

Bolston Development, Bonvilston

The name Bonvilston derives from that of a Norman nobleman, Simon de Bonville. Interestingly the Welsh version, Tresimwn, is based on his Christian name. Going back in time the village was often referred to as Bolston. In the late 1970s Bonvilston House was demolished and much of the land used to build Village Farm. The gardener's cottage at Bonvilston House was altered and substantially extended to form Bolston House and the adjoining stables converted into The Coach House.

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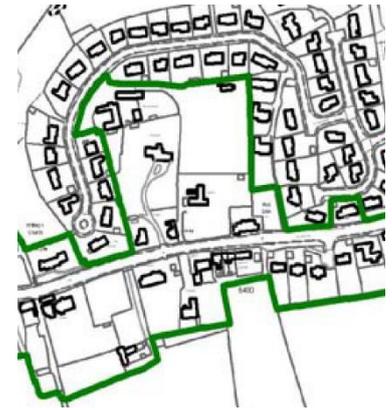
Planning Constraints

- Refusal for two properties 200m to the west on the southern side of the A48
- Road Noise levels
- Conservation Area

Conservation Area

The site lies within the Bonvilston Conservation Area. Any new construction must reflect the incremental development of Bonvilston, and buildings of unique appearance and character.

The walls along the A48 have been protected by the Conservation Area, however, the high walls are a relatively recent feature, and a reaction to the A48 being increasingly busy, noisy and dangerous.



The walls do not create an attractive place for living or walking and reflect noise.

Pictured below is Ty Mawr, an attractive property that disappeared from view, behind a high wall, a decade ago, as others like Plasnewydd have done before.



The high walls have degraded the Conservation Area, and yet the conservation policies pursued by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, wrongly, protect these walls.

The wall at the front of Bolston House is 2.65m high and more appropriate for a prison than a village. The wall is currently softened by vegetation that is overhanging it and in danger of obstructing the highway. When this vegetation is removed, a hard, unwelcoming wall lies behind.





The walls found in front of Red Lion and Sheep Court Cottages are more appropriate, with traditional or native hedging behind if appropriate.

This old photograph of The Red Lion shows that there was such a wall here too before the carpark was provided. Walls of this height are attractive, functional and welcoming.

The road needs to adapt to the fact it's passing through a village, the village should not be adapting for, and dominated by, the road.

New development should enhance the Conservation Area and become a part of it. What's currently proposed is reason to remove the Conservation Area from this space.

Replicating Sheep Court and Red Lion Cottages along the A48, with rear access for deliveries and parking would maintain and enhance the character and feel of Bonvilston as a unique and special place, whilst providing additional homes and surveillance of the street. The property Natland (opposite the development) has also been built to a similar style.



The limestone stone walls, with distinctive red brick dressing should be replicated on new properties visible from the A48.



Future Generations and the Sustainable Development Principle

The guiding principle of sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This means that we need to consider finite resource use (especially building materials and their embodied energy) carefully.

Bolston House



Parts of the stone-built house with slate roof date back to the 1800's. It was extended in the 1970's and it is believed that materials and components came from the deconstruction of Bonvilston House. The building has cultural interest predating its construction. The uniqueness of this building can contribute positively to the Conservation Area.

The council objects to demolition. If the house cannot be repaired/renovated or repurposed, then deconstruction must be considered. **Reduce, reuse, recycle.**

- Reduce waste
- Reuse materials and components



The most sustainable building that can stand on the site is the existing Bolston House. As Bolston House does not prevent the construction of other dwellings on the site, for the well-being of future generations, it must be retained, repaired and renovated.



The unnecessary loss of this unique building and its associated history would be detrimental to the Conservation Area, and the global environment.



The two stone columns at the front entrance to Bolston House originally stood at the front of Bonvilston House (pictured here).

Proposed Housing

There is less uniformity in the McDonalds golden arches than the frontage of dwellings produced by Waterstone Homes. The appearance of the dwellings proposed for this site are identical to the appearance of dwellings produced by Waterstones at all their other sites. There is no thought for local character or sources of building material. There is a limestone quarry at Bonvilston, and it's hoped that all new stone requirements will come from this source.

The council would like each property to be fronted with a limestone garden wall, with gates, like the other properties in the Conservation Area. Where building walls are not of limestone, they should be rendered with traditional lime render, and painted with limewash or a natural, silicate paint.

Windows and roofs should replicate the shape and appearance of those already found in the Conservation Area, and with the best environmental performance possible.



The statement of the buildings proposed to those stood on the site would be “You are on a Waterstones Estate. What the buildings should tell those standing in front of them is that they are in Bonvilston. The proposed buildings conflict with and dominate the Conservation Area. They are simply not compatible and Conservation Area status would need to be revoked.

It's a shame that no bungalow is included in these plans for older people, or those with a disAbility, needing to live on a single level.



FRONT ELEVATION

LEFT SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

LEFT SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

LEFT SIDE ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION



Layout



There are concerns with the north west corner of the proposal – the proximity to existing properties and isolation from the rest of the development. It looks like two dwellings have been squeezed onto one plot. The total plot size for both dwellings is similar to that of the neighbouring 31 Village Farm. Profit is being prioritised far ahead of people and planet.

The west facing windows of properties on The Walk seem to overlook the rear gardens of some of the new dwellings.



It's antisocial to put two storey houses against the fence of an existing dwelling – especially to their south. This needs to be reconsidered. A single-story garage (or bungalow) would be far less rude.

The developer claims that the development would have a “solar gain orientation”. This turns out to be – “The sun may be seen from the site”.

Public Open Space

There needs to be a clear purpose for the public open space and a clear management strategy in place. Well maintained, open front gardens can have some of the same positive effects of public open space (POS). Will the proposed POS be used? Is it usable? By whom, why? Does it meet the open space needs of people living on the Bolston site?

Walkability

The layout does have issues in term of walkability. Whilst there are visual and calming benefits of curves, people walk to desire lines – which are straight lines. This means that people will frequently be crossing the street... Have people with disAbilities been considered? People who are deaf or require a guide dog? Can a guide dog negotiate this street?



The path of the road needs to be reconsidered and evidence of inclusiveness of all people and consideration of desire lines presented.

Development name

There are clear candidates for the name of the proposed development

- Bolston Green
- Bolston Gardens
- Bolston Cottages

Speed Limit

It is our view that no development should take place until the speed limit is corrected in-line with Welsh Government guidance.

Road Noise

The level of noise from the road must be tackled prior to building commencing, should permission be granted. This can be done by reducing traffic speeds, improving compliance with the speed limit, and changing the road surface to one that produces less rolling noise.

Road noise should not be mitigated by building walls and fences.

Inclusive Accessibility

Existing A48 footway widths do not meet either Active Travel or Inclusive Mobility guidance minimum standards. This is a barrier for people with disAbilities, and makes walking uncomfortable for many. As a minimum, the footway must be 2m wide, however, children should be able to cycle on this path to travel to school or visit friends, thus requiring the northern pathway to be 3m wide. Thought must also be given to widening the southern footway. Full guidance is provided by the Welsh Government in their Active Travel Design Guide, Design Elements DE024 & DE001.

We would expect this development to be linked by such a pathway to The Old Village Shop and Maes Y Ffynon, and the bus stop.



This photo is taken from in front of the Red Lion, along the footway in front of The Bolston Site.

The footway in front of the wall is 1.8m wide by the Red Lion, narrowing to 1.4m



Here, the width of the footway in front of the Bolston site, from kerb edge to wall, is 1.4m.

Photo taken looking east, back towards the Red Lion, The Red Lion Cottages opposite can be seen.



To the west of the site, the footway on front of Woodlands House is 1.2m wide. We are proposing that this is widened to 3m, following Welsh Government guidance.



Opposite is Plasnewydd. The footway outside Plasnewydd is 0.8m wide – not wide enough for a wheelchair.

The road between Plasnewydd and Woodlands house is 9.3m wide. It needn't be wider than 6.5m.



Opposite the entrance to Bolston House is Natland. The footway outside Natland is 1.3m wide, however, this narrows to 1m where a yellow BT box has been situated, obstructing passage. The unsightly yellow box needs moving!



The footway outside number 4, Red Lion Cottages is 1.1m. Outside 2 and 3 Red Lion Cottages, it is 1.2m. This is opposite the eastern edge of the Bolston site, where the footway is 1.8m before narrowing as it continues westwards.

Outside number 1, it's 1.3m wide.



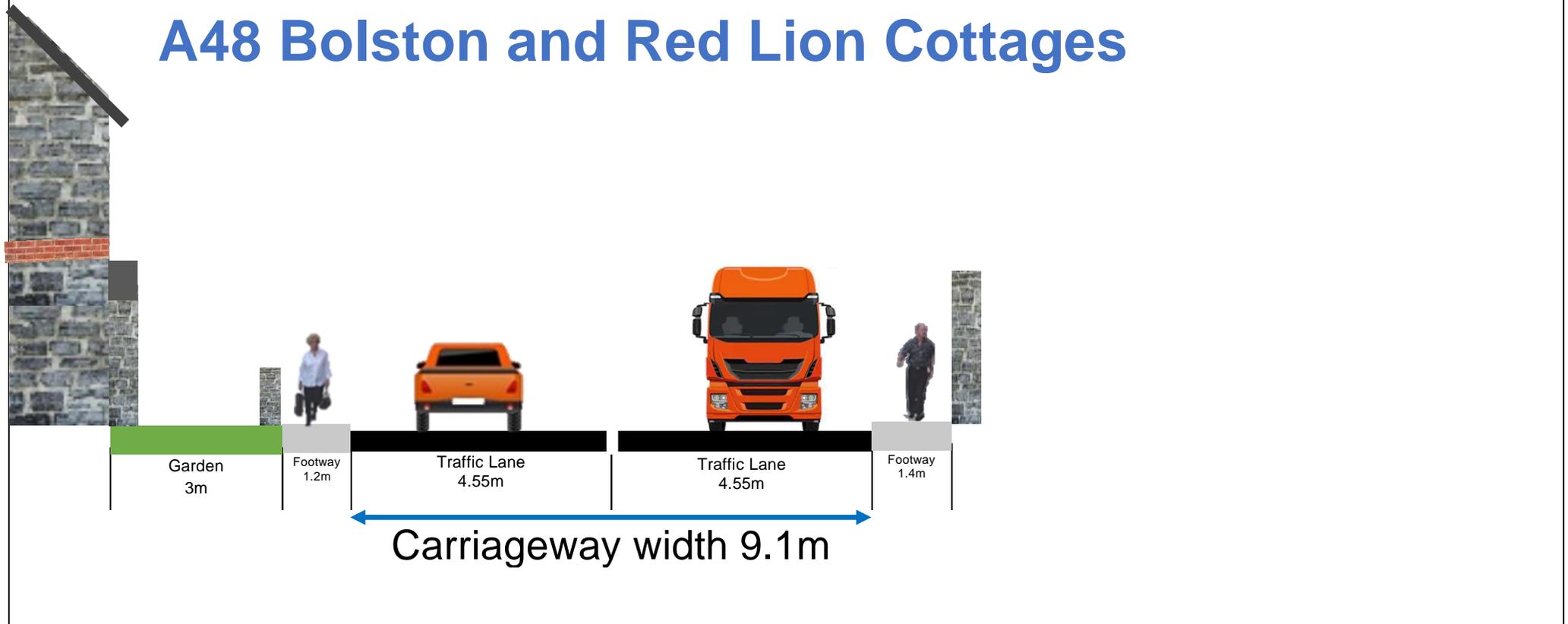
At the crossing, the footway is 1.3m wide, narrowing to 0.9m where the box for the signal controlling electrics is positioned. This box needs to be relocated so as not to obstruct the crossing!

The box needs to be relocated to a position in front of Old Forge, to the east of its present location.



Street Cross-sections

A48 Bolston and Red Lion Cottages

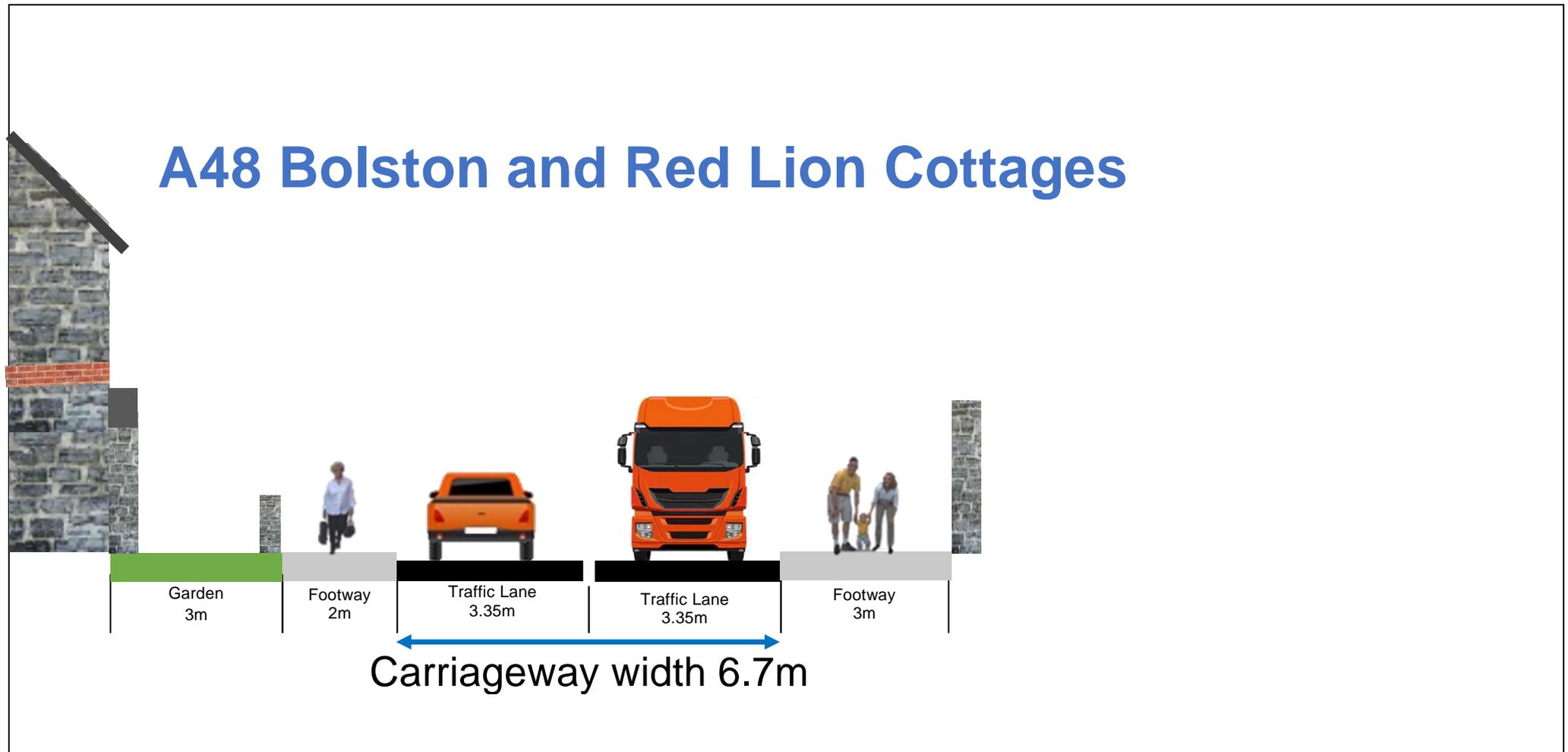


This is how the space between Bolston House and Red Lion Cottages is today. The space is dominated by motorised vehicle movements and there is little space or comfort for those walking. The wide road encourages high speeds that are not suited to a village – and these speeds contribute to the excessive road noise that's currently experienced.

This shows the street looking west, Red Lion Cottages on the left, Bolston on the right.

There is an opportunity to increase footway widths to those recommended in the Welsh Government's Active Travel Guidance, the 3m footway could be shared by children on bicycles and tricycles.

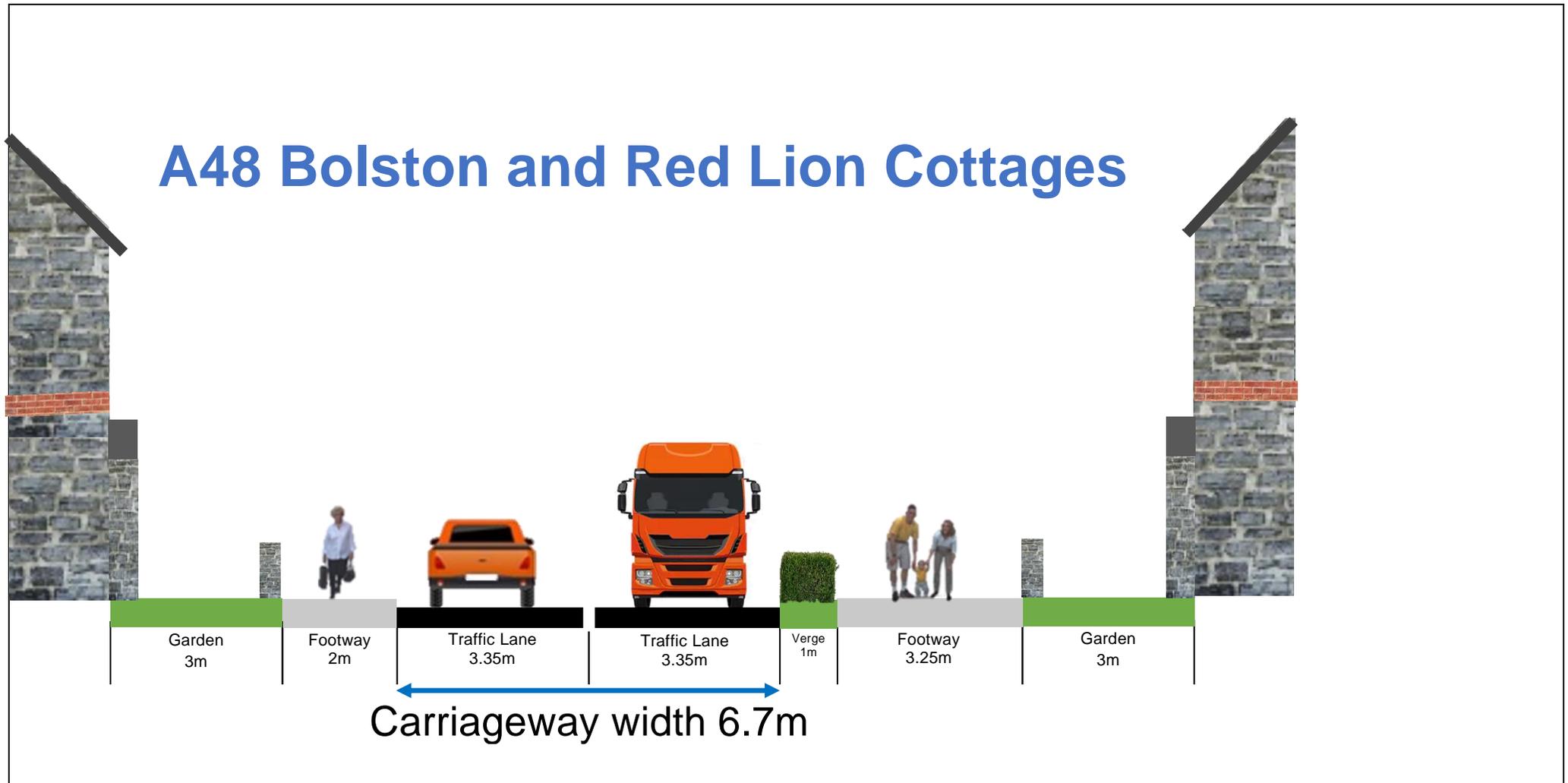
A48 Bolston and Red Lion Cottages



This is clearly much better for people, although still dominated by the road and high wall. Standard road width is 7.3m. The new 60mph A4226 is 7.3m wide. 6.5m is sufficient for an A road through a village. Traffic lanes eastbound on the M4 between junctions 34 and 33 are 3m and 3.2m wide, so traffic lanes of this width are suitable for the traffic that needs to pass through Bonvilston.

With the Bolston development, there is opportunity to increase the street space and to improve the public realm with housing that replicates the existing housing in the Conservation Area, with interesting and calming front gardens, and increase surveillance of the road. This is a much more pleasant and inviting place. A planted verge protects children from the dangers of the road, should they fall, and prevents pavement parking and stopping on the A48 to access the properties – access would be to the rear for deliveries, etc.

A48 Bolston and Red Lion Cottages



Ghost Island

The Ghost Island is probably included in this design on request of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, with maximising motorised traffic flow along the A48 being their only consideration. The site is directly opposite Red Lion Cottages and next to the Red Lion pub, all of which front the street... This is a residential area and junction design needs to appropriate with place.

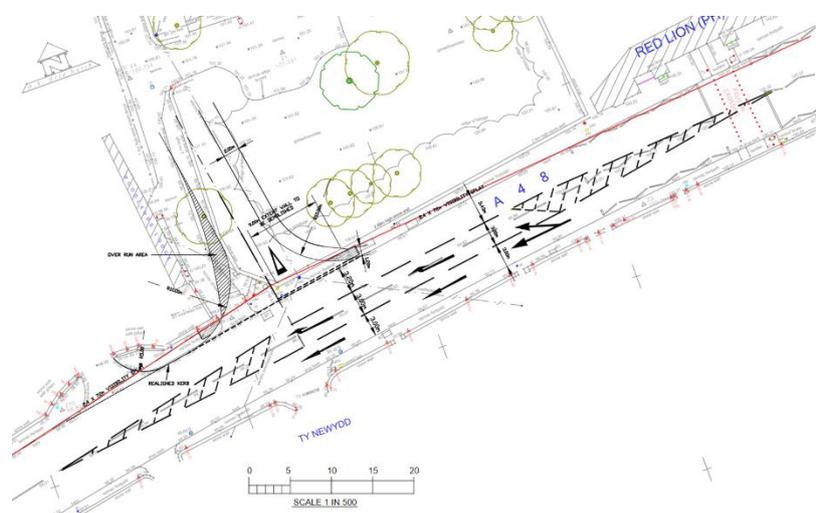
Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) states:

9.4.7 TD 42/95⁵⁴ recommends that consideration should be given to providing a right turning lane at priority junctions where side road flow exceeds 500 vehicles per day, but this applies to trunk roads, where there is an emphasis on providing an unimpeded route for through traffic. It is a relatively low flow, and junctions without right turn lanes will often be able to cater for higher levels of turning traffic without resulting in significant congestion.

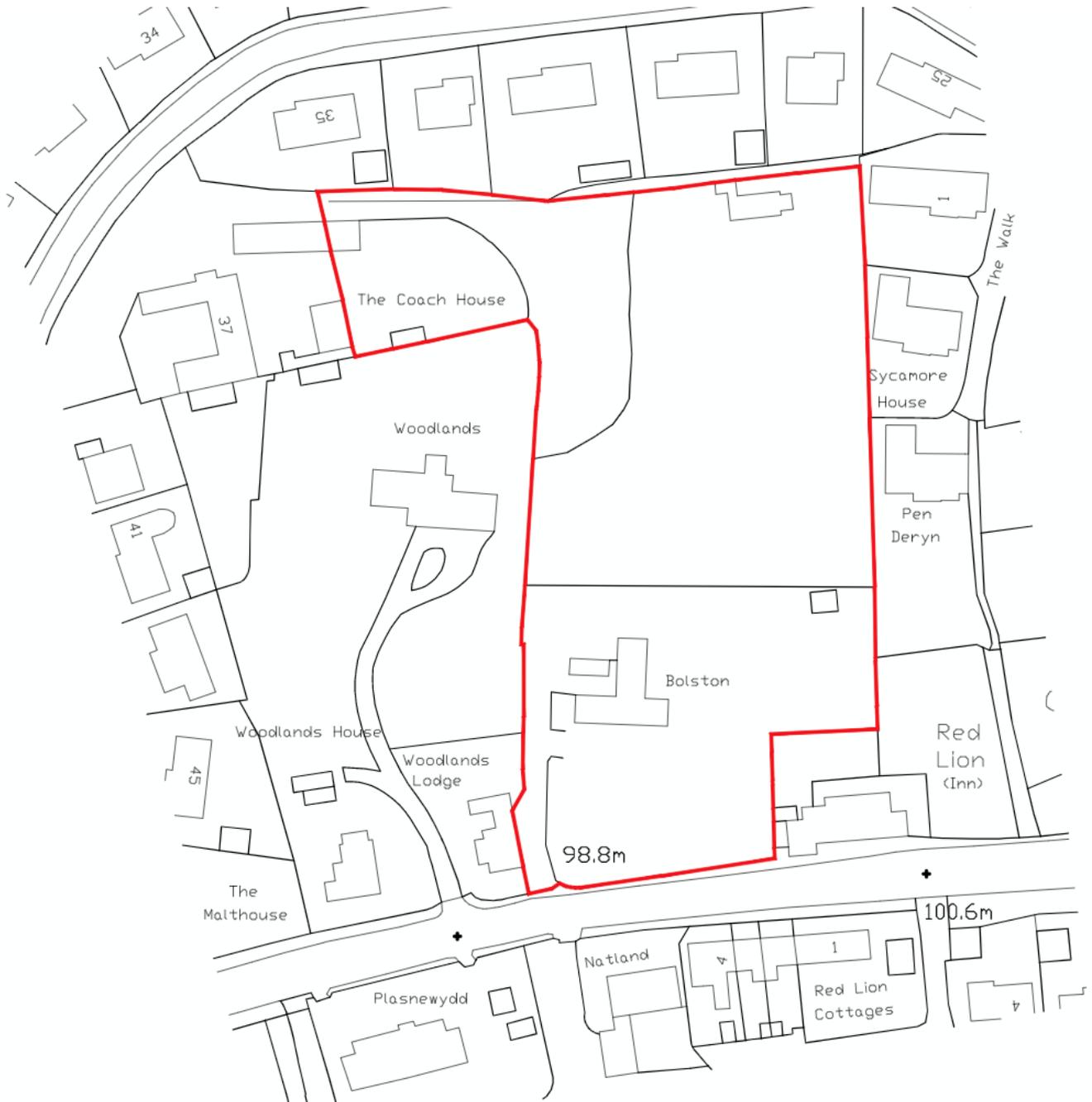
9.4.8 Right turning lanes make it more difficult for pedestrians to cross major roads and lead to higher traffic speeds and authorities should therefore consider carefully all of the effects before deciding to provide them.

It is our view, that based on evidence presented in MfS2 that a ghost island is inappropriate for a village and particularly a Conservation Area where the public realm is important. The evidence suggests that they encourage higher vehicle speeds and discourage walking, as well as consuming limited urban space.

It should be noted that there is no ghost island for the right turns in to the main part of the village of St Nicholas, where the school and church are, and there is no safety or congestion issue as a result. This confirms that a ghost island for this development is unnecessary.



Miscellaneous Background Material







- KEY:
- Site Boundary
 - Buildings to be demolished
 - Existing trees to be retained
 - Existing trees to be removed
 - Existing free groups to be removed





KEY

1. Existing stone wall to be realigned using original stone to accommodate a safe highway access.
2. Existing mature trees retained and used as the focal point for the new housing development and open space.
3. Mature boundary trees retained where possible to soften impact on existing settlement.
4. New landscaping to supplement existing retained trees and hedgerows.

