

# Phase 1: Northgate Site

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - AUGUST 2017



YGWEITHFEYDD  
THE WORKS  
EBBW VALE GLYN EBWY

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**1.1** This Development Brief has been prepared for Phase 1 Northgate Site, The Works, Ebbw Vale. Phase 1 Northgate Site refers to a vacant plot of land located north east of the recently constructed Learning Campus (Figures 1 and 2 show the location of the site). The Works is identified in the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan for mixed use development under Policy MU2. To date, a number of significant developments have been completed. To inform and guide potential developers on the remaining plots, [The Works Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (SPG) document was adopted in October 2013. A requirement of that SPG is that a development brief is prepared for each of the remaining development plots having full regard to the SPG, the [Design Codes](#) and Energy Strategy.

### **Purpose of the Development Brief**

**1.2** The purpose of the Brief is to set out, for the benefit of the community, landowners and developers, the requirements of the Local Planning Authority, the Highway Authority and other service providers. It also sets out the principles of development that should be adopted by developers including housing density and mix, affordable housing and sustainability.

**1.3** This Brief is intended to provide guidance to ensure that a high quality, sustainable development occurs whilst taking into account the opportunities and constraints of the site.

**1.4** The Brief will be a SPG document. It is a material consideration when determining a planning application. The Brief should be read in conjunction with The Works SPG; the Design Principles (at a minimum) of the Design Codes for the site; The Sustainable Energy Strategy, where appropriate; and the approved Code of Construction Practice. A list of relevant approved documents that developers will need to refer to and where they can be obtained is contained at Appendix 1.

## 2.0 THE WORKS SITE

**2.1** The Blaenau Gwent [Local Development Plan \(LDP\)](#), adopted by the Council in November 2012, indicates that Phase 1 Northgate site is located in the MU2 The Works mixed use allocation. The LDP identifies that the development of 'The Works' site includes the construction of a new hospital, learning zone, leisure centre, playing pitches, approximately 520 homes, business hub, family history and genealogy visitor centre, environmental resource centre and wetland park.

**2.2** The Works site was granted outline planning permission in 2007 for the mixed use redevelopment of the former industrial land. The site has undergone a range of reclamation activities aimed at providing construction platforms and improving the topography of the site for future development. A number of developments have also been completed on site, including the Learning Zone; Primary Phase of Ebbw Fawr Learning Community; an Integrated Children's Centre; the Local General Hospital; Energy Centre; Multi Storey Car Park; Environmental Resource Centre; the Leisure Centre and Sports Pitches; the 11-16 phase of the Learning

Community and the extension and refurbishment of the General Offices.

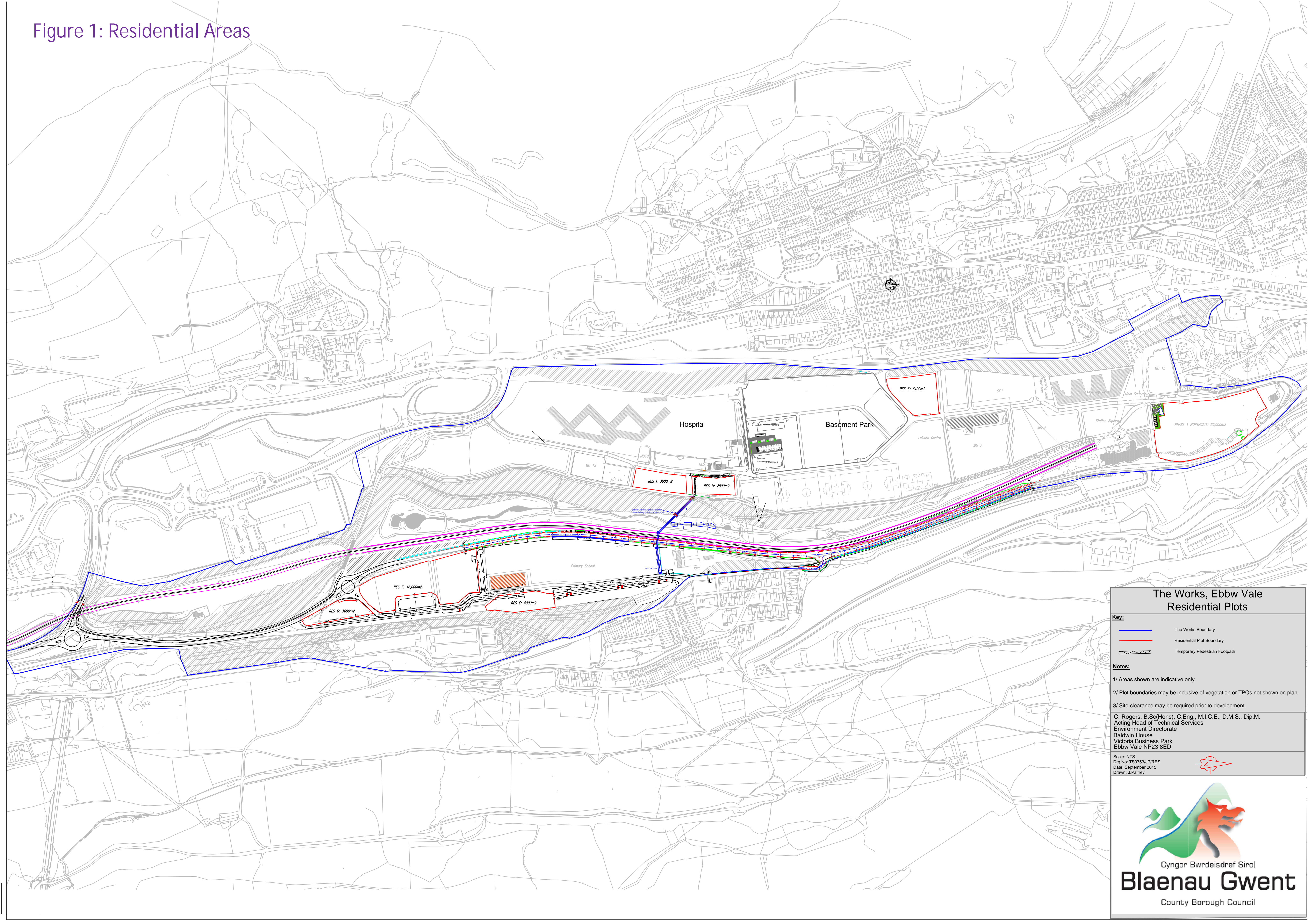
**2.3** The Works SPG, adopted in October 2013 identifies four residential areas (identified on Figure 1 below):

- **North east of the Learning Campus - residential plots B (1.2 ha); and C (0.8 ha), now known as Phase 1 Northgate;**
- South of the Learning Campus - residential plots K (0.6 ha); and L (0.3 ha)
- South of the Ebbw Fawr Learning Community and Special School on the Hot Mill Plateau - Residential Plots E (0.3 ha); F (1.3 ha); and G (0.4 ha);
- East of the Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Hospital - residential plots H (0.3 ha), I (0.4 ha) and J (0.4 ha).

**2.4** Phase 1 Northgate site is the first residential area to be marketed on The Works site and is located north east of the Learning Campus.



Figure 1: Residential Areas



**The Works, Ebbw Vale Residential Plots**

**Key:**

- The Works Boundary
- Residential Plot Boundary
- Temporary Pedestrian Footpath

**Notes:**

1/ Areas shown are indicative only.

2/ Plot boundaries may be inclusive of vegetation or TPOs not shown on plan.

3/ Site clearance may be required prior to development.

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County Borough Council



### 3.0 THE SITE

#### Location

**3.1** The site is a vacant, flat development platform located south west of the recently constructed Learning Campus. Immediately to the west of the site is a vacant development plot identified for mixed use development as shown on Figure 2 below. Adjacent to this mixed use site is Diamond Jubilee Square (public realm) and the cableway which will enable pedestrians access to and from The Works site from Ebbw Vale town centre. Immediately south of the site is an available plot for the development of an arts centre/station square and the recently extended and renovated Grade II Listed General Offices.

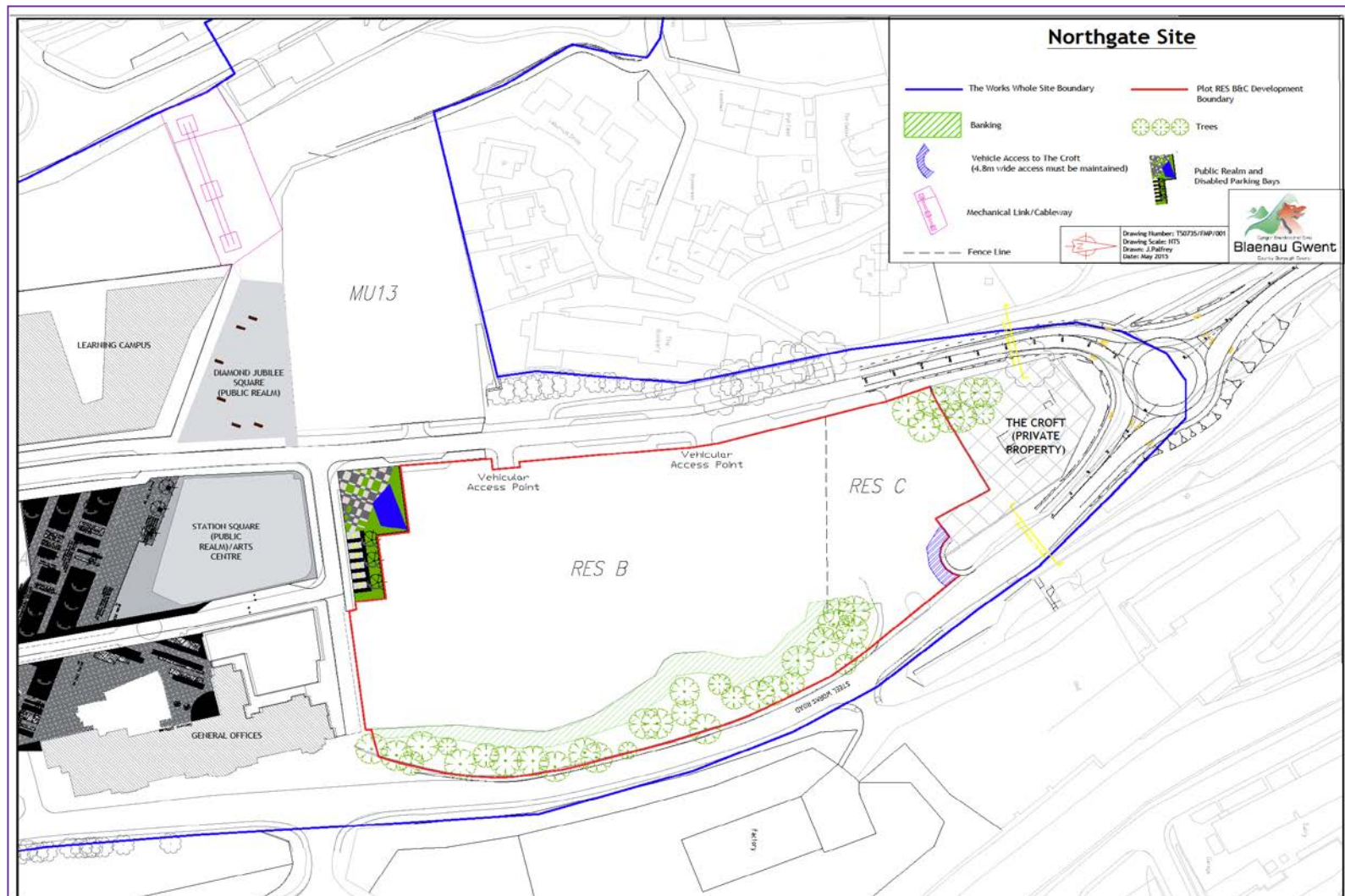
**3.2** Immediately south west of the General Offices is the new Ebbw Vale town rail link and station which is an extension to the existing line running from Cardiff to Ebbw Vale Parkway. The rail link provides a direct hourly connection to Cardiff. Station square will link the station to the main north-south bus routes and the cableway up to the town centre.

**3.3** North of the site is the residential care home 'The Croft' which is excluded from the site boundary (see Figure 2). To the east of the site is a 2008 Redrow residential development known as Cae Fwrnais.



**3.4** The site is bordered to the east by Steelworks Road, which is in itself bordered by the River Ebbw before it becomes culverted. Steelworks Road has been upgraded to become the new A4281 Peripheral Distributor Road (PDR), which will carry through traffic and bypass Ebbw Vale town centre. The road is screened from the site by a band of existing mature trees and shrubs (within the site boundary) which have a high value in terms of biodiversity and landscape and must be retained and protected.

Figure 2: Site Context





## Site Characteristics

**3.5** The site has a total site area of approximately 2.0 ha and is previously developed land. The site is predominantly flat vacant land.

**3.6** In 2010, the site was reprofiled and the ground level was raised by approximately 3.3 metres in order to ensure the suitability of the land for residential use.

**3.7** Access to the site will be achieved via two bell mouth junctions on Lime Avenue as shown on Figure 2 above. There is no proposed vehicular access from Steelworks Road.

**3.8** The Works SPG identifies six Character Areas across The Works site. All streets, development platforms and public spaces fall within each of the character areas. Phase 1 Northgate Site is located in the Urban Centre Character Area which is described as a *“busy mixed use area close to the town centre designed around the main square. Buildings are taller for visual impact and to make the physical connection to the town”* (The Works SPG, October 2013).

## 4.0 PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

**4.1** The following section provides detailed explanations of the policy requirements that need to be met when developing the site. It is expected that the developer will put forward their own design solutions, but must respond to this Development Brief as a **minimum** requirement.

## Housing Density

**4.2** The Urban Centre Character Area identifies that a high housing density should be achieved of 35-50 dwellings per hectare. The site has a total site area of 2.0 ha it is therefore anticipated that the site could accommodate between 70 and 100 dwellings.

## Housing Mix

**4.3** It is the aim of the LDP to achieve a development that meets the local housing needs of residents in Blaenau Gwent. To achieve this, any planning application should provide a mix of dwellings in terms of size, type, tenure and affordability, which reflects the diversity of the population, compliments the surrounding development and creates a balanced community.

## Affordable Housing

**4.4** The provision of affordable housing is a critical element of the Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (LDP) as set out in Policy DM7.

**4.5** [The Works SPG](#) states that for The Works site, subject to need and viability 10% affordable housing will be sought on all residential property sites that contain 10 or more dwellings; or exceeds 0.28 ha in gross site area; or exceeds the threshold of the above for adjacent sites.

**4.6** Subject to viability, for this site, 10% affordable housing units are required. If a viability assessment proves the site unviable

affordable housing will not be required. The mix of affordable housing units must complement the surrounding development. They should be built to DQR standard and should, as practically possible, be indistinguishable from the private market housing and be distributed throughout the development.

## Sustainability

**4.7** Development, so far, on The Works site has achieved sustainability exemplar standards. Therefore, development on the Northgate should make best use of opportunities for energy efficiency in building design and layout. Where possible, renewable energy technologies and water efficiency measures, such as the incorporation of water efficient fittings and appliances for low flow taps, showers, water butts and low flush toilets should be integrated into the development.

**4.8** The design (from the overall layout to the detail) should incorporate sustainability from the outset. For instance, if solar panels are to be used, consideration needs to be given to their appearance in relation to the overall building design as well as the closeness of other features, such as trees.

**4.9** [Practice Guidance – Planning for Sustainable Buildings](#) (Welsh Government, July 2014), Building FOR Life 12, Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 12 and Manual for Streets provides guidance for Local Planning Authorities and developers on sustainable design.

## Travel Plan

**4.10** A Travel Plan is required for the site. Works shall not commence on site until a Travel Plan is approved, and the recommendations and requirements of the Travel Plan have been adhered to. To assist with this, a Strategic Travel Plan has been prepared for The Works site.

## 5.0 CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT

### Flood Risk

**5.1** The site is located entirely in flood zone C2 as defined by the Development Advice Map referred to in [Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk](#) (TAN 15) (July 2004).

**5.2** A Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) was undertaken for The Works redevelopment by Halcrow in 2007. The 2007 FCA recommended the site level be raised to reduce the risk of flooding. In 2009 planning permission was granted to raise the ground level by 3.3 metres. This work was undertaken in 2010.

**5.3** In 2017, an updated FCA, based on current hydrological data and improved assessment methods was undertaken (Wallingford Hydrosolutions Ltd). The FCA shows that the site is within Flood Zone A, and therefore, considered to be little or no risk of fluvial or tidal/coastal flooding. Subject to review and acceptance of the updated FCA by Natural Resources Wales, the Development Advice Map and flood maps for the site will be amended accordingly.

### Ground Conditions



**5.4** All foundations from pre-existing buildings and structures have been removed up to a depth of 2.0m below original ground level throughout the site. Any resulting voids have been filled with appropriate materials commensurate with the proposed end use of the site. As a result of the site levels being raised post demolition, residual structures / obstructions should not be present within the top 3.5 to 4.5 m below current ground levels.

**5.5** A number of piped culverts at depths up to 4.0m have been treated. The top of the pipe has been removed to allow the pipe to be backfilled with clean 100-200mm stone.

**5.6** The site has been remediated as required by the Local Planning Authority and the Environment Agency commensurate with residential development end use. The remediation standards at the site were set on the following criteria being implemented at development stage: i) landscaped areas are capped with 600 mm of clean inert fill; ii) appropriate water pipe protection measures are used for all buildings based on Guidance for the Selection of Water Pipes to be used in Brownfield Sites; and iii) vapour barriers are installed in all building foundations. Any areas of non-paved surfaces within the site will need to have clean cover of an appropriate depth to suit the end use.

**5.7** Whilst the site has been remediated to a standard acceptable for residential accommodation with appropriate remediation, any future developer of the site should keep a watching brief for unidentified or remobilised contamination and cease work and notify Officers of the Local Authority and NRW

immediately during the works, should contamination of this nature become apparent during the sites redevelopment.

**5.8** Further details are contained in the Technical Report – Northgate, Ebbw Vale Developer Information Pack and the Ground Condition Report (CH2M HILL June 2014.)

### **Coal Mining Risk Assessment**

**5.9** The site is within an area designated as High Development Risk by the Coal Authority, therefore a Coal Mining Risk Assessment should be prepared for the site outlining potential risks to ground stability associated with previous mining activity. However, the ground conditions report prepared for the Northgate site (CH2M, 2014) states that there are no mine entries within 20m of the site boundary, and based on borehole data, the risk of surface instability associated with shallow mine workings is considered low. Notwithstanding the above any application for development on this site will need to be accompanied by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to identify any remediation measures necessary.

### **Noise**

**5.10** A new Ebbw Vale town centre rail link and station opened in May 2015 running through the central valley as an extension of the Cardiff – Ebbw Vale line to Parkway Station. The rail link provides a direct hourly connection to Cardiff. The terminus station is located approximately 200m from the site.

**5.11** A noise survey needs to be undertaken early on in the process of designing a scheme to ensure that mitigation measures can be identified and integrated into the design.

### Trees

**5.12** There are a limited number of natural features on the site, given its previous industrial use. However there is an embankment of mature trees and shrubs along the east boundary of the site which are of high biodiversity and landscape value. These trees are an important asset given the limited number of trees across The Works site and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO BG100).

**5.13** There is also a small mound containing trees in the north western corner of the site. These trees are also protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO BG100).



**5.14** To ensure the protection of the trees a buffer has been identified (as identified on Figure 2 as banking). The buffer is

defined as a result of land reclamation and flood risk work where the land was raised excluding the area in which the block of trees are located. No development should take place within the root protection areas of the retained trees as identified within BS5837.2012. Trees and tree roots will be required to be protected during construction via fencing as detailed in BS5837.2012.

### Historical Features



**5.15** Immediately adjacent to the site, in the south-western corner is the Mill Stand is a retained rolling mill historical feature from the former Steelworks site set on a concrete platform. This feature must be retained and its setting enhanced in any development. The setting could be enhanced by the provision of an interpretative panel setting the Mill Stand in its context in the history of the largest integrated steelworks in the world. Prior to the commencement of any development, a standing building record should be commissioned.

## 6.0 HIGHWAYS AND ACCESSIBILITY

### Vehicular Access

**6.1** Access to the site will be achieved via two bell mouth junctions off Lime Avenue, on the western boundary of the site (Figure 2).



**6.2** The northern boundary of the site includes an existing junction which must not be used as access to the site. The developer will be required to reconfigure and downgrade this junction as part of any future development. These works will require the removal of the existing parking areas, kerb realignment and reinstatement of footways across the junction. Any future development proposal will also need to incorporate the existing private driveway serving 'The Croft'. The full extent of the works will need to be agreed by the Highway Authority.

### **Pedestrian Access**

**6.3** Pedestrian access to the site can be taken from Lime Avenue. There is no pedestrian access at present from Steelworks Road.

**6.4** All external spaces and routes must be safe, legible and accessible for pedestrian movement.

**6.5** Routes and gathering areas must be well lit and overlooked by adjacent buildings to provide active surveillance.

**6.6** The site is approximately 300m east of Ebbw Vale town centre. The main pedestrian route from the town centre to the site is via the cable car connection (cableway), which is located along the north eastern boundary of The Works (as shown on Figure 2). There are also potential links via footways provided from Station Hill.

**6.7** Consideration should be given to destinations and desire lines to ensure that the development promotes walking and the use of public transport. Direct and legible routes should be accommodated to the train station to the south and the cableway to the south west.

### **Cycle Access**

**6.8** The Works site is an ideal environment for cycling because it is mostly flat, with either shared or designated cycle routes that follow the site's highway network. In addition, there are more rural routes along the site's Central Valley, which offers a varying topography for a more challenging ride.

**6.9** Secure and safe cycle parking facilities must be provided within the development. Covered and secure communal cycle parking can be established in the parking courtyards integrated with other communal facilities or stand alone structures.

### **Parking**

**6.10** Blaenau Gwent Council has adopted parking standards for residential and commercial development. These standards are set out in the [Access and Car Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (March 2014).

**6.11** The best residential developments provide a mix of parking solutions that respond to the layout, design of the houses and the type of place that is being created.

6.12 Detailed guidance is provided in the [Design Code](#) document.

## 7.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

7.1 The site is a key element of the urban centre character area. The development of this site will have a significant impact in setting standards for other residential development. The developer should have a clear vision of the type of place that they are creating and how the design responds to this vision. This will inform the layout, integration of green space, house type and materials. The development of the site should follow the urban design principles as set out below which build on those in the SPG and [Design Codes](#).

7.2 The diagram below shows an indicative layout of a typical high density scheme in the urban centre character area of The Works site.

7.3 The key urban design principles for the site are:

- An urban presence and near continuous frontage on the main street;
- A permeable block of maximum 2 access points with shared surface lanes and parking courtyards;
- Properties fronting onto courtyards and lanes for active surveillance;
- Range of different unit sizes;
- Higher massing at corners and gateway to lanes;
- Desire lines, solar orientation and green links; and
- Integrated measures to protect and enhance local landscape and biodiversity.

Figure 3: Indicative Layout of a Typical High Density Scheme in the Urban Centre Character Area (Source: [The Works Design Codes](#))



### Enclosure, Frontage and Edge Conditions

7.4 As a key gateway to The Works site, the development is required to have a strong urban presence. The southern boundary of the site, facing the General Offices and Lime Avenue frontages



should contribute to this setting through a sympathetic use of materials to reflect the local context.

**7.5** The development must contribute to the urban character of the main streets providing an appropriate level of street enclosure, locating higher massing on corners of blocks and entrances to lanes, and a higher level of continuity in the frontage.

**7.6** Primary frontages and entrances to properties must front on to all streets, lanes and courtyards in order to achieve a good level of active surveillance throughout the development.

**7.7** Buildings must be used to create enclosure and secure boundaries and form an integrated part of the design such that the use of fencing and railings is kept to a minimum. Hedgerows and tree planting are encouraged. The [Design Code](#) provides details on acceptable forms of boundary treatment in Appendix E.

### **Buildings, Heights, Massing and Views**

**7.8** Buildings must be between two and three storeys high.

**7.9** Higher massing and variation in elevational treatment should be used to create prominent corners. Three storey buildings should be located at specific corners to emphasise gateways to general streets and lanes.

**7.10** Special attention should be given to the roofscape as this will be seen from higher levels of the town. It should reflect the scale (plot, size, amount and diversity of architectural detail) of the

residential use of the development, with varied steps in building heights.

**7.11** Views out from the buildings should take advantage of views to the Diamond Jubilee Square and to the surrounding hillsides.

### **Secured by Design**

**7.12** The development is encouraged to embody the principles of Secured by Design and wherever possible and practicable to achieve full Secured by Design accreditation.

### **Architectural Language, Elements and Materials**

**7.13** The building materials must comply with the list of materials set out in the [Design Codes document Appendix B](#). Sustainable procurement is an integral element of The Works and materials should be sourced locally from within the Heads of the Valleys. Where this is not practicable, materials may be sourced from further afield, preferably within Wales. [The Council's Sustainable Procurement Strategy](#) summarises actions to be taken to ensure sustainable procurements is progressed in practice. Developers should provide an indication of proposed sources of selected materials.

**7.14** Materials should relate to the function of the different parts of the buildings to create a legible frontage and avoid eclecticism, homogeneity and blandness of external materials.

**7.15** The durability and design life of elements must be a 50-year service life with maintenance interval minimum of 10 years.

### **Roofs**

**7.16** Where practicable, the aim is to provide a varied roofscape from viewpoints above the development. This is possible by alternating adjacent roof heights and/or varying adjacent roof profiles.

**7.17** There is preference for non-traditional roof pitches or a mix of traditional pitched roofs with alternatives, such as mono-pitches and gullwing arrangements.

### **Walls**

**7.18** Non-structural timber that is used only in an ornamental way, such as Tudor style panelling, is not allowed.

### **Windows**

**7.19** Preference is for slender mullions, transoms and glazing bars; and for fewer subdivisions of panes. The use of modules and infill panels to create horizontal banding is encouraged.

**7.20** Timber (site or factory finished, FSC-sourced timber); polyester powder-coated aluminium; aluminium/timber composite; softwood windows with an external aluminium cladding are preferred.

**7.21** Window boards, soffits and fascias must be specified to maximise maintenance intervals.

### **Employment Opportunities**

**7.22** Developers are encouraged to work with the Council's Economic Development team to maximise opportunities for local sourcing and local employment opportunities.

### **Site Environmental Management Plan**

**7.23** A Site Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is a site specific plan developed to ensure that all necessary measures are identified and implemented in order to protect the environment and comply with environmental legislation. This will be required which shall be in general conformity with the principles of the Strategic Code of Practice.

## **8.0 BIODIVERSITY and LANDSCAPE**

### **Biodiversity**

**8.1** The ecological assessment prepared for the 2010 Masterplan Update for the whole of The Works site concluded that there are no sites designated for nature conservation importance within the site or immediate surrounds, although there are a number of habitats and species significant to the scheme.

**8.2** A planning application for the site must be accompanied by a Local Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan which has

regard to the approved [Strategic Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan](#). Biodiversity proposals will need to demonstrate that they contribute to biodiversity enhancement through the use of connectivity planting such as hedgerows, species rich verges / tree avenues and a wildlife pond – design for biodiversity to be integrated with landscaping. Specific biodiversity features within structures to include gaps under fencing to allow dispersal for mammals such as hedgehogs and integrated design into structures allowing space for wildlife such as birds and bats.

## Landscape

**8.3** Acceptable development proposals will establish a high quality landscape setting. A robust approach to landscape design will help to tie the built elements together and create a coherent and unified structure for the site. The area of Tree Preservation Orders to the east and south of the site should be considered as an asset for the development, providing a mature landscape element that enhances the overall development. An appropriate design response will be required that acknowledges this opportunity.

**8.4** Landscape detailing should be used wherever practical to reduce the impact of blank side and rear boundary fences. Opportunities should also be taken to enhance the public realm through the planting of trees ([Design Code](#) Appendix D).

**8.5** Development proposals should be accompanied by a landscape masterplan that clearly illustrates how the scheme complies with the established design codes for the site and this brief.

## 9.0 SITE SERVICES

**9.1** Applicants must be able to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure required to service the development can be provided. Applicants are advised to contact all utility providers for an assessment of their plans at an early stage.

**9.2** Table 1 sets out a utility services summary for the site based upon the stated assumed loads. Please note that these were what was required at the time of preparing the development brief and are subject to change.

**Table 1: Utility Services Summary**

Utility	Location and Description	Comments
Electricity – Western Power Distribution	A HV cable runs in the eastern footpath of Lime Avenue from the south to a point just north of the northern bell mouth entrance to the site.	Plot loads of 142 KVA (RES B) and 102 Kva (RES C) have been assumed for the site
Gas – Wales & West	A medium pressure gas supply is located in each of the constructed bell mouths.	Plot loads of 514 KW (RES B) and 370 KW (RES C) have been assumed for the site
Telecommunications – BT	4 x 100mm ducts and joint boxes have	



Utility	Location and Description	Comments
	been installed in the western service corridor on Lime Avenue to the footway adjacent to the constructed bell mouths	
Water Supply – DCWW Welsh Water	A water main exists in the eastern service corridor on Lime Avenue. A stop valve and fire hydrant is located on the northern side of each bell mouth	Plot loads of 1.70 litre/sec (RES B) and 1.29 litre/sec (RES C) have been assumed for the plot

Source: Technical Report – Northgate, The Works, Ebbw Vale Developer Information Pack (CH2HILL June 2014)

## 10.0 FOUL AND SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

**10.1** Surface water from the site will be discharged to the River Ebbw via a network of public surface water sewers and highway drains. The primary surface water drainage system serving the site takes the form of a traditional pipe carrier system laid in Lime Avenue. Surface water from the development plots will be discharged to the primary highway network via connections constructed as part of the primary infrastructure works. There are no restrictions on surface water discharge.

**10.2** Where practicable, the developer is required to reduce the surface run off from the site to levels equivalent to greenfield run off rates. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as swales, water gardens, ponds, soft landscaping areas, or even water attenuation methods and hydro breaks.

**10.3** Foul connection points for the site are also along Lime Avenue boundary.

**10.4** Detailed information is contained in the [Technical Report – Northgate, The Works, Ebbw Vale Developer Information Pack \(CH2HILL June 2014\)](#).



### Appendix 1: A List of Relevant Approved Documents

- Blaenau Gwent Local Development Plan (November 2012)
- The Works Supplementary Planning Guidance (October 2013)
- Access and Car Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2014)
- Masterplan Design and Access Statement (September 2010)
- The Design Codes (September 2010)
- Technical Report – Northgate, The Works, Ebbw Vale Developer Information Pack (June 2014)
- Sustainable Energy Strategy (June 2007)
- Strategic Code of Construction Practice
- Strategic Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan (June 2008)
- Strategic Travel Plan

All of these documents are available from Planning Policy by contacting the team via email [planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk), via telephone on (01495) 355538 or visit the team at the Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, NP23 3XB.