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## Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Gwrandawriad a gynhaliwyd ar 14/06/16

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 14/06/16

gan Paul Selby BEng (Hons) MSc  
MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 15.07.2016

## Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 14/06/16

Site visit made on 14/06/16

by Paul Selby BEng (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 15.07.2016

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**Appeal Ref: APP/E6840/A/16/3144474**

**Site address: The Mount, Parc Road, Coed y Paen, Monmouthshire NP4 0SY**

**The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr William Jones against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
  - The application Ref DC/2015/01019, dated 21 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 3 February 2016.
  - The development proposed is Full planning application for the proposed erection of a single dwelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site lies at the centre of Coed y Paen, a small village featuring residential buildings of a range of periods and designs. The site lies opposite the village church, and extends from the junction of the main route through the village up to the car park of the Carpenters Arms public house. A tall hedgerow and post and rail fence mark the front boundary, and a mature beech hedgerow lies on the property boundary of The Mount. The site is higher than the lanes which it fronts, and slopes gently up towards the residential dwellings and open countryside which lie beyond.
  4. There is no dispute amongst the parties that Coed y Paen is, in principle, a suitable location for small-scale residential development, and on my site visit I saw evidence of a significant amount of infilling having taken place in recent years. The Council considers the design of the house to be acceptable, and I also find that the proposed dwelling is of a modest and sympathetic design that is consistent with the character of the village.
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5. At the hearing it was established that, together with the church and the pub, the site forms part of the historic core of the village. Whilst originally part of a small paddock attached to The Mount, the site is now mainly grass and shrubland and the tall boundary hedgerow obscures views into it from the south. Despite the overgrown appearance of the site, its undeveloped nature affords it an intrinsically rural character which provides a positive setting for the neighbouring church and public house and contributes beneficially to the character of the village core.
6. Although the appeal site and neighbouring buildings are not the subject of any statutory or non-statutory designations, I saw on my site visit that the immediate area is nevertheless an attractive and visually appealing enclosed landscape and, in forming the historic centre of the village, is of significance to the character and form of Coed y Paen as a whole.
7. A previous scheme for a single dwelling on the site was dismissed at appeal in 2015 (reference: APP/E6840/A/14/2225629). Reference has also been made to an earlier appeal dismissed in 2005 (APP/E6840/A/04/1162155/T). The appellant has sought to address the Inspector's findings from the 2015 appeal decision by re-orientating and re-siting the dwelling further back from the lane, and by retaining a substantial margin of undeveloped land outside the residential curtilage. It is submitted that these elements of the revised scheme would ensure that key views from the junction to the church, graveyard and the public house would be retained. I was able to confirm on my site visit that, whilst the existing tall boundary hedgerow contributes to the rural character of the village, its removal would strengthen the visual connection between the newer part of the village to the south and its older core.
8. The proposed dwelling would be substantially set back from the road, positioned within a recess towards the rear of the site. Its siting and orientation would moderate its visual presence in views from the south, facilitating clear views from the junction to the church and public house. From the lane itself, the dwelling would appear as a prominent feature, due to its relatively high slab level and similar ridge height to neighbouring properties. However, a proposed low stone wall and hedgerow marking the front boundary of the curtilage would assist in screening and integrating the dwelling into its immediate setting.
9. Nevertheless, the presence of a building on the site would significantly alter its character and appearance, and with it that of the village core and the setting of the church, its associated graveyard and the public house. Despite its location towards the rear of the site, the dwelling and parking area within its curtilage would damage the open, undeveloped nature of the land, which can currently be appreciated from many parts of the village core, and which frames the public house and church and visually ties these elements to the open countryside beyond. This rural composition at the heart of Coed y Paen is critical to its sense of place, and its loss would unacceptably harm the character of the village as a whole.
10. Furthermore, whilst the retained area of undeveloped land outside the residential curtilage would open up key views within the core of the village, it would be of an awkward shape and size. Access to the proposed dwelling would be obtained across it, and regardless of the surface treatment used, the character of the residual open land would be primarily derived from the neighbouring residential use. Its linear form is such that landscaping, secured by condition, would not prevent it from appearing as a verge of overtly suburban character. Despite the retention of an area of undeveloped land and the clear views that would be obtained across it, I find that its reduced size,

shape and form would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the village core and the setting of the key older buildings therein.

11. Whilst the proposal is materially different from the previous scheme subject to the 2015 appeal decision, not least in terms of the different site boundary, I find myself in agreement with the previous Inspector who considered that the introduction of a dwelling onto the site would destroy one of the primary features of this part of the village. Nevertheless, whilst I have had regard to the 2015 decision and the earlier decision from 2005, I have determined the appeal based on the specific circumstances of the case. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would fundamentally alter the undeveloped, open and intrinsically rural nature of the site, unacceptably harming the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the objectives of LDP policies S13, S17, H3 and DES1.

### **Other Matters**

12. At the hearing the appellant submitted that the retained undeveloped land could be used by the public, but whilst a condition could be used to prevent structures or means of enclosure from being erected, public access could not be safeguarded in this manner. In any event, any benefits that might arise from informal public access being obtained to the retained land would not outweigh the identified harm.
13. Representations have been made in relation to potential highway safety concerns and impacts on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties. The Council's Highways Department has not raised any concerns regarding highway safety, and I consider the proposed access and on-site parking arrangements to be acceptable. I am satisfied that the siting, orientation and design of the proposed dwelling are such that no unacceptably harmful impacts on the privacy or outlook of neighbouring occupants would be likely to arise. The proposed sewage treatment system, whilst close to the property boundary, would be subject to the normal regulatory requirements, and I note that Natural Resources Wales has not objected to the proposal in this regard.
14. Finally, whilst I acknowledge that the proposal would make a modest contribution to rural housing supply, this does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

### **Conclusion**

15. Having taken into account all matters raised, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Paul Selby*

INSPECTOR

## **APPEARANCES**

### FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr M Roberts	Barton Willmore
Mr L Bowkett	Architectural Consultant
Mr W Jones	Appellant

### FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Ms K Young	Planning Control Officer
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### INTERESTED PERSONS:

Mr G Rogers	Llangybi Fawr Community Council
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## **DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING**

1. Site Layout Plan relating to 2015 appeal decision