

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT:

FORMER GELLINUDD HOSPITAL, LON CATWG, SA8 3DX



Applicant: SWP SPV4 Limited

Proposed Development: Construction of 4no. new single storey units (in a C2 use), relocation of the car park and associated works

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports the following planning application prepared on behalf Rhodos Properties (No. 22) Limited:

Construction of 4no. new single storey units (in a C2 use), relocation of the car park and associated works

- 1.2 The applications site is located within the grounds of the former Gellinudd Hospital, Lon Catwg, SA8 3DX. The site covers an area of approximately 0.18ha.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) describes green infrastructure as ‘the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. PPW requires a stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure including the requirement of proportionate green infrastructure statements with planning applications. This GIS has been prepared to meet the requirements of PPW and is proportionate to the small scale and nature of the proposed development.

3.0 APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site measures 0.18ha and forms part of the wider former Gellinudd Hospital site which is located on the eastern outskirts of Pontardawe

- 3.2 In terms of the site’s context, it is located in a primarily residential area with dwellings located to the east and south, along Lon Catwg. To the north, north east and west is woodland that extends to Graig Gellinudd to the north.

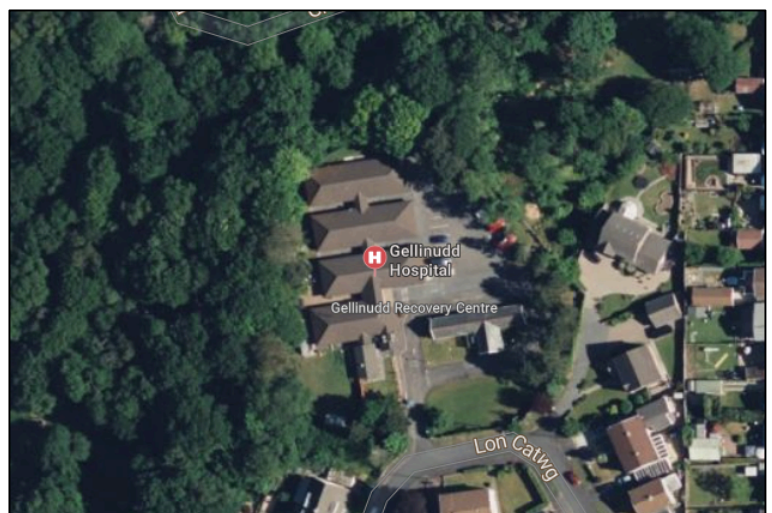


Figure 1: Aerial Image showing site location

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The proposals subject to this application form part of a wider re-use of the former Gellinudd Hospital site for as a specialist residential care home within the C2 use class. The existing buildings have been subject to a recent certificate of lawful development (for a proposed use) to confirm the lawfulness of the internal refurbishment of the existing mental health facilities (use class C2) to provide a care home (use class C2) that was granted in 2024 (ref: P2024/0002).

4.2 The application seeks full planning permission for 4no. new single storey units and to relocate the car park and associated works. The units will be a step down care provision which will be used in associated with the care provision provided in the main building. The use class of the units would be C2 and offer a more flexible care provision than the main building whereby the level of care can be reduced to support residents if their care needs change whilst at the facility. The units will form part of the planning unit of the main care home and will be located on the car park area in the north eastern portion of the site. The car park will be relocated to the front of the site on an area of maintained grass. The proposals are shown on the Proposed Site Plan extract shown in Figure 2 below.

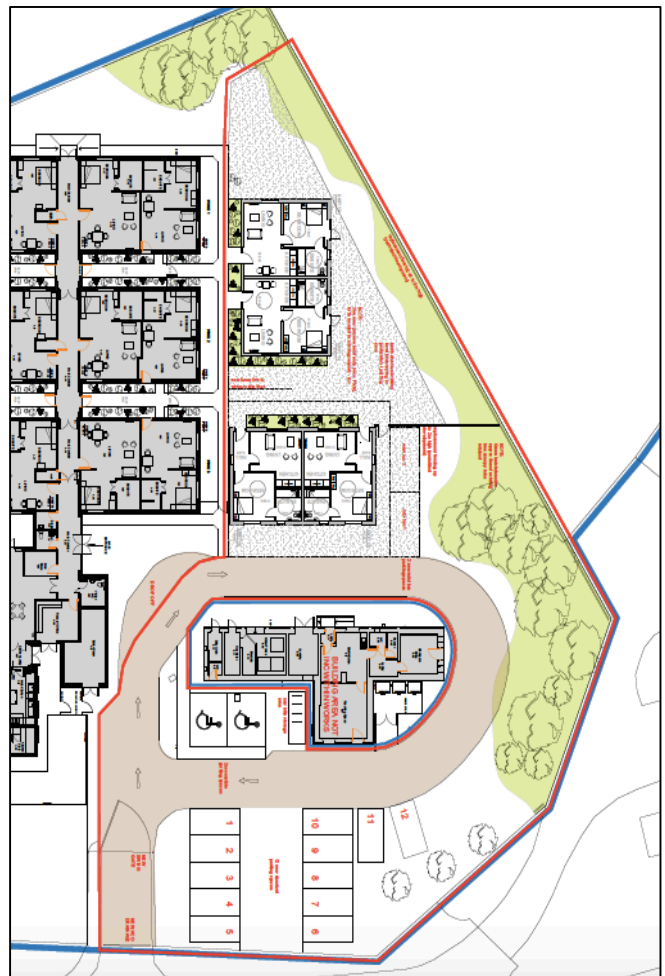


Figure 2: Extract of Proposed Site Layout for the new units and relocated car park

5.0 IDENTIFIED ON-SITE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

5.1 The application site is part of the wider former Gellinudd Hospital site which consists of two existing buildings; the main building which has a large footprint which covers most of the western half of the site and a smaller building located almost centrally on the eastern half of the site. The existing buildings do not form part of the application site for the purposes of this planning application. The application site itself is triangular in shape and includes the car park area, to the east of the main building, and a small section of the woodland/grassed area to the east and the maintained grassed area to the front of the site together with the access point. The green infrastructure within the application site red line boundary is limited and it is predominantly hard standing which is currently used as a car park so has no green infrastructure. The only elements of GI within the site limits are trees along the eastern boundary, which form the edge of the woodland beyond, and a small area of maintained grassland to the front of the site.

5.2 The Tree Constraints Plan from the supporting Tree Report is extracted overleaf at Figure 3 and depicts the existing trees within the application site, indicating there are 1no. Category A, 6no. category B trees, 12no. category C or U trees and 1no. category C group of trees. The trees on site, particularly the category A and Bs trees represent high quality GI. The grassland is well maintained, cut regularly, and is of limited quality as a GI asset.

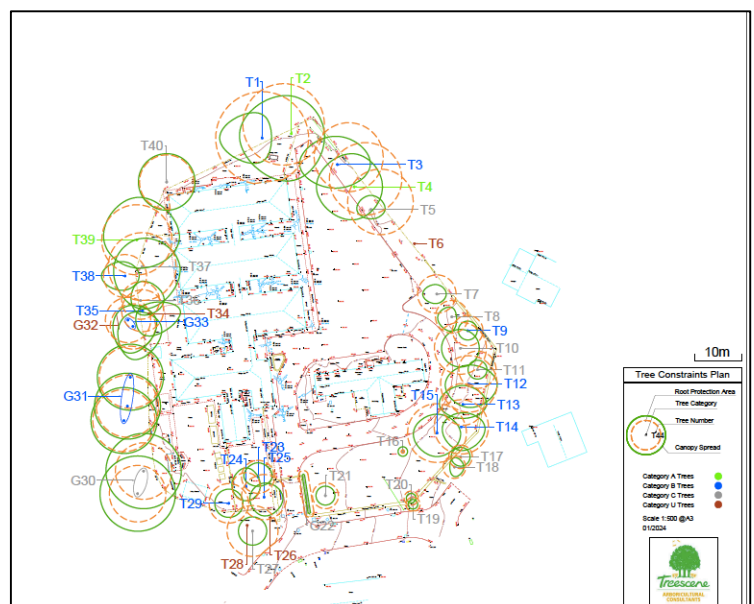


Figure 3: Extract of Tree Constraints Plan

prepared by Treescene

6.0 IDENTIFIED LOCALISED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

- 6.1 The localised GI assets in relation to the application site relates to the wider Gellinudd Hospital Site and the surrounding area.
- 6.2 In terms of the wider Gellinudd Hospital Site, whilst it predominantly comprises of built form and hardstanding as can be seen on the Site Location Plan at Figure 1, it is enclosed with a number of significant trees and interspersed with maintained grassland around the site boundaries and existing buildings. The trees around the site boundary are shown in Figure 3 above and includes a mix of category A, B, C and U trees. The existing trees at the site represent a significant GI asset.
- 6.3 Beyond the former Gellinudd Hospital boundary to the north west, north, and east is a significant woodland with agricultural fields beyond to the east which is a natural buffer between Gellinudd and Pontardawe. To the north, beyond the woodland, are the residential dwellings along Graig Gellinudd. To the east and south of the site is the main residential development of Gellinudd which has limited GI assets aside from private gardens and some verge planting along the roadside, some of which is mature. The Gellinudd settlement is small and beyond the built form is the open countryside characterised by a network of fields separated by thick tree and hedgerow planting.

Ancient Woodland

- 6.4 The tree planting around the outskirts of Gellinudd connect to the ancient semi-natural woodland to the north and southern west of the settlement. Figure 4 below shows the location of ancient semi-natural woodland hatched in pink.

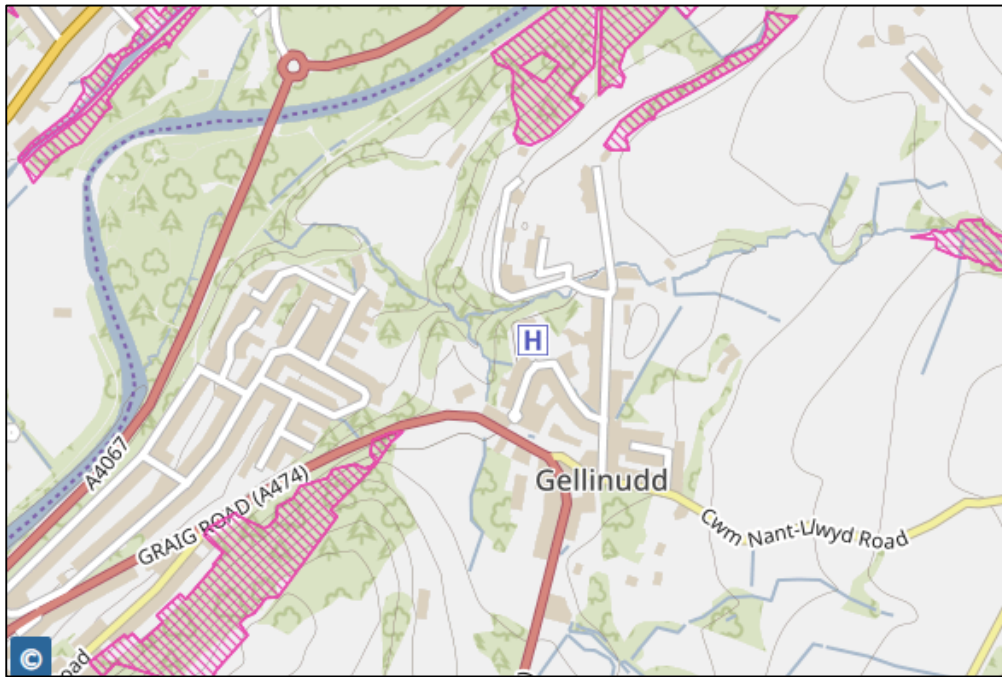


Figure 4: Extract of Welsh Government Maps showing ancient woodland (application site depicted by 'H')

Rights of Ways

- 6.5 There are no rights of way immediately adjacent to the application site but there is a network of rights of ways around Gellinudd that provide access to the adjacent countryside. The rights of way in the vicinity of the site are shown in the extract of the Ordnance Survey Map in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5: Extract of Ordnance Survey Map showing Rights of Way and open spaces near the application site (application site is depicted by red 'H')

- 6.6 In terms of open green spaces near the site, there is limited publicly accessibly open space within Gellnudd in the vicinity of the site. As discussed above, there are a network of rights of ways around the settlement which provides access to the countryside.

Waterways

- 6.7 The nearest river is the River Tawe which runs through Pontardawe and is around 1.6 miles from the application site. There are small watercourses to the north and east of Gellinudd, as shown on online mapping but are not formal waterways.

Cycle Route

- 6.8 The nearest cycle route is route 43 which links Swansea to Coelbren and around 57% of the route is traffic free. Route 43 is around 1.6m miles from the application site. Figure 6 below shows the location of ancient semi-natural woodland.



Figure 6: Extract of Map showing cycle route 43 near the application site (application site is depicted by red star)

6.9 There are no other green infrastructure assets in the area such as allotments

7.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

7.1 There is considered limited opportunities to enhance and connect to the surrounding GI assets based on the size and nature of the proposed development. The main opportunities are localised to the site itself and to enhancing the connectivity of new GI assets.

7.2 The new units have been positioned on the car park area to limit and avoid the loss of soft landscaping/GI assets on site. The new units will have areas of landscaping to the front which will increase the landscaping in this area. It is not possible to link these proposed landscaped areas to the wider planting on site but biodiverse planting will be provided in these new landscaped areas to enhance their quality and biodiversity credentials. A comprehensive landscape scheme will be implemented at the site and it is anticipated this will be subject to a planning condition. The proposed units will also have biodiversity enhancements integrated including a 2no. bat boxes and 2no. bird boxes located in unlit positions which relate best to the wider GI assets on site. The proposed external lighting will be carefully planned to enable dark corridors between the new units and the existing GI assets on site to encourage connectivity.

6.3 The provision of the car park will result in the loss of a small area of grassland and the removal of four category C trees and one group of category C trees and this is unavoidable to deliver the proposed development. Whilst this loss is regrettable, the grassland is well maintained and has limited biodiversity qualities and the trees are of low quality, as evidenced by their categorisation. To mitigate for the loss of the grassland and the trees, the car park size is limited to the minimum required to minimise the loss. There is ample retained grassland around the proposed car parking area which can be enhanced through landscaping. The proposed development, as mentioned above, will have a comprehensive landscape plan which will include the retained areas around the proposed car park which can be enhanced to ensure it has native planting which is biodiverse so provides much higher quality landscaping than

the existing grassed area. Furthermore, the enhanced landscaping around the car park will successfully link to the existing GI assets on site, in particular the trees to the east of the site which are part of the wider woodland beyond the site boundary to the east.

7.4 Through the landscaping plan there may be also opportunities to include native tree and shrub planting to enhance the site boundaries which will connect into the existing woodland outside the application site limits.

7.5 The comprehensive landscaping scheme would also integrate with the SAB proposals maximising the surface water drainage opportunities on site.

8.0 BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

8.1 As mentioned earlier in this statement, the biodiversity enhancements proposed are:

- 2no. bird boxes (details included in appendix 1)
- 2no. bat boxes
- Comprehensive Landscape scheme

8.2 It is anticipated the biodiversity enhancement can be secured by planning condition to agree their specification and exact location.

9.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

9.1 The existing GI assets in the local vicinity are primarily outside of the applicant's control and would be maintained as they currently are to ensure they remain intact and provide ongoing ecological benefits and screening to the application site.

9.2 The existing GI assets on site are minimal but the identified assets, the trees as depicted in Figure 1 above, will largely remain intact and unaffected by the development.

9.3 New landscaping to provide GI across the site will be managed through a landscape management plan, which will be prepared once the comprehensive landscaping

scheme is prepared. The landscaping scheme and management plan for the landscaping can be subject to a planning condition.

- 9.4 The proposed landscaping, which will provide an increased amount of soft landscaping compared to the current situation, together with the retained GI and future management plan would enhance the application site and its connectivity to the surrounding GI assets and reinforces the GI network across the Gellinudd area.
- 9.5 In terms of monitoring, it is expected that the biodiversity enhancement and landscaping plan will be required in perpetuity via the planning consent. Given the small scale nature of the proposals and limited opportunities for GI within the site boundaries, it is not considered an ongoing monitoring plan, beyond the landscape management plan is required.

10.0 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports the full planning application prepared on behalf Rhodos Properties (No. 22) Limited for the construction of 4no. new single storey units (in a C2 use), relocation of the car park and associated works
- 10.2 The application is within the grounds of the former Gellinudd Hospital, Lon Catwg, SA8 3DX. The site covers an area of approximately 0.18ha.
- 10.3 There are limited opportunities to enhance and connect to the surrounding GI assets based on the size and nature of the proposed development. The main opportunities are localised to the site itself and to enhancing the connectivity of new GI assets.
- 10.4 The proposals will result in a net gain in soft landscaping which will connect to the existing GI assets in the surrounding area enhancing the GI network in the Neath Port Talbot area. The proposals also include appropriate and proportionate biodiversity enhancements.