

Appendix 5.5: Effects on Landscape Character

LCA5a Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte Summary Description (see Appendix 5.4 for further detail) • Hill slopes facing settlement and industrial developed lowlands • Castle and estate parkland, woodland and farmlands • Gateway to Ceiriog Valley and Vale of Llangollen • Traversed by Offa's Dyke • Focus for tourism					
Susceptibility to Change: Medium to High		Lower	↔	Higher	Value: High
Scale	Medium to large scale landscape of pasture fields and parkland on an east-facing landform. Views outwards across lower-lying land to the east are available.		■		• AONB; • Chirk Castle (designated heritage assets and visitor attraction); • Offa's Dyke Path National Trail; • Local landscape designation (SLA).
Pattern/ Complexity	A mix of enclosed agriculture, plantations and historic parkland, on a landform that slopes consistently from west to east. The pattern is consistent, organic and relatively simple.			■	
Development/ Human Influence	Traditional (and often designated) built features predominate within the LCA. The presence of industrial features at the Kronospan Facility is an established discordant presence in outward views.			■	
Connections with adjacent areas	Obvious and very strong visual relationship with LCA 7a to the east. Very obvious transition into the valleys of the Ceiriog (to the south) and the Dee (to the north). Plantation woodland marks the transition into the higher ground to the west.			■	
Visual Interruption	Typically open views are available eastwards, due to the underlying landform. However, there is significant screening vegetation also present, especially with the Chirk Castle Estate		■		
Sensitivity: High The LCA is a mixture of pastoral agriculture, plantation woodland and historic parkland. The east-facing landform focuses views outwards over Chirk and including the Kronospan Facility, which is an established if discordant presence. Susceptibility to change is medium to high, with the predominantly traditional built environment, strong linkages with the land to the east, and the simple consistent landscape pattern the most susceptible components of character. The value of the landscape is high. The LCA is located within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB and also lies within a local landscape designation. As such, the value of the landscape itself is clearly recognised. Additionally, wider value is represented by the presence of Chirk Castle (and estate) both as a designated heritage asset and as an important visitor destination, and by the presence of the Offa's Dyke Path, a nationally imported promoted walking route. Overall, sensitivity is high.					
Size/ Scale of Effect: • The Proposed Development would be a limited addition to the existing larger assemblage of industrial structures/ buildings at the Kronospan Facility;		Geographical Extent: • More exposed parts of the LCA, including the northern and eastern edges of the Chirk Castle estate and the hillsides west of the Chirk Marina.			

• The Proposed Development would be visible from more exposed locations within the LCA, but would always be seen in the context of the existing Kronospan Facility, which already exerts a localised influence upon the context of such views; • The visible extent of the Kronospan Facility would be increased northwards, but the new features would be far less prominent than the existing industrial structures; • The existing influence of built development at Chirk (including the Kronospan Facility) upon the visual context of the LCA would undergo a limited and incremental increase; • Woodland recently planted by the Applicant would reduce visibility as vegetation establishes (and this is already beginning to occur from some locations); • Further new planting associated with other recent Kronospan development proposals, and with the Proposed Development would provide further screening; • This planting accords with published guidelines for the LCA. • The underlying characteristics of the LCA would not change.	
Duration: • Long-term	Reversibility: • Irreversible (permanent development)
Magnitude: Small The Proposed Development would be introduced to the north of the existing Kronospan Facility, increasing the visible extent of this northwards. The new features would all be relatively small in height and scale, and would be far less prominent than the existing tall industrial structures. As such there would be a limited and incremental increase in the visual context of the LCA, due to the localised change in the assemblage of features present in outward views. Woodland recently planted by the Applicant as part of the Kronospan Landscape Strategy would reduce visibility towards the Site as vegetation establishes (and this can already be seen from some location especially during summer). Further new planting associated with other recent development proposals at Kronospan, along with the new planting proposed as part of the Proposed Development would provide further additional screening. All of this planting would accord with published management guidelines for the LCA. Whilst there would be some change in outward views from more exposed parts of the LCA, including the northern and eastern edges of the Chirk Castle estate and the hillsides west of the Chirk Marina, the majority of the LCA would be wholly unaffected. The underlying landscape characteristics of the LCA would remain as at baseline	
Significant Effect: No A minor level of effect would occur. The character of LCA5a is already influenced by the presence of the Kronospan Facility within outward views to the east. The introduction of the Proposed Development would give rise to only very limited and incremental further change to the visual context of the LCA. Proposed new tree and woodland planting would complement other similar landscape treatments proposed or implemented by the Applicant and this would accord with stated management guidelines for the LCA. The underlying characteristics of the landscape would not change appreciably from baseline. Effects would not be significant.	
Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial: The effects of the Proposed Development would be adverse.	

LCA7a: Chirk Summary Description (see Appendix 5.4 for further detail) - Industrial structures within a wider rural setting visually dominating much of the area and beyond - Canal (a major tourist attraction), road and rail corridors pass through the area - Chirk is within a shallow valley with open views to hills - Contains nationally important viaduct and aqueduct historical landscape features - Village lies between the historic estates of Chirk Castle and Brynkinallt					
Susceptibility to Change: Medium		Lower	↔	Higher	Value: High
Scale	Generally a small-medium scale landscape, but with the Kronospan site notably out of scale with other features present. Views are typically short-range due to enclosure by buildings and vegetation.		■		- AONB overlaps the western boundary of the LCA; - Local landscape designation (SLA) extends over the Site, and the area west of the canal; - World Heritage Site (canal); - Canal has recreational function (including marina and towpath); - Heritage assets within Chirk (listed buildings and Conservation Area); - Chirk is an established settlement with village centre and residential areas.
Pattern/ Complexity	A varied pattern of small scale residential and commercial buildings, enclosed agricultural fields, transport corridors and large scale industry. As such, the landscape is not consistent and has both organic and geometric influences.	■			
Development/ Human Influence	Typically small-scale buildings, both traditional and contemporary, but with the Kronospan Site a very prominent large-scale industrial facility, including tall/ bulky structures		■		
Connections with adjacent areas	Visual relationship with the hillsides to the west (LCA 5a). The canal provides a functional relationship with the landscapes to the north and south (along the canal corridor). Very obvious transition into the valleys of the Ceiriog (to the south) and the Dee (to the north). The A5 corridor marks a clear boundary to the east.			■	
Visual Interruption	Views are frequently interrupted by buildings (within the village) and by vegetation elsewhere. Nevertheless there are localised spots of longer range visibility, with the Kronospan site typically clearly visible.	■			
Sensitivity: Medium to High The LCA contains a relatively diverse mix of features, of which the Kronospan site is prominent by virtue of its large size/ scale. Susceptibility to change is medium, with the linkages with the adjacent land to the west the most susceptible component of character. Value is high. The LCA lies partially within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB and also lies within a local landscape designation, thereby recognising the inherent value of the landscape. The presence of the World Heritage Site adds further value, both as a recognised heritage asset that is an important landscape feature in its own right, and also as an important tourist/ recreational resource. Chirk itself provides the setting for the lives of its residents and has clear value in that regard. Overall, sensitivity is medium to high					
Size/ Scale of Effect: The Proposed Development would be introduced into this LCA and would result in direct physical change from the presence of new structures and hard surfaces, and from proposed landscaping;		Geographical Extent: Concentrated in the Site and its immediate vicinity, including along the B5070 corridor north of Chirk with localised change on the ridge east of Chirk and the area west of Chirk Marina			

• The footprint of built development would be extended northwards from the existing Kronospan Facility; • New buildings, other structures and storage piles would be concentrated at the southern edge of the Site, closer to existing development; • Loss of existing woodland in the north-eastern part of the Site and localised tree loss elsewhere; • The proposed new features would be less prominent than the far larger existing industrial structures; • A localised sense of urbanisation at the northern edge of Chirk, which would be limited in extent and intensity by a combination of landform and existing and proposed vegetation cover; • Woodland recently planted by the Applicant would reduce visibility as vegetation establishes (and this is already beginning to occur from some locations such as along the Canal corridor); • Further new planting associated with other recent Kronospan development proposals, and with the Proposed Development would provide further screening; • There would be a net gain in tree cover as a result of the proposed new planting; • This planting accords with published guidelines for the LCA; • In the medium and longer term, planting would enclose the majority of the developed Site, and the proposed earth bund would provide enclosure along the eastern perimeter	
Duration: • Long-term	Reversibility: • Irreversible (permanent development)
Magnitude: Medium The Proposed Development would be introduced into this LCA and would result in direct physical change from the presence of new structures and hard surfaces, and from proposed landscaping. The footprint of built development would be extended northwards from the existing Kronospan Facility. New buildings, other structures and storage piles would be concentrated at the southern edge of the Site, closer to existing development. There would be loss of existing woodland in the north-eastern part of the Site and localised tree loss elsewhere. The proposed new features would be less prominent than the far larger existing industrial structures. Their presence would result in a localised sense of urbanisation at the northern edge of Chirk, which would be limited in extent and intensity by a combination of landform and existing and proposed vegetation cover. This change would be concentrated in the Site and its immediate vicinity, including along the B5070 corridor north of Chirk. Less marked and localised change would also be experienced from the ridge east of Chirk and from the area west of Chirk Marina. Woodland recently planted by the Applicant (as part of the Kronospan Landscape Strategy) would reduce visibility as vegetation establishes (and this is already beginning to occur from some locations such as along the Canal corridor). Further new planting associated with other recent Kronospan development proposals, and with the Proposed Development would provide further screening. There would be a net gain in tree cover as a result of the proposed new planting. This planting accords with published guidelines for the LCA. In the medium and longer term, planting would enclose the majority of the developed Site, and the proposed earth bund would provide enclosure along the eastern perimeter.	
Significant Effect: No A moderate level of effect would occur. The character of LCA7a is already influenced by the presence of urban development at Chirk, including large scale industry at the Kronospan Facility. The Proposed Development would comprise a limited urban extension at the northern edge of town, the influence of which would be limited by the underlying landform of the Site, by existing vegetation cover (notably along the Canal corridor), and by proposed new planting. Proposed new tree and woodland planting would complement other similar landscape treatments proposed or implemented by the Applicant and this would accord with stated management guidelines for the LCA. Change in character would be localised and the majority of the LCA would be unaffected. Effects would not be significant.	

Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:

The effects of the Proposed Development would be adverse