



Bangor & Blaenau Ffestiniog

Strategic Placemaking Workshop Report



Key Points

There is identified housing need in both Bangor and Blaenau Ffestiniog, particularly for one-bed homes and, in Bangor, affordable family homes. However, financial viability of development is problematic and needs to be addressed to encourage development. Currently, almost all new housing development is affordable and developed by RSLs. In Bangor, the majority of development is in the form of flats, which do not attract any parking provision requirement. There are a number of plots with derelict buildings and empty brownfield sites within walking distance of city centre facilities. In both locations there are numerous empty properties which could be redeveloped to provide homes, including homes above shops or other commercial uses.

In Blaenau Ffestiniog there are derelict and under-used sites and parking areas with potential for infill development. New development on the edges of the town is limited by topography and the valuable landscape of the national park context. Public transport connects the town to nearby settlements, but services by train are infrequent. Two previously allocated sites beyond walking distance of the town centre have not been developed.

There are measures that can be taken in both towns to enable and promote development of more town-centre housing. This could include policies in the emerging revised Local Development Plan, design principles in Development Briefs or Plot Passports and working with partners such as RSLs to remove barriers and bring forward developments. Understanding the barriers and potential for local private developers, self-builders and community led housing developers would be positive. In Blaenau Ffestiniog, encouraging tourism could boost the vibrancy of the town centre.

This report identifies potential town-centre housing sites and typologies for development in Bangor and Blaenau Ffestiniog. It also provides guidance on tools for conducting town and site analysis, and establishing design principles to support the delivery of affordable town-centre housing.



Strategic Placemaking: How a placemaking approach to planning can support sustainable settlements

The Design Commission for Wales is providing practical support to planning authorities through the Strategic Placemaking Project, helping to reimagine how towns and cities in Wales can grow sustainably and compactly.

We are supporting eight planning authorities to embed placemaking in their Local Development Plans, particularly in relation to where growth should be located, and balance the emphasis on large strategic sites, which require significant infrastructure investment and can be challenging to deliver with mixed-use centres and public transport.

Our approach focuses on making the most of existing infrastructure and facilities by identifying opportunities for infill, densification and redevelopment within existing settlements. We are helping local authorities and national parks to create clear, place-based visions and establish simple, practical design principles to guide and enable housing and mixed-use development at a settlement level.

There are good examples of these types of developments within settlements in Wales and elsewhere in the UK. We have identified good practice and how good design can overcome common challenges with small sites and support placemaking. We have also identified measures to bring forward and enable developments and deliver high-quality design.

We believe that small, design-led housing developments can make a significant contribution to affordable housing in Wales, while supporting our vision for vibrant, 20-minute neighbourhoods. Through this project, we are equipping planning authorities with the skills and tools they need to unlock the potential of these sites and create great places to live.



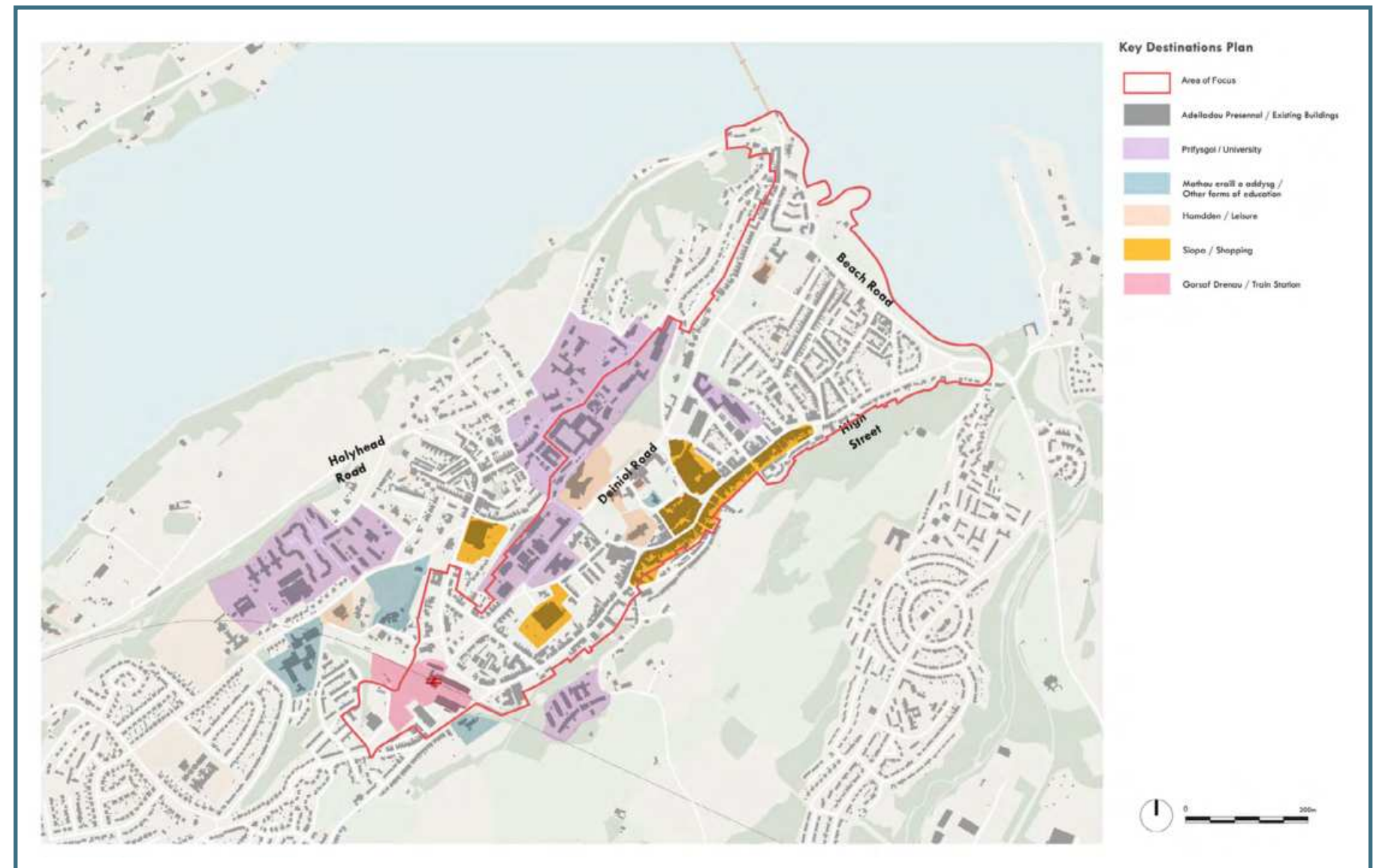
A Summary of Bangor

A wider analysis of Bangor shows that the city centre includes a range of facilities and amenities for residents. There are very good transport links via train and bus, meaning parking requirements could be reduced. Although there are a range of shops, cafes and bars, the high street has many empty units. The long length of the high street and the extensive edge/out of town retail exacerbate this issue.

Since the previous LDP, a number of brownfield sites have become available in the city centre. There are also potential upcoming development opportunities at the Menai Shopping Centre, old Post Office, swimming pool, Coleg Menai and redundant university sites.

The steep topography limits development potential at the edges of the city centre and reduces the convenience of active travel. Bringing empty buildings back into use by refurbishing and converting to residential or mixed use would have the benefit of adding additional activity to the town throughout the day and evening.

Currently, the majority of housing applications are for flats from RSLs, which helps meet the demand for one-bed homes. However, there is also a need for family homes. Encouraging more private developers and being clear about the type of development wanted would be positive.



Plan taken from Bangor Placemaking Plan, showing location of amenities and facilities

Bangor Potential Sites

A good understanding of the place, allows for easier identification of sites. The majority of opportunities for housing in Bangor city centre appear to be through developing empty brownfield sites and plots with derelict buildings. It is also useful to consider whether or not parking provision in the city meets or exceeds demand, as under-used parking sites can offer good development opportunities.

By applying a density calculation to a potential site, it is possible to get a general idea of the number of homes the site may be able to provide. A density of 50-80 dwellings per hectare is appropriate within Bangor. Whilst applying average densities can give a high level idea of capacity, these will, of course, need to be tested against a sites constraints and opportunities; and it is not applicable to redevelopment of redundant buildings.

The sites identified within this document are just samples, to support this process and many more may exist. DCFW recommends that a comprehensive audit of the town be undertaken to identify all potential development sites.

BANGOR

Nodi Safleoedd Posibl Identifying Potential Sites

➤ Safle / Site A

Defnydd Presennol: Tir ac adeilad diffaith
Current Use: Derelict building and grounds

0.388 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 19-31 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 19-31 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site B

Defnydd Presennol: Adeilad gwag
Current Use: Vacant building

0.041 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 2-3 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 2-3 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site C

Defnydd Presennol: Lle parcio
Current Use: Car parking

0.719 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 35-58 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 35-58 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site D

Defnydd Presennol: Adeilad diffaith
Current Use: Vacant building

Potensial ar gyfer ei adnewyddu/ôl-osod
Potential for refurbishment/retrofit 0.313 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 15-25 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 15-25 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site E

Defnydd Presennol: Siediau diffaith?
Current Use: Derelict sheds?

0.1636 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 8-13 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 8-13 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site F

Defnydd Presennol: Plot gwag
Current Use: Vacant plot

0.586 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 29-47 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 29-47 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site G

Defnydd Presennol: Plot gwag
Current Use: Vacant plot

0.092 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 4-7 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 4-7 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



➤ Safle / Site H

Defnydd Presennol: Plot gwag
Current Use: Vacant plot

0.184 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 9-15 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 9-15 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare



Design Principles for Placemaking in Bangor

The key considerations for identifying sites in Bangor can be considered in the context of the Placemaking Wales Charter’s six placemaking principles.

People & 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.

Bangor has a large student population, whereas many of the staff of the city’s main employers (the university and hospital) live outside of the city. Improving the mix of housing types, including more family housing, would strengthen the sense of community outside of university term time. One-bed homes with their own front doors would address housing need whilst creating a sense of belonging and connection between people and place.

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.

Having homes located in close proximity to shops and services make a place sustainable and active, with residents supporting businesses and bringing life to the streets throughout the day and year.

In Bangor, developing housing on derelict sites and identified brownfield plots within walking distance of the high street would be beneficial. The steep topography needs to be taken into account when assessing potential locations. Housing above commercial uses would also provide homes close to city-centre facilities.

Mix of Uses

Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to 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.

More homes with a mix of tenures and sizes within the existing city centre will create a better balance of uses. Housing with a mix of tenures would contribute to a diverse community and more vibrant public realm, as people would be present at different times of the day and evening.

Alternative uses to retail could be considered for the ground floor of Bangor’s long high street, with homes located on the upper floors.

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.

How sites can be accessed via foot, cycle, public transport and car is a key principle for any development.

Bangor is very well connected by public transport, reducing residents' reliance on car travel. This means there could be a reduction in parking requirements in some circumstances, which in turn can lead to a higher density of homes being possible.

The steep topography has an impact on active travel.

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.

Bringing empty buildings and sites back to life, especially by including homes above commercial uses, would add vitality to the public realm.

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.

Making use of derelict buildings and spaces above existing shops would help preserve the character they bring to the town, whilst developing empty brownfield sites is an opportunity to consider an appropriate contemporary character.

Consideration will need to be given to any listed buildings or other heritage assets in the area.

Designing for Growth in Bangor

The key to growing Bangor from within is to focus on developing empty brownfield sites and derelict building, as well as adding homes through the redevelopment of upper floors on the high street. Homes above commercial units would help meet the demand for one-bed homes with their own front doors.

Continuing the flexibility on highways and parking requirements would open up opportunities for more housing within the existing neighbourhood and maximise use of redundant sites and buildings.

Partnering with RSLs and engaging small private developers and potential self-builder and community-led developers to deliver more variety of homes in the city would be a positive step. This would help to enable more development and diversify the types of developers active in the city.



Residential Above Shops/Offices



Often, the upper floors of shops or office buildings in town centres are empty or under-used. This offers an opportunity to improve the mix of uses by adding housing to upper floors.

A case study of how this has been implemented elsewhere:

Swanley High Street, Kent

This mixed-use development accommodates 17 new homes and a co-working/business space on a vacant plot on the high street in the town centre. The project is a good example of a local authority making use of a redundant high street site to drive regeneration, support small local businesses and meet housing demand by building appropriately sized new homes in the town centre.



Empty Brownfield Sites



Light industrial, commercial and education sites often become redundant as market demands change over time or organisations develop new facilities. These are often found in areas with good transport links, so are prime to redevelopment for housing or a mix of uses.

A case study of how this has been implemented elsewhere:

Clockhouse Gardens, Welwyn

50 new homes occupy the site of a derelict former hotel which sits between the busy A1(M) motorway and a strip of woodland at the edge of the settlement. Five building blocks are arranged to create a courtyard and buffer noise from the motorway, whilst benefiting from the adjacent woodland. A material palette of brick and timber, and an extensive landscape scheme also respond to the qualities of the different sides of the site.



A Summary of Blaenau Ffestiniog

Although Blaenau Ffestiniog is relatively small, wider analysis shows there is a range of amenities and assets which could support sustainable town-centre living.

Public transport connections are mainly via bus, as trains are infrequent. Reliance of private car travel is high, and active travel opportunities are limited by topography, which also constrains edge of town development.

The town experiences high levels of deprivation and demand for social housing, especially one-bed homes. With the lowest house prices in Gwynedd, viability of private development is a barrier. Promoting tourism could benefit the town centre and make it more active.

There are a few derelict plots and parking areas which could accommodate new homes, whilst upper floors on the high street could be utilised. The fact that allocated sites outside of the town centre haven't been brought forward for development highlights the need for a different approach.



Aerial view of Blaenau Ffestiniog

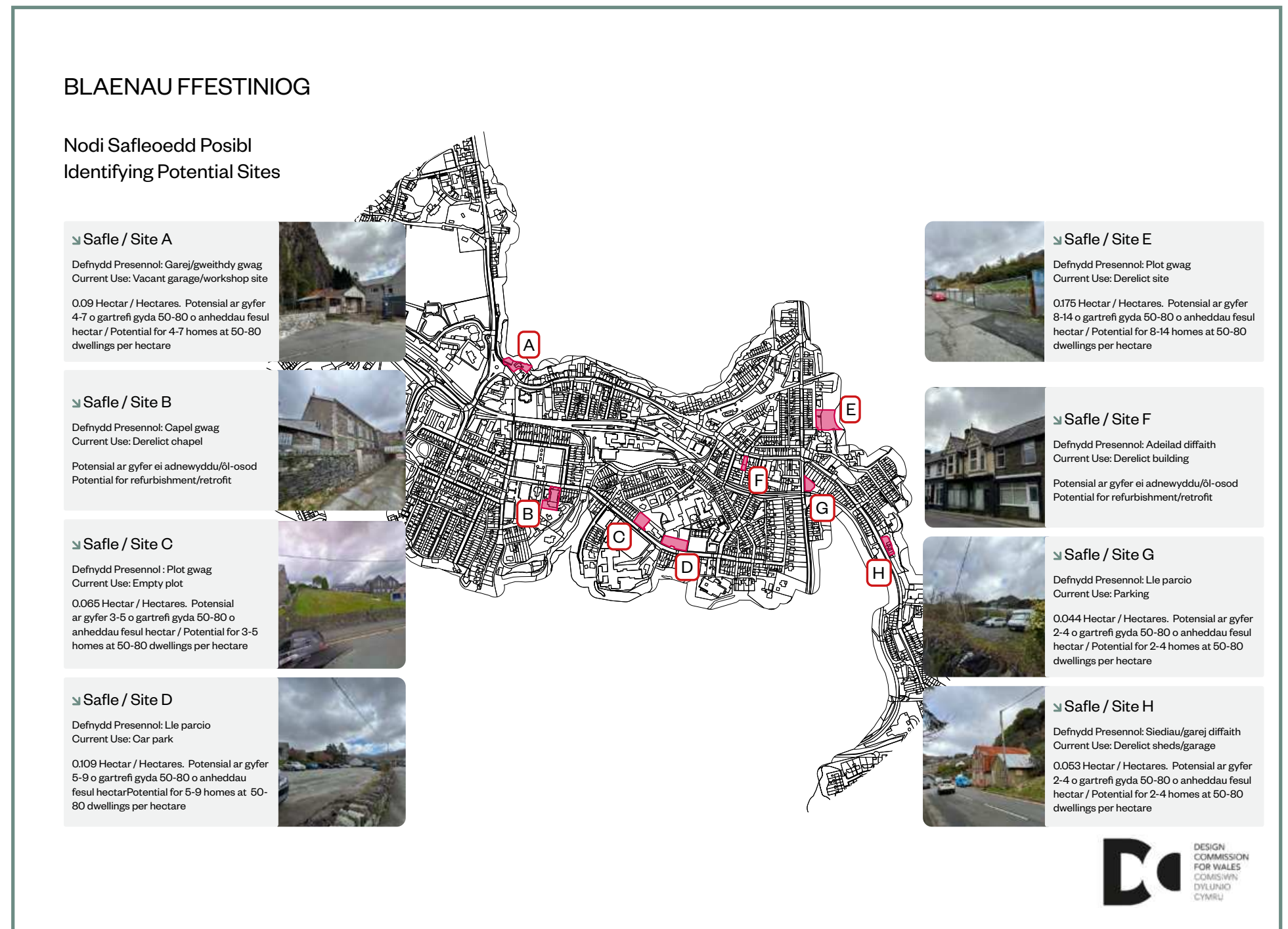
Blaenau Ffestiniog Potential Sites

There are a number of derelict sites and buildings and parking areas in Blaenau Ffestiniog which could be redeveloped to provide new homes within the existing settlement. There is also potential to include homes above commercial or community uses along the high street when empty units are refurbished.

The sites identified within this document are just samples, to support this process and more may exist. DCFW recommends that a comprehensive audit of the town be undertaken to identify all potential development sites. The former Queens Hotel was identified as a potential additional site in the workshop.

By applying a density calculation to a potential site, it is possible to get a general idea of the number of homes the site may be able to provide. A density of up to 50-80 dwellings per hectare is appropriate within Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Whilst applying average densities can give a high level idea of capacity, these will, of course, need to be tested against a sites constraints and opportunities; and it is not applicable to redevelopment of redundant buildings.



Design Principles for Placemaking in Blaenau Ffestiniog

The key considerations for identifying sites in Blaenau Ffestiniog can be considered in the context of the Placemaking Wales Charter’s six placemaking principles.

People & 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.

There is already strong sense of community in Blaenau Ffestiniog, as many families would have previously been employed in the slate industry.

Much of the existing housing is in the form of terraced housing built for the slate-workers. However, there is a demand for one-bed homes which is not currently being met.

Homes with their own front doors have many social benefits and foster a sense of belonging, as well as avoiding issues associated with communal corridors and stairwells.

Where new homes can be integrated with the existing settlement, the sense of community will be enhanced.

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.

Development on the edges of the town is limited by the dramatic topography and National Park status of the surrounding landscape.

New homes in Blaenau Ffestiniog can easily be located within walking distance of town centre facilities. This could be through redevelopment of derelict buildings and plots or infill homes on under-used parking areas.

Mix of Uses

Places have a range of purposes which provide opportunities for community development, local business growth and access to 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.

Housing with a mix of tenures which meets current and predicted future demands would contribute to a diverse community and more vibrant public realm.

More variety of homes in the town centre would support a range of uses year-round and during the daytime and evenings.

Blaenau Ffestiniog’s residents have to travel elsewhere to access some facilities. More housing in the town centre would increase footfall and support more businesses and facilities.

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.

How sites can be accessed via foot, cycle, public transport and car is a key principle for any development. Any potential development should be well connected and permeable, with good links to the town centre facilities.

Ideally, housing should be located within walking distance of facilities, or along active travel and public transport routes.

Blaenau Ffestiniog is compact, but active travel is limited by topography. There is a bus (and infrequent train) service connecting the town to nearby settlements which have additional facilities. Bringing the overgrown section of railway into use for active travel or train travel could be considered.

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.

New housing sites provide an opportunity to contribute to a positive public realm and incorporate green space to better support well being and biodiversity. Integrating SuDS with planting and well designed public spaces would bring numerous benefits, including alleviating flood risk.

Additional homes in the town centre would contribute to a more active public realm throughout the day.

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.

Making use of derelict buildings and spaces above existing shops would help preserve the historic character they bring to the town.

The town is largely built from the material - slate - which was the reason for its creation. This gives the place a strong visual identity and character. New development offers an opportunity to strengthen the town's identity in a contemporary way which avoids pastiche and looks to the future.

Consideration will also need to be given to any listed buildings or other heritage assets in the area.

Designing for Growth in Blaenau Ffestiniog

Blaenau Ffestiniog was established to support the slate industry, and has grown up around the traditional town centre with its transport hub, market and shops. There is potential to strengthen the core of the town with strategically located housing.

As well as providing homes above commercial uses on the high street, there are some empty brownfield sites, derelict buildings and plots or parking areas with potential for development.

Due to the positive policy in place allowing residents to use public car parks, there is an opportunity to consider lower on-site parking requirements. This could make potential sites more viable and support good placemaking.

Some case studies relating to site typologies found in Blaenau Ffestiniog are given opposite.



Urban Infill Sites



Under-used car parking and small derelict sites offer potential for development. These areas can be best served by being redeveloped into active and attractive residential uses.

A case study of how this has been implemented elsewhere:

Challender Court, Bristol

This new-build council housing on a former garage site at the back of existing houses achieves Passivhaus standards, whilst making efficient use of the tight, irregular site. Screened balconies help to prevent overlooking and, combined with integrated bike stores, define the entrances. Despite needing to meet Bristol City Council's housing standards to be robust, low maintenance and energy efficient, carefully considered design has created a delightful and sustainable place to live.



Underused Brownfield Sites



These are sites or parts of sites, that have been previously developed, or are no longer considered greenfield and are not being used to their full potential.

A case study of how this has been implemented elsewhere:

Harvey Gardens, Greenwich

This infill development provides four houses, six apartments and a shared community day room for over 60s on a compact garage site next to a railway in Greenwich. Previously the site of garages for the adjacent housing development, this constrained site has been thoughtfully planned to maximise the number of units without compromising on quality and delight. The scheme is extremely dense in comparison to the neighbouring housing, yet each home benefits from its own outdoor space.



Tools



Site & Context Analysis

DCFW prepared planning guidance for the Welsh Government, Site and Context Analysis: Capturing the value of a site, which provides a useful starting point and set of prompts for conducting analysis of towns and potential sites. The guide gives examples of analysis and how this can inform design principles and strategies at three different scales of development.

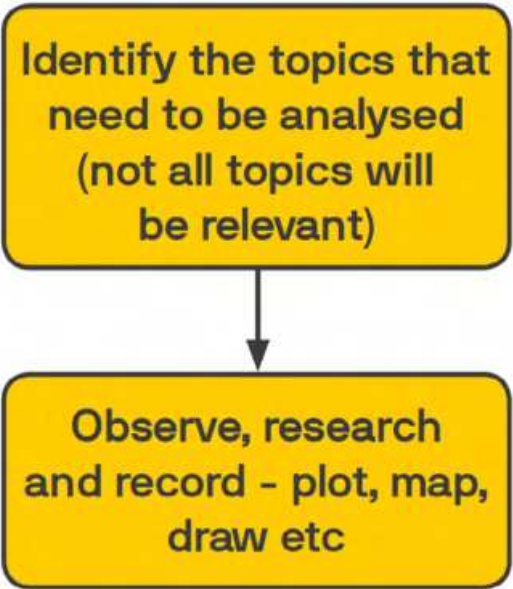
[View the document here.](#)



The four categories of site analysis:

1 Culture & Community	2 Landscape	3 Movement & Infrastructure	4 Built Form
- Site location - Planning context - Surrounding land & building use - Neighbourhood structure - Consultation & engagement - Socio-economics - Market analysis	- Topography - Green & blue infrastructure - Ecology - Ground conditions - Microclimate	- Road hierarchy & access - Public transport - Utilities & Infrastructure	- Urban form - History & archaeology - Building scale, height & density - Building character & building traditions

The approach to site and context analysis:



Preparing a design framework is a useful step following the site analysis as it starts to combine results of context and site analysis with the project vision and brief. It will identify aspects such as:

- Access points
- Movement hierarchy
- Distribution of uses
- Variety in density
- Significant spaces
- Structural landscaping
- Important frontages and entrance locations
- Building orientation

Bangor Immediate Context

Once a site has been identified a more thorough analysis of its immediate context is needed. This will help identify key services and facilities around the sites. The site’s access to public transport is also a key consideration.

This information will help identify what type of housing would be most appropriate for the site. So if it is close to a school then family homes may be more beneficial and if it is close to public transport and shops then flats for older people may be better.

This site is situated within walking distance of city centre shops and other facilities, along a steep street to the south east of the high street. Commercial, education, leisure and health facilities can be easily accessed. The site could be suitable for a terrace of family housing.

BANGOR Cyd-destun Uniongyrchol Immediate Context



Golyfta ar draws Safle H / View across Site H

Safle / Site H

Defnydd Presennol: Plot gwag
Current Use: Vacant site

0.184 Hectar / Hectares

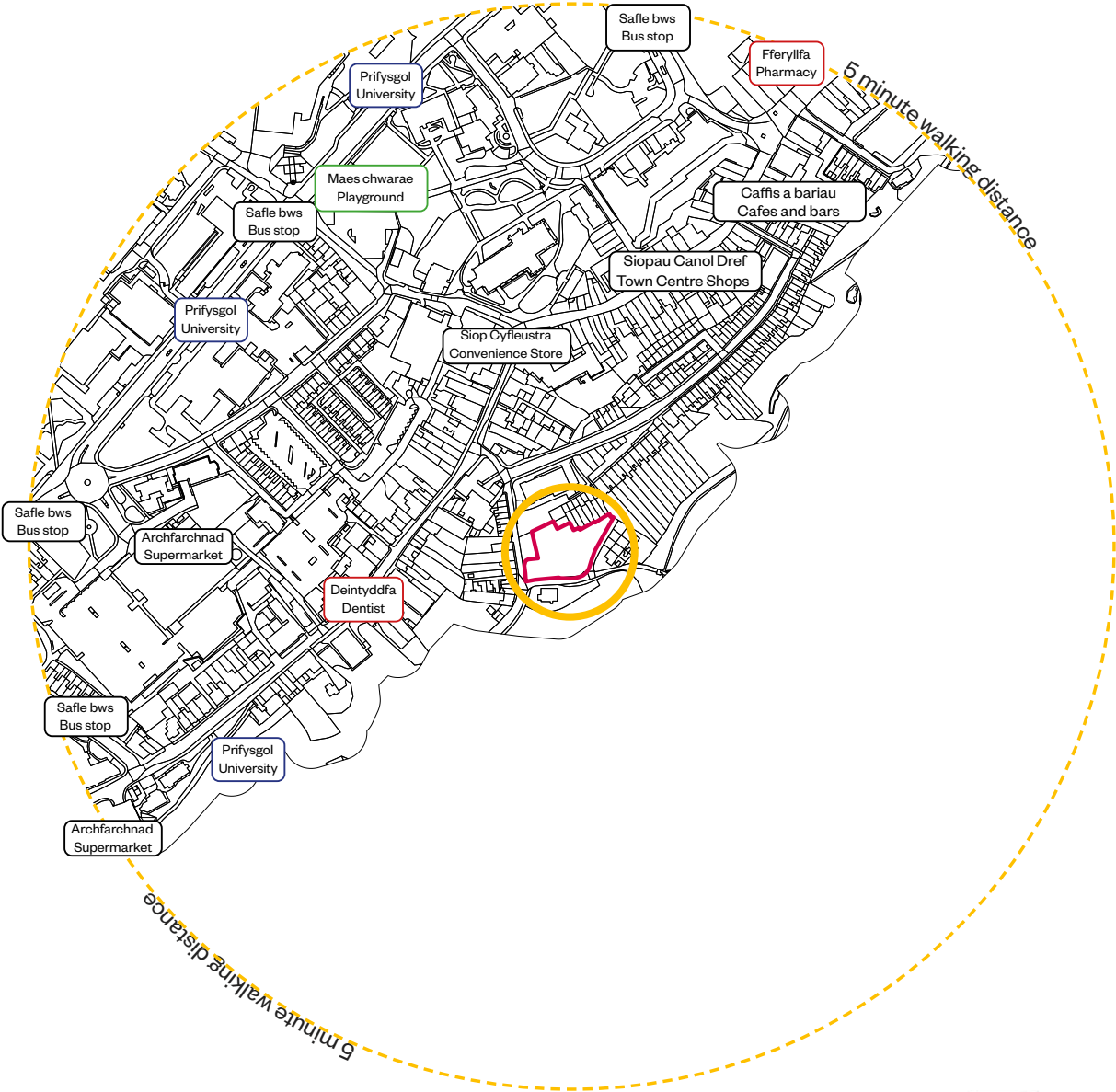
Potensial ar gyfer 9-15 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 9-15 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare

O fewn 5 munud o gerdded (oddeutu 400m) o'r safle, mae nifer o wasanaethau lleol a chyfleusterau lleol.
Within a 5 minute walk (400m radius) of the site, there are a number of local services and community facilities.

- ✓ Siopau stryd fawr / High street shops
- ✓ Siopau Cyfleustra / Convenience stores
- ✓ Fferylfa / Pharmacy
- ✓ Caffis a bariau / Cafes and bars
- ✓ Maes chwarae / Playground
- ✓ Cyfleusterau gofal iechyd / Healthcare facilities
- ✓ Safleoedd bws lleol / Local bus stops
- ✓ Archfarchnad / Supermarket

O fewn 10 munud o gerdded o'r safle, ceir hefyd:
Within a 10 minute walk of the site, there are also:

- ✓ Gorsaf drenau/ Train station
- ✓ Ysgolion / Schools
- ✓ Canolfan Hamdden / Leisure centre



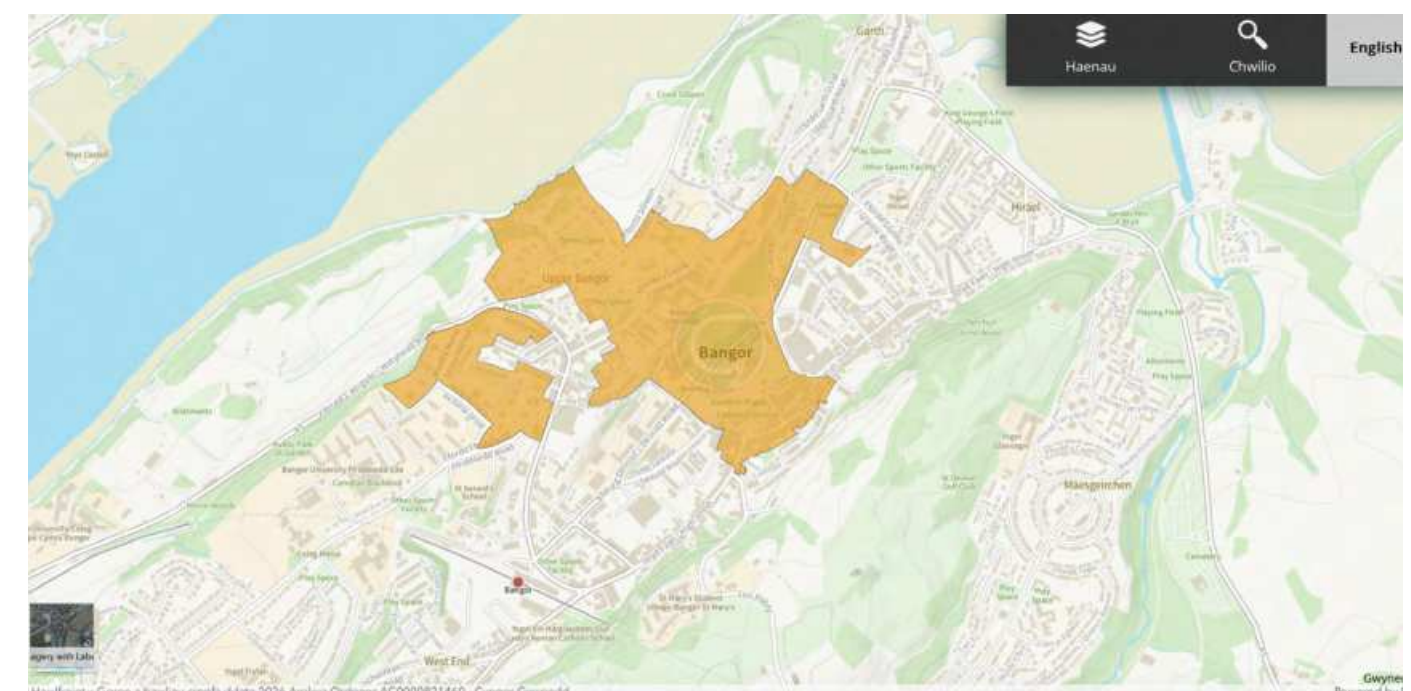
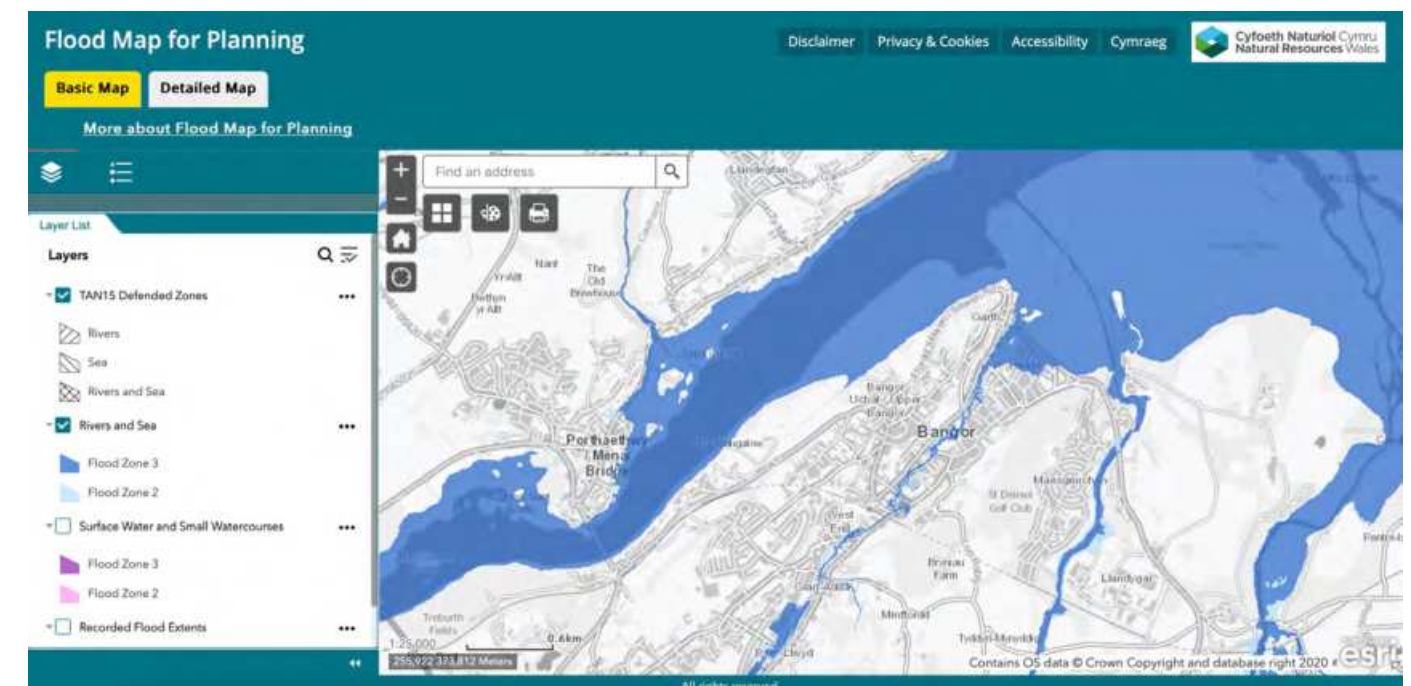
Bangor Flood Risk and Conservation Analysis

Conducting a high level assessment or check of the flood risk and conservation status of potential sites is useful, as these factors may have an impact on the viability of developing a site for residential use.

Flood risk maps can be checked on the Natural Resources Wales website. Flood risk may preclude residential uses, especially at ground floor level.

Conservation area reports or DataMapWales can be used to quickly identify conservation areas, listed buildings and other heritage designations which need to be taken in to consideration.

The examples opposite show the flood risk levels and Conservation Area in Bangor/



Bangor Site Analysis

A site appraisal can determine key issues such as how the site can be accessed and if there are any constraints which the proposed design will need to overcome or opportunities to take advantage of. The key issues to analyse include:

- Site access
- Surrounding uses and potential overlooking
- Existing landscape features that may be retained
- Existing pedestrian/cycle links running through or near to the site
- Key views into or out of the site
- Where key frontages could sit to overlook and present attractive frontages to streets and public spaces

BANGOR Gwerthusiad Safle H Site H Site Appraisal



Golyfys ar draws Safle H / View across Site H

Safle / Site h

Defnydd Presennol: Plot gwag.
Current Use: Vacant site

0.184 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 9-15 o gartrefi gyda 60-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 9-15 homes at 60-80 dwellings per hectare

Mae'r safle hwn wedi'i nodi gan fod y plot yn wag ac yn agos at ganol y dref. / This site has been identified due to the empty building and being close to the town centre.

Mae'r safle ar gyrion canol y dref i gyfeiriad y de ddwyrain, mewn ardal breswyl yn bennaf. Mae'r safle o fewn pellder cerdded byr i'r stryd fawr a chyfleusterau eraill. Er bod tir gwastad mawr ar y safle, mae'r topograffï o'i amgylch yn serth. Mae lleoliad uchel y safle yn cynnig golygfeydd ar draws y ddinas. / The site is located on the south eastern edge of the town centre, in a predominantly residential area. It is a short walk to the main high street and other facilities. Although the site has a large flat plateau, the surrounding topography is steep. The elevated position gives views across the city.

- ✓ Safle nad yw'n cael ei ddefnyddio'n ddigonol / Underused site
- ✓ Mewn ardal breswyl bresennol / In existing residential area
- ✓ Mynediad da at ganol y dref / Good access to the town centre

Potential gains:

- Cyfle i ddefnyddio safle gwag ar gyfer adeiladu tai fforddiadwy yng nghanol y dref / Opportunity to make use of an empty site for affordable town centre housing.



Bangor Design Principles

The focus can now turn to how the identified site can be developed. Key design considerations, informed by the analysis, can be mapped onto the site, which will help form a framework for development. Key design considerations include:

- How the site is accessed
- Main vehicle, pedestrian and cycle routes
- Development areas
- Existing structures to be retained or repurposed
- Location of public open spaces
- Where parking will be located
- Where key frontages need to be situated to overlook streets and public spaces
- Where key buildings could be located

BANGOR

Egwyddorion Safle H Site H Site Principles



Golygfa ar draws Safle H / View across Site H

Safle / Site h

Defnydd Presennol: Plot gwag
Current Use: Vacant site

0.184 Hectar / Hectares. Potensial ar gyfer 9-15 o gartrefi gyda 50-80 o anheddau fesul hectar / Potential for 9-15 homes at 50-80 dwellings per hectare

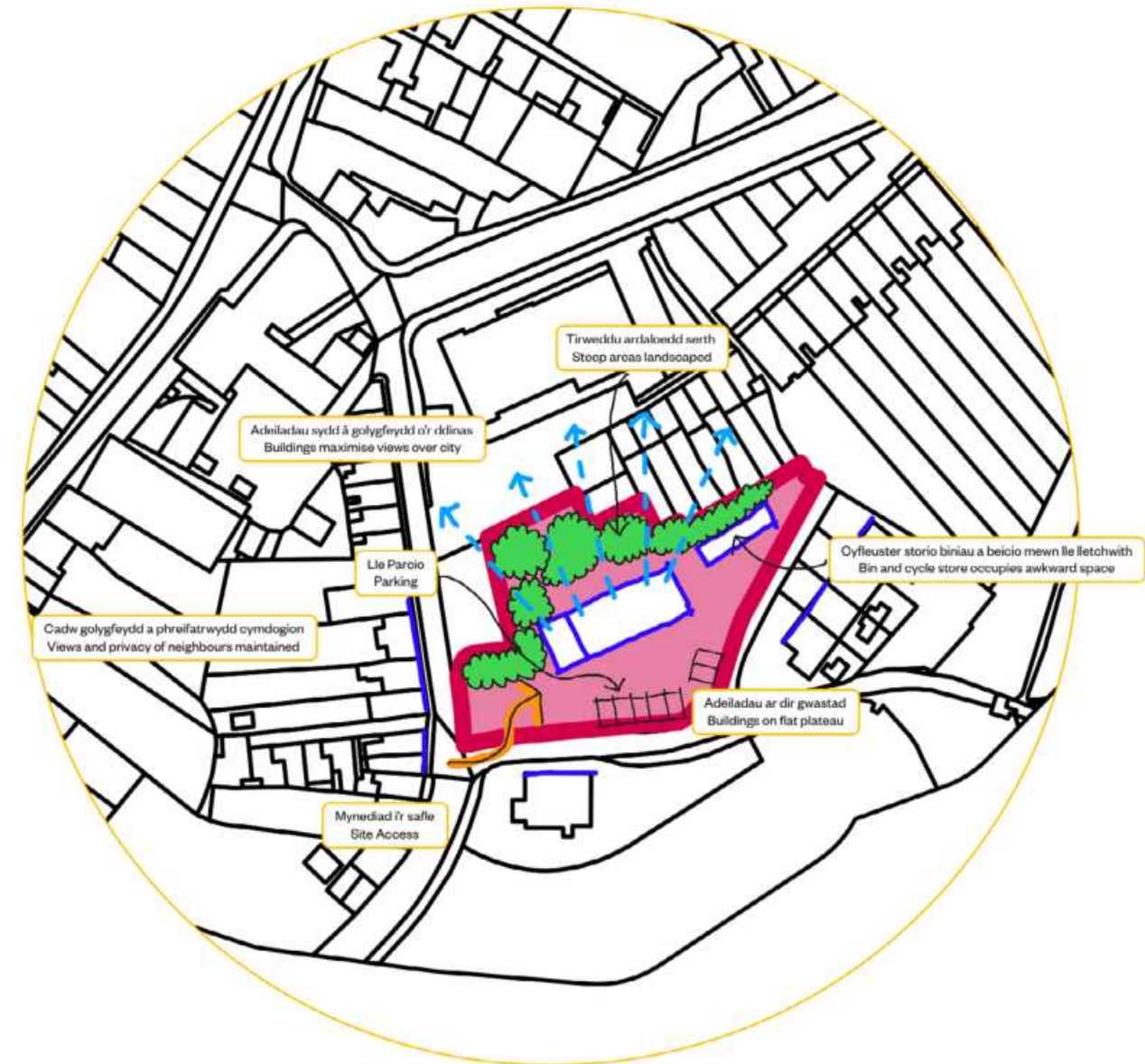
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- ✓ Safle nad yw'n cael ei ddefnyddio'n ddigonol / Underused site
- ✓ Mewn ardal breswyl bresennol / In existing residential area
- ✓ Mynediad da at ganol y dref / Good access to the town centre

Potential gains:

- Cyfle i ddefnyddio safle gwag ar gyfer adeiladu tai fforddiadwy yng nghanol y dref. / Opportunity to make use of an empty site for affordable town centre housing.



Implementation



Planning

The revised Local Development Plan (LDP) provides the opportunity to develop planning policies and supporting guidance to enable the identified potential for development within Bangor and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

There is also the opportunity to prepare development briefs or site passports in the shorter-term.

The workshop and material in this report provides advice on how design principles can be prepared at a town-wide scale and for individual sites. We encourage developing policies and guidance with design principles that establish simple rules that clearly set out what can be done to provide certainty and enable developers to bring forward sites for development, as well as positively inform the design.

We encourage preparing policies, guidance and development briefs that are simple, concise and visual. Design principles do not need to be prescriptive about the architecture of the buildings, materials or elevational treatment, but focus on key aspects that inform the urban form, streets, public spaces, housing typologies and car parking.

Larger sites which become available, such as former university, college, post office and shopping centre sites in Bangor, offer opportunities for mixed use development on a larger scale.

Cyngor Gwynedd is encouraged to make use of DCFW's Design Review and Client Support services if such development comes forward. DCFW can also provide support with training, including member training.

[Design Review](#)

[Client Support](#)

Please contact us to discuss further:

max.hampton@dcfw.org

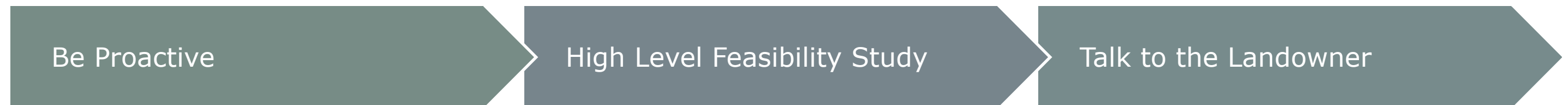
Partners

Engaging positively with a range of partners will help to unlock the development of new housing. This is especially important where viability is a barrier. Understanding the nature of (perceived) barriers so that risks to developers can be reduced is crucial to unlocking the potential of sites to deliver the right types of housing needed in the right place. Partners might include RSLs, small developers, and self-builders who can be supported to bring forward sites and positively shape the design quality of schemes.

With easy access to the National Park, Blaenau Ffestiniog could be an attractive location for self-builders who want to live an alternative lifestyle. Some smaller sites could be promoted to them through serviced plots, 'plot passports' and support through Welsh Government or Development Bank of Wales to encourage alternative forms of development.

Viability of sites here is difficult, so steps need to be taken to alleviate this problem, for example, by reducing required affordable housing contributions. Similarly, working with potential developers to understand the planning and highways issues which are deterring development would be positive.

Action Plan



The first stage will be to go out and identify potential sites. As this process has demonstrated these could include a wide range of site typologies, such as:

- Garage sites and car parks
- Industrial land
- Underutilised land
- Edge of town and infill sites
- Former employment sites
- Derelict or empty buildings

Tapping into local knowledge will help with this.

The Audit Wales "Sustainable development? – making best use of brownfield land and empty buildings" report, January 2024 recommends that councils create a systematic process to find and publicise suitable sites for regeneration. This should draw on data already held by councils, as well as external data sources to develop a composite and more complete picture of sites. Where known, key barriers should be named to help efforts to overcome them.

An initial high level feasibility study can be undertaken on the identified sites. This will help give a good understanding if the site can be developed, how many homes it may be able to accommodate and if there are any issues that may need to be overcome. When considering these three things it can be decided if a site is worth pursuing or not. Some key principles to assess include:

- Surrounding land and building use
- Topography
- Ecology
- Ground conditions
- Flooding
- Access to the site and public transport
- Utilities and infrastructure
- Heritage and archeology
- Building heights, scales and density
- Building character

Once a site has been identified and deemed developable, the landowner should be contacted. By informing them that the planning authority would be supportive of the redevelopment of their site, this gives them the confidence and incentive to start the development process. Some key considerations that the landowner may want to consider are:

- Current uses of the site and if necessary where they can be located to and what would be the time frame for doing so
- Constraints or issues with the site that they may be aware of but where not possible to identify during the high level feasibility study
- Appointing architects, masterplanners and other consultants to undertake formal assessment and prepare a planning applications
- The costs of the undertaking a planning application

Provide Development Briefs

The planning authority can help support the design process and any eventual planning application by preparing a development brief for the site. Research shows that briefs can improve the efficiency of the planning system by reducing uncertainty. A good planning brief will make clear what is likely to be acceptable and what is unacceptable; where there is flexibility and where requirements are firm. This should reduce uncertainty for developers, minimising abortive work and the amount of negotiation required over a planning application.

Development briefs can vary in detail, with short and concise ones for smaller sites, and more detailed for larger sites.

The brief may also include information on issues regarding implementation of development on the site. This is particularly important in promotional briefs. The issues might include, guidance on reclamation works, advice on the phasing of development and information on possible funding sources.

Planning Policy

Planning policy, including the revised LDP, can have a major impact on the promotion and development of these sites. Whenever possible, planning policy should be updated to specifically target and bring forward brownfield sites. Incentives, such as a presumption in favour of development and policies enabling the conversion of unused buildings into residential uses, would aid in this.

Own Portfolio of Land

This process can also be applied to the council's own portfolio of land. An audit can be undertaken across the whole town that identifies potential sites such as schools, community uses, existing housing stock, parking and vacant land that is no longer required and has the potential to be redeveloped.

A review of existing housing estates can also be undertaken. This would help determine if there are under-used greenspaces or garages which would be more suitable for infill housing sites resulting in a efficient use of space. This could help reduce anti-social behaviour through removal of spaces with little or no surveillance and help reduce maintenance costs of unused greenspaces.

This Action Plan is not linear and stages can occur simultaneously or may not need to be undertaken.

The Design Workshop



Design Workshop Record

DCFW held a design workshop with 12 officers from Cyngor Gwynedd. This took place on the 22nd April 2026 at Galeri Caernarfon. The workshop was attended by officers and was facilitated by two DCFW representatives.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the workshop was to take officers through the process of identifying potential sites for development, particularly for housing, within the towns of Bangor and Blaenau Ffestiniog. These two towns were chosen by the council as areas of focus. In running through the identification process, it was intended to demonstrate, through a participatory example, that the identification of sites and an initial assessment of suitability and potential capacity is relatively simple and time efficient. Another outcome was to demonstrate that, generally, there are a surprising number of untapped development opportunities within town centres. Of course, following an initial sieving process, further more detailed analysis to identify the site's issues and opportunities would need to be undertaken.

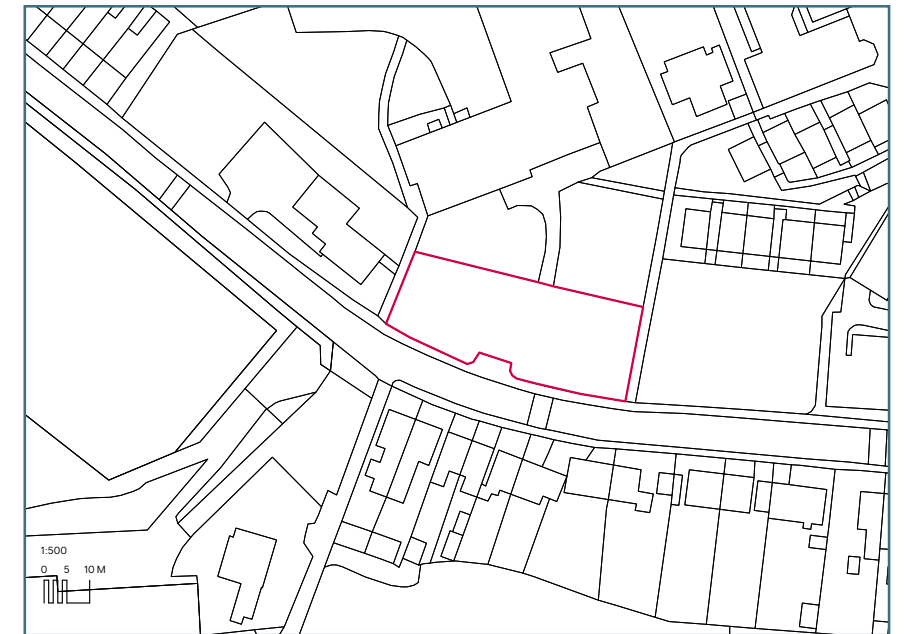
Workshop format

DCFW presented a series of slides which ran through:

- Purpose of project
- About DCFW
- Introductions
- Placemaking
- Strategic placemaking – how places grow
- Introduction to site and context analysis

The workshop then turned toward the high level analysis of the two identified towns:

1. Wider place analysis and assets
2. Identifying potential sites
3. Localised context analysis of an identified site example
4. Analysis of an identified site example



Workshop Activity Site Plan & Aerial View

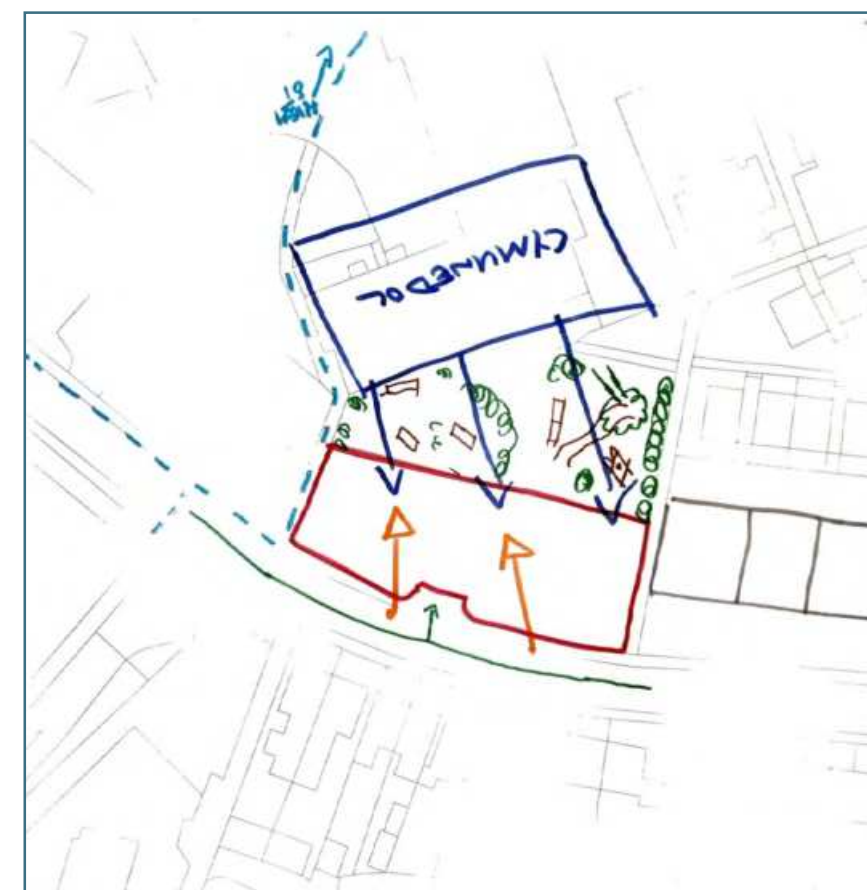
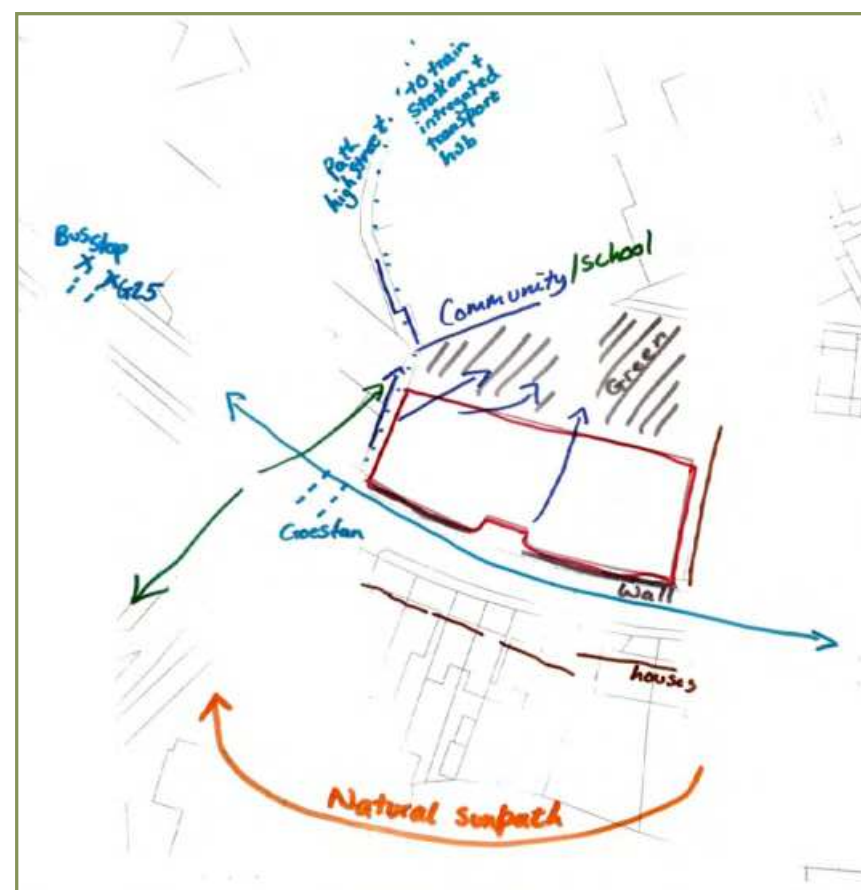
Activity focussed on a car park site below the Town Hall in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

An example of the site analysis process was demonstrated using a potential site in an elevated position to the south east of the high street in Bangor, with views over the city.

The group of officers then split into small groups to undertake site analysis of the car park site below the Town Hall in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Each group presented their analysis to the room with lots of questions and feedback. This process, through practical participation, helped to demonstrate that, at high level at least, understanding a site's issues and opportunities can be a relatively straightforward and time efficient process.

The analysis identified key street frontages, access points, adjacent building heights and uses, solar access, pedestrian routes, views and overlooking.

Note: The space in front of the recent housing development adjacent to the site is dominated by parking, affecting the quality of the scheme from a placemaking point of view. This highlights the benefits of reducing parking requirements.



Workshop Site Analysis Plans

The process identified opportunities and constraints for the car park site below the Town Hall in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

The presentation then moved on to the next step from site analysis to set out some key design principles to inform a development framework. The example site in Bangor was used to demonstrate this.

DCFW used the example to show how site analysis, particularly the identification of site constraints and opportunities can inform some simple design principles for development of the site.

The group then split into its groups from the morning and undertook a practical exercise of creating design principles for the Blaenau Ffestiniog site they previously analysed. The process helped participants think about how the value of the site, which is ideally located within walking distance of the town centre facilities, could be maximised.

As with the morning session, each group then presented their designs to the room, prompting discussion about viability, housing need, placemaking principles and planning processes.

Taking into account the ideas, discussion and analysis from the workshop, an example set of design principles for the site could include:

- Development should provide one-bed homes with their own front doors.
- Homes should take the form of flats with buildings two to three storeys high, facing onto both the street and green space to the rear of the site.
- Parking should be limited to one space per home or less, and arranged so that it does not dominate the street scape.
- A pedestrian route to the south side of the Town Hall should be retained and enhanced.
- Amenity space, including play, should be included and integrated with SuDS and biodiversity enhancement measures. This could utilise green space adjacent to the site.
- The layout should allow for future development of the adjacent site.
- Proposals should consider how the green space to the north of the site could be enhanced and contribute positively to the overall scheme.



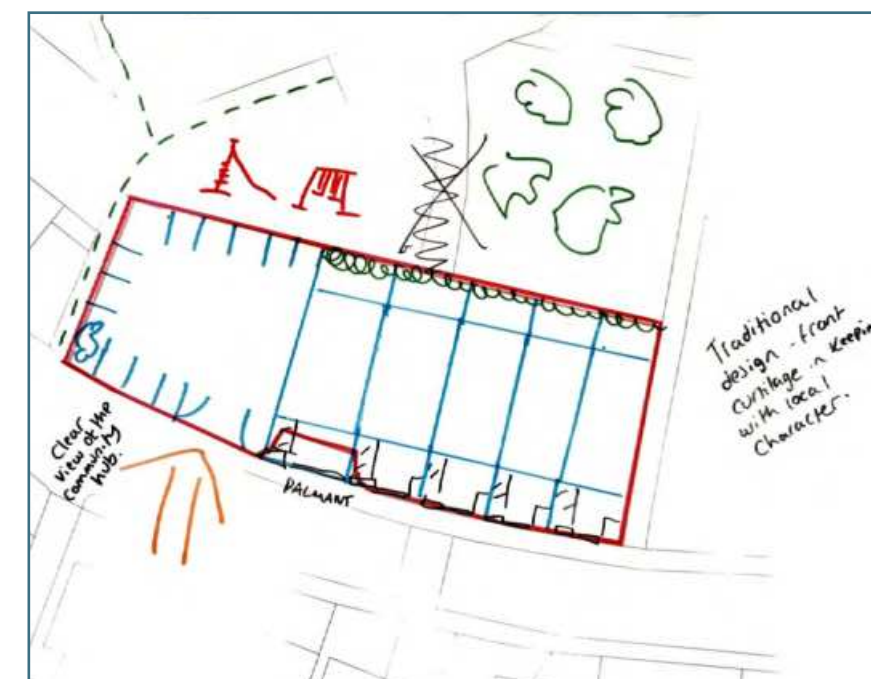
Example Design Principles Plans

Identified opportunities and constraints can inform options for layouts, which help to establish potential design principles.

The workshop ended with a discussion on how this town centre first approach to providing new housing might influence the Local Development Plan (LDP) and whether there could be planning policies and other measures that would help to encourage and support potential sites in coming forward. It was raised that there is a role for planning authorities in identifying and enabling potential opportunities.

Discussion also covered the viability issues faced by both Bangor and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Where potential development sites are identified, a sensible next step would be to consider how the viability of those sites can be improved, perhaps by reviewing requirements relating to affordable housing contribution, highways and other planning issues. Reducing planning risk for developers also improves viability.

There was a brief discussion about the potential for promoting self-build sites in town centres, and supporting community-led development.



Workshop Design Principles Plans

Identified opportunities and constraints informed options for layouts, which helped to establish potential design principles.

Workshop Slides

DC
DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Gweithdy Creu Lleodd Strategol

Gwynedd Strategic Placemaking Workshop

22/04/26

HARVEY GARDENS
Greenwich, London
Peter Barber Architects
Greenwich Council

SWANLEY HIGH STREET
Kent
Bell Phillips Architects
Sevenoaks District Council

BANGOR
Gwerthusiad Safle H
Site H Site Appraisal

Creu Lleodd Cymru Placemaking Wales
The Placemaking Wales Charter was first developed in partnership with the Placemaking Wales Network, which is a coalition of organisations working to create a range of insights. The Charter reflects the collective and individual commitment of those organisations to support the development of high-quality places that relate to the benefit of communities.

Creu Lleodd yn Strategol Strategic Placemaking
Galluogi mwy o ddatblygu yn y lleoliadau
Enable more development in the right locations
Manteisio i'r eithaf ar y seilwaith presennol
Maximise benefits of existing infrastructure
Cefnogi cymdogaethau 20 munud
Support 20-minute neighbourhoods
Gwneithu lle i bobl i fyw'n agos at
Make space for people to live close to

Case Study 3 - Town centre plot Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 3 - Plot canol tref
Fframwaith

Case Study 1 - Rural, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 1 - Oesedig, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 2 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 2 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 4 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 4 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 5 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 5 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 6 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 6 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 7 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 7 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 8 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 8 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 9 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 9 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 10 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 10 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 11 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 11 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 12 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 12 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 13 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 13 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 14 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 14 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 15 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 15 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 16 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 16 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 17 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 17 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 18 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 18 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 19 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 19 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Case Study 20 - Urban, edge of village Framework
Astudiaeth Achos 20 - Ddiwydiol, cyrion penaf
Fframwaith

Casgliadau a Gweithredu Conclusions and Implementation
Pa effaith fyddai'r gweledigaethau/strategaethau yn ei chael ar y CDLI?
What impact would the visions/strategies have on the LDP?
Pa fesurau cynllunio allai gefnogi a galluogi'r math hwn o ddatblygiad?
What planning measures could support and enable this kind of development?
Ar wahân i'r Adran Gynllunio, pa adrannau neu bartneriaid allanol ddylai fod yn rhan o'r broses?
Outside of planning, which departments or external partners should be involved?



Case Studies

LAVENDER HILL Clapham, London

Units:	9 apartments
Tenure:	Private, to rent
Site typology:	FORMER INDUSTRIAL BACK OF HOUSES
Building typology:	COURTYARD
Architect:	Sergison Bates Architects
Developer:	Marston Properties

This infill site – a former sheet metal factory – is embedded within a Victorian residential urban block and accessed by an existing cobbled mews. The redundant industrial site has been transformed through the careful design of a two to three-storey building to provide nine private to-rent dwellings arranged around a communal courtyard.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Avoiding overlooking.
- Maintaining/achieving privacy for new and existing homes.
- Achieving good daylight levels in the new dwellings.

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The block is designed so that all apartments face into a new communal courtyard, rather than outwards overlooking existing gardens. The courtyard is heavily planted to provide some privacy between dwellings. Most bedrooms and bathrooms are located at ground floor level where there is greater privacy; and living spaces are at first floor to benefit from higher daylight levels. Carefully located private courtyards and terraces bring daylight into the centre of each dwelling without causing overlooking issues. High ceilings also improve daylight levels.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: Residents have been encouraged to adopt, nurture and add to the central courtyard to foster a sense of belonging and community amongst neighbours. All entrances to apartments are accessed from the courtyard or communal deck which wraps around the courtyard at first floor level, increasing the likelihood of meeting neighbours and improving security.

The contemporary use of articulated grey brick façades and timber and twisted metal details make reference to the former industrial use of the site and the Victorian residential context without being pastiche.



DOVER COURT Islington, London

Units: 70 units, variety of house types and sizes

Tenure: 58 social rent, 12 private

Site typology: EXISTING COUNCIL ESTATE

Building typology: ESTATE REGENERATION/
INFILL

Architect: Pollard Thomas Edwards

Developer: London Borough of
Islington

This infill housing on an existing council housing estate was developed through co-design with the existing community, and avoided the need to relocate residents. As well as providing 70 new energy efficient homes, the scheme includes a new community centre in the base of an existing tower block, and a revitalised public realm incorporating new pedestrian routes, improved lighting, more green open space and playable landscapes.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Maintaining a sense of community amongst existing residents
- Avoiding and mitigating loss of green and amenity spaces.
- Avoiding relocation of residents

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The architects developed the project brief through a co-design process with residents and the client to find out what types of housing were needed. The process helped to build a sense of trust amongst the existing community. Relocation of residents was avoided by building mainly on redundant garage plots rather than demolishing homes. The existing estate had a large amount of underutilised outdoor space that contributed to the estate feeling unsafe. A landscape strategy introduced new green spaces and routes, play spaces, improved lighting and a ball court to ensure that all the open spaces are contributing to a vibrant place to live.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: Engaging the local community in the design process has helped to make this a people-focussed place which meet local needs. The landscape-focussed placemaking strategy connects the multiple new infill elements, while ensuring the estate works well as a whole. A consistent use of brick and contemporary orthogonal forms in the new-build insertions contributes to a sense of identity and references both the modernist estate and surrounding Georgian architecture.



Challender Court Bristol

Units: 8 one-bed apartments

Tenure: Council Housing

Site typology: GARAGE SITE
BACK OF HOUSES

Building typology: PASSIVHAUS
APARTMENTS

Architect: Emmett Russell Architects

Developer: Bristol City Council

This new-build council housing on a former garage site at the back of existing houses achieves Passivhaus standards, whilst making efficient use of the tight, irregular site. Screened balconies help to prevent overlooking and, combined with integrated bike stores, define the entrances. Despite needing to meet Bristol City Council's housing standards to be robust, low maintenance and energy efficient, carefully considered design has created a delightful and sustainable place to live.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

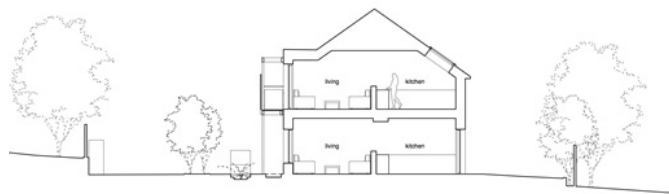
- Making efficient use of a tight brownfield site
- Avoiding overlooking of existing properties

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The well-considered, compact floor plans create one-bedroom apartments which feel spacious and comfortable and meet Lifetime Homes standards, but make efficient use of the site.

Bike storage helps to articulate the entrances, while bins and parking occupy the irregular spaces at the edges of the site. First floor flats have metal screened balconies which avoid overlooking the neighbouring properties, and rooflights are located to improve daylight levels.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The landscape around the building have been thoughtfully designed to ensure there is no 'left over' space. SUDS and planting have been incorporated to define thresholds and deal with a slight change in level across the site.

The project makes good use of a challenging site to address an identified need for smaller housing units.



Antony & Roderick House London

Units:	30 new apartments
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BLOCK
Building typology:	ROOFTOP EXTENSION MODULAR OFF-SITE
Architect:	HKR Architects and HTA Design
Developer:	Apex Airspace & Lambeth & Southward Housing Association

The project creates 30 new affordable homes by building two additional storeys on the roof of two existing 1950s residential blocks in south east London. The design makes use of innovative modular construction to allow for minimal disruption on site and to create high quality, energy efficient homes. The roof of the old buildings required significant upgrades, so the £4m saved not doing that was leveraged to create more homes. Improvements were also made to communal facilities and amenity space.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Lack of available land to meet housing need
- Minimising disruption to existing residents
- Meeting structural requirements for additional floors

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: By adding additional floors above an existing building, 30 new affordable homes were provided without taking up valuable land. A bespoke steel frame exoskeleton was installed to carry the weight of the new floors without requiring disruptive structural works internally. The modular off-site construction method was used to minimise time and disruption on site, so that existing residents could remain. It also meant that the new homes achieved a high quality finish and excellent energy efficiency.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: A new central core containing a lift, and improvements to the communal lobby and landscape areas have improved the quality of life for existing and new residents. All homes now have some private amenity space in the form of a balcony or garden. The design aims to complement the original 1950s blocks whilst also being contemporary.



Ivor House Brixton, London

Units:	26 apartments
Tenure:	Private
Site typology:	FORMER DEPARTMENT STORE
Building typology:	BUILDING REUSE ROOFTOP EXTENSION
Architect:	Cartwright Pickard
Developer:	Muse Developments and Lambeth Council

The restoration and reuse of this Art Deco former department store to provide residential accommodation is part of a wider £120m Lambeth Civic Quarter development. The wider masterplan included the refurbishment and expansion of the 1908 grade II listed Lambeth Town Hall and the construction of an 11,000sqm BREEAM Excellent Civic Centre, as well as three residential schemes, one of which was Ivor House. An existing mansard roof was replaced with a new two-storey mansard to add an additional floor. The ground and basement floors contain commercial uses.



Before



After

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Addressing demand for housing in an urban area
- Working with an existing building
- Preserving the character of a listed building

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: Reuse of an existing building for housing has helped to meet demand without occupying additional land. The replacement two-storey mansard adds an additional level to increase the number of units the site could accommodate. Designs were developed through consultation with the council's Heritage Officer to make sure that the character of the Art Deco façade was preserved and the building sensitively restored. Its new life as a residential block ensures that the historically significant building has a new lease of life.

The ground and basement floors provide commercial spaces, with 26 one and two-bed apartments occupying the upper floors. This means that the apartments benefit from greater privacy, while the commercial units contribute activity to the street.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: By refurbishing rather than demolishing and rebuilding, this significant building remains a local landmark. The Art Deco details and character have been conserved and restored so that they still contribute to a sense of place; and the stories of the building's history live on in the community.



CHOWDHURY WALK Hackney, London

Units:	11 houses
Tenure:	7 social rent, 4 private sale
Site typology:	FORMER GARAGES
Building typology:	TERRACED HOUSES
Architect:	Al-Jawad Pike Architects
Developer:	London Borough of Hackney

This infill development of 11 terraced 2-storey houses occupies a narrow site between two existing terraces which was formerly used for garages and ad hoc parking. The scheme creates a pedestrian route through the site, with the houses arranged in a staggered form with private gardens to the rear. The cross-laminated timber construction is clad with red brick, and sits on a base of granite blocks which also form planters at the entrances.



Aerial view before



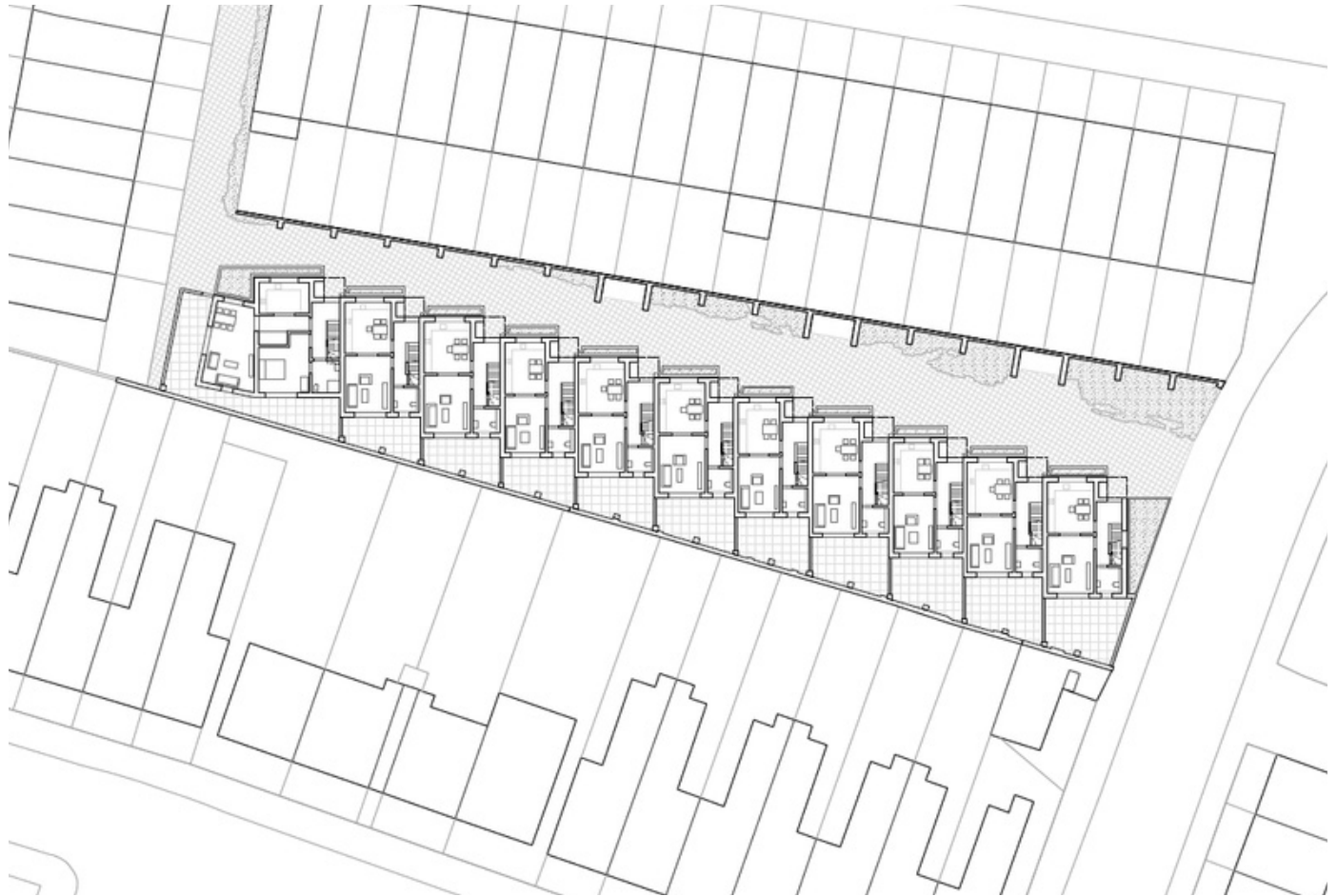
Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Avoiding overlooking of neighbours
- Developing a constrained, narrow site

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The staggered form of the terrace helps to avoid direct overlooking of the existing neighbours, whilst creating a defined entrance and threshold space to each house, and assisting the control of solar gains. Carved out entrance spaces give the scheme character and orientate the front doors towards the main street.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The terraces follow the grain of the surrounding streets to help the scheme 'belong' in its neighbourhood. The bold form, materials palette and thoughtfully composed details create a confident sense of place.



IDLEWILD MEWS Croydon

Units:	8 flats
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	FORMER GARAGES BACK OF HOUSES
Building typology:	APARTMENT BLOCK
Architect:	vPPR
Developer:	Croydon Council

The scheme occupies a back land garage site which was previously thought undevelopable, to create eight new affordable homes. The form and layout have been carefully designed to avoid overlooking of neighbouring properties, and to provide homes which feel modern and spacious on a tight budget. The contemporary and characterful form and materiality of the design create a sense of identity whilst referencing the surrounding built environment. Details in the design help to create a sense of community and encourage social interaction amongst residents.



Aerial view before



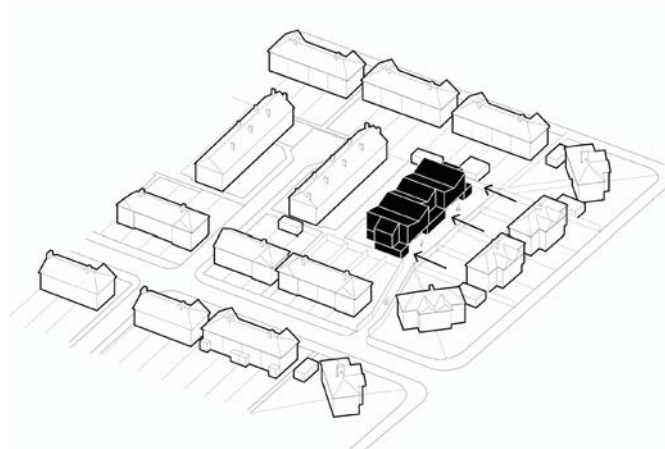
Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Narrow, restricted site
- Avoiding overlooking

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The eight affordable homes are accommodated in a multi-faceted block which incorporates recessed entrances and first floor terraces which respond to the constraints of the narrow site, and help to achieve privacy between neighbours. Pushing back the terraces and entrance spaces allows inward looking views whilst admitting plenty of daylight. Terraces are wrapped in folded metal balustrades and incorporate built-in planters to add a further privacy buffer.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: Although distinctive and boldly contemporary, the form and materials of the block echo those of the surrounding houses. Changes in paving along the narrow lane which accesses the homes help to break down the perceived length of the path and demarcate shared spaces and entrances. Built-in benches opposite the clustered front doors and stairs to the first floor encourage social interaction and a sense of community.



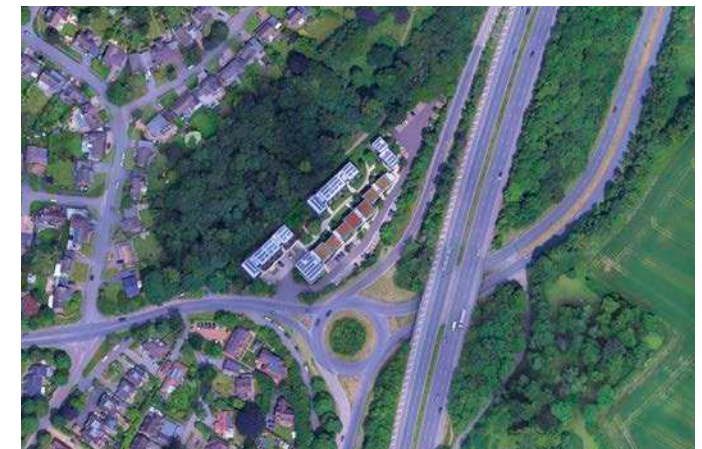
CLOCKHOUSE GARDENS Welwyn

Units:	50 flats
Tenure:	Private
Site typology:	DERELICT HOTEL NEXT TO MOTORWAY
Building typology:	APARTMENT BLOCKS
Architect:	Stockwool
Developer:	Developing London

50 new homes occupy the site of a derelict former hotel which sits between the busy A1(M) motorway and a strip of woodland at the edge of the settlement. Five building blocks are arranged to create a courtyard and buffer noise from the motorway, whilst benefiting from the adjacent woodland. A material palette of brick and timber, and an extensive landscape scheme also respond to the qualities of the different sides of the site.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

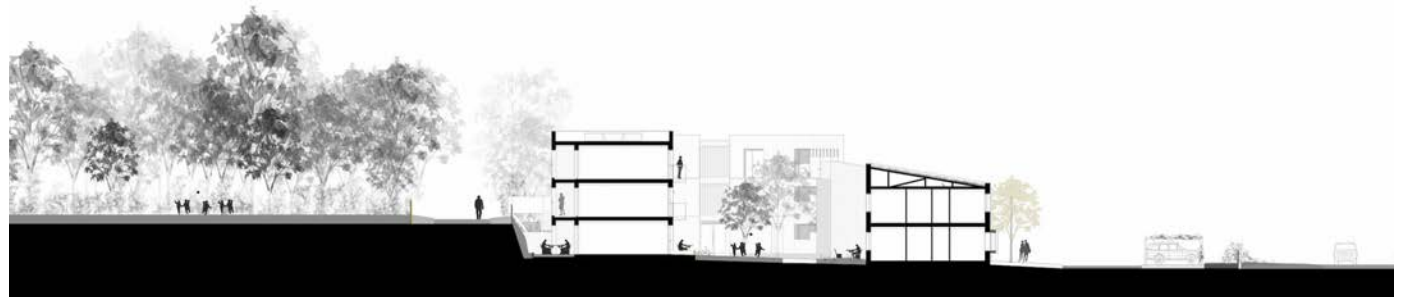
MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Local lack of affordable, small homes
- Adjacent motorway

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: Through consultation with the local council, it was decided that the scheme should provide a large number of smaller homes which would be more affordable than the typical larger private homes found in the area.

The two and three-storey blocks are positioned to form a defensive 'wall' against the noise and pollution of the motorway. They define a landscape courtyard which embraces views to the adjacent woodland. Harder brickwork elevations face the motorway, while softer timber-clad walls with larger windows are found in the quieter areas of the site. All units are dual aspect so that every resident can enjoy the views to the courtyard and/or woodland.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The project addresses the demand from young families and singles for smaller, affordable housing. This will ensure a better mix of house types and a diverse community. The project is a good example of making the most of nearby green assets by connecting residents with the adjacent woodland.



OLD BAYLIS SCHOOL Lambeth, London

Units:	149 homes
Tenure:	Private
Site typology:	LISTED BUILDING COMPLEX
Building typology:	REUSE & EXTENSION
Architect:	Conran and Partners
Developer:	Henley Homes

The scheme reuses a Grade II listed former school campus to create a new community of 149 homes in Lambeth, London. The Lilian Baylis School was designed in the 1960s by ACP Architects, and in 2011, after the school had relocated, the site was purchased by Henley Homes. Around 46 apartments are housed within the refurbished teaching blocks, benefiting from the character of the 1960s architecture; while new buildings accommodate further homes and address the surrounding streets.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Preserving a listed building
- Changing a school into homes

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: A wide range of stakeholders, including neighbours, artists in residence, local council, the GLA, English Heritage, Secured by Design, and the original architects were engaged by the design team to ensure the character of the old school buildings was maintained whilst creating a vibrant place to live which contributed positively to the neighbourhood. The former classroom blocks were converted into bespoke apartments, with the layouts designed so that living spaces could take advantage of the daylight offered by the expansive original windows. Some of the new blocks help define the site edges and address the surrounding streets, with front doors animating the streetscape and providing natural surveillance.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: Preserving and converting the Grade II listed school gives the development a unique identity. A series of communal garden squares and courtyards between the building blocks contain planting, water features, mini-allotment beds and integrated play spaces, offering more than four times the amount of amenity space on site than is required by statutory guidance and enhancing the everyday experience of living in the development. Following development of the homes, a separate community sports initiative was established using the school's former playing fields.



Key

■ New build

■ Refurbished school buildings

■ Surrounding streetscape



MORAY MEWS London

Units:	8 houses
Tenure:	Private
Site typology:	BACK OF HOUSES FORMER WORKSHOPS
Building typology:	MEWS TERRACE
Architect:	Peter Barber Architects
Developer:	Roberto Caravona

This tricky narrow site has dozens of houses backing onto it. Derelict workshops and a patch of scrubland have been replaced with a terrace of eight generous courtyard houses along a mews lane. The cleverly designed form of the terrace avoids overlooking and overbearing on the neighbours, whilst creating a quality terrace of homes with interest and integrity.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Avoiding overlooking of existing houses
- Maximising the number of quality units

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: A previous planning application with another architect was rejected due to overlooking. Peter Barber Architects designed a notched terrace, alternating between one and two storeys to replace the derelict two storey workshop, actually improving the views from surrounding houses. At the end of the site the houses are sunk into the ground by a metre to reduce their impact. Each house has a courtyard entrance garden and a roof terrace to the first floor. Most windows and doors face into these to avoid overlooking other homes. Facing into the mews at first floor level, each house has a projecting oriel window to allow for views up and down the lane, but the main face of the window is opaque glass to maintain privacy. Using these techniques, the architects provided the same number of units as the failed planning application.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The design strategy was informed by consultation with the existing neighbours, and addressed their concerns about overlooking and views. As well as gaining local support, this allowed the planning permission process to go more smoothly. All the inaccessible roofs are green to improve both biodiversity and views onto them from the surrounding buildings. Reclaimed brick façades and a cobbled street surface make the project feel like it has always belonged here.



THE RYE APARTMENTS London

Units: 10 apartments

Tenure: Private

Site typology: CORNER
END OF STREET

Building typology: 2 APARTMENT BLOCKS

Architect: Tikari Works

Developer: Tikari Works

On a prominent corner plot opposite Peckham Rye Park, two blocks house 10 new apartments – a mixture of one-bed garden flats, and two-bed and three-bed split level apartments. The form and materiality of the scheme has been designed to address the surrounding streets and foster a sense of community whilst avoiding pastiche.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Relating to the existing streetscapes
- Maintaining privacy
- Supporting a sense of community

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The form of the building blocks was designed through a process of testing against issues of access to daylight, overlooking and relationship to surrounding building forms. The two building blocks, which replace a dilapidated post-war building and garages, form new ends to the two streets they sit on. The blocks are unified by a concrete plinth wall which wraps the buildings and sunken central garden at ground level. The wall also encloses bins and bicycle storage, creates a buffer from the busy road, and reinforces the sense of a shared community of homes. The buildings are clad in terracotta clay tiles to relate to the Victorian brick architecture found locally. However, the contemporary detailing and forms avoid pastiche.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: Acting as architect, client and developer, Tikari Works had the ambition of "creating exciting, sustainable homes, full of detail, craft and delight". They say that, "The project deliberately rejects generic spaces in favour of spaces which are authentic and designed to encourage attachment over time, helping residents foster a sense of ownership and community".



KILN PLACE Camden, London

Units:	15 new homes
Tenure:	7 social rent, 8 market sale
Site typology:	HOUSING ESTATE
Building typology:	MULTIPLE INTERVENTIONS
Architect:	Peter Barber Architects
Developer:	London Borough of Camden

A series of carefully designed interventions on constrained and underutilised parts of the site adds 15 new homes to this large post-war housing estate in Camden. Alongside improvements to existing homes, the new buildings create a series of human-scaled streets and connections across the estates. Retaining rather than demolishing the existing blocks meant existing residents did not need to be relocated.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Avoid relocating residents
- Improving feeling of safety
- Complex site constraints

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: By Building new homes on constrained, redundant parts of the site – car parking, a former plant room and a bin store – the architects were able to avoid demolition of existing homes which would have required relocation of residents. Instead, existing homes were upgraded, and new interventions were added in the form of a new terrace, at the corners of existing blocks, and on underutilised land. New streets were created to encourage more people to walk through the site, and the new buildings define the public open spaces and provide overlooking of streets for natural surveillance. One of the new streets allowed for new front gardens to be created for existing ground floor flats which could previously only be accessed via an internal corridor.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: Carefully observed site analysis has informed the new layout and design of the new interventions so that opportunities are grasped to make the most of the highly constrained sites. For example, the roof of a new intervention becomes an external terrace for an existing apartment. The new well-overlooked streets create places for social interaction within the estate, improving the sense of community.



SWANLEY HIGH STREET Kent

Units:	17 homes + co-working/ business hub
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	HIGH STREET
Building typology:	MIXED USE BLOCK
Architect:	Bell Phillips Architects
Developer:	Sevenoaks District Council

This mixed-use development accommodates 17 new homes and a co-working/business space on a vacant plot on the high street in the town centre. The project is a good example of a local authority making use of a redundant high street site to drive regeneration, support small local businesses and meet housing demand by building appropriately sized new homes in the town centre.



Aerial view before



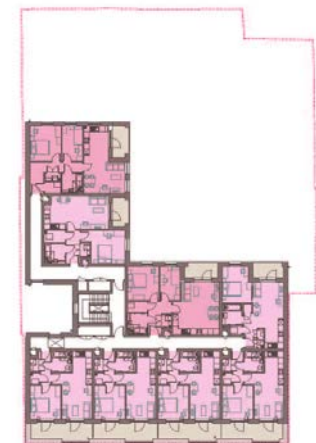
Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Contributing to a vibrant high street
- Achieving privacy for residents
- Addressing post-covid work demands

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: The ground floor of this three-storey block houses a co-working/business hub which supports small local businesses and addresses a change in working patterns post-covid. The work space adds activity and vitality to the high street, with workers also making use of other shops, cafés and facilities in the town centre. The upper floors accommodate 17 one and two-bed apartments. Privacy for residents is achieved by locating the apartments on the upper floors and providing recessed balconies. A garden to the rear of the block is shared by the businesses and apartment residents to encourage social interaction and a sense of community.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The palette of materials reflects the tones of surrounding buildings, whilst the design is unapologetically contemporary. The rhythm of the openings and recesses in the new block echoes the rhythm of the shop fronts along the high street, creating a sense of belonging.



RIGHTSIZING Monmouthshire

Units:	4 houses, 4 bungalows
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	GARAGE SITES
Building typology:	COURTYARD BUNGALOW TERRACE
Architect:	Welsh School of Architecture
Developer:	Monmouthshire Housing Association

These two pilot study housing schemes were tailored to the needs of two specific demographics – under 35s 'start ups' and over 55s 'downsizers' – where there was an identified gap in the market in Monmouthshire. The innovative homes were built on redundant garage sites through a collaboration between the Welsh School of Architecture and Monmouthshire Housing Association. The energy efficient one bed mews-style terraces and courtyard bungalows are designed to be repeatable across a variety of sites.



Aerial view before: Start ups



Aerial view after: Start ups

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Creating repeatable house types
- Addressing identified gaps in housing market

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: Both the terrace of one-bed houses for under 35 'start ups' and the courtyard bungalows for over 55 'downsizers' are designed as pilot projects for repeatable, scalable house types which could be used across a variety of identified sites. The homes were planned in response to extensive research and consultation which identified how the needs of the two demographic groups could best be met. The 'start up' houses include a mezzanine office area, overlooking a large open plan living and dining room. The 'downsizer' bungalows offer two separate layouts with either one bedroom with a separate kitchen or two bedrooms with an open plan living area depending on household need. There was a desire to create an aspirational house type to encourage older people to downsize and free up larger family homes.

DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The pilot schemes are built on underused garage sites within existing residential areas. Making use of these spaces for new housing contributes to a more vibrant and diverse neighbourhood. Although the units are designed to be repeatable, they are arranged and orientated to address site conditions such as views, sunlight, privacy and surveillance of streets and public spaces



Aerial view before: Downsizers



Aerial view after: Downsizers

HARVEY GARDENS Greenwich, London

Units:	4 houses, 6 apartments, community day room
Tenure:	Affordable rent
Site typology:	GARAGE SITE
Building typology:	MEWS/COURTYARD
Architect:	Peter Barber Architects
Developer:	Greenwich Council

This infill development provides four houses, six apartments and a shared community day room for over 60s on a compact garage site next to a railway in Greenwich.



Aerial view before



Aerial view after

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Maximising small constrained site
- Meeting the social and physical needs of over 60s

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES: Previously the site of garages for the adjacent housing development, this constrained site has been thoughtfully planned to maximise the number of units without compromising on quality and delight. The scheme is extremely dense in comparison to the neighbouring housing, yet each home benefits from its own outdoor space in the form of a courtyard garden or roof terrace. The housing is designed specifically for the over 60s. Three of the homes are wheelchair accessible, and all residents share the use of a community day room. Each home has its own front door facing onto the small, leafy mews street to encourage social interaction amongst neighbours. These details support the physical and social needs of the target demographic who often experience loneliness.



DESIGN FOR PLACEMAKING: The bespoke designs for each home, the pale red brick used throughout the scheme and the careful positioning of windows, doors and gardens creates a joyful and vibrant place to live. Residents have planted their individual garden spaces, creating a sense of identity and belonging.

