



Three Cliffs Bay Holiday Park
[Visual Appraisal and Design Report]
March 2020

Three Cliffs Bay Holiday Park: Introduction

This visual appraisal and design document has been produced in respect of land at the Three Cliffs Holiday Park in Penmaen, as part of a planning application submission.

A summary of the proposals includes the delineation of the front and back camping fields, including unit numbers, the setting aside of a large area of habitat space overlooking Three Cliffs Bay and the creation of new hedgerow boundaries between camping areas and habitat or agricultural zones.

The following pages set out the landscape context and character areas of the holiday park, a detailed visual appraisal of the park and the camping fields and finally, a description of the design proposals for each of the camping fields.



Part 01 Site Context

Site Context: Landscape Character

Three Cliffs Bay Holiday Park forms part of North Hills Farm which comprises in excess of 100 acres of woods, agricultural land together with the cliffs which lead down to the beach. The farm has been used for tented camping and caravanning since the early 1900's.

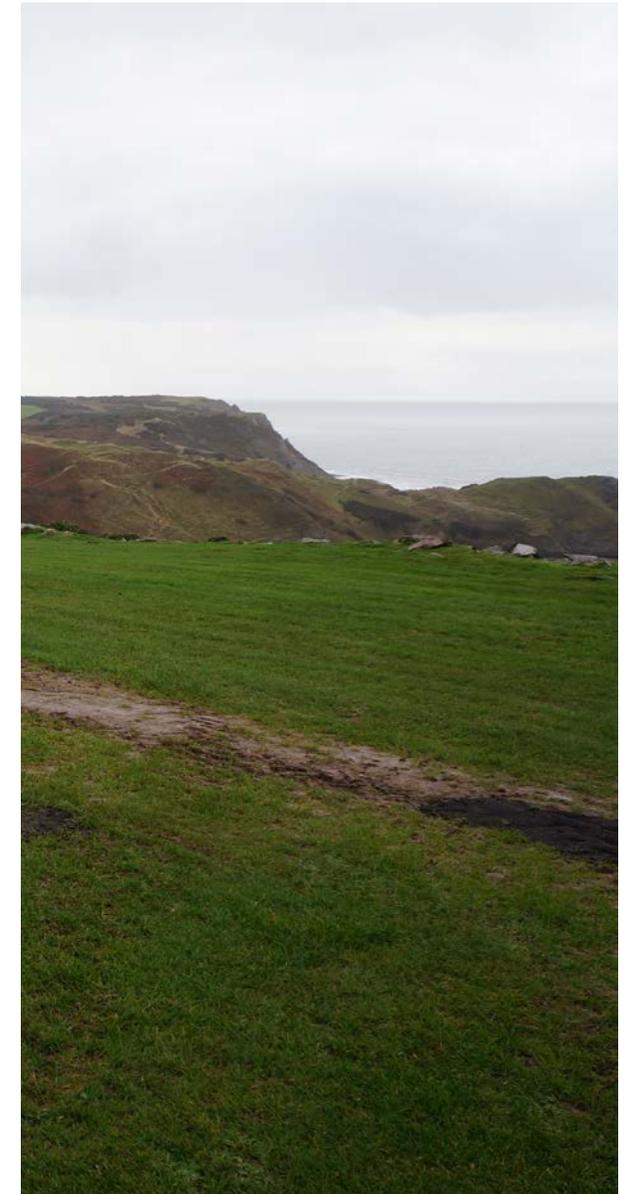
The holiday park is a family run business which has been graded as 5 stars by Visit Wales, the only 5-star site on the Gower Peninsula, and voted the best holiday park on the peninsula. The excellent standards of the park are evident when visiting the site, from the quality of the buildings to the care and attention paid to the maintenance and development of the landscape setting.

The holiday park is located in the village of Penmaen to the south of the A4118 approximately 200m along North Hills Lane. The entrance to the park is set within the North Hills Farm buildings where a park shop, holiday cottages and toilet facilities are provided. The principal camping areas are located to the east of North Hills farmhouse and are formed by two main enclosures to the north and south of North Hills Lane (which, at this point becomes a bridleway).

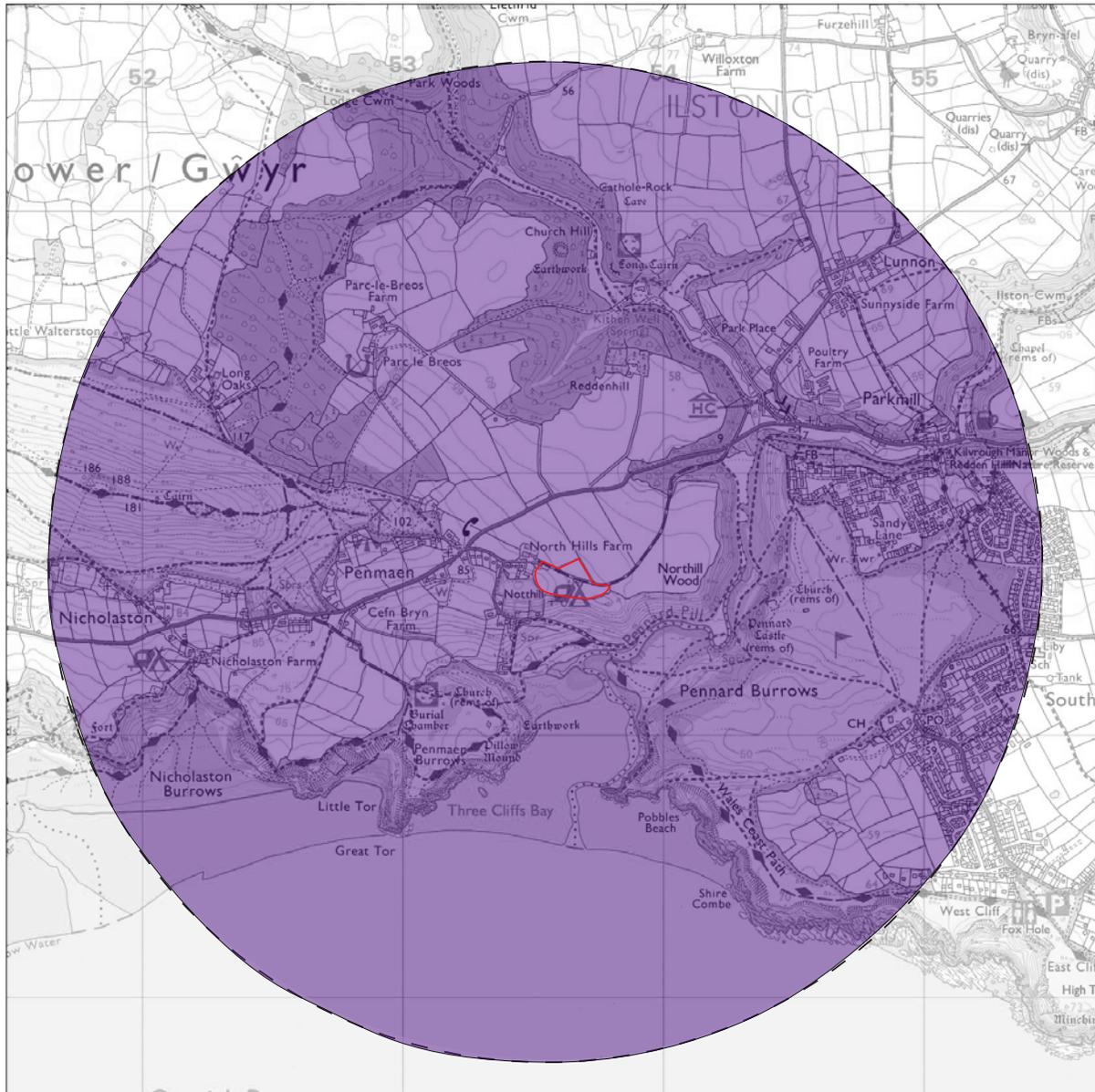
The majority of the site is situated at a median elevation of 75m above sea level and adjacent to the steeply sloping cliff edge at Three Cliffs Bay. The southern camping field in particular is dominated by the dramatic views down to the beach and over to Southgate in the east. The northern field has a different character defined by the hedgerow enclosures and rolling agricultural land and woodland to the north.

Although the site benefits from a range of long-distance views, especially to the north, east and south, the camping areas in particular are not overlooked. This will be explored in greater detail later in this document but primarily it is due the lack of neighbouring properties and footpaths, and to the park's high elevation in comparison to the surrounding landscape.

The following pages set out character of the surrounding landscape context in more detail, from the extents of the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the access network and wider historic and landscape designations.



Site Context: Landscape Character



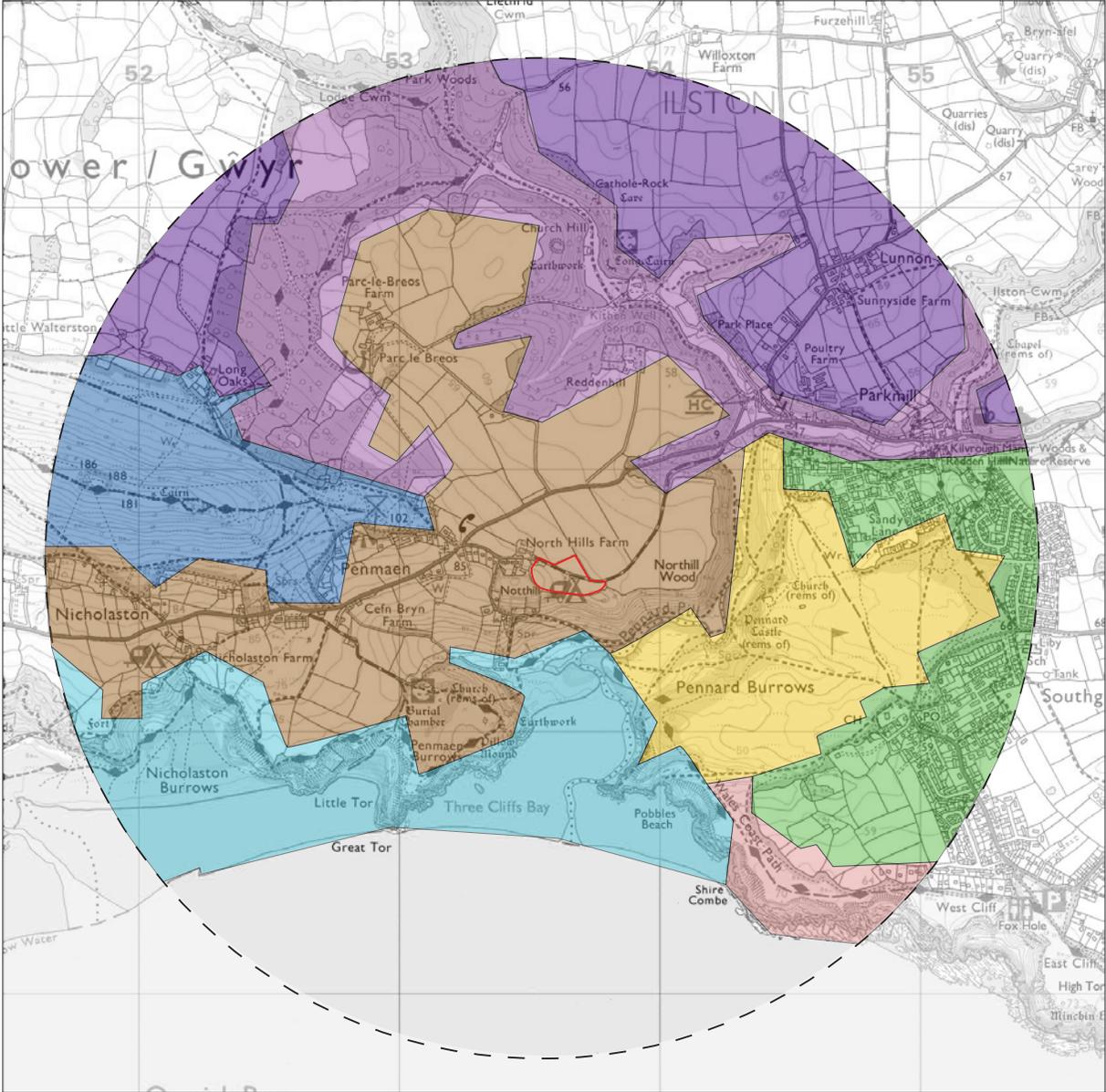
-  Site Location
-  2km Radius
-  National Landscape Character Area: '39 Gower'

The entire study area is located in the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and forms part of National Landscape Character Area 39 'Gower'. The key characteristics of this area include:

- Gently rolling countryside with a well balanced relationship between field boundaries, topography and settlement
- Wide stretching heathland (downs), being an important feature of the Peninsula
- Settlements of whitewashed buildings are linked by a network of minor roads, fringed by high, flower rich verges.
- Varied coastline and unspoilt, tranquil and unspoilt views
- Established woodland belts helping to create and reinforce a sense of enclosure

The following page provides a more detailed overview of the site character based on the Gower AONB landscape character assessment from March 2013.

Site Context: Gower AONB Character Areas



-  Site Location
-  2km Radius
-  LCA 15 - Oxwich Bay
-  LCA 16 - Nicholaston & Penmaen
-  LCA 17 - Cefn Bryn
-  LCA 24 - Lunnun
-  LCA 25 - Parkmill
-  LCA 26 - Southgate & Pennard
-  LCA 27 - Pennard Burrows
-  LCA 28 - Pwlldu Head

The site is located within the AONB Gower Character Area 'Nicholaston & Penmaen.' The following page includes a detailed study of this character, including its relationship to the adjoining LCA 15 'Oxwich Bay'.

Site Context: LCA 16 Nicholaston and Penmaen & LCA 15 Oxwich Bay

This page describes the LCA 16 'Nicholaston and Penmaen', within which Three Cliffs Holiday Park is located. LCA 16 is identified and described in 'The Gower Landscape Character Assessment', and is set within the wider NLCA 39 Gower. North of our study area character area is LCA 25 Parkmill, and to the south, lies LCA 15 'Oxwich Bay'. This important coastal edge of Oxwich Bay will also be looked at in this section due to its proximity to LCA 16.

16. Nicholaston and Penmaen

The study area 'Nicholaston and Penmaen' lies within a large area of the AONB that includes most of the peninsula's coastline. This LCA consists of a band of rolling lowland farmland, between the coastal character edge above Oxwich Bay, and the rising common land of Cefn Bryn. There are distinctive wooded belts and farmed landscapes surrounding the study area to the north, and an attractive, accessible, coastal landscape, with stunning coastal views, rocky shoreline and cliffs to the south. This LCA has a maritime flavour and a strong sense of place, with generally unspoilt rolling farmland inland.

It is noted that there are a few visually detracting elements, namely small areas of settlement, as well as clusters of caravan and camping sites at Three Cliffs Bay (referring primarily to the site within the study area). It is also noted that there are some local concentrations of overhead electricity and telephone lines.

Management Guidelines

The following points have been taken from the management guidelines set out in the LCA 16 description.

Where considered appropriate, some of these shall be referred back to later in this report, particularly with regards to how the proposed landscape strategy and mitigation measures are responding positively to these guidelines, as summarised below:

- Maintain and conserve field boundary hedgebanks and resulting field patterns.
- Optimise agri-environment schemes to target the most visually-sensitive areas, and to retain and conserve the field boundary hedgebank network
- Retain and conserve the fixed sand dunes, both for habitat conservation reasons and their screening function in relation to intrusive features
- Control caravan and camping site developments or extensions in the northern section of the LCA, so that intrusive visual effects are prevented, including light pollution

15. Oxwich Bay

Oxwich Bay LCA is characterised by a long, curved sandy beach backed by the vegetated sand dunes of Oxwich Burrows. There are steep sided wooded valley and wooded coastal slopes / scrub and the dunes which have colonised / formed along the back of the broad sandy beaches. Above these coastal slopes begins 'in-part' the edge to the Three Cliffs Camping Site. This LCA has a strong sense of place, and there are picturesque views along the dunes and beaches to sea cliffs, and long views inland up to the prominent ridge of Cefn Bryn.

The area has multiple statutory environmental designations: the AONB, a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and two Sites of Special Scientific Interest - Nicholaston Woods and Oxwich Bay.

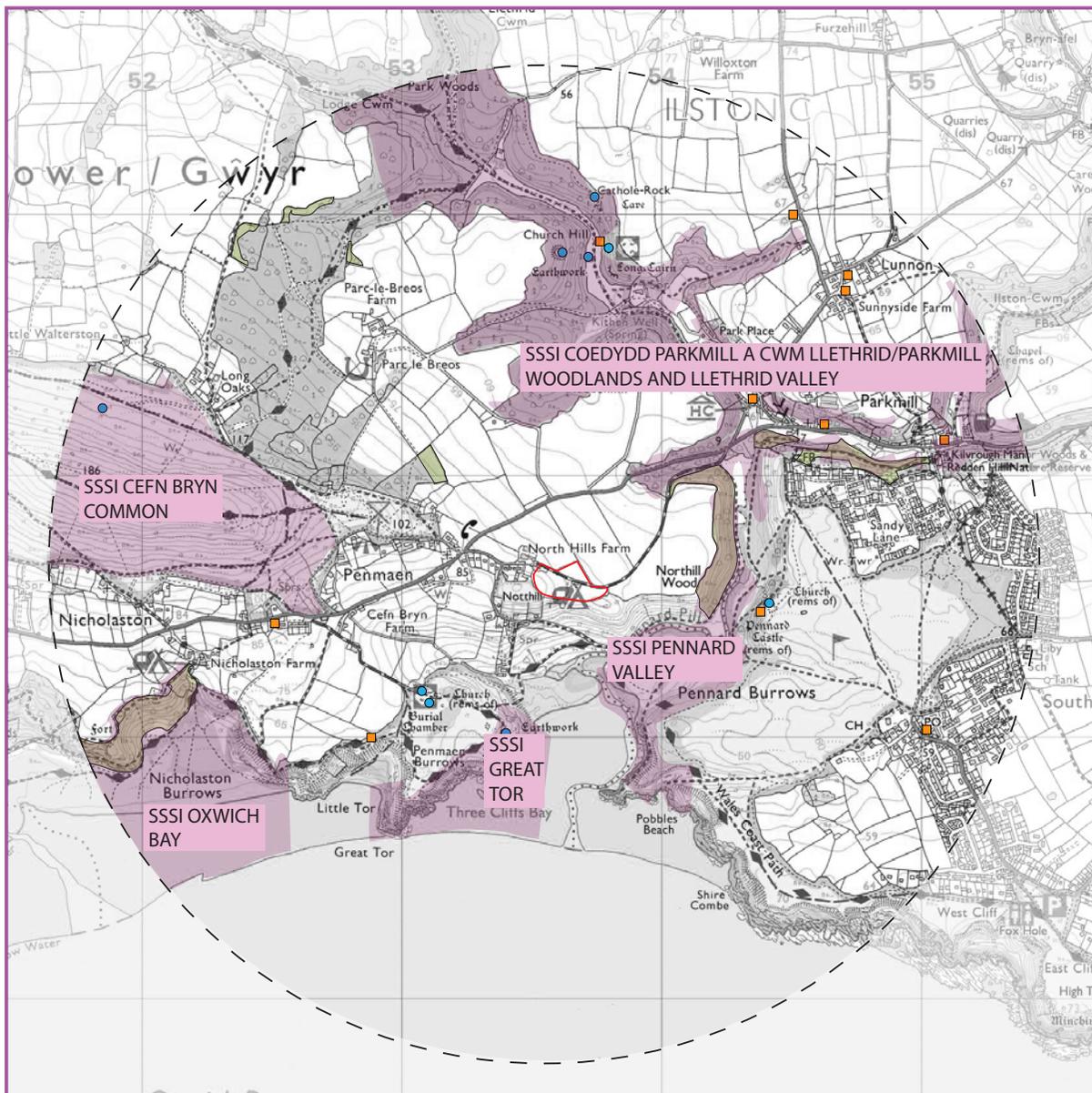
The designated areas appear to suffer little erosion - a tribute to the management of the site, in view of the many thousands of visitors to the immediately adjacent Oxwich Bay beach throughout the year.

Management Guidelines

- Maintain and conserve boundary hedgebanks, earthen and rubble banks and stone boundary walls
- Maintain existing character through favourable vegetation management
- Continue with the effective visitor management which is successfully preventing damage to vulnerable habitats in designated sites
- Retain and conserve the fixed sand dunes, both for habitat conservation reasons and their screening function in relation to intrusive car parks and leisure facilities
- Control new caravan and camping site developments or extensions within the nearby section of the Llanddewi and Reynoldston LCA, so that existing intrusive visual effects are minimised and further intrusive effects are prevented

Consider incentive schemes to alter the colour of caravans where they cannot be effectively screened or assimilated into the land-scape by landform or vegetation.

Site Context: Designations



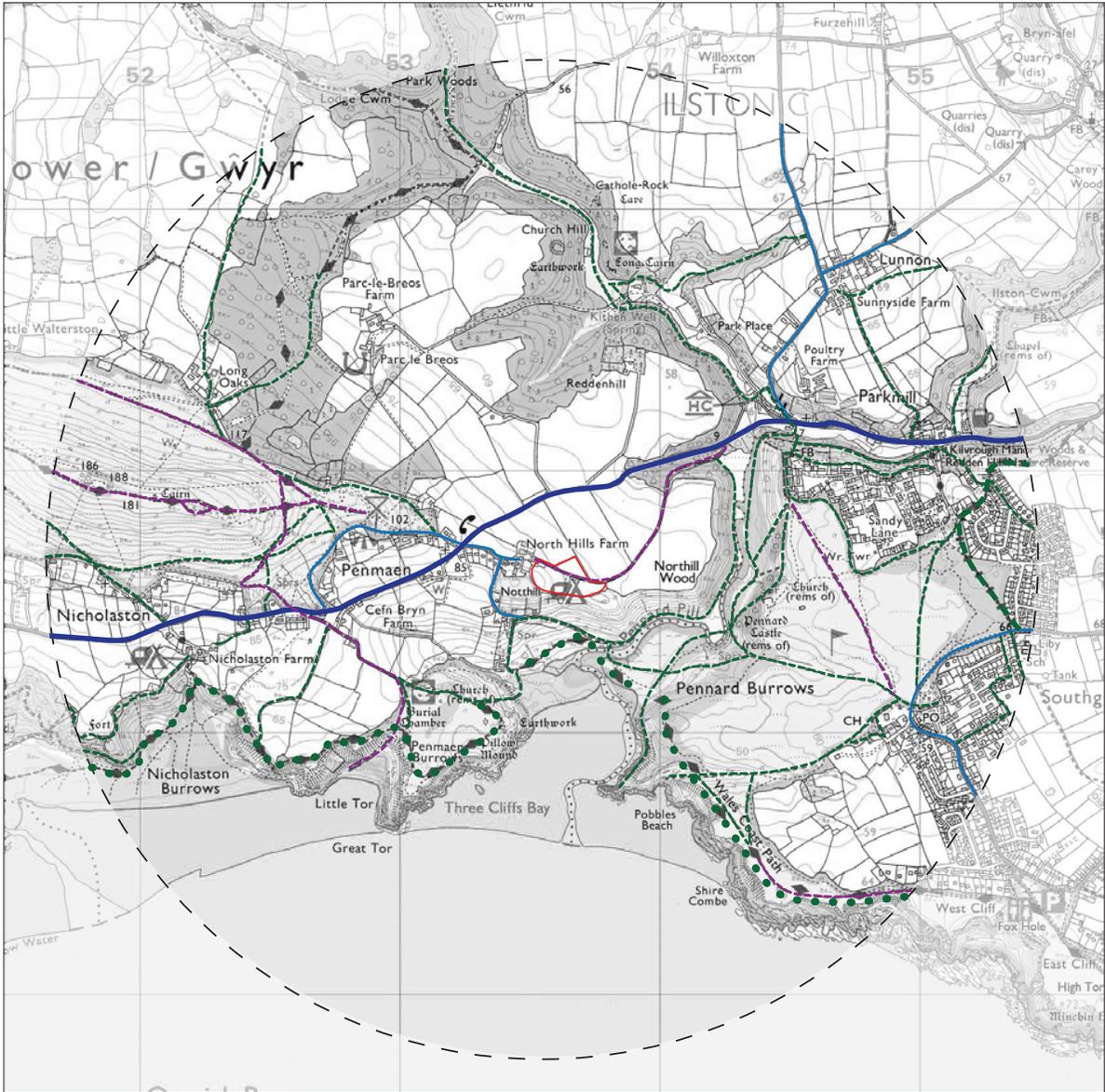
-  Site Location
-  2km Radius
-  Listed Building / Landscape
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Gower AONB

As described earlier in the report, the entire study area is located in the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

There are a number of other landscape designations located within the study area including five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are shown on the adjacent plan.

The adjacent study area plan also illustrates the location of scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings with Pennard Castle, Kilvrough Manor and the Burial Mounds of Penmaen Burrows of particular note.

Site Context: Access networks



- Site Location
- 2km Radius
- A Road
- Road generally less than 4m wide
- Footpath
- Byway open to all traffic
- Recreational Route
- Bridleway

Three Cliffs Holiday park is served by a range of local access routes. North Hills Lane provides road access to the park before continuing as a bridal path running to the north and east. The local road network provides access to the wider footpath links with the coast path in particular a significant asset of the area. The path runs to the south of the park, generally at a lower elevation, which restricts views of the camping areas and surrounding buildings. Further details and viewpoint photographs are provided later in this document on this point.



Part 02 Visual Appraisal

Visual Appraisal: Site Character



Three Cliffs Holiday park is a family run business which benefits from an excellent level of landscape maintenance and care. The majority of the camping areas are laid to grass, enclosed by cut, mature, native hedgerows and bordered by a number of woodland and scrub areas.

Further to the historic field boundaries, a number of landscape improvements have recently been made with over 200m of new, native hedging having been laid (protected with stockproof fencing) alongside repairs to grass areas and hard standings.

The photographs provided on this page and the pages that follow illustrate the character and setting of the holiday park in relation to the surrounding landscape areas and, due to the elevation and orientation of the fields, the relatively inconspicuous position it has visually.



1. The first image is taken from North Hills Lane and shows the roadside field that leads to the farm buildings and entrance area of the holiday park. The lane is defined by a traditional stone wall and native hedgerows and provides long distance views to the north.
2. The second image is taken from the farm yard and holiday park entrance and illustrates views to Southgate in the east. The high level of maintenance is evident in this image with the well maintained stone boundaries and hedgerows.

Visual Appraisal: Site Character



3. This third image is taken looking along North Hills Lane which is now a bridleway. The view illustrates the well screened character of the lane with hedgerows screening views into the camping fields to the left and right of the view. A point of note in relation to the bridleway is that it underwent some improvement works on behalf of the local authority during the winter of 2018.

4. The lower image is taken from the southern camping field and illustrates the far reaching views over to Three Cliffs Bay and to Southgate in the east. The gravel hard standings and extents of gravel track are also evident in this view but, in our opinion, they do not form a dominant part of the view and they do not detract from the character of the surrounding landscape (an important to note is that these areas will be “greened” over as part of the recent discharge of condition application).



Visual Appraisal: Site Character



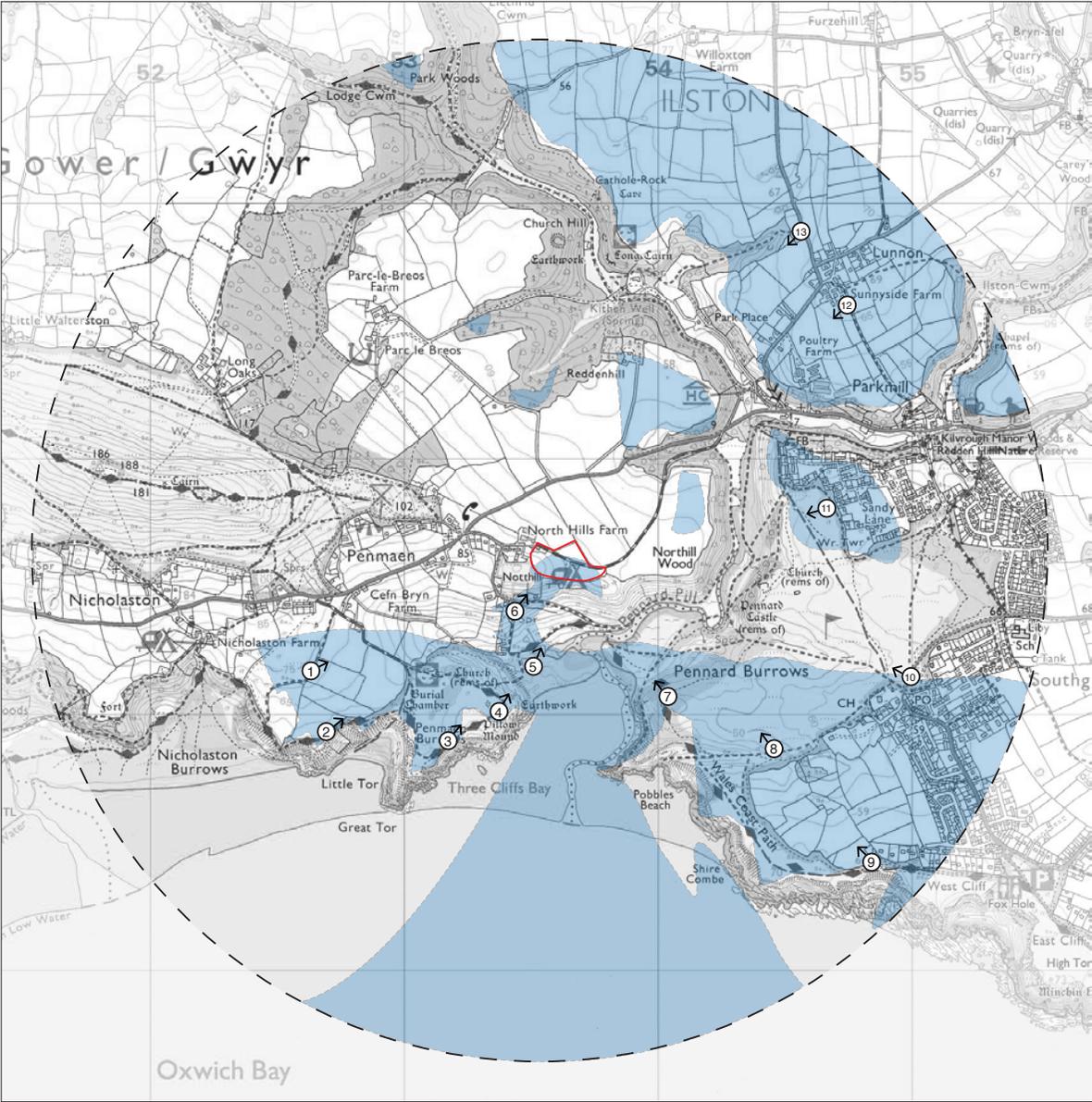
5. The upper image is taken from within the south camping field looking south west towards Great Tor. The view illustrates the elevated views available and the adjacent coastal landscape character of scrub woodland. The high degree of landscape care is also evident with the stock proof fencing providing protection for a line of new hedgerow planted within the field. It is important to note that the fencing is a temporary measure that will be removed once the hedgerow has established. This will have a significant, positive, impact on the landscape character of the field.



6. The lower image is a view taken from within the northern field and again illustrates the extent of new hedgerow planting that has taken place. The view shows the view to the north and the wooded valley of Llethrid and Parkmill SSSI. The extent of the gravel access track is shown in the view which provides both all weather camping access and agricultural access to the adjacent field.

The design proposals shown at the back of this document illustrate the changes to the existing camping fields in terms of enhanced areas for ecology and additional hedgerow planting.

Visual Appraisal: Zone of Theoretical Visibility + Viewpoint Locations



-  Site Location
-  2km Radius
-  Computer Generated ZTV
-  Viewpoint Location

The plan illustrated on the left shows the areas of land from where the site is likely to be visible. The blue area with dashed black line shows the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) generated by a computer at a height of 2m from ground level at the centre of the site.

Viewpoint 01: View from footpath looking east



Viewpoint 01 is taken from a footpath approximately 300m to the south of the A4118 looking in an easterly direction towards Three Cliffs Bay Holiday Park which is approximately 1km distant. The designation as a right of way means that it is classed as a high value receptor.

The overall experience for users of the footpath is one of enclosure by the coniferous plantation woodland to the east and open views over the coastline to the west and to the Bristol Channel in the south.

As demonstrated by the viewpoint photograph, there are no direct views of the holiday park from this location therefore the overall visual impact is negligible.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 01: Negligible.

Standardised methodology can be used to score the overall impact of the new enclosure from any landscape receptor. This is determined by combining judgements of size and extent of the proposed development, and of the value and condition of the landscape with a degree of professional judgement. The score ratings range from - Major / Moderate / Slight / Negligible.

Viewpoint Number : 01
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : east

Viewpoint 02: View from coast footpath looking east

Approximate
location of site



Viewpoint 02 is taken from a location to the south of viewpoint 01 on the Wales Coast Path looking in an easterly direction towards the site which is approximately 1km away. The view illustrates the typical character of this section of the coastal path with coastal scrub planting and heathland. The path navigates the cliff edge looking out over Little Tor and Great Tor and the beaches below.

The photograph is taken looking in the direction of the site but there is no view due to the screening of existing vegetation and the intervening topography of the Great Tor headland.

Given this setting, and the overall screening of the view, no visual impact will be created.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 02: Negligible.

Viewpoint Number : 02
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : east

Viewpoint 03: View from coast footpath looking north-east



Viewpoint Number : 03
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north-east

Viewpoint 03 is taken from the Wales Coast Path adjacent to the National Trust property of Penmaen Burrows. The landscape character is more open along this section of the path as it traverses the Great Tor headland with heath grassland and intermittent scrub vegetation.

The view is a typical example of the experience for users walking in an easterly direction towards Three Cliffs Bay and offers dramatic views along the coast and down to the beaches below.

The location of southern camping field of the holiday park is visible on the ridge of the view shown, with the roofline of the amenity block partially visible in the background.

Given the time of year there is very little evidence of the holiday park visible from this location. The camping field is at a higher elevation therefore the surface of the field is not visible. This in turn demonstrates that the holiday park has no visual impact on the coast path in this location.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 03: Negligible.

Viewpoint 04: View from the beach looking north



Viewpoint 04 is taken from the beach below the holiday park and provides a representative view for users of the beach. The southern camping field is located approximately 500m to the north of the viewpoint position.

The photograph demonstrates that there is little visual evidence of camping activity from this location and, given the high elevation of the field, there is no view of the surface and therefore no visual impact created.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 04: Negligible.

Viewpoint Number : 04
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north

Viewpoint 05: View from footpath looking north-east



Viewpoint 05 is taken from the footpath that lies immediately to the south of the southern camping field and the holiday park.

The view is representative of the view for users of the footpath and of the view from a number of residential properties that occupy the lane leading to the beach.

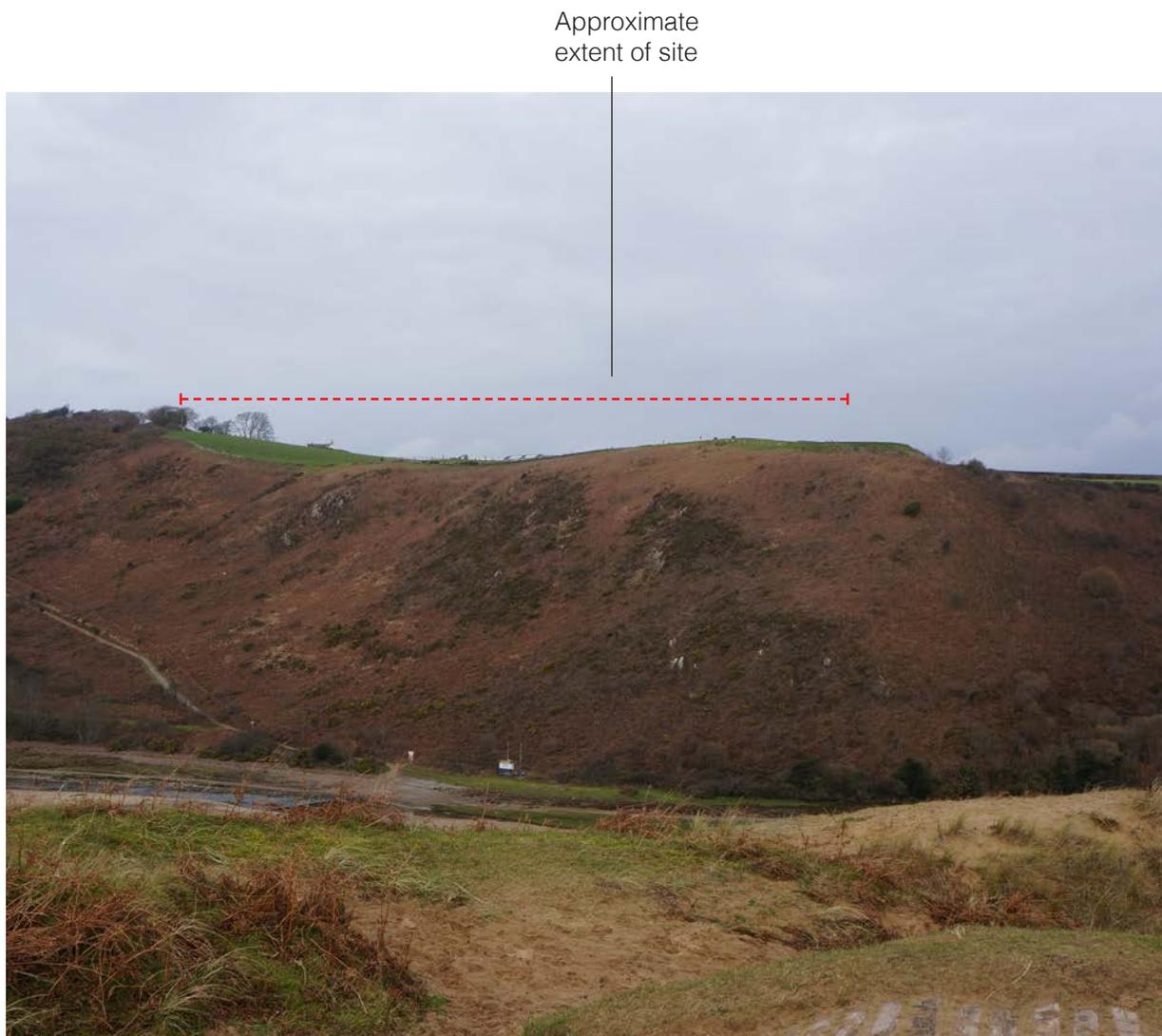
The steeply sloping coastal edge is characterised in this part of the bay by scrub and occasional tree planting.

The viewpoint is only 150m to the south-west of the southern camping field but again, due to the high elevation of the field, there is no view of the surface and therefore no visual impact created.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 05: Negligible.

Viewpoint Number : 05
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north-east

Viewpoint 06: View from the coast path looking north-west



Viewpoint Number : 06
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north-west

Viewpoint 06 is taken from the Wales Coast Path to the east of the holiday park and on a high promontory looking over the Pennard Pill valley.

The coast path in this location passes along the southern boundary of Pennard Golf Course and has a very different character to the coast path to the west. The landscape is dunal in character with established areas of dunes alongside less stable areas following pathways and routes.

The view shown is representative of walkers using the coast path in this location and of golfers at the western edges of the course.

The southern camping field of the holiday park is visible in the view with the rising ground to the west clearly visible showing the change of character from coastal scrub to agricultural enclosure.

Given the time of year, there is no visual evidence of camping activity on the field and, due to the rise in topography to the eastern end of the camping field, the rest of the field is screened from view.

As illustrated in the design proposals at the back of this document, the areas of existing camping field that are visible will be allowed to develop as native habitat areas thereby further reducing any landscape impact.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 06: Negligible.

Viewpoint 07: View from footpath looking north-west



Viewpoint 07 is taken from the southern edge of Pennard Golf Course and is located on a footpath running from north east to south west. The viewpoint is approximately 1.1km to the east of the holiday park and at an elevation of approximately +60m AOD.

The view is representative of walkers using the footpath and of golfers playing in this area of the course. The landscape is characterised by the links golf fairways and by intermittent coastal scrub planting and coastal grasses that partially screen views along the path route.

The upper most sections of the southern camping field are visible from this location with the east gable of North Hills farmhouse visible in the view. Given the time of year, there is no visual evidence of camping activity in the view.

As highlighted in viewpoint 06, the proposals at the rear of this document show the upper area of the front field and cliff edge turned over to native habitat zones.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 07: Negligible

Viewpoint Number : 07
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north-west

Viewpoint 08: View from coast footpath looking north-west



Viewpoint 08 is taken from the Wales Coastal Path on the southern edge of Southgate and at the western end of West Cliff. The view is approximately 1.7km's from the holiday park at a similar elevation.

The view is representative of views for walkers using the coast path, residents of West Cliff and for recreational users of the nearby National Trust car park.

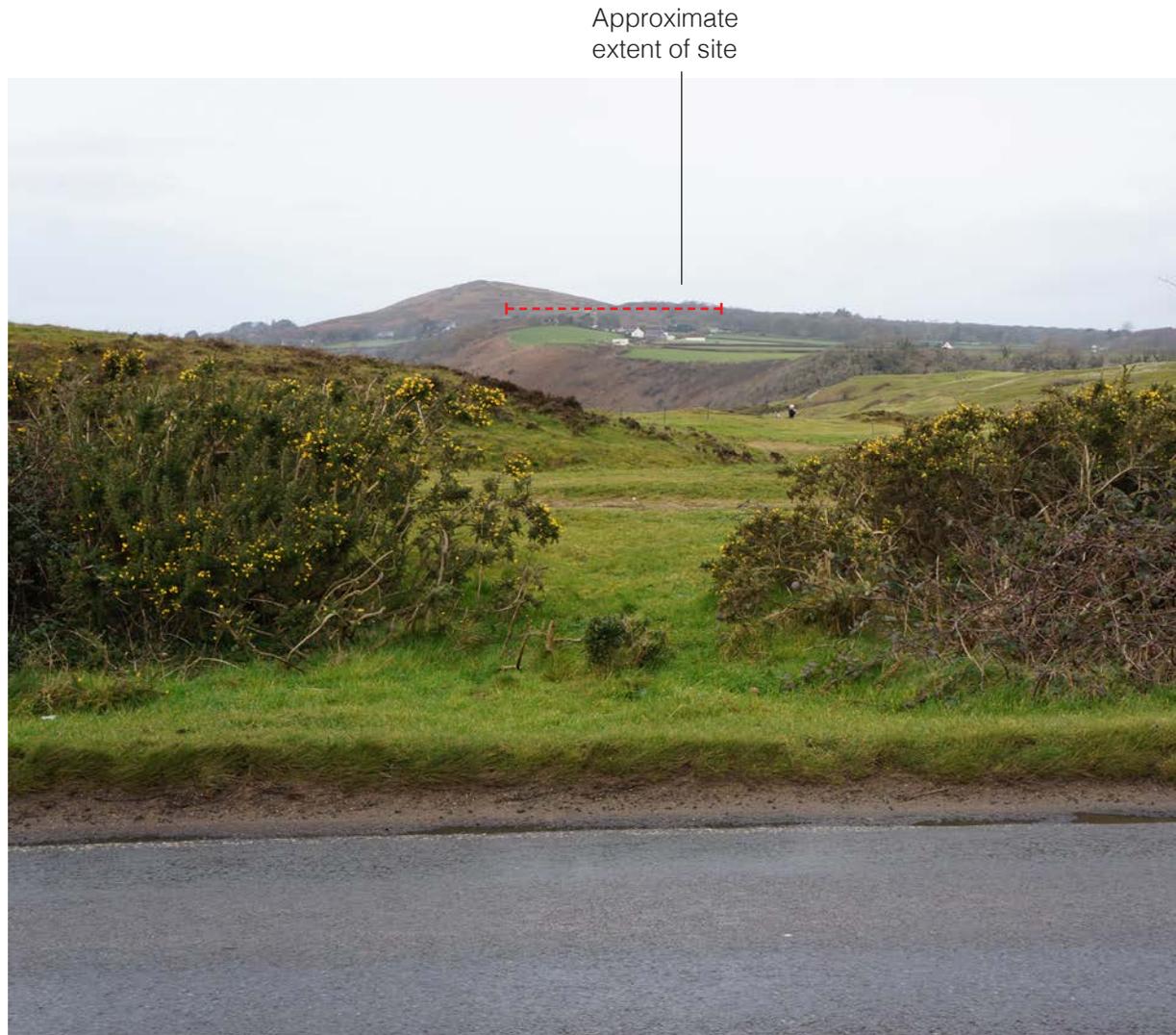
Buildings on the holiday park are partially visible from this location and from the footpath along sections of its route. The park is, however, a long distance away therefore detail is difficult to make out.

The negligible visual impact of the site will be reinforced further by the set aside habitat zones on the upper areas of the front field and the cliff edge.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 08: Negligible

Viewpoint Number : 08
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north-west

Viewpoint 09: View from road / footpath at Pennard Golf Club



Viewpoint 09 is taken from the footpath that follows the line of Pennard Road adjacent to Pennard Golf Club. The view is approximately 1.3kms to the east of the holiday park and is representative of road users, pedestrians and residents in this part of Southgate who look out over the golf course and along the coast to the west.

The character of the landscape in this area is typical of the links golf course with the fairways interspersed with rough coastal grasses and intermittent areas of scrub.

The viewpoint is at a similar elevation to the holiday park allowing oblique angle views of the camping fields and of the farm buildings and campsite buildings. Given the length of distance to the park, detail of the camping areas is difficult to make out and therefore any visual impact is negligible.

This will be further enhanced through the creation of habitat areas and hedgerows on the upper areas of the front field and along the cliff edge.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 09: Negligible

Viewpoint Number : 09
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : north-west

Viewpoint 10: View from footpath at Sandy Lane looking west



Viewpoint 10 is taken from the west edge of the residential area at Sandy Lane. The view is representative of walkers using the network of footpaths that criss cross the area and of residents living in the nearby properties.

The viewpoint location and surrounding landscape is at a similar elevation to the holiday park therefore oblique angle views available with the existing farmhouse and farm buildings and the northern and southern camping fields partially visible.

The viewpoint is located approximately 900m from the eastern edge of the park and, at that distance, detail is hard to make out. This factor, combined with the screening provided by the hedgerows, topography, existing buildings and the proposed new habitat zones to the front field will further reduce any potential impact created by the holiday park.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 10: Negligible

Viewpoint Number : 10
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : west

Viewpoint 11: View from track and footpath in Lunnon looking south-west

Approximate
location of site



Viewpoint 11 is taken from a farm track and public footpath in the village of Lunnon. The viewpoint is located approximately 1.5km's to the north east of the holiday park and is representative of walkers using this footpath route.

The landscape in this area is characterised by pasture fields enclosed with boundaries of native hedgerows and interspersed by wooded valleys. The character is very different to the coastal character of earlier viewpoints.

The height of the hedgerows along the track preclude long distance views out over the landscape to the west therefore the park, and the hard standings in particulare are not visible.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 09: Negligible

Viewpoint Number : 11
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : south-west

Viewpoint 12: View from road side in Lunnon looking south-west



Viewpoint 12 is taken from the north side of Lunnon and is taken to represent views for residents in the village and for walkers and road users in the immediate area.

The viewpoint is located approximately 1.5km's to the east of the holiday park at a similar elevation to the park site. The wooded Parkmill valley lies between the viewpoint and the park partially obscuring views of the site. There are however, partial views of the farmhouse, farm buildings and camping fields but, at this distance, detail is hard to make out.

Overall visual impact of Viewpoint 12: Negligible

Viewpoint Number : 12
Lense Focal Length : 50mm
Direction : south-west

Design Proposals: Overview

Overview

The visual appraisal shown on the previous pages has demonstrated the minimal amount of landscape impact created by the existing camping fields. It has also demonstrated the level of landscape management that is already employed on the site in terms of new native hedgerows and maintenance of the existing hedgerow network.

A key part of this planning application is the further enhancement of the landscape that surrounds the holiday park. The proposals have been drawn from analysis of the coastal landscape context and from the management recommendations set out in the Landscape Character Area assessments. Some key points highlighted in these assessments are as follows:

- Maintain and conserve boundary hedgebanks, earthen and rubble banks and stone boundary walls
- Maintain existing character through favourable vegetation management
- Continue with the effective visitor management which is successfully preventing damage to vulnerable habitats in designated sites

Proposals

The design proposals set out over the following pages illustrate a number of key interventions within the existing holiday park that will enhance the character of the landscape, improve bio-diversity and define a long-term structure for the camping field boundaries. Specifically, the proposals look to remove camping from the most visually prominent parts of the site as seen from the golf course and the coastal path.

Each of the landscape interventions are as follows:

- The reduction in camping provision to the front field from 75no. pitches to 20no. pitches and away from the visually prominent high point of the site.
- The creation of nearly 7,000m² of set aside habitat land on the front camping field that will provide a native scrub and grassland interface to the cliffs and beach landscape to the south.
- The creation of new hedgerows to define the boundaries between the camping fields (front and back) and the adjacent habitat or agricultural land.
- Management of the existing hedgerow boundaries to maintain sufficient height and width in line with landscape character area

recommendations.

- The provision of cycle storage to allow greater flexibility for visitors arriving by different modes of transport.
- The replacement of existing lighting to facilities buildings in line with “Dark Skies” standards.

In addition to the landscape proposals, the camping fields have been delineated to show the useage and pitches numbers for both tented and touring caravan accomodation. These are as follows:

Back Field

- 71no. pitches including 19no. yurts.

Front Field

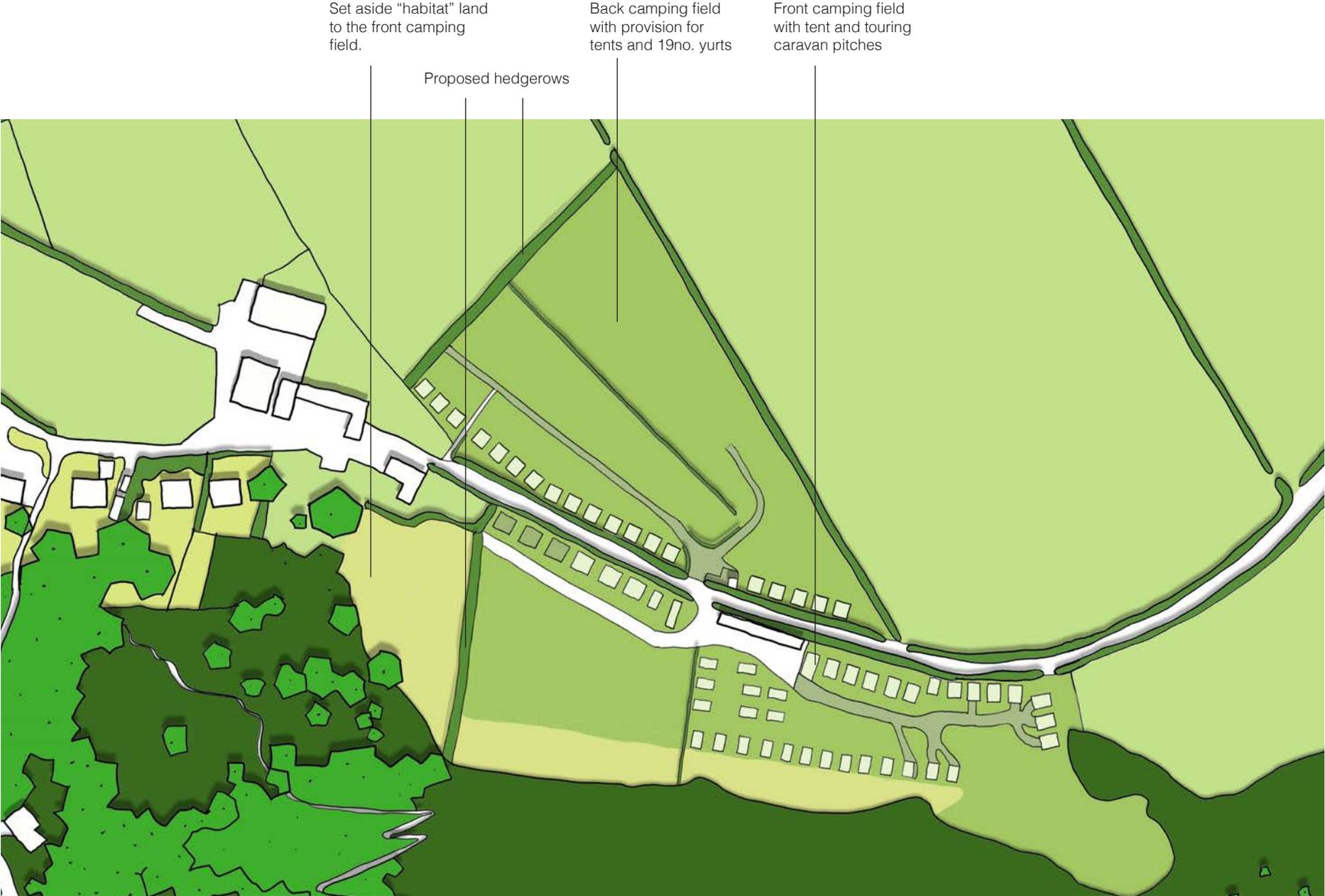
- 39no. tent pitches
- 23no. touring caravan pitches

The following pages show firstly the existing site plan as it stands and secondly plans showing the extent of changes described above. This is shown on both an illustrative sketch plan and a technical layout drawing with relevent areas:

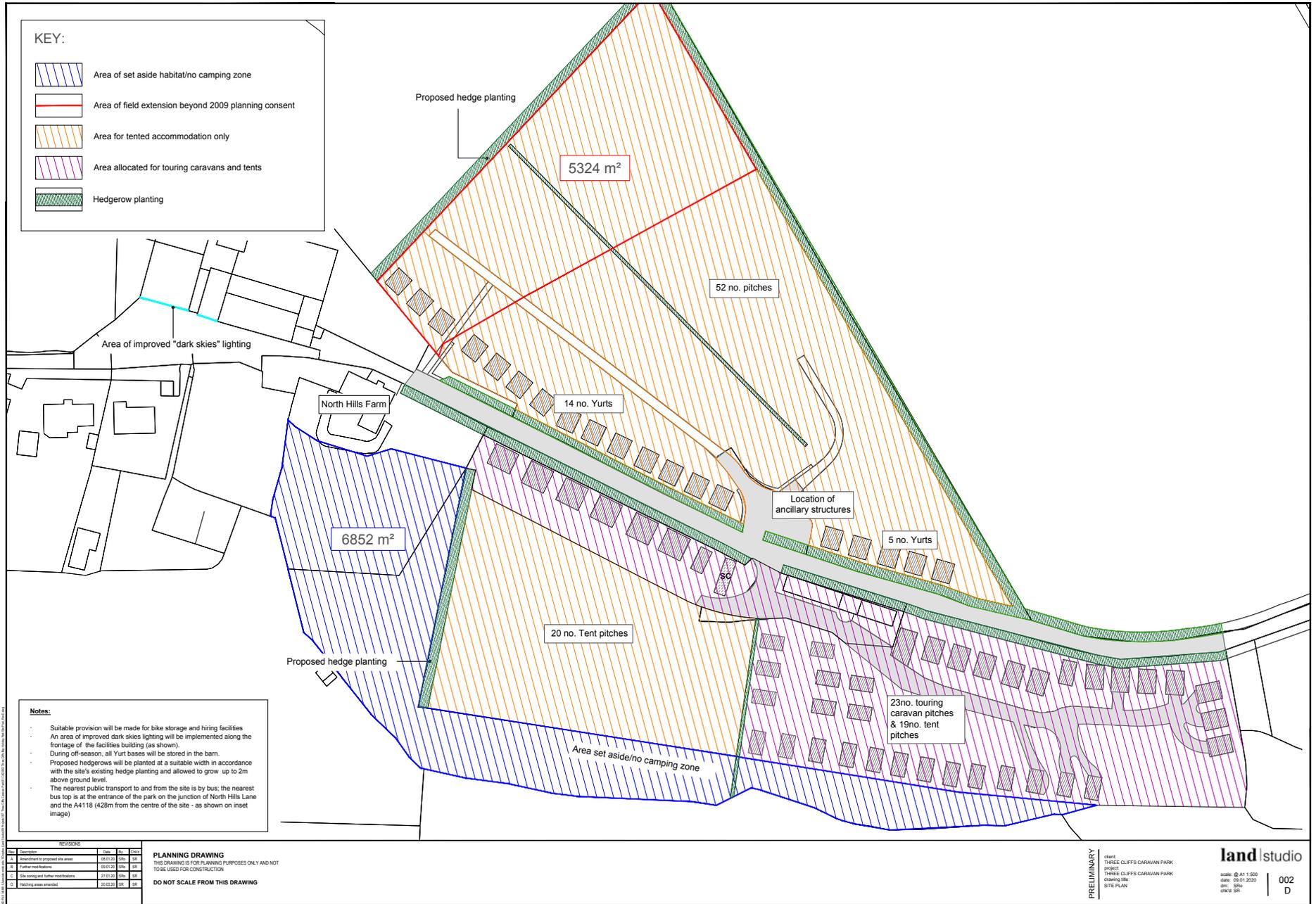
Existing Site: Layout and Site Context



Proposed Site: Layout and Site Context



Proposed Site: Layout and Site Context



Conclusion:

This conclusion sets out the key points highlighted as part of the landscape assessment process that has been undertaken in conjunction with the design proposals described on the earlier pages.

As has been demonstrated throughout this document, the holiday park has undertaken significant environmental improvements, with the landscape in particular, looked after to a high standard. All the existing hedgerows and grassed areas are maintained to a high level and over 200m of new, native hedgerows have been planted throughout the site (with protective, stock proof fencing) demonstrating the care and attention the site owners take with the land.

The detailed landscape assessment contained within this report demonstrates that large areas of the holiday park are not visible from the majority of receptors in the landscape. This is due to the topography of the site and the amount of existing vegetation. Viewpoints 6-10 show that the front camping field is partially visible from receptors to the east, in particular the front edge nearest the cliff and the upper slopes of the field to the west.

The landscape improvement works associated with this application will have a significant, beneficial impact on the character of the landscape within the holiday park. The setting aside of nearly 7,000m² of the front field to native habitat will enable the landscape character of the cliff and Three Cliffs Bay to continue further into the park. This change in particular will have a beneficial impact on viewpoints 6-10 and views from the east.

In addition, the provision of native hedgerow boundaries to delineate each of the camping fields will have a beneficial impact on the wider landscape character.

In overall terms, the landscape assessment and the associated landscape proposals have demonstrated that there will be significant environmental, biodiversity and landscape improvements to the character of the holiday park and, importantly, to Three Cliffs Bay and the wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

