

enviroparks

APPENDIX 12.3

Viewpoint assessment



Chapter Twelve

APPENDIX 12.3

VIEWPOINT ASSESSMENT

Viewpoint A

- 12.1 This viewpoint is representative of views potentially gained by public footpath users within the National Park, although the definitive route along the lower slope of the nearby reservoir has limited accessibility due to fencing, although it appears that the track could be used by footpath users as it connects directly to the route near Tai-cwpau to the west and a section of fence near the northeastern corner of the Site has been cut to allow access to the overgrown route that passes through woodland to the east of the reservoir. A belt of trees exists between the definitive route and the Site and therefore the actual visibility would be less than illustrated in this view.
- 12.2 The existing view (see **Visualisation Aa**) takes in the northern boundary of the Site that is enclosed by a security fence, beyond which scrub within rough grassland filters views of the existing building on the Site. The remainder of the Site is visible, partly filtered in places by scrub. The backdrop of the view consists of planting within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, pylons and rising land at Hirwaun Common on the horizon.
- 12.3 The sensitivity of the footpath users views has been assessed as follows:
- The views are restricted by surrounding tree planting within the reservoir and adjacent industrial estate (i.e. within the Site) and are filtered by the security fencing that encloses the Site. The value of the view is Medium.
 - The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium due to the adjacent industrial uses and context within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate.
 - The overall sensitivity is assessed as Medium.
- 12.4 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the High Energy Use building that is located between 15m and 30m from the security fence. The planting along the northern boundary would be reinforced, such that by Year 15 visibility of the proposals would be very limited, although the view would be replaced by a dense thicket of native tree and shrub planting with heavily filtered glimpses of the building beyond in winter.
- 12.5 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be **Very Large** with views of the new buildings, filtered by existing retained tree planting and more apparent in winter.

- 12.6 The overall effects for walkers (diverted from the definitive footpath route) would be a **Major** effect that is **Significant** (Year 1), reducing to a **Moderate** level that is **Not Significant** as planting matures (Year 15).
- 12.7 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme is unchanged as whilst the slightly taller stack would be seen above the High Energy Use building the taller Gasification Hall and Turbine/Fuel Storage Hall would be screened from view. The modest increase in the stack height would not be sufficient to change the magnitude and overall effect compared with the original scheme.

Viewpoint B

- 12.8 This viewpoint is representative of views potentially gained by anglers within the National Park, at the top of the southern reservoir embankment. There is no promoted public access to this location noting the nearby definitive footpath route is along the lower slope of the reservoir embankment and has limited accessibility due to fencing (the alternative footpath route is represented by Viewpoint A).
- 12.9 South facing views in winter are always difficult to photograph as the arc of the sun is restricted and the clear conditions needed for landscape photography typically means that the sun will be within the 90 degree viewing angle, regardless of the time of day photography is taken.
- 12.10 The existing view (see **Visualisation Ba**) is approximately 50m from the Site boundary and takes in the northern boundary of the Site that is enclosed by woodland. The remainder of the Site is visible, including clear views of the existing phase 1 building. The backdrop of the view consists of planting within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, a line of pylons and rising land beyond at Hirwaun Common on the horizon.
- 12.11 The sensitivity of the anglers using the reservoir has been assessed as follows:
- The main focus of angler's views would be in the opposite direction across the water. The Site is set within the context of other industrial buildings. The value of the view presented is Low to Medium.
 - The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium due to the adjacent industrial uses and context within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate.
 - The overall sensitivity is assessed as Medium.
- 12.12 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the proposed High Energy Use and Biomax buildings as consented. The planting along the northern boundary would be reinforced, such that by Year 15 visibility of the proposals would be further restricted, although the stack and roofscape of the High Energy Use building in particular would remain clearly visible.

- 12.13 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be **Very Large** with views of the new buildings, filtered by existing retained tree planting and more apparent in winter (see **Visualisation Bb**). The magnitude at Year 15 (see **Visualisation Bc**) would slightly reduce to a Large level because ground level activity and the lower levels of the buildings would be screened by the growth of new tree and shrub planting along the northern boundary (see **Figure 12.5**).
- 12.14 The overall effects for anglers would be a **Major** effect that is **Significant** (Year 1), reducing to a **Major/Moderate** level that is **Significant** as new planting matures (Year 15).
- 12.15 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme is unchanged as whilst the slightly taller stack would be seen above the High Energy Use building the taller Gasification Hall and Turbine/Fuel Storage Hall compared with the lower consented buildings they replace would form a very small increase in the overall massing of the consented scheme as perceived from this location. The modest increase in the stack height and buildings set behind the High Energy Use building that remains unchanged from the consented scheme, would not be sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint C

- 12.16 This viewpoint is representative of views potentially gained by anglers within the National Park on the northern shore of the reservoir near a memorial bench (to fishermen). There is no promoted public access to this location.
- 12.17 South facing views in winter are always difficult to photograph as the arc of the sun is restricted and the clear conditions needed for landscape photography typically means that the sun will be within the 90 degree viewing angle, regardless of the time of day photography is taken.
- 12.18 The existing view (see **Visualisation Ca**) is approximately 330m from the Site boundary and takes in the northern boundary of the Site that is enclosed by woodland. The open water of the reservoir dominates the view and the backdrop consists of planting and roofscape of buildings within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, a line of pylons and the rising land at Hirwaun Common on the horizon. The existing phase 1 building is largely screened from view by the reservoir embankment with only the upper parts of the roof visible.
- 12.19 The sensitivity of the anglers using the reservoir has been assessed as follows:
- The main focus of angler's views would be across the water towards the Site set within an industrial context and with the pylons forming prominent vertical features across the panorama. The value of the view presented is High.
 - The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium due to the adjacent industrial uses and context within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate.

- The overall sensitivity is assessed as High to Medium.

- 12.20 The main changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise views of the upper levels and roof of the proposed Gasification Hall and Turbine Hall and Fuel Storage Hall set behind. The proposed High Energy Use Building would not be visible apart from a glimpse of the ridgeline (see **Visualisation Ca**). Planting along the northern boundary would be reinforced, however it is unlikely that by Year 15 growth of the tree planting at a lower level would be sufficient to screen views of the buildings (see **Visualisation Cb**).
- 12.21 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 and Year 15 would be **Medium to Large**.
- 12.22 The overall effects for anglers would be a **Major/Moderate** effect that is **Significant** (Year 1 and Year 15).
- 12.23 The differences relative to the consented scheme would be modest and include a slightly taller/wider stack (but still set below the landform on the horizon and the level of the more distant pylons) and visibility of the slightly taller Gasification Hall and Turbine/Fuel Storage Hall. The increases are not sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint D

- 12.24 This viewpoint is representative of views potentially gained by public footpath users within the National Park on the track near Tai-cwpau farmstead. In reality the path appears to have restricted use as a route through the farmstead is prevented by aggressive farm dogs. Furthermore approaching the location in a westwards direction and passing Viewpoint A is unlikely as further west the route passes through near impenetrable woodland east of the reservoir.
- 12.25 South facing views in winter are always difficult to photograph as the arc of the sun is restricted and the clear conditions needed for landscape photography typically means that the sun will be within the 90 degree viewing angle, regardless of the time of day photography is taken.
- 12.26 The existing view (see **Visualisation Da**) is approximately 130m from the Site boundary and takes in rising landform as sheep grazed pasture to the southeast of the farmstead of Tai-cwpau. The landform and tree planting beyond restricts visibility of the Site with a glimpse of the Phase 1 building visible. Distant rising landform is barely perceptible on the horizon.
- 12.27 The sensitivity of footpath users along the route has been assessed as follows:
- As described above the route does not appear well used and the glimpse of the existing Phase 1 building is a fleeting oblique glimpses that is not available from other locations along the footpath route. The value of the view presented is Medium.
 - The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is High as the view is predominantly rural in character with no discernible visibility of

the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate.

- The overall sensitivity is assessed as Medium to High.

- 12.28 The main changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise heavily filtered views of the upper levels and roof of the proposed Gasification Hall and Turbine Hall and Fuel Storage Hall set in front of the existing phase 1 building. The top half of the stack would be clearly visible against the sky. The majority of the buildings would be screened by a combination of landform and intervening tree cover (see **Visualisation Db**). Planting along the western boundary would be reinforced, such that by Year 15 visibility of the roofscape and upper levels of the proposed buildings would be predominantly fully screened and the upper levels of the stack still clearly visible.
- 12.29 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be **Medium to Large** with views of the new building upper levels and roof, filtered by existing retained tree planting, more apparent in winter. The magnitude at Year 15 would reduce slightly to **Medium** due to the growth of new tree planting along the eastern boundary of the Site.
- 12.30 The overall effects for footpath users would be a **Moderate/Major** effect that is **Significant** (Year 1), reducing to a **Moderate** level that is **Not Significant** as new planting matures (Year 15).
- 12.31 The differences relative to the consented scheme would be modest and include a slightly taller/wider stack and filtered visibility of the taller Gasification Hall and Turbine/Fuel Storage Hall. The increases are not sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint E

- 12.32 This viewpoint is representative of oblique views potentially gained by road users in vehicles on the layby off the eastbound A465 Dual carriageway. Fleeting views towards the Site would also be available to passengers of vehicles travelling in both directions on the A465 although given the woodland screening it is unlikely that the proposed development would be perceived by motorists passing at speed.
- 12.33 The existing view (see **Visualisation Ea**) is approximately 190m from the Site boundary and takes in buildings and outside storage within the Hirwaun Business Park, set behind a belt of woodland planting. The existing phase 1 building on the Site is partly visible and the embankment of the reservoir and nearby woodland planting can also be perceived. The overhead lines of the electricity pylons cross the length of the panorama.
- 12.34 The sensitivity of road users has been assessed as follows:
- The industrial foreground of the existing business park and restricted oblique visibility, heavily filtered by intervening woodland are only likely to be perceived by drivers who stop in the layby and result in a Low value.
 - The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is

Low as the Site is set within the context of the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate and is heavily filtered by intervening woodland.

- The overall sensitivity is assessed as Low.

- 12.35 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the proposed Fuel Storage Hall and Gasification Hall behind which are taller than the buildings of the consented scheme but would appear only slightly taller than the existing phase 1 building. The stack would appear slightly taller. The growth of new tree planting along the southern boundary of the Site is similar to the consented scheme and would further filter views of the building over time.
- 12.36 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Medium with new buildings, filtered by existing retained tree planting and more apparent in winter, although heavily filtered (see **Visualisation Eb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would slightly reduce to a Medium to Small level because ground level activity and the lower levels of the buildings would be screened by the growth of new tree planting along the southern boundary.
- 12.37 The overall effects for road users would be a Minor/Moderate effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), reducing to a Minor effect that is Not Significant as new planting matures (Year 15).
- 12.38 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme is unchanged as whilst the slightly taller/wider stack would be seen above the taller Gasification Hall and Turbine/Fuel Storage Hall compared with the lower consented buildings they replace would form a small increase in the overall massing of the consented scheme, heavily filtered by intervening woodland, as perceived from this location. The increase in built volume would not be sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint F

- 12.39 This viewpoint is representative of oblique views potentially gained by road users entering the access drive to the nearby restaurant and Buckley's Bungalow. The view is also representative of direct views that may also be available to road users of Fifth Avenue, within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate.
- 12.40 The existing view (see **Visualisation Fa**) is approximately 390m from the Site boundary and is dominated by the Fifth Avenue corridor on the edge of the Hirwaun Business Park. The Sewage treatment works are set behind tree planting in the right of the view, with pylons punctuating the skyline. Part of the existing phase 1 building on the Site is partly visible in the background of the view, although the majority of the Site is screened by intervening landform, reinforced by tree cover.
- 12.41 The sensitivity of road users has been assessed as follows:
- The industrial fringe character of the existing business park with glimpses of reclaimed land and pylons, combined with rural elements including woodland, pasture and trees result in a Low to Medium value.

- The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Low to Medium as the Site is set within the context of the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate although other built development does not dominate this viewpoint.
- The overall sensitivity is assessed as Medium to Low.

- 12.42 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the upper levels of the Proposed Turbine Hall set in front of the existing Phase 1 building. The stack and remaining buildings would be fully screened by intervening landform. The growth of new tree planting along the southern boundary of the Site is similar to the consented scheme and would further filter views of the buildings over time.
- 12.43 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Small with only a small proportion of the existing phase 1 building and other proposed buildings visible (see **Visualisation Fb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would slightly reduce to a Very Small level because ground level activity and the lower levels of the buildings would be screened by the growth of new tree planting along the southern boundary.
- 12.44 The overall effects for road users would be a Minor effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), reducing to a Minor to Negligible effect that is Not Significant as new planting matures (Year 15).
- 12.45 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme is unchanged as whilst the taller proposed Turbine Hall would be visible in front of the existing Phase 1 building, there would only be a very small increase in the overall visible massing as the majority of the buildings and the stack would be screened by intervening landform, reinforced by tree cover. The increase in built volume would not be sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint G

- 12.46 This viewpoint is representative of oblique views potentially gained by road users of the private track to the holiday cottage of Tyle-morgrug in the National Park. The view does not represent a route promoted to the public, but is likely to be experienced by youth and adult groups interested in the outdoors and staying at the cottage. Views towards the Site from the dwelling itself are predicted to be filtered by closer intervening tree cover.
- 12.47 The existing view (see **Visualisation Ga**) is approximately 1.03km from the Site boundary and is dominated by undulating upland sheep pasture, with much of the track flanked by tree planting. The Hirwaun Business Park buildings are located in the middleground of the valley, set amongst tree planting including belts of coniferous species. The steeply rising land of Hirwaun Common is located on the horizon and some of the wind turbines of Pen y Cymoedd are also visible.
- 12.48 The sensitivity of road users has been assessed as follows:

- The rural character of the immediate landscape contrasts with the existing infrastructure of the Hirwaun Business Park in the valley and therefore views towards the Site in this context have a High to Medium value.
- The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is High to Medium as the Site is set within the context of the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate although other built development does not dominate the landscape at this viewpoint.
- The overall sensitivity is assessed as High to Medium.

- 12.49 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the upper levels of the proposed stack, with both the existing Phase 1 building and proposed buildings fully screened by intervening landform and dense intervening tree cover. The stack would appear close to a pylon that would appear taller than the stack at this location.
- 12.50 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Very Small with only a small proportion of the upper stack visible (see **Visualisation Gb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced further by the growth of intervening existing tree planting.
- 12.51 The overall effects for road users would be a Minor/Moderate effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), with a Minor effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.
- 12.52 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance would be barely perceptible. The increase in stack height would not be sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint H

- 12.53 This viewpoint is representative of oblique views potentially gained by walkers and horse-riders on the bridleway near Moel Penderyn in the National Park. The views are available for a relatively limited stretch of the route with intervening vegetation and /or landform restricting visibility in either direction along the route. Similar but slightly more elevated views would be available from open access land at the summit and south facing slopes of Moel Penderyn itself, although these would be more distant from the Site than the selected viewpoint.
- 12.54 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation Ha**) is approximately 1.54 km from the Site boundary and is dominated by large-scale open undulating rough grassland, with only limited tree and shrub cover. The pale coloured Hirwaun Business Park buildings are located in the valley in the middleground of the view and typically strongly contrast with darker tree planting. The existing phase 1 buildings and the majority of the Site is visible just above intervening landform. The steeply rising land of Hirwaun Common is located on the horizon and the Pen y Cymoedd wind turbines are also visible.

12.55 The sensitivity of bridleway users has been assessed as follows:

- The rural character of the immediate landscape in the National Park contrasts with the existing infrastructure of the Hirwaun Business Park in the valley and therefore views towards the Site in this context have a High value.
- The Susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is High as whilst the Site is set within the context of the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate, other built development whilst present does not dominate the landscape at this viewpoint and additional large scale built development, particularly with vertical and pale coloured elements, has the potential to become detractors in the view.
- The overall sensitivity is assessed as High.

12.56 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the upper levels of all the proposed main buildings and the upper levels of the stack, backclothed by existing industrial buildings and tree cover. The growth of proposed tree planting along the northern boundary of the Site would assist in restricting visibility of the High Energy Use Building at Year 15.

12.57 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Medium (see **Visualisation Hb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced to a Medium to Low level by the fact the external facades would have faded, particularly the wood cladding and to a lesser extent by the growth of intervening existing tree planting (see **Visualisation Hc**).

12.58 The overall effects for bridleway users would be a Major/Moderate effect that is Significant (Year 1), with a Moderate effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.

12.59 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance would be barely perceptible. The increase in the built volume as a result of the Gasification Hall and to a lesser extent the Turbine and Fuel Storage Hall building would however be perceptible. Given that the proposed buildings would be perceived as only slightly higher than the existing Phase 1 building and backclothed by existing industrial buildings, it is assessed that the increase in the height of buildings on a similar overall footprint to the consented scheme would result in a similar effect i.e. the visual impact of both the proposed and consented scheme would be Significant at Year 1 and Not Significant at Year 15.

12.60 The cumulative effect taking into account the consented gas power station to the southwest of the Site, within the Hirwaun Industrial Park is illustrated on a wireline visualisation (see **Visualisation Hd**). Reference has also been made to Viewpoint No. 18 photomontage of the Hirwaun Power Project (HPP) ES which is taken at a similar location to Viewpoint H. No significant effects upon visual amenity from this location were identified in the HPP ES and the cumulative effect, taking into account the consented Enviroparks development was assessed to be of *'negligible magnitude'* and the *'cumulative effect neutral'* (see page 523 of the HPP ES).

12.61 Using the methodology outlined at **Appendix 12.1**, the prior presence of the consented HPP would result in a Very Small overall magnitude and a Minor adverse effect (there would be removal of more visible pale coloured large scale buildings replaced by the HPP structures of a smaller footprint and several vertical stacks backclothed by landscape). The addition of the Proposed Development, significant in its own right, would extend the volume of built development in the view, however given that the consented HPP would only have a Very Small magnitude upon the visual amenity of bridleway users, the cumulative effect of the Hirwaun Enviroparks scheme (both consented and proposed) in combination with the consented HPP would be Minor and Not Significant.

Viewpoint I

12.62 This viewpoint is representative of views potentially gained by users of the open space (a sports pitch) and private views from the rear of nearby properties on Heol Esgyn.

12.63 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation Ia**) is approximately 1.61 km from the Site boundary and contains the amenity grassland of the sports pitch in the foreground, enclosed to the southeast by native tree and shrub planting. The middleground of the view consists of sheep grazed pasture and includes a line of pylons, behind which glimpses of buildings located within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate area available, partly screened by tree cover. The distant horizon is formed by elevated land at Moel Penderyn and more distant views of rising land east of Penderyn.

12.64 The sensitivity of users of the open space and nearby residents has been assessed as follows:

- The rural outlook includes panoramic views of a predominantly rural landscape beyond the sports pitches, including prominent elevated land within the National Park. Pylons and buildings within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate represent detractors in the view. In this context it is assessed that views have a High value for residents and Medium value for users of the sports pitches.
- The susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium as the Site is set down in the valley within the context of the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate, noting additional vertical man made features have the potential to add to the detractors already present.
- The overall sensitivity is assessed as High to Medium for residents and Medium for users of the open space.

12.65 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the upper levels of the proposed stack, with both the existing Phase 1 building and proposed buildings fully screened by intervening landform and dense intervening tree cover. The stack would appear at a lower relative height to the closer pylons in the view and dark in colour against a landform backdrop.

- 12.66 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Very Small with only a small proportion of the upper stack visible (see **Visualisation Ib**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced further by the growth of intervening existing tree planting.
- 12.67 The overall effects for residents would be a Minor/Moderate effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), with a Minor effect that is Not Significant at Year 15. Users of the Sport pitch would experience a Minor effect at Year 1 and a Minor/Negligible effect at Year 15 (both Not Significant).
- 12.68 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance would be barely perceptible. The increase in stack height would not be sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint J

- 12.69 This viewpoint is representative of views potentially gained by road users driving northeastwards along the A4061 and users of the nearby public footpath. The public footpath has been blocked off by three lengths of post and wire fencing (barbed wire) that flank the A4061 and the minor road parallel with the A4061. The only stile to the footpath is located adjacent to a private track and with the fencing between this point and the A4061 the route has effectively been stopped up. There is also no stile or route discernible on the other side of the A4061 which crosses the northern fringes of Hirwaun Common where opencast mining activity has expanded considerably since the time of the 2008 photographic survey (no access to ES viewpoint 21 on the former public footpath route was possible).
- 12.70 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation Ja**) is approximately 1.71 km from the Site boundary and in the foreground is dominated by the A4061 and the parallel private track. The middleground of the view comprises the valley with the roofscape and upper levels of the pale coloured buildings within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate visible and surrounded by tree cover. The existing Phase 1 building is barely discernible and largely screened by intervening tree cover. The Penderyn Reservoir is clearly visible in the mid-ground of the view, set above the Site. The distant horizon is formed by elevated land within the National Park.
- 12.71 The sensitivity of road users has been assessed as follows, noting that whilst the public footpath has been stopped up the views would be similar to views nearby from rising open access land on Hirwaun Common.
- The predominantly rural outlook includes man-made features including the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate and transport corridors. The upland landscape of the National Park forms a distinctive backdrop in the views. In this context it is assessed that fleeting views for motorists have a Medium value and users of nearby Open Access land, in the context of the Opencast workings also a Medium value.
 - The susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium as the Site is set down in the valley within the context of the existing Hirwaun Industrial Estate.

- The overall sensitivity is assessed as Medium for both road users and for walkers across the nearby open access land of Hirwaun Common.

- 12.72 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the roof of the proposed Fuel Storage Hall, Turbine Hall and Gasification Hall and glimpses of the High Energy Use building roof. The upper levels of the stack would be most visible, adjacent to a pylon from this location and backclothed by the reservoir and tree cover. The growth of existing tree planting within the industrial estate would assist in restricting visibility of the proposed buildings at Year 15.
- 12.73 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Very Small (see **Visualisation Jb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be further reduced by the growth of intervening existing tree planting (see **Visualisation Jc**).
- 12.74 The overall effects for users of the nearby open access land and public footpath would be Minor and Not Significant (Year 1), with a Minor to Negligible effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.
- 12.75 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance would be barely perceptible. The increase in the built volume as a result of the Gasification Hall and to a lesser extent the Turbine and Fuel Storage Hall building would however be perceptible at Year 1. Given that the proposed buildings would be perceived as only slightly higher than the existing Phase 1 building and backclothed by landform, it is assessed that the increase in the height of buildings on a similar overall footprint to the consented scheme would result in a similar effect i.e. the visual impact of both the proposed and consented scheme would be Not Significant at Year 1 and Year 15.
- 12.76 The cumulative effect taking into account the consented gas power station to the southwest of the Site, within the Hirwaun Industrial Park is illustrated on a wireline visualisation (see **Visualisation Jd**). Reference has also been made to the photomontages prepared from Viewpoint Nos. 4 and 15 for the Hirwaun Power Project (HPP) ES, noting that Viewpoint J was taken inbetween these two locations along the A4061. Moderate effects upon visual amenity (Not Significant) from Viewpoints Nos. 4 and 15 were identified in the HPP ES and the cumulative effect, taking into account the consented Enviroparks development was assessed to be of 'Low magnitude' and the 'cumulative effect Slight' (see page 522 and 523 of the HPP ES).
- 12.77 Using the methodology outlined at **Appendix 12.1**, the prior presence of the consented HPP from Viewpoint J would result in a Medium overall magnitude and a Moderate adverse effect (there would be removal of more visible pale coloured large scale buildings replaced by the HPP structures of a smaller footprint but taller height and overall volume). The addition of the Proposed Development, significant in its own right, would be partially set behind the HPP and the roofline of the proposed buildings would extend beyond, but would be largely screened by existing intervening tree cover. The cumulative effect from the addition of the Hirwaun Enviroparks scheme (both consented and proposed) in combination with the consented HPP would be Minor and Not Significant.

Viewpoint K

- 12.78 This viewpoint is representative of views gained by public footpath users southeast of Rhigos. The public footpath is signposted and starts at the edge of Rhigos but upon reaching the A4061 further progress is prevented by three lengths of post and barbed wire fencing (See Viewpoint J description above).
- 12.79 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation Ka**) is approximately 1.83 km from the Site boundary and in the foreground is dominated by medium to large scale fields of sheep grazed pasture enclosed by hedgerows. The coniferous planting belts and pylons in the valley below are visible in the middle-ground of the view, with most of the buildings within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate screened from view. The water of the reservoir above the Site is discernible and the rising land of the National Park extends across the horizon of the view.
- 12.80 The sensitivity of footpath users has been assessed as follows:
- The predominantly rural outlook includes some man-made features including the pylons and occasional buildings; however these are subservient in the overall view. The upland landscape of the National Park forms a distinctive backdrop in the views. In this context it is assessed that oblique views for footpath users have a High value.
 - The susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium as the Site is set down in the valley and partially screened.
 - The overall sensitivity is assessed as High to Medium.
- 12.81 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the upper levels of the proposed stack, with both the existing Phase 1 building and proposed buildings fully screened by intervening landform and dense intervening tree cover.
- 12.82 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Very Small with only a small proportion of the upper stack visible (see **Visualisation Kb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced further by the growth of intervening existing tree planting.
- 12.83 The overall effects for footpath users would be a Minor effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), with a Minor to Negligible effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.
- 12.84 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance would be barely perceptible. The increase in stack height would not be sufficiently different to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint L

- 12.85 This viewpoint is representative of views gained by public footpath users south of Cefn Rhigos. The public footpath is signposted from the minor road but the stile is rotten and difficult to negotiate and there is no worn route on the ground, suggesting infrequent use.
- 12.86 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation La**) is approximately 2.14 km from the Site boundary and in the foreground is dominated by medium to large scale fields rough pasture enclosed by hedgerows, with remnant hedgerow lines also present. Pylons cross the field nearby and extend into the middle-grounds of the view where glimpses of the buildings within the Hirwaun Industril Estate are visible, filtered by intervening tree cover. The rising land of the National Park, south and east of Penderyn extends across the horizon of the view.
- 12.87 The sensitivity of footpath users has been assessed as follows:
- The predominantly rural outlook includes frequent man-made features including the nearby pylons and frequent buildings in the valley partially filtered by tree cover. The upland landscape of the National Park forms a distinctive backdrop in the views. In this context it is assessed that oblique views for footpath users have a Medium value.
 - The susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium as the Site is set down in the valley and partially screened.
 - The overall sensitivity is assessed as Medium.
- 12.88 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the upper levels of the proposed stack, with small parts of the roof of the tallest proposed buildings also visible.
- 12.89 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Small with only a part of the roofscape and upper stack visible above intervening tree cover (see **Visualisation Lb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced further by the growth of intervening existing tree planting.
- 12.90 The overall effects for footpath users would be a Minor/Moderate effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), with a Minor effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.
- 12.91 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance and taller Turbine /Fuel Storage Hall and Gasification Hall would be perceptible however the increase in built volume would not be sufficient to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.

Viewpoint M

- 12.92 This viewpoint is representative of views gained by walkers across open access land within the National Park, east of the farmstead of Bodwigiad.
- 12.93 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation Ma**) is approximately 2.35 km from the Site boundary and in the foreground is dominated by open moorland with patches of heather amongst rough grassland. The Hirwaun Industrial Estate is clearly visible in the valley below with buildings appearing contained by surrounding tree cover, noting the glimpses of the roof of the existing Phase 1 building above a belt of conifer planting. The upland landscape including Hirwaun Common forms a distinctive backdrop in the views, with the route of the A4061 visible and the Pen y Cymoedd turbines on the skyline.
- 12.94 The sensitivity of walkers using the open access land has been assessed as follows:
- The rural landscape is punctuated by frequent man-made features in the valley below including the settlement of Pontbren Llywd, the edge of Hirwaun and the roofscape and upper levels of buildings in the Hirwaun Industrial Estate partially screened by surrounding tree cover. In this context it is assessed that views for walkers have a High value.
 - The susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is Medium as the Site is set down in the valley within the context of the Industrial Park and contained by planting.
 - The overall sensitivity is assessed as High to Medium.
- 12.95 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the introduction of the upper levels of the proposed stack, with both the roof and upper levels of the proposed buildings seen above the surrounding tree cover, with the Gasification Hall most visible but a very small part of the overall panorama and in the context of existing industrial buildings.
- 12.96 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Small within the context of surrounding built development with only a part of the roofscape and upper stack visible above intervening tree cover (see **Visualisation Mb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced further by the growth of intervening existing tree planting.
- 12.97 The overall effects for footpath users would be a Moderate effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), with a Moderate/Minor effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.
- 12.98 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance and taller Turbine /Fuel Storage Hall and Gasification Hall would be perceptible and the increase in built volume would be sufficient to change the magnitude from what would have been Very Small to a Small level. The overall effect upon visual amenity of the consented scheme at Year 1 would have been Minor (as opposed to Minor/Moderate with the Proposed Development). Whilst there is a small difference in

assessment level between the consented and Proposed schemes, the effects upon visual amenity would be Not Significant in both cases.

- 12.99 The cumulative effect taking into account the consented gas power station to the southwest of the Site, within the Hirwaun Industrial Park is illustrated on a wireline visualisation (see **Visualisation Mc**). Reference has also been made to the photomontage prepared from Viewpoint Nos. 21 for the Hirwaun Power Project (HPP) ES at a similar location. *'Slight'* effects upon visual amenity (Not Significant) from Viewpoint No. 21 was identified in the HPP ES at page 515 and the cumulative effect, taking into account the consented Enviroparks development was assessed to be of *'Low magnitude'* and the *'cumulative effect Slight'* (see page 524 of the HPP ES).
- 12.100 Using the methodology outlined at **Appendix 12.1**, the prior presence of the consented HPP from Viewpoint J would result in a Very Small magnitude and a Minor/Moderate adverse effect (there would be removal of more visible pale coloured large scale buildings replaced by the HPP structures of a smaller footprint but taller height and overall volume). The upper levels of the Proposed Development would be visible with the majority screened by existing woodland cover and tree planting. The cumulative effect from the addition of the Hirwaun Enviroparks scheme (both consented and proposed) in combination with the consented HPP would be Minor and Not Significant.

Viewpoint N

- 12.101 This viewpoint is representative of views gained by road users of the A4061 at Mynydd-Beilglas and walkers of open access land near the layby and promoted viewpoint.
- 12.102 The existing panoramic view (see **Visualisation Na**) is approximately 3.82km from the Site boundary and is located near a layby. The photography was not taken from the layby and interpretative panel at the promoted viewpoint as at these locations the Site is partly obscured by intervening landform. The landscape is dominated by the steep moorland slopes of Hirwaun Common and in the middle-distance the panoramic views include the Hirwaun Industrial Estate and the village of Rhigos in the valley below. Buildings are typically contained by surrounding tree cover, noting the glimpses of the existing Phase 1 building. The upland landscape of the National Park forms a distinctive backdrop in the views. Behind the viewer close range views of the wind turbines of the Pen y Cymoedd windfarm are available.
- 12.103 The sensitivity of walkers using the open access land has been assessed as follows:
- The open moorland landscape is punctuated by frequent man-made features in the valley including the roofscape and upper levels of buildings in the Hirwaun Industrial Estate partially screened by surrounding tree cover. Given the extensive panoramic views towards the National Park and promoted viewpoint status it is assessed that views for walkers have a Very High value.
 - The susceptibility to change assuming a baseline of no development on the Site is High because whilst the Site is set down in the valley and contained by planting and flanked by existing built development, the elevated location of the viewpoint allows

views into the ground level of the Site.

- The overall sensitivity is assessed as High to Very High.

12.104 The changes to the view as a result of the Proposed Development would comprise the upper levels and roofscape of all the main buildings with the ground level in front of the High Energy Use building visible. The stack would be barely discernible being at a lower relative height to the closer pylons in the view and backclothed against the reservoir.

12.105 The magnitude of visual effect at Year 1 would be Small to Very Small (see **Visualisation Nb**). The magnitude at Year 15 would be reduced by the growth of intervening existing tree planting and also proposed tree planting along the southern and western boundaries of the Site (see **Visualisation Nc**).

12.106 The overall effects for walkers would be a Moderate effect that is Not Significant (Year 1), with a Moderate/Minor effect that is Not Significant at Year 15.

12.107 The magnitude relative to the consented scheme has been assessed and a 5m increase in height of the stack at this distance would not be perceptible. The increase in building height i.e. the Turbine/Fuel Storage Hall and gasification Hall would be barely perceptible and not sufficient to change the magnitude and overall effect when compared with the consented scheme.