



**Kelsterton Lane,  
Connah's Quay**  
[Green Barrier Assessment]  
*February 2021*    M16.10B

## **Kelsterton Lane: Introduction**

This Landscape Appraisal and Green Barrier Assessment has been produced in respect of land at Kelsterton Lane, Connah's Quay.

The document consists of the following parts which combine to set out a summary assessment of the potential impact of any proposed development on the surrounding green barrier;

- Part 01 : Site Analysis and Context Masterplan
- Part 02 : Green Barrier Assessment
- Part 03 : Visual Appraisal

The proposed site is an area of approximately 40ha which adjoins the north western edge of Connah's Quay. It is located 1.3km east of Flint, 2.4km north east of Northop and 2.1km north west of Northop Hill. The site is accessed from Kelsterton Lane to the east between Kelsterton Cemetery and the southern boundary of the site.

There is the power station, residential properties and Coleg Cambria to the north east of the site, with scattered farmsteads located further afield towards the western and southern boundaries of the site. The area contains Kelsterton Farm and associated outbuildings, but mainly consists of agricultural pasture and mature mixed field boundaries. A small stream and ancient woodland runs along the southern boundary leading upto Cheshire Farm to the south.

The topography of the site is gently undulating with views to the north and west over hedgerow planting aligning the boundaries. Views to the east and south are enclosed by woodland tree planting.

In addition to the above, this document will review Highway route plans for the Northop to Shotwick Interchange Improvement Scheme, in conjunction with the Council's responses to representations made in November 2019 regarding the development site.

The following pages look at the council responses and how these will be addressed throughout the report. These are followed by the national and regional character areas present within the study area.

## **Kelsterton Lane: Flintshire Council objections to development**

### **COMMENT 555: Green Barrier**

Response: “*For the most part the site is completely divorced from the built form of Connah’s Quay, being separate by open land between Kelsterton Lane and the settlement boundary. It is situated within the Flint - Connah’s Quay green barrier, GEN4(4) which has been reviewed as part of the LDP process and found to meet the objectives of PPW... The site forms part of a large swathe of open countryside to the north west of the settlement. It is considered that the site is an integral part of the open countryside and has little relationship to the form and pattern of development within the settlement of Connah’s Quay. The inclusion of this site within the settlement boundary, or its allocation, would virtually split the green barrier between Flint and Connah’s Quay in two...In its response on policy HN1 the Council has explained how the Red Route is not considered to provide a context for development in this Plan period.*”

Action: As part of this appraisal the report will assess how development of the site and the proposed link road, may impact surrounding landscape character of the Green Barrier. It will then analyse the proposed sites relationship to surrounding settlement areas and the future relationship to the proposed road corridor.

### **COMMENT 1269: Deposit Local Development Plan**

Response: “*The objector proposes a mixed use development on 40ha of land on the north western edge of Connahs Quay. The objection is lacking in any background or technical documentation to demonstrate that it is appropriate, viable, free from constraint and deliverable. The submission is also lacking in any detail as to the quantums of development proposed...The site forms part of a large swathe of open countryside to the north west of the settlement. It is considered that the site is better related to the open countryside than to the form and pattern of development within the settlement of Connah’s Quay. The inclusion of this site within the settlement boundary, or its allocation would result in an illogically drawn settlement boundary, a significant incursion into open countryside and a scale of development which would be unsustainable...*”

Action: The report will review the scale of potential future development and make recommendations on where this may be best suited in relation to the preservation of the Green Barrier, the surrounding landscape character and the adjacent settlement boundaries.

### **COMMENT 553: Transport and Accessibility (roadside facilities)**

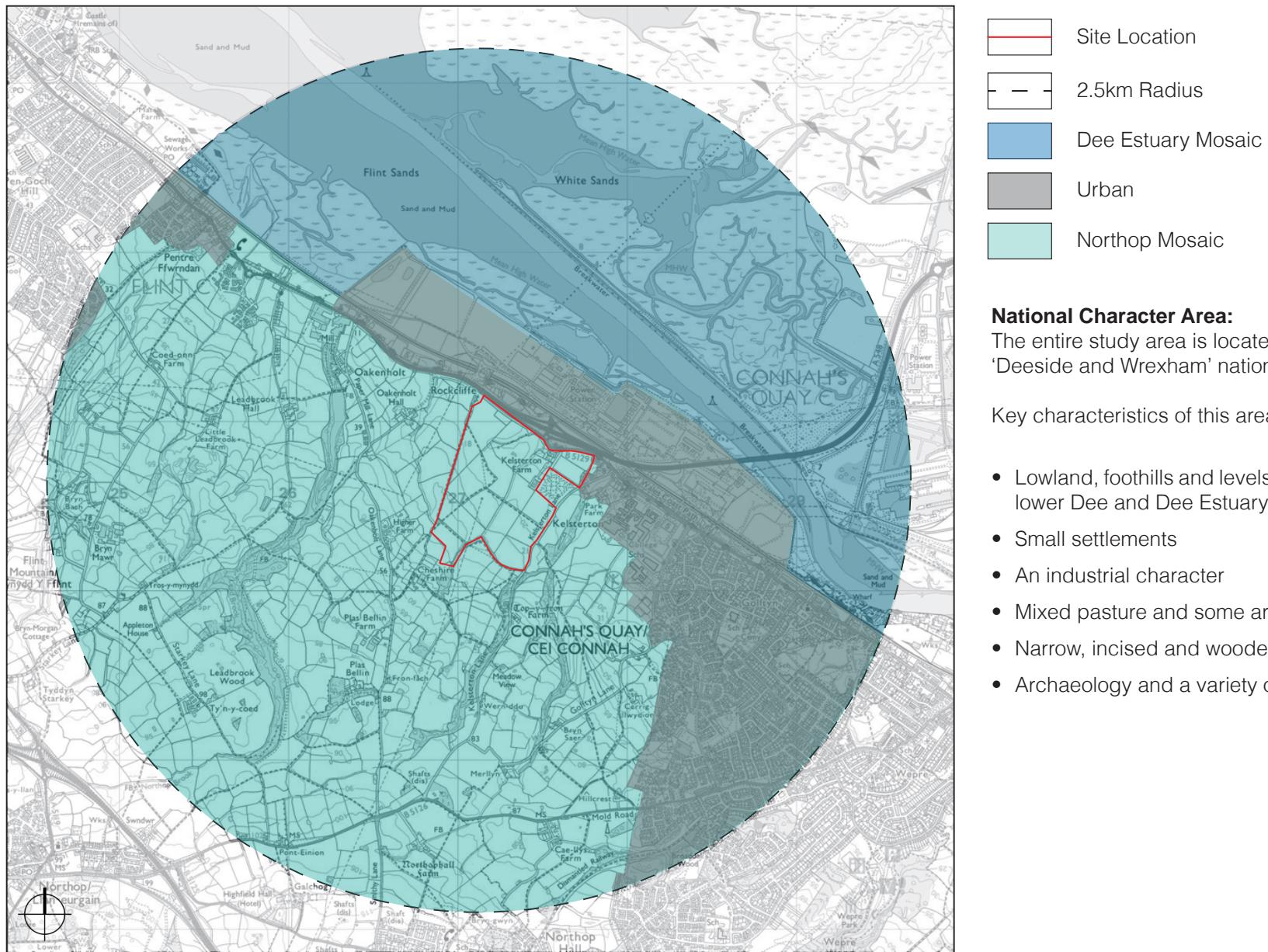
Response: “*While the policy does not specifically reference new roadside facilities it does reference ‘new development and transport infrastructure’ and incorporates criteria against which proposals can be assessed. The Council is also aware of the Welsh Government’s aim (para. 5.3.19 of PPW Edition 10) for there to be an increase in freight movement by rail and water rather than by road. Any proposals for roadside facilities can be considered on their merits against the Plans framework of policies and national planning guidance.*”

Action: The appraisal will consider how the development of roadside facilities for the proposed link road may impact the surrounding landscape character of the site and the Green Barrier.



**Part 01** Site Analysis

**Figure 01:** Landscape Character



## Landscape Character Areas: Descriptions

The following page describes the three principal landscape character areas that are located closest to the site. The descriptions should be read in conjunction with the plan on the previous page.

### Northop Mosaic

This aspect area comprises the mainly improved grass fields of the coastal slope with a few arable fields. The ribbon woodlands which follow the small streams down towards the Dee Estuary and the commons and old mines form a very important biodiversity resource and are likely to harbour a wide range of common species, together with the BAP species recorded.

Evaluation Value: High

### Urban

Two large areas of settlements consisting of Connah's Quay and Flint. Connah's Quay is a large urban area with many residential developments with gardens. There are several blocks of mown amenity grassland and some important areas of trees, scrub, woodland and the very important ponds which support great crested newts. Flint is a coastal strip containing a number of built up urban areas but also some grazed fields and scrub, marsh and dunes. As the urban development is still scattered the connecting fields and scrub form a very important corridor resource for wildlife to get from the estuary to other wildlife sites inland.

Evaluation Value: High

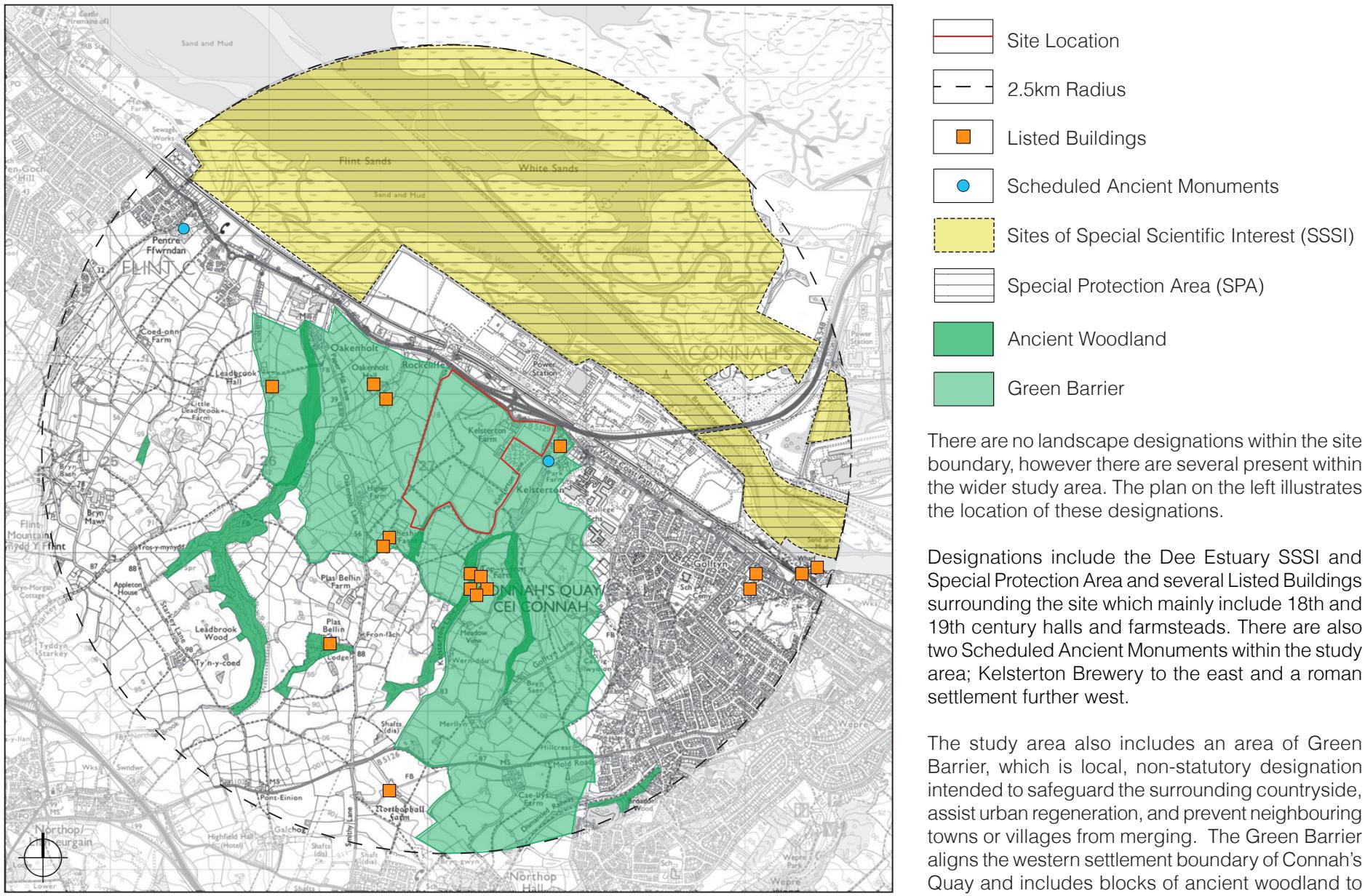
### Dee Estuary Mosaic

The Dee Estuary is a large sheltered estuary with extensive areas of intertidal sand-flats, mud-flats and saltmarsh. There are some areas of improved grassland and also salt marshes containing brackish and swamp vegetation on the upper shore. It is amongst the most important sites in Europe for its populations of waders and wildfowl. The salt marshes hold a wide range of rare and common species

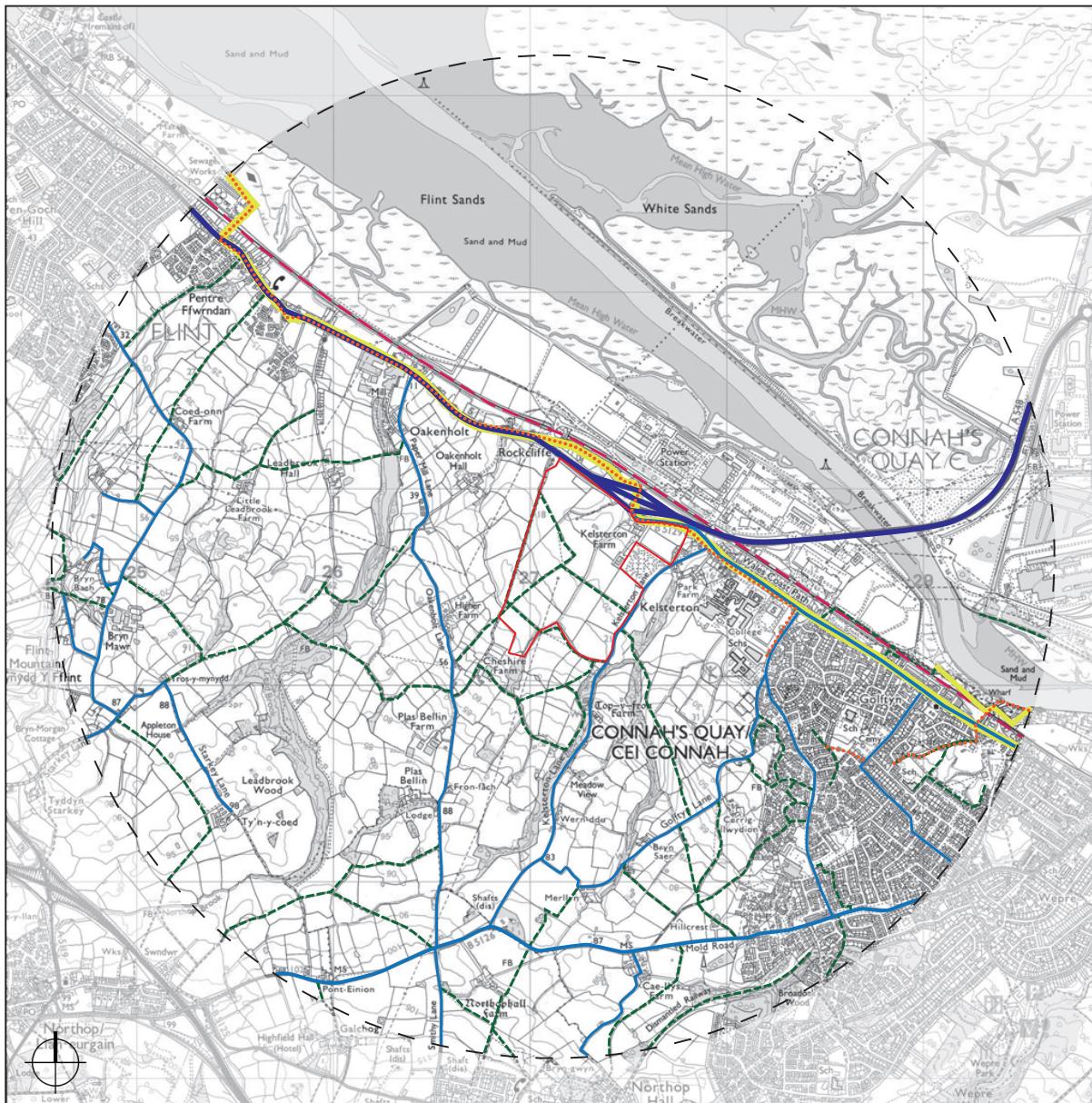
Evaluation Value: Outstanding

Additional information on each character area can be found on the Natural Resources Wales website.

**Figure 02:** Designations



**Figure 03: Access**



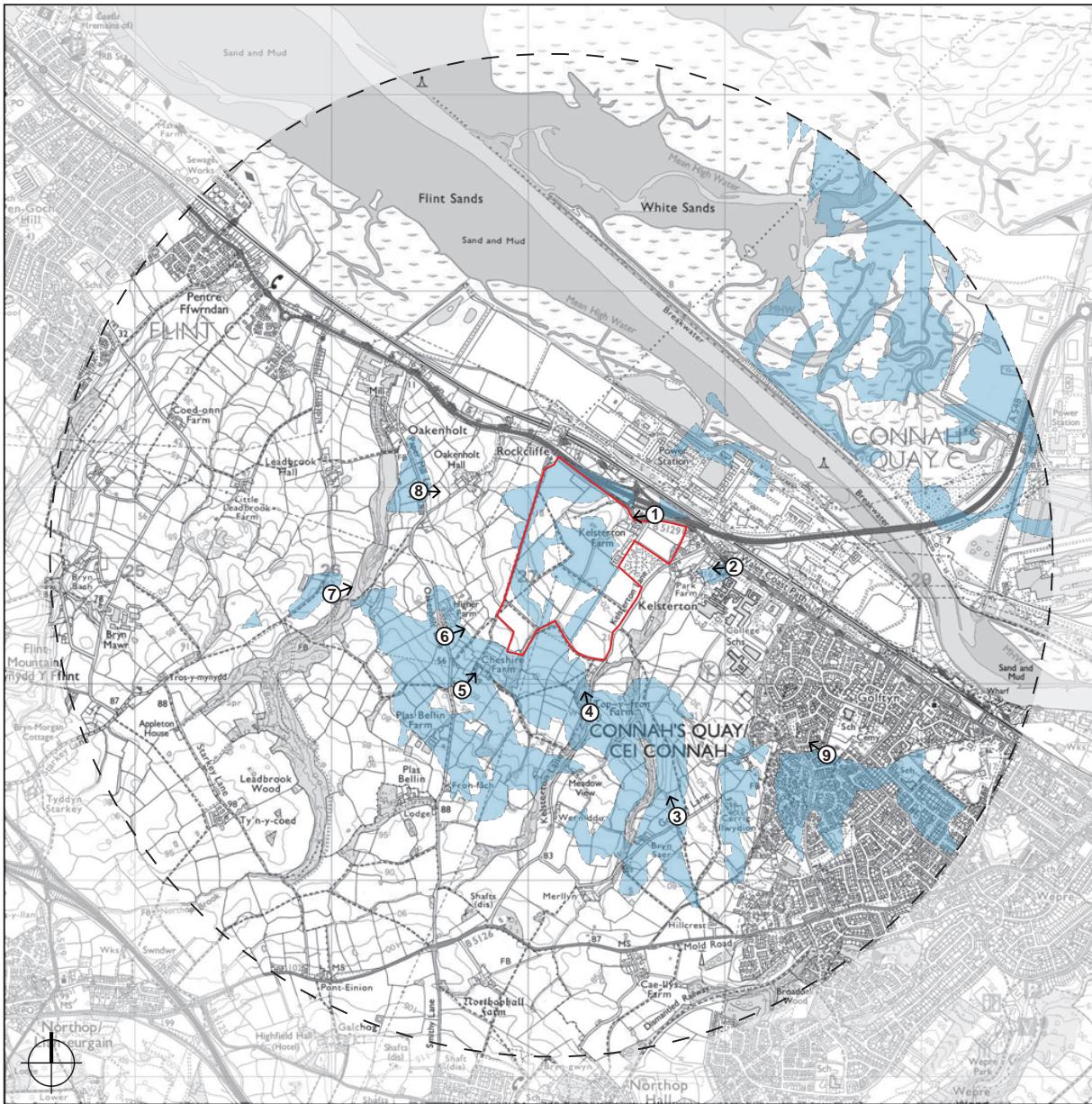
- Site Location
- 2.5km Radius
- A Road
- B Road
- Road generally less than 4m wide
- Public Right of Way
- Bridleway
- Cycle Route
- Railway Line
- Wales Coastal Path

The plan on the left illustrates key access routes within the study area. The area contains several Public Right of Way routes, as well as a section of the Chester and Holyhead Railway Line.

The site also borders the Wales Coast Path; a recreational route that follows the 870 mile coastline, from Queensferry to Chepstow. This section of the Coastal path is also a designated cycle route.

Access to the site is off Kelsterton Lane along the eastern boundary, which joins up with the A548 immediately to the north.

**Figure 04:** Visual Envelope and Viewpoint Locations



- Site Location
- 2km Radius
- Computer Generated ZTV
- ① Viewpoint Location

The plan illustrated on the left shows the areas of land from where the site is likely to be visible.

The light blue area with dashed black line shows the Zone of Theoretical Influence (ZTV) generated by a computer at a height of 2m from ground level at the centre of the site.

Nine viewpoints were chosen based on a selection of significant places such as surrounding public footpaths, roads, cycle routes and residential properties. The adjacent diagram indicates each of the locations that photographs of the site were taken from.

An analysis of these viewpoints is set out in the third part of this document.

## Landscape Context: Images and Landscape Character



The images on the left illustrate typical planting patterns and landscape characteristics found in the surrounding context of the site. Key elements that could be implemented as part of the landscape mitigation strategy include:

- Integrate with the surrounding urban area to the north east of the site through high quality design and suitable planting
- Utilising existing woodland and vegetation to help mitigate views of the adjacent industrial land uses and integrate the site with the surrounding landscape.
- Field boundaries consisting of hedges and trees .
- Utilise strong, natural barriers to inform boundaries to development.
- Diverse planting for improved biodiversity
- Native planting and improved management
- Strengthen boundary planting

## Landscape Context: Context Masterplan



### Overview

The plan on the left illustrates the site context, highlighting existing settlement areas, field boundaries, blocks of woodland, scattered farmsteads, and main roads.

The northern boundary is defined by a strong urban edge relating to the power station and Kelsterton Road / A548 link road.

Blocks of woodland to the south and east provide a strong structure in which the site is located. This woodland and existing mature field boundaries help to screen views from these aspects.

The proposed A55 Link Road is also shown as part of the landscape context for the site as this will have an adverse, detrimental impact on the overall character of the development area.

In addition to the visual appraisal of the site, this report also assesses the impact of development on the Green Barrier. The assessment looks at eight key principles which are as follows:

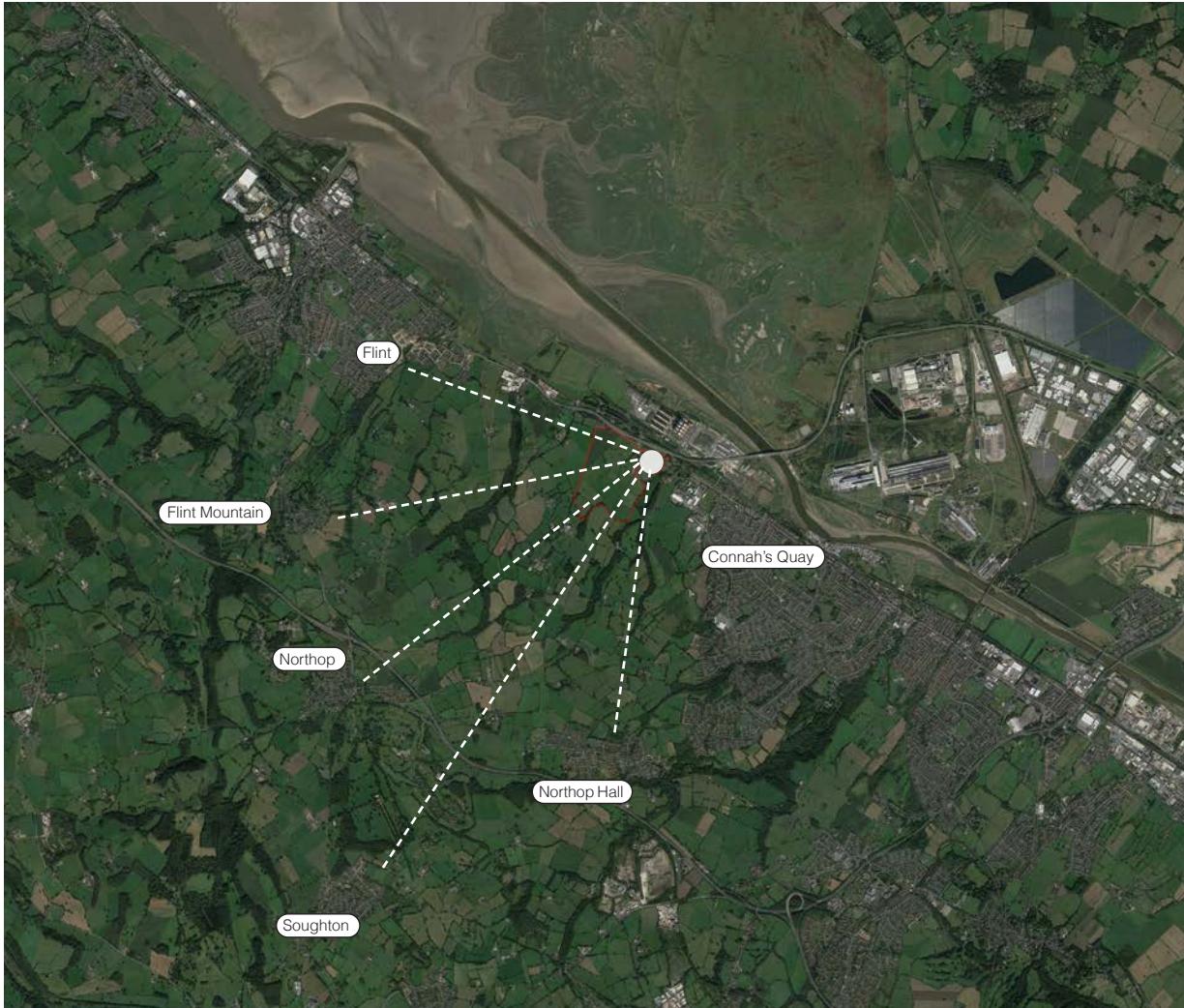
- Distance
- Topography
- Vegetation
- Landscape Character
- Existing uses and density of buildings
- Nature of urban edges
- Inter and intra-vizibility
- The sense of leaving a place



## Part 02 Green Barrier Assessment

# 01

## Green Barrier Assessment: Distance



### 01 Distance

The first of 8 key points compares the distance between the existing settlement boundary of Connah's Quay and other surrounding settlement areas, and the proposed development area of the site and surrounding settlement areas: It is considered that development towards the north of the site, in conjunction with the proposed road alignment would have a marginal impact on the distance to neighbouring settlements and therefore limit encroachment on the Green Barrier. The proposed and existing distances are as follows:

#### Flint

Connah's Quay - 2.3km  
Site (north-east corner) – 1.9km

#### Flint Mountain

Connah's Quay - 3.4km  
Site (north-east corner) – 3.2km

#### Northop

Connah's Quay – 3.6km  
Site (north-east corner) – 3.5km

#### Northop Hall

Connah's Quay – 2.4km  
Site (north-east corner) – 2.7km

#### Soughton

Connah's Quay – 4.8km  
Site (north-east corner) – 4.9km

As shown, the change in distance between settlements created by the proposed development in the north of the site would only have a marginal impact on the Green Barrier.

# 02

## Green Barrier Assessment: Topography



### 02 Topography

The second point considers the existing topography of the site and surrounding area, and the effect that any development would have on levels. The points below highlight the main topographical features:

- General topography slopes down gradually from south to north as illustrated on the left.
- The site is most visible from Kelsterton Road to the north and Oakenholt Lane to the west.
- The site is well screened from roads and public footpaths to the south and west of the Green Barrier. This reduces the impact on views from rural outline communities and settlements towards the south west of the study area.

# 03

## Green Barrier Assessment: Vegetation



### 03 Vegetation

The site and its immediate context contains several important vegetation features, highlighted in green on the adjacent diagram. These include:

- Hedgerow and tree field boundaries provide a strong framework and high-quality boundary planting that screens views into the site from the east and south.
- The prominence of the woodland is evident from the surrounding landscape, as shown in Part 3, Visual Appraisal.
- The existing vegetation has the effect of creating a natural and robust boundary to the site. This creates a strong sense of enclosure preventing views into and out of the area especially from the landscape and settlements to the south and west.

# 04

## Green Barrier Assessment: Landscape character



### 04 Landscape Character

Following the landscape character study in Part 1, the fourth point considers the potential changes to landscape character. The following points summarise the key considerations and what effect the development might have:

- The potential of the north edge of the site to be integrated within the existing urban area of the power station and Kelsterton Road would only have a slight impact on the Mosaic Rolling Lowland character area.
- The proposed A55 link road would amend the extents of the current urban landscape character designation and have a detrimental influence on the Northop Mosaic area as it currently stands.
- The character of the proposed site in its northern extents, which is impacted by urban and industrial land uses, is distinctly different to the south, where tree and woodland boundaries are evident. This creates the potential for a natural boundary for development to be contained within the northern area.

# 05

## Green Barrier Assessment: Existing uses and density of buildings



### 05 Uses and density of buildings

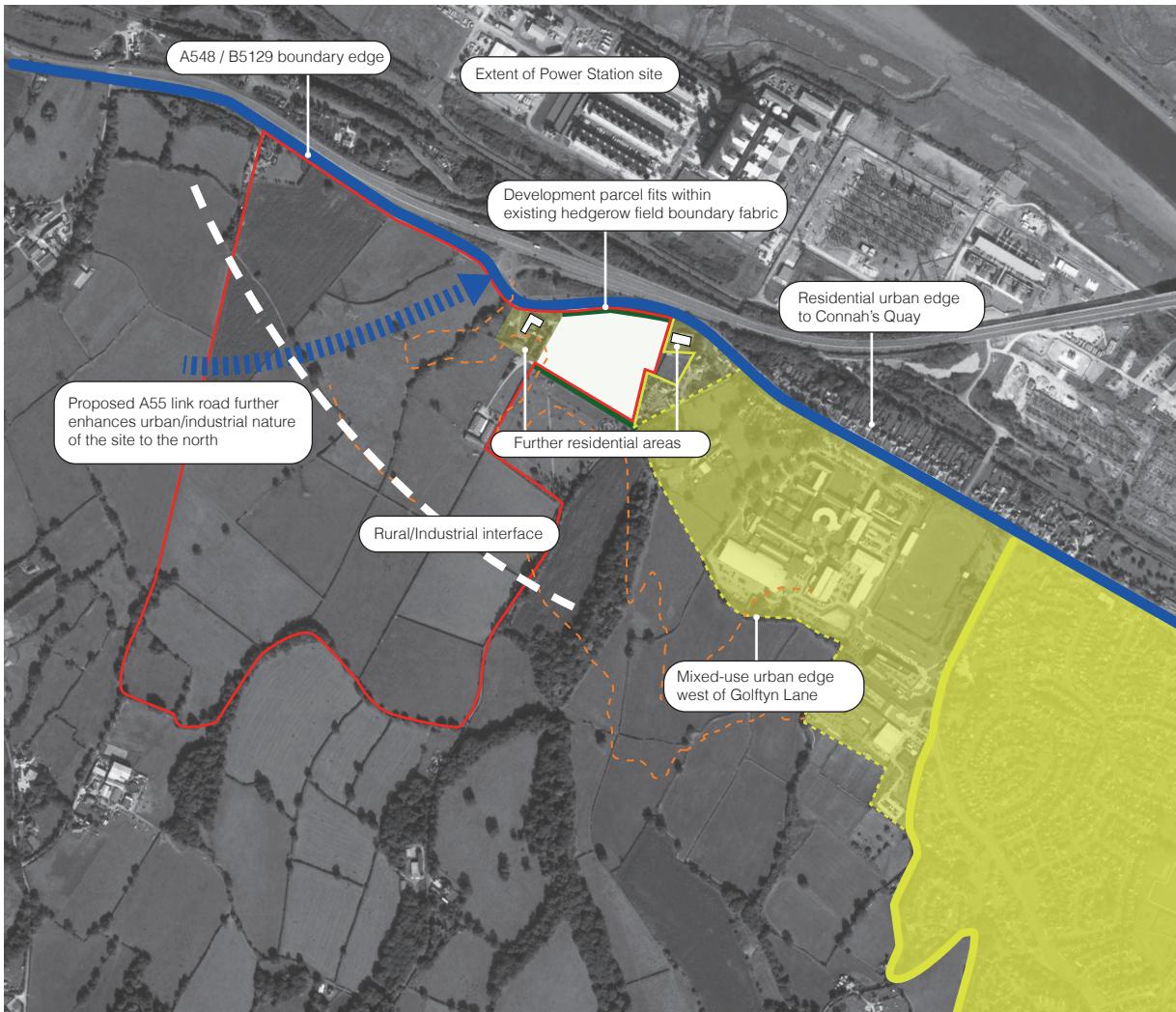
The images on the left illustrate the uses and density of existing buildings around the site. These include farmsteads on Kelsterton Lane and the Kelsterton Farm outbuildings within the site. Most notable are the pylons and electricity lines associated with the Power Station. The following points summarise additional key features:

- Existing agricultural pasture with scattered farmsteads, native hedgerows and woodland blocks.
- Power station and electricity pylons in close proximity to the site
- Cluster of large detached houses along Kelsterton Lane boundary



# 06

## Green Barrier Assessment: Nature of urban edges



### 06 Nature of urban edges

This principle considers the quality and integrity of the existing urban edge for Connah's Quay that follows Kelsterton Road. Key considerations include:

- Existing urban boundary to the north of the site has no definitive edge and consists of the power station, mixed use development and linear C20th century housing; giving the potential to strengthen the boundary to the north-western extents of Connah's Quay.
- Proposed development could be informed by the strong field boundaries to the north of the site, helping to integrate it into the surrounding industrial/urban landscape.
- The proposed link road will create a stronger urban influence on the north and western extents of the site.
- The diagram on the left illustrates the prominence of these features in the context of the proposed site.



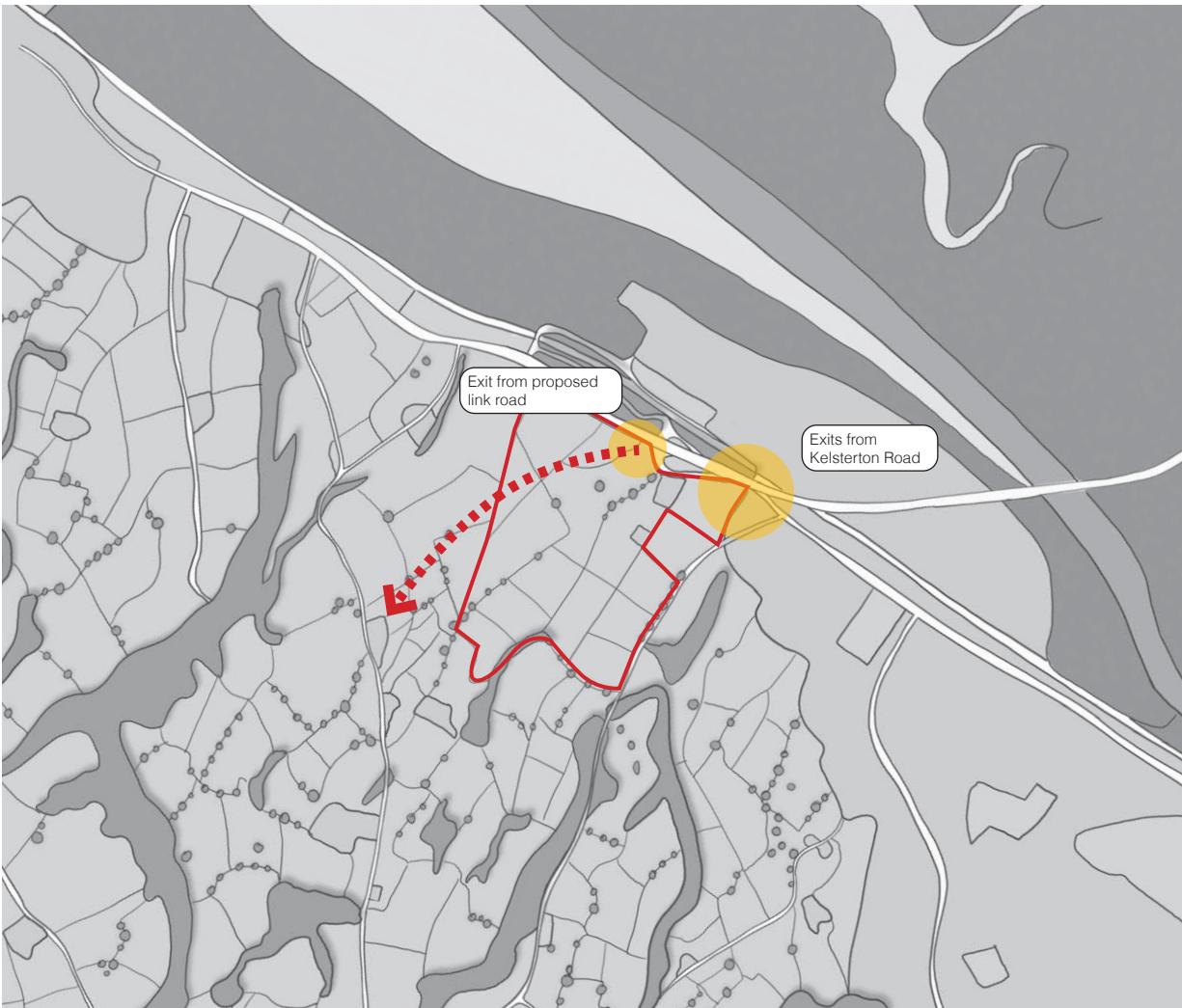
## 07 Visibility

The penultimate point examines the inter and intra-visibility. The adjacent diagram illustrates the available views in and out of the site, most of which are screened by woodland and development. Other key features are listed below with additional information in Part 3, Visual Appraisal:

- Views into the site are available from the west and north, however views from east, south, and west are screened by field boundary planting and mature woodland
- Undulation in topography within the site boundary creates low and high areas, with improved screening to the higher areas in the south and west
- Long distance views are available from the high points of the site (centrally and to the southern extents) particularly to the west and north-east.
- New development would be visible from several locations within the study area (see Part 3 – Visual Appraisal), however if this were focussed towards the north the development area, it would be completely concealed by the falling topography, Kelsterton Farm and the Cemetery. Alongside the proposed link road extension, the area would therefore be more integrated into the existing urban area to the north and east.

# 08

## Green Barrier Assessment: The sense of leaving a place



### 08 Sense of leaving a place

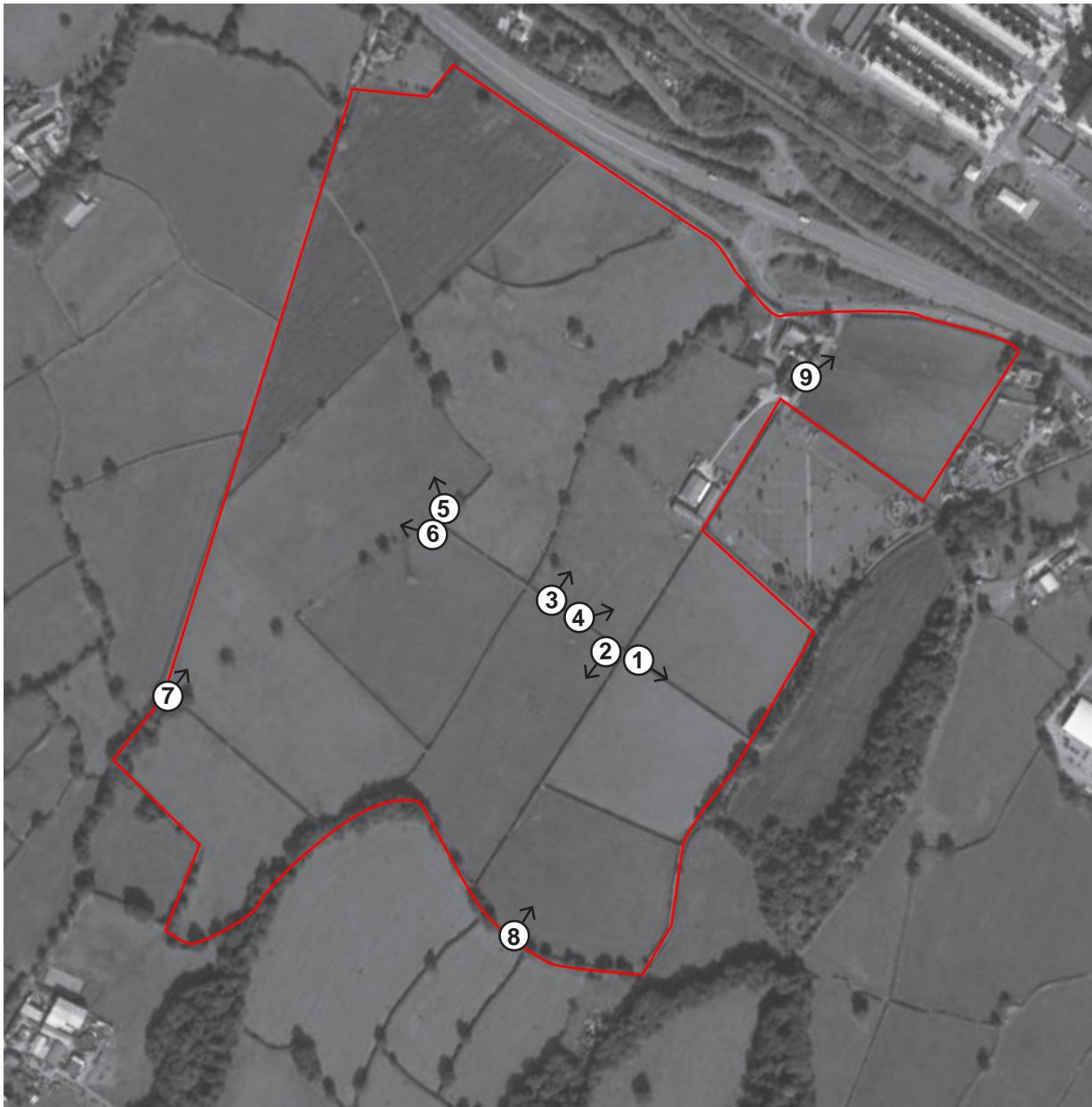
The final point considers the sense of leaving Connah's Quay and the effect development may have on this perception. The following points highlight these in more detail:

- The site is located directly adjacent to Kelsterton Road and Kelsterton Lane, which are two main routes out of Connah's Quay.
- The site is well screened from Kelsterton Lane but can be viewed from Kelsterton Road.
- The site is located behind existing residential properties and Kelsterton Cemetery on Kelsterton Lane, with no direct views of the site from any existing pedestrian or vehicular route to the east.
- The alteration to the settlement boundary will be most prominent along Kelsterton Road where it joins with the A548, however the perception on the sense of leaving or arriving in Connah's Quay will be greatly altered by the proposed link road.
- The link road will have an impact on the open countryside character of the northern boundary of the site which, combined with the power station to the north will create a more urban character to the landscape.



## Part 03 Visual Appraisal

## Site Photos: Views from within site

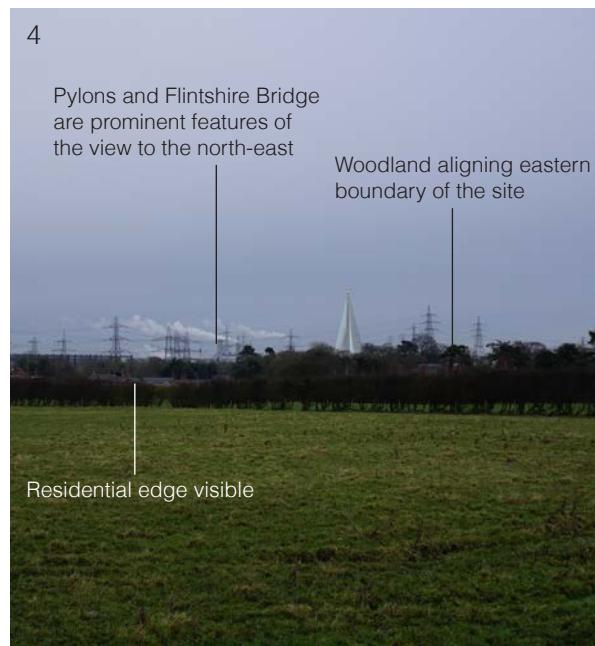
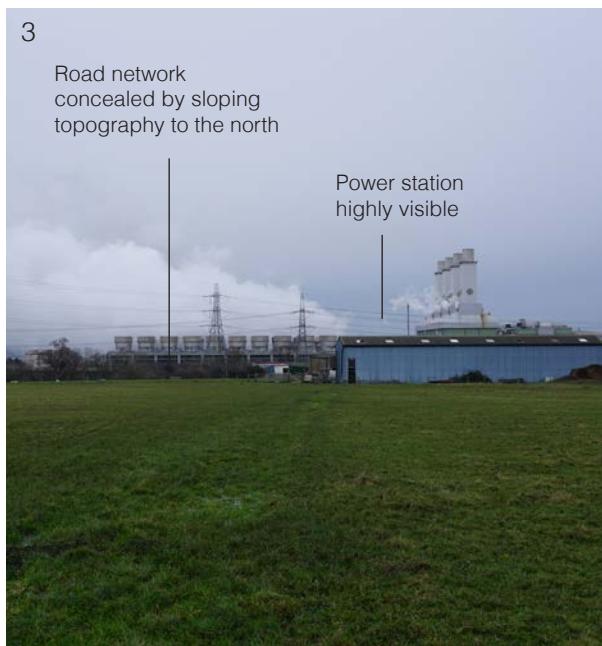
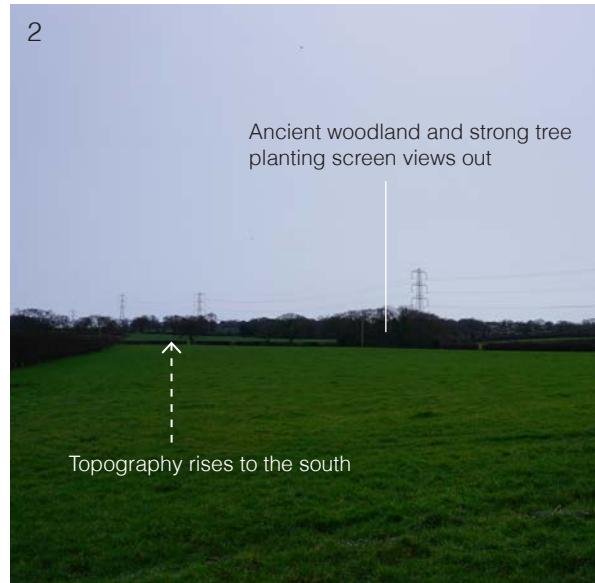


The plan on the left illustrates the viewpoint locations from within the site, shown on the following two pages.

The subsequent pages present views from key locations within the zone of theoretical influence and a 2km radius of the site. Each view is described in the context of the proposed development and scored based on its visual impact.



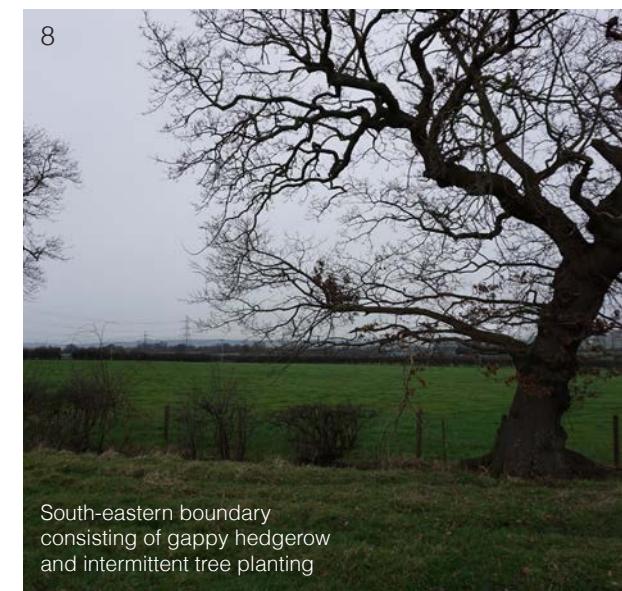
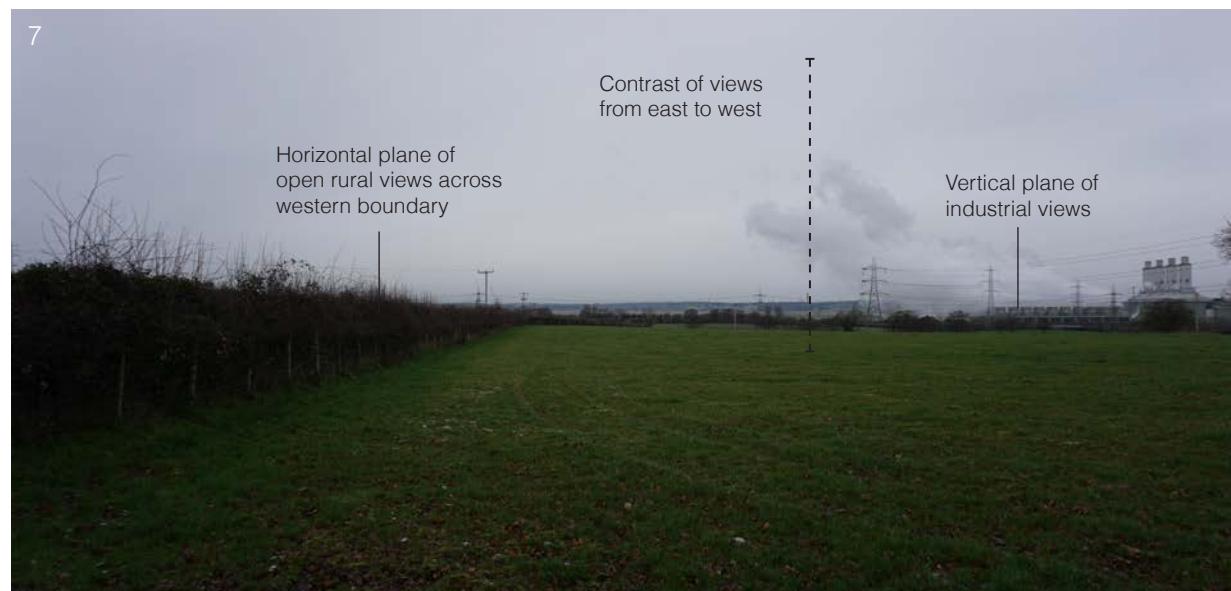
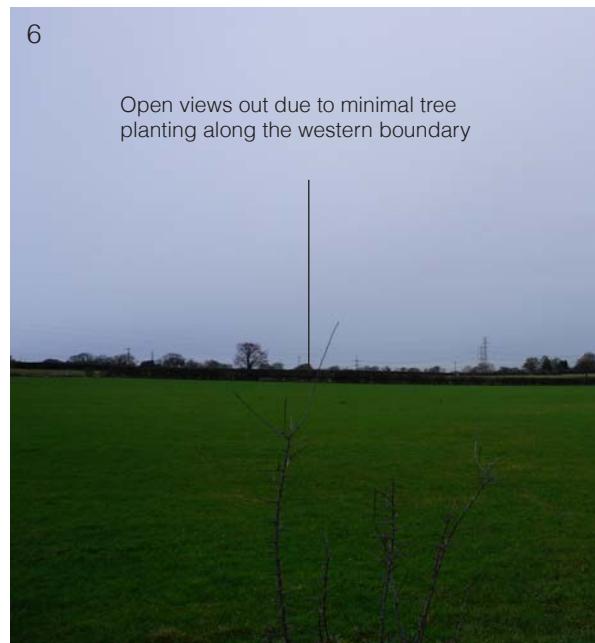
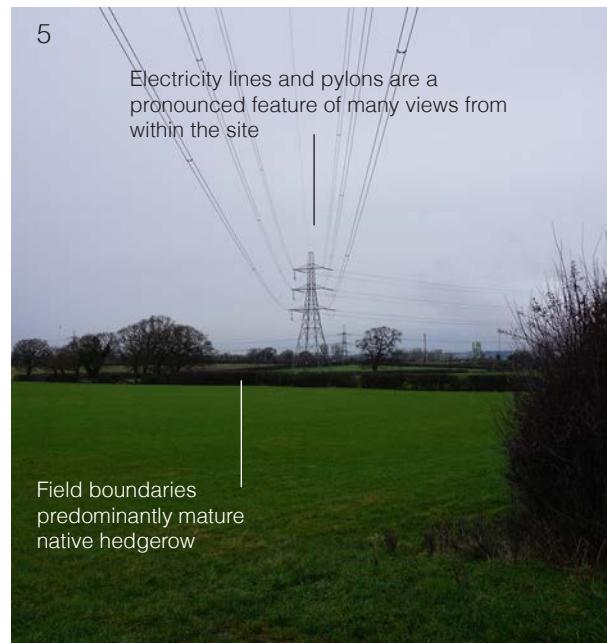
## Site Photos 01: Views from inside the site



The following pages present photographs taken from inside the site boundary. Key characteristics of the site include:

- Steady undulating topography, with areas of high points to the south.
- Screened access from Kelsterton Lane between the cemetery and the southern boundary.
- A strong landscape framework consisting of mature hedgerow within the site and hedgerow with scattered tree planting along the boundaries.
- The adjacent Power Station and associated electricity pylons dominate views within and outwards of the site.
- Open views to the north and west due to minimal tree planting.
- The site comprises mainly of grazed agricultural pasture and dense native hedgerows.
- Potential views into the site from northern, south-eastern and western boundaries where several farmsteads and residential properties are located.

## Site Photos 02: Views from inside the site



## **Viewpoint 01:** View from the B5129 / Wales Coastal Path, looking west.



Viewpoint Number: 01  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: West

Viewpoint 01 was taken from the top of Kelsterton Farm/Cemetery access road. This view is representative of receptors travelling along Kelsterton Road between Kelsterton and the A548.

The elevated position of this viewpoint location provides open views to the west through intermittent tree and hedgerow planting.

Standardised methodology can be used to score the overall impact of a new development from any landscape receptor. This is determined by combining judgements of size and extent of the proposed development, and of value and condition of the landscape with a degree of professional judgement. The score ratings range from - Major / Moderate / Slight / Negligible.

Development would have a high impact on receptors from this viewpoint location because of the open views into the site and the potential change to the urban edge caused by the siting of new buildings.

Improved screening to the northern boundary would help mitigate visual impact and also help integrate the proposed development with the surrounding vegetation along the road network.

## **Viewpoint 02:** View from the B5129 / Wales Coastal Path, looking west.



Views screened by tree planting and residential properties

Approximate location of site

Viewpoint 02 was taken from opposite the Coleg Cambria, further east from Viewpoint 01 along Kelsterton Road. This view is representative of receptors travelling along Kelsterton Road between Kelsterton and the A548.

Views towards the site are mostly screened due to the gently rising topography and intervening mature tree and hedgerow planting that aligns Kelsterton Road.

Development would have a negligible effect on receptors because of the screening provided by existing residential and road boundaries.

Viewpoint Number: 02  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: West

## **Viewpoint 03:** View from Golftyn Lane, looking north west.

Mixed native hedgerow screens views

Approximate location of site

Undulations in landform conceal views of the site



Viewpoint 03 was taken from Golftyn Lane approximately 800m to the south-east of the site. It is representative of receptors travelling in a northern direction towards Connah's Quay.

Long distance views are limited due to the elevated position of this viewpoint. Glimpsed views of agricultural pasture are available over mature field boundaries, with hillsides visible in the far distance.

Views towards the site are therefore screened due to the undulating landform and intervening field boundary vegetation.

The proposed development would have a negligible effect on receptors from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint Number: 03  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: North-west

## **Viewpoint 04:** View from Kelsterton Lane (Top y Fron Farm), looking north west.



Viewpoint 04 was taken from the entrance of Top y Fron Farm on Kelsterton Lane, approximately 300m south east of the site boundary. It is representative of receptors travelling along the road in a northern direction towards Kelsterton Road.

Open views are restricted due to the riparian woodland associated with Kelsterton Brook. However a glimpsed view of pastoral farmland and hedgerow boundaries are available to the southern edge of the woodland. Views of the site are entirely screened by the existing vegetation aligning the north western boundary of the farm.

The proposed development would have a negligible effect on receptors because of the screening provided by the woodland.

Viewpoint Number: 04  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: North-west

## **Viewpoint 05:** View from Cheshire Farm Public Footpath, looking north east.



Viewpoint 05 was taken from the public footpath approaching Cheshire Farm, approximately 380m from the site boundary. It is representative of receptors using the Public Right of Way and the access road to the farm.

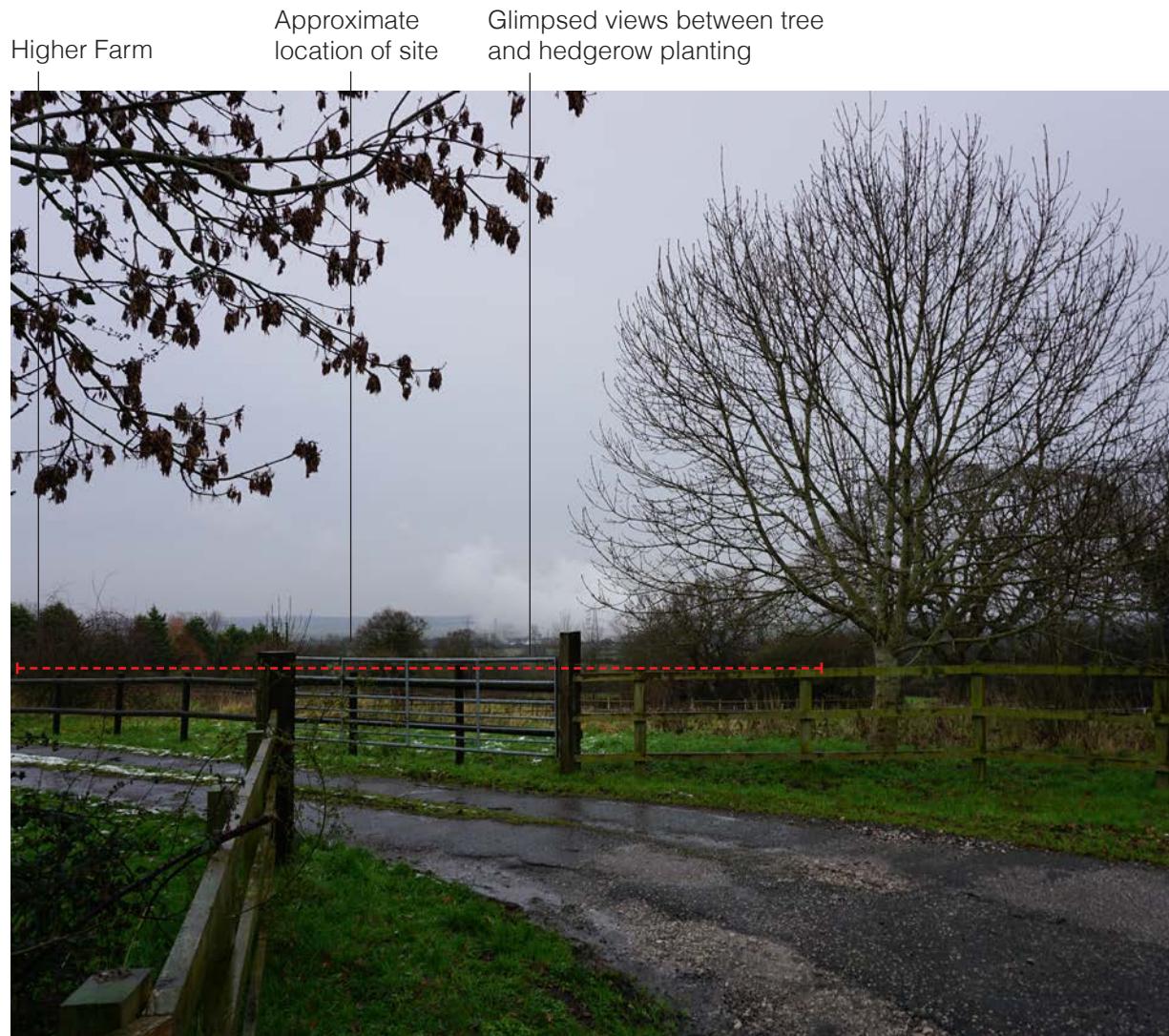
The footpath is bounded by mature tree and hedgerow planting preventing any long distance views. In addition the farmhouse and a number of large outbuildings intervene in the view further along the path.

Glimpsed views of the site may be possible further along the footpath towards the farmhouse, however these are likely to be screened by field boundary planting of mature trees and hedgerow.

The proposed development would have a slight effect on receptors because glimpsed views through existing woodland may be available.

Viewpoint Number: 05  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: North-east

## **Viewpoint 06:** View from Higher Farm (Oakenholt Lane), looking north east.



Viewpoint 06 was taken from the entrance of Higher Farm, approximately 270m west of the site boundary. It is representative of receptors who reside at the property and are travelling along Oakenholt Lane in a northern direction towards the A548.

Views consist of mature tree and woodland planting in the foreground with long distance views of the Power Station and intervening fields available in the background.

Glimpsed views of the site are evident from this viewpoint due to the sloping topography to the east.

The effect of the proposed development is reduced to moderate due to the industrial nature of the view whereby the Power Station and associated Pylons are a prominent, detracting feature. Therefore any new development would be within the context of the existing built form. However, views could be further mitigated by strengthening the western boundary with additional native planting.

Viewpoint Number: 06  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: North-east

## **Viewpoint 07:** View from Lead Brook Woodland Public Footpath, looking north east



Viewpoint 07 was taken from the western boundary of Lead Brook Woodland, along the public footpath approximately 900m to the south west of the site boundary. It is representative of receptors using the Public Right of Way and travelling in an eastern direction towards the site.

The undulating topography gradually rises and falls from west to east, with linear blocks of woodland and hedgerows aligning field boundaries.

Views to the east are screened by a significant block of ancient woodland associated with Lead Brook. Long distance views of the Dee Estuary and surrounding hillsides can be seen clearly in the distance towards the north.

The proposed development would have a negligible effect on receptors because of the dense screening provided by ancient woodland.

Viewpoint Number: 07  
Lense Focal Length: 16mm  
Direction: North-east

## **Viewpoint 08:** View from Paper Mill Lane, looking east.



Viewpoint 08 was taken from the residential properties along Paper Mill Lane, approximately 540m from the site boundary. This view is representative of receptors living at these properties.

Views mainly consist of mature hedgerow planting along the road and field boundary, with glimpsed views of the Power Station and surrounding hillsides in the distance.

Direct views of the site may be evident from first floor rooms, however with the current views consisting of major industrial features such as the power station, the proposed development would be within the context of the existing built form.

The proposed development would therefore have a moderate impact on receptors because direct views of the site may be available. However, additional screening along the western boundary would help mitigate any visual impact.

Viewpoint Number : 08  
Lense Focal Length : 16mm  
Direction : East

## **Viewpoint 09:** View from Public Footpath / Cycle Route, looking west.



Viewpoint 09 was taken from the Public Right of Way that provides access to the school and playground from the surrounding residential estate at the centre of Connah's Quay, approximately 1.2km from the site. It is representative of receptors walking or cycling along the path in a western direction.

The foreground and immediate surrounding areas consists of residential dwellings and open green space, bounded by fence and hedgerow. In the distance, views of the power station and associated network of electricity pylons can be seen.

Views of the site are entirely screened by the residential estate and due to the distance of this viewpoint from the site, the proposed development would have a negligible effect on receptors.

## **Kelsterton Lane: Conclusion**

Throughout this document, reference has been made to the potential impact the development might have on the green barrier, and what potential impact that might entail. After a site visit, green barrier assessment and visual appraisal, the following points can be concluded:

In response to Comment 555 from Flintshire Council with regards to the impact of the development on the Green Barrier, it is agreed that the southern extents of the development area would have an impact on the Green Barrier as the character of the site is predominantly rural and includes blocks of ancient woodland, streams and tree planting that are likely to be ecologically valuable habitats. However towards the north, the site's character changes significantly and is heavily influenced by the surrounding built form of the A548 road network and Power Station. In addition, the proposed A55 Link Road will increase the urbanised nature of this area of the development site considerably and will have a significant detrimental impact on the Northop Mosaic landscape character area as it currently stands. Therefore, it is considered that a mix, from low density, roadside development to the west to higher density residential development in the east would be suitable, if limited to the northern extents of the site and appropriately mitigated for with native planting.

Comment 553 from the Council also addresses the suitability of future roadside facilities, and as Part 3 of this appraisal demonstrates, the northern extents of the site are heavily impacted by urban and industrial influences due to the presence of the adjacent power station and associated pylons and electricity lines. It is considered that with the arrival of the A55 Link Road, the existing character of the site will become more urbanised and any associated roadside development will not significantly impact the landscape character and context following its construction.

With regards to comment 1269 in relation to the Deposit Local Development Plan; a detailed analysis of the nature of settlement boundaries and urban edges (as shown on page 18 of this report) demonstrates that there are certain areas of the site which are best suited to development when compared with others with limited impact on the wider landscape. The appraisal acknowledges the councils concerns regarding the site's lack of relationship to the settlement of Connah's Quay, however if residential development is focussed towards the north-eastern extents of the site there is an opportunity to strengthen the existing urban edge as it will utilise an area bordered by residential properties, Kelsterton Farm and the Cemetery. In addition, there are strong natural boundaries of mature hedgerow to the north and south, which means the area can be naturally integrated within the landscape.

*(Conclusion continued on following page)*

## Kelsterton Lane: Conclusion

The visual appraisal in Part 3 demonstrates that the site is well screened from views from the south, helping to preserve the wider landscape character of the Green Barrier. Viewpoints 01, 06 and 08 illustrate that views are available from the east and north, however improved screening using native planting to these boundaries would help mitigate visual impact.

In summary, it is felt that any proposed development should be focussed towards the northern extents of the proposed site, particularly to the north-eastern corner for residential schemes. This will have a moderate effect on the surrounding area because of views into the site from Kelsterton Road, however this can be mitigated for with further planting along the northern boundary of the site, as previously stated. Therefore this area of the site, alongside the area to the north west where the proposed link road will intersect the site (as illustrated below), presents a suitable location for development because of the reduced effects it will have on the Green Barrier.

### Proposed Site Plan:

Key:

- Roadside Development Area
- Residential Development Area
- Proposed Tree Planting
- Site Boundary

Proposed Link Road .....

