

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Gareth Davies - Development Control Case Officer

Reference: P/26/0057 & P/26/0058

From: Planning Policy and Implementation Section

Ask for: David James

Extension: 7053

Date: 21st April 2026

Summary

No objection raised. In this instance, the development meets Replacement LDP policy SW4, and could meet policies SW11 & CW1.

If minded to approve in principle, particular consideration should be given to the impact of the development on the character of the Grade II Listed Building and the Town Centre Conservation Area (and any other relevant Heritage assets), the impact on surrounding area and occupiers in terms of noise and disturbance, traffic generation and parking provision, and any other relevant risks to public health and safety, particularly flooding, and the impact on biodiversity (Policies SW11, SW12, CW1, EnW1, EnW3 & EnW4).

Observations in respect of the above development

1. Proposed Development

An application for the creation of a new entrance on the northern elevation, together with replacement sash windows, installation of new external timber doors and renovation of the rendered elevations. Refurbishment of the basement level, including waterproofing of walls and floor, installation of new floor slabs and associated reconfiguration of the internal spaces and installation of a moveable acoustic wall/screen, at Canolfan Soar, Pontmorlais, High Street, 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 14 Town and Local Centres: To develop the town and local centres as accessible, attractive, viable and vibrant places.*
- *LDP Objective 15 Leisure, Recreation and Tourism: To support sustainable tourism, leisure and recreation developments and encourage an all year round tourism industry.*

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 CW1: Historic Environment*
- *Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation & 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*
- *Policy EcW3: Retail Hierarchy – Supporting Retailing Provision*
- *Policy EcW5 Town and Local Centre Development*

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 3: Shopfront Design (May 2013).*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: Sustainable Design (July 2013).*
- *Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5: Nature and Development (May 2015)*

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
- Active and Social Places: Living in a Place
- Activities in a Place: Retail and Commercial Development
- Activities in a Place: Community Facilities
- Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places
- Recognising the Environmental Qualities of Places

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 6: Town Centre First
- Policy 8: Flooding
- Policy 33: National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

TAN 4: Retail and Commercial Development (November 2016).

TAN 12: Design (March 2016).

TAN 15: Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion (March 2025).

TAN 24: Historic Environment (May 2017).

3. Policy Considerations

The application site is a commercial unit (which is also a Grade II Listed Building), located within Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre, and the Town Centre Conservation Area (Policies CW1 and EcW5). The site is located within the Primary Growth Area and settlement boundary, where new development can be considered acceptable in principle (Policy SW4) subject to proposals being compatible with the Plan's other policies and all other material considerations.

Policy SW9 considers the requirement for planning obligations. Given the nature of the development, 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.

Considering the nature of the development, and the location of the site (in close proximity to existing residential and commercial uses and within the Town Centre Conservation Area) consideration should be given to the above issues. Particular consideration should be given to the impact of the proposed external alterations on the character of the Conservation Area and on the Listed Building.

Part of the proposal involves bringing the basement area of the building back into beneficial use. This could increase the intensity of the building's use, with subsequent increased traffic movements and parking requirements. As such, the views of the Council's Environmental Health department and the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought.

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. It is noted that the application site is located in close proximity to both the bus and train stations in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

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 application site is a Grade II Listed Building, and lies within the Town Centre Conservation Area, the Town Centre (High Street and Pontmorlais) Urban Character Area (UCA1), and the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. It appears that the proposed alterations could respect the character of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area and preserve or enhance their architectural quality, character, and importance. However, this should be confirmed by the appropriate Heritage Officer, and/or Heritage body.

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. As such, the views of the Environmental Health department should be sought as appropriate.

The application site lies partly within Flood Zone 2, as shown on NRW's Flood Map for Planning.

Para. 10.19 of TAN 15 states that planning applications in Zone 2 require careful consideration and must be consistent with the acceptability considerations set out in section 11 (of TAN 15). They must also be accompanied by a FCA which clearly describes the flood risk and the risks must be acceptable.

As such, Natural Resources Wales should be consulted.

Policy EcW3 advises that Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre is the favoured location for retail, leisure, and other complementary development, being situated at the head of a retail hierarchy. Proposals for new and enhanced retail, leisure and other complementary provision in this location will be permitted where they improve the vitality and viability of the centre.

Policy EcW5 advises that development enhancing the vitality and viability of the Town and Local Centres will be supported. It also states that within the Town Centre Primary Shopping Area (PSA)...., the change of use of the ground floor to 'non-A' use classes will only be permitted where:-

- It is demonstrated through active and appropriate marketing that the existing use is no longer economically viable; and,
- The proposal would not result in an over concentration of non-A1 uses that would be detrimental to the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the local centre; and,
- The proposal would not result in the creation of a dead window frontage; and,
- The proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity and viability of neighbouring uses, having regard to the 'agent of change principle'.

The site of the proposal is located within Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre. The proposal is therefore appropriately located in the Town Centre, however, the above criteria are relevant.

The development proposes external alterations/improvements to the building. These alterations would also bring back an unused part of the building back into beneficial use. As such, it is considered that the proposal would contribute to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre, and would therefore be in accordance with the requirements of Policy EcW3 and EcW5.