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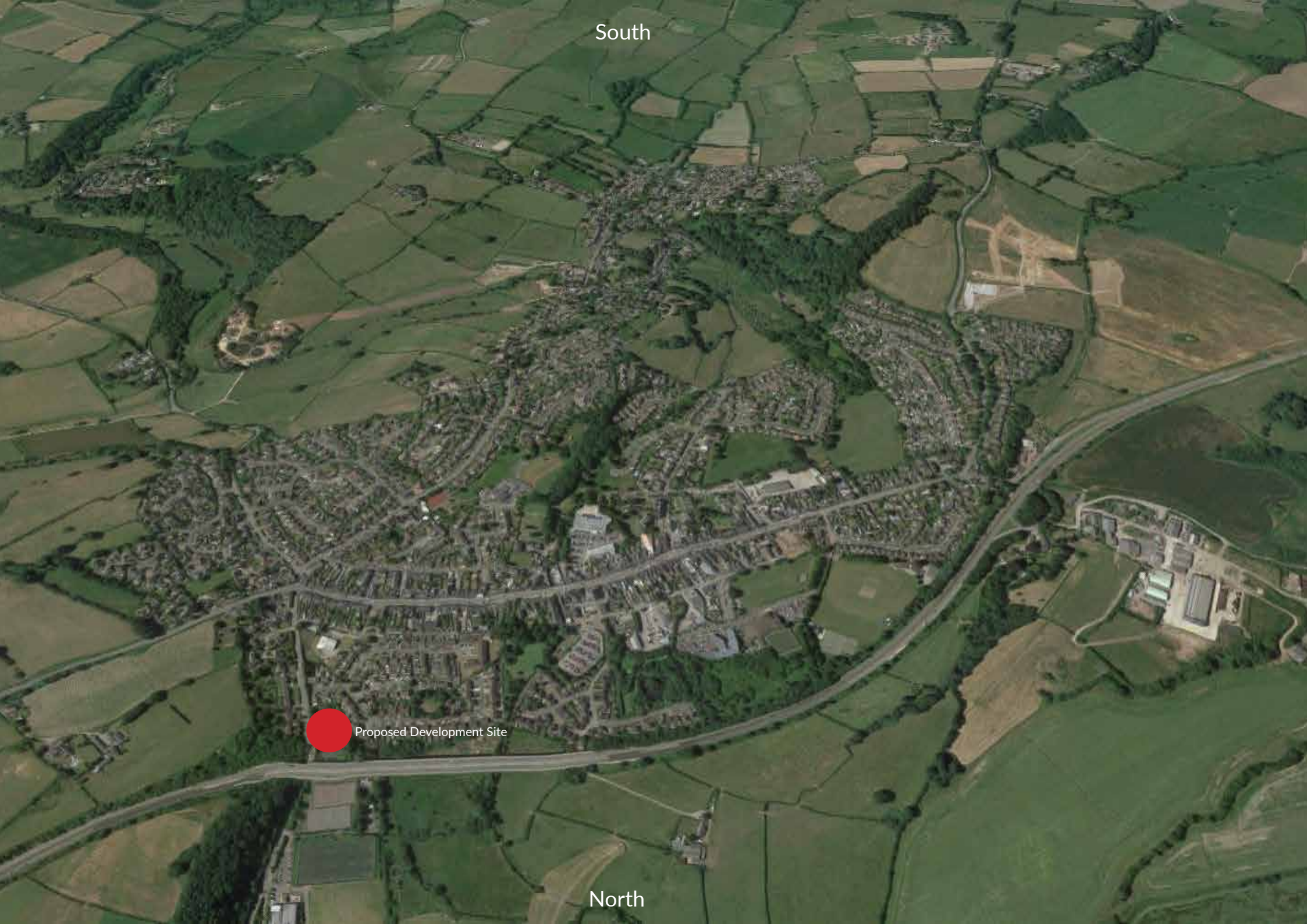
## LAND AT ABERTHIN ROAD, COWBRIDGE

Design and Access Statement

Prepared by LRM Planning Limited on behalf of Hafod Housing

December 2018

South



Proposed Development Site

North



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Fig 1: Interior of the existing school building



# 1

## Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by LRM Planning with input from Pentan Architects on behalf of Hafod Housing as part of an application for the proposed demolition of the former school buildings; and development of 48 units (including 43 flats and 5 houses) and associated works on land at Aberthin Road, Cowbridge.

### Background

- 1.2 The application site comprises the former Cowbridge Comprehensive School and associated ancillary buildings which are currently vacant and derelict. The school buildings are of late Victorian construction and comprise a fairly substantial, partially single storey, partially two storey building.
- 1.3 This Design and Access Statement will demonstrate how the proposed development layout responds positively to the local context, site features and constraints whilst having regard for the relevant planning policy.

### Purpose

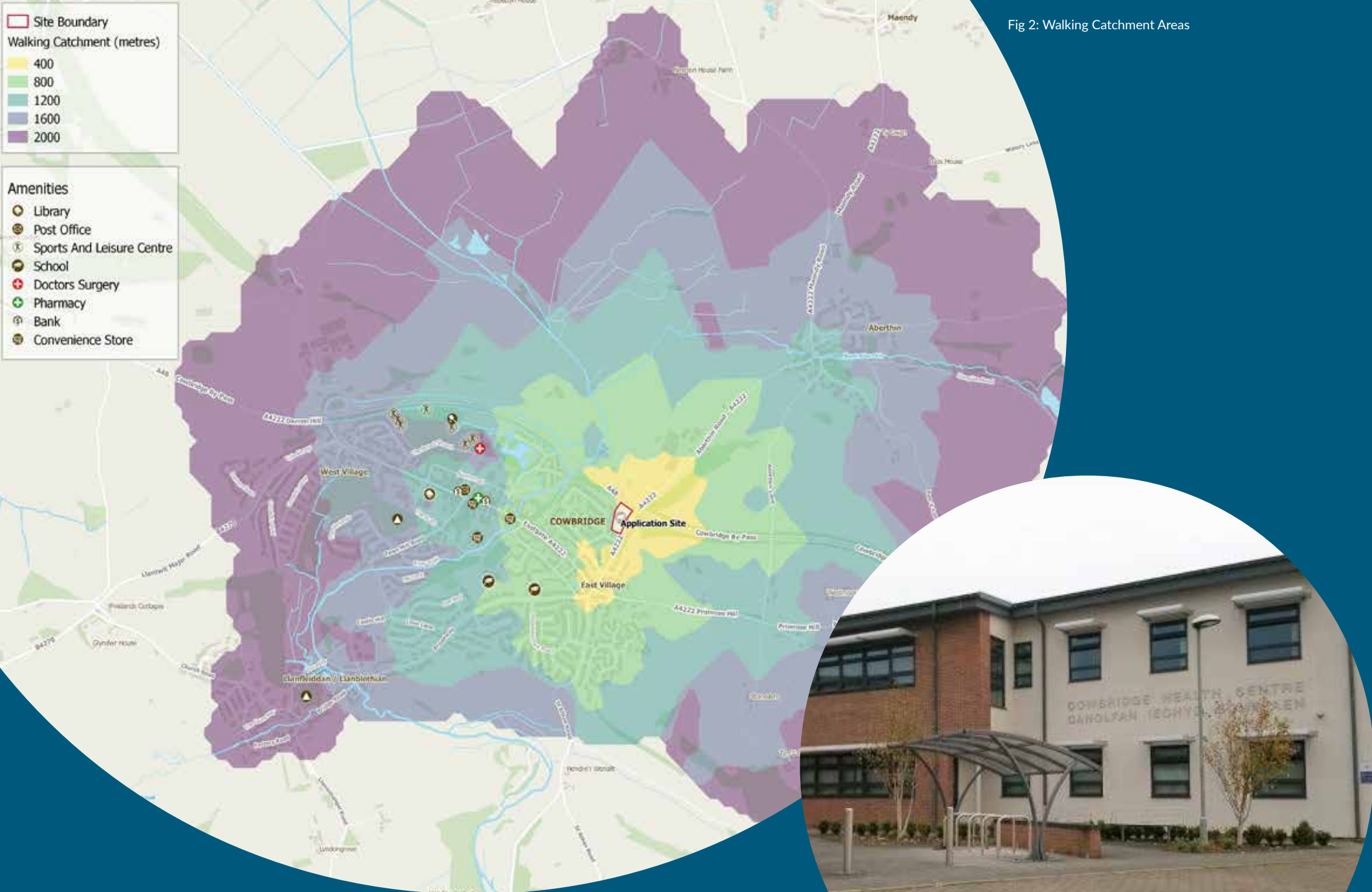
- 1.4 TAN 12 defines a Design and Access Statement as *'a communication tool which outlines how the design of the proposal has been considered from the outset of the development process and how the objectives of good design have been used to inform this.'*
- 1.5 The purpose of this document is to analyse the context of the site in respect of planning policy and the local character of the area, whilst having regard to each of the five objectives of Good Design.

### Vision

- 1.6 The vision for the development is to create a high quality, sustainable development which is both visually attractive and robust, whilst also seeking to address a known housing need by positive reuse of a brownfield site in an inherently sustainable location.

### Aim

- 1.7 The aim of this document is to:
- Provide an overview of the site context, which has aided in shaping the proposals;
  - explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
  - demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
  - explain the policy or approach adopted for access and how policies relating to access in the development have been taken into account; and
  - explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.



# 2

## Context and site analysis

### Location

- 2.1 The application site is located to the north eastern extent of the town of Cowbridge, to the south of the A48. Cowbridge is located centrally within the Vale of Glamorgan, acting as a service centre for the surrounding villages.

### Features

- 2.2 The site is brownfield, comprising the former Cowbridge Comprehensive Sixth Form and ancillary buildings which are vacant and derelict. The wider site area measures approximately 0.53 hectares and is broadly rectangular in shape, though slightly wider towards the north-eastern end of the site. In terms of topography, the site is generally flat, albeit that it lies slightly set down below the road level.
- 2.3 The former school buildings are of late Victorian construction and comprise a fairly substantial, partially single storey, partially two storey building. Steep pitched roofs, tall windows and dark stone construction give the former school a dominant presence on the streetscene, contrasting with the vernacular of the

surrounding dwellings. In addition to the school, there is also a more modern demountable single-storey building to the rear of the site, which is of no merit in architectural terms.

### Boundaries

- 2.4 The eastern boundary of the site faces directly onto Aberthin Road (the A4222), on the opposite side of which are dwellings, elevated above the road by the local topography (two dwellings face the site on the immediate opposite side of the road), and an undeveloped heavily vegetated area. The short southern boundary and the majority of the longer western boundary are flanked by the rear of dwellings on Slade Close and Millfield Drive. Much of these properties are two-storey semi-detached or detached houses, though some have extended into their roofs. The northern boundary meets the flyover of the Cowbridge by-pass (A48), but is undefined on the ground, as there is no physical boundary under the flyover until it reaches the sports courts of the new Cowbridge Comprehensive School. The school itself lies beyond, to the northeast.

### Access

- 2.5 Historically, it is anticipated that vehicular access to the school would have been from just inside of its southern boundary. In this location, an opening wide enough for vehicles has been closed off for such use by the placement of large boulders in the entrance. The site offers good highway visibility in both directions, onto Aberthin Road, which has a 30 miles-per-hour speed limit. A lay-by and bus stop are located immediately to the east of the site, adjacent to Aberthin Road. A new vehicular access to serve the site is proposed to the south of this lay-by.
- 2.6 In addition to the bus stop located directly adjacent to the site boundary, two further stops are located within 400m to the south of the site along Cardiff Road providing services to Cardiff, Porthcawl and other local destinations. The closest rail station is located approximately 8.9km to the south of the site in Llantwit Major. This station provides regular services to Cardiff Central, Bridgend and Aberdare.

Fig 4: Existing local vernacular along Aberthin Road

## Local facilities

- 2.7 The site is located within 700m walking distance of Cowbridge town centre, which provides access to a wide range of local services and facilities including supermarkets, convenience stores, banks, cafes and a number of other independent shops and restaurants.
- 2.8 In terms of education and healthcare provision, Y Bont Faen Primary School is located 500m walking distance to the south of the site, with Cowbridge Comprehensive School located directly to the north. Cowbridge and Vale Medical Centre and Cowbridge Health Centre are also located approximately 800m to the east.

- 2.10 Cowbridge Conservation Area is located to the south and west of the site, separated from the site by existing dwellings. This area is characterised by late 19th century development, including a number of mediaeval buildings.

## Ecology and trees

- 2.11 In order to inform this planning application, Soltys Brewster undertook an Extended Phase 1 and Bat Survey Report in August 2018. The combination of desk study and field surveys undertaken at the site identified a limited range of habitat types dominated by scrub vegetation, the school buildings and bare ground.

## Local architectural context

- 2.9 The local vernacular within the immediate context of the site is varied, including a mix of both large detached dwellings set in generous plots with driveways and detached garages along Aberthin Road, and smaller semi-detached dwellings of post war construction along Millfield Drive. The larger dwellings are finished in a variety of brick, stone and cream render, with brown roofs. The semi-detached units include a mix of pebble dash render, and red/buff brick with hanging tile detail and brown roofs.



Fig 5: Existing local vernacular along Millfield Drive





- 2.12 There is also a limited amount of species poor semi-improved grassland and some mature trees on-site. The grassland and scrub habitat were generally considered to be of some ecological value in a local context and the scrub habitat in particular is likely to function as a shelter, foraging and commuting resource for a variety of mammal, bird and invertebrate species. The majority of mature trees will be retained as part of the proposal, aside from a yew to the front (southeast) of the site.
- 2.13 Slow worms were found to be present on site, in addition to bats roosting within the main school building.
- 2.14 With regards to mitigation of the impact upon slow worms, it is proposed that a detailed mitigation strategy be undertaken prior to site clearance/construction, the details of which will be agreed with the Local Authority.
- 2.15 With regard to mitigation in respect of bats, a licence will be required from Natural Resources Wales to demolish the existing school building, which can only be obtained once planning permission is granted. Further survey work is also proposed to inform the final mitigation strategy, however it is proposed that much of the existing vegetation along the western boundary of the site will be retained and bolstered with new planting to maintain a dark commuting corridor for bats. In addition, a purpose built bat house will be provided to the south of the site.
- 2.16 With regards to existing trees, the Tree Survey accompanying this application identifies three

large, mature category A trees to the north west of the site which will be retained as part of the proposed layout. Three further smaller specimens, two of which are category C and one of which is category B, will be removed and mitigated as part of the detailed landscaping scheme for the site.

## Flood risk and drainage

- 2.17 Welsh Government's TAN 15 Development Advice Maps, as hosted by Natural Resources Wales, shows that the site is in Flood Zone A and therefore not at risk from flooding.
- 2.18 With regards to drainage, it is proposed that infiltration testing is undertaken to confirm if soakaways are a viable option to discharge storm water. If infiltration is unviable, a connection into the existing off-site culvert to the north of the site is proposed, as outlined on the Drainage Strategy Layout ref: C1214 C-SK01 accompanying this application. Foul water will be discharged into the existing combined sewer to the north west of the site.

## Heritage and archaeology

- 2.19 The site does not lie within a Conservation Area, nor are there any listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments or public rights of way within the site vicinity that would impact upon the proposals.
- 2.20 Cowbridge Conservation area lies approximately 180m to the south of the site along Eastgate and Cardiff Road. The closest Scheduled Ancient

Monument is 'Southgate' located approximately 800m to the west of the site. Two further Scheduled Ancient Monuments are located within 2km (St Quintin's Castle and Caer Dynnaf Hillfort).

- 2.21 No designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the site have been identified as being at risk of having their significance harmed by the demolition of the existing buildings within the site or its subsequent development, either in terms of an effect on their physical form/fabric or through change to the contribution made by their setting. This includes the Cowbridge Conservation Area, the setting of which would be unaffected by the proposed development.
- 2.22 The site contains buildings of the former Cowbridge Comprehensive School. These date from 1896 and 1908, and, on account of their architectural, aesthetic and historical values, are considered to represent an historic asset. The proposed development will result in the total loss of this historic asset.
- 2.23 The site also contains a boundary wall and railings associated with the former school. These are considered to represent an historic asset closely related to the school. The proposed development will retain and repair this boundary feature, which will continue to represent a feature of the roadside.
- 2.24 Evidence suggests that there is a moderate potential for archaeology related to prehistoric funerary activity within the site, and a low potential for Roman period archaeology related to agricultural activity. There is also a low



potential for mediaeval or later archaeology of very low significance being present within the site. However, it is considered that any archaeological remains located within the footprint of the former school buildings are likely to have been damaged or destroyed. Likewise, historic landscaping within the school grounds is also likely to have resulted in damage or destruction of archaeological remains located within the site more generally.

- 2.25 Impacts from the proposed development on unrecorded archaeological remains within the site would be restricted to effects derived from re-surfacing and other landscaping activity, which would be likely to only affect remains located at shallow depths. The proposed buildings would be located within, or in close proximity to the footprint of the existing school buildings, and thus would be within areas of the site in which archaeological remains are unlikely to be preserved.
- 2.26 A programme of archaeological trenching will be undertaken to comprehensively identify the depth of disturbance caused by the landscaping within the school grounds, and thus conclude as to the potential for the survival of archaeological remains in these areas.
- 2.27 In addition, the demolition of the school building will be preceded by a programme of historic building record.
- 2.28 Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust have not suggested at this stage that the building is of 'national importance', in that it is not equivalent to a listed building and does not require preservation 'in situ'. This fact is reflected in the site's allocation

for residential development, in that the loss of the building and the development of the site for housing is already established in principal.

## Noise

- 2.29 A Noise Assessment has been undertaken by Wardell Armstrong, which confirmed that the dominant source of noise affecting the proposed development site is road traffic on the A48 and Aberthin Road.
- 2.30 In order to meet the relevant guidance levels, proposed mitigation includes 1.6m high close board fencing along the southern boundary of the garden of plots 1 and the northern boundary of plot 5. In addition, a detailed glazing and ventilation scheme has been compiled to ensure noise is attenuated to an acceptable level in all internal areas.

## Planning History

- 2.31 There is no recent planning history for the site. The Council's online records reference the following, although given the significant time that has elapsed since and the nature of these approvals, none of these applications are of relevance in the context of the current proposals for residential development:
  - 2000/01191/REG3 - Demolition of demountables and construct new single storey art block (Approved 23/11/2000)
  - 1999/00360/REG3 - New classroom block to replace existing demountable units (Approved 28/05/1999)

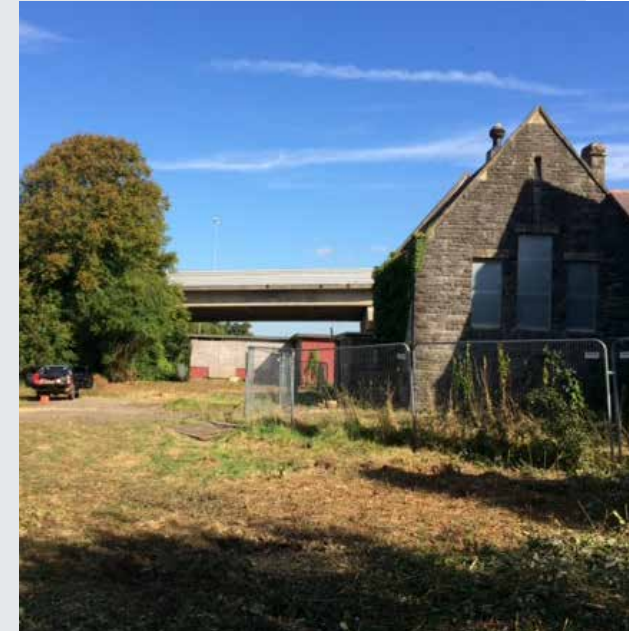


Fig 7 (Above): View from within the site looking north towards the flyover



Fig 8 (Above): View from within the site looking west

- 1995/00902/REG3 - Two storey teaching block (Unknown)
- 1993/00916/OBS - Erect demountable classroom accommodation (Approved 08/10/1993)

## Opportunities and constraints

2.32 The nature and location of the site provides the opportunity to:

- Provide a sensitively designed development, making best use of brownfield land within the settlement boundary;
- Improve the appearance of the streetscene within the locality, by redeveloping a vacant and derelict building;
- Provide range and choice of much needed affordable housing; and
- Promote access to, and use of the existing services and facilities in the surrounding area.

2.33 The site presents the following constraints:

- The proximity to the A48 flyover and existing surrounding properties to the west of the site;
- The location of existing mature trees to the north east of the site; and
- The need to retain the existing lay-by to the north east of the site along Aberthin Road.

2.34 These constraints do not preclude development, but require a considered design response.



Fig 9 (Above): Existing interior of the school buildings, showing significant signs of dilapidation



Fig 10 (Above): Existing prefabricated outbuilding ancillary to the main school building



Fig 11 (Above): View of the existing school buildings looking west from Aberthin Road

# Planning policy framework

3.1 The planning context for the application site is provided by National and Local Planning Policy. The National Guidance is provided within Planning Policy Wales alongside its supporting Technical Advice Notes (TANs) whereas the Local Policy Guidance is set out by The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan (up to 2026) and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## Planning Policy Wales

3.2 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal national planning policy document which sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government (WG) against which development proposals should be assessed. The latest version is the tenth edition, published in December 2018.

3.3 The main thrust of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Placemaking lies at the heart of PPW, with policy and development management decisions

required to seek to deliver development that adheres to these principles.

3.4 In a bid to ensure placemaking is prioritised, and in order to aid in implementing the Well-being of Future Generations Act, policy topics within PPW have been grouped under four themes, namely '*Strategic and Spatial Choices*'; '*Active and Social Places*'; '*Productive and Enterprising Places*'; and '*Distinctive and Natural Places*'. Each of the four headed chapters is supplemented by detailed and interwoven policy, which seeks to work together in delivering sustainable places.

3.5 PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process, which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities. In this regard it seeks to achieve the Welsh Government's well-being goals.

3.6 All statutory bodies in Wales carrying out a planning function must exercise those functions with the principles of sustainable development as defined in the Well Being Act. Accordingly,

paragraph 1.17 of PPW confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.7 Figure 3 of PPW covers the Key Planning Principles of the Welsh Government in seeking to achieve "the right development in the right place". Development proposals must seek to deliver development that addresses these outcomes, albeit paragraph 2.20 recognises that not all of these outcomes can necessarily be achieved under every development proposal.

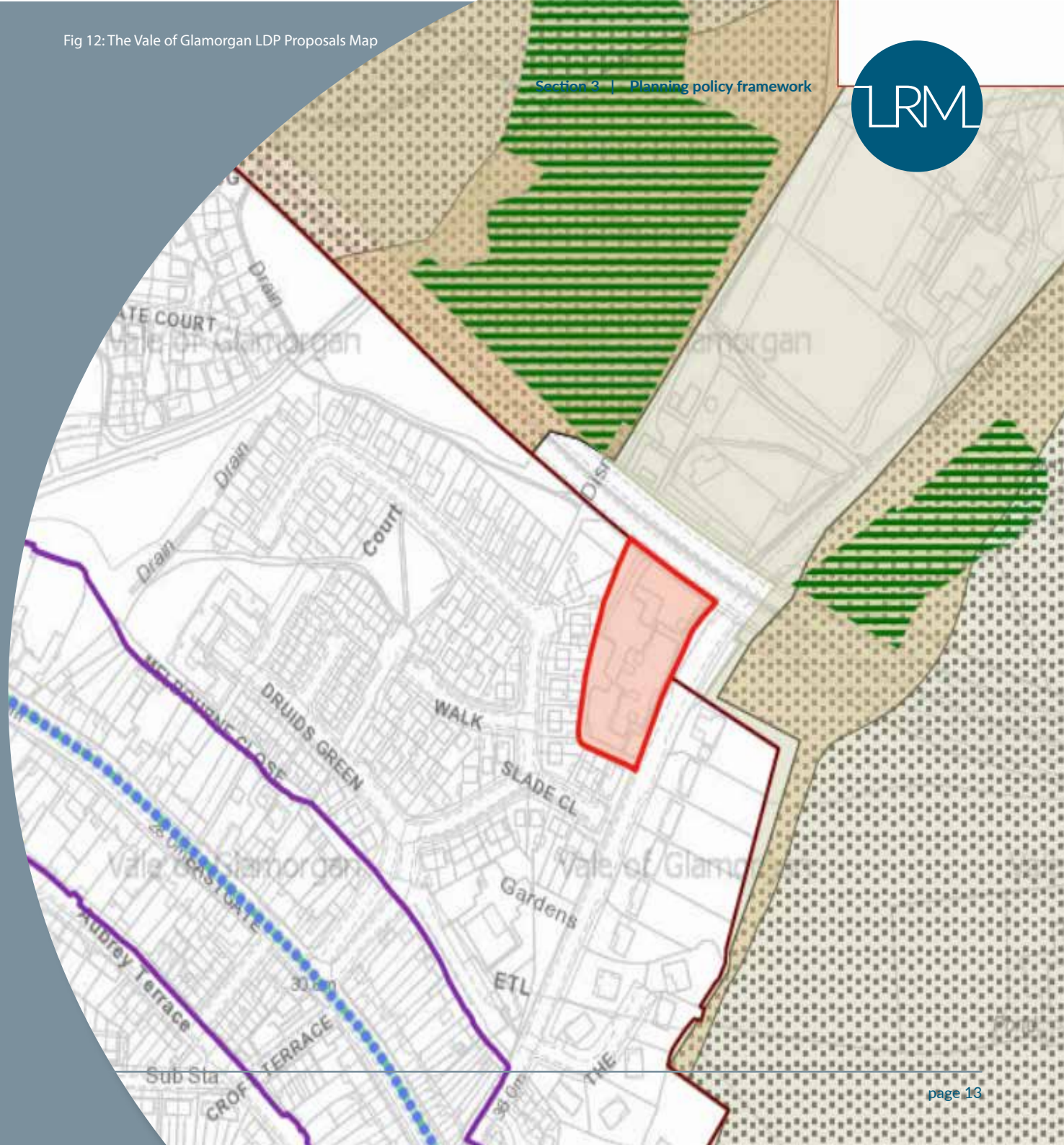
### Strategic and Spatial Choices

3.8 It is indicated that the first stage of the assessment of proposals is in respect of Strategic and Spatial Choices. In this regard it is stated that "*Effective strategic placemaking requires early collective consideration of placemaking issues at the outset... when developing specific proposals*" and "*This includes considering the design of a development and its impacts upon everyday lives as well as thinking holistically about where*



protected. These crucial, early decisions will have the greatest impact on the type of development which is ultimately delivered and its contribution to sustainable development and the environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of Wales.”

- 3.9 Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.18 are subheaded ‘Good design Making Better Places’. In terms of design, this Design and Access Statement demonstrates how design issues have been considered and the context appraised and how the proposals meet the 5 overarching aims of design which has been incorporated into the proposals from the outset - see section 5.
- 3.10 Paragraphs 3.19 to 3.24 are entitled ‘Promoting Healthier Places’. The Welsh Government indicate that the built and natural environment is a key determinant of health and well-being. In this regard PPW seeks to maximise access to health facilities, encourage healthy places with access to a range of activities, and integrate key design features into proposals that encourage activity.
- 3.11 Paragraphs 3.45 to 3.48 deals with ‘Accessibility’. This states that the overarching aim of spatial strategies should be minimising the need to travel, reducing reliance on the private car and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- 3.12 PPW seeks to ensure that proposals achieve a broad balance between housing, community facilities, services and employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas should be promoted to minimise the need for long distance commuting. Major generators of travel demand,





such as housing, should be located within existing urban areas or areas which are, or can be, easily reached by walking or cycling, and are well served by public transport.

- 3.13 Higher densities should be encouraged in urban centres and near major public transport nodes or interchanges, to generate a critical mass of people to support services such as public transport, local shops and schools.
- 3.14 Paragraphs 3.51 to 3.53 cover 'Previously Developed Land', whereby PPW indicates that previously developed land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its reuse will promote sustainability principles and any constraints can be overcome.

#### Active and Social Places

- 3.15 A key theme of PPW is creating places that are active and social, this includes sustainable transport provision for housing and mixed-use development. The opening paragraphs to this chapter include the following aspiration of PPW:

*"New development should prevent problems from occurring or getting worse such as the shortage of affordable homes, the reliance on the private car and the generation of carbon emissions."*

3.16 PPW places importance on locating development so as to minimise the need to travel and increasing accessibility by modes other than the private car.

3.17 In terms of car parking, paragraph 4.1.51 indicates that *"A design-led approach to the provision of car parking should be taken, which ensures an appropriate level of car parking is integrated in a way which does not dominate the development. Parking provision should be informed by the local context, including public transport accessibility, urban design principles and the objective of reducing reliance on the private car and supporting a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. Planning authorities must support schemes which keep parking levels down"*.

3.18 With respect to housing, the WG recognise the importance of a home to people's lives and indicates that the planning system must:

- *"identify a supply of land to support the delivery of the housing requirement to meet the differing needs of communities across all tenures;*
- *enable provision of a range of well-designed, energy efficient, good quality market and affordable housing that will contribute to the creation of sustainable places; and*
- *focus on the delivery of the identified housing requirement and the related land supply."*

3.19 Paragraph 4.2.15 emphasises that local planning authorities must ensure that sufficient land is genuinely available or will become available to provide a 5-year supply of land for housing judged against the general objectives and the scale and location of development provided for in the development plan.

3.20 Paragraph 4.2.25 states that *"a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration which must be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and determining relevant planning applications."*

#### Productive and Enterprising Places & Distinctive and Natural Places

3.21 These chapters are of lesser direct relevance to proposals for residential development, but amongst other things, advocate the future-proofing of development via sustainable technologies, and guard against causes of pollution.

#### Technical Advice Notes

3.22 TAN 1 informs and advises on Joint Housing Land Availability Studies and was published in January 2015. It provides guidance on the requirement for Local Authorities in Wales to maintain a five-year supply of readily developable land suitable for housing.



- 3.23 TAN 12 (March 2016) provides guidance on good design and is addressed in detail within this Design and Access Statement, including assessing how the current proposals adhere to the five objectives of good design in terms of:
- Character;
  - Movement;
  - Community Safety;
  - Environmental Sustainability; and
  - Access.

- 3.24 TAN 18 (March 2007), deals with Transport matters, and advocates locating development where there is good access by public transport, walking and cycling; generally advocating development at sustainable sites.

## Local Development Plan

- 3.25 Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.26 The statutory development plan for this site is the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (Adopted 2017). Please refer to figure 12 for an extract of the LDP Proposals Map.
- 3.27 The site (shown in red at figure 12, previous page) is allocated for residential development

under policy MG2(18) of the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan, and therefore the principle of the proposed development is established, subject to detailed design.

- 3.28 A summary of the pertinent LDP policies is listed below.
- 3.29 Strategic Policies:
- SP1 - Delivering the Strategy
  - SP3 - Residential Requirement
  - SP4 - Affordable Housing Provision
  - SP7 - Transportation
  - SP10 - Built and Natural Environment
- 3.30 Managing Growth Policies:
- MG1 - Housing Supply in the Vale of Glamorgan
  - MG2 - Housing Allocations
  - MG4 - Affordable Housing
- 3.31 Managing Development Policies:
- MD1 - Location of New Development
  - MD2 - Design of New Development
  - MD3 - Provision of Open Space
  - MD4 - Community Infrastructure and Planning Obligations
  - MD5 - Development within Settlement Boundaries
  - MD6 - Housing Densities
  - MD7 - Environmental Protection
  - MD9 - Promoting Biodiversity

## Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 3.32 The Vale of Glamorgan also has a number of adopted SPGs, amongst which it is considered that the following documents are relevant:
- Affordable Housing (2018)
  - Biodiversity and Development (2018)
  - Parking Standards (2015)
  - Planning Obligations (2018)
  - Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Development (2018)



# 4

## The scheme

4.1 This section explains the evolution of the scheme as a result of the context appraisal and design process.

### Pre-application consultation

4.2 Pre application advice was sought from the Local Planning Authority with regards to the proposed scheme. The main comments in respect of design have informed the current layout.

4.3 In summary the comments received from the Local Planning Authority are outlined below:

- There is no objection to the principle of the number of units, or the proposed storey heights, subject to detailed design;
- There is no planning justification to retain the existing building;
- Concerns were raised over the extent of parking adjacent to the existing properties along Millfield Drive - the revised layout reflects an amended parking layout which reduces the number of parking spaces in this location.

- Due to the site's location a relaxation in the parking requirement may be considered appropriate.

4.4 In addition, a statutory Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) exercise and a non-statutory public exhibition were undertaken prior to the submission of the planning application. The results of these exercises are presented within the 'PAC Report' that accompanies this planning application.

### The development proposal

4.5 The proposed development comprises the demolition of the former school buildings, and the construction of 48 units, including 31 one-bedroom flats, 12 two-bedroom flats and five three-bedroom houses. The proposed houses are two-and-a-half storeys in height, with the block of apartments extending to four storeys. All dwellings will comprise affordable housing.

4.6 Five of the one-bedroom flats are provided as adapted/accessible units, on the ground floor of the apartment building with dedicated external level access points.

4.7 The location of the proposed buildings reflect the location of the existing school buildings, situated to the front (east) of the site, this arrangement ensures sufficient separation distances in relation to the existing properties to the west and south of the site. In addition, a staggered ridge height is proposed from four storeys adjacent to the A48 flyover to the north of the site, reducing to two-and-a-half storeys to the south of the site, adjacent to the existing properties along Slade Close. It should also be noted that the properties located along Aberthin Road to the east of the site are elevated in comparison with those proposed as part of the development. These separation distances are illustrated on drawing ref: 3703/PA/030A accompanying this application.

4.8 In addition, a new vehicular access is proposed off Aberthin Road, to the south of the existing lay-by. This access forms a T-junction arrangement within the site which serves two parking court areas to the rear of the houses, and adjacent to the apartments.

4.9 A cycle store is located to the north of the proposed apartments which will accommodate 22 cycle parking spaces. Bin storage for the apartments is provided within the building,



allowing for convenient storage and access.

- 4.10 With regards to car parking, a total of 47 parking spaces are provided within the site curtilage. Whilst this is below the Council's adopted standards, this level of parking is considered appropriate given the proposed tenure of the development and the site's sustainable location in close proximity to a wide range of local services and facilities in Cowbridge.
- 4.11 It is proposed that the building will be finished in a combination of brick and smooth render, with hanging tile detail. A number of precedent images are shown in figure 13. Further details of materials will be confirmed through the application process.
- 4.12 A purpose built bat roost is also proposed to mitigate the loss of bat habitat, located in the south east corner of the site, which will be screened by vegetation.



Fig 13: Examples of proposed finishes



Fig 14: Site Layout

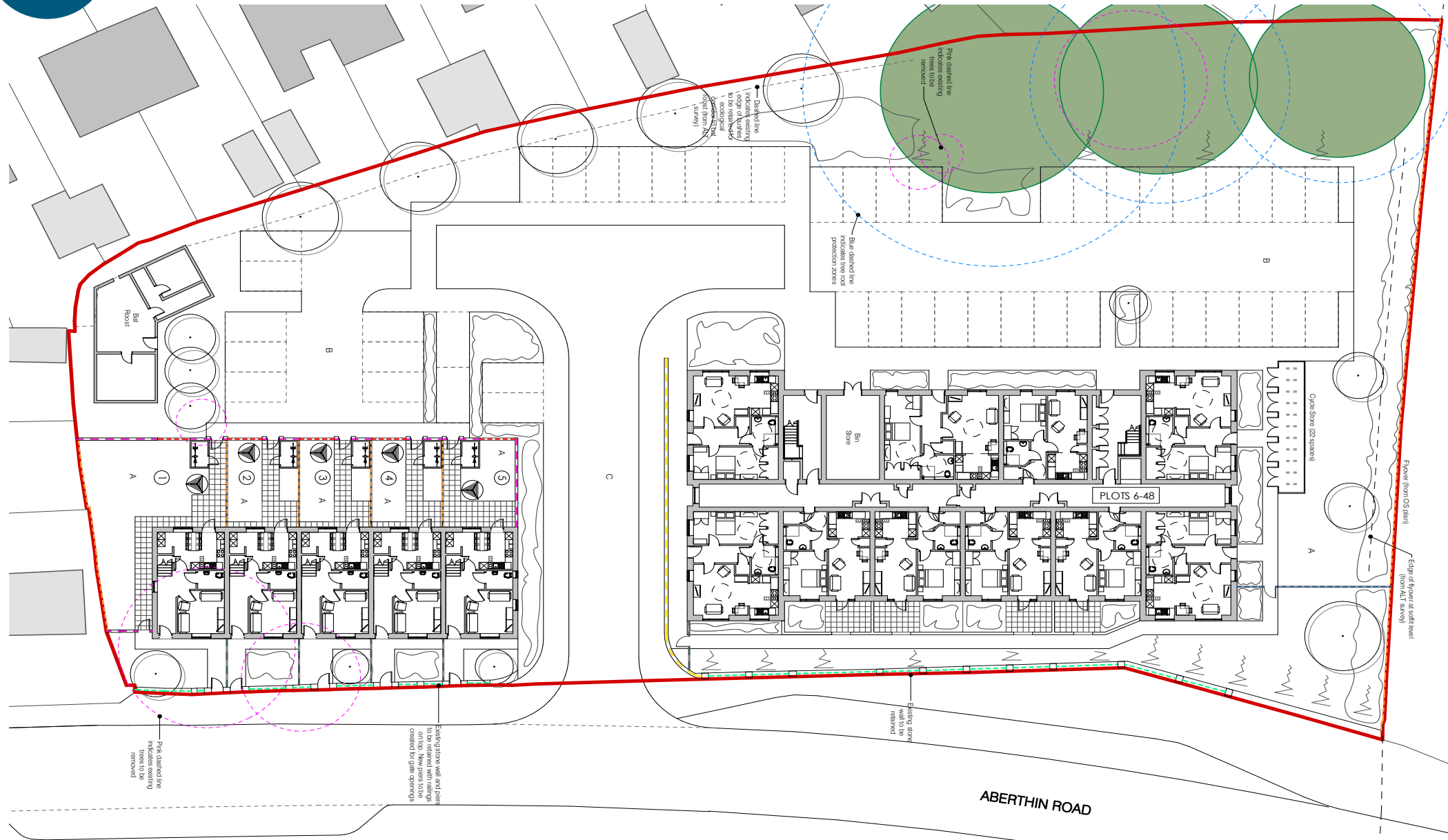




Fig 15: Apartment Elevations



Front Elevation (Aberthin Road)



Side Elevation (north)



Rear Elevation (west)



Side Elevation (south)



Fig 16: House Elevations



Front Elevation (Aberthin Road)



Side Elevation (south)

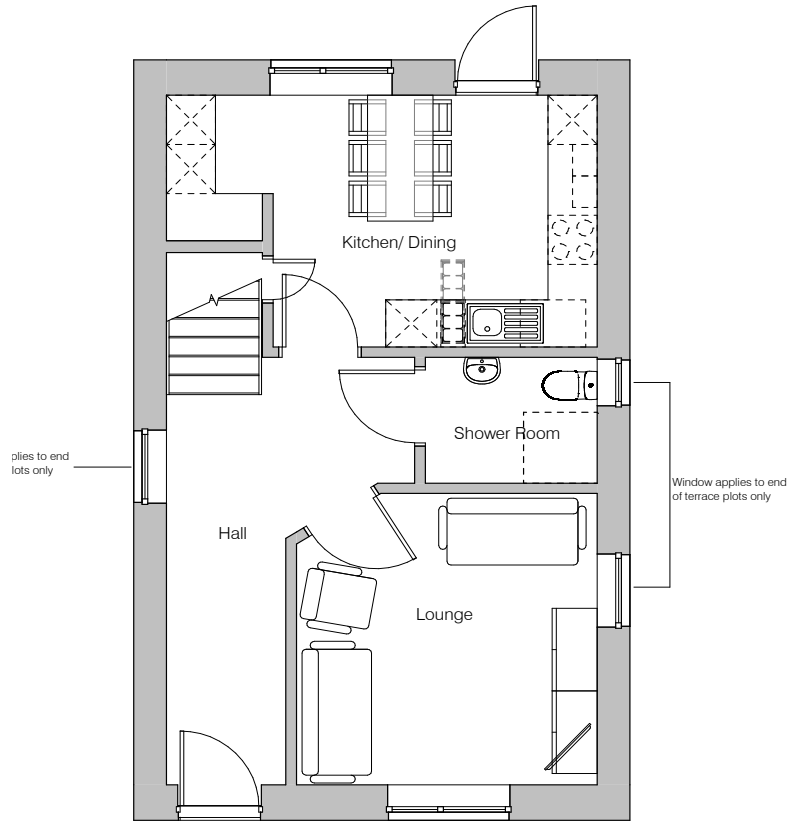


Rear Elevation (west)

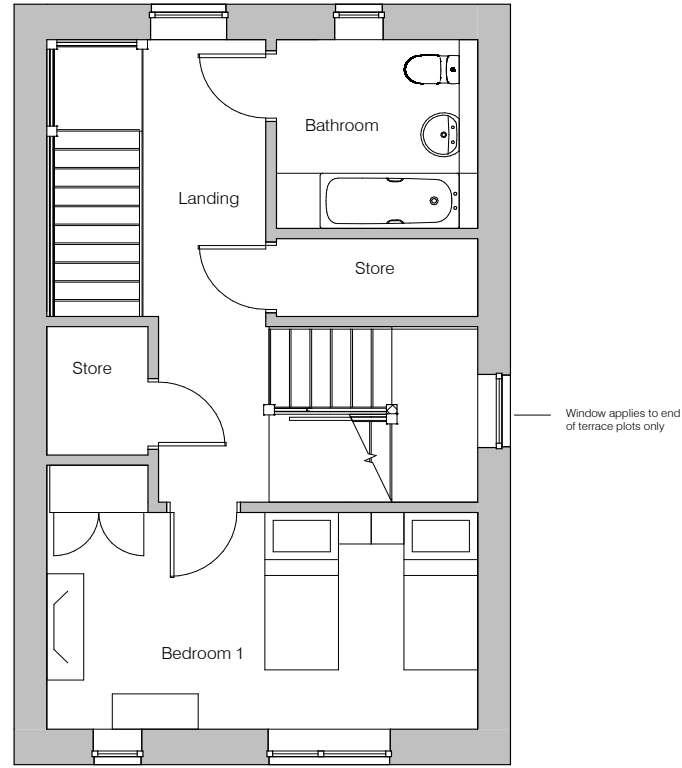


Side Elevation (north)

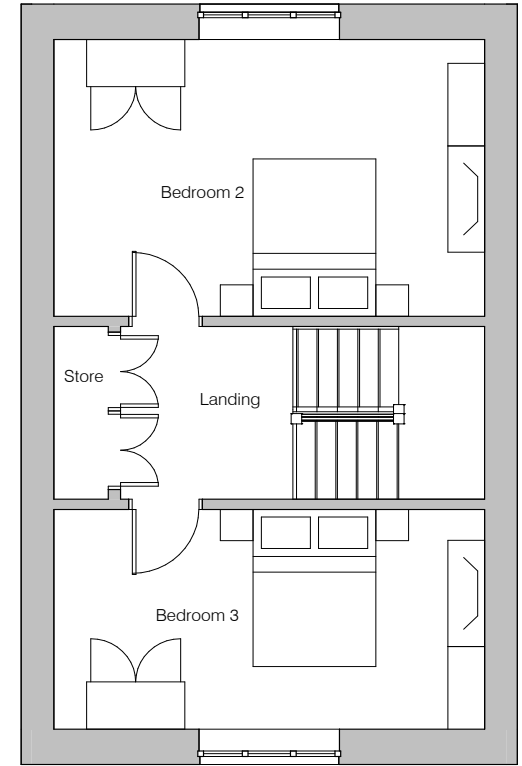
Fig 17: Proposed house floor plans  
N.B. see submission drawings for floor plans to flats



Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

# 5 Design response

Fig 18: Objectives of Good Design  
source: Planning Policy Wales  
edition 10, Dec. 2018



## Design objectives

5.1 TAN 12 breaks 'design' down into five key objectives Access, Movement, Character, Community Safety and Environmental Sustainability, and describes the process as one of 'analysis and synthesis'. This section of the Design and Access Statement will explain how the final scheme meets each of the design objectives.

### Access

- 5.2 'Inclusive design principles that deliver adequate provision for all people including those with mobility impairments, sensory impairments learning difficulties.'
- 5.3 The proposed layout seeks to develop the site within its context and promote access for all. In achieving this objective, the scheme has been designed to increase ease of manoeuvrability by wheelchair users, including five accessible/ adaptable flats located on the ground floor of

the apartment building, with dedicated level exterior access. The main entrance to the building will also be designed to comply with Lifetime Homes, DQR and Part M (Building Regs) to include a level entrance platform. There will also be a lift provided within the apartment block to enable access to all floors.

### Movement

- 5.4 'The ease of movement to, from and within the development for sustainable forms of transport by creating a safe and attractive environment.'
- 5.5 By virtue of its location, the development site is within close proximity to a number of local facilities and services in Cowbridge, as well as links to the wider transport network. Bus stops are located immediately adjacent to the site entrance, and within 400m along Cardiff Road, providing services to Cardiff, Porthcawl and other local destinations.
- 5.6 Pedestrian links to the town centre are strong,

with it being located only 700m from the site. Secure cycle parking is also located within the curtilage of the site.

### Character

- 5.7 'Sustaining or enhancing local character. Promoting legible development. Promoting a successful relationship between public and private space. Promoting quality, choice and variety. Promoting innovative design.'
- 5.8 The proposal for 43 flats and five houses located in two distinct blocks is deemed an acceptable scale and level of development for a site of this size and nature, subject to an appropriate design solution. The resulting density of development ensures an efficient use of the land, whilst not compromising amenity for either the



surrounding properties, or future occupants.

- 5.9 To ensure the character and existing amenity of the area is maintained, the location of the new buildings broadly reflect the existing school building footprint. The scale and massing of the proposed development is also considered appropriate given the staggered ridge height across the site which steps down from the four storey apartments adjacent to the A48 flyover to the north of the site, to the two-and-a-half storey housing to the south of the site, adjacent to the existing properties along Slade Close. The separation distance of the taller apartment block from existing neighbouring homes is also more than sufficient to ensure that no unacceptable amenity impact is arising.
- 5.10 The development proposals seek to integrate new landscaping primarily along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, to both screen the existing development and provide a commuting corridor for bats. Native species will be used to ensure integration with the surrounding area and provide a food source for local wildlife.
- 5.11 Further detailed proposals are provided in the landscaping scheme that accompanies the application.
- 5.12 Various boundary treatments, including 1.8m high close board fence to the north of the site and within gardens and 1.1m high metal railings

to the front of the proposed dwellings are used within the layout to retain privacy for both the new occupants and surrounding properties and provide a clear delineation between public and private space. Landscaping will also be used to soften these areas.

- 5.13 The appropriate level of cycle parking & refuse storage is provided within the curtilage of the site to allow for ease of access and security.

## Community Safety

- 5.14 *'High quality public realm and routes which are fit for purpose and will provide the opportunity for safe physical activity and recreation.'*
- 5.15 The site layout has been designed to maximise natural surveillance by ensuring that habitable rooms overlook amenity areas, car and cycle parking. Robust boundary treatments and lighting will also ensure car parking and amenity areas are secure and lit after dark, reducing the risk of crime.
- 5.16 In addition, the proposed dwellings will be Secured by Design accredited and be fitted with PAS 24-level secure windows and doors at ground floor level. The access door to the flats will also include an audio visual entry/exit system to prevent unauthorised entry. Similarly, the bin store area will have controlled access for residents only to prevent anti-social behaviour.

## Environmental Sustainability

- 5.17 *'Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources, enhancing biodiversity and designing for change.'*
- 5.18 The design layout and orientation of the proposed development will seek to:
- promote the efficient use of resources;
  - minimise the use of non-renewable resources;
  - maximise energy efficiency;
  - reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
  - minimise the generation of waste and pollution.
- 5.19 These principles will be further established post planning, through the construction process.
- 5.20 In terms of ecology and biodiversity, appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure there is no detrimental impact to protected species as a result of the development.

Fig 19: View of the vacant school buildings looking west from Aberthin Road

# 6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the demolition of the former Cowbridge Comprehensive School; and development of 48 units (comprising 43 flats and five houses).
- 6.2 The site is allocated for residential development under policy MG2(18) of The Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan. The principle of the proposed development is therefore established subject to detailed design.
- 6.3 The proposals are considered to accord with national and local planning policy in the form of the new PPW, its supporting TANs; and the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan.
- 6.4 The design of the development is considered to be an improvement in terms of the general streetscene in comparison to the existing former school building which is currently derelict and in a state of substantial disrepair.
- 6.5 The site can be safely accessed via Aberthin Road and an appropriate amount of car parking is provided given the proposed tenure of the development and the site's sustainable location in close proximity to a wide range of local services and facilities.
- 6.6 Accordingly, it is considered that the scheme represents a suitable and well integrated form of sustainable development that will provide a mix of much-needed affordable housing.
- 6.7 On this basis, it is respectfully recommended that the Vale of Glamorgan put the application forward for approval.



Fig 20: Aerial view of the existing, vacant school buildings





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