

With reference to my recent planning application for a safe car pull-in at Sirona, Belmont Hill, I thought I would keep you updated from my and my wife's perspective.

We note the reasons for refusal and would like to confirm that we are keen to address the Council's concerns, fully, and to work constructively towards an acceptable, proportionate, solution, recognising the limited nature of the works.

Our refusal report states our property is on Old Hill, but it is on Belmont Hill, with our stretch of road with no traditional cottages and no sloping landscape. Our application was in keeping with the surrounding street – in fact, it was the exact same design as the drive opposite that passed planning permission, recently. The adjoining properties to ours have a large wooden gate, a rocky bank and open drive-ways – no green areas - ours would be sculptured, clean and in good condition, and masonry matching to houses next door. We could ask for your help to propose a frontage design that NCC would require, in order to make it totally at-one with the surroundings. Our property is not in a conservation area but we are keen for our frontage to look in keeping with the nearby conservation area. We are also keen for the front – as is our back garden – to allow biodiversity and environmental improvements through plantings, rainwater capture and encouraging wild-life.

The house, 2 doors down, has built a drive in a conservation area, with no visibility pulling into the highway, and hasn't applied for planning permission, but we wanted to do everything by the laws, so stopped work as soon as we found out we needed planning permission for our drive, and now going through the proper procedures.

All driveways on Belmont Hill are to the front of the property – as our proposal – but ours will be the only safe one. All other properties reverse onto the main carriageway, but our proposal is for one car to park parallel to the main highway, so pulling off onto a 20 mph road, using wing mirrors, so is as safe as any road in Wales, of any speeds. My section of Belmont Hill is straight, so the safest part of the hill. The only safe way for pedestrians to pass through Belmont Hill is walking on the road and when larger vehicles pass, they step onto driveways – my section of Belmont Hill is the only one with no step-off opportunity, so we have a firm belief, that our drive will provide a safety improvement on the hill, as pedestrians can step onto our drive.

Traffic on Belmont hill will not increase due to our drive being built, as we use the road already for commuting, shopping etc; in reality, our journeys will reduce, as we now make extra journeys, due to not being able to start our journey from our property. We will not walk on the road if our application is agreed, so reducing foot traffic on the hill.

The wall to the front of our property was crumbling onto the main highway, so removal of that wall has improved safety for the road users and pedestrians. The front had been partially dug out by previous owners and the section behind this had been backfilled in recent times – we assume when the house was built. When we dug this out we pulled out a pvc door and 2 pvc windows and debris of all kinds. Below this is solid rock, so there are no issues of destroying anything of archaeological interest in my build, we wouldn't do it if there was any chance of this. We have contacted Cadw and Heneb and acquired site maps that confirm the nearest point of historical interest is the King Arms Public House (now Los Reyes) approx. 100 metres away.

The reason my wife and I started this project, is because we are nearing retirement age and a regular visitor to our property is my mum, who is disabled, and to have no safe way to enter our property, is dangerous for us. Wheeling my mum down a busy road with no pavement is not acceptable in this modern age and in our care-minded society.

My wife has worked for the NHS for most of her life, so works long hours with early and late days; this means she must walk on a road with no pavement, often in the dark. It breaks my heart to see her on the road, and in danger.

Even though this process has had a massive detrimental affect on my mental health, we feel we have to continue the process in order to provide a safe entry onto our property. So, I will

be re-applying for consent, making amendments to cover the issues raised – parking bay size, wall height and porous material for the base etc. I would therefore appreciate officer guidance on how the proposal could be amended or mitigated to overcome the issues raised.

Thank you for taking time to read this and hope you have a great week.

Kind regards,
Ian and Helen Cope