

A photograph of three mountain bikers on a dirt trail. One biker is in the air, performing a jump. Two others are on the ground, following the trail. The background shows a dense forest of evergreen trees and a hazy mountain range in the distance.

BikePark Wales, Merthyr Tydfil

Design and Access Statement

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Introduction

BikePark Wales| Design and Access Statement



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Introduction

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been produced to accompany an application for planning permission for proposed development at BikePark Wales, Merthyr Tydfil.

The development proposed in the application includes:

- 141 car, van and motorhome parking spaces to be provided for day to day use with 85 in overflow.
- highway access and pedestrian routes;
- 36 camping pods and 5 chalets;
- shower and toilet block;
- natural play area
- trail maintenance yard; and
- associated drainage and improved landscape infrastructure.

Since opening, BikePark Wales has seen a continual increase in visitor numbers from approximately 47,500 tickets sold in 2013/14 to approximately 75,000 tickets sold in 2017/18. Continued growth is expected, but the mountain bike market is also becoming increasingly competitive.

To ensure continued growth and prominence in the market place, BikePark Wales has planned and secured funding to implement a major growth plan over the next 4 years that will result in a capital investment of £1.5 million. This investment is imperative to ensure that Bike Park Wales can strengthen its offer to existing and new customers and maintain its position as the premier mountain bike destination in the UK. The £1.5 million investment would:

- 1) Expand the core trail offering;
- 2) Deliver two green graded trails (beginner) in order to open the Park to the family market;
- 3) Improve the uplift road so a faster service can be provided to customers;
- 4) Provide additional facilities buildings including shower and toilet block, visitor welcome centre and office ;
- 5) Provide 36 camping pods and 5 chalet's for overnight stay; and
- 6) Provide 226 new parking spaces which is critical to address existing parking issues on site and to accommodate new visitors.

BikePark Wales anticipates that these new facilities will increase visitor numbers to the Park by a further 30% by 2022. This increase in visitor numbers will allow the BikePark Wales business to grow and increase the positive impact that it has on the local economy in terms of job creation and increased overnight visitors to the local area.

The development is discussed in more detail in Sections 3 and 4.

1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

As a result of the Planning (Wales) Act, Design and Access Statements (DAS) are now required for the following types of development only:

- All planning applications for “major” development except those for mining operations; waste developments; relaxation of conditions (section '73' applications) and applications of a material change in use of land or buildings; and,
- All planning applications for development in a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site which consist of the provision of one or more dwellings or the creation of floorspace of 100 sq. , (gross) or more.

The proposal is classed as major development and as such, a Design and Access Statement is required.

Technical Advice Note 12: Design Guidance on Design and Access Statements (March 2016) sets out the requirements that a DAS should satisfy. These are as follows:

1. Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
2. Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
3. Explain the policy or approach adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account; and
4. Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

This statement has been prepared to satisfy the requirement for a DAS and provides the information identified in TAN 12.

1.3 STATEMENT CONTENT

This Statement is structured as follows:

- **SECTION 2: CONTEXT** - Identifies the site location and surrounding context; describes the application site; identifies the historical context for the site and surrounding area; and, describes the planning policy context and relevant planning application history;
- **SECTION 3: DESIGN ASSESSMENT** - Describes the proposed development and associated activities and explains the design approach and analyses the design against key design criteria;
- **SECTION 4: PLANNING STATEMENT** - Assesses the proposals against national and local planning policy; and Conclusion.

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INTRODUCTION



Existing BikePark Wales centre from above

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INTRODUCTION



Mountain bike coaching at BikePark Wales

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Site and Planning Context

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement



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SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

2.1 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Location

The site consists of an area of woodland with open areas and access tracks running through it. Parts of the site are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (Abercarnaid Fields and Craig Gethin). The site is bounded to the west by the existing Bike Park Wales site, to the north by woodland, to the east by grassland and woodland, and to the south by woodland. The wider area includes a mix of woodland types on the valley sides above the River Taff.

The A470 runs north-west-southeast past the site to the east, and the settlements of Abercarnaid and Pentrebach are found to the east, with industrial, retail, residential and public spaces present.

Site Context

The site is a mix of open and wooded areas with paths and trails connecting them. The site is already comprised of an existing welcome centre and associated buildings along with car parking. Although the A470 runs adjacent to the site, the core of the site is not widely visible and is well enclosed by heavy planting.



View to east over grassland/scrub at the northern end of the site



Woodland within the Craig Gethin SINC



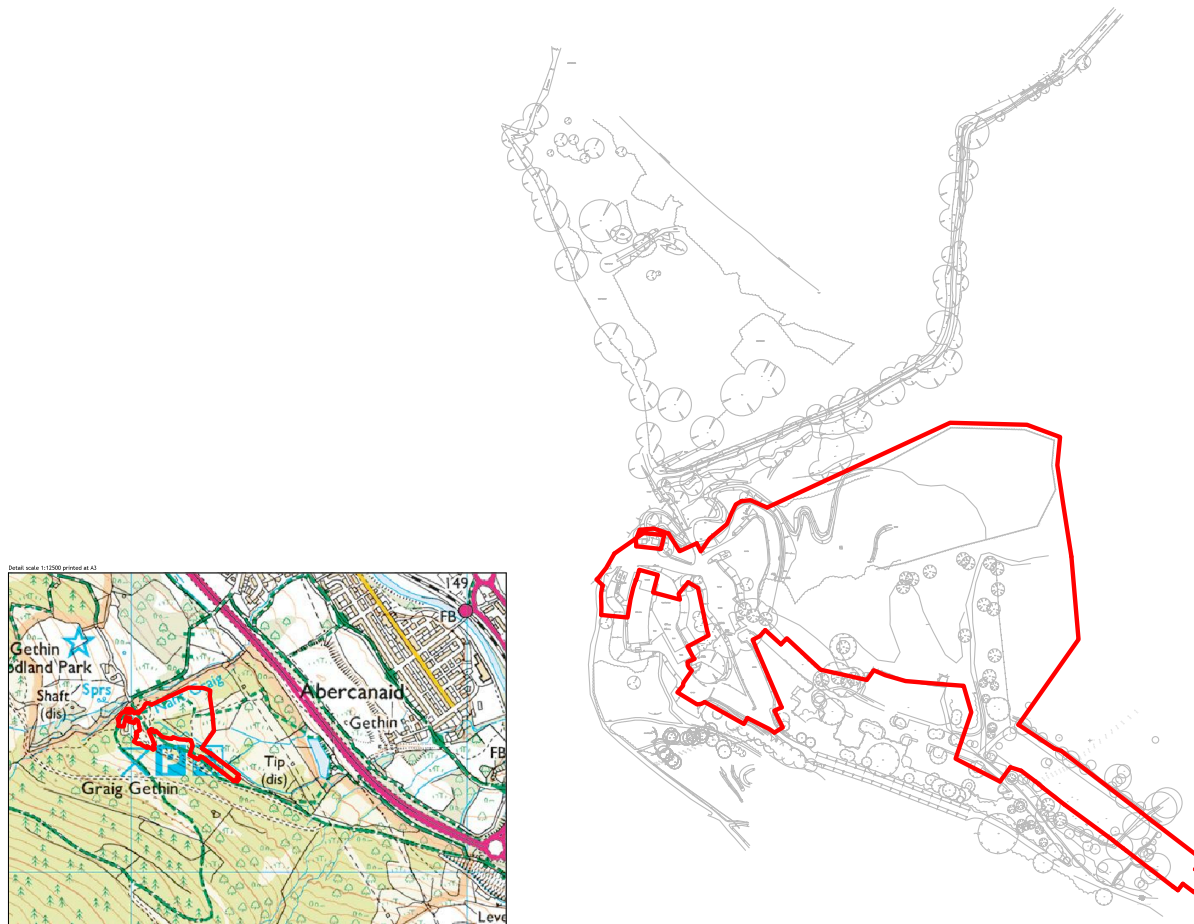
Scrubby part of the grassland area with bracken and bramble present



Grassland/scrub at the northern end of the site

SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement



Site location plan

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SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT



Aerial image of BikePark Wales. Source: Google 2018



Coaching session at BikePark Wales

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SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

2.2 PLANNING POLICY & HISTORY

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

This section sets out the national planning policy of relevance to the proposed development.

PLANNING POLICY WALES (EDITION 10, DECEMBER 2018)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the Welsh Government's land use planning policy for Wales. It replaces the 2016 edition of PPW. The most substantive change is the introduction of placemaking as a key element intended to deliver on the aspirations of the Act and drive plan making and development management decisions.

PPW describes the process of placemaking as an "inclusive process, involving all of those with a professional or personal interest in the built and natural environment, which focuses on developing plans, making decisions and delivering developments which contribute to the creation and enhancement of sustainable places" (PPW para 2.6)

Furthermore, establishes that the planning system provides for a presumption in favor of sustainable development to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are balanced and integrated in decision making. Sustainable development is defined as the process of improving the economic, social, environmental, cultural well-being of Wales without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

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

The Planning Act (Wales) 2015 introduced a statutory purpose of the planning system in Wales by stating that a LPA must exercise its function in relation to the determination of planning applications "...as part of carrying out sustainable development in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (anaw 2), for the purpose of ensuring that the development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales." (PA(W), Sec.2(2))

To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals. The Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals, not just one or two. The goals are identified in the image.

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) now provides a definition of sustainable development as "the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle" (WBFG, Sec. 2). The principle being: "...in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

The seven well-being goals are:

- 1) A prosperous Wales.
- 2) A resilient Wales.
- 3) A healthier Wales.
- 4) A more equal Wales.
- 5) A Wales of cohesive communities.
- 6) A Wales of vibrant culture and a thriving welsh language.
- 7) A globally responsible Wales.

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE 12, DESIGN (2016)

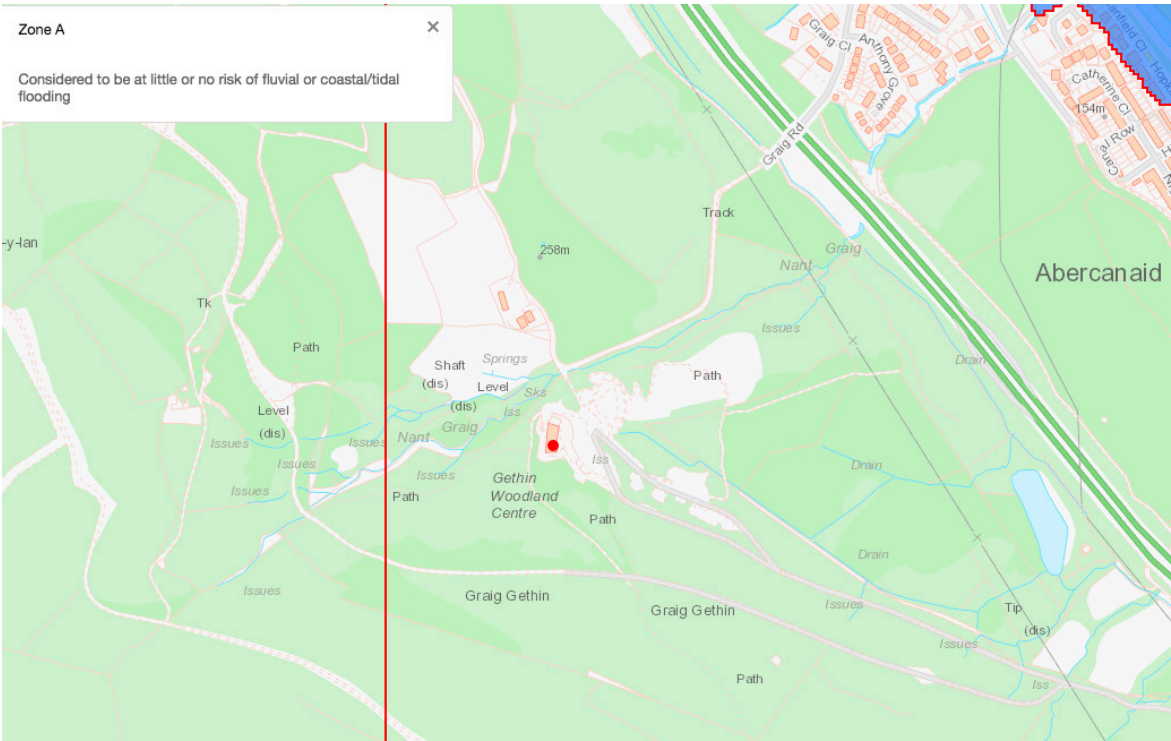
The revised Technical Advice Notes (TAN) aims to equip all those that are involved in the design of development with advice on how sustainability, through good design, may be facilitated through the planning system plus it provides detailed guidance on the content of Design and Access Statements. It sets out the core design principles that any development proposal must follow to help create a sustainable environment and exhibit a high level of design quality.

It sets out five key objectives of good design as being: Access, Character, Community Safety, Environmental sustainability, and Movement. These are elaborated as follows:

- Access - Ensuring ease of access for all;
- Character - Sustaining of enhancing local character; promoting legible development; promoting a successful relationship between public and private space; promoting quality, choice and variety; and promoting innovative design;
- Community Safety - Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces and security through natural surveillance;

SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

This TAN provides guidance in relation to development and flooding. It provides advice on matters including the use of development advice maps to determine flood risk issues, how to assess the flooding consequences of proposed development and action that can be taken through development plans and development control (management) procedures to mitigate flood risk when planning for new development. The majority of the site is located within Zone A, meaning there is little or no risk of flooding.



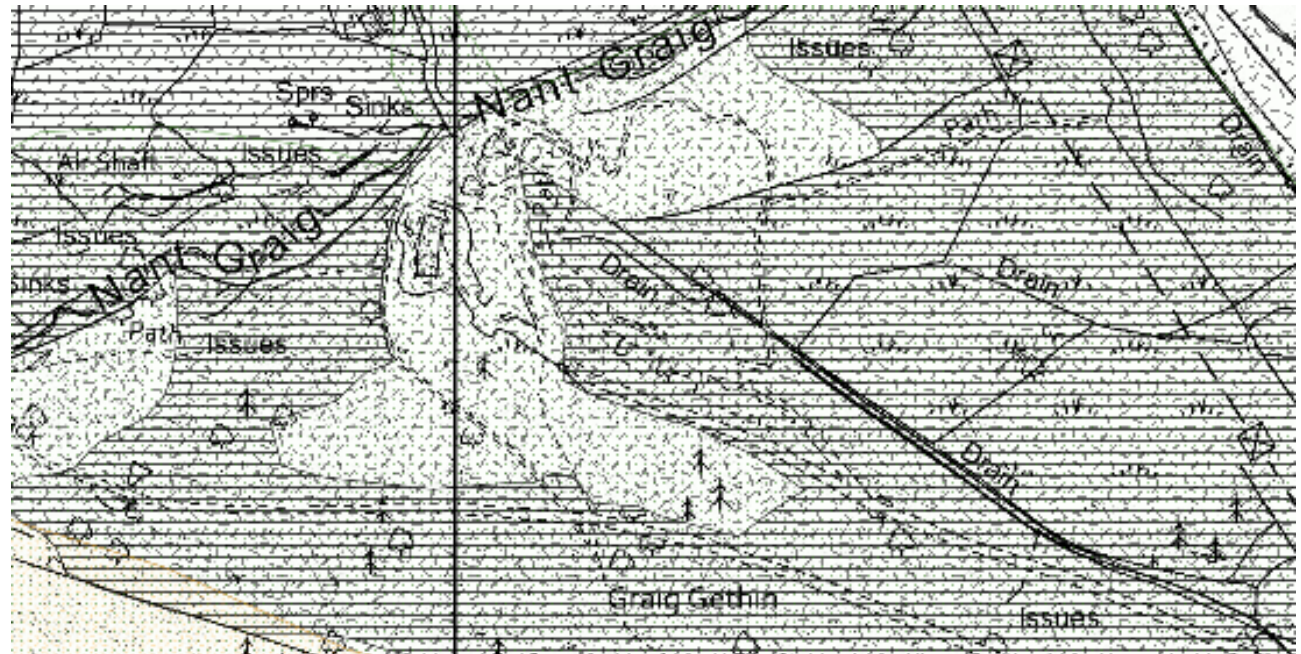
Natural resources wales development advice map

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

A search of the adopted Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-2021 interactive proposals map has highlighted the following considerations:

1. There are two Sites of Important Nature Conservation (SINC) located within development area, namely Abercanaid Fields and Craig Gethin.
2. The development site falls within a Coal Safeguarding area, and there is a possibility that there are old coal workings on site as result of Merthyr's historic mining activities
3. The area proposed for development falls within the Merthyr Landscape of Historic Interest.
4. The site contains an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland .

These issues are fully assessed in the Planning Statement section of the DAS.



Snapshot from LDP interactive proposals map.

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SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2006-2026

The plan was adopted on the 25th of May 2011 and provides the statutory framework for the development and use of land within the Borough over the period 2006-2026. The vision is that:

“Between 2006 and 2021, the Local Development Plan will ensure that the development and use of land in Merthyr Tydfil is undertaken in a sensitive manner following a holistic approach with the concept of sustainability as its core. In this way, the ambition of the Plan is to reflect the expectations of the community to:

- facilitate sustained growth;
- promote social inclusion;
- safeguard the environment; and,
- provide an excellent quality of life for all

Within the plan the development site is located within a Site of importance for Nature Conservation, namely Graig Gethin and Abercaniad Fields. Furthermore, the BikePark Wales is considered to be located within the Merthyr Tydfil Historic Landscape area. Policies BW5, AS4 and AS6 of the Local Development Plan favour development that has regard for the protection, conservation and enhancement of such sites.

Policies that are relevant to the development and site are identified below:

POLICY BW4: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES / LOCATIONAL CONSTRAINTS :

Settlement boundaries are defined on the LDP Proposals Map in order to define the area within which development will be allowed providing it is compatible with other relevant plan policies and material planning considerations.

Outside defined settlement boundaries, proposals will be regarded as 'countryside development' and will not be permitted unless:

- The development is associated with rural enterprises or the winning and working of minerals.
- The development is for the re-use, adaptation, or replacement of rural buildings and dwellings.
- The development supports the expansion of an existing business in the countryside.
- The development is for tourism, recreation or leisure facilities where the need for a countryside location is fully justified.

POLICY TB11: ACCESS, PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY OF LOCAL FACILITIES

Proposals for development should ensure that:-

- Any new highways are designed and constructed in accordance with the Manual for Streets and include operational and non-operational parking provisions according to adopted standards set out in CSS Wales Parking Standards, and the land use, density and location proposed; and
- The access needs and mobility requirements of all sections of the community, particularly those with special needs and disabilities, are met.

Should it be proposed to use reduced standards of highway design or construction, the proposal must be fully explained and justified.

POLICY BW7: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND PLACE MAKING:

The Council will support good quality sustainable design and require new development to:

- be appropriate to its local context in terms of scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;
- integrate effectively with adjacent spaces and the public realm to enhance the general street scene and create good quality townscape;
- not result in unacceptable impact on local amenity in terms of visual impact, loss of light or privacy, disturbance and traffic movements;
- incorporate a good standard of landscape design;
- sensitively relate to existing settlement patterns and take account of natural heritage and the historic environment on site and in terms of potential impact on neighbouring areas of importance.

POLICY BW10: MINERAL SAFEGUARDING: The LDP contributes to meeting society's need for a continuous and secure supply of minerals by:

1. Safeguarding mineral resources from permanent development which would sterilise them or hinder their extraction;
2. Safeguarding mineral reserves from development which would prevent their extraction in order to maintain a minimum 10 year land bank of permitted aggregate reserves.

POLICY BW16: PROTECTING /ENHANCING THE NETWORK OF LEISURE FACILITIES:

The Council will protect and support the enhancement of the County Borough's network of leisure facilities including outdoor play space, public open space and public rights of way in order to ensure their continued use for recreation and amenity. Development proposals that result in the loss of an existing facility will not normally be permitted unless:-

- Alternative provision of at least equivalent value to the local community can be provided nearby, or

- It can be demonstrated that existing provision is inappropriate or surplus to the needs of the community and is no longer required, or
- In the case of commercially based leisure facilities, it can be demonstrated there is no longer a viable leisure use for the facility.

POLICY BW12: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND TRANSPORT:

Where appropriate, the Council will expect all development proposals to demonstrate how they will:-

- help reduce the need to travel
- encourage the use of transport other than the private car
- avoid increasing traffic to unacceptable levels
- avoid causing or exacerbating highway safety problems

Transport assessments will be required for developments likely to result in significant trip generation.

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POLICY AS4: HISTORIC LANDSCAPE: There will be a presumption in favour of the protection, conservation and enhancement of:

- Gelligaer Common, and the main settlement of Merthyr Tydfil in accord with their status as Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales.

POLICY AS6: LOCAL NATURE CONSERVATION

DESIGNATIONS: Using published scientific criteria, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation have been designated as shown on the LDP Proposals Map.

Applications for development affecting these sites and /or the Cwm Taf Fechan Local Nature Reserve, will not be permitted unless full account has been taken of the relevant features so as to prevent damage to their conservation value.

Where appropriate, planning conditions or a planning agreement will be employed to safeguard and /or enhance features, or to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensatory measures

POLICY BW18: CONTAMINATED LAND

Contaminated land Development proposed on a site known or reasonably believed to be contaminated, will require a site assessment to establish the nature and extent of the contamination prior to determining the application. Development will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that effective measures can be taken to treat or control any contamination in order not to:

- Expose occupiers of the development land and neighbouring land to unacceptable risk;
- Contaminate any watercourse, water body or aquifer;
- Cause the contamination of adjoining land or allow the contamination to continue

2.3 PLANNING HISTORY

A planning search of the site has identified the following relevant permissions:

Application P/12/0235: The planning permission for the original BikePark Wales facilities

Application P/13/0214: Erection of single story extension to visitor centre to accommodate plant room

Application P/15/0385: Construction of 23 additional mountain bike trails to expand the existing facility

Application P/16/0055: Retention of revised car parking layout, including the provision of additional car parking spaces and the erection of two wood clad huts

Application P/17/0367: Construction of a new access track and widening of existing forest roads to be used as uplift route by BikePark Wales; and

Application P/18/0335: Erection of new bike hire centre with associated bike washing facilities and storage areas. Erection of new catering unit and staff office building.



Mountain bike trail

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SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

2.4 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

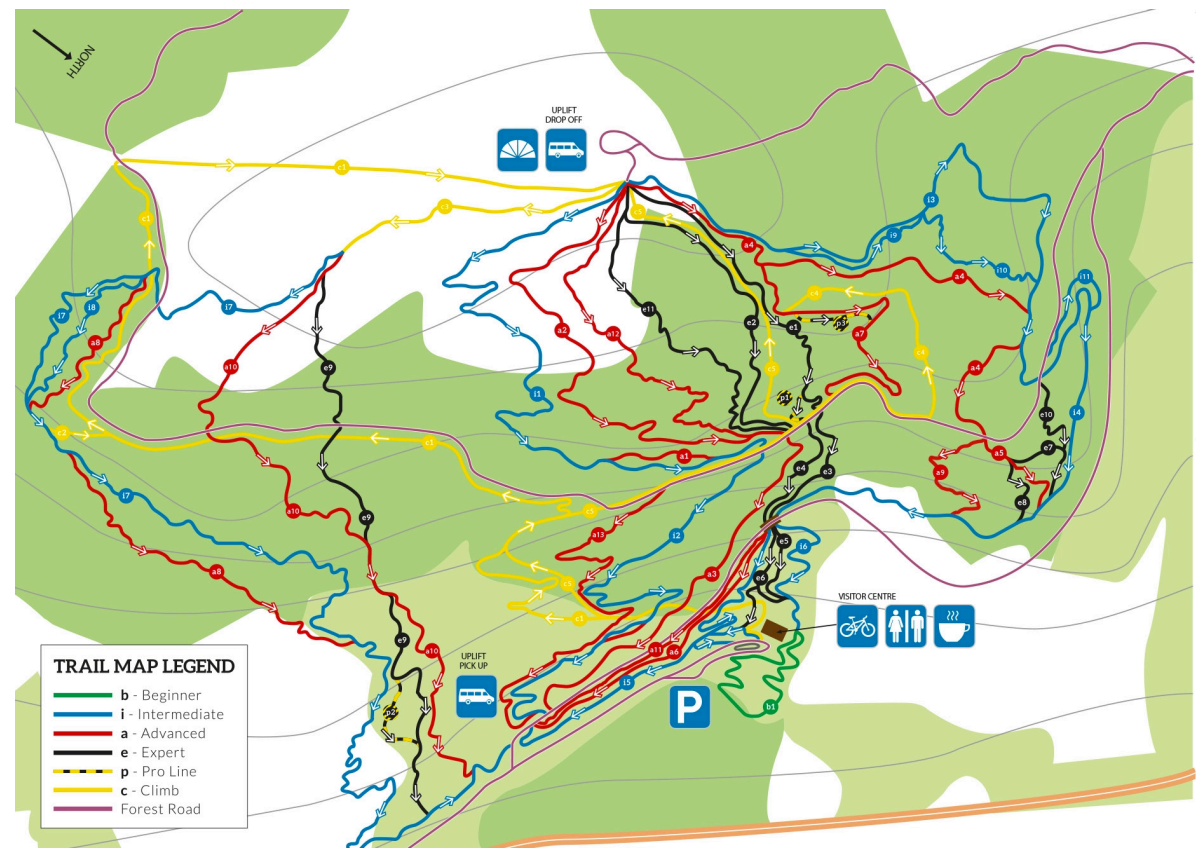
LAND USE

Currently the site is being used as a mountain bike park which is classed as Sui Generis under the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended). The proposals seek to provide 141 parking spaces to be provided for day to day use (including motor homes) with 85 in the overflow. The proposals also include highway access and pedestrian routes, 36 camping pods and 5 chalets, shower and toilet block, extension to the terrace, a trail maintenance yard and associated drainage and landscape infrastructure. Consequently, it is considered that the proposals are ancillary to the use of the site as a Mountain Bike Park.

BIKEPARK WALES

BikePark Wales was born from a passion to create the best mountain bike facility in the UK, and to form the UK's first full scale bike park to rival the best in the World. Over five years,

BikePark Wales have continued to invest in the business with particular focus on improving the trail offering. For intermediate mountain bikers through to seasoned downhill pro's, BikePark Wales offers something for most abilities. However, in order to remain competitive in the market further investment is required. The proposals listed above are integral to building upon the success BikePark Wales has experienced over the last five years, to allow the business to expand into the novice and family market and to safeguard the bike park's place as the number 1 mountain bike destination in the UK.



BikePark Wales trail map



Mountain biking trail



Existing external seating area

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SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

OPERATIONAL HOURS

Bikepark Wales opening times are seasonal. Between April and September (Summer) the site is open and operational between 9am and 6pm (7 days a week) and some days is open until 9pm (depending on light). Between October and March (Winter) the site is open between 9am and 5pm (7 days a week). The proposals will not alter these hours. However the addition of on site a commodation will mean that shower and washing facilities would be available for guests use outside of these hours.

FACILITIES

The facilities at the existing bike park include a visitor centre which incorporates bike hire, a café and a shop. The trails (43 types) are predominantly located to the west of the centre. The exception is a pump track, which is located in the centre area and a short beginner trail which is located to the east. Both are located in the proposed area of development.

UPLIFT SYSTEM

Visitors to the site usually access the site by car, use the car parking facilities provided, before using the uplift system run by BikePark Wales. This system is comprised of large mini-buses and trailers that ferry visitors from the welcome centre area to the mountain-top.

PARKING

There are significant number of informal car parking areas throughout the site. In total, there are approximately 150 – 170 car parking spaces currently on-site although none of these are formally marked, due to the unbound nature of the surfacing within the site.

A one-way vehicle access route is in operation throughout the site which ensures that conflict between vehicular movements within the site is minimised. This also routes past all of the various informal parking areas within the site.

ACCOMMODATION

Currently, visitors to the site rely upon the existing B&B trade for over night accommodation .The proposals include the provision of 36 camping pods and 6 chalets for overnight stay. Given the growth forecasted for the BikePark Wales, it is considered that additional on site accommodation is required to cater for the increased demand, but would also act as a catalyst for a further increase in visitor numbers (particularly families) due to the attraction of on site accommodation.

BIKE PARK WALES GROWTH

BikePark Wales anticipates that the new facilities that will be delivered will increase visitor numbers to the Park by a further 30% by 2022. This increase in visitor numbers will allow the BikePark Wales business to grow and increase the positive impact that it has on the local economy in terms of job creation and increased overnight visitors to the local area.

In respect of job creation, it is anticipated that an additional 16 full-time jobs would be created through the investment. This would take the total number of BikePark Wales employees to 70.

In respect of overnight stays, previous survey suggests that 48% of visitors stay overnight. Based on current annual ticket sales of 75,000 this equates to 36,000 overnight stays per annum. Should this percentage of overnight stays continue then the investment would result in a further 10,800 overnight stays, which would take the total number of overnight stays to 46,800.

While the camping pods and chalets would cater for some of the visitors this would be a fraction, and the local B&B trade that has emerged as a result of BikePark Wales would stand to benefit and continue to flourish.



Aerial view of BikePark Wales

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Design Assessment

Bike Park Wales | Design and Access Statement



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DESIGN ASSESSMENT

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

3.1 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

A series of design objectives have been established for the proposed development. These are identified below:

1) GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

RETENTION OF TREES

- The layout has been designed to minimise the impact on existing trees.
- Buffer zones to be placed around veteran and large trees that are in close proximity to any development.

TREE PLANTING

- Integrated planting native to the area to screen views of the development and assimilate it into the site landscape.
- Planting designed to aid in the movement of fauna and the spread of flora between the existing areas of woodland.
- To enhance the inter-connective opportunities for wildlife.

GRASSLAND

- To maintain as much grassland as possible to mitigate any impacts of the development upon the Abercanaid Fields SINC.

BIODIVERSITY

- To Minimise impact on site biodiversity and incorporate features for species present on the site into the layout.

SUDS

- To incorporate drainage infrastructure that is sustainable and reduce the need for hard infrastructure.

2) ARCHITECTURE

BUILDINGS

- Design buildings to have a natural appearance
- Incorporate buildings onto the site via an organic layout that responds to the site topography
- Incorporate a variety of forms to avoid uniformity and incorporate diversity

3) VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Deliver high quality accommodation that caters for a range of users (mountain bike riders and other recreational users)
- Incorporate new shower and wash facilities that can serve the existing centre and deliver bespoke shower and wash facilities for the new overnight accommodation
- Incorporate a natural playground area that will diversify the recreational offer
- Provide a clear and legible internal highway network that allows visitors to orientate themselves
- Provide new parking areas that can be easily and safely accessed by visitors

3.2 OPTIONS CONSIDERED

ALTERNATIVE SITES

The proposed site has been selected because it is readily available (the site is part of the land that BikePark Wales leases from Natural Resources Wales) is easily accessed from the existing site and core facilities, and is considered the least environmentally sensitive.

OPTION 1

Since 2016, discussions regarding the expansion of BikePark Wales have been ongoing between the Park, Natural Resources Wales and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. During these discussions Natural Resources Wales acknowledged the ecological constraints that surround the existing BikePark Wales site, and suggested that BikePark Wales consider acquiring and developing land to the north of the existing bike hub building.

Considerable time and effort was spent in pursuit of this option, however, the site was not commercially available and was also subject to ecological constraints (it is a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation).



Aerial showing first development site option

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DESIGN ASSESSMENT

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OPTION 2

Consideration was given to land located south of BikePark Wales. However, this is approximately 600 metres from the existing facilities at the Park and the site was discounted on customer experience grounds. Given that BikePark Wales are looking to expand into the family market, this distance is considered too great (particularly when the gradient is taken into account). Furthermore, it is not considered safe for children to be walking on the main access road into the Park.



Aerial showing second development site option

OPTION 3

A site east of the existing facility (just south of the proposed site). Initial designs for the development were progressed and a preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken to identify the ecological baseline for the site, since the site is part of the Abercarnaid Fields SINC.

The survey found a number of sensitive ecological receptors, including the potential presence of Marsh Fritillary butterfly. Following engagement with the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Natural Resources Wales, BikePark Wales decided against proposing the development of the site on ecological grounds.



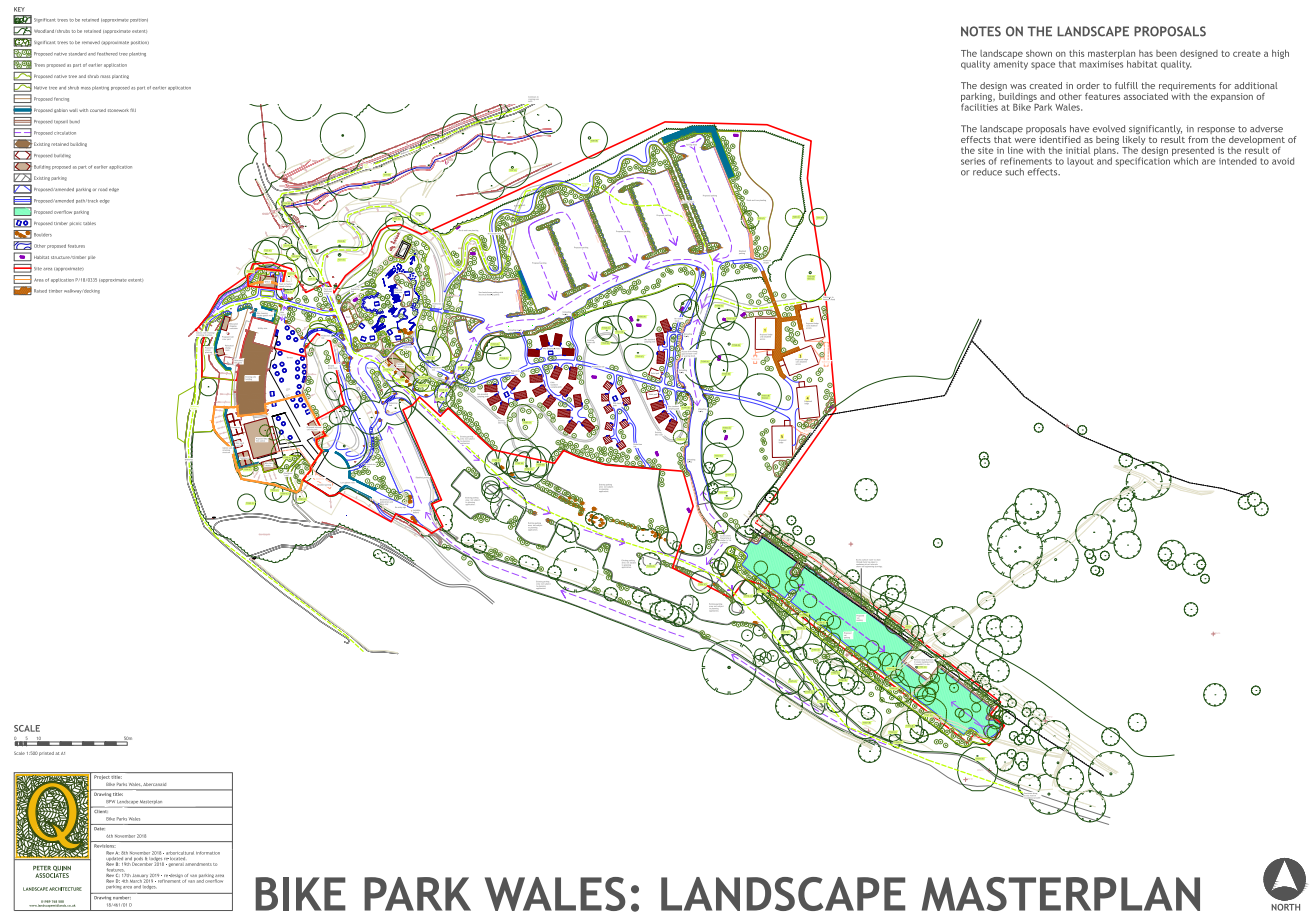
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CHOSEN SITE

This site was chosen as it is readily available, is close to the existing centre and would provide visitors to BikePark Wales with an organic woodland camping experience.

Furthermore, given the various constraints this is the only remaining option for BikePark Wales, and without its development it will not be possible to deliver the investment that is required to ensure BikePark Wales remains the premier mountain bike destination.

To identify the ecological baseline on the site, an Ecological Impact Assessment has been undertaken, and the advice provided to date identifies that while the site has ecological receptors of value, it is not as sensitive as the previous site and subject to suitable mitigation can be developed without unacceptable impacts.





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DESIGN ASSESSMENT

3.3 PREFERRED OPTION

The following image shows the final masterplan and landscape strategy for the development proposals.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The location of development has sought to minimise the requirement for undeveloped land. The shower block, natural play and picnic area and trail maintenance yard will be located on developed land. Where development requires the use of undeveloped land, the impact on green infrastructure has been minimised.

The Landscape Statement identified primary mitigatory measures designed to prevent or avoid potential adverse landscape and visual effects. These were used to refine the design and construction methods to avoid or minimise such effects. Therefore, the proposals as presented are significantly different from the original concept.

For example, the area of proposed parking has been reduced since the initial concept and the consequent probable adverse effects on biodiversity and landscape have also been reduced in line with these changes.



ASSESSMENT OF PREFERRED OPTION

The proposed design incorporates all the key development components that BikePark Wales requires to grow the centre and diversify its offer:

- 141 parking spaces to be provided for day to day use (including motor homes) with 85 in overflow.
- highway access and pedestrian routes;
- 36 camping pods and 5 chalets;
- shower and toilet block;
- natural play area;
- trail maintenance yard; and
- associated drainage and landscape infrastructure.

More importantly, however, the design achieves this in a manner that is appropriate to the site and the design objectives.

Throughout the design process, a series of sensitive design choices and amendments were undertaken to minimise the environmental impact of the proposed scheme.

DESIGN OBJECTIVE 1: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND BIODIVERSITY

- This includes designing the overflow parking area around existing mature trees and undertaking an extensive redesign of the ground profile to prevent intrusion into the surrounding woodland.
- Tree and shrub planting has been used to screen views of the development from afar and assimilate the development into the landscape.
- In the parking areas, planting has been incorporated to break up its form and soften views. The parking areas will consist of dry-bound macadam stone and will not be formally marked (with white lines). This will replicate the natural approach that is currently in operation at the BikePark Wales site,
- Planting proposed would be native to ensure that it establishes and is appropriate to the surrounding site landscape
- As much grassland as possible has been retained as part of the layout and would be managed to maximise its biodiversity value. A particular opportunity is presented by the camping pods, which would not require significant ground works to implement;
- The drainage infrastructure avoids the use of hard infrastructure, and instead consists of swales that would blend into the site landscape;

- The lighting design proposed is sensitive and focussed on low lying lighting coverage to guide pedestrians along key routes.
- This will minimise impacts on bats and prevent light pollution. In particular there would be no lighting of vegetation corridors, trees with bat roost features and water features.
- The layout incorporates refugia habitat for reptiles and boxes for bats.

DESIGN OBJECTIVE 2: ARCHITECTURE

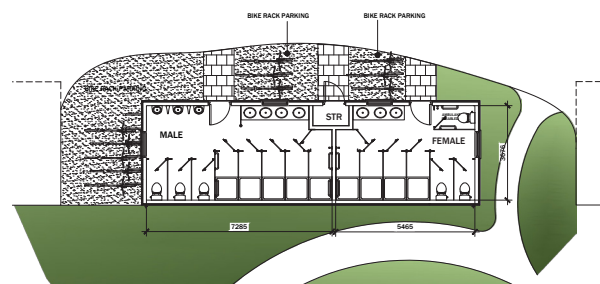
- The layout incorporates the new buildings via an organic layout that responds to the existing site topography
- Building would not have a monotone appearance, which would ensure variety and diversity and complement the organic layout
- The buildings would have natural finishes that replicate the vernacular of the existing centre and is appropriate to the landscape character of the site
- The accommodation will be incorporated into the existing site topography without re-profiling the site topography.

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DESIGN ASSESSMENT

DESIGN OBJECTIVE 4: CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

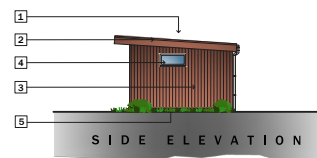
- The layout provides an alternative choice of overnight accommodation that would appeal to a range of users and increase visitor types to the centre
- The accommodation is easily accessible from the core facilities provided at the current visitor centre and the proposed new rental centre, which has recently been granted planning permission
- The shower and wash facilities are centrally located between the existing centre and the remainder of the proposed development area
- The layout incorporates new access roads that would provide visitors with a safe means of accessing the park, and which would enable them to orientate themselves within the site when enroute to parking areas.
- The accommodation is easily accessible from the core facilities provided at the current visitor centre and the proposed new rental centre.
- The playground is centrally located so that it is safely accessible from the new accommodation and the existing visitor centre.
- A new overflow parking area has been incorporated for use when events are being held.



PLAN VIEW
Scale 1:50



FRONT ELEVATION

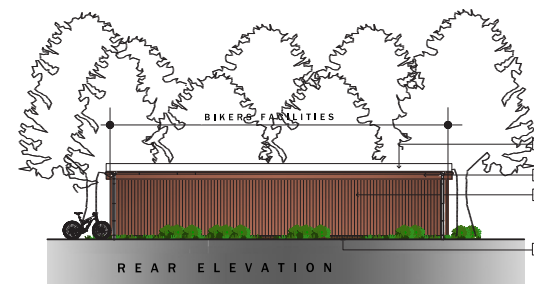


SIDE ELEVATION

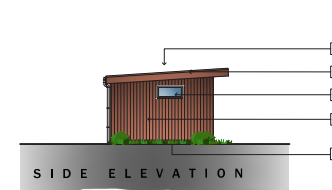


MATERIAL KEY LEGEND

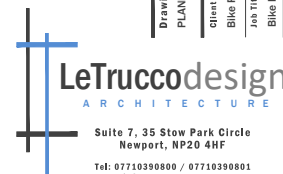
- 1 HIGH PERFORMANCE ROOFING MEMBRANE
- 2 TREATED TIMBER FASCIA'S / BARGEBOARDS ROOF FINISHES.
- 3 TREATED TIMBER CLADDING FASCIA LAID VERTICALLY
- 4 GREY UPVC WINDOW AND DOOR UNITS.
- 5 FACING BRICKWORK BELOW DPC



REAR ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION



Suite 7, 35 Stow Park Circle
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Tel: 07710390800 / 07710390801
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Revisions

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Drawing Purpose
PLANNING

Client
Bike Park Wales

Drawing No
LT1811.04.04

Drawing Title
Proposed Shower Block

Issue Title
Bike Park Wales Proposals

Date
Dec.18

Checked
kml

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1:100 @ A2

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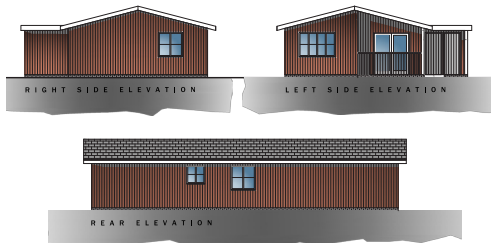
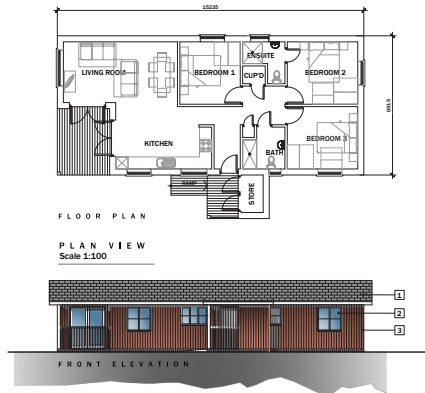
Revision

03

DESIGN ASSESSMENT

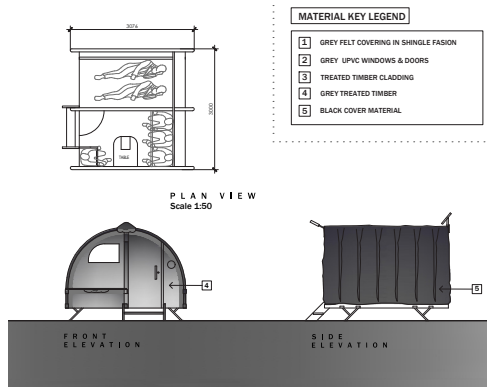
3 BEDROOM LODGES

Scale 1:100



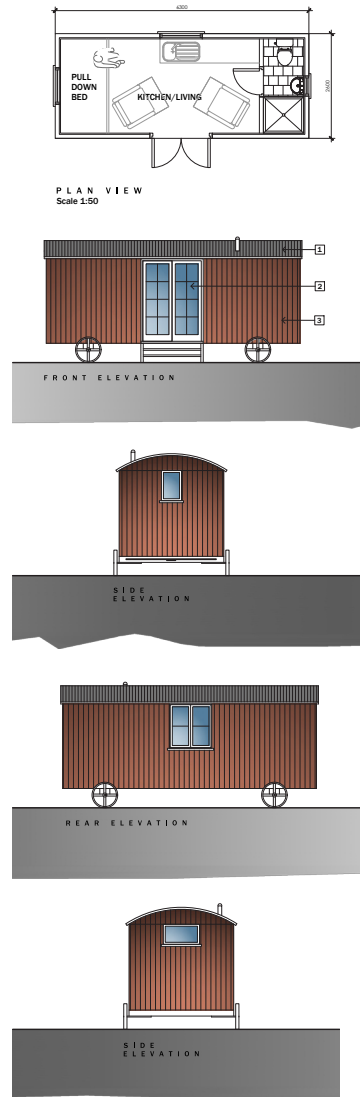
LAND PODS

Scale 1:100



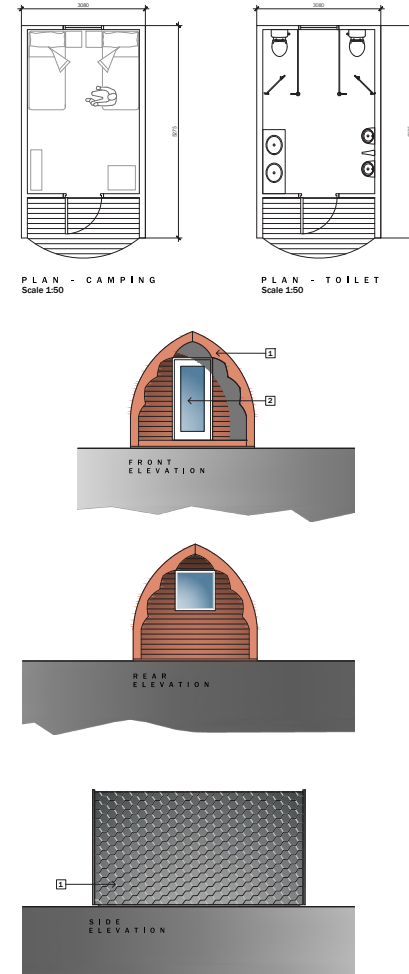
SHEPHERD'S HUT

Scale 1:50



STANDARD CAMPING POD

Scale 1:50



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Revisions

Revision	Scale	Date	Checked	Drawn
1	1:500 @ AL	17/05/2025	Nov 25	Nov 25

Drawing Purpose
PLANNING

Client
Bike Park Wales Ltd

Project Title
Proposed Camping Facilities

Drawing No.
LP2501-01/05

Drawing Title
Camping Accommodation



LeTruCCo design
ARCHITECTURE

Suite 7, 35 Stow Park Circle
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Proposed accommodation

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

PLANNING STATEMENT

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement



04

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Project Title | Document Title

4.1 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Planning applications are to be determined having regard to the development plan, unless material considerations suggest otherwise. The below analysis considers the design proposals against the development plan policies and national policy identified in section 2.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

POLICY BW4:

Outside defined settlement boundaries, proposals will be regarded as 'countryside development' and will not be permitted unless:

1. The development is associated with rural enterprises or the winning and working of minerals.
2. The development is for the re-use, adaptation, or replacement of rural buildings and dwellings.
3. The development supports the expansion of an existing business in the countryside.

The proposed development is essential to enable an existing business to grow, and would be located within and adjacent to the existing operational area of the business. The development is therefore considered appropriate and in accord with the policy.

POLICY BW5:

The policy states that development proposals would only be supported where they maintain, enhance or do not cause harm to: the landscape character of the countryside; national and local nature reserve designations; trees woodland and hedgerow; and, other biodiversity interests. Whilst the development would not be located in a national or local nature designation, it would require the development of undeveloped land that is categorised as SINC land. It has therefore been designed to respond to the site setting to minimise its impact on the site landscape and biodiversity. For example:

- Buildings proposed in the scheme would consist of timber finishes, and would be integrated into the existing topography;

- Roads and parking plateaus would also be integrated into the existing topography and would consist of natural materials that replicate the arrangement on the existing BikePark Wales centre
- The layout has been designed to minimise the requirement for tree removal, and large volumes of replacement tree planting are proposed to assimilate the development into the surrounding landscape and screen views from afar
- Existing grassland would be retained where possible and enhanced to maximise its value;
- Appropriate mitigation for protected species (including birds, bats and reptiles) is proposed as part of the scheme
- Lighting design would be minimal and sensitive to ensure no light pollution; and
- The drainage infrastructure consists of SUDS (swales) that would blend into the site's green landscape

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

To fully assess the development's impact on biodiversity and landscape, the Environmental Statement that is included in the planning application includes an ecological impact assessment and a landscape and visual impact assessment. Both of these assessments conclude that, subject to mitigation that would be delivered as part of the development, the proposals are acceptable on landscape and biodiversity grounds. It is therefore considered that the development satisfies the requirements of the policy.

POLICY BW7:

The policy supports design that is appropriate to its local context in terms of materials, detailing, layout, form and scale. The development proposed in the application is considered to satisfy all of these considerations. The proposed accommodation would be comprised of Pods, Larger land pods, Shepherds huts and Lodges.

Each of these would vary in terms of their design and scale. However, it is considered that this variety would help to prevent repetition and contribute to a more organic layout. Furthermore, the structures are all of modest scale, with the exception of the chalets, which have been located in the bottom of the site to reduce their visual impact. Their external materials would provide them with a natural appearance that is appropriate to the wider woodland environment.

The proposed shower block has been located so that is viewed within the context of the site's existing built environment. Its size has been minimised to the operational requirements, and the materials replicate that of the accommodation and the existing centre building.

The new parking areas and roads would inevitably increase the hard standing area of the site, but care has been taken in the design to integrate the infrastructure into the site landscape, to advocate the use of natural materials that replicate those used for the existing site infrastructure, and to use planting to screen and assimilate the infrastructure. Overall, it is considered that the proposals comply with the requirements of the policy.

POLICY BW8:

The policy permits development where it would not be located in areas at significant risk of flooding; would not have an adverse effect on water quality and would have adequate water and sewerage systems. The development is located in an area deemed to have little or no risk of flooding, and it would not increase flood risk elsewhere. The development includes the provision of a SuDS that would maintain the existing green field run off rate and remove the risk of flooding down site.. It is therefore considered that the development would satisfy the policy.

POLICY BW10:

The policy safeguards mineral resources from permanent development. Given the proposed development would be located in BikePark Wales, a successful mountain bike complex, it is not considered that mineral extraction would take place in this area. It is therefore considered that the development would not endanger a mineral resource that would be viable to extract, and it is considered that the proposals comply with the policy

04

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

POLICY BW12:

The policy requires developments to address how they would avoid increasing traffic to unacceptable levels and avoid exacerbating highway safety problems. A detailed Traffic Assessment prepared for the application states that Detailed junction assessments were undertaken, as required by Welsh Government. These confirm there would be no material change to the operation or queuing on the highway network resulting from the proposed development. The site would not have a material impact on traffic flows or congestion on the network and no mitigation is considered to be required. It is therefore considered that there are no significant highways and transportation matters that should preclude the Local Planning Authority from approving this planning application.

POLICY BW16:

The policy protects public open space, outdoor play space and public rights of way. None of these features would be impacted by the development. The proposals are therefore compatible with the policy.

POLICY BW18:

Development proposed on a site known or reasonably believed to be contaminated, will require a site assessment to establish the nature and extent of the contamination prior to determining the application. There are areas of potentially unstable land are known to exist in certain parts of the County Borough, and within the BikePark Wales site as a result of historical coal mining activity. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment prepared for the application concluded that the site can be suitably and safely developed, subject to carrying out the recommended mining site investigation works and then carrying out the mitigation measures detailed, should be considered necessary.

A Desktop Study of the site has confirmed that the site is largely uncontaminated, therefore the proposals would not be at risk of contamination, thus satisfying the aims of the above policy.

POLICY AS6:

The policy only permits development that would not reduce the conservation value of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The development would affect two SINCS, namely Abercanaid and Graig Gethin. The Abercanaid SINC is a series of fields laying either side of the A470 and is designated for its species-rich semi-improved grasslands and marshy grasslands. It also some small areas of semi-natural oak/birch woodland, and scattered scrub and trees.

Craig Gethin is designated for its wooded ffridd slopes, supporting extensive ancient semi-natural woodland and bracken slopes with large trees, together with some scree areas supporting lichen heath. The bracken slopes also support abundant bluebell.

Impacts of development upon trees would be minimal. Wherever possible, trees have been retained with buffer zones placed around veteran and large trees that are in close proximity to any development.

The impact on grassland would be minimised as the accommodation (e.g. pods) would not require excavation. In addition, it is considered that the replanting will successfully mitigate for the loss of habitat within the SINCS by leading to an overall increase in the area of native woodland

The Ecological Impact Assessment prepared for the development has found that development would not have an unacceptable impacts upon the SINCS, and as such the proposals are considered to comply with the policy.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

This section of the Design and Access Statement assesses the proposed development against the national planning policies identified in section 2 of the Design and Access Statement (DAS).

PLANNING POLICY WALES (10TH EDITION)

Aforementioned, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) has a presumption in favour of placemaking as well as sustainable development to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are balanced and integrated in decision making, thus ensuring the well-being of future and current generations.

It is considered that the proposals would contribute to the aims set out in Planning Policy Wales as the proposed development is set to contribute significantly to the local economy by providing much needed local jobs. Furthermore, the development proposals would result in an increase in visitor numbers, which benefit other businesses in the County Borough and beyond. The environmental impacts of the proposals are considered to be successfully mitigated, and therefore the proposals would not have any unacceptable impacts upon the natural environment. Overall, it is considered that the proposals comply with the requirements of PPW.

THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (WALES)

The proposals would contribute to the majority of the goals outlined in the above act, particularly the goal of creating a prosperous Wales as the proposals would benefit the local economy through an increase in visitors to the area and the provision of new jobs. The proposals therefore accord with the Act.

TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE 12 (DESIGN)

The proposed development has been designed around the core principles outlined in the document to ensure a good standard of design is achieved. Section 3 of the DAS explains the approach that has been taken to addressing access, character, community safety, environmental sustainability and movement.

Furthermore, an assessment of Policy BW7 of the LDP demonstrates that the proposed design would be high in quality. It would be of appropriate character; have clear and safe access strategy, be safe for users and would be sustainable. The development would therefore comply with the guidance of the TAN.

TAN 15 DEVELOPMENT AND FLOOD RISK

The application site is located in flood risk Zone A as defined by Natural Resources Wales's development advice mapping system. This means that the site is at little or no risk of flooding. Consequently, proposals satisfy the requirements of the TAN.

04

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

POLICY TB11:

Amongst other things, this policy requires development to consider mobility requirements of all sections of the community, particularly those with special needs and disabilities.

An area within the site has been designated for disabled parking provision. As the site is proposing a total of around 400 car parking spaces, an additional 20 spaces would be allocated for disabled parking (An additional 5% of the total provision).

Step free access will be provided from the disabled parking area to the main building, the cycle hire centre and the log cabins, chalets and motorhome spaces.



Event day at BikePark Wales.



Mountain bike trail

05

CONCLUSION

BikePark Wales | Design and Access Statement

The Design and Access Statement has comprehensively assessed the context of the site and its surroundings and has clearly explained the design principles and concepts which have been applied to the proposed development.

The delivery of the proposed development will allow BikePark Wales to grow, remain the premier mountain bike destination in the UK and continue to increase its important contribution to the local economy. Careful consideration has been given to the character of the area in the proposed development design and design measures have been undertaken to minimise the environmental impacts of the development to acceptable levels.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant national and local planning policy and it is therefore respectfully requested that the Local Planning Authority grant planning permission.