

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/22/0170
Site Address:	Learning And Well Being Centre Mount Pleasant Cardiff Road Merthyr Vale Merthyr Tydfil
Development:	Temporary siting of two static caravans for a period 18 months
Case Officer:	David Cross
Site Visit:	6th July 2022
Application Expiry Date:	19th August 2022
Consultation reply date expired:	27th July 2022

APPLICATION SITE

This application relates to the former Mount Pleasant School which closed in 2010 and was then used as the Merthyr Tydfil Learning and Well-Being Centre until 2011. The building has subsequently remained vacant for a number of years.

The site is bound to the south-east by South View with a sports field beyond and to the south-west is vacant land, which abuts a railway line with the Taff Trail on the opposite side. To the north-east is a sloping grassed embankment with a number of trees that adjoins Mount View. A public footway runs along part of the northern boundary of the site along with new bungalows, which have more recently been constructed adjacent to the north-west corner of the site.

The majority of the application site is hard surfaced with a grassed embankment and trees located in the eastern part of the site. The school building is located on an upper plateau with the western part of the site (former playground) being at a lower level. Access into the site would be from main road (South View) to the south-east.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Temporary planning permission is sought for the siting of two caravans to be located on the existing hardstanding to the east of the main building. It is proposed that both caravans would accommodate a single family unit and would be utilised for a period of 18 months, while the renovation works to the former school building are undertaken, as part of its conversion to a residential unit, which was granted planning permission under application P/18/0393.

One of the caravans (Bluebird) would measure 10.7m in length by 3.7m wide and 2.3m high. The other caravan (Atlas) would measure 10m long by 3m deep and 2.3m high. It is noted that the existing vehicular access would be improved, as previously consented (under application P/18/0393) to enable the caravans to be brought onto the site. Additionally, a temporary foul water connection to the existing drainage system would be installed to serve the caravans.

PLANNING HISTORY

P/18/0393 - Conversion of former school building to a dwelling, erection of a balcony and widen existing vehicular access.

Permission GRANTED on 19.02.2019

P/15/0369 - Change of use from school (Use Class D1) to a bunk house (Sui Generis) and the provision of a new car parking area.

Permission GRANTED on 03.03.2016

CONSULTATION

Head of Engineering
& Highways - No objection.

Planning Division's
Ecologist - No objection subject to the provision of bird & bat boxes

Welsh Water - No objection subject to a condition relating to surface water and land drainage.

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.

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

POLICY CONTEXT

National planning policy

The Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), Edition 11, February 2021:

Para 3.5 – 3.15 set out the importance of high quality design to ensure inclusive design, to promote environmental sustainability and ensure high environmental quality. Regard

should also be given to the special characteristics of an area, community safety and to encourage sustainable forms of transport.

Para 3.55 notes that previously developed land wherever possible should be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development.

Para 4.1.43 – 4.1.56 set out the need to reduce the level and speed of traffic in new development, the provision of car parking and how this may be integrated into new development to minimise the reliance on cars. Transport assessments are also an important mechanism to determine anticipated impacts a development proposal may have.

Para 6.4.21 – 6.4.23 note that local authorities should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and build resilient ecological networks to ensure that any adverse environmental effects can first be avoided, mitigated or compensated. Regard should also be given to any potential impacts on protected species which may result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

Technical Advice Notes (TAN):

- TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning, September 2009
- TAN 12 Design, March 2016
- TAN 18 Transport, March 2007

Local planning policy

Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) 2016-2031:

- Policy SW4 - Settlement Boundaries
- Policy SW11 - Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- 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

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):

- SPG 4 Sustainable Design, July 2013
- SPG 5 Nature and Development, May 2015

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Land use

The application site is located within the settlement boundary where new development is generally supported and encouraged by policy SW4 of the LDP. The properties in the surrounding area are predominantly residential and planning permission was previously granted to convert the former school building into a single dwelling. As such, the residential use of the site has already been established and would be compatible with the neighbouring properties. It is proposed that the caravans are only required for a temporary period of 18 months while the former school building is being renovated and converted. The caravans would only be utilised by a single household who would subsequently reside

in the dwelling. Following the completion of the conversion works, it is understood that the caravans would then be removed from the site, which can be secured by condition. The land would then continue to be used as part of the private garden area serving the property. Therefore, the principle of the development is acceptable.

Design approach

The proposed caravans would be of a typical design, appearance and scale with a powder coated metal exterior, incorporating a series of window openings and a doorway and a lower profile curved roof. The caravans would be located on an existing hardstanding area adjacent to the former school building. They would be positioned at a much lower level to the adjoining highway due to the change in levels and would be partly screened by an existing stone boundary wall and mature trees. As such, the caravans would not have a significant impact on the character of the wider surroundings. Although the appearance of the caravans would not be in keeping with the design of the former school building or the neighbouring properties, it is noted that the caravans would only be required for a temporary period and would not have a long-term permanent impact on the surrounding environment. Furthermore, the provision of temporary accommodation to assist in the renovation of the former school building would help to bring an otherwise vacant building back into use, which in turn would have a positive impact on the overall quality and appearance of the immediate surroundings.

Local amenities

The caravans would be located approximately 33m away from a bungalow to the east of the site, which is in an elevated position and located on the opposite side of Mount View. As such, there would be limited inter-visibility due to the separation distance, change in levels and the screening provided by the boundary wall and trees. Furthermore, there would be no overlooking concerns in relation to the properties to the north of the site, which would be prohibited by the intervening former school building. It is acknowledged that no letters of objections have been received from local residents highlighting any particular concerns. Therefore, the development would not adversely impact on residential amenity in accordance with policy SW11 of the LDP.

Ecological impact

The proposed caravans would be located on an existing hardstanding in an area of the site that is deemed to be of little ecological value. It has been highlighted by the planning division's ecologist that due to the condition of the existing school building, there is some potential for bats to be utilising the roof space. Whilst this may be the case, this application does not involve any works to the building. As such, the proposal is not deemed to give rise to any adverse ecological impacts on protected species or habitats. However, since the approval of the application (P/18/0393) to convert the school building, there has been a change of the LDP policies, notably the requirements of policy EnW1, which requires new development to maintain and enhance biodiversity interests. In this regard, the planning division's ecologist has requested that a single bat box be attached to a tree within the site, the details of which can be secured by condition. Therefore, the proposal complies with policies EnW1, EnW2 and EnW3 of the LDP.

Highway implications

It is illustrated on the submitted plans that the improved access that was previously approved (P/18/0393) as part of the conversion of the school building would be utilised. Once the caravans are in position, there would remain a small area adjacent to the site entrance that could continue to be used for parking. Additionally, the section of highway serving the site to the south, provides no through access. As such, any potential reversing manoeuvres on to this road would not likely give rise to significant highway safety concerns. In this regard, it is acknowledged that the Head of Engineering and Highways has not raised any objection to the development. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy SW11 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 acceptable and complies with the relevant LDP policies. Accordingly, 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:

- Drawing No. MPS-01, Floor Plans & Elevations, received 27.06.2022
- Drawing No. MPS-03, Proposed Site Plan, received 27.06.2022
- Drawing No. MPS-04, Proposed Site Plan 2, received 04.07.2022

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

3. The caravans, hereby permitted to provide temporary residential accommodation, shall be removed from the site within 18 months from the date of which their use commenced. The date of commencement shall be submitted to the local planning authority in writing at least 2 weeks before the caravans are brought on to the site.

Reason - Planning permission is granted for a temporary period only having regard to the particular circumstances of the application.

4. No surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network.

Reason - To prevent hydraulic overloading of the public sewerage system, to protect the health and safety of existing residents and ensure no pollution of or detriment to the environment.

5. **Prior to the occupation the caravans** hereby approved, details for the provision of a bat box to be attached to an existing tree within the site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The bat box shall be installed prior to the residential use of the former school building and retained in place thereafter.

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

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant is advised to liaise with Welsh Water on 0800 917 2652 in relation to any new connections to the public sewer and/or to any works which affect the line of or are in close proximity to existing public sewers and/or water mains.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE:

13/10/22