

Land East of Bridgend Road, Pontrhydydyff

Stage 2 Candidate Site Assessment (Site ID: 325.C1)



Boyer

Land East of Bridgend Road, Llangynwyd, Pontrhydycyff

STAGE 2 CANDIDATE SITE ASSESSMENT

SITE ID: 325.C1

Report Control

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On behalf of our client, Waterstone Homes part of the JEHU Group (Herein referred to as Jehu), Boyer submits further detail in support of candidate site 325.C1, land east of Bridgend Road, Llangynwyd, Pontrhydydyff for Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan – Candidate Site Assessment Stage 2.
- 1.2 Bridgend County Borough Council are preparing their Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) covering a 2018-2033 plan period. Following consultation on Preferred Options in autumn 2019, Bridgend are currently in the process of preparing their Deposit Plan for consultation in the summer of 2020. As part of the process, a Stage 1 Assessment of Candidate Sites was carried out to determine those sites in conformity with the emerging strategy. A stage 2 assessment is now taking place, of those sites including our client's site (325.C1) that progressed through stage 1, forming a more rigorous assessment to demonstrate deliverability of sites.
- 1.3 Accordingly, our client has commissioned technical work in support of the stage 2 assessment of candidate site 325.C1, which is included in this submission. This report provides a summary of the relevant technical work and key findings in order to assist officers.
- 1.4 Bridgend County Borough Council recognise that certain limitation in light of the Covid-19 pandemic exist where working conditions have been restricted. Any limitations are explained throughout this report and in the supporting technical documents where applicable.
- 1.5 This report provides a summary of work carried to date and demonstrates that Candidate Site 325.C1 is deliverable. The report is structured in the following order to provide officers with a comprehensive overview of the relevant context and technical work.

Section 2: Describes the site and surrounding area.

Section 3: Outlines the relevant background context and LDP position.

Section 4: Provides a summary of relevant technical assessments carried out and their findings.

Section 5: Concludes the findings of the technical work in demonstrating the deliverability of the site.

Section 6: Includes a list of all technical documents included as part of this assessment.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The subject candidate site (ID:325.C1) (as indicated on the location plan **Doc 1**) comprises approximately 5.5ha of agricultural land situated to the south-east of the existing built-up area of Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff, Llangynwyd. It consists of three large, irregularly-shaped fields bounded by existing, mature vegetation, while the westernmost field bounds the public highway along Bridgend Road (A4063) and Parc-Tyn-y-Waun. There is a larger, wooded area in the north-east corner of the site, which abuts the Llynfi River to the east and is situated within Flood Zones C1 and C2. No development is proposed within areas of identified constraint including flood risk. There are no other identified, significant policy constraints in terms of ecology, landscape or heritage.
- 2.2 In terms of topography, the site slopes gently downwards towards the east and north, as is indicated Topographical Survey of the proposed developable area (**Doc 2**).
- 2.3 The site is well-located in terms of local connectivity and access to public services, with a bus stop immediately adjacent to the site on Bridgend Road, which is served by three regular bus routes between Aberkenfig, Bridgend and Maesteg. The site is highly accessible to Bridgend and M4 Junction 36 which is approximately 9 kms away. There is also a primary school (Llangynwyd Primary School) and a secondary school (Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd) within just 150m of the site to west and south, respectively. There is also a convenience store, a post office and a local takeaway 130m to the north along Bridgend Road, as well as public house and village hall on Station Road.
- 2.4 There is an existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) that runs through the site from Bridgend Road to a level rail crossing in the north-east corner of the site, which will be diverted but retained and integrated into the design of the development. A number of trees on-site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), which will be retained where appropriate.
- 2.5 Due to the physical and environmental characteristics of the land and the immediately surrounding context, the site is visually well-contained with existing, mature vegetation along the site's curtilage and would therefore represent a logical, south-eastern extension to the settlement that would appropriately integrate with the existing community. It is also of an appropriate scale that is commensurate with the size and population of the existing settlement.
- 2.6 Moreover, it is considered that the site represents a highly sustainable location for new residential development due to the proximity of several, existing public services and facilities within very short walking distance. This particularly includes education facilities, with both a primary school and secondary school within less than 150m of the site, in addition to several local shops and business within the centre of Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff and Llangynwyd just to the north. There are also additional facilities, as well as a rail station and employment opportunities in the built-up area of Maesteg, Garth and Cwmfelin, which are situated between 500m and ca. 3km to the north-west.

3. REPLACEMENT LDP - CONTEXT AND POSITION

- 3.1 As outlined in the introduction, Bridgend County Borough Council are preparing their Replacement LDP covering a 2018-2033 plan period. Following consultation on Preferred Options in autumn 2019, Bridgend are currently in the process of preparing their Deposit Plan for consultation in the summer of 2020. As part of the process, a Stage 1 Assessment of Candidate Sites was carried out to determine those sites in conformity with the emerging strategy.
- 3.2 The subject candidate site (325.C1) forms part of the **Maesteg and Llynfi Valley Regeneration Growth Area**, as included in the Preferred Strategy, where Strategic Policy 1 (Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy) allocated circa 8,333 new homes to be delivered across a series of regeneration and sustainable growth areas, including Maesteg and Llynfi Valley.
- 3.3 Accordingly, the Maesteg and Llynfi Valley area is identified as a Regeneration Growth Area, comprising "...settlements that would benefit from appropriate growth to address a broad range of socio-economic issues within their vicinity, whilst demonstrating capacity to accommodate that growth in a sustainable manner."
- 3.4 In terms of the 'strategic site options', the candidate site is included under **2.1 Land South of Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff** identified for a mixed use development including approximately 500 homes over an area of 19ha in total, a cluster of four sites in total. In addition to the subject candidate site, 325.C1, this includes adjoining candidate sites (IDs: 287.C1/C2, 305.C7 and 352.C.21).
- 3.5 We consider the subject candidate site 325.C1 is capable of delivery independently for residential development, given its connectivity with the existing settlement, or as an early phase of a wider strategic development as outlined by 2.1 Land South of Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff. Discussions with neighbouring site promoters have been instigated but unfortunately disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.6 The subject candidate site 325.C1 has progressed through Stage 1 assessment through to Stage 2. The Stage 1 Assessment concluded that:

*Llangynwyd is identified as a 'local settlement' where new development should be contained within the existing settlement boundary however, the site (287.C1)(Brownfield) collectively with candidate sites 305.C7 and **325.C1** offers an opportunity for a sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement of Llangynwyd, located logically adjacent Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd. Therefore, this site (297.C1 collectively with 305.C7 and **325.C1** forming a strategic site) will be assessed as part of Stage 2. (Boyer emphasis)*

4. TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

- 4.1 As alluded to in the earlier sections of the report, technical work has been undertaken on behalf of Jehu in respect of residential development at land east of Bridgend Road, Llangynwyd (candidate site 325.C1). It is acknowledged that the site forms part of a wider draft allocated site known as 2.1 Land South of Pont Rhyd-y-Cyff, however the technical work referred to in this report relates solely to candidate site 325.C1, as the land in control by our client.
- 4.2 The technical assessments include those considered to be of relevance to the context of residential development at land east of Bridgend Road and are based on the assumption of a development of circa 80-100 dwellings.
- 4.3 The compilation of documents represents best efforts given disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Further clarity and discussion, in particular, relating to comprehensive development with neighbouring land is anticipated on return of more normal working conditions.

Place Making: Masterplanning and Land Use Framework

- 4.4 Place making components have been incorporated in to the masterplanning of the site, which has seen a site layout evolve in recognition of the sites opportunities and constraints. Included in the submission are the following documents by Spring Design (**Docs 3-10**):
- Constraints Plan
 - Framework Plan
 - Draft Block Plan
 - Site Layout
 - Contextual Masterplan
 - Design Principles
 - Street Hierarchy Plan
 - Massing Plan
- 4.5 The proposed masterplan indicates how circa 80-100 dwelling can be achieved through a high quality design, that is well connected to the surrounding neighbourhood and landscape led, seeking to retain much of the existing mature trees and landscape features.
- 4.6 In terms of phasing, it is anticipated that development will begin in the north western parts of the site adjacent to the existing built up area and develop outwards towards the south east.

Transport

- 4.7 A Transport Appraisal is provided by Lime Transport in support of the candidate site. Whilst the report is not as detailed as a Transport Assessment in support of a planning application, it does summarise:
- Site sustainability, including existing walking, cycling, public transport provision, as well as the most recent accident data
 - Trip generation, distribution and assignment of development generated traffic, and
 - Details of the proposed development, including land-use, site access, visibility splays, parking provision, and deliveries and servicing.
- 4.8 At the planning application stage, it is anticipated that the Transport Assessment will include detailed sections on policy, sustainability, the proposed development, traffic impact (including trip generation), and Transport Implementation Strategy (TIS) as required by the Council.
- 4.9 The submitted appraisal (**Doc 11**), finds the candidate site to be highly sustainable owing to good connectivity by public transport and active travel and a range of facilities being within walking distance, including:
- Primary School;
 - Post office;
 - Local shop;
 - Welsh Medium Language Secondary school;
 - Pub/restaurants;
 - Places of worship; and,
 - Recreational ground.
- 4.10 The Transport Appraisal concludes that a development of circa 100 dwellings, with access via a priority junction off Bridgend Road (A4063), is likely to increase traffic by a maximum of 3.2%, and in accordance with TAN 18, it is unlikely that this would represent a material impact from the development upon the local highway network.
- 4.11 It is anticipated that any improvement measures would be negotiated through a planning application and secured through a s.106 agreement.

Agriculture

4.12 A review of Welsh Government's predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map version 2 finds that the site is predominantly Grade 5 and does not include any Best and Most Versatile land (BMV). Accordingly development of the site would not result in the loss of BMV.

Community Infrastructure

4.13 The candidate site is sustainably located adjoining, Llangynwyd, Pontrhydydyff which has a good range of community facilities, including those within walking distance of the site as bulleted above. This includes a Primary School and Welsh Medium School within walking distance of the site (less than 1.2km) and further primary and secondary schools within the locality. Other essential community facilities, including health centres are located within Maesteg, namely the Llynfi Surgery which is currently accepting registration of new patients.

4.14 The Preferred Strategy states that Regeneration Sites will be closely aligned and serviced by existing transport hubs, services and facilities. It is considered that the proposed development can be accompanied by existing community infrastructure and make contributions to improving existing community infrastructure where justified, and that provision of new community infrastructure through the development would not be necessary.

Ground Investigation

4.15 A Geotechnical & Geo-environmental Desk Study has been carried out on the site by Terrafirma (**Doc 12**) which confirms the site's suitability for development. The site is greenfield and has been largely unoccupied throughout history, save for a small portion of the site that was crossed by a tramway. The study does not find any abnormal conditions that would prevent development coming forward. In summary:

- Geology - The site is primarily underlain by sandstone.
- Mining - the site is not considered to be at risk by past underground coal mining and there are no known recorded coal mine entries within the site or within 20m of the site.
- Radon gas – no radon protection will be required for new development.
- Landfill gas and ground gas – low to moderate risk
- Contamination – low risk, no anticipated source of contamination save for tramway on part of the site.
- Anticipated foundation solution – concrete strip and trench fill should be suitable.

Ecology

- 4.16 A preliminary ecology appraisal has been carried out by Hawkeswood Ecology (**Doc 13**). The assessment consisted of a walk-over survey of the site taking into account features within and adjacent to it. The developable area is confined to the agriculturally improved grassland areas and as such direct impacts on both the wooded habitats and protected species may be limited. There will be indirect impacts however and as such further survey is required to properly assess the impacts of the development on both habitats and protected species.
- 4.17 The report concludes that the proposed construction zone is mainly impacting agriculturally improved grassland which is heavily grazed. There will be impacts on the adjacent wooded areas that may support protected species.
- 4.18 Accordingly, further surveys are recommended. If the measures outlined in the recommendations are implemented, there are no significant ecological reasons to prevent the development proceeding pending the outcomes of further surveys.

Arboriculture

- 4.19 A Tree Survey has been carried out on the developable area of the site (as informed by the Topographical Survey **Doc 2**) and a Tree Constraints Plan has been produced by Treescene (**Docs 14 and 15**).
- 4.20 The data collected provides an informative guide of varying tree health and categories across the site to inform the proposed development as it advances to a planning application, with further refinement of the layout which seeks to retain natural landscape features as far as possible.

Landscape and Visual Assessment

- 4.21 The ecological and tree surveys have also informed the landscape assessment of the site. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal was carried out by Catherine Etchell Associates (**Doc 16**). The report:
- identifies the visual and landscape character impacts which the proposed development would have on the surrounding landscape;
 - examines how the proposals respond to Planning Policy, in particular LANDMAP and Green Infrastructure Strategy
 - describes potential mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for identified effects and how the current proposed layout may best respond to reduction and amelioration of adverse potential visual impacts.

4.22 The report finds that the site's keys assets in landscape terms are all to be retained. This accords with the approach of the Landscape Character Assessment and ensures that the existing landscape infrastructure will be in place to screen and soften the proposed development and provide wildlife corridors which link to surrounding countryside.

4.23 The report concludes with a series of recommendation for consideration of further refinements of the masterplan of the site as it advances to planning application stage.

Heritage

4.24 The Preferred Strategy acknowledges that there are not considered to be heritage constraints present. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings on the site or within the site's setting.

4.25 In Historic Landscapes terms, the locality is considered an important industrial communications/settlement corridor, including the Bridgend Road and the railway. The old tramway on the site is part of the original Dyffryn Llynfi and Porthcawl Railway Company's 1825 tramroad to the coast.

4.26 However, there are not considered to be any heritage constraints on the site that would prevent development.

Utilities

4.27 Given the sites location, being adjacent to the existing built edge, there are a wide range of services and utilities in the locality with potential for connection. A fill utility plan report prepared by SMS PLC is included in the submission (**Doc 17**).

Flooding and Drainage Assessment

4.28 Vectos have provided a Flood Consequence and Drainage Appraisal of the site (**Doc 18**), acknowledging that part of the site is covered by flood zones C2 and B. However no development is proposed within these flood zones as all development will be steered into Zone A.

4.29 The report concludes that given development is kept within Zone A and Surface water runoff from the site will be managed using SUDS, in accordance with the sustainable drainage hierarchy via restriction to greenfield runoff rates prior to discharge in the River Llynfi, the site is capable of delivering development which is compliant with PPW and TAN 15.

Renewable Energy and Sustainability

4.30 The proposed layout allows orientation to benefit from solar gain and the future development has potential for sustainable construction methods incorporating renewables where feasible.

4.31 Llynfi Biomass Power Station is located approximately 2 km south east from the Site and there is potential for the site to be serviced by this power station, which would allow the development to be powered by a renewable energy facility.

4.32 Land Ownership Statement

4.33 The site is in single ownership and we originally promoted the site on behalf of the landowner. An option on the site has since been acquired by our client, Jehu, who now have control of the entire site area of candidate site 325.C1. The Jehu Group have a strong track record of delivery of high quality projects across south Wales, this includes both Waterstone Homes and through the wider group's construction expertise.

Viability

4.34 The landowner originally did a viability appraisal in 2018 which looked at local sales values and found the site to be viable, this is reinforced by developer interest in the site and the subsequent option acquisition by the Jehu Group. Given that Jehu have very recently acquired the site option, and current Covid-19 disruption, a full detailed viability appraisal is yet to be completed, however an initial indication is included in answer to the Council's viability questions (**Doc 19**). It is anticipated that further detail will follow as soon as practically possible.

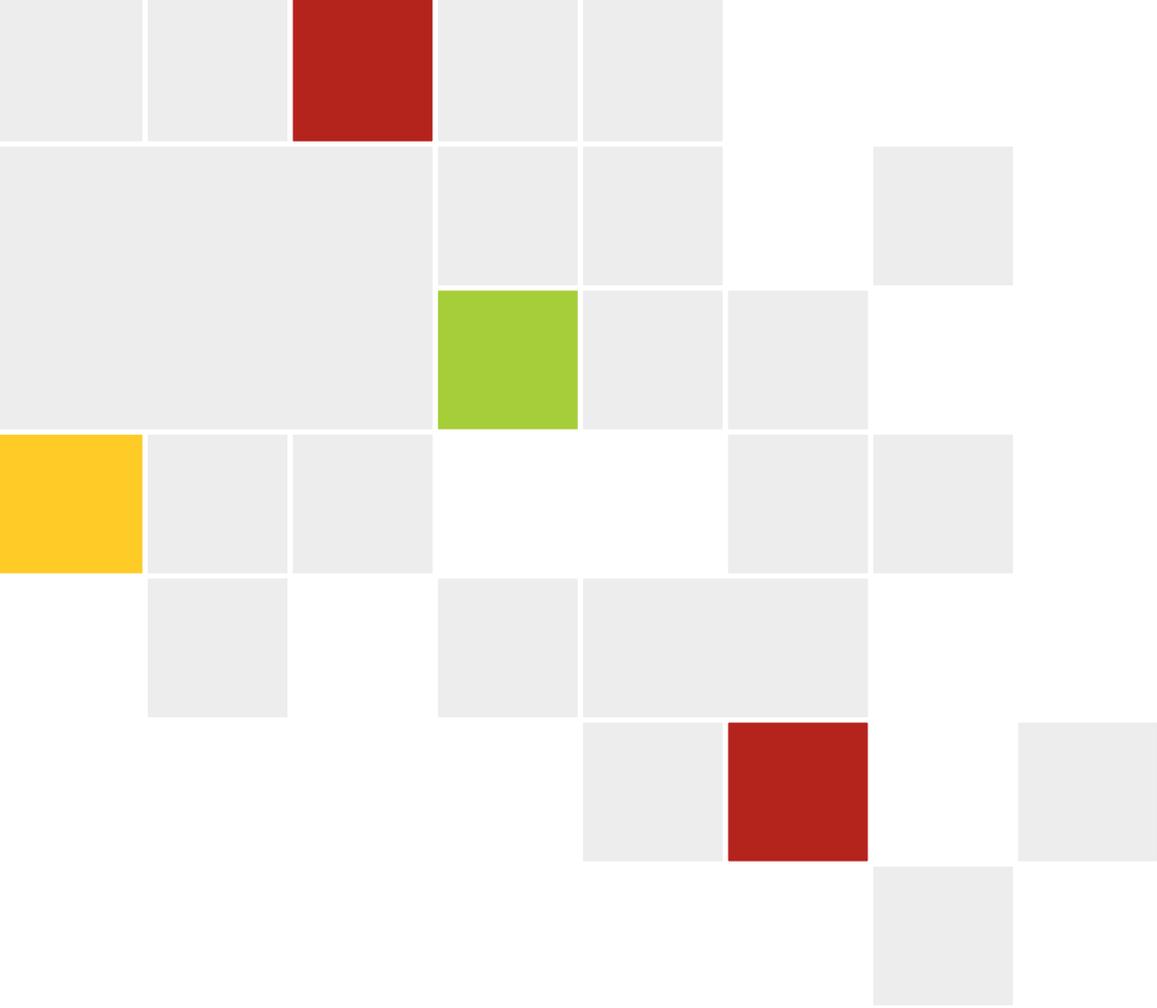
5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The findings of the technical assessments are that there are no constraints preventing development coming forward.
- 5.2 The site is now controlled by the Jehu Group who are a local business that have a strong track record of delivery of high quality projects in Bridgend County Borough and wider South Wales area. The site will deliver circa 80-100 homes to be developed by Waterstone Homes, a high quality brand that is part of the Jehu Group.
- 5.3 The assessment demonstrates that the site can come forward as a standalone sustainable development given its relationship and connectivity to the existing settlement, or as an initial phase of a wider comprehensive strategic development.
- 5.4 Accordingly, the Candidate Site 325.C1 is coherent with the emerging strategy and should progress as an allocation in the Replacement LDP Deposit Plan.

6. LIST OF DOCUMENTS

6.1 The below list includes those technical documents included as part of this submission for the stage 2 candidate site assessment. The findings of the technical work are summarised in this report, which find the site to be suitable for development and deliverable. The candidate site is also highly sustainable and in accordance with the Replacement LDP preferred strategy. The submitted documents provide further detail in support of promoting this site for inclusion as an allocation in the Replacement LDP.

| Doc Ref # | Document Name | Author |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Site Location Plan | Boyer |
| 2 | Topographical Survey | Healer Surveys |
| 3 | Constraints Plan | Spring Design |
| 4 | Framework Plan | Spring Design |
| 5 | Draft Block Plan | Spring Design |
| 6 | Site Layout | Spring Design |
| 7 | Contextual Masterplan | Spring Design |
| 8 | Design Principles | Spring Design |
| 9 | Street Hierarchy Plan | Spring Design |
| 10 | Massing Plan | Spring Design |
| 11 | Transport Appraisal | Lime Transport |
| 12 | Geotechnical & Geo-environmental Desk Study report | Terrafirma |
| 13 | Preliminary Ecological Appraisal | Hawkeswood Ecology |
| 14 | Tree Survey | Treescene |
| 15 | Tree Constraints Plan | Treescene |
| 16 | Landscape & Visual Appraisal | Catherine Etchell Associates |
| 17 | Utility Plan Provision | SMS PLC |
| 18 | Flood Consequences and Drainage Appraisal | Vectos |
| 19 | *Private and Confidential* – Initial Viability Draft | JEHU Group |



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