

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: Gareth Davies - Development Control Case Officer
Reference: P/25/0229 & P/25/0230

From: Planning Policy and Implementation Section
Ask for: David James
Extension: 7053

Date: 3rd October 2025

Summary

No objection. The proposal meets the requirements of Replacement LDP Policy SW4 (Settlement Boundaries), and satisfies the criteria of Policies SW13 and EcW7

It also appears that the proposal would preserve and enhance the architectural quality, character, and the historic and cultural importance of the Listed Buildings of Primrose Hill and the Synagogue, and the Thomastown Conservation Area (CW1). Although this should be confirmed with the relevant Heritage organisation.

Consideration should also be given to the impact of the development on the character of the surrounding area, the impact on surrounding area and occupiers (particularly in terms of loss of light, loss of privacy, traffic generation and highway safety), the impact on biodiversity, and any other relevant risks to public health and safety (Policies SW11, SW12, EnW1, EnW3 & EnW4).

Observations in respect of the above development

1. Proposed Development

An application for the repair and restoration of a derelict grade II listed Synagogue, and currently residential grade II listed Primrose Hill, and adaptations to both to provide new Welsh Jewish Cultural Centre. Landscaping works to derelict land to the north and east of the Synagogue, with a small structure inserted within land to the east of the Synagogue, to house bat roost, plant enclosure and air source heat pump. Proposed Use Classes would relate to A1, A3, B1, C3/4/5/6, D1 and D2. Residential use would only relate to Primrose Hill, which is already in residential use.

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 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.*

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 SW13: Protecting and Improving Local Community Facilities*
- *Policy CW1: Historic Environment*
- *Policy EnW1: Nature Conservation & Ecosystem Resilience*
- *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 EcW7: Tourism, Leisure and Recreation 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).*

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 Places: Retail and Commercial Development
- 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 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

TAN 12: Design (March 2016).

TAN 24: Historic Environment (May 2017).

3. Policy Considerations

The site comprises two Listed Buildings (Merthyr Tydfil Synagogue, and the adjoining Primrose Hill), and their grounds. It is located within the Thomastown Conservation Area (Policy CW1), and within the Primary Growth Area and settlement boundary, where new development can be considered acceptable in principle subject to proposals being compatible with the Plan's other policies and all other material considerations (policy SW4).

Policy SW9 considers the requirement for planning obligations. Given the nature of the development, on-site provision of affordable housing or open space, or a financial contribution towards affordable housing, would not be sought. Additionally, 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;
- contribute to the provision of green infrastructure, including open space in accordance with the Council's standards, sustainable drainage systems

- where appropriate, and ensure that the County Borough's network of green infrastructure is accessible and connected;
- 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;
- incorporate resource efficient/adaptable buildings and layouts using sustainable design and construction techniques;
- minimise the demand for energy and utilise renewable energy resources;
- incorporate measures to improve ground and surface water quality wherever possible;
- provide adequate facilities and space for waste collections and recycling; and
- promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour.

Considering the nature of the development, and the location of the site (in close proximity to existing residential uses and the Town Centre, and within the Thomastown Conservation Area) particular consideration should be given to the above issues.

The impacts of the proposed uses, including their impact on the amenity of surrounding residents, increased traffic movements and parking provision, should be considered, having regard to the previous uses of the site.

Any current and proposed parking provision should be checked against the Council's parking standards. As such, the views of the Council's Environmental Health department and the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought where appropriate.

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 site is located in close proximity to Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre, and the car parks and bus and train stations located there. The site has a Proposed Active Travel Route running through it. As such, the views of the Engineering and Traffic Group Leader should be sought in this respect.

Policy SW13 states that the Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough's existing community facilities. As the proposal would bring a vacant building (previously occupied by community uses) back into beneficial use, it is considered to comply with Policy SW13.

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 site lies within the Thomastown Conservation Area, the Thomastown and Penyard Urban Character Area (UCA 2) and the Merthyr Tydfil Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. As

mentioned above, the site comprises two grade II Listed Buildings, which are key elements of the proposal.

The impact of the renovation and change of use, and any associated works, on the character of the Listed Buildings and the Thomastown Conservation Area should be particularly considered. It is noted that the sensitive renovation and reuse of the Synagogue would bring a currently vacant and neglected Listed Building back into beneficial use. As such, the views of the appropriate Council Officer, and Heritage body, should be sought as a priority.

Policy EnW1 seeks to protect nature conservation and ecosystem resilience. Policy EnW3 states that development proposals likely to have an adverse impact on Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, or Priority Habitats and Species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The need for the development clearly outweighs the conservation value of the site;
2. Adverse impacts on nature conservation features or geological features can be avoided;
3. Appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation measures can be provided; and
4. The development maintains and where possible enhances biodiversity and geodiversity interests.

As such, the views of the Council's Ecologist should be sought.

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.

Policy EcW7 stats that tourism, leisure and recreation development within settlement boundaries is generally supported, particularly where they aid the revitalisation and regeneration of the Town and Local Centres.

The proposed cultural centre would increase the variety of the tourism offering within MTCB. While the proposed site is outside of the Town Centre, it is within 60m. As such, it is reasonable to assume that the businesses and services in the Town Centre would be utilised by visitors to the cultural centre, contributing to its revitalisation and regeneration.