

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No: P/21/0334

Site Address: Woodstock
Somerset Lane
Cefn Coed
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 2PA

Development: Attic conversion comprising of an increase in roof ridge height and change from hipped roof to gable roof with dormers to front, rear and side

Case Officer: Caroline Pulley

Site Visit:

Application Expiry Date: 11th August 2022

Consultation reply date expired: 23rd March 2022

APPLICATION SITE

The application site relates to a single storey dwelling situated along Somerset Lane in the residential area of Cefn Coed. The property is bound by the highway to the west, a large detached two-storey dwelling to the north, a bungalow to the south and a detached dwelling to the east. The extended property has a large 'L' shaped footprint measuring approximately 30m in length and a maximum of 14m in depth. Its principal elevation containing the main entrance door faces a south-easterly direction towards the side elevation of the neighbouring bungalow known as Rosewater. Its rear elevation faces north and is at a lower level to the neighbouring property known as Bryncerddin. The property has a small private garden area to the east, which is laid primarily with artificial turf. To the north, there is a narrow and enclosed area of garden which is stepped in level and is partially raised above the level of the house. The roadside boundary of the property is enclosed by an attractive stone wall and a sliding timber gate.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks planning permission to increase the ridge height of the dwelling by 1.1m and to provide four pitched roof dormers and 7 skylight windows to its northern, southern and eastern elevations. The application is a resubmission of a previous refused scheme (P/21/0124). The previous application sought to raise the height of the main roof and erect flat roof dormers to the front, rear and side of the dwelling. The reason for refusal was:

'The proposed development by virtue of its design, bulk and size would result in a prominent, disproportionate and unsympathetic form of development that would significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.'

As such the proposal is contrary to Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan.'

The current application seeks permission for a similar scheme but to overcome the previous reasons for refusal, the design and scale of the proposed dormers have been significantly amended and further revisions have been made to the eastern elevation to overcome concerns raised by the occupier of a neighbouring property (Bryn-Onen).

As a result of the new proposal, the main original roof of the dwelling would be changed from a hip to a gable (this remains unchanged from the earlier refused scheme). The flat roof dormers originally proposed under the refused application have been replaced by four pitched roof dormers (two in the rear northern elevation and one in each of the remaining southern and western elevations).

The two dormers proposed within the northern rear elevation of the dwelling would measure 3.1m wide, 3m deep and 2.5m in height. They would each serve a bedroom and would be separated in the roof plane by two skylight windows (one serving an en-suite bathroom and the other serving a dressing room). Along the main front roof plane (facing south), a bedroom would be served by a 3.1m wide dormer and a skylight window. This dormer would also measure 3m in depth and 2.5m in height. The east facing roof plane would feature three skylight windows (two of which would serve a bedroom and the other, a bathroom). Along the western roof plane, a single dormer and skylight window would be provided serving bedroom and a landing.

In terms of materials, the submitted plans indicate that the external elevations of the dormers and the side gable walls of the dwelling would be finished in cedar cladding. The roof would be covered in tiles.

In total, the development would provide four first floor bedrooms. The ground floor would also be reconfigured internally to provide living accommodation including a large kitchen, a games room, sitting room, office and a bedroom.

PLANNING HISTORY

The recent planning history relating to the property is as follows:

P/21/0124	Attic conversion comprising an increase in roof ridge height and change from hipped roof to gable roof with dormers to front, rear and side. Refused – 01.06.2021
P/15/0359	Retention of change of use from dwelling with dog grooming, dog boarding and dog training business. Refused – 23.12.2015
P/11/0138	Erection of garage Approved – 19.07.2011
P/03/0169	Conversion of garage into living accommodation and extension Approved – 16.09.2003
P/99/0168	Erection of single-storey bungalow and detached garage

CONSULTATION

None undertaken with this type of application.

PUBLICITY

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012, letters were sent to the adjoining properties.

One letter of objection has been received from the occupiers/owners of a neighbouring property called Bryn-Onen, which is located to east of the application property. The main concerns are summarised below:

- The proposed increase of roof height and dormer windows would result in a loss of privacy to their garden and surrounding grounds;
- The size and height of the proposed plans are not in keeping with the surrounding properties in the area.

Local Ward Members were advised of the objection received to this application however, no request has been submitted requiring the application to be reported to the Planning Committee. As such, the application will progress to be determined by the Director of Neighbourhood Services.

POLICY CONTEXT

National 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) sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government. The most relevant sections are:

Paragraphs 3.3 – 3.16 sets out the principles of good design in new development proposals, which should take into account its relationship to its surrounding context.

Paragraph 3.9 refers to character and states that '*...the special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations. A clear rationale behind the design decisions made, based on site and context analysis, a strong vision, performance requirements and design principles, should be sought throughout the development process and expressed, when appropriate, in a design and access statement...*'

Paragraph 3.14 refers to context appraisal and states that these '*...should be used to determine the appropriateness of a development proposal in responding to its surroundings. This process will ensure that a development is well integrated into the fabric of the existing built environment...*'

The policies in PPW are supported by Technical Advice Notes (TANs). The most relevant TAN to this application is as follows:-

TAN 12 - Design advises that the Assembly Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environment, which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development, and social inclusion at every scale throughout Wales.

Paragraph 4.16 and 4.17 state that *'...achieving good design is the responsibility of all those involved in the design process...who should consider how each aspect of the design process meets the objectives of good design and responds to local context...'*

Local Policy

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

Policy SW4: Settlement Boundaries;

Policy SW11: Sustainable Design and Placemaking;

LDP Policy SW11 is the main primary consideration and points 1 to 3 are particularly relevant and state that new development should *'...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; and, 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...'*

- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG's)

It is noted in the SPG that *'...any extension or alteration to your property should be sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of its scale, siting and appearance, to ensure it complements neighbouring properties and the wider street scene...'*

'...the size, shape and siting of an extension to your house must be of an appropriate height and form that is in keeping and subservient to the existing building and its setting...'

More specifically with regards to dormer extensions, the SPG states that careful consideration should be given to the siting and design of dormer windows to ensure that they are a sympathetic addition to the dwelling, particularly in terms of their size, roof style, fenestration and materials. It confirms that dormer windows should be *'...small, incorporating a pitched roof that reflects the style of the dwelling and be discretely located to the side or rear of the dwelling. Flat roof dormer windows will often appear too bulky, out of proportion and can make the dwelling appear top heavy...'*

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

As detailed earlier in this report, planning permission was recently refused for a similar proposal under application reference P/21/0124. In this case, it was considered that the development arising from its design, bulk and size would result in a prominent, disproportionate and unsympathetic form of development that would have a detrimental

impact on the character and appearance of the existing property and the surrounding area. In attempt to overcome these concerns, a number of changes have been made to the design and scale of the proposed development.

Good design is a fundamental requirement of new development. Its importance is reflected throughout Planning Policy Wales which is supported by Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 – Design. Paragraph 2.6 of TAN 12 states that design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to grasp opportunities to enhance the character of the area should not be accepted. The importance of good design is reinforced at a local level through Policy SW11 which amongst other things requires new development to be appropriate to the area in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials, layout and form. This is reflected in the guidance set out in the Council's SPG for householder development (Note 6: A Design Guide for Householder Development). The SPG stipulates that any extension to a dwelling should be sympathetic to its surroundings to ensure that it complements neighbouring properties and the wider street scene. Important features can include building type, roof design and pitch, symmetry and size of windows, architectural detailing and material finishes. Paragraph 3.7 provides further advice in relation to roof alterations and loft conversions. It highlights that the roof of a dwelling is an important component and unsympathetic alterations can adversely affect the character, proportions and appearance of the dwelling in the street scene.

As a result of the proposed development, the property would have an increased ridge height and would incorporate dormer windows and skylight windows to facilitate first floor living accommodation. The proposal would significantly alter and increase the mass of the dwellings roof by increasing its height by a metre and by changing its hipped roof to a gable. As highlighted in the previous application, the proposed increase in the roof height and the erection of the dormers would enable the number of bedrooms in the property to increase by providing four additional bedrooms (with en-suites) in the roof space. While it was noted that the property does have some gable features to its front elevation, there was concern that the proposal to change the shape of the dwelling's main roof would give the property a discordant appearance. While this is still a concern, it is acknowledged that the character and appearance of the area is varied. Properties in the vicinity are predominately situated to either side of Somerset Lane. There is little consistency in their orientation with some properties having a frontage onto the lane while others are orientated to take advantage of the distant views of the south. The majority of the houses are also detached and there are significant variations in their design and appearance. Taking this into account, on balance, the proposed alterations to the property's roof would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area. Additionally, the scale and overall design of the proposed dormers would now be proportionate to, and consistent with, the resulting roof form. Accordingly, the proposal would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. Thus, the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy SW11 of the LDP and SPG 6 - A Design Guide for Householder Development.

Regard has also been given to the impact of the proposals upon the amenities of the adjoining residential properties. Given the positioning of the property and its relationship with neighbouring dwellings, the proposed increase in the height and mass of the dwelling would not have an overbearing or a significant level of overshadowing impact on the neighbouring properties to the north, south and east. The greatest potential impact arising from this proposal would be the overlooking impact arising from increasing the roof height and providing an additional level of accommodation at the property. This is a concern

raised by the occupiers/owners of the neighbouring property (Bryn-Onen) located to the east of the application property.

In this respect, it is noted that the dormer originally proposed along the east facing roof plane of the property has been replaced with three high level skylight windows. These windows would be located 1.7m above the internal floor level and as such these openings would not afford overlooking. The two dormer windows proposed to the rear of the dwelling would face onto the front and side garden of the neighbouring property known as Bryncerddin (to the north). This property has recently been granted permission for a large single storey extension along its western side. While acknowledging that the rear dormers would directly face the garden area of this property, the bedroom windows would be largely obscured behind a hedgerow. This limits any potential overlooking from these windows. In addition, it is noted that a separation distance of approximately 30m would be maintained between the bedroom windows and the front elevation of Bryncerddin. In addition to this, the neighbouring property has a driveway located along the dividing boundary. This separates the neighbour's garden area from the proposed dormer windows.

In respect of the dormers proposed to the front of the property, again, due to the increase in height, there is some potential for some overlooking to occur to parts of the garden area of the bungalow known as Rosewater. However, given the orientation of this neighbouring property and its positioning in relation to the application property, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a harmful level of overlooking. It should also be noted that no letters of objection or representation have been received to the scheme from the owner/occupier(s) of this property.

Other matters

Parking and Highway Safety

Having considered the on-site parking facilities to the front of the dwelling which could accommodate three vehicles, the proposed development would not give rise to any significant highway safety issues. As such, the proposal would comply with Policy SW11 of the LDP in this respect.

Ecology

A Bat Survey has been submitted in support of the application. The Council's Ecologist has considered the report and has raised no objection to the proposed scheme subject to the works being completed in accordance with the recommendations and measures set out in the report and the details provided on the elevation drawing (WS-06 Rev E).

Conclusion

While the concerns raised to the application are acknowledged, it is considered that the revised proposal overcomes the previous concerns raised in relation to the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the property and the amenities of neighbouring properties.

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 the following CONDITIONS

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. WS-03 Rev B received on 09.03.2022

Drawing no. WS-04 Rev B received on 09.03.2022

Drawing no. WS-05 Rev D received on 09.03.2022

Drawing no. WS-06 Rev E received on 26.07.2022

Bat Survey, Issue 1, Version B received on 26.07.2022

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

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended for Wales) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no roof extensions or roof lights shall be inserted/erected within the east facing roof plane of the dwelling other than those expressly authorised by this permission.

Reason - In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy SW11 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. 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.

2. 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.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Head of Town Planning

DATE:

27/7/22