

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed erection of 10 no. affordable dwellings and associated development
at
Former Ysgol Babanod Coed Mawr, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 4TW

Prepared on behalf of
Cyngor Gwynedd Council



OWEN DEVENPORT CYF LTD

Cynllunwyr Tref Siartredig • Chartered Town Planners

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5 Stryd y Cae / 5 Field Street,
Llangefni,
Ynys Môn / Anglesey,
LL77 7EH
01248 724 356

23 Lôn Wynnstey / 23 Wynnstey Road,
Bae Colwyn / Colwyn Bay,
Conwy,
LL29 8NB
01492 536 024

20 Stryd y Dyffryn / 20 Vale Street,
Dinbych / Denbigh,
LL16 3BE
01745 816 145

Author:

Name: Jamie Bradshaw Director

Date: 04/04/2024

Reviewed By:

Name: Jamie Bradshaw Director

Date: 04/04/2024

Issued/Approved By:

Name: Jamie Bradshaw Director

Date: 04/04/2024

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FORMER YSGOL BABANOD COED MAWR, BANGOR, GWYNEDD, LL57 4TW: PROPOSED ERECTION OF 10 NO. AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to examine the proposal within its planning context and to demonstrate that it is a development that will make a positive contribution, in terms of its accessibility and design, to the local area.
- 1.2 The proposal has been designed with the national and local policy context in mind and with due accord paid to all policies relevant to the proposed use.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is situated within the south-western section of Bangor, within the residential area set between Caernarfon Road and Penrhos Road, just off Ffordd Coed Mawr.
- 2.2 The site is currently vacant, having been previously occupied by Ysgol Babanod Coed Mawr, which was recently demolished. As such, the site now contains the remains of the building and its associated hardstandings, together with the soft landscaped area that were set around the school.
- 2.3 The site is mainly defined on its frontage/north-western edge by fencing & gates that separate the site from Bron-y-De, which is the highway and associated footway that serves the site. Opposite are no's 1 & 3 Bron-y-De, which are set above the site. The remainder of the boundary is formed by other boundary treatments that separate the site from the rear of no's 5 & 7 Bron-y-De that abut the site.
- 2.4 Varying boundary treatments also form the southern edge of the site and separate it from numbers 1-9 Lon-y-Bedw, whose amenity areas abut the site.
- 2.5 Fencing defines the eastern edge of the site and separates it from the rear gardens of no's 2-16 Toronnmen, which are set to the south and below the site.
- 2.6 Finally, the northern/north-eastern edge of the site is also defined by fencing that separates it from the rear and side gardens of no's 29-39 Ffordd Coed Mawr.
- 2.7 From the above it can clearly be seen that the site is set amongst existing residential development in the heart of Bangor, and that it presently offers little to the area following the demolition of the school.

3.0 CHARACTER

- 3.1 When assessing design, the initial process seeks out the context of the site and surroundings. The site lies in a residential area of the town, though there are commercial uses nearby that are mainly concentrated on Caernarfon Road.
- 3.2 However, it is clear from the submitted plans that the scheme represents a considered approach to the site and its context. The proposal adopts a traditional scale, form, and general design approach, but is of its time in terms of the design philosophy and materials¹. The result is a successful design for the proposed properties that will be suited to the site and context and will be of a high quality.
- 3.3 This approach also extends to the street design, with a ‘standard estate road’ providing the core access route within the site, but with parking deliberately placed mainly to the side of the dwellings to reduce the influence of cars on the street-scene and retain green space to the front of the properties. This arrangement will result in a higher quality streetscape than can be achieved with a ‘standard developer’ approach which usually dictates large areas of parallel parking spaces along the street edge. Thus, the proposal represents best practice in terms of design quality and sustainability as it reflects the role of those streets as part of a residential development, with pedestrians and cyclists given priority over cars.
- 3.4 Whilst the layout is different to that previously approved, proposing a single fairly straight access road with houses either side, rather than an inverted T-layout to the road with houses set around it, this layout is considered to be appropriate and would sit well amongst the housing set around the site and reflect the general street pattern of the area.
- 3.5 Open space for recreation has also been included within the proposal, and existing trees retained where possible and complemented with new landscaping, ensuring that it provides a pleasant environment for occupiers and also is subject to passive surveillance to give a safe and enjoyable space.
- 3.6 A detailed ***soft landscaping design*** has also been provided as part of this submission, with the proposed scheme designed to ensure that the site is landscaped to a high standard and thereby integrates successfully into its setting. The scheme also offers ecology benefits and has been integrated into the surface water drainage design.
- 3.7 Overall, what is being proposed is a high-quality scheme of a good standard of design that reflects the pattern of adjoining development and would provide a well-designed space that will be pleasant and enjoyable for its occupiers. As such, the proposal complies with the guidance on design set out within ***Chapter 3, section 4.2 of PPW, TAN12, and policies and policies PCYFF2, PCYFF3, & PCYFF4, PS19, & AMG3 of the JLDP and SPG - Design in the Urban and Rural Environment.***

¹ At this stage final detail of materials has not been confirmed. However, sufficient detail is provided to allow consideration of the application, and it is submitted that condition requiring submission and approval of final details of external finishes prior to development proceeding beyond slab would be appropriate as it would allow control of this matter whilst also allowing preparatory works to commence on the development.

- 3.8 The areas economic character is typical of the urban parts of the County with a mixture of shops, services, and other employment uses, with the university and hospital playing a particular role, and a variety of agricultural and other rural based businesses in the surrounding area. The proposal would not materially impact upon the local economy as it would involve the erection of only 10 dwellings in place of a vacant site that was previously occupied by a school.
- 3.9 The area's social character is typical of urban settlements in the area, with a mixture of retirement and family dwellings, along with areas of student accommodation which are more unusual across the wider plan area. The proposal would have a beneficial impact as it involves the addition of affordable dwellings to the city that will assist in meeting identified housing needs. The impact upon the Welsh Language will be very modest and likely beneficial, and in any case a suitable set of measures are proposed to mitigate the impact upon the Welsh Language. Greater detail on this point is provided in the Planning Support Statement and Community & Linguistic Statement supplied as part of the application.

4.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 4.1 Crime levels in the locality generally reflect the urban location of the site and patterns seen elsewhere within the settlement and wider area. There will be no reduction in community safety as a result of this modest proposal. All doors and windows will meet relevant BSE standards and thus ensure that the site is properly safeguarded from the risk of crime. The site offers good potential for active and passive surveillance which would act to discourage crime, and suitable measures would be integrated into the building to ensure its security.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.1 Turning to the question of **energy use and built sustainability** the proposed dwellings will be designed to reduce their energy consumption through high levels of insulation, and the specification of energy efficient technology and fittings, as well as appliances and fittings that would reduce the use of water. As such, environmental impacts of the proposal will be minimised. This will address the requirements of **para's 3.7-3.8 & section 5.8 of PPW, TAN12, and policies PS5, PS6, PCYFF3, & PCYFF5 of the JLDP.**
- 5.2 A **Water Conservation Strategy** has been provided as part of the scheme which demonstrates that suitable measures can be incorporated into any future detailed design to reduce water usage. As such, the proposal complies with the requirements of **section 6.6 of PPW and policy PCYFF6 (as well as PS5, & PS6) of the JLDP.**
- 5.3 An Ecological survey has been completed by Cambrian Ecology, with the resulting report provided as part of the submission. This was undertaken prior to demolition of the school building, but also provides conclusions and advice for the then forthcoming development. The report has been submitted with the application and should be read in full, but in brief it confirms that:-
- **Records search** - There are no protected or designated habitats within or close to the site. There are also no records of protected or notable species on the site;

- **Bats** - The site itself provides some potentially suitable bat habitat in the form of the buildings and trees. However, surveys have revealed that they are not in use and provide low potential after a detailed inspection and an emergence survey, and therefore the site has limited value due to its nature and setting. As such mitigation measures are proposed in the form of ceasing works if bats are found during demolition (none were found). Turning to enhancement, measures were proposed in earlier ecology reports for inclusion as part of the originally approved development, but the subsequent work supersedes this and does not recommend their inclusion, but recommendations for planting to offer connectivity and foraging are set out and these have been respected in the landscape plan. Where possible these are incorporated onto the plans, with the remainder suitable for imposition through conditions upon any permission;
- **Birds** - The site has some potential to host nesting birds and provides some foraging value. As such, the report recommends that the planting scheme is designed to provide native species that are of value to birds, with these either carried through onto the relevant plans. Similarly, enhancement measures are set out in the GIS, including house sparrow colony boxes, and swift bricks, all of which are shown on the proposed plans. Timing controls for removal of vegetation/trees are also set out;
- **Other protected & non-protected species** - No other protected or priority species were found to be present, and the GIS report recommends including 20 bee bricks within the development, which can easily be accommodated in the development;
- **Habitat** - The site comprises a mix of habitats comprising mainly amenity grassland, ornamental planting, some trees (within and adjoining the site), and the then present building and its hardstandings that dominated the site. The habitat assemblage is not rare or notable, and as such the report concludes that suitable mitigation and enhancement can be provided through a detailed landscaping scheme, with its recommendations carried through into the submitted design;
- **Invasive Non-Native Species** - Montbretia and Rockspurry cotoneaster are present on the site, which are both INNS, though their numbers are very limited. The report sets out two options for eradication of the INNS, which are entirely suitable for control through conditions upon any permission;
- **Green Infrastructure** - The submitted GIS confirms that the site does not provide important habitat or connections, and those that exist will be retained and impacts avoided. Whilst these would be some habitat loss this is of lower value habitat and mitigation will be provided through the landscaping scheme and replanting proposed as part of the scheme. It is also confirmed that compensation & enhancement will be provided through bird boxes & other similar measures, tree & other planting, and other similar measures. As such, it is clear that the scheme will deliver biodiversity & ecosystem resilience and net benefit.

5.4 Overall, the measures set out in the report will protect the favourable conservation status of the species present on the site, and will address the requirement for ecological enhancement & mitigation. These are suitable for approval as part of any permission, and should be secured through a suitably worded condition/s upon any permission. As such the proposal complies with

the guidance within *para's 6.4.1-36 of PPW & TAN 5, and with the requirement of policies PCYFF2, PCYFF 3, & AMG 5 of the JLDP.*

- 5.5 Again, it is noted that no concerns were raised in respect of the ecology & biodiversity matters in the previous application. If there were such issues then they would have been highlighted in that case, and as nothing substantive has changed it is expected that the proposal will continue to be acceptable in this respect.

6.0 MOVEMENT TO, FROM AND WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT, & ACCESSIBILITY

- 6.1 The access approach taken for this development has been relatively simple to reflect the uncomplicated nature of the project and the design of the dwellings.

Movement within the Development

- 6.2 The proposal has been carefully designed to facilitate its use by a variety of residents, from those with young children, to the elderly or mobility-impaired persons. The proposal is primarily designed for family use, with 2 or 3 bedrooms, standard living space, a bathroom, and a ground floor WC provided to cater for needs of the average family.
- 6.3 It is of an uncomplicated design, which allows for easy access by all. All entrances, doors and walkways are of sufficient width for most users, and the simple design allows for clear lines of sight through the building thus enabling easy movement throughout the property.
- 6.4 The proposal could be easily adapted for use by mobility-impaired users through the provision of standard stair lifts or indeed a lift. The bathrooms specified are of sufficient size to be easily adapted to fit most mobility impaired users' needs.
- 6.5 The outside areas will be suitably surfaced and designed to facilitate their use by all users, with care taken to avoid any uneven surfaces or sudden changes in level to allow for their use by all.
- 6.6 Adequate circulation space has been provided in the submitted design (inside and around the proposal), and the site would have good links to the local area.
- 6.7 A parking area is shown for each building, preventing any untidy or unregularised parking on the site, which could restrict the ease of movement of vehicles on or off the site, or cause problems for the mobility impaired.
- 6.8 Access to the proposal is simple and straightforward allowing those with mobility impairments, the elderly, or those with young children simple and quick access to the proposed dwellings without unnecessary barriers or difficulty.

Disability

- 6.9 In respect of access by persons with *disabilities or mobility impairments* the proposed dwellings have been laid out to provide suitable clear access routes within the site to allow for movement within it by all potential users.

Turning to the dwellings, the floor plans demonstrate that the buildings will be reasonably accessible subject to minor adaptations to allow use by particular users, such as the installation of a stair lift or full lift, either of which would be achievable within the proposed designs. As such it is submitted that it is clear that these proposed dwellings will all be reasonably accessible and adaptable as per the approach set out in *para's 3.5-3.6 & 3.7-3.8 of PPW and TAN12, and in JLDP policies TRA4, PS5, PCYFF3, PCYFF4.*

External Movement

Highway and Pedestrian Access

- 6.10 In respect of **vehicular access**, the scheme will be served by an improved access onto Bron-y-De. The proposed entrance provides a good standard of visibility onto the highway, with clear splays available in both directions that are sufficient bearing in mind the expected speeds and volumes on the highway, and also the historic use of the site as a school.
- 6.11 The proposed entrance will also provide a suitable **pedestrian access** from the site onto the existing footway that adjoins the site, with a crossing put in across that entrance to ensure that there is clear and safe access across it. This arrangement will provide a good standard of access onto the wider pedestrian network within the settlement.
- 6.12 Turning to the question of parking, the proposed provision is suitable bearing in mind the size of the dwellings and the accessibility of the site.
- 6.13 Indeed, it is also considered to be pertinent to briefly touch upon the Council's SPG on parking.
- 6.14 The proposal includes the following number of parking spaces:-

Table 1 - Proposed parking

Type of space	Proposed number
On-plot parking	22 (2 per property, except for plots 5 and 6 which will have 3 spaces)
Visitor spaces	2
Cycle & motorcycle	Space within plot of each dwelling to store at least one bicycle, likely more. No requirement for motorcycle spaces.
Total	24

- 6.15 As the application relates only to residential development the scheme has been assessed against the residential zone 2-6 in the SPG standard as this is the most appropriate fit for this location (which is likely to be zone 3 or 4). Based on the size of dwellings indicated in the proposed plans (6 no. 3-bed, 4 no. 2-bed houses) the following level of parking is normally required **as a maximum**:-

Table 2 - Parking sought by SPG LDPO2

Type of space	Level sought
Residents	26 (1 per bedroom)
Visitor	2 (1 per 5 units)

<i>Cycle & motorcycle</i>	<i>No requirement for cycle 'spaces', no requirement for motorcycle spaces</i>
Total	28

- 6.16 However, it is considered that the sustainability scoring set out Appendix 6 applies, with the following scores achieved:-

Table 3 - Sustainability points

Type of space	Level sought
Local facilities, (community centre, 205m, school 350m) 2 points	2
Public transport - stop within 300m	3
Frequency of public transport (within 800m)	2
Total	7

- 6.17 Which results in the following parking requirement:-

Table 4 - Parking sought by SPG LDP02 based on above points

Type of space	Level sought
Residents (reduction in 1 space per unit, subject to minimum of 1 space per unit)	16
Visitor (1 space reduction)	1
<i>Cycle & motorcycle</i>	<i>No requirement</i>
Total	17

- 6.18 The following table compares the proposed numbers of spaces against the standard sought by LDP02:-

Table 5 - Comparison between proposed parking and level sought by LDP02

Type of space	Proposed number	Level sought	Difference
Residents	22	16	+6
Visitor	2	1	+1
<i>Cycle & motorcycle</i>	<i>0 specified, sufficient space for at least 1 per dwelling</i>	0	<i>n/a</i>
Total	24	17	+7

- 6.19 The preceding table clearly shows that the proposal actually exceeds the required provision under the SPG's requirements, with the 4 no. of 3-bed properties meeting requirements, 2 no. of the 3-bed properties and the 2-bed exceeding them by one space (a prudent step), with an extra visitor space also provided (also considered to be prudent). Bearing in mind the accessibility of the site it is submitted that there should be no barrier to the approval of the application on the basis of the proposed level of parking.

- 6.20 In addition, it must be noted that car ownership levels can be expected to lower in this scheme as it proposes entirely affordable homes. In addition, to provide more parking would fly in the face of national and Local Policy which seeks to foster use of non-car modes of transport in locations such as this (as per. Para's 4.1.49-54 of PPW and TRA/2 of the JLDP). Indeed, the proposal all day-to-day facilities and many employers can be reached within an acceptable cycle distance or on foot. This coupled with the availability of public transport means that car use should be lower in any case, and all steps should be taken to encourage this through lower on-site parking provision.
- 6.21 As such, it is submitted that the development will have a minimal and entirely acceptable impact upon the operation and safety of the highway, which has sufficient capacity to accommodate the development, and that suitable access & parking arrangements are proposed for vehicles. It is also clear that the site can be provided with a suitable pedestrian access and is highly accessible via non-car modes.
- 6.22 As such, the proposal will comply with the requirements of **section 4.1 of PPW & TAN18 as well as policies PS4, TRA1, TRA2, TRA4, PS5, & PCYFF4 of the JLDP and together with SPG - Parking Standards**, as suitable access and parking arrangements are proposed.
- 6.23 It is noted that the Authority was satisfied with the access arrangement or parking provision for the scheme in the previous application. As nothing substantive has changed it is expected that the proposal will continue to be acceptable in this respect.

Sustainable Transport

- 6.24 In respect of ***access via non-car modes of transport*** the proposal is situated within walking and cycling distance of the wide range of shops, services, facilities, and employment sites available within Bangor. A good number of very regular bus services are also available within easy walking distance of the site allowing easy access to a wide variety of key local settlements, with a mainline railway station also set within a short walk or cycle allowing access to the wider region and nation.
- 6.25 As such, the proposal is set in a highly accessible location and therefore has the potential to foster the adoption of non-car modes of transport by its occupiers.
- 6.26 The proposal therefore complies with the objectives set out in ***para's 3.6, 3.12-3.13, and section 4.1 of PPW, and in policies PS/4, TRA1, TRA4, PS5, PCYFF3 of the JLDP.***

7.0 POLICY

7.1 The requirement for showing compliance with relevant policies as regards a Design and Access Statement are given in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 as amended.

7.2 The relevant policies in respect of this application are contained within the Anglesey & Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan. The proposal complies with the general preferences within the plans in terms of the design and accessibility of the proposal. Specifically the proposal will comply with the following policies which relate to design & accessibility:-

- *Policy PS1: Welsh Language and Culture*
- *Policy PS4: Sustainable Transport, Development and Accessibility*
- *Policy TRA 1: Transport network developments*
- *Policy TRA 2: Parking Standards*
- *Policy TRA 4: Managing Transport Impacts*
- *Policy PS 5: Sustainable Development*
- *Policy PS 6: Alleviating and Adapting to The Effects of Climate Change*
- *Policy PCYFF 2: Development Criteria*
- *Policy PCYFF 3: Design and Place Shaping*
- *Policy PCYFF 4: Design and Landscaping*
- *Policy PCYFF 6: Water Conservation*
- *Policy TAI 1: Housing in Sub-Regional Centre & Urban Service Centres*
- *Policy TAI 8: Appropriate Housing Mix*
- *Strategic Policy PS 19: Conserving and where Appropriate Enhancing the Natural Environment*
- *Policy AMG 3: Protecting and Enhancing Features and Qualities that are Distinctive to the Local Landscape Character*
- *Policy AMG 5: Local Biodiversity Conservation*

7.3 TAN12 - Design and Planning Policy Wales have also been assessed and their advice incorporated into the submitted design.

7.4 *A full assessment of the specific planning issues raised by this application is provided within the Planning Support Statement & other detailed technical reports which must be read alongside this document.*

Jamie Bradshaw - BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI - April 2024

Owen Devenport Ltd.
Chartered Town Planners