

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Church and Housing Development,
Abermule

for:

Hughes Architects



August 2016, ref: 2906

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Commission

- 1.1.1 In July 2016 Lingard Styles was commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for Tudor Jones on behalf of Hughes Architects to identify potential impacts of a proposed church and housing development in Abermule, Powys.

1.2 The Proposed Development

- 1.2.1 The Proposed Development is described in the planning application submission and consists of four houses, a church and associated elements located on the edge of the settlement of Abermule. Associated elements include internal access roads, car parking, garden areas, mitigation tree and hedge planting and pedestrian routes. The housing and church will be accessed via a shared entrance from the B4368. For further details information refer to the planning application submission.
- 1.2.2 Along the B4368 Kerry Road between the proposed Site entrance and the lane to the west the existing roadside hedge (~160m) is proposed to be moved back from the road by approximately 2m to allow construction of a pavement to provide pedestrian access to the Site.

1.3 The Site and Study Area

- 1.3.1 The Site, for the purposes of this report, is considered to be the fields within which the Proposed Development is located, however the proposed hedge translocation (see section 1.2, above) and pavement will also be considered within the assessment. The Study Area is shown on **Figure 1** and encompasses an area of 1.5km radius from the boundary of the Site. Following a desktop study, a visit to the Site and Study Area were undertaken on the 12th and 14th July 2016. The Site and Study Area are described in Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 The LVA assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual resource of the area. The methodology applied is described in Appendix 1 and has been informed by the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute.
- 1.4.2 This report consists of the following sections:
- **Section 2: Planning Context**, which provides an outline of the planning context;

- **Section 3: Baseline**, which provides a review of the existing landscape and visual baseline within the Study Area;
- **Section 4: Landscape Assessment**, which records the outcomes of the assessment of the likely effects the Proposed Development will have on the baseline landscape resource and character of the Study Area;
- **Section 5: Visual Assessment**, which records the outcomes of the assessment of the likely effects the Proposed Development will have on a range of visual receptors identified within the Study Area;
- Section 6 Conclusions

1.4.3 All distances in this assessment are approximate, as denoted by the symbol ~ in this report.

2. PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 National Planning Policy Wales

- 2.1.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 8, January 2016) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government, and seeks to conserve and improve natural heritage, including landscape. The following extract pertains to landscapes:

5.5.1 Biodiversity and landscape considerations must be taken into account in determining individual applications and contributing to the implementation of specific projects. The effect of a development proposal on the wildlife or landscape of any area can be a material consideration. In such instances and in the interests of achieving sustainable development it is important to balance conservation objectives with the wider economic needs of local businesses and communities. Where development does occur it is important to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to safeguard or enhance the environmental quality of land.

2.2 Unitary Development Plan

- 2.2.1 The Powys Unitary Development Plan: 2001-2016 was formally adopted on 1st March 2010, and sets out guidance for determining planning applications through 2016. The following policy is of particular relevance to landscape and visual matters:

ENV2 – Safeguarding the Landscape

Proposals for the development and use of land should take account of the high quality of the landscape throughout Powys and be appropriate and sensitive to the character and surrounding landscape. Where appropriate, account will also need to be taken of the special qualities or reasons for designation of the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Parks. Proposals which are acceptable in principle should:

- 1. Contain appropriate measures to ensure satisfactory integration into the landscape;*
- 2. Not unacceptably adversely affect features of importance for nature conservation or amenity; and*
- 3. Not result in significant damage to ancient and semi-natural woodlands and should seek to conserve native woodlands, trees and hedgerows.*

2.3 Powys Local Development Plan

- 2.3.1 The Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026) has been prepared and is undergoing Examination, although this has been suspended until late November

2016. Although the LDP is not yet adopted, its policies of particular relevance to landscape and visual matters are noted below:

Policy DM1 – Strategic Planning Matters:

All proposals for development must not compromise, or unacceptably adversely affect, either on their own or in combination with existing or approved development:[the following, including]... the characteristics and special qualities of Powys landscape (as defined by LANDMAP) and adjacent protected landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the visual amenity enjoyed by users of those areas.

3. BASELINE

3.1 Description of the Site and immediate environs.

- 3.1.1 Internal Site views are shown in Appendix 3. The Site is located within three grass fields separated by post and wire fences and together form an elongated shape on a broadly east-west alignment. The fields together are ~250m east-west and ~60m north to south in length. The southern boundary of the Site is marked by a dense hedge of 2-4m height adjacent to the B4368 Kerry Road. There is a gap (~12m length, secured by post and wire and Heras fencing) in the hedgerow as result of works for the installation of a high pressure gas main that passes under the Site.
- 3.1.2 The northern and eastern boundary of the Site is marked by a post and wire fence and the disused Kerry Branch Line railway which currently provides access to the fields of the Site. Trees, shrubs and hedges are also dotted along the northern boundary, becoming more dense and continuous towards the eastern end. The western boundary of the site is bordered by a hedgerow, beyond which is Abermule House. The hedgerow is dense and ~5m tall except for the southernmost section, closer to the house, which has some short sections ~2m tall.
- 3.1.3 The Site has a gentle slope from approximately 100m AOD in the south-east to ~95m AOD in its north-western corner. The eastern end of the southern boundary is on an embankment above the rest of the Site and means the Kerry Road and hedge are ~3.5m above the main fields at this point. The embankment gradually reduces towards the west until the road and hedge are approximately level with the adjacent fields after ~180m.
- 3.1.4 Two sets of overhead electricity lines pass broadly centrally over the Site and the B4368 Kerry Road on a broadly north-south axis. No pylons are located within the Site, although close to the northern boundary is a timber H-pylon and a taller latticework tower, estimated to be approximately 15m tall.
- 3.1.5 To the north of the Site the sinuous River Mule passes through grass fields and is tree-lined. North of the river is a minor road which serves properties including Brooklea, 1-2 The Meadows and a larger group of properties (approximately 20) at Parkside, further east. To the south side of the B4368 Kerry Road is a larger pasture field that rises to form a hill to the south. To the south-west of the Site is the entrance to Court Close, a linear housing estate stretching to the south-west, predominantly comprised of bungalows. West of Court Close is the Agrimont Depot, a large agricultural and building supplies depot building, including steel fabricators, with extensive areas of external storage. To the west of this is the Cambrian mainline railway which has a level crossing over the B4368 Kerry Road, adjacent to a junction with the minor road that serves Parkside. To the east of the Site is the wooded valley of the River Mule along which runs a minor road serving isolated residential properties within the valley.

3.2 Description of the Study Area

Topography

- 3.2.1 Topography can be seen in **Figure 2**. The Topography of the Study Area is dominated by the valley of the River Severn which extends from the south-western edge of the Study Area through to its northern edge. The valley bottom varies in width from approximately 500m to 1000m as it passes through the Study Area at ~90m AOD. Either side of the valley the landform is characterised by rolling upland hills rising to ~250m AOD at the south-eastern edge of the Study Area. The River Mule, a tributary of the River Severn passes from the southern edge of the Study Area, northwards through a winding and steeply incised valley and then westwards where passes to the north of the Site and ultimately meets the Severn at Abermule.

Land Use and Vegetation

- 3.2.2 Farming dominates the land use within the Study Area with the majority being pasture fields of small to medium size typically with semi-regular boundaries consisting of hedgerows. Woodland is also a key feature with deciduous and mixed woodland occupying steeper valley sides, such as those alongside the River Mule and River Severn.

Settlement Pattern

- 3.2.3 The village of Abermule is the main settlement within the Study Area and is adjacent to the western side of the Site, while a separate pocket of settlement (Parkside) is located at a minimum separation distance of ~120m north-east of the Site. Smaller villages and hamlets are distributed at relatively low density across the Study Area, as are isolated homes and farmsteads, particularly within central and western parts of the Study Area, away from more upland areas. Within the wider area settlement is limited to a scattering of more isolated houses and farmsteads.

Transport Network

- 3.2.4 The valley of the River Severn acts as a major transport corridor within the area. The principal road passing through the Study area is the A483 (T) which follows the valley of the River Severn, passing to the west of Abermule, connecting Newport to the south-west with Welshpool to the north-east.
- 3.2.5 Three notable 'B' roads pass through the Study Area and provide notable road connections for Abermule. To the south of Abermule the B4386 branches from the A483 and runs north-eastwards through the centre of Abermule before returning to the A483. The B4368 branches eastwards from the B4386 in Abermule and passes the southern boundary of the Site before turning southwards to follow the sinuous valley of the River Mule towards Kerry. The B4385 extends from the north of Abermule and runs broadly parallel with the A483 along the Severn valley but ultimately turns eastwards towards Montgomery.

- 3.2.6 The Cambrian mainline railway passes through the Study Area, following the Severn valley and passing through Abermule to the west of the Site. There is no station at Abermule but the B4368 crosses the line within in the village at a level crossing (Abermule Old Station) to the east of the Site. The closest stations to Abermule are at Newtown to the south-west and Welshpool to the north-east.
- 3.2.7 A minor road has a T-junction from the B4368 to the immediate east of the railway line and turns northwards, crossing the River Mule before turning eastwards passing north of the river Mule and the Site and passing through Parkside for which it is the only road connection.
- 3.2.8 The Montgomery canal passes through the Study Area, following the western side of the River Severn.

Public Access

- 3.2.9 The Study Area has a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), typically connecting minor roads and farmsteads. The PRoW network connects with minor roads and together these form a moderately dense access network, although it less dense close to the Site.
- 3.2.10 As can be seen **Figure 1**, one long distance walking trail, namely the Severn Way passes through the Study Area, following the path of the Montgomery Canal on the western side of the River Severn. The Severn Way is a long-distance trail covering 360km, following the path of the River Severn from its source at Plynlimon to Bristol. Approximately 5km of the route passes broadly east-west through the Study Area and passes approximately 500m west of the Site at its closest point.
- 3.2.11 A single Sustrans National Route of the National Cycle Network passes through the Study Area, namely Route 81, which like the Severn Way, follows the Montgomery Canal through the western part of the Study Area.
- 3.2.12 Open access Land is not a notable feature of the Study Area.

3.3 Landscape Character

LANDMAP

3.3.1 LANDMAP is the formally adopted five-tiered landscape classification system developed by the Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) and forms the basis of the landscape evaluation for this assessment.

3.3.2 The LANDMAP system has created geographically defined datasets called Aspect Areas for each of the following criteria:

- Cultural Landscapes;
- Geological Landscapes;
- Historical Landscapes;
- Landscape Habitats;
- Visual & Sensory Landscapes.

3.3.3 For each Aspect Area in each criterion, a pre-defined set of questions has been answered by a LANDMAP assessor, which creates the characterization and evaluation of the area. The Overall Evaluation of the Aspect Area is key to understanding its value in terms of sensitivity, rarity or importance (depending on which criteria is considered), and is used to determine which areas are to be considered as receptors in an LVIA assessment.

3.3.4 The Overall Evaluation used by LANDMAP is:

- Low - of little or no importance;
- Moderate - of some local importance;
- High - of regional or county importance;
- Outstanding - of national or international importance.

Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas

3.3.5 Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas (VSAAs) within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 3** and identified below.

LANDMAP Unique ID	LANDMAP Area Name	Scenic Quality VS46	Character evaluation VS48	Overall evaluation VS50
MNTGMVS650	River Severn Flood Plain	Moderate	High	Moderate
MNTGMVS946	Llandyssil Hill and Scarp Grazing	High	Moderate	Moderate
MNTGMVS899	Tregynon Rolling Hills	High	High	High
MNTGMVS722	Garthmyl Rolling Farmland	High	High	Moderate

3.3.6 Descriptions taken from the LANDMAP pro-formas of those VSAA taken forwards into the assessment are provided below:

- MNTGMVS650 River Severn Flood Plain

3.3.7 This VSAA hosts the Site.

3.3.8 LANDMAP summary description: *A significant open valley / vale with a patchwork of medium to large field parcels many displaying established field boundaries of managed and overgrown hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees. Predominantly arable farming with some lowland dairy farming. Settlements of varying sizes are prevalent from farmsteads to significant urban areas such as Welshpool and Newtown. Open skies dominate with wooded valley sides fringing the valley bottom.*

- MNTGMVS946 Llandyssil Hill and Scarp Grazing

3.3.9 LANDMAP summary description: *An area of rolling upland grazing centre on an intricate patchwork of small field parcels bounded by treed hedgerows. Majority of the area is of a more open nature with larger grazed and cultivated fields and dispersed settlements / farmsteads overlooking the flat open farmland of the Severn Vale.*

- MNTGMVS899 Tregynon Rolling Hills

3.3.10 LANDMAP summary description: *An extensive area of rolling hillsides and pasture land with gently sloping sides and rounded tops. Views across the area are generally from a succession of rolling ridges and due to the size of the area long distance views are limited / insignificant to far distant ridgelines of upland areas. Sense of place is settled, safe and relatively intimate. Vegetation is predominantly Oak/mixed broadleaf woodland patched with a strong field pattern defined by hedgerows. General landscape character is defined strongly by the rolling farmed landscape with traditional farming techniques common i.e. hedge laying and few intensive farming practices employed.*

- MNTGMVS722 Garthmyl Rolling Farmland

3.3.11 LANDMAP summary description: *Rolling mosaic lowland of a parkland and traditionally farmed landscape. The area display aspects of a more formally planned parkland landscape due in part to the large Georgian/Victorian and Edwardian houses that lie in the vicinity of Garthmyl and Berriew and face onto the River Severn Floodplain. Aspect has a functional link as a transitional landscape between the rolling upland hill and scarp of mid Montgomeryshire and the lowland floodplain. Domestic, settled and with a rich patchwork of mixed woodland and strongly defined field boundaries - managed hedgerows with intermittent mature hedgerow trees.*

Cultural Landscape Aspect Areas

3.3.12 Cultural Landscape Aspect Areas (CLAAs) within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 4**.

Table 2 Cultural Landscape Aspect Areas

LANDMAP Unique ID	LANDMAP Area Name	LANDMAP Rarity (CL33)	LANDMAP Group Value (CL35)	LANDMAP Overall Evaluation (CL40)
MNTGMCL051	Rural Landscapes	Low	High	High
MNTGMCL052	Cambrian Railway	Low	High	High
MNTGMCL025	Castell Dolforwyn	High	High	Outstanding

3.3.13 The Site is located within the following CLAA, which is described below:

- MNTGMCL051 Rural Landscapes

3.3.14 LANDMAP summary description: *The Aspect Area is essentially a catch-all of landscapes surrounding other Aspect Areas. It reveals an eclectic mix of landscape type, from fertile lowlands to bleak moorlands, and forms a buffer between other Aspect Areas that are more culturally distinctive or diverse. Surprisingly, there are few statutorily protected landscape types - such as SSSIs or SLAs within the area. Nevertheless, Rural Landscapes forms the background to the more detailed painting on the canvas of Montgomeryshire, contributing greatly to the county's soubriquet of Powis paradwys Cymru.*

Historic Landscape Aspect Areas

3.3.15 Historic Landscape Aspect Areas (HLAAs) within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 5**.

Table 3 Historic Landscape Aspect Areas

LANDMAP Unique ID	LANDMAP Area Name	LANDMAP Overall Evaluation (HL40)
MNTGMHL630	Upper Mule	Outstanding
MNTGMHL620	Middle Severn Valley	Outstanding
MNTGMHL617	Cefn-y-coed	Outstanding
MNTGMHL719	Brooks	Outstanding

3.3.16 The Site is located overlapping the following two HLAAs, which are described below:

- MNTGMHL630 Upper Mule

3.3.17 LANDMAP Summary Description: *Mixed fieldscapes in the valley of the river Mule and the surrounding and the surrounding hill slopes around Kerry, between the northern escarpment of the Kerry Hills and the Severn valley. The more irregular field patterns appear to represent early piecemeal clearance and enclosure from medieval and earlier times whilst areas of more regular, straight-*

sided fields appear to represent late 18th and 19th-century enclosure of former commons. Blocks and strips of 20th-century conifer plantation, mixed woodland, and some residual ancient broadleaved woodland on the steeper hill slopes and in stream valleys. Early settlement and land use is indicated by early prehistoric burial mounds and by later prehistoric hillforts at Great Cloddiau, Giant's Bank, Pen-y-gelli, Sibyll Wood, Pen-y-castell and Fron Derw and a scatter of smaller defended enclosures of later prehistoric and Roman date. Medieval land use and settlement is indicated by the earthwork castle at Tomen Madoc and by occasional farms and houses and areas of relict ridge and furrow of certain or possible medieval origin. Dispersed farms, gentry houses and cottages of post-medieval date, including Dolforgan Hall, the former focus of small landed estate. Small nucleated church settlement of medieval origin at Llanmerewig.

- MNTGMHL620 Middle Severn Valley

3.3.18 LANDMAP Summary Description: *Regular lowland landscapes on the floor of the Severn valley north of Newtown. Early settlement and land use is indicated by a number of Neolithic to Bronze Age burial mounds and by later prehistoric and possibly Roman defended enclosure sites. The Roman road between the Roman forts at Forden Gaer and Caersws runs through the area as does the course of the late 18th-century Montgomeryshire Canal and the extant later 19th-century Cambrian Railway line between Welshpool and Newtown. Medieval settlement and land use is indicated by earthwork castles at Gro Tump to the north of Newtown, at Brynderwen, and at Cefn Bryntalch north of Abermule. Dispersed farms of medieval and later origin. Small, later 19th-century country house and registered garden at Bryntalch.*

Geological Landscape Aspect Areas

3.3.19 Only those Geological Landscape Aspect Areas (GLAAs) within which the Site is located are selected to be taken forward into the assessment. The Site is located overlapping the following three GLAAs, which are described below:

- MNTGMGL414 Newtown

3.3.20 MNTGMGL414 Newtown has a LANDMAP Rarity/Uniqueness (GL31) of Low and an Overall Evaluation (GL33) of Moderate. The LANDMAP justification of the overall evaluation is: *Typical geomorphological feature and deposits, partly covered by urban development. No notable sites recorded.*

- MNTGMGL769 Severn

3.3.21 MNTGMGL769 Severn has a LANDMAP Rarity/Uniqueness (GL31) of Low and an Overall Evaluation (GL33) of High. The LANDMAP justification of the overall evaluation is: *Major river system with well developed features such as meanders, etc. Includes two GCR sites.*

- MNTGMGL444 Kerry Hills

3.3.22 MNTGMGL444 Kerry Hills has a LANDMAP Rarity/Uniqueness (GL31) of Low and an Overall Evaluation (GL33) of High. The LANDMAP justification of the overall evaluation is: *Important landscape feature with regionally important site*

Landscape Habitats Aspect Areas

3.3.23 Only the Landscape Habitat Aspect Area (LHAA) within which the Site is located is selected to be taken forward into the assessment. The Site is located within the following Landscape Habitat Aspect Area, which is described below:

- MNTGMLH056 Improved Grassland

3.3.24 MNTGMLH056 has a LANDMAP Connectivity/Cohesion (LH42) of Moderate and an Overall Evaluation (LH45) of Moderate. The LANDMAP summary of the key features that define this area's biodiversity character is: *This is an area of small fields on an undulating landscape. The fields tend to have remnant hedges or individual mature trees left in the boundaries, most are grazed and cut although there are some arable. There are one or two blocks of ribbon woodland.*

3.4 Landscape Designations

National Designations

- 3.4.1 There are no national landscape designations (such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) in the Study Area.

Local Designations

- 3.4.2 There are no local landscape designations (such as Special Landscape Areas) in the Study Area.

3.5 Heritage Designations

Landscapes with Heritage Designations

- 3.5.1 No landscapes with heritage designations, such as Landscape of Special Historic Interest or Registered Parks and Gardens have been identified within the Study Area.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

- 3.5.2 As Shown on **Figure 6** two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) are located within the Study Area.
- 3.5.3 Dolforwyn Castle SAM (ref: MG114) is located ~1.2km west of the Site on a hill above Abermule and the River Severn. Built by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1273, but may not have been completed by Easter 1277, when the castle was besieged and captured by the English¹ The castle ruins are managed by CADW and are also a free visitor attraction served by a small carpark to the east.
- 3.5.4 Bryn-Derwen Mound and Bailey Castle (MG054) is located ~530m north of the Site on the northern edge of Abermule. The site is described as a : *'greatly mutilated motte and bailey, resting on steep riverine scarps to the W, where the motte appears to have been almost entirely robbed, leaving traces of its ditch and counterscarp, c.67-72m in diameter'*².

Listed Buildings

- 3.5.5 As Shown on **Figure 6** a number of listed buildings are shown within the Study Area. Those closest being within Abermule approximately 200m from the Site.

¹ <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/300392/details/dolforwyn-castle-abermule>

² <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/306217/details/bryn-derwen-castle>

3.6 Visual Baseline

- 3.6.1 This section describes the visual characteristics of the study area based on the baseline study and clarifications made through observations on site.
- 3.6.2 The viewpoints are intended to cover views from a range of directions, representing the variety of views available within the Study Area, their locations are shown on **Figure 7**. Photographs can only be taken from publicly accessible locations, such as roads or PRow footpaths. Photographs and photomontages are contained in Appendix 3 Visual Record. It should be noted that the Site is relatively well screened by surrounding tree and hedge vegetation, making clear views to Site difficult to obtain from publicly accessible locations.

Table 4 Viewpoint Descriptions

Viewpoint	Approximate distance from Site	Nearby Receptors	Description of Panorama (or single-frame view where no panorama)
VP1 Court Close	~ 8m	Road users, residents of Court Close.	The Site which is to the north of the Kerry Road is screened entirely from view by a substantial hedge of ~3m height. Looking westwards a bungalow of Court Close occupies the foreground and beyond the road, bordered by the dense hedge extends towards woodland. The view along the road beyond the bungalow features a street lighting column, road signs and overhead lines. The view looking east (away from the Site) features Abermule House, a roadside hedge of ~2m height, a bungalow of Court Close, street lighting columns and, in the distance, a level crossing.
VP2 – Level Crossing	~ 120m	Road users	The Site which is to the west is screened entirely by hedgerow vegetation of ~2-6m height. To the north-west is the level crossing featuring barriers and warning lights. A green palisade fence lines the railway line and borders a lane. To the west a gateway marks the entrance of a disused railway line, now heavily vegetated. In the distance Abermule house and a bungalow of Court Close are partially visible beyond intervening vegetation. Beyond these appears an area of slightly elevated woodland. The viewpoint is adjacent to Agrimont Depot which consists of a large warehouse unit, car parking and external storage areas for constructions materials.

VP3 – The Meadows	~ 90m	Road users, residents	This view is taken from the lane below the Meadows which has a more elevated view to Site. The Site is entirely screened from view by a hedgerow of ~2m effective height. Above the hedgerow, trees and a more distant hillside are visible. The house of Brooklea is also partially visible above the hedge, along with the upper part of a lattice-work pylon close to the northern boundary of the Site.
VP4 – Parkside	~140m	Residents, road users.	This view is elevated and looks over a garden at Parkside towards the Site. The Site itself is not readily visible, being screened by trees alongside both the River Mule and the disused railway line that borders the Site. A lattice work pylon is visible amongst the aforementioned trees.
VP5 – PRoW to North of Site	~ 490m	PRoW users	This view looks across a large open and mostly level pasture field. In the distance, housing at Parkside is visible on slopes amongst tree cover. The site itself is screened by intervening hedges and trees. A number of timber pylons appear in the middle-ground of the view.
VP6 – Kerry Road 1 (bend to east of Site)	~ 20m	Road users	This view shows the view from the B4368 Kerry Road as it emerges from a wooded valley heading towards Abermule. The Site is not readily visible due to screening by roadside hedge and shrub vegetation. There is a glimpse through tree cover towards a more distant hillside.
VP7 – Kerry Road 2 (near proposed church)	adjacent	Road users	This view shows the view from the B4368 Kerry Road after it has passed VP6 (see above) and is adjacent to the Site. The Site is completely screened from view by a dense roadside hedge of ~3-4m height. The roof of Abermule House is visible in the distance below a wooded hillside in the background.
VP8 – Kerry Road 3 (near proposed site entrance)	adjacent	Road users	This view shows the view from the Kerry Road as it approaches the proposed Site entrance. The Site is entirely screened by a roadside hedge of ~3m height. Built form of Abermule is clearly visible including the Agrimont Depot. Ahead are a number of street lighting columns and road signs, including a warning sign for a level crossing.

4. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Construction Effects

4.1.1 Construction effects are considered in this section. Effects associated with the necessary long term land-take and the presence of above ground structures on the development site are considered in the subsequent operational section. The construction period at the time of writing is not known, however it is likely to take less than 1 year. Given the temporary nature of construction effects they will be discussed separately from operational effects only where pertinent.

4.1.2 At the time of writing the construction management plans were unavailable but some effects will result from the following:

- Site clearance including vegetation removal;
- Stripping of topsoil;
- Storage for site-won and imported materials;
- Construction compounds and workers' facilities;
- Movement and operation of construction machinery;
- Temporary fencing; and
- Ground Works

Operational Effects

4.1.3 Operation effects consider the completed Development. Operation effects will result from the following changes:

- Built properties;
- Access road infrastructure;
- Fencing, signage and lighting;
- Vehicle parking;
- Vehicle movements;
- Hard landscaping; and
- Soft landscaping

4.1.4 It is assumed that proposed tree planting will have a limited effect when the site is initially operational. However, upon maturing it may increase screening or filtering of views and may reduce the magnitudes of change that would be sustained by landscape and visual receptors, typically as a mitigating or compensatory factor. The assessment will make note of this where pertinent.

5. LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.1 This section sets out how landscape elements, landscape character and landscape designations are likely to be affected by the Proposed Development and the level of that effect. The assessment focuses on operational effects; however construction effects are discussed where pertinent.

5.2 Landscape Elements: Trees and Hedges

- 5.2.1 Trees and hedges are accorded medium sensitivity. The Proposed Development will result in the loss of a short section of roadside hedge (~20m in length) to accommodate the new site entrance. It should be noted that the Proposed Development features over 100m of new hedgerow planting which would likely more than compensate for the loss of hedge as it establishes. It is not anticipated that any trees will be removed as a direct requirement of the Proposed Development and that over 40 new trees are to be planted.
- 5.2.2 The translocation of the hedge along the B4368 to allow the addition of pavement alongside the road to provide pedestrian access to the Site, is likely to have some effect on the hedge but this is likely to be temporary as it re-establishes.
- 5.2.3 Considering the above factors, the Proposed Development would result in a low magnitude of change resulting in a **slight** landscape effect which would be negative in the short term but as new planting establishes is likely to become positive.

5.3 Landscape Character

LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas

- MNTGMVS650 River Severn Flood Plain

- 5.3.1 This is the host VSAA for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (VS50) of Moderate. The VSAA's sensitivity is considered **Medium**. The sensitivity is derived from a Medium Susceptibility to Change and a Medium Landscape Value.
- 5.3.2 The Proposed Development will result in the loss of agricultural fields, which although one of the key characteristics of the VSAA is ubiquitous within it such that its loss is unlikely to affect the integrity of the VSAA. It should be noted that the design includes a meadow area that will mitigate this change to a degree. The introduction of housing, church and associated elements will result in an effective expansion of the built area of Abermule (also within the VSAA) with development types that are generally appropriate in land use, design, scale and character of a village such as Abermule. Hedges are noted within the VSAA's entry as being of importance for landscape character and the Proposed Development will retain the majority of hedges on the Site boundary and provide additional hedges overall to reflect those existing within the area. The translocation of the hedge along the B4368 and addition of pavement alongside

the road to provide pedestrian access to the Site will occur within the village's urban fringe as defined by close association with existing built form (Abermule House and Close Court) existing road signage.

5.3.3 The effects caused by the Proposed Development upon the VSAA are considered to be small in scale and unlikely to notably affect the overall integrity or key characteristics of the VSAA. The duration of effect is considered to be permanent and the extent of the effects is anticipated to be localised to the Site and its immediate environs. Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this VSAA is considered to be Negligible, with the nature of effect being **Negligible**.

- MNTGMVS946 Llandyssil Hill and Scarp Grazing

5.3.4 This VSAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the VSAA.

- MNTGMVS899 Tregynon Rolling Hills

5.3.5 This VSAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the VSAA.

- MNTGMVS722 Garthmyl Rolling Farmland

5.3.6 This VSAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the VSAA.

LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Aspect Areas

- MNTGMCL051 Rural Landscapes

5.3.7 This is the host CLAA for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (CL40) of High. The CLAA's sensitivity is considered **Medium**. The sensitivity is derived from a Medium Susceptibility to Change (within the context of the Proposed Development) and a Medium Landscape Value.

5.3.8 The CLAA's entry notes that it is a 'catch-all' landscape and is 'eclectic mix' of landscape types although it is predominantly agricultural. The entry also notes that de-population and neglect are a cause of decline within the CLAA. Guidelines for the CLAA seek to counter de-population and encourage nurturing and maintenance of the landscape.

5.3.9 The Proposed Development, notably the church will represent a new cultural element within the CLAA and will result in the loss of agricultural land. However, the creation of housing and a church will encourage maintenance and nurturing of the landscape on Site, including new tree planting and boundary hedges. The

Proposed Development may also assist in countering de-population within the CLAA.

5.3.10 The level of screening around the Site, in addition to proposed planting means that the Proposed Development will be relatively well screened

5.3.11 The scale of effects caused by the Proposed Development upon the CLAA are considered to be small in scale and unlikely to notably affect the overall integrity of the CLAA, although it will result in a new cultural element within the CLAA. The duration of effect is considered to be permanent. The extent of the effects is anticipated to be localised to the Site and some of its immediate environs. Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this CLAA is considered to be Low, with the nature of effect being **Slight**.

- MNTGMCL052 Cambrian Railway

5.3.12 This CLAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the CLAA.

- MNTGMCL025 Castell Dolforwyn

5.3.13 This CLAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the CLAA.

LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas

- MNTGMHL630 Upper Mule

5.3.14 This is one of two host HLAA's for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (HL40) of Outstanding. The HLAA's sensitivity is considered **High**. The sensitivity is derived from a High Susceptibility to Change and a High Landscape Value.

5.3.15 The HLAA's entry notes mixed fieldscapes dominated by Medieval and later agriculture.

5.3.16 The Proposed Development will result in the loss of agricultural land but will retain the large majority of existing boundary hedges and the disused railway line, which are relatively notable in contributing to the legibility of the historic landscape. The Proposed Development will not affect any of the key historic sites (or their interactions) listed within the HLAA, or any of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings within the HLAA (see Figure 6).

5.3.17 The effects caused by the Proposed Development upon the HLAA are considered to be small in scale and unlikely to notably affect the overall integrity or key characteristics of the HLAA. The duration of effect is considered to be permanent. The extent of the effects is anticipated to be localised to the Site. Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed

Development upon this HLAA is considered to be Negligible, with the nature of effect being **Slight**.

- MNTGMHL620 Middle Severn Valley

5.3.18 This is one of two host HLAA's for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (HL40) of Outstanding. The HLAA's sensitivity is considered **High**. The sensitivity is derived from a High Susceptibility to Change and a High Landscape Value.

5.3.19 The HLAA's entry notes a regular lowland fieldscape with early settlement and later transport infrastructure including the 18th Century Montgomery Canal and 19th Century Cambrian railway.

5.3.20 The Proposed Development will result in the loss of agricultural land but will retain the large majority of existing boundary hedges and the disused railway line, which are relatively notable in contributing to the legibility of the historic landscape. The Proposed Development will not affect any of the key historic sites (or their interactions) listed within the HLAA, or any of the Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings within the HLAA (see Figure 6).

5.3.21 The scale of effects caused by the Proposed Development upon the HLAA are considered to be small in scale and unlikely to notably affect the overall integrity of the HLAA. The duration of effect is considered to be permanent. The extent of the effects is anticipated to be localised to the Site and some of its immediate environs. Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this Area is considered to be Negligible, with the nature of effect being **Slight**.

- MNTGMHL617 Cefn-y-coed

5.3.22 This HLAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the HLAA.

- MNTGMHL719 Brooks

5.3.23 This HLAA is at a sufficient separation distance from the Site with sufficient intervening screening that the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effects** on the HLAA.

LANDMAP Geological Landscape Aspect Areas

- MNTGMGL414 Newtown

5.3.24 This is one of three host GLAAs for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (GL33) of Moderate.

5.3.25 The LANDMAP entry notes no notable sites recorded and that it is partly covered by urban development.

- 5.3.26 Although the Proposed Development will include excavation, it is unlikely to notably alter the underlying geology or notably affect legibility of geology, geomorphology or associated processes at a scale to notably affect the GLAA.
- 5.3.27 Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this Area is considered to be Negligible, with the nature of effect being **Negligible**.
- MNTGMGL414 Severn
- 5.3.28 This is one of three host GLAAs for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (GL33) of Moderate.
- 5.3.29 The LANDMAP entry notes a major river system with well-developed features.
- 5.3.30 Although the Proposed Development will include excavation, it is unlikely to notably alter the underlying geology or notably affect legibility of geology, geomorphology or associated processes at a scale to notably affect the GLAA.
- 5.3.31 Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this Area is considered to be Negligible, with the nature of effect being **Negligible**.
- MNTGMGL444 Kerry Hills
- 5.3.32 This is one of three host GLAAs for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (GL33) of Moderate
- 5.3.33 The LANDMAP entry notes it as covering a major river system with well-developed features.
- 5.3.34 Although the Proposed Development will include excavation, it is unlikely to notably alter the underlying geology or notably affect legibility of geology, geomorphology or associated processes at a scale to notably affect the GLAA.
- 5.3.35 Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this Area is considered to be Negligible, with the nature of effect being **Negligible**.

LANDMAP Landscape Habitats Aspect Areas

- MNTGMLH056 Improved Grassland
- 5.3.36 This is the host LHAs for the Proposed Development and has an overall LANDMAP evaluation (LH45) of Moderate. The LHAA's sensitivity is considered **Medium**. The sensitivity is derived from a Medium Susceptibility to Change and a Medium Landscape Value.
- 5.3.37 The Proposed Development will result in a loss of an area of improved grassland. However, additional hedge, tree planting and meadow seeding is likely to mitigate against this.

- 5.3.38 The scale of effects caused by the Proposed Development upon the LHAA are considered to be small in scale and unlikely to notably affect the overall integrity of the CLAA, and the proposed planting and seeding may result in a partially improved habitat within the LHAA overall. The duration of effect is considered to be permanent. The extent of the effects is anticipated to be localised to the Site and some of its immediate environs. Considering the above factors the magnitude of change caused by the Proposed Development upon this LHAA is considered to be Low, with the nature of effect being **Negligible**.

5.4 Landscape Designations

- 5.4.1 As discussed in Section 3.4 Landscape Designations, no landscape designations have been identified within the Site or Study Area.

5.5 Heritage Designations

- 5.5.1 No landscapes with heritage designations, such as Landscape of Special Historic Interest or Registered Parks and Gardens have been identified within the Study Area.

Scheduled Ancient monuments

- 5.5.2 As discussed in Section 3.5 the Study Area includes two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, namely Dolforwyn Castle (ref: MG114) and Bryn Derwen Mound and Bailey Castle (MG054).

- Dolforwyn Castle

- 5.5.3 A visit to Dolforwyn Castle (12/07/2016) confirmed that there are no views available to the Site due to screening by landform and vegetation. The Proposed Development is unlikely to be discerned from the SAM and therefore it is likely to result in **no effect** on the SAM.

- Bryn Derwen Mound and Bailey Castle

- 5.5.4 Bryn Derwen Mound and Bailey Castle occupy a low-lying position adjacent to the northern side of Abermule such that views to the Proposed Development are likely to be screened by intervening built form and vegetation. Therefore the Proposed Development is likely to result in **no effect** on the SAM.

Listed Buildings

- 5.5.5 None of the listed buildings shown on Figure 6 are likely to offer views to the Proposed Development due to a combination of landform, separation distance and vegetation. The Proposed Development is therefore likely to result in **no effect** on Listed Buildings.

6. VISUAL ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section identifies the potential visual impacts of the Proposed Development upon a range of identified visual receptors within the Study Area including residents, users of Public Rights of Way, road users and recreational receptors.

6.2 Residential Receptors

- 6.2.1 All residential receptors are considered to be High sensitivity receptors, given the likelihood that views out may be highly valued and that views may have the potential to be highly susceptible to change. Only those residential receptors within close proximity and those likely to obtain some views to the Proposed Development are considered below.

Residents of Abermule House

- 6.2.2 Abermule House is a two storey property located to the immediate west of the Site, separated from it by a hedgerow and its own parking area/driveway which provides access to the B4368 Kerry Road. The house's principal elevation faces the Kerry Road and the housing of Court Close beyond. The property has a large garden to its rear. The house's eastern elevation which faces the site includes a single small upper storey window and at least three ground floor windows. Currently residents are likely to have some partial views to the fields of the Site and possibly the electricity wires that cross it, particularly from the upper storey window on the eastern elevation.
- 6.2.3 Residents are likely to obtain some close distance partial views to the upper parts of the closest proposed house, from the upper-storey window. Similar but highly angled views may also be obtained from the rear elevation windows. Some views to upper parts of the closest proposed house may be possible above the intervening hedge from the ground-floor windows and adjacent parking area/drive. The intervening hedgerow will nonetheless provide a strong sense of separation, particularly for those at ground level. It should be noted that where views to the proposed development are available they will tend to be restricted to the closest proposed house which would tend to screen the rest of the proposed development beyond. The hedgerow to the rear garden is substantial such that views to the proposed development are likely to be entirely screened from the rear garden.
- 6.2.4 The translocation of the hedge along the B4368 and addition of pavement alongside the road to provide pedestrian access to the Site will likely result in a reduction of screening to the B4368 Kerry Road, in addition to a short period when the hedge translocation operation will be clearly visible, however the reduction of roadside screening is likely to be temporary as the hedgerow re-establishes.

- 6.2.5 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Low magnitude of change resulting up to a **moderate** nature of effect

Residents of 1 Court Close (See Viewpoint 01)

- 6.2.6 1 Court Close is a bungalow located on the eastern side of Court Close at the junction with the B4368 Kerry Road. The property's northern side elevation faces towards the Kerry Road and the western end of the Site beyond the Site's screening roadside hedge. This side elevation has windows and a half-glass side door face in the direction of the site with a low hedge on the property's boundary. The property's rear garden, however, is well screened by a tall evergreen hedge and mature garden trees. Currently residents have no views to the Site due to screening by the site's own tall and dense roadside hedge.
- 6.2.7 From the eastern side elevation windows and adjacent external area residents may possibly obtain some close distance partial glimpse views to the roofs of the closest proposed houses above the site's tall hedge beyond the B4368 Kerry Road. Residents are unlikely to obtain clear views to the Proposed Development's new road entrance due to the angle of view combining with the bungalow's rear garden hedge and trees screening or heavily filtering any views. No views are likely to the proposed church.
- 6.2.8 The translocation of the hedge along the B4368 and addition of pavement alongside the road to provide pedestrian access to the Site may be discernible, particularly with a temporary reduction in screening allowing more of the proposed housing to be seen potentially. However, this reduction in screening will be temporary as the hedge re-establishes.
- 6.2.9 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Low magnitude of change resulting up to a **Moderate** nature of effect

Residents of 2 Court Close (See Viewpoint 01)

- 6.2.10 2 Court Close is a bungalow located opposite Abermule House at the junction of Court Close and the B4368 Kerry Road. The side elevation has a single window, the view from which is filtered by adjacent small garden trees. The front elevation faces west on to court road, although a tall evergreen hedge screens much of its eastern boundary.
- 6.2.11 Residents may obtain some partial angled and filtered views, particularly when trees are not in leaf, of the rooftops of the closest proposed houses, above the site's tall roadside hedge and beyond the intervening B4368 Kerry Road. Views to the Proposed Development's entrance are unlikely due to screening by the bungalow's garden hedge and trees. No views are likely to the proposed church.
- 6.2.12 The translocation of the hedge along the B4368 and addition of pavement alongside the road to provide pedestrian access to the Site may be discernible, particularly with a temporary reduction in screening allowing more of the proposed housing to be seen potentially. However, this reduction in screening will be temporary as the hedge re-establishes.

- 6.2.13 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Negligible magnitude of change resulting up to a **Moderate** nature of effect

Residents of Brooklea (See Viewpoint 03)

- 6.2.14 Brooklea can be seen in internal viewpoint photographs (view north) and Viewpoint 3. Brooklea is a two-storey detached house located ~60m north of the north-western corner of the Site. The principal elevation of the house faces east, while the rear of the house has a conservatory and an area of outbuildings. The river Mule passes close to the south-east of the house.
- 6.2.15 Residents may obtain some partial glimpses to some upper parts of the proposed housing and church, although these would, in most part be heavily filtered by intervening garden trees and the trees and hedgerows of the site's northern boundary (disused railway track). These views would be clearest from the southern elevation but a highly angled version of the view may be possible from windows on the southern elevation. At ground level, including the conservatory, views will be more greatly filtered by intervening vegetation.
- 6.2.16 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Negligible magnitude of change resulting up to a **slight** nature of effect

Residents of 1&2 The Meadows (See Viewpoint 03)

- 6.2.17 1&2 The Meadows can be seen in internal viewpoint photographs (view north) and Viewpoint 3. 1&2 the Meadows are semi-detached houses, in an elevated position north of a lane, located ~100m north of the north-western corner of the Site. The principal elevation of the houses faces south towards the Site.
- 6.2.18 Residents are likely to obtain partial views to parts of the proposed housing and church from both upper-storey and ground floor windows, although these would, be partly filtered by intervening trees of the site's northern boundary (disused railway track). It should be noted that these views will likely include the outbuildings of Brooklea in the lower foreground.
- 6.2.19 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Low magnitude of change resulting up to a **moderate** nature of effect

Residents of Parkside (See Viewpoint 04)

- 6.2.20 This group of properties is located ~120m north of the eastern end of the Site and extends up a hillside. Viewpoint 04 is located in a partially elevated position within Parkside. Upper parts of the lattice work pylon to the immediate north of the site's boundary are clearly visible.
- 6.2.21 Trees lining the River Mule and the site's northern boundary are likely to combine to heavily filter or screen views to the Proposed Development when in full leaf. However, in winter filtered views may be possible to parts of the Development, particularly from more elevated properties and windows.

Mitigating tree planting as part of the proposed development is likely to further filter and screen views as it establishes.

- 6.2.22 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Negligible magnitude of change resulting up to a **slight** nature of effect

6.3 Users of Long Distance Trails, Sustrans Routes and Public Rights of Way

Severn Way

- 6.3.1 Users of the Severn Way are unlikely to obtain views to the Proposed Development due to intervening vegetation and built form. Therefore the Proposed Development will result in **no effect** for users of the Severn Way.

Sustrans Route 81

- 6.3.2 Users of Sustrans Route 81 are unlikely to obtain views to the Proposed Development due to intervening vegetation and built form. Therefore the Proposed Development will result in **no effect** for users of Sustrans Route 81.

Public Rights of Way

- 6.3.3 Users are Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are likely to have very few opportunities to obtain views to the Proposed Development, due to the generally low density of PRoWs in close proximity to the Site and the combination of topography and vegetation. However, Viewpoint 05 shows one of the available views from a PRoW in the direction of the Site. In this view rooftops of the Proposed Development may be partially glimpsed amongst trees, although are at a separation distance such that they may be missed by the casual observer.
- 6.3.4 Considering the above factors, the proposed development is likely to result in a Negligible magnitude of change resulting up to a **slight** nature of effect

6.4 Road and Rail Receptors

- 6.4.1 For road and rail users in the Study Area the value of the views and susceptibility to change are considered to be Medium for these receptors, as the users may not be engaged specifically in landscape-related activities, but benefit from scenic surroundings. The sensitivity of these receptors is considered to be **Medium**.

Users of B4368 Kerry Road

- 6.4.2 The B4368 Kerry Road connects Abermule with Kerry, approximately 5km to the south. Viewpoints 01, 02, 06, 07 and 08 are all taken on the B4368 Kerry Road, adjacent or close to the Site (see Figure 7 for locations).
- 6.4.3 **Heading west:** Road users passing Viewpoint 06 would likely have no readily discernible view of the Proposed Development when the roadside shrubs are in leaf. However, when not in leaf they may have a partial, filtered, transient

glimpse view of the northern edge of the church building, with the majority of its form screened by the dense roadside hedge. It should be noted that as the proposed on-site mitigation planting matures this view would become heavily filtered such that the proposed development would not be readily discerned.

- 6.4.4 As road users pass the site itself they are likely to have no readily discernible views of the Proposed Development due to screening by the tall and dense roadside hedge (see Viewpoint 07), until they approach the entrance itself at Viewpoint 08. At this point it would have been clear already that users are entering a settlement as this view contains existing features such as built form of the Agrimont Depot, road signage and street lighting. The proposed entrance would be relatively inconspicuous and quickly passed, although a transient partial glimpse view to some of the proposed housing is likely. However any views to the proposed housing would be perceived in close association with the existing housing of Close Court and Abermule House.
- 6.4.5 **Heading east:** Road users would have likely crossed or passed near the level crossing and Agrimont Depot (Viewpoint 02). As road users pass Court Close (Viewpoint 01) they would have a view of the proposed entrance. The entrance has been designed with hedges and tree planting to blend into the existing landscape and as such would appear relatively inconspicuous, particularly after this vegetation establishes. Initially, a transient partial glimpse view may be possible to the car parking and proposed church beyond, however, as mitigation planting matures this view is likely to be heavily filtered and possibly entirely screened when vegetation is in leaf. It should be noted that the proposed entrance is located to the fore of road signage and overhead power lines which are the last obvious indicators of the settlement's fringe.
- 6.4.6 For those road users heading in either direction, the translocation of the hedge along the B4368 and addition of pavement alongside the road to provide pedestrian access to the Site may be discernible, particularly with a temporary reduction in screening allowing more the proposed housing to be seen potentially. However, this reduction in screening will be temporary as the hedge re-establishes. The new length of roadside pavement, although discernible is unlikely to be particularly alter views for road users, particularly as it will be located in close association with existing development including Abermule House and Close Court.
- 6.4.7 Considering the above factors, notably the high level of screening, transient nature of views and the site entrances close association with existing development and urban fringe elements, the Proposed Development will result in a Low magnitude of change resulting up to a **Slight** nature of effect

Users of minor road to Parkside

- 6.4.8 Users of this road are likely to have no readily discernible views to the Proposed Development due to screening by the roadside hedge, except for a short section, heading southwards at Viewpoint 04. At this point, upper parts of the lattice work pylon to the immediate north of the site's boundary are clearly

visible. In this view trees lining the River Mule and the site's northern boundary are likely to combine to heavily filter or screen views to the Proposed Development when in full leaf. However, in winter filtered glimpse views may be possible to parts of the Development, although it should be noted that drivers would be preparing to navigate a sharp bend and any views would be transient.

- 6.4.9 Considering the above factors, the Proposed Development will result in a Negligible magnitude of change resulting up to a **Negligible** nature of effect

Users of Cambrian mainline railway.

- 6.4.10 Train passengers are unlikely to obtain clear views to the Proposed Development due to screening by intervening vegetation. Therefore the Proposed Development will result in **no effect** for users of the Cambrian mainline railway.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Landscape Effects

Landscape Elements

- 7.1.1 There is likely to be a **slight** landscape effect on the tree and hedge resource as result of the proposed development, this would be initially negative as a result of the loss of a section of hedgerow to allow for the Site's entrance. However, the effect is likely to become positive as proposed tree and hedge planting across the Site establishes, increasing the quantity and quality of the tree and hedge resource within the Site.

Landscape Character

- 7.1.2 The majority of the host LANDMAP Aspect Areas (Visual & Sensory, Cultural Landscape, Geological Landscape, and Landscape Habitats) are likely to sustain a **negligible** nature of effect, namely VSAA MNTGMVS650 River Severn Flood, CLAA MNTGMCL051 Rural Landscapes, GLAA Newtown, GLAA MNTGMGL414 Severn, GLAA MNTGMGL444 Kerry Hills and LHAA MNTGMLH056 Improved Grassland.
- 7.1.3 The host LANDMAP historic landscape aspect area (HLAA) MNTGMHL630 Upper Mule would sustain a **slight** nature of effect, due in part to its LANDMAP overall evaluation of Outstanding. All other LANDMAP Aspect Areas within the Study Area are likely to sustain **no effect** as a result of the proposed development.

Landscape Designations

- 7.1.4 No Landscape Designations are located within the Site or Study Area

Heritage Designations

- 7.1.5 No landscapes with heritage designations are located within the Site or Study Area. The two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) within the Study Area, namely Dolforwyn Castle and Bryn Derwen Mound and Bailey Castle are likely to sustain **no effect** as a result of the Proposed Development. Listed buildings within the Study Area are likely to sustain **no effect** as a result of the Proposed Development.

7.2 Visual Effects

Residential Receptors

- 7.2.1 The highest nature of effect would be **moderate**, for residents of Abermule House, 1 & 2 Court Close, and 1 & 2 The Meadows. Residents of Parkside and Brooklea would sustain no greater than a **slight** nature of effect.

Users of Long Distance Trails, Sustrans Routes and Public Rights of Way

- 7.2.2 Users of Public Rights of Way within the Study Area would sustain no more than a **slight** nature of effect as a result of the Proposed Development. Users of Severn Way and Sustain Route 81 are likely to sustain **no effect** as a result of the Proposed Development.

Road and Rail Users

- 7.2.3 Users of the B4368 Kerry Road will sustain up to a **slight** nature of effect as a result of the Proposed Development. Users of the minor road to Parkside will sustain a **negligible** nature of effect as result of the Proposed Development. Users of Cambrian mainline railway are likely to sustain **no effect** as result of the Proposed Development.

7.3 Conclusion

- 7.3.1 The Proposed Development is likely to generate no greater than **slight** landscape effects, and no greater than **moderate** visual effects for residents of five nearby properties and **slight** visual effects for the users of B4368 Kerry Road. It is important to note that the Proposed Development will be relatively well screened, adjacent to existing development and of a design such that landscape and visual effects will be highly localised. Given the above factors, both the Site and the Proposed Development are considered suitable and acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

Appendix 1: Methodologies

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) Overview

Landscape and Visual Appraisal is a tool used to inform planning decisions on the likely effects of a Proposed Development upon the landscape resources and visual amenity experienced in a given area.

The methodology has been developed in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute, which is generally regarded as the industry standard. In accordance with GLVIA3, the scope of this assessment has been tailored in response to the scale of the Proposed Development, to provide information that is “appropriate and proportional” for the understanding of the Proposed Development in its context (para. 1.17).

As the title suggests, LVAs are composed of two types of assessment – the first of which is concerned with effects upon the landscape (i.e. physical changes) and the second is concerned with the visual effects experienced by people.

This assessment is based on a desktop study of publicly available information, specialist computer modelling, and field work undertaken on the Site and study area.

This LVA includes the following:

- A description of the landscape and visual baseline of the Site and study area;
- a description of the policies, plans and designations which are relevant to the proposal, and;
- analysis of the landscape character associated with the Site and study area;
- a description of the development including its location and layout, expected timescale for construction, operation, design and specification, description of installation methods, and reasonable estimates of activity associated with construction and operation;
- identification and description of potential landscape and visual receptors and their sensitivity to change;
- consideration of the phasing, timescale, reversibility and potential mitigation measures which could be incorporated into the Proposed Development.

It is important to note that this assessment contains objective information and subjective judgements based on professional opinion. Subjectivity is avoided as much as possible by focusing on the objective description of the changes to views, rather than potential viewers reactions to these changes.

Assessment Methodology

The methodology described here attempts to provide a concise summary of the logic used in this assessment. The general framework is $A + B = C$. ‘A’ being sensitivity, ‘B’ being Magnitude and ‘C’ being Nature of Effect. However, individual receptors and effects are considered on a case-by-case basis, which is explained in descriptive text within the main body of the report. In accordance with GLVIA3, we place an emphasis on descriptive text rather than tabular matrices.

The terminology used in LVAs may vary slightly from one author or practice to another. This assessment attempts to use the terminology which is current (based on GLVIA3) and reflects

best practice. The term 'Nature of Effect' replaces what would in EIA be termed 'Significance of Effect'. Because the terminology of Significance has a specific legal weight in EIA, it is avoided here in a non-EIA project.

The key terms used in this assessment are:

Sensitivity – of both landscape and visual receptors, based on Susceptibility and Value;

Magnitude of Change – based on the Scale, Duration and Extent of an effect;

Nature of effect - Major, Moderate, Slight, Negligible or No Change. (No Change scenarios may be largely scoped out of the assessment in the early stages of identifying receptors.)

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

The Susceptibility to Change of landscape receptors describes the landscape's ability to maintain its baseline condition while accommodating development. Determining Susceptibility is reliant on the interaction between the specific landscape in question and the specific development in question, therefore it does not form part of the baseline information (as recorded landscape character studies might record 'Sensitivity') but is part of the assessment of effects. (GLVIA3 para. 5.42). The Susceptibility of a landscape to development is recorded on a verbal scale of High, Medium to Low, with justification for the judgement provided. Examples of landscape susceptibility are described below:

High – landscapes which are highly cohesive, in good condition, with historical and vernacular features intact and low levels of development. These landscapes are likely to be subject to conservation designations.

Medium – landscapes in which some development is seen, but which are still largely intact and cohesive, in good condition, with some historical features.

Low – landscapes which are generally regarded as being in poor condition, in which a large degree of change is present, with discordant features and little historical or vernacular character is present.

Value of Landscape Receptors

The Value of the landscape considers the importance of that landscape to society. Landscape designations are considered as a starting point, but individual elements may also be considered, such as geological formations or tree planting. Examples of landscape valuation are given below:

High – Landscapes of international importance, such as AONBs, National Trails, World Heritage Sites, and National Parks. Registered Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Ancient Monuments may also be included depending on their listing.

Medium – Locally valued recreational landscapes, such as Country Parks, popular trails, Open Access Land or well-known areas of scenic beauty. Everyday landscapes valued by the local community, such as residential neighbourhoods.

Low – Landscapes which are dominated by commercial and industrial development and/or with little evidence of being valued by the community.

Table 1: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Landscape Value	Susceptibility to Change		
	High	Medium	Low
High	High	Medium-High	Medium
Medium	Medium-High	Medium	Medium-Low
Low	Medium	Medium-Low	Low

Susceptibility to Change of Visual Receptors

Visual receptors are always people, but may be classed in different categories dependent upon the activities engaged in at the location where the view is experienced. For example:

High – This category is for viewers engaged in activities involving enjoyment of the landscape, or for views from residential properties, which may be of significance for the inhabitants due to the long term experience of such views, or the limited availability of views. Of particular susceptibility are residential properties with views experienced from the main living spaces of a dwelling, such as living rooms, kitchens and to some degree gardens, where views may be part of the enjoyment of the property, and are experienced in daylight hours. Users of well-known recreational footpaths and public open spaces designed for landscape appreciation and visitors to historic properties may also be considered highly susceptible to change.

Medium – This category covers viewers who are not primarily engaged in landscape enjoyment, but views may add to their experience. This includes visitors to hospitals, offices, places of worship, sports grounds, schools, National Cycle Routes and users of roads where the speed of travel is low enough to allow enjoyment of scenery.

Low – This category is for viewers who are engaged in activities which have no relationship to the landscape, generally workers or others engaged in industrial, retail or high speed travel activities.

Value of Visual Receptors' Views

The value of a view is closely linked to its susceptibility, but the differentiation helps to distinguish between views that may relate to a given receptor, but which might themselves be of a different value, i.e. a view from a residential property over an industrial complex, or a view from a motorway which provides panoramas over an AONB.

High – Highly valued views include those that take in views associated with a designated or promoted landscape, public viewpoints associated with historic assets, or close range views of townscapes. Unrestricted, panoramic views of the countryside or seascape may also be highly valued.

Medium – Restricted or compromised views of open countryside, heritage assets or townscape.

Low – Unrestricted views of degraded landscapes, close range views of industrial or infrastructure features.

Table 2: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Value of View	Susceptibility to Change		
	High	Medium	Low
High	High	Medium-High	Medium
Medium	Medium-High	Medium	Medium-Low
Low	Medium	Medium-Low	Low

Scale of Effect

The scale of an effect applies equally to landscape and visual receptors, and identifies the degree of change likely to occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Large scale – changes which will result in a major alteration of key elements, qualities and characteristics, to such a degree that the post-development landscape or visual experience will be fundamentally altered in character from the baseline.

Medium scale – changes which will partially alter some key characteristics of the baseline landscape or view, creating a noticeable change.

Small scale – changes which result in only minor alterations to key characteristics and the baseline situation is largely unchanged.

Negligible – changes which result in very minor alterations to the baseline situation, and are likely to be missed by the casual observer.

Duration of Effect

The duration of an effect identifies the period of time over which the change to the receptor would be perceived.

Permanent effects – relate to changes for which there is no intention of reversal, such as the construction of a house.

Long term effects – are changes which are likely to be in place for 10 to 25 years, with changes being fully reversible.

Medium term effects – are changes which are likely to be in place for 2 to 10 years, and may be fully reversible. The life span of a stand of coppice is an example.

Short term effects – are changes which are in place for up to 2 years, and are fully reversible. These include construction phase effects of renewable energy developments.

Extent of Effect

This describes the geographic area over which an effect is perceived.

Localised effects – cover the Site and its immediate environs, up to 100m distance from site

Medium range effects – cover an area between 100 and 500m from the Site boundary.

Long range effects – covers an area over 500m from the Site boundary.

Magnitude of Change

The Magnitude of Change relates equally to Landscape and Visual Receptors, and is based on the scale, duration and extent of the effects.

High Magnitude effects are those which encompass permanent to long term changes of medium to large scale, and large scale changes over a wide extent.

Medium Magnitude effects are those which may be of large scale, but localised extent or short term duration, or of medium scale with an intermediate extent, or medium term duration.

Low Magnitude effects are those which may be of small to medium scale and/or of a medium to short term duration or extent.

Degree of Effect

'Nature of Effect' replaces Significance in the EIA terminology, in this non-EIA context. Nature of Effect considers the Sensitivity of the Receptor in combination with the Magnitude of Change resulting from the proposal. (Where deemed appropriate, a hyphenation of two categories indicates an effect falling somewhere between the two.)

Table 3: Nature of Effect

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
High	Major	Moderate-Major	Moderate
Medium	Moderate-Major	Moderate	Slight
Low	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Negligible	Slight	Negligible	Negligible

In some cases the Magnitude of Change may be considered to be low enough such that the Nature of Effect would be Negligible for a High sensitivity receptor.

Photography

The photographic fieldwork for LVA is carried out in fair weather conditions, such as sun, partly cloudy or high white overcast. Ideally LVA fieldwork takes place in the winter, to avoid obstruction of views by trees and hedges in leaf, ensuring a “worst case scenario” for visibility. Fieldwork for this project was carried out in March in fair weather conditions, with trees in partial leaf.

The camera used for viewpoint photography was a Nikon D3200 digital SLR. Shots were taken from ~1.6m above ground.

Both panorama and single-frame photographs are supplied where available and annotated to aid assessment.

Panoramas

Panoramas are included to give contextual information to the viewer regarding the landscape beyond the photomontage. They are not intended to cover specific angles of view or to be viewed at a specific distance. The panoramas are produced using the Adobe Photoshop. An approximate 30% overlap was used.

Appendix 2: Figures

NB: All figures intended to be printed at A3.

Figure 1: Study Area

Figure 2: Topography

Figure 3 LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas

Figure 4 LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Aspect Areas

Figure 5 LANDMAP Historic Landscape Aspect Areas

Figure 6: Heritage Designations

Figure 7: Viewpoint Locations

Appendix 3: Visual Record

Panorama photographs from site

- Internal Site Views: West and North
- Internal Site Views: East and South

Viewpoint panoramas and single-frame photographs

- Viewpoint 01 Panorama - Court Close
- Viewpoint 01 Single Frame - Court Close
- Viewpoint 02 Panorama - Level Crossing
- Viewpoint 02 Single Frame -Level Crossing
- Viewpoint 03 Panorama - The Meadows
- Viewpoint 03 Single Frame - The Meadows
- Viewpoint 04 Panorama - Parkside
- Viewpoint 04 Single Frame - Parkside
- Viewpoint 05 Panorama - PRoW to north
- Viewpoint 05 Single Frame - PRoW to north
- Viewpoint 06 Single Frame - Kerry Road 1 (bend to east of Site)
- Viewpoint 07 Single Frame - Kerry Road 2 (near proposed church)
- Viewpoint 08 Single Frame - Kerry Road 3 (near proposed Site)

Appendix 4: References

Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third edition; Spon Press, London (2013).

Landscape Institute (2011) Photography and photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment, Advice note 01/11, London: Landscape Institute.

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