

Cae Mor Farm Free Range Egg Laying Unit

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

January 2016

VIENTO ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITED

53 Armoury Gardens

Shrewsbury

SY2 6PJ

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Method of Assessment	1
Predicted Effects and Mitigation	2
Landscape and Visual Context	2
Viewpoint Analysis	4
Landscape Assessment	5
Visual Assessment	8
Conclusions	10
References	11

Appendix A – Wrexham CBC Landmap information

Appendix B – Viewpoint Analysis

Appendix C – Additional photographs

Figure LVIA 1 – LVIA Study Area

Viewpoints A – L – Panoramas

Viewpoints A and H - Photomontages

Landscape and Visual Assessment

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a landscape and visual assessment that has been undertaken to identify the likely effects of the proposed Cae Mor Farm application on the landscape character and visual amenity of the locality. A Landscape and Visual Summary was produced in 2015 to accompany the application and this full LVIA has been produced in 2016 at the request of the Council.
2. The assessment has concentrated on a 3.0km radius study area for landscape character, landscape designations and visual amenity, which is considered sufficient to identify all likely significant effects on landscape and visual amenity (see **Figure LVIA1**).
3. The assessment is illustrated by **Figure LVIA1 and by Viewpoints A - L** and supporting information is provided in **Appendices A - C**. All references are listed at the end of this report.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment Approach

4. The assessment has examined the effects of the proposed free range egg laying unit in the context of the existing landscape and visual baseline within 3km of the proposed site.

Good Practice Guidance and Data

5. The assessment process has been based on the current published good practice guidelines for landscape and visual assessment (LI/IEMA, 2013). The assessment has drawn on information provided within the local development plans that cover the study area (see list of references) and the landscape character assessments which cover the study area (see list of references).
6. GLVIA3 recommends that for non-EIA development, an assessment of significance is not required and that the assessment should also be proportionate to the scale of the project and the nature of its likely effects. The term 'significant' has been used within this assessment and in this context refers to effects which are material to the determination of the application. Essentially the term of significant used in this assessment is not used in relation to the EIA regulations.

Assessment Process

7. The assessment has involved information review, fieldwork observations and photography, and computer-based data processing and analysis, and has been undertaken in several stages, as presented in the following sections of this report:
 - Predicted effects and mitigation – a review of the visual characteristics of the proposed development to identify the aspects with the potential to give rise to landscape and visual effects and a description of the measures that have been incorporated into the design to mitigate these effects.
 - Landscape and visual context – a review of the existing landscape and visual baseline of the study area, to identify landscape character, landscape designations and visual receptors in the study area.
 - Viewpoint analysis – to predict the changes to views as a result of the proposed development from a selection of viewpoints that represent the main visual receptors in the study area.
 - Landscape assessment – an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on landscape fabric, landscape character and landscape designations in the landscape study area.
 - Visual assessment – an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity of receptors in the visual study area.

- Conclusions – a summary of the findings of the landscape and visual assessments.

Prediction Methodologies

8. The prediction methodologies for the viewpoint analysis, landscape assessment and visual assessment are provided at the beginning of these sections.

PREDICTED EFFECTS AND MITIGATION

9. A detailed description of the proposed development and information on the installation of the various components of this proposed development are provided in the Design and Access Statement of the Planning Application.
10. It is the visual appearance of the proposed development and associated activities and any proposed changes to the existing landscape fabric that are the main aspects of the development with the potential to affect landscape and visual amenity and these are summarised below.
11. The main elements of the proposed development that would be visible would be:
 - Built form – measuring 76m x 19.8m and 6.03m to ridge of roof. Four vents are located along the ridge of the roof, each 1.14m high. Two silos would be located adjacent to the southwestern corner of the building and would be of a height of up to 6m. The building and silos would be juniper green (or similar) in colour. (Final colour to be agreed with the Council)
 - Access track and turning circle – providing access to the site from the B4579 immediately to the south. The access track would be approximately 90m in length from the site entrance.
 - Site entrance – a new site entrance onto the B4579 would be created as shown on Drawing RJC-MZ-1845-05.
 - Landscape enhancement proposals – a detailed planting scheme would be submitted for agreement with the Council, post permission. Drawing RJC-MZ-1845-01B indicates the types of landscape enhancements proposed as part of the application. These landscaping measures are proposed to aid in the filtering of some views of the proposal. The landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken at the end of the construction period before the landscaping proposals have established and so assumes a worst case assessment. Commentary on the likely effects of these landscape proposals in the medium and longer terms is made throughout the report.
 - Lighting - security lights would be associated with the development and these would be motion activated, shutting off again after a short period of time has elapsed. No other lighting would be used within the development.
 - Deliveries to and from the site (as set out within the Design and Access Statement).
12. From a landscape and visual perspective, the number of visual elements present has been minimised by setting the built form within the slope of the landform (as detailed within Drawing RJC-MZ-1845-04) which takes advantage of nearby field boundary screening to the immediate north and east. Additionally a juniper green colour is suggested for the built form and landscape enhancements are proposed to aid the integration of the application into its surroundings.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT

Landscape Fabric

13. The proposed development would be situated within 150m of the existing Cae Mor farm buildings. Cae Mor Farm currently consists of the original farm (which is listed, Grade II) and some further modern extensions as well as an outbuilding (which is located to the west on the other side of the local road). The field within

which the proposed development would be located is currently laid to pasture and separated from Cae Mor Farm by an agricultural field and woodland block. Each of the fields is bounded by hedgerows, with the hedge line immediately north of the proposed built development formed by a mature treeline of hazel, hawthorn, willow, birch and mountain ash at a height of approximately 6m. Just beyond this to the north is a mature block of deciduous woodland of similar height. The eastern field boundary contains a number of mature deciduous trees of heights exceeding 7m. The field boundary adjoining with the B4579 typically contains hazel, holly, rose, hawthorn and some bracken, with mountain ash hedgerow trees. The hedge on the northern side of the B road is currently maintained to a height of approximately 2m. However, the hedge bounding the southern side of the road (the side closest to Cae Mor Ucha) is currently much taller than this, at a height of between 4m and 5m.

Landscape Character

14. Within the LANDMAP character areas refined by Wrexham County Borough Council as part of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG, adopted March 2007), the site and surrounding area are located within Landscape Character Area 4 (LCA4) Ceiriog Valley. The key characteristics and full descriptions for this LANDMAP character area, as defined by Wrexham County Borough Council, are provided in **Appendix A** and an assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the character of this area is provided in the Landscape Assessment below. The Planning Guidance Note associated with LCA 4 sets out the key characteristics of this LCA and these include:

Visual character:

- Upland pastoral valley with small scale mosaic of fields with hedgerows and woods,
- Steep open slopes give an upland feel even at lower elevations,
- Constantly changing views due to zig zag shape of valley,
- Scattered stone built farms reached by steep winding lanes,
- High quality of the landscape, the result of the sense of peace and tranquillity as well as the scenery.

Geological character:

- Quarries and spoil tips are evident around Glyn Ceiriog,
- Soils vary but are usually well drained loams.

Ecological character:

- Farmland is mainly improved grassland of low biodiversity interest but the high density of hedges and hedgerow trees is valuable for wildlife,
- Valley is rich in woodland habitats – broadleaved, conifer or mixed. Semi natural broadleaved woodland is usually associated with steep slopes and deeper tributary valleys.

Historical character:

- Older evolved/irregular small field patterns of the lower valley survive, giving way to more recently enclosed larger regular fields on upper or steeper slopes.

Cultural character:

- Sheep farming is the dominant land use, with some pheasant rearing, but there is increasing diversification to include rural crafts, woodland management, low key tourism and recreational facilities and activities including fishing and walking,
- The Ceiriog Valley is recognised as a distinct cultural area within Wales. Welsh is widely spoken.

Landscape Designations

15. There are no national landscape designations in the 3.0km radius study area. However, the site is located within a local landscape designation, Special Landscape Area (SLA). Policy EC5 within the Wrexham UDP (WCBC 2005) states:

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.

16. This is discussed in further detail later within this assessment.

Visual Receptors

17. The visual receptor locations within the 3.0km radius study area include:

- Settlements –the villages of LLwynmawr and Pontfadog and the smaller hamlets of Dolywern, Pentre Cilgwyn, Bedwlwyn, Craignant and Graig.
- Individual residential properties – scattered cottages and farmsteads.
- Long distance recreational routes – Offa's Dyke Path and Llwybr Ceiriog Trail.
- Local public rights of way – footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic (BOATs).
- Public highways – including the B4579, B4500, and a network of minor roads.

VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

Viewpoint Locations

18. Twelve viewpoints were selected as representing and illustrating some of the most open and/or key locations or receptors within the 3.0km radius study area. These viewpoints are listed in **Appendix B** and the locations of these viewpoints are shown on **Figure LVIA1**. A detailed description of a selection of these viewpoint panoramas and the potential changes that would occur through the introduction of the proposed development are contained within **Appendix B**. The remainder of the viewpoints are not included within the detailed assessment but are illustrated for information with a blue tone denoting on each photograph the field within which the proposed development would be located. Two of the twelve viewpoints are further accompanied by photomontage images, with a set viewing distance to illustrate predicted visibility of the proposed development and typically the levels of screening provided by existing vegetation in the landscape.

Findings of Viewpoint Analysis

19. Given the nature of the valley landform, the good levels of vegetation within the landscape of the study area and the position of the built form adjacent to existing mature vegetation, in general terms the visibility of the proposed development would be limited and partial. Consistently the viewpoints show generally good levels of vegetation within the existing views (even in winter months) where the proposed development would be at least partially screened from various parts of the study area. Fieldwork was undertaken during autumn/winter months and shows the worst case scenario with regard to vegetative screening. Therefore, as indicated by the viewpoint panoramas, potential visibility of the proposed development would predominantly be limited and partial.
20. Taking into account the viewpoint analysis and other fieldwork observations, these findings suggest that the proposed development could theoretically result in a significant change in the view for some high sensitivity visual receptors (e.g. some residents) immediately surrounding the application site and within approximately 500m of the site, for some high/medium sensitivity receptors (e.g. tourists, equestrians, cyclists and walkers (on local routes where high/medium sensitivity occurs)) potentially within

approximately 250m of the site, and for some medium sensitivity receptors (e.g. motorists) immediately adjacent to and within approximately 50m of the site.

21. However, it is important to note that even within close proximity of the proposal there are many locations where the proposed development would be largely or entirely screened by intervening topography and/or vegetation, such that views from within these zones would be partial. This is illustrated by a number of the viewpoints, such as Viewpoints C, D, E and F which are all located within 250m of the proposal, but no significant effects on visual receptors are expected due to the screened views towards the proposal. In these instances the magnitude of change in the view and resulting overall effects are reduced by the partial visibility of the proposal.
22. A more detailed discussion of the likely effects on the visual amenity of receptors in settlements and residential properties, on recreational routes, public highways and local roads is provided in the Visual Assessment below.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

23. This assessment draws on the review of the predicted effects of the development, the landscape fabric of the site, the key characteristics of the LANDMAP LCA, the purposes/objectives of the landscape designations, the visibility analysis, the viewpoint analysis and fieldwork observations, and discusses the significance of the predicted effects on:

- Landscape fabric of the site.
- Landscape character.
- Purposes of the landscape designations.

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Prediction Methodology

24. Landscape fabric is composed of the physical components of the landscape (eg landform, land cover and landscape elements and features). Developments can bring about both direct and indirect effects on landscape fabric. Direct effects occur where changes to the fabric of the landscape arise as the result of physical disturbance, for example, the loss of landscape elements such as hedgerows, walls and trees. Indirect effects are consequential changes that are separated from the source of the change in a temporal or spatial manner, for example changes in vegetation downstream as the result of modifications to surface water patterns upstream in a catchment area.
25. This assessment of effects on landscape fabric considers the existing landscape fabric of the site and the predicted effects of the development, and makes a judgement as to whether there are likely to be any significant beneficial or adverse changes to landscape fabric based on the following two definitions:
 - Significant beneficial effects on landscape fabric - could occur where important/mature/diverse/distinctive components, which had previously been lost or degraded as the result of agricultural operations or other development, would be added, reinstated or improved.
 - Significant adverse effects on landscape fabric - could occur where existing important/mature/diverse/distinctive components would be permanently lost (or long term temporarily lost) and the effects cannot be adequately mitigated.

Construction Phase

26. There would be some adverse effects on landscape fabric during the construction phase as a result of the trimming back and/or removal of up to approximately 86m of field boundary hedgerow in total to improve visibility at the site entrance. However, wherever possible this would purely be trimming and as little hedgerow would be removed as possible.

27. As the field is laid to pasture, there would be limited loss of ground vegetation as a result of the footprint of the built form and access track/ turning circle within the proposed development.
28. As part of the application, landscaping proposals would be planted at the end of the construction phase as a beneficial effect on the landscape fabric of the site.
29. Therefore, overall there would be no significant (adverse or beneficial) effects on landscape fabric as a result of the construction phase.

Operational Phase

30. There would be no effects on the landscape fabric of the site during the operational phase, as there would not be any further alterations to the landscape fabric of the site as a result of the operation of the proposed development.

Effects on Landscape Character

Prediction Methodology

31. Landscape character is composed of physical, biological and social components, combined with aesthetic and perceptual factors. This assessment of effects on landscape character considers the existing landscape character of the site and study area and the predicted effects of the development, and assesses the area within which there is likely to be a significant change to landscape character, based on the following two definitions:
 - Significant beneficial effects on landscape character - are likely to occur where the proposed development would materially enhance the quality (condition) of the landscape, would complement the existing character and/or where particularly valued characteristics, previously lost or degraded, would be reinstated.
 - Significant adverse effects on landscape character - are likely to occur where the proposed development would become a key or one of the defining characteristics of the landscape, would contrast with the existing character, and/or where existing key characteristics would be permanently lost or changed.
32. Whether predicted changes to landscape character would be significant depends on the sensitivity (susceptibility and value) of the landscape resource and the scale or magnitude of landscape effects, as indicated by fieldwork and the viewpoint analysis. Therefore, the findings of the viewpoint analysis are examined together with other fieldwork observations so as to determine the degree and extent of likely significant effects of the proposed development on landscape character within the various landscape character units in the study area.
33. Landscape units are often relatively large geographical areas and the screening effects of topography and vegetation will vary across each unit, so that the predicted extent of significant effects on landscape character will almost always be intermittent. However, with increasing distance from the proposed site, the proposed development will have a decreasing effect on landscape character and there will come a point where there are few or no further significant landscape effects. This is defined as the extent of the significant effects on landscape character.

Effects on Character of the Site Landscape

34. There would be some short-term effects on the character of the site as a result of the construction phase, particularly the excavations of the trench and foundations. Overall, the construction phase would be short-term, with the various activities lasting for only small parts of the overall timescale. The presence of construction machinery and activities would be transient (temporary, short-term and reversible) and ground and vegetation disturbance would be limited. Therefore, the effects of the construction phase would not result in a significant beneficial or adverse effect on the landscape character of the site.

35. The main effects on the landscape character of the site would occur during the operational phase as a result of the presence of the new building, access track and turning circle. All these elements would be located within LCT 4.
36. The element of the proposal most likely to be visible across the surrounding area would be the proposed built form which would become a key characteristic of the landscape of the site itself and, although existing key characteristics would not be lost, this built form would contrast with the existing character such that it would result in a significant adverse change to the character of the site landscape.
37. However, it would be impossible to site a building of this scale in the UK without significantly affecting the character of at least the site. The key issue is how far this change in landscape character would extend and whether this change would be acceptable.

Effects on Character of Wider Landscape

LCA 4

38. The key characteristics and more detailed description of this LCA are provided in the extract in **Appendix A**. The area is described within the assessment as (extract) '*scenic, tranquil and steep-sided valley enclosed by spurs of the Berwyn mountains, with hillside farms, wooded and farmed slopes, and small villages along the River Ceiriog*'. Distinctive characteristics include: mosaic of pasture, woods and traditional farms, constantly changing views due to zig-zag shape of valley, farmland mainly improved grassland with high density of hedges and hedgerow trees.
39. The SLA local landscape designation covers the area. This LCA covers the landscape within the entire study area and fieldwork found that views across the area vary greatly depending on local topography and vegetation – as noted by the LCA 4 description as well. Viewpoints A to L are all located within this LCA.
40. Sensitivity – the key characteristics of this LCA are relatively strongly/clearly expressed and, due in particular to its overall rural character, scale varying from small to medium, irregular pattern and varying topography, it would have a medium compatibility with a development of the scale and nature proposed. However, due to the generally rural nature of the area this LCA is considered to be susceptible to the type of changes that could be brought about by the introduction of a development of this type on the site. This landscape is within a local landscape designation, and will have county value with the valued elements including the wildlife and biodiversity, views, historic assets and hedgerows. Therefore, in general, the sensitivity of the LCA to built form is considered to be high/medium.
41. The site is located on land sloping down to the north, which is bounded by mature hedgerows and mature tree belts to the north and east. To the south and west existing hedgerows bound the field to heights of approximately 1.5 – 2m. Beyond the road to the south, the landform continues to rise, with the roadside hedgerow boundary approximately 3m tall. These topographic and vegetation elements all aid in containing and limiting visibility of the proposed site from within the study area.
42. It is also important to note the existing built form within the locality. To the south, Cae Mor Ucha has two agricultural barns associated with the property, approximately 100-150m from the proposed development. To the east, Plas-onn has a large agricultural barn which is approximately 700m from the proposed site. This Plas-onn barn is of similar proportions to the Cae Mor proposal and is illustrated in Appendix C as well as labelled on Viewpoint A. There are a number of other large agricultural barns in the vicinity, such as at Pwll-hir and Caedicws Farm. In this way, agricultural buildings are a regular feature of views within this landscape and are generally partially screened by local vegetation, as would be the case with the proposed development, as indicated by the viewpoints. The sloping valley landform allows some views of a detailed patchwork rural landscape where the proposed built form would sit tucked in behind mature hedgerows and tree belts, as illustrated by the photomontages for **Viewpoints A and H**. However, in other locations, the slope of the landform serves to screen parts of the view due to the steepness of the slope. Parts of the proposal would be discernible from some parts of the landscape in a similar way to the visibility of the

agricultural sheds at Plas-onn, however in the same way, the Cae Mor proposal would not be prominent or dominant and would not become a key characteristic of this landscape, nor would it override the existing landscape context.

43. In the short term (post construction), the proposed development would be partially visible from some parts of the landscape close to the site, such as from some points along the B4579, as illustrated by Viewpoints E and G. However, these are not consistent views, several parts of the landscape closer to the site than Vp G contain much higher levels of vegetation as roadside hedgerows and areas of woodland where the proposed development would not be visible. Therefore, whilst Viewpoints E and G indicate that a significant change in landscape character may occur if similar views are consistently available in the vicinity of the site, fieldwork has found that this is not the case – these viewpoints represent the worst case scenario beyond the site. As a result, whilst intermittently more open views of the proposal may be available these do not characterise the typical views locally and no significant effect on the character of this LCA are expected beyond the site.
44. In the medium term, proposed landscaping measures would establish and start to provide some limited screening of the proposal. The effects of this would be seen in the further reduction of views from the landscape around the B4579 to the east and south of the site where the development would be further filtered in views and potential visibility of the turning circle would also be reduced.

Effects on Landscape Designations

45. As noted above, the site is located within the SLA local landscape designation. Policy EC5 relating to this designation is also set out above. This proposed development is considered to be for '*agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other rural enterprises*' and has considered carefully the location of the development so as to limit the potential visual impacts. Evidence of the limited visual impacts is illustrated in Viewpoints A to L and within the photographs in Appendix C. To further ensure the minimisation of potential visual impacts, the proposal has also provided a range of landscape and biodiversity enhancement. As such, it is considered that the proposal conforms with Policy EC5 and that there would be no significant effect on the purposes of this designation.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Prediction Methodology

46. Visual amenity arises from a visual receptor's experience of the visual world around them and the value they place on a particular view or views. It is possible for a development to result in a significant change in the view from a particular location without resulting in a significant effect on the visual amenity of any receptors if, for example, the location is not accessible to receptors or if the view is acknowledged as having limited value.
47. For the purposes of this assessment, the predicted changes in views have been examined and significant effects on visual amenity have been identified where the proposed development would result in a significant effect on the primary view(s) at a location or along a route and the view(s) is/are valued and can be appreciated by receptors who are at that location for purposes that include the appreciation of the view(s).
48. Significant effects on visual amenity can be perceived as beneficial, adverse or neutral and this depends largely on the perceptions and opinions of the individual receptors and, to a certain extent, on the type of development proposed. The polarisation of public opinion on renewable energy is such that it is difficult to define significant changes in a view as having a definitely beneficial or definitely adverse effect on visual amenity for all members of the public who may experience that view.
49. Accordingly, the assessment identifies whether the predicted effects on visual amenity would be significant or not significant and, whilst it is expected that these significant effects would be placed on the negative side of the planning balance, it is important that the broad range of public opinions on such effects is also taken into account in the decision making process.

50. This assessment draws on the predicted effects of the development, the viewpoint analysis and fieldwork observations, and discusses the significance of the predicted effects on the visual amenity of receptors at a range of visual receptor locations within the study area. Within this study area these include settlements, individual residential properties, long distance recreational routes, the local public rights of way network, and public highways.

Settlements

51. The viewpoint analysis suggests that there could be significant changes in the view for high sensitivity receptors, such as residents in their properties, within approximately 500m of the proposed development. Each of the settlements within the study area is located at distances of 1km or more from the proposal and so no significant effects on the visual amenity of these residents would occur as a result of the proposals.

Individual Residential Properties

52. There are a limited number of residents within farmsteads and individual properties within 500m of the proposed development who may gain open views of the proposal and who could experience a significant effect on their visual amenity.
53. In reality, the natural slope of the landform, the proposed earthworks to nestle the building into this slope, the existing vegetation and the proposed landscaping would all combine to greatly limit any potential views of the proposal. Viewpoint F illustrates this point well, being located close to Cae Mor Ucha to the south of the site. The viewpoint indicates that the existing vegetation along the B4579, combined with the slope of the land across the site results in the site field being completely screened from view. Furthermore, Viewpoints C and D illustrate the views south from Cae Mor Farm itself and show the extremely limited potential visibility of the proposal from within 300m of the application site. Briwnant and Ty-nant are the only two other properties located within 500m of the proposal, where fieldwork has indicated that the slope of the landform in combination with nearby existing mature vegetation would filter potential views of the proposal to such a degree that no significant effects on the visual amenity of these residents is expected.

Long Distance Recreational Routes

54. The Offa's Dyke Path is a National Trail and runs through the far east of the study area at a distance of 2.3km from the proposed development at its closest point. From this sort of distance, any visibility of the proposal would be distant and as part of wide and detailed views, such as those illustrated by Viewpoint A, located at a similar distance from the proposal. As Viewpoint A has indicated, in terms of the existing view (and not taking into account the proposed landscape enhancements) a slight/negligible magnitude of change would be expected as a result of the introduction of the proposal and no significant effect on the visual amenity of receptors using this National Trail would occur.
55. The Llwybr Ceiriog Trail is located more proximate to the site at a distance of 550m from the proposals at its closest point. However, this section of the route across the moorland to the south would gain no visibility of the proposal due to the screening nature of the local topography. Nevertheless, Viewpoint K does represent a view from this long distance route as possibly one of the most proximate views from the route, at a distance of 1.5km away. Here the site is partially visible and the proposed development would be partially visible, side on, in the short, medium and longer term, where a slight/negligible magnitude of change is expected and no significant effect on the visual amenity of users of this route would occur.

Local Public Rights of Way

56. There is a network of public byways, footpaths and bridleways in the surrounding area, the closest of which are the footpaths by Cae Mor Ucha to the south, and by Cae Mor Farm to the north. These footpaths are illustrated by Viewpoints F and D respectively, indicating the existing good levels of localised vegetation near these footpaths.

57. The viewpoint analysis has suggested that the limit of significance for high/medium sensitivity receptors such as users of the local public rights of way network would be within approximately 250m of the site. Both Viewpoints D and F fall within this distance, yet both indicate that the proposed development would be almost entirely screened by existing vegetation. Viewpoint H is one of the closest open views towards the proposed site from a local footpath, at a distance of 500m away. Immediately west of this location the footpath drops down onto lower ground (with no visibility of the site) and travels through woodland. It is useful to note that this section of the footpath (through the woodland) has been rendered impassable over recent months due to the high rainfall. Whilst the proposal would be partially visible from Viewpoint H, the photomontage which accompanies this report indicates that the limited height of the building would result in a well screened development due to its location on the slope, when seen from this viewpoint, and no significant effect on the visual amenity of these receptors would occur.

Public Highways

58. Public highways in the study area include the B4579, B4500 and a network of minor roads. The viewpoint analysis has predicted that, for medium sensitivity receptors, such as motorists and their passengers, significant changes in the view are unlikely to occur beyond the site itself. This has been illustrated by Viewpoints E, G and I which are located in the vicinity of the site but where no significant effect on the visual amenity of motorists is expected due to the levels of existing vegetation in the area.

CONCLUSIONS

59. This assessment has examined the likely effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area.
60. The significant effects of this proposed development would be limited to:
- The character of the landscape of the site. This would be limited to an extremely small part of LCA 4.
61. There would not be any significant effects on landscape fabric, the character of the landscapes beyond the site, or the visual amenity of residents, or walkers, equestrians and cyclists in the study area or motorists on any B and local road network within the study area.
62. It should also be noted that this assessment has considered the landscaping proposals at the point at which they have been implemented and not once the planting has established and matured, which will further filter the proposal in views from the surrounding area over time.
63. Therefore, it is considered that the significant effects on landscape and visual amenity as a result of the proposed development would be limited in this location.

REFERENCES

DCLG (June 2006a) Environmental Impact Assessment: A guide to good practice and procedures. A Consultation Paper.

DCLG (June 2006b) Amended Circular on Environmental Impact Assessment. A Consultation Paper.

DETR (1999) Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No 293) as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No 2867) and the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No 3295).

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition

Landscape Institute (March 2011) Photography and Photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment (LI Advice Note 01/11)

Swanwick C (2004a) Landscape Assessment Series – Topic Paper 6 – Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity

Wrexham County Borough Council (2005) Wrexham UDP 1996 – 2011

Wrexham County Borough Council – Landmap LCAs 2, 3 and 4.

Reference has also been made to the following Roger Parry & Partners documents:

Design and Access Statement for Cae Mor Application

Drawings:

RJC-MZ-1845-01B

RJC-MZ-1845-01C

RJC-MZ-1845-02

RJC-MZ-1845-03

RJC-MZ-1845-04

RJC-MZ-1845-05

RJC-MZ-1845-06