

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/26/0041
Site Address:	The Rose Retreat Spa Cyfarthfa Park Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8RE
Development:	Erection of single storey extension, timber screen and patio with canopy
Case Officer:	Rebecca Owens
Site Visit:	4th March 2026
Application Expiry Date:	24th April 2026
Consultation reply date expired:	25th March 2026

APPLICATION SITE

The application relates to a small detached building that operates as a spa with a small side garden area. The site is within the settlement boundary but is located within the Cyfarthfa Castle Historic Park and Garden which is Grade II* and 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.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a single storey extension, timber screen and patio with Canopy.

The proposed extension would have an irregular footprint. Directly off the south eastern facing side elevation it is proposed to erect a relaxation room. This would span almost the full width of the elevation (5.63m) and would project out 3.33m in depth along the eastern side of the side. The extension would also jut out at an angle to the main front elevation for a maximum depth of 9.1m with this projection being 3.65m in width and incorporating a W.C/shower, sauna and sauna room. The elevations of the relaxation roof would be glazed with a sliding glass door to the patio area and the remaining elevations of the extension would be finished with vertical timber cladding The roof would largely comprise of a planted green roof with an aluminium powder coated roof light spanning directly along the existing southern elevation.

As referred to above, a paved patio area is proposed off the south eastern elevation of the relaxation room extension and south eastern elevation of the sauna room extension. This would have two tiers, the highest being covered with a timber canopy that would project

out 1.95m from the southern elevation of the relaxation room. A timber screen is also proposed along the eastern side of the canopy.

Along the north western elevation of the extension (which fronts into Cyfarthfa Park) a untreated larch timber screen is proposed which would cover the entire elevation. This would continue past the rear elevation to join the boundary wall and incorporate a gate for access to the enclosed garden area.

PLANNING HISTORY

The relevant planning history is summarised below:

P/25/0035 Erection of single storey extensions, decking and timber screen
 Refused planning permission on 14 April 2025 for the following reasons:

1. "The proposed development is of an 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. The development is therefore contrary to Planning Policy Wales and Policies SW11 and CW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan".
2. "The applicant has failed to provide sufficient ecological information to fully consider the potential impacts of the development on features of ecological interest. There is also insufficient information to demonstrate that a net benefit would be provided in respect of biodiversity. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policies EnW1 and EnW2 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan and Planning Policy Wales Edition 12".

P/17/0135 Change of use from office to beauty salon (Sui Generis use)
 Granted planning permission on 14 June 2017

CONSULTATION

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

Head of Engineering and Highways	No objection
Environmental Health Manager	No objection subject to conditions
Planning Policy Officer	No objection
Ecologist	No objection subject to conditions
Tree officer	No objection
Estates	No response

Dwr Cymry Welsh Water	No objection subject to condition
Cadw	No objection
Heneb	No objection subject to condition

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to neighbouring properties and two site notices were displayed within the vicinity of the site. Ten letters of support and one letter of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

It is noted that some of the letters of support have been submitted twice by the same person so for clarity it is highlighted that letters have been submitted from seven individual persons. The letters of support outline the following points:

- The spa enhances the visitor experience at Cyfarthfa Park and diversifies what the park has to offer. Its expansion would further improve facilities for customers.
- It attracts visitors from both the local area and further afield (encouraging repeat visits) that positively contributes to footfall and the economy of the park and local area. The expansion would allow guests to spend more time in the park and strengthen its position as a destination for wellbeing and leisure as well as its long-term sustainability and success whilst also making Merthyr Tydfil more visible in Wales and beyond.
- The development would create job opportunities, provide work experience, training and skills development and grow and enhance the team.
- The development uses sustainable, natural materials.

The main points raised by the objector are summarised below:

- Notes that the application is in the grounds of Cyfarthfa Park
- Concern that it will prevent them from maintaining their property particularly a wooden fence along the length of the boundary wall.
- The objector suffers from an allergy to perfumes and fragrances and they note that they are often not able to use their garden due to the scents produced by the spa. They are concerned that use of the outdoor area would make this situation worse and impact on their health and wellbeing.

Local ward councillors have been informed of the concerns raised by local residents and have not requested the application be present to the planning committee as such the application is to be determined under the delegated power by the Director of Neighbourhood Services.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 (February 2021) 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.

National Planning Policies

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

Section 6.1 recognises the importance of protecting the historic environment.

- Paragraph 6.1.7 highlights that *“It is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way”*.
- Paragraph 6.1.9 notes that *“Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment¹⁰³ and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place”*
- In respect to specifically to listed buildings paragraph 6.1.10 emphasises that *‘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 statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.’*
- Referring to Conservation areas paragraph 6.2.14 states *“There should be a general presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas or their settings. Positive management of conservation areas is necessary if their character or appearance are to be preserved or enhanced and their heritage value is to be fully realised”*
- While paragraph 6.1.15 notes that *“There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or 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”*.
- In respect to Historic Parks and Gardens paragraph 6.1.18 notes that *“Planning authorities should value, protect, conserve and enhance the special interest of parks and gardens and their settings included on the register of historic parks and gardens in Wales. The register should be taken into account in planning authority decision making. Green Infrastructure Assessments should be used to explore the role of historic parks and gardens and the findings of other landscape character assessments should be fed into historical and cultural assessments to ensure consistency of information”*.
- Paragraph 6.1.19 goes on to highlight that *“The effect of a proposed development on a registered park or garden, or its setting, is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications”*.

Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (2026) is also of relevance.

- Section 4 outlined the importance and considerations that should be given to archaeological remains.
- Section 5 refers to the listed buildings

- Section 6 addressed conservation areas with paragraph 6.3 states that local planning authorities must give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas when taking planning decisions.
- Section 7 relates to the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and the Register of Historic Landscapes in Wales. Paragraph 7.2 notes that local planning authorities should protect and conserve parks and gardens, and their settings, included in the register of historic parks and gardens in Wales.

Local Planning Policies

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
- SW10 Protecting and Improving Open Spaces
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- SW12 Improving the Transport Network
- SW13 Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities
- CW1 Historic Environment
- CW2 Cyfarthfa Heritage Area
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW2 Internationally and Nationally Protected Sites and Species
- EnW3 Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species
- EnW4 Environmental Protection

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

- Note 4, Sustainable Design.
- Note 5, Nature and Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle

The application site is located within the primary growth area of the settlement boundary and as such the principle of development is acceptable and accords with Policy SW4 of the LDP, subject to its compliance with other relevant planning policies and material planning considerations.

In this respect it is noted that the property currently operates as a spa and the proposal would result in the expansion of this community facility. As such it is in accord with Policy SW13 of the LDP which seeks to support the enhancement of the county boroughs existing community facilities.

Design and impact on historical assets

The application site is located within the Grade II* registered historic park and garden at Cyfarthfa Castle 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 has been developed in the grounds of the Grade II Listed Gwaelodygarth House. As such the impact of the proposal

on the character, setting and the historical and cultural importance of these historic assets is an important material planning consideration of this application with both local and national policies placing an emphasis on protecting, conserving and enhancing historic assets. In respect to the above, the application has been accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) which details the historic context of Cyfarthfa Park and Castle. It highlights that the existing spa building is modest with a functional and domestic appearance that is not a listed structure and *“physically separated from the principal parkland by the access drive to the car park”*. It suggests that the existing frontage currently makes a limited contribution to the historic character of the park. The local planning authority would agree with this assessment. At present, the application building is a simple, unassuming structure, of modest scale and with limited features of interest. As such is considered that there is scope for the property to be extended but the design and visual impact of this will be important to ensure that it represents a subservient addition which does not conflict with the character of the park and garden and the setting of the listed structures.

Despite the limited value of the building itself, the HIA recognises the importance of mature trees, existing planting and the traditional natural stone boundary wall that contribute to the green and historic character of the park entrance. It highlights that the proposal has sought to retain and enhance these features while improving the frontage of the building itself to better respond to its surrounding landscape and the operational needs of the spa. The design approach has been clearly set out. This highlights consideration given to *“traditional stone-built extensions and designs more closely matching the existing house”*, which were not pursued, *“as stone structures reflecting the character and materiality of the castle were considered too visually heavy and risked creating a false sense of history by blurring the distinction between historic and new elements”*. It also outlines consideration of a *“more domestic approach”* which was so avoided, *“as it risked reading as a simple house extension rather than a public wellness and recreational space”*. Ultimately it was concluded that as the existing spa building “holds limited historic or architectural significance, directly copying its style was not considered necessary”. Subsequently, a more contemporary design has been put forward with inspiration *“drawn from the historic role of parkland pavilions, which were traditionally lightweight structures used for shelter, leisure and relaxation within parks and gardens [noting] Pavilions have long formed part of designed historic landscapes, adding visual interest and amenity while remaining visually secondary to the wider parkland setting”*.

In an attempt to overcome concerns with respect to the previous extension which stepped forward of the principal elevation, the current proposal would introduce an extension that would be set at an angle to the front elevation, following the line of the existing garden wall. This is considered to be a more sympathetic and fluent approach that would sit well within the existing arrangement of the driveway and boundary wall. The contemporary design of the extension would also create a clear division between the original structure and the new addition, whilst its scale and natural front elevational treatments would also aid it in appearing subservient and somewhat unassuming, particularly given its potential prominence when entering the park. The proposed green roof and planting to the front of extension and screen would also aid in softening the development and its visual impact whilst also bedding it within the landscape. It is acknowledged that the HIA has set out the historic planting character of Cyfarthfa Park and used this to inform the landscaping scheme put forward. For the above reasons, it is also considered that the development would have a minimal visual impact on the wider character of the historic park and associated listed structures.

The application site is located in an archaeologically sensitive area. Henneb have indicated that whilst there are no sites recorded within the proposed development area there is potential for remains and features to be encountered during any ground disturbing works. A review of the historic Ordnance Survey maps, shows the area as open land with no features on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (dated 1875) with further development of the Park evident on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (1904), along with the addition of structures within the immediate surrounding areas. The Third Edition Ordnance Survey map (1919) shows the footprint of a lodge within the area of the existing garden. In addition the Historic Environment Record (HER) also shows that prehistoric, Roman and industrial finds and deposits have been encountered during relatively recent archaeological works within the Historic Park and Garden. Therefore, based on the current information in the HER, it is considered that there is potential in encountering archaeological remains, and features associated with the lodge and/or earlier use of Cyfarthfa Park, during any ground disturbing works in the area. Thus, in order to mitigate the impact of the development on the archaeological resource Henneb have recommended that a condition requiring the applicant to submit a detailed written scheme of investigation for a programme of archaeological work to protect the archaeological resource is attached to any permission issued.

Residential amenity

Despite being located within the ground of Cyfarthfa Park, the application site is bound by two dwellings along its north eastern side known as 8 and 9 Cyfarthfa Court. Given that the development is all at ground floor level, it would not give rise to any overbearing impact or result in any loss of light or significant overshadowing and similarly, due to their height and the boundary wall and fence between the site and the adjacent properties, the additions would not generate any overlooking concerns or lead to a loss of privacy.

It is recognised that the covered patio area may result in more users of the outdoor space and an associated increase in noise and disturbance to the neighbouring occupiers. However, given the scale and nature of the business it is not considered that noise would be to a level which would be deemed harmful to residential amenity nor would this be during anti-social hours.

It is acknowledged that one letter of objection was received to the planning application from an adjoining occupier who has highlighted that they suffer from an allergy to perfumes and fragrances. They note that they are often not able to use their garden due to the scents produced by the spa and are concerned that use of the proposed outdoor spa area would make this situation worse, adversely impacting on their health and wellbeing. It is recognised that odours can impact on residential amenity but in this instance, it is not considered that the development would give rise to the creation of a significant or indeed harmful level of smells and odours that would normally justify the refusal of the application. The extension would serve a sauna, sauna room, relaxation room and tea and coffee station so it does not appear that this would be used for treatments. It is also considered unlikely that the external space would be used in this way, but being located in the open would also help with dispersal of fragrances. As such, whilst the issues of the objector's allergies are noted it would not be appropriate to restrict otherwise acceptable development due to their individual circumstances.

They also raise concerns over the development preventing them from maintaining their property with particular reference to the need to paint their wooden fence which runs along the length of the boundary wall. However, this is not a material planning consideration.

The other point raised by the objector relates to the development being located is in the grounds of Cyfarthfa Park, presumable because this is a registered park and garden. This has been addressed above.

Thus, having regard to the objection and the above considerations the proposal is found on balance to be acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity and in this respect would accord with Policy SW11 of the LDP.

Parking and Highway Safety

Whilst the proposal would result in the expansion of the existing spa, it is not considered that it would generate additional traffic that would impinge on the local highway network. It is recognised that the application site does not benefit from any designated parking and none is proposed as part of the development. However, it is currently served by a car park within the ground of Cyfarthfa Park and it is not considered that the extension would generate additional parking demand in excess of that which is available. The site is also accessible by public transport, cycling and on foot. It is also noted that the Head of Engineering and Highways has not raised any objection to the proposal in respect to parking or highway safety.

Ecology

In accordance with chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 12), the application has been supported by Green Infrastructure Statements (GIS). This sets out the existing green infrastructure within the site which comprises of managed lawn and borders planted with hedges, shrubs and trees of varying maturity. It notes that the development would predominantly result in the loss of existing hard landscaping and managed lawn, avoiding mature trees, hedges and root protection areas to maintain the more ecologically valuable features. However, it recognised that in addition to the loss of lawn there would also be the loss of a small area of hedge and planting along the eastern boundary. However, the green infrastructure lost would be offset by new native planting, an ecologically diverse green roof and additional bird, bat and insect habitats (including two bat boxes, two bird boxes and two insect hotels). There would also be a hedgehog access gap in gate. The local authority's ecologist has considered this information and is generally satisfied with that the development would not have any adverse ecological impacts whilst also providing a net benefit for biodiversity. However, he has requested a full planting plan and details of the species list for the green roof. It is considered that this can be suitably addressed though condition. In addition, a lighting plan is recommended to ensure there would be no detrimental impact from external lighting. Having regard to the above, the proposed development would comply with LDP Policy EnW1.

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**:

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: Block Plan, Drawing Number: 002 Rev. A, Received 27 February 2026.

Drawing Title: Proposed Ground Floor Plan, Drawing Number: 111, Received 27 February 2026.

Drawing Title: Proposed Roof Plan, Drawing Number: 111 Rev. B, Received 27 February 2026.

Drawing Title: Proposed Elevations, Drawing Number: 120 Rev. C, Received 27 February 2026.

Green Infrastructure Statement, Project number 2434 Rev. B dated 24/02/2026, produced by MWD Architects, received 14 May 2026

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

3. Demolition or construction works shall not take place outside the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 Mondays to Fridays and 09:00 to 14:00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

Reason - To ensure that the noise emitted/activities are not a source of nuisance to occupants of nearby properties in accordance with Policies SW11 and EnW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

4. No surface water from an increase in any impermeable surfaces from the development hereby approved shall drain directly or indirectly to the public sewerage system.

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. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured agreement for a written scheme of historic environment mitigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the programme of work will be fully carried out in accordance with the requirements and standards of the written scheme.

Reason - To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.

6. Prior to the extension hereby approved being brought into beneficial use, two bat boxes, two bird boxes, two insect hotels and a hedgehog gap in the gate shall be provided in accordance with the details outlined in the Green Infrastructure Statement and these shall be retained in perpetuity thereafter.

Reason - Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) requires all development to maintain and enhance biodiversity and to accord with Policy EnW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan.

7. Prior to the installation of any external lighting, a Lighting Scheme shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning. External lighting shall only be installed in accordance with the approved details and maintained as such thereafter.

Reason - To limit the impact on protected species and reduce light pollution in accordance with policies EnW2 and EnW4 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

9. No development shall take place until a long term Landscape and Ecological Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include full details of the planting plan, the species list for the green roof and a timescale for the provision of any planting or seeding. The development shall be undertaken, managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved Plan.

Reason - In the interests of biodiversity and visual amenity in accordance with Policies SW11 and EnW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. 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.

2. This planning permission does not provide consent to undertake works that require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence. All bats and their roosts are protected under UK and European legislation. It is an offence to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb a bat or to recklessly damage or destroy their breeding sites or resting places.

If works are planned on a building/tree in which bats are found to be roosting, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) must be contacted. on 0300 065 3000 or at <https://naturalresources.wales/permits-and-permissions/species-licensing/apply-for-a-protected-species-licence/bat-licences/?lang=en>.

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.

Under these circumstances, an EPS licence is likely to be required to undertake the works within the law.

3. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

If works to any trees, hedgerows and/or other nesting bird habitat (including buildings with suitable features) are to be undertaken, they will take place outside of the bird nesting season. If the works must be undertaken during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a breeding bird survey will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified will be protected until the young have fledged.

Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/1>) is involved, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, will be devised and implemented.

4. With respect to condition 5, the programme of work will take the form of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (watching brief) during the groundworks required for the development, with detailed contingency arrangements including the provision of sufficient time and resources to ensure that any archaeological features or finds that are located are properly investigated and recorded; it should include provision for any sampling that may prove necessary, post- excavation recording and assessment and reporting and possible publication of the results.

The archaeological work must be undertaken to the appropriate Standard and Guidance set by Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and it is recommended that it is carried out either by a CIfA Registered Organisation or a MCIfA level accredited Member.

5. The applicant is advised that some public sewers and lateral drains may not be recorded on Dwr Cymru Welsh Water maps of public sewers because they were originally privately owned and were transferred into public ownership by nature of the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011. The presence of such assets may affect the proposal. In order to assist them in dealing with the proposal the applicant may contact Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to establish the location and status of the apparatus. Under the Water Industry Act 1991 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has rights of access to its apparatus at all times.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 05.06.2026