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# CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A HOTEL, INCLUDING PREPARATORY EARTHWORKS, HARD & SOFT LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE ON LAND AT PARC CYBI, HOLYHEAD, ISLE OF ANGLESEY

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## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

### Draft for Consultation

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). The Appraisal follows good practice guidance set out in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (the GLVIA)<sup>1</sup> and adopts an approach proportionate to the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development, whilst not seeking to provide unnecessary detail.
- 1.1.2 The Appraisal seeks to establish whether the Proposed Development would result in landscape and visual effects materially different to those identified in relation to the 2005 outline planning consent (ref 19C842A/EIA), including the subsequently approved masterplan, and what the nature of such effects would be. The conclusions of the Appraisal have been determined via use of professional judgement, supported by reasoned justification. The Appraisal does not constitute a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 1.1.3 It should be noted that the landscape (including the context in which views are experienced) is dynamic, i.e. it is affected by social, economic, technological and climatic changes, all of which can influence patterns of land use, land cover and land management. As such, the baseline context is not static. It should be noted that the Site of the Proposed Development, and the wider Parc Cybi site within which it sits, benefit from outline planning consent for a range of development, and that this does form part of the baseline for the Appraisal.

### ***Description of the Proposed Development***

- 1.1.4 The overarching principles of development at Parc Cybi are set out in the *Parc Cybi Development Design Guide* (submitted to Isle of Anglesey County Council in 2009), which was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the outline planning consent for the site (ref 19C842A/EIA).
- 1.1.5 For a full description of the Proposed Development, refer to the Planning Supporting Statement and to the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.1.6 In summary, the Proposed Development would comprise:

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Routledge: Abingdon.

- A new 80-bed, four-storey hotel building of roof height 14.4m above ground level, and footprint of approximately 1,000m<sup>2</sup>;
- Associated external hard surfaces;
- Associated soft landscaping

1.1.7 The landscape scheme that forms part of the Proposed Development is contained within Part 5 of the planning application documentation. This comprises specimen trees towards the eastern and western boundaries, ornamental planting along the frontage of the proposed new building, a new native hedges, and areas of species-rich grassland areas.

### ***Previous Applications and Other Development at Parc Cybi***

1.1.8 As referenced in the Planning Supporting Statement, the wider Parc Cybi site benefits from outline planning permission dating back to 2005. Under the outline planning permission, the Site of the Proposed Development would be occupied by business and leisure development, with a maximum roof height of 8m.

1.1.9 Subsequently, a full planning application (ref. 19C842J/ECON) was approved in 2010 to replace this development (at the Site of the Proposed Development) with 3 no. two-storey office buildings, each of which had a maximum roof height of 12.165m.

1.1.10 Following the grant of outline planning consent in 2005, additional planning applications for development at the wider Parc Cybi site have been submitted to the Isle of Anglesey County Council. Notably, a truck stop, located to the south-east of the Site of the Proposed Development has been operational since 2015 (ref. 19C842/ECON).

### ***Legislative and Policy Context***

1.1.11 Details of the planning and policy background for the proposal, including an appraisal of effects on relevant landscape-related policies, as set out in the adopted Statutory Development Plan, are included in the Planning Supporting Statement. Key legislation and policies relevant to the Assessment are summarised below.

#### ***Statutory Landscape Designations***

1.1.12 The Site is located within the Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONBs are a statutory designation, first designated under the auspices of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The primary purpose of an

AONB, as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, is to “*conserve and enhance the natural beauty*”.

#### *European Landscape Convention*

- 1.1.13 The UK Government is a signatory of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which became binding in March 2007. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape. It relates chiefly to public bodies and to the policies, plans and programmes produced by these.
- 1.1.14 The LVIA is a development specific process which accords with Article 6C. The LVIA is informed by extant Landscape Character Assessment studies (described in Section 3 below), which more directly relate to the provisions of Article 6C.

#### *Planning Policy*

- 1.1.15 For details of relevant planning policies, refer to the Planning Supporting Statement. Relevant policy documents are listed below:
- *Planning Policy Wales*, edition 9 published in November 2016;
  - *Ynys Mon Local Plan* (adopted 1996, Isle of Anglesey County Council).

## **2.0 Methodology**

### ***Current Guidance***

- 2.1.1 As noted in Section 1, this Appraisal has been based on the published good practice guidelines set out in the GLVIA, and is proportionate to the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development.

### ***Significance of Effect***

- 2.1.2 In the case of development (such as that proposed) that does not require Environmental Impact Assessment, there is no requirement to state whether an effect is significant or not. However, it is considered likely to be of benefit to the decision-maker if such a statement is included in the Appraisal.
- 2.1.3 Not all landscape and visual effects arising as a result of a particular proposal will be significant. Furthermore, where likely significant environmental effects are predicted, this does not automatically mean that such effects are unacceptable. The

acceptability of landscape and visual effects is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely environmental effects of any proposal are transparently appraised and described, in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision-making process. The judgement made will depend on the specific circumstances being considered.

### **Consultation**

- 2.1.4 Pre-application consultation was held with Isle of Anglesey County Council in March 2017. The Pre-Application Response received from the Council's Built Environment and Landscape Section confirmed that:

*"From a built environment and built conservation perspective I don't have any issues or concerns to raise due to the fact that the principle of this type of development has been approved in the Master Plan for the subject area"*<sup>2</sup>.

- 2.1.5 Further attempts were made by the Applicant's Consultant Team to ascertain the opinion of the Built Environment and Landscape Section regarding potential landscape and visual effects. However, at the time of writing, no response had been received.

## **3.0 Baseline**

### ***The Site and its Surroundings***

- 3.1.1 Parc Cybi is located at the south-eastern edge of Holyhead, immediately south of the A55 trunk road. The B4545 runs north-south to the west, beyond which is the Trearddur Bay Golf Course. The village of Trearddur lies to the south and agricultural land lies to the south-east.
- 3.1.2 The Parc Cybi Development Design Guide sub-divides the wider site into seven distinct 'character zones' for the purposes of development, which relate to topography and to proposed land uses and built forms. The Site of the Proposed Development is located within Character Zone 1 (Hotel and Leisure), at the northern edge of the

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<sup>2</sup> Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2017. *Letter from Dewi Francis Jones to F Jones (The Conygar Investment Company PLC) in response to a request for pre-application information.* [letter] 6 March 2017.

wider site, and close to the split-level junction allowing access to the A55 (with a dumbbell roundabout elevated above the main carriageway).

- 3.1.3 The whole of Parc Cybi lies within the Anglesey AONB. To the north-east, on the further side of the A55, and also within the AONB, is an industrial/ commercial estate and the former Anglesey Aluminium site which is currently being redeveloped as a Biomass Plant/ Eco Park.
- 3.1.4 An internal spine road, comprising improvements to the local road 'Lon Trefignath' runs through the centre of Parc Cybi, with a cycleway running along the former route of Lon Trefignath. The various development plots are located on either side of the spine road. To date, a single plot has been developed at Parc Cybi (south of the spine road), comprising a truck stop, with service/ amenity buildings and extensive areas of hard surface (predominantly HGV parking).
- 3.1.5 Some structure planting forming part of the outline consent has also been implemented, including planting on the embankment leading up to the A55 junction.

### ***Landscape Designations***

- 3.1.6 As stated in Section 1 above, the Proposed Development would be located within the Anglesey AONB. The special qualities of the AONB are set out in the *AONB Management Plan*<sup>3</sup>, as follows:

- Expansive Views/ Seascapes;
- Peace and Tranquillity;
- Islands around Anglesey;
- Broadleaved Woodlands;
- Lowland Coastal Heath;
- Species Rich Roadside Verges;
- Ecologically Important Coastal and Wetland Habitats;
- Built Environment including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings;
- Archaeology and Ancient Monuments/ Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens;
- Rural Agricultural/ Coastal Communities;
- Welsh Language;
- Soil, Air and Water Quality;

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<sup>3</sup> *The Isle of Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan Review 2015-2020* [online] <<http://www.anglesey.gov.uk/planning-and-waste/countryside/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty-aonbs/anglesey-aonb-management-plan/>> [accessed 26 April 2017]

- Public Rights of Way Network;
- Accessible Land and Water

### ***Landscape Character Assessment and Related Studies***

- 3.1.7 The landscape character of Anglesey is described in the *Landscape Strategy Update*<sup>4</sup>. This document utilises data gathered as part of the Wales-wide LANDMAP study to describe the character of the island.
- 3.1.8 The Proposed Development would be located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 2: Holy Island. This character area covers a far greater extent than the Parc Cybi development, and in fact covers the majority of the undeveloped parts of Holy Island. The Landscape Strategy Update set out a series of key issues in relation to development within LCA2 relating to the need to respect local character and not to impose standard solutions.
- 3.1.9 In relation to this Appraisal, it is considered that the principles set out in the Parc Cybi Development Design Guide address the issues highlighted in the Landscape Strategy Update and provide a bespoke design approach for the entirety of the Parc Cybi site (and individual plots/ zones therein), that respects the specific location and surroundings of the wider site.

### ***Future Landscape Change***

- 3.1.10 Should the Proposed Development not gain planning permission, it is noted that the Site already benefits from outline planning permission for business and leisure development, and that detailed proposals for such development are likely to come forward. The wider Parc Cybi site benefits from the outline planning permission (for a range of development types), and it seems reasonable to assume that further detailed proposals for development in other plots will also come forward. It is therefore likely that the Site of the Proposed Development and the remainder of the Parc Cybi site would be developed at some point in the future.

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<sup>4</sup> TACP, 2011. *Isle of Anglesey Council Landscape Strategy Update*.

## **4.0 Assessment of Effects**

### ***Construction***

- 4.1.1 Construction sites feature distinctive elements that are likely to draw attention, including temporary signage and fencing, and site operatives wearing high-visibility clothing. Construction also, by necessity, requires the use of suitable vehicles and other plant, some of which would potentially be readily apparent by virtue of their colour, form and movement. A temporary contractor's compound would be required which would also feature potentially visible built forms including site offices, welfare facilities, storage, etc.
- 4.1.2 It should be noted that movement of vehicles along the A55, and the movement of Heavy Goods Vehicles to the truck stop are already prominent, and therefore the movement of construction vehicles associated within the Proposed Development would not appear wholly alien. Additionally, the general acceptability of construction activity to decision-makers can be inferred from the grant of outline planning consent for the wider Parc Cybi site.
- 4.1.3 Whilst there would inevitably be short-term landscape and visual effects during the construction phase, these would be temporary in duration, limited in extent, and would not be significant.
- 4.1.4 Construction activity, as it relates to landscape protection and visual amenity, would be undertaken in accordance with good practice and in accordance with appropriate legislation. Construction activity could be controlled by the Isle of Anglesey County Council via a suitably worded planning condition, for example requiring the preparation and submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

### ***Landscape Effects: Operational***

#### *Effects on Landscape Fabric*

- 4.1.5 The Proposed Development would replace the existing vegetation cover within the Site with new built structures, external hard surfaces and new landscaping. This would be in keeping with the outline planning permission. The layout and orientation of buildings and hard surfaces would differ from what was shown on the outline masterplan, but the general principle of the replacement of semi-natural vegetation cover with built features and more formal landscaping would not change materially.

The effects on landscape fabric would be very similar to those that would occur under the outline consent, and as such, would not be significant.

#### *Effects on Landscape Character*

- 4.1.6 The Proposed Development would result in only limited change in landscape character when contrasted with what is currently consented. The proposed building would be approximately 5m taller than the consented building, but this increase in height would have little influence upon the landscape of the surrounding area. The proposed building would be similar in maximum roof height to the office buildings consented in 2010.
- 4.1.7 The consented development at Parc Cybi (as represented on the approved masterplan and additional detailed planning permissions) would change the predominantly rural landscape to one where urban fringe development predominates. This change is already underway, as evidenced by the presence of the transport hub.
- 4.1.8 The introduction of the Proposed Development (as opposed to the development proposed under the outline consent) would not result in any appreciable change in landscape character from the consented baseline, and the influence of Parc Cybi upon the surrounding area would not change materially over and above what is consented. Additional effects on landscape character would be negligible at worst and would not be significant.

#### ***Visual Effects: Operational***

- 4.1.9 The Environmental Statement submitted in support of the 2005 outline planning application identified a series of receptors that would experience visual effects resulting from the scheme proposed in 2005 for the entire Parc Cybi site.
- 4.1.10 As the Proposed Development would increase the roof height of buildings in Character Zone 1 by 5m, it is important to understand if this height increase would result any additional visual effects. It should be noted that the proposed building would be similar in maximum roof height to the office buildings consented in 2010 in the same location.
- 4.1.11 To the north of Character Zone 1, the A55 embankment rises by approximately 8.5m above the ground level in the vicinity of the Proposed Development, and tree cover on the embankment provides further screening of views. Further to the north is an area of industrial development and commercial development (including the biomass

plant/ eco park that is under construction), which would restrict views of the Proposed Development from the coastal area further north. The Proposed Development may be visible from some locations to the north, but would be a minor background feature, given the context in which such views would be experienced. Given this, visual effects would not be significant.

- 4.1.12 To the east, visual receptors include travellers along the realigned Lon Trefignath and the adjacent cycleway. The Proposed Development would be visible from sections of these routes, but the routes pass through the centre of the wider Parc Cybi site and therefore views would include other consented development located on either side of both routes and located closer to travellers. The grant of outline planning consent for the wider Parc Cybi site indicates that the presence of development in views from the two routes is acceptable to decision-makers. Existing vegetation retained along the Lon Trefignath and localised variations in topography (with higher ground to the south-east of Parc Cybi) would also provide effective screening of views from further to the south-east. As such, visual effects over and above the consented baseline would not be significant.
- 4.1.13 The Proposed Development would also be visible from vehicles travelling westwards along the A55. Given the transitory nature of views from fast-moving vehicles, it is unlikely that the increase in building height associated with the Proposed Development would register with travellers. Visual effects would not be significant.
- 4.1.14 From the south, there would be little change in view experienced by residents in properties at Trearddur. The changes that would result from the Proposed Development would be set in the context of views across the wider Parc Cybi site and the backdrop of the A55. Other development plots at Parc Cybi are located closer to Trearddur than the Proposed Development would be, and the increase in roof height proposed would have little bearing upon the nature of the views available, when considered in the context of what is consented. As such, visual effects over and above the consented baseline would not be significant.
- 4.1.15 To the west and north-west, clear views are available from properties at Cweryd Villas and at the southern edge of Holyhead. Properties along Maes y Delin and Cytir Maes have filtered views through the tree belt at the north-western boundary of Parc Cybi. The Proposed Development would be apparent, due to relative proximity to the receptors. However, this would be in-keeping with the type of change in view that would result from the consented development (new built development set against the

backdrop of the A55). As such, visual effects over and above the consented baseline would not be significant. As structure planting along the A55 access road continues to mature, and as further proposed structure planting at Parc Cybi is implemented, this would provide enhanced screening of views. It should also be noted that the outline planning consent for the wider Parc Cybi site allows for residential development between these properties and the A55 access road, which would further screen views.

### ***Effects on the AONB***

- 4.1.16 The principle of development within the AONB at Parc Cybi has already been established by virtue of the grant of outline planning consent. The Proposed Development would not give rise to significant changes to the landscape or to views over and above those changes that would occur resulting from the consented development set out on the approved masterplan. The layout of the proposed building and external spaces would differ from what is consented and there would be an increase in roof height but, in overall terms, the Proposed Development would be broadly similar to the consented buildings, and would be located adjacent to an elevated trunk road junction and would be set within a larger site the whole of which benefits from outline planning consent for a range of development.
- 4.1.17 As such, the Proposed Development would not appreciably increase the influence of development at Parc Cybi upon the remainder of the AONB landscape, and neither the statutory purposes nor the special qualities of the designation would undergo any material effect over and above those already deemed acceptable as part of the grant of outline planning permission for the wider site.

## **5.0 Mitigation**

- 5.1.1 As the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would not be significant, no specific mitigation measures are proposed.

## **6.0 Residual Effects and Conclusions**

- 6.1.1 The Proposed Development would result in minor changes to the consented layout of buildings and external areas within Character Zone 1 of the wider Parc Cybi site, and would also comprise an increase in roof height above that which is consented. The Proposed Development would be located adjacent to an elevated split-level junction on the A55, where traffic movement is apparent and would be set within the

much larger Parc Cybi site, the whole of which benefits from outline planning consent for a range of development types. As such, the principle of built development (and changes deriving from such development) along the A55 corridor at the south-eastern edge of Holyhead has already been deemed acceptable by decision-makers. In this context, the introduction of the Proposed Development would not give rise to any significant landscape and visual effects over and above those that would occur as a result of the development that already has outline planning consent across the whole of the wider Parc Cybi site.