



PROPOSED NEW WAREHOUSE, KRONOSPAN, CHIRK

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

May 2021



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Heritage Appraisal of the proposed new warehouse at the Kronospan site, Chirk (Proposed Development), 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 The Heritage Appraisal, which focuses on the visual interaction of the Proposed Development with nearby designated heritage assets, follows the assessment principles set out in *Planning Policy Wales* (edition 11, 2021, Welsh Government), the accompanying *Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment* (2017, Welsh Government), and *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (Cadw, 2017).
- 1.4 Landscape and visual effects are separate, although closely related and interlinked issues.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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

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- A conclusion as to the residual likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

1.8 The process follows a standard approach, namely:

- The establishment of the baseline conditions, against which the effects of the Proposed Development will be assessed;
- 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 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.

1.11 Appendix 5 provides further details regarding the methodology followed in undertaking the Heritage Appraisal.

Description of the Proposed Development

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

1.13 In summary, the Proposed Development would comprise a new warehouse building close to the north-eastern boundary of the wider Kronospan site, with a maximum roof height of approximately 11.5m.

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- 1.14 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) forms part of the planning submission. The AIA identifies the effects of the Proposed Development upon trees, and also identifies mitigation measures.

Legislative and Policy Context

- 1.15 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

- 1.16 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 940m 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*”.

Cultural Heritage Assets

- 1.17 There are a range of cultural heritage assets located within the study area. Some types of asset are subject to statutory protection.
- 1.18 Listed Buildings are designated under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in respect of buildings, or other structures of special architectural or historic interest.
- 1.19 Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in respect of areas the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Whilst a statutory designation, Conservation Areas are designated by local authorities, rather than centrally.
- 1.20 Scheduled Monuments are nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

European Landscape Convention

- 1.21 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.
- 1.22 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

- 1.23 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);
 - *Local Planning Guidance Note 33. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site* (adopted by Wrexham County Borough Council 2012);
 - *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 set out 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 a series of viewpoint locations.

Heritage

- 2.7 The Heritage Appraisal (HA) set out in Appendix 5, is concerned with the implications of visual change to the setting of designated heritage assets (an approach that has been adopted in relation to several previous planning applications at the Kronospan site). Setting can also be affected by additional factors, such as noise, which are not

considered here. Noise effects are addressed in a separate Noise Assessment that also forms part of the planning submission.

- 2.8 The HA adopts a proportionate approach to effects on setting, as advocated in *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (Cadw 2017). The HA seeks to provide a broad appraisal that focuses on more significant or sensitive assets or groups of assets.
- 2.9 The HA identifies designated assets within the study area, giving a brief description of what these are and what designation entails. An overview of how the Proposed Development would be experienced in relation to these assets and their setting is then set out, with a conclusion as to what the likely effects upon the assets would be.

Limitations

- 2.10 Viewpoint photography used in the LVIA was taken in December 2020 and reflects the vegetation cover present at this time of year. As such, the assessment of visual effects from each viewpoint 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 40.2 hectares at the western edge of Chirk.
- 3.3 The Proposed Development would be located close to the north-eastern boundary of the wider Kronospan site, within what is currently an area of hardstanding used for the storage of materials. Existing warehouse buildings and other storage areas are located immediately to the west and south, and are similar in height to the Proposed Development. The site boundary to the north and east of where the

Proposed Development would be located is defined by dense tree cover, which provides very effective screening of views from the surrounding area. The eastern boundary of the site is with the B5070 Holyhead Road, and in addition to the aforementioned tree cover, an earth bund approximately 5m high is located at the boundary (with planting along its length).

- 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. As such, there are a series of two-storey residential properties located along the eastern side of the B5070, that have frontages facing that part of the wider Kronospan site where the Proposed Development would be located. The earth bund and tree cover described above provide very effective screening of views, and only occasional glimpses of existing structures within the wider Kronospan site are available from the properties.
- 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;

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- 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;
 - 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.

Cultural Heritage Assets

3.17 A range of designated cultural heritage assets are located within the vicinity of the wider Kronospan site, the locations of which are shown on Figure 3. Of particular note are:

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- the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (approximately 60m to the west of the Kronospan Site);
 - Chirk Castle Registered Park and Garden (approximately 350m to the west of the Kronospan Site);
 - Chirk Conservation Area (located approximately 65m south-east of the Kronospan Site)

3.18 For further details regarding heritage assets, refer to Appendix 5.

Landscape Character Assessment and Related Studies

3.19 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).

3.20 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

3.21 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 replaced to accommodate new industrial processes, or otherwise refurbished, and new items of plant introduced to the Site, reflecting changes in technology or working practices.

Visual Baseline

3.22 As noted in Section 2 above, a series of fourteen viewpoints were identified and agreed with Wrexham County Council as part of work related to the assessment of previous development proposals at the wider Kronospan site.

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- 3.23 Given the relatively low height of the Proposed Development, the degree of screening provided by landform and vegetation cover, and the presence of other far larger structures nearby, it was clear that significant visual effects would not occur from all of the previously identified viewpoints, and ten of these were thus scoped out of the LVIA.
- 3.24 Two new viewpoint locations were identified in order reflect potential changes in view from the properties on Holyhead Road to the east of the Site.
- 3.25 As such, a total of six viewpoints have been included in the LVIA, reflecting more sensitive receptors located closer to the Proposed Development. Locations are illustrated on Figure 1. The location of viewpoints scoped out of the LVIA are also illustrated on the Figure.
- 3.26 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).
- 3.27 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;
 - Road and rail users; and
 - Tourists/ recreational visitors on surrounding public rights of way/ other routes (including the canal towpath), and as part of their journeys to other destinations.
- 3.28 Figures 2a-f include baseline photography from each viewpoint, which is annotated where deemed appropriate to highlight key features. The photographs were taken in December 2020, using a Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with a full-frame sensor, using a 50mm lens. The precise location of each photograph was recorded using a hand-held Garmin Oregon 600 GPS device (which has an accuracy of approximately 3m). Following the Site visit, the GPS data was loaded into Google Earth, to double check that the GPS recording was accurate.

- 3.29 Figures 2e and 2f (Viewpoints O and P) also have an outline of the proposed new buildings superimposed onto the baseline photograph. To produce these, a digital model of the Proposed Development was created using details provided by the Applicant. This was imported into industry standard software (Autodesk 3DStudioMax), along with the viewpoint data recorded on site (as discussed above). This enables a series of 'camera' points to be created within the model, reflecting the view from each viewpoint towards the Proposed Development.
- 3.30 A series of markers were added to the model, representing real-world locations such as topographic features, vegetation and buildings. The locations of these markers were determined via the use of aerial imagery (e.g. Google Earth) and by the Environment Agency 1m Digital Surface Model (DSM) LIDAR data. The model was then lined up with the individual photograph that focuses on the Site. The markers were used to ensure that the model lines up both horizontally and vertically with the photograph (by matching the markers with the real-world equivalent). The outline of the proposed building was then traced.
- 3.31 Given the nature of the views towards the Site from Viewpoints O and P, there are few markers that can be used to line up the model and the photography, and this limits how accurately the model can be lined up. As such, the building may be slightly higher, or slightly lower than indicated on the Figures. This does not affect any conclusions made in the LVIA.
- 3.32 In relation to the requirements of the current Landscape Institute visualisation guidance¹, Figures 2a-d are Type 1 visualisations (annotated photographs), and Figures 2e-f are Type 3 visualisations (photowire).
- 3.33 The viewpoints included in the LVIA are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Viewpoints Included in the LVIA

Viewpoint	British National Grid Co-ordinates	Viewpoint Details
A: Chirk Recreation Ground	329022, 337810	<i>Representative</i> of views from public open space in Chirk village centre
C: N edge of Chirk	328919, 339157	<i>Representative</i> of views available to residents and road users at the edge of the village

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

Viewpoint	British National Grid Co-ordinates	Viewpoint Details
I: New Hall	327562, 338824	<i>Representative</i> of views from the adjacent road network and nearby property, and also from the entrance to Chirk Castle
M: Canal towpath north of site	328562, 339100	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users
O: B5070, outside number 16	328926, 338884	<i>Representative</i> of views available to local residents and road users
P: B5070, next to bus stop near Co-op	328972, 338690	<i>Representative</i> of views available to local residents and road users

3.34 Table 2 lists those viewpoints that were scoped out of the LVIA.

Table 2: Viewpoints scoped out of the LVIA

Viewpoint	British National Grid Co-ordinates	Viewpoint Details
B: Offa's Dyke Path near Fron Isaf	327325, 339882	<i>Representative</i> of views from the National Trail, north-west of the site
D: Chirk Castle Gates	328114, 337683	<i>Specific</i> view from the Castle gates
E: Green Lane	329697, 338820	<i>Specific</i> view through gap in roadside hedge from hillside lane east of village
F: B5070 north of Chirk	328871, 339664	<i>Representative</i> of the views available from the road leading into the village
G: Offa's Dyke Path west of Bronygarth	325703, 336550	<i>Representative</i> of views from the National Trail, south-west of the site
H: Chirk Castle	327176, 338038	<i>Specific</i> view from the garden terrace at the Castle
J: Canal towpath near marina	328604, 339627	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users (including those at the marina)
K: Canal towpath north-west of site	328516, 338945	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users
L: Chirk Castle driveway	327238, 338583	<i>Representative</i> of views available to visitors on their way to the Castle itself.
N: Canal towpath north of site	328558, 339165	<i>Representative</i> of views available to canal and towpath users

Cumulative Development

- 3.35 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:
- 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
- 3.36 These four schemes are therefore existing features, and their presence forms part of the main LVIA baseline.
- 3.37 The remaining three projects all benefit from planning consent, but have yet to be built. These are therefore cumulative schemes:
- Log Offloading and Flaker Facility (new building of maximum height 2.1m, and associated trackside cranes and conveyors);
 - Raw Board Storage (vertical extension to an existing building, with an increased maximum height of 22.935m); and
 - 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).
- 3.38 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 three 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 a new warehouse building. 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 largely within an existing area of hardstanding, but would require changes to the perimeter bund along the B5070 Holyhead Road.
- 4.4 A number of trees located along the inner face of the affected section of perimeter bund would be removed. The trees affected are identified in the AIA as being of low quality. A single oak tree (referred to as tree T01 in the AIA) growing remote from the bund within the existing hardstanding further west would also need to be removed. The AIA identifies this as being of moderate quality, but also notes that the tree is in poor condition. The AIA confirms that equivalent replacement planting for tree T01 (oak), and for tree T02 (oak) would be provided as part of the Proposed Development (locations to be agreed with Wrexham County Council). The majority of the tree cover on the perimeter bund including all of the larger trees along the B5070 frontage would be retained.
- 4.5 Change to the physical fabric of the Site would be limited. Whilst there would some localised tree removal, the eastern perimeter of the wider Kronospan site would continue to be defined by an extensive belt of dense tree cover. Effects on fabric would be adverse, but would not be significant.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 In summary, the Proposed Development would comprise a new warehouse building, of similar height to adjacent existing buildings, and far smaller than the largest structures at the wider Kronospan site. Due to its location within the wider Kronospan

site relative to existing larger structures, and due to the surrounding landform and pattern of vegetation cover (and in particular the existing bund and tree cover immediately to the east along the Holyhead Road boundary), the Proposed Development would not be widely visible. In addition, in the context of the existing structures at Kronospan, its presence would be wholly unremarkable. The overall influence of the Kronospan site upon landscape character would not change and the wider underlying characteristics of the two LCAs would not change. Effects upon character would be negligible and would not be significant.

Visual Effects: Operational

- 4.8 A detailed assessment of visual effects at each of the six viewpoints included in the LVIA is set out in Appendix 4. The viewpoints cover a range of receptor types within the study area, and reflect views towards the Proposed Development from a range of different directions.
- 4.9 In summary, none of the viewpoints would experience significant visual effects. At four of the viewpoints (C, M, O and P) a minor level of effect would occur. A negligible effect would occur at Viewpoint I. The Proposed Development would not be visible from Viewpoint A.
- 4.10 Generally, the Proposed Development would be very well screened by a combination of landform, vegetation cover and existing structures, and as such, would not be widely visible. The earth bund and the tree planting along the eastern boundary of the wider Kronospan site would provide very effective screening of views of the Proposed Development from properties located along the B5070 Holyhead Road, and at worst only glimpses of the new building would be available from these through the trees. The existing warehouse buildings to the west and south, and existing tree cover to the north would also provide screening. The Proposed Development would not stand out, and indeed would seldom be clearly visible.
- 4.11 Where visible (in the context of the screening features described above), the Proposed Development would be viewed in the context of existing and larger structures already present at the wider Kronospan site. The Proposed Development would typically result in only a minor change to the arrangement of elements within the wider site. Several of the existing structures are far larger than the Proposed Development in terms of height, mass, floorspace, or all three. As such, the Proposed Development would generally have little or no appreciable effect upon the

long-established existing influence of the Kronospan site upon views. There would be a localised increase in the influence of built development in views from Holyhead Road, but change in view would be small scale, with the new building well screened by tree cover.

Effects on Landscape Designations

- 4.12 It should be noted that the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB was extended in 2011 to cover the area west of the Kronospan site, and that the 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.
- 4.13 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), and the addition of the Proposed Development would not materially increase this influence upon the designation.

Effects on Heritage Assets

- 4.14 The effects of the Proposed Development upon the setting of heritage assets are set out in detail in Appendix 5. In summary, effects would not be significant, with the Proposed Development resulting in little appreciable change to the existing influence of the Kronospan Site upon the surrounding area and upon the setting of assets therein. Effects would be negligible at worst.

Cumulative Effects

- 4.15 In a scenario where the four 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 views towards the Proposed Development, which would continue to be well screened by existing structures, by vegetation cover and by landform.
- 4.16 As such, the effects of the Proposed Development would not materially differ from those described above. Cumulative effects would not be significant.

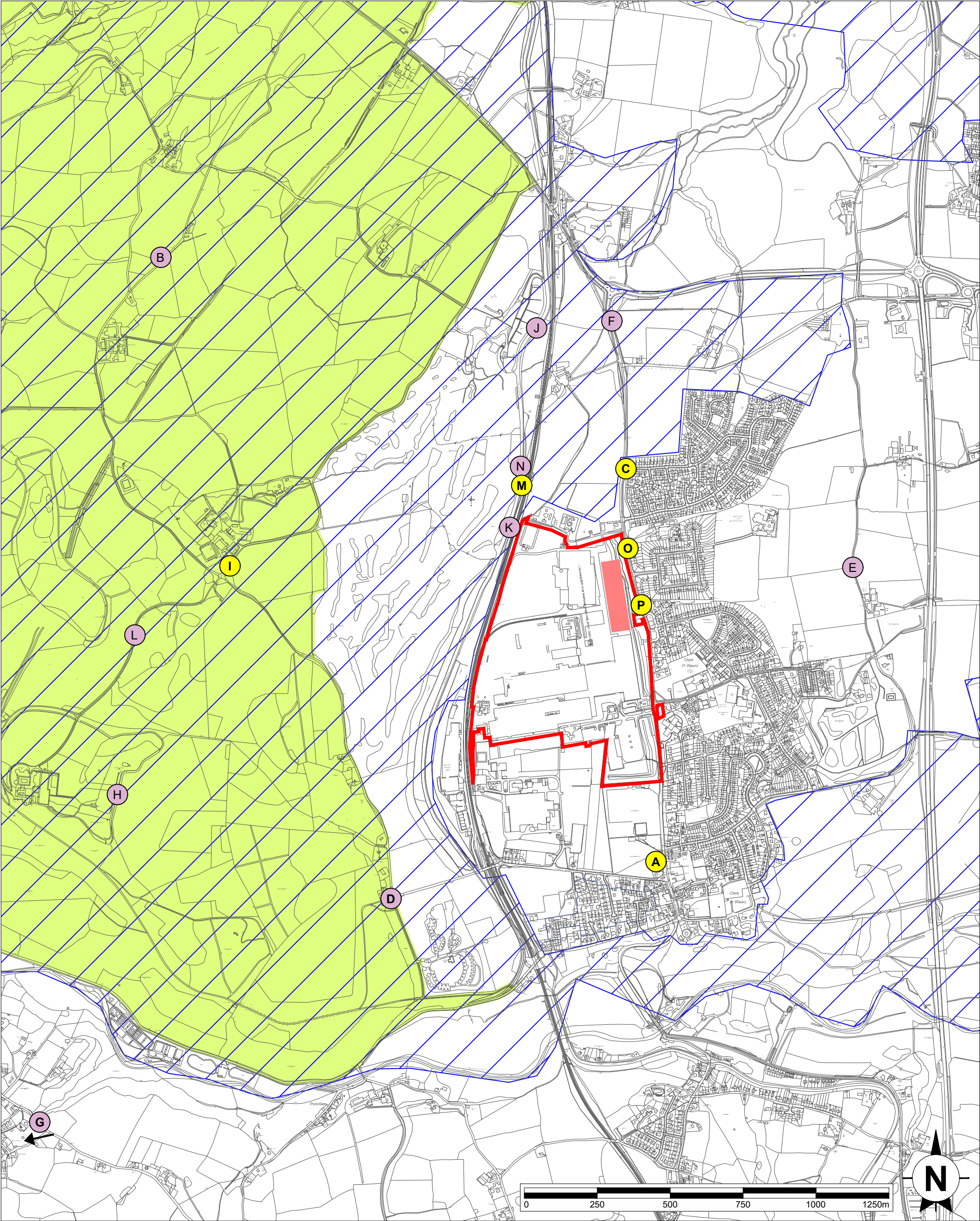
5 Mitigation

- 5.1 As set out in Section 4.0 above, and in the AIA, replacement planting for two trees lost to development would be provided.
- 5.2 As the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would not be significant, no further specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.
- 5.3 It should also be noted that, independent of this planning application, the Applicant submitted a landscape strategy for the area surrounding the Kronospan site in May 2017. The purpose of the landscape strategy is to identify and then implement opportunities for enhanced screening of the Kronospan site via new off-site planting and changes to the management of existing vegetation. The landscape strategy was approved by Wrexham County Council in 2019.
- 5.4 The implementation of the landscape strategy has commenced (for example to the recent planting close to Viewpoint I), and this likely to result in some reduction in the visibility of the Kronospan site (including the Proposed Development) generally over time.

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 within the study area and their presence is an established part of the character of the landscape. In comparison, the Proposed Development would be a much smaller structure, and would be well screened by other structures, by the screening bund along Holyhead Road to the east, and by retained tree cover to the north and east. The Proposed Development would be an unremarkable addition that would seldom be clearly visible, and which would result in little or no appreciable change to existing influence of the Kronospan site upon its surroundings. Neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant.

FIGURES



axis Key: Location of Proposed Development Kronospan Site Boundary Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Special Landscape Area	Kronospan Warehouse	
	Figure 1	
	Landscape and Visual Context	
	Scale 1:12,500@A3	Date May 2021



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



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Existing View



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Existing View



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Existing View



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View at a comfortable arm's length

Existing View with Proposed Development outline