

# LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL (LVA)

## Quarry Farm, Oakenholt

Prepared by TPM Landscape Ltd on behalf of:

Castle Green Homes

August 2023





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| Job Number: 4441                     |              |                 |                 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Project Name: Quarry Farm, Oakenholt |              |                 |                 |
| Rev                                  | Issue Status | Prepared / Date | Approved / Date |
| -                                    | First Issue  | KP August 2023  | KP August 2023  |
|                                      |              |                 |                 |
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# 1.0 CONTEXT

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION - PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TPM were commissioned by Castle Green Homes in July 2023 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVA) for the land to the west of Leadbrook Drive, Oakenholt, Flintshire, Wales; this will be referred to as the proposal site throughout the document. This document is in support of a masterplanning exercise for the site seeking detailed permission for residential development. The LVA will consider the baseline for both landscape and visual amenity and will seek to identify the sensitivity of each before considering the change that the introduction of any development may introduce. Both the landscape and visual impact of the proposed residential development will be assessed and a strategy of mitigation planting or other methods will be explored where relevant to reduce identified impacts.

The landscape and visual appraisal was undertaken in July when trees are active and with leaf.

## 1.2 SITE CONTEXT

The proposed development site lies between Flint to the west and Connah's Quay to the east, and to the south of Chester Road (A548). To the north of the A548 is flat Flint Sands associated with the River Dee. The landscape north of the railline running parallel to the A548 and River Dee is influenced by industrial usage. To the south of the A548 is agricultural land and the Croes Atti recently completed residential estate adjoins the western boundary of the proposal site.

The northern boundary of the proposal site adjoins a small play area that is enclosed by timber post and wire fencing, with a single bungalow property to the north-west. Existing terrace and detached housing line the northern side of the A548. Two linear lines of semi detached housing are located along Leadbrook Drive, on the eastern boundary of the site.

Agricultural land lies to the south of the proposal site, with pasture fields bounded by hedgerows, and with woodland and copses following the minor stream valleys.

The common building material in the area is red brick.

## 1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site itself is comprised of two irregular shaped fields adjoining Leadbrook Drive. The northern field has an elevation of 10-20m AOD with contours running in a west-east direction following the direction of the A548. The southern field has an elevation of 20-25m AOD with contours running in a north-south direction following the direction of Leadbrook Drive. The two fields are separated by an unmade (looks to be a former track) that has hedgerow and hedgerow trees running along both sides of the track along its length towards Quarry Farm.

The hedgerows surrounding the proposal site are managed. A ditch runs along the south western boundary.

The southern boundary is bound by an informal track leading to Little Leadbrook Farm. The track is also a designated public right of way footpath. The hedgerow is maintained to approximately 1.2m in height, with several small hedgerow trees.

## 1.4 STUDY AREA

The local roads were driven and footpath networks explored to determine the receptors to be appraised. Due to the built form along the east of the proposal site limiting visibility in this direction (beyond Leadbrook Drive) the main receptors are to the south and west where the landscape is more open. The study area to the north is limited due to the Flint Sands and River Dee which are inaccessible. The recently completed Croes atti residential estate forms the eastern boundary of Flint settlement and restricts views extending further westwards.

## 1.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The proposed development is for residential properties on the proposed development site. The assessed proposal includes approximately 128 dwellings ranging between detached, semi-detached and terraced properties. The proposed access is located off the recently completed Croes Atti residential development. A large area of Public open Space is located in the northern part of the northern field, which takes account of the Croes atti Roman Scheduled Monument site. The design of the proposed development has been informed by the initial findings of this study and the subsequent Landscape Framework Plan and are summarised in Chapter 9. This outline design for residential development was then reviewed as part of this Landscape and Visual Appraisal to determine the specific impacts expected through the design iterations expressed in the masterplan. These potential impacts and the mitigation strategy proposed to alleviate any impacts are described in Chapter 8.

## 1.6 DESIGNATION

The proposal site is not subject to any landscape or environmental designation. The land to the north of the rail line around the Flint Sands and River Dee are covered by environmental designations (e.g. SSSI, SAC).



Figure 1. Development Proposals: Extract of TPM Landscape drawing 4441-101 Composite Landscape Masterplan

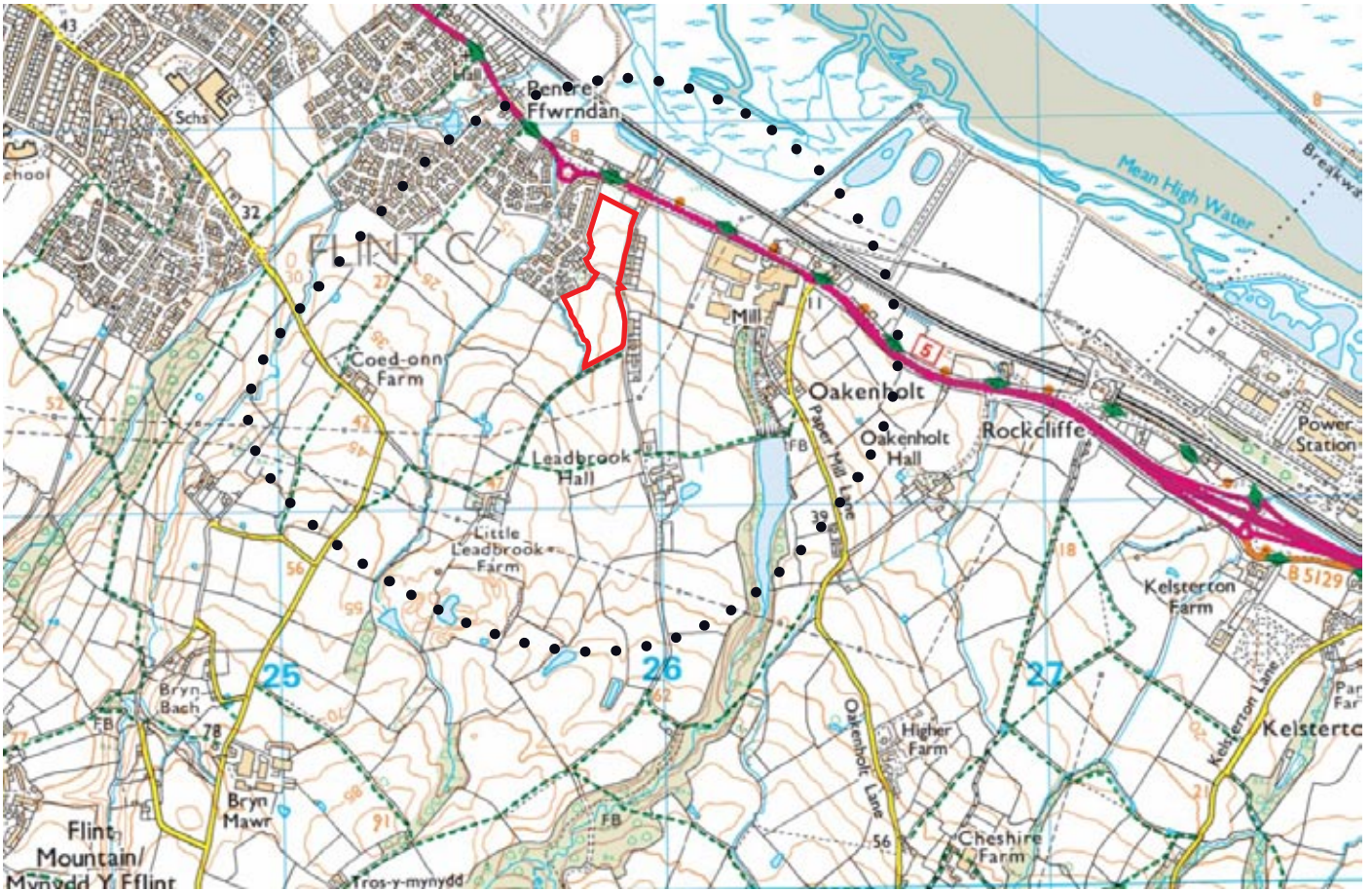


Figure 2. Study Area and Location Plan

• • • Study Area      — Proposal Site



Figure 3-1. Aerial View (the proposal site)

— Proposal Site

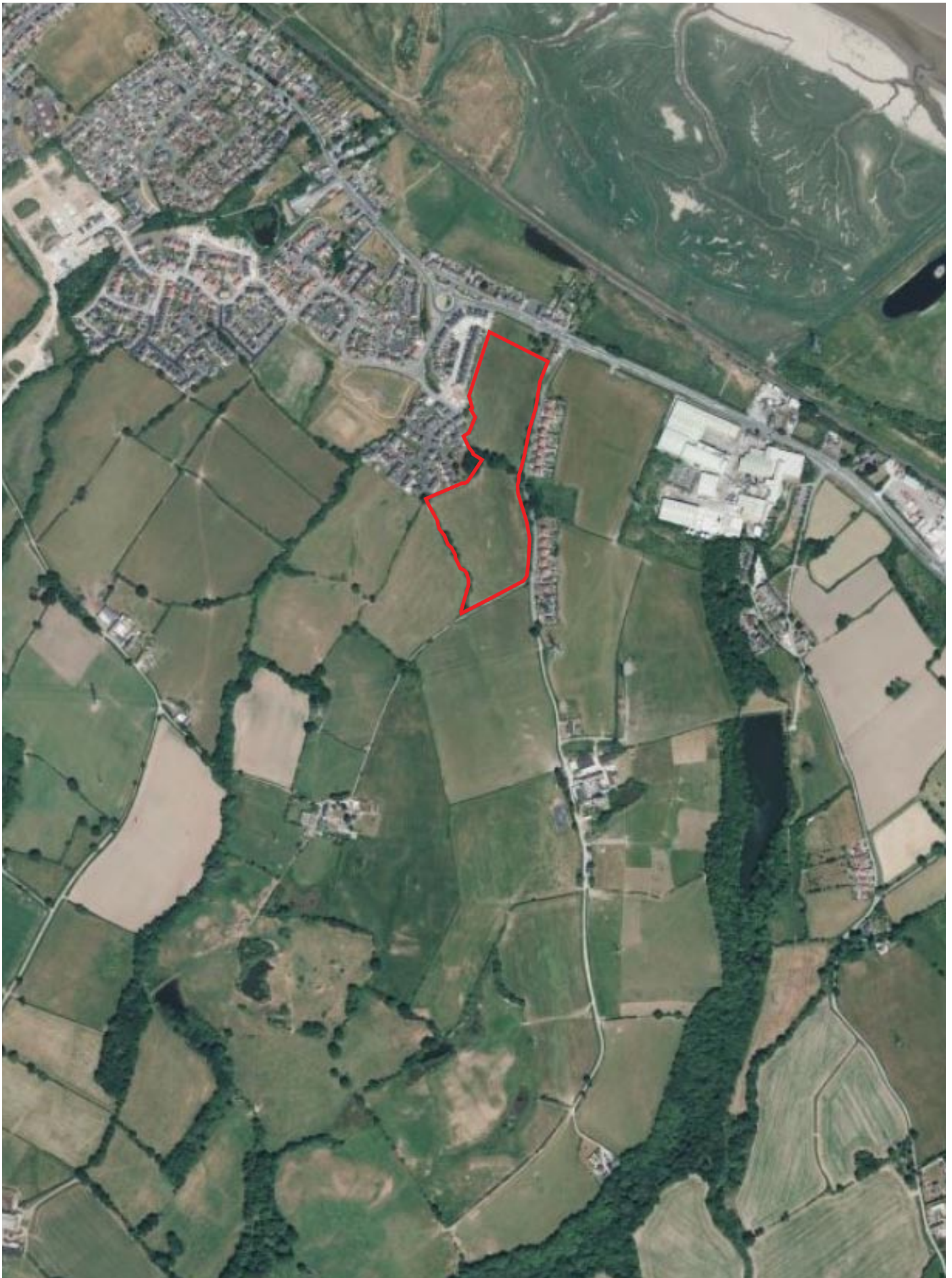


Figure 3-2. Aerial View (wider site context)

— Proposal Site

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 METHODOLOGY

The site was visited and the surrounding road network driven. Positive and detracting elements in the landscape were recorded, as was the general land use and quality of the site. Viewpoints were identified based on public viewpoints (public footpaths), private viewpoints (residential properties) and key distant viewpoints to determine the wider impact on the landscape and where development would have the potential to affect the quality and character of existing views and in consideration of the nature of the proposed development. A study area of approximately 1km was assessed in consideration of the likely visual envelope. Potential longer distance views were also considered. A photographic record of the study area, surrounding context and important views/character were recorded.

The methodology seeks to use recognised, published industry standards and techniques to identify and describe a landscape and visual baseline and ascribe a sensitivity to these landscape and visual receptors which may be altered through the introduction of the proposed development. Landscape and Visual Impacts are considered separately although the conclusion on sensitivity and impact will have regard to both these related areas of study and proposals made for the mitigation of that impact.

The magnitude of change brought about through the proposed development is considered alongside the level of sensitivity for each landscape area or receptor and the level of landscape or visual effects is expressed as a combination of these two elements.

**The methodology for landscape character appraisal and visual appraisal is summarised in sections 2.2 and 2.3, refer to APPENDIX 2 for tables 2.4 to 2.12.**

*The appraisal has been based on guidelines and information provided in the following publications:*

- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002)
- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage). Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3rd edition 2013.
- Natural Resources Wales - Landmap (Visual and Sensory)
- Ancient Monuments UK: Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/2009. Use of photography and photomontage in landscape and visual assessment.

### 2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER APPRAISAL

A desktop study and site survey of existing landscape policies, planning designations and character appraisals was undertaken and an appraisal made of the landscape character of the surrounding area and the proposal sites value in landscape terms within this character area.

To determine the effects of development on the landscape three different key aspects or receptors are considered:

**Elements:** Individual elements within the landscape, which are quantifiable and include features such as hills, valleys, woods, trees, hedges and ponds;

**Characteristics:** Elements or combinations of elements that make a particular contribution to the character of the area i.e. scenic quality, tranquillity or wildness;

**Character:** A combination of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

These key aspects or landscape receptors indicate the landscape condition, quality, value and susceptibility to change which are considered when judging landscape sensitivity.

To assist in the appraisal of the sensitivity of the landscape resource each landscape encountered is considered against the criteria



set out in the tables in Appendix 2. The tables identify the principal factors considered when assessing the sensitivity of the landscape, combining judgements of susceptibility to change from the proposed development (Table 2.1), landscape quality (Table 2.2) and landscape value (Table 2.3).

The criteria used to assess the landscape effects on key aspects or landscape receptors included:

- The susceptibility of the landscape (Table 2.1)
- The quality of the landscape (Table 2.2)
- The value of the landscape (Table 2.3)
- The sensitivity and type of the landscape receptor (Table 2.4)
- The magnitude of change (Table 2.5)
- The effects of development on the landscape (pre-mitigation) (Table 2.6)
- The effects of development on the landscape (post-mitigation) (Table 2.6)
- The nature of landscape effects (Table 2.7)
- The importance level of effects (Table 2.14)

## 2.3 VISUAL APPRAISAL

Visual appraisal relates to the change to views as a result of development, and the overall effects on visual amenity.

Considerations when judging sensitivity included:

- Location of the viewpoint
- Context of the view
- Activity of the receptor
- Frequency and duration of the view

To assist in the appraisal of the sensitivity of visual amenity each viewpoint is considered against the criteria set out in the tables in Appendix 2. The sensitivity of visual receptors is based on consideration of both susceptibility to change in views (Table 2.8), quality and value attached to each identified view (Table 2.9).

The criteria used to assess the visual effects on selected viewpoints included:

- The susceptibility of the visual receptor (Table 2.8)
- The quality and value of the visual receptor (Table 2.9)
- The sensitivity and type of visual receptor (Table 2.11)
- The magnitude of change (Table 2.10)
- The effects of development on the view (pre-mitigation) (Table 2.12)
- The effects of development on the view (post-mitigation) (Table 2.12)
- The nature of visual effects (Table 2.13)
- The importance level of effects (Table 2.14)

The appraisal of visual effects describes:

- The changes in the character of the available views resulting from the development and the changes in the visual amenity of the visual receptor.
- The appraisal process mirrors that of landscape effects in that it requires the collation of baseline information relating to the nature and type of views and the receptors which will receive them. As with landscape effects, visual effects are determined by considering the magnitude and nature of change evaluated in consideration of the sensitivity of the receptor (Table 2.11).
- The magnitude of change to the view will depend on numerous factors including the extent and nature of the current view, the distance to the proposed development, the time of year and whether other elements intervene in the view such as vegetation or moving traffic.

### 3.0 PLANNING POLICY

The overall planning context in relation to the Proposed Development is explored in greater detail within the separate Planning Statement that accompanies the planning application. The following provides a summary in relation to landscape and visual matters.

#### 3.1 NATIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

##### Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11 February 2021)

Planning Policy Wales sets out the following objectives for the conservation and improvement of the landscape and natural heritage:

1.4 PPW and the National Development Framework (published as Future Wales – the National Plan 2040) set out how the planning system at a national, regional and local level can assist in delivering these requirements through Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs).

Section 6: ‘Distinctive and Natural Places’ of PPW sets out the following objectives:

##### Distinctive and Natural Placemaking and Well-being

The Distinctive and Natural theme covers environmental and cultural components of placemaking. These components are complementary to those of the Active and Social and Productive and Enterprising themes and collectively the three themes come together to contribute towards the national sustainable placemaking outcomes. The diagram below illustrates how these outcomes are linked and work together as a whole, with Natural and Distinctive outcomes emphasised. Places which are Distinctive and Natural contribute to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in the following ways.

A Prosperous Wales can be realised by valuing the quality of our landscapes and historic environment as important for tourism, business, local employment, locally sourced building products, in attracting inward investment and to be accessed, used and enjoyed by local communities. By protecting and enhancing biodiversity, and our natural environment more generally, it will be possible to future proof economic assets in response to the challenges presented by the climate emergency, to promote low carbon and appropriate resource choices which address the causes of climate change and to provide cost effective ecosystems services such as clean air and water.



Figure 4 Planning Policy Wales criteria for determining ‘Distinctive and Natural places.

Section 6.3 of PPW relates to 'Landscape', and sets out the following:

*6.3.1 Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. Landscape policy is guided by the European Landscape Convention.*

*6.3.2 The landscapes of Wales are rich and varied. Many Welsh landscapes are iconic, and a quarter of the land area of Wales is designated as either a National Park or Area of National Outstanding Beauty (AONB). The character and special qualities of all our places and landscapes, both urban and rural, can provide a strong sense of place, inspiration and belonging, and contribute to the distinctive cultural identity of Wales.*

*6.3.3 All the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places. Considering landscape at the outset of formulating strategies and policies in development plans and when proposing development is key to sustaining and enhancing their special qualities, and delivering the maximum well-being benefits for present and future generations as well as helping to deliver an effective and integrated approach to natural resource management over the long term. Collaboration and engagement with adjacent planning authorities, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Cadw and the third sector will be necessary to draw on a wide range of expertise and evidence.*

*This means:*

- *ensuring Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for landscapes;*
- *ensuring statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed;*
- *ensuring that the value of all landscapes for their distinctive character and special qualities is protected; and*
- *ensuring the opportunities landscapes provide for tourism, outdoor recreation, local employment, renewable energy and physical and mental health and well-being are taken into account and multiple well-being benefits for people and communities secured.*

With regard to the 'Characteristics of Local Landscape'; PPW sets out the following:

*6.3.12 Planning authorities should provide for the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of local landscapes. This may include policies for landscape features, characteristics and qualities of local significance, and the designation of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). Planning authorities should state which features, characteristics or qualities require extra protection, and explain how the policy or designation will achieve this protection. LANDMAP and any associated landscape character assessments (including the register of historic landscapes in Wales) should be used to inform local landscape policies and SPG, and to help identify or revise SLAs.*

*6.3.13 SLAs are non-statutory designations that define local areas of high landscape importance, which may be unique, exceptional or distinctive to the area. Planning authorities should apply these designations where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection.*

The status of Green Barriers and Green Wedges has been reviewed in Edition 11 of PPW, which sets out the following: *Managing Settlement Form – Green Belts and Green Wedges*

*3.64 Around towns and cities there may be a need to protect open land from development. This can be achieved through the identification of Green Belts and/or local designations, such as green wedges. Proposals for both Green Belts and green wedges must be soundly based and should only be employed where there is a demonstrable need to protect the urban form and alternative policy mechanisms, such as settlement boundaries, would not be sufficiently robust. The essential difference between them is that land within a Green Belt should be protected for a longer period than the relevant current development plan period, whereas green wedge policies should be reviewed as part of the development plan review process.*

*3.65 The main aim of Green Belts is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. And further states ....*

*3.68 Green wedges are local designations which essentially have the same purpose as Green Belts. They may be used to provide a buffer between the settlement edge and statutory designations and safeguard important views into and out of the area. Green wedges should be proposed and be subject to review as part of the LDP process.*

*3.69 The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply in a Green Belt and a green wedge but there is, in addition, a general presumption against development which is inappropriate in relation to the purposes of the designation. Green Belts and green wedges can have other beneficial effects including the provision of access to the countryside and sport and recreation opportunities. However, the extent to which the use of land fulfils these objectives is not a material factor in determining whether land should be included within a Green Belt or green wedge.*

*3.70 Green Belt and green wedge boundaries should be chosen carefully using physical features and boundaries to include only that land which it is necessary to keep open in the longer term. The boundaries of Green Belts should be altered only in exceptional circumstances and with regard to their intended long-term permanence. The spatial form of Green Belts should be appropriate to the location and will not necessarily need to extend in a continuous band around an urban area.*

### 3.2 LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The Flintshire County Council website notes the current status of the Local Plan:

*The Flintshire LDP was adopted by the Council on 24/01/23 and covers the period 2015 to 2030. It forms part of the statutory development plan alongside Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. The remaining part of the statutory development plan will be the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for North Wales, once prepared and adopted. The Council will use the LDP and Future Wales as the primary basis for making decisions on planning applications and development proposals.*

*The adoption of the LDP is accompanied by the following documents: Post Adoption Statement, Final Sustainability Appraisal Report & Habitats Regulations Assessment Adoption Update*

The proposal site lies outside of the Local Plan settlement boundary for Flint and for which there are no specific policies. Policy PC1: ‘The Relationship of Development to Settlement Boundaries’ sets out the following with regard to development outside the settlement boundaries:

*6.2 Outside settlement boundaries land is usually referred to as open countryside. PPW 11 paragraph 3.60 directs that ‘new building in the open countryside away from existing settlements or areas allocated for development in development plans must continue to be strictly controlled’. The Plan therefore seeks to strictly control new development by identifying a number of specific types of development which may be acceptable in open countryside.*

*6.3 ‘Appropriate’ development in the open countryside will include those types of development which by virtue of their scale and nature, can sit comfortably in an open countryside location without harming its character and appearance. ‘Essential’ development will include those types of development where there is a locational or resource requirement to be sited within open countryside.*

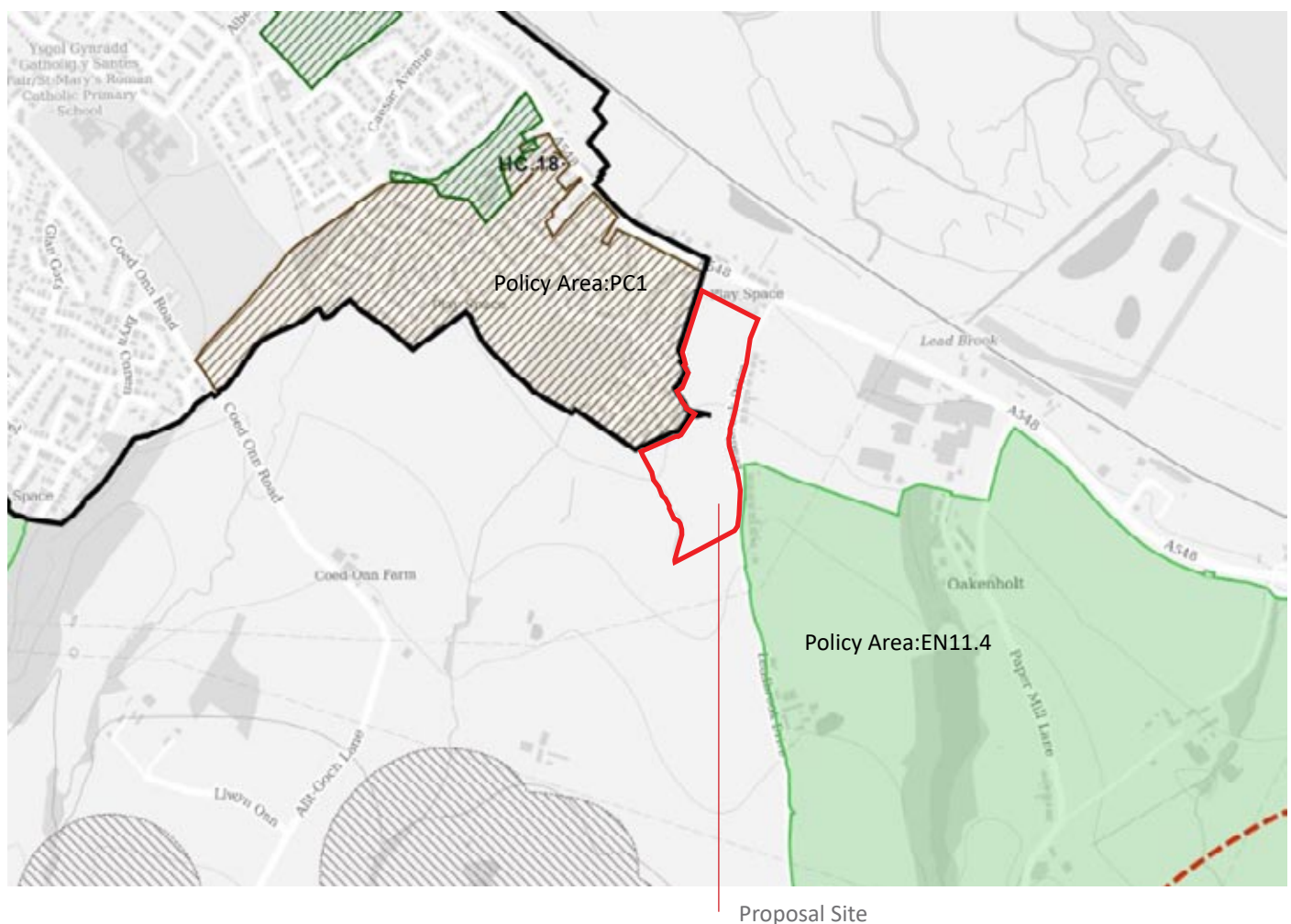


Figure 5. Planning Policy Extract of Flintshire Local Plan - Interactive Website Aug '23

Land in the vicinity of the proposal site was previously designated as Green Barrier (Policy Gen 4 (4)) within the former Flintshire UDP. As part of the development of the current Local Plan (adopted) the council prepared a review of the Green Barriers: 'Flintshire Deposit Local Development Plan Background Paper 1 Green Barrier Review (with maps) Sept 2020. All Green Barrier land was reviewed for the way in which it performs Green Barrier function. For Green Barrier land to the east of the proposal site (Gen 4(4)), the extent of the Green Barrier (later to become Green Wedge within the adopted Local Plan), was extended to Leadbrook Drive, but did not extend further westwards to meet the current Croes Atti residential estate.

Land to the east of the proposals site, beyond Leadbrook Drive is within land identified as 'Green Wedges', covered by policy EN11.4 (land between Flint and Connah's Quay), which sets out the following:

*9.43 Green wedge designations are drawn to ensure protection of the openness of key areas of land in strategic or key locations over the Plan period. Whilst there are other policies in the Plan to control development in the countryside, it is considered important to give added protection to some areas via designation as green wedges as they protect key areas of open countryside between and around settlements.*

*9.44 The green wedges designated in the UDP have been the subject of a robust review as to their fitness for purpose, details of which can be found in a Background Paper: Green Barrier Review. The review involved each green wedge being assessed against the criteria within PPW 11 i.e. that the purpose of a green wedge is to: prevent the coalescence of large towns and cities with other settlements; manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; protect the setting of an urban area; and assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

*9.45 The review has also had regard to whether each existing green wedge has been the subject of previous or current development pressure. Proposals for new green wedges or extensions to existing green wedges which were put forward as part of Candidate Site submissions have also been assessed in the same manner. The objective is to ensure that in each case a green wedge designation is necessary and justifiable over and above settlement boundary and open countryside policies and fulfils the purpose of green wedges in PPW 11. The approach to the review and designation of green wedges is in line with guidance with PPW 11.*

*9.46 PPW 11 provides specific guidance on the consideration of planning applications within green wedge designated areas. It emphasises the importance of maintaining the openness of the land, provides a presumption against inappropriate development and outlines the very exceptional circumstances when other considerations outweigh the importance of protecting the openness of the land. Given that PPW 11 provides such clear and detailed advice it is not considered necessary for it to be repeated within this policy. Any proposals for inappropriate development in a green wedge will be treated as a departure from the Plan.*

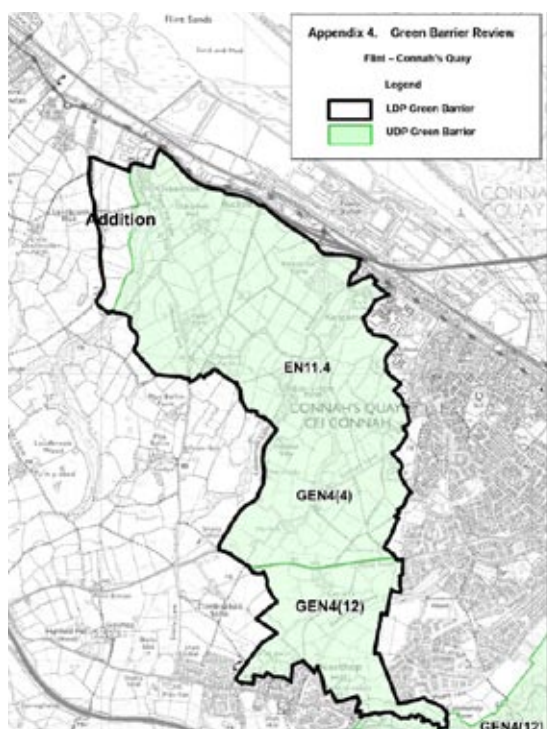


Figure 6. Extract of Flintshire Council Green Barrier Review - 2020

### 3.4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Planning Policy Wales sets out national policy with regard to Historic Landscapes. Scheduled Monuments are considered as Archaeological Remains, and PPW sets out the following:

*6.1.23 The planning system recognises the need to conserve archaeological remains. The conservation of archaeological remains and their settings is a material consideration in determining planning applications, whether those remains are a scheduled monument or not.*

*6.1.24 Where nationally important archaeological remains and their settings are likely to be affected by proposed development, there should be a presumption in favour of their physical protection in situ. It will only be in exceptional circumstances that planning permission will be granted if development would result in an adverse impact on a scheduled monument (or an archaeological site shown to be of national importance) or has a demonstrably and unacceptably damaging effect upon its setting.*

The majority of the northern field of the proposal site is a Scheduled Monument - Croes Atti Roman Site

The Ancient Monuments UK website provides the following description for the scheduled monument:

*The monument comprises the buried remains of a Roman road, roadside settlement and associated cremation cemetery known from geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation (Wardell Armstrong 2014, 2015). This lies on the continuation of the same Roman road and an associated roadside lead working and domestic complex excavated approximately 80m to the NNW in 2013.*

*The remains occupy almost level ground at 10m OD, sloping gently uphill to the south from the present coastal road with views across the Dee estuary to the north. Magnetometer survey in 2014 produced clear evidence of the Roman road running SSE-NNW across the scheduled area towards the section excavated in 2013. A series of magnetic anomalies ranged along the line of the road indicates an area of intense human activity, likely to represent parallel ditches for building plots containing possible structures, pits and hearths or furnaces, comparable in layout to the known industrial structures excavated to the north-west, outside of the scheduled area in 2013. Evaluation trenches to the south of this area revealed a well preserved cremation cemetery of both cists and urns, and a range of post holes, pits and gullies containing Roman pottery dating from the late 1st to early 3rd centuries AD, contemporary with that recovered by the previous Croes Atti excavations in 2013, in the vicinity of Pentre Farm and Pentre Bridge Roman Site (FL131) in the early 20th century.*

*The monument is of national importance as a rare example of a Roman roadside industrial settlement and cemetery with few parallels in Wales. It is likely to retain extensive and well-preserved buried archaeological deposits with high potential to enhance our knowledge of Roman industry, civilian settlement, transport and funerary practices, and of broader patterns of Roman activity along the Dee Estuary. It shares group value with extensive and contemporary Roman industrial activity excavated or observed to either side of the Roman road to the northwest. This includes the furnaces, associated sheds and possible domestic structures in the vicinity of Pentre Farm excavated by the Flintshire Historical Society in the early twentieth century (partly scheduled as FL131) and the well preserved roadside lead working features alongside a largely intact section of the same road excavated by Earthworks Archaeology in 2013.*

*The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive. It is 1.18ha in area and L shaped in plan and measures 109m SE-NW by 120m SSW-NNE.*

There is no built form in the Scheduled Monument area, other than footpaths through parkland, which have a very limited excavation and construction profile. The proposed public open space will also have trees and shrubs, however no trees are proposed in a 30m offset from the line of the roman road. The landscape design proposals for the public open space will need to be assessed by a heritage consultant to confirm that they will not harm the scheduled monument.

### 3.3 APPRAISAL OF LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSAL SITE

The proposal site lies outside of the Flint settlement boundary, in land often referred to as 'Open Countryside', although this land also includes areas of residential and commercial development, such as the properties on Leadbrook Drive, and the properties and large commercial premises on Chester Road to the north and north-east of the proposal site. Land within the settlement boundary is controlled by policy PC1. No specific policies relate to land outside the settlement boundary. Policy PC1 provides a list of types of development which will be permitted outside of the settlement boundary, however the proposed development is not one of the listed types of development.

Land to the east of the proposal site beyond Leadbrook Drive is covered by policy EN11.4 'Green Wedges'. The boundary of this 'Green Wedges' land was reviewed as part of the formation of the current adopted Local Plan, where the former Green Barrier Land (Gen 4(4)), was extended to Leadbrook Drive but not further to meet the existing settlement boundary at Croes Atti residential estate, which would have included the fields of the proposal site. It is therefore concluded that the land of the proposal site does not perform Green Belt/Wedge function, nor need protecting from new development by Green Belt/Wedge policy.

## 4.0 SITE CONTEXT

The following views have been selected to give a brief overview of the landscape within and surrounding Oakenholt area and the proposal site. An assessment of visual amenity and specific receptors is included in section 7.




Figure 7. Topography

 Proposal Site



Figure 8. Vegetation Cover

 Principle areas of trees and hedgerow

 Proposal Site

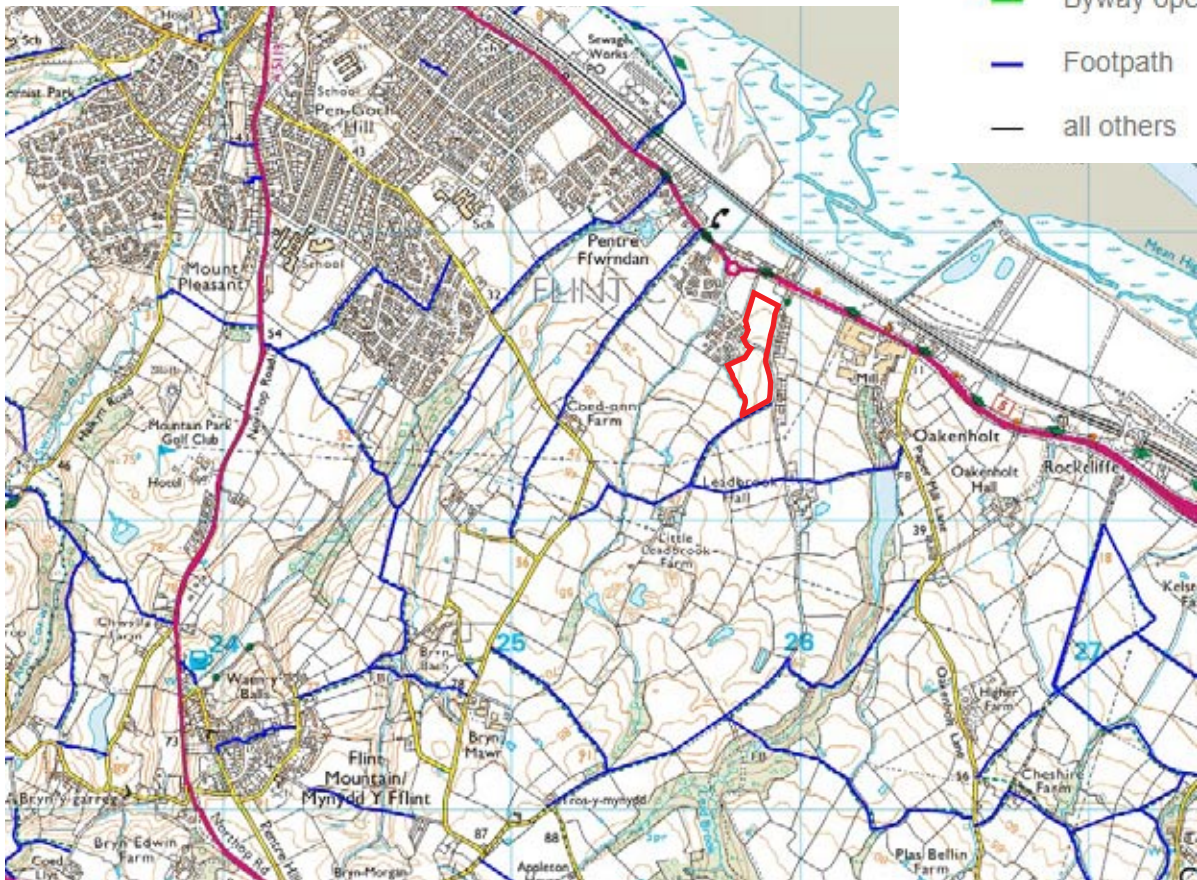
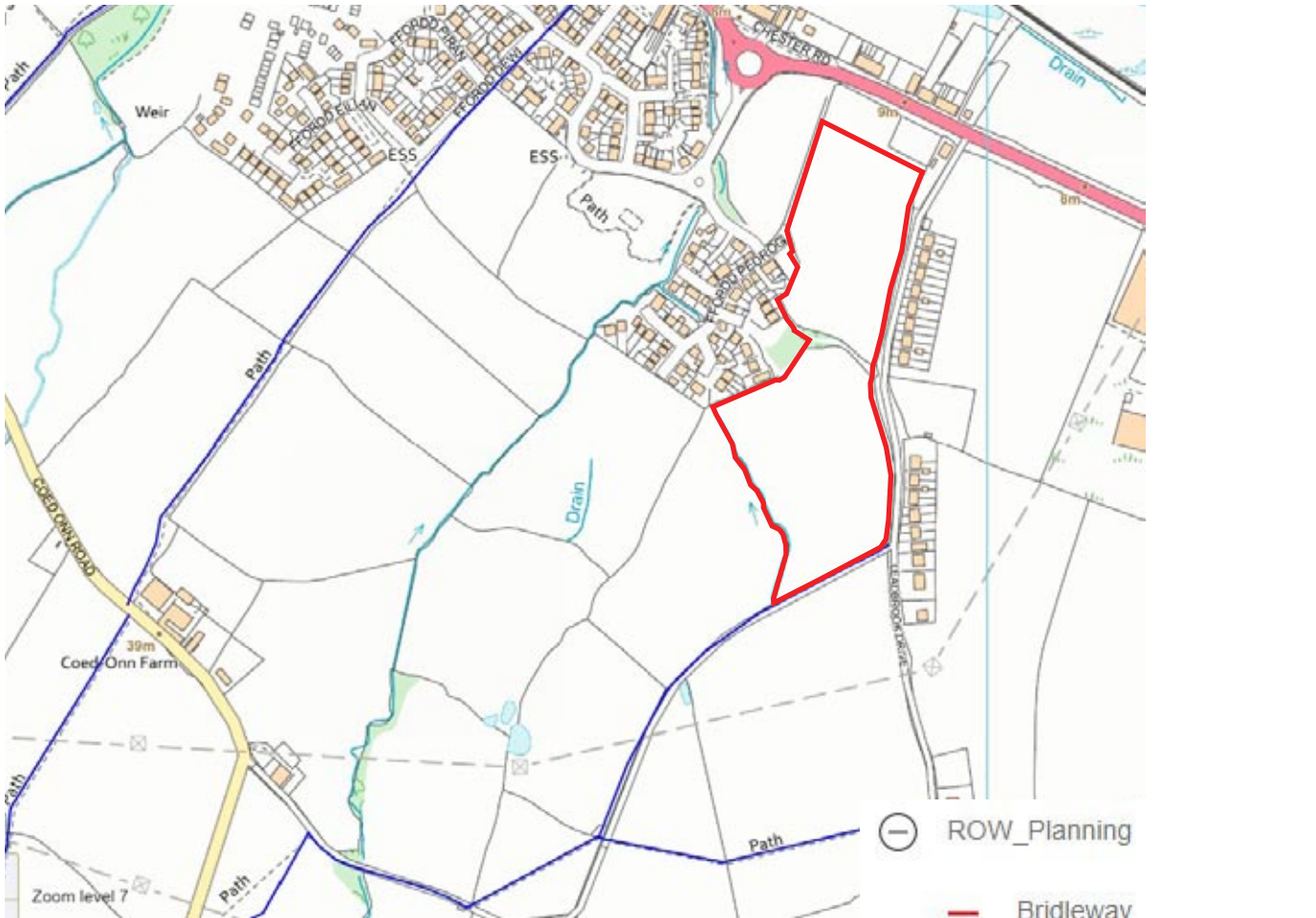
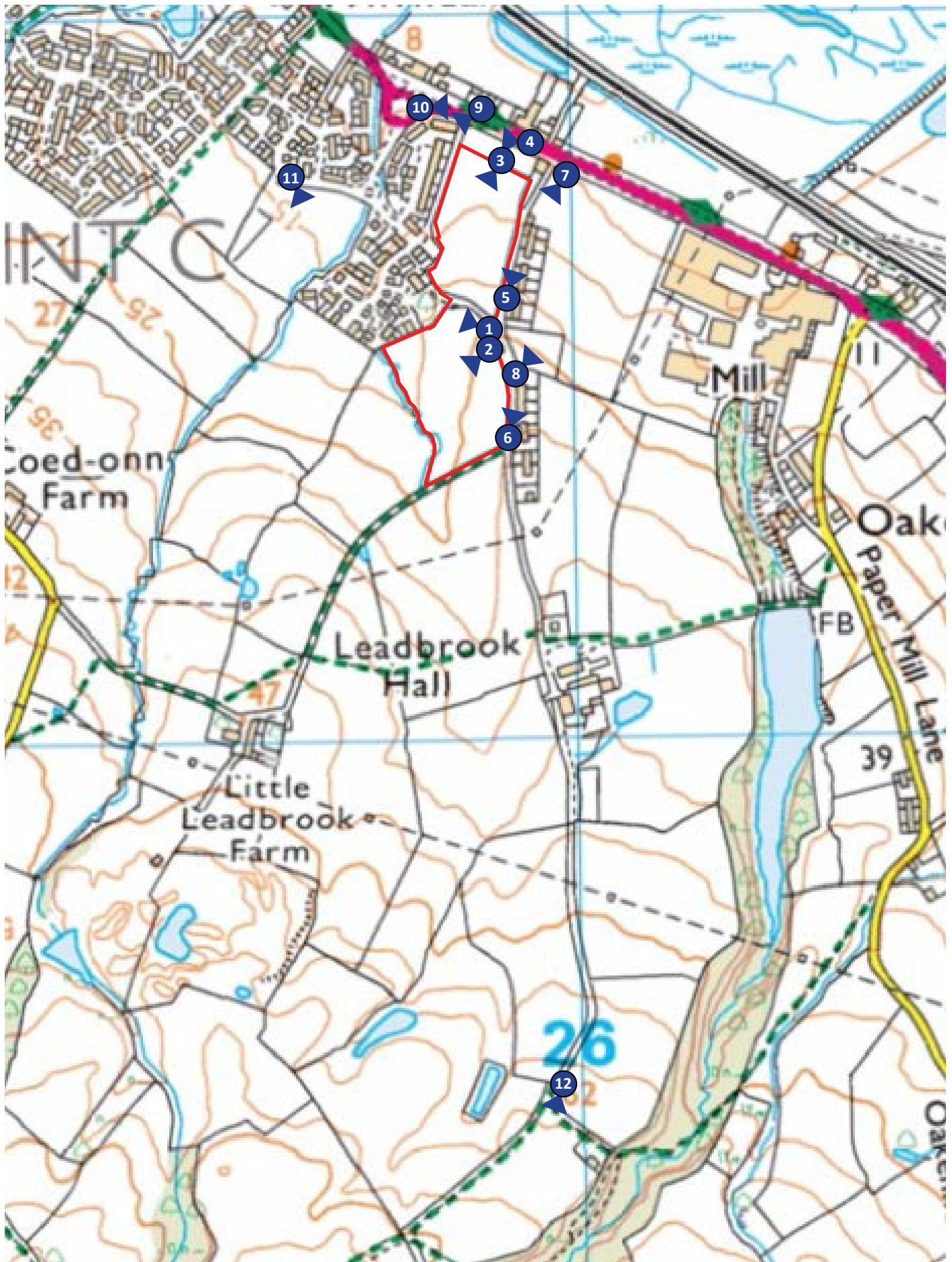



Figure 9. Public Rights of Way Maps  
<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Public-rights-of-way.aspx>

— Proposal Site





 Context photograph locations

 Proposal Site

Figure 10. Site Context Photographs- Proposal Site



Proposal Site - Southern field looking westwards from Leadbrook Lane



Proposal Site - Southern field looking south-west from Leadbrook Lane



Proposal Site - Northern Field (Parcel A) looking north from the play area on Chester Road.



The play area between the public open space of the proposal site and Chester Road.



Residential properties on Leadbrook Drive which face the northern field of the proposal site.



Residential properties on Leadbrook Drive which face the southern field of the proposal site.



Leadbrook Drive facing north in the direction of the proposal site (the public open space of the proposal site is located beyond the hedgerow on the right side of the photograph).



Photo looking eastwards from Leadbrook Drive across the 'Green Wedges' Land (policy NE11.4) towards the large industrial units on Chester Road



Residential properties on Chester Road, looking west towards the Croes atti residential estate

10



Photo looking eastwards towards the residential properties on Chester Road which face towards the proposal site.

11



Typical settlement of the Croes atti residential estate looking eastwards in the direction of the proposal site (located beyond the trees in the distance)

12



Photo from the footpath at the southern end of Leadbrook Drive looking south (away from the direction of the proposal site)

## 5.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASE LINE

### 5.1 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES WALES: NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA: NLCA13 DEESIDE AND WREXHAM**

The wider landscape character area has been assessed as part of the Natural Resources Wales: National Landscape Character Assessment

##### *Summary description*

*A border area, extending from the mouth of the Dee along the coast as far as Point of Ayr, and inland as far south as the Ceiriog Valley. It includes several settlements and centres of population, the principal being the towns of Chirk, Wrexham and its main satellites Ruabon, and Rhosllanerchrugog in the south; Mold, Flint and Holywell in the north and west, and the part-industrial, part-suburban centres of Queensferry, Connah's Quay, Mostyn Docks and Talacre on the shores of the Dee Estuary. Elsewhere, many settlements, like Buckley, have grown out of the linear expansion and coalescence of preindustrial roadside villages and hamlets. Historically, much of this area has formed part of the hinterland of Chester. The greater part of the lowland around the mouth of the Dee was reclaimed from the sea in the 18th century, though the former large expanse of tidal water is recalled in the Welsh name for Hawarden, Penarlâg, 'the hill above the lake'. This area also became heavily industrialised from the establishment of Shotton steelworks in 1895, though this was built of a long-established tradition of engineering and metalworking all along the coast, itself reflecting a long history of mining and the availability of water-borne transport. The Wrexham area similarly industrialised early on, taking advantage of its resources of coal, iron-ore, clay and limestone, as well as free-flowing streams to turn industrial water-wheels. In recent years, the area as a whole has become an economic hub of the Welsh and regional English economy with its gaze more towards Merseyside than to the rural areas to NLCA13 Deeside and Wrexham. However it would be wrong to see this area as a purely industrial and commercial landscape. It includes some attractive traditional architecture and countryside too, indeed its early industrial history has bequeathed some important monuments such as the Bersham ironworks near Wrexham.*

##### *Key Characteristics*

*Lowland, foothills and levels - sloping down to the lower Dee and Dee Estuary. Carboniferous Coal Measures interspersed with outcrops of Millstone Grit, Holywell shales and Cefn-y-Fedw sandstones. Glacial till, fluvio-glacial and river terrace drift overlay in parts of the valley floor, giving rise to localised gentle land form variation. A single large river, the Dee, traverses the area. The Dee opens out into a broad estuary with tidal sand and mud flats. A number of minor rivers dissect the landscape, for example, the Alyn and Eitha, and associated streams. A broad flat flood plain adjacent to the Dee Estuary – with wide open views to Wirral Narrow, incised, wooded tributary valleys – many running down from the west. Mixed pasture and some arable - and farm woodland cover. Archaeology - variety of historic sites indicate the former strategic importance of the coastal route and the turbulent history of the Marchlands, including Offa's Dyke and Wat's Dyke. Late Medieval parklands and ecclesiastical / funerary sites. Urban settlements - a strongly settled character is apparent in the central and southern parts of the area, with the relatively large, almost linked settlements of Holywell-Connah's Quay-Mold-Wrexham-Ruabon. An industrial character - evident in the line of coalesced settlements at Connah's Quay and Holywell, associated both with the Chester to Holyhead railway line, mining and large scale power generation and industrial plants. Include landmark scale structures such as Broughton aircraft factory, Shotton Steel works and Connah's Quay power station. Industry tends to dwarf historic settlement and features e.g. Flint and its castle. Small settlements – outside urban areas, compact villages associated with landed estates and isolated farmsteads, or coalesced ribbon developments and encroachment upon commons, which are the legacy of the former coal and lead mining industries. Culturally many connections to Chester and Merseyside*

##### *Visual and Sensory profile*

*The area encompasses the main concentration of built up areas that fall along the Dee and foothills of Wales. There is great contrast between the large, open estuary mouth, its large skies and tidal ebb and flow, and the busy developed areas around Connah's Quay, Queensferry and Wrexham. The associated transport links of the A55 Expressway, the A548 coast road and the A483 and A494 trunk roads, present much traffic noise, movement and night lighting. The aircraft factory at Broughton, the new Dee bridge, the gas-fired power station at Flint and the gas terminal near Port of Ayr, located on the former colliery site, are modern leviathans that create their own distinctive landscapes. Under the right weather conditions, the towering steam clouds vented from the wood processing plant at Chirk can be seen for miles across this and other, English landscapes to the east.*



Figure 12 - National Landscape Character Area 13: Deeside and Wrexham

● Proposal Site

## 5.2 APPRAISAL OF NLCA13 DEESIDE AND WREXHAM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL SITE

The character of the wider proposal site context is broadly in line with the NCA13 Deeside and Wrexham landscape character assessment. National Landscape Character Assessments generally cover a very broad range of landscape areas and incorporate large settlements, so the key characteristics are similarly broad, and contain both positive and detracting landscape characteristics. At this scale, it is almost impossible for a proposed development to have anything other than a very minor effect on the national landscape character area, unless the particular site is in a very sensitive area where the landscape is an exemplar of the most positive characteristics (for example National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), or the proposed development is so large and out of context with its surroundings that it could have an impact on the landscape character description, even if the receiving landscape is not necessarily sensitive (for example a large industrial park).

The proposal site is a pasture landscape located in an urban fringe location with no designation. The proposed development is for residential housing adjoining an existing large urban settlement, and is therefore not incongruous or out of scale. It is therefore assessed that the proposed development would have a Negligible impact on the key characteristics of the landscape character area.

## 5.3 REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS - LANDMAP AREA FLNTVS014

Natural Resources Wales has made an assessment of the landscape character for Wales (Landmap). The assessment is a broad overview of the countryside typical to a locality, and there may be areas within the broader area which have their own characteristics, or differ substantially from the broader assessment. How well the site relates to the broader landscape character is assessed at the end of this section, and a more detailed assessment of the site characteristics carried out in Section 6. The below text is extracted from the Wales Landmap database.

The below text is extracted from the Visual and Sensory assessment; Aspect Area Code: FLNTVS014, Lowland/ Rolling Lowland/ Mosaic Rolling Lowland (Level 3).

### Description

*Estuary Edge and Valleys - gently sloping and rolling lowland estuary edge with distinct east/west grain and mosaic of wooded linear stream valleys, traditional and improved farmland, and a linear settled and urban fringe lower edge; and an overall estuarine influence.*

### Landscape Physical Form & Elements

- *Rolling / Undulating topography*
- *Field Pattern/ Mosaic landcover*
- *Linear settlement pattern*
- *Field boundaries - hedges with trees*

**Landscape Aesthetic Qualities**

- Medium scale
- Enclosed
- Organised pattern

**Landscape Other Factors** • Frequent human access and moderate night time pollution

**Views** • Attractive views both in and out and detracting views to urban edge.

**Landscape Perceptual Qualities**

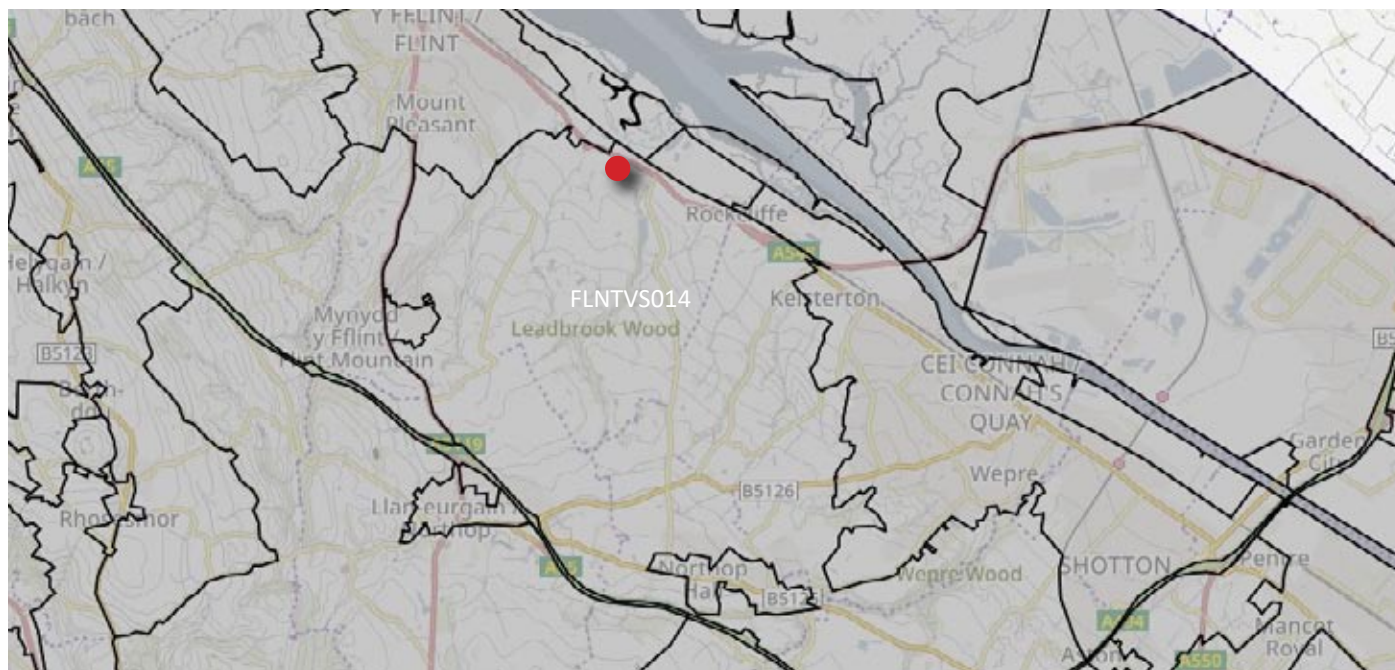
- Mixture of attractive and unattractive landscape, with some noisy and exposed areas.
- Moderate sense of place and local distinctiveness

**Recommendations**

- Estuary edge and wooded valleys plus strong field patterns are key qualities
- Woodland, field boundaries and traditional fields should be conserved

**Summary Evaluation**

- Scenic Quality - Moderate
- Integrity - Moderate
- Character - Moderate
- Rarity - Moderate
- Overall evaluation - Moderate: Area of local landscape importance



● Proposal Site

**5.4 APPRAISAL OF LANDMAP AREA FLNTVS014 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL SITE**

The character of the proposal site is broadly in line with the Landmap character description, which predominantly relates to countryside on the edge of urban development, where both attractive and unattractive elements are a feature of the landscape, and which has human settlement and activity which reduces the tranquility of the landscape. The site has been categorised as having a moderate rating for scenic quality, character, rarity and Integrity.

The proposed development will change 2 pastoral fields on the eastern edge of the existing Flint settlement to a residential area (on the outer edge of this landscape character area). The existing trees and hedgerows which divide the 2 fields, and which form the site boundaries, will be retained in the development proposals. A large area of public open space is proposed to cover most of the northern field to protect the Roman remains of the Croes Atti ancient monument site. As well as forming an extension to the existing Flint settlement, the site will be bounded by the existing houses on Leadbrook Drive, and much of the proposal site (particularly the northern field) does not have a visual connection to the wider rural landscape. The proposed development would have an impact on some views across the landscape (see Section 7), but only in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site. The proposed development would form a logical extension of the existing settlement in this location, would not appear incongruous or out of scale. The proposed development is assessed to have a Low change to the key characteristics of the Landmap FLNTVS014 Landscape Character Area.



## 6.0 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

### 6.1 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA APPRAISAL

The existing landscape character assessments available are detailed assessments of the wider area. A site specific character appraisal has been carried out by TPM Landscape as part of this assessment for the site and immediate surrounding landscape in order to understand the landscape character and the interface between these varying character areas around the proposal site.

The Character Areas have been defined through a variety of characteristics and elements;

- Structure / Density / Scale
- Land use and Landscape
- Geology / Topography
- Visual Amenity (where it relates to landscape character)
- Heritage and Culture

Site visits and desk top research have informed this appraisal, with both built form and the natural environment considered. The assessment has identified four local character areas, (See Figure 14):

The proposal site lies within Character Area 1 Rolling Lowland Farmland that is surrounded by varying land uses and character areas including existing settlement and construction / new settlement landscape. The Industry and Estuary character areas have not be described in detail in this report due to the distance and separation form the proposal site, and there is no potential for the proposal site to have an impact on the landscape characteristics of these character areas.

The proposal site and wider landscape area are illustrated on Fig.12 ‘Local Landscape Character Map’. The proposed development would change the proposal site from Landscape Character Area 1 (Rolling Lowland Farmland) to Landscape Character Area 2 (Settlement)

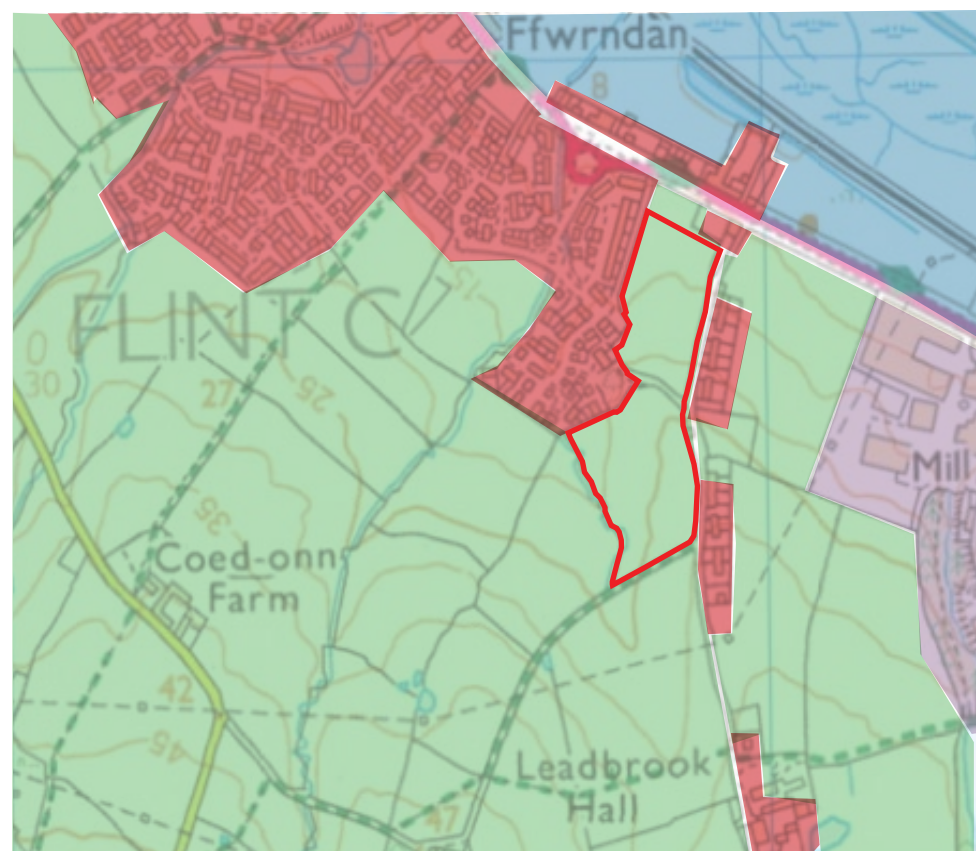


Figure 12. Local Landscape Character Appraisal Map






-  The Proposal Site
-  Character Area 1 - Rolling Lowland Farmland
-  Character Area 2 - Settlement
-  Character Area 3 - Industry
-  Character Area 4 - Estuary



Photo 1. Rural land to the south

## 6.21 CHARACTER AREA 1 - Rolling Lowland Farmland

**Settlement/Layout and Scale:** Undulating fields used for both arable and pastoral farming. Irregular field patterns ranging from small to large. Fields divided by managed hedgerow vegetation (typical Hawthorn). Mature hedgerow trees are grouped together giving localised areas of tree cover. Relatively open landscape. Pylons run across the landscape.

**Designation:** No landscape designation for the proposal site. Land to the east of Leadbrook Drive is 'Green Wedges' land. See Planning Context - Section 3.

**Resource:** A network of public footpaths connecting through the fields to the local roads.

**Landform and topography:** 10-45m, Undulating landform.

### Remoteness and Tranquility:

Rural lanes with low volumes of traffic to the south. Heavier traffic and urbanising features along the A548 in the north.

**Quality and Value:** Ordinary Quality, Moderate Value.

### Landscape Elements:

- Built Form: Minimal outside of settlements, predominantly farmsteads and isolated agricultural buildings
- Fields bounded by hedgerows, and large areas of woodland and more isolated woodland copses.

**Heritage:** The northern part of the northern field of the proposal site is the Croes Atti Scheduled Ancient Monument.

**Culture:** No special cultural attributes

**Visual Amenity:** Wide panoramic views across the landscape and estuary from elevated locations are a characteristic of the landscape character area.

**Susceptibility to the proposed type of development:** Low-Medium in urban fringe location

### Sensitivity:

- Wider rural landscape: Medium Landscape Sensitivity. (including southern field of the proposal site).
- Fringe of Settlement: Low-Medium Landscape Sensitivity. (including northern field of the proposal site)





Photo 2. Flint settlement

## 6.22 CHARACTER AREA 2 - Settlement

**Settlement/Layout and Scale:** Linear settlement pattern along Leadbrook Drive and Chester Road. Properties along Leadbrook Drive are predominantly semi-detached red brick and rendered. Properties along Chester Road are varied from terraced, semi-detached and detached. Render and brick are the common materials.

**Designation:** No landscape designation.

**Resource:** Urban settlement, residential properties.

**Landform and topography:** 20-50m. Slightly sloping from higher ground in the south.

**Remoteness and Tranquility:** A developed and peopled landscape at the interface with the countryside setting. Construction landscape proposed to further separate the rural edge. Not tranquil, low activity urban environment.

**Quality and Value:** Poor Quality and Low Value. Predominantly modern buildings on the eastern Flint edge. No conservation areas or listed buildings.

### Landscape Elements:

- Built Form: Predominantly modern housing, no conservation areas or listed buildings.
- Trees (TPO/ Woodland/ Ancient/ Other): Few trees in the urban setting.

**Heritage:** No notable heritage assets in the settlement

**Culture:** No notable cultural assets in the settlement.

**Visual Amenity:** Restricted urban views

**Susceptibility to the proposed type of development:** Low susceptibility to additional residential development.

### Sensitivity:

Low Sensitivity.

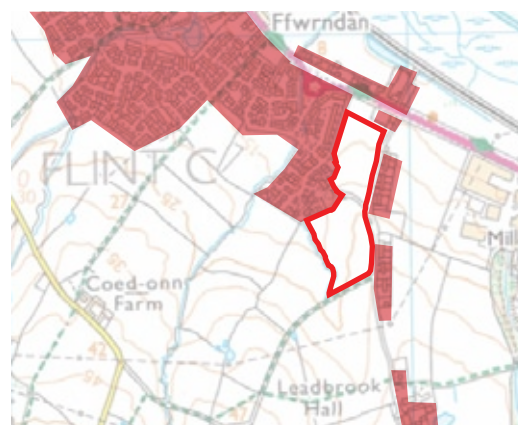




Photo 3. Commercial unit adjacent to Chester Road

### 6.23 CHARACTER AREA 3 - Industry

**Settlement/Layout and Scale:** Large modern commercial buildings

**Designation:** No designation

**Resource:** No public access

**Landform and topography:** general flat/ mild slope

**Remoteness and Tranquility:** Not remote or tranquil.

**Quality and Value:** Low quality and Value

**Landscape Elements:**

Few

**Heritage:** None

**Culture:** None

**Visual Amenity:** None

**Susceptibility to the proposed type of development:** Low

**Sensitivity:**

Low Landscape Sensitivity.

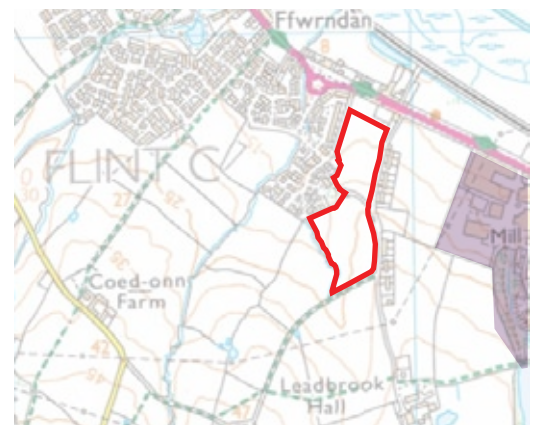




Photo 4. Dee estuary (zoom view from upland location)

#### 6.24 CHARACTER AREA 4 - Estuary

**Settlement/Layout and Scale:** Estuary landscape

**Designation:** Various ecological/SSI designations

**Resource:** Public Footpaths at the fringes of the area

**Landform and topography:** Flat

**Remoteness and Tranquility:** A tranquil landscape with remote areas away from the settlements and road network.

**Quality and Value:** High quality away from settlement, and High Value

**Landscape Elements:**

- Built Form: None
- Trees (TPO/ Woodland/ Ancient/ Other): Few trees other than at the fringes

**Heritage:** N/A

**Culture:** N/A

**Visual Amenity:** Wide panoramic views across the estuary.

**Susceptibility to the proposed type of development:** High Susceptibility to new development of any kind.

**Sensitivity:**

High Landscape Sensitivity.



### 6.3 CHANGE AND LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TO LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

#### *Change in elements, characteristics, character and qualities of the landscape as a result of development.*

The potential for a change to the character of the assessed Local Landscape Character Areas has been assessed with regard to the proposed development described in Figure 1 of this report.

Where potential effects are assessed for neighbouring landscape character areas, the potential intervisibility between the proposed development site and the adjacent landscape character area has been assessed with regard to restricting visual factors described in the Visual assessment in Section 7 of this LVA.

#### **Character Area 1: Rolling Lowland Farmland**

The proposed development is located within this landscape character type, and will change 2 pastoral fields on the existing settlement edge to residential development, and will consequently result in a reduction of this landscape character area. The scale of loss of this landscape character area is considered small with regard to the scale of the wider landscape area, and the proposal site is located directly adjacent to the existing settlement, in an area of land contained by houses to the north, east and west, between Flint and Leadbrook Drive. The landscape in the vicinity of the site does not have Green Belt/ Green Wedges function, unlike the landscape to the east of Leadbrook Drive, and is not designated in any other way (landscape designation). The northern part of the northern field contains the Croes atti Roman scheduled ancient monument site, being the location of the Roman Road. This route of the Roman road is located within the public open space part of the development site, and no development is proposed in the near vicinity of the ancient monument.

Due to the location of the proposal site, the scale of the proposed development, the retention of existing trees and hedgerows within the site and on the boundaries, it is assessed that the proposed development would have a Medium change to this landscape character area initially, however this will reduce to Low as proposed mitigation planting throughout the development matures, and the development becomes an assimilated part of the settlement. The effect to this landscape character area is assessed as reducing from **Slight-Moderate** adverse to **Slight** Neutral

#### **Character Area 2: Settlement**

The proposed development is not within this landscape character type, and any potential impacts would be 'indirect' through potential intervisibility. The proposed development will form an extension of this landscape character type, and the residential development will be congruous with the adjacent built form, and the scale of development will not have a notable effect on the existing Flint settlement. The effect of the proposed development on this landscape character area is assessed as Negligible.

#### **Character Area 3: Industry**

The proposed development is not within this landscape character type, and any potential impacts would be 'indirect' through potential intervisibility. The proposed development will not have any impact on this landscape character type, and the effect is assessed as Negligible.

#### **Character Area 4: Estuary**

The proposed development is not within this landscape character type, and any potential impacts would be 'indirect' through potential intervisibility. The proposed development will not have any impact on this landscape character type, and the effect is assessed as Negligible.

### 6.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER MITIGATION

Certain direct interventions and/or management techniques can be employed to assist in reducing the proposed impact on the landscape and integrating the development into the edge of settlement context. The following mitigation measures would be expected to reduce the impacts on the proposal site and the wider landscape and meet the objectives in the national and regional landscape character assessments:

- Utilise sympathetic building materials, to reinforce the sense of place, and enhance the setting.
- Retain the existing trees and hedgerows that surround the proposal site. Replace any lost tree cover with new tree and woodland planting to retain the green infrastructure around the site. Use the landscaping of the site to enhance the bio-diversity where possible.
- Ensure that good provision is made within the layout to incorporate new tree, shrub, grass and meadow planting.

| <b>Table 1 - SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS</b>    |                                |                                   |  |                              |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Landscape Receptor</b>                        | <b>Hierarchy of Importance</b> | <b>Sensitivity</b>                | <b>Change</b><br><i>(pre mitigation)</i> | <b>Landscape Effect</b>      |                                |
|  |                                |                                   |  | <b>Year 1 pre-mitigation</b> | <b>Year 15 with mitigation</b> |
| <b>National and Regional Landscape Character</b> |                                |                                   |  |                              |                                |
| NLCA13: Deeside and Wrexham                      | National                       | Medium                            | Negligible                               | Negligible                   | Negligible                     |
| LANDMAP AREA FLNTV2014                           | Regional                       | Medium                            | Low<br><i>(Low)</i>                      | Slight-Moderate              | Slight-Moderate<br>(Neutral)   |
| <b>Local Landscape Character</b>                 |                                |                                   |  |                              |                                |
| Character Area 1<br>Rolling Lowland Farm-land    | Local                          | Low-Medium<br>(settlement fringe) | Low<br><i>(Medium)</i>                   | Slight-Moderate              | Slight                         |
| Character Area 2<br>Settlement                   | Local                          | Low                               | Negligible                               | Negligible                   | Negligible                     |
| Character Area 3<br>Industry                     | Local                          | Low                               | Negligible                               | Negligible                   | Negligible                     |
| Character Area 4<br>Estuary                      | National                       | High                              | Negligible                               | Negligible                   | Negligible                     |

**Landscape Effects:**

Assessed landscape effects can be Adverse, Neutral, or Beneficial (see Appendix for definitions). The above effects are assessed as 'Adverse', unless annotated otherwise. Negligible effects are Neutral.

## 7.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

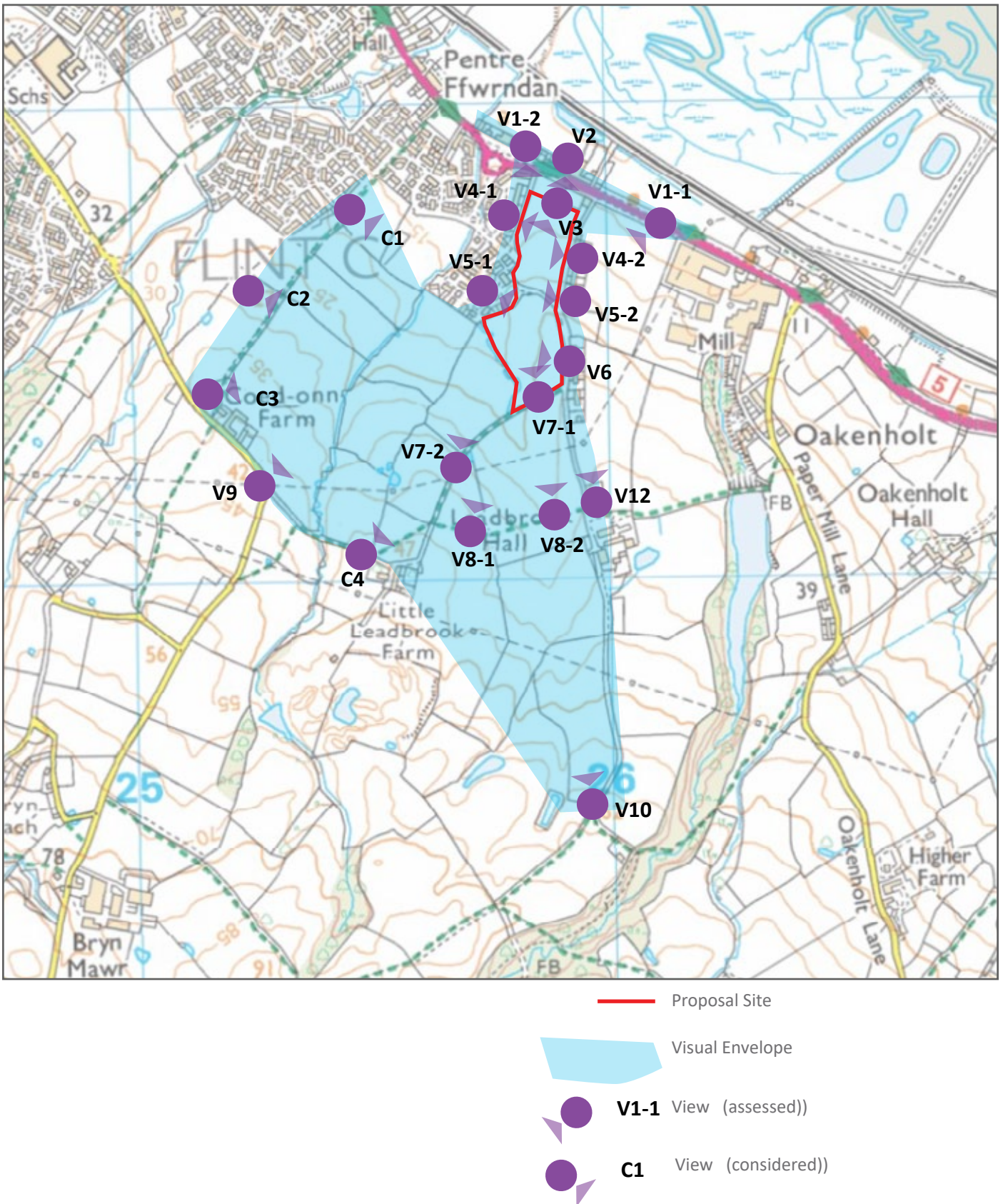


Figure 13. Viewpoint / Receptor Location Plan

Please refer to Appendix 1.0 for Visual Receptor Figures



## 7.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

Refer to tables Appendix 1 Methodology: Tables 8-13, and Appendix 2: Views (A3 document)

### 7.1 VISUAL APPRAISAL - RECEPTORS

Viewpoints have been selected from various locations and possible vantage points identified through site visits and analysis. Views for the appraisal have been chosen to be both representative of the range of differing receptors (public, community, residents and visitors) within the study areas, and of the visual amenity available at points north, south, east and west of the proposal site.

### 7.2 SUSCEPTIBILITY & SENSITIVITY

The susceptibility and sensitivity of each receptor is considered as part of the appraisal with regard to the proposed change of use of the site, from 2 pasture fields to a residential development of 128 units. Generally views from the principle rooms of residential properties and those from rural footpaths where the site forms a prominent part of the experience are described as having High Sensitivity. Residential properties with secondary rooms, together with people engaged in outdoor recreation where the focus is not on the landscape or view, and public right of way footpaths in a predominantly urban context, are described as having Medium Sensitivity. Low Sensitivity receptors are typically those where the experience of the view is not of great importance, such as people at their place of work and journeys through a landscape within cars, trains or other forms of transport (transient) when the view is not considered part of the experience. The viewpoints have then been categorised into the type of receptors and views selected which are representative of a typical view of that type of receptor. A selected view may be representative of more than one receptor type (e.g. residential property and public footpath). Also, a single receptor might have several viewpoints (such as a series of views on the same footpath). Viewpoints are generally chosen where they are most representative of the typical view of the receptor, however it is not always possible to obtain actual views (for instance from private residential properties), and an alternative representative view is used in this instance. The viewpoints have then been categorised into the type of receptors and views selected which are representative of a typical view of that type of receptor.

#### Residential Receptors

Five residential receptor groups have been identified and assessed:

VIEW 2, is representative of the properties on Chester Road which directly face the proposal site. These properties lie directly adjacent to a busy road, and their current view (southwards) is contained predominantly by settlement. These receptors are assessed to have Low-Medium Susceptibility to residential development, and Medium Sensitivity, as any views will be predominantly from upper floor rooms. The existing view for these properties is assessed as Poor-Ordinary Quality and Value.

VIEWES V4-1, V4-2, and V4-3 are representative of the properties (approximately 12Nr) which lie directly adjacent to the site, on the northern, north-eastern and north-western boundaries where they face the proposed public open space (site of the Croes Atti Roman Road). These receptors are assessed to have a Medium Susceptibility to the proposed residential development, due to their location on the edge of settlement and existing views towards residential properties, and existing views being contained to some extent by settlement and urban form. Residential properties are often considered to have High Sensitivity, however with regard to the Medium Susceptibility, and Poor/Ordinary Quality and Value of the view, these residential properties are assessed to have Medium Sensitivity in this context.

VIEWES 5-1 and 5-2 are representative of the residential properties (approximately 12Nr) which face onto the proposed built part of the northern field of the proposal site, from the Croes Atti residential estate on the western site boundary and from Leadbrook Drive on the eastern site boundary. These receptors are assessed to have Medium Susceptibility and Medium- High Sensitivity due to their edge of settlement location, but with a semi-rural aspect. The existing view for these properties is assessed as Poor-Ordinary Quality and Value.

VIEW V6 is a representative viewpoint for properties (approximately 10Nr) which face directly onto the proposed southern field of the proposal site from Leadbrook Drive. These properties are considered to have a Medium Susceptibility due to their edge of settlement location, and a High Sensitivity as their existing views (mainly from upper floor windows) are predominantly rural. The existing view for these properties is assessed as Ordinary. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Good where panoramic views are available across the landscape.

VIEW V9 is predominantly representative of the vehicle users of Coed Onn Road, however is also generally representative of Coed Onn Farm building (a view could not be obtained from the actual property as it is private and concealed). The Susceptibility and Sensitivity of the Farm is assessed as Medium due to the distance from the proposal site and orientation of the property. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Ordinary-Good where panoramic views are available across the estuary.

VIEW V11 is representative of a single property which lies south to the south of Leadbrook Drive approximately 250m from the proposal site. The Susceptibility and Sensitivity of the Farm is assessed as Medium due to the distance from the proposal site and orientation of the property. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Ordinary where panoramic views are available.

### **Pedestrian Receptors - Public Footpaths**

Three pedestrian receptor groups have been identified and assessed from public right of way footpaths:

VIEW 7 -1 and 7-2 are representative of the views experienced by users of the public right of way footpath which runs directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposal site. The users of this footpath which provides a route from the urban fringe into the countryside are assessed to have a High Susceptibility and Sensitivity to change. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Ordinary-Good where panoramic views are available across the rural landscape.

VIEW 8-1 and 8-2 are representative of the views experienced by users of the public right of way footpath which connects Coed Onn Road to Leadbrook Drive, and runs approximately 300m to the south of the proposal site. It is a rural footpath and the receptor is assessed to have a High Susceptibility and Sensitivity to change. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Ordinary-Good where panoramic views are available across the estuary.

VIEW 10 is representative of the views experienced by users of the public right of way footpath to the south of Leadbrook Drive, approximately 875m to the south of the proposal site. The Susceptibility and Sensitivity of this receptor group is assessed as being Medium due to the distance from the proposal site. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Ordinary where panoramic views are available across the estuary.

### **Vehicle, travel and pedestrian roadside footpath Receptors**

Two representative travel receptor groups have been identified and assessed:

VIEW 1- Representative of views for people travelling along Chester Road to the north of the proposal site. This receptor group is located in a settlement location and is assessed to have a Low Susceptibility and Sensitivity to change. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Poor-Ordinary.

VIEW 9 Representative of views for people travelling in vehicles along Coed Onn Road, approximately 450m south-west of the proposal site. This receptor group is assessed to have a Medium Susceptibility to change due to the rural location, and a Low Sensitivity to change due to the lane being contained by hedgerows with very limited views from this location. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Ordinary-Good where panoramic views are available across the estuary.

### **Other Visual Receptors**

VIEW V3 is representative of the view experienced by users of the play area located between the northern boundary of the proposal site and Chester Road. The play area is not easily accessible. Play areas are generally located in settlement locations, and this receptor group is assessed to have a Low Susceptibility and Sensitivity to change. The Value and Quality of the view is assessed as being Poor-Ordinary.

### **Considered Views and Receptor groups**

Further potential views were considered where desktop study indicated that potential views may be available. These potential views have been appraised in Considered Views within Appendix 1: Views as follows:

C1 to C4 Potential views for people using the public right of way footpath which runs from the south of the Coes Atti residential estate and leads to Coed Onn Road. This footpath route is not very accessible, and has high hedges which restrict all views in the direction of the proposal site. Any potential change to the Considered Views was assessed as Nil/ Negligible and these views were not assessed in detail in this report.

## **7.3 VISUAL QUALITY AND VALUE**

### ***The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.***

The quality of the views are generally Poor to Ordinary in the near vicinity of the site, as they are predominantly in an 'urban settlement' context, with only limited views to the rural countryside beyond the settlement. Views from more elevated locations in the rural countryside to the south of the site are assessed to be Ordinary to Good, where wide panoramas across the landscape and estuary are available. The network of pylons which traverse the landscape are major detracting factors to the views.

## 7.4 CHANGE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

The following assessment has been made with the assumption that the proposed layout is similar to the illustrative layout in Figure 1 and adopts the mitigation measures described in Section 8. Tables 12 and 13 and 14 of Appendix 2: Methodology illustrates the assessment criteria to determine visual effects and whether the receptor is at a local, regional or national importance.

Eleven representative viewpoints were assessed for identified receptor groups, with further description of the assessed change in Appendix 1. A summary of the considered change for all eleven receptor groups is provided below. Where effects are described post mitigation, this is with regard to the implementation of the proposed mitigation described in the Landscape Framework Plan (Section 8 of this report).

Viewpoint V1 (Pedestrian and Vehicle on Chester Road) - Low Change due to the setback of the proposed dwellings (to offset the Croes Atti Roman Road), and the proposed area of public open space to the north of the proposal site. The resulting effect to the visual receptor will be a slight effect, however it will be neutral as the primary change will be from a field to an area of parkland with native trees and shrubs.

Viewpoint V2 (Residential properties on Chester Road) - Medium change to the views from upper floors of the properties which face the proposal site (as with View 1, the majority of the view will be of the proposed public open space part of the site), resulting in a Moderate Adverse effect, however as the planting within the public open space matures, the effects will reduce, and the effect will become Slight-Moderate and Neutral, as the predominant view will be of parkland.

Viewpoint V3 ((Users of the play area adjacent to Chester Road) - The change of the view for users of the play area will be Low, as the play area will abut the proposed public open space of the proposal site, which will result in a Slight Neutral effect.

Viewpoint 4 (Residential properties which face toward the northern part of the proposal site - facing public open space area) - These properties will experience a Medium change to their view as the field becomes parkland, however these properties are located in a settlement edge location, and the change to parkland is considered to be Neutral in nature.

Viewpoint 5 (Residential properties on Leadbrook Drive and the Cores Atti estate which face towards the northern part of the proposal site - facing new residential development) - These properties will experience a change in view from pasture field (in an edge of settlement location) to residential development. Views across the proposal site are predominantly from upper floor windows (which face the site) and the change is considered to be High from these locations, resulting in a Substantial Adverse change. When the proposed mitigation planting becomes established, it is considered that the effects will reduce to Moderate-Substantial, but remain Adverse.

Viewpoint 6 (Residential properties on the southern end of Leadbrook Drive which face new development) - These properties will experience a change in view from pasture field (with a predominantly rural aspect) to residential development. Views across the proposal site are predominantly from upper floor windows (which face the site), and the change is considered to be High from these locations, resulting in a Substantial Adverse change. When the proposed mitigation planting becomes established, it is considered that the effects will reduce to Moderate-Substantial, but remain Adverse.

Viewpoint 7 (Users of the public right of way directly adjacent to the south of the proposal site) - The users of this footpath will experience a High change to their view as the nature of the view will change from pasture field to residential properties, and some longer distance views will be screened in the immediate vicinity of the site. The effect is assessed as Substantial (Adverse), reducing to Moderate-Substantial (Adverse) following establishment of the proposed mitigation, for users of the footpath in the immediate vicinity of the site, however as the footpath extends to the countryside (beyond location V7-2), the change to the view is for this limited section of the footpath only.

Viewpoint 8 (Users of the public right of way footpath which runs from Coed Onn Road to Leadbrook Drive approximately 300m to the south of the site, and from limited locations only). The change to the view is assessed as Medium from selected locations, reducing to Low as the proposed mitigation planting integrates the proposed development into the existing settlement. The corresponding effects are assessed as Moderate-substantial (Adverse), reducing to Moderate (Neutral) following mitigation.

Viewpoint 9 (Vehicle receptors and users of Coed Onn Road). The proposal site is located approximately 500m from this receptor, and there are only limited views from gaps in hedgerows. From these locations the change is assessed as low reducing to Negligible, with the corresponding effect reducing from Slight-Moderate (Adverse) to Negligible as the proposed mitigation becomes established.

Viewpoint 10 and 11 (Users of the public right of way footpath and property to the south of Leadbrook Drive. The assessed change is Low reducing to Negligible for both receptor groups, with a corresponding effect of Slight (Adverse) reducing to Negligible as the proposed mitigation becomes established.

**Table 2 - SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS**

| View | Receptor                        | Hierarchy of Importance | Sensitivity                                | Change to view Pre Mitigation (post mitigation) | Visual Effect  |  |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|--|--|
|      |                                 |                         |  |   | Year 1 pre-mitigation (Beneficial/Neutral/Adverse)             | Year 15 with mitigation (Beneficial/Neutral/Adverse) |
| V1   | Roadside Pedestrian and Vehicle | Local                   | Low  | Low (Low)                                       | Slight (Neutral)   | Slight (Neutral)                                     |
| V2   | Residential                     | Local                   | Medium                                     | Medium (Low)                                    | Moderate (Adverse)   | Slight-Moderate (Neutral)                            |
| V3   | Play Area users                 | Local                   | Low  | Low (Low)                                       | Slight (Neutral)   | Slight (Neutral)                                     |
| V4   | Residential                     | Local                   | Medium                                     | Medium (Low)                                    | Moderate (Neutral)   | Slight-Moderate (Neutral)                            |
| V5   | Residential                     | Local                   | Medium-High                                | High (Medium)                                   | Moderate-Substantial (Adverse)                                 | Moderate-Substantial (Adverse)                       |
| V6   | Residential                     | Local                   | High                                       | High (Medium)                                   | Substantial (Adverse)  | Moderate-Substantial (Adverse)                       |
| V7   | Footpath (PRoW)                 | Local                   | High                                       | High (Medium)                                   | Substantial (Adverse)  | Moderate-Substantial (Adverse)                       |
| V8   | Footpath (PRoW)                 | Local                   | High                                       | Medium (Low)                                    | Moderate-Substantial (Adverse)                                 | Moderate (Adverse)                                   |
| V9   | Farm Residential, and Vehicle   | Local                   | Farm Residential (Medium)<br>Vehicle (Low) | Low (Negligible)                                | Farm - Slight Moderate (Adverse)<br>Vehicle - Slight (Adverse) | Negligible both                                      |
| V10  | Footpath (PRoW)                 | Local                   | Medium                                     | Low (Negligible)                                | Slight-Moderate (Neutral)                                      | Negligible   |
| V11  | Residential                     | Local                   | Medium                                     | Low (Negligible)                                | Slight (Adverse)   | Negligible   |

Table Summary of Visual Effects

## 8.0 MITIGATION

### 8.1 MITIGATION PROPOSALS

The visual impacts identified are associated with views of the proposed residential development from both near and mid distance views. Comprehensive landscape proposals are provided as an integral part of the detailed housing layout.




To provide mitigation for identified landscape and visual impacts, a Landscape Framework Plan has been prepared. The existing landscape boundaries (existing housing and hedgerows/hedgerow trees) would provide clear edges to the development which could also be strengthened and enhanced to maintain the semi rural character of the land.

The Landscape Framework Plan seeks to mitigate the impacts and ensure the development addresses both landscape and visual impacts by the following methods:

- 1 Manage and restore hedgerows for landscape structure and biodiversity whilst providing organic boundaries to the proposed development
- 2 Allow for the further strengthening and management of existing boundaries and promote habitat creation.
- 3 Allow for public access and recreation space within the development to connect to the existing movement network and proposed public open space and the wider Croes Atti development and local facilities
- 4 Proposed site entrance to be located off the croes Atti residential estate
- 5 Set development back from existing settlement and allow room for public open space and vegetation planting



Figure 14. Landscape Framework Plan

-  Existing trees and hedgerow retained (refer to arboricultural survey and landscape design proposals)
-  New landscape buffer (Native tree and shrub planting with evergreen species)
-  New Trees (indicative)

 The Proposal Site

## 9.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

### 9.1 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development comprises 128 residential dwellings with associated access roads and public open space, located on 2 fields on the eastern boundary of Flint settlement, to the south of the Dee estuary in North Wales.

The following summary has been made with the assumption that the proposed layout is similar to the illustrative layout in Figure 1 and adopts the mitigation measures described in Section 8.

### 9.2 SITE CONTEXT

The proposal site is located to the south of Chester Road, directly adjacent to the recently completed Croes Atti residential estate on the eastern edge of Flint settlement. Leadbrook Drive runs along the eastern boundary of the proposal site and has a row of houses located on a small ridgeline. Trees and native hedgerow are located on the site boundary with Leadbrook Drive, with a small woodland copse and former farm access track separating the 2 proposed development fields. The Dee estuary is located beyond the housing on Chester Road, although there is very little visual relationship between the immediate vicinity of the proposal site and the estuary landscape. Land to the south of the proposal site rises up to lowland hills to the south of Flint, where wide panoramic views extend across the landscape and the Dee estuary.

The northern part of the proposal site has a former Roman Road running through it, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Croes Atti). The proposed development has provided an offset from the alignment of the Roman Road, where no development is proposed, in order to preserve the ancient monument, and this area is proposed as public open space within the development proposals, comprising of new parkland with native trees and shrubs accessible to the public through new footpaths, and with the potential to provide improved access to the existing play area adjacent to Chester Road.

### 9.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

The proposal site is located outside the current Flint settlement boundary (PC1), defined in the adopted Flintshire Council Local Plan, and has no specific policy attached to this type of land. It is often referred to as 'Open Countryside', although this is a generic term, and the 'non-policy' area also covers areas of settlement, including the housing and industrial buildings on Chester Road, and the housing on Leadbrook Drive, in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site. Policy PC1 provides a list of what would be considered to be 'appropriate development' outside of the settlement boundary, however new residential estates are not included in the list of 'appropriate' development.

Land to the east of Leadbrook Drive is covered by policy EN11.4 'Green Wedges', which are similar to former Green Barrier and Green Belt policy, with the aim of preventing urban sprawl and maintaining separation between settlements amongst their primary functions. Flintshire council undertook a Green Belt review in 2020 to inform the emerging Local Plan, and the former Green Barrier land (Gen 4(4)), was extended westwards, but stops at Leadbrook Drive, indicating that it was not considered that the 2 fields of the proposal site are required to perform Green Belt/ Green Wedges function.

There are no landscape designated areas in the vicinity of the proposal site (ie National Park/ AONB), or local designations such as Special Landscape Areas.

### 9.4 LANDSCAPE RESOURCE SUMMARY

The landscape and visual appraisal has been assessed and concluded from desk top based research, site visits and in consideration of the most recent national and local character assessment guidelines.

#### The Wider Landscape

The wider landscape has been considered through National and Regional studies and through published work on the local landscape character. The wider landscape is assessed at several levels. At a National level the wider landscape has been assessed by Natural Resources Wales, and the proposal site lies within NLCA13 - Deeside and Wrexham. This landscape character area is vast and comprises a broad array of landscape character types, and it is considered that the proposed development would have a Negligible effect on the key characteristics of the National landscape character area, as the proposed development is not out of scale with the wider Flint settlement pattern, and the nature of the proposed development (residential housing) is not incongruous in the edge of settlement location.

At a Regional level, the landscape has been assessed by Natural Resources Wales Landmap Area assessment, where the hills to the south of Flint and Connah's Quay are assessed as landscape character area FLNTVS014: Lowland/ Rolling Lowland/ Mosaic Lowland, described as: *Estuary Edge and Valleys - gently sloping and rolling lowland estuary edge with distinct east/west grain and mosaic of wooded linear stream valleys, traditional and improved farmland, and a linear settled and urban fringe lower edge; and an overall estuarine influence.*

The proposed development would change a very small part of this landscape character area, removing 2 fields which are located directly adjacent to the existing settlement, and bounded on 3 sides by residential properties. There will be a loss of some views across the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the site, but most wide panoramic views across the Dee estuary are from more elevated locations in

the hills to the south of this landscape character area. It is assessed that the change to this landscape character area will be a Low change, with a Slight-Moderate landscape effect.

### **The Local Landscape**

The local landscape has also been assessed within this LVA at a more local level, in order to consider potential impacts on the character and setting of Flint/ Oakenholt settlement. The proposal site lies within an area of pasture farmland on the edge of the existing settlement, which also includes some industrial land to the east of Oakenholt, and the Dee estuary to the north. The only impact of the proposed development to the local landscape character will be to the 'Rolling Lowland Farmland' character area, which is assessed to have a Low-Medium sensitivity in the northern field of the proposed development, and a Medium Sensitivity in the southern field of the proposed development. The proposal site will remove 2 fields on the existing edge of settlement, bounded on 3 sides by existing settlement, and a 'rural fringe' character, and will not impact on the key characteristics of the higher ground to the south of the settlement. The change to the assessed local landscape character is Medium reducing to Low as the proposed mitigation becomes established and the proposed development becomes an integrated part of the existing settlement. The corresponding effect is a Slight -Moderate effect, reducing to Slight, as the existing trees and hedgerows which form the site boundaries are retained.

## **9.4 VISUAL RESOURCE SUMMARY**

The proposed development has been considered from eleven viewpoints, providing representative views for residential, pedestrian, vehicle and Other receptor groups.

### **Residential Receptors**

The residential receptors who lie directly adjacent to the northern part of the northern field of the proposal site will face directly onto a new area of public open space, and whilst their views will change from field to parkland, the change is assessed as being Moderate (Neutral), reducing to Slight -Moderate as the proposed mitigation planting becomes established.

Residential receptors which lie directly adjacent to the proposed residential part of the proposal site (the southern field, and the southern part of the northern field), will experience a High change, with Substantial Adverse effects, which will reduce to Moderate-substantial following mitigation.

### **Pedestrian Public Right of Way Receptors**

There will be a High change to the users of the public right of way footpath which runs directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the proposal site, resulting in a Substantial Adverse effect, which will reduce to Moderate-Substantial following mitigation. This footpath extends to the wider rural landscape, and the effects of the proposed development will be contained to the immediate site and a short distance beyond.

There will be glimpsed views of the proposed development from other more elevated footpath locations at mid to long distance from the site, however for the most part the proposed development will not form a readily notable part of the view, and proposed mitigation will integrate the development into the existing settlement pattern.

### **Vehicle Receptors**

There will be no discernible change to vehicle and country lanes, beyond the immediate vicinity of the proposal site.

### **Mitigation Measures**

The following mitigation measures are proposed in order to help reduce identified potential impacts, and to help assimilate the proposed development in the edge of settlement context:

- Construct the properties from materials sympathetic to the locality
- Retain the existing trees and hedgerows around boundaries.
- Strengthen boundary screening with additional native tree and shrub planting, incorporating evergreen species.
- Incorporate sensitively designed planting within the development

## **9.3 CONCLUSION**

The proposed residential development of 128 dwellings adjacent to the eastern Flint settlement area will not have a substantial impact on any key landscape characteristics of the wider landscape. There will be some substantial effects initially to existing properties which face directly towards the proposed houses of the development, however the effects will reduce as the proposed mitigation planting matures. Sustainable urban extensions are generally located directly adjacent to existing residential areas, and it is inevitable that there will be some substantial effects to the residents who live directly adjacent, however a sensitively designed development can be integrated into the existing settlement pattern.

The proposal site is bounded on 3 sides by existing settlement and forms a logical extension to the residential area. Land to the east of Leadbrook Lane is protected as 'Green Wedges' land, which would prevent any further encroachment, and substantial effects to views will be contained to the immediate vicinity of the site.





## **APPENDIX 1.0**

### **VISUAL RECEPTORS - VIEWS - SEPARATE A3 DOCUMENT**

## **APPENDIX 2.0**

### **LVIA METHODOLOGY**