

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/20/0039

Site Address: Former Vicarage Of Cyfarthfa Christ Church
Plwmp
Heol S O Davies
Georgetown
Merthyr Tydfil

Development: Remodelling and extensions to existing dwelling, creation of external terrace and other works within the curtilage

Case Officer: Rebecca Owens

Site Visit: 19th February 2020

Application Expiry Date: 21st September 2020

Consultation reply date expired: 30th April 2020

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to a vacant, detached dwelling, which formerly served as a vicarage to the adjacent Cyfarthfa Christ Church, which is scheduled as a Grade II Listed Building. The site is located within the settlement boundary in a mainly residential area (although it is in close proximity to an established retail park). The site is bound by the aforementioned church to the west, highways to the south and east and vegetated land to the north. The site has an uneven profile with a generally flat plateau to the west of the site on which the access, hard standing and dwelling are located. The land then slopes down steeply to the east to a more gentle sloping area of grassed land, which is substantially elevated above the adjoining highway.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the remodelling and extension of the existing dwelling, which would represent a complete overhaul of the existing structure and result in a dwelling that is substantially larger and different in appearance. The works to the dwelling are summarised below:

At present, the eastern elevation of the dwelling represents the principal elevation. However, this proposal would re-orientate the building with the southern elevation (which fronts towards Aberdare Road) becoming the primary elevation. This elevation would be increased in width by a two storey extension on the eastern elevation (see below) and a projecting gable feature would be erected centrally within the elongated elevation. This would be 3.9m in width and project out from the main front elevation by 0.65m. It would have a hipped roof which would have a ridge height of 6.75m. The front gable feature would incorporate a recessed entrance with the main front doors set within it and a central first floor window above serving a bedroom. Either side of this central gable the main front

elevation would feature four windows (eight in total), two at first floor and two at ground floor creating a symmetrical appearance. It is noted that four of these would be within the southern elevation of the two-storey extension on the eastern elevation. The ground floor windows would serve a living room and sitting room and the first floor windows would serve bedrooms.

It is proposed to erect a two-storey extension on the eastern elevation (which following the proposal would become the side elevation of the dwelling). This extension would be flush with the southern elevation (elongating what is to become the principal elevation). The extension would extend the southern elevation by 5.5m and would be 8.5m in length. It would have a hipped roof, which would continue the existing south facing roof plane and which would have a ridge height of 8.15m (the same as the existing main ridge height). The extension would feature three windows at first floor level serving a bedroom and dressing room and two projecting bay window features at ground floor incorporating French doors and full height windows, which would serve a living room. These would project out from the eastern elevation by 0.35m would have a maximum width of 2.15m and flat roofs with a height of 2.7m. The north facing elevation of this extension would feature a further set of French doors with glazed panels above and to the sides, which would be at ground floor level and also serve the living room. The southern elevation would feature a further four windows, two at ground floor and two at first floor. These have been detailed in the section above. A new ground floor window would also be inserted into the in the existing eastern elevation which would serve a dining room.

It is proposed to completely alter the existing number, position and design of the fenestration in the north facing elevation and planning permission is sought for a small single storey extension. The extension would be 3.1m in width by 1.5m in depth and would have a pitched roof with a ridge height of 3.65m. It would feature glazing in all its elevations and would create a seating area off the proposed kitchen area. French doors with glazing panels above and to the side are also proposed alongside this extension, serving the dining area. At first floor level, three windows are proposed serving bedrooms.

It is also proposed to completely alter the fenestration in the western elevation. Under the proposed scheme, this elevation would feature a single first floor window serving the landing and two windows at ground floor level serving the sitting room and kitchen. There would also be a door in this elevation into the utility room.

In terms of external finishes, the roofs would comprise of existing and new natural slates in a blue/black colour and capped terracotta ridge and hip tiles. The existing and new external walls would be finished with smooth through coloured render in an off-White colour. The doors would be upvc in a grey colour and similarly, the windows would be upvc vertical sliding sash frames in a charcoal grey colour with painted reconstituted stone cills. There would also be painted decorative surrounds to the front elevation windows and entrance door.

Planning permission is also sought for other external works within the curtilage of the dwelling. These are summarised below:

It is proposed to create a large resin forecourt to the south of the site (adjacent to the dwelling) which would create a parking and turning area accessed via the existing opening off Aberdare Road. To facilitate this the existing stone retaining wall to the west of the dwelling would be extended with a new section of retaining wall adjacent to the proposed forecourt and returning to meet the new stone wall forming the proposed recessed access

(described below). The existing access would be slightly modified with the gateway recessed in from its current position by a maximum distance of 2.4m. To allow for this, the existing piers would be demolished and the boundary walls returned with new sections of natural stone wall (meeting the above retaining wall). A new electrically operated painted hardwood gate would be installed which would be 2m in height.

A section of the southern boundary (adjacent to Aberdare Road) which lies between the gateway and the adjoining Church would also be altered. This currently comprises of a lower stone wall than the rest of the boundary with brick piers and railings above. It is proposed to remove the brick piers and railings and build up the wall to 2m in height using matching natural stone.

It is also proposed to erect a brick wall to the east of the forecourt to separate the forecourt area from the lower garden area. This would run directly from the southern boundary wall to the new steps proposed to the lower garden level. At the point where this proposed wall meets the southern boundary wall, the walls would be at the same height and the proposed wall would remain at this height for a length of 2m before increasing to a height of 1.8m for its remaining length.

An external terrace area is proposed to the east of the two storey extension which would run alongside the eastern elevation of the dwelling for 11.3m and which would be 3m in width. The terrace would be elevated above the sloping side garden and thus would require retaining works approximately 1.2m in height. The terrace would also be enclosed by a stainless steel and glass balustrade 1.1m in height. New steps are also proposed from this terrace down to the lower garden, which would comprise of brickwork sides and paving slab treads.

A new boundary treatment is proposed along the top of the eastern boundary wall (adjacent to Llwyn Dic Penderyn). This would comprise of 1.2m high timber post and rail fence behind which it is proposed to plant a new hedge.

The lower garden area would also see some re-profiling with the existing sloping embankment graded back to correspond with the proposed steps and other retaining works.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history relating to this site.

CONSULTATION

The following bodies were consulted and their responses are presented below:

Engineering & Traffic Group Leader	No objection subject to conditions
Planning Division's Policy Group Leader	No objection
Planning Division's Conservation Officer	No objection
Planning Division's Ecologist	No objection
Planning Division's Landscape Architect	No objection

Environmental Health Manager

No objection subject to conditions

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to the surrounding properties and two site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site.

No letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031 are relevant to the determination of this application:

- SW4: Settlement Boundaries
- SW9: Planning Obligations
- SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- SW12: Improving the Transport Network
- CW1: The Historic Environment
- EnW1: Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW2: Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- EnW4: Environmental Protection
- EnW5: Landscape Protection

In addition, the application will be determined having regard to the advice contained within the following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Notes:

- Note 2: Planning Obligations
- Note 4: Sustainable Design
- Note 5, Nature and Development.
- Note 6, A Design Guide for Householder Development

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle

The application site relates to a detached dwelling located in a mainly residential area within the settlement boundaries. Accordingly, the principle of the development is considered acceptable subject to compliance with other planning policies and material planning considerations.

The property was formerly the vicarage to the adjacent to Cyfarthfa Christ Church, which was listed in January 1988 and scheduled as a Grade II Listed Structure. However, the vicarage as it appears today is not the original vicarage building, which was demolished in 1937 and replaced in its entirety by the current dwelling in 1939. Given that the structure is a later addition with its own curtilage, it is not considered that the structure is curtilage listed. However, the impact of the development on the character and setting of this listed church is an important planning consideration.

Character and visual amenity

As highlighted above, the site is adjacent to a Grade II Listed church and is located between this and a row of dwellings, which are of a modest scale and simple design. The dwelling subject to this application formerly served as the vicarage to the church, and relates more closely to this than the surrounding dwellings. Both local and national policies place an emphasis on protecting, conserving and enhancing historic assets. This includes consideration on the setting of a historic asset, which might extend beyond its curtilage. At present, the application building is a simple, unassuming structure, of modest scale and subservient to the Listed Building.

This proposal would drastically alter the character and appearance of the dwelling. However, it is recognised that at present it has a poor appearance, which despite being subservient does not positively contribute to the visual amenities of the area. Given this and its lack of relationship with other dwellings in the vicinity, there is scope to extend and remodel the dwelling, altering its appearance significantly. However, this must be done sensitively to ensure alterations do not harm the Listed Building and do not result in an incongruous development. The scheme which has been proposed, would create a significantly larger dwelling which would be more apparent within the streetscene. However, it is noted that particularly from the south (where it is viewed next to the church, this dwelling is at a noticeably lower level and would be partly obscured behind the boundary walls and planting, thus reducing its overall impact on the church. The proposal would also present a dwelling that is more visually pleasing than that which currently exists, being of a design which although unique to the area would not appear incongruous and one which would not compete with the adjacent listed church. On balance, it is considered that the remodelling and reoccupation of this empty and run-down dwelling would positively contribute to the visual amenities of the area without harming the setting of the listed church.

Residential amenity

Regard has also been had for the impact of the proposal on the residential amenity of the surrounding occupants. Whilst there are no dwellings directly adjoining the application site there are dwellings located on the opposite side of the highway sited to the east of the site (Llwyn Dic Penderyn). These dwellings occupy a lower level than the application site. The proposal would involve a two-storey extension off the eastern elevation of the building, which would introduce new windows facing towards these properties at both ground and first floor levels. However, there would be a distance of over 21m between the windows in the extension and the windows of the dwellings in Llwyn Dic Penderyn, which would prevent any significant overlooking, or loss of privacy. Similarly, it is noted that adjacent to this extension it is proposed to create an external terrace, which would involve increasing the land level of a section of an existing sloping embankment. Whilst this terrace would allow views to the east, towards the dwellings Llwyn Dic Penderyn, it would be elevated at a level, which would be above the first floor windows of these properties. It would also be sited at a minimum of about 20m from the front elevations of these dwellings. As a result of this separation and the difference in levels, it is not considered that the terrace would give rise to any objectionable overlooking or loss of privacy. The only other aspect of the development, which could have the potential to impact of these neighbouring properties and their occupants, is the introduction of fencing and planting along a section of the eastern perimeter of the site. This would project above the existing retaining wall opposite the front elevations of dwellings in Llwyn Dic Penderyn. However, given that this is on the opposite side of the highway to these dwellings it is not considered

that it would result in any unacceptable overshadowing or loss of light. In addition, the fencing proposed would be timber post and rail fence and would only be 1.2m in height. Thus it would not have an overbearing appearance despite its elevated position on top of an existing retaining wall. Finally, in terms of the proposed hedge planting, it is noted that this can be done without planning permission. Thus having considered the above, the proposal is found to be acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity and it is noted that no representations were received following the publicity exercise.

Car parking and highway safety

The application site already benefits from vehicular access off the highway known as Aberdare Road and this would continue to be used with existing visibility maintained. The gated access would also be set slightly further into the site, allowing a greater distance from the edge of the highway for vehicles to wait in front of the gates before entering the site. The hard standing area immediately adjacent to the vehicular access would also be remodelled to allow parking for three vehicles and adequate space for these to turn within the site and thus exit in a forward gear. As such the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader is satisfied that adequate parking provision can be achieved to meet the needs of the extended property and that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety.

Protected trees and species

The application site is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO No. 4 Christchurch Cyfarthfa). This is a group TPO and as such all trees contained within the boundary of the TPO are protected. The Landscape Architect had indicated that it would be pertinent to undertake an arboricultural survey at this time to assess the health and safety of the trees (as any recommended works could then be undertaken as part of the development). However, as it has been confirmed that the proposal would not result in any trees being felled or indeed their root systems being impacted upon it is not considered that this is necessary. In addition, a Tree Protection Plan and a plan indicating the siting of protective fencing in line with this report has been provided which will ensure the protected trees are safeguarded during construction works. The Landscape Architect is therefore satisfied that the development would not harm any trees within the site.

A general Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and an Ecological Impact Assessment relating to Bats have been undertaken with subsequent reports produced and submitted for the consideration of the Planning Division. Whilst some negative impacts have been identified within these reports, a number of recommendations have been made to mitigate against these. Thus, the reports conclude that subject to the recommendations being successfully implemented, it should be possible for the proposed development to proceed without any long-term impacts on key protected species. The Division's Ecologist has considered these reports and has not raised any objection to the proposal on this basis.

Conclusion

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.

Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE APPROVED subject to the 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:

Drawing Title: Sketch Design - Plans and Sections, Drawing Number: 03 Rev. E, Received on 14 February 2020.

Drawing Title: Sketch Design - Elevations, Drawing Number: 04 Rev. E, Received on 14 February 2020.

Drawing Title: Proposed Site Plan, Drawing Number: 05 Rev. G, Amended Plan Received on 27 July 2020.

Drawing Title: External details, Drawing Number: 06, Received on 14 February 2020.

Ecological Impact Assessment - Bats, Document Reference: WWE20104 BAS Rev C - 21/07/2020, Produced by Wildwood Ecology, Received on 27 July 2020.

Ecological Impact Assessment, Document Reference: WWE20030 ECIA Rev C - 21/07/2020, Produced by Wildwood Ecology, Received on 27 July 2020.

Tree Protection Plan, Document Reference: 9037/09/- Issue 1 - January 2020, Produced by Paul Overton Architects, Received on 14 February 2020.

Landscape Specification and 5 Year Landscape Management Plan, Revision A - 22/7/20, Produced by Paul Overton Architects, Received on 27 July 2020.

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

3. In accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Impact Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment -Bats and in accordance with drawing number 05 Rev. G, **WITHIN 3 MONTHS of the completion of the extensions**, the habitat piles and rain garden shall be created and 1 no. bat box and 1 no. bird box shall be erected. These shall remain in perpetuity thereafter.

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

4. **No development shall take place** until details, including structural calculations and facing materials, of any retaining wall which exceeds 1 metre in height have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The walls shall be completed in accordance with the approved details before the development hereby approved is brought into beneficial use.

Reason - In the interest of safety and visual amenity in accordance with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan .

5. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason - To ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity and to accord with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. The developer is advised to contact the County Borough Council's Head of Engineering regarding any retaining works or other works affecting the highway **BEFORE** construction works commence.
2. The developer is advised to seek appropriate legal advice if the development to which this application refers involves either:-
- i) work on an existing wall shared with another property;
 - ii) new building on the boundary with a neighbouring property; or
 - iii) excavating near a neighbouring building.

as these works may fall within the scope of the Party Wall Act 1996 and may require statutory notices to be served on affected owners.

3. The Developer is advised to check and confirm the positions of all boundaries **BEFORE** construction works commence.

Any discrepancies or problems of interpretation of boundary lines shall be resolved amongst all interested parties **BEFORE** works commence.

Failure to comply with this information could lead to civil action being brought against the developer by aggrieved parties.

4. All bats and their roosts are protected against disturbance under UK and European legislation. If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. They must be given

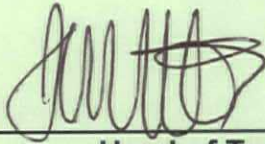
reasonable time to advise as to whether the works should be carried out and, if so, the method to be used.

If work has already commenced and bats are found, or if any evidence that bats are using the site as a roost is found, work should cease and NRW should be contacted immediately.

5. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Works to any trees, hedgerows and other suitable nesting bird habitat which are to be removed or pruned as part of the proposal should only be carried out outside the bird breeding season. The bird breeding season typically extends between March to August inclusive.

If any vegetation removal or site clearance works are scheduled to commence in the bird nesting season it is advised that the advice from an Ecologist is sought. Any active nests will need to be protected until the young have fledged.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Head of Town Planning

DATE:

7/9/20