

PLANNING STATEMENT

Land to the west of Plas Maldwyn, Caersws

February 2024



Summary

Proposal:

Full planning application for residential development and associated works

Location:

Land to the west of Plas Maldwyn, Caersws, Powys, SY17 5HG

Date:

February 2024

Project Reference:

23.240

Client:

MWP Developments

Product of:

Asbri Planning Limited
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Contents

Section 1	
Introduction	4
Section 2	
Site description	7
Section 3	
Planning Context	11
Section 4	
Proposals	12
Section 5	
Planning Policy Context	16
Section 6	
Appraisal	29
Section 7	
Conclusion	41

Introduction

- 1.1 Asbri Planning have been instructed by MWP Developments to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany a full planning application for the construction of 22 dwellings, access, landscaping and associated works on land at Plas Maldwyn, Caersws, Powys.
- 1.2 The application site comprises a vacant plot of brownfield land located immediately west of the Plas Maldwyn residential flats which is situated along Ty Gwyn Road. Plas Maldwyn is a historical landmark having previously occupied a former workhouse, and which was later converted to Llys Maldwyn Hospital, before being developed for residential purposes. The purpose of this Planning Statement is to provide a clear and logical document to outline the planning considerations and policy relevant to this proposal.
- 1.3 The Planning Statement acts as a supporting document to the accompanying planning application and should be read in conjunction with all other elements of the application. The following drawings prepared by Hiraeth Architecture accompany the application:

Drawing name	Drawing reference
Existing Site Location Plan	2340-HIR-00-XX-DR-A-00020-S0-P4
Existing Site Plan	2340-HIR-00-XX-DR-A-00021-S0-P4
Site Location Plan as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-00200-S0-P4
Proposed Site Plan – House Types	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-00201-S0-P8
Proposed Site Ground Floor Plan as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-00202-S0-P4
Proposed Site First Floor Plan as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-00203-S0-P4
Proposed Site Roof Plan as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-00204-S0-P4
Proposed House Type 02 & 02A (2 bed 4 person)	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01300-S0-P2
Proposed House Type 03 & 03A (3 bed 5 pers – front)	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01302-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 1 Plans as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01310-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 2 Plans as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01320-S0-P2

Proposed Terrace 3 Plans as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01330-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 4 Plans as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01340-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 5 Plans as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01350-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 6 Plans as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-01360-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 1 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02410-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 1 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02411-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 2 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02420-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 2 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02421-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 3 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02430-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 3 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02431-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 4 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02440-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 4 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02441-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 5 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02450-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 5 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02451-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 6 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02460-S0-P2
Proposed Terrace 6 Elevations as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02461-S0-P2
Proposed Site Section AA as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-03500-S0-P1
Proposed Site Section ZZ as Proposed	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-03501-S0-P1
Drainage Layout Plan	PM-DL-300 Rev D
Typical Highway Bio-Retention Detail	PM-BR-309
Drainage Details Plan	PM-DD-307 Rev

Kerbing and Setting Out Plan	PM-KL-303 Rev D
Levels Plan	PM-LP-304 Rev D
Levels Plan	PM-LP-305 Rev A
Longitudinal Section	PM-LS-301 Rev A
Road Construction Details	PM-RC-308
Refuse Vehicle Tracking Plan	PM-RT-306 Rev B
Greenfield runoff rate estimation	---
Proposed Site Landscape Masterplan	2340-HIR-00-ZZ-DR-A-02210-S0-P4
Topographical Survey – 2d	MWPJ007/01
Tree Constraints Plan	PC23/xxx/TCP
Tree Survey Schedule	---

1.4 In addition, the following supporting documents are submitted.

Document	Prepared by
Application Forms	Asbri Planning
Planning Statement	Asbri Planning
PAC Report	Asbri Planning
Design and Access Statement	Hiraeth Architecture
Preliminary Ecological Assessment	Ben Jones Ecology
Green Infrastructure Statement	Hiraeth Architecture

1.5 The statement takes the format of an overview of the site and its surroundings at Section 2 whilst Section 3 summarises the planning context and history of the site. Section 4 explores the proposals in detail, whilst the policy context is discussed in Section 5. Section 6 appraises proposals against pertinent policy and the document comes to a conclusion in Section 7.

Site Description

General Location

- 2.1 The site is located to the west of Plas Maldwyn, off Ty Gwyn Road in a largely residential area of Caersws, with residential developments adjoining to the south east and west. The site is centred on the following grid co-ordinates X: 303540, Y: 292377
- 2.2 The site lies 8km west of Newtown and halfway between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury. The site is located within the settlement boundary of Caersws in the Powys Local Development Plan, and is identified as a 'Large Village'.

Site Features

- 2.3 The site is brownfield in nature, having previously occupied a building associated with the Llys Maldwyn Hospital (see figure 1 below). The site is, however, now vacant having previously been used as a construction material storage site associated with the residential conversion of the neighbouring Victorian Workhouse and later, Llys Maldwyn Hospital. This part of the site forms the majority of the application site boundary, and is currently in poor condition due to lack of appropriate management. However, also included in the red line boundary is the existing access road leading from Ty Gwyn Road which links the development site to the wider village of Caersws. The site, including the existing access road to the site, extends to approximately 0.75ha.



Figure 1: OS Map of application site [Source: National Library of Scotland]

- 2.4 The application site is irregular in shape and given poor management of the site, currently comprises of material mounds and waste. The site boundaries are demarked by a mix of low timber fencing to the north, and taller timber closed board fencing to the west and southern boundaries. A maintained hedgerow forms the boundary of the site to the north eastern edge, which also defines the edge of the formal Plas Maldwyn gardens beyond. The site's topography slopes

gently downwards to the north, benefitting from views towards open playing fields and countryside beyond.

- 2.5 The site is not located within a Conservation Area. Llys Maldwyn Hospital which is located east of the site (Plas Maldwyn) is a Grade II Listed Building (ref. 16184). Other Listed Buildings lie further south and south west (see blue dots in figure 2 below). The site is also located within the Registered Historic Landscape of Caersws Basin (ref. HLW (P) 5). Furthermore, the Caersws Roman Site (ref. MG001) located 550m south west of the site, and Roman Earthwork NE of Caersws (ref. MG161) located 475m north east of the site, are both Scheduled Monuments.

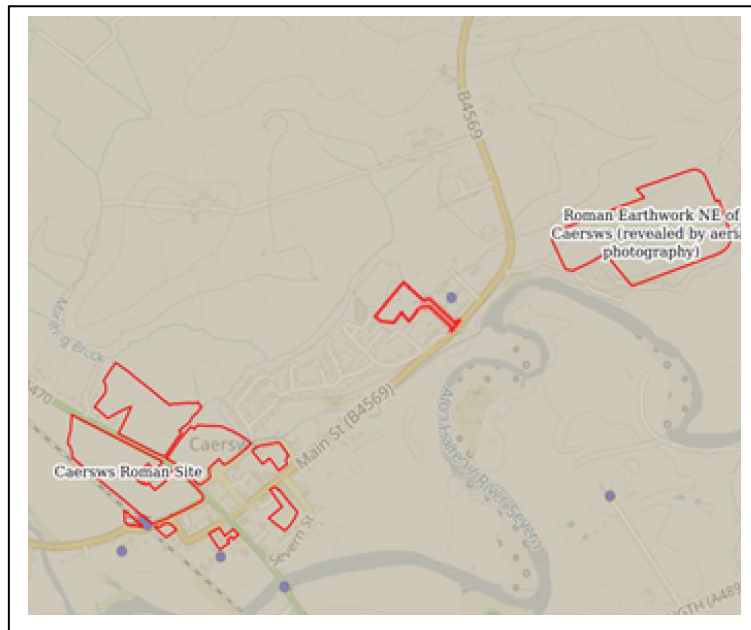


Figure 2: Designated Historic Assets in the vicinity of the application site

- 2.6 As aforementioned, the neighbouring Plas Maldwyn Grade II Listed Former Workhouse lies east of the site, and was later a children's hospital and most recently converted to accommodate a mix of residential flats and a larger privately owned home in the principal wing. It is clear that this is a dominant feature which is key to the character of the site.
- 2.7 A review of Natural Resources Wales Development Advice Map shows that the site lies within Flood Zone A which means the site is considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding (see figure 3).



Figure 3: Development Advice Map

- 2.8 A review of Natural Resources Wales Flood Map for Plan shows that the site is not within an area of flood risk- Rivers and Sea as well as Surface Water and Small Watercourses.

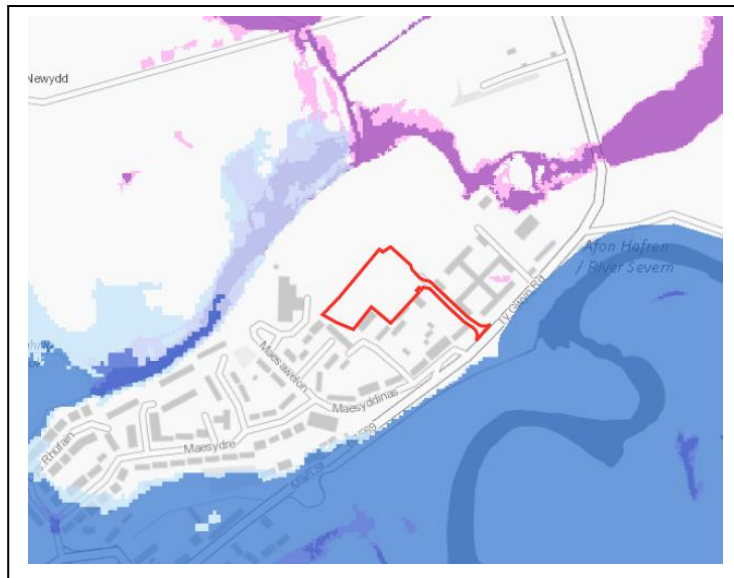


Figure 4: Flood Map for Planning

Access

- 2.9 Whilst currently vacant, the site can be accessed via the existing access road to the south-west of Plas Maldwyn which falls off Ty Gwyn Road to the south east. There are no Public Rights of Way identified within the site boundary itself, however one lies immediately adjacent the south western site boundary which initially runs in a north westerly direction away from the application site. There is a future walking and cycling active travel route to the south west of the site (P-LL-FR-210013).

- 2.10 National Cycle Network Route no. 8 commences approximately 590m south west of the application site along Carno Road, and runs to Machynlleth via Llanidloes and Staylitttle. Caersws Railway Station lies 750m south west which offers direct journeys to Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury whereby further journeys beyond can be obtained. The nearest bus stop lies only a 9-minute walk from the application site (opposite the Buck Inn). The site is therefore accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and has good connectivity to surrounding towns and villages.

Surroundings

- 2.11 The site is immediately adjoined by residential dwellings to the south and south west, with Plas Maldwyn residential apartments and its gardens located to the east, albeit intercepted by an access road directly off Ty Gwyn Road. Beyond Plas Maldwyn and Ty Gwyn Road to the south east runs the River Severn which meanders through the low lying agricultural fields which lie south of the main village of Caersws. To the west and north west of the application site lies Caersws Community Primary School and associated playing field. Beyond here, and to the north of the site, are low lying agricultural fields, of which make up the rural character of the village of Caersws and beyond.
- 2.12 As aforementioned, Caersws Community Primary School lies adjacent to the site along its northwestern boundary. Caersws Village Club is located 500m south west of the application site, and a Costcutter Supermarket lies only 100m further. A number of other community uses exist within close proximity of the site including Caersws Post Office, numerous restaurants and public houses, and the Caersws Recreation Ground which is the home ground of Caersws F.C. A number of large, public open and play spaces are also situated within the village. 'Large Villages' including Carno to the north west, and Llandinam to the south west lie within a 6-mile radius of the application site, both of which are accessible by bus.

Planning Context

Planning History

- 3.1 A full planning application for the site was approved in June 2002 which permitted the construction of 24 houses to the West of Plas Maldwyn in combination with a neighbouring area of development to the East. A portion of the East development has already commenced, hence the extant status of the permission. Whilst the intention to implement this extant permission was explored, it was not considered to be appropriate particularly in regards to its adaptability to the Welsh Design Quality Requirements and effectiveness in terms of sustainable low energy design.

Pre-Application Consultation

- 3.2 In accordance with Part 1A of ‘The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedures) (Wales) (Amended) Order 2016’ (DMPO 2016), all major developments are required to be subject of pre-application consultation, prior to the Planning Application being validated by the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.3 Accordingly, a Pre-Application Consultation was held between the 14th of December 2023 to the 11th of January 2024, where all statutory, community and ‘other’ consultees are invited to view the submission package and provide their comments. Further details on the PAC process and comments are to be provided within the accompanying PAC Report and any alterations to the scheme, as a result of this consultation, is included within the Design and Access Statement.

SAB Pre-App

- 3.4 At the time of preparing this statement initial discussions with the SAB engineer have been undertaken, however, no official pre-application submission has been made. Through the process of these discussions and subsequent site investigation the SuDs design will be further developed and established.

Proposed Development

Amount, Scale and Layout

- 4.1 The planning application seeks full planning permission for residential development involving the construction of 22 dwellings, along with access, landscaping and associated works. The proposed residential accommodation comprises the following mix of accommodation;

Property types	Quantity
2 Bed 4 Person	13
3 Bed 5 Person	9
Total	22

- 4.2 The applicant has identified a local need for a mix of 2 and 3 bed quality affordable and mixed tenure housing. It is therefore sought to develop the site to provide a mix of housing types, including short terraces and semi-detached properties over 2-storeys, to provide a total of 22 dwellings as identified above, along with associated access, parking and landscaping.
- 4.3 The layout consists of an appropriate density proportionate to the site area and has been carefully designed to ensure the development remains rural in both scale and character. Residential units are appropriately spaced throughout the site area, with intervening courtyards and landscaping proposed to provide amenity benefits and to soften the built nature of the development. Such soft landscaping incorporates sustainable drainage measures.
- 4.4 In addition to the provision of private gardens serving each dwelling, the proposal involves a shared community garden located beyond terraces 1-14. This provides a place for shared play, safe pedestrian routes and direct access to nature through green corridors across the site. Further details are set out in the accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement.
- 4.5 Furthermore, it is proposed to retain the existing Oak tree canopy located within this area and propose further planting within the site boundary. Such green infrastructure and areas of vegetation will be a valuable amenity and leisure area for residents, with plentiful trees and landscape features which will contribute greatly to the residents' enjoyment of the site as well as to their overall health and well-being. Such proposals are deemed to be a significant positive enhancement to this currently poorly maintained site.

Appearance and Materials

- 4.6 Having taken consideration of the local vernacular, the material palette utilized within the scheme comprises the following:
- Grey/Black mixed and Red bricks
 - Combination of hit and miss brickwork for bin stores to the front of the 2 bed units, providing secure yet well ventilated storage, hiding refuse out of site but with easy access to roadside. This brick work will continue into the landscaping and garden boundary walls to provide a sense of transparency and connection to the green amenity spaces.
 - Textured and decorative brick work; in reference to the local vernacular areas within recessed porches and on the rear garden elevations will have a mix of patterns within the masonry.
 - Datum line; tracing around the terraces to demarcate entrance spaces and linking the built form through wrapping garden walls.
 - PPC aluminium copings, window and door frames, fascias, soffits, dry verges and detailing will enable a contemporary aesthetic to balance the use of more traditional material palette.
- 4.7 The proposal seeks to achieve a high standard of design, with careful consideration given to detailing and materiality in keeping with the character of the local area, whilst making every effort to ensure high standards of energy efficiency and low carbon consumption. The development would ensure improved access to natural light and solar gain through the provision of carefully situated openings and orientated living spaces. The proposal is designed to deliver homes compliant with the Design Quality Requirements 2021 and Life Homes, and dwellings would be constructed to a Passivhaus Standard, combining a high-performance fabric with non-fossil fuel energy sources whilst seeking low embodied carbon construction solutions.

Sustainability

- 4.8 The proposed development seeks to achieve environmental sustainability through reducing construction impacts and operational energy. These will be addressed via the following efforts:
- Materials, systems and skills to be sourced locally as far as realistically possible. The construction approach will be significantly focused on the use of timber and offsite construction methods;
 - Low carbon construction materials and systems will be utilised;
 - Careful consideration is to be given to material performance during technical design, construction, in use and at the end of life. Materials to be used will be durable within the proposed context, to ensure no loss of building performance throughout the building's life;
 - Reduce the amount of energy used by the buildings;
 - Maximise the free gains that are available to the site. This includes the careful placement of habitable rooms and openings to maximise the potential of useful solar heat gains;

- Maximise the opportunities for natural daylighting and where necessary artificial lighting is required, this is provided by low energy systems;
- A 'fabric first' approach will be adopted which prioritises a high performance fabric incorporating high levels of insulation;
- A compact plan, building form and careful placement of openings will look to maximise the efficiency of the external fabric, and the principles of fabric performance will form the basis of the specification of the proposed development going forward;
- Implement solar panels and/or solar hot water.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

4.9 The introduction and enhancement of this green infrastructure network on site helps to minimise visual dominance of the built form and car parking, and creates a clear sense of place through green corridors, shared community gardens and public amenity spaces which further nurtures community engagement, supporting mental wellbeing of future residents.

Access and Parking

4.10 The proposal includes the improvements to the existing access road to enable it to become an adopted highway which will continue into the proposed development site. The proposed access has been designed in accordance with manual for Streets and national guidance published by the Welsh Government. The proposed improvements include the update to the existing route from the main Ty Gwyn Road towards the site and create a safe and easy to navigate highway into and throughout the development. The proposal seeks to ensure adequate vehicular and pedestrian facilities are provided with pedestrian footpaths within the development along an adopted highway of 5.5m, providing crossing points ensuring inclusive access across the site.

4.11 The road pattern internally to the site will follow the basic principles of a traditional estate road and a suitable turning head will be provided to allow all vehicles using the site to enter and leave in a forward gear, which will assist refuse and emergency vehicles to access the site, as well as for adequate manoeuvring. Please see the accompanying highway engineers' drawings for further detail in this regard.

4.12 A new public footpath is proposed into the site which connects pedestrians to the existing public right of way that lies adjacent the site's western boundary. This access will provide part of a green amenity space and allow pedestrians to avoid travelling on the main B4569 to access local facilities such as the nearby school. In turn, this ensures through permeability with the existing built form in the interest of good place making.

4.13 In line with the CSS Wales Parking Standards (2008), a total of 1 parking space is required per bed, up to a maximum of 3 spaces. In addition, visitor parking will be accommodated within the adopted carriageway. Accordingly, the site is able to accommodate the required provision of parking, as indicated on the supporting site layout plan. The parking spaces are located in close relation to each respective dwellinghouse to ensure safe and convenient access for future occupiers.

Waste Management

4.14 Refuse and recycling storage is provided at the front of houses in lockable stores or within larger rear gardens. Collection points for each of the private parking courts have been provided.

Planning policy context

Introduction

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this Planning Application comprises the following:

- National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (February, 2021);
- The Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026) (Adopted April 2018).

5.2 In addition to the Development Plan, the Planning Application has been informed by policy and guidance set out in the following:

- Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February, 2021), informed by The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and supplemented by Technical Advice Notes;
- Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures (July, 2020);
- Powys County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

5.3 This section of the Planning Statement provides an overview of the Development Plan context and planning policy framework of specific relevance to the determination of this application. For ease of reference, this overview is set out below at the national and local level.

National Level

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

5.4 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (which came into force on 1st April 2016) requires “*public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle*”. The Act sets out seven ‘well-being’ goals as follows:

• *A prosperous Wales: An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.*

• *A resilient Wales: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).*

- *A healthier Wales: A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
- *A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).*
- *A Wales of cohesive communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.*
- *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.*
- *A globally responsive Wales: A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.*

5.5 Within the Act, sustainable development is defined as follows: “the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals”. The Act sets out that when making decisions, public bodies need to take into account the impact they could have on people living in Wales in the future and must apply the sustainable development principle in all decisions.



5.6 **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040** Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 was adopted in February 2021 and replaces the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP) and provides a framework for the future spatial development of Wales. Future Wales comprises the first development plan of its kind within Wales. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and

climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

- 5.7 Future Wales sets out its overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales by means of 11 Outcomes. As set out on Page 52 of Future Wales, the 11 Outcomes are collectively a statement of where the Welsh Government aspire Wales to be in 20 years' time, as follows:

A Wales where people live:

- 1. ...and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places*
- 2. ...in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services*
- 3. ...in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth*
- 4. ...in places with a thriving Welsh Language*
- 5. ...and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth*
- 6. ...in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted*
- 7. ...in places where travel is sustainable*
- 8. ...in places with world-class digital infrastructure*
- 9. ...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution*
- 10. ...in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems*
- 11. ...in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient*

- 5.8 On urban growth, Policy 2 of Future Wales states:

"The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure.

Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:

- creating a rich mix of uses;*
- providing a variety of housing types and tenures;*
- building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other;*
- increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities;*
- establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development;*
- promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and*
- integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority's Green Infrastructure Assessment.*

Housing

- 5.9 It is stated at Page 73 of Future Wales that *“the planning system has a long-established role in the delivery of affordable housing. We are committed to ensuring that new housing meets the needs of all members of society especially those unable to afford to buy on the open market. Echoing the strategic placemaking principles in policy 2, sustainable places are inclusive and welcoming to all; they do not exclude sections of the community or create ghettos of the affluent and the poor”*
- 5.10 Policy 7 is of key relevance in regard to the delivery of affordable housing, which states the following:

“The Welsh Government will increase delivery of affordable homes by ensuring that funding for these homes is effectively allocated and utilised. Through their Strategic and Local Development Plans planning authorities should develop strong evidence based policy frameworks to deliver affordable housing, including setting development plan targets based on regional estimates of housing need and local assessments. In response to local and regional needs, planning authorities should identify sites for affordable housing led developments and explore all opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing.”

Placemaking

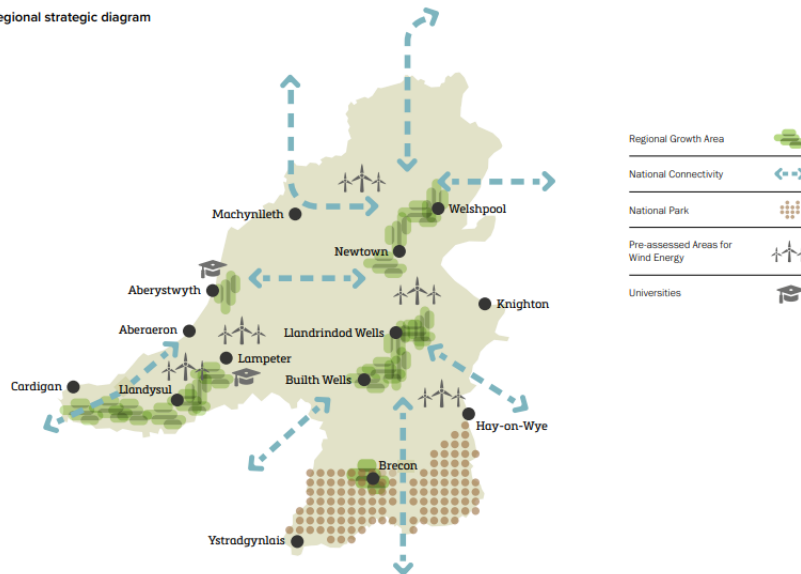
- 5.11 Placemaking forms a key concept upon which many national planning policies are based. It is set out at Page 65 of Future Wales that *“Placemaking is at the heart of the planning system in Wales and this policy establishes a strategic placemaking approach and principles to support planning authorities to shape urban growth and regeneration”*.

Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 5.12 It is identified at Page 76 that the strategic focus of Future Wales on urban growth requires *“an increased emphasis on biodiversity enhancement (net benefit) in order to ensure that growth is sustainable”*
- 5.13 In addition, the associated importance of green infrastructure is highlighted: *“As the population of Wales becomes increasingly urban, the opportunity to optimise well-being benefits from green infrastructure will be greatest in and around these areas. Innovative use of nature-based solutions and integrating green infrastructure in and around urban areas can help restore natural features and processes into cities and landscapes. Providing locally accessible, high quality green spaces and corridors helps to maintain and enhance the strategic functioning of our natural resources and ecological networks and address physical and mental well-being” (page 78).*

- 5.14 Policy 9 of Future Wales is of key relevance in regard to green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement, which states the following:
- To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:*
- identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and*
 - identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.*
- 5.15 In respect of climate change, Future Wales confirms that:
- “It is vital that we reduce our emissions to protect our own well-being and to demonstrate our global responsibility. Future Wales, together with Planning Policy Wales will ensure the planning system focuses on delivering a decarbonised and resilient Wales through the places we create, the energy we generate, the natural resources and materials we use, and how we live and travel.”*
- 5.16 Future Wales divides Wales into four regions, North, Mid Wales, The South West and The South East. The Mid Wales region comprises Ceredigion, Powys and the majority of the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is Wales’ most rural region and is home to 205,000 people. Future Wales also sets out a vision for different areas of Wales. Caersws, is identified as being within a Regional Growth Area which is an area deemed to grow, develop and offer a variety of public and commercial services at regional scale. The extent of the Mid Wales region is illustrated in the regional strategic diagram below:

Regional strategic diagram



5.17 Whilst it is highlighted that cities and large towns will be the main development areas, Future Wales does acknowledge the importance of development in rural locations, and emphasises that such development in rural towns and villages *“should be of appropriate scale and support local aspirations and need.”* It further stresses the need to reduce dependence on the private motor vehicle, and to support a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. However, the Welsh Government recognises that *“travel by car may be the only realistic mode of travel for some, especially in remote areas.”*

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

5.18 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 (February 2024) is the principal document which sets out the land use policy context of the Welsh Government. Its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system itself contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development whilst improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and other pertinent legislation.

5.19 The planning system is central to achieving sustainable development in Wales. It provides the legislative and policy framework to manage the use and development of land in the public interest which is consistent with key sustainability principles.

5.20 Sustainable development is defined at Page 7 of PPW as follows: *“the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals”*. Paragraph 1.18 sets out that *“Legislation secures a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise to ensure that social, economic, cultural and environmental issues are balanced and integrated”*.

Placemaking

- 5.21 In accordance with the National Development Framework, placemaking is also at the heart of PPW – Paragraph 2.1 for example states that *“Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking in both plan making and development management decisions in order to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities”*.
- 5.22 It is summarised succinctly at Paragraph 2.3 that *“The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all”*.

Good Design

- 5.23 The importance of good design in development proposals is highlighted at Paragraph 3.3 of PPW where it is stated that *“Good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. Design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places. To achieve sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, economic, environmental, cultural aspects of the development, including how space is used, how buildings and the public realm support this use, as well as its construction, operation, management, and its relationship with the surrounding area”*.
- 5.24 In addition, it is highlighted that good design promotes environmental sustainability and contributes to the achievement of the well-being goals - Paragraph 3.7 states for example that *“Developments should seek to maximise energy efficiency and the efficient use of other resources (including land), maximise sustainable movement, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, encourage decarbonisation and prevent the generation of waste and pollution”*.
- 5.25 The importance of good design in term of ensuring high environmental quality is set out at Paragraph 3.8: *“Landscape and green infrastructure considerations are an integral part of the design process. Integrating green infrastructure is not limited to focusing on landscape and ecology, rather, consideration should be given to all features of the natural environment and how these function together to contribute toward the quality of places”*.
- 5.26 PPW also states that planning authorities should aim to *“promote the re-use of previously developed, vacant and underused land.”*

Green Infrastructure

- 5.27 The importance of green infrastructure is highlighted throughout PPW. It is summarised at Paragraph 6.2.5 that *“The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places”*.
- 5.28 The updated Chapter 6 of PPW (Distinctive and Natural Places) is duly noted, which came into immediate effect when it was published in October 2023. Section 6.2.5 has been updated to require the submission of a green infrastructure statement with all planning applications. It states, *“This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.21) has been applied.”* Furthermore, sections 6.4.2, 6.4.5 and 6.4.21 have been updated to strengthen reference and clarification regarding the requirement to maintain, enhance and deliver a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Heritage

- 5.29 The importance of The Historic Environment is emphasised through paragraph 6.15 which states, *“The historic environment is a finite, non-renewable and shared resource and a vital and integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales. It contributes to economic vitality and culture, civic pride, local distinctiveness and the quality of Welsh life. The historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved.”*
- 5.30 There is a requirement to *“safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved.”*

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

- 5.31 PPW is supplemented by a series of topic specific Technical Advice Notes (TANs) including the following:

Technical Advice Note 2 (2006): Planning and Affordable Housing

- 5.32 TAN 2 provides advice and guidance on Planning and Affordable Housing. It states the importance of the role of the local authority in setting a target for affordable housing based on Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMA). Furthermore, the importance of

carefully assessing whether the size and tenure of affordable housing reflects the identified need is emphasised.

- 5.33 Paragraph 11 refers to the design of affordable housing. Here, Planning Policy Wales' design objectives are highlighted as ones which *'apply equally to market housing and to affordable housing, the overriding principle being to establish a sense of place and community'*.

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

- 5.34 TAN 5 provides advice on *"how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation."*
- 5.35 Paragraph 1.5.1 notes how *"Biodiversity is important in its own right and essential to maintain the life support systems that allow life, including human life, to exist on the planet. Wildlife and its habitats are of fundamental importance to our future well-being and prosperity because a rich and diverse environment supports a long-term sustainable economy and contributes to a healthier and happier society."*

Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

- 5.36 TAN 6 emphasises the role that the planning system has to play in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities. It stresses the importance of making sufficient land available to provide homes and employment opportunities for local people, helping to sustain rural services.

Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)

- 5.37 In defining the notion of design, paragraph 2.1 states that it can help in articulating our nation and culture whilst helping in sustaining a positive image of Wales.
- 5.38 Paragraph 2.5 warns that 'good design is not inevitable', in order to achieve it, it must embrace sustainability, architecture, place making, public realm, landscape, and infrastructure. Furthermore, the five objectives of good design are highlighted;
- Access;
 - Character;
 - Community Safety;
 - Environmental Sustainability; and
 - Movement.

Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007)

- 5.39 TAN 18 confirms that integration of land use planning and development of transport infrastructure has a key role to play in addressing the environmental aspects of sustainable development.

Paragraph 2.4 indicates that by influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses and new development, land use planning can help to reduce the need to travel and length of journeys, whilst making it easier for people to walk, cycle or use public transport.

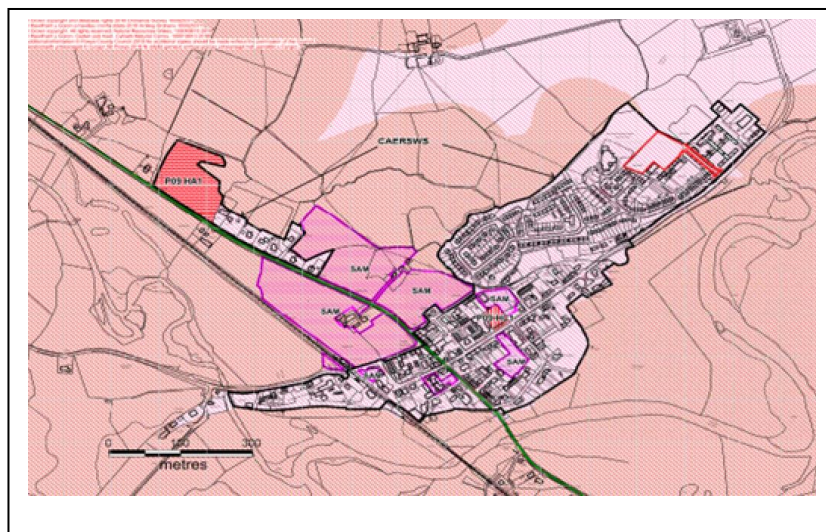
- 5.40 In rural areas, it is acknowledged that the car is important for accessibility and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. In terms of car parking, it highlights that *“Rural centres are likely to have different parking requirements than urban areas due to a greater reliance on car travel and this may be reflected in parking policy depending on the evidence used to inform the regional parking strategy.”*

Technical Advice Note 24 (2017): The Historic Environment

- 5.41 TAN 24 highlights the importance of our historic environment and the role that the planning system has to play in protecting such assets. In particular, it states that listed buildings are nationally important assets which represent a unique source of information about the past and make a valuable contribution to the quality and character of Welsh landscapes and townscapes.

Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026)

- 5.42 Powys County Council Local Development Plan was adopted in April 2018 and is the prevailing development plan for the county of Powys. As such, it is a material consideration for planning applications within Powys.
- 5.43 As shown below, The Powys County Council Local Development Plan Proposals Map indicates that the site is included within the defined settlement boundary for Caersws.



- 5.44 In light of the above, the following Local Development Plan policies are considered relevant in the context of the proposed development:

Policy	Title
Strategic Policies	
SP1	Housing Growth
SP3	Affordable Housing Target
SP5	Settlement Hierarchy
SP6	Distribution of Growth across the Settlement Hierarchy
SP7	Safeguarding of Strategic Resources and Assets
Development Management Policies	
DM1	Planning Obligations
DM2	The Natural Environment
DM3	Public Open Space
DM4	Landscape
DM6	Flood Prevention Measures and Land Drainage
DM7	Dark Skies and External Lighting
DM13	Design and Resources
DM15	Waste Within Developments
Transport	
T1	Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure
Housing	
H1	Housing Development Proposals
H3	Housing Delivery
H4	Housing Density
H5	Affordable Housing Contributions

5.45 Policy SP3 – Affordable Housing Target specifies the identified target for provision of affordable housing over the period 2011-2026. The policy states:

“The LDP will seek to provide 952 affordable dwellings through the following measures:

- 1. Setting thresholds and targets requiring housing development to contribute to affordable housing provision in accordance with Policy H5; and*
- 2. Providing a framework for determining affordable housing exception sites in accordance with Policies H1 and H6. The provision of affordable housing will be controlled to ensure that dwellings remain affordable and available to those in local need in perpetuity.”*

5.46 Given the site’s location within the defined Large Village of Caersws, Policy H1 is pertinent. This states:

“In accordance with Strategic Policies SP1, SP3, SP5 and SP6, housing development proposals must comply with the following site criteria:

- 1. In Towns and Large Villages:*
 - i. On sites allocated for housing and other suitable sites within the development boundary.*

ii. On sites forming logical extensions outside development boundaries for affordable housing in accordance with Policy H5.”

5.47 Policy H3 relates to the delivery of residential developments, and advises:

“Housing development proposals must be of an appropriate scale and shall:

i. Provide a suitable mix of housing types to meet the range of identified local housing needs.

ii. Be phased if appropriate to reflect the context of the development and mitigate its impact on the local community.

5.48 Policy H4 is also of relevance as it is specific to housing density. It advises that for sites within towns and large villages, a housing density delivery of 27+ units per hectare should be achieved.

5.49 Policy H5 – Affordable Housing Contributions states:

“Housing development proposals will be required to make contributions towards affordable housing in accordance with the following criteria:

1. A contribution will be required from open market housing development proposals of 5 or more dwelling units or on sites of 0.25 ha and above.

2. The target contributions required for each a sub-market area are as follows:

i. Central Powys – 30% contribution.

ii. Severn Valley – 20% contribution.

iii. North Powys - 10% contribution.

iv. South West/Powys – 0% contribution.

The above target contributions will be kept under review in order to reflect changes in viability. Any amendments made to the target contributions as a result of this review will be confirmed through the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance.”

5.50 Policy DM6 ‘Flood Prevention Measures and Land Drainage’ states that development proposals must avoid unnecessary flood risk by assessing the implications of development within areas of flood risk. This includes improving areas for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other mitigation features, and introducing flood protection and defence features where required.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.51 The following Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) adopted by Powys County Council is of relevance to the proposed development:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Affordable Housing SPG (Adopted October 2018)

- Residential Design SPG (Adopted January 2020)
- CSS Wales Parking Standards. (Adopted January 2016)
- Planning Obligations.

Appraisal

Overview

6.1 The previous section identified the relevant planning policies which must be taken into account when considering the planning application. Accordingly, this section serves as an appraisal of the proposed development against the established policy framework and other material considerations, as well as drawing together the key points and conclusions from the plans and supporting technical documents in order to demonstrate the overall appropriateness of the proposal in planning terms.

6.2 The key issues identified and material considerations of relevance in the determination of the application are as follows:

- The **principle of development** in terms of development plan policy and other planning context;
- The impact of the development on the **residential amenity of surrounding properties**;
- The impact of the development on the **character and appearance of the surrounding area**;
- The impact of the development on the **local highway network**;
- The impact of the development on **heritage assets**;
- Other **material considerations**.

The principle of the development in terms of development plan policy and other planning context

6.3 The application site is located within the settlement boundary for Caersws within which the principle of development is established as acceptable, subject to compliance with all other material considerations. The site is considered a brownfield, previously developed parcel; the development at such sites of which is strongly supported by planning policy at all levels, as identified above. PPW specifically states that *"previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development."* Accordingly, the redevelopment of the site would allow for new attractive residential dwellings to be constructed that would replace currently vacant and overgrown land, creating a positive extension to the existing adjacent residential sites, as well as a regeneration benefit to the site and surrounding area.

6.4 Whilst Caersws is acknowledged as being a rural locality, it is identified within Powys' LDP as being a 'Large Village' where development in such locations is promoted. Strategic Policy SP5 (Settlement Hierarchy) places Large Villages in the second highest tier settlement, just below 'Towns'. The LDP states that development outside of the main towns and large villages is closely controlled, which ensures that the higher tier settlements within the County,

including Large Villages, remain as focus for housing, employment and services, contributing to their vitality and promoting vibrant and sustainable communities. Strategic Policy SP6 (Distribution of Growth across the Settlement Hierarchy) states that a significant proportion of new housing development required will be directed to Large Villages. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed residential development would align with the Powys LDP in this respect which identifies Caersws as a key settlement and an appropriate location for housing development, with good connectivity to surrounding towns.

6.5 Planning Policy Wales advocates residential development on sites within sustainable locations within close proximity to local facilities and public transport nodes. Within Powys' LDP, it states that growth is focussed upon towns and large villages through LDP land allocations and the designation of development boundaries, and these are noted as being the locations with the greatest range of facilities and services. The site lies in close proximity to Caersws Railway Station and bus stops which provide services to nearby towns and villages, and beyond. Furthermore, local facilities located within the centre of Caersws are within reasonable walking distances and thus future residents of the development would not be reliant on a car to access essential day-to-day services. Therefore, the site lies in a sustainable location which is reflected by its designation in the LDP as a 'Large Village', in accordance with the aforementioned PPW guidance.

6.6 Policy H1 (Housing Development Proposals) states that [relevant part only]

"...housing development proposals will only be permitted:

1. In Towns and Large Villages:
 - i) On sites allocated for housing or on other suitable sites within the development boundary;..."

Whilst the site is not specifically allocated for housing development, the site, as identified above, is located within the development boundary and is clearly a suitable site for such a development, given its brownfield and vacant status, its allocation as a 'Large Village', its sustainable location, and given that it already lies adjacent to a predominantly residential site, thus forming an extension of this. Furthermore, the extant permission relating to the site demonstrates that the principle of developing the site for residential purposes has already been firmly established.

6.7 On the matter of affordable housing, Policy H5 confirms that the overall affordable housing requirement for this site would be a 10% provision. Accordingly, the scheme proposes 3 affordable dwellings which would meet the criteria set out within policy H5 and would make a modest contribution to the delivery of affordable housing in the County Borough, in accordance with the requirements of LDP

Policies H5 and SP3 of the LDP, as well as Policy 7 (Delivering Affordable Homes) of Future Wales.

- 6.8 Given the assessment undertaken above, it is considered that the principle of residential development is firmly established at this location. Proposals are considered in accordance with PPW 12th edition, the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act as well as LDP policies such as SP3, SP5, SP6, H4 and H5, as noted above.

The impact of the development on the residential amenity of surrounding properties

- 6.9 Policy DM13 of the LDP states that proposals will only be permitted where (amongst other things):

- *the amenities enjoyed by the occupants or users of nearby or proposed properties shall not be unacceptably affected by levels of noise, dust, air pollution, litter, odour, hours of operation, overlooking or any other planning matter.*

The Residential Design SPG states that the design standards in the householder section in respect of the amenity, privacy and overlooking criteria should be applied to all proposed housing development. It is considered that the proposed layout and orientation of dwellings has been carefully considered in order to ensure that the amenity of adjacent existing residents are not unduly harmed.

- 6.10 Existing residential properties lie to the west, south and east of the application site. Sufficient separation distances are in place between the proposed dwellings and existing residential properties. In some cases, a highway separates proposed and existing dwellings, and habitable room window openings are carefully positioned on proposed dwellings which are suitably orientated to avoid direct overlooking into neighbouring existing properties. Side-side and side-rear relationships are achieved wherever possible to minimise direct facing between properties. Furthermore, the scale of the proposed dwellings is considered appropriate and sympathetic of the surrounding area and properties are adequately set off neighbouring boundaries. As such, it is not considered to cause an overbearing impact to existing residents nearby.

- 6.11 Given the position of the proposed dwellings in relation to existing residential properties, along with their scale and the separation distances in place, it is not considered that they would cause a detrimental loss of light to existing residents. The application site lies largely to the north of the existing residential cluster, which means any development in this location would not cause harmful overshadowing to existing dwellings.

- 6.12 Within the development itself, the relationships between the proposed units are considered acceptable and well-considered in order to secure a good level of residential amenity for future residents of the development. Sufficient separation distances are in place and properties are well-oriented to avoid overlooking. The site is appropriately set back from the main road to the south east, which ensures minimal noise impacts in this respect. Furthermore, the proposed dwellings and the surrounding site are considered to offer its future occupants' reasonable levels of natural light, perceived space, ventilation, privacy, outdoor amenity space, parking, cycle storage, and refuse storage.
- 6.13 In conclusion, it is considered that residential amenity within and adjacent to the site can be considered acceptable with the retention of residential amenity considered to be of paramount importance. Proposals are considered to be in accordance with PPW 12th Edition, the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act as well as LDP policies such as DM13 and SPG Residential Design.

The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

- 6.14 Policy DM13 (Design and Resources) is fundamental to the assessment of the development's overall design and impact on the character of the surrounding area. It states, "*Development proposals must be able to demonstrate a good quality design and shall have regard to the qualities and amenity of the surrounding area, local infrastructure and resources.*" Development should complement and/or enhance the character of the surrounding area in terms of siting, appearance, integration, scale, height, massing and design detailing, and should contribute towards the preservation of local distinctiveness and sense of place. The layout of development should create attractive, safe places, which support community safety and crime prevention and should incorporate adequate amenity land, together with appropriate landscaping and planting. Public rights of way networks or other recreation assets must be enhanced and integrated within the layout of the development proposal.
- 6.15 As established, the site is located within the defined settlement boundary for Caersws, within an established residential area. As such, the proposed residential development is considered appropriate in this setting and the resulting use of the site would conform to its surrounding uses.
- 6.16 The proposal comprises 22no. units on a developable area that measures 0.67ha which would equate to a housing density of 32 dwellings per hectare. This is in line with the density guidelines set out in Policy H4 (Housing Density) of Powys LDP which requires 27+ dwelling per hectare in Large Villages. It is considered that the proposed density is therefore appropriate, and would contribute

towards the housing growth requirement as identified in Strategic Policy SP1 of the LDP (Housing Growth).

- 6.17 Due consideration has been given to the materiality and detailing of the immediate and wider site context. This is explored in further detail in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 6.18 Proposals are contemporary in nature; finishing materials proposed are of high quality and are considered appropriate within the surrounding context. The dwellings are all to be designed to a Passivhaus standard. Whilst comprising of a generally simple design, constructed of gable ended roof construction, finishing materials bring together a more contemporary appearance whilst ensuring they relate well to the local vernacular. The design of the scheme ensures a clear distinction between the newly proposed dwellings and the existing established residential properties in situ, without creating such a distinction that creates an obtrusive or incongruous form of development. Careful consideration has been given to ensure a contemporary and modern design which pays attention to the local vernacular and distinctive character of Caersws. The overall appearance of the scheme has been consciously selected in order to introduce a high quality; modern design as seen in the accompanying elevation plans. Furthermore, the development has regard to 'Secured by Design' principles, in line with Policy DM13, the layout of the development creates *"attractive, safe places, supporting community safety and crime prevention."*
- 6.19 Sympathetic boundary treatments are proposed. The use of these boundary treatments is consistent throughout the development site, as is their proposed heights, ensuring continuity and a harmonious form of development. New boundary treatments would not obstruct views of the house from the street, and would not visually dominate the street scene.
- 6.20 The site layout has been developed with communities at the forefront. Notable Green Infrastructure is proposed on site, which will be for use by the wider community. This is in line with the aspirations outlined within the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPG. The existing mature Oak tree along the north western boundary is to be retained, which will add further value to the site on top of proposed landscaping given its long-established status. In line with Policy DM13, the development *"incorporates adequate amenity land, together with appropriate landscaping and planting"*. The layout seeks to integrate prospective residents with surrounding land uses, both existing and proposed, and implements footpath links within the site which also connect to the wider surrounding vicinity, ensuring a well-connected form of development, in the interests of good placemaking. For example, a public footpath is proposed within the site which will be connected to the existing Public Right of Way that lies adjacent to the western boundary of the site. This complies with

criterion 9 of Policy DM13 which seeks to ensure that the PROW network is enhanced and integrated within the layout of the development proposal. A community street garden and a shared garden amenity space is proposed between, and to the north of plots 1-14. The layout as proposed will therefore foster activity and interaction between existing and prospective occupiers and facilities and creates a vibrant and dynamic environment where people can thrive. It is therefore considered that the proposal incorporates the principles of 'Good Design' as noted in paragraph 3.3 of PPW.

- 6.21 A review of the residential developments which abut the site comprises largely of 2 storey terraced and semi-detached properties, although higher storey elements do lie within the vicinity including Plas Maldwyn apartments, as well as some bungalows in lesser numbers. Based on the surrounding context, the scale of the proposed dwellings is considered to be in keeping with that of surrounding properties.
- 6.22 Ultimately, it is considered that proposals will not negatively impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would make use of a vacant brownfield space and introduce a development that is appropriate within its residential context. The proposal seeks to offer a positive enhancement of the village of Caersws, and an improvement on the extant consent. It aims to achieve a high standard of design, which ensures detailing and materiality is in keeping with the character of the local area, whilst securing high standards of energy efficiency and low carbon consumption. Indeed, it is considered that the proposals will positively contribute to the surrounding character and appearance whilst complying with PPW 12th Edition, the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, TAN 12 (Design) and LDP policies such as DM13 (Design and Resources) and the Residential Design SPG.

Impact of the development on the local highway network

- 6.23 Part 10 of Policy DM13 (Design and Resources) states that the development must be *"designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transport network – journey times, resilience and efficient operation – whilst ensuring that highway safety for all transport users is not detrimentally impacted upon."* It further states that, *"Development proposals should meet all highway access requirements, (for all transport users), vehicular parking standards and demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network or that traffic impacts can be managed to acceptable levels to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts from the development."*
- 6.24 The existing site currently has no highway within the site or a provision for pedestrians or vehicles to navigate around it. The proposed scheme looks to provide a new safe highway access from

the classified road in to the site, with provision made for the turning of refuse and emergency vehicles, in accordance with local and national guidance. It would also allow pedestrian movement via a new public footpath which adjoins the public right of way to the western boundary of the site. This encourages movements by foot, cycle and provides easy access to nearby public transport facilities. In any case, the local environment allows for everyday movements for various purposes to be carried out without the requirement of a local car.

- 6.25 Furthermore, the proposed development is not anticipated to generate large scale vehicular movements which would have a material impact on the operation or safety of the local highway network.
- 6.26 The parking provision is also considered to be acceptable due to it meeting CSS Wales Parking Standards. The development can meet the requirements and provide visitor parking on-site given the 5.5m wide carriageway which allows for this.
- 6.27 Given the above assessment, the proposed development is deemed in accordance with the aforementioned policies, including PPW 12th edition, the aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, CSS Wales Parking Standards, and LDP Policy DM13 (Design and Resources).

The impact of the development on heritage assets

- 6.28 Whilst the development would not intrinsically harm the setting of the adjacent Plas Maldwyn Listed Building given its scale, set back, and given that the Former Workhouse has been converted to residential purposes, an assessment of Policy SP7 is undertaken below in any case to acknowledge this.
- 6.29 Policy SP7 of the Powys LDP seeks to safeguard strategic resources and assets by ensuring development proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the resource asset and its operation. The following strategic resources and assets are of relevance to this proposed development;
- Caersws Basin (ref. HLW (P) 5) Registered Historic Landscape;
 - Plas Maldwyn Grade II Listed Building (ref. 16184);
 - Public Right of Way located along the western site boundary.

An assessment of the development's impact upon each of the strategic resources and assets listed above, is given below, in their turn.

- 6.30 Caersws Basin Registered Historic Landscape
The site lies within Caersws Basin. Historic villages, farms, roads and fields are integral parts of this landscape. Evidence remains of

prehistoric and iron age settlements as well as significant links to Roman occupation. The proposed development would utilise a disused, unmanaged brownfield site which currently does not contribute to the Registered Historic Landscape in which it is situated. With due consideration given to the surrounding local distinctiveness and character of the RHL, it is considered that the proposed development has been carefully designed to enhance the visual appearance of this site, in turn, contributing to the quality of this strategic resource.

6.31 Plas Maldwyn Grade II Listed Building

The proposed development has been designed to be consistent with the forms and rhythm of the long rectangular wings, prominent gables and mix of materials and brickwork used within the neighbouring Plas Maldwyn. The hierarchy of the design, which becomes more modest and repetitive towards the subservient wings of the former workhouse, is reflected in the planning and expression of the more south westerly terraces in this proposal. The development appears subordinate to the neighbouring Plas Maldwyn, and largely lies out of its sight lines. Given its set back and intervening built form, the development is also not highly visible from the fronting main road, which ensures that Plas Maldwyn remains the prominent feature in this particular location. As such, it is considered that the development has been designed to complement this heritage asset and protect its setting, by utilising an existing unmanaged and formerly disused site and through a sensitive design approach.

6.32 Public Right of Way

Whilst the PROW is not a heritage feature, it is a strategic asset which lies adjacent to the site, and for completeness, will be assessed against Policy SP7 as above. The proposed development does not involve the diversion of the PROW but instead, proposes a public footpath within the site boundary which would directly connect to the existing PROW, securing good connectivity with the network.

6.33 The proposed development has therefore been carefully designed with due consideration given to surrounding heritage and strategic assets and resources. The development would provide much needed housing without causing detriment to Powys' range of valued assets and resources, in line with LDP Policy SP7, and the requirements of PPW 12th edition and TAN 24.

The impact of the development on Green Infrastructure and Ecology

6.34 Policy DM2 of the LDP states that, *"development proposals shall demonstrate how they protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests including improving the resilience of biodiversity through the enhanced connectivity of habitats within, and beyond the site."* Accordingly, an Ecological Appraisal and

Arboricultural survey has been undertaken, and a Green Infrastructure Statement prepared, addressing such matters.

- 6.35 The Ecological Appraisal prepared by Ben Jones Ecology Ecological Services Ltd confirms that the site itself had no roosting potential for bats; however, the mature oak tree on the far side of the site boundary did have several cracks and bark damaged areas that would provide roost features for bats in the area. Consideration to a sensitive lighting strategy for nocturnal species such as bats will be required as per the mitigation recommendations in the accompanying Ecological Appraisal. Furthermore, integrated bat boxes will be installed into the dwellings, securing an enhancement of biodiversity value of the site.
- 6.36 The report confirms that the site showed no evidence of other protected mammals. However, in terms of enhancements, hedgehog friendly fencing will be installed within and around the development site, as well as permanent hedgehog nesting provision by means of purpose-built hedgehog domes.
- 6.37 The report confirms the presence of bird species on site such as blue tit, house sparrow, great tit and magpie. However, the developer will ensure no nesting birds will be impacted by the proposed development by cutting the trees and large vegetation to stumps outside of the nesting season and should a nesting bird be found, a 4m buffer will be left around the nest, and no further works carried out until the young have fledged and the nesting bird season has finished. A range of bird boxes will be installed.
- 6.38 The rubble and overgrowth on site provide good terrestrial shelter for amphibians in their terrestrial stage. Whilst the site had patches of open ground alongside scrub cover which might provide shelter and basking for reptiles, the site ecological survey did not uncover any reptiles. A working method statement is set out within the Ecological Appraisal which outlines how any harmful impacts to reptiles and amphibians will be eliminated from development and construction works. Enhancement measures include the construction of a hibernaculum situated away from human disturbance which will provide refuge for local fauna.
- 6.39 Furthermore, no evidence of invasive species was found on or around the site.
- 6.40 There are no designated sites within 1km zone of influence and it is not considered that there would be a negative impact on any designated area beyond here, given the scale of the proposed development. Whilst the development would result in the loss of scrubby habitat and successional weed growth on site, these do not represent habitats of principal importance listed in Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act (HMSO, 2016).

- 6.41 A key consideration identified in the ecological survey related to the single mature Oak tree located outside of but adjacent to the red line boundary of the site. The tree was initially observed in the ecological report to have significant rot and a cover over stability issues. An arboricultural survey was subsequently conducted and established healthy regrowth and noted the value of the tree to the setting, identifying it as a Category B tree determining an 18m root protection zone which provided a principal consideration for the site strategy.
- 6.42 The considered landscape proposal has identified and utilised existing features of the site, ensuring their preservation and enhancement in the new plans. The scheme creates new planting zones, establishing native hedgerows, integrating rainwater attenuation, and incorporating landscape elements that not only mitigate environmental impacts but elevate biodiversity and enhance the overall amenity value of the site.
- 6.43 With positive connections to nearby existing wildlife corridors the site is well positioned to support the local ecosystem through considered design decisions. The site landscape plan describes how the existing and proposed green infrastructure is integrated into the built form, including:
- Creation of new hedgerows and native species planting along site boundaries to improve ecological habitat on-site and beyond
 - Enhancement of existing natural features and ecological links beyond the site
 - Provision of bird and bat boxes within the built form and proposed new tress
 - Integration of hedgehog friendly fencing allowing movement between internal and external site boundaries
 - Attractive and healthy public amenity spaces planted with native species
 - Attenuation rain gardens with native plant mixes
 - Creation of a new footpath connecting green spaces and promoting accessibility
 - Permeable hard landscaping
 - Bat-friendly lighting scheme
 - A hibernaculum will be constructed on a site boundary away from human disturbance specifically designed to provide refuge for local fauna
- 6.44 The proposed planting layout provides a sense of place to the development alongside the rich wildlife habitats created, helping with orientation at key junctions and within the public amenity spaces. A mix of native trees and ornamental planting will be used across the site to break down the built form. The shared community spaces provide a place for shared play and direct access to nature and the green corridors across the site. The built form provides

- natural surveillance overlooking the private and community gardens, this creates safer pedestrian routes to private garden access.
- 6.45 The Oak tree is enhanced and acts as a focal point for the amenity spaces with all buildings located outside of the root protection area. The community gardens also provides an inclusive design with integrated areas for seating and planting with safe routes through for both wildlife and residents.
- 6.46 The green infrastructure helps the development to be prepared for impacts of Climate Change through integrations of SuDS strategy.
- 6.47 As such, it is clear that proposals will be in line with the requirements of PPW 12th edition, TAN 5, Environment (Wales) Act 2016, LDP policy DM2 (The Natural Environment) and the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPG.

Conclusion

- 7.1 Asbri Planning Limited has been instructed by MWP Developments to submit a full planning application for the construction of 22 homes, access, landscaping and associated works, at Plas Maldwyn, Caersws, Powys.
- 7.2 The site lies wholly within the settlement boundary for Caersws as defined by the adopted Powys County Council Local Development Plan (LDP). The site is currently vacant and is previously developed (brownfield) land. The principle of developing the site for residential purposes is fully established.
- 7.3 It is considered that the proposals comprise an appropriate use of the land whilst ensuring proposals assimilate with and enhance the surrounding built context. Proposals comprise an exciting opportunity to develop a vacant land parcel in a sustainable location.
- 7.4 The scale, form, massing, layout and design are considered to be appropriate to the local setting. In this respect, the development would positively contribute to the character of the site, especially given its current brownfield status, and would relate sympathetically to existing residential properties in the immediate vicinity. The development would enhance the local vernacular through use of complementary materials and appropriately scaled buildings, which give due consideration to local heritage assets and strategic resources.
- 7.5 Furthermore, the proposed development seeks to achieve environmental sustainability through reducing construction impacts and operational energy; low carbon construction materials and systems will be utilised and the design and construction will reduce the amount of energy used by the buildings.
- 7.6 A strong network of Green Infrastructure is proposed in the form of open spaces and woodland features, street trees, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), private gardens as well as a community garden. The GI network will provide recreational space for communities to thrive, create habitats for wildlife, improve water quality and promote urban livability.
- 7.7 Car Parking on site will be provided in accordance with maximum parking standards as set out in CSS Wales Parking Standards. The additional vehicular movements generated from the scheme is not considered detrimental and would not have a material impact on the safe operation of the surrounding highway network.
- 7.8 Supporting documents demonstrate that the proposal would not undermine the natural environment and species of ecological importance located in and around the site, subject to compliance

with mitigation and management measures implemented during and before construction works commence.

- 7.9 The development of the site for residential use is compatible with the adopted Local Development Plan's policies and will serve to advance the residential character of the surrounding area whilst delivering affordable housing in accordance with identified need.
- 7.10 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development has suitably addressed the key material considerations for the site. The application's approval would provide a quality development that would complement and enhance the existing residential context of Caersws. It is for these reasons that Powys County Council is respectfully requested to grant full consent for the proposals.