

Penrhos Farm

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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Viento Environmental Limited
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Landscape and Visual Assessment

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the findings of a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) that has been undertaken to identify the effects of the newly constructed building at Penrhos Farm, Penrhos on the landscape character and visual amenity of the locality.
2. The building was constructed in winter 2017 – spring 2018 without planning permission. As a result, the owner is now seeking retrospective permission for the ‘as built’ development and so this assessment forms part of a retrospective planning application and seeks to identify and quantify all impacts on landscape character, landscape designations and visual amenity which have resulted from the introduction of this new building.
3. Prior to construction of this building, an agricultural barn and a small outbuilding were demolished as part of the footprint for the current building. Therefore, the assessment of landscape and visual impacts will be a judgement of the impacts of the building that has been built at the site, with the baseline formed by the site prior to construction of this building, but post demolition of the previous buildings; in effect the open site. This will measure the change in landscape and visual terms as a result of the new built form and then will discuss whether the built development integrates successfully with its surroundings (in landscape and visual terms).
4. The assessment has concentrated on a 3.0km radius study area and is illustrated by **Figures LV1 – LV3** and by **Viewpoints 1 - 8**.

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment Approach

5. The assessment is a study identifying the key views towards the built development and describing how these views have changed as a result of the development. In addition, the study identifies the landscape character of the site and surroundings and sets out the changes to landscape character that occur as a result of the development.
6. 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

7. As mentioned above, the assessment has utilised guidance set out within the GLVIA3. 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. Some viewpoints are illustrated within the report as single frame images and others are illustrated within the photomontage booklet with a set viewing distance. The viewpoint images are provided for information purposes and some are labelled with relevant notes. These viewpoint images should not be considered as a substitute to visiting a viewpoint in the field.

Assessment Process

8. 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 (as built) 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.
 - Visual analysis – visibility analysis using a computer-generated zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) to identify the locations in the study area from where the proposed development (as built) is theoretically visible (based on topography only). In addition, a viewpoint survey to illustrate typical local views and to predict the changes to views as a result of the built development from a selection of viewpoints that represent the main visual receptors in the study area.
 - Landscape assessment – an assessment of the effects of the built development on landscape fabric, landscape character and landscape designations in the landscape study area.
 - Visual assessment – an assessment of the effects of the built 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

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

PREDICTED EFFECTS AND MITIGATION

10. A detailed description of the built development and information on the installation of the various components of this development are provided in **the Design and Access Statement** of the Planning Application.
11. It is the visual appearance of the built development and associated activities and any 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.
12. The main elements of the built development can be summarised as follows:
 - Built form – measuring 76.7m x 36.6m and 8.55m to ridge of roof. The roof has two ridges and an eaves height of 8m. The building has four entrance bays on the eastern façade measuring approximately 4m in width and 4.8m in height and two standard sized door entries on the western façade. The roof of the building is grey in colour, with the walls a dark grey/blue colour.
 - Hardstanding – existing hardstanding areas have been utilised and extended slightly to the south, surrounding the building by a few metres to the west, south and also to the east.
 - Access – access to the building is via the existing Penrhos Farm access and across previously existing farmyard hardstanding areas. However, the hardstanding areas southeast of the new building have been extended to connect with the existing farmyard.
 - Deliveries to and from the site (as set out within the Design and Access Statement).
 - Landscape enhancement proposals – a landscaping scheme is proposed as part of the new planning application although some of this planting has already been implemented. These measures are proposed to aid in the integration of the building into the area as well as adding enhancements to local landscape fabric. They comprise:
 - Soil bunding to the southwest and south of the new building and hardstanding area with leylandii planted along the length of the bund (already implemented).
 - A sizeable native woodland block wrapping around the southern end of the Penrhos Farm site (as indicated in **Figure LV 3**) measuring approximately 100m by 35-40m and totalling approximately 3,500 – 4,000sqm, linking with the existing Penrhos Coppice to the west. (Detailed planting plan to be agreed post permission, local native species include ash, elm, bird cherry, oak, hawthorn, hornbeam, hazel, rowan, sycamore as well as some honeysuckle, ivy and rose).

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CONTEXT

13. The built development is situated within and adjacent to an existing farm complex. Part of the land over which the building is located was previously occupied by another agricultural building of a smaller footprint (but of a comparable height) and a small outbuilding.
14. The current farmyard comprises five other farm buildings including Penrhos farmhouse as well as the proposed building (which is seeking retrospective planning consent). This new building forms the western side of the farm complex, although six additional buildings are also located immediately north of Penrhos Farm, forming a haulage business. In total, thirteen large buildings are found in the immediate area incorporating Penrhos Farm and the neighbouring haulage business, including the newly built development.
15. Open grassland is located immediately south of the built development, with Penrhos Coppice located within 30-40m to the west, parts of which have recently been felled. Ash Coppice is located just beyond the local road to the south, approximately 60m away.
16. The nearest residential property to the built development is Penrhos Farmhouse itself, which is occupied by a worker at Penrhos Farm. Beyond this, the nearest residential properties are approximately 90m to the south or 300m to the north of the built development.

Landscape Fabric

17. The land across which the built development is located was formed partly by built form (which has since been demolished) and hardstanding and partly by open grassland. The landform was slightly altered so as to accommodate a level hardstanding area across the full extent of the built development, resulting in a slightly steeper gradient to limited parts of the grassland immediately south of the built development. The grass field is bounded by thick and mature hedgerows to the south and east and by the remnants of woodland to the west. An existing earth bund and new leylandii planting mark the boundary between the field and the new development and hardstanding area.
18. The nearest public right of way is a public footpath located to the east of Penrhos Farm and the local road, travelling east through part of Ash Coppice to Penthryn Fechan. Other public footpaths travel south from the local road approximately 150m to the south and approximately 200m northwest across higher land towards Ty Top. All of these footpaths are located within fields which are characteristically bounded by hedgerows.
19. The local area is very well vegetated by coppices, small woods, hedgerows and tree belts and with a sizeable range of native species. Hedgerow trees are also a common feature and the coppices close to the site form a stretch of woodland approximately 1.5km in length, although some parts of Penrhos Coppice have recently been felled.

20. The landform of the site itself is flat, but then slopes down to the south beyond the built development and earth bund. The site is situated at approximately 110m AOD, and the grass field to the south then gently slopes down to approximately 95m – 100m AOD to the south where it meets the road approximately 75m away. To the north and northwest the landform gradually rises to a high point of 154m approximately 600m away. Therefore, it is a fair description to say that the built development (along with Penrhos Farm itself and the adjacent haulage yard) is located on the side of rising land as part of a wider valley landscape. This rising land forms the northern slopes of the valley, along with land encompassing Collfryn and Deuddwr, with the southern slopes encompassing Sarnau, Geuffordd and Arddleen. A number of small brooks can be found in the low lying parts of the valley, such as Holywell, Sarnau and Maerdy Brooks.
21. Beyond this ridge of higher land to the north of the site, the landform tends to undulate to similar or slightly lower heights, but to the south of Sarnau the landform tends to rise slightly, still with undulations, but to slightly greater heights of 170m AOD in places.

Landscape Character

22. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has produced a landscape character map for the whole of Wales, with 48 national landscape character areas (NLCAs). NRW has also provided detailed descriptions of each NLCA (NRW, 2014). The built development and the vast majority of the study area are located within NLCA 17 – Montgomeryshire Hills and Vales.
23. The NRW NLCA describes the Montgomeryshire Hills and Vales as *“many quiet, sylvan river valleys with a locally distinct character, from broad flood plain and meandering river, to steep wooded hillsides and narrow incised valley. There are neatly managed mixed fields in the richer valley bottoms and grazing on higher slopes and moorlands. Hedgerows enclose pastures that often reach right over the tops of the lesser intervening ridges. For a wide area around neighbouring Welshpool, many estate woodlands provide a parkland character in places. There are a number of villages in the river valleys, and farmsteads on the valley sides.”*
24. The key characteristics of the Montgomeryshire Hills and Vales are identified as:
- **A series of hills and valleys** - which are aligned broadly east to west, with sinuous, curved skylines.
 - **A mix of both upland and lowland parts** – the highest land in the north-west adjacent to Y Berwyn. As a whole the area is transitional between adjacent upland and lowland.
 - **A number of rivers** - carve through the area, notably those of the Tanat and Vyrnwy.

- **Pastoral agriculture** - with lowland pasture in the river valleys and hill sheep farming on the upper valley sides and ridges.
 - **Hedgerows with trees** - as field boundaries.
 - **Woodland** - blocks of deciduous woodland of irregular or organic form, especially on steep valley sides and with important ecological importance, and some coniferous plantation woodland.
 - **Archaeology** - sites and settlements from the Roman and Medieval periods, in addition to a number of historic parklands such as Llangedwyn and Bodfach. Meifod was an important Early Christian church foundation.
 - **Settlement** - confined to isolated farmsteads and compact nucleated valley villages associated primarily with historic river crossing points.
 - **Patchwork landscape of pastoral fields and woodland**, with an intimate spatial character created by the distinctive combination of vegetation and the undulating ridge and valley land form.
25. In addition, the five separate LANDMAP layers have also been considered and identified covering the site as follows:
- Cultural – Rural Landscapes (overall evaluation – high),
 - Geological – Deuddwr (overall evaluation – moderate),
 - Historic – Trewylan (overall evaluation – high),
 - Landscape Habitats – Improved Grassland (overall evaluation – moderate),
 - Visual and Sensory – Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands (overall evaluation – high).
26. The LANDMAP aspect layers within the study area are illustrated on **Figures LV1 and LV2**.

Landscape Designations

27. There are no national or local landscape designations in the 3.0km radius study area. The general planning policy context is discussed in more detail within the **Design and Access Statement**.

Visual Receptors

28. The visual receptor locations within the 3.0km radius study area include:
- Settlements – Arddleen, Sarnau, Burgedin, Deuddwr and Bryn Mawr.
 - Individual residential properties – scattered houses and farmsteads.
 - Local public rights of way – footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic (BOATs).
 - Public highways – including the A483, B4392, B4393 and a network of minor roads.

29. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Access Lands Maps accessed through the NRW website ¹ have been checked and show no areas of access land within 3.0km of the site.

VISUAL ANALYSIS

Theoretical Visibility Analysis

30. **Figure LV1** includes a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the built development, indicating the locations within a 3.0km radius where topography would theoretically allow visibility of the building. This has been based on one of the highest points of the building; the apex of the roofline (Point A). This point has been used at a height above ground level relating to the height of the roof apex within the design, although it has been rounded up to 9.0m above ground level to allow for any alterations of the floor level of the building during the construction process. The ZTV has been generated using a computer-based intervisibility package and the Ordnance Survey Digital Terrain Model (DTM) with height data at 50m intervals.
31. **Figure LV1** indicates that theoretically the built development would be visible predominantly across some southern parts of the study area, with extremely limited potential visibility across northern parts of the study area.
32. The ZTV is based on bare terrain topographical data only. It does not take into account the screening effects of any minor topographic features, vegetation such as woodland, tree belts and hedgerows or built structures and therefore tends to over-emphasise the extent of visibility in this type of well vegetated landscape, providing a worst case scenario. In reality, these surface features would fragment and reduce the extent of most of these zones of theoretical visibility, and, in a well vegetated landscape such as this, would also reduce the amount/proportion of the development visible from any given location.
33. The ZTV does not illustrate the decrease in the scale of the built development with increased distance from the site which is better illustrated by viewpoints. As a result, fieldwork and the viewpoint analysis are essential as a way of verifying the ZTV and undertaking a thorough assessment.
34. Furthermore, the ZTV does not account for the planting measures proposed as part of the planning application. Whilst the earth bund and associated planting does exist and may be discernible from some viewpoints, the woodland planting proposed has not yet been planted and neither of these elements are accounted for within the ZTV.

¹ <http://lle.gov.wales>

Viewpoint Analysis

35. Eight 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 and have been located in positions where the ZTV has suggested that potential visibility of the built development may be available. These viewpoints are listed below and the locations of these viewpoints are shown on **Figures LV1 and LV2**. A detailed description of these viewpoints 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	Approx distance from built development	Landscape Character (Visual & Sensory Layer)	Visual Receptor
1	Church of the Holy Trinity, Penrhos	323680 316620	0.25km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Motorists. Church goer
2	Local road near Tyddyn Dauddwr	323495 317150	0.4km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Motorists
3	Sarnau to Penrhos road	323525 316265	0.6km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Walkers, Motorists
4	Local road near Deuddwr	323725 317850	0.9km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Walkers, Motorists
5	Southern edge of Sarnau	323575 315950	1.0km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Residents, Motorists
6	West edge of Sarnau	323215 315675	1.25km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Walkers, Residents, Motorists
7	Local road east of Sarnau	324230 315625	1.25km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Walkers, Residents, Motorists

8	Local road near Burgedin	323150 314560	2.35km	Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA	Motorists
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Prediction Methodology

36. The following viewpoint analysis has been assessed on the assumption that the baseline is formed by the site prior to construction of this building, but post demolition of the previous buildings; in effect the open site, and so measures the magnitude of change occurring as a result of the built development. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile noting that an agricultural building previously stood on the footprint of much of the new building.
37. A planting scheme is proposed as part of the planning application which will further screen the built development over time. As a result, whilst this is not evident at present, once the woodland planting has established and matured it will begin to provide additional screening. In order to measure this change, the assessment has first measured the magnitude of change of the built development against the baseline, and then has also measured the magnitude of change at a point 10 years in the future once the woodland planting has established.
38. 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. 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.
39. 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.
40. 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:

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- 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.
41. 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).
42. The magnitude of the change in the views from the eight 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).
43. This magnitude of change scale is a relative scale and is not an absolute scale.
44. 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 – Church of the Holy Trinity, Penrhos

45. This viewpoint is located at approximately 85m AOD and 250m southwest of the built development at the Church of the Holy Trinity within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. The roadside to the north is well vegetated with a dense layer

of mature deciduous trees with a scattering of mature coniferous trees behind. The built development is on higher ground within the centre of the view but is entirely screened in summer months. Due to the recent felling of parts of Penrhos Coppice, in winter months some very filtered views of the built development would be available, seen in the context of the existing farm complex at Penrhos Farm. However, over time in winter months the proposed woodland planting would further filter and ultimately screen the development from view.

46. The viewpoint represents views of motorists along this section of the local road (medium sensitivity) as well as church goers (high/medium sensitivity).
47. In summer months, the magnitude of change in the view is *none*, resulting in *no impact* for motorists and church goers at this point.
48. Currently in winter months some very filtered visibility of the development is likely, seen in the context of the existing farm complex, where a *negligible* magnitude of change would occur, resulting in a *minor/negligible* impact for motorists and a *minor* impact for church goers.
49. In ten years the proposed woodland planting will have established. In summer months the current existing mature roadside vegetation will continue to entirely screen the building. In winter months the proposed woodland planting in combination with the existing roadside vegetation will entirely screen the building from view, with a magnitude of change of *none* and *no impacts* on motorists or church goers.

Viewpoint 2 – Local road near Tyddyn Dauddwr

50. This viewpoint is located at approximately 145m AOD and 400m northwest of the built development on a local road within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. The roadside hedgerows are of a height to allow views out across the surrounding landscape to the south. As part of these wide views, a foreground agricultural barn is visible approximately 10m away to the southwest close to the highest point of the landform (not shown in this photograph but illustrated in Plate 1 below). To the southeast, parts of the haulage yard and Penrhos Farm complex are visible in conjunction with parts of the roof of the new building. They are seen in a single grouping in the same way as the original agricultural building on the Penrhos site was seen in conjunction with the other farm buildings, although the new building is larger in comparison and the roof is noticeable as newer than the surrounding buildings.
51. The viewpoint represents views of motorists (medium sensitivity). The magnitude of change in the view from the baseline is *moderate*, resulting in a *moderate/ minor* impact for motorists at this point. The proposed woodland planting would be on the other side of the building and so would not be visible and would not alter the visibility of the building from this elevated location.

Viewpoint 3 – Sarnau to Penrhos road (see attached photomontage booklet)

52. This viewpoint is located on a local road at approximately 75m AOD and 0.6km south of the built development within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. This location was identified during fieldwork as the only open section of the road where a clear view towards the built development was available. As illustrated in the photograph within the photomontage booklet, this local road is bordered by mature hedgerows with several mature hedgerow trees. Furthermore, woodland in the intervening landscape serves to add further layers of vegetation to views from the road so that this glimpsed view is available in summer months. In winter months visibility of the built development is likely to be slightly more open, but would still be layered and filtered by the mature vegetation in the intervening landscape.
53. The viewpoint represents views of motorists (medium sensitivity) and nearby footpath users (high/ medium sensitivity).
54. Currently in summer months the magnitude of change in the view is *slight*, resulting in a *minor* impact for motorists and a *moderate/minor* impact for footpath users at this point. The building is discernible, but not prominent or dominant within the view.
55. Currently in winter months the building will be slightly more visible, filtered through existing mature vegetation where the magnitude of change will at most be *moderate*, resulting in a *moderate/minor* impact for motorists and a *moderate* impact for footpath users at this point.
56. In ten years the proposed woodland planting will have established and this is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint. In summer months the screening effect of this additional vegetation would result in a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor/negligible* impact for motorists with a *minor* impact for footpath users at this point. In winter months the screening would be slightly less effective, resulting in a *slight* magnitude of change, and a *minor* impact for motorists with a *moderate/minor* impact for footpath users at this point.

Viewpoint 4 – Local road near Deuddwr

57. This viewpoint is located on a local road at approximately 125m AOD and 0.9km north of the built development within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. Mature trees are common within the hedgerows in this area as the viewpoint indicates. As a result, views to the south are very enclosed and the built development is entirely screened. This would also be the case in winter months due to the wealth of mature vegetation.
58. The viewpoint represents views of walkers (high/medium sensitivity) and motorists (medium sensitivity). The magnitude of change in the view would be *none* as the development would be entirely screened, resulting in *no impact* for walkers or motorists at this point.

Viewpoint 5 – Southern edge of Sarnau

59. This viewpoint is located on a local road on the southern edge of Sarnau at approximately 80m AOD and 1.0km south of the built development, located within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. At this location the view is low lying and generally interrupted by the wealth of vegetation within the surrounding landscape. However, the Church of Holy Trinity in Penrhos is partially visible within the left of the view, with much of the church covered from view by mature vegetation. Further mature vegetation completely screens the right hand side of the view, with roadside and intervening vegetation layered in the view. It is this section of the view that the built development is located within, but due to the dense layering of vegetation (from roadside trees, copses and tree blocks) the development is completely screened and would be so in winter months too.
60. The viewpoint represents views of residents (high sensitivity) and motorists (medium sensitivity). The magnitude of change in the view would be *none* as the development would be entirely screened, resulting in *no impact* for residents or motorists at this point.

Viewpoint 6 – West edge of Sarnau (see attached photomontage booklet)

61. This viewpoint is located on a local road close to a nearby footpath at approximately 95m AOD and 1.25km southwest of the built development, within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. From this location wide and open views north across the valley

are available with the agricultural landscape evident along with the wealth of local vegetation. The agricultural barn close to Viewpoint 2 is clearly visible on higher ground within the valley, as are a number of buildings within the locality, all partially visible amongst existing mature vegetation. Similarly the new building at Penrhos Farm is partially visible on the valley side, partially screened by existing vegetation.

62. Over time, the woodland planting proposals would further screen the built development from view (as illustrated by the photomontage).
63. One further consideration is what effect (if any) the replanting of Penrhos Coppice would have on visibility of the built development. It is not known whether the coppice is intended to be replanted, but the second photomontage indicates what change this would make to views of the building over time.
64. The viewpoint represents views of footpath users (high/medium sensitivity), residents (high sensitivity) and motorists (medium sensitivity). Currently the magnitude of change in the view is *slight*, resulting in a *moderate/minor* impact for walkers, a *moderate* impact for residents and a *minor* impact for motorists at this point.
65. In ten years the proposed woodland planting will have established and this is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint. The screening effect of this additional vegetation would result in a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor* impact for walkers, a *moderate/minor* impact for residents and a *minor/negligible* impact for motorists at this point.
66. It is unclear whether Penrhos Coppice will be replanted but the second photomontage indicates the further screening that this woodland would provide, should the area be replanted.

Viewpoint 7 – Local road east of Sarnau (see attached photomontage booklet)

67. This viewpoint is located on a local road close to a nearby footpath at approximately 105m AOD and 1.25km south of the built development, within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. From this location wide and open views north across the valley are available where foreground vegetation allows. The agricultural barn close to Viewpoint 2 is visible on higher ground within the valley, as are a number of other buildings, again all partially visible amongst existing mature vegetation. Ash Coppice is clearly visible extending out throughout the right hand side of the view. Parts of Penrhos Farm and the haulage yard buildings are visible, although the new building at Penrhos Farm is more clearly visible on the valley side, only partially screened by existing vegetation.
68. Over time, the woodland planting proposals would further screen the built development from view (as illustrated by the photomontage). Due to the orientation of the viewpoint to building,

any potential replanting of Penrhos Coppice would have no impact on visibility of the built development and so no photomontage of this has been included.

69. The viewpoint represents views of footpath users (high/medium sensitivity), residents (high sensitivity) and motorists (medium sensitivity). Currently the magnitude of change in the view is *slight*, resulting in a *moderate/minor* impact for walkers, a *moderate* impact for residents and a *minor* impact for motorists at this point.
70. In ten years the proposed woodland planting will have established and this is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint. The screening effect of this additional vegetation would result in a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor* impact for walkers, a *moderate/minor* impact for residents and a *minor/negligible* impact for motorists at this point.

Viewpoint 8 – Local road near Burgedin (see attached photomontage booklet)

71. This viewpoint is located on a local road at approximately 165m AOD and 2.35km south of the built development, within Guilsfield Rolling Farmland LANDMAP visual and sensory aspect area. From this location elevated, wide and open views north across the valley are available, similar to Viewpoints 6 and 7. The agricultural barn close to Viewpoint 2 is clearly visible on higher ground within the valley, as are a number of buildings within the locality, all partially visible amongst existing mature vegetation. Parts of Penrhos Farm are visible, although the new building at Penrhos Farm is more clearly visible on the valley side, only very partially screened by existing vegetation.
72. Over time, the woodland planting proposals would further screen the built development from view (as illustrated by the photomontage). In addition, if Penrhos Coppice is replanted, it would alter the potential visibility of the built development in the future and a second photomontage illustrates this potential effect.
73. The viewpoint represents views of motorists (medium sensitivity). Currently the magnitude of change in the view is *slight*, resulting in a *minor* impact for motorists at this point.
74. In ten years the proposed woodland planting will have established and this is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint. The screening effect of this additional vegetation would result in a *negligible* magnitude of change and a *minor/negligible* impact for motorists at this point.
75. It is unclear whether Penrhos Coppice will be replanted but the second photomontage indicates the further screening that this woodland would provide, should the area be replanted.

Table LV3 – Summary of visual impacts

Vp	Viewpoint Name	Distance from proposed building	Predicted Visual Impacts
1	Church of the Holy Trinity, Penrhos	0.25km	Motorists & church goers – initially in summer months no impacts due to screening, but minor/negligible impacts (motorists) and minor impacts (church goers) in winter due to filtered views. Over time woodland planting would establish resulting in no impacts for receptors.
2	Local road near Tyddyn Dauddwr	0.4km	Motorists – moderate/ minor impacts
3	Sarnau to Penrhos road	0.6km	Currently in summer minor impacts for motorists and moderate/ minor impacts for walkers. In winter moderate/ minor impacts for motorists and moderate impacts for walkers. Over time, woodland planting would establish resulting in minor/negligible impacts (motorists) and minor impacts (walkers) in summer and minor impacts (motorists) and moderate/minor impacts (walkers) in winter.
4	Local road near Deuddwr	0.9km	No impacts for motorists or walkers.
5	Southern edge of Sarnau	1.0km	No impacts for residents or motorists.
6	West edge of Sarnau	1.25km	Currently moderate/minor impacts for walkers, moderate impacts for residents and minor impacts for motorists.

			Over time as woodland planting establishes, there would be minor impacts for walkers, moderate/minor impacts for residents and minor/negligible impacts for motorists.
7	Local road east of Sarnau	1.25km	Currently moderate/minor impacts for walkers, moderate impacts for residents and minor impacts for motorists. Over time as woodland planting establishes, there would be minor impacts for walkers, moderate/minor impacts for residents and minor/negligible impacts for motorists.
8	Local road near Burgedin	2.35km	Currently minor impacts for motorists which over time would reduce down to minor/negligible impacts as proposed woodland planting establishes.

Further Photographs

76. It is noted that the ZTV in **Figure LV1** suggests that the built development may potentially be visible mainly from central and southern parts of the 3km radius study area. However, even within these areas there are a number of locations where the built development would not be visible. In reality good levels of vegetation combined with the gently undulating topography would regularly screen the development from view. The photographs below have been provided as evidence of this extremely limited potential visibility.
77. It has been noted within the descriptions of the Montgomeryshire Hills and Vales NLCA and the Guilsfield Rolling Farmland AA that this is a well vegetated landscape. The following photographs provide illustration of this through typical views available from a number of local footpaths and roads surrounding the proposed site.
78. In addition it is also useful to note the number of large buildings and agricultural barns dotted throughout the area. A few of these are illustrated below for reference.



Plate 1 – Agricultural barn on high land near Ty-top. NGR 323495 317150.



Plate 2 – Large buildings near Hawthorn Cottage 323195 317065.



Plate 3 – The well maintained hedgerows typically limit views across the landscape. 322555 316675.



Plate 4 – A number of buildings and agricultural . 322555 316675.



Plate 5 – Some buildings in the local landscape 322900 316750.



Plate 6 – In the landscape west of Sarnau the existing vegetation screens large parts of the built development. 322820 315585.



Plate 7 - View towards the site (screened by vegetation) from footpath near Geuffordd 322610 314480.



Plate 8 – Near Bryn Mawr. View towards site screened by topography and vegetation. Other large buildings visible within view. 324770 318225.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

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

Effects on Landscape Fabric

Prediction Methodology

80. 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.
81. 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.
82. The built development has been located across the footprint of a previous building and partly within a grassland field where the footprint of the building and hardstanding area simply required the removal of some grassland and the slight re-contouring of a small area of landform. There was no removal of any other existing vegetation, hedgerows or isolated trees. In addition a series of leylandii trees have been planted and a further woodland area is proposed as part of the development. The size of the woodland area would be approximately 3,500 – 4,000 sqm and therefore, overall there would be beneficial effects on landscape fabric as a result of the development.

Effects on Landscape Character

Prediction Methodology

83. In accordance with GLVIA3, the sensitivity of each landscape character unit (LCU) is judged on the basis of its value and its susceptibility to change arising from the specific type, scale and location of development proposed.
84. The susceptibility to change of a LCU 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 development and the compatibility of these with the above factors.
85. 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.
86. Accordingly, the assessment of landscape sensitivity for each LCU 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.
87. 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.
88. The sensitivity of the LCU/AA 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

Montgomeryshire Hills and Vales NLCA

89. Both fieldwork and the viewpoint illustrations have indicated that the built development is located within a well vegetated landscape with undulating topography. NRW describes this NCLA as a hill and valley landscape with a number of villages in the river valleys and farmsteads on the valley sides, with typically steep wooded hillsides. However, this NCLA covers a wide area in mid Wales and more specific information is provided within the LANDMAP aspect area descriptions.
90. As indicated by **Figure LV1**, much of the study area is located within the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands aspect area of the Visual and Sensory layer. Visibility of the built development is essentially contained within this aspect area, as illustrated by the viewpoint analysis. The potential effects on this aspect area are discussed in more detail below.

Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands aspect area

91. Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands is the aspect area within the Visual and Sensory layer, although the four other layers (cultural, historic, geological and landscape habitats) do not follow the same boundaries. For ease of reference, Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands will be the main reference, although it is important to note that the other aspect layers have also been considered. These are illustrated on **Figure LV2**.
92. The overall evaluation in LANDMAP given to the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands is high (where outstanding is the highest category). The area is described as having a sense of enclosure, medium scale, strong sense of place, organised pattern and attractive views both within and out of the area. The recommendations for the area are to conserve the traditional farmed character with wooded patches, to enhance the balance of pasture land to woodland patches through phased replanting and to encourage further mixed broadleaf plantings in the medium term. The other aspect layers for the area include
- Cultural – Rural Landscapes (overall evaluation – high),
 - Geological – Deuddwr (overall evaluation – moderate),
 - Historic – Trewylan (overall evaluation – high),
 - Landscape Habitats – Improved Grassland (overall evaluation – moderate),
93. The limited settlement, repeating land use patterns and often panoramic views lend a generally robust sense of place to the area. Overall, the evaluation of the sensitivity of the area by this assessor is considered to be high/medium (where high is the highest category).
94. It is worth noting that the limited height and extent of the built development, located adjacent to other built form of similar style and height in a well vegetated landscape such as this, would

be generally visually contained and would not alter any of the key characteristics of this area (key characteristics – rolling/undulating landform, field mosaic landcover pattern, medium scale, enclosed, diverse with coarse texture and curved lines, moderate contrasts and organised pattern with infrequent human access and attractive views and a strong sense of place. All of the viewpoints are located within the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands (Viewpoints 1 - 8) and also illustrate the limited visibility of the proposal.

95. Overall, as already discussed, this is a well vegetated landscape where views out of and across the area are often interrupted, contained, or framed and are not consistently available. As a result, much of the character of the area is derived from its intrinsic characteristics, sense of place and features where the susceptibility to the type and location of development proposed is considered to be moderate and the sensitivity of the LCU to the proposal is considered to be high/medium.
96. Within the majority of the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands within the study area, the built development would not be visible, screened by intervening vegetation, topography and built form, as indicated by Viewpoints 1, 4 and 5, where no impacts on landscape character would occur (although in winter months a negligible change and a minor impact on landscape character would initially occur from Viewpoint 1). From some other locations within the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands some partial visibility of the built development is available, similar to the views indicated by Viewpoints 2, 3 and 6-8 where the partial visibility is as part of wide views and often in the context of other existing built form and results in a slight magnitude of change and a moderate/minor impact on landscape character.
97. However, the proposed woodland planting as part of the application is in line with the recommendations and management strategies of the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands and (as illustrated by the photomontages) would provide additional screening of the building over time as well as strengthening the existing wooded character of the area. Over time, once this woodland has established and begun to provide screening, the magnitude of change would reduce to negligible, resulting in a minor impact on landscape character.
98. In addition, if the felled area within Penrhos Coppice is replanted – although there is no information indicating that it will be – then this would provide further additional reinforcement to the local landscape character and also the screening of the built development. Photomontages have been provided to indicate the effect this may have on visibility of the building over time.

Other LCUs/AAs

99. Fieldwork and the viewpoint analysis have both indicated that the built development is not visible from the other three aspect areas within the study area (as set out in **Figure LV1**). These aspect areas occupy limited parts of the study area as well as showing extremely limited potential visibility of the built development, which in reality is screened by the wealth of intervening vegetation. As a result, no impacts on the landscape character of these aspect areas is expected.

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Prediction Methodology

100. 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, the local public rights of way network and public highways.

Settlements

101. Arddleen, Sarnau, Burgedin, Deuddwr and Bryn Mawr are the main settlements within the study area. The ZTV in **Figure LV1** indicates that topography screens the built development from Deuddwr and Bryn Mawr, although potential views would be available from parts of Arddleen, Sarnau and Burgedin. Nevertheless, fieldwork found that the location of Arddleen on the southeastern edge of the 3km radius study area and the layering of vegetation within the landscape entirely screens views from all parts of Arddleen at distances of over 2km away, even in winter months.
102. Properties in Burgedin are also located at a distance from the built development of over 2km away, although they are generally positioned in more elevated locations, such as is illustrated by Viewpoint 8, where the built development forms an element of wide views and is a noticeable, but not prominent element within these views, with a slight magnitude of change. Residents are high sensitivity receptors, which combined with the slight magnitude of change would result in a moderate impact for residents with views of the built development. However, it should be noted that in the majority of cases intervening vegetation and/or built form would screen the building from view and it is expected that very few residents gain a view of the building.

103. Sarnau is the closest settlement to the site, located on low lying land within the valley floor. A number of the viewpoints are located within or close to Sarnau – Viewpoints 5-7. Viewpoint 5 is located on the southern edge of Sarnau, the closest part of the settlement to the site at a distance of approximately 1km from the building. At this point, intervening vegetation including woodland blocks, hedgerows and roadside trees all layer within the view to screen the building. However, some central parts of the village are slightly more elevated and have a different orientation to the site where partial views of the building are expected to be available. During fieldwork no clear and open views of the built development were identified from public locations within this central part of the village, but some properties with private north facing views are likely to have views of the building, albeit seen as part of wider views containing several other buildings and layered vegetation, as is typical in this area. These views are likely to be very similar to the view illustrated by Viewpoint 6, at a distance of 1.25km from the building, where a slight magnitude of change current occurs, which would result in a moderate impact for residents. Over time, the woodland planting proposals would establish and provide additional screening and it is estimated that after ten years this additional screening would reduce the magnitude of change down to negligible, resulting in a moderate/ minor impact for residents.
104. Viewpoint 7 illustrates a view from to the east of Sarnau where visibility of the built development is similar to Viewpoint 6 and the impacts on residents are comparable currently, as well as once the woodland planting proposals have established.
105. In addition, photomontages illustrating the potential screening resulting from the replanting of Penrhos Coppice have also been provided. It should be made clear that we do not know whether this is the intention of the land owner, but it is useful to illustrate this possibility.

Individual residential properties

106. The closest individual properties to the site are Penrhos Farmhouse itself which is occupied by a worker at the Penrhos Farm complex. Beyond this, the nearest residential properties are approximately 90m to the south and 300m to the north of the built development.
107. The impact of the built development on Penrhos Farmhouse as a residential dwelling is a major impact. This impact quantifies the change from the baseline of no built development, although it must be remembered that prior to this building, another agricultural barn and smaller outbuilding were present across a sizeable part of the footprint of the current building, as part of the Penrhos Farm complex. It must also be considered that the resident within the farmhouse is a worker at Penrhos Farm and lives in the farmhouse in order to retain proximity to the complex and to manage its running.

108. Slightly further afield, a few properties are located approximately 90m south of the built development, on the other side of the local road. Currently a mature roadside tree belt entirely screens the built development from these properties although in winter months some very filtered views may be available, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change and moderate/minor impacts for residents. This visibility would reduce in winter months over time due to the screening effects of the proposed woodland planting, with no impacts expected once the woodland has established.
109. The properties located approximately 300m to the north of the built development generally do not see a discernible change in their current views, as the building is located on the southern side of the Penrhos Farm complex, which is to the south of the haulage yard. Therefore, any views to the south firstly look over the haulage yard and its associated buildings, as well as the other parts of Penrhos Farm complex. No impact on the visual amenity of these residents is expected.

Public rights of way

110. There are no long distance cycleways, bridleways or footpaths in the study area. Viewpoints 3, 4, 6 and 7 are all located on the local public right of way network between 600m and 1.25km from the site, where receptor sensitivity is high/ medium. At greater distances from the site, the built development would often be viewed from the valley sides, as illustrated by Viewpoints 6 and 7, where the development would regularly be seen as part of wide views, where other agricultural buildings are visible, with each partially screened from view by mature vegetation. However, from some routes closer to the site, such as is illustrated by Viewpoint 3, views from the footpath are from a lower elevation in the valley floor. In these cases, vegetation can play a much stronger role in screening the development, allowing only very partial and short-lived visibility of the building. This effect would be even more heightened once the proposed woodland planting is established, as indicated by the photomontage for Viewpoint 3 where the impact on walkers would reduce from moderate/minor to minor in summer months and from moderate in winter months to moderate/minor.
111. Users of public rights of way proximate to the site to the north and east would see little to no change to their views as a result of the built development due to the screening effects of the haulage yard and other parts of the Penrhos Farm complex.

Public highways

112. The ZTV suggests potential views of the built development would be available from only a few roads in the study area (a small section of the A483, B4392 and some local roads). However,

roads in this landscape are characteristically bounded by mature hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees, as indicated in several photographs above and as mentioned as characteristic within the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands AA description. As a result, views of the built development are extremely limited in reality, with fieldwork indicating that visibility of the building is only available for short stretches or sections of a few local roads, as illustrated by Viewpoints 2, 3 and 6-8 where a moderate/minor impact on motorists is the highest level of impact found. Viewpoints 1, 4 and 5 illustrate screened views from local roads.

CONCLUSIONS

113. The ZTV has suggested greater potential visibility of the built development within a 3km radius study area than would be available in reality. This is illustrated by the viewpoints and the photographs set out above and within the photomontage booklet, which have all been chosen from locations where the ZTV suggested visibility of the built development would be available. However, in the majority of cases the viewpoints and the photographs illustrate that the screening effects of local vegetation combined with the very gently undulating topography would vastly reduce the areas where the built development is visible from that which is indicated on the ZTV.
114. In terms of landscape character, large agricultural buildings are not uncharacteristic within the local landscape, with similar buildings dotted throughout the area, although few are noticeably recurrently visible from the surrounding area, except for the elevated barn near Ty Top which is a regular element. Whilst the introduction of the built development may be a discernible addition within the landscape immediately surrounding the site, the amalgamation of adjacent buildings and the good levels of mature existing localised vegetation on the valley sides and within the valley floor assist in integrating the building into the local landscape. This will be further strengthened by the proposed woodland planting which would enhance the landscape fabric and landscape character in line with the management recommendations of the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands aspect area as well as assisting with this integration of the building within the landscape. Overall it is considered that the built development can be accommodated within the local landscape context.
115. In landscape character and visual amenity terms, the proposed built development would be a suitable fit within the context of its immediate surroundings in combination with the woodland planting proposals, and would result in limited changes to views and landscape character within the local area as illustrated by the viewpoints associated with this study.