

Development Brief

Development of 54 no. dwellings plus new access and highways infrastructure

Land Adjacent to Verlon Farm, Pool Road, Montgomery, Powys
SY15 6EU

Rev. A



Summary

Proposal

Design statement for proposed residential development

Location

Land at Verlon Farm, Pool Road, Montgomery, Powys, SY15 6EU

Date

September 2022

Project Reference

T006

Clients

The Trustees of Lymore Estate

Planning Authority

Powys County Council

Statement prepared by

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Introduction

Hughes Architects has been commissioned by the Trustees of Lymore Estates to prepare a pre-application enquiry for proposed residential development of land at Verlon Farm, Pool Road, Montgomery, Powys, SY15 6EU.

The site is allocated for development in the Powys Local Development Plan 2011-26 (reference P45 HA1). While the allocated site area is in excess of 10 hectares the Local Development Plan anticipates that only 2 hectares will be developed during the Plan period.

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) comments in relation to the allocated development site are as follows:

“Large Site capable of being phased beyond the Plan period. Development Brief required for phasing and potential future phasing as provision of new link road necessary to realise full allocation.

Plan anticipates approx. 2 ha being developed.

Sensitive site re: heritage and landscape buffer required for Sewage Treatment Works. Lies within the Trefaldwyn character area of the Vale of Montgomery Registered Historic Landscape - so will require assessing under ASIDOHL2.

Site lies immediately close to three Scheduled Ancient Monuments, ‘Montgomery Castle’, ‘Montgomery Town Walls’ and ‘Ffridd Faldwyn hillfort’ development adjacent to these sites may come within the terms of 1979 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act and would require consultation with CADW and CPAT to ascertain the effects that it might have on the setting of this historic asset.

Any development here may also require archaeological intervention as part of any planning application.

As part of any development proposal the existing junction of the B4385/B4388 will need to be permanently closed up to all vehicular traffic. Site is within a catchment that is failing WFD objectives (due to phosphate levels). Therefore, foul water disposal must go to a mains public sewer or developer must show private connection is not adding to phosphate levels in the catchment.

*Development proposals must be identified through the preparation of a development brief that takes account of all issues including constraints and viability. *Project level HRA screening required – Montgomery Canal SAC (hydrological connections)”*

(Source: Powys LDP 2011-26 – April 2018)

The proposal is for a development of no more than 54 properties on approximately 2 hectares of the allocated site and which takes account of site constraints including topography and highways access, and having regard to the proximity of sites of archaeological interest.

Taking its lead from the Local Development Plan, this document seeks to provide context to the proposed development having regard to the rich heritage of Montgomery and its notable landscape and to provide the basis for dialogue between the applicant and their design team, the Local Planning Authority and other key stakeholders such as the Montgomery Civic Society, CADW and Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT).

1.0 Location

General Location and Context

Montgomery is an historic Border market town situated in the Welsh Marches and is the old county town of Montgomeryshire, characterised by a mixture of Georgian, Victorian and much earlier half-timbered architecture, a ruined mediaeval castle, 13th century church and a myriad of modern architectural styles. The whole town within the ancient walls is a Conservation Area and lies at the heart of the designated Outstanding Historic Landscape Area of the Vale of Montgomery.

The town, which at last count had a population of 1,295, is little over 1 mile over the Welsh border from Shropshire and is 21 miles west of Shrewsbury by road.

Prior to the reforms in local government, which took Place in 1974, Montgomery was a Borough, with its own Borough Council and was the County Town of the then County of Montgomeryshire which stretched from the Welsh border westwards to the coast. With the administrative changes the county became a District in the charge of Montgomery District Council at Welshpool, and the extensive County of Powys.

A Montgomery Civic Society exists with the object of helping preserve the character of the town and ensuring that any developments will be in keeping with it. A 16th century house known as “The Old Bell”, standing in Arthur Street, has been restored by the Society and established as a Museum and Exhibition Centre, in which the Towns historical heritage is displayed.

1.0 Location

Site Location

The land at Verlon Farm that is allocated for housing development in the Powys Local Development Plan lies to the North of the former County town of Montgomery and nestles between the B4385 Class II Station Road, linking Leintwardine, Shropshire and Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, and B4388 Class II Forden Road between Montgomery and Welshpool.

These two roads meet just to the south of the site from which the B4385 continues through the town and on to Shropshire, which is just over one-mile distance from the town. This forms a “wishbone” shape inside which is located the land at Verlon Farm.

1.0 Location

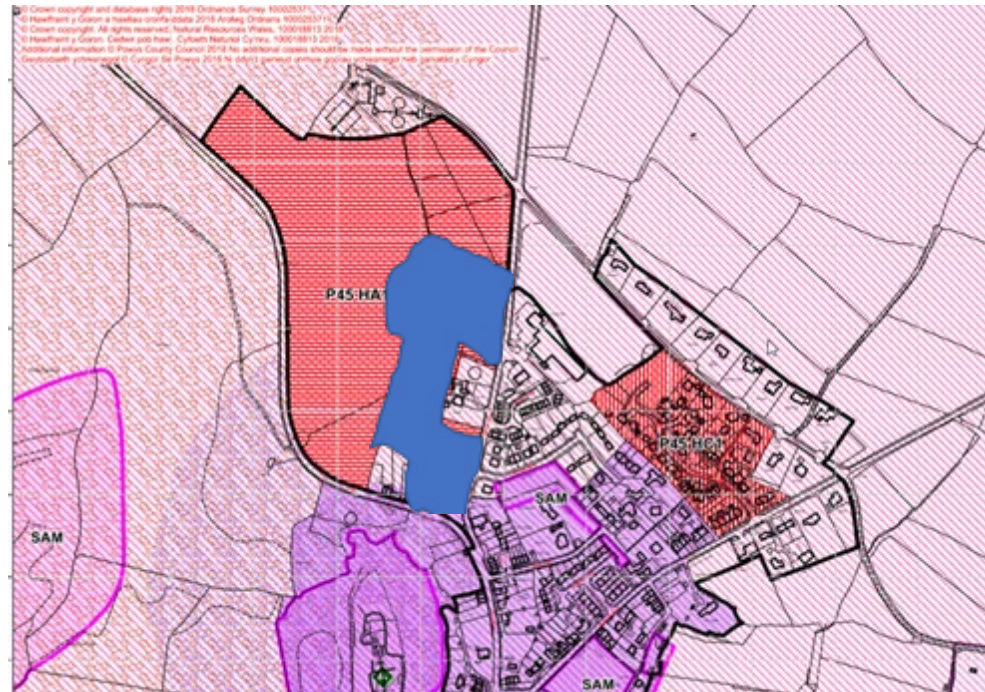


Figure 1. Extract from Powys Local Development Plan 2011-26 showing the large allocated site P45 HA1, Land at Verlon Farm

The area of 2 hectares which is proposed to develop within the lifetime of the Local Development Plan is coloured blue on the above inset plan and massed around Verlon Farm. This takes account of the potential sensitivity of the site referred to in the Local Development Plan and contained in the Introduction to this Development Brief. In terms of this section of the allocated site then it is only the B4388 Class II Forden Road between Montgomery and Welshpool that will be affected as regards highways and access.

The entire site allocated for development in the Local Development Plan sits outside of the Conservation Area and historic town centre of Montgomery.

Topography and Geology

The application site is bounded on 2 sides by classified roads. The upper road is the B4385 Newtown/ Abermule road and is at an average of 134.31 AOD. From that road edge the site drops at some considerable gradient very quickly by on average 5m. It slopes in a north easterly direction leading to its lowest point around Verlon Farm at 120.30 AOD. Towards its most northern edge the land starts to flatten out at 107.32 AOD. The B4388 Forden Road defines the site at its eastern edge.

In terms of its geological composition soils are derived from mudstone. The soils are seasonally wet and adjacent to streams and springs. In the western field there is alluvial cover over the till deposits, this being absent away from the stream. Towards the top of the field the geology has more the character of soils derived from mudstone with a thin cover of till.

The lower regions of the steepest western slopes are of colluvial material from upslope, maybe mobilised by the cultivation activity seen historically.

The same underlying geology is apparent on the eastern slopes. Much of the central region of this area is alluvium within which was the former stream course (diverted to the present line prior to the Tithe Map of the 1840s). This same region is now wet ground along the valley bottom.

1.0 Location

General Usage

The site forms part of the Lymore Estate and is used for agricultural purposes as grazing land.

Proximity to Conservation Area

The Montgomery Conservation Area lies adjacent to and south of the allocated site and incorporates all of the town within the ancient walls. The land at Verlon Farm sits wholly outside of the Conservation Area. However, its proximity suggests that any design proposals will need to be respectful of and sympathetic to the Conservation Area and not detract in any way from its character and appearance.

1.0 Location

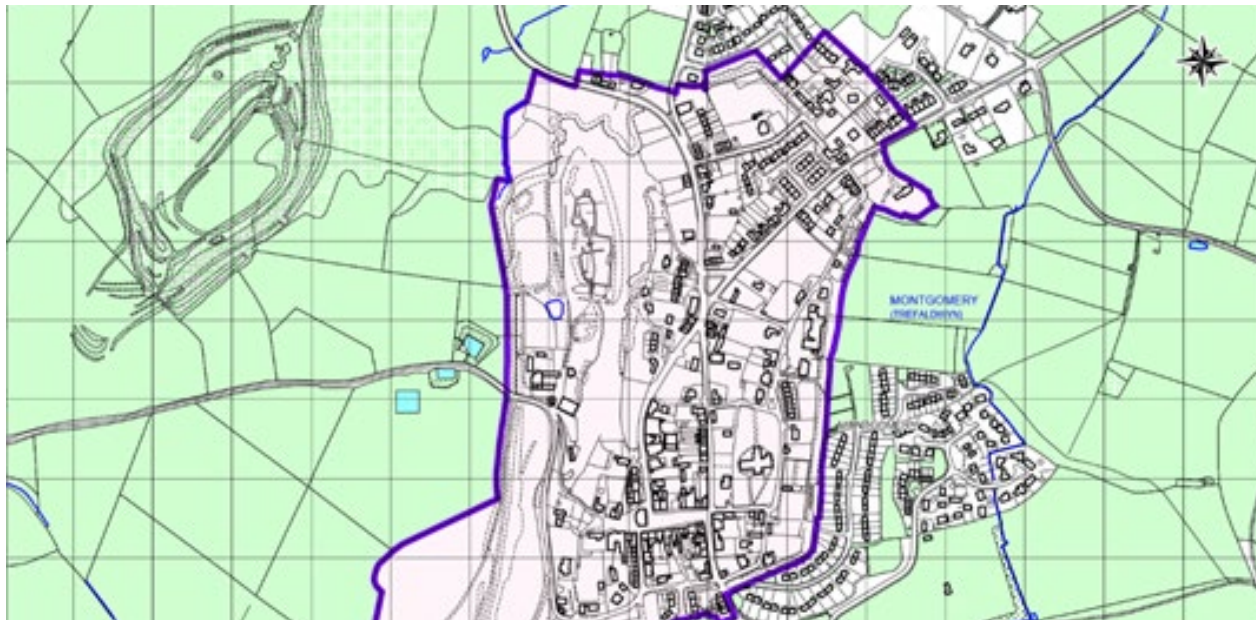


Figure 2. Montgomery Conservation Area. The allocated site lies to the North of this area. The proposed development site of 2 ha. is outside of the scope of this map.

2.0 Historical Development

Early History and Development (Outline)

Early settlement of the area may be indicated by a cropmark enclosure about 40m across, to the north of Little Lymore, suggesting that it may belong to the Iron Age or Roman periods.

However, the documented history of Montgomery is rooted in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest of 1066. Earl Roger built the earth and timber, motte and bailey castle now known as Hendomen about 1.5km to the north-east of the town shortly after the fall of Mercia in 1071, naming it Muntgumeri after his home in Normandy.

Trefaldwyn, the Welsh name for the town, means 'Baldwin's town'. The place-name is first recorded as 'Baldwin's castle' (Chastell Baldwyn), probably after Baldwin de Boulers upon whom Henry I conferred the lordship of Montgomery after 1086, both the Norman and Welsh names being subsequently transferred to the new town of Montgomery, created in the early 13th century.

The castle at Hendomen became an important strategic feature, by guarding the ford across the river Severn at Rhydwhiman (see Trehelig-gro character area), by acting as a means of controlling the areas which had been deserted due to Welsh incursions before the Norman Conquest, and by acting as a springboard for Norman incursions into Wales. Trading activities took place at this new settlement, possibly either within the castle bailey or on an unidentified site nearby, such as in the area of the present hamlet of Hendomen.

Excavation and fieldwork at Hendomen has revealed evidence of earlier, pre-Norman activity, including a timber building of posthole construction below the castle defences, together with elements of an earlier ridge and furrow field system and traces of an earlier, probably Anglo-Saxon settlement just to the west of the castle. The settlement has no documented history, but like a number of others in Bro Trefaldwyn which are mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, has possibly been one of a number of Mercian settlements founded to the west of Offa's Dyke in the 9th century but abandoned due to warfare between the Mercia and the Welsh kingdoms in the early 11th century.

2.0 Historical Development

Friction continued between the Welsh kingdoms and the Norman held territories throughout the later 11th and 12th centuries. Finally, in 1223, during the reign of Henry III, in the face of renewed hostilities between Llywelyn ap Iorwerth of Gwynedd and neighbouring English lords, work began on the construction of a new royal stone castle on the hillside to the south-east, followed by the construction of a new town, which received its first charter in 1227.

Montgomery church was probably started in the 1220s, the new parish of Montgomery also being created at this time from the earlier larger parish of Chirbury.

Much of the original medieval road plan remains together with the earthwork defences, particularly on the east and west, but there are only slight visible remains of the town wall, on the northern side.

Relatively little archaeological excavation has been undertaken within the town, though the archaeological potential has been clearly shown by one site in Pool Road, where a sequence of timber building techniques from posthole to sleeper-beam construction at a period in about the 13th to 14th century has been demonstrated.

Montgomery appears to have been a thriving market town and borough during the medieval period but underwent a decline in the late medieval period when it ceased to have a military function. Speed's map of the town of 1610 shows many vacant areas in the northern and eastern sides of the town.

Unlike a number of other border towns it failed to develop as an industrial centre in the post-medieval period.



2.0 Historical Development

Civil War

In 1664 the castle was surrendered to the Parliamentary army on 4 September 1644 and besieged by Royalist forces between 7-18 September, which resulted in one of the largest battles in Wales during the civil war period. The battlefield probably occupied most of the ground on the north-east side of what is now the Character Area of Trefaldwyn, ranging between Lymore Park and Offa's Dyke to the east and Hendomen to the west.

Systematic metal detector surveys in parts of the area have revealed military finds including musket, carbine and pistol shot, and provide graphic evidence of the disposition of troops during the course of the battle, in which the Parliamentary army was victorious. Aerial photography has revealed possible remains of Civil War siege works or encampment near the junction of Sarkley Lane and the road leading towards Forden (A4388). Large parts of the castle were eventually demolished in 1649-50.



2.0 Historical
Development

3.0 Landscape and Vistas

Key historic and landscape characteristics

The land within the character area falls from the steep cliffs near the castle, at about 210m above OD, down to the more gently sloping fields north of the Camlad, at about 80m OD, and faces predominantly towards the north-east.

CPAT note that the site contributed to “the Trefaldwyn historic landscape character area (HLCA 1070) within the Vale of Montgomery registered historic landscape (HLW (P) 2).”

The solid geology is composed of Silurian shales, overlain by ridges of boulder clay. Soils on the lower-lying ground are predominantly fine silt, clay and loam stagnogley soil, subject to seasonal waterlogging in some areas.

The medieval town of Montgomery was built on the lower ground below the castle to the was determined by the defensive position occupied by the castle, and although much of it was unsuited to a regular layout it nevertheless proved possible to establish a substantial borough on the sloping ground below the castle, and is the best preserved of the medieval towns of mid Wales, the medieval road pattern being dictated by a slight valley below Castle Rock and the spur beyond it, below the church.

The town was defended by substantial ditches possibly accompanied in the early phases by timber defences replaced in stone with some interval towers later in the 13th century, with four gates, Cedewain Gate on the west, Arthur’s Gate on the north, Chirbury Gate on the east and Kerry Gate on the south. Little of the original defences remains visible.

Significant Buildings

The oldest surviving buildings in the town are the castle and St Nicholas's Church, both of which have surviving 13th-century stonework, the stalls having been brought from the former Augustinian priory at Chirbury at the Dissolution.

The earliest domestic and commercial buildings are likely to have been largely of timber, the excavation of one burgage plot in Pool Road showing a change from post-built to sleeper-beam, probably cruck-framed construction between about the 13th and 14th centuries.

The earliest surviving timber buildings are 16th-century timber-framed houses, together with a number of 17th- to early 18th-century timber-framed houses, now with brick infill. Stone and brick became more commonly used in the 17th and 18th centuries. Relatively early brick buildings in the town include Clawdd-y-Dre with a datestone of 1726 while other Georgian brick buildings include the former Charity School of 1747 on Pool Road and the Town Hall of 1748.

Other notable buildings include the County Gaol of the 1830s in brick faced with stone, and with a stone arch of 1866, the stone Presbyterian Church with sandstone dressings of 1885 and the Wesleyan Chapel and School on Pool Road in brick with stone dressings, of 1903.

The town has a number of cast-iron public hand water-pumps of the 1870s.

Modern housing is focused on each of the four medieval gates, with late 19th- and 20th-century expansion of town beyond the medieval defences on the north-east, between Arthur's Gate and Chirbury Gate.

On the outskirts of the town as far Hendomen is a scattering of small farms and smallholdings, with a small number of medium-sized farms beyond, most of which are probably of early post-medieval and more recent origin, some of which probably colonised the former open-fields of the medieval town. The earliest surviving buildings in these areas include the small 17th to early 18th-century timber-framed houses with slate roofs at Siglen and timber-framed cottages at Stalloe Cottages and Clift Cottage to the west of Sarkley.

There are relatively few early brick buildings outside the town, one of the few exceptions being Castle Farm, an 18th-century farmhouse with unusually asymmetrical gables. 18th/19th-century brick farmhouses include Rhydwhiman Farm, Pwll, Stalloe, Burnt House, and Sarkley, the latter added to an 18th-century timber-framed building, with 18th to early 19th-century rendered brick farmhouses at Little Lymore and Hendomen.

There are 19th and 20th-century brick roadside cottages and small houses at Hendomen, invariably with slate roofs, and a number of modern bungalows at Hendomen. A stone barn at Rhydwhiman Farm is one of the relatively small number of surviving stone outbuildings. Other buildings include a weather-boarded barn at Siglen, 19th/20th-century brick outbuildings at Stalloe, and fairly ubiquitous 19th/20th-century timber-framed and steel-framed outbuildings elsewhere, often clad in corrugated iron, and small timber-framed Dutch barns. A number of fields have reused railway waggons. Other buildings in the countryside include the 19th-century brick signalman's cottage at Hendomen, and 20th-century light industrial buildings at Hendomen and on the northern outskirts of Montgomery

Open land characteristics

Modern land-use in the fields outside the town is predominantly pasture with occasional arable. The present-day field pattern shows little change from the mid- 19th century, apart from the loss of some field boundaries, and seems to largely represent early post-medieval enclosure of the original open fields belonging to the medieval town of Montgomery. These consist of long rectangular strip fields running along the contour, with lanes in hollow ways and green lanes running between medieval arable open fields. There are numerous low lynchets on sloping ground, with remnant medieval and earlier ridge and furrow in places. Generally low-cut multi-species hedges, predominantly hazel and hawthorn, with some blackthorn, holly and elder, some former and some more recent hedge-laying, and some low hedge banks. Gorse scrub appears on the steeper slopes.

Verlon Farm - Landscape Characteristics

Verlon Farm itself has been in existence since the 1880s and comprises a two-storey farmhouse with brick and metal clad outbuildings.

The site forms a key part of the Trefaldwyn character area with long views from the castle and town of the battlefield and the open field system surrounding the town.



Figure 3. View of Verlon Farm from Forden

The past landscapes at Verlon Farm seem to have been agrarian and there is little convincing evidence for former settlement or industry although there may be evidence for a small structure attached to a former boundary in the western field.

Some anomalies are related to extant earthworks that appear to be parts of a field system while others have been mapped that might indicate more of the same. The ridge and furrow cultivation do not necessarily respect this field system, but their relative date is ambiguous.

In the southwest part of the survey undertaken by Tiger Geo there might be evidence for a former thoroughfare that pre-dates the present road to the west of the site. This could be of medieval date given it appears to be heading towards the site of Arthur's gate into Montgomery. If so, how this relates to the ridge and furrow cultivation also of probable medieval data is unknown as they overlap.

Several different soil and land use contexts are evident within the data that have affected to a variable degree magnetic contrast and hence the detectability of some classes of feature. The lack of artificial mechanisms for soil magnetic susceptibility enhancement, typically heat and originating within settlement, means that the result is entirely dependent upon the natural susceptibility of the soil. This seems unlikely to have had a significant effect upon the interpretation.

Verlon Farm – Archaeological Characteristics

The search undertaken by Tiger Geo indicates that the north-eastern part of the site contains potential archaeological features and finds associated with the Civil War battlefield (of Montgomery). Finds relating to the Civil War are also recorded within the site, although these are more prominent in a field to the south-west, on the opposite side of the B4388 carriageway and outside the survey area.

Possible siege works (PRN 172) are recorded here as upstanding banks that form part of a rectangular enclosure, although these are more likely to be remnant field boundaries of medieval or later date, with any siege works closer to the castle, on the slopes of Ffridd Ffaldwyn (Mark Walters).

Further earthworks are also visible on satellite images in the southern part of the site, although these are not recorded and their origin may be associated with agricultural ditches and drains. Inspection of these earthworks during survey revealed them to be low but substantial banks and to cross the valley bottom, outlining at least one fairly large rectilinear enclosure. In the northern part the banks recorded as PRN 172 appear to be former field boundaries surviving as lynchets and again part of a rectilinear system.

Character and Relationship of Spaces

The proposed application site is contained within a bowl within the lee of Montgomery Castle. There are 2 classified roads that define the site to 2 separate boundaries. The B4385 is at some elevation to the site at its southern and western boundaries. The 4388 Forden Road contains the site at its eastern boundary and heads north. The land flattens out towards the northern most part of the site. The general pattern of development in the area is of dwellings in an increasingly lower density arrangement. There are some areas of industry notably the old Montgomery Thermostats site but it is understood that owners of that site may have aspirations for future residential development in the form of sheltered housing.

Views and Vistas with the Area

The application site can be seen from all public highways as it is effectively in a bowl around Verlon Farm. It can be also be seen from the highly elevated Montgomery Castle to the south.

3.0 Landscape
and Vistas

4.0 Townscape and Architecture

Grain, Scale, Repetition and Diversity

Montgomery is characterised by a wide range of residential development styles and house types, not only reflecting the town's long and rich history but also more recent development within and adjacent to the old town walls.

The following illustrations provide a snapshot of some of the range of residential property types and designs, ranging from traditional style terraced cottages, traditional bungalows and two-storey dwellings to more recent additions to the street scene including development adjacent to the allocated site and indeed the sites of all of the former mediaeval gates.



Figure 4. Cottages at B4385 Station Road on the approach to Montgomery



Figure 5. Modern detached property approaching junction with B4388 Forden Road from B4385 Station Road (Verlon Close development can be glimpsed in background beyond allocated site)



Figure 6. Views at junction of B4385 and B4388 indicating road network and examples of development styles



Figure 7. Views at junction of B4385 and B4388 indicating road network and examples of development styles

4.0 Townscape
and Architecture



Figure 8. Modern dormer bungalow development at Verlon Close (opposite and right angles to allocation site) with bungalows at Arthur's Gate in background



Figure 9. Modern dormer bungalow development immediately opposite allocation site, looking along B4388 in the direction of Welshpool



Figure 10. B4388 in direction of Montgomery with allocated site to right of picture



Figure 11. Examples of variety of house styles and materials near Montgomery town centre as viewed from B4385 including traditional cottage, bungalow and houses



Figure 12. Brick terrace cottages near Montgomery town centre, viewed from B4385



4.0 Townscape
and Architecture

Figures 13 & 14. Views towards Georgian Town Hall Building

From the above it is possible to grasp the range of appearance and materials that characterise the local built environment. While roof coverings are almost uniformly of slate, roof pitches vary considerably, while walls are constructed of a variety depending on the period and style of construction including brick, timber frame with brick infill, stone and render.

Principal Buildings and Features

The vast majority of principal buildings are at some distance to the proposed site. There are very few buildings of architectural substance, specifically dwellings, that can be used as cues and inspiration for the design agenda for this site. Those dwellings that are closest to the site are of typical 20th century design and bring very little to the architectural interest evident elsewhere in Montgomery. We must therefore travel to the town centre to develop our design agenda for the site.

As Haslam states in the Pevsner Architectural Guide - The Buildings of Wales (Powys), "Montgomery became a free borough and ecclesiastical parish in 1227... and remained a prosperous market town till the industrial age. Then the canal and later the railway came to serve the lower-lying Welshpool and Newtown, and anyway stimulated not Welsh manufacture but markets for English goods. So the town is left the best planned and best preserved in Mid Wales..." So, we must turn to the centre of the town for inspiration as there is very little in the immediate vicinity of the proposed application site.

The majority of buildings in the town centre are from the Georgian period. Arranged in terraces and of varying heights the key to what makes Montgomery is the tight variety of differing styles but within the same overall architectural language. Density is increased with buildings fronting the street line with very little defensible space bar areas reserved for coal shuts or small railed garden areas. Buildings are, in the main, simple brick structures with low pitched slate clad roofs. Certainly not of the 35- 45 degree pitched tiled roofs seen nearer to the proposed site.

Some roofs are hidden behind parapet walls and others have their eaves exposed. Scale is brought to street level by the introduction of dormers which break roof lines. There is a lack of standard sized facias with rainwater goods fixed to rafter ends or reduced size facias. Small details that make the difference.

More often than not elevations are symmetrical on the street with dwellings served by a short flight of steps up to the front door. Below ground floor there is usually a basement with the principal rooms on the first floor.

Tall and dignified sash windows with delicate wooden glazing bars in standard sized panes of glass dominate the front façade. Short windows on the ground floor for solidity, tall windows on the first floor and more often than not, square windows to the upper floors. Front doors are generous and delicately panelled with fanlights over.

Listed Buildings and Scheduled and Ancient Monuments

Whilst Montgomery is rich in terms of the number of listed buildings and can boast three scheduled and ancient monuments (SAMs) the proposed development is unlikely to impact on these either in terms of setting or appearance, being some way distant of any of these historic assets.

We are aware that the site of Verlon Farm could have formed a small part of the civil war battle referred to elsewhere in this document and it will be important that there is archaeological intervention at the pre-planning stage, notwithstanding that initial investigation by TigerGeo, and who were appointed on the advice of Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust found only negligible evidence of historic and agricultural remains.

Boundaries

Within the town centre dwellings are built tight to the inner pavement edge with only a short amount of space to front facing windows and small private gardens. 1200mm high metal railings provide for defensible space. The stereotypical town centre boundary treatment is very urban in a Georgian sense. Boundaries near the application site are characterised by larger front gardens and hedges to the road edge.

Prominent Styles

The most prominent style in Montgomery, and that which characterises the town is Georgian. Towards the application site that style changes to 1920s and 1930s domestic in an Arts and Craft style as below.



Figure 15. Arts and Craft style dwelling

In the immediate vicinity of the site that style turns to turn of the century estate domestic, as referenced above, with very little reference to the typical Montgomery style in evidence elsewhere in the town such as at Brades Meadow (by the same applicant), now Mortimer Road, as below:



Figure 16. Mortimer Road



Figure 17 & 18. Mortimer Road

4.0 Townscape
and Architecture



The architectural styling at Maldwyn Way explores similar themes but in a more familiar domestic way:



Figure 19. Maldwyn Way

4.0 Townscape
and Architecture

Materials

The predominant facing material in the town centre and outlying estates is brick and a smooth render. Roofs are clad in slate and windows are, in the main, painted timber.

Typical Features and detail

Within the town centre buildings, and more specifically dwellings in that area, are simple brick clad structures punctuated by a hierarchical arrangement of judiciously placed timber windows. Proportion is everything and the verticality of buildings is a key aspect of architectural styling in the town. Brick detailing can be rather dramatic on some buildings but this is tempered by simplicity elsewhere. Not all buildings have the same extrovert approach in their detailing and that is the key to this town, there is an element of showmanship but this is not shared by every building. Detailing is well mannered, considered and calm while being of its place. Similar themes have been entertained at Brades Meadow and to a lesser degree at Maldwyn Way. The urban realm is key to the success of any new development in Montgomery so particular attention needs to be brought to this element of the proposed site.

5.0 Proposed Design Solution

Design Philosophy

The challenge with this site is to successfully integrate a modern arrangement of dwellings with key urban design features redolent of Montgomery in this edge of settlement green field site. Add to this the fact the site is at a key entrance to this town of historical gates and also the fine long view of the castle and the historical landscape and you have quite the task for an architect. However, the most beautiful designs come from sites with the most constraints.

The site will need to look appealing from long views as well as up close. The topography lends itself to a development that will gradually reveal itself as you approach it from each road rather than being entirely apparent from every vista. Another key view will be from Montgomery Castle which is at some considerable elevation from the site.



Figure 20. View from the castle with far reaches of the application site visible



Figure 21. View towards the castle from Forden Road and the application site emerging on the right

Scale and density

The proposal is to develop 54 houses reflecting Local Planning Authority comments that only 2 hectares are anticipated to be developed during the plan period to 2025. The area for development is indicated on the attached location plan and is massed around the farmhouse to the east of the site nearest the B4388 and opposite the existing developments at Arthur's Gate and Verlon Close (see illustrations).

These are to be brought forward incrementally and it is proposed will utilise a variety of house types and styles reflecting the heterogenous vernacular and varied street scenes of Montgomery. Nowhere is this better exemplified than at Brades Meadow on Mortimer Road, Montgomery, a well-received modern housing development which emanated from Trustees of the Lymore Estate. Proposals for Verlon Farm would seek to emulate this successful scheme in terms of the range of housing and which themselves complement the myriad of housing types and styles that characterise this most quintessential of Welsh border towns.

Density of development shall be crucial to ensure that this gateway development site not only enhances the patina of this wonderful border town, but also the long views of it set against the backdrop of the castle. Accordingly, density is likely to be less than that set out in Policy ?? in the LDP.

Aesthetic

The ambition with the design of this site from detail to overall vision is to be bold while being entirely respectful of the setting in which the land lies. The edge of settlement position brings with it the age-old challenge of how a traditional townscape gives way to rolling countryside. The site will need to appear green in every aspect, while being fit for purpose for use by cars users and pedestrians alike.

The public realm needs to be considered as an integral part of the scheme while the modern-day preponderance for the car to overwhelm the good intentions of any urban design needs to be challenged, not only by designers, but by the local authority as well.

In terms of the fine detail the architect has to design a traditional and balanced dwelling house in scale and massing while referencing historic Montgomery styling in a contemporary way. A low carbon agenda cannot be satisfied by use of historical features alone so it is vitally important to consider building orientation, positioning of windows and relationship of dwellings to each other. These are key factors which mean a move away from traditional building appearances and relationships.

Here are some examples of where this dichotomy has been successful in other areas of the UK.



Figure 22. Dichotomy examples



Figure 23. Dichotomy examples

In these 2 examples a simple palette of materials uses depth of elevations to create variety in the street scene and complement the existing fabric.



Figure 24. Dichotomy examples

Rhythm and repetition and positively addressing the street scene by bringing the building line forward. Larger glazed openings reference the hierarchy of historical window arrangements.

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