

A wide-angle photograph of a green field with a dirt path leading towards a row of houses under a clear blue sky. The field is in the foreground, with a dirt path curving through it. In the background, there is a row of houses, some with red brick and some with white walls. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

[Visual Appraisal]

March 2023

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham: Introduction

This landscape appraisal has been produced in respect of the proposed development located at the land at Berse Road, Wrexham.

The document consists of the following parts;

- Part 01 : Site Context
- Part 02: Viewpoint Photographs and Conclusion

The site lies approximately 600m to the west of Wrexham and lies to the south of New Broughton. Vehicular access into the site is available from Berse Road while pedestrian access is available from both Berse Road and Strytybydden. The site does not lie within any designation, however key designations located within the study area include listed buildings, scheduled monuments, ancient woodland and a SSSI.

The site is located to the south of New Broughton and lies between Strytybydden and Berse Road, surrounded by residential development to the north and eastern boundaries and agricultural fields to the south and west. The site is not visible from any locations outside of the local viewpoints within 500m of the site, which will be afforded filtered views to the site. Beyond 500m, the site is largely screened by layers of vegetation to field boundaries throughout the study area and will therefore not be visible. This is explored further in Part 03 of this report.

The proposed development includes the construction of 42no. two storey residential buildings, with associated access roads, parking and pumping station. Also proposed to the southern and western perimeter of the site is new parkland/ public open space with an informal walking route through it, joining the existing public footpath. Materials, size and scale of buildings will be sympathetic to the local vernacular.

The site is also listed as a proposed housing allocation in the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan (Site reference 11 for 25no. dwellings) and its change in landscape and visual characteristics has been accepted in principle by the council.

This document provides detail on the points raised above, demonstrating the landscape context in which the site sits and assessing the potential impact of views from the identified viewpoints. The appraisal method is outlined in Appendix A of this report. The assessment ends with an overall conclusion that summarises the degree of landscape and visual impact of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape character.

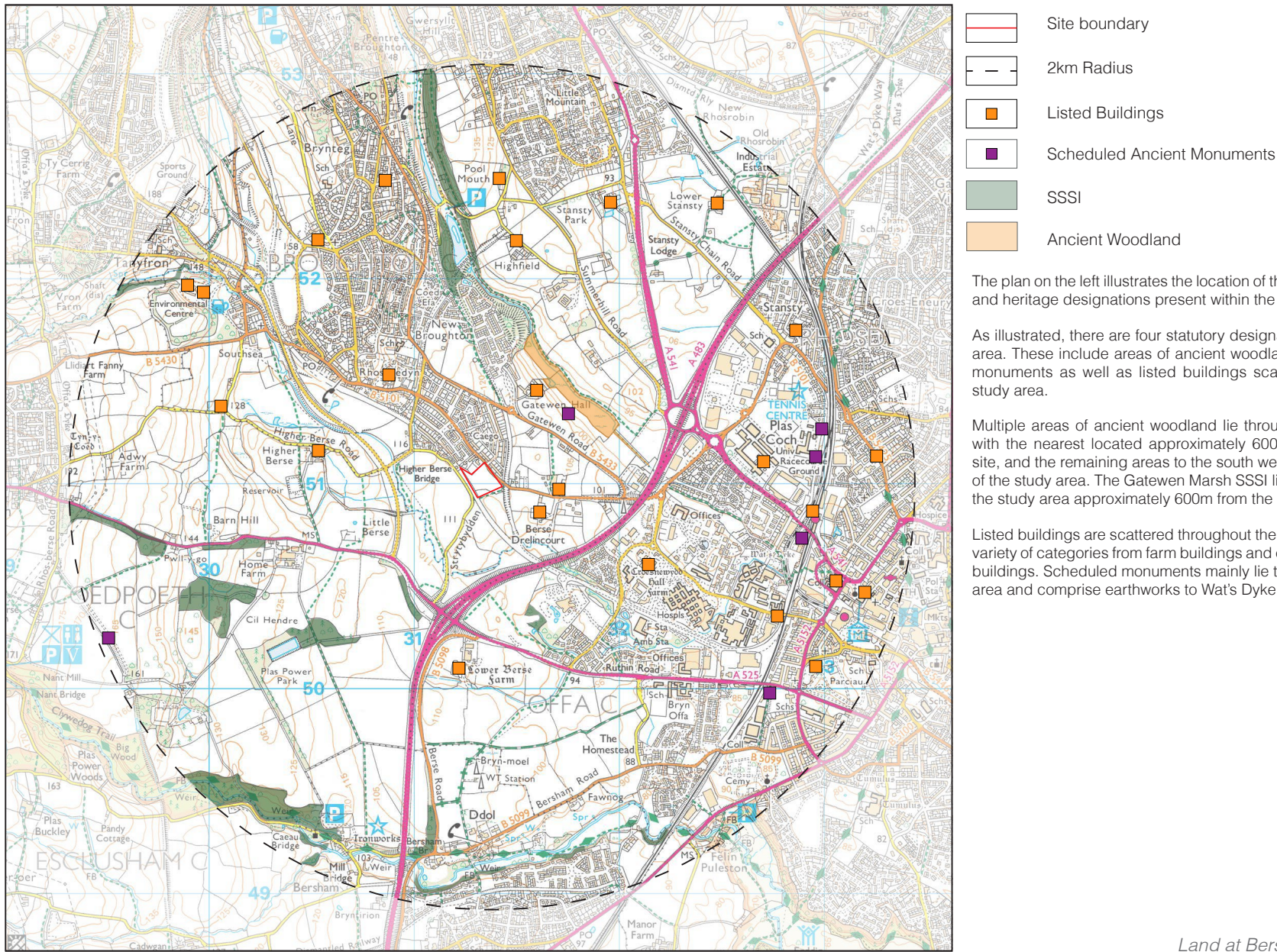




Part 01 Site Context

The following chapter sets out an analysis of the surrounding landscape to determine the character and setting of the development site. The analysis involves detailed mapping of local landscape designations, character areas, access routes and visual receptors.

Figure 01: Designations



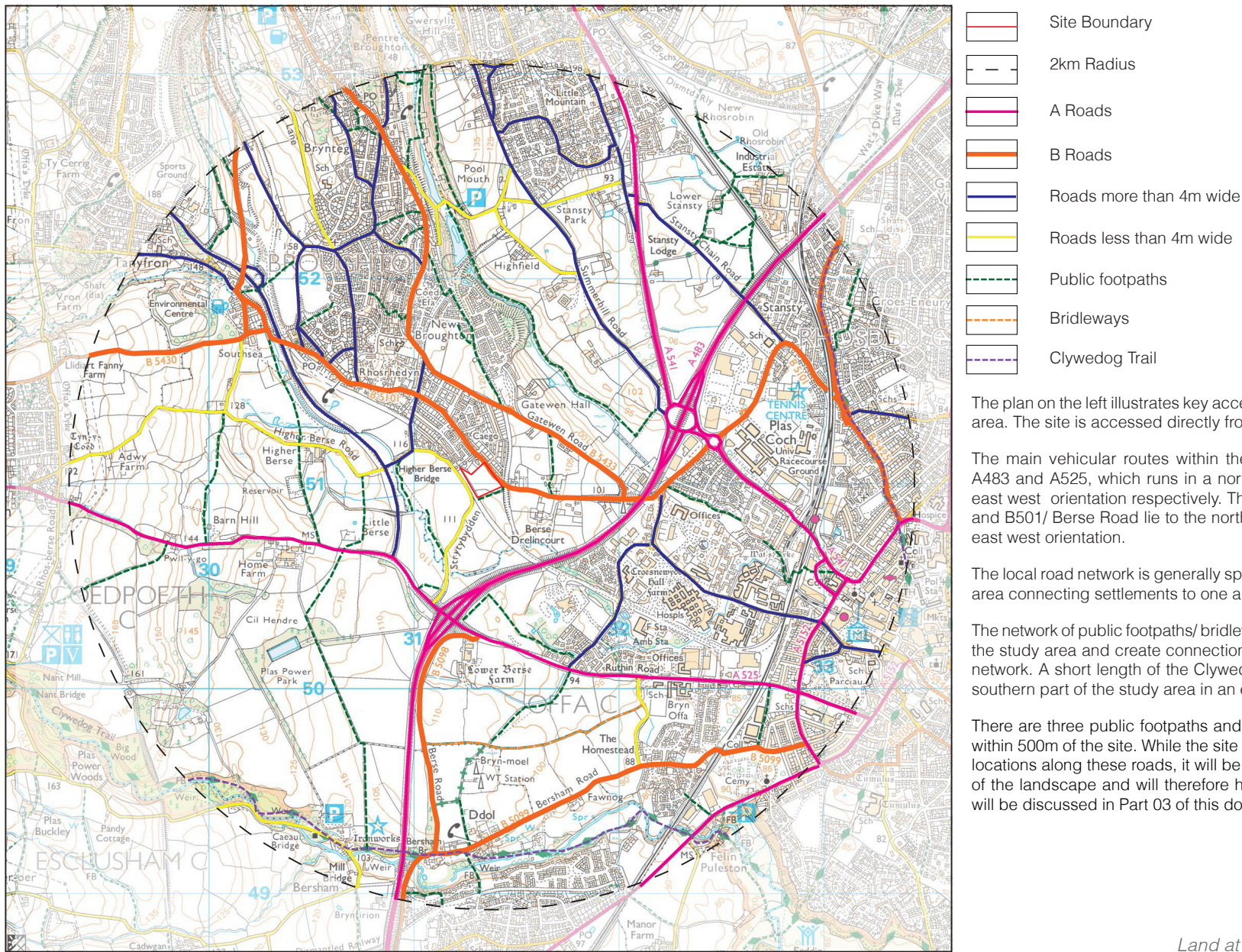
The plan on the left illustrates the location of the statutory landscape and heritage designations present within the study area.

As illustrated, there are four statutory designations within the study area. These include areas of ancient woodland, SSSIs, scheduled monuments as well as listed buildings scattered throughout the study area.

Multiple areas of ancient woodland lie throughout the study area, with the nearest located approximately 600m to the south of the site, and the remaining areas to the south west and northern edges of the study area. The Gatewen Marsh SSSI lies to the north west of the study area approximately 600m from the site.

Listed buildings are scattered throughout the study and consist of a variety of categories from farm buildings and churches to residential buildings. Scheduled monuments mainly lie to the east of the study area and comprise earthworks to Wat's Dyke at Crispin Lane.

Figure 02: Access



The plan on the left illustrates key access routes within the study area. The site is accessed directly from Berse Road.

The main vehicular routes within the study area include the A483 and A525, which runs in a north east to south east and east west orientation respectively. The B5433/ Wrexham Road and B501/ Berse Road lie to the north of the site and run in an east west orientation.

The local road network is generally spread throughout the study area connecting settlements to one another.

The network of public footpaths/bridleways is spread throughout the study area and create connections between the local road network. A short length of the Clywedog Trail runs through the southern part of the study area in an east west orientation.

There are three public footpaths and some local roads that lie within 500m of the site. While the site may be visible from some locations along these roads, it will be seen in the wider context of the landscape and will therefore have limited impacts. This will be discussed in Part 03 of this document.

Figure 03: Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Locations

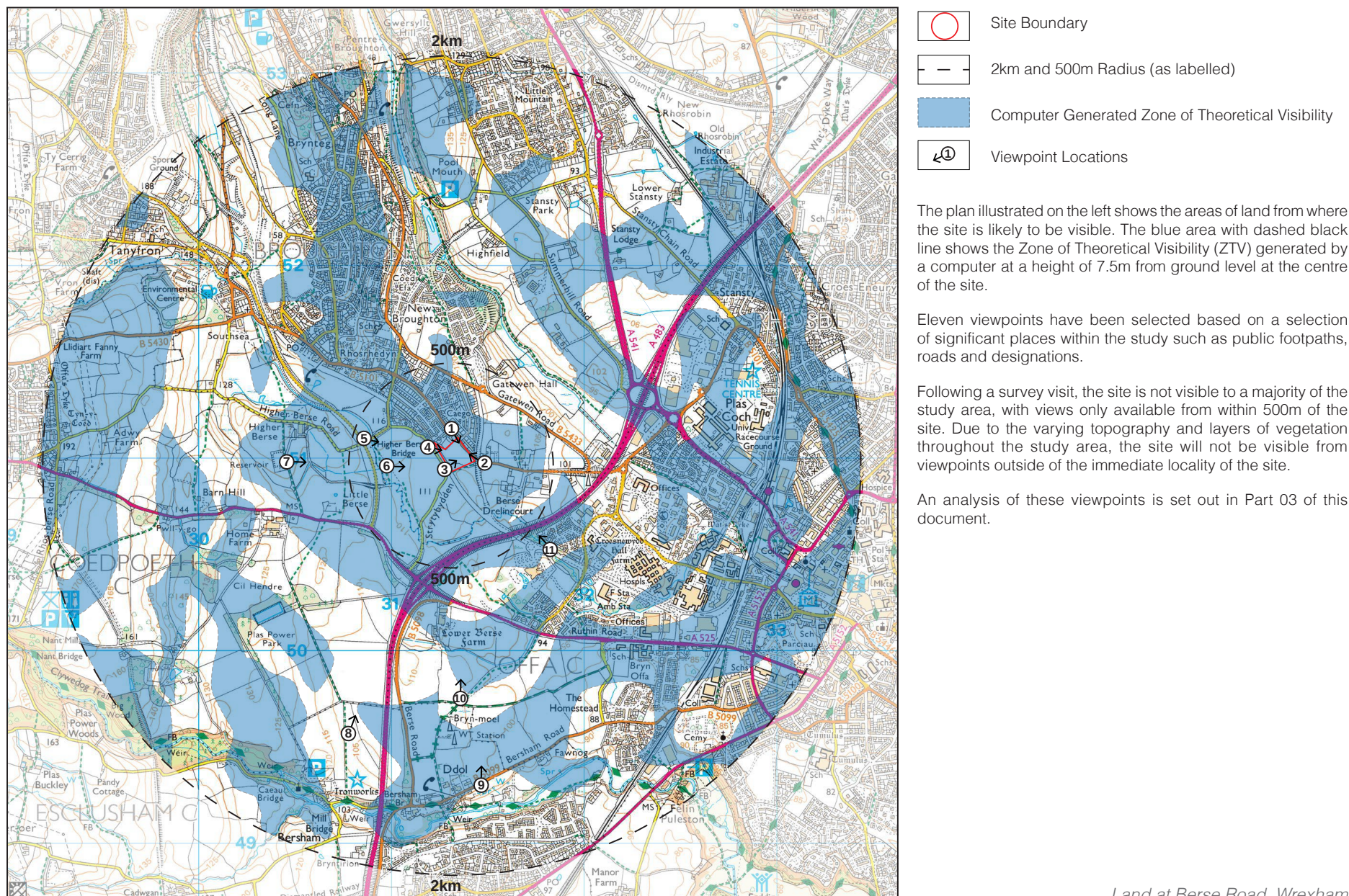
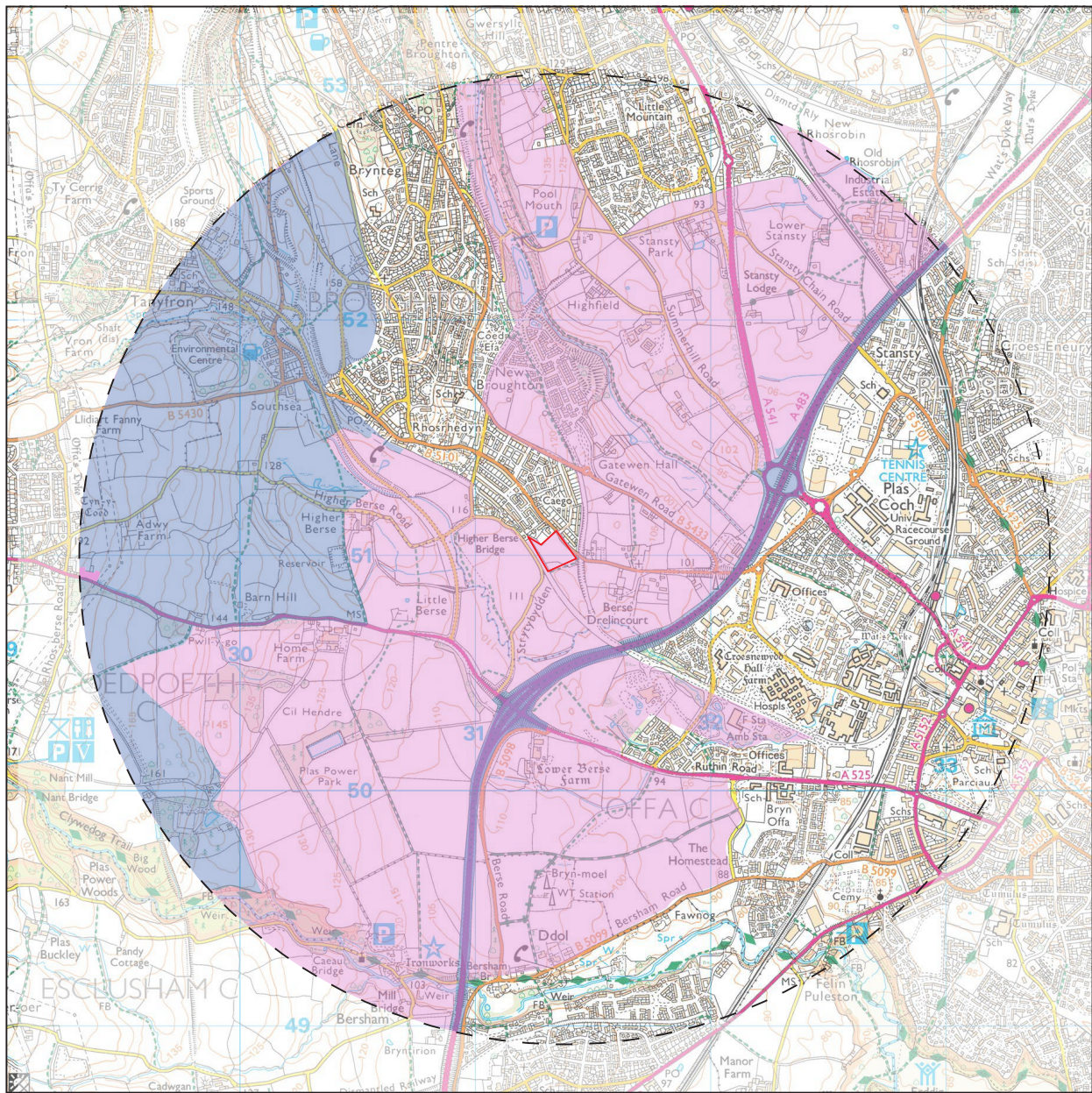


Figure 04: Local Character Areas



-  Site Boundary
-  2km Radius
-  A483 Mold Road Corridor
-  West Wrexham Lower Slopes

The plan on the left illustrates the location of the landscape character areas within the study area, as specified by Natural Resources Wales LANDMAP.

The entire study area sits within the Deeside and Wrexham National Character Area (13). Key characteristics include:

- "A single large river, the Dee, traverses the area. The Dee opens out into a broad estuary with tidal sand and mud flats. A number of minor rivers dissect the landscape, for example, the Alyn and Eitha, and associated streams.
- A broad flat flood plain adjacent to the Dee Estuary – with wide open views to Wirral.
- Narrow, incised, wooded tributary valleys – many running down from the west.
- Mixed pasture and some arable - and farm woodland cover.
- Archaeology - variety of historic sites indicate the former strategic importance of the coastal route and the turbulent history of the Marchlands, including Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke. Late Medieval parklands and ecclesiastical / funerary sites.
- Urban settlements - a strongly settled character is apparent in the central and southern parts of the area, with the relatively large, almost linked settlements of Holywell-Connah's Quay-Mold-Wrexham-Ruabon.
- An industrial character - evident in the line of coalesced settlements at Connah's Quay and Holywell, associated both with the Chester to Holyhead railway line, mining and large scale power generation and industrial plants. Include landmark scale structures such as Broughton aircraft factory, Shotton Steel works and Connah's Quay power station. Industry tends to dwarf historic settlement and features e.g. Flint and it's castle."

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Landscape Character Areas: Descriptions

The following landscape character area descriptions should be read in conjunction with Figure 04 on the previous page.

A483 Mold Road Corridor

"The area comprises the hinterland low lying land around Wrexham town and its outlying urban villages, generally rural in nature but often with significant noise from A483, adjacent roads and the railway. the area is generally low lying open farmland with a large open field pattern with well defined hedgerow boundaries. The original rural character has been significantly weakened by urban influences with some pockets of interest. Area is classified as rolling lowland farmland but heavily influenced by the A483, Mold Road. Other roads and rail corridors subdivide the wider area, with pylons, views of housing & industry, mining & quarrying a frequent occurrence. Although relatively fragmented by development the area has not suffered as much visual degradation as the adjacent aspect area, the area is vulnerable to further fragmentation of the remaining rural areas by development and suburbanisation."

Overall evaluation: Moderate.

West Wrexham Lower Slopes

"This aspect comprises a fragmented area between settlements where there have been many changes to the landscape. Lying on the lower slopes of Ruabon mountain and sloping broadly in a west to east direction the general landform is undulating predominantly open pasture land but also includes a wider range of mixed landuse including the core area of Plas Power estate (sharply defined by boundary stone walls), Plas Power tip near Southsea, parts of Offa's Dyke and the River Gwenfro valley. Generally the area has a similar character to the adjacent lowland to the east but is clearly physically part of the lower slopes of Ruabon Mountain. Generally the area has been fragmented by settlement and built elements such as pylons and roads but in wider areas has a well defined field system - medium to large scale fields bounded by sparsely vegetated hedgerows with over mature hedgerow trees. Cefn sandstone and red brick are traditional materials with modern materials also commonly found."

Overall evaluation: Low.

In summary, the A483 Mold Road Corridor character area within which the site lies, highlights the landscape character as one with a varied topography, and multiple urban influences in the form of the A483, electricity pylons, rail corridors, industrial and mining occurrences. The proposed development will not impact the wider character areas mainly because it will be seen in the context of New Broughton and will not be perceived from outside of a 500m radius. The design of the development will be sympathetic to the local vernacula and the landscape will reflect and enhance the local character of the site.

A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground. In the middle ground, there are several large, bare trees with intricate branch structures. Behind the trees, a line of smaller trees and a distant town or city are visible on a hillside. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds. The overall tone is calm and somewhat somber due to the lack of leaves on the trees.

Part 02 Viewpoint Photographs

This chapter provides an analysis of the selected representative viewpoints within a 2km radius of the site. The overall visual impact on each viewpoint will be identified following an assessment of the wider context of the view and its susceptibility to change, combined with the receptor sensitivity as identified on figure 03.

Viewpoint 01: View from B5101/ Berse Road, looking South

Approximate extent of site



Viewpoint 01 is taken from B5101/ Berse Road approximately 25m to the north of the site. It is representative of people travelling along the road in a north south orientation along Berse Road.

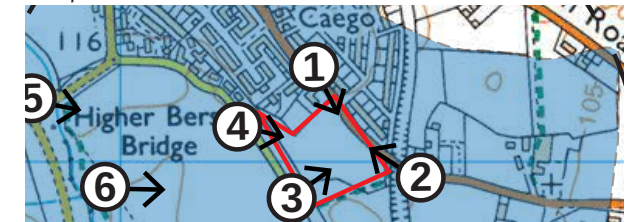
The view is comprised of a neighbouring property and boundary fencing to the north of the site. The site itself lies to the middleground with a mature hedgerow and trees along the disused railway in the background. Detracting elements in the view include telephone poles.

Given the proximity of the viewpoint to the site, the proposed development will be visible from this location which will have an impact on the landscape character of the existing fields. The impact will however, be reduced through a number of measures which includes the following:

- The proposed landscape design which will include extensive native hedge and tree planting, a new high quality area of public open space to the west and south, and an upgrade to the public footpath through the site.
- The proposed buildings which have been designed to reflect the surrounding vernacular.
- The site frontage along Berse Road will be bound by metal railings with native hedgerow planted along side an avenue of trees.
- The site is only visible for a length of approximately 170m of Berse Road, after which it becomes screened by the existing residential properties.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 01: Major.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 01
Lens Focal Length : 16mm
Direction : South

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Viewpoint 02: View from B5101/ Berse Road, looking West

Approximate extent of site



Viewpoint 02 is taken from B5101/ Berse Road approximately 50m to the east of the site. It is representative of people travelling along the road in a north south direction.

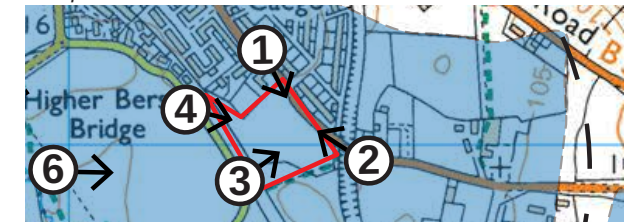
The view shows the bridge over the disused rail to the foreground with the site and residential buildings to the south of New Broughton to the middleground. Detracting elements include telephone poles which run along Berse Road.

The proposed development will be visible from this viewpoint mainly due to its close proximity but also because of its higher elevation. While the proposals will be visible, only a small number of the new buildings, located to the east of the site, will be visible while the remainder will be screened by the bridge and adjacent tree planting.

Similar to viewpoint 01, the character of the view will be impacted, however impacts will be reduced through design measures. These measures will include the eastern boundary of the site along Berse Road, being bound by a combination of metal railings and native hedgerows with an avenue of trees. The public footpath, which follows the southern boundary and adjoins Berse Road, will also be upgraded with new surfacing and a choice of routes through the public open spaces. Proposed buildings that will be visible to the east of the site, will be of high quality, reflecting local vernacular and will be viewed in the wider urban context of New Broughton, which forms a large part of the background.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 02: Major.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 02
Lens Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : West

Viewpoint 03: View from Public Footpath, looking East

Approximate extent of site



Viewpoint 03 is taken from the western entrance of the public footpath to the south of the site. It is representative of walkers using the footpath travelling in an east west orientation.

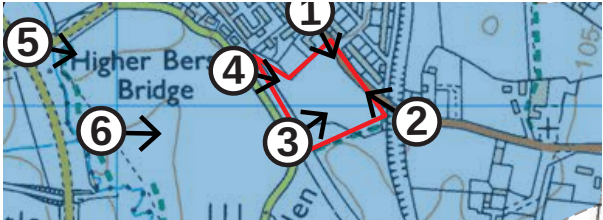
The view shows the site in its entirety to the foreground and middleground, with the southern urban extent of New Broughton visible in the background.

The proposed development will be visible from this viewpoint due to its close proximity to the site. While the proposed development will be visible, it will be seen in the wider urban context of New Broughton which is visible to the background.

Similar to viewpoints 01 and 02 there will be an impact on the existing character of the area. However this impact will be reduced by the landscape strategy which proposes a new area of high quality public open space to the foreground of this view. The public footpath will also be upgraded with new surfacing and an option of routes through the public open space/ site. The public open space will feature a woodland character, similar to adjacent fields, with groups of native trees that will help to screen the proposed development from the west over time.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 03: Major.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 03
Lens Focal Length : 16mm
Direction : East

Viewpoint 04: View from Strytybydden, looking South East

Approximate extent of site



Viewpoint Number : 04
Lens Focal Length : 16mm
Direction : South East

Viewpoint 04 is taken from Strytybydden approximately 35m to the north west of the site. it is representative of travellers using the route in a north south orientation.

The view comprises a small section of agricultural land to the foreground bounded by post and wire fencing. The site lies in the middleground with residential properties to the south of New Broughton and vegetation along the disused railway.

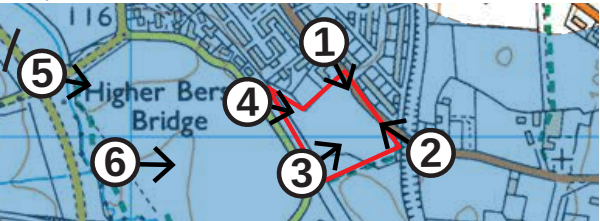
The proposed development will be visible from this viewpoint mainly due to the close proximity to the site as well as the lack of any screening.

Again similar to viewpoint 03, there will be an impact on the landscape character of the site. These impacts will be reduced through a number of design measures, which includes the proposal of a high quality public open space to the western boundary of the site. This area will have a woodland character that will mature and screen the proposed development overtime and also improve the biodiversity value of the site through the provision of new habitat areas.

While the proposed development will be visible, it will be seen in the wider context of the urban settlement to the south of New Broughton and will reduce the impact on the character of the view.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 04: Major.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint 05: View from Bersham Road, looking South East

Approximate extent of site



Viewpoint Number : 05
Lens Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : South East

Viewpoint 05 is taken from Bersham Road approximately 400m to the west of the site. It is representative of travellers using the road in an east west orientation.

The view is comprised of mainly field boundary vegetation and gated entrance to the south of Bersham Road. The middleground and background are visible through the field entrance and comprise grassland, the site and residential buildings.

The site will be visible from this viewpoint mainly due to the lack of screening but also because of its close proximity to the site. However, views are only afforded from this single location where the field entrance is, and will not be visible from anywhere else along this road.

The proposed development will have an impact on the view, which will be reduced through the introduction of the new area of public open space along the western and southern boundary. This area of public open space will have a woodland character which overtime will mature and provide screening of the site from this viewpoint.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 05: Moderate.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint 06: View from Public Footpath, looking East

Approximate extent of site



Viewpoint 06 is taken from a public footpath approximately 350m west of the site. It is representative of walkers using the footpath in a north south orientation.

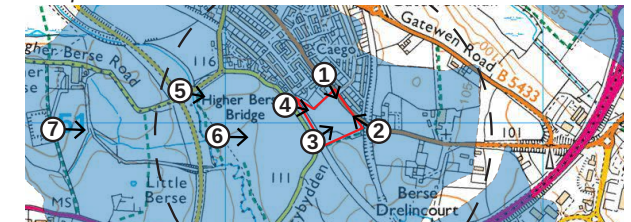
The view comprises grassland to the foreground and middleground with residential buildings to the south of New Broughton and mature trees/ vegetation in the background.

The proposed development will be visible from this viewpoint mainly due to its close proximity to the site as well as the lack of screening between both points. While the proposed development will have an impact on the character of the view, the impact will be reduced mainly through the proposed area of public open space, located to the west and south of the site.

This will improve screening of the development overtime, from the west whilst also improving the biodiversity value of the site through the introduction of new habitat areas further reducing the impact of the proposed development on the character of the view.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 06: Moderate.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 06
Lens Focal Length : 16mm
Direction : East

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Viewpoint 07: View from Public Footpath, looking East

Approximate extent of site



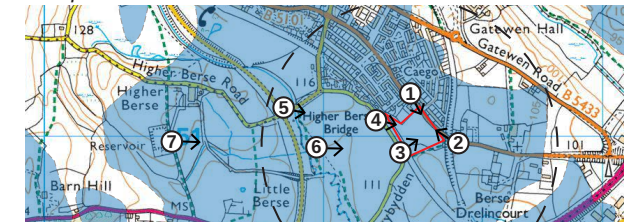
Viewpoint 07 is taken from a public footpath approximately 800m to the west of the site. It is representative of travellers using the path in a north south orientation.

The view comprises fields bounded by post and wire fencing and short lengths of woodland with agricultural equipment in the foreground and middleground. Residential buildings to the south of New Broughton are also visible to the background of the view. Detracting elements include agricultural buildings and equipment within fields.

The proposed development will not be visible from this footpath due to layers of intervening boundary vegetation that create screening between the site and the viewpoint.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 07: Negligible.

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 07
Lens Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : East

Viewpoint 08: View from Public Footpath, looking North

Approximate extent of site



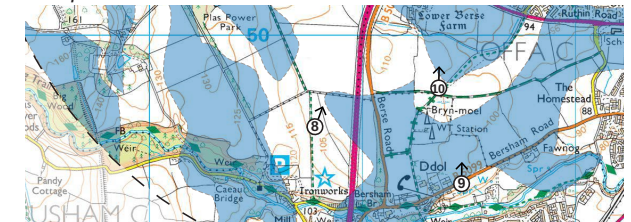
Viewpoint 08 is taken from a public footpath approximately 1.6km to the south of the site. It is representative of travellers using the path in a north south orientation.

The view comprises large open fields bounded by hedgerow and trees, followed by layers of mature trees. Detracting elements include signage from the A483 that are visible above trees.

Due to the distance and layers of intervening vegetation between the site and viewpoint, the proposed development will not be visible.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 08: Negligible

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 08
Lens Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : North

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Viewpoint 09: View from B5099/ Bersham Road, looking North

Approximate extent of site



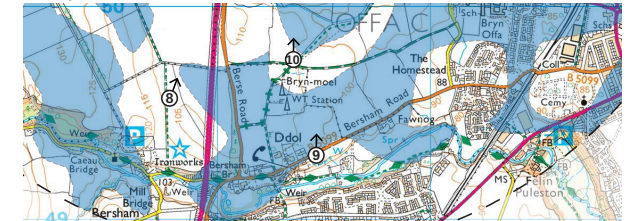
Viewpoint 09 is taken from B5099/ Bersham Road approximately 1.6km to the south of the site. It is representative of travellers using the road in a east west orientation.

The view comprises Bersham Road and adjacent field boundary hedgerow to the foreground. A property along Bersham Road is also visible along with a neighbouring field to the middleground. The background includes layers field boundary hedgerow and tree planting that restrict views northward. Detracting elements include telephone poles and tall metal masts.

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint mainly due to the layers of vegetation that screen the site entirely and a difference in elevation.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 09: Negligible

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 09
Lens Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : North

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Viewpoint 10: View from Public Footpath, looking north

Approximate extent of site



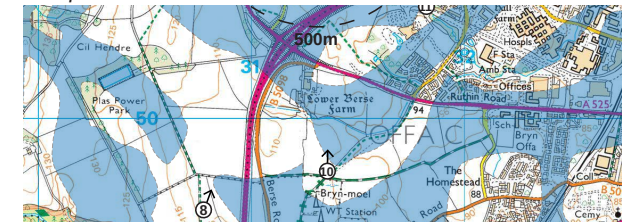
Viewpoint 08 is taken from a public footpath approximately 1.2km to the south of the site. It is representative of travellers using the public footpath in a north south orientation.

The view comprises an arable field to the foreground and middleground which is bound by hedgerow. the background consists of layers of field boundary hedgerows and trees which stretch along much of the horizon of the view. Detracting elements include telephone poles and vehicles from the A483 and A525 which can be experienced from this footpath.

The site and proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint due to the layers of vegetation along field boundaries as well as on both sides of the A525 and A483 which screen the site entirely.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 10: Negligible

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 10
Lens Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : North

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Viewpoint 11: View from Western Gateway, looking North West

Approximate extent of site



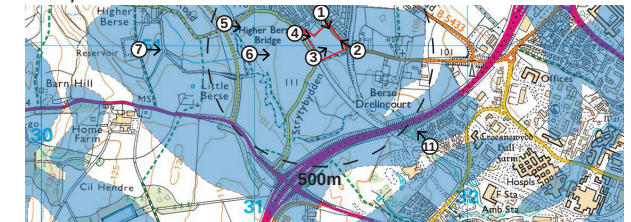
Viewpoint 11 is taken from Western Gateway approximately 650m to the south east of the site. It is representative of travellers using the road in a east west orientation.

The view comprises Western Gate, roundabout and adjacent fields to the foreground and middleground. The background comprises layers of field and highway boundary vegetation as well as a bridge to the A483. Detracting elements include lamposts and traffic from the busy A483 which can be experience from this viewpoint.

The proposed development will not be visible from this viewpoint mainly due to the layers of mature vegetation along both sides of the A483 which completely screens any visibility to the north west.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 08: Negligible

Viewpoint Location:



Viewpoint Number : 11
Lens Focal Length : 16mm
Direction : North West

Land at Berse Road, Wrexham

Conclusion:

This report has assessed the potential impact of the proposed residential development at the land at Berse Road and assessed the potential impact of the proposed changes on the wider landscape. The report has identified the footpath network, designations and listed buildings that lie within 2km of the site so that an accurate and representative assessment can be made for this planning application submission.

The landscape character surrounding the site comprises a varying topography with a semi-regular mosaic pattern of fields bounded by hedgerows and trees. Multiple urban influences exist in the form of the A483, electricity pylons, rail corridors, industrial and mining occurrences. Detracting elements include telephone poles, electricity pylons and the busy A Roads which can be experienced from the site.

As previously mentioned, the site is also listed as a proposed housing allocation in the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan for 25no. dwellings and while the new development proposes 47no. dwellings, the impact of 47no. dwellings in comparison to 25no. dwellings will not be materially greater .

It is acknowledged that the change to a residential land use will have an impact on the character of the existing landscape. As set out in this report, viewpoints 01-04 will have a major impact on viewpoints and a moderate impact on viewpoints 05 and 06. As demonstrated in the viewpoint assessment, views are only available from locations within 500m of the site, with no views afforded beyond 500m. Viewpoint 01 to 04 are within close proximity to the site and the proposed development will be visible but they will be seen in the wider context that includes the urban settlement of New Broughton. Viewpoints 05 and 06 will receive glimpsed views of the site but as with viewpoints 01 to 04, will be seen in the wider developed context. The remaining viewpoints will not be afforded views of the proposed development.

The conclusion of this assessment is that the proposed development will have an impact on the wider landscape character but only on a local level from within 500m of the site where it will be viewed in the wider context of New Broughton. Whilst the character of the site will be impacted, there are measures that will help to reduce and offset the impact. These measures include the proposed development having a high quality design and specification for both buildings and landscape, reflecting the local vernacular of buildings and landscape features such as woodlands and hedgerows. The new area of public open space along the west and southern boundary will also integrate the public footpath, providing upgraded routes through the site and additional screening which will assist in offsetting the impact on site character.

Appendix A: Visual Appraisal Methodology

Visual Receptor Sensitivity Appraisal:

Category	Visual Receptor Criteria
High: <i>Observers whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape and recognised views in particular.</i>	• Recognised / Important Viewpoints, including those identified within and protected by policy. These viewpoints may be tourist destinations and marked on maps. • Residential Properties • Users of Rights of Way, Recreational Trails or land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land and National Trust Land) whose interest is primarily focused on the landscape
Medium: <i>Views of the landscape are part of, but not the sole purpose of the receptors' activities.</i>	• Those playing or participating at outdoor sports or undertaking formal outdoor recreation. • Users of local roads where there are clear / open views across the landscape, low speeds and low levels of traffic.
Low: <i>Attention is focused upon the activity of the receptor and not upon the wider views.</i>	• Users of main roads travelling at speed, or local roads where the focus is upon the road ahead owing to traffic conditions and the context / composition of views. • Places of Work

Visual Magnitude Criteria:

Category	Scale of Effects
High	The proposed development will be clearly noticeable and the view would be fundamentally altered by its presence.
Medium	The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
Low	The proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
Negligible	Virtually imperceptible change to existing views and visual amenity.

The **magnitude of the change** to a view has been made by way of consideration of the following factors:

Size or scale; taking into account change with respect to loss or additions of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposals. In addition the degree of contrast or integration with any new features or changes in the landscape in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture are considered. Finally the nature of the view is considered e.g. full, partial or glimpsed;

Geographical extent will vary in relation to the main activity of the receptor; the **distance** of the viewpoint from the proposed development and the **extent of the area** over which the changes would be visible.

Appendix A: Visual Appraisal Methodology

Overall Visual Impact Appraisal:

An initial indication of impact significance (which can be either adverse or beneficial) was gained by combining sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix below. However, it should be noted that this provides an indication of the likely impact arising from the assessment of magnitude and sensitivity. Given that the criteria represent levels of a continuum or continuous gradation, professional judgement and awareness of the relative balance of importance between sensitivity and magnitude is also required.

A * is marked next to a significance rating in the assessment text where the outcome does not follow the significance rating determined by combining sensitivity and magnitude using the below matrix. The matrix is used as a guide, however, professional judgement is also required and in some scenarios this outcome will differ slightly to the matrix.

	MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT				
RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Slight
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Slight	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible