

Chapter Twelve

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

INTRODUCTION TO FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CHAPTER

A12.1 This chapter replaces and updates the previously submitted Environmental Statement Addendum (ES Addendum) Landscape and Visual Effects chapter dated February 2017.

A12.2 Enviroparks (Wales) Limited (EWL) submitted planning applications for an amended phase II development and operation of a sustainable waste resource recovery and energy production park to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) in February 2017 (Application Refs: (BBNPA) 17/14587/FUL and (RCT) 17/0249/10).

A12.3 EWL has been in discussion with its technology providers and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to ensure the air emissions and associated deposition on the Blaen Cynon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from the proposed gasification plant will be at an acceptable level, such that the Habitat Regulations Assessment can reach an acceptable conclusion. This has led EWL to amend the gasification technology it proposes to install. The change will mainly affect the layout of process plant and apparatus inside the proposed gasification building. However, the change also requires the following external amendments.

- ***The addition of a clerestory void over the central-southern part of the proposed Gasification Hall.***

This is required to accommodate vertical apparatus required for the amended gasification technology. The proposed clerestory has an eaves height of 21.25 metres and a ridge height of 23.4 metres, an increase of 4.75 metres above the main body of the gasification hall, and would be finished in the same palette of materials as the Gasification Hall as currently proposed.

- ***The addition of a gas flare stack in the service yard in the south-western quarter of the site.***

This takes the form of a vertical steel cylinder measuring 4.2 metres in diameter and 14.0 metres in height, with internal gas burners at its base. The flare stack would be located behind the water tanks at the northern edge of the service yard, 100 metres back from the Fifth Avenue frontage of the site.

REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS ES ADDENDUM

A12.4 A review of the previously submitted Landscape and Visual Effects ES Addendum chapter has been undertaken to assess the potential landscape and visual effects that might arise as a result of the proposed changes to the proposed development.

A12.5 In terms of landscape and visual matters, the minor changes to the proposed development have been assessed following review of an updated ZTV plan (**Figure 12.1 Rev a**) and a revised photomontage image (Viewpoint C). All other viewpoint photomontages were assessed and it was

concluded that the changes would either not be visible or would be so small in comparison to the overall development as to be barely perceptible in comparison with the original scheme.

A12.6 The ZTV plan (see **Figure 12.1 Rev. a**) indicates a very slight geographical increase in area over which the highest point of the maximum building height would be theoretically visible. Within 1km of the Site this includes a localised area within the Industrial Estate south of the A465, where views would be very restricted by local tree planting and other infrastructure. Beyond 1km from the Site, the ZTV reflecting the revised development proposal is almost identical to the original ZTV and there would be no increase in the magnitude of effect from the revised proposal or any discernible increase in the geographical area over which the development would be visible.

Viewpoint C

A12.7 The slight increase in maximum ridge height of the central part of the Gasification Hall would be discernible from Viewpoint C. However, it would not be sufficiently different to the original scheme to change the magnitude or overall effect upon visual amenity from this location. It is noted that all other main components of the scheme including stack height and horizontal extent of the buildings remain unchanged.

Changes to the Landscape and Visual Effects ES Addendum chapter

A12.8 The previously submitted Landscape and Visual Effects ES Addendum remains almost completely unchanged. The overall conclusions have not changed. For completeness, changes to the previously submitted Landscape and Visual Effects ES Addendum chapter are shown by way of Track Changes to the original text. New text therefore appears in blue, and deleted text appears in red with a strikethrough, for example: ~~deleted text red with a strikethrough~~. New paragraphs are prefaced by the letter A, for example: A1.1.

INTRODUCTION

12.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement Addendum (ES Addendum) assesses the potential landscape and visual effects that may arise as a result of implementing the proposed development. The process is described as a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and includes urban or 'townscape' elements. The proposed development varies from the consented scheme that is partly constructed and is described in chapters 1-4.

12.2 The original Environmental Statement (ES) was prepared in 2008. Since this time there have been a number of changes that have the potential to influence the LVIA and these are summarised below.

- Changes in the landscape and townscape surrounding the site including built development and planting which have the potential to influence both the landscape character and visual baseline.
- Updated best practice guidance on preparing LVIA as contained in the publication '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - 3rd Edition*' 2013.
- Updated assessment of *Landmap* areas published by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and available online.

- New guidance contained in the Landscape Institute Advice note 01/11 entitled '*Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*', published in 2011.
- Updates to planning policy at a national and local level.

12.3 Due to the large number of changes described above since the production of the ES, for clarity the 2008 LVIA ES chapter text has been fully superseded by this ESA. Baseline information from the ES has been incorporated into this ES Addendum chapter where still relevant.

12.4 The original ES LVIA Chapter contained a number of supporting figures. The following ES figures are still relevant and cross reference is made in this chapter.

- Figure 12.1 Site Location and Context
- Figure 12.2 Landscape Related Designations
- Figure 12.3 Landscape Character Areas
- Figure 12.4 Approximate Boundaries of CCW *Landmap* Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas
- Figure 12.5 Vegetation, Ridgelines and Public Access

12.5 Viewpoint locations have been reviewed in the field and some changes were made to the ES viewpoint selection as follows:

- omission of a number of viewpoints where the Site and Proposed Development would be fully screened from view by intervening landform and/or tree cover in winter, unless the receptor is particularly sensitive and/or located close to the Site where there is potential for significant visual effects;
- inclusion of some modified viewpoint locations, where micro-siting has been undertaken to maximise the visibility of the Proposed Development; and
- inclusion of some new viewpoint locations that fall within the new Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).

12.6 To avoid any confusion between the ES and ES Addendum, all viewpoints contained in this ES Addendum are identified by letter references (e.g. Viewpoint A, Viewpoint B etc.), as opposed to the numerical referencing used in the ES.

12.7 Figures 12.6 to 12.22 from the ES covering Zone of Visual Influence, Viewpoint Locations and Photographic Viewpoints and Photomontages are now superseded by the following figures and visualisations contained in this ES Addendum.

- ~~Figure 12.1~~ **Figure 12.1 Rev a:** Zone of Visual Influence and Viewpoint Locations
- Visualisation Aa: View southwards from northern boundary of Site near route of Public Footpath (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Ba: View southwards from southern edge of Penderyn Reservoir (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Bb: View southwards from southern edge of Penderyn Reservoir (Photomontage Year 1)
- Visualisation Bc: View southwards from southern edge of Penderyn Reservoir (Photomontage Year 15)
- ~~Visualisation Ca~~ **Visualisation Ca Rev b:** View southwards from northern edge of Penderyn Reservoir (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)

- ~~Visualisation Cb~~ Visualisation Cb Rev b: View southwards from northern edge of Penderyn Reservoir (Photomontage Year 1)
- ~~Visualisation Cc~~ Visualisation Cc Rev b: View southwards from northern edge of Penderyn Reservoir (Photomontage Year 15)
- Visualisation Da: View southeastwards from track to property of Tyle-morgrug (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Db: View southeastwards from track to property of Tyle-morgrug (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation Ea: View northwards from layby on the A465 (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Eb: View northwards from layby on the A465 (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation Fa: View eastwards from Fifth Avenue adjacent to Hotel access road (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Fb: View eastwards from Fifth Avenue adjacent to Hotel access road (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation Ga: View southeastwards from public footpath near the farmstead of Tai-cwplau (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Gb: View southeastwards from public footpath near the farmstead of Tai-cwplau (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation Ha: View southwards from public bridleway near Moel Penderyn (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Hb: View southwards from public bridleway near Moel Penderyn (Photomontage Year 1)
- Visualisation Hc: View southwards from public bridleway near Moel Penderyn (Photomontage Year 15)
- Visualisation Hd: View southwards from public bridleway near Moel Penderyn (Cumulative wireline drawing)
- Visualisation Ia: View northeastwards from sports field on northeastern edge of Rhigos (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Ib: View northeastwards from sports field on northeastern edge of Rhigos (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation Ja: View northeastwards from A4061 near junction with public footpath (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Jb: View northeastwards from A4061 near junction with public footpath (Photomontage Year 1)
- Visualisation Jc: View northeastwards from A4061 near junction with public footpath (Photomontage Year 15)
- Visualisation Jd: View northeastwards from A4061 near junction with public footpath (Cumulative wireline drawing)
- Visualisation Ka: View northeastwards from public footpath between Rhigos and the A4061 (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Kb: View northeastwards from public footpath between Rhigos and the A4061 (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation La: View eastwards from public footpath near the southern edge of Cefn Rhigos (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Lb: View eastwards from public footpath near the southern edge of Cefn Rhigos (Overlaid Wireline)

- Visualisation Ma: View southwestwards from open access land above Pontbren Llwyd (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Mb: View southwestwards from open access land above Pontbren Llwyd (Overlaid Wireline)
- Visualisation Mc: View southwestwards from open access land above Pontbren Llwyd (Cumulative wireline drawing)
- Visualisation Na: View northeastwards from A4061 near layby and promoted viewpoint (Baseline Photograph and Wireline)
- Visualisation Nb: View northeastwards from A4061 near layby and promoted viewpoint (Photomontage Year 1)
- Visualisation Nc: View northeastwards from A4061 near layby and promoted viewpoint (Photomontage Year 15)

12.8 The assessment covers the assessment of theoretical effects assuming that the Site is undeveloped. This has been undertaken in order that the original ES can be updated in light of changes to best practice guidance and baseline conditions, notwithstanding the fact that phase I of the Enviroparks development is now on site. Following the initial theoretical assessment, this chapter provides an assessment of the differences between the consented scheme and the Proposed Development.

CONTEXT

Study Area

12.9 An initial 10km radius Study Area was reviewed; however as part of the initial viewpoint selection process it became apparent that likely significant effects arising from the Proposed Development would in reality be restricted to a much smaller area. A 5km radius Study Area, within which all the representative viewpoint locations are located was therefore adopted for detailed assessment purposes. The approach complies with the proportionate approach now advocated in best practice guidance (GLVIA3 – paras 5.2 and 6.2).

Methodology

12.10 The full methodology is contained at **Appendix 12.1** and the information below presents a summary of the approach and methodology.

Desk Study

12.11 The original ES was reviewed to establish what information required to be updated and the following sources were consulted:

- LANDMAP;
- Brecon Beacons Landscape Character Assessment;
- Rhondda Cynon Council website including Development Plan documents;
- Brecon Beacons National Park website including Development Plan and Management plan documents;

- Ordnance Survey Mapping and Aerial Photography; and
- The Archaeology/Cultural Heritage and Ecology Chapters of the ES and ES Addendum.

Field Survey

12.12 All photography was undertaken with a Canon 5D camera with a full frame sensor and a fixed 50mm lens, mounted on a tripod. Due to the time constraints it was not possible to consult the Local Planning Authority or National Park Authority on viewpoint locations. Instead the ES viewpoints were used as a starting point and additional locations suggested by the ZTV were reviewed in the field and used if there was the potential for significant visibility of the proposed development.

12.13 GLVIA3 states at paragraph 3.16 that *‘the level of detail provided should be that which is reasonably required to assess the likely significant effects’*. It goes on to state at paragraph 6.16 *‘that the viewpoints from which the proposal will actually be seen by these different groups of people should then be identified’*

12.14 It is clear that the reproduction of a large number of photographic viewpoints illustrating no visibility or extremely limited visibility with no potential for Significant effects does not comply with the approach advocated by best practice guidance.

Impact Assessment Methodology

12.15 The overall significance of effect is defined by combining the magnitude of impact and the sensitivity of the receptor (see **Appendix 12.1**). The determination of significance requires professional judgement and takes into account:

- Duration (short, medium, long term);
- Reversibility; and
- Whether the effect is positive or negative and indirect or direct.

Value, Susceptibility, Sensitivity and Magnitude of Impact

12.16 The specific criteria adopted are explained in **Appendix 12.1**.

Significance of Effect

12.17 A level of effect greater than Moderate is deemed Significant. All effects in this chapter have been assessed as negative (adverse) unless otherwise stated.

Cumulative Effects

12.18 The cumulative assessment covers the consented Hirwaun Power gas-fired power station to the south of the A465, within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate. Cumulative effects are reported using the following terminology where applicable:

- **In combination** - where the proposal and other scheme/s are seen together in the same field of view;

- **Successive** – where the Proposed Development and other scheme/s are seen from the same location but not in the same field of view; and
- **Sequential** - where the Proposed Development and other scheme/s are seen separately at intervals along a route.

LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Planning Policy Wales (9th edition Nov 2016)

12.19 The statutory purposes of National Parks are confirmed at paragraph 5.3.4 to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities.

Technical Advice Note 12: Design (March 2016)

12.20 The Design and Access Statement explains how the relevant provisions of TAN12: Design have been taken into account in the Proposed Development.

Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Development Plan up to 2021 (March 2011)

12.21 Relevant Policies to landscape and visual issues include Policy AW 5 – New Development, where it states that Development Proposals will be supported where the scale, form and design of the development would have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The Policy also covers retention of existing site features where appropriate and no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

12.22 Policy AW 6 covers Design and Placemaking and states that Development Proposals will be supported where they are appropriate to the local context in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, elevational treatment, materials and detailing. The policy goes on to state that landscaping and planting should be integral to the scheme and enhance the site and wider context and that the design protects and enhances landscape (and biodiversity).

12.23 Policy AW 8 covers Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment states that proposals will only be permitted where there would be no unacceptable impact upon features of importance to landscape (or nature conservation).

12.24 Policy NSA 25 covers Special Landscape Areas (SLA) which includes land at Hirwaun Common. As the policy refers to consideration *within* the defined SLA the presence of the SLA within the ZTV of the Proposed Development is not relevant.

Brecon Beacons National Park Local Development Plan 2007-2022 (2013)

12.25 The Local Development Plan Objectives covering landscape and visual issues include SQ1: Special Qualities i.e. to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Brecon Beacons National

Park and Objective SQ4: Landscape is stated to ensure that all future development will protect and enhance the beautiful and varied character of the Landscape.

12.26 The relevant Policies are covered in the Design and Access Statement.

Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan 2015-2020

12.27 The Special Qualities are listed at paragraph 48 of the Plan and include the following qualities that are relevant to landscape and visual considerations of the Proposed Development.

- Rural setting and Open Land;
- Sense of Place and Cultural Identity;
- Sweeping grandeur and outstanding natural beauty;
- 'Living patchwork' landscape; and
- Enjoyable and accessible countryside with widespread and varied recreational opportunities.

12.28 In 2013 the BBNP was awarded Dark Sky Reserve Status. The Management Plan is committed to ensuring that the lighting management plan continues to influence lighting improvements in the National Park. It is stated at paragraph 182 of the Plan that '*Large areas of the National Park remain free from light pollution, though the gradual encroachment of street, house and security lights puts this at jeopardy*'.

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

Brecon Beacons National Park

12.29 The Brecon Beacons National Park Authorities Landscape Character Assessment (2012) identifies the Site and surrounding land within the National Park as lying within Landscape Character Area 4: Waterfall Country and Southern Valleys. The distinctive characteristics relevant to the Site and locality are summarised below with reference to page 48 of the published Assessment.

- A dramatic landform of steep enclosed valleys separated by ridges of flatter, higher land;
- Landuse predominantly pastoral agriculture but with extensive areas of forestry;
- Limestone walls and hedgebanks enclosing irregular fields in valleys, with some hedges (predominantly beech or hawthorn). Higher land less enclosed, with more use of post and wire fencing;
- A range of historic features in the landscape; and
- Development concentrated in valley floors, particularly along the A4067 and A4059. Some intervisibility with settlements, roads and other development beyond the National Park boundary.

12.30 The overall Strategy is described as *‘to maintain and enhance the special qualities of the landscape, in particular its historic features and magnificent waterfalls, resisting development which would impact on views from the area’*.

LANDMAP

12.31 LANDMAP covers all of Wales and records and evaluates landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape. It was designed as tool to help sustainable decision-making and natural resource planning at a range of levels from local to national whilst ensuring transparency in decision-making.

12.32 LANDMAP comprises five spatial datasets:

- Visual and Sensory;
- Geological Landscape;
- Landscape Habitats;
- Historic Landscape; and
- Cultural Landscape.

12.33 The datasets were last updated between 2011 and 2013 (i.e. since the 2008 ES).

12.34 **Appendix 12.2** provides extracted LANDMAP for all aspect areas directly affected by or intervisible with the Project at Classification level 3 or 4. ES Figure 12.4 identifies the boundaries of the Visual and Sensory layers within the Study Area and the geographical coverage of other layers is illustrated on the published sheets at **Appendix 12.2**.

Field survey

12.35 A description of the designations and the Site location and Setting is set out at paragraph 12.27 to 12.43 of the ES. The Site survey in December 2016 identified that the majority of the Site has been cleared and the Phase 1 building constructed (but not operational). Associated roads, hardstanding and other infrastructure are present as the part completed consented scheme. Native tree and shrub planting within grassland is located along the northern and western boundaries of the Site (see **Plate 2**).

Plate 2: Aerial Photo of the Site in August 2016 (not to scale)



Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Analysis

12.36 The ZTV (see **Figure 12.1** **Figure 12.1 Rev a**) was created to indicate the theoretical visibility of a multiple target points based on ground level activity (set at 2m above ground), the ridge height of the main buildings (varying between 11.4m and ~~19.6m~~ 23.4m) and the height of the stack at 45m.

12.37 Visual barriers at conservative heights were added to the ZTV model to incorporate the main buildings (8m high) and the main blocks of woodland planting (10m high). The proposed development has a lifetime of 25 years and therefore any felling of woodland has the potential to increase the visibility of the proposals from some locations; however topographical analysis (see **ES Figure 12.5**) indicates that the key landscape element restricting visibility of the proposals is landform i.e. a series of major ridgelines to the north and south and built development and locally elevated land to the east and west.

12.38 The ZTV does not include tree belts, individual trees or hedgerows, which when combined often notably reduce the visibility of built development. The ZTV should therefore always be interpreted with caution and verified in the field. The different colours do not infer a level of visual effect, only the geographical locations where parts of the development could be visible. All areas not covered by the ZTV are highly unlikely to experience any visibility of the proposed development and the ZTV therefore offers an important tool to scope representative viewpoint locations and produce a proportionate and focussed assessment.

12.39 Theoretical visibility to the north is predicted in the vicinity of Penderyn reservoir (including public footpath), with visibility of ground level activity restricted to the southern edge of the waterbody and adjacent land. Further north intervisibility is predicted to be intermittent due to woodland cover with the greatest extent of theoretical visibility predicted from elevated rough grassland to the north and northwest of the Site up to 1.8km from the Site. Public access is not possible to the majority of these areas with the notable exceptions of a section of a public bridleway and part of the open access land at Moel Penderyn. Theoretical visibility is also indicated from intermittent sections of a nearby minor road.

12.40 Visibility to the south of the Site is restricted by woodland planting although glimpses of the proposals are predicted to be available along very localised parts of the A465 corridor and from discrete areas within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate. Further south, the ZTV predicts increasing visibility of the proposals from rising land at Hirwaun Common that includes Open Access Land and the A4061 road. It is noted that the open cast workings between the A4061 and Hirwaun cover a notable area of the ZTV.

12.41 To the south-west and west of the Site the ZTV indicates visibility from the edge of Rhigos and Cefn Rhigos and parts of the surrounding landscape, predominantly confined to the roofline of the proposed buildings and the stack.

12.42 The ZTV indicates restricted visibility of the proposed development to the east of the Site including land between the edge of the industrial estate and the A4059. Visibility is predicted to extend further east into the National Park, although it becomes more intermittent, principally due to woodland cover. The settlements of Penderyn and Pontbren Llwyd lie in a valley and no visibility of the proposals is predicted. At a distance of between 0.5km and 4km northwest of the Site the land rises east of Penderyn and the ZTV indicates the potential for visibility of the proposals, including ground level activity, on the slopes of Mynydd-y-glog which includes open access land.

Representative Viewpoints

12.43 Viewpoint locations have been reviewed in the field and some changes were made to the ES viewpoint selection as set out in Table 12.1 below.

Table 12.1: Representative Viewpoint Review

ES Viewpoint Reference	Comments	ESA Viewpoint Reference	Notes
1	Included at the same location	B	No public access – anglers only
2		C	
3		F	
4	Not included as vegetation fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	New guidance in GLVIA 3 rd Edition (2013) advocates a proportionate approach to viewpoint selection and assessment
5	Not most representative of what would be seen by motorists	E	Relocated to a more appropriate location nearby
6	Unable to access location because of aggressive farm dogs on the public footpath	D	Relocated to a more appropriate location nearby where building on the Site is visible
7	Not included as vegetation obscures views of proposed development	n/a	New guidance in GLVIA 3 rd Edition (2013) advocates a proportionate approach to viewpoint selection and assessment
8	Not included as landform and planting obscures views of proposed development	n/a	
9	Not included as vegetation fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	
10	Not included as landform and woodland fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	
11	Not included as vegetation fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	
12	Not included as similar to nearby Viewpoint 13 and only a fleeting glimpse available above roadside embankment	n/a	
13	Included at same location	H	
14	Included at same location	G	Private track and not representative of views from nearby property
15	Not included as landform and woodland fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	New guidance in GLVIA 3 rd Edition (2013) advocates a proportionate approach to viewpoint selection and assessment
16	Original photography duplicates viewpoint 18 photography by mistake	L	View included from public footpath within the ZTV close to Viewpoint 16 location
17	Not included as vegetation fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	New guidance in GLVIA 3 rd Edition (2013) advocates a proportionate approach to viewpoint selection and assessment
18	Included at same location	I	

ES Viewpoint Reference	Comments	ESA Viewpoint Reference	Notes
19	Included at same location	K	
20	Site partly screened by intervening landform	N	Relocated to a more appropriate location nearby
21	No public access due to expansion of opencast workings	n/a	No appropriate viewpoints nearby due to opencast workings
22	Not included as landform and woodland fully screens views of proposed development	n/a	New guidance in GLVIA 3 rd Edition (2013) advocates a proportionate approach to viewpoint selection and assessment
23	Not included as vegetation screens views of proposed development apart from potential glimpse of upper stack in context of closer pylons	n/a	
Photomontage Sheet 1	This is ES Viewpoint 20	N	Photomontage from revised location nearby produced
Photomontage Sheet 2	Precise location no longer accessible	J	
Photomontage Sheet 3	This is ES Viewpoint 13	H	Photomontage from same location produced
Photomontage Sheet 4	This is ES Viewpoint 1	B	
Photomontage Sheet 5	This is ES Viewpoint 2	C	
n/a	Views from track adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site	A	Technically not on the definitive route of public footpath but is accessible to the public.
n/a	Views of existing building roof from open access land	M	Not included in original ES

Table 12.2: Selected Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoint Reference	Viewpoint Description	Approximate distance to Site	Receptors
A	View southwards from northern boundary of Site near route of Public Footpath	2m	Nearby public footpath users
B	View southwards from southern edge of Penderyn Reservoir	50m	Anglers with permit (no general public access)
C	View southwards from northern edge of Penderyn Reservoir	330m	Anglers with permit (no general public access)
D	View south-eastwards from public footpath near the farmstead of Tai-cwplau	130m	Public Footpath users
E	View northwards from layby on the A465	190m	Road users
F	View eastwards from Fifth Avenue adjacent to Hotel access road.	390m	Road users and residents
G	View south-eastwards from track to property of Tyle-morgrug	1.03km	Visitors to rental property
H	View southwards from public bridleway near Moel Penderyn	1.54km	Public Bridleway users
I	View north-eastwards from sports field on northeastern edge of Rhigos	1.61km	Sports field users and nearby residents
J	View north-eastwards from A4061 near junction with public footpath	1.71km	Road users and nearby public footpath users
K	View north-eastwards from public footpath between Rhigos and the A4061	1.83km	Public Footpath users
L	View eastwards from public footpath near the southern edge of Cefn Rhigos	2.14km	Public Footpath users
M	View south-westwards from open access land above Pontbren Llwyd	2.35km	Walkers on open access land
N	View north-eastwards from A4061 near layby and promoted viewpoint	3.82km	Road users and walkers

Potential Key Landscape Receptors

12.44 The key receptors within the 5km study area and the ZTV are:

- The Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) covering part of the Site and landscape to the north of the Site;
- The host LANDMAP aspect areas and those within the Study Area and ZTV with a High or Outstanding value have been identified as having the potential to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. Full details of the scoping exercise are contained at **Appendix 12.2** and the selected areas to be assessed in detail are summarised below.

- Visual and Sensory: Penderyn
- Visual and Sensory: Hirwaun Common
- Visual and Sensory: Cadair Fawr
- Cultural: Designated Landscape Areas
- Cultural: Brecon Beacons National Park
- Cultural: Hirwaun
- Cultural: The Rhigos
- Historic: Cynon Valley Corridor
- Historic: Penderyn
- Historic: Tower Colliery
- Historic: Rhondda Uplands
- Historic: Hirwaun Common Enclosure
- Historic: Moel Penderyn
- Landscape Habitats: unnamed host area; and
- Geological Landscape: Rhigos.

Potential Key Visual Receptors

12.45 The key receptors identified within the 5km study area and the ZTV include:

- Recreational receptors including users of the public footpath passing the northern boundary of the Site, anglers at Penderyn Reservoir, users of Open Access land and the public bridleway near Moel Penderyn, users of the Open Access Land east of Penderyn, users of Open Access Land at Hirwaun Common and users of the public rights of way network in the vicinity of Rhigos and Cefn Rhigos.
- Road users including users of the A465, A4061, A4059 and other local roads; and
- Residents within settlements including Rhigos, Cefn Rhigos and also scattered dwellings outside settlements.

DESIGN MITIGATION

12.46 The overall massing of the Proposed Development is driven by operational requirements; however careful consideration of external materials and detailed design has sought to minimise landscape and visual impacts as far as possible for both the consented scheme and Proposed Development (see the Design and Access Statements) and paragraphs 12.65 to 12.68 of the ES.

12.47 The key differences between the consented and operational scheme that have the potential to influence landscape and visual effects to the extent that there is the potential for the level of effects to change are summarised below (as set out in the Design and Access Statement).

- It is proposed that the gasification yard, pyrolysis building and engine house all shown separately in the 2010 scheme should all be consolidated into a single building. This would be achieved by raising the height of the consented but unbuilt building on the Fifth Avenue frontage of the site by two metres to a ridge height of 16 metres to accommodate a Fuel

Storage Hall and Turbine Hall, and building a Gasification Hall to the north of this revised building, extending towards the centre of the site, with a height to ridge of ~~18.4 metres~~ 23.4 metres.

- Raising the height of the consented but unbuilt emissions stack at the centre of the site from 40 metres to 45 metres to ensure the effective dispersion of atmospheric emissions without interference to air flow from the proposed Gasification Hall beneath. The high voltage electricity pylons that pass close to the Site are approximately 49m in height. In addition the width of the stack has increased slightly from 2.5m to 3.5m in diameter.

12.48 From a visual amenity perspective, enclosing the gasifiers in a building helps to avoid light pollution and presents a less industrial and more visually coordinated feature in views from outside the site, including from the elevated terrain in the Brecon Beacons National Park to the north. The new and amended buildings would use the same elevational treatment and building materials approved for the development that was granted planning permission in 2010.

12.49 External lighting proposals would follow the principles adopted as part of the preliminary lighting design for the original scheme (see paragraph 12.72 of the ES).

12.50 In terms of secondary mitigation, the landscape strategy remains unchanged from the consented scheme with the exception of the green wall that enclosed the gasifier yard. This wall was proposed to screen views of the gasification units and AD tanks. However, now that the gasification units are proposed to be enclosed in a building towards the centre of the site and the AD tanks are being removed this primary need has disappeared. The remaining items of external plant are lower than the gasifiers and AD tanks and a 'soft' landscape scheme of trees and shrubs is proposed instead for the south-western corner of the site, fronting onto Fifth Avenue.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Construction Phase

Landscape and Visual Effects

12.51 The assessment of construction effects is set out at paragraph 12.88 to 12.89 of the ES. There would be no material differences in the construction process as a result of the Proposed Development compared with the consented scheme.

12.52 In summary it is assessed that the landscape and visual construction effects would be no greater than the operational landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme at Year 1 following completion of construction, which is described below.

Operational Landscape Effects

12.53 The full landscape assessment following the methodology at **Appendix 12.1** is contained at **Appendix 12.2** and a summary is provided as **Table 12.3** below.

Table 12.3: Summary of Landscape Character Assessment

Area Name (Unique ID)	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Landscape Character Effect (Year 1 winter)
Visual and Sensory			
Penderyn (CYNONVS833)	Medium	Very Large to Medium at close to medium range	Major to Moderate/Major (Significant)
		Small to Very Small at medium to long range	Minor (Not Significant)
Hirwaun Common (CYNONVS340)	Medium	Very Small at long range	Minor (Not Significant)
Cadair fawr (CYNONVS735)	Medium	Small at long range	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)
Cultural Landscape			
Designated Landscape Areas (CYNONCL056)	Medium	No direct or indirect effects	Neutral (No effect)
BBNP (CYNONCL044)	High	Close range: Medium	Moderate/Major (Significant)
		At medium to long range: Very Small to Medium	Moderate/Major (Significant) to Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)
Hirwaun (CYNONCL042)	Medium	At close to medium range: Small to Medium	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)
The Rhigos (CYNONCL041)	Medium	Small to Very Small	Minor (Not Significant)
Historic Landscape			
Cynon Valley Corridor (CYNONHL117)	Medium to High	Close to long range: No effect	Neutral (Not Significant)
Penderyn (CYNONHL176)	Medium	Medium to long range: No effect	Neutral (Not Significant)
Tower Colliery (CYNONHL183)	Low to Medium	Medium to long range: No effect	Neutral (Not Significant)
Rhondda Uplands (CYNONHL687)	Medium	Long range: No effect	Neutral (Not Significant)
Hirwaun Common, Enclosure (CYNONHL903)	Medium	Long range: No effect	Neutral (Not Significant)
Moel Penderyn (CYNONHL150)	Medium	Long range: No effect	Neutral (Not Significant)
Landscape Habitats			
CYNONLH051	Medium	Small (beneficial) from addition of planting	Minor/Moderate beneficial (Not Significant)
Geological Landscape			
CYNONGLO28	Medium	Very Small	Minor (Not Significant)

12.54 The adverse effects at Year 15 upon landscape character would diminish as planting around the Site matures, reducing intervisibility, particularly at lower and mid-levels of the buildings. The external materials of the buildings, in particular the wood cladding would also fade and become less apparent, particularly from medium and long range locations.

12.55 In terms of the landscape assessment the key issue is whether any of the Significant effects at Year 1 would become Not Significant by Year 15. It is assessed that the geographical range of Significant effects would be restricted to the Site itself and immediate locality where clear intervisibility with the Proposed Development would remain e.g. Penderyn Reservoir.

12.56 The potential for lighting impacts upon landscape character, particularly the BBNP designation including its Dark Sky Reserve status, were assessed at 12.89 of the ES in outline only, noting that a detailed assessment is not possible without a final lighting design that would be subject to a planning condition. As described at paragraphs 12.47 to 12.48 above, the Proposed Development would have a reduced night-time impact compared with the consented scheme.

Operational Visual effects

12.57 The full viewpoint assessment following the methodology at **Appendix 12.1** is contained at **Appendix 12.3** and a summary is provided as Table 12.4 below.

Table 12.4: Summary of Viewpoint Assessment

VP Ref	Viewpoint Location	Range	Sensitivity	Magnitude at Year 1	Visual Effects at Year 1 winter	Visual Effects at Year 15 winter
A	Northern boundary of Site near route of Public Footpath	Close	Medium	Very Large	Major (Significant)	Moderate (Not Significant)
B	Southern edge of Penderyn Reservoir	Close	Medium	Very Large	Major (Significant)	Moderate/Major (Significant)
C	Northern edge of Penderyn Reservoir	Medium	High to Medium	Medium to Large	Moderate/Major (Significant)	Moderate/Major (Significant)
D	Public footpath near the farmstead of Tai-cwplau	Close	High to Medium	Medium to Large	Moderate/Major (Significant)	Moderate (Not Significant)
E	Layby on the A465	Close	Low	Medium	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)
F	Fifth Avenue adjacent to Hotel access road	Medium	Low to Medium	Small	Minor (Not Significant)	Minor/Negligible (Not Significant)
G	Track to property of Tyle-morgrug	Medium	High to Medium	Very Small	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)
H	Public bridleway near Moel Penderyn	Long	High	Medium	Moderate/Major (Significant)	Moderate (Not Significant)
I	Sports field on north-eastern edge of Rhigos	Long	High to Medium	Very Small	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)
J	A4061 near junction with public footpath	Long	Medium	Very Small	Minor (Not Significant)	Negligible (Not Significant)
K	Public footpath between Rhigos and the A4061	Long	High to Medium	Very Small	Minor (Not Significant)	Negligible (Not Significant)
L	Public footpath near the southern edge of Cefn Rhigos	Long	Medium	Small	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)	Minor (Not Significant)
M	Open access land above Pontbren Llwyd	Long	High to Medium	Small	Moderate (Not Significant)	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)
N	A4061 near layby and promoted viewpoint	Long	Very High to High	Small to Very Small	Moderate (Not Significant)	Minor/Moderate (Not Significant)

Other Visual Receptors

12.58 An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development upon the other visual receptors within the Study Area has been made with reference to the representative viewpoint visualisations

and the ZTV in combination with assessment in the field. In line with best practice guidance only the receptors with the potential for significant visual effects are covered (as scoped from review of the ZTV and initial visualisations).

12.59 The assessment below puts the representative viewpoints in context e.g. as particular points along a route, whilst at other locations the closest representative viewpoints are used to calibrate the assessment of effects from the receptor in combination with the information provided by the ZTV (see ~~Figure 12.1~~ **Figure 12.1 Rev a**) and review in the field.

Recreational Receptors

12.60 The location of open access land and public rights of way are shown on ES Figure 12.5.

12.61 Views of the Proposed Development from the public footpath passing the northern boundary of the Site are screened by intervening landform, reinforced by tree cover in the vicinity of the farmstead of Tai-cwplau and the section of the route to the west of the farmstead. Oblique and very restricted glimpses of the proposed development would be seen from a short section of the route to the east of the Tai-cwplau (see Viewpoint D) with more open views adjacent to the site boundary (see Viewpoint A), although the track at the latter location does not follow the route of the definitive public footpath and access to the definitive route is currently prevented by tall fencing around the reservoir Site. In summary at Year 1 some very localised Significant visual effects would occur, as illustrated by the representative viewpoints; however by Year 15 the growth of proposed planting at the northern end of the Site would heavily filter views of the proposed development to the extent that No Significant residual effects on the visual amenity of footpath users are predicted.

12.62 Anglers with permits can access the Penderyn Reservoir; however there is no general public access. Representative Viewpoints B and C illustrate the visual impact of the Proposed Development for anglers. The assessments identifies Significant impacts on visual amenity at Year 1 and Year 15, with a reduction in the visual impact of the proposed development at Year 15 due to the growth of proposed woodland buffer planting at the northern end of the Site.

12.63 Users of Open Access land and the public bridleway near Moel Penderyn are represented by Viewpoint H. The ZTV indicates that visibility would extend for c.1km of the bridleway route and the summit and south facing slopes of the nearby open access land. With reference to Viewpoint H, Significant visual effects are predicted at Year 1; however following the growth of buffer planting to the north and east of the proposed buildings, views of ground level activity within the Site and some of the lower buildings facades would be filtered and the building facades would have weathered and faded. The residual visual effects are assessed to be Not Significant.

12.64 Users of the Open Access Land to the east of Pontbren Llywdd includes a tract of elevated open access land which extends east of the farmsteads of Pen-y-cae and Bodwigiad to the upper slopes of Mynydd-y-glog (between 1.5km and 4km from the Site). The representative Viewpoint M was taken on a track at a location where the roof of the existing building is visible above intervening tree cover. More distant views that may comprise a slightly greater extent of the Site are predicted by the ZTV to be available from remoter locations on the open access land (where accessibility may be reduced, particularly in winter due to wet and uneven ground conditions). The viewpoint assessment has identified no Significant visual effects at Year 1 from Viewpoint M which would also apply to the remainder of the access land including more distant and elevated locations.

12.65 Users of Open Access Land on the lower slopes of Hirwaun Common would have similar views of the Proposed Development to the nearby Viewpoint J taken from the A4061 and no Significant effects on visual amenity are predicted at Year 1. More distant views from the more elevated parts of the Open access land include Viewpoint N, where an elevated sensitivity is identified. The magnitude would be Small resulting in No Significant effects on Visual amenity. Views further east on Hirwaun Common would be set in the context of the extensive opencast workings and the influence of nearby commercial scale wind farm and therefore would be less susceptible to change with an overall reduced sensitivity compared with the promoted Viewpoint N. No significant visual effects are therefore predicted from elevated land at Hirwaun Common.

12.66 Users of the public rights of way network in the vicinity of Rhigos and Cefn Rhigos have been assessed in the field and the assessment calibrated in relation to the viewpoint photomontages I, J, K and L and the ZTV at ~~Figure 12.1~~ **Figure 12.1 Rev a**. A network of public footpaths cross farmland between Rhigos and Cefn Rhigos and a footpath follows a track between the gliding club and the farmstead of Wyrfa-uchaf. The ZTV indicates the potential for visibility of the stack and in places the roofline of the building; however in reality the majority of the routes are bounded by mature hedgerows with trees and opportunities for visibility of the Proposed Development would be very limited. Where glimpses are available it is assessed that the sensitivity and magnitude would be similar to Viewpoint L and K i.e. High to Medium sensitivity with a Small to Very Small magnitude. Consequently the effect upon visual amenity as experienced by footpath users where views of the Proposed Development are occasionally available would be Minor/Moderate or less and Not Significant.

12.67 A section of the public footpath to the north of Cefn Rhigos falls within the ZTV and to the south of the A465. Assessment in the field indicates that the view remains similar to the view taken in 2008 (see ES Viewpoint 15). The proposed buildings would be largely screened by intervening hedgerows with the stack visible at similar height to the distant pylons more than 2.4km distant. The viewpoint is located at a lower elevation and is more distant from the Site than Viewpoint L and the overall sensitivity and magnitude would be similar i.e. a High to Medium sensitivity and a Small magnitude resulting in a Minor/Moderate effect that would be Not Significant.

Road Receptors

12.68 Fifth Avenue passes adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate. Whilst forming part of the wider minor road network it is likely that the majority of traffic is associated with the Industrial Park and nearby Units and therefore road users would have a lower susceptibility to change, which when combined with a Low value to the views would result in a Low overall Sensitivity. The magnitude of effect passing the Site would be Very Large resulting in a Moderate/Major effect at Year 1 that is Significant. The growth of tree planting along the southern boundary of the site and weathering of external cladding would filter views of the development by Year 15, resulting in a Moderate adverse effect that is Not Significant.

12.69 The A465 passes east to west through the Study Area; however as indicated by the ZTV at ~~Figure 12.1~~ **Figure 12.1 Rev a** the proposed development would not be visible from the majority of the route. The locations indicated by the ZTV are in the vicinity of Viewpoint E, as assessed above

and similar filtered visibility from the route, south of Viewpoint F; where the visibility would be reduced compared with Viewpoint E.

12.70 The A4061 starts at a roundabout junction with the A465 and A4059 at the western edge of Hirwaun. The route follows a route south towards Hirwaun Common on rising ground and passes outside the Study Area after the ridgeline at Mynydd Beili-glas. With the exception of visibility of the Proposed Development travelling in both directions from the promoted viewpoint at Mynydd-Beili-glas (see Viewpoint N where a Moderate effect was assessed), theoretical visibility from the route would only be available to road users travelling north between the entrance to Tower Colliery and the edge of the Hirwaun Industrial Estate (see Viewpoint J where a Minor effect was assessed).

12.71 The A4059 connects Penderyn with Hirwaun in the Study Area; however due to intervening landform and woodland the theoretical opportunity for oblique views of the upper levels of the stack only would be largely restricted to a c.600m stretch of the route between the junction with the access road to the Ty Newydd County Hotel and the bridge over the railway to the south. Review in the field indicates that visibility would be restricted from much of the aforementioned route section due to roadside hedgerows. Where fleeting oblique glimpses are available, the upper levels of the stack more than 1km distant would be potentially noticeable above intervening hedgerows on the horizon, set in the context of much closer pylons that would be more dominant vertical structures in the view. The magnitude of effect would be comparable to Viewpoint G at a similar distance and ZTV visibility extent i.e. Very Small. The sensitivity of road users is assessed to be Low to Medium, resulting in an overall Minor to Negligible effect upon visual amenity that is Not Significant.

12.72 A minor road connects the western end of the Hirwaun Business Park with the village of Penderyn to the north, passing the public bridleway near Moel Penderyn (Viewpoint H). The ZTV indicates limited visibility from the route due to the woodland planting along the eastern side of the route. Potential for greater visibility lies near the crest of the hill near a layby; however when assessed in the field it was only possible to glimpse part of the existing building roof above middle-ground woodland when stood outside of a vehicle and the views were additionally restricted by planting on top of an earth mound that surrounded the layby (see ES Viewpoint 12). The clear focus of any views from this location is across open moorland in the opposite direction to the Site. The sensitivity of road users is assessed to be Medium and the magnitude Small, resulting in an overall Minor/Moderate effect upon visual amenity that is Not Significant.

12.73 A minor track links the northern edge of Hirwaun with the farmstead of Llwyncoch and is located 2km east of the Site at the closest point. The ZTV indicates potential visibility of the Proposed Development roofline; however in the field it was determined that the route was flanked by mature trees and there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development.

12.74 Other local roads where there is the potential for intervisibility include the minor roads to the south and southeast of Cefn Rhigos. Review in the field in winter indicates the presence of mature hedgerows flanking the routes and whilst there are limited short sections where the hedgerows have been clipped e.g. to the south east, intervening hedgerows would prevent visibility of the Proposed Development.

Residential Receptors

12.75 Rhigos is a village located between c.1km and 2km southwest of the Site. The majority of the village lies out with the ZTV; however theoretical visibility of the upper stack only from ground level windows and garden is indicated from the eastern edge of the village off Heol Esgyn (see Viewpoint I). The sensitivity would be Medium to High, the magnitude Very Small and the overall effect upon visual amenity Minor/Moderate and Not Significant.

12.76 Cefn Rhigos is a small linear village located c.2km west of the Site. The majority of the village lies outwith the ZTV with only the southern fringes indicating potential visibility of the upper stack and roofline of the Proposed Development. Review in the field indicates that because of adjacent hedgerow and tree planting and the orientation of the dwellings relative to the Site, no views of the Proposed Development would be available.

12.77 Cwm-hwnt is a small hamlet south of Cefn Rhigos and the ZTV indicates theoretical visibility of the upper stack. Review in the field indicates that because of adjacent hedgerow and tree planting and the orientation of the dwellings relative to the Site, no views of the Proposed Development would be available.

12.78 Scattered dwellings outside settlements have been identified where they lie within the ZTV and there is the theoretical potential for Significant effects (see Plate 2).

Plate 2: Closest Dwellings within the ZTV (not to scale)



Key:

- A: Buckleys Bungalow
- B: Reservoir House
- C: Tre-banog-uchaf
- D: Tai-cwplau
- E: Tre-Banog-Isaf
- F: Tyle-Morgrug
- G: Ty Newydd

12.79 The field assessment evaluated the potential for intervisibility between residents of the closest dwellings within the ZTV (see **Figure 12.1** **Figure 12.1 Rev a**) and the Proposed Development from the nearest public locations.

12.80 Buckley's Bungalow (Receptor A) is located c.400m west of the Site and views from the access drive would be similar to nearby Viewpoint F; however no visibility is predicted from the dwelling itself due to intervening landform and nearby tree cover.

12.81 Reservoir House (Receptor B) is located c.350m north of the Site. The ZTV indicates no visibility at ground level; however there is the potential for views of the stack from some upper floor windows, filtered by nearby woodland cover. The sensitivity would be Medium and the magnitude Small to Medium, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect that is Not Significant at Year 1 with a reduction in the level of effect by Year 15 due to the growth of intervening tree cover.

12.82 Tre-banog-uchaf (Receptor C) is located c.480m north of the Site. Woodland to the north of the reservoir would prevent views of the majority of the Proposed Development although glimpses of the roof and upper levels of the staff may be available, particularly from upper floor windows. The

sensitivity would be Medium to High and the magnitude Small, resulting in a Moderate effect that is Not Significant at Year 1 with a reduction in the level of effect by Year 15 due to the growth of intervening tree cover.

12.83 Tai-cwplau (Receptor D) is located c.170m west of the Site. The ZTV does not predict intervisibility from ground floor level due to intervening landform and woodland. Should any upper floor windows face the Site there is the potential for visibility of the upper levels of the stack. The sensitivity would be Medium and the magnitude Medium, resulting in a Moderate effect that is Not Significant at Year 1. Growth of proposed planting along the western boundary of the Site would further restrict visibility at Year 15.

12.84 Tre-Banog-Isaf (Receptor E) is located c.820m west of the Site. Multiple layers of local tree cover surround the property and are also present along intervening field boundaries. No visibility of the proposed development is predicted.

12.85 Tyle-Morgrug (Receptor F) is located over 1.2km northwest of the Site (close to Viewpoint G); however mature intervening field boundary hedgerow field boundaries close to the dwelling are predicted to filter views to the extent that it is unlikely that the top of the stack would be visible.

12.86 Ty Newydd and Ty Newydd Cottage (Receptor G) are located c.510m east of the Site and on the edge of the ZTV; however local tree cover close to the properties is predicted to screen any views of the Proposed Development.

Miscellaneous Receptors

12.87 Other potential miscellaneous receptors in the surrounding landscape with the potential for significant visual effects include the Ty-Newydd Country Hotel, Bryn-y-Gear Cemetery and Mount Pleasant Public House on the edge of Hirwaun.

12.88 Ty-Newydd Country Hotel is located c.570m east of the Site and on the edge of the ZTV; however review in the field indicates that views towards the Site are unlikely due to intervening tree cover along the boundary of the Site coupled with the orientation of the building.

12.89 Bryn-y-Gear Cemetery is located c.810m southeast of the Site. The access road is flanked by coniferous trees and the older part of the cemetery contains frequent tree specimens that would restrict views out towards the Site. Review of the ZTV and assessment in the field indicates that there is the potential for views of the upper levels of the stack only seen behind the much closer pylons that would be the dominant vertical structures in the view. The sensitivity would be Medium, the magnitude Small and the overall effect Minor/Moderate and Not Significant.

12.90 Mount Pleasant Public House is located c.1.2km southeast of the Site and photography was obtained as part of the original Environmental Statement (see ES Viewpoint 23). The site is located between the 2nd and 3rd pylon in the view however the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened by intervening planting along the railway embankment and the southern boundary of the cemetery. The sensitivity would be Medium, the magnitude Small and the overall effect Minor/Moderate and Not Significant.

Differences in Landscape and Visual Effects between the Proposed Scheme and Consented Scheme

12.91 No significant changes upon landscape elements or landscape character would occur between the consented scheme and the Proposed Development.

12.92 The viewpoint assessment at **Appendix 12.3** outlines for each viewpoint location the differences between the assessment of the Proposed Development and the Consented Scheme. The increase in built volume of selected buildings and the slight increase in the height and width of the stack would be most noticeable from close range locations; however in all cases have been assessed as having a small increase in the adverse level of effects. At no location would the Proposed Scheme result in Significant adverse effects upon visual amenity where previously they were Not Significant with the consented scheme.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

12.93 **Appendix 12.3** includes an assessment of the cumulative effects from selected viewpoint locations where both the Proposed Development and the consented gas power station within the Hirwuan Industrial Park would be most visible (i.e. Viewpoints H, J and M).

12.94 In summary only Minor cumulative landscape and visual effects were identified that would be Not Significant.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

12.95 This Landscape and Visual Assessment covers the theoretical effects resulting from the Proposed Development, assuming that the Site is undeveloped. This approach has been undertaken in order that the original ES can be updated in light of changes to best practice guidance and baseline conditions, notwithstanding the fact that phase I of the Enviroparks development is now on site. Following the initial theoretical assessment, this chapter provides an assessment of the differences between the consented scheme and the Proposed Development.

12.96 A 5km radius Study Area, within which all the representative viewpoint locations are located was adopted for detailed assessment purposes. The approach complies with the proportionate approach now advocated in best practice guidance (GLVIA3 – paras 5.2 and 6.2).

12.97 The current Planning Policy covering landscape and visual issues at a national and local level has been reviewed and relevant policies identified. The published Landscape Character baseline comprises the Brecon Beacons National Park Authorities Landscape Character Assessment (2012) and the updated LANDMAP national landscape character assessment.

12.98 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) plan was generated to establish the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development based on ground level activity (set at 2m above ground), the ridge height of the main buildings (varying between 11.4m and ~~19.6m~~ 23.4m) and the height of the stack at 45m. Representative viewpoint locations were reviewed in the field and some changes were made to the original ES viewpoint selection.

12.99 The combination of the ZTV plan, field assessment and preparation of photomontage visualisations identified the key landscape and visual receptors surrounding the Site, where there was the potential for Significant effects and the requirement for detailed assessment.

12.100 The overall massing of the Proposed Development is driven by operational requirements; however careful consideration of external materials and detailed design has sought to minimise landscape and visual impacts as far as possible for both the consented scheme and Proposed Development.

12.101 The differences between the consented scheme and the Proposed Development are set out in the Design and Access Statement and in summary would result in a small but noticeable increase in the massing of buildings at the southwestern end of the Site and a small increase in the height and width of the stack. The new and amended buildings would use the same elevational treatment and building materials approved for the consented scheme. In terms of secondary mitigation, the landscape strategy remains unchanged from the consented scheme with the exception of the green wall that enclosed the gasifier yard which is no longer required.

12.102 There would be no material differences in the construction process as a result of the Proposed Development compared with the consented scheme. It is assessed that the landscape and visual construction effects would be no greater than the operational landscape and visual effects of the proposed scheme at Year 1 following completion of construction.

12.103 Significant effects at Year 1 following construction upon the LANDMAP aspects areas would be restricted to the host aspect areas only and localised parts of the surrounding landscape. These areas comprise the Penderyn Visual and Sensory Aspect Area and the Brecon Beacons National Park, Cultural Landscape Aspect Area.

12.104 The adverse effects at Year 15 upon landscape character would diminish as planting around the Site matures, reducing intervisibility, particularly at lower and mid-levels of the buildings. The external materials of the buildings, in particular the wood cladding would also fade and become less apparent, particularly from medium and long range locations.

12.105 The Proposed Development would have a reduced night-time impact compared with the consented scheme.

12.106 The Viewpoint Assessment identified Significant visual effects at Year 1 from the majority of close range viewpoints including the Penderyn Reservoir and localised points on the nearby public footpath. More distant views of the Proposed Development with the potential for Significant effects upon visual amenity were assessed from a localised section of a public bridleway near Moel Penderyn. The visual assessment at Year 15, allowing for growth of mitigation planting and the fading of the building facades would result in the reduction of the visual effects to a non-Significant level from some locations, noting that Significant effects upon visual amenity for anglers using Penderyn Reservoir would remain (no public access).

12.107 An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development upon the other visual receptors within the Study Area has been made with reference to the representative viewpoint visualisations

and the ZTV in combination with assessment in the field. The potential for Significant effects upon visual amenity have been identified for users of Open Access land near Moel Penderyn, Road users passing the Site on Fifth Avenue. No significant impact on any views from residential properties within settlements or as outlying dwellings is predicted.

12.108 The cumulative assessment has identified the locations where both the Proposed Development and the consented gas power station within the Hirwuan Industrial Park would be most visible. Only Minor cumulative landscape and visual effects were identified that would be Not Significant.

12.109 The differences in landscape and visual effects between the Proposed Scheme and Consented Scheme have been analysed. No significant changes upon landscape elements or landscape character would occur. The increase in built volume of selected buildings and the slight increase in the height and width of the stack would be most noticeable from close range locations; however in all cases this would only have a small increase in the adverse level of effects. At no location would the Proposed Scheme result in Significant adverse effects upon visual amenity where previously they were Not Significant with the consented scheme.

12.110 In conclusion it is assessed that the Proposed Development could be accommodated within the landscape with only localised Significant landscape and visual effects. These effects would reduce over time from publicly accessible locations, following the growth of new planting and the weathering of the building facades.