

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0128
Site Address:	33 High Street Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8DE
Development:	Steel frame with enclosing cladding to stabilize exposed gable wall, with access door for inspection and maintenance purposes.
Case Officer:	Gareth Davies
Site Visit:	19th June 2026
Application Expiry Date:	10th August 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	8th July 2026

SITE NOTES:

APPLICATION SITE

The application site is located within a wider site currently under redevelopment following the demolition of the three shops that previously occupied that space and is located on the eastern side of High Street at the southern end of the town centre.

The site is currently enclosed with hoardings following the demolition of the shops and works are currently ongoing for the redevelopment of the site as public open space which will provide a pedestrian link between the High Street and Railway Station. North and south of the wider site are two commercial properties that were previously attached to the demolished shops. The application site is located within the town centre retail area and the Town Centre Conservation Area.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed works aim to stabilise the gable wall of the Sunflower Cafe (32 High Street) which has become vulnerable following the demolition of the property that previously adjoined it. The works involve the construction of a steel frame that would stabilise the gable with that being enclosed with rendered walling built to match that currently in place at the Sunflower Cafe off a brick plinth with the roof of the cafeteria extending over in matching materials. The stabilising structure will project approximately 1.5m from the existing gable and will have a door fitted centrally for inspection and maintenance purposes. Facias and rainwater goods would also be extended to match that established at the Sunflower Cafe.

In addition to the submitted plans and application forms the proposals are also supported with the following details

- Render Carrier Fixing Details
- Wall Carrier Steel Frame Cavite Spacer Rail and Carrer Board Details
- Project Specification Report.

PLANNING HISTORY

P/26/0114 – NMA to P/25/0021 to design of public realm works – Approved

P/25/0021 – construction of a new area of public open space. – Approved 13th May 2025

P/24/0260 – Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of 34 – 38 High Street Merthyr Tydfil – Approved 14th March 2025.

P/04/0002 – Retail of computer equipment business and domestic IT services (34 High Street) – Approved 4th February 2004

P/98/0008 – Alterations to the front and rear elevations (No. 33, 35, 36 High Street) – approved with conditions 3rd March 1998

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering and Highways – No objection

Council Ecologist – No Objection

Environmental Health – No objection

Natural Resources Wales – No objection

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – No objection

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service – No response received

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring properties on 17th June 2026 site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site on 19th June 2026

No representations were received as a result of this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

Future Wales the national Plan 2040

Relevant policies include the following: -

Policy 1 – where Wales will grow.
Policy 2 – shaping urban growth and regeneration – strategic placemaking.
Policy 6 – town centre first.
Policy 12 – regional connectivity.
Policy 33 – national growth area – Cardiff, Newport, and the Valleys.
Policy 36 – South East Metro.

Planning Policy Wales 12 2024 (PPW)

Paragraph 6.1.15 advises with regard to conservation areas stating the following: -

“There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character and appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds”

PPW Technical Advice Note 4 – Retail and Commercial Development

Sets out the Welsh Government’s objectives for retail and commercial centres which includes improving access to and within retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport, especially walking, cycling and public transport.

PPW Technical Advice Note 12 – Design

Aims to promote sustainability through good design. It advises that design should be a fundamental consideration from the outset and should not be treated or developed in isolation

PPW Technical Advice Note 16 Sport Recreation & Open Space

Offers advice on the role of the planning system in making provision for sport and recreational facilities and open spaces in urban and rural areas, encouraging the creation and use of open space assessments to improve current levels of provision and set standards.

PPW Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport

Aims to secure the provision of transport infrastructure and services that improve accessibility and foster more sustainable communities through, inter alia, integration between different types of transport

PPW Technical Advice Note 24 - The Historic Environment 2017

Provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment in development plan preparation and decision making on planning and listed building applications. The TAN provides specific guidance on managing the historic environment including proposals within conservation areas.

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

The local development plan sets out a series of objectives, and the following are considered most relevant in the determination of the current proposals:

- LDP Objective 4 Regeneration: to promote the re use of suitable 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 6: sustainable design: to promote high quality sustainable and inclusive design and support measures which mitigate the predicted effects of climate change.
- LDP Objective 7 Transport: to support an integrated transport system, promote active travel and ensure that new developments are accessible by walking cycling and public transport links.
- LDP Objective (heritage and cultural assets: to protect, enhance and promote all heritage, historic and cultural assets.
- LDP Objective 10 biodiversity: to improve ecosystem resilience and connectivity which supports habitats and species of principal importance.
- LDP Objective 14 Town and Local Centres: to develop the town and local centres as accessible, attractive, viable and vibrant places.

Relevant LDP policies:

- Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW10: Protecting and Improving Open Spaces
- Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- Policy SW12: Improving the Transport Network
- Policy CW1: The Historic Environment
- Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation and ecosystem Resilience
- Policy EnW2: Internationally and nationally Protected Sites and Species
- Policy EnW4: Environmental Protection
- Policy EcW3: Retail Hierarchy
- Policy EcW5: Town and Local Centre Development

Merthyr Tydfil Open Space Strategy

Sets out the guidance in respect of the promotion, maintenance and improvement of all types of public open space within the County Borough

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

In terms of the principle of development, the application site is located within the settlement limits, as defined by Policy SW4 of the Local Development Plan (LDP) where new development is generally supported subject to its compliance with other relevant policy requirements and other material considerations.

Design and Built Development

The design of the proposed development in this instance is a response to unforeseen circumstances. The demolition of the shops that previously occupied the site identified a problem with the gable wall of the Sunflower Cafe that could not possibly have been foreseen prior to demolition taking place. The design is therefore a solution to a specific problem that will in turn facilitate the delivery of the remainder of the public open space approved under planning approval P/25/0021. Given that context, the use of appropriate and matching render system and roofing materials is considered acceptable and satisfies the requirements of replacement Local Development Plan Policy SW11 with regard to the issue of design.

The Historic Environment

The original scheme approved under P/25/0021 demonstrated that the redevelopment of the site would deliver beneficial outcomes for the historic environment through the removal of dereliction and the provision of improved public open space that respects the historic character of the Town Centre Conservation Area. Since the approval of the scheme the site has been subject of a Non-Material Amendment approval, in part to deal with the circumstances relating to the Sunflower Cafe gable wall. The works to stabilise that wall are also in the interests of the historic environment and conservation area in that it will both secure the future of a traditional town centre shop and at the same time deliver a slightly modified version of a scheme of improvement to the public realm that has already demonstrated acceptability in historic terms. In this respect the proposals are acceptable in terms of their impact on the historic environment and the requirements of Replacement Development Plan Policy CW1.

Ecology

The Council's ecologist has requested that the application be supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats prior to consent for the development being granted. In this instance given the specific circumstances of the case, where works on the original approved scheme had commenced and there is a genuine need to secure the stability of the gable wall of the Sunflower Cafe, such a requirement is considered unduly onerous and consequently the assessment has not been sought. The original approval for the site was on the basis that it would deliver net benefit for biodiversity, and the developer would remain under such an obligation now. As such, the requirements of Replacement Local Development Plan Policies EnW1 and EnW2 are met.

Highways and Transportation

The original approved scheme for the wider site was considered acceptable in highway and transportation terms as it demonstrably creates an area of public open space that would strengthen the visual link and wayfinding between the train station and the main High Street. This development whilst using up, out of necessity, some of the land that would otherwise be public open space, does not affect the delivery of that desired outcome and consequently the Head of Engineering and Highways has raised no objection with regard to the proposed development. The scheme is compliant with the requirements of Replacement Local Development Plan Policies SW11 and SW12 insofar as they are relevant to this case.

Amenity

Whilst there are a number of residences in the town centre, notably on the floors above shops, the proposed development would have a very similar impact to the original approved scheme through the process of the development of the site. The Environmental Heath Manager has not raised any objections to the proposal, suggesting conditions that would lessen the impact of the development through the build out process. In the longer term, the development delivers a benefit to the amenity of the town centre for residents and shoppers through the removal of dereliction, better wayfinding and amenable public open space. Therefore, the development is considered in compliance with the requirements of Policy EnW4 of the Replacement Local Development Plan.

Retail considerations

Policy EcW3 of the LDP establishes Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre at the head of the retail hierarchy for the County Borough, making it the favoured location for retail, leisure and other complimentary development. Policy EcW5 indicates that development to enhance the vitality and viability of town and local centres will be supported. The proposed development, alongside the associated public realm improvements, is very much complimentary to the town centre in that it will secure the future of the Sunflower Cafe along with amenable public open space along with better wayfinding between the shops and transport hubs.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed works that are now required could not have been foreseen prior to the demolition of the buildings. There is also an obligation to ensure that, in creating this space, properties immediately adjoining are unencumbered by the proposed development and in the worst-case scenario, are not the subject of further loss. This scheme, though impacting the provision of public open space does not conflict with its intended purpose and secures the future of the Sunflower Cafe. Consequently, a positive recommendation is made.

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.

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

CONDITIONS/REASONS:

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: -

- Structural Cladding Plan drawing no's.2606/T01, 2606/P01, 2606/P02, 2606/P03, 2606/P04 and 2606/P05
- Render Carrier Fixing Detail
- Foundation Details drawing no. 26053-S-002-B
- Steelwork Elevations GA's and Details Drawing no.26503-S-001-B
- Wetherby Wall Systems Steel Frame Spacer Details.
- Wetherby Wall Systems Project Specification

Reason - to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, drawings and documents submitted with the application.

3. Demolition or construction works shall not take place outside of 08:00hrs to 18:00 hrs Mondays to Fridays and 09:00hrs to 14:00hrs on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason - In the interests of amenity and to avoid statutory nuisance.

4. A Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of any work on site. This document should include the following details:

- The means of access into the site for all construction traffic;
- The location on site for the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- The management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
- Wheel-cleansing facilities;
- The sheeting of lorries leaving the site.
- Temporary traffic management
- Vehicle routing for all HGV traffic associated with the demolition site
- Details on the size of vehicles entering/exiting the site to ensure they are suitable for the means of access
- The anticipated number / type of the vehicles entering/exiting the site per day and demolition timescale

Reason - In the interests of highway safety and free flow of traffic.

INFORMATIVES

1. The developer shall obtain all other necessary consents **BEFORE** works commence including BUILDING REGULATION approval.
2. All reasonable precautions shall be taken to reduce the impact of dust. Effective dust control measures, such as 'damping down' following cutting or other dusty operations shall be employed at all times.

3. In the event that any evidence of potential contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified then all development works should be stopped immediately, the Local Planning Authority and the Environmental Health Department contacted within 2 working days and a scheme to investigate the risks and any required remedial measures be submitted to, agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the recommencement of development works.

Following the completion of development works and prior to the first occupation of the site, sufficient information must be submitted to demonstrate that any required remedial measures were satisfactorily implemented or confirmation provided that no unexpected contamination was encountered.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED

p.p. 

Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 20th July 2026