Date: February 2025



PENLEY HALL DRIVE, PENLEY

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL

The study is intended to accompany an Outline Planning Application to Wrexham County Borough Council for development of residential units on land previously used as WWII United States and Polish Hospital in Penley.

The Study has been prepared and coordinated by Above Zero Landscape Architecture on behalf of Mr K. Barker and Mrs T. Wilson.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared to assess the potential for landscape and visual effects as a result of residential development (9 units) on land previously used as a United States (and later Polish) WWII Army Hospital off Penley Hall Drive, Penley.

1.2. The appraisal is intended to be used to assess the potential for landscape and visual effects resulting from development on a strategic and illustrative level. The information contained within the report has been used to develop proposals to demonstrate that the brownfield site could accommodate a residential housing proposal without having a detrimental effect on landscape character and views. The report also explains how a well-considered design proposal may enhance the key characteristics that contribute to the site and surrounding area's character, quality and sense of place. It is intended that this appraisal will be used to help steer future more detailed proposals and it forms the basis for a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

1.3. The report is intended to support an Outline Planning Application to Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC).

1.4. Desk and field analysis and assessment has been coordinated and prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects and is set out to include the following Chapters:

- Establishment of the landscape and visual baseline;
- A description of the proposed development;
- Mitigation and design considerations and recommendations
- Summary and Conclusion.

1.5. The assessment commenced in April 2018 as part of an iterative design process alongside other professionals involved in the design and development of the site. Measures to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects and where possible

provide beneficial effects are incorporated into the proposals. The report has been updated in February 2025 following an alteration to the ecological mitigation area.

1.6. The Landscape and Visual Appraisal is in accordance with the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment, (Third Edition) (GLVIA3*)'. GLVIA3 is a joint publication by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environment Management and Assessment (IEMA).

2.0 Baseline Environment- Landscape

The Site and its Landscape Context

2.1. The application site is on the northern edge of Penley on part of the former WWII United States and later Polish Hospital site. Penley is a small village approximately 13km south east of Wrexham. The site and its surrounding context are shown on Figure 1.1.

2.2. The site is located north east of a large area of modern housing accessed from Penley Hall Drive.

2.3. The site covers an area just under one hectare in size, although the same landowner also has control over a further four hectares (approx.) of land to the north and east of the site.

2.4. The site contains six surviving buildings constructed as part of the United States military hospital during 1944 as well as large areas of hardstanding (concrete). All the buildings are derelict and in a poor condition and surrounded by self-regenerated trees, scrub and groundcover plants such as ivy and brambles. Two large veteran oak trees are situated in the north west corner of the site (ref T2 &T3 -Figure 5.1) and a belt of mature birch trees flank the south west boundary of the site G4 Figure 5.1).

Summary of Published Landscape Assessments

<u>Wrexham LANDMAP</u>

2.5. Wrexham LANDMAP was produced in 2004 and provides a consolidated and simplified version of LANDMAP in all but the evaluation scores for each aspect. Wrexham LANDMAP supersedes the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) LANDMAP data (produced in 2002).

2.6. This report forms supplementary planning guidance and is part of a series of guidance notes which support the adopted Unitary Development Plan. It forms a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications which could affect the form, appearance and setting of the built and natural landscape and its features. Figure 2.1 illustrates the landscape character areas.

2.7. The site lies within Landscape Character Area: 'Rural Lowlands'. This group of Character Areas covers the majority of land to the east and south of the town of Wrexham within the WCBC administrative boundary. Rural Lowlands is described as: *The Eastern lowland areas of Wrexham are largely rural and agricultural and share many characteristics of the neighbouring Cheshire and North Shropshire landscape. The general area also includes the River Dee floodplain and flat river terraces, and Fenn's Moss, an extensive area of heathland and bog. There are scattered farmsteadings, attractive small villages, and historic landscape features including medieval ridge and furrow and moated sites*.

2.1. Key landscape issues relevant to Penley and surrounding areas stated for Rural Lowlands include:

- Impact on rural character from commuter pressure;
- Hedgerow and hedgerow tree conservation and restoration;
- Impact on historic landscape features of agricultural changes;
- Effects of economic diversification and recreation in the countryside;
- Footpath and cycle links between town and country; and
- Impact on landscape and wildlife by farm building conversions to housing.

2.2. The Landscape Character Area is sub-divided into a number of Detailed Character Areas (DCA). The site lies within DCA: 13b English Maelor. The area is similar to the Cheshire and North Shropshire Plain beyond the Wrexham administrative boundary. The cultural landscape is characterised by a mixture of English and Welsh influences.

2.3. The character of this area is summarised as:

- Large character area defined by strong English influence;
- Undulating, mainly pastoral lowland farmland;
- Relatively tranquil rural area;
- Well-managed hedges with hedgerow trees and small woodlands;
- Historic designed estates with the western half being a Landscape of Special Historic Interest;
- Field ponds abundant on areas with clay soils;
- Historic settlement pattern with moated settlements and remnants of medieval ridge and furrow;
- Patches of valuable semi-natural habitats;
- Current agricultural changes affecting character.

2.4. Similar to NRW Landmap data the key characteristics of the landscape are spilt into topics covering Visual, Geological, Ecological and Historic character. Key characteristics relevant to Penley and the surrounding areas described by Wrexham Landmap are as follows :

Visual Character

- A large character area defined by strong English influence;
- Undulating mainly pastoral lowland farmland;
- Relatively tranquil, rural area;
- Enclosure by well-managed hedges and hedgerow trees as well as landform
- Good views towards western hills;
- Small rural villages;

Geological Character

- Soils derived from glacial till are slow draining and heavy;
- Drainage to the River Dee via the Emral and Wych Brooks;

Ecological Character

- Mainly improved grassland and farmland with valuable hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- Abundant field ponds derived from marl or clay pits;
- Other aquatic habitats of high value include canals, meres and streams;
- Areas of parkland and wood pasture with mature and veteran trees of high value;
- Broadleaved, conifer and mixed plantation woodlands;

Historical Character

- Extensive areas of medieval strip fields and ridge and furrow with associated moated sites preserved under pasture; and
- Settlements of medieval origin (including Penley);

2.5. The document also provides a list of management guidelines for the DCA. The management strategy is conservation and sustainable rural development. Guidelines of relevance to landscape and visual mitigation for the site include:

- The character of rural villages and their setting are particularly sensitive to new development;
- Enhance and expand wood pasture and retain veteran trees from agricultural intensification;
- Maintain and develop wooded corridors;
- Maintain and develop green networks including hedgerows;
- Management of rural areas needs to reflect/anticipate social and agricultural change. Provide low-key record of Polish Hospital; and
- Preserve character of rural villages.

Landscape Designations

2.6. The site lies within a Special Landscape Area (SLA). A local-level landscape designation covering large proportions of the administrative area of WCBC. Development within a SLA is covered by WCBC planning policy EC5 with the adopted (February 2005) Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1.

2.7. WCBC is preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP) which will replace the current adopted Unitary Development Plan. The LDP will be a long-term land use and development strategy focused on achieving sustainable development. SLA's are covered within the Deposit Version of the Plan (December 2017) under policy NE5: Special Landscape Areas.

2.8. Policy EC5 states that within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development, other than for agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other rural enterprises, and essential operational development by utility service providers, will be strictly controlled. Development will be required to conform to a high standard of design and landscaping, and special attention will be paid to minimising its visual impact both from nearby and distant viewpoints.

2.9. Policy NE5 states that a landscape and visual impact assessment and landscape scheme is required for development proposals with the potential to have a significant impact upon a SLA.

2.10. The designation of a SLA does not exclude residential development but seeks to protect, manage and enhance the character and quality within these special landscape areas and ensure that features of the landscape that contribute to character, value and distinctiveness, sense of place and quality are protected from inappropriate development.

Landscape Character of the site and its surrounds

The Site

2.8. The site is on the northern edge of Penley on a small proportion of the northern part of the former hospital site which extended further to the north, south, east and west. A number of the hospital buildings to the south of the site have been demolished and land redeveloped for residential housing. A large proportion of the former hospital buildings are still existing and form part of the Penley Industrial Estate.

2.9. Six derelict former hospital buildings (constructed as part of the United States military hospital during 1944) as well as large areas of hardstanding (concrete).are still present within the site as well as a former tennis court (Photo Viewpoint 2,3,4 &5).

2.10. The site is unmanaged and is covered in poor quality, self-seeded scrub and trees with some larger higher quality specimen trees. All the buildings are derelict and in a poor condition. Two large, high quality veteran oak trees are situated in the north west corner of the site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) (T2 & T3 Figure 5.1). An additional TPO covers the self seeded woodland in the north eastern part of the site (TPO nr. 286/2018). This area has been identified by the Council for its importance for amenity value and provision of wildlife habitat. The tree report (Tree Solutions ref. 18/AIA/WXM/220) identifies these trees as group G3 described as naturally colonised overgrown scrub that has had limited management. Many trees are of poor quality such as horse chestnuts which have honey fungus and many that have failed at the root-plate.

2.11. The south western boundary adjoins a modern housing development and is made up by a belt of mature birch trees and a young oak tree with scrub vegetation (Photo Viewpoint 7). A chain-link fence is positioned on the boundary with a single timber access gate. A mix of chain-link and post and wire fencing continues on the access track on the north western boundary to a timber vehicle access gate which serves as the existing site access. A liner belt of formally coppiced willow and scrub vegetation is situated just behind the fencing along this track.

2.12. A low growing patchy, mixed species hedge with a timber post and rail fence is on the sites north boundary and abuts a small workshop and its grounds (Photo Viewpoint 7). The boundary becomes less defined on the east side of the north boundary with a second workshop building situated just north of the application site. The building and grounds of 'Tupa' are situated just beyond the workshops to the north. An area of dense trees and shrubs sits behind the workshops and between the workshops and properties further to the north (Photo Viewpoint 6).

2.13. The sites' eastern boundary adjoins a grazing meadow. It is not clearly defined and made up of self-seeded vegetation, scrub and grassland with some sections of dilapidated agricultural fencing (Photo Viewpoint 9). The c. 3m high chain-link fencing used for the former tennis court (which is situated in the south eastern corner of the site) defines the southern section of this boundary and the eastern end of the southern boundary.

2.14. Beyond the tennis court the site abuts the curtilage (extended garden) of a large residential property. Two large oak trees (T4 &T5 figure 5.1) are situated within the residential curtilage but are close to the boundary with canopies overhanging into the site. Further along the southern boundary is a c.50 long section of concrete post and timber panel fencing associated with rear boundaries of modern development adjoining the site. These buildings are clearly visible above this fencing. (Photo Viewpoint 3&4).

Penley

2.11. Penley is a small relatively compact village that expanded considerably in 1944 when a United States Hospital was set up in the grounds of Penley Hall. Some of the former hospital buildings remain to the south west and are now business units. A large proportion of the hospital site was redeveloped for housing.

2.12. The A539 highway runs through Penley in an approximate east-west direction. With the exception of a detached housing development south of the village, the majority of residential development has occurred on the north side of this road. The south side of the road is characterised more by its ribbon development along Ellesmere Lane, larger-scale buildings and grounds associated with the Maelor School and farmsteads. There is also some ribbon development along Hollybush Lane separated by a small field and Saint Mary Magdalene Church.

2.13. The land to the immediate south of the site has been developed for residential housing with public open space. A small area of public open space has been retained along the edge of this estate and adjoins the southern boundary.

2.14. The eastern boundary to the village is characterised by large gardens planted with a mix of ornamental and native plant and tree species some of which extend all the way to the wooded valley and watercourse. This creates a green edge to the village when entering from the east.

The surrounding landscape

2.15. The site is on relatively flat ground that forms part of the gently undulating English Maelor Landscape. The land lies at predominantly 60m AOD with local undulations and regular river valleys that cut across the landscape in a primarily north-south direction. Linear belts of woodland are associated with these watercourses and together with larger blocks of woodland (including New Gorse Covert which is on a slight knoll) provide enclosure and compartmentalise the landscape into small areas that are visually separate from the next and provide a wooded horizon to many views.

2.16. The surrounding landscape contains an abundance of field ponds of various sizes and shapes associated with marl or clay pits. A large field pond is situated within the grazing meadow to the east of the site and an even larger pond just north of this.

2.17. Figure 3.1 (Landscape and Visual Analysis) provides a summary of the landscape and illustrates the flat landform, linear character to woodland along watercourses and abundance of field ponds.

2.18. Modern housing southwest of the site has been positioned and orientated to face public open space with large retained mature trees that predate the development. The open spaces are divided by access roads but form a green edge to modern development with a backdrop of trees in views, especially from the west. The mature trees backdrop is partially created by the existing trees on the sites' southwestern boundary. The derelict buildings on site are discernible beyond the trees.

Summary of Landscape Character

2.19. The characteristics of the site and surrounding area can be summarised as:

- Overgrown and unmanaged site with specimen mature trees, derelict buildings and scrub/naturally regenerated trees providing an unkempt and dilapidated appearance;
- Low lying and gently undulating rural agricultural landscape;
- Abundant field ponds, almost one pond per field;
- Distinctive north-south fingers of woodland following watercourses create a highly enclosed and compartmentalised the landscape;
- Large gardens and properties to the east of Penley extend to the wooded valley and watercourse;
- Former United States and Polish WWII hospital buildings retained as part of Penley Industrial Estate in the west of Penley;
- New residential development in the north of Penley and pocket to the south off Ellesmere Lane;
- Open spaces and mature trees retained as part of new housing development in development immediately adjacent to the site (north Penley); and
- Larger-scale buildings, grounds and car park associated with the Maelor School to the south of the A539.

3.0 Baseline Environment- Visual

3.1. The site is on relatively flat ground on the northern edge of Penley. The site is covered in self-seeded scrub with specimen mature trees and six dilapidated buildings which prevent open views across the site. Visual receptors are generally limited to those close to the site including people within properties and people using open spaces and roads immediately adjacent to the site, although even in these views, the site is filtered by trees and vegetation within and outside the site boundary. (Photo Viewpoint 7& 8).

3.2. People in their workplace or undertaking recreational activities with the workshops and grounds immediately north of the site have open views into the site.

3.3. The linear tracks of woodland along watercourses provide a strong degree of enclosure in views further afield and in the landscape to the north, east and west of Penley. (Photo Viewpoint 11,12,13,14 &15) There are few public rights of way and public spaces in the surrounding area where views to the site are possible except for sections of the long distance (24 mile): Llwybr Maelor Way to the east (Photo Viewpoint 9).

3.4. To the north there is no public access within 1km of the site. Visual receptors are primarily a handful of detached residential properties in the former grounds of Penley Hall. Properties are set amongst mature trees and vegetation that screen and filter views to the site. (Photo Viewpoint 6)

3.5. To the west a combination of residential development and linear woodland along a watercourse (c.250m west of the site) combine to provide screening towards the site in longer distance views such as those from Hollybush Lane and Penley Village Hall (Photo Viewpoint 15).

Visual Receptors

3.6. The following groups of people have been identified as potential visual receptors as part of the baseline visual assessment. In some cases these have been included to demonstrate that there is not a view or where there are views these are very localised and that many receptors only have partial or filtered views to the development site. Visual Receptors are illustrated on Figure 4.1.

Residents/ Workers

A- People occupying properties South and South West of the site;

C People occupying properties to the North West of the site (Penley Hall, Stables, The Pigeonaire, Tupa). Including people in their workshops to the north of the site.

Public Rights of Way. Footpaths and Highways

B People using open spaces and highway (Penley Hall Drive, Winston Way) to the south and west of the site;

D People using the footpath Llwybr Maelor Way (24 miles trail) to the East of the site;

E People using Public Rights of Way and highways (Bryn Lane) to the South East of the site;

F People using Public Rights of Way and highway (Bryn Lane) to the North East of the Site;

G People using Rural Lanes, Public Areas, Public Rights of Way and Properties to the South of the site (Ellesmere Lane). and

H People using Rural Lanes (Hollybush Lane), Properties situated on Hollybush Lane and Public Rights of Way to the West of the site.

Nature of existing views

3.7. The majority of the views are very local (adjacent to the site) and only experienced by local residents, people using PRoW, permissive routes, public open spaces and the local road network close to the site.

Views from the north

3.8. Views from the north are limited to people occupying the few private properties within the former grounds of Penley Hall (Receptor C; Photo Viewpoint 6) and the workshops just north of the application site. Many of these residential properties have trees along the southern boundaries of their gardens which in combination with vegetation within the boundary provide a high level of screening and filtering to the view. Views are of mature trees and self-seeded scrub with occasional glimpses through to the derelict former hospital buildings. People in their workplace or undertaking recreational activities within the workshops and grounds immediately north of the site have open views into the site.

Views from the east

3.9. Llwybr Maelor Way extends through Penley using PRoW on land to the south of the village before heading north along a PRoW which extends along the edge of the village. Part of its route is tightly sandwiched between rear garden boundaries and hardly passable due to overhanging vegetation and waterlogging at certain times of the year. Views are of garden fences which enclose and channel views. As the route heads east the route follows a track bordered on either side by extended wooded gardens with views of polytunnels, garden buildings, vegetable garden, parkland trees and grassland. Where the route is between gardens, north westerly views are towards the trees on the eastern boundary of the site. The existing derelict buildings on site are occasionally discernible but are a barely noticeable feature of the view. (Receptor D; Photo Viewpoint 9). This section of the route feels like it is continuing through part of the edge of the village as a result of garden structures and domestic land uses. Further to the east views are across pastoral fields. A linear belt of woodland along the watercourse provides a backdrop to the view and a high degree of filtering to views beyond. The site forms part of the woodland in these views. Glimpses through this woodland belt are possible during winter months but the levels of filtering by branches makes the site barely discernible (Photograph 10). As the route continues further to the east the layering effect of woodland, trees and hedgerows means that the site is not visible.

3.10. Views to the eastern edge of Penley are possible along Bryn Lane as it exits the village and heads east. This edge is characterised by rear garden boundaries and rooftops and mature trees within the extensive garden of a property on the easternmost edge of the village. This provides a relatively green edge and screens views towards the site, polytunnels and garden buildings are glimpsed between trees and hedgerows (Receptor E; Photograph 11). Further east, views towards the site are heavily screened by the mature linear woodland extending south, c.120m east of the site. (Photograph 12). Continuing east the layering effect of linear woodland, hedgerow trees and hedgerows provides screening to the site (Photograph 13).

3.11. Further away along Bryn Lane, as the road curves to head north, views are across relatively flat farmland bound by low hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees. Views are to a wooded horizon, including New Gorse Covert which is on a slight knoll. Penley and the site are not discernible in the view. (Receptor F; Photograph 14).

Views from the south

3.12. Residential properties to the immediate south (and some to the west) of the site have a mixture of direct and oblique ground and first floor views towards the site beyond public open space, mature trees and shrub planting. The site is visible as mature and young self-seeded trees beyond a chain-link fence. The derelict former hospital buildings on site are visible through the trees. The former buildings on site contribute to an unkempt and derelict character to the site. (Receptor A; Photographs 7 and 8).

3.13. South of Penley, along Ellesmere Lane, the landscape opens up slightly with lower hedgerows and fewer hedgerow trees. Northerly views from PRoW, properties bordering the road and people using The Maelor School are towards the southerly edge of Penley, the school buildings, car park and grounds and Penley Industrial Estate. The backdrop of the view is to woodland to the north of the village. The site is screened by intervening built form to the immediate north of the A539. (Receptor G; Photograph 16)

Views from the west

3.14. Areas of public open space have been created as part of the residential development immediately adjacent to the site. These areas mainly comprise amenity grassland, earth mounding, retained mature trees some shrub planting and are bordered by low timber knee rails. One of the smaller areas of public open space is informally used for football. There is no path structure, benches or formality to the open spaces. The vegetation on the site and surrounding detached properties form a wooded backdrop to the open space in easterly views with modern residential development also forming a backdrop in westerly and southerly views. The chain-link fencing around the site is visible as are the derelict former hospital buildings which are discernible through the trees and contribute to an unkempt and derelict character on site. (Receptor B; Photographs 7 and 8).

3.15. Views from the west towards the site are restricted by a belt of woodland along a watercourse. Residential properties and Penley Village Hall extend along Hollybush Lane which is rural lane bordered by intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees. (Receptor H; Photograph 15). Easterly views are across a single pastoral field towards the linear woodland along the watercourse which enclose views. During winter there are filtered glimpses through to farmland beyond. The site is not discernible in views. Views from some properties and the southern extent of the lane include Saint Mary Magdalene Church and glimpses of buildings in Penley Industrial Estate.

Summary of Views

3.16. There are very few views towards the site. Views are generally limited to those close to the site including people within properties, work places and people using open spaces and roads immediately adjacent to the site, although even in many of these views the site is filtered by trees and vegetation within and outside the site boundary.

3.17. Where views are available to the site they are of an unmanaged area containing derelict buildings, a dilapidated tennis court and low quality self-seeded scrub

and trees. A belt of mature, better quality birch trees on the south western edge of the site provide some filtering to views. The quality and grandeur of the two veteran oak trees to the north of the site cannot be appreciated from anywhere outside the site with the exception of people using the small workshop and grounds adjacent to the northern boundary.

3.18. Views to the eastern edge of the site are available from a short section (c. 100m) of the 24 mile Llwybr Maelor Way to the east of the site. Views are filtered through individual trees planted in a domestic garden. Views along this short stretch of footpath are also to polytunnels, garden buildings, trees and short mown grass. The character of this particular section of footpath is influenced by domestic gardens on both sides of the footpath and the sense of being on the village boundary is evident. The TPO woodland (W1) on the north eastern part of the site provides a wooded edge from the very limited occasional views of the site possible from this footpath.

3.19. Further afield hedgerows, large mature trees in combination with mature woodland and linear belts of woodland, provide a high degree of visual enclosure and screening to the site.

3.20. Receptors that have the potential to experience the greatest change in their views include:

- People occupying residential properties to the immediate south and west of the site (Receptor A);
- People using open spaces and highways to the immediate west and south of the site (Receptor B);
- People occupying residential properties and workshops to the immediate north of the site (Receptor C); and
- People using a very short section of Llwybr Maelor Way (Receptor D).

4.0 The Proposed Development & Design Considerations

Description of the Scheme

4.1. The development comprises residential properties (9 units). A site layout proposal has been prepared by NWD Architects (Figure 6.2).

4.2. The design development for the site has been an iterative one and influenced by; Architects, Landscape Architects, Tree Consultants, Highways and Drainage Engineers, Archaeologists, Ecologists and also feedback from WCBC. Measures have been incorporated into the design and layout over a number of iterations to ensure a scheme is put forward that is sensitively set within it's environment. Consideration has been given to landscape and visual receptors surrounding the site as well as to creating an attractive development that makes the most of existing landscape features, has a strong sense of place and contributes to local distinctiveness.

4.3. A description of the buildings, access and circulation shown on the site layout (figure 6.2) is as follows:

Buildings

- Removal of two of the derelict former hospital buildings in the central part of the site and retention of four in the north east part of the site as well as associated regenerated scrub and trees;
- 9nr two storey residential buildings with a maximum height of 10m;
- Building roofs to be pitched to at least 30 degrees;
- A range of single or double garage to individual plots;
- Individual driveways and gardens to each property;

Access and Circulation

- c.35m length of the existing private track leading to 'Tupa' to be widened to create a two-way vehicle and safe pedestrian route from the development to Penley Hall Drive;
- A new access road created at 90 degrees off the upgraded/widened track;
- A main two-way spline road through the development with smaller cul-de-sac access to properties from this;
- Shared vehicle and pedestrian routes;
- Turning areas for domestic cars and larger vehicles (fire tender and bin lorry);
- A direct access through the site for the maintenance of land to the east including the new wildlife areas.

Landscape Strategy

4.4. The development layout and orientation of buildings has been influenced through the production of a Landscape Strategy and Parameter Plan (Figure 6.1). The Landscape Strategy and Parameters plan sets out an illustrative layout, describes opportunities to build on existing landscape character, pays due consideration to views into the site and also defines the parameters for good design within the new development.

4.5. The principles for development shown on the Landscape Strategy and Parameters Plan are as follows:

- Removing some of the derelict buildings;
- Avoiding the rear of properties bordering the proposed or existing streetscenes;
- Directing views and setting development to face onto existing and proposed landscape features, particularly the two veteran oak trees, mature birch trees on the west, scrubby woodland and meadow/ wetland area to the east;
- Retention of the mature birch and developing trees to the boundary with Penley Hall Drive and setting the development behind this;

- Retention of TPO designated scrub/regenerated trees in the north eastern part of the site. (separate woodland management plan has been provided to ensure this woodland is managed proactivity);
- Creating an active frontage to the development with Penley Hall Drive;
- Retention of two veteran oak trees within a generous green space and providing a buffer to new development from properties and the workshops to the north of the site;
- Continuing the character of development within Penley Hall Drive and Winston Way development with the retention of mature trees in open space;
- Allowing the public to enjoy and view the veteran oak trees;
- Planting of native hedgerows and trees across the development site to soften built form and maintain ecological connectivity across the site;
- Allow surface water outfall to drain via open swale and connect to the wildlife area to the east.

4.6. An area to the east of the site (c.1.0 hectares in size) on an existing grazing meadow has been set aside for a mitigation area principally created and managed for great crested newts as well as lesser horseshoe bats. An illustrative layout for this is shown on the Landscape Strategy and Parameters Plan (Figure 6.1).

4.7. The area provides the opportunity to build on the diversity of habitat types already found in the existing landscape and an ecological extension of the existing wooded watercourse c.120m to the east of the site. The area also provides an ecological connection, bridging the gap between the site and its retained and proposed landscape features and the wooded watercourse. It also reflects the character of extended wooded gardens along the eastern edge of the village.

4.8. The wildlife mitigation area would be managed under an agreed management plan for the benefit of wildlife and in particular great crested newts and lesser horseshoe bats. It would have a strict policy to exclude any public access within it. Controlled access would be provided for maintenance and educational activities

and a path/track provided to facilitate this. A summary of proposals within this area are as follows:

- A diversity of habitat types found in the existing landscape such as native woodland, scrub vegetation, hedgerows, meadow, wetlands and ponds.
- Ponds connected via open ditches or swales;
- Raised ground levels and hibernacula created for amphibians;
- Controlled gates, stiles and signage to manage and control public access;
- Fencing to stop livestock and dogs entering the area; and
- Graded linear swale, planted with reed to retain and filter (remove pollutants) from surface water run off prior to reaching new ponds

5.0 Conclusion of Assessment of effects on Landscape and views

5.1 The brownfield site lies on the northern edge of Penley on part of the former United States and later Polish WWII hospital site. Much of that site has since been redeveloped for housing or buildings retained and used for industry at Penley Industrial Estate.

5.2 The site is characterised by six derelict buildings and low quality self-seeded scrub/young trees which contributes to an unkempt and derelict character to the site. The scrub/trees in the north eastern part of the site have been designated as a TPO (286/2018). The site includes a number of landscape features which contribute to local landscape character: mature birch trees on the southern part of the site and 2 nr veteran oaks close to the northern boundary.

5.3 Penley is a small settlement characterised by ribbon development, school and farmsteads south of the A539 and the majority of development to the north of the road (including modern development immediately adjacent to the site and Penley Industrial Estate). There are a number of individual properties to the north and south east of the site which have large wooded gardens.

5.4 The wider landscape is characterised by numerous field ponds and mature belts of linear woodland following watercourses in a north-south orientation. These woodland blocks as well as other woodland (including New Gorse Covert on a slight knoll), intact hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees enclose and compartmentalise the landscape.

5.5 This degree of enclosure and compartmentalisation mean that the site is generally only visible from the land immediately adjacent. Further away trees, buildings and hedgerows provide screening.

5.6 New proposals include 9nr new residential units set within the site, retention of the mature birch trees on the south western boundary, 2 nr veteran oak trees which would be incorporated into new open space and the areas of designated TPO woodland and 4 nr derelict buildings in the north eastern part of the site. Proposals also include the provision of a wildlife mitigation area to the east of the site which would include a diversity of habitats including new woodland and tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, ponds and swales.

Appraisal of Effects on Landscape Character

5.7 This site includes six derelict buildings and is edged by mature and maturing trees as well as low quality self-seeded scrub. Development on the site of 9nr residential properties would alter the character of the site by increasing built form and fomalising access. However, the proposed development would be similar in character to the adjacent residential development. In addition the site currently displays a derelict character as a result of the appearance of the derelict buildings and new development would screen the retained derelict buildings and provide an improved and managed character on site. Retention of site features such as mature birch trees, veteran oak trees and regenerated scrub and trees in the north eastern part of the site would contribute and retain a green setting to the site and new development within it.

5.8 The provision of the ecological mitigation area would contribute to local character through the planting of woodland blocks and incorporation of wetland features such as ponds and meadows. Planting of woodland would contribute to the enclosed, wooded and compartmentalised character to the landscape surrounding the site and wooded character of adjacent extended gardens. It would also further reinforce the green wooded edge to the development site.

5.9 The Landscape Strategy and Parameters Plan demonstrates that it is possible to introduce new development on site that improves the derelict character, and retains a green setting and valued landscape features. The proposals mitigate potential wider landscape effects through retention of trees and woodland within the site and the provision of a wildlife area which reflects the character of the

compartmentalised landscape and the larger extended wooded gardens on the eastern edge of the village.

5.10 This land and planting on the edges of the site would retain a wooded character to the eastern edge of the village and be barely discernible within the wider landscape.

5.11 The site lies on the very edge of the Special Landscape Area (SLA) and is currently a derelict site. The SLA extends across the surrounding landscape encompassing the lowland rural countryside. The highly compartmentalised nature of the SLA created by fingers of woodland would not be altered through development. Development retains the periphery of woodland around the site and adds to this with the planting of new woodland. The edge of Penley will remain a wooded edge with occasional development visible. Development on site would not impact upon the key characteristics of this large SLA.

Appraisal of Effects on Views

5.12 The site is enclosed by a combination of built form and trees. This limits views to those properties, open spaces and roads closest to the site. From the majority of visual receptors identified in this report there would be no views of new development on site. This is a visually enclosed site with very limited views to it from the surrounding area.

5.13 To the immediate south and west (modern development, open space and residential roads; Receptors A and B) views of the site are through mature birch trees with glimpses of the derelict buildings. This would alter to include glimpses of new properties beyond the retained birch trees. As views already contain derelict built development views would be slightly improved. These are views already characterised by modern development and new development would be seen in that context.

5.14 There are a number of mature trees to the north of the site which are outside the site boundary. These provide a high degree of filtering to views from properties to the immediate north (Receptor C). In winter there may be very glimpsed views of new development on site from parts of the grounds of these properties but these would be a barely discernible feature of views.

5.15 There would be more open views of the new development from the workshops and their grounds (Receptor C) but new planting of hedgerows and retention of the existing veteran oak trees would provide some filtering of views once established. New development would replace near distance views of derelict buildings and introduce a more managed character to the site.

5.16 Existing vegetation within large gardens as well as retained scrub and trees within the north eastern part of the site and new trees and woodland planted as part of the wildlife mitigation area east of the site would provide screening of new development in views from Llwybr Maelor Way (Receptor D). This screening would increase over time as new planting matures.

Summary

5.17 This report demonstrates that the redevelopment of the site in Penley has the opportunity to improve a derelict site through removal of some of the buildings and construct new housing within a wooded setting. This would improve the character of the site. It would also be in keeping with the character of adjacent residential development. The compartmentalised nature of the landscape, retention of trees and planting of new trees would ensure there are no adverse effects on the SLA. Views are restricted to occasional glimpses of houses through threes for a few receptors immediately adjacent and the scale of change of these views would be very low.