DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Replacement dwelling in the countryside
Garden Cottage, Pentre-Poeth Rd, Rhiwderin, Newport NP10 8RT

Contents

1.0 Summary of the proposal

This Design and Access Statement supports a planning application for a replacement dwelling at Garden Cottage, Pentre-Poeth Road, Rhiwderin, Newport. The proposal involves demolishing the existing substandard dwelling and constructing a sustainable, modern home that aligns with the Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) and Planning Policy Wales.

Key objectives include:

- Providing a high-quality family home tailored to the rural context.
- Enhancing ecological and biodiversity value through native planting, tree preservation, and sensitive landscaping.
- Improving energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

The proposal incorporates feedback from pre-application advice (ref: PRELET/PS/23/0074) and integrates a landscape-led design approach to harmonise with the surrounding built environment.

2.0 The site

The site lies within a cluster of six properties on Pentre-Poeth Road, between Bassaleg and Michaelston-y-Fedw. It is in an open countryside location with good transport links to the A48 and M4. The existing dwelling was originally a potting shed converted into a modest residence, now deemed substandard and inefficient.

Key features of the site include:

- A stone boundary wall with post-and-rail fencing adjoining an open paddock.
- Tree-lined boundaries to the west and south, providing ecological connectivity.
- A visually prominent but ecologically rich location.

The replacement dwelling will utilise the existing access and driveway, with parking upgraded to permeable surfacing for improved drainage.

Figure 1 - Site location

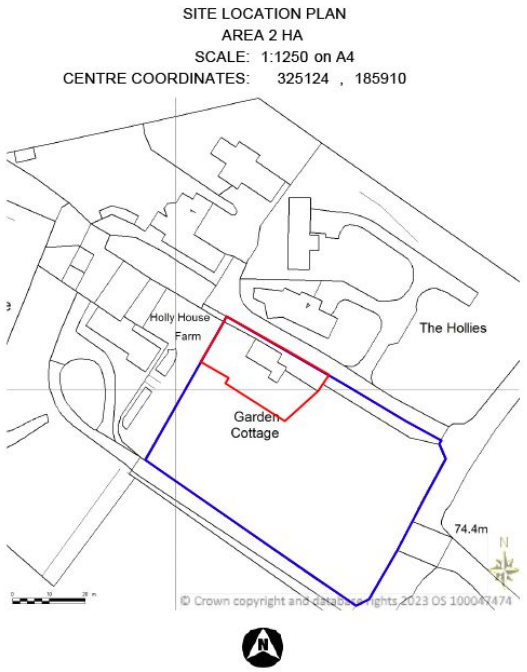


Figure 2 - Location plan

3.0 The Scheme

The application proposes to replace the existing substandard dwelling in the countryside with a modern, high-quality home designed to meet current standards and align with the scale and design of surrounding properties. The existing building, originally constructed as a potting shed for the parent property, was later extended and converted into a dwelling. However, it fails to meet modern efficiency standards and no longer provides an adequate living environment. The replacement dwelling will address these deficiencies, enhancing both the quality of life for its occupants and the overall character of the site.

Figure 3 - Existing building

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) was initiated at the project's earliest stages and has evolved through iterative development, incorporating pre-application advice. Constructive dialogue with the council has guided the proposal, ensuring it is sympathetic to its rural context, responsive to local and national planning policies, and designed to maximise the likelihood of a positive outcome.

The proposal aligns with guidance from the Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) and the Technical Advice Notes (TANs) issued by the Welsh Assembly Government. This statement demonstrates how the design adheres to the principles set out in Welsh Statutory Instruments on Town and Country Planning, addressing aspects such as character, access, movement, environmental sustainability, community safety, and planning policy.

4.0 Character

4.1 Existing Character

The current building is a single-storey-and-a-half structure originally constructed as a potting shed and later extended into a dwelling. Over time, the building has undergone several piecemeal extensions and modifications, resulting in a lack of architectural cohesion and visual appeal. The roofline is fragmented, and the overall form appears disproportionate compared to the surrounding properties. The materials used, such as UPVC and dated finishes, further detract from the building's aesthetic integration within the cluster.

In contrast, the five other dwellings within the cluster are predominantly two to three stories, displaying a unified architectural style with prominent gables, a mix of rendered and stone finishes, and cohesive rooflines. These homes present a consistent character and scale, creating a visually appealing and harmonious cluster that the current Garden Cottage does not effectively contribute to.

Figure 4 - Existing rear elevation

Figure 5 - Aerial view of the cluster

4.0 Character

4.2 Proposed Character

The proposed replacement dwelling has been thoughtfully designed to integrate into the existing cluster while addressing the deficiencies of the current structure. Key design features include:

Gabled Roof Form: The new dwelling incorporates a gabled roof form, consistent with the aesthetic of the neighbouring properties. The symmetrical gables and simplified roofline create a balanced and cohesive silhouette, ensuring the building sits well with its surroundings. Additionally, the inclusion of half-hipped gables softens the roof's appearance and helps reduce the visual massing of the building, ensuring it sits comfortably within the rural landscape.

High-Quality Rendered Finishes: The building's façade will be finished with a smooth white render, a characteristic feature of the cluster's architectural palette. This choice of material ensures the new dwelling complements its neighbours while providing a fresh, modern appearance. The render will be paired with high-quality fixtures and materials to enhance durability and aesthetic appeal.

Architectural Detailing: Features such as refined window proportions, appropriate fenestration, and subtle detailing enhance the building's character. These elements ensure the new dwelling maintains a timeless design while incorporating contemporary touches to reflect modern living standards.

5.0 Landscape Design

The landscape design for Garden Cottage has been prepared by Mackley Davies Associates and focuses on integrating the new dwelling into its rural surroundings while enhancing biodiversity and respecting existing natural features. The proposal retains key elements, such as mature boundary trees and the traditional stone wall, while introducing new planting to strengthen ecological value and visual harmony.

Key enhancements include native hedgerow planting along the paddock boundary, underseeded with species-rich grass to support wildlife habitats. Seventeen orchard trees on semi-vigorous rootstocks will be planted to reflect the site's historic character and provide foraging opportunities for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. A no-dig permeable driveway will protect tree roots, reduce surface water runoff, and ensure the driveway aligns with sustainable drainage principles. Slate chip pathways will further enhance the natural aesthetic and provide practical access throughout the site.

Additional biodiversity measures include the incorporation of species-rich grassland seeding in open areas, encouraging a diverse range of flora and fauna. These plantings will enhance habitat connectivity across the site and contribute to ecological networks in the surrounding landscape. The retained stone wall will not only preserve the visual integrity of the site but also provide a habitat for small invertebrates and other species.

A detailed planting and maintenance schedule ensures the long-term success of the landscape, with hedgerows maintained to support dense growth, orchard trees pruned to promote healthy canopies and fruiting, and species-rich grasslands monitored for successful establishment. The schedule also includes provisions for replacing failed planting during the five-year establishment phase to ensure landscape objectives are achieved.

These measures ensure the landscape design contributes positively to the site's character, enhancing ecological value while meeting local planning requirements. By thoughtfully balancing ecological enhancement with rural character preservation, the landscape plan ensures Garden Cottage will blend seamlessly into its surroundings while supporting biodiversity and sustainability goals.

Figure 6 - Proposed site layout

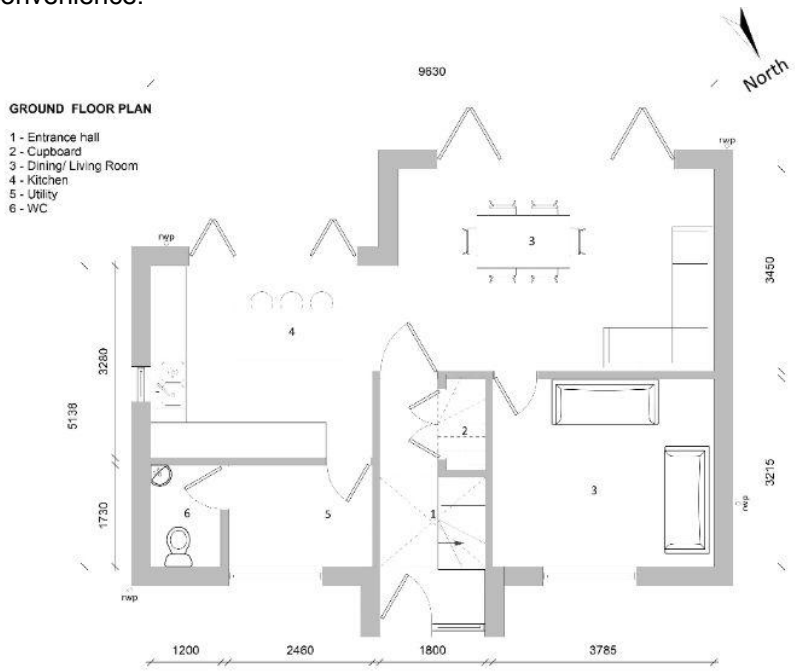
6.0 Layout of Development

The proposed replacement dwelling has a compact and efficient footprint of 72m², spread over two floors. The layout is designed to optimise the use of space while ensuring functionality, flexibility, and comfort for modern family living.

Ground Floor Layout:
The ground floor features an open-plan kitchen, dining, and living area that creates a spacious and inviting environment, ideal for family interactions and entertaining. A separate lounge provides additional privacy and versatility, catering to different lifestyle needs. Practical features, such as a utility room and a downstairs toilet, have been thoughtfully incorporated to enhance everyday convenience.

Upper Floor Layout:
The upper floor includes four well-proportioned bedrooms, providing appropriate accommodation for families. One bedroom benefits from an ensuite, while a family bathroom serves the remaining bedrooms. The layout balances shared and private spaces, ensuring functionality and comfort for all occupants.

The proposed layout reflects a balance between practicality and modern design principles, ensuring the house is both liveable and adaptable. By carefully considering the arrangement of spaces, the design promotes a high quality of life for future occupants.



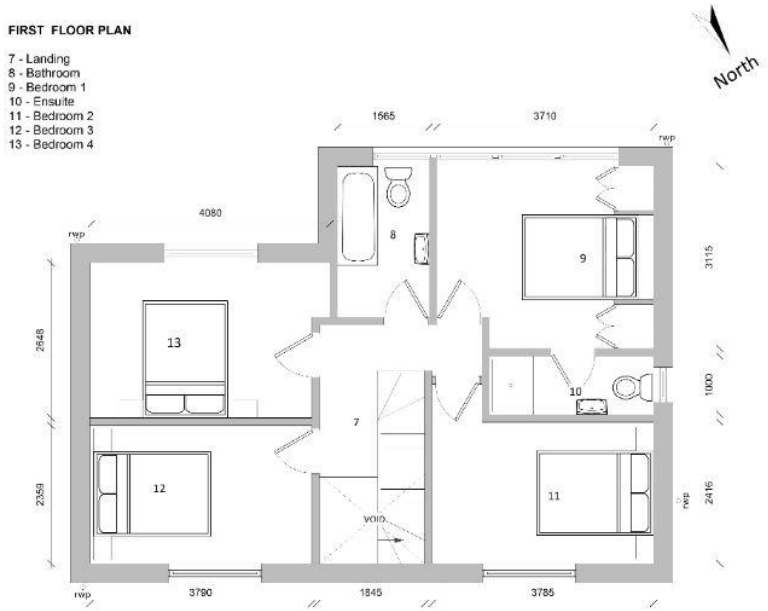


Figure 7 - Proposed Floor plans

7.0 Appearance

The proposed replacement dwelling has been thoughtfully designed to harmonise with the surrounding cluster of homes, ensuring a cohesive architectural style while introducing subtle contemporary elements to enhance functionality and aesthetic appeal. The design pays homage to the local architectural vernacular, ensuring the new dwelling integrates seamlessly into its rural context.

Key Design Features:

Rear Gable Orientation: The proposed dwelling incorporates a rear-facing gable oriented to the south-east, reflecting the orientation of the other dwellings in the cluster. This consistency reinforces visual continuity within the group, strengthening the sense of unity and cohesion.

Half-Hipped Gables: The design features half-hipped gables on both sides of the main structure. These elements soften the roofline, creating a more refined and balanced silhouette. By reducing the visual mass of the roof, the building sits comfortably within its rural context without dominating the landscape.

Smooth White Render: In keeping with the character of the cluster, the exterior will be finished in a smooth white render. This material choice echoes the traditional aesthetic of neighbouring properties while offering a fresh, modern appearance. The render provides a timeless backdrop that enhances the dwelling's visual integration into the local architectural palette.

Architectural Balance:
The proposed design balances tradition and modernity, respecting the existing character of the cluster while introducing contemporary touches that elevate its aesthetic and practical qualities. The thoughtful use of proportions, materials, and design elements ensures the dwelling enhances the overall quality and character of the area, contributing positively to the local landscape.

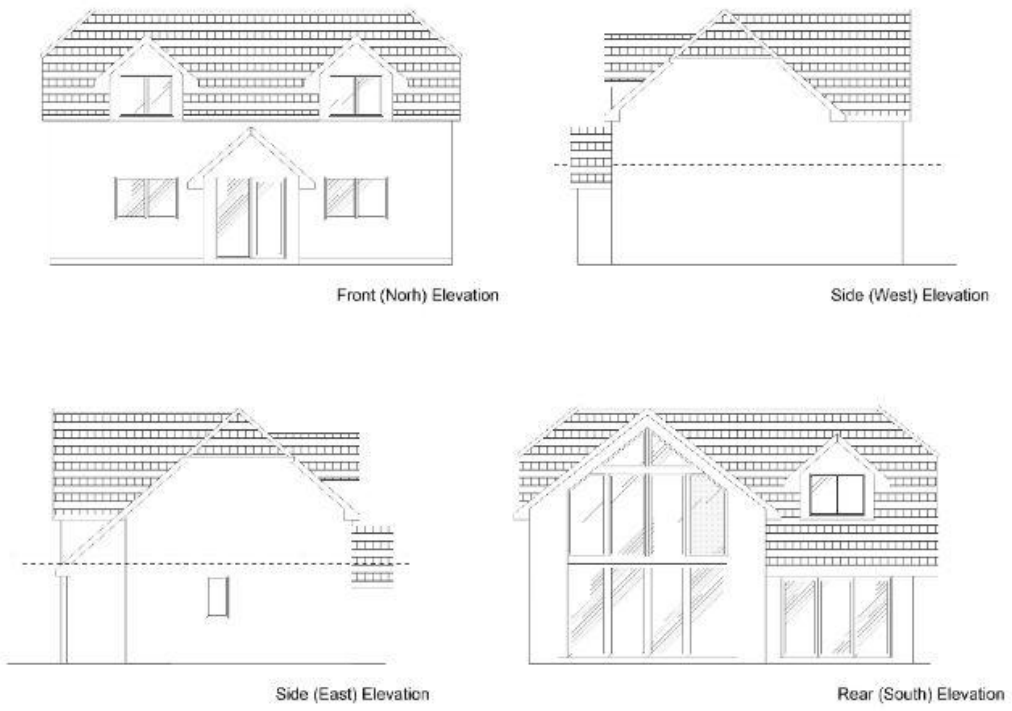


Figure 8 - Proposed Elevations

8.0 Access & Movement

Access to the six dwellings, including Garden Cottage, is provided via a shared private drive off Pentre-Poeth Road. Each property benefits from a dedicated parking area, ensuring convenience for residents while maintaining the orderly use of the shared access route.

Parking and Driveway Improvements:
The existing parking area for Garden Cottage will be upgraded to accommodate three parking spaces. The driveway will retain its slate chipping surface, ensuring a consistent and natural appearance in keeping with the rural setting. To prevent slate chips from being dragged onto the public highway, a permeable hard surface will be installed at the entrance in a no-dig manner. This approach protects tree root zones and reduces surface water runoff, supporting sustainable drainage while improving safety and cleanliness on the road.

Visibility and Safety Enhancements:
The existing 8-foot stone wall adjacent to the drive will be reduced to a height of 600mm to significantly improve visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the private drive. This modification enhances safety for residents and visitors while retaining the traditional aesthetic of the stone wall, preserving the character of the site.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access:
Safe pedestrian access will be provided from the dwelling to the shared access lane and Pentre-Poeth Road, with pathways designed to be inclusive for all users, including those with disabilities. Bicycle storage has been incorporated into the design, promoting sustainable modes of transport and encouraging environmentally friendly travel options.

Connectivity and Accessibility:
The location of the dwelling benefits from good connectivity to local amenities and transport links via Pentre-Poeth Road. The enhanced access design facilitates ease of movement for residents while supporting sustainable transportation and accessibility to nearby services. These measures ensure the access arrangements are safe, functional, and well-integrated into the rural environment.

Figure 9 - Existing access and parking

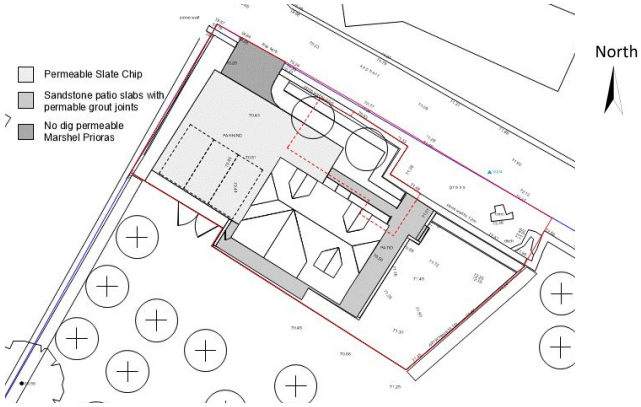


Figure 10 - Hardscaping plan

9.0 Environmental Sustainability

The proposed dwelling has been designed with environmental sustainability at its core, integrating energy-efficient systems, water conservation measures, and sustainable building practices to minimise its ecological footprint while promoting sustainable living. These measures align with modern building regulations and best practices, ensuring long-term environmental benefits.

Energy Efficiency

The architectural design incorporates high-performance insulation in the walls, roof, and floors, significantly reducing heat loss and improving energy efficiency. Windows will be fitted with high-quality double or triple glazing with low-emissivity coatings to optimise thermal performance and minimise energy waste. Energy-efficient LED lighting will be used throughout the home, providing a durable, low-energy alternative to traditional fixtures.

In addition, the dwelling will feature high-efficiency heating and ventilation systems that optimise energy use while maintaining comfortable indoor conditions. Smart technologies, such as programmable thermostats, may be integrated to enable residents to control energy consumption effectively and reduce wastage. Energy-efficient appliances, including refrigerators, dishwashers, and washing machines, will be used to ensure further reductions in electricity and water usage.

Water Conservation

Water efficiency will be achieved, with the installation of low-flow fixtures, such as toilets, taps, and showerheads, to minimise water consumption without compromising performance. A rainwater harvesting system will collect and store rainwater for non-potable uses, such as irrigation for landscaped areas. These measures reduce reliance on mains water and conserve valuable resources, contributing to sustainable water management.

Sustainable Building Materials

Sustainable and durable materials will be prioritised in the construction process to reduce embodied carbon and support long-term environmental goals. Materials will be selected for their energy efficiency, low maintenance requirements, and ability to withstand environmental conditions, ensuring the building remains sustainable throughout its lifecycle.

Landscaping and Ecological Integration

The dwelling’s landscape design further supports sustainability by incorporating native planting and orchard trees, reducing reliance on artificial irrigation and enhancing biodiversity. Permeable surfaces in the driveway support sustainable drainage, minimising surface water runoff and its impact on local infrastructure.

10.0 Scale & Amount

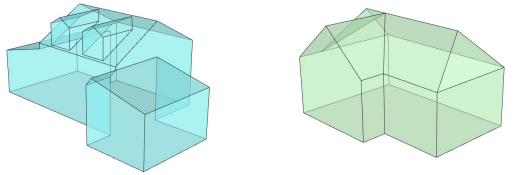
Policy H12 of the Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) limits the volume of replacement dwellings in the countryside to no more than 30% larger than the original dwelling. However, paragraph 5.26 acknowledges that: "While the 30% volume limit should be applied in principle, where it can be demonstrated that an increase above 30% will not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area, such development may be considered acceptable."

To assess the proposal against this policy, a scale mapping exercise was conducted, comparing the existing building to the five other properties in the cluster. The footprint of the existing dwelling is 62m², significantly smaller than the cluster average of 177m². Similarly, the existing volume is just 215m³, compared to an average of 1,048m³ for the surrounding dwellings. These comparisons demonstrate that the existing dwelling is disproportionately small and out of character with the cluster.

Under the 30% rule, the dwelling's volume could increase to 280m³. However, this volume would still remain disproportionately smaller than the neighbouring properties and fail to make effective use of the site. An earlier pre-application submission proposed a volume of 725m³, but feedback indicated that this scale was too large and would not be supported. The current proposal incorporates this feedback, significantly reducing the proposed volume to 394m³.

The proposed design achieves a careful balance, creating a modest yet functional four-bedroom home with a compact footprint of 72m². This two-storey dwelling integrates with the surrounding properties, which are predominantly two to three stories, and reflects their scale and character while remaining subordinate to the rural setting. The proportions and placement of the new dwelling, aligned with the established building line and softened by existing trees and hedgerows, ensure it does not dominate the landscape.

The accompanying visual impact assessment demonstrates that the increase in volume will not detract from the character or appearance of the surrounding area. By prioritising proportionality, functionality, and sensitivity to its context, the proposal complies with Policy H12 and should be considered acceptable. The design respects the rural setting while delivering a high-quality, sustainable home that meets the needs of its occupants.



Existing Volume: 215m3

Proposed Volume: 355m3

Figure 11 - Volumetric study

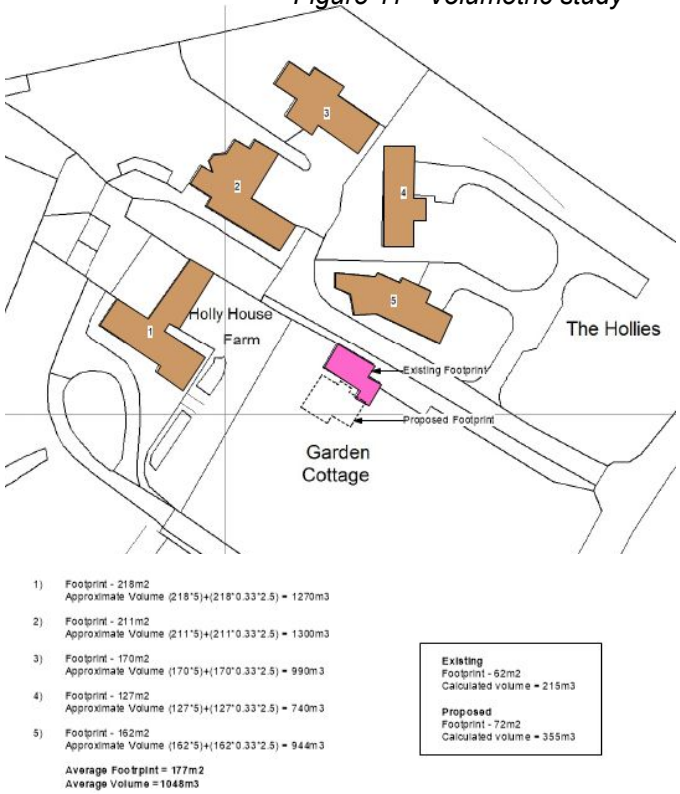


Figure 12 - Scale mapping