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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND AT DAN Y GRAIG, PONTWALBY

Revised 2023

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Appendix A– Application site edged red with layout

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT: LAND AT DAN Y GRAIG, PONTWALBY

1.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Design and Access Statements (DAS) have been required in Wales for many planning applications since 2009, however in 2016 requirements changed to state the provision of DAS to accompany planning applications applied only to:

- All planning applications for Major development (over 1,000 sq. m floorspace) **except** those for mining operations, waste developments, relaxation or amendment to conditions (section '73' applications) and applications for a material change in use of land or buildings
- All planning applications for development in a conservation area or World Heritage Site where there is provision of one or more dwellings or the creation of floorspace of 100 sq. (gross) or more

1.2 Whilst this development does not fall within a conservation area or World Heritage Site, the three dwellings could potentially provide a cumulative floorspace in excess of 100 sq. m and thus triggering the requirement for DAS.

1.3 The requirement for a DAS and the content of such documents forms part of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016.

1.4 The main purpose of the DAS is to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal and explains the design. DAS were introduced to help ensure both design quality and inclusive access are given sufficient consideration in the planning process.

1.5 Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 12 (Design) explain the principles of good design. TAN 12 now also includes important guidance on sustainable building standards in Wales and how to achieve them. (Note this follows the cancellation of TAN 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings, in July 2014.) TAN 12 now details ways of reducing carbon emissions by application of the energy hierarchy and also provides details on a series of steps to be undertaken to decrease consequential carbon emissions of new development in the most cost-effective and efficient way.

1.6 The diagram below summarises the objectives of good design.

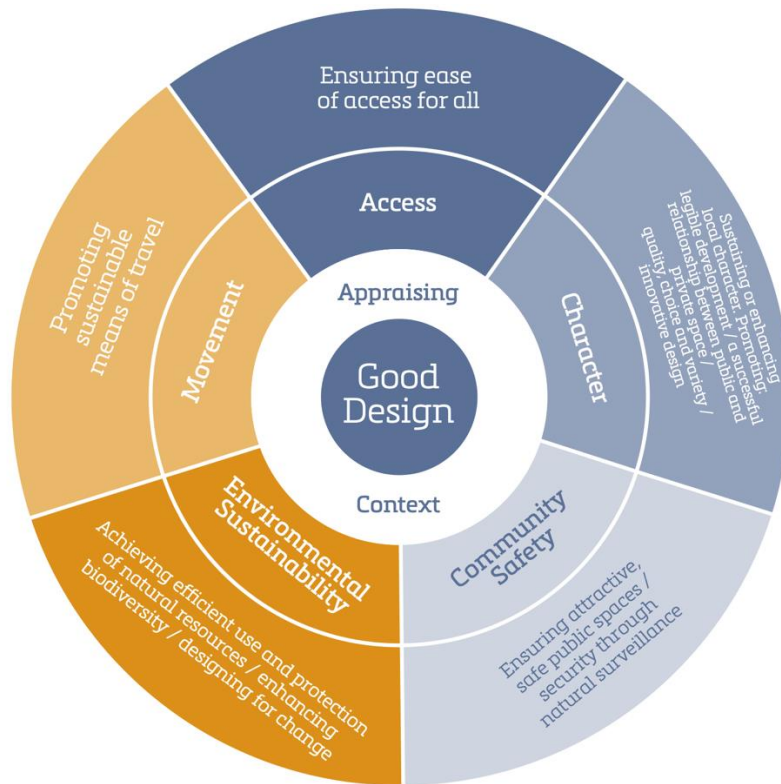


Figure 1 – Objectives of Good Design (Planning Policy Wales Edition 11, Feb 2021)

- 1.7 The DAS should act as a 'living document' and the reserved matters application/s to follow this outline should be accompanied by a progress statement updating any changes that have occurred since this original DAS was submitted.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On behalf of our client, Herbert R Thomas submit this Design and Access Statement in support of a resubmission of a previously approved outline planning permission ref: 2009/0417.
- 2.2 The application is in outline with ALL matters reserved for the erection of x3 no. detached dwellings. The development is proposed on a parcel of land at Dan y Graig, Pontwalby.
- 2.3 Please read the cover letter of the application to ensure the full and sensitive circumstances of the application are understood.
- 2.4 See Appendix A for a layout plan with the site edged red. The satellite images below show the site (general location of which is marked with a red dot) in the context of the surrounding settlement of Pontwalby.

Figure 2: The site (marked with a red dot) in context of the surrounding settlement (Google Maps)

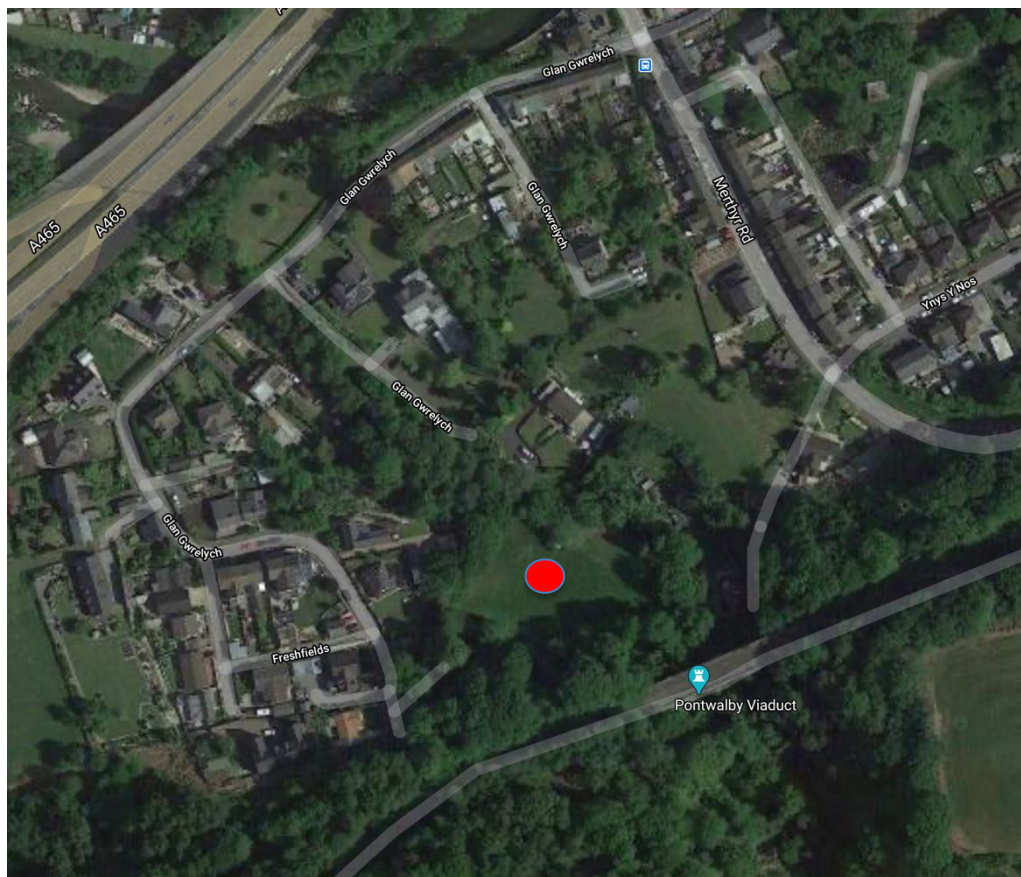


Figure 3: satellite image of the site (marked with red dot) adjacent to Pantwalby Viaduct (Google Maps)



rail was added to provide a mixed gauge route, with a complete conversion to standard gauge taking place on 11th May 1872.

- 3.4 Pontwalby was the site of a viaduct which launched the two-track line over the Gwrelych valley. Built by contractors Gale and Warden, it comprises five spans of 35 feet each, giving an overall length of about 80 yards.
- 3.5 Whilst the arches are formed in red brick, the rest of the structure was built in locally-quarried grey stone. The piers incorporate arches to reduce weight and focus forces onto the foundations.
- 3.6 The Glynneath to Hirwaun line closed completely on 2 October 1967. Today the deck is tarmacked, hosting a foot and cycle path. The viaduct received a Grade II listing in September 2003.

3.7 Site context

- 3.8 The site is located in Pontwalby, approximately 11 miles from Neath. Together Pontwalby and Glynneath form a typical small Welsh valley town located in Neath Port Talbot County's vale of Neath. Glynneath is the main service centre for the Neath Valley, and is home to a number of shops and small businesses such as hairdressers, specialist shops and health providers such as dentist, optician, and pharmacy. A new health centre has recently opened on the edge of town. There is a leisure centre with pool, as well as a private gym.
- 3.9 The town is in the top 50% of areas of multiple deprivation in Wales in seven of the eight categories. (The exception been the physical environment.) It ranks as 24th overall for the County.
- 3.10 The population is ageing, and has dropped between the last two censuses, and is forecast to drop again.
- 3.11 The site forms a parcel of approximately 0.28 hectares of undeveloped land lying to the north of Pontwalby viaduct and bordered by Nant Gwrelych to the north and

east. The land is accessed via an existing gated entrance off Glan Gwrelych. See also attached separate Access statement.

- 3.12 There are no permanent buildings on the site subject to this planning application. Surrounding the site are residential properties and their associated gardens and driveways. Note that the properties on Glan Gwrelych that are in closest proximity to the site are of single storey or 1.5 storey design (dormer bungalow). The images below show those neighbouring properties (images taken from Street View of Google).



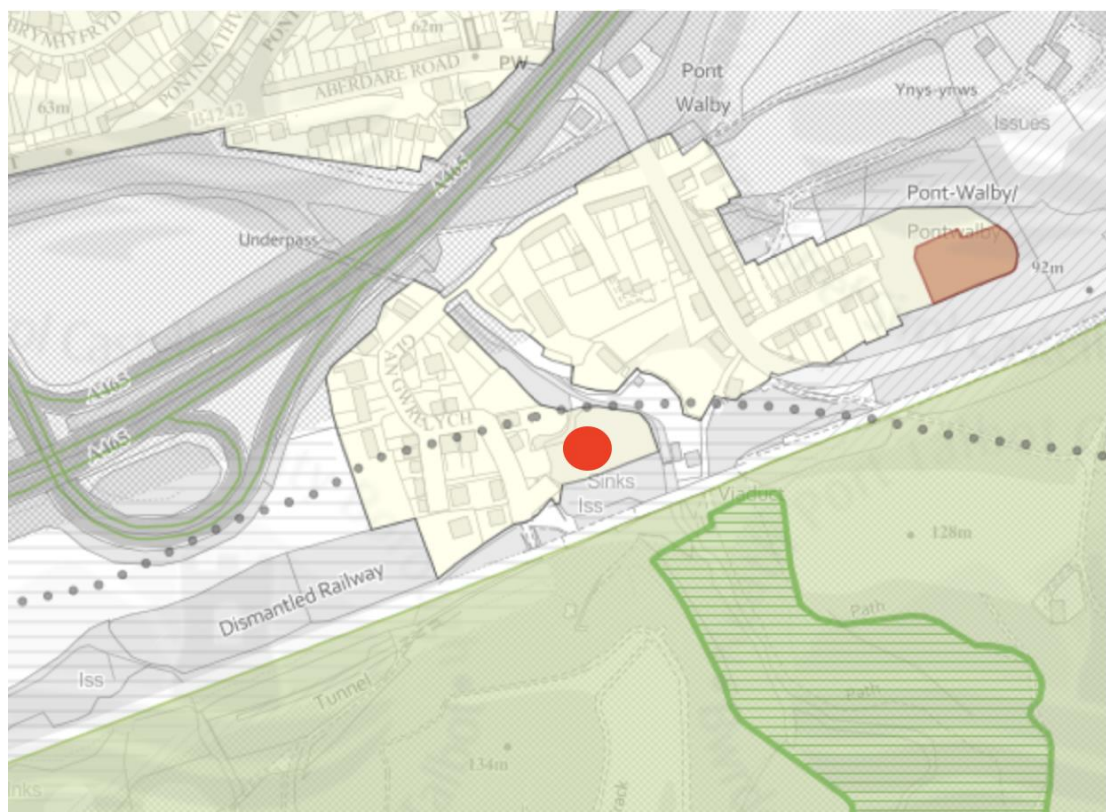
Images of residential properties at Glan Gwrelych in close proximity to the site



3.13 ***Development Plan Policies***

- 3.14 The National policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and associated Technical Advice Notes (TANs) – please refer to the accompanying Planning Statement for reference to these documents.

- 3.15 The current adopted development plan for the area is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (NPTLDP) 2011– 2026. The extract below shows the proposals map for the relevant part of the borough. Note preparation is underway for a replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) with a period, otherwise referred to as the 'Plan period', for 15 years from 2021 to 2036. Once adopted (around 2025), the NPT RLDP 2021–2036 will replace the NPT LDP 2011–2026.



4.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The previous applications (P2006/0307 and P2009/0417) were discussed, by the then applicant, on site with various Council Planning and Highways officers. The main issue at that time was considered to be the proximity to the stream and the potential for flooding. This issue was addressed by a flood assessment report that indicated the risk was negligible. Flood risk information is provided as part of this application. A Flood Consequences Assessment report has been carried out by Tulip Engineering concluding the development as proposed meets the key TAN 15 requirements including a flood-free development and emergency access route and no flood risk increase elsewhere.
- 4.2 As far as we are aware, specific formal neighbour consultations have not been undertaken in relation to this most recent proposal to date – please refer to the cover letter of the application and note the sensitive circumstances surrounding this application.
- 4.3 It is noted that the neighbours immediately adjacent to the site are aware of the previous permission for residential development of this site and provided comments at the time those applications were under consideration.
- 4.4 A Tree Survey and accompanying report has been carried out. The report concludes that two trees require removal to facilitate the proposed development; it is understood that the loss of these trees will not significantly impact local amenity or landscape character.
- 4.5 A landscape scheme, including new tree planting, is recommended to mitigate the loss of the two trees and provide a resilient, more sustainable tree population, helping to ensure the development has a positive impact on local amenity, canopy cover and landscape character.

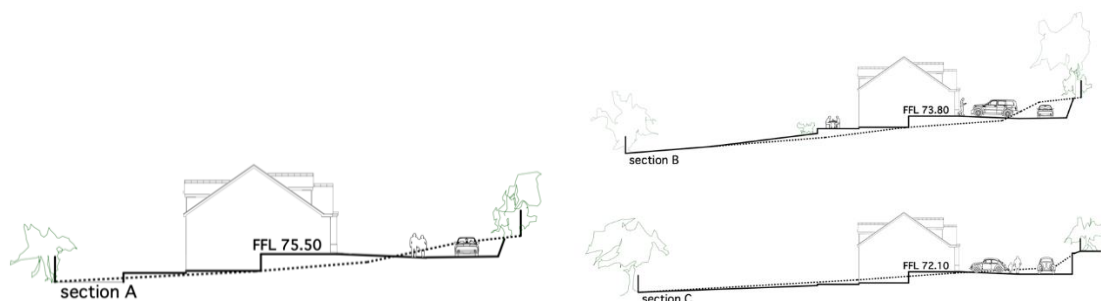
5.0 DESIGN

5.1 **Amount:** The list below provides the maximum and minimum length, width and height for the development,;

- Maximum length 12 m
- Minimum length 10m
- Maximum height 9 m
- Minimum height 7m
- Maximum width 14 m
- Minimum width 12 m

5.2 Using the above maximum and minimum measurements the maximum foot print for each dwelling would total 168 sq. m whilst the minimum foot print would total 120 sq. m. Note the maximum height of 9m could potentially accommodate a 2 storey dwelling however the current design vision, in line with that of the original submission, is for a dormer style single storey with potential split level to the ground floor and provision of bedrooms in the roof of the dwelling providing a lower roofline, less impact and opportunity for more attractive design. This design would be considered in-keeping with surrounding properties of the area.

5.3 Below are sectional drawings of the indicative properties to give a flavour of how the changing levels within the site could work with the properties. Some indicative designs of such dwellings are provided on page 14, ranging from more traditional to Scandinavian style single story / dormer dwellings. The final designs will be the subject of the reserved matters application.



(Produced by CFW Architects)



Designs for single storey, split level or dormer bungalows
(indicative only)



- 5.4 **Layout:** The dwellings will be served by a newly constructed private road within the site. This private road will use the existing access to the site and join Glan Gwrelych (note at this point the road widens significantly).
- 5.5 It is considered that the hedging surrounding the site is dense enough to provide a barrier plus the stream to the north and eastern edge provides a further barrier. Therefore, no fencing treatment will likely be required to secure the site.
- 5.6 **Scale:** The proposed dimensions of the dwellings are provided on Page 12 for indicative purposes. The dwellings final scale will be determined at the reserved matters stage but would need to be in keeping with surrounding dwellings and respect the site context.
- 5.7 **Landscaping:** All mature trees and hedging on the site will be retained as far as practical (note that 2 trees require removal to facilitate the scheme with tree planting

elsewhere in the immediate area to mitigate the loss of these trees). Land in the ownership of the applicant and not proposed for development is outlined blue on the plan in Appendix A. You will note a large proportion of the land is to remain open (approximately 80%) on the east and southern portion of the site to allow openness within the site and separation between the development and the river and also the wooded bank and setting of the listed Pontwalby Viaduct.

- 5.8 ***Appearance:*** The final appearance of the dwellings will be agreed at reserved matters stage. It is noted however that the residential properties will take cues from the local vernacular and as many local materials will be used as possible. Given the private nature of the site it does not sit within a street scene and the impacts therefore to the existing Glan Gwrelych will be minimal and not adversely affected.

6.0 CHARACTER

- 6.1 This outline proposal is considered to be in keeping with the semi-rural character of this part of Pontwalby through the careful positioning, sensitive design, appropriate choice of materials that will be detailed in the reserved matters proposals. The neighbouring viaduct forms an attractive and imposing 'edge' to the site and lends itself to the character of the area. The residential development would likely take design cues from arched form of the viaduct, the imposing grey stone and contrasting red brick that has been used in its construction.



Figure 7 - Photos demonstrating the arches, red brick and grey stone of the neighbouring viaduct.

- 6.2 The site forms a parcel of land of around 0.28 hectares and it is envisaged that the total building footprint for the 3 dwellings would range from 360 sq. m (minimum total footprint) to 504 sq. m (maximum total footprint). This represents a low density scheme given the neighbouring properties.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 There are no issues with this application which would result in a negative impact on community safety.
- 7.2 Furthermore the development of this small-scale scheme will ensure an ongoing benefit of surveillance over this area. It is considered that safety and security of the area will be improved by a beneficial use of the site that creates a natural surveillance.
- 7.3 In previous years (prior to January 2020) the land was actively used and accessed regularly for parking of an HGV, entry for wood collection and maintenance purposes and frequent dog walking and dog training by the owners. Whilst after this date occasional access has still been gained it is noted the level of use has dropped and therefore surveillance has decreased accordingly. This will in turn result in less self policing of the land itself. The proposal of 3 dwellings would create a beneficial use and active surveillance of the area.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

8.1 The proposal will progress in line with guidance at local and national level. The Welsh Government puts forward the 7 goals of the well being of future generations (see diagram below) and confirms:

'As a country, we understand our duty to be globally responsible and we also recognise equally that good development is a matter of local and community scale importance. Future Wales is a vital link between the two, and for the next twenty years it will enable us to make the right choices – and to put the right development in the right place.' NPfW 2040

The Well being of future generations (7 goals)



8.2 The environmental sustainability of the scheme will be promoted through the reserved matters stage of the application process.

8.3 The development will be constructed using high quality materials to ensure that they will stand the test of time.

8.4 The development will use as many local materials and craftsmen/women as possible to ensure travel distances for products and labour are minimised.

8.5 Planting will be encouraged to be of native species and where possible existing trees and hedging retained.

9.0 MOVEMENT

- 9.1 A safe access and egress will be created ensuring the current access way is utilised to its full potential. See attached plan showing the established existing access point that is to be used for the scheme (denoted by blue arrow).
- 9.2 The access road of Glan Gwrelych does not lead to anywhere by vehicle beyond the Pontwalby Viaduct Bridge. There is no visible speed limit however by nature of the 'winding road that widens and narrows in places drivers would likely travel at around 20MPH in what is likely a 30MPH limit.
- 9.3 Pedestrians may use the intermittent footways along the side of the road. A footway or suitable shared surface would be provided within the scheme at the reserved matters stage. The reserved matters stage will also detail junction design, vision splay and driveways.
- 9.4 Promoting active and sustainable travel - EV charging points can be included at the reserved matters stage to encourage travel generating less emissions and contributing to more sustainable travel. The proximity to the bus stop at Pontwalby Bridge is within 550m.

10.0 ACCESS

- 10.1 The site is located at the 'tail end' of Glan Gwrelych road on a relatively unused and straight road affording good visibility for both vehicle and pedestrian traffic in both directions. A right of way is legally secured by the applicant over the access.
- 10.2 The site junction with Glan Gwrelych has been widened over the years when historically Heavy Goods Vehicles used this area to turn and park. The applicant has confirmed legal right of way over this access in to the site.
- 10.3 There are no obstructions at this junction to obscure oncoming traffic or pedestrians. There is very little traffic flow past this junction as the road only provides access to a few isolated farms beyond the viaduct (south).
- 10.4 The design envisages the plots will incorporate a driveway providing surface car parking space within the curtilage of each plot for 2 cars. This arrangement will minimise the need to park on the private road. Note full designs will be provided as part of the reserved matters stage.

11.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 The proposal is located fully within the settlement limit of Pontwalby and falls within an established residential area. At the reserved matters stage the design will take its cues from the surrounding residential developments and the imposing industrial architecture of the viaduct.
- 11.2 The scale of the development is sympathetic to the surroundings in producing a development that preserves the openness of this site toward the stream corridor. The setting of the viaduct is also respected in so far as the development leaves a buffer between the structure and the development itself.
- 11.3 The proposal concept ensures it works with the changing levels, that the site can be accessed and egressed adequately using the existing wide vehicular access (designs will be produced as part of the reserved matters stage) with no highway safety concerns arising from the outline proposal.

APPENDIX 1

Red line site plan / block plan



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