

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	P/25/0065
Site Address:	Summerfield 8 Pontsarn Close Pontsarn Merthyr Tydfil CF48 2TW
Development:	Remove chimney, enlarge front and rear dormer roof extensions, single storey front extensions and new wrap around first floor balcony
Case Officer:	Kate Glover
Site Visit:	31st March 2025
Application Expiry Date:	5th May 2025
Consultation reply date expired:	21st April 2025

APPLICATION SITE

The property is a detached dormer bungalow with external materials which include render, stone on the elevations, horizontal boarding on the side of two dormer roof extensions, concrete tile roof and uPVC window and door frames. Other features of the property include a conservatory which has been constructed against the principal elevation, and first floor balconies are located on the principle and northwest elevations. Incorporated into the principal elevation is a large chimney which is constructed/faced with stone.

The property is located on the west corner of a group of dwellings which have been built along the highway (Pontsarn Road). To the northwest of the property's boundary is a small tree and open fields. Beyond Pontsarn Road and further to the west of the application site, is a dwelling known as Wallhouse.

In terms of the character and appearance of the nearby built environment, the properties directly adjacent to the site are a bungalow (southwest) and a dormer bungalow (northeast). Other properties in the area are typically two storey and traditional in character and appearance with rendered elevations and slate or concrete tile roof.

In respect of the position of the site in the wider landscape the property is in an elevated location where there are views over the Taf Fechan Valley, countryside and mountains located to the north, west and south.

The property is on land outside the settlement boundary, as defined in the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031. The site is within the Nant Morlais & Cwm Taf Fechan Special Landscape Area and an Archaeologically Sensitive Area identified as 'Prehistoric Enclosures; Morlais Castle;

Morlais Castle Quarries'. To the north and northeast of the site is Merthyr Tramroad: Morlais Castle section Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). To the northeast and east of the site is Morlais Castle SAM. To the northeast of the site is the Pont Sarn Bridge (Grade II Listed Building).

Close to the northwest boundary of the site, is an area which is identified as a group Tree Preservation Order, known as 'Upper Taf Fechan', although, it is noted that there are no mature trees and a small tree near to the southwest of the site. Also, close to the northwest boundary of the site, is the Cwm Taf Fechan Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks full permission which includes the removal of the chimney and, in summary, provide 2 new dormer roof extensions (one each side of the roof pitch), a wraparound covered balcony and construct 2 single storey ground floor extensions on the principal elevation. Further details on the proposed works are provided below.

The walls of the dormer roof extensions would be built directly above the ground floor walls with the overhang of the roof remaining at the foot and sides of the dormers. The proposed rear dormer roof extension would measure approximately 3.83m deep and 13.39m wide and 3.23m high, which would be the same height as the properties ridgeline. There would be 4 windows inserted into the rear of the dormer, and the proposed floor plans indicate that the windows would serve a bedroom, bathroom and an office. The proposed front dormer roof extension would be the same width of approximately 13.39m but would not be as high and would measure approximately 3.08m high and 3.75m deep. The reduced height of the dormer results in its roof sitting approximately 0.15m below the ridgeline of the property.

The wraparound covered balcony would run along the principal and side (southeast) elevations, and some sections of the balcony would be enclosed by using vertical slats or solid walls. The roof of the balcony would be above ground level by approximately 5.96m (approximately 0.25m lower than the ridge of the property), measure approximately 4.27m deep along the principal elevation and 3.58m deep along the side elevation. Access to the balcony would be provided by 2 openings using bifold/patio doors which would be positioned on each end of the principal elevation and a further 2 French doors in the southeast elevation.

The 2 ground floor extensions proposed to be constructed on the principal elevation would result in the front elevation being brought forward by approximately 1.62m. Although it is noted that the principal elevation of the property is currently extended by a conservatory which has been constructed on the southern corner of the property.

The external materials for both dormer windows are horizontal boarding, possibly timber and there are no other details regarding the materials to be used on the roofs of the dormers and frames for windows and doors.

PLANNING HISTORY

The Council's records do not indicate any other recent or relevant planning history for this site.

CONSULTATION

Planning Ecology Officer: Further ecological information required.

PUBLICITY

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

No letters of objection were received following this publicity exercise.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Development Framework

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

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) (PPW12).
Technical Advice Note 12: Design (March 2016) (TAN12)

Local Planning Policies

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

- SW4 Settlement Boundaries
- SW11 Sustainable Design and Placemaking
- EnW1 Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Resilience
- EnW5: Landscape Protection
- CW1: The Historic Environment

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

- Note 5, Nature and Development
- Note 6, A Design Guide for Householder Development

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The issues to consider under the assessment of this application relate to whether the proposal is acceptable in terms of principle, its scale and design with regards to its impact upon the character and appearance of the property, its impact on the visual qualities of the area and wider relationship with the Special Landscape Area (SLA). The impact upon residential amenity and ecology are also important considerations.

Principle of Development

The application site is outside of the defined settlement boundary, however, is within the curtilage of an existing dwelling. As such the principle of development is acceptable.

Visual Impact

As noted above the site is located in SLA1: Nant Morlais & Cwm Taf Fechan and LDP Policy EnW5 requires that in an SLA development proposals will be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that:

- a) It would not cause unacceptable harm to the character and quality of the landscape setting of the County Borough;
- b) Development within Special Landscape Areas are sensitive to their special characteristics;
- c) Development respects the local distinctiveness and historic character of the landscape;
- d) Development will safeguard local landscape character and landscape features, including views, which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of the locality;
- e) Development secures the enhancement of the character, appearance and quality of the landscape, through restoration, management or enhancement where possible;
- f) There is no satisfactory alternative and the benefits associated with the development can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm; and
- g) Where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided appropriate mitigation has been secured.

LDP Policy SW11 also requires 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:

- 1. be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;
- 2. integrate effectively with adjacent spaces, the public realm and historic environment to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;
- 3. 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

There are no concerns in relation to the removal of the chimney, as this structure does not have any particular architectural merit in respect of the property or surrounding area.

The size and scale of the proposed balcony and the methods of enclosing its sides are such it would dominate the appearance and character of the property, and the proportions of the balcony would create a property that would appear to be a rectangular block.

It is noted that the dwelling and other properties in the vicinity of the site incorporate balconies. However, the proposed balcony is significantly larger and do not share any characteristic to the more modest balconies which are currently provided on the application property or are incorporated into other properties near to the site. As such the scale, design and character of the proposed balcony is discordant with the character and appearance of the application property and the properties nearby.

In respect of the proposals impact on the wider area and SLA, the property is open to longer views due to its prominent position in the landscape. The character, appearance, design and scale of the proposal would form a rectangular block which would be prominent and discordant with the surrounding landscape. It is also noted that there is no vegetation, or trees, in the vicinity of the site which could help to reduce the visual impact of the proposed extensions and alterations.

In summary, the proposal would be discordant and incongruous and fail to respect local context resulting in a harmful impact to the character of the dwelling itself, the setting of the property amongst the neighbouring properties and the special historic character of which the proposal would be seen. As such the proposal fails to meet with the requirements of LDP policies EnW5 and SW11.

Residential Amenities

As noted above there are dwellings to the rear (northeast) and side (southeast) of the property.

In respect of the proposed dormer window and overlooking and loss of privacy for the occupants of the property to the northeast, the rear property is at a higher level than the application site and due to this relationship the first-floor windows of the rear property look over the application site. As such there would be no change in overlooking and loss of privacy in respect of the first-floor windows. In respect of the proposed balcony, it is noted that the northeast elevation of the balcony is finished with a solid wall, therefore, there would be no loss of privacy. As noted above there would be 4 windows inserted into the rear dormer, and there would be approximately 15m between these windows and the ground floor windows of the property to the rear. It is noted that there are trees between the two properties and further to this the property to the rear could erect a 2m high fence under permitted development rights. It is also noted that no representations have been received following the publicity exercise. As such the proposal would not result in any significant degree of overlooking or loss of privacy in respect of the property to the rear of the application site. Turning to loss of light and overbearing impact. Due to the difference in ground levels between the property to the rear and the application site, the proposal would have minimal impact and would not result in significant loss of light or an overbearing form of development.

In respect of the proposed dormer roof extensions and the potential for overlooking and loss of privacy for the occupants of the property to the southeast. In respect of the proposed balcony, it is noted that the southeast elevation of the balcony is finished with a solid wall, therefore, there would be no loss of privacy and no new windows are proposed to be inserted into the southeast elevation of property or the sides of the proposed dormers. As such the proposal would not result in any overlooking or loss of privacy. Turning to loss of light and overbearing. The proposed balcony would be approximately 3.8m from the boundary and project forward of the principle elevation of this neighbouring property. The topography of the area results in the ground level of the property to the southeast being at a higher level than the application site. Due to this difference in ground levels and the position of the balcony and dormers, there would be no significant loss of light or overbearing to warrant a recommendation of refusal in this instance. As such, the proposal would have minimal impact on the identified property and would not result in significant loss of light or an overbearing form of development.

Turning to the dwelling known as Wall House, it is noted that this property is set down from the application site and approximately 23m away. The proposed balcony would not result in an overbearing form of development, nor would it cause any loss of light or significant loss of privacy to Wall House.

It is also noted that no representations were received following the publicity exercise.

As such it is considered that the proposal meets with the requirements of LDP Policy SW11.

Ecology

In respect of ecology, the Council's Ecologist has concluded that survey work in the form of a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist) is required. This survey work must provide sufficient information for the local planning authority to assess any potential adverse impacts of the proposed works. The Ecologist notes that lesser horseshoe bats have been recorded within 133m of the site.

As noted in chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (edition 12), applications should be supported by Green Infrastructure Statements (GIS). Given that no green infrastructure would be affected by this proposal and as such, a GIS would not be deemed a reasonable requirement in this instance. However, given the countryside location of the proposal, the record of a lesser horseshoe bat and that the development includes extensive works to the roof of the property and the loss of a chimney, the submission of further ecological information is proportionate and necessary in this instance. It is also noted that no ecological enhancement has been proposed as part of this application. The Local Planning Authority have a duty to protect and maintain biodiversity and to take action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and to mitigate against the effects of climate change.

As such it is considered that the proposal fails to meet with the requirements of 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, as well as the Welsh Ministers well-being objectives set out in section 8 of the WBFG Act.

For the above reasons, the proposed development for reasons of its scale, size, design and use of materials and in an elevated position would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the dwelling and wider landscape. In addition, insufficient information has been provided to assess the potential ecological impacts of this scheme.

Accordingly, the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION: BE REFUSED for the following **REASONS:**

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, size, design and use of materials would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the property, the setting of the nearby properties and Special Landscape Area. As such, the proposal is contrary to policies SW11 and EnW5 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.
2. Insufficient information has been submitted to fully assess the ecological impact of the proposed development or demonstrated a net benefit in respect of biodiversity contrary to Policy EnW1 of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031.

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED



Director of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 01.05.2025