



**LRM**  
PLANNING  
LIMITED



# FORMER NEW FORGE PUBLIC HOUSE, OAKDALE, BLACKWOOD, CAERPHILLY

Design and Access Statement

Prepared by LRM Planning Limited on behalf of Castell Group

December 2023



Site location



# Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Site description and context analysis	8
3. Interpretation and design development	14
4. Planning policy context	24
5. The proposal & assessment against objectives of good design	30
6. Appraisal & conclusion	34

Figure 1 -The site fronting Syr-Dafydd Avenue



Figure 2 -Syr-Dafydd Avenue facing east



# 1

## Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement accompanies a full planning application for a proposed residential development comprising 26 affordable apartments, landscaped access, vehicle parking, public open space, and associated works at the former New Forge Public House, Oakdale, Blackwood, Caerphilly, NP12 0LG, on behalf of Castell Group.
- 1.2 The proposed development seeks permission for 26 affordable dwellings, comprising 20 one-bedroom apartments and six two-bedroom apartments, in addition to amenity and public open space, vehicle access and parking, and associated works.
- 1.3 The site lies within the identified settlement boundary of Oakdale and comprises brownfield land.
- 1.4 The Design and Access Statement and accompanying documentation justify how the proposed development aims to make use of this vacant brownfield site which sits within a predominantly residential context. All pertinent

technical considerations have been appropriately assessed and conclude that there are no impediments to the delivery of development of this nature and scale at this location.

### Purpose

- 1.5 TAN 12 defines a Design and Access Statement as *'a communication tool which outlines how the design of the proposal has been considered from the outset of the development process and how the objectives of good design have been used to inform this.'*
- 1.6 The purpose of this document is to analyse the context of the site in respect of planning policy and the local character of the area, whilst having regard to each of Welsh Government's five objectives of good design.

### Aim

- 1.7 The aim of this document is to:
  - provide an overview of the site context, which has aided in shaping the proposals;
  - demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
  - explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
  - explain the policy or approach adopted for access and how policies relating to access in the development have been taken into account; and
  - explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.



Figure 3 - The former New Forge



Figure 4 - The former New Forge and existing car parking area to the rear



# 2

## Site description and context analysis

### The site

- 2.1 The site is formed by the former The New Forge Public House, which measures approximately 0.24ha in size and is broadly rectangular in shape.
- 2.2 The vacant public house has not been in use for an extended period of time; the site has been made secure with heras fencing, with windows and door boarded up. The former public house building is positioned towards the front of the site with access adjacent to the south-west corner. An access drive leads down into the site following the western boundary and leads into a large hard surfaced parking area.

### Location

- 2.3 The site is located within the identified settlement boundary of Oakdale, being regarded as brownfield land given its former and historic use. It is located within the established residential area, and the land binding the site is formed:
  - to the **north** by a boundary fence, beyond which are residential dwellings of Clos Penywaun (no. 20 has its side elevation adjacent to this boundary);
  - to the **east** by a hedge with an area of public open space located beyond. Further east lies the housing on Gwesty Close;
  - to the **south** by the public highway, Syr-Daffydd Avenue, beyond which is the residential property Waun y Gof located on the opposite side of the road.
  - to the **west** by the rear of properties located on Clos Penywaun (nos 10 - 18 back onto the side boundary of the site) which is formed by timber fencing.

### Local architectural context

- 2.4 In terms of surrounding land uses, the site is located within an established residential area comprising predominantly two-storey terraced dwellings.
- 2.5 The site sits amongst a number of modern housing developments, comprising a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings of contemporary design.
- 2.6 To the east of the site at Gwesty Clos, and to the west of the site at Penywaun Close and Blacksmith Close, dwellings are typically detached and semi-detached and predominantly two-storeys in height. Some dwellings are up to two and a half storeys, with dormer windows within the roofs. The material palette for these dwellings comprise a mix of light render, buff brick, and red brick.
- 2.7 Two dwellings which exist to the south of the site, along Syr-Daffydd Avenue, are slightly less





Figure 5 - Dwelling at Blacksmith Close



Figure 6 - Dwelling at Gwesty Close



Figure 7 - Dwelling at Penywaun Close



Figure 8 -Dwellings at Gwesty Close



Figure 9 - Morrisons convenience store and post office



Figure 10 -Bakery, pharmacy and convenience store



Figure 11 - Oakdale medical centre



Figure 12 - Oakdale rugby and football club

contemporary in nature, comprising stone and rough render, with painted brick quoin and cill details.

## Local facilities

- 2.8 The site is very sustainably located and is well related in terms of proximity to surrounding facilities.
- 2.9 The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2021 describes walkable and active neighbourhoods as those which are characterised by having a range of facilities within 20 minutes walking distance, which would equate to a distance of circa 1.6km.
- 2.10 A number of services and facilities exist within 1.6km of the site. Table 1 looks to provide a summary of those facilities, their distance from the site, and their walking and cycling distance to the facility.
- 2.11 As demonstrated, the site benefits from good and convenient access to a number of educational and leisure facilities.

## Flooding

- 2.12 The Development Advice Map hosted by Natural Resources Wales demonstrates that the site is in Flood Zone A, which signifies areas not at risk from flooding. A new TAN 15 that will reclassify the flood zones was due for adoption in June 2023 but has been delayed until early 2024. Under those maps, the site continues to be outside any flood zone and therefore not at risk of flooding.

Facility	Distance from site (m/km)	Walk time (minutes)	Cycle time (minutes)
Caerphilly Athletics Hub	200	3	1
Oakdale Common bridal path	240	3	1
Gulf petrol station and shop	400	6	1
Morrisons convenience store	450	6	1
Red Diamond takeaway	450	7	2
Prebyterian Church	450	7	2
Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School	500	7	1
Taekwondo hub	650	9	2
Fern Close Pen y Fan Industrial Estate	650	9	2
Parsons Bakery	750	11	3
Pharmacy	750	11	3
Nisa convenience store	750	11	3
Croespenmaen Industrial Estate	750	11	3
Oakdale Library	800	11	3
Oakdale rugby and football club	800	11	3
Oakdale medical centre	850	13	3
Islwyn High Schol	850	14	6
Oakdale rugby pitches	1.1km	16	5
Oakdale skate park	1.1km	16	5
Saint David's Church Penmaed	1.1km	17	5
Bowling green and club	1.2km	18	5
Children's park	1.2km	18	5
Oakdale business park	1.2km	17	5

## Heritage context

- 2.13 In relation to heritage assets, the site is not within a conservation area nor does it contain any listed buildings or scheduled monuments. The site is not bounded by any designated heritage assets, the nearest of which, a Grade II listed building, is some 350m south east of the site.

## Access

- 2.14 The site can be accessed directly from Syr Dafydd Avenue (the B4251), an adopted highway which extends from Cross Keys to Pontllanfraith.
- 2.15 A pedestrian footpath exists on the southern side of Syr Dafydd Avenue, providing convenient access to a number of the facilities set out in the table above, all of which are within suitable walking distance of the site.
- 2.16 A number of bus stops are present along Syr Dafydd Avenue, the nearest of which is some 35m to the west. The bus stop serves bus route 5, which provides frequent access to Blackwood, Newbridge, and Panside, and other locations on the route. It operates 19 times a day from Monday to Friday, providing two services per hour between 07:00 and 17:00. Additional bus stops are present at Presbyterian Church, some 450m from the site, serving the same bus route.
- 2.17 Newbridge train station is situated 3km south east of the site and provides a direct service to Cardiff Central in approximately 40 minutes. It is on the Ebbw Vale Line, and therefore

provides regular, direct services to a number of destinations including Ebbw Vale, Crosskeys, Risca and Pontymister, Rogerstone and Pye Corner. A wider range of destinations can be reached via Cardiff Central station.

## Ecology

- 2.18 An Ecological Impact Assessment Report of the site for bats and nesting birds was undertaken by Wildwood Ecology in April 2023. This followed a Preliminary Roost Assessment and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which were initially carried out in 2017 and then updated in 2022.
- 2.19 In 2017, it was found that the existing building on site offered low suitability for bats. A single bat activity survey was undertaken and no bat roosts were identified in the building. In 2022, as the 2017 survey had expired, the assessments were undertaken again and it was found that the building affected by the development offered moderate bat roost suitability. Two additional bat activity surveys were therefore undertaken.
- 2.20 The 2023 EIA Report looked to combine the 2022 survey work with an updated desk based assessment. It concluded that the building is utilised as a day roost for two pipistrelle bats and it cannot be guaranteed that there is no maternity use of the building. Several suggestions were therefore made, including recommendations for an EPS licence for bats, supervision of an ecologist on site during periods of certain work, preventing works during bat maternity seasons, inclusion of bat boxes within the development, and the requirement for further survey work if bat presence exceeds

those identified during the dusk emergence surveys.

- 2.21 In regards to nesting birds, the EIA recommended that any building works or vegetation clearance undertaken for nesting bird habitats will need to take place outside of the bird nesting season. The EIA also recommended hedgerow protection measures to prevent root damage and limit the impact of nesting birds using the hedgerow.
- 2.22 The Report concludes that subject to the recommendations being successfully followed and implemented, the proposed development should proceed and there should be no long term impacts upon the key protected species present at the site.

## Planning history

- 2.23 A mixed use scheme was previously proposed under planning application 22/0911/FULL. This application proposed retail units at ground floor level, in addition to 16 no. affordable apartments and associated works. This application was recently withdrawn.
- 2.24 An earlier permission exists on the site for the partial demolition of the existing building and change the use of the existing Class A3 (public house) and erect new extension to create two Class A1 (retail) units, servicing area, car parking and associated works under LPA Ref 18/0090/FULL. This was granted 18 February 2019, with subsequent submissions made to discharge associated conditions.



Figure 13 - Oakdale library



Figure 14 - Open space near facilities at Aberconway Place and Beech Grove

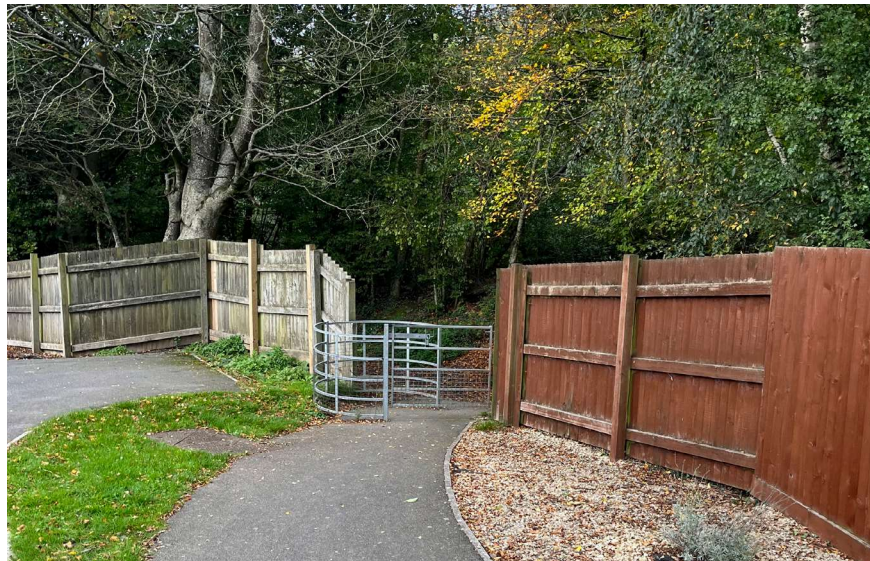


Figure 15 -Access to Oakdale common bridal path from Clos Penywaun



Figure 16 -Bus stop at Syr Dafydd Avenue

## 3

# Interpretation and design development

## Pre-application engagement with Local Authority

- 3.1 The applicant had been pursuing a mixed-use proposal, as shown at Figure 17. An application which proposed a combination of retail and commercial units at ground floor level, with residential apartments above, was submitted to the Local Authority in October 2022.
- 3.2 Following concerns raised by the Authority in terms of design, loss of hedgerow, and impact upon neighbouring uses, the applicant decided to withdraw this submission.
- 3.3 It had become difficult to balance both the Authority's requirements along with the commercial operators' design and operational needs, and so the application decided to drop the commercial elements and instead only pursue the residential elements of the scheme.
- 3.4 Pre-application advice was therefore sought for a revised scheme focusing on the residential aspects of the development. The sketch

submitted sought to respond to the initial key issues raised through the appraisal of the previous mixed-use proposal. The applicant intended to engage with Officers, both planning and urban design, with a view to discussing the matters in detail.

- 3.5 The package submitted for comment at pre-application stage looked to address a number of comments, including in relation to:
  - Affordable housing - the scheme purely focused upon the delivery of affordable housing and as such avoids the need to accommodate some of the commercial operators' sales and operational requirements.
  - Scale/amenity - whilst the design proposed was three storeys in height, due to the change in levels, this would appear more two or two and a half storey in scale when viewed from the south. A hipped roof was included over the northern extent of block 2 to help reduce the overall massing.

- Streetscene - a revised 'T' shape design was drawn, to present a more attractive facade.
  - Parking - car parking was to be delivered at a ratio of just under one space per unit.
  - Amenity/open space - some enclosed communal space was included along the western side of the site. A more useable area of public open space was also included at the northern edge.
- 3.6 Pre-application advice was subsequently received from planning officer Elizabeth Rowley on 21st September 2023. These were issued via email directly, and can be summarised as follows:
- No objection was raised to the principle of development from highways terms.
  - Concerns were raised over the height of Block 1, but Block 2 could potentially reach three storeys subject to the land being graded and it being incorporated into a landscaping scheme.



Figure 17 - Site layout submitted for withdrawn planning application



**Schedule of accommodation**

Retail unit 1 - 3950ft<sup>2</sup> (Inc BOH)

Retail unit 2 - 1500ft<sup>2</sup>

9no. 1b2p Flats - 50m<sup>2</sup>

3no. 2b3p Flats - 59m<sup>2</sup>

*12no parking spaces for resi.*

*17no. parking spaces for retail*

- The scheme should adopt a strong material palette.
- The landscape architect welcomed the retainment of hedgerow on the eastern boundary, and the indicative landscaping proposed. Strong green infrastructure should be provided suitable to the car park.
- The level of parking proposed was not acceptable and insufficient evidence was provided to suggest that car ownership would be such that no overspill parking would occur.
- Secure cycle provision should be provided for all units, and an internal turning head for delivery vehicles should be accommodated. EV charging should be provided.
- A dropped kerb crossing should be provided.
- The scheme should consider the Design Guidance - Active Travel Wales Act 2013.
- There was debate over the site sustainability.
- No objections were raised from the Head of Environmental Health.
- The Housing Enabling officer could not confirm that the accommodation provision proposed aligned with the local need.
- Each premise should have storage for 1 x 240 litre refuse bin, 1 x 240 litre recycling bin, plus an external food caddy.
- In addition to the documents listed as

necessary in the enquiry letter, the following additional works were noted as necessary for planning submission:

- Sustainability appraisal;
- Tree and hedgerow constraints plan and Arboricultural Implications Assessment;
- Plan to show landscaping, sustainable drainage, lighting and street furniture;
- Green Infrastructure Plan;
- Elevations;
- Existing and proposed topography;
- A Transport Statement; and
- An Asbestos Survey.

## Interpretation of context and design evolution

3.7 Fundamentally, the constraints to development, set out in Section 2, provide fundamental parameters within which the proposals have to be designed.

3.8 Given the relatively unconstrained nature of the site and that the constraints were known at the outset, early iterations were relatively well-informed. Subsequent minor amendments to the proposals following receipt of the pre-application enquiry response only included the following:

- Scale (Block 1) - the height of the building block has been reviewed and the roof design has been reconsidered in order to

reduce the height of the buildings as much as possible. The finished floor levels have however been raised slightly meaning that the buildings are now at street level. The mono-pitch roof design has been tested to the rear, but the more traditional approach was considered more appropriate.

- Scale (Block 2) - the engineers have reviewed the levels and have kept the height down as much as possible.
- Amenity - the amenity of ground floor users has been reconsidered and options to include railings and hedge planting have been explored to increase privacy screening to the front of dwellings.
- Accommodation - the quantum of two-bedroom apartments has been reduced, and the applicant has liaised with the housing strategy officer to ensure the final mix reflects the local housing need.
- Material palette - a package of robust and good quality finish materials which are befitting of the local character has been provided.
- Highways - a transport engineer has prepared a Transport Statement which demonstrates that the development proposal can be supported.
- Waste - suitable storage has been provided and vehicle tracking demonstrates that this can be collected by refuse vehicles.





Figure 18 - Proposed layout submitted at pre-application stage



Schedule of accommodation

Block 1

- 6no. 1b2p Apartments
- 3no. 2b3p Apartments

Block 2

- 12no. 1b2p Apartments
- 6no. 2b3p Apartments

Total 27 Apartments

27no Parking spaces






## Pre-application engagement with the community

- 3.9 A statutory Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) exercise was undertaken with the local community and specialist consultees following engagement with the Local Authority.
- 3.10 The proposals submitted as part of this PAC process are similar to those submitted for this planning application, and included 26 apartments, 27 vehicle parking spaces, access from Syr-Dafydd Avenue, cycle storage, bin storage, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), communal gardens, and the retainment of hedgerow.
- 3.11 The PAC process ran for a period of 29 days from 14th november until 13th December 2023.
- 3.12 The responses received as part of the PAC process can be summarised as follows:
- Six responses were received from local residents; and
  - Four specialist consultee responses were received from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Caerphilly County Borough Council Highways Authority, Coal Authority, and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 3.13 No responses were received from the local Councillors of Penmaen.
- 3.14 The full set of comments and responses received can be read within the PAC Report submitted alongside this Design and Access Statement.
- 3.15 A summary of the statutory consultee comments is provided below:
- Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water made a number of observations in relation to the public sewerage network, surface water drainage, foul water drainage, sewage treatment, and potable water supply. No major constraints to the development proposals were identified.
  - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service raised no objection to the proposed development.
  - The Coal Authority confirmed that the site is located outside of the Development High Risk Area and therefore raised no objection to the proposed development.
  - The Highways Departments made a number of comments in relation to parking, access, the site layout, and the supporting documentation required to be submitted as part of this application.
- 3.16 The layout submitted for the PAC process is shown at Figure 19.

Figure 19 -Proposed site layout submitted for PAC



**Hard & Soft Landscaping key**

-  Tolermore paving to internal road / parking - exact style to be agreed
-  Tolermore paving to internal paths - exact style to be agreed
-  Indicates grassed areas - Provide topsoil and turfing as section Q30 and D20
-  Indicates tarmac Road to adoptable standards
-  Indicates proposed street trees; Species to be agreed

**NR Refer to landscaping layout for details of planting**

Block 1 - Accommodation schedule		
Plot number	Type	Area (GIA)
PLOT 1	2B3P	59 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 2	1B2P	49 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 3	1B2P	49 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 4	2B3P	58 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 5	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 6	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 7	2B3P	59 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 8	1B2P	49 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 9	1B2P	49 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 10	2B3P	58 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 11	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 12	1B2P	49 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 13	1B2P	48 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 14	1B2P	47 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 15	1B2P	47 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 16	1B2P	47 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 17	1B2P	48 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 18	1B2P	47 m <sup>2</sup>

Block 2 - Accommodation schedule		
Plot number	Type	Area (GIA)
PLOT 19	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 20	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 21	2B3P	59 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 22	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 23	1B2P	50 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 24	2B3P	59 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 25	1B2P	48 m <sup>2</sup>
PLOT 26	1B2P	48 m <sup>2</sup>

## The proposed development

3.17 It should be noted further to the changes set out under para 3.7 the scheme has been further amended to take on board further input received from the arborist and consultant engineers in particular.

3.18 As a result, the levels of block 1 have been increased to ensure that the foundations don't undermine the hedge to be retained along the eastern boundary. Furthermore, in order to ensure an acceptable relationship with the neighbouring residential properties, the height of the northern end of block 2 has been reduced. As a result the total number of units has been reduced to 26 apartments.

3.19 Castell Group are now seeking planning permission for a proposed residential development comprising the following elements:

- 26 affordable apartments, comprising 20 one-bedroom apartments and six two-bedroom apartments;
- 27 vehicle parking spaces;
- Landscaped access onto Syr-Dafydd Avenue;
- Separate cycle storage;
- Bin storage and adequate access for refuse vehicles to collect waste;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- A communal garden to the front of apartment block 1, and a larger communal garden and area of public open space along the northern boundary; and
- Retainment of hedgerow along the eastern boundary.

Figure 20 -Proposed site layout



PV Panels to be confirmed with SAP assessment



**Block 1 - Front elevation**

1 : 100

Material Schedule

1. Merley clay plain tiles to roof
2. Black UPVC Rainwater goods
3. White upvc fascias
4. White painted roughcast render to upper floors
5. Red / brown multi facing brick to ground floor
6. Off White upvc windows with brick cills as shown
7. Brick string courses as shown

PV Panels to be confirmed with SAP assessment



**Block 1 - Side elevation 1**

1 : 100

1m<sup>2</sup> AOV Above stairwell  
PV Panels to be confirmed with SAP assessment

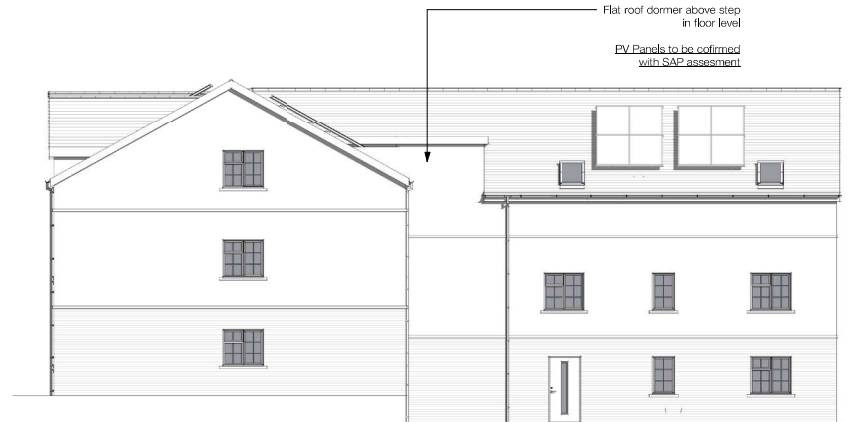


**Block 1 - Rear elevation**

1 : 100

Flat roof dormer above step in floor level

PV Panels to be confirmed with SAP assessment



**Block 1 - Side elevation 2**

1 : 100

Figure 21 - Block 1 elevations



**Block 2 - Front elevation**

1 : 100

Material Schedule

1. Marley clay plain tiles to roof
2. Black UPVC Rainwater goods
3. White upvc fascias
4. White painted roughcast render to upper floors
5. Red / brown multi facing brick to ground floor
6. Off White upvc windows with brick cills as shown
7. Brick string courses as shown



**Block 2 - Side elevation 1**

1 : 100



**Block 2 - Rear elevation**

1 : 100



**Block 2 - Side elevation 2**

1 : 100

Figure 22 - Block 2 elevations

## 4

## Planning Policy Context

## Overview

- 4.1 The planning policy context for the determination of this application is provided by national and local planning policy guidance. National guidance is set out within Future Wales The National Plan 2040, Planning Policy Wales, and Technical Advice Notes.
- 4.2 Local policy comprises the adopted Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 and its supporting Supplementary Planning Guidance documents.

## Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 4.3 Future Wales is Welsh Government's top-tier national development framework. It is a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system over the next two decades, including sustaining and developing

a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems, and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

- 4.4 It is a spatial strategy which does not seek to take decisions that are most appropriately taken at the regional or local level, but does provide a strategic direction for all scales of planning and sets out policies and key issues to be taken forward at the regional scale. One of the key aims of the document is to address issues which Welsh Government consider to be a priority at this time, with affordable housing identified as a critically important issue throughout Wales.
- 4.5 The document follows a sequential structure, with each section building on the previous one as follows, 'Wales: An Overview', 'Setting and achieving our ambitions', 'Strategic and Spatial Choices: Future Wales' spatial strategy' and 'The Regions'. These sections and their relevance to the proposals at hand are set out as follows.

## Wales: An Overview

- 4.6 This chapter provides a broad overview of the country and its intricacies. It is a very high-level overview of the country, however it identifies housing, particularly affordable, as a key issue to address throughout the country, stating that '*Good quality affordable homes are the bedrock of communities and form the basis for individuals and families to flourish in all aspects of their lives. Future Wales provides evidence of the need for housing across Wales at both a national and regional level. This evidence demonstrates the need for a focus on increasing the delivery of social and affordable homes.*'

## Setting and achieving our ambitions

- 4.7 A focus of Future Wales is to provide quality development in the right places for the right reasons. 11 Future Wales Outcomes are set out within the chapter, which collectively are a statement of where Welsh Government wants





Wales to be in 20 years. Every part of Future Wales is written with the intention of achieving these Outcomes.

- 4.8 Each Outcome commences with the prefix 'A Wales where people live...' building on the statement to provide a vision of Wales in 2040. Of particular relevance to the proposal are the following outcomes, all following the prefix 'a Wales where people live':

1 *'...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places'*,

3 *'...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth'*,

5 *'...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth'*,

7 *'...in places where travel is sustainable'*,

9 *'...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution'*,

10 *'...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems'*, and

11 *'...in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient'*.

### **Strategic and Spatial Choices: Future Wales' spatial strategy**

- 4.9 One of the opening paragraphs states that "the spatial strategy supports the Future Wales

*Outcomes. Decisions taken at a national level, including Welsh Government investment choices, will reflect the principles of the strategy and make positive contributions towards the national placemaking objectives."* Cities and large towns are identified as the main development areas through co-locating homes, jobs, and services in these areas, aiming to utilise untapped potential of places and their infrastructure.

- 4.10 Among the places identified to achieve this growth, referred to as National Growth Areas, is the Newporr, identified in Policy 1, 'Where Wales will grow' within the same National Growth Area as Cardiff and the Valleys. A total of 19 policies are identified within this chapter. These include 'Strategic Placemaking', 'Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration', and 'Delivering Affordable Homes', among others. The latter notes that providing homes in Wales at levels which meet our needs is a key priority and shift in delivery is required to meet this basic human need.

## **Planning Policy Wales**

- 4.11 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal national planning policy document which sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government (WG) against which development proposals should be assessed. The latest version is the eleventh edition, published in February 2021.

- 4.12 The main thrust of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. Placemaking lies at the heart of PPW, with policy and development management decisions required to seek to deliver development that adheres to these principles.

- 4.13 In a bid to ensure placemaking is prioritised, and in order to aid in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act, policy topics within PPW have been grouped under four themes, namely 'Strategic and Spatial Choices'; 'Active and Social Places'; 'Productive and Enterprising Places'; and 'Distinctive and Natural Places'. Each of the four headed chapters is supplemented by detailed and interwoven policy, which seeks to work together in delivering sustainable places.

- 4.14 PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities. In this regard it seeks to achieve WG's well-being goals. All statutory bodies in Wales carrying out a planning function must exercise those functions with the principles of sustainable development as defined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Accordingly, paragraph 1.18 of PPW states emphatically that 'legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development'.



4.15 Figure 4 of PPW covers the Key Planning Principles of WG in seeking to achieve “*the right development in the right place*”. Development proposals must seek to deliver development that addresses these outcomes, albeit paragraph 2.20 recognises that not all of these outcomes can necessarily be achieved under every development proposal.

4.16 Another Key Planning Principle of WG is facilitating accessible and healthy environments, stating in Figure 3 that “*Our land use choices and the places we create should be accessible for all and support healthy lives. High quality places are barrier-free and inclusive to all members of society. They ensure everyone can live, work, travel and play in a way that supports good physical and mental health.*”

### Strategic and Spatial Choices

4.17 It is indicated within PPW that the first stage of the assessment of proposals must take place in respect of Strategic and Spatial Choices. In this regard it is stated that “*Effective strategic placemaking requires early collective consideration of placemaking issues at the outset... when developing specific proposals*”.

4.18 Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.18 of PPW highlight the importance of good design in “*creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise*”. To achieve good design, proposals

need to meet the five overarching aims of design which comprise of access, character, community safety, environmental sustainability, and movement.

4.19 Accessibility is covered between paragraphs 3.49 and 3.52, wherein it is stated that the overarching aim of spatial strategies should be minimising the need to travel, reducing reliance on the private car, and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport.

4.20 PPW seeks to ensure that proposals achieve a broad balance between housing, community facilities, services, and employment opportunities. Major generators of travel demand, such as housing, employment, retailing, leisure and recreation, and community facilities should be sited within existing urban areas or areas which are, or can be, easily reached by walking or cycling, and are well served by public transport.

4.21 PPW indicates at paragraphs 3.61 to 3.63 that development should be located so that it can be well serviced by existing or planned infrastructure.

### Active and Social Places

4.22 A key theme of PPW is creating places that are active and social, this includes sustainable transport provision for housing development.

The opening paragraphs to this chapter include the following aspiration of PPW:

*“New development should prevent problems from occurring or getting worse such as the shortage of affordable homes, the reliance on the private car and the generation of carbon emissions.”*

4.23 PPW places importance on locating development so as to minimise the need to travel and increasing accessibility by modes other than the private car.

4.24 In terms of car parking, paragraph 4.1.50 indicates that “*A design-led approach to the provision of car parking should be taken, which ensures an appropriate level of car parking is integrated in a way which does not dominate the development. Parking provision should be informed by the local context, including public transport accessibility, urban design principles and the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. Planning authorities must support schemes which keep parking levels down*”.

4.25 With respect to housing, the WG recognise the importance of a home to people’s lives and indicates that the planning system must:

- “*identify a supply of land to support the delivery of the housing requirement to meet*

the differing needs of communities across all tenures;

- enable provision of a range of well-designed, energy efficient, good quality market and affordable housing that will contribute to the creation of sustainable places; and
- focus on the delivery of the identified housing requirement and the related land supply.”

4.26 Paragraph 4.2.5 states that “Planning authorities should plan for a mix of market and affordable housing types to meet the requirement and specifically consider the differing needs of their communities.”

4.27 Paragraph 4.2.25 states that “a community’s need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which must be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and determining relevant planning applications.”

### Productive and Enterprising Places

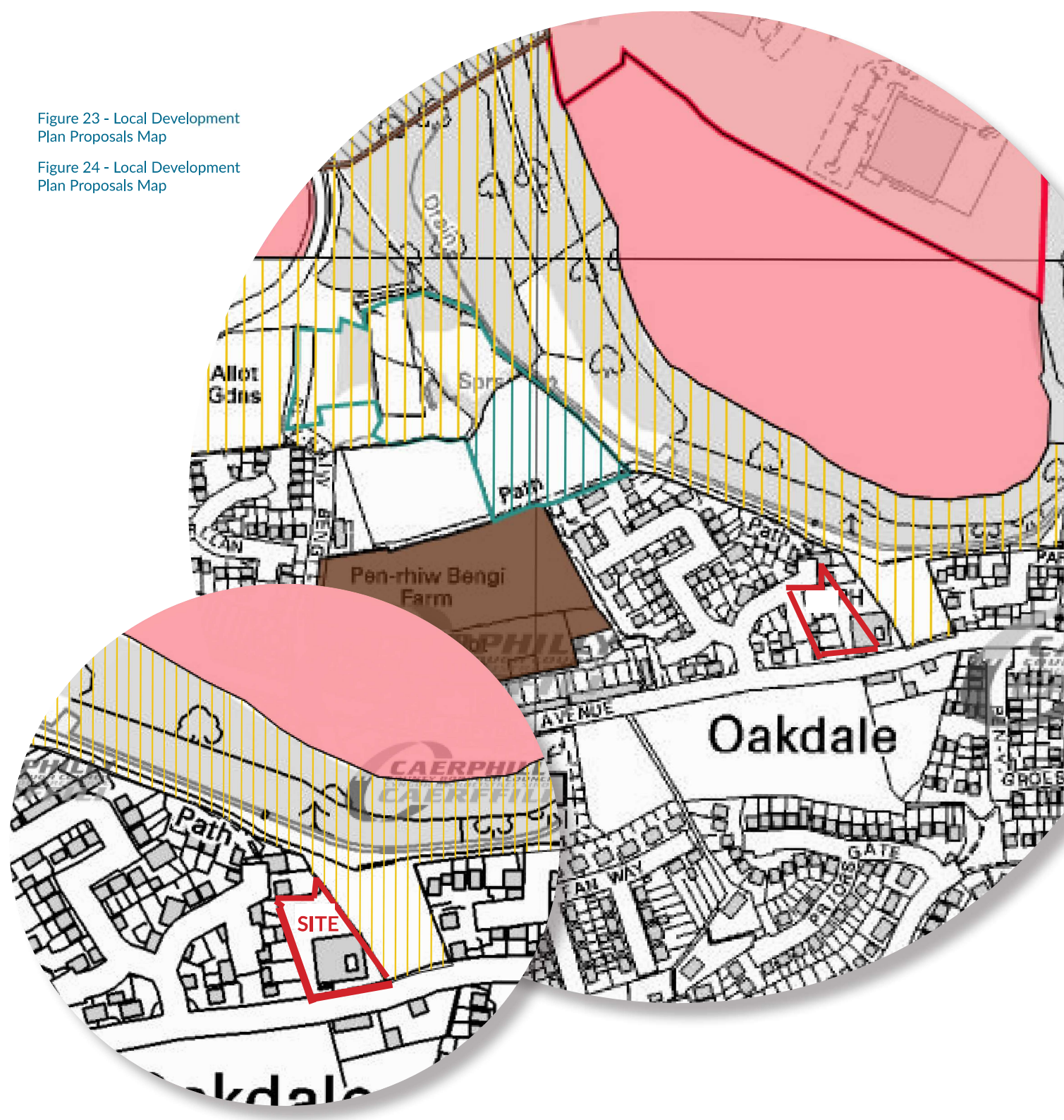
4.28 This section relates primarily to economic development, tourism, infrastructure, the rural economy, energy, and waste, and is thus less directly applicable to this proposal.

### Distinctive and Natural Places

4.29 This chapter of PPW covers a range of topics, including cultural heritage matters, natural assets, and environmental quality. The opening statement of the chapter states that:

Figure 23 - Local Development Plan Proposals Map

Figure 24 - Local Development Plan Proposals Map



*“Development proposals should be formulated to look to the long-term protection and enhancement of the special characteristics and intrinsic qualities of places...Problems should be prevented from occurring or getting worse. Biodiversity loss should be reversed, pollution reduced, environmental risks addressed and overall resilience of ecosystems improved.”*

## Technical Advice Notes

- 4.30 The following Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are of relevance in the consideration of these proposals.
- 4.31 TAN 2, published in June 2006, is of relevance to affordable housing developments, providing practical guidance on the role of the planning system in delivering affordable housing.
- 4.32 TAN 12 relates to Design and was updated in March 2016. It provides advice and information on a number of related areas including the definition of design for planning purposes; design considerations in planning decisions; and local planning authority design policy and advice.
- 4.33 TAN 18, which was published in March 2007, deals with Transport matters, and advocates locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling; generally advocating development at sustainable sites.

## Well-being of Future Generations Act

- 4.34 The Well-being of Future Generations Act imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with the sustainable development principles, and to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Its content is sought to be delivered through the planning system via the intertwining of the Act through PPW.

## Local Development Plan

- 4.35 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. The development plan for the site comprises the Caerphilly Council Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted in 2010 and covers the period up until 2021.
- 4.36 Caerphilly Council is currently in the process of preparing a Replacement LDP which will extend up to 2035. The original Delivery Agreement for the RLDP set out that a Deposit Plan would be published for consultation in summer 2023, with examination scheduled for mid 2024, and adoption anticipated for spring 2025. For various

reasons, slippage has resulted in these timescales shifting, and at present, no RLDP Deposit Plan has been published. Due to the prematurity of the process, the LDP up to 2021 remains the relevant development plan document which should be considered as part of planning application processes.

- 4.37 The Vision for the current LDP looks to ‘ensure that the needs of all the County Borough’s residents and visitors are met and the regeneration of [the] towns, villages and employment centres and the surrounding countryside is delivered in a well-balanced and sustainable manner that reflects the specific role and function of individual settlements’.
- 4.38 The site is located within the settlement boundary of Oakdale, and within the Northern Connections Corridor, as defined by the LDP Proposals Map. As demonstrated in Figures 23 and 24, the site itself is not subject to any formal designations. It does however sit within proximity to a number of policy designations, including:
- The Former Oakdale Colliery Informal Open Space to the east; and
  - The Plateau 2, Oakdale Business Park Employment Allocation to the north.
- 4.39 Policies with a prefix of ‘SP’ are strategic policies, whilst subject specific policies are prefixed according to their topic.

4.40 Policy SP2 relates to the Northern Connections Corridor, and stipulates that development proposals in such locations will promote sustainable development that inter alia, focuses development on brownfield sites, reduces car borne trips by promoting sustainable modes of travel, makes the most efficient use of infrastructure, and capitalises on the economic opportunities offered at Oakdale.

4.41 Policy SP4 looks to support existing settlements, and notes that they should be enhanced based on their role and function in the settlement strategy. Oakdale is not listed a principal town or local centre, and therefore falls within a defined residential settlement which sits in the hierarchy, defined as *'all other villages within defined settlement boundaries'*.

4.42 Policy SP5 defines the settlement boundaries, with the intention of defining the area within which development would normally be allowed, and to promote the full and effective use of urban land.

4.43 Policy SP15 sets the affordable housing target for the county, and notes that at least 964 affordable dwelling should be delivered across the plan period.

4.44 Policy CW11 sets the affordable housing planning obligations for the county, and notes that an element of such housing should be provided for all sites that accommodate five or more dwelling. It dictates that within the

Northern Connections Corridor, affordable housing should be sought at a rate of 25%.

4.45 Other policies of relevance to the development proposal at this location are set out in the table below.

LDP Policy	Relating to
Strategic policies	
SP6	Placemaking
SP7	Planning Obligations
SP14	Total Housing Requirements
SP21	Parking Standards
Countywide policies	
CW1	Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion
CW2	Amenity
CW3	Design Considerations: Highways
CW6	Trees, Woodland, and Hedgerow Protection
CW10	Leisure and Open Space provision
CW15	General Locational Constraints
Strategy Area 2: Northern Connections Corridor	
CF1	Community Facilities
LE5	Protection of Informal Open Spaces

## Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

4.46 It is considered that the following SPG documents are applicable in consideration of the proposed development:

- Affordable Housing Obligations (November 2020);
- Trees and Development (January 2017);
- Car Parking Standards and Parking Zones (both January 2017);
- Building Better Places to Live (January 2017); and
- Protection of Open Spaces (April 2011).

# 5

## The proposal & assessment against objectives of good design

- 5.1 The design by Chamberlain Moss King has sought to respond to a number of points raised through the appraisal of the previous mixed-use proposal.
- 5.2 The following sub-headed paragraphs demonstrate how the scheme is assessed against the objectives of good design.

### Character

- 5.3 The site layout has been designed to respond to the existing built form and has been influenced by the existing site arrangements. The building blocks are to be located at the south eastern portion of the site, mirroring the placement of the current public house, and the site access and parking arrangements are to remain along the western extent.
- 5.4 Whilst the scheme promotes a design which is predominantly three-storeys in height, due to the change in levels, the site will appear

more two storey in scale when viewed from Syr Dafydd Avenue to the south. Gable roofs with dormer windows are to be included to increase functionality of space and subsequently help reduce the overall massing of the site.

- 5.5 The low density development is to be supported through a scheme of landscaping. The access drive into the site is to be landscaped to provide an attractive and soft approach into the site, and soften the visual appearance of the site from Syr Dafydd Avenue. Further to reduce massing, tree planting has been incorporated within the car parking area to reinforce a sense of greenery.
- 5.6 The scheme also responds to the open nature of land to the east of the site, which as set out above, is designated as informal open space. The design looks to ensure that the future needs of occupiers are considered with the inclusion of a communal public open space to the north of the site. This space will provide a number of benefits, not least by softening the development and

Figure 25 - Welsh Government's Objectives of Good Design (source: Planning Policy Wales)



integrating it into the wider landscape beyond, but by providing opportunities for informal play, addressing surface water measures, and assisting with biodiversity and ecological enhancements.

5.7 The material palette looks to mimic those used in the surrounding environs for the main facing materials. This will include the use of red and brown multi facing brick at ground floor level, with white painted render above. Marley clay plain tiles are also proposed for the roofs, however it is intended that both building blocks will also accommodate solar PV panels on the front elevations.

5.8 The scheme looks to enhance the existing streetscene as seen from Syr-Dafydd Avenue by replacing the currently vacant site with a more active use and reinforcing the residential role of Oakdale. The integration of landscaping along the southern boundary will also provide a soft and attractive approach to the site.

5.9 In addition to this, through the orientation of the building blocks, the scheme also looks to create a new streetscene at the centre of the site. The presence of landscaping and a communal garden to the front of the proposed building blocks softens the development and will enhance the visual interest of the site in accordance with good placemaking principles.

5.10 The proposed apartments have been designed

to comply with Welsh Government's Design Quality Requirements, and Lifetime Homes standards. They will also be non fossil fuel dependent, and will be EPC rated 'A'.

5.11 Given the design of the layout, which locates the new parking areas along the western boundary, and a communal garden and area of public open space along the northern boundary, the development will far exceed standard separation and privacy distances.

## Access

5.12 The site benefits from an existing access at Syr-Dafydd Avenue, which will continue to serve the site and provide an entrance into the parking are.

5.13 The internal access arrangements will mirror those which currently exist, whereby the site entrance leads to an internal road and parking arrangements to the west of the existing building. The proposals demonstrate that the apartments are to be located along the southern and eastern portions of the site, similar to the existing public house, whilst the associated parking will be located to the west.

5.14 The proposed development looks to promote a softer approach to the car parking area, which allows for green infrastructure and open space to be introduced into the site. To the rear of the

site, an area of public open space and communal garden has been illustrated, whilst an additional communal garden has been shown to the front of Block 1.

5.15 A turning head is also provided within the site to ensure sufficient vehicle manoeuvrability can be obtained. A suite of vehicle tracking drawings have been prepared to demonstrate how the site layout allows for vehicle movements into and out of the site, and how the arrangements can accommodate the necessary refuse vehicle movements.

5.16 The site benefits from good pedestrian access, with footpaths on either side of the site entrance, ensuring future residents benefit from pedestrian connectivity into the site.

5.17 The scheme proposes 27 vehicle parking spaces, which equates to one parking space per apartment. Whilst this is slightly under the general expectation for one vehicle parking space to be provided per bedroom, a lower level of car ownership is anticipated given the tenure of the units. It is considered appropriate to strike a balance between parking provision and the anticipated needs of the occupiers.

5.18 Cycle storage is to be separately, to the rear of the building blocks.

## Movement

- 5.19 The site is located in a sustainable location, within walking distance of a number of local services and facilities, including convenience stores, retail provision, recreational facilities and leisure opportunities, as demonstrated in Section 2. It also benefits from access to good employment opportunities, with both the Fern Close Pen y Fan Industrial Estate, and the Croespenmaen Industrial Estate, within walking distance of the site.
- 5.20 Section 2 of this DAS also demonstrates that the site benefits from convenient and frequent access to bus service 5, which provides frequent access to key local destinations including Blackwood, Newbridge, and Panside. Newbridge train station is also situated 3km south east of the site, providing a direct service to Cardiff Central and the wider geographic area.
- 5.21 Evidently, sustainable travel is available from the site to a host of local and regional destinations.

## Environmental sustainability

- 5.22 The proposed development makes use of a well-located vacant site, thereby according with a key consideration of local and national policy.
- 5.23 The sustainable location of the site in proximity to a range of local services and within convenient access of Blackwood and Newbridge promotes opportunities for healthy access to

a breadth of facilities. The availability of public transport provision further reduces the need for residents to travel by car.

- 5.24 Means to improve sustainability through building methods and construction will be explored, but at this stage in proceedings, that level of detail is yet to be explored. It should however be noted that all buildings will be non fossil fuel dependent, and will be EPC rated 'A'.
- 5.25 In terms of drainage design, the proposals for the site offer a sustainable drainage strategy in accordance with Welsh Government SuDS guidance and to meet the requirements of SuDS Approval Body (SAB), and will comprise of a mixture of SuDS components.

## Community safety

- 5.26 It is considered that the siting of the building to the south and eastern extents of the site, in addition to the placement of parking and green infrastructure, are such that the standard privacy and separation distances are exceeded.
- 5.27 It is considered that the proposed site layout demonstrates a series of positive features that will ensure the development creates an attractive, safe and secure place. These include:
- High levels of natural surveillance over the new internal road and parking areas, with the proposed apartments fronting onto this area ensuring that they are well overlooked.

- Car parking has been placed in front and within the curtilage for most houses, thereby allowing residents to overlook their cars providing more security.
- The communal gardens and areas of public open space have also been placed in overlooked parts of the site.

- 5.28 It is also noted that by redeveloping the currently vacant site for residential use, Syr-Dafydd Avenue will also benefit from a heightened sense of security by introducing a more active use.

## Response to planning policy

- 5.29 The proposed design is considered to adhere to the relevant planning policy set out in Section 4.
- 5.30 The overriding principles of PPW are considered to be met. In this respect, a vacant and derelict site is being redeveloped in order to provide much-needed affordable housing in a sustainable location. It also advocates development of sites in close proximity to modes of sustainable transport.
- 5.31 PPW brings the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations Act into clearer focus in a planning context, and it is considered from a planning policy focus that compliance with PPW is demonstrated. In this regard, wellbeing goals of the Act are considered to be adhered to through this application, in that there would



- be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the application being approved and development being carried out.
- 5.32 Compliance with PPW is demonstrated, which advocates siting new development within existing urban areas. Further, the development also assists in PPW's aim to tackle the shortage of affordable homes and assist in promoting sustainable residential developments to enable people to live independently and safely in their own homes for longer.
- 5.33 The proposed development is also able to demonstrably adhere to placemaking principles advocated by PPW, in that the development contributes towards creating and sustaining communities with the provision of affordable housing contributing towards meeting the identified need within Newport.
- 5.34 Policies of the LDP are also considered to be complied with, not least due to the site's location in the defined settlement boundary, within which development proposals should look to enhance the settlement in line with their identified role and function as per Policy SP4.
- 5.35 The site is also situated within the Northern Connections Corridor, whereby it is acknowledged that sustainable development should be focused at brownfield sites as per Policy SP2.
- 5.36 The proposed development, which focuses on the delivery of affordable housing, also exceeds the policy requirement for development within the Northern Connections Corridor to deliver such housing at a rate of 25%. The provision of 100% affordable housing should therefore be welcomed.
- 5.37 The high quality design promoted by Chamberlain Moss King looks to reinforce the attractive qualities of the site, whilst promoting a scheme which is sustainable, accessibility, and efficient in line with Policy SP6.
- 5.38 The site entrance and internal access arrangements have been designed such that they promote an effective and efficient use of land within the site, which do not dominate the site layout in accordance with Policy CW3.
- 5.39 The site layout has been carefully designed to ensure that it can accommodate a good level of useable, accessible, and high quality public open space which is integral to the wider development. In accordance with Policy CW10, it is considered that ample provision has been provided to meet the needs of future residents of the proposed development.

## 6

## Appraisal &amp; conclusion

- 6.1 This application proposes a scheme of 26 affordable apartments, comprising 20 one-bedroom dwellings and six two-bedroom dwellings. The proposals also include sustainable drainage proposals, landscape planting, car parking, cycle storage, and associated infrastructure.
- 6.2 The principle of the development is considered to have been established by virtue of the site's location within both the settlement boundary and the Northern Connections Corridor. The development proposes a scheme of 100% affordable housing, further supporting key principles of both local and national policy in this regard.
- 6.3 The design facets proposed are befitting of the site's location and demonstrate consideration of the surrounding land uses. The design ensures minimal impact on existing residents and complements the local area.
- 6.4 Access arrangements ensure that the dwellings are accessible in line with WG's Development Quality Requirements, and that pedestrian safety is prioritised. Manoeuvrability for vehicles on site has also been tested via swept path analysis in order to ensure users are able to access and egress the site safely.
- 6.5 The development makes use of a redundant site in line with national and local policy and presents an opportunity to contribute to the identified local housing need for affordable dwellings. The proposals, though not strategic in scale, will aid in addressing this known housing shortfall within Caerphilly.
- 6.6 Wellbeing goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act are considered to be adhered to through this application in that there would be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the application being approved and development being carried out. By this token, the aspirations of PPW, which mirror the well-being goals, are followed under these proposals.
- 6.7 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal offers an opportunity to provide homes in a sustainable location which will promote active travel and encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport whilst providing much needed affordable dwellings to the area. The site accords with sustainable development principles through its location within both the Northern Connections Corridor and the settlement boundary. The development is considered to be a suitable and positive addition to the streetscene and there are no known constraints to the development of this site. On this basis, it is considered that this application is one that Caerphilly County Borough Council is in a position to support.

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