NICHOLSONS

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Client: Net World Sports Ltd

Site: Land South of Bryn Lane, Wrexham

Date: 14/02/2025

Revision: **7**



Table of Contents

1. Introduction 03
2. Planning Policy Background 04
3. Baseline Assessment 06
4. Landscape Baseline 19
5. Visual Baseline 26
6. Description of the Proposals 43
7. Assessment of Effects- Landscape Character 46
8. Assessment of Effects- Visual Assessment 49
9. Summary & Conclusions 50
10. Appendices 51

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V4	Version 4- Addition of Comparative Wireframe Visualisations	19/12/2024	JT
V5	Version 5- Updated layout plan, Wireframe Visualisations numbering, addition to report text for viewpoint.	20/12/2024	JT
V6	Version 6- Inclusion of Wrexham Unitary Development Plan	20/01/2025	ID
V7	Version 7- Updated layout plan	14/02/2025	JT

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Executive Summary

The Site is located within Wrexham Industrial Estate, surrounded on three sides by industrial uses, and with additional allocated employment development to the north. It currently comprises an area of rough grassland with belts of woodland on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries, the latter two forming part of the Strategic Ecological Network of the industrial estate. The western boundary comprises security fencing and permits clear intervisibility with an adjacent industrial building. Other industrial buildings are visible above the boundary vegetation.

The proposed development comprises a single industrial building of 26m ridge height with associated parking, vehicle circulation and green infrastructure areas. The woodland belts on the eastern and southern boundaries are proposed to be conserved and enhanced, and a new hedgerow is proposed along the western boundary to soften the appearance of the boundary and to provide wildlife connectivity around the entire Site boundary.

The landscape impact assessment considered the effects upon the character of the Site and its immediate setting, and that of the surrounding published character. It concluded that the proposed development would not result in any significant landscape effects, the most significant being an adverse effect of Moderate to Moderate/Minor significance upon the character of the Site and its immediate setting.

The visual impact assessment found that the visual environment of the Site is highly restricted to the west, south and east by existing tall vegetation and structures. Wider views are available from receptors to the north, comprising the users of public highways and Public Rights of Way.

The assessment concluded that none of the visual receptors would experience significant effects, the most significant being adverse effects of Moderate/Minor significance upon the users of public footpaths crossing agricultural land to the north.

The land to the north of the Site is allocated within the Local Plan for an extension to Wrexham Industrial Estate and subject to a live planning application, which is pending determination. Should this be delivered then the only public view of the proposed building is anticipated to be from Bryn Lane directly to the north.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable on landscape and visual grounds.

Table 1: Visual Assessment Results

Receptor	Viewpoint	Significance of Effect
Users of Bryn Lane	1	Minor adverse
Users of Public Footpath ISY/6	2	Moderate/Minor to Minor adverse
Users of Public Footpath HOLT/24	3&4	Moderate/Minor adverse
Users of Public Footpath HOLT/25	5&7	Moderate/Minor adverse
Users of Francis' Lane	6	Minor adverse

1. Introduction

Instruction

1.1 In October 2024, Nicholsons was instructed by Mauna Kea Limited, a fully owned subsidiary of Net World Sports, to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for a new industrial building on land to the south of Bryn Lane, Wrexham (the 'Site').

Scope

1.2 This assessment was undertaken using an established methodology, derived from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3), which is the nationally accepted guidance for the consideration of landscape and visual effects.

1.3 The terms of reference for this assessment are as follows:

- To assess the baseline landscape and visual characteristics of the proposed Site, including desk survey information and first-hand field evidence;
- To assess the proposals, and where appropriate, provide recommendations in relation to key landscape and visual mitigation requirements; and
- To propose, where possible, suitable mitigation measures to reduce adverse impacts to an acceptable level.

1.4 A number of plans and photographs have been prepared to illustrate the character and visual environment of the Site and its context, and these have been appended to this report.

1.5 This report should be read in conjunction with all other information submitted in support of this Application.

Site Description

1.6 The Site comprises a single land parcel extending to approximately 3.72ha in area, accessed from Bryn Lane to the north.

1.7 The Site mostly comprises open grassland, with trees on its northern, southern and eastern boundaries. It is surrounded to the west, south and north by Wrexham Industrial Estate.

1.8 The central grid reference of the Site is SJ 384 507.



2. Planning Policy Background

2. National Planning Policy Background

Planning Policy Wales

1.1 Edition 12 of Planning Policy Wales was published in February 2024, and it sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government.

1.2 Chapter 3 of PPW covers strategic and spatial choices. Under the heading of 'Placemaking in Action' at paragraph 3.3, it encourages good design to make better places. It states that good design is fundamental to creating sustainable places where people want to live, work and socialise. It further states that design is not just about the architecture of a building but the relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment and between people and places.

1.3 Policies relating to the natural environment are set out in Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places.

1.4 Section 6.2 relates to Green Infrastructure,and within this paragraphs 6.2.11 sets out a framework for the integration of green infrastructure into new developments and the demonstration of its value, as follows:

"The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes."

1.5 Paragraph 6.12 in particular requires all new development to demonstrate effective integration of green infrastructure, as follows:

"A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied."

1.6 Under the heading of 'Landscape', Planning Policy Wales defines landscape in paragraph 6.3.1 as "*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.*"

1.7 Paragraph 6.3.3 further states that "*All the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places.*"

1.8 With regard to the effect of development upon landscape character, paragraph 6.3.4 states that where adverse effects on landscape character cannot be avoided, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission.

Local Planning Policy Background

Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013-2028

2.9 Wrexham Local Development Plan was adopted by Wrexham Council in December 2023. The Proposals Maps for the Plan show the Site to be located within the Employment Area of Wrexham Industrial Estate, with land on the eastern and southern boundaries of the Site falling within the Wrexham Industrial Estate Strategic Environmental Network.

2.10 The following Local Plan policies are therefore considered to be relevant to this assessment, which are set out in full at **Appendix 1**:

- Policy SP2: Location of Development
- Policy SP9: Wrexham Industrial Estate
- Policy EM1: Protection of Existing Employment Land

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011

2.11 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan formed the previous Local Plan, adopted in 2005, and it was superseded by the Wrexham Local Development Plan upon adoption.

2.12 The following Unitary Development Plan policies are therefore considered to be relevant to this assessment, which are set out in full at **Appendix 1**:

- Policy PS2
- Policy EC4
- Policy GDP1(a)

3. Baseline Assessment

Study Area

3.1 For this assessment, a Study Area of 3km has been used. It is judged that beyond this distance, the proposed building will blend into the adjacent industrial estate to the extent that significant effects are unlikely.

Site Overview

3.2 The Site mostly comprises an open grassland field, which is divided into two parts with timber post and rail fencing.

3.3 Tall native woody vegetation is present on the northern, eastern and southern Site boundaries, with the eastern and southern boundaries forming part of a strategic ecological corridor within the Local Plan.

3.4 The Site is accessed from Bryn Lane via an existing agricultural entrance on its northern boundary. Woody vegetation extends from the boundary into the Site, flanking the existing access.

3.5 Watercourses are present along parts of the southern and eastern Site boundaries. The southern watercourse is a substantial engineered channel, whereas the eastern watercourse bears the character of an informal ditch. Both watercourses flow through engineered headwalls into culverts near to the southernmost point of the Site.

3.6 The western Site boundary comprises galvanised steel palisade security fencing topped with barbed wire, permitting clear intervisibility with the adjacent industrial land to the west.

3.7 Two disused World War II concrete bunkers are located within an area of scrub in the north-eastern corner of the Site.

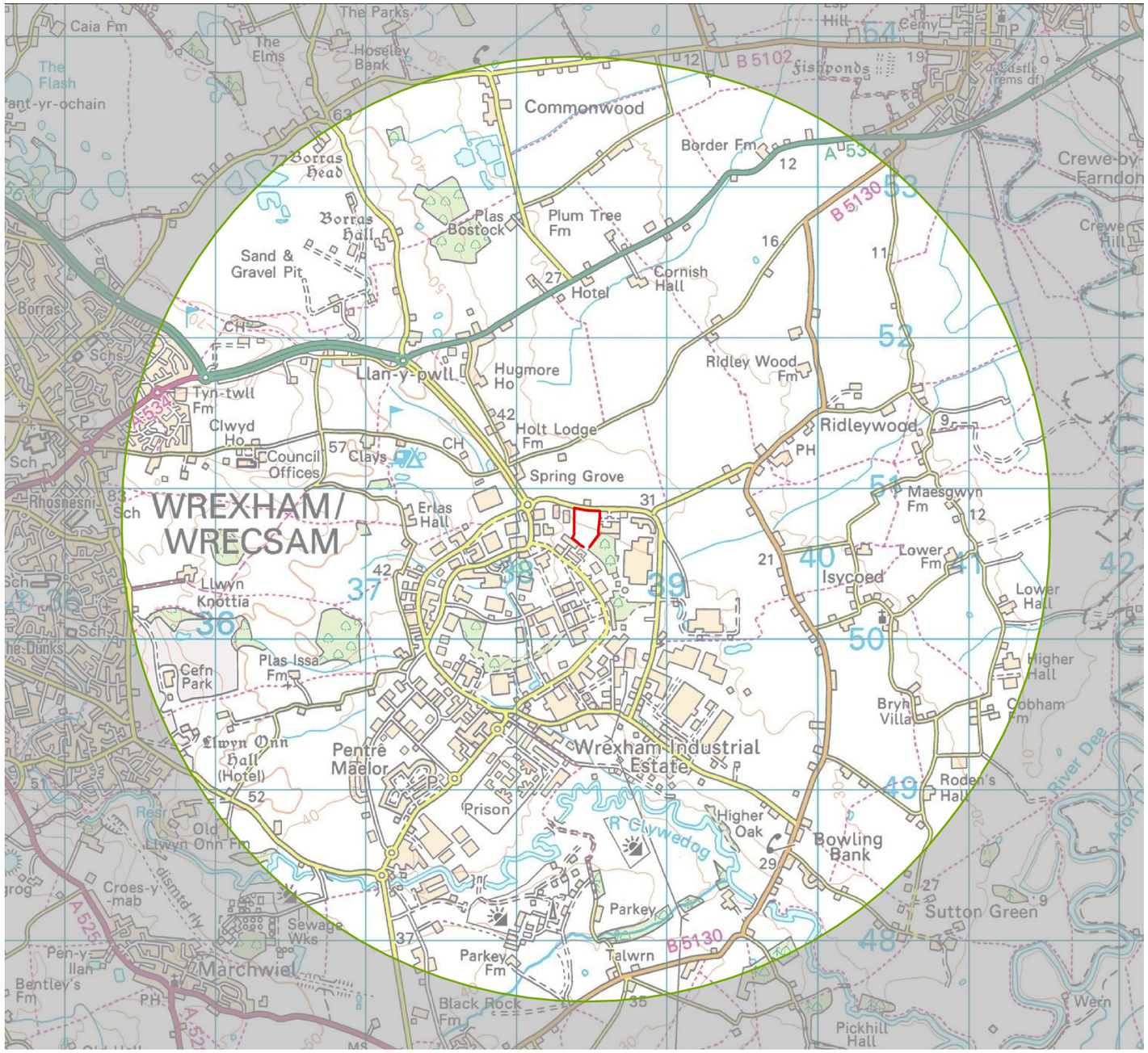


Figure 1: Site Location and Study Area

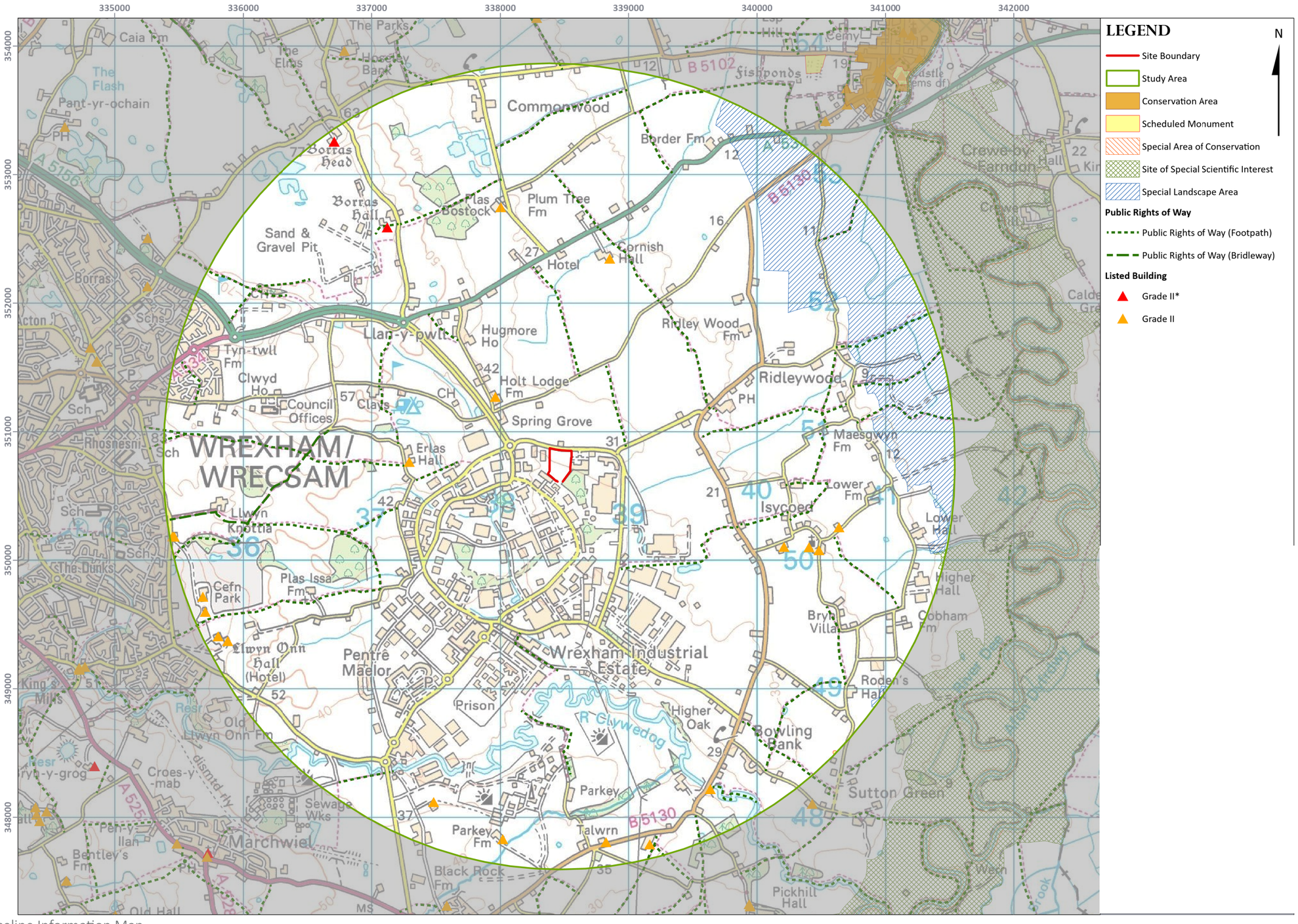


Figure 2: Baseline Information Map

Site Context

3.8 The Site is located on the northern edge of Wrexham Industrial Estate, with commercial and industrial uses to the west, south and east exerting a strong influence upon its character. In particular, the tall structures associated with the Kelloggs factory to the east are a visually dominant feature.

3.9 An area of native woodland is located to the south-east, connecting with the Site's southern and eastern boundary vegetation and forming part of the strategic green infrastructure network of the industrial estate.

3.10 Bryn Lane forms the northern boundary of the Site and beyond this lies a small farmstead, surrounded by pastoral and arable fields bounded with treed hedgerows that extend northwards to the edge of the study area.

3.11 The land to the north of the Site comprises an employment Key Strategic Site in the recently adopted Local Plan, under Policy KSS3 and subject to a live planning application for employment use. It is therefore highly likely that this land will be developed for employment uses within the Plan period, resulting in the Site being entirely set within the industrial estate.

Topography & Landform

3.12 The Site expresses a relatively level topography, sitting around 30m AOD with no discernible change in levels across its area.

3.13 The wider landform generally slopes down eastwards towards the River Dee, which sits at around 5m AOD. This is consistent with the industrial estate being located on the lower western slopes of the concave valley, and the land sloping upwards more steeply towards the settlement edge of Wrexham

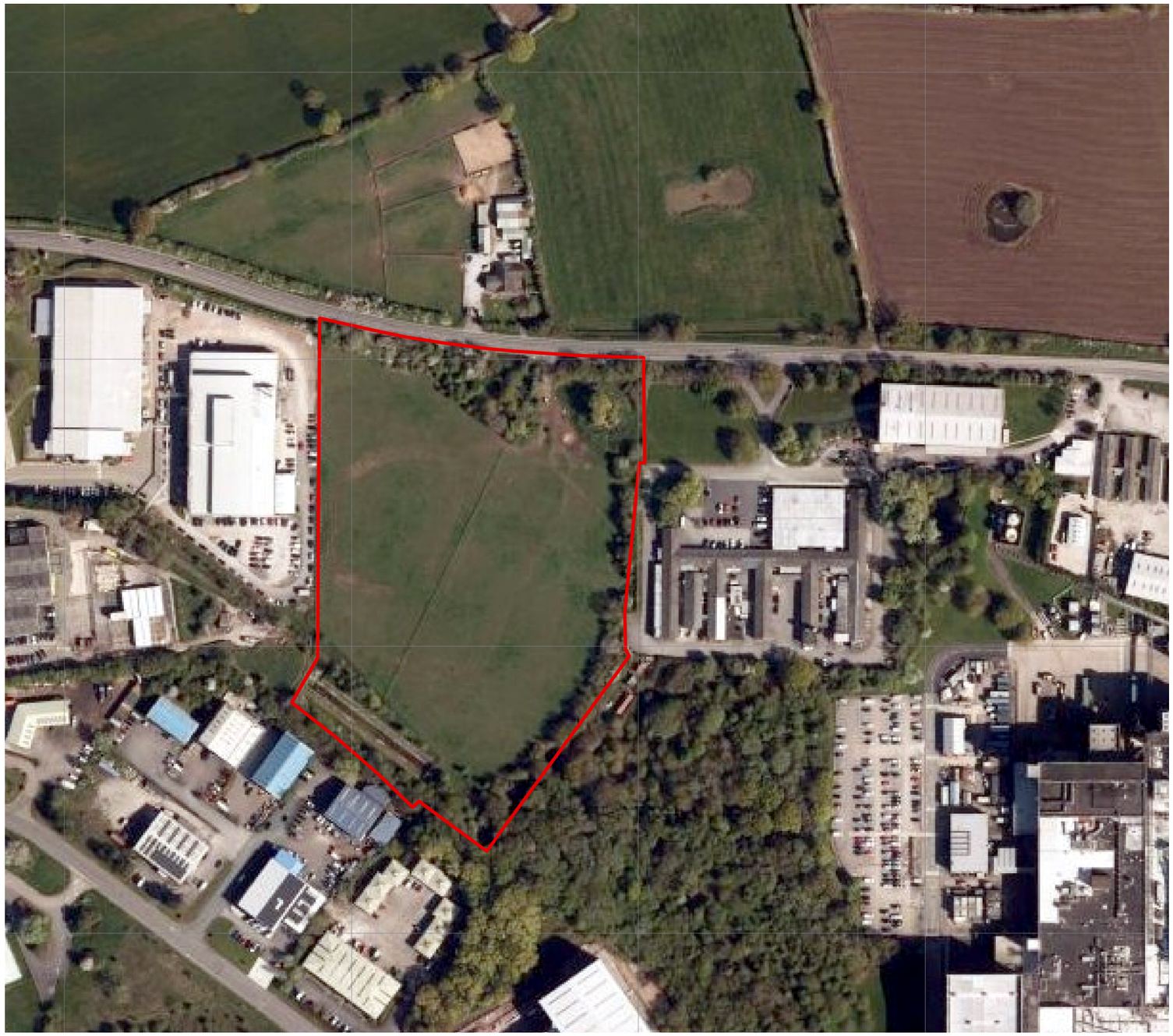


Figure 3: Aerial Photo

at the western edge of the study area, which sits at approximately 80m AOD.

Public Rights of Way

3.14 There are no Public Rights of Way running through the Site, and no part of the Site is publicly accessible.

3.15 A number of Public Rights of Way passing through the land to the north of the Site that have the potential to be affected as a result of the Site's development are shown on the Baseline Information Map.

3.16 When the employment allocation within the Local Plan to the north of the Site is delivered, all views towards the Site from Public Rights of Way will be neutralised.

Designations

Landscape Designations

3.17 The Site is not located within a nationally or locally designated landscape.

3.18 A Special Landscape Area associated with the River Dee corridor is located approximately 2.5km to the east of the study area, although intervening structures and vegetation within the landscape prevent any character relationship between the Site and this area.

Heritage Assets

3.19 There are a number of Listed Buildings within the study area, the closest being the Grade II Listed New Hold Lodge Farm, located approximately 500m to the north-west of the Site.

3.20 Field investigation has shown that there is no perceptual relationship between the Site and these historic assets, and therefore no impacts are anticipated upon the character of the setting of these assets.

Illustrative Viewpoints

3.21 To assist in understanding the character and composition of the Sites and the landscape in which they are located, a series of illustrative views are presented over the following pages.

3.22 The locations of these illustrative viewpoints are shown on the Illustrative Viewpoint Location Map.



Figure 4: Illustrative Masterplan for land north of the Site