

## **Landscape Matters – Supplementary Note**

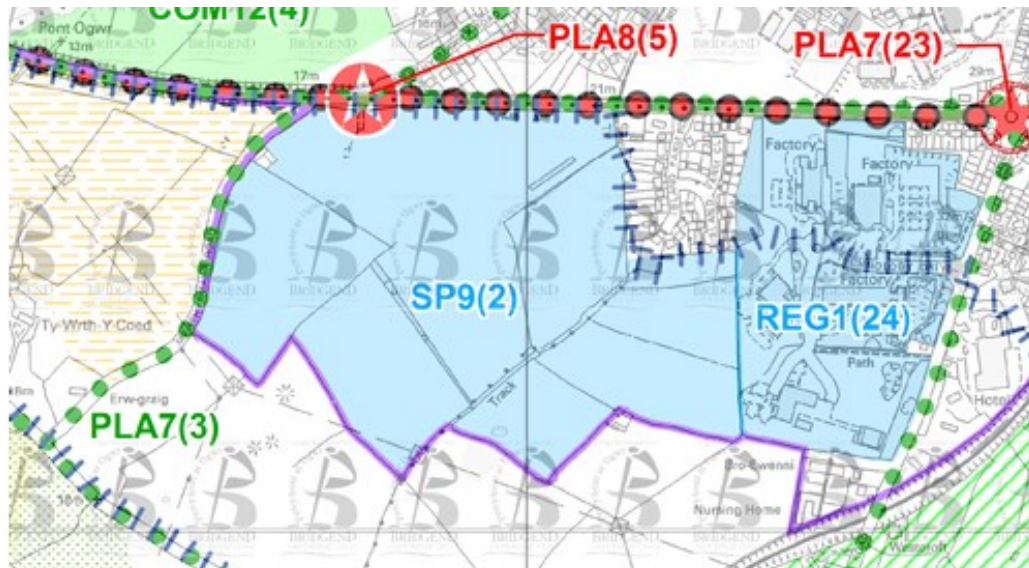
**September 2020**

### **Introduction**

1. This Landscape Note has been prepared by Savills in support of HD Ltd's ongoing promotion of Island Farm on the southern fringe of Bridgend as a site for a mixed use development. The scope of the note is to consider matters relating to landscape effects and mitigation but it should be read alongside the Candidate Site Assessment Stage 2 Supporting Statement.
2. The scope of this note reflects discussions with BCBC Officers, who confirmed that a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was not required at this stage. As such, this note has been prepared to identify any statutory and non-statutory landscape designations relevant to the site and set out how the masterplanning process undertaken to date has sought to minimise any possible effects on landscape character and visual amenity.

### **Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations**

3. The existing LDO Proposals Map for the site is replicated below:



4. The Local Development Plan (LDP) makes two landscape based designations:
  - i) Special Landscape Areas (SLA) is a local level landscape designation. The site is not within an SLA with the nearest being the Merthyr Mawr SLA which covers a substantial area to the south and west of Bridgend. The eastern boundary of the SLA adjoins western boundary of New Inn Road which forms the southwestern boundary of Island Farm.
  - ii) The Glamorgan Heritage Coast runs for 14 miles along the southern coast of the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend. The northern edge of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast is at the village of Merthyr Mawr which is 1.5km southwest of Island Farm. The site is outside of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.
5. A single listed building is located on the Island Farm site, the Grade II listed 'Hut 9 at former Prisoner of War Camp (198) and Special Camp XI, Island Farm. Hut 9 is well screened by vegetation. A single oak tree situated at the southwest boundary of the site is protected by a group Tree Preservation Order.

## LANDMAP

6. LANDMAP is a Wales wide resource (maintained by Natural Resources Wales) that identifies and evaluates key landscape characteristics. The site is identified as falling within two LANDMAP landscape areas:
- “CYNONVS828 – Between Bridgend & Merthyr Mawr - open rolling lowland” - This area encompasses the southern aspect of the site and a wide band that bounds the southwest urban area of Bridgend and includes Merthyr Mawr. The assessment summarises the area as being gently undulating land containing a mosaic of field patterns, scattered rural development and farmsteads. The overall value of this aspect area is moderate, with moderate scenic quality, integrity, character value and rarity, There are no key qualities identified for conservation, enhancement or change.
  - “CYNONVS726 – Bridgend - urban” - This aspect area covers the northern half of the application site. The area is dominated by housing, industry and major road and rail corridors. Views within the area are generally unattractive. The area is evaluated as having low scenic quality, integrity, character value and rarity providing an overall evaluation as low.
7. Landscape quality is assessed against five criteria. These are then placed on a scale of ‘Outstanding’, ‘High’, ‘Moderate’, and ‘Low’. The evaluation of the site against the five criteria is set out in the table below:

Landscape Quality	Assessment
Geological Landscape	Part High Part Low
Landscape Habitats	Moderate
Visual and Sensory	Part Moderate Part Low
Historic Landscape	Outstanding
Cultural Landscape	High

8. The nature of LANDMAP means that parcels of land are rated on the basis of the above five criteria rather than a single measure and so accordingly it is not possible to definitively compare the landscape value of different parcels of land but nevertheless it is clear that the site performs comparatively to other undeveloped parcels of land on the fringes of the urban area of Bridgend.

### Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough

9. A Landscape Character Assessment for Bridgend County Borough was prepared by LUC and published in July 2013. The document provides guidance on landscape character and, following the adoption of the Local Development Plan, supplements the Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape Supplementary Planning Guidance.
10. The Assessment categorises undeveloped land into 15 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) with the site being located within the “Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline” which runs north-eastwards up from the coast to the southwestern fringe of Bridgend.
11. For the Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline LCA, the following six landscape sensitivities are identified:
- Visually prominent sand dunes;
  - Internationally important coastal habitats;

- Nationally important archaeology and cultural heritage;
  - The Merthyr Mawry Conservation Area;
  - The recreational value of the landscape; and
  - The peaceful characteristics of the landscape.
12. Save for the fact that any undeveloped parcel of land inherently can be seen as having “peaceful characteristics”, none of the first five landscape sensitivities are evident across the site.

### Planning History

13. Island Farm has an extensive planning history relating to various sport-led mixed use developments. The most recent, and most relevant application relates to the development of the Island Farm site to deliver a substantial sports village (ref. P/08/114/OUT) comprising of the following elements:
- 21,000 sqm extension to the Science Park;
  - 15,000 seat stadium;
  - 5,000 seat stadium;
  - 2,000 seat stadium;
  - Indoor and outdoor tennis centre; and
  - Indoor 4G Training facility and sports centre.
14. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was undertaken as part of the Environmental Statement submitted alongside the 2008 outline application for the sports village at Island Farm.
15. The LVIA for evaluated the significance of landscape and visual impacts by assessing the sensitivity of the existing baseline landscape and visual resources of the application site and wider area and the magnitude of the change that would occur to the site and surroundings during the various phases of the development. The LVIA was prepared on the basis of proposals for a sports village which included buildings of close to 20m in height as well as, in the cases of the proposed stadia elements, a high level of massing.
16. The LVIA concluded that:
- “While there will be permanent residual views of buildings, these will be predominantly negligible, minor or moderate significance following the implementation of the comprehensive mitigation measures at the end of the 15 year assessment period. Views are a subjective matter and have been assessed as being adverse because of the scale of change in the appearance of an undeveloped landscape. It is anticipated that the majority of receptors will embrace these community led proposals and be stimulated by the quality and appearance of this development.*

*The loss of landscape features will be significantly compensated by the scale of proposed planting and through improved landscape management, will give rise to beneficial landscape and ecology effects in the medium and long term future. Burying the overhead power*

*underground lines will also provide a minor beneficial effect in views from the south and west.”*

17. A series of mitigation measures were recommended. Broadly, the same means of mitigation are proposed as part of the proposed development and will include strong boundary planting, the creation of an undulating roofscape, the use of muted recessive colours, the use of horizontal and vertical bands of colour and texture, and using cut and fill techniques to reduce perceived scale and mass of buildings.
18. It should also be noted that the proposed mixed-use development of the Island farm will result in significantly reduced building heights and a reduced feeling of massing when compared to the previously permitted sports village scheme.

### **Indicative Masterplan**

19. The proposed masterplan is GI-led and will include the provision of high quality landscaping and architectural design which responds to the sites semi-rural context. As shown on the masterplan, a carefully designed GI network can be developed to ensure that a continuous ‘green lung’ connects the site, internally and with Bridgend Town Centre (via Newbridge Fields) and Merthyr Mawr. Significant landscape buffers on the edge of the site, notably the southern and western boundaries will soften the development and mitigate possible effects on visual amenity close to the boundary of the site.
20. Furthermore, detailed proposals can build on the extensive scheme of the protection and enhancement of existing biodiversity value on the site, ensuring appropriate provision for and protection of, existing biodiversity in the area. It is reiterated that a large extent of the landscape and ecological mitigation works previously approved to support the sports village proposals, has already been implemented by the landowner and site promoter, HD Ltd. In 2006-17, a bat house was constructed and there was extensive tree planting within the south west field, as compensatory planting for the permitted loss of part of the SINC for site access.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

21. The site is not subject to any local or national, statutory or non-statutory landscape designations, albeit there are listed buildings and TPOs on the edge of the site (neither are directly affected by the proposed development).
22. LANDMAP analysis reflects that the sites are not subject to any designations. Whilst scoring as “high” and “outstanding” against certain criteria, it also performs as “medium” and “low” for other criteria and overall the level of sensitivity is comparable to similar parcels of land on the urban fringe of Bridgend. Further, the development of the site is not considered to undermine any of the six landscape sensitivities that are identified as typifying the Merthyr Mawr Farmland, Warren and Coastline Landscape Character Area.
23. The principle of the development of the Island Farm site has been established through the site’s allocation in the adopted LDP for employment uses and through the implemented planning permission for the development of a sports village.
24. The LVIA undertaken as part of the sports village proposals concluded that landscape impact would be minor and moderate adverse though could be mitigated through sensitive design and boundary planting. A residential scheme would have a lesser impact given that heights across the site would be lower than the previously approved stadia.
25. A detailed, updated LVIA would be prepared to inform and accompany further masterplanning work (i.e. as part of an outline planning application) in due course and will inherently be based on a more advanced and detailed scheme.