

Robert Bowen Planning and Development Ltd

Planning Statement Land off Maes Ty Canol Baglan

June 2022

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1. Overview

This document is prepared to assist in the determination of the planning application. Its format is based on a Design and Access Statement.

2. Vision Statement

“The vision is to provided 8 sustainable self-build dwelling houses”

3. Introduction and Site Location

Application

This is a highbred application for the construction of a highway, 8 detached self-build dwellings (Plot 1 Outline permission and Plots 2,3,6,7,8,9, & 10 Full permission) with associated landscaping and drainage (Phase1)

Planning Context

National Policy

There are key objectives contained within Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 Feb 2021 (PPW)¹ that set a clear framework that supports the application.

4.2.13 As part of considering housing delivery options, planning authorities should understand the contribution that all sectors of the housing market and house-builders could make to meeting their housing requirement. When

¹ https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf

allocating sites, planning authorities need to consider providing a range of sustainable and deliverable sites to allow all sectors and types of house-builder, including nationals, regionals, registered social landlords (RSLs), Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and the custom and self-build sector, the opportunity to contribute to delivering the proposed housing requirement.

4.2.14 To assist in broadening the housing delivery options and enable the provision of housing by RSLs, SMEs and the custom and self-build sector, planning authorities should set a locally determined target for the delivery of housing on small sites. To facilitate this, planning authorities should maintain a register of suitable sites which fall below the threshold for allocation in their development plan. Planning authorities should also work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites where this could help to speed up the delivery of homes.

4.2.15 When promoting self-build and custom build development, planning authorities must consider all relevant policy options including the use of Local Development Orders (LDOs) and site specific design codes to simplify the planning process and enable housing development to be brought forward more quickly.

Local Policy

The development plan for the site is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development. The Council adopted the plan on 27th January 2016²

Policy Criteria

SP3 Sustainable Communities

² <https://www.npt.gov.uk/7328>

SC1 Settlement Limits

SP6 Development within the VSA

SP7 Housing Requirements

AH1 Affordable Housing

EC4 Protection of Existing Employment Uses

EN7 Important Natural Features

SP10 Transport Network

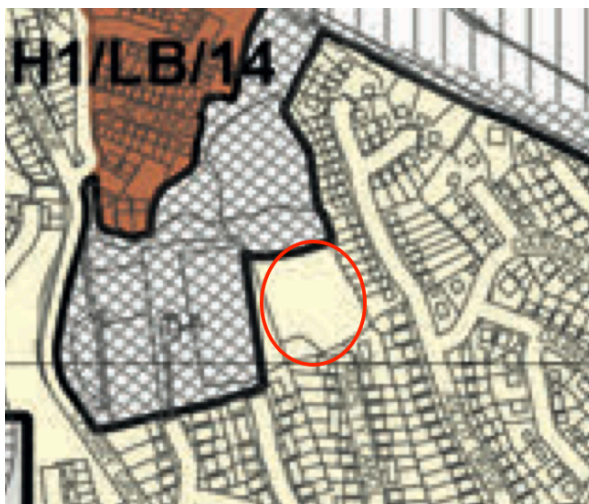
TR2 Design and Access to New Developments

BE1 Design

Policy Appraisal

The application site is located within the settlement limit as defined by the LDP (Proposals Map 41) as shown in **figure 1** below.

figure 1



It is therefore considered that the development of the site accords with Policy SC1.

The application is highbred application for the construction of a highway, 8 detached self-build dwellings (Plot 1 Outline permission and Plots 2,3,6,7,8,9, & 10 Full permission) with associated landscaping and drainage (Phase1). The development therefore falls within the threshold as set out in Policy AH1.

In support of the application the applicant will submit a viability assessment which demonstrates that the site cannot support an affordable housing contribution.

The application site is in a sustainable location and therefore accords with Policy TR2.

Policy BE1 guides developers in in relation to design. It contains 10 criteria which proposals are required to take account of. Policy BE1 8 (a-d) deals with the efficient use of resources. BE1 8(a) requires that the site, which is within the Costal Corridor Area, provide a dwelling density of 35 dwellings per Ha. As set out in ***figure 2*** below

figure 2

5.5.8 Policy BE1 Design

Policy BE 1 Design

All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places.

Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

1. It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment;
2. It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges;
3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;
4. It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community;
5. Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;
6. It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement);

7. It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community;

8. It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through:

- (a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area;

(b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land;

(c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible;

(d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain.

9. Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-off and flood risk and prevent pollution;

10. The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.

5.5.9 The design of new development has a major influence on the conservation and enhancement of the character of an area and on people's quality of life. The policy addresses concerns raised about dereliction and loss of character and Plan objectives concerning the built and natural heritage of the County Borough. It aims to ensure that development proposals will complement and enhance the area generally, including its arterial gateways, townscapes, landscape and seascape, and retain existing character where this is desirable.

5.5.10 'Arterial Gateways' are those areas adjacent to the County Borough boundary which are prominent when entering or leaving Neath Port Talbot and help to define the character and image of the area. There are concerns that previous developments within these areas have detrimentally affected the appearance of the locality and consequently the first impressions given to visitors and the overall image of the County Borough.

5.5.11 An analysis has been undertaken of the main routes by which people enter and leave Neath Port Talbot. Such routes include the M4 and mainline railway at Margam in the south east and Lonlas in the north west, along the A483 Fabian Way from Swansea and the A465 Heads of the Valleys trunk road at Glynneath. Other less major routes include the A474 and A4069 into the Amman Valley, the A4067 into the Swansea Valley, the A4107 into the Afan Valley and routes from Maesteg.

5.5.12 Within these gateway areas, new developments will be required to take full account of their visual impact when seen from the main transport arteries, with careful attention being paid to siting, design, appearance, massing and scale to minimise any visual intrusion and where appropriate enhance the visual aspects of the area.

5.5.13 Drainage systems should be designed to ensure that developments have no detrimental effects on the water environment or on flood risk. Normally this will involve the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques.

5.5.14 In order to make the best use of available land, developments should be designed where possible to maximise the accommodation provided while remaining in keeping with the surrounding area. Development below the specified residential density levels will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are significant constraints associated with a site that prevent development at the specified levels or where development at the density required would have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the locality or result in the loss of an important site feature. In central locations which

The application site has a gross area of 0.5ha and the entire site has a gross area of 0.62ha.

Based on the above criteria the entire site should provide 21.7 dwellings. However, there are two undevelopable areas within the wider site, north of the turning head and the public sewer easement to the east of the site. These reduce the gross site area by 840m² this in turn reduces the entire site to a net area of 0.53ha. **Table 1**

Based on the net developable area the entire site should provide 18.5 dwellings with the current application site providing 17.5 dwellings. Justification for the reduced density is set up below.

Table 1

Description	Area Ha	Density Required
Application site	0.5	17.5
Overall site	0.62	21.7
Overall site less undevelopable areas	0.53	18.5

- Self-build Provision and Policy application
- Character of the area
- Physical and other Development Constraints
- Financial Justification
- LDP delivery of Housing

Self-build Provision and Policy application

Paragraphs 4.2.13 - 4.2.1 55 PPW (shown above) clearly states that Local Authorities must make provision for self-build development.

Notwithstanding this the LDP makes no specific reference to self-build development. As such self-build development within the County Borough is treated in the same way as open market housing both in relation to density, the provision of affordable housing and other Section 106 contributions.

It is generally accepted that self-build development consists of large, bespoke dwellings in generally large plots. There are, as far as I'm aware, no self-build developments within the County Borough that contain small open market type detached dwellings (below 120sqm), semi-detached or link dwellings.

It is accepted that there is a need to obtain a satisfactory density of dwellings in order to provide adequate dwellings within the most efficient manner. However, applying the required density across-the-board, regardless of the size of the site, clearly provides a market advantage to the larger developers who own larger site.

On large sites developers will be able to offer a greater number of detached dwellings (thus unfairly improving their market share) whilst ensuring there is sufficient space within the remainder of the site to provide higher density semi-detached or link dwellings in order to achieve the required density.

As the size of a development site diminishes there is less scope for the developer to provide detached dwellings whilst ensuring there is sufficient space within the site to provide additional dwellings to achieve the required density.

It is therefore submitted that the universal application of the density criteria across all sites does not provide a level playing field for developers. It is clear that larger sites will have an unfair market advantage in the provision of large detached dwellings simply due to the size of the development site. As such it

is considered that the density requirement required within Policy BE1 should not be universally applied to all sites.

Character of the area

The application site is adjacent to existing residential development. To north is Ascot Drive and to the south is Maes Ty Canol.

Ascot Drive consists of modern market houses constructed post 2000. These houses are generally detached and have a density of approximately 22 per ha (**Table 2**). This is over 37% below the Councils current policy requirement.

Maes Ty Canol was is constructed circa 1980 and consists of a large detached self-build dwellings of various designs. These houses have a density of approximately 18 per ha.

The overall development (Phase 1 & Phase 2+) will an overall density of 18.86 per Ha. As such it is considered that the proposed housing density reflects that along Maes Ty Canol and is notionally below the density on Ascot Drive.

Table 2

Area	Density Per Ha
Ascot Drive	22
Maes Ty Canol	18
Proposed development(10 dwellings)	18.86

Physical and other Development Constraints

The overall site consists of a steeply sloping parcel of land with a gross area of 0.62ha. There are a number of physical and other development constraints which have both limited the design of the development and resulted in significant additional costs to the overall scheme. These constraints, as indicated above, have reduced the developable area of the site to 0.53ha. These constraints are listed below.

- Public sewer easement
- One access point
- Need to provide potential future access to field at north of site
- Steep gradients across the site
- Poor water infiltration rates

Access to the development is limited to one location. When the applicant purchased the site, as part of his contract, he was required to ensure that a fully adoptable highway was available to provide potential future access to the fields at the North. The steeply sloping site, which falls over 14m across the site, dictates that the highway can only be placed in one location and importantly for the plot density, cannot end in a shared drive layout which would inevitably lead to a great density of dwellings and a reduced cost for the construction of the highway.

In relation to foul sewerage there is an existing drain on the eastern side of the site running from dwellings on Ascot Drive. The consequences of this is

that a 6m easement (equivalent to half a plot width) is required. The applicant has examined the possibility of moving the site in order to release further land however, no practical or cost-effective solutions were found.

In 2020 new SAB regulations came into force within Wales. These regulations required developers to deal with all surface water emanating from their site. The aim was to prevent surface water flooding both on-site and offsite, to improve water quality and biodiversity.

The slope of the site and the poor infiltration rates within the development foot print has creating significant drainage issues. The poor infiltration rates in the site has necessitated the discharge of water into adjacent water courses. The high rate of flow at the discharge point (80 L per second) has resulted in the developer having to provide substantial attenuation despite providing large areas of infiltration within the site. As permissible discharge rates are set at 5 L per second the developer has had to provide a large attenuation tank together with substantial drainage works on the north-western corner of the site. This has resulted both in the loss of available development land for drainage works and maintenance easement and again has come at significant additional costs.

Whilst the location of the highway and the general layout has been dictated by the identify constraints the matter for discussion is whether the number of dwellings can be increased. The applicant has considered this in engineering terms. The most obvious solution would be to double the total number of dwellings from 10(entire site) to 20 retain the proposed footprint and general retaining the plot layouts. Doubling the number of dwellings, by effectively halving the proposed footprints of each dwelling, would not result in any additional surface water run-off from the proposed dwelling footprint. However, car parking provision for the proposed nine dwellings is

approximately three vehicles per dwelling. If a scheme for 20 dwellings was proposed, each new dwelling would need to provide between two or three additional car parking spaces. A two car drive is required to be 10m long and 3.2m which this would produce an additional surface area of 32m². An 20 dwelling scheme would therefore require 320m² (10 x 32m²) of hard surfaces which in turn would relate to additional costly on site attenuation together with the reduction of available land for development.

It is therefore considered that submitted scheme provides the best and most cost-effective engineering solution to the development of the site. Whilst a higher density could, in theory, be achieved this is likely to result in increased surface water flows giving rise to additional costly engineering solutions within the site.

Financial Justification

The application site has been within settlement limits for several decades and has been the subject of previous planning permissions dating back as far as 2008. However, the size of the site and the significant physical constraints have resulted in the site not being developed despite its excellent location within the settlement and close to local facilities.

The small size of the site has deterred large developers and the significant physical constraints have likewise deterred many small developers.

The applicant has undertaken viability assessments based on a 10-unit scheme and a 20-unit scheme. Both assessments have shown that the development is not viable. The consequences of that are that the developer is unable to raise finance to build out the development and sell completed dwellings on the open market.

Table 3 below sets out the costs of constructing two dwellings on a 20-unit scheme. It is considered that in order to construct 2 dwellings ready for sale the applicant will require £1.1 million in finance. With shortages of labour and materials in combination with conveyancing taking in excess of four months it is considered that the applicant will be able to achieve 2 to 3 completions/sales per annum. This would result in the development taking 6-9 years to complete.

The applicant is unable to raise finance to progress the scheme due to the viability of the development and the time required to complete the works. Although the period of completion can be reduced, in order to achieve this more finance will be required in order to build out the development.

However, the applicant is of the view that the development would be able to progress as a self-build project. Of the 10 plots proposed five have been sold, subject to the grant of planning permission. The sales receipts from the plots would be used to cover the applicants initial spending on the land purchase, professional fees and road construction

Table 3

Description	Costs
Land Purchase (March 2020)	£282,800
Professional fees	£300,000
Road Construction	£120,000
Two Dwellings ^{**}	£340,800
Interest ^{***}	£58,800
TOTAL	£1,102,400

^{**} 2 Nos 120sqm dwellings @£1420 per sqm

^{***} 3 years on land @7%pa

It is clear from the above financial analysis that the only practical method of developing the site is by self-build. The consequences of that, so far as density is concerned, is that a lower number of houses will be required on site in order to meet the needs of self-builders would require larger plots.

It is therefore considered that the lower density is justified in order to see the site developed for the wider benefit of the local economy and provision of houses within the LDP plan period.

LDP Delivery of Housing

In October 2021 the council produced its Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)³. At paragraph 6.1.5 it indicated that the LDP allocated land for the provision of 8760 dwellings in order to deliver 7800 by 2026. Unfortunately, only 2357 dwellings had been completed against an annual cumulative target of 4956. This represents a delivery of only 48%. **Table 4** below sets out the accumulated short fall since 2011. The AMR accepted that the LDP would not deliver the full housing requirement of 7800 by the end of the plan period.

In accordance with Welsh Government Advice the AMR has set out predicted housing completions from 2021-2026. The predicted delivery is set out in figure 6.2 of the AMR and has been reproduced in **Table 5** below

³ <https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/12342/jhlafinalreport2019.pdf?v=20190829083714>

Table 4**Table 6.1.2 Total Housing Completions by Year (NPT LDP)**

Year	Annual Target (NPT LDP)	Actual Housing Completions	Cumulative Target (NPT LDP)	Cumulative Completions	Cumulative Completions Against Target (NPT LDP)	Cumulative Completions as a % of Target (NPT LDP)
2011/12	262	277	262	277	15	106%
2012/13	287	303	549	580	31	106%
2013/14	301	262	850	842	-8	99%
2014/15	386	314	1,236	1,156	-80	94%
2015/16	486	214	1,722	1,370	-352	80%
2016/17	549	184	2,271	1,554	-717	68%
2017/18	625	119	2,896	1,673	-1,223	58%
2018/19	686	276	3,582	1,949	-1,633	54%
2019/20	698	259	4,280	2,208	-2,072	52%
2020/21	676	149	4,956	2,357	-2,599	48%

Table 5**Figure 6.2 Housing Delivery in Neath Port Talbot**

LDP Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27 (01/04/26-31/12/26)
Actual completions large	221	247	204	267	162	146	70	214	244	102						
Actual completions small sites	56	56	58	47	52	38	49	62	15	47						
Anticipated completions allocated sites during year											12	65	190	389	584	440
Anticipated landbank completions during year											118	195	196	151	244	170
Anticipated completions large windfall during year											0	0	35	35	35	35
Anticipated completions small windfall during year											50	50	50	50	50	50
Total actual completions during year	277	303	262	314	214	184	119	276	259	149						
Anticipated annual build rate											180	310	471	625	913	695

The AMR predicts a total of 3194 completions within the next six years. It is therefore submitted that there are sufficient allocated and or consented sites within the County Borough to deliver the 3194 predicted completions. As such a minor reduction in the overall density of the development as submitted will not have a detrimental or immeasurable impact on the overall housing and delivery target of LDP.

In conclusion, whilst it is accepted that the site cannot provide housing densities at the levels suggested by BE1 8(a) there are there are a number of significant mitigating reasons to permit the density as submitted.

As such it is considered that the development accords with policy BE1.

In conclusion, the application site is within settlements. Its development therefore accords with Policy SP3 and SC1 and provides much needed housing as requires by Policy SP7.

The application site as no important natural features and the submitted Bat Survey indicates that no bats were found within the existing building. Sensitive landscaping will enhance the site and the development therefore accords with Policy EN7.

4. Site Analysis

The application site is approximately 0.5 ha in area and form part of a larger site of 0.62ha. The wider site consists of an open area of land which slopes

steeply downwards from east to west.

The eastern boundary of the site adjoins residential dwellings on Ascot Drive and demarked by timber fencing. The southern boundary adjoins an underground reservoir owned by Welsh Water together with a large exclusion zone. This boundary is the marked by a post on my fence.

Vehicle access to the site is to the South off Maes Ty Canol. This provides access to the local highway network that connects with the wider community and local/regional transport links to the south.

5. Context Assessment

The application site is located within the settlement of Baglan approximately 3km North of Port Talbot.

6. Involvement and Consultation

The proposal has been the subject of consultation with the LPA reference Q2020/0094

7. Design

The key objectives have been

1. Protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area.
2. Promote the use of sustainable resources

3. Provide a functional family homes
4. Minimize impact on neighbouring properties
5. Ensure that the development adequately deals with on-site drainage

Design solutions

The application submitted seek to:

- Minimize the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area by designing and orientating the proposed dwelling to fit the character and appearance of the existing settlement pattern.
- Protect the amenities of nearby properties by not increasing on street car parking or creating and overlooking.
- Maximize solar gain
- Provide adequate amenity space
- Maximize the number of dwellings on the site
- Provide adequate levels of privacy for future occupiers of the dwellings
- Provide a suitable drainage scheme

8. Community Safety

The proposed dwellings have open frontages to the proposed access road ensuring clear lines of visibility. The rear gardens and access is overlooked by the dwellings and their elevated living areas provides visibility to and beyond the site boundary. Therefore, the submitted layout ensures that all public areas are overlooked maximizing natural surveillance.

9. Character

Amount of development

The proposal is for the construction of 8 dwellings (1 Outline & & Full). Full details of each dwelling have been provided within the application.

Layout

The design process has been influenced by constraints on the site which have limited design solution. They are

- Public sewer easement
- One access point
- Need to provide potential future access to field at north of site
- Steep gradients across the site
- Poor water infiltration rates

The areas to the sides and rear of the dwelling will provide private amenity space for the dwellings.

The parking for a minimum of 3 vehicles will area will be located to the side/front of the dwellings.

Scale

As shown on attached plans

Appearance

The proposed dwellings have been designed to reflect the character and appearance of the area. The front elevation will be generally symmetrical with a central door and the roofline will run parallel to the highway. This is typical of the character of dwellings in the area.

Landscaping

The proposal does not contain detailed landscaping proposal however; significant opportunity exists for the landscaping of the site particularly the area turn off the site adjacent to the site boundary.

The landscaping strategy for the site will seek to:

- Improve and enhance the Area
- Seek to retain existing native trees
- Provide formal and informal landscaping area using native wildlife friendly species
- Provide a wildlife friendly landscape buffer adjacent to the northern site boundary
- Eradicate any invasive species found on the site

10. Environmental Sustainability

PPW states

4.12.1 Climate responsive developments are those that tackle the causes of climate change and adapt to the current and future effects of climate change through the incorporation of effective mitigation and adaptation measures

Advice on achieving the Welsh Governments aspiration set out above are contained with *Practical Guidance - Planning for Sustainable Buildings July 2014*⁴

The proposed internal layout has been design so as to maximize solar gain.

Low energy lighting will be used throughout the dwelling.

The proposal will meet all current insulation standards

The property will be converted in accordance with Part L (Approved Document L) of the Building Regulations⁵

11. Movement and Access

Movement

The site is located off Mae Ty Canol. Maes Ty Canol connects to the local highway network which in-turn provides access to the and the M4 to the

⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/140820practice-guidance-planning-for-sustainable-buildings-en.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/approveddocuments/partl/approved>

South. Connecting footways from the site are lit and provide access to public transport to the wider community and regions. There is a bus stop within 158m of the site providing access to the wider region.

Local facilities such as pubs, schools and shops are available in Baglan at distances of no more than 800m, more varied facilities are available in Port Talbot approximately 3km south. These facilities are accessible by foot or public transport.

Bus stop	158m
Schools	261m & 500m
Pub	800m
Shops	400m

Given the location of the site close to local facilities and public transport it is considered that the occupier of the proposed dwelling would not be dependent on motor vehicles and the site is therefore in a sustainable location in accordance with PPW and Policy GC1, and T1 of the UDP

The site is large and provided access and parking to current standards.

Access

The dwellings will be accessed off the existing access to the south of the site. The access will provide vehicle and pedestrian access of the existing highway.

The proposed development would provide a highway with footways to current adoptable standards.

The entrance door to the dwelling will have storm proof level access thresholds and have a minimum clear with of 775mm. All internal circulation routes are in excess of those required under Building Regulations and internal doors will have a minimum clear width of 750mm.

A WC is provided within the entrance storey to dimensions as set out in Approved Document M (Diagram 31 & 31) allowing adequate transfer space.

All switches, sockets and distribution boards are to be sited between 450mm and 1200mm above finished floor level.

The dwellings are of a significant scale, and layouts afford future adaptation works easily.

Documents Referred to:-

Approved Document M

CABE Guide to Access Statements

WAG Access Statements