



Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Proposed Residential Development at Pen-y-bont, Nr. Chirk

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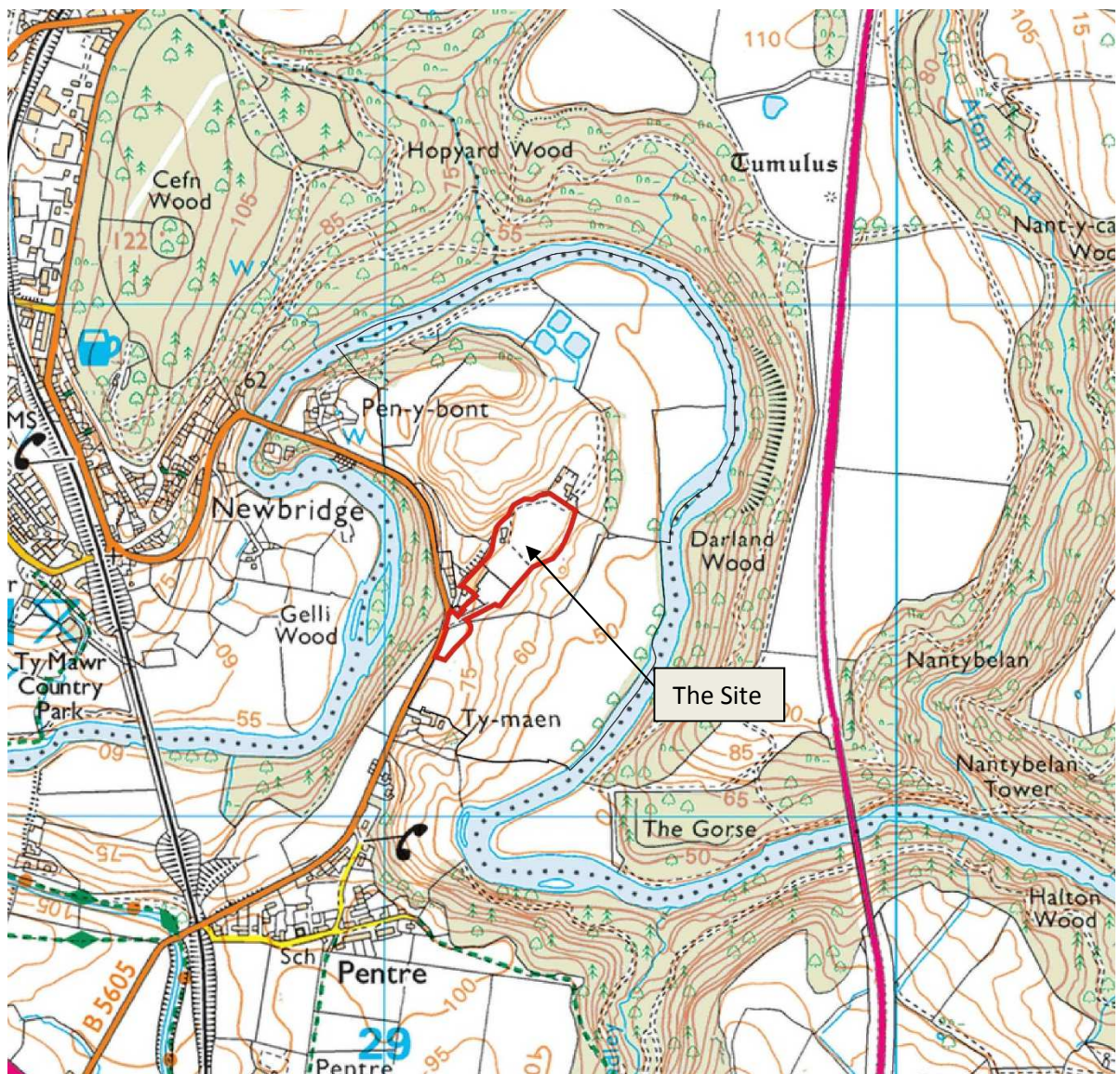
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SITE LOCATION AND SCOPE OF WORKS

1.1.1 Crestwood Environmental Ltd ('Crestwood'), a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute, were commissioned by DBA Estates Ltd, ('the Client'), to provide a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) in relation to proposed residential development ('the Development' – see below) on land at Pen-y-bont Landfill, Chirk ('the Site') (NGR: SJ 2941 2651) to accompany an outline application for planning permission.

Diagram 1 Site Location

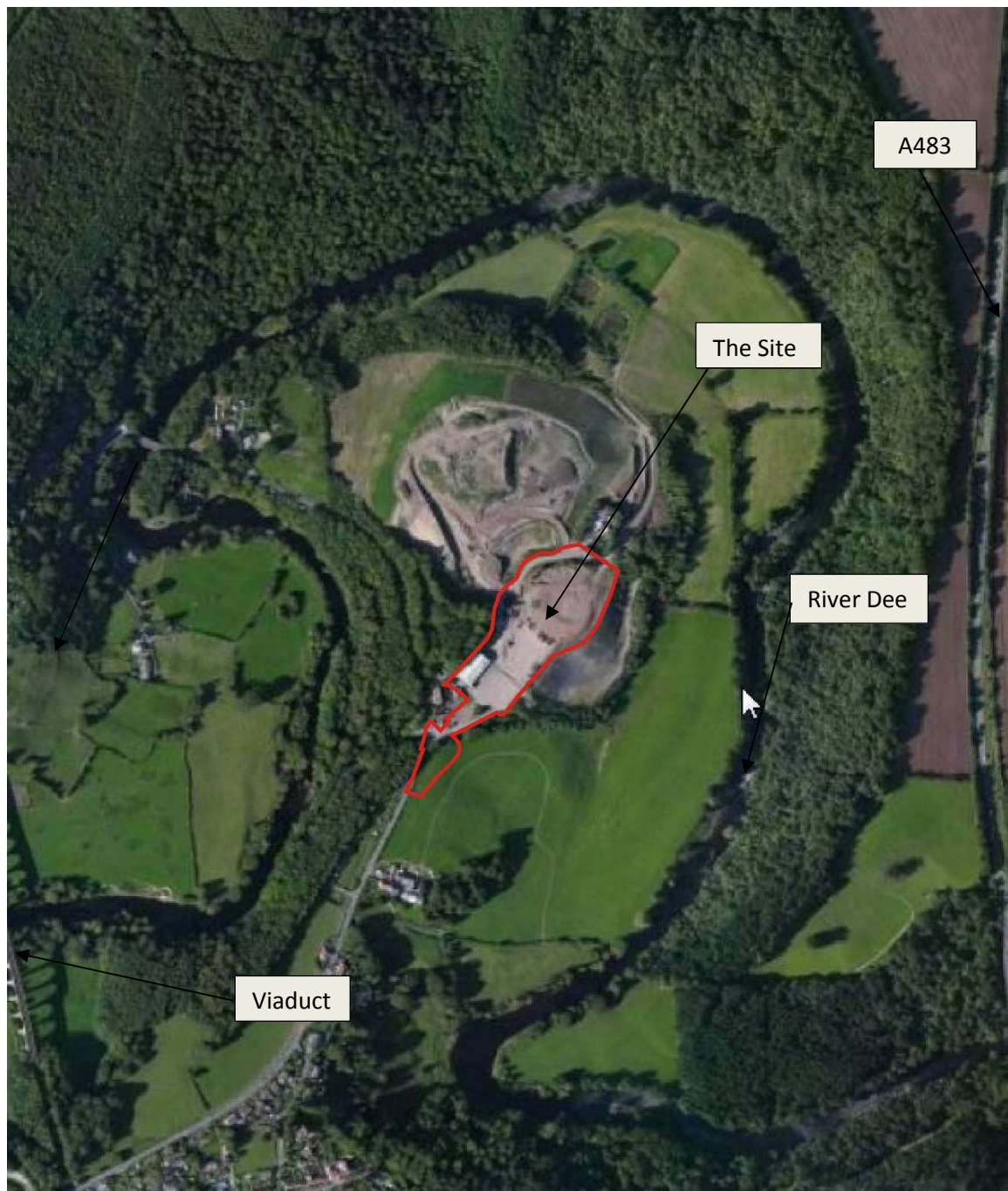


1.1.2 Crestwood have therefore undertaken an LVA of the Development which included the following key tasks:

- A desktop review of the landscape planning context for the Site and immediate area;
- A desktop study and web search of relevant background documents and maps, including reviews of aerial photographs, LPA publications and other landscape character assessments;

- Collated information about any relevant landscape designations, such as National Parks, and those and those parks and gardens listed on English Heritage's national register;
- A field assessment of local site circumstances including a photographic survey of viewpoints towards the Site, undertaken by a suitably qualified Landscape Architect; and
- An analysis of the likely visibility and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

Diagram 2 Immediate Site Context (Bing Maps)



1.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 The proposed development comprises:

- Residential dwellings (approx. 60 no.); and

- Access road and Open Space.

1.2.2 The proposed layout is shown indicatively in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3 Proposed Development Layout



1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Landscape and visual assessment is comprised of a study of two separate but inter-linked components:

- **Landscape character** – which is the physical make-up and condition of the landscape itself. Landscape character arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects; and

- **Visual amenity** – which is the way in which the Site is seen and appreciated; views to and from the Site, their direction, character and sensitivity to change.
- 1.3.2 This appraisal, carried out by a suitably qualified Chartered Landscape Architect, is conducted with regard to the principles set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition ('GLVIA3'), (Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013).
- 1.3.3 In this assessment, the initial study area extended to 2km in all directions from the edge of the Site, to help determine potential visibility and understand the wider sensitivity of visual and landscape receptors. The extent of the initial study area was predicted, conservatively, to be the likely maximum distance where the Proposed Development could result in significant landscape and visual effects, given the topography.
- 1.3.4 Fieldwork was undertaken in February 2018 to further understand the potential for significant landscape and visual effects and following this, the Study area was subsequently reduced, as it was clear the effects would be more localised.
- 1.3.5 The combination of the fieldwork and desktop review established that the scale of the landscape and Proposed Development would limit likely adverse effects to within less than 2km of the Site.

2 BASELINE SITUATION

2.1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL POLICY

General

- 2.1.1 An appreciation of the 'weight' to be attributed to any visual and landscape effects arising from development starts with an understanding of the planning context within which any such development is to be tested for its acceptability.
- 2.1.2 Strictly, in legal terms, there is no automatic right to a view. However, the enjoyment of a view could be an important part of the residential amenity of location (e.g. a neighbouring property), and its loss might therefore have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of that property (i.e. an environmental effect on humans).
- 2.1.3 It should be recognised that the landscape is dynamic, as is made clear within GLVIA3 (Para 2.13): "Landscape is not unchanging. Many different pressures have progressively altered familiar landscapes over time and will continue to do so in the future, creating new landscapes. Today many of these drivers of change arise from the requirements for development to meet the needs of a growing and changing population and economy".

National Planning Policy

- 2.1.4 It is stated in paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) that *"at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking"*. The NPPF also recognises that *"the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes"*.

Local Policy

2.1.5 The statutory development plan which applies to the Site is the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011 (adopted February 2005). It is worth noting that Wrexham County Borough Council are in the process of preparing a Local Development Plan (LDP) to replace the current UDP, and guide planning decision making up to 2028.

2.1.6 Relevant to the Proposed Development and related landscape and visual effects, the key policy from the Wrexham UDP are:

Policy PS3: Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible, particularly so where greenfield land is of ecological, landscape or amenity value, or comprises agricultural land of grades 1, 2 or 3a quality.

Policy GDP1: All new development should:-

- a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.
- b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
- d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
- e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.
- f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.
- g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.
- h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.
- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Policy EC5: Within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development, other than for agriculture, small-scale farm-based and

other rural enterprises, and essential operational development by utility service providers, will be strictly controlled. Development will be required to conform to a high standard of design and landscaping, and special attention will be paid to minimising its visual impact both from nearby and distant viewpoints.

Policy EC6: Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported.

2.2 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 2.2.1 The land is not nationally designated in respect of landscape importance (i.e. National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc.). The land does not fall within 2km of any National Park. The south-eastern corner of the 'Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' lies to the west of the Site, with the boundary being formed by the B5605. No part of the Site lies within the AONB.
- 2.2.2 The landscape within the Study Area is designated as a 'Special Landscape Area', (SLA) as identified within Policy E5 of the Wrexham UDP (2005). The Site and adjacent landfill site are identified as being excluded from being within the SLA.

2.3 REGISTERED PARKS AND GARDENS

- 2.3.1 No part of the Site lies within or adjacent to a Registered Park or Garden. Wynnstay Park lies c. or the wider study area lies c.1.77km to the north-east and is listed on the CADW Register of Landscapes Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales (Grade I Reference PGW(C) 64).

2.4 LISTED BUILDINGS, SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

- 2.4.1 A formal assessment of the historical setting of these heritage features falls outside the scope of this report and the professional experience of the report author. Irrespective of this, to help ascertain whether there were potential landscape-related effects of the Potential Development on heritage features the following was determined.
- 2.4.2 The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal is designated World Heritage Site (ref:1303) and lies c.0.75km to the south-west at its closest point. The 'buffer zone' to the World Heritage Site extends in the direction of the Site, and forms a small section of the Site boundary, at the location of the existing access road from the B5605.
- 2.4.3 No part of the Site or the defined study area falls within a Conservation Area.
- 2.4.4 There are several Scheduled Monuments within the Study Area:
- Darland Wood Round Barrows (ref: DE223) lies c. 0.75km to the north-east;
 - Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal (ref: DE175) lies c. 0.75km to the south-west;
 - Offa's Dyke (ref: DE140) lies c. 0.97km to the south-west; and

- Offa's Dyke (ref: DE177) lies c. 1.35km to the north.

2.4.5 There is one Listed Buildings within the Site. The Grade II 'Pen-y-bont Brick and Tile Co Office' lies within the Site's south western corner, immediately adjacent the existing road access. Within the wider study areas there are several Listed Buildings located to the west and south west, including the Cefn Viaduct (c. 630m to the south-west), the Newbridge Railway Viaduct over River Dee (c. 630m to the south-west); Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel, (c. 670m to the west) and Waterloo Tower (c.800m to the north-west). In addition, a grouping of Listed Buildings (Newbridge Lodge and Entrance Gates and Railings) lie to the west at a distance of c. 575m from the Sites western boundary at its closest point.

2.5 ANCIENT WOODLAND AND TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

2.5.1 There are no areas of ancient woodland within the Site; the nearest being c. 400m to the north-west in the vicinity of Pen-y-bont Farm. Significant areas of the surrounding landscape contain woodland, particularly the northern bank of the River Dee, and is classed as 'Restored Ancient Woodland Site'. These include Hopyard Wood and Darland Wood to the north and east of the Site, on the opposite side of the river.

2.5.2 There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) relating to the Site.

2.6 ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

2.6.1 The land does not contain or overlap any national or international designations for ecological conservation. The River Dee Site of Special Scientific Interest follows the course of the river, surrounding the site and passing within 110m at its closest point to the west.

2.7 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND OPEN ACCESS LAND

2.7.1 There is no 'Access Land' OR Registered Common Land within the Site or within the Study Area. The Ty Mawr Country Park has been identified within the Study Area, lying c. 640m to the west of the Site at its closest point.

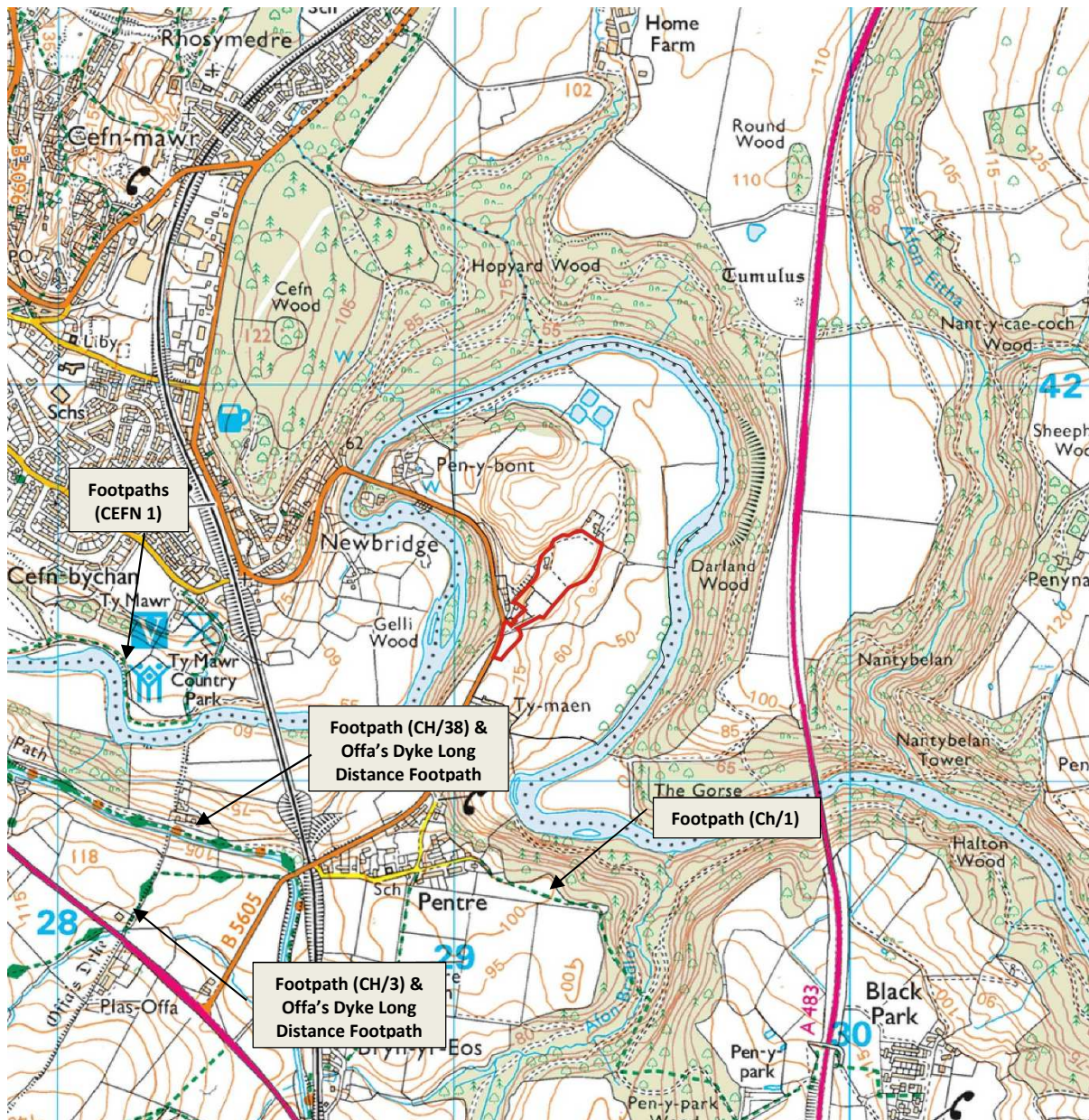
2.7.2 There are no public rights of way (PRoWs) or permissive access within the Site.

2.7.3 There are limited PRoW to the east and north of the Site, however to the south and west there is a more comprehensive network of PRoW, including the Offa's Dyke Long Distance Footpath and the towpath to the Llangollen Canal. The nearest footpath to the Site (Ch/1) is located c. 560m to the south, on the eastern edge of the village of Pentre. See Diagram 5.

2.7.4 The nearest main road is the A483 (circa 470km to the east) which runs between Ruabon to the north and the A5 to the south. The A5 itself runs to the south of the Site, at a distance of c. 1.25km. The B5605 runs from the A5 through the settlements of Pentre and Newbridge, to Cefn-mawr, forming a length of c. 30m of the western boundary, and is the location of the existing Site access. There is a

2.7.5 There are no National Cycle Routes within the Site. Within the wider study area, National Route 84 between Rhyl and Oswestry follows the alignment of the Llangollen Canal, passing within 790m to the south-west of the Site.

Diagram 4 Public Rights of Way (PRoW's)



2.8 WATER COURSES AND WATER BODIES

2.8.1 There are no water bodies or watercourses on Site. The Site is within an area of land that is located in a significant bend of the River Dee, which passes at its closest within a distance of c. 165m to the west.

2.9 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.9.1 The Site lies on an elevated plateau of land between 70m and 75mAOD, located within a bend or meander of the River Dee, shaped like an inverted horse-shoe. The Site currently forms a part of the Pen-Y-Bont Landfill Site, and formerly the Pen-Y-Bont Brick and Clay works that was closed in 1960. The majority of the Site has been substantially altered or influenced by man-made activities, including topography changes and the construction of a large concrete apron that covers the majority of the Site. The Site contains several buildings, including the 'Pen-y-bont Brick and Tile Co Office' a Grade II Listed Building, located at the main entrance.

- 2.9.2 Outside of the Site, the topography to the east and west falls quite dramatically down to the River Dee, at a level of c. 50mAOD. To the south, where the bends in the river are at their closest, a ridge of land extends southwards with a height of c. 80m AOD, with the B5605 following this alignment. To the north, but within the horse-shoe of the river, the topography of the land has been dramatically altered by landfill operations, rising to c. 99m AOD.
- 2.9.3 The Site's boundary is open to the west with the B5605, forming the Site access. To the north, the Site boundary is partly formed by areas of mature woodland vegetation, becoming more open as it extends eastwards. The eastern and southern boundaries are relatively open, with limited vegetation and demarcated by the existing change of levels.

2.10 LOCAL LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

- 2.10.1 The landform outside of the Site is varied, and heavily influenced by the River Dee that has carved its way through the landscape, creating steep valley sides to the north and east of the river, with heights reaching between 100m and 122m AOD. These valley sides are well vegetated by established and mature woodlands. Further north and eastwards in particular, the landform undulates into a series of high points and wooden valleys that contain tributaries of the River Dee.
- 2.10.2 To the south, the landscape similarly undulates between a series of high points and shallow valleys, with the valleys often containing transport networks, including the A5 road and the Llangollen Canal, as well as the rail line between Wrexham and Chirk, which crosses the wide valley of the River Dee via the Cefn (Newbridge) Viaduct that is located to the west of the Site. To the west, the landform follows the course of the river (Vale of Llangollen), with a series floodplains at c.55-60mAOD, punctuated by a series of hills, in excess of 350m AOD.
- 2.10.3 The surrounding landscape is largely under agricultural use, varying between pastoral and arable production. Woodlands mainly occupy the steep valley sides, and include Hopyard Wood to the north, Darland Wood to the south, Gelli Wood to the west and Cefn Wood to the north-west.
- 2.10.4 There is a small cluster of dwellings located immediately adjacent to the north-west corner of the Site, sharing the Site access to the B5605. Further to the north-west and west, on the opposite side of the River Dee are the conjoined settlements of Newbridge, Pen-Y-Bont, and Rhosymedre. The village of Pentre lies to the south-west, at a distance of c. 300m.
- 2.10.5 There are several farmsteads in the study area, the closest being Pen-y-bont Farm to the north-west at a distance of c. 375m; and Ty-maen Farm to the south at a distance of c. 195m.

2.11 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENTS

- 2.11.1 The Site lies within the **Deeside and Wrexham** National Character Area (NCA) (Natural Resources Wales, n.d.). The key characteristics for this character area that are relevant to the Site and the study area are listed as:
- *Lowland, foothills and levels - sloping down to the lower Dee and Dee Estuary. Carboniferous Coal Measures interspersed with outcrops of Millstone Grit, Holywell shales and Cefn-y-Fedw sandstones. Glacial till, fluvio-glacial and river terrace drift overlay in parts of the valley floor, giving rise to localised gentle land form variation.*
 - *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 its castle.*
- *Small settlements – outside urban areas, compact villages associated with landed estates and isolated farmsteads, or coalesced ribbon developments and encroachment upon commons, which are the legacy of the former coal and lead mining industries.*

2.11.2 Wrexham County Borough Council have produced the 'Wrexham LANDMAP' (Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process) Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2007) to support the policies of the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (Feb 2005). This SPG categorises and groups areas in to four common broad landscape character types (LCT), with the Site falling predominantly within the 'Rural Lowlands' LCT, but also with the western boundary being within the 'Rural/Urban Villages' LCT.

2.11.3 The 'Rural/Urban Villages' LCT is described as "*Wrexham urban villages are associated with past coal mining, and located on the edge of the uplands and to the north of Wrexham town. The villages are set among farmland, wooded valleys and regenerating or restored landscapes. This complex character area contains main roads, railways and canals, as well as Offa's Dyke and prehistoric hill forts, reflecting Wrexham's history on the border between England and Wales, upland and lowland.*" Key landscape issues within this LCT are identified as:

- *The future of 'urban fringe' landscapes;*
- *The potential for urban forestry;*
- *Impact of new housing on traditional community identity;*

- *Maintenance of local distinctiveness;*
- *The need for footpath and cycle links;*
- *The long-term impact of sand and clay quarries and landfill; and*
- *Preservation of local history and industrial archaeology.*

2.11.4 The 'Rural/Urban Villages' LCT is further sub-divided into detailed landscape character areas, with the Site being partially located within Landscape Character Area '9d: Dee Valley, Froncycyllte to Newbridge' and is described as *"Spectacular section of the River Dee at the entrance to the Vale of Llangollen, including Pontcysyllte aqueduct and Newbridge viaduct."* It further summarises the landscape of this area as:

- *Key section of Dee Valley with historic canal, rail, road and Offa's Dyke Crossing;*
- *Enclosed valley with scenic views to west;*
- *Rural land uses but close to industry and settlements;*
- *Important river, grassland and woodland habitats;*
- *Focus for tourism and recreation; and*
- *Outstanding industrial archaeology.*

2.11.5 The landscape sensitivity within this character area is described as being sensitive to any development which might affect the setting of the Pontcysyllte Aquaduct and Cefn Viaduct, and the scenic Vale of Llangollen.

2.11.6 The 'Rural Lowlands' LCT is described as *"The eastern lowland areas of Wrexham are largely rural and agricultural and share many characteristics of the neighbouring Cheshire and North Shropshire landscape. The general area also includes the River Dee floodplain and flat river terraces, and Fenn's Moss, an extensive area of heathland and bog. There are scattered farmsteadings, attractive small villages, and historic landscape features including medieval ridge and furrow and moated sites."* Key landscape issues within this LCT are identified as:

- *Impact on rural character of commuter pressure;*
- *Conservation and management of historic parks, gardens and boundary walls;*
- *Hedgerow and hedgerow tree conservation and restoration;*
- *Impact of flooding defence measures;*
- *Effects of economic diversification and recreation in the countryside;*
- *Footpath and cycle links between town and country; and*
- *Impact on landscape and wildlife by farm building.*

2.11.7 The Rural Lowlands' LCT is further sub-divided into detailed landscape character areas, with the Site being located within Landscape Character Area '12a: Dee / Ceiriog Wooded Valley' and is described as *"Scenic wooded valley of the River Dee and tributaries, with spectacular road, rail and canal crossings but limited public access".* [Authors emphasis]. It further summarises the landscape of this

area as:

- *Steep sided and enclosed sections of the River Dee and River Ceiriog valleys, shared with North Shropshire;*
- *Dominated by broadleaved and coniferous woodlands, with some pasture land*
- *Spectacular road, rail and canal crossings enhance the scenic qualities and provide views;*
- *Strong seasonal contrasts; and*
- *Much in estate ownership with limited public access.*

2.11.8 The landscape sensitivity reflects the narrowness and linearity of this landscape character area to inappropriate development on its margins. Widening of road crossings would also have a detrimental impact. The future of the area depends on the long-term management of the adjoining estates.

2.11.9 The character of the Site and the study area is largely consistent with the characteristics as defined within the National Landscape Character Area and the local landscape character descriptions.

3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 VISUAL ASPECTS

3.1.1 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the Proposed Development was undertaken, and is illustrated Diagram 5, below.

Diagram 5 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the Proposed Development



3.1.2 Based on the findings in the field, the actual extent of where the Proposed Development will be visible from is considered to be less than that shown through the combination of intervening

woodland, major hedgerows, buildings and landform in the locality. It also demonstrates the few accessible viewpoints that the Proposed Development would be visible from; the ZTV not readily overlapping PROWs or lengthy sections of road.

- 3.1.3 The ZTV is elongated in a north-south orientation, reflecting the combination of higher ridge and shallower valley landform to the north and east. Woodland to the west and south, combined with the lower lying landform severely limits views from locations in these directions.
- 3.1.4 Views from the road frontage (B5605) are largely restricted to the section running past the entrance to the Site and for users travelling north from within the vicinity of Ty-maen Farm. These views take in the large workshop buildings and the listed building at the Site entrance. The road frontage itself would be largely unchanged due to the retention of the existing building on the road frontage at the Site entrance.
- 3.1.5 Potential visibility of the Proposed Development from the east are limited to a section of the A483 (when travelling north only) and include a lay-by. Views are likely to be filtered by the existing woodland vegetation of Oarland Wood.
- 3.1.6 Views from the north are very restricted by the lack of publically accessible areas. Woodland vegetation (Hopyard Wood and Cefn Wood) and the existing landfill site severely limits potential visibility from locations in this direction.
- 3.1.7 From the south, there are potential views from the public footpaths near the village of Pentre, particularly where they are located to the edges of the valley landform. Views are likely to be screened or filtered by vegetation to the valley sides.
- 3.1.8 From west and south-west, there are potential views towards the Site due to the more open landscape present here, including views from the Ty-Mawr Country Park.
- 3.1.9 Visibility from a small number of residential properties with open southern facing aspects immediately adjacent the north-west boundary of the Site may be possible. There are likely close range views of less than 500m distance from Ty-maen Farm to the south. Views from Pen-y-bont Farm are likely to be screened by dense roadside vegetation and the intervening topography associated with the landfill site.

3.2 METHOD OF ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

- 3.2.1 The assessment of visual effects uses professional judgement to ascertain levels of importance of effect through levels of contribution of sensitivity of the viewer, magnitude of effects and nature of effect (i.e. whether it is positive, negative or neutral).

Table 1 *Magnitude of Visual Effects Criteria*

Magnitude of Visual Effect	Visual Criteria
Very Large	Where the proposals become the only dominant feature in the view and to which all other elements become subordinate. Typically involves direct views at close range over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Large	Where the proposals would form a significant and immediately apparent element of the scene and would affect the overall impression of the view. Typically involves direct or oblique views at close range with notable changes over the horizontal and vertical

	extent.
Medium	Where proposals would form a visible and recognisable new development but where it is not intrusive within the overall view. Typically involves direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Small	Where proposals constitute only a minor component of the wider view, which the casual observer could miss or where awareness does not affect the overall quality of the scene. Typically involves an oblique view at medium or long range or a direct view at long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Very Small	Where only a very small part of the development is discernible or that it is at such a distance that the effects are scarcely appreciated.

Table 2 **Sensitivity of Viewer Criteria**

Visual Sensitivity	Visual Criteria
Very High	Nationally well recognised and advertised location for high visual amenity value Prominent location or vista with high visual amenity value that is recognised in published sources. Very high susceptibility to change as a very high level of attention focussed on the landscape and particular views.
High	Well-known area recognised regionally for high landscape value . Open areas of recognised public access where primary enjoyment is of the views of the landscape. High susceptibility to change as a high level of attention focused on the landscape and particular views.
Medium	Locations afford views of some value , but visual amenity not well recognised beyond locality. Moderate susceptibility to change as a moderate level of attention focussed on the landscape and particular views.
Low	Viewpoint context and location is of lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible. Low susceptibility to change as low level of attention focussed on the landscape and particular views.
Very Low	Viewpoint context is such that views have a very low value . Expectations of visual amenity are very low. Activity at viewpoint is incidental to the view.

- 3.2.2 The derivation of levels of effect (indicating their importance) generally follows a pattern by which the relationship between sensitivity and magnitude contributes to the level of importance as shown in **Error! Reference source not found..** This process is applied to a selection of representative viewpoints.
- 3.2.3 On balance, in overall planning terms, important effects may not necessarily be considered unacceptable.

Table 3 Overall Level of Effect

Sensitivity : \ Magnitude:		Very small —————→ Very Large	
Very Low ↓ Very High		Negligible	
		Minor	
		Moderate	
		Major	
		Substantial	

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

3.3.1 A number of representative viewpoints have been selected to demonstrate the types of effects that are anticipated and that have been assessed as part of the Proposed Development. These are from the following locations and are assessed and illustrated on subsequent pages:

- Photo 1** View from the B5605 at the entrance to the existing landfill site, the location of the proposed Site entrance;
- Photo 2** View from the B5605 near Ty-maen Farm, looking north towards the Site;
- Photo 3** View from public footpath to the east of Pentre, looking north;
- Photo 4** View from lay-by on the A483, looking west;
- Photo 5** View from Offa's Dyke Path (Long Distance Footpath), to the south-west of the Site.

Diagram 6 Photograph location Points



Photolocation 1

3.3.2 Photo 1 shows the existing Site entrance, including the listed building that is to be retained. The change in view will be the removal of wooden fencing and new housing appearing in the mid-distance. Views of the distant woodland would be reduced by the incorporation of new dwellings. (See Plate 1)

3.3.3 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is **Low** (road users) and magnitude of effect would be **Medium**.

The overall effect would be considered to be of **Minor/Moderate** importance.

Plate 1 *View from B5605 at the existing entrance to the landfill site.*



Photolocation 2

- 3.3.4 Photo 2 is taken from the B5605 and shows the view afforded to users of the local road network as they travel north. Significant roadside vegetation limits views towards the wider landscape, with the Site being viewed within the direction of travel. The listed building at the site entrance and workshops (white building to the centre of the view) are clearly visible. The change of view will be the removal and replacement of the workshops with new dwellings. (See Plate 2).
- 3.3.5 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is Low (road users) and the magnitude of effect would be **Small** as the proposals only form a minor component of the wider view and could be easily missed by the casual observer. The effect would have some positive and some adverse effects that overall would be considered to be of **Minor** importance.

Plate 2 *View from B5605 near Ty-maen Farm, looking north.*



Photolocation 3

- 3.3.6 Photo 3 is taken from a public footpath to the east of the village of Pentre, and shows the views afforded by users of the PRoW. In this location, the footpath is located atop an area of high ground at c. 100m AOD, located to the south of the River Dee valley. The valley sides in this location contain significant areas of mixed deciduous and evergreen woodlands, limiting views towards the Site to being very filtered or screened. There are filtered views of the river valley to the east of the Site, including elements of Ty-maen Farm, however during summer months these will largely be screened. There will be limited discernible changes to this view. (See Plate 3).
- 3.3.7 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is **High** (footpath users) and the magnitude of effect would be

Very Small as the proposals would be barely discernible with the level of screening and could be easily missed by the casual observer. Very filtered views (more likely during winter) are predicted to be of a **Negligible-Minor** level of effect at worst.

Plate 3 *Photo taken from public footpath to the east of the village of Pentre, looking north.*



Photolocation 4

3.3.8 Photo 4 is taken from a lay-by on northbound section of the A 483, to the east of the Site. At this location, the A483 runs parallel with a ridgeline between the River Dee valley and a tributary (Afon Eitha), at a height of c. 100m AOD. A linear area of woodland planting, adjacent to the highway provides a degree of screening for views to the west, with the edge of Darland Wood being visible where it descends the valley sides. This vegetation provides a degree of screening to views from the A483, however there are glimpse views of the Site where the vegetation has thinned, with the existing workshops and adjacent house being visible. (See Plate 5).

3.3.9 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is **High** (footpath users) and the magnitude of effect would be **Very Small** as the proposals would be barely discernible with the level of screening and could be easily missed by the casual observer. Very filtered views (more likely during winter) are predicted to be of a **Negligible-Minor** level of effect.

Plate 4 *Photo from A483 looking west.*



Photolocation 5

3.3.10 Photo 5 shows the view from the Offa's Dyke Path, a long-distance footpath that runs from the south into the River Dee valley near Pentre, before following the route of the Llangollen Canal westwards. This view is located to the south-west of the Site at a distance of c. 1.7km. This is an elevated view into the Llangollen Valley, with views of the viaduct and the Pen-y-bont landfill site beyond. The Site itself is screened by intervening woodland vegetation (See Plate 6).

- 3.3.11 Whilst the sensitivity of the visual receptor is **Very High** (footpath within the WHS buffer zone), the Proposed Development is not predicted to be visible and therefore no or **Negligible** impacts on receptors are predicted, as the proposals will not be discernible.

Plate 5 *Photo from Offa's Dyke Path (Long Distance Footpath) to the south-west of the Site.*



3.4 METHOD OF ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 3.4.1 Landscape Sensitivity is determined by the combination of landscape susceptibility (i.e. the inherent ability of a defined landscape receptor (e.g. landscape characteristics) to accommodate the specific Proposed Development without undue negative consequences) and landscape value.
- 3.4.2 Landscape value is the desirability of landscape characteristics (including scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness, cultural associations, conservation interests etc.) and the acceptability of their loss to different stakeholders (i.e. valued for different reasons by different people and on different scales, e.g. local, national).
- 3.4.3 The level of landscape sensitivity is derived generally following the pattern shown in Table 4.

Table 4 *Landscape Sensitivity*

Land. Susceptibility Land. Value	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low or Medium	Medium
Low	Very Low	Low	Low or Medium	Medium	Medium or High
Medium	Low	Low or Medium	Medium	Medium or High	High
High	Low or Medium	Medium	Medium or High	High	Very High
Very High	Medium	Medium or High	High	Very High	Very High

- 3.4.4 The determination of magnitude of landscape effect is guided by Table 5.

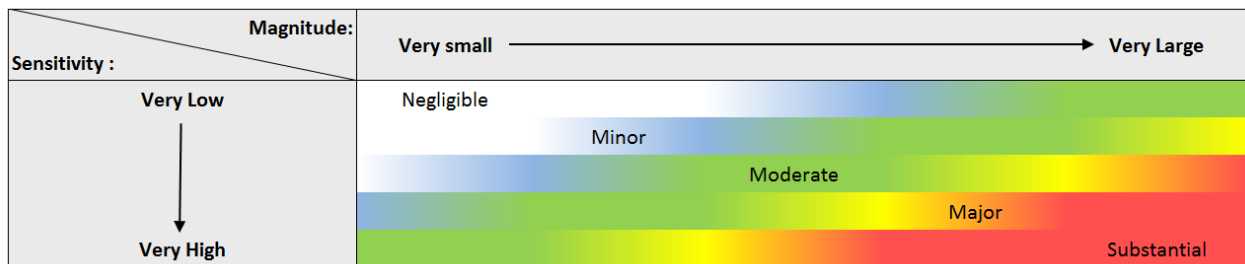
Table 5 *Magnitude of Landscape Effect*

Magnitude of Landscape Effect	Landscape Criteria
Very Large	Typically, large scale changes and/or numerous changes to important landscape characteristics

Large	Typically, large scale changes to some landscape characteristics, or a high number of medium scale changes to the landscape characteristics
Medium	Typically, some medium scale changes to some landscape characteristics
Small	Typically, a low number of medium scale changes to landscape characteristics, or a number of small scale changes to landscape characteristics
Very Small	Typically, occasional, small scale changes to unimportant landscape characteristics

- 3.4.5 The effects on the landscape can apply at an individual level (e.g. to specific landscape elements or characteristics) and at the landscape character level. Both aspects are considered below.
- 3.4.6 Important changes to landscape character occur when the relative level of contribution of the existing key characteristics changes (either through reduction/increase or removal/addition) such that the landscape would be defined or classified differently at a given geographical scale.
- 3.4.7 For this Proposed Development and site, potential effects on landscape character would be limited to a maximum of 750m from the Site.
- 3.4.8 The derivation of levels of importance of effect generally follows a pattern by which the relationship between sensitivity and magnitude contributes to the level of effect as shown in 4. Major or Substantial levels of effect would be considered to be Important. On balance, in overall planning terms, important effects may not necessarily be considered unacceptable.

4 OVERALL LEVEL OF EFFECT



4.1 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Effects on Landscape Characteristics

- 4.1.1 The landscape elements present within the Site consist of areas of hardstanding, buildings and bare ground. The existing buildings comprise a brick building near the entrance (the office building to the former brick and tile works), and a single workshop building. Areas of hardstanding cover a significant extent of the Site and are used for storage and vehicle parking, with a number of vehicles parked on the Site at the time of the fieldwork. The Site boundaries are a combination of hedgerows and trees, fencing, brick and stone retaining walls (along the northern boundary) and areas of rough grassland.
- 4.1.2 The more valued elements largely relate to those present at the boundaries (e.g. hedgerows and trees, brick and stone walling, and the brick building at the Site entrance) which will be retained. The remaining elements are of low value in the landscape and would not be susceptible to change in their

own right. The addition of new buildings (dwellings) would be (subject to detail design) in keeping with adjacent existing dwellings and the extent of the Proposed Development will reflect the extent of the current Site.

- 4.1.3 Overall, accounting for the predominantly 'built' situation within the Site, the landscape sensitivity of the landscape elements to the Proposed Development is considered **Very Low-Low**. Compared to the existing 'built' situation, the magnitude of change is considered to be **Medium** relating primarily to an increase in the quantum of built development at the Site (over and above the existing situation), replacing the pre-existing undesirable 'industrial' character with a residential development. The importance of the effect on landscape elements is considered to be **Minor** adverse at worst, relating to the increase in the quantum of development.
- 4.1.4 This is balanced, by beneficial effects brought about by development, relating to increased amount of landscaping, through tree planting and provision of garden and communal green space. The more desirable and 'naturalistic' landscaped areas will replace undesirable hardstanding elements. Overall, where landscaping is to be provided, the magnitude of change is considered **Medium** beneficial at a Site level and **Minor** beneficial importance.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 4.1.5 The key characteristics of the local landscape character are listed as:
- *Steep sided and enclosed sections of the River Dee and River Ceiriog valleys, shared with North Shropshire;*
 - *Dominated by broadleaved and coniferous woodlands, with some pasture land*
 - *Spectacular road, rail and canal crossings enhance the scenic qualities and provide views;*
 - *Strong seasonal contrasts; and*
 - *Much in estate ownership with limited public access.*
- 4.1.6 The Proposed Development would allow the retention of the pattern of the parcel of land as existing (not disrupting the existing wider pattern), would allow the retention (and supplementation) of hedgerows and a number of trees to the perimeter of the Site and incorporation of a number of trees within the Site itself.
- 4.1.7 The Primary and Secondary key characteristics of the landscape character area would not reduce. A number of detracting characteristics would be replaced via the addition of the new elements (dwellings, landscaping and shared surface access). In effect, the character at a Site level will change from industrial to residential.
- 4.1.8 The pattern, layout and density of the proposed residential development (in outline) are such that it would reflect the existing adjacent residential character in nearby locations.
- 4.1.9 Owing to the landfill landform to the north, and relative location of the Site within the landscape, the Site currently exerts limited influence over the wider landscape, with limited locations from which the Site is visible. There is much screening within the wider landscape associated with hedgerows and tree lined valley slopes.
- 4.1.10 The Site and adjacent landfill to the north do not fall within the Ardal Tirlun Arbenning Special

Landscape Area SLA, but this designation does surround the Site to the west, east and south.

- 4.1.11 The majority of areas from within the SLA from which the Proposed Development may be discernible are non-publicly accessible, particularly the lower lying flood plain land within the meander of the River Dee, east and south of the Site. The Site has a very limited visual influence on the surrounding landscape.
- 4.1.12 It is considered, that the Proposed Development, through an increase in the quantum of built development compared to existing, will exert a **Small** magnitude of effect on the surrounding landscape character within the SLA to the east, west and south, primarily limited to areas of intervisibility, over and above the baseline industrial situation. The surrounding landscape comprises a local landscape designation and accounting for pre-existing human influences such as industry and the landfill (progressively being restored), the sensitivity of the surrounding landscape character is considered **High**.
- 4.1.13 Overall, the effect from the Proposed Development is considered **Moderate** adverse (and not important), with the level of effect further diminishing over time as new housing becomes integrated in to the landscape through increased landscaping at the Site and the establishment and maturing of restoration at the adjacent landfill. The residential will replace the pre-existing industrial character at a Site level, with the wider primary landscape characteristics of the area being retained and unaffected by development.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 There are no overriding reasons relating to landscape or visual effects why the Proposed Development should not be approved. The Site has a very limited visual influence on the surrounding area and is generally well screened from sensitive locations. The Proposed Development would not have an unacceptable adverse effect upon the landscape setting of adjacent settlements or visual approaches into settlements, views of key buildings (listed building at Site entrance), or views from within the adjacent World Heritage Site and its buffer zone. Sensitive or promoted footpath routes also have views towards the Site relatively screened.
- 5.1.2 The level of effect exerted by the Proposed Development across the wider landscape character area and Special Landscape Area is both limited in scope and area due to the nature of the landform and presence of screening features.
- 5.1.3 Effects in respect of visual amenity and landscape character are considered limited to a Moderate and non-important effect at worst. The residential proposals (with increased landscaping) will replace with pre-existing industrial baseline at a Site level. The increase in the quantum of development will increase the proportion of built development at the Site and marginally influence the wider landscape character, but this is considered balanced in the short and longer term by increases in landscaping at the Site, which will integrate development in to views (where visible) and the landscape.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 It is recommended that a suitable condition be put in place to agree the detailing of the peripheral and internal landscaping, and management of these features, to maximise opportunities to retain

and establish characteristic and native planting and allow the integration of these and the Proposed Development into the immediate landscape as effectively and as positively as possible.