

## Proposed Residential Development Land at Dilwyn



# Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

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# **Contents:**

## **1.0 Background and Scope**

**Diagram 1 – Regional Location of Dilwyn – centre of black circle indicates position of site**

## **2.0 Definition of Landscape Character & Visual Effects**

**Diagram 2 – Aerial Photograph showing Dilwyn Parish Conservation Area & Proposed Development Site**

**Diagram 3 – Aerial Photograph showing Dilwyn Landscape – key features**

## **3.0 Landscape Character, Landscape Setting, Principle Views & Impact of Proposed Development**

**Diagram 4 – Historic Map 1888 - 1890 showing Dilwyn and Surrounding Field Patterns**

**Diagram 5 – OS Map 1:25,000 showing “Zone of Visual Influence”**

**Diagram 6 – OS Map 1:25,000 showing Public View Points towards and over the Site**

**Diagram 7 – Aerial Photograph showing Key Views from the Site**

## **4.0 Statement of Assessment**

**Appendix A – Location of Photograph View Points**

## 1.0 Background and Scope

Jim Hicks of Owen Hicks Architecture has commissioned this landscape assessment on behalf of Client, Ms. R. Powell. The proposal is for the erection of four detached properties – 2 no. three bed and 2 no. four bed and formation of a new vehicular access on a Greenfield site in the village of Dilwyn situated in the central lowlands of Herefordshire.

Key factors of the village are:

- The village is located off the A4112 linking Leominster with the Upper Wye Valley.
- The county town of Hereford is situated to the south east, 10 miles as the crow flies.
- The parish is rich in heritage value and Dilwyn is listed in the Domesday Book and is of considerable architectural and historic interest being part of the Herefordshire 40 mile Black and White Village Trail.
- The height above sea level of the centrally positioned village green is 84 metres.

Key elements of the site are:

- Located in Dilwyn Parish Conservation Area.
- There are two historic fields in client ownership that lie side by side and are of similar size enclosed by native Hawthorn hedges which are maintained at a height of 1.4 metres. Note: each field is named for the purpose of this report as west field and east field.
- East field has a road frontage of 110 metres wide and a depth of 206 metres.
- The development site shall occupy 20% land area of east field and shall extend from the northern road boundary south to a depth of 44 metres thereabouts.
- West field borders onto a line of up to 7 no. detached properties that share the field boundary. The end property driveway of Hazelwood overlooks east field.
- The site is more or less flat and falls in a north easterly aspect at a gradient of 1:55.
- The site is between 81 and 82.6 metres above sea level. The road is slightly sunken below the level of site and falls with the site from west to east from a height of 80.75 metres to 80 metres asl.
- There shall be a retained access for what appears to be an old private permissive path running diagonally across both fields (refer to Diagram 3).
- New replacement field access is to be provided within the development off the new vehicular access. This is important because the fields are currently used by the community for the staging of the annual village show in May. This proposal shall provide improved visibility along the road and safer access for both pedestrians and vehicles during future organised events.

The purpose of this technical study is to assess the landscape and visual impact of the proposed residential development site across all panoramas of the surrounding lowland rolling rural landscape. Key considerations shall include:

- An assessment of the landscape setting and rural character of the area.
- A visual appraisal to identify key viewpoints in and out of the site.
- Layout and juxtaposition of new properties.
- An understanding of Dilwyn through time, showing settlement pattern and development growth and any resulting changes to field patterns.

A thorough site investigation of the local area has been carried out by car and on foot – driving along country lanes, walking public footpaths, identifying visible neighbouring property and surveying the site and planned access and boundaries. A desk-top analysis of the area has also been undertaken to obtain relevant geographical and planning information. This information is summarised in written text. Data has been collated and is mapped and presented on both ordnance survey maps and aerial photographs to show:

- Regional Location of Dilwyn.
- Village and Conservation Area – statutory historic features.
- Dilwyn Landscape – key features.
- Historic Village Layout and Field Patterns 1888-90.
- Area of visible land viewable from the site known as the Zone of Visible Influence (ZVI).
- Position of visual horizons, where a visual corridor (or field of view) leads from the view point and travels over the land and up to the visible skyline.
- Key viewpoints in and out of the site and any distinct secondary and filtered views.

The assessment is supported by photographs and panoramas with comments and is based on my qualitative professional judgement of 30 years landscape architectural experience.

The format of this report considers the best practice approach set out in two key publications:

- *Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Wales (LCA) [Countryside Agency & Scottish Natural Heritage 2002]*
- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA) [Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013].*

**This landscape assessment has been carried out informally and should be read as a *Standalone Landscape Appraisal only* which under the guidance of GLVIA, uses a simplified analytical approach to seek out likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.**

Also taken into account is the planning policy and supplementary planning guidance of Herefordshire Council and other public documents which include the following:

- *Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan – Adopted March 2007.*
- *Landscape Character Assessment – Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004 – Updated 2009.*
- *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012.*
- *Natural England National Character Profile – 100. Herefordshire Lowlands – 2013.*
- *Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy: Rural Housing Background Paper – March 2013.*
- *Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy: Proposed Main Modifications – March 2015 (Consultation Paper).*



Additional sources of geographic information are derived from the government website of Magic for designations within the surrounding area; Environment Agency for flood information; British Geological Society for bedrock; LandIS for soils; Promap for OS & Historic maps; Getmapping for Aerial Photography. Dilwyn community website – [www.dilwyn.com](http://www.dilwyn.com) is also a useful source of information and the Dilwyn Parish Plan Survey Report of March 2013 provides a good insight into the community think-tank!

Photographs in this report were taken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015, using a Nikon Coolpix P50 digital camera with optical zoom lens 4.7 – 17mm and a resolution set at 1280 x 960 pixels. Stitching software used in the panoramic photographs is ArcSoft Panorama Maker 6. Weather during the site visit was dry, warm and sunny with broken cloud on both occasions. Visibility in April was impaired by a dusty haze. Dry ground conditions underfoot. Vegetation in April was still in winter mode – deciduous trees starting to bud; small areas of Hawthorn hedge and Elder springing into leaf. By late May the countryside was in full leaf and cereal crops are growing a foot high.

**NB: Landscape Strategy Proposals drawing reference LA3401.1 shall supplement the Architect's Proposed Site Plan, drawing reference 2015.038 – P003. The strategy puts forward sketch proposals for mitigating landscape works to enhance and conserve the surrounding landscape character of Dilwyn.**



Note: the blue circle indicates a 10 km radii distance of the centre of site.

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## 2.0 Definition of Landscape and Landscape & Visual Effects

Since 2002 the UK has signed and ratified the European landscape Convention (ELC) raising the profile of landscape considerations in government and emphasising the role landscape can play as an integrating framework for many areas of policy. The ELC adopts a definition of landscape now widely used today and supported in the latest edition of GLVIA:

*“Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction and /or human factors.”  
(Council of Europe 2000)*

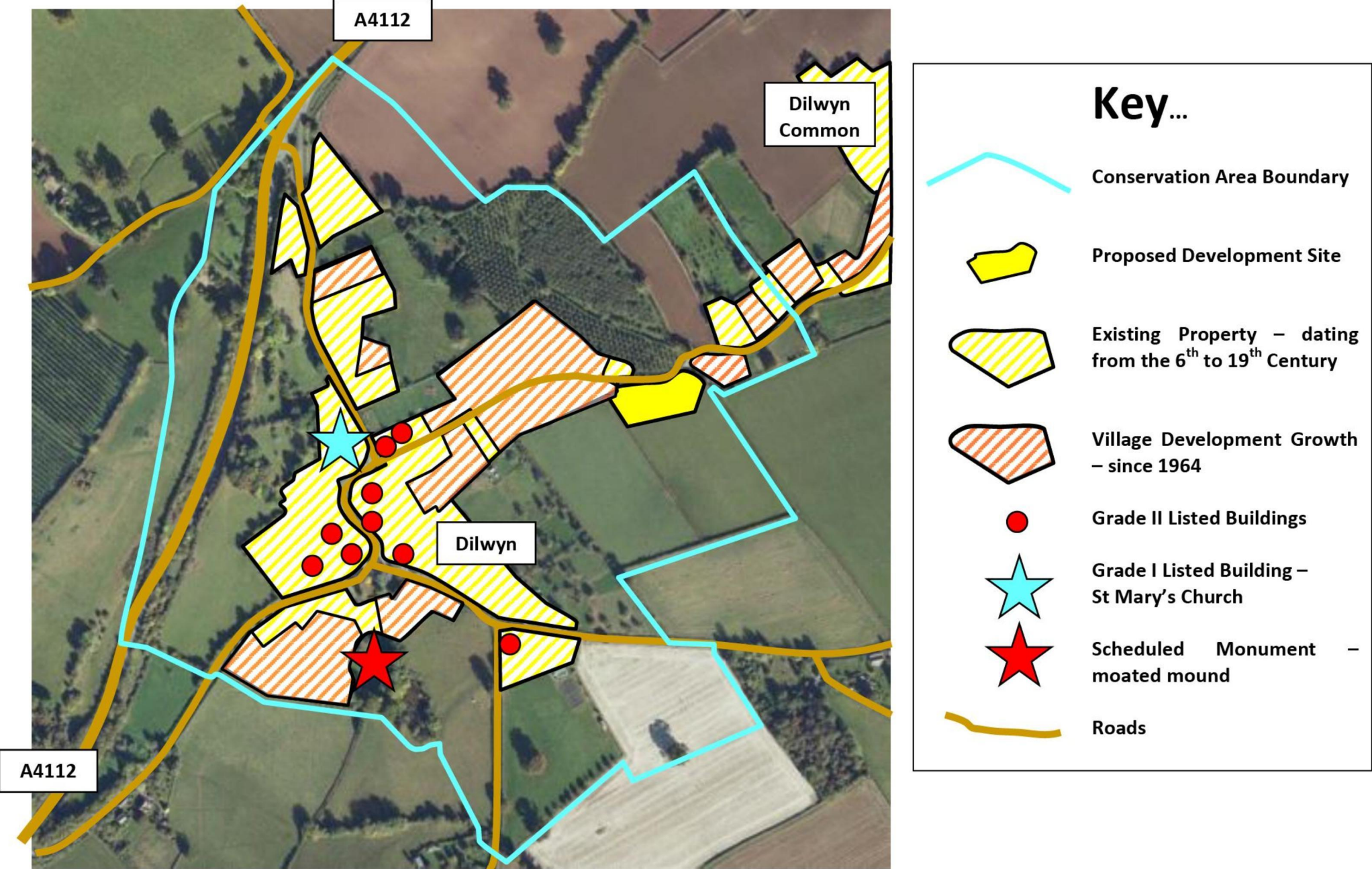
The inclusive nature of landscape was captured in a paragraph from the 2002 guidance on Landscape Character Assessment which embraces the broad interpretation of what landscape means, taking on board the ordinary and everyday, the landscapes where people live and work and spend their leisure time. It states:

*“Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day to day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland, as much as a mountain range and an urban park as much an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way different components of our environment – both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and cultural impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) – interact together and are perceived by us. People’s perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape.”  
(Swanwick and Land Use Consultants, 2002:2).*

Landscape effects relate to the degree of change to physical, natural and cultural characteristics of the landscape (its components and site features – e.g. topography, tree cover and built form), which together form landscape character, which also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experimental aspects that make different places distinctive.

Visual effects relate to the degree of change to an individual receptor’s view of the landscape and surrounding area. In this study, the receptor can be local residents, users of public footpaths and motorists / tourists passing through the area. These are views that people enjoy.

Diagram 2 – Aerial Photograph showing Dilwyn Parish Conservation Area & Proposed Development Site















(c) Getmapping plc 2015.



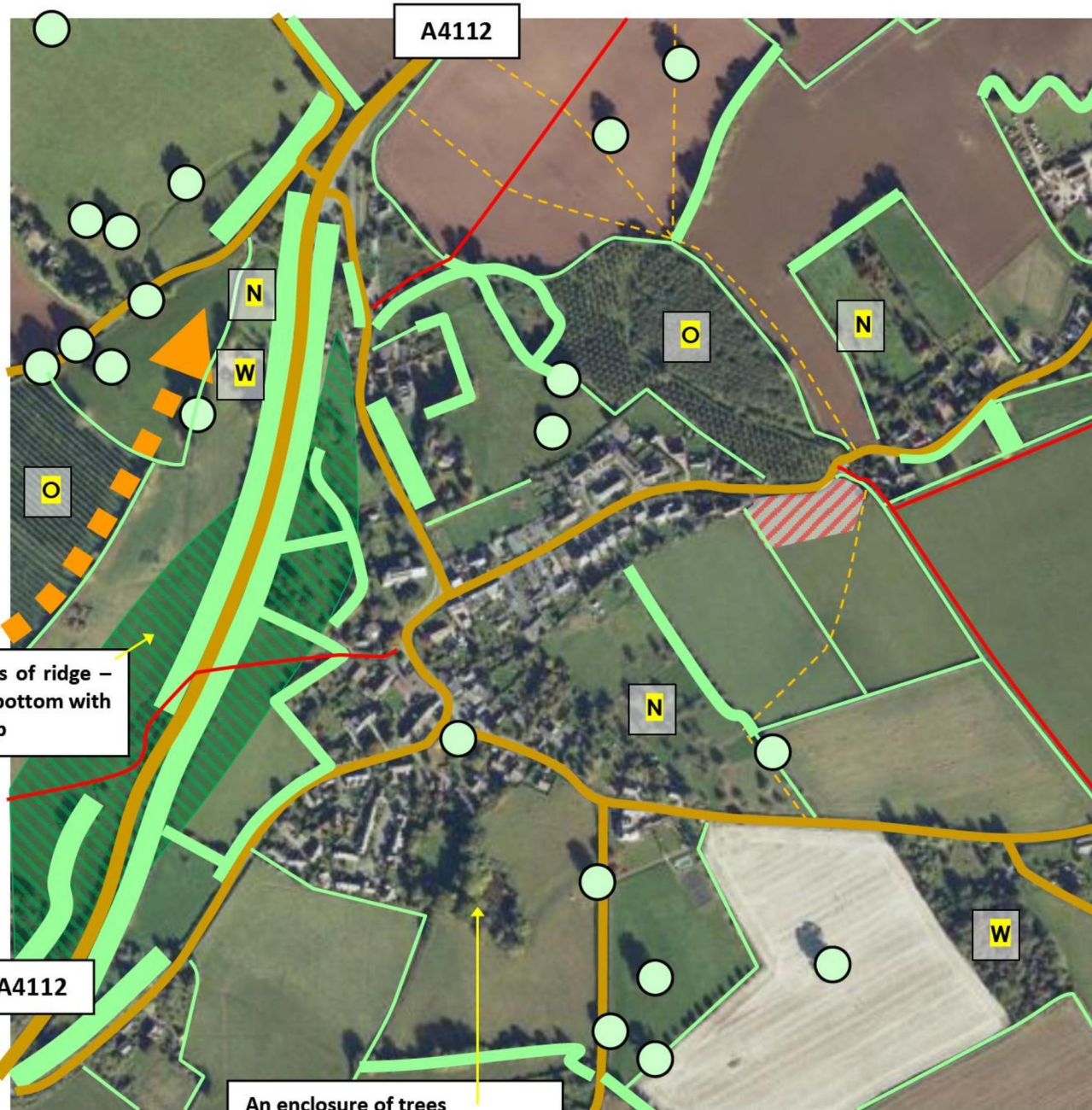
Diagram 3 – Aerial Photograph showing Dilwyn Landscape – key features

## Key...

-  Proposed Development Site
-  Public Right of Way
-  Old Permissive Path Routes – currently no public right of access
-  Roads
-  Maintained Low Hedgerow – 1.2 – 1.8 metres high
-  Tall Hedgerows – natural unrestricted growth, some areas of annual trimming along highways
-  Ancient Specimen Trees – predominantly Oak with Ash
-  Mature Tree Belts
-  Deciduous Woodland Copse
-  New Orchards
-  Old Neglected Orchards
-  Elevated Convex Ridgeline - falls in direction of arrow

### Notes:

1. Fields comprise mixed agriculture of permanent pasture for sheep and cattle grazing; large ploughed arable fields for potato, winter feed and cereal crops.
2. Roadside hedges are managed short & trimmed annually, unless where shown.



Steep slopes of ridge – concave at bottom with a convex top

A4112

An enclosure of trees surrounds ancient moat &

(c) Getmapping plc 2015.

### 3.0 Landscape Character, Landscape Setting, Principle Views & Impact of Proposed Development

**Landscape Character** is shaped by physical and human influences over time, namely:

**Physical Influence:**

Geology is the origin, composition and structure of rock beneath the ground and primarily determines the type of landform and soil.

Topography (landform) is the surface features of a site.

Soil is the top layer of land surface derived from underlying bedrock and superficial deposits, air, water and decomposed vegetable matter. Depth, acidity, fertility and drainage determine its use by man.

**Human Influence:**

Settlement Pattern reflects the broader history of the land and is either dispersed (scattered farmsteads / isolated dwellings) or nucleated (clustered to form towns, villages and hamlets)

Tree Cover- extent and composition is significantly influenced by man's activity over time. Woodland trees and hedges help shape views, provide enclosure and create sense of scale.

Land Use – soil, landform and advancements in agricultural practice predominantly affect the type of land use reflected in numerous changes over time.

Land at Dilwyn can be broadly categorised into landscape character types identified and detailed at National and County level.

At National level, there are 159 different landscape types identified and detailed in the 2005 publication “The Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map” by Natural England and English Heritage. Under revised new guidance by Natural England, Dilwyn Parish is located in National Character Area Profile 100 – Herefordshire Lowlands. Key characteristics are:

- Gently undulating landscape with localised steep-sided hills and wide agricultural flood plains.
- Fertile soils support intensive mixed agriculture.
- Wide meandering rivers drain the area offering rich wetland habitats.
- Pasture of wet cut meadows and permanent grassland interspersed with arable crops of cereals and potato.
- Low hedgerows for field boundaries with dispersed tree cover.
- Localised traditional and bush orchards with occasional hop fields planted with windbreaks.
- A scattering of historic parklands with ancient and veteran trees.

At County level, Herefordshire Council produced their “Landscape Character Assessment” in 2004, updated in 2009. The site is located in the category – Principal Settled Farmland and reflects the broader characteristics described above; notably the small black and white timbered village of Dilwyn, orchards, rich patchwork of pasture and arable fields enclosed by low hedgerows, dispersed farms and the descending southerly slopes of Henwood – an 18<sup>th</sup> century house and parkland.



### **Geology, Soils, Land Use, Settlement Pattern, Groundwater & Flood Risk**

The site lies over sedimentary bedrock formed in the Silurian Period. Elevated ridges in the landscape are of the Raglan Mudstone Formation comprising mainly sandstone. The lower height of the valleys and undulating land are of the Raglan Formation where siltstone and mudstone is interbedded. This rock is covered with mixed deposits of superficial geology formed in the glacial Quaternary Period. The higher land comprises mainly sand and gravel with alluvium deposits on the lowest ground of silty clay – soft to firm, consolidated and compressible.

Soils are a free draining slightly acid loam. This gives rise to an agricultural land use class of grade 3, supporting very good permanent pasture on the site. Client landowners currently graze sheep which has included cattle in the past.

Diagram 2 shows settlement growth of the village. This is characterised by linear development radiating along roads from the village centre and the site can be described as an infill development plot along the eastern settlement spur. Many of the older properties pre-dating the 1888 historic map are scattered at intervals along this road linking Dilwyn to Dilwyn Common. This development is therefore consistent with past settlement growth and the gradual infill development of a continuous line of individual plots. The juxtaposition of the four proposed properties reflects the existing layout and character of existing properties along this route.

The site falls within the Environment Agency Nitrate Vulnerable Zone for the monitoring of groundwater quality. The site and surrounding land is not in a flood protection zone. However, within the confines of the sunken road running the length of the site, there is a 1:30 risk of surface water flooding along the northern road edge. The flow is high velocity of over 0.25 metres per second, so any temporary flooding is likely to drain fairly rapidly and is less likely to affect the whole road. There is an open and deep maintained drainage ditch running along the road 30 metres north east of the site.

### **Level of Tranquillity & Light Pollution**

During my weekday site visits, the main A4112 was at times busy with traffic. Away from this road, the narrow rural roads are relatively quiet and levels of tranquillity rise. The quiet hinterland can be disturbed by more frequent bouts of heavy traffic as experienced along the secondary road leading to the very successful rural business of Tyrrells Potato Crisps Limited, situated within one mile of the site to the north east. The screening afforded by the undulating countryside and overgrown hedgerows helps create a sense of calm and peace.

Light pollution whilst not recorded during my field work, can be one of the most intrusive forms of negative impact. This area experiences some of the lowest light levels in the country despite being very close to conurbations of high light pollution. It is recommended that proposal for external lighting is confined to each building and restricted in use with time-out switches. Any luminaires must be of a type with horizontal cut-off with an upward light ratio of 0% and all external lighting provision should comply with Environmental Zone E1 in accordance with the ILP Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light 2011.

### **Local Area Designations within 1Km radius of the Site**

Statutory History – 17 no. Listed Buildings, of which St.Mary's Church in Dilwyn is Grade I Listed; 1 no. Scheduled Monument.

Priority Habitats – at Henwood located north west of Dilwyn, the ancient and semi-natural woodland is part of the national inventory and is classed as priority deciduous woodland habitat. There are nine traditional orchards in the area and the nearest one is directly opposite the site covering an area of 3.364 hectares. This orchard was planted relatively recently thought to be in the 1990's and helps to address the balance of lost orchards. Many of the new orchards planted on the higher ground around Henwood are more intensively managed with low bush trees at close intervals and sprayed out rows of bare earth. This change in the landscape resembles a wholesale nursery of field grown trees for sale! This is in stark contrast to the traditional orchard planted amongst a green pasture grazed by pigs and sheep. There is scope to introduce more in the way of traditional orchard planting in the field of the proposed development site which shall provide added character and to re-create a more intimate and domestic scale, lacking in this part of Dilwyn.

Grassland farmland birds indicate presence of Tree Sparrow and Grey Partridge to land south of the site. Refer to Ecology Report for further details of habitats and species.

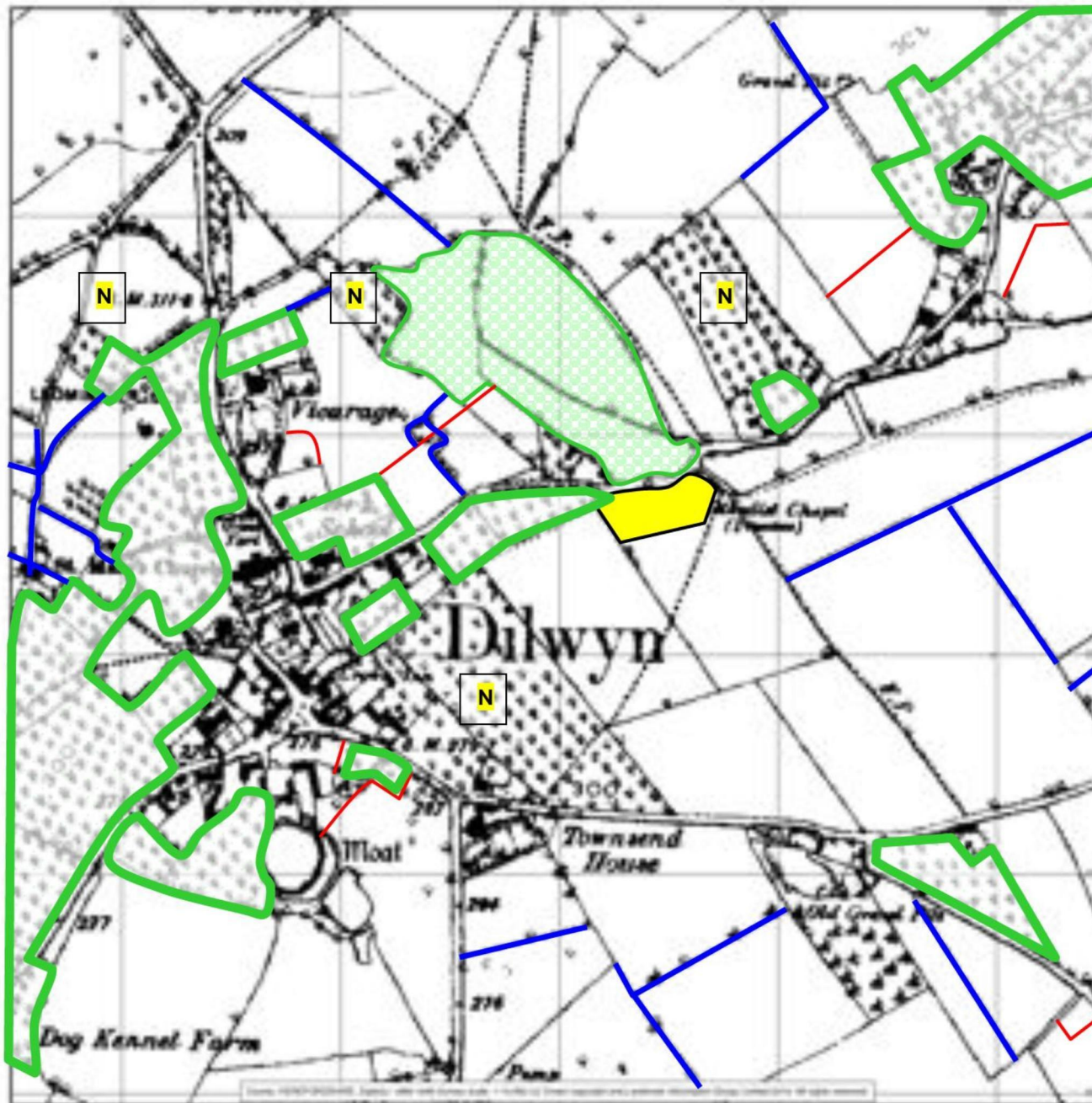
### **Historic Field Patterns**

An analysis of field pattern changes can be perused in Diagram 4. There was no change to field patterns between 1888 and 1953. Traditional orchards surrounded the historic properties of the village community. A major loss of orchards occurred between 1964 and 1983. This created space for more open pasture, the construction of the bypass between 1974 and 1977 and land for settlement growth, particularly along the eastern spur road where the site is located (refer to Diagram 2 showing settlement growth).

Since 1983 a high proportion of hedgerow boundaries were removed to enlarge fields for the intensive growing of arable crops. New boundaries were established where infill development took place. Most of these boundaries lack the native hedge planting of the original field boundary. Whilst boundary treatment to private property can be to a person's taste, one has to remember that Dilwyn has many Grade II Listed walls and railings and unfortunately some of the property boundaries built since 1974 lack the attention to detail reflected in the overall character of the area that was put in place by our ancestors. The Landscape Strategy drawing illustrates a sketch scheme for a more discerning landscape treatment.

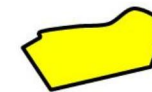


Diagram 4 – Historic Map 1888 - 1890 showing Dilwyn and Surrounding Field Patterns



## Key...

The map shows the village layout and surrounding agricultural field patterns enclosed with hedges. Note the widespread location of traditional orchards. Other features include roads, footpaths, old gravel pits and prominent features & buildings. Spot heights are in feet above sea level. Between 1888 and 1953, very little change occurred. A large proportion of orchards were cleared between 1964 and 1974. Approximately 50% of this land has been developed for new housing.



Proposed Development Site



Lost Hedge Boundaries –  
removed to enlarge fields

Note: all other boundaries  
shown on this map exist today



New Field Boundaries (Bypass road  
boundary not shown)



Orchards Lost to Clearance



Neglected Orchards Suitable for Re-  
Planting



Planting of new Orchards in 1990's

Landmark Historical Map  
County: HEREFORDSHIRE  
Published Dates: 1888-1890  
Originally plotted at: 1:12,500



## **Landscape Setting**

It is interesting to note that the name Dilwyn may be derived from the Anglo-Saxon meaning of “hidden place”. Walking and driving around the area, Dilwyn gives the impression of being concealed from most directions. The busy A4112 linking Leominster to the Upper Wye Valley, bypasses the village at a higher level. The village centre at 84 metres above sea level nestles into the steeply rising slopes west and north up to a height of 127 – 132 metres and in the east is protected by broad low ridges at Highlow Field, 98 metres asl. Immediately to the south, flattish land is bordered by tall mature hedgerows.

The historic part of the village is characterised by meandering lanes filled with overgrown hedgerows and extensive tree cover that provides an element of surprise and intrigue amongst a jumble of buildings. The village radiates from the nucleated centre; creating spurs of settlement growth to the north and east (refer to Diagram 2). This linear settlement pattern is a distinct feature of Dilwyn and the east spur links the hamlet of Dilwyn Common with a continuous line of properties along the road. The proposed development site shall infill the last remaining open section along this route. Starting at the school and community centre, hedgerow frontages to properties are more manicured and also absent and tree cover is sparse. Towards the site and beyond to Dilwyn Common, the natural hedgerows have survived and are maintained in a mix of low cut hedge along the development site interspersed with tall unmanaged sections where only one side of the road has been developed. Contrast this with the linear ridge top road flanked with low clipped hedges along eastern approaches from Dorstone. The village is partially visible from this direction and the slight rise in ground levels provide panoramic views south over the Stretford Brook and the skyline wooded escarpments of Birley Hill 236 metres and Burton Hill 294 metres.



Northern meandering spur road heading into Dilwyn village (left) with overgrown hedgerows, which spill out into small sub-regular pasture (right) where modern development is contained within the original field pattern and natural boundaries are retained with a mix of hedgerow height, some partially clipped for local views. This is a small intimate landscape where settlement was originally spread out along the road. The more ancient building plots are narrow and abut the road. More recent infill development has reduced distance between plots and increased the depth of settlement from the road.



Approach from the south west along the A4112. Dilwyn is concealed by a combination of subtle undulation of the broad plain and the steeply wooded slopes west of the village (ringed).



Approach from the north east along the A4112 at Golden Cross showing linear belts of trees along hedgerows to give the impression of more extensive tree cover.  
Prominent distant skyline wooded ridge of Burton Hill.





Pastoral scene across fields. Shows the modern southern built-up edge of village with very little additional planting of native trees along the old field boundary. The low trimmed hedge along the road provides a clear view of the buildings and in return, gives the residents an elongated corridor view of the attractive heavily vegetated slopes. The spire of St. Mary's Church is just visible through trees and mature hedges and smaller field size flanking the steep western slopes towards the village. There are a few remnant orchard trees that have survived the mass clearance of orchards in this area and are scattered randomly throughout the pastures, some covered in Mistletoe.



The approaches from the east start at Stretford Bridge over the Stretford Brook, a meandering lazy river draining rich mixed farmland teeming with wildlife (above left photo). The route rises along the narrow road from Dorstone following the broad shallow open ridge (above right photo). At the highest point of Highlow Field at 98 metres, there are panoramic views west and south across the shallow valley of Stretford Brook. The photograph below is taken along the A4112; Dilwyn is screened by tree cover and is out of picture to the right; Birley Hill is the skyline ridge 4.7 km away; Highlow Field is ringed and the hidden length of site is marked in yellow.







The eastern spur of mixed modern development leading to the site (ringed in above right photo). Frontages vary between tall or low clipped hedge, no hedge, earth banking, and stone retaining wall. The photographs below reveal a more intimate character further east from the site in the hamlet of Dilwyn Common, where hedges vary in height and small belts of tree cover add drama to the gentle landscape.



### **Principle Views & Impact of Proposed Development**

Diagram 5 shows the “Zone of Visual Influence”. This area maps the extent of land visible from the centre of the site at eye level when standing at approximately 1.65 metres above ground level.

Since we have discovered that Dilwyn village is more or less hidden from view, it is not surprising to find that the full extent of this visible zone is comparatively small and is restricted to foreshortened views to the south and east.

What is interesting is the effect of cumulative tree screening at intermediate intervals from the site and towards the woodland skyline ridges west and north. The extensive coverage of mixed tall hedgerow, orchard trees, linear roadside tree belts and scattered large ancient Oak and Ash, provides a layered screen of vegetation accentuated with height gained, resulting in either blocked or filtered views of fields and buildings.

Diagram 6 shows all public viewpoints surrounding the site. These viewpoints are not extensive and are restricted due to limited public access. The extensive tree cover in the north and west provides a good screen of the site at ground level and all these views are directed over the site at a higher level. This would still result in a portion of the upper floors and roofline of new buildings to be visible and the significance of this impact is assessed for each viewpoint location in the photographs that follow. Distance and slope aspect in relation to the site are key factors when determining the scale of impact. Long distance objects appear blurred and attention to detail is lost.

The undulating landform plays a significant role in screening the site from the east, south and south west. This natural screening provided along the shallow ridge of Highlow Field, could be further enhanced by allowing field boundary hedges to be managed and cut to a higher level. The advantage of this idea is to block the “Primary Pedestrian View” of the site off the public footpath to the south south-east. In practice this is unlikely to happen because third party landowner consent is required. It may be more appropriate and in keeping with the character of the area to introduce new filtered screen planting at source located along the new southern field boundary to the development site.

In order for this approach to work and be successful, it is important to consider the amount of space required for new hedge and tree planting to avoid planting too close to new properties where the end result looks more like an after thought. The mitigating hard and soft landscape proposal must be an integral feature of the development design and these ideas are cemented in the Landscape Strategy Plan for further detailed consideration.

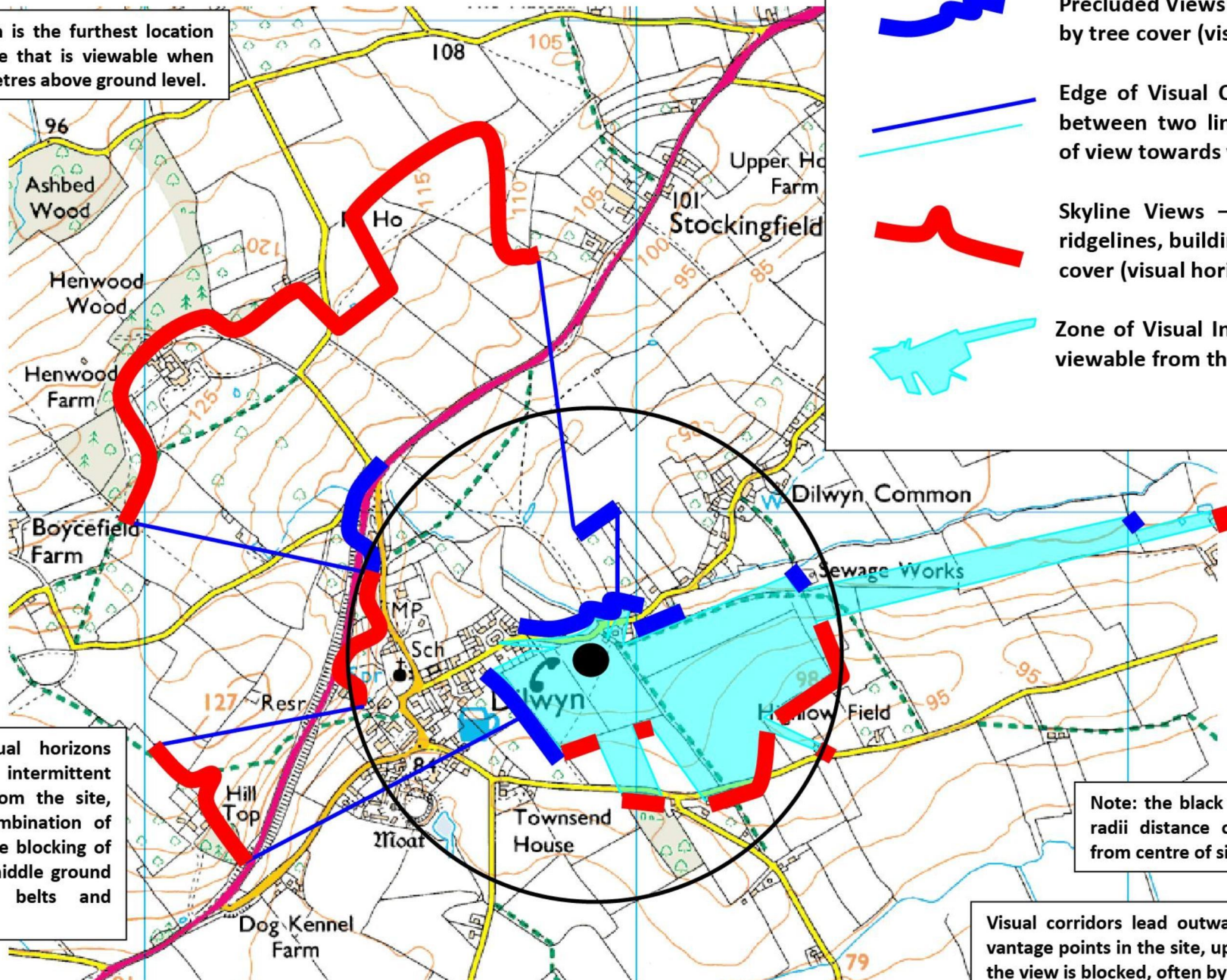
Photograph viewpoints follow Diagram 7 and are organised in the following order:

- Photographs to show public viewpoints of the site (no’s 1, 2, 6, 7, 8)
- Photographs to show concealed views towards and over the site (no’s 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)
- Photographs showing key Views from within the site (no’s 14, 15a, b, c, d)



Diagram 5 – OS Map 1:25,000 showing “Zone of Visual Influence”

The visible horizon is the furthest location away from the site that is viewable when standing at 1.65 metres above ground level.



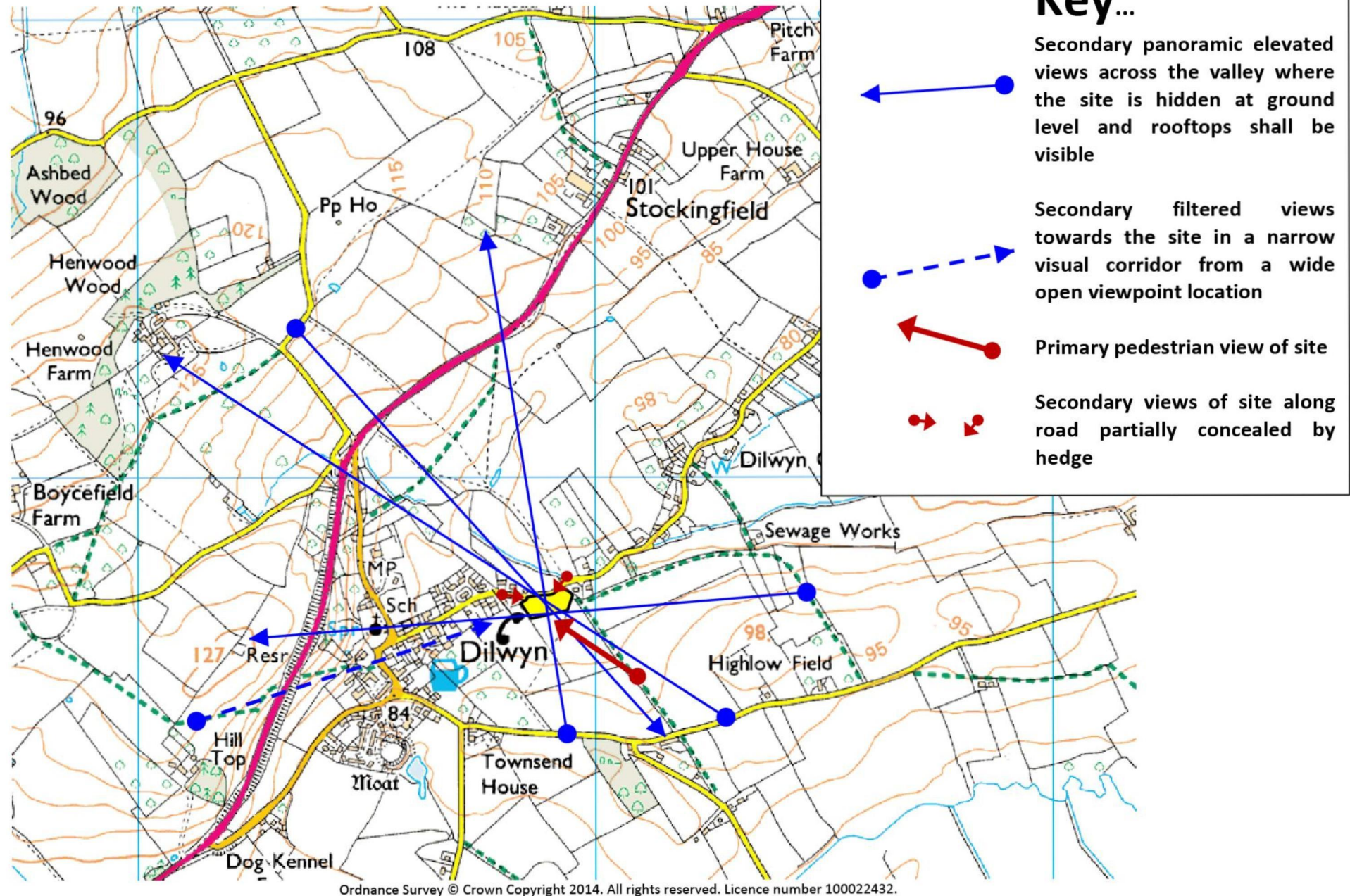
Intermediate visual horizons are visible at intermittent intervals away from the site, because of a combination of rising land and the blocking of foreground and middle ground views by tree belts and landform.

Note: the black circle shows a radii distance of 500 metres from centre of site.

Visual corridors lead outwards from various vantage points in the site, up to a point where the view is blocked, often by trees.



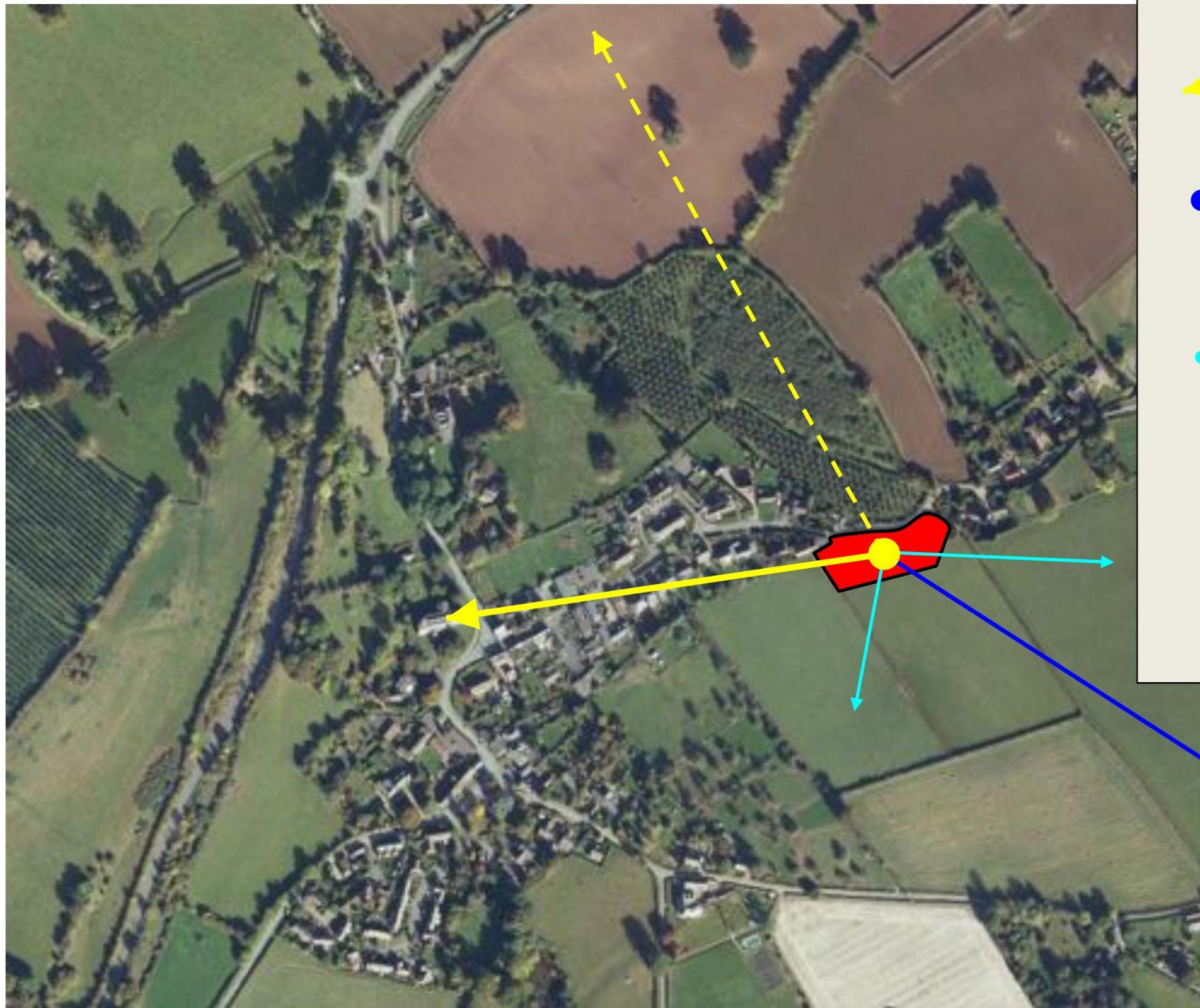
Diagram 6 – OS Map 1:25,000 showing Public View Points towards and over the Site



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Diagram 7 – Aerial Photograph showing Key Views from the Site



## Key...

Primary View – west towards St. Mary's Church steeple and steeply rising wooded ridge along skyline.



Longer Distance Corridor View of Birley Hill 4.7 km away at 236 metres asl.



Foreshortened Secondary Views – along shallow valley and gently rising ridge.



Secondary Filtered Views – north over the tops of orchard trees towards gently rising land, viewable at first floor window level only.







1.



2.

The above photographs show the site frontage along the lane. (1) at road level and (2) on site showing the change of level of 2.4 metres from road to top of hedge and the excellent quality and thickness of existing Hawthorn hedges. The proposal is to form a new vehicular access resulting in the removal of a short mid section of hedge close to where photograph (2) was taken. This shall create an open window when viewed along the lane in both directions of between 10 metres wide at road edge tapering to 5 metres wide into the site. The dimensions provide the required highway visibility splays. New Hawthorn hedges shall be planted along the radii sections leading into the site. There is sufficient front verge space created behind the retained hedges for additional tree planting. These enhancement proposals should be more than adequate to mitigate against any perceived loss of character. Taking into account the distance from retained hedge to proposed building line of 20 metres and the overall change of level from road to hedge top of 2.4 metres, the roadside view is of the houses is substantially screened. **The impact is low increasing to moderate** where the new access is formed.



3. The public footpath follows the edge of field along the natural curve formed by the boundary hedge. This panoramic viewpoint is looking south-west to west and the site is totally hidden from view by the tree belt in the middle distance (ringed). As one approaches closer to the site along this footpath, the screen of vegetation and arc of the boundary continues to provide an effective screen to the proposed position of new housing. There shall be little or no change to the view. **The landscape impact is very low.**



4.

Viewpoint (4) is taken from the public footpath east of the site at a point where the site is concealed by tree cover growing in the rear gardens of neighbouring properties Brooklyn and Brookside and where the foreground boundary hedge and rising slope of the ground blocks the view of both west and east field very effectively. Viewpoint (5) is taken from the footpath at the top of the broad shaped ridge known as Highlow Field. At this point the natural landform totally screens the site and most of Dilwyn. Filtered views to the north show the linear settlement of Dilwyn Common along the valley floor. **There is very low impact to views.**



5.





6.



7.

Viewpoint (6) shows the Primary Pedestrian View of the site along the public footpath running directly south, following the outer edge of existing field boundary hedge. The photograph is actually taken 5 metres off the line of footpath shown in (7). This results in the site being fully exposed. If the walker follows the line of path there is some blocking of the view as can be seen. For this reason, the impact of the new line of housing is lessened. There shall be a material change of view and its effect is likely to be noticeable. **The impact is moderate.** There is an opportunity here to re-create some of the lost character of the area within the development field and the Landscape Strategy Proposals gives a clear indication of mitigating landscape treatment which should serve to enhance the development. This would allow the good quality low cut hedges to be conserved without detriment to the management practices of the arable farmers.



8. Secondary panoramic elevated viewpoint across the valley towards the skyline ridge and woodland of Henwood. The site road hedgerow is visible and the full length and height of rooftops of the proposed development is indicated. Bear in mind that each property is detached and there will be space between each property. This zoomed-in photograph is taken along the secondary road at Highlow Field standing on the raised verge and looking north over the clipped hedge top. The human eye is able to see less detail. Summer growth of the hedges shall conceal this view. **The seasonal impact is moderate** during the period from mid-September/mid-October (when hedges are expected to be cut) to early June when new growth provides an adequate screen and the scale of impact strongly diminishes. Proposed mitigation landscape treatment shall also help reduce the impact over time. Higher maintained hedges in the short term would provide immediate relief to lessen this impact and allow new planting to become established. This would require agreement with neighbouring farms and require the hedges being increased in height by only 600mm giving a maintained height of 1800mm along a section of road 150 metres long.





9. Similar viewpoint to (8) taken further west along the same road. A combination of the convex topped ridge and boundary field hedge running across the middle foreground is sufficient to screen a high proportion of the site. The proposed ridgeline is indicated by the red line. Bear in mind that each property is detached and there will be space between each property. **The impact is low to moderate.** There is scope to raise the height of this managed hedge by one metre which is enough to totally screen the development and also neighbouring existing properties which are visible to the left.



10. View east from the elevated public footpath skirting Hill Top. This is a secondary filtered view towards the site in a narrow visual corridor framed by existing tree cover. The site is ringed and is adequately screened. The view is directed at the gable ends of proposed housing, so here juxtaposition of each property in alignment plays an important role in reducing the effective width of built form. **The impact is very low.**





11. View south east from the public footpath that crosses the parkland at Henwood Farm. The development site is screened but the higher southern reach of west field is visible. The total distance as the crow flies is 835 metres. The dusty haze experienced on the day of the photograph makes it difficult to focus on the view. A proportion of the proposed roofline of new properties shall be visible. Bear in mind this photograph was taken without leaves on the trees. The dense tree cover immediately visible in front of the site is the mass of traditional planted orchard. These trees are still growing in height and coupled with additional tree planting proposed along the front of the development site, the effect of this impact shall be reduced each year. **The overall impact is very low.**



12. This viewpoint is actually off the public road skirting Henwood 160 metres north east of viewpoint (11) and was taken through a fairly dense roadside hedge overgrown with trees and ivy. So in effect, the view south east from the road is camouflaged by this vegetation screen. I have indicated the proposed height of roofline. Bear in mind that each property is detached and there will be space between each property. **The impact is low.** The skyline ridge is Birley Hill and the Herefordshire Matterhorn on the right skyline is Pyon Hill 180 metres asl.



13. Zoomed-in view near lay-bye on A4112 roadside verge looking south across the site. The upper reach of east field is visible and a small break in tree cover gives a filtered glimpse of the proposed development site. This gap should close after trees have burst into leaf. This visual corridor and field of view is narrow. The proposed roofline is indicated. **The impact is Low.**





14. View west across the development site towards Dilwyn. The following existing properties shall overlook the proposed new housing site in varying degrees of prominence depending on the juxtaposition of each property in relation to each other. Impact is assessed for each property:

**Moderate to low impact** – Woodstock Cottage, Hazelwood, and Brooklyn.

**Low impact** – The Bramlings, Sunnyside, Red Rowans, Brookside.

**Very low impact** - No. 11 & 12 The Glebelands.



15a. View east from site.



15b. View south south-east from site.



15c. View south west from site.



15d. View north north-west from site.



16. Photograph shows the traditional orchard opposite the development site. Trees appear to have been planted on a square grid at 8 metre centres. There is plenty of space to gather the fruit harvest and sufficient headroom for the management of this meadow either by a summer hay cut or grazing by sheep or pigs or a combination of both. This type of new orchard planting should be encouraged in the fields around Dilwyn.



#### 4.0 Statement of Assessment

- The built form of the proposed residential development shall have some visual intrusion of specific viewpoints in the area. Where these affect local properties and public viewpoints to the south and south east of the site, the overall impact is assessed in the moderate to low category.
- There shall be little or no change to views that people enjoy along public viewpoints west and north of the site and the overall impact is assessed in the very low to low category.
- Neighbouring properties shall experience the greatest impact in terms of both the physical intrusion of new built form resulting in the partial loss of views that neighbours may enjoy. Visual effects of the development are more likely to be noticed by these properties during the construction period and the early years of establishment for new planting.
- The existing Landscape Character of the development site is lacking through height reduction of boundary hedges, the loss of old field boundaries in neighbouring fields and tree planting along these hedges.
- This infill development site gives an opportunity to reverse this trend and to enhance and re-create a more intimate landscape character found in other locations along the lane and within Dilwyn village. This would allow the good quality low cut hedges to be conserved without detriment to the management practices of the arable farmers.
- Furthermore, the proposals support improved and safer access into east field and west field for the staging of future community events like the Annual May Festival.
- On balance, because of a combination of natural landform and existing tree cover, the new development is at an acceptable level of landscape and visual impact because the site is adequately screened and hidden from view over a larger proportion of the area NOT affected by these proposals.
- It has been demonstrated in this report, that any adverse effects of the development can be reduced, controlled and eliminated over time with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures detailed in the Landscape Strategy Proposals.
- The Architect has carefully designed the layout to significantly reduce any adverse impact to neighbouring properties.
- Architecture is of the highest quality and reflects the local historic vernacular of the region and each property is an attractive addition to the built form experienced along the lane.

## Appendix A – Location of Photograph Viewpoints

