

CPAT Report No. 1945




**Bluebell Fields, Wrexham Road,
Abermorddu**

Heritage Impact Assessment



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Summary

This Historic Impact assessment was carried out to determine the potential impact of a proposed housing development at Bluebell Field, Abermorddu on nearby designated assets including Caergwrle Castle, Bryn Iorcyn Hall and gardens, Wat's Dyke and Caer Estyn Hillfort.

The assessment has found there to be a slight indirect impact on Caergwrle Castle because of continued urban encroachment on the open space surrounding the castle, although there would also be an opportunity for more publicly accessible areas from which the castle can be clearly viewed from the new housing estate.

This assessment has determined that there is no discernible change to other local designated assets such as Wat's Dyke, Bryn Iorcyn Hall and gardens and Caer Estyn. Previous targeted archaeological evaluations on the site did not produce any significant archaeological evidence.

This assessment produced some minor amendments to the baseline of the site's archaeological potential with possible industrial features visible on an 18th century painting of Caergwrle Castle viewed from the direction of the proposed development, as well as topographic features noted on National Environment Agency LiDAR data and visible on site.

Crynodeb

Cwblhawyd yr asesiad hwn o Effaith Hanesiol i gadarnhau effaith bosibl datblygiad tai arfaethedig yn Bluebell Field, Abermorddu ar asedau dynodedig, gan gynnwys Castell Caergwrle, Neuadd Bryn Iorcyn a'r gerddi, Clawdd Wat a bryngaer Caer Estyn.

Daeth yr asesiad i'r casgliad y byddai effaith anuniongyrchol fach ar Gastell Caergwrle oherwydd llechfeddiant trefol parhaus i'r ardal agored o amgylch y castell, er y byddai cyfle hefyd ar gyfer ardaloedd sy'n fwy hygyrch i'r cyhoedd fel bod modd gweld y castell yn glir o'r stad dai newydd.

Mae'r asesiad hwn wedi dod i'r casgliad nad oes unrhyw newid amlwg i'r asedau dynodedig lleol eraill, fel Clawdd Wat, Neuadd Bryn Iorcyn a'r gerddi a Chaer Estyn. Ni chynhyrchodd gwerthusiadau archaeolegol blaenorol wedi'u targedu ar y safle unrhyw dystiolaeth archaeolegol sylweddol.

Cynhyrchodd yr asesiad hwn rai mân newidiadau i linell sylfaen potensial archaeolegol y safle, gyda nodweddion diwydiannol posibl i'w gweld ar baentiad o'r 18fed ganrif o Gastell Caergwrle o gyfeiriad y datblygiad arfaethedig, yn ogystal â nodweddion topograffig a nodwyd ar ddata LiDAR Asiantaeth Genedlaethol yr Amgylchedd ac a oedd i'w gweld ar y safle.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Castle Green Developments has commissioned the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment for proposed housing development located in close proximity to one scheduled monument and within 1km of a further two. The assessment was required by Cadw in order to provide informed advice to Flintshire County Borough Council in determining whether planning permission would be justified.
- 1.2. Planning application FUL/000769/22 was registered on 12th December 2022 for the erection of 70 dwellings, construction of a new vehicular access, landscaping and associated works on land located to the west of Wrexham Road, Abermorddu, Flintshire.
- 1.3. The site is located at National Grid Reference SJ 30771 56767 encompassing one large and two small pastoral fields to the west of Wrexham Road (Figure 1). The larger field which adjoins Wrexham Road slopes towards the east and consists of meadow grassland situated at the foot of a steep-sided hill to the west. The two smaller fields to the south, which are divided by a remnant tree boundary, are also pastoral meadows and contain a small play area associated with the adjacent modern housing estate.
- 1.4. Possible heritage constraints in relation to the proposed development were raised by Cadw on the 22nd of March 2023 after initial documentation was deemed inadequate in providing sufficient information for a balanced decision relating to the Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 24 Historic Environment and associated guidance. The primary concern raised by Cadw was that the initial advice had not taken into consideration the proximity of nationally significant scheduled assets, one of which, Caergwrle Castle, is located less than 200m to the north of the development boundary.
- 1.5. As a result, Cadw requested that a Historic Impact Assessment should be undertaken to assess the impact of the proposed development on the setting of nearby scheduled monuments, with a particular emphasis on the impact on Caergwrle Castle. It was stipulated that this assessment must be undertaken by a qualified organisation or individual following the methodology outlined in the Welsh Government's best-practice guidance, 'Setting of Historic Assets in Wales' (2017). As such, this assessment follows a four-stage process that identifies historic assets impacted by the proposed development, defines the settings of the identified assets, summarises the proposed development, evaluates the impact of the development, and makes recommendations for further mitigation.
- 1.6. A previous planning application for this site had been submitted in 2018 by Clark Estate developers (FUL/000769/22), who had also been responsible for the development to the southwest of the site. As part of the 2018 application, an archaeological assessment was carried out that included a magnetometry survey followed by a targeted 5 trench evaluation. A summary of results retained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust planning advisor indicated that both the survey and the resulting evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological deposits. A report has not been submitted to the Historic Environment Record, however, and therefore further details have not been accessible at the time of this assessment.

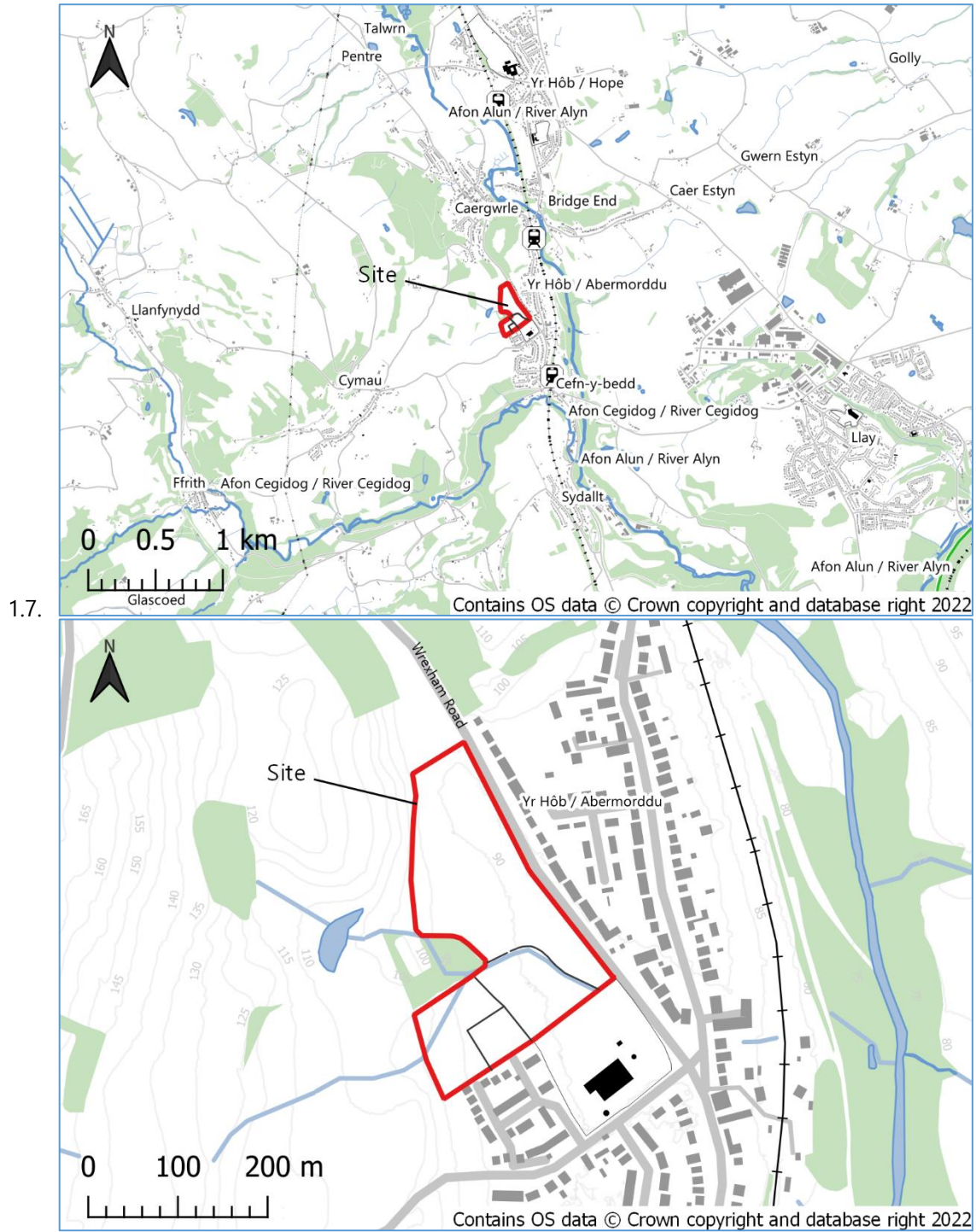


Figure 1 Location of proposed development

2 Planning policy and guidance

- 2.1. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is the primary statutory tool for protecting historic assets and sustainable management of the historic environment. It is designed to enable greater transparency into decisions taken on the historic environment and to make it a statutory requirement for information on the historic environment to be safe-guarded for the public good.
- 2.2. The Well-being of Future Generations Act of 2015 defines sustainable development as 'the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action ... aimed at achieving the well-being goals'. It requires public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term impact of their decisions, and whether such decisions contribute to social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being in Wales.
- 2.3. The national policy within Wales is set out in Planning Policy Wales Edition 11, December 2021 ("PPW"), within which Section 6.1 The Historic Environment (part of the chapter on Distinctive and Natural Places) explains the need for a reasonable and proportionate impact assessment to ensure Proposed Development is sustainable and to prevent unnecessary harm to historic assets.
- 2.4. PPW is supported by Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (May 2017) which is designed to assist local authorities with developing their local plans and for determination of planning applications or listed building consent in relation to historic assets.
- 2.5. The three principal guidance documents that will be followed in this assessment are those produced by Cadw on behalf of the Welsh Government for managing historic assets:
 - Conservation Principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales (March 2011) to establish objective assessment of the value and significance of historic assets within and surrounding the Proposed Development site;
 - Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (2017); and
 - Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales (May 2017)
- 2.6. Cadw's Conservation Principles (page 18) states that in Managing Change to an Historic Asset: *"Changes to historic assets are inevitable To ensure the long-term future of historic assets, change needs to be managed to ensure that their significance is not diminished as a consequence"* and paragraph 47 *"When considering the severity of potential impacts upon an historic asset, there should always be proportionality and reasonableness"*. The heritage assessment reported upon in the current document has used these key aims of the guidance to ensure the results of the study are focused on a proportionate response to potential impacts on heritage significance from any identified change resulting from the Proposed Development.
- 2.7. The Flintshire County Council Local Development Plan (2011) was superseded in 2015 by the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (FUDP) which incorporates several policies relevant to the assessment of the impact on heritage assets. These include:

Policy STR8, The Built Environment, seeks to protect the historic environment of the County but allowing for sensitive regeneration. This incorporates:

- a) *the setting and integrity of the historic environment of the County, including listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology and historic landscapes, parks and gardens; and;*
- b) *the regeneration of areas through the sensitive improvement, renovation, and redevelopment of appropriate suitable brownfield land and buildings*

Policy HE6 seeks to protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important archaeological sites. Development that would remove, damage or obscure a Scheduled Ancient Monument or other nationally important archaeological site, or its setting, will not be permitted.

- 2.8. Flintshire County Council have also provided supplementary planning guidance (SPG) from January 2017 which supports the FUDP by encouraging early discussion between developers, the local planning authority and where appropriate the regional archaeological trust.

3 Assessment Outline

- 3.1. The guidance issued by Cadw in 'the Setting of Historic Assets in Wales' (May 2017) and Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales (May 2017) promotes a staged approach to assessing assets, their historic significance, and the potential impacts from development. These stages have been adopted by this document, with particular focus placed on historic assets highlighted by Cadw in their letter of advice dated 22nd of March 2023.
- 3.2. The key aspects of the proposed development that might affect the historic environment include elements such as visual dominance, scale, intervisibility, unaltered setting and historic urban development which can all form part of the criteria for assessment.
- 3.3. Once relevant assets are identified and discussed, this assessment outlines the existing baseline for the monument's setting, from which the degree of impact can be assessed. The level of impacts and effects are categorised as direct or indirect, adverse or beneficial, and short-term, long-term, reversible or permanent. Direct impacts are those which physically alter an asset and therefore its heritage significance; indirect impacts are those which affect the heritage significance of an asset by causing change within its setting. The significance of the effect is derived from a matrix scoring the importance and sensitivity of the historic asset against the magnitude of impact. The criteria for this assessment is outlined in Appendix 2.

4 Stage 1: Identify the Designated Historic Assets

- 4.1. Cadw's advice letter to the planning authority dated 22/03/23 states: "*The proposed development is located some 200m south of scheduled monument FL020 Caergwrle Castle and some 500 east of registered park and garden PGW(C)6(FLT) Bryn Iorcyn and is potentially inter-visible with these designated historic assets. This will be a material consideration in the determination of this application (see Planning Policy Wales 2021, section 6.1.23 and section 6.1.19)*".
- 4.2. The following sections, therefore, address the specific requirements of the Cadw advice by describing the assets that might be affected by the proposed development, assessing their historic significance, and how they might be impacted by development, in accordance with the *Settings of Historic Assets* and other guidance referenced in section 2.5 above.

- 4.3. Within a 1km radius of the site boundary there are three scheduled ancient monuments, one designated park and garden and 16 listed buildings. These assets are illustrated in Appendix 3 Map 1 and include other non-designated assets discussed within this section.
- 4.4. Table 1 outlines the assets identified by this assessment as being most affected by the proposed development. This is based on the initial statement from Cadw as well as the proximity and visual connection of each asset to the proposed development,

Table 1: Designated assets identified as having potential impact

| Reference | Type | Asset Name | Distance from site |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| FL020 | SAM | Caergwrle Castle | 190m north |
| LB-29 | Listed Building | Plas-yn-Bwl Grade II* | 265m northwest |
| PGW(C)6(FLT) | Garden | Bryn Iorcyn | 470m west |
| FL066 | SAM | Caer Estyn Hillfort | 740m northeast |
| FL119 | SAM | Wat's Dyke: Section N of Rhydun Farm | 810m northeast |

5 Stage 2: Define and Analyse the Setting

- 5.1. This section aims to define and analyse the setting of each monument outlined within Stage 1, to provide both a historic and contemporary baseline that defines the monument's relationship with its historic and existing surroundings. As urban growth is a significant factor that is likely to impact all the identified assets, this has been separately analysed within this section.

FL020 Caergwrle Castle

- 5.2. Caergwrle Castle (also known as Queens Hope Castle) is a scheduled monument (FL020) considered to be of significant national importance, partly due to its association with a defining event in Welsh history. The monument is comprised of the upstanding ruins of the last medieval masonry castle to be built by the Welsh prior to the invasion of Edward I.
- 5.3. Caergwrle Castle was first erected by Dafydd ap Gruffydd, brother of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (known as Llywelyn the last) in about 1278. The castle's construction was granted by the king of England, Edward I, after gifting Dafydd the lordship of Hope as a reward for his support during the conflict against his brother Llywelyn. Dafydd eventually changed sides, abandoning the castle and damaging its defences to prevent it falling into English hands.
- 5.4. By 1282 the castle was taken and refurbished by Edward I who gifted it to his queen Eleanor but was destroyed by fire on 27th August 1282 before it could be completed. In 1308 the ruined castle was granted to John of Cromwell on condition that he repair it, but no renovations appear to have taken place, with the site remaining ruinous by 1335 (Manley, 1994).
- 5.5. The castle is believed to have been established on the site of an earlier fortification, which is today defined by a significant earthwork that extends eastwards from the castle. Radiocarbon dates obtained from the enclosure during excavations in the 1990s produced an early medieval date, giving the site possible associations with the Mercian settlement of Corley, for which

Caergwrle is likely derived, however, its origin remains broadly attributed to either Late Romano-British or Early Post-Roman, and may also represent the reoccupation of an earlier Iron Age hillfort.

5.6. The scheduling description records the remains as follows:

The castle is defended on the north and east sides by a rock-cut ditch and counterscarp bank. The remains of the late thirteenth-century masonry castle are set at the south-south-west angle of an irregular enclosure defining the relatively level summit of a steep-sided hill. Excavation demonstrated that this enclosure, roughly 110m north-west to south-east by 120m, had been defined by a stone-revetted wall, radio-carbon dating indicating an early medieval date.

The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of medieval defensive practices. The monument is well-preserved and an important relic of the medieval landscape. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of both structural evidence and intact associated deposits. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive."

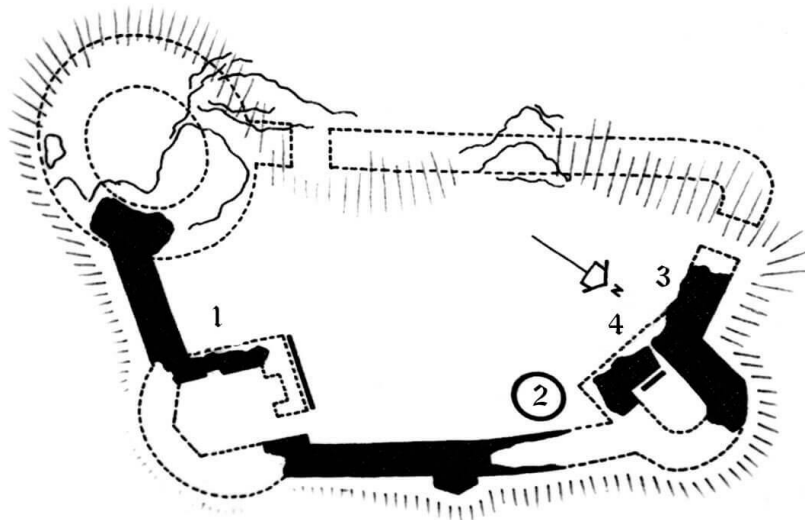


Figure 2: Plan of the upstanding remains of Caergwrle Castle

- 5.7. Cadw defines a castle as "a defended residence or stronghold, built mainly of stone, in which the principal or sole defence comprises the walls and towers bounding the site...". Their purpose was not only defensive but also administrative, often being strategically situated with emphasis placed on both views and routeways. This can be considered a defining aspect in the setting of castles and therefore is worthy of consideration in this assessment.
- 5.8. The castle is situated on a natural promontory located at a pinch point between the east-facing Welsh hillsides and the River Alyn, which is likely to have been a significant routeway during the medieval period. This is later represented by a road noted in the 17th century Ogilby maps and the establishment of the Wrexham to Mold Turnpike Road in 1757 (Map 1 at end of this report) which still exists today as the main thoroughfare that runs north-south past the castle. These routeways from the south and north in conjunction with natural boundaries can be considered significant aspects in the setting of the castle as they directly relate to its defence and administrative functions.

- 5.9. By design, the position of the castle on a natural mound would have not only given the castle commanding views over strategic routeways, but also made it clearly visible for some distance along the road to the north and south, and from the immediate surrounding area. Today, the castle is only visible between gaps in the forestry, which is only observable from Mold Road and Bryn Yorkin Lane in Caergwrlle to the north and from Wrexham Road and Bluebell Field in Abermorddu to the south. The view of the castle is largely obscured from the east and west by the forestry that now dominates the hilltop, however, the trees are a relatively modern addition to the site and were not present in the 18th century (Figure 4) or as late as the mid-20th century.

FL119 Wat's Dyke

- 5.10. To the east of the proposed development is the route of Wat's Dyke, a significant linear earthwork similar to the nearby Offa's Dyke, both of which are believed to represent early historic boundary markers that signify the changing border between the Welsh Kingdoms and the kingdom of Mercia.
- 5.11. The scheduled extent of the monument, which represents the most intact section of the earthwork in this area, runs north to south along the eastern edge of the village of Hope (810m to the north-north-east of the proposed development). The projected route of the earthwork takes it close to the River Alyn, where excavations have identified the ditch to the south of Rhydun Hall (Hill, 2020) and shown in HER as PRN 106666 (see Appendix 3 Map 1). This non-designated section of the route is located 330m to the east of the proposed development.
- 5.12. Due to the scale of the earthwork, the primary function of the dyke is considered to denote administrative and political boundaries associated with the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Mercia but is also regarded as a defensive feature against Welsh incursion from the West. Therefore, the earthwork was designed to be clearly seen as a marked border from the west as well as forming a nominal defensive obstacle.
- 5.13. The scheduling description records the remains as follows:

Wat's Dyke runs south from Holywell to the Morda Valley near Maesbury. Wat's dyke consists of an earthen bank, often utilising local topography and fronted, where it survives, by a ditch to the west. The size of the surviving earthworks varies considerably, reflecting differences in preservation and probably also in the original scale of construction.

The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of early medieval defensive organisation and settlement. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. A linear earthwork may be part of a larger cluster of monuments and their importance can be further enhanced by their group value. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

FL066 Caer Estyn

- 5.14. Caer Estyn, which is located 770m to the northeast of the proposed development, comprises the remains of a defended enclosure or hillfort likely dating to the Iron Age period (c. 800 BC - AD 74), but may have Late Bronze Age origins and continued activity during the Roman and early Post Roman periods.
- 5.15. The hillfort is defined by ramparts and ditches which are both defensive features that are also designed to be visible from a great distance. The hilltop that the hillfort occupies sits within

the predominantly flat land that extends eastwards from the hills of Caergwrle and Hope Mountain and therefore is clearly visible at a significant distance from the north, south and east.

5.16. Today, the earthworks are almost completely obscured by dense vegetation, resulting in the hillfort not being visible from afar.

5.17. The scheduling description records the remains as follows:

The earthworks of this hillfort can only be traced easily on the west and north-west sides, as a result of quarry damage. The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of later prehistoric defensive organisation and settlement. The site forms an important element within the wider later prehistoric context and within the surrounding landscape. The site is well preserved and retains considerable archaeological potential. There is a strong probability of the presence of evidence relating to chronology, building techniques and functional detail. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

PGW(C)6(FLT)b Bryn Iorcyn (Park) and Bryn Iorcyn Manor (LB06)

5.18. Located 470m to the west of the development, Bryn Iorcyn Gardens and Manor are registered well-preserved examples of utilitarian walled gardens and a seventeenth-century manor house, dove house, privy and corresponding farm buildings. The manor represents one of the most prominent local buildings and considered to be of significant archaeological importance.

5.19. The manor has a notable visual relationship with Caergwrle Castle, with part of the walled garden incorporating a window that gives views of the castle, however, this view was restricted to only the castle, with the lower-lying surroundings not being visible from the manor or its gardens (see Appendix 3 Map 5 at the end of this report).

5.20. The scheduling description for the gardens and Manor are as follows:

Bryn Iorcyn is situated on the east-facing side of Hope Mountain. A straight drive runs from the Bryn Iorcyn Lane on the east to Bryn Iorcyn Manor (Cadw LB: 6). Seventeenth-century gate piers (Cadw ref: LB 14339) are situated at the head of the drive. The gardens consist of a series of walled enclosures, shown as orchards on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1870s).

The house originated as a cruck house of at least 3 bays. There is some evidence to suggest that an original storeyed end of the cruck house survives in the form of ceiling beams which seem much heavier and more roughly finished than others in the building. During the C17 stone-built wings were added and floors inserted. The older part of the house was also encased in stone, but the stonework differs in character from that of the wings suggesting that this took place some time later. In c1700 Edward Lhwyd included Bryn Iorcyn in his list of houses of note in the area. At that time it was owned by Elis Young Esq. It later passed to the Shipley Conwys of Bodrhyddan by marriage.

Plas-yn-Bwl (Listed Building 29)

5.21. Located 270m to the northwest of the proposed development, this grade II* listed building was the seat of the Bold (or Bould) family, recorded as being already present in Caergwrle during the early 15th century. The house may be associated with notable historical figures including A Thomas de Bolde who was constable of Chester castle from 1433 until his death in

1436 and Richard Bolde who is recorded as Prothonotary of Chester and Clerk to the Crown in the middle of the C15. The house later fell under the ownership of the Yonges family (later known as the Bulls) of nearby Bryn Iorcyn, but by the late C17 the family appear to have died out altogether.

5.22. Edward Lhwyd (in 1699) gives reference to a chapel associated with the house, however, the exact location, or existence, of the chapel is disputed.

5.23. The scheduling description records the remains as follows:

T-shaped storied house constructed of squared freestone blocks (with evidence of former render); slate roofs with original kneelered stone gable parapet to the W gable. This has a projecting, gabled end chimney with squat C19 stack; rebuilt former central chimney to main section (now appearing as a lateral stack). Square stair projection to E, reduced in height and with sloping slate roof; crude kneelers. Modern windows and doors to front, contained within c1900 openings. To the rear adjoins a fragmentary former hall (?) range, now truncated and of one storey with lean-to roof. This retains a fine Tudor-arched entrance to its E wall, with hollow-chamfered moulding; this is now blocked up.

The Urban Development of Abermorddu and Caergwrle

Medieval settlement

5.24. Despite its Welsh form, the name Caergwrle in part has its origins in English meaning 'Fort of the crain wood', Caer being Fort in Welsh and *gwrle* derived from early English *cron* 'crane' and *lëah* 'wood' (Owen, 1998). There has been some suggestion that English derivative may have associations with a Mercian settlement on the banks of the River Alyn called Corley, however, aside from an early medieval date associated with the enclosure underlying Caergwrle Castle, this is mostly unsubstantiated.

5.25. Prior to the establishment of the masonry Castle there is very little known as to the extent of settlement activity in Caergwrle and Abermorddu. The focal point for Early Medieval settlement is likely to be on the other side of the River Alyn in Hope, a settlement which is noted in the Domesday Book under the Maelor Cymreag Hundred but is recorded as having two villages, the second likely being Caergwrle.

5.26. Whilst the castle itself had only been active for a relatively short time, once under English control, a town was established below the castle, and a charter allowed for four annual fairs and weekly markets (Silvester, et al., 2012). This is situated under what is now the core of Caergwrle village, located to the north of the castle and is evident as a distinct grid pattern that survives within the modern street plan.

5.27. There is reference to the existence of Abermorddu in 1378, referred to as Abermoelduy (Flintshire County Public Records, 1377-81, 233), and later as Aber mole in 1587 (Flintshire Record Office, D/GW/1113). However, the extent or exact location of this settlement is unclear, but it is likely to be relatively small. Its name could give reference to industrial activity, *Aber* meaning by the confluence or river mouth, *moel* meaning bare, both in Welsh and early English, and *ddu* meaning black. This may allude to coal mining waste, other industrial activity, or simply the name of a tributary joining the River Alyn.

5.28. In 1403 the town of Caergwrle was attacked by Glyndŵr's army and completely destroyed, which left a long-lasting impact, arguably diminishing it as a settlement to the point that it was no longer considered a town.

Post Medieval Settlement

- 5.29. There does not appear to have been any significant development around the castle in the Post-Medieval period. An estate map of c.1790 shows Caergwrle as having a relatively small population of a now nucleated settlement set within the grid pattern of its former town (Silvester, et al., 2012). A painting of Caergwrle castle viewed from the south by John Ingleby dated to 1798 (Figure 4) depicts Plas-yn-Bwl, a grade II* listed house with 15th century origins, with the area of the proposed development depicted on the bottom left-hand side. In this painting, the area to the south of the castle is shown as being open land. There is also some form of structure depicted in the bottom right-hand corner that may represent roadside industry or a well.
- 5.30. The area continued to be sparsely occupied in the mid 19th century, however, Abermorddu is depicted on the junction between the Wrexham to Mold Turnpike road, and Hawarden Road (Figure 3). By 1872, the first edition Ordnance Survey Map shows the establishment of the railway line between Wrexham and Bidston, which brought a development of industries in Caergwrle, Abermorddu and Cefn-y-Bedd. By the end of the 19th century, Caergwrle has significantly re-established itself, with the settlement now filling the former medieval grid pattern streets.
- 5.31. It isn't until after World War II that the housing of Abermorddu along Wrexham Road and the western side of Hawarden Road began to develop. The school and housing to the south of Bluebell Field was then developed in the latter half of the 20th century whilst further housing expanded along the Cymau road in 2018. This has left the fields to the west of Wrexham Road as the last remaining green space that once surrounded the castle (Figures 5 and 10).



Figure 3: Extract from the 1851 tithe map of Part of Hope parish in the County of Flint, location of development shown in red (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru – The National Library of Wales)



Figure 4: 1795 painting by John Ingleby showing the view of the castle ruins from the south



Figure 5: View from the site towards Caergwrle Castle and Plas-yn-Bwl

6 Stage 3: Proposed development

6.1. The proposed development of 70 dwellings, vehicular access and other associated works has been submitted by Castle Green Homes to Flintshire County council. This section outlines the details of the proposed development as defined in the planning design and access statement produced by Grimster Planning on behalf of Castle Green Homes (Grimster Planning, 2022).

Development brief

6.2. The proposed development as shown in Figure 6 will comprise the following:

- 14x 2-bed mid-end terraced properties (Affordable Homes).
- 6x 3-bed end terraced properties (Affordable Homes).
- 1x 3-bed end terraced corner property (Affordable Homes).
- 37x 3-bed properties (Open Market Homes).
- 12x 4-bed detached properties (Open Market Homes).
- a sub-station located to the south of Plot 10.
- vehicular access from Wrexham Road.
- public open space with pathways accessing existing playground facilities.

6.3. The proposed net density across the Site will be 33.92 dwellings per hectare. The cumulative net footage across the Site will equate to 3,450.25 square metres per hectare. The total combined proposed floorspace will equate to 76,428 square feet.

Structural design

6.4. Consideration has been given by the development design for the sympathetic addition to local architecture which complies with Flintshire County Councils guidelines on sustainable development, the aim of which is to mitigate any impact the development has on the existing character of Abermorddu.

6.5. All proposed dwellings have been restricted to a maximum of two storeys in height, which was also adopted by the recent Llys Clark development to the south-west.

6.6. The proposed mix of houses outlined in section 6.2 has been designed to mimic the organic development of housing within the local area, avoiding what would appear to be a mass addition of visually similar houses (Figures 7 - 9).

6.7. The layout has been designed to provide for the efficient use of the land to deliver 70 new homes, with only a small number of private gardens backing on to any of the Site boundaries (Plots 1-4). This will protect the residential amenity and privacy of future residents, as well as existing nearby dwellings/land uses, and prevent issues of overbearing and overlooking.

6.8. The proposed construction materials consist of the following:

The palette of materials proposed by the Applicant comprise facing brickwork with contrasting details and some render. Roof materials will likely include the use of slate-coloured concrete tiles. The palette of materials has been carefully considered with a view to ensuring a high-quality design which responds to the placemaking aspirations set out in the Local Development Plan (adopted and emerging) and PPW11. 4.25. Confirmation of the full and final materials palette can be dealt with by way of a pre-commencement planning condition(s) attached to any planning permission.



Figure 6: Plan of the proposed development (updated 3/05/2023)

Landscaping and environment

- 6.9. The proposed development aims to provide an area of open space set between the housing and the recent Llys Clark residential site to the southwest and the southern parcel of land adjoining Ysgol Abermorddu. This will incorporate the existing playground facilities established by the previous development with no proposed structural additions other than pathways linking the playground to the proposed housing and open public areas and an attenuation basin.
- 6.10. In respect to the Flintshire County Council's Unitary Development Plan (FUDP), the proposed development has been designed to retain as many of the existing trees and hedgerows as possible, however, there will be a small number of trees and hedgerows removed. This will be compensated for by replacement planting to include new and compensatory native trees and hedgerows, ornamental planting and wildflower seeding. The development also includes an attenuation basin as part of the surface water drainage strategy, located within the southern parcel of land.



Figure 7: Elevations of proposed terrace housing



Figure 8: Elevation of proposed detached housing



Figure 9: Elevation of proposed semidetached housing

7 Stage 4: Evaluate Potential Impact of Development

- 7.1. As part of this assessment, a limited site walkover was undertaken to assess the setting of the site and its relationship with nearby designated assets (Appendix 1). This has resulted in some potential changes to the previously established baseline assessment due to features observed on site and through GIS mapping.
- 7.2. It was noted on both the Natural Environment Agency LiDAR data (depicted in Appendix 3 Map 2) and observed during the site walkover that there is a slight earthwork present in the north-western corner of the proposed development that may represent some form of platform (labelled as A, Figure 16) or the remains of a former trackway (labelled as B) which are not depicted on any Ordnance Survey Mapping (Appendix 1, Figure 16). Feature C depicts linear striations consistent with cultivation, likely Early Post-Medieval to modern in date.
- 7.3. It was also noted that most of the site boundaries contain managed water channels, which on Historic Ordnance Survey mapping, are shown to feed the River Alyn via covered streams that underlie Abermorddu. There is a possibility that these streams could have served as a water supply for the 'Old Hope' colliery located to the east on the River Alyn and therefore may have been subject to historic alterations.

Significant heritage settings

- 7.1. There are several key heritage settings that have been identified in this assessment which may be impacted by the proposed development. These form the core of this assessment, for which the impact of the proposed development will be determined. The significance of these assets and their setting is defined by criteria set out in Table 2 of Appendix 2. These classifications have been highlighted in bold throughout this section.

Prehistoric settlement

Located to the east of the River Alyn is Caer Estyn hillfort, which, based on its preservation and scheduled status, can be considered as **high** importance. Visual dominance is a significant factor in the setting of hillforts, however, today the enclosure is completely obscured by forestry, as a result, only the hilltop itself is clearly visible from the site.

Early Medieval fortifications and administrative boundaries

- 7.2. Assets such as the Early Medieval phase of Caergwrle Castle as well as two of the most prominent linear earthworks in Britain, Wat's Dyke and Offa's Dyke (the latter situated a further 2.4Km to the west), demonstrate the continuous social and administrative change that defined the area during the Early Medieval period. As a group, these assets are of **high** importance.

There is very little known about the fortification that predates Caergwrle Castle, having received relatively little investigation in recent years, with this aspect of the site's past being largely overshadowed by the later masonry castle. This is further compounded by the lack of visibility of the surviving earthworks beyond what is visible from within the enclosure itself. The linear earthworks typically represent significant visual markers denoting not only defensive but administrative boundaries in the landscape, however, the sections closest to the site now only survive as non-designated sub-surface assets.

Caergwrle Castle and Medieval to Early Post-Medieval settlement

Despite its relatively short occupation, Caergwrle Castle is considered to be a significant historical asset in terms of both Welsh and British history, having played a key role during the end of Welsh independence and the invasion of Edward I. As a structure, the castle was designed to be an imposing symbol on the landscape, both commanding views over the eastern border of Wales and being purposely visible from afar. In its present condition however, the castle is almost completely obscured by dense foliage that has encroached on the castle within the last 100 years. As an asset, Caergwrle Castle can be considered to be of **high** importance.

In addition to the castle, the Grade II* listed building, Plas-yn-Bwl is located 275m to the northwest of the site boundary. The house is known to have been in existence during the 15th century but may have earlier origins. The house represents the remains of a significant stately home with possible connections to regional historical figures and therefore can be considered to be of **high** importance.

Industrial activity

- 7.3. Non-designated asset data held by the Historic Environment Record and references in 18th-century depictions of Caergwrle Castle have indicated some potential for small-scale industrial activity in the vicinity of the site. This also includes the proximity of an early 19th century coal mine, with records of coal having been extracted in the area since the Medieval Period, with the name Abermorddu possibly alluding to an industrial activity. Whilst the presence of this activity within the immediate vicinity of the site has not been confirmed, if present, it would be of negligible to low importance, but at this time can be considered as **unknown**.

Impact assessment

- 7.4. Appendix 2 Table 3 defines the criteria used in this assessment to determine the magnitude of impact and Table 4 the significance of the effect. These classifications have been highlighted in bold throughout this section.
- 7.5. Given the nature of the proposed development, all impacts noted in the following sections can be considered, unless otherwise stated, as adverse and permanent and with long-term effect.

Direct impacts

- 7.6. There are no known archaeological remains within the site and therefore the proposed development would, at present, be considered to have **no change** with a **neutral** impact. Previous archaeological investigations have identified limited potential for archaeological deposits, however, there may still be some limited potential for unknown subsurface archaeological features along the boundaries of the site which were not covered by previous archaeological investigations. The walkover survey and LiDAR analysis undertaken as part of this assessment also identified a possible platform or trackway that was not covered by the previous assessment. The 18th-century painting of Caergwrle castle covered in section 5.29 (Figure 4) depicts a possible roadside structure, likely small-scale early Post Medieval industrial activity. If any of these survive as buried remains within the site, then the impact posed by the development would be considered **minor – moderate**, and the significance of effect would be **slight**.

Indirect impacts

Intervisibility

- 7.7. As part of this assessment, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis was undertaken to help illustrate the intervisibility between key designated assets including Caergwrle Castle (Appendix 3 Map 3), Caer Estyn (Map 4), Bryn Iorcyn (Map 5) and Plas-yn-Bwl (Map 6). These models were produced using National Environment Agency LiDAR Digital Terrain Models (DTM) and therefore do not incorporate modern forestry and housing. This was undertaken to give an assessment of theoretical (and potential historic) visibility from the perspective of key assets identified by Cadw, which was then followed by the site walk-over survey which aimed to assess the modern inter-visibility.
- 7.8. Historically, Caergwrle Castle would have been more clearly visible, owing to significantly less surrounding tree coverage, with the visual modelling indicating that most of the proposed development site would have been visible from the castle, thus forming a small part of its historically rural surroundings. The agricultural landscape and small historic urban core of Caergwrle would have played an important role in the socio-economic activity of the Castle and its inhabitants, and so the Site forms a small part of the general setting that contributes to the heritage significance of the asset. Whilst the modern vegetation masks the majority of the scheduled monument, there remain certain areas where the ruins are still visible, one of which is the area of the proposed development, which provides the clearest view of the castle ruins from the southern approach (Figure 1818). Given the significance of the castle, this would therefore constitute a **Minor** accumulative impact on the historic rural setting. This therefore amounts to a **Slight Effect** on the asset's heritage significance.
- 7.9. The rural setting for the Grade II* listed Plas-yn-Bwl has within the last 100 years been encroached upon by the urban growth from Caergwrle, however, its southern prospect has remained relatively unaltered. The proposed development does not impact the fields

immediately to the south of Plas-yn-Bwl, and despite its depiction in the 18th century painting (Figure 4), there is no intervisibility with the site (Map 6). Therefore, there would be **no change**, with a **neutral** effect.

- 7.10. The visual modelling of Caer Estyn demonstrated that historically, the entirety of the proposed development site would have been intervisible with the hillfort. Today, the hilltop is still clearly visible within the skyline looking eastwards (Figure 14), so the asset can be understood and appreciated in its topographical setting, but due to the dense forestry, the enclosure itself is not recognisable from any direction. Although within its hinterland, the Site makes no specific contribution to the heritage significance of the hillfort, and therefore, the impact of the proposed development can be considered to have **no change** and is of **neutral** effect on the asset.
- 7.11. The visual modelling of Bryn Iorcyn demonstrated that there is no intervisibility between the asset and the proposed development, therefore the development can be considered to have **no change** on the asset with a **neutral** effect.
- 7.12. The closest, and only theoretically intervisible section of Wat's dyke, survives as a sub-surface non-designated asset. The Site makes no specific contribution to the heritage significance of the dyke, and therefore, the proposed development will result in **no change**, with a **neutral** effect.

8 Stage 5: Mitigation Options

- 8.1. Mitigation options for the impact on the character of the local settlement have already been considered as part of the project design approach. This has included; limiting the construction of all proposed dwellings to two stories, using sympathetic building material in keeping with local architecture, using a more varied design of buildings to better integrate with the organic development of the surrounding village, and limiting the density of housing to 70 dwellings.
- 8.2. Given the already limited visibility of the castle ruins due to forestry and the precedent set by historic urban encroachment within the setting of the castle, there is no obvious suitable mitigation strategy that could be incorporated into the current design.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1. As recommended by Cadw, this heritage impact assessment has followed due process in understanding the historic assets that would be affected by the proposed development by assessing the significance of the assets, the extent of the development, and how the proposals are likely to affect change in the settings of the identified assets.
- 9.2. This approach was undertaken in accordance with Cadw's recommended guidance and has resulted in the potential for a slight effect on Caergwrle Castle. This effect is defined by the further reduction of publicly accessible areas from which the castle can be clearly viewed from the south, and therefore appreciated as a monument in a locally prominent topographic position within a rural setting. The slight effect does not mean that there would not be opportunities from within the Site once the houses have been built, to appreciate and understand the castle in its setting, rather it means that experiencing the monument would change from seeing it in a rural context, to one that is more urbanised (see Figure 10). The Site forms only a very small part of the setting in which the castle can be appreciated, however, and therefore the change from the proposed development is not considered to represent a

significant adverse change, but instead it is an incremental erosion to the scheduled monument's historic context. This assessment has determined that there is no discernible change to other local designated assets such as Wat's Dyke, Bryn Iorcyn Hall and gardens, Plas-y-n-Bwl house and Caer Estyn.

9.3. The completion of this heritage impact assessment ensures the application has complied with both national and local policies, and provides Cadw with sufficient information to further advise on the proposed development.

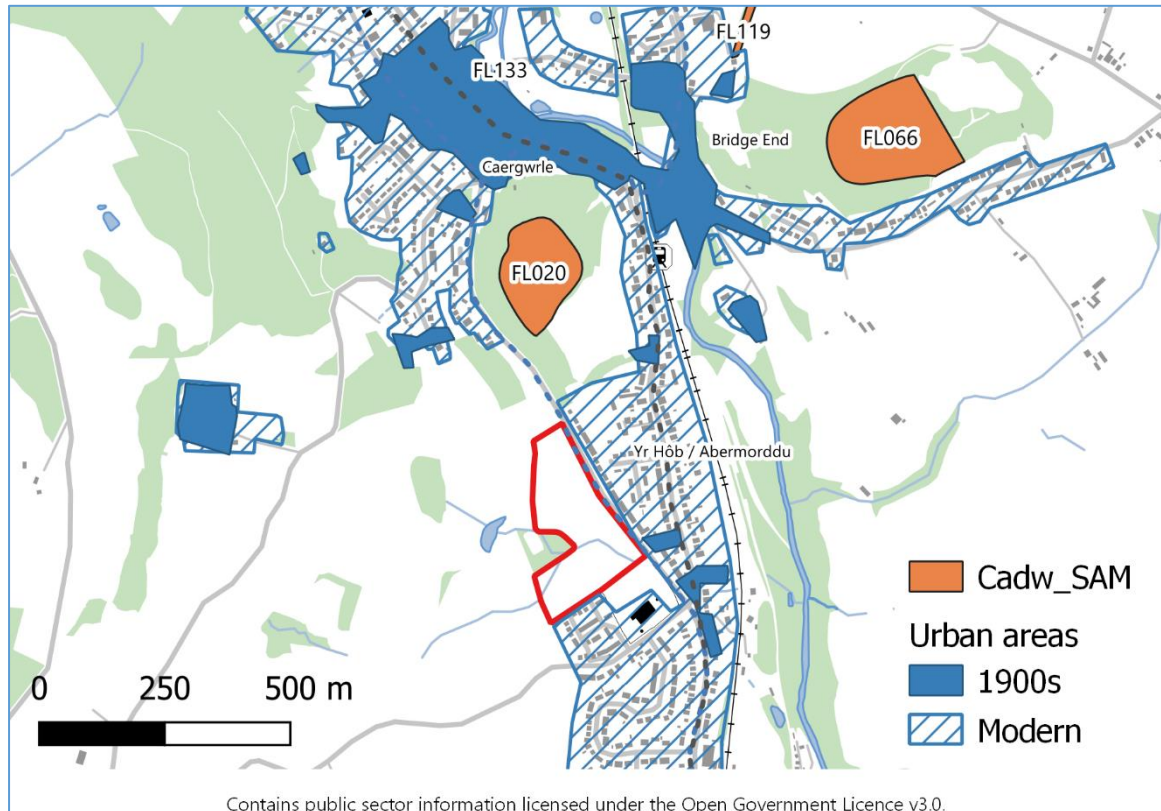


Figure 10: Extent of urban development in Abermorddu since 1900

National Guidance references

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Cadw May 2017. *Managing: Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales* Welsh Government

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Cartographic sources

- 1851 tithe map of Part of Hope parish in the County of Flint
- 1872 Ordnance Survey 6inch to the mile map Flintshire Sheet XVII
- 1909 Ordnance Survey 6inch to the mile map Denbighshire Sheet XXI.SE
- 1869 to 1962 Ordnance Survey 6inch to the mile map SJ35NW - A

Appendix 1: Site Visit Photographs



Figure 11: View of Caergwrl Castle from Bryn Yorkyn to the north (CPAT photo 5065-02)



Figure 12: Stream forming part of the southwestern boundary (CPAT photo 5065-05)



Figure 13 Coppice forming part of the southwestern boundary (CPAT photo 5065-07)



Figure 14: View of Caer Estyn from the development area (CPAT photo 5065-09)



Figure 15: Main development area viewed from the northwest corner (CPAT photo 5065-010)



Figure 16: Platform earthwork located in the northwest corner of the development area shown in Map 1 as feature 1 (CPAT photo 5065-11)



Figure 17: View of southwestern boundary and coppice (CPAT photo 5065-12)



Figure 18: View of Caergwrle Castle from the development area (CPAT photo 5065-13)



Figure 19: Coppice and streams forming the southern and southwestern boundary, viewed from the southern smaller field. (CPAT photo 5065-17)

APPENDIX 2 Criteria for assessment

The relative value (importance) of a heritage asset, as given in greater detail in DMRB (2007) is laid out in Table 2.

Table 2: Factors for Assessing the Value of Heritage Assets

| Factors for Assessing the Value of Heritage Assets | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Very High | World Heritage Sites (including those nominated). Assets of acknowledged international importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives. |
| High | Scheduled Monuments. Other monuments which could potentially be worthy of scheduling. Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives. |
| Medium | Conservation Areas and Grade II Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens. Non-designated assets that contribute to regional research objectives. |
| Low | Non-designated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with the potential to contribute to local research objectives. |
| Negligible | Assets with very little or no surviving heritage interest. |
| Unknown | The importance of the resource has not been ascertained. |

Factors that need to be considered in assessing the magnitude of the impact are given in Table 3, based on the DMRB (2007), but in modified form, for each historic environment sub-topic (archaeological remains, historic buildings, historic landscapes etc) has its own set of factors, which are set out in great detail in the Design Manual.

Table 3: Factors in the Assessment of the Magnitude of Impact

| Factors in the Assessment of Magnitude of Direct Impacts | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Major | Change to most or all key heritage elements, such that the resource is totally altered. |
| Moderate | Changes to many key heritage elements, such that the resource is clearly modified. |
| Minor | Changes to key heritage elements, such that the asset is slightly altered or different. |
| Negligible | Very minor changes to heritage elements. |
| No Change | No change. |

The significance of the effect of a development on a particular heritage asset is then established from the matrix (Table 4) also taken from the DMRB (2007).

Table 4: Matrix for Assessing the Significance of Effect of the Proposed Development upon Heritage Assets

| Magnitude of Impact | Value/Sensitivity of Heritage Asset | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Very High | High | Medium | Low | Negligible |
| Major | Very Large | Large/ Very large | Moderate/ Large | Slight/ Moderate | Slight |
| Moderate | Large/Very Large | Moderate/ Large | Moderate | Slight | Neutral/ Slight |
| Minor | Moderate/ Large | Moderate/ Slight | Slight | Neutral/ Slight | Neutral/ Slight |
| Negligible | Slight | Slight | Neutral/ Slight | Neutral/ Slight | Neutral |
| No change | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral | Neutral |

APPENDIX 3 Additional notes and Mapping

Non designated assets

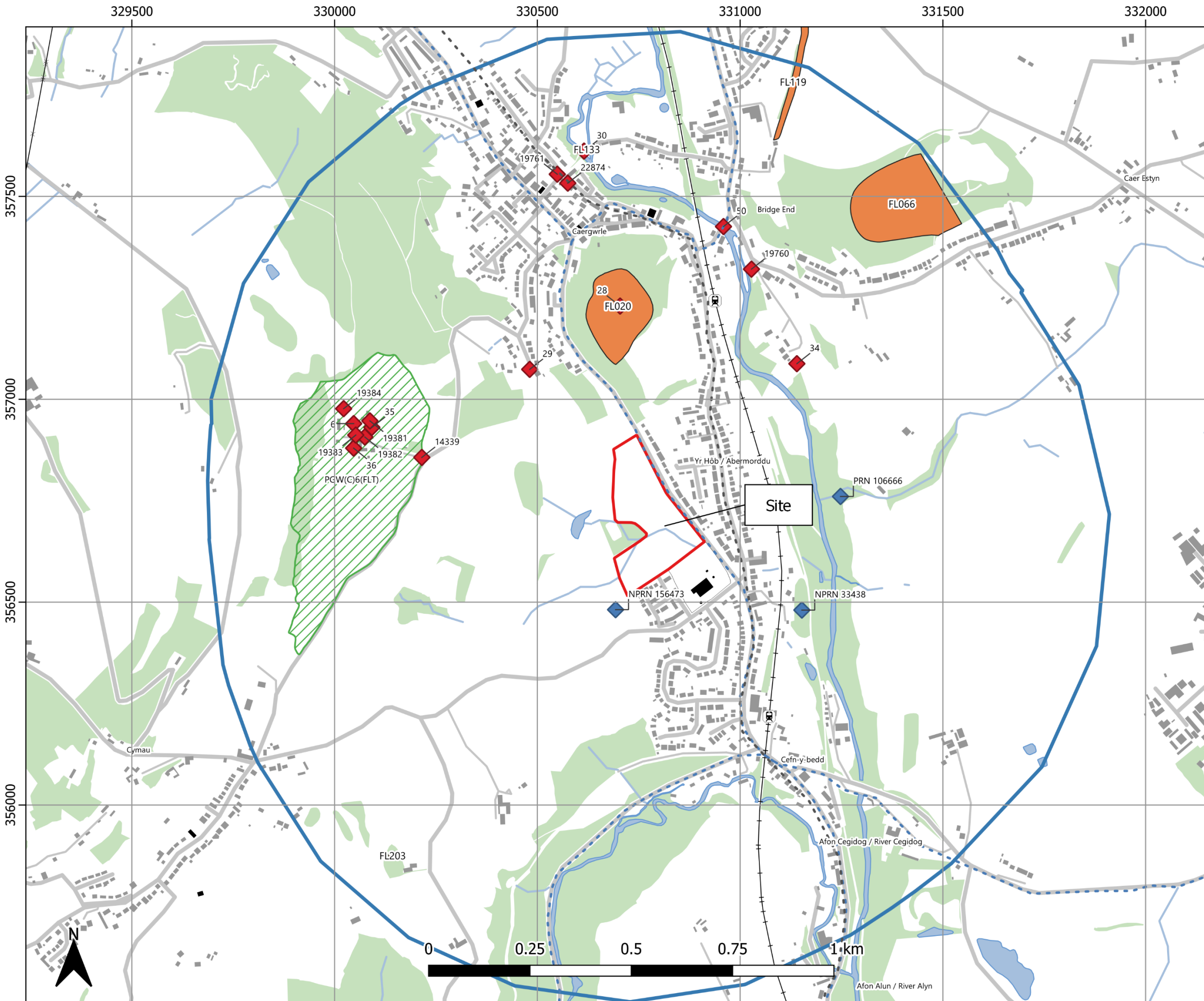
NPRN 33438 Gwern Alyn Colliery; Old Hope Colliery

This asset consists of the remains of a coal mine comprised of two shafts and old slag heaps. The mine is shown as an 'old mine' in the first edition Ordnance Survey map. The exact date of this mine is not known, however, there are records of coal and lead mining in the area dating back to the 14th century. The old winding engine house still stands, preserved as a family home in Cefn-y-Bedd (Healey, 2019).

NPRN 36168 Abermonddu Barrow

Designated as a destroyed Scheduled Ancient Monument, The Royal Commission for Historical and Archaeological Monuments Wales (RCHAWM) records Abermonddu Barrow as "A cairn close to a small hollow on the crest of a hill that measures 6m in diameter and 0.3m high. Composed of stone consolidated in turf and peat it has been dug into slightly on the East"

The initial identification of this monument was in a manuscript by Edward Lhuyd dating to 1693, which referred to a stone chest full of urns in a cairn called Arffedogaed y wrach. The location of which was later identified by Ellis Davies, however, no remains are now visible (Davies, 1949, pp. 223-5).



Legend

- Site boundary
- Cadw SAM
- ◆ Listed Buildings
- ◆ Archaeological Assets
- Parks and gardens
- Ogilby 17th-C road
- 18th-C turnpike Roads

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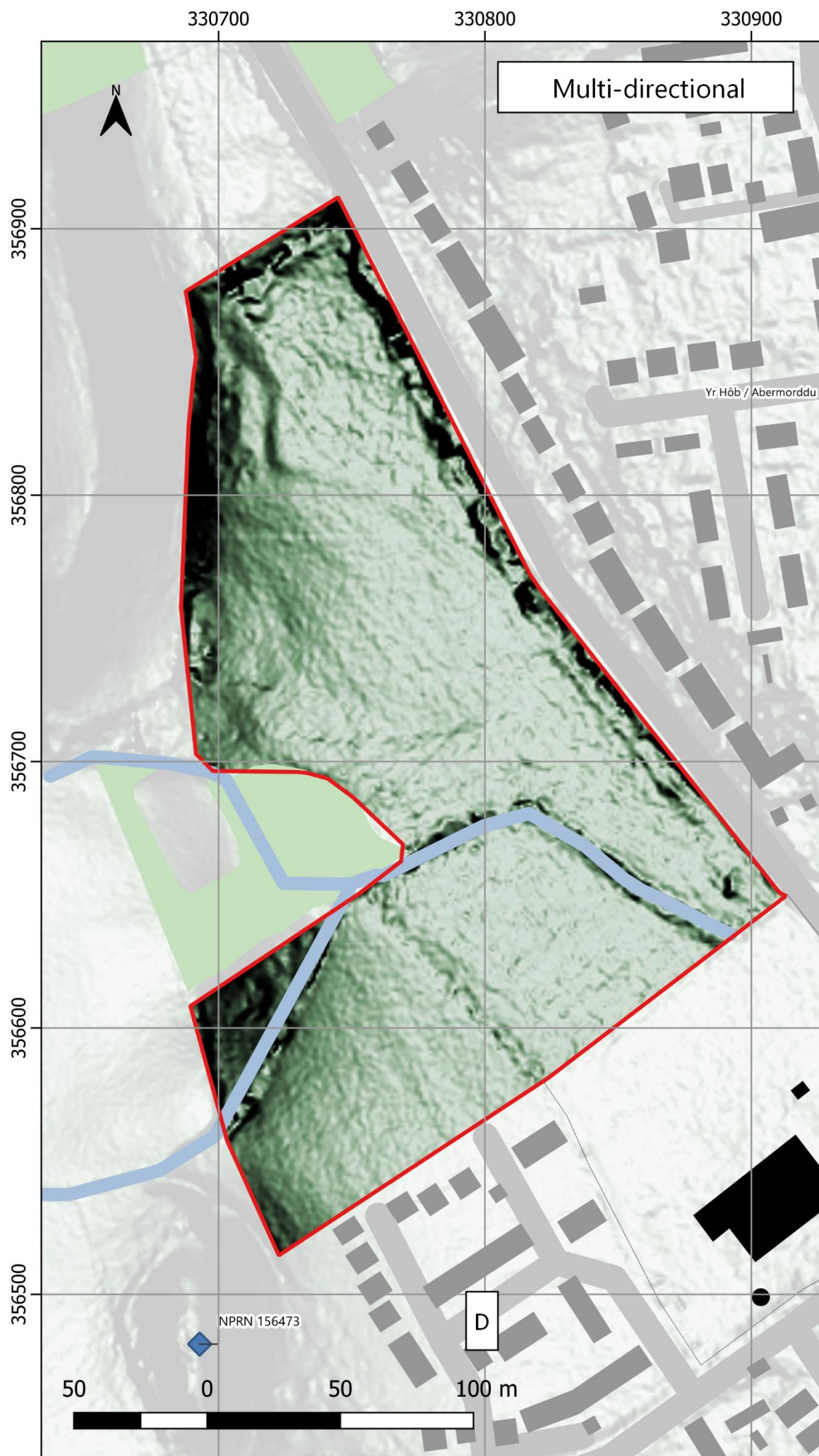


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 www.cpat.org.uk

Bluebell Field, Wrexham Road
 Abermorddu, Flintshire
Historical and Archaeological Assets

Map 1

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Scale 1:5000 @ A3 | Date April 2023 |
|----------------------|--------------------|



Legend

 Site boundary

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Bluebell Field, Wrexham Road
 Abermorddu, Flintshire

Hillshade Analysis

Map 2

Scale

1:2000 @ A3

Date

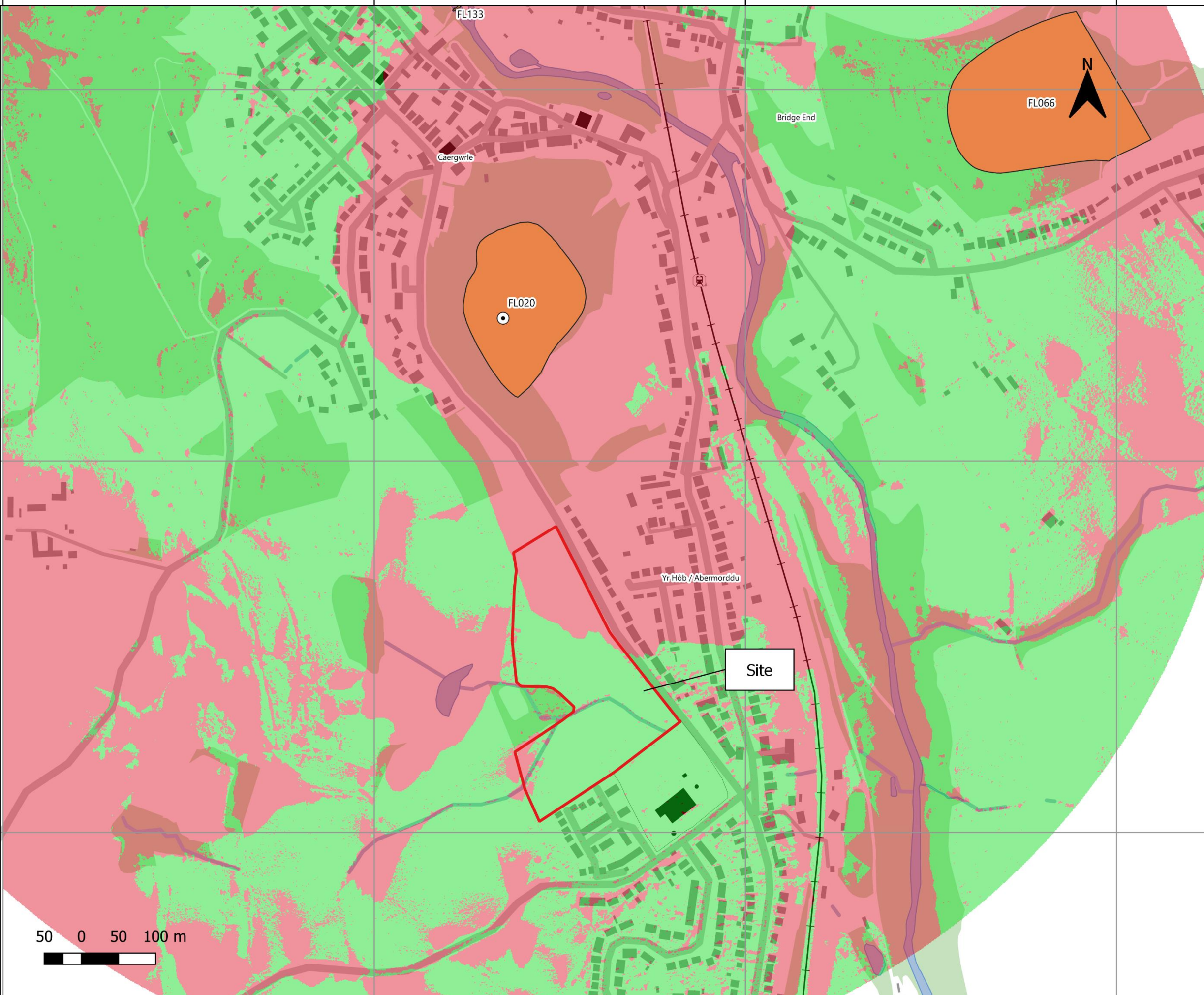
April 2023

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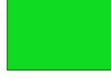

357500

357000

356500



Legend

-  Site boundary
-  Cadw SAM
- ZTV**
-  Not visible
-  Visible
-  Observer point

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Bluebell Field, Wrexham Road
 Abermorddu, Flintshire
ZTV from Caergwrle Castle

Map 3



| | |
|-------------|------------|
| Scale | Date |
| 1:5000 @ A3 | April 2023 |

330000 330500 331000 331500

357500

357000

356500

FL133

Caergwrle

Bridge End

FL066






FL020

Yr Hôb / Abermorddu

Site

N

Legend

-  Site boundary
-  Cadw SAM
- ZTV**
-  Not visible
-  Visible
-  Observer point

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Bluebell Field, Wrexham Road
 Abermorddu, Flintshire
ZTV from Caer Estyn

Map 4



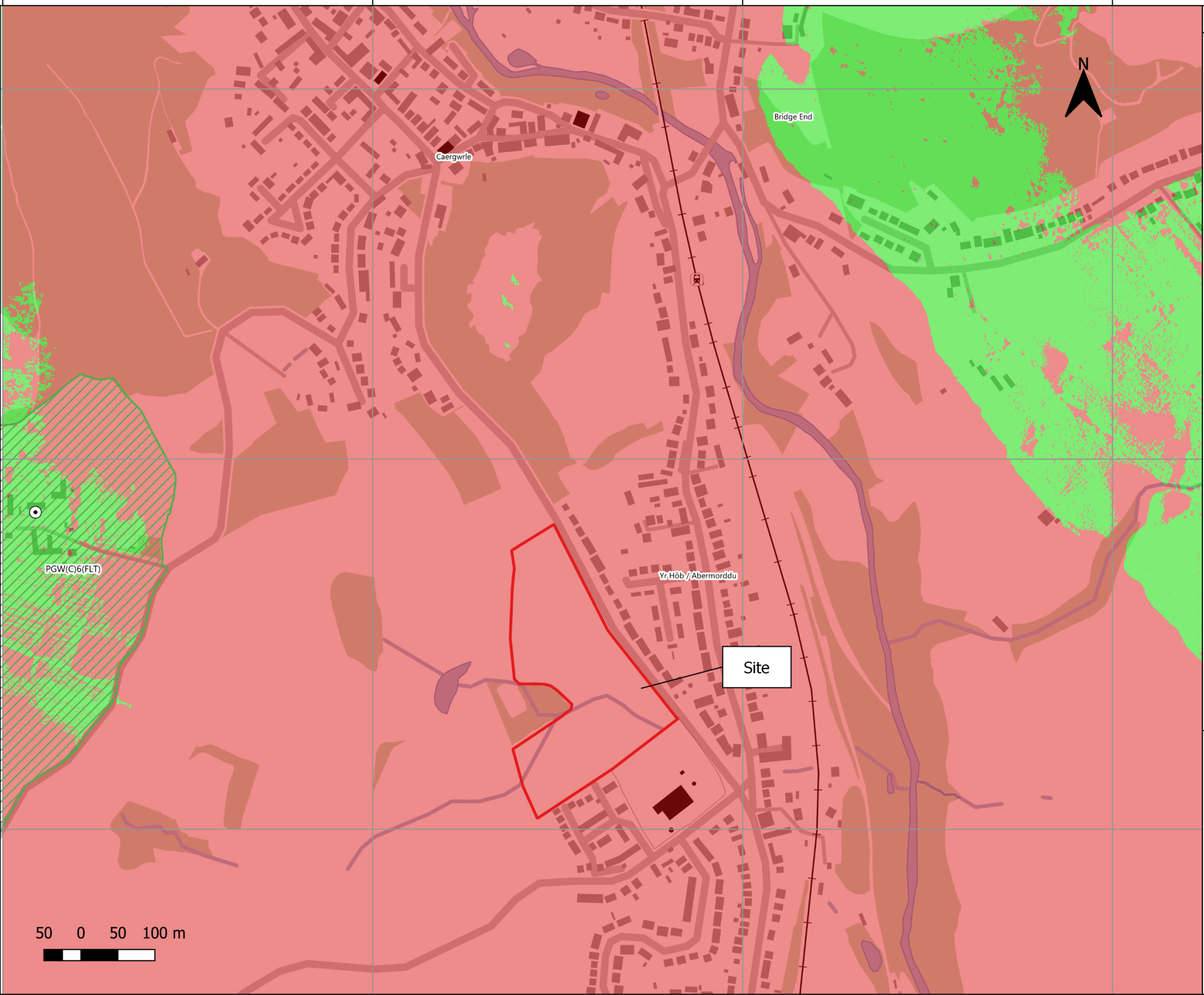
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33000 33050 33100 33150






35750

35700

35650



Legend

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-  Cadw SAM
- ZTV**
-  Not visible
-  Visible
-  Observer point

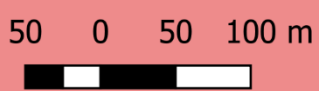
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Bluebell Field, Wrexham Road
 Abermorddu, Flintshire
ZTV from Bryn Iorcyn

Map 5



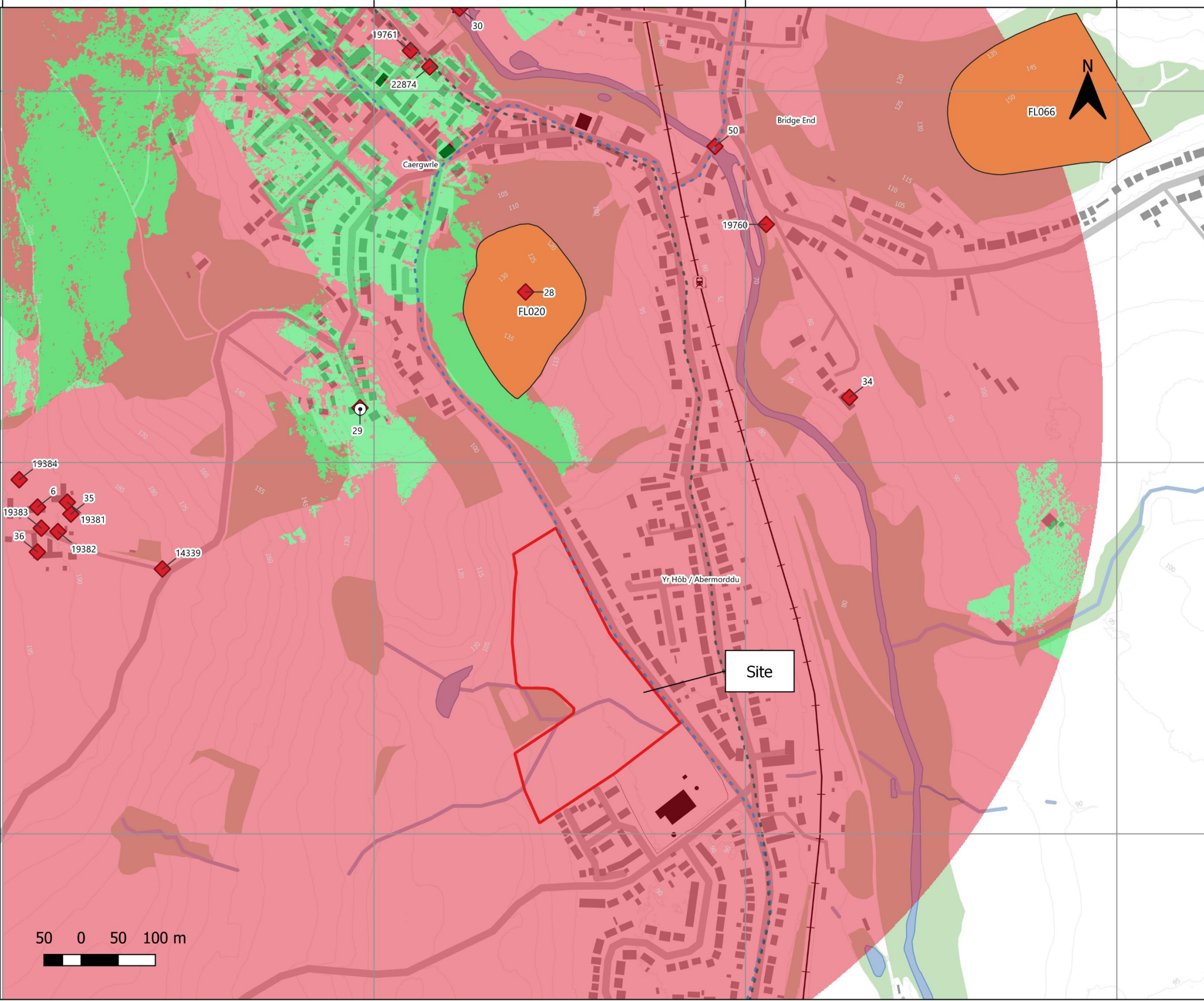
| | |
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| Scale | Date |
| 1:5000 @ A3 | April 2023 |

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357500

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356500



Legend

-  Site boundary
-  Cadw SAM
- ZTV**
-  Not visible
-  Visible
-  Observer point

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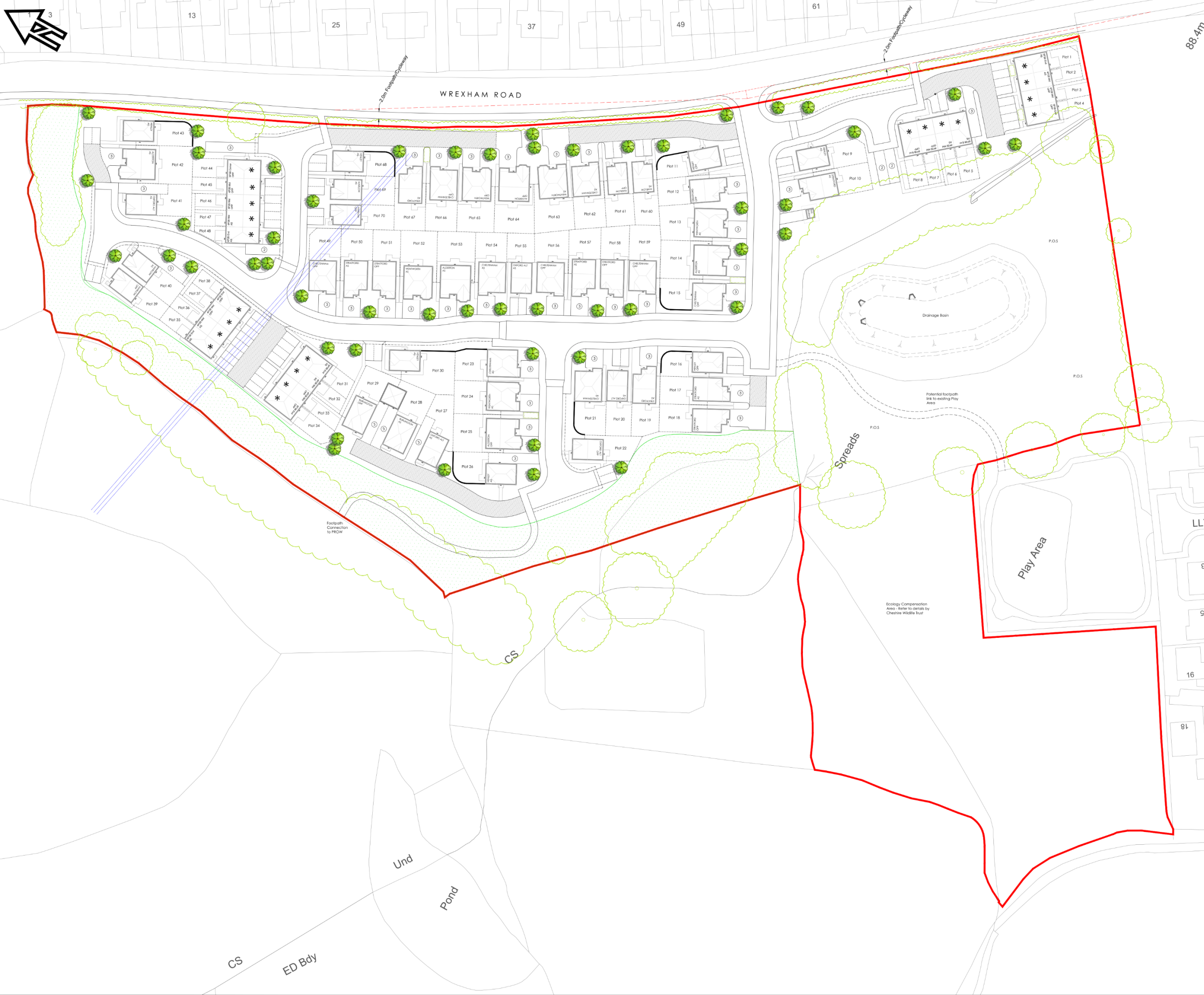
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 Email: trust@cpat.org.uk
 www.cpat.org.uk

Bluebell Field, Wrexham Road
 Abermorddu, Flintshire
ZTV from Plas-yn-Bwl

Map 6

Scale
 1:5000 @ A3

Date
 April 2023



| SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| HOUSETYPE | DESCRIPTION | SQFT | NUMBER | PERCENTAGE |
| 4P2B (Affordable) | 2 Bed, 2 Storey, Mid-End-Terrace | 885 SQFT | 14 | 20.00 |
| 3P2B (Affordable) | 3 Bed, 2 Storey, End-Terrace | 1015 SQFT | 6 | 8.57 |
| 3P2B Center (Affordable) | 3 Bed, 2 Storey, End-Terrace | 1015 SQFT | 1 | 1.43 |
| Mid-End Semi | 3 Bed, 2 Storey | 987 SQFT | 6 | 8.57 |
| Mid-End | 3 Bed, 2 Storey | 1040 SQFT | 5 | 7.14 |
| Henry | 3 Bed, 2 Storey | 1040 SQFT | 7 | 10.00 |
| Strawford | 3 Bed, 2 Storey | 1055 SQFT | 10 | 14.29 |
| Chatterham | 3 Bed, 2 Storey | 1234 SQFT | 9 | 12.86 |
| Burkington | 4 Bed, 2 Storey | 1355 SQFT | 2 | 2.86 |
| Waverthorpe | 4 Bed, 2 Storey | 1344 SQFT | 5 | 7.14 |
| Alderley | 4 Bed, 2 Storey | 1501 SQFT | 5 | 7.14 |
| TOTAL | | 74428 SQFT | 70 | |
| Gross Site Area | | 10.54 Acres | 4.27 Hectares | |
| P.O.S | | 41.1 Acres | 1.66 Hectares | |
| Existing Landscaping & Buffer zone | | 1.15 Acres | 0.47 Hectares | |
| Site Entrance & Single-Sided Road & Sub Station | | 0.18 Acres | 0.07 Hectares | |
| NETT SITE AREA: | | 5.1 ACRES | 2.06 HECTARES | |
| Gross Density: | | 6.64 Units/Acre | 16.41 Units/Hectare | |
| NETT DENSITY: | | 13.73 UNITS/ACRE | 33.82 UNITS/HECTARE | |
| Gross Footage: | | 7251.23 SQFT/Acre | 1854.64 SQM/Hectare | |
| NETT FOOTAGE: | | 14993.88 SQFT/ACRE | 3440.25 SQM/HECTARE | |

Key:

- Site Boundary
- - - - - 1.8m high boundary fence
- 1.8m high screen wall / fence
- ▨ Private Drive
- - - - - Visibility Splays - 2.4x120m to Site Entrance
- Indicative Landscaping
- Number of parking spaces proposed to Semi-Detached and Detached Dwellings in accordance with Flintshire's Parking Standards
- Parking space allocation to Frontage Parking Dwellings
- Knee rails to parking bays to terraced Housetypes
- * Affordable Housing
- Existing retained hedges/landscaping
- Existing overhead lines
- Existing Landscaping & Wildlife buffer zone

| Rev: | Description: | Date: |
|------|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| A | Mix amended & Sub Station added | 04/03/20 |
| B | Amended in line with Pre App Response | 07/10/20 |
| C | Attenuation Basin amended | 31/08/22 |
| D | Amendments to suit levels following review | 26/04/23 |



Castle Green

Castle Green,
Unit 20,
St. Asaph Business Park,
Denbighshire. LL17 0LJ.
Tel. 01745 536677

Site: **Wrexham Road, Abermorddu**

Title: **Site Layout**

Scale: **1:500 at A1** Date: **19/02/2020**

Ref: **ABMRD-SP.01** Rev: **D**