

Density Statement

Bolston House, Bonvilston

Introduction

This statement is made to support the application for 9 new houses on the site of this dilapidated singular house in extensive grounds accessed off the A48 at Bonvilston.

It justifies the density of dwellings (9) proposed by the application as suitable because of a number of factors and influences. This density falls below the “preferred” density of the council of 25 dwellings per hectare (DPH)

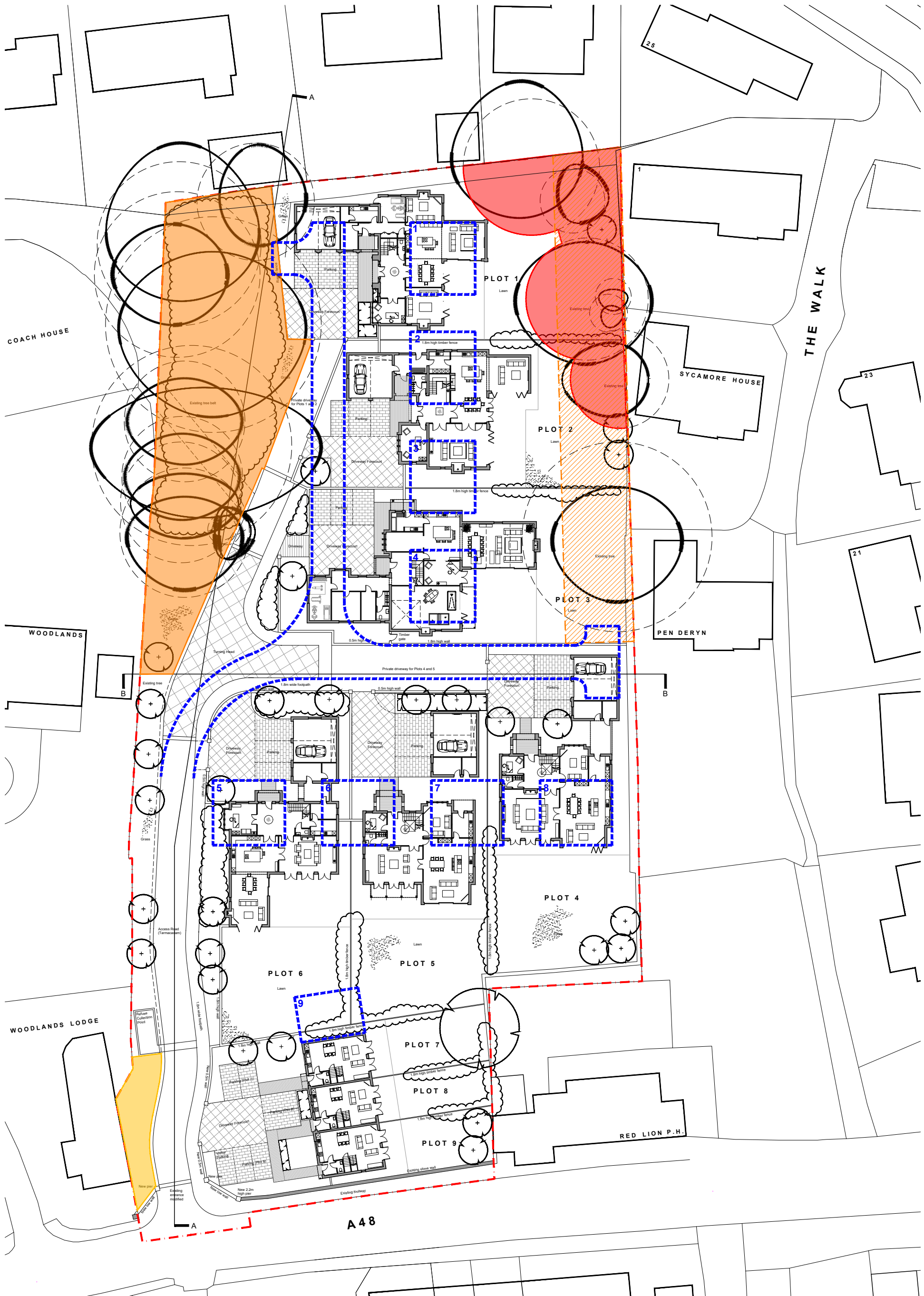
The Site

This is a roughly rectangular piece of land of some 0.91 hectares (gross). It is roughly rectangular is trending north with its longer dimension but narrowing towards the A48 making a restriction as it addresses the road. There are a number of influences which make the “nett” developable area of the site smaller. These are broadly are:-

- a. Access position and geometrical restrictions made by the vision splays and heritage issues in respect of the boundary wall
- b. Mature trees with preservation orders and other good mature species worthy of retention in line with planning guidance and general good practice
- c. Proximity of houses to the eastern boundary being those houses on The Walk and to a less extent the Red Lion pub
- d. A drain from the Red Lion pub crossing the site which affects development form but can/will be diverted but nevertheless has an effect even in its new position

There are also other influences which affect coverage over and above just site size. These are:-

- a. SAB needs which were not factored into the WAG DPH figure as it predated SAB legislation. In this instance the porosity of the ground is low and considerable on site storage is needed which cannot be sited close too or under built forms. This is related to latent drainage capacity in the area (or lack of) and the spirit /needs of SAB as a new sustainability need. Inevitably this will affect all site capacities but is technically relevant here because of capacity invert and ground infiltration/permeability issues.
- b. Locational characteristics and surroundings which exhibit a density and “grain” well under the guided 25 DPH. This has to be considered in contextual reference/urban design terms.



- Area not developable for garden or structures
- Area not developable for structures (ARB)
- Area not developable for structures (separation / privacy)
- Area not developable for "practical reasons"

Theoretical development of smaller houses yet size falls within local precedents
8 houses at 2,000 sqft = 16,000 sqft + 1 house at 1,000 sqft = 17,000 sqft

Site total excluding Plots 7,8 and 9 = **17,000 sqft**

Proposed layout site total excluding Plots 7,8 and 9 = **24,807 sqft**



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Project Name : Bolston House, Bonvilston	
Project Ref : SP612	
Drawing Title : Plot Size Comparison_1	Scale : 1:500 @ A3
Drawing Number : SK01	
Revision:	PLANNING
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- c. Site shape, particularly the width means that development on only one side of an access road is practical to achieve a good design solution simply because the site is not wide enough, to allow development on each side of a central spine, especially when the RPAs to trees are considered. This is an inefficient form of development and effects DPH.
- d. Access position driven by conservation of the historic wall to a “minimal intrusion” position. This places the road in a corner of the land from where it cannot work effectively for plot access until well within the site.

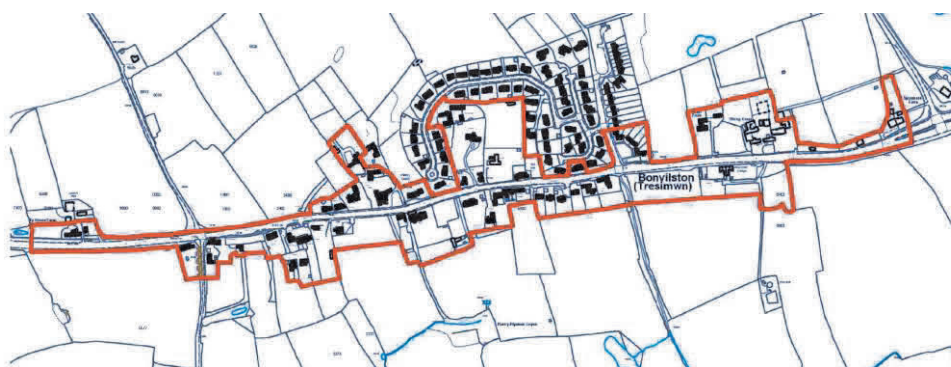
An Argument of Context and Suitability

The relevant planning policies here are MD5 point 3, MD2 and MD6.

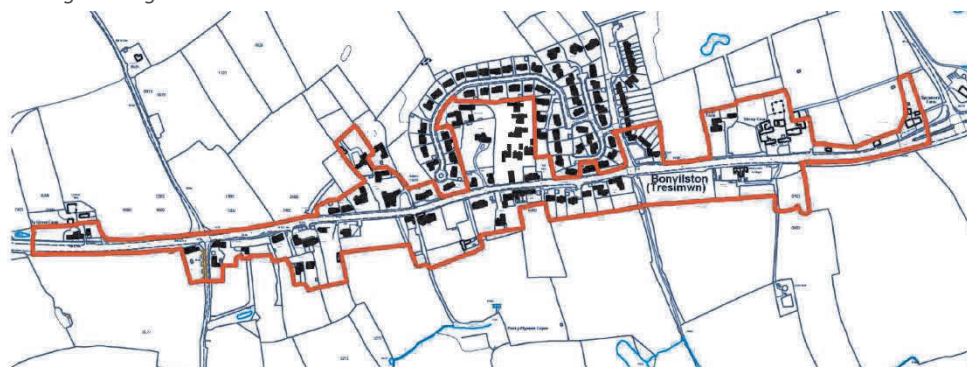
Policies do contain provisos which allow the rather draconian DPH stated to be reduced on the basis of constraints and context. Context (or urban grain) has to be strongly considered, especially since the development is at the heart of the Bonvilston Conservation Area.

In this case then considering the village grain and the surrounding stock we can state that, looking at the typical grain of Village Farm, which is the immediate context of what is really a rather small overall settlement form that the density shown in the application (14.5 DPH) nett is higher than its surroundings (13.2 DPH) This is hardly surprising given the existing stock type and stock type of the proposals. The grain is therefore commensurate with the surroundings, which is important. There is of course no policy curtailing size of dwellings other than the “back door” method of 25 DPH, which naturally generates smaller houses. This figure does not aim to do this but is a bi-product of its “one size fits all” harsh approach.

It also has to be considered that as with Woodlands adjacent this plot could have been granted for a singular replacement dwelling without falling foul of the 25 DPH hypothesis. This would be a nett loss from Vale housing figures of 8 units when compared to the submitted scheme.



Existing urban grain within the Bonvilston Conservation Area



The proposed grain within the application site shows it is commensurate with the surroundings

Access Status and the Historic Wall

Consideration has to be given as to the status and magnitude of the modified access off the A48. Whilst up to 9 units can be accessed off low impact (visually) infrastructure in terms of detriment/minimal intervention to the wall fronting the A48, any more dwellings would mean a step change in highway typology, with width, splays, radii, build outs, footways etc and would dramatically change the character of the A48 and this historic wall.

The current, low intervention proposals, does limit the number of dwellings served but balances effect on the wall, conservation considerations and density.

Density against Coverage

In terms of grain we have taken a cue from the predominating size of interstitial gaps between houses surrounding the site. There are in between 7 and 12m, so the houses appear to be in “generous” plots and there is visual porosity between them. This is a local characteristic. Following this cure reduces density but not necessarily coverage, because, mainly, the houses are large.

Looking at an alternative philosophy where smaller units are used to climb towards 25 DPH it can be demonstrated that the site ratio (coverage) is reduced, for example using a predominantly 2,000ft (185sqm) unit and 1,000ft (92sqm) units a development density of 17,000ft is achieved, whereas the proposals create nearly 25,000ft of living space. This is because larger units need less driveways, have less interstitial gaps between units, need less intensive (bigger) vehicle infrastructure and create more ancillary space. It can be considered therefore that the current proposals are an “efficient use of land”, which is what the somewhat clunky 25 DPH figure is driving at in the round.

VILLAGE FARM



ACH HOUSE

WOODLANDS

OODLANDS LODGE

THE WALK

23

21

RED LION P.H.

A 48



Existing Plot*

Total = 5312.1 sqm / 1.31 acres / 0.53 hectares
Number of dwellings = 7
Dwellings per hectare = 13.2



Proposed Plot

Total = 6231.7 sqm / 1.53 acres / 0.62 hectares
Number of dwellings = 9
Dwellings per Hectare = 14.5



Site Boundary



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Project Name :		Bolston House, Bonvilston	
Project Ref :		SP612	
Drawing Title :		Plot Size Comparison_2	
Drawing Number :		SK02	
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* Part of the Village Farm development

Conclusion

It can be reasonably concluded that this particular site has many mitigating factors which would lead to the consideration of a density less than 25 DPH being acceptable.

Looking at nett coverage the site achieves 14.5 DPH, which is not unreasonably low, whilst its built context (Village Farm) which is fairly commensurate with the whole grain of the village, is 13.2 DPH.

Constraints of highways, trees, drainage, shape, overlooking and access all contribute towards the output density. Whilst a small increase is possible with smaller units this is not what the development strives to deliver, which is to increase choice over and above the recently other builds in St Nicholas by Waterstone and Redrow of circa 187sqm units with some smaller stock, along with the Acorn development, Cottrell Gardens.

Planning policy asks us to increase diversity of houses not just pure numbers and this proposal addresses this consideration. Whilst it is entirely possible that this site (as per Woodlands adjacent) could have just delivered one unit, it can add 8 8 additional units to Vale housing numbers, along with commensurate S106 considerations, along with observing the village grain and general “green” feel of the area and leave the development of more dense schemes commensurate with the 25 DPH figure to more tightly packed and larger urbanised development areas.

The Vale of Glamorgan represents many diverse yet well defined housing grains be it the more tightly packed areas of Barry or even Cowbridge but the looser forms of villages such as Bonvilston and St. Nicholas can continue to observe their generic grains and preserve the diversity of the county.

POLICY MD2 - DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

In order to create high quality, healthy, sustainable and locally distinct places development proposals should:

1. Be of a high standard of design that positively contributes to the context and character of the surrounding natural and built environment and protects existing features of townscape or landscape interest;
2. Respond appropriately to the local context and character of neighbouring buildings and uses in terms of use, type, form, scale, mix, and density;
3. Where appropriate, provide new or enhanced areas of public realm particularly in key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions;
4. Promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour. In the case of retail centres, developments should provide active street frontages to create attractive and safe urban environments;
5. Provide a safe and accessible environment for all users, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;
6. Have no unacceptable impact on highway safety nor cause or exacerbate existing traffic congestion to an unacceptable degree;
7. Where appropriate, conserve and enhance the quality of, and access to, existing open spaces and community facilities;
8. Safeguard existing public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance;
9. Provide public open space, private amenity space and car parking in accordance with the council's standards;
10. Incorporate sensitive landscaping, including the retention and enhancement where appropriate of existing landscape features and biodiversity interests;
11. Provide adequate facilities and space for the collection, composting and recycling of waste materials and explore opportunities to incorporate re-used or recyclable materials or products into new buildings or structures; and
12. Mitigate the causes of climate change by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with their design, construction, use and eventual demolition, and include features that provide effective adaptation to, and resilience against, the current and predicted future effects of climate change.

**POLICY MD5 -
DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES**

Settlement boundaries have been defined around all the settlements within the LDP settlement hierarchy. New development within these settlements will be permitted where the proposed development:

1. Makes efficient use of land or buildings;
2. Would not prejudice the delivery of an allocated development site;
3. Is of a scale, form, layout and character that is sympathetic to and respects its immediate setting and the wider surroundings and does not unacceptably impact upon the character and appearance of the locality;
4. The proposal would not result in the loss of natural or built features that individually or cumulatively contribute to the character of the settlement or its setting;
5. Would not result in the unacceptable loss of public open space, community or tourism buildings or facilities;
6. Has no unacceptable impact on the amenity and character of the locality by way of noise, traffic congestion and parking; and
7. Makes appropriate provision for community infrastructure to meet the needs of future occupiers.

**POLICY MD6 -
HOUSING DENSITIES**

Residential development proposals within the key, service centre and primary settlements will be permitted where the net residential density is a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare. In minor rural settlements, a minimum net residential density of 25 dwellings per hectare will be required.

Lower density levels will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. Development at the prescribed densities would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the surrounding area;
2. Reduced densities are required as a result of significant site constraints or to preserve a feature that would contribute to existing or future local amenity; or
3. The proposal is for a mixed use development where a residential use is the subordinate element of the proposal.

Higher densities will be permitted where they reflect the character of the surrounding areas and would not unacceptably impact upon local amenity.