

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

DEMOLITION OF PART DEMOLISHED, FIRE DAMAGED AND DERELICT FORMER C1 RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS. CONSTRUCTION OF 15 NO LINK DWELLINGS (40% AFFORDABLE), AND THE CONVERSION OF THE EXISTING CHAPEL INTO A DWELLING, AND THE RETENTION / EXTENSION OF THE CARETAKER'S BUNGALOW

DESIGN AND ACCESS

STATEMENT



SITE ADDRESS:

**ST ATHAN BOYS VILLAGE,
ST ATHAN,
BARRY,
CF62 4HZ**

PREPARED BY:

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A ASSESSMENTS AND APPRAISALS

A.1 PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

Overview

The site lies a short distance off the B2465, approximately 1km from the settlement boundary enclosing St Athan.

The Boys Village opened in 1925, and was built to enable children, primarily from the South Wales Valley communities, to spend time enjoying the ‘fresh air and freedom’ of the Welsh Coast. With the advent of cheap foreign travel, and the general disappearance of mining in the Valleys, its use declined, and it finally closed in 1990.

The aerial photo on Page 1 of this Statement was taken in 1993; it shows the substantial built extent of the Village, a relative short time after its closure. The photos below illustrate its current forlorn, fire damaged, and part demolished condition. The brownfield site has become a magnet for vandals and vagrants; its appalling brooding appearance detracts from the amenities of the nearby houses at Bryn-y-Mor and West Aberthaw, and of the area in general.



The Report to Committee for an Approval issued in 2006 for 12 dwellings on the site stated:

'...because the site has not been actively used for many years, there is now an appearance of sad neglect and dilapidation...to the extent that the site now detracts from the general appearance and amenity of the surrounding area.'

A further six years on, the Report to Committee for the private dwelling approvals in 2014 confirmed:

'The condition of the site has deteriorated significantly over the last ten years to the point where it now has an appreciably detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area. It is therefore considered that a...re-use of the site would...improve its own appearance...and the visual amenity of the wider area.'

A.2 POLICY APPRAISAL:

i. Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011:

Of particular relevance to this proposal, are the following UDP policies:

Strategic Policy 2

' Proposals which encourage sustainable practices will be favoured including...Proposals which contribute to energy conservation (and)...proposals which improve the quality of the environment through the utilization of high standards of design'.

ENV 1 - Development in the Countryside

ENV 6 - East Vale Coast

ENV 8 - Small Scale Rural Conversions

ENV 16 - Protected Species

ENV 17 - Protection of the Built and Historic Environment

ENV 27 - Design of New Developments

ENV 29 - Protection of Environmental Quality

HOUS 3 - Dwellings in the Countryside

HOUS 7 - Replacement and Extension of Dwellings in the Countryside

REC 3 - Provision of Open Space within New Residential Developments

TRA 10 - Parking

ii) Supplementary Planning Guidance:

The following Vale Council SPG guidance applies to the application proposal:

Amenity Standards

Sustainable Development

Design in the landscape

Affordable Housing

Model Design Guide for Wales

iii) **Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7 July 2014)**

Para 4.9.1 'Previously developed land should wherever possible, be used in preference to Greenfield sites (this includes)... land in and around existing settlements

Figure 4.3 Definition of Previously Developed Land states that it is land occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure).

B EVALUATION

The application site has been subjects to earlier planning approvals; the first in 2006 was for 12 no dwellings, the majority of which were new build and only 4 created by the conversion of several of the remaining existing buildings; the second was in fact a number of individual approvals dated the same date in 2014, for 5 no dwellings, 4 created though the substantial conversion and extension of the existing buildings, the 5th being newbuild.

Whilst Policy ENV 1 seeks generally to restrict development in the countryside, the above approvals set a precedent for the construction of new dwellings on the site. The Report to the Committee for the 2006 Approval states:

'The primary issue of concern...is the creation of ...new dwellings on a site which would usually be contrary to Policy. However,...other 'material considerations' can also be taken into account. The most notable consideration in this case is that the ...Boys Village...is a long-established complex in this area... The site has a 'built-up' appearance.

'Whilst the site is located within the countryside, the environs of the site currently include other forms of development. Most notably, the Aberthaw cement works...and the Power Station. There are other dwellings in the locality, including property known as West Hall which fairly recently has had planning consent for conversion and extensions to form eight separate units...'

Similar to the above approvals, this application proposal includes an element of conversion, through the conversion of the existing Chapel into a dwelling; unlike the above approvals however, this proposal will also provide a 40% element of affordable housing, in accordance with the Draft SPG document, and the emerging LDP 2011 - 2026; affordable housing is a use that the text accompanying policy ENV1 states as being appropriate for sites such as this.

The subject of sustainability is referred to within the provisions of Policies ENV 27 and HOUS 7. The Council states in their Report on the 2006 Approval:

'The site is located outside a recognized settlement but, nevertheless, is within reasonable walking distance from the B4265 which is a recognized bus route.'

They state in their Report on the 2014 Approvals:

'The site lies approximately 400m away from the nearest shop...'

'While the stretch of rural lane directly to the north of the site is only single vehicle width, it is only 160m in length and relatively straight, such that there is good visibility along its stretch.'

Beyond the above, the short stretch of road leading onto the B4265 does have a footway. An improvement scheme to the B4265 is currently nearing completion; the scheme includes the installation of a new ambulant disabled access bus stop directly opposite the end of the road leading to the application site. The existing westbound carriageway bus stop shelter at the road junction has been retained; it is unclear at this time whether this bus stop will be subject to any further improvements.

Since the submission of the applications in 2012, which included the conversion of 4 no of the existing buildings, the latter have been subject to further vandalism and fire damage. They are now in such a poor state, the question must be asked whether their conversion is a 'point of principle' or whether it would be best to build a new, and comply with the 9 no criteria of policy ENV27 Design of New Developments. Other than the Chapel, which is to be retained, none of the remaining buildings possess any rear architectural merit, being neither rural in appearance, or particular to the period in which they were constructed. It is acknowledged that second to the Chapel, the former Dining Hall used to possess a degree of charm; yet the vandals have been 'busy' with that particular building over the last 3 years and it is now in such a state as to be economically and feasibly unviable for conversion into an attractive, sustainable dwelling (see left hand photo below). The (slightly younger) isolated brick faced two storey structure in the south east corner of the site is more akin to a building for the Atlantic Trading Estate in the 1950's (see right hand photo below)



C DESIGN

C1 Use:

The use of the site for dwellings has already been approved through the earlier planning permissions. The use of the brownfield site accords with PPW Para 4.9.1

The proposal is for 15 new dwellings. The scheme includes two further dwellings, the first through the conversion of the former Chapel, and the second through the retention and re-modelling of the existing Caretaker's Bungalow. Despite the attempts of local vandals, these two structures have managed to remain largely intact (see photos below). The detail of the former will be as per that approved under Permission 2012/00633/FUL, but with the dwelling sited on a more appropriately sized plot; the latter will be as per the design approved under Permission 2012/00592/FUL.



C2 Amount of Development:

The boundary of the application site is shown the same as the combined boundary of the 5 no 2012 applications, approved in 2014, i.e. approximately 110m wide by 115m deep, as confirmed in the Report to Committee on the latter.

Each of the dwellings within the would be served by an area of garden well in excess of the requirements within the Council's Amenity Standards SPG.

The generous amount of public open space area shown well exceeds the minimum requirement cited in UDP Policy REC3.

HOUS7 calls for any replacement structure not to be disproportionate in size to the original. The ground footprint of the remaining buildings on the site (excluding the Chapel and Bungalow) is some 1690m²; the combined ground footprint of the 15 no new detached dwellings is only 1275m². Clearly, as can be seen from the 1993 aerial photo below, the ground footprint of the buildings that were on the site originally (prior to fires, necessary demolition, etc) would have outweighed by many multiple factors the overall footprint of this proposed development.



C3 Layout and Landscaping:

The main access into the site will be retained in the same position as the access that served the Village when it was in operation; the access at present is blocked with boulders etc to prevent unauthorised vehicle entry onto the site. This access at the north west corner of the site, can be seen on the above photo. A new 5.5m wide adopted road with 1.8m footways both sides will be taken into the site.

The following factors have informed the layout of the application proposal:

- During pre-application discussions with the Vale Planning Department, it was agreed that the new dwellings should be sited loosely on the footprint of the existing buildings
- The new dwellings should be and sited around the 'central open square' layout of the original 1925 Village buildings, and the Listed War Memorial, as currently found at the central point of that square.
- The Report to Committee on the 2006 Permission acknowledged the positive attribute of that scheme seeking...'to make the memorial a central focal point in the development...'

C4 Scale and Indicative Appearance:

The indicative design of the new detached dwellings shows them to be dormer style dwellings with lowered eaves.

A pallet of white render, timber, and timber windows is envisaged for the houses. Open carports provide protection for parked cars whilst avoiding the urban look of double garages. Again ,it is hoped that the enclosing of these carports could be prevented by a planning condition.

The indicative design seeks to comply with the requirements of Policy HOUS 7, in that its scale, siting, design, materials, landscaping...is compatible with ...related structures and the surrounding landscape...'

D MOVEMENT

D1. Movement to, from, and within the Site:

The presence of nearby bus transport, the road access to the site, and the vehicle access within the site have all already been touched upon. It is acknowledged that the Council would seek contributions towards sustainable transport, which it is hoped could be used to provide shelter to the bus stop close to the site, and improving bus travel information to the stops on both sides of the carriageway.

The Report to Committee on the 2006 Permission confirmed:

'...subject to the implementation of works to improve the bus facilities in the vicinity of the site, the development would be materially more sustainable than the site is at present and on balance, sufficiently sustainable to justify a development of this size and kin in this location.'

The road access into the site has been described under the Section 'Layout and landscaping'. The access to Plot 9 would utilise the existing access that served the former Caretaker's house.

The existing hedge on the site's western boundary would be cut back to ensure it doesn't overhang the highway verge, and to improve the visibility entering and leaving the site. If required street lighting could be added to this length of road. Visibility splays will be provided in accordance with TAN 18.

Parking to each of the dwellings would accord with current Council guidelines.

D2. Inclusive Access:

Each dwelling would have level / ramped access to the level threshold main entrance door. Level thresholds will be provided on remaining ground floor external doors. The ground floor of each property accommodates an accessible wc compartment. Full height glazing is provided in most areas, affording views out from the dwelling, irrespective of whether occupants are standing or sitting.

E ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The performance of the proposed new dwellings will improve hugely on the poor energy performance of the existing building structures. Foliage and trees to be added to the site will extend the habitats of animals and insects. Ample waste areas to be provided for recycling sorting and storage, with clear routes for efficient removal. The orientation of the tall south and west facing windows will permit some passive solar gain.

The proposal accords with the Vale Council's SPG 'Sustainable Development' 2006, and the Sustainability Guidelines therein. Namely:

Site layout:

The design maximizes the natural resources of daylight and sunlight through the orientation and size of fenestration

Transport and Movement:

The development provides for easy and safe movement for all modes of transport. Ample cycle storage area will be provided in the Garage.

Sustainable Energy Use in Buildings:

The provisions referred to under 'Energy Demand' Passive Solar Design', Natural Daylighting, and 'Natural Ventilation' have been incorporated into the building's design, and will be in its construction and heat / energy appliances.

Renewable Energy Sources.

The Pre-Assessment indicates that there will be a significant commitment to the provision of on site renewables, including solar PV, solar thermal, and biomass. The house is to utilize low or zero carbon technologies greater than or equal to 15%.

Energy Efficiency and Material Choice:

The Pre-Assessment indicates that the building fabric will achieve a 100% improvement in DER over TER. The proposal will be constructed with materials possessing low embodied energy. The construction materials to be used are all available locally. All building labour will be provided by local tradesmen. Appliances will be A+ and A rated.

Water Conservation:

The proposal will incorporate low water use appliances, water efficient fixtures, water butts where possible, and an indigenous planting scheme. The Pre-Assessment indicates that rainwater and grey water harvesting will be used.

Sustainable Drainage:

Permeable external surfacing, eg. Permeable block paving, will be used where possible. The Pre-Assessment indicates that there will be no surface water connection to local drainage systems.

Waste Management:

The proposal includes adequate internal storage for recyclables within wheeled containers. The Pre-Assessment indicates that procedures and commitments will be utilized for the minimizing and diverting 80% waste from landfill.

Landscape, Trees, and Ecology:

Trees – New trees and shrubs will be planted to enhance the external areas around the site.

F COMMUNITY SAFETY

The site has remained unused for many years. After nightfall it has an ominous look about it, and the whole site remains in total darkness. The proposed new use will immediately provide a 'presence' on site. In accordance with the TAN12 criteria for good design, the proposal will provide 'security through natural surveillance' via the large glazed areas; these will afford a good amount of observation from the building to its surrounds.