



Landscape and Visual Appraisal

for

Proposed Solar Array

at

**Cop House Farm, Flint Road, Saltney Ferry,
Chester, Cheshire, CH4 0BW**

for

David Edge

March 2025

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CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Methodology
- 3 The Existing Landscape and Visual Context
- 4 The Proposed Development
- 5 The Landscape and Visual Effects
- 6 Summary and Conclusion

Appendix – Figures

Figure 1 - Site Location

Figure 2 - Site Context Plan

Figure 3 - Existing Site Photographs

Figure 4 - Layout Plan / Solar Array Information and Building Visualisations

Figure 5 - Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure 6 - Viewpoints 1 to 3

Revisions

Date		Purpose
Final Draft	11/03/25	For Client Comment and Approval
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Design with Nature Ltd has been instructed by Kathryn Williams, of Davis Meade Property Consultants, on behalf of David Edge, to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) in relation to a future planning application for a proposed solar array on land at Cop House Farm, Flint Road, Saltney Ferry, Chester, Cheshire, CH4 0BW.

This appraisal considers the potential impact of the proposed development on both the landscape resource and visual amenity of both the site and surrounding area, as well as recommending landscape mitigation measures, where considered appropriate.

The study area extends approximately 1km from the site, which has been judged, for this development, to be an appropriate visual envelope to review the surrounding landscape character and the effective visibility of the site. This has been determined following a desk study and site assessment visit undertaken on Thursday 12th December 2024.

1.2. Site Location

The site is located a short distance west of the Chester suburbs of Saltney Ferry and Saltney, approximately 4km west of Chester town centre, at grid reference SJ36106557. The location is shown in Figure 1 - Site Location in the appendix, including an aerial photograph.

1.3. A Description of the Development

The proposed development involves the construction of a 0.99MW solar array and sub-station / distribution buildings. More details about the proposed development can be found in section 4.

1.4. Scope of Appraisal

This appraisal will:

- Describe and evaluate the landscape and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area which may be affected by the proposed development.

- Identify and consider any effects on landscape or visual amenity, that will result from the proposed development.
- Summarise the mitigation measures to be incorporated into the development to avoid detrimental effects on the landscape or on views.

2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

The methodology in this report seeks to be broadly in accordance with *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (3rd Edition) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in 2013. However, it should be emphasised that the production of Landscape and Visual Assessments (LVIAs), associated with larger scale developments (and very often part of an Environmental Impact Assessment - EIA), is the principal focus of these guidelines. Each Landscape and Visual Appraisal we produce is carefully tailored to ensure it is both appropriate and proportionate in relation to the particular development being assessed.

In this landscape and visual impact appraisal, the landscape and visual receptors are identified as follows:

- *Landscape receptors*: the elements that physically form that landscape, its perceptual qualities and character.
- *Visual receptors*: the people who will be affected by changes in views or visual amenity.

The appraisal involves both desk study and field survey, including:

- A field survey of publicly accessible locations with views of the site, including a photographic record.
- A desk study of published landscape character assessments.
- An evaluation of the landscape of the site and its context, setting, and sensitivity to change.
- The identification of potential landscape and visual effects.
- Consideration of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential adverse effects on the landscape or on views.

2.2. Landscape Methodology

For this site an initial study area with a radius of approximately 1 km has been deemed to be proportionate to the scale and extent of the proposed development as indicated in section 1.1. The landscape receptors within the study area that may be affected by the proposals will be identified. The potential landscape receptors may include:

- Existing vegetation, land use, boundaries and landform that are part of the setting of the site and the study area.
- Designated landscapes such as National Landscapes, Nature Reserves etc.
- The landscape character of the local area with particular reference to the assigned landscape character type or area.

Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change

This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change has been assessed using the criteria set out in the table below:

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The landscape receptor is highly susceptible to the development, and a low ability to accommodate the specific proposed change, because the key characteristics of the landscape have no or very limited ability to accommodate the specific proposed change without undue adverse effects taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape, and/or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Medium	The landscape receptor is moderately susceptible to the development, and a moderate ability to accommodate the specific proposed change, because the relevant characteristics of the landscape have some ability to accommodate it without undue adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape, and/or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.
Low	The landscape receptor has low susceptibility to the development, and a high ability to accommodate the specific

	proposed change, because the relevant characteristics of the landscape are generally able to accommodate it with little, or no, undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.
Negligible	Very high ability to accommodate the specific proposed change; no undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation (receptor value) and/or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies.

Value of landscape receptor

Consideration has been given to the value of the local landscape within the 1 km assessment area. Landscape value has been defined as “*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*”. It can apply to areas of landscape as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. Landscapes or their component parts may be valued at the community, local, national or international levels. It should be stressed that while landscape designations are a starting point in assessing landscape value, absence of designations may not necessarily infer a lack of quality or value. Assessment of value includes the site, its immediate environs, and the surrounding landscape setting. The following definitions are used in this appraisal:

Value	Criteria
Excellent	Areas of very high-quality landscape, such as National Landscapes or National Parks, but not exclusively so, having outstanding scenic values as well as intact landscape character and/or valued for their tranquillity. May be nationally or regionally important in historical or cultural terms or have rarity for its natural and/or semi-natural landscape component.
High	Areas of outstanding regional or local landscape quality and may have designations such as conservation areas, SSSI's or other wildlife designations, but not exclusively so. They have high scenic quality with intact landscape character and many natural and/or semi-natural landscape components.
Good	Landscapes that have an attractive quality are unspoilt and/or appealing at a local level. Unlikely to have any designations but are intact and representative of the landscape character and are likely to have numerous natural and/or semi-natural landscape components.
Fair	Landscapes that have been changed and are unlikely to be representative of the local landscape character. Not particularly attractive, with detractors, possibly related to urban areas, adjacent developments or lack of natural / semi-natural landscape feature.

Poor	Landscapes that are derelict or run down and are not attractive. Likely to have numerous detractors, very little character and few natural / semi-natural landscape features. May need restoring and/or development may enable an improvement to such a landscape.
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Sensitivity or capacity of the landscape resource

This is determined by combining the assessed susceptibility and value of the landscape resource likely to be affected by the proposed development. The degree to which a particular landscape type or area can accommodate change arising from a particular development, without detrimental effects on its character, will vary with:-

- existing land use;
- the pattern and scale of the landscape;
- visual enclosure / openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;
- the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape;

Variations of these characteristics within the local landscape and within the site need to be identified.

Scale or magnitude of landscape effects

There is no standard methodology for the quantification of the magnitude of effects. However, it is generally based on the scale or degree of change to the landscape resource, the nature of the effect and its duration.

Scale	Criteria
High Adverse	Total loss of, or major alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area
Medium Adverse	Partial loss of or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area
Low Adverse	Minor loss of, or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area
No Change	Very minor loss or change to the landscape characteristics or features of the area, compensated by landscape improvements or enhancements
Low Beneficial	Minor improvements to the key characteristics or features that outweigh any adverse landscape effects of the proposal. Removal of minor incongruous features
Medium Beneficial	Notable improvements to the key landscape characteristics or features, or improvements resulting from removal of inappropriate land uses or features

High Beneficial	Major landscape implements, through the creation of a new landscape structure, or the removal of large scale inappropriate features
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2.3. Visual Methodology

Visual receptors that may be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity in the study area will be identified and illustrated by specific viewpoints. All viewpoints chosen are from publicly accessible locations, in accordance with published guidelines¹. The viewpoints are assessed for the value attached to particular views and their susceptibility to change. The nature of the view is also considered in terms of whether they are direct, glimpsed or oblique and whether the receptors are mobile or static. Seasonal variation is also considered, where appropriate. The most extensive and/or intrusive viewpoints are generally chosen to illustrate the worst potential impact of a proposed development.

Photography

The photographs used in this appraisal seek to follow, as far as practically possible, the best practice set out in the latest Landscape Institute photography guidelines (*Technical Guidance Note 06/19*, Published on 17 September 2019). They have been taken with a compact digital camera using an equivalent focal length of 50mm, in this case a Canon EOS 1300D. Where photographs are stitched together to illustrate a panoramic view these have been digitally merged using Photoshop to provide a panorama approximating a normal field of view.

Extent of Visibility

In the analysis of existing and proposed views, the extent of the visibility is described in the following terms:

- Visible: views of the site / development are not interrupted by other landscape features or built form and the whole or majority of the site / development would be visible.
- Partially visible: views of the site / development are partly screened by other landscape features or built form and a section or some of the site / development would be visible.

¹ Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute, IEMA, 2013

- Glimpsed: views of the site / development are largely screened by other landscape features or built form and only a small part of the site / development would be seen.

Residential Properties

Although some residential dwellings are specifically identified within this appraisal no access has been obtained to any particular private property. However, some assumptions can be made about the potential visibility from these and other nearby dwellings and this can be beneficial in assessing the overall impact of a proposed development. Clear views from dwellings are generally more likely from first floor windows that directly face a proposed development, whilst some may have oblique views and others may have partial views, where intervening vegetation, landform or built form may partially obscure the development. Reference to any potential visibility from dwellings will be based on professional judgement only and on observation in the field from the nearest publicly accessible locations.

Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

The susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views depends upon:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations.
- The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

The criteria used to assess the susceptibility of a visual receptor are summarised in the table below:

Susceptibility	Type of Receptor
High	Residents at home. Views from well used public rights of way including strategic footpaths / long distance trails and cycle routes (where the attractive nature of the countryside is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the walk). Visitors along scenic routes and to recognized viewpoints. Visitors to protected landscapes or heritage assets where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience. The location, numbers, frequency of use and visual context of the

	viewpoint would be high. Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area. Travellers on road, rail, or other transport routes along scenic routes, where the appreciation of the view contributes to the enjoyment and quality of the journey.
Medium	Views experienced from boats, public rights of way / footpaths used locally and passing through the landscape and well used footpaths within settlements. Views from places of worship and associated grounds, schools, country parks and golf clubs. Views experienced by users of local roads where there are clear / open views across the landscape and low levels of traffic. The location, numbers, frequency of use and visual context of the viewpoint would be medium.
Low	Views experienced from places of work where workers and visitors are concentrating on their day to day activities. Views experienced by on near to motorways, major roads Views experienced by users of the rail network and main roads travelling at speed or local roads where the focus is upon the road ahead owing to traffic conditions and the context / composition of the view. Views experienced from less well-used public rights of way which pass through less attractive landscapes or townscape and are not used for enjoyment of the scenery. Views experienced by those playing or spectating at outdoor sports or utilising outdoor sports facilities. The location, numbers, frequency of use and visual context of the viewpoint would be low.

In making judgements about the value of each view, the assessment should take into account the following:

- Recognition of the value to a particular view, e.g., in relation to heritage assets or planning designations; and
- Indicators of the value attached to views by others, e.g., in guidebooks, tourist maps, literary references, painting etc.

Value of a view

The value attached to views should be made on judgements based on the following:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations; and
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature or art.
- Views unaffected by landscape designations of cultural / heritage associations may still have some local value if they are of a pleasing composition and/ or are deemed to strengthen the connection of the receptor with the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity of visual receptors

This is determined by combining the assessed susceptibility and value of each individual view. The sensitivity of visual receptors and views will be dependent on:

- the location and context of the viewpoints;
- the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor;

Scale or magnitude of visual effects

In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude or scale of visual change is described by reference to:

- the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture;
- the duration and nature of the effect, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous, etc;
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.

The assessment criteria for the overall degree of magnitude of change are summarised in the table below:

Scale	Criteria
High Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a significant deterioration in the view
Medium Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the view
Low Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a minor deterioration in the view
No Change	Where the scheme overall would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view
Low Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a minor improvement in the view
Medium Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable improvement in the view
High Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a significant improvement in the view

2.4 Definitions of Effect

Both landscape and visual effects are determined by combining the degree of sensitivity with the degree of magnitude of change. Professional judgement is used to determine the overall significance of impact based on these two elements. Effects can be adverse or beneficial. To ensure an objective and consistent approach, the definitions outlined in the table below have been used.

Scale	Criteria
Substantial	Total loss or major alteration of the landscape character, features and key elements: There would be a significant change to the landscape and would be at a considerable variance within the landform, scale and pattern of landscape. Total loss or major alteration of the visual resource, features and key elements: There would be a significant deterioration in the existing view. Elements would be at considerable variance with the scale and quality of the existing visual amenity. Is likely to affect a large number of and / or sensitive receptors.
High	Partial loss or alteration to landscape character, features and key elements: There would be considerable change to the landscape and would be at odds with the landform, scale and pattern of landscape. Partial loss or alteration to the visual resource, features and key elements: There would be a noticeable visual intrusion, causing deterioration in the existing view and elements would be at odds with

	the scale and quality of the existing visual amenity. Is likely to affect a considerable number of and / or sensitive receptors.
Moderate	Some loss or alteration to character, features and key elements: There would be a perceptible deterioration in the landscape and does not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape. Some loss or alteration to the visual resource, features and key elements: There would be some visual intrusion or a perceptible deterioration in the existing view. Is likely to affect a small number of receptors
Low	Minor loss, slight alteration to character, features and key elements: There would be localised or limited change to the existing landscape. Minor loss, slight change to visual resource, features and key elements: There would be small changes to the view but with no discernible deterioration in the existing visual amenity. Is likely to affect a limited number of receptors
None	No loss or alteration to the landscape character, features and key elements or visual amenity.

3. The Existing Landscape and Visual Context

The section will describe the existing landscape resource and visual context of the site, its immediate environs, and the surrounding area.

3.1. The Site and Immediate Surrounds

The site, comprising 1.865 hectares of improved grassland, is situated at around 4m AOD, on a flat site which is the southernmost portion of a larger field, currently used for cattle grazing. In the *Green Infrastructure and Net Benefit for Biodiversity Report* produced by ELM Associates its condition is assessed as “*Moderate overall*”. In addition, this assessment confirmed the habitat classification as *Floodplain Coastal and Grazing Marsh*, rating the habitat present on site as Poor overall.

There is an established native species hedgerow (planted in 2018) on the western boundary of this field while the eastern boundary adjoins a drainage ditch and a self-set woodland with some areas of scrub (and patches of Japanese Knotweed) on what is believed to be a former industrial site. The northern boundary is currently open although it is understood that is periodically fenced off to facilitate rotational grazing. Mature trees and shrubs associated with the adjacent *Chester to North Wales* railway line adjoins the sites southern boundary. See Existing Site Photographs - Figure 6 in the Appendix.

The susceptibility of the site to change is **Medium to Low**.

In terms of the wider landscape context, the site is situated in a predominately flat landscape associated with the flood plain of the *River Dee*, located approximately 500m to the north, while the sprawling complex of buildings and factory facilities making up *Hawarden Aerodrome* situated to the south and west results in this portion of the study area being deemed to be peri-urban in character. The village of *Saltney* is located 3.1km to the south-east while *Chester Road* (A5104), one of the principal routes into *Chester City Centre* from North Wales, lies approximately 1km south-east of the site.

3.2. Planning policy

The following policies are deemed to be relevant to the proposed development.

Flintshire Local Development Plan (2015-2030)

The LDP functions across key themes with two of them being pertinent to this report:

- Delivering Growth and Prosperity (point 13) stated aim is to *“promote a diverse and stable rural economy”*
- Safeguarding the Environment (point 15) stated aim is to *“minimise the causes and impacts of climate change and pollution”*

The following policies expand on these themes:

Strategic Policies

- **STR7 Economic Development, Enterprise, and Employment** includes the following provision: *“In rural areas, recognise the continued contribution agriculture makes to the rural economy, whilst also supporting wider rural enterprise, tourism and diversification”*.
- **STR14 Climate Change and Environmental Protection** states *“encouraging energy efficient development, environmentally acceptable renewable and zero / low carbon energy generation”*

Development Management Policies

- **EN2 Green Infrastructure** states that *“Development proposals will be required to protect, maintain and enhance the extent, quality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network”*, and seek to *“create new green*

infrastructure linkages from the proposed development to the existing local network”.

- **EN4 Landscape Character** stipulates that *“New development, either individually or cumulatively, must not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape”* further adding that *“Landscaping and other mitigation measures should seek to reduce landscape impact and where possible bring about enhancement”*.
- **EN13 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development** infers that *“renewable or low carbon energy generation development may be permitted for small-scale solar in appropriate locations”*.

It is considered that the proposed development and the associated mitigation are in general accordance with all the above policies with the potential to enhance the immediate landscape setting.

3.3. Landscape Character

The LANDMAP Landscape Typology produced for Natural Resources Wales divides the county of Flintshire into a number of different landscape character types. The site lies within the *Dee Coastal Levels* landscape type, which is prevalent in this area of Flintshire. Its relevant key characteristics are:

- *Mixed farming land-use a mixture of rectilinear fertile arable & pastoral farmland drained by ditches with wetland and urban fringe uses.*
- *Significant areas are under clear or white plastic for agricultural uses.*
- *Scattered settlements including farmsteads with glass and ribbon development in places.*
- *Hedgerows are low cut and sometimes gappy.*

The characteristics of the surrounding landscape, north-east of the railway line, are broadly in accordance with those listed for the above landscape type.

3.4. Designations

The site is unaffected by any statutory landscape designations.

The *River Dee* Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 500m north of the site with which it has a very limited degree of intervisibility.

There is only one listed building within the study area, the Grade II *Well House Farm*, and this has no intervisibility with the site.

All the above designations are shown in Figure 2 – Site Context in the appendix.

3.5. Recreational Resources

There are very few Public Rights of Way within the study area due in part due to over a quarter of this being occupied by *Hawarden (Chester) Aerodrome*. Those with potentially at least partial or glimpsed views of the site, along some sections, include:

- *Wales Coast Path* (309/2/40) designated long-distance route, which also coincides along this section with part of National Cycle Route 568, runs along the north bank of the *River Dee*.
- Public Footpath (307/2/10) is on the Ordnance Survey and online definitive map ([Public Rights of Way - Public Rights of Way Map](#)) as running directly alongside the B5129 although in reality only the permissive path on top of the flood embankment on the south side of the river is in use by recreational walkers.
- Public Footpaths 307/11/10 and 309/11/20 which run from opposite sides of the river to join at the mid-point of the pedestrian footbridge that connects the above two paths, approximately 800m north-east of the site.

Observations made during the field visit confirmed that generally these Public Rights of Way were well signposted and unobstructed, with evidence of frequent use by recreational users.

3.6. Landscape Value

As outlined in section 3.1, the site's notable landscape features are exclusively associated with its western, southern and eastern boundaries, where the established trees, shrubs and hedgerow serve to both provide a sense of enclosure and clearly define its extent. These are generally intact and in a reasonable condition, although the presence of Japanese Knotweed within the adjoining self-set woodland is a cause for concern, in relation to ecological diversity.

Although, as indicated in section 3.2 the landscape characteristics of the site and its immediate setting are broadly representative of the relevant landscape character type, part of the study area has been subjected to a large degree of change and

relatively extensive development, especially in relation to *Hawarden Aerodrome* and the associated Aircraft Factory.

Although the urban fringe context of the site makes it a more esoteric destination for day visitors, a significant number of people living nearby appear to use the nearby Wales Coast Path for walking and / or travelling by bike between Connah's Quay and Chester. In addition, Chester had in excess of 16 million visitors in 2023 and it is assumed that at least a small proportion of those staying in the city take the opportunity to explore the wider area.

Using the criteria set out in section 2.2, the overall landscape value is categorised as falling between **Good** and **Fair** for the site although the area to the north-west, east and north. *Hawarden Aerodrome* is deemed to be far too urban in character to warrant the assigning of any landscape value.

3.7. Visual Context

3.7.1. Visibility of the Site

Topography and mature vegetation serve to limit visibility of the site to a very relatively small number of locations to the north and east, as shown on the Viewpoint Location Plan. It was confirmed, during the site assessment, that the proposed development site is not visible from the *Wales Coast Path* which runs along the north bank of the *River Dee* and is extremely well-used by both recreational walkers and cyclists.

Significant visual receptors in the study area are primarily users of local footpaths since the site is largely invisible visible from the surrounding roads. This comprises predominantly of local walkers, which are likely to consist predominantly of residents (those living in the local area, *Chester* and *Connah's Quay*), although may also, as referenced in section 3.6, include visitors to Chester, exploring the wider area during an extended stay. It is noted that there is both *Fir Trees Caravan and Lodge Park* and an adult-only campsite just over 1km to the north-east.

The locations of the selected viewpoints are shown in Figure 5 - Viewpoint Location Plan and the viewpoint photographs are presented in Figures 6 in the appendix.

3.7.2. Scenic Quality

Although the flood plain in which the site is located has a very distinctive character, in which views of the sky play an important part, the encroachment of nearby settlements and urbanising influence of *Hawarden Aerodrome* serve to reduce the overall level of scenic quality. The extremely large and visually dominant Airbus Factory building, located just over 1km to the west, serves as a significant visual detractor in relation to wider panoramic views in the immediate vicinity of the site. In addition, the canalised character of the nearby *River Dee* and the presence of pylons / overhead wires in the wider area reinforce the man-made character of the surrounding area. As referenced in section 3.3 the landscape in which the site is located is highly ordered with its geometric field pattern intensively managed hedgerows. Overall, the site and the immediate surrounding area are deemed to have a **Moderate to Low** level of visual amenity.

3.7.3. Views from Private Property

The residential property closest to the site is *Cop House Farmhouse* located just under 500m, to the north-west, although it seems unlikely, due to its orientation, that the occupants of this dwelling have any discernible views of the site.

There are a significant number of terraced houses, seemingly associated with a former factory, in a couple of distinct clusters located approximately 500m to the east although very few of these have any views towards the site due to the north and south orientation of their front and rear facing windows.

Approximately, 2km north of the site there are 2no. 13 storey high rise residential blocks, *Nant Peris and Glyn Garth*, with the middle and upper floors of their south-facing elevations having intervisibility with the site.

4. Proposed Development

4.1. The Proposal

The proposed development involves the construction of a 0.99MW AC connected solar array comprising 2,500 x 570 watt panels. The proposed layout of the panels is shown in Figure 4.1 of the Appendices. The arrays would be connected to the grid via electricity cables laid in shallow trenches. It is anticipated that the construction of the array would be completed within a period of several weeks.

It comprises of the following elements:

- Installation of ground mounted solar panels, attached to a substructure sat upon galvanised steel piling. They face south being arranged in rows, approximately 5m apart.
- 2.5m high flat roofed substation building (4m x 2.5m) and 2.8m high single pitched roofed switchgear / distribution building (4.8m x 3.5m) - see Figure and 4.3 in the appendix. These would be located adjacent to one another in the eastern corner of the site. The substation enclosure is to consist of GRP construction (RAL 6018 Green) while the distribution building has a light grey corrugated roof and timber cladding.
- 1.8m high timber post and galvanised mesh boundary fence.

It is understood that the site will be grazed by sheep following completion of the development.

4.2. Potential Sources of Impact

The aspects of the proposed development which could potentially result in landscape and visual impacts are:

- Construction activities.
- Installation of transformer and switchgear buildings.
- Panel associated glare during periods of sunny weather.

4.3. Proposed Mitigation and Enhancement Works

The panels have been purposely located in the southernmost portion of the field adjoining the railway line and adjoining woodland, both factors serving to obscure the installation from publicly accessible viewpoints located to the north and east. In addition, the following measures have been taken to reduce the level of impact associated with this development.

Layout / Design

- Retention of all the existing hedgerows and associated mature trees on the site's boundaries.
- Proposed new native mixed species hedgerow along the north-eastern boundary (see Figure 4.1).
- Location of the two buildings in the eastern corner of the site against the adjoining block of woodland and the selection of appropriate cladding materials / colours.

During Construction

- Protection of existing retained vegetation in accordance with BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations'.

5. Landscape and Visual Effects

5.1. Introduction

This section will examine the potential landscape and visual effects that may be expected to result from the development, focusing on those that are reasonable and proportional.

5.2. The Landscape Effects

Landscape Features

The proposed development will only result in a very slight reduction in the existing area of agricultural land at this farm and the site will still be periodically grazed by sheep. Since all the existing western boundary hedgerow is to be retained, along with all the trees in the adjoining self-set woodland (not under the ownership of the client), there will be no change to the existing landscape structure. In addition, the proposed hedgerow planting on the northern boundary is likely to result in a degree of landscape enhancement in the immediate vicinity of the site. Consequently, the overall effect on existing landscape features is deemed to be slightly beneficial, in the long term.

Landscape Character

The site and the surrounding area are deemed to be of **Moderate to Low** susceptibility, at most, due to the urbanizing influence of *Hawarden Aerodrome* and its associated large-scale structures, such as the *Airbus* factory building. However, the area north-east of the railway line is, as referenced in section 3.3, generally representative of the landscape type and therefore its value in this context is deemed to be **Medium**. Consequently, the level of landscape sensitivity for the site, and its immediate vicinity, is **Medium to Low**. The greatest magnitude of landscape change is associated with the introduction of partly reflective panels into a semi-rural landscape setting. Accounting for the very modest scale of the proposals, the proposed location at the very edge of the *Dee Coastal Levels* landscape type and the demountable nature of the panels, this is deemed to be **Low Adverse to No Change**. Consequently, combining sensitivity and magnitude assessments results in a **Low Adverse to None** landscape effect, on the site and the immediate surrounding area.

Landscape Designations

The proposed development has no effect on any statutory or non-statutory designations present within the study area, including the *River Dee* SAC.

Recreational Resources

There would be no direct changes to the route of any of the existing public rights of way. For the effects on views from these, refer to the viewpoint appraisal below.

5.3. The Visual Effects

A total of three viewpoints have been selected to provide a representative impression of the visibility of the site from the surrounding area with all of them located on Public Rights of Way. Those chosen are indicated on Figure 5 (Viewpoint Location Plan) and listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Viewpoints

Viewpoint Number	Location	Approx. Elevation AOD (metres)	Approx. Distance to site (m/km)
Viewpoint 1	Ewart St/Flint Road Recreation Ground	5.3m	250m
Viewpoint 2	Middle of footbridge from B5129 leading to Wales Coast Path	8.4m	700m
Viewpoint 3	Footpath on south bank of River Dee looking south	6.2m	500m

Overview

Due to the flat nature of the topography and the screening effects of intervening vegetation the visual envelope of the proposed development is very limited. Consequently, the site is not visible from most publicly accessible locations within the study area and therefore the number of selected viewpoints is particularly low. Reference is made to the difference in levels of visibility during the winter months, where this is relevant to the assessments below.

Viewpoints 1– Ewart St/Flint Road Recreation Ground

Although not located on either a PROW, or even a permissive footpath, this viewpoint has been selected to represent the worst-case scenario in relation to views experienced by users of this Recreation Ground which consists of football pitches and a children's play facility (located in the opposite corner to the viewpoint). Using

the criteria outlined in section 2 of this report, the susceptibility of receptors, likely to consist predominately of dog walkers, is deemed to be **Low**. Although there are distant glimpses of the *Clwydian* mountain range this view is obscured by the chain-link boundary fence and has no pronounced compositional characteristics. The Airbus Factory visible in the background serves to act as a slight visual detractor. Taking all this into account results in the value of this view being assessed as **Low**. Consequently, the overall sensitivity of the receptors at Viewpoint 1 is deemed to be **Low**.

It is considered unlikely that any of the panels will be particularly discernible at this viewpoint, to all but the most studied viewer, due to the partial screening effect of the intervening fence, woodland and hedgerow. As a result, it is deemed that the magnitude of change is **No Change**. Consequently, accounting for their oblique nature of this view, and the very short period of time receptors will be exposed to it, the overall visual effect, is deemed to be **None**.

Viewpoint 2 – Middle of footbridge from B5129 leading to Wales Coast Path

This viewpoint is situated at the highest point of the pedestrian footbridge and represents views likely to be experienced by walkers proceeding southwards to the road (B5129). It is located next to a small car park used by people accessing the *Wales Coast Path* and the public footpath (307/2/10) that runs along the south side of the *River Dee*. Consequently, although some of the users will be local dog walkers, these receptors are deemed to be of **Medium** susceptibility, overall. There are wide panoramic views including this west facing view which includes the wooded hills north of Mold and glimpses of the *Clwydian* mountain range beyond. The *Airbus* Factory buildings and telegraph wires / overhead wires in the middle distance serve to detract, to some degree, from the overall quality of the view, which is assessed as being of **Medium** value. Consequently, the overall sensitivity of this viewpoint is deemed to be **Medium**.

The site is almost entirely screened from view by both the hedgerow running alongside the B5129 and the mature vegetation around the pond located approximately 350m to the south-west, although it is possible that immediately following installation a few of the panels in the northern corner of the array may be discernible. However, the fact that the visible part of the site is a very small proportion of the overall view where the focus is principally on the distant skyline, and accounting for the oblique nature of the view, the magnitude of change is assessed

as **Low to No Change**. Consequently, the resulting overall visual effect is **Low Adverse to None**, reducing to **None** once the proposed native species hedgerow on the northern boundary of the site becomes fully established.

Viewpoint 3 – Footpath on south bank of River Dee looking south

This viewpoint is situated on the footpath (307/2/10) runs along the top of the flood embankment on the south side of the *River Dee* and is at right-angles to the direction of travel. The receptors are deemed to be of **Medium** susceptibility, although to a slightly lesser extent than users of the *Wales Coast Path*, located on the opposite bank of the river. It is situated at a gap in the boundary hedgerow and looks south towards the site which is partially screened by an intervening field boundary hedgerow. The southern part of the *Clwydian* range can be seen in the far distance, and although some *Hawarden Aerodrome* buildings are partly visible in the distance, the view is largely free of visual detractors. As a result, the overall quality of the view is assessed as being of **Medium to Low** value. Consequently, the overall sensitivity of this viewpoint is deemed to be **Medium**, at most.

On completion it is the rear of some of the panels, and possibly the upper portion of the substation / distribution buildings, will be discernible to the studied viewer, although the magnitude of change is still only deemed to be **No Change**, due to any potential adverse effect being offset by the presence in the visual baseline of the Hawarden Aerodrome buildings and communications mast, which dissects the skyline. Consequently, the resulting visual effect is assessed as **Low Adverse to None**, reducing to **None** once the proposed native species hedgerow on the northern boundary of the site becomes fully established.

Residential properties

Due to the screening effect of the adjoining woodland, it is unlikely that the proposed solar array will have any adverse effect on the levels of existing visual amenity enjoyed by occupants of the two property clusters to the east. However, the rear of a few panels in the north of the array may be visible, at completion, in oblique views from some of the properties at the western end of North Street, although these would largely be obscured from view over the longer term by the proposed boundary hedgerow.

The south facing orientation of the panels is likely to significantly reduce the level of visibility from the *Nant Peris* and *Glyn Garth* tower blocks located to the north due to

the general absence of reflectivity during sunny periods, associated with their south-facing orientation.

Other views

It is likely that users of the *Chester to North Wales* railway line (deemed to be of **Low** Sensitivity) will, especially in the winter months, have glimpses of the south-facing panels which will be particularly conspicuous during periods of sunny weather, due to their reflective nature. However, due to the very small scale of the proposed array and hence very short duration of time that they will be exposed to views of it, it is considered that this will not result in any notable adverse effects.

6. Summary and Conclusions

6.1. Summary

The site is located in *Flintshire*, approximately 4km west of *Chester* town centre, 500m south of the *River Dee*, along whose north bank runs a section of the *Wales Coast Path*. The proposed development involves the construction of a 0.99MW solar array and associated sub-station / distribution buildings.

The site is 1.865 hectares of low-lying improved grassland currently used for cattle grazing. There is an established native species hedgerow on the western boundary of this field while the eastern boundary adjoins a drainage ditch and a self-set woodland with some areas of scrub while the northern boundary is currently unenclosed. Mature trees and shrubs associated with the adjacent *Chester to North Wales* railway line adjoin the entire length of the site's southern boundary. The susceptibility of the site to change is **Medium to Low**.

The site is unaffected by any statutory landscape designations and is situated within *Dee Coastal Levels* landscape type, while the sprawling complex of buildings and factory facilities making up *Hawarden Aerodrome* is located to the south and west and the village of *Saltney* lies 3km to the south-east.

Topography and mature vegetation serve to limit visibility of the site to a small number of locations to the north and east with the site not really being visible from any of the surrounding roads. Receptors comprise predominantly of local walkers, some of which are likely to be visitors exploring the wider area during an extended stay in Chester or the *Fir Trees Caravan and Lodge Park* / adjacent campsite.

The ordered flood plain landscape in which the site is located has a very distinctive character, in which views of the sky play an important part while the encroachment of nearby settlements and urbanising influence of the *Hawarden Aerodrome complex* serve to reduce the overall level of scenic quality. In addition, the canalised character of the nearby *River Dee* and the presence of pylons / overhead wires in the wider area reinforce the man-made character of the surrounding landscape. Overall, the site and the immediate surrounding area is deemed to have a moderate to low level of visual amenity.

Although *Cop House Farmhouse* is the closest residential property to the site, levels of intervisibility appear to be largely non-existent. In addition, there are limited oblique views from a few of the terraced houses on North Street 500m to the east and some long distance intervisibility with two high rise residential blocks, *Nant Peris* and *Glyn Garth*, 2km to the north.

6.2. Mitigation

The panels have been purposely been sited in the southernmost portion of the field adjacent to some woodland, both factors serving to largely obscure the proposed array from view. In addition, the following measures have been taken to reduce the level of impact associated with this development: retention of all existing hedgerows and trees associated with the site's boundaries; proposed new native mixed species hedgerow along the north-eastern boundary and the location of the two buildings in the eastern corner of the site next to the woodland.

6.3. Landscape Effects

The proposed development will only result in a very slight reduction in the existing area of agricultural land at this farm and the site will still be periodically grazed by sheep, following its completion. All of the existing western boundary hedgerow and adjoining mature shrubs are to be retained, resulting in no change to the existing landscape structure. It is considered that the proposed hedgerow planting on the northern boundary will result in a degree of local landscape enhancement. The site and the surrounding area are deemed to be of **Moderate to Low** susceptibility, due to the urbanizing influence of *Hawarden Aerodrome complex* with the value of the site in its landscape context deemed to be **Medium**. Consequently, the level of landscape sensitivity for the site, and its immediate vicinity, is **Medium to Low** and the magnitude of landscape change is considered to be **Low Adverse**, resulting in a **Low Adverse to None** landscape effect. The proposed development has no effect on any statutory or non-statutory designations present within the study area and there would be no direct changes to the route of any of the existing public rights of way.

6.4. Visual Effects

While Viewpoint 1 has been determined to be of **Low** Sensitivity this was considered to be **Medium** in relation to Viewpoint 2 and 3 because of the greater numbers of receptors (whose focus is more likely to be on appreciation of the wider landscape) and the greater prominence of the *Clwydian* range in the background. No visual effect was determined for Viewpoint 1 while that associated with Viewpoints 2 and 3 was categorised as **Low to None**, although this was deemed to reduce to **None** in both cases over the longer term, as the proposed hedgerow on the northern boundary becomes properly established. No notable visual effects were deemed to be associated with any of the residential properties with intervisibility with the site or for users of the *Chester to North Wales* railway line.

6.5. Conclusion

The proposed development is broadly in accordance with all relevant local authority policies. The report has determined that there is only a **Low Adverse to None** landscape effect on the site and the area immediately surrounding the site, albeit one that is reversible in nature and has a limited extent. In conclusion the proposed development is deemed to have no adverse effect on the key characteristics of the *Dee Coastal Levels* Landscape Type or on the current levels of visual amenity enjoyed by users of the footpaths along the River Dee, including the *Wales Coast Path*.

References

- Flintshire Local Development Plan (2015-2030)
- Green Infrastructure and Net Benefit for Biodiversity Report; ELM associates, January 2025.

Appendix – Figures

Appendix – Figures

Figure 1 - Site Location

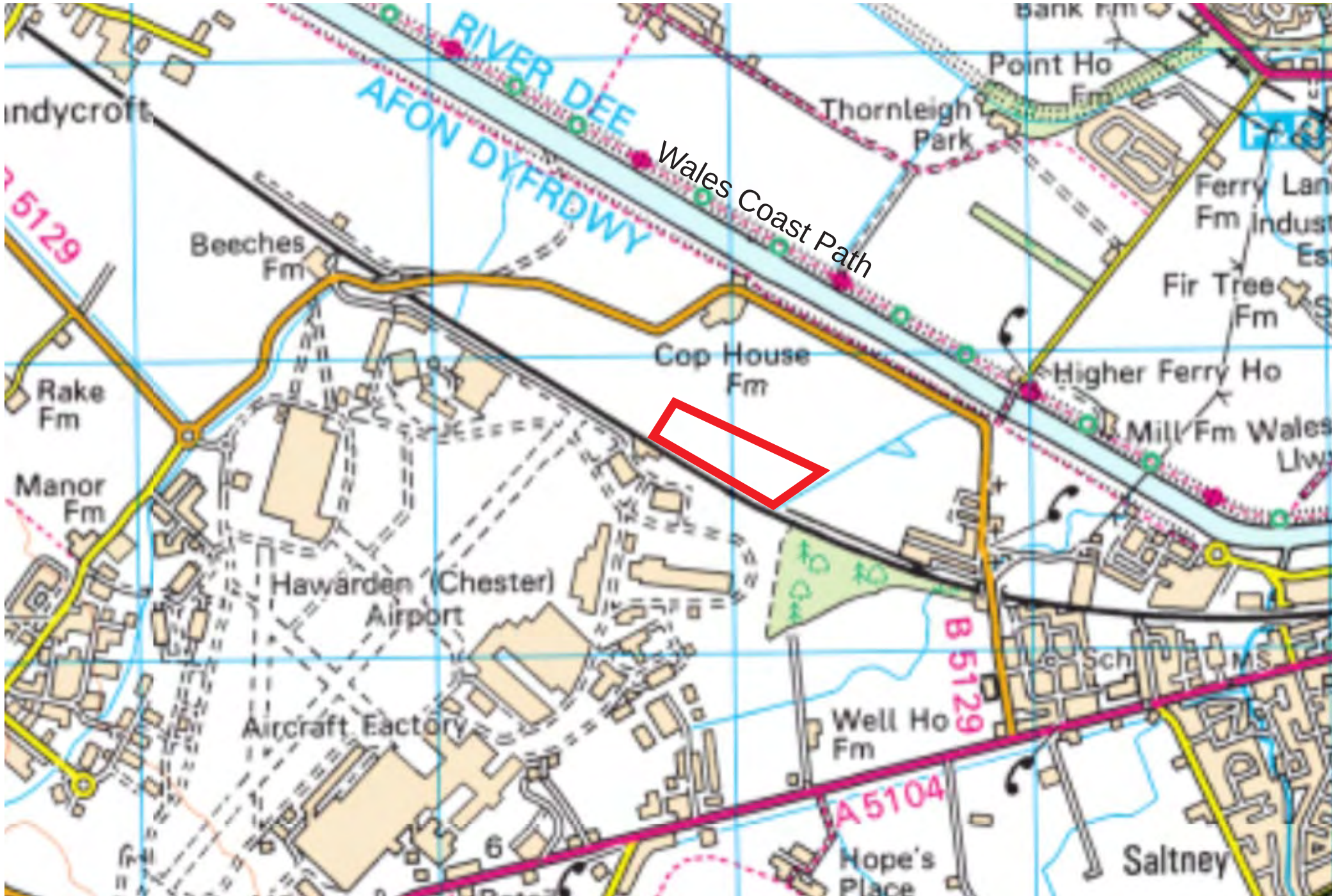
Figure 2 - Site Context Plan

Figure 3 - Existing Site Photographs

Figure 4 - Layout Plan / Solar Array Information and Building Visualisations

Figure 5 - Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure 6 - Viewpoints 1 to 3



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 Application site



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Client

David Edge

Project

Cop House Farm

Drawing Title

Site Location Plan
Figure 1

Scale

NTS

Date

12.24

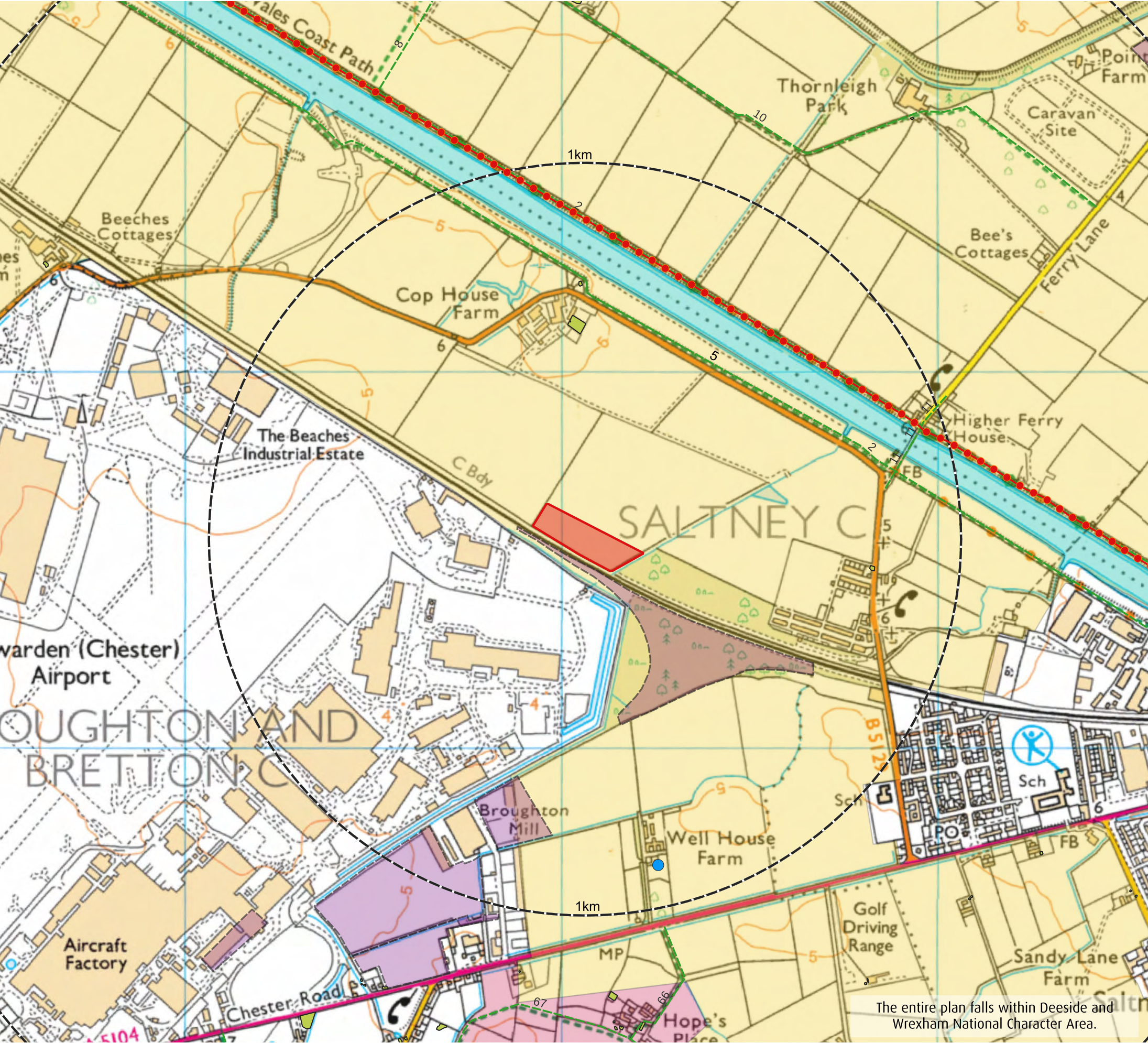
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Rev





- Site Boundary
- Historic Landfill Sites
- Traditional Orchards
- Listed Buildings (Grade II)
- Wales Coast Path
- Public Footpaths
- LANDMAP Visual Sensory
 - Broughton farmland
 - Dee coastal levels
 - River Dee





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Drawing Title
Site Context Plan
Figure 2

Scale
NTS

Date
12.24

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Drawing Number
Rev



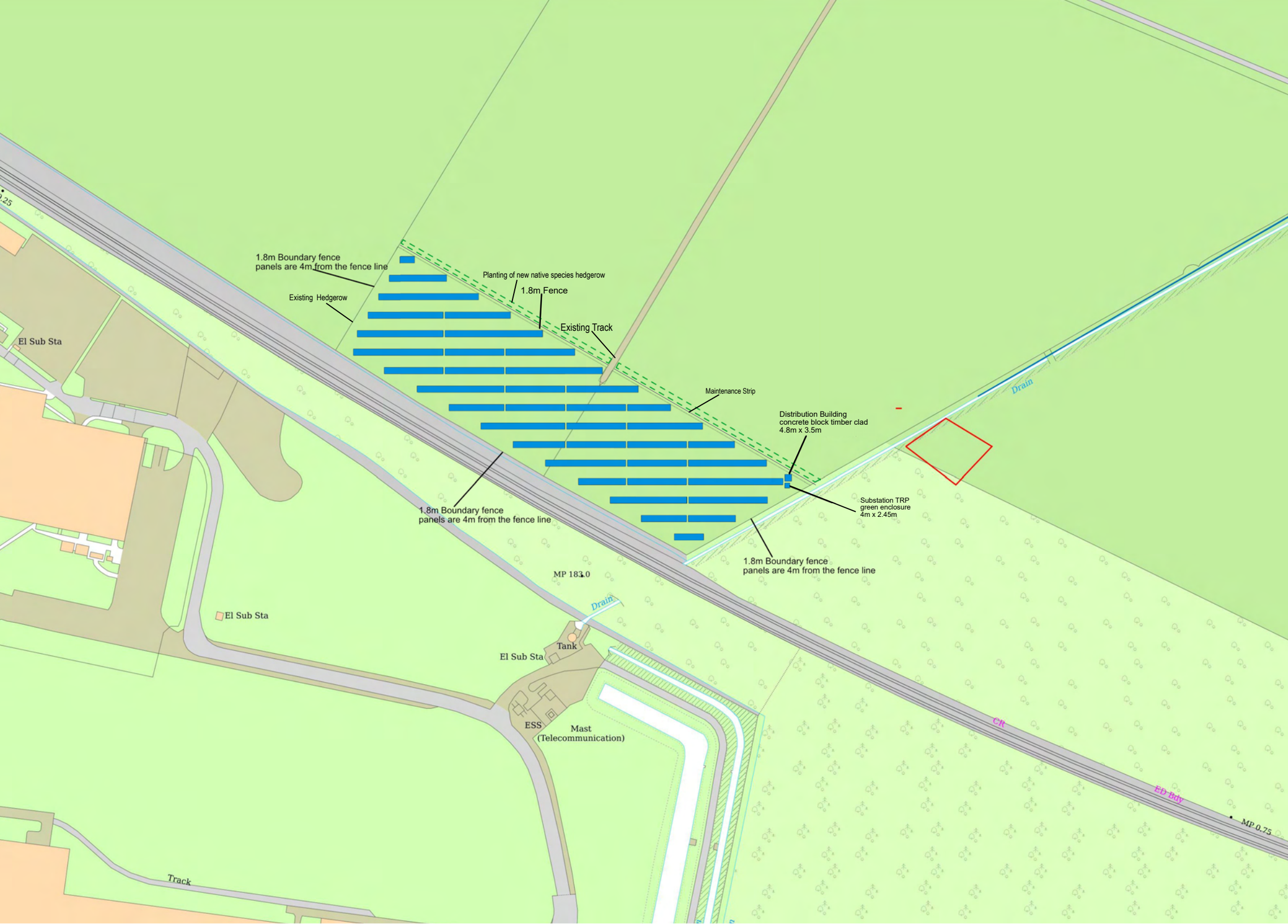
Looking north east and east from southwestern corner of site

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Drawing Title Existing Site Photos Figure 3.1			
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Looking north west north and northeast from southeastern corner of site

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Drawing Title Existing Site Photos Figure 3.2			
Scale NTS	Date 12.24		PH MS
Drawing Number			Rev





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Figure 4.1
Site plan for 0.99MW AC connected solar farm
with 2500x570watt panels. 18650m2

Scale
NTS

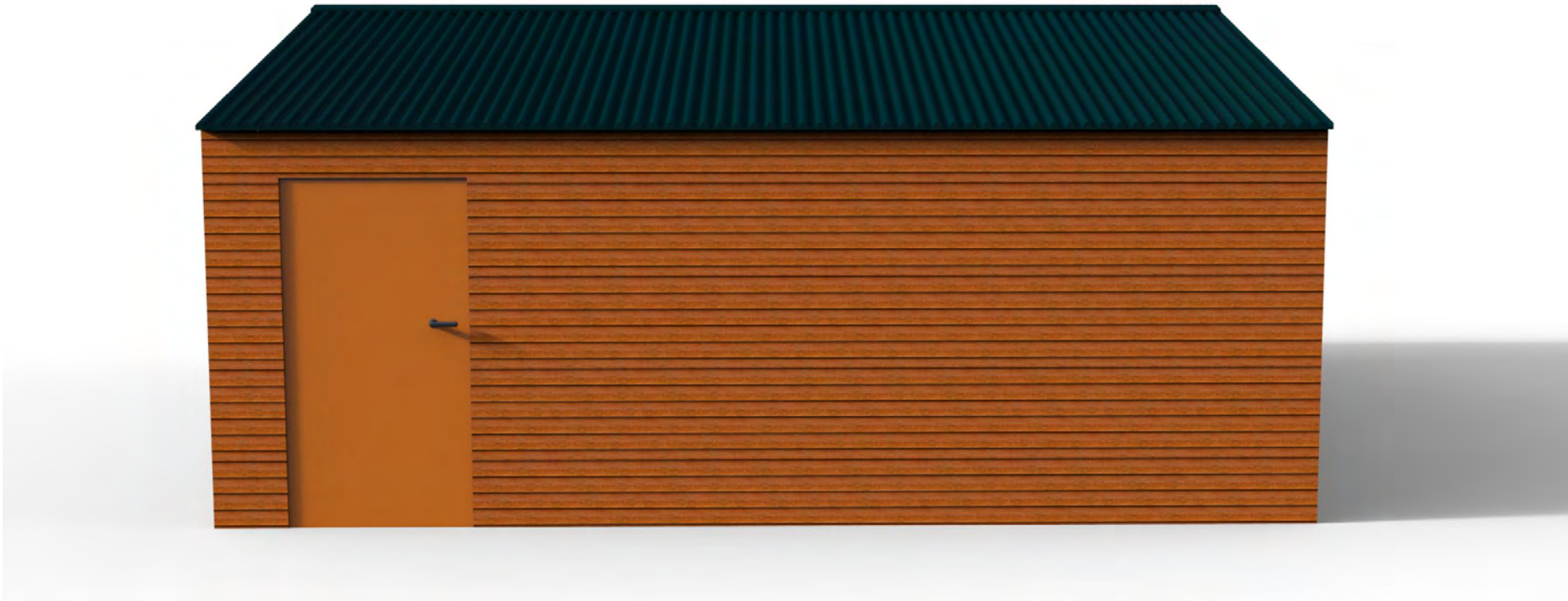
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Project					
Cop House Farm					
Drawing Title					
Figure 4.2 Proposed Solar Mounting System					
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Drawing Number				Rev	

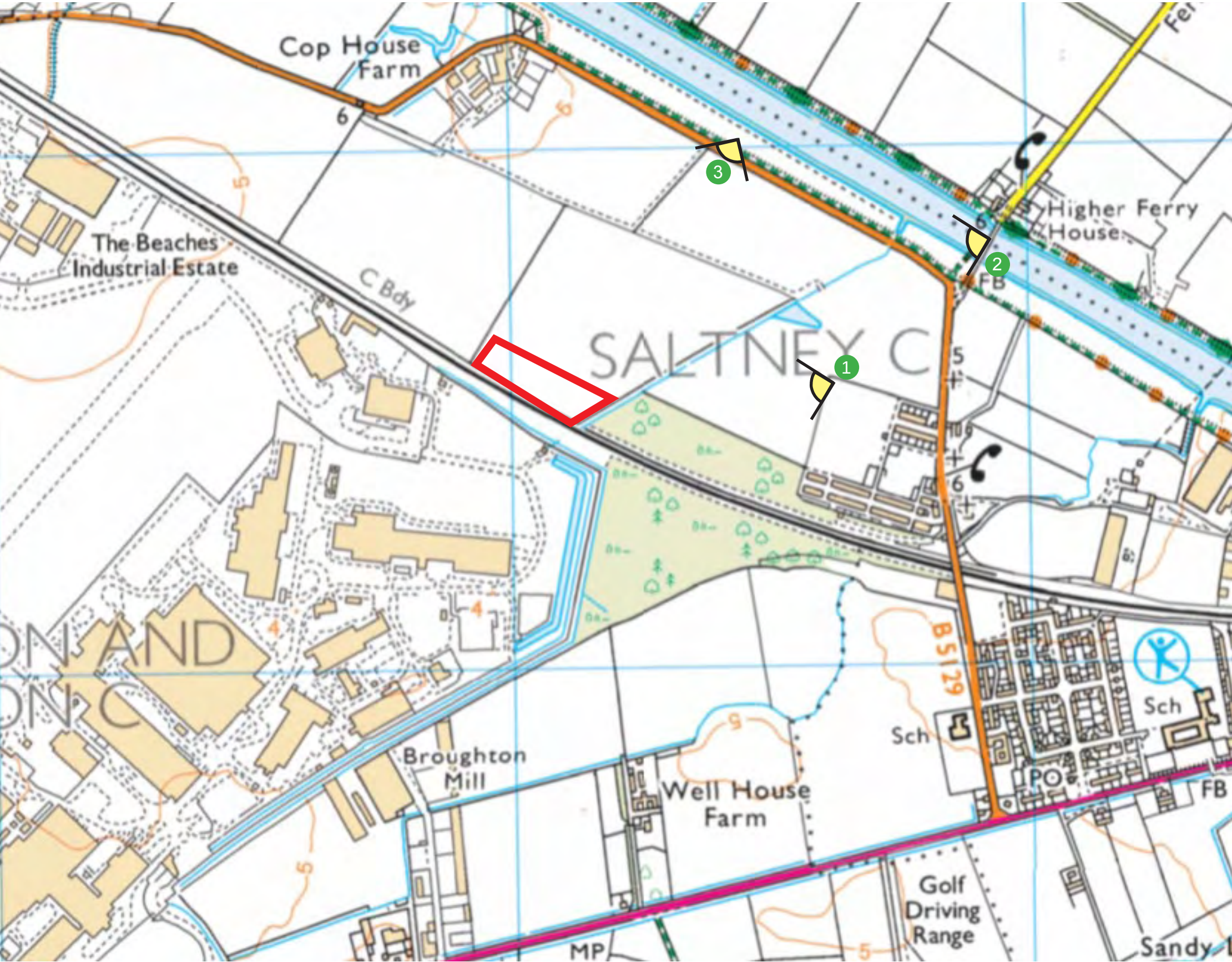


CGI Visualisation of Proposed Distribution Building



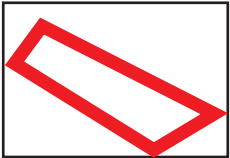
CGI Visualisation of Proposed Substation

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Client	David Edge		
Project	Cop House Farm		
Drawing Title	Figure 4.3 Proposed Solar Array Distribution Building and Substation		
Scale NTS	Date 12.24		PH MS
Drawing Number			Rev



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KEY



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Viewpoint locations



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Drawing Title

Viewpoint Location Plan
Figure 5

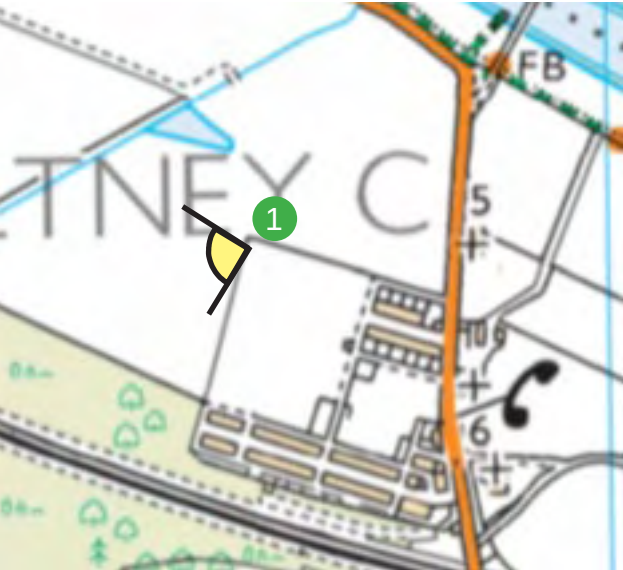
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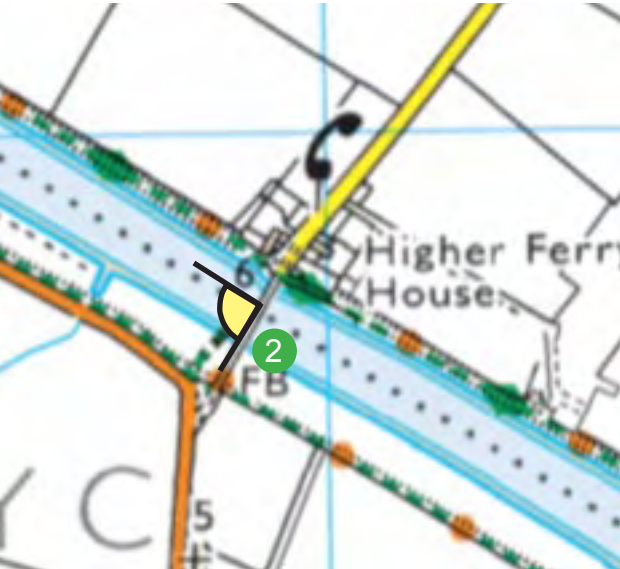
Rev



Viewpoint Information
Location: Ewart St/Flint Road Recreation Ground
Approximate elevation: 5.1m
Approximate distance from site: 250m
Direction of View: East

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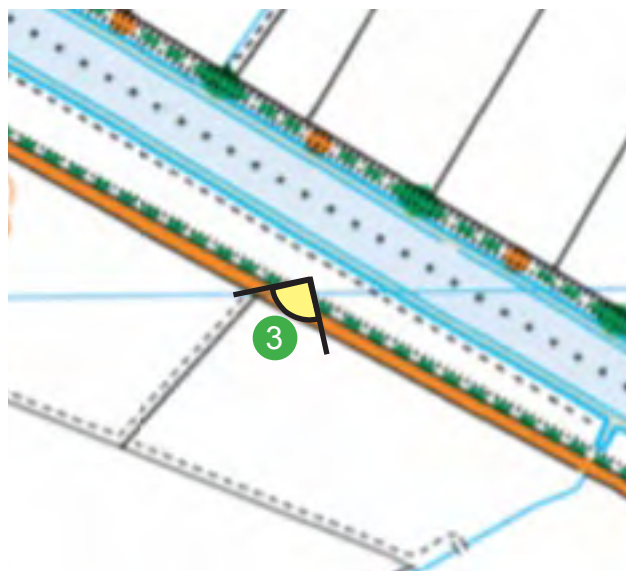
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Client David Edge					
Project Cop House Farm					
Drawing Title Figure 6 Viewpoint 1					
Scale NTS	Date 12.24			PH MS	
Drawing Number				Rev	



Viewpoint Information
Location: Middle of footbridge from B5129 leading to Wales Coast Path
Approximate elevation: 8.4m
Approximate distance from site: 700m
Direction of View: South west

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Client David Edge			
Project Cop House Farm			
Drawing Title Figure 6 Viewpoint 2			
Scale NTS	Date 12.24		PH MS
Drawing Number			Rev



Viewpoint Information

Location: Footpath on south bank of River Dee looking south
 Approximate elevation: 6.2m
 Approximate distance from site: 500m
 Direction of View: South

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Figure 6
 Viewpoint 3

Scale
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