

the urbanists



Brookland Road, Risca

Design and Access Statement

February 2025
V2

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01. Introduction

1.1 - Project Brief

This Design and Access Statement is prepared by The Urbanists Ltd. on behalf of Caerphilly County Borough Council to support an outline planning application for land off Brookland Road, Risca (referred to in this document as 'the site').

The outline planning application is for a residential development of up to 23 units with associated landscape, highways and drainage infrastructure. The site covers an area of approximately 0.48 ha.

1.2 - Document Aims and Objectives

The Design and Access Statement summarises the extensive design process and contextual considerations that have been taken into account in developing the proposal ensuring a strong sense of character and place whilst also positively contributing towards community and nature.

This document has been informed by a number of reports which examine the site and its context with regard to highways and transportation, ecology, topography, flood risk and drainage and utilities.



1.3 - Placemaking Wales Charter

The scheme design and the Design and Access Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Placemaking Wales Charter and the 6 Placemaking Principles.

The Charter was developed by the Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales along with the Placemaking Wales Partnership – a multi-disciplinary group representing professions and organisations working in the built and natural environment

Signatories pledge to involve the local community in the development of proposals, to choose sustainable locations for new development and to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport. The Placemaking Charter Wales sets out six principles:

- **People and Community**
- **Location**
- **Movement**
- **Mix of Uses**
- **Public Realm**
- **Identity**

When one of the 6 principles for a well-designed place is addressed throughout this Design and Planning Statement it is highlighted with appropriate symbol and an explanation of how it has been addressed is provided.

Placemaking Wales Charter - 6 Principles

- **People and Community:** The local community is involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as creating, integrating, protecting and/or enhancing a sense of community and to promote equality.
- **Location:** Places should grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.
- **Movement:** Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.
- **Mix of Uses:** Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.
- **Public Realm:** Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive, with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable, with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.
- **Identity:** The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

The proposed development has been designed following the 6 Placemaking Principles in order to support the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities.

The Design and Access Statement illustrates how the 6 Placemaking Principles have influenced the proposed scheme.



Figure 1: The six placemaking principles



1.4 - Planning Policy Context

This section identifies the relevant national and local planning policy in which the development proposals should be considered.

National Policy

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Planning Act (Wales) 2015 states that Local Planning Authorities must exercise their function in relation to the determination of planning applications "...as part of carrying out sustainable development in accordance with the

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (annex 2), for the purpose of ensuring that the development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales." (PA(W), Sec.2(2))

The Future Generations Act defines Sustainable Development in Wales as:

"The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals."

The Sustainable Development Principle sets out how public bodies are required to work to apply sustainable development. These include, looking longer term to ensure that the needs of future generations are met without compromise, to meet their own needs. It also includes taking an integrated approach so that public bodies use the well-being goals to guide their objectives. Other key elements are involving a diversity of the population in the decision making, and working in a collaborative way to find shared solutions. Another way to work sustainably is to understand the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.



Figure 2: The Wellbeing Goals

Planning Policy Wales (2024) Ed. 12

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) (PPW) is the Welsh Government's land use planning policy for Wales. The primary objective of PPW is to ensure the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development, and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

PPW selects placemaking as the process of creating sustainable places and maximising wellbeing. PPW identifies key planning principles that include: growing our economy in a sustainable manner; delivering educational facilities; creating healthy and accessible environments; sustaining communities; and, maximising environmental protection and limiting impact. These principles are then underpinned by National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes which interrelate.

It also sets out the four key themes which contribute to placemaking thus:

- Strategic and spatial choices, including how to achieve good design that enables access and inclusive, environmental sustainability and respect for local character; and healthier places, including enabling opportunities for outdoor activity and recreation.
- Active and social places, including encouraging the multiple use of open space and facilities, where appropriate, to increase their effective use.
- Productive and enterprising places, including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and physical and mental health and wellbeing, provision of integrated green infrastructure and resilience to climate change.
- Distinctive and natural places, including the need to conserve and enhance. The historic environment and its assets; protecting and enhancing green infrastructure assets and the protection and enhancement of biodiversity; protection of trees and woodland where they contribute towards the ecological, character or green infrastructure functionality of an area; and to integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems to minimise flood risk and maximise other benefits.

The way these different principles, themes and targets integrate when considering planning proposals follow the decision-making hierarchy. The first consideration is how the proposals contribute towards strategic and spatial choices; then how

they contribute towards active and social places, productive and enterprising places and distinctive and natural places. The outcomes of this process should result in a proposal which contributes towards a sustainable place, achieving the well-being goals and sustainable placemaking outcomes. Each theme contributes in different ways to the placemaking outcomes. Residential development generally falls under the active and social places theme, which includes the key placemaking outcomes of: integrated green infrastructure; resilient to climate change; promotes physical and mental health and wellbeing; unlocks potential and regenerates; convenient access to goods and services; minimising the need to travel; appropriate development densities; makes best use of natural resources; feels safe and inclusive; provides equality of access; and embraces smart and innovative technology.

The updated chapter 6 has been initially set out in guidance, titled 'Addressing the nature emergency through the planning system: update to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales'. This has now been incorporated into the Edition 12 of PPW.

The main changes to policy requirements, being:

- Green Infrastructure: A stronger emphasis would be placed on a proactive approach, covering cross-boundary consideration, identifying key outputs of green infrastructure assessments, the submission of proportionate green infrastructure statements with planning applications and signposting Building with Nature standards.
- Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach (see Figure below): Off-site compensation is acknowledged as a last resort, and the need to consider enhancement and long-term management is recognised. Green Infrastructure statements are set out as a requirement to demonstrate the 'step-wise approach'.
- Protection for sites of Special Scientific Interest: The updated chapter strengthens the approach to the protection of SSSIs with increased clarity on site management and exemptions for minor developments. Setting out that: Development not for management of the SSSI must be avoided; there may be desirable intervention in SSSIs relating to public benefits (travel, education) or to secure its role as a living landscape; and only in wholly exceptional circumstances, with no likely harm to a SSSI, and with significant mitigation and enhancement may a development be allowed.

- Trees and Woodlands: a close alignment is taken with the step-wise approach, as well as promotion of new planting as part of development based on securing the right tree in the right place. For any trees that may be removed as part of a proposed development, consideration of their GI value including carbon, landscape amenity and ecological resilience sets a baseline from which a proportionate ratio of planting compensation shall be considered. Furthermore, the prescribed minimum ratio or areas of tree cover to compensate for any tree/ woodland loss should be regarded.

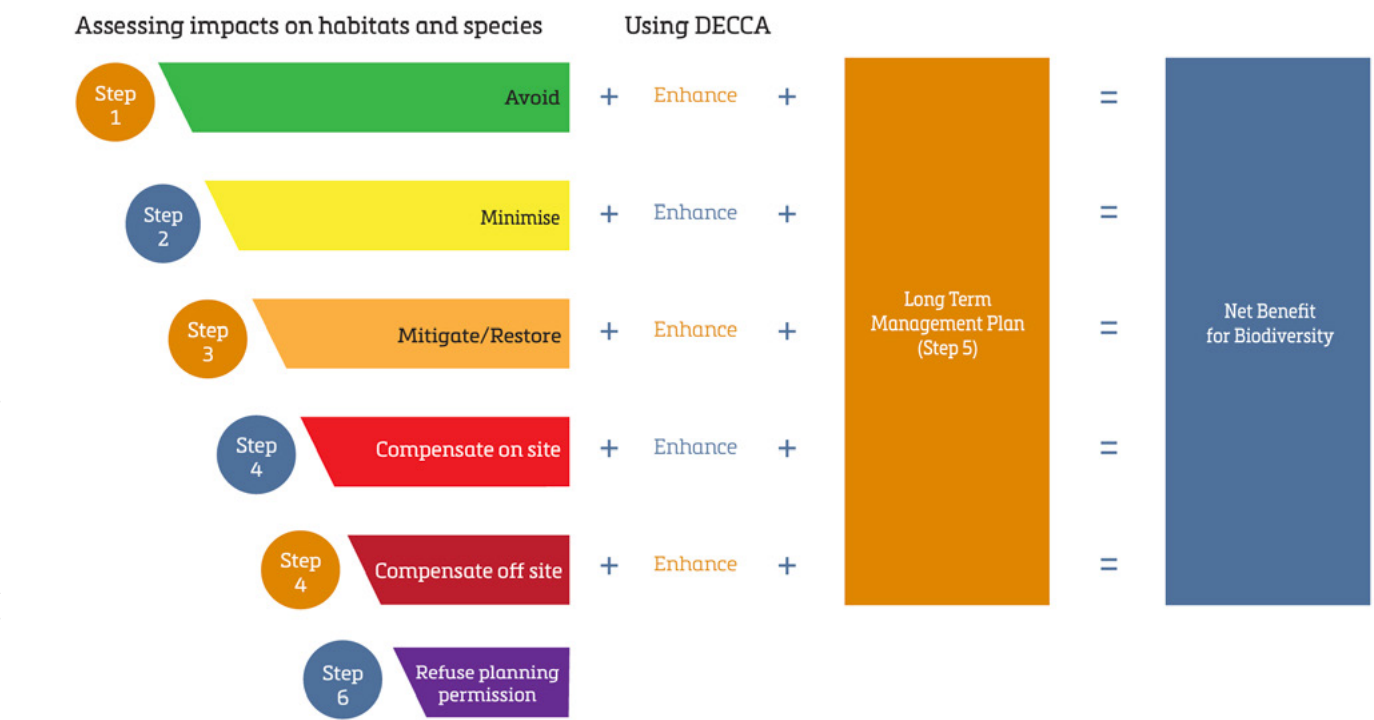


Figure 3: Step-wise Approach

• **Future Wales - The National Plan 2040**

Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 was adopted in February 2021 as the national development framework setting the direction of development in Wales to 2040. Future Wales provides a strategy to address key national priorities through the planning system, including developing a vibrant economy, developing strong ecosystems, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience and improving the health and wellbeing of communities. It sets out 11 outcomes of Future Wales comprising the vision for Wales in 2040. The aim is for a Wales where people live:

- In connected, inclusive and healthy places;
- In vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services;
- In distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth;
- In places with a thriving Welsh Language;
- In towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth;
- In places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted;
- In places where travel is sustainable;
- In places with world-class digital infrastructure;
- In places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution;
- In places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems; and
- In places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient.

Future Wales divides Wales into 4 regions with Caerphilly falling within the South-East Region. Future Wales also provides a series of national policies (ch.4, Strategic and Spatial Choices), including:

Policy 1 identifies that The Valleys are a key location for future growth and Policy 2 sets out the need to create spatial frameworks to achieve the placemaking aims of the Wales planning system. Policy 2 also sets out the key Strategic

Placemaking Principles: mixtures of uses; a variety of housing; walkable scales; increased densities in towns and cities; integration with street networks; plot-based development; and green infrastructure.

Policy 9 explains the importance of identifying areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and also the importance of identifying opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.

Policy 11 supports development that improves sustainable transport and improved national connectivity. It states that planning authorities should support developments associated with improvements to national connectivity (including bus routes, cycle routes, and strategic road connections) and, where appropriate, maximise the opportunities that arise from them.

Policy 33 sets out the importance of Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys as a national growth area. It highlights the importance of the area as a focus for housing, employment, tourism, public transport and key services within their wider areas and supports their continued function as focal points for national growth.

• **Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021**

Llwybr Newydd is the new Welsh Government transport strategy. It sets out our vision for how our transport system can help us deliver our priorities for Wales, helping to put us on a pathway to creating a more prosperous, green and equal society. The strategy sets out how we can make a modal shift from use of private vehicles to active travel and public transport.

As well as setting out our short-term priorities and long-term ambitions, it sets out nine “mini plans” explaining how Welsh Government will deliver them for different transport modes and sectors. Llwybr Newydd is also supported by a more detailed Mobility in Wales report, the Transport Data and Trends report and an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal.

It requires governments, local authorities, transport providers (both commercial and third sector) and our colleagues in other policy areas to work together to help ensure that transport contributes to the current and future well-being of Wales; to set us on a new path.



Figure 4: Wales Transport Strategy

• **Technical Advice Notes (TANs)**

A series of Technical Advice Notes also help to guide development proposals. Notes that are considered particularly relevant to the proposals are:

TAN 2: Planning and Affordable Housing - Technical advice note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (Welsh Government, September 2009) sets out the requirements for Local Development Plan around affordable housing. It sets out how to undertake a Local Housing Market Assessment and how affordable housing targets should be set. The guidance makes reference to financial viability and explains that site viability will be a critical factor to be considered in determining thresholds for affordable housing.

TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning - This Technical Advice Note provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. It brings together advice on sources of legislation relevant to various nature conservation topics which may be encountered by local planning authorities. The key principles of planning for nature conservation are set out followed by advice about the preparation and review of development plans, including the relevant statutory requirements.

TAN 12, Design - The revised Technical Advice Notes (TAN) aims to equip all those that are involved in the design of development with advice on how sustainability, through good design, may be facilitated through the planning system. It sets out the core design principles that any development proposal must follow to help create a sustainable environment and exhibit a high level of design quality. These are structured via the five following key objectives of good design:

- Access - Ensuring ease of access for all;
- Character - Sustaining of enhancing local character; promoting legible development; promoting a successful relationship between public and private space; promoting quality, choice and variety; and promoting innovative design;
- Community Safety - Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces and security through natural surveillance;
- Environmental Sustainability - Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources and enhancing biodiversity; and,
- Movement - Promoting sustainable means of travel.

TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk - The Technical Advice Note provides guidance on the management of flood risk and applies a precautionary framework to guide planning decisions. The precautionary approach is provide via three development advice zones. The Development Advice Map identifies the site as Zone B which is considered to be areas known to have flooded in the past. A flood zone C2 is located west of the site, which is an area without significant flood infrastructure. In June 2023 the Development Advice Map will be replaced with the Flood Map for Planning, this identifies the site as not in a flood zone. Parts of the site are impacted by surface water flooding.

The built infrastructure on site is located within Flood Zone 2 and is therefore classified as having a medium probability of fluvial flooding from the Ebbw River. As shown in Figure 6 the site is located within a TAN15 defended zone. TAN15 defended zones are areas benefitting from formal flood defenses owned and maintained by Risk Management Authorities, offering a minimum standard of protection against flooding, with a 1 in 100-year probability for rivers and a 1 in 200-year probability for the sea.

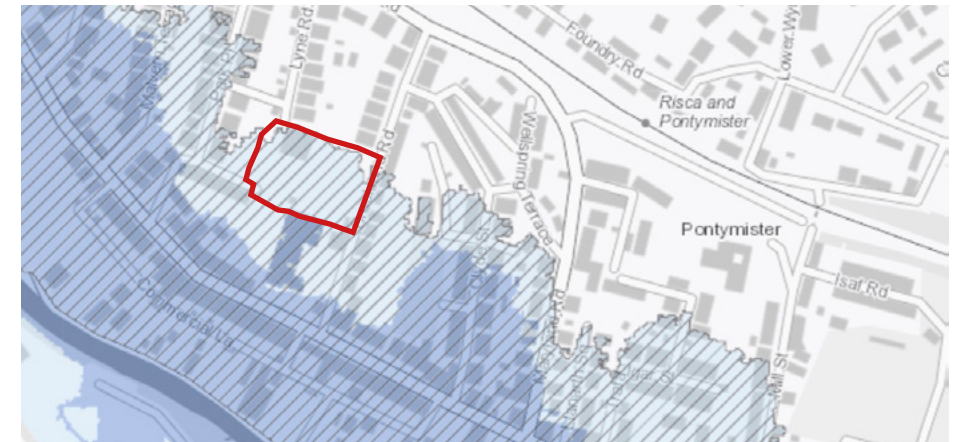


Figure 5: Flood Map for Planning

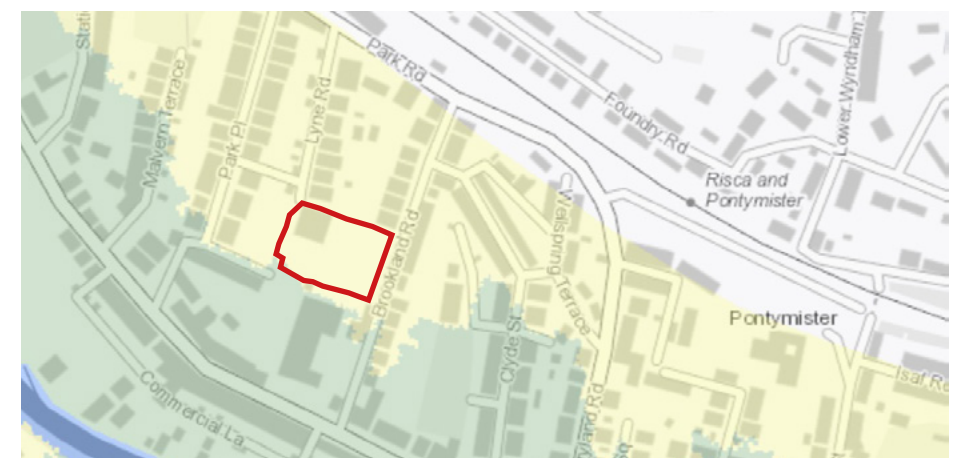


Figure 6: Development Advice Map

01. Introduction

Local Policy

- **Caerphilly Local Development Plan up to 2021**

The development plan for the site is the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 (LDP), which was adopted in November 2010. The LDP provides the local policy on which decisions on development are to be made. The LDP vision, set out on Page 19, is focused on capitalising on the strategic location of Caerphilly County Borough, to ensure that the needs of all the County Borough's residents and visitors are met. Another focus of the plan is to regenerate towns, villages and employment centres and the surrounding countryside in a well-balanced and sustainable manner, to reflect the specific role and function of individual settlements.

The policies which are relevant to this proposal are set out below:

- Policy SP4 Settlement Strategy
- Policy SP5 Settlement Boundaries;
- Policy SP6 Place Making;
- Policy SP7 Planning Obligations;
- Policy SP8 Mineral Safeguarding;
- Policy SP14 Total Housing Requirements;
- Policy SP15 Affordable Housing Target;
- Policy SP21 Parking Standards.
- Policy CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion;
- Policy CW2 Amenity;
- Policy CW3 Design Considerations - Highways;
- Policy CW4 Natural Heritage Protection;
- Policy CW5 Protection of the Water Environment;
- Policy CW6 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection;
- Policy CW8 Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities;
- Policy CW10 Leisure and Open Space Provision
- Policy CW11 Affordable Housing Planning Obligations;
- Policy CW15 General Locational Constraints.

The adopted plan is currently under review and is due to be replaced by an LDP up to 2035. As set out in the Delivery Agreement report, the replacement plan is due to be submitted to Welsh Government in November 2026 and is due to be adopted in July 2027.

- **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents provide further detail on the policies set out in the LDP. The SPGs relevant to the proposed development are:

- Affordable Housing Obligations (2020) - This SPG provides further guidance on Policy SP15 and CW11 to ensure the provision of affordable housing. The requirement to meet the need for affordable housing is a material consideration and will be taken into account in the determination of planning applications.*
- Car Parking Standards (2017) - This guidance identifies how the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2014 will be applied across Caerphilly County Borough. The requirement for residential development in zones 2 - 6 is 1 space per bedroom (maximum requirement of 3 spaces) and 1 visitor space per 5 units.
- Building Better Places to Live (2017) - the purpose of this document is to improve the standard of design in residential development; it acts to serve as guidance for developers and planning officers. The guidance provides further detail to the LDP policies (SP6) and refers to the objectives of good design as set out in TAN 12. Objectives for residential development are set out in addition to an explanation of an effective design process.

*Note that discussion will be required as to how the outputs typically associated with planning obligations are addressed, since the Council would be the applicant for any future planning applications.

- **Replacement Local Development Plan**

A review of the Adopted Local Development Plan has been undertaken and the findings are set out in the Review Report. This provides a summary of the issues that have been considered and identified that the Council should commence a full revision of the Adopted LDP. The Pre-Deposit Public Consultation took place between 15th January - 26 February with findings yet to be published.

- **Local Development Constraints and Proposal Plans**

The proposals maps identifies that the site is unallocated however it is located within the defined settlement boundary.

The constraints map identifies that the site is located in an area of Flood Zone C1 although more recent updates to the Development Advice Map show that the site falls within Zone B; with Zone C1 instead bounding the site to the south. The Flood Map for Planning shows that the site lies within Flood Zone 2 for Rivers & Seas and Surface Water & Small Watercourses.

It also identifies neighbouring designations which include an Allocated Housing site HG1 and HG1.53 ROM River (1.9ha) to the north of the site, approximately 0.15 miles away. As well as an allocated site HG1.54, with the eastern part of the land adjacent to River Ebbw, Pontymister.

Within close proximity to the site there is a designated cycle route and the Rhymney River is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. On the constraints map the site is part of a wider Secondary Coal Resource Area and is also part of a Coal Mining Development Referral Area. The western boundary of The Rhymney Conservation Area is located to the south east.

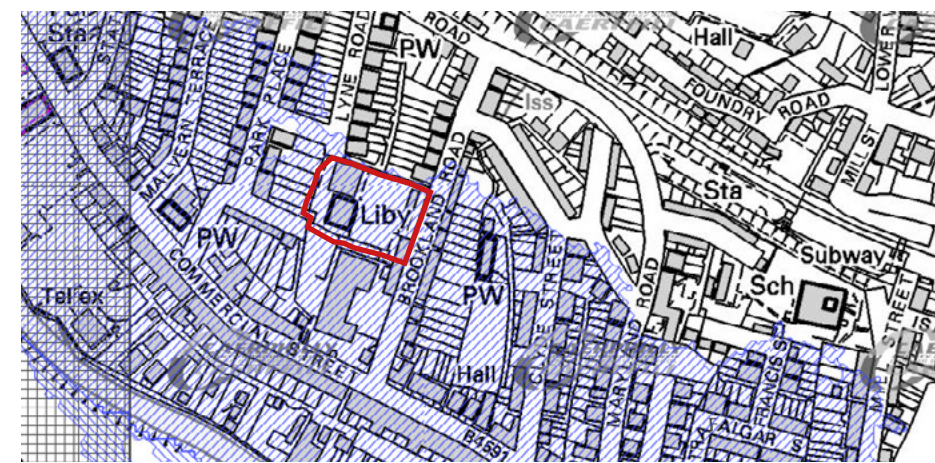


Figure 7: Constraints Plan

1.5 - Planning History

The relevant Planning History on site is listed below:

2/09845: Extension of Risca Youth Club, Alterations to Brookland Adult Training Centre, Alterations and Extension to Risca Youth Club Annexe for Family Centre, Additional Parking to Brookland Site - Brookland Adult Training Centre Risca Youth Club (Off Brookland Road, Risca); Permitted 12/02/91

2/01778: Change of use to accommodate an Adult Training Centre (Social Services) for 120 people - Caerphilly County Borough Council Brookland Road Adult Training Centre Brookland Road Pontymister Risca Newport NP11 6BH; Permitted 13/09/77

2/02779: Proposed change of use of disused school canteen to a Grounds Maintenance Depot including the resiting of two lock-up garages with a new vehicular access - Brookland Road Pontymister Newport NP11 6BH; Permitted 12/06/79.

P/01/0024: Demolish outbuildings and convert rest room and stores to offices for area housing - Former Grounds Depot Brookland Road Pontymister Newport NP11 6BH; Granted Conditional 05/01/01

The Planning History includes the demolition and conversion for a variety of outbuildings for needed facilities in this area such as offices and a Grounds Maintenance Depot



Figure 8: Image of the existing site

02. Context Appraisal

2.1 - Site Location

Wider Context

The site is located in the town and community of Risca which lies in Caerphilly County Borough, South Wales.

The town has a distinctive green backdrop, with valleys rising above the settlement. The site is well connected through rail connections and road infrastructure and a strategic highway route that connects to the M4, with Newport being 5.5 miles south-east of the site and Caerphilly being 8.8 miles west. The site also lies 14 miles north-east of Cardiff.

- Legend:
- Site Location
 - City
 - Town
 - Road
 - Railway
 - Water
 - Park

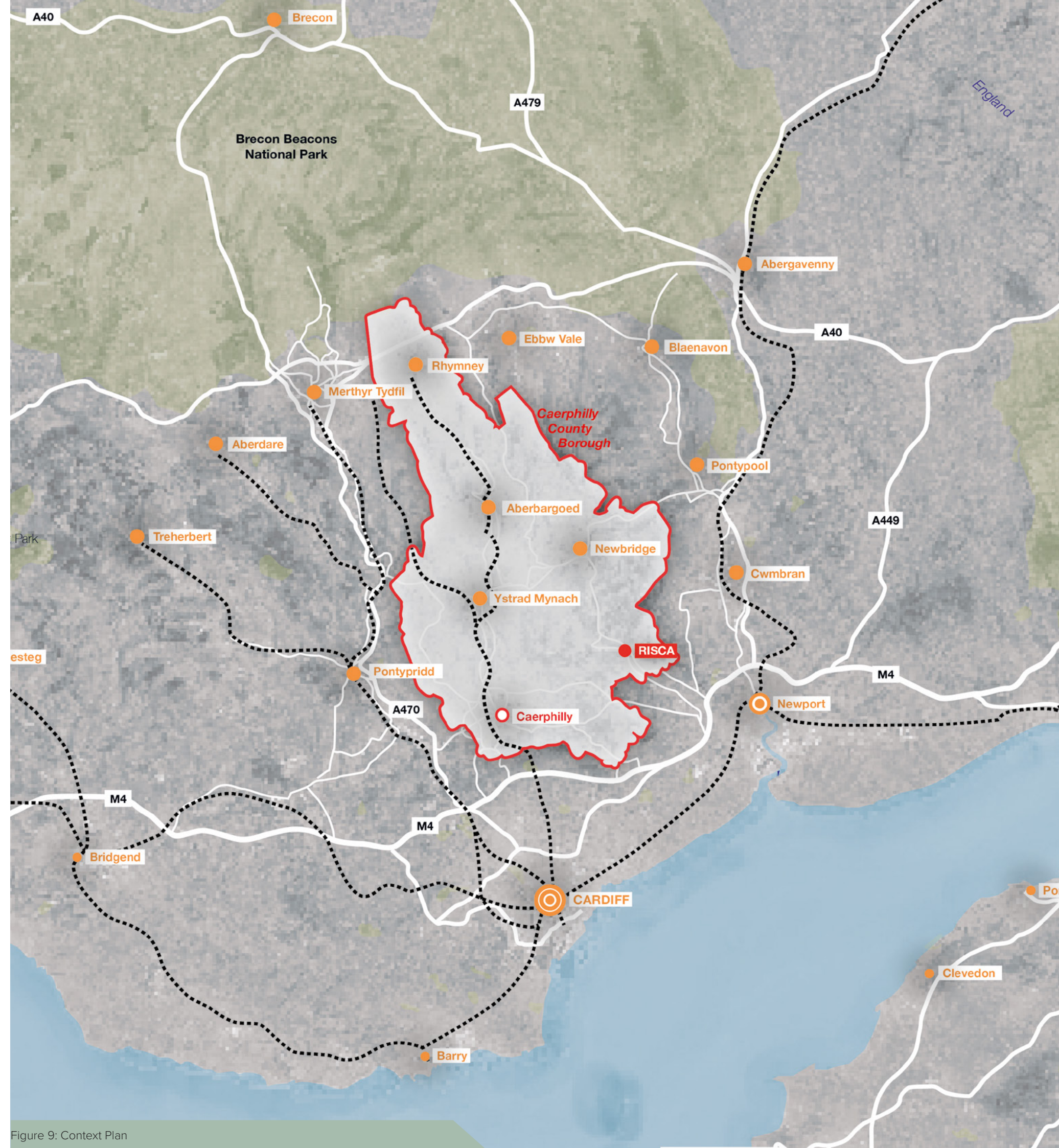


Figure 9: Context Plan

Local Context

As shown by the immediate context plan, the site is located in the southern area of Risca. The sites surroundings is mainly residential to north and retail to the south-west.

The site lies adjacent to the A467 and B4591, as well as Ebbw River allowing good access and accessibility to existing highway and blue/green infrastructure.

National cycle route (47 and 465) runs along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal which connects to the nearby villages and towns, like Crosskeys to the north and Rogerstone to the south.

The existing sustainable transport infrastructure already in place, like the railway and cycle/pedestrian routes, promotes Risca to be a more desirable place to live. The nearest railway station is the Risca Railway station, which is located approximately 300m to the east of the site. The station is situated on Ebbw Valley Railway with services operated by Transport for Wales (TfW).

The site is situated in a highly sustainable location. Potential future residents can walk or cycle to a number and range of leisure facilities, shops, services and education facilities within appropriate distances via good quality routes, reducing the need to own a car. In this regard, the site location is consistent with the sustainable transport policies in PPW11 (in particular paras 4.1.10 - 4.1.17) and is situated in a 'walkable neighbourhood' location.

- Legend:
- Project Location
 - Road
 - Railway
 - Cycle Routes
 - Train Station
 - Water
 - Park / Greenspace



Figure 10: Local Context Plan

02. Context Appraisal

2.2 - Local Amenities and Facilities

The adjacent plan shows that there are a number and range of facilities and services situated within comfortable walking and cycling distances which can be accessed via suitable active travel routes.

The site is situated in a highly sustainable location, as would be expected for a site in an existing and established residential area, with close proximity of the local centre, bus stops, rail stations and a school.

The site is well connected through several bus stops along the B4591 allowing regular journeys to the wider area, providing further local amenities and facilities. Some of these facilities include sports provision, churches, health services, schools, convenience store, libraries and a community centre.

Education

Risca has two primary schools located to the north and north-west of the town. Risca Primary School is located a 9 minute walk from the site and Ty Sign Primary School is a 10 minute walk from the site.

Risca Community Secondary School is a 38 minute walk north-east of the site and Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus is 37 minute walk north-west of the site.

Health Care

There is a doctors surgery, Wellspring Medical Centre, north of the site being a 3 minute walk away. The dental surgery is also a 4 minute walk from the site and Risca Day Hospital is a 15 minute walk from the site.

Employment and Retail

Risca is predominantly residential with a few employment uses along the A467 and B4591. The site is close to the town centre with roads running immediately adjacent to the site which is home to a retail park, an industrial park, a library, sports centre and a few cafe's and restaurants.

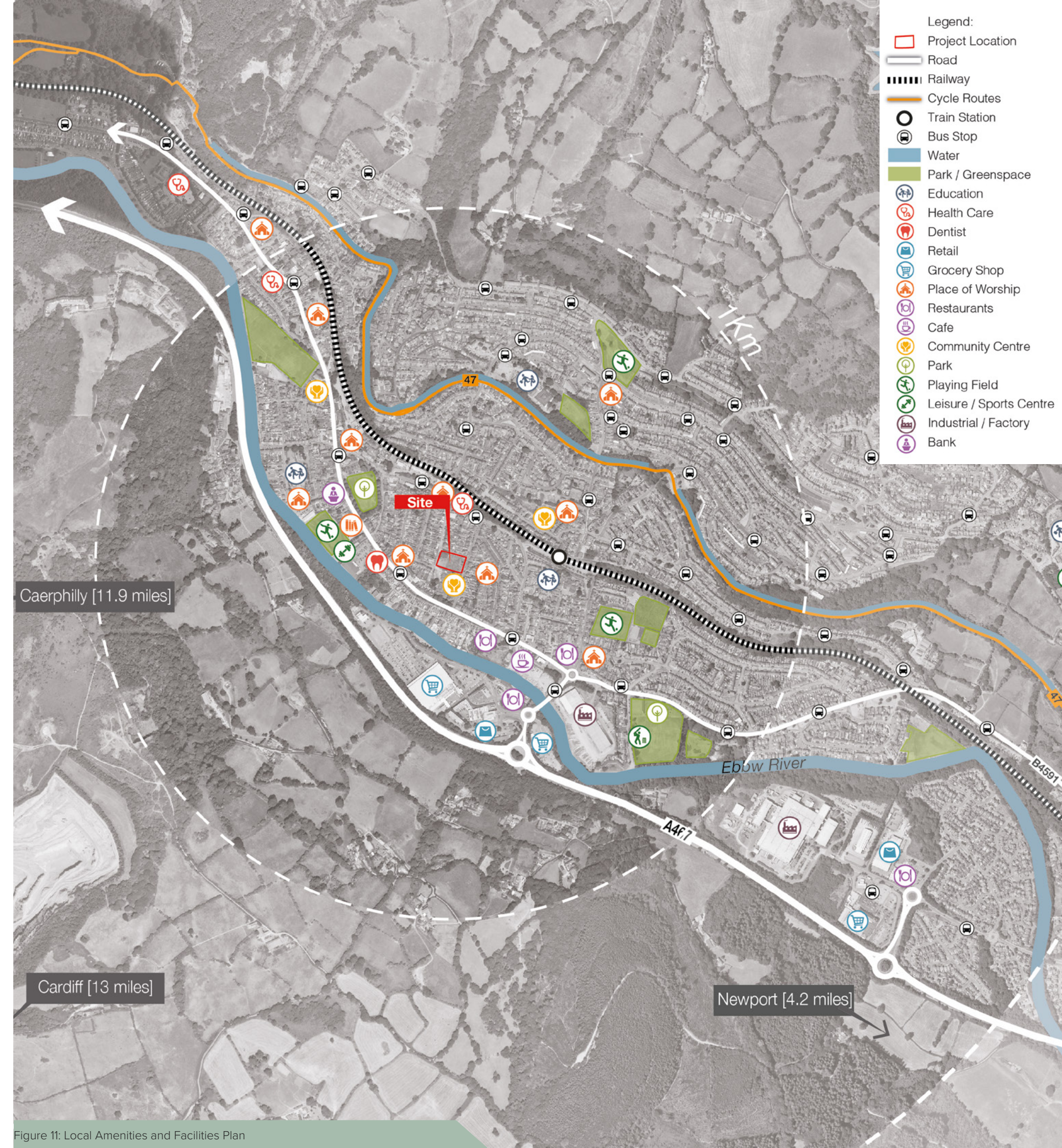


Figure 11: Local Amenities and Facilities Plan

2.3 - Pedestrian and Cycle Movements

The site is located in proximity of the 47 National Cycle Route (NCR), which runs along the north of the site providing a direct route to NCR 465 north west of the site.

The National Cycle Route (NCR) 47 runs from Newport north west towards Rogerstone, forming part of the developing network running the length of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. This route also connects to NCR 465 which is a route connecting Crosskeys to Pontywaun.

The site is surrounded by Public Rights of Way (PRoW). These run through the surrounding existing residential development which allows the site to benefit from being located in a highly sustainable location in relation to the built-up extent of Risca.

Brookland Road, Park Place and Lyne Road all provide good quality pedestrian infrastructure, which includes a network of footways on both sides of the carriageway, street lighting, uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points (including the provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving and low speed limits).

The site also has excellent public transport links, with the nearest bus stops and railway station located within a short walking distance from the site via good quality routes. These services provide a suitable, attractive and realistic alternative to travelling by car. This will assist in minimising the need for residents to own or travel by car. It will also benefit and attract residents that would prefer to travel by public transport. This will minimise the impact of the development and reduce the demand for parking on or off the site.

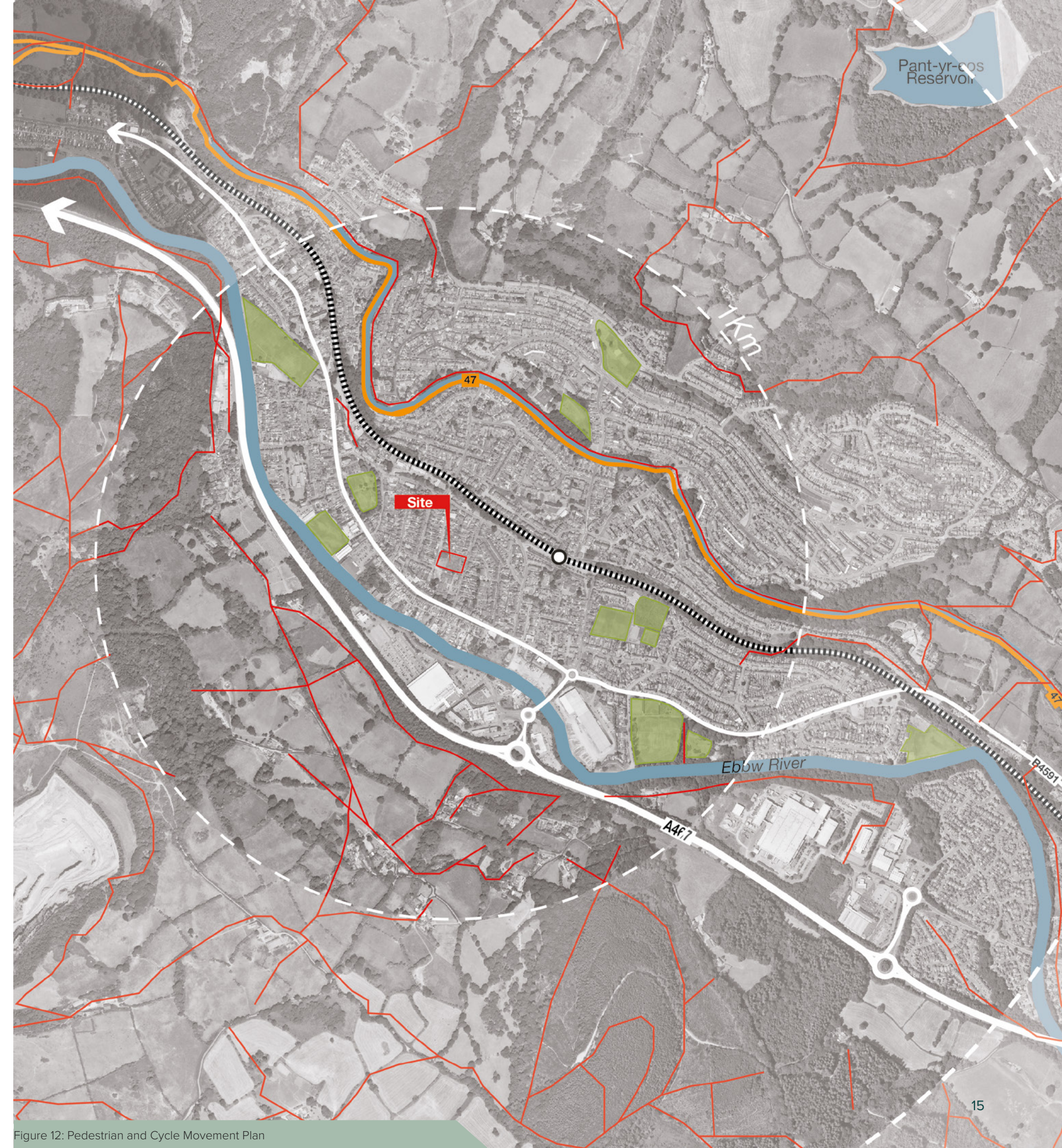


Figure 12: Pedestrian and Cycle Movement Plan

2.4 - Historical Context

The earliest map dated 1883, indicates the site was a part of an undeveloped field, with trees sporadically located along the sites northern boundary. The land to the north and south of the site also consisted of undeveloped fields.

Residential properties, noted as Philanthropic Row was located directly west of the site and residential properties, noted as Club Row was located to the east of the site. The wider area consisted of either residential properties or undeveloped land. A watercourse was located some 110m southwest of the site and railway lines some 165m north of the site. Britannia Foundry (Iron & Brass) was located some 188m northeast of the site. A Gas Works was located approximately 250m southeast of the site.

A map dated 1901, shows that the site remained undeveloped. Development had occurred in the wider area. A school was located approximately 50m south of the site. A road was located directly east of the site.

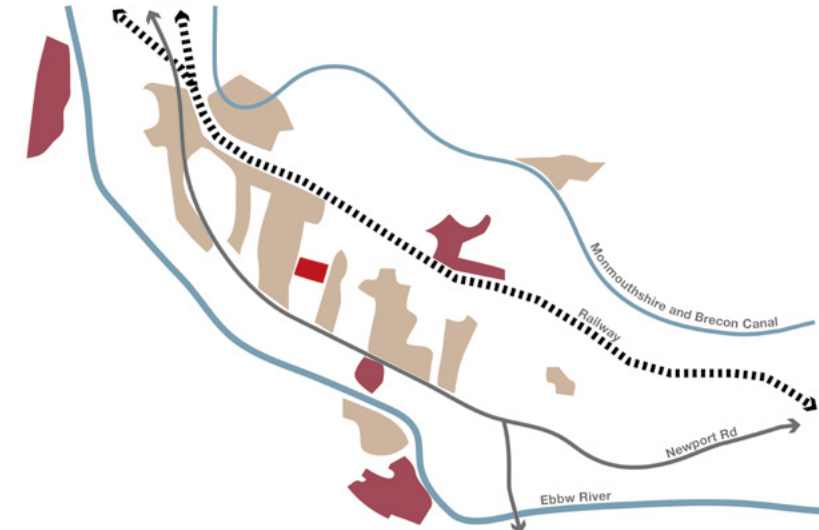
Significant development, mainly residential had occurred some 100m south of the site, along a main road. The watercourse located some 110m southwest of the site was noted as the River Ebbw. The Britannia Foundry located approximately 188m northeast of the site was now noted as Pont-y-Mister Steel Foundry.

By 1920, significant residential development had occurred directly north of the site and in the general wider area. The road to the east of the site was noted as Brookland Road, with buildings located along both sides of the road to the north and south of the site.

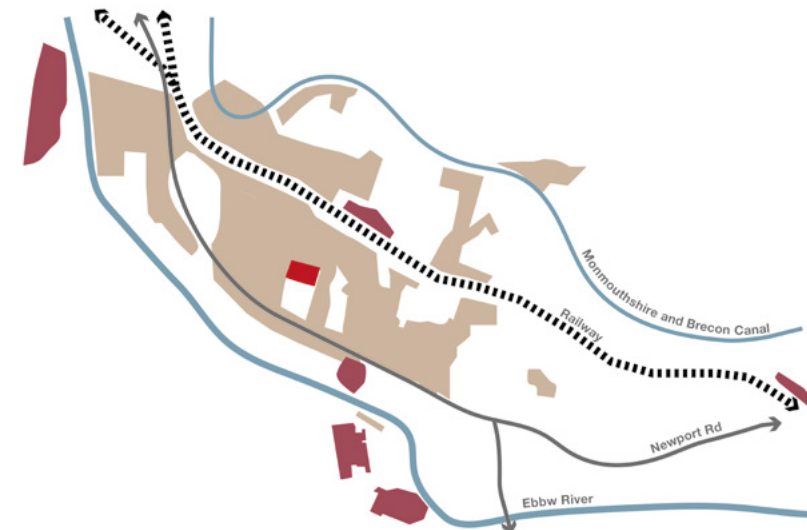
The school located some 50m south had expanded. The main road located some 100m south of the site was noted as Commercial Road and development had continued along the road. The site itself remained undeveloped.

A map dated 2023 shows a strong expansion within the Risca area with employment and retail to the south of the site.

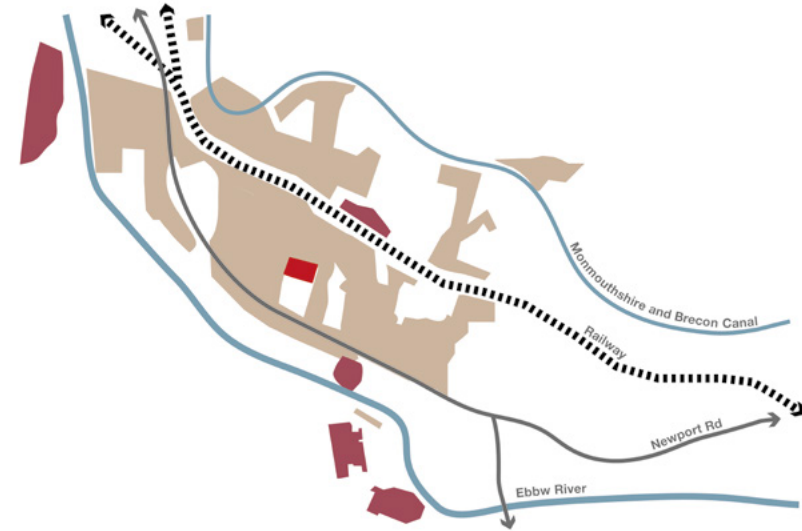
- Site Location
- Residential Development
- Industrial Development



Map 1 - 1883/ 1872



Map 2 - 1917



Map 3 - 1938



Map 4 - 2023

Figure 13: Historical Maps of Risca

2.5 - Site History

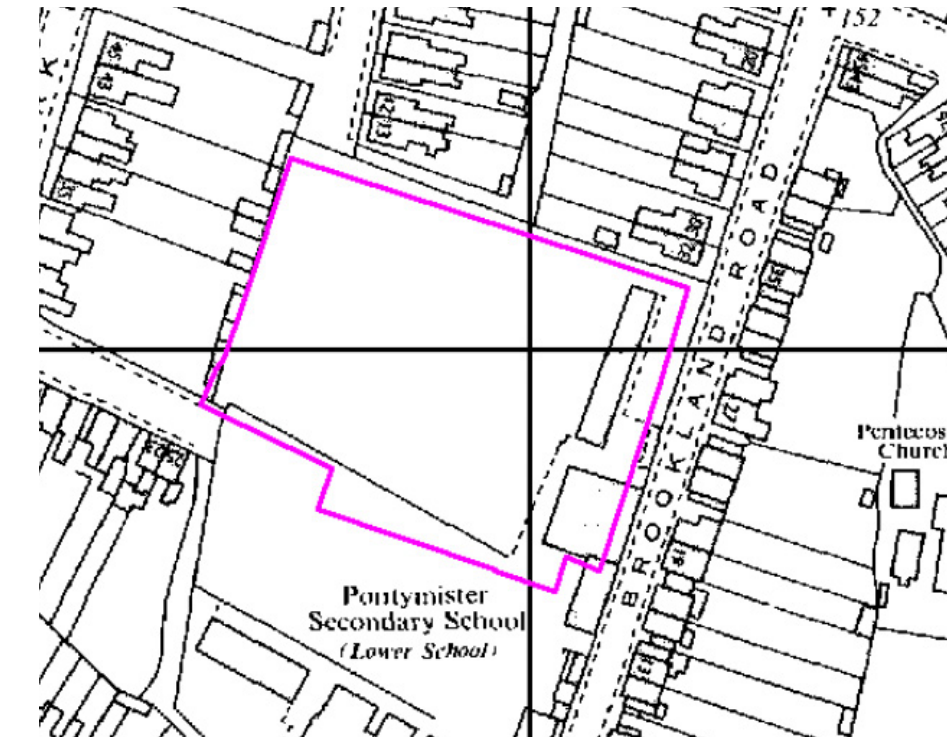
A map dated 1964-1965 shows a first development happening on the site, indicating that two buildings were located in the eastern area of the site. The remainder of the site remained undeveloped.

By 1974, two further buildings had been constructed on site, a Youth Centre in the north west area of the site and a Library in the southwest area.

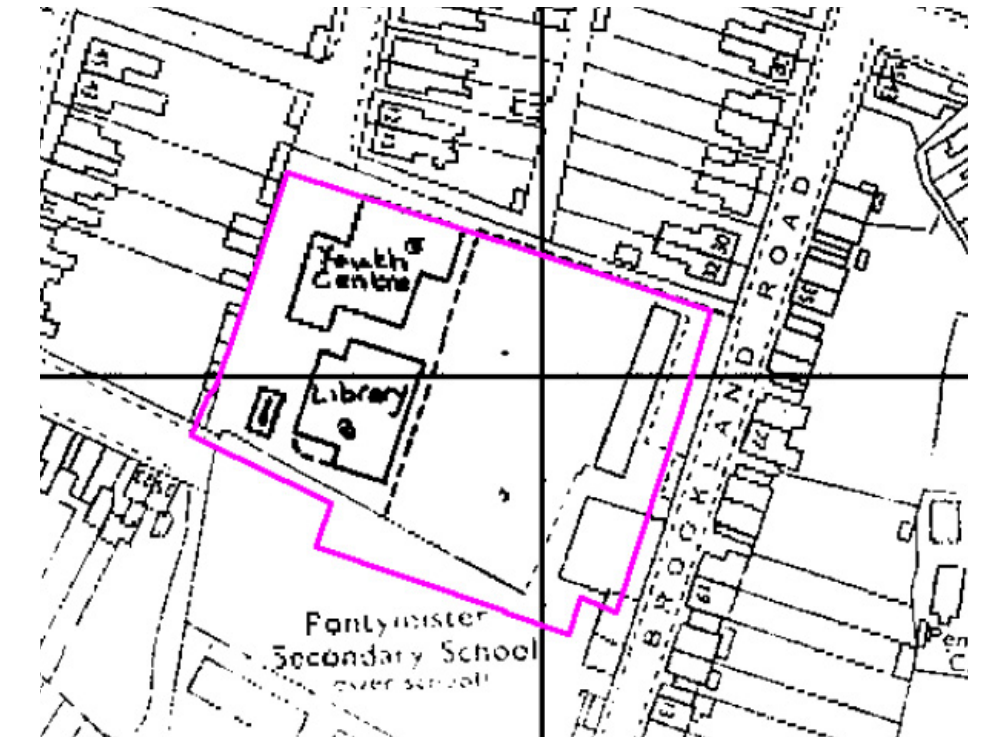
By 1982, further smaller buildings were located in the eastern and southwest area of the site. The school to the south of the site had been demolished and replaced with an Adult Training Centre, which extended from the southern site boundary to Commercial Road. The Gas Holder was noted as disused and the southern area of the former Gas Works was noted as Risca Holder Station.

In the subsequent map editions, no significant changes had occurred on site, with the exception to minor extensions/reconfiguration to the buildings and addition of small buildings. An aerial image dated 2016, indicated the centre of the site was covered with grass with areas of hard standing along the northern boundary and around the buildings. The remaining Gas Works infrastructure was removed in the early 1990s.

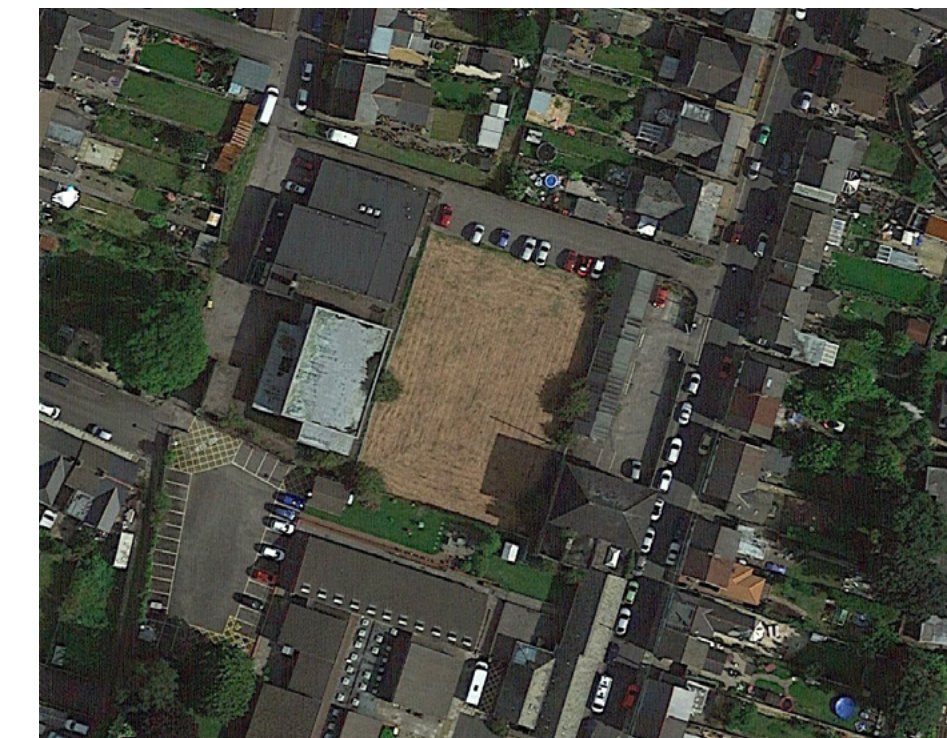
No significant changes occurred on site until 2023, where a Google Earth Image indicates the buildings in the eastern and south western area of the site have been demolished. The Youth Centre building remained in the north west area of the site, with the site layout resembling its current day layout.



Map 1 - 1964



Map 2 - 1974



Map 3 - 2016



Map 4 - Present day

Figure 14: Site History Maps and Images

02. Context Appraisal

2.6 - Local Character

The site is located in a predominantly residential area, characterised by a mix of two-storey terraced and semi-detached 1920s homes, typical to South Wales. The materials and architectural vernacular reflect the traditional styles of the region, creating a clear local character.



Figure 15: Photos of existing architecture



2.7 Constraints and Opportunities

A summary of the opportunities and constraints on the site are visualised opposite.

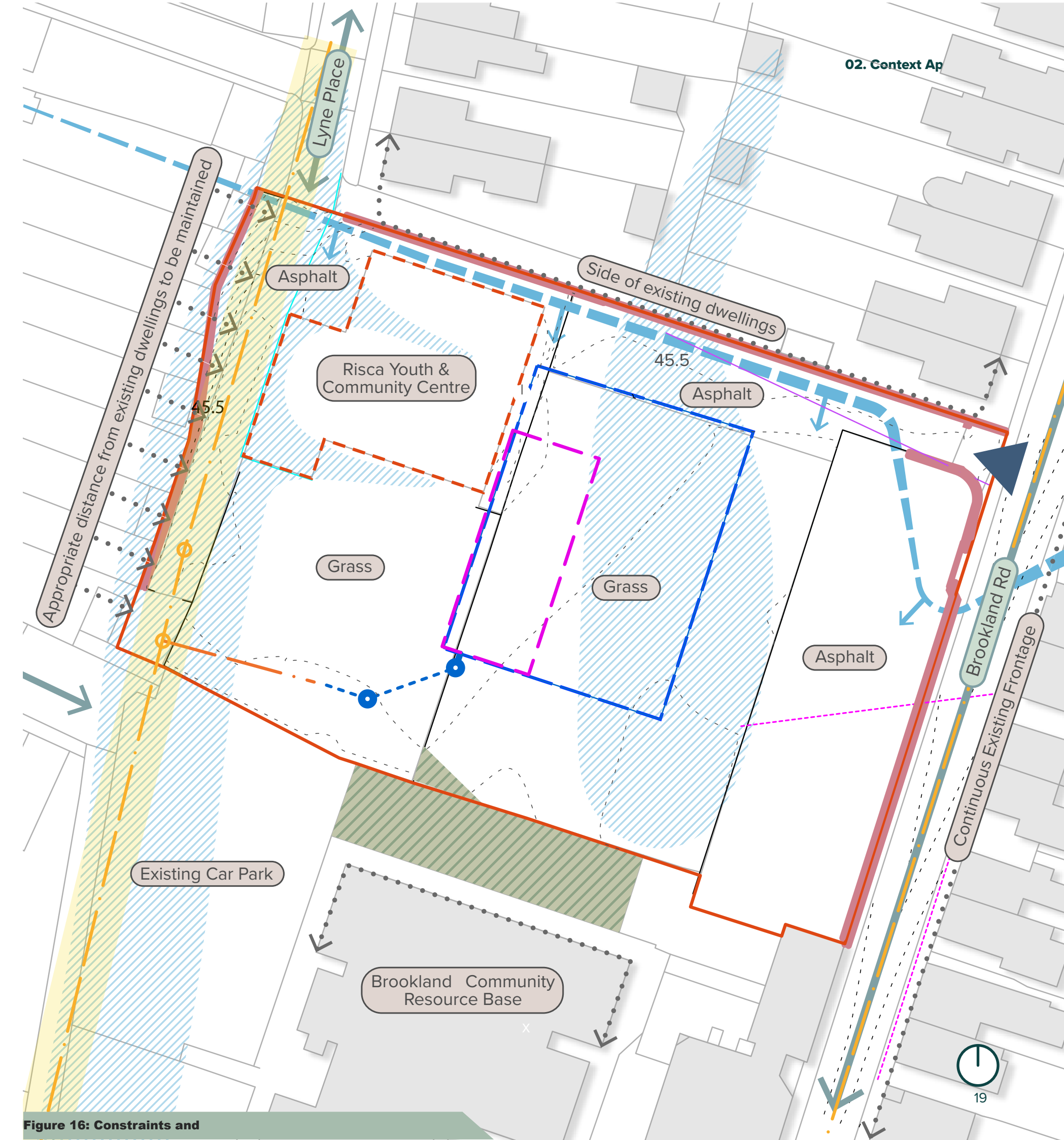


Figure 16: Constraints and

2.8 Arboriculture

An Arboricultural survey and constraints plan have been prepared. See opposite.

Existing Trees

There are three trees on site and three located on the boundary. Those fully on the site are all category C, False Acacias (*Robinia pseudacacia*).

The boundary trees are category B trees and are willow, fig and apple.

Tree Strategy

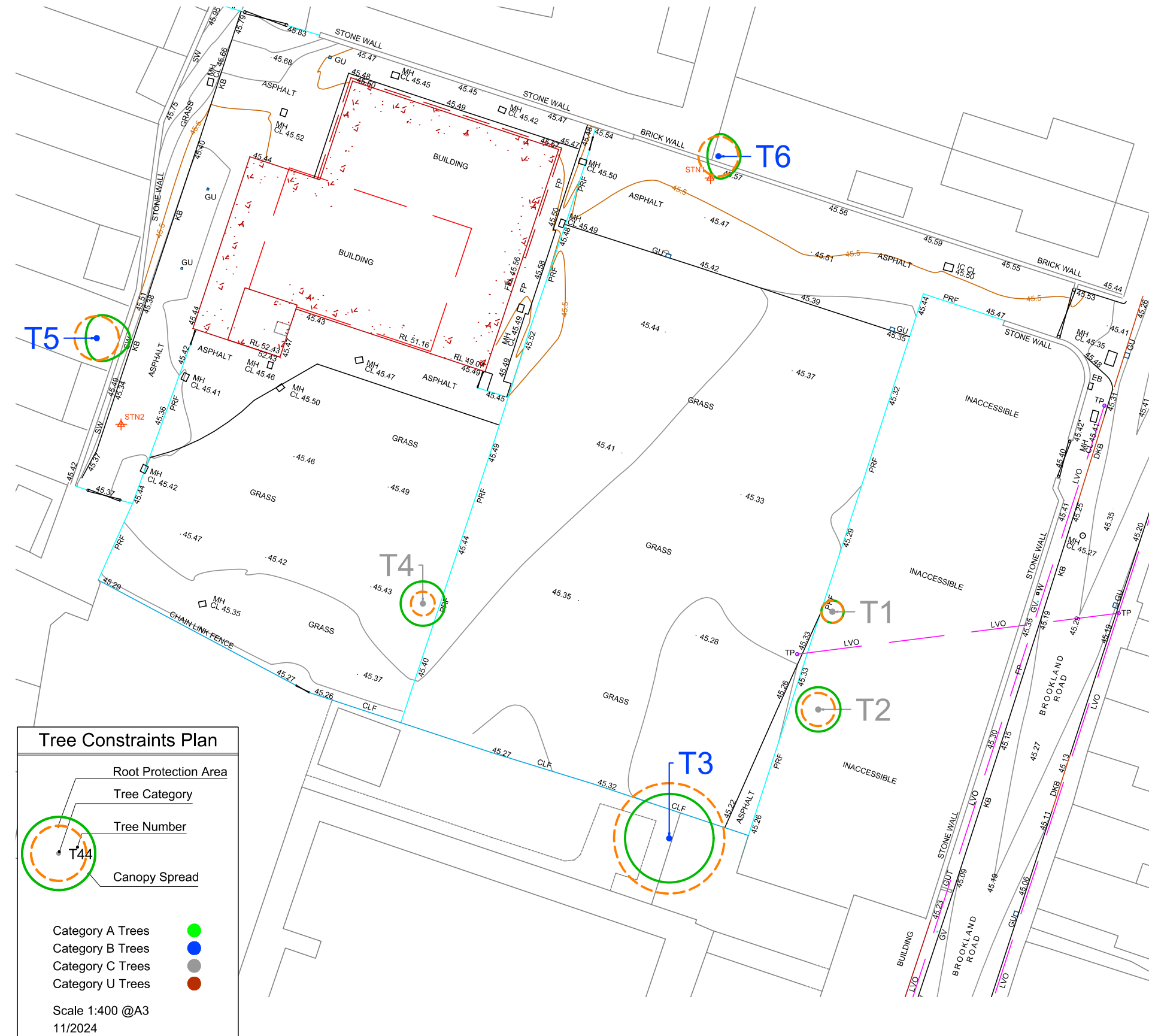
Trees within the site will require removal due to the development and drainage works. The three category C trees removed will be replaced with 3 to every tree removed.

Replacement

A total of 9 replacement trees are proposed to mitigate for the removal of the 3 category C trees plus 7 to improve amenity and biodiversity

This gives a total of 16 trees proposed.

Boundary trees and levels will be retained and roots protected during demolition and construction works.



2.9 Landscape Constraints

The site is mostly level, which is helpful from a development point of view but as mentioned before it does fall within flood zone 2 and is therefore classified as having a medium probability of fluvial flooding from the Ebbw River, giving drainage and sustainable drainage considerations.

The site is mostly covered with grassland, which although not high in ecological value will require mitigation with the introduction of buildings and road surfaces. Consideration of permeability for sustainable drainage is also a factor.

One of the main constraints is the sewerage pipe and easement that run from north to south on the western edge of the site. This will restrict development and tree and shrub planting. There are only 3 trees on site, which will require removal and mitigation of 3 for every tree lost.

Some of the boundary features are historic stone walls, which will be retained where possible to provide context and character to the site.

The Risca Youth Centre on site will be demolished to facilitate the development, this decision has been made following due scrutiny to account for local need.



02. Context Appraisal

Existing Ecology and Green Infrastructure

An Ecological Impact Assessment has been carried out to ascertain the ecological features and character affecting the site. The 0.48ha site consists of amenity grassland, unmanaged vegetation and areas of hard standing. Within the north-west section of the site there is a community centre. There are no designated sites within short distance of the site. A bat emergence survey has also undertaken on the onsite building, no emergences were observed.

Existing Vegetation

The site contains only two types of habitat: low value Amenity grassland and Tall ruderal, which has ecological value and will require mitigation.

Amenity Grassland: Species consist of annual meadow grass, bristly oxtongue, creeping buttercup, ragwort, ribwort plantain, ryegrass, sorrel

Tall ruderal: Species consist of Bramble, buddleia, bristly oxtongue, broadleaved dock, cocksfoot, creeping cinq foil, creeping thistle, daisy sp., dandelion, early primrose, gorse, greater plantain, marigold, mugwort, common mullein, nettle, ribwort plantain, rose sp., rosebay, willowherb, teasel, vetch sp., Yorkshire fog.

No invasive species were found on site.

There are three trees on site, and three on the boundary. The Arboricultural survey summary provides more information on the following pages.

Opportunities

The existing site suffers from poor management and sprawling habitats that could be richer and more diverse. There is an opportunity to create new species rich habitats and manage them positively. Grass areas can be enhanced with species rich seeding. Well managed enhanced habitat of scrub and native shrub species, would be more appropriate to the site.

The site is connected to the surrounding habitat through a series of residential houses and gardens. The surrounding area is likely to support common and widespread species and habitats.

The planting strategy will include species to reflect existing species found on site and to connect to nearby native species and nature reserves.



03. Site Appraisal

3.1 Site Description

The site is located within an urban area. Approximately one-third of the site is open grassland with another third of the site covered in asphalt.

The remaining third is occupied by the former youth and community centre. The site is bounded by residential properties to the north, Brookland road to the east, Caerphilly County Borough Council buildings to the south including a community resource centre and the rear gardens of residential properties to the west.

The site is rectangular in shape and occupies an area of approximately 0.48 hectares. The boundaries of the site are defined by residential properties to the north and west, to the south and Brookland Road, with residential properties beyond to the east.

A building occupied by Risca Youth & Community Centre is located in the north west corner of the site.

An access road/lane is located along the western and northern site boundary. The centre of the site is occupied by a grassed area, surrounded by metal fencing. The remaining site area in the west and east is occupied by rough grass and vegetation. Areas of hard standing associated with the former buildings are located in the eastern area of the site.

The site boundary is lined by a combination of stone walls and metal fencing.



Figure 18: Photos Location Plan

03. Site Appraisal

3.2 Site Access and Movement

Vehicle Access and Movement

The main point of access is from the eastern boundary of the site onto Brookland Road.

A secondary access point is illustrated at the north-western extent of the site onto Lyne Road. This point of access comprises of a linear extension to the existing Lyne Road carriageway and also forms a current gated access to the existing site use. The third point of access for the site is located in the south west of the site joining from Park Place.

Pedestrian Access and Movement

Brookland Road, Park Place and Lyne Road all provide good quality pedestrian infrastructure, which includes a network of footways on both sides of the carriageway, street lighting, uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points (including the provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving and low speed limits).

The internal footways connecting onto the surrounding highway network will ensure that the site is well integrated with the surrounding residential area.



Figure 19: Potential Access on Brookland Road



Figure 20: Access and Movement Plan

3.3 Topography

The existing site topography is very flat with a minor fall in a south eastern direction. Levels range from 46.00m to 45.25m AOD which has been confirmed by means of a topographical survey.



Figure 21: Site Topography



Figure 22: Site Topography Plan

Legend

- Site Boundary
- ⋯ Existing Topography
- Point levels

04. Design Proposals

4.1 Outline Parameters

Outline planning permission for the development is being sought, which means that all matters of design are reserved for future determination. These include, layout, scale, appearance, landscape and access. However, at this stage a series of design parameters are proposed. A summary of these are below with the parameters plan opposite. Up to 23 new homes, the mix of which is to be agreed but illustratively includes, 14no. one bedroom apartments, 4no. two bedroom low cost home ownership apartments, 4no. two bedroom later living properties and 1no. accessible five bedroom house. The proposed scheme will maintain the existing building line along Brookland Road and will be of the same scale and form as properties on Brookland Road.

The materials chosen will respect the local vernacular and include brick and appropriate cladding. The existing stone wall will be reincorporated into the new boundaries for the site. Creation of a new central access from Brookland Road - it was advised by the Highway and Placemaking Officers that this would be preferred over the use of the original. Good pedestrian connectivity with the access from Brookland Road and Park Place. Pedestrian access from Lyne Road is not proposed to improve safety. Setting parking away from the main street scene so its enclosed and overlooked by properties. No scheme parking to be located on Brookland Road. Creation of a new public open space in the south of the site that is multi-use with play spaces, sustainable drainage, places for residents to relax and socialise and planting that helps to deliver biodiversity net gain on the site. Green streets with native tree planting and rain gardens.

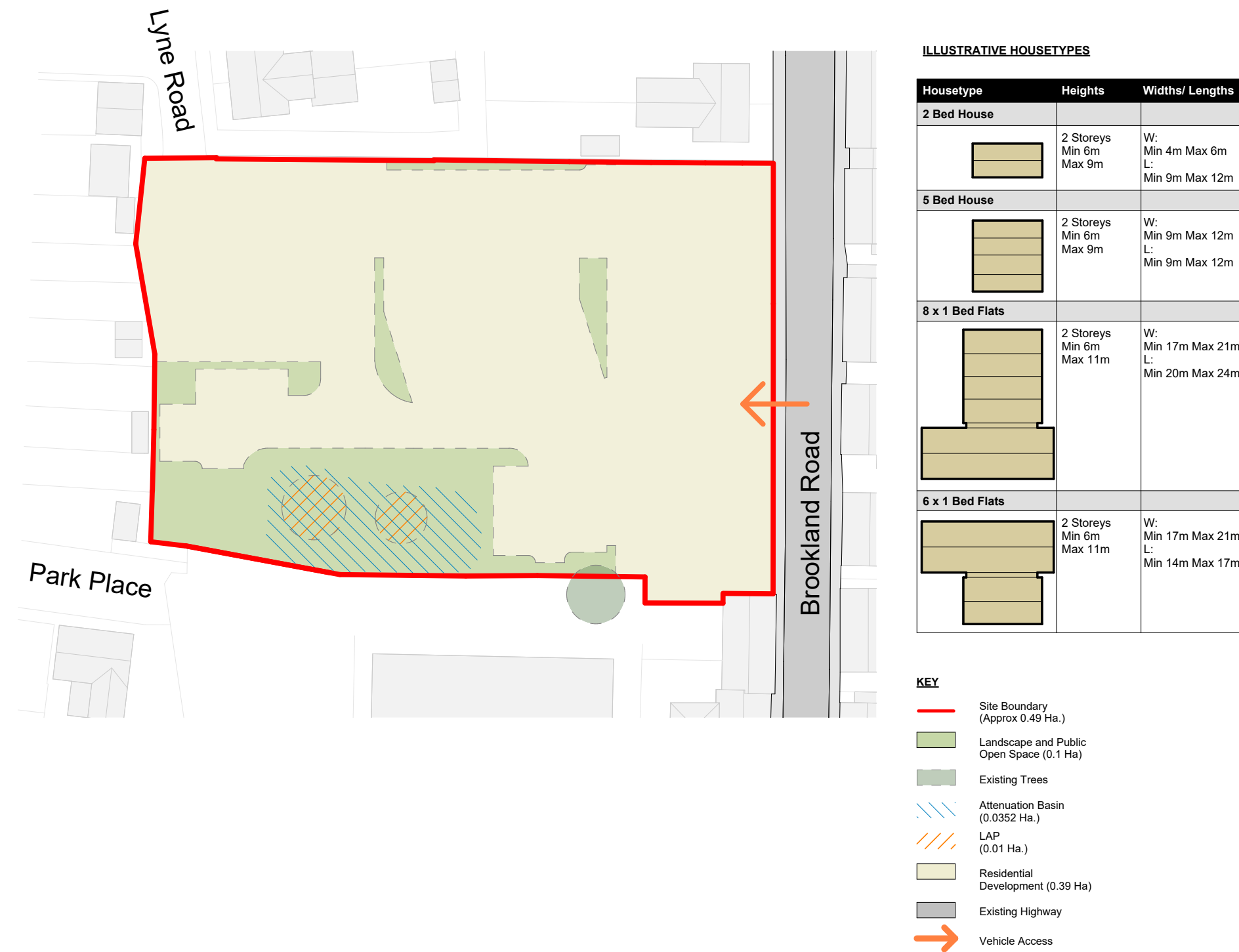


Figure 23: Illustrative Layout

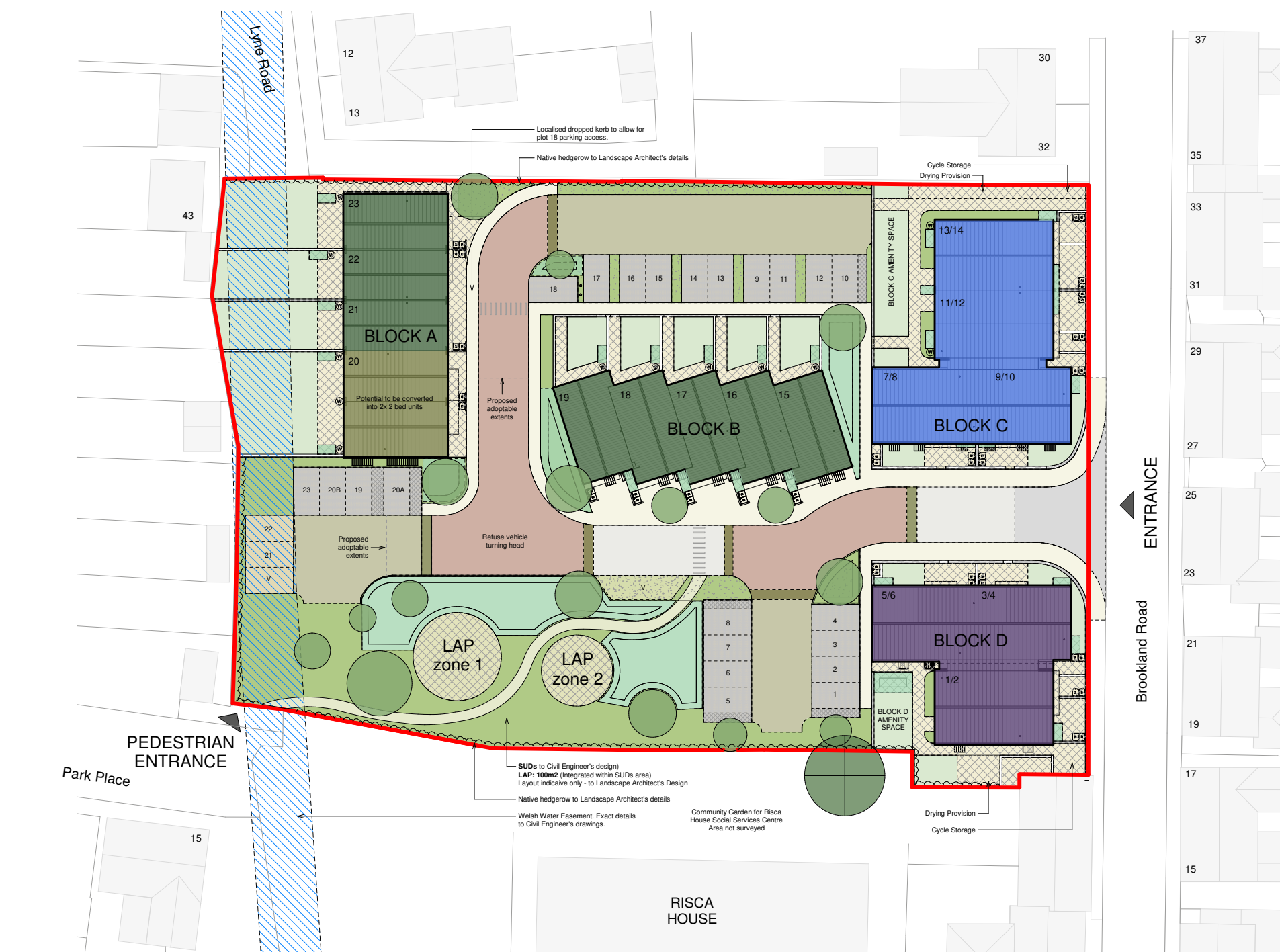


Figure 24: Illustrative Site Plan



Figure 25: 3D Visualisations

4.2 Landscape Strategy

The landscape design is again reserved but a strategy has been prepared to set the key landscape design approach for the site. The landscape strategy considers the setting of the site, reflecting existing planting, habitat, materials and setting whilst creating an enhanced landscape with species rich planting, additional tree canopy cover, softened edges providing a positive setting to the development. It is important to provide a consistency of design language and materials across the site, that ties into the architecture and develops a synergy between the new homes and public spaces and green environment.

The strategy focuses on the creation of southern open space, incorporating a green ecological corridor, backing onto the open space of the Council property located to the south. Native hedgerows, trees and new habitat enhance the site.

This green space provides an attenuation basin as part of the sustainable drainage strategy as well as amenity for the recreational needs of local residents and children, incorporating a Local Areas of Play, which will provide significant health benefits through the opportunity of physical activity outdoor; it enhances the quality of life of residents and contributes to their sense of well being; it can positively contribute to the built environment; and it can contribute to biodiversity, the conservation of nature and landscape, air quality and the protection of groundwater.

The layout of the landscape, provides space for residents to meet, socialise, east outdoors as well as safe spaces for children to play.

Tree placement is restricted due to a water easement running through the western edge of the site but trees are located across the site to provide amenity, seasonal interest and biodiversity, concentrated to the rich ecological area to the south of the site.

Below are the key landscape principles for the site:

- Provide accessible spaces and connections for all
- Ecological and green connections will be created to the southern perimeter of the site
- Existing planting is of poor quality and lacks diversity. There is an opportunity for habitat creation with new planting and planting that is robust, low maintenance and provides seasonal variation
- New native trees will be planted across the site
- The sustainable drainage strategy is deeply integrated into the landscape strategy, with rain gardens to capture the run off from the car parking and the attenuation basin that serves as an amenity and play area
- Permeable paving will be provided to the majority of surfaces as part of the sustainable drainage strategy
- Opportunities for outdoor activity, social interaction and a LAP in the new external amenity areas in the south of the site.



Figure 26: Landscape Strategy Plan

4.3 Illustrative Masterplan

KEYS:

- Site Boundary
- Trees to be removed
- Existing tree retained
- Root protection zone
- Proposed tree planting
- Wild Flowering Planting mix
- Native species rich edge planting
- Gardens
- Species Rich garden planting
- Attenuation Basin
- Rain Garden
- Amenity Space
- Proposed native hedging
- Permeable paving to footpath
- Access Road - Asphalt
- Permeable paving to garden terraces
- LAP play surface
- Resin bound footpath
- Permeable paving to road and parking spaces
- Grasscrete
- Seating



Figure 27: Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

4.4 Green Infrastructure Strategy

Enhancing and improving the existing planting creates a wider green corridor through the site and provide a greener heart to the surround spaces.

Habitat opportunities:

- Create more versatile habitat areas that can be multifunctional.
- Enhance and creating habitats within a dense residential setting to create a green setting and corridor to the south of the site.
- Incorporate a mix of planting typologies to elevate biodiversity and increase the value it brings to the its surroundings in terms of wildlife, biodiversity and green value.
- Improve green connectivity and longevity through the use of native trees and hedgerow, to create an climate responsive space.
- Landscape-lead scheme to ensure habitats are created in suitable areas through the space and surrounding and filling the site with greenery.

Ecological enhancements:

- The addition of bird and bat boxes on buildings and in trees from the ecologists recommendations help maintain green connections and corridors
- Building reptile habitats such as bug hotels
- Species rich habitats encourage the growth of existing wildlife and the introduction of new wildlife



4.5 Drainage and Play

Play provision for residents will be integrated with the sustainable drainage strategy, using the open space and attenuation basin to combine open space with natural play to form a LAP.

The attenuation basin will be 400mm deep, with 1 in 3 banks at the steepest and will not hold water. It will be planted with robust wet tolerant species rich grasses and wildflowers. Play equipment, including natural play features such as rocks and logs, will be located in this basin area and surrounding it to provide a dynamic multi-layered play space that is well overlooked by the surrounding properties and away from the road. The play area is 100sqm and provide natural equipment and seating required for a LAP.



4.6 Planting

Planting Strategy

The planting strategy is centred around enhancing existing and creating new habitats to increase biodiversity, whilst also planting species rich plants and native trees to provide seasonal colour and interest as well as being robust and providing ecological corridors. There are principally three typologies; gardens, wetland and native edge.

The plants selected reflect the native species and habitat found on site, whilst maintaining a cohesive character across the mixes.

Gardens

Species rich grass and plant mixes to add colour and interest to public areas around buildings. This typology includes 'defensive planting' to the perimeter of buildings to create a green privacy buffer. Species to include: ferns, anemone, burnett, echinacea, libertia, geranium, deschampsia.

Wetland

Wet tolerant species rich grass and wildflower mixes to attenuation basin and rain gardens include: ribwort plantain, Yorkshire fog, yarrow, pincushion flower, bladder campion, geranium, ferns

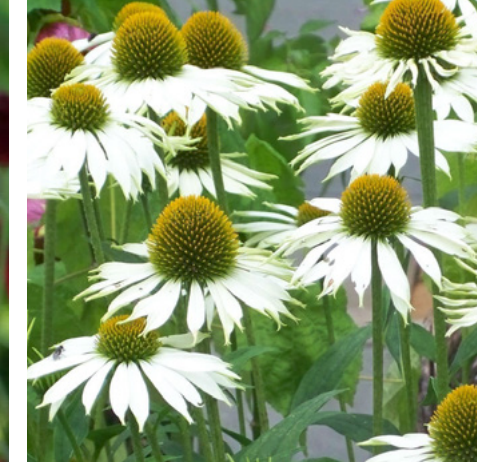
Native edge

Native tree, woodland edge, hedge and understorey planting to form an ecological corridor and green perimeter to the southern edge of the site. Species to include: Hawthorn crab apple, harts-tongue fern, holly, ivy, guelder rose, elderflower, dog rose

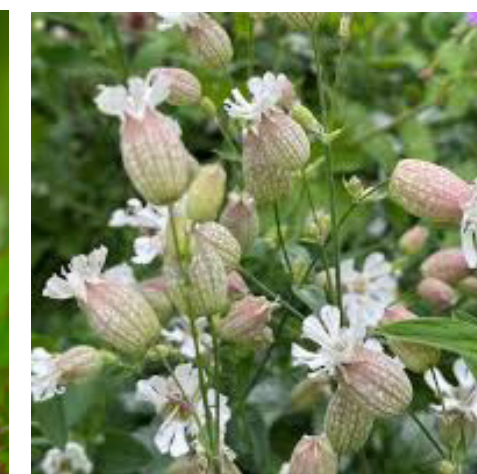
Native Trees

Native trees will be planted across the site, with mid to large canopy sizes to provide shade and house a few bat/bird boxes as part of the wider green corridor and biodiversity enhancement. Tree species to include: Field maple, birch cherry, and rowan,

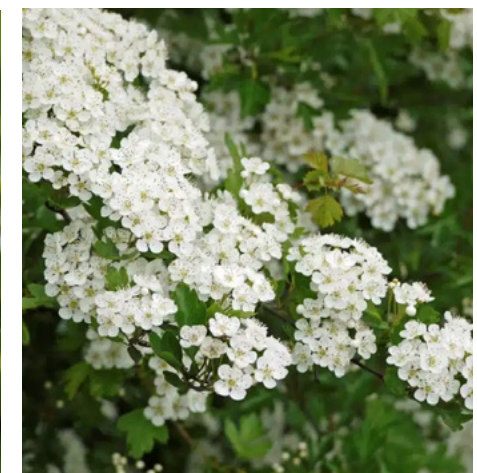
Gardens



Wet Grassland / Bioretention



Native edge



4.7 Materials

Materials will be consistent with the existing character of the site, including the retention and re-use of stone walls, and to complement surrounding buildings and the materials of the proposed buildings.

Road and footpath surfaces are to be permeable wherever possible, including permeable paving, resin bound gravel. Where adopted, asphalt is proposed.

Perimeter Strategy

To reflect the existing landscape character, the aim is to retain and re-use the existing stone in any walls on the site boundary.

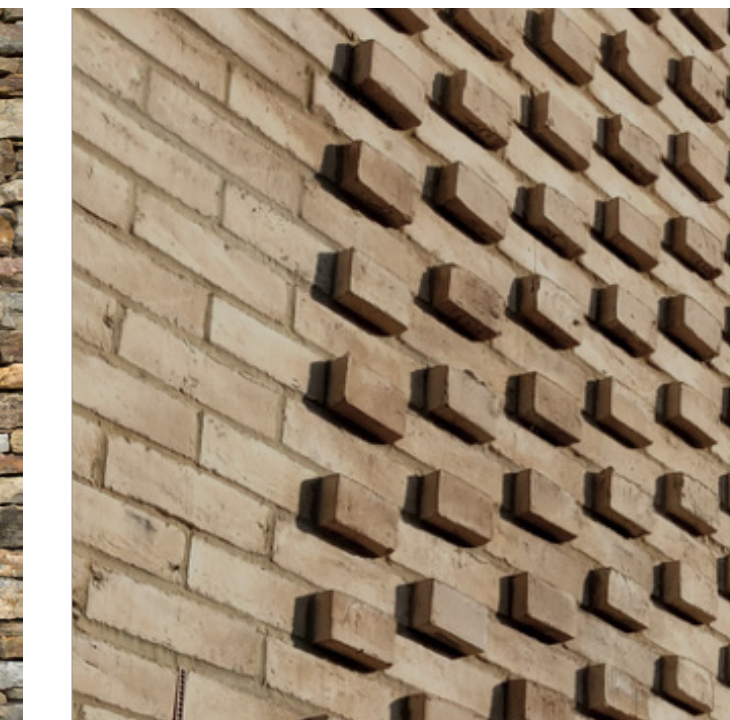
The southern and northern boundaries will be native hedge and railings.



Brickwork in complementing tones to existing



Re-used Stone from Brookland Rd Wall



05. Planning Assessment

This section sets out the compliance of the scheme against planning policy at both national and local levels.

Principle of Development

The site is previously developed brownfield land, it is unallocated but is within the defined settlement boundary, where new residential development is supported by LDP Policies SP5 (Settlement Boundaries) and CW15 (General Locational Constraints). The principle of residential development is therefore acceptable within the defined settlement boundary and the proposed mix reflects the role and function of the settlement. The scheme has also been designed to reflect sustainable transport and accessibility principles.

The Local Housing Market Assessment Prospectus 2024 identifies an estimated annual requirement for an additional 765 homes. The assessment also identifies strategic housing priorities, which include increasing the range of accommodation for older people and increasing the provision of accessible homes. Although the scheme mix remains illustrative at this stage. It would directly help to contribute to these two strategic housing priorities. The proposed tenure mix includes 23 affordable units, comprising of the following:

- 14 Later Living One bedroom flats;
- 4 Low-Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) Two bedroom house;
- 4 Later Living Two bedroom house; and
- 1 Five bedroom accessible house.

Flood Risk

The site falls within Flood Zone B (which is defined as areas known to have been flooded in the past evidenced by sedimentary deposits, see current flood map). In respect of the Flood Map for Planning, the site is within Flood Zone 2 and just outside Flood Zone 3. It is also identified as a Defended Zone. TAN 15 regarding the Development Advice Map, and guidance for Flood Maps for Planning, identify that both Flood Zone B and Zone 2 (respectively) are appropriate for development. Policy CW5 (Protection of the Water Environment) sets out that proposals will only be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment.

A Flood Consequences Assessment was undertaken regarding these flood risks, and found that river flooding potential and surface water flooding was very low. Groundwater flooding was found to be moderate, however all potential flood risks to the site could be reduced to an acceptable level using standard mitigation measures set out in the assessment. The drainage strategy has been developed to ensure this impact is mitigated and compliant with SAB. It is proposed that

the surface water generated by the development shall be treated and conveyed through a series of SuDS systems and discharged via infiltration within a cellular storage structure located under the POS area to the south of the development. As such the scheme is considered likely to be compliant with national and local policies regarding flood risk and risk management.

Access and Parking

The site is currently accessed from Brookland Road from the east of the site and Lyne Road to the west of the site. Policy CW3 (Highways) of the Local Development Plan states that "proposals must have regard for the safe, effective, and efficient use of the transportation network, and ensure that new access roads within development proposals are designed to the standard." Policy SP21 (Parking Standards) sets out the on-site requirements. Supplementary Planning Guidance document LDP5 - Car Parking Standards: Parking Zones states that for houses and apartments, 1 space per bedroom (maximum requirement 3 spaces) for residents is required and 1 space per 5 units for visitors is required. Applied to the site proposal, this equates to a total provision of 33 parking spaces plus five visitors spaces, equating to a total provision of 38 parking spaces.. The outline scheme sets out 24 car parking spaces for residents and two spaces for visitors (26 spaces in total). This is in accordance with the maximum standards and reflects the sustainability of the site.

The site is well integrated to the wider Risca settlement, including the key facilities and services within the town centre. The site is well situated to benefit from public transport infrastructure and the scheme encourages walking and cycling for local journeys. Given the sustainable location of the site, reduction below the standards is therefore proposed. This is reflected in the illustrative masterplan and the Transport Assessment undertaken that sets out the planning case for the scheme.

Ecology

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out on the 19th November 2024. The report identified that the River Ebbw is located 200m south of the site and is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The proposed scheme will have no adverse impacts on this watercourse to comply with Policy CW5 (Protection of the Water Environment). The report also identifies that the amenity grassland is considered as having ecological importance as it contains a tall ruderal habitat. It was also recommended that demolition works are undertaken outside of the nesting season. The EIA also surveyed for the likely hood of impacts on bats and other priority species as a result of the scheme. The surveys found no bats roosting on site, and no evidence of other priority species being present on site. The net benefit for biodiversity approach will be delivered through the landscape strategy proposed and will ensure enhancement of the site

through a mix of planting typologies and bird and bat boxes on buildings and trees.

Community and Leisure Facilities

The Risca Youth and Community Centre is located on the site, this is due to be demolished as part of the scheme. This building is no longer in use as a Community Centre. Channel View Community Centre is located in Pontymister, Risca roughly 320m north-east of the Site. This facility is open and available for Community use. According with Policy CW8 (Protection of Community and Leisure Facilities) It is demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements within the local area.

Visual and Neighbour Amenity

Policy CW2 (Amenity) sets out that developments should lead to no unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land.

The site sits between a series of terraces to the north and Risca House to the south of the site. Parking has been located to the rear of the blocks to prevent off-street parking causing harm to the street character. Surrounding buildings are not typically taller than two-storeys, this scheme will reflect these heights. Existing dwellings are a mixture of render and stone, the material palette has been selected to reflect the character of the surrounding area. Significant impacts on neighbour amenity have been avoided by the careful placement of windows and setting dwellings at sufficient distances.

Although the application prepared for the development is only outline, with all matters reserved, the illustrative layout and design approach is considered to present a strong and deliverable placemaking response on the site. The illustrative layout meets the strategic placemaking principles of Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales criteria.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme is outline in detail with all matters reserved but it is considered the principle of development is sound when considered against national and local planning policy. Furthermore the design sets a series of development parameters and principles that demonstrate good placemaking, in respects of quality and appearance, ecology, access and movement, neighbour amenity and use of land. It is therefore deemed that the scheme represents sustainable development and satisfies material planning considerations.

On the above basis it is considered the proposed scheme is suitable for the grant of planning permission, with the agreement of reserved matters to follow.

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