



South of Usk Road, Penperlleni

Landscape and Visual Statement

August 2021

On behalf of Edenstone Homes



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Landscape and Visual Statement

Project no. 2842

August 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Viridian Landscape Planning Ltd was commissioned in July 2021 by Edenstone Homes to prepare an initial statement on the potential landscape and visual effects of proposed residential development on land off Usk Road, Penperlleni, to be used as part of the Second Call for Candidate Sites for the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan.

1.1.2 The Council's Guidance Note of June 2021 sets out at paragraph 3n on page 7 that:

Proposers of land should consider the visual impact of development on landscape character, visual amenity and/or the setting of heritage assets. It is recommended that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is submitted with your submission. If there are likely to be negative effects on visual amenity or the setting of heritage assets please explain how features located within or near to the site could be retained or enhanced.

1.1.3 This report has been prepared by chartered landscape architects at Viridian Landscape Planning. It is intended to be used for candidate site purposes only. It has used on-line resources to undertake a desk-based appraisal, followed by a site visit to consider the site and its relationship to its landscape context and the potential effects of development on landscape character, landscape features, and views and visual amenity.

1.1.4 A more detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) will accompany any future planning application.

1.1.5 When prepared, the LVIA or LVA will present the methodology, context and results of the landscape and visual assessment or appraisal process. It will include the findings of the desk study and site visit, and the design and mitigation measures. If an LVIA, the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the development proposals will be set out in the Landscape and Visual Effects Tables. A summary and conclusions will also be provided. The LVIA or LVA will be based on the principles of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute, IEMA, 2013).

1.1.6 The assessment of landscape and visual effects aims to be as objective as possible, however, as explained in paragraph 2.23 on page 21 of GLVIA3:

Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction... much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.

- 1.1.7 As part of this report, the following plans have been prepared:
- Figure L1: Viewpoint Location Plan
 - Figure L2: Landscape and Visual Analysis.
- 1.1.8 Baseline information has partly been taken from relevant plans which appear in the Landscape Sensitivity Update Study (October 2020).
- 1.1.9 The viewpoints which will support the visual analysis of the site are represented by stitched panoramic photographs, presented in **Appendix A**.

1.2 SCOPE OF ASSESSMENT

- 1.2.1 The LVIA or LVA will be prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Viridian Landscape Planning. It will consider:
- Features of the site and its context;
 - Landscape character, the character of the site, and its relationship to its surroundings;
 - Landscape-related planning designations;
 - Views towards the site; and
 - Changes to landscape features, landscape character and views arising as a result of the development proposals.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

- 1.3.1 The LVIA will be based on the principles of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute, IEMA, 2013).
- 1.3.2 The assessment of landscape and visual effects aims to be as objective as possible, however, as explained in GLVIA3:

Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction... much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.

(Paragraph 2.23, page 21, GLVIA3)

1.4 DESKTOP STUDY

- 1.4.1 The desktop study for this Landscape and Visual Statement comprised collation and review of published background information on the site and surrounding context. This

included a review the landscape character of the site, as well as information on statutory and non-statutory landscape designations on the site or in the surrounding area.

1.5 FIELD SURVEY

1.5.1 A site visit was undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects on 10 August 2021

1.5.2 The purpose of the fieldwork was to:

- Gain an understanding of the landscape character of the site and its context;
- Determine the extent of visibility of the existing site and the visibility of potential development on the site - the actual extent of which is determined by landform, vegetation, and existing / proposed built development; and
- Carry out the landscape and visual impact assessment.

The area surrounding the site was surveyed and photographed to assess visibility of the site and the proposals. Viewpoints were those to which the public has access, such as footpaths, bridleways, roads and other public spaces. Viewpoint photographs showing the character of the site and a representative range of views towards the site, are included in **Appendix A**.

2 BASELINE CONDITIONS

2.1 SOURCES OF BASELINE INFORMATION

2.1.1 The sources of baseline data are summarised in **Table 2.1** below:

Table 2.1: Baseline Information Sources

Baseline Topic	Data Source
National Park Listed Buildings Scheduled Monuments Open Access Areas National Trails National Cycle Network	GIS
Conservation Areas	GIS / Local Development Plan
Public Rights of Way	Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Explorer Map
Landscape Character	National Landscape Character Areas LANDMAP Monmouthshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2009) Monmouthshire Draft Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Guidance (2019)

2.2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.2.1 The site is located on the south-western edge of Penperlleni in Monmouthshire, on the main southern approach to the settlement on the A4042 / Usk Road. It forms a triangle of land enclosed by the A4042, the southern edge of Penperlleni, and a tree-lined stream boundary.

2.2.2 The site is approximately 3.3ha in extent and comprises three semi-regular rough pasture fields, bounded by hedgerows and forming a rough triangle. There are no buildings on the site.

2.2.3 The site is bounded to the:

- north-east by a low-cut hedged boundary to recent development and public open space on the south-western edge of Penperlleni;

- south by a stream, with associated hedgerow, mature trees and riparian vegetation, with the rural countryside extending beyond; and
- north-west by a mature roadside hedgerow to the A4042, which becomes degraded, low and dominated by bracken and bramble towards its western end.

VEGETATION

- 2.2.4 Within the study area, the vegetation pattern is reflective of the local landscape character. The rolling lowland landscape comprises fields subdivided by mature hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees, riparian vegetation on watercourses, and woodland on steeply sloping valley sides. The Monmouthshire and Brecon canal is notable in the landscape, forming a linear strip of mature trees and riparian vegetation.
- 2.2.5 On and adjacent to the site, the existing vegetation consist of hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, and the significant treed boundary to the south following the stream.

LANDFORM AND WATERCOURSES

- 2.2.6 According to OS mapping, the site slopes to the east from a spot height of just over 100m AOD halfway along the north-western boundary, to just over 90m AOD at the eastern corner. The landform undulates gently away from the site for some distance, with small hills and some stream valleys creating local skylines. 2km to the west the land rises steeply to a high point of 436m AOD on Mynydd Garn-wen, and 2km to the east drops notably into the Usk Valley with flat floodplain beyond.
- 2.2.7 A stream, Flynnon Ddu, forms the southern boundary to the site, following the gentle slope down to the east. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal passes 145m north-west of the site following a broadly level contour.

SETTLEMENT

- 2.2.8 Built development within Penperlleni extends north-eastwards from the site. The settlement pattern is linear in form with clustered estate housing and school development sited between the A4042 and the Newport, Abergavenny and Hereford Railway. Penperlleni reads alongside Goytre as one settlement. Recent housing development lies close to the site, with an area of public open space, with some recently planted native trees and shrubs, forming much of the north-eastern site boundary.
- 2.2.9 Away from the primary settlement, scattered development in the form of isolated farmsteads is dispersed across the rolling lowland landscape.

NATIONAL PARK

- 2.2.10 The Brecon Beacons National Park boundary follows the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, 145m north-west of the site at its closest point; the site is not in the National Park.

CONSERVATION AREAS

- 2.2.11 There are no Conservation Areas associated with the site or the settlement at Penperlleni. The closest is at Llanover, some 3.8km north on the A4042.

LISTED BUILDINGS

- 2.2.12 There are no Listed Buildings on the site. The nearest Listed Building is one of the series of bridges over the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, Bridge No. 70 (Grade II), 200m west of the site boundary, just north of Ty-Llwyd Farm. Further Grade II listed bridges follow the path of the canal, with scattered Grade II listed farmhouses in the landscape surrounding the site. These include Tre-domen Farmhouse, 270m south of the site, and Goytre House Farmhouse, 380m north of the site.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

- 2.2.13 The nearest Scheduled Monument is a holy well known as Ffynnon Angoeron, of probable medieval date, sited 2.2km north-west of the site. The Scheduled Monument Report describes it as a well-preserved example of a medieval or early post-medieval well, with medicinal or religious associations.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

- 2.2.14 There are no public rights of way on or adjoining the site. The canal towpath to the west of the site is a public footpath and part of the National Cycle Network (NCN49). Away from the canal, the closest footpaths pass 200m east and 320m south of the site, connecting Penperlleni to the wider public rights of way network. The Usk Valley Walk Long Distance Trail passes 2km east of the site.

OPEN ACCESS AREAS

- 2.2.15 There are no Open Access Areas at the site or within its immediate context. The closest area is 2.6km west, on the ridge of high ground at Mynydd Garn-wen.

2.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (NLCA)

- 2.3.1 The site is in NLCA31 (Central Monmouthshire). Whilst this is a broad level of assessment, the site and its environs are consistent with the gently undulating lowland landscape of grazed pasture fields, with wooded hills and strong hedged boundaries.

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: LANDMAP

- 2.3.2 According to LANDMAP Guidance Note 2 (2018):

LANDMAP is a whole landscape approach that covers all landscapes, designated and non-designated, it covers the natural, rural, peri-urban and urban areas, it includes inland waters and coastal areas to the low water mark. LANDMAP is an all-Wales GIS (Geographical Information System) based landscape resource where landscape

characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape are recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. In Wales, LANDMAP is the formally adopted methodology for landscape assessment and is advocated by Planning Policy Wales.

2.3.3 The LANDMAP assessment identifies Visual and Sensory 'aspect areas', which are each assigned one of four overall grades of value: Low, Moderate, High, or Outstanding. The site lies centrally within MNMTHVS042 (Goytre Lowland), which is given an overall value grade of High.

2.3.4 The summary description for Goytre Lowland is:

A gently undulating lowland landscape, sheltered by the scarp slopes of Mynydd Garn-fawr and Garnclochdy to the west, gradually merging with the floodplain of the River Usk to the east.

It is an enclosed landscape with large irregular blocks of mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland, parkland and medium to large-scale fields of permanent pasture and arable crops, becoming smaller and more irregular to the south. These fields are enclosed by a strong structural network of traditional field boundaries, individual field trees and hedgerow trees and often interspersed with streams, tributaries and ponds. It is a domesticated landscape with numerous large farmsteads, traditional cottages, country estates and small-scale linear settlements. It is crossed by a network of narrow roads as well as the main A4042(T) and the Newport to Hereford railway.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Monmouthshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2009)

2.3.5 The study defines Local Landscape Character Areas across Monmouthshire and considers the sensitivity and housing capacity of the landscape. The site lies within PE02, with the following relevant Key Characteristics:

- Gently undulating slopes with small stream valleys;
- Irregular small to medium-sized fields with a mix of outgrown and low cut hedgerows;
- Damp woodland in stream valleys, mature trees in hedgerows and fields and around settlement;
- The undulating landform creates local skylines in places with the main skyline being the ridge to the west;
- Tranquillity increases towards the west away from the A4042 Usk Road;
- The area forms part of the landscape rising west from the settlement towards the ridge; and
- Brecon Beacons National Park lies west of the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal which overlooks the area.

2.3.6 Sensitivity is described as High/Medium, and Housing Capacity as Low.

Monmouthshire Draft Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Guidance (2019)

- 2.3.7 Volume 2 of the Draft SPG (Landscape Character Assessment) defines Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and Landscape Types (LTs) across Monmouthshire.
- 2.3.8 The site is in LCA16 (Llanover Lowland) described as LT04 (Rolling Lowland). The key characteristics of these landscapes primarily relate to the gently rolling domesticated mixed arable and pastoral lowland with a diverse, tranquil and intimate character away from the main traffic routes. It also notes the presence of small, irregular fields of permanent pasture, enclosed by a strong structural network of thick hedges, hedgerow trees and treelines, and small-scale woodland blocks and orchards.
- 2.3.9 Adjacent to the north-east, Penperlleni is identified as a Main Town or Rural Secondary Settlement.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE SITE

- 2.3.10 The site comprises three fields, shown in **Site Photographs A, B and C**, subdivided by intermittent hedgerows. The site is largely open to the recent edge of development across the hedge of the north-eastern boundary, as can be seen in **Site Photograph A**, whilst it is effectively separated from the wider countryside to the south by the visually significant riparian woodland along Flynnon Ddu, as shown in **Site Photograph C** and **Viewpoint 1**. As a result, the eastern part of the site has a closer relationship with Penperlleni than it does to the rural landscape to the south. The riparian woodland has a different character, providing a wooded corridor along the meandering course of the stream.

3 VISUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Typical views towards the site were assessed from publicly available viewpoints and are illustrated by the panoramic photographs from **Viewpoints 1-4** in **Appendix A**. The location of these photograph viewpoints is shown on **Figure L1: Viewpoint Location Plan**. The photographs were taken in August 2021.

VIEWPOINTS

3.1.2 There are no published or designated key views within the vicinity of the site, and the site does not fall within any designated key views.

3.1.3 The only publicly accessible views of the site were found to be from public roads and roadside footpaths. Owing to the relatively flat landscape and substantial belts of trees and hedges across the landscape, the viewpoints are limited to those immediately adjacent to the site.

3.1.4 **Viewpoints 1 and 2** are from the residential road, Trem Yr Ysgol, and across the intervening open space. At **Viewpoint 1**, the open space is only a few metres wide, whereas at **Viewpoint 2**, it is about 35m wide. The site can be seen rising gently towards the hedge on Usk Road, and the trees along Flynnon Ddu provide separation from the wider landscape, although that effect will be reduced in winter.

3.1.5 **Viewpoint 3** is from Usk Road and shows the pedestrian access to the open space adjacent to the site, as well as the roadside hedge along the north-western boundary.

3.1.6 **Viewpoint 4** is also from Usk Road, but at its junction with Croes-Y-Pant Lane. The south-western field is more visible than the rest of the site, as it is slightly lower than Usk Road and the hedge is less substantial. The houses on Trem Yr Ysgol are visible through the trees. The riparian tree belt along Flynnon Ddu provides separation from the wider landscape.

4 DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

4.1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

- 4.1.1 **Figure L2: Landscape and Visual Analysis** and the **Site Photographs** show elements of the site and its context, including the following:
- The substantial vegetation on the southern boundary of the site which separates it from the wider landscape;
 - The open nature of much of the site;
 - Adjacent residential development; and
 - The limited visibility of the site from the surrounding area.
- 4.1.2 **Figure L2** also shows the route of two water mains and their easement running from the north-east corner of the site to the south-west corner.
- 4.1.3 The site is not covered by, or in the setting of, any landscape protection designation, nor is it visible from, or is it adjacent to, the Brecon Beacons National Park, any scheduled monument, conservation area or listed building. There are no public rights of way on or near the site.
- 4.1.4 The site survey has shown that views of the site are limited to those from adjacent roads and are screened or filtered by boundary vegetation.

4.2 MONMOUTHSHIRE LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY UPDATE STUDY

- 4.2.1 In the Monmouthshire Landscape Sensitivity Update Study (the Sensitivity Study), it is noted that:
- The susceptibility of the site lies in its character as open countryside extending south of the settlement bounded by the Ffynnon Ddu watercourse and associated riparian corridor, the hedgerows enclosing small scale fields with the irregular boundaries. The settlement is well contained by the A4042[T] and the riparian vegetation... Whilst the site, if developed, would significantly extend the settlement to the south west, it would be contained by the watercourse and riparian corridor to the south and the road to the north and west. It would be essential that the riparian corridor would be protected by a publicly accessible buffer, the south western corner planted and the roadside hedge retained and planted with trees to soften the edge of the settlement when viewed from the A4042, close to the National Park.*
- 4.2.2 The site is given a medium sensitivity to development, although it should be noted that the site is visually and physically separated from the National Park.

4.3 DESIGN CONCEPT

- 4.3.1 A design concept has been developed by Edenstone in close consultation with Viridian Landscape Planning and is shown on drawing 101/02 that forms part of the submission.
- 4.3.2 It reflects the following principles:
- Retaining, managing and supplementing the boundary vegetation, especially along the Usk Road and Ffynnon Ddu, as suggested by the Sensitivity Study;
 - Placing the development edge up to about 65m from Usk Road, south-east of the easement for the water mains;
 - Creating green corridors around the periphery of the site to protect the boundary vegetation and provide circular pedestrian routes through the site;
 - Providing an extensive swathe of open space, taking up most of the north-western side of the site, with opportunities for wildflower meadows, informal mown paths, a community orchard and new tree and hedge planting; and
 - Designing drainage features, open spaces and green corridors to provide ecological connectivity and bio-diversity features.
- 4.3.3 By retaining the boundary vegetation, the site will continue to be enclosed and separated from the surrounding landscape, which will be reinforced by setting development back to accommodate the watermains. It is unlikely that the development will be clearly visible from Usk Road, even in winter.
- 4.3.4 Strengthening of the boundary vegetation would also provide ecology buffers and wildlife corridors.
- 4.3.5 Any necessary remedial work to existing trees would be undertaken, and the implementation of a Landscape Management Plan would ensure the survival and enhancement of the boundary vegetation in the future, achieving both landscape and ecological objectives.
- 4.3.6 An appropriate landscape scheme and an infrastructure study, developed as part of a planning application in consultation with the Council, will reinforce the existing landscape framework on the site by additional planting, to ensure the diversity and sustainability of the vegetated boundaries. They will also integrate the scheme into its landscape setting and into the adjoining green infrastructure.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The site is contained within a discrete parcel of land in the wider landscape, mostly separated from the surrounding landscape and screened or filtered in viewpoints by the boundary vegetation and existing development. There is residential development on the north-eastern side, from where there are the clearest views of the site. Development of the site will have little effect on the character of the wider landscape.
- 5.1.2 The proposals provide the opportunity for a comprehensive design solution with a carefully designed and managed green infrastructure across the site, as well as management of the existing green infrastructure, with enhanced public access through corridors managed for landscape, biodiversity and play.
- 5.1.3 Should a planning application be made in the future, it will be accompanied by an LVIA or LVA, which will report on the assessment of any scheme brought forward. Viridian Landscape Planning will assist Edenstone and the other members of the design team, in securing a scheme that is sensitive to the special location of the site and provides multi-functional green infrastructure.
- 5.1.4 Having undertaken a review of the baseline information, including LANDMAP and the Council's Sensitivity Study, and having visited the site and its context to undertake the survey work, it is considered that there are no substantive landscape and visual constraints to the development proposals.