

Design and Access Statement



**Land off Gatewen Road,
Wrexham**

Landscape

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1.0 Introduction

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This Design and Access statement has been prepared by JS Bloor (Wilmslow) Ltd in order to allow Wrexham CBC to assess the planning implications of a preserved matters planning application for the Landscaping design to the proposed residential development at the former Gatewen Colliery, Gatewen Road, Wrexham.

Since the 30th July 2007, there has been a requirement for most planning applications and applications for listed building consent in Wales to be accompanied by a Design & Access Statement. The statement must demonstrate the accessibility of the proposal, and illustrate how the adoption of good principles of Inclusive Design have informed and guided the application.

Promoting sustainability through good design is referred to in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and revised by the Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement (MIPPS) 'Planning for Good Design' (01/2008) and also covered within the Planning and Climate Change MIPPS (draft 2006).

Good practice guidance for design and access statements is detailed in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design. This states that a design statement should be used to identify and explain how issues such as context, scale, use and landscape have been addressed in the design, and how any conflicts and decisions have influenced the final proposal.

This statement has been prepared to accord fully with the appropriate policy framework.

2.0 Site Context

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The existing site is a former colliery and associated railway line which has largely been cleared apart from significant areas of hard standing. Many areas of previously disturbed land have been allowed to regenerate naturally, resulting in significant tree cover. Several water bodies are within the site boundary and a small water course runs along the eastern boundary.

The site sits in a mixed landscape. To the immediate west of the site are playing fields and residential areas. To the east, there is open farmland between the site and the edge of Wrexham. The north of the site is bounded by a continuation of the woodland which has developed along the dismantled railway whilst the southern boundary is closed by Gatewen Road.

3.0 Accessibility

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All landscape areas will be designed to be fully accessible to pedestrians and cyclists will be able to use a new cycle way. A network of pedestrian routes will link areas of public open space and create both circular routes within the site and linkages to the adjacent public footpaths. Dropped crossings at appropriate points will allow easy access for both wheelchair users and carers with pushchairs. The new cycleway will be designed to conform to current recommended standards, again allowing easy access for all users.

The landscape proposal is intended to encourage movement on foot or by bicycle. The creation of new pedestrian and cycle routes in an attractive landscape setting will enable easy movement both around the site and to other networks beyond. It will be a simple matter to either walk or cycle to adjacent communities and public facilities.

4.0 Environmental Sustainability

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Because the proposed development falls almost entirely on the footprint of the former colliery buildings and hard standings, there is little impact on the existing landscape. Some trees require removal on the grounds of their condition and a separate report has been produced to this effect.

Extensive new planting will take place, which will be of great environmental benefit. Within the proposed housing new planting will consist of both tree and shrub planting. Within this area the species are mainly 'exotic' or ornamental varieties as would be expected in a domestic setting. However, many of the species selected are of wildlife benefit, attracting insects and birdlife. Wherever appropriate, native trees will be used.

Open space areas have been designed to include the maximum amount of indigenous species. This includes native tree planting, native shrub planting, meadow areas and bulb planting. A new pond is being created as part of the ecological mitigation and this will also include native pond plants.

Where possible, plants will be sourced from local growers and nurseries and if possible stock of local provenance will be used. All planting is designed to be of minimal maintenance requirements and will not require substantial watering other than during drought shortly after planting.

5.0 Character

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The character of the landscape will be heavily influenced by the existing landscape features being retained. The addition of substantial new tree and shrub planting and large areas of open space will give the landscape a semi-rural character, rather than a suburban feel. Paths will be deliberately low key and the cycleway is designed to have the feel of a country lane.

The tree and shrub planting within the housing areas is designed to create tree lined roads and uses large tree sizes to create focal points throughout the development. Trees are evenly distributed to be of maximum impact to all future users of the site and shrub planting will be of further aesthetic benefit.

6.0 Community Safety

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The layout has been designed to ensure maximum amounts of natural surveillance. The cycleway, footpaths and open space will have properties fronting them at regular intervals and existing landscape areas will also benefit from added over looking.

Public areas will be the responsibility of a management company and site checking will ensure a continuing safe environment for play and leisure activities. The proposed development will substantially reduce the risk to the public by the remediation of a derelict site which currently attracts some anti-social behaviour.