

Landscape Character and Visibility Appraisal of the A48

Ringland Allotments Site at Llanwern,
Newport

25 March

Turley

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Planning policy review	3
3.	Baseline situation	5
4.	Scheme proposals: assumptions	19
5.	Likely effects	20
6.	Summary	23
	Appendix 1: Photographs	1

Katy Neaves
Katy.neaves@turley.co.uk

Client
Gallagher Estates

25 March 2014

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This landscape character and visibility appraisal has been prepared by Turley VIA team and assesses the likely effect of a gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation site at Ringland Allotments on a section of the A48 Southern Distributor Road and its surrounding corridor.
- 1.2 It considers the experience of travelling along the A48 Southern Distributor Road and describes:
 - the local planning policy relating to landscape character and views
 - the baseline landscape elements, character areas and visibility of the Ringland Allotments Site and identified A48 corridor
 - the assumed gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation proposals within the Ringland Allotments Site
 - the likely effects of these proposals on the Ringland Allotments Site and A48 corridor's landscape character and visibility
- 1.3 For the purpose of the appraisal the Ringland Allotments Site includes the land to the southeast of the junction of Cot Hill and the A48, and the study area includes the section of the A48 between its junction with the M4 to the north and the Balfe Road roundabout to the south, as shown in **Figure 1**. As well as identifying views from the surrounding area the appraisal considers the views from the Eastern Expansion Area, which our client has an interest in, to the Ringland Allotments Site and study area at a high level.

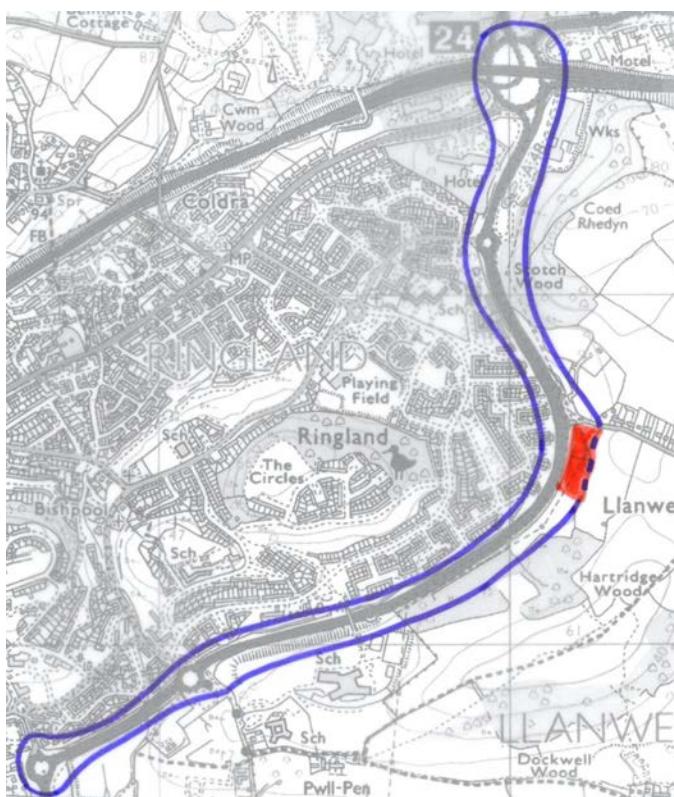


Figure 1 – Ringland Allotments Site (in red) and the study area (outlined in purple)

- 1.4 The document is set out under four sections. The first two sections set out any relevant planning policy and the emerging baseline situation of the Ringland Allotments Site and the study areas surrounding area's landscape character and visibility. The third section describes the assumed gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation proposals. The final sections provide an assessment of the likely effects of the proposals on the previously identified baseline situation. A summary of the appraisal's findings is set out at the end of the document. The appraisal is supported by a series of figures and photos, which can be found within the document.



Panoramic photo of the Ringland Allotments Site

- 1.5 The Ringland Allotments Site comprises of an area of scrub grassland, which was once used for allotments. The A48 study area passes to the west of the Ringland Allotments Site and provides an access for:
- vehicles passing at 50 mph
 - cyclists following a designated cycle trail
 - pedestrians using the footpaths either side of the road
- 1.6 The Ringland Allotments Site provides an area of land that provides open views from a section of the A48.



Photo of the A48 with the Ringland Allotments Site in the background

2. Planning policy review

- 2.1 The existing and emerging local planning policy and the existing landscape character area assessments relevant to this appraisal is summarised below.
- 2.2 The Ringland Allotments Site has been identified as a H15 (ii) – Gypsy and Traveller Transit Accommodation and H16 (ii) – Gypsy and Traveller Residential Accommodation within Newport City Council's (NCC) Revised Deposit Local Development Plan (LDP) – December 2013 policy map. The study area's eastern side is located within an area shown as Countryside and the A48 and the study area's western side is located within the Urban Boundary of Newport. The surrounding area to the east has been identified as H1 (H3) - Housing and SP11 - Eastern Expansion Area, along with areas of Environmental Space.

Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011

- 2.3 NCC adopted its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) in 2007 and, although it has started to work on its LDP, the policies continue to be used for Development Management purposes. A specific objective of the UDP in relation to the environment is, within both urban and rural areas, to conserve protected and sensitive areas and enhance poor or degraded environments.
- 2.4 Policy SP6 states that development will only be permitted within the countryside where it respects the landscape character of the immediate surrounding area and it is appropriate in scale and design. Policy CE4 outlines the requirements for landscaping schemes, with the supporting text stating that large scale and visually prominent developments will require greater consideration of landscaping issues than other sites.

Revised Deposit Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026

- 2.5 NCC has submitted their Revised Deposit LDP to WAG and the examination is due to commence 1st April. The LDP will eventually replace the 'saved' policies of the UDP. Although the policies within the Local Development Plan have not been formally adopted they are at an advanced stage and are of material consideration for the purpose of this LVIAs.

Objective 6 of the Local Development Plan sets out NCC's objective in relation to conservation of the natural environment. It aims to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment, including landscape.

- 2.6 Policy GP5 of the plan sets out criteria which development needs to meet in order to gain permission. Point (v) states that there would be no unacceptable impact on landscape quality. Points (vi) and (vii) go on to stress the importance of having an appropriate landscape scheme and tree planting or retention strategy. The latter point emphasises the importance of avoiding unacceptable loss of, or harm to, trees, woodland or hedgerows that have amenity value.

LANDMAP

2.7 LANDMAP provides a landscape resource where landscape characteristics, qualities and influences on the landscape within Wales is recorded and evaluated into a nationally consistent data set. It identifies that the Ringland Allotments Site falls within the following:

- **Geological Landscape** - Llanwern-Underwood / Lowland plateau (Evaluation: High)
- **Landscape Habitat** - Mosaic (Evaluation: Moderate)
- **Visual & Sensory** - Llanwern Park Mosaic / Lowland Valleys (Evaluation: Moderate)
- **Historic Landscape** - Bishton and Wilcrick / Regular Fieldscapes (Evaluation: High)
- **Cultural Landscape** - Newport Hinterland / Other Rural (specify) (Evaluation: High)

2.8 The area is described in the Visual & Sensory section as:

"Gently undulating rounded hills rising from the levels at 10m AOD to 60-80m AOD. The area is primarily pastoral and fields are small to medium scale enclosed by cut hedges and trees. Most fields have sinuous boundaries while others are rectilinear. Blocks of deciduous woodland are noticeable and give emphasis to the hillsides in places, and are prominent from the M4. Settlement is a combination of clustered villages, a relatively recent estate at Underwood, and scattered farmhouses. Llanwern Park Farm is surrounded by a parkland landscape. The M4 adjacent is a source of noise and movement in an otherwise tranquil area. This road allow views into the area making it an important approach to Newport. Views from the area to the south are dominated by the Llanwern complex. The area is generally well managed."

2.9 This section goes onto describe attractive views as being 'both in and out (to and from landscape to the north, from M4 and mainline railway towards area)' and detractive views 'out (to M4, Llanwern complex and edges of Newport [Celtic Manor])'.

3. Baseline situation

- 3.1 The following features have been identified as contributing to both the landscape character of the Ringland Allotments Site and the study area. They will also influence the surrounding area's visibility onto the Ringland Allotments Site.

Landscape elements

Land use

- 3.2 The Ringland Allotments Site comprises of an area of scrub grassland, which was once used for allotments. The A48 study area provides a dual carriageway, where vehicles pass at 50 mph. The carriageway is divided in two by a grassed central reservation verge and metal crash barrier.



Typical image of the A48 corridor with the residential to the west (left) of the view and woodland to the east (right) of the view

- 3.3 The A48 currently divides the eastern suburbs of Newport from the countryside, with residential located to the west of this road. To the east of the A48 are range of fields and woodland blocks along with a school and factory. The latter uses are set away from the road and screened with vegetation following the boundary, in the case of the factory, or a large grassed area buffer, in the case of the school. Both uses are set within landscaped areas and only partial to glimpsed views can be gained from the A48 corridor.

Topography and drainage

- 3.4 The Ringland Allotments Site slopes broadly from the east down to the west from 30 metres AOD to 25 metres AOD. The study area is located within a shallow valley, with the A48 running at broadly 30 metres AOD to the north down to 10 metres AOD in the south, as shown in **Figure 2**.

- 3.5 The surrounding area is characterised by gently undulating landscape, which consists of a series of minor ridgelines that run north to south and extend from a major ridgeline that runs east to west to the north of the M4. This creates a varied visibility within the area.
- 3.6 There are no water bodies or drainage features within the Ringland Allotments Site. There is an existing drainage ditch and associated attenuation basins located near to the A48's south western corridor, adjacent to the residential area.

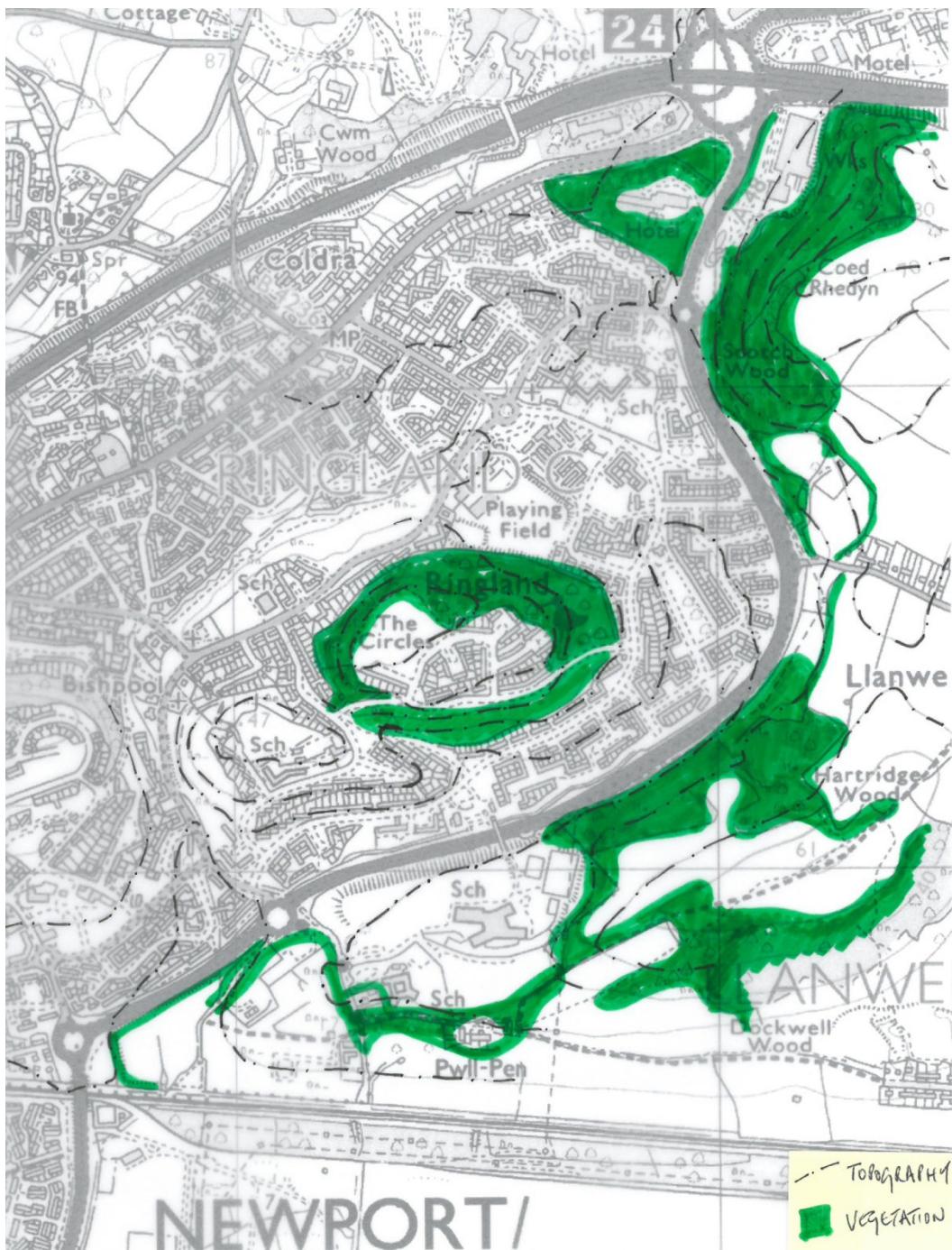


Figure 2 – Key vegetation and contours that surround the Ringland Allotments Site and study area

Vegetation

- 3.7 The Ringland Allotments Site comprises of a grassed scrubland field that is framed to the east and south by a dense line of unmanaged vegetation, and north by a gappy unmanaged hedgerow. The western boundary is defined by a 1.5 metre chain linked fence, with the occasional semi mature tree. There is also a remnant of a gappy hedgerow that runs east to west within the centre of the Ringland Allotments Site.



Photo of the Ringland Allotments Site from the opposite side of the A48

- 3.8 There is limited vegetation associated within the A48 corridor study area, although the verges and central reservation are grassed. Trees and scrub are typically associated with the woodland areas to the west and east, as shown in **Figure 2**.

Built form

- 3.9 The Ringland Allotments Site and the study area do not contain any built form. To the west of the study area the residential consists of two storey terrace and semi-detached houses, and also three storey flat blocks and a twelve storey tower block (Milton Court). To the east are large grain buildings of a school and a factory, comprising of around two to three storeys in height, can be found at the south and north ends of the study area.



Typical image of the residential development that frames the A48 corridor

Movement

- 3.10 The Ringland Allotments Site does not contain any public rights of way and is currently accessed from Cot Hill. The study area consists of a dual carriageway, which is broken four times with roundabouts and once with a 'T' junction. These points provide access to the surrounding residential area to the west and countryside to the east, as shown in **Figure 3**. A footpath is located on both sides of the road and a cycleway is located to the west.
- 3.11 Pedestrian only crossing points are limited to three points, Hartridge Comprehensive School bridge and subway, and Dawson Close subway. Both of which have controlled access times. The remaining pedestrian crossing points are associated with the four roundabouts. There are no public rights of way that cross through the study area, but a number run within the countryside to the west, as shown in **Figure 3**.



Hartridge Comprehensive School subway



Hartridge Comprehensive School bridge

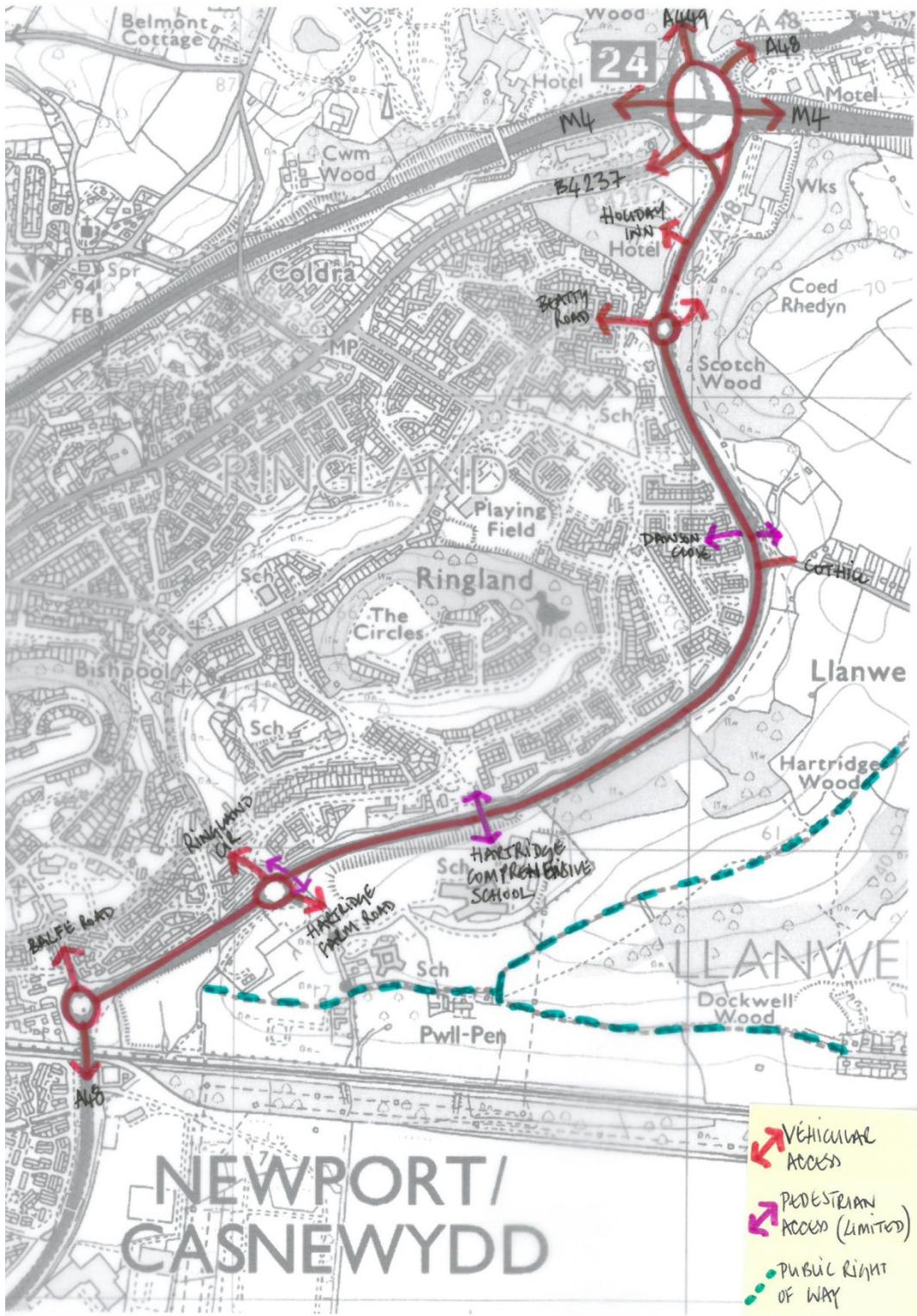


Figure 3 – Movement

Local character areas

- 3.12 The study area can be broken into six sections, or local landscape and townscape character areas, which are illustrated in **Figure 4** and summarised below running from the north to the south.

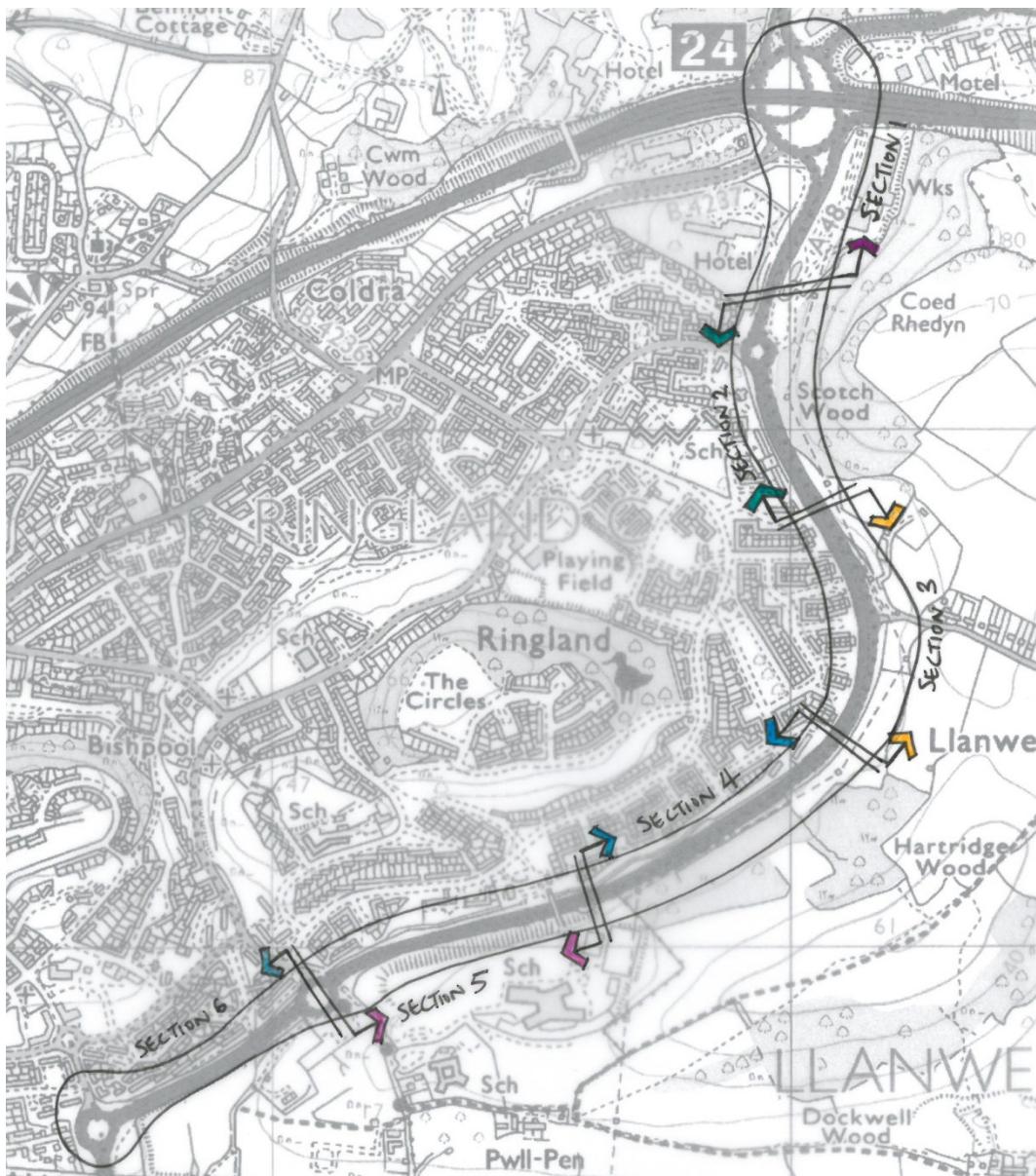


Figure 4 – Local character areas

- 3.13 Overall the A48 provides a clear boundary between the western residential area and the surrounding countryside. This is accentuated with both the eastern factory and school buildings being set away from the road and a clear landscape buffer of between 40 and 100 metres being provided setting these developments visually away from the A48. This is emphasised further by the topography and vegetation. The proposal's for the Strategic Llanwern Village development respects this buffer and is set behind the existing eastern ridgeline.

Section 1

3.14 This section of the study area runs from the M4 and A48 junction to the north side of the Beatty Road roundabout. The area is influenced by the M4 and A48 junction, its key elements are:

- Land use to the east and the west consists of the large footprints of the hotel and factory
- Vegetation is limited to the hotel and factory
- The M4 and A48 junction dominates the northern views



Typical image of section 1 local character area looking north



Typical image of section 1 local character area looking south

3.15 In summary this section of the A48 feels relatively contained by the surrounding vegetation. Glimpsed views can be gained into the hotel and employment area to the east and west. The area is dominated by the large M4 and A48 junction.

Section 2

3.16 This section of the study area runs from the north side of the Beatty Road roundabout to the half-way point of this roundabout and Cot Hill. The area is influenced by the surrounding vegetation and noise attenuation fencing, its key elements are:

- Land use to the east consists of the broadleaved woodland of Scotch Wood and residential to the west.
- Vegetation is limited to the woodland
- Celtic Manor to the north provides a local landmark. To the south views open up to the Ringland Allotments Site and landscape beyond, as shown in **Appendix 1**



Typical image of section 2 local character area looking north



Typical image of section 2 local character area looking south

3.17 In summary this section of the A48 is contained by the surrounding dense vegetation, to the east, and attenuation fencing, to the west.

Section 3

3.18 This section of the study area runs from the half-way point of Beatty Road roundabout and Cot Hill to the northern end of Hartridge Wood, and contains the Ringland Allotments Site. The area is influenced by the landscape opening up to the east and the raised residential properties near The Circles set behind the noise attenuation fencing, its key elements are:

- Land use to the east consists of the scrub grassland and residential to the west
- Vegetation is associated with field boundaries
- Open views to the countryside edge to the east, as illustrated in **Appendix 1**, and residential to the west



Typical image of section 3 local character area looking west



Typical image of section 3 local character area looking south

3.19 In summary this section of the A48 is open with views to the countryside edge, to the east, and residential, to the west.

Section 4

3.20 This section of the study area runs from the northern end of Hartridge Wood to Hartridge Comprehensive School. The area is influenced by the surrounding vegetation and noise attenuation fencing, its key elements are:

- Land use to the east consists of the broadleaved woodland of Hartridge Wood and residential to the west.
- Vegetation is limited to the woodland
- Views are limited to vistas along the A48 and the Ringland Allotments Site are visible from the northern section, as illustrated in **Appendix 1**



Typical image of section 4 local character area looking north



Typical image of section 4 local character area looking south

3.21 In summary, as with section 2, this section of the A48 is contained by the surrounding dense vegetation, to the east, and attenuation fencing, to the west.

Section 5

3.22 This section of the study area runs from Hartridge Comprehensive School to Ringland Cir roundabout. The area is influenced by the school's engineered slope and fencing, to the east, and the noise attenuation fencing, to the west. Its key elements are:

- Land use to the east consists of the school and the associated playing field and residential to the west
- Vegetation is associated with field boundaries
- Relatively contained views to the school's engineered slope and fencing, and the residential roofs to the west



Typical image of section 5 local character area looking north



Typical image of section 5 local character area looking south

3.23 In summary this section of the A48 feels relatively contained by the slope and fencing. Glimpsed views can be gained to the school's pedestrian bridge, a local landmark.

Section 6

3.24 This section of the study area runs from the Ringland Cir roundabout to the bridge crossing of the railway. The area is influenced by the flatter topography creating a visual open feeling. This section of the A48 also appears busier than the previous sections.

- Land use to the east consists of scrubland and residential to the west.
- Vegetation is associated with the urban edge and scrubland
- Relatively open views



Typical image of section 6 local character area looking north



Typical image of section 6 local character area looking south

3.25 In summary this section of the A48 feels open, but dominated by vehicles.

Visibility

- 3.26 The visibility of the Ringland Allotments Site and the study area has been established through both a desktop analysis of their surroundings and by confirming on site the localised screening effect of the landform, vegetation and built form (as described in the previous sections).
- 3.27 To the west open views are possible to the Ringland Allotments Site along the A48 to the northwest and to the south. This area provides a gap in the dense vegetation that follows the road and offers open views to the surrounding undulating landscape. Beyond this road is a 2.5 metre noise barrier that mitigates the A48's noise to the residential area beyond. It is assumed that open to partial views will be possible from the upper floors of these properties where they are orientated towards the Ringland Allotments Site.
- 3.28 The Ringland Allotments Site's visibility is reasonably contained to the north and east by the existing vegetation, but it is assumed that glimpsed views are likely to be possible from the immediate fields that are located directly adjacent to the Ringland Allotments Site and the proposed site of the Strategic Llanwern Village development. Partial views can be gained from the western end of Cot Hill and it is assumed that glimpsed views will be possible from the western residential properties. To the south views are contained by the trees associated by Hartridge Wood.
- 3.29 The visibility of the study area has been discussed in the previous landscape character area section and is illustrated in **Figure 5**. There are a number of local landmarks within the area that aid with legibility, these include:
- Celtic Manor hotel
 - Holy Trinity Church
 - Milton Court residential tower
 - Hartridge Comprehensive School bridge
 - The electricity pylons that run adjacent to the A48
- 3.30 It is considered that the western slopes associated with Scotch Wood and Hartridge Wood, and the intervening fields provide a buffer to the eastern open countryside. The A48 corridor study area provides a transitional character area between the open countryside and the edge of Newport.
- 3.31 Views from the Strategic Llanwern Village development to the Ringland Allotments Site are screened by the existing intervening vegetation. This proposed development sits on the opposite side to an existing ridgeline, which minimise its impact on the A48 and the suburbs of Newport. The supporting Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment chapter of the 2006 ES, prepared by Hankinson Duckett Associates, identified that the Strategic Llanwern Village development would have negligible residual effects from the A48.

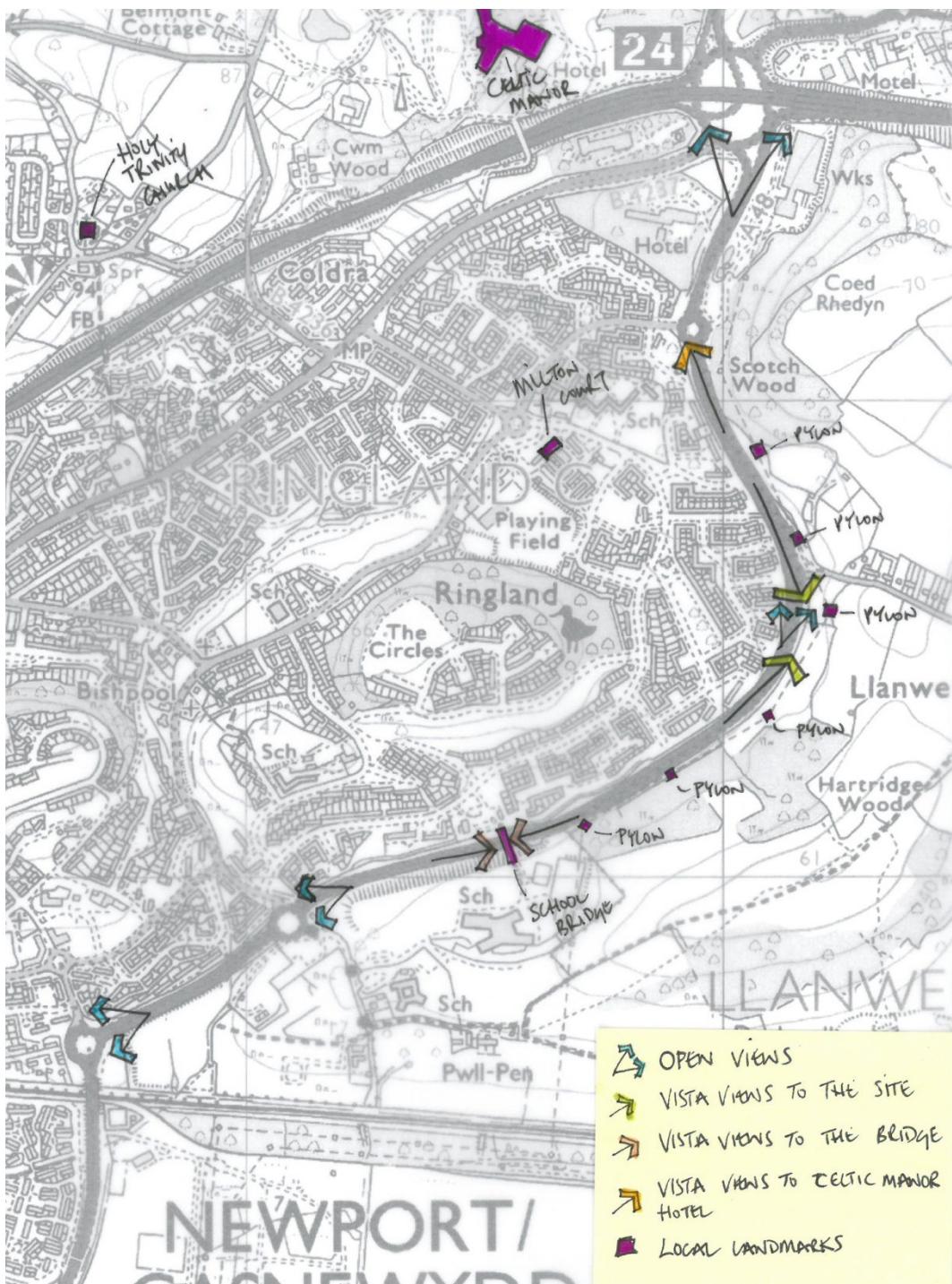


Figure 5 – Visibility

4. Scheme proposals: assumptions

- 4.1 Currently the layout of the scheme proposals for the Ringland Allotments Site's gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation has not been fixed. Therefore a series of assumptions have been made, which include:
- The Ringland Allotments Site will be levelled to the same height as the pylon standings, to provide a standing for the gypsy and traveller caravans and ancillary infrastructure. This will be undertaken through 'cutting and filling' the area, creating 1:3 slopes and a loss of existing boundary vegetation.
 - New shrub planting will be set along the 1:3 slopes
 - To mitigate the noise of the A48 on the Ringland Allotments Site a 2.5 metre attenuation fence will be provided along the top of the north, south and west boundary of the caravan standing.
 - Vehicular access will be provided off Cot Hill

5. Likely effects

- 5.1 The effect of the gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation proposals on the Ringland Allotments Site is quantified by predicting the likely change on the previously identified landscape elements, character and visibility. In regards to the visibility the appraisal does not attempt to predict the visual effects of seasonal changes throughout the year but describes the ‘worst case’ position in terms of the view i.e. in the winter the trees would have lost their leaves.

Landscape elements

Land use

- 5.2 The proposals will permanently change the Ringland Allotments Site’s land use from open countryside to gypsy and traveller transit or residential accommodation and ancillary infrastructure.. This will urbanise and develop the eastern side of the A48.

Topography and drainage

- 5.3 In order to level the Ringland Allotments Site for the gypsy and traveller transit or residential accommodation standing the topography will be significantly affected, with the whole area being ‘cut and filled’.

Vegetation

- 5.4 The proposals will lead to vegetation being removed and lost through the ‘cut and fill’ exercise’, in particular the access into the Ringland Allotments Site and along the eastern boundary. This will change the character of the area and open up views to the east. The proposals will affect the study area’s vegetation that immediate surrounds the Ringland Allotments Site.

Built form

- 5.5 The proposals will introduce built form, and associated infrastructure, of up to one storey in height and noise attenuation fencing. This produces an adverse urbanising effect on east side of the A48.

Movement

- 5.6 The proposals will introduce a new vehicular access into the Ringland Allotments Site.

Landscape character areas

- 5.7 The proposals will have a direct, permanent, effect on the Ringland Allotments Site with the scrub and grassed area being replaced by gypsy and traveller transit or residential accommodation. This will affect sections of the previously identified local character areas within the study area, which are summarised below.

Section 1

- 5.8 The proposals will not be visible from this section of the A48 and will not affect views from it, or its character

Section 2

- 5.9 The proposals will be visible from the southern end of this section of the A48 and will have a direct, permanent, effect on views from it. The proposals impact on the physical character of the eastern side of the A48 through providing urbanising features.

Section 3

- 5.10 The proposals for the gypsy and travellers site fall within this section and will have a direct, permanent, effect on both the character and the views from the A48. It will change the physical character of the eastern side of the A48 from scrub grassland to an urbanising feature with attenuation fencing, one storey built form and ancillary infrastructure.
- 5.11 In order to re-level the site the cut and fill will raise the land. This landform, along with associated planting and noise attenuation fencing, will create a raised feature of some five metres in height. This will significantly change the visibility of this section of the A48, to the east, through preventing existing open views to the surrounding countryside. It is also likely to visually merge the western residential suburb of Newport with the gypsy and traveller site and the Strategic Llanwern Village development. This is due to a likely minimum buffer of 20 metres between the A48 and the gypsy and traveller site, and a further 20 metres between the gypsy and traveller site and the Strategic Llanwern Village development.

Section 4

- 5.12 The proposals will be visible from the northern end of this section of the A48 and will have a direct, permanent, effect on views from it. The proposals impact on the physical character of the eastern side of the A48 through providing urbanising features.
- 5.13 The proposals will affect the recognised landscape elements of the land use, topography, built form and sections 2, 3 and 4 of the identified local character areas.

Section 5

- 5.14 The proposals will not be visible from this section of the A48 and will not affect views from it, or its character

Section 6

- 5.15 The proposals will not be visible from this section of the A48 and will not affect views from it, or its character

Visibility

- 5.16 Open views to the noise attenuation features associated with the gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation proposals will be possible along the A48 (to the northwest and to the south). Rising above this fencing will be the roof line of the accommodation and ancillary infrastructure.
- 5.17 The proposals impact on the physical character of the eastern side of the A48, through providing urbanising features, and will restrict the existing open visibility to the surrounding eastern landscape. Beyond this it is assumed that open to partial views will be possible from the upper floors of the western residential properties, above the

existing noise attenuation fencing, where they are orientated towards the Ringland Allotments Site.

- 5.18 Views will be reasonably contained to the north and south, by the existing woodland. To the east views will become partial to glimpsed, due to a proportion of the vegetation along the eastern boundary being removed. Currently partial views can be gained from Cot Hill and it is assumed that glimpsed views will be possible from the western residential properties onto the proposals.
- 5.19 The effect of the proposals on the study area has been discussed in the previous landscape character area sections.

6. Summary

- 6.1 The appraisal has been founded on a thorough study of the Ringland Allotments Site and the study area's landscape setting. Through understanding these features and resources, a robust appraisal of the Ringland Allotments Site and the study area has been undertaken. The Ringland Allotments Site and study area do not fall within or near any national or local landscape designations.
- 6.2 Currently the A48 provides a clear boundary between the western residential area and the surrounding countryside, to the east. This is accentuated with both the eastern factory and school buildings being set away from the road and a clear landscape buffer of between 40 and 100 metres being provided. The proposal's for the approved Strategic Llanwern Village development respects this buffer and is set behind the existing eastern ridgeline. The Ringland Allotments Site helps to maintain the distinct identity of the existing and proposed communities, preventing coalescence and creating a green biodiversity corridor.
- 6.3 To the west open views are currently possible to the Ringland Allotments Site along the A48 (to the northwest and to the south). Beyond the A48 a 2.5 metre noise barrier screens the majority of views from the adjacent residential properties. Open to partial views will, however, be possible from the upper floors of these properties where they are orientated towards the Ringland Allotments Site. The Ringland Allotments Site's visibility is reasonably contained to the north, south and east by the existing vegetation.
- 6.4 It has been assumed that the proposals for the Ringland Allotments Site's gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation will include:
 - site levelling through cut and filling earthworks
 - noise attenuation fencing
 - vehicular access off Cot Hill
- 6.5 The proposals will dramatically affect the recognised landscape elements of the land use, topography, built form and sections 2, 3 and 4 of the identified local character areas. In regard to the latter it will change the physical character of the eastern side of the A48. The proposals will also directly impact on the entrance to the Strategic Llanwern Village development from the west.
- 6.6 The approved proposal for the Strategic Llanwern Village is set away from the A48 and respects its associated buffer, which is in keeping with the existing character of the roads corridor. This creates two different settlements. The gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation will provide an urbanising feature that will merge the western residential suburb of Newport with the Strategic Llanwern Village development.
- 6.7 With the proposal's noise attenuation fencing, buildings and ancillary infrastructure open views will be possible from the west along the A48 and will have an adverse effect. It is assumed that open to partial views will be possible from the upper floors of the western residential properties of the suburbs of Newport, where they are orientated towards the gypsy and traveller transit and residential accommodation. The proposals are likely to be reasonably contained to the north and south, but will become visible to the east and

the Strategic Llanwern Village due to the removal of a proportion of the eastern boundary vegetation.

Appendix 1: Photographs

Photoviewpoint 1 (50mm) - Existing View







Turley Office
The Charlotte Building
17 Gresse Street
London
W1T 1QL

T 020 7851 4010

Turley