

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Replacement dwelling in the countryside

Plough House, Druidstone Road, Old St. Mellons,
Michaelston-Y-Fedw, CF3 6XD



Contents

1.0 - SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL.....	p.1
2.0 - THE SITE	p.2
3.0 - SURROUNDING CONTEXT.....	p.3-4
4.0 - EXISTING BUILDING ON SITE.....	p.5
5.0 - DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND CONCEPT EVOLUTION.....	p.6-7
6.0 - PROPOSED DESIGN.....	p.8-13
7.0 - ACCESS AND MOVEMENT.....	p.14
8.0 - DRAINAGE.....	p.15
9.0 - PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE.....	p.16
10.0 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	p.17

1.0 Summary of the proposal

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a full planning application for the replacement of the existing dwelling at Plough House, Druidstone Road.

The proposal seeks to replace a dated and energy-inefficient building with a high-quality, well-designed family home that responds sensitively to its rural setting. The scheme has been revised following pre-application feedback to reduce perceived massing, refine the architectural approach, and strengthen the relationship between the building, landscape, and wider countryside.

The design has evolved to:

- Reduce visual prominence within the landscape
- Improve proportional balance and architectural clarity
- Incorporate a comprehensive landscape and biodiversity strategy
- Deliver a sustainable, energy-efficient dwelling

The proposal has been carefully developed to comply with Policy H12 and wider LDP policies, demonstrating that although the volume increase exceeds 30%, it does not result in a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

2.0 The site

The application site comprises Plough House, a detached dwelling located on Druidstone Road, between Castleton and Michaelston-y-Fedw. The property occupies a substantial rural plot enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows, surrounded on all sides by open agricultural land.

Access is gained directly from Druidstone Road via a private driveway leading to a circular forecourt in front of the house. The topography falls gradually from the north-east (approximately 68m AOD) down to the south-west (around 63m AOD), giving the property an elevated position with wide panoramic views towards the north-west across open countryside.

The garden extends mainly to the west and south, with generous spacing to all boundaries. The plot's size, containment by vegetation, and distance to neighbouring dwellings provide an ideal setting for a replacement dwelling without harming rural character or visual amenity.

The site is not within a designated conservation area or landscape protection zone, and there are no listed buildings within its immediate vicinity. The plot offers considerable scope for a replacement dwelling of high architectural quality, designed to respond sensitively to the landform, setting, and long-distance views.



Figure 1 - Site location

3.0 Surrounding Context

Druidstone Road is a narrow rural lane lined with large, individually designed dwellings set within substantial plots. The surrounding character is semi-rural, comprising a mix of traditional farmhouses, converted barns, and more recently approved contemporary replacement dwellings.

To the east and west, several properties have undergone significant redevelopment in recent years, replacing older bungalows with modern two-storey homes. These examples establish a clear and evolving precedent for high-quality, bespoke architecture along this section of Druidstone Road

The area benefits from strong landscape containment, with mature woodland belts and field boundaries limiting visual impact in long-range views. Despite its rural setting, the site lies within easy reach of the A48(M) and M4, providing direct access to both Cardiff and Newport, reinforcing its sustainable location.

There are no designated heritage assets, conservation areas, or protected landscapes in the immediate vicinity. The site therefore presents an opportunity to deliver a visually sensitive, energy-efficient replacement dwelling that enhances the character of the area while maintaining its open countryside qualities.



Figure 2 - Aerial view of Immediate context

3.0 Surrounding Context

3.1 Adjacent Development and Recent Extensions

In addition to the wider rural context, the immediate neighbouring properties provide a highly relevant and direct comparison in terms of scale, built form and accepted patterns of development along this stretch of Druidstone Road.

The application site forms part of a small cluster of rural dwellings, including Maes Y Crochan House and Little Maes Y Crochan, both of which have undergone substantial redevelopment and extension in recent years.

At Little Maes Y Crochan, planning permission was granted for the demolition of a modest existing dwelling and its replacement with a significantly larger detached house. The approved scheme resulted in a substantial uplift in scale, including a five-bedroom dwelling with integral garage and additional basement accommodation. Importantly, the officer's assessment confirms that this site has a long planning history of cumulative increases, including extensions and replacement dwellings that together resulted in volumetric increases well beyond the 30% guideline typically set out under Policy H12.

Despite this, planning permission was granted on the basis that the development would not result in material harm to the character of the countryside, with key considerations including limited public visibility, strong boundary vegetation, and the wider agricultural context.

Similarly, Maes Y Crochan House is itself a replacement dwelling, approved and constructed at a scale exceeding the original building. Subsequent applications have introduced further large-scale additions, including a substantial leisure and gym extension measuring approximately 23.5m in depth and 14.5m in width. This extension provides extensive ancillary accommodation and represents a significant increase in built form.

The officer's assessment in that case again acknowledges that the cumulative scale of development on the site exceeds the typical policy thresholds. However, permission was granted on the basis that the development remains acceptable when considering its siting, reduced visual prominence, and the limited impact on the wider countryside due to screening and topography.

Taken together, these neighbouring developments clearly demonstrate that:

- Substantial increases in scale beyond the original dwelling form have been accepted within the immediate context;
- The application of Policy H12 has been balanced against material considerations such as visual impact, screening, and landscape context;
- Larger, more contemporary dwellings and extensions are an established and accepted characteristic of this cluster of properties.

The application site shares the same defining characteristics as these neighbouring plots, including a generous curtilage, strong boundary vegetation and limited visibility from public vantage points.

In this context, the proposed development should be assessed not against a theoretical interpretation of the original dwelling alone, but against the established pattern of development within the immediate locality. When viewed in this way, the scale of the proposal is consistent with what has already been accepted on adjacent sites and does not represent an outlier in the local context.

4.0 Existing Building on Site

The existing dwelling at Plough House is a large detached home with a clear gable led form and generous glazing to the principal elevations. The ground floor is organised with broad living spaces that open toward the garden, with wide window runs that already focus views out to the countryside, a theme that continues at first floor where the main bedrooms take advantage of outlook and natural light. The existing house has a ground floor area of approximately 230m² and an overall built volume of approximately 1,493m³, including the substantial raised patio and terrace structure which forms part of the building's plinth and overall built form.

Architecturally, the house reads as a collection of volumes, including the main two storey core, flat roofed front projections, elevated terraces and the gabled garage. While this composition provides visual interest, it also results in a fragmented footprint and awkward internal arrangement, with few truly square rooms and several angled corners that reduce the efficiency and usability of the internal spaces.

The building is well below modern expectations in several important respects. The fabric and services are of an era that predates current energy efficiency standards, with limited insulation, older glazing and a layout that makes comprehensive upgrade difficult without extensive intervention. As a result, thermal comfort, acoustic performance, airtightness and overall energy efficiency fall significantly short of what a contemporary family home can provide, and the scope for sensitive retrofit is limited by both the construction and form of the existing building.

While the existing dwelling benefits from a generous footprint, the way that space is configured does not lend itself well to modern family living. Circulation is fragmented and the relationship between rooms lacks the openness and cohesion expected of a contemporary home. The site itself, together with the scale of the existing built form, demonstrates that it can comfortably accommodate a substantial replacement dwelling without appearing over-scaled or out of keeping within its setting.



Figure 3 - Existing building

5.0 Design Development and Concept Evolution

The proposed dwelling has evolved from the pre-application scheme through a process of refinement rather than fundamental redesign. The overall form and arrangement have been retained, reflecting the applicants clear brief and the internal layout requirements established at an early stage.

The focus of the design development has therefore been on reducing the perceived scale and improving how the building sits within the landscape, rather than altering the underlying geometry. In response to the pre-application feedback, the scheme has been amended to lower the overall height and width, to reduce the visual prominence of the building, while maintaining the functional layout and spatial qualities of the original concept.

Alongside this, attention has been given to the external appearance and composition of the elevations. The arrangement of openings has been carefully refined to better align with the internal layout and to achieve a more considered overall composition.

Particular focus has been given to the side elevations, which are the most visible from the approach along Druidstone Road. Here, the fenestration has been adjusted to break up repetition and improve visual rhythm, reducing the sense of uniformity across the façade. The front and rear elevations retain a more consistent and symmetrical arrangement in line with the overall design approach.

These refinements result in a more balanced and cohesive appearance, softening the visual impact of the building and helping it sit more comfortably within its setting.

Material choices have also been developed as a key part of this process, introducing a more restrained and considered palette that helps break down the mass of the building and allows it to sit more comfortably within its rural setting. The combination of natural stone at ground level and lighter cladding above contributes to a more grounded and visually stable composition.

Taken together, these refinements result in a scheme that retains the original design intent but responds more carefully to its context, with a reduced visual impact and a more resolved architectural approach.

5.0 Design Development and Concept Evolution

Volume and Policy Considerations

Throughout the design process, close attention was given to Policy H12 (Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside), which normally limits increases to around 30 percent of the original dwelling's volume. While the proposed design exceeds this threshold, the development seeks to demonstrate that the increased scale can be accommodated without adverse landscape or visual impact.

To support this, a permitted-development comparison study was undertaken, illustrating that extensions and outbuildings achievable under existing rights could result in a cumulative increase of around 578% far greater than the proposed replacement dwelling. This exercise confirms that a single, well-designed replacement offers a more coherent and sensitive solution than a piecemeal enlargement of the existing structure.

Key:

- Existing dwelling
- Permitted development outbuilding
- Permitted development extensions

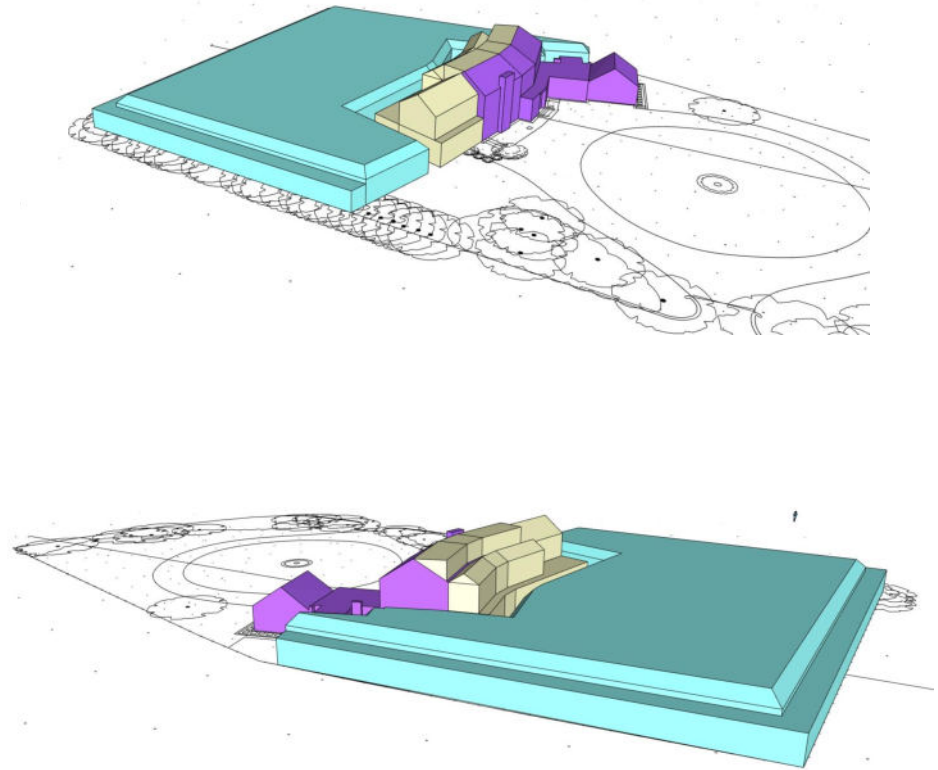


Figure 4 - Extent of what is possible under permitted development

6.0 Proposed Design

The proposed replacement dwelling has been carefully developed to deliver a high quality, energy efficient family home that responds positively to its rural setting, replacing an outdated and inefficient building with a more coherent and considered architectural form.

The design draws on traditional rural cues such as pitched roofs, gabled forms and strong vertical proportions, interpreted in a contemporary manner through simplified geometry, restrained detailing and a clear relationship between internal spaces and the surrounding landscape.

Particular attention has been given to how the building sits within the site, with the finished floor level lowered and the form arranged to follow the natural topography, reducing its apparent height and visual prominence when viewed from the surrounding area. The overall composition has also been refined to provide a more balanced and legible arrangement, with materiality and detailing used to break down the mass and soften the building within its landscape setting.

The approach seeks to rationalise the complexity of the existing building and replace it with a more resolved and efficient form, with the emphasis placed on improving how the building is experienced externally rather than fundamentally altering the underlying layout.

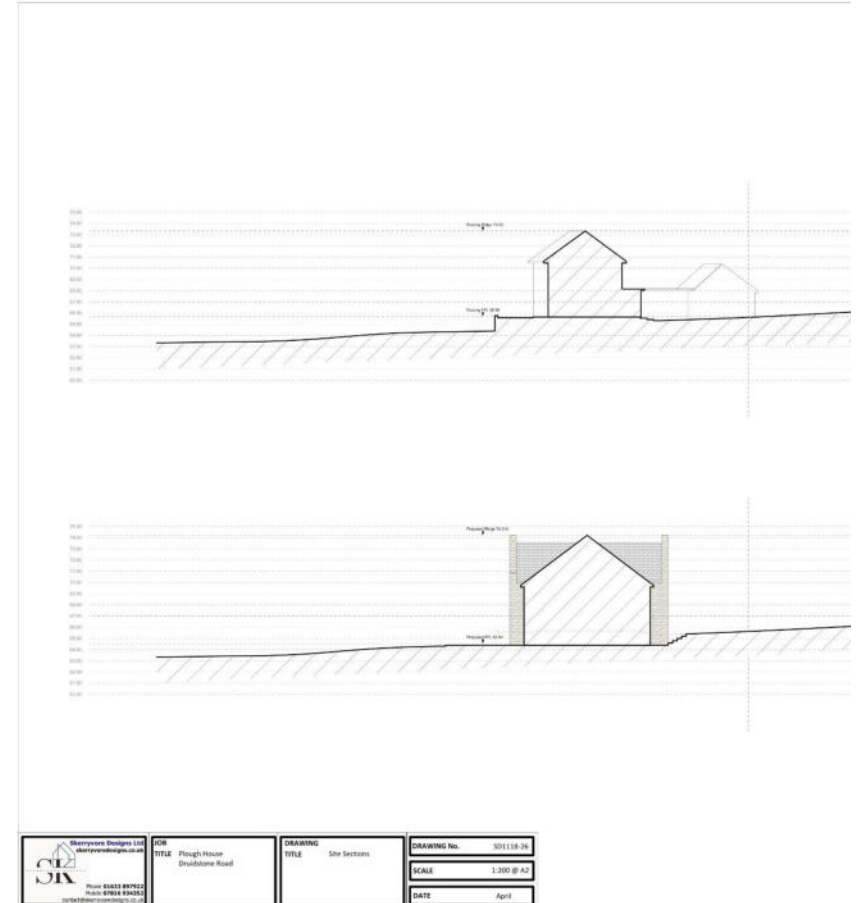


Figure 5 - Site Sections

6.0 Proposed Design

6.1 Layout and Use

The proposed dwelling is arranged over two and a half storeys, providing a clear and efficient internal layout suited to modern family living. The ground floor is organised around a central entrance and circulation space, with the principal living areas positioned to either side. This creates a logical and balanced plan, with the kitchen, dining and living spaces forming the core of the house and benefiting from direct access to the surrounding garden and external areas.

Ancillary spaces, including the utility, cloakroom and plant areas, are located discreetly to the rear and side of the plan, allowing the primary living spaces to remain open and uninterrupted. Additional rooms such as the family room and playroom provide flexibility in how the house can be used, reflecting the scale of the dwelling and contemporary expectations for adaptable living space.

At first floor level, the accommodation is arranged in a clear and consistent manner, with a series of generous bedrooms supported by ensuite and storage provision. The layout is symmetrical and efficient, allowing for straightforward circulation and a strong relationship between rooms .

The second floor accommodates the principal bedroom suite and a separate study space, making effective use of the roof volume without increasing the overall footprint of the building . This approach allows the accommodation to be contained within the form of the building rather than extending further across the site.

Overall, the layout is well considered and avoids unnecessary sprawl, delivering a functional and coherent arrangement that supports modern living while remaining proportionate to the size of the plot.

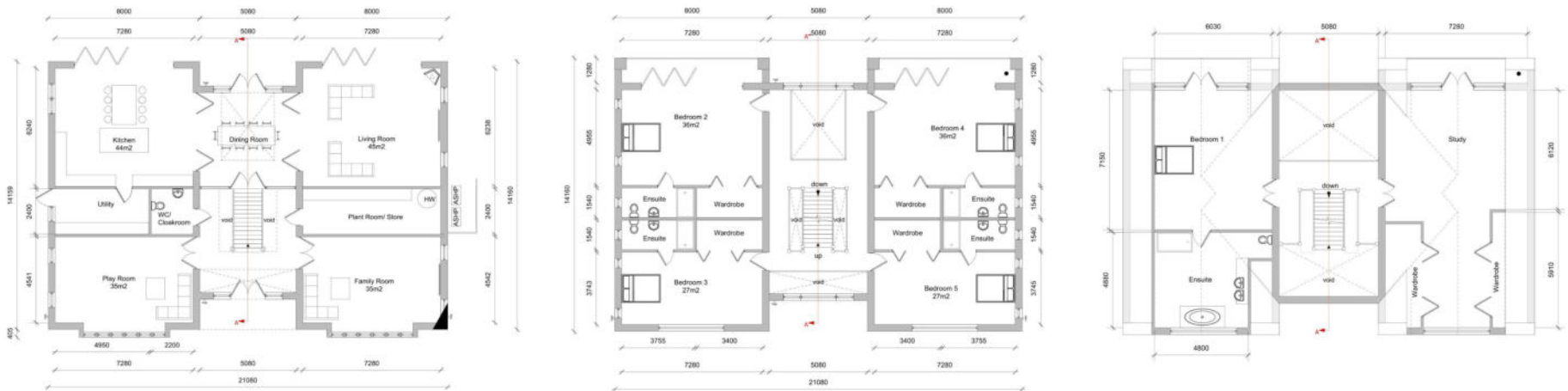


Figure 6 - Proposed plans

6.0 Proposed Design

6.2 Scale and Massing

The proposed dwelling has an approximate volume of 2,154m³, compared with an existing built volume of approximately 1,493m³, which includes the raised patio and terrace structure forming part of the building's plinth. On this basis, the proposal represents an increase of approximately 44%.

While this exceeds the 30% guideline set out within Policy H12, the policy allows for larger increases where it can be demonstrated that there is no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The scheme has been carefully refined following pre-application feedback to reduce its perceived scale and visual prominence. The overall height of the building has been reduced by approximately 1.2m, with the finished floor level lowered by approximately 1.15m. As a result, the proposed ridge sits approximately 2.35m lower than the pre-application scheme and only approximately 0.89m higher than the existing ridge. The overall width of the building has also been reduced. Collectively, these changes represent a substantial reduction in the apparent scale of the development.

In addition, a proportion of the increased volume is accommodated below the level of the existing finished floor level. Approximately 340m³ of the proposed volume is set lower within the site, meaning it does not contribute to the perceived height or visual prominence of the building when viewed from the surrounding area. This allows the dwelling to sit more comfortably within the landform and reduces its overall impact.

The form of the building has been designed to further break down its mass. The composition of two gabled wings linked by a recessed central element reduces the perceived width and avoids the appearance of a single dominant block. The upper accommodation is contained within the roof structure, ensuring that the building maintains proportions consistent with traditional rural forms.

The generous size of the plot allows the building to be comfortably accommodated without any sense of overdevelopment, with sufficient separation from boundaries and scope for meaningful landscape buffering. When considered alongside the surrounding context, including nearby properties that have been significantly extended, the scale of the proposal is not out of keeping with the established pattern of development.

Overall, while the proposal exceeds the 30% guideline in volumetric terms, it has been demonstrated that the scale of the building is appropriately managed through design, siting and landform. The development reads as a well-proportioned and visually contained dwelling within its setting and does not result in a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

6.0 Proposed Design

6.3 Appearance and Materials

The architectural approach adopts a contemporary interpretation of traditional rural forms, combining simple geometry with a restrained and carefully considered material palette.

The building is defined by two gabled forms linked by a recessed central element, creating a balanced and legible composition. The elevations have been developed to provide a consistent and coherent external appearance, with the arrangement of openings responding directly to the internal layout while maintaining a clear and controlled overall expression.

Particular attention has been given to the side elevations, which are the most visible from the approach along Druidstone Road. The fenestration in these areas has been refined to break up repetition and introduce a more considered rhythm, reducing the sense of uniformity and softening the overall appearance of the building. The front and rear elevations retain a more symmetrical and consistent arrangement, reflecting the overall design approach.

The material palette plays a key role in reducing the perceived mass of the building and integrating it within its setting. The lower level is constructed in locally sourced sandstone laid in random coursed masonry, providing a strong and grounded base that reflects the character of traditional rural buildings .

Above this, the use of charred or black-stained timber cladding introduces a darker, recessive upper layer that helps the building visually recede within the landscape. This contrast between a heavier stone base and a lighter, visually subdued upper level breaks down the overall mass of the building and reduces its prominence when viewed from surrounding areas .

Roof finishes are proposed in a muted anthracite tone, further contributing to a subdued and cohesive palette, while details such as natural stone cills, dressed surrounds and raised parapet gables with stone copings reinforce a robust and consistent architectural language. Openings are formed in black aluminium, providing a restrained contrast that complements the darker upper materials.

Glazing has been carefully considered to balance the need for natural light and outward views with the wider landscape and ecological context. Low-emissivity, solar control glazing is proposed, with controlled light transmission to minimise glare and reduce light spill into the surrounding countryside.

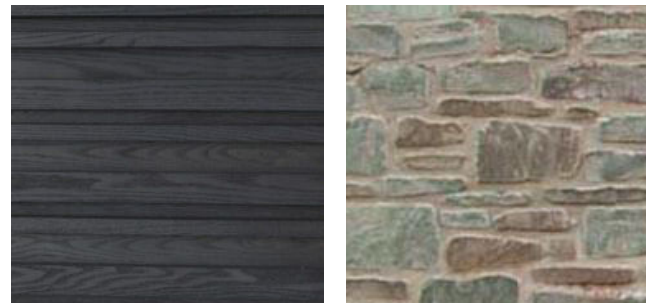


Figure 7 - Proposed dark timber and welsh sandstone finishes

6.0 Proposed Design

6.4 Landscape and Setting

The proposal has been developed with a clear understanding of the site's rural context and its position within an open rolling lowland landscape, characterised by agricultural fields, mature hedgerows and well screened residential plots . The site itself is already defined by a strong framework of existing trees and shrub planting along its boundaries, which provide a high level of enclosure and visual containment.

A key part of the design approach has been the retention and reinforcement of this existing landscape structure. All existing boundary trees, hedgerows and established shrub planting are to be retained, ensuring that the site continues to benefit from an immediate and effective level of screening from surrounding roads and neighbouring views . This existing vegetation is identified within the Landscape Visual Appraisal as the primary factor in limiting visibility of the site both in summer and winter conditions.

The proposed landscape strategy builds upon this framework through the introduction of additional native planting. This includes the provision of approximately 128 linear metres of new native mixed hedgerow planting, along with native trees and species-rich grassland areas . These measures will strengthen the site boundaries over time, improve biodiversity value and further integrate the development into the surrounding landscape.

Additional planting has been carefully targeted to reinforce key boundaries, particularly along the northern edge where a native hedge with occasional trees will provide a buffer between the residential curtilage and adjacent agricultural land . Areas of species-rich grass and wildflower planting are also introduced to soften the transition between managed garden areas and the wider landscape, creating a more natural edge condition.

The Landscape Visual Appraisal confirms that the site is already well screened from Druidstone Road by dense roadside hedgerows, with only limited and filtered views available in winter months. The proposed development is expected to be similarly screened, with visibility largely contained to close-range or transient views, and in some cases reduced through the removal of existing built form such as the garage .

In addition to structural planting, the proposal incorporates measures to minimise wider landscape impact, including the use of a subdued material palette and careful control of external lighting to limit light spill in this rural location.

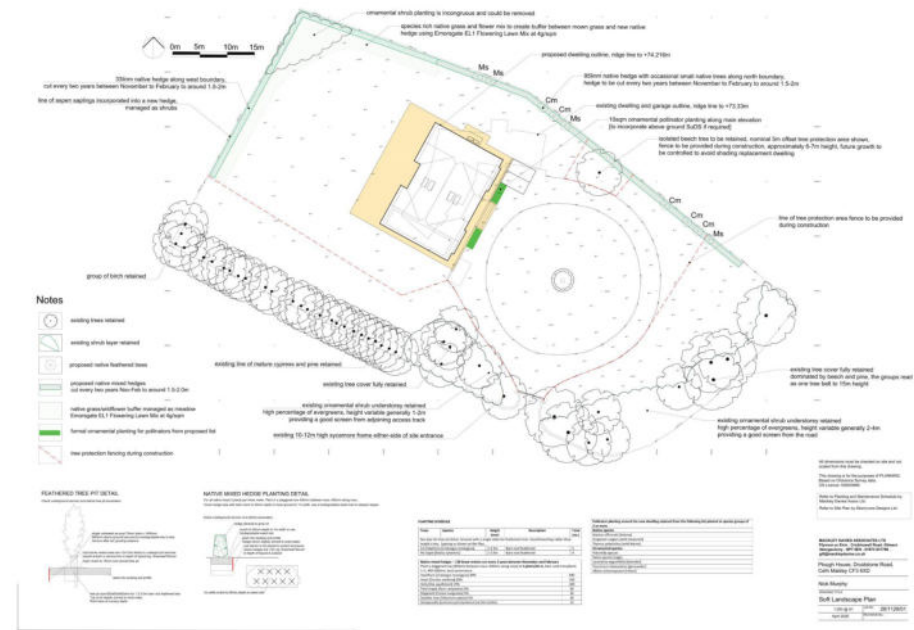


Figure 8 - Soft landscaping plan by Mackley Davies Associated Ltd.

6.0 Proposed Design

6.5 Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

The proposed dwelling has been designed to achieve a high level of environmental performance, representing a significant improvement over the existing building in terms of energy efficiency, comfort and long-term sustainability.

The building fabric will be constructed to a high standard, with enhanced levels of insulation, airtightness and glazing performance to minimise heat loss and reduce overall energy demand. The layout and orientation of the building maximise natural daylight and solar gain where appropriate, improving internal conditions and reducing reliance on artificial lighting.

Low carbon technologies are integrated into the design, including the use of an air source heat pump to provide efficient heating and hot water. Solar panels are incorporated into the roof, contributing to on-site renewable energy generation . Provision is also made for electric vehicle charging within the site, supporting the transition to low-emission transport .

Sustainability has also been considered in terms of construction and material choice. The use of locally sourced stone and timber reduces embodied energy and supports a more sustainable approach to building. The applicant's direct involvement in insulation supply further ensures that the building will be delivered to a high standard, with particular attention given to thermal and acoustic performance.

In addition to energy performance, the proposal incorporates measures to enhance biodiversity, including the integration of bat roosting features along the roof ridge and built-in bird boxes within the external walls . These measures provide meaningful ecological benefit alongside the wider landscape strategy.



Figure 9 - Proposed Elevations

7.0 Access and Movement

The site is accessed via an existing private access which connects onto an unadopted lane, which in turn joins Druidstone Road. This access arrangement is well established and is retained as part of the proposal, with no alterations required. It continues to provide safe and suitable entry to the site and has historically served the property without issue.

It is noted that the pre-application response refers to potential improvements at the junction with Druidstone Road; however, this relates to land outside of the applicant's control and does not form part of the application site. No works are proposed to this junction, and the development does not intensify the use of the access beyond its existing residential use.

Internally, the layout allows for clear and convenient vehicle movement, including adequate space for parking and manoeuvring within the site. The arrangement ensures that vehicles can enter and exit in a forward gear, reducing reliance on the wider highway network for turning.

Parking provision is appropriate to the scale of the dwelling and reflects its rural location, with space provided within the site to accommodate multiple vehicles. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is incorporated into the scheme, supporting future sustainable transport use.

Pedestrian movement within the site is straightforward and legible, with direct access from parking areas to the main entrance and surrounding external spaces. The arrangement ensures a clear separation between vehicle and pedestrian routes where possible, improving safety and usability.

8.0 Drainage

The proposed development will utilise separate surface water and foul drainage systems.

Surface water runoff from roofs and hard surfaces will discharge to on-site soakaways, with the detailed design and specification to be developed and agreed as part of the separate Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) application process. The proposal adopts a sustainable drainage approach in accordance with current Welsh SuDS requirements, ensuring that surface water is managed on site and does not increase runoff to the wider area.

Foul drainage will continue to connect into the existing drainage arrangements serving the property.

The proposal therefore maintains a simple and sustainable drainage strategy appropriate to the scale and nature of the development.

9.0 Planning Policy Compliance

The proposed development has been carefully considered against the relevant national and local planning policies identified within the pre-application response and is considered to comply with the development plan when read as a whole.

At a national level, the proposal aligns with the objectives of Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales in delivering a high-quality, sustainable form of development that makes efficient use of an existing residential site, enhances environmental performance and incorporates measures to support biodiversity and green infrastructure.

In relation to the Newport Local Development Plan, the principle of a replacement dwelling in the countryside is supported by Policy H12. While the proposal exceeds the 30% volume guideline, the policy makes clear that larger increases may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that there is no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As set out in this statement, the scale of the proposal is appropriately managed through design, siting, landscape mitigation and strong existing screening, ensuring that it does not result in harm to the wider countryside.

Policy SP5 (Countryside) and SP7 (Green Wedge) require development to respect the character and openness of the rural landscape. The proposal responds to this through a combination of reduced perceived scale, sensitive siting, and a comprehensive landscape strategy, ensuring the building is visually contained within the site and does not detract from the openness of the wider area.

Policy GP6 (Quality of Design) is addressed through a clear and coherent architectural approach, drawing on traditional rural forms and materials while delivering a contemporary and well-resolved building. The proposal improves significantly on the existing dwelling in terms of design quality and visual contribution to the site.

Policy GP5 (Natural Environment) is satisfied through the retention of existing vegetation, the introduction of new native planting and the incorporation of biodiversity enhancements, resulting in a net environmental benefit. This is supported by the submitted Green Infrastructure information and landscape proposals.

Policy GP4 (Highways and Accessibility) is met through the retention of the existing access arrangement, which continues to provide safe and suitable access to the site without intensification or the need for alteration.

Policies relating to amenity (GP2) and housing standards (H2) are satisfied through the provision of a high-quality internal layout, generous living accommodation and adequate private amenity space, with no adverse impact on neighbouring properties.

10.0 Summary and Conclusion

The proposed development seeks to replace an existing dwelling of limited architectural merit with a high-quality, energy-efficient home that responds more positively to its rural setting.

The scheme has been carefully developed to address the concerns raised at pre-application stage, with particular focus on reducing perceived scale, improving the overall composition and enhancing how the building sits within the landscape. This includes measurable reductions in height, width and finished floor level compared to the earlier scheme, alongside a refined architectural approach and a more considered material palette.

The design adopts a simple and legible form based on traditional rural principles, interpreted in a contemporary manner. The use of locally sourced stone and charred timber cladding, combined with a restrained approach to detailing, helps to soften the visual impact of the building and ensure it integrates with its surroundings.

A comprehensive landscape strategy, supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, demonstrates that the site benefits from strong existing screening and that the proposed development will be similarly contained within the site. Additional native planting and biodiversity enhancements will further strengthen this position over time, resulting in a clear improvement to the existing situation.

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant national and local planning policies, including Policy H12. While the development exceeds the 30% guideline in volumetric terms, it has been demonstrated that this does not result in a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area. The scale of the building is appropriately managed through design, siting and landscape mitigation, and is consistent with the established pattern of development within the immediate context.

The scheme also delivers significant improvements in terms of sustainability, energy efficiency and biodiversity, ensuring that it represents a responsible and future-proofed form of development.

The proposal represents a well-considered and balanced response to both the site and its context, delivering a clear enhancement over the existing dwelling. It is therefore considered that the application accords with the development plan when read as a whole and should be supported.