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**Proposed strategic development site,
Llanrhos, Conwy County.**

Landscape and Visual overview

September 2019

Tirlun Barr Associates

Chartered Landscape Architects

Tan y Berllan,
Llanbedr y Cennin,
CONWY. LL32 8UY

www.tirlunbarr.com

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Author	Checked	Issue	Date
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JB	PW	Issued	19.09.19

This report has been prepared by Tirlunbarr Associates on behalf of Beech Development (NW)Ltd. in connection with a potential development at Llanrhos Conwy County and takes into account their particular instructions and requirements. It is not intended for and should not be relied on by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

1.0 Introduction and scope of the report

- 1.1 Tirlun Barr Associates were appointed in summer 2019, by Beech Developments Ltd. to undertake an initial Landscape and Visual review of a proposed mixed use development on land near Llanrhos Conwy County north Wales.
- 1.2 It is understood that Beech Developments are responding to a open request by the Council inviting interested parties to Plan review for strategic the as part of the 2019 adopted Conwy LDP Strategic formal review which takes place every 4 years.
- 1.3 The assessment was undertaken by Mrs. Julie Barr BA, Dip LA CMLI, a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 28 years' experience and Principal of Tirlun Barr Associates
- 1.4 This document has been prepared to accompany a submission by Beech Homes (NW) Ltd. for mixed use development on land in Llanrhos as a candidate strategic site for consideration to be included in Conwy Councils forthcoming Local Development Plan 2013-2033(LDP Local Development Plan, 2018-2033(LDP).) Candidate sites were sought in 2018 to address the demand for a range of land uses such as housing residential, schools employment, retail and leisure etc.
- 1.5 This information provided is intended to provide an overview of any likely landscape and visual impacts that the development may have upon the surrounding landscape, and visual receptors at this initial stage and should not be considered as a Landscape and Visual Impact assessment, or historic landscape assessment which may be required in the future.
- 1.6 A basic description of the site and surrounding area context has been undertaken as a baseline identification, and the review has involved the consideration of the illustrative proposals following site inspection.
- 1.7 Suggested mitigation, including refinement of the illustrative masterplan, has been undertaken in order to reduce and avoid adverse impacts upon the wider landscape.
- 1.8 Report figures are contained within the Appendices at the rear of this document.

2.0 The proposed development

Landscape context

- 2.1 The proposed site extent comprises predominantly grazed and developed hinterland located between the existing settlements of Llanrhos and Deganwy accessed by a well-established road network.
- 2.2 The site context includes existing commercial office development with associated car parking, and peripheral resident development including the edges of Deganwy, Llanrhos and Llandudno, as well scattered pre-war housing, Plas Dolau Farmhouse and static caravan site, native hedgerows and native copses, and established regional and local road networks.
- 2.3 Built development is predominately single and two storey post war residential development with earlier and imposing late Victorian dwellings near the Bryn Lupus and Pentywyn Road junction in the east, and large multi storied former convalescent homes at Tyn y Coed and Plas Mariandir now converted as 31 retirement flats to the north west- an extract from Google Earth below indicates the site context within an aerial photograph.



Plate 1-The site context with the proposed site location highlighted above.

Google Maps ©

- 2.4 Forming part of the LANDMAP Aspect Area reference CNWYVS024 Wydden and Ganol Valleys – as open lowland farmland - (the Aspect area is centred along these former river valleys between elevated wooded and steeper land), having Moderate value, its distinctiveness is cited as a result of its enclosure by the landform of coastal hills.
- 2.5 Within the extant Conwy LDP the proposed site is located within the Green Barrier- (Policy NTE2) together with land north of Bryn Lupus Road, and has remained undeveloped during the plan period with the aim of preventing physical coalescence between Llanrhos and Deganwy, but has no other protective landscape designation.
- 2.6 The wider area has important historical and cultural association with the surrounding landscape including Deganwy Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) some 0.5km distant the Vardre and Bryniau Tower, circa 0.4km distant, Bodysgallen Hall and St. Davids College Listed Buildings and Parks and Garden contained within the ICOMOSUK and CADW Register of Landscapes Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales.
- 2.7 Topographically the proposed site extent is set within lower land between 30-45m AOD surrounded by the afore mentioned coastal hills which include Deganwy Castle over 50m above the site at 107m AOD to the west and largely enclosed to the south and east by landform and existing development.
- 2.8 The site is not visually connected with Llandudno being some 2.5km to the south and with a well wooded and undulating rural landform of Bryniau at over 90m AOD preventing intervisibility.
- 2.9 Several footpaths link through the site area providing existing (and retained) connectivity between Deganwy, Tywyn, Bodysgallen, and Bryniau.
- 2.10 Existing abundant vegetation layers through the site, formed by a network of native hedgerows with established Oak Ash and Sycamore trees, and small native copses.
- 2.11 Mature ornamental blocks of trees at the CGG Robertson Research International office complex, which was formerly the Victorian T'yn y Coed Birmingham convalescence home (a listed building) are a notable landscape feature and include the avenue of mature trees contiguous with the existing access from Pentwyn Road.
- 2.12 Further screening and site division provided by the tall hedges surrounding Plas Dolau farm and caravan site and bordering the minor tracks and footpaths leading through the area.

Predominant views/linkage/intervisibility

- 2.13 Views in to the site from the surrounding area are largely gained from the surrounding urban road network which includes Pentwyn Way to the south east and Bryn Lupus Road forming the northern site boundary which provide immediate views of part of the site where existing vegetation, built development and existing vegetation permit.
- 2.14 Receptors are general sensitive, comprising residents, tourists and users of the transport corridor and include views from within the site from the network of footpaths which link through the site extent, again filtered by existing topography, vegetation and built development.
- 2.15 Views from the elevated Deganwy Castle SAM vantage point are wide ranging and include only a very small part the proposed site (due to the intervening topography) as well as Llandudno Town, Great Orme, Conwy town (World Heritage Site) and the Conwy estuary and Carneddau beyond as a focus by sensitive receptors and of directional historical reference.
- 2.16 From within the proposed site predominantly from footpath and include development of urban character (Including office blocks and a static caravan site) and are mainly short views due to the

enclosure the surrounding topography provides, although a view towards Deganwy Castle from Bryn Lupus Road provides a long open view of the open hill tops and lower gorse clad slopes and this noted view is retained within the illustrative layout provided.

Landscape character and quality

- 2.17 Overall the landscape quality is fragmented; and typical of urban periphery with significant areas of modern planned housing which have extended the built edge over the past 80+years with little respect of topography and existing field boundaries providing some hard residential edges and poor frontages with the wider road and pedestrian network.
- 2.18 The boundary with Bryn Lupus Road (and forming part of the open Green Barrier) is indicative of the urban context with street lighting a pavement and busy traffic movement and reduced tranquillity levels.
- 2.19 The site land surrounding Tyn y Coed and Maes Dolau Static Caravan Park is less open, however the presence of an International Office headquarters and associated parking, lighting, signage and movement reduces the potential rural quality and character further.
- 2.20 From within the site development is visible on all boundaries, as are evident urban lighting pavements, resultant visual detractors as well as audible and visual domestic activity, and traffic movement, further reducing the presumed rural character.
- 2.21 Existing housing along Cefn y Bryn and Maes Castell follow the lower slopes of Deganwy Castle to the west rising to circa 70-80m AOD along the SAM and forming part of the much larger conurbation of Deganwy whilst to the north of the site Llanrhos is a small cluster of generally post war housing associated with nearby Llanrhos Church (located further north on Pentwyn Road) including Bryn Lupus Drive, Hill View Road and Grange Road and the older vernacular and traditional properties to the north.



- 2.22 To the south Coed y Bwlch, Bwlch Farm Road and Pentwyn Heights form the nearest conurbation on slightly elevated land (circa 40-50m AOD) and again part of the Deganwy Castle lower hillslope and edge of Deganwy/Pentwyn, and where the junction of Marl Lane (Llandudno Junction) meets Pentwyn Road.
- 2.23 An avenue of mature Lime trees flank the entrance to Robertson Headquarters from Pentwyn Road and these are an attractive landscape feature visible from the road for a large number of receptors and which assist in breaking up the site into pockets.
- 2.24 Natural Resources Wales (formerly CCW) have undertaken a landscape qualitative assessment for the whole of Wales entitled LANDMAP which includes the proposed site extent, in order to

contribute to current and future landscape related policy and which is considered to have formed the baseline for the Councils Landscape related policy direction.

2.25 **LANDMAP** is the name given to a computer based landscape assessment and decision making process originally devised by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and the Wales Landscape Partnership Group (which comprised the main local government bodies in Wales from local and central level)

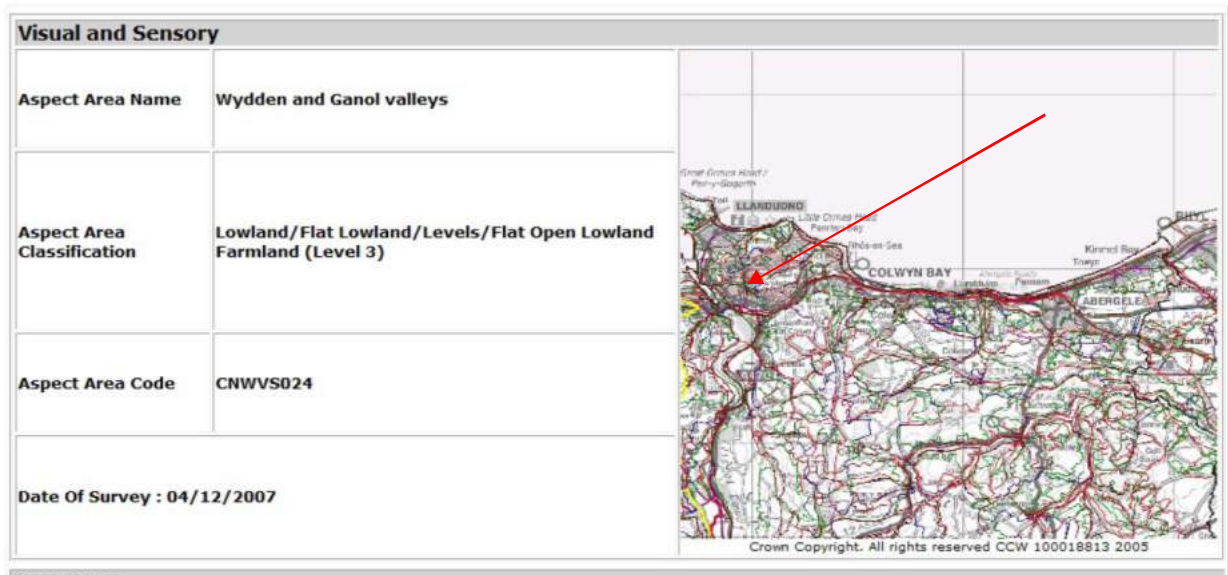
2.26 **LANDMAP** stands for Landscape Assessment and Decision Making Process, and is designed to assist decision making over a range of disciplines, e.g. development planning and development control, environmental enhancement, biodiversity, forestry and rural development etc.; there are five Evaluated Aspect layers which comprise the full set of LANDMAP information, these are:

Visual and Sensory: This aspect layer identifies those landscape qualities that are perceived through the senses. It deals with the individual physical attributes of landform and land cover, as well as their visual patterns of distribution and sensory characteristics, and the relationships between them in a particular area.

Landscape Habitats: This aspect layer looks at the distribution of vegetation and habitats and the basis for landscape ecology.

Cultural Landscape: This aspect layer considers the relationship that exists between people and places; how people have given meaning to places, how the landscape has shaped their actions

2.27 Both the original site development extent and extended site extent are located within the LANDMAP Aspect Area reference CNWVVS024 Wydden and Ganol Valleys – as Lowland/flat Lowland/Levels/Flat Open Lowland Farmland which includes the Afon Wydden Valley to the east linking towards the coastline at Penrhyn Bay as indicated on the extract below;



LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Area extent ©NRW (CCW)

Materials

2.28 Materials in the study area vary widely; older vernacular features are generally limestone and include walling and stone pillars and small stone cottages with lower roof slopes and less dense

layout and in places associated with Bodysgallen Hall and St Davids College, particularly boundary limestone walls predating modern fencing and red brick or concrete walling.

- 2.29 Housing types are varied, single storey bungalows or dormer bungalows - detached, semi-detached houses of two and three storey either rendered or comprising a mix of facing brick hues of often repeated designs and layouts, and with varied hedge, wall and timber fenced boundaries.
- 2.30 Soft landscape materials are largely ornamental vegetation within gardens and adjoining caravan parks and the offices at Tyn y Coed and Mariandir House, but with native hedging, and hedgerow trees and upland un grazed vegetation surrounding the steep slopes of the Vardre and Deganwy castle and mature stands of native stature field trees beyond to the east of the LANDMAP Character Area extent.
- 2.31 Any Street furniture is generally utilitarian and modern in appearance, with wide verges of short mown grass in part along Bryn Lupus Road and with narrower roads enclosed with more traditional stone walling along Pentwyn Road and the area is currently lit by existing street lighting along Pentwyn Road, Bryn Lupus Road and lighting associated with Robertson Office and car park.

Proposal

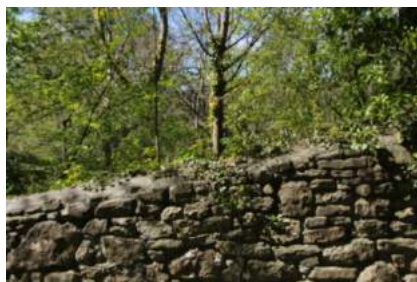
- 2.32 The extent of the illustrative masterplan extends southwards to include land south of Tyncoed and Bryn Dolau Caravan site as indicated within Figure 2 at the rear of this document on land which is between 20-40m AOD and centred towards Roberts Offices and Car Park.
- 2.33 The area contain several footpaths which link through the area connecting Bryn Lupus Road with Bwlch Farm and Pentwyn Road as well as Deganwy Castle and the wider area, and these have been included within the illustrative masterplan as inter-connective non vehicular routes for cyclists, and pedestrians.
- 2.34 The layout indicated includes provision for a new school and associated playing fields, as well as outdoor recreation areas and commercial land associated with existing employment land located adjoining the existing Robertson international Offices.
- 2.35 Housing is indicated predominantly to the north and west of this along Bryn Lupus Road and to the south of St Annes Gardens respecting the presence of Tyncoed Listed Building, avenue trees and garden retention, and aligning with the natural wider topographical grain.
- 2.36 New housing will obviously enclose the currently open land as a much changed landuse- although opportunity exists to retain a long view towards Deganwy Castle as an open vista from Bryn Lupus Road as a formal part of the overall design, which will support its retention in the longer term.
- 2.37 Likewise by infilling fields fronting Pentwyn Road along a short frontage will assist in softening the varied rear elevation of garden boundaries visible along St Annes Gardens, whilst retaining the Tyncoed avenue and access onto Pentwyn Road.
- 2.38 The development extent is all located within the LANDMAP Aspect Area reference CNWYVS024 Wydden and Ganol Valleys and final extents and layout have sought to reflect a number of landscape led principles including:
- Wider landscape integration – by avoiding prominent or elevated land, which extends to retained original field boundaries, respecting the natural grain or topography of the landscape and of a scale which can be accommodated i.e. avoiding skyline development

- Devising a schematic layout that minimises landscape and visual impact through using retained vegetation and topography to absorb the development characteristics and extent.
- Siting low activity and visually open areas in key positions to reduce visual impact
- Retaining existing vegetation to promote the existing site fragmentation and screening thereby achieving a perceived smaller and splintered scale of future development
- Using existing built development to retain and screen wider views
- Reflecting and protecting long important views of local landmarks i.e. Deganwy Castle SAM
- Reinforcing local landscape character and development scale through use of existing materials and design
- Assisting with the wider connectivity of the area through designated footpath and cycle route connectivity provision
- Providing biodiversity benefit and enhancement of the existing landscape
- Providing benefit to the wider community
-

- 2.39 By encompassing the larger site extent – the overall benefits indicated above and on any final masterplan can be achieved as a whole rather than piecemeal series of development, thus benefitting from advanced landscape infrastructure planting, building materials, form and styles as well as a firm layout content.
- 2.40 Committed public liaison and community involvement will assist further in any final proposal together with a robust masterplan concept.

Landscape and Visual overview of an extended footprint

- 2.41 The overall and indicative masterplan demonstrates a potential development layout on one site formed from cluster of individual sites located between Llanrhos and Deganwy.
- 2.42 Considered together they provide the advantage of a formal and considered layout which has the ability to be accommodated in its entirety rather than an ad hoc or piecemeal sequence of development.
- 2.43 Combining the development areas but limiting access points and splintering the layout through screening into distinct smaller visual compartments, as well as utilising the lower land which is generally screened by the existing topography, assists in reducing the scale of the site upon both the wider landscape and visual receptors and avoiding prominence.
- 2.44 By adopting a landscape led approach and respecting and using the wider landscape setting, the ability of the landscape to absorb potential development over the increased area is maximised.



2.45

Longer views from Deganwy Castle SAM, Bodysgallen Garden and House, and St Davids College are generally protected by virtue of the wider topography and proposed site layout.



Plate 2-The site area. Google Maps ©

3.0 Summary

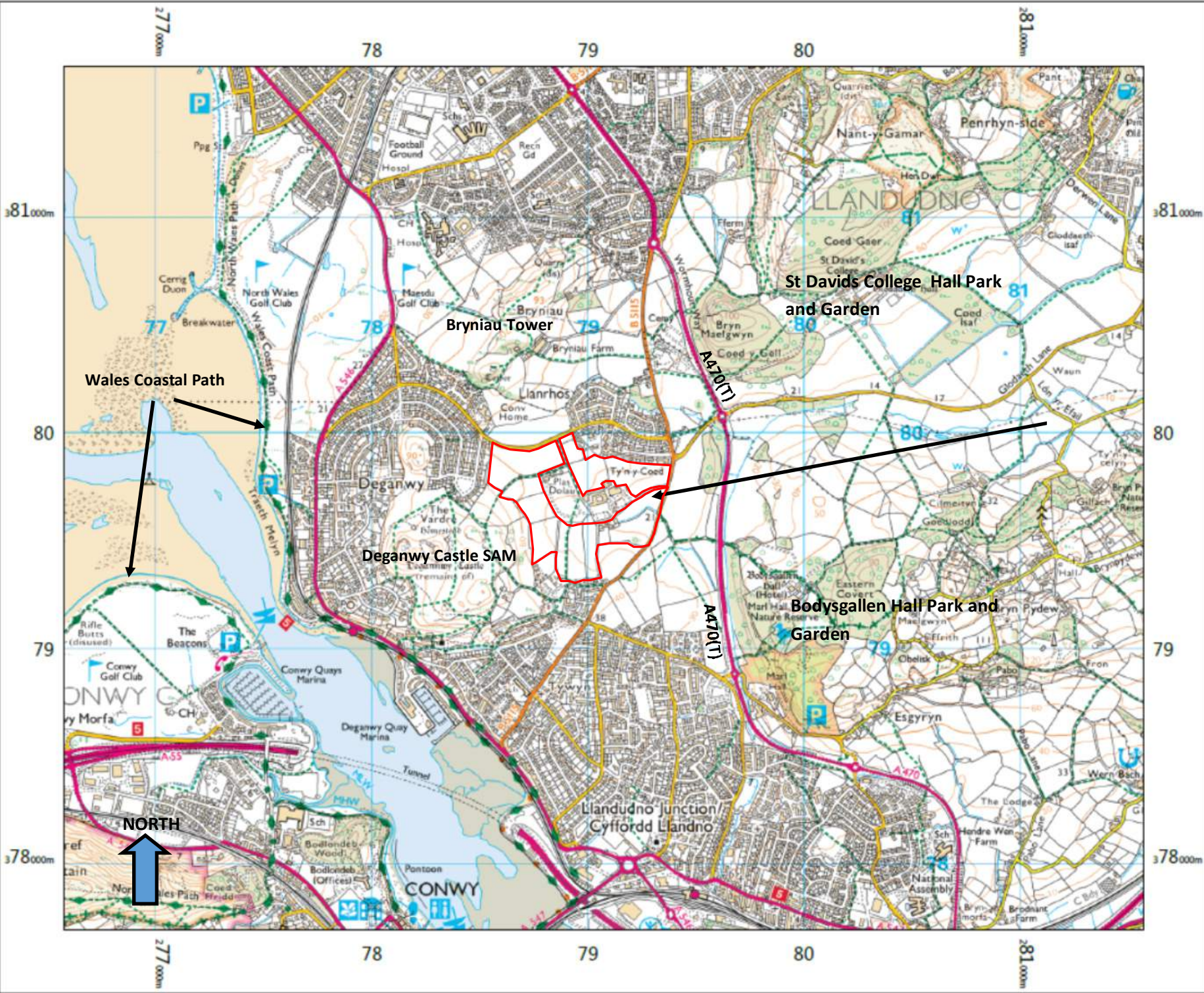
- 3.1 The assessment has reviewed an illustrative proposed residential development on land between Llanrhos and Deganwy to establish any initial landscape and visual effect and mitigation measures that can be included to avoid or reduce these as part of the illustrative masterplan proposal, and includes land beyond the original strategic site extent as shown within Figure 2.
- 3.2 The review is essentially an early consideration of any likely impacts and is not intended to replace the need for any future Landscape and Visual Assessment, or landscape heritage assessment but serves to assist in considering the site and extents further, its merits and limitations in respect of Landscape and Visual Amenity at this early stage.
- 3.3 The illustrative masterplan extends the development footprint beyond the original strategic site extent to achieve further provision of housing numbers as well as allotments, a school, commercial development (employment) land, as well as recreational land, school playing fields and public space and linkage provision.
- 3.4 The illustrative layout shown has adopted initial landscape and visual mitigation recommendations and further mitigation such as building form, materials, massing, and soft landscape inclusion will be developed at any future detailed design stages.
- 3.5 The site is partially enclosed by the presence of mature native vegetation and although sensitive receptors exist in the area such as a Deganwy Castle SAM and public footpaths, existing roads surround the proposed site periphery and these allow views into the development area in relatively close proximity, and several existing public footpaths run through the site which already experience views of urban elements including Housing Offices and a large static caravan site thereby reducing the likely degree of change and development magnitude.
- 3.6 Whilst removal of part of the green barrier land is indicated – the land north of Bryn Lupus Road will continue to provide visual and physical separation to Deganwy and Llanrhos as part of the wider open area to the north between Llanrhos and Llandudno, which provides the more open views from both directions of approach than the land currently undeveloped to the south of Bryn Lupus Road.
- 3.7 The change of landuse from currently pastoral land to developed land as a result of the proposed development will be a noted adverse impact, but it is considered that wider effects can be limited by a robust landscape led layout and integral mitigation measures.
- 3.8 The landscape quality is mixed, and affected by peripheral development and the existing road network in several adjacent areas, and where current intervisibility of dense residential development is evident and there is limited views of the entire proposed site area – this contributes to a more developed urban character than the LANDMAP Aspect Area classification acknowledges, and enables the perceived changes to be more readily absorbed.
- 3.9 This will constitute a major magnitude of change upon the local landscape and long term impact of significance as both the original site extent and larger site extent.
- 3.10 Wider elevated views including from Deganwy SAM are filtered by topography as well as existing vegetation and built development, and these elevated views are extensive and reduce the scale of the proposed development extent as a result.
- 3.11 In order to achieve an acceptable layout – it is recommended that a robust Masterplan approach is agreed following wider public consultation adopting landscape led principles to provide a sensitive and attractive development.

APPENDICES

List of Figures (Contained within the rear of this report)

- Figure 1** *Site Location Plan* 1:25000
- Figure 2** *Indicative Masterplan – prepared by Beech Developments (NW) Ltd.*
- Figure 3** *Photographs of the site context*

Llanrhos
FIGURE 1
SITE LOCATION PLAN
Sept 2019



OS 25k scale raster
Tuesday, September 17, 2019, ID:
CM-00828174
www.centremapslive.co.uk

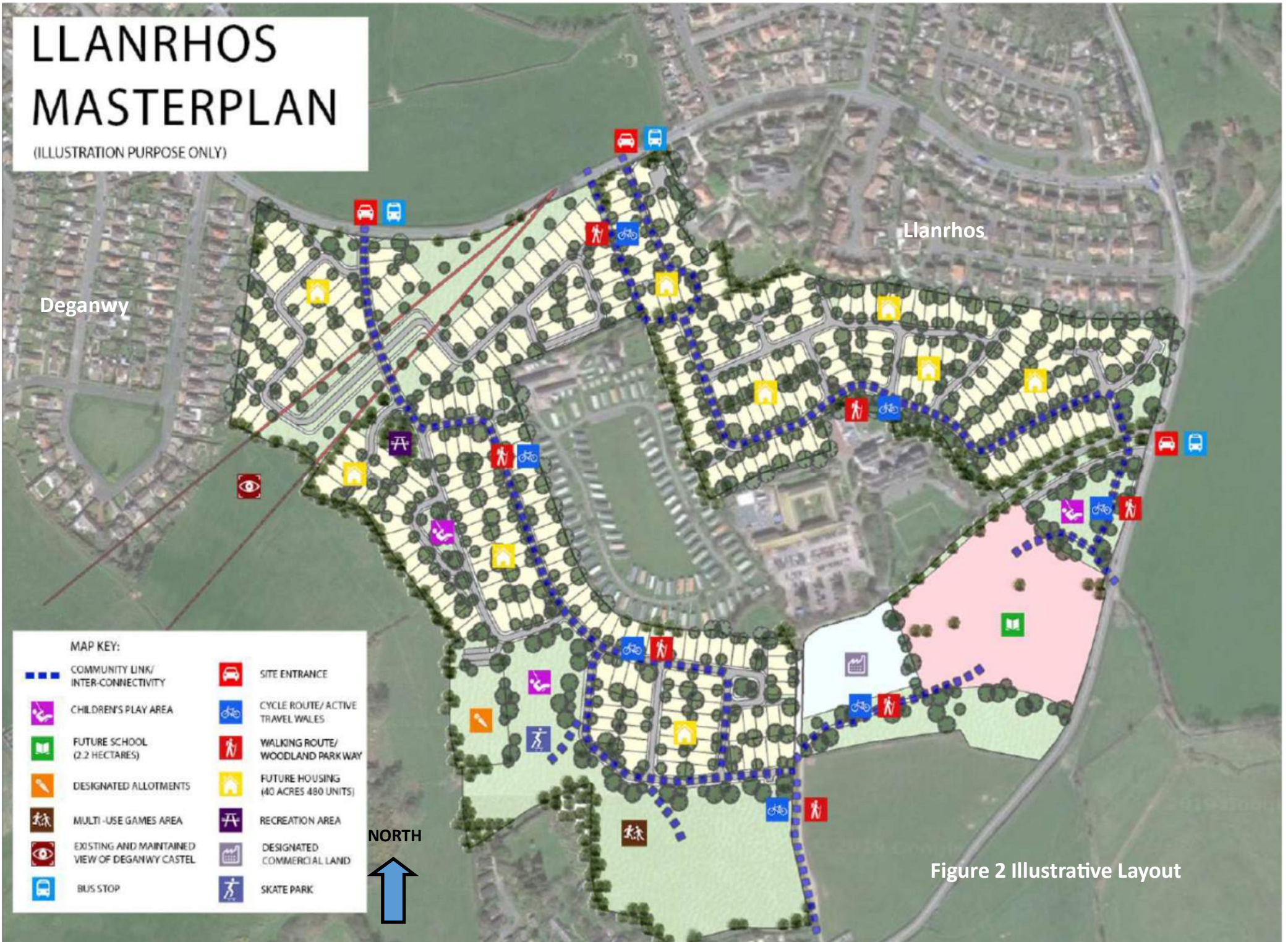
1:25000 scale print at A4, Centre:
279072 E, 379695 N

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LLANRHOS MASTERPLAN

(ILLUSTRATION PURPOSE ONLY)



Deganwy

Llanrhos

MAP KEY:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | COMMUNITY LINK/
INTER-CONNECTIVITY |  | SITE ENTRANCE |
|  | CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA |  | CYCLE ROUTE/ ACTIVE
TRAVEL WALES |
|  | FUTURE SCHOOL
(2.2 HECTARES) |  | WALKING ROUTE/
WOODLAND PARK WAY |
|  | DESIGNATED ALLOTMENTS |  | FUTURE HOUSING
(40 ACRES 480 UNITS) |
|  | MULTI-USE GAMES AREA |  | RECREATION AREA |
|  | EXISTING AND MAINTAINED
VIEW OF DEGANWY CASTEL |  | DESIGNATED
COMMERCIAL LAND |
|  | BUS STOP |  | SKATE PARK |

NORTH



Figure 2 Illustrative Layout



Plate 1– Photograph taken from the existing public footpath looking north towards the proposed site, including the Bryn Golau Static Caravan Park existing Robertson offices at Tynycoed



Plate 2– Photograph taken from the public footpath leading towards Bryn Lupus Road from the caravan park looking towards Deganwy with Deganwy Castle to the left of the plate and the existing village ahead.

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September 2019

FIGURE 3



Plate 3– Photograph taken from Bryn Lupus Road looking south west towards Deganwy Castle— a retained vista reflected in the illustrative layout



Plate 4– Photograph taken from Bryn Lupus Road looking towards Deganwy Castle

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Llanrhos
September 2019
FIGURE 3



Plate 5 - View eastwards along Bryn Lupus Road with the proposed site to the right of the plate



Plate 6 – Photograph taken from Deganwy Castle eastern summit looking eastwards towards the proposed site which is generally obscured by the topography.

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FIGURE 3

All photographs taken with a Standard 67mm lens and assembled using Photoshop unless indicated otherwise.



Plate 7– Photograph taken from within the village illustrating traditional materials colours and period detailing



Plate 8– Photograph taken from western extent of Deganwy castle and highest point at 107mAOD looking towards the proposed site with Llandudno to the left of the plate.

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FIGURE 3

All photographs taken with a Standard 67mm lens and assembled using Photoshop unless indicated otherwise.



Plate 9– Photograph taken from within the village illustrating traditional materials colours and period detailing



Plate 10– Photograph taken from western extent of The Vardre looking towards the proposed site with Llandudno to the left of the plate.

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FIGURE 3

All photographs taken with a Standard 67mm lens and assembled using Photoshop unless indicated otherwise.



Plate 9– Photograph taken from Bodysgallen Hall driveway facing towards the site in Winter leafless conditions



Plate 10– Photograph taken from The Obelisk (Pydew) looking towards the proposed site area in inter leafless months.

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FIGURE 3

All photographs taken with a Standard 67mm lens and assembled using Photoshop unless indicated otherwise.