



Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort

FINAL DRAFT

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd

On behalf of:

Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

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Plan EDP 3: Findings of Visual Appraisal (edp6556_d012a 12 April 2024 GYo/TYC)

Executive Summary

- S1 The proposed development aims to deliver a new tourism and leisure destination in the Vale of Neath. Holiday lodges will be complemented with supporting facilities including a multi-functional central hub. The landscape strategy has shaped the design and layout of the scheme, and the focus is on maintaining a wooded landscape through retaining much of the vegetation on-site and implementing new strategic tree belts to reduce views of built form proposed, whilst simultaneously introducing designed views outward.
- The site is located within the Vale of Neath Special Landscape Area (SLA) which is a large-scale local landscape designation covering much of the valley. The site is surrounded by vegetation and dramatic landforms, limiting visibility within the immediate vicinity. Key receptors affected include Public Rights of Way (PRoW) users, road users, and in part some residents at a medium distance. Views experienced are often elevated and distanced, resulting in moderate to minor adverse effects and some beneficial effects with much of the local landscape remaining unaffected due to the lack of views of the site. While there may be some adverse effects on the SLA's character, they would be minor when considered in terms of the scale of the SLA, and perceptible effects would be contained to a discreet area. The presence of built form exists already on-site and in the valley, which is consistent with the rural character of the surrounding landscape. Additionally, the development proposed is not anticipated to significantly alter woodland cover or panoramic views, with efforts focused on retaining and enhancing key features to maintain the landscape character and preserve the landscape's essential qualities.
- The proposed landscape design and mitigation strategy emphasises sensitivity to the existing landscape and a naturalisation of the area around the lodges will be maintained. Sustainable drainage features, habitat creation, and tree planting has been incorporated as an integral part of the design and this will promote biodiversity within the site.
- In summary, the development proposed aims to enhance the landscape while minimising adverse effects on the surrounding environment. By prioritising sensitivity and sustainability, the holiday lodge scheme appraised herein seeks to create a harmonious balance between nature and leisure to manage the needs of people and of wildlife.

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Section 1 Introduction, Purpose and Methodology

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited ('the applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of proposals to further develop an existing tourism and visitor attraction centre at Parc Pelenna, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot SA11 3QE (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). The site area is approximately 45 hectares (ha) and it is briefly described in **Section 2** of this LVA. Full site details are given in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanying the outline planning application.
- 1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cardiff, Cheltenham and Cirencester. The practice provides advice to private and public sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website (www.edp-uk.co.uk). EDP is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute specialising in the assessment of the effects of proposed development on the landscape.
- 1.3 This LVA baseline is part of a suite of documents for promotion of the proposed development summarised in **Section 6** of this report. The proposals are illustrated on the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan provided at **Appendix EDP 1**.

PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS LVA BASELINE

- 1.4 The purpose of this LVA is to provide an independent, informed professional assessment of the predicted nature and significance of the changes to the landscape that may arise as a result of the proposed development.
- 1.5 In undertaking the assessment described in this LVA, EDP has:
 - Undertaken a thorough data trawl of relevant designations and background documents, described in **Section 3**;
 - Assessed the existing (baseline) condition and character of the site and its setting, described in **Section 4**;
 - Assessed the existing visual (baseline) context, especially any key views to and from the site (Section 5). The establishment of baseline landscape and visual conditions, when evaluated against the proposed development;
 - Described the landscape aspects of the proposed development that may influence any landscape or visual effects (**Section 6**);

- Provided an analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme
 in Section 7, which is determined by combining the magnitude of the predicted change
 with the assessed sensitivity of the identified receptors. The nature of any predicted
 effects is also identified (i.e. positive/negative, permanent/reversible) and assessed
 the landscape and visual effects in accordance with the approach described below;
 and
- Reached overall conclusions in Section 8.

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE ASSESSMENT

- 1.6 The proposed development which forms the focus of this LVA is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This LVA baseline has, therefore, been undertaken in accordance with the principles embodied in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition* (LI/IEMA, 2013) (GLVIA3) and other best practice guidance, insofar as it is relevant to non-EIA schemes.
- 1.7 Familiarisation: EDP's study has included reviews of aerial photographs, web searches, Local Planning Authority (LPA) publications and landscape character assessments. EDP has also obtained, where possible, information about relevant landscape and other designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), conservation areas and parks and gardens listed on Cadw's 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest' (RPG).
- 1.8 Field Assessment: EDP has undertaken a comprehensive field assessment of local site circumstances, including a photographic survey of the character and fabric of the site and its surroundings, using photography from a number of representative viewpoints (Appendix EDP 2). Field assessments were undertaken by a qualified landscape architect in 2023 and 2024, the dry weather conditions were variable, but visibility was fit for purpose.
- 1.9 Design Inputs: EDP's field assessment has informed a process whereby the development proposals have been refined to avoid, minimise, or compensate for landscape effects. Such measures are summarised in Section 6.
- 1.10 Assessment methodology: Predicted effects on the landscape resource arising from the proposed development (as detailed in Section 7 of this LVA), have been determined in accordance with the principles embedded within published best practice guidance (GLVIA3) insofar as the assessment adopts the following well-established, structured approach:
 - Likely effects on landscape character and visual amenity to be dealt with separately;
 - The assessment of likely effects will be reached using a structured methodology. The
 definition of sensitivity, magnitude and significance is contained in **Appendix EDP 3** of
 this LVA. This framework is combined with professional judgement, which is an
 important part of the assessment process; being neither 'pro' nor 'anti' development
 but acknowledging that development may result in beneficial change as well as
 landscape harm;

- As advised in GLVIA3, the baseline takes into account the effects of any proposed mitigation; and
- Typically, a 15-year time horizon is used as the basis for conclusions about the residual levels of effect. Fifteen years is a well-established and accepted compromise between assessing the short-term effects (which may often be rather 'raw' before any proposed mitigation has had time to take effect) and an excessively long-time period.

STUDY AREA

- 1.11 To establish the baseline and potential limit of material effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:
 - First, a broad 3km radius 'study area' was adopted. Based mainly on desk-based study, this broad study area allowed the geographical scope of the appraisal to be defined based on the extent of views to/from the site and site's environmental planning context; and
 - 2. Second, following initial analysis and subsequent field work, the broad study area was refined down to land which is most likely to experience landscape effects. The extent of this detailed study area is 2km from the site boundary, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate. This detailed study area is illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**.

Section 2 The Site

- 2.1 **Plan EDP 1** illustrates the location of the site's boundaries and the study area for the LVA. The site connects to New Road (B4434) on the northern edge, between Tonna to the southwest and Clyne, to the north-east. The site is wooded along this edge.
- 2.2 The site's environmental planning considerations are illustrated on the aerial photograph, which is shown on **Plan EDP 2**. The site is located within the Vale of Neath SLA 3, which is covered by Local Plan Policy EN2/3 Special Landscape Areas and supporting study. Greater detail regarding the site's character is included within **Section 4**.
- 2.3 Pen-rhiw Angharad is a farm with a series of buildings that sits in the centre of the site. The aspect of the site is north-facing and the contours fall (sharply in places) from the southern boundary, where the site's edge meets National Cycle Route (NCR) 47, to the north towards the bottom of the valley which contains a series of linear routes including New Road (B4434) which demarcates the proposed site entrance, a railway line, a little further north is the Neath Canal and aligned NCR 46, and the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road also sits in the valley bottom. Existing development is generally concentrated in the valley bottom, with the exception of the occasional farm and terraced houses on the valley slopes to the south-west and north (Clyne Terrace).
- 2.4 In terms of its wider context, the landscape is expansive and **Plan EDP 1** shows the sloping nature of the site and where it sits within the Vale of Neath. Woodland plantations are characteristic of the SLA, as well as the broader landscape, and this is perceptible on-site, which contains a large amount of woodland, and on the ridgelines located beyond the extents of the site. Of note, Pelenna Forest is a managed woodland plantation (broadly conifer) which forms a natural backdrop to the site, and the site sits below the crest of the ridge in views from the wider site context. As seen within **Image EDP 2.1**, the aerial image illustrates the extent of woodland cover within and in the context of the site. This woodland tends to limit and filter views of the site, and open views into the site are difficult to discern as a result.



Image EDP 2.1: Birds eye view of the site (Image source: Google Earth, March 2024). Approximate site boundary added by EDP in red.

Section 3 Findings of EDP Data Trawl

3.1 The findings of EDP's data trawl of relevant environmental and planning designations are illustrated on **Plan EDP 2** and summarised in this section.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 3.2 The following documents are relevant and will be discussed as appropriate later in this report:
 - LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment;
 - Landscape and Seascape Supplementary Planning Guidance (May 2018); and
 - Local Development Plan (LDP) Neath Port Talbot Council Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (adopted 2016).

FINDINGS OF EDP DATA TRAWL

Landscape-related Designations

- 3.3 Landscape-related designations and policy considerations within 2km of the site are shown on **Plan EDP 2**. In summary:
 - National landscape designations the site lies outside of any National Parks or National Landscapes;
 - Local Landscape Designations the site within the Vale of Neath SLA locally designated landscape; and
 - Other landscape-related designations the site does not lie within any other local designation of relevance e.g. Green Belt/Green Wedge.

Ecology Matters

- 3.4 A separate Ecology Assessment (prepared by Ramboll) considers the ecological assets on the site and within the study area. The following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVA:
 - Neath Canal, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), is approximately 60m north-west of entrance track at closest point.
 - Sarn Helen SINC is located approximately 0.8km north-west, on the opposite side of the Neath river valley;

- Tonmawr Minewater Treatment & Surrounding Habitats SINC is approximately 1.6km south; and
- Cwm Blaen Pelenna SINC is at approximately 1.7km south-east.

Heritage Matters

- 3.5 Heritage assets can influence the visual character of the landscape and enrich its historic value. This LVA addresses heritage assets only insofar as they are components of the wider contemporary landscape not in terms of their significance and value as heritage assets.
- 3.6 Within the wider study area, the following heritage assets are components of the contemporary landscape:
 - There is a scheduled ancient monument in the south-western corner of the site, namely Pen-Rhiw-Angharad Round Cairns (GM276). Blaen-Cwmbach Camp is a large scheduled ancient monument located approximately 80m to the south-west of the site; and
 - The Gnoll is a Registered Park and Garden (RPG) of Historic Interest which is located approximately 2km to the south-west of the site. There is no intervisibility with the site due to landform.

Arboricultural Matters

- 3.7 A separate Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the site in order to understand the arboricultural assets on the site and within the study area. The following matters are relevant to the scope of this LVA:
 - Consultation with the LPA confirmed that no trees on-site are identified to be covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs);
 - There are areas of ancient woodland present within and adjacent to the site; and
 - The majority of tree stock within the site appears to be in relatively good condition, and in landscape terms, provide important landscape and green infrastructure features within the site.

Public Access and Rights of Way

- 3.8 A review of the Neath Port Talbot definitive map identifies a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the study area, as illustrated on **Plan EDP 3**. There are three PRoW within the site, and there are relatively few within the wider context, particularly those that afford views of the site:
 - The Footpaths 53/7.Ton/3 and 53/8.Ton/3 enter the site from the west then exit to the north along New Road (B4434);
 - The Bridleway 51/9/1 passes through the site at the southern edge and connects to the scheduled monument, Pen-Rhiw-Angharad Round Cairns within the site; and

• The NCRs 46 and 47 run parallel to the northern and southern site boundarys respectively. The latter partially passes within the south-western edge of the site before it progresses through woodland, whilst NCR 46 follows the Neath Canal within the valley bottom and is separated from the site's edge.

Adopted Local Plan (Published)

- 3.9 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026 includes over-arching general development policies, to which the development proposals will be tested. Policies that are specific to the site in landscape and visual terms are:
 - Policy EN2 Special Landscape Areas: "Development within the designated Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the Special Landscape Area has been designated";
 - Policy EN6 Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites: "Development proposals
 that would affect Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS), Local Nature
 Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs), sites meeting SINC
 criteria or sites supporting Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or S42 habitats or
 species will only be permitted where:
 - They conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site; or
 - The development could not reasonably be located elsewhere, and the benefits of the development outweigh the natural heritage importance of the site.

Mitigation and/or compensation measures will need to be agreed where adverse effects are unavoidable"; and

- Policy TR2 Design and Access of New Development: "Development proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:
 - The development does not compromise the safe, effective and efficient use of the highway network and does not have an adverse impact on highway safety or create unacceptable levels of traffic generation;
 - Appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities are provided and the access arrangements for the site allow for the safe manoeuvring of any service vehicles associated with the planned use;
 - The development is accessible by a range of travel means, including public transport and safe cycle and pedestrian routes;
 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans are provided for developments that are likely to create significant traffic generation."

Landscape and Seascape Supplementary Planning Guidance

3.10 With respect to Policy EN2 Special Landscape Areas, the following is set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance:

"Policy EN2 [in the LDP] Development within the designated Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the Special Landscape Area has been designated."

"Outside settlements, an understanding of landscape character should be a starting point in the design process for any development. The development layout, form and detailed design should respond to the landscape and should seek to enhance it where possible. Under most circumstances, proposals that would have a significant negative landscape impact will be resisted."

"Detailed landscape character area assessments for all parts of the County Borough are provided in the **NPT LANDMAP Landscape Assessment**¹. Developers should assess the impact of their development in relation to the attributes of the character area in which it is to be sited and in relation to any other character area bounding the site or from which it will be visible."

- 3.11 Other policies considered relevant to this site include Policy SC1 Settlement Limits which discusses the specific circumstances in which development may be considered acceptable outside of these limits. Sustainable tourism and/or farm diversification are identified as acceptable forms of development in the countryside.
- 3.12 The Vale of Neath is identified as an important tourist destination, and amenities such as the Neath Canal, Aberdulais National Trust, cycleways and promoted routes, all contribute to the increased the footfall and opportunities for growth in this area. National Cycle Route 47 abuts the southern site boundary, and NCR 46 is in close proximity to the northern extent of the site. Tourism accommodation is recorded as small in scale currently, and there is likely to be further growth in tourism and the need for sustainable accommodation which further increases access to the countryside.

https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/9005/spg_landmap_landscape_assessment_2004.pdf

¹ White Consultants as commissioned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Countryside Council for Wales. Report (accessed April 2024) is available here:

Section 4 Existing (Baseline) Conditions: Landscape Character

4.1 This section provides an assessment of the 'baseline' (existing) conditions in respect of the character of the site and its landscape context. It summarises any relevant published landscape assessments which contribute to a better understanding of the landscape context. Such assessments provide a helpful understanding of the landscape context, but rarely deliver site-specific or up to date information to draw robust conclusions about the significance of any change proposed by the development. Accordingly, EDP has undertaken its own assessment of the site, as well as a review of national and local assessments which is also included in this section.

NATIONAL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.2 At the national level, the character of Wales has been described and classified in the National Landscape Character Area (NLCA) profiles published by Natural Resource Wales (NRW). The site and its surroundings fall within NLCA 37, 'South Wales Valleys'. The NLCA is summarised as:

"Many deep, urbanised valleys dissect an extensive upland area. Combined with industrial heritage and the distinct identity of its people, the South Wales Valleys provide some of Wales' most widely known and iconic national images.

Extensive ribbon development fills many valley bottoms and lower slopes. Their urban and industrial character is juxtaposed with dramatic upland settings with steep hillsides, open moors or forests. Networks of railways and roads connect valley settlements. Topography constrains passage between valleys, and there are only a limited number of high passes between valleys. The noise and business of many valleys contrast with the relatively remote and wild qualities of adjacent hill plateaux.

Underlying geology and mineral deposits provided the resources that fuelled a rapid spread of industrial development in the C19th. Once rail transport became possible, new coal, steel and iron industries created an extensive infrastructure of large buildings, furnaces, towers, chimneys, viaducts, spoil heaps and levels. Housing for workers resulted in the extensive and iconic rows of terraced houses that run along hillsides. Their needs in turn brought chapels, shops, schools and other facilities to create new settlements with an urban character. The way of life and harsh environment resulted in the image of a tough, rugby playing and radically minded society. But the decline of industries in the late C20th resulted in the closure, removal, abandonment or redevelopment of many former industrial sites. These changes continue today, as do the consequential social changes to the way of life and community identity. The area is now seen as part of a wider, increasingly post-industrial, 'city region', the largest in Wales. A new iconic image is at times unclear, but heritage-based activities set within a softer, greener environment are emerging as part of this.

While greenness is returning to some former industrial landscapes many of the new woodlands are coniferous. Waterways are slowly welcoming back fish, and mammals such

- as otters. The importance of wildlife conservation being undertaken hand-in-hand with economic regeneration is being recognised as one of the keys to the sustained revitalisation of this most iconic Welsh 'bro', in the Heads of the Valleys and Valleys Regional Park initiatives."
- 4.3 While the NLCA 37 is broadly representative of the site's landscape context, it is likely to be too broad a scale to reliably inform an assessment of the suitability of the proposals in landscape terms on a site of this size. Therefore, the LANDMAP evaluations and local area assessments (where available) are discussed below and cross-referenced in this report.

PUBLISHED CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS - LANDMAP

- 4.4 LANDMAP (Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process) is a system managed by NRW since 1997, in conjunction with the Wales Landscape Partnership Group (WLPG). The aim is to record and make available to anyone with an interest in land, a wide range of information about the Welsh landscape.
- 4.5 LANDMAP is a GIS based landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities, and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. Data is defined by five layers or themes, the Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Visual and Sensory, Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape, forming the key landscape guidance for Wales.
- 4.6 LANDMAP is a whole landscape approach that covers all landscapes, designated and non-designated. It identifies key landscape characteristics and qualities that can be used to aid planning policy and decisions. The accompanying guidance states that it is the use of all five layers of information that promotes sustainable landscape decision-making, giving all layers equal consideration.
- 4.7 The site is composed of a number of LANDMAP 'aspect areas', as summarised in **Table EDP 4.1**. Each LANDMAP theme/layer is described, assessed, and assigned one of four overall grades of value: low, moderate, high, or outstanding. Summary LANDMAP descriptions are provided on the NRW website.

Table EDP 4.1: LANDMAP Assessment and Evaluation

Aspect	Area Name	Classification	Evaluation
Geological Landscape	Mynydd Blaenafon. Mynydd Resolven	Undulating upland terrain and dissected plateau.	Moderate (Dissected slopes in Pennant (Llynfi-Brithdir Beds) sandstone succession; glacial cirques; landslips, mining.).
Landscape Habitat	Not named, within region of Neath Port Talbot	Dry (Relatively) Terrestrial Habitats.	Moderate (Extensive areas of semi-natural broadleaved woodland, much of it ancient; contains Gnoll Country Park.).

Aspect	Area Name	Classification	Evaluation
Visual and Sensory	Mynydd Nant y bar/ Mynydd Blaenafan	Exposed Upland/Plateau	Moderate (Area of forestry is consistently managed and contains numerous landscape features, exposed rock and open upland, which add to the aesthetic quality of this area. The edges and skyline against the Afan and Neath valley complement the valleys' characters.).
Historic Landscape	Vale of Neath (southern valley side)	Irregular Fieldscapes	Outstanding (This area presents some problems in assessment; while the appearance of the heavily-wooded valley may well superficially resemble that captured by late 18th-early 19th century landscape painters such as Hornor, it should be emphasised that much of the existing woodland represents modern coniferous plantation, not the ancient and semi-natural woodland which is shown on the OS 1st edition map. Much of the irregular fieldscape and pattern of dispersed settlement shown in this area on historic maps has survived; however, there has been limited loss of field boundaries and some farmsteads are in a ruined, derelict state or have completely vanished. However, while taking this serious loss of coherence into account, it has been decided to categorise this area as being of overall outstanding importance, in view of the presence of industrial remains of exceptional rarity and national importance, in particular the remains of the early ironworking site at Melincwrt and the remarkably well preserved remains of the Glynneath inclined plane on the Cefn Rhigos Tramroad, the second oldest steampowered incline known to have been built in the United Kingdom.).
Cultural Landscape	Mynydd Nant y bar/ Mynydd Blaenafan	Exposed Upland/Plateau	Unclassified (Landscape where its scenic quality and character are moderate. Weak Welsh national identity with approx. 57% of people in the area identify as Welsh and approx. 20% of people in the area speak Welsh.).

4.8 Within LANDMAP, each aspect area is typically described, assessed, and assigned one of four overall grades of value: low, moderate, high, or outstanding. Summary LANDMAP descriptions are provided on the NRW website. With respect to the findings relevant to the

- site at Parc Pelenna, all of the LANDMAP areas with evaluations were found to score an overall evaluation of moderate.
- 4.9 Typically, the most pertinent aspect area to landscape and visual matters is the visual and sensory theme. The 'Mynydd Nant y bar/Mynydd Blaenafan' aspect layer is evaluated as 'Moderate'. The summary for this visual and sensory area is described as a:
 - "Large area of undulating plateau running across the high ground between the Afan valley and Neath valley to the east of county borough. Rising from approx 50m AOD in Neath valley to 600m AOD. Numerous small valleys provide added topographical interest to this landscape which the conifers emphasise and add drama to. The area is almost entirely covered with coniferous plantation, mainly spruce, with larch which leads to a monotonous cover on the plateau tops. There are some areas of open ground and exposed rock, primarily at summits or steeper ground. There are no roads or settlements in this area although the Coed Morgannwy Way which almost dissects the area and provides access along a long distance trail. In many areas the abrupt forest edge sits uncomfortably with the surrounding open landscape. Cleared areas of forest are unsightly. Change detection 2014: Opencast mining active, and restored areas have become a feature but not particularly conspicuous from surroundings. Minor areas of broadleaf conversion."
- 4.10 The description of the visual and sensory aspect area is fairly consistent with the site. The site itself is on a north-facing slope within the Neath Valley. The levels on-site range from c.40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) on the northern edge, to c.270m aOD on the southern boundary. Exposed rock faces create variation in topography and character on-site also. There is also a mix of coniferous and mixed plantations on the site. Two rights of way cross the site, but there are no promoted routes such as the Coed Morgannwy Way long distance trail. This route is over 5km to the east of the site, and due to the intervening topography, there is no intervisibility with the site from this route.
- 4.11 The St. Illtyd's Trail is another long-distance path that crosses the Neath Port Talbot authoritative area. The route is c.1.7km north-east of the site at its closest point, and owing to topography, the majority of the site is completely screened and there would be no open views into the site, however, there may be glimpses of the upper parts of the site if intervening coniferous plantations do not intervene in views to the south-west from this route.

EDP SITE ASSESSMENT

4.12 While the above published assessments provide a helpful contextual appreciation of the wider landscape, none provide a site-specific assessment to allow a reliable assessment to be made of the effects of the proposed development on the landscape. In particular, published assessments tend to miss more localised influences on the landscape, such as the effect of traffic or existing development on tranquillity and visual character. This requires an appropriately detailed assessment of the site itself and its immediate surroundings, which EDP has undertaken and is described below.

- 4.13 Site visits took place during March 2023, August 2023 and again in March 2024. Weather conditions were mostly dry and mostly clear although owning to the south-facing views required, the sun and glare made the site difficult to discern particularly from mid-morning to early afternoon. The visits were complemented by a review of aerial photography, mapping, and field assessments from publicly accessible locations (e.g. from local roads, PRoW and identified viewpoints).
- 4.14 A series of images has been included below to illustrate the types of landscape features on site, including the perceptual connection with the wider landscape. Photoviewpoints (PVPs) have also been captured to demonstrate viewpoints in the wider landscape and these illustrate the type and extent of views towards the site. The PVPs are contained at **Appendix EDP 2** and the PVP locations are shown on **Plan EDP 3**. The Vale of Neath broadly runs south-west to north-east. The site is due south of Clyne and east of Tonna, on a north-facing hillslope with Neath Canal in the valley bottom to the north, and woodland, namely, Pelenna Forest to the south which is located on Cwm Blaenpelenna. Existing development is generally concentrated in the valley bottom, with the exception of the occasional farm and terraced houses on the valley slopes to the south-west and north (Clyne Terrace). Wind farm development and large-scale pylons traverse the upper valley slopes in the wider site context, and these are visible in views to and from the site.
- 4.15 Landscape features of the site are varied and include woodland plantation, including conifer and broadleaf trees and some areas of woodland, including wet woodland. There are a number of ponds on-site, and a series of streams which naturally occur with high rainfall. There are areas of exposed rock faces and an old quarry which are visible signs of past uses on the site. On higher ground there are areas of meadow grassland and areas of improved grass, such as around the existing cabin on-site. Other man-made features include overhead powerlines, made paths/roads, and the farm buildings around Pen-rhiw Angharad.
- 4.16 The landform of the site is varied, and levels fall sharply in places. The more open part of the site is in the southern area around the meadows, but large proportions of the site are enclosed by trees and views outwards are framed, glimpsed and/or screened completely. Owing to the elevation and the remoteness of the site, there is a strong sense of tranquility and isolation. Outward views from the site encompass far reaching views over the Vale of Neath, with the largely wooded hills of Waun Glyn-nyd and Sarn Hirfnydd to the north and north-west, and Mynydd Resolfen further north-west; built form is sparse and the expansive and a large-scale landscape dominates. **Images EDP 4.1** to **4.3** are taken from within the site.



Image EDP 4.1: View looking north-west from an area of meadow in the southern part of the site from a right of way in Abergarwed Woods. Far reaching views of wooded hills include Abergarwed Woods and Hirfynydd to the left of the view, and Mynydd Resolven to the right. Clyne Terrace is screened by vegetation in the middle ground, however, the settlement seen in the valley bottom is Clyne.



Image EDP 4.2: View looking east from NCR 47 as it passes within the southern corner of the site and progresses off-site into Pelenna Forest and area of open access land.



Image EDP 4.3: A pond in the centre of the site near Pen-rhiw Angharad, which is enclosed by trees with powerlines overhead, and reeds and waterlily.



Image EDP 4.4: View of an existing cabin and pond on-site.

- 4.17 With the exception of the meadows area, open views into the site are curtailed by intervening vegetation and the site itself is mostly characterised by woodland and there are number of plantations present within the surrounding landscape seen in the context of the site. A number of vantage points were explored to investigate a range of distances, directions, and receptor groups within the study area. The most likely obtainable views of the site's interior are naturally from areas of higher ground on the opposite side of the valley. Even in these views, large proportions of the site are screened by on-site vegetation, as illustrated by **Photoviewpoint EDP 1**. There are close-range views available for users of the road network, but this is limited to users of New Road (B4434) where it meets the proposed access point (**Photoviewpoint EDP 6**).
- 4.18 A limited number of residential dwellings within the valley would experience views of the site also, such as from south-westerly aspects of Abergarwed and Cilfrew (**Photoviewpoints EDP 4** and **5**). The right of way network is relatively infrequent, but there are large areas of open access land in the context of the site, and due to the topographical variation of the sleep valley sides, some filtered and framed views may be available from wooded areas on the opposite of the valley.
- 4.19 In terms of potential impacts on the landscape character of the site, proposed development offers the opportunity to positively integrate the proposals into the site, whilst maintaining a very light footprint due to the proposed method of construction, thus retaining the characteristic elements and patterns which are prevalent across the site while also contributing towards biodiversity.
- 4.20 Considering the visual openness in the southern part of the site, and the site's placement within the Vale of Neath, there are mature landscape features within the site that should be positively integrated with any future proposals. The site has a strong visual connection to

the wider landscape and this should be maintained through planned views which allow views out, and restrict views back towards built form.

Section 5 Existing (Baseline) Conditions: Visual Amenity

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 Visual amenity is not about the visual appearance of the site, but is concerned with the number, distribution and type of views towards, from or within the site. An analysis of visual amenity allows conclusions to be reached about who may experience visual change, from where and to what degree those views will be affected by the proposed development.
- 5.2 This section describes the existing views; with changes to views brought by the proposed development. An analysis of existing views, and therein the visual receptors, likely to experience visual change is conducted in three steps described in turn below.

STEP ONE: DEFINING ZONES OF THEORETICAL AND ZONES OF PRIMARY VISIBILITY

- 5.3 The starting point for an assessment of visual amenity is a computer-generated 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV). The ZTV is derived using digital landform height data only, and therefore it does not account for the screening effects of intervening buildings, structures or vegetation, but it does give a prediction of the areas which, theoretically, may be able to experience visual change; it thus provides the basis for more detailed field assessment.
- The ZTV is then refined by walking and driving local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints to arrive at a more accurate, 'field-tested' Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV). The ZPV is where views of the proposed development would normally be close-ranging and/or open, whether in the public or private domain, on foot, cycling or in a vehicle.
- 5.5 Beyond the ZPV lies a zone of visibility which is less open, being either partly screened or filtered. Views from within this zone would include part or all of the proposal it may not be immediately noticeable, but once recognised would be a perceptible addition to the view.
- 5.6 **Appendix EDP 2** illustrates **Photoviewpoints EDP 1-8**. From this it can be seen that, as a result of the valley formation and the site's position on a north-facing slope in the Vale of Neath, as well as the wooded nature of the site and its surroundings, the ZPV forms two areas, including:
 - Medium distanced, elevated and open locations on the opposite valley side (Photoviewpoint EDP 1), which permits expansive views over the valley, including views in the direction of the site;
 - Discreet areas in the immediate vicinity of the site, typically on, within, or adjacent to the site boundary, including the PRoW footpath crossing the western boundary via existing woodland, and NCR 47 crossing through the south-western corner of the site (Image EDP 4.2); and

• Clyne, a residential area to the north in the valley bottom (view of eastern extent of site available – the meadow plateaus, Pen-rhiw Angharad and the existing log cabin etc are not discernible due to vegetation and variation in landform).

STEP TWO: DEFINING RECEPTOR GROUPS

5.7 Within the ZPV and wider area, the visual receptors likely to experience change can be considered as falling into a number of discernible groups.

Public Rights of Way and Open Access Land

- 5.8 Recreational users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) refers to users of bridleway, local and promoted footpath users. Public paths often cross over with areas of open access land (OAL) and these have also been considered herein in their own right. Users of right of way which are likely to have some perceptible view of the site and future development are likely to be limited to PRoW crossing the site and those, represented by **Photoviewpoints EDP 1**, **2**, **7** and **8** respectively).
- 5.9 Within a wider extent and for rights of way users within the Vale of Neath, there is potential for glimpsed and framed or filtered views towards the site, not all PRoW were visited to inform the appraisal, however, it is clear from the site visit that vegetation is abundant along field boundaries, arterial routes, the canal etc and there are large woodland blocks which are characteristics across the valley. Together with the stark variation in elevation, views of the site tend to be curtailed. There are no clear or obvious medium or long-reaching views of the open grassland plateaus on-site. The vegetation on-site is visible, however, Pelenna Forest creates the backdrop in views towards the site, as the site sits below the crest of the ridgeline.
- 5.10 Users of these PRoW routes are likely to be slow moving and using the routes for the purpose of enjoyment of the surrounding landscape (through dog-walking etc.). Given the frequency and distribution of the network and their position within the extent of the SLA designation, these routes are considered to be afforded a high level of value. Some routes are fully enclosed while others are influenced by the existing presence of farms, rural roads, or other infrastructure. Therefore, the overall sensitivity of receptors using these routes is considered to be high.

Road Users and Users of the Neath Canal

5.11 The main road users identified as having potential views of or towards the site are users of New Road (B4434) (proposed site access) and the B4242 (existing Clyne). Other residential streets, such as those in Clyne Terrace and those around Clyne (Byrn Golwg) are likely to have medium distanced views towards the site, although the proposed built form is likely to be screened by landform, retained vegetation, and the proposed mitigation planting. The extent of views from other road routes and waterways within the surrounding context are found to be filtered by intervening landform and vegetation, namely the Neath Canal and the A465.

- 5.12 In close proximity to the site's northern edge, **Photoviewpoint EDP 6** represents views from New Road (B4434) where the site boundary meets the road. Views are limited to the access point and a short stretch of the access before it goes out of view as it zig-zags up the hill. Only the road resurfacing and treatment required to enable vehicular access would be a noticeable change in the view (removal of field gate, scrub clearance etc). The site's interior is not visible from this location and the main part of the site is around 500m from the viewer as the crow flies. Woodland encloses the route and the boundary of the site where built form is proposed.
- 5.13 To the south of the site, there is an unclassified road which terminates at the entrance point to Pelenna Forest, around the 250m aOD contour. As the road enters the site area, trees are seen on the boundary and in the site's interior. There is a considerable set-back between the road (also the alignment of PRoW and NCR 47) of the development proposed. Trees and a drop in the levels, away from the route into the site results in the landform and vegetation curtailing views to the foreground.
- 5.14 To the north-west, views from both Cilfrew and Crynant were investigated. Firstly **Photoviewpoint EDP 4** is a view from Penscynor, a residential street c.2.8km from the main body of the site. The site is largely orientated away from the viewer, and the interior of the site (open elevated areas) is not visible due to landform and intervening vegetation. An adjacent farm (Lletty-mawr) to the right of the site is visible which is close to a pylon and a group of conifers.
- 5.15 **Photoviewpoint EDP 5** represents a view from a rural, minor road, namely Oak View in Crynant, taken c.3.5km from the main body of the site. Again, Lletty-mawr (adjacent farm) is identifiable in the view, however, the settlements sitting lower in the valley are not visible due to the dramatic changes in elevation. The site sits to the left of Lletty-mawr, below Pelenna Forest which is seen on the horizon, and part of the open fieldscape in the elevated part of the site is visible in the background of the view.
- 5.16 Given the less developed character of Oak View and Clyne Terrace, at the point where views are available, locals using these roads are likely to experience a greater level of appreciation of the surrounding landscape in comparison to the residential streets in Clyne and Cilfrew for example. Therefore, users of the Oak View and Clyne Terrace are considered to be of medium sensitivity, whereas the other roads noted herein, with the capacity for views towards the site, are likely to have a reduced sensitivity.

Residential Dwellings/Groups

- 5.17 Views from private residential properties, although likely to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application. However, they remain relevant to this review of the predicted extent and nature of visual change.
- 5.18 The settlements of interest to this appraisal are Clyne (and Clyne Terrace), Ynysygerwn, Cilfrew, Crynant, Aberdulais and Abergarwed. The roads and routes discussed above and included within the photoviewpoints were selected to capture publicly accessible views from areas where views within or adjacent to these settlement may be available.

Photoviewpoints EDP 3, 4, 5, 7 and **8** are representative of views from settlements, or rural and more isolated residential receptors. There are no open or close-range views of the site from such receptors and the closest residential receptors of note, i.e. at Clyne Terrace are orientated away from the site. **Photoviewpoint EDP 8** is a view from the end of the terrace and vegetation in the foreground heavily filters views in the direction of the site. There is one farmhouse of note at Oak View (Bryncaws Farm) which would have views of the site upon exiting the property, but the front elevation of the house itself is orientated south, away from the site.

STEP THREE: DEFINING REPRESENTATIVE PHOTOVIEWPOINTS

- 5.19 Within the ZPV, there may be many individual points at which views towards the site are gained. EDP has selected a number of viewpoints which are considered representative of the nature of the views from each of the receptor groups. The selection of the representative viewpoints is based on the principle that the assessment needs to test the 'worst-case' scenario and, in selecting these viewpoints, EDP has sought to include:
 - A range of viewpoints from the north, east and west;
 - A range of viewpoints from distances at close quarters at the site boundary and up to distant viewpoints at 3km and more from the site; and
 - Viewpoints from all the above receptor groups.
- 5.20 Eight Photoviewpoints (PVPs) have been selected, the location of which are illustrated on **Plan EDP 3**. Photographs from the selected viewpoints are contained in **Appendix EDP 2**, with **Table EDP 5.1** providing locational information and reasons for selection.

Table EDP 5.1: Summary of Representative Photoviewpoints

Photoviewpoint Number	Location	Distance and Direction of View	Reason(s) for selection and Sensitivity of Receptor
1	View from a right of way in Abergarwed Woods looking south-west towards the site.	2.27km, looking south	Users of rights of way. (Sensitivity – high)
2	View from National Cycle Route 46 and tow path along the Neath Canal looking south towards the site.	1.56km; looking south	Pedestrians, cyclists, users of waterway. (Sensitivity – high)
3	View from Ynysygerwn Cricket Club looking south- east towards the site.	1.93km; looking east	Recreational users of Cricket Club. (Sensitivity – low to medium)

Photoviewpoint Number	Location	Distance and Direction of View	Reason(s) for selection and Sensitivity of Receptor
4	View from Penscynor in the settlement of Cilfrew looking east towards the site.	2.80km; looking east	Residential receptors. (sensitivity - high)
5	View from Oak View, a rural road in Crynant looking south-east towards the site.	3.03km; looking south-east	Road users – minor road. (Sensitivity – medium)
6	View from B4434 looking towards the proposed entrance to the site.	42m; looking east	Road users – minor road. (Sensitivity – medium)
7	View from PRoW and Bryn Golwg looking north-east towards the site.	845m; looking north-east	PRoW and road users (Culde sac to Clyne Terrace). (sensitivity - medium - high)
8	View from Bridleway and Clyne Terrace.	555m, looking south-west	PRoW and road users (Cul-de sac to Clyne Terrace). (sensitivity – high at most)

Section 6 The Proposed Development and Mitigation

6.1 Having defined the baseline conditions in the previous two sections, this report now reviews the proposed development and (in the next section) undertakes an assessment of the likely effects in landscape terms.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 6.2 The Illustrative Landscape Masterplan for the proposed development is contained at **Appendix EDP 1**. The DAS supporting this application provides details of the development proposals which comprise the following:
 - "The proposed development is primarily for private holiday lodges, on land located between the settlements of Tonna and Resolven. The proposed scheme would create a premium holiday-resort development comprising those lodges, other supporting leisure, hospitality, and service facilities, as well as a new access road and associated infrastructure".
- 6.3 The lodge development will have a minor vehicular access route and the area will remain naturalised with a sensitive approach to the landscape design. A series of sustainable drainage features will be incorporated with habitat creation and with tree planting to create an attractive holiday resort. In total there is c.120 lodges proposed. The southern edge of the lodge development will include a green buffer with strategic tree planting to minimise views from the south, particularly along the northern edges of The Meadows to maintain a wooded landscape view in views inwards, whilst creating designed views outwards.

PROPOSED LANDSCAPE MITIGATION

- 6.4 EDP's early engagement with the design process has allowed for an iterative process which has informed the design of the submitted scheme. In particular, landscape advice from EDP has informed the relationship between the proposed development and the existing vegetation and green infrastructure assets on-site. Early engagement has assisted in the minimising of impacts on the site's existing tree stock, all of which serve an important characteristic of the SLA and the character of the site. Existing woodland also serves a screening function and provides an ambiguous edge to the development, blending into the connecting woodland blocks and the patchwork of landscape types in the surrounding area.
- 6.5 Landscape mitigation measures which are embedded into the overall design of the proposed scheme are as follows:
 - The scheme allows for the retention and enhancement of the majority of the woodland and water features:
 - The proposals work with the contours of the site and will sit below the ridgeline (Pelenna Forest frames the backdrop of the view currently);

- Development has been contained to discreet pockets of suitable land within the site, and the eastern part of the site will remain development free;
- The mosaic of habitats will be retained as much as possible and mitigation planting will incorporate wildflower meadow planting to compensate for the anticipated loss in parts of the site;
- Rights of way on-site will be retained, and a connection to the network will be actively encouraged in the forthcoming scheme;
- New native tree planting of local provenance will be incorporated within the scheme and areas of suitable for natural succession will be managed to enable areas of the forest floor to become glades, which will benefit the biodiversity of the site. Tree planting will be informed by the project arboriculturist and will incorporate the replacement requirements set out in PPW12; and
- Sensitively designed foraging routes will be implemented which will benefit people and wildlife.

PROPOSED LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT

6.6 The final scheme would be subject to a detailed landscape design (to be provided by condition), which would provide an improvement in respect of the quality, species diversity and age diversity of tree and shrub planting across the site. Proposed areas of Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), naturalistic Public Open Space (POS) and play features within the scheme will be balanced by the need for ecological and arboricultural mitigation.

Section 7 Predicted Landscape and Visual Effects

INTRODUCTION

7.1 In this section, the predicted effects on landscape character and visual amenity are summarised. The assessment uses the thresholds for magnitude, sensitivity, and significance, defined at **Appendix EDP 3** as a guide, but moderated where appropriate with professional judgement. Professional judgement is an important part of the assessment process; it is neither 'pro' nor 'anti' development but acknowledges that development may result in beneficial change as well as landscape harm. The assessment also takes account of the likely effectiveness of any proposed mitigation.

PREDICTED EFFECTS ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE

- 7.2 The landscape character of the site itself will, inevitably, change distinctly as a result of its conversion from its current green-field state to that of newly developed lodges. However, the site is currently in a relatively 'unkempt' condition and is likely to deteriorate further without intervention. Landscape features such as boundary vegetation and internal tree lines are considered to be in good condition and have been identified for retention and enhancement within proposals. Overall, the site's existing use and the current site condition, as well as the local landscape designation within which the site lies indicates that it is of high sensitivity to development of this nature.
- 7.3 This high sensitivity, coupled with the high magnitude of change, implies that the effect on the character of the site itself will be **major** with both adverse and beneficial effects. Despite this, the proposal is considered sensitive to existing site landscape features by allowing for the retention and enhancement of existing vegetation on-site through habitat creation making the change from farm and woodland to tourism the greatest adverse impact.

PREDICTED EFFECTS ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE'S SURROUNDINGS

- 7.4 The site area itself is considered to be subject to the greatest change to the defined LANDMAP aspect areas. Perceived change to the immediate surrounds is likely to be limited to the northern access point as reprofiling is likely to be required to accommodate an upgrade to the access. A planning application (reference: P2017/0628) was submitted previously to Neath Port Talbot Council for the access road to the north of the site. This application was approved on 20 August 2017. For the wider effects on the surrounding character (indirect landscape effects), the level of change is predicted to diminish starkly in scale due to distance and intervening landform and features. Effects on the immediate surroundings and the wider area are described below:
 - The scale of the effect upon landscape character as a result of proposals is expected to be highly localised as a result of containment created by steep sloping valley sides, existing built form and mature vegetation within or surrounding the site;

- The site forms a relatively minor constituent of the overall extent of the host LANDMAP
 aspect areas and, though it presents a number of notable character features
 mentioned within the aspect area descriptions such as woodland;
- Of course, the development of the site would change the degree to which it is perceived from outside its bounds, however, in all instances the site is mostly enclosed by vegetation that would be retained and where the more exposed areas are proposed to be built on, strategic tree planting has been embedded within the design to reduce visual effects (which may only be perceived in medium and long distance views from elevated and exposed areas). The lodges proposed would be built into the landscape, rather than sitting on top of and the colour palette proposed means that the receiving landscape (which is large-scale) is capable of accommodating this type of development in the layout it is proposed; and
- The proposals take into account the wooded nature of the SLA and aspect area and, through retention of existing vegetation and proposed new planting, continues to incorporate this characteristic feature of the area within itself. Proposed development would not be perceived to create an urbanised development, the scheme has been thoughtfully placed to be in harmony with the key features of the site, protecting these features is a key design principle employed by the scheme appraised herein.
- 7.5 Given the placement within the Vale of Neath, a truly vast and rural landscape, the value of the SLA which encompasses the site and the wider landscape surrounding the site is undoubtedly high. However, there are man-made features which detract slightly, such as infrastructure and existing built form (including existing built form currently on-site).
- 7.6 The magnitude of change within this immediate landscape resulting from the scheme is limited by the relative scale of the development proposed, and the enclosure offered by existing (and largely retained) vegetation of the site. The wider landscape and the valley sides which surround the site also limited the extent of potential visibility. This is considered to create a low magnitude of change and, thereby, a **moderate** to **low** adverse level of effect on the SLA and wider landscape area.

PREDICTED EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

7.7 The baseline assessment of visual amenity identified three receptor groups – PRoW users, road users, and residential receptors. Effects on each of these are considered as follows.

Users of Open Access Land and the PRoW Network

7.8 As mentioned within **Section 5** above, pedestrian PRoW users and recreational users of open access land within the context of the appraisal site, were identified as having a high sensitivity to development.

PRoW 53/7.Ton/3 and 53/8.Ton/3

7.9 These connected routes intersect the western edge of the site before progressing towards the centre and then to the north where they intersect with the proposed access road. Access

- to this PRoW was not obvious from New Road (B4434) (completely vegetated edge) and the route does not currently appear be in use.
- 7.10 If the path was reinstated, the proposed development is likely to result in no more than a medium magnitude of change which gives an overall **moderate** level of effect upon footpath users upon this route, likely to be considered beneficial as the route is largely unpassable on-site in its current state, and off-site the connection to the road network appears to be missing.

Bridleway 51/9/1 and National Cycle Route 47

- 7.11 This route passes through the site for approximately 200m along the most southerly point of the site's extent and it is flanked by Pelenna Forest and Pen-Rhiw-Angharad Round Cairns Scheduled Monument. **Appendix EDP 1** includes the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan, and this route will remain unchanged by the proposals for the most part. The built form would be screened, largely by localised changes in the landform, as well as vegetation on-site. There is an interpretation board proposed around the scheduled monument though, and cyclists and users of the bridleway will be encouraged to stop and read about the Cairns and the connection of the scheduled monument to other heritage features of interest in the wider landscape.
- 7.12 Overall, the addition of the proposed development is expected to form a very low magnitude of change to the baseline condition which, when combined with the high sensitivity of such receptors, results in no more than a **minor** beneficial level of effect upon PRoW users traveling along this route as it passes within the bounds of the site.
- 7.13 NCR 46 which follows the alignment of the Neath Canal was not found to have any obvious intervisibility with the site, therefore the no change is anticipated.

Road Users

7.14 Minor road users are generally considered to have low to medium sensitivity to change in the context of this site, and combined with the transitory nature of the experience, the speed at which they may be travelling and the fact that they often aren't driving simply to enjoy the view.

New Road (B4434) and B4242 and Residential Streets in Clyne

7.15 Given the provision of access into the site at this point from New Road (B4434), and the required changes to facilitate this, it is anticipated that the proposals would create a high magnitude of change to road receptors passing the new access road at close range (represented by **Photoviewpoint EDP 6**), where the field gate and scrub would be removed and a hard surface and potential widening into a newly visible area of countryside would be seen. The changes would only be noticeable for a very short stretch of New Road (B4434) as it passes the new entrance, beyond this, existing roadside vegetation tends to completely enclose the road. Therefore, the anticipated magnitude of change for wider receptors using this road route would be low (fleeting change for road users travelling at a considerable speed). With this in mind, and the medium sensitivity of road receptors here, at most, a **moderate/minor** neutral level of effect is anticipated as a result of proposed development.

There is already an adjacent access to a neighbouring property, so the change proposed is not uncharacteristic in the view.

7.16 The B4242, Clyne Terrace, and Bryn Golwg are represented by **Photoviewpoints EDP 7** and **8**. In these views, the site is located in the background at a medium distance from the viewer. With this in mind, and the medium sensitivity of road receptors here, at most a **moderate/minor** neutral level of effect is anticipated as a result of proposed development. The hillside containing the site is at a considerable distance from the viewer, it is far more elevated, and all available views were oblique and filtered by vegetation. Pylons tend to detract from the view also. With a medium sensitivity of road receptors here, a **moderate/minor** adverse level of effect at most is anticipated as a result of the proposed development. There may be glimpses of the tops of lodges on the highest elevations on-site, however, with the proposed mitigation planting, views are likely to be negligible once the vegetation establishes (within 10-15 years).

Oak View and Penscynor

7.17 Roads such as Oak View and Penscynor (**Photoviewpoints EDP 4** and **5**) are located to the north and north-west of the site, the majority of views towards the site from these aspects are at a considerable distance owning to the expansive nature of the valley containing the site. For Oak View, the road is elevated and views out are uninterrupted by vegetation in the foreground. Long distance views across the landscape include views towards the site and the proposals would be perceived in the distance. Other farms are seen on the hillside in the far distance, such as Lletty-mawr and the proposals would be less visible than those due to the materiality used (darker materials). In addition, the proposed structural landscape around the most elevated locations on the site would minimise views of the proposals once established. With this in mind, a low magnitude of change is expected for road receptors travelling along these routes, giving an overall **minor** adverse level of effect when combined with the receptor's medium sensitivity.

Residential Receptors

- 7.18 Residential receptors are generally considered to be of high to very high sensitivity to changes in the view, but their rights to any particular view, or quality of view, is not protected in planning policy at any level. In this instance, residential receptors are located adjacent to the site to the south and west and, as a result of rear fencing, side-on property elevations and associated garden vegetation of existing properties would predominantly have views from upper floors only (typically considered less sensitive than lower floors).
- 7.19 Of the settlements and farmsteads investigated, no properties were found to directly overlooking the site. The elevated and isolated nature of the site, in combination with the wooded nature and the landscape scheme proposed means that views of the site, particularly for residential properties in the valley bottom means that views from ground or first floor windows seem highly unlikely. From the property grounds, such as front and back gardens in settlements around Cilfrew and Clyne, there would be no more than a medium magnitude of change at most resulting from the proposals upon properties within these settlements with available views directly toward the site. As such, combined with the sensitivity of the viewers, the effect on visual amenity for these residential receptors would

- be no greater than **moderate** and generally perceived to be adverse by these residents who no doubt appreciates expansive valley views.
- 7.20 It should be noted that while visual amenity of residents within their private dwellings/curtilage is not protected, their 'residential amenity' generally is. This relates to issues such as privacy, noise and light and, in this sense, it doesn't appear that residential amenity is likely to be affected by the scheme proposals, with plenty of space between properties proposed, together with careful plot orientation to avoid overlooking.

PREDICTED EFFECT ON VALE OF NEATH SLA

- 7.21 From a character perspective, the SLA is considered a highly sensitive landscape receptor which is reinforced by the local level protection afforded to it. The site itself is within the SLA boundary and the landscape around the site is similar in character, possessing a highly wooded rural character as a result. This is demonstrated through **Photoviewpoints EDP 1**, 4, and 5, which represent views from within the surrounding SLA towards the site. As such, it is considered that the SLA presents a high sensitivity to development.
- 7.22 Owning to the type of development proposed, the magnitude of change of the proposed development on the character and appearance of SLA would be low overall given the scale of development proposed in proportion to the scale of the SLA. Through the visual appraisal above, there is found to be a limited extent of clear intervisibility available between the site and the SLA and, where intervisibility does exist sensitive mitigation measures incorporated into the proposals ensure that the majority of existing landscape features on-site are retained and enhanced. Through consideration of available views from the SLA to the site, it is felt that the addition of the proposed scheme would be in keeping with the existing baseline condition and, despite the change of site from farmland to tourism, would not accentuate the presence of the existing settled character such as that which is found in the valley bottom.
- 7.23 With the above sensitivity and magnitude of change in mind a resulting overall **moderate/minor** adverse level of effect upon a localised area of the SLA and its setting is anticipated as a result of the proposed scheme.

Section 8 Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1 EDP is an independent environmental consultancy and Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute specialising the assessment of developments at all scales across the UK.
- 8.2 This report has summarised the findings of a comprehensive landscape data trawl and field appraisal undertaken by EDP's landscape team (**Sections 2**, **3**, **4** and **5**). In **Section 6** the proposed development is described with any proposed mitigation. **Section 7** undertakes an appraisal of the likely landscape effects having regard to the above and based on a combination of the thresholds set out in **Appendix EDP 3** coupled with professional judgement.
- 8.3 The anticipated landscape and visual effects are summarised as follows.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE ITSELF

- 8.4 The landscape features of the site are suffering from a lack of management which has resulted in some natural succession and extensive encroachment of scrub.
- 8.5 The development of the site for residential would undoubtedly change its physical and perceived character, although the influence of existing buildings on site somewhat reduces its sensitivity to development. The development proposed is relatively small-scale in the context of the existing valley and, subject to appropriate detailed architectural proposals and landscape design, should be able to readily assimilate itself into the settlement boundary of Parc Pelenna. Effects on the character of the site itself are therefore considered to be **major/moderate** at most but, in the round, beneficial.

ON THE SITE'S IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS

8.6 The site's location on the hillside and within the largely wooded area in which it is already perceived the likely visibility is reduced even before mitigation planting is considered. The enclosure of the site and the relationship between the proposed development and the vantage points from which it may be experienced suggest that the magnitude of change would be limited, especially with the retention of landscape features which contribute to the overall LANDMAP assessment. With this in mind, the overall level of effect of the proposal is likely to be **minor** adverse.

ON VISUAL AMENITY

8.7 The site is well-enclosed by a combination of vegetation and surrounding elevated landform. This results in a limited ZPV encompassing the immediate vicinity of the site and a contained area upon apposing sloping ground on the opposite side of the valley.

- 8.8 The baseline section of this report identified the key receptors to be PRoW users, road users and residents. Those identified as being most notably affected by the development of the site are located north-west and north-east of the site (views experienced tend to be elevated and distanced). Effects range from moderate to minor adverse effects with some beneficial effects reported. The type of views experienced by receptors are often filtered or screened by vegetation, some are open and interrupted, and on occasion, they are influenced by the presence of existing settlement (**Photoviewpoint EDP 4**).
- 8.9 Generally, however, the lack of views of the site means that receptors in much of the local landscape would be completely unaffected.

EFFECTS ON THE SLA

- 8.10 Given the consideration of all the above effects and the contained nature of the development proposed, the effects of the site on the character of the Vale of Neath SLA is considered to be at most **moderate/minor** adverse though contained to a very small extent of the overall SLA designation. The presence of built form is not uncharacteristic and already gives the site and land beyond the designation a rural but partially settled character, and this will continue to be the case post-development; this is clearly not a proposal which results in 'urbanisation'.
- 8.11 Proposed development would not alter the perceived level and extent of woodland cover or the panoramic views available from the surrounding SLA, both identified to be key features, and retention and enhancement of key features on-site would maintain the treed character that the site currently possesses.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- 8.12 The SLA is an important local landscape designation, and a considerable degree of protection and conservation should be given 'weight' in decision making. However, the proposals appraised herein have offered a sensitive and considered approach to design by minimising vegetation removal and working with the natural features of the site, including the habitats and watercourses which make up the character of the site. Furthermore, the site's cultural heritage and interesting history will be honoured through the sensitive landscape scheme proposed, and this will connect visitors of the site to the wider landscape and the rich history of the Vale of Neath. The appraisal conclusions presented herein have demonstrated that overall, there would be limited effects (to landscape character or visual amenity) as a result of the proposals assessed.
- 8.13 Overall, although some moderate/minor effects have been identified, the extent over which these are experienced (and the number of receptors experiencing them) is localised, and on this basis, no significant adverse impacts have been found on the features and characteristics for which the SLA has been designated.
- 8.14 EDP sees no reason why the development appraised herein would be considered unacceptable from a landscape and visual perspective, and furthermore, there would be

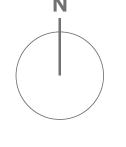
beneficial effects in many ways to the character of existing landscape features which are worthy of long-term management and enhancement for people and for wildlife.

Appendix EDP 1 Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (edp6556_d008b 05 April 2024 NWa/MDu)





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05 APRIL 2024 drawing number edp6556_d008b Refer to scale bar @ A0

RBa

Trisvelhaus UK Holding Limited

Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort

drawing title **Illustrative Landscape Masterplan** Appendix EDP 2
Photoviewpoints
(edp6556_d016a 12 April 2024 GYo/MDu)





Registered office: 01285 740427 the environmental dimension partnership

dimension partnership

Grid Coordinates: **280652, 201919** Date and Time: 22/03/2023 @ 15:56 Height of Camera: 1.6m Projection: Planar

Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6° Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD:

Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3

Direction of View: S 143m Focal Length: 50mm date 12 APRIL 2024
drawing number
drawn by
checked MDu
QA DJo

client Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot drawing title Photoviewpoint EDP 1





Registered office: 01285 740427 www.edp-uk.co.uk info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: **280306, 201225** Date and Time: 22/03/2023 @ 12:52 Height of Camera: 1.6m Projection: Planar

Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6° Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD: Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3

16m Focal Length: 50mm date 12 APRIL 2024
drawing number drawn by checked MDu
QA DJo

client Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot





Registered office: 01285 740427 www.edp-uk.co.uk info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: **277806, 199760** Date and Time: 22/03/2023 @ 12:33 Height of Camera: 1.6m Projection: Planar

Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6° Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3

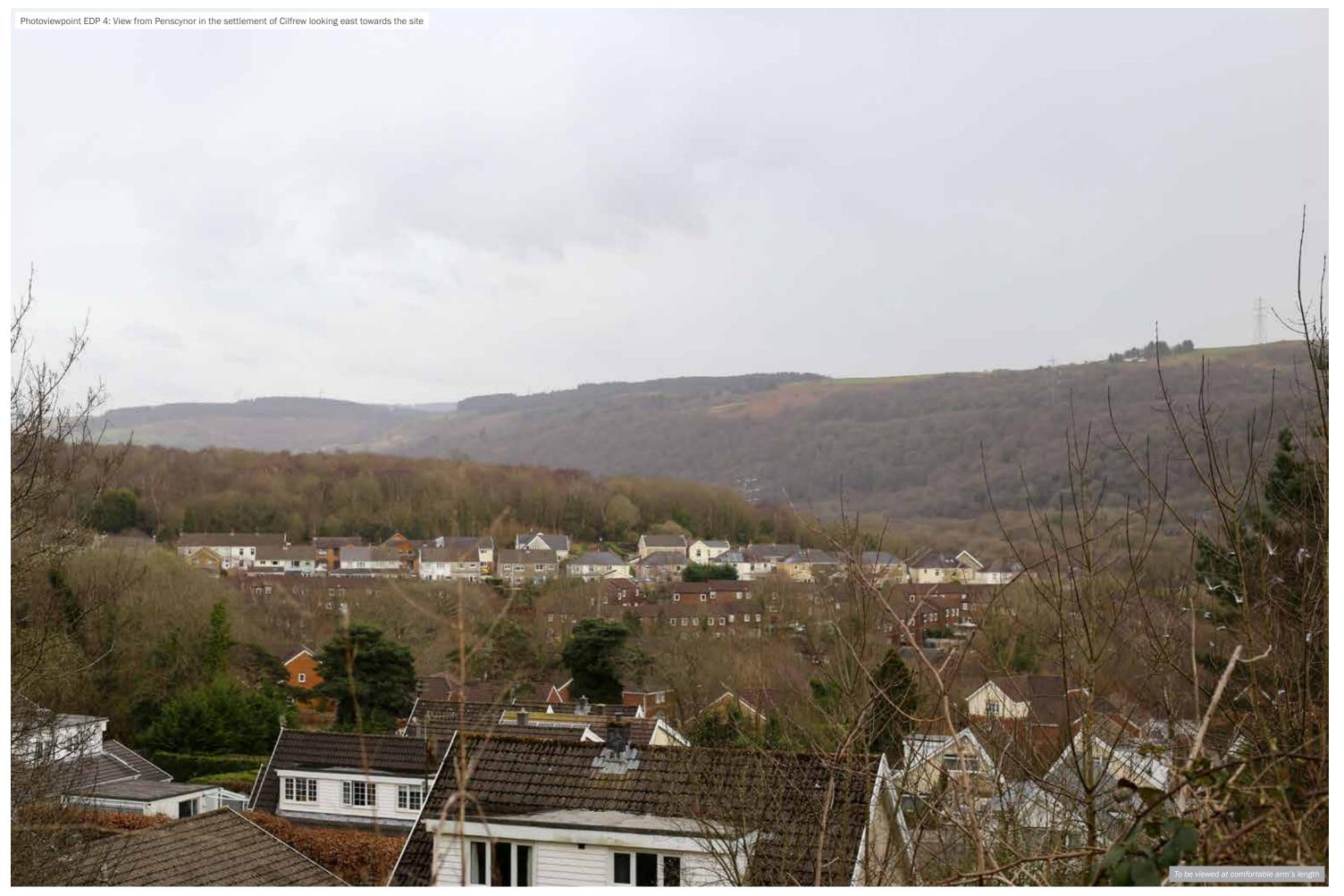
Direction of View: E Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD:

34m Focal Length: 50mm date 12 APRIL 2024 drawing number drawn by checked QA 12 APRIL 2024 edp6556_d016a GYo MDu DJo

client

Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot drawing title Photoviewpoint EDP 3





Registered office: 01285 740427 dimension partnership

dimension partnership

Grid Coordinates: 276937, 199789 Date and Time: 22/03/2023 @ 15:00 Height of Camera: 1.6m Projection: Planar

Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD: Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3 Focal Length: 50mm

62m

date 12 APRIL 2024
drawing number drawn by checked MDu
QA DJo

client Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot





Registered office: 01285 740427 dimension partnership

dimension partnership

Grid Coordinates: 277342, 201890 Date and Time: 22/03/2023 @ 14:51 Height of Camera: 1.6m Projection: Planar

Visualisation Type: 1

Horizontal Field of View: 39.6° Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD:

Direction of View: SE Enlargement Factor: 100% @ A3 Focal Length: 50mm

191m

date 12 APRIL 2024
drawing number drawn by checked MDu
QA DJo

client Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot drawing title Photoviewpoint EDP 5



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Registered office: 01285 740427 www.edp-uk.co.uk info@edp-uk.co.uk

Grid Coordinates: 279471, 199741 Horizontal Field of View: 90°

Date and Time: 07/03/2024 @ 12:03 Height of Camera: 1.6m

Projection: Cylindrical Make Model Section 1.6m

Projection: Cylindrical Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD: 47m

Visualisation Type: 1 Enlargement Factor: 96% @ A1 width Focal Length: 50mm

client Trivselhus UK Holdings Limited

project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot



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Registered office: 01285 740427 www.edp-uk.co.uk info@edp-uk.co.uk

Visualisation Type: 1

Grid Coordinates: 280491, 200535 Horizontal Field of View. 50

Date and Time: 07/03/2024 @ 11:32 Height of Camera: 1.6m Distance: 845m Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS a0D: 41m

Focal Length: 50mm

date 12 APRIL 2024
drawing number
drawn by GYo
checked MDu
QA DJo

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project title Parc Pelenna Holiday Resort, Fairyland Road, Neath Port Talbot



Grid Coordinates: 280676, 200331 Horizontal Field of View: 90° the environmental dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427 www.edp-uk.co.uk info@edp-uk.co.uk

info@edp-uk.co.uk

| Canon 6 | Canon Projection: Cylindrical Make, Model, Sensor: Canon 6D MK1, FFS aOD: 70m

Visualisation Type: 1 Enlargement Factor: 96% @ A1 width Focal Length: 50mm

date 12 APRIL 2024
drawing number edp6556_d016a
drawn by GYo
checked MDu
QA DJo

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Appendix EDP 3 Tables Defining the Thresholds and Definitions of Terminology used in this Appraisal

 Table EDP A3.1:
 Defining the Sensitivity of the Landscape Baseline

EDP Assessment Terminology and Definitions Landscape Baseline - Overall Sensitivity					
	Susceptibility : Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.				
High	Value: Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.				
	Susceptibility : Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.				
Medium	Value : Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.				
	Susceptibility : Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.				
Low	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.				
	Susceptibility : Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.				
Very Low	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.				
	Susceptibility : Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.				

Table EDP A3.2: Defining the Sensitivity of the Visual Baseline

Visual Baseline - Overall Sensitivity				
Very High	Value/Susceptibility: View is designed/has intentional association with surroundings; is recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; national/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.			
	Examples: May include views from residential properties, National Trails; promoted holiday road routes; designated countryside/landscape features with public access; visitors to heritage assets of national importance; Open Access Land.			
High	Value/Susceptibility: View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.			
	Examples : May include from recreational locations where there is some appreciation of the visual context/landscape e.g. golf, fishing; themed rights of way with a local association; National Trust land; panoramic viewpoints marked on OS maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides and/or for their scenic value.			
Medium	Value/Susceptibility : View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.			
	Examples : May include people engaged in outdoor sport not especially influenced by an appreciation of the wider landscape e.g. pitch sports; views from minor road routes passing through rural or scenic areas.			
Low	Value/Susceptibility : View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.			
	Examples : May include major road routes; rail routes; receptor is at a place of work, but visual surroundings have limited relevance.			
Very Low	Value/Susceptibility: View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.			
	Examples: May include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little of no importance.			

Table EDP A3.3: Defining the Magnitude of Change to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

Magnitude of Change				
(Considers Scale	of Proposal/Geographical Extent/Duration and Reversibility/Proportion)			
Very High	Landscape : Total loss/major alteration to key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; addition of elements that strongly conflict or integrate with the baseline.			
	Visual : Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view.			
High	Landscape : Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; or, addition of prominent conflicting elements.			
	Visual : Additions are clearly noticeable, and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.			
Medium	Landscape : Partial loss/alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics; Addition of elements that are evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.			
	Visual: The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.			
Low	Landscape : Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape receptors/characteristics; Additional elements may not be uncharacteristic within existing landscape.			
	Visual: Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.			
Very Low	Landscape : Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.			
	Visual: Proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.			
Imperceptible	In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints or receptors will be lower than 'Very Low' and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to negligible effects.			

Table EDP A3.4: Determining the Predicted Levels of Effects to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

Overall	Overall Magni	Overall Magnitude of Change				
Sensitivity	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	
High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	
Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	
Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible	

Table EDP A3.5: Definition of Effects

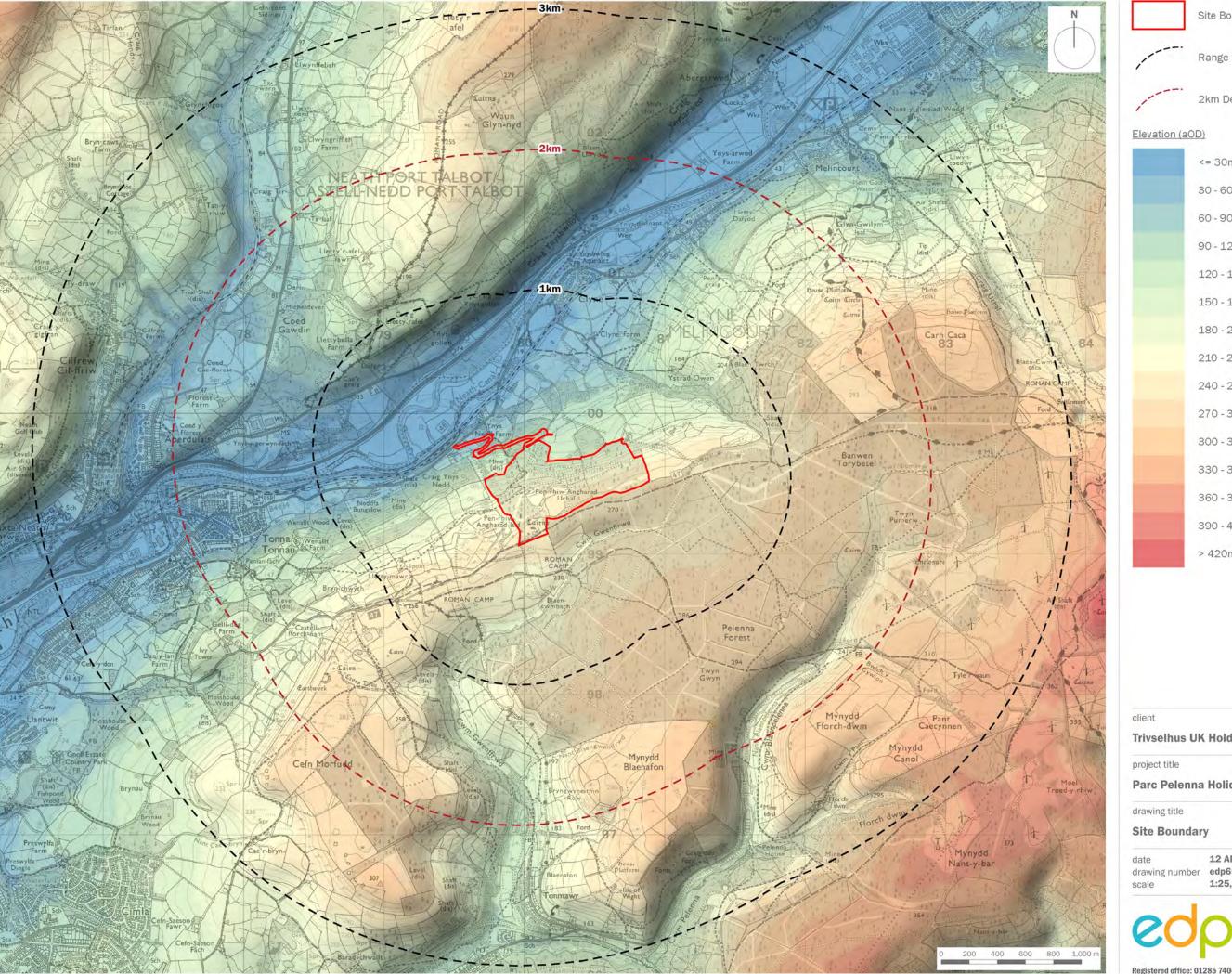
Definition of Effects				
Substantial:	Effects which are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.			
Major:	Effects which result in noticeable and fundamental alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.			
Moderate:	Effects which result in noticeable but non-fundamental alterations to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.			
Minor:	Effects which result in slight alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.			
Negligible:	Effects which result in barely perceptible alterations to the landscape resource or visual amenity.			
None:	No detectable alteration to the landscape resource or visual amenity.			
Consequence:	Effects can be positive, adverse or neutral i.e. if no change arises.			
Duration:	Long term (20+ years); Medium-long term (10-20 years;) Medium term (5-10 years); Short term (1 – 5 years); Temporary (>12 months); Construction.			

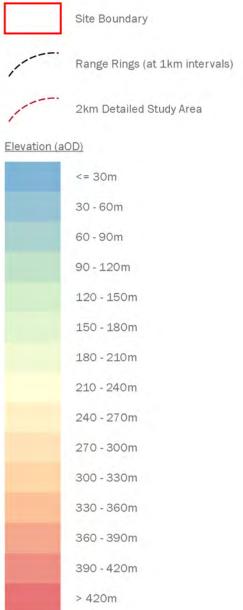
Plans

Plan EDP 1: Site Boundary (edp6556_d010a 12 April 2024 GYo/TYC)

Plan EDP 2: Environmental Planning Considerations (edp6556_d011a 12 April 2024 GYo/TYC)

Plan EDP 3: Findings of Visual Appraisal (edp6556_d012a 12 April 2024 GYo/TYC)





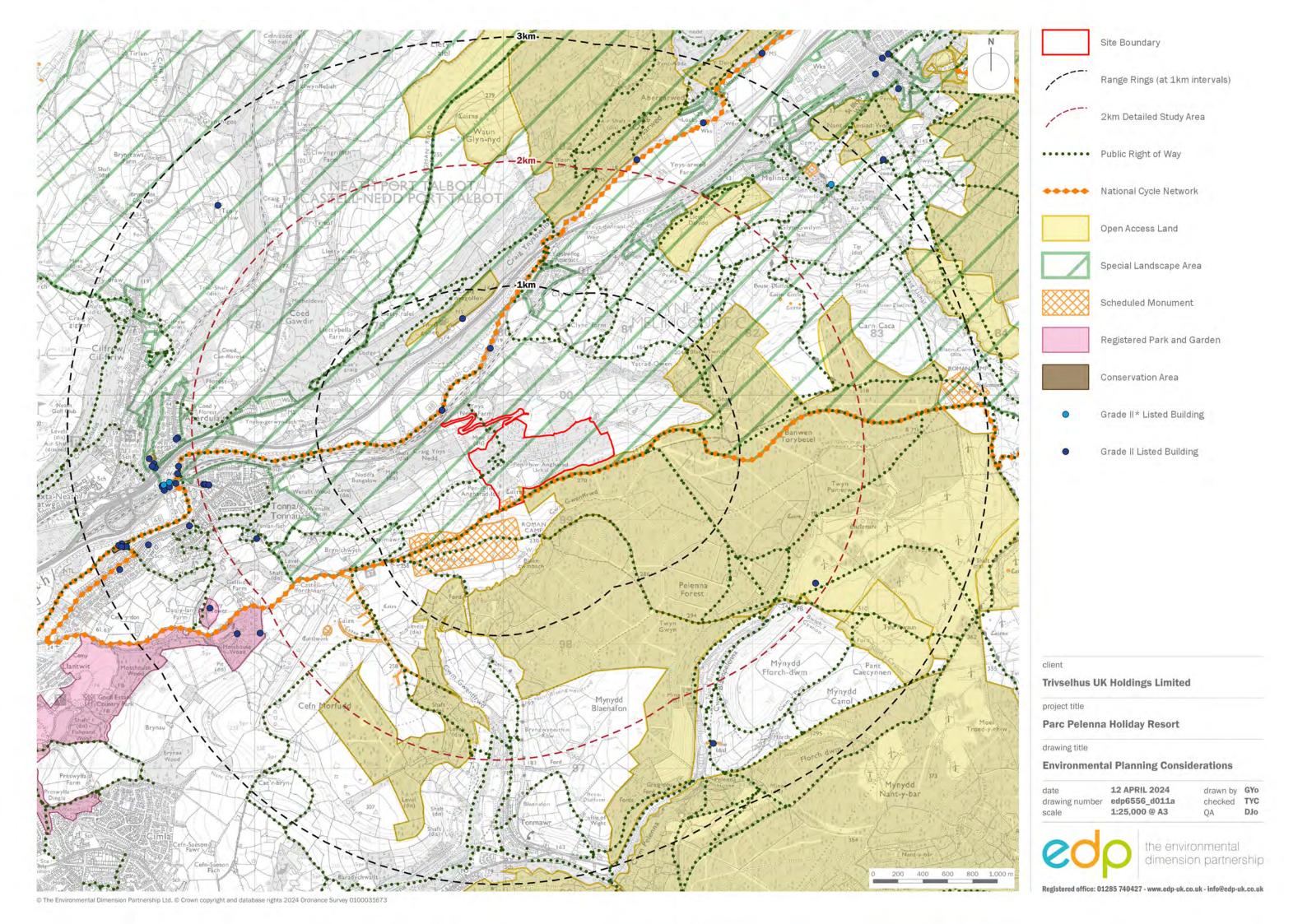
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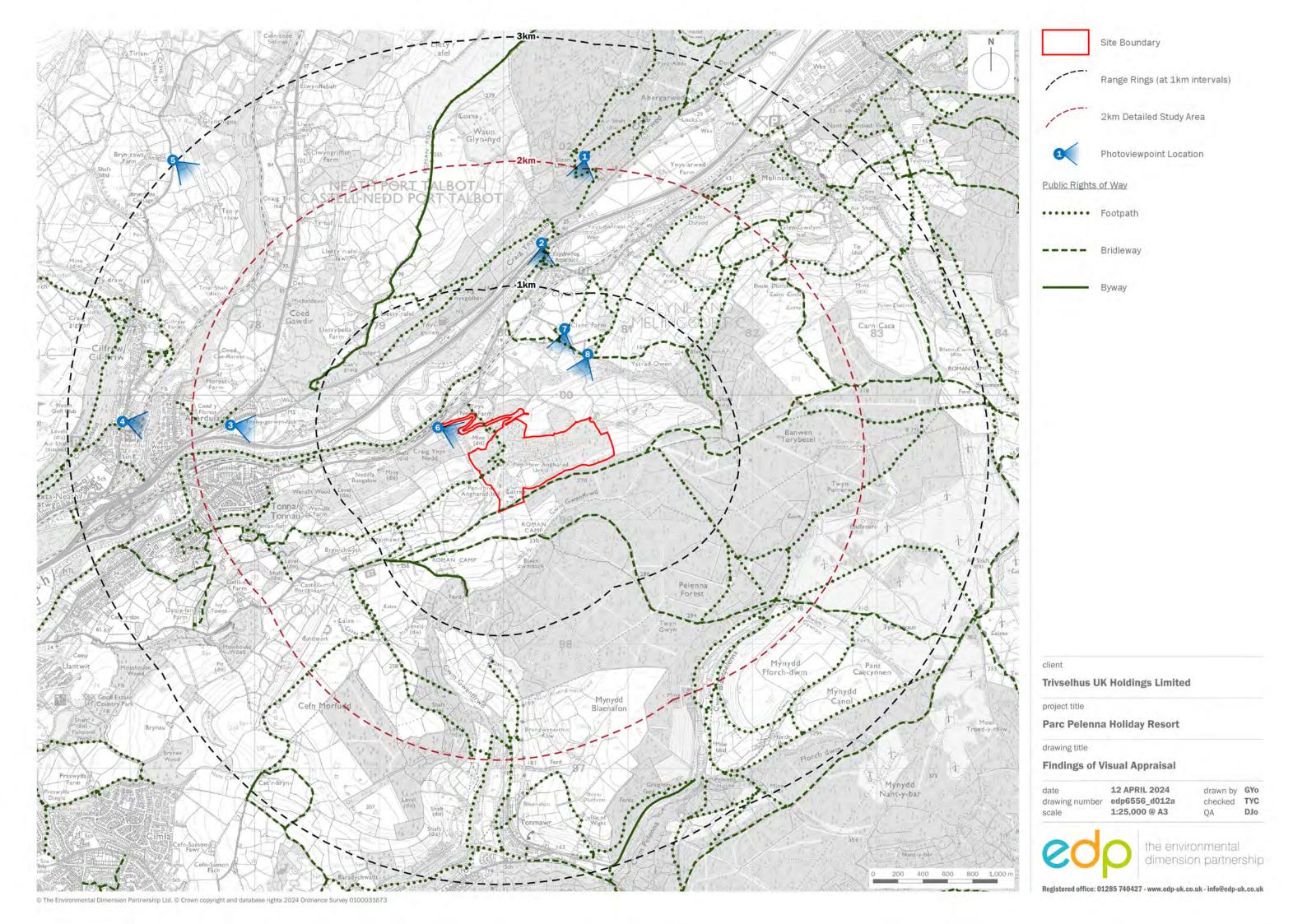
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date	12 APRIL 2024	drawn by	GYo
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