

Design Statement – for Proposed 2 Storey Extension to 18 Castle Drive, Cimla

Site Context and Existing Character

The application property forms one of a semi-detached pair within an established residential street characterised by similar two-storey dwellings of consistent scale, form, and appearance. This section of Castle Drive exhibits a varied yet structured pattern of development, with pairs of semi-detached properties arranged along a staggered building line reflecting the alignment of the road.

Notably, the adjacent pair of dwellings further along Castle Drive (Nos. 14–16) are positioned approximately 3–3.5 m forward of the application property. This established stagger creates a clear visual break between building groups and prevents the perception of a continuous or uniform terrace. The street scene is therefore defined by a rhythm of aligned semi-detached pairs rather than uninterrupted frontage.

The host dwelling reflects the prevailing architectural character of the area, with facing brickwork, a pitched roof, and clearly defined vertical and horizontal proportions. Existing vertical brick band detailing provides important visual structure to the elevation.

The existing projecting bay window on the principal elevation is to be removed and replaced with a flush window opening. This alteration responds to ongoing weathering and maintenance issues associated with the bay construction and forms part of the wider rationalisation of the frontage.

The removal of projecting bay windows is not uncommon within the immediate street context. Properties opposite the application site at Nos. 19 and 25 Castle Drive have similarly replaced their original projecting bay windows with flush window openings. This demonstrates an established pattern of alteration within the street and reinforces that such changes can be accommodated without detriment to the overall character or visual coherence of the area. The proposed alteration is therefore consistent with the evolving character of the surrounding dwellings and accords with the principles of the Neath Port Talbot Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design.

Design Approach and Response to Surroundings

The proposed two-storey side extension has been designed to integrate proportionately with the host dwelling, aligning with the existing principal elevation and maintaining the established ridge and eaves heights. This approach reflects the scale, form, and architectural proportions of the original building and ensures the extension reads as a coherent and well-integrated addition.

Whilst the extension does not incorporate a setback from the principal elevation, setbacks are not a universal requirement and must be considered in the context of the surrounding streetscape. The staggered building line along Castle Drive prevents the formation of a continuous terrace and ensures the proposal will be viewed within a varied and articulated street scene. Similar extensions within the locality have been approved which align flush with the principal elevation, demonstrating that such design approaches are acceptable in principle when proportionate & sympathetic to the host dwelling (Wood View - see overleaf).



Example properties No's 2+3 Wood View, Cimla.

The proposal has been developed in accordance with the Neath Port Talbot Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design, respecting the character, proportions, and visual integrity of the host property and surrounding area.

Architectural Composition and Elevational Design

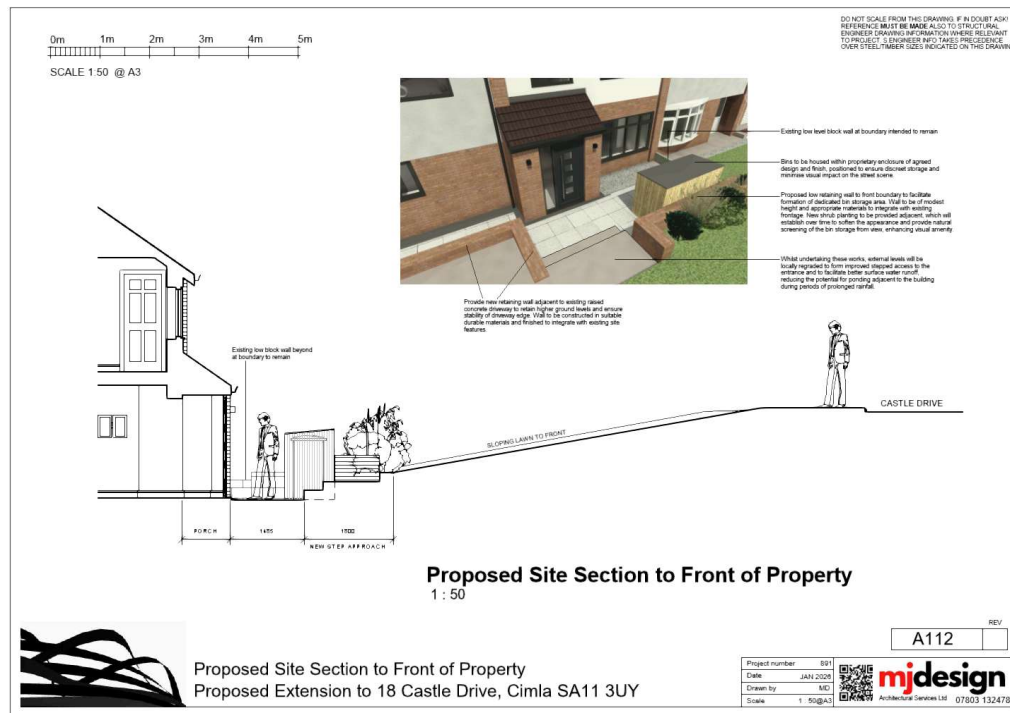
A key element of the proposal is the introduction of a centrally positioned porch entrance which provides a clear focal point and reinforces a balanced and symmetrical composition across the principal elevation. The porch aligns proportionately with the extended frontage and corresponding window openings, improving the overall architectural clarity and legibility of the dwelling.

The existing vertical brick band at the junction with the original dwelling is retained and reflected at the outer corner of the extension. This repetition of vertical detailing provides visual definition and continuity, reinforcing the established rhythm and proportions of the elevation and ensuring the extension integrates cohesively with the original building.

The existing projecting bay window is to be removed and replaced with a flush window opening due to ongoing weathering and maintenance issues associated with its construction. The replacement window simplifies the principal elevation and aligns with the overall design approach, allowing the extended dwelling to read as a unified and coherent architectural composition.

Proposed Alterations to the Frontage (Retaining Wall and Bin Storage)

The proposal includes the construction of a low retaining wall to the front boundary to facilitate discreet and integrated bin storage and to improve access to the property. The retaining wall will be modest in height and constructed using materials appropriate to the character of the dwelling and surrounding streetscape.



The bin storage area has been sensitively positioned to minimise visibility from the public realm, whilst new shrub planting adjacent to the retaining wall will soften its appearance and provide natural screening as planting matures. These measures will enhance the visual amenity and contribute positively to the green character of the frontage.

The regrading of external levels and formation of improved stepped access will rationalise the existing arrangement and assist in managing surface water runoff, reducing localised ponding adjacent to the building.

Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal accords with the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design. In particular, the development complies with Policy BE1 (Design) by maintaining the character, scale, and visual integrity of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

The proposal also aligns with Policy SP15 (Built Environment) by enhancing the visual quality and functionality of the property, and Policy TR2 (Design and Access of New Development) through improved and legible access arrangements.

The introduction of new planting contributes positively to the objectives of Policy EN9 (Green Infrastructure), whilst improvements to drainage and external levels align with Policy EN8 (Pollution and Land Stability).

The development is further consistent with the design objectives of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) and Technical Advice Note 12: Design, representing a sensitive and proportionate form of development that integrates successfully within the established residential context.

Conclusion

The proposed two-storey side extension and associated frontage works have been carefully designed to respect the character, proportions, and architectural composition of the host dwelling and surrounding area. The extension integrates coherently with the existing building, responds appropriately to the established staggered pattern of development, and enhances the architectural clarity and functionality of the property.

The proposal represents a proportionate and sympathetic form of development that accords fully with local and national planning policy and will not adversely affect the character or visual amenity of the street scene.