



Chapter Two **SITE DESCRIPTION**

LOCATION

2.1 The planning application site lies within the Hirwaun Industrial Estate, which lies to the north of the A465 'Heads of the Valley' east-west trunk road, close to its junction with the A4059 / A4061 north-south route between Brecon and the Rhondda Valley. Road access to the site is gained from the A465(T) Heads of the Valley road via the A4061 Rhigos Road, which leads onto Fifth Avenue. The site has existing road accesses from Fifth Avenue to the south and Ninth Avenue to the east. These are currently sealed to deter unauthorised access.

LOCAL SETTLEMENTS

2.2 The nearest large settlements in the area are Merthyr Tydfil 11 km to the east, and Aberdare, 7 km to the south-east. Local settlements include Hirwaun, 2 km to the south-east of the site, the village of Penderyn 2 km to the north-north-east, and Rhigos, which lies 1.7 km to the south-west of the application site. There are isolated smaller dwellings closer to the site, and two hotels.

THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS

2.3 The site is located in an area of varied terrain. Whereas the Hirwaun Industrial Estate occupies a generally level area of land, the land rises gently to the south and east, and more steeply to the east and north. Established land uses in the locality are also diverse, with a variety of manufacturing, storage and waste reclamation activities taking place on the industrial estate itself, and with a large area to the south-east of the industrial estate occupied by the workings of the former Tower Colliery, a coal mine that closed in 2008. Across Ninth Avenue from the application site stands a large industrial complex operated by Eden Industries. On the southern side of Fifth Avenue to the south-east of the site there is a waste wood processing and storage yard. The area to the north and west of the planning application site is more rural in character, comprising woodlands and well-defined fields used for pasture.

2.4 This urban-rural distinction is reflected in local authority boundaries, and it happens that the boundary between Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT-CBC or 'RCT') and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA) bisects the planning application site. For this reason, EHL's planning application has been submitted to both planning authorities.



2.5 Water storage, transfer and treatment facilities are a notable feature of the locality. Immediately to the north of the planning application site is the Penderyn reservoir, a lake formed by high artificial embankments. The reservoir is used for fishing by the Mountain Ash Fly Fishing Association (MAFFA). In addition to the reservoir there are operational pumping station and treatment facilities at the northern end of Ninth Avenue and on both sides of Fifth Avenue to the south-west of the application site.

THE SITE

2.6 The boundaries of the planning application site are clearly defined on the ground, comprising Fifth Avenue to the south, Ninth Avenue to the east, a woodland screen below the reservoir embankment to the north, and wooded hedgerows on the western side. A stream on the western side of the site flows into the River Camnant nearby.

2.7 The planning application site is pictured in figure 2.1. It is roughly square in shape and approximately 8.5 hectares in area. In general the land comprises flat grassland with scrub vegetation. The site is classified as previously developed land, and ground investigations have identified made-up ground overlying the natural geology. The site has a well-defined network of drainage ditches in a regular herringbone pattern. It is understood that the site was prepared for development by the former Welsh Development Agency approximately a decade ago. During the Second World War the site was used in association with a factory that made brass shell and bullet cases for munitions.