



Arrochar, 14 Prescott Road, Melling

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

September 2023

Ref: 10015_R01a

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI





Summary

- S.1 This report has been prepared by Annabelle Langhorn CMLI in order to provide an appraisal of the landscape character and visual circumstances of land at 14 Prescott Road, Melling, on which the applicant proposes to build four new residential dwellings, and to redevelop the existing bungalow 'Arrochar'. It provides details of the current landscape conditions of the site, an analysis of the landscape character of the area, and an appraisal of the context within which the site is visible from nearby publicly available locations.
- S.2 A site visit was undertaken in April 2023 which confirmed that the site is located to the west of Prescott Road, within a small developed area located to the north of the A58, north of Melling and to the north-east of Maghull. The site is already developed at present, and consists of an existing bungalow, a large driveway/parking area with a fountain in the centre, and several outbuildings. The proposals include the removal of all the existing outbuildings within the site, the redevelopment of the existing bungalow, with garden areas to the front and rear, the construction of four new two-storey detached dwellings within the area of the site currently consisting of tarmac surfacing, with front and rear gardens, and a new tarmac driveway serving all five properties within the site.
- S.3 Within published character documentation, the site is identified within the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain National Character Area. Within the Sefton Landscape Character Assessment the site is identified within the Settled Farmlands Landscape Character Area, and more specifically, within the Lydiate Land Description Unit.
- S.4 The fieldwork undertaken has confirmed that the site is previously developed, is influenced by the presence of residential and commercial development within the local vicinity, and associates with the developed area along the part of Prescott Road in which it is situated. The urban area it is located within has somewhat rural surroundings in that it is surrounded by large agricultural fields and blocks of woodland restrict intervisibility with nearby settlement areas such as Maghull. Nevertheless, the site itself clearly registers as being part of a built-up area despite it being located within the Green Belt. The site does not contain any character features identified within published character documentation.
- S.5 GIS height data mapping has been used to ascertain the theoretical extent to which the proposed development could be seen from the surrounding area. This mapping was then used to verify the potential visibility of the proposals in the field. The resulting viewpoint photography demonstrates that visibility of the proposed development will be limited to a short section of Prescott Road, glimpses from discrete locations on Cunsough Lane, and a small number of neighbouring private residential dwellings and commercial premises. There are no locations from where the proposals would be seen distantly.
- S.6 Visually, it will be important to ensure the development associates well with the built-up area within which is located, through careful consideration of the chosen materials palette as well as ensuring the massing and form of the dwellings complements and respects the landscape surroundings. There will be a particular need to ensure the southern boundary of the site is appropriately designed so as to allow for the retention of the existing hedgerow along this edge, to retain the robust boundary to the rest of the Green Belt that this provides, and to soften sight of the proposed housing on the approach northwards along Prescott Road.
- S.7 Considering that the site is already developed, together with the landscape and visual context described within this report, it has been judged that there is likely to be no change to the landscape character of the area as a result of the proposed dwelling. Impacts on visual amenity will only be experienced by a very localised and limited number of viewers, most of whom will be private residents, such that for the most part there will be negligible effects on public users.
- S.8 Notwithstanding that the proposed development is located within an area of Green Belt in which other residential properties are also washed over by a Green Belt designation, the sight of the proposed development will also not be uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape and furthermore it will also visually be discrete in that it will be seen from very few locations. The development also allows for localised small-scale enhancements to be delivered in the form of strengthened green infrastructure and habitat connectivity.
- S.9 Overall it is considered that the design of the proposed development can be readily accommodated into the site without any unacceptable impact on landscape character or visual amenity.



Contents

Summary	2
Contents	3
Section 1: Introduction	4
Section 2: Baseline Landscape Context	7
Section 3: Baseline Visual Context	15
Section 4: Landscape Policy Summary	23
Section 5: Landscape & Visual Appraisal	25
Section 6: Conclusion	30

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Methodology for Landscape & Visual Appraisal
- Appendix 2: Extracts from Natural England's publication for the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain National Character Area
- Appendix 3: Extracts from Sefton's Landscape Character Assessment for the Settled Farmland LCA and the Lydiate Land Description Unit.

Plans

- Plan 1: Site Location and Context
- Plan 2: Topography
- Plan 3: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Photoviewpoint Locations
- Plan 4: Landscape Recommendations
- Photosheets for Photoviewpoints 1 to 14



Section 1: Introduction

Introduction and Proposals

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Annabelle Langhorn, a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and Landscape Planner experienced in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, Landscape and Visual Appraisals and matters relating to the suitability of new development in landscape and visual terms. This report considers the landscape and visual context of land at Prescott Road, Melling, on which the applicant proposes to build four new detached dwellings, as well to redevelop the existing bungalow and provide a new access driveway to all five dwellings.
- S.10 The parcel of land on which the site is located consists of an existing residential bungalow with rear garden, several outbuildings, a storage yard, and a large area of tarmac driveway with a fountain in the centre. The proposals include the redevelopment of the existing bungalow within the site, with garden areas created to the front and rear and a driveway. The proposals also include for the construction of four new two-storey detached dwellings within the area of the site currently consisting of tarmac surfacing, with front and rear gardens, and a new tarmac driveway serving all five properties within the site. The area of the site currently occupied by a storage yard and several outbuildings will be reinstated as grassland.
- 1.2 The baseline landscape character and visual context is set out within this report and as part of this stage of the work a series of landscape recommendations were made and set out on a plan. Following confirmation of the fixed design proposals for the new dwellings on site, this report was then updated with an assessment of the likely impacts that will arise on the visual amenity of users of the local area, the character of the local landscape, and the resulting effects that will arise as a result of the proposed new dwellings.
- 1.3 The location of the site is illustrated on the plan below:



Figure 1: Site Location (image sourced from Google Earth)



Site Description

- 1.4 The site consists of an area of previously developed land, to the west of Prescott Road within a small developed area located to the north of the A58, north of Melling and to the north-east of Maghull. The site consists of an existing bungalow ('Arrochar'), several outbuildings, a storage yard area, and a large driveway/parking area with a fountain in the centre. There are a small number of trees within the site, associated with the gardens of the existing bungalow and the boundaries, as well as some overgrown scrub vegetation (brambles etc). There is also a gappy hedgerow along parts of the southern boundary of the site.
- 1.5 The fieldwork undertaken has confirmed that the site is influenced by the presence of residential and commercial development within the local vicinity, and associates with the developed area along the part of Prescott Road in which it is situated. The urban area it is located within has somewhat rural surroundings in that it is surrounded by large agricultural fields and blocks of woodland restrict intervisibility with nearby settlement areas such as Maghull
- 1.6 The site is located within the Green Belt as shown on Plan 1, an extract of which is included below:

Plan 1: Site Location & Context

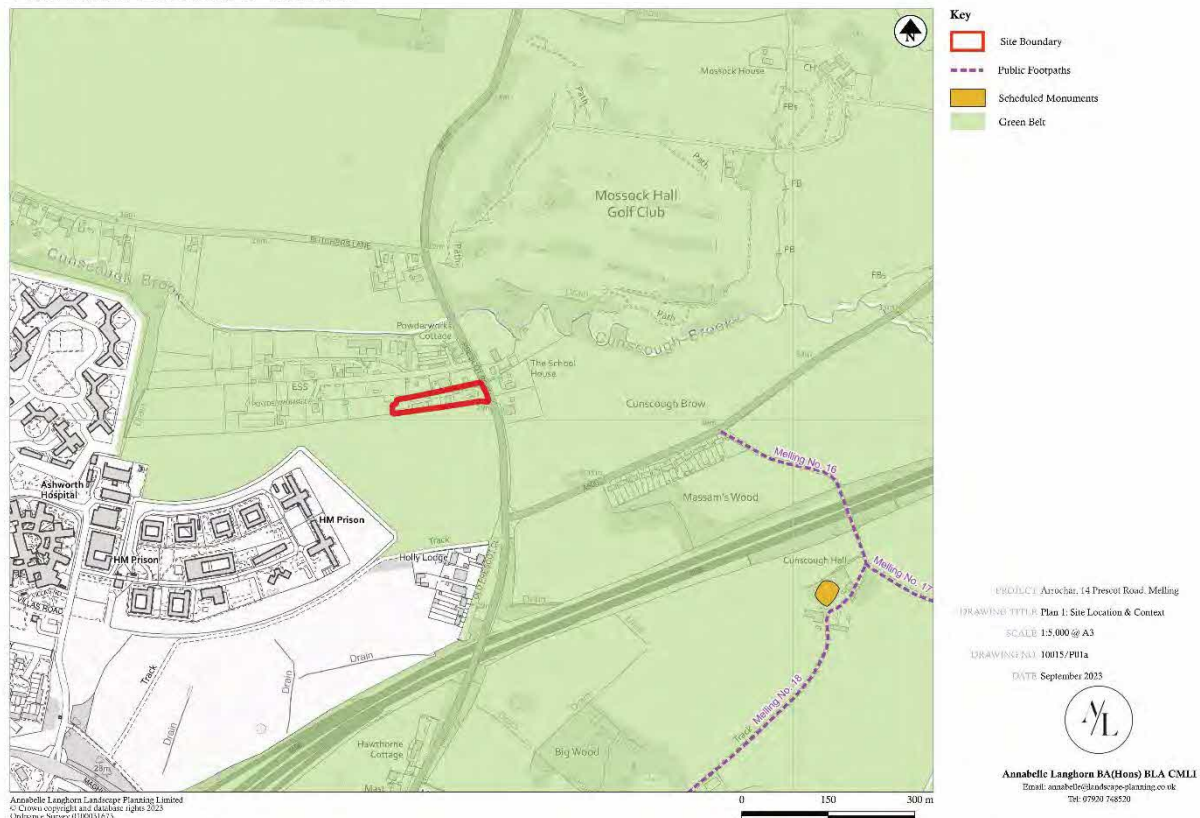


Figure 2: Plan 1 Site Location & Context

- 1.7 The site forms part of an established built-up area washed over by the Green Belt designation. The built-up area in which it is located consists of residential and commercial premises, as well as a small industrial area (at the Powderworks). There is no prevailing architectural style and buildings are a mixture of single and 2-storey in height. Overall, the site registers as being located within an isolated settlement area on Prescott Road, surrounded by rural fields. Despite being surrounded by an agricultural landscape, the sense of tranquillity is affected by proximity to the M58 motorway which is located to the south, as well as the densely settled area of Maghull to the south-west. Visually, blocks of woodland also intervene to restrict any sense of being within a larger area, as well as to screen visibility and noise of the M58 motorway corridor.



1.8 The site itself occupies broadly flat ground, with levels ranging from approximately 30m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) across the majority of the site, gently falling to 29m AOD where the site adjoins Prescott Road.

1.9 The site's immediate environs comprise of the following:

To the north, the site is adjoined by the residential curtilages of 'Lurgaboy' and 'The Alamo', a bungalow and dormer bungalow respectively, and by a storage yard associated with the Powderworks industrial estate;

To the east, the site immediately adjoins Prescott Road, beyond which the two-storey residential properties 'The School House' and 'The Chesterfield' are located;

To the south, the site is defined by a gappy hedgerow, beyond which lies a large agricultural field; and

To the west the site is adjoined by land within the applicants ownership which consists of an area of grassland.

1.10 More broadly speaking, the site is surrounded by built-up development to the north and east, and by agricultural land to the south and west. Mossock Hall Golf Course is located to the north-east of the built-up area, Maghull is located a short distance to the south-west beyond intervening fields, and the M58 corridor lies to the south. There are small linear rows of houses located to the south and south-east of the site, along Prescott Road and Cuncough Lane, and small clusters of dwellings and farmsteads to the north and north-west along Butchers Lane.

Methodology

1.11 The purpose of this report is to set out for the reader the process that has been undertaken to assess the landscape and visual circumstances relating to the development of the site for housing use. It has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance as set out at **Appendix 1**.

1.12 Where plans are included within this report as extracts, full-size plans are also contained at the rear of this report.



Section 2: Baseline Landscape Context

Landscape Character of the Site

- 2.1 The site consists of an existing bungalow with gardens to the rear, several outbuildings, a storage yard area, an access driveway leading to the land also in the applicants ownership that lies to the west of the site, and a large tarmac driveway/parking area at the front with a fountain at its centre.



Figure 3: View of the site from Prescott Road – the tarmac driveway/parking area can be seen in the foreground, the bungalow 'Arrochar' to the rear, and the access driveway leading to the additional land owned, visible to the right of the image.



Figure 4: View eastwards from the doorstep of the existing bungalow 'Arrochar' – the tarmac driveway/parking area can be seen in the foreground beyond front gardens associated with Arrochar. The fountain at the center of the parking area can be seen, as well as the outbuilding to the left of the image. Properties along Prescott Road can be seen in the background.



- 2.2 To the west of the site is the rest of the land owned by the applicant which an area of grassland.



Figure 5: View eastwards from the storage yard area within the site boundary – the access driveway can be seen in the centre of the image, with ‘Arrochar’ visible to the right of the image, the outbuilding within the site visible in the background, and with the neighbouring dormer bungalow ‘The Alamo’ visible to the left.

- 2.3 The site is defined by a hedgerow and timber fence to the south, a blockwork and brick wall to the north, and a low concrete wall along the frontage to the east.
- 2.4 It is situated within an area of established residential, commercial and industrial development on Prescott Road, opposite Mossock Hall golf club and to the north of the M58. It is surrounded by residential and commercial development, beyond which lies agricultural land.

Published Landscape Character Context

National

- 2.5 The site is identified at a national level within the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain National Character Area (NCA). A summary of the key characteristics as published is contained at **Appendix 2**. National Character Areas are very broad and set out key characteristics of large geographical areas, usually providing the overview to more localised assessments undertaken at a regional or district wide level. Whilst NCAs do not provide an appreciation of the site-specific issues which need to be taken into account in the determination process, it should be noted that some of the key characteristics of the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain NCA are discernible in relation to the site and the wider landscape surrounding it, namely the presence of pastoral and arable fields, the flat and gently undulating landscape, the presence of pastoral field ponds and small to medium-sized woodland blocks punctuating views.
- 2.6 Whilst still relating to more of a broad geographical scale, the Statements of Environmental Opportunity associated with the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain do still offer some guidance for development, with the following a summary of those objectives that could steer the development response on this site:

Conserving hedgerows and hedgerow trees (SEO2)

Creating networks, corridors and stepping-stones of semi-natural habitats (SEO2)

Ensuring that development respects local settlement patterns and uses traditional building materials where possible (SEO3)

Incorporating green spaces into new developments, in particular around the urban fringe (SEO3)



Connecting green spaces with semi-natural habitats where possible, providing communities with recreational green space and wildlife corridors (SEO3)

Managing development around the urban fringe and within rural settlements to enhance the distinctive character and countryside setting of the rural landscape (SEO3)

Encouraging landscaped buffers for any development that impacts on land outside settlement boundaries, in order to limit the effect on the landscape (SEO3)

Ensuring that significant built developments do not adversely impact the open character of the area (SEO3)

Using an understanding of the area's traditional and historic architecture, and its distinct patterns of settlement, to plan for and inspire any environmental beneficial new development that makes a positive contribution to local character and retains key views (SEO3)

- 2.7 A full extract of the Statements of Environmental Opportunity for the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain NCA is also contained at **Appendix 2**.

Regional

- 2.8 At a regional level, the site is covered by Sefton's Landscape Character Assessment (Sefton Council; Dec 2003). Within this document the site is identified within the Settled Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) and more specifically within the Lydiate Land Description Unit (LS04).
- 2.9 The Settled Farmlands LCA is described as "*an open, rolling agricultural landscape of arable farms, hedged fields and clusters of rural dwellings*". The Assessment notes that a key feature of the Settled Farmlands LCA is its settled character which it states contrasts strongly with the adjoining more sparsely populated carrlands. The Settled Farmlands are described as "*open in character with tree cover largely restricted to groups of trees around buildings and field ponds*".
- 2.10 The key characteristics of the Settled Farmlands LCA are set out in full in the extract contained at **Appendix 3**. As an area of previously developed land the site does not share any characteristics with the LCA; the following is a list of those characteristics of the Settled Farmlands that are relevant to the site's immediate surroundings:

Gently rolling lowland topography

Dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside dwellings

Network of narrow, rural lanes

Sub-regular enclosure pattern of hedged fields

Arable cropping with field vegetables

Frequent field ponds with associated trees and scrub

Brick built farmsteads and barns

- 2.11 Field ponds are noted to be the distinguishing feature of the Lydiate LDU, but again, this characteristic is not present within the site. In terms of the key issues affecting the Lydiate LDU, the influence of sub-urban elements and road corridors is an applicable issue in relation to the site.
- 2.12 The Landscape Character Assessment sets out a series of policy guidelines for each LCA. These are contained in full within **Appendix 3**, but in summary, the following guidelines are of relevance to the development of the site:

The replanting of hedgerows with hedgerow trees would strengthen the existing field pattern.

The area north of Maghull, around the A59 and Ashworth Hospital site and along its boundary with West Lancs is threatened by urban expansion. Redevelopment of the site will need to respect



the value of the adjacent landscape character of the surrounding open landscape within the Settled Farmlands LCA. The green buffer between settlements will need maintaining.

The landscape pattern should be retained in order to avoid visual confusion and to retain the integrity of the character of the area. The characteristics of the area should be strengthened to ensure they are continuous throughout the Character area.

Landscape character should where possible be improved by replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. These should build from the previous field pattern, where these still exist e.g. south of Melling there are sporadic lines of overmature trees on slightly raised field boundaries, indicating former field pattern. Equally this would greatly enhance ecological corridors throughout the area.

It is important to retain the small scale nature of development within the rural area. It is this again which contributes to local distinctiveness. Melling should retain its present scale. Elsewhere the scattered farms and small linear groups of cottages (often terraced) should continue to personalise the landscape, but retain their scale, building style and traditional choice of materials (generally brick/ stone).

Choice of new build materials should reflect the predominance of traditional brick and stone types and styles.

In addition to hedgerows (noted above) boundaries to development should consider appropriate and traditional materials, such as stone or brick walls, particularly if this is relevant to context. In some instances hedges would be suitable, but choice of species must be appropriate.

Field boundaries should discourage the use of post and wire and post and rail in favour of hedgerows and/ or ditches where appropriate.

- 2.13 As can be seen from the extracted text above, the site has very little by way of characteristic features that relate to the wider LCA or LDU and is much more associated with the settlement area along Prescott Road. It is previously developed so already registers as a residential part of the landscape, within an established built-up area. The fields surrounding the site have an urban fringe character, being agricultural in usage, with some intact field boundaries, but with influences from the nearby M58 motorway corridor, the Powderworks industrial site, and the nearby settlement edge of Maghull.
- 2.14 The site itself is degraded in character due to having little to no landscape features present, being brownfield in nature, and being influenced by the urban qualities of the neighbouring residential built form.

Identification and Classification of Landscape Resources

- 2.15 The threshold and terminology referred to in this section is set out in **Appendix 1**. The classification of sensitivity of the landscape as a resource is related to its susceptibility to the type of change proposed, and the value placed on the landscape.

Susceptibility

- 2.16 This means the ability of the landscape type, in this locale, to accommodate the development proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
- 2.17 With regards to the site, the proposed development will result in the redevelopment of an existing residential plot. The specific context surrounding it is such that the chance for visibility of development within the site will be restricted to a narrow geographical area. Appropriate mitigation can be provided to enhance assimilation of the new houses into the existing context and address local landscape character and policy objectives to retain and enhance the site boundaries, particularly along the southern edge and the eastern boundary onto Prescott Road, as a component of new development.
- 2.18 The landscape of the site is therefore of a **low susceptibility to the change proposed**, as the development would complement the local character and be entirely consistent with the character of the local area in terms of its scale, use, and massing.



Value

- 2.19 The site is not located within a designated landscape, and it is therefore not automatically considered to be 'valued' under the definition set out within the NPPF.
- 2.20 'Having value' and being a 'valued landscape' are not inter-changeable terms. A landscape may have a degree of local value but that does not equate to possessing value sufficient to reach and surpass the necessary threshold to be 'valued' by a particular community at either a local or national scale. A site-specific analysis is set out below, to assist the reader in understanding the value of the site, within the context of it not being a statutorily designated site.
- 2.21 In considering the value of the landscape the following aspects of the landscape are noted within the Landscape Institutes latest technical guidance note on value¹ as relevant in the assessment process:

Natural Heritage: Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape. (Examples include wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place, semi-natural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type, geological, geomorphological or pedological features, capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services, and landscapes which make an identified contribution to a nature recovery/green infrastructure network.)

Cultural Heritage: Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape. (Examples include historic landmark structures, designed landscape elements, historic parks and gardens, designed landscapes, landscape that form the setting to heritage assets, glaciers, peat bogs, relic farmsteads, ruins, historic field patterns and historic rights of way).

Landscape Condition: Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure. (Examples include intactness of walls, parkland, trees, good health of elements such as water quality and soil health, strong landscape structure such as intact historic field patterns, absence of detracting / incongruous features).

Associations: Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts. (Examples include associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape, associations with science or technical achievements, links to notable historical events and associations with a famous person or people).

Distinctiveness: Landscape that has a strong sense of identity. (Examples include landscape with a strong sense of place, presence of distinctive features which are characteristic, presence of rare or unusual features, landscapes which contribute to the character or identity of a settlement, settlement gateways/approaches that provide a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of a settlement).

Recreational: Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important. (Examples include open access land, common land, public rights of way where appreciation of the landscape is a feature, areas with outdoor recreation opportunities and spiritual experiences/inspiration, town and village greens, physical evidence of recreational use where experience of landscape is important, and landscapes that form part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of recreational activity).

Perceptual (scenic): Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense. (Examples include distinctive features or combinations of features such as dramatic landform or harmonious combinations or land cover, strong aesthetic qualities such as colour, scale, form and texture, natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors and coastal edges, visual diversity and memorable or distinctive views and landscapes).

¹ Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations'; Landscape Institute; May 2021



Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity): Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies. (Examples include landscape with high perceived tranquillity, links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife and birdsong and relative peace and quiet, wild land, rugged terrain, remoteness from public mechanised access and lack of modern artefacts, and a sense of particular remoteness, seclusion or openness).

Functional: Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape. (Examples include landscapes that contribute to the healthy function of the landscape such as natural hydrological systems, floodplains, areas of undisturbed healthy soils, peat bogs, woodlands, oceans, areas of diverse land cover, wildflower meadows, areas with strong links to adjacent national designations and areas that form an important part of a multifunctional green infrastructure network).

2.22 For each of these considerations a range from ‘good’ through ‘ordinary’ to ‘poor’ has been used to assess the landscape’s performance against these criteria. In the table below, these issues are considered for the site itself in relation to the wider landscape surrounding it.

Criteria	Description of Value
Natural Heritage	The site consists of an existing residential plot, containing hard surfacing, an existing bungalow, several existing outbuildings and a garden area. The flat topography of the site and the hedgerow boundary along parts of the southern edge are characteristic of the wider landscape, but not rare, or unique features. The site is considered poor in terms of its natural heritage.
Cultural Heritage	There is nothing of heritage interest associated with the site. The site is considered poor in terms of its value for cultural heritage interests.
Landscape Condition	The site generally reflects the landscape character areas which it is associated with in that it is part of an established settlement area and is consistent with the predominantly residential usage of that area. The only landscape features within the site are the hedgerow and hedgerow trees to the southern boundary, and the site’s broadly flat topography. Overall, the site is of poor quality –it is a derelict residential plot, within an established residential area, with overgrown vegetation to the boundaries in places. It has limited positive landscape features currently and could be improved to represent a considerably better landscape condition overall.
Associations	There are no known associations which would indicate a strong or important link between the landscape on site and its historic or current appreciation. The site is considered to be poor in this regard.
Distinctiveness	The landscape of the site is consistent with the wider landscape character area and type, but it is also affected by detracting elements and aspects which could be improved in order to better reflect the settlement area with which it is associated, and to maintain the integrity of the surrounding open agricultural land. Whilst the site possesses locally typical features such as the hedgerow to the southern boundary and the broadly flat topography, there is no evidence to suggest these are important aspects and overall the distinctiveness of the site could benefit from enhancement in association with development. The features present on site are not exceptional, are in poor condition, do not reflect the positive attributes of the wider LCA and to a degree actually contribute towards the degradation of the settlement edge by influencing the wider landscape visually. The site is poor in this regard.
Recreational	The site is not publicly accessible. The site is considered to be poor in terms of the recreational value it provides.



Perceptual (scenic)	The site has no special intrinsic scenic qualities and appears visually as a part of the existing settlement area on Prescott Road. As a result of these matters the scenic quality is ordinary.
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	The visual containment provided by the southern boundary of the site, together with the association the site has with the existing residential development area it is sited within means the site itself does not contribute to the enjoyment of the landscape for users of the surrounding area. The site is perceived to be an ordinary housing plot, with a degree of degradation in terms of its currently derelict status, the overgrown vegetation and lack of characteristic boundary features. The site is considered to be poor overall in terms of its perceptual aspects.
Functional	The site is a derelict housing plot and is wholly brownfield. It does not contain any identifiable or valued landscape functions beyond its role within the existing settlement edge along the section of Prescott Road in which it is located. The site is considered to be poor in terms of its landscape function.

2.23 Having considered the key elements related to value above for the site specifically, it has been determined that there is nothing associated with the site that makes it as a whole more than poor and it would not be considered valued. The fact the site has previously been occupied and its boundary features are in poor condition means that it performs a detracting role locally. The site would not be considered to be valued locally.

Landscape Sensitivity

2.24 Combining the susceptibility and value of the landscape of the site, the landscape on-site is considered to be of a **low sensitivity to change**, and the wider LCA landscape is considered to be of a **medium sensitivity to change**.

2.25 This means that the site itself, being poor in terms of its value, and it being possible to mitigate some of the impacts and enhance the site in conjunction with the development proposed puts it on the lower end of the sensitivity spectrum when considered within the context of the wider LCA overall. It has been judged that within the local landscape area, for this site to be any less sensitive it would need to have additional degraded or no landscape features of merit, and to be any more sensitive it would need to contain irreplaceable, unique and/or rare landscape features such as characteristic hedgerow boundaries, visually prominent land, historic built form and/or no visual relationship with detracting elements nearby (highway infrastructure) consistent with the more valued and sensitive parts of the wider LCA.

Recommended Landscape Mitigation and Enhancements

2.26 The above site-specific and published character context provides an indication of the key issues relating to landscape change within the site and the wider landscape. The published character studies provide guidance as to what sort of mitigation and enhancement measures would be both necessary and desirable in order to assimilate new development into the landscape.

2.27 In the context of the proposal to develop the site for housing use, the following measures are recommended to ensure the development assimilates into the landscape context appropriately and without causing undue adverse impacts on the LCA, or resulting in change beyond what can be accommodated within the wider landscape:

Consider the incorporation of new soft landscaping along the frontage of the site to provide visual softening of the new dwellings and to assist them to blend into the existing street scene along Prescott Road.

Retain existing hedgerow along southern boundary of the site and enhance it by adding new hedgerow saplings to gaps, and by adding new hedgerow trees. This will retain the vegetated edge to the built development within the site and offer visual softening to the new dwellings beyond.



Reinstate the storage yard area as grassland so as to create openness within the Green Belt.

2.28 These recommendations have been incorporated into the Landscape Recommendations set out on **Plan 4: Landscape Recommendations Plan**.



Section 3: Baseline Visual Context

Extent of Visibility

- 3.1 In order to determine the extent of the area from which the development can be seen, LIDAR terrain data has been used to produce a topographical map of the landscape surrounding the site, and to produce a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the built form proposed. The ZTV is theoretical, based on bare-earth data and on satellite data for the heights of existing built form and vegetation. The ZTV does not take into consideration site-specific visual circumstances such as the actual screening effect of built form, trees and vegetation. Therefore, a more accurate representation of the extent to which the site and proposed development would be viewed is undertaken in the field, with the ZTV used as a starting point for the fieldwork in terms of determining the existent of visibility and the likely visual receptors.
- 3.2 **Plan 2** shows the topography of the site and **Plan 3** shows the ZTV for the proposed development on-site.

Plan 2: Topography

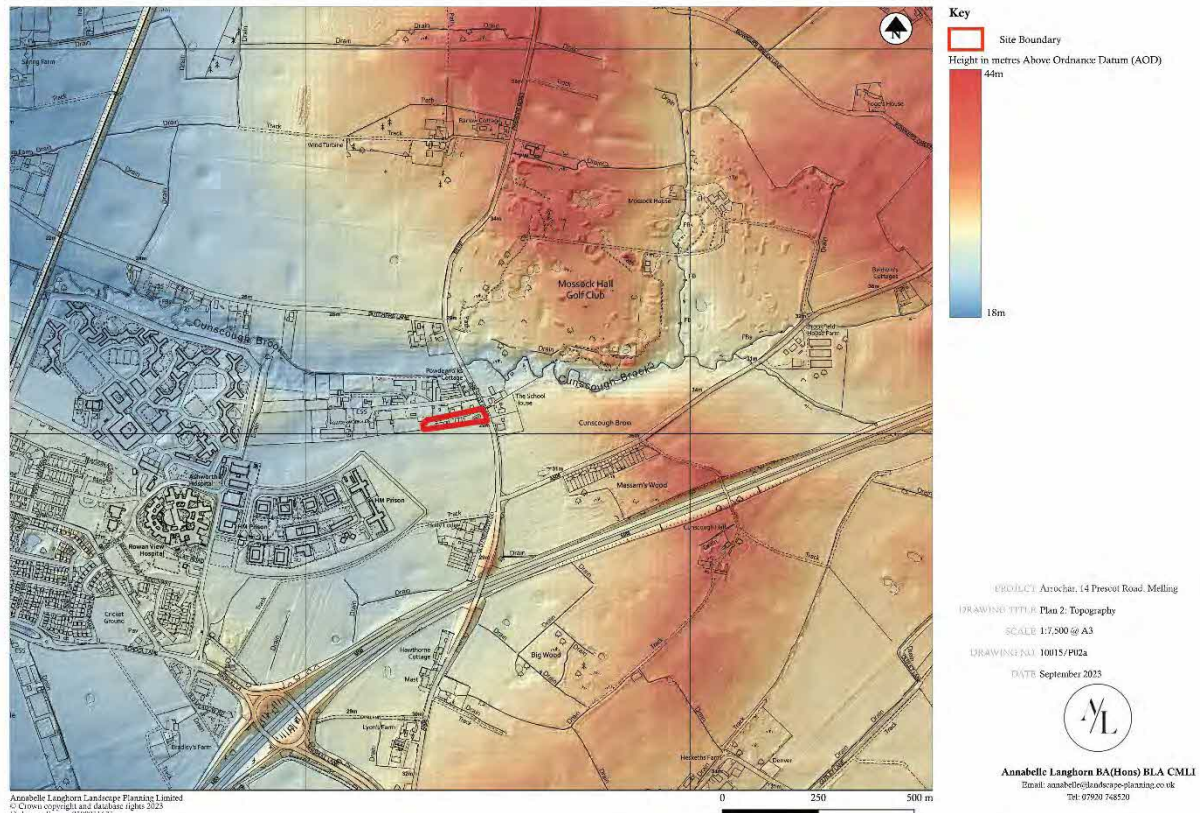


Figure 6: Plan 2 Topography



Plan 3: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Photoviewpoint Locations

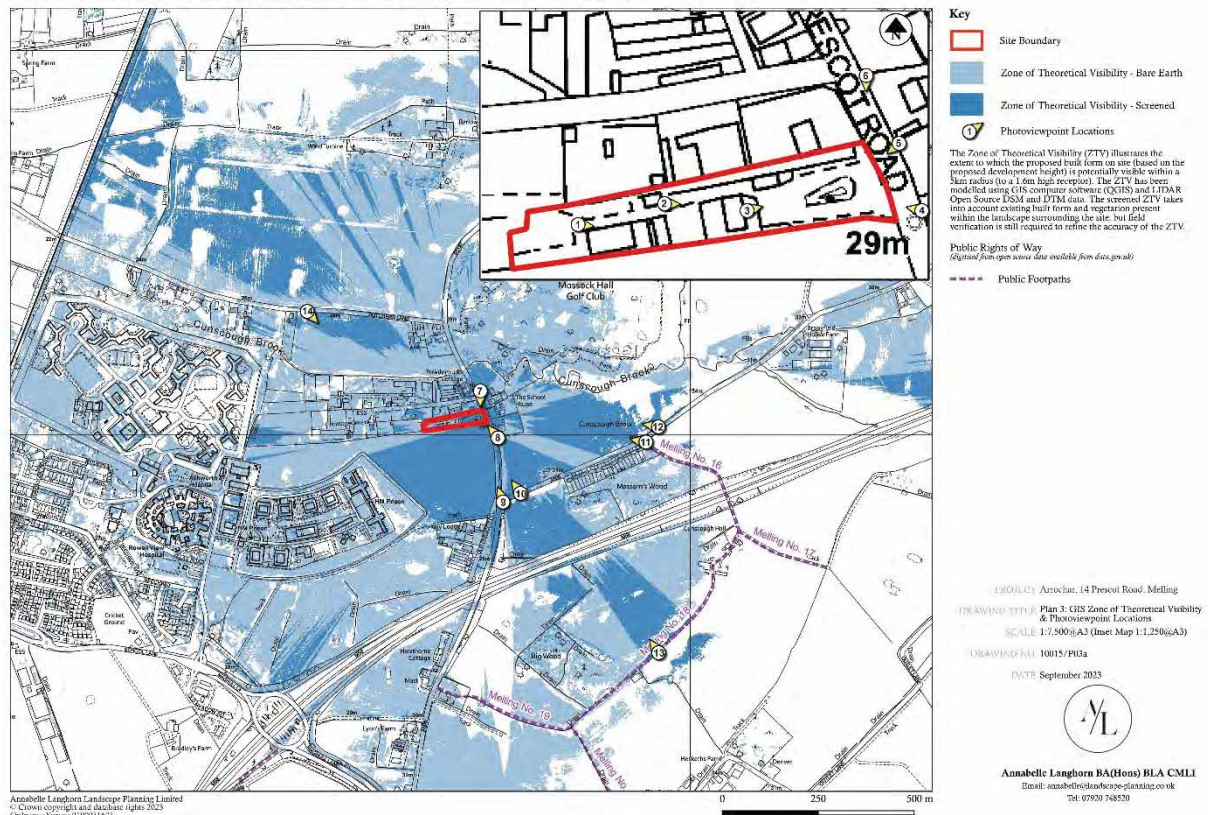


Figure 7: Plan 3 GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 3.3 As can be seen from the above, the potential for visibility of the proposals mainly relates to a limited section of Prescott Road to the immediate east, north-east and south-east of the site, and to limited sections of Cunsough Lane and Butchers Lane.
- 3.4 In the field, it quickly becomes evident that the intervening field boundaries restrict visibility. Even where there is potential for views towards the site from public routes, the low-lying landscape together with the presence of built form and intact field boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks, is such that the site cannot be seen.
- 3.5 A series of photoviewpoints² have been obtained to illustrate this visual context and these are set out below. The photoviewpoints are intended to be representative of the area within which the site is visible, and to represent a variety of visual receptors.

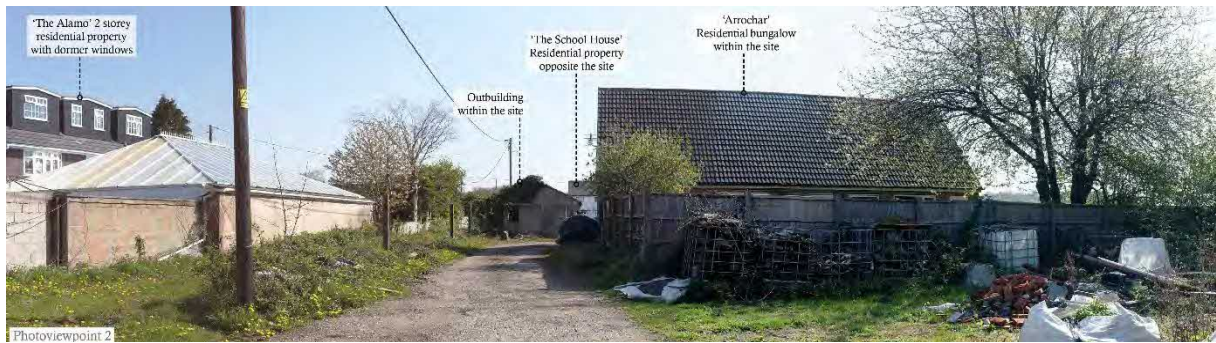
² The photoviewpoint photography included within this appraisal was taken using a digital SLR camera (Canon 5D) using a 50mm focal length as per best practice guidance. The photography is intended to provide an indication of the composition of the view and extent of visibility of the site, but it is recognised that such views are best experienced in person, in the field. The identification of views was carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces. Spring photographs were taken in April 2023 when deciduous vegetation was partially in leaf. Conditions were dry and visibility was good.



Representative Viewpoints

3.6 The following viewpoint description refers to the photoviewpoints contained on the Photosheets at the rear of this report. Extracts are included below for ease of reference, but the full-size images should also be viewed on the Photosheets.

Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3



3.7 The land within the site is well contained visually to the north by the adjacent built form also associated with this settlement area along Prescott Road. To the south it is more open visually as the boundary is a low fence and hedgerow. To the west, the additional land owned by the applicant contains has vegetated boundaries which serve to restrict visibility further westwards.



Viewpoints 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8



Photoviewpoint 4



Photoviewpoint 5



Photoviewpoint 6



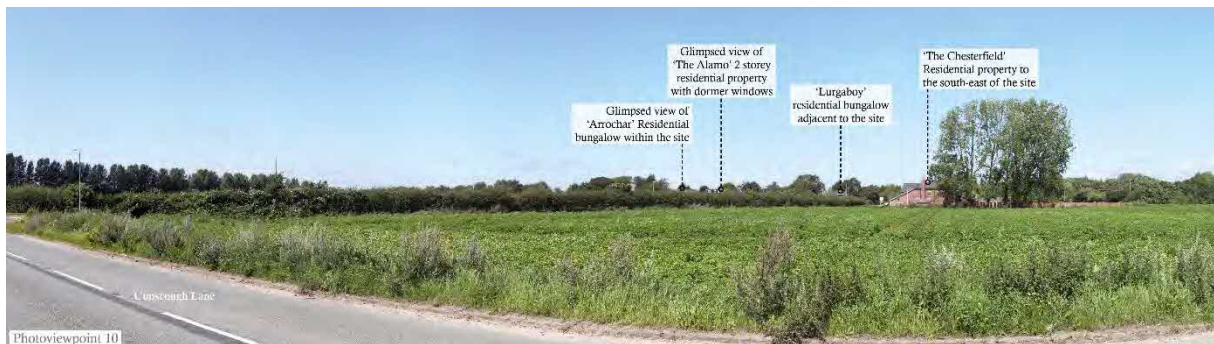
Photoviewpoint 7



3.8 To the east, north-east and south-east, the site can be seen from Prescott Road, which is settled in this area and contains other residential single and two-storey dwellings as well as commercial premises such as Brides garage.

3.9 The degraded nature of the site boundary features has an influence over the character of the landscape visually from this stretch of Prescott Road. As distance from the site along Prescott Road increases northwards intervening built form serves to gradually restrict visibility of the site and the agricultural land adjacent to it to the south.

Viewpoints 9 and 10



3.10 As distance southwards increases, views become restricted by intervening roadside and field boundary hedgerows such that only the very top of Arrochar and The Alamo can be glimpsed. Other residential development along Prescott Road can be partially seen.

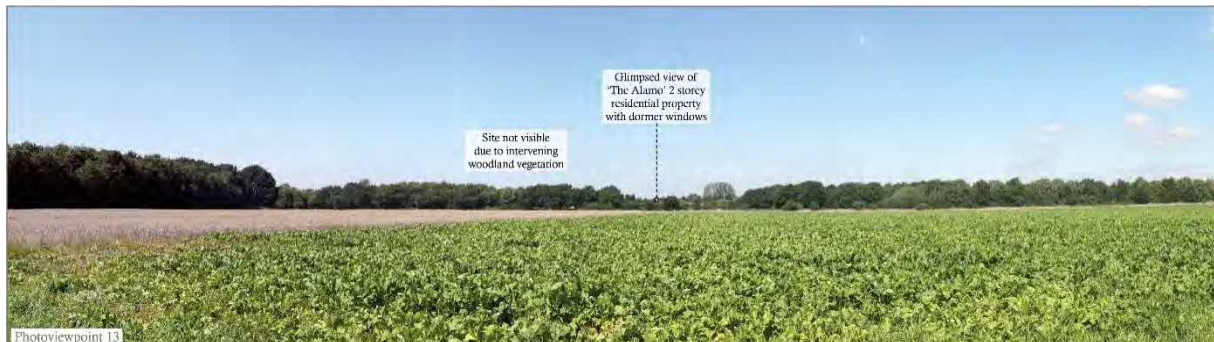


Viewpoints 11 and 12



3.11 Gaps in the field boundary hedgerows along Cuncough Lane allow glimpsed visibility towards the site, such that the existing bungalow and neighbouring properties are all partially visible.

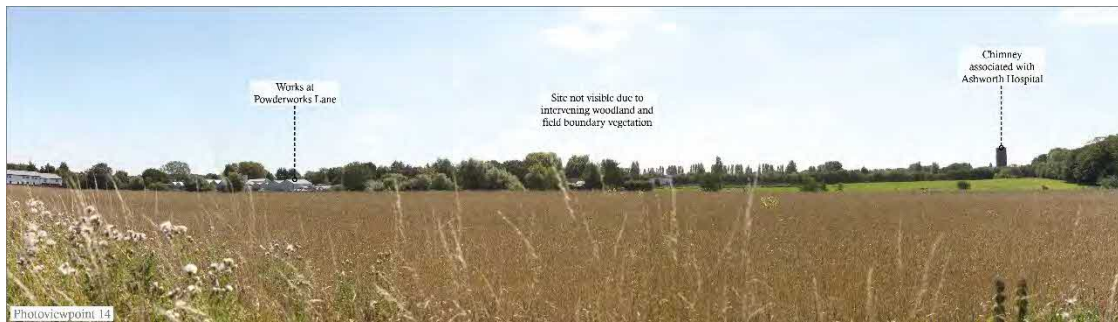
Viewpoint 13



3.12 From the Public Footpath (Ref: Melling 18) that runs between Cuncough Lane and Prescott Road there is a relatively elevated section from which glimpses towards the site are possible. However, the level of intervening vegetation is such that the site cannot be seen. The neighbouring two-storey property The Alamo is partially visible so it can be anticipated that the new two-storey development proposed within the site could be visible to a similar degree from this short section of the Melling 18 footpath route.



Viewpoint 14



- 3.13 To the north-west of the site, the flat topography and layering of field boundary hedgerows within the intervening landscape is such that the site can not be seen.
- 3.14 Overall, the above photoviewpoints demonstrate that there is a very limited visual envelope and a small number of potential visual receptors to the proposed residential development within the site limited to transient users of Prescott Road and Cuncough Lane, recreational users of Public Footpath Melling 18 and a very small number of private residents neighbouring the site. For the majority of nearby users, including recreational users of the rest of the public footpath network, users of local roads and private residents living close by, the site is not visible.
- 3.15 Visually, it will be important to ensure the materials palette, massing and form of the dwellings complements and respects the landscape surroundings and associates well with the existing settlement area.
- 3.16 Even for the more sensitive of visual receptors, the development of the site would still only represent the addition of four new residential properties, and the redevelopment of the existing bungalow within the site, set within an existing residential plot and located within an established residential area. There will not be any loss of important scenic qualities or valued visual features.

Identification and Classification of Visual Receptors

- 3.17 Corresponding with the above description of the extent to which the site is visible, and the associated representative viewpoints included within this report, the people (visual receptors) likely to be affected by the proposals are:
- Recreational users of Public Footpath Melling 18 to the south-east of the site;
 - Private residents of The Alamo and Lurgaboy to the immediate north of the site;
 - Private residents of The School House and The Chesterfield to the east of the site;
 - Private residents along Cuncough Lane to the south-east of the site;
 - Business users of Brides Garage to the north-east of the site;
 - Transient users of Prescott Road; and,
 - Transient users of Cuncough Lane.
- 3.18 Recreational users of the local rights of way will be engaged in outdoor activities whereby their attention and interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and the sequential visual experience. As a result, the sensitivity of these user groups to visual change will be **high**.
- 3.19 Private residents of housing will experience views on a daily basis and as such their sensitivity to visual change will be **high**.



- 3.20 Transient users of Prescott Road and Cuncough Lane will have a different focus to their activities and will be travelling for the purposes of making a journey, likely to notice the site only whilst travelling in close proximity to it. The sensitivity of transient users of the local roads will be **low**.
- 3.21 Business users of Brides Garage will be focused on their work activities rather than the surrounding landscape or townscape; their sensitivity will therefore be **low**.



Section 4: Landscape Policy Summary

National Planning Policy & Guidance

4.1 In terms of National Planning Policy, the key point to note is that the site is located within the Green Belt which means it falls within one of the footnote 7 examples of designated areas and assets referred to at Paragraph 11 of the framework. In terms of the recognised hierarchy of internationally to locally designated sites (NPPF para. 175) and the greater weight to be applied to conserving and enhancing the top tier of protected landscapes (NPPF para. 176), the site would not be considered worthy of protection for its landscape status, quality or features.

Local Policy

4.2 The site falls within the administrative borough of Sefton Council and the relevant development plan for the purposes of this application is the Sefton Local Plan. Under these policies the site is designated as Green Belt.

Plan 1: Site Location & Context

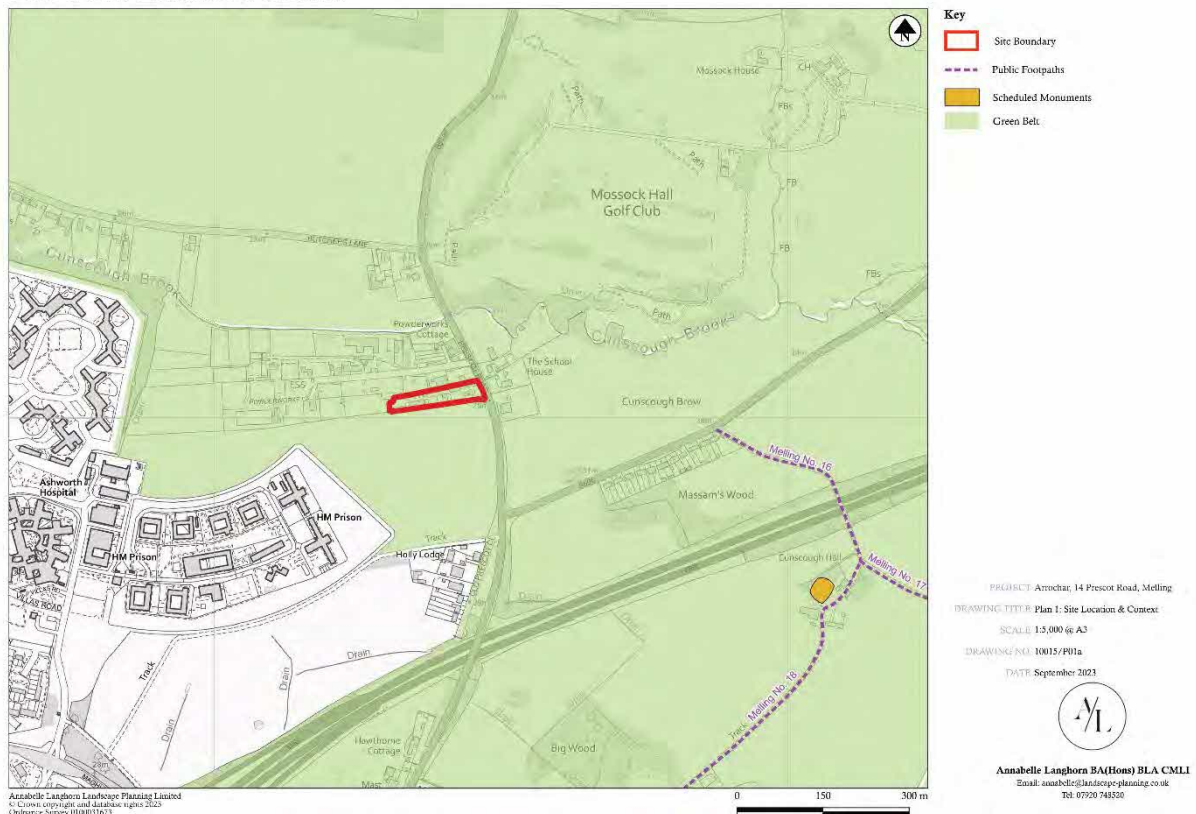


Figure 8: Plan 1 Site Location & Context



4.3 The following adopted policies are relevant to the site and the landscape and visual matters within this report:

MN7: Green Belt

EQ2: Design

EQ9: Provision of Public Open Space, Strategic Paths and Trees

NH1: Natural Assets

NH7: Rural Landscape Character

4.4 The key landscape objectives of the above policies in landscape and visual terms are:

To ensure that the extent of the Green Belt in Sefton is retained (Policy MN7);

To ensure that development proposals respond positively to the character, local distinctiveness and form of its surroundings (Policy EQ2);

To enhance the character of an area where the existing area is of a lesser quality rather than preserve or reproduce negative aspects of the existing environment (Policy EQ2);

To ensure that key views of townscape, including landmark and gateway buildings, and important landscape features are retained or enhanced (Policy EQ2);

To ensure the arrangement of buildings, structures and spaces within the site relates positively to the character and form of the surroundings and achieves a high quality of design (Policy EQ2);

To ensure development proposals make a positive contribution to their surroundings through the quality of their design in terms of scale, height, form, massing, style, detailing, landscape and use of materials (Policy EQ2);

To ensure that development proposals do not result in unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees as a result of development (Policy EQ9);

To ensure that any trees lost as a result of development are replaced at a ratio of 1:1 within the site (Policy EQ9);

To ensure that Sefton's natural assets and landscape character will continue to contribute to the Borough's sense of place, local distinctiveness and quality of life, with development proposals contributing positively towards achieving this (Policy NH1);

To where possible, create new habitats and green infrastructure (Policy NH1); and

To protect, enhance or restore landscape character of the rural area, as appropriate (Policy NH7).

4.5 The policies above aim to fulfil these objectives through the preclusion of certain types of development, and through requiring applicants to demonstrate design and landscape character has been taken into account.

4.6 Policy MN7 generally precludes development within the Green Belt in that the existing Green Belt boundaries are expected to be maintained. However, the development proposed is seeking to create new dwellings within a previously developed area of land and furthermore, the Green Belt boundaries do not take into account any of the existing settlement area off Prescott Road including all the existing housing, commercial and industrial development to the immediate north and east of the site.



Section 5: Landscape & Visual Appraisal

The Proposals

- 5.1 The application proposals are for the creation of four new residential dwellings and for the redevelopment of the existing bungalow, on a strip of land containing a large area of hard-standing, an existing bungalow, several existing outbuildings and an unmanaged grassed garden area.
- 5.2 The ZTV and field verified visual envelope included within this report (**Section 3**) has shown that the proposed development will only be visible from a very limited geographical area, and the limited extent of visibility means the proposed development will affect a very limited geographical part of the wider Settled Farmland LCA. Visually, the development has the potential to be well contained within the existing settlement area with which it is already visually and characteristically associated.
- 5.3 Transient users of roads are low sensitivity users as their focus is not on an appreciation of the landscape, and along Prescott Road that experience is reinforced by their susceptibility to change within their visual context being influenced by the presence of housing already along Prescott Road and by the current condition of the site itself.
- 5.4 The proposed dwellings will complement the settled surroundings of the site, and the character of Prescott Road and the materiality proposed is sympathetic to the locality which does not have a prevailing architectural style.
- 5.5 A series of recommendations have been set out on **Plan 4** which were used to inform the final design of the building in terms of landscape character and visual amenity considerations.

Plan 4: Landscape Recommendations



Figure 9: Plan 4: Landscape Recommendations



Landscape Impacts

Settled Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Lydiate Land Description Unit (LDU)

- 5.6 The LCA and LDU within which the site is located extends to an area much wider ranging than the site itself. From public locations beyond the site, the construction of the new dwellings would only be perceived within a very limited geographical area relating to Prescott Road which is immediately adjacent to the site to the east, and Cuncough Lane to the south-east. From this very limited area, the delivery of materials to the site will be seen, as well as the houses being erected. Given the urban influences within the LCA and LDU as a whole, and the adjacent settled context of the site, material deliveries of the sort required to facilitate this development will not be in any way unusual or out of character for the area.
- 5.7 Similarly, once completed, the new dwellings will only be perceived from a very limited area and will register as a wholly expected visual occurrence within the previously developed context of the site and the settled context of its surroundings along Prescott Road. The new housing will be seen adjacent to neighbouring residential properties to the north, north-east, east and south-east of the site.
- 5.8 The site is not a fundamental defining component of the LCA, indeed in its current state it is considered to form a detracting element within the landscape as it is currently derelict with the limited landscape features present (hedgerow along the southern boundary) being in a poor condition. Only the site's broadly flat topography and the hedgerow along part of the southern boundary are characteristic. There will be no loss of key landscape features of the LCA, no loss of characteristics fundamental to its character and the openness of the surrounding agricultural landscape will remain intact. The removal of the existing outbuildings within the western part of the site, and the reinstatement of these and the associated storage yard surfacing with grassland will create an area of open grassland that is consistent with the character of the local landscape immediately surrounding the site, as well as that of the wider LCA in general. The street-scene along Prescott Road can be enhanced in association with the proposed development which will contribute to the character of the landscape locally by creating new development to replace the detracting features perceived in association with the site's currently derelict state.
- 5.9 Taking into consideration the above reasoning, it has been deduced that there would be **negligible impacts** during construction resulting in **neutral effects** and **negligible impacts** on completion resulting in **neutral effects**. The introduction of new dwellings within the site would not in any way be uncharacteristic given the past usage of the site for housing, the presence of housing immediately adjoining the site both to the north and east, and the usage and character of the wider LCAs locally. The new dwellings would only be perceived within a very discrete geographical area, limited to the immediate surroundings of the site and short sections of nearby public roads, such as to not form a noticeable change to the landscape. Even where more distant public views of the site are possible such as from Public Footpath Melling 18 to the south-east of the site, the proposed development is still not anticipated to cause any harm to the perception of the wider LCA, as again, would appear in keeping with the massing, scale, height and land use of the local area, in particular along Prescott Road.
- 5.10 Once the proposed soft landscaping has become established (after 15 years), there will be localised improvements to the character of the landscape along Prescott Road. The replacement of an area of hardstanding and unmanaged boundaries with residential properties that reflect the materiality of the locality, set within a curtilage defined by a new verge and improved hedgerow planting, is more in keeping with the wider LCA. The impacts will be **low**, resulting in **minor beneficial** effects due to the local improvements that the development will bring to the landscape character of the area.

Visual Impacts

Recreational Users

- 5.11 People utilising the public footpath Melling 18 to the south-east of the site currently experience no visibility of the site; however it is anticipated that the new two-storey houses could be partially glimpsed from a long distance (over 750m away) (see **Photoviewpoint 13**). It is anticipated that due to the distance at which the site is viewed from, there is unlikely to be any noticeable disruption to the existing visual



experience as a result of the construction works taking place. The construction of the development is therefore judged to result in **negligible impacts** on the users of Public Footpath 18 and **neutral effects**.

- 5.12 The completed development will be even less discernible as it will be viewed at long distance, and the materiality, form and height of the buildings are such that they will blend into both the existing residential context and the wooded backdrop. The change brought about through the creation of the proposed dwellings is in keeping with the existing landscape and visual context, registering as only a minor alteration to the view. Thus, there will be **negligible impacts** on users of Public Footpath 18, resulting in **neutral effects**.
- 5.13 There will be no change in the effects once the proposed soft landscaping has established fully (after 15 years) as it will not be visible from this location. Effects at Year 15 will remain **neutral**.

Private Residents

- 5.14 For private residents at The Alamo and Lurgaboy to the immediate north of the site, views of the site are direct as these properties have upper and lower storey windows overlooking the site (see **Photoviewpoints 1, 2 and 4**). These users will inevitably be impacted upon during the construction period, as the sight of vehicular movements to and from the site, material import and storage on site, and the gradual construction of the new dwellings will all be visible in relatively close proximity. Impacts during construction will be **medium**, resulting in **temporary minor adverse** effects.
- 5.15 The completed development as proposed will be broadly consistent with the baseline visual composition, with the presence of a new single storey height dwelling being in keeping with the existing visual context but with the new two-storey dwellings interrupting views that currently extend across the open agricultural fields beyond the site to the south. The new dwellings will still register as being part of the established settled context despite this change to views from these neighbouring residential properties. Overall, it is judged that private residents at The Alamo and Lurgaboy will experience **medium** impacts, resulting in **minor adverse** effects. The proposed soft landscaping at the southern site boundary and along the site's frontage onto Prescott Road will not change the impacts on these properties therefore at Year 15 the effects will remain **minor adverse**.
- 5.16 For private residents associated with the houses located to the east of the site on Prescott Road (The School House and The Chesterfield) the site is viewed directly across Prescott Road (see **Photoviewpoints 4, 5 and 8**). During construction, users of these properties will see construction vehicles coming and going, the import of materials, and the gradual building of the new houses. Given the existing usage of the site, and the adjacent settled context, this should not be out of character. Similarly, once the development is completed, views of the new houses will be a readily noticeable change. The proposals will be wholly characteristic however once completed. As a result of this context, impacts during construction will be **medium** resulting in **temporary minor adverse** effects. On completion, the impacts will be **low**, resulting in **minor adverse** effects. Once the proposed soft landscaping has become established (after 15 years), the development will be slightly better assimilated into the rest of the settlement area, but the change will not be sufficient enough for the resulting effects to be considered to be any lower than **minor adverse**.
- 5.17 Private residents on Cunsough Lane, have partial, distant and filtered views of the site. Intervening field boundary and garden curtilage vegetation serves to restrict visibility of the site, and where seen, it is glimpsed within the context of the adjacent residential properties on Prescott Road and the backdrop of the woodland to the north.
- 5.18 During construction there will be **low** impacts on these users, resulting in **temporary minor adverse** effects as the creation of the new houses, and the construction activities appear as glimpses, partially visible. On completion, the new properties will appear in keeping with the rest of the existing development along Prescott Road and will not be an uncharacteristic change to the visual composition. The houses will be kept to a height that means they will register as a characteristic addition to the existing settlement area, and no important features of the existing visual context will be lost. On completion therefore, the impacts will be **low** resulting in **minor adverse to neutral effects**. Once the proposed soft landscaping has established (after 15 years) the development will be even better assimilated into the visual context, but the views from



these properties will not change due to the distance at which the proposed development will be viewed and the low-level screening such that effects will remain **minor adverse to neutral**.

- 5.19 For business users at Brides Garage on Prescott Road the site is visible partially across Prescott Road beyond the intervening property Lurgaboy (see **Photoviewpoint 6**). During construction, users will see construction vehicles coming and going, the import of materials, and partial sight of the new houses gradually being built. Given the existing usage of the site, and the adjacent settled context, this should not be out of character. Similarly, once the development is completed, views of the new houses will be a readily noticeable change, interrupting views across the open agricultural land to the south of the site and towards the woodland that runs along the M58 corridor. The new houses will only be seen partially beyond the intervening house at Lurgaboy. The proposals will be wholly characteristic once completed. As a result of this context, impacts during construction will be **medium** resulting in **neutral** effects. On completion, the impacts will be **low**, resulting in **neutral** effects. Once the proposed soft landscaping has become established (after 15 years), the development will be slightly better assimilated into the rest of the settlement area, but the change will not be sufficient enough for the resulting effects to be considered to be beneficial, therefore remaining **neutral**.

Transient Users

- 5.20 These users relate to those travelling along Prescott Road and Cunsough Lane.
- 5.21 The site is accessed from Prescott Road and it can be seen directly from it (see **Photoviewpoints 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8**). The development will not be readily seen by users of Prescott Road, as the road is immediately adjacent to the site. The section of the road that will afford visibility of the development is restricted however, such that to the north-east and south-east views become restricted by intervening roadside vegetation and built form (see **Photoviewpoints 7 and 9**). The construction of the development will result in **high impacts** on the users of Prescott Road as the construction activities will be seen at close proximity. This will result in **temporary minor adverse** effects on this low sensitivity user.
- 5.22 The completed development is not a significant change from the baseline position. The new houses are likely to be considered an improvement visually to the baseline context in which the site contains detracting elements and is in a degraded condition. The completed development will therefore result in **medium impacts** and **neutral effects** on the users of Prescott Road. These effects will improve to **minor beneficial** after 15 years when the proposed soft landscaping has become established as this will bring about local improvements to the character of the area, and therefore the visual experience of users of the road will be bettered.
- 5.23 For users of Cunsough Lane, the changes that will arise as a result of the construction of the development and the completed development will be less noticeable. The site is partially visible from discrete locations along Cunsough Lane, where gaps in the intervening field boundary vegetation allow views across the intervening fields (see **Photoviewpoints 10, 11 and 12**). The visual composition is such that from these locations, the construction activities will be slightly disruptive, as they will appear incongruous where seen. This is judged to result in **medium impacts** and **temporary minor adverse to neutral** effects. Once completed, the development will not form a key component within views –it will be seen partially, glimpsed through intervening vegetation, beyond agricultural fields, and adjacent to existing residential properties. It will not be noticeable therefore resulting in **neutral** effects. Once the proposed soft landscaping has become established the development will blend into the existing visual context more, but given the glimpsed nature of views, the partial nature of views, the enhancements brought about by the proposed soft landscaping will not improve the visual composition for these users. Effects will remain **neutral**.

Policy Compliance

- 5.24 There will be no vegetation losses as a result of development, and the new development can incorporate new native tree and hedgerow planting as well as the replacement of an area of hard surfacing, outbuildings and scrubby vegetation with new open grassland.



- 5.25 The development is located within an area of landscape that has a character associated with the existing settlement area, and which features varied settlement styles. Detracting elements are frequent and the site itself is in a degraded condition. As the proposed development is located within an existing residential plot and directly adjacent to residential properties along Prescott Road and Powderworks Lane, the proposed development fits well within the receiving landscape.
- 5.26 As set out above, impacts on the landscape character of the wider Landscape Character Area and Land Description Unit will be negligible, as will impacts on users of the local footpath network. Whilst impacts on local road users and private residents will be higher, this is expected for a development within a settled context as these users are in closer proximity to the site, and some degree of change will inevitably be noticeable. Even so, this report has demonstrated that the proposals will be very limited in terms of the geographical area affected, and even within that area, the new houses will rarely be seen in their entirety and will register as part of the existing land uses within and surrounding the site which are already a component within views.

Green Belt

- 5.27 The proposed development is located within the established settlement area on Prescott Road which together with the adjoining properties is washed over by the Green Belt.
- 5.28 The new houses will be entirely consistent with the existing on-site and surrounding land uses, will not appear out of keeping, and the Green Belt will continue to have the same sense of openness. The removal of the existing outbuildings and hard surfaced storage yard area on site will work to counteract the proposed new dwellings in terms of Green Belt openness. The siting, proposed height, form and materiality of the development is such that it will not have an impact on the wider Green Belt surrounding the site in terms of its visibility as it will only be visible from a very limited geographical area, within views in which houses set within a wooded context are already typical.
- 5.29 The presence of new residential properties within the site are entirely appropriate for the local context and they will not be visible from any more of the Green Belt than the existing housing located close to the site, nor will any special, unique, or important character features of the landscape character area be affected. The proposed development is associated with the land uses already present along Prescott Road and is enclosed by the adjoining settlement edge. It would not cause unacceptable visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt or give any perception of an erosion of the countryside, or a contribution towards urban sprawl.
- 5.30 Notwithstanding that the proposed development is located within an area of Green Belt in which other residential properties are also washed over by a Green Belt designation, the sight of the proposed development will also not be uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape and furthermore it will also visually be discrete in that it will be seen from very few locations. The development allows for localised small-scale enhancements to be delivered in the form of the removal of landscape detractors (the hard-standing and outbuildings present within the site and degraded boundary features), and the creation of new characteristic housing set within characteristic boundaries and with a large area of new open grassland.



Section 6: Conclusion

- 6.1 This report has been prepared by Annabelle Langhorn CMLI in order to provide an appraisal of the landscape character and visual circumstances of land at 14 Prescott Road, Melling, on which the applicant proposes to build four new residential dwellings, and to redevelop the existing bungalow 'Arrochar' with a new dwelling. It provides details of the current landscape conditions of the site, an analysis of the landscape character of the area, and an appraisal of the context within which the site is visible from nearby publicly available locations.
- 6.2 This report has found that the site can be seen from a very limited visual envelope and it has determined that the proposals are likely to only be visible from a very limited part of Prescott Road, Cunsough Lane, and those living within properties that immediately surround the site. The new houses may also be partially visible from some sections of Public Footpath Melling 18 and houses along Cunsough Lane to the south-east of the site registering as only a minor alteration to the view.
- 6.3 The site is not a fundamental defining component of the LCA, indeed in its current state it is considered to form a detracting element within the landscape due to having a degraded condition and it has an established residential usage at present. Only the site's broadly flat topography and the hedgerow along part of the southern boundary are characteristic. There will be no loss of key landscape features of the LCA and no loss of characteristics fundamental to its character. The removal of the existing outbuildings within the western part of the site, and the reinstatement of these and the associated storage yard surfacing with grassland will create an area of open grassland that is consistent with the character of the local landscape immediately surrounding the site, as well as that of the wider LCA in general.
- 6.4 Given this landscape and visual context, this report concludes that there is likely to be a limited change to the landscape character context of the site as a result of the proposed dwellings, and the potential for impacts on the visual amenity of only a very localised and limited number of viewers such that for the most part there will be negligible effects.
- 6.5 The siting, proposed height, form and materiality of the development will be paramount to ensure that it will only be visible from a limited geographical area. The design of the houses, and proposed materiality has therefore been carefully considered to ensure the development blends well with the urban fringe landscape that it is part of, and in keeping with the character of the existing settlement area it is associated with along Prescott Road.
- 6.6 Overall it is considered that the design of the proposed development has the potential to blend well with the character of Prescott Road and even improve it slightly through the removal of derelict and detracting features. The houses will only be seen from a small number of locations within a very limited geographical area, and even where these users are more sensitive as is the case for users of Public Footpath Melling 18 and the private residents living adjacent to the site, the development has the potential to appear in keeping with the existing visual context, in that it will appear within an existing residential plot, will be of a height that ties in with the existing prevailing built heights adjacent, and it will be enclosed by an enhanced hedgerow edge. No key landscape or visual components of the landscape would be lost.



Appendix 1: Methodology for Landscape & Visual Appraisal



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment/ Appraisal Methodology

Introduction

This report has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance and following the Landscape Institute and IEMA guidelines, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA3).

The appraisal/assessment of landscape and visual impacts and effects are not based on hard and fast rules. A judgement process, using narrative to fully explain the reasoning behind the judgements made is a key part of the process, which is set out in full within this report. Within this methodology however, a series of tables are included which provide the reader with more detail and definitions relating to the assessment of sensitivity, magnitude of change, and significance of effect.

The conclusions reached about the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of change (impacts) and the significance of the resulting effects are always based on professional judgement.

The key terms used within assessments are:

Susceptibility and Value – Which contribute to Sensitivity;

Scale, Geographical Extent, Duration and Reversibility – which contribute to the Magnitude of change; and

Significance of Effect – a judgement of the level of significance of effect when Sensitivity and Magnitude are combined.

Sensitivity

Overall sensitivity lies along a continuum of low to high. The Value and Susceptibility of a receptor are both considered in order to ascertain its overall sensitivity. In the case of landscape receptors, reference is normally made to the most recent relevant published Landscape Character Assessments.

Susceptibility

Susceptibility is assessed both for landscape receptors (including landscape designations and character areas) and for visual receptors (people). It indicates the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development “*without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.*” (GLVIA, 3rd version, para 5.40). An example of how Susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following tables below for both landscape and visual receptors.

Value

Landscape Value is “*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*” (GLVIA, 3rd version, page 157). Box 5.1 (GLVIA 3rd version, page 84) sets out factors to be considered in the identification of valued landscapes and this has been supported by the guidance set out within the Landscape Institutes Technical Guidance Note 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’. The factors influencing landscape value can be broadly described as: Landscapes recognised and valued for their quality and and/or cultural associations; key characteristics and features as recognised in published landscape character assessments; Landscape constrictions and the degree to which the landscape is intact and legible.

In visual terms, Value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people) – this is typically influenced by scenic qualities of the view, a view being identified as forming part of a specific viewing spot, or one which has been locally noted to form a key role as part of a settlement, route, or experience. Certain views are highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations, which can increase the sensitivity of the



viewer. However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall visual receptor sensitivity, a low value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity.

GLVIA3 advises that it is helpful to consider (but not be restricted to) the following:

- Nature of the view (full, partial or glimpsed);

- Proportion of the proposed development visible (full, most, part or none);

- Distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development and whether it would be the focus of the view or only a small element;

- Whether the view is stationary, transient or sequential; and

- The nature of the changes to the view.

Additionally, the seasonal effects of vegetation are considered, in particular the varying degree of screening and filtering of views.

Magnitude of Change

Overall magnitude of change lies along a continuum of low to high. Together the scale, geographical extent, and duration and reversibility of effect are all considered in understanding the overall Magnitude of change.

- Scale of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development.

- Geographical Extent of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt.

- Duration and Reversibility of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.

Effects

Landscape effects can be defined as the changes in the character and quality of the landscape as a result of a development, through:

- The impact on the landscape fabric (changes the development may cause to specific features and elements that make up the landscape);

- The impact on the overall patterns of elements and on the perceptual and aesthetic aspects that give rise to landscape character and regional and local distinctiveness; and

- The impact on valued landscapes such as public open space, designated landscapes or otherwise valued landscapes including wild land.

Visual effects relate to changes in available views of the landscape and the effect of those changes on people, including:

- the immediate impact of the Proposed Development on the content and character of views (e.g. through intrusion or obstruction and / or the change or loss of existing elements in a specific view); and

- the broader impact considering the overall change in visual amenity enjoyed by receptors in the area.

Best practice guidelines stipulate that the level of any landscape or visual effect should be evaluated, both during the construction works and following completion of the development. The level of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources and visual receptors against the magnitude of change that they would experience. As such, the assessment of potential and residual effects can be described as: negligible, minor, moderate, or major.

The following terms are used to define residual landscape/townscape effects:

- Adverse:** the proposed development may result in direct loss of physical landscape/townscape resources, weaken key characteristics or negatively affect the integrity of a landscape/townscape designation; and

- Beneficial:** the proposed development may replace poor quality elements of the existing landscape/townscape or strengthen existing landscape/townscape characteristics.



The following terms are used to define residual visual effects:

Adverse: the proposed development reduces visual amenity; and

Beneficial: the visual amenity is improved by the proposed development.

Appraisal/Assessment Criteria Tables

Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been arrived at by considering the landscape receptor value and the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the change proposed.

Susceptibility and value can be combined in different ways although it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity. As noted in GLVIA3 there can be complex relationships between the value attributed to a landscape and its susceptibility to change, which can be particularly important when considering change in or close to designated landscapes.

Landscapes considered highly susceptible to the proposed change are normally considered to be of high sensitivity unless there are particularly strong reasons associated with the landscape value that lead to a reduction in sensitivity. Similarly, receptors considered to be of low or medium susceptibility are usually in the same category of sensitivity, unless there are reasons associated with the landscape value that lead to an increase in sensitivity.

The overall sensitivity generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum. Professional judgement is always used to determine the overall level.

LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
HIGH	<p>Areas of landscape character that are highly valued for their scenic quality (including most statutorily designated landscapes);</p> <p>Elements/features that could be described as distinctive, unique or are nationally scarce;</p> <p>Distinct landscape structure with strong pattern and intact features;</p> <p>Mature vegetation with provenance such as ancient woodland or mature parkland trees;</p> <p>Mature landscape features which are dominant within the landscape and fundamental to defining the distinct landscape character of an area. Features which are characteristic of and contribute to a sense of place and illustrate time-depth in a landscape and if replaceable, could not be replaced other than in the long term;</p> <p>Important characteristics and features recognised as forming an intrinsic part of a nationally or regionally designated landscape; and/ or</p> <p>Few detractors or uncharacteristic features or elements present.</p> <p>The landscape is such that changes in terms of the proposed development would be entirely at odds with its character, related to matters of pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.</p>
MEDIUM	<p>Areas that have a positive landscape character but include some areas of alteration/degradation/or erosion of features;</p> <p>Locally important and notable features that contribute to the overall character of an area;</p> <p>Perceptual/aesthetic aspects has some vulnerability to unsympathetic development; and/or features/elements that are locally commonplace; unusual locally but in moderate/poor condition; or mature vegetation that is in moderate/poor condition or readily replicated.</p>



	Some scope for substitution or positive enhancement – the proposed development is somewhat consistent with the existing scale, pattern, grain, and/or land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
LOW	<p>Damaged or substantially modified landscapes with few characteristic features of value; Features or elements that are uncharacteristic and detract from the landscape character of an area such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large scale developments, etc);</p> <p>Degraded landscape structure with fragmented pattern and poor legibility of character</p> <p>Capable of absorbing major change – the proposed development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass, and/or there is scope for substitution or positive enhancement.</p>
NEGLIGIBLE	<p>Areas that are relatively bland or neutral in character with few/no notable features;</p> <p>A landscape that includes areas of alteration/degradation or erosion of features; and/or Landscape elements/features that are common place or make little contribution to local distinctiveness.</p> <p>Opportunities for the restoration of landscape through mitigation measures associated with the proposal.</p>

Visual Sensitivity

The sensitivity of a visual receptor reflects their susceptibility to change and any values which may be associated with the specific view. It varies depending on a number of factors such as the activity of the viewer, their reasons for being there and their expectations and the duration of view.

As with landscape, susceptibility and value can be combined in different ways to form a judgement about the sensitivity of a given receptor. It is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity.

However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall sensitivity of the visual receptor, a low value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity. Visual receptors considered highly susceptible to the proposed change are normally considered to be of high sensitivity unless there are particularly strong reasons associated with the value of the view that lead to a reduction in sensitivity.

Similarly, receptors considered of low or medium susceptibility are usually in the same category of sensitivity, unless there are reasons associated with the value of the view that lead to an increase in sensitivity.

The overall sensitivity generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum.

LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
HIGH	<p>A view or overall visual amenity which is an important reason for receptors being there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for highly susceptible receptors).</p> <p>A well balanced view containing attractive features and notable for its scenic quality.</p> <p>A view which is experienced by a large number of people and/ or recognised for its scenic qualities.</p> <p>(e.g. residents at home, users of public rights of way, users of footpaths where the attractive nature of the countryside is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the route, cyclists on national and local cycle routes designed to provide an attractive experience, road users on recognised tourist/scenic routes, visitors to landscape and heritage resources and attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to their appreciation, experience or enjoyment).</p> <p>The visual composition following the development as proposed will include discordant and incongruent elements.</p>



MEDIUM

A view or overall visual amenity which plays a relatively small part in the reason why a receptor would be there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for receptors of medium susceptibility).

An otherwise attractive view that includes noticeable discordant features or overall visual amenity where there are noticeable visual detractors.

(e.g. general road users, passengers on rail lines where the trains run at low or moderate speeds, users of public open space and footpaths where the nature of the surroundings is not a significant factor in the enjoyment of the space/ activity, visitors to landscape and heritage resources and attractions where views of the surroundings are a minor contributor to their appreciation, experience and/or enjoyment).

The visual composition following the development as proposed will be consistent with the baseline situation although some aspects may be at odds with the visual composition.

LOW

A view or overall visual amenity which is unlikely to be part of the receptor's experience or reasons for being there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for receptors of low susceptibility).

An unattractive view or overall visual amenity where there are many visual detractors.

(e.g. people at their place of work or shopping, users of high speed roads and passengers on railway lines running at high speed, people engaged in recreational activities where the view of the surroundings is secondary to the enjoyment of the activity such as outdoor sports, user of public open space and footpaths where the nature of the surroundings is irrelevant to the enjoyment of the activity)

The visual composition following the development as proposed will be in harmony with the existing composition.

NEGLIGIBLE

A view or overall visual amenity which is irrelevant to the receptor's experience or reasons for being there.

(e.g. users of indoor facilities where the view is irrelevant to their activity)

The visual composition following the development as proposed will make no difference to the users existing visual context or experience.

Magnitude of Change (Impacts)

The magnitude of change described within this report generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	JUSTIFICATION
HIGH	Total loss or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline (existing) landscape or view, and/or the introduction of totally uncharacteristic elements with the receiving landscape.
MEDIUM	Partial loss of or alteration to one of more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that may be prominent but not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
LOW	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
NEGLIGIBLE	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape – approximating the 'no change' situation.



Level of Effect

The level of effect will vary depending on the circumstances, the type and scale of development proposed, the baseline context and other factors. Professional judgement is used to combine sensitivity and magnitude to gauge the level of effect and determine whether it is significant or not.

The gradations of magnitude of change and level of effect used in the assessment represent a continuum on a four-point scale: major; moderate; minor; and negligible. Where appropriate, this assessment uses intermediate descriptors, such as minor to negligible, minor to moderate or moderate to major, where the assessor considers that the effect falls between the levels set out below.

Effects can be either beneficial or adverse and, in some cases, neutral.

The level of effect described within this report generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum.

LEVEL OF EFFECT	JUSTIFICATION
MAJOR	Total permanent loss or major alteration to key elements and features of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements totally uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. Development would be visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views both into and across the area (adverse). Fitting well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, and enhance the existing landscape character. The development would create a highly improved change in views (beneficial).
MODERATE	Effects that are at variance with some of the landscape characteristics, adversely affecting the character (adverse), or fitting well with the landscape characteristics but changing their emphasis for improvement (beneficial).
MINOR	Not quite fitting the characteristics of the landscape (but not considered uncharacteristic) or have local/limited scale adverse impact (adverse), or locally improving or adding to the quality of the landscape (beneficial).
NEUTRAL	Complementing the landscape characteristics and maintaining the existing landscape character and quality.



Appendix 2: Extracts from Natural England's publication for the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain National Character Area

Key characteristics



Agriculture near Rufford.

- A rich patchwork of pasture, arable fields and drainage ditches, on a relatively flat to gently undulating coastal landscape.
- Extensive views across the plain, within which small to medium-sized blocks of mixed woodland (wind-sculpted near the coast) provide punctuation and vertical accents.
- Thickly blanketed by glacial till, with poorly-drained peat-filled hollows that give rise to mosses and meres (now mainly remnants).
- Medium-sized to large fields form an open, large-scale agricultural landscape. Pasture is more dominant north of the Ribble Estuary, with arable to the south. There is a high density of relict pastoral field ponds on the eastern side of the NCA.
- Localised areas of intensive market gardening provide seasonally varied colours and textures.
- A complex network of wide meandering rivers, raised drainage ditches and dykes divide and drain the landscape. Along with fragmented relicts of reedbeds and mosses, and historic place names, these provide a reminder of the area's heritage of wetland reclamation.

Continued on next page...

Key characteristics continued...

- Coastal habitats and large areas of open water are of international importance for their migratory and wintering wildfowl and wading bird populations.
- Mixed arable and pastoral farmland habitats support a nationally important assemblage of breeding farmland bird species.
- A complex network of channelised rivers, canals, drainage ditches and dykes supports a nationally important population of water vole.
- The Fylde coast, which extends from Fleetwood in the north to the mouth of the Ribble Estuary, includes significant urban areas along the coastal strip (such as Blackpool and Fleetwood).
- Urban settlement is concentrated in the planned Victorian coastal resorts (including Blackpool) and inland towns (the largest of which is Preston).
- The Ribble Link, Lancaster Canal, and Leeds and Liverpool Canal all cross the NCA.
- Designed landscapes associated with large houses are locally common in the south, where they provide enclosure in an otherwise open landscape.
- A rectilinear network of lanes and tracks –usually without fences or hedges –subdivides the landscape, and isolated brick farmsteads occur in rural areas.
- Tourism is an important contributor to the local economy, with many opportunities for informal recreation –particularly along the Fylde coast.
- Several long-distance paths cross the NCA, including the Lancashire Coastal Way, the Ribble Way and the Wyre Way, as well as canal towpaths.



Appendix 3: Extracts from Sefton's Landscape Character
Assessment for the Settled Farmlands LCA and the Lydiate
LDU



6. Conserve and enhance ecological diversity of pond and field habitats

Conserve the existing and traditional pattern of pond features within the agricultural areas and encourage ecological opportunities for habitat creation and diversity. Promote some relaxation of agricultural management, from arable to pasture, in favour of encouraging diversity, and to aid retention as an agricultural landscape, but avoid changes to field boundaries (eg post and rail fencing), landform and geology.

7. Conserve the small scale pattern of country lanes within the rural areas

The winding country lanes partly define the character of the rural areas in that they often form the field boundaries. They are simple, sometimes without edging and lighting features which have a urban nature and therefore reduce their rural character.

8. Conserve landscape character by restricting and controlling future development

Essential for the retention of this landscape type is the strict limitation of development, particularly encroachments into the rural areas adjacent to the Conservation Areas (so reducing the character of isolated settlements) and the reduction in extent and the disintegration of the field and ditch patterns between the urban developments to the north and south.

Development can best be accommodated in the immediate areas to the existing built form, particularly where the pattern is isolated or destroyed though association with existing development, although a green buffer or recreational uses would always be preferable and desirable. The landscape pattern should aim to be retained to the largest extent of area possible. Note that continued and piecemeal development on the urban edge, often associated with permitted development within the green Belt, begins to erode the landscape of pattern and causes its gradual break down.

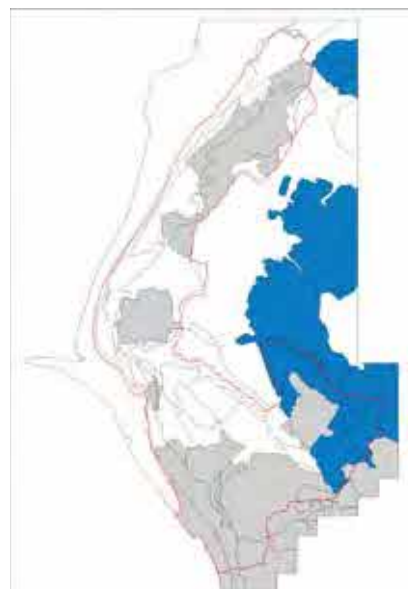
Changes in level are particularly undesirable, as are further recreational development such as football pitches, sports grounds and golf courses. Recreational uses as noted in 1 above.

This is reflected in the many red brick farmsteads and dwellings scattered throughout the area and the network of narrow rural lanes which serve them. The settled farmlands are 'open' in character with tree cover largely restricted to groups of trees around buildings and field ponds.



Key characteristics

- gently rolling lowland topography
- dispersed pattern of farmsteads and wayside dwellings
- network of narrow, rural lanes
- sub-regular enclosure pattern of hedged fields
- arable cropping with field vegetables
- frequent field ponds with associated trees and scrub
- brick built farmsteads and barns



7. Settled farmlands

An open, rolling agricultural landscape of arable farms, hedged fields and clusters of rural dwellings. A key feature of this landscape is its settled character, which contrasts strongly with the adjoining sparsely populated carrlands.



Settled farmlands

The settled farmlands comprise a number of component land description units (LDU's). These have been defined by the occurrence of certain key characteristics, which are summarised below. A first attempt has also been made to summarise the key issues affecting each LDU.

LS01 (Melling) / LS04 (Lydiate)		LE02 (Maghull Moss)	
Topogra phy:	rolling lowland	Topogra phy:	rolling lowland
Geology:	glacial drift	Geology:	glacial drift
Soil type:	free-draining sandy soils	Soil type:	free-draining sandy soils
Land use:	cropping - thorn hedges	Land use:	cropping - thorn hedges
Settlement:	settled - brick & slate	Settlement:	isolated farms
Tree cover:	tree groups	Tree cover:	tree groups
Distinguishing features:		Distinguishing features:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • field ponds 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relic mossland 	
Key issues:		Key issues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fragmented cultural pattern • widespread sub -urban influences • road corridors - localised high impact 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fragmented cultural pattern • road corridors - localised high impact 	

LS03 (Royal Oak)		LE05 (Sudell)	
Topogra phy:	rolling lowland	Topogra phy:	rolling lowland
Geology:	glacial drift	Geology:	fluvial drift
Soil type:	free-draining sandy soils	Soil type:	wet clayey soils
Land use:	cropping - thorn hedges	Land use:	cropping - thorn hedges
Settlement:	dispersed - brick & slate	Settlement:	settled - brick & slate
Tree cover:	trees & woods	Tree cover:	linear trees
Distinguishing features:		Distinguishing features:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • field ponds 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stream corridor 	

Key issues:	Key issues:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fragmented cultural pattern • incoherent tree cover • urban edge - localised impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fragmented cultural pattern • intensive farming

Summary Of Pressures

- Changes in farming practices over the last 150 years, primarily through intensification and diversification have resulted in the change in scale and visual appearance of the landscape and its associated patterns, i.e. loss of hedgerows, trees and ancient field patterns.
- Transportation and communication requirements continue to dissect the rural character. Whilst visually the canal allows the land use to continue/ flow into its adjacent and opposite areas the changed topography and scale associated with motorways and railways forms a visual barrier to original land patterns and foreshortens the Landscape Character.
- Continuing expansion of the urban edge, particularly around Maghull, Kirby, Lydiate and Aintree reduces the extent and therefore weakens the character area between the urban settlements. Continued pressure of even 'soft' development (for example tree planting) threatens the retention and existence of the rural area in these locations.

Strategy Statement

Conserve the ancient and strong landscape patterns associated with the gently rolling arable landscape north, east and west of Lydiate, limit development and retain the pattern of dispersed farms and dwellings. Conserve and enhance the arable landscape pattern in the eastern most area of Lydiate, particularly on boundaries with the settled farmlands of the adjacent authority and limit developments associated with the A59. Maintain the east-west flow of the landscape. Conserve, strengthen and enhance the arable landscape patterns between the eastern side of Maghull and the western side of Kirkby (neighbouring authority), this will improve the visual unity. Ensure the retention of the rural agricultural area between these settlements.



Policy Guidelines

1. Conserve and strengthen the ancient enclosure and associated landscape pattern.

Areas to the north, east and west of Lydiate demonstrate the strongest characteristics of ancient enclosure. Features such as irregular field boundaries with 'wavy' field boundaries, water filled ditches and the winding lanes connecting the dispersed settlement should be retained. There should be strict limitation on further development particularly beyond the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. A reduction in field size and the replanting of hedgerows with hedgerow trees and small sporadic woodland blocks would strengthen the existing pattern.

2. Conserve and enhance the arable landscape pattern to retain the Landscape Character and limit future development.

The existence of the Landscape Character type is in places threatened by urban expansion, particularly the area north of Maghull, around the A59 and Ashworth Hospital site and along its boundary with West Lancs. This east-west flow of the landscape should be retained. A sensitive redevelopment of the Ashworth Hospital site is necessary to respect and reflect the values of the adjacent Landscape Character within this area. Development should also be restricted in the adjoining particularly to the south-west of Aughton.

Equally urban expansion threatens the continued existence of what has become a green and rural agricultural corridor between Maghull, Kirkby and Aintree. Areas under greatest threat are those north and west of the M58 motorway and the area wedged between the M57, the Liverpool golf Course and Aintree. Careful consideration should be afforded to maintaining the Landscape Character and maintaining this green 'buffer' between settlements.

3. Conserve the gently rolling landscape to retain visual prominence & the landscape pattern to retain unity

The gently rolling landscape gives prominence to high points in the topography, such as Melling and the ridgeline marked by the A5147 through Lydiate. Traditionally these were often punctuated by churches. The Church of St Thomas at Melling is prominent throughout the surrounding landscape. Equally the Church of Our Lady and St Katherine's Chapel (Lydiate) are particularly prominent in views from the north and the east. It is important to maintain the long and distant views, often sweeping up and beyond the fields to the settlement marked by its church, as they contribute significantly to local distinctiveness. Equally long and distant views westwards are afforded as far as the Welsh Hills from and below the ridgeline at Lydiate and these should also be retained.

The importance of retaining the landscape pattern was noted in both points above. Continued breakdown of the pattern of a character area creates visual confusion and weakens its integrity. Visual unity is strengthened by building upon the key characteristics of an area and ensuring that these values are continuous throughout the Character area. This should be encouraged.

4. Conserve and restore the landscape pattern of hedgerows trees and woodlands.

Landscape Character should where possible be improved by replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. These should build from the previous field pattern, where these still exist e.g. south of Melling there are sporadic lines of overmature trees on slightly raised field boundaries, indicating former field pattern. Equally this would greatly enhance ecological corridors throughout the area. Small scattered blocks of woodland could be introduced into the field pattern at an appropriate scale and frequency, to help provide physical and visual continuity and promote ecological diversity. These would integrate well with the patterns in adjacent areas and could help soften the impacts where the urban edge forms a stark and ugly juxtaposition with the rural area (Aintree).



5. **Conserve traditional patterns of small scale linear settlement and dispersed farmsteads and dwellings.**

It is important to retain the small scale nature of development within the rural area. It is this again which contributes to local distinctiveness. Melling should retain its present scale. Elsewhere the scattered farms and small linear groups of cottages (often terraced) should continue to personalise the landscape, but retain their scale, building style and traditional choice of materials (generally brick/stone). Conservation should consider being extended to the old barns which often accompany farm developments, whilst the size, scale, materials and siting of new farm sheds should reflect their position and appearance in the landscape.

The large country houses scattered throughout should be retained. Choice of new build materials should reflect the predominance of traditional brick and stone types and styles.

6. **Conserve and strengthen traditional boundary treatments.**

In addition to hedgerows (noted above) boundaries to development should consider appropriate and traditional materials, such as stone or brick walls, particularly if this is relevant to context. In some instances hedges would be suitable, but choice of species must be appropriate.

Field boundaries should discourage the use of post and wire and post and rail in favour of hedgerows and/ or ditches where appropriate.

7. **Conserve and enhance ecological diversity.**

The area is characterised by field ponds, often with associated vegetation, these should be retained. Ecological diversity along canal corridors, motorways and railways (including dismantled), should be encouraged, (by reintroducing or breaking traditional land use patterns), whilst avoiding the appearance of emphasising the route.

Ecological target notes from National Vegetation Classifications (see Appendix A) comment on the ornithological value of the arable field pattern. Retention should include this consideration.

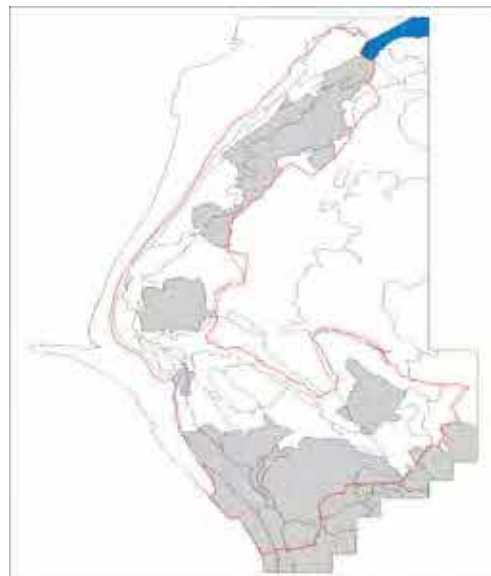
Two further landscapes were identified within the wider study area, where they form an immediate or close boundary with Sefton. They are of use for adjacent context and character descriptions only are detailed. These are:

8. Enclosed marsh

An open, low-lying former marshland landscape characterised by large arable fields bounded by a grid-like pattern of drains, ditches and embankments. This is a visually uniform, man-made landscape where the environment is carefully controlled to maximise agricultural production.

Key characteristics

- flat, low-lying topography
- large fields of cereals and vegetables
- grid-like pattern of drains and ditches
- large, isolated farmsteads
- visually prominent sea defense embankments



9. Sandstone hills

A variant of the settled farmlands, with a more distinctly undulating and upstanding topography, closely associated with a zone of low sandstone hills. Wide views towards the coast are afforded from prominent vantage points such as Clieves Hill.

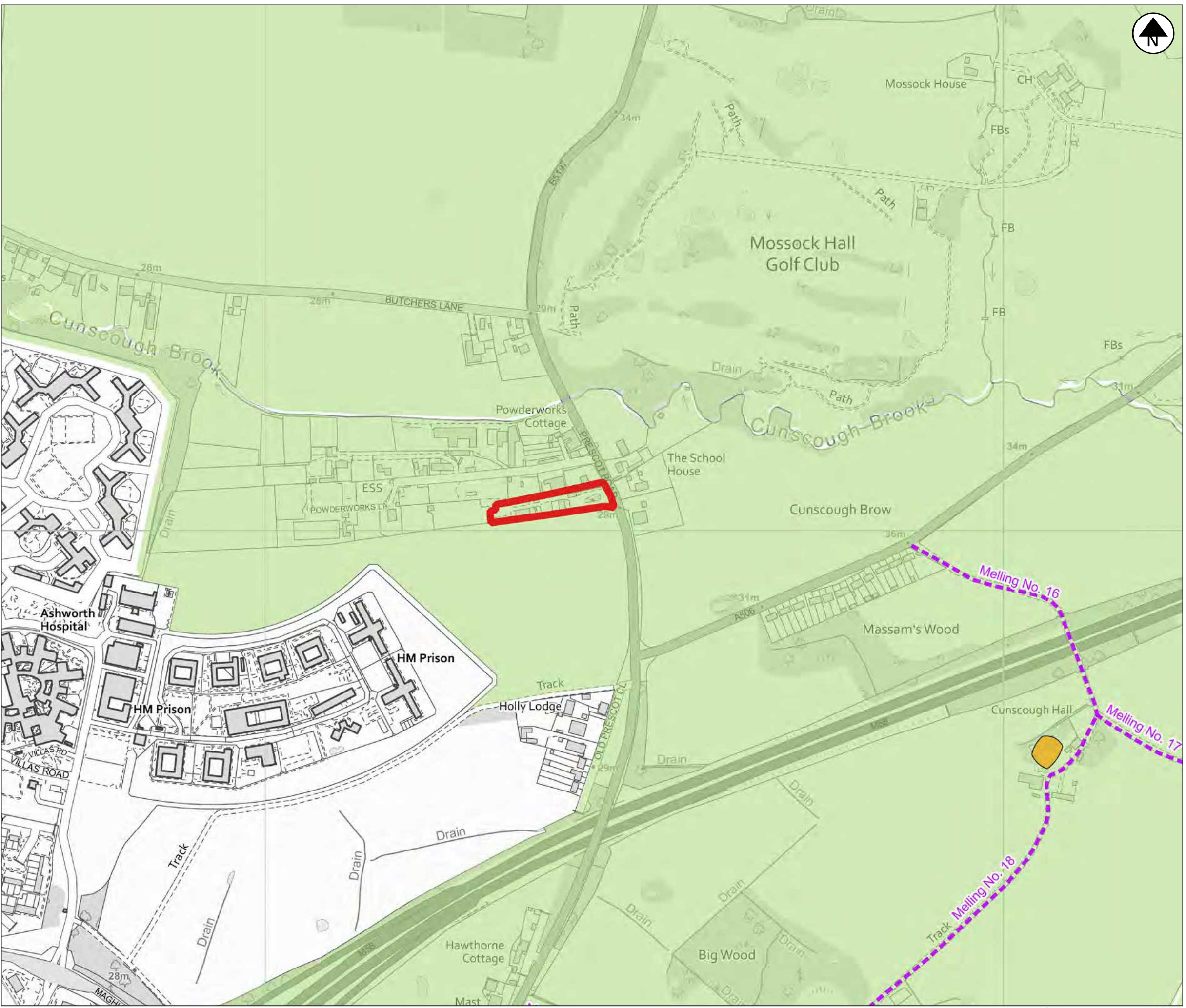
Key characteristics

- low undulating hills







Plans

Plan 1: Site Location & Context



Key

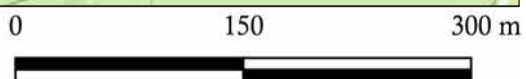
-  Site Boundary
-  Public Footpaths
-  Scheduled Monuments
-  Green Belt



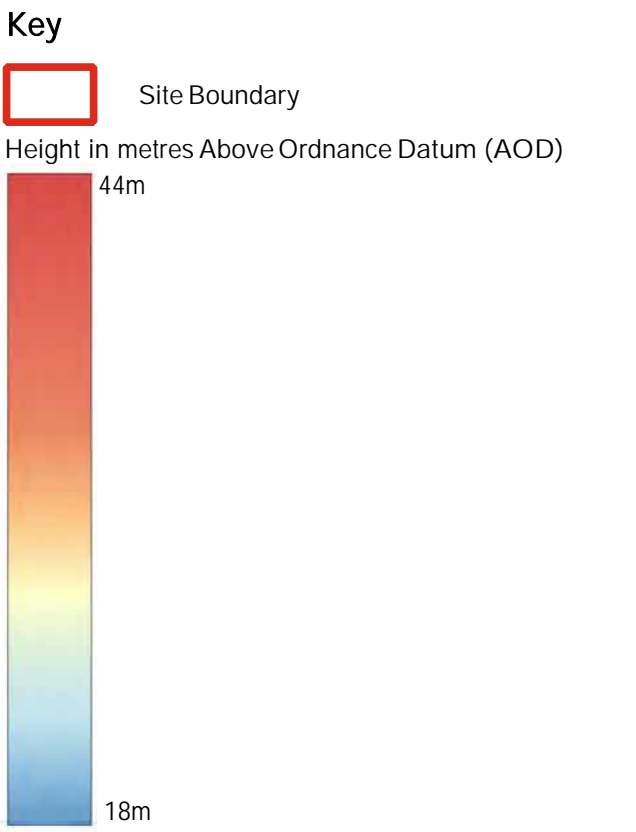
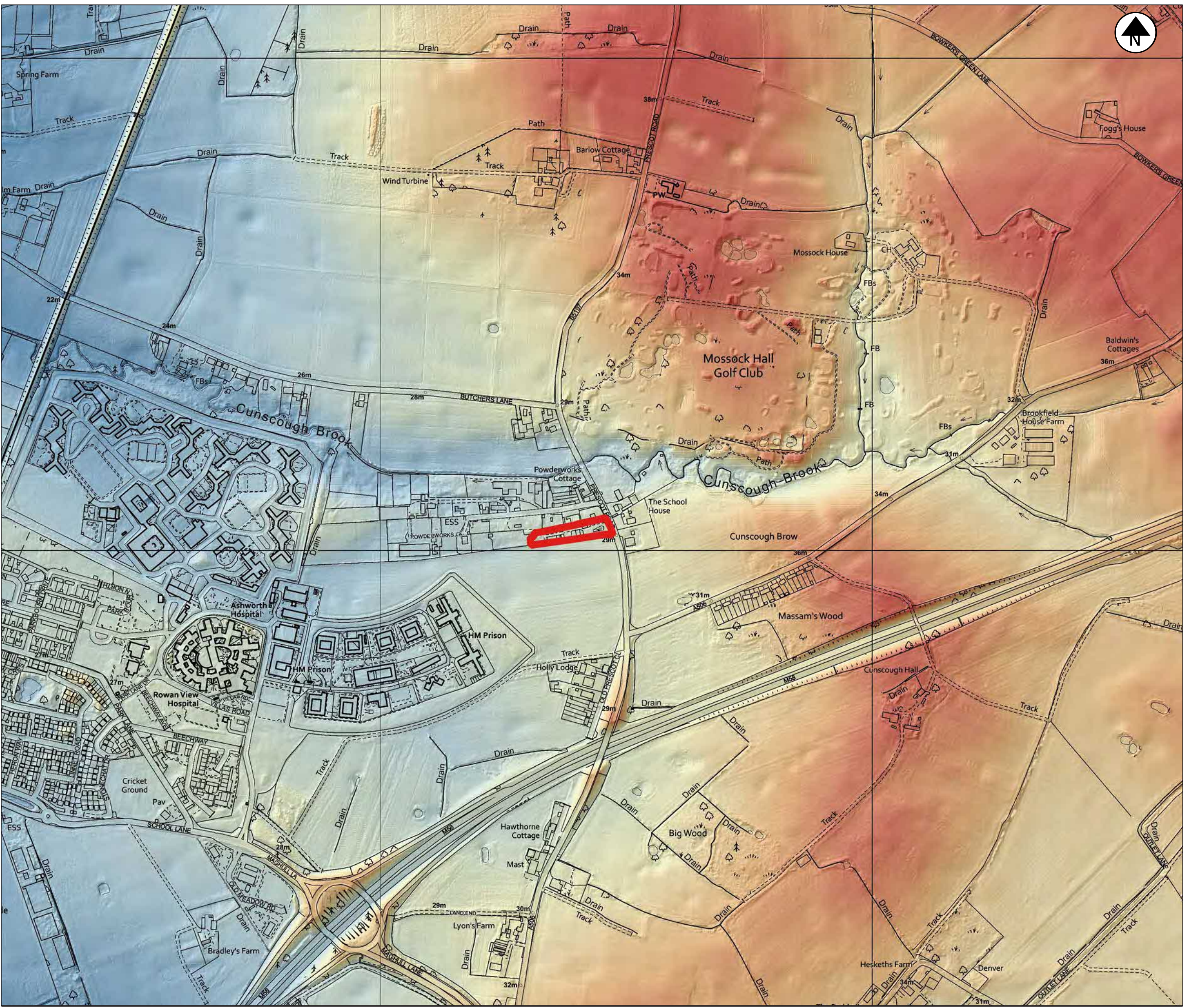
PROJECT Arrochar, 14 Prescot Road, Melling
 DRAWING TITLE Plan 1: Site Location & Context
 SCALE 1:5,000 @ A3
 DRAWING NO. 10015/ P01a
 DATE September 2023



Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI



Plan 2: Topography



PROJECT Arrochar, 14 Prescot Road, Melling

DRAWING TITLE Plan 2: Topography

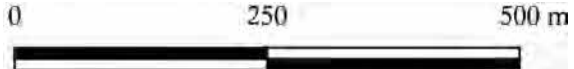
SCALE 1:7,500 @ A3

DRAWING NO. 10015/P02a

DATE September 2023



Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI



Plan 3: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Photoviewpoint Locations



Key

- Site Boundary
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility - Bare Earth
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility - Screened
- 1 Photoviewpoint Locations

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the proposed built form on site (based on the proposed development height) is potentially visible within a 5km radius (to a 1.6m high receptor). The ZTV has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and LIDAR Open Source DSM and DTM data. The screened ZTV takes into account existing built form and vegetation present within the landscape surrounding the site, but field verification is still required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.

Public Rights of Way
(digitised from open source data available from data.gov.uk)

- Public Footpaths

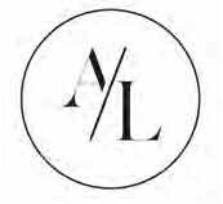
PROJECT Arrochar, 14 Prescot Road, Melling

DRAWING TITLE Plan 3: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Photoviewpoint Locations

SCALE 1:7,500@A3 (Inset Map 1:1,250@A3)

DRAWING NO. 10015/P03a

DATE September 2023







Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI

Plan 4: Landscape Recommendations

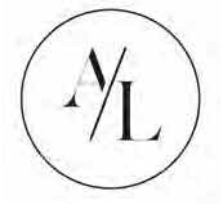


Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Retained boundary hedgerow planting
-  New soft landscaping to verge
-  Area to be reinstated as grassland



PROJECT Arrochar, 14 Prescott Road, Melling
 DRAWING TITLE Plan 4: Landscape Recommendations
 SCALE NOT TO SCALE
 DRAWING NO. 10015/P04a
 DATE September 2023



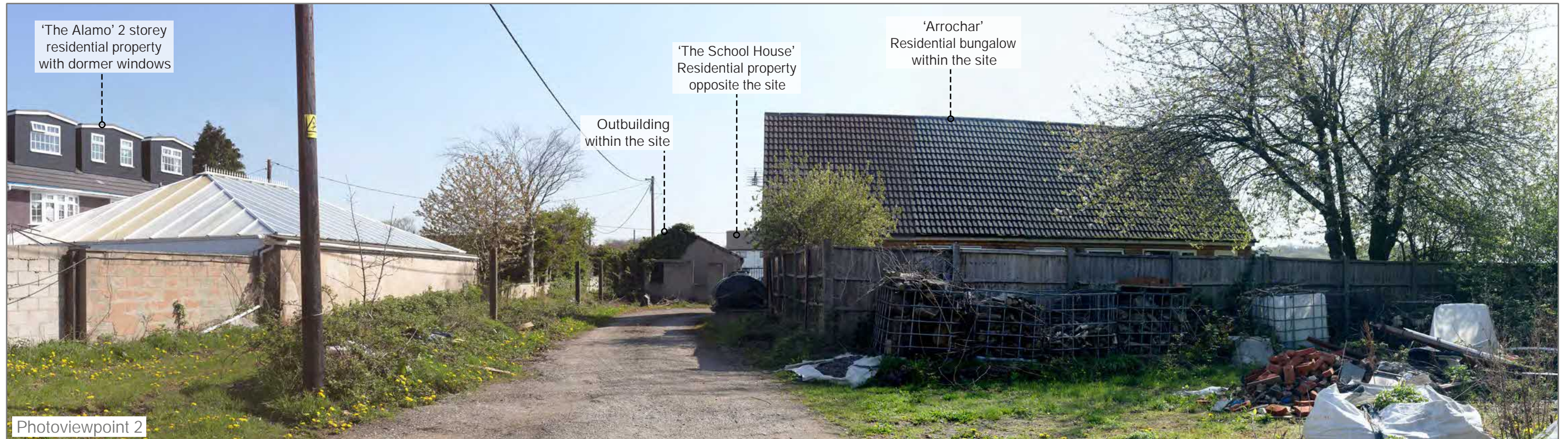
Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI

Photoviewpoints 1 and 2



Photoviewpoint 1

Orientation: East Distance from Site: 0m Grid Reference: SD 40339 03029
 Description: View towards site from storage yard area within the western part of the site



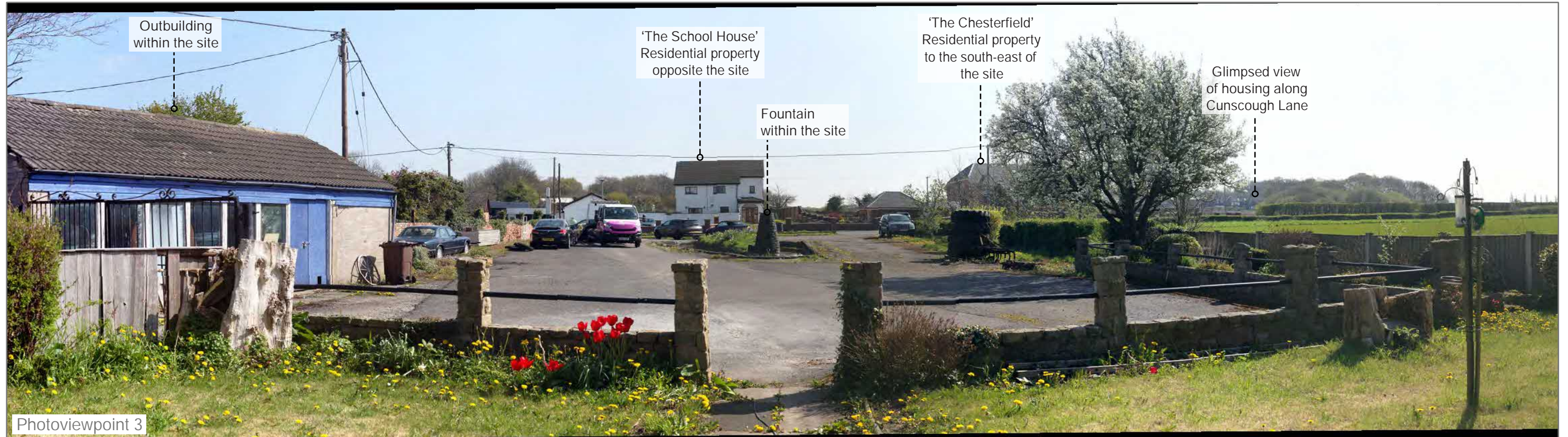
Photoviewpoint 2

Orientation: East Distance from Site: 0m Grid Reference: SD 40376 03042
 Description: View towards site from storage yard area within the western part of the site

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI



Photoviewpoints 3 and 4



Photoviewpoint 3

Orientation: East Distance from Site: 0m Grid Reference: SD 40408 03039
 Description: View across the site from the entrance doorway to Arrochar, the existing bungalow within the site



Photoviewpoint 4

Orientation: North-west Distance from Site: 49m Grid Reference: SD 40499 02993
 Description: View towards site from Prescott Road

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) B.L.A. CML I



Photoviewpoints 5 and 6



Orientation: South-west Distance from Site: 9m Grid Reference: SD 40471 03070
 Description: View towards site from Prescott Road



Orientation: South-west Distance from Site: 35m Grid Reference: SD 40456 03100
 Description: View towards site from Prescott Road

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) B.L.A. CML I



Photoviewpoints 7 and 8



Photoviewpoint 7

Orientation: South Distance from Site: 56m Grid Reference: SD 40446 03119
 Description: View towards site from Prescott Road



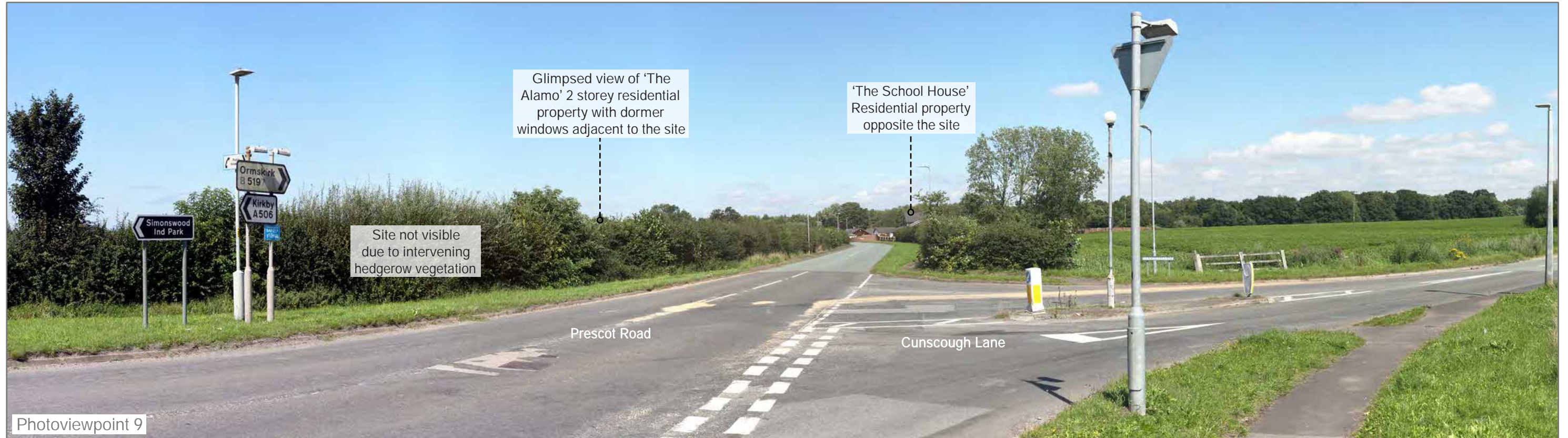
Photoviewpoint 8

Orientation: West Distance from Site: 8m Grid Reference: SD 40483 03039
 Description: View towards site from Prescott Road

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) B.L.A. CML I



Photoviewpoints 9 and 10



Photoviewpoint 9

Orientation: North Distance from Site: 220m Grid Reference: SD 40509 02818
 Description: View towards site from junction between Cuncough Lane and Prescott Road



Photoviewpoint 10

Orientation: North-west Distance from Site: 209m Grid Reference: SD 40547 02840
 Description: View towards site from Cuncough Lane

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI



Photoviewpoints 11 and 12



Photoviewpoint 11

Orientation: North-west Distance from Site: 411m Grid Reference: SD 40884 02988
 Description: View towards site from Cuncough Lane at the start of Public Footpath Melling 16



Photoviewpoint 12

Orientation: North-west Distance from Site: 450m Grid Reference: SD 40927 03027
 Description: View towards site from Cuncough Lane

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI



Photoviewpoints 13 and 14



Site not visible due to intervening woodland vegetation

Glimpsed view of 'The Alamo' 2 storey residential property with dormer windows

Orientation: North-west Distance from Site: 758m Grid Reference: SD 40937 02462
Description: View towards site from Public Footpath Melling 18



Works at Powderworks Lane

Site not visible due to intervening woodland and field boundary vegetation

Chimney associated with Ashworth Hospital

Orientation: South-east Distance from Site: 430m Grid Reference: SD 40023 03322
Description: View towards site from Butchers Lane

Annabelle Langhorn BA(Hons) BLA CMLI

