Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Local Development Plan
2011 - 2026

Design
Supplementary Planning Guidance
(July 2017)

www.npt.gov.uk/ldp

Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

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Note to Reader

This document supplements and explains the policies in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP was adopted by the Council on 27th January 2016 and forms the basis for decisions on land use planning in the County Borough up to 2026.

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared following a public consultation exercise that was undertaken in the Summer of 2017 and the guidance was adopted by the Council's Regeneration and Sustainable Development Cabinet Board on 21st July 2017.

While only policies in the LDP have special status in the determination of planning applications, the SPG will be taken into account as a material consideration in the decision making process.

This SPG is also available in Welsh, either to download or by request. Should you need this document in another format, then please contact the LDP team at **ldp@npt.gov.uk** or **[01639] 686821**.

Note to Reader

1 Introduction

1.0.1   This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides information in respect of design issues in Neath Port Talbot and sets out the relevant matters that will need to be taken into consideration when developments are being planned in the County Borough.

1.0.2   The Council's planning policy is set out in the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP)[1], namely Strategic Policy SP21 (Built Environment and Historic Heritage) and detailed Policy BE1 (Design) and this SPG should be read in the context of these policies and explanatory text.

1.0.3   The LDP guides the future development of the County Borough over the period 2011-2026, setting out the policy framework for where, when and how much development can take place. Delivering high quality, well designed buildings, neighbourhoods, streets and spaces is fundamental to achieving the overall vision and objectives of the LDP. Furthermore, the importance of design in creating attractive and safe communities should not be understated, with the concept of good quality, inclusive design that respects the character and local context of the area being paramount in creating places where people want to live and work, and helping create prosperous, sustainable and healthy communities.

1.0.4   Design is defined in Planning Policy Wales (PPW)[2] as:

> '...*the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its construction, operation and management, and its relationship to its surroundings'.*

1.0.5   'Design' can refer to a wide range of factors including the physical appearance of a new building; the ease of access for all; the impacts on existing development; and the protection of natural resources. No one specific objective takes precedent over the other and the key to achieving good design is maintaining a holistic overarching view of the development as a whole. This requires a multi-disciplinary approach to design, including at the earliest possible stages, input from relevant consultees and stakeholders.

1.0.6   When designing new development, it is important to consider all design related issues and to take an approach that ensures all considerations are addressed. This holistic approach to design encompasses many different specialist and technical aspects, but the overall aim is to promote relevant and logical design which accords with these overarching principles and results in characterful buildings and spaces within which people will enjoy living and working.

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1   Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan (2011-2026) Adopted January 2016.
2   Paragraph 4.11.1 Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (2016 - Welsh Government).

Structure and Content

1.0.7   The purpose of this SPG is to provide detailed guidance on how the Council will implement the design policy contained within the LDP. Accordingly, the SPG is structured into the following parts**(3)**:

- **Part 1: Introduction and Background** - the first part sets out an introduction (*Chapter 1*), the character and context of Neath Port Talbot (*Chapter 2*) and the national and local policy context (*Chapter 3*);

- **Part 2: Implementation of Policy BE1** - the second part provides detailed guidance on the implementation of Policy BE1 (*Chapter 4*), specifically focusing on the design principles associated with each of the individual criterion; and

- **Part 3: Development Sites and Types** - the third part sets out site-specific design guidance for the Council's key strategic development sites (*Chapter 5*) along with detailed guidance on specific types of development including residential (*Chapter 6*) and commercial (*Chapter 7*).

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3   Some images within the document courtesy of Google Streetview.

2 Character and Context of Neath Port Talbot

2.1 Character and Context

2.1.1   Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council covers a diverse area of urban and industrial development. Rural areas range from the farmland of the coastal plain, beaches and dunes and marshland, to upland moorland and forested areas cut by steep sided valleys.

2.1.2   The built environment is varied and distinctive, with important remains, structures and buildings still in evidence from all periods from prehistory onwards. These range from Iron Age hill forts and burial mounds, Roman military infrastructure and medieval ecclesiastical buildings through to the industrial developments and associated extensive areas of housing from the 19th and 20th Centuries. In the 21st Century, the availability of significant areas of former industrial land has enabled the establishment of new, modern high-tech industries, educational establishments and housing developments, embracing a variety of contemporary, modernist, post modern and more traditional styles.

2.1.3   Within the more densely populated coastal corridor area, centres of population have grown up around the towns of Neath and Port Talbot. The town of Neath retains the character of a traditional market town with its predominantly medieval origins and layout, while much of the centre of Port Talbot has a more modernist character having been substantially rebuilt in the mid 1970s with the construction of a new road system, the Aberafan shopping centre, the civic centre and associated developments.

2.1.4   The key characteristics of most of the County Borough's other towns and villages derives largely from the area's industrial heritage, from the mining and metal working of the early industrial revolution through to the large scale steel and petro-chemical industries of the 20th Century.

2.1.5   The historic heritage of the area is reflected by a range of formal designations, including two designated Landscapes of Historic Interest, six Historic Parks and Gardens, six Conservation Areas, 92 Ancient Monuments and 391 Listed Buildings. In relation to the countryside and landscapes of the County Borough, there are six Special Landscape Areas, five Green Wedges and an area designated as undeveloped coast, all of which have additional controls over the types of development that will be allowed. Further designations provide protection to areas of ecological importance across the County Borough.

2.2 Design and Planning

2.2.1   Whilst design is only one consideration in determining a planning application, it is not limited to the look of the buildings alone, or the materials used. Design has a place within the highway layout, the creation of public and private spaces, security and crime reduction, enhancing people's well-being and benefiting the wider socio-economic health of the County Borough.

2.2.2 Places that are well designed can regenerate areas and change people's perceptions of a place or area. As such the objectives of good design go through every aspect of development and can affect the everyday lives of everyone interacting with it.

2.2.3 Good design also requires an early and initial assessment of not only what the function and needs of the development are (the *'vision'*), but also an assessment of the site itself, and how the existing site interrelates, or not, with the surrounding development and/or environment. This document considers the overarching issues that are considered relevant for all types of development, although it should be acknowledged that some issues may be more relevant to specific development types.

2.2.4 The need to consider all aspects of design, including how occupiers and users of places interact with the built environment and the spaces around them, are key in ensuring that developments are successful, provide benefits for the area within which they are sited, not just for the short term, but also provide positive outcomes for the future.

2.3 Engagement and Consultation

2.3.1 Design is an iterative process (i.e. it evolves over time), and there are many competing and often conflicting aspects that can pull the evolution of a development proposal from one solution to another. The key to ensuring that all of the important considerations are identified is consultation and engagement with the Planning Department at the earliest stage.

2.3.2 There are varying degrees of engagement dependant on the scale and type of development proposed, but the importance of this process prior to fixing key design principles is paramount in reducing unnecessary delay and costs.

2.3.3 The Council seeks and encourages developers to propose innovative designs and to justify alternative approaches to development that serves to enhance and create places to the benefit of the wider County Borough. The creation of unique developments, that do not follow standard layouts and designs, will be explored and considered at all times.

2.3.4 Whilst it is accepted that in some circumstances this cannot be achieved, the prime objective of this guidance document is to assist in creating places that are distinctive and defined by their design and character, rather than replicating development that appears to be of a standard design.

3 Policy Context

3.1 National Policy Context

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 9 (2016)

3.1.1   PPW provides the overarching planning framework for sustainable development in Wales and supports the principles of the 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'. As one of the key factors in achieving sustainable development, good design can protect and enhance environmental quality; consider the impact of climate change; help to attract business and investment; promote social inclusion, and improve the quality of life.

3.1.2   PPW emphasises that *'...meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales, from the construction or alteration of individual buildings to larger development proposals*[4]. Furthermore, PPW stipulates that good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers flexibility in use, and provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone.

3.1.3   Illustrated in Figure 3.1 below, these objectives are categorised into five key aspects of good design:

- Access;

- Character;

- Community Safety;

- Environmental Sustainability; and

- Movement.

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4   Paragraph 4.11.2 Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (2016 - Welsh Government).

Figure 3.1 Objectives of Good Design (PPW 2016)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)

3.1.4   TAN12 supplements PPW and provides detailed guidance on the design of new development, providing advice on how *'promoting sustainability through good design'* and *'planning for sustainable building'* can be facilitated through the planning system.

3.1.5   The TAN recognises the importance of good design, both in terms of its role in articulating culture and its importance to quality of life and the quality of the landscape and townscape.

3.1.6   The TAN places a focus on collaboration, creativeness, inclusiveness, the process of problem solving and innovation, embracing sustainability, architecture, place making, public realm, landscape, and infrastructure. The document notes that the suggested holistic approach requires a shift in emphasis away from a total reliance on prescriptive standards, to avoid stifling innovation and creativity.

3.1.7   Early considerations of design and collaboration in the process are identified as essential in achieving good design.

3.2 Local Policy Context

3.2.1   The policy framework for design is contained within Policies SP21 and BE1. Policy SP21 is the strategic policy which sets the context for the detailed policies and seeks to conserve and enhance the built environment and heritage of the whole County Borough.

Policy BE1 aims to ensure that all development proposals will complement and enhance the area generally, including the arterial gateways, townscapes, landscape and seascape, and retain existing character where this is desirable.

3.2.2   Strategic Policy SP21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Policy SP21

Built Environment and Historic Heritage

The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced through the following measures:

1.   Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals;

2.   Protecting arterial gateways from intrusive and inappropriate development;

3.   Safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance;

4.   The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement:

   (a) Landscapes of Historic Interest;

   (b) Historic Parks and Gardens;

   (c) Conservation Areas;

   (d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and

   (e) Listed Buildings and their curtilage.

LDP Objectives: OB 2, OB 23 and OB 24

3.2.3   Policy BE1 Design

Policy BE1

Design

All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate high quality design which fully takes into account the natural, historic and built environmental context and contributes to the creation of attractive, sustainable places.

Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

1. It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment;

2. It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges;

3. It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate;

4. It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community;

5. Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible;

6. It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement);

7. It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community;

8. It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through:

    (a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area;

    (b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land;

    (c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible;

    (d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain.

9. Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-off and flood risk and prevent pollution;

10. The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities.

3.2.4   Whilst Policy BE1 provides detailed design criteria, all policies within the LDP are interrelated and must be read together to understand their combined effect upon any planning proposal. The principle of good design is therefore intrinsically linked to a number of other policies within the LDP, including:

- Policy H1 (Housing Sites);

- Policy AH2 (Affordable Housing Exception Sites);

- Policy GT2 (Proposals for New Gypsy and Traveller Sites);

- Policy EC1 (Employment Allocations);

- Policy EC6 (Live-work Units);

- Policy R1 (Retail Allocations);

- Policy R2 (Proposals Within Retail Centres);

- Policy R3 (Out of Centre Retail Proposals);

- Policy EN4 (Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside);

- Policy EN5 (Conversion and Extension of Existing Buildings in the Countryside);

- Policy EN6 (Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites);

- Policy EN7 (Important Natural Features);

- Policy TR2 (Design and Access of New Development); and

- Policy BE2 (Buildings of Local Importance).

4 Implementation of Policy BE1 Design

4.0.1   Acknowledging that new development has the potential to have a major influence on the character of an area, Policy BE1 sets out ten criteria that development proposals will need to satisfy.

4.0.2   The sections below take each of the ten criterion in turn providing guidance on their implementation. It should be noted however that the policy criterion should not be considered in isolation, as all are interrelated with each criterion needing to be addressed to ensure high quality design that considers the built, historic and natural environment.

4.1 Character and Appearance (Criterion 1)

Criterion 1: *'It complements and enhances the character and appearance of the site, building or area in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment'.*

Creation of Character - Diversity and Choice

4.1.1   The character of a development can affect how it is perceived, and affect how people use and respond to it. This character can be respectful of the existing local area, or respond in a more individual or distinctive way. Dependant on the scale of the development proposed it can also provide distinctive character areas that respond to both the local context or specific uses or requirements. This can be influenced by the locality's position in the place/movement hierarchy[5] and in detailed design matters such as building lines, scale, density and massing of buildings, and the enclosure of spaces.

4.1.2   Formal and informal spaces can be created through a variation in all of these providing visual interest and legibility. Key junctions and buildings can be identified to provide 'way-markers' within sites. On smaller more self-contained sites, a specific character can provide a distinctive environment and create places of genuine quality and visual interest.

4.1.3   The Council seeks to ensure that sites provide a distinctiveness that allows innovation and quality to be provided within the public realm and design of the buildings themselves, rather than a uniformity of house type and character that could be 'anywhere'.

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5   Defining a Place and Movement Hierarchy is a method for defining the relative importance of particular streets/roads in terms of place and movement functions, not solely on the basis of traffic functions. See Manual for Streets (2007) for further information.

Site Assessment - Character and Context

4.1.4 All development, no matter its scale or use, does not sit alone within the confines of its application site boundary. The key to understanding how a site relates now or in the past to its immediate and wider community or area is often a key step in understanding how a site can be developed. This important stage in the design process is often omitted or considered after the initial designs have been set out. Further information about site context assessment is provided in Section 4.2.

Site Design Issues

4.1.5 Criterion 1 of Policy BE1 refers specifically to the detailed design of a site or building in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing and elevation treatment. These aspects are critical in ensuring that a new development is appropriate within its context.

4.1.6 The design response to the site's context and setting in terms of building heights / verticality, plot widths and setback etc. will be central to this, and can result in modern materials, construction methods and design responses that are in keeping with their surroundings. Existing building forms, architectural character, boundary treatments and building materials should be analysed and interpreted in order to inform this process. Dominant local building materials and building forms may be identified to influence the design.

4.1.7 Other detailed site design aspects that should be considered include measures such as the increase of building heights on corners or in prominent locations, the articulation of buildings around corners and the detailing of facades at the end of vistas.

4.1.8 Further advice on these topics is available from the Planning Officers Society for Wales Design Guide[6], the Welsh Government 'Site and Context Analysis Guide'[7], and 'Building for Life 12

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6   A Model Design Guide for Wales - Residential Development (2005 - Planning Officers Society for Wales).
7   Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (2016 - Welsh Government).

Wales'[8]. Further information on the use of materials is given in Section 4.3. For small scale householder developments, further detail is provided in **Appendix B** (Householder Design Guide).

> **Key Principle:** Developers will be expected to define and identify where and how their development proposals have had due regard to the creation of distinctiveness and enhancement of the character of the area where it is located.

4.2 Wider Context (Criterion 2)

> **Criterion 2:** *'It respects the context of the site and its place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough, its effects on townscape and the local historic and cultural heritage and it takes account of the site topography and prominent skylines or ridges'.*

4.2.1   Understanding the context surrounding the site, and the character (good or bad) within which a development will sit is key to understanding some fundamentals that can inform how the site is developed. It also provides the developer with justification for why specific design decisions or choices were taken, and informs the process in discussions with the client and/or the Council.

4.2.2   Introducing new development into the context of an existing established landscape, townscape and/or near to existing buildings is a key part of the design process and analysis of the site and its context has a fundamental role in achieving good design. Advice on site and context analysis and how this should be used to inform the development design is given in the Welsh Government publication 'Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site'[9] which also includes further references to other relevant publications.

4.2.3   The policy requires consideration to be given to the following topics:

- Landscape;

- Arterial Gateways;

- Townscape;

- Historic and Cultural Heritage; and

- Site topography, skylines and ridges.

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8   Building for Life 12 Wales (2015 Welsh Edition edited by Design Commission for Wales).
9   Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (2016 - Welsh Government).

4.2.4   Within these topics, the following factors should be addressed:

- Existing topography, key views, existing features within or near to the development site;

- The existing pattern of development including density, scale, massing;

- Features or characteristics of the area that are important and valued;

- Connectivity, not only public and private transport, but pedestrian and cycling linkages (refer to Criterion 7);

- Location of community facilities, shops, schools, parks, open spaces etc; and

- Ecological issues including water features, trees, habitats etc (refer to Criterion 5).

4.2.5   A simple sketch on a plan or map of the area, starts to identify some important local context. This information can be used to consider where access onto the existing highway network would be best located, where occupiers or users of the site would wish to travel in the area, what aspects of the site are important to be retained, and what constraints need to be removed or engaged with.

4.2.6   This stage of assessment can eliminate costly re-designs, but also ensures that the development takes advantage of the site's positive aspects and integrates with surrounding development and movement patterns, rather than working against them. Benefits of understanding the wider area can also reduce potential on-site requirements, if access to adjoining facilities are considered early. In addition, the benefit of retaining natural features and routes within the site also reduces the need for replacements or costly re-routing etc. (refer to Criterion 5). Clearly the scale of the development will dictate the extent of this process on a case-by-case basis, but this process is still beneficial for a single residential plot.

Landscape

4.2.7   Criterion 2 of Policy BE1 firstly refers to landscape and requires new developments to respect the site's place within the local landscape. Landscape context is fundamental to good design and should be the starting point in the design process. New development can have a significant effect on the landscape, and while design that responds and relates to the landscape can enhance landscape character, proposals that do not, will have a negative impact[10]. In designing new development, the issues set out below will need particular consideration in relation to the landscape.

[1] Landscape Designations

4.2.8   There are a number of designations at a national and local level that can apply to sensitive or notable landscapes. In the local context, the main relevant nationally recognised area of landscape importance is the 'Brecon Beacons National Park' (located immediately adjacent to the north eastern boundary of the County Borough). Additionally, there are a number of LDP designations that relate mainly, or in part, to landscape issues. These factors are considered in greater detail below.

Brecon Beacons National Park

4.2.9   The Brecon Beacons National Park was originally designated in 1957 for its landscape quality. Under the Environment Act 1995, there are two statutory National Park purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and

- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park by the public.

4.2.10   Under Section 62(2) of the Environment Act, all authorities must have regard to the National Park purposes when performing any functions affecting land in the National Park. Consequently, any development within Neath Port Talbot that could have a visual or sensory impact on the National Park will need to take into account National Park purposes and the effects on its landscapes.

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10   Further information and guidance will be provided in the Council's Landscape and Seascape SPG.

LDP Designations: Settlement Limits (LDP Policy SC1)

4.2.11   The LDP defines settlement limits (i.e. a line drawn around all settlements in Neath Port Talbot that are listed within the LDP Settlement Hierarchy, excluding the smallest groups of dwellings which are defined as 'dormitory settlements'). Within settlement limits, development that is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement will generally be acceptable, while outside these limits development is much more restricted (refer to Policy SC1).

4.2.12   The aims of this designation are partly to encourage development within sustainable locations and the development of sustainable communities, but also to prevent the coalescence of settlements, ribbon development and fragmented development and to prevent inappropriate development in the open countryside.

4.2.13   The settlement limits policy is therefore an important factor in the conservation of the countryside and the landscape generally. In design terms, developments that meet the requirements for location outside settlement limits and are therefore deemed to be appropriate in the countryside will still need to take into account their rural location and be sited as far as possible adjacent to existing buildings and be appropriate in scale and form. Larger scale, more massive or prominent buildings that contrast with their surroundings and are highly visible within the landscape should be avoided, and developments should be designed to have a scale and appearance that is appropriate to their rural surroundings.

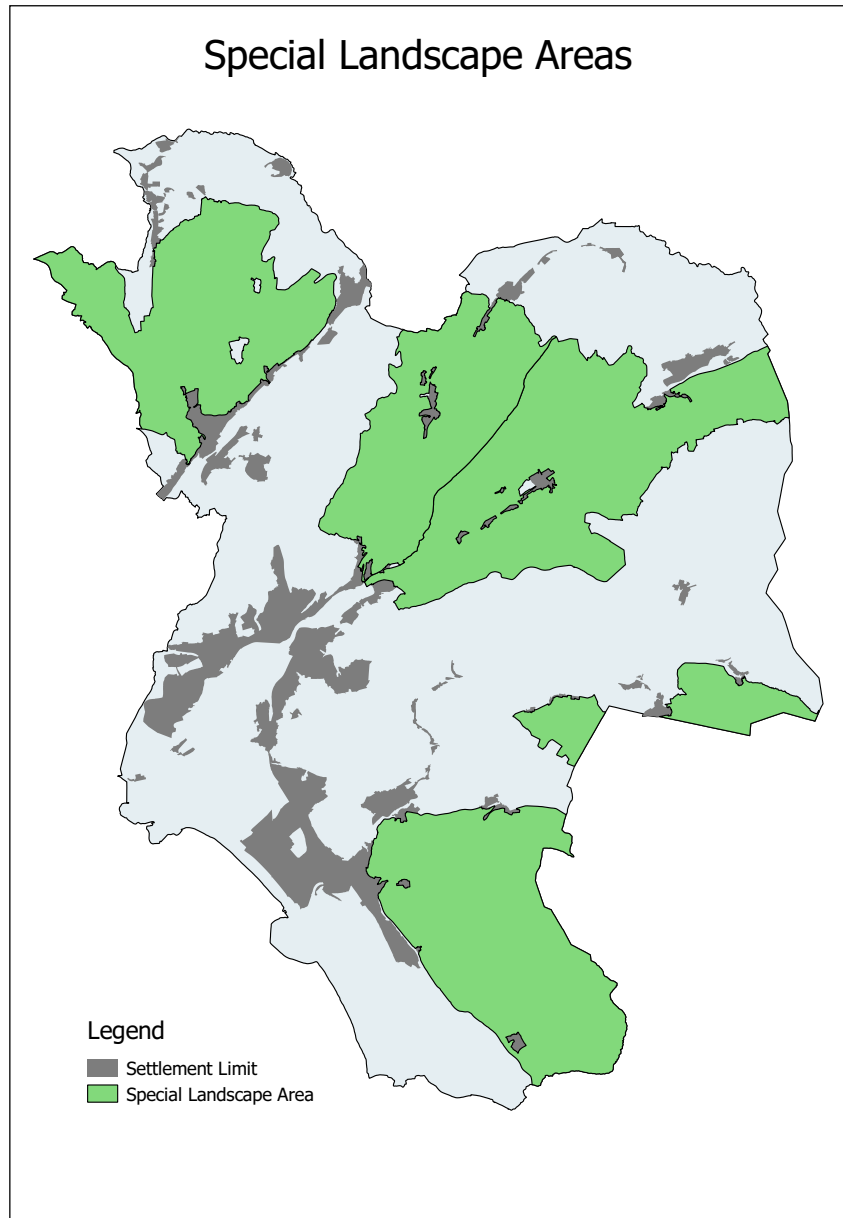*LDP Designations: Special Landscape Areas (LDP Policy EN2)*

4.2.14   Six Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) have been designated under LDP Policy EN2. SLAs are areas of high landscape quality which are intended to be protected from any development which would harm their distinctive features or characteristics. The SLAs have been identified using the designation criteria in the LANDMAP Guidance Note 1 (2008) and LANDMAP data (refer below for further information). The SLAs designated in Policy EN2 are illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

4.2.15   Within the designated SLAs, the emphasis is on protecting the landscape from any development that would harm their identified distinctive features or characteristics. The features and characteristics that led to the identification of each SLA are set out in the Landscape Advice Study[11] prepared to inform the LDP preparation process.

4.2.16   SLAs are landscapes that are particularly sensitive to new development and proposals for any type of development within an SLA will be expected to be designed taking full account of the special features and characteristics of the landscape and the site and its immediate surroundings, and will be expected to conserve and where possible enhance the appearance and character of the landscape.

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11   Consultancy Services for the Provision of Landscape Advice (2011 - TACP).
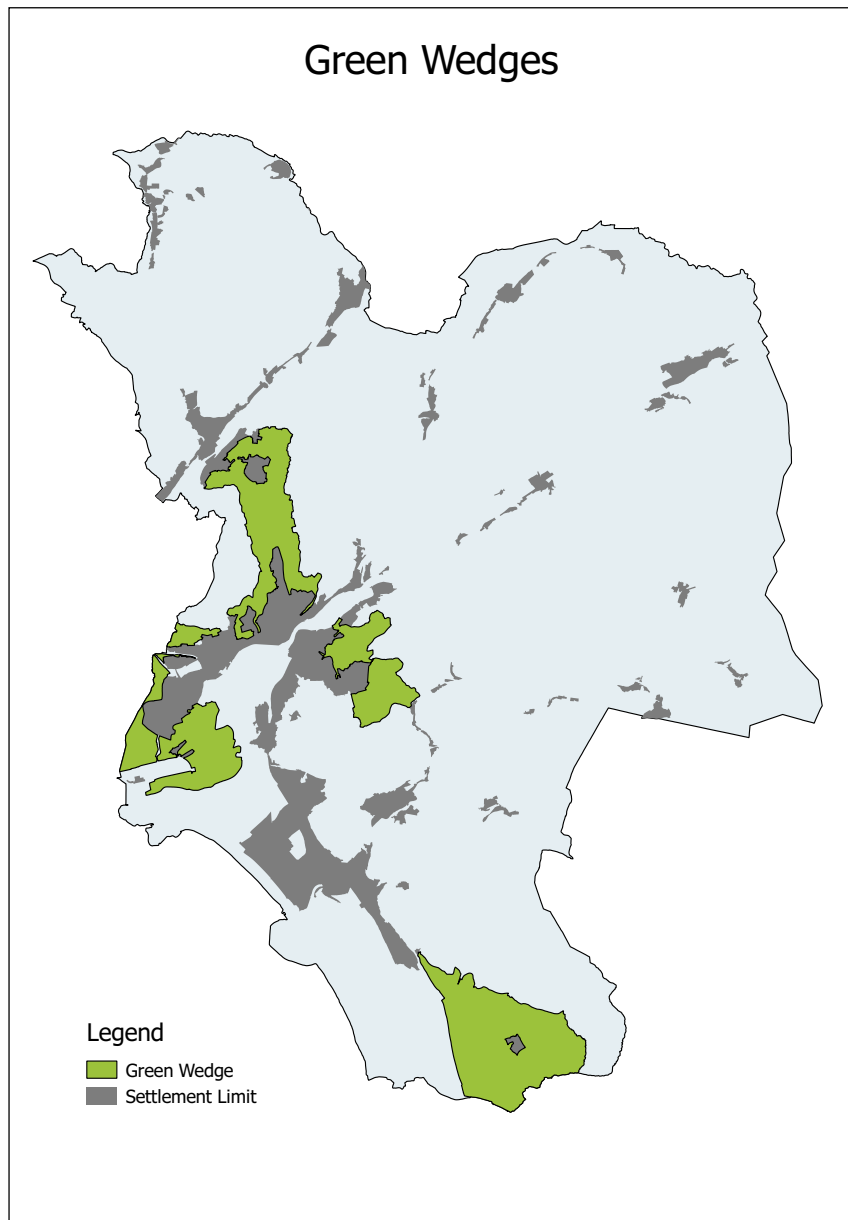
Figure 4.1 Special Landscape Areas (LDP Policy EN2)

LDP Designations: Green Wedges (LDP Policy EN3)

4.2.17 Green wedges are areas identified for protection in order to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to protect the setting of urban areas. Five green wedges have been identified within Neath Port Talbot, within which development is strictly controlled by being limited to the categories set out in national policy[12]. The green wedges designated in Policy EN3 are illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

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12   Planning Policy Wales Edition 9 (2016 - Welsh Government).

Figure 4.2 Green Wedges (LDP Policy EN3)

Green Wedges

Legend
■ Green Wedge
■ Settlement Limit

4.2.18   'Appropriate Development' within a green wedge is limited to: justified rural enterprise needs; essential outdoor sport / recreation facilities and cemeteries etc; extension / alteration or replacement of existing dwellings and small scale diversification within farm complexes. The aim in all cases is to maintain the openness of the green wedge.

4.2.19   In the very limited circumstances in which development may be allowed within a green wedge, proposals will be required to demonstrate that their impacts on the openness of the green wedge is minimised and that they will maintain the character and appearance of the area and the functions for which the green wedge has been identified.

[2] Other Designations

4.2.20   Other designations that are not primarily relating to the landscape, but which may have landscape implications include those relating to biodiversity and geodiversity, including internationally recognised sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Ramsar Sites, nationally designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or local biodiversity and geodiversity designations such as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). More information on biodiversity issues is given in Section 4.5 below.

[3] LANDMAP

4.2.21   LANDMAP[13] is a landscape assessment process developed by the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) to provide a system to cover the whole of Wales. LANDMAP separately assesses five different aspects of the landscape: geological; visual and sensory; habitat; historic and cultural.

4.2.22   Using this methodology, White Consultants undertook a LANDMAP Landscape Assessment for Neath Port Talbot in 2004[14], identifying and describing landscape character areas covering the whole of the County Borough. This study therefore identified the relevant features of the landscape in all parts of the County Borough, and should be the starting point for assessments of landscape and the potential impacts of development proposals as part of the design process.

Design Implications of Landscape Issues

4.2.23   Taking into account the matters summarised above, the following issues relating to landscape should be taken into consideration and incorporated into the design process where appropriate:

- The site layout, building location, orientation and massing should be carefully considered in order to fully take into account the existing landscape setting and character of the area;

- Existing landscape features of value which could add character to a development, be of value to wildlife and integrate development into surrounding areas should be incorporated into the scheme and be protected throughout the site clearance and construction process;

- A landscape framework should be prepared at the outset of the scheme design process, including the creation of features such as green corridors and the integration of buildings and spaces within the wider context;

- Existing or new landscape features should be considered to provide natural wind shelter in exposed locations.

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13   Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process.
14   Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (White Consultants 2004).

4.2.24 Further information and guidance on landscape matters will be given in the Council's Landscape and Seascape SPG.

Arterial Gateways

Definitions

4.2.25 Criterion 2 of Policy BE1 relates to arterial gateways. These are defined in the LDP as areas adjacent to the County Borough boundary which are prominent when entering or leaving Neath Port Talbot and help to define the character and image of the area.

4.2.26 The LDP also identifies the primary and core road networks within the County Borough. The primary network comprises the M4 motorway, the A465 (T) and the A483 dual carriageway (Fabian Way). The core network comprises the A48, A4109, A4107, A474, A4067, A4221 and A4069. The most significant 'gateways' are therefore identified as being those located where the primary road network and/or main line railway enter the County Borough, with other key gateways being located along other important main roads.

4.2.27 The extent of the areas within which impacts on the gateways will need to be considered will depend on the nature and importance of the transport route and the character of the landscape, countryside or townscape in the vicinity of the gateway. Policy BE1 (2) states that proposals should respect the development site's *'...place within the local landscape, including its impact on the important arterial gateways into the County Borough...'.* Whether a development has an impact on the gateway will depend on whether it would be visible to people entering or leaving Neath Port Talbot via that route and if so whether it would be prominent and have a significant effect (positive or negative) on the character of its surroundings in the locality.

4.2.28 An outline of the locations, individual locational characteristics, and potential impacts of new developments for each primary and core network gateway is provided in **Appendix A**[15].

Townscape and Historic and Cultural Heritage

4.2.29 When a site is being developed within an existing built-up area or town, the site and context analysis will need to include all the aspects listed in paragraph 4.2.3 above, and depending on the size and significance of the site and development, this will need input from a range of specialists, co-ordinated by the designers, agent or project managers. Developers are also advised to instigate pre-application discussions with the Planning Department at an early stage[16].

4.2.30 Where a site is in an old-established or historic area, context analysis will need to take into account any statutory or local designations of buildings, features or areas including Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Buildings of Local Importance (refer to

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15 Further information will also be available from the Council's Landscape and Seascape SPG.
16 The procedures for undertaking pre-application discussions applied by the Council can be found on the Council's website: **http://www.npt.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=10326**

LDP Policy BE2) and Conservation Areas, but should also be extended to include the character and appearance of the wider area and the existing and potential role of the site within it.

4.2.31   Further advice on context analysis is given in the Welsh Government's 'Site and Context Analysis Guide'[17].

Site Topography and Prominent Skylines or Ridges

4.2.32   As a result of the nature and topography of the County Borough, many development sites will be in prominent locations, on hillsides or valley locations, potentially visible from a wide area. In such cases, strategic landscape assessment should be undertaken at the start of the design process analysing the impact and prominence of the site and taking into account the existence of prominent skylines and ridges. The site should be designed from general layout to building mass, orientation and design, to ensure that any noticeable intrusion affecting important landscape features is minimised.

> **Key Principle:** Developers will be expected to show how local context and character has been addressed, including the wider landscape, townscape and heritage of the area where appropriate, and how this has informed key design decisions.

4.3 Materials and Landscaping (Criterion 3)

> **Criterion 3:** *'It utilises materials appropriate to its surroundings and incorporates hard and soft landscaping and screening where appropriate'.*

Materials

4.3.1   The use of materials will have a significant bearing on the character and appearance of any development, not just in respect of the buildings themselves but also within the public realm and highway. The choice of materials should be informed by the intended use of the development, the existing character of the area, the local context and its appropriateness within the setting of the proposed development area.

4.3.2   The choice of materials can have a positive impact on the likely use and perception of the development. The use of materials within the public realm can define private and public spaces, car parking, shared areas etc. Used with variation in the highway specification, they can also be used to control traffic and slow traffic speeds.

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17   Site and Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (2016 - Welsh Government).

4.3.3 The choice of materials will also need to take into account inclusive design principles, to ensure that the materials used will promote equal access for all. Surfacing of roads, pavements and amenity areas should be accessible to all and take into account the needs of partially sighted people or those with impaired mobility (refer to Section 4.10).

4.3.4 Consideration should be given to the longevity of any materials used, considering the potential lifespan of the materials, how the materials are likely to weather and how robust or durable they will be for the intended use.

Materials and Sustainability

4.3.5 The choice of materials, finishes and construction techniques has the potential to have significant impacts on the overall sustainability of a development through enhanced insulation, passive climate control, enabling efficient rainwater harvesting, reducing energy use before, during and after the construction phase, and enabling energy generation from renewable sources.

4.3.6 The incorporation of solar power generation technologies within cladding systems or integrated into roofs at the design stage can have visual and efficiency benefits. Further guidance on energy generation is available in the Council's Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPG[18]. Similarly, the use of innovative concepts such as green roofs[19] and eco-friendly products such as bat-friendly roof membranes can be beneficial in terms of biodiversity, energy efficiency and visual impact.

4.3.7 The amount of energy used within buildings, and during the construction period can be influenced considerably by the type of materials used. Careful consideration should be given to the use of sustainable materials that are durable and have low embodied energy[20] in their production and transportation to site.

4.3.8 Where it is appropriate or realistically possible, any existing materials on site should be re-used, and waste minimised. Under LDP Policy W3[21] all new built development is required to demonstrate that provision has been made for the management of waste both during the construction and the occupation phases, and larger proposals will be required to produce a Site Waste Management Plan.

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18   SPG: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (July 2017).
19   Roofs partially or completely covered with vegetation and a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane.
20   Embodied energy is the total amount of energy taken to produce any product, as embodied in the product itself.
21   LDP Policy W3 Waste Management in New Development.

Detailing and Quality Specification

4.3.9   The quality and specification of a build can affect the overall feel and character of a place, and defining these issues at the planning stage can ensure that the quality of a development is maintained beyond the planning process. This can include:

- Specification drawings for means of enclosure;

- Signage and lighting, and other public realm street furniture;

- Detailing of public realm finishes, such as paving;

- The location of sub-stations and other infrastructure;

- Meter-boxes and vent locations;

- Open spaces / gardens / soft landscaping.

Landscaping and Screening

4.3.10   Landscaping is often considered after the layout has been fixed, utilising land left over, or introduced in areas that are not able to be fully developed. This is not considered to be the right approach, as landscaping, including the provision of open spaces, natural features and street tree planting can provide a significant difference to the character of a site. The landscaping strategy for a site should be considered at an early stage, both integrating and enhancing existing natural features, and creating a sense of character and individual place-making.

4.3.11   The use of wildlife friendly species and those of a local provenance can further enhance a development, rooting any development to its local context. In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate to screen a development from sensitive areas or viewpoints through the use of tree planting or landscaping belts.

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Key Principle: Developers should explain and justify the use of materials and landscaping within the development, including the public realm, and how these promote and inform the legibility and distinctiveness of the development, enhance the local area and its natural resources and promote energy efficiency.

4.4 Highway Safety and Amenity (Criterion 4)

Criterion 4: *'It would not have a significant adverse impact on highway safety, the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land or the community'.*

Highway Safety

4.4.1   A wide range of types of development can have a significant impact on highway safety, from householder developments involving garages and driveways, to major housing and industrial sites. In order to ensure that developments do not have adverse effects on highway safety, they will need to comply with the Highway Authority's requirements.

4.4.2   National policy relating to highway design matters is set out in Planning Policy Wales and TAN18[22]. More detailed advice on the design and layout of developments and the approach that should be taken to balancing design and place-making aspects, connectivity, permeability and vehicular access provision, is set out in 'Manual for Streets'[23].

4.4.3   More detailed technical specifications are contained within the Neath Port Talbot Highways Technical Design Guide[24], which sets out the standards that will be applied in specific cases.

Parking

4.4.4   Parking may be required for development of any scale or type, and although the promotion of sustainable forms of transport will remain a priority, incorporating parking for occupiers, staff and visitors will still be required. Poor parking arrangements can cause both unacceptable visual impacts, and also result in conflict and crime. Parking should normally be located close to the development it serves, be safe to use, and be designed to reflect the character and street scene proposed.

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22   Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007)
23   Manual for Streets (Welsh Government / Department of Transport - 2007).
24   Neath Port Talbot Highway Technical Design Guide for Residential and Commercial Developments (Consultation Draft - May 2017).

4.4.5   Traditional parking options such as hard surfaced drives fronting on to the side of properties can result in a dominant feature within streets. It can also be difficult to accommodate parking and adhere to traditional patterns of development when developing small infill sites. On-street and frontage parking can interrupt the continuity and enclosure of street frontages, while conversely courtyard parking if undertaken poorly, can result in crime, or a fear of crime.

4.4.6   Very often, these issues can be mitigated through specific design approaches:

- Frontage and driveway parking can be inter-mixed with landscaping and can be partially screened through the use of boundary treatments.

- Garages should be of sufficient size to accommodate cars, bikes and storage.

- Parking courtyards should be accessible, overlooked and provided with enclosure to define then as semi-private spaces.

- On-street parking should be integrated with the highway design and landscaping, creating parking squares, that can provide alternative informal community spaces, and add to the character of an area, creating a sense of place.

4.4.7   Further information and guidance on the standards that will need to be achieved in respect of parking provision is set out in the Council's Parking Standards SPG[25].

Residential / Community Amenity

4.4.8   Residential amenity has an important influence on the quality of life experienced by residents. The relationships between buildings, in terms of their height, position and the positioning of windows and other features all have an impact on the privacy of residents and neighbouring properties and the level of general residential amenity experienced.

4.4.9   In relation to residential amenity and privacy issues, the Council has prepared guidance relating to householder and residential developments which sets out standards which should be adhered to in order to safeguard these concerns. These guidelines cover matters such as distances between habitable room windows (to avoid overlooking), the size and massing of new buildings including domestic extensions and extensions and alterations to roofs (to avoid loss of outlook or light and to safeguard the overall appearance and character of the area). These guidelines are available in appendix B.

Noise

4.4.10   The potential sources of and transmission of noise should be considered within the design process to ensure that any such issues do not adversely impact on quality of life for residents. This is particularly important if the proposed development is located close

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25   SPG: Parking Standards (October 2016).

to external sources of noise, such as busy roads and railway lines, or potentially noisy uses are being proposed within a noise sensitive area. Further guidance on noise matters is available in the Council's Pollution SPG[26] and TAN 11: Noise[27].

Key Principles:

- Developers will be expected to show that a development proposal will not have any adverse effects on highway safety or residential / community amenity either for existing residents of the area or for occupiers of the site.

- It should be demonstrated that the visual impact of parking has been considered as an integral part of the design process, and that the provision of parking does not undermine the overall urban design aspirations for the development, or lead to crime or a fear of crime.

4.5 Retention of Important Features (Criterion 5)

Criterion 5: *'Important local features (including buildings, amenity areas, green spaces and green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological connectivity) are retained and enhanced as far as possible'.*

4.5.1   Criteria 1 and 2 of Policy BE1 require all development proposals to take into account the natural, historical and built environmental context. In support of this principle, Criterion 5 requires the retention and enhancement (where possible) of local features which form an important part of this context, including buildings, amenity areas and green spaces.

4.5.2   Distinctive local features of the types listed can play a significant role in defining the unique character of places, and this can very easily be lost unnecessarily if such features are removed when new developments take place. Opportunities should therefore be taken whenever possible to retain and integrate such features within the new scheme.

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26   SPG: Pollution (October 2016).
27   Technical Advice Note 11: Noise (1997 - Welsh Government).

Buildings

4.5.3   Distinctive existing buildings (including those of interesting design or that are of significance to the local community as well as structures of historic interest) can provide a clear distinctive character and sense of place. Many such buildings will have been identified by being listed, being included within a conservation area or by being identified as Buildings of Local Importance (LDP Policy BE2), and will consequently have some statutory or policy protection, but others may not be protected in this way despite having a character or appearance that enhances (or could enhance) the locality.

4.5.4   Where buildings are protected by such designations, specific separate consents may be required for any demolition or alteration, and national and local planning policy will require full consideration to be given to their retention. In all such cases, whether buildings are separately protected or not, careful consideration should be given to their role within the local areas and community and the possibility of retention or part retention should be fully addressed where this is appropriate[28].

Amenity Areas, Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure

4.5.5   Development sites can often incorporate existing areas that provide green space or amenity space that is important in the local area, including areas that can be considered to be 'green infrastructure'[29]. Other policy requirements may require the provision of equivalent or additional areas as part of a new development, but as with distinctive local buildings and other features, existing open/green spaces can help to provide a distinctive character and sense of place that can easily be lost if they are removed and replaced with alternative provision.

4.5.6   The contribution that such areas make to the character and distinctiveness of their locality should therefore be assessed and taken into consideration as part of the site context assessment, and where possible such areas that are important in the local context should be retained within new development areas.

28   Further information on the historic environment will be available from the Council's Historic Environment SPG.
29   'Green Infrastructure' can include green corridors, roofs, walls etc. that provide regulating services including mitigating flood risk, providing habitat and preventing extremes of temperature in urban areas.

Biodiversity and Ecological Connectivity

4.5.7 Many sites have some biodiversity value, and this may not always be obvious. Even previously developed vacant sites, or derelict buildings can offer valuable habitats to many species, including those that may have legal protection. Sites may form part of a network of areas and corridors important for biodiversity, or have the potential to enhance such networks and improve ecological connectivity. As such, early consideration of the biodiversity value of the site will be integral within the design process.

4.5.8 Areas of a development site with biodiversity value should be retained and/or enhanced within the development proposals, and existing hedgerows, trees and natural features integrated within the site layout[30]. This will not only enhance the biodiversity value of the area, but will also enhance the specific character of the site. Where possible, opportunities for wildlife should be incorporated within the design of buildings such as by providing or maintaining access through the use of bird or bat bricks etc.

4.5.9 Where there is a loss or impact, mitigation will be required, and this should relate to the development proposed, the habitat lost, or species affected. This can often be integrated within the site layout, building design and infrastructure provided. Innovation within this area is welcomed, and often the integration of biodiversity enhancements within the infrastructure (such as SuDS) or open space/play provision can provide a more viable alternative. Where space is limited other less traditional technologies such as green roofs and walls can be incorporated. As a last resort, compensation measures may be appropriate, to enhance biodiversity elsewhere to compensate for losses on a site[31].

4.5.10 The concept of 'multiple benefits' should be at the forefront of this process, which can not only be a good use of limited space, but also financially beneficial. A single space can be biodiversity rich, an informal open space/play area can be used for sustainable drainage in addition to providing visual and health benefits.

4.5.11 The Council requires developers of sites, no matter how small, to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity. The Council has produced 'Biodiversity in Planning - A Basic Guide for Developers[32] to highlight how these issues can be addressed. The Council's Countryside and Wildlife team can also offer guidance and advice at the pre-application stage and further information will be available in the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPG.

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30   Refer to LDP Policy EN7.
31   Further information on mitigation and compensation will be available from the Council's Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPG.
32   Biodiversity in Planning - A Basic Guide for Developers

Key Principles:

- Developers will be expected to identify the important local features that exist within a site, their role in the creation of the character / individuality of the place and how these will be enhanced and/or protected and integrated appropriately within the development proposals.

- The design of the site should integrate with and connect to existing features, and provide a logical hierarchy of formal and informal spaces, that are usable for all. The developer should demonstrate that this adds to the overall design of the site, and improves biodiversity and ecological connectivity through the use of wildlife friendly and native species.

- Building design should incorporate features that provide opportunities for wildlife wherever possible.

4.6 Community Safety (Criterion 6)

Criterion 6: *'It achieves and creates attractive, safe places and public spaces, taking account of 'Secured by Design' principles (including where appropriate natural surveillance, visibility, well lit environments and areas of public movement)'.*

4.6.1   Local Authorities are required to have due regard to crime and disorder prevention in the exercise of their functions under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This is reinforced within PPW and TAN 12: Design with the main objectives being to:

- Ensure attractive, safe public spaces; and

- Achieve security through natural surveillance.

4.6.2   'Secured By Design' (SBD) is the UK Police flagship initiative that is founded on the principles of designing out crime and crime prevention. At its core, SBD aims to bring together elements of physical security with environmental design, layout and construction.

4.6.3   Development of any scale, whether it be an extension to an individual property or a large residential or commercial development, should consider both the security of the development and how the layout of a site can impact positively upon both crime reduction and reducing the fear of crime. Overlooked public spaces, pedestrian links, boundary treatments, and the defining of private/public spaces can all provide positive outcomes.

4.6.4 Achieving good design, appropriate site layouts and landscaping can help to create a safer and more secure environment for residents, support community cohesion, reduce instances of criminal and anti-social behaviour and have a positive impact on people's quality of life and perceptions of an area.

4.6.5 Sites across the County Borough can offer specific challenges, especially in relation to topographical constraints and pedestrian connectivity. The design and layout of parking, the integration of open space (whether it be formal or informal) and the perceived safety of pedestrian linkages are especially relevant considerations.

4.6.6 The Council consults the South Wales Police Architectural Liaison Officer on all major developments. Their comments and guidance will be a material consideration in the determination of any application. Their advice can also be sought at pre-application stage by the LPA, with further information available on their website[33].

Secured by Design - General Principles

4.6.7 Development in Neath Port Talbot will be expected to consider Secured by Design principles, and should:

- Encourage high design standards, ensuring that all development is designed to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime;

- Enhance the quality of life for residents to make Neath Port Talbot a place where people want to live and work;

- Create places that encourage healthier communities, providing safe and usable amenity areas and safe walking and cycling routes;

- Support community cohesion and encourage social interaction through creating spaces that encourage use by community members and providing access to all;

- Design development with natural surveillance to enhance security; and

- Design areas to allow for convenient and safe movement for all users and transport modes to prevent conflict.

33   www.securedbydesign.com

Layout and Movement

4.6.8 The layout of a development should consider how people will move around the development, and should encourage use by all transport modes. All routes should be well lit, convenient, have natural surveillance and meet the needs of people with all abilities. Routes should connect to the existing road network to promote the sense of identity of the community and prevent segregation.

4.6.9 Vehicular and pedestrian routes should be visually open and integrate to other networks. For residential sites, the design and layout of streets can help to naturally lower traffic speeds, creating a safer environment for residents.

4.6.10 Parking areas should be located within close proximity of dwellings, and where possible be well lit, visible from surrounding properties, and have a safe and direct pedestrian link.

Access and Footpaths

4.6.11 Footpaths and cycleways provide important connections and should be provided in locations that encourage use. Paths should have good visibility along the route, avoid narrow corridors and be well-lit. Bus stops and shelters should be located in areas with good surveillance and should be part of the active street frontage.

4.6.12 Generally, any footpaths or cycleways should not be located at the rear of buildings or provide access to gardens. If this is unavoidable, access from the rear should be controlled and designed to maximise security. Any planting along routes will need to be considered, to ensure that the types and species used do not overhang or provide hiding places. The use of suitable planting should enhance natural surveillance.

Open Spaces and Communal Areas

4.6.13 Public open spaces and amenity areas are an important element of new development, and can influence the character of the development. Due to the important contribution such areas make towards sustainable and healthy communities, it is important they are designed to ensure they are safe, usable and inviting. They should be located and designed to be overlooked by buildings to allow natural surveillance and should not be located in areas that are isolated or poorly lit.

4.6.14   Where possible, private rear boundaries should not back onto public open spaces. If appropriate, design measures should incorporate features to prevent unauthorised vehicular access onto public open spaces.

> **Key Principle:** Developers will be expected to identify how a development has had due regard to reducing crime and the fear of crime through the layout and design of the development.

4.7 Integrated Transport and Linkages (Criterion 7)

> **Criterion 7:** *'It plays a full role in achieving and enhancing an integrated transport and communications network promoting the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and ensures linkages with the existing surrounding community'.*

Integrated Networks

4.7.1   The accessibility of a site and ease of movement are critical to the success of the development and for the well-being of people using and accessing the development. Developments with well designed streets and connections help shape sustainable communities and create places for people to live and work. Good design and connectivity are more likely to encourage walking and cycling and create attractive places which are more likely to encourage social interaction.

4.7.2   The layout of new development should provide a coherent and legible street network that connects people to local facilities, public transport and walking and cycling routes. The layout should be easy to navigate and provide safe, convenient access around the development and to connecting areas.

4.7.3   Whilst new development needs to integrate and connect with the existing community and network, consideration should also be given to whether the new development provides the opportunity to improve the accessibility and legibility of the wider area by creating new routes and safer connections. Applicants should refer to Manual for Streets[34] and have regard for the principles contained within it.

Streets as Social Spaces

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34   Manual for Streets (Department for Transport / Department of Communities and Local Government / Welsh Government 2007).

4.7.4 The function of a street is far more than just movement, having a wider function in strengthening and building communities that are safe and accessible. The design process should provide for a more holistic approach, creating a sense of place and recognising that streets are multi functioning areas that are focal points within new developments, allowing for social interaction and for safe, convenient movement.

4.7.5 In the past, developments have been centred around the use of the private car, with walking and cycling routes often segregated. Design that is focused purely around vehicle movement can erode the character of the area and discourage walking and cycling.

4.7.6 Streets should be designed as social spaces, as they serve many functions and uses, with the design of streets having a strong emphasis on place-making and pedestrian movement. The needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, and emergency service vehicles should be at the heart of the design process and dependent on the street's function in the overall network, these users should be put above the needs of motorists.

4.7.7 Streets should encourage walking and cycling, and have adequate building frontage to provide natural surveillance and enhance public safety to encourage their use. Pedestrian only links should have generous widths, be short in length and ensure they are over looked, to create links that encourage use and feel safer to use. The image below illustrates a good example of a pedestrian link that provides generous open space, is short in length, with tree planting and surveillance from buildings.

Connectivity, Linkages and Movement

4.7.8 The Council seeks a collaborative design approach, within which vehicular, pedestrian and cycle linkages are designed in conjunction with the 'urban design' for the development site.

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4.7.9 The pattern of movement, and 'desire lines' for connectivity to key facilities, or services within and around a site can set a basic framework within which development parcels sit. However, this framework should be flexible, logical and legible, and relevant to the overall character and needs for the development it serves. Vehicular traffic volumes require specific carriageway widths, and the need to accommodate parking and servicing are important factors to consider.

4.7.10 The overriding aim is to create places within which people and buildings can function at a human scale, and where the infrastructure reflects this, not only in scale but also in its detailed design and materials. The Council's technical guide to highway design[35] gives more detailed information on detailed technical requirements for the construction of streets and roads.

4.7.11 Larger development should distinguish between primary routes, secondary routes and tertiary routes by varying the character and scale of the routes through a site, creating a sense of place, and character areas. This approach can help to reinforce a hierarchy of streets and spaces that makes the development legible and easier to understand. It can also be key in defining areas that are public and those that are solely for residents, helping to discourage crime and create places that are attractive for people to live in.

4.7.12 Sites should be permeable and interconnected allowing for pedestrian and cycle movement, but also be designed for low vehicle speeds. The road alignment, materials, landscaping including street planting and variation in building lines can all contribute to this, without the need for obvious traffic calming of the need for an over-proliferation of signing or traffic orders.

4.7.13 For each street and space in the hierarchy within a development, the applicant should be able to describe its desired character and role within the wider structure of the development, its accessibility and traffic function, and its design characteristics.

4.7.14 The developer should be able to identify and justify pedestrian and cycle routes, that are both logical, integrated and safe to use for all ages and abilities. Developers will need to pay particular regard to the Council's emerging Active Travel 'Integrated Network Map'.

4.7.15 Further advice on these topics is available within 'Building for Life 12 Wales'[36].

Key Principle: Developers will be expected to show how movement and connectivity have been addressed for all modes of transport and that the development design is legible, reduces traffic speeds, and creates a network hierarchy that adds to the creation of character areas and interconnected spaces.

4.8 Resource Efficiency (Criterion 8)

Criterion 8:

'It uses resources, including land and energy, as efficiently as possible through:

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35   Neath Port Talbot Highway Technical Design Guide for Residential and Commercial Developments (Consultation Draft - May 2017).
36   Building for Life 12 Wales (2015 Welsh Edition edited by Design Commission for Wales).

(a) Making the best and most efficient use of the land available through being of appropriate density taking into account the character and appearance of the area, normally a minimum of 35 dwellings per hectare in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area or a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare in the Valleys Strategy Area;

(b) The layout and form of the development does not preclude the reasonable use of other adjacent land;

(c) Developing brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where possible;

(d) Minimising building exposure while maximising solar gain'.

Housing Density

4.8.1   Land has become a scarce resource and any new development, or redevelopment should ensure land is used as efficiently as possible. Policy BE1 specifies a density of 35 dwellings per hectare (dph) in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area and 30dph in the Valleys Strategy Area that would normally be expected on all new development proposals. These densities were established through an analysis of the delivered housing density on sites across all the LDP spatial areas over recent years.

4.8.2   All new development should aim to meet the specified densities as a minimum, and the development should be designed to create a sustainable development pattern which incorporates dwellings and other features, such as open space as part of the development concept. The density of the development should be considered at an early stage within the design process, and should be integral to the overall vision for the site.

4.8.3   There are a number of design approaches that can be used within the overall site design concept to ensure that higher density can be achieved successfully without compromising principles of sustainable development. These include:

● Provision of high quality open space to provide visual relief and recreation opportunities, preferably located around concentrations of services and facilities;

● The provision of some usable private open space for all dwellings, for example patios and balconies;

● Clear demarcation between public and private spaces;

● The integration of car parking provision more efficiently into the overall concept, avoiding the domination of the street scene.

4.8.4   Whilst it is important to make the best use of land, the site layout and design will be influenced by the character and setting of the development. There may be instances where the topography of the site, or specific features of the development site may not

allow development to meet the specified densities. Should the applicant be able to demonstrate that constraints, or important site features require development to adopt a lower density, developments below the specified densities will be considered.

4.8.5 In some locations, building densities higher than the specified 35dph and 30dph will be appropriate. This applies in particular to sites with high levels of accessibility, or close to concentrations of local services and facilities, such as town centre and beach front locations. Building at higher densities can provide a range of benefits, and can respond positively to linking to local services and amenities and public transport. Higher density development provides the opportunity to include design elements that define the space and can create active frontages to main streets. LDP Policy H1: Housing Sites provides a list of allocated housing sites where higher density development will be expected.

Calculating Housing Density

4.8.6 To calculate the density of a site, the site area needs to be measured in hectares. On larger housing development, or developments containing multiple dwellings, the whole site area, including any access roads and amenity spaces will be included in the site area. On single unit schemes, the site area will be taken from the front boundary and include the total size of the plot.

Dwellings Per Hectare = Number of Dwellings / Site Area (Hectares)

Site Layout

4.8.7 The layout and form of a development site should take into account its surroundings, existing and future movement patterns, connectivity and permeability. Where a development site is adjacent to undeveloped land or land currently developed but not publicly accessible, a site should be designed to make provision for future potential connectivity, including in cases where connections are not feasible at the time of construction but may become so in the future. This design principle is illustrated below[37]:

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37   Further guidance on the principle of 'connectivity' is provided in Section 4.7.

Preference for Brownfield Development

4.8.8   PPW indicates that previously developed (or brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites[38]. This will depend on the suitability of the site in question, and it is recognised that some previously developed land may not be suitable for re-use because of the presence of protected species or valuable habitats, industrial heritage, or contamination.

Orientation

4.8.9   The final part of Criterion 8 indicates that developments and building orientation should be planned to minimise building exposure while maximising solar gain. A range of factors will influence the overall orientation and positioning of buildings within a site, but within the particular constraints of topography, highways considerations and other design expectations, careful consideration should be given to levels of exposure of different parts of the site (including an evaluation of prevailing winds and natural existing shelter due to topography, tree belts etc.), and the design and general orientation of the development layout and of individual buildings planned accordingly to minimise exposure.

4.8.10   Orientation of individual buildings is also important in terms of solar gain, and building layouts should be planned to ensure that this is maximised within the constraints of the site taking it into account in the design of buildings where possible, ensuring that larger windows and habitable rooms are located on southerly facing elevations if practicable.

38   Previously developed land is that which is, or was, occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure. A full definition is provided in Figure 4.4 of PPW.

However, care should be taken to avoid overheating. The potential for siting solar panels on southerly facing roofs and surfaces should also be maximised. Further advice is available from the Welsh Government Practice Guidance - Planning for Sustainable Buildings[39].

Key Principle: Developers will be expected to show how the planning, layout and overall orientation of the development has maximised the efficient use of land and other resources taking into account the constraints of the site.

4.9 Drainage Systems (Criterion 9)

Criterion 9: *'Its drainage systems are designed to limit surface water run-off and flood risk and prevent pollution'.*

4.9.1   New developments should be designed to ensure there is no detrimental impact on water quality or flood risk (either within the site or elsewhere). The use of sustainable and efficient drainage systems within developments provides an opportunity to better manage the run-off of surface water.

4.9.2   The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can be an effective drainage solution, providing a more efficient alternative to conventional drainage systems. Traditional methods, such as piped drainage, can cause increased run-off rates, which can result in soil erosion,flood risk and polluted water supply, whereas SuDS interventions can improve the quality and quantity of surface water run-off and can slow down the rate of water flow.

SuDS: Policy Context

4.9.3   Schedule 3 of The Flood and Water Management Act (2010) will require all new developments to include SuDS features to comply with national standards. To date, this Schedule has not yet commenced.

4.9.4   Until Schedule 3 is commenced, the Welsh Government has, in 2016, published interim advisory national standards. The recommended non-statutory standards[40] advise on effective ways of embedding SuDS principles into new developments, providing detail of the design, construction, operation and maintenance of SuDS.

4.9.5   Prior to the commencement of Schedule 3, developers should have consideration for the Welsh Government guidance. Within the local policy context, Policy BE1 (9) requires development proposals to design drainage systems to limit surface water run-off and prevent flood risk and pollution.

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39   Welsh Government Practice Guidance - Planning for Sustainable Buildings (July 2014).
40   Recommended Non-Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) in Wales - Designing, Constructing, Operating and Maintaining Surface Water Drainage Systems (2016 - Welsh Government).

Opportunities

4.9.6   There are many benefits and opportunities presented by the use of SuDS. Dependent on how SuDS are implemented within a scheme, it can reduce volumes of surface water, reduce pressure on sewer infrastructure by enabling the network to better cope with the flow of discharge and improve the quality of water by using processes such as filtration to remove pollutants from the water supply. If implemented successfully, SuDS can also reduce long term costs as blockages can be easily identified above ground and remedied more readily.

4.9.7   New development has the potential to increase the total volume and flow of surface water run-off by replacing natural drainage with impermeable surfaces, which could make areas more susceptible to localised flood risk. Introducing SuDS into new development can, depending on design, help by reducing the risk of flood by slowing down the speed of water flow and provide areas for water storage to allow water to infiltrate into the ground.

4.9.8   The use of SuDS can contribute to increase areas of amenity space and green infrastructure, which contribute to creating safe, attractive and better places for people to live. There are a number of ways where the use of amenity space can be incorporated, including the delivery of dual use areas, using attenuation and water storage areas for green spaces and amenity space. The use of SuDS as amenity / green spaces can also have a positive impact on air quality, as the use of certain SuDS principles, such as trees, swales and basins can help to absorb certain pollutants. Future maintenance and adoption of such areas, including requirements for commuted sums, must be discussed with the Council early on in the design process and whilst the Council may adopt the drainage systems, amenity areas may not be part of the adoption agreement.

4.9.9   SuDS can increase the amount of green spaces within a development, and provide opportunities to create suitable places for a range of species, and use vegetations to help attenuate and slow the flow of water. SuDS should be sensitively designed and located to enhance biodiversity interest.

4.9.10   In built up and more urban areas, the use of SuDS can introduce small areas of green space which help to break up the prominence of buildings on the street scene and can make areas more attractive places and can help to encourage visitors and investment.

4.9.11   Whilst the use of SuDS is generally applied to new developments, there are a number of ways SuDS can be incorporated into existing developments to address sewerage capacity and local flood risk problems.

Planning Applications

4.9.12   All new development should consider the use of SuDS for the disposal of surface water. Considering SuDS early on in the design process will help to create a better functioning drainage scheme, and provide opportunities for SuDS to enhance the overall site design and maximise the functional benefits SuDS can provide. Individual SuDS features can improve water management, however it can be more effective when considered for the site as a whole and on a site-wide basis.

4.9.13   Developments should aim to reduce the existing rate of surface water run-off. Where this is not possible, developments must demonstrate that there is no net additional increase in run-off rates. Depending on the type and scale of development and the existing topography and water catchment, a comprehensive drainage strategy may be required as part of a planning application. Applications will be required to provide details of run-off, peak flow, discharge volumes and attenuation.

4.9.14   Furthermore, SuDS should be designed with consideration for the long term maintenance and longevity of the scheme, to ensure functionality and cost effective maintenance for the operational lifetime. Dependent on the proposed development, applicants may be required to provide a detailed management and maintenance plan.

4.9.15   Before commencement of works on site, details on the flow of discharge and acceptable management arrangements should be agreed and approved by the Council. It may be appropriate for developers to contribute towards the costs of provision via a Section 106 Agreement.

4.9.16   The Council has produced a design guide[41] that provides further detail on the design, implementation and adoption of SuDS in Neath Port Talbot and is available on the Council's website.

> **Key Principle:** Developers will be expected to show that sustainable drainage principles have been applied and appropriately implemented as part of the development, taking into account the topographical and hydrological context and future maintenance.

4.10 Inclusive Design (Criterion 10)

> **Criterion 10:** *'The layout and design of the development achieves inclusive design by ensuring barrier free environments, allowing access by all and making full provision for people with disabilities'.*

4.10.1   Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled people. The Act requires service providers to take all reasonable steps to ensure a disabled person is not at a substantial disadvantage.

4.10.2   Inclusive design means providing equal access into and around a development to ensure it can be accessed by all. Inclusive design should be incorporated into development proposals by putting people at the centre of the development, ensuring good access is provided to developments, buildings and places to ensure everyone can use services, facilities and places safely and with ease.

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41   Design Guide for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in Neath Port Talbot (2012):
www.npt.gov.uk/pdf/DESIGNGUIDEFORSUDS1.pdf

4.10.3   Principles of inclusive design should be considered from the outset and be a key consideration throughout the design process, ensuring all new development is accessible to all users. Having an inclusive approach to the design of new developments will allow all users to equally, safely and independently access streets, buildings and public spaces. The latest building regulations, local and national policies and statutory guidance should be considered and the vision for the development should include objectives for achieving inclusive access.

4.10.4   New development will be expected to:

- Ensure it meets the needs of all, including those with visual and hearing impairments and those with limited mobility;

- Ensure all streets and public spaces are safe and accessible and should not provide any additional barriers to any users, such as wheelchair users, people with restricted mobility or people with pushchairs.

- Reflect the diversity of the community who will be using the spaces and allow ease of and equal access to all, irrespective of a person's mobility, age, gender, sex or ethnicity;

- Have consideration for the location and design of street furniture, signage, lighting and paving and design these to reflect the needs of all potential users; and

- Ensure the use of materials does not provide any barriers to access. The surfacing of roads, pavements and amenity areas should consider the needs of partially sighted people or those with impaired mobility.

Key Principle: Developers should demonstrate that the development allows for safe access and use for people of all ages and abilities.

5 Key Strategic Development Areas

5.0.1 There are four key strategic development areas within Neath Port Talbot which, because of their importance, size and self-contained nature, have masterplans and specific design guidance or design codes that apply within the specific areas only. This section summarises the design issues in relation to each of these areas.

5.1 Coed Darcy, Neath

5.1.1 The development of Coed Darcy will see the extensive remediation and redevelopment of the former BP oil refinery at Llandarcy. This significant and ambitious regeneration project is being delivered in partnership between the developer [St. Modwen Developments Limited (SMDL)], 'The Prince's Foundation' and the Council.

5.1.2 The site is allocated for mixed use development in the LDP and designated as a Strategic Regeneration Area (Policy SRA1). 'Coed Darcy Urban Village' was granted outline planning permission in 2008 for approximately 4,000 dwellings with associated employment, retail, commercial, eduction and community uses.

5.1.3 As illustrated in the adjacent image, the initial phases of development have already been constructed with the remaining areas to be developed over the life of the LDP and beyond.

5.1.4 The 'Coed Darcy Masterplan' (illustrated in Figure 5.1 below) establishes the vision for the development as a whole and provides an indication of the broad proposals of the location and different development uses on the site. In addition, the more detailed 'Coed Darcy Town Code'[42] establishes detailed standards and guiding principles for the residential element of the development, including guidelines for the design of the neighbourhood scenes and the open spaces / amenities.

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42   Coed Darcy Town Code Phase 1 Addendum (2011).

Figure 5.1 Coed Darcy Masterplan

5 . Key Strategic Development Areas

5.2 Fabian Way Corridor

5.2.1   In order to coordinate development along the Fabian Way corridor, a draft masterplan framework[43] has been produced jointly by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea.

5.2.2   The Fabian Way corridor stretches for 5km along the A483 Fabian Way, covering the area from the Amazon roundabout in Neath Port Talbot to the eastern bank of the River Tawe adjacent to Swansea City Centre.

5.2.3   The vision is for an 'Innovation Corridor', building upon a number of prestigious, high profile developments, either already developed or proposed to be developed along the corridor, which provide significant opportunity for growth in the region including the Swansea University Science and Innovation Campus, Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay (TLSB) and the University of Wales Trinity St. David Campus (UWTSD). Such development has the potential to support growth in the knowledge based economy.

5.2.4   The draft masterplan (illustrated in Figure 5.2 below) provides a land use framework for an integrated approach to maximise the benefits of the area and overcome the existing site constraints. The corridor is one of the key approaches from the M4 into Swansea and is at the heart of the City Region. The design principles set out in the framework seek to enhance its gateway function, maximise accessibility and better integrate the communities and land uses either side of Fabian Way.

5.2.5   With detailed masterplans already existing for the Swansea University's Bay Campus and UWTSD SA1 areas, the draft SPG focuses on the intervening land and splits the corridor into four distinct (but overlapping) 'place making' areas: Eastern Gateway, City Approach, Eastern Waterfront and Spine Streets.

5.2.6   Each area provides a specific land use that would be permitted on each development plot and an analysis and range of design principles for each area is set, focusing on plot definition, scale and public realm. The SPG document should be referred to for guidance about any proposed development within the overall corridor.

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43   SPG: Fabian Way Innovation Corridor Masterplan Framework Consultation Draft - Dec'15 (NPTCBC/C&CS).

Figure 5.2 Fabian Way Masterplan

Fabian Way Masterplan: Potential Land Uses

5.3 Baglan Energy Park, Port Talbot

5.3.1   Baglan Energy Park is situated in a coastal location mid way between Port Talbot, Neath and Swansea. It consists of a number of distinct existing and proposed employment developments, most of which are redevelopments of former industrial land, including the sites of metal working complexes and a petro-chemical works.

5.3.2   Part of the overall site is allocated in the LDP for new employment uses [Policy EC1/1 (75 hectares)], with the remainder being identified as being safeguarded for employment uses [Policy EC2/6]. The whole area can be divided into four distinct character areas, two of which are older established industrial estates with a traditional 20th Century design and layout approach. The other two areas comprise the first phase of Baglan Energy Park, which has been partly developed over the past 15 years or so; and the former chemical works site.

5.3.3   The original Energy Park was designed and developed in accordance with the Baglan Energy Park Design Framework[44] and includes extensive areas of landscaping and planting with the aim of giving a spacious and attractive appearance. A number of buildings within the Energy Park are of innovative and striking design.

5.3.4   The Baglan Energy Park Development Framework SPG[45] sets out the framework for the future expansion of employment uses within the LDP allocations. The Development Framework takes a zoned approach to the area, setting out appropriate uses, constraints and the required design approach for each zone depending on its existing character and envisaged future types of uses. The four zones are illustrated on the Masterplan in Figure 5.3.
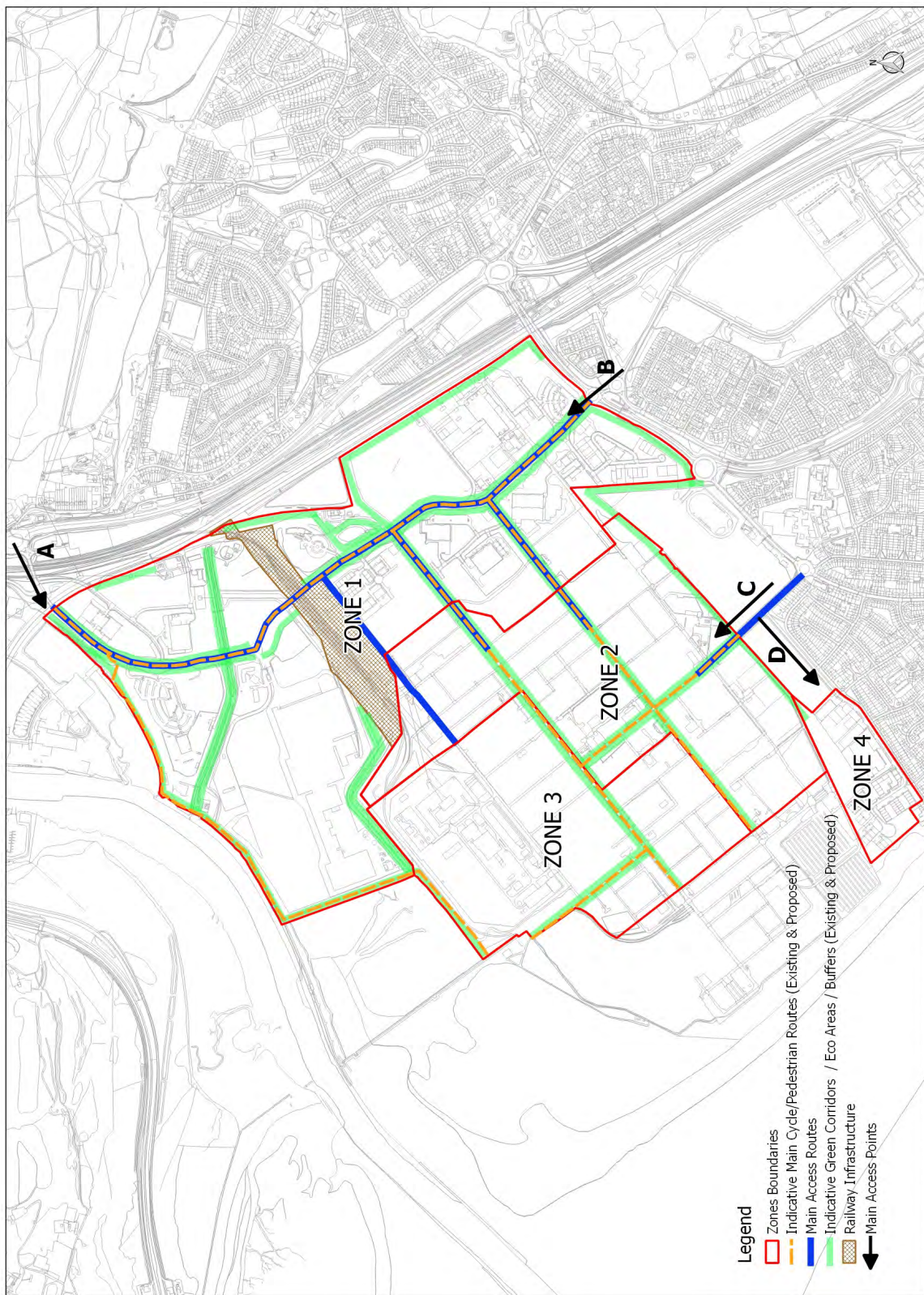

5.3.5   The design approach for each of the zones is set out within the SPG. Zone 1 includes the original Baglan Energy Park and additional areas that are envisaged to be developed in accordance with the principles of the original 2003 Urban Design Framework. The SPG incorporates the detailed Design Framework principles, suitably updated and the document should be referred to for guidance about any proposed development within the overall Baglan Energy Park.

44   Baglan Energy Park Urban Design Framework: Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis (March 2003).
45   SPG: Baglan Energy Park Development Framework (NPTCBC - October 2016).

Figure 5.3 Baglan Energy Park Masterplan

ZONE 1

ZONE 2

ZONE 3

ZONE 4

A

B

C

D

Legend

Zones Boundaries
Indicative Main Cycle/Pedestrian Routes (Existing & Proposed)
Main Access Routes
Indicative Green Corridors / Eco Areas / Buffers (Existing & Proposed)
Railway Infrastructure
Main Access Points
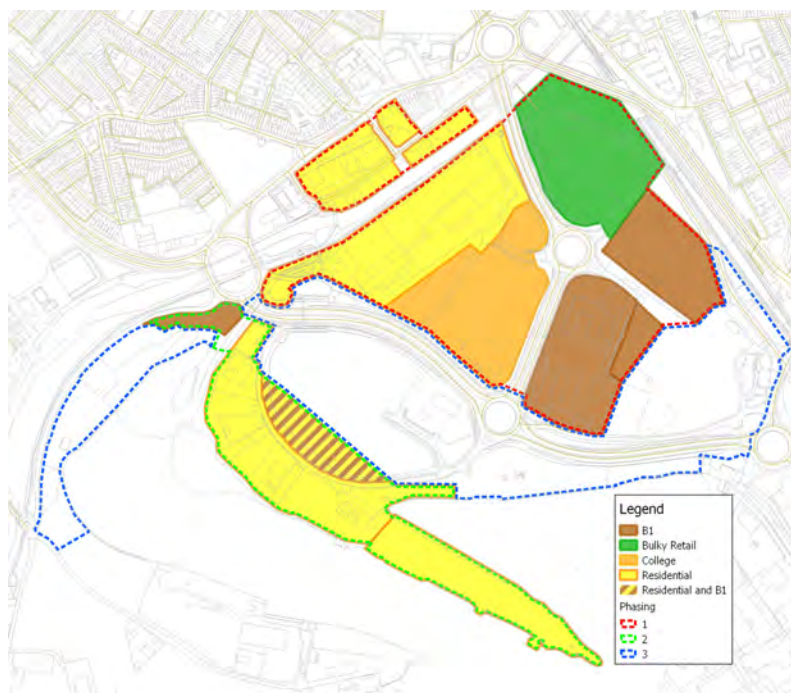
5.4 Harbourside, Port Talbot

5.4.1   The Harbourside Strategic Regeneration Area (SRA) benefits from a central location within Port Talbot, near to the town centre with good transport links. It comprises an extensive area of brownfield land around Port Talbot docks and contains major regeneration sites suitable for employment and residential uses.

5.4.2   Harbourside is designated as a Strategic Development Area in the LDP (Policy SRA2), within which residential (385 units), employment (7 hectares) and bulky goods retail uses (3.37 hectares) are envisaged. The new Harbour Way distributor road links the area from the M4 at Margam to the south east and the A48/M4 at Baglan to the north west. Parcels of land within Harbourside have already been redeveloped, including a new Justice Centre, a Research and Development (R&D) Centre and residential development.

5.4.3   The 'Harbourside Masterplan' (illustrated in Figure 5.4 below) gives an indication of the broad proposals for the SRA (although this may be subject to change). Full details will be given in the Council's 'Port Talbot Harbourside & Town Centre Development Framework' SPG including overall design concepts and envisaged design approaches. The Harbourside SPG should be referred to for further information on design matters within the SRA.

Figure 5.4 Harbourside Masterplan

6 Residential Development

6.1 Infill Development

6.1.1   Infill residential plots within settlement limits raise specific challenges, both in respecting the character and pattern of the existing development in the area, and in achieving current parking and access standards.

6.1.2   Often house designs are chosen prior to plots being identified, and the context and character of an area may consequently not be reflected in the design. When a site is part of an existing built-up area and street scene, applicants should demonstrate how the proposal will fit into the existing development pattern in terms of scale, density, building line, ridge heights and elevations.

6.1.3   Developers should firstly consider the context of their site, and attempt to define what the main characteristics of the area are. Not only in terms of massing, scale and density, but also specific design features and vernacular that define the site context. These can identify both good and bad elements within the context of the site, and further inform the detailed design of the development itself.

6.1.4   The Council encourages innovation in design, and would not expect every infill site to provide a replica or copy of other dwellings in the area, but would encourage developers to justify their chosen design, through an iterative step by step process. The use of modern or alternative finishes, or bespoke design can be appropriate if supported and justified through this logical process. Applicants will need to ensure any innovative or creative design responds positively to the parameters set by the existing local context. The Council can offer pre-application advice in this regard, to inform this process.

Key Principle: Developers should identify how their proposals consider and respect the character of the area within which they are located, promote quality and enhance the street scene.

6.2 Self Build Schemes

6.2.1   Self build schemes, where plots on a housing development site are sold off to individual developers to build their own homes, can provide a popular opportunity for people to construct a dwelling that meets their own specific requirements. However, this brings its own particular challenges in design terms, such as the need to ensure that the site is developed in a coherent way and that the individual buildings comply where appropriate with the overall design and concept for the site. Development briefs, design codes and plot passports can be useful tools to address these challenges.

Development Briefs

6.2.2   Development briefs can inform developers and other interested parties of the constraints and opportunities presented by a site, and the type of development expected or encouraged by local planning policies. They are intended to improve the design quality of the overall development and can include the identification and protection of certain characteristics of a site or its surroundings; the enhancement or responses to features, such as topography, mature landscape, public access or open space; and measures to ensure that new development meets acceptable standards of design and is in keeping with its setting.

6.2.3   Development briefs may be appropriate for larger sites that are being developed, especially where associated infrastructure is required, or the self-built element is part of a larger scheme. The production of a brief could be initiated by pre-application discussions with the Council or by the developer. This can provide clarity on the infrastructure necessary for specific areas of a site, ensuring its delivery alongside the development of the housing itself.

Design Codes

6.2.4   A design code aims to provide clarity over what constitutes acceptable design quality for a particular site and can provide a level of certainty for developers and the local community. Design Codes are invaluable for self build schemes as they can identify the parameters and general design principles that should be followed. For example, they can ensure the buildings are of an appropriate size and position for the plot; provide key information on boundary treatments and other specific details that will provide common and unifying elements such as landscaping and other infrastructure requirements; and can also pick up on any locally important features or context.

6.2.5   Design Codes should also however afford the self-builder a degree of flexibility to vary the design to suit individual circumstances, particularly on larger sites. The Design Code can be produced in discussion with the Council or the developer (as part of a planning application or ideally through the pre-application process) and the Council may condition a Design Code as part of any permission. It may also be useful to develop a template Design Code and to offer this as part of any pre-application discussion.

Plot Passports

6.2.6   A Plot Passport is a summary of the design parameters for a plot in the form of information sheets, containing relevant information relating to the planning permission, design constraints and procedural requirements in an accessible format. The passport should show the plot location, permissible building lines and side spacing requirements, proximity constraints and the developable area of the plot within which the building should be located. Other information may include building height restrictions, the number of dwellings that are appropriate on the plot (generally only one), car parking, access location and so on. Other details, such as finishing materials, fenestration and roof shape may remain flexible, to be decided by the plot developer.

6.2.7 The Plot Passport information sheets can be produced to set out to potential purchasers of individual plots the key design and layout principles set out by the wider Design Code or Development Brief and can be a useful way of ensuring a self-build development has an overall design coherence while allowing for individual differences according to the requirements of the plot owners.

> **Key Principle:** Promoters of self-build sites should be able to show how the overall planning, design and layout of the site will ensure a coherent character and appearance while allowing for individually designed and planned dwellings on individual plots.

6.3 Medium to Large Residential Developments

Larger Schemes - Creating Places and Neighbourhoods

6.3.1 Larger developments, generally defined as developments of 10 houses or more, represent opportunities to design schemes with a clear vision to create new neighbourhoods and define the character.

6.3.2 The vision should take account of the interaction between the development and neighbouring land uses, the network of movement, landscaping, retention of important features and connections to goods and services.

6.3.3 Larger residential developments can raise specific issues that would not always be relevant to smaller sites. These include:

- Location of on-site community facilities, and connections to existing facilities;

- Creation of public transport routes and connections;

- Creation of walkable communities and neighbourhoods; and

- Logical and legible phasing delivery.

6.3.4 Early consideration of any potential on and off-site improvements or facilities can have an impact of the design and layout of a site, and whilst the forgoing objectives are relevant, the use of on-site facilities or services for a wider community may raise other specific challenges. An early initial analysis of the local context and how the site connects to the surrounding area will help to create an overall vision of the development and establish a street hierarchy that connects to the existing network.

6.3.5 Integration with existing communities and neighbourhoods, and impacts upon existing communities and infrastructure will also need to be considered. As such development of this scale often requires a masterplan, and design code, especially where these developments are to be built out over a significant period of time and/or by more than one developer.

Key Principle: Developers may be required to submit a masterplan, phasing plan, design code and/or other supporting information as appropriate in order to justify and explain the proposed layout, location of key infrastructure and community facilities and the overall design of a development.

7 Commercial Development

7.0.1   Many of the forgoing issues are relevant to any form of development, and the key aims and objectives of good design apply equally to commercial and industrial development. There are however specific challenges, especially where there are the specialist needs of an occupier to consider, or alternatively the development is speculative.

7.0.2   Particular attention should be paid to site layout, access, servicing arrangements and parking. The principles and objectives of site context and legibility, outlined elsewhere in this document,[46] should be applied equally to commercial developments. Although function often dictates form and operational constraints or requirements define the massing and scale of these developments, the external appearance, location of entrances, key views and frontages can be delivered and designed in a way that maintains quality.

7.0.3   The key issues include:

- The creation of a strong frontage, including a clear and legible main entrance and reception.

- Servicing should be readily accessible, but screened from public areas.

- Any external storage areas should be minimised and delimited and defined.

- Careful attention should be paid to the design of parking areas for staff, visitors and customers.

- The approaches taken to the location and installation of plant and machinery should be carefully considered and justified.

- The approaches taken to security matters and general means of enclosure should be integrated with and complement the overall site design concepts.

7.0.4   Entrances and reception areas should front onto streets, public spaces or forecourts. Where appropriate, entrances should be generous and welcoming, and easily identifiable in order to improve legibility and contribute to surveillance.

7.0.5   Where possible, buildings should have active frontages to enhance the street scene with activity generating uses located on principal frontages, adjacent to public streets and spaces. Buildings should not be significantly set back and should respond positively to the surrounding areas in terms of their scale, massing and built form. Large scale buildings should not be the dominant feature in these areas, with the use of landscaping,

46   Chapter 4.

public realm and the street design important tools in ensuring buildings are not the dominant feature. The use of glazing, cladding and facades can also be used to reduce the dominance of buildings.

7.0.6   The choice of materials will have a significant visual impact on the context and appearance of the development. Materials should consider the longevity of their use and respond to the local context, to ensure it integrates into the existing environment and landscape. Careful consideration of materials can also help to reduce the massing and bulk appearance of the building, while green roofs and walls can provide biodiversity resources while benefitting energy efficiency and visual impact.

7.0.7   Service areas should be incorporated within the perimeter of a site and screened where possible, with service areas that front public spaces avoided. Large forecourt areas for parking or servicing should not be located at the front of buildings, and should have appropriate landscaping to ensure that they do not cause visual intrusion.

7.0.8   If parking is to be provided at the front, or near to the front of buildings, smaller forecourt areas with appropriate landscaping should be chosen, with applicants required to demonstrate that the relationship between the parking areas and building line has been designed to ensure an attractive and coherent street scene is created or maintained. The image below illustrates a good example of a modern commercial building with attractive frontage and car parking located at the rear, with planting utilised for screening purposes.

Picture 7.1 Modern Commercial Building Example

7.0.9   Commercial and employment areas should be accessible by a range of transport means, being located on public transport routes wherever possible having good pedestrian and cycle links to bus / rail stops and adjacent uses.

7.0.10   Larger scale employment / commercial areas should be designed to have a network of connected streets that provide legibility and ease of access throughout with active street frontages. Principal streets throughout the development should be designed to incorporate a range of uses and avoid the dominance of vehicle traffic. Boulevards with appropriate planting and public spaces can help to encourage walking and cycling and provide a multi-functional street scene.

7.0.11   Any signage, branding or advertising should be appropriate to the scale of the development and not be intrusive to the local context. It should be carefully considered as part of the overall development design.

Key Principle: Developers will be expected to justify the design and layout of the development, both in relation to their operational needs but also with regard to the aims and objectives set out in this SPG in specific relation to the key issues identified.
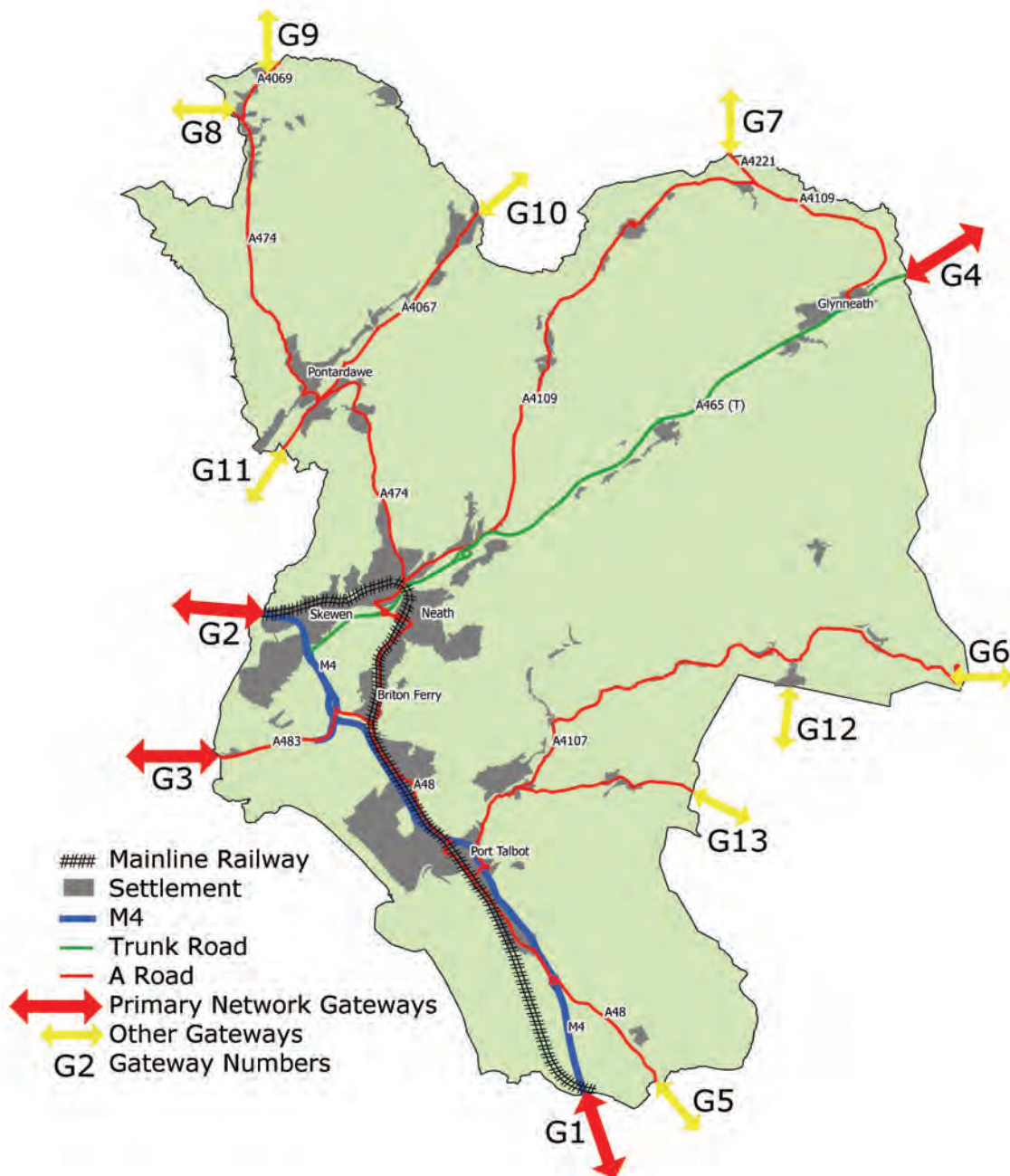
Appendix A: Arterial Gateways

A.0.1 This Appendix gives more detail on the characteristics and features of significance for each gateway locality and sets out the approach that will be taken to the implementation of the gateway policy.
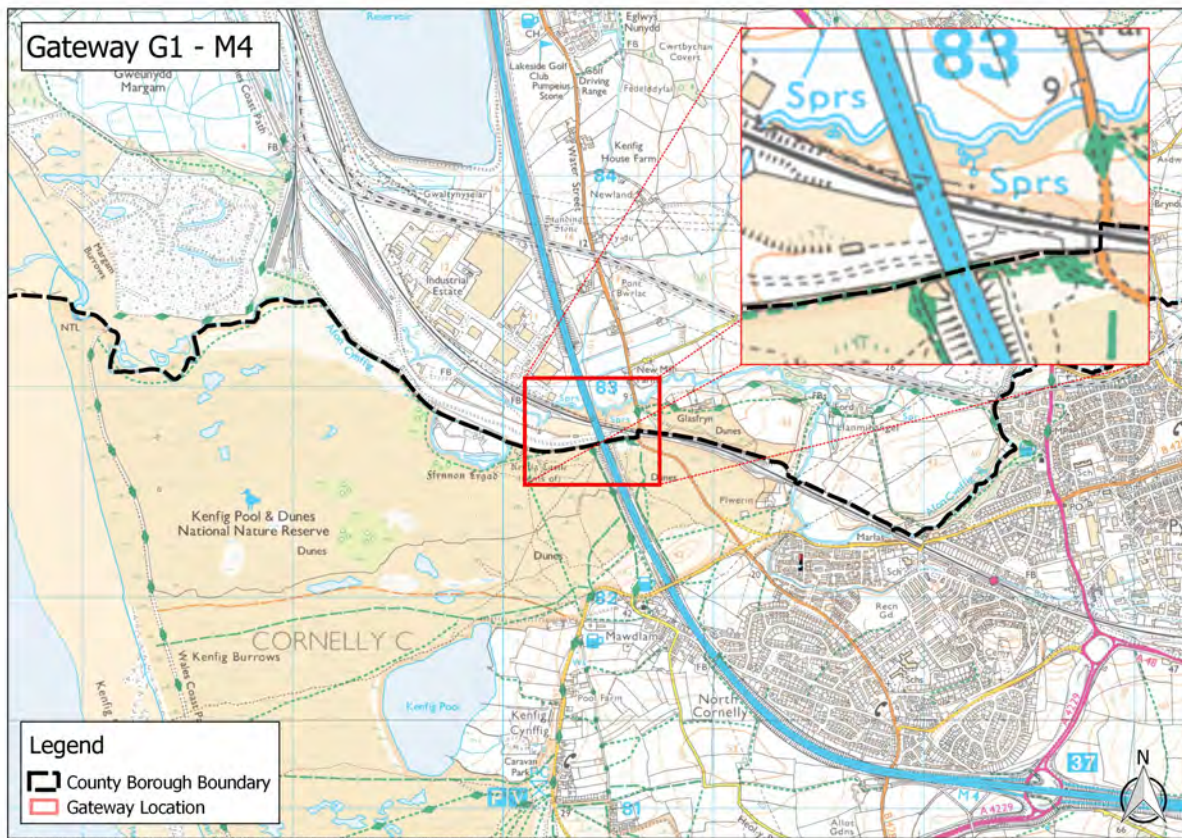
A.0.2 As indicated in Section 4.2, the most significant gateways into the County Borough are considered to be those situated along the primary road network, with other important gateways located along other main road routes. The figure below indicates the locations of the Primary Network Gateways and the other important gateways.

Figure A.1 Location of Gateways

A.1 Primary Network Gateways

A.1.1 Gateway G1: M4 and Mainline Railway at Margam

A.1.1.1 A large proportion of road and rail traffic enters the County Borough via the M4 motorway and mainline railway at Kenfig/Margam. The main prominent features in the landscape at this point are Kenfig Industrial Estate (to the west of the motorway, at a lower level) with sand dunes, Margam Moor and Swansea Bay behind. Views from the rail line are more restricted and comprise coastal sand dunes to the west, followed by closer views of the industrial estate to the east.

Picture A.1 M4 West Side

A.1.1.2   To the east of the motorway is an extensive area of relatively low-lying open countryside of mixed agricultural uses with a distinctively rural character (Picture A.2).

Picture A.2 M4 East Side

A.1.1.3   The backdrop to these views is formed by the steelworks to the north west and by Margam Mountain to the north east. Taking into account the importance of the transport corridor coupled with the open nature of the landscape with its distant views including glimpses of Swansea Bay on one side and more mountainous country on the other, this locality is probably the most significant and important of Neath Port Talbot's gateway locations.

Designations

A.1.1.4   The area of countryside to the east of the M4 at this point is designated as a Green Wedge under LDP Policy EN3, while the area further to the east (on the far side of the A48) is also a Special Landscape Area (SLA) under Policy EN2. In addition, the sand dunes and associated areas at Kenfig are designated as a Special Area of Conservation

(SAC) and as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and there are two other SSSIs in the locality (Eglwys Nynydd Reservoir and Margam Moors). The extent of these designations is shown on the LDP Proposals Map[47].

LANDMAP

A.1.1.5   The NPT LANDMAP Landscape Assessment identifies six landscape character areas within this locality, three of which are near to the gateway itself (Areas 1 Margam Marsh, 2 Margam Burrows and 4 Coed Hirwaun), with a further three forming the general backdrop (Areas 3 Margam Country Park, 5 Coed Hirwaun and open scarp tops and 50 Port Talbot Docks and Margam Works). Full descriptions of these character areas is given in the NPT LANDMAP Landscape Assessment[48].
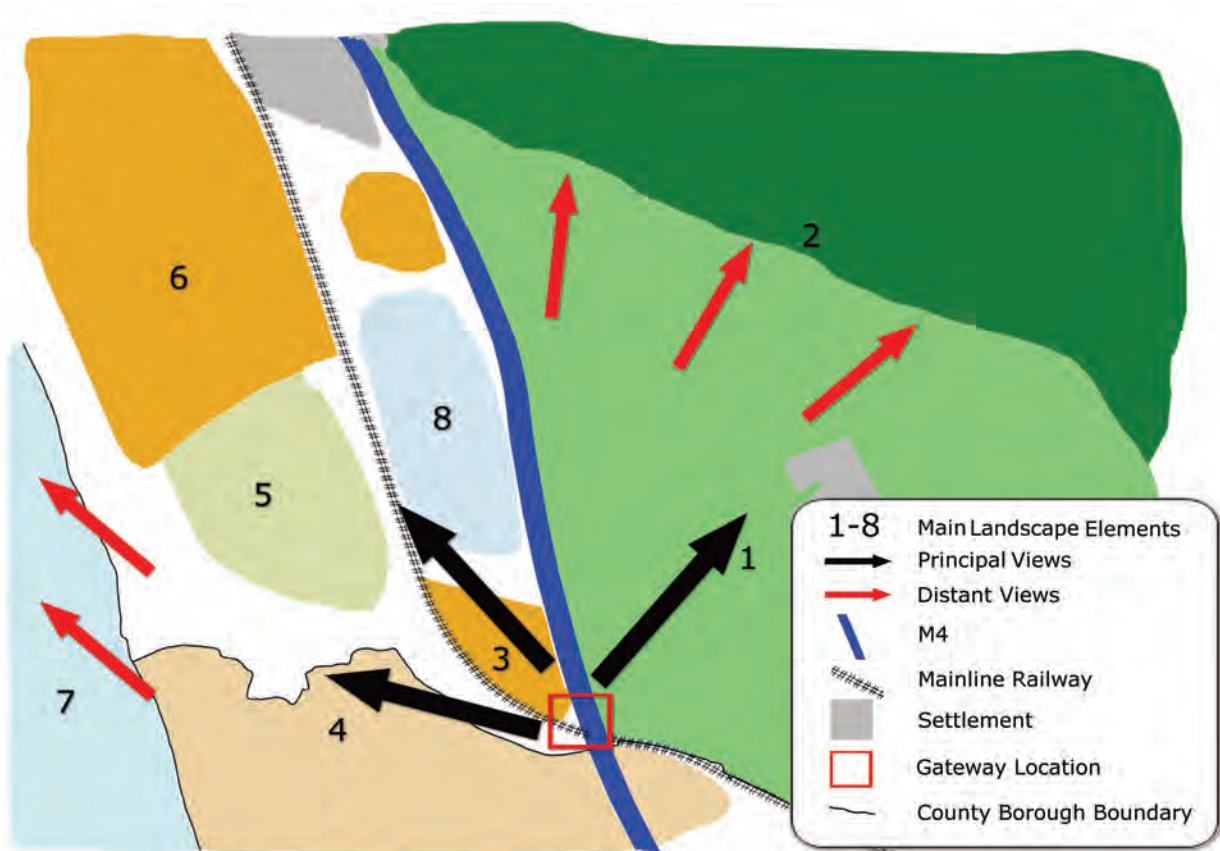
Extent of Area Affected by Gateway Considerations

A.1.1.6   Figure A.2 below broadly indicates the areas within which new developments could affect the character of the gateway area and the main landscape elements that should be taken into account. As a result of the open character of the landscape in the vicinity of this gateway and the extensive views (in particular from the motorway, but also from the railway in places), developments across a wide area could have a significant impact on the overall landscape as seen from the County Borough boundary on entering Neath Port Talbot. Consequently, developments within any of the LANDMAP character areas described above could have an effect depending on the precise location, nature and prominence of what is proposed.

47   https://www.npt.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=14926
48   Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (White Consultants 2004).

Figure A.2 Gateway G1 Margam: Landscape Elements and Important Views

Landscape Elements Key

1. Low-lying mixed agricultural area of small fields, hedges and woodlands. [LANDMAP - Character Area 4: Coed Hirwaun].

2. Southwestern scarp slope of Mynydd Margam. Character changes from mixed lowland pasture enclosed by hedges at the foot of the scarp to upland sheep grazing at the top. [LANDMAP - Character Area 5: Coed Hirwaun and Open Scarp Tops].

3. Kenfig Industrial Estate. Industrial units set in spacious landscaped estate. One- and two-storey buildings below level of motorway. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 50: Port Talbot Docks and Margam Works].

4. Kenfig Burrows. Extensive area of sand dunes designated as a SAC and SSSI, mostly outside the NPT boundary.

5. Margam Moors. Predominantly flat cattle grazed marshland drained by a network of ditches lined by willows, designated as a SSSI. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 1: Margam Marsh].

6. Port Talbot Steelworks. Extensive steelworks dominating distant views to the north west. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 50: Port Talbot Docks and Margam Works].

7. Swansea Bay. Open seascape to west with views visible across bay to Mumbles Head.

8. Eglwys Nynydd Reservoir. Area of open water used for leisure activities including dinghy sailing, designated as a SSSI. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 1: Margam Marsh].
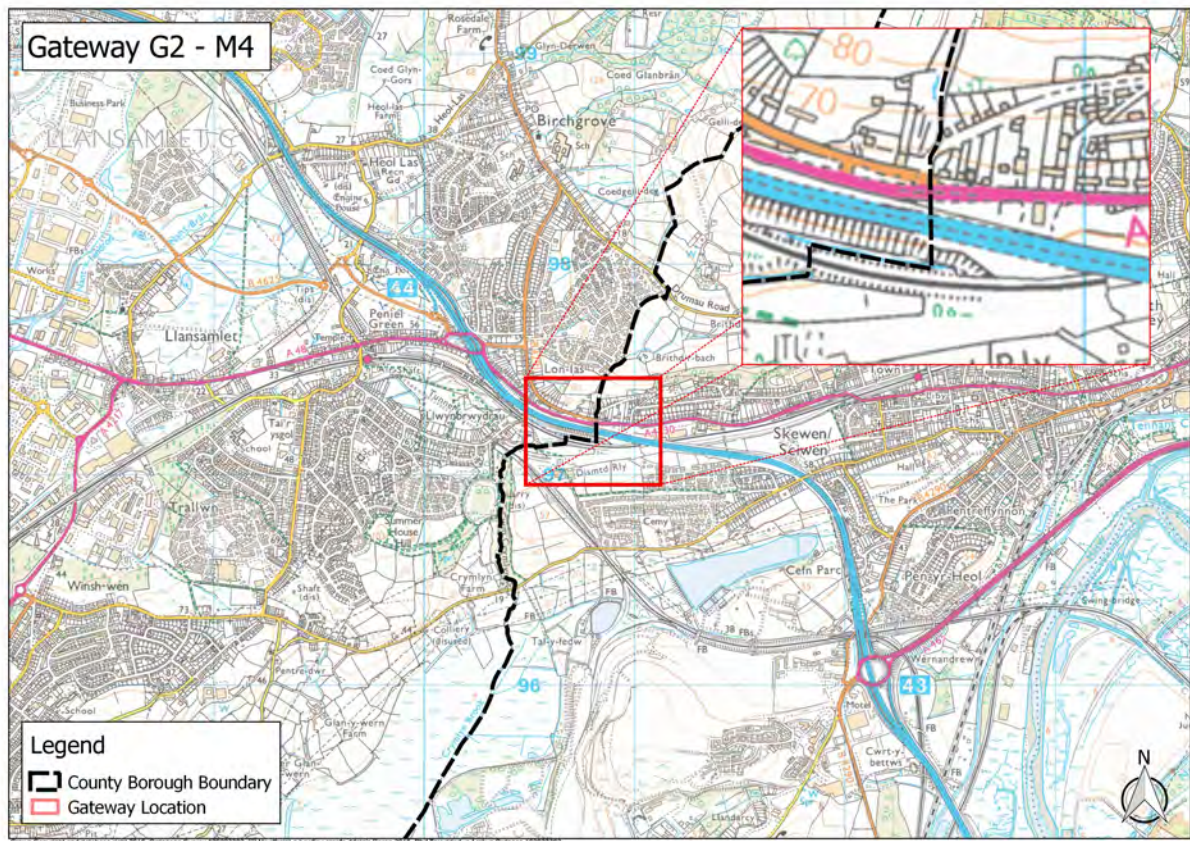
Design Solutions

A.1.1.7   Potential design solutions for new prominent developments within this area will depend on the nature of the proposed development and its location, in particular with reference to the LANDMAP character areas outlined above. Developments in the agricultural / countryside areas to the east and north of the M4 are likely to be smaller in scale and related to rural uses as a result of the requirements of Green Wedge policy. Any new development here should be designed to have a character and scale compatible with traditional rural buildings, and be sited as far as possible within or near to existing groups of buildings, with the aim of ensuring that the rural character of the landscape is maintained or enhanced as far as possible.

A.1.1.8   The character areas to the west of the M4 and railway line are largely either protected marshland or sand dunes, or industrial land either associated with the steel works or Kenfig Industrial Estate. New developments are most likely to take place within the defined industrial estate allocation, and in terms of their gateway impacts, should be designed in appropriate form for this location, avoiding any disproportionately large or prominent structure that will be significantly higher than existing buildings and would therefore be intrusive within the landscape when viewed from the adjacent higher level motorway.

A.1.1.9   All proposed developments within the gateway zone will need to take into consideration possible impacts on the gateway, and this matter will need to be addressed in a design statement including an assessment of the prominence and visual impact of the proposal when viewed from the gateway location and design measures that have been applied to address any issues.

A.1.2 Gateway G2: M4 and Mainline Railway at Lonlas

A.1.2.1 Lonlas is the location of one of the main routes into and out of Swansea as well as being on the main east-west transport corridor. Consequently, a major proportion of the road and rail traffic between Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, as well as traffic from further afield, passes through this area. On entering Neath Port Talbot at this location, views of the surrounding area from both the motorway and railway are much more restricted than at Margam, due to the surrounding topography, tree cover and other screening.

Picture A.3 G2 M4 Gateway

Picture A.4 G2 Rail Gateway

A.1.2.2   To the north of the motorway and railway are the built up areas of Lonlas and Skewen, which are not readily visible from either transport route, in the case of the M4 due to the screening of trees and fencing and in the case of the railway line due to topographical effects and the presence of the motorway. To the south are areas of woodland and farmland together with the housing developments of Crymlyn Park and Crymlyn Road, Skewen which can be seen in places from the motorway near to the gateway location.

Designations

A.1.2.3   To the north of the M4, Lonlas and Skewen are within settlement limits as defined under LDP Policy SC1, where infill developments or redevelopments may be expected. To the south, areas alongside the railway are designated as Green Wedge (LDP Policy

EN3), while parts of the fields beyond are allocated for residential development under LDP Policy H1 (See Fig A3). There is also a housing allocation at Wern Goch (H1/10) which may be visible from the M4 gateway but is unlikely to be prominent. Policy EN3 is likely to prevent any significant built development within the green wedge areas in this location, but housing development is likely on the allocated area as an extension to the Crymlyn Park development within the Plan period.
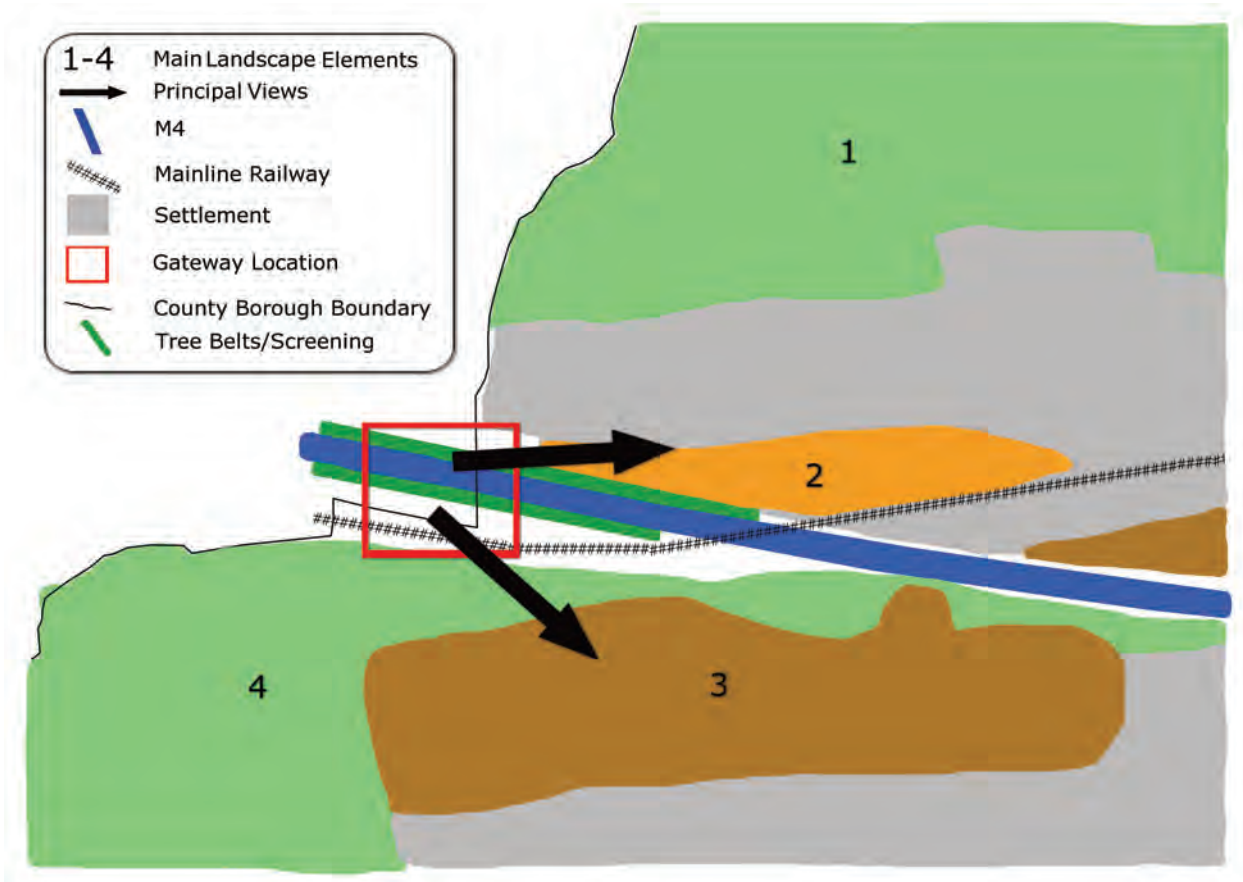
LANDMAP

A.1.2.4   The LANDMAP Landscape Assessment identifies two landscape character areas within this locality, areas 40 (Neath) and 46 (Cae'r Hendy). Area 40 comprises the built-up areas of Neath and adjoining settlements, while 46 is the area to the south of the motorway and is characterised as being a small area of pastoral farmland comprising a mosaic of fields bounded by overgrown hedges. This area has been partly changed in character since the compilation of the NPT Landscape Assessment by developments at Crymlyn Park.

Extent of Area Affected by Gateway Considerations

A.1.2.5   Due to the factors outlined above, the area within which gateway factors will need to be considered is relatively restricted. The main impacts are likely to come from the development of the LDP housing allocations (H1/8 and H1/9), with possible redevelopment sites within Lonlas to the north having the potential to be prominent when viewed from the motorway if higher than current screening or if the screening is removed.

A.1.2.6   Any developments within these areas will be required to fully address possible views from the motorway in particular to ensure that the gateway location is not adversely affected. As above, this should be addressed in a design statement including an assessment of the prominence and visual impact of any proposal when viewed from the gateway location, and an explanation of the design measures that have been applied to address any issues.

Figure A.3 Gateway G2 Lonlas: Landscape Elements and Important Views

Landscape Elements Key

1. Lower slopes of Mynydd Drummau. Area of mixed farmland and woodland forming backdrop to the settlements of Birchgrove/Lonlas and Skewen. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 38 Mynydd Drummau].

2. Area of commercial development within settlement alongside A48, currently largely screened from the motorway.

3. Area of farmland sloping down towards motorway from ridge line at Crymlyn Park. Allocated for housing development in LDP and therefore likely to undergo significant change in character in the next few years. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 46: Cae'r Hendy].

4. Mixed area of farmland and woodland forming part of the green wedge between Skewen and Swansea. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 46: Cae'r Hendy].
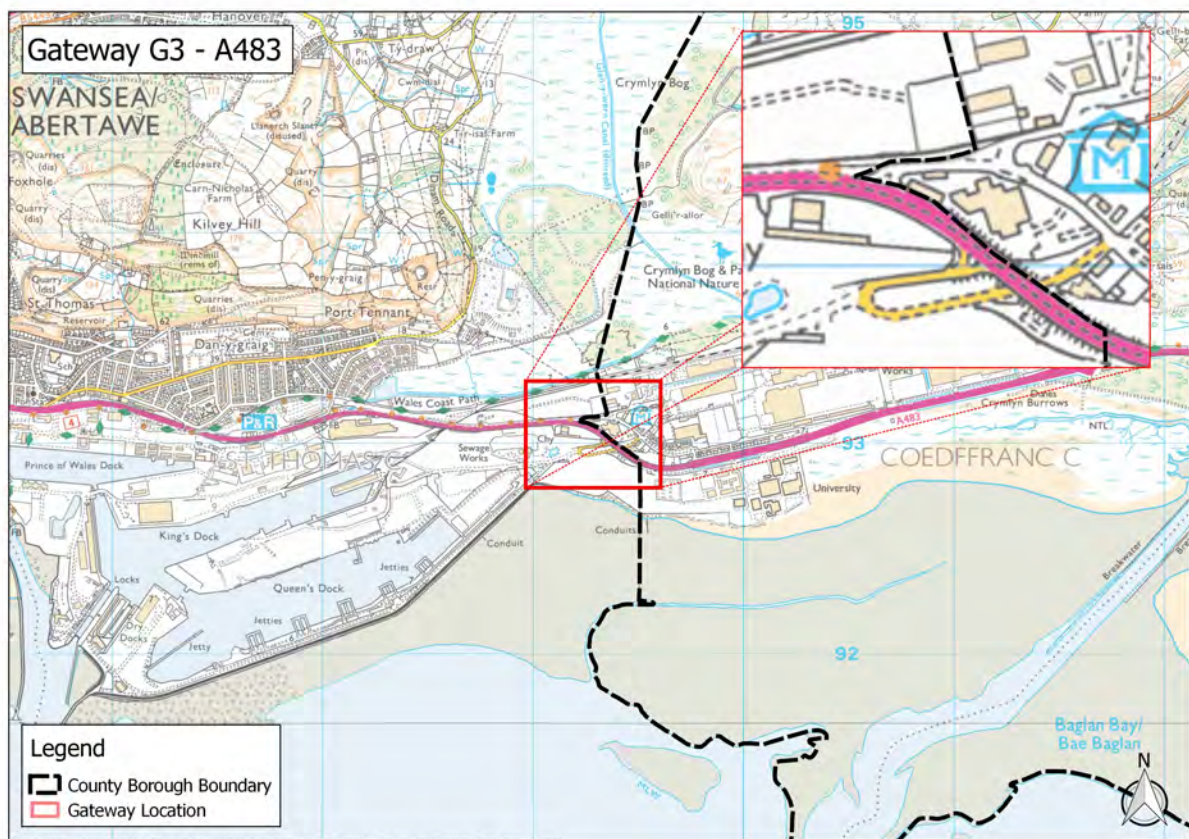
Design Solutions

A.1.2.7   The identified gateway zone in this area can be split into areas to the north of the motorway, and those to the south. To the north, any new buildings or structures are likely to be within existing sites (or the redevelopment of existing sites) along Park Avenue where existing developments are not prominent from the motorway but new buildings may be. Where buildings or other structures would be visible, the impacts on the gateway will need to be addressed in design terms, including careful consideration of siting, design, appearance, massing, scale and screening in order to comply with Policy BE1. The approach taken should be fully explained in the design statement accompanying the planning application.

A.1.2.8   To the south of the motorway, the most likely development proposals are the continuation of the Crymlyn Park housing development within the LDP housing allocation. At present this site is gently sloping north facing green fields bordered by trees/hedgerows, which are visible at times from both the motorway and railway. The design and layout of new housing developments here should be designed to fit well into the existing landscape and be broken up and screened by the retention of existing features where possible and the addition of new planting and landscaping.

A.1.3 Gateway G3: A483 Fabian Way

A.1.3.1 Fabian Way is one of the main road arteries into central Swansea from the M4 and the east, and is consequently therefore also a main gateway into Neath Port Talbot for traffic leaving Swansea. The boundary between Neath Port Talbot and Swansea is in the vicinity of Baldwins Crescent and the new Swansea University Bay Campus, the gateway location being along a stretch of road at the Baldwins Bridge flyover where areas to the north of the road are within Neath Port Talbot.

A.1.3.2 On entering the County Borough at this location, the main views are of established industrial buildings including the Victorian brick former railway buildings at Gower Chemicals on the north side, followed by the new Bay Campus development to the south.

Picture A.5 Fabian Way North Side

Picture A.6 Fabian Way South Side

Designations

71

A.1.3.3 Much of the existing industrial land to the north of Fabian Way in the gateway location is designated as an *existing employment area* under LDP Policy EC2. To the north of this area is Crymlyn Bog which is identified as a SAC, a Ramsar site and a SSSI due to its ecological interest and is also identified as a Green Wedge under LDP Policy EN3. Settlement limits identify areas of existing housing and a housing allocation to the

north of Fabian Way along Baldwins Crescent and Elba Crescent. To the south of Fabian Way and east of the University campus, the dunes and seashore areas are also designated as a SSSI and Green Wedge.

LANDMAP

A.1.3.4   The NPT Landscape Assessment identifies the developed areas on both sides of Fabian Way near to the County Borough boundary as being within Character Area 47 (Elba Crescent). It is characterised as being flat lowland adjacent to and straddling the Fabian Way corridor which dominates its character. It is predominantly covered by development, industry, road and rail connections, yet blocks of deciduous woodland help integrate the various elements and create a sense of enclosure in places. The assessment was undertaken before the development of the University campus, which has changed the landscape/seascape character significantly on the south side of Fabian Way.
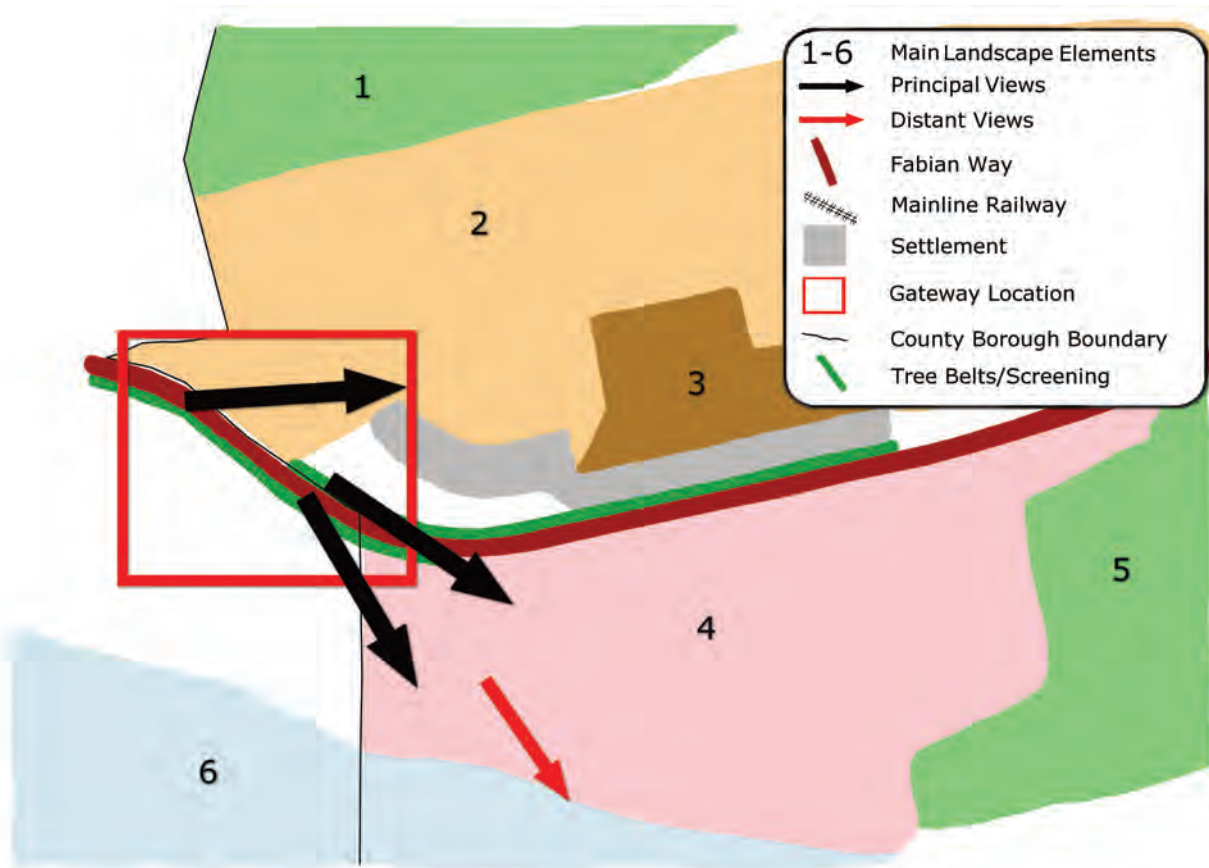
Extent of Area Affected by Gateway Considerations

A.1.3.5   Again, in this location the area within which gateway factors will need to be considered is relatively restricted. Further developments within the University campus to the south will be significant, while areas to the north of Fabian Way may in the future be redeveloped and could be prominent when entering Neath Port Talbot.

A.1.3.6   Potential road realignments and improvements in the area include the possible changes to the Baldwins Bridge junction and proposals for a new sustainable transport 'spine street' linking Langdon Road/SA1 in Swansea with the University campus, both of which will affect the gateway location[49]. Any developments within these areas should fully address their impacts on views from Fabian Way to ensure that the gateway location is not adversely affected.

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49   More details are provided in the Council's 'Fabian Way Innovation Corridor Masterplan Framework' (Consultation Draft - December 2015).

Figure A.4 Gateway G3 Fabian Way: Landscape Elements and Important Views
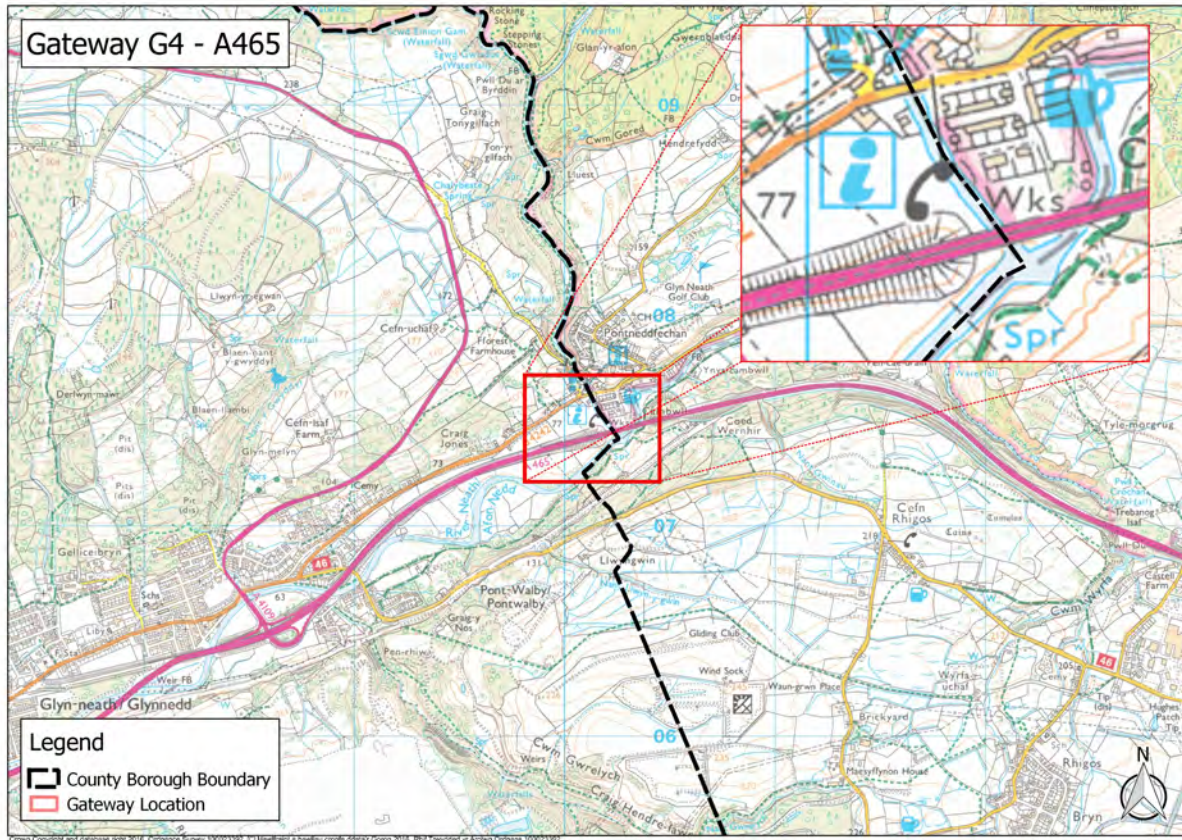
Landscape Elements Key

1. Crymlyn Bog. Low lying secluded marshland area with areas of open water including the Tennant and Glan y Wern Canals. Wetland vegetation, marshy grasses, reed beds and wet woodland, bounded to the south by disused and extant mineral railway lines. Designated a SAC, SSSI and NNR. [LANDMAP - Character Area 45: Crymlyn Bog].

2. Fabian Way Employment Area. Established employment area on flat coastal lowland. Predominantly developed with industrial and commercial premises, road and rail connections, interspersed with blocks of woodland. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 47: Elba Crescent].

3. Elba Crescent housing site. Vacant former industrial land fronting onto Elba Crescent, allocated for residential development in the LDP and therefore likely to undergo significant change in character in the next few years. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 47: Elba Crescent].

4.   Swansea University Bay Campus. Newly developed university campus (currently under construction). Striking and distinctive layout, design and architectural treatments constituting an important new landmark development near to the County Borough boundary with Swansea. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 47: Elba Crescent (assessed before development of the new campus)].

5.   Crymlyn Burrows. Protected area of sand dunes, dune slacks and beach designated as a SSSI. [LANDMAP - part of Character Area 53: Neath Estuary Mouth].

6.   Swansea Bay. Open seascape to south with views across Swansea Bay.

Design Solutions

A.1.3.7   Fabian Way is recognised as being an important gateway for both Neath Port Talbot and Swansea, and a separate joint SPG has been prepared by both Councils for the whole of the Fabian Way corridor which sets out design expectations in this area[50]. The SPG should be referred to for further advice about appropriate design approaches in this locality.

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50   Fabian Way Innovation Corridor Masterplan Framework (Consultation Draft - December 2015).

A.1.4 Gateway G4: A465(T) at Glynneath

A.1.4.1   The A465(T) dual carriageway trunk road provides a strategic transport corridor linking Swansea and south west Wales with the Heads of the Valleys and the Midlands. Consequently, a significant proportion of traffic from the north enters Neath Port Talbot via this route. The County Borough boundary is located to the north east of Glynneath at Pontneddfechan where it crosses the River Neath.

A.1.4.2   The gateway is located at a point where the road sweeps down into the valley on an embankment from Hirwaun to the north east. This gives extensive views across the open countryside at the top of the valley and a strong sense of entering more pastoral low lying countryside after traversing higher and bleaker moorland. Little built development is noticeable at this point, other than some properties along Pontneathvaughan Road and wind turbines above Glynneath, part of the Maesgwyn Windfarm.

Picture A.7 G4 A465(T) South Side

Picture A.8 G4 A465(T) North Side

Designations

A.1.4.3   The valley sides to the south of the road are designated as part of the Vale of Neath SLA under LDP Policy EN2. Settlement limits delineate the extent of development in Glynneath.
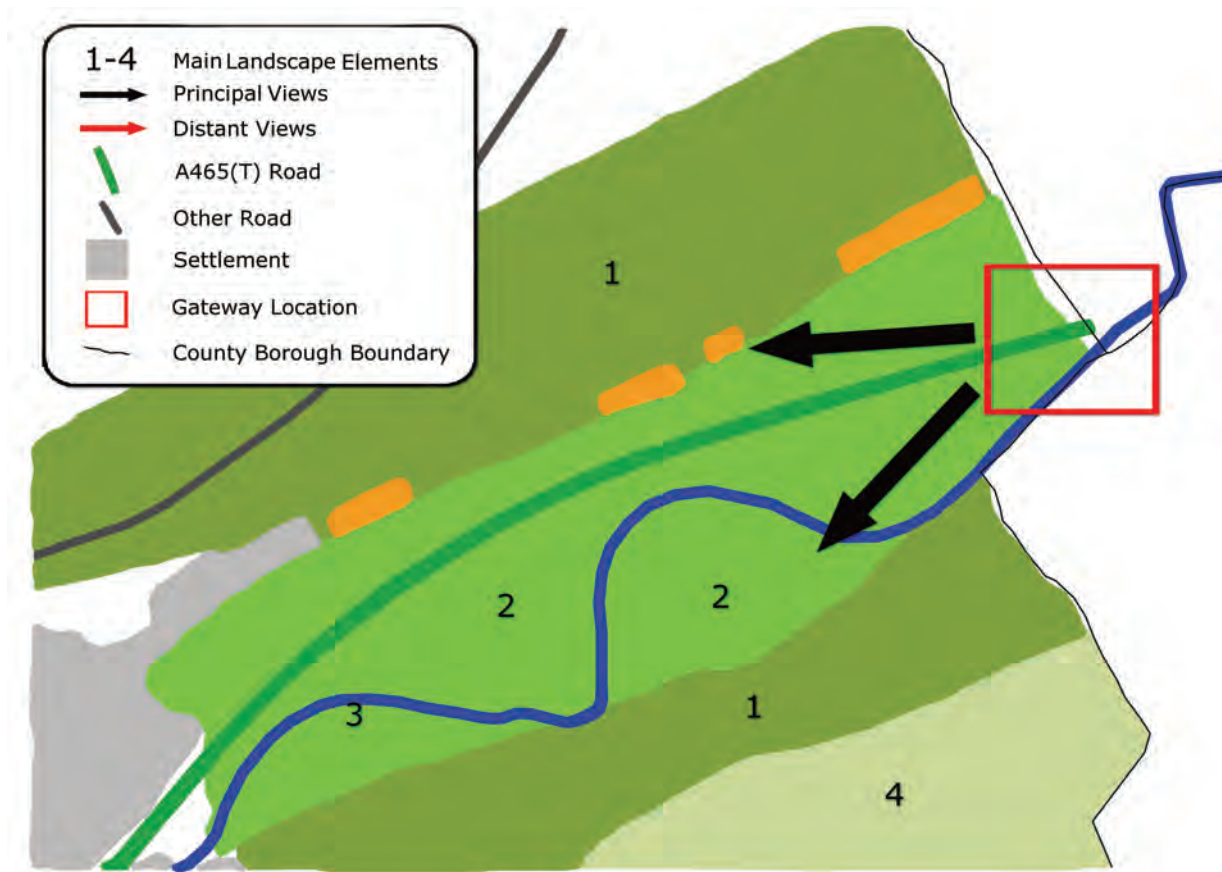
LANDMAP

A.1.4.4   The NPT Landscape Assessment identifies the countryside areas on both sides of the dual carriageway near to the County Borough boundary as being within Character Area 19 (Neath Valley), an area that includes the whole valley to the north east of Tonna. This is characterised as being a broad U-shaped valley dominated by flood plains and channel, consisting of alluvium and terrace geology. Within the valley floor a mixture of settlements, individual dwellings and scattered commercial units lie within a mosaic of pasture.

Extent of Area Affected by Gateway Considerations

A.1.4.5   The landscape in this gateway location is more open in character with quite extensive views down the valley towards Glynneath from the dual carriageway road. Developments across a wide area including both the valley bottom and sides could have a significant impact on the overall landscape as seen from the County Borough boundary on entering Neath Port Talbot. The majority of the visible area is open countryside and outside settlement limits where development is likely to be limited, with areas to the south being within the SLA as indicated above.

A.1.4.6   Developments in any part of landscape character area 19 that would be clearly visible from the gateway location will need to take into consideration possible impacts on the gateway, and such proposals will need to be addressed in a design statement including an assessment of the prominence and visual impact of the proposal when viewed from the gateway location and design measures that have been applied to address any issues.

Figure A.5 Gateway G4 Glynneath: Landscape Elements and Important Views

Landscape Elements Key

1.   Sloping valley sides. Pastoral and deciduous woodland mosaic, predominantly wooded on the southern side of the valley.

2.   Valley floor. Flat valley bottom comprising small fields, hedges and tree belts.

3.   River Neath. Meandering river bisecting the valley floor, lined by belts of trees.

4.   Open southern plateau. Higher, more gently sloping open land to the south side of the valley, designated as a Special Landscape Area in the LDP.

LANDMAP: All the above landscape areas are within Character Area 19: Neath Valley.
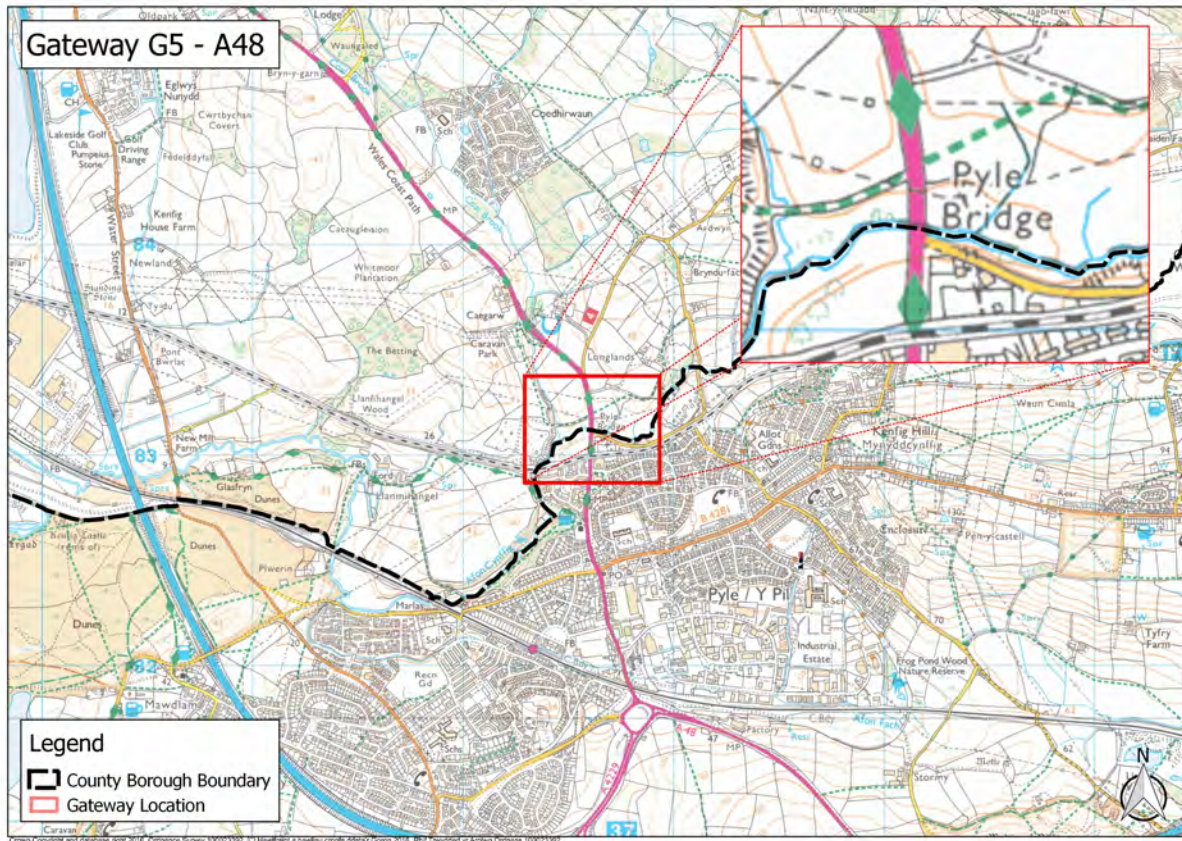
Design Solutions

A.1.4.7   Any proposed buildings in the agricultural/countryside areas visible from the gateway location should be designed to have a character and scale compatible with traditional rural buildings, and be sited as far as possible within or near to existing groups of buildings, with the aim of ensuring that the rural character of the landscape is maintained or enhanced as far as possible.

A.2 Other Gateways

A.2.1   In addition to the four Primary Network Gateways covered in detail above, there are nine other important and significant gateways into the County Borough along main road routes that carry significant traffic. The same general principles should be applied to these additional gateways as have been outlined for the Primary Network Gateways, with developments that are likely to be prominent when seen from the gateway location needing special consideration in respect of their visual and landscape impacts. Detailed information about the LANDMAP Character Areas that relate to each gateway location is available in the NPT LANDMAP Landscape Assessment[51]. The additional important gateway locations are outlined in this section.

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51   Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (White Consultants 2004).

Gateway G5: A48 at Margam/Pyle

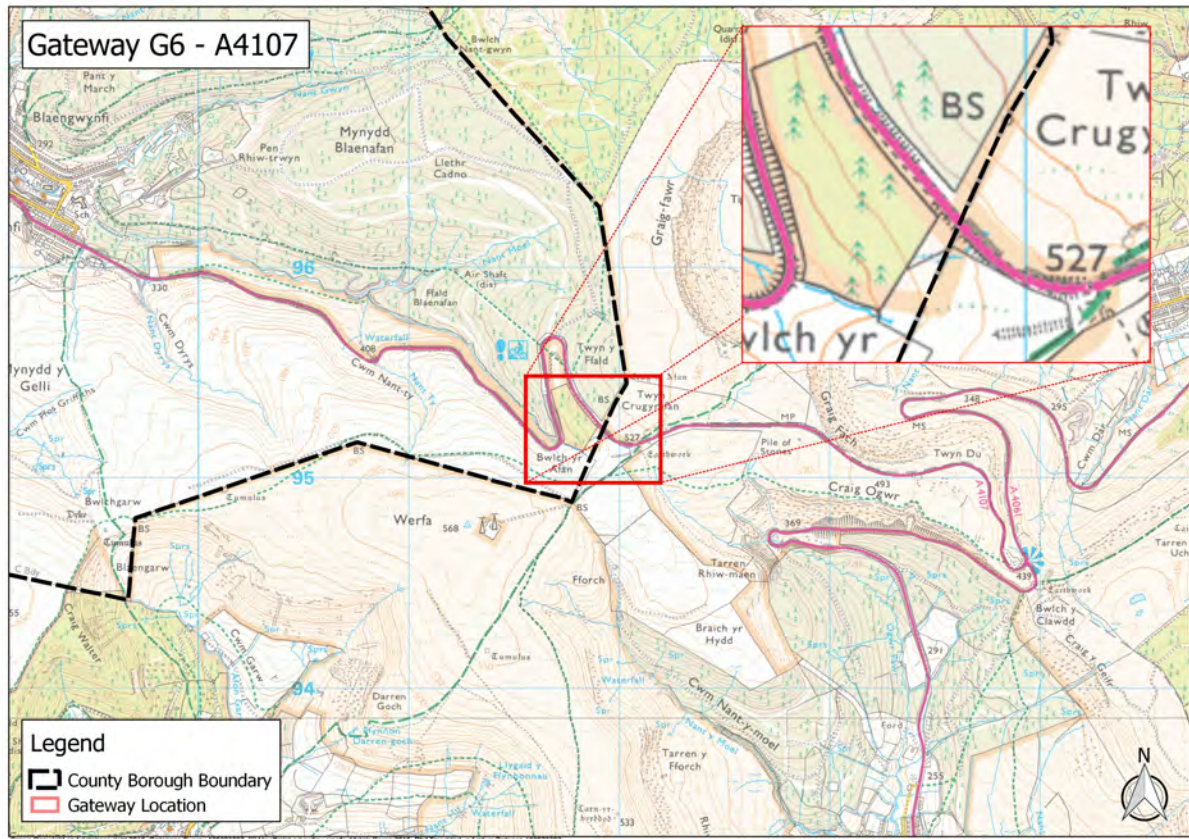**Picture A.9 Gateway G5: A48 Looking North**

Factors of Note

A.2.2   Open fairly flat and low lying farmland on both sides of the A48 with trees and hedgerows. Less extensive views than from G1 M4 Margam gateway. The countryside on both sides of the road is designated a Green Wedge in the LDP, with land on the east side also designated as a Special Landscape Area (i.e. LDP Policies EN2 and EN3).

Gateway G6: A4107 above Abergwynfi (Bwlch yr Afan)

Picture A.10 Gateway G6: A4107 Looking North West

Factors of Note

A.2.3   Open high moorland landscape with conifer plantations and extensive views down into the Afan Valley and beyond. Southern valley side is designated a Special Landscape Area (LDP Policy EN2).

Gateway G7: A4221 at Coelbren
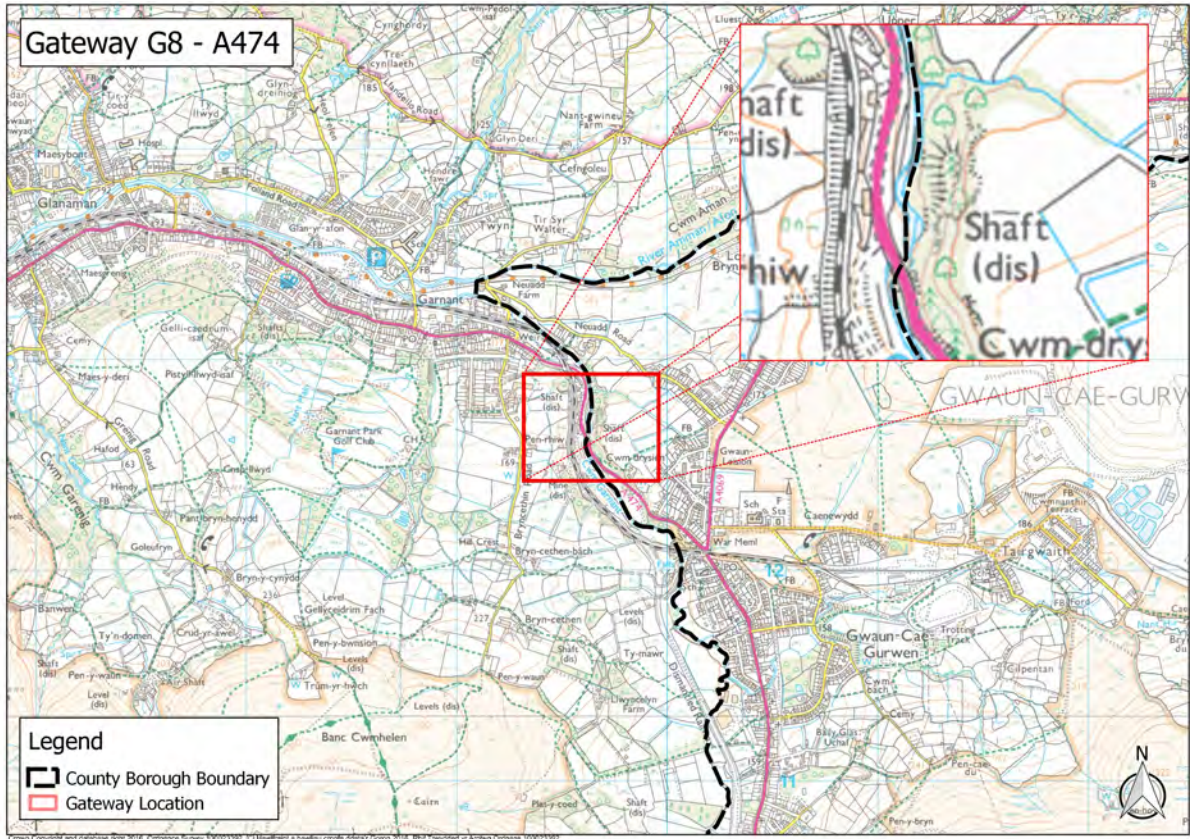

Picture A.11 Gateway G7: A4221 Looking South East

Factors of Note

A.2.4   Open moorland with few trees or buildings other than Onllwyn Washery complex to south. To the north east of the road is the extensive Gors Llwyn SSSI. Extensive open views to both sides of the main road.
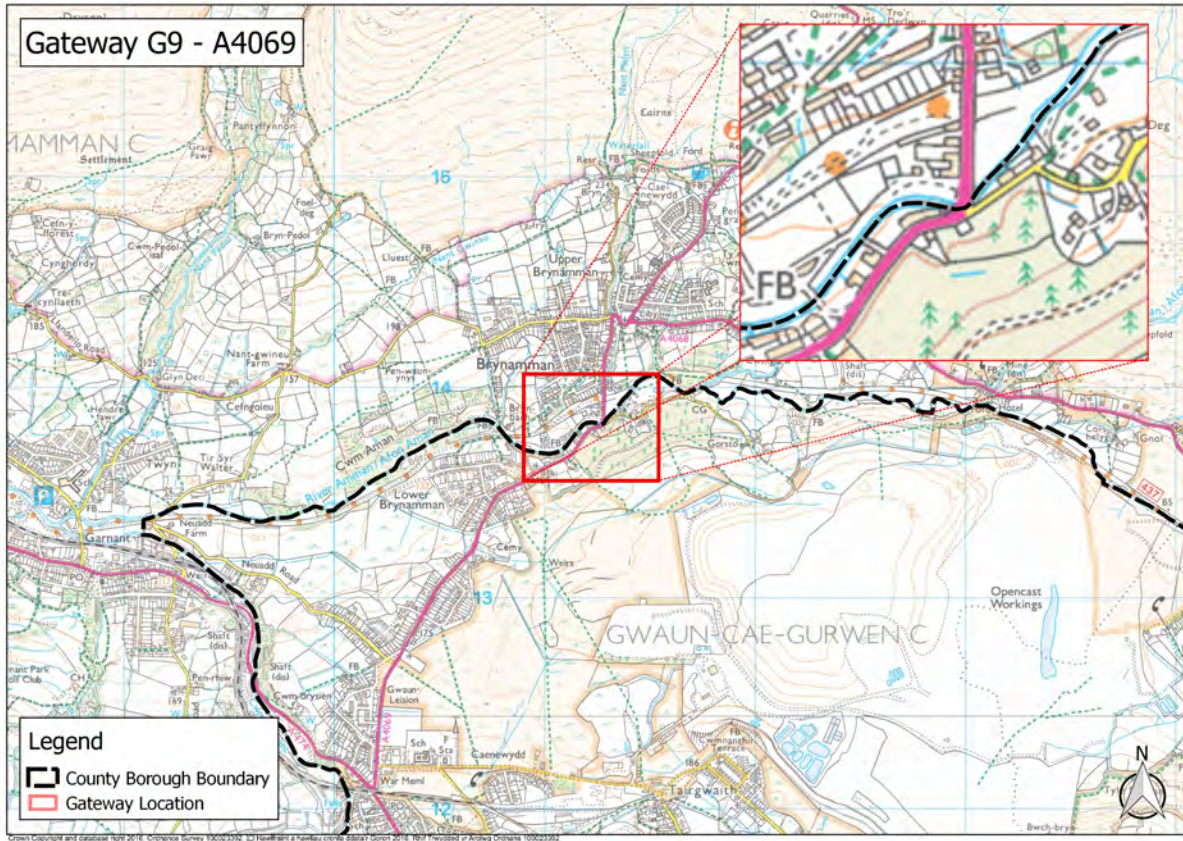
Gateway G8: A474 at Gwaun Cae Gurwen

Picture A.12 Gateway G8: A474 at Gwaun Cae Gurwen looking south

Factors of Note

A.2.5 Extensive tree screening and woodland cover result in generally restricted views from the main road at this gateway location.

Gateway G9: A4069 at Brynamman

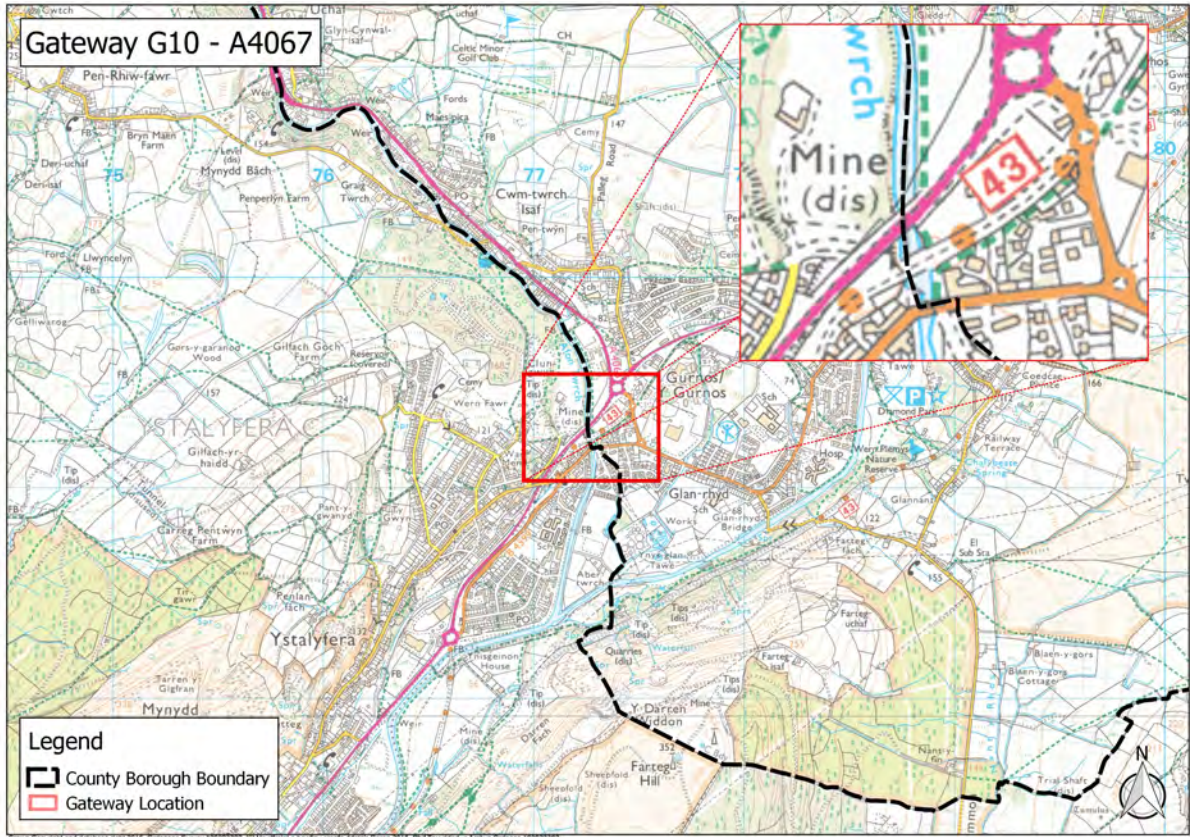**Picture A.13 Gateway G9: A4069 at Brynamman looking south**

Factors of Note

A.2.6   Restricted views due to topography. River bridge and war memorial (listed) are noticeable features, with wooded area around memorial.
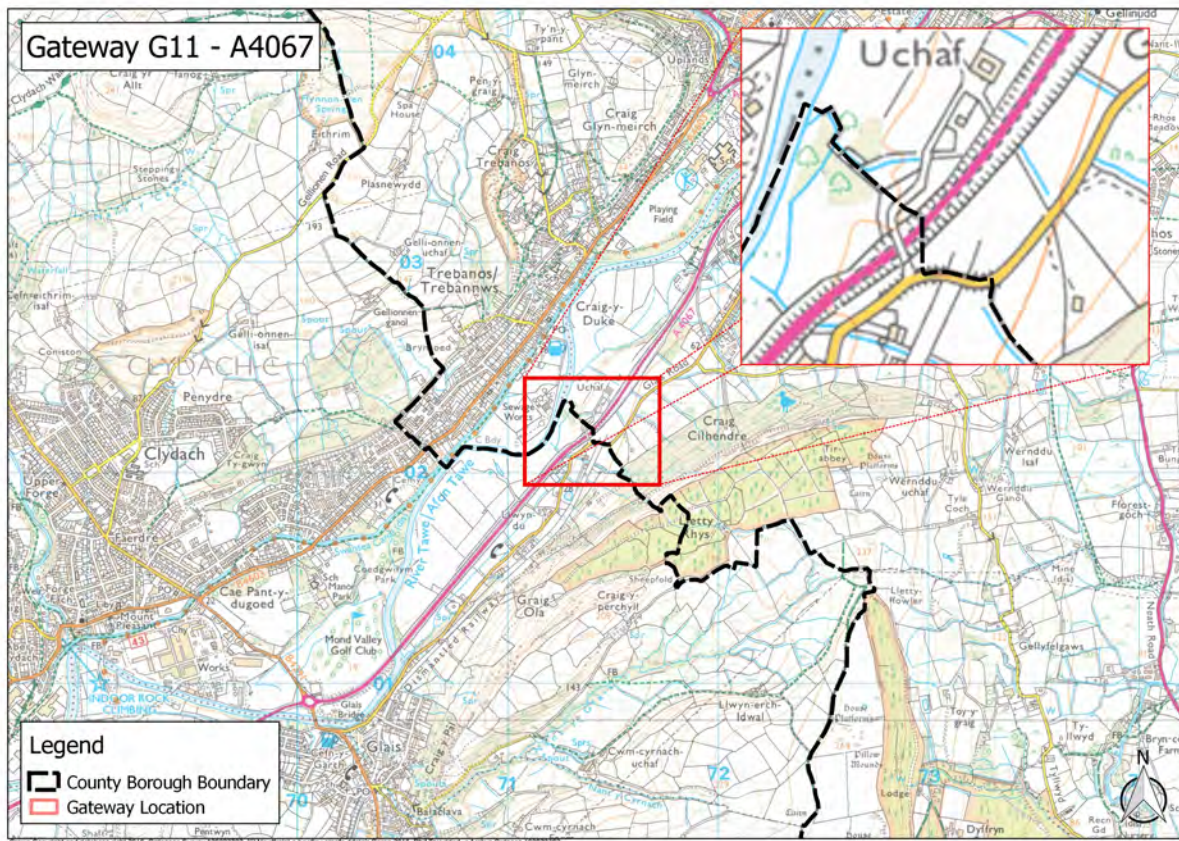
Gateway G10: A4067 at Ystalyfera

Picture A.14 Gateway G10: A4067 at Ystalyfera looking south west

Factors of Note

A.2.7 Gateway on by-pass road built on former railway alignment. Views largely restricted by trees/screening, but brief distant views of canal aqueduct (ancient monument) and Farteg mountain to south are significant.

Gateway G11: A4067 at Alltwen/Trebanos

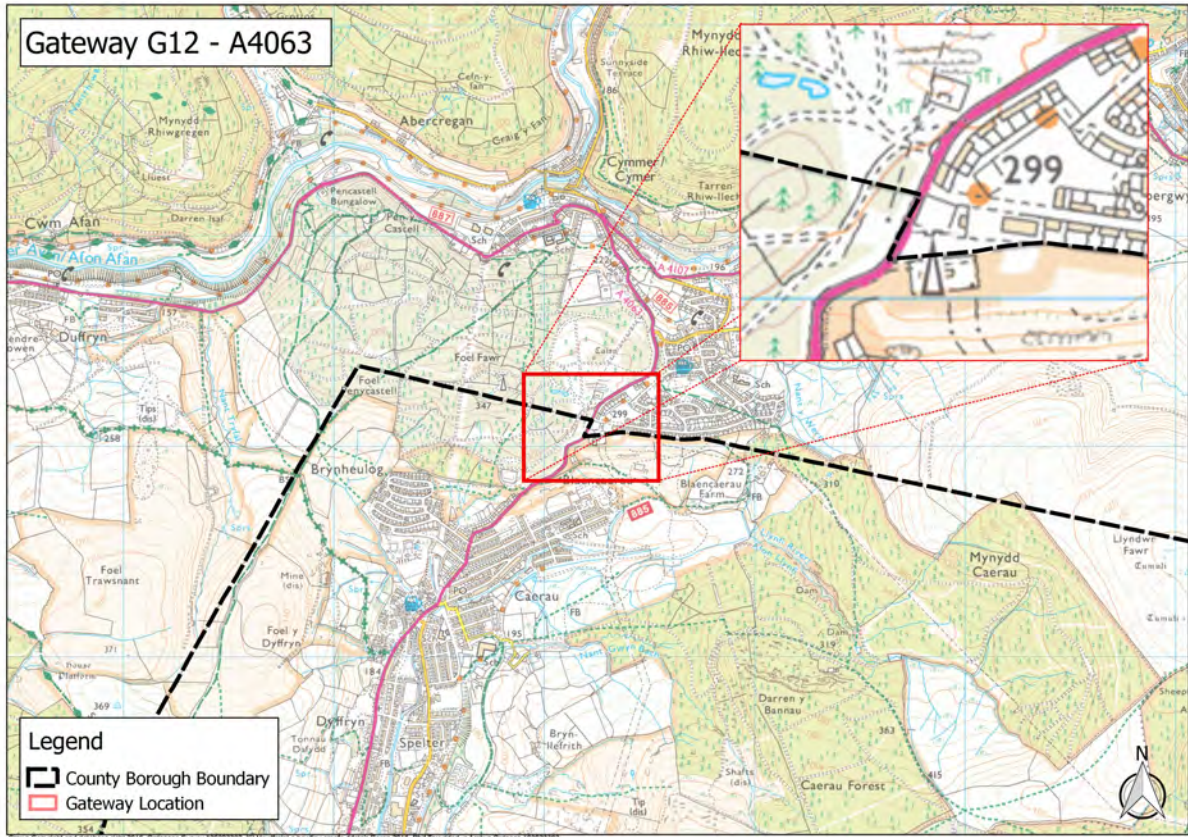**Picture A.15 Gateway G11: A4067 at Alltwen/Trebanos looking north east**

Factors of Note

A.2.8   The gateway location is on the by-pass road which runs along the open flat valley floor. Views are generally restricted by trees/screening.

Gateway G12: A4063 at Croeserw

Gateway G12 - A4063

Legend
County Borough Boundary
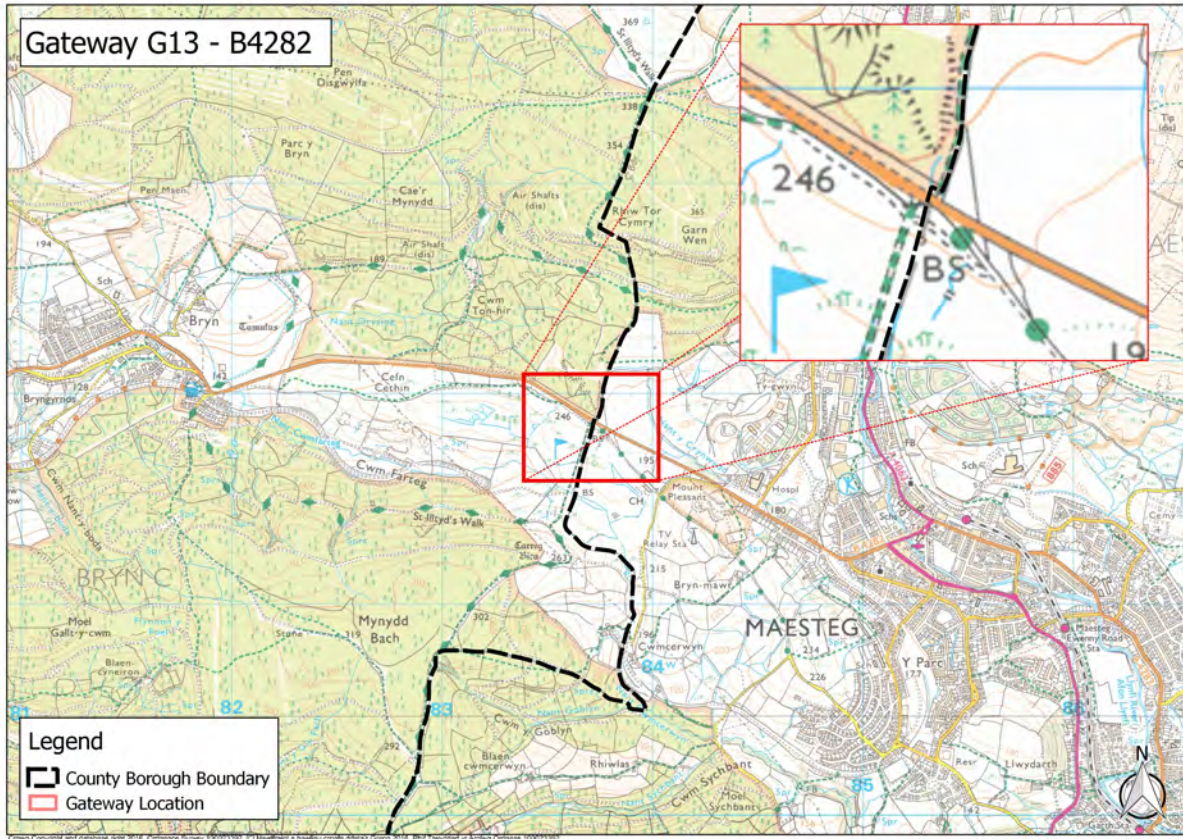Gateway Location

Picture A.16 Gateway G12: A4063 at Croeserw looking north

Factors of Note

A.2.9   Fairly open distant views of open moorland/mountains to east and some conifer woodland areas to west with sporadic development close to the road on the east side. Potential for new development within settlement limits to east of road.

Gateway G13: B4282 Maesteg/Bryn

Picture A.17 Gateway G13: B4282 Maesteg/Bryn looking west

Factors of Note

A.2.10   Extensive open moorland views especially to south side of road, with conifer woodland to north. Land on the south side of the road is designated as a Special Landscape Area (LDP Policy EN2).

Appendix B: Householder Guide

Introduction

B.0.1 On the 30th September 2013, the Welsh Government amended the permitted development rights for householders, through the introduction of the 'Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2013'. Permitted development is development that can be added to a property without first requiring planning permission.

B.0.2 The permitted development rights are restricted by a number of controls and conditions that development must meet to benefit from the deemed consent. In the past these controls and conditions have been focused upon a volume restriction approach. However, it was considered that a more appropriate method of control would be an impact led approach.

B.0.3 The Welsh Government has provided a **Householder Guide to Planning** as well as **Technical Guidance Note** on the specific householder permitted development rights. There is also an interactive model of a house and the relevant permitted development rights available to view on the Planning Portal website: www.planningportal.gov.uk

B.0.4 Planning Policy Wales sets out the Assembly Government's land use planning policy in respect of 'promoting sustainability through good design', which includes the role of local planning authorities in delivering good design. In addition Technical Advice Note 12: Design promotes good design. These documents are available on the Welsh Government Website.

Purpose of the Guidelines

B.0.5 These guidelines are aimed at providing advice to householders and developers, considering alterations or extensions to a residential dwelling, or other developments within the curtilage of a dwelling where planning permission is required. By highlighting clearly and simply, the design and amenity impact criteria against which planning applications will be considered, it is the intention that this guide will aid a consistent approach to all schemes being provided by the Local Planning Authority.

B.0.6 It is the intention for the Local Authority to formally adopt these guidelines, and that these will be a material planning consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

B.0.7 This advice has been prepared in part as a response to the design of some extensions that have been constructed in the past including, in particular, the impact that they have had upon neighbouring properties, the design of the host property, and the impacts that unsympathetic extensions and alterations can have on the street scene and the character of the area within which the property is sited.

B.0.8 The main purpose of the guidelines is therefore to ensure that where extensions require planning permission, the design of the extension is sympathetic to the existing property, and the character of the area as a whole whilst ensuring that the amenity of adjoining properties in protected.

B.1 General Overarching Design Principles and Guidelines

B.1.1 Principles & Procedures

Principles

B.1.1.1 The principle behind these new guidelines is a recognition of the potentially conflicting demands of the desire of householders to extend their own properties and the protection of appropriate standards of amenity enjoyed by neighbours. These guidelines attempt to provide a balance between these two demands. In different types of property these different demands may be given differing weight, to ensure that the guidelines do not overly restrict the opportunity to extend specific property types.

B.1.1.2 For example, in older terraced properties there may be a need to provide additional accommodation to ensure basic kitchen and bathroom facilities. There is often no alternative design solution available other than a rear extension.

B.1.1.3 It should be recognised by all householders, that most properties have a limit, beyond which they cannot be extended. This is what is often described as "overdevelopment" of the site.

Procedures

B.1.1.4 The new regulations introduced on 30th September 2013 are more detailed and require a more complex assessment as to whether a proposed development would benefit from permitted development rights or whether planning permission is needed. As such, the Council will now require a Certificate of Lawful Development (Proposed) or (Existing) application, prior to being able to confirm whether planning permission is required. If planning permission would be required, free pre-application advice is given to the applicant as to whether the development would be likely to receive a favourable officer recommendation at the planning stage.

Lawful Development Certificates

B.1.1.5 The application forms for a Certificate of Lawful Development (Proposed) or (Existing) are available to download[52] and can be submitted electronically through the Planning Portal[53].

B.1.1.6 The current fee for a Certificate of Lawful Development (Proposed) is **£95**, while an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development (Existing) is **£190**. Fees can be paid electronically if the application is submitted via the Planning Portal or can be paid by cheque in other cases. Cheques should be made payable to NPTCBC.
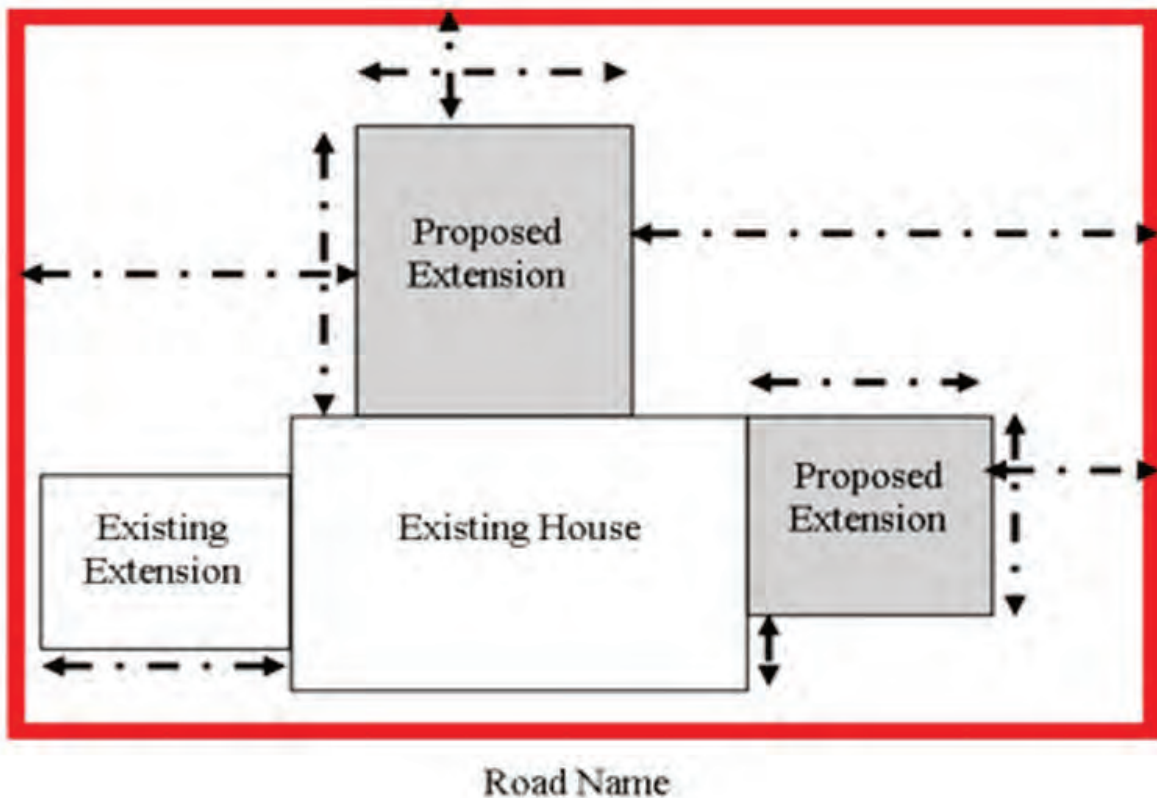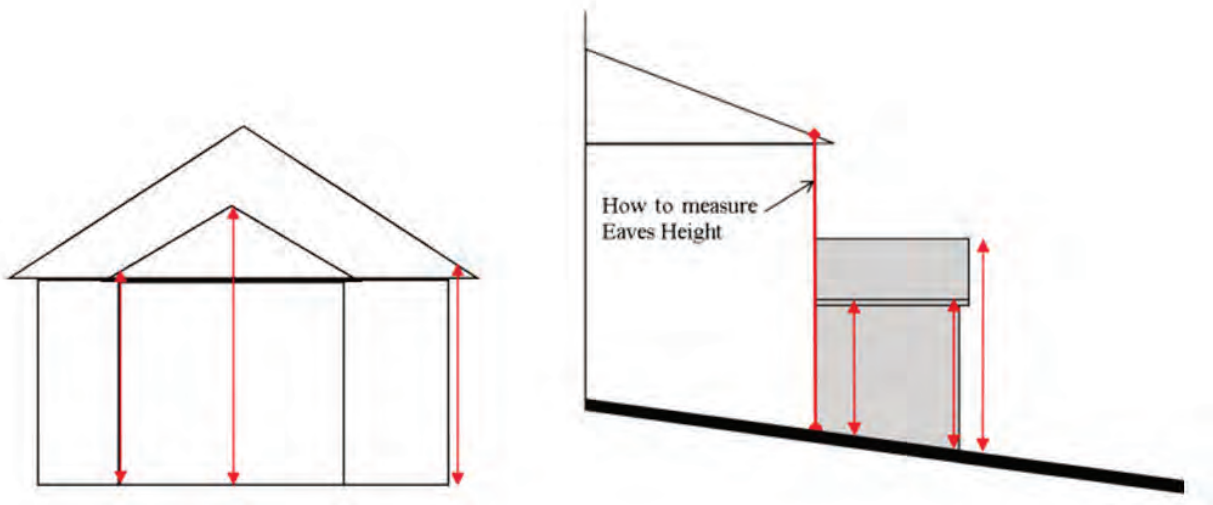
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52   https://www.npt.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=7604
53   www.planningportal.gov.uk

B.1.1.7   Applications should be accompanied by a site location plan (Ordnance Survey Plan) with the application site outlined in red, at a scale of 1:1,250 and with a north point shown, together with a block plan, proposed elevations and proposed floor plans which at this stage can be annotated with dimensions rather than produced to a stated scale.

B.1.1.8   Whilst the plans do not have to be professionally drawn, they still need to be of a suitable standard to enable the Planning Authority to confirm if planning permission is required. Furthermore, it is essential that these plans and elevations are an accurate statement of the development proposed. Any variation from these details could mean that planning permission is required. The drawings must also accurately show any change in ground levels around the area where the proposed extension is going to be built. A Planning Officer will be able to give you further advice on this, at the time of your application.

Examples of Measurements required as a Minimum for a Lawful Development Certificate Submission

Road Name

B.1.1.9 If a planning application is submitted for a proposal and it is identified as being permitted development, the applicant will be asked to complete a Certificate of Lawful Development application form, submit the reduced alternative fee (the original fee will be returned to them) and the application will be determined as a Certificate of Lawful Development. The developer will then have the benefit of a legal determination as to the planning status of the development. This will provide them with legal security in the future, such as when they come to sell the property.

B.1.1.10 In addition to the above, most Building Work, other that straight forward repairs, will require Building Regulations approval, for which a separate application must be made. It should be noted that different types of applications will be determined by reference to different criteria and legislation. Approval under Building Regulations should not therefore be taken as an indication that planning permission has been or will be granted.

B.1.1.11 The Local Authority Building Regulations Section can be contacted on 01639 686920 or email building.control@npt.gov.uk

Pre-Application Advice and Guidance

B.1.1.12 The Council's approach to Development Management continues to place significant importance upon the provision of the best possible advice to a potential developer / applicant before a formal planning application is submitted.

B.1.1.13 Since the 16th March 2016, the Welsh Government has required all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Wales to provide a Statutory Pre-Application Service. To reflect this new duty, the Council's 'Planning Pre-Application Service Protocol' covers the following pre-application services offered by Neath Port Talbot:

- The Statutory Pre-Application Service;

- Provision of additional advice following an initial written response received under the statutory service; and

- Non-Statutory Pre-Application Advice.

B.1.1.14   The 'Planning Pre-Application Service Protocol' is intended to proactively represent the Council's service statement in respect of all pre-application services offered, chargeable or otherwise, and not only sets out the charging regime, but also details the level of information which should be submitted and the quality of response that is to be expected when engaging with the Council in pre-application discussions. Further information on the charges, and the services offered can be found on the Council's website.

B.1.2 Initial Property Assessment

Understanding Your Property and Street Scene

B.1.2.1   It is important that you consider the type of property you are proposing to alter or extend, the layout and pattern of existing surrounding development, and the density and character of the area within which your property lies.

- Is your property detached, semi-detached, terraced or a bungalow?

- Is it of a distinct period of architecture, if so, what are the defining / important features?

- How are the windows and doors arranged, and are the windows vertical or horizontal in emphasis?

- What materials are used, and are these materials common within the street?

- It your property within an area of special control (e.g. a Conservation Area), or a Listed Building?

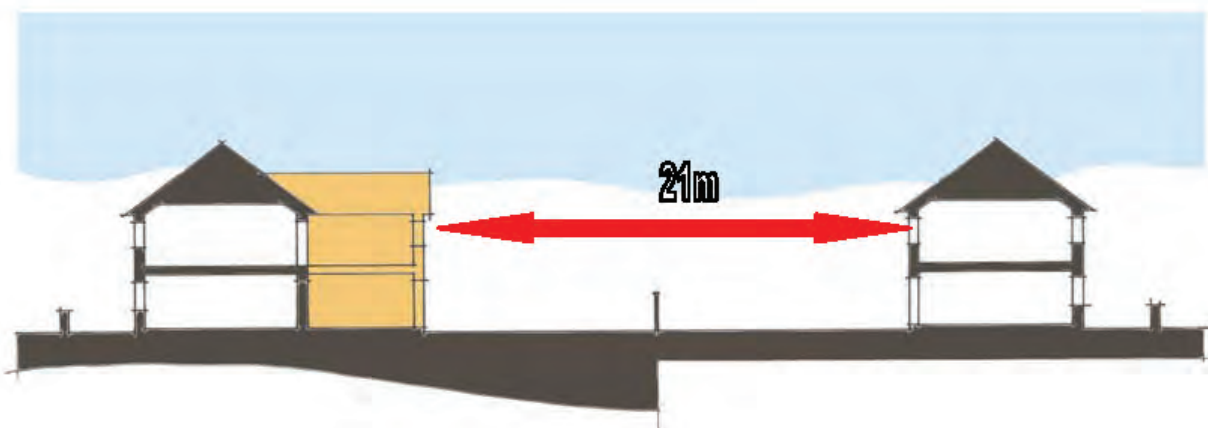**In relation to the street scene and character of the area:**

- Are all of the properties in your street or location of a similar design and scale?

- Is there a uniform building line, or common elements that enhance or create a distinct character?

- Do boundary walls, landscaping and open spaces provide important features within the area?

- What density of development exists? Are the properties constructed close together or spaced apart? Would your development affect this?

B.1.2.2   These are elements that make up important features within your properties wider context, and its relationship with other properties within the area. How you alter your property will either complement these features, or potentially detract from the street scene and result in a recommendation of refusal or delays in the application process.

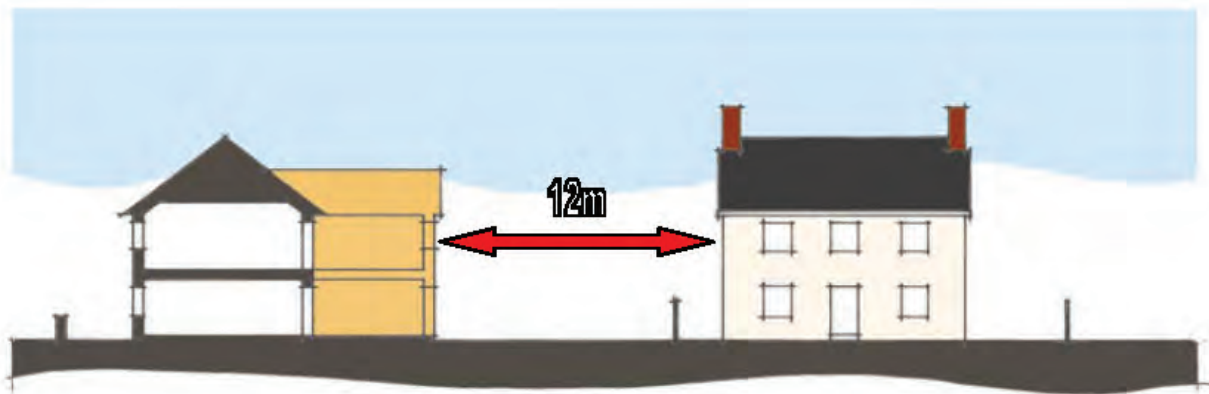**Distances between Habitable Room Windows**

B.1.2.3   A minimum distance of 21 metres(m) shall be retained between directly overlooking habitable room windows on that of the new extension and those in any existing property.
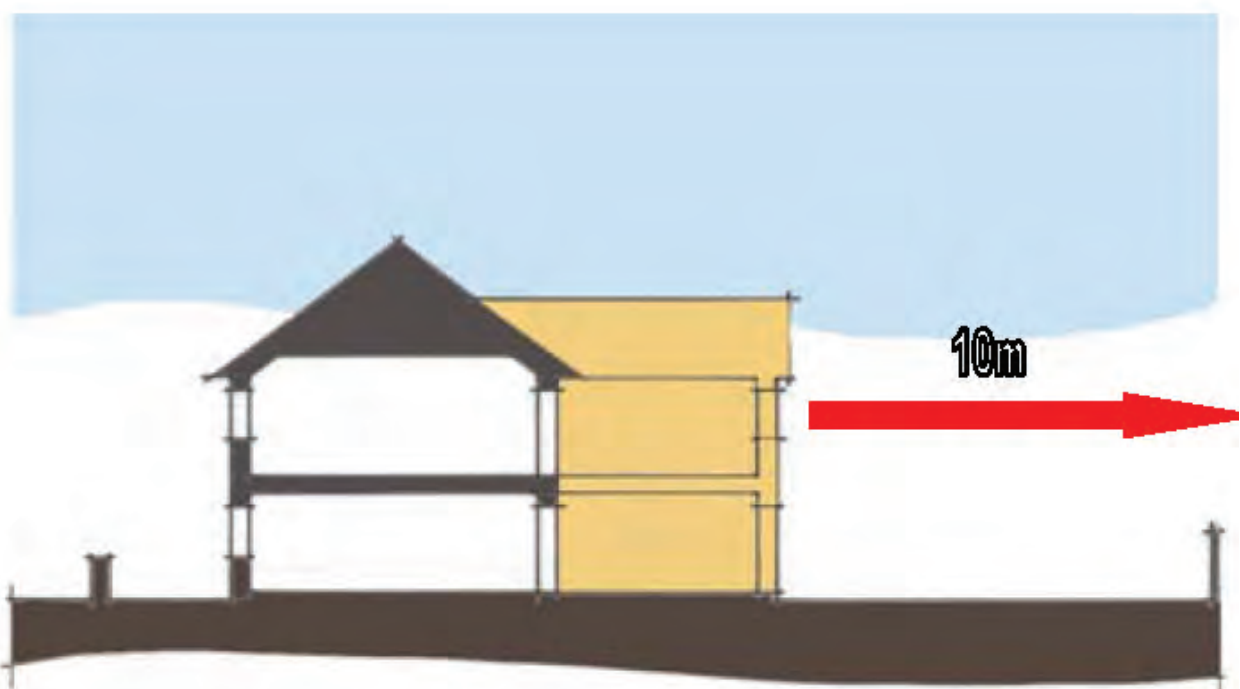
B.1.2.4   A habitable room is considered to be any room within that property apart from a utility room, hallway/landing, kitchen (if not a kitchen diner) bathroom or en-suite.
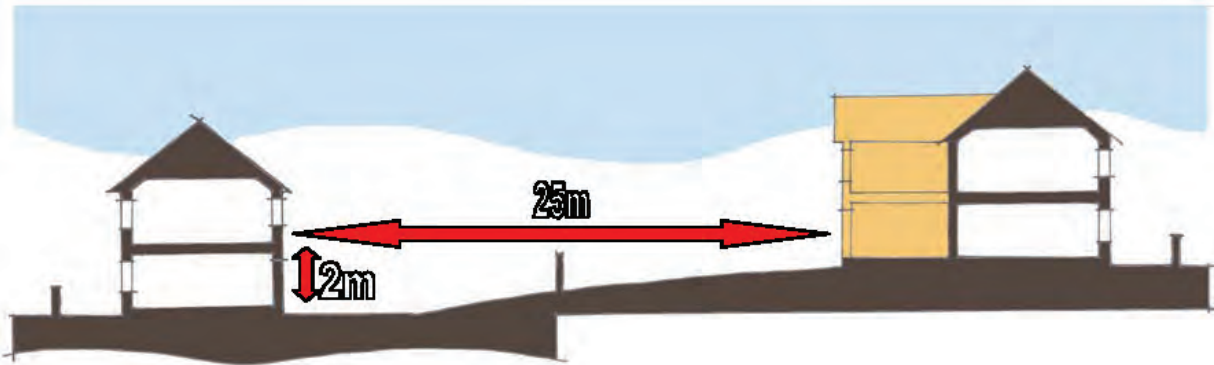
B.1.2.5   In addition it is <u>not</u> considered acceptable that the only window to a habitable room is obscured to address overlooking issues, as this would impact detrimentally upon the amenity of future occupiers. Therefore internal arrangements should ensure that habitable rooms can be provided with an acceptable outlook.

B.1.2.6   Where an extension would overlook the side or a blank elevation in an adjoining property, a distance of 12m should be provided. This distance would ensure that the proposed development would retain adequate separation and not result in any unacceptable overbearing or overshadowing impact on the neighbouring properties.
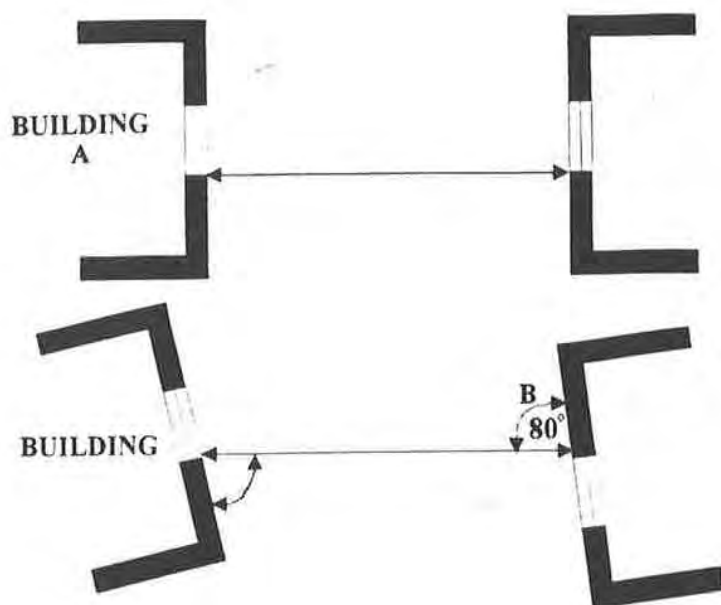
B.1.2.7   The impact of development upon existing private garden areas must also be considered. To ensure that any extension does not overlook, and result in a loss of privacy to these areas, or is considered to overshadow or overbear upon that garden area, it is considered that a distance of 10m should be retained.

B.1.2.8   Where a change of levels occurs between properties, the minimum separation distance of 21m between habitable room windows shall be increased, to take account of this. An additional 2m separation for every 1m difference in height difference will be required. For example:

- 2m height difference in slab levels: 21m + (2m x2) = 25m separation distance required between the habitable room windows.

B.1.2.9   Where properties are at an angle to each other, as shown on the diagram below, the distance required between windows can be reduced, in accordance with the table.

Appendix B: . Householder Guide

Building A (Angle A)

Table B.1.2.1

Building B (Angle B)		90⁰	80⁰	70⁰	60⁰	50⁰	40⁰	30⁰	20⁰	10⁰	0⁰
	90⁰	21m	21m	21m	21m	16m	12m	9m	7m	6m	5m
	80⁰	21m	21m	21m	16m	12m	9m	7m	6m	5m	
	70⁰	21m	21m	16m	12m	9m	7m	6m	5m		
	60⁰	21m	16m	12m	9m	7m	6m	5m			
	50⁰	16m	12m	9m	7m	6m	5m				
	40⁰	12m	9m	7m	6m	5m					
	30⁰	9m	7m	6m	5m						
	20⁰	7m	6m	5m							
	10⁰	6m	5m								
	0⁰	5m									

External Materials (Traditional and Modern)

B.1.2.10   Materials should generally match those used on your existing property, and it is common that all properties within your street may also have a common palette of external finishes that result in a specific external appearance.

B.1.2.11   However, as the need to develop in a more sustainable manner has been brought to the fore, it is clear that modern or alternate materials are required to achieve the required sustainability targets.

B.1.2.12   As such, the Council does not prescribe external materials, but would expect that if an alternative design or external finish be proposed, that it is justified and can be shown to be design and/or sustainability led and achieve the overarching design principles set out within Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 12: Design.

B.1.2.13   The use of inappropriate materials on an existing property that are purely "bolt-on features" that do not reflect or add value to the design would unlikely be acceptable.

B.1.2.14   Where modern extensions or external materials are proposed, the importance of precise detailing and quality will be necessary, to ensure a good relationship between the existing and proposed elements.

Windows Design and Solid to Void Ratios

B.1.2.15   Dependant of the style and setting of your extension, the location and design of the windows would need to reflect those within the existing dwelling.

● What type are they (e.g. sash, bay), are they all uniform in design?

● What types of glazing bars? Are these a feature worthy or retention or replication?

● How many are there and what are their size and shape?

● Are they set back within the walls, creating a defined reveal, or flush?

● Are there lintels and sills?

● What proportion of the facade do they take up (i.e. solid to void ratio)?

B.1.2.16   Windows on the front facades of buildings have an important role to play in the appearance and continuity of a dwelling and its response to its local context. Windows have traditionally been set back in their frames rather than positioned directly flush with the building facade. This improves both the weathering and appearance of the window. Window reveals should be a minimum of 100mm in all new dwellings and where windows are replaced in an existing building.

B.1.2.17   Consideration should also be given to the size and amount of window coverage in a new building. The proportion of windows in any one facade is known as the solid to void ratio. Extensions should seek to respond to the prevailing solid to void ratios of their settlement, especially on the front facades. When designing an extension it is important to consider the following:

Size and Proportion

B.1.2.18   Overlarge windows on an extension are generally considered to be inappropriate. The proportion of the windows should provide continuity between the original house and the extension.

Style

B.1.2.19   The style of windows should match those on the original house.

Ratio of Wall to Openings

B.1.2.20   The ratio of solid wall to openings, otherwise known as the 'solid to void ratio', is important in order to reflect the character of the host building and to avoid unsightly large expanses of brickwork.

Vertical Rhythm

B.1.2.21   An extension must have special consideration to any regular arrangements of vertical features along a façade.
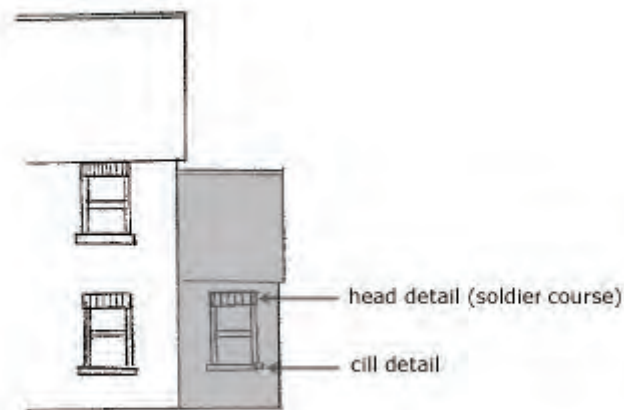

Architectural Detailing

B.1.2.22   Your extension will be more attractive, and more sympathetic to the original house, if you are able to use detailing similar to that on the house. Look particularly at the following details:
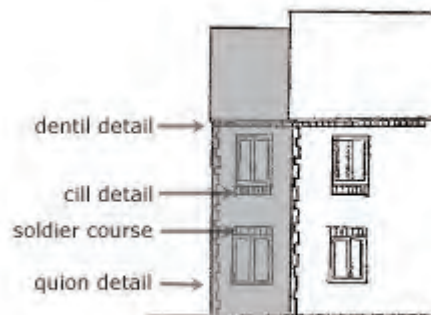
Openings

B.1.2.23   The head and cill details to windows or doors are usually easy to replicate and are a very effective way of integrating the old with the new. Replicating existing details, such as arched brickwork and lintels or soldier courses can make a great difference to the quality of the final building. More complex details can often be copied by skilled builders. However, such detailing should only be applied where it is already apparent in the host building. The introduction of new detailing on an extension which is otherwise absent in the host building can appear alien and should be avoided.

head detail (soldier course)
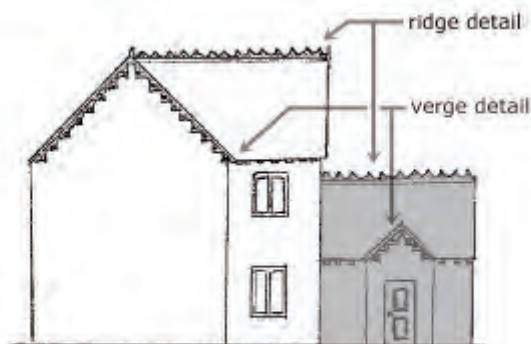
cill detail

Brickwork Details

B.1.2.24   It is important to examine the bonding of the original brickwork and match this on the new extension. People are often disappointed when a new extension appears to have a different visual appearance and texture to the original building, despite having taken care to match the bricks. This is invariably caused by using stretcher bond on an extension to an older property. It is also important to match the mortar type and joints, so that the new brickwork blends with the old. In situations where it is difficult to match bricks and/or brickwork, it may be appropriate to use different materials.

B.1.2.25   Quoins and soldier courses could be carried through onto a new extension in order to integrate the new work. The copying of details should be carefully considered as this may detract from the original building.

dentil detail

cill detail

soldier course

quion detail

Roof Details

B.1.2.26   Look at the verge, eaves and ridge of the original house and aim to replicate these details within the extension in the same way taking cues from the host building. These elements are particularly important in achieving a sense of continuity between the host building and the proposed extension.
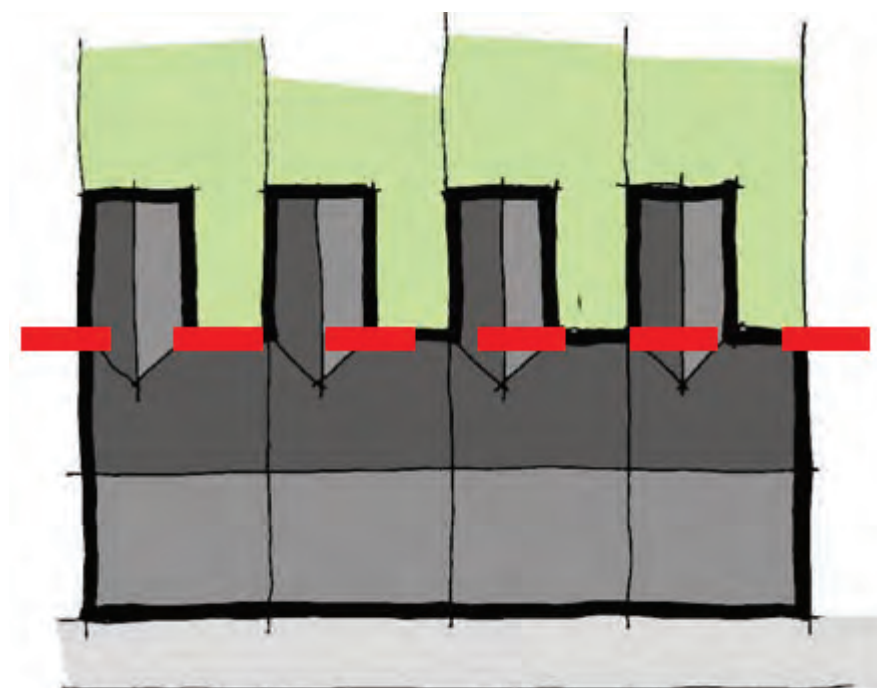
B.2 Specific Guidelines for Property / Extension Type
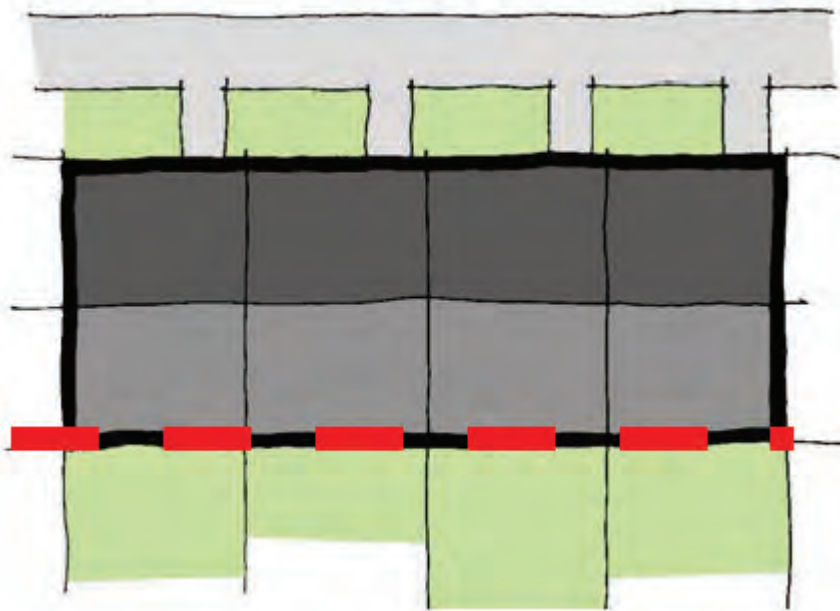
Rear Extensions to Terraced Properties

B.2.1   Extending traditional and modern terraced properties can often lead to issues with a loss of outlook to the rear windows of adjoining properties and a loss of light. Whilst many traditional terraced properties have generous rear garden lengths, they are often narrow, and can therefore through a "tunnelling effect" lead to issues detrimental to amenity.

B.2.2   As such, there needs to be a balance to allow these types of properties to extend, whilst retaining an appropriate level of amenity for adjoining properties.
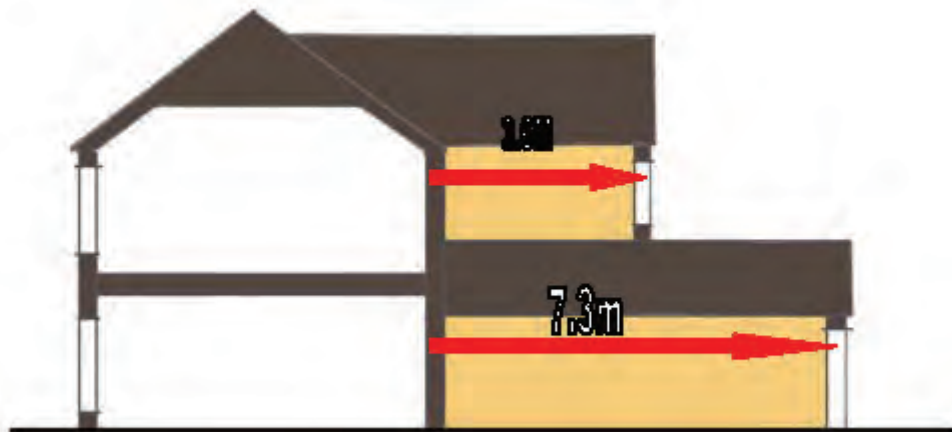

B.2.3   Therefore a limit on the total projection at ground and first floor is necessary to ensure that this balance is achieved.

B.2.4   This allows for a total projection from the main rear wall of the property, which is defined as the main wall supporting the main pitched roof, excluding any projecting rear wing, whether original or not (as marked red on the diagrams opposite).

B.2.5 It is therefore considered that the maximum permitted distances that you extend beyond the main rear wall (as defined) would be 7.3m at ground floor level, and a maximum projection of 3.6m at first floor.

B.2.6 If properties on **both sides** of your property already have extensions that project further, you may be allowed to extend to a similar distance. For example, if properties on both sides of your house have first floor extensions that project 5m from the main rear wall. You may be allowed to project to a similar distance.

B.2.7 The design of the extension should consider all relevant design principles set out within this guide, and respect eaves and ridge heights of the existing property, whilst providing in the majority of situations, a ridged roof to match into the existing roof design. Flat roof extensions may be permissible, but only if these are considered not to be visible from a public viewpoint, and that a ridged roof is not possible due to site constraints.
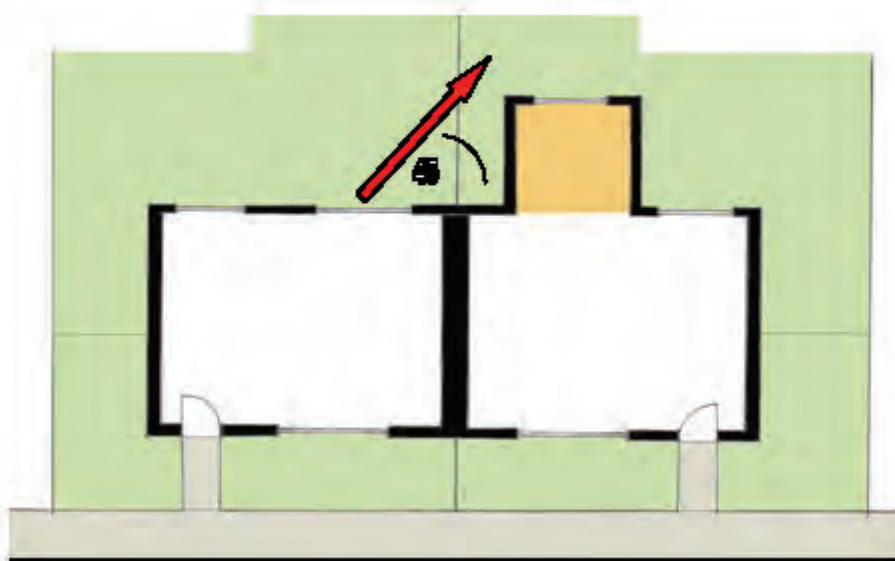
Rear Extensions to Detached and Semi-Detached Properties

B.2.8   Rear extensions to detached and semi-detached properties should adhere to the overarching design of the main dwelling, and provide an integrated addition that complements the scale and massing of the host property.

B.2.9   The roof should therefore tie into the main roof of the property, and follow its existing design, unless site conditions dictate otherwise. For example, if the roof to the main property is hipped or gable in form, that this is replicated in the design of the proposed extension.

The 45° Rule

B.2.10   The 45^0 code is to be used for first floor extensions to detached and semi-detached properties only. The compliance with this is to be taken from the nearest habitable room windows on the neighbouring properties on either side of the application property, at ground and first floor (the definition of a habitable room is set out previously within these guidelines).

B.2.11   The reference point is the mid-point of the window of the nearest habitable room to the extension. The 45^0 line shall be drawn in the horizontal plane such that the windows to be considered are those at a similar height of the proposed extension.

B.2.12   Dependant on the relative size and orientation of the windows involved the code may be relaxed if the extension would only affect a secondary window to a room which has two or more windows. Regard will also be had to any permitted development rights that may exist such that the Council will not seek to be overly restrictive should a similar extension be able to be built without planning consent.

B.2.13 If an extension has already been built or been given planning approval prior to the Council's adoption of the Code so that its projection is beyond that which would be permitted by the code, an extension of the other half of the semi-detached properties should not extend further than one already built or permitted.

B.2.14 Joint proposals for extensions of a pair of semi-detached properties may be accepted even if the extension would not comply with the code, providing they are of the same projection, and are to be constructed and completed at the same time. Subject to all other design and amenity considerations.

B.2.15 As with all extensions, the design of the extension should consider all relevant design principles set out within this guide, and respect eaves and ridge heights of the existing property, whilst providing in the majority of situations, a ridged roof to match into the existing roof design. Flat roof two storey extensions are unlikely to be permissible, unless site constraints dictate that there are no alternatives, and not visible to public areas.

Bungalows

B.2.16 Bungalows often present particular challenges when designing appropriate extensions. Whereas a single storey flat roof extension may, in certain circumstances, be appropriate on a two storey property, it would rarely be on a bungalow. Any extension to the rear should reflect the existing roof design, tying the extension into the existing dwelling in a sympathetic manner. Again, the development should consider the setting of the property, its relevant design features, and its location within the street scene and in relation to other properties.

B.2.17 In considering extensions to bungalows, these often take the form of alterations and extensions within the roof space. These may involve the introductions of dormer extensions, and/or the potential increase in ridge level, to create sufficient internal ceiling heights at first floor level.

B.2.18 Dormer extensions should be of a scale that are sympathetic to the scale of the property, and should be designed to reflect the shape and form of the roof of the main dwelling.
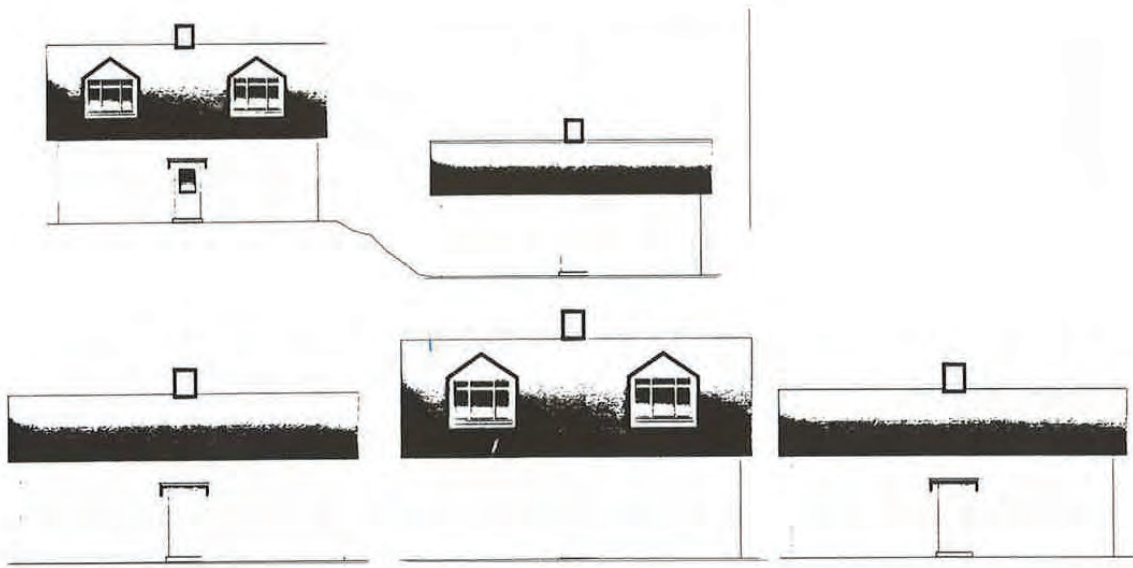
B.2.19 Set down off the ridgeline of the existing property, and set back off the eaves line. Finished in materials to match or reflect the main dwelling, and provided with glazing that also mirrors the pattern and type within the main property.

B.2.20 Large overly dominant flat roof dormer extensions that alter the massing of the dwelling, and do not respect the design of the property or can be intrusive elements within a wider street scene, are generally unacceptable.

B.2.21 Where it is proposed to alter the roof of the property to increase the ridge height or shape of the roof to allow for first floor accommodation, due care needs to be taken on the wider impact of this on the street scene and adjoining properties. It would be necessary to provide existing and proposed plans indicating the levels of adjoining properties, eaves and ridge heights to support any application.

B.2.22 Increases in eaves and ridge height, where properties would be out of character and scale within the area are unlikely to be acceptable. In some circumstances changes in house type along a road frontage, or changes in level may allow changes in roof design to occur, but impacts upon both visual amenity, and residential amenity should be carefully considered, and additional supporting cross sections and levels may be necessary to justify the proposals.

Side Extensions

B.2.23   The form and shape of the original dwelling should be taken into consideration when considering the design and scale of any proposed extension. Careful attention to the proportions of any side extension, the location and design of windows and doors, and the detailing and external finishes associated with the development can impact significantly on the design of the property as a whole, and have both positive and negative impacts.
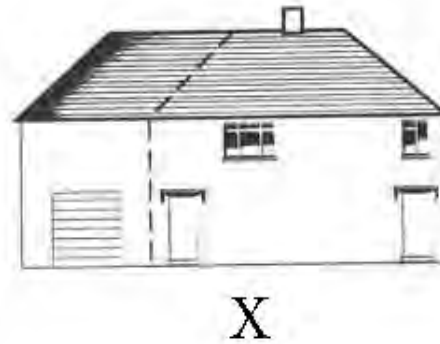
Semi-Detached Properties

B.2.24   All two storey side extensions to semi-detached properties should be set back a **minimum of 1m** from the front (principal) elevation of the dwelling, and the ridgeline set down lower than the existing main ridge of the dwelling.

Retains character

Loses Character.

B.2.25 The extension should be of a scale that is subordinate to the main dwelling and the roof design and other features reflect the design of the dwelling as a whole.

B.2.26 The width of the extension should not exceed two thirds of the width of the original dwelling.

B.2.27 In addition the extension should be designed as to consider the existing pattern of development within the street within which the property is sited. Therefore extensions that extend to the side boundary of the property, and would result in a loss of the separation between properties, known as "a terracing effect" may be inappropriate, and lead to further amenity issues, such as refuse collection, repairs and maintenance.

Terracing effect ✗   Avoids Terracing ✓

B.2.28   The spaces between buildings often make an important contribution to the character of an area. Extensions which reach a property boundary may contribute towards an inappropriate "terracing effect" or can result in a cramped appearance to the extended property itself. This is particularly noticeable where an extension continues the roof line of the original building and where a neighbouring property could also be extended in a similar manner. Home owners should not rely on similar extensions within the area permitted under previous policies and guidance as justification for inappropriate development.

B.2.29   Extensions should be set back and lower to create a subservient appearance.

B.2.30   Side extensions should be set off the boundary with any adjoining property and be set back a minimum of 0.5m from the principal elevation of the existing dwelling to maintain both a subordinate appearance, and to prevent potential for terracing. In some circumstances, a greater level of setback may be necessary to achieve this due to the individual circumstances.

Extensions and Alterations to the Roof

B.2.31   Massing of the building and its relationship with the other properties in the street scene can be significantly affected by alterations to the roof shape. As set out previously, dormer extensions should be set down from the main ridgeline, and set in from the eaves level, and be appropriate in scale and massing to the host property. Large scale side dormers, can significantly affect the overall massing of a roof structure.

Porches

B.2.32   The scale and design of a porch should reflect the scale and design of the main dwelling. The proportions including its width and projection, together with the roof design should not result in an over dominant feature to the elevation, and should consider the need to be sympathetic to the street scene.

B.2.33   The design of the roof should consider the relationship with the main dwelling, and the distances off front boundaries consider the scale and massing of the porch design, to ensure that it does, in the case of semi-detached properties, lead to an unbalanced and unsympathetic addition, due to its prominent location.

Front Extensions

B.2.34   Large scale front extensions are usually not appropriate, but if circumstances allow, these should be well designed to reflect or enhance the existing property, taking into account all of the forgoing advice.

B.2.35   How this extension would integrate with the existing property, and the existing pattern of development would be paramount, due to its prominent location. As such, an assessment of the local character and area would be essential.

B.2.36   Front extensions should:

- Leave sufficient space between the extension and the front boundary of the house to retain the appearance of openness around the dwelling.

- Not be obtrusive, prominent features in the street scene.

- Respect the size and proportions of the existing house.

- Respect the architectural features, brickwork, stonework, colour and texture of the existing house. Front porches usually look best where the materials, glazing pattern and degree of roof pitch, match the existing house.

- Not unduly affect neighbours amenity.

B.2.37 Where there is a strong building line or an architectural cohesiveness which would be broken, front extensions are unlikely to be acceptable.

Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Local Development Plan
Cynllun Datblygu Lleol

www.npt.gov.uk/ldp