



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2019

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 19/0670/10 (BJW)
APPLICANT: The Cwmparc Blitz Memorial Project (a Community Association)
DEVELOPMENT: Construction of memorial.
LOCATION: LAND AT PARK ROAD, CWMPARC, TREORCHY, CF42 6LB
DATE REGISTERED: 27/06/2019
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Treorchy

REASONS:

The proposed memorial would be of an appropriate and acceptable design and appearance that would be a fitting tribute to the previously bombed houses at the application site as well as the fallen of various conflicts, would be in keeping with the character, appearance and visual amenity of the surrounding area and acceptable in highway safety terms.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

- Three or more letters of objection have been received

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a memorial on land at Park Road, Cwmparc, Treorchy.

The memorial would consist of a single square column located in the centre of a stylized, floor-mounted, Celtic cross. The cross would join the public footpath to the south, directly opposite the junction of Park Road and Ocean Street and would feature stone bench seats on the other three cardinal compass points (east, west and north).

The stylized, floor mounted cross would be finished in sandstone with black, limestone paving slabs forming an outer circular feature around them with a sunken kerb edging made of concrete. An inner circular feature would also be present, finished in pennant sandstone and edged with pennant cobblestones. The total ground area taken up by the proposal would be 8.5m in depth, from the public footpath by 7.35m in width.

The bench seats would measure 840mm in width by 2400mm in depth by 600mm in height and would be constructed of semi-coursed pennant building stone.

The memorial would measure a total of 1.45m in height and 800mm in width and depth. The memorial monument would be constructed of semi-coursed pennant building stone and topped with an overlapping slab of black granite. The stone top will be inlaid with a slightly raised cap of Welsh slate, 580mm diameter, etched with a red dragon.

The south, east and west sides of the monument would feature a polished, black granite plaque (550mm width by 900mm height).

Three sides of the monument are to be fixed with a polished black granite. The plaque at the front of the monument (i.e. facing Parc Road) will be inscribed with the individual names of each of those killed in the bombing. The plaque on the left-hand side (as viewed from Parc Road) will bear a generic inscription paying tribute to the servicemen from the village who sacrificed their lives in both World Wars and in other conflicts of the past involving our country's Armed Forces. The right-hand side of the monument (as viewed from Parc Road) will bear a generic message of gratitude to all who have donated/ contributed - financially or otherwise - to the realisation of the Memorial Project and its success.

All inscriptions will, so far as possible, be bilingual (Welsh and English). All will be engraved in gold lettering.

The application is accompanied with a tree hazard report, undertaken by Cardiff Treescapes, in respect of the health and longevity of the tree (an ornamental Cherry) that would be removed as part of the proposal and the recommendations for a replacement tree at the site, including the preferred location and species.

The proposal was the subject of early engagement with the Council's Development Control Section who advised on procedural matters and suggested public engagement for the project as well as aspects of the location and design of the proposal.

A four-day public consultation exercise was held in November 2018 at the Parc Hall, Cwmparc where alternative schemes were displayed and community consultation undertaken and views, opinions and feedback gathered. The presented schemes were the subject of a public vote which determined the scheme which has been progressed through to application stage. A further consultation meeting was held in January 2019 prior to the application being submitted in June 2019.

SITE APPRAISAL

The site is a rectangular-shaped piece of land between the junction of Park Road and David Street (48 Park Road) and No. 59 Park Road. The site, which measures 51m in length by 31m in depth, formerly had 10 terraced houses in situ which were subject to a bombing raid in the 1940's during World War Two. The houses were catastrophically damaged, with loss of civilian life, and thereafter removed from the site which has never been developed since that time.

The resultant site consists of a gentle slope to a plateau, just above the existing footway (approximately 400mm), with another rise in ground level to a shorter, rear-plateau that ties into the rear lane of Treharne street to the North of the site. The site is covered with well-established but mowed grass and has a total of six trees, five fronting onto Park Road with a single tree fronting David Street.

The proposed memorial would be located roughly in the centre of the site with direct pedestrian access off the public footpath of Park Road opposite the junction of Park Road and Ocean Street.

PLANNING HISTORY

None.

PUBLICITY

This has included site notices and the direct notification of properties surrounding the site 39 responses have been received 12 objecting to the application and 27 in support.

The main points of the responses are detailed below:

Objections

1. The memorial is too large, would be visually dominant and is not in keeping with the area.
2. The seating will allow people to look directly into houses, affecting privacy and amenity.
3. The area will become a site where youths will congregate, leading to disturbance and anti-social behaviour.
4. There is not sufficient landscaping features to mitigate the hard landscaping proposed by the application.
5. There has not been sufficient community involvement.
6. Residents were assured that the area affected would be smaller (a dimension of 4m x 6m is consistently referenced).
7. The memorial will take up too much of the site and will compromise the use of the area for informal recreation.
8. It is claimed that assurances were given that the tree would not be removed.
9. Loss of habitat.
10. Lack of replacement planting for the removed tree.
11. There is also some questioning of how the votes for the different options for the memorial were counted.
12. The development will prevent local residents practising fly-fishing on the land.
13. Disturbance caused by heavy works vehicles during construction.

Support

1. Both Cwmparc and Treorchy should have such a memorial which is overdue.
2. The memorial would be a positive community-embraced use of the site.

3. It is about time that the people who lost their lives that night had a permanent memorial as well as their relatives still living in Cwmparc and elsewhere.
4. A memorial of this type is so very important to the community - not only will it pay tribute to the people who lost their lives that night but it will also ensure future generations remember them for years to come.
5. The memorial will bring great comfort to families and friends of those involved, offering a place for quiet reflection.
6. From a purely aesthetic point of view, it is visually pleasing and will no doubt enhance the area.
7. This beautifully designed memorial will do the village proud.
8. This site can easily accommodate the proposed memorial, (having viewed the area marked out). A smaller memorial would be lost.
9. The materials chosen are sympathetic to the local area and Welsh heritage.
10. Seated areas overlooking the Bwlch allow quiet contemplation as do the existing bench.
11. Generous donations, reflect the commitment and desire of the majority of our community for the memorial to be erected.
12. The memorial will be an improvement of the unkempt land that is there at the moment and to remember the fallen.
13. The proposed memorial will be a focal point for the local community a place of remembrance a bringing us together to commemorate and celebrate those who fought and died for our lives land and freedom.
14. An excellent idea which will always keep those who have gone before in a very trying time in our thoughts.
15. The Cwmparc Blitz memorial will be a fitting and sensitive tribute not only to those 27 residents who lost their lives on April 29th 1941 but also to those who were left to cope with the physical, mental and emotional scars of that night.
16. The memorial will afford current and future generations to reflect on the effect of warfare on an innocent civilian population whose lives were so callously obliterated.
17. Surely a small, but significant, gesture for such human sacrifice cannot be begrudged?

CONSULTATION

Transportation Section – no objection. The proposed memorial is served off the public highway and has no detrimental impact on the highway safety. There is also sufficient on-street parking spaces available to accommodate any increase in parking demand.

Public Health and Protection Division – no objection, subject to a condition restricting the hours of operation during the construction period of the development and standard informative notes.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Cwmparc and is unallocated.

Policy CS1 - sets out criteria for achieving sustainable growth.

Policy AW2 - supports development in sustainable locations.

Policy AW5 - lists amenity and accessibility criteria that will be supported in new development proposals.

Policy AW6 - lists design and place making criteria that will be supported in new development proposals.

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of National Planning Policy that are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where National Planning Policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

The Welsh Government published Planning Policy Wales 10 on 5th December 2018, and the document aims to incorporate the objectives of the Well-being of Future generations Act into Town & Country Planning.

It is considered that this proposal meets the seven wellbeing of future generations goals inasmuch as they relate to the proposed development and that the site has been brought forward in a manner consistent with the five ways of working.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking as set down in Chapter 2 People and Places: Achieving Well-being Through Placemaking, of PPW10 and is also consistent with the following inasmuch as they relate to the development.

Chapter 3 (good design and better places, promoting healthier places, sustainable management of natural resources)

Chapter 4 (moving within and between places, transport, living in a place)

Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 12 - Design

The above chapters and Technical Advice note set out the Welsh Government's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of this planning application.

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Main issues:

Principle of the proposed development

The site is currently an informal area of open space in a prominent location within the centre of the village. The area includes a bench opposite 257 Park Road, Cwmparc as well as a total of six trees on the periphery of the site (five onto Park Road one onto David Street).

It is considered that the site would be a suitable location for a war memorial due to its prominent location within the village and its good accessibility. The area does not have any specific use and would allow people to congregate during Remembrance Day services and more informally at other times to pay their respects.

It is usual that such memorials are placed in prominent locations within towns and villages, often in a roadside location and commonly within a central hub. It is also considered that the location would also provide the gravitas that a memorial of this nature should have.

Consequently, it is considered that the principle of the proposal is acceptable.

Impact on neighbouring properties

The proposed memorial is considered to be of an acceptable scale and design that would not adversely impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Due to the location of the proposal, within the central location within the village centre, it is considered that there would be no detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties. The memorial would also be placed opposite the junction of Park Road and Ocean Street and therefore the seating would not directly effect the privacy of neighbouring properties to any greater degree than the current seating on the site.

Consequently, it is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Effect on the visual amenity of the area

The proposed memorial is considered to be of an acceptable design and scale that would be in keeping with the character and appearance of existing buildings at the site and the wider environment.

The materials and design would deliver a high quality and lasting memorial that would be appropriate to its setting and the character and appearance of this prominent village centre location. The proposed materials are typical of a civic monument of this nature and are also considered to be both suitable and acceptable.

Consequently, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Highway safety

The proposal has been subject to consultation with the Council's Transportation Section who have raised no objection to the application.

This view acknowledged that the proposal has no detrimental impact on highways and pedestrian safety. Therefore the proposed war memorial is considered acceptable.

Other issues

The application has been subject to a fairly high level of response as part of the consultation exercise. In this regard, the following comments are offered to the responses received:

The memorial is considered to be on an appropriate and acceptable scale that would be suitable to its setting and not to be overbearing to neighbouring properties. The materials, which include pennant stone and slate, are considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the village where such materials are commonplace.

As detailed above, the seating proposed is opposite the junction of Park Road and Ocean Street and will not allow direct overlooking of adjacent neighbouring properties. Additionally, there is already an existing bench, that has been on site for a considerable period of time which is closer to neighbouring properties.

The site is in a prominent roadside position which is subject to excellent levels of surveillance by surrounding properties. It is not considered that the site would be an attractive area for youths to congregate for this reason. However, issues of antisocial behaviour are a crime and disorder issue that can be referred to the police should this unlikely activity transpire.

In terms of landscaping, the applicant has communicated a will to plant a replacement tree in place of the ornamental Cherry tree that would be removed as part of the proposal. This is consistent with the advice from the tree report that accompanies the application, undertaken by Cardiff Treescapes. This could be secured by condition and would certainly mitigate the loss of the tree at the site. In terms of general landscaping, it is considered that the existing soft landscaping and the modest scale of the proposed memorial provides a suitable backdrop to the proposal and additional soft landscaping would not be necessary.

The application has been subject to pre-application advice. A suggestion was made that the project should engage with the local community through some form of consultation event to gauge support, opposition and to make the proposal reflective of the communities opinions. A public exhibition was undertaken for four days in the Parc Hall where options were displayed and presented to the public. The options were voted upon in sealed boxes and were counted and verified by the local vicar of St. George's Church, Cwmparc. A second public event was also held in January 2019. Consequently, it is considered that the community involvement is an exemplar and was well above what would be considered sufficient for a proposal of this nature.

In terms of assurances given for the reduction in size of the memorial and against the removal of the trees the applicant has stated that there was an undertaking to look into these concerns but no wider assurances. It was decided that by the Blitz Memorial Committee that the location chosen would have the least impact on neighbouring properties and that the reduction in scale of the memorial would not be appropriate in

terms of its scale and impact. Consequently, the decision was made to submit the application in its currently form.

It is considered that the site is a modest installation that could be easily accommodated within the wider site of the bombed houses and would not compromise the wider use of the site.

The loss of habitat represented by the scale of the works proposed would not be so significant as to warrant refusal of the application.

The point raised regarding fly fishing is acknowledged, however it is not considered that this site is suitable for undertaking this type of activity.

In terms of construction traffic it is inevitable that there would be some disturbance during construction activities. However, the site has good accessibility from the surrounding highway and the developer would be expected to follow best practice in the minimisation of noise, dust and disturbance during the construction phase of the development.

The responses in support of the application demonstrate that the proposal does have wider community support, is considered to be visually acceptable and would be a positive addition to the area.

The comments of the Public Health and Protection Division in respect of a condition to restrict the hours of operation during construction are acknowledged, however it is considered that this issue can be better addressed through other legislative controls open to the Council.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusion

It is considered that the site would be an suitable location for a memorial within the village of Cwmparc, particularly given the history of the site. The proposed memorial would be an attractive installation and a fitting memorial to civilians killed at the site during the war and the war dead in general and would allow the community to commemorate remembrance-day services in the future.

The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties, would be acceptable in terms of the visual amenity of the area and would also be acceptable in highway safety terms.

Consequently, having regard to the above the development is considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan(s):

Location Plan
Block Plan
Cwmparc Memorial, plans and elevations, Size D, Revision 2

and documents received by the Local Planning Authority unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with the approved plans and documents and to clearly define the scope of the permission

3. Prior to the removal of the existing ornamental Cherry Tree, a scheme for the replacement plant of a tree within the site shall be submitted to and specifically agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details in the first available planting season.

Reason: To mitigate the loss of the existing tree at the site and to ensure that the new development will be visually attractive in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. Building operations shall not be commenced until samples of the materials *proposed* to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all materials used shall conform to the sample(s) so approved.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development will be in keeping with the character of the area and adjoining buildings in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.