

Cae Mor Farm Proposed Organic Poultry Unit

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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Viento Environmental Limited
www.viento-env.co.uk

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a landscape and visual impact assessment that has been undertaken to identify the likely effects of the proposed organic poultry development on the landscape character and visual amenity of the locality.
2. The assessment has concentrated on a 3.0km radius study area for landscape character, landscape designations and visual amenity, which is considered sufficient to identify all likely impacts on landscape character and visual amenity given the limited height and extent of the development (see **Figure LV1** for the extent of the study area).
3. The assessment is illustrated by **Figures LV1 – LV2, Appendices LV1 – LV2** and by **Viewpoints 1 – 7**.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment Approach

4. The assessment is a study identifying the key views towards the proposed development and describing how these views could change as a result of the proposal. In addition, the study identifies the landscape character of the site and surroundings and sets out the potential changes to landscape character that could occur as a result of the proposal.
5. The methodology used in this study conforms to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3). GLVIA3 recommends that for non-EIA development, an assessment of significance is not required and that the assessment should also be proportionate to the scale of the project and the nature of its likely effects.

Good Practice Guidance and Data

6. As mentioned above, the assessment has utilised guidance set out within the GLVIA3. The assessment has also taken account of Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Photographs illustrating views from each viewpoint have been taken using a Canon EOS 6D digital camera using a fixed lens with a 50mm focal length. These photographs have been stitched together to provide Type 1 images of the site and local surroundings, labelled with relevant information.

Assessment Process

7. The assessment has involved information review, fieldwork observations and photography, and has been undertaken in several stages, as presented in the following sections of this report:

- Predicted effects and mitigation – a review of the visual characteristics of the proposed development to identify the aspects with the potential to give rise to visual effects and a description of the measures incorporated into the design to mitigate these effects.
- Landscape and visual context – a review of the existing landscape and visual baseline of the study area, to identify landscape character, landscape designations and visual receptors in the study area.
- Viewpoint analysis – to illustrate typical local views and to predict the changes to views as a result of the proposed development from a selection of viewpoints that represent the main visual receptors in the study area.
- Landscape assessment – an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on landscape fabric, landscape character and landscape designations in the landscape study area.
- Visual assessment – an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on the visual amenity of receptors in the visual study area.
- Conclusions – a summary of the findings of the landscape and visual assessments.

Prediction Methodologies

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

PREDICTED EFFECTS AND MITIGATION

9. A detailed description of the proposed development and information on the installation of the various components of this proposed development are provided in **the Design and Access Statement** of the Planning Application.
10. It is the visual appearance of the proposed development and associated activities and any proposed changes to the existing landscape fabric of the site that are the main aspects of the development with the potential to affect landscape and visual amenity and these are summarised below.
11. The main elements of the proposed development that would be visible would be:
 - Built form – four poultry buildings with a smaller packing room located in the centre of the building complex. Each poultry building would measure approximately 45.6m by 17.3m and would measure 5.62m to the ridge of the roof with an eaves height of approximately 3.0m. Extraction fans would be located in two pairs just under the ridge of the roofline at a height of approximately 0.89m on each poultry building. Two silos would be associated with each poultry building, of the same height as the roof ridge and located

on the south side of each building. The packing room would be a smaller building approximately 18.0m by 12.0m and 2.5m to the eaves, 3.625m to the roof ridge. Each of the buildings, rooves and silos would be juniper green (or similar) in colour. (Final colours to be agreed with the Council). The buildings would be situated on two main hardstanding areas set into the natural slope of the landform. These hardstanding areas would house a pair of the poultry buildings on each and would each be approximately 115m by 30m in size. Between these two hardstanding areas would be a smaller hardstanding area giving access to the packing room (located between each pair of poultry buildings) and also providing a turning circle. This smaller hardstanding would be approximately 30m in diameter.

- Access track – access to the site would be from the B4579 to the south. This would involve the removal of two sections of hedgerow; firstly approximately 25m from the main access point onto the main highway (the B4579) and then approximately 5m at the point of entry into the site field. At the highway access, a further 32m of hedgerow on either side of the access point would need to be maintained at a height of below 1m in order to allow a suitable visibility splay. In order to provide a suitable gradient the access track would gradually follow a route down the local slope of the field south of the site and would be approximately 330m in length in total.
 - Earthworks – the landform across the site would be altered to create a flat finished floor level for the three hardstanding areas incorporating the proposed buildings. This would involve a mixture of cut and fill earthworks across the site utilising site soils only. This information is shown on Section Plans RB-MZ555-07 and RB-MZ555-08. Further cut and fill details are provided within the Design and Access Statement although overall a limited amount of soil will need to be removed from site once earthworks are completed.
 - Deliveries to and from the site (as set out within the Design and Access Statement).
 - Landscape enhancement proposals – a detailed planting scheme would be submitted post permission. **Figure LV3** indicates the proposed landscaping measures such as the new native tree belts/woodland areas within the site area to the north, south, southeast and west of the proposed development, as well as areas located between the proposed buildings and along parts of the access track near to the B4579. These measures are proposed to aid in the integration of the building into the area as well as adding enhancements to local landscape fabric.
12. From a landscape and visual perspective, the number of elements visible has been minimised by setting the built form within the slope of the landform which takes advantage of nearby field

boundary screening to the immediate west and east. Additionally a juniper green colour is suggested for the built form and landscape enhancements are proposed to aid the integration of the application into its surroundings.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT

13. The proposed development would be situated within a series of pasture fields on a landform sloping down to the north. The proposed buildings would be located within a single pasture field and then the access track would follow a route through a second agricultural field immediately south of this, providing access onto the B4579. Planting of native woodland would occur within some neighbouring fields. As part of the current farming operation at Cae Mor Farm (which is located approximately 150m southeast of the proposed buildings), an existing poultry unit is located approximately 350m southeast of the nearest proposed building. This existing poultry unit was subject to a refusal of planning permission and then an approval at appeal. The inspector's decision is included within **Appendix LV2** of this report and will be referred to at pertinent points within this report.
14. The field within which the proposed buildings would be situated currently slopes down to the north between heights of approximately 250m and 275m AOD. The field across which the majority of the proposed track would cross also slopes down to the north from heights of approximately 300m AOD at the roadside by the B4579 to approximately 275m AOD on the northern field boundary.
15. As mentioned above, the main site field within which the proposed buildings would be located is laid to pasture. It is broadly square in shape, with hedgerows along its western, eastern and southern boundaries, and a few trees forming the northern boundary, with a number of mature trees located within these boundary hedgerows. The neighbouring fields are also predominantly bound by hedgerows and numerous mature trees. A public footpath enters the site just north of the main site field northern boundary approximately 20m north of the proposed buildings and follows a route east to west through the site.
16. The nearest residential property to the proposed buildings is Cae Mor Farm itself, approximately 180m southeast from the closest part of the proposed development. Beyond this, Brithdir is located approximately 240m west of the proposal, Bronallt is located approximately 400m to the northwest, Ty Nant is approximately 370m to the southwest, Bryniau Farm is approximately 500m to the southwest, Cae Mor Ucha is approximately 330m to the south, Penllwyn is approximately 590m to the north, Bank is approximately 500m to the northwest, and Llwynmawr Farm is approximately 650m to the northwest. The settlements of Pentre Cilgwyn

and Llwynmawr are located at distances of 700m and 770m from the proposed buildings, respectively.

Landscape Fabric

17. The fields forming the site are laid to pasture. As mentioned above, the site fields are mainly bounded by hedgerows with several hedgerow trees. A footpath runs along parts of the northeastern boundary of the site, and then follows a route through a northern section of the site.
18. In general there is a wealth of vegetation within the local landscape. Typically the roadside hedges local to the site are approximately 1.5m – 2m in height. Hedgerows form the typical field boundary, with regular hedgerow trees, as well as overgrown hedgerows forming tree belts in some locations. Tree belts are common along watercourses and associated with farm buildings. Across higher ground within the north, east and south of the study area conifer plantations are a common feature, giving this local landscape a well vegetated feel.
19. Beyond the site field the local landscape slopes noticeably down to the River Ceiriog to the north and rises sharply north of the B4500. Overall the landform in the study area ranges in height between 422m AOD in the southeast and 128m AOD in Pontfadog.

Landscape Character

20. Within the LANDMAP character areas refined by Wrexham County Borough Council as part of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG, adopted March 2007), the site and surrounding area are located within Landscape Character Area 4 (LCA4) Ceiriog Valley. The key characteristics and full descriptions for this LANDMAP character area, as defined by Wrexham County Borough Council, are provided in **Appendix LV1** and an assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the character of this area is provided in the Landscape Assessment below. The Planning Guidance Note associated with LCA 4 sets out the key characteristics of this LCA and these include:

Visual character:

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

Geological character:

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

Ecological character:

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

Historical character:

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

Cultural character:

- Sheep farming is the dominant land use, with some pheasant rearing, but there is increasing diversification to include rural crafts, woodland management, low key tourism and recreational facilities and activities including fishing and walking,
 - The Ceiriog Valley is recognised as a distinct cultural area within Wales. Welsh is widely spoken.
21. Within Wrexham County Borough Council area, the LCAs that fall within the 3km radius study area are indicated on **Figure LV1**. These are discussed in greater detail later within this report and descriptive extracts of these LCAs are included within **Appendix LV1**.

Landscape Designations

22. There are no national landscape designations in the 3.0km radius study area. However, the site is located within a local landscape designation, Special Landscape Area (SLA). Policy EC5 within the current Wrexham UDP 1996 – 2011 (WCBC 2005) states:

Within Special Landscape Areas, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape. Development, other than for agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other rural enterprises, and essential operational development by utility service providers, will be strictly

controlled. Development will be required to conform to a high standard of design and landscaping, and special attention will be paid to minimising its visual impact both from nearby and distant viewpoints.

23. This local landscape designation covers large parts of the Borough. However, Wrexham CBC are currently in the process of producing a Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028, which is at Deposit Stage. As part of this emerging plan, the SLA local landscape designation would be refined and reduced sizeably, although the site and large parts of the study area would remain within this local landscape designation. Proposed Policy NE5 covers the SLA designation area and states:

Priority will be given to protecting, managing and enhancing the character and quality of the following Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) as shown on the proposals map:

- i. Berwyn Mountains*
- ii. Ceiriog Valley*
- iii. Upper Dee Valley and Woodlands*
- iv. Lower Dee Floodplain*
- v. The Maelor*
- vi. Bettisfield, Gredington, and Hanmer*
- vii. The Mosses*

Within SLAs, development will only be permitted where proposals include measures to protect and enhance the character and quality of the particular landscape features for which the SLA has been designated having regard to:

- i) The impact, including cumulative impact, of the proposed development on the key features, landscape character and quality of the SLA; and*
- ii) The ability of the development to provide appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.*

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

Visual Receptors

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

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

- Public highways – including the B4579, B4500, and a network of minor roads.

VISUAL ANALYSIS

Viewpoint Analysis

26. Seven viewpoints were selected as representing and illustrating some of the most open and/or key locations or receptors within the 3.0km radius study area. These viewpoints are listed below and the locations of these viewpoints are shown on **Figure LV1**. A detailed description of these viewpoints and the potential changes that would occur through the introduction of the proposed development are contained below. The viewpoint images are provided for information purposes and are labelled with relevant notes and should not be considered as a substitute to visiting a viewpoint in the field.

Table LV1 – List of viewpoints

Vp	Viewpoint Name	NGR	Distance from proposed poultry buildings	Landscape Character Area	Visual Receptor
1	Footpath northeast of site	322816 336169	0.13km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Walkers
2	Local road to Cae Mor	322876 336077	0.18km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Motorists
3	Footpath to Bryniau Farm	322097 336086	0.44km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Walkers
4	B4579 near local road to Bronallt	322201 336435	0.45km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Residents, motorists
5	Footpath near Penllwyn	322732 336655	0.5km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Walkers
6	Llwynmawr near Mulberry Inn	322446 337021	0.75km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Residents, motorists

7	Local road near Dolywern	321775 337815	1.8km	LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley	Motorists
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Prediction Methodology

27. The following viewpoint analysis has described the existing view from each viewpoint and has identified the visual receptors at each viewpoint. In accordance with GLVIA3, the sensitivity of each visual receptor group at each location is a function of the susceptibility of visual receptors to change at that location and the value attached to these views.
28. All visual receptors are people and are assumed to be equally sensitive to change. However, the location and activities of visual receptors influence the way in which they currently experience the landscape and views, the extent to which views of the surrounding landscape may contribute to their existing visual amenity, the value they place on these views and their susceptibility to changes in these views. Accordingly, at any one location there may be different levels of sensitivity for the different receptor groups, the sensitivity may vary depending on the direction of the view, and any one receptor group may be accorded different levels of sensitivity at different locations.
29. Receptor susceptibility levels of susceptible, moderate susceptibility and slight susceptibility are used taking into account the following factors:
 - Receptor location, occupation or activity,
 - Movement of receptor and duration and frequency of view experienced,
 - Focus of attention and interest.
30. The judgement of value is based on a five point scale – National value, County/Borough/District value, Community value, private value, unvalued. The value attached to a location or to a particular view at a location can influence the purpose and expectation of receptors at the location and the judgement of value takes into account:
 - Recognised value – for example by the presence of planning designations or designated heritage assets,
 - Indicators of value – to individuals, communities and society generally, such as the popularity of a location.
31. Accordingly, within this assessment visual receptor sensitivity is determined in terms of the sensitivity of each location for each receptor type (rather than the sensitivity of the receptors *per se*), using a five point relative scale (high, high/medium, medium, medium/low and low).

32. The magnitude of the change in the views from the seven viewpoints has been assessed based on the assessor's interpretation of largely quantifiable parameters, including:
- Distance and direction of the viewpoint from the development.
 - Extent of the development visible from the viewpoint.
 - Field of view occupied by the development (horizontal and vertical angles of view) and proportion of view (as a percentage of the panorama).
 - Context of the view and degree of contrast with the existing landscape and built elements (background, form, composition, pattern, scale and mass, line, movement, colour, texture, etc).
 - Scale of change with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view.
 - Duration and nature of the effect, eg direct/ indirect, secondary, cumulative, temporary/ permanent, short term/ long term, intermittent/ continuous, reversible/ irreversible, etc (as related to the nature of the development).
33. This magnitude of change scale is a relative scale and is not an absolute scale.
34. The resulting overall degree of impact is a combination of receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change and is divided into eight levels of impact (major, major/moderate, moderate, moderate/ minor, minor, minor/ negligible, negligible and imperceptible) as indicated in the matrix below.

Table LV2: Assessment of overall impact

Location sensitivity	Magnitude of change			
	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	Major	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor
High/ medium	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor
Medium	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor	Minor/ negligible
Medium/ low	Moderate/ minor	Minor	Minor/ negligible	Negligible
Low	Minor	Minor/ negligible	Negligible	Imperceptible

Viewpoint 1 – Footpath northeast of site

35. This viewpoint is located at approximately 250m AOD and 0.13km northeast of the proposed buildings on a footpath within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. The footpath runs through fields

northeast, immediately north and then northwest of the proposed buildings, through the northern section of the red line boundary for the application, and the viewpoint is located on the footpath immediately northeast of the application boundary.

36. A field boundary is located immediately south of the viewpoint, seen crossing through the foreground of the view, which looks broadly in a westerly direction. Beyond this, a further field boundary is partially visible within the left of the view and this is the eastern boundary to the field within which the proposed buildings would be located. The right hand of the view shows a part of the wide views available across the Ceiriog Valley to the north.
37. Initially post construction the five proposed buildings and a few of the silos would be very partially visible in summer months beyond two intervening field boundaries in the near distance with a maximum height of 5.6m to proposed roof ridge. The buildings would be built into the slope of the landform, although in winter months some partial filtered visibility of the proposed buildings and silos would be available with no leaves on the hedgerows. The access track would broadly be screened by intervening hedgerows from this location, as would be earthworks associated with the proposal.
38. Year 10: Planting is proposed along some areas immediately east of the proposed buildings which would further screen the proposed buildings and silos in summer and winter months. Ten years post planting, this woodland planting would provide greater density and leaf cover to views west where it is anticipated that only very limited roof sections of the proposal and the tops of a few silos would be discernible in winter months.
39. The viewpoint represents views of walkers (high/medium sensitivity). The eastern ends of limited parts of the proposed buildings, would be partially visible behind existing field boundaries initially where the magnitude of change in the view would be *slight*, resulting in a *moderate/ minor* impact for walkers at this point.
40. Year 10: The mitigation planting would be established and providing some further screening to views west, although some very limited upper sections of proposed roofs and silos may be discernible, mainly in winter months where a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor* impact for walkers at this point could occur.

Viewpoint 2 – Local road to Cae Mor

41. This viewpoint is located at approximately 260m AOD and 0.18km southeast of the proposed development on a local road within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. The view looks west through a gap in the roadside hedgerows. The foreground of the view is occupied by a pasture field which forms part of the site and in the middle distance a field boundary extends up the sloping landform. This is the field boundary beyond which the proposed buildings would be located.

42. Initially post construction: The proposed access route would not be discernible from this viewpoint, although the proposed buildings and the closest silos would be clearly visible beyond the intervening field boundary, along with some eastern parts of the earthworks. The orientation of the proposed built form means that the eastern two poultry buildings along with the silos and packing room would be seen end on, with the western two poultry buildings and silos predominantly hidden from view behind the eastern buildings. The existing field boundary would provide some screening, mainly to the northern buildings within the group in summer months, with the broken form of southern parts of the field boundary allowing some more open visibility of the southern buildings, particularly in winter months.
43. Year 10: Planting is proposed along some areas immediately east of the proposed buildings which would further filter and screen the proposed buildings and silos in summer and winter months. Ten years post planting, this woodland planting would provide greater density and leaf cover to views west where it is anticipated that some upper sections of the proposed poultry buildings would be visible although the packing room would be screened from view.
44. The viewpoint represents views of motorists (medium sensitivity). Initially post construction, the eastern parts of the proposed buildings, silos and the associated earthworks would be visible with only some partial screening behind the existing field boundary where the magnitude of change in the view would be *substantial*, resulting in a *moderate* impact for motorists at this point.
45. Year 10: The mitigation planting would be established and providing screening to views west, although some upper sections of proposed buildings and silos would be visible, where a *slight* magnitude of change and a *minor* impact for motorists at this point could occur.

Viewpoint 3 – Footpath to Bryniau Farm

46. This viewpoint is located on a local footpath at approximately 310m AOD and 0.44km west of the proposed development within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. The footpath is characteristically enclosed on either side for much of its route by an avenue of mature trees which can be seen within the right of the view. Some glimpsed views out are available, as indicated within the left of the view. The wider landscape of the Ceiriog Valley is visible, of which the proposed site would form a part in the middle distance.
47. Initially post construction: The proposed access track and access point from the highway would predominantly be screened from view by foreground and intervening vegetation. However, the field within which the buildings are proposed would be discernible and the built form would also be discernible where intervening field boundary vegetation allows. Given the elevated location of the viewpoint, the roofs of the proposed buildings would be the most visible aspect

of the built form and much of the earthworks associated with the proposal would not be discernible from this distance and orientation.

48. Year 10: Woodland blocks are proposed along the western and southwestern boundaries of the site as well as areas between the buildings. Over time these would establish to reinforce the field boundary to the west and southwest of the proposed buildings, as well as vegetation within the site, which would add further screening to these views from the west so that fewer parts of the proposed roofs would be visible.
49. The viewpoint represents views of walkers on the footpath (high/medium sensitivity). Initially post construction the roofs of the five buildings, the tops of the silos and some limited side walls of the built form would be visible in the middle distance where intervening vegetation allows, resulting in a *moderate* magnitude of change in the view and a *moderate* impact on the visual amenity of walkers at this point.
50. Year 10: The woodland planting would be established and providing additional screening to views east, although several parts of the roofs of the proposed buildings and parts of some silos would be visible, where a *slight* magnitude of change and a *moderate/minor* impact for walkers at this point could occur.

Viewpoint 4 –B4579 near local road to Bronallt

51. This viewpoint is located at the junction of a local road with the B4579 near to Bronallt at approximately 250m AOD and 0.45km northwest of the proposed development within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. Views to the other side of the valley area available above roadside hedgerows, although much of the foreground and middle distance view is obscured by roadside vegetation. A small gap in the roadside hedgerow at this point allows a view southeast across middle distance fields including part of the site.
52. Initially post construction, some parts of the earthworks on the site and mainly the northern pair of poultry buildings would be visible from this viewpoint, where these two buildings would screen the majority of visibility of the remaining buildings due to orientation.
53. Year 10: Woodland blocks are proposed along the northern and western parts of the site as well as areas between the buildings. Over time these would establish to reinforce the field boundary to the west and to create a boundary north of the buildings, which would add screening to these views from the northwest so that fewer parts of the northern pair of buildings would be visible.
54. The viewpoint represents views of residents (high sensitivity) and motorists (medium sensitivity). Initially post construction parts of the earthworks within the northern part of the site and mainly the northern pair of poultry buildings and parts of a few silos would be visible,

resulting in a *moderate* magnitude of change in the view, a *major/ moderate* impact on residents and a *moderate/ minor* impact on motorists at this location.

55. Year 10: The woodland planting would be established and providing some screening to views southeast, although upper parts of the northern pair of the proposed buildings and silos would be visible, where a *slight* magnitude of change and a *moderate* impact for residents and a *minor* impact for motorists would occur at this point.

Viewpoint 5 – Footpath near Penllwyn

56. This viewpoint is located on a footpath to the south of Penllwyn at approximately 195m AOD and 0.5km north of the proposed development, located within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. At this location the landform rises gently to the south with the layering of intervening trees obscuring the detail of the middle distance view. The proposed site is obscured behind these intervening trees.
57. Initially post construction, in summer months the proposed development is expected to be almost entirely screened from view, where limited parts of the roofline of the northern pair of poultry buildings may be partially visible. In winter months some limited filtered visibility of the northern buildings may be available through existing tree cover. However, the earthworks and the access track would remain entirely screened behind this mature intervening vegetation.
58. Year 10: Woodland vegetation is proposed immediately north of the proposed buildings and on the earthworks north of the buildings. Over time this vegetation would establish to reinforce the existing intervening vegetation so that even in winter months the majority of the proposed development would be screened from view. However, limited parts of the roofline of the northern pair of poultry buildings may remain partially visible amongst the intervening trees.
59. The viewpoint represents views of walkers (high/medium sensitivity). Initially post construction parts of the northern pair of poultry buildings may be visible, predominantly in winter months, resulting in a *slight* magnitude of change in the view, and a *moderate/ minor* impact on walkers at this location.
60. Year 10: The woodland planting would be established and providing some additional depth of screening to views south, particularly in winter months, although limited parts of the roofline of the northern buildings may still be discernible above the intervening trees, where a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor* impact for walkers would occur at this point.

Viewpoint 6 – Llwynmawr near the Mulberry Inn

61. This viewpoint is located on a local road within Llwynmawr at approximately 150m AOD and 0.75km northwest of the proposed development, within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. Post and wire

mesh fencing lines the southern side of the road allowing clear views out to higher ground to the south and west. Vegetation across this sloping landform can be seen layered within several parts of the view including to the south.

62. Initially post construction, in summer months the proposed development is expected to be almost entirely screened from view, where limited parts of the roofline of the four poultry buildings may be partially visible. In winter months some limited filtered visibility of the poultry buildings may be available through existing tree cover. However, the earthworks and the access track would remain entirely screened behind this mature intervening vegetation.
63. Year 10: Woodland vegetation is proposed immediately north and west of the proposed buildings and on the earthworks north of the buildings. Over time this vegetation would establish to reinforce the existing intervening vegetation so that even in winter months the majority of the proposed development would be screened from view. However, limited parts of the roofline of the poultry buildings may remain partially visible amongst the intervening trees.
64. The viewpoint represents views of residents (high sensitivity) and motorists (medium sensitivity). Initially post construction parts of the poultry buildings may be visible, predominantly in winter months, resulting in a *slight* magnitude of change in the view, and a *moderate* impact on residents and a *minor* impact on motorists at this location.
65. Year 10: The woodland planting would be established and providing some additional depth of screening to views south, particularly in winter months, although limited parts of the roofline of the poultry buildings may still be discernible above the intervening trees, where a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *moderate/ minor* impact for residents and a *minor/ negligible* impact for motorists would occur at this point.

Viewpoint 7 – Local road near Dolywern

66. This viewpoint is located on a local road on high ground above Dolywern village at approximately 240m AOD and 1.8km northwest of the proposed development, within the Ceiriog Valley LCA. The view is from a field gate as the road is enclosed by mature vegetation on both sides. The view is open across the valley landform with Coed Collfryn visible as a large area of woodland on the southern slopes. The existing Cae Mor poultry development is barely discernible behind existing vegetation where some other built form on the southern valley slopes is discernible, such as Plas-onn agricultural building.
67. Initially post construction, the proposal including earthworks, buildings and access track would be discernible in the distance as part of a detailed view without any screening from intervening vegetation.

68. Year 10: Woodland vegetation is proposed immediately north and west of the proposed buildings, on the earthworks north of the buildings and also within areas between the buildings as well as along parts of the access track. Over time this vegetation would establish to provide some screening of the proposal, although parts of the buildings and some parts of the access track would remain visible from this vantage point.
69. The viewpoint represents views of motorists (medium sensitivity). Initially post construction parts of the proposed buildings, earthworks and access track would be visible as part of this wide and detailed view, resulting in a *slight* magnitude of change in the view, and a *minor* impact on motorists at this location.
70. Year 10: The woodland planting would be established and providing some screening to views southeast, although parts of the proposed buildings and access track would still be discernible, where a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor/ negligible* impact for motorists would occur at this point.

Table LV3 – Summary of visual impacts

Vp	Viewpoint Name	Distance from proposed buildings	Predicted Visual Impacts
1	Footpath northeast of site	0.13km	Walkers: Initially – moderate/ minor impacts Year 10 – minor impacts
2	Local road to Cae Mor	0.18km	Motorists: Initially – moderate impacts Year 10 – minor impacts
3	Footpath to Bryniau Farm	0.44km	Walkers: Initially – moderate impacts Year 10 – moderate/minor impacts
4	B4579 near local road to Bronallt	0.45km	Residents: Initially – major/moderate impacts Year 10 – moderate impacts Motorists: Initially – moderate/minor impacts Year 10 – minor impacts

5	Footpath near Penllwyn	0.5km	Walkers: Initially – moderate/ minor impacts Year 10 – minor impacts
6	Llwynmawr near Mulberry Inn	0.75km	Residents: Initially – moderate impacts Year 10 – moderate/minor impacts Motorists: Initially – minor impacts Year 10 – minor/negligible impacts
7	Local road near Dolywern	1.8km	Motorists: Initially – minor impacts Year 10 – minor/negligible impacts

Findings of the Viewpoint Analysis

71. Given the nature of the valley landform, the good levels of vegetation within the landscape of the study area and the position of the proposed built form near to existing vegetation, in general terms the visibility of the proposed development would be limited and partial. Consistently the viewpoints show generally good levels of vegetation within the existing views where the proposed development would be at least partially screened from several parts of the study area.
72. It is important to note that even within close proximity to the proposal there are a number of locations where the proposed development would be largely or entirely screened by intervening topography and/or vegetation, such that views from within these zones would be partial. This is illustrated by some of the viewpoints, such as Viewpoints 1, 5 and 6 which are all located within 750m of the proposal.
73. A more detailed discussion of the likely effects on the visual amenity of receptors in settlements and residential properties, on recreational routes, public highways and local roads is provided in the Visual Assessment below.

Further Photographs

74. The photographs below have been provided to give an illustration of the character and typical views available from a number of local footpaths and roads within the local area as well as giving an indication of general levels of vegetation within the local landscape.



Plate 1 – View southwest towards the site from local road junction to northeast. Proposed buildings would be located within middle distance vegetation. NGR 323000 336555.



Plate 2 – View south towards the site from junction of local road with public footpath. Proposed buildings would be located within middle distance vegetation. NGR 322950 336620.



Plate 3 – Typical roadside hedges along the local road network near to the site. NGR 323015 336385.



Plate 4 – Typical roadside hedges along the local road network near to the site. NGR 322975 336225.



Plate 5 – View west towards part of the eastern field boundary to the field within which the proposed buildings would be located. NGR 322780 336160.



Plate 6 – View west towards part of the western field boundary to the field within which the proposed buildings would be located. NGR 322660 336130.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

75. This assessment draws on the review of the predicted effects of the development, the landscape fabric of the site, the key characteristics of the landscape character units, the purposes/objectives of the landscape designations, the viewpoint analysis and fieldwork observations.

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Prediction Methodology

76. Landscape fabric is composed of the physical components of the landscape (eg landform, land cover and landscape elements and features). Developments can bring about both direct and indirect effects on landscape fabric. Direct effects occur where changes to the fabric of the landscape arise as the result of physical disturbance, for example, the loss of landscape elements such as hedgerows, walls and trees. Indirect effects are consequential changes that are separated from the source of the change in a temporal or spatial manner, for example changes in vegetation downstream as the result of modifications to surface water patterns upstream in a catchment area.
77. This assessment of effects on landscape fabric considers the existing landscape fabric of the site and the predicted effects of the development, and makes a judgement as to whether there are likely to be any beneficial or adverse changes to landscape fabric.
78. The proposed development would be located across a series of pasture fields where the access from the highway and for the access track through field boundaries would require the removal of approximately 30m of existing hedgerow, as well as the trimming of approximately 32m of hedgerow on either side of the highway access point to 1m in height to allow a suitable visibility splay onto the public highway. No other existing vegetation, hedgerows or isolated trees would need to be removed. The proposed footprint of the proposed buildings and hardstanding areas, as well as the proposed earthworks to accommodate the proposal would not require the removal of any existing vegetation on site.
79. Some sizeable earthworks are proposed as part of the application in order to set the proposed buildings within the slope of the landform. Details of these earthworks are shown on plans accompanying this application and overall some soil would be removed from site as part of the cut and fill works. This would result in an alteration to the natural landform of the site which would be an adverse change to the landscape fabric of the site.
80. A range of landscape mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed as part of the development including a number of woodland areas and tree belts. These are shown on **Figure**

LV2 and include woodland areas to the north, west, southwest and east of the proposed buildings as well as extending centrally between some of the buildings, a woodland block southeast of the proposed buildings and two tree belt areas adjacent to the access track near to the B4579. Overall this represents approximately 15,000m² of proposed native planting.

81. Overall there would be beneficial effects on landscape fabric as a result of the proposal.

Effects on Landscape Character

Prediction Methodology

82. In accordance with GLVIA3, the sensitivity of each landscape unit is judged on the basis of its value and its susceptibility to change arising from the specific type, scale and location of development proposed.
83. The susceptibility to change of a landscape unit is based on a three point scale (susceptible, moderate susceptibility and slight susceptibility) and depends on:
- The key characteristics of the landscape, and the clarity and robustness of these characteristics,
 - Nature of views (visual enclosure/openness of views and extent to which views contribute to landscape character),
 - Landscape planning policies and strategies for the landscape unit,
 - The nature of the changes to landscape character and views that could be brought about by the type, scale and location of the proposed development and the compatibility of these with the above factors.
84. Judgements on landscape value are based on those given in published landscape character assessments (where given) and/or checked in the field from fieldwork observations.
85. Accordingly, the assessment of landscape sensitivity for each landscape unit is derived from the judgement of value and combined with the judgement of susceptibility to give a level of landscape sensitivity as part of a five point scale – high, high/medium, medium, medium/low or low sensitivity.
86. The magnitude of the change in landscape character is assessed using a four point scale – substantial, moderate, slight and negligible. This magnitude of change scale is a relative scale and is not an absolute scale. It is based on the assessor's interpretation of largely quantifiable parameters, those of which have already been set out within paragraph 32 above.
87. The sensitivity of the LCU is then combined with the magnitude of change to predict the potential impacts on landscape character as set out within the matrix below (the same as illustrated in **Table LV2** above).

Table LV2 – Assessment of overall impact

Location sensitivity	Magnitude of change			
	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	Major	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor
High/ medium	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor
Medium	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor	Minor/ negligible
Medium/ low	Moderate/ minor	Minor	Minor/ negligible	Negligible
Low	Minor	Minor/ negligible	Negligible	Imperceptible

Effects on Character of the Site Landscape

88. There would be some short-term effects on the character of the site as a result of the construction phase, particularly the earthworks and excavations of the foundations. Overall, the construction phase would be short-term, with the various activities lasting for only small parts of the overall timescale. The presence of construction machinery and activities would be transient (temporary, short-term and reversible) and vegetation disturbance would be limited. However, ground disturbance as a result of the earthworks would be across the majority of one site field and other ground and vegetation disturbance would occur through the creation of the access track and highway access.
89. The main effects on the landscape character of the site would occur during the operational phase as a result of the presence of the new buildings, silos, access track and turning circle. All these elements would be located within LCT 4.
90. The elements of the proposal most likely to be visible across the surrounding area would be the proposed built form and silos which would become a key characteristic of the landscape of the site itself and, although existing key characteristics would not be lost, this built form would contrast with the existing character such that it would result in a sizeable adverse change to the character of the site landscape.

*Effects on Character of Wider Landscape*LCA 4 – Ceiriog Valley

91. The key characteristics and more detailed description of this LCA are provided in the extract in **Appendix LV1**. The area is described within the assessment as (extract) *‘scenic, tranquil and steep-sided valley enclosed by spurs of the Berwyn mountains, with hillside farms, wooded and farmed slopes, and small villages along the River Ceiriog’*. Distinctive characteristics include: mosaic of pasture, woods and traditional farms, constantly changing views due to zig-zag shape of valley, farmland mainly improved grassland with high density of hedges and hedgerow trees.
92. This LCA covers the valley landscape of the study area and fieldwork found that views across the area vary greatly depending on local topography and vegetation – as noted within the LCA 4 description as well. Viewpoints 1 to 7 are all located within this LCA.
93. Sensitivity – the key characteristics of this LCA are relatively strongly/clearly expressed and, due in particular to its overall rural character, scale varying from small to medium, irregular pattern and varying topography, it would have a moderate compatibility with a development of the scale and nature proposed. However, due to the generally rural nature of the area this LCA is considered to be susceptible to the type of changes that could be brought about by the introduction of a development of this type on the site. This landscape is within a local landscape designation (Special Landscape Area), and will have county value with the valued elements including the wildlife and biodiversity, views, historic assets and hedgerows. Therefore, in general, the sensitivity of the LCA to built form is considered to be high/medium.
94. The site is located on land sloping down to the north, with some mature hedgerows to the west, south and east as well as mature tree belts in fields north of the proposal. Beyond the road to the south, the landform continues to rise, with the roadside hedgerow boundary ranging between 3m and 1.5m tall. These topographic and vegetation elements all aid in containing and limiting visibility of the proposed site from within the study area. Similarly, the planning inspector for the Cae Mor poultry unit appeal scheme in 2017 noted in para 13 that *‘the appeal proposal would make effective use of existing screening in views from a number of directions, including those across the valley from north and west, from Nantffowc to the east and from views to the south’*. The decision notice is included as **Appendix LV2** accompanying this report. The general lack of visibility of the existing operational Cae Mor unit is notable within the seven viewpoints, where a very limited proportion of the building is discernible only from Viewpoint 7, but is entirely hidden in the remaining six viewpoints.
95. Agricultural built form in the locality is not uncharacteristic. To the south, Cae Mor Ucha has two agricultural barns associated with the property, approximately 150m from the proposed

site and 350m from the proposed buildings. To the southeast, Plas-onn has a large agricultural barn which is approximately 850m from the proposed site. The existing Cae Mor poultry unit is also located approximately 100m southeast of the proposed site boundary. The appeal inspector for the existing Cae Mor poultry unit noted in his appeal decision that the building would be agricultural in nature and activity associated with the proposal would also be agricultural in nature (paras 15 and 20 respectively). This would also be the case for the proposed development.

96. Agricultural buildings are a regular feature of views within this landscape and are generally partially screened by local vegetation, as discussed above. This would also be the case with the proposed development, as indicated by the viewpoints. The sloping valley landform allows some views of a detailed patchwork rural landscape where the proposed built form would sit stepped into the landform and partially screened or filtered by existing vegetation. Additional proposed planting measures would assist in further integrating the proposal into the locality, much in the same way as the existing Cae Mor poultry unit.
97. However in other locations, particularly to the south of the site, the slope of the landform serves to screen parts of the view due to the steepness of the slope. Parts of the proposal would be discernible from some parts of the landscape in a similar way to the visibility of the agricultural sheds at Plas-onn, however in the same way, the proposed development would not be prominent or dominant and would not become a key characteristic of this landscape, nor would it override the existing landscape context.
98. In the short term (post construction), the proposed development would be partially visible from some parts of the landscape close to the site, such as from some points along the footpath immediately north of the proposed buildings and limited parts of the local road to Cae Mor east of the site, as illustrated by Viewpoint 2. However, these would not be consistent views, the high levels of vegetation local to the site as roadside hedgerows, field boundaries and tree belts would often screen or largely screen the proposed development. As a result, whilst intermittently more open views of the proposal may be available, resulting in substantial/moderate or moderate adverse impacts on landscape character, these do not characterise the typical views locally where overall moderate/minor or lower adverse impacts would be expected.
99. In the medium term, proposed landscaping measures would establish and start to provide some further screening of the proposal. The effects of this would be seen in the further reduction of views from the local landscape where the development would be further filtered in views and moderate/minor or minor adverse impacts would be characteristic in the locality.

LCA 2 & 3 – Berwyn Foothills and Ceiriog Forest

100. The key characteristics and more detailed description of this LCA are provided in the extract in **Appendix LV1**. The area is described within the assessment as (extract) *‘Exposed slopes or lower spurs of the Berwyn Mountains, with pasture and forest, enclosing the Ceiriog Valley. The Ceiriog Forest is a typical upland commercial forestry plantation contrasting strongly with the surrounding open areas’*. Distinctive characteristics include: regular fieldscape, scattered farms and no settlement, forestry mainly in blocks, outstanding distant views, tranquil and remote.
101. This landscape covers the highest ground within the study area to the south, east, west and north and at its closest point is situated approximately 350m south of the proposed built form within the development. However, the upland nature of the vast majority of this LCA within the study area means that the plateau topography would screen the proposal from view from the majority of the LCA, except for a few limited areas on the boundary with LCA4 to the south of the site. The views towards the proposal from these areas are likely to be similar to those seen at Viewpoint 3 where initially a moderate magnitude of change is expected, reducing down to a slight magnitude of change by Year 10 as mitigation planting establishes.
102. Sensitivity – the key characteristics of this LCA are relatively strongly/clearly expressed and, due in particular to its overall rural character, regular field pattern, outstanding elevated views and elevated topography, it would have a moderate compatibility with a development of the scale and nature proposed. However, due to the generally rural nature of the area this LCA is considered to be susceptible to the type of changes that could be brought about by the introduction of a development of this type on the site. This landscape is within a local landscape designation (Special Landscape Area), and will have county value with the valued elements including the wildlife and biodiversity, views and historic assets. Therefore, in general, the sensitivity of the LCA to built form is considered to be high/medium.
103. From the vast majority of this LCA the proposal would be entirely screened by intervening topography and vegetation. However on the plateau edge, such as locations around Bryniau Farm, some views of the proposal may be possible, resulting initially in a moderate adverse impact on landscape character, with similar views to those illustrated by Viewpoint 3. However, over time mitigation planting would reduce visibility of the proposal to moderate/minor adverse impact levels.

Effects on Landscape Designation

104. As set out earlier within this report, the site is located within the SLA local landscape designation. Policy EC5 relating to this designation is also set out above in para 23. This proposed development is considered to be for *‘agriculture, small-scale farm-based and other*

rural enterprises' and has considered carefully the location of the development so as to limit the potential visual impacts. Evidence of the limited visual impacts is illustrated in Viewpoints 1 to 7. To further ensure the minimisation of potential visual impacts, the proposal has also provided a range of landscape and biodiversity enhancement. As such, it is considered that the proposal conforms with Policy EC5 and that there would be no significant effect on the purposes of this designation.

105. It is also worth noting that the planning inspector for the existing Cae Mor poultry unit appeal considered (in para 18) that the appeal proposal would protect and conserve the SLA.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Prediction Methodology

106. Visual amenity arises from a visual receptor's experience of the visual world around them and the value they place on a particular view or views. This assessment draws on the predicted effects of the development, the viewpoint analysis and fieldwork observations, and discusses the predicted effects on the visual amenity of receptors at a range of visual receptor locations within the study area. Within this study area these include settlements, individual residential properties, long distance recreational routes, the local public rights of way network and public highways.

Settlements

107. Llwynmawr, Pentre Cilgwyn, Glyn Ceiriog and Pontfadog are the main settlements within the study area. Fieldwork found that the layering of mature vegetation within the study area, particularly up the sloping landform north of the proposed site, would almost entirely screen views of the proposal from Llwynmawr at distances of 0.75km away or more, as indicated by Viewpoint 6 where a moderate impact on residents is predicted initially, reducing to moderate/minor as mitigation measures establish.
108. Fieldwork from public locations within Pentre Cilgwyn found the interlocking nature of the local landform in views south and southeast would entirely screen views of the proposal from this grouping of residential properties.
109. Pontfadog is located at greater distances from the proposal (approximately 1.7km at its closest point) and is located on the valley floor alongside the River Ceiriog which is characteristically surrounded by mature trees along this section of the valley floor. Glyn Ceiriog is also located on the valley floor approximately 2.7km northwest of the proposal, set within similarly established mature trees. Fieldwork indicated that the vegetation within the foreground and the intervening landscape would screen the proposed development from view.

Individual residential properties

110. The nearest individual residential property to the proposed buildings is Cae Mor Farm itself, approximately 240m west from the closest part of the proposed development. Beyond this, Brithdir is located approximately 240m west of the proposal, Bronallt is located approximately 400m to the northwest, Ty Nant is approximately 370m to the southwest, Bryniau Farm is approximately 500m to the southwest, Cae Mor Ucha is approximately 330m to the south, Penllwyn is approximately 590m to the north, Bank is approximately 500m to the northwest, and Llwynmawr Farm is approximately 650m to the northwest.
111. Currently western parts of Cae Mor Farm look northwest over towards Glyn Ceiriog and the Ceiriog Valley. The proposed buildings would be added to a part of this view, although partially screened initially by existing intervening field boundary vegetation where a moderate magnitude of change and a major/moderate impact on residents would be expected. A large woodland block is proposed within an intervening part of the site which would add further filtering and screening to views northwest as the planting establishes, reducing the impacts down to moderate and moderate/ minor levels over time. It should be noted that the residents of Cae Mor Farm are the applicants for this proposed development.
112. Brithdir is located approximately 240m west of the proposal and Bronallt is located approximately 400m to the northwest. Each of these properties would gain some visibility of the proposal, although for residents of Brithdir, this would mainly be limited to winter months due to intervening mature vegetation, where a moderate/minor impact is expected initially. However, Bronallt would gain more open views initially, as indicated by Viewpoint 4, where a major/ moderate impact is initially expected. However, extensive woodland planting is proposed along western and southwestern boundaries of the site which, once established would provide additional screening, particularly to views from Bronallt, where moderate impacts would be expected.
113. Ty Nant is located approximately 370m to the southwest, where mature vegetation coupled with the slope of the landform is anticipated to screen the proposal entirely from view. Bryniau Farm is located approximately 500m to the southwest in an elevated and open location. However, due to the orientation of vegetation and built form, a clear view towards the proposal from footpaths adjacent to the farm was not available, although Viewpoint 3 illustrates a view from nearby where a major/ moderate impact on residential amenity is indicated. This is likely to be the case for these residents initially, although mitigation planting over time would provide some screening, reducing impacts down to moderate or lower levels once planting establishes.

114. Cae Mor Ucha is located approximately 330m to the south of the proposed buildings where an existing tree belt immediately north of the property would screen the majority of visibility of the proposed buildings and the new access point from the highway. However, parts of the access track would be discernible in some views north from the property, and some winter views of the proposal could also be available where initially a moderate impact is expected. However, proposed vegetation along the B4579 would predominantly screen these views once established, where a moderate/minor impact is likely.
115. Penllwyn is approximately 590m to the north and would experience similar views to those illustrated by Viewpoint 5, where the majority of the proposal would be entirely screened by mature intervening vegetation and at worst a moderate impact is expected initially, reducing down to a moderate/minor impact once mitigation planting establishes. This would be similar with Bank and Llwynmawr Farm, located 500m and 650m northwest of the proposed buildings respectively. Viewpoint 6 illustrates the type of view that these properties would experience where initially a moderate, and then a moderate/minor impact would be expected once mitigation planting establishes.
116. Other individual residential properties are located at greater distances from the site, generally over 1.0km away where the majority of views of the proposal are expected to be screened.

Long distance recreational routes and public rights of way

117. **Figure LV1** indicates the long distance routes within the study area are the Offa's Dyke Path and Llwybr Ceiriog Trail.
118. The Offa's Dyke Path is a National Trail and runs through the far east of the study area at a distance of approximately 2.7km from the proposed buildings at its closest point. From this sort of distance, any initial visibility of the proposal would be distant, partial, and seen as part of wide views, where a negligible magnitude of change would be expected, resulting in a moderate/minor impact on users of this route.
119. The Llwybr Ceiriog Trail is located more proximate to the site at a distance of approximately 650m from the proposals at its closest point. However, from several sections of this route within the study area, the nature of the local topography would entirely screen any potential views of the proposal. Nevertheless, one of the most proximate sections of the route to the site follows a local road through Llwynmawr, close to Viewpoint 6, where some limited potential visibility of the proposal may occur at distances of approximately 650-700m away. Similarly to Viewpoint 6, the intervening vegetation would screen much of the view of the proposal initially, and this would then be further strengthened by woodland planting proposals immediately

north of the buildings. As a result, initially a moderate/minor impact is expected for walkers on this route, reducing down to minor as the planting measures establish.

120. Viewpoints 1, 3 and 5 are located on the local public right of way network between 0.13km and 0.5km from the site, where receptor sensitivity is high/ medium. At greater distances from the site, as illustrated by Viewpoint 5, the proposed development would regularly be largely or entirely screened from view from public rights of way. However, from routes close to the site, mainly the footpath crossing through part of the site itself, some more open and proximate views of the proposal would initially be available from within the site, resulting in moderate and major/moderate impacts. However, beyond this immediate view, the footpath travels east out of the site and the combination of topography and mature vegetation would screen parts of the proposal from view from several parts of the route, as illustrated by Viewpoint 1 where initially a moderate/ minor impact is expected, reducing down to minor as mitigation planting around the proposed buildings establishes. Over time the proposed woodland planting immediately north of the proposed buildings would further strengthen the screening of the proposal from parts of the footpath within the site.

Public highways

121. Public highways in the study area include the B4579, B4500 and a network of minor roads. Viewpoints 2, 4, 6 and 7 are all located on the local road network at distances ranging between 0.18km and 1.8km from the proposal. Viewpoint 2 indicates that at worst proximate views of the proposal could initially result in a moderate impact on motorists on local roads close to the site, reducing down to minor impacts once mitigation woodland and tree belts have established. However, Viewpoints 6 and 7 indicate that local mature vegetation levels would often almost entirely screen the proposal from view, where minor impacts or lower are expected. Viewpoint 4 illustrates a view from the B4579 northwest of the site, where a glimpsed view of the proposal would be available through a break in the roadside hedgerows at a distance of approximately 450m from the proposed buildings. Initially a moderate/minor impact is expected, which would gradually reduce down to a minor impact as mitigation planting establishes.
122. It is worth noting that this visibility of the proposed development would be very intermittent, partial and mainly limited to sections of these routes in proximity of the site.

CONCLUSIONS

123. The careful siting of the proposal set into the local landform would take advantage of local vegetative and topographical screening. In addition, the splitting of the development into a series of separate buildings would allow the maximisation of additional vegetative screening

from sensitively located mitigation planting. Overall, 15,000m² of new native planting is proposed as part of comprehensive mitigation proposals associated with the application.

124. The viewpoints have illustrated the good levels of existing mature vegetation in the landscape local to the site which would regularly at least partially screen the proposal.
125. Whilst the introduction of the proposed development may be a noticeable addition within the landscape immediately surrounding the site, the limited height of the development and the good levels of existing localised vegetation would assist in integrating the proposal into the local area. This has been the case for the nearby existing poultry unit building which was considered acceptable in landscape character and visual amenity terms at planning appeal in 2016/17. Now operational, this existing poultry unit is largely screened from view from the majority of the study area by local topography and vegetation much in the same way as the proposed development would be.
126. In landscape character and visual amenity terms, in combination with the planting proposals, the proposed development would be a suitable fit within the context of its immediate surroundings and would result in limited changes to views and landscape character within the local area as illustrated by the viewpoints associated with this study.