

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Rebecca Owens - Development Control Case Officer

Reference: P/26/0041

From: Planning Policy and Implementation Section

Ask for: David James

Extension: 7053

Date: 18th March 2026

Summary

The proposal meets the requirements of Replacement LDP Policy SW4 (Settlement Boundaries), and satisfies the criteria of Policy SW13 (Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities).

There is no objection to the proposal, provided that:

- It would be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, and materials and detailing;
- it would integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;
- it would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character, and the historic and cultural importance of the relevant designated historic environment assets, particularly the Cyfarthfa Park Historic Park and Garden and the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area (Policies SW11 & CW1).

Particular consideration should also be given to the impact of the development on the character of the surrounding area, the impact on surrounding area and occupiers (particularly in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy, traffic movements and highway safety), the impact on biodiversity, and any other relevant risks to public health and safety (Policies SW11, SW12, EnW1, EnW3 & EnW4).

Observations in respect of the above development

1. Proposed Development

An application for the erection of a single storey extension, timber screen, and patio with canopy, at The Rose Retreat Spa, Cyfarthfa Park, Merthyr Tydfil.

2. Development Plan Framework

The existing development plan framework in Merthyr Tydfil is provided by:-

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

The relevant LDP Objectives are:-

- *LDP Objective 1 Sustainable Population Growth: To encourage a sustainable level and distribution of population growth.*
- *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 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 new developments are accessible by walking, cycling and public transport links.*
- *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 10 Biodiversity: To improve ecosystem resilience and connectivity which support habitats and species of principle importance.*
- *LDP Objective 12 Economic Development: To provide and safeguard appropriate land for economic and skills development.*

The following development plan policies would apply:-

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

The following supplementary planning guidance is applicable:-

- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 2: Planning Obligations (March 2012).*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013).*

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

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

- Placemaking in Action: Good Design Making Better Places
- Strategic Placemaking: Previously Developed Land
- Activities in a Place: Community Facilities
- Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places
- Recognising the Environmental Qualities of Places

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

TAN 12: Design (March 2016).

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

3. Policy Considerations

It is noted that a previous proposal for the erection of a single storey extensions, decking and timber screen was refused planning permission at this location, as part of planning application P/25/0035. The proposal was refused due to its unacceptable design, which would introduce inappropriate and discordant features, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Cyfarthfa Castle Historic Park and Garden and the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area, as well as due to insufficient ecological enhancements. The current proposal has been amended to attempt to address the reasons for refusal.

The site of the proposal is a detached building (currently containing a spa), and an adjacent open garden area. It is located within the Primary Growth Area, and within the settlement boundary where development will be allowed subject to the proposals compatibility with other plan policies and material considerations (Policy SW4). The site is also within the Cyfarthfa Park Historic Park and Garden, and the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area (Policy CW1)

Policy SW9 relates to planning obligations. Given the nature of the proposal, on-site provision of affordable housing or open space, or a financial contribution towards affordable housing, would not be sought. Additionally, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would not be chargeable.

Policy SW11 advises that development must contribute to the creation of attractive and sustainable places through high quality, sustainable and inclusive design. Where appropriate, new development will be required to (amongst other things):

- be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;

- integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;
- not result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity, loss of light or privacy, or visual impact, and incorporate a good standard of landscape design;
- allow access for the widest range of people possible, and demonstrate that any traffic movements will not have an unacceptable impact on local amenity or highway safety and satisfy the Council's parking standards.
- provide adequate facilities and space for waste collections and recycling.

Considering the nature of the development, and the location of the site (in close proximity to existing residential uses, and within a Historic Park and Garden, and Conservation Area) consideration should be given to the above issues.

Particular consideration should be given to the scale, height, massing, elevational treatment and materials of the proposed extension, and timber screen, in terms of their impact on the character of the surrounding Listed Buildings, Conservation Area, and Historic Park and Garden. It is noted that the current proposal has been amended and reduced from that which was previously refused. However, the extension and timber screen remain conspicuous additions to the existing property.

The impact of the increased intensity of the commercial use, and the subsequent increased traffic movements, on highway safety and the amenity of surrounding residents and occupiers should also be particularly considered.

Any dedicated parking should be checked against the Council's current parking standards, and the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy SW12 supports development that encourages a modal shift towards sustainable transport, including the enhancement of pedestrian, cycle, rail and bus facilities, in addition to any necessary road improvements. Developments will be expected to demonstrate how they reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

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. Development proposals that would result in a loss of an existing community facility will only be permitted where:-

- alternative provision of at least equivalent value to the local community can be provided nearby, or
- it can be demonstrated that existing provision is inappropriate or surplus to the needs of the community and is no longer required, or
- it can be demonstrated there is no longer a viable community use for the facility.

The development would result in an expansion of an existing community facility (a spa). As such, it would satisfy the above criteria, and be in accordance with Policy SW13.

Policy CW1 advises that the integrity of our historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural

importance of our designated historic environment assets. And that, development affecting undesignated historic environment assets including, Locally Listed Buildings or structures, Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Urban Character Areas and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas should have regard to their special character and archaeological importance.

The proposal is located within the Cyfarthfa Park Historic Park and Garden, which contains a number of listed structures including the Grade I Listed Cyfarthfa Castle. It is also located in the Cyfarthfa Conservation Area and is adjacent to the Cyfarthfa Court residential development within which is the Grade II Listed Gwaelodygarth House, and the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest.

It would be sited in a prominent location, adjacent to one of the entrances to Cyfarthfa Park. The site is currently a fenced, but open, garden area, which would be surrounded by a timber screen as part of the development. The development would therefore have an impact on the character of the above historic environment assets, particularly the Historic Park and Garden. As such, the views of the relevant Officer and external Heritage body should be sought as a priority, to ensure that the proposal would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character, and the historic and cultural importance of the designated historic environment assets.

Policy EnW4 advises that development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural environment from either:

- Pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;
- Land contamination;
- Hazardous substances;
- Land stability;
- Noise, vibration, dust, odour nuisance and light pollution; or
- Any other identified risk to public health and safety.

Where impacts are identified the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures have been incorporated to reduce, or minimise the impact identified to the lowest possible acceptable level. Planning conditions may be imposed or legal obligation entered into, to secure any necessary mitigation and monitoring processes.

Considering the proposed extension, the subsequent increase in the intensity of the activity, as well as the proposed operating times, the potential noise generated by proposal should be particularly considered. As such, the views of the Environmental Health department should be sought as appropriate.