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## Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 22/02/22

gan Paul Selby BEng (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion  
Cymru

Dyddiad: 07.04.22

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22/02/22

by Paul Selby BEng (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh  
Ministers

Date: 07.04.22

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**Appeal Ref: APP/N6845/A/21/3282263**

**Site address: The Haven, Pleasant Valley, Stepside, Narberth SA67 8NY**

**The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Karl Watson against the decision of Pembrokeshire County Council.
  - The development proposed is Replacement Dwelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposal on: a) the character and appearance of the area; and: b) the living conditions of neighbouring occupants.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site accommodates a detached, pitched roofed bungalow, and is situated within the settlement boundary of the village of Pleasant Valley as designated by the Pembrokeshire Local Development Plan (LDP). Reflecting the local topography, the appeal site slopes steeply up from its street frontage towards the site's rear. Its front boundary is marked by a hedgerow which, in addition to trees sited within the front garden, screens much of the existing bungalow's front elevation and roof.

### *Character and appearance*

4. Within the vicinity of the site the built form of the village is mainly concentrated northeast of the highway and takes the form of ribbon residential development which has evolved over time. As a consequence, dwellings and guesthouses near to the appeal site vary considerably in their style, often reflecting vogues of the period in which they were built, with several displaying modifications and extensions which have further eroded any local vernacular. There is little consistency in the siting of buildings relative to the highway, in

terms of both distance and elevation. There is also notable variation in the form and arrangement of front boundary hedges, fences, walls, front gardens and driveways.

5. There is, however, a rhythm to the pattern of the row of houses, of which the appeal dwelling forms part, which affords this part of Pleasant Valley an order and spaciousness which, in addition to the principally rural setting, contributes positively to its character and appearance. Key to this, in my view, is the manner in which the prominence of dwellings is alleviated through the use of modest roof forms and design details within their first or second storeys. Where balconies are present, these tend to be at first floor level, projecting beyond principal elevations rather than integrated beneath roof forms. Second storey accommodation, for example at the neighbouring dwelling of Pencoed or at the nearby property of Pleasant Valley House, is typically served by dormer windows of limited height and/or width, the prominence of which is reduced by being set wholly or partly into the roof slope.
6. The apparent height of the appeal property would be moderated by it being set into the prevailing landform, with a height appearing similar to the adjacent dwellings and others within the parade. Whilst wider than the existing bungalow, adequate gaps would be retained at the side boundaries to avoid any harmful 'enclosing' of built form. The removal of the front hedgerow and front garden trees, and their replacement with a wall/fence and driveway, would also not appear incongruous to the established local character.
7. Nonetheless, whilst the appearance of the ground and first floor front elevations would not notably or detrimentally diverge from those of other dwellings nearby, the form and siting of the projecting gable, with a massing closer to the highway than the front elevations of the neighbouring dwellings, would appear as a prominent feature in the street scene. Although the stepped front elevation would provide some relief in this regard, and the ancillary building in the front garden of Pencoed would provide some screening, the extent to which the gabled roof form would project beyond the second floor accommodation and above the balcony would appear cumbersome in several close-range views from the highway. Any perceived reduction in bulk resulting from the degree of second floor glazing would, to my mind, be negated by the extent of the overhang. Furthermore, the height and width of glazing within the main gable, in addition to the glazed balcony screens wrapping around to the side elevations, would afford the second floor of the dwelling an austere and urban appearance which would draw the eye and jar with the rural setting.
8. I recognise that the existing bungalow is of no particular merit in design terms. I consider that the general scale and footprint of the proposed dwelling would be appropriate to the location, context and to the size of the plot, and I find no conflict with LDP policy SP 1. Nonetheless, the siting, form and design of the proposed dwelling's front elevation would notably and detrimentally depart from the design of other residential properties nearby, including that of the neighbouring dwelling of Pencoed, in doing so causing harm to the immediate area's character and appearance. Consequently I conclude that the proposal would conflict with criterion 1 of policy GN.1 and criteria 1 and 2 of LDP policy GN.2, which amongst other things seek to ensure that the siting of development is compatible with the capacity and character of the site and the area within which it is located, and to secure developments of good design which pay due regard to local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the local context, and are appropriate to the local character and landscape/townscape context in terms of form and detailing.

#### *Living conditions*

9. The proposed dwelling would be wider than the main part of the existing bungalow, with a southeastern flank wall located closer to the shared boundary with Pencoed. Relative to the underlying ground level, the proposed dwelling would also be taller than the existing

bungalow. Nonetheless, its front elevation would be similar in placement to that of the existing dwelling and its rear elevation would not extend beyond those of the adjacent dwellings of Coed Gwyrdd and Pencoed. The recessed ground floor and gabled form of the flank elevations would offset its apparent bulk and dominance, with a predominantly open outlook retained from rear gardens and from front- and rear-facing windows of the neighbouring properties. The separation distance between the side elevation and Coed Gwyrdd would also avoid any harmful reduction in outlook from southeast-facing windows in that property.

10. The orientation and placement of the proposed dwelling would be likely to lead to some overshadowing of neighbouring rear gardens during the morning or afternoon/evening. However, such effects would be experienced principally for limited periods of time outside the summer months. Having regard to the bulk and placement of the existing bungalow, I do not consider that any overshadowing or loss of light caused by the proposed dwelling would be of a magnitude that would harmfully interfere with occupants' living conditions.
11. The limited glazing in the proposed dwelling's side elevations, and the use of obscure glazed panels to the sides of balconies, would ensure that habitable rooms and private amenity spaces in the adjacent properties would not be directly or harmfully overlooked. This includes from a second floor window in the flank elevation facing Coed Gwyrdd, which would be limited in scale and, serving a bathroom, could be conditioned to be glazed and non-opening. Moreover, any overlooking from exterior steps and paths would be of a similar nature and magnitude to that arising from the existing property.
12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the proposal would not be harmful to neighbouring occupants' living conditions and would accord with criterion 2 of LDP policy GN.1, which amongst other things seeks to avoid significant detrimental impacts on local amenity in terms of visual impact, loss of light or privacy.

### **Other Matters and Conclusion**

13. Whilst I have found the proposal to be acceptable in terms of its effects on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, this does not outweigh the identified harm to the area's character and appearance.
14. I have considered the other matters raised, including the improved on-site accessibility of the proposed dwelling, but these do not alter my decision. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.
15. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective to make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.

*Paul Selby*

INSPECTOR