

PLANNING STATEMENT

Land at Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane, Oakdale

April 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Stacey Lewis (the applicant) for the proposed development of a single detached dwelling with associated garage / outbuilding, access track, and associated landscaping on land to the east of Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane, Oakdale (hereafter referred to as the Site).
- 1.2 This document provides a full assessment of the acceptability of the proposed development from a planning perspective in relation to local and national planning policy, as well as all other material planning considerations. The document also summarises the comments made by the Local Planning Authority in relation to a pre-application enquiry submitted for a single dwelling at the site, and outlines why the proposal submitted as part of this planning application, has been amended to reflect the concerns raised by the planning case officer in relation to the originally proposed scheme.
- 1.3 This document is structured as follows:
- Section 2.0 - Site Description and Context
 - Section 3.0 - Planning History
 - Section 4.0 - Planning Policy Framework
 - Section 5.0 - Planning Appraisal
 - Section 6.0 – Pre-application submission and related amendments
 - Section 7.0 - Conclusion

2.0 **SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1 The proposal site is located immediately to the north of Blacksmith Close / Cefn Y Fferm that forms the northern edge of the settlement of Oakdale. To the west of the application site is the property known as Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm, a dwelling that has recently been renovated and extended. Beyond Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm to the west are the residential developments known as Tir Berllan and Waterloo. To the east of the proposal site is an open field parcel that forms part of the Pen-rhiw Bengi Marsh Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Along the northern edge of the site is an area of established woodland that also forms part of the Pen-Rhiw Bengi Marsh SINC.
- 2.2 The proposal site is roughly rectangular in shape and slopes from south to north. From its southern boundary to its northern boundary, the land falls by approximately 9 metres over a distance of approximately 80 metres. This difference in levels has influenced the proposed design of the development, as discussed below under Proposed Development.
- 2.3 The land is characterized by open grassland that is grazed by horses and therefore of limited ecological value. The southern and eastern field boundaries are marked by mature hedgerows, and the northern boundary is marked by the edge of the woodland to the north of the site. Mature trees are also located along the north-western boundary of the site along Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane, to the north of the curtilage of Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm.
- 2.4 The site is accessed off Pen-Rhiw Bengi Lane in its north-west corner. Along the western boundary of the site are a number of mature trees that are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Along the south-western boundary of the site is the property known as Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm. The presence of Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm and the TPOs dictates that the vehicular access to the site must be in the north-west corner, opposite the current access to Waterloo allotments.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A planning history search on the Caerphilly County Borough Council website indicated that there are no recent planning applications relevant to the site.
- 3.2 The applicant did however submit a pre-application enquiry in 2022 (LPA Ref: SPA/22/0045) seeking the view of the Local Planning Authority in relation to the development of a single detached property with associated garage, access track and landscaping. That proposal differed from the current proposal in terms of the location of the proposed dwelling, i.e. it was proposed to be sited in a more central position on the site, whereas the proposal subject to this planning application has been re-sited along the southern edge of the site to address concerns raised by the LPA and pre-app stage. The proposal submitted as part of that pre-application enquiry also proposed a significantly larger house than that proposed as part of this planning application. The comments of the LPA in relation to pre-application enquiry ref: SPA/22/0045 are summarized below.
- 3.3 In their formal response to pre-application enquiry SPA/22/0045, the planning case officer confirms that as the Site is located entirely within the Settlement Boundary, the presumption is in favor of new residential development in accordance with Policy SP5 (settlement boundaries) of the adopted Caerphilly Local Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the LDP). The case officer also confirms that the Site is located in the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC), where development on both brownfield and greenfield development is supported, in accordance with Policy SP2, subject to material planning considerations.
- 3.4 Following on from confirmation that new residential development at the site is acceptable in principle, the case officer makes reference to the design of the dwelling submitted with the original pre-application enquiry being (in their opinion) unacceptable. The case officer states that the general outlook of the proposed dwelling is at odds with the properties in the immediate vicinity and whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal sits within its own plot separate from nearby dwellings, the officer states that the design of the dwelling pays no regard to the scale and form of the surrounding dwellings and wider settlement.
- 3.5 The case officer then goes on to refer to the efficient use of land and the low density of development proposed. Reference is also made to a higher density of dwellings being capable of being accommodated at the site, but that such an increase in the number of dwellings proposed would likely have implications in terms of highway safety, trees and ecology, and visual impact.
- 3.6 In relation to the planning consideration of the pre-application enquiry, the case officer concludes by stating that given the relatively open nature of the site, the proposal has the potential to cause harm to the visual amenity of the area, due to the contrasting design (of the proposed dwelling) that bears no resemblance, or character, of the surrounding properties. The case officer also refers to the excessive scale of the dwelling further impacting the visual amenity of what they describe as a semi-rural setting.
- 3.7 The remainder of the pre-application response from the LPA provides advice in relation to land drainage, trees, public rights of way, highway impact and landscape impact further to the comments from the relevant consultees. The main comment of relevance relates to the potential impact of the proposed access on existing protected trees along the western

boundary of the site. It is also noteworthy that the Council's Highways Department raised no objection to the existing highway network serving a single dwelling at the Site.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At national level the relevant policy is Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales and supporting Technical Advice Notes. The statutory local development plan for this Site is the Caerphilly County Borough (CCBC) LDP up to 2021, which was adopted in 2010.

National Planning Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 4.2 The National Plan for Wales (hereafter referred to as Future Wales) was formally adopted by Welsh government in February 2021 and it outlines Welsh Government's strategies to address national priorities through land use planning, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, delivering growth in the right areas, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities. The relevant aspects of Future Wales to this Site and its development are:
- **Policy 1: Where will Wales Grow** identifies a series of National and Regional Growth Areas within which new development is generally to be focussed. One of these National Growth Areas is the Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys urban cluster which includes the development site.
 - **Policy 2: Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration** states that growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure.
 - **Policy 9: Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure** seeks to ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure. This should be achieved by identifying areas to be safeguarded, opportunities for the maximising the value of existing green infrastructure and introducing new green infrastructure. Where possible, existing designated or high value sites should be connected through green infrastructure improvements.
 - **Policy 11: National Connectivity** sets out the aspiration of the Welsh Government to support and invest in improving national connectivity. The priorities are to encourage longer-distance trips to be made by public transport, while also making longer journeys possible by electric vehicles.
 - **Policy 12: Regional Connectivity** encourages a modal shift away from the private car by incorporating measures that encourage active travel and the use of public transport.
 - **Policy 17: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure** this policy strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet the future needs of Wales.
 - **Policy 33: National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys** this policy provides more information about aspirations for growth within this newly designated National Growth Area. The policy reaffirms that Oakdale is included within the National Growth Area.

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11

- 4.3 The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The key planning principles are set out in this document are, amongst other things:
- A plan-led approach is the most effective way to secure sustainable development through the planning system, i.e., decisions should be made in accordance with Local Development Plans
 - Making the best use of resources
 - Creating and sustaining communities
 - Maximising environment protection and limiting environment impact
 - Consideration of the Transport Hierarchy

Technical Advice Notes

- 4.4 Technical Advice Notes (hereafter referred to as TANs) should be considered by local planning authorities when they are preparing development plans and should be read along with the Planning Policy Wales document which sets out land use planning policies in Wales. The relevant TANs are:
- TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
 - TAN 12: Design (2016)
 - TAN 16: Transport (2007)
 - TAN 24: Historic Environment (2017)

Caerphilly CBC Local Development Plan up to 2021

- 4.5 The Caerphilly CBC Local Development Plan covers the period from 2010 to 2021 and was adopted in 2010 but remains in force until a new LDP is adopted in the future in accordance with the relevant Ministerial letter regarding the status of LDPs in Wales.
- 4.6 On the LDP Proposals Map the Site lies in settlement of Oakdale immediately north of the Redrow housing development which was constructed between 2010 – 2014, and was designated as an allocated housing site in the adopted LDP. Please see Figure 1 below which contains an extract of LDP Proposals.



Figure 1: Local Development Proposals Map Extract

- 4.7 The LDP policies which are relevant to this planning appraisal are listed below:
- Policy SP2 – Development Strategy in the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC)
 - Policy SP5 – Settlement Boundaries
 - Policy SP6 – Place Making
 - Policy CW2 – Amenity
 - Policy CW3 – Design Considerations: Highways
 - Policy CW4 – Natural Heritage Protection
 - Policy CW5 – Protection of the Water Environment
 - Policy CW6 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow protection
 - Policy CW15 – General Locational Constraints
 - Policy NH3 – Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 4.8 Supplementary Planning Guidance provide additional guidance and detail to supplement the policies contained within the LDP policies. The relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance documents to the proposed development at the Site are:
- LDP4 – Trees and development
 - LDP5 – Car Parking Standards
 - LDP6 – Building Better Places to Live

Other Relevant Legislation

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 4.9 The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development. The Act requires an improvement in the delivery of all four aspects of well-being: social, economic, environmental and cultural.

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

- 4.10 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) requires surface water drainage for new developments which are over 100m² to comply with mandatory National Standards for Sustainable Drainage and developments obtain consent from the relevant require SuDS Approving Body (SAB).

5.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL

5.1 In a planning context, development is acceptable if there is an established principle of development and the proposed development is acceptable in regard to all material planning considerations.

5.2 For clarity, the principle of development is only established if there is specific national and/or local policy support for the relevant development. Material considerations are the technical considerations of a development which assess if there would be any harm in a planning context as a result of the development. These aspects of the development will be considered in turn below.

Principle of Development/Proposed Land Use

5.3 Policy SP5 defines settlement boundaries within which development is permitted in principle. The application site is located entirely within the settlement boundary as defined in the adopted Caerphilly LDP, and therefore the principle of new residential development is acceptable in principle subject to local and national planning policies, as well as all other relevant material planning considerations.

5.4 Whilst the Site is classed as greenfield land in planning terms, as the Site is located within the Northern Connections Corridor (NCC) as defined by Policy SP2 of the adopted Caerphilly LDP, both greenfield and brownfield sites are considered acceptable subject to development supporting the social and economic functions of an area. The proposed dwelling falls within Use Class C3 and given its proximity to the existing settlement of Oakdale, will support the function of the village.

Sustainability

5.5 The underpinning principle of PPW11 is the requirement for sustainable development in Wales through, amongst other things, sustainably located development and energy efficient development. This is supported by LDP Policy SP2 which seeks to promote sustainable development that reduces car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel and makes the most efficient use of existing infrastructure.

5.6 The proposals seek to provide a new family home on a site which is in a highly sustainable location with good access to public transport, local services and facilities. The sustainability credentials of the Site and the proposals are high and fully in accordance with planning policy.

5.7 The following public transport links, local services and facilities are located within short walking distance of the application site:

- A bus stop serving Bus Service No. 5 is located within 150m of the Site, i.e. to the south located on Penmaen Avenue. The bus service provides an hourly service linking Oakdale to Blackwood, Newbridge, Pontllanfraith and Pen-Y-Fan Industrial Estate. Newbridge has a railway station with links to Cardiff and beyond.
- A bus stop serving Bus Service No. 5A is located within 250m of the Site, i.e. to the west located on Tir Berllan. This bus service provides an hourly service linking Oakdale to Blackwood central bus station.
- A petrol filling station and associated convenience shop is located 150m to the southeast of the Site.

- Oakdale village centre is located 400m to the south of the Site. Within the village centre is a small supermarket (Co-op), a pharmacy, library, café, several hairdressers, several hot foot takeaways, as well as Oakdale rugby club.
- An English Medium primary school is located 200m to the south of the Site, and a Welsh Medium primary school is located 300m to the southwest.
- Islwyn High comprehensive school is located 200m to the north of the Site.

Energy Efficiency and Renewables

- 5.8 The proposed development should, as far as possible, incorporate energy efficient construction methods and energy solution for the end use. The new dwelling will be built to current building regulation standards thereby resulting in excellent levels of air tightness and energy efficiency.

Highway Impact

- 5.9 PPW11 through the Transport Hierarchy seeks to reduce the use of the private car in favour of active travel, public transport and more sustainable forms of travel, such as electric vehicles.
- 5.10 LDP Policy CW3 seeks safe, effective and efficient use of the transportation network. This Policy also states that proposals should ensure that new access roads within development proposals are design to a standard that:
- Promotes the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before that of the private car, and
 - Safely and effectively accommodates the scale and nature of traffic, which these roads are intended to serve.

The development proposes a single means of vehicular access off Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane along the western edge of the Site, with an access track leading from the northwest corner of the site to the proposed dwelling and associated garage. This access track has been proposed along the northern edge of the application site, i.e. at the lowest point within the site, to minimise its potential impact in the landscape.

- 5.11 In response to the pre-application enquiry, the Transportation Engineering Manager raised no objection to the proposed access to the site via Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane, and therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective.
- 5.12 Also in regard to Policy CW3, and as outlined at 5.9 above, the Site is very well located in terms of access to public transport and local shops and facilities. This proximity will result in the future occupiers being able to access day to day facilities without the need to travel by private vehicle, thereby supporting the sustainability credentials of the proposed development.

Traffic Generation

- 5.13 The proposed development, i.e. a single family homes, will result in minimal amount of traffic movements to and from the site hence the Council's highways Department raising no objection to the principle of a new dwelling at the site at pre-application enquiry stage.

Car and Cycle Parking

- 5.14 The proposed dwelling would need to provide appropriate levels of parking for vehicles and cycles in accordance with the Councils adopted Parking Standards SPG. The proposed dwelling would require 3no. off road car parking spaces, and as can be seen from the submitted plans, such parking provision can comfortably be accommodated within the site.

Construction Traffic Management

- 5.15 Should permission be granted, it is possible the LPA will seek to manage construction traffic to ensure no adverse impact on highway safety and neighbour amenity. This would likely be dealt with via planning condition. The site is clearly capable of accommodating all construction traffic within its curtilage thereby having no unacceptable impact on the surrounding highway network.

Design

- 5.16 LDP Policy SP6 relates to Place Making and requires new development to contribute to creating sustainable places by having full regard to the context of the local, natural, historic and built environment and its special features through:
- A. An appropriate mix of uses that reflect the role and function of settlements;
 - B. A high standard of design that reinforces attractive qualities of local distinctiveness;
 - C. Design in accordance with best practice in terms of designing out crime;
 - D. A location and layout that reflects sustainable transport and accessibility principles and provides full, easy and safe access for all;
 - E. The incorporation of resource efficiency and passive solar gain through layout, materials, construction techniques, water conservation, and where appropriate the use of sustainable drainage systems;
 - F. The efficient use of land, including higher densities where development is close to key transport nodes;
 - G. The incorporation and enhancement of existing natural heritage features;
 - H. The incorporation of mitigation measures that improve and maintain air quality.
- 5.17 As can be seen on the submitted floor plans and elevations, the proposed dwelling and associated garage outbuilding have been carefully designed to propose a new dwelling of high architectural value. The footprint of the proposed dwelling is roughly square, with active frontages proposed along its northern, western and eastern elevations. The southern elevation of the proposed dwelling proposes slightly less detailing given its orientation and proximity to existing residential properties to the south, i.e. the properties located on Blacksmith Close and Cefn Y Fferm.
- 5.18 In order to appropriately integrate with the scale and design of nearby properties, the proposed dwelling has been designed over 2.5 storey and incorporates rooms at second floor level within the roof space with associated dormer windows. This element of the design mimics the 2.5 storey properties with dormer windows located immediately to the south of the application site on Blacksmith Close and Cefn Y Fferm.
- 5.19 The materials palette proposed for the new development has also been carefully selected to ensure the dwelling integrates into the setting along the southern boundary with existing properties as sensitively as possible. It is proposed use facing brick and roof tiles for the

majority of the dwelling, with some stonework detailing to further enhance the aesthetics of the proposal. The proposed dormer windows and chimney detailing elements have also been carefully designed to ensure the resultant dwelling is a quality piece of architecture within the Site.

- 5.20 The proposed garage outbuilding, that incorporates 3no. parking spaces at ground floor level with a storage area above, has also been carefully designed to sit in close proximity to the main dwellinghouse, and uses materials and design elements that will complement the main dwellinghouse.
- 5.21 Whilst the proposed dwelling and associated garage outbuilding pay regard to the existing residential development to the south of the Site in terms of the overall height of the dwelling and the use of external finishes that are similar to those of existing properties in the locale, the dwelling has not been designed as a pastiche of the existing properties on Blacksmith Close / Cefn Y Fferm. Those dwellings were constructed over 10 years ago and formed part of a large residential estate. The context of the application site is different in that only one new property is proposed, and it had been designed accordingly to sit appropriately within its setting. To replicate a house type from the adjacent volume house builder site would look very odd on at the application site and out of scale with its surroundings. Indeed, if the applicant sought to replicate a house type similar to that on Blacksmith Close, it would appear as an unnatural extension to the existing residential development. It should also be noted that the footprint of the proposed dwelling is very similar in terms of its scale as the recently renovated and extended property to the west, i.e. Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm.
- 5.22 Policy SP6, Criterion F makes reference to density and efficient use of land. In their response to the pre-application enquiry, the planning case officer states that a single dwelling at the application site would represent an inefficient use of land contrary to Policy SP6. However, this comment is made without acknowledgement on the part of the planning case officer that the highway network leading to the site, i.e. Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane, is narrow with no pedestrian footway, and it is highly unlikely that it would be suitable to serve a large number of properties. On this basis, given the site constraints in terms of access, the density of proposed development is not considered to be of significant importance in this case.

Visual Impact

- 5.23 LDP Policy CW2 states that development proposals should have no unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land. In their formal response to the pre-application enquiry, the planning case officer stated that the proposed development could result in a detrimental impact on the visual amenity area. On that basis the applicant has instructed the preparation of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for the proposed development that has been submitted with the planning application. The LVA has been undertaken on the basis of the proposal submitted with the planning application and was amended from that proposed at pre-application enquiry stage based on the concerns of the Local Planning Authority.
- 5.24 In terms of the potential impact of the dwelling on the surrounding landscape in terms of its massing and scale, the LVA concludes that given the modest scale of the proposal on a site that is already substantially enclosed by existing trees and hedgerows, and not visible from a significant part of the wider landscape, the development would have a negligible adverse impact in the surrounding landscape. This limited impact is further reduced by virtue of the proposed dwelling being viewed against the backdrop of the existing urban edge of Oakdale.

- 5.25 Given the sloping nature of the existing Site, the LVA also provides analysis on the potential impact of any required retaining works that would facilitate the development and the associated internal access road. As can be seen from the submitted plans, along the southern edge of the proposed dwelling is a 1.5m high retaining wall which result in the proposed dwelling sitting lower in the Site than natural ground levels, thereby reducing its visual impact in the landscape. The development has been carefully designed to minimize the extent of retaining works, and the access road has been aligned along the northern, tree lined boundary of the site to minimize its visual impact on the surrounding area. It should also be noted that given the space available within the Site, any retaining works required in relation to the internal access road can be undertaken with landscaped banks, that when vegetated, will have the appearance of being a part of the natural landscape.
- 5.26 Finally in relation to impact on visual amenity, as can be seen from the plans submitted with the application, the development offers the opportunity to provide significant tree and vegetation planting enhancements. The plans indicate that significant tree planting will be undertaken along the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the application site, thereby further reducing the impact of the proposed development in the landscape, as well as offering significant biodiversity enhancement measures.

Residential Amenity

- 5.27 LDP Policy CW2 also relates to impact on residential amenity. The nearest existing properties to the proposed dwelling are No. 5 Cefn Y Fferm which is located 30m to the south of the proposed dwelling, and Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm, which is located 60m to the west of the proposed dwelling. These separation distances are well in excess of the generally accepted separation distance of 21m. Based on the relationship between the existing nearby properties and the proposed dwelling, the development will not have an unacceptable impact on existing levels of residential amenity and therefore complies with Policy CW2. It should also be noted that the proposed dwelling sits at a lower level than the properties to the south, thereby further reducing its impact on those neighbouring properties. The proposed garage will have very limited impact on existing nearby properties, and its potential impact will be further minimized by virtue of the boundary tree planting proposed as part of the application.

Biodiversity

- 5.28 To the north and east of the proposal site is the Pen-Rhiw Bengi March Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). As can be seen on the submitted proposal drawings, the proposed development is set well off the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to ensure this SINC is protected. Furthermore, it is proposed to undertake extensive tree planting along the boundaries of the site. This represents significant planning gain in biodiversity terms and adds weight to the acceptability of the proposal.
- 5.29 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been prepared by a suitably qualified Ecologist and submitted with the planning application. The PEA confirms that the site is dominated by semi-improved neutral grassland, with hedgerows found along the Site boundaries comprising of a combination of woody species including bramble, hazel, ivy and holly.
- 5.30 The desktop element of the PEA confirms that there are no records of Great Crested Newts (GCN) within 2km of the site, and no ponds within 500m of the application site. On this basis, as well as the existing vegetation onsite, and lack of sheltering opportunities, the ecologist concludes that it is unlikely that GCN are present within the site.

- 5.31 As with GCN above, records also indicate that there are no records of Dormice within 2km of the application site. However, the existing hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site were deemed to be potentially suitable to support dormice. As the development, including its access road, is located off these boundaries, the ecologist concludes that the development will not impact on these potential habitats and that no further survey work in relation to Dormice is required. It is also noteworthy that the ecologist considers the proposed tree planting along the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the site as offering overall enhancement of this habitat.
- 5.32 In relation to Bats, the PEA concludes that no existing trees within the curtilage of the site, or any trees within the hedgerow of the site boundary, are suitable for bat roosting purposes. The PEA did indicate that the site is likely used by bats for foraging and commuting given its good connectivity to the nearby woodland and wider landscape. On this basis it is recommended that an appropriate external lighting scheme be devised to ensure no adverse impact on bat foraging as a result of development. This matter can be suitably controlled by way of Condition.
- 5.33 The PEA concludes that given the nature of the vegetation onsite, its open aspect, as well as its distance from the river Sirhowy, the site is an unsuitable habitat for Otters or Badgers, and their presence onsite is very unlikely.
- 5.34 The report indicates that the Site is suitable for reptiles given the interface between the open grassland and the hedgerows / woodland along its boundaries. However, given the limited scale of the proposed development, i.e. one dwelling, compared to the overall size of the application site, the PEA concludes that the potential impact on reptiles using the site is low providing a reptile mitigation strategy can be implemented during construction works. As with the external lighting strategy outlined above, this can suitably be controlled by way of planning condition, and no further survey work is deemed necessary.
- 5.35 The PEA also includes a recommendation that any clearance works should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season, i.e. March to August inclusive, and that a root protection zone (RPZ) must be implemented around any retained hedgerows within the proposed development area as well as around any trees that lie adjacent to the site boundary to the north. Again, these matters can be suitably controlled by way of planning conditions.
- 5.36 PPW11 also requires new development to demonstrate biodiversity enhancements. The submitted plans clearly show extensive tree planting along the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the site that will offer significant biodiversity net gain. The applicant is also happy to install bat or bird boxes to offer further biodiversity enhancement, and such measures can be controlled by way of planning condition.

Trees

- 5.37 Policy CW6 protects trees, woodland and hedgerows owing to their amenity value and possible biodiversity value. The site is bounded by significant trees along its northern, north-western and eastern boundaries, with an established hedgerow running along the southern boundary of the site. The only existing break in this vegetated boundary at present is the recently renovated and extended property to the west, i.e. Pen-rhiw Bengi farm.
- 5.38 The proposed development, including the proposed retaining wall adjacent to the southern elevation of the proposed dwelling, has been set off the southern boundary of the site to

ensure it does not have a detrimental impact on the existing hedgerow along that boundary, or any trees contained within it. In order to guarantee the integrity of the hedgerow and trees during construction, a condition could be attached to any planning permission requiring tree and root protection measures during works.

- 5.39 The proposed dwelling and associated garage outbuilding is sited appropriately within the site to ensure no long-term pressure on existing trees found along the boundaries of the site. Furthermore, the proposed extensive tree planting will reinforce and expand the woodland and hedgerows along the Site boundaries.

Drainage

Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) requires surface water drainage for new developments which are over 100m² to comply with mandatory National Standards for Sustainable Drainage and developments obtain consent from the relevant SuDS Approving Body (SAB). The statutory standards are now available and can be found here: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/statutory-national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems.pdf>.

- 5.41 The SAB process is separate from the planning process, however, it must be demonstrated through the planning application that the proposals are capable of incorporating a SAB solution otherwise the LPA may refuse permission. Given the density of the proposed development, as well as the location of the proposed development at the highest point within the application site, there is clearly adequate scope within the site to provide the required drainage features to secure a SAB approval and further provide biodiversity net gain opportunities. The relevant drainage strategy can provide drainage features set away from the boundaries with the SINC to the north and east of the Site to ensure they do not compromise the integrity of the SINC.

Heritage Considerations

- 5.42 The application site is located approximately 100m to the north of the Oakdale Conservation Area. However, given the recent housing development between the application site and the Conservation Area, the proposal will have no impact on the Oakdale Conservation Area. Also, the nearest Listed Building is located over 500m away, i.e. Oakdale Hospital, and the development will have no impact on this heritage asset.

6.0 PRE-APPLICATION PLANNING ENQUIRY SPA/22/0045 AND AMENDMENTS MADE TO CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATION

Pre-Application Planning Enquiry SPA/22/0045

- 6.1 Section 3.0 of this report (Planning History) outlines the comments made by the Planning case officer in relation to the pre-application enquiry originally submitted by the applicant. The proposal submitted with the pre-application enquiry differs from the proposal submitted with this planning application for two primary reasons, i.e. the proposal has been amended to re-site the dwelling from a position more central within the site to a location closer to the southern boundary, and the scale of the proposed dwelling has also been reduced.
- 6.2 In their pre-application response, the planning case officer stated that the design of the dwelling shown a part of the submission would be 'of a grand nature', and at odds with the properties in the immediate area and therefore unacceptable. The case officer also stated that the dwelling shown as part of the pre-application submission was three-storeys whereas it would be more accurately described as 2.5 storeys with habitable rooms in the roof space.
- 6.3 Based on the comments of the case officer, the scale, i.e. the footprint of the proposed dwelling has been significantly reduced in terms of its overall width in particular. The height of the proposed dwelling remains the same, and properties of a similar height with rooms in the roof space and associated dormers are located on the development immediately adjacent to the site to the south, i.e. Nos. 4, 8 & 10 Cefn Y Fferm, and No. 92 Blacksmith Close. The proposed dwelling is also proposed at a lower level than the existing properties to the south. It should also be noted that the footprint of the proposed dwelling is now similar in size to the recently renovated and extended property to the west, i.e. Pen-rhiw Bengi Farm which has a footprint of approximately 18m x 10m.
- 6.4 The case officer also made reference to the impact of the scheme submitted at pre-application stage on the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The case officer states that given the open nature of the site, coupled with the originally proposed siting of the dwelling in a more central position, the dwelling had the potential to result in a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area. In light of these comments, the proposal submitted with this planning application has been relocated within the Site to the southern boundary. This results in a proposal that is far better related to the existing urban edge of Oakdale and the properties located along Blacksmith Close and Cefn Y Fferm. At a height of 2.5 storeys, and set at a lower level, the development will be read against the backdrop of existing housing along the northern edge of Oakdale in the landscape.
- 6.5 The case officer referred to the proposed dwelling submitted at pre-application stage as having a contrasting design that bore no resemblance to the character of the surrounding properties. Whilst the dwelling submitted with the planning application does share some characteristics with the existing dwellings to the south in terms of overall height, the inclusion of dormer windows, and the use of facing brick and roof tiles, it is not considered to be necessary to design the proposed dwelling as a pastiche of the dwellings located on the Redrow development to the south. These existing dwellings are those of a volume housebuilder and do not necessarily represent good architecture. The proposal has been amended to an appropriate degree to lessen its visual impact without trying to have the appearance of an extension to the existing housing estate.
- 6.6 In terms of visual impact, due regard must be given to the LVA submitted with this application. Not only are there limited short range views of the proposed development by virtue of existing

boundary treatments and vegetation, but any long distance views will view the proposed dwelling against the backdrop of the urban edge of Oakdale.

- 6.7 Finally in relation to the pre-application response from the Local Planning Authority, it is not considered appropriate to object to the proposed development on the basis of inefficient use of land. Whilst it is accepted that efficient use of land is desirable, and supported by local and national planning policy, this must be assessed on a site by site basis. The application site is located at the edge of the urban settlement with open countryside beyond where a lower density of development is more appropriate. Also, and of significant importance to the density consideration, is the nature of the access lane serving the development site, i.e. Pen-rhiw Bengi Lane. This is a single carriageway country lane with no pedestrian footpath. This is a significant constraint to development and means that only a small number of properties could be accommodated at the site.
- 6.8 It is considered that the development proposal submitted as part of this planning application has been amended to an appropriate degree to overcome the concerns the planning case officer had at pre-application stage, i.e. scale, design and siting. The amended scheme has been carefully reassessed and designed to pay regard to the new build houses located immediately to the south of the Site, whilst also retaining a character of its own and not attempting to imitate a house type of a volume housebuilder. Furthermore, the re-siting of the dwelling along the southern edge of the Site, coupled with it siting at a lower level than natural ground levels, ensure it will have limited impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The principle of developing a new residential dwelling with associated garage on the Site is established by virtue of the location of the Site entirely within the settlement boundary as defined in the adopted Caerphilly LDP.
- 7.2 In terms of the material considerations, the following summarises the primary issues for the proposed development:
- The proposed dwelling and associated garage have been appropriately designed and located within the Site to ensure the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the residential or visual amenity of the area.
 - The proposed access road leading to the proposed dwelling has been sited to minimise its impact in the landscape from short and long distance views by virtue of its alignment towards the northern boundary of the site. Furthermore, any earthworks required in relation to the access road can comfortably be achieved with gentle earth embankments that will fully integrate within the site subject to vegetation establishing.
 - The proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the ecology of the Site or its surroundings and offers the opportunity for significant biodiversity net gain.
 - The development has been sited accordingly to ensure it does not have a detrimental impact on the trees or hedgerows that run along the boundaries of the site. Indeed, the extensive tree planting proposed as part of the submission will result in significant net gain in terms of trees and the resultant reinforcement of the integrity and resilience of these vegetated boundaries.
 - The Council's Highway Department raise no objection to the position of the proposed access or the highway network leading to the site, and adequate parking provision can be accommodated within the site in accordance with the Council's adopted car parking standards.
 - The site is large enough to accommodate natural drainage features as part of any SAB scheme. These features can be sited away from the SINC along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and offer further biodiversity net gain.
- 7.3 On the basis of the information and analysis contained in this report it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposed development.

