plateau overlooking the site of the Former Cyfarthfa Ironworks to the north of the town centre. To the rear of the castle is woodland, whilst to the front is the car park and parkland with occasional trees along with the lake on the western edge of the site. The park is bound by Brecon Road to the west and south-west, Gurnos Road to the north-west and north, and residential streets to the east and south-east. The park slopes towards the River Taff to the west.

Cyfarthfa Castle was designed by the London Architect Robert Lugar in 1824-25 in the picturesque style. The building is constructed from coursed ashlar masonry set beneath a crenelated parapet. The castle layout is broadly rectangular in shape, and the arrangement of the buildings is asymmetrical with the family rooms located on the southeast side of the building and the former school on the northwest. The castle museum also occupies part of the building. The two main elevations of the castle remain unaltered from their original construction and therefore are of considerable architectural and symbolic importance. However, the overall value of the building is reduced by the extensive changes made to both the interior and exterior in the early 20th century.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development represents the first leg in the renewal of drainage serving the building. It is proposed to install new below ground surface water drainage network to convey water runoff from the building via attenuated, controlled discharge to an existing Dwr Cymru Welsh Water connection south-east of Cyfarthfa Park.

The proposals involve the installation of new drainage channels around the perimeter of the castle building which would involve excavation behind the existing retaining wall which bounds the castle to the south and east across the south terrace.

The new runs would be connected to new drainage routes running southeast away from the castle and beneath the tree lined boundary around the pavilion and bowling green into a below ground attenuation tank. From there water would be discharged via a new route southward across the parkland where it will link up with the existing Dwr Cymru Welsh Water connection.

New drainage runs and yard gullies would also be built to capture existing above ground water run off just north of the castle, that is caused by insufficient drainage to discharge water running off the higher ground in the north of the park. This run off would also be routed south eastwards below the existing footpath to connect with the main route taking run off to the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water connection.

It is proposed to replace the existing drainage run east of the bandstand. The new pipework would be connected to a new run taking water from the play area north of the bandstand southwards through the woodland/parkland to the bandstand. An additional connection would be made to direct water from these two runs to the principal route leading southwards to the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water connection.

The construction of the new runs would necessitate the removal of a number of trees all of which have been assessed by an arborist as being of low value.

All existing drainage runs will be retained in situ. Some runs which currently provide discharge for both foul and surface water, would be used only for foul drainage following the implementation of the new drainage runs. The majority of the existing runs leading southwards across the parkland to the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water connection would be abandoned.

In addition to the submitted plans the planning application is accompanied by the following:

- Heritage Impact Assessment,
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal,
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Access Strategy,
- Roof Surface Water Drainage Strategy, and
- Site Drainage Strategy

PLANNING HISTORY

P/23/0051 – Install new timber door and 2 flues on the front elevation of the boiler room at Cyfarthfa Castle (Listed Building Consent) – Approved 18th April 2023

P/22/0055 - Opening up works to ascertain the condition of the structure (Listed Building Consent – Approved 13th May 2022

P/20/0216 - Patio / terrace decking extension to Canolfan Building and Splash pad plant room extension, new changing room pod, bin store, footpaths and bridge – Approved 4th February 2021

P/12/0270 - Creation of new footpaths and re-surfacing of existing paths with associated drainage works and stone walls – Approved 21st January 2013

P/12/0268 - Hard landscape works to castle forecourt – Approved 7th March 2013

P/10/0009 - Variation of Condition 1 of planning consent P/09/0167 (erection of Woodland Centre) relating to amended materials – Approved 11th March 2010

P/09/0343 - Toilet and plant room building (associated with the Woodlands Centre and splash play pad) – Approved 11th February 2010

P/09/0167 - Proposed Woodland Resource Centre, terrace cafe, wet and dry play areas and landscaping – Approved 26th October 2009

P/08/0108 - Erection of new gates to west and south elevations of main entrance portico – Approved 11th November 2008

P/08/0107 - Erection of new gates to west and south elevations of main entrance portico (Listed Building Consent) – Approved 4th November 2008

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering and Highways – No objection

Estates – No response received

Planning Ecologist – No objection subject to conditions relating to ecological enhancements, mitigation and management.

Environmental Health manager – No response received

Regeneration – No response received

Parks – No objection

Natural Resources Wales – No objection

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – No objection

Heneb – No objections subject to a condition requiring the provision of an archaeological watching brief being included in any permission granted.

Cadw – No objection

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 letters were sent to neighbouring properties on 1st April 2025 and site notices were displayed in the vicinity of the site on 3rd April 2025.

No objections or observations have been received as a result of the consultation exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021):

Future Wales provides guidance on matters relevant to this application, including, but not limited to:

Policy 1: Where Wales will grow

Policy 2: Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking

Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 12, February 2024:

Planning Policy Wales provides guidance on matters relevant to this application, namely: -

One of the five Key Planning Principles is that natural, historic and cultural assets must be protected, conserved and enhanced.

Paragraph 6.1.1. states - The historic environment comprises all the surviving physical elements of previous human activity and illustrates how past generations have shaped the world around us.

Paragraph 6.1.5. states - The planning system must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations.

Paragraph 6.1.6. The Welsh Government's specific objectives for the historic environment seek to:

- safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved; and
- preserve the special interest of sites on the register of historic parks and gardens.

Paragraph 6.1.10. advises There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of a listed building and its setting, which might extend beyond its curtilage. For any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Paragraph 6.1.11. states - For listed buildings, the aim should be to find the best way to protect and enhance their special qualities, retaining them in sustainable use.

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

The relevant LDP Objectives are:-

- LDP Objective 2 Welsh Language and Culture: To protect and enhance Welsh language and culture.
- LDP Objective 4 Regeneration: To promote the suitable reuse of previously developed land and the continued regeneration of local communities.
- LDP Objective 5 Infrastructure: To ensure that community infrastructure and open space supports the regeneration of local communities.

- LDP Objective 8 Community Facilities: To support existing community facilities and suitable community led development.
- LDP Objective 9 Heritage and Cultural Assets: To protect, enhance and promote all heritage, historic and cultural assets.
- LDP Objective 15 Leisure, Recreation and Tourism: To support sustainable tourism, leisure and recreation developments and encourage an all year-round tourism industry.

The following development plan policies would apply:-

- Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces
- Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW13: Protecting Community Facilities
- Policy CW1: Historic Environment
- Policy CW2: Cyfarthfa Heritage Area
- Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW2: Internationally and nationally Protected Site and Species.
- Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection

The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is applicable: -

- SPG Note 4: Sustainable design (July 2013)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The key consideration in the determination of this planning application is to meet the requirement of planning policy at the national and local level, to preserve and enhance the unique qualities of the grade I listed building and its surrounding grade II* listed grounds. It is also important to give due consideration to the significance of the impact and the likely consequences of the proposed works on the ecology of the locality and the registered parkland.

Heritage impacts

The proposed development aims to address a situation where drainage around the listed building is failing and needs to be replaced. As such, the proposed development clearly meets the obligations set out in LDP Policy CW1 that requires proposals to preserve and enhance the character and cultural and historic importance of the building. Indeed, failure to do this work would only lead to further deterioration of what is probably Merthyr's most important historic and cultural asset. Further, LDP Policy CW2 supports the development of the wider Cyfarthfa Heritage Area as a heritage based visitor attraction and the proposed replacement drainage would sustain that into the future and provide some betterment in that it would also reduce the potential for flooding in the area through attenuation.

The castle and grounds are central to the history and development of Merthyr Tydfil and notably have high historic, aesthetic and communal value in itself and the wider setting and group value of the listed building and grounds to the town and beyond is considerable. Further the estate is also recognised as an archaeologically sensitive area as elements of the estate such as stables, kitchen gardens and icehouse which have been lost over time and there may be potential for remains to exist. This should not prevent the necessary works proposed but would require an archaeological watching brief be undertaken through the

course of works and an appropriate planning condition to that effect should be attached to any permission that might be granted.

The application is supported with a Heritage Impact Assessment which sets out in detail an understanding of the buildings and the grounds that form Cyfarthfa and their importance in their own right and in the history of the town. The report considers the history and development of the site from construction, its use by the Crawshay family and its use as a school and museum in some detail. Importantly the study acknowledges that water ingress damp and poorly maintained rainwater goods have led to a deterioration of the built fabric and that there is an urgent need to address, arrest and reverse this process which has been recognised in the 2022 condition survey. The report then goes on to assess the significance of the site from an evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values perspectives, concluding the building is of high value other than for the evidential assessment which is considered medium. Given the condition of the building the report acknowledges and accepts the need for the drainage works to progress and regards the proposed drainage strategy as an appropriate solution with minimal intrusion on the historic asset, designed to address the problems with water ingress in an appropriately sensitive manner. The report concludes that improving drainage would be to the overall benefit of the building itself, the parkland and the wider Cyfarthfa Conservation Area.

Ecology & Landscape

The building and grounds at Cyfarthfa are ecologically sensitive and as such the proposal is supported with a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). The proposed works entail the construction of new underground drainage channels and attenuation tank. The route comprises some 663m of excavation works that would require the removal of hedgerows, grassland, trees and some scrub areas. Whilst the PEA did not specifically identify any feature or habitats that are likely to be lost to the development it did identify appropriate ecological constraints and evaluated the impact of the development against them suggesting appropriate actions where necessary. The PEA considers all potential ecological impacts of the proposed development and recommends a series of actions to be followed to ensure that net biodiversity benefit is delivered. This would be achieved through the agreement of a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) that would set out the requirements for the protection of habitats, ecological protection of all hedgerows and trees that might be affected by the development with fencing. Trees that would be removed to facilitate the work would be inspected for bats and nesting birds and appropriate action undertaken if necessary. Trees that are removed would be replaced on a three to one basis. The replacement tree planting would take place in three copes which the replanting plan shows in the south western grounds. The planting would combine traditional trees such as oak and Hornbeam along with some ornamental species such as Japanese cherry broadly reflecting the mix established within the grounds. The PEA also recommends the inclusion of ecological enhancements within the development. To that end, a planning condition is recommended that a Landscape and Ecological Enhancement Plan be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority and its recommendations implemented on completion of works. The net result of replanting would be that there would be a benefit to the character and appearance and landscape quality of the garden and grounds in terms of trees planted and the restoration of grasslands resulting from the works following full restoration.

The application is also accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) which sets out the existing green infrastructure and what would be created as a result of the proposed development. The GIS considers the impact of the development on modified grasslands,

natural grasslands, species rich hedgerow translocation and creation, scattered trees and lighting. Following the stepwise approach and DECCA framework the GIS concludes that the development would result in an onsite Net Benefit for Biodiversity and an improvement in ecosystem resilience. This would be achieved through the design of the proposed works, sensitive working practices whilst works are being undertaken, replacement planting of trees lost at a 3 to 1 ratio, the siting of new bird and bat boxes and the creation of reptile hibernacula and an insect tower. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy EnW1 of the LDP.

Highways

The application is supported with an access strategy which sets out how access will be managed and preserved through the development process while works to the drainage of the property are ongoing. The statement confirms that access to the public and pre-paid car parks will be maintained through the development process and that access to the site facilities will be maintained though use of some will be limited on occasion. To ensure that contractor access does not disrupt public use or compromise safety a number of safety measures will be implemented. These include clear signage and barriers, scheduling during off peak hours, regular communications with the public and park users, the use of adequate lighting where appropriate and environmental control measures such as dust suppression. On completion of the works all access routes will be reinstated. Subject to conditions the Head of Engineering and Highways is content with its findings and recommendations which are aimed at continuity in the function of the building and grounds whilst the works take place.

Drainage

The Roof and Surface Water Drainage Strategy, and Site Drainage Strategy are technical documents which set out how the improved drainage of the site is and how it will be delivered. The first sets out the drainage strategy for the house and its immediate environs and sets out how it would deal with that moving into the castle grounds. Collectively they illustrate that the proposed changes would be to the benefit of the listed building in that the water ingress issues would be adequately dealt with and that the development would also reduce waterlogging/saturation within the wider grounds to the benefit of the building and to the trees within the grounds, a number of which have been lost to the waterlogging problem. It is envisaged that with the approach adopted a 30% improvement can be delivered over existing arrangements using an attenuated solution as proposed.

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 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 in 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.

The proposed development would offer considerable benefits towards the protection of Cyfarthfa Castle by reducing the potential for further deterioration due to poor drainage. The new drainage would intercept water run off from the north taking it away from the building reducing significantly or removing, water ingress to the basement in particular. There would

also be benefit to the grounds as the new system would reduce the loss of trees resulting from saturation of the ground and uprooting. Additionally due diligence has been undertaken regarding the archaeological record and the needs of the ecology of the site. Therefore the proposal complies with the relevant policies 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: -

- Site location plan drawing no. CCTS-PUR-01-XX-DR-A-0005
- Proposed drainage strategy plan drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0500-S2-P7.
- Proposed drainage strategy sheet 1 drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0501-S2-P7.
- Proposed drainage strategy sheet 2 drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0502-S2-P07
- Manhole schedule drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0503-S2-P4
- Drainage details drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0505-S2-P4
- Attenuation tank sections drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0506-S2-P4
- Drainage long sections drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0507-S2-P2
- Drainage long section drawing no. 12050-MNW-XX-XX-DR-C-0508-S2-P2
- Proposed drainage site plan drawing no CCTS-PUR-01-00-DR-A-0011-P03
- Proposed drainage site plan drawing no. CCTS-PUR-01-00-DR-A-0012-P01
- Access strategy
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal version 2, 23rd April 2024.
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Road Surface Water Drainage Strategy
- Site Drainage Strategy

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

3. **No development or site clearance shall commence** until the local planning authority have been informed in writing of the name of a professionally qualified archaeologist who is to be present during the undertaking of any excavations in the development area so that a watching brief can be conducted. No work shall commence until the local planning authority has confirmed in writing that the proposed archaeologist is suitable. A copy of the watching brief report shall be submitted to the local planning authority within two months of the archaeological fieldwork being completed.

Reason - In order that the archaeological operations are undertaken to an acceptable standard and that legitimate archaeological interest in the site is satisfied in accordance with Policy CW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

4. **No development shall take place** until a Wildlife Protection Plan for Construction has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include:

- a. An appropriate scale plan showing 'Wildlife Protection Zones' where construction activities are restricted and where protective measures will be installed or implemented;
- b. Details of protective measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid impacts during construction;
- c. A timetable to show phasing of construction activities to avoid periods of the year when sensitive wildlife could be harmed (such as nesting bird season).
- d. Persons responsible for:
 - i) Compliance with legal consents relating to nature conservation;
 - ii) Compliance with planning conditions relating to nature conservation;
 - iii) Installation of physical protection measures during construction;
 - iv) Implementation of sensitive working practices during construction;
 - v) Regular inspection and maintenance of physical protection measures and monitoring of working practices during construction;
 - vi) Provision of training and information about the importance of the 'Wildlife Protection Zones' to all construction personnel on site.

All construction activities shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

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

5. No Development shall commence until a site wide Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall include:

- Construction methods, details of materials, how waste will be managed;
- General Site Management: details of the construction programme including timetable, details of site clearance, details of site construction drainage, containment areas, appropriately sized buffer zones between storage areas (of spoil, oils, fuel, concrete mixing and washing areas) any watercourse or surface drain;
- Control of Nuisances: details of restrictions to be applied during construction including timing, duration and frequency of works;
- Resource Management: details of fuel and chemical storage and containment;
- Traffic management: the location of accesses, the management of vehicular and pedestrian areas, location of areas for the loading and unloading of plant, materials and manoeuvring areas, location of parking areas for site operatives and visitors, details of site deliveries and storage areas, parking and storage of plant on site, wheel wash facilities, types and number of vehicles on site through the development process;
- Pollution Prevention: demonstrate how relevant guidelines for pollution prevention and best practice will be implemented, including details of emergency spill procedures and incident response plan; and
- Details of persons and bodies responsible for activities associated with the CEMP and emergency contact details.

The CEMP shall be implemented as approved during the site preparation and construction phases of the development.

Reason - In the interests of the highway safety and free flow of traffic and to protect the environment in accordance with Policies SW12 and EnW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

6. **No development or site clearance shall commence** until a Landscape and Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan, including details of tree and screen planting and site restoration along with a timetable for implementation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The methods of working and other measures contained in the approved Landscape and Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan shall be adhered to and carried out in accordance with the agreed timetable for implementation.

Reason - To protect the natural environment and important habitats and ensure net biodiversity benefits in accordance with Policy EnW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

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DATE: 23.05.2025