



PROPOSED CHIP PREPARATION BUILDING EXTENSION AND RAW MATERIAL STORAGE SILOS, KRONOSPAN, CHIRK

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

August 2022



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).
- 1.2 The LVIA follows best practice guidance set out in '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*' (3rd edition 2013, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), hereafter referred to as the GLVIA.
- 1.3 Landscape and visual effects are separate, although closely related and interlinked issues.
- 1.4 Landscape effects are caused by physical changes to the landscape, which may result in changes to the distinctive character of that landscape and how it is perceived.
- 1.5 Visual effects are changes to what can be seen by people as a result of what is proposed. A visual assessment assesses the change in visual amenity undergone by people (either individually or in groups) that would arise from any change in the nature of views experienced.
- 1.6 The LVIA aims to establish the following:
- A clear understanding of the Site and its context, in respect of the physical and perceived landscape and in respect of views and visual amenity;
 - An understanding of the Proposed Development in terms of how this would relate to the existing landscape and views;
 - An identification of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and upon views, throughout the life-cycle of the Proposed Development;
 - Potential for mitigation to reduce / eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or views arising as a result of the Proposed Development; and
 - A conclusion as to the residual likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.
- 1.7 The process follows a standard approach, namely:
- The establishment of the baseline conditions, against which the effects of the Proposed Development will be assessed;

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- The determination of the nature of the receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its sensitivity;
 - The prediction of the nature of the effect likely to occur, i.e. the magnitude of change; and
 - An assessment of whether a likely significant landscape and visual effect would be experienced by any receptor, by considering the predicted magnitude of change together with the sensitivity of the receptor, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures.
- 1.8 Further details regarding the specific methodologies of assessment and determination of significance are included in Appendix 1. The LVIA has been informed by both desk and field based studies.
- 1.9 It should be noted that the landscape (including the context in which views are experienced) is dynamic, i.e. it is affected by social, economic, technological and climatic changes, all of which can influence patterns of land use, land cover and land management. As such, the baseline context for the LVIA is not static.
- 1.10 A draft of the LVIA was included as part of the draft planning submission made to Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) in June 2022. Following comments received from the WCBC Conservation Officer, additional information has been included in the final LVIA, as follows:
- Figure 1 wholly revised to include a ZTV of existing tall structures at the Kronospan site, and a ZTV of the Proposed Development;
 - Amendments to Appendix 2 to include a methodology for ZTV production;
 - Inclusion of an additional Viewpoint from the entrance to Chirk Castle (Figure 2q);
 - Inclusion of summer photography from Viewpoints I, J and K (Figures 2i, 2k and 2k);
 - Amendments to Appendix 5 to include an assessment of effects from the Chirk Castle Entrance Viewpoint;
 - Amendments to the main LVIA text to reflect all the above changes.

Description of the Proposed Development

- 1.11 The Proposed Development is described in detail in the Planning Statement and illustrated on the accompanying Drawings.

1.12 The Proposed Development would be located within an area of existing hard standing and in summary would comprise:

- 2 no. new raw materials storage silos
 - o height of approximately 33.5m;
 - o appearance similar to the nearby existing silos (2 no. height approximately 32m, and 2 no. height approximately 25m);
- An extension to the existing chip preparation building:
 - o No change to the height of the building, which would remain at approximately 29m;
 - o An increase in the footprint of the building;
 - o 3 no. new silos, with a height of approximately 24m;
 - o The repositioning of 3 no. associated filter boxes, and the provision of 1 no. new filter box.

Legislative and Policy Context

1.13 Full details of the planning and policy background for the proposal, including an appraisal of effects on relevant landscape-related policies, as set out in the adopted Statutory Development Plan, are included in the Planning Statement. Key legislation and policy documents relevant to the LVIA are summarised below.

Statutory Landscape Designations

1.14 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located approximately 300m west of the wider Kronospan site at the closest point (and approximately 420m from the location of the Proposed Development). AONBs are a statutory designation, first designated under the auspices of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. The primary purpose of an AONB, as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, is to “*conserve and enhance the natural beauty*”.

European Landscape Convention

1.15 The UK Government is a signatory of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which became binding in March 2007. The Convention is aimed at the protection, management and planning of all landscapes and raising awareness of the value of a living landscape. It relates chiefly to public bodies and to the policies, plans and programmes produced by these.

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- 1.16 The LVIA is a development specific process which accords with Article 6C. The LVIA is informed by extant Landscape Character Assessment studies (described in Section 3 below), which more directly relate to the provisions of Article 6C.

Planning Policy

- 1.17 Full details of relevant planning policies are set out in the Planning Statement. Relevant documents include:
- *Planning Policy Wales*, edition 11 published in February 2021; and
 - *Wrexham Unitary Development Plan* (adopted by Wrexham County Borough Council 2005);
 - *Supplementary Planning Guidance Note: Clwydian and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (Adopted by Wrexham County Council 2018).

2 Methodology

Current Guidance

- 2.1 This LVIA has been based on the published best practice guidelines set out in the GLVIA, as stated in Section 1 above. The full methodology can be found in Appendix 1. The LVIA also has regard to *Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19* (Landscape Institute, 2019).

The Study Area

- 2.2 The study area for the LVIA has been determined based upon the assessor's prior knowledge of the Kronospan site and its surroundings, and previous experience of similar developments elsewhere. It is considered that, given the industrial context of the Site, there would be little scope for significant effects to extend over a wide area. To confirm this, the LVIA considers effects up to approximately 2km from the Proposed Development.

Significance of Effect

- 2.3 In the case of development (such as that proposed) that does not require Environmental Impact Assessment, there is no requirement to state whether an effect is significant or not. Nevertheless, it is considered of benefit to the decision-maker for such a statement to be made in the LVIA.
- 2.4 Not all landscape and visual effects arising as a result of a particular proposal will be significant. Furthermore, where likely significant environmental effects are predicted, this does not automatically mean that such effects are unacceptable. The acceptability of landscape and visual effects is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely environmental effects of any proposal are transparently assessed and described in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision-making process.
- 2.5 The judgement in relation to this LVIA is that a greater than 'moderate' level of effect is more likely to be significant. This is because such an effect would generally result from larger magnitudes of change on higher sensitivity receptors. This does not preclude a 'moderate' effect or lower being significant, or a greater than 'moderate' effect not being significant. The judgement made will depend on the specific circumstances being considered. Refer to Appendix 1 for further details.

Consultation

- 2.6 The LVIA has been scoped on the basis of previous engagement with Wrexham Borough Council and statutory consultees relating to previous development proposals at the Kronospan site. Part of this previous work included the identification of an agreed set of viewpoint locations, which provide a full and representative coverage of locations and receptor types within the Study Area.

Limitations

- 2.7 Viewpoint photography used in the LVIA was taken in January, March and July 2022 and reflects the vegetation cover present at that time of year. As such, the assessment of visual effects has been undertaken on a worst case basis that does not reflect the presence of deciduous foliage during the summer months.

3 Baseline

Data Collection

- 3.1 Baseline data for the LVIA has been gathered by both desk and field based surveys. These have included review of extant landscape character assessment studies (see below) and field visits to gain an understanding of the landscape and visual context of the Site.

Baseline Conditions

The Site and its Surroundings

- 3.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the existing Kronospan site, which covers an area of approximately 41.2 hectares at the western edge of Chirk.
- 3.3 The Proposed Development would be located towards the north-western boundary of the wider Kronospan site, within an area currently occupied by hardstanding. The existing chip preparation building and existing MDF silos are located immediately to the south. External storage areas are located to the north and east. A belt of planting to the west forms the boundary with the adjacent railway corridor.
- 3.4 The wider Kronospan site includes a number of large industrial process buildings (some with emissions stacks), storage areas for raw materials, warehouse buildings, offices and car parking. Some of the existing structures are large in scale and height. The tallest structures on site are the CHP emissions stack (70m), the WESP stack

(65.5m), the MDF cyclones (57m), and the dryer exhaust stack at the WESP Chip Dryer (50m). Emission plumes from these stacks are often clearly visible from the surrounding area.

- 3.5 Chirk is a small town located off the A5 and just north of the England-Wales border (within Wales). The residential areas of the town mostly lie east of the B5070, with the wider Kronospan site to the west of this road. On the western side of the B5070, to the south-east of the wider Kronospan site is an area of greenspace comprising a private sports club (immediately south of the Kronospan car park) and Chirk Recreation Ground. The larger structures within the wider Kronospan site are visible from the recreation ground, but the existing warehouse buildings are very well screened from view by intervening vegetation cover.
- 3.6 To the north the wider Kronospan site adjoins agricultural land. To the west, the wider Kronospan site is bordered by a railway line which is paralleled on its western side by the Llangollen Canal. Both the railway and canal run in a north-south orientation. To the south, the wider Kronospan site borders an area of public open space and other industrial uses. Chirk town centre lies south-east of the wider Kronospan site and includes various commercial and community buildings and areas of public open space.
- 3.7 The wider area around the wider Kronospan site is rural. The landform falls steeply, from the hills to the west towards the much lower-lying Shropshire Plain to the east. Local variations in topography are evident, with a marked rise to a ridge east of the town.
- 3.8 To the west of the wider Kronospan site the land rises towards the foothills of the Berwyn Range of mountains. The Llangollen Canal forms part of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (WHS). Beyond the canal, settlement is sparse and land cover comprises a mixture of pasture and small woodlands. Chirk Castle and its associated grounds (Grade 1 registered) are a notable feature within the landscape. Several public footpaths lead up to the castle. The Offa's Dyke Path National Trail runs in a broadly north-south direction further to the west, with views available east over the lower ground; the path does not always follow the line of Offa's Dyke (a historic boundary earthwork) in this area.
- 3.9 To the north, the land undulates before falling into the steep valley of the River Dee some 2.5km north of the wider Kronospan site. The canal (WHS) runs due north

before turning westwards along the southern lip of the valley. The northern side of the valley is urbanised, with a string of contiguous small villages at Cefn.

- 3.10 To the east, the undulating agricultural landscape extends for some 3km before falling sharply into the valley of the River Ceiriog. The A5 corridor runs north-south in what is almost a straight line along a ridge top approximately 1.5km east of the wider Kronospan site. The Brynkinallt estate (registered park and garden) is bisected by the road. The wholly separate Brynkinallt Park lies west of the road, at the eastern edge of Chirk, on reclaimed colliery land.
- 3.11 The steep sided valley of the River Ceiriog cuts through the surrounding hills 1.5km to the south of the wider Kronospan site. Parts of the valley slopes are well wooded. The Llangollen Canal crosses the valley via the Chirk Aqueduct, which forms part of the WHS. The Ceiriog Trail recreational route runs along the southern lip of the valley. Several small settlements lie to the south of the valley, such as Weston Rhyn and Bronygarth.

Landscape Designations

- 3.12 As stated in Section 1 above, the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB is located approximately 300m west of the wider Kronospan site at the closest point (refer to Figure 1 for location). The Chirk Castle estate is located within the AONB.
- 3.13 The special qualities of the AONB are set out in the *Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Management Plan 2014-2019* (undated) as follows:
- Tranquility;
 - Remoteness and Wildness, Space and Freedom;
 - Heather Moorland and Rolling ridges;
 - Broadleaved woodlands and veteran trees;
 - River Valleys and the River Dee;
 - Limestone grasslands, cliffs and screes;
 - Historic Settlement and Archaeology;
 - Industrial Features and the World Heritage Site;
 - Historic Defence Features;
 - Small historic features;
 - Traditional boundaries;
 - Iconic Visitor and Cultural Attractions;

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- The Offa's Dyke National Trail and Promoted Routes;
 - The Built Environment; and
 - People and Communities

3.14 The area west of the wider Kronospan site, beyond the railway, lies within the non-statutory local-level Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation. This designation is protected by a policy in the Unitary Development Plan and is underpinned by *Background Paper 7: Special Landscape Areas* (Wrexham Borough Council 2010), a document prepared to inform the production of the next iteration of local development plans.

3.15 UDP Policy EC5 states that [**emphasis** added]:

“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 from both nearby and distant viewpoints.”

3.16 The Proposed Development does not lie within the SLA.

Landscape Character Assessment and Related Studies

3.17 LANDMAP is the formally adopted methodology for landscape assessment in Wales and, as such, forms the baseline for this assessment. The *Wrexham LANDMAP Supplementary Planning Guidance* (adopted 2007) subdivides the Borough into a series of four broad landscape types and twenty-seven geographically distinct landscape character areas (LCA).

3.18 The Proposed Development would be located within the Rural/Urban Villages landscape type and within LCA 7a: Chirk. The land to the west of the Site (west of the canal) is located within the Uplands landscape type and within LCA 5a: Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte. Extracts from the SPG, detailing these LCAs, are included as Appendix 2. The influence and visual dominance of industrial structures upon LCA 7a is specifically noted in the SPG.

Future Landscape Change

- 3.19 The site of the Proposed Development would be located within the much larger Kronospan site. It seems reasonable to assume that, irrespective of the presence/absence of the Proposed Development, that there would be some degree of change within the wider Site as buildings are upgraded or replaced to accommodate new industrial processes, or are otherwise refurbished, and new items of plant are introduced to the Site, reflecting changes in technology or working practices.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 3.20 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping has been used to identify the extent of the visibility of the Proposed Development. The ZTVs reflect the theoretical visibility of existing tall structures at the wider Kronospan site, and the theoretical visibility of the proposed silos.
- 3.21 Three separate ZTVs have been produced, reflecting the following:
- theoretical visibility of selected existing tall structures, namely;
 - o CHP stack, at a height of 70m;
 - o WESP stack, at a height of 65.5m;
 - o MDF cyclones, at a height of 57m;
 - o WESP Chip Dryer exhaust stack, at a height of 50m.
 - theoretical visibility of the proposed new raw materials storage silos at a height of 33.5m.
- 3.22 The ZTVs were produced using a commercial 2m Photogrammetric Digital Surface Model (DSM) available from Bluesky International. This is derived from aerial photography and does take account of screening features. This gives a realistic picture of the visibility of the Proposed Development, but does treat vegetation as a solid feature, when in reality views can sometimes be available through leaves and branches especially in winter. The ZTVs are presented on Figure 1.
- 3.23 Appendix 2 provides details of the methodology followed in producing the ZTVs.

Viewpoints

- 3.24 As noted in Section 2 above, a series of viewpoints were identified and agreed with Wrexham County Council (and other consultees where necessary) or identified in the field as part of work related to the assessment of previous development proposals at the wider Kronospan site.
- 3.25 From three of these, there would be no views of the Proposed Development due to the presence of dense vegetation cover along the B5070 Holyhead Road and the presence of other existing buildings within the wide Kronospan site. As such, Viewpoints O, P and S have been scoped out of the LVIA.
- 3.26 From a further Viewpoint located along the towpath of the Llangollen canal, there would be no views of the Proposed Development due to vegetation cover along the canal corridor. Viewpoint T has also been scoped out of the LVIA.
- 3.27 Figures 2a-q include visualisations from each of the seventeen viewpoints included in the LVIA. Each Figure has been prepared in accordance with current best practice guidance¹, and a detailed methodology describing how they have been produced is included in Appendix 2. Baseline photography is provided from each Viewpoint and is annotated where deemed appropriate to highlight key features.
- 3.28 Photomontages illustrating how the Proposed Development would appear are also included on some of the Figures. Photomontages have been prepared from selected Viewpoints (Viewpoints C, E, I and M) where clearer views of the Proposed Development are anticipated.
- 3.29 Additionally, summer photography has been included from selected Viewpoints (Viewpoints I, J and K). This is to illustrate how seasonal change in vegetation affects views towards the Proposed Development from the Llangollen Canal corridor and from the edge of the Chirk Castle. For the avoidance of doubt, summer photomontages have not been produced. The summer photograph from Viewpoint K is from a slightly different location (approx. 30m further to the south) to the equivalent winter photograph, in order to avoid dense vegetation at the original winter location.

¹ Landscape Institute, 2019. *Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19*

3.30 The viewpoints included in the LVIA are set out in Table 1 below, and locations are illustrated on Figure 1.

Table 1: Viewpoints Included in the LVIA

Viewpoint	British National Grid Co-ordinates	Viewpoint Details
A: Chirk Recreation Ground	329040, 337815	<i>Representative</i> of views from public open space in Chirk village centre
B: Offa's Dyke Path near Fron Isaf	327302, 339844	<i>Representative</i> of views from the National Trail, north-west of the site
C: N edge of Chirk	328921, 339165	<i>Representative</i> of views available to residents and road users at the edge of the village
D: Chirk Castle Gates	328106, 337680	<i>Specific</i> view from the Castle gates
E: Green Lane	329696, 338817	<i>Illustrative</i> of the degree to which the Proposed Development would be screened by other features in views from elevated locations
F: B5070 north of Chirk	328869, 339668	<i>Representative</i> of the views available from the road leading into the village
G: Offa's Dyke Path west of Bronygarth	325714, 336544	<i>Representative</i> of views from the National Trail, south-west of the site
H: Chirk Castle	327158, 338969	<i>Specific</i> view from the garden terrace at the Castle
I: New Hall	327559, 338814	<i>Representative</i> of views from the adjacent road network and nearby property, and also from the entrance to Chirk Castle
J: Canal towpath near marina	328604, 339624	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users (including those at the marina)
K: Canal towpath north-west of site	328520, 338945	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users
L: Chirk Castle driveway	327234, 338569	<i>Representative</i> of views available to visitors on their way to the Castle itself.
M: Canal towpath north of site	328562, 339101	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users
N: Canal towpath north of site	328564, 339152	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users
Q: New Hall South Lodge (Chirk Castle Entrance)	327517, 338763	<i>Specific</i> view from the entrance to Chirk Castle, adjacent to the listed lodge building
R: Eastern edge of Chirk Castle Estate	327544, 338701	<i>Illustrative</i> of views from the eastern edge of the Chirk Castle Estate
U: Chirk Castle entrance	326900, 338130	<i>Specific</i> view from outside the main entrance to Chirk Castle (the castle itself, and not the wider estate)

3.31 Viewpoints fall into three categories, as set out in the GLVIA:

- Representative viewpoints (which represent the experience of different types of receptors in the vicinity);
- Specific viewpoints (a particular view, for example a well-known beauty spot);
- Illustrative viewpoints (which illustrate a particular effect/issue, which may include limited/lack of visibility).

3.32 It should be noted that the viewpoint itself is not the receptor; rather it is the people that would be experiencing the view from the viewpoint. Receptors in the vicinity of the Site that are likely to experience views of the Proposed Development include:

- Local residents;
- Users of public rights of way and other routes/ land with public access, including the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail;
- Visitors to Chirk Castle
- Road and rail users.

Cumulative Development

3.33 A series of new or improved facilities at the wider Kronospan site are proposed as part of Kronospan Vision 2020. This comprises several major projects, the following of which are operational or under construction:

- Log yard silos and RCF offloading and grading facilities;
- Melamine facing press hall/ building; and
- Wood Chip Preparation Building and WSEP Chip Dryer;
- Refurbishment of Existing Chipper Facility;
- Log Offloading and Flaker Facility (new building of maximum height 2.1m, and associated trackside cranes and conveyors);
- Raw Board Storage (under construction); and
- North East Warehouse (under construction).

3.34 The presence of these five schemes forms part of the main LVIA baseline.

3.35 One further project benefits from planning consent but is yet to be built, namely:

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- Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Facility (vertical extension to an existing building, with an increased maximum height of 28m, and a new building of maximum height of 33.2m).

3.36 Planning applications for two further projects are awaiting determination, namely:

- Covered Loading Yard (horizontal extension to an existing building close to the eastern boundary of the wider Kronospan site, with no increase in height);
- Engineering Stores (new warehouse building at the southern edge of the wider Kronospan site, with a maximum height of 12m).

3.37 The cumulative assessment set out in Section 4 is concerned with the effects of the Proposed Development based upon a further cumulative baseline scenario where the five schemes listed above are also present.

4 Assessment of Effects

Construction

4.1 The Proposed Development would be located within a large industrial site, where the movement of vehicles, stockpiling of materials and operation of plant are inherent characteristics, and where construction activity relating to other facilities within the wider site is already a familiar influence.

4.2 Construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would be experienced in the context of the operational Site and would have little or no influence upon the character of the surrounding landscape or upon views, both of which are already influenced by the extensive and sometimes tall industrial structures present. As such, construction stage effects would not be significant.

Landscape Effects: Operational

Effects on Landscape Fabric

4.3 The Proposed Development would comprise an extension to an existing building, and several new silos. The Proposed Development would be sited wholly within the wider Kronospan site where similar structures, buildings and materials stockpiles are already present. The Proposed Development would be located wholly within an existing area of hardstanding. No vegetation loss would be required.

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- 4.4 Hardstanding is not a sensitive landscape element, and its replacement with new structures would clearly not result in significant effects upon landscape fabric. Given this, a detailed assessment of effects upon landscape fabric is not considered to be necessary.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 4.5 A detailed assessment of effects upon the character of LCA5a: Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte and LCA7a: Chirk is set out in Appendix 3. In both LCAs, the effects of the Proposed Development would be similar.
- 4.6 In summary, the Proposed Development would comprise a limited addition to the existing assemblage of structures within the wider Kronospan site. Whilst the new structures would be large in their own right, they would be in keeping with the size and scale of existing structures and be very similar to these in form and materials. From within much of Chirk, the existing structures at the wider Kronospan site, and vegetation cover within the town would screen the new structures. Similar screening would be provided from along much of the canal corridor, and from the more formal areas of the Chirk Castle estate. The underlying landscape characteristics of the two LCAs within the Study Area would remain as at baseline, with only very limited, localised and incremental change in the visual context of the landscape occurring. The effects of this would be negligible and would not be significant.

Visual Effects: Operational

- 4.7 A detailed assessment of visual effects at the seventeen viewpoints included in the LVIA is set out in Appendix 4. In summary, none of the viewpoints would experience significant visual effects, and at four of the viewpoints the Proposed Development would not be visible due to intervening vegetation cover.
- 4.8 The Proposed Development would be introduced into the wider Kronospan site where many large-scale industrial structures are already present and are often visible from locations in the surrounding area. The new structures would always be viewed in the context of the existing development at Kronospan and would appear as an extension to this, rather than as a separate feature.
- 4.9 From some locations the Proposed Development would be largely screened from view by existing structures (refer to Viewpoint A as an example). At others, chiefly north of the Kronospan site including along the canal corridor and at the entrance to

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- Chirk Castle, the Proposed Development would wholly or partially screen views of existing structures (refer to Viewpoints C, F, K, M, N and U). In these cases, the introduction of the Proposed Development would not appreciably increase the amount of built development visible, but rather would simply give rise to relatively limited change in what is visible, i.e. replacing one visible structure with another.
- 4.10 When viewed from locations more directly east or west of the Kronospan site, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a limited increase in the horizontal spread of large-scale structures in the view (refer to Viewpoints E, I and R). This would not give rise to any notable change in the nature of views available from these areas, where clear views of the Kronospan site are already available.
- 4.11 From some locations, the presence of vegetation cover in the intervening landscape would either largely (refer to Viewpoint Q) or wholly (refer to Viewpoints D, H and J) screen the Proposed Development from view. As such, there would be a negligible effect or no effect from some of the Viewpoints.
- 4.12 It should be noted that during the summer months, the visibility of the Proposed Development would reduce from some locations. The summer photography provided from Viewpoints I, J and K demonstrates the degree to which vegetation cover would provide additional screening of views from the Llangollen Canal towpath, and from the edge of the Chirk Castle Estate. In addition, at Viewpoints I and J, woodland recently planted as part of the Kronospan Landscape Strategy (refer to Section 5 below) would continue to grow and is likely over time to provide effective screening in winter as well.
- 4.13 The Proposed Development would result in only a limited and incremental change to the assemblage of elements within the wider Kronospan site. Several of the existing structures are larger than the Proposed Development in terms of height or floorspace. The site as a whole has a well-established influence upon views across the surrounding landscape and the various structures are familiar features. The further presence of the new structures forming part of the Proposed Development would have little or no appreciable effect upon this influence.

Effects on Landscape Designations

- 4.14 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB was extended in 2011 to cover the area west of the wider Kronospan site, and the wider Kronospan site was present when this extension took place. The presence of large-scale industrial structures at

Kronospan did not preclude the inclusion of land a short distance west of the Site within the AONB.

- 4.15 As noted above, neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant. As such, it follows that the presence of the Proposed Development would not have a material effect upon either the statutory purposes or the special qualities of the AONB. The presence of the Kronospan facility is an established part of the context of the south-eastern edge of the AONB (i.e. the area around Chirk). The addition of the Proposed Development would not materially increase this influence upon the designation.

Cumulative Effects

- 4.16 In a scenario where the five consented cumulative schemes set out in Section 3 are present, this would incrementally increase the well-established influence of the wider Kronospan site upon the surrounding landscape and upon views. Their presence would not however open up any new aspect of visibility or views towards the Proposed Development, which would continue to be well screened by existing structures and by vegetation cover.
- 4.17 As such, the effects of the Proposed Development would not materially differ from those described above. Cumulative effects would not be significant.

5 Mitigation

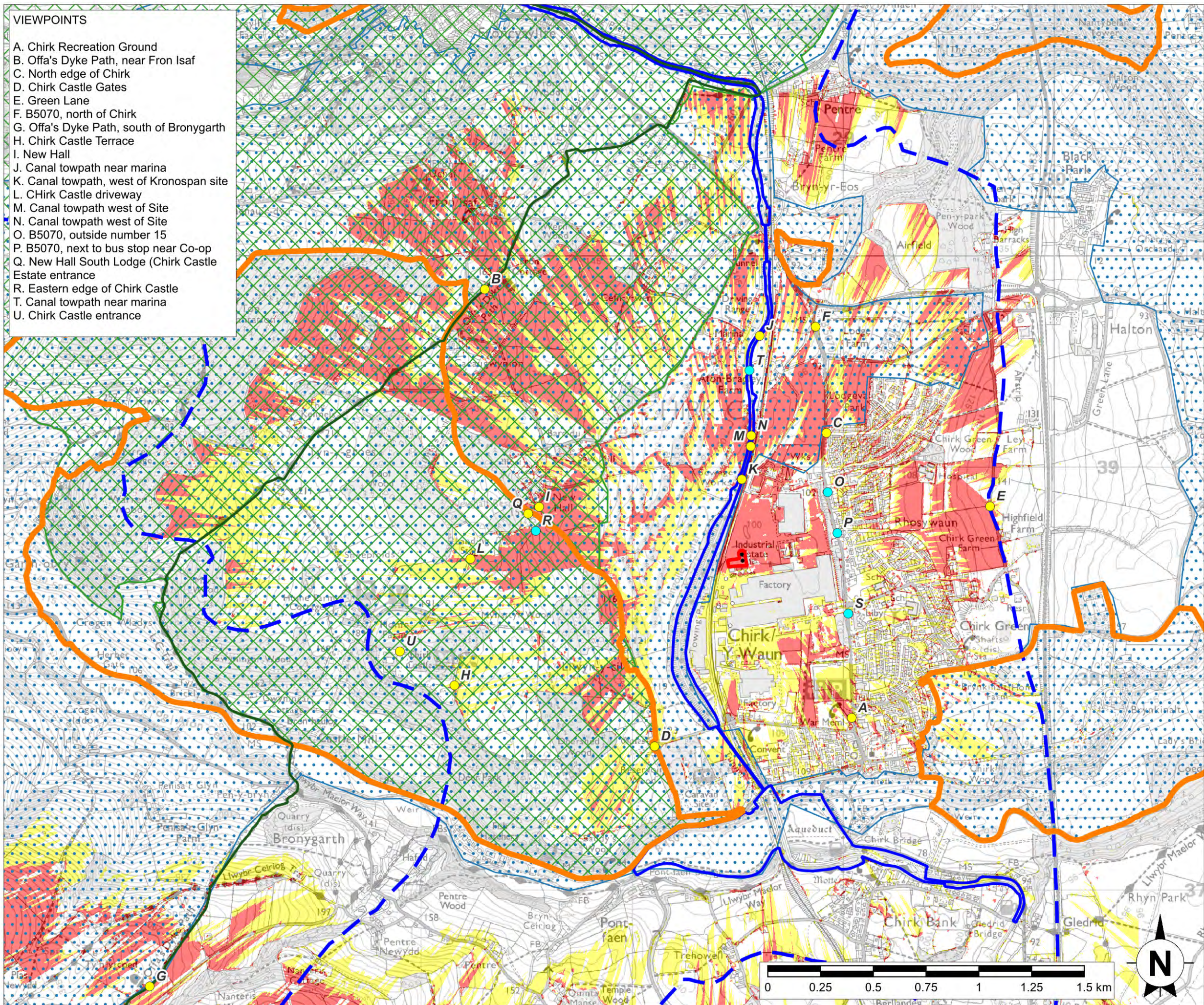
- 5.1 As the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would not be significant, no further specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.
- 5.2 It should also be noted that, independent of this planning application, the Applicant submitted a landscape strategy for the area surrounding the wider Kronospan site in May 2017. The purpose of the landscape strategy was to identify and then implement opportunities for enhanced screening of the wider Kronospan site via new off-site planting and changes to the management of existing vegetation. The landscape strategy was approved by Wrexham County Borough Council in 2019 and planting has subsequently been carried out within land owned by Kronospan. This planting will result in some reduction in the visibility of the wider Kronospan site generally over time as it establishes and grows in stature.
- 5.3 The planting can be seen clearly in the photography prepared from Viewpoint I in both winter and summer and is also present in the photography prepared from

Viewpoint J (partially screened by adjacent foreground vegetation). It is already beginning to have some screening value, and this will only increase over time as the planting matures.

6 Residual Effects and Conclusions

- 6.1 The Proposed Development would be introduced into an existing large-scale industrial site that is an established influence upon the town of Chirk and the surrounding rural area. Views of existing tall, bulky structures at the Kronospan site are commonplace from within the study area and their presence is an established part of the character of the landscape. The further presence of the Proposed Development would not result in only very limited and incremental to this established influence upon the landscape and upon views. Neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant.

FIGURES



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axis

Key

- Application Boundary
- Location of points used to generate the ZTV of existing tall structures
- Location of points used to generate the ZTV of the proposed silos
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Special Landscape Area
- National Trail
- Registered Park and Garden
- World Heritage Site
- World Heritage Site: Essential Setting
- ZTV of existing tall structures
- ZTV of proposed silos
- Viewpoint included in LVIA
- Viewpoint omitted from LVIA

NOTES

- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using BlueSky Mapping 2m photogrammetric Digital Surface Model (DSM) data, which reflects the presence of vegetation, buildings and other structures
- ZTV generation has allowed for the curvature of the earth, and for light refraction
- ZTV has been generated based upon an observer eye height of 1.7m above ground level

KRONOSPAN CHIP PREPARATION
BUILDING EXTENSION & RAW
MATERIALS STORAGE SILOS

Figure 1

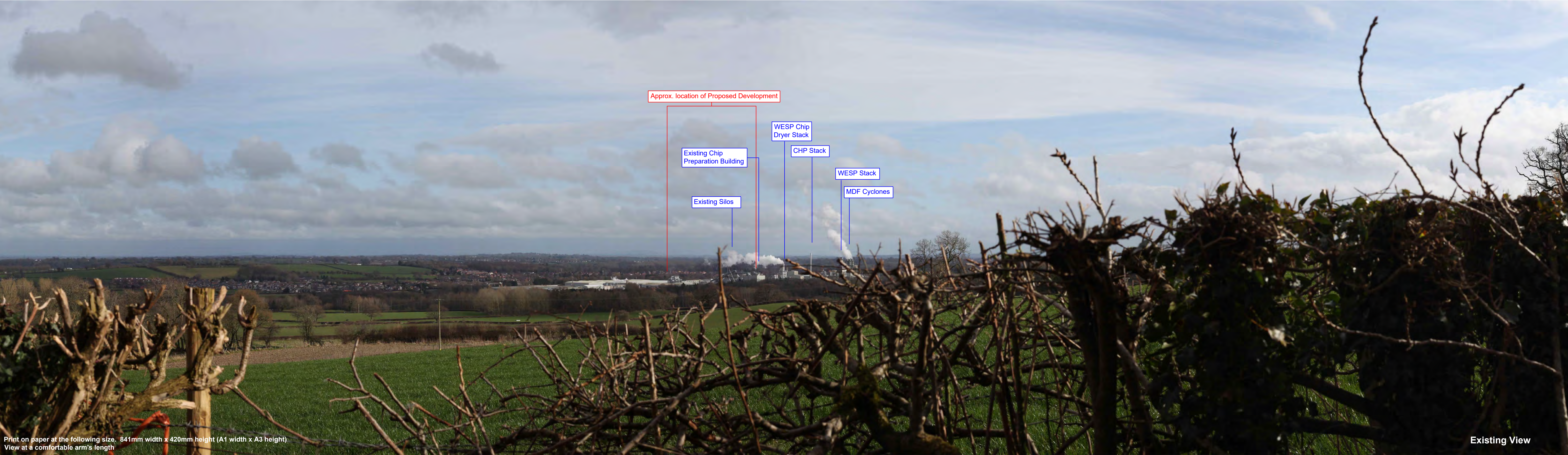
Landscape and Visual Context

Scale 1:17,500@A3	Date August 2022
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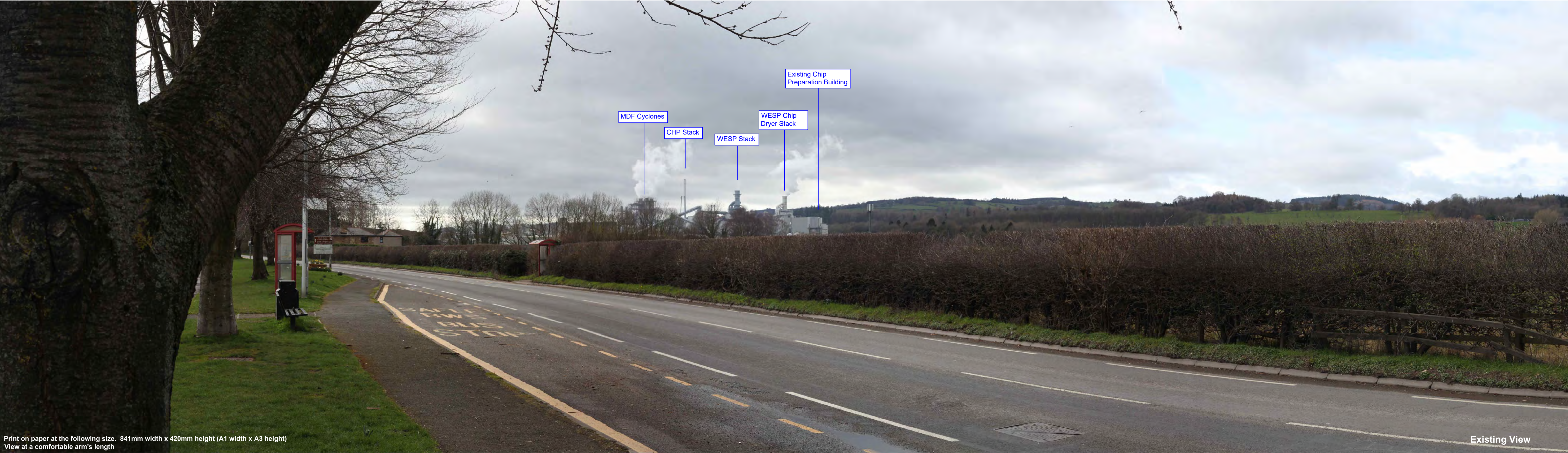
Print on paper at the following size. 841mm width x 420mm height (A1 width x A3 height)
View at a comfortable arm's length

Existing View



Print on paper at the following size. 841mm width x 420mm height (A1 width x A3 height)
View at a comfortable arm's length

Existing View



Print on paper at the following size. 841mm width x 420mm height (A1 width x A3 height)
View at a comfortable arm's length

Existing View

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Enlargement Factor:	96%	Camera:	Canon EOS 5D FFS	HFoV:	90°
Projection:	Cylindrical	Date and Time of Photograph:	17/03/22 11:47	Lens:	Canon EF 50mm 1:1.8 II	Direction of View:	South-west





Print on paper at the following size. 841mm width x 420mm height (A1 width x A3 height)
View at a comfortable arm's length

Existing View