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# PLANNING STATEMENT

## Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support and response to comments of a planning application (24/1034) for the construction of two residential dwellings as part of a back land development on land situated at 15 Ridgeway, Newport, NP20 5AF, Wales.

The proposal seeks to provide high-quality housing in accordance with national and local planning policies, contributing to the housing supply while respecting the character of the area.

## Site Location and Context

The application site is located within an established residential area of Newport and is currently underutilized land positioned behind existing properties. The site is accessible via a proposed private drive with direct connectivity with the surrounding road network.

The surrounding area comprises a mix of detached and semi-detached houses with gardens, and the proposed development will be designed to integrate harmoniously with the existing built environment.

## Background

Ridgeway House was constructed as a large single residential property in 1923. The new property had extensive gardens and presumably ownership of that part of the Coed-y- Glasllwch woodland which adjoined the northern boundary of the property.

The applicant's parents also bought this woodland when they purchased number 15 Ridgeway in 1969. The original property had six rows of either larch or cypress trees planted around the time of construction. These rows followed the slope of the garden down to the woods.

In the approximate 100 years since construction development has continually taken place. In part this was to address the need for more housing, but also in the 21<sup>st</sup> century residents established that large gardens were no longer desirable.

The first property to establish sub-division of deeds was Ridgeway House. This was divided to create numbers 15 and 17 Ridgeway. In the 1960's number 13A was constructed in part of the garden of number 15, and in the 1970's numbers 17A and 17B were constructed in part of the garden of number 17 Ridgeway.

## Proposed Development

The proposal consists of the erection of two detached dwellings, each designed to reflect the character and scale of surrounding properties. Key design features include:

- Two-storey construction with pitched roofs to complement neighbouring homes.
- Off-street parking provision for each dwelling to minimize the impact on local traffic.

- Private garden spaces for each property, enhancing residential amenity.
- Sustainable construction methods and materials in line with environmental policies.

The proposed design and layout of the new dwellings is based primarily on the feedback received from NCC following a pre-application submission. The pre-application was based on 3no. split level dwellings with a more modern design. However, feedback received

*“The proposed design of the dwellings appears overtly modern with large areas of glazing and a dual monopitch roof. This design is not considered to remain in keeping with the character of the properties in the surrounding area which exhibit more traditional vernacular including bay windows and pitched / hipped roofs.”*

The number of dwellings were reduced creating larger amenity space serving 2no. dwellings. The orientation of the dwellings is as proposed with habitable rooms facing the front and rear to avoid any overlooking to adjacent properties including the host dwelling No. 15.

Due to the topography of the site, the proposed dwellings are substantially lower than that of the adjacent properties that will also benefit from existing shrubs on the boundary as illustrated on the tree drawings.

### **Planning Policy Compliance**

The proposed development aligns with the planning policies set out by the Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) and relevant national policies, including:

- **Planning Policy Wales (PPW):** Supporting sustainable development and efficient land use.
- **Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 – Design:** Ensuring high-quality residential environments.
- **Newport Local Development Plan (2011-2026):** Encouraging sustainable growth in appropriate locations.
- **Policy H1 – Housing Provision:** Delivering new homes within the defined urban boundary.
- **Policy SP10 – Built Environment:** Protecting and enhancing local character and distinctiveness.

Newport City Council are aware and agree for the need to develop further housing to meet the demand of the area. As such proposing future development on greenfield land in the immediate vicinity of Ridgeway.

There is recent precedent for back land development to encourage the use of brownfield sites,

08/0307 – 4 Glasllwch Crescent  
14/0807 – 16 Ridgeway, Newport  
21/0875 – 147 Risca Road, Newport  
23/0971 – 94 Allt – Yr – Yn Avenue, Newport

### **Trees**

The mature trees that remained in the gardens of the former Ridgeway House must all be in the region of 100 years old. Many of the original trees had already been lost – one assumes through felling, disease or storm damage. It has been clear for several years that many of those remaining in the garden of the current number 15 Ridgeway were dead, diseased and dying. In

the summer of 2023, the applicant received a formal letter from the owner of 17 Ridgeway raising concerns about the safety of the red oak and potential danger to his property.

Following advice and recommendations the applicant employed the services of James Pinder of Treecare Consulting. He has prepared the Tree Information report which has been submitted to support the planning application, but prior to that he had also advised in relation to the trees on the site. His key findings were as follows:

- The dead horse chestnut is a danger to the site and has to be removed to meet the landowner's duty of care.
- The red oak has a basal cavity extending into a non-tensile fork and is a safety risk. This is a U Category tree meaning removal.
- The larch trees are mostly dead (due to phytophthora ramorum). The disease is a characteristic of the species in maturity and occurs when grown in tight groups or lone trees. It is a notifiable disease and NRW can serve a plant health notice on landowners to remove them to try and reduce the spread of the disease. Removing the odd completely dead one would create gaps meaning windthrow of adjacent trees would be possible. They had also been topped historically so the stem form was far from ideal in some trees. These are U or at best C category trees.
- Various other cypress on site are remnants of old outgrown hedges. These have outgrown topping points, non-tensile forks, damaged branches and dead sections. Again, C Category at best.
- If every defective tree is to be removed and just the odd tree left here and there, altered exposure as per table B1 of BS3998 2010 will be a factor. Tree failures, wind snap will be the obvious outcome.

The loss of the mature trees on the application site is regrettable but given the expert advice all were needed to be felled either immediately, or in the short term. It seems likely that there are similar dangerous and diseased trees on neighbouring properties which may have contributed to the problems with the trees on the application property.

The supposition from objectors that the trees were felled in anticipation of the planning application is simply not true; the trees would have been felled early in 2024 except it would have fallen into the bird nesting season.

Whilst the tree felling was taking place, the contractor was contacted by the Council and the Tree Officer visited the site and was happy that the works should proceed.

A statement to clarify is that the woodland is also under ownership of the applicant and is aware of the TPO's in place to protect the wood. No activity or felling has taken place in this area and no intention to do so as part of this application.

### **Highway Trees**

The response by Mackley Davies Associates Ltd for Streetscene and City Services seem to be entirely based on July 2023 version of Google Earth – with presumably no site visit. (see appendix) The tree outside property number 15 has since been severely pollarded. Around the same time a highway tree outside number 17 was removed completely. In recent years storm damage has led to the removal of highway trees outside properties 1 and 11 Ridgeway.

None of these trees have been replaced by NCC. If it was necessary to fell a tree to improve sight lines a replacement could be planted further along the verge. However, it might be that NCC do not want replacement trees in these narrow verges because over time root damage becomes a problem.

### **Access and Highways Considerations**

Kevin Jackson has stated that 'it appears likely that a suitable private drive could be created.' A private drive is proposed for this application. The drive will be constructed utilising permeable paving and wide enough for two vehicles to pass. The design had incorporated comments received from the pre-application submission.

Drawings have been revised and submitted to illustrate off road parking serving the host dwelling and have widened the existing stone wall opening to improve sight lines for highway safety. All properties on Ridgeway have dropped kerbs and off-road parking. The majority of residents enter the highway in a backwards motion. Vehicles entering the highway from the new dwellings will enter in a forward gear utilising the adequate turning area at the bottom of the drive and private driveways.

Delivery vehicles (amazon, ups, evri etc) are able to access the two proposed dwellings and also leave in a forward gear. There is no evidence of accidents on this highway and greater safety measures have been introduced by reducing the speed limit to 20mph on this road.

The proposed dwellings include adequate on-site parking in compliance with Newport City Council's parking standards and will have refuse provision located within the curtilage that the residents will display on the kerbside as per other properties on Ridgeway for refuse collection.

### **Impact on Residential Amenity**

Careful consideration has been given to the design and layout to ensure the new dwellings do not adversely impact the privacy, light, or outlook of neighbouring properties. The positioning of windows, boundary treatments, and landscaping will minimize any potential overlooking or overshadowing concerns.

Objectors have referred to noise levels and the impact on the 'quiet enjoyment' of the rear gardens of surrounding properties. Disruption during construction will be inevitable but can be mitigated via the usual regulatory measures and of course be of limited duration.

Noise disruption once built will be minimal, particularly from the lower dwelling, more than 50m from the nearest adjacent home. For any of the residents on this side of Ridgeway, and hence all the objectors, quiet enjoyment is rarely available. The noise from the M4 motorway is constant (24 hours a day) and an ever-present background when outside the homes. Negligible noise from the dwellings proposed and the associated minimal traffic movements will be insignificant in comparison with existing conditions.

### **Environmental Considerations**

The development will incorporate sustainable features, including energy-efficient building materials, insulation, and potential renewable energy sources. Any existing trees and greenery will be retained where possible, with additional planting to enhance biodiversity and visual appeal.

Biodiversity enhancements will be provided to encourage birds to nest and breed in the vicinity of the surrounding woodland.

### **Drainage and Utilities**

A sustainable drainage strategy will be implemented to manage surface water run-off, ensuring compliance with Welsh Government's Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) requirements. The site has access to existing water, electricity, and sewerage infrastructure.

Welsh Water has confirmed that capacity exists within the public sewerage network to receive the domestic foul flows from the proposed development site.

Objectors have made comments regarding drainage, but it is obvious that the sloping nature of the site means that there will be no problems regarding the disposal of surface water. We anticipate and welcome a condition to the approval for SAB application and compliance. Whilst the woodland is not affected by the proposals, it could be improved by adding a natural pond for water-based ecology.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development represents an efficient use of underutilized land to provide much-needed housing in the area. The design respects the character of the area while ensuring high-quality living environments for future occupants. Given its compliance with national and local planning policies, we respectfully request that this application be approved.

### **APPENDIX**

