

# Landscape and Visual Appraisal



**Retrospective Planning Application to Caerphilly  
County Borough Council For a Single Lake**

**On Land at**

**Cefn Mably Farm Park, Cefn Mably, Cardiff, CF3 6LP**

**Date: 22 April 2025**

## Document Management

**Prepared For:** Mr Rhys Edwards  
Cefn Mably Farm Park,  
Cefn Mably  
Began Road, Cefn Mably,  
Cardiff, CF3 6LP

**Report Reference:** 193 210 Cefn Mably Farm Park

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mr Edwards is applying for a retrospective planning consent for the construction of a single lake and grassed earth bunds (approx. 2 metres tall) located on land within the ownership of Cefn Mably Farm Park.

The development site is located to the north-east of Began Road and separate from the main Cefn Mably Farm Park visitor attraction part. The development site is part woodland and part open agricultural land having previously been used for rearing animals.

There is an existing access track located on Cefn Mably Road and the gate and 'set down area' is set back from the roadside and allows vehicles to park on the 'bell mouth' (private land) and the gate to be opened without causing congestion on the public highway.

The landscape character within the study area is mainly agricultural grazing fields but it does have some urbanising features including the tall electricity pylons, Cefn Mably Farm Park visitor attraction and some residential areas.

The study area is mainly agricultural and located in the Landscape Character Type 'CYNONVS740'. The study area would have a **Medium** landscape sensitivity and the lake would **not have a significant impact** on this LCT.

Within the local study area (1.5km radius) and as shown in Figure 6 - the 'Zone of Visual Influence' the development site cannot be seen from the vast majority of the study area. There are only 'partial' views of the lake that can be seen from short sections of the adjacent roadway and footpath.

The existing management regime for the development site would continue to maintain the boundary trees and hedgerows and provide both privacy and ecological habitats.

The proposed management regime is considered to be in line with the 'Landmap, Visual and Sensory Aspect' information and guidance (Q 32), which recommends the 'Medium Term **management of riparian vegetation to ensure long-term tree cover, encourage increased tree cover in hedgerows.**

The ongoing management regime and recently planted hedgerow and trees would contribute and effectively reduce the visual impact of the lake from the adjacent viewpoints and would have **no impact to the visual amenity** of the local landscape character.

In conclusion, the lake would not be seen within the majority of the local landscape and in both, landscape character and visual amenity terms there are no significant effects on the countryside within the study area.

## INTRODUCTION

Steele Landscape Design have been instructed on behalf of Mr Edwards, to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to inform the planning application with Caerphilly County Borough Council, in respect of the retrospective planning application for the of a lake at Cefn Mably Farm Park, CF3 6LP (thereafter referred to as the 'development site').

A LVA has been prepared to consider the effect of single lake that is located on land to the east of the main Cefn Mably Farm Park visitor attraction. The development site is located within a study area which is agricultural in character but already containing many man-made structures, including numerous tall electricity pylons, large commercial barns within Cefn Mably Park Farm and the M4 motorway corridor.

An existing gateway from Cefn Mably Road has been upgraded to provide safe and appropriate access into the development site. A lake has been constructed within the development site and the spoil has been kept on-site and forms two linear features.

A substantial planting scheme has been introduced to re-provide hedgerows along Cefn Mably Road and Began Road, this enables a reduction in the visual impact of the development from short sections of adjacent public roadways and footpath.

This LVA will identify the specific effects created by the development and to consider the effects of the potential impacts on the landscape character and the visual amenity of the study area.

The LVS has been undertaken by Vince Steele who is a fully qualified (Landscape Architecture - BA Hons and Grad. Dip), trained and experienced landscape architect using techniques and best practice guidance in accordance with 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'.

In particular, the LVS will consider the commercial development at Cefn Mably Farm Park in conjunction with the following matters:

- a. Study Area - Description of the development site and the surrounding countryside; a summary of the overall visibility; and the identification of potential visual receptor locations relevant to the lake.
- b. Identification and assessment of relevant landscape character designations
- c. Identification and assessment of relevant assessment of visual amenity
- d. Assessment of impacts of a small scale lake construction
- e. Mitigation measures to reduce the potential landscape and visual impacts
- f. Conclusions

## STUDY AREA

For the purpose of the LVS, a study area has been identified that would cover not only the development site but has been extended to cover approx. 1.5km radius, radiating out from the development site boundary.

The extent of the study area has been defined and based on an initial desk top survey using local maps, aerial imagery and was confirmed through the site evaluation visit (01 April 2025) as an appropriate scoping distance.

Cefn Mably Park Farm is located to the north of Junction 30 of the M4 Motorway and the outskirts of Cardiff. The development site is a separate from the main visitor attraction and is mainly a woodland area and in part previously used for animal rearing. The development site is located in a wider landscape of mainly agricultural land for grazing and some arable production.

The single track Cefn Mabley Road passes adjacent to the western site boundary and connects outlying villages to the north-west, north and north-east and the fringe residential areas of Cardiff to the south. The single track Began Road passes adjacent to the southern site boundary and connects with outlying farmstead to the east.

The character of the study area consists of agricultural fields and large woodland blocks of Cefn Mably Woods (southwest), Coed y Tranch (north and Coed Wern-due (north-west).

Within the study area there are several large manmade structures that have degraded the countryside, these include the numerous large overhead electricity pylons, motorway corridor, large buildings and car parks of Cefn Mably Farm Park and the urban fringe of Cardiff.

The local topography and woodland blocks provide considerable screening of the development site from view point locations to the north and west. The small village of Michaelston-y-Fedw is located on the local high ground to the east of the development site but is screened from the developments site by local topography and local trees and hedgerow.



Figure 1: Location Plan and Development Site

## LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

The study area has been defined based on an initial desk top survey including local maps and was confirmed through the onsite investigation as an appropriate scoping distance. The desktop analysis of the landscape character and landscape designations within the study area and confirmed that the development site was not located or formed any part of the following;

- World Heritage Site,
- Scheduled Monument,
- Green Belt,
- Registered Parks and Garden or
- Special Landscape Area
- Listed Building

## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Data presented within Natural Resources Wales/Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru states that the study area for this LVS is located within the National Landscape Character Assessment No. 35 Caerdydd, Barri a'r Casnewydd / Cardiff, Barry and Newport

LANDMAP also provides additional 'Visual and Sensory Aspect' information on a more local basis and the development site is within designation '**Rhydney Valley NWPRTVS003**'.

**Description:** *Open character of pastoral and arable land enclosed by more wooded rolling landscapes to east. The area is focused on the sinuous course of the River Rhydney which is strongly defined by riparian vegetation of alders, willows and other species. The medium scale fields are enclosed by close trimmed hedges. There are other uses such as a cricket ground, nurseries and small reservoir. The valley is crossed by three minor roads but it is generally tranquil in character. Settlement consists of scattered farmhouses and dwellings, some of suburban character.*

The following 'Visual and Sensory' evaluation information has been recorded for **Rhydney Valley NWPRTVS003** and will be used to develop an overall landscape sensitivity to change as impacted by the lake development.

### Evaluation:

- Q26 - Value: Moderate
- Q27 - Condition: Good - well-managed in most areas
- Q28 - Trend: Constant.
- Q29 - Existing management: Generally Appropriate
- Q32 – Guideline: Medium Term - **Managed riparian vegetation to ensure long-term tree cover, Encourage increased tree cover in hedgerows.**
- Q33 - Define the key qualities that should be conserved: Tranquillity, rurality.



Figure 2: **Rhydney Valley NWPRTVS003** (Visual and Sensory)

**Evaluation Matrix:**

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Q46 - Evaluation Criteria: Scenic quality, | <b>Moderate</b> , A pleasant rural riverine landscape with attractive views to the adjacent hills.                                                    |
| Q47 - Evaluation Criteria: Integrity,      | <b>Moderate</b> , The area is generally in good condition unspoilt by major intrusive development.                                                    |
| Q48 - Evaluation Criteria: Character,      | <b>Moderate</b> , Moderate sense of place.                                                                                                            |
| Q49 - Evaluation Criteria: Rarity,         | Moderate, Representative lowland valley farmland <b>without significant rarity</b> .                                                                  |
| Q50 - <b>Overall Evaluation</b> ,          | <b>Moderate</b> , Pleasant rural valley floor in good condition focussed on attractive river corridor <b>slightly affected by urban fringe uses</b> . |
| Q51 - Justification of overall evaluation: | <b>All criteria Moderate.</b>                                                                                                                         |

Therefore, the **Rhymney Valley NWPRTVS003** has a **Medium Sensitivity** to the lake development.

It is considered that due to the very low level of intervisibility of the development site that the impacts made on the setting of this landscape asset would largely be unchanged and the development would be considered to have 'none to negligible' significance and **not significant**.

**Residential Dwellings**

To provide context, the local residential amenity remains relevant to this report and would be limited to the small number of dwellings along Cefn Mably Road, Home Farm and Ty-Hir Farm located within close proximity of the development site.

The low number of residential dwellings are private property and it has not been possible to ascertain all possible views but given the local topography and presence of mature vegetation, that the lake would not appear obvious or out of the ordinary.

Views from local private residential dwellings are not protected by national planning guidance or local planning policy. Accordingly, changes to the character, 'quality' and nature of private views are not a material planning consideration in the determination of a planning application.

For clarity, there are no local residential dwellings that would have a full and un-interrupted view of the development site.

## Ancient Woodland

There are several blocks of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland that are located to the north and the south of the developments site and along the Rhymney River corridor to the north-west. These woodland blocks would not be directly impacted by the lake development and provide considerable screening of the development site from the higher ground locations to the north and west.



Figure 3: Ancient and Semi-Ancient Woodland

## Heritage Assets

From the large study area is 1.5 km radius (approx. 2.5 million m<sup>2</sup>) the conclusion of the desktop study is that from the vast majority of the study area, there are **only a few partial views** of the development site due to intervening topography, buildings, trees and hedge etc.

Within the 1.5km study area, there are several Grade II and a single Grade II\* Listed buildings of Church of St Michael to the east of the development site. These heritage assets and their 'settings' would be considered to have a High sensitivity to change and would experience 'no change' by the lake development.

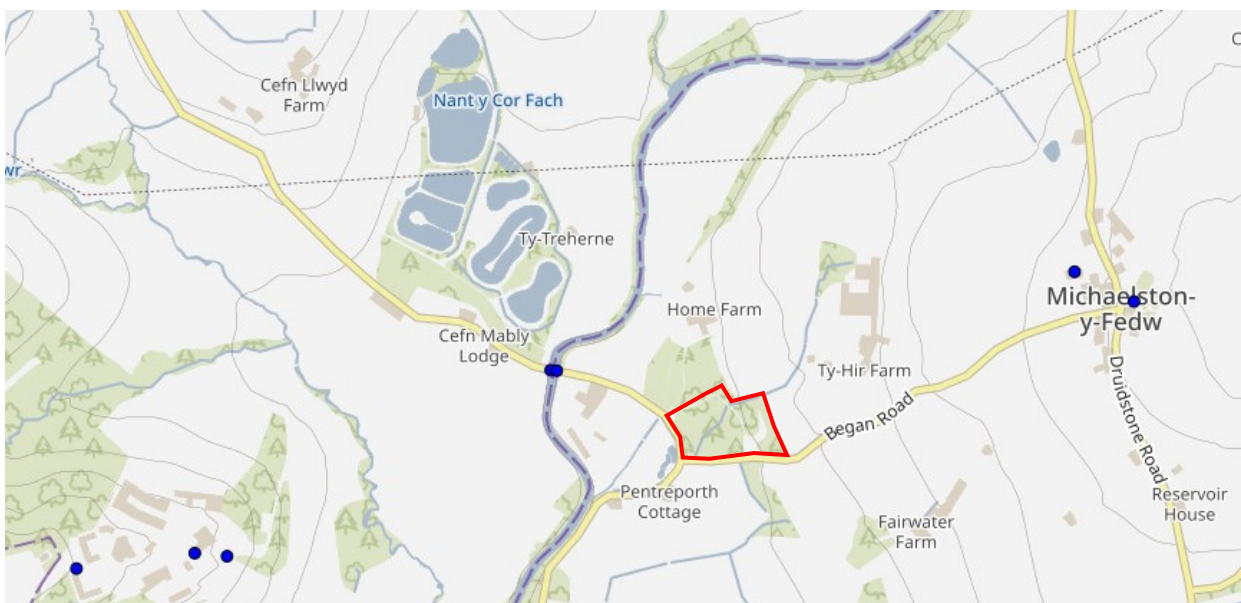


Figure 4: Listed Buildings

## VISUAL AMENITY

A study area of approx. 1.5km has been defined and based on an initial desk top survey including local maps / aerial imagery and confirmed through the site evaluation visit (01 April 2025) as an appropriate scoping distance.

The fieldwork analysis of the visibility of the development site entailed walking and driving around the local countryside and photographically recording any views of the development site from publicly accessible locations.

From the large study area 1.5km radius, the conclusion of the field study is that there is only a few vantage points with an oblique, and partial view of the lake within the development site.

This report has also provided a set of photographs that illustrate that the development site is not visible from various publicly accessible vantage points within the local countryside.

The identified photograph locations are located as follows;

- |                       |       |                                 |           |
|-----------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| • <b>Viewpoint 1:</b> | North | - Footpath near Home Farm.      | - VIEW    |
| • <b>Viewpoint 2:</b> | West  | - Cefn Mably Road.              | - NO VIEW |
| • <b>Viewpoint 3:</b> | West  | - Cefn Mably Road / Began Road. | - NO VIEW |
| • <b>Viewpoint 4:</b> | South | - Began Road.                   | - VIEW    |
| • <b>Viewpoint 5:</b> | East  | - Footpath near Ty-hir Farm.    | - NO VIEW |

The viewpoint location from roadways are considered to have a **Low sensitivity** to change from the lake development. Views of the lake within the development site as seen from long public footpaths have a **High sensitivity** to change.

Photographs were taken from the listed 'Viewpoint Locations' (refer to following photograph sheets) and have been described with mitigation measures proposed to reduce the visual impact of the lodge development.

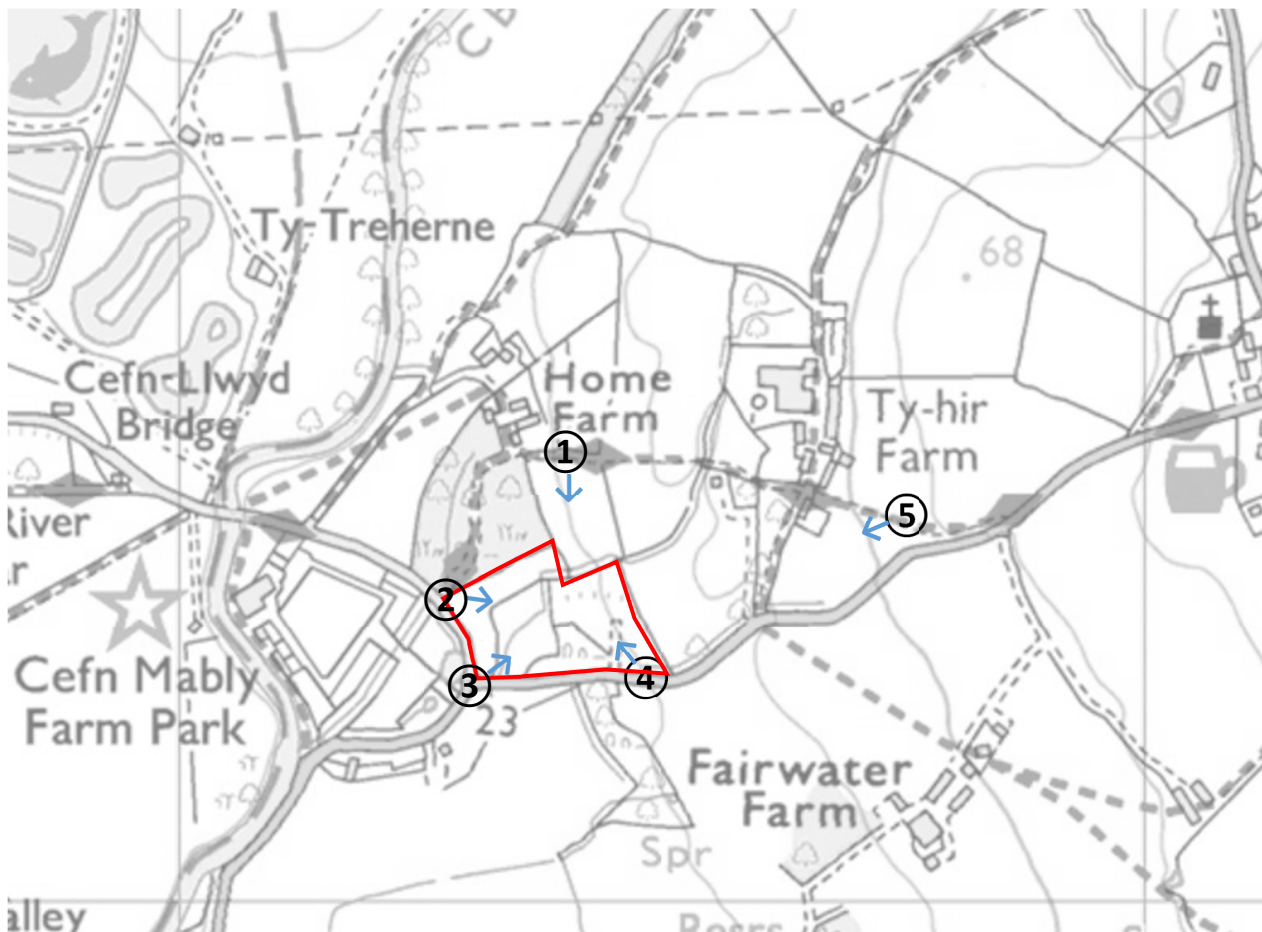


Figure 5: Viewpoint Location Plan

**Viewpoint 1: Rhymney Circular Footpath, near Home Farm, Looking South.**

Lake Within Development Site With Newly Planted Trees



**Description of the View:**

From the majority of the local and long distance footpaths, there are no views of the development site due to existing mature and tall hedgerows and the local undulating topography.

This photograph is taken from the footway and is a good example of the view by local hikers as they walk along a short section within this sloped field.

The existing boundary hedgerow to this development site, as seen in this photograph, already contributes to the reducing views toward the lake and adjacent earth bunds.

New tree and hedgerow planting would contribute to reducing the view of the lake and earth bunds.

|                                          |         |                      |             |                                    |          |
|------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Landscape Sensitivity to Change:         | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL. |
| Visual Sensitivity to Change (Footpath): | High,   | Magnitude of Change: | Negligible, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL. |

Viewpoint 2: Cefn Mably Road, Looking East.

Newly Planted Tree and Hedge Along Cefn Mably Road  
and Entrance into Development Site.

Approximate Direction of Lake



Description of the View:

From the majority of the local road ways, there are no views of the development site due to existing mature and tall hedgerows and the local undulating topography.

This photograph is taken at the Cefn Mably Road junction and the private access track into the development site.

From Cefn Mably Road there are no views of the development site due to adjacent tall trees and mature, dense hedgerow.

A new boundary of trees and hedgerow has been planted, as seen in the photograph, and would, in time, return a native hedgerow along this section of Cefn Mably Road.

|                                  |         |                      |             |                                    |            |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| Landscape Sensitivity to Change: | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL.   |
| Visual Sensitivity to Change:    | Low,    | Magnitude of Change: | NONE,       | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NO CHANGE. |

Viewpoint 3: Junction of Cefn Mably Road and Bagan Road, Looking East.

NO VIEW

Cefn Mably Road

Approximate Direction of Lake



Description of the View:

From the majority of these road ways, there are no views of the development site due to existing mature and tall hedgerows and the local undulating topography.

This photograph is taken from the junction of the adjacent Cefn Mably Road / Bagan Road and the existing dense hedgerow and trees provide screening into the development site.

It is intended that as part of the ongoing management that the boundary trees and hedgerow would be maintained as seen in the photograph and would continue to screen the lake within the development site.

|                                  |         |                      |             |                                    |            |
|----------------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| Landscape Sensitivity to Change: | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL.   |
| Visual Sensitivity to Change:    | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NO CHANGE. |

Viewpoint 4: Began Road, Looking North.



Description of the View:

From the majority of the local road ways, there are no views of the development site due to existing mature and tall hedgerows and the local undulating topography.

This photograph is taken from the adjacent Began Road along the southern boundary of the development site. There is no view of the lake but there is an oblique, partial and transient view of the earth bunds within the development site.

A new boundary of trees and hedgerow has been planted, as seen in the photograph, and would, in time, return a native hedgerow along this section of Began Road as well as reduce the impact of the earth bunds.

|                                         |         |                      |             |                                    |          |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Landscape Sensitivity to Change:        | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL. |
| Visual Sensitivity to Change (Roadway): | Low,    | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL. |

Viewpoint 5: Footpath near Ty-hir Farm, Looking West.

NO VIEW



Description of the View:

This photograph is taken from the footpath, located (approx. 800m) to the east of the development site and there are no views of the development site due to existing mature and tall hedgerows and the local undulating topography.

It is intended that as part of the ongoing management that the boundary trees and hedgerow would be maintained, as seen in the photograph, and would continue to screen the lake within the development site.

|                                          |         |                      |             |                                    |           |
|------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Landscape Sensitivity to Change:         | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NEGLIGIBLE, | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NEUTRAL.  |
| Visual Sensitivity to Change (Footpath): | Medium, | Magnitude of Change: | NONE,       | Significance of Effect (Residual): | NO CHANGE |

## ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZVI)

The ZVI plan shown below (Figure 6) indicates the extent at which the development site can be seen (confirmed from 'on the ground' site survey (01 April 2025) within the study area and along publicly accessible footpaths, roads and amenity areas within the countryside.

The viewpoint locations listed in the previous section are not comprehensive but do include the representative vantage points on which this assessment has been carried out.

The ZVI plan illustrates the outcomes of the site visit and field survey and confirm that from the vast majority of the study area the development site would not be visible.

Only from a **few adjacent locations** within the local landscape, can the development site be visibly discerned. The lack of visibility is mainly due to the local topography, local tall trees and hedges which obscure views toward the development site.

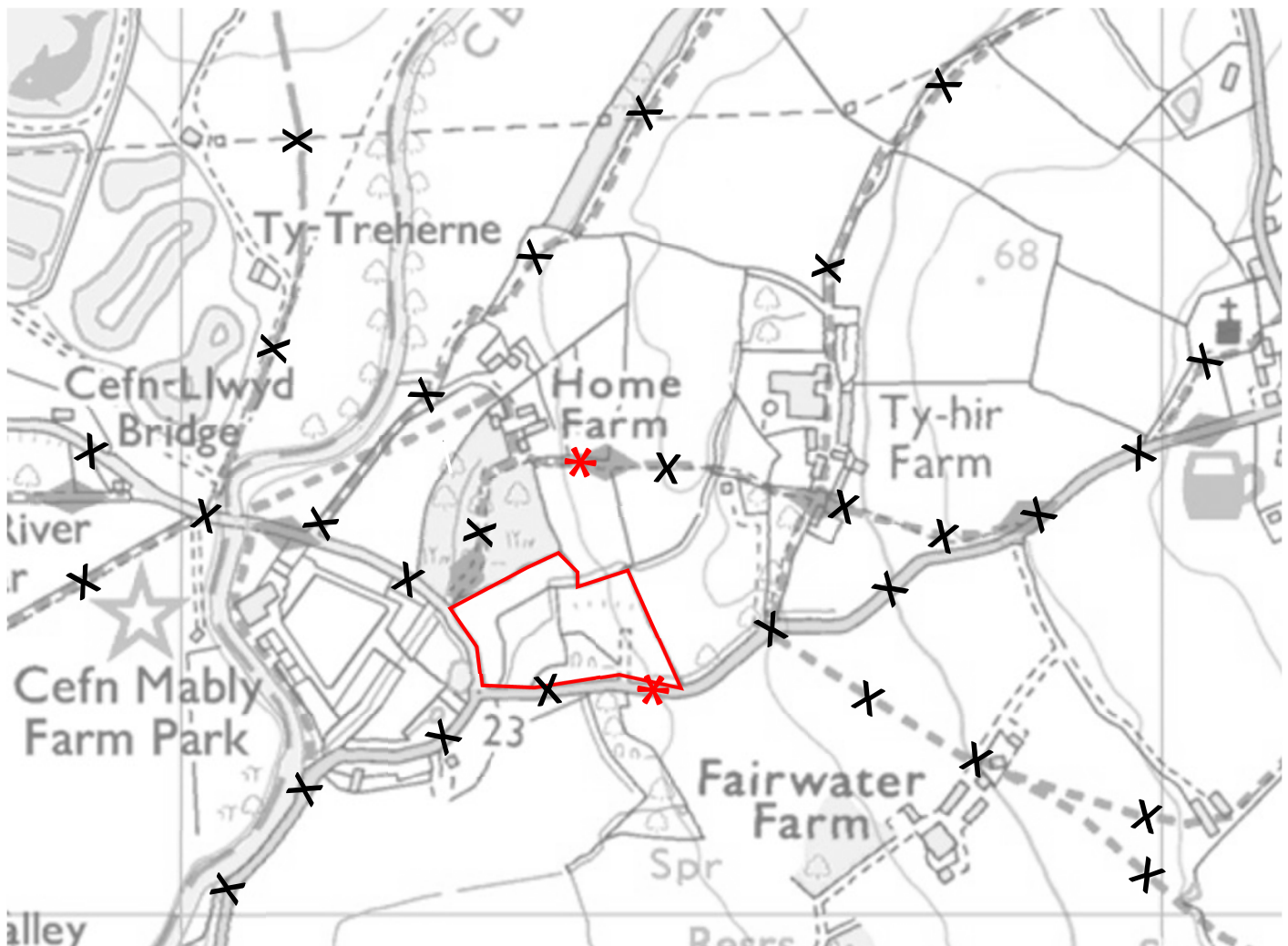


Figure 6: Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)

### Key

- X** - Locations with no view of the development site
- \*** - Locations with a view of the development site

## MITIGATION MEASURES

As can be determined from the photograph sheets above, the development site is mostly concealed by the existing boundary trees and hedgerows. The only view possible is from a short section of footpath (north) and a short section of Began Road (south) where the lake and or earth bunds can be partially seen.

Significant lengths of hedgerow have already been planted along Cefn Mably Road and Began Road as well as 'secondary' tree belts and numerous individual trees (6-8cm girth) which would all contribute to reducing the visual impact of the lake and associated earth bunds (approx. 2 metres tall).

The existing management regime for the development site would also support and maintain the boundary trees and hedgerows and provide both privacy and ecological habitats.



Figure 7: Landscape Plan - Existing and Proposed Hedgerow Planting

## CONCLUSION

Mr Edwards is applying for retrospective planning consent for a single lake and associated earth bunds which are located on land to the east of Cefn Mably Farm Park visitor attraction. The existing site is part woodland and part open agricultural land having previously been used for rearing animals.

As started above, the landscape character of the study area is mainly agricultural grazing fields but it does have some detracting features including the tall electricity pylons, commercial Cefn Mably Farm Park and M4 Motorway corridor etc. The study area is located within the **Landscape Character Area 'Rhymney Valley NWPRTVS003'** and would have a **Medium** landscape sensitivity to the lake which would **not have a significant impact** on the wider LCT.

Within the local study area (1.5km radius) and as shown in Figure 6 - the 'Zone of Visual Influence' the development site cannot be seen from the vast majority of the study area. There is only a partial and oblique view from the adjacent footpath (Viewpoint 1) and Began Road (Viewpoint 4).

There have been planted significant lengths of hedgerow along Cefn Mably Road and Began Road as well as 'secondary' tree belts and numerous individual trees (6-8cm girth) along the southern boundary. All of which would contribute to reducing the visual impact of the lake and associated earth bunds (approx. 2 metres tall).

The existing management regime for the development site would also support and maintain the boundary trees and hedgerows and provide both privacy and ecological habitats.

The proposed management regime is considered to be in line with the 'Landmap, Visual and Sensory Aspect' information and guidance (Q 32), which recommends that the '**management of the riparian vegetation to ensure long-term tree cover and encourage increased tree cover in hedgerows**' and would be considered to have a '**neutral impact**' to the local landscape character.

The ongoing management regime of the existing and newly planted areas would contribute and effectively reduce the impact of the development site from the few local viewpoint. This would be considered to have '**no change / minimal adverse impact**' to the visual amenity of the local countryside.

In conclusion, the lake and bunds within the development site cannot be seen within the local landscape and in both, landscape character and visual amenity terms, there are no significant effects on the vast majority of the countryside.

**REPORT END**