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# BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE

## Options Appraisal

MARCH 2020



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## VERSION CONTROL

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This report dated 12 March 2020 has been prepared for Black Mountains College (the “Client”) in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment dated 19 July 2019 (the “Appointment”) between the Client and **Arcadis Consulting (UK) Limited** (“Arcadis”) for the purposes specified in the Appointment. For avoidance of doubt, no other person(s) may use or rely upon this report or its contents, and Arcadis accepts no responsibility for any such use or reliance thereon by any other third party.

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# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX B

Existing Spaces within Talgarth – Assessment Sheets  
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Outline Heritage Report [Holland Heritage]

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Options Appraisal was commissioned by Black Mountains College with funding from ARWAIN to help refine discussions around potential sites for the college. The report builds on information contained in the Strategic and Economic Case produced by Aecom in 2019, which identified four high level options for BMC, namely do-nothing, utilise existing sites, build on a greenfield site or redevelop the brownfield site of the former Mid Wales Hospital. The Options Appraisal has been informed by feedback from a comprehensive public consultation exercise held in October 2019.
- 1.2 It is important to note that the Options Appraisal has taken a flexible approach to site options; the scope of work has altered slightly during the course of the study, with the inclusion of an additional site which became available during the latter half of 2019 (Troed yr Harn). The incorporation of this site has led to a more focused approach on potential opportunities for phasing of the project, with emphasis around whether a smaller pilot phase could be developed.

### About Black Mountains College

- 1.3 Black Mountains College (BMC) is a new type of Further and Higher Education Institution planned for Mid Wales. Located within the Brecon Beacons National Park, BMC is a proposal for an undergraduate college dedicated to creativity, sustainability and technology that will be a unique institution in the UK. BMC will adopt the successful model of delivery pioneered by Quest University (Canada's first independent, not-for-profit liberal arts and sciences university devoted to excellence in undergraduate teaching).
- 1.4 BMC will primarily offer a degree level (BSc and BA), liberal arts and sciences curriculum in Mid Wales. Based on Quest's block teaching method, it will deliver a teaching-led curriculum with a maximum of 20 students per class, an annual intake of 200 students, and a forecast of 600 undergraduates at any one time. BMC's curriculum offer will directly focus on the grand challenges identified within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – climate change, an ageing population and a rapidly changing economy, and an applied third year research project on implementing the Act. BMC will therefore be the practical application of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in Mid Wales.

### Vision and Objectives

- 1.5 The Vision for BMC is described as follows:  
*'A new approach to undergraduate education connecting nature, the arts, science and technology to build a better world'*
- 1.6 Objectives include to:
- Create a new pipeline of graduates that benefit from a comprehensive education and gain employment particularly in the creative economy; land based, and energy sectors.
  - Address skills gaps in key and emerging sectors in the rural economy of Mid Wales
  - Stimulate the economy of Mid Wales by regenerating Talgarth and the surrounding areas.
  - Pioneer the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in Wales and make Mid Wales an exemplar of the Act.
  - Build a network of peer-to-peer support to mainstream creative pedagogies in Powys schools.

### Report Structure

- 1.7 This report is structured as follows:
- Section 2** Provides a summary of the current situation relating to the BMC in terms of courses, finances and governance.
- Section 3** Sets out further detail relating to the various options under consideration, including an initial assessment as to whether the option is discounted or continued.

- Section 4** Outlines the opportunities for a phased approach to developing the BMC on sites as appropriate.
- Section 5** Describes the Preferred Strategy and series of Next Steps.

## 2 Current Situation

2.1 This section sets out background information taken from the Outline Business Case prepared by BMC in 2019 in relation to the strategic case for the project. It describes the need for the college proposals and the gap that the project is intended to fill. This is followed by a summary of the current position of BMC in terms of courses, accreditation and governance.

### Summary of Strategic Case

2.2 The BMC delivers against wider political, economic, environmental and social trends and policies. In particular, there is a positive link between BMC and the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which outlines the need to address the grand challenges of climate change, poverty, health inequalities and the need for sustainable growth which face Wales both now and in the future. Key points to emerge from the strategic case include:

- The challenges described are set to cause major disruptions to labour markets. New categories of jobs will emerge, partly or wholly displacing others. The skill sets required in both old and new occupations will change in most industries and transform how and where people work.
- Evidence suggests that high-speed mobile internet, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and cloud technology are set to spearhead companies' adoption of new technologies leading to a rise in jobs that are significantly based on, and enhanced by, the use of technology.
- The creative industries are set to thrive. Artisanal employment incorporating elements of craft-based technical skill and cultural knowledge are expected to grow while the need to enhance biodiversity, promote the resilience of ecosystems and meet the challenge of climate change suggests natural resource management, new approaches to agriculture, and the green tech revolution will come to the fore.
- There is the risk that the education system is preparing young people for a world that is out of date. Creative thinking is required to address the future needs of the economy, the environment and society, as reflected in the recent Donaldson<sup>1</sup> and Hazelkorn<sup>2</sup> reviews.
- Furthermore, the Mid Wales labour market is already subject to challenges:
  - Mid Wales employers experience the greatest difficulties in finding workers with the right skills to fill their vacancies compared with other Welsh regions. Employers experience technical skills shortages, particularly complex analytical skills, a lack of core or soft skills (88%), and sufficient applicants for roles (52%).
  - Mid Wales suffers from the outward migration of young people seeking to access Higher and Further Education and employment opportunities outside of the region which exacerbate existing skills shortages and have contributed toward an ageing population profile.
  - Total GVA in Mid Wales is amongst the lowest in the UK. GVA per hour worked, which takes account of the region's workforce, further demonstrates this with Powys lagging behind the rest of Wales and the UK at 65% of the UK average.
- BMC presents an opportunity to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act on the ground in Mid Wales. It will deliver courses aligned with the needs of the local and national economy and the grand challenges of climate change, poverty, health inequalities and the need for sustainable growth outlined in project aligned with the goals of the Act.
- The establishment of a Higher Education institution, and provision of additional Further Education, will provide learning opportunities to young people from Mid Wales and directly address the skills shortages experienced by local businesses. It will attract international students with its unique sustainability offer benefitting the economy by bringing skills, generating expenditure in the local economy, creating demand for services and applying new cultural perspectives to issues facing Mid

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<sup>1</sup> Successful Futures Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. Professor Graham Donaldson, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Towards 2030. A framework for building a world-class post-compulsory education system for Wales. Professor Ellen Hazelkorn, 2016

Wales. The establishment of BMC will also directly create jobs to support the development and operation of the College and within its supply chain.

- BMC therefore stands to benefit Mid Wales economically – through developing skills, fostering innovation and generating expenditure and high value jobs with positive implications for GVA growth – and socially by embedding delivery locally and acting to co-locate and co-create with the local community.

## Current Status of BMC

2.3 The current status of the project is summarised as follows:

- **Courses.** Black Mountains College has delivered courses at a small scale through a summer school and, with partners, will be offering some courses at NVQ Levels 1 & 2 from 2020.
- **Academic Accreditation.** Black Mountains College does not currently have an educational partner which accredits its qualifications in the UK. On the advice of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) the College has approached several Welsh universities for discussions (including Glyndwr, Aberystwyth, Bangor, Swansea, Cardiff and Trinity St David's). Of these the last has proved most promising and the College has received a verbal endorsement from the Vice Chancellor of Trinity St David's who is keen to pursue discussions on validation agreement. The timeline for this is around two years from now to full validation. In addition to this there is an opportunity for accreditation from Bard College in New York, the College is hoping to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Eden Project in coming weeks and has just signed an agreement with Neath/Port Talbot College for two years which will enable delivery of vocational qualifications from September 2020.
- **Governance.** Black Mountains College is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees, currently numbering seven, who meet quarterly.

## Public Consultation

2.4 BMC held a consultation event in October 2019, to seek views on proposals for the college and early site options (including the former Mid Wales Hospital site, a greenfield site and use of existing premises within Talgarth). It should be noted that the Troed yr Harn Farm option was not available at the stage which consultation took place. Over 2000 people were consulted through public events and online activities, with over 500 participants completing feedback forms and 65 stakeholders providing feedback). The participants covered a range of ages from school age, working professionals and retired people in the region of Talgarth, Hay-on-Wye, Builth Wells and beyond.

2.5 A summary of general feedback received is as follows:

**Views on campus in Talgarth** – All positive feedback. Respondents frequently highlighted the strengths of this project as a regeneration tool, re-developing the redundant Mid Wales Hospital Site, an opportunity to support the local economy in a sustainable way and regenerate the rich heritage of the local area.

*“Delighted, could not be a better opportunity for Talgarth”*

**Location** – 90% in favour of brownfield site (the former Mid Wales Hospital site)/ 10% in favour of greenfield site.

**Potential issues** – respondents highlighted the importance of continued communication with the local community throughout the process. A second issues identified related to access/ transportation problems within the town centre and to local services.

**Interest in Using Potential Students for Business Purposes** – All feedback was positive, with business owners willing to explore opportunities to accommodate students. A range of business owners/ employers have provided letters of support for BMC.

**Suggestions for sites of learning in the area for vocational courses/qualifications** – Feedback included a variety of activities, mainly based around outdoor activities and local specialties, such as sustainable farming, woodwork and foresting. Other activities included seasonal catering (Talgarth bakery) and the wider hospitality sector (hotels, cafes and pubs).

**What vocational skills gaps exist in the area** – Participants responded with a range of niche ideas including bookbinding, coppicing and Welding. Topics surrounding sustainability such as renewable energy, gardening and horticulture were cited.

*“In a non-vocational capacity there is a huge gap between academic artistic communities and rural not sure how unusual that is it BMC seems a good option to support this”*

### 3 Options Under Consideration

3.1 This section identifies the potential site options that have been under consideration for the Black Mountains College. The Aecom report produced in 2019 originally identified four high level options. A fifth option has since been added to the list (Troed yr Harn Farm).

3.2 Broadly, the options included within this report are as follows:

- Do nothing
- Utilise existing spaces within Talgarth
- Develop on a greenfield site in Talgarth
- Develop on the former Mid Wales Hospital Site
- Develop at least an initial phase of the project at Troed yr Harn Farm

#### Do Nothing

3.3 Do nothing means Black Mountains College would not be taken forward beyond the concept stage. The Aecom report highlighted that the impact of doing nothing would mean that 'current conditions in the region would remain unchanged and the opportunity to regenerate and breathe life into the region would be missed; the creation of a new kind of further and higher education institution in Mid Wales would be lost'. Do nothing has therefore been discounted from the options appraisal on the grounds that it is not an acceptable option at this stage.

#### Utilise Existing Spaces

3.4 This option is focused on using existing vacant space and community facilities and vacant premises to deliver BMC's provision. The use of existing space is considered to provide an affordable solution by focusing on space available within Talgarth or redundant spaces within the community.

3.5 Advantages of this approach include that:

- It will provide an affordable and lower risk option to delivery particularly in the early years of delivery when students numbers are building up;
- The regeneration effects on Talgarth will be significant as buildings will be brought back into use or fully utilised. It will also improve the vibrancy of Talgarth as students will be located in the middle of the town, increasing the use and spending on existing services (e.g. shops); and
- Students will be embedded in the local community which fits with the ethos and approach of Black Mountains College.
- The option would have a very low capital outlay and represents the option with least financial impact should the BMC proposition not proceed beyond pilot stage.

3.6 Disadvantages were highlighted as:

- Space in existing facilities is likely to be limited and so may not be suitable for accommodating BMC's planned growth in student numbers;
- The logistics of sharing spaces are likely to be complex with the no guarantee that the right spaces can be secured at the times required;
- Existing buildings may not offer the flexibility of space and facilities that a modern undergraduate programme requires;
- This approach would not provide BMC with a new iconic campus building that could help drive demand from students; and

3.7 At the start of 2019, seven potential development sites (excluding the former Mid Wales Hospital Site) were identified within Talgarth, namely:

- Unit 5, Talgarth Business Park
- The Library, New Street, Talgarth
- The Chapel site, Back Lane, Talgarth

- Talgarth School Site 1, School Street, Talgarth
- Talgarth School Site 2, Back Lane, Talgarth
- Gwernyfed High School.

3.8 Each of these sites was subject to a detailed review by Graham Frecknall Architects, taking into account factors such as:

- Potential area (internal and external), measured against a schedule of accommodation
- Existing use
- Availability
- Any potential uses identified (for example a number of sites were allocated for residential development in the Local Development Plan)
- Access
- Benefits and disadvantages (for example including deliverability)

3.9 A summary of the site assessment is given in Table 3-1 below, with more detailed site assessment sheets provided at Appendix A.

Table 3-1 Summary of Assessment of Existing Spaces within Talgarth

Name of Site	Area (ha)	Current Use	Benefits / Disadvantages
Unit 5, Talgarth Business Park	0.39	Vacant business / industrial premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern, purpose built facility</li> <li>• Potential for extension</li> <li>• Good access and parking</li> <li>• Location / setting / premises not compatible with BMC vision and principles</li> </ul>
Former Talgarth Library	0.042	Former library (vacant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small site with little room to expand</li> <li>• Poor access and parking</li> <li>• Site has been sold</li> </ul>
Chapel, Back Lane	0.046	Chapel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small site with no room for expansion</li> <li>• Poor access and parking</li> <li>• Not likely to be suitable / appropriate for proposed uses</li> </ul>
Former School Site (1)	0.679	Vacant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brownfield site</li> <li>• Allocated for residential purposes in LDP</li> <li>• LPA to progress site for residential</li> </ul>
Former School Site (2)	0.156	Vacant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted access via Back Lane</li> <li>• Potential use for small-scale events</li> </ul>
Gwernyfed High School	n/a	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not considered further</li> </ul>

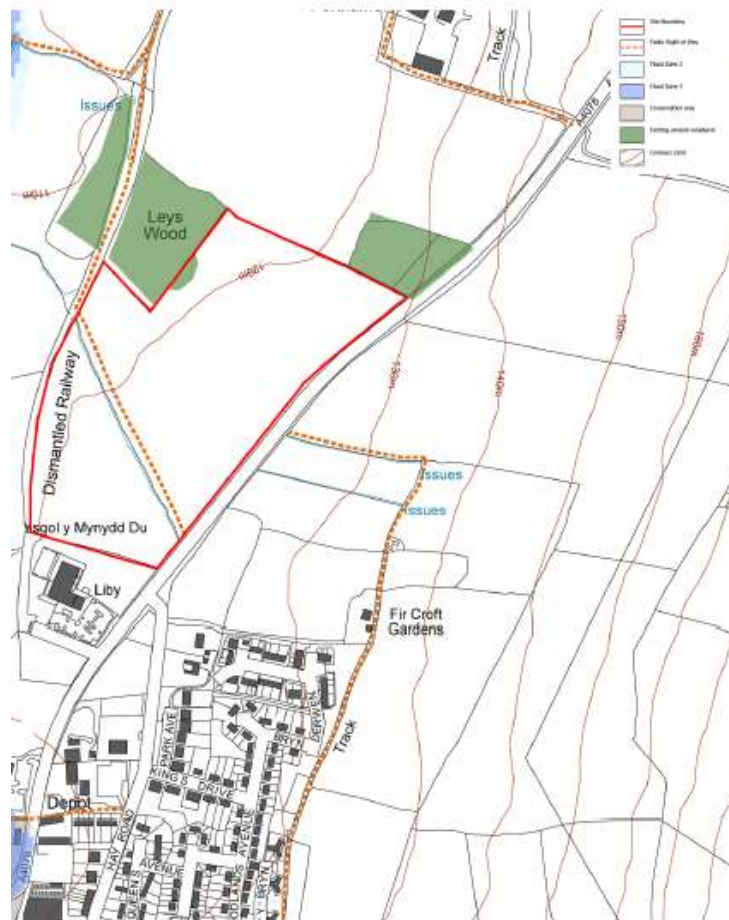
3.10 Over the course of the study it has become apparent that firstly, a number of these sites are no longer available (for example they are already being developed for alternative uses); secondly that a number of sites are not suitable for the purposes of the BMC (for example the Gwernyfed High School site due to its location and existing uses); and thirdly, that the sites do not fulfil adequately the full vision and objectives of the BMC project.



## Greenfield Site

- 3.11 A third option identified in the Economic Case presented by Aecom was for development of the BMC on a greenfield site in / close to Talgarth. For the purposes of this options appraisal, a greenfield site was identified on the outskirts of Talgarth (shown in Figure 3-1).

Figure 3-1 Greenfield Site Location, Talgarth



- 3.12 The following strengths were considered to be offered by a greenfield development:
- An iconic new build campus building would be attractive to potential students and provide all the facilities and spaces of a modern new campus and allow for a design that supports the interdisciplinary and collaborative working environment required.
  - A new build facility provides the opportunity to host an international design competition to provide a facility that operates to the highest possible sustainability standards.
  - Build costs of the proposal on a greenfield site are likely to be considerably lower than on brownfield.
- 3.13 An initial consideration of planning and wider environmental matters identified the following with regard to this site, including that it is:
- located outside of the current settlement boundary of Talgarth as identified in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Local Development Plan (adopted December 2013). The site was submitted by BMC as a Candidate Site to the Brecon Beacons National Park in 2019 as part of the Local Development Plan Review process.
  - readily accessible from the A4078. The site is of sufficient size to be able to accommodate appropriate levels of parking within it.

- in close proximity to Talgarth town centre and therefore accessible by sustainable modes of travel.
- has no known heritage constraints – the Historic Environment Record does not identify any known archaeological interest within this site although there is a reference found nearby (within Leys Wood immediately to the north of the site (at SO 1556534888), is noted the remains of the Mid Wales Railway Line (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust HER reference 125560)).
- Western Power Distribution have assets including overhead HV 11k cables at the north west of the site; in addition, there are LV underground cables adjacent to the A4078.

3.14 The greenfield site option was presented at the public consultation held in October 2019; however only a minority of people considered this to be their preferred option (10%), with reasons given relating to the fact that the purpose of the project should be about regeneration of brownfield land (i.e. the former Mid Wales Hospital site). Environmental principles are strongly embedded into BMC’s vision and objectives for the project; creating the college on a greenfield site does not fit well. For these reasons, further consideration of a greenfield site has been discounted.

### Former Mid Wales Hospital Site

3.15 The principal brownfield location for the Black Mountains College is the former Mid Wales Hospital site, which is 13.62ha in area. The site is in private ownership, with longstanding proposals for use as housing (the site is allocated in the BBNPA Local Development Plan (LDP)). The site has been the subject of many previous studies in relation to various aspects of its condition and opportunities. An iconic site, currently in a state of severe disrepair, regeneration would likely have a transformative effect on the local economy and community. An existing plan of the site has been prepared by Graham Frecknall Architects (Figure 3-2).

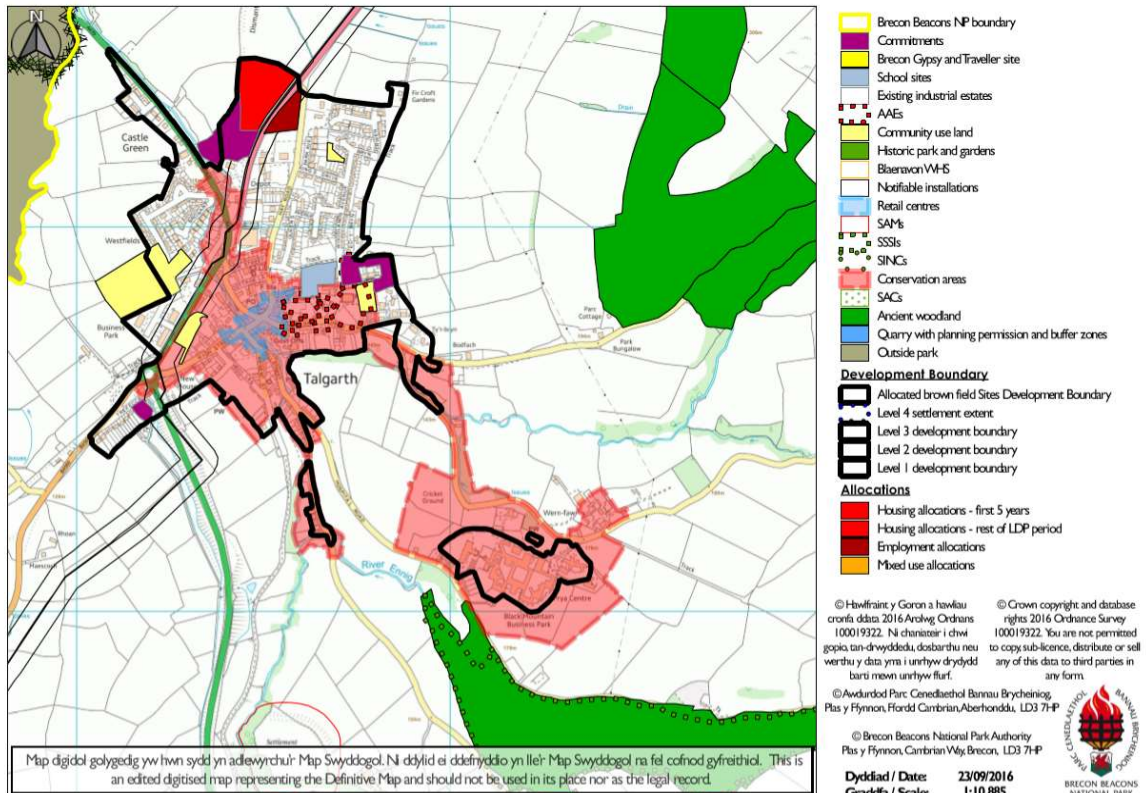
Figure 3-2 Existing Plan of the former Mid Wales Hospital Site



## Planning Considerations

- 3.16 The Local Development Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park was adopted in December 2013 and identifies Talgarth as a key settlement. The fifteen year vision for the town identifies Talgarth as a 'hub supporting a wider rural economy comprised of agriculture, tourism, quality retail and small scale rural enterprises'. As shown on the extract from the Proposals Map in Figure 3-3, the former Mid Wales Hospital site is allocated in the LDP for mixed use development (housing, employment and community use). Paragraph 7.2.1 of the LDP requires development briefs to be agreed on site prior to the submission of any planning application.

Figure 3-3 Extract from the LDP Proposals Map for Talgarth



Source: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority LDP Proposals Map 2016

- 3.17 Planning and conservation area consent applications for the mixed use development of the site was submitted in 2012 (ref: 12/07922/FUL and 12/07690/CAC). The applications related to housing, employment and community uses including 76 residential units, five live work units and 18 one to two bed retirement apartments, in addition to a Care/Health facility (up to 70 bed apartments), the conversion of the retained Chapel into multi-use community building and offices, the conversion of the retained Mortuary into office space, internal roads and paths, new allotments, creation of new cricket pavilion, access road, car park and tennis courts, landscaping and public open space, sustainable drainage systems, de-construction (demolition) of the existing former ward buildings and associated works, services and utilities.
- 3.18 The applications were refused permission in May 2013 for the following reasons:
- **Affordable Housing** – low number of units proposed and the suggested method of disposal being contrary to policy.
  - **Highway Safety** – the size and scale of the development and distance from public transport services and detailed highway design incorporating a lack of sufficient parking spaces to serve the development.



- **Impact on Conservation Area** – insufficient information provided to justify proposals to demolish buildings that are an integral part of the Talgarth Conservation Area.
  - **Settlement Strategy** – the proposed development, by reason of its size, scale, location and timing in relation to the consideration of the Local Development Plan, would prejudice the preferred settlement strategy of the Local Development Plan.
- 3.19 The 2019 Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS) identifies the former Mid Wales Hospital site as having capacity for 125 units developed out from 2021, although it is also noted that this is the sixth year which the site has been in the five year supply for the BBNPA.
- 3.20 A Development Brief was prepared for the site in May 2018 by the Urbanists in consultation with officers from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Talgarth Town Council. The document states that it is *'intended to be used by designers and others bringing forward the development as a briefing document. It is also intended for development control officers by helping to establish whether a scheme has met the quality thresholds'*.
- 3.21 The BBNPA LDP (2018-2033) Preferred Strategy was issued for public consultation in July 2019. Key issues relevant to the revised LDP include:
- The effect of development and visitor pressure on the National Park and its special qualities
  - The requirement to adapt to and mitigate against the effects of climate change through sustainable development and renewable energy production
  - The capacity for growth in terms of environmental constraints, infrastructure, utilities and public service provision
  - The need for circular and sustainable economic development
  - The need for natural growth of rural villages to allow for increased community vitality and quality of life.
- 3.22 Three strategic development options have been assessed against sustainability objectives:
- **Strategic Option A Sustainable Placemaking** – concentrating development within principal settlements (including Talgarth), concentrating on the use of previously developed land and to meet development needs within existing development boundaries.
  - **Strategic Option B Prioritising Economic Growth** – locating development within settlements where there is most demand.
  - **Strategic Option C East/West Diversity and Difference** – intervenes to provide more opportunities for mixed development in the smaller settlements in the west, with developments in eastern areas being concentrated in the main towns.
- 3.23 The Preferred Strategy is closely aligned to Option A, with accompanying strategic options relating to the sustainable management of natural resources, climate change, good design, sustainable sense of place, environmental protection, the historic environment, sustainable communities, economic wellbeing and sustainable transport.

### **Transport and Access**

- 3.24 The site is located approximately 1km to the south-west of Talgarth, which has a selection of shops, public transport stops, food and drink outlets and other local amenities. This equates to distances on foot of approximately 15 minutes and by bicycle of approximately 10 minutes. Existing walking and cycling connectivity between the site and the centre of Talgarth is limited. The condition of the footway along Hospital Road is variable and street lighting is intermittent.
- 3.25 Highway widths along Hospital Road are approximately 6m overall (although reduce to 4.5m in places). Bell Street and Penbont Road are constrained with existing road corridor widths as low as 3.4m. Key pinch points include the road bridge over the River Ennig (3.4m total width) and at the junction of Bell Street/ Penbont Street and Bell Street (3.4m total width). The potential to enhance the local highway network at these locations, including the provision of a suitable pedestrian/ bicycle route will be extensively limited by the width of the adopted highway. The northern section of the current route along Bell Street/ Penbont Road has no segregated pedestrian facilities including footways or surfaced areas.

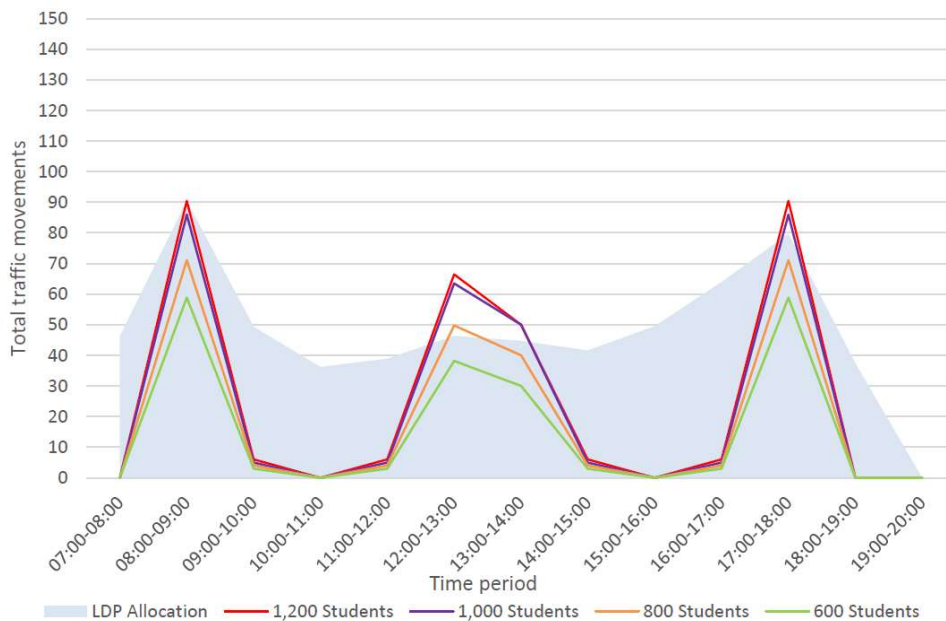
- 3.26 Although the route from the Hospital site to the centre of Talgarth is circa 1km, it should be noted that some pedestrians and cyclists could be deterred by the increasing gradient of the route on approach to the Hospital site entrance.
- 3.27 An existing public footpath (081/22/1) provides a traffic-free route linking Penbont Road to The Bank in central Talgarth, avoiding the constrained section of route through Penbont Road and Bell Street.
- 3.28 Current public transport provision is limited with no public transport facilities situated within the immediate vicinity of the site, reducing the attractiveness for students and staff to arrive and depart the town by bus.
- 3.29 Whilst the rural context of the site has the potential to establish use of the private car as the dominant mode of transport for both students and staff, the ethos and principles of the Black Mountains College in terms of sustainability and environmental principles is such that the focus should be on sustainable transport uses. Therefore, a range of opportunities will need to be considered to promote and explore opportunities that maximise sustainable travel and alternatives to using the private car, including the implementation of a robust development Travel Plan to encourage travel by non-car modes over the medium to long term. Opportunities are considered to include:
- Options to upgrade and widen the existing local highway network through the implementation of segregated active travel routes adjacent to Hospital Road which is currently bounded by greenfield along its eastern boundary.
  - Improvements to the existing public footpath (081/22/1) which provides a traffic-free route linking Penbont Road to The Bank in central Talgarth, avoiding the constrained section of route through Penbont Road and Bell Street.<sup>3</sup>
  - An assessment of land ownership between the Hospital site and the centre of Talgarth, identifying further opportunities to develop off-line traffic-free walking and cycling routes for the benefit of the proposed development and wider community.
  - Establishing sustainable connectivity between the proposed development and existing walking cycling routes, including the interconnectivity with the extant cycle link between Talgarth and Three Cocks.
  - A robust package of sustainable highway measures that could be implemented throughout Talgarth, to encompass the implementation of formal and informal crossing points together with improved lighting along key pedestrian and cycle routes/ desire lines to facilitate enhanced safety and security for users.
  - Consider on-line improvements to highway road markings and road signs in the constrained sections of Bell Street and Penbont Road to improve driver awareness of cyclists.
  - Consider the implementation of improved local public transport provision. This may encompass the extension of local bus services interconnecting with the proposed development and the enhancement of existing stops/ infrastructure and services throughout Talgarth. Other possibilities may include the provision of a shuttle bus service interconnecting between the Hospital site and central Talgarth (including connectivity with Talgarth car park and other key facilities/ amenities).
  - Implementation of a long-term, sustainable car and cycle parking strategy that reasonably supports the demands of the proposed development, whilst proactively encouraging a modal shift away from use of the private vehicle for local and regional trips.
  - Identify opportunities to provide new and enhanced cycle parking facilities at key destinations throughout Talgarth to support local travel by bicycle.

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<sup>3</sup> This provides the opportunity for an attractive pedestrian route, between the Hospital site and central Talgarth. A package of improvements would be necessary as it is currently not suitable to wheelchair users (not DDA compliant) and at 1.2m wide is narrow with a lack of lighting and perceived poor surveillance. However, this potential off-line link could route pedestrians away from the highly constrained sections of Bell Street and Penbont Road providing a safe route into Talgarth.

- 3.30 A number of assessments have been made for the site in terms of identification of traffic generation from proposed uses. A traffic assessment prepared by acstro in February 2019<sup>4</sup> in support of the re-use of the site in line with its allocated purposes within the LDP (i.e. residential, community and employment uses) attempted to identify what the baseline situation should be with regard to traffic movements. The report notes advice from the BBNPA that a hospital use of the site *'remains extant for the purposes of informing a baseline vehicle trip rate assessment'*, with the figure of 755 daily vehicle movements continuing to represent a pragmatic view of traffic flows when the hospital was open. An assessment using TRICS trip rates, however, suggests that this figure could easily be higher. The acstro assessment goes on to suggest that the LDP allocation has the potential to generate some 890 daily vehicle movements, significantly more than the baseline traffic volume previously agreed.
- 3.31 A report prepared by Vectos<sup>5</sup> in January 2020 considers the potential impacts of the Black Mountains College from a traffic perspective at the former Mid Wales Hospital site. The report considers the traffic effect of the college using two different methodologies (TRICS and first principles) and compares these to the likely traffic effect of the development on the allocated site uses (residential, community and employment).
- 3.32 Again, using a TRICS analysis, the Vectos report forecasts that total combined daily trips for the allocated use of the site is 624 (less than that suggested by the acstro assessment). Four scenarios of differing students' capacities and staff numbers are then used to calculate likely traffic generation, ranging from 600-1,200 students. Scenario 1, based on 600 students, identifies the total forecast daily trips to be 335; Scenario 4, based on 1,200 students, identifies the total forecast daily trips to be 465. In addition to the TRICS analysis, a more bespoke 'first principles' approach has been used to assess traffic generation; the findings are illustrated in Figure 3-4 below, which shows that for 600 students (the anticipated target for capacity at the college), the total traffic movements remain below those suggested for the LDP allocation across all time periods.

Figure 3-4 Traffic Movements Using First Principles Approach



Source: Black Mountains College Traffic Assessment, Vectos, January 2020

<sup>4</sup> Talgarth Hospital Traffic Assessment – Technical Note, acstro (February 2019)

<sup>5</sup> Black Mountains College, Talgarth, Vectos (January 2020)

- 3.33 The report concludes that:

*'when compared to the allocated site use, a TRICS based assessment shows that the college will generate a higher quantum of traffic movements in the AM peak period and slightly less in the PM peak. Using the first principles methodology, which is likely to be more representative of the College operations, the analysis shows that in almost all student population scenarios the weekday commuter peak periods traffic effect is less than the LDP allocation. On the basis that the local highway authority accepts this methodology, a case could be made for a college in this location. Whilst the acceptance of the TRICS methodology and resulting traffic effect may also be acceptable, it will likely require additional assessments and reviews of additional local junctions.'*

## **Heritage**

- 3.34 An Outline Heritage Report was prepared by Holland Heritage to inform this Options Appraisal. The report, which can be found at Appendix B, sets out the history and architectural description of the former Mid Wales Hospital. Whilst the buildings of the former Mid Wales Hospital are not statutorily listed, the site is within the designated Talgarth Conservation Area, which was enlarged in 2016, and the area is within the Brecon Beacons National Park. The buildings of the former hospital site were added to the Talgarth Local List of Heritage Assets in 2014; Talgarth and the former hospital site lie within the Middle Wye Valley designated Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales.
- 3.35 The Outline Heritage Report identifies that whilst the site is not statutorily listed, it does retain considerable significance and interest which should be protected and valued in any future adaptive reuse. The plan form of the buildings is in itself of interest and conversion should seek to preserve the existing layout. The Office building to the centre is the best-preserved block and the one with the most architectural character. On the other hand, the former Isolation Hospital block at the north-east corner is of considerably less significance as a result of substantial mid-20<sup>th</sup> century alteration and offers the opportunity to be replaced without adverse impact on the core of the site. The brick chimney on account of its height is an important visual landmark for the site. The Dining Hall and the Chapel are also significant built features which have architectural presence but also offer a good opportunity for providing large capacity flexible spaces for the Black Mountains College. Adaptive reuse needs to respect the original distinctive pattern of fenestration – both the ubiquitous 15 over 15-pane horned sashes as well as the fewer number of examples of decorative small-pane metal-frame windows.
- 3.36 The report acknowledges that the condition of many of the buildings is poor and, in some cases, allows for a greater degree of alteration as there is little that can be saved.
- 3.37 An important constraint is the open space within the site which was historically part of the philosophy of mental health care. These landscaped areas, for example around the church, should remain open without being encroached upon by new build. The view east through the site with the main office and workshop buildings to the south and the chapel to the north is an important vista which should be preserved and used to enhance future uses. The view south to the hills of the Brecon Beacons National Park should also be valued and a hard boundary should be avoided so as to retain the feeling of the site and the landscape being seamless.
- 3.38 The original hospital was built using local materials and it would be appropriate to continue that objective in any new work.
- 3.39 The local interest in and support for the appropriate adaptive reuse of the hospital site should also be seen as a strength and a resource with which to engage. There is the opportunity for collaboration and community involvement in shaping the future of the site and in celebrating its heritage.
- 3.40 As the former Mid-Wales Hospital was added to the Local List for Talgarth in September 2014 it is now subject to Policy 18 (Protection of Buildings of Local Importance) which states:
- "Development affecting buildings which make an important contribution to the character and interest of the local area as set out on the local list will be permitted where the distinctive appearance, architectural integrity or their settings would not be significantly adversely affected."*

- 3.41 Given that the whole site lies within the Talgarth Conservation Area, consent will be required for demolition and any new work will need to comply with Brecon Beacons National Park planning policies. Paragraph 3.15.5.4 of the Local Development Plan (adopted December 2013) states:

*“Applicants for development within Conservation Areas will need to take into account Conservation Area Appraisal Reports in determining planning applications. Reports have already been developed to accompany some of the designations. Others will be produced at a future date. These reports should be referred to as they will provide information on the topography, landscape setting, history, buildings and settlement forms of the Conservation Area. The reports may also highlight negative features that detract from the special qualities of the Conservation Area and recommend ways forward to protect and further enhance the area.”*

- 3.42 Paragraph 3.15.5.5 states:

*“The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 requires planning applications to be submitted for certain types of development in Conservation Areas which are elsewhere classified as permitted development. For example, Conservation Area designation gives greater control over the demolition of most buildings and walls, and the felling, lopping and topping of trees. It requires wider local publicity for planning applications and ensures that new proposals are given the closest scrutiny and reach appropriate standards of design. Outline applications will not be acceptable in Conservation Areas.”*

- 3.43 Policy 19 (Development affecting Conservation Areas) states:

*“New development and alterations to existing buildings within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and where the design, all building materials, proportions and detailing are appropriate to the Conservation Area.*

*The demolition or substantial demolition of any unlisted building or structure within a Conservation Area that is subject to Conservation Area consent will only be permitted where there is the strongest justification. Where such a building is to be replaced, a contract of redevelopment will be required to be finalised and entered into prior to the granting of conservation area consent.”*

- 3.44 The Talgarth Conservation Area Appraisal (draft report May 2016) states that the hospital site has been allocated (December 2013) as a mixed development site for residential and employment uses. It acknowledges at paragraph 10.8 that *“there is a need to secure the remaining buildings and to ensure that any development is of the highest standard, respecting the handsome buildings and their setting in an attractive landscape.”*
- 3.45 Any alteration or adaptive reuse of the hospital buildings should be preceded by building recording and appropriate health and safety precautions will be needed in order to achieve this. Recording should adhere to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (CIfA 2016). It should also follow Historic England’s guidelines, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016), which is adopted by Cadw as the basis for defining levels of recording. The Historic Building Record for this site should be at least to Level 2.

## **Ecology**

- 3.46 A high level ecological constraints survey was undertaken for the site based on a walkover survey and a review of previous environmental reports and documents associated with previous planning applications for the site. The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was reviewed to obtain information on designated sites within 2km of the site. The Lle Geo-Portal Ancient Woodland Inventory was also reviewed to identify any areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, restored ancient woodland and / or plantation on an ancient woodland site within 500m of the site. The walkover survey identified potential ecological constraints applicable to the proposed development and habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected / notable species of plants and / or animals; observation was made of any incidental signs of protected / notable species.



3.47 Table 3-2 details three statutory designated sites located within 2km of the former Mid Wales Hospital site.

Table 3-2 Statutory designated sites within 2km of the former Mid Wales Hospital Site

Site Name	Designation	Location in Relation to the Site	Description
PWLL YWRACH	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	124.8m east	<p><b>Botanical interest.</b> The woodland is the best example of Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)– Field maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) – Dog’s Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) woodland in Brecknock, here developed on the steep sloping banks of the River Ennig and tributary. Hazel (<i>Corylus avellane</i>) is frequent throughout the wood. The diversity of canopy species is reflected in the herb and ground layers.</p> <p><b>Faunal interest.</b> One of only two presently known localities for hazel dormouse (<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>) in Brecknock. The site supports good breeding populations of small birds such as pied flycatcher (<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>), wood warbler (<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>), chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>) and willow warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>) and the streams provide suitable habitat for dipper (<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>) and grey wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>).<sup>6</sup></p>
RIVER WYE / AFON GWY (WALES)	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	1.4km northwest	<p>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation.</p> <p>Annex I habitats that are a qualifying feature: Transition mires and quaking bogs.</p> <p>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: white-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>), sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>), brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>), river lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>), Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>), Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>), bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>) and otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>).</p> <p>Annex II species that are a qualifying feature: Allis shad (<i>Alosa alosa</i>)<sup>7</sup></p>
AFON LLYNFI	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	1.4km northwest	<p>The Afon Llynfi is of interest for its internationally important populations of otter and Atlantic salmon, as well as bullhead. The Llynfi supports aquatic communities that are typical of streams of moderate to high nutrient status. Seminatural riparian habitats include broadleaved woodland, dry and marshy grassland, stands of tall fen and marsh vegetation and gravel banks. The site also includes back channels and oxbows that support otter and waterfowl and provide valuable refuges for small fish and invertebrates in times of flood.<sup>8</sup></p>

3.48 There are no statutory sites designated for bats located within 10km of the former Mid Wales Hospital site.

<sup>6</sup> Natural Resources Wales (formerly Countryside Council for Wales), 2002. Pwll Y Wrach SSSI Citation. Accessed in August 2019 [https://naturalresources.wales/media/677098/sssi\\_0535\\_citation\\_en001.pdf](https://naturalresources.wales/media/677098/sssi_0535_citation_en001.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Natural Resources Wales (formerly Countryside Council for Wales), 2002. River Wye / Afon Gwy (Wales) SAC Citation. Accessed in August 2019 [https://naturalresources.wales/media/627040/SAC\\_UK0012642\\_Register\\_Entry001.pdf](https://naturalresources.wales/media/627040/SAC_UK0012642_Register_Entry001.pdf)

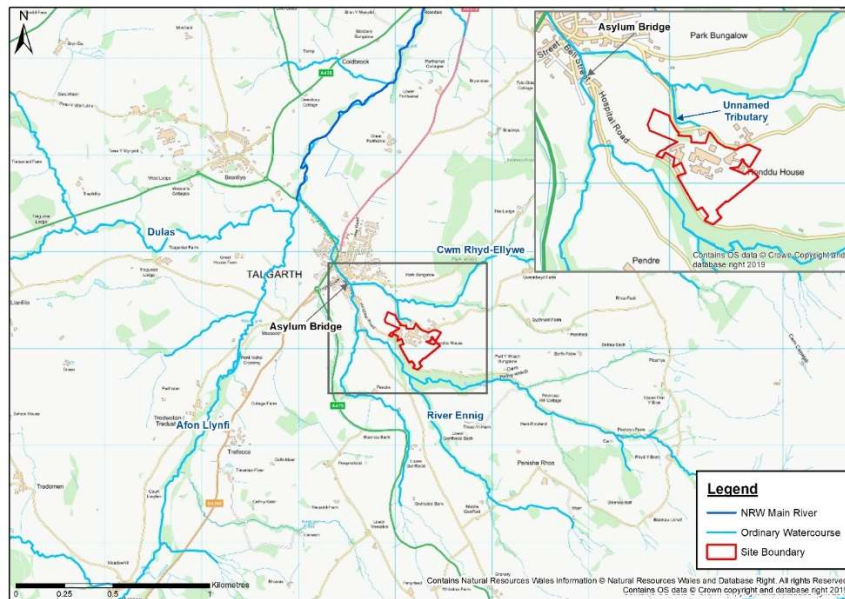
<sup>8</sup> Natural Resources Wales (formerly Countryside Council for Wales), 2002. Afon Llynfi SSSI. Citation. Accessed in August 2019 [https://naturalresources.wales/media/654764/SSSI\\_0908\\_Citation\\_EN00157e5.pdf](https://naturalresources.wales/media/654764/SSSI_0908_Citation_EN00157e5.pdf)

- 3.49 There are three areas of ancient semi-natural woodland named in the Ancient Woodland Inventory 2011 within 500m of the site, namely a restored ancient woodland 140km to the southwest, and two ancient semi natural woodlands (100m south and 296m north respectively). It is considered unlikely that proposals for the site would have any direct effects on the designated sites identified above if standard pollution control measures are put in place to control, noise, dusts and surface water runoff. It is anticipated that the college would make provision for recreation within its grounds and so there would be no adverse effects associated with recreational pressure on these sites.
- 3.50 Habitats identified within the site include grassland, scattered trees, woodland, scrub, tall ruderal, intact hedgerows, amenity grassland, hardstanding, buildings and rubble piles.
- 3.51 The following assessment has been made in relation to species:
- **Invertebrates** – the habitats on site were assessed as offering limited value for invertebrates. Several pollinator species were observed during the walkover.
  - **Reptiles** – the grassland, scrub, rubble piles and hedgerows were assessed as offering potential to support both foraging and hibernating reptiles.
  - **Bats** – the scattered trees and buildings offered potential for roosting bats. The known roosts within the buildings are still present, and in large numbers. The buildings within the site are known to support a colony of lesser horseshoe bats (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) (exceeding 100 individuals), brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), common (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) pipistrelles, whiskered bats (*Myotis mystacinus*) and possible Natterer's bats (*Myotis nattereri*). While the buildings have clearly deteriorated since the previous surveys were undertaken, it is still considered that they offer high value habitat for roosting bats.
  - **Dormouse** – the hedgerows present on site were assessed as offering potential to support dormouse. It is considered likely that they would be on site given the sites proximity to the known population in Pwll Y Wrach woodland.
  - **Otter and Water Vole** – the watercourse located 0.1km southwest of the site could offer potential habitat suitable to support otters or water voles. No habitat on site was identified as suitable to support these species, though it is possible that otters could travel over land across the site.
  - **Badger** – the woodland, hedgerows and scrub were assessed as suitable to support badger (*Meles meles*). No field signs of badger were recorded on site and no setts were recorded within the hedgerows. However, the woodlands were not surveyed in detail due to access restrictions and so the presence of a sett cannot be ruled out.
  - **Birds** – the trees, scrub, hedgerows and buildings were assessed as offering suitable nesting habitat for common bird species.

### Water Environment

- 3.52 The former Mid Wales Hospital site is located within the catchment of the River Wye, on high ground between two 'ordinary watercourses' – the River Ennig to the south west and an unnamed tributary of the Cwm Rhyd-Ellywe to the north east. The nearest 'Main River' is the Afon Llynfi some 1.5km to the north west of the site.
- 3.53 The catchment area of the River Ennig at Talgarth is approximately 19km<sup>2</sup>; the upper reaches are formed by the north western slopes of the Black Mountains which drop steeply into a mixture of forests and pasture below. The catchment is predominantly rural and includes no major settlements. Figure 3-5 illustrates the location of the site relative to the existing watercourse network.

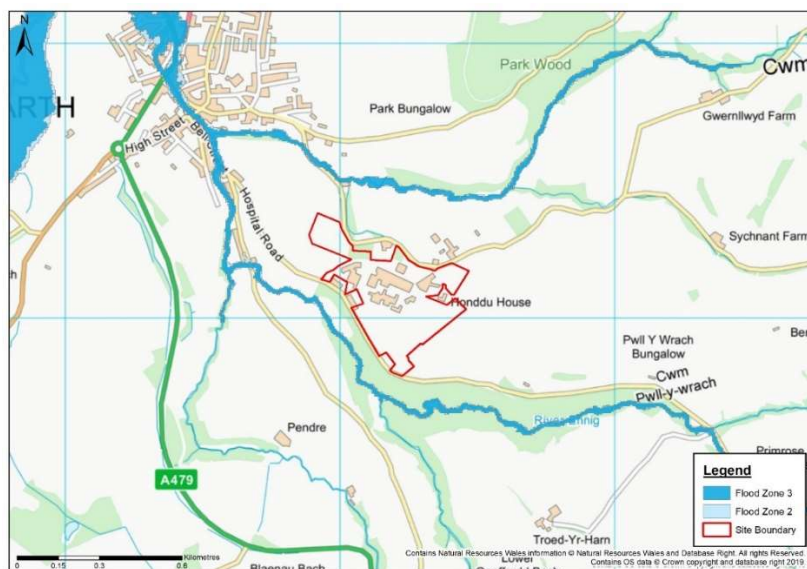
Figure 3-5 Site Location and Watercourses



Source: National Resources Wales

- 3.54 The site is outside the extent of areas identified on the NRW Historic Flood Map as having previously flooded. However, the town of Talgarth downstream of the site is known to flood; significant flooding in 1998 and 2008 is readily documented online. Therefore, a detailed analysis of pre and post development site runoff will be required to ensure that flood risk downstream of the site is not increased.
- 3.55 The NRW Flood Risk Maps show the site to be in Flood Zone 1 (Figure 3-6), an area which has a less than 0.1% chance of flooding in any given year. The site is also located within Development Advice Map (DAM) Zone A; this zone is at little or no risk of fluvial flooding.

Figure 3-6 Flood Zones



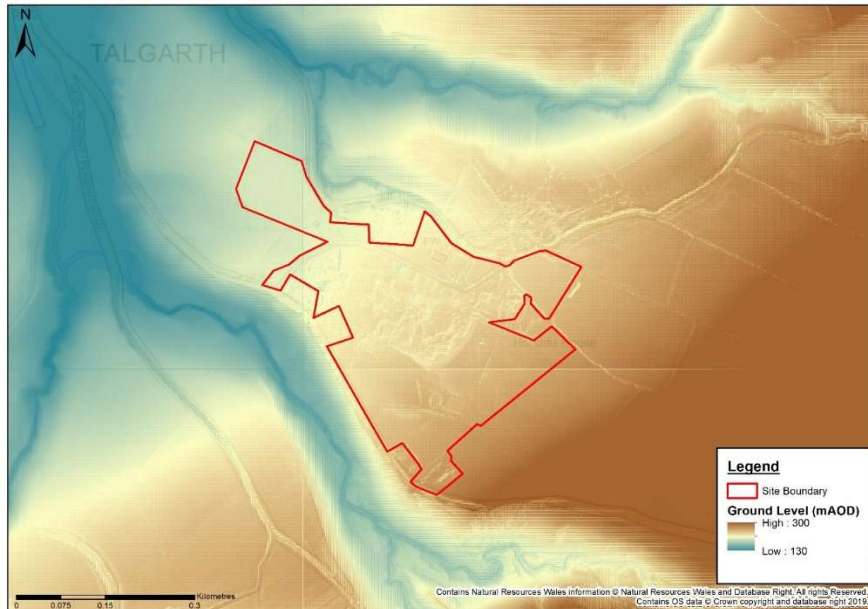
Source: National Resources Wales

- 3.56 Development proposals for the site comprise a 'Further and Higher Education Institution' with 'associated residential student accommodation'. This is classed as 'highly vulnerable development'

by Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (TAN15) and is appropriate within Flood Zone 1.

- 3.57 LiDAR data downloaded from the Lle Portal<sup>9</sup> (Figure 3-7) indicates that the north eastern edge of the site, closest to the Cwm Rhyd-Ellywe, is approximately 7m above the river valley further confirming that the site is at very low risk of fluvial flooding.

Figure 3-7 LiDAR Ground Elevations



Source: National Resources Wales Lle Portal

- 3.58 NRW Flood Risk Maps show that, for the most part, the site is not at risk of surface water flooding. There are small, isolated areas at high (chance of flooding of greater than 1 in 30 (3.3%) in any given year), medium (chance of flooding between 1 in 100 (1%) and 1 in 30 (3.3%) in any given year) and low (chance of flooding between 1 in 1000 (0.1%) and 1 in 100 (1%) in any given year) surface water flood risk. These areas coincide with existing depressions in the LiDAR data and are likely to change as the site is redeveloped.
- 3.59 The site is currently occupied by the buildings of the former hospital; it is therefore likely that the site is underlain by a formal piped drainage network. A site 'Condition Survey' carried out by the Ferrier Partnership Ltd in 2014 refers to a large underground water tank for the collection of roof runoff but noted that this could not be located at the time of survey. A detailed site drainage survey would therefore be necessary to determine location, levels, connections, condition and the extent to which surface water and foul water drainage is separated.
- 3.60 Current best practice for surface water management assumes a 'discharge hierarchy' in order of preference as follows:
1. Infiltration to ground
  2. To a surface water body
  3. To a surface water sewer, highway drain or other drainage system
  4. To a combined sewer
- 3.61 The underlying bedrock geology is Raglan Mudstone Formation which is overlain by superficial deposits of till (Devensian, Diamicton). This geology affords variable permeability depending on the exact composition of the strata. Detailed information on site permeability is not currently available and should be obtained by site specific testing in order to determine the suitability for infiltration

<sup>9</sup> <http://lle.gov.wales/home?lang=en>



based drainage. The potential for contaminated ground should also be assessed when considering infiltration drainage (these uncertainties are referred to in the geo-environmental section below).

- 3.62 The Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Statutory Guidance<sup>10</sup> published by the Welsh Government in January 2019 requires that all new developments of more than one dwelling house or where the construction area is 100m<sup>2</sup> or more, implement Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for the management of surface water. All SuDS on new developments must be designed and built in accordance with the Statutory SuDS Standards<sup>11</sup> and must be approved by the local authority acting in its SuDS Approving Body (SAB) role, before construction work begins. Consequently, the management of surface water runoff from the proposed development is a key consideration and space should be allowed to accommodate surface water drainage management measures.
- 3.63 A Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) will need to demonstrate that runoff from the site is the same as in the pre-development case, thereby ensuring flood risk is not increased (although where possible, betterment should be achieved).
- 3.64 The site is not at risk of flooding if a large reservoir were to fail and release the water it holds, as indicated by the Reservoir Flood Risk mapping produced by NRW. No other artificial sources of flood risk have been identified in the study area.
- 3.65 Climate change is predicted to increase rainfall intensity in the future, and this must be considered when assessing the surface water runoff from the site to ensure that an appropriate management strategy is in place.
- 3.66 An assessment of the water quality attributes of watercourses in the vicinity of the site has been informed by data from the second cycle of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) River Basin Management Plan for the River Severn River Basin District. The River Ennig is classed as a WFD waterbody; the table below provides a summary of the current WFD status of the river. If site specific testing indicates that surface water discharge is required to be to the River Ennig, SuDS should be used to manage the water quality such that no detrimental impact on existing water quality occurs.

Attribute	Status
Overall	Poor
Chemical	Good
Ecological	Poor

- 3.67 Review of the NRW Abstraction Register did not identify any licensed abstraction in the vicinity of the site. There are no published Source Protection Zones (SPZ) within the study area. Whilst the absence of published source protection SPZs in the study area is a useful indicator of groundwater sensitivity, it should be noted that unpublished source protection SPZs may exist around any source of potable water (boreholes, wells or springs).
- 3.68 A review of NRW data on the Lle Portal did not identify any consented discharges in the vicinity of the site. The closest discharge is into the River Ennig downstream of Talgarth (approximately 1.8km downstream of the site).

### Geo-Environmental Review

- 3.69 The site has been subject to many investigations surrounding potential contamination and geo-environmental issues. Key points to take account are summarised as follows:
  - Asbestos is clearly a site-wide high risk, present on, and likely mixed into, areas of surface soil and within both buildings and infrastructure.
  - There are multiple areas where there is a need for remedial action (i.e. site clean-up) that result from previous site uses and storage of fuels / materials. Examples include the presence of hotspots of hydrocarbon contamination from previous fuel usage and maintenance activities and

<sup>10</sup> <https://gweddill.gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/190108-suds-statutory-guidance-en.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gweddill.gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/181015-suds-statutory-standards-en.pdf>

shallow surface contamination from ash, pesticide and heavy metal applications within the previous hospital and associated orchard land.<sup>12</sup>

- Detailed intrusive investigations, the delineation of impacts, detailed assessments and the design of appropriate remedial actions will be required as part of preliminary design and site advanced works.
- There is some uncertainty at this stage concerning the feasibility of SuDs infiltration systems due to the presence of clay rich soils with low permeability and hence which may be unlikely to provide good soakage performance. Further testing is likely to be required as the project progresses to inform design.

### Infrastructure and Utilities

3.70 A utilities search was undertaken for the site, with statutory undertakers identified using the LinesearchbeforeUdig (LSBUD) service. Information described here has been provided by third parties to inform the Options Appraisal; confirmation / verification of utility assets would be required as part of more detailed site work. Utility assets relate to the following:

- **Electricity** – Western Power Distribution (WPD) has electricity distribution networks outside the site boundary and within the site. These include overhead 66kv cables to the west of the site, 11kv overhead cables within the site, and underground lv cables also within the site.
- **Telecommunications** – infrastructure is located along Hospital Road which may have the potential to serve development at the site.
- **Foul drainage** – not located directly adjacent to the development, which may result in the need to extend the public sewer along Hospital Road.
- **Surface water drainage** – no public surface water sewer found adjacent to the site; further investigation would therefore be required.
- **Gas** – the nearest gas main is a low pressure main located adjacent to houses near to the junction of Hospital Road and Penbont Road.

### Architecture and Design Proposals

3.71 An architectural assessment undertaken by Graham Frecknall Architects has demonstrated how the former Mid Wales Hospital site could be converted to accommodate the space required by the Black Mountains College. The assessment comprised a classification of each building on the site to produce a schedule of single and two storey buildings and interpreted Gross External Areas / Gross Internal Areas, thereby establishing the grain and density of the built form and external areas throughout the site. A comprehensive layout for the site is shown in Figure 3-8 overleaf.

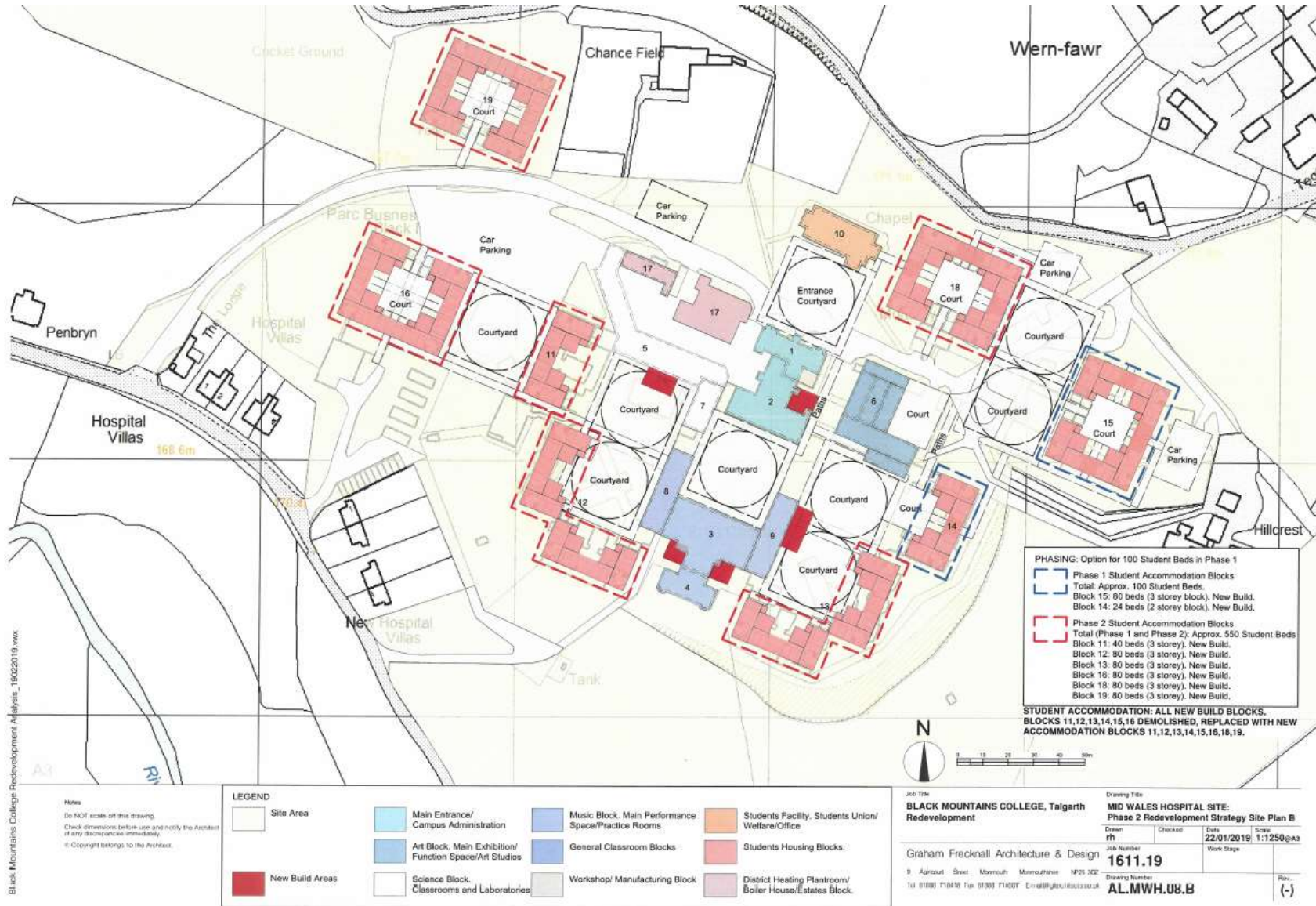
3.72 The institutional function and morphology of the historic layout lends itself well to re-use as a teaching campus. It provides a clear pattern for both how the site can be developed in terms of the different functional areas and their relationships and the control of proposed changes to provide a modern integrated sustainable environment for learning and living. It is also a way of dealing with contemporary interventions into a historic environment, which respects and expresses the original plan and allows integrated respectful redevelopment.

3.73 A demolition plan has been developed, showing how demolition can either be carried out in one overall programme or phased to match the redevelopment requirements of providing teaching facilities and the initial student accommodation, with buildings earmarked for future demolition mothballed until such time as funds become available.

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<sup>12</sup> Environmental Management Solutions (EMS3271) Phase 1 Desk Study Report

Figure 3-8 Former Mid Wales Hospital Site Redevelopment Strategy



- 3.74 Key features of the architectural design have included:
- The retention, renovation and re-use of the central spine of buildings to provide the core of the new teaching facilities, with the further retention of areas of buildings forming the frontage onto the existing access route through the site to the central arrival space, located between the campus entrance / administration building and the student facilities building.
  - Inclusion of student welfare facilities.
  - Replacement of the perimeter ward blocks with new buildings to provide the student accommodation buildings.
  - New areas of student accommodation built on adjacent areas of the site.
- 3.75 A concept was developed for the construction method for the conversion of existing buildings which are to be retained. It is generally accepted that the existing buildings have been both vandalised and left to deteriorate with no attempt to provide maintenance. Many of the roofs have been stripped of their slate roof finishes. This is causing ongoing widespread damage, decay and loss of the original structure. The concept developed for the bringing back into purposeful re-use of the areas of existing buildings identified to be retained is the insertion of a structural lining system within the retained stonework walls. It is comprised of new ground and upper floors, new structural lining walls to the retained masonry, new lateral walls, and new roofs. These would all act together as a stabilising structure for the retention of the existing masonry which defines the strong identity of the buildings.
- 3.76 The form suggested for the student accommodation blocks is a layered courtyard development. The prototype block is made up of four communal units per floor, each comprising of six to seven individual student bedrooms with en-suite facilities, wrapped around two sides of a communal living/dining kitchen area. These are all connected together by a common linked corridor that runs around the block. Vertical circulation is provided at each corner. These four fundamental units form a courtyard housing block with the communal living spaces looking out onto the common external central courtyard space, a place of interaction between the wider community of the whole block which reinforces a strong identity through neighbourly interaction. The bedrooms look out to the wider natural landscape, reminding students of their involvement with the rural context and society as a whole. The blocks are usually three storeys high.
- 3.77 The intention of the blocks is to provide students with both privacy and communal spaces when they require them. Each block forms an expanding series of neighbourhoods, which start with the private individual bedroom, then the fundamental 6 bedroom/communal facility which forms the immediate tightest communal group, then the wider grouping connected by the circular common passageway, then the central communal courtyard of the specific housing block overlooked by all of the shared communal facilities. Finally, the wider group of the linked housing blocks and courtyards through the site.
- 3.78 The prototype block is then adapted to suit specific areas of the site where original buildings are to be demolished and replaced. The blocks are able to be pivoted around the vertical circulation spaces, opening up to adapt to the pattern of the original site plan, retaining the original linked courtyard spaces which form the strong internal landscape identity of the site.

### **Troed yr Harn Farm**

- 3.79 Troed yr Harn Farm is a complex of farm buildings, accommodation units, workshops, barns and associated farmland located approximately 3km from Talgarth (by road) and approximately 2km by public footpath. The site currently comprises just over 540m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace across the various buildings, together with 120 acres of pasture. The land abuts the Pwll-y-Wrach Nature Reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest, which forms a natural link between the farm and the former Mid Wales Hospital Site (a public footpath of 1km in length connects the two sites). Troed yr Harn Farm is currently on the market with McCartneys property agents.
- 3.80 It is accepted that Troed yr Harn is not an appropriate location for the BMC to locate in its entirety, due to potential issues to do with access, capacity of the site (built environment) and landscape / setting. However, the site is considered as a potential location for a significant pilot phase, and as an ongoing resource for the BMC from a land and agricultural skills perspective. As such a maximum



capacity of 80 students has been assumed at Troed yr Harn, with implications set out in the following sections.

## Planning Considerations

- 3.81 Informal advice from the BBNPA has identified that proposals for the Black Mountains College at Troed yr Harn would be subject to the authority's farm diversification policies. Policy 38 of the BBNPA LDP relates to farm diversification, noting that *'Proposals for farm diversification will be permitted where:*
- a) the proposed diversification will be of an intensity of use appropriate to the environment and setting within the National Park and will have no significant detrimental effect on the vitality and viability of an adjacent town or village, either in its own right or through cumulative impact;*
  - b) functioning of surrounding agricultural land is not prejudiced;*
  - c) adequate provision for the storage of materials/equipment is maintained*
  - d) adequate parking provision is made to serve the needs of the diversification scheme; and*
  - e) any new buildings or conversions or existing buildings that form part of the proposal lie within or immediately adjacent to the group of existing buildings which make up the farm complex and are in accordance with Policy CYD LP1 criteria 4 and Policy 23.'*
- 3.82 The BBNPA published Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to farm diversification in March 2015. The SPG is a material consideration in determining planning applications for farm diversification, noting that diversification offers *'key benefits for the socio-economic growth of rural communities allowing the creation of commercial opportunities to provide rural employment that utilises existing resources and offers an additional income'*.
- 3.83 The SPG states that diversification proposals will generally be supported by the BBNPA; this is in line with Planning Policy Wales, which states that local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to farm diversification in rural areas. Paragraph 2.2 of the SPG states that *'not all diversification projects will require planning permission but usually projects requiring change of use of land from agriculture to another use and the erection or conversion of buildings for non-agricultural purposes will require planning consent.'*
- 3.84 Other material planning considerations that will be considered relate to:
- **Scale** – the level of activity that is likely to be created should be appropriate to the site and its surroundings; new building should be constructed sympathetically within the landscape; the conversion of existing buildings will be given priority over the construction of new build.
  - **Access** – Many existing farms are located in isolated locations with access along narrow country roads. It would not be appropriate to encourage additional traffic generation on a dangerous access or along approach roads that are totally unsuitable for the expected traffic generation. Consultation is required with the Highways Authority.
  - **Siting and design** – Features of traditional farm buildings should be retained as part of a new design.

## Transport and Access

- 3.85 The farm is located approximately 3km from Talgarth by road. Access roads are narrow country lanes, with a small bridge on the final approach to the farm buildings. Alternative access may be possible via the Black Mountains Gliding Club, which connects to the south of the farm site and links to the A479, although this route is in private ownership and discussions would be necessary with the club owners.
- 3.86 Constraints relating to access are therefore primarily related to the limited number of suitable routes serving the site (which would be a particular issue during construction). Further consultation as to the suitability of access to the site is required with the Highways Authority; they typically may require a road safety audit and/or swept path analysis in order to demonstrate suitable access/egress with any planning application as well as proposed route improvements (such as vehicle passing bays,

signage, hedge/tree cutting). Assessment of the likely quantum of materials / waste involved with construction may also be necessary as part of a planning application as this will dictate the number of truck movements (as the route is both constrained and sensitive (small number of residential properties)).

- 3.87 Operational access routes for students and staff will need to be agreed with the Highways Authority. A rough assessment of likely trip generation to the site has been made using the TRICS based methodology provided within the Vectos traffic assessment undertaken for the former Mid Wales Hospital site. A worst case approach has been identified in terms of daily traffic movements based on assumptions including:
- 100 students in total at the Troed yr Harn site
  - 90 reside on site (this follows the Vectos assumption that 90% of students are residential)
  - 9 to 10 staff (based on the Vectos staff ratio used for Scenario 1)
  - Some cross-campus travel is expected between the Farm and former Mid Wales Hospital site as well into Talgarth (these are assumed as part of a worst case scenario to all be vehicle movements due to a lack of sustainable alternatives)
- 3.88 This gives an estimated (and very crude) total daily traffic movements (two-way) of 56, which is obviously significantly lower than the numbers Vectos have identified for the main hospital site due to the significantly lower student numbers predicted.
- 3.89 Opportunities to create and improve footpath links between the Troed yr Harn site and the former Mid Wales Hospital site (and thereby to Talgarth) do exist and would need to be explored further. Constraints relate to the passage of these links through the Pwll y Wrach Nature Reserve and potential impacts relating to increases in recreational pressure at this location.

## Heritage

- 3.90 The Outline Heritage Report prepared by Holland Heritage to inform this Options Appraisal (found at Appendix B) identifies that two buildings at Troed yr Harn are included on the Brecon Beacons National Park's Local List for this area, meaning that they demonstrate qualities of age, style or distinctive characteristics relative to the area and have architectural design, details and construction materials that add to the local character. Furthermore, the criteria indicate that the buildings are judged to remain in a substantial and recognisable form, retaining historic features and layouts. Notwithstanding this identified interest the buildings were not considered to merit statutory listing at the time of the resurvey of Talgarth Community in 1995.
- 3.91 Troed yr Harn is not included on the Historic Environment Record.
- 3.92 The site is shown (spelt Troed yr Haern) on the 1841 Tithe Map showing a farmhouse and two farm buildings. On the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of 1888 it appears little different apart from an enlargement of the farmhouse, but at the time of the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century the number of farm buildings had been substantially enlarged. As seen today the farmhouse has modern fenestration, though the overall structure, set into the slope, is indicative of having 17<sup>th</sup> century origins as an in-line farmhouse and byre. There is also a large former threshing barn which has a triangular vent, characteristic of the region.
- 3.93 Internally the farmhouse has chamfered beams, a large gable fireplace with winding stairs and some surviving early boarded doors.
- 3.94 Whilst the buildings are of considerable age they are already altered and therefore can sustain further sensitive alteration and conversion without unacceptable impact. However, it is noted that windows are characteristically small and therefore care would be needed in enlarging openings or creating lots of new openings. Given the presence on the Local List it is likely that the Brecon Beacons National Park would require a Heritage Impact Statement to accompany any planning application for conversion as proposals are likely to involve radical change. It is also likely that the BBNPA would require a full historic buildings record to be made in advance of any development.

## **Ecology**

- 3.95 Whilst no additional ecological survey has been undertaken at the Troed yr Harn site due to time and seasonal constraints, a high level review suggests that, due to the proximity of the farm to the former Mid Wales Hospital site, many of the findings would be the same (for example, statutory designated site and areas of ancient woodland located within 2km and 500m respectively of the farm, and findings related to individual species that may be present within the site).

## **Water Environment**

- 3.96 A review of the flood maps shown in the preceding section relating to the former Mid Wales Hospital site, show the location of Troed yr Harn to the south-east. A review of the maps suggests that, as for the Hospital site, Troed yr Harn is also located within Flood Zone 1 (and therefore at low risk from flooding); similarly the site does not appear to be at risk from surface water flooding (again reference to NRW surface water flood risk maps). The remainder of the conclusions relating to water quality and associated matters are considered to be the same as for the former Mid Wales Hospital site.

## **Infrastructure and Utilities**

- 3.97 The sales particulars for the property advise that there is a connection to a private pumped water supply together with private shared drainage. The site has mains electricity.

## **Architectural and Design Proposals**

- 3.98 Initial architectural and design proposals have been prepared for the Troed yr Harn site by Graham Frecknall Architects, to allow for the accommodation of up to 80 students and associated teaching and welfare facilities. The design (illustrated in Figure 3-9 overleaf) incorporates the following:
- Administrative facilities and student common meeting areas are located at the centre of the site. The existing stone farmhouse converted to provide the site manager's accommodation, temporary accommodation for visiting teaching staff, administration offices and the staff common room. The existing barn opposite the farmhouse converted to provide student union space, a multi-purpose hall and supporting utility / storage space. There would be flexibility within the barn to optimise its use for the first year cohort prior to expanding into subsequent spaces for subsequent cohorts.
  - The field barn at the south-west of the site has potential as a field study centre.
  - New student accommodation buildings could be created to replace existing modern agricultural outbuildings which are either excessively dilapidated or structurally inappropriate to allow for the maximum number of bedrooms to be incorporated within the site. Student accommodation to be provided in cluster flats of either bedrooms with en-suites or bedrooms with sanitary provision by cluster shower rooms. Each cluster flat would have a common kitchen/dining/living space with either six or eight bedrooms.
  - The new plan generated by the development resolves into the form of buildings around courtyards. Bedrooms are placed along the external perimeter of the blocks, wrapped around the common spaces. This overcomes the physical restrictions of the built form and topography, providing bedrooms with privacy, natural light, ventilation and views. The common spaces are located to interact with the courtyard spaces and connections throughout the site. This also creates a common underlying identity between the former Mid Wales Hospital site and Troed yr Harn, while allowing each site to reflect its specific character, layout, scale and form.
  - Modern methods of construction would be proposed for both converting existing retained structures and providing new building structures on the site. These include lightweight, highly insulated panel and cassette systems located within the primary structural frame of either the existing or the new building.



## Options Analysis

3.99 This chapter has identified five options for taking forward the Black Mountains College proposition, ranging from ‘do nothing’ through to detailed information relating to specific sites. Table 3-3 sets out a high level analysis of how each option performs against a range of criteria (using a simple RAG analysis to indicate whether the option performs well, reasonably or poorly). Criteria include how each option:

- Fits with the BMC Vision and Objectives
- Fits with BMC accommodation requirements
- Contributes to wider strategic and policy needs (for example as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act)
- Performs against outcomes from the initial public consultation
- Can incorporate options for phasing

Table 3-3 Initial Options Assessment Analysis

Criteria	Do Nothing	Use of Existing Spaces	Greenfield Site	Former Mid Wales Hospital Site	Troed-yr-Harn Farm
Fits with BMC Vision and Objectives	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Fits with BMC Accommodation Requirements	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow
Alignment with Wider Strategic and Policy Requirements	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Aligned with Outcomes of Public Consultation	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	N/A
Can incorporate Options for Phasing	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green

3.100 From the above, the former Mid Wales Hospital site and Troed yr Harn Farm are clearly the two strongest options of those considered. The following section of this Options Appraisal focuses more closely on the opportunities for phasing of the Black Mountains College project at each of these two sites.



## 4 Phasing

4.1 Black Mountains College is a significant capital project to provide a new and transformational education institution. As such, developing a pilot phase to enable the concept of BMC to be proved is a critical factor. The scale and complexities of the former Mid Wales Hospital site are such that an initial pilot phase would be beneficial from both cost and timescale perspectives. There are several options for the location of the pilot phase – either within the former Mid Wales Hospital site or at Troed yr Harn Farm. This section looks at the implications associated with these options in more detail. If successful in the pilot phase, BMC anticipates expansion into a new campus within the former Mid Wales Hospital site.

### Pilot Phase at Former Mid Wales Hospital Site

4.2 Ways to create a pilot phase for the BMC within the footprint of the former Mid Wales Hospital site have been considered. Critical issues include the site’s complexities (ground contamination and other environmental constraints associated with the site such as the presence of bats within the former hospital buildings). A further consideration of commercial importance to BMC as a proposition relates to reputational impact of locating a pilot phase within a site dominated by derelict and deteriorating buildings. Incorporating a pilot phase within the former hospital site is therefore challenging.

4.3 Two potential pilot options have been identified – Option A which locates all the college functions and accommodation to the west of the site near the main entrance; a second Option B locates all the college functions and accommodation to the north of the main access road through the site. These two options are shown on Figures 4-1 and 4-2. For both options, the main hospital site would be secured / ‘mothballed’ during the pilot phase by means of a wall or fence and gated entry to prevent access by students / members of the public. The capital costs associated with development of a pilot phase at the former hospital site are estimated at around **£16mn** (excluding VAT and design fees). Additional costs for consideration would include acquisition of the site and ongoing revenue costs associated with appropriate insurances and maintenance for buildings in the wider site.

Figure 4-1 Pilot Phase Option A Hospital Site

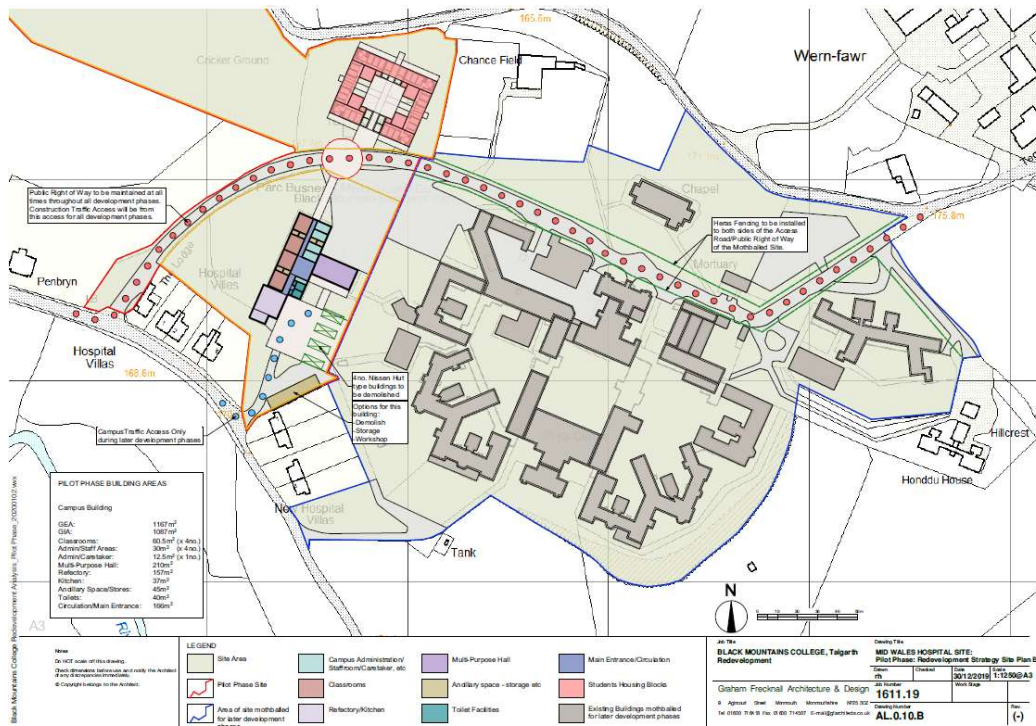
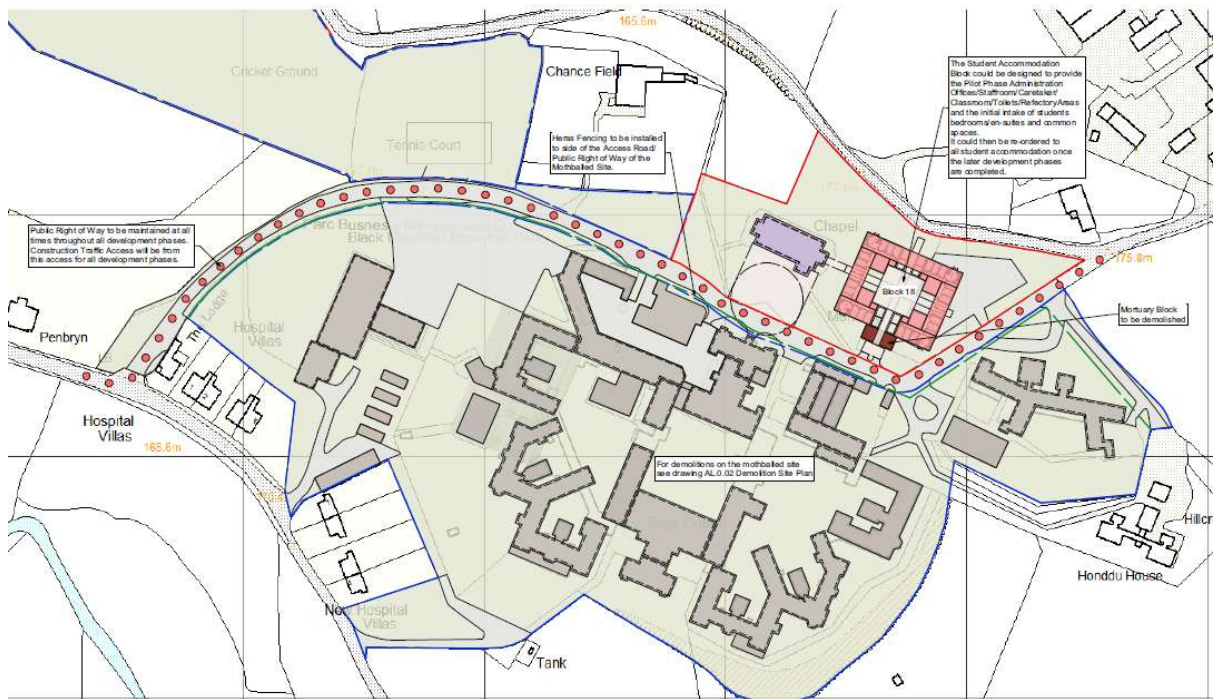


Figure 4-2 Pilot Phase Option B Hospital Site



## Benefits and Opportunities of Phasing

4.4 Benefits associated with creation of a pilot phase within the former Mid Wales Hospital site include:

- The option gives the community and stakeholders a positive affirmation of intention regarding the regeneration of the former Mid Wales Hospital.
- The pilot phase is part of the long-term permanent home for the BMC, with development over a single site which could present a consistent message to potential funders.
- The proposals include student accommodation, staff and visitor accommodation, teaching space and social space for students and therefore a stand-alone facility for up to 80 students. The proposals would be incorporated into the wider site development once proof of concept has been established and the main phase of BMC is constructed.
- Location of the pilot phase here would mean that students are in easy walking / cycling distance of Talgarth and associated facilities.
- Transport assessments have identified that the weekday commuter peak periods traffic effect of the main phase of the college development (i.e. 600 students) is less than that approved for the Local Development Plan allocation. The development of the pilot phase at this location is therefore assumed to be within an acceptable limit.

4.5 Opportunities associated with creation of a pilot phase within the former Mid Wales Hospital site include potential to incorporate renewable energy generation into the design and use of surrounding areas.

## Risks and Constraints

4.6 Risks associated with creation of a pilot phase within the former Mid Wales Hospital site include:

- The reputational risk is potentially two-fold – on the one hand, the initial intakes of students will be located immediately adjacent to a large derelict site which may be off-putting / not be able to present the type of experience that BMC’s vision suggests. The second area of risk relates to proximity of students to a major construction project as the main phase is developed. Mitigation measures can be implemented to take into account for example hours of working / noise mitigation,

however it is likely that the main route for construction traffic will be directly through the middle of the pilot phase (use of the access to the rear of the site has already been ruled out by the local planning authority).

- The option necessitates purchase of the former Mid Wales Hospital site from the outset. There is obviously a financial risk to BMC should the pilot phase not prove viable, as re-sale of the site may be problematic (noting the site has proved itself undevelopable in recent years due to viability concerns and lack of interest from developers). Other financial risks would be associated with the need for BMC to be responsible for the site in terms of maintenance and insurances necessary from the outset.
- The expected timeline for the first year of the pilot intake is 2024, with the first year of the main phase intake not likely before 2028. The longer lead-in time for development of the pilot phase at this site is due to a number of reasons – for example the fundraising period is likely to be longer due to the greater level of funding sought; and the planning and design stage is also likely to be longer for reasons explained below.
- It is expected that the BBNPA would wish to see a planning application embracing the whole site rather than just the area encompassed by the pilot stage. In addition, the BBNPA would expect to see a development brief prepared for the site (in line with requirements of the current LDP), together with public consultation on the proposed new use. Use of the site for education purposes represents a change to the existing allocation for the site within the LDP; this change of direction will need to be formally approved by the BBNPA as part of the preparations of the revised LDP which are currently ongoing.
- Prior to site acquisition / construction commencing, it is recommended that sufficient financing be in place for the entirety of the project (pilot plus main phase). Advice to date from fundraising consultants is that development of the site is unaffordable without public subsidy and that public subsidy is unlikely without proof of concept.

4.7 There are known constraints associated with the former Mid Wales Hospital site as have been described within Section 3 of this Options Appraisal. Specific constraints that would need to be included within proposals for the pilot phase include site contaminants such as asbestos, ground contamination as well as ecological mitigation and infrastructure issues. Costs may be disproportionate to the ultimate value of the site for this stage.

### **Pilot Phase at Troed yr Harn Farm**

4.8 Troed yr Harn Farm presents an opportunity for the development of a pilot phase in a timely manner; serving as a small campus, enabling student numbers to grow incrementally over a 4-5-year period and enabling BMC to deliver its core mission. The ultimate goal would be to establish proof of concept and an evidence base for future larger scale capital funding associated with major capital investment at the former Mid Wales Hospital site. The proposals for a pilot phase at Troed yr Harn are as described in Section 3, with the farm able to provide a stand-alone facility for between 20 and 80 students over time. The pilot phase operational timescale would run from 2022 – 2026.

4.9 Capital costs associated with Troed yr Harn are lower than those for the former Mid Wales Hospital site. Costs associated with the development of the pilot phase in its entirety (capacity of 80 students) are estimated at **£13.3mn** (excluding VAT and design fees); this figure reduces to **£10.8mn** (again excluding VAT and design fees) if a phased approach is taken, with an initial plan for 20 students and further accommodation blocks constructed over time to enable expansion up to 80 students (the figure could reduce still further if there is flexibility over use of modular design and construction methods). Other costs relate to site acquisition (the farm is currently on the market for £1.2mn) and again ongoing maintenance costs and insurances for relevant buildings and structures (although noting that buildings are generally in useable conditions).

### **Benefits and Opportunities of Phasing**

4.10 Benefits associated with creation of a pilot phase at Troed yr Harn include:

- Troed yr Harn has the potential to provide a stand-alone facility for between 20 and 80 students (subject to planning).



- The setting of Troed yr Harn aligns positively with the Vision of the BMC. The farmland associated with the buildings can be readily utilised and integrated into courses offered by the BMC, thus providing a long-term unique selling point for the College. Owning land adds value to the BMC proposition
- Delivery is not contingent on raising significant additional funds beyond the cost of acquisition. As a proof of concept, it may help to unlock the bigger funds necessary to acquire and develop the former Mid Wales Hospital site and the larger public/private sector partnerships that would be needed.
- Income generation from the farm would commence on acquisition – ongoing income sources include grass keep (£11,000 in 2019) and rental income from two properties (£13,000 per annum). Further income generating opportunities may arise in the short-term from rental of farm buildings for vehicle storage / builder's materials and from payments as part of wider environmental schemes (for example work to improve hedgerows).

4.11 Troed yr Harn also presents some specific opportunities for BMC, namely:

- Accompanying land presents an opportunity for students to be involved in practical land management, landscape-scale research and outdoor learning.
- Opportunities to work with neighbouring farms and landowners to manage the land (for example seasonal grazing).
- Favourable location adjacent to the former Mid Wales Hospital site for subsequent expansion and connectivity. For example, there is potential to create and enhance existing footways between the two sites.
- Troed yr Harn has an assessed hydro potential of 29kw. This provides a further opportunity both for income generation and as a resource for learning.
- The land at Troed yr Harn presents opportunities for carbon sequestration, which allies with BMC's ambition to be a carbon neutral college. Over time and with increasing emphasis on the need to become carbon-neutral, new subsidies may become available to assist with this opportunity. Carbon sequestration on-site would reduce the need for potentially costly off-site off-setting arrangements.
- Opportunities for partnering with a range of organisations in the development and running of Troed yr Harn. Potential partner organisations identified to date include Down to Earth, a social enterprise building company.

### **Risks and Constraints**

4.12 Risks and constraints associated with a pilot phase at Troed yr Harn are lesser than those associated with the former Mid Wales Hospital site. Risks include:

- Those associated with the running and maintenance costs of old buildings (three of the four farm buildings are old stone built). These risks are normal and apply to many capital asset purchases. The buildings are currently in use. A maintenance budget would be required and has been included in current financial projections.
- Responsibilities related to owning land in an uncertain policy context. However, BMC would not be alone in this and some form of continuing public subsidy is likely, and even more likely for the kind of approach represented by BMC.
- There are some downside financial risks to farming but BMC would not be trying to pursue commercial farming. In the event of complications BMC could manage this risk by either long-term leasing of the land to farmers / partners / conservation trusts for habitat restoration, or alternatively selling the land.
- Reputational risk associated with a relatively remote, rural learning facility. The distance / access from Talgarth may not be appropriate for some students, although BMC's target audience would be expected to be sympathetic to the setting and location; the site would be self-contained in terms of accommodation, teaching and social space.

- There is a risk that the former Mid Wales Hospital site may no longer be available to acquire by the time proof of concept at Troed yr Harn is established and BMC is in a position to proceed with expansion. BMC could manage this risk by acquiring the hospital or acquiring an option to purchase.

4.13 Constraints identified in the preceding section with regard to Troed-yr-Harn Farm are as follows:

- Ongoing liaison is necessary with the BBNPA as the local planning authority to determine the requirements for planning consent and additional assessments that may be necessary (e.g. traffic impact, heritage impact assessments), which may limit overall student numbers.
- Site access is poor. Liaison is necessary with the Highways Authority to identify and overcome potential safety concerns and the potential impacts of additional traffic. Liaison will also be beneficial with the Gliding Club to consider opportunities for alternative site access.
- The distance of the site from Talgarth for students without access to private vehicles may be a constraint.
- The farmhouse is 'locally listed' and will therefore require an assessment as to the implications of the proposed development on the building.

### Summary

4.14 This section has identified three potential options for phasing of the BMC proposition, both within the former Mid Wales Hospital site and at Troed yr Harn. Benefits, opportunities, risks and constraints associated with developing a pilot phase at each location have been considered taking into account not only site-specific factors, but also factors relating to the wider reputation and commercial focus of BMC.

## 5 Preferred Strategy and Next Steps

- 5.1 The Options Appraisal has comprised a thorough review of the various potential options set out in the Strategic and Economic Case for BMC prepared by Aecom in 2019. The additional option associated with the Troed yr Harn Farm site has been incorporated into the appraisal as it is widely considered to represent a unique opportunity for the College. This section sets out a preferred strategy for BMC in terms of site location and phasing, together with a summary of the next steps necessary to achieve this.

### Preferred Strategy

- 5.2 The preferred strategy for BMC is as follows:

- Pursue the use of Troed yr Harn as a facility to develop a pilot campus for up to 80 students, prove the concept of BMC and 'build the brand'.
- Continue to explore use of the former Mid Wales Hospital site as a main campus for BMC.
- Expansion into a new campus on the former Mid Wales Hospital site, retaining use of Troed yr Harn as a satellite campus and teaching resource.

### Next Steps

- 5.3 Immediate next steps for BMC are as follows:

- Develop a Full Business Case for the BMC proposition to support funding applications and wider investor discussions.
- Planning consents – undertake formal pre-planning discussions with BBNPA regarding planning requirements for Troed yr Harn Farm. Liaison with the Highways Authority to form part of this stage.
- Subject to outcomes, develop detailed design for the pilot campus in readiness for obtaining necessary consents.
- Continued liaison with local community regarding project progress and direction.
- Work with BBNPA to revise the allocation of the former Mid Wales Hospital site to an education use through the LDP Review process, including preparation of supporting information as appropriate.
- Continue to pursue academic accreditation, develop partnerships with appropriate organisations and deliver planned learning during 2020.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Public Consultation Material [Barton Willmore]**



# THE VISION FOR BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE: TALGARTH



## VISION

‘Black Mountains College is a **new transformational** education institution that will pioneer **new ways of teaching and learning** and demonstrate how to transition to a more **sustainable circular economy**. Using Mid Wales as a laboratory and the Brecon Beacons National Park as a classroom, BMC will offer an **innovative, holistic education** that will produce **a new breed of multi-skilled and adaptable graduates** equipped with the skills to **meet the economic, social and ecological challenges of the future.**’

## WHAT MAKES BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE UNIQUE

- » **Adopts the block teaching method of delivery** – BMC will utilise the block teaching method as opposed to a conventional semester system. Classes will be taught in 24-day units in series. The block teaching method allows students to focus on one area of the curriculum at a time, with future blocks building on their predecessors. Block teaching therefore allows for a deeper and more immersive learning experience.
- » **Has small class sizes** – block teaching will take place in seminar-style tutorials with a maximum of 20 students. BMC will have an annual intake of 200 students and a forecast of 600 undergraduates at any one time.
- » **Uses the Brecon Beacons National Park as a place for learning** – BMC will, as far as possible, focus on outdoor learning using the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) as its classroom.
- » **Focuses on ‘learning by doing’** – BMC’s learning focus will be on practical education and addressing the grand challenges identified within the Well-being of Future Generations Act – climate change; an ageing population and a rapidly changing economy. BMC will embed the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) into every aspect of its approach.



TO CREATE A  
NEW PIPELINE  
OF GRADUATES



TO ADDRESS  
THE SKILLS  
GAP



TO STIMULATE  
THE MID WALES  
ECONOMY



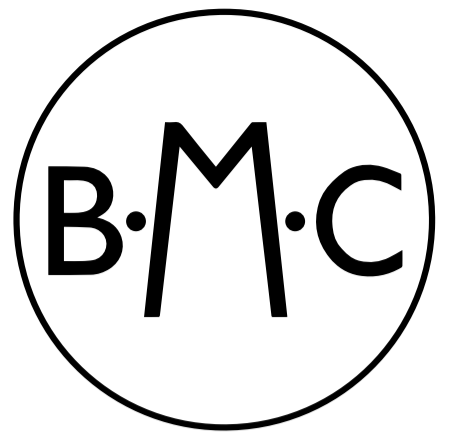
WELL-BEING  
OF FUTURE  
GENERATIONS



BUILD A NETWORK  
OF PEER-TO-PEER  
SUPPORT



# WHY THE BLACK MOUNTAINS?



## THE BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

An educational institution using the natural resources of the National Park has the potential to produce graduates schooled in a holistic approach towards sustainable development, to offer a classroom like no other and to provide a unique opportunity to tailor an educational experience to urgent social priorities. BMC will utilise the Brecon Beacons National Park as its classroom, with the living environment its library and laboratory.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Talgarth is home to many craftspeople and small businesses, each bringing a wealth of creative skill and knowledge to the local area. The opportunity exists to utilise this local knowledge base and share these specialist skills with students of BMC.

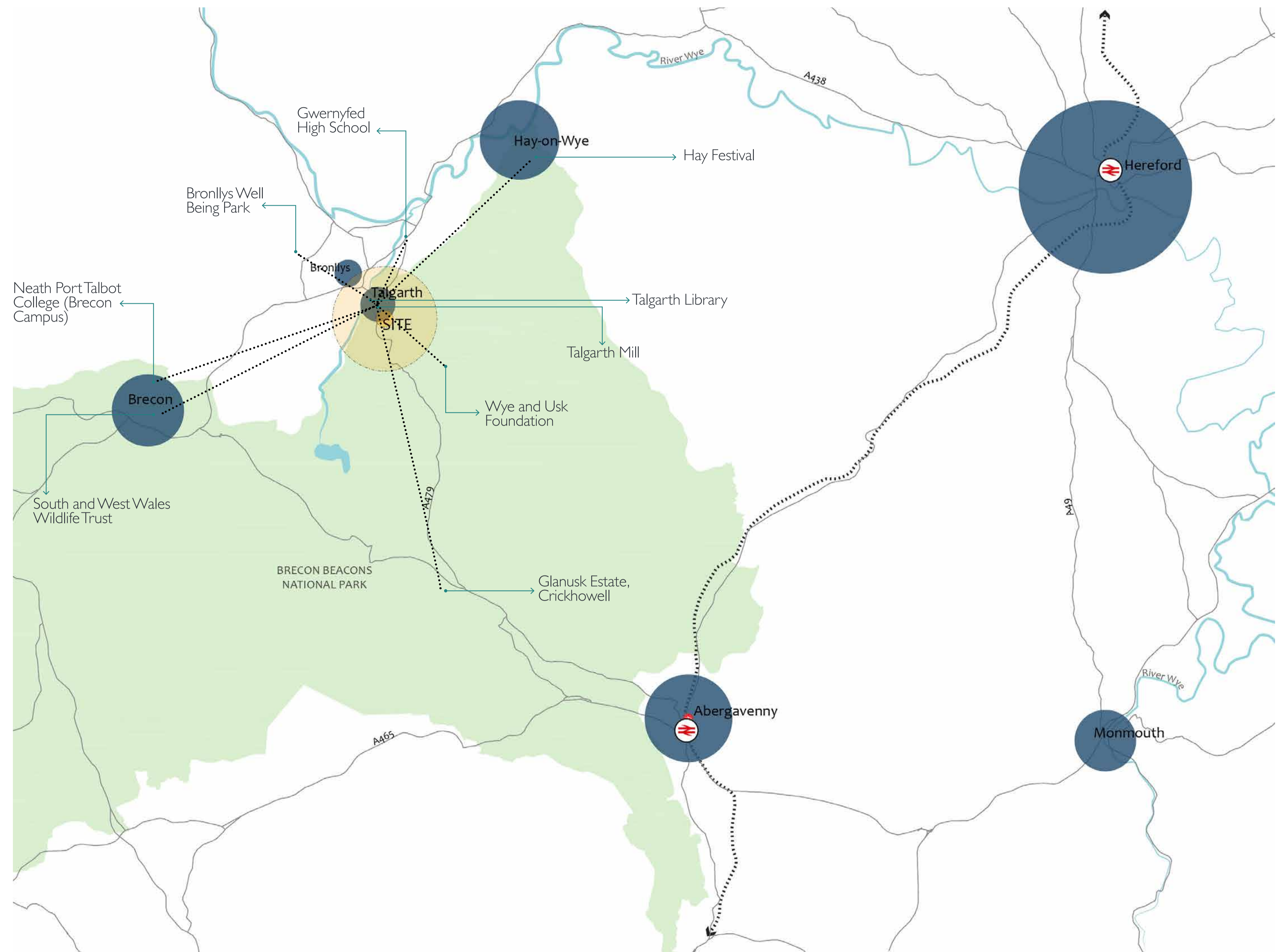
In addition to Talgarth itself, the wider Brecon Beacons area offers a wealth of skills and employment opportunities, presenting prospective students with the chance to develop their skillset, to learn about the rural economy and local landscape and to apply the lessons taught in the classroom to real-life scenarios.

BMC proposes an immersive teaching experience which looks to foster creative thinking to prepare people for the challenges of the future, including climate change, an ageing population and a rapidly changing economy.

## AVAILABILITY OF SITES

There are a number of existing, available vacant spaces, community facilities and vacant premises within Talgarth that could help deliver BMC's provision including:

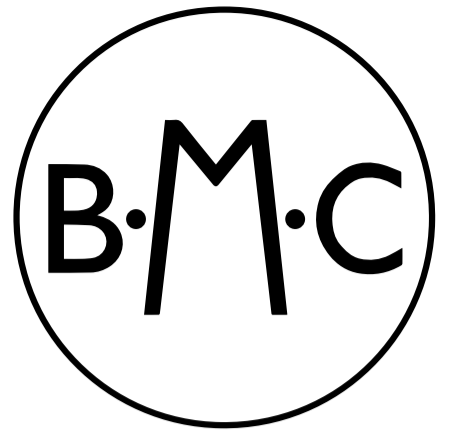
- » Talgarth Mill
- » Empty business units
- » Former school



Wider Context Location Plan



# WHY TALGARTH?



## SUPPORTING THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Survey research suggests that there is strong support for BMC within the local business community:

- » 56% of businesses reported an interest in recruiting graduates from Black Mountains College when provided with an overview of BMC's approach and ethos.
- » Just over two-thirds of businesses reported an interest in hosting a student placement from Black Mountains College.
- » Over half of businesses reported an interest in supporting students in the future to carry out short research projects on implementing the 5 ways of working and the 7 principles of the Well Being of Future Generations Act.
- » 40% of businesses reported being willing to work with Black Mountains College to influence the curriculum offer.

## REGENERATING TALGARTH

The BMC project will be transformative for local people and the local economy. Not only will it offer a new kind of undergraduate experience built on skills rather than subjects to meet the needs of employers and the future labour market, but it will support an economy in urgent need of regeneration and a sustainable transition and be at the heart of placemaking in Talgarth and the wider BBNP.

Economic benefits associated with BMC have been estimated as follows:

- » A total economic benefit to the area of £300m over 15 years.
- » £30m p.a. gross value added in indirect, direct and induced economic activity.
- » The creation of up to 100 high skilled jobs, including supply chain opportunities during both construction and operation phases.
- » The provision of skills locally for young people, allowing them to contribute to the local economy.

## WIDER BENEFITS FOR TALGARTH AND NEARBY COMMUNITIES

- » BMC will attract local, UK and international students, benefiting the local economy through bringing skills, generating expenditure, and transforming Mid Wales.
- » The creation of new jobs at BMC will drive demand for local services, including shops, food and drink establishments, local community and education facilities (for example making local schools more viable and keeping Talgarth Library open), and help support local initiatives such as the local energy co-operative.
- » Opportunities to develop sustainable transport initiatives within and around Talgarth – for example new walking and cycling routes, improved viability of local bus routes.
- » Stemming the outflow of young people from rural Mid Wales through the provision of new training and employment opportunities, applying innovative thinking and ways of working in key sectors and helping with the formation of new start-up businesses.
- » Training opportunities, including apprenticeships, NVQs and H&S training, arising from construction of the college. These could be in forestry and timber processing as well as more traditional building skills, benefiting existing residents including those who are economically inactive.
- » Opening up access to built and natural heritage in the area through the creation of green corridors (for example the Pwll y Wrach nature reserve).
- » Opportunities for furthering community cohesion and integration through the development of the project, for example identifying community needs and how they could be addressed by the college.
- » Universities have been shown to create a cluster of new businesses around them. BMC could have a huge catalytic effect.



The Strand - Local Cafe



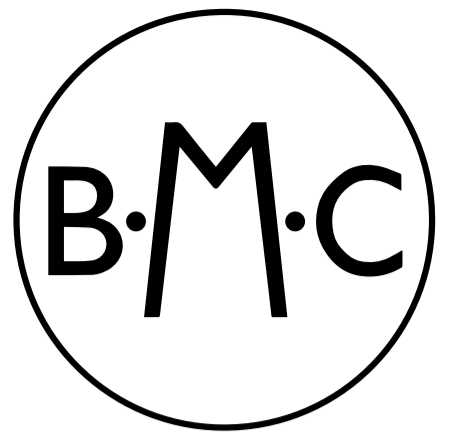
Talgarth Tourist Centre



Former site of library



# SITE OPTIONS FOR BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE

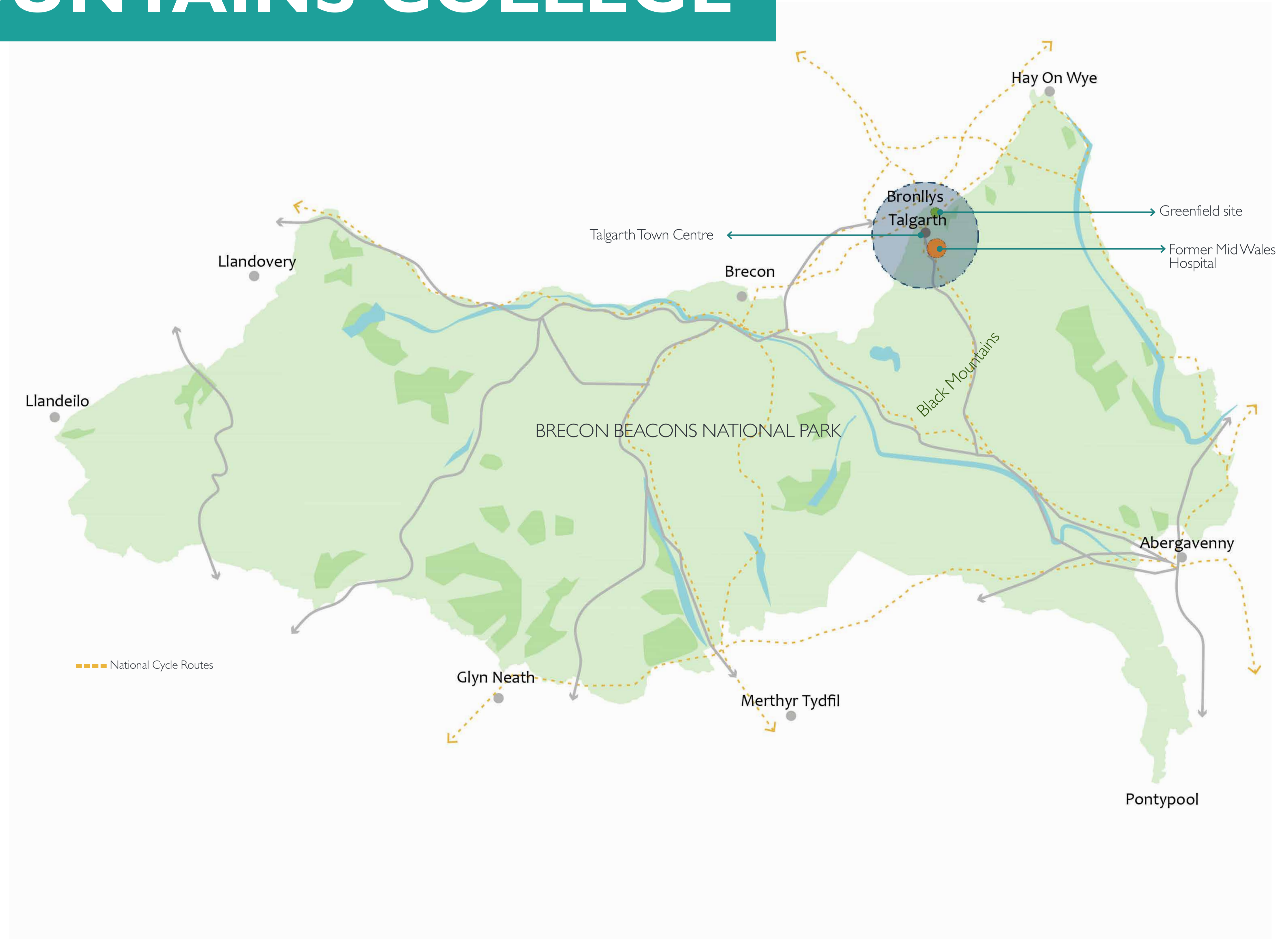


## THREE SITE OPTIONS

An economic assessment of the possible delivery options for the Black Mountains College looked at four potential site options for the college including where best to locate the college within the Black Mountains area:

1. Utilise existing spaces within Talgarth: this is considered to provide an affordable solution by focusing on space that is currently available of redundant spaces within the community
2. **Develop on a greenfield site:** local feedback suggests there are potential sites available next to trunk roads on the edges of Talgarth
3. **Develop on a brownfield site (The former Mid Wales Hospital):** the only viable brownfield site in close proximity to Talgarth and the largest brownfield allocation in the National Park.

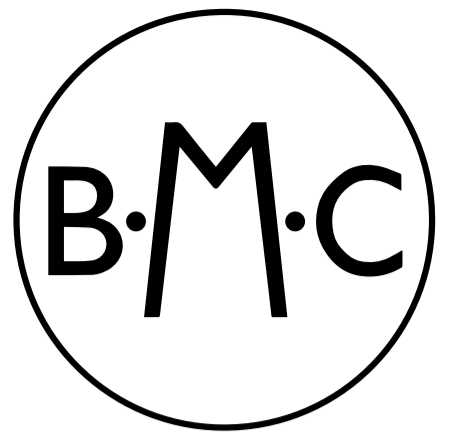
Option 1 (utilise existing spaces within Talgarth) has been discounted as a sole option due to a lack of sufficient space within the town centre but could be used to support the main preferred option site for development of the BMC.





# SITE OPTION: NO.1

## FORMER MID WALES HOSPITAL



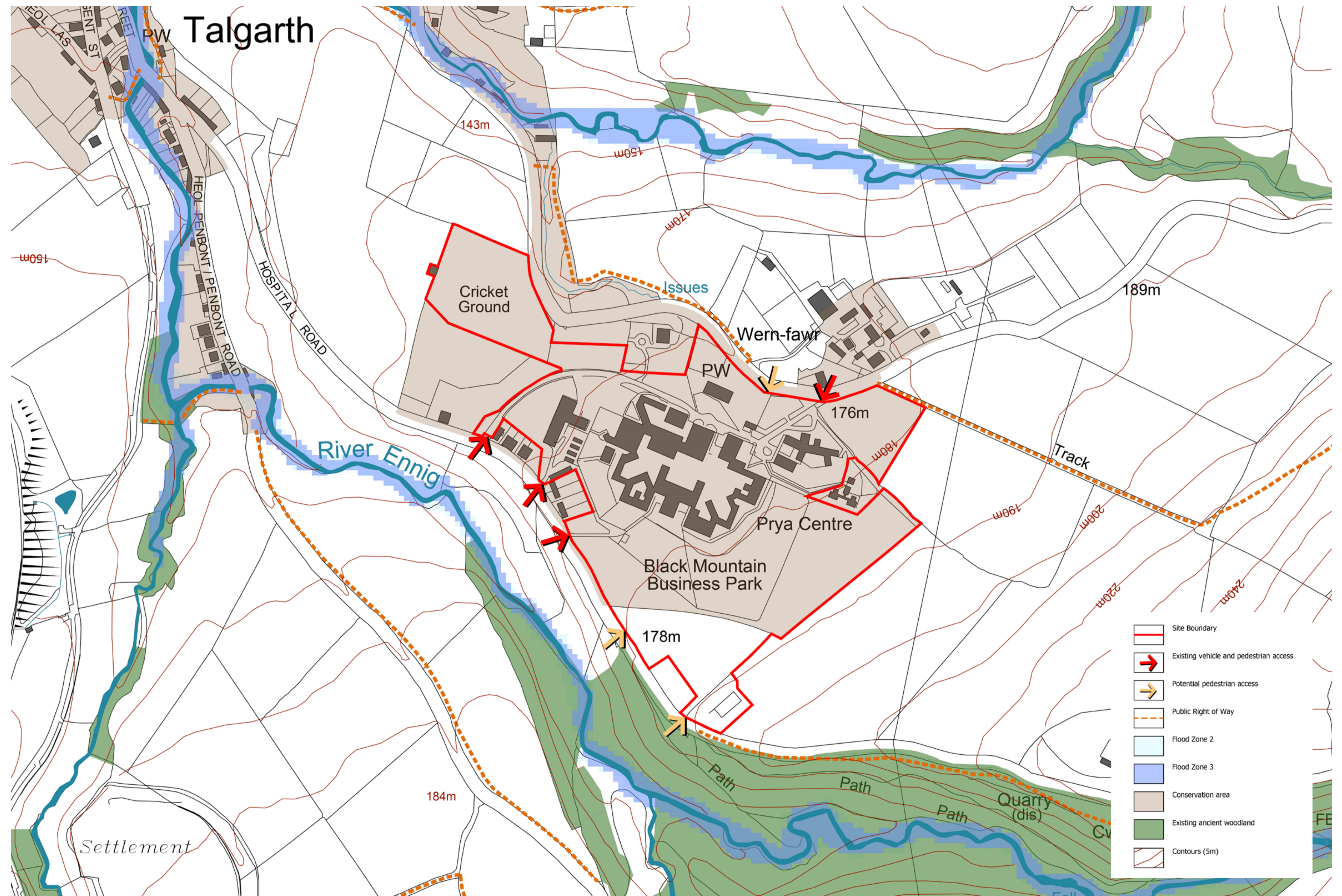
Site option 1 for BMC focuses on a heritage led-regeneration scheme, developing the college on a brownfield site south of Talgarth town centre.

A summary of the issues and opportunities of developing the Former Mid Wales Hospital are set out below.

Regenerating the site is likely to receive strong support locally given its deterioration and local significance in terms of heritage and scale.

Architectural and heritage assessment has shown how the former hospital buildings could be converted to accommodate the space required by the BMC and provide space for expansion.

- » Initial feedback from transport consultants suggest accommodating 600 students on the site would not cause significant traffic issues locally.
- » The site could accommodate all of BMC's needs as well as space for associated activities such as business incubator, re-forestation, and community events including theatre and sports.
- » The site is within walking distance of Talgarth whilst also providing some separation from the centre.
- » The hospital site is the largest allocated housing site in the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- » The site is in private ownership with proposals to use the site for housing.

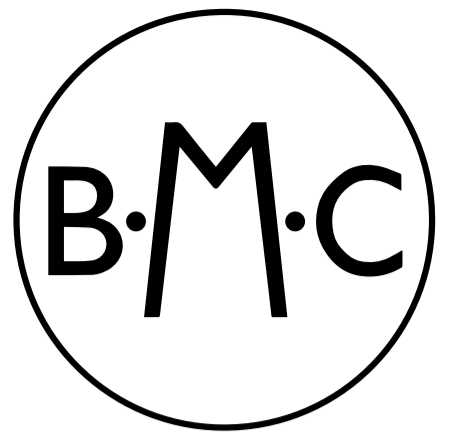


Former Hospital Site: Summary of Constraints and Opportunities



# SITE OPTION: NO.1

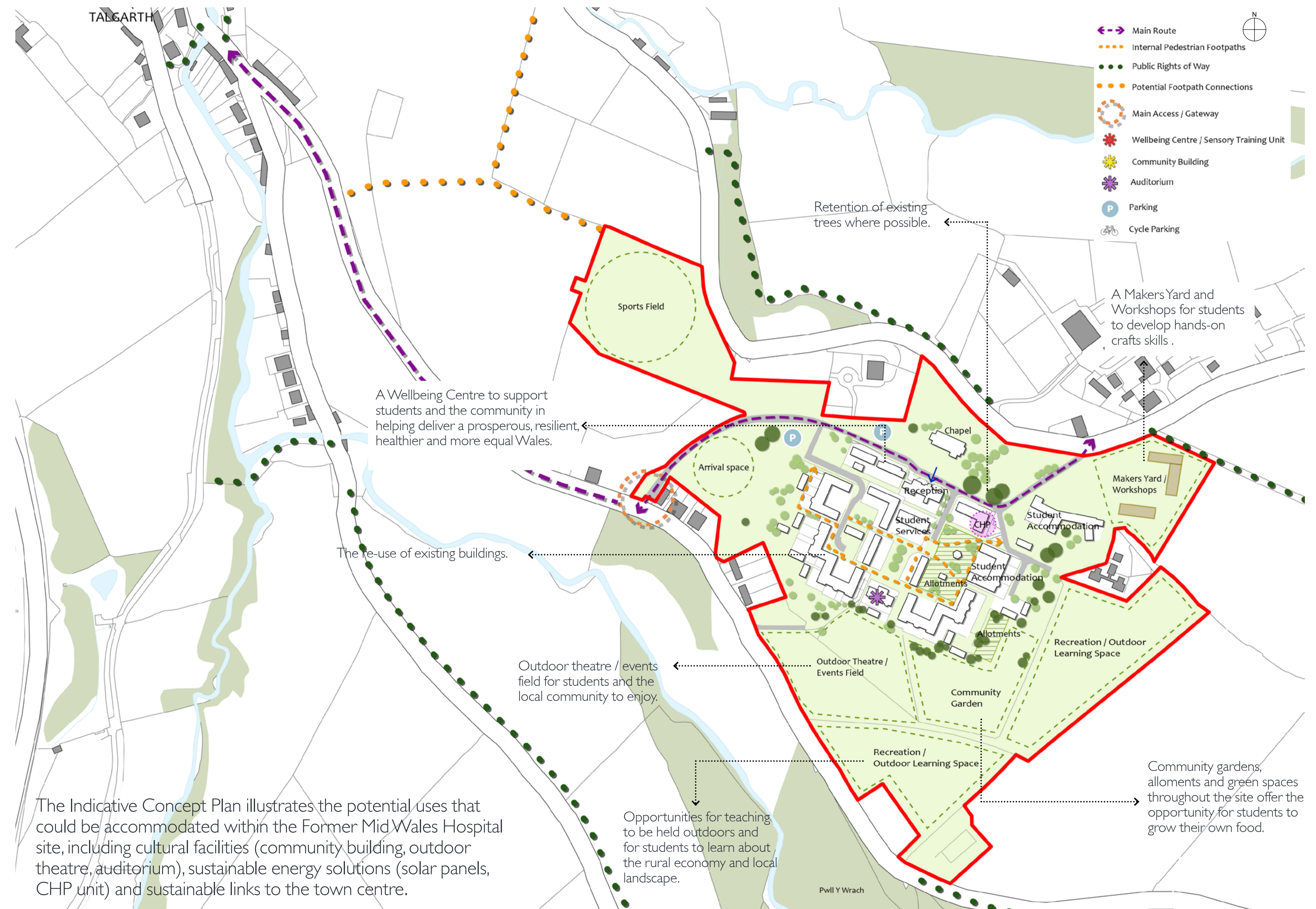
## FORMER MID WALES HOSPITAL



The Former Mid Wales Hospital site could accommodate all of BMC's needs, as shown indicatively on the adjacent plan. Moreover, the site has sufficient space to realise the aspirational proposals of the college., including those relating to sustainable travel, energy and community transformation.

### SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

- » Establish a strategic vision for the proposed development to promote and explore opportunities to maximise sustainable travel and alternatives to using the private car.
- » Consider options to improve public footpaths and encourage active travel.
- » Identify further opportunities to develop off-line traffic-free walking and cycling routes.
- » Establish sustainable connectivity between the proposed development and existing walking cycling routes.
- » Consider a robust package of sustainable highway improvement measures that could be implemented throughout Talgarth.
- » Consider the implementation of improved local public transport provision by enhancing existing infrastructure and connecting existing services to the proposed development. This could include the provision of a shuttle bus service interconnecting between the Hospital site and central Talgarth.
- » Identify opportunities to provide new and enhanced cycle parking facilities at key destinations throughout Talgarth to support local travel by bicycle.
- » Explore emerging technologies, such as automation and artificial intelligence and decentralised energy generation
- » Incorporate renewable energy solutions on site, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP) unit and roof mounted solar panels.
- » Incorporation and maintenance of existing trees.

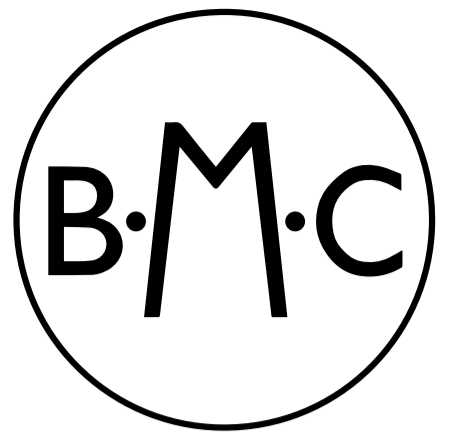


The Indicative Concept Plan illustrates the potential uses that could be accommodated within the Former Mid Wales Hospital site, including cultural facilities (community building, outdoor theatre, auditorium), sustainable energy solutions (solar panels, CHP unit) and sustainable links to the town centre.

Former Hospital Site: Indicative Concept Plan



# SITE OPTION NO.1: FORMER MID WALES HOSPITAL



## EXISTING SITE IMAGES

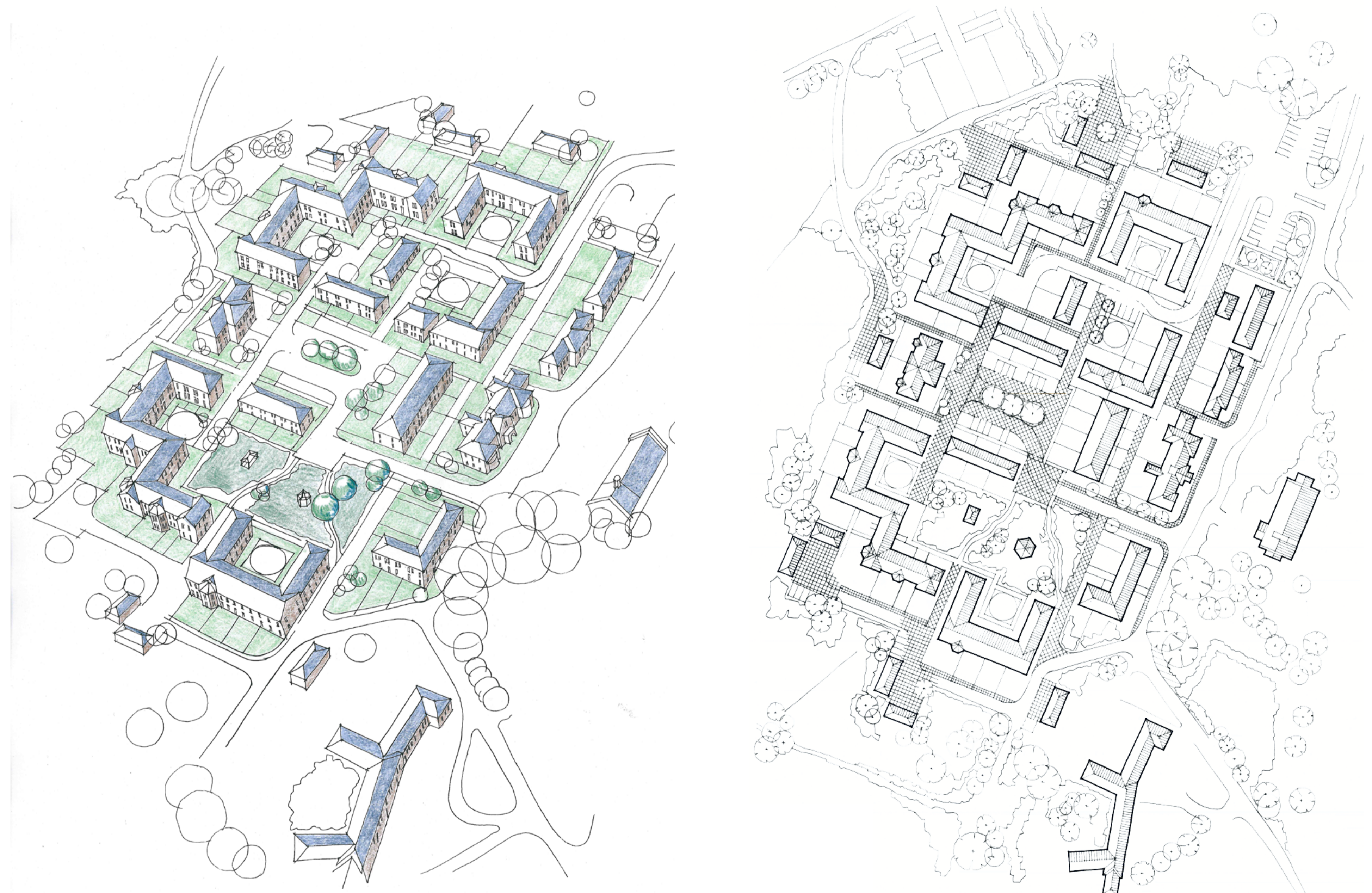


Existing entrance of Former Mid Wales Hospital



Existing courtyard and buildings within Former Mid Wales Hospital Site

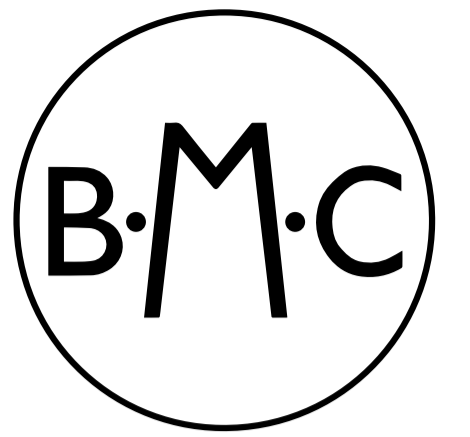
## SAVE BRITAINS HERITAGE - INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGNS



+



# SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES: TALGARTH TOWN CENTRE



While there is a lack of existing space within Talgarth town centre to accommodate all BMC's needs, there are a number of supporting opportunities within Talgarth town centre focused on utilising existing vacant space, community facilities and empty premises to help deliver BMC's provision in what could be over the short or longer term. These include Talgarth library; a former primary school, which could be used temporarily or to provide accommodation or social housing; and Talgarth Mill, which already has close links with BMC.

The adjacent plan illustrates the links between the Former Hospital site and Talgarth town centre.

A summary of the issues and opportunities of utilising vacant space within the town centre are set out below.

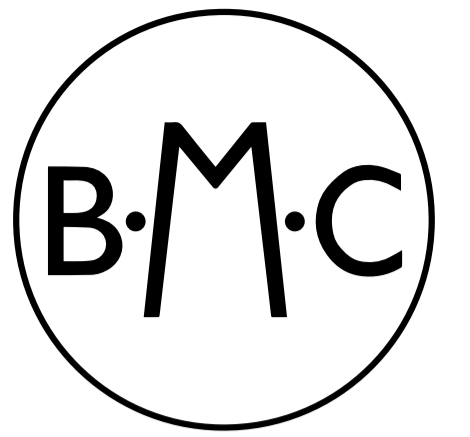
- » An affordable and low risk option to delivery particularly in the early years of delivery when student numbers are building up.
- » The regeneration effects on Talgarth would be significant and would improve the vibrancy of the town and increase the use of and spending on existing services within the town centre.
- » A massive transformational effect on the local economy and increase in high value jobs.
- » Studies have shown that the average student expenditure generates up to £10,000 and that every student supports one new job. Furthermore, the impact of higher education in Wales has been shown to provide over 49,000 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs and over 16,000 direct FTE jobs. For every 100 direct FTE jobs created in the universities itself, another 120 jobs were generated outside of universities in other industries.
- » Embedding students in the local community fits with the ethos and approach of BMC.
- » Space in existing facilities is likely to be limited and so may not be suitable for accommodating all of BMC's planned growth in student numbers.
- » No guarantee that the right spaces can be secured at the times required.
- » Existing buildings may not offer the flexibility of space and facilities required.



Talgarth: Constraints and Opportunities Plan including connections

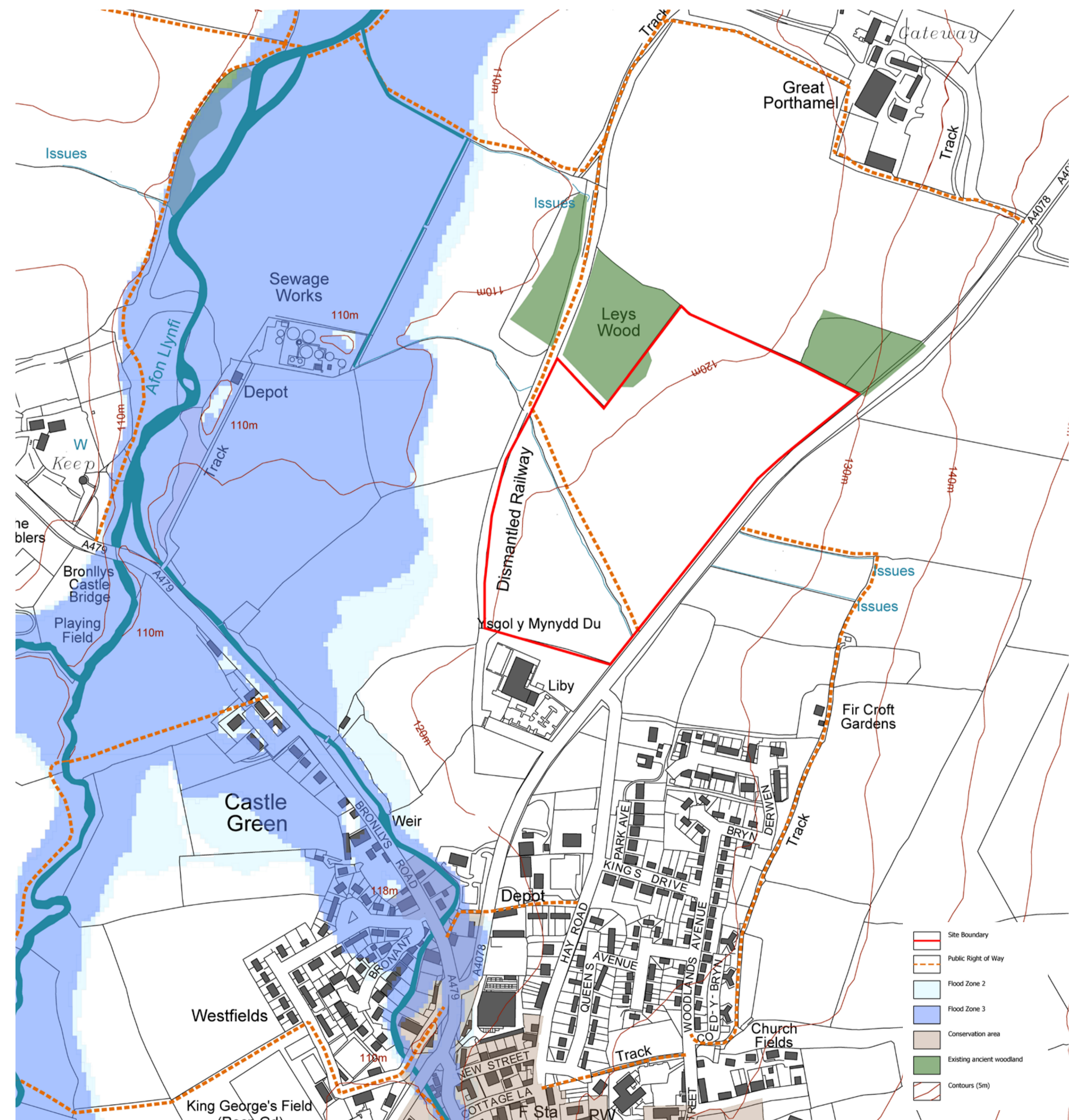


# SITE OPTION NO. 2: GREENFIELD SITE



Greenfield sites have been identified in close proximity to Talgarth. The issues and opportunities associated with developing a greenfield site are set out below. The adjacent constraints and opportunities plan is based on a nominal greenfield site immediately north of Talgarth town centre.

- » An iconic new build campus building would be attractive to potential students and provide all the facilities and spaces required and allow for a design that supports the interdisciplinary and collaborative working environment required
- » A new build facility provides the opportunity to host an international design competition to provide a facility that operates to the highest possible sustainability standards.
- » A greenfield site would lend itself to the provision of co-housing/social housing schemes.
- » The opportunity for the provision of a district heat network.
- » Potential to benefit from the proximity of GP Biotech Talgarth.
- » Local support for a greenfield development may be limited particularly when a suitable brownfield site is currently available
- » A greenfield site could raise questions about BMC's environmental principles.
- » The existing power line would require mitigation.



Nominal greenfield site: Constraints and Opportunities Plan



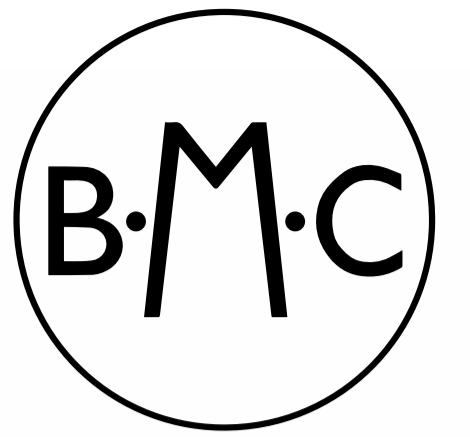
# NEXT STEPS

- » Analysis of feedback from consultation event.
- » Development of preferred option.
- » Preparation of Development Brief for submission to donors, investors and for pre-planning purposes.

## GET IN TOUCH

- » Black Mountains College, The Mill, The Square, Talgarth, LD3 0BW
- » Email: [info@blackmountainscollege.uk](mailto:info@blackmountainscollege.uk)
- » Twitter: [@bmc\\_college](https://twitter.com/bmc_college)
- » Instagram: [@blackmountainscollege](https://www.instagram.com/blackmountainscollege)
- » Facebook: [@blackmountainscollege](https://www.facebook.com/blackmountainscollege)

For more information on Black Mountains College visit us at:  
[www.blackmountainscollege.uk](http://www.blackmountainscollege.uk)



## **APPENDIX B**

**Existing Spaces within Talgarth – Assessment Sheets**

**[Graham Frecknall Architects]**

Reference

1611.19/GF

February 2019

Project Title

**THE BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE**  
**Talgarth**



Document

**Potential Development Sites for The Black Mountains College:  
Summary Report**

**DRAFT**

Client

**The Black Mountains College Project Ltd**  
**2 Llanellieu Court**  
**Talgarth**  
**Powys**  
**LD3 0EB**

Architect

**Graham Frecknall Architecture & Design**  
**9 Agincourt Street**  
**Monmouth**  
**Monmouthshire**  
**NP25 3DZ**



## **CONTENTS**

1. Preface

2. Introduction

3. The Sites

1. Unit 5, Talgarth Business Park
2. The Library, New Street, Talgarth
3. The Chapel site, Back Lane, Talgarth
4. Talgarth School Site 1, School Street, Talgarth
5. Talgarth School Site 2, Back Lane, Talgarth
6. Gwernyfed High School.
7. Allocated Housing Site T9, Land North of Doctors Surgery, Talgarth
8. The Former Mid Wales Hospital

4. The Possible Preferred Site: Mid Wales Hospital Site

Appendix A: Drawings for Mid Wales Hospital Site

## 1.0 PREFACE

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of findings about the eight sites with development potential, after assessing each one as a location for all or part of the spatial requirements of a rural college of further and higher education integrated into the community, utilising sites of learning within existing businesses, institutions and the natural environment of the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- 1.2 The assessments were not designed to imply a single scheme design proposal but rather a statement about the spatial requirements of the college, expressed as a schedule of accommodation compared with spaces available on the sites, by converting existing buildings or constructing new buildings on greenfield sites or areas created by demolition.
- 1.3 Indicative costs for the development of each site are given for the conversion and re-use of buildings and for new build alternatives.
- 1.4 It is understood that the findings may be used to help establish base line conditions for a wider masterplan for the college within the town and its environs.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Graham Frecknall Architecture and Design (GFAD) was appointed in December 2018 to assess the development potential of eight sites, in and around Talgarth, as locations for elements of the proposed Black Mountains College.


2.2 The sites are identified as:

1. Unit 5, Talgarth Business Park
2. The Library, New Street, Talgarth
3. The Chapel site, Back Lane, Talgarth
4. Talgarth School Site 1, School Street, Talgarth
5. Talgarth School Site 2, Back Lane, Talgarth
6. Gwernyfed High School.
7. Allocated Housing Site T9, Land North of Doctors Surgery, Talgarth
8. The Former Mid Wales Hospital

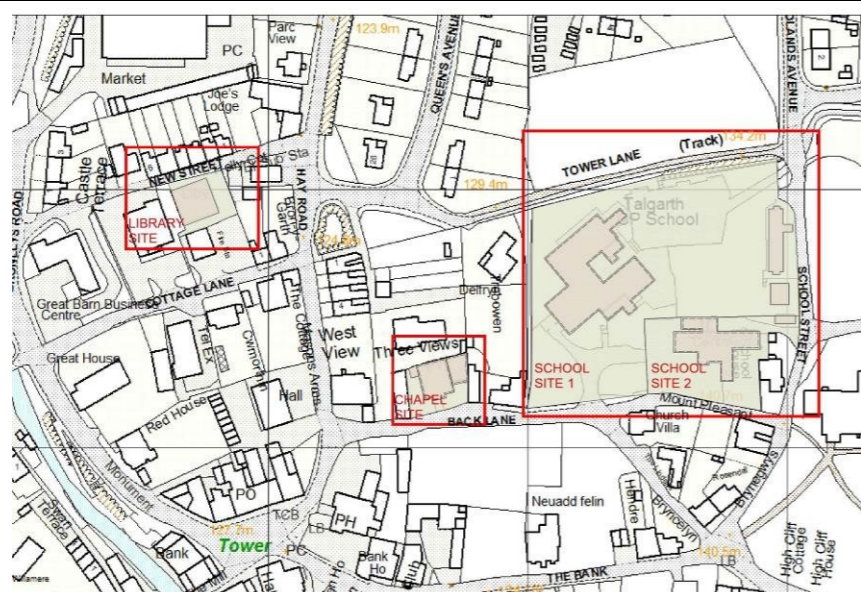
2.3 An appraisal of each site seeks to confirm areas of existing buildings and potential sites, measured against a schedule of accommodation for the phased development of a rural college of further and higher education.

2.4 The establishment of the college is to be a phased operation with a first phase intake of approximately 200 students and a second phase spread over a five year period building up to a student population of 600 – the intended capacity of the college.

3.0 THE SITES

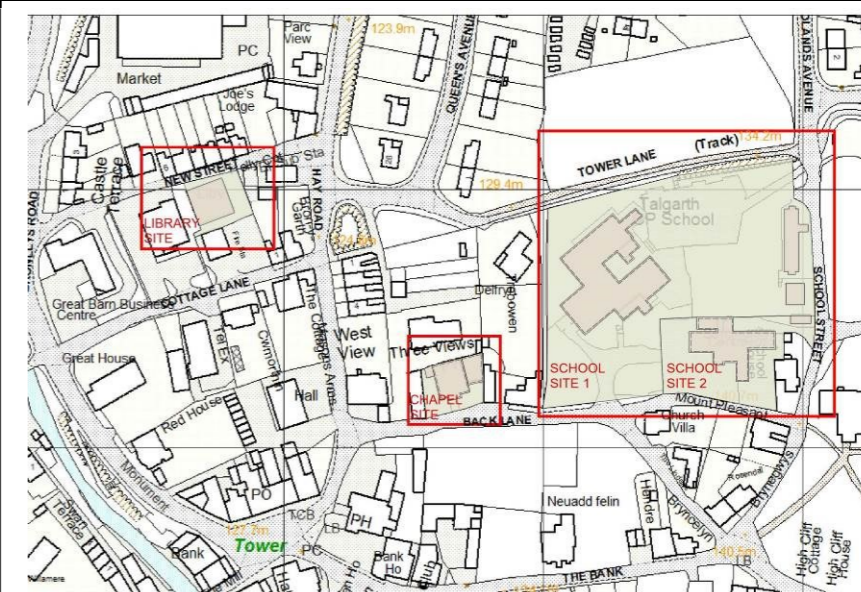
<p>Site 1. Unit 5 Talgarth Business Park Talgarth</p> 	
Availability:	Vacant.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Buy/Rent.
Site Area:	0.39ha/ 0.973acres.
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	567 m <sup>2</sup> 530 m <sup>2</sup>
Conservation Area:	No.
Existing Use:	Business/Industrial.
Potential Use:	Workshops/Manufacturing.
Access:	Good. On-site car parking provided.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Modern purpose built facility.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	Possible area for extension to double size of building. Cost: £750.00/m <sup>2</sup> , Cost of extended industrial unit £425,250.00 ex vat.
Cost of demolition and new build:	Not applicable to this site.

Site 2.  
Library Site  
New Street  
Talgarth



Availability:	Yes. Currently vacant.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Buy.
Site Area:	0.042ha/ 0.104acres.
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	210 m <sup>2</sup> 190 m <sup>2</sup>
Conservation Area:	Yes.
Existing Use:	Library.
Potential Use:	Library. Retain use as community library run as outreach facility by BMC.
Access:	Restricted. New Street provides a narrow access, with no pavements to the highway. There are no areas for unloading without blocking the highway. No on-site car parking available.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Small site with little room to expand or build new housing. Access/Car Parking/Privacy/Noise issues.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	Renovation/upgrading costs to be confirmed.
Cost of demolition and new build:	Not applicable.

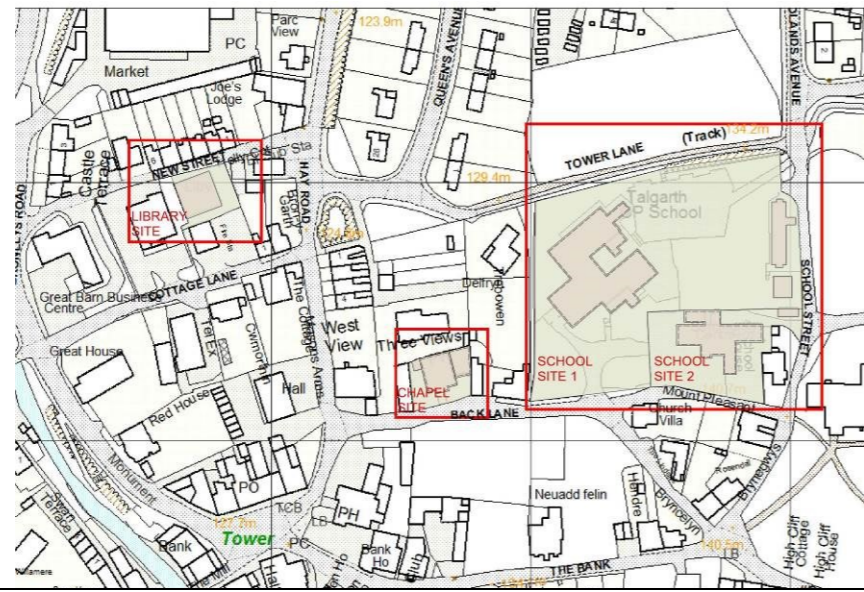
Site 3.  
Chapel Site  
Back Lane  
Talgarth



Availability:	Yes. Currently in use as Chapel.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Buy.
Site Area:	0.046ha/ 0.113acres.
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	246 m <sup>2</sup> 205 m <sup>2</sup>
Conservation Area:	Yes.
Existing Use:	Chapel.
Potential Use:	Music Performance Space and Recording Studio. The building is identified as falling within the Retail Centre area of Talgarth in the BBNPA LDP Map.
Access:	Restricted. Back Lane provides a narrow access, with no pavements to the highway. There are no areas for unloading without blocking the highway. No on-site car parking available.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Small site with no room to expand. Access/Car Parking/Privacy/Noise issues.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	Renovation/upgrading costs to be confirmed.
Cost of demolition and new build:	Not applicable to this site. Conversion/adaption only.

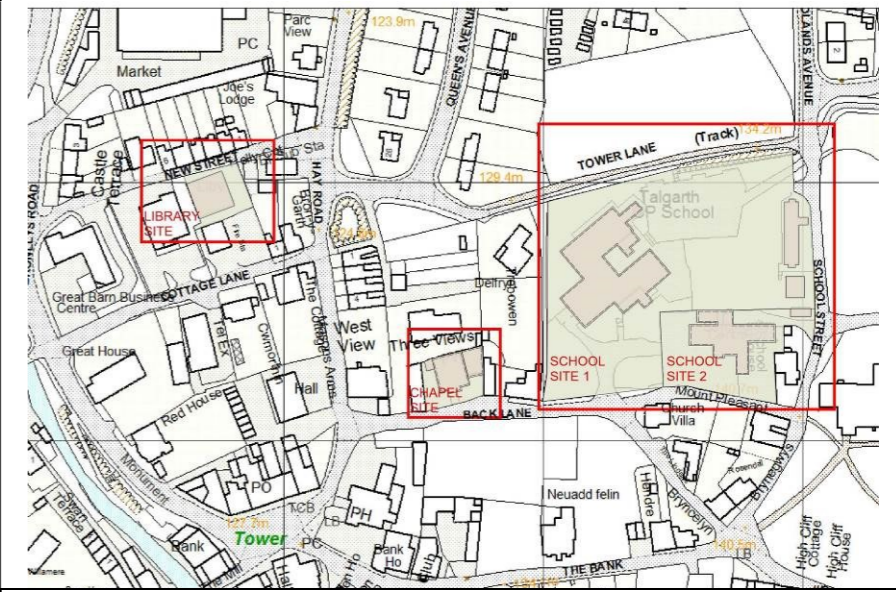


Site 4.  
School 1 Site  
School Street  
Talgarth

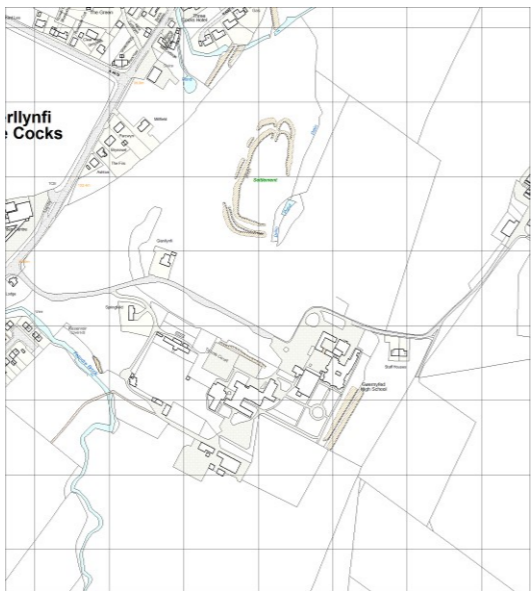


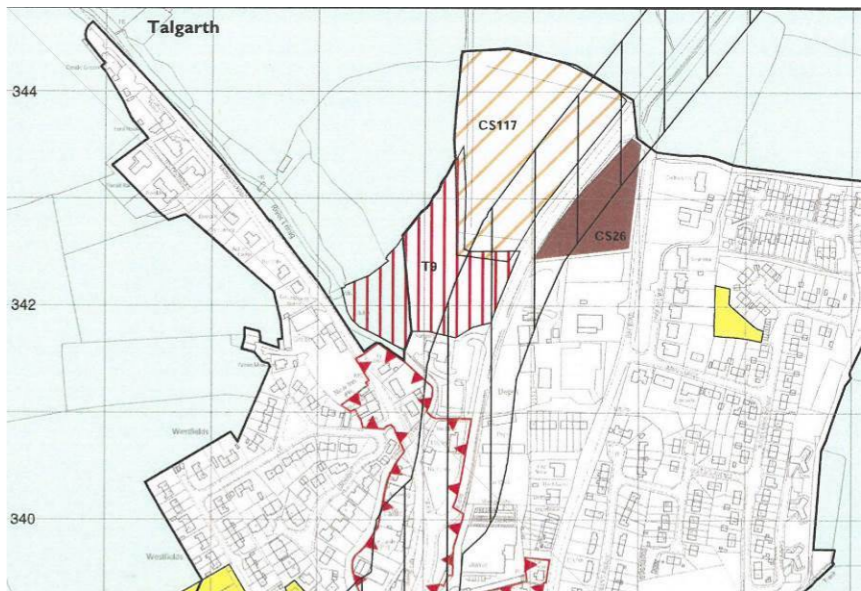
Availability:	Yes. Currently vacant.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Buy.
Site Area:	0.679ha/ 1.679acres.
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	1034 m <sup>2</sup> 925 m <sup>2</sup>
Conservation Area:	No. Some areas of site identified for 'Area of Archaeological Evaluation.'
Existing Use:	School.
Potential Use:	Proposed for Residential Development in LDP.
Access:	Fair.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Brownfield site already identified in LDP for residential development.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	Not applicable
Cost of demolition and new build:	

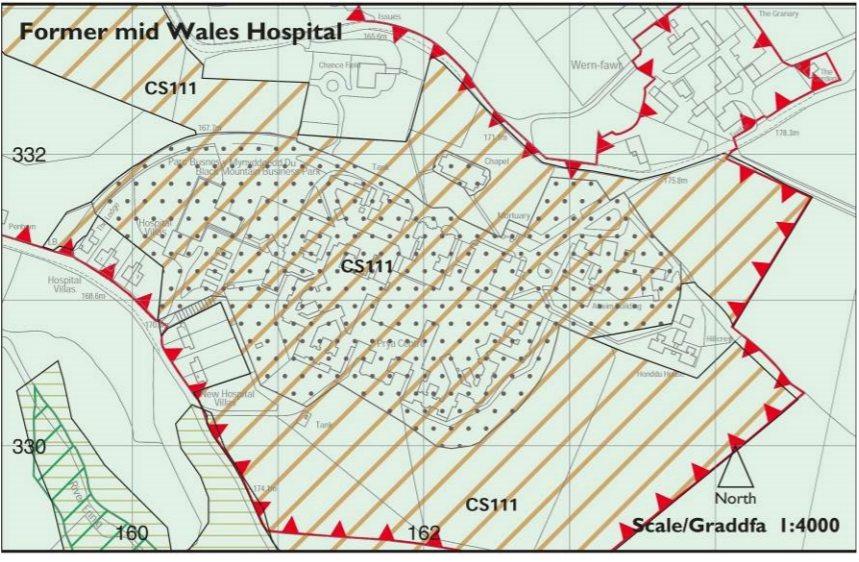
Site 5.  
School Site 2  
Back Lane  
Talgarth



Availability:	Yes. Currently vacant.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Buy.
Site Area:	0.156ha/ 0.386acres.
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	429 m <sup>2</sup> 363 m <sup>2</sup>
Conservation Area:	Yes.
Existing Use:	School/Community Youth Facility.
Potential Use:	Art Gallery.
Access:	Restricted. Back Lane provides a narrow access, with no pavements to the highway. On Site car parking is available but access is from School Site 1.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Re-use of existing school building would suit conversion to exhibition and gallery spaces, with workshop/teaching rooms, café, toilets, storage and admin. office.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	
Cost of demolition and new build:	Not applicable to this site.

Site 6. Gwernyfed High School Three Cocks	
Availability:	Yes.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Share.
Site Area:	
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	
Conservation Area:	
Existing Use:	School.
Potential Use:	Shared teaching facilities.
Access:	Good.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Existing teaching facilities. Too remote from the Talgarth sites to be part of integrated campus, without the provision of adequate connecting vehicular services.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	Not applicable to this site.
Cost of demolition and new build:	Not applicable to this site.

Site 7. Allocated Housing Site BBNPA Policy SS1 T9 Site North of Doctors Surgery Talgarth	
Availability:	Yes.
Buy/Rent/Share:	Buy.
Site Area:	1.35ha/3.35acres. Site area identified for 36no. housing units.
Building Areas GEA: GIA:	
Conservation Area:	No.
Existing Use:	Greenfield Site.
Potential Use:	Housing Land.
Access:	Good.
Benefits/ Disadvantages:	Greenfield Site for new build housing. South-west area of site in Flood Zone.
Cost of conversion/adaption:	Not applicable.
Cost of demolition and new build:	

<p>Site 8. Mid Wales Hospital Site Hospital Road Talgarth</p>	
<p>Availability:</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Buy/Rent/Share:</p>	<p>Buy.</p>
<p>Site Area:</p>	<p>13.6ha/ 33.6acres</p>
<p>Building Areas GEA: GIA:</p>	<p>Refer to Section 4 for Site Analysis and Lee Associates High Level Cost Plan Feasibility Report.</p>
<p>Conservation Area:</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Existing Use:</p>	<p>Redundant Hospital Site.</p>
<p>Potential Use:</p>	<p>Mixed Use Allocation in BBNPA LDP.</p>
<p>Access:</p>	<p>Restricted.</p>
<p>Benefits/ Disadvantages:</p>	<p>Refer to Section 4 for Site Analysis and Lee Associates High Level Cost Plan Feasibility Report.</p>
<p>Cost of conversion/adaption:</p>	<p>Refer to Section 4 for Site Analysis and Lee Associates High Level Cost Plan Feasibility Report.</p>
<p>Cost of demolition and new build:</p>	<p>Refer to Section 4 for Site Analysis and Lee Associates High Level Cost Plan Feasibility Report.</p>

#### **4.0 The Former Mid Wales Hospital Site**

- 4.1 This site was studied in more detail than the other sites because potentially it is large enough to form a complete campus for the college, and may be regarded as a preferred site.
- 4.2 The site has a total area of 13.6ha/ 33.6acres and existing buildings with an estimated gross external area of 12400m<sup>2</sup>/ 133500ft<sup>2</sup>.
- 4.3 The proposed re-use of the former hospital site consists of selective demolition of some buildings and structures, being 2700m<sup>2</sup>, and for option B block 15 would also be demolished, its area being 865m<sup>2</sup>, and the construction of new, thermally insulated timber linings within the stone external walls of retained buildings (see drawing no. AL.MWH.06 appendix A) New warm roof structures formed using lightweight trusses, purlins and profiled metal roof covering are proposed.
- 4.4 As with most asylum buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Talgarth hospital is orientated towards the South-West. The buildings are an assembly of distinct areas, defined by building blocks and open courtyards similar to historic colleges. The Talgarth hospital site is enhanced by its parkland setting and views towards the wider landscape area of outstanding natural beauty.
- 4.5 These attributes have been used to develop a design rationale for the phased redevelopment strategy for the site. This is illustrated in drawings AL.MWH.01; AL.MWH.02; AL.MWH.03A; AL.MWH.03B; AL.MWH.04A; AL.MWH.04B, in appendix A. Option A drawings illustrate the site redevelopment retaining block 15 as student accommodation, Option B drawings illustrate the site redevelopment with the demolition of block 15 and building a new student accommodation block.
- 4.6 A schematic layout of the spatial assessment of the phase 1 accommodation is illustrated in drawing number AL.MWH.05, in appendix A.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Outline Heritage Report [Holland Heritage]**





**MID WALES HOSPITAL, TALGARTH  
POWYS, LD3 0DT**

**OUTLINE HERITAGE REPORT**

For Black Mountains College



September 2019  
Updated February 2020

Edward Holland

Holland Heritage  
[www.hollandheritage.co.uk](http://www.hollandheritage.co.uk)





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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Authorship and Purpose**

This Outline Heritage Report is written by Edward Holland on behalf of the Black Mountains College. It was commissioned by Barry Williams of Barton Wilmore to inform the wider assessment of opportunities and constraints as part of the evaluation of potential sites for the College in and around Talgarth. The report focuses on the Mid Wales Hospital site as the primary site under consideration for the college base. There were initially three other sites being considered, two of which are greenfields on the north-eastern edge of the town and the third is the former Talgarth Primary school site within the town. Latterly a further site has been added, that of the farm of Troed yr Harn to the south-east of the hospital.

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### **1.2 Location**

The former Mid-Wales Hospital is situated approximately 500m south-east of Talgarth. Access is east off Hospital Road which climbs south-east out of the town approximately following the line of the River Ennig. It is set within its own grounds with broad views out to the surrounding countryside. The former hospital stands at SO 1617 3311.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The purpose of this Outline Heritage Report is to fully understand the historic asset and its vulnerabilities and to inform emerging proposals for the site and the Black Mountains College. The specific objective of the report is to identify the place and its associations, assess its significance, identify obligations arising from this significance, gather information about other factors affecting the future of the place and develop a policy for its future. This assessment process follows the approach set out by Cadw in Conservation Principles<sup>1</sup> and in best-practice guidance documents including *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales (2017)* and *Managing Change in Conservation Areas (2017)*. These documents contain the general principles to consider when planning changes to historic assets. In Wales,

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<sup>1</sup>Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales (Cadw, Welsh Government, March 2011).



as from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017, a proportionate Heritage Impact Statement is now mandatory for all applications for demolition within conservation areas. The survey has excluded buildings that were originally linked to the hospital but are now in separate ownership. These include Chance Field and Wern Fawr which was the hospital farm.

This report is based upon on-going heritage advice to the project and specifically on a site survey on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

#### **1.4 Relevant Designations**

The buildings of the former Mid Wales Hospital are not statutorily listed but the site is within the designated Talgarth Conservation Area, which was enlarged in 2016, and the area is within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Talgarth Community has 60 listed buildings. The buildings of the former hospital site were added to the Talgarth Local List of Heritage Assets in 2014.

Talgarth and the former hospital site lie within the Middle Wye Valley designated Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales.

A Tree Preservation Order applies to the former hospital site.



Fig 1 site plan © Graham Frecknall Architecture and Design

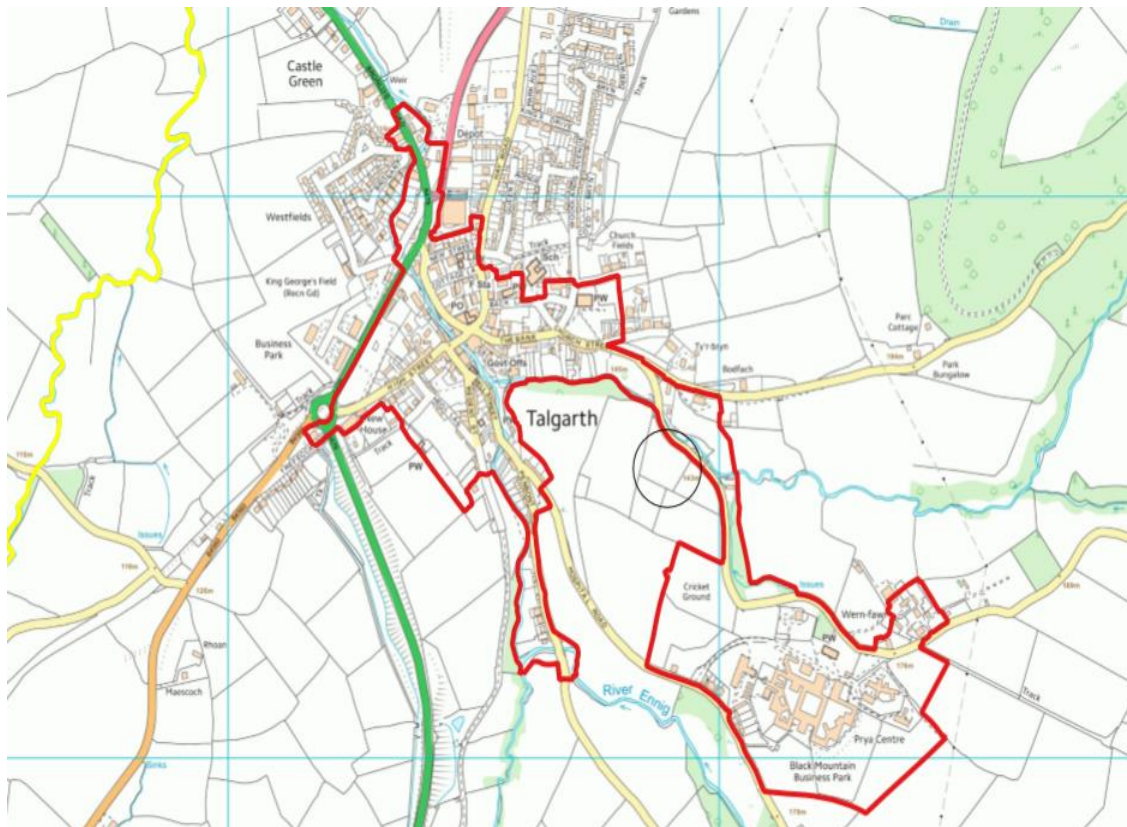


Fig 2 Talgarth Conservation Area boundary © Brecon Beacons National Park



## **2.0 The History of the former Mid-Wales Hospital**

2.1 The Brecon and Radnor Joint Asylum hospital was opened on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1903 and built to the designs of Giles, Gough and Trollope architects of London. The builder was Watkin Williams of Pontypridd and it cost £126,000. It was characteristically sited high up above the town and here occupied a seven-acre site. It is said to have taken 300 men three years to build using local stone, brick and Welsh slate and when opened, to have admitted 350 patients with the capacity for this number to rise to 500. The objective was to make the hospital as self-sufficient as possible.

2.2 The historical background to the creation of asylums like this one at Talgarth dates back to the reforms resulting from the County Asylums Act of 1845 and the Lunacy Act of the same year. The former Act made it mandatory for every county to provide asylum treatment for its pauper lunatics and the latter Act established the Lunacy Commission which had a regulatory role over all asylums. The previous County Asylums Act of 1808 had failed to develop consistent care for the mentally ill. Prior to 1903 pauper lunatics in the counties of Brecon and Radnor had been treated at the Penyfal Hospital Abergavenny which was opened in 1851.

2.3 In the 1st World War the hospital was requisitioned by the War Office for the treatment of injured and shell-shocked soldiers. A headstone for one such soldier can be seen immediately to the north of the chapel.

2.4 Following the 1959 Mental Health Act giving patients more rights, many of the wards were kept unlocked but it also laid the ground for more psychiatric units to be attached to general hospitals reducing the need for asylums. In 1961 the name of the hospital was changed to drop the word Mental, becoming known as the Mid-Wales Hospital. The later emphasis on care in the community for those with more minor mental illness was a further move that led to the phased closure of such asylums. It was calculated that by the year 2000, out of a total of 121 large mental hospitals 98 had closed. This resulted in a major loss of Victorian architectural heritage as the founders of many of these institutions lavished such care on them that they were sometimes as fine as country houses and were set in landscaped grounds often with farms and an array of ancillary buildings. Many were the work of highly competent architects and the result of architectural competitions. Those that have been saved have mostly been converted to residential (e.g. Royal Holloway Sanatorium, Surrey).



2.5 The original design of the hospital is consistent and successive enlargements largely followed the same pattern of materials and fenestration though close inspection shows that the main ranges are of roughly coursed rubble whereas some of the secondary ranges to the rear are of sneaked rubble. This could imply different phases of construction yet the evidence is that it was all built in one phase. In the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of out of character modern additions were made.

2.6 The design adopted a traditional, almost symmetrical, plan form with six male wards to one side of the main block and six female wards to the other, all stepping inwards in an echelon manner. This strict separation of males and females was in accordance with government guidance. Each block had its own airing court and there was a separate Isolation Ward. In addition, there was the huge Dining Hall and there were service buildings including the boiler house and chimney and workshops including a bakery, butchery, tailor, shoemaker and printer. To the north, separated from the main buildings, as was advocated by the Commissioners in Lunacy, and the architect G T Hine writing in 1901 in the R.I.B.A. Journal. To the east of that is the former mortuary and beyond that a former isolation hospital block later converted to staff accommodation.

2.7 In the 1990s services began to be transferred out to other hospitals or to the community. Despite having a good reputation for the quality of its care of the mentally ill, the Mid Wales Hospital finally closed in 2000. Since then it has become increasingly abandoned and derelict despite active campaigns to protect the buildings and ensure an appropriate future use.



Fig 3 Grand Opening of Brecon and Radnor Asylum, 1903 © [www.highroydshospital.com](http://www.highroydshospital.com)  
(no copyright infringement is intended)

### 3.0 Architectural Description of the former Mid Wales Hospital

3.1 The site is entered at the west end between stone piers capped by metal lamps. These are assumed to have once had gates though no evidence for their former existence can be seen. There is a former lodge beside the drive entrance and this is now in separate ownership.

3.2 The hospital blocks are mostly 2-storey and built of local rubble stone with freestone dressings to the windows and doors. A few blocks have a basement and a few are 3-storey. Where the roof coverings remain, they are of Welsh slate and have terracotta ridge tiles and most roofs are hipped. Modern extensions are mostly flat roofed. The skeleton of the rigid plan are the corridors that link each block and to the south the blocks gradually step inwards in an echelon plan.

3.3 The fenestration is predominantly horned small-pane sash windows in a distinctive 15-pane over 15-pane pattern. There are at least two blocks that have metal-frame small-pane windows with decorative rosettes at the intersection of the glazing bars. One example is the 8-window workshop block to the west of the main office block. Where these survive, they are an important part of the hospital's character. Many of the blocks have splayed bay windows, often positioned in stepped-forward bays at either end of a symmetrical elevation, or to the central bay.



*Fig 4 Former 2-storey workshop block to west of main block known as official block*

3.4 The hospital generated its own power hence the boiler house near the main office block and the tall red brick chimney stack with chamfered corners on a stone base.



*Fig 5 Chimney to former boiler house, to west of main (official) block*



*Fig 6 Main Block, known as the official block*



3.5 The primary building is the administration block midway along the access road on the south side. It was referred to as the Official Block. The 10-window symmetrical elevation is the most significant architectural element of the hospital complex. The outer 2-window bays are stepped forward with hipped roofs and splayed ground floor bay windows with high parapets. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows are 12-pane sashes. The central gabled bay is also stepped forward and has a projecting dressed stone porch with elliptical arch entrance reached up a shallow flight of steps. The pair of windows above are surmounted by an ornate dressed stone panel carved with the date 1900 representing the year when construction began. The porch has the remains of a decorative tile pavement and fragments of pitch pine joinery. The elevation is crowned by a square clocktower with octagonal lead cupola and weathervane. Internally can be seen a heated entrance hall with decorative cornice.

3.6 East of the main block is a single storey hipped roof range with louvred clerestory, a form of roof that is seen on a number of ranges to the eastern side of the complex. There is also a slightly taller cross range with conical ventilators.



*Fig 7 Single storey Workshop block to east of Main Block*

3.7 To the north of the access road, opposite the various ranges discussed above, is the chapel. This is of Early English Gothic style with a tall slate roof swept out at the eaves and with an octagonal bellcote towards



the east end. There are three lancets to the west gable and a porch with boarded doors. The interior is said to retain its parquet floor but was not accessible at the time of survey (August 2019).



*Fig 8 Chapel viewed from south-west*



*Fig 9 Chapel interior © [www.highroydshospital.com](http://www.highroydshospital.com) (no copyright infringement intended)*

3.8 Immediately to the north of the chapel is a headstone to Private J Lewis of the Welsh Regiment who died here in October 1915.

3.9 A short distance to the east of the chapel is the former mortuary, a single-storey roofless range of rubble construction and with some obscure glass windows. Internally the remains of tiled areas can be seen.



*Fig 10 Former Mortuary to south east of chapel*

3.9 At the north-eastern corner of the site is a former Isolation Hospital later converted to staff accommodation. It is a 2-storey building of rambling plan indicative of having had a series of extensions. On account of its rendered elevations it is out of character with the rest of the hospital buildings and it has no features of architectural interest.

3.10 At the south-east end of the site the buildings are in especially poor condition but the symmetrical layout is still clear to see. At either end of the south side are large 2-storey E-plan blocks with extended claw-like blocks, inward facing at their respective north-west and north-east corners. These blocks are partly of snecked masonry and historic plans show that at least one of these included a padded cell.





*Fig 11 2-storey range to south-east of original hospital complex*

3.11 To the centre of the south side is a 3-storey block that, at its rear, linked to the tall Dining Hall which also hosted entertainment events and was able to seat 500 people. Internally the Dining Hall retains its arched roof and entrance doorway and original metal balustraded staircase at the west end.



*Fig 12 3-storey block to south side*





*Fig 13 Former Dining Hall to centre of the hospital complex*

3.12 At the west end of the site is a traditional asylum-type shelter made of timber in the manner of a summerhouse. These would have been typical of all the airing courts but this is the only one to survive at this site.



*Fig 14 Surviving airing court shelter*



## 4.0 Condition of the former Mid Wales Hospital and its impact on the heritage

4.1 The condition of the former Mid-Wales Hospital is poor and, in some areas, such as to the south-east side, the extent of collapse is so great as to make these ranges unsaveable. Most of the roofs have had their slate covering stripped which has had a serious impact on condition as well as on historic character.

4.2 On the other hand, the primary block, known as the Official Block is not only architecturally the most distinctive but also amongst the better preserved of all the ranges here. In its structure, and its detail, it is substantially capable of repair. The Chapel and the Dining Hall are also capable of repair and adaptive reuse as large-scale spaces in which to hold events or conferences.



*Fig 15 View into block to south-east of site*

4.3 Any reuse of the buildings will necessarily require a significant amount of new material.

4.4 The grounds are relatively well preserved and managed, preserving the character of the setting of the hospital buildings.

## **5.0 Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Significance of the former Mid Wales Hospital**

### **5.1 Summary**

5.1.1 The former Mid Wales Hospital has important historic significance as a surviving example of a Victorian asylum. In 1914 there were over 100 such institutions in England and Wales. Eight of these were in Wales but one has been entirely demolished, four that remain in some use have been variously altered, one has been successfully repurposed as private housing and those at Denbigh and Talgarth remain seriously derelict.

5.1.2 Most of the Welsh examples are 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century examples such as Whitchurch demonstrate a greater level of architectural ambition than is found at Talgarth. Architecturally the layout of the Mid Wales Hospital is remarkably unaltered and consistent in its materials and detail. However, its style and materials to a considerable degree look back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century workhouses and asylums. By contrast, examples such as Whitchurch are in a more distinctive early 20<sup>th</sup> century Wrenaissance manner.

5.1.3 The poor condition of the Mid-Wales Hospital has diminished significance through structural collapse and the loss of original materials and resulting removal of clear evidence of the function of each range.

### **5.2 Heritage Values**

This report assesses significance against the following heritage values set out in Cadw's Conservation Principles and adopted by Welsh Government. It sets out criteria for how significance can be evaluated, considering Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal values and says that:

*"The significance of an historic asset embraces all of the cultural heritage values that people associate with it"*

#### **5.2.1 Evidential Value**

This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity.

The plan form and style of the buildings and the nature of the grounds is entirely typical of an asylum of this kind, albeit not necessarily one of this late date. Notwithstanding its poor condition it provides evidence of how the site was used when in operation. The office block was the main point





of reception and from where the hospital was managed. The chapel is evidence of the strongly Christian society of the time. The chimney is evidence of its self-sufficient power supply, the large windows are evidence of the importance placed on light and air as being therapeutic to the mentally ill. This is further evidenced by the one surviving shelter to the south-west, in what was one of several airing courts. The inscribed headstone to a soldier of the Welsh Regiment is evidence of the hospital having been requisitioned during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. The fact that there is a former mortuary is evidence of the fact that the treatment was often not successful and there was a high death rate in such institutions. Accordingly, the Mid Wales Hospital at Talgarth has **high evidential value**.

### 5.2.2 Historical Value

This derives from how the historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement. This can be less tangible than the evidential value but is nonetheless important.

The historic value of the Mid-Wales Hospital at Talgarth is an example of the Victorian response to the social and medical need of the time and the building of asylums such as this resulted directly from the legislation passed in 1845. The closure of the Talgarth hospital in 2000 stemmed from the government decision in early 1960s to, in Enoch Powell's words, "eliminate" most of the country's mental hospitals. As a result, few survive in anything like their original condition and few can illustrate the way in which these places cared for the mentally ill. The definitive book about the former Mid-Wales Hospital says it was "a major institution on the Welsh landscape and it exemplified orthodox treatment over 100 years from asylum to community care".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly the Mid-Wales Hospital at Talgarth has **high historical value**.

### 5.2.3 Aesthetic Value

This derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset.

As a result of the poor condition of the buildings, which in a few places is so derelict as to be unsaveable, the aesthetic value of the site is adversely affected. There is an uncomfortable sense of decay throughout and this is only lifted by the spaciousness, the tree lined drive and the broad views to

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<sup>2</sup> Hugh Purcell, *Up Top*, (Talybont, 2018) p.11



the surrounding hills of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Accordingly, overall, the Mid-Wales Hospital at Talgarth has **low aesthetic value**.

#### 5.2.4 Communal Value

This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for people who relate to it or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Given the thousands of people who were patients here or who worked here the building is known to many either directly or indirectly by families who remember that a relative was here. Since closure the hospital has been a concern to local people and a local and national campaign (by SAVE Britain's Heritage) has been led to save it from demolition. Accordingly, the Mid-Wales Hospital at Talgarth has **high communal value**.

5.3 In 2012 Judith Alfrey, Cadw's Head of Regeneration and Conservation, acknowledged that the buildings of the former Mid Wales Hospital had been assessed but had not been judged to meet the high standard necessary for listing. However, she summarised the significance of the site as follows:

*"Although the Mid Wales hospital does not meet the exacting standard required for listing, this should not be taken as meaning that it is of no value or interest, and its inclusion within the Talgarth Conservation Area would seem to be an acknowledgement of its local importance.*

*Although when compared with Whitchurch Hospital, the buildings at Talgarth are stylistically conservative, they constitute a near-complete group in a harmonious style with good quality detailing (particularly in the use of materials), and a coherent plan: retention of its original echelon plan-form is probably the principal historic interest of this complex of buildings and although we have judged Whitchurch to be the key exemplar of this significant plan type, the buildings at Talgarth represent a good demonstration of similar principles. The relatively complete survival of the complex at Talgarth also enabling the buildings to demonstrate approaches to mental health care in the early twentieth century."*





## **6.0 Summary of the constraints and opportunities at the former Mid Wales Hospital**

6.1 This Outline Heritage Report has set out the history and architectural description of the Mid Wales Hospital at Talgarth. It has shown that whilst not statutorily listed it does retain considerable significance and interest which should be protected and valued in any future adaptive reuse. The plan form of the buildings is in itself of interest and conversion should seek to preserve the existing layout. The Office building to the centre is the best-preserved block and the one with the most architectural character. On the other hand, the former Isolation Hospital block at the north-east corner is of considerably less significance as a result of substantial mid-20<sup>th</sup> century alteration and offers the opportunity to be replaced without adverse impact on the core of the site. The brick chimney on account of its height is an important visual landmark for the site. The Dining Hall and the Chapel are also significant built features which have architectural presence but also offer a good opportunity for providing large capacity flexible spaces for the College. Adaptive reuse needs to respect the original distinctive pattern of fenestration both the ubiquitous 15 over 15-pane horned sashes as well as the fewer number of examples of decorative small-pane metal-frame windows.

6.2 This report has acknowledged that the condition of many of the buildings is poor and, in some cases, allows for a greater degree of alteration as there is little that can be saved.

6.3 An important constraint is the open space within the site which was historically part of the philosophy of mental health care. These landscaped areas, e.g. around the church, should remain open without being encroached upon by new build. The view east through the site with the main office and workshop buildings to the south and the chapel to the north is an important vista which should be preserved and used to enhance future uses. The view south to the hills of the Brecon Beacons National Park should also be valued and a hard boundary should be avoided so as to retain the feeling of the site and the landscape being seamless.

6.4 The original hospital was built using local materials and it would be appropriate to continue that objective in any new work.

6.5 The local interest in and support for the appropriate adaptive reuse of the hospital site should also be seen as a strength and a resource with



which to engage. There is the opportunity for collaboration and community involvement in shaping the future of the site and in celebrating its heritage.

6.6 As the former Mid-Wales Hospital was added to the Local List for Talgarth in September 2014 it is now subject to Policy 18 (Protection of Buildings of Local Importance) which states:

*"Development affecting buildings which make an important contribution to the character and interest of the local area as set out on the local list will be permitted where the distinctive appearance, architectural integrity or their settings would not be significantly adversely affected."*

6.7 Given that the whole site lies within the Talgarth Conservation Area consent will be required for demolition and any new work will need to comply with Brecon Beacons National Park planning policies. Paragraph 3.15.5.4 of the Local Development Plan (adopted December 2013) states:

*"Applicants for development within Conservation Areas will need to take into account Conservation Area Appraisal Reports in determining planning applications. Reports have already been developed to accompany some of the designations. Others will be produced at a future date. These reports should be referred to as they will provide information on the topography, landscape setting, history, buildings and settlement forms of the Conservation Area. The reports may also highlight negative features that detract from the special qualities of the Conservation Area and recommend ways forward to protect and further enhance the area."*

Paragraph 3.15.5.5 states:

*"3.15.5.5 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 requires planning applications to be submitted for certain types of development in Conservation Areas which are elsewhere classified as permitted development. For example, Conservation Area designation gives greater control over the demolition of most buildings and walls, and the felling, lopping and topping of trees. It requires wider local publicity for planning applications and ensures that new proposals are given the closest scrutiny and reach appropriate standards of design. Outline applications will not be acceptable in Conservation Areas."*





Policy 19 (Development affecting Conservation Areas) states:

*"New development and alterations to existing buildings within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and where the design, all building materials, proportions and detailing are appropriate to the Conservation Area.*

*The demolition or substantial demolition of any unlisted building or structure within a Conservation Area that is subject to Conservation Area consent will only be permitted where there is the strongest justification. Where such a building is to be replaced, a contract of redevelopment will be required to be finalised and entered into prior to the granting of conservation area consent."*

6.8 The Talgarth Conservation Area Appraisal (draft report May 2016) states that the hospital site has been allocated (December 2013) as a mixed development site for residential and employment uses. It acknowledges at paragraph 10.8 that "there is a need to secure the remaining buildings and to ensure that any development is of the highest standard, respecting the handsome buildings and their setting in an attractive landscape."

6.9 Any alteration or adaptive reuse of the hospital buildings should be preceded by building recording and appropriate health and safety precautions will be needed in order to achieve this. Recording should adhere to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (CIfA 2016). It should also follow Historic England's guidelines, *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016), which is adopted by Cadw as the basis for defining levels of recording. The Historic Building Record for this site should be at Level 2.

## 7.0 Constraints and opportunities at the two Greenfield sites to north of the town

7.1 Two sites to the north of the town have been identified as having potential to provide greenfield land on which to build the proposed college buildings. One is immediately to the north-east of the new Ysgol Mynydd Du, on the north-western side of the A 4078 and the other is opposite on the south-eastern side of the road with the southern end of the site being parallel with Bryn Derwen.

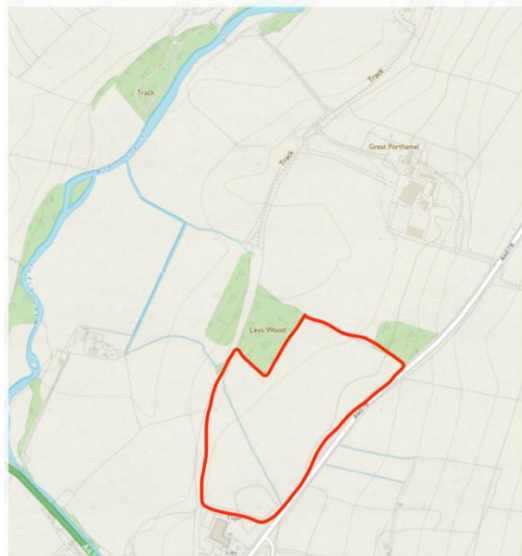


Fig 16 Greenfield site 1 NW of A4078



Fig 17 Greenfield site 2 SE of A4078

7.2 The Historic Environment Record does not identify any known archaeological interest within these sites though there are two references found nearby. Within Leys Wood immediately to the north of Greenfield Site 1, at SO 1556534888, is noted the remains of the Mid Wales Railway Line (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust HER reference 125560). Immediately to the south-west of Greenfield Site 2, at SO 1577434388, is Faircroft Ridge and Furrow (Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust HER reference 44116).

7.3 There are no known heritage constraints to development in these areas other than that they are outside the development boundary of the town.

## 8.0 Constraints and opportunities at the former school site to the west of the Parish Church

8.1 The former Ysgol Gynradd Talgarth / Talgarth Primary School is on the north side of Back Lane and to the west of the Parish Church of St Gwendoline. The Victorian building known as Ysgoldy, situated midway between the Primary School and the Parish Church, is of interest and included on the Local List for Talgarth. It is also within the Conservation Area, as is the adjacent contemporary Community Centre, which was the original school and built in a simple Victorian Gothic style. However, the main Primary School buildings are neither on the Local List nor within the Conservation Area and are post-war buildings with no significant heritage constraints.



Fig 18 Location of former Primary school site to west of the Parish Church



## 9.0 Constraints and opportunities at Troed yr Harn Farm

9.1 This site lies approximately 1km due south-east of the hospital, reached by continuing further along the by-road and then turning right along a private farm track. The property is currently for sale.

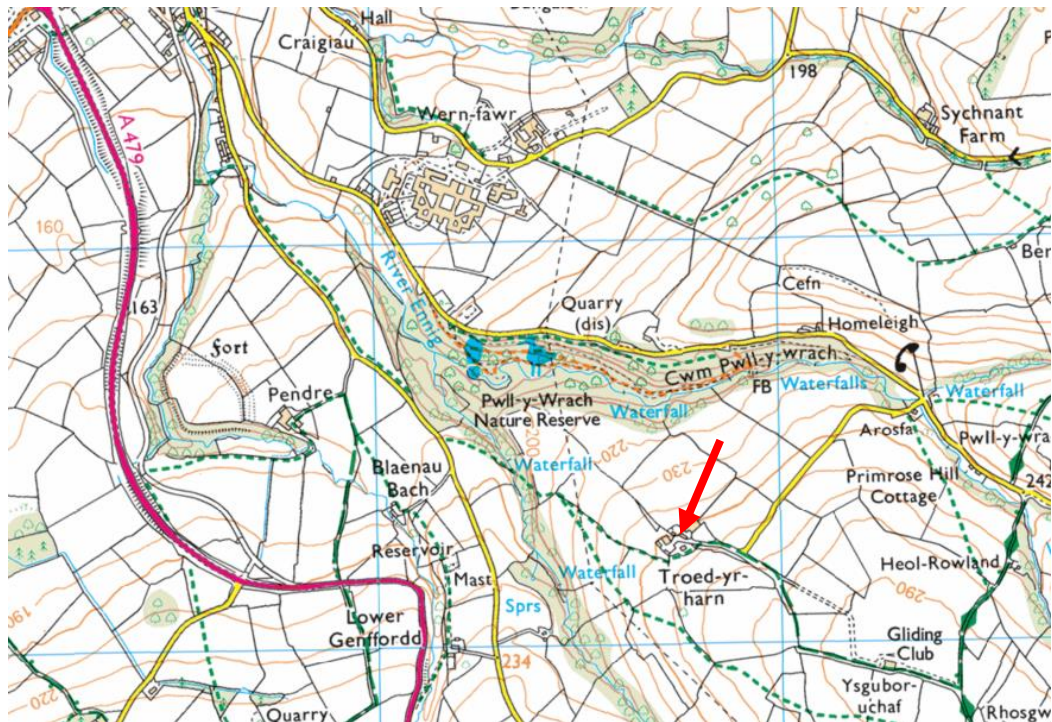


Fig 19 Location map (annotated to identify Troed yr Harn) © Bing maps

9.2 Two buildings at Troed yr Harn are included on the Brecon Beacons National Park's Local List for this area on account of the authority's criteria 3b, 3c, 4a and 4b. This means that the BBNP has judged that they demonstrate qualities of age, style or distinctive characteristics relative to the area and they have architectural design, details and construction materials that add to the local character of the area. Furthermore, the criteria indicate that the buildings are judged to remain in a substantial and recognisable form, retaining historic features and layouts. Notwithstanding this identified interest the buildings were not considered to merit statutory listing at the time of the resurvey of Talgarth Community in 1995.

9.3 Troed yr Harn is not included on the Historic Environment Record.

9.4 The site is shown (spelt Troed yr Haern) on the 1841 Tithe Map showing a farmhouse and two farm buildings. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of 1888 it appears little different apart from an enlargement of the

farmhouse but the time of the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century the number of farm buildings had been substantially enlarged. As seen today the farmhouse has modern fenestration though the overall structure, set into the slope, is indicative of having 17<sup>th</sup> century origins as an in-line farmhouse and byre. There is also a large former threshing barn which has a triangular vent, characteristic of the region.



*Fig 20 Troed yr Harn farmhouse © Graham Frecknall Architecture and Design*



*Fig 21 Troed yr Harn Barn © Graham Frecknall Architecture and Design*



9.5 Internally the farmhouse has chamfered beams, a large gable fireplace with winding stairs and some surviving early boarded doors.

9.6 Whilst the buildings are of considerable age they are already altered and therefore can sustain further sensitive alteration and conversion without unacceptable impact. However, it is noted that windows are characteristically small and therefore care would be needed in enlarging openings or creating lots of new openings. Given the presence on the Local List it is likely that the Brecon Beacons National Park would require a Heritage Impact Statement to accompany any planning application for conversion especially as the provisional scheme for the first phase of the college would involve radical change. It is also likely that they would require a full historic buildings record to be made in advance of any development.

## **10.0 Opportunity for Heritage-led Regeneration**

10.1 Within the heart of the town of Talgarth there are 24 listed buildings. The creation of a hub for the Black Mountains College will have a catalytic effect on the town. Evidence of other settlements where major investment has been made in the heritage demonstrates that it will lead to increased spend within the town as well as increased demand for commercial, retail and residential space. If the necessary funding can be sourced the proposed heritage-led regeneration will, over time, return the value. The benefit to the town's economy will also benefit the town's heritage helping to sustain the listed buildings and to find new uses for those that are out of use. Information on the Buildings at Risk Register for Talgarth has so far been unobtainable from the local authority so it is not yet possible to know how many of the listed buildings are recorded as being out of use or otherwise at risk. The report can be updated when this information is available.

10.2 The Black Mountains College also has the opportunity to indirectly deliver training in traditional building skills through the adaptive reuse of the buildings on the hospital site. These skills can also be used to repair and maintain the historic buildings of the town and the wider area. Embedding traditional building skills will, over time, result in a higher standard of preservation of the heritage.





## **11.0 Summary**

This report has set out the heritage significance of the former Mid-Wales Hospital and concluded that it has considerable scope for adaptive reuse to accommodate the Black Mountains College needs. The report has also demonstrated that it would not only preserve the essential significance of the site but would also have the potential to deliver catalytic heritage benefit to the wider area. The report has also assessed the two potential greenfield sites and concluded that there would be no adverse heritage impact from building new college buildings there but if these sites were selected the only positive heritage benefit would be through the potential catalytic effect on the town centre. The risk is that development of these sites would mean that the hospital site would be likely to remain abandoned and the heritage asset would eventually be lost altogether. Additionally, the report has assessed the former school site to the west of the parish church and also the Troed yr Harn farm. The former has no particular heritage constraints but the latter, in origin, is an early farm and, whilst the buildings have been altered, their layout and appearance are indicative of the 17<sup>th</sup> period, typical of so many of the farms in this area. Adaptive reuse would therefore need to respond to this historic character.

Overall, the conclusion is that the best heritage outcome would be the regeneration of the Mid Wales Hospital site. This has the potential to be collaborative, involving local people in delivering an innovative educational vision, transforming the town and enriching the wider area of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

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