



Land east of Llanrwst Road, Gyffin, Conwy

Outline Landscape Strategy – December 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Outline Landscape Strategy

- 1.1.1 This Outline Landscape Strategy has been prepared by Richards Moorehead and Laing Ltd (RML) on behalf of Beech Developments (NW) Ltd (BD) and Adra (Tai) Cyfyngedig to support a planning application for a proposed residential development of affordable homes on the southern fringe of Gyffin, Conwy Town, North Wales.
- 1.1.2 The Outline Landscape Strategy (OLS) sets out the general approach that the proposed development takes in relation to the landscape. It evaluates the context of the landscape character and key landscape elements of the site and surrounding area, and suggests a landscape led approach that the proposed development should take into account in the design stages to achieve a sustainable development.

1.2 The Site and Study Area

- 1.2.1 The proposed development lies approximately 900 metres south-west of the historic town of Conwy Town and Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is a greenfield site of 5.31 hectares currently used as agricultural land for grazing sheep and horses. The site is composed of three fields and in total measures approximately 335 metres long and 100-200 metres wide, it is roughly rectangular in shape. To the north lies the residential area of Gyffin and to the east a band of mature woodland (Bryn Seiri Wood) set on rising ground. To the south is agricultural land and to the west a mixed woodland that separates the site from Llanrwst Road (B5106). Llanrwst Road is the main road along the western side of the Conwy Valley that connects Conwy with villages and the wider countryside to the south. The site is steeply sloping rising from circa 25 metres AOD in the lowest north-western corner to around 60 metres to the south-east with an average gradient of around than 1 in 5 but steeper as it rises steeply on the eastern side of the site towards Bryn Seiri Wood.

1.3 The Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 The proposed development is for a total of 95 No. dwellings and access road off the B5106 Llanrwst Road. The dwellings would be positioned in the lower sections of the site with wildflower meadows in the upper sections of the site adjacent to Bryn Seiri Wood. The existing woodland to the west of the site would be retained and protected including a mature oak tree at the entrance to the site.
- 1.3.2 The dwellings would be a combination of apartments, semi-detached and detached buildings with designated car parking areas. A play area is located towards the southern end of the site and an active travel route provided that connects the site to a cul-de-sac of Isgoed in Gyffin to the north.

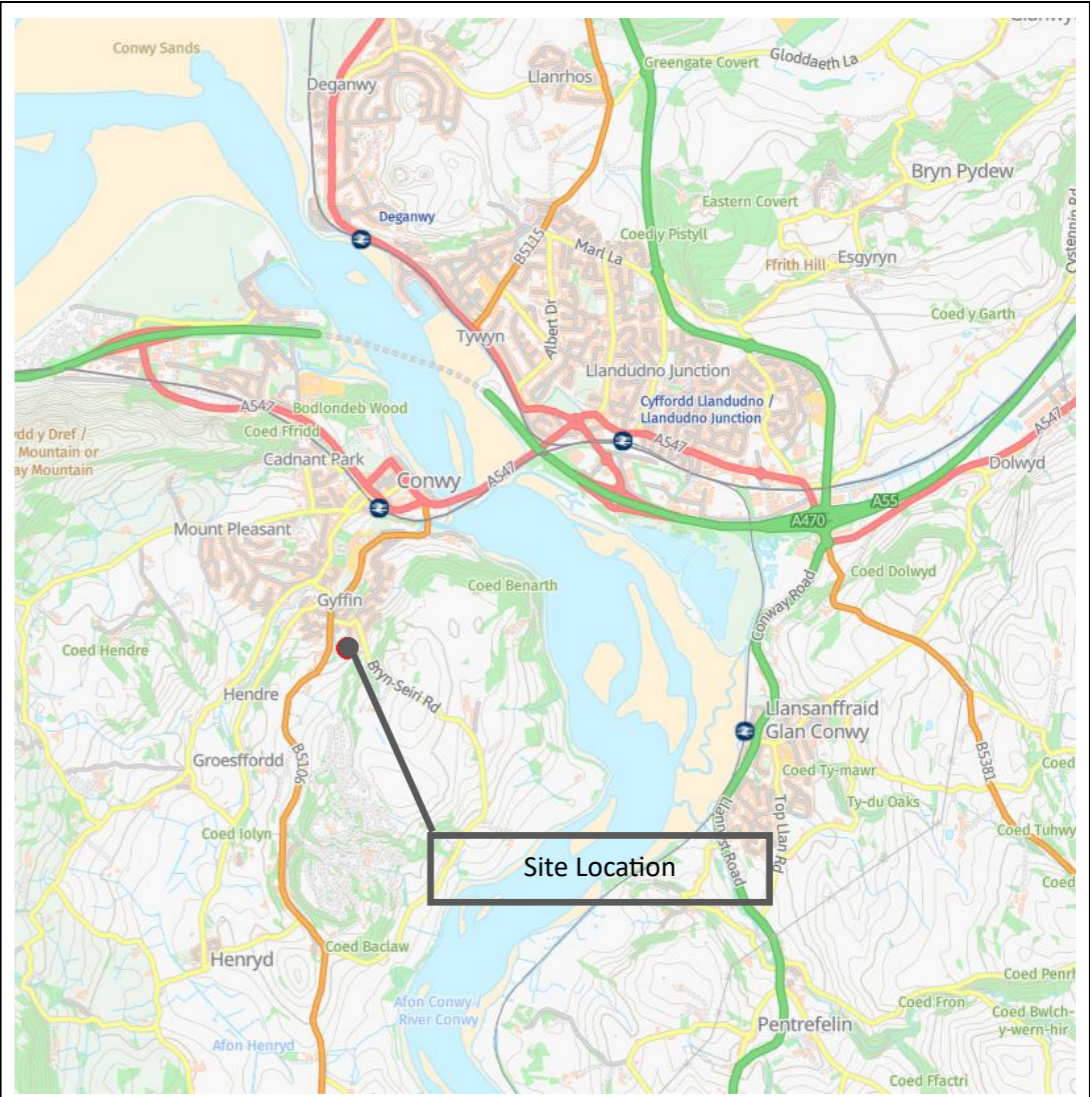


Fig 1-1 – Site Location Plan

1.4 Planning Policies

Planning Policy Wales (PPW - Edition 12 – February 2024)

- 1.4.1 The landscape that surrounds creates a sense of place and PPW calls for the planning system to ***“create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all.”***¹
- 1.4.2 PPW advocates the process of “Placemaking” as a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and to draw on an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health and happiness, and well-being in the widest sense.
- 1.4.3 The site lies outside the settlement boundary of Conwy and on the cusp of open countryside to the south. PPW suggests that development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements ***“where it can best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access, habitat and landscape conservation. Infilling or minor extensions to existing settlements may be acceptable, in particular where they meet a local need for affordable housing or it can be demonstrated that the proposal will increase local economic activity”***.²
- 1.4.4 PPW acknowledges that the character and special qualities of all places and landscapes can provide a strong sense of place, inspiration and belonging, and can contribute to the distinctive cultural identity of Wales. It places emphasis on the characteristics of both nationally protected areas such as National Parks and local landscapes, and areas of high landscape importance that may be unique or distinctive to a particular area.
- 1.4.5 The Placemaking Wales Charter has been developed in collaboration with the Placemaking Wales Partnership. The charter builds on the strengthening focus on placemaking policy and practice in Wales and aims to provide a common understanding of the range of considerations that go into placemaking.
- 1.4.6 “Placemaking” is a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense and supporting the development of high-quality places across Wales for the benefit of communities.
- 1.4.7 RML are proud to be a signatory and advocate of the six principles of the Placemaking Wales Charter. It will be our aim to embody these principles during the design development process along with the Step-wise approach

¹ PPW 12 – para 2.3

People and community

The local community are involved in the development of proposals. The needs, aspirations, health and well-being of all people are considered at the outset. Proposals are shaped to help to meet these needs as well as create, integrate, protect and/or enhance a sense of community and promote equality.

Location

Places grow and develop in a way that uses land efficiently, supports and enhances existing places and is well connected. The location of housing, employment and leisure and other facilities are planned to help reduce the need to travel.

Movement

Walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and avoid dependence on private vehicles. Well designed and safe active travel routes connect to the wider active travel and public transport network and public transport stations and stops are positively integrated.

Mix of uses

Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access jobs, services and facilities via walking, cycling or public transport. Development density and a mix of uses and tenures helps to support a diverse community and vibrant public realm.

Public realm

Streets and public spaces are well defined, welcoming, safe and inclusive with a distinct identity. They are designed to be robust and adaptable with landscape, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage well integrated. They are well connected to existing places and promote opportunities for social interaction and a range of activities for all people.

Identity

The positive, distinctive qualities of existing places are valued and respected. The unique features and opportunities of a location including heritage, culture, language, built and natural physical attributes are identified and responded to.

A Placemaking Guide has also been published with further guidance on the principles of placemaking and how they can be applied in practice (dcfw.org/placemaking/resources/).

Fig 1-1 Creu Lleodedd Cymru – Placemaking Wales Charter and the six placemaking principles

² PPW 12 – para 3.6 Development in the Countryside

Conwy Local Development Plan

- 1.4.8 The site lies within the Conwy Valley Special Landscape Area and the Conwy Local Development Plan Policy NTE/4.

POLICY NTE/4 – THE LANDSCAPE AND PROTECTING SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

1. Special Landscape Areas are shown on the proposal map and designated in the following locations:
 - a. Great Orme and Creuddyn Peninsula
 - b. Conwy Valley**
 - c. Abergele hinterland
 - d. Elwy and Aled Valleys
 - e. Hiraethog
 - f. Cerrigydrudion and the A5 corridor
2. In order to conserve the attributes of the Special Landscape Areas development proposals will have to show particular regard to the character of each locality in order to minimise their impact. Development will only be permitted if it is shown to be capable of being satisfactorily integrated into the landscape. In appropriate cases planning applications should be accompanied by a landscape character assessment to assess the visual and landscape impacts of the development.
3. All proposals, both within and outside SLAs, will be considered against the Development Principles and other policies in the Plan designed to protect the environment and landscape character.

BP27 - Special Landscape Area (SLA)

- 1.4.9 The site lies in the Special Landscape Area of the Conwy Valley, an extensive area that encompasses the Conwy Valley that lies to the east of the site and stretches from Conwy Castle and Town Walls as far as the town of Llanrwst, over 15 kilometres to the south. The SLA is a locally significant landscape valued for its proximity to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Conwy and Snowdonia National Park which as an appealing area is under pressure from inappropriate development.

“The main threat is from visual obtrusive development in an otherwise natural environment of woodland, forestry and farmland including landscape features of mountain streams, stone walls and semi-improved grassland. Views are an important element to the area and its approach to SNP, Conwy castle and wider uplands of Conwy. Intervisibility between other SLAs and SNP will also be a future consideration. The protection of the area from inappropriate wind turbine development will also be a key future objective.”

- 1.4.10 The SLA designation is intended to raise awareness of the special characteristics, qualities and importance of a locally valued landscape so that it can be promoted as a positive management tool to ensure quality design and landscape treatment is a key part of any development.

LANDMAP and Landscape Character

- 1.4.11 LANDMAP is an all-Wales resource that is administered by Natural Resources Wales. It records and evaluates landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape in a nationally consistent data set. The site lies within LANDMAP area CNWVS067 Conwy Valley sides and Hills that has a summary description of the area as extracted below: -

“Valley edges & slopes often steep giving dramatic enclosure to the valley floor. The slopes are often clad in woodland with a strong pattern of trees, both deciduous and evergreen in a mosaic of small medium irregular shaped pasture fields. The tree cover diminishes with height, then being found on steep tributary valley sides, with more open fields with long views. Parkland can be found on lower slopes including Bodnant Gardens which give the sense of unity and consistent management. Along the Conwy valley, the wooded slopes sometimes include rock outcrops which heighten the sense of drama. Settlement is a mix of small, clustered settlements and dispersed farmsteads creating a settled landscape. Tourism development such as caravan parks are set within trees and generally discreetly located in the landscape.”

2. Outline Landscape Strategy

2.1 Landscape Objectives

- 2.1.1 The general objectives of the outline landscape strategy are based around the Step-wise approach as set out in PPW of avoidance, minimisation, mitigation and compensation.
- 2.1.2 The key landscape elements of the site are considered as being:-
 - Topography
 - Existing Woodland and Hedgerows
 - Open fields
- 2.1.3 These three key features contribute to the landscape character as a distinctly rural site and were identified in the early site analysis as described below:-
 - Valley edge with steep sided slope a characteristic of the local topography
 - Mature woodland on rising land along the eastern boundary of the site extremely important landscape and visual element that should be retained and protected
 - Linear block of woodland along western boundary is also an important landscape feature that provides a visual screen form Llanrwst Road and likely to be of high ecological value. The woodland needs to be protected and not to be encroached on. Landscape buffer required for its protection and enhancement and future management /maintenance. This area may also be of archaeological interest as it may be part of a former quarry.
 - Existing trees along northern boundary need protection as they are an important visual barrier to the adjacent residential area. Preservation and additional landscape buffer to ensure longevity and opportunities for growth/replacement planting and maintenance
 - Upper reaches of fields visible from Conwy Castle Walls and any changes to the topography of this section of the site needs to be resisted, the topography is a key landscape element of the site
 - East-west hedgerows/linear belts of trees important visual elements that restrict views of site from northern vantage points
 - Access off Llanrwst Road limited due to topography and existing oak trees
 - Glimpsed views of site from Llanrwst Road near property of Pen-y-Bryn to the south
 - Views of site from adjacent residential areas along west of Llanrwst Road and southern parts of Gyffin that overlook the site

The Step-wise Approach	Response to the Step-wise Approach
Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The existing veteran oak tree at the entrance of the site would be retained and protected. The health and condition of the tree would be monitored. Acorns from the oak would be collected and seedlings grown for re-planting on the site.• The blocks of woodland (protected under TPO) would be retained and protected. Minor pruning works to overhanging canopies may be undertaken subject to TPO consent.
Minimise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of existing hedgerows would be kept to a minimum. Where feasible, existing hedgerows would be translocated to areas within the site unaffected by the development proposals.• Minimise impacts on topography through use of retaining walls to accommodate changes in level• Some sections of hedgerow (HR1, HR3 and HR5) would be lost and cannot be avoided in order to construct the proposed development. There would also be the loss of some hedgerow trees. The potential loss of these would be minimised at detailed design stage and working methodologies deployed to minimise any loss or damage.
Mitigate/ Restore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Native species hedgerows would be planted along the southern boundary of the site and as linear features along the full length of the site.• Additional tree and hedgerow planting would be provided along the northern boundary of the site to enhance existing tree belt.• Upper fields would be managed as hay meadows for species rich grassland.• Integral bat boxes, bird boxes and bee bricks would be incorporated into the properties
Compensate On-Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An artificial badger sett would be constructed within the site close to the eastern boundary and Bryn Seiri Wood. The sett would be surrounded by scrub habitat created as part of the landscape mitigation and to provide benefits to biodiversity.• A wildlife corridor would be created to connect the lower Wood with the eastern section of the site. The lighting levels along the road corridor would be kept to a minimum to encourage use by badgers and bats.
Compensate Off-Site	No compensation off site is currently proposed

Table 2-1: Response to the Step-Wise Approach



3.0 Proposed Landscape Elements

3.1 Generally

- 3.1.1 Adra (the Applicant) is a North Wales' housing association providing quality, energy efficient homes in North Wales. The development proposals for the site at Llanrwst Road is for 95 No. affordable homes comprising of ten different house types as set out in the table below: -
- 3.1.2 The dwellings would be typically one or two storeys in height and predominantly detached and semi-detached houses with the occasional terrace, bungalow and apartments. Parking courts are provided to the south-west corner of the site where density can be increased while off street parking is located along the access road which splits into two cul-de-sacs further north. The site would be accessed off Llanrwst Road towards the southern end of the site carefully located to avoid an existing mature oak tree.
- 3.1.3 The proposed layout responds to the topography of the site with the main access road following the contours in a meandering north-south alignment to provide a flowing natural streetscape set within the lower sections of the site. The site has been developed to balance the quantity of groundworks in the form of cut and fill. Tiered gardens and retaining structures will also assist with the change in level and assist in softening the development and retaining structures within the landscape when viewed from the Castle walls to the north.
- 3.1.4 An active travel shared use route would connect the proposed development with the streetscape of Gyffin to the north and provide opportunities for non-motorised users to access the wider footpath network to Conwy town centre.
- 3.1.5 The existing woodland to the west and the upper Bryn Seiri woodland to the east would be retained and protected. The proposed development would result in the unavoidable loss of some sections of hedgerows and hedgerow trees in the central section of the site. The existing hedgerows to be lost would, if practicable, be translocated and replanted on the upper slopes and along southern boundary of the site.
- 3.1.6 The upper fields of the site, currently grazed by sheep and horses, would be retained and managed as wildflower meadows to provide biodiversity benefits. The lower slopes of the meadows would be terraced with crib lock retaining walls (circa 3 metres high) to manage the change in levels.
- 3.1.7 Native hedgerow planting would follow the alignment of the retaining walls providing inter-connecting strong linear landscape features and wildlife corridors through the central sections of the site. A wildlife corridor would be formed within the central section of the site connecting the woodland to the west with the upper slopes and Bryn Seiri woodland to the

east. An artificial badger sett would be provided in the upper fields close to Bryn Seiri wood within which evidence of badger activity has been recorded.

- 3.1.8 Surface water run-off would be controlled by a series of swales running in a north-south alignment through the upper meadows. Surface water run-off would be stored in underground cells located beneath car parking areas and verges before being gradually released into the adjacent stream and culvert to the north-west of the site.

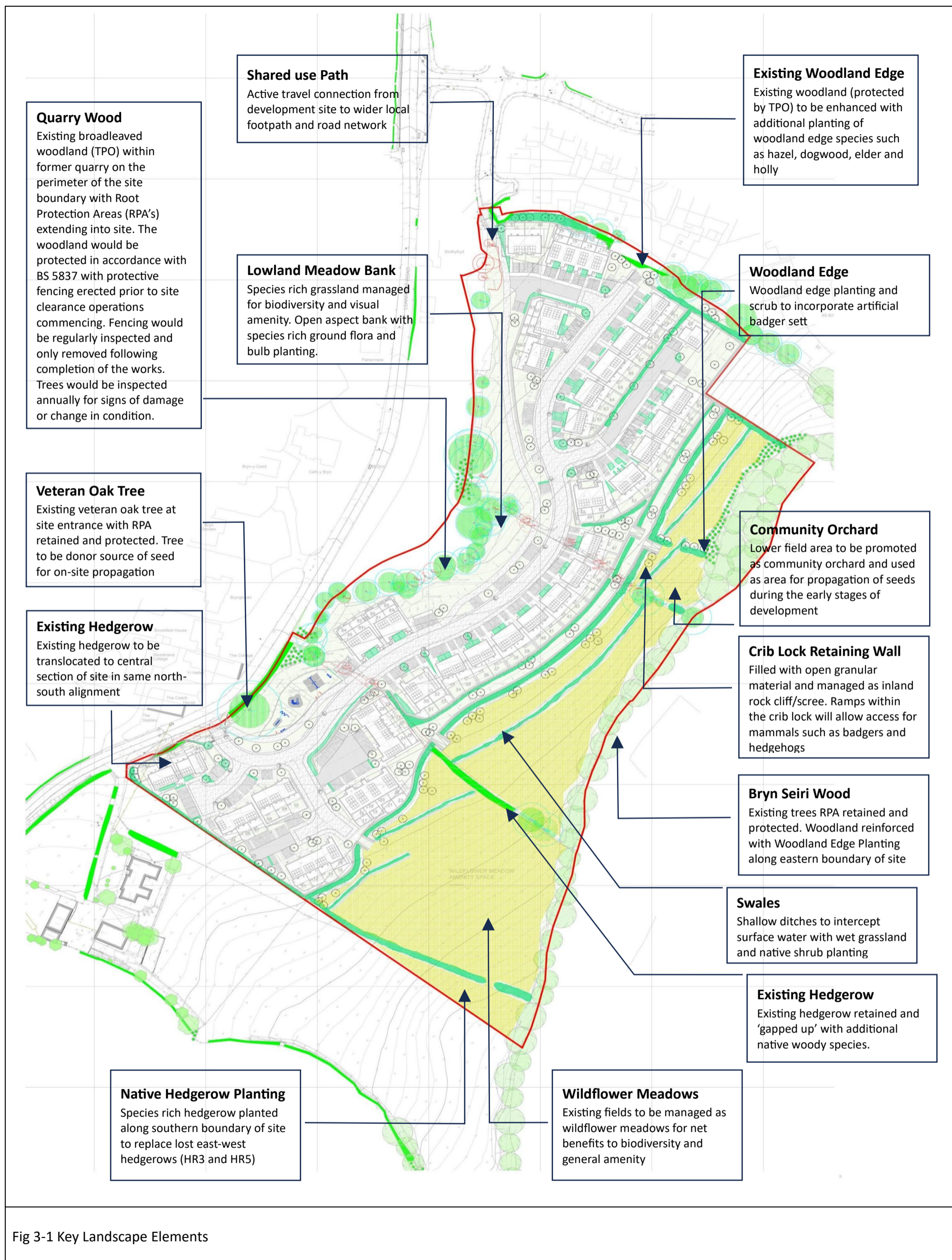


Fig 3-1 Key Landscape Elements

3.2 Planting Proposals

- 3.2.1 The planting proposals are for a simple palette of planting mixes that will provide a robust landscape framework that can sustain a number of different habitats and that will contain sufficient native species to be resistant to climate change and seasonal variances. The planting mixes include combinations of species for:-
- Native Species Hedgerow
 - Hedgerow Trees
 - Woodland Edge Planting
 - Native Shrub/Scrub
 - Orchard
- 3.2.2 Table 4-1 provides an indication of the species proposed for each of the planting mixes and Table 4-2 a list of fruiting trees proposed for the community orchard.
- 3.2.3 Detailed planting proposals will be prepared for the final layout following the PAC process and further design development stages.

Table 4-2 Community Orchard Species

Orchard
Apple Varieties
Pendragon
Nant Gwrtheryn
Rhyl Beauty
Tin y Gwydd
Pendragon
Pear Varieties
Berllanderi Green Pear
Penrhyn Castle Pear
Plum
Denbigh Plum

Table 4-1 Planting Mixes

Native Species Hedgerow		Hedgerow Trees		Woodland Edge		Native Shrub/Scrub	
Plant Species	Common Name	Plant Species	Common Name	Plant Species	Common Name	Plant Species	Common Name
Corylus avellana	Hazel	Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	Cornus sanguinea	Dogwood
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	Malus sylvestris	Crab Apple	Corylus avellana	Hazel	Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn
Hedera helix	Common Ivy	Populus nigra betulifolia	Welsh Black Poplar	Ilex aquifolium	Holly	Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	Prunus cerasifera	Myrobalan Plum	Malus sylvestris	Crab Apple	Ulex europeaus	Gorse
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	Prunus padus	Bird Cherry	Prunus padus	Bird Cherry	Viburnum opulus	Guelder Rose
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	Quercus petraea	Sessile Oak	Quercus petraea	Sessile Oak		
Quercus petraea	Sessile Oak			Sambucus nigra	Elder		
Ribes uva-crispa	Wild Gooseberry			Ulex europeaus	Gorse		
Rosa canina	Dog Rose			Ulmus glabra	Wych Elm		
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn			Viburnum opulus	Guelder Rose		



