

Foul Drainage

The facilities are proposed to connect into the existing sewerage network. Some concerns were raised during the public consultation by members of the village that the existing sewerage network becomes overwhelmed during periods of high rainfall and that the proposals for visitor WCs would therefore represent an increased pressure on the sewerage network that it would not be able to cope with.

A pre-application has been conducted with DCWW (reference PPA0008547) to confirm the connection point and capacity within the existing network for the development. DCWW responded with the following statement *'our operations team have confirmed that they're not aware of any flooding issues at Pontneddfechan treatment works'*.

In addition they note in the Pre-Application response, *'We have considered the impact of foul flows generated by the proposed development and concluded that flows can be accommodated within the public sewerage system.'*

Proposals have subsequently reflected this response and are awaiting further input from the PAC process.

Surface Water Drainage

Please see associated documentation. A new sustainable drainage system will address on site surface water drainage, with accompanying design drawings submitted as part of this application.

Local Planning Authority

Prior to the PAC submission, Hiraeth Architects, Jubb Civil/ Structural Engineers and Andrew Scott Ltd. (Contractors) met with Jessica King

from NPT's Planning Authority. Key moves and design development were presented and the opportunity for questions presented. Whilst judgement on the scheme was rightly withheld, no major issues were highlighted at the time.

Secured by Design

Hiraeth have been in discussions with Mike Harvey the Designing Out Crime Officer for the Neath and Port Talbot area to ensure Secure By Design principles are incorporated at an early stage of the design development to create the most seamless and integrated solutions for the proposal.

Discussions were had to outline the site context and constraints, alongside initial LUF proposals and during the design development of the scheme. As a result a report was produced by Mike on the 1st May 2024 with advice outlining how the scheme could achieve a Secured By Design (SBD) certification through early consideration of a number of key areas. These included:

- Surveillance
- Building Shell
- External stores
- Access Control
- Door and window security
- Alarms systems
- Drainpipes
- Lighting

Following the conclusion of the PAC and receiving an updated report from Mike Harvey dated 16th July 2024 advice regarding lighting, security and surveillance have been further discussed and addressed as part of the full planning application.

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Constraints

- the waterfalls are a popular visitor destination and the site is already heavily influenced by an influx of tourists throughout the year and especially at peak periods;
- the proposed site sits within the vicinity of the designated 'locally important' Angel Inn, which should be considered in any proposals;
- whilst the site has been chosen to reduce the impact of the car park on the landscape surroundings, there are key views into the site - across landscape basin; from the flyover to the south; from the main road into the village (Pontneathvaughan Road); and from neighbouring houses - which all need to be considered and responded to;
- Sgwd Gladys sits adjacent to the development site and provides constraints, including visibility splays for the proposed carpark access road, and the establishment of an existing massing/scale;
- access into the site is off the main road into Pontneddfechan;
- the land available for the development is constrained by the amount available for purchase by NPT Council;
- the site sits adjacent to the tree-lined river corridor, with associated root protection areas and ecological considerations;
- the existing Ash Tree to the north of the site has a sizeable root protection area which will influence the layout;
- there is a high pressure water main that runs through the site, which has a 4.8m easement either side on which no building can be constructed and no roofs can impinge upon.

Opportunities

- to address the pressure on existing parking and the local community, by providing a new dedicated car-park;
- to provide adequate waste storage and collection systems for the site to help encourage responsible behaviour and reduce littering of the countryside;
- to provide additional community facilities to address needs identified during consultation, for example a play park.
- to improve pedestrian movement and safety throughout the village by considering road crossing points, the width of pavements and the location of car parking in relation to them;
- to form sustainable high quality proposals that are an exemplar of sensitive development in a rural environment;
- to capitalise on the popular attraction of the Waterfall Trail and encourage visitors to engage with local businesses;
- to provide quality visitor facilities that reduce the pressure on the local village whilst not competing with the revenue generating aspects of local businesses;
- to generate income for the local economy and ensure any visitor facilities are financially sustainable;
- to improve interpretation in the village to celebrate the unique history and contribution of the village;
- to provide retail within a new community shop;
- to connect Sgwd Gladys with the new public realm to enhance the holistic nature of the development and create further opportunities for this existing asset.

DEVELOPED BRIEF

In response to the deeper analysis of the site; local facilities; economic and social context; history; access and defining character of the proposal site; alongside involvement from key stakeholders through consultation and pre-application advice, further development and refinement of the original brief was required. This included:

- Creating a dedicated play park alongside opportunities for play and unstructured green spaces integrated into the wider proposal to benefit local residents and visitors;
- Ensuring no parts of the development encroach detrimentally into identified root protection zones of the trees onsite or close to the proposal boundary;
- Consolidating the built forms towards the North West of the proposal site away from residents to the east of the river;
- No built form to be constructed or extend into/over the water main easement zone, identified as running through the site;
- Refinement in line with 'Secure by Design' guidance such as the removal of large extents of covered canopies;
- Strategic approach to the management of off-season car park usage through choice of hard and soft landscape design to reduce visual and environmental impact of development to the south, whilst catering for peak times.

THE PROPOSAL



INTERPRETATION - INFORMING A DESIGN STRATEGY

Taking into consideration the requirements of the Brief, the historic and environmental context of the 'Waterfall Country' and the constraints of the site, a strategic approach to the proposed site can be developed.

The proposed site strategy should represent a careful balancing of the complex constraints of this site, including:

Landscaping

The site should be landscaped to reference the local river environment, whilst providing areas where the community can gather, and visitors can safely congregate. Landscaping should be utilised to direct people to safe crossing points between the carpark and route to the waterfall trails.

Hard and soft landscaping and specific planting strategies should be developed to add specificity to the interpretation of this important asset and encourage biodiversity.

Layout

The spatial constraints of the site, including root protection zones and the high pressure water main, will necessarily constrain and influence the layout. The layout should also reference the existing grain of local development, with consideration given to courtyards which complement the arrangement of buildings associated with Sgwd Gladys, which form a road-side courtyard, and to the wider landscape character. Proposed new courtyards should have different characters and purposes. This would integrate the proposal with the existing urban grain and can further define the space and screen the necessary car parking.

Form and Scale

The form and scale of the new-buildings should be explored in relation to the local vernacular and historic reference points. The scale should respect the adjacent bistro and historically important Angel Inn.

As identified in the analysis a clear correlation to the traditional agricultural farmstead typical to the area, and valued as important both in form and scale, provided clear conceptual cues for this development, which are appropriate to the building uses. The emergence of a scheme from an agricultural aesthetic should be referred to as the driving force for the form and scale of the proposals.

Materiality

A palette of materials should be developed that is appropriate within the setting - exploring the local agricultural settlements, vernacular architecture and natural environment as a living backdrop. The weathering of materials should be considered to ensure they will age well and have longevity within the village setting, alongside complementing the rich tones and seasonality of the natural context.

In addition, the carbon cost and recyclability of selected materials and technologies should be considered to ensure that the building minimises its whole life carbon impact in construction.

Views

Consideration should be given to the key approach from Pontneathvaughan Road, looking at how the building might respond to glimpsed views into the development. The building should also look to realise views out over the courtyards and long distance points of interest over agricultural fields and the tree lined surroundings.