



PLANNING & DESIGN STATEMENT

Project name: Outline planning application with external appearance and landscaping as reserved matters: 2no. new semi-detached houses at 10–14 Old Road, Baglan, SA12 8TT

Date: 6.4.2021

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1. Introduction

1.01 This document supports an outline planning application for this site on behalf of our clients, Mr Fred and Mrs Patricia Best, who live at 10–14 Old Road and own the land involved, which is currently part of their garden. It follows a pre-application enquiry ref. Q2021/0005 dated 2.3.21.



OS map 1936

1.02 The site is large – approximately 40m x 40m square (0.015H) – and is set on a raised section of land high above Old Road. The numbering 10–14 Old Road appears to suggest that there was always the intention for there to be three houses here, two of which for some reason were never built. The OS map adjacent shows that 14 was built sometime around the early 1930s, with the gap left even then. The OS map from 1969 remains virtually unaltered apart from the insertion of a garage to the south-east edge.



OS map 1969

1.03 Detailed plans and sections and simplified elevations are provided to enable the Planning and Highway's Departments (and others) to be satisfied as to the technical ability for these houses to be constructed and positioned here. This statement responds to the findings and observations of the pre-app in each case.



- 1.04 We also include a slightly amended local professional highways consultant's report and design assessment for the access, parking, and turning within the site, as well as the sight-lines to meet national standards.
- 1.05 Finally we include again an arboriculturist's report on the affected trees on the site.

2. Site

- 2.01 The site has a 38m frontage of which about 17m is proposed to be taken up by the two semi-detached dwellings and the shared access. The total site area including the existing house is 708m², and that of the proposed houses and rear gardens is approximately 575m² although there is within that a shared area for car parking and manoeuvring.
- 2.02 The site is for the most part reasonably flat to the northern half with a slight fall towards the south-west. However, there is then a sharp drop to the SW down to Old Road, the majority of which is contained by a large retaining wall. The remaining section to the east of this is the existing concrete accessway to the house past two garages. The site is itself set high above the land adjoining Port Talbot/Briton Ferry and Swansea Bay, and thus any houses here enjoy a spectacular view across towards Swansea Bay (including the steel works!).
- 2.03 The applicants, our clients, live on the site and the aim is to remain in the house. They are now in or close to retirement and find the site excessively large to manage effectively. Their remaining land ownership would include the annexe at the bottom of the garden, in the north-west corner of the site. There is therefore a requirement to retain sufficient car parking for their house and access up to the house from the garage area.
- 2.04 No. 14 is a reasonably large house with a later conservatory added to the south east, which may or may not be removed at a later date, since it is cold in winter and hot in the summer – as with most conservatories.
- 2.05 A key feature of the current site and surroundings is the relative position of 8 Old Road to our proposals. It is set forward of our proposed building line, but its NW side elevation's windows face the retaining walls to the boundary between the two houses and the side of the garage and raised deck on our client's site. The



relationships here are discussed in our response section to the pre-apps findings below.

- 2.06 On the first floor of no. 8 there is a bedroom on the N corner and again it has a second window facing down the garden and another facing NW across the boundary. This latter secondary window is level with the deck and balustrading on our client's site.
- 2.07 As will be described below, and in discussion with the owners of no. 8, we have worked hard to come up with a design that minimises the impact of development on the occupiers of no. 8. If planning consent were applied today for their house no windows would be allowed to benefit from a view down into our client's site. But we inherit an historic situation where such rules did not apply. We have therefore kept the building line back from both nos. 8 and 14 to maintain as much a sense of open space alongside the no. 8 main entrance as possible. The photos at the end show how currently the area is very sunken and completely overlooked by the existing deck, and our proposed house designs will avoid any overlooking from any floor to their house; the bedroom floor windows facing SW are set deep into the roof and the cheeks of the recesses prevent sideways views. Our clients have required of us from the outset that in this respect the scheme was 'neighbour-friendly'.
- 2.08 At the very centre of the plot's garden is a redundant swimming pool, that has long since been left abandoned, and which will be infilled, and above which some of the proposed development will be located. The proposed houses at this level are in fact 'bungalows' as far as anyone from that garden level or the houses to the north are concerned, and not even with dormer windows over.
- 2.09 To the north and rear of the site the property and land steps up so that the houses beyond that line are significantly higher than our site and our proposals.
- 2.10 The proposals do mean the removal of a number of trees, and a formal tree report to BS5837 is included. It is noted that these trees are situated close to the existing high retaining wall, which already exhibits signs of cracking. There is an ongoing dispute between the client and the local authority, who constructed the poor-quality retaining wall under a CPO arrangement when they widened Old Road locally to provide room for a bus stop in that location. Although we do not feel that this is relevant to this planning application, we do feel that anything our client can do to reduce the risk of further cracking is important to consider. As is shown, replacement trees and bushes are



proposed for that area but this is outside the scope of this outline planning application where 'landscaping' is a 'reserved matter'.

3. Design approach

- 3.01 We have provided an illustrative set of floor plans along with sections, elevations and site plan sufficient at outline application stage to demonstrate how the design could be accommodated successfully on this site within the policies of NPT. We also provide a highways report by a local consultant engineer, and a tree report, all as noted above and we worked closely with them on the access and parking arrangements.
- 3.02 The design provides more than the minimum separation distances between opposing faces of buildings. With regard to the relationship with no. 14, there is an oblique relationship between the south elevation of the western new house and the east conservatory of the existing, but as noted below we have designed the roof between to screen and prevent overlooking. The relationship of the rear single-storey element of the proposed houses and the rear of no. 8 is commented upon in the pre-application response, and discussed below
- 3.03 A single shared driveway is provided to the entire site. It is generally located where there is the existing access, but has been widened and moved to the west to provide the easterly visibility splay required, the westerly one being achieved by reconstruction of the boundary up to the existing retaining wall. All this is shown on the engineer's report and drawings.
- 3.04 The houses have been carefully designed specifically for this site; the lower ground and ground floors are single aspect to the SW, with a retaining wall to the rear which reflects the existing sharply dropped ground profile. A single through floor above that from north to south provides a larger plate of development, with access to the garden. As already noted, the rear half is the single-storey where the front half is a third-storey due to the change in levels. Each plot has a stepped side access path to the garden and upper ground floor from the entrance courtyard area.
- 3.05 Nine car spaces are provided for the existing and two new houses. Two garaged spaces are provided for no. 14 + 1no. external on-curtilage space, whereas the two new houses have a single garage each plus 2 external on-curtilage spaces. In addition, we have made specific provision for three covered



2010_Design & planning statement (continued)

bicycle spaces. We have indicated an area for roadside refuse collection once a week as is the custom in this area.

- 3.06 The south-facing bedroom windows are deeply recessed within the roof in front of them which prevents any overlooking to nos. 8 or 14. Their outlook is thus constrained to one directly outwards (SSW) and not to the east or west.
- 3.07 There is direct access from the garage to the upper floor via an internal staircase. A further room is provided on the lower ground floor access level which could also be a home office, for example. There is a WC at the main living level and at bedroom level a full family bathroom as well as an en-suite to the master bedroom.
- 3.08 Although we always seek to provide fully accessible homes suitable for those who are disabled, this kind of steep site is not ideal for such residents, and so the two flights of stairs, and the fact that the main living rooms are at upper ground floor level are a factor when it comes to the marketing of the dwellings. But in the case of the existing house on the site, we have been asked by our clients to make specific provision for an external stair lift up to the living level for them in future-proofing their accommodation if they choose to remain here. This is shown on the drawings.
- 3.09 Our design locates the proposed houses away from trees, but the access and parking arrangements do impact existing trees, as noted in the tree report. None of the trees are considered to be worth protecting in any special way, and are already affected by the existing garage and retaining wall structures.
- 3.10 External appearance and landscaping are reserved matters.

4. Pre-application planning response: discussion & response

- 4.01 The principle of development of this site is agreed since it lies within the settlement boundary in the middle of a residential area. The fact that two other plots were originally expected to be built here serves only to underline the original perception that the site was large enough for three plots although clearly this does not affect planning policy in this case.



Highways access

- 4.02 The highways access design and car parking was accepted in principle by the Borough Highways Officer (BHO), and felt to offer some improvement on the current situation.
- 4.03 The BHO felt that the turning head templates shown for access to the double garage in front of no. 12 needed further development. This submission shows these turning heads adjusted slightly to show that each car is able to manoeuvre out from its garage or space and access the road in a forward direction. We also indicate the space available for curbside collection of refuse and recycling.
- 4.04 The BHO requires a construction method statement prior to works commencing on site; we trust the authority will agree that at this outline planning application stage this is both unrealistic and unnecessary and should be a condition for the clearance of all details at a later date.

Trees/ecology

- 4.05 As mentioned above, a tree report is attached to this submission, and which was provided to the pre-app. We recognise that a number of trees have to be removed not only to enable the development but also because of the risk of further damage to the significant retaining wall constructed by NPT when Old Road was widened.
- 4.06 We accept the requirement that artificial bird boxes are placed within the scheme, and these have been indicated albeit we are happy to be flexible with these as necessary. In addition other trees and bushes are shown to be added to replace those lost and to add to biodiversity and nesting sites.

Sustainable drainage

- 4.07 We are aware that under new SUDS regulations any development of this site will need to manage surface water in a way that does not depend upon the connection to an external sewer. Although we have not developed a detailed design solution for this site at this outline application stage it is likely to be made up of the following elements:
- Rainwater butts to the rainwater pipes, which then when full overflow into



- 'rain gardens'; an area of land that is fully enclosed by a non-permeable membrane, from which a land drain or French drain leads to
- a soakaway, or in this case almost certainly a very large area under the permeable surface of the car parking area and drives, which can store water and discharge at a certain calculated rate into the subsoil. All this will be designed following a permeability test on site.

4.08 Although we have not shown these on the drawings, we trust that this written statement shows clear design intent, and we recognise that there will be a condition in the planning application as well as a legal requirement to provide a design prior to construction on the site.

Potential overlooking and loss of amenity: responses

4.09 One concern of the pre-application response arose partially because the planning officer was not able to visit the site during the COVID-19 lockdown to experience the relationship between no. 8 and the proposals site. We would expect that for this application a site visit will be essential, and we have provided in this document numerous photographs of the boundary area between no.8 and the proposed position for no. 10, to enable a better understanding of the space and visual relationship to support the site visit.

4.10 Reference is made to the SPG regarding the projection of a building past the 45° subtended angle from rear windows of no. 8. This SPG is of course with regards to an extension to an existing building and is not designed for new houses, but we recognise that the principle is the same. We have therefore reduced the depth of our proposals to the north as a result of this in addition to arguing our case below.

4.11 Our view is that, as the officer noted in his pre-app, the rear element of the two houses is single-storey and that of a bungalow in appearance with no dormers. The only side window is to a WC with obscured glass, and the boundary retaining walls and existing fences and scaffolding deck currently provide a significant intrusion into the same subtended angle. We would argue that the impact upon no. 8 is only fully understood in three dimensions, and it is hard to communicate in plan form only. The existing boundary wall is 1.88m above the land on the application site and the top of this wall is already 340mm above the head of the bedroom rear window to no. 8 and thus about 900mm above eye



level. The beginning of the 45° subtended angle starts at the ridge of the proposed house and the house roof is falling from that point to the rear elevation which is single-storey.

- 4.12 Whereas the specific point is made that the proposals for this site are significantly below the housing density that NPT's LDP seeks for redevelopment sites, the issues of access, changes of level, and the relationship with both nos 8 & 10, as rehearsed here and in the pre-application response, demonstrate that, apart from knocking down number 14 and starting again this is the maximum development possible within the site constraints. We do not believe that anyone could accuse us of underdevelopment in the light of the complex issues here. This clause represents our required 'justification statement'.in this regard.
- 4.13 The front door to no. 8 is at the side in the deep 'chasm' between the sites on this boundary, where there are large east-facing retaining walls as well as the garage and deck structures. The ground floor entrance door faces these, as well as a side window to the ground floor room that faces north into the garden. Thus it is a second window to that room, and it is noted that it has permanently drawn blinds.
- 4.14 The window to the rear on the NW side at 1st floor level has net curtains and, in any case, looks at a blank wall on the boundary. The other window on this 'pine end' is to a wc and has obscured glass.
- 4.15 By contrasting the existing site section to the east (drawing 2010.S01A) with section BB (drawing 2010.PL04) we believe the observer will recognise the extent to which we have gone to position the houses as close to the existing relationship on site as possible. Furthermore, instead of an untidy and unkempt garage and scaffolding deck there will be the clean lines of a new purpose designed house with a very similar profile at the closest point to the boundary.

In conclusion we believe that our outline planning application based on this submission and response to the issues raised in the pre-app provides a real benefit for the area in terms of widening the choice for family housing and falls entirely in line with NPT's policies for sustainable residential development.

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7.4.21



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As existing photos



view to east across swimming pool to no. 8



view of existing access point to Old Road with no.8 to RHS



view up ramp from garage level to existing house



street view of nos 6 & 8



View along neighbour's & site frontage to west



view to north – of garages adjacent to no. 8 & boundary wall



north elevation of existing house from annexe



retaining wall frontage of existing houses 16/18 Old Rd



continuation of frontage retaining wall to no. 14



continuation of retaining wall frontage to east of no. 14



last section of frontage retaining wall before access drive



adjacent view from scaffolded deck towards no. 8



Boundary junction: nos. 8 & 14 at garage block & deck over



adjacent view – to no.8 – looking east



continuation of view of east boundary to no. 8



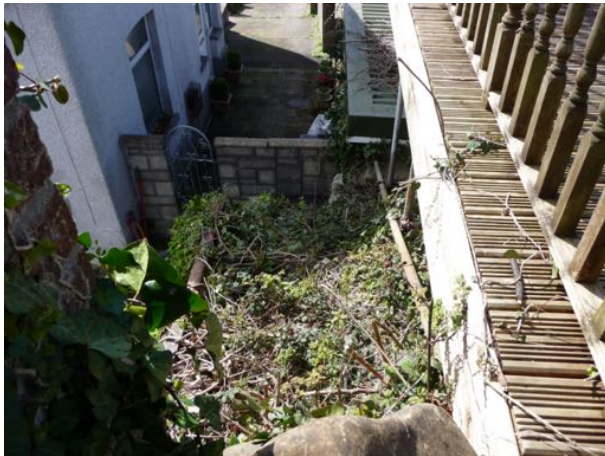
view to south from garage deck: similar to the anticipated view from eastern new house at 1st floor level



view to NW from proposed plots, with no.14's annexe in view



view to north from proposed plots



view from deck down towards side entrance to no. 8



view from deck to east to no. 8



view from deck down to no. 8 entrance area



view 2 from deck to entrance to no. 8



view at retaining wall coping level along boundary against no. 8 entrance



view over garage roof to rear corner of no. 8



direct view over garage roof to no. 8



view down from deck into rear ground floor garden of no. 8



view from deck down side of no. 8 looking south