

Design & Access Statement:
Land Rear of 40 Victoria Road
Fleur De Lis

On behalf of:
Mr. A & Mrs. S Carrafa

Prepared By:

Hannaby Planning
Solutions Ltd

November 2023

Applicant: Mr. & Mrs. Carrafa

Location: Land Rear of 40 Victoria Road Fleur De Lis

Proposal: Full planning application for demolition of 40 Victoria Road, erection of 5 detached dwellings and formation of a new access.

Disclaimer: This report has been prepared for the use the applicants and Caerphilly Council and may not be relied upon by any other party.

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1. Introduction:

1.1. Purpose of Report

1.2. This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Hannaby Planning Solutions Ltd on behalf of Mr & Mrs Carrafa in support of a FULL planning application to Caerphilly Council for residential development of 40 Victoria Road, Fleur De Lis and land at the rear, as shown edged in RED on the submitted site location plan, with other land in the ownership of the applicants edged BLUE.

1.3. The statement is intended to provide an overview of the proposed scheme and site; how the context of the development has been appraised, the principles and concepts governing the design and how development plan policies and issues relating to access have been dealt with in the proposal.

1.4. All drawings in this report are for illustrative purposes only. The drawings which constitute the application are submitted separately and are listed in the covering letter.

1.5. Description of Development

1.6. The proposal is for the demolition of 40 Victoria Road, the erection of 5 detached dwellings on land at the rear of 40 Victoria Road and the formation of a new access onto Victoria Road, Fleur De Lis.

1.7. This 0.728ha site is located on the western side of Victoria Road, south of William Street and north of Twyn, Fleur De Lis, at the rear of numbers 22-42 Victoria Road, 4 William Street and numbers 1-3, 7 & 8 Twyn. The proposed houses comprise of 1no. 5 bedroom detached dwelling and 4no. 4 bedroom detached dwellings.

1.8. A new vehicular and pedestrian access is to be formed onto Victoria Road, which connects to Maesycwmmer and Ystrad Mynach to the south and Blackwood to the north.

1.9. The Brief and Vision

1.10. The brief and applicants' vision has evolved significantly during the formulation of the proposal.

1.11. The applicants are local to the area and had a vision of building their 'forever home' within the area for their family. The applicants' original vision to find a suitable site within the Blackwood area and build a family home. The application site was seen as a perfect opportunity to fulfil this dream and, after purchasing the site, they began exploring the possibilities of obtaining planning permission for a single dwelling.

- 1.12. The single dwelling was to be a self-build project and to be fully involved they intended to live on site in the existing dwelling during the creation of a new access and the construction of the new dwelling on the land at the rear. This would have enabled them to sell their existing house with the equity contributing towards the build costs. Once built the applicants were to move into the new house and sell the renovated, modernised and extended, existing house.
- 1.13. However, the planning application, Ref: 21/1101/FUL to enable this vision become a reality was refused planning permission on the 7th January 2022. Some reasons related to a lack of information on a number of technical issues that could be easily addressed. Others were more fundamental and related to the impact the proposed extensions would have on nearby houses and the character of the area, as well because the proposal was not considered to deliver sufficient housing.
- 1.14. To enable the owners to sell their existing dwelling and move into 40 Victoria Road as soon as possible, efforts were made to resolve the LPA's concerns. However, a pre-application enquiry (SPA/22/0057) and further discussions failed to resolve the issues.
- 1.15. Therefore, in August 2022, the applicants abandoned ideas of extending the existing house and instead focussed on developing a new vision based on what could be achieved in terms of new housing on site. At that time there was an extant planning permission for 20 dwellings (Ref: 18/0593/NCC); a renewal of a 2013 permission (ref: 08/1355/FULL).

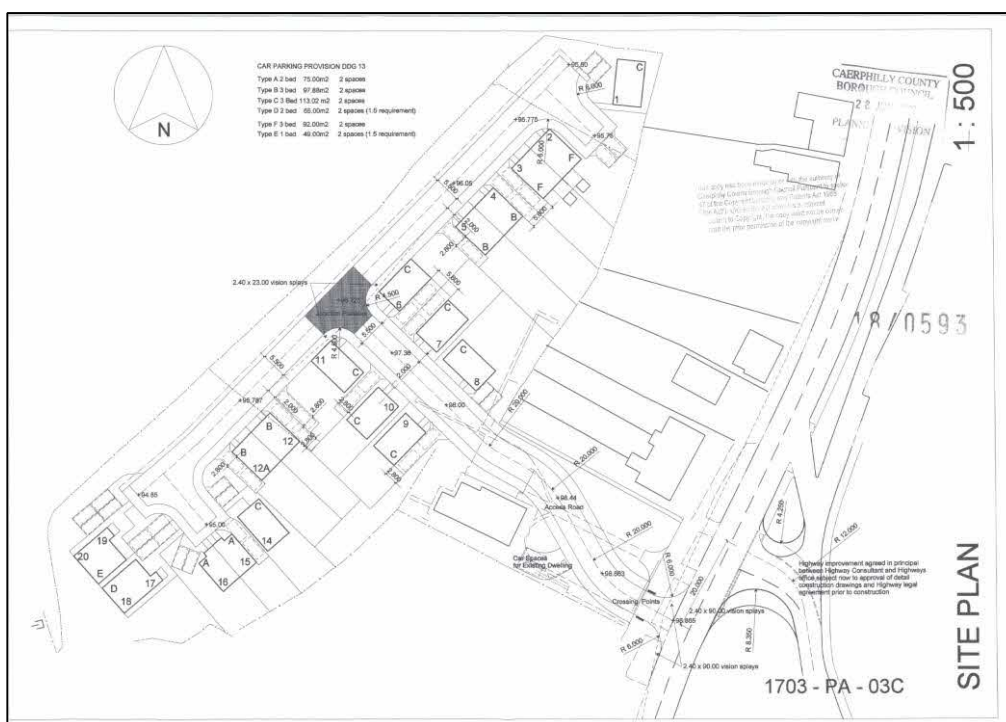


Figure 1: Approved layout plan 18/1355/FULL

- 1.16. It was clear that the LPA's aspirations were based on this extant consent and the applicants first considered whether the extant consent could be delivered.
- 1.17. The extant permission included land at the front of 41 Victoria Road which the previous owner had retained along with land at the rear. The applicants' land ownership is shown on site location plan (Ref: N345/A1.2 - Existing Site Layout). The following (Fig 2) shows the land ownership boundaries of numbers 40 and 41.

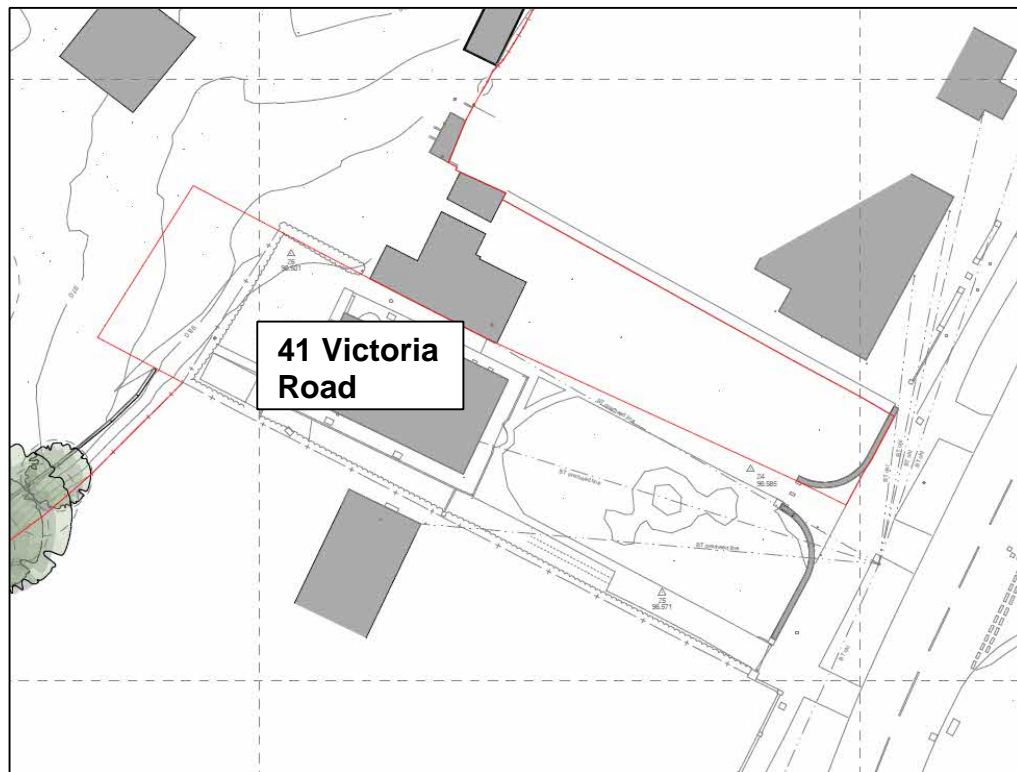


Figure 2: Curtilage of 41 Victoria Road

- 1.18. The retained parcel at the rear of number 41 prevents the erection of plot 9 of the extant consent. More fundamentally, the permitted access utilised the front garden of number 41 to provide a staggered junction with Castle Street junction opposite to avoid conflict between road users. It was concluded that the access cannot now be formed and planning permission (Ref: 18/0593/NCC) cannot be implemented as permitted.
- 1.19. The previous owner also retained the access that had previously served number 40; which now has no pedestrian or vehicular access.
- 1.20. Any new application to develop the land at the rear will have to be based on current land ownership and include a new access directly opposite the Castle Street junction rather than being staggered as previously approved. This means that the potential for vehicle conflict would be high if the proposed new access were to be an adoptable road serving 20 dwellings

as previously approved. A new access onto the site would therefore have to be one with a lower priority than Castle Street; a private drive serving the maximum number of dwellings that can be accessed off a private shared drive.

- 1.21. It is understandable why the previous owner retained this land and effectively stymied the implementation of the extant consent once one realises that, despite being advertised for sale with planning permission since 2013, no developer or housebuilder considered it feasible to develop. It appears that this reluctance was related to the findings of the site investigation report submitted with previous applications. It paints a picture of a difficult site to develop due to previous mine workings (the Mynyddislwyn coal seam), a quarry, landfill and a geological fault. Despite continued marketing; the site was only sold in 202; to the current owner.
- 1.22. In November 2022 a pre-application enquiry was submitted for the demolition of the existing dwelling, the formation of a new pedestrian and vehicular access and the erection of 5 houses (Ref: SPA22/0131).
- 1.23. The LPA response supported proposals for five dwellings and the Highway Authority confirmed that an access to serve 20 dwellings is no longer possible helped crystallise the applicants' vision to develop a high quality scheme for 5 dwellings, with one being for their occupation. The applicants' clear intention was to also retain the trees on the site and develop a layout which achieves that.
- 1.24. The brief to develop the vision was to create a high quality small scale scheme of an appropriate design and scale within the village context to:
 - create a legible and attractive entrance to the development which identifies its presence in the street-scene
 - demolish the existing house
 - form a new pedestrian and vehicular access off Victoria Road in accordance with Highway Authority advice
 - provide parking within the curtilage of all properties in accordance with adopted parking standards
 - protect the trees within and surrounding the site and ensure the Oak and Maple within the centre of the site remain significant features
 - ensure the layout and house design does not result in overlooking or loss of privacy to existing residents
 - design a scheme that compliments the character and appearance of the local area
 - limit scale and massing to 2 storey to ensure the development's relationship with surrounding dwellings is appropriate
 - provide much needed housing
 - provide ecological/biodiversity enhancements

- design a SuDS drainage scheme for sustainable drainage and biodiversity benefit.
- provide a high quality landscaped setting with new native trees, hedge planting and a landscaped entrance/frontage
- Provide a safe environment

Without adversely impacting on:

- highway safety
- the character of the village
- trees
- the amenities of adjoining residents
- local drainage
- protected species
- local environmental considerations

2. Site and Context Analysis:

2.1. Site Location and Description

2.2. Fleur De Lis is a small former colliery village, on the east side of the Rhymney River about 7 miles north of Caerphilly, within a cluster of villages that includes Pengam to the north, Blackwood to the east and, Tir-y-Berth, on the other side of the river to the west. It contains a good range of local services including a variety of local shops, a post office, a health centre, library, church, primary and secondary schools, public houses, hairdressers, playing fields and a variety of employment uses. As such the site is a sustainable location.

2.3. Number 40 Victoria Road is a modest 2 bedroom detached house with no bathroom at first floor level and only a WC at ground floor level. The 0.728ha application site area is an irregular shape, forming part of a larger 1.1ha landholding lying at the southern end of the village on the western side of the B4252, Victoria Road at the rear of numbers 22-42 Victoria Road with a frontage to Victoria Road provided by number 40.

2.4. To the north lies a short, narrow cul-de-sac; William Street with another to the south; Twyn. Running alongside the western boundary is a wooded area that forms part of the land ownership. The application site is an open area of land which, although relatively flat, gently slopes from east to west and from north to south; whereas the adjoining wooded area steeply slopes down to the Rhymney River.



Photo 1: Looking south from the Oak Tree



Photo 2: Looking south from the Maple Tree towards Tywn

2.5. Site Boundaries

2.6. The extent of the application is clearly indicated on the Site Location drawing which accompanies the Planning Application. The application site boundaries include a mixture of walls, fences and hedges between the site and the adjoining housing to the north, east and south with the western and south-eastern boundaries bordered by established mature trees.

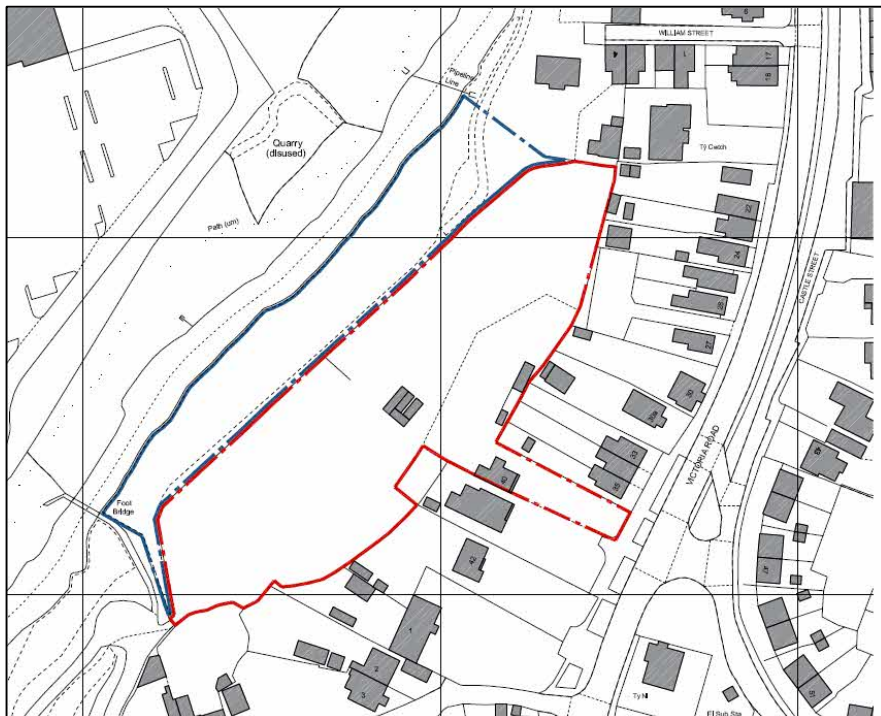


Figure 3: Site location edged red

Character/Context

- 2.7. The character of the immediately surrounding area is predominately residential although to the south west and a little distance from the site lies a car dismantlers and across the river to the west lies the Tir-Y-Birth industrial estate which incorporates a number of commercial activities.
- 2.8. The application site is an enclosed field at the rear of a dwelling house which is not prominent in the landscape and has no public use. It provides limited visual amenity to the public only as they pass by along Tywn to either visit the car dismantlers or walk across the river footbridge.

Built Form

- 2.9. The proposed site is outside of a Conservation Area and there are no heritage assets within the immediate vicinity or that will be affected.
- 2.10. The village has a very mixed architectural character with no prevailing style. The buildings comprise some 19th century/early 20th century terraces (more prominently in the historic core of the village), some pre and some post war development as well as some of more recent construction. The housing is a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses with an eclectic mix of building lines and styles.
- 2.11. The majority of buildings are 2 storeys but there are some 2.5 storey buildings and some single story, either interspersed within 2 storey development or in streets of bungalows. Roof design includes those with main gable roofs, hipped roofs or a mixture. There is an example of a 3 storey building; Pengam and Fleur De Lis Workmen's Library and Institute which was originally a 2 storey building.
- 2.12. There are a wide range of building materials used locally; bricks of varying colours, natural stone and render (smooth, rough and pebbledash) with occasional examples of wooden detailing or composite cladding. Roofing materials include slate, composite slate, clay and concrete tiles; some smooth and some profiled. Accordingly there are also a wide range of roof pitches and design ranges from simple forms to complicated roof designs.



Photo 3: Houses in Victoria Street near to site

- 2.13. Window styles and materials also cover a wide range reflecting the age range of the buildings in the village. There are very few examples where traditional wooden sash windows remain with most replaced with modern casement windows made of metal or, more often, UPVC.
- 2.14. The existing house has limited architectural merit or character and, in the immediate vicinity of the application site, other buildings are of varied styles typical of the village as set out above: traditional terraced houses, a bungalow and modern contemporary houses. Most are 2 storeys but there are a number of modern houses which have a frontage to Victoria Road that incorporate rooms in the roof space.



Photo 4 & 5: Houses in Victoria Street near to site

- 2.15. The building styles range from the simple to those with intricate architectural detailing; especially around windows and doors.



Photo 6: Houses in Victoria Street near to site

- 2.16. In terms of the building line in the immediate vicinity, on the western side of Victoria Road the application site signals a shift from buildings predominately lined up along the road frontage to the north, to those to the south being set back over 30m. On the opposite side of Victoria Road, the buildings front Castle Street but do not follow a defined building line.



Photo 7: Castle Street frontage



Photo 8: Victoria Road frontage north of site



Photo 9: Victoria Road frontage south of site

2.17. Flood Risk and Drainage

2.18. A Flood Consequences Assessment accompanies the application which confirms that residential development is considered to be 'highly vulnerable development' in accordance with TAN15.

- 2.19. The Welsh Government Development Advice Map (DAM) identifies the site as falling within Zone A – land which is at little/no risk of fluvial or tidal / coastal flooding (see Figure 4). Therefore, the FRA confirms that highly vulnerable development such as residential development is fully compliant with TAN15 and no further justification is required.



Figure 4: Extract from NRW Development Advice Map (DAM)

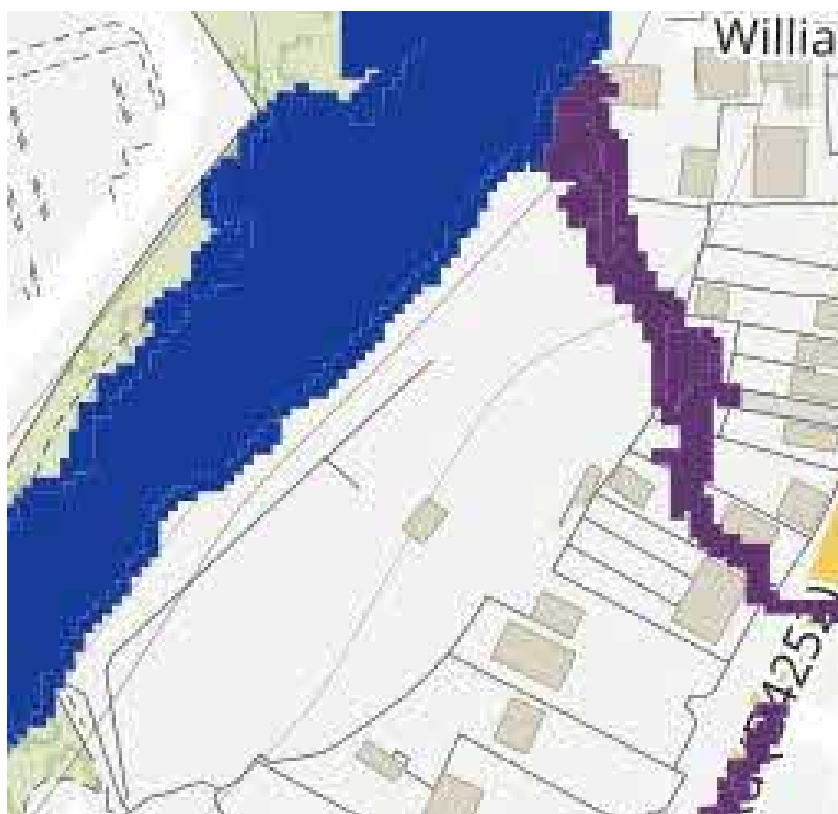


Figure 5: Extract from NRW Flood Map for Planning

- 2.20. The application site falls outside of the extreme flood extent (Flood Zone 1) from all sources with the exception of a small, isolated section in the north extent of the site, which is identified by the NRW Flood Map for Planning (see Figure 5) to be at risk from surface water and small watercourses; lying within Flood Zone 2 and 3. Although currently this plan has no status it does represent the latest available information. Both flood maps shown in Figures 4 and 5 are extracts from a full set of flood maps that can be found at Appendix E of the FRA which accompanies the application.
- 2.21. The FRA considers that the site is at Very Low Risk from fluvial and tidal flooding and surface water flooding is the main potential source of flood risk; albeit a Low Risk with minimal or no anticipated associated consequences. All other potential sources of flooding have been assessed and are concluded to be either Very Low or Low Risk. Mitigation measures and recommendations are contained in section 5 to ensure that any risks are residual, acceptable and manageable. As such the FRA concludes that the proposed development is fully compliant with PPW and TAN15.
- 2.22. A Drainage Strategy Report, drainage layout plan and a landscaping plan associated with the drainage strategy accompanies the application.



Figure 6: DCWW marked up drainage plan

- 2.23. The site is served via a mains drain for the discharge of foul and surface water. Figure 6 is an extract from Welsh Waters asset plan for the area, a copy of which can be found at Appendix D of the FRA.
- 2.24. Foul sewage from the site will discharge to the existing combined DCWW sewer as highlighted in Figure 6. Connections will be subject to S104 and S106 applications with DCWW. A peak foul water flow of 0.23l/s has been calculated for the development and a CCTV survey of the existing asset has been carried out to prove a gravitational connection to is viable. The survey also accurately plotted the position of the existing sewer on site to ensure that the 6m easement would be protected.
- 2.25. A SAB pre-application enquiry was submitted to ensure that the drainage strategy is acceptable to the Drainage Authority and the submitted drainage strategy follows the guidance in the SAB response. The proposed drainage strategy is designed to adoptable standards. A full SAB application will be submitted in parallel with the planning application and the implementation of the scheme.
- 2.26. Site Access:
- 2.27. The site location has good access in terms of road links, pedestrians, cyclists and buses.
- 2.28. The Rhymney Valley Linear Cycle Route - Heads of the Valleys to Bedwas / Caerphilly, Northern runs along the Victoria Road past the site.
- 2.29. In terms of public transport the nearest bus stops are approximately 0.5 miles away either to the north on Victoria Road opposite Gwent Court: route C9 Bargoed –Caerphilly; route 50 Bargoed-Caerphilly-Newport; and route C17 Bargoed –Caerphilly. To the east the nearest bus stop is on the A4049 at Ysgol Gufyn Cwm Rhymni (route 14; Bargoed to Blackwood). To the south the nearest stop is at the Angel Maesycwmmmer and route 7 Pontypridd –Blackwood; Route 26 Cardiff-Blackwood.
- 2.30. There is also a railway station 1.2 miles away at Pengam, on the Rhymney to Cardiff line; with 40 direct trains from Pengam to Cardiff Central each day taking approximately forty-five minutes, running from 06.30 until 22.00. These trains also stop at Caerphilly and Cardiff Queen Street.
- 2.31. Although the primary frontage to the site is to Victoria Road there is no pedestrian or vehicular access from it as the previous access has been retained by the owner of number 41. There is a gateway and access onto Twyn at the southern extremity of the site, which can be seen in the following photograph:



Photo 10: View of existing access onto Twyn

2.32. Trees

2.33. An arboricultural survey was carried out in November 2022. The majority of trees are on the periphery and the report identified those which require attention as well as defining the root protection area (RPA) for each tree. Within the centre of the site are 2 significant trees which would have been felled if the previous permission were implemented. These are T1, a 15m high category B Oak in fair condition and T43, a 16 m high category B Norway Maple tree in fair condition.

2.34. Ecology

2.35. The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment which comprised of a 1km desk top search for protected species as well as a field study of the site itself, examining the sites suitability for a range of species. A ground-level assessment and an assessment of trees on and adjoining the site and buildings on site were carried out.

Statutory & Non-Statutory Sites

2.36. There are three statutory sites within 2km of the application site; as detailed in Table 3 of the accompanying ecology report. Due to the distance between these statutory sites and the proposed development, no adverse impacts are anticipated to any of them.

2.37. There are no SACs or SSSIs specially designated for bats within 10km of the site.

2.38. There are a number of non-statutory sites within 2km of the application site; as detailed in Table 4 of the accompanying ecology report. No adverse impacts are anticipated to these non-statutory sites apart from the following two closest sites and any potential impacts can be fully avoided against by precautionary measures:

1. The River Rhymney:

The river adjoins the woodland slope west of the application site and although there is a considerable difference in levels between the site and the river, there are potential adverse impacts from construction and light spill. A construction and environmental management plan (CEMP) and pollution prevention measures will need to be drawn up and implemented to ensure that there are no detrimental impacts to the River Rhymney.

2. Victoria Road Slopes, Fleur De Lys:

The Slopes are 0.2km south-east and the proposed CEMP and pollution prevention measures should ensure that there are no detrimental impacts to the Victoria Road Slopes.

Trees

2.39. There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands, restored ancient woodlands or plantations on ancient woodland sites within 2km of the site. The closest is in the applicants' ownership; the Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland adjoining the site. This offers high-quality habitat for a number of species but is outside the application site and no works are proposed within it, although the arboricultural assessment identified that some Ash trees may need to be felled or reduced due to ash die-back.

2.40. The ecology report makes recommendations in section 4 to avoid and mitigate against any accidental damage to trees in the woodland or the individual trees within the site during construction works; such as from heavy plant movement over the root protection area or during general construction activities.

Habitats

2.41. Other areas of habitat are identified in the ecology report and relevant recommendations are set out in section 4 of the report. The report also notes that there are no invasive plant species within the site and none that are considered to be of either of national, regional or local significance.

Birds

2.42. A moderate number of birds were recorded on site, which contains numerous features that offer suitable habitats; all of which are widespread in the surrounding landscape. The report recommends carrying out any vegetation clearance outside the nesting season.

Dormice:

- 2.43. There is one record of dormice within 1km of the site dated from 2000; located in Cefn Hengoed Hillside, 0.5km west of the site. There was no evidence of dormouse found during the survey. However, the woodland contains a few plants known to form part of the dormouse diet and as such precautionary measures are recommended in section 4.

Otters:

- 2.44. There no records of Otters within 1km of the site and no evidence of otters along the river adjacent to the site. However, the report considers it is likely that otters forage and commute along the river and as such precautionary measures are recommended in section 4.

Water Vole:

- 2.45. There no records of Water Voles within 1km of the site and no evidence of Water Voles along the river adjacent to the site although the banks appear superficially suitable for burrowing. Therefore precautionary measures are recommended in section 4.

2.46.



Reptiles:

- 2.47. There are 4 records of reptiles (all slow-worms) within 1km of the site. The survey area contains a range of optimal and suboptimal habitats for reptiles but there was no direct evidence of any reptiles on the site. As the proposed development could result in the loss of potential habitat and site clearance may accidentally kill or injure reptiles should they be present in the future, the report recommends mitigation measures in section 4.

Other Mammals:

- 2.48. There are 16 records of other mammals within 1km of the site: hedgehog, American mink, eastern grey squirrel and polecat. The woodland is suitable to support a range of other mammals but no works are proposed to it.
- 2.49. The only evidence of other mammals on site was multiple molehills to the south of the site. However, the proposed development and site clearance may also result in the accidental killing or injury of commuting or foraging small mammals, if present. Therefore section 4 recommends vegetation clearance methods that should avoid impacts to small mammals.

Invertebrates:

- 2.50. There are 46 records of invertebrates within 1km of the site of which 31 are priority invertebrate species. These include various moths and butterflies as listed in para 3.6.10 of the report. 3 invertebrate species of conservation concern and 12 locally important species were recorded within 1km of the site. On the site itself 2 cabbage white butterflies (*Pieris rapae*) and 1 gatekeeper butterfly (*Pyronia tithonus*) were recorded.
- 2.51. The habitats on site are assumed to support various invertebrates but it is unlikely these will support any notable or rare species. While some habitat loss will occur, the invertebrates on site are likely to be relatively common and unlikely to rely solely on the site for their continued survival. Habitat loss can be more than offset by providing a range of new habitats within the development that will benefit invertebrates.

Bats:

- 2.52. There are 4 records of bat roosts within 1km of the site; 1 Common Pipistrelle (0.6km south) and 3 unidentified bats (0.7km west). There are also many records of bats foraging or commuting within 1km of the site.
- 2.53. The applicants' land ownership is considered to provide high quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats due to the woodland on the western boundary. These habitats form a continuous habitat corridor and connect the site to the wider landscape.
- 2.54. The trees within the site lack suitable roosting features such as holes, cracks or crevices and are considered to have negligible potential for supporting roosting bats. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that bats would roost in them even on a casual basis. Nonetheless, all are to be retained. A preliminary ground-level roost assessment of the trees was undertaken but no evidence of roosting bats was found.
- 2.55. The six buildings within the site were assessed as potential roosts for bats. These are identified in the ecology report; the existing dwelling and various single storey outbuildings. No evidence of bats was found in any building and their potential for providing suitable roosts was rated as moderate (buildings 1, 2, 3 & 6), low (building 4) and negligible (building 5). The report recommends further surveys for buildings 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 before any works commence to determine if a bat development licence will be required, to inform avoidance measures and determine the requirement for mitigation and/or compensation measures.
- 2.56. The report also identified possible indirect impacts from potential significant increases in artificial lighting levels both during construction and occupation of the development and recommends a lighting strategy.

2.57. However, it is not the applicants' intention to demolish all 6 existing 'buildings' on site. The following plan shows the 6 existing buildings on-site that were identified by the ecologists:



Figure 7: Existing buildings on site

2.58. Figure 7 is an extract from a demolition plan which accompanies the application that confirms which buildings will be demolished in phase 1 and phase 2 and which will be permanently retained. The 6 buildings are identified on the above plan with the same references as used in the PEA report. Photographs of each one can be found on pages 26-30 of the PEA report and their positions are also identified on plan 6 of the PEA and plan 2 of the Dusk Emergence Survey Report.

2.59. Building 1 (coloured red) is the existing dwelling and will be demolished as part of phase 1 to enable access and drainage to be provided to serve plot 1 initially. Building 2 (coloured orange) is a wooden outbuilding in the centre of the site which will be used for equipment storage during phase 1 and only demolished on commencement of phase 2.

2.60. Phase 2 will not commence until plot 1 has been completed and occupied and further ground investigations have been carried out across the rest of the site to enable the design of specialist foundations for plots 2-5 and/or the design of ground stabilisation works. This is likely to take some time to resolve and, as such, any emergence surveys carried out now for building B2 would inevitably have to be repeated prior to its demolition.

- 2.61. It is the applicants' intention to retain buildings 3, 4, 5 & 6 as outbuildings as they do not need to be demolished to carry out the development.
- 2.62. An ecological survey can only identify what is present on site at the time and habitat usage by species can change over time. Therefore during phase 1 it is considered sufficient to survey Building 1 and carry out the survey of building 2 at the appropriate time.
- 2.63. Emergence surveys for building 1 were carried out on 2 occasions as recommended in the PEA. They were conducted by 3 surveyors on 7th July 2023 and 5th August 2023. Surveyor details can be found in Appendix 3 of the Dusk Emergence Survey Report and their positions during the survey can be found at plan 2 in the report. A summary of weather conditions and the survey results are contained in section 3 of the Dusk Emergence Survey Report which accompanies the application.
- 2.64. In summary, no bats were observed emerging from building 1 or interacting closely with it during either survey. Bats were observed foraging in a north to south direction, within the front garden during the first survey and, during both surveys, were observed commuting in a west to east direction, adjacent to the northern side of the house.
- 2.65. Moderate levels of activity of common pipistrelles were recorded throughout the both surveys with lower levels of activity of soprano pipistrelle recorded during the first survey.
- 2.66. In addition, a visual search of building 1 was undertaken for active bird nests, as well as any signs of either past or current nesting. No signs were found within or on the exterior of the house during either survey.
- 2.67. Based on the conclusion that bats are unlikely to be using the house as a roost site and birds are not currently nesting within or on it, no negative direct or indirect impacts on bats or birds are anticipated. The report also concludes that a protected species license is not required for the demolition and, in section 6.2, makes a number of precautionary recommendations to minimise risks to bats and birds.
- 2.68. The overall conclusions of the PEA and the Dusk Emergence Survey Report are that the site's ecological value is not considered to represent a fundamental in-principal constraint to the proposed development. In paragraphs 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 the report makes recommendations for ecological enhancements, which can be secured by planning conditions.

2.69. Surveys

2.70. A topographical survey of the site been submitted as part of this Planning Application. This survey forms the basis for the submitted drawings.

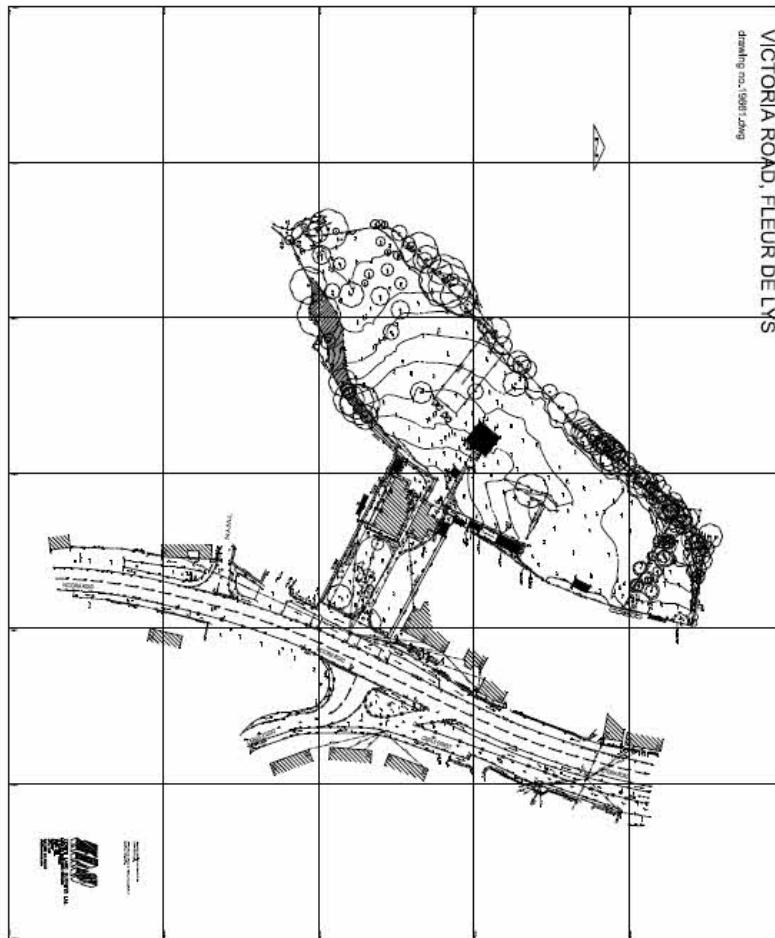


Figure 8: Topographical Survey Plan

2.71. An analysis of the local context, current design policy and guidance has shaped the proposals and as a result the main landscape and habitat features, such as trees and hedges, will not be affected, the proposed building design and site layout will protect the amenities of existing residents and the development compliments the character of the area.

2.72. Coal Mining Risk Assessment

2.73. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA) has been undertaken and accompanies the application. It has influenced the proposed layout and phasing plan.

2.74. The report concludes that the southern part of the site was occupied by a quarry which closed in the early 1920s. Later re-profiling appears evident from historical plans, but it is unknown if and to what extent the quarry has been infilled. The site is underlain by made ground and the solid geology consists of mudstones and siltstones of the Grovesend Formation.

2.75. The Mynyddislwyn coal seam lies at a shallow depth beneath the site, dipping towards the north (18m and 21m depth respectively). Depending on the amount of rock-head cover above the workings, the site is considered to be at high risk of mining related ground instability. Therefore an intrusive investigation is recommended prior to commencement to determine the depth and thickness of workings and any ground remedial works. The risk in terms of mine gas is considered high. Investigation is therefore required to confirm the risk to the proposed development.

2.76. Noise Assessment

2.77. Due to the proximity of the existing Tir-Y-Birth industrial estate to the proposed residential development, a Noise Assessment Report accompanies the planning application.

2.78. A noise survey was carried out between 10.30hrs, Wednesday 19th and 11.00hrs, Thursday 20th April 2023 in accordance with good practise. It concludes that the 'desirable' internal noise level targets for habitable spaces obtained from BS 8233 can be met with suitable glazing and ventilation specifications that are recommended in the report.

2.79. Planning Policy Context:

2.80. National Planning Guidance:

- Future Wales: The National Plan (Edition 11, 2021);
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021);
- Technical advice note 2: planning and affordable housing (2006)
- Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009);
- Technical Advice Note 10: Tree Preservation Orders (1997);
- Technical Advice Note 11: Noise (1997);
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016);
- Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004);
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007).

2.81. The Development Plan

2.82. The site and its surroundings are located within Caerphilly County, where the development plan consists of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021; adopted in 2010. The following policies are considered relevant to the proposed development:

Strategic Policies:

- Policy SP2 Development Strategy - Development within the Northern Connections Corridor(NCC);
- Policy SP4 Settlement Strategy
- Policy SP5 Settlement Boundaries;
- Policy SP6 Place Making;

- Policy SP7 Planning Obligations;
- Policy SP10 Conservation of Natural Heritage;
- Policy SP14 Total Housing Requirements;
- Policy SP15 Affordable Housing Target; and
- Policy SP21 Parking Standards.

Countywide Policies:

- Policy CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion;
- Policy CW2 Amenity;
- Policy CW3 Design considerations - Highways;
- Policy CW4 Natural Heritage Protection;
- Policy CW5 Protection of the Water Environment;
- Policy CW6 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection;
- Policy CW11 Affordable Housing Provision; and
- Policy CW15 General Locational Constraints.
- Policy EM2 Employment Sites Protection

2.83. Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.84. The following adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance are considered relevant;

- LDP 1 Affordable Housing Obligations (updated 2020);
- LDP 4 Trees and Development (Updated 2017);
- LDP 5 Car Parking Standards (Updated 2014); and
- LDP 6 Building Better Places to Live;

2.85. Planning History:

08/1355/FULL - residential development - Granted 31.07.13.

12/0714/TPO - Cut back the small twigs of two trees that are protruding through the boundary fence - Granted 26.10.2012.

18/0593/NCC - Vary condition 1 of planning consent 08/1355/FULL to extend development for a further five years - Granted 04.09.18.

21/1101/FULL - Remodel existing house to include single storey front extension, rear ground and first floor extension and second floor loft extension together with proposed dwelling with access arrangements and associated works – Refused - 07.01.2022.

SPA/22/0057 – Pre-application enquiry - erect single storey front extension and two and single storey rear extensions, raise roof height and develop a dormer and create new pedestrian and vehicular access and parking arrangements for 3 vehicles.

SPA/22/0131 - Pre-application enquiry - Demolish existing dwelling and erect 5 detached dwellings and create new pedestrian and vehicular access onto Victoria Road.

3. Interpretation

- 3.1. Any new application to develop the land at the rear will have to be based on current land ownership; with a new access opposite the Castle Street junction. A private drive serving a fewer number of dwellings would have a lower priority than an adoptable highway and reduce conflict with traffic using the junction opposite. According to Policy CW3 and Appendix 16 of the adopted Local Plan, the Highway Authority would allow a maximum number of 5 dwellings off a private drive.
- 3.2. Neither the 2013 permission nor the 2018 permission took full account of trees on the site. The development for 20 houses would result in the loss of significant trees and the applicants wanted to retain them because of their significance in landscape and ecology/biodiversity terms.
- 3.3. The following concept plan illustrates the set of principles and objectives, which provided a framework during the design process. These are based on the pre-application advice, the planning policy framework and the existing context and character of the area:

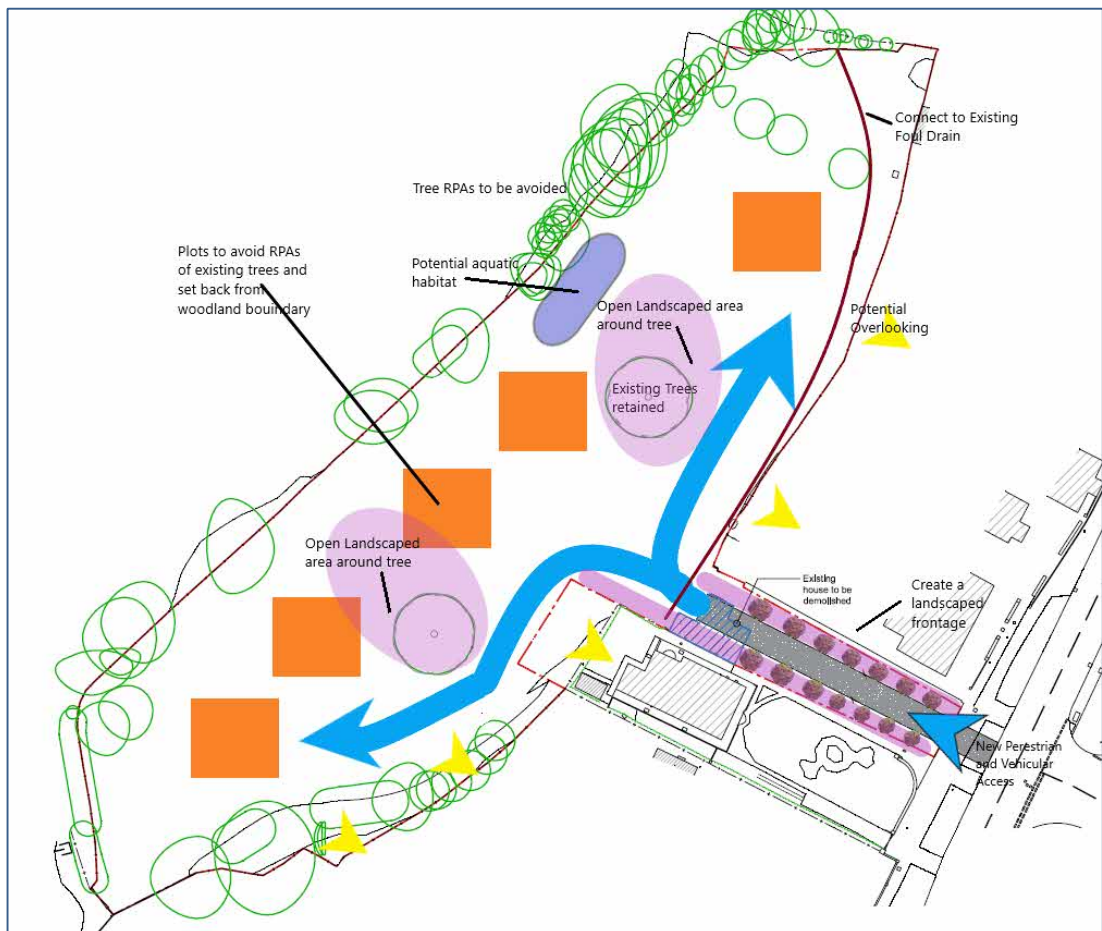


Figure 9: Concept Plan

4. Design

4.1. Concept and Evolution

4.2. The vision to create a high-quality small scale scheme has informed the concept and all stages of the design evolution of the scheme.

Concept:

4.3. The concept for the residential development sought to:

- demolish the existing house
- create a legible and attractive entrance
- form a new pedestrian and vehicular access off Victoria
- provide parking within the curtilage of all properties
- protect the trees within and surrounding the site
- ensure the Oak and Maple within the centre of the site remain significant landscape features within the development
- protect existing residents from overlooking or loss of privacy
- compliment the character and appearance of the local area
- limit scale and massing to 2 storey
- provide much needed housing
- provide ecological/biodiversity enhancements
- provide a SuDS drainage scheme for sustainable drainage and biodiversity benefit.
- provide a high quality landscaped setting with new native trees, hedge planting and a landscaped entrance/frontage
- Provide a safe environment

Without adversely impacting on:

- highway safety
- the character of the village
- trees
- the amenities of adjoining residents
- local drainage
- protected species
- local environmental considerations

Design Evolution:

4.4. The refusal of planning application Ref: 21/1101/FUL and the LPAs responses to pre-application enquiry (SPA/22/0057) resulted, in August 2022, the applicants focussing on developing a new vision for the site.

4.5. A series of draft layouts for 5 dwellings were drafted for initial discussion:

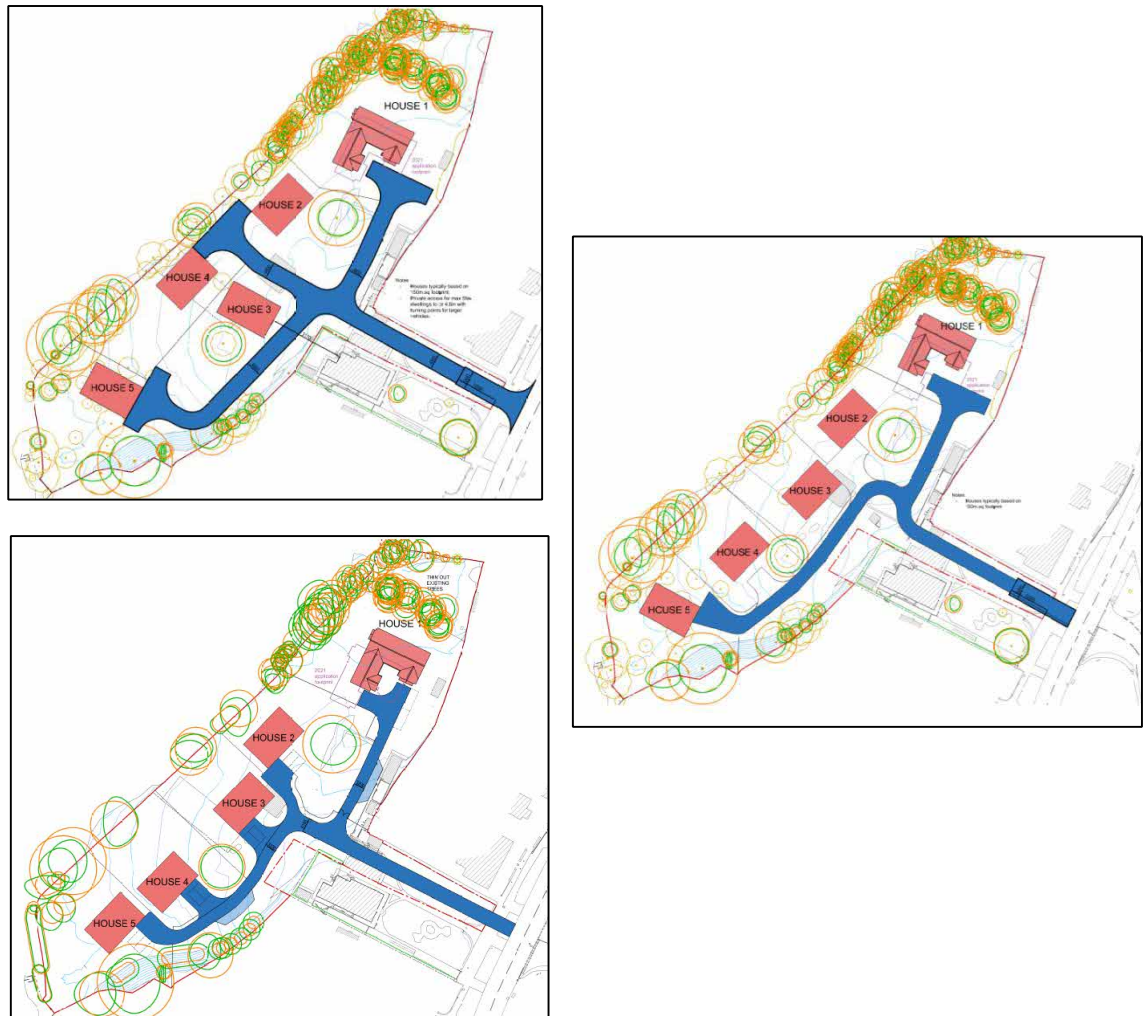


Figure 10: Initial Sketch layouts

- 4.6. These initial sketches considered how 5 dwellings could sit between the existing trees in and around the site and how the access drive could be designed to serve each dwelling without impacting upon their RPAs or requiring them to be felled by winding its way between them. The existing oak and maple within the middle of the site were to remain as significant landscape features and not enclosed within individual private gardens.
- 4.7. The access needed to be of sufficient width to allow 2 vehicles to pass and incorporate turning facilities so that all vehicles that enter and leave the site can do so safely. Where the drive width needed to be reduced to protect the trees, passing places would be incorporated instead.
- 4.8. The sketches also addressed the interrelationships between the proposed dwellings and with the existing dwellings.

- 4.9. The various amendments resulted in a sketch which was then developed into a more detailed draft layout to submit for pre-application planning advice (see Fig: 11). Indicative landscaping was added on either side of the access drive to help create a legible and attractive entrance, a turning head for large vehicles and passing places along each spur were added to avoid the driveway being too wide and impacting upon the trees and the distance between facing elevations is at least 21m to ensure adequate privacy:

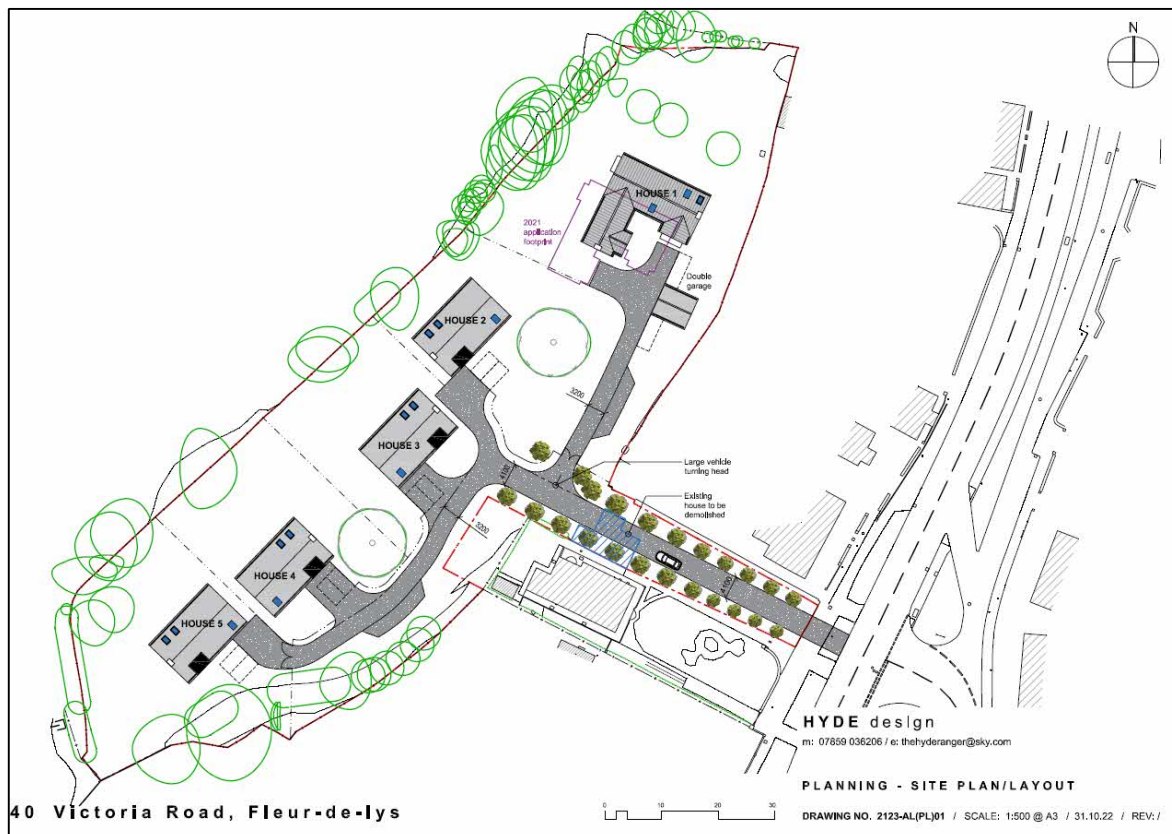


Figure 11: Pre-app advice plan

- 4.10. In November 2022 a pre-application enquiry was submitted (Ref: SPA22/0131). These proposals included the demolition of the existing dwelling, the erection of 5 new dwellings and a new access.
- 4.11. The LPA response, in February 2023, confirmed that the principle of residential development in this location is in accordance with LDP policy SP5. It also noted there is a protected oak tree and adjoining protected woodland (TPO 50/09/CCBC) as well as the adjoining Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC reference NH3.1 River Rhymney).
- 4.12. The LPA response went on to point out that the proposed density is significantly lower than 30 dwellings per hectare and lower than the previous consent. However, the advice also noted that the density of the area varies considerably and a lower density would be more realistic;

expressing a preference for an 'intermediate' number of dwellings. Comments from the Planning Policy team acknowledged that the extant consent 'weighs in the proposal's favour.'

- 4.13. Subsequent correspondence and discussions with the LPA in March 2023 confirmed that the Local Planning Authority would support five dwellings subject to satisfying all other material considerations.
- 4.14. Subsequent correspondence with the Highway Authority in March 2023 confirmed that a staggered junction would be required if the proposal was for 20 dwellings and, due to the inability to create a staggered junction, agreed it is no longer possible to form an access to serve 20 dwellings.
- 4.15. With a positive response from planning and highway authorities, the applicants' vision therefore crystallised to develop a high quality scheme for 5 dwellings.
- 4.16. The design and layout of the scheme has evolved further in direct response to the feedback from the LPA and its consultees. Specific comments were made by the LPA and its consultees about access, parking and turning arrangements, landscaping, waste and recycling points, privacy of adjoining residents, design issues, ecology, potential noise issues, drainage and affordable housing. All of these comments have been addressed in the proposed scheme.

5. The Proposal

- 5.1. Character
- 5.2. The proposal is based on the land ownership of the applicants and, as such, must include a new access directly opposite the Castle Street junction rather than being staggered as previously approved.
- 5.3. This means that the potential for vehicle conflict would be high if the proposed new access were to be of the same priority as Castle Street: i.e. an adoptable road serving the maximum number of dwellings the site could accommodate; approximately 20. Therefore a new access onto the site needs to be one with a lower priority than Castle Street; a private drive serving the maximum number of dwellings that can be accessed off a private shared drive.
- 5.4. The maximum number allowed off a private drive by the highway authority and planning policy CW3 & Appendix 16 of the Local Plan is 5 dwellings and this has defined the amount and density of development. Plot layout and size varies considerably in the village but the proposed plot sizes are similar to those in the immediate vicinity, as can be seen from Figure 14.

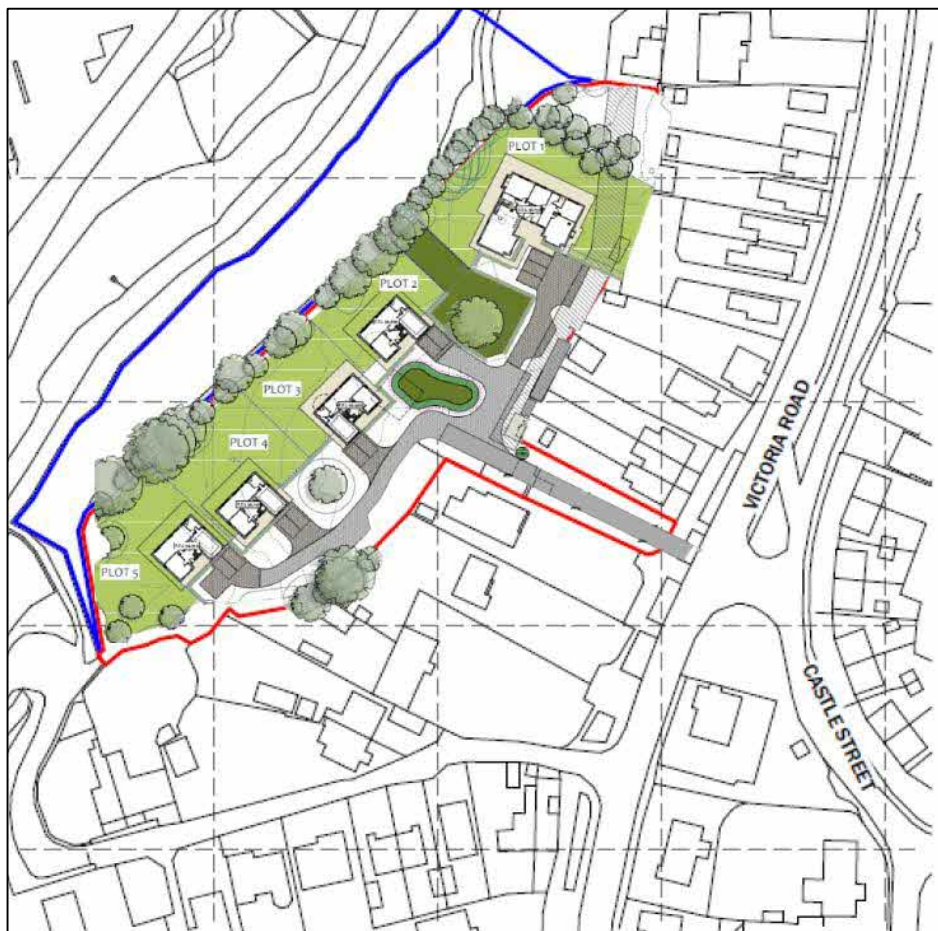


Figure 12: Proposed Layout in context

- 5.5. The housing is set back behind existing housing and existing trees in a linear form in accordance with the character of the area.
- 5.6. The layout is designed so that the 5 dwellings and access drive winds between the existing trees in and around the site without requiring them to be felled or impacting upon their RPAs. The existing oak and maple within the middle of the site remain as significant landscape features and are not enclosed within individual private gardens.

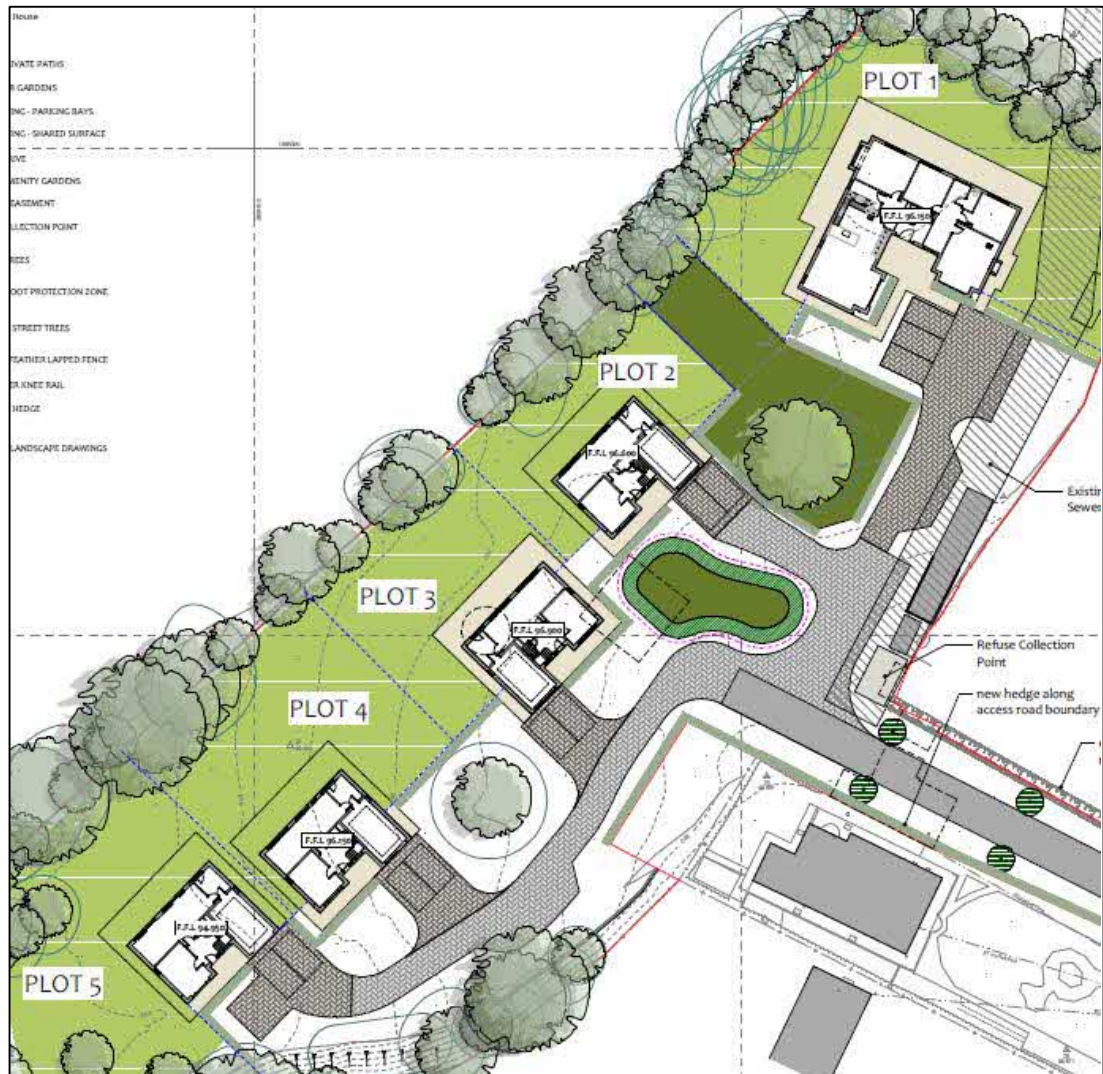


Figure 13: Proposed plot layout and driveways

- 5.7. The access needed to be of sufficient width to allow 2 vehicles to pass and incorporate turning facilities so that all vehicles that enter and leave the site can do so safely. Where the drive width needed to be reduced to protect the trees, passing places would be incorporated instead.
- 5.8. The proposed scale and massing compliments the urban grain of the adjoining area, being predominantly 2 storeys. The well-defined and

landscaped site entrance creates a legible and attractive entrance to the development which identifies its presence in the street-scene



Figure 14: Perspective View from site entrance

- 5.9. Proposed floor levels will follow the existing levels across the site and the ridge heights of the new dwellings will fit in behind the existing street scene and will not form an intrusive or dominant feature.

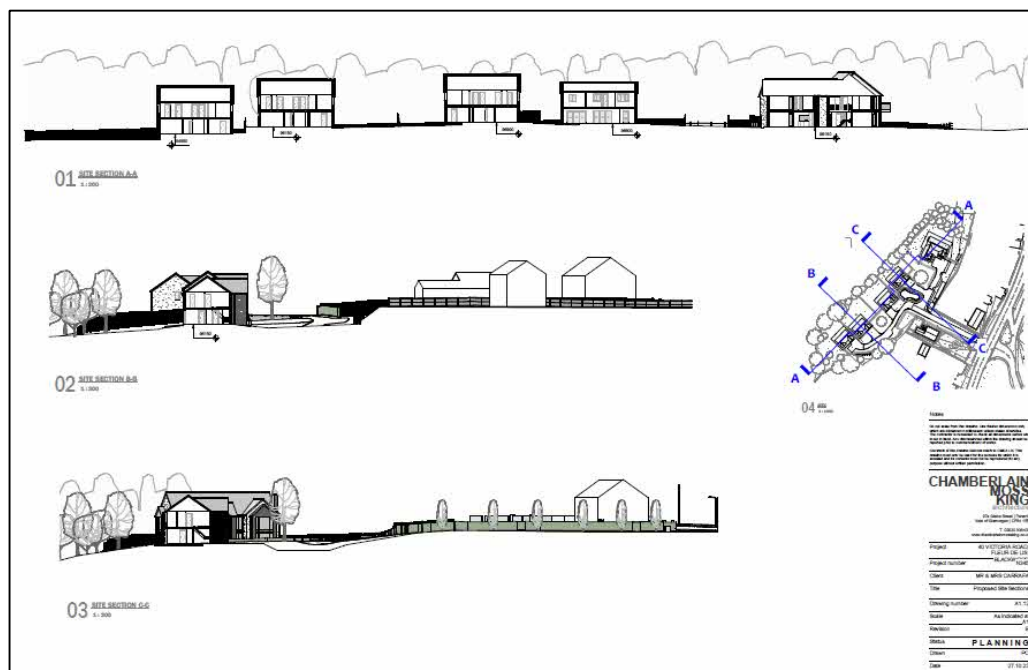


Figure 15: Sections across the site

- 5.10. Existing trees within the site are retained and form significant landscape features in the proposed layout.



Figure 16: Perspective View Plots 1-3

- 5.11. The dwellings are designed to complement the character of the area with are relatively simple fenestration details, facing materials typical of the area (stone and render walls) and gable roofs with 2 storey gable projections at the front.



Figure 17: Proposed external appearance

- 5.12. Access and Movement
- 5.13. Fleur De Lis is considered a sustainable location and the application site is a sustainable transport location. It is capable of being accessed by a variety of modes of transport and is sufficiently close to local amenities to avoid a dependence on the use of cars.

Baseline Condition

- 5.14. Active Travel. The site is well located with a range of local facilities easily accessible via walking and cycling. These include: bus stops, convenience

stores, a post office, a health centre, library, playing fields, church, public houses, hairdressers, primary and secondary school provision and a variety of employment uses.

- 5.15. Bus Services. The nearest bus stops are approximately 0.5 miles away to the north on Victoria Road opposite Gwent Court, to the east on the A4049 at Ysgol Gufyn Cwm Rhymni and to the south at The Angel Inn, Maesycwmmmer. These provide regular direct services to Bargoed, Caerphilly, Blackwood, Pontypridd, Newport and Cardiff (see paragraph 2.30 for details) with connections to further destinations from these locations.
- 5.16. Rail Services. There is a railway station 1.2 miles away at Pengam, on the Rhymney to Cardiff line; with 40 direct trains from Pengam to Cardiff Central each day taking approximately forty-five minutes, running from 06.30 until 22.00. These trains also stop at Caerphilly and Cardiff Queen Street.
- 5.17. It has been demonstrated that the site is in a sustainable location with respect to the proximity to local facilities and the proximity of sustainable transport to access local and national destinations.

Proposals

- 5.18. A new 4.1m wide vehicular and pedestrian access is to be formed onto Victoria Road (B4252) within the existing 30mph speed restricted area. 2.5m x 43m visibility sight lines will be provided within land owned by the highway authority (see plan N345-A1.16. Rev A).



Figure 18: Proposed access arrangements

- 5.19. An existing street lighting column will be relocated immediately to the north of its current position and placed outside the visibility sight lines.
- 5.20. A turning area will be provided for refuse and large vehicles at the end of the initial section of the shared access road, in front of plots 2 & 3 (see Figure 17 and plan N345-A1.16. Rev A). A refuse collection point will be provided at this location. Swept paths are shown on the plan to confirm that they are suitable for large vehicles as well as service, delivery and emergency vehicles.
- 5.21. To the north of the turning head are individual driveways to plots 1 & 2 and to the south is a 3.2m wide shared driveway to plots 3-5 with a passing place along its length.
- 5.22. Parking provision. All properties will have parking provision within their curtilage in accordance with LDP5; 3 parking spaces per dwelling with plots 2-5 incorporating 1 of the spaces within an integral garage which have clear internal dimensions of 3.5m x 6m; which also meets the adopted standards.

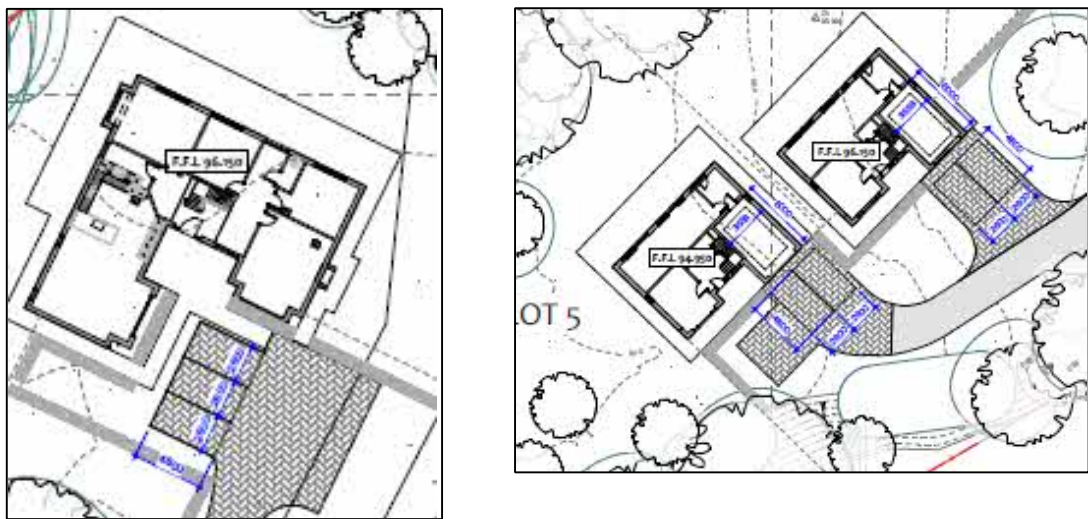


Figure 19: Parking provision

Impact of Proposals

- 5.23. The proposal is modest in scope (5 dwellings) as compared to the previous permission for the site (20 dwellings) and therefore its impact would likely be indiscernible on the immediate or wider road network.
- 5.24. As demonstrated in Figure 15 the site is relatively level and as such there are no challenging gradients that would limit accessibility of the site and ensures that all users will have convenient access into the site to all the new dwellings.

6. Environmental Sustainability

Landscape and Ecology

6.1. Landscape design will seek to create an attractive and biodiverse landscape through a range of features including:

- Protection of the existing trees within and surrounding the development
- An infiltration (drainage) pond as part of a SuDS scheme which creates an attractive feature and periodically hold water thereby attracting a range of wildlife
- 'Rain gardens' within each plot as part of a SuDS scheme which creates an attractive feature and will attract a range of wildlife
- New native species hedges
- New native species trees

6.2. The plot layout has been amended through the design process and the individual dwellings have been designed to create a relationship with the existing trees within the site that ensures any impact from shading will be minimised.

6.3. The site entrance will be defined by new native species hedge along its boundary with number 41 and, in addition, it is proposed to plant 3 native species trees such as Silver Birch (*Betula Pendula*) and/or Wild Cherry (*Prunus Avium 'Plena'*) on either side of the new access drive. These trees have a light canopy and are of a size that does not create excessive shading and they will be planted to avoid any impact on adjoining neighbours.

6.4. Individual plots will be defined by 1.8m high feather lapped fences to the sides and between each of the dwellings, with a new native species hedge in front. Rear boundaries of the individual plots will remain as existing. The infiltration pond will be bounded by a 0.9m high timber knee rail.

6.5. Ecological precautionary, mitigation and protection measures are recommended in the attached PEA and Dusk Emergence Survey; which includes the production of a CEMP, reptile surveys, using predominately native plants across the site, installing bird and bat boxes, a sensitive lighting strategy, pollution control and contingency measures to protect the water quality of the Rhymney River, protective fencing for trees and timing of vegetation clearance. These can be secured by planning conditions.

Energy and Resource Efficiency

6.6. The development will use sustainable construction methods and sustainable local materials where possible to deliver energy efficient heat and lighting, water efficient fittings and fixtures, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling and waste recycling. Renewable energy will be

incorporated into the development where possible to create comfortable homes with minimal running costs by the use of heat pumps, solar or other sources of energy and heat.

- 6.7. The proposed drainage strategy is designed to adoptable standards and follows the guidance in the SAB response to the SAB pre-application enquiry. A full SAB application will be submitted in parallel with the planning application and the implementation of the scheme.
- 6.2. The development will incorporate a SuDS drainage system for surface water runoff & permeable surfacing. In summary, the drainage in the site access road will drain via traditional gulleys into an attenuation basin before a flow control device limited to 0.7/s allowing flows into an infiltration crate in a proposed shared space. Individual driveways will be constructed from lined permeable paving discharging to the plot soakaways.
- 6.3. Due to gradients across the site, storage within the sub base of the permeable paving is not considered suitable. Roof areas will discharge into rainwater butts which will have a high-level overflow into a below ground network discharging to a raingarden with crates below, before infiltration into the ground.

Waste Minimisation

- 6.8. All development generates waste. Waste is: Materials that are unwanted having been left over after the completion of a process and which would otherwise be discarded.
- 6.9. In new developments this is initially often as a result of site clearance, demolition and construction. Whilst this is a transient impact, once occupied, the site will continue to generate waste. This can be addressed by a combination of management and construction measures.
- 6.10. National policy seeks to protect both the environment and the health of the population by ensuring less waste is produced and, wherever possible, re-used.
- 6.11. The sustainable design principles of waste minimisation are:
 - reduce the amount of construction waste generated
 - reduce the amount of waste generated by occupation
 - re-use construction arisings
 - re-use waste on-site to reduce transport
 - use recycled materials
- 6.12. The design process has considered the various stages of the project; site clearance, layout, construction and occupation, and applied the above

principles at each stage so as to minimise the generation of waste and ensure it is reused where possible.

Site Clearance:

- 6.13. There will be no clearance of trees. The only demolition required is the demolition of the existing dwelling and the proposed development will seek to re-use demolition materials on site where possible.
- 6.14. Any topsoil stripped off to enable construction works will be stored for re-use on site.

Layout:

- 6.15. The layout of roads and dwellings has considered the access requirements of refuse and recycling vehicles and a refuse/recycling collection point is shown on the proposed site layout plans.

Construction:

- 6.16. Construction waste management will promote resource efficiency and ensure waste from the construction phase is minimised, re-used or recycled;
- Avoid unnecessary excavation and where it is unavoidable, using arisings on site for landscaping etc.
 - Use recycled materials where possible.
 - Imported materials will be recycled or locally sourced wherever possible, subject to availability
 - Provide SuDS drainage, water efficient fittings and fixtures, rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling
 - Materials for basic building & finishing will be responsibly sourced

Occupation:

- 6.17. Recycling will be provided by internal storage containers and external recycling provisions to encourage recycling and reduce waste.
- 6.18. Community Safety
- 6.19. Safety of residents is of particular importance. The following is noted regarding features included in the design:
- Lighting will be provided along the shared drives using low level lighting that both provides safety for residents but also avoids harmful impacts upon bats or other animals that are active at night.
 - The access is a shared space of sufficient width to enable residents to safely access the public footpaths connecting to community facilities in the village.

- Defensible space: Houses are arranged facing the front of the site creating naturally defensible space.
- Parking is generally located to the front of houses creating a strong relationship between homes (windows) and the street.
- Housing is orientated to provide good passive supervision of the site frontage.

6.20. Response to Planning Policy

6.21. The site is neither allocated nor protected by planning policy but is located within the Blackwood settlement boundary as identified in the Local Plan and, as such, the principle of residential development in this location is therefore acceptable and in accordance with LDP policies SP4 (Settlement Strategy) and SP5 (Settlement Boundaries).

6.22. The proposed layout and design of the development has been formulated in accordance with policy SP6 (Place Making) and TAN 12 (Design) by having full regard to the local, natural and built environment context as set out above in section 5; in particular the presence of protected trees within and around the site, its scale and its relationship to its surroundings and context; as set out in section 5.

6.23. The proposed density is less than the nationally recommended 30 dwellings per hectare. However, the density of the area varies considerably and the immediate vicinity is characterised by a lower density. In addition, it has been demonstrated that the application has to be based on current land ownership which can only be served by an access of lower priority than Castle Street; a private shared drive. The proposed number of dwellings is the maximum that would be supported by Policy CW3, Appendix 16 of the adopted Local Plan and the Highway Authority; which allows a maximum of 5 dwellings off a private drive.

6.24. The proposed access and parking provision has been formulated to comply with **Manual For Streets**, Policy CW3 (Design considerations – Highways), Policy SP21 (Parking Standards) and SPG LDP 5: (Car Parking Standards) in terms of the width of the access, the use of passing places, the visibility at the junction, the number and size of parking spaces for each plot.

6.25. The layout complies with Policy CW15 (General Locational Constraints) as regards its relationship with surrounding housing and the nearby employments site. It also complies with Policy CW2 (Amenity) in terms of its relationships with surrounding dwellings. In terms of other uses, the layout and proposals comply with PPW, Tan 11 (Noise) and Policy EM2 (Employment Sites Protection); as evidenced by the findings of the accompanying Noise Survey.

- 6.26. There is a protected oak tree (T1) on the site, an adjoining protected woodland and an adjoining SINC (reference NH3.1 River Rhymney). The layout ensures that all existing trees are protected in accordance with criterion C of Policy CW6 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection) and TAN 10 (Tree Preservation Orders).
- 6.27. In accordance with TAN 5 (Nature Conservation and Planning), Policy SP10 (Conservation of Natural Heritage), an extended phase 1 habitats survey has been carried out and a subsequent dusk emergence survey for bats.
- 6.28. A site investigation has been carried out to investigate the suitability of a SuDs scheme for the site and the proposed surface water drainage strategy demonstrates that the proposed development can achieve national and local requirements through an infiltration led drainage strategy. The FRA confirms that the proposed development such is fully compliant with PPW and TAN15 (Development and Flood Risk).