

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT
TO LITTLEMOOR FARM,
LLYSWORNEY**

Heritage Statement



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Bob Edwards

BSc. (Hons.) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA

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Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Littlemoor Farm consists of former farm buildings once forming part of Moor Farm located on the north-western edge of the village of Llysworney, Cowbridge. The site lies within the Llysworney Conservation Area. The owners of the property are seeking planning permission to build a new detached house on land to the west of the former farmstead. This revised application follows a previous application which was refused, partly on the grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area (2021/01242/FUL).

1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of character and appearance of the conservation area and to consider the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the designated heritage asset, and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services, visited the property in September 2022 and subsequently prepared this report. This report builds upon a heritage statement (Appendix I) prepared for the previous application which provides a useful historical background for the property, and which needs not be repeated in this report.

1.3 This report will present:

- A description of the site and the conservation area
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the significance of the character and appearance of the conservation area
- A description of the proposed development and an assessment of the potential impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Conclusions

3.0 SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

Site Description

- 3.1 Littlemoor Farm lies at the north-western corner of the village of Llysworney, the site being bounded by Squire Street to the south-west (which is a green lane at this point) and by an unnamed track to the north (Figure 1). The proposed development site forms part of the residential curtilage of the 'converted' range of farm buildings, once associated with Moor Farm to the east (Figure 2). The range of buildings is largely of 20th century date, and consists of various linked, mainly single-storey structures including an element at right-angles to the main north-south range, but also includes a painted stone two-storey element, and with a mixture of pitched slate roofs and mono-pitched roofs. This range faces west rather than facing into the former farmyard area to the east as an open-fronted building on this site did in the early 20th century, and so backs onto the former farmyard area of Moor Farm (Figure 3). Linked to this range is The Stables, also a late 20th century building. To the east of the Littlemoor Farm range is the proposed development site which is a lawned area bounded by mature hedges to the south-west, south-east and north, and with a number of trees along the east boundary between the lawn and the parking area adjacent to the converted range (Figure 4). Squire Street to the south-west and north of the site is a green lane bounded by hedges (Figure 5).



Figure 1 The location of the proposed development site at the north-western corner of the village. © Google Maps



Figure 2 The converted and modern buildings formerly now called Littlemoor Farm, facing south-east.



Figure 3 Littlemoor Farm as viewed from the north-east.



Figure 4 The lawn area of Littlemoor Farm facing north.



Figure 5 The green lane to the north of the lawned area of Littlemoor Farm facing east, the northern part of the house of Littlemoor Farm being visible.

Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

3.2 The 2009 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a useful summary of the key historic aspects of the character and appearance of the Llysworney Conservation Area:

‘Although not exhaustive, the defining characteristics of the Conservation Area that reinforce the designation can be summarised as follows:

- *Small residential village in a rural setting.*
- *Location on north-west facing slope provides views over the valley of the Stembridge Brook;*
- *Village is centred on the attractive pond, small village green, and St. Tydfil’s Church, dating to the late 12th century; (Figures 6 and 7)*
- *Moat Farm sits on a medieval moated site;*
- *A network of narrow lanes connects the main road to the village core;*
- *Mainly detached historic houses and cottages, some of them former farms; (Figures 8 and 9)*
- *All of the old barns and outbuildings associated with the farms have been converted into residential uses, although Moat Farm is still in agricultural use; (Figures 10 and 11)*
- *The listed buildings are very varied and include St Tydfil’s Church, the former Church School of 1858, a former Ebenezer Particular Baptist Chapel, and Llysworney House, a substantial mid-16th century residence;*

- *Also listed the sheep washery, and a cast iron milestone outside the Carne Arms Inn;*
- *A number of unlisted farmhouses and cottages which date to the 17th century or possibly earlier;*
- *Use of the local lias limestone, often faced with painted lime render and occasionally dressed with red brick; (e.g. Figures 7 - 12)*
- *Roofs to the historic buildings are generally covered in natural slate.’ (e.g. Figures 7 - 12).*



Figure 6 A view from adjacent to the village pond towards St Tydfil's Church.



Figure 7 A view towards St Tydfil's Church and the former school from Church Street. Due to the topography, narrow lanes, buildings and trees, the church has limited visibility as a landmark building within the village.



Figure 8 Traditional stone-built detached houses along Church Street, one of the narrow lanes that creates an irregular grid of lanes and tracks that is a key characteristic of the conservation area.



Figure 9 The Sycamores, an example of a traditional detached house within the village.



Figure 10 A converted barn to the west of Great House, Church Street.



Figure 11 A small converted former agricultural building on Squire Street.



Figure 12 The Carne Arms and barn on the B4268 from Church Street.

3.3

The summary of the character and appearance of the conservation area, as illustrated above, focuses on the historic elements that contribute to the character of the conservation area, but the present-day character is not only derived from the historic buildings. The Townscape Appraisal Map of the CAAMP effectively illustrates the degree to which the historic buildings of the conservation area represent only a relatively small proportion of the buildings within the designated area (and some of the positive contribution buildings identified on this map, including Littlemoor Farm, The Stables and Penrhos adjacent to Moor Farm, are actually of 20th century date). This map, when compared to the historic Ordnance Survey maps in the heritage statement submitted as part of the previous application shows the extent to which the village has grown in the 20th century. Whilst much of this development has attempted to reflect local character through the use of materials such as stone, render and slate, not all of the developments have been successful, particularly in relation to landscaping and driveways (Figures 13 – 16).



Figure 13 Modern detached house of stone and render.



Figure 14 Modern house north of St Tydfil's Church of 1½ storeys with rendered elevations and slate roof.



Figure 15 Modern development with rendered elevations. The brick paving to the driveway is at odds with the character and appearance of the conservation area, introducing a suburban character.



Figure 16 Historically brick was only used for dressings to window openings and quoins. This modern house of brick stands in contrast to the overall character of the conservation area.

- 3.4 The Townscape Appraisal map of the CAAMP identifies a number of what are described as 'significant views' within the conservation area. Examination of many of these 'views' suggests that many cannot be reasonably be regarded as 'significant' in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area, but are no more than sight-lines that are of minimal importance in terms of managing the heritage asset. In respect of the proposed development site, there are three 'significant views' that have identified. The first

is a view along Squire Street to the north-west in which the lawned area of Littlemoor Farm is seen through a gateway into the property (Figure 17). The key aspect of this view is the treed landscape in the distance.



Figure 17 The 'significant view' north-west along Squire Street with the curtilage of Littlemoor Farm in the mid-ground and the treed landscape beyond the conservation area in the distance.

- 3.5 The appraisal also identifies two views from the gateway into the lawned area of Littlemoor Farm (Figures 19 and 20). One of these views is shown as being from actually within the boundaries property as defined by the hedge and gate. These views are also identified as being significant due to view to the landscape beyond the conservation area. Firstly, it is important to consider that both of these views are taken from private land as the boundary of Littlemoor Farm is not wholly marked by the hedge and gate but the drive to the property is also private land (Figure 18). The view from Squire Street across the lawned area should be considered from the public right of way – to identify a significant view which is not an intentional or designed view in this context is poor practice.



Figure 18 The view from Squire Street through the gateway into the lawned area of Littlemoor Farm with the approximate line of the boundary to the private land of Littlemoor Farm marked by the dashed line.

- 3.6 The two 'significant views' which look across the lawned area that are identified in the CAAMP do not actually provide important views to the wider landscape beyond the conservation area. The view that looks to the north-west is blocked by a bush within the garden and the view to the landscape beyond is extremely limited (Figure 19). The second view, looking north from the gateway, looks towards the line of trees that mark the eastern edge of the lawned area and, again, this is clearly not a significant view to the landscape beyond (Figure 20). These 'views' are simply looking into a private residential curtilage and do not contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area.



Figure 19 The 'significant view' to the north-west from the gateway into the curtilage of Littlemoor Farm.



Figure 20 The 'significant view' to the north from the gateway into the curtilage of Littlemoor Farm which looks directly at a row of trees rather than the landscape beyond the conservation area.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, amended by the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.

4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy MD8 Historic Environment of the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2026.

4.3 Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) says when considering the impact of development on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 195 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 The Llysworney Conservation Area was designated as an area of special architectural or historic interest in 1970 and subject to an appraisal of its character and appearance in 2009, resulting in the publication of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document.

5.2 The wider conservation area consists of a scatter of historic buildings along the network of lanes and tracks that form the irregular grid pattern of the settlement, with a higher number of modern buildings that also contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation

area. Most of these modern houses may be considered neutral but some are less successful, and boundary and drive treatments often result in a suburbanising effect on the area. Although there are more modern buildings than historic in the village, it is considered that the area merits conservation area designation.

- 5.3 The proposed development site lies within the framework of roads and tracks that defines the area of the village of Llysworney. The site is bounded by a green lane to the west and north which is an important element of the settlement pattern and contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.4 The proposed development site is a private garden area associated with largely modern buildings that replaced historic farm buildings associated with Moor Farm to the east. The garden area is largely screened by mature hedges apart from a gateway in the south boundary which allows glimpsed views into the lawned area from Squire Street. The site itself is considered to make little contribution to the significance of the conservation area.
- 5.5 The CAAMP document has identified 'significant views' across the site. However, as has been illustrated in both this report and the previous heritage statement, the assessment of views in the CAAMP document is generally poor and, in the case of these specific views, taken from private land (which is poor practice) and, when viewed from the points as shown on the appraisal map, are evidently not significant views in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area, provide limited ability to appreciate the agrarian origins and rural context of the village.
- 5.6 The buildings of Littlemoor Farm are identified in the CAAMP as buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These buildings are of 20th century date and do not seem to represent conversions of traditional farm buildings. They, mostly, have a traditional appearance and so are not negative buildings in the conservation area, but the degree to which they are positive is questionable. They are at least neutral and possibly slightly positive.
- 5.7 There are general views towards the conservation area from the lane that leads north from the village, but the proposed development site is not a notable area in these whereby it

would be regarded as making an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

6.1 Following the refusal of the previous scheme, a substantially revised proposal for a single dwelling house has been developed. The proposed dwelling will also have a single-storey garage building located close to the south-western boundary of the site.

6.2 The design of the proposed house has been revised so that it presents an agricultural form, the building having a barn-like scale, and a stronger vernacular character than the previous proposal with walls of natural stone and render under a gabled slate roof (Figures 21 and 22). Attached to the south-east gable is a single-storey lean-to structure with a mono-pitch slate roof.



Figures 21 and 22
Proposed south-west
and south-east
elevations.

- 6.3 It is considered that the design of the proposed house utilising an agricultural form and scale, relating to the relationship of the site to Moor Farm, represents an appropriate approach to the development of this site. The building is not intended to represent a pastiche of a traditional barn but utilises the general simplicity of farm buildings, avoiding features such as dormer windows and chimneys. Openings to the principal, south-west elevation are generally bold and non-domestic in their form. This revised design is in direct contrast to the refused scheme which was overly complicated in both form and detail.
- 6.4 In relation to the previous scheme, concerns were raised over the scale of the proposed building in relation to the predominantly single-storey buildings of Littlemoor Farm. This reflects a simplistic conservation philosophy that any new building must necessarily be lower than any adjacent historic buildings. It is a philosophy that cannot be supported as it makes no consideration of context. The context for this development is Moor Farm, the building forming Littlemoor Farm being relatively modern buildings (not historic as stated in the officer report). The key aspect is the agricultural character. Moor Farm does not appear to have a barn as part of its group and, as can be seen in the village, relatively large barns could form part of farmstead groups. The small barn on the west side of Squire Street is more akin to a field barn than a barn found within a farmstead. So, the fact that the proposed building is taller than the rebuilt range of Littlemoor Farm is of little relevance in terms of its impact on a farmstead character in this corner of the village, and as such will not harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.5 The material palette is considered to respect the local vernacular and the character of the traditional buildings within the conservation area.
- 6.6 One of the key reasons for refusal of the previously submitted scheme was the impact on the significant views across the site. In relation to these views there are two aspects to consider in relation to the revised proposal:
1. The **actual** significance of the views identified in the CAAMP
 2. The alterations made in the revised proposal with respect to the views into and across the site.

1. As discussed and illustrated in this report, the 'significant views' identified in the CAAMP are, unreasonably, located on private land where there is no right of public access. The identification of significant views from private land is not regarded as good practice in the preparation of conservation area appraisals.

When the actual 'views' identified in the CAAMP are considered (see Figures 19 and 20, above) it can be seen that there is little that may be regarded as significant in these views. They both look into a private garden area and there is minimal ability to look out to the landscape beyond. The point where there is a view that may be regarded as significant is located further south along Squire Street (Figure 17) where the rural character of the northern part of Squire Street can be appreciated and there is a view across the garden of Littlemoor Farm to a wooded backdrop in the distance.

It is required that planning decisions are based on evidence. Whilst the CAAMP is an adopted document, in respect of the views identified in relation to this specific site, it is strongly argued that officers should consider the reality of the quality of these 'views' rather than simply fall back on a position that 'significant views' have been identified and therefore they must be significant without any further consideration.

2. The revised scheme has considered the views across the garden area of Littlemoor Farm. Whilst the general position of the proposed house has not been altered, the building remaining positioned on the eastern boundary of the plot, the linear form in contrast to the L-plan building of the previous proposal means that it presents a smaller mass as seen from Squire Street to the south – the proposed building will now be barely visible in views through the gateway (Figure 23). This means that the sight-line that runs across the site is maintained and the site will remain relatively open.

The improvement in the appearance of the development as seen through the gateway compared to the previous application is assisted by the relocation of the proposed garage following the reasonable concerns expressed in officer comments in relation to the previous proposal. The relocation of the garage allows the retention of the trees to the southern part of the site which provide a screening to the proposed house.



Figure 23 A perspective drawing of the proposed development from Squire Street adjacent to the gateway into the property showing the limited visibility of the proposed house.

The proposed garage has been reduced in scale to a single-storey building which will be set further from the gateway and close to the south-west boundary meaning that it will have minimal visibility from Squire Street and will not harm the significance of the view that can be considered as important (from further south as shown in Figure 17). The visibility of the upper part of the roof of a simple, vernacular style building will not harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 6.7 Greater attention has been paid to the landscaping of the proposed scheme in relation to the entrance and drive into the property. Rather than creating a formal driveway, the access will be formed as a track, with gravelled wheel tracks and a central grass strip, providing a softer and more rural appearance.
- 6.8 The siting of the proposed house will still require the removal of a small number of relatively young and middle-aged trees including a fruit tree, holly maple, a beech and two oaks. All apart from one oak are category C trees in no better than fair condition. It is considered that with the retention of the trees to the southern part of the site in contrast to the previous proposal, together with some replanting on site, the loss of these trees which are of limited value in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area, means that the

limited impact is reduced and can be mitigated so that there is no harm to the designated heritage asset.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 It is considered that the proposed development at Littlemoor will not cause harm to the significance or 'special architectural or historic interest' of the designated heritage asset, the Llysworney Conservation Area as:

- The design of the proposed development has been revised to respond better to its immediate context, having a more agricultural form and scale rather than domestic which preserves the character of this north-western part of the village where there are former farmstead groups.
- Utilises materials that respect the local vernacular and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- The development will not impact on views of significance to the character and appearance of the conservation area – the revised scheme will have reduced visibility from Squire Street and will maintain the sightline across the centre of the site.
- The proposed garage will be a simple, single storey building largely screened by the hedge to the south-west boundary and will, through its traditional form, scale and materials, not impact on the character of the conservation area.
- The landscaping of the drive will maintain a rural character, avoiding the suburban appearance of a standard drive.

7.2 Accordingly, I can find no conflict in the proposed development with the statutory duty in Sections 66 or 72 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Policy MD8 Historic Environment of the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2026 and conclude that the application should be allowed.