

Design and Access Statement

Holiday World International Travel, Rhydycar

January 2020



Project Summary

Description of Development:

Construction of new offices, future proofed with the potential for expansion with space and structure for a second storey.

Location:

Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village,
Rhydycar,
Merthyr Tydfil,
CF48 1UT

Date:

January 2020

Client:

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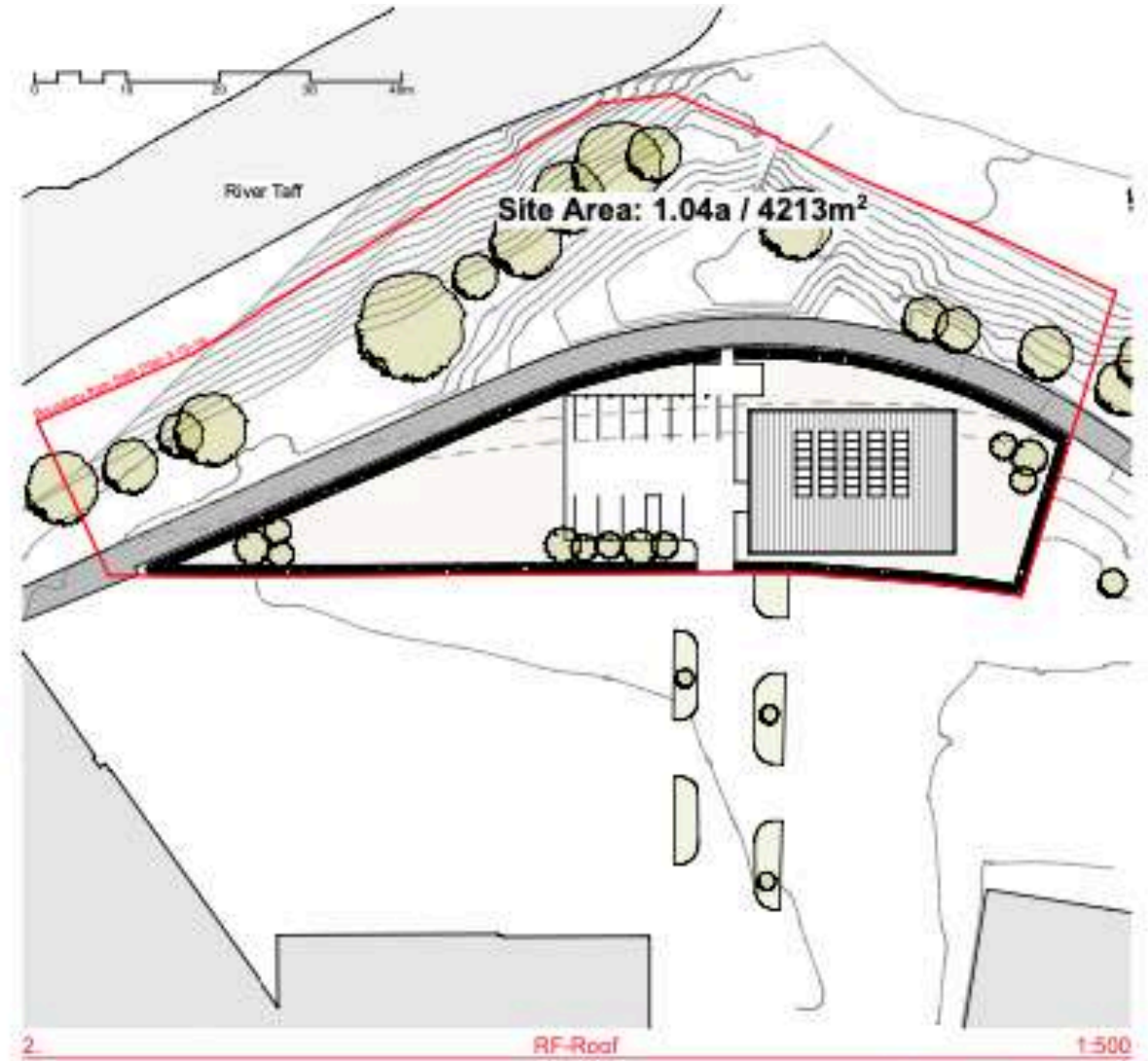
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Summary

1.1 The proposed building is for offices with an area of 294sqm on a site of 4213sqm. The site is located next to a car park in Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village, Rhydydar. The proposal is single storey, but is future proofed in structure and internal height for the addition of a second storey. The scheme provides 9 private parking spaces and one disabled (ten total) off the existing Leisure Village car park and requires full planning permission along with this DAS.



The Brief and Vision

2.1 Design Brief

The brief is for a single unit office of 14m x 21m. It must allow for natural light and natural ventilation. The project will not be BREEAM certified due to its scale, but it will follow guidelines regarding water collection and harvesting, Green Guide A Rated Materials, No AC (no refrigerants), 10% improved U-Values, and improved ecology and travel plan.

2.2 Client Needs

Construction of an office building in Merthyr Tydfil that relates well to its site. The organisation of the building must promote productivity and operational effectiveness as it is a business establishment. The quality of life for those within the building must be catered for through walk/cycle to work opportunities and building comfort strategies. The proposal will increase user value and business productivity.

2.3 User Experience

The design must allow for inclusive access and be safe to use. Meeting and social interaction opportunities should be incorporated into the design and masterplanning. Opportunities to interact and meet people will increase productivity and happiness. The offices should strive towards an equal opportunities work ethic which will improve the quality of life of the users. The proposal needs to be easy to navigate and ergonomic in design, providing key zones for specific activity. A design that is easy to navigate will save time and energy and allow an open office feel which invites the outside in. The design needs to be user specific and evolves with the users over time.

2.4 Placemaking

The building should be 'of-place' and consider the scale and density, surrounding uses and both the public and private interfaces of the existing built environment. The proposal must allow for a sense of community and civic pride. The use of similar materials and textures to the existing buildings will enable visual connections since the building scales vary across the site. The building should be of private access with defensible space protecting the boundary but also provide visuals of the surrounding site and Taff Trail. A reduction in crime and vandalism through natural surveillance will increase the social value of the building and encourage social inclusion. Creating a design that fits in its built environment allows the building to become 'of-place', forming strong relations with the surrounding builds. Natural surveillance through visuals created by the building orientation will enable the proposal to increase security towards the rear of the existing leisure complex, thus increasing social inclusion through reduced anti-social behaviour. Being able to see outside the building also implies that those outside will see within which could possibly lead to anti-social behaviour or damages to the proposal outside working hours. Therefore, varied times of use need to be incorporated.

2.5 Culture and Community

The project will provide a number of jobs which will contribute towards the local economy. Added community and use value can be achieved through the creation of new job opportunities. The infrastructure of the site is already sufficient but an influx in usage of public transport and main roads are expected. The site itself sits within Merthyr Leisure Village which provides restaurants and leisure opportunities. These amenities can improve the quality of life for those using the proposal. Public transport, cycle routes and pedestrian paths need to work along side the Green Transport Initiative as a means to enrich commutes. Public relations opportunities are possible with the existing offices and leisure facilities, along with the sites close proximity to Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre. An increase in local traffic, and therefore commute times, leads to increased pollution. The environmental impact of increased traffic may lower the environmental value of the proposal.

2.6 Energy Performance

The building is to be designed to maximise natural ventilation and natural light. Cross-ventilation could be maximised through the open plan layout and stack-ventilation introduced pending details on the second storey. Within the building, users will typically be using computers and electrical equipment, so efficient energy resources and signal is required. Local and national environmental regulations must be followed in order to sustain and introduce ecological systems.

2.7 Flexibility and Adaptability

Scope for a second storey must be considered during the design process to accommodate potential business growth and technological advancements. An open plan design layout allows for change of a use and creates a flexible design layout. The exterior cladding (Cedral) can be coloured for a change of aesthetics, and it can be removed/replaced in the future. It is weather, rot and pest resistant and can be recycled. The life expectancy of Cedral is 50 years. Lifecycle and end of life considerations must be taken into account. The majority of the building will be recyclable. Considerations of the buildings flexibility and adaptability will lower the need for future works and in turn decrease maintenance costs.

2.8 Site Considerations

Easement location is a potential risk - Gas and Water Main running adjacent the site, as well as the realignment of the Taff trail. CAT Scanning has been carried out to locate the Mains with reasonable success.

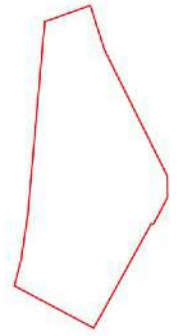
Site in Regional Context



Wales and Merthyr



Merthyr and Site



Site



Site and Context Diagram

3.1 General Location

The site is located within the settlement of Rhydycar, towards the south of Merthyr Tydfil town centre, centred on grid coordinates; 51°44'20"N 3°22'33"W with an area of 4213sqm (1.04a).

The site is located to the east of the A4102 and just north of the A470. The site's proximity to the A470, implies a potentially noisy environment. To the front of the site the land is developed and occupied by commercial units housing Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre and other sporting facilities, Vue Cinema, restaurants and a Travel Lodge. The Welsh European Funding Office and Orbit offices are opposite. The railway line is to the east, running to Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre.

3.2 Site Features

The site is roughly a triangular parcel of land which meets the River Taff. The site has not yet been developed and sits on the edge of an area of hard standing parking for Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre. The Taff Trail runs through the site, behind the existing Leisure Centre and Cinema Complex. The site is bound by trees to the east.

3.3 Access

The site currently benefits from an existing vehicular access point to the west which joins the A470 to the south. The access leads to existing, free public parking spaces to the rear of the existing builds that are predominantly used as secondary (overflow) parking when the front car parks are full. Pedestrian access to the site can be gained either via the vehicular entrance or the Taff Trail. There are a number of bus stops closely located including one less than a two minute walk from the site, providing travel to Merthyr Town Centre and proximity to Merthyr bus station. The site is located close to Merthyr Tydfil train station and benefits from good access to cycle routes through the Taff Trail. A linear belt of trees protects the site from the River Taff and railway to the east.

3.4 Surroundings

The immediate surrounding environment consists of car parking spaces and leisure complexes along with various sporting activities. The location can be identified as a retail/leisure centre. The site is in a prime location with a range of shops, services and facilities closely located in Merthyr Town.

3.5 Planning History

P/15/0056 | Residential Development | Land To The Rear (East) Of Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village Merthyr Tydfil. Consented on Thursday 30 Apr 2015.



Site Images

Site Entrance, Scale comparison



Welsh European Funding Office, Roof shape



Orbit Office, Timber cladding



Immediate site surroundings



Opportunities and Constraints

The concept for the development of the site has derived from the following:

1. A full site analysis including a full desktop study of the site and surroundings.
2. A site visit and visual assessment analysing the built form and demographics of the area.
3. Client discussions outlining the key features of the brief and vision.

Opportunities

3.6 Settlement Boundary

The site is located within the settlement boundary of Rhydyar.

3.7 Access

An existing roundabout leads visitors to Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre and Cinema Complex. The existing road off the roundabout divides the existing car parks and provides a natural threshold for the site. The single entrance allows for monitored access to the offices, increasing privacy and safety.

3.8 Sustainable Location

The site lies within close proximity to a number of facilities and services in Rhydyar, Merthyr Tydfil and Merthyr town centre. There are also public transport nodes, including a bus stop which is a two minute walk from the site and a Merthyr Tydfil train station which is a 10 minute walk from the site.

3.9 Context

The site backs onto large, highly glazed buildings providing opportunity for a modern approach to building design. The existing car parks act as suitable noise buffers between the leisure complex and site.

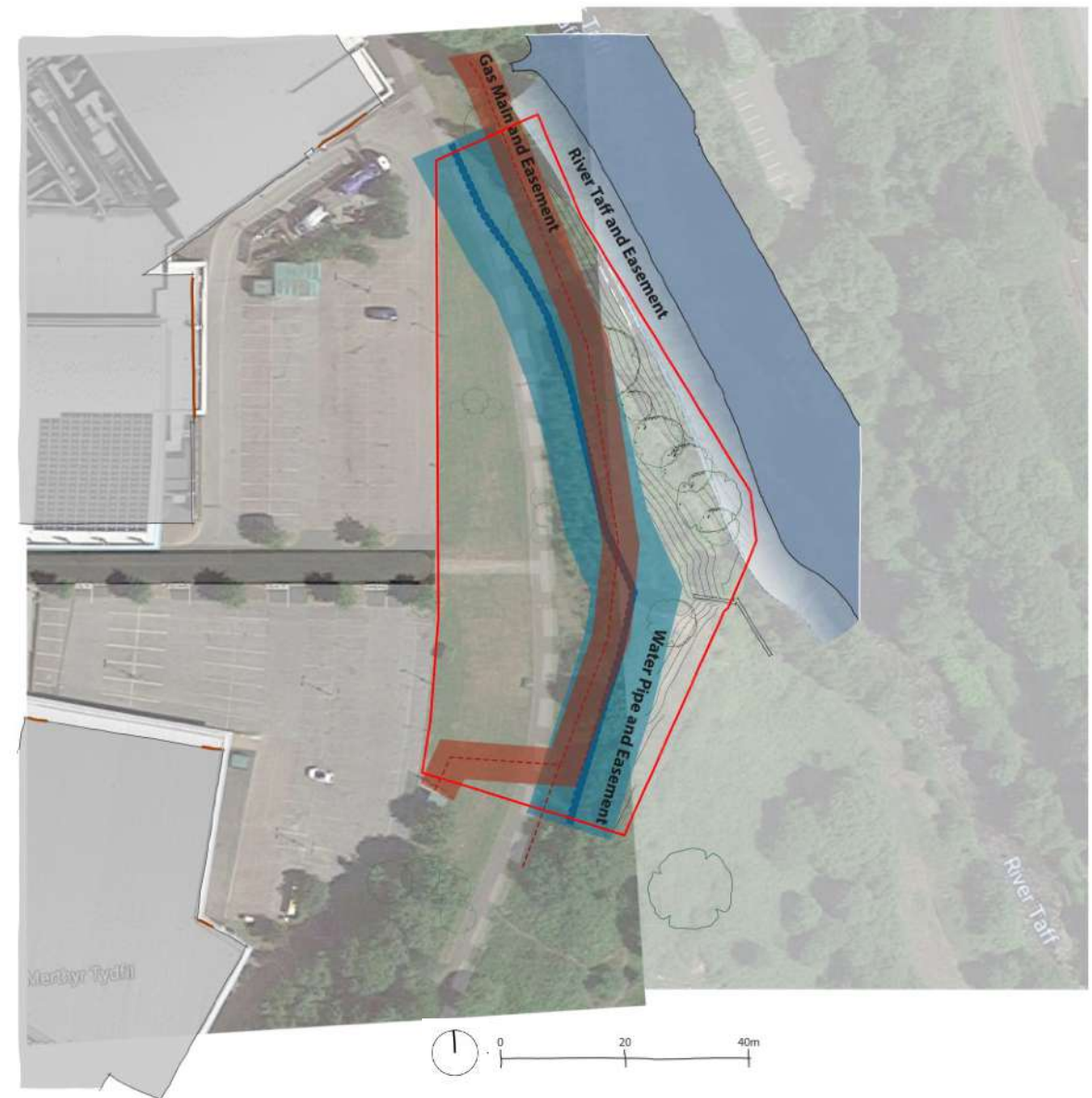
Constraints

3.10 Neighbouring Properties

The site is located within close proximity to a leisure centre and leisure complex, both in frequent daily use by the public. The proposed offices will need their own privacy as well as a suitable sound buffer. A distinction between public and private access needs to be ensured.

3.11 Existing Trees

There are a number of trees within the site boundary. However, due to the easement constraints, they remain untouched.



3.12 Landscaping

Disruption of the Taff Trail route will cause changes to the landscaping east of site.

3.13 Easements

Existing easements (water, gas and Taff Trail) decrease the buildable site area. This decrease influences the size and shape of the proposed offices. The client, however, does not want a large, overly complex scheme.

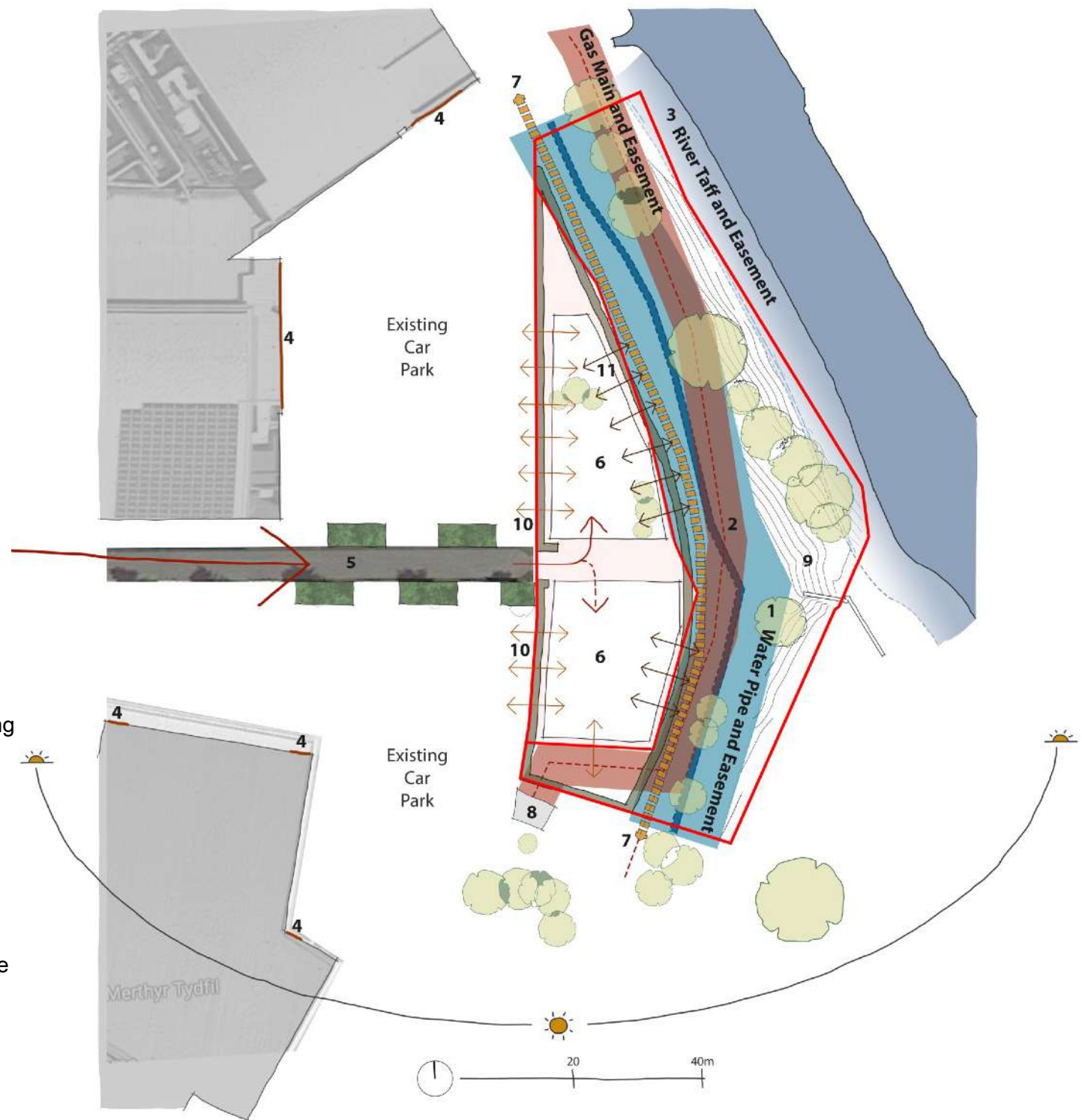
3.14 Noise

The site is within close proximity to the A470 and sits behind a public leisure centre. The building must respond to and respect these sound influences.

Interpretation of Constraints

4.1 Interpretation

1. Water Easement.
 - Divides the site into two parts, each at different levels.
2. Gas Main Easement.
 - Divides the site in two and wraps around the southern corner of the site.
3. River Taff Easement (site not classed as a flood risk zone).
 - Uneasy riverbank land, not suitable for building.
4. Existing building rear windows and private access points.
 - Larger rear entrances for Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre.
 - Secluded where anti-social behaviour takes place.
5. Existing road to be used as the site entrance.
 - Pathway between existing buildings, site can be seen from the road and roundabout.
6. Possible building locations based on easements and ground level.
 - Easements decrease the size of the buildable land and the road creates a threshold space.
7. Proposed new Taff Trail route, rear (east) of the proposed building location, rear (east) of all existing.
 - Movement of the Taff Trail allows the proposed office inclusion with the existing buildings, the Taff Trail wraps around all of the building in Rhydycar.
 - The Taff Trail would not follow the river when cutting in front of the proposed offices and office access would be restricted.
8. Gas Governor.
9. Contours depicting uneven ground
 - Building locations (6) proposed on even ground surface, avoid more expensive groundworks to flatten the land and riverbank.
10. Views in and out of the site from the car park.
 - Important elevations of the building that will be seen from the road and roundabout entrance.
11. Views in and out of the site from green spaces (river bank and trail).

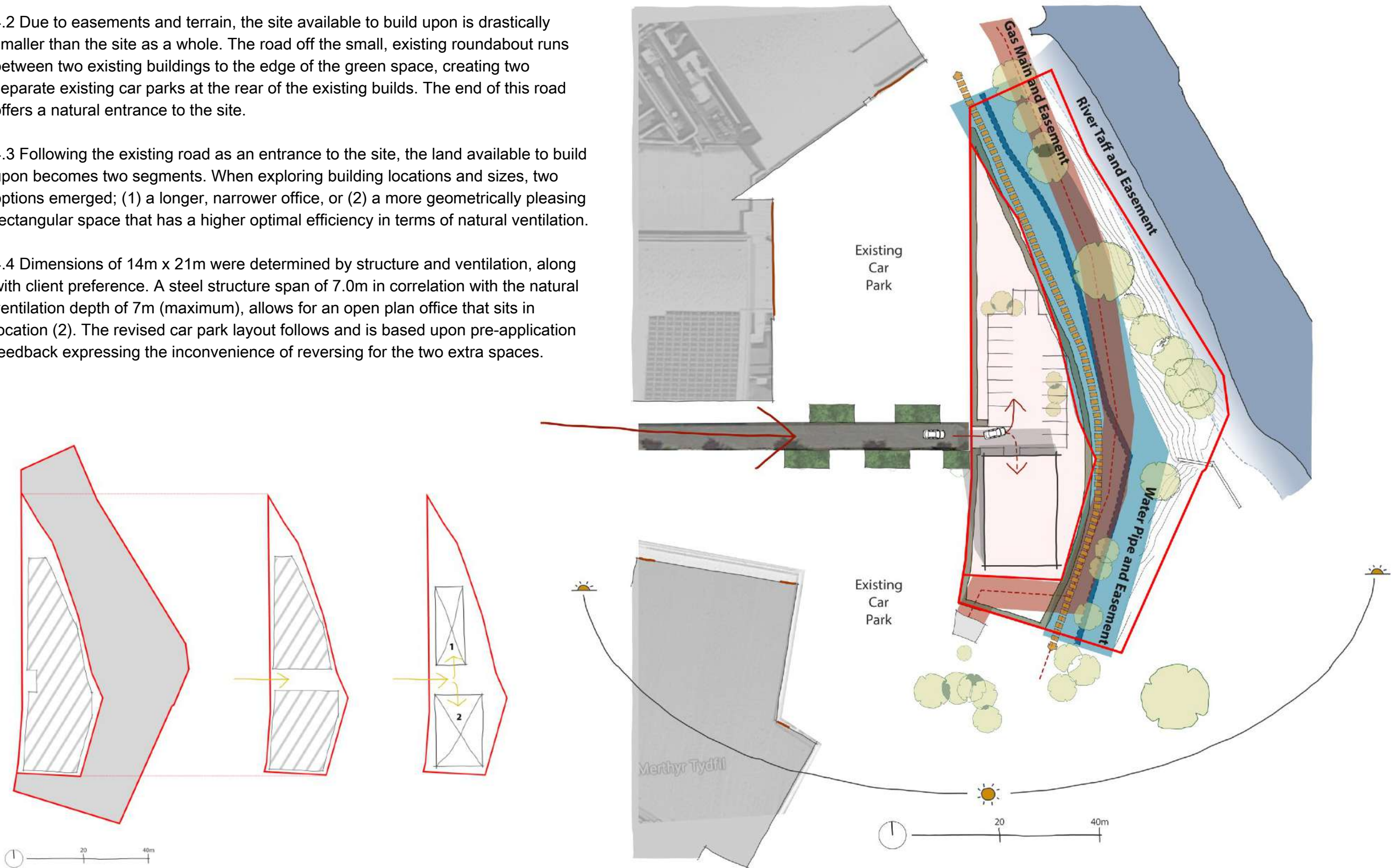


Interpretation and Design Development

4.2 Due to easements and terrain, the site available to build upon is drastically smaller than the site as a whole. The road off the small, existing roundabout runs between two existing buildings to the edge of the green space, creating two separate existing car parks at the rear of the existing builds. The end of this road offers a natural entrance to the site.

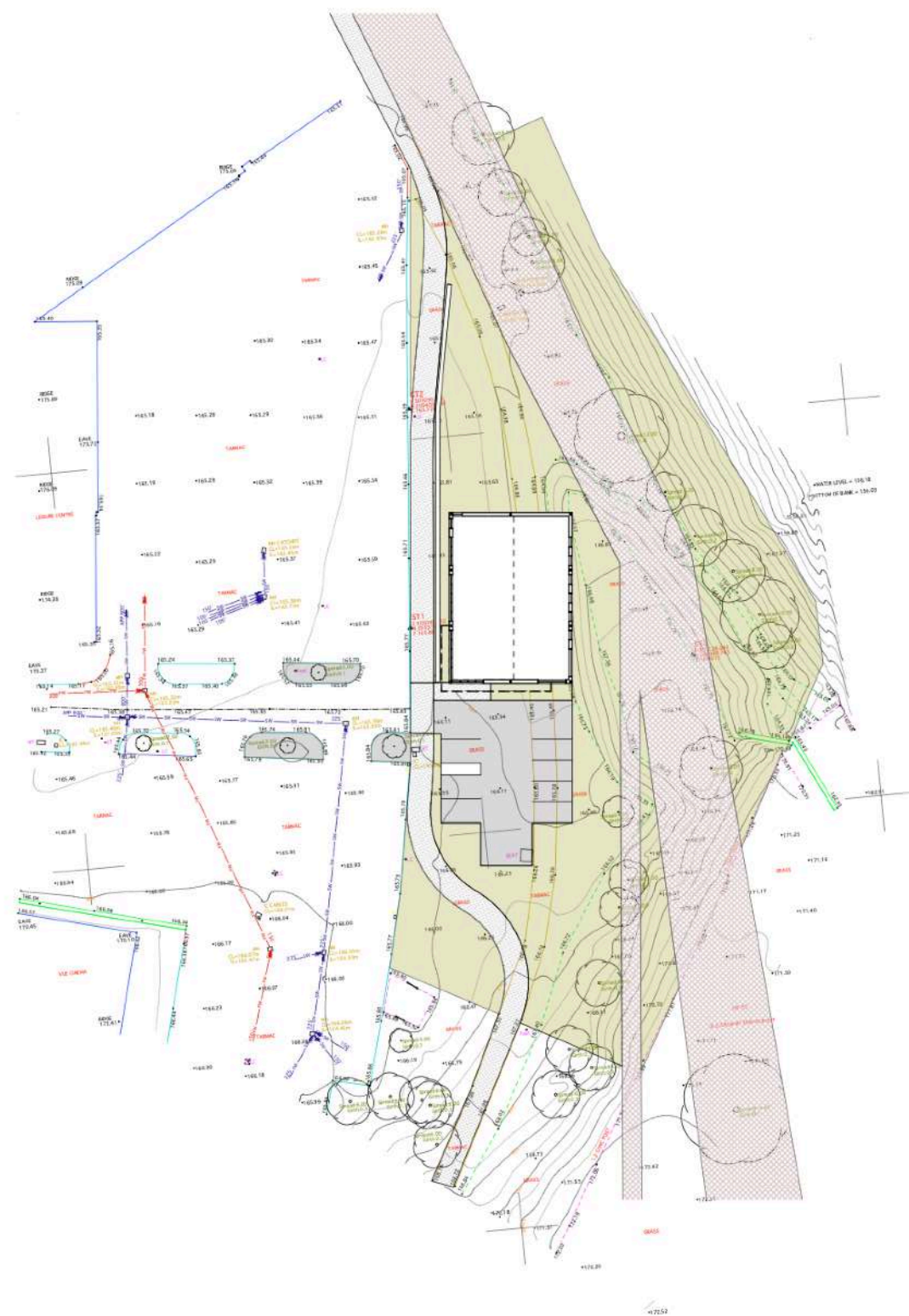
4.3 Following the existing road as an entrance to the site, the land available to build upon becomes two segments. When exploring building locations and sizes, two options emerged; (1) a longer, narrower office, or (2) a more geometrically pleasing rectangular space that has a higher optimal efficiency in terms of natural ventilation.

4.4 Dimensions of 14m x 21m were determined by structure and ventilation, along with client preference. A steel structure span of 7.0m in correlation with the natural ventilation depth of 7m (maximum), allows for an open plan office that sits in location (2). The revised car park layout follows and is based upon pre-application feedback expressing the inconvenience of reversing for the two extra spaces.



Interpretation of Constraints

Initial Proposal Layout 190606

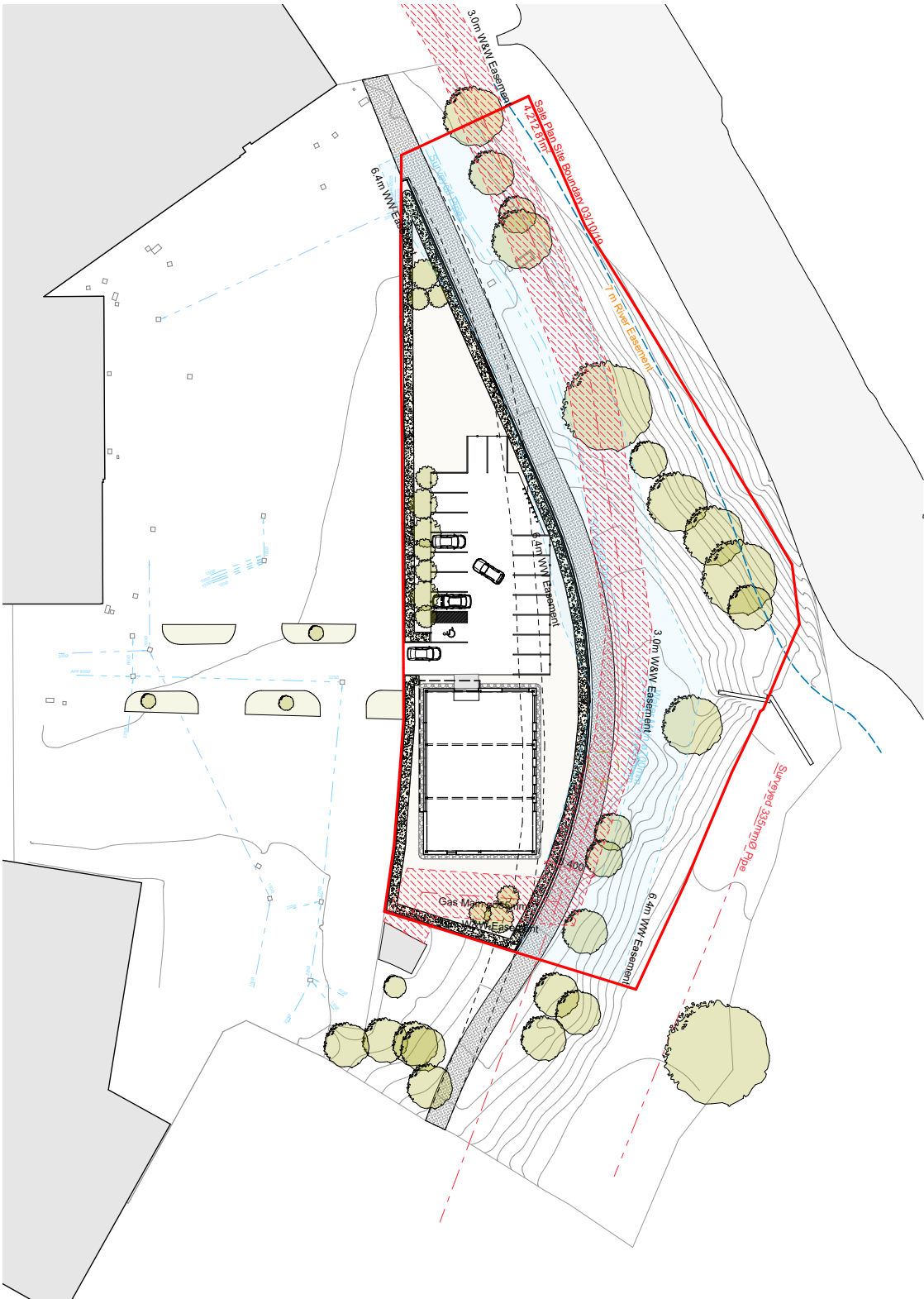


Revised Layout 191120

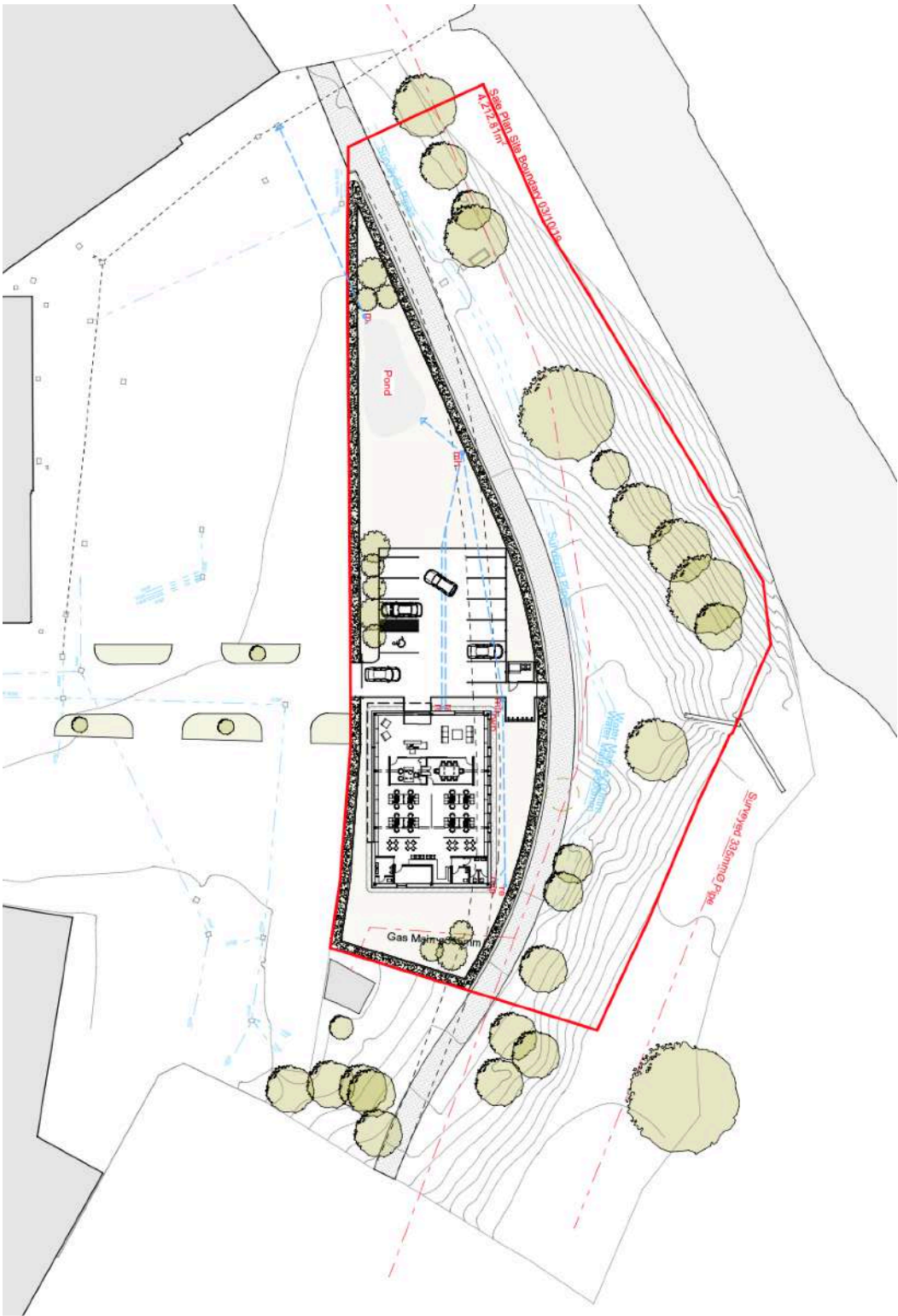


Interpretation of Constraints

Further Revised Layout 191213



Revised/Finalised Proposal Layout 191217



Design Response

5.1 Key Influences of the Design

Welsh Water pipe location
Wales & West Utilities pipe location
Client Preferences
Rights of Way Division

5.2 Pre-Application Meeting Feedback

Feedback highlights the need for a sustainable design response that lowers the use of private cars in the local area. The scheme should fit in with the surrounding buildings, despite each appearing to have their own unique finish, style, shape and scale. Glazing wrapping around the northern facade would provide an interesting feature to the design and provide better natural surveillance. The Taff Trail should be suitably overlooked and an adequate number of parking spaces. A Highway statement and an Ecological Method statement could be prepared along with the planning submission documents.

5.3 Considerations made throughout the design process

The building location was the first design development point. The building began north of its current position. Following a meeting with Welsh Water, the location was edited as shown through interpretations of the constraints digram. The water easement pushed the site towards the car parks, rather than the green space.

5.4 Built Environment

The surrounding, existing buildings are low level builds. They are long and flat in nature. The client wishes for single storey offices with the potential of a second storey. This specification point and design layout suits the existing built environment and matches the appearance of 'vast' open space created by low the builds and will be similar in scale to the restaurants on site. The building will be fully visible from the roundabout, which allows for increased natural surveillance and the Taff Trail wrapping around the building allows for activity surrounding the building at all times.

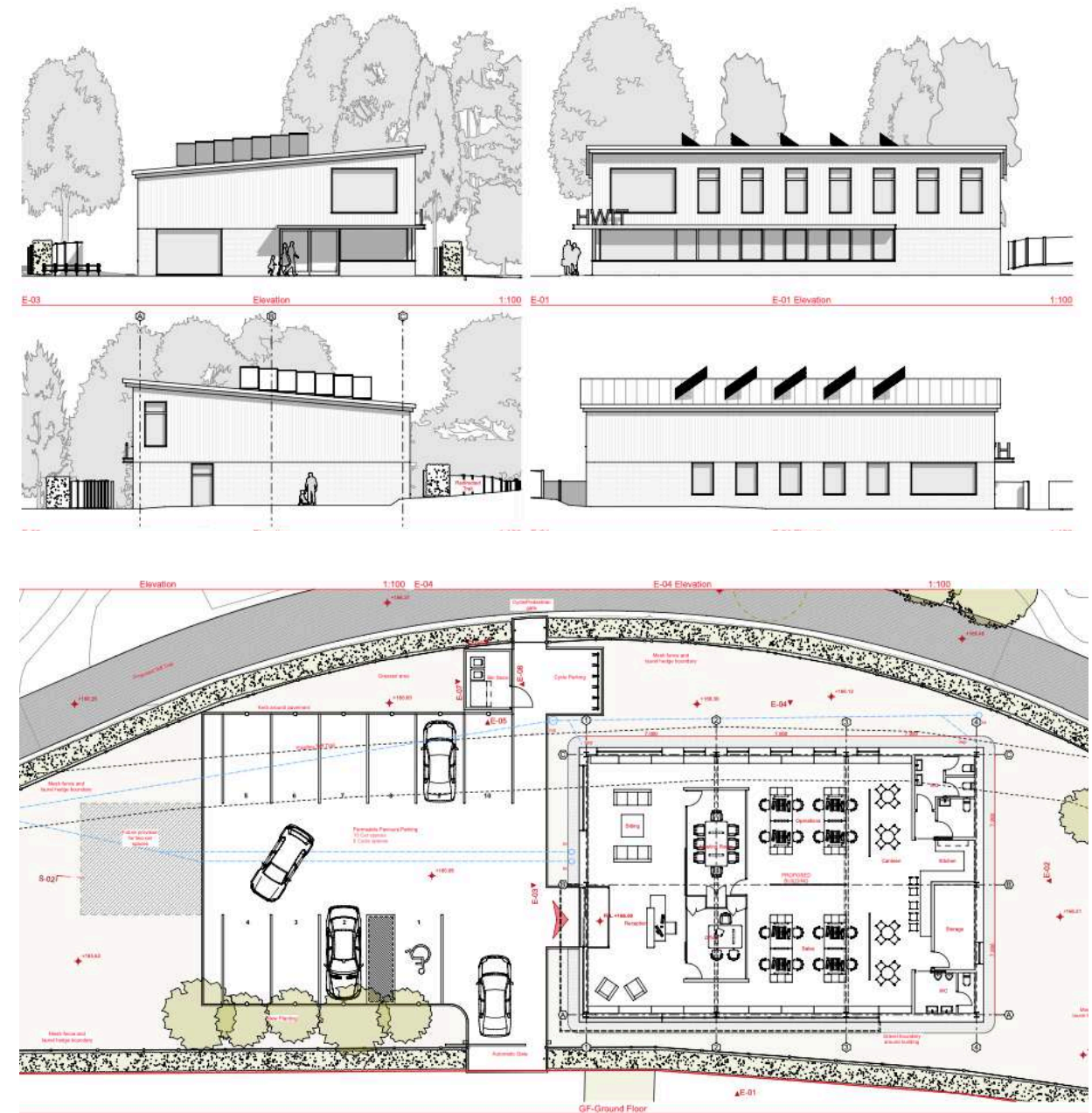
Scale in the Built Environment



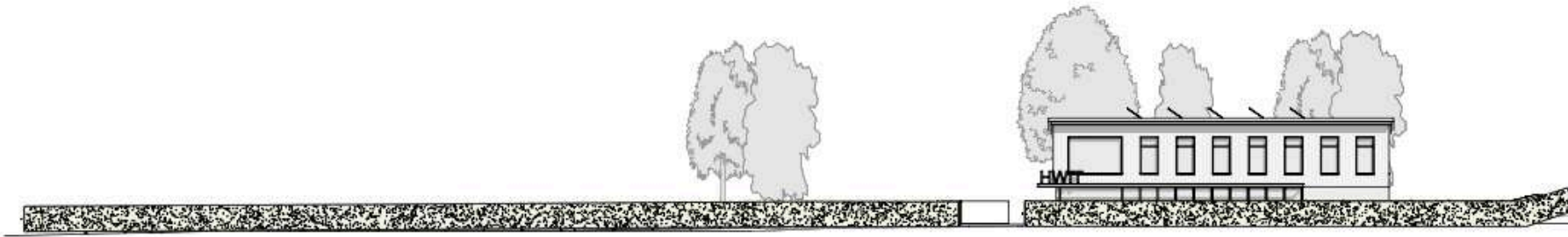
Site Layout

5.5 Key Design Decisions

Proposed open plan office space for 16 permanent desk spaces, 2 meeting rooms, an open reception, kitchen and male and female toilets. A hedge lines the site, creating a natural boundary and enhancing a welcoming yet private atmosphere. The orientation of the proposed offices allows for east-west sunlight and northern daylight. By strategically closing off the southern facade to the strongest sunlight, the design avoids massive solar gain and glare which could overheat the building. The glazing wraps around the westerly and northern facade at ground level allowing large span vistas and natural surveillance over the existing car park and proposed car park. Key windows are also located on the first floor, creating further surveillance and a cathedral-like light internally. On the north facade, a large window increases surveillance over the Taff trail and creates a nice architectural moment to sit and watch over the trail. The ten parking spaces proposed are separated from the Taff Trail and existing car parks via a green buffer wrapped around the site as a whole.



Site Layout



ST-01

Elevation

1-200



0.

ST-Landscape

1:200

The Proposal



Character

6.1 Placemaking

The proposed site boundary hedge line follows this topography of the land creating a strong sense of place. The hedge/fence provides privacy for the site and decreases crime and vandalism of the proposed building. The hedge also acts as a buffer to the existing leisure centre. The vehicular entrance off the roundabout invites the public to the site and enhances connections to the existing buildings, which in turn increases social value. The contribution that the proposal will make to the quality of life of those interacting with the building is both mental and physical. The Taff Trail encourages cycle to work schemes and the protected outdoor green space and pond allow mental stimulation for those on site. The open plan nature of the proposal increases safety due to informal surveillance and the natural ventilation and daylight improve productivity in the workplace.

6.2 Amount and Density

The proposed office block is a single unit with an outdoor hard surface car park. The unit is single storey with scope for a second storey, as per the clients request. The development is sustainable and suitable for the site both short and long term. Construction access to the site is readily available via the road entrance. The building does not interfere with the existing water pipes and gas mains. The proposed building size relates well to its built environment.

6.3 Streets

The proposed development reinforces the quality of the existing road and provides a point of interest coming off the roundabout. The Taff Trail continues to follow the perimeter of the site, enhancing social engagement around the development.

6.4 Spaces and Public Realm

The site boundary and road allows for clearly defined public spaces. The site itself is not accessible to the public and the boundary deters unwanted crime and vandalism. The open reception desk at the entrance to the building invites the public into the space and the open plan office creates a welcoming hive of activity. Private spaces are defined by the site boundary, for example the car park within the site is to be used by those in the offices. This is reinforced by a gated entrance to the site. The public/private realm has been designed to promote safe connectivity and provide a strong landscape framework. The office building is orientated to overlook the car park and the Taff Trail is located on higher ground overlooking the site. The car parking spaces and pond allow a balance between hard and soft landscape which sits outside the building entrance. The planting leading to the site sets up the landscape design and creates a formal yet natural build up to the site.

6.5 Mix of Uses and Tenure

The building will be occupied by a travel agency. It is a single use build, but its open plan design allows for flexibility of uses in the future. The proposed uses are appropriate for the context as a leisure park is a prime location for a travel agents. The design supports the current infrastructure of Rhydycar through the introduction of further parking spaces, making the site self sufficient. The increased footfall and traffic on site improves local business and is positive for existing tenures. The proposed use contributes to the character and image of the local area. The offices increase job opportunities and welcome new people to the local area.

6.6 Scale and Layout

The height of the proposed building responds well to the site and fits in with its surrounding buildings (as shown in the Design Response section of this DAS). The location of the site and entrance respond well to the actions of the existing buildings that are organised in a nucleated fashion, focussing on the central roads and roundabouts. The entrance to the building itself points north in order to increase surveillance of the car park and introduce people to the secluded areas at the rear of the existing buildings. The sloped roof opens the facade to the existing buildings and orientates the proposed towards the focal roundabout.

6.7 Green Spaces

Green space is incorporated into the development and provides a useful amenity space that is safe and attractive. The space houses a pond which is predominantly used as SUDs, enabling a steady water flow across the site. The pond also provides an attractive assembly point on site where visitors can eat their lunch. The size of the pond is adequate for its use. The pond will collect surface water and lead it to a manhole off the site which subsequently disperses the water into the river. The surrounding green space along the River Taff is enhanced by the new trail route.

Character

6.8 Detail Design

The building is to be clad in horizontal cedral panels that last a long time, are maintenance free and non-flammable.

6.9 Material Considerations

The local context, vision, performance requirements and budget constraints influenced the materials of the proposal. Glazing features heavily across the local site, providing natural surveillance emphasised at the entrances to each building. The proposal is glazed at ground level in order to increase natural surveillance and allow for natural ventilation throughout the open plan interior. Vertical cedral cladding allows the building to stand tall between the two larger existing buildings and creates a soft connection to the green space towards the rear of the site and riverbank. Existing offices on site are timber clad so the proposed cedral cladding will sit well within the built environment.

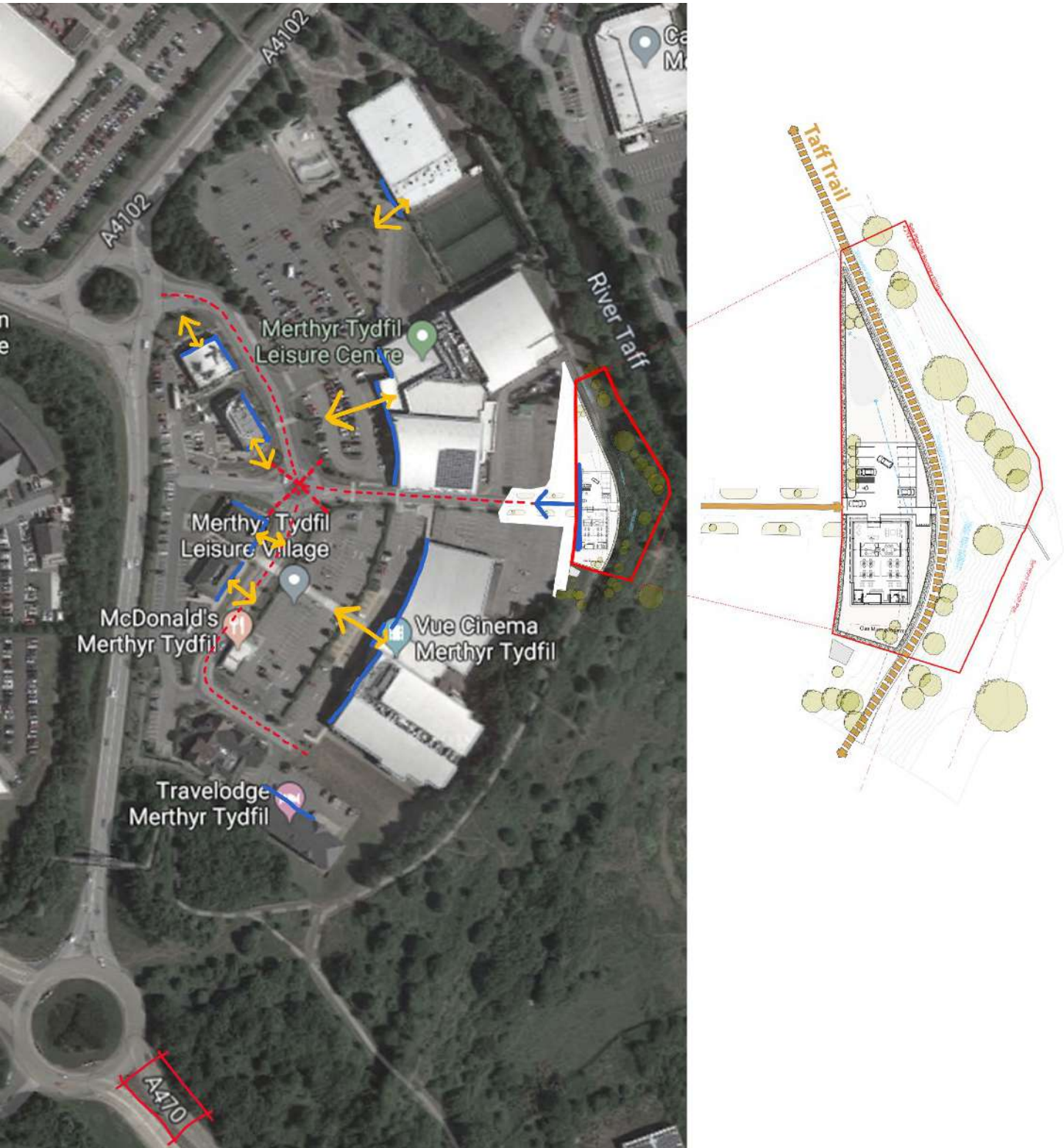
Proposed, Cedral cladding



Orbit Office, Timber cladding



Character Diagrams



Access

6.10 Inclusive Access

The building is at ground level on even ground allowing for access for all. Disabled parking is close to both the site and building entrance and there are not any changes in the ground floor level. All users have equal and convenient access, both into the site from its boundary via the tarmac road, and to the offices and green spaces within the site. Circulation within the site is straight forward; upon entering the site, parking is to the left and the building entrance to the right. Access to the Taff Trail provides an entrance for cyclists along with cycle racks to park bikes safely next to the offices. All local amenities can be accessed via tarmac roads and pavements. Access to Merthyr Town Centre is walkable and the path runs along the bus route. Further access to Cardiff City Centre is available via the train line that begins in Merthyr Tydfil town.

6.11 Circulation

Circulation around the site is demonstrated on the following diagram. The office building is private and the internal circulation is defined by two private meeting rooms within the open plan space. Zones have been created within the building through the use of furniture, for example a welcome reception area is defined at the entrance and the toilets are more private towards the rear of the building. A step-free route runs through the site from the entrance road, to car par, to building, to Taff Trail which also does not contain steps.

6.12 Parking Design and Layout

The layout of the car park provides 9 parking spaces along with 1 disabled parking space immediately at the entrance to the site within close proximity to the office doors. Parking standards sets out the parking requirements for office developments, which in this case equates to a total of 9 spaces

6.13 Maintenance of Developed Entrances

Maintenance falls to the client. All glazing is self-cleaning enabling an easily maintained facade and the building cladding is maintenance free.

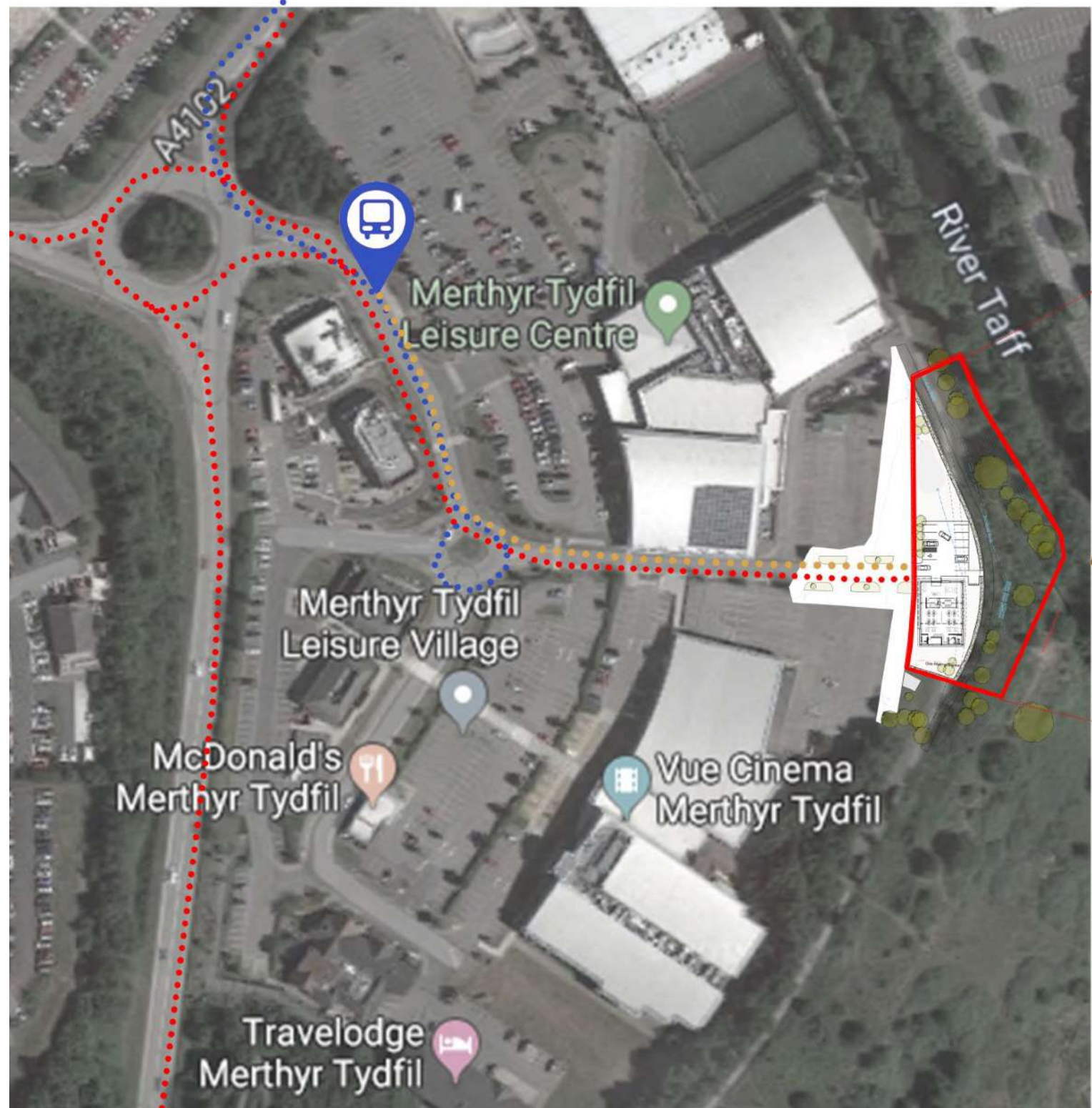
6.14 Access Groups/Consultants

The client specified access for those with disabilities. The flat topography of the site enables this. Accessible bike storage and scooter parking is required by the client for those working within the offices. The predominant way finding system is the floor texture and change in surface; parking and access versus boundaries are made clear by paving and grass/foliage. The route through the site is the same level with no steps,

allowing equal, flexible access for all. Both the building and site circulation are open, encouraging a loop of circulation throughout.



Access



Movement

6.15 Means of Travel

The proposal promotes a sustainable, healthy means of travel through connections to the Taff Trail and the provision of bicycle parking and access. The choice of site enables good connectivity to existing leisure facilities and amenities. The site is directly connected to the Taff Trail which actively promotes walking and cycling. The site's proximity to bus and train stations support the use of public transport as a means of travel.

6.16 Safety

Safety of movement has been proposed through formalised roads and path systems. Physical connections between the Taff Trail and exiting car parks has been designed so that the trail does not cross over onto the vehicular-predominate areas. The proposed parking spaces and cycle racks have been well integrate onto the site and are overlooked by the building, reinforcing informal surveillance and safety. The streets have been designed to be comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists and inclusive for all users through the use of even ground surfaces. The cycle and pedestrian routes run past bus stops for increased connectivity and the opportunity for further bus routes is available, but not necessary.

6.17 Road Hierarchy

The A470 is the main road access to the site. It is located to the south of the site and feeds onto the A4102. Off the A4102, a roundabout acts as a node attracting various leisure buildings and car parks. The site is located at the end of a road coming off said roundabout which highlights its importance within the local area. The road width makes it a prominent feature within the immediate local context and allows distinction between vehicular access routes and pedestrian (narrower Taff Trail). Desire lines show pedestrians walking across the car parks in order to reach shops. The central road provides access to the shops for pedestrians when the car park is fully active. The proposed Taff Trail hugs the site boundary following the minimal distance around the site (desired by pedestrians and cyclists). TAN 18 section 5.14 suggests consideration to be taken for mixed-use developments as they will increase traffic and congestion. Section 6.2 of TAN 18 has been considered when evaluating the importance of pedestrianised routes to and from the site.

6.18 Parking

Parking requirements and parking arrangements have been considered to avoid cars dominating the development. The access to the site is existing and will be well-overlooked by the proposed development. It is predominantly used by vehicles but intermittent green zones allow for a break in a predominantly vehicular environment.

Parking corresponds to WGC 016/2014: The Use of Planning Conditions for Development Management 5.98. From the Manual for Street 1 and the Policy Planning Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13) (Wales: TAN 18), the need for convenient, safe and secure cycle parking in new developments has been addressed and bicycle parking is located within the site boundary.

<https://www.visitmerthyr.co.uk/things-to-do/attractions/merthyr-leisure-village/>



Environmental Sustainability

6.19 Environmental Ideas

TAN 12 states that the objectives that developers need to respond to in respect of Environmental Sustainability include the achievement of efficient use and protection of natural resources, enhancing biodiversity and designing for change. The site is situated in a sustainable location and is readily accessible to a variety of services and facilities in Merthyr Tydfil, along with cycle routes that lower the need for use of private cars. A Green Travel Plan has been followed which links to public transport routes and improved cycling facilities. The development of the site will run in accordance with the current Building Regulation standards.

6.2 Environmental Objectives

The environmental objectives of the proposed scheme aim to create a sustainable development within a Leisure Park. A 'fabric-first' approach will maximise the performance of the building envelope before the introduction of MVHR or electrical systems. The entrance to the building is north facing with daylight throughout the year and no direct sunlight. Therefore sitting in shade along with the vehicles in the car park. The rear of the building sits within direct sunlight. A closed south facade does not allow direct sunlight to cause glare on the computer screens within the office building.

6.21 Landscape/Habitat

The opportunities to improve the existing landscape and biodiversity quality on the site are mainly featured around the Taff Trail and the river. Minimal disruption to the existing landscape will decrease the negative impact on the site's biodiversity. The movement of the Taff Trail allows for further site landscaping along with the proposed pond and trees on site, which will improve ecology through an increase in indigenous species. Landscape management ensures the landscape can fulfil needs and aspirations in an effective and sustainable way for present users and future communities. The proposal will bring increased traffic to the site and Taff Trail. The use of hard and soft materials distinguishes between formal public access points and informal zones designed to be left untouched. For example, The car park is paved implying frequent use, and the surrounding grass areas determine pathways and steer pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The hardwearing nature of the building sitting amongst greenery plays homage to Merthyr Tydfil's highly industrial heritage.

6.22 Energy and Resource Efficiency

The proposal is designed to maximise natural light through large panels of glazing along the north, east and west of the building. The natural light captured is not direct

sunlight from the south, thus avoiding overheating of the building and glare, but still enabling a minimum solar gain to heat the proposal. These large windows allow the building to be naturally ventilated through cross-ventilation from west to east, following the predominant wind flow direction in Merthyr Tydfil. This leads to limiting mechanical ventilation. There is no AC (no refrigerants) within the proposal and there is a 'medium' level of renewables in the form of approximately 20m² of solar panels. The cladding is cedar which is environmentally friendly, easy to install, low maintenance and adds value. A Green Guide to A Rated Materials has been taken into account. An improvement of 10% will be made to the U-Values and insulants as follows: ODP - zero; GWP<5. The proposal contains Lighting Control Systems and a Building Management System to control the internal environment.

6.23 Water and Waste Management

The water throughout the scheme is harvested and conserved so as to avoid overloading the existing water systems. A proposed pond at the northern end of the site collects and holds surface water before passing it through existing drainage systems to the River Taff. Foul waste is collected in separate foul waste manholes on site which will be connected to an existing manhole. The general waste bin plan is to be maintained by the client. Waste bin storage is located opposite the bike stores and bins will be dragged from the store to the entrance road to the site. The bins pass the front of the offices and will sit outside the main entrance gate for collection. They will require manual movement back and forth to the stores. The waste bin plan follows.



Community Safety

6.24 Safety for the Community

TAN 12 suggests that community safety can be achieved through design solutions that aid in crime prevention. These include providing natural surveillance, improving safety by reducing conflicts in uses, and promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility. Secure by Design standards have been taken into account in the development proposal, which ensure a positive relationship between private and public space.

6.25 Promoting Security through Natural Surveillance

Natural surveillance of the existing car parks, road entrance, and site have been achieved through the orientation of the proposal. The entrance to the proposal faces north towards the new car park and the main building facade (glazed and open) overlooks the existing car parks and entrance road. On site, the existing car parks are not currently monitored and are located at the back of the existing buildings in a 'dark spot'. The proposal opens up this space and introduces natural surveillance to the rear of the existing buildings, decreasing anti-social behaviour in these areas while remaining private through the use of hedge line and fences. An electronic gate system controlled by the offices enables control and surveillance over who enters the site and at what times. This buffer zone of gates and hedgerows deters crime due to a lack of anonymity for the wrongdoers. A single vehicular entrance allows for a single vehicular escape route along with a singular pedestrian route. This deters criminals through a lack of means of escape and again through reduced anonymity as specified in SBD (Secured by Design) principles.

6.26 Secured by Design Principles

Out of scale facilities such as the the leisure park buildings and nearby supermarket can influence crime and anti-social behaviour as they are intended for the larger community rather than local. Natural surveillance becomes an increased priority in order to avoid such incidents on site. Existing honeypots on site include fast-food restaurants, McDonald's for example, where people congregate and remain longer in an area than they would otherwise do. Within these public spaces, everyone has a legitimate reason to be there. Proposing the site as private and with boundaries and controlled entrances increases safety.

6.27 Lighting

Exterior lighting and CCTV cameras at the entrance to the offices will further deter bad behaviour. Existing lighting in the form of street lamps end in line with the entrance to the existing leisure complexes. Lighting along the main entrance road to the site

should be introduced along with the proposed design in order to increase general site safety.

6.28 Site Activity

The site will be actively used between working hours of 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. This constant activity during the week will increase site safety. Mixed use of existing buildings promotes site activity at different times of the day. On the weekends, the wider site will be used by those using the leisure complex facilities; all age groups, but mainly families and youths. Restaurants, the hotel and cinemas promote site traffic during the evenings and night, while the swimming pool and bowling complex promote daytime activities. These surrounding activities will help to make the site feel safer. Constant activity surrounds the site via the main entrance road, leisure complex and Taff trail. As a means to monitor the activity on and around the site, the introduction of a gate on the road coming off the roundabout (possibly between the two existing large scale builds) would further deter night time car racing activities.

6.29 Planting

Planting along the entrance road suggests a well-kept, frequently used environment. The hedges used to create the site boundary act as a buffer between public and private spaces on and around the site. The vegetation surrounding the site creates a sense of enclosure, deterring vandals and anti-social behaviour.

Response to Planning Policy

Response to National and Local Policy

6.3 Principle of development

The site overlaps an area allocated for housing (H31) and an area designated for new leisure development (L1). Outline planning permission has previously been granted for residential development (Ref P/15/0056) which extended over the same site area of the current proposal. Rhydycar Leisure Park (Ref P/07/0240) completed. So, little weight would be attributed to Policy AS16 of the LDP. Proposal will encroach on to northern part of a housing estate (H31). It is noted that there are a number of office blocks within the facility of the site.

6.31 Design Approach

The design considerations of the proposal should have particular regard to Policy BW7 of the LDP, which highlights the need to provide good quality sustainable design that integrates into the local context. The proposal is 'of-place' within the site and follows the guidelines of sustainable design. The scheme offers bicycle standing bays since the site is located next to a national cycle route. The buildings within the local facility vary in scale and materiality. The proposed offices will be similar to the local restaurants in scale and the materials will be soft in order to fit within the landscape and integrate well with the 'green' environment along the Taff Trail. The introduction of trees and hedgerows further enhances the environment along the Taff Trail.

6.32 Highway Implications

When assessing the potential highway impacts, regard should be given to Policy BW12 of the LDP, which encourages sustainable forms of transport and avoids causing or exacerbating highway safety problems. Connections to the Taff Trail encourage cyclist and pedestrians. It is necessary to divert the Taff Trail to accommodate for the size of offices. Discussions with the Rights of Way Division must take place. The site is within close proximity to bus and train stations to decrease the need for private vehicles (cars). The Engineering and Highway Officer has noted that the additional traffic movements onto the adopted roads (A4102) are not deemed detrimental to highway safety, so additional infrastructure is not required. The flow of traffic will be impacted and so the productions of a highway statement along with the planning application has been recommended. Policy TB11 of the LDP considers the need to accommodate sufficient parking, along with the CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008. This sets out the parking requirements for office developments, which in this case equates to 1 space per 35m² (a total of 9 spaces). The scheme offers 9 spaces and 1 disabled space.

6.33 Underground Services

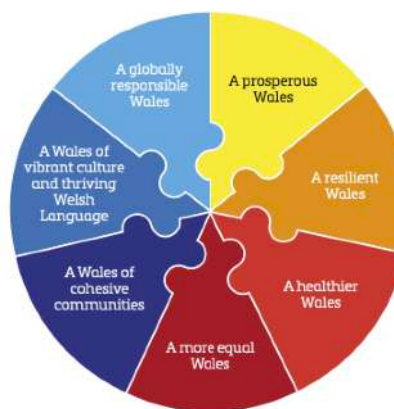
Welsh Water and Wales & West Utilities will be consulted as part of a planning application due to large water and gas mains pipes running through the site.

6.34 Ecological Impact

The proposal lies adjacent to the Avon Taf Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC 58), which follows the river and its embankments on either side. Within the site vicinity, there are records of protected species, including otters, bats, birds, invertebrates and hedgehogs. Therefore, the proposal must consider Policy BW5 of the LDP, which seeks to ensure the development maintains, enhances or does not cause harm to areas of nature conservation and other biodiversity interests. Lighting techniques should be considered as to avoid spilling over the adjacent scrub land.

6.35 Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act came into force in 2015 and seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals in order to make sure that everyone works towards the same vision. The 'five ways of working' set out in the Health and Well-being Act (involvement, collaboration, integration, prevention, and long term factors) have been taken into consideration. The project agrees with 'a prosperous Wales' in that it generates wealth and provides employment. The scheme enhances a biodiverse, natural environment with healthy, functioning ecosystems through the introduction of the SUDs pond and green, defensible space. The physical and mental health of users has been considered with the Taff Trail abiding by the 'healthier Wales' goal and equal access for all creates 'a more equal Wales'. The building is well-connected to an existing leisure community on site creating a cohesive community. Users are encouraged to take part in local sports by the abundance of existing facilities and recreation is a large part of the scheme as the offices specialise in holiday organisation.



Pre-Application Document

Judith Jones BA (Hons), BTP, MRTPI
Prif Swyddog Cynllunio a Gwasanaethau Cymdogaeth
Chief Officer Planning & Neighbourhood Services

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We welcome calls in Welsh



f.a.o. Dennis Hellyar
Dennis Hellyar Architects

(Sent via email: dh@dennishellyar-architects.com)

Dyddiad/Date: 16th August 2019

Ein Cyf / Our ref: PA/19/0039
Eich Cyf / Your ref:

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: David Cross
Llinell Uniongyrchol / Direct Line: 01685 724632
e-bost / e-mail: David.cross@merthyr.gov.uk

Dear Mr Hellyar

RE: Pre-application advice for proposed offices on land at Rhydycar Leisure Village.

I write in regards to the above mentioned pre-application enquiry (following our meeting on the 15th August 2019) for a proposed office building, which included indicative layout plan and elevations. I have now had the opportunity to discuss the proposal with our internal consultees, including our Engineering and Traffic Officer, Ecologist and Landscape Architect.

Principle of development

The site is located within the settlement boundary and Primary Growth Area as defined by the Local Development Plan (LDP), where the majority of new development is generally supported in principle by Policies BW1 and BW4. It is noted that the site overlaps an area allocated for housing (H31) and an area designated for new leisure development (L1). Additionally, outline planning permission has previously been granted for residential development (Ref P/15/0056) which extended over the same site area of the current proposal.

Policy AS16 of the LDP indicates that the area designated for new leisure development was to ensure that there was sufficient land available for the completion of the Rhydycar Leisure Park. However, it is acknowledged that the leisure development (approved under application P/07/0240) has now been completed. Therefore, little weight would be attributed to Policy AS16.

Policy AS1 of the LDP identifies a number of sites across the County Borough which are allocated for the provision of housing within the Primary Growth Area. Given that the proposal would encroach on to northern part of a housing site (H31), the office development would essentially constitute a departure from Policy AS1 that runs contrary to aims and objectives of the LDP. However, now that the Rhydycar Leisure Park has been completed, it can be seen that the area of land allocated for housing would generally have a poor relationship with the neighbouring buildings and would not integrate particularly well with its local context. Conversely, the proposed office development would provide a complimentary use that can integrate better with the neighbouring uses. In this regard, it is noted that there are a number of other office development within the vicinity of the leisure park.

Whilst the development may be a departure from the LDP, in this instance it is considered that the proposal would present an appropriate use of the land. It should also be noted that in the Replacement LDP (currently being considered by the Planning Inspectorate) the housing allocation (H31) is intended to be removed. As

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such the development would not undermine the future aims and objectives of the LDP. Therefore, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.

Design approach

The design considerations of the proposal should have particular regard to Policy BW7 of the LDP, which highlights the need to provide good quality sustainable design in new development that integrates well with its local context.

The siting of the proposed office building is largely restricted by the constraints of the site, which includes the need to maintain the Taff Trail and the steep embankment along part of the eastern boundary. The principle of positioning the building to have a frontage onto the Taff Trail and the adjacent car park is welcomed and would enable the development to relate well with the Rhydycar Leisure Park.

It was suggested in the meeting that the office building could be positioned further south so that it presents of focal point that terminates the view on the main approach to the site from the west. This would place the development further away from the service yard serving the leisure centre and would enable the development to have greater presence within the wider Rhydycar Leisure Park. The siting of the building at the southern part of the site would enable the parking spaces to be merged together and limit the number of vehicle crossing points along the Taff Trail. However it was noted in the meeting, that the position of the building was restricted by the point at of access into the site, due to land ownership rights in the area. It was also suggested in the meeting that consideration could be given to whether there is a need for additional parking given that the site lies adjacent to an existing car park. Furthermore, it was advised that the scheme should include bicycle stands to encourage sustainable forms of transport, particularly given its location next to a national cycle route.

The existing buildings within the Rhydycar Leisure Park differ in their scale and appearance, from the prominent leisure centre and cinema buildings with their curved roofs, to the smaller restaurants, each with their own individual style and material finishes. The proposed office building would appear to be of a similar scale and mass to the other restaurant buildings in the vicinity. Taking into account the varied finish in the area, it is considered that the use of timber cladding on the elevations would not have an adverse impact on the character. Indeed, it would help provide a softer appearance within the landscape that integrates well with the 'green' environment along the Taff Trail.

The overall design of the building is considered to be acceptable. However, there is some concern with the northern elevation of the building (elevation 02), which would present a blank aspect that is highly visible along the Taff Trail. This could be suitably addressed with the introduction of additional windows/glazing to help break up its overall mass and provide greater interest. This could involve the provision of additional windows that follow the rhythm of the front elevation or perhaps glazing that wraps around the corner of the building to create an interesting feature to its design. This would also help provide better natural surveillance that overlooks the Taff Trail.

It has been commented by our Landscape Architect that the Taff Trail should be repositioned to the rear of the office building with intervening hedgerows/trees to maintain a sheltered green route. It was noted in the meeting that this would be difficult to achieve particularly due to the steep embankment along the eastern boundary. It is worth highlighting that the section of the Taff Trail which crosses through the site presents a more open environment that is exposed to the urban environment, which generally contrasts with the more enclosed environment of the Taff Trail elsewhere. As such, the positioning of the Taff Trail to the front of the office where it can be suitable overlooked is deemed to be appropriate in this instance. However, the introduction of hedgerow planting and trees around the proposed carpark and office building would help

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Pre-Application Document

enhance the environment along the Taff Trail, and add further interest/screening around the parking area which would now be evident on both sides of the cycle route.

Highway implications

Access to the site would be via the existing highway network from the roundabout on the A4102 (to the west) and then via the internal roads within the Rhydycar Leisure Park. When assessing the potential highway impacts, particular regard should be given to policy BW12 of the LDP, which amongst other things seeks to encourage sustainable forms of transport and avoid causing or exacerbating highway safety problems. Additionally, policy TB11 of the LDP is of relevance and considers the need to accommodate sufficient parking. The CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008 also sets out the parking requirements for office developments, which in this instance would equate to 1 space per 35m² (a total of 9 spaces).

The submitted layout plan indicates new parking spaces (total of 13) would be provided to either side of the building, which would involve vehicles having to reverse or cross over the diverted Taff Trail. This has the potential to give rise to safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists using the Taff Trail. To maintain the integrity of the Taff Trail and in the interest of its users, vehicular crossing points should be avoided to minimise any potential conflict. In instances where it cannot be avoided, clear priority should be given, where possible, to pedestrians and cyclists.

Given that the proposed development would be situated opposite an extensive car park, which serves the wider Rhydycar Leisure Park, it would be appropriate to consider the capacity of the existing car park to accommodate the development. This may avoid the need to provide additional parking and minimise the potential impacts to the users of the Taff Trail. It was noted in the meeting that due to land ownership rights, it may not be possible to rely on the spaces within the existing car park. It was suggested that the 3 parking spaces on the northern side of the office be taken out of the scheme to avoid vehicles reversing over the Taff Trail. This would also limit the scheme to one crossing point over the Taff Trail and thus reduce some of the potential conflicts. It is understood that separate discussions are taking place with the Rights of Way Division to agree the design of the crossover and to meet the requirements of Sustran.

The Engineering and Highway Officer has noted that the development would generate additional traffic movements, which may have an impact on the flow of traffic within the Rhydycar Leisure Park. As such, it has been requested that this should be investigated further to determine if there is a need to alter the priority of traffic flow. In terms of the wider impacts, the Engineering and Traffic Officer has indicated that the additional traffic movements onto the adopted roads (A4102) are not deemed to be detrimental to highway safety. It was suggested in the meeting that a highway statement could be prepared in support of the application which considers the potential highway implications. This could include details about the staff and visitor numbers expected, which would give some indication of the amount of traffic likely to be generated.

In order to accommodate the development it will be necessary to divert the existing Taff Trail. It is understood that discussions are already taking place with the Rights of Way Division in this respect.

Underground services

Prior to the development of the Rhydycar Leisure Park significant works were undertaken as part of a reclamation scheme which involved the diversion of utilities apparatus. The Engineering and Highways Officer has indicated that there may be two large water mains serving Cardiff and a large gas supply which cross the site. Both Welsh Water and Wales & West Utilities will be consulted as part of a planning application. It was noted in the meeting that you are already aware of the water/gas main supplies in the area and that appropriate easements have been identified to the east of the site away from the development.

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Ecological impact

The proposal lies adjacent to the Afon Taf Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC 58), which essentially follows the alignment of the River Taff and includes the embankments on either side. It has been highlighted by our Ecologist that within the vicinity of the site there are records of protected species, including otters, bats, birds, invertebrates and hedgehogs. Therefore, the proposal should have regard to Policy BW5 of the LDP, which seeks to ensure development maintains, enhances or does not cause harm to areas of nature conservation and other biodiversity interests, including protected and priority species and ecological networks.

Whilst the majority of the site that would be impacted by the development comprises regularly mown grassland, the eastern boundary abuts an area of scrub land and trees, which are likely to provide habitats for reptiles and nesting birds. It has been noted by our Ecologist that the development would likely result in some disruption to these habitats. There is also potential for the lighting associated with the proposed parking area to spill over the adjacent unlit scrub land.

The development is deemed to be of a sufficient distance away from Afon Taf SINC to not adversely impact on its conservation value or the resident otters. However, our Ecologist has indicated that an Ecological Method statement should be submitted with the planning application, which should include a reptile mitigation strategy, consideration for nesting birds, measures to ensure a dark corridor is maintained along the eastern boundary for bats. Other enhancements are also recommended which could include the provision of bat boxes and the planting of perennial windflowers for the benefit of pollinators.

Application details

If you intend to submit a planning application, you will need to submit the following information:

- A fully completed application form and relevant ownership certificates (this can be found on the Council's web site www.merthyr.gov.uk)
- A site location plan (Scale of 1:1250) which clearly identifies the application site (outlined in red) within the surrounding area and includes a north arrow.
- Detailed drawings (to a suitable scale) illustrating the proposed development in relation to neighbouring properties/features, including proposed elevations, floor plans, existing/proposed section details and a landscaping scheme
- Any supporting information i.e. Ecological Method Statement and Highway Statement
- Appropriate planning fee (£380 per 75m² or part thereof).

Conclusions

The principle of the office development at the site is acceptable. Whilst there are some minor alterations required to the layout of the scheme and the elevations of the building, the design approach is deemed to be appropriate for the site. The above advice is made at an officer level and would therefore not prejudice any decision that may be made in the future by the Council. I trust the above is of assistance and self-explanatory. If you need to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact David Cross.

Yours sincerely



P.P. JUDITH JONES

CHIEF OFFICER PLANNING & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Merthyr Tudful

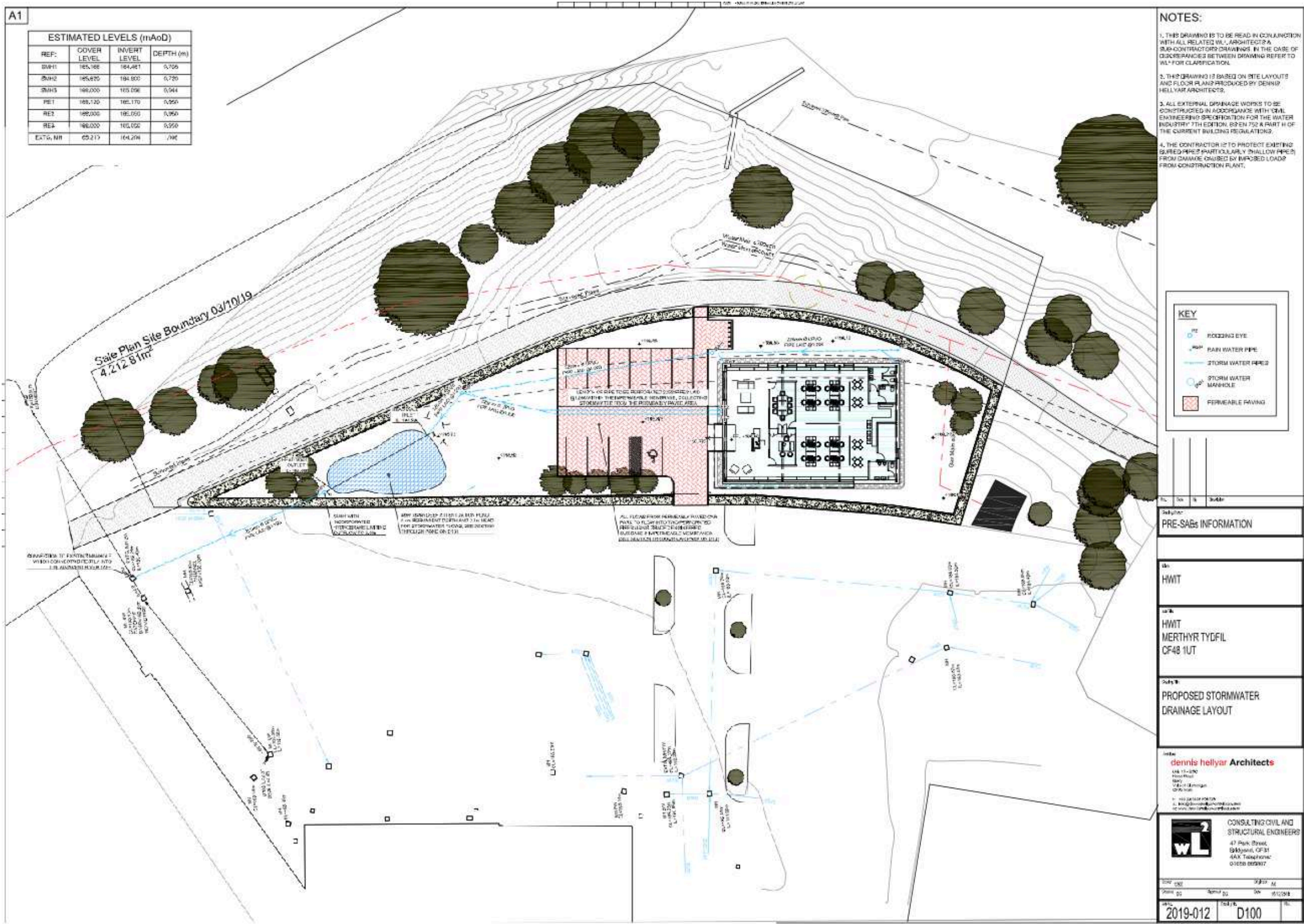
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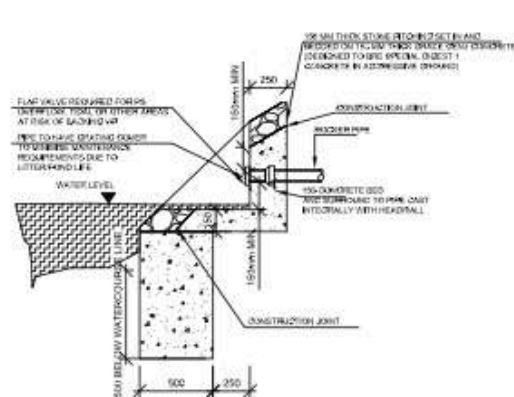
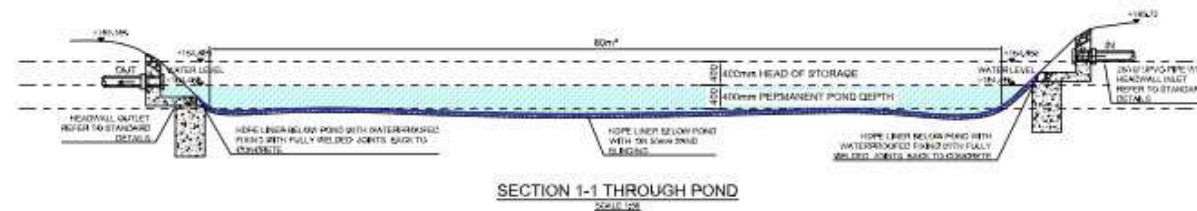
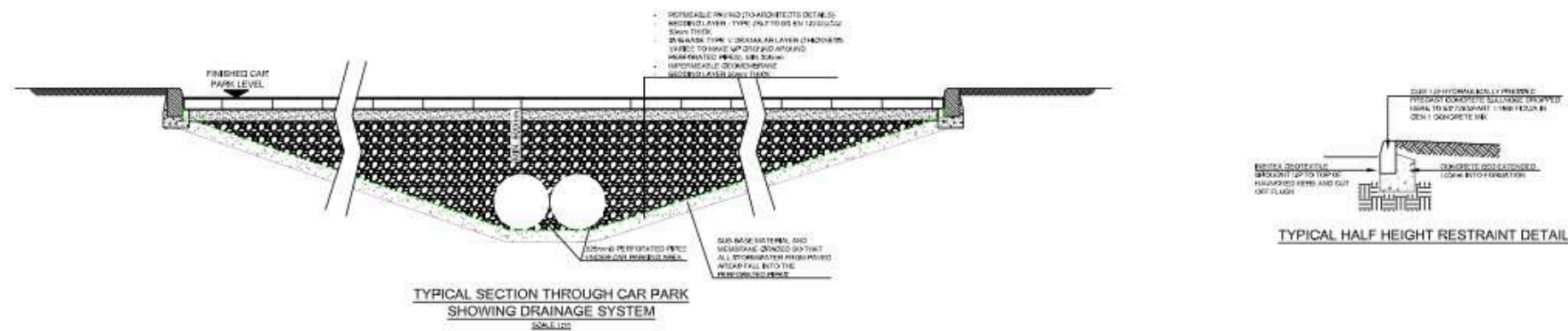
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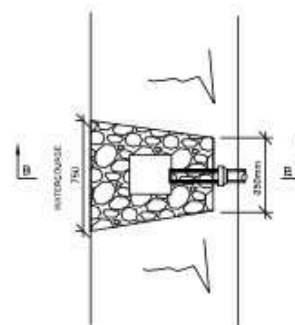
Pre-SABs App Drawings



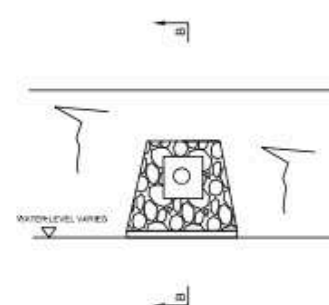
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TYPICAL DETAIL OF HEADWALL OUTLET/INLET
SECTION B-B



TYPICAL DETAIL OF HEADWALL INLET/OUTLET
(ON PLAN)



TYPICAL DETAIL OF HEADWALL OUTLET/INLET
(FRONT ELEVATION)

NOTES:

1. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELATED W.L. ARCHITECT'S & SUB-CONTRACTOR'S DRAWINGS. IN THE CASE OF DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN DRAWING REFERT TO W.L. FOR CLARIFICATION.
2. THIS DRAWING IS BASED ON SITE LAYOUTS AND FLOOR PLANS PRODUCED BY DENNIS HELLARY ARCHITECTS.
3. ALL EXTERNAL DRAINAGE WORKS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIVIL ENGINEERING SPECIFICATION FOR THE WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY (W.S.A.) & IN PART WITH THE CURRENT BUILDING REGULATIONS.
4. THE CONTRACTOR IS TO PROTECT EXISTING SURROUNDING PARTICULARLY 5' WALLON FIRE-ES FROM DAMAGE CAUSED BY IMPOSED LOADS FROM CONSTRUCTION PLANT.

No.	Date	To	Subject
Drafting			
PRE-SAB'S INFORMATION			
Client			
HMIT			
Job #			
HMIT MERTHYR TYDFIL CF48 1UT			
Drawing No.			
PROPOSED STORMWATER DRAINAGE SECTIONS & DETAILS			
Designer			
dennis hellyar Architects			
+44 15 960 Unit 10 Vale of Glamorgan CF48 1ED			
P +44 20 7444 4022 E d.hellyar@dhel.co.uk www.dhelliars.com			
 CONSULTING CIVIL AND STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS 47 Park Street, Glyncornwr, CF31 6AX, Telford TF11 6JCS (01562) 80607			
Title ASBONN			
Scale DG	Version DG	Date	01/12/2016
Project	Design	Rev	
2019-012	D101		

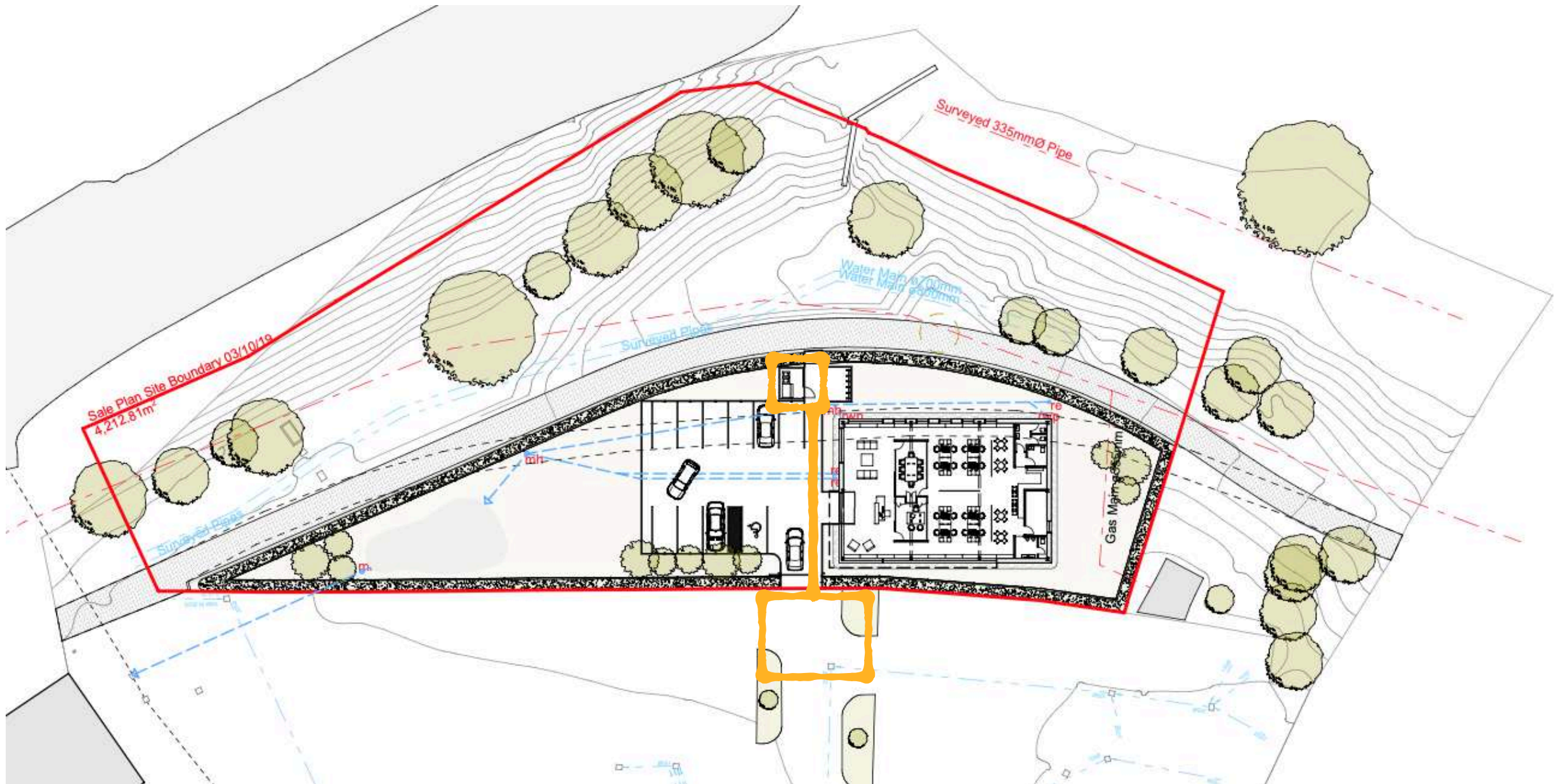
Foul Strategy Drawing

Proposed foul water manholes on site collect foul waste. The proposed foul water manholes connect to an existing manhole. Therefore, the foul from the proposed will run into the existing foul network on site.



Waste Strategy

Waste bins are proposed to be stored to the rear of the site. On bin days, the bins would be relocated to the front entrance to the site, for ease of collection.



Conclusion

7.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared on behalf of Mr David Cousins to accompany the full planning application for proposed construction of HWIT Offices, Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village, Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UT.

7.2 In regards to the principle of development, the site lies within the settlement boundary of Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil. The site previously had planning permission for a residential scheme. The site sits between leisure complexes housing a swimming pool, restaurants, a hotel and various offices. Therefore, the development of the site to accommodate further offices is considered established.

7.3 The size, layout and appearance of the proposal are considered to be highly appropriate to the surrounding context and the materials used have been considered under the Secured by Design principles. The proposal makes use of a redundant site which, if left unmanaged, may fall into a state of disrepair and detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding area as the site itself is already prone to anti-social behaviour.

7.4 In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed development has suitably addressed key materials and design details for the site and its approval would provide a quality development through investigated design and landscaping.

7.5 The scheme is located within the primary growth area of Merthyr Tydfil and so follows policy BW1.

7.6 As such, it is respectfully requested that Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council grant full planning consent for the proposed construction of 1 no. offices and associated works at Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Village, Rhydycar, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1UT.

