NEW ROAD FARM
VARTEG ROAD
BLAENAVON

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Non-technical summary has been prepared to accompany the Environmental Statement (ES) which supports the full planning application made to Torfaen County Borough Council in respect to the development of houses on a parcel of land currently used for agriculture.

1.2 The Proposed Development

The proposed development may be seen on the separate drawings submitted with the planning application.

The design consists of eleven separate blocks of houses which are accessible from an infrastructure of winding roads.

Houses contained within the separate and individual blocks comprise detached, semi detached and terraced units as well as flats and maisonettes. The properties vary in size, from having one to five bedrooms and from having two to three stories. In total there are 119 properties.

1.3 Planning Context

Section 54a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that the development plan is the starting point for the determination of planning applications. In this instance, the development plan comprises of the Gwent Structure Plan 1991-2006 and the Torfaen Local Plan adopted July 2000.

Structure Plan Policy H2 indicates that new housing will be located in or immediately adjoining urban areas on land identified in local plans. The proposal is in accord with this policy, as not only does the site abut an urban area, but the site is also specifically identified for residential development in Policy S1 of the Torfaen Local Plan. The site is, therefore, specifically identified for residential development in the relevant planning policy documents.

Nevertheless, there are other designations which have to be taken into consideration; in particular the site falls within a Landscape of Outstanding Historical Interest, which is addressed at Policy C6 of the Gwent structure Plan, and Policy H7 of the Torfaen Local Plan. In essence, these policies seek to protect the overall integrity of the landscape, and as will be seen this has been one of the main objectives when developing the current proposal. As a result, the proposal is in accord with the development plan.

Material planning considerations include the advice contained in Planning Policy Wales (March 2002), in which the fostering of sustainable development is a high priority. In this instance the scheme not only meets the objectives of

achieving a resource efficient settlement pattern and minimising travel by private car, as the site located within walking distance of the town centre and on a bus route, but also achieves a number of further objectives. In particular, it will provide a range and choice of quality housing, which the Local Plan identifies as being required, as well as helping underpin local services and facilities which are failing following decades of population decline.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Site Location

The site is located on Varteg Road to the south of Blaenavon town at National Grid Reference SO 253 083. Drawing ES1534.ES.01 shows the location of the proposed site on the southern side of the Afon Lwyd valley.

An Envirocheck Report has been obtained for the site. The report contains information from various sources, including the Environment Agency on the environmental aspects of the site.

2.2 Existing Site

In general, the site slopes from the southwest to the northeast. The majority of the 4.65 hectare site is open field with mature trees and dry stone walls lying within the site boundary. No hedgerows lie within the site boundary.

The farm buildings are situated on the western boundary of the site and comprise a farmhouse, barn and garage. These buildings are to be incorporated in to the scheme as a whole with the barn being converted into an individual dwelling.

A wooded ravine and watercourse are present in the north western corner of the site. The watercourse is culverted as it enters and leaves the site. This area will not be developed as part of the proposed housing scheme.

2.3 Proximity of Houses and Centres of Population

Blaenavon is the nearest town to the development site. This is located on the northern side of the Lwyd valley at approximately 150m from the site.

Terraced, semi-detached and detached houses are all found at Blaenavon. These houses are generally located along the roads that run through the Lwyd valley. Most of the existing houses overlook the valley and therefore the proposed site.

2.4 Land Use

The site is currently used for agricultural purposes and is grazed by cattle over winter and sheep during the summer. The three fields that make up the site are interconnected and the entire area is openly grazed by the animals.

2.5 Traffic and Infrastructure

There is currently no developed infrastructure at the site within the area to be developed. New Road Farm is accessed from Varteg Road which is located to the east of the farm.

2.6 Topography

The site is located on the southern side of the Lwyd valley and is steep sided with an incline to the north east. A deep sided ravine cuts through the north western area of the site.

Two stone quarries were previously excavated at the site. Historical evidence has shown that these quarries have been filled.

2.7 Geology

The British Geological Survey was contacted to confirm the soil types found at the site. A site investigation determined that Made Ground is present to a maximum depth of 2 metres consisting of black ash fill. The superficial deposits are that of glacial till. The depth to bedrock is estimated to be around 10m.

2.7.1 Coal Mining

To determine the existence of past and present mining within the area of the site a Coal Mining Report was obtained from the Coal Mining Authority.

The site area is not within a zone of likely physical influence on the surface from past, present or future underground or opencast coal workings.

The Coal Authority has no record of any notice of the risk of the land being affected by subsidence being given under S.46 of the Coal Mining Subsidence Act 1991.

The Coal Authority have no knowledge of any mine entries within, or within 20 metres of the boundary of the site area.

2.7.2 Site investigation

Due to the presence of two filled quarries at the site a site investigation was undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of contamination. A water course that runs along the eastern boundary of the site originates from a cemetery located to the south. The site investigation was also carried out to confirm if any contamination exists at the site as a result of this pathway between the site and cemetery.

Four trial pits were excavated at the site and confirmed that there is no contamination at the locations investigated.

2.8 Hydrogeology

The site lies on a Major Aquifer designated as High Vulnerability. The carboniferous limestone is a highly permeable formation with the presence of significant fracturing. The limestone is highly productive and able to support large abstractions for potable water supply and other purposes.

The soils in the area are classed as having high leaching potential, and are readily available to transmit non-absorbed pollutants and liquid discharges. The soils have some ability to attenuate absorbed pollutants because of their large clay or organic matter content.

2.9 Hydrology

The nearest major watercourse is the Afon Llwyd which lies approximately 10m to the north of the site. The Afon Llwyd runs southeast to northwest through Blaenavon.

At the nearest sampling point to the site (19m from the boundary) the river was classed as Fairly Good (C) in 2002 with respect to chemical and biological quality.

2.9.1 Flooding

The Welsh Assembly Government have produced TAN15 Development Advice Maps, which provide an indicative view of the areas at risk from flooding. The maps are based on upon the Environment Agency's 0.1% (1in1000 year) extreme flood outline.

The TAN15 Advice Map for the development area shows that the site does not fall within a flood area.

2.10 Air

2.10.1 Dust

Air quality was investigated in relation to particulate matter.

Values of particulate matter recorded in the area were less than 0.1 mg/m^3. These values are typical of rural areas.

2.10.2 Noise

The immediate area around the proposed development is predominantly rural. However, there are several residences close to the site boundary. These include two new houses opposite New Road Farm adjacent to Varteg Road, the four properties at Oakfield Terrace, and the flats on Riverside Drive.

Data to establish the existing noise climate of the area was obtained on 20th July 2004. The weather was clear and sunny with a wind speed of 5mph and temperature of 21°C.

Four locations were chosen to represent the most sensitive receptors are as follows: -

Location 1 – New Road Farm
Location 2 – Opposite flats at Riverside Drive

Location 3 – Site Boundary (SE)
Location 4 – Opposite Oakfield Terrace

The noise levels recorded at each location are similar, both for ambient and background levels.

The majority of noise at each location resulted from traffic utilising the main Varteg Road and access road to Riverside Drive.

2.11 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

2.11.1 Landscape

The development lies within an ICOMOS World Heritage Site and the Historic Landscape Character Area 018 as listed on the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales.

The existing landscape character of the area is partly defined by the significance of its transport links which reflect the industrial development of Blaenavon.

The area surrounding Blaenavon town is covered by a palimset of the remains of early mineral working, processing, transportation networks and water tops. These industrial aspects of the area, together with the town, lie in a surrounding landscape of open mountainous moorland that was primarily used for grazing livestock, with little or no evidence of permanent settlement until the Late Medieval Period.

The proposed site is situated on the southern side of the Afon Llwyd valley. As such the site is in open view of some properties located higher up on the north side of the valley in the town of Blaenavon. Two new properties have also been built to the west of the site on the opposite side of Varteg Road. These new properties overlook the site.

Several mature trees are located along the ravine and on the western area of the site.

2.11.2 Visual Impact Assessment

A Visual Impact Assessment has been carried out at the site. This has been done in accordance with 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' issued by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

Due to the location of the site within a deep sided valley many of the views into the site are mostly open and direct from the opposite side of the valley with few trees screening the site. Mature trees are present within the site however, they do not screen the site fully.

Due to the topography of the area and the land utilisation, there are several long and short distance views of the site. All viewpoints of the site were considered.

2.12 Public Rights of Way

There are no public rights of way affecting the site. However, the National Cycle Route No 46 runs adjacent to the site.

Several public footpaths are located on the opposite side of the valley to the site. There will be unobstructed views of the site from these locations.

2.13 Assessment of the Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Areas

An Assessment of the Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Areas on the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales (ASIDOHL) has been undertaken by Cambria Archaeology. This assessment is required in association with the landscape assessment as the development is located within a World Heritage Site and within a landscape of historic interest in Wales (No. 16 on the Register Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Areas on the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales).

2.14 Aerial Photographs

Historical aerial photographs of the site that were obtained from the Royal Commission of Ancient Monuments were assessed as part of the ASIDOHL.

The site has historically been used for agricultural purposes therefore few changes in the use of the site can be seen on the aerial photographs.

In 1951 the quarry located in the eastern area of New Road Farm is visible and a hedge runs around the quarry's edge. By 1955 large sections in the southern area of the site show major industrial ground disturbance as a result of extensive mining and quarrying. No visible sign of the second quarry can be seen on the 1962 photograph.

In 1991 potential in-filled ditches can be seen running north to south through the site.

2.15 Ecology

To assess the current ecological status of the site a flora and habitat survey together with several protected species surveys were undertaken during July 2004 and between February to May 2005. The protected species surveyed and results of the flora surveys are summarised in the following table.

Species	Comments
Nesting birds	One tree within the site boundary is used by nesting birds. This tree will not be felled as part of the development.
Bats	It is recommended that any felling of dangerous, dead or dying trees be done under the supervision of a licenced bat worker. Prior to felling the trees should be inspected for bats. No bats have been found in the barn to be converted.
Barn owls	No signs to indicate the presence of Barn owls were found within the barn.
Wasp nest	A large wasp nest was observed in the base of a mature Ash tree and care should be taken if any work is to be carried out near the tree.
Reptile	A reptile survey was undertaken to find basking reptiles, however no reptiles were recorded during this survey.
Otters	No otter identification marks were found within the area of the site to be developed. No actual otter resting places were found within the site.
Badgers	No identification marks by the species were found within the site boundary. Land adjacent to the site did not show signs of use by the species and no indicators to show the presence of a sett were identified.
Water voles	All water bodies within the development area were deemed unsuitable for water voles as they we re shallow and fast flowing.
Dormice	The suitability of the site for dormice was assessed and was deemed unsuitable.
Great crested newts	No Great crested newts have been recorded at the site. However, potentially suitable refugia for the species have been recorded within the site boundary.
White-clawed crayfish	No water bodies or dry water bodies within the site boundary were suitable habitat for White-clawed crayfish. No white clawed crayfish were present during the survey carried out within the site boundary and within the Afon Lwyd.
Floral survey	No species listed on the IUCN Red List, Lists of nationally rare and scarce vascular plants, species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, UK and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species or species listed by the Welsh Assembly Government (as a requirement of Section 74(2) of

	the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) were observed at the site.
Bryophytes	Lichen and moss species were present some of the dry stone walls.
Hedgerows	No hedgerows were found within the fenced site boundary.
Arboreal survey	An arboreal survey recorded tree species including Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Silver birch, Ash, Pedunculate oak, Elder, Beech, Rowan and Sycamore.

2.15.1 Ecologically Designated Areas

No sites of ecological designation lie within the boundary of the proposed development. The development site is located 2km from the Brecon Beacons National Park.

2.16 Human Beings/Socio-Economic

The socio-economic difficulties experienced by Blaenavon have been well reported. The Torfaen Local Plan identifies that Blaenavon experienced a 38% fall in population between 1955 and 1991, and in further reports Blaenavon has been classified as one of the most deprived wards in Wales.

Recent data provided by the 2001 Census showing a further fall in population of 5% since 1991, and 41% since 1951. The data also indicates that there has been no apparent structural change in population.

The Local Plan specifically identifies low levels of house building activity and a lack of choice in terms of type and quality of housing stock as typifying and exacerbating the wider social and economic problems which exist in the area.

Residential development providing a range of house types is required in Blaenavon if the underlying social and economic problems are to be addressed, and the ongoing regeneration work underpinned by an increase in economic activity. As this site is by far the largest housing development opportunity identified in Blaenavon, its contribution to this process is significant.

2.17 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

New Road Farm is located within an ICOMOS World Heritage Site and a Landscape of Historic Interest in Wales which recognises its archaeological and historic significance.

There are no known sites, or sites with the potential to contain archaeological deposits of significance to environmental archaeological studies within the site boundary.

No known Palaeolithic sites lie within the Blaenavon area and no known Roman or Medieval period sites are located at the site.

Two potential locations of post medieval buildings that pre-date the existing buildings of New Road Farm were identified at the site. These potential deserted settlements were investigated through archaeological trial trenching. This investigation confirmed that both locations were a result of field clearance/lynchet.

2.18 Services

The following table describes the services located at, and in the vicinity of the site.

Service Provider	Comments
Dŵr Cymru	A foul water pipe runs north along the western boundary of the site. Surface water from the town enters the Afon Lwyd at a location opposite to the site.
NTL	There are no services in the vicinity of the site.
British Pipeline Agency Limited	BPA do not operate or manage any pipelines within the site area.
National Grid Transco	A low pressure mains gas pipe runs along the western boundary of the site.
Western Power Distribution	An overhead 66/132kV power line crosses the site from south east to north west.
BT	A BT phone line runs north to south along the western boundary of the site.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Development

The main structure of the development consists of a primary network of streets, which together with the public open spaces associated with the existing trees to be retained, defines a pattern of blocks.

A typical street is lined by a mixture of terrace, semi-detached and detached houses, and some two and some three- storey.

In order to give the new development a strong sense of belonging to Blaenavon, the design of the new buildings is closely based on the local vernacular as found in the town centre, adapted where necessary in the light of modern improvements such as double glazing and central heating.

3.2 Services/Utilities

It is anticipated that all domestic services will be required at the site. These are: -

- Gas
- Water
- Telecommunications
- Electricity

These services currently exist close to the site and therefore will be able to service the development.

3.3 Sewerage and Surface Water Drainage

During the construction period, water will be supplied by the mains connection to the site.

Surface water quality may be affected by the discharge of construction site drainage.

The presence of settling lagoons, excavations and other topographical depressions caused by earth moving may cause ponding and the accumulation of potentially contaminated water.

On all construction sites there is the potential for water pollution arising from the storage of fuel and hazardous substances that area used in the construction process.

3.4 Safety Statement for Construction

All work will be subject to S.I No. 44 of 1993 Safety. Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993 (amended by S.I No. 188 of 2001), and S.I No 481 of 2001 Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2001 and all current legislation. A detailed safety statement will be prepared at the contract document stage and finalised on commencement of construction.

3.5 Construction Management Plan

A Construction Management plan will be drawn up prior to the commencement of construction activities in order to minimise the impacts to the environment during construction.

3.6 Landscape and Visual Impact

All dead or moribund trees will be felled for health and safety reasons. All safe and healthy trees depicting field boundaries have been integrated in to the design of the scheme where possible.

Two of the three internal dry stone walls and their associated trees will be retained and reinforced by rebuilding and replacement tree planting. The stone from the third internal field boundary, which is partially collapsed and is in a poor state of repair, will be reused to rebuild the other field boundaries as well as contributing to new stone walls on the site.

3.7 Ecology

All healthy trees along the ravine will be kept to ensure the stability of the ravine and aid visual screening of the site from the north west. Any moribund or unsafe trees in this area will be felled for health and safety reasons. These trees will be checked by a licenced bat worker to confirm the presence of bats prior to felling.

3.8 Human Beings

The development will create new housing for the locality. It will also create construction phase employment opportunities for civil works, electrical, plastering, roofing etc.

3.9 Environmental Controls

The following table outlines the proposed environmental controls that will be implemented to control, reduce and prevent pollution and nuisances from the construction and use of the development.

Environmental Control Measures

Unit Process Description	Pollution Control System
Domestic effluent	All domestic effluent will collected by the foul water drains.
Surface water run off	All surface water run off will be collected by soakaways.
Building water run off	All clean rainwater will be collected by soakaways.

4.0 POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

4.1 Land Use

The development of housing at the site will change the land use of the existing site. The development will therefore have a significant impact upon the land use of the site.

4.2 Traffic

Pre-application discussions have taken place with officers of the Highway Authority and no particular traffic issues have been raised. The main vehicular access will be from a new junction on Varteg Road just below the existing farmhouse.

The development incorporates a pedestrian access at the bottom of the site that will double as an emergency vehicular access. The potential for a bus stop on Varteg Road towards the top of the site has also been identified, though its provision will be dependent on the agreement of the bus service providers. By allowing pedestrians to walk down through the site towards the town centre, and then return by bus to the top of the site, it should encourage pedestrian trips to the town centre.

It is intended that the rear lanes which service many of the garages will not be adopted. In order to maintain these rear access lanes future residents will be required to enter into a management agreement.

4.3 Topography

The general topography of the site will not change with the development and therefore no impact will occur as a result of the development.

4.4 Geology (Soils)

4.4.1 Development - Construction phase

A minimal removal of soil / subsoil from the site during construction is proposed. Therefore, it is unlikely that the bedrock will be exposed.

Prior to construction of the site, it is proposed that topsoil will be stripped from the site. The foundations of the proposed houses will be cut into the subsoil. The construction of services, sewers, water mains etc. will also involve stripping topsoil and subsoil along the service routes.

It is predicted that topsoil will be stripped, stored and replaced in the construction of the proposed development. The short term effect will have a slightly moderate direct impact because of the disturbance to the landscape

and soil conditions. Mitigation measures will be in place to minimise these impacts.

4.4.2 Mitigating adverse impacts on Bedrock Geology

Based on available information on the depth to bedrock across the site, it is not expected that the bedrock will be encountered during the proposed construction of the houses over most of the site.

If bedrock is encountered in any of the excavations and bedrock is exposed these areas will be appropriately restored and lined with concrete.

4.4.3 Mitigating adverse impacts on Soils and Subsoils

Topsoils, which may be excavated prior to the construction of any foundations for the houses on the site, can be stored for re-use, particularly in the context of any landscaping and building up of soil mounds to screen the site, particularly along the northern boundary.

4.5 Coal Mining

The site is not located in an area likely to be affected by the coal working occurred in the past, present or future.

No impacts with regards coal mining are predicated to occur as a result of the development.

4.6 Site Investigation

From the results of the site investigation no contamination has been found within the site as a result of the location of the quarries and cemetery to the south.

4.7 Hydrogeology

4.7.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phases of the development, any foul water and grey water discharges associated with facilities for construction workers, or spillages of stored fuel oil and other chemicals, could introduce contamination to the aquifer if not controlled.

Provided the development is constructed in accordance with good practice the impact on the groundwater will be limited. No beneficial users of groundwater have been identified downgradient of the site.

4.7.2 Mitigation Measures

During the construction phase, any excavations will be backfilled as soon as is possible to prevent any infiltration of potentially polluting compounds to the subsurface and the aquifer.

All fuel oils and chemicals required for construction will be stored in bunded areas which have impermeable floors.

All wastewater from the construction facilities will be stored for removal off site for disposal and treatment.

4.8 Hydrology

4.8.1 Construction Phase

The construction of the development will result in the removal of topsoil.

The disturbance of the topsoil during construction may affect the surface water features which flow to the north of the site and within the northwest corner of the site, particularly if runoff from the site is not controlled.

Provided the development is constructed in accordance with good practice, which minimises the runoff to surface water features during the construction process, the impact on the surface water bodies will be limited.

Surface water quality may be affected by the discharge of construction site drainage. Construction activities are also likely to cause high levels of suspended solids in any surface water flowing off the site. The removal of the vegetation cover from the site will increase the potential of surface water run off from the site.

4.8.2 Mitigation Measures

During the construction phase, run-off from the works areas will be controlled by a number of measures. An undisturbed vegetation strip will be retained along the boundaries of the site, maintaining the existing.

Any runoff possibly containing suspended solids during the construction of the site can be subjected to settlement or filtering (using a fine-woven mesh fabric in a fence or using piled bales of straw) prior to discharge to the open streams.

All potentially polluting materials (fuel, oil etc.) will be stored in bunded areas away from the open watercourses.

Provided good practice is adhered to, the risk to the surface water bodies is expected to be low.

4.9 Air

4.9.1 Impact of Dust during the Construction Phase

The construction works have the potential to impact on local air quality via the production of dust, created by: -

- Site clearance;
- Topsoil stripping;
- Vehicle movements on unsurfaced roads;
- Excavations;
- Cutting and grinding.

The background levels of dust in the atmosphere are low, therefore creation of excessive dust by the site works could become a nuisance to local residents if not controlled properly.

The overall impact on the surrounding air quality near the site boundary and the entrance is predicted to be a slight to moderate negative impact, as a result of dust emissions. These impacts will be short-term, lasting at most a few months and will depend on the amount of site preparation work required prior to laying the foundations of the site. It is predicted that the impact of dust and particulate emissions, at the nearest houses will be slight with no adverse effect on the local amenity or community health.

4.9.2 Mitigation Measures for Construction Works

Mitigation measures are recommended below that would minimise the impact local residents: -

- Stripping of the overburden during the site clearance will be undertaken so that the generation of dust emissions will be kept to a minimum.
- Regular maintenance of the site entrance will be undertaken including the prompt removal of any spillage to prevent dispersion and subsequent re-suspension by passing vehicles along the road.
- Burning of building waste or cleared vegetation on-site will be prohibited.
- The use of construction equipment designed to minimise dust generation;
- Sheeting of lorries during transportation of friable construction materials and spoil;
- Delivery of ready-mixed concrete where possible;
- Minimising drop heights for material transfer activities such as unloading of friable materials;
- Frequent wash down of roads and made surfaces;
- Wheel washing facilities for vehicles leaving the site;
- Water spray dampening of soils and surfaces to prevent dust dispersion during hot, dry weather conditions;

- Contractors required to develop and adhere to an Environmental Management Plan for the construction;
- Monitoring dust levels during construction works and comparison against established baseline levels.

By ensuring the above the potential impact on residents in the immediate vicinity of the site is not considered significant and should not represent a nuisance.

4.10 Noise

4.10.1 Construction Effects

Initial site clearance activities and construction will increase levels of noise. This could be of particular concern for local residents.

4.10.2 Mitigation Measures

The site works will be limited to normal working hours during the day. The more intense and noisy activities associated with the use of large plant will only take place over a short duration and will be temporary in nature. All plant used will be well maintained with appropriate silencing equipment fitted.

It is expected that normal construction hours would be followed; Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:00 hours and on Saturdays between 08:00 and 13:00 hours.

4.11 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The site is located within a World Heritage Site and within a landscape of historic interest in Wales (No. 16 on the Register Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Areas on the Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest in Wales). Nevertheless, the reduction in value on the designated landscape brought about by the development is scored as a "3" in the ASIDOHL assessment, which is categorised as "Low".

4.11.1 Summary of Landscape and Visual Constraints

The development of the site will involve a change in the land use within the site boundary which will significantly affect the landscape character of the site temporarily during construction and permanently following completion of the construction period.

In order to mitigate the adverse effects of the project from the landscape all trees deemed to be important will be retained.

Certain measures have been incorporated into the proposed scheme which will be implemented within the site following the completion of the works to retain the landscape value of the area. These measures are as follows: -

- Planting using native species to enhance biodiversity and to tie the modified landform into the local landscape
- Careful consideration of the form and finish of structures and the brick/stone type used
- The appearance of other features such as street lighting and street signs

Due to the nature and layout of Blaenavon a minimum number of public locations have views of the site due to the location of the majority of roads running west to east along the Lwyd valley.

All potential views of the site at road level are fully screened by houses located lower down the valley side. From inside private property, open direct views of the site can be experienced. The roads running north to south which interconnect the previously mentioned roads have open direct views of small areas of the site. However, throughout the area, views of the site are seen against the backdrop of the hillside of which the site forms only a small part.

4.11.2 Mitigation measures

Two of the three internal field boundaries will be retained and improved by stone wall rebuilding and supplementary tree planting. The third field boundary is in very poor condition and is not marked by a line of trees. The stone from the dilapidated wall which marks that boundary will be reused to help rebuild the stone walls on the other boundaries.

All trees that are healthy and safe will be included in the design of the development. All dead or unsafe trees will be felled.

Trees will be planted to create a linear feature in the centre of the site which will recognise and reflect the existing field boundaries and create a natural pathway through the development.

All mature, healthy trees along the ravine will be maintained to ensure all houses all screened from viewpoints to the north west. All tree planting will be located near to existing trees to aid visual screening.

4.12 Public Rights of Way

The construction and occupation of the development will not create a direct impact upon the Public Rights of Way located on the opposite northern side of the valley.

4.13 ASIDOHL

An Assessment of the Significance of the Impact of Development on Historic Landscape areas on the Register (ASIDOHL) has been undertaken at the site as a consequence of its registered landscape status.

4.13.1 Mitigation

The proposed development has integrated mitigation measures into its design to minimise impact upon the landscape. Architecturally the houses are designed to be in keeping with local and regional building styles and traditions, and therefore should be in keeping with the existing urban settlement. The development is also such that certain aspects of the former landscape will be retained or reflected in the layout.

These measures will certainly soften the visual impact of the development, both looking to and from Blaenavon.

4.14 Ecology

4.14.1 Protected Sites.

As no sites of ecological designation are located at or near to the site no impacts will arise with regards this matter. Therefore no mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Mitigation measures for all flora and fauna surveys undertaken are described in the following table.

Species	Comments
Bats	The recommendations contained in the arboreal will be complied with. Any trees that are felled which contain any hollow sections of timber will be allowed to remain on the ground undisturbed for 24 hours after felling. If any mature trees have to be felled further bat survey work will be undertaken and a licenced bat worker will be present during felling to advise contractors and to handle any grounded bats.
Barn owls	No mitigation measures are required.
Wasp nest	Care should be taken if any work is to be carried out near the tree.
Reptile	No mitigation measures are required.
Otters	No direct mitigation measures are required.
Badgers	No mitigation measures are required.
Water voles	No mitigation measures are required.
Dormice	No mitigation measures are required.
Great crested newts	If Great crested newts are found during construction all work should be stopped and the CCW and Herpetofanua Conservation Group contacted.
White-clawed crayfish	If the species is found during construction all work should cease and CCW contacted.
Floral survey	No protected habitats and/or species were found

	at the site therefore it is predicated that no impacts will arise as a result of the development and therefore no mitigation measures are required.

4.15 Human Beings/Socio-Economic

From both the statistical analysis and the findings of the adopted Local Plan, it is quite clear that residential development providing a range of house types is required in Blaenavon if the underlying social and economic problems are to be addressed, and the ongoing regeneration work underpinned by an increase in economic activity. As this site is by far the largest housing development opportunity identified in Blaenavon, its contribution to this process is significant.

4.16 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

The farmhouse, barn and field system are of regional or county importance.

Both filled quarries within the site are of minor archaeological significance.

The archaeological evaluation investigation undertaken at the site confirmed that isolated sites were a result of past agricultural practice and therefore should be considered as an element of the historic landscape. As individual elements in the landscape they are of minor importance.

4.17 Services

Any mitigation measures for services are described in the following table.

Service Provider	Comments
Dŵr Cymru	The location of a foul water pipe which runs north along the western boundary of the site will enable the development to connect to this service with minimum impact. Detailed surface water drainage design will create minimum impact upon the Afon Llwyd.
NTL	Not applicable
British Pipeline Agency Limited	Not applicable
National Grid Transco	The presence of a low pressure mains gas pipe along the western boundary of the site indicates that this service is available to the development.
Western Power Distribution	No tall machinery will operate in the area of the overhead 66/132kV power line.
BT	The presence of a BT phone line to the west of the site running north to south indicates that this service is available to the development.

4.18 Summary of Significance of Impacts

The table below summarises the levels of impact upon each environmental aspect at the site as a result of the proposed development.

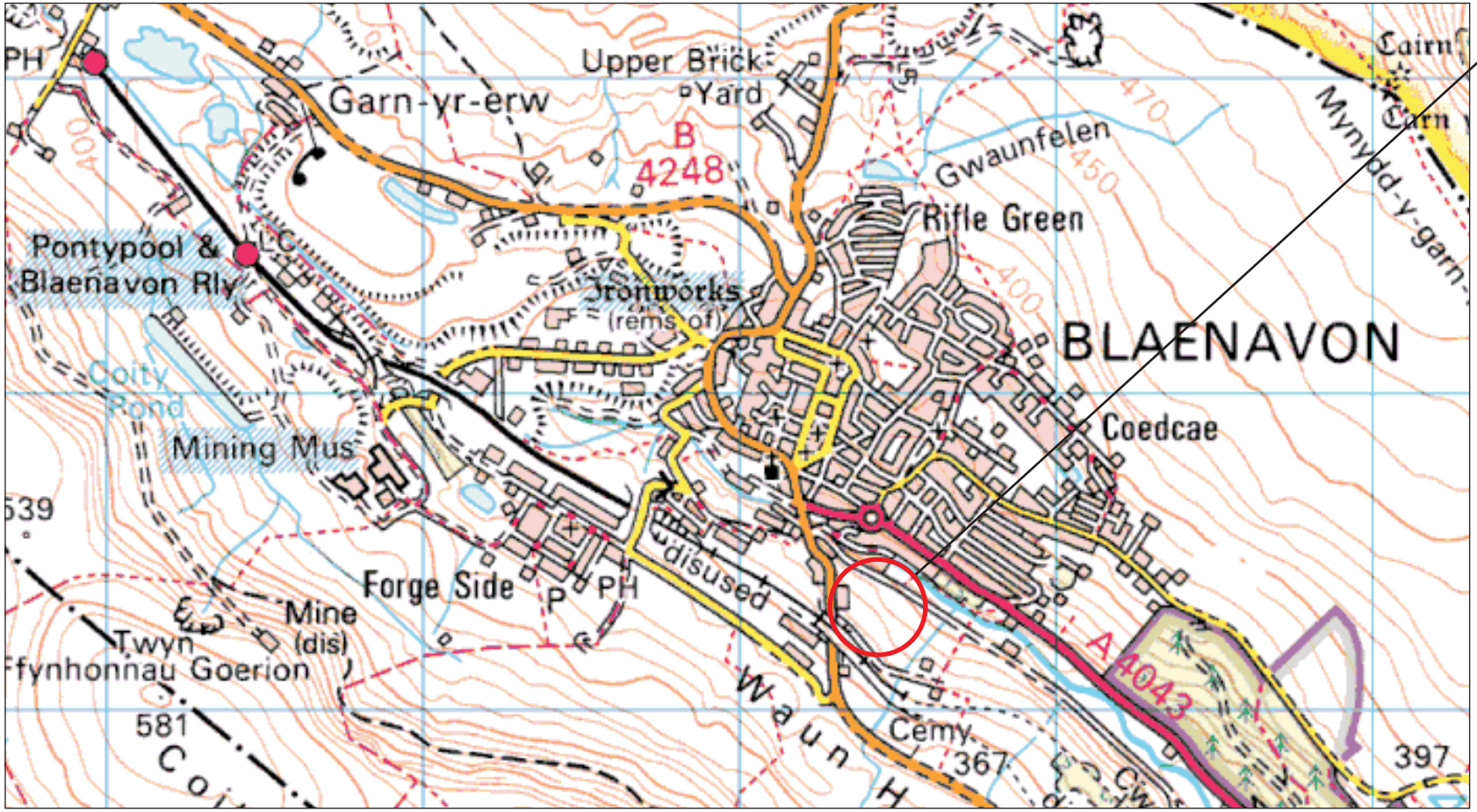
Table 11 Summary of Significance of Impact

Environmental Impact	Significance
Land Use	Significant
Traffic	Moderate
Topography	None
Geology – Bedrock	Slight
Geology – Soils and Sub-soils	Moderate
Coal Mining	None
Site Investigation	None
Hydrogeology	Slight
Hydrology	Moderate
Air	Temporary – Moderate Operation – Slight
Noise	Temporary – Moderate Operation – Slight
Surface Water	Significant
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Low overall to significant locally
Public Rights of Way	Slight
ASIDOHL	Significant
Ecology – Protected Sites	None
Ecology – Flora	None
Ecology – Bats (Trees)	Negligible
Bats (Drainage culvert)	Negligible
Bats (Barn)	Negligible
Barn Owl	None
Wasp nest	Slight
Reptiles	None
Mammals – Otters	Slight
Badgers	None
Water Voles	None
Dormice	None
Great crested newts	Slight
White clawed crayfish	Slight
Human Beings/Socio economic	Significantly positive
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	Low
Services – Dwr Cymru	Slightly positive
NTL	None
British Pipeline Agency Limited	None
National Grid Transco	Slightly positive

Environmental Impact	Significance
Western Power Distribution	Moderately positive
BT	Slightly positive
Interaction of the foregoing – felling of trees	Slight
Felling of trees located near existing field boundaries	Slight
Otter safe surface water drainage	Slight

APPENDIX A

Drawings



Project:

New Road Farm, Varteg Road, Blaenavon

Title:

Site Location

Date:	May 2005
Scale:	NTS
Drawn by:	JMB
Checked by:	SR

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