





Design + Access Statement

Monmouthshire County Council

This Design and Access Statement is in support of the Reserved Matters Application relating to the Outline Application (DC/2016/008833) for 122 new dwellings on Parcels B and C2 on Rockfield Farm, Undy.

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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access statement has been prepared in support of the Reserved Matters Application for 122 dwellings on Rockfield Farm, Undy.

Childs Sulzmann Architects have been appointed to develop the site based on the 2016 Outline Application (DC/2016/008833). This application outlined a masterplan of 266 dwellings and 5575m² of B1 employment space.

This Reserved Matters Application relates specifically to parcels B and C2, as described in the 2016 Outline Application, proposing 122 dwellings.

This Design and Access statement, and supporting documents, provides information relating to condition 1 of the Decision Notice; details of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the development and condition 6: details of site sections and levels.

The proposals described in this Design and Access statement reference those already outlined in the 2016 Outline Application 'Master Plan report and Design and Access statement', as prepared by Monmouthshire County Council.



Aerial view of the site

2.0 Planning History

The 2016 Outline Application (DC/2016/008833) covered a master plan area of 13.8ha South of the M4, proposing to create a total of 266 dwellings and 5575m² B1 employment space. The application was approved in March 2018.

This should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access statement and supporting information of the 2016 Outline Application.

Phase 1 of the development, 144 dwellings on parcels A and D, was submitted in October 2018 (DM/2018/01606) and was approved in February 2019.

This application outlines the proposals for the remaining residential parcels, B and C2, to create 122 dwellings.



2016 Outline Application Masterplan

3.0 The Site

Rockfield Farm, is located on the North East edge of the village Undy in Monmouthshire.

The total area of the site, as described in the Outline Application, is 13.8ha however parcels B and C2 cover 4.75ha of the site.

These two parcels are green field sites and are defined by the M4 to the North, existing housing to the South, fields to the West and Phase 1 of the Rockfield development to the East.

A significant feature of the area is the existing woodland corridor 'Breezy Bank' which, although is outside of the application boundary, runs between parcel B and C2. This area has ecological significance and is a designated SINIC.

On the Eastern boundary, the upgraded road The Elms can provide access to the proposed development and divides the site from Phase 1.



4.1 Constraints and Opportunities

2016 Outline Application

Referencing the original 2016 Development Framework Plan, the original proposals outlined several key design features, including:

- To retain and respond to existing landscape features
- A clear hierarchy of roads and streets with good connectivity into existing networks.
- Key views considered, particularly from the existing housing to the South.
- Buildings varying in scale with 'landmark buildings' to add interest and legibility.
- Provision of POS and green infrastructure.
- Provision of 25% affordable housing across the site.
- Incorporation of attenuation areas as part of a SUDs strategy.

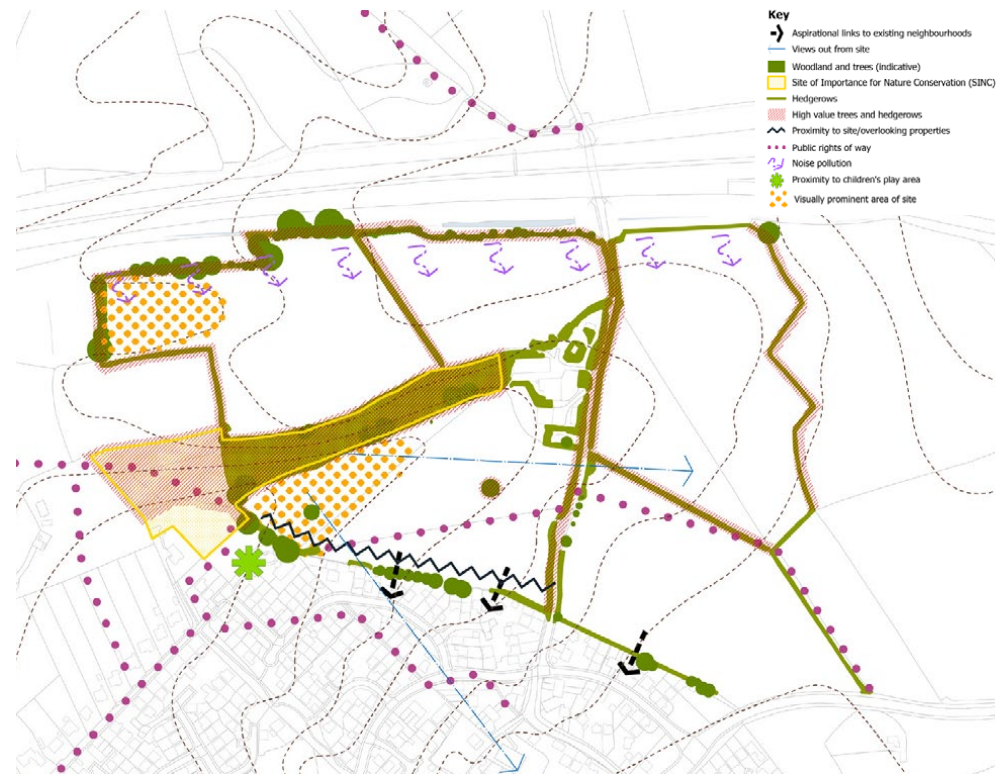
Specific constraints/opportunities for each parcel were as follows:

Parcel B:

- The development responds to the existing well-established woodland corridor to the North of the site.
- Retain the established hedgerow which follows The Elms.
- Retain the large oak tree in the centre of the site.
- Incorporate a re-routed public right of way - providing access between The Elms, Rockfield View and the woodland corridor.
- Provision of POS at the site's most visually sensitive extent.
- Provision of informal public space in the centre of the site.
- Demolition of the existing farmhouse - which is of little architectural merit.

Parcel C2:

- Development retains the existing hedgerow which runs North-South (dividing parcels C1 and C2).
- The proposals consider the constraints of the M4 South boundary.



Constraints and Opportunities diagram from the 2016 Outline Application

4.2 Constraints and Opportunities

Current Proposals

The current proposal has been developed in response to these constraints as outlined in the 2016 Outline Application.

In the development of the masterplan further constraints/opportunities were identified as follows:

Constraints

- To provide a greater variety of housing included a higher number of detached properties to match market demand.
- A more detailed sound report (submitted as part of this application) highlighted that the houses on the South of the site would require noise mitigation.
- A bund with acoustic fencing to the North of the site is required to reduce noise from the M4 to an acceptable level.

Opportunities:

- A greater variety of housing creates the opportunity for a more characterful and varied townscape which better reflects the provision found locally.
- Noise mitigation features such as the bund could be turned into landscape features.
- To use renewable/low energy technologies, including the provision of MVHR units as part of a noise mitigation strategy.



Aerial view of the site

5.1 The proposals

Site Arrangement - Comparison

The current proposal has been developed based on the principles of the 2016 Outline Application. The two site plans below illustrate the design evolution as a comparison between the Outline Application and this Reserved Matters Application.

All of the fundamental design decisions; the road layout, access strategies and green spaces have remained the same - based on the 2016 design and analysis.



Current Reserved Matters proposal

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2016 Outline Application (extract of parcels B and C2 highlighted)

5.2 The proposals

Site Arrangement Principles

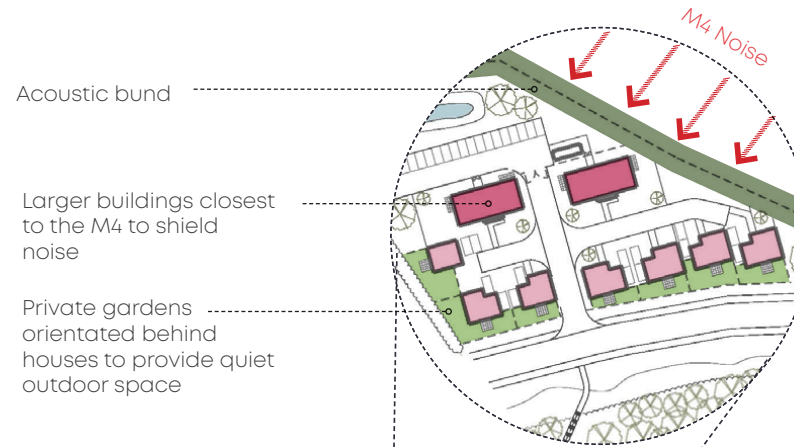
The proposal is split into two sites, parcels B and C2, which are sited on the upper and lower portions of the site.

The proposed layout is closely based on the design fundamentals set out in the 2016 Outline Application. The three key design principles of the proposed layout can be distilled to:



Primary Spine Roads

A primary spine road on each parcel of land creates legibility and clear access. On parcel B, the primary loop road is characterised by strong street frontage, creating a sense of place.



Parcel C2 - Noise

Since the 2016 Outline Application, more recent noise surveys have been undertaken and have informed the design of the proposals - particularly for parcel C2. The accommodation has been arranged in a hierarchy, with the private gardens furthest away from the noise, to help create quiet outdoor space shielded from the noise of the M4.



Neighbourhood clusters

Off of the primary access road there is the opportunity to have smaller neighbourhood clusters accessed via smaller shared surface access routes, creating character pockets of development.



Connected Green spaces

Two primary green spaces have been created on the site centred around the two existing trees. These are connected via the re-routed Public Right of Way and a new woodland walk connection to link the parcels of land.

6.0 Amount

The proposal creates 122 dwellings (19 on parcel C2 and 103 on parcel B). The mix of units is as follows:

13 x 4P2B House
46 x 5P3B House
27 x 7P4B House
18 x 2P1B Flat
18 x 3P2B Flat

Affordable Housing Provision

The affordable housing provision includes 25% of the units - 31 dwellings in total.

The affordable provision consists of:

8 x 2P1B Flat
8 x 3P2B Flat
5 x 7P4B House
8 x 5P3B House
2 x 4P2B House

The affordable houses are pepper potted throughout the site and are in clusters of no more than 15 - as noted in the 2019 Monmouthshire Housing Supplementary Guidance Note. The units will be tenure blind.



7.0 Character

Appearance, Materials and scale

All houses proposed are two storey dwellings.

The flats are three storey buildings and these have been located strategically to either front onto green open space or at key points along the spine road to act as landmark buildings and provide variety. In parcel C2 they help to shield noise from the M4.

The primary palette of materials is brick, render and random coursed stone. This ties in with the local context which consists of mostly brick and render, but also heavily references the materials utilised in phase 1 of the development, parcels A and D.

Illustrated here is a comparison between some of the key buildings in the proposal, phase 01 and local vernacular.

Proposed House Type Examples:



Phase 01 (DM/2018/01606) Examples:



Local Vernacular Examples:



8.0 Access & Movement

Main access to both parcels of land will be via The Elms.

The primary road for parcel B loops around and connects back to The Elms creating a cyclical route.

The primary road for parcel C2 has the potential to be expanded into parcel C1 as part of a future phase.

All secondary roads off of the primary roads are shared surface, creating attractive cul-de-sacs and varied streetscapes.

An existing Public Right of Way has been diverted to connect through the green open spaces before joining up to The Elms.

A new woodland walk link connects parcels B and C2 across the existing 'Breezy Bank' improving connectivity to existing and proposed green spaces.

Parking has been provided with reference to Monmouthshire Parking Standards 2013, providing a parking space per bedroom (maximum provision of three). These have been provided by a variety of garages, driveways and parking spaces.

24 visitor parking spaces have been provided on both B and C2, in central convenient locations, details provided on the landscape plans.



Primary Road with footpaths Secondary Roads - shared surface Diverted Public Right of Way

9.0 Landscape Strategy

The two existing significant trees on site have been retained. Both are Category B trees and the most central is subject to a Tree Protection Order. Both now form a focal point to the two proposed green spaces in the South and centre of parcel B.

Other key existing green infrastructure includes existing hedgerows - most significantly the hedgerow which runs adjacent to The Elms. This, as well as other hedgerows to the South and East, have been retained - utilising existing gaps for road and path entry points.

The proposed landscaping enhances the existing hedgerow infrastructure, providing additional native hedgerow mix to the South and The Elms and utilising wildflower seeding as a buffer maintenance zone to existing hedgerows throughout the site.

Additional trees, shrubs and planting have been utilised to create attractive streetscapes and a sense of place using a majority of native species to enhance biodiversity and ecological habitats.

The Public Open Space to the West provides open amenity space as well as creating a buffer between

the existing and proposed housing. The central green space is centered around the existing mature oak tree and will provide informal play spaces.



Landscape plan - not to scale

10.0 Sustainability & Ecology

Energy

The proposed dwellings will adopt a 'fabric-first' approach, creating energy efficient buildings through a high performing external fabric.

This will include well insulated roofs and walls and high performance glazing. All the of the flats and a selection of dwellings will have mechanical ventilation with heat recovery for efficient cooling - refer to drawing 050 Noise Mitigation for details.

Low energy fittings should be used throughout to reduce energy consumption within the home.

Surface water

Driveways utilise permeable block paving and two attenuation basins have been incorporated into the two lowest points of each parcel to help manage surface water and mitigate any flooding issues from the increase of hardstanding surfaces.

Sustainable Transport

Flats will be provided with external secure cycle parking with provision for a cycle space per bedroom, promoting use of sustainable transport.

Materials

The proposed dwellings will be constructed from high quality masonry and render. Render must be through colour, self-cleaning variety to minimise maintenance and increase the longevity of the buildings.

Ecology

The following ecology surveys were submitted as part of the 2016 Outline Application:

- 2014 Extended Phase 1 habitat and species assessment and bat and bird survey
- 2015 Dormouse Survey
- Jan 2016 ecological survey report
- Feb 2016 Badger survey
- May 2016 updated extended phase 1 survey (confirmed original survey was still an accurate representation).

Since these surveys the following have been undertaken by Just Mammals and are submitted as part of this application:

- Dec 2018, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- June 2019, Bat survey

Bats

The 2019 bat survey established that the existing garage building is a bat roost and it was suspected that the lesser horseshoe bat may be present. When demolishing this building, a bat license must be obtained, and all guidance set out in the report must be followed.

As part of the mitigation strategy a single stand-alone roost structure is proposed, as recommended in the report - details are illustrated on the submitted landscape plans.

Badgers

The 2016 badger surveys concluded that badger setts were present in the 'Breezy Bank', designated SINC.

The reports recommended a 'green lane' to allow for the free movement of the badgers to cross the development area into the underpass.

The North side of the 'Breezy Bank' has over an 11m green buffer zone before the public footpath to allow for the free movement of badgers. At the top of the bank, on the South, there is a 3m buffer zone between the SINC and the development to ensure preservation of any existing tree roots and protection of any ecological habitats.

Dormice

The 2016 reports concluded negative results for dormice, however existing hedgerows have been retained and enhanced to provide habitat opportunity.

Birds

In response to recommendations in the 2016 and 2019 reports, 50 bird boxes will be provided throughout the site and 2 owl nesting boxes - details illustrated on the landscape plans.

11.0 Crime Prevention & Security

The proposed plans have followed Designing Out Crime principles to create safe, desirable neighbourhoods.

The following methods have been implemented to prevent crime:

- Back-to-back house layouts for secure garden arrangements avoiding vulnerable back garden exposure.
- Good street frontage, avoiding back gardens facing streets, promoting good natural surveillance.
- Open spaces are well overlooked by dwellings to promote surveillance from neighbours and a sense of safety.
- Long dead end roads have been avoided.
- Good sightlines and visibility throughout the site.
- Parked cars are well overlooked and are located in close proximity to associated dwelling. In C2, a secure access control parking forecourt has been provided for the flats.

12.0 Conclusion

These proposals are based on the principles set out in the 2016 Outline Application, approved in March 2018.

The 2016 outline application considered the topography, views, existing housing and ecological constraints when forming the outline layout and these primary layout decisions have remained unchanged.

This proposed development will provide 122 high quality dwellings across a range of 1-4 bedroom houses and flats with a 25% affordable housing provision. High quality green open spaces are incorporated within the layout, and ecological assets have been retained and enhanced.

The proposals are sensitive to the existing contextual constraints and are sympathetic to the character of the area.

Therefore, we believe the submitted proposals to be entirely acceptable and in keeping with existing local development. We look forward to discussing these proposals in more detail with the Local Authority.



Aerial view of the site