

Landscape and Visual Statement

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Prepared on behalf of Westacres



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Scope
- 1.1.1 Tir Collective is instructed by Westacres to prepare this Landscape and Visual Statement (LVS) which relates to the proposed residential development at Crwys Farm, Three Crosses, Swansea. The site is defined by the boundary shown on Figure LA.01.
- 1.1.2 A wider 1km study area has also been considered for this LVS as the area where landscape and visual effects may arise from the potential residential development within the site.
- 1.1.3 The LVS is illustrated by plans and photographs in **Appendix 1**, as follows:

Figure	LA.01	Site location
Figures	LA.02	Designations
Figure	LA.03	Public access
Figure	LA.04	Topography
Figures	LA.05	LANDMAP
Figure	LA.06	Site context
Figures	LA.07	Appraisal photographs

1.2 Statement methodology

- 1.2.1 The methodology used for reviewing the landscape character and visual amenity of the study site and surrounding area is broadly based on the recommendations in **Guidelines for** Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in 2013 (GLVIA3).
- 1.2.2 The Landscape and Visual Statement process comprises high-level desk studies and field surveys. A Chartered Landscape Architect from Tir Collective visited the site and surrounding area on 29th February 2024 during dry and cloudy weather with good visibility.

Guidance

- In addition to GLVIA3, the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, September 2019¹ was referred to.
- 1.2.4 Relevant policy, landscape character assessments, and other contextual information sources were also referred to, including:

¹ The Landscape Institute Guidance Note, Visualisation of development, September 2019, on LI website: <u>https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/visualisation/</u>

- NRW LANDMAP assessment information and Guidance Note 46
- Policies relevant to the landscape and visual amenity in national and local policy including the Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) 2010-2025.

2.0 Landscape Policies and Designations

2.1 National planning policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 2.1.1 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, published 24 February 2021, sets out the development plan for Wales, influencing "all levels of the planning system in Wales and will help shape Strategic and Local Development Plans."² The plan promotes development that enhances our wellbeing and our quality of life"³ and embeds the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The plan sets out development policies for Wales, dividing it into 4 regions: The North, Mid Wales, The Southwest, and The Southeast, the site is located in the southeast region.
- 2.1.2 The key policies that are of relevance to the proposed development include:
 - Policy 2 Shaping Urban growth and Regeneration Strategic Placemaking states "The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places... and integrated with green infrastructure."
 - Policy 9 Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure aims "To ensure the... provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:
 - [...]
 - identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.
 - ... In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of... green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment."

² <u>https://gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040-0</u>

³ Page 4, Future Wales The National Plan 2040



Planning policy Wales

- 2.1.3 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 published 7th February 2024 sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. Its primary objective is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.
- 2.1.4 PPW translates The Welsh Government's commitment to sustainable development into the planning system, to be taken into account when preparing development plans, so that it can play an appropriate role in moving towards sustainability. The key policies that are of relevance to the development include:
 - **Chapter 2 People and Places, paragraph 2.1** states that "Everyone engaged with or operating within the planning system in Wales must embrace the concept of placemaking... in order to achieve the creation of sustainable places and improve the well-being of communities."

Paragraph 2.17 states ... the creation of sustainable places and in recognition of the need to contribute to the well-being of future generations in Wales through placemaking, development plans and development proposals must seek to deliver developments that address the national sustainable placemaking outcomes."

Paragraph 2.26 states "Planning authorities should ensure that social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits are considered in the decision-making process... to implement the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Sustainable Development Principle." A key factor is environmental considerations, which are listed as:

- "will important features of the natural and built environment be protected and enhanced;
- are the environmental impacts of development on... amenity limited to acceptable levels...;
- is environmental protection for people and natural resources, property and infrastructure maximised and environmental risks prevented or appropriately managed;

[...]

• will the causes and impacts of climate change be fully taken into account through location, design, build, operation...

[...]"

Landscape and Visual Statement

• Chapter 3 Strategic and Spatial Choices paragraph 3.9 states "The special characteristics of an area should be central to the design of a development. The layout, form, scale and visual appearance of a proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are important planning considerations."

Paragraph 3.10 goes on to state "In areas recognised for their particular landscape or historic character and value, it can be appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. In those areas, the impact of development on the existing character, the scale and siting of new development... will be particularly important."
In relation to healthier places, paragraph 3.23 states "Green infrastructure can be an effective means of enhancing health and well-being, through linking dwellings, workplaces and community facilities and providing high quality, accessible green spaces."
Paragraph 3.60 addresses development in the countryside and states "Development in the countryside should be located within and adjoining those settlements where it can best be accommodated in terms of infrastructure, access, habitat and landscape conservation." It goes on to state "All new development should be of a scale and design that respects the character of the surrounding area."

• **Chapter 6 Distinctive & Natural Places, paragraph 6.0.2** states "The special and unique characteristics and intrinsic qualities of the natural and built environment must be protected in their own right, for historic, scenic, aesthetic and nature conservation reasons."

Section 6.2 Green infrastructure, paragraph 6.2.4 states "Green infrastructure plays a fundamental role in shaping places and our sense of well-being, and is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces we live, work and play in. The planning system must maximise its contribution to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets and networks..."

In relation to Green Infrastructure Assessments that Local Authorities are to undertake, if not already doing so, **paragraph 6.2.6** states the "outcomes should also be given early consideration in development proposals and inform the design and implementation of projects."

In relation to integrating green infrastructure and development, **paragraph 6.2.11** states "The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design." **Paragraph 6.2.12** goes onto state that "A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal... The green infrastructure statement will be an effective



way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach has been applied." **Paragraph 6.2.13** provides examples of design measures "that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places." For larger scale developments "wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered." **Paragraph 6.2.14** goes on to state "Development proposals should be informed by the priorities identified in green infrastructure assessments and locally based planning guidance. The Building with Nature standards represent good practice and are an effective prompt for developers to improve the quality of their schemes and demonstrate the sustainable management of natural resources."

Section 6.3 Landscape, paragraph 6.3.3 states "All the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places." **Paragraph 6.3.4** goes on to state "Where adverse effects on landscape character cannot be avoided, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission."

In relation to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, **paragraph 6.4.11** states "Planning authorities must follow a stepwise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for." **Paragraph 6.4.12** goes on to state "providing evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step-wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity."

In relation to trees, woodland and hedgerows **paragraph 6.4.37** sets out their importance for biodiversity and "connecting habitats for resilient ecological networks and make an essential wider contribution to landscape character, culture, heritage and sense of place..." It goes on to state "Planning authorities must promote the planting of new trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland as part of new development." **Paragraph 6.4.39** states "Planning authorities must protect trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland where they have ecological value, contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality, or perform a beneficial green infrastructure function." **Paragraph 6.4.40** goes on to state "Where surveys identify trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and areas of woodland capable of making a significant contribution to the area, these trees should be retained and protected." **Paragraph 6.4.42** states "Permanent removal of trees, woodland and hedgerows will only be permitted where it would achieve

significant and clearly defined public benefits. Where individual or groups of trees and hedgerows are removed as part of a proposed scheme, planning authorities must first follow the step-wise approach. Where loss is unavoidable developers will be required to provide compensatory planting... Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must be preferably onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost."

Section 6.6 Water and flood risk, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Development paragraph 6.6.18 states "The provision of SuDS must be considered as an integral part of the design of new development and considered at the earliest possible stage when formulating proposals for new development." **Paragraph 6.6.19** goes on to state "Design for multiple benefits and green infrastructure should be secured wherever possible..."

2.1.5 Planning Policy Wales is supplemented by 21 topic based Technical Advice Notes (TANs), of which the key elements of relevance to the landscape and visual aspects of the development are set out below:

TAN 12 Design

2.1.6 TAN 12 advocates a holistic approach to design, to meet the objectives of good design, set out in Figure 1, which include:

[...]

 Character: Sustaining or enhancing local character; Promoting a successful relationship between public and private space; Promoting innovative design; Promoting legible development; Promoting quality, choice and variety;

[...]

• Environmental Sustainability: Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources; Enhancing biodiversity; Designing for change;

[...]"

- 2.1.7 "Understanding the site and its immediate and wider context is the basis for a meaningful and sustainable design response", including appraising "character", including landscape character, skylines and vistas, prevailing uses, natural and cultural resources and locally distinctive features (4.3 4.8). The TAN makes reference to the information available in LANDMAP, in addition to detailed site appraisals.
- 2.1.8 Paragraph 5.5.2, the TAN recognises that "good design will almost always be dependent on working within the natural constraints and the historic character of the landscape ... The aim should be to achieve good design solutions which maximise the natural landscape assets and



minimise environmental impact on the landscape. It is particularly important that proposals to amend or create new landscape are not considered as an afterthought and that the long-term impact of development on the landscape is fully understood. The quality of implementation and the long- term management of changes implicit in planting schemes are fundamental to a scheme's success".

Local planning policy

2.1.9 The site lies within the unitary authority of Swansea. Planning policy for the area is provided by the Swansea Local Development Plan 2010-2025, adopted on the 28th February 2019. Policies relevant to the site and the proposed residential development and include:

Swansea Local Development Plan (LDP) 2010-2025

- Policy PS 2: Placemaking and Place Management states "Development should enhance the quality of places and spaces, and respond positively to aspects of local context and character that contributes towards a sense of place... Depending on the nature, scale and siting of the proposal, development should also:
 - i. Have regard to important elements of local heritage, culture, landscape, townscape, views and vistas;

[...]

iv. Integrate effectively with the County's network of multifunctional open spaces and enhance the County's Green Infrastructure network;

[...]"

 Historic and Cultural policy HC 1: Historic and Cultural Environment states "The Country's distinctive historic and cultural environment will be preserved or enhanced by:

i. Requiring high quality design standards in all development proposals to respond positively to local character and distinctiveness;

[...]"

• Ecosystem and Resilience policy **ER 2: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network** states "Green Infrastructure will be provided through the protection and enhancement of existing green spaces that afford valuable ecosystem services. Development that compromises the integrity of such green spaces, and therefore that of the overall Green Infrastructure network, will not be permitted. Development will be required to take opportunities to maintain and enhance the extent, quality and connectivity of the County's multi-functional Green Infrastructure network, and where appropriate:

i. Create new interconnected areas of Green Infrastructure between the proposed site and the existing strategic network;

ii. Fill gaps in the existing network to improve connectivity; and

iii. In instances where loss of Green Infrastructure is unavoidable, provide mitigation and compensation for the lost assets."

- ER 4: Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) states "Development proposals that are outside, but closely interlinked with the AONB must not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the natural beauty of the AONB."
- **ER 5: Landscape Protection** states "Development will not be permitted that would have a significant adverse effect on the character and quality of the landscape of the County."
- ER 11: Trees, Hedgerows and Development states "Development that would adversely affect trees, woodlands and hedgerows of public amenity or natural/cultural heritage value, or that provide important ecosystem services, will not normally be permitted."

The policy goes on to state "Where trees are to be replaced a scheme for tree replacement must be agreed prior to the commencement of development, including details of planting and aftercare."

- Countryside and Village policy **CV 2: Development in the Countryside** states "Outside defined settlement boundaries development will be required to ensure that the integrity of the countryside is conserved and enhanced."
- **T 7: Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes** states "Development that significantly adversely affects the character, safety, enjoyment and convenient use of a PROW will only be permitted where an acceptable alternative route is identified and provided.

Linkages, and where appropriate extensions, to the existing PROW network will be expected from all new developments, which must have regard to the existing character of the PROW and the aspiration to improve access for all."

2.2 Designations

2.2.1 Designations provide an indication of landscape value. They are areas that have been recognised for the scenic beauty and recreational potential of the landscape. Designations are shown on **Figures LA.02**.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

2.2.2 The nearest statutory designated landscape is the Gower AONB, which is located approximately 630m to the southwest of the site boundary at its nearest point. The AONB



covers the southwest and southern part of the study area and extends further southwestwards over a large area, beyond the limited of the study area.

Special Landscape Areas

- 2.2.3 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are a non-statutory landscape designation applied by the local planning authority to define areas of high landscape importance within their administrative boundary.
- 2.2.4 Swansea LDP policy ER 5: Landscape Protection identifies 5 SLAs across the unitary authority.
- 2.2.5 The site is not located in a SLA, but adjacent to the east boundary of the site is SLA 3: **North East Gower and Crockett Valley.** The SLA covers an extensive area, within and beyond the study area extents, immediately north of the Gower AONB covering land beyond settlement boundaries, such as Three Crosses.

Ancient Woodland

2.2.6 There are several areas of **Ancient Semi Natural Woodland** located within the study area. **Prior's Meadow** is the nearest block to the site, which is located approximately 220m to the south at its nearest point. It is a **restored ancient woodland site** and is the largest woodland block in the study area at circa 14.75ha. Approximately 390m to the northwest of the site is a small restored ancient woodland site on the eastern edge of Pen-y-Wern Wood. There are no other ancient woodland sites within 500m of the site boundary.

Historic and cultural landscape designations

- 2.2.7 The setting of historic and cultural designations is a consideration during the preparation of this LVS as these features inform the overall landscape character, quality and value of the area. This LVS does not address the effects on heritage assets however it considers the contribution these features make to landscape value and scenic quality.
- 2.2.8 Relevant historic and cultural designations are shown on **Figure LA.02-1**. There are no scheduled monuments, registered historic parks and gardens, historic landscapes, or conservations areas within or close to the study area, these historic designations are therefore scoped out from further consideration in this LVS.

Listed buildings

2.2.9 There are no listed buildings within the site, however, immediately to the southwest there are three **Grade II** listed buildings associated with **Crwys Farm**: the **Stable and Cowshed**, the **Livestock Range with Loft**, and **Crwys Farmhouse**.

2.2.10 Approximately 290m to the southwest of the site, along Chapel Road, near the centre of Three Crosses village is Y Crwys Independent Chapel including boundary railings and piers Grade II listed building. There are no other listed buildings within the 1km study area.

Ecological designations

2.2.11 Ecological designations, although not specifically related to landscape amenity and not assessed within this report, are an indication of landscape value.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

2.2.12 There are no SSSIs within 0.5km of the site. The nearest SSSI to the site is **Fairwood**, **Penwern and Welshmoor Commons**, which is located circa 0.5km to the south at its nearest point and extends southwards and beyond the study area. The commons "form an extensive area of lowland heath and associated wetland situated at the eastern end of the Gower Peninsula..." and are designated for "heathland and wet grassland communities with intermediate and transitional forms of importance..."⁴

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

2.2.13 There are several locally designated SINC sites throughout the study area. The nearest SINC to the site is **Prior's Wood and Meadow**, which is located approximately 200m to the south. Approximately 410m to the northwest is **Cefn Goleu Valley**, a narrow linear area that extends northwards and beyond the study area. **Cwmmawr** Woods SINC is located circa 420m to the northeast of the site at it neatest point. No other SINCs are located within 0.5km of the site.

Public access

2.2.14 Public rights of way and access land are shown on **Figure LA.03**. There are no National Cycle Routes (NCR) or links to an NCR, they are therefore scoped out from further consideration in this LVS.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Long-Distance Footpaths

- 2.2.15 There are no public footpaths within the site. The **Gower Way** skirts the most western part of the site boundary, following Chapel Road and Gowerton Road through Three Crosses. Just to the north of the site, the route heads in an easterly direction, across farmland to connect with Gowerton and Waunarlwydd to the northeast, beyond the study area.
- 2.2.16 Approximately 115m to the north of the site, a **footpath** heads in a west direction from Gowerton Road before looping south at Pen-y-Wern Wood and connecting to Joiner Road in the north of Three Crosses. Another footpath heads north from Pen-y-Wern Wood to connect with a local road beyond the study area.

⁴ <u>https://naturalresources.wales/media/641615/SSSI_0368_Citation_EN001d727.pdf</u>



- 2.2.17 Approximately 170m to the southwest of the site, a footpath transects a small area of access land in the northeast of Three Crosses.
- 2.2.18 Beyond 0.5km of the site, The Gower Way enters the northern edge of Fairwood Common. A footpath crosses the Gower Way at the edge of the Common and then follows the northern boundary of the Common in a south-easterly direction.

Open access land

2.2.19 A small area of Open Access Land at Ffrwd Wood extends into the northwestern fringes of the study area, approximately 825m from the site boundary at its nearest point.

3.0 Proposed development

- 3.1.1 Details of the proposed development are provided on the drawings accompanying the planning application. This section describes the main aspects of the proposed development which could potentially affect landscape and/or visual amenity. It also identifies features of the proposals which will assist in mitigating adverse landscape and visual impacts.
- 3.1.2 The main feature of the proposed residential development is the construction of 27 units comprised of 2 storey detached and semi-detached properties with front and rear gardens. Proposals also include SuDS features consisting of rain gardens alongside the proposed access road, swales in public open spaces, and small private rain gardens. Access would be via Gowerton Road on the western boundary.
- 3.1.3 The landscape proposals for the site include retaining existing site boundary trees and hedgerows, where possible. The planting of new trees and native hedgerows. SuDS features are to be planted with shrubs, perennials and grasses that are suitable for wet and dry conditions. Further detail is provided on the Landscape Strategy plan, Figure L100, produce by Tir Collective. The impact on Green Infrastructure is set out in the Green Infrastructure Statement, also produced by Tir Collective.

Sources of potential effects on the landscape and views

- 3.1.4 The main features of the development proposal which could potentially result in landscape and visual impacts are:
 - Temporary fencing/hoarding to protect retained trees/ site perimeter.
 - Activities and movement of large vehicles and equipment during the construction phase.
 - The change of use from small fields/ paddocks to a residential development.
 - The introduction of buildings to nearby views in the context of Three Crosses village.
 - The impact of the proposed mitigation planting on visual amenity.

Mitigation measures

- 3.1.5 The potential for adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity has been recognised and mitigation measures incorporated in the scheme to avoid or reduce adverse effects or to offset or compensate for unavoidable adverse effects.
- 3.1.6 Mitigation measures incorporated into the scheme design include:
 - The retention of existing trees and hedgerows, where possible, which are to be protected during the construction phase.
 - Proposed native hedgerow and shrub planting to provide additional screening between the proposed development and the nearby residents, pedestrians and local roads users.
 - Creating a native hedgerow boundary where residential properties are adjacent to the field boundary.
 - The introduction of diverse grassland mixes to improve the biodiversity of the site.

4.0 Landscape baseline

4.1.1 The landscape baseline is a description and analysis of the existing landscape. The landscape is described, first, by reference to landscape character assessments for the area in which the site is located, at national and local levels, and then, from site-specific surveys and analysis carried out for the purposes of this study.

4.2 LANDMAP

- 4.2.1 Landscape Assessment, following the LANDMAP methodology, has been undertaken for Swansea. The assessment uses the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) / Wales Landscape Partnership Group approach which separates the defining aspects of the landscape into five categories, or aspect layers: Geological Landscape, Landscape Habitats, Historic Landscape, Cultural Landscape Services, and Visual & Sensory. It considers the relationship that exist between people and places; how people have given meaning to places through time and how the physical landscape has shaped their actions, or how their actions have shaped the landscape.
- 4.2.2 Summarised descriptions for the most relevant aspect areas to the study site and its context are outlined below for all five aspect layers. The findings of the LANDMAP studies have formed the basis of the landscape and visual baseline within this LVS. **Table 1** below defines the criteria that LANDMAP uses for evaluating each aspect area.



LANDMAP Evaluation	Definition
Outstanding	of international or national importance
High	of regional or county importance
Moderate	of local importance
Low	of little or no importance
Unassessed	insufficient information exists to evaluate

Table 1 Criteria for evaluating LANDMAP Aspect Areas⁵

4.2.3 Characteristics of particular relevance to the site and its context are highlighted in bold. LANDMAP aspect areas for Historic Landscape and Visual and Sensory aspect layers are illustrated on **Figures LA.05**.

Geological Landscape

- 4.2.4 **The site** is located within aspect area **Penclawdd** (SWNSGL029)⁶, which is classified as **Lowland escarpment** (Level 3). The geographical and topographical character of the area is described as (question GL4) "East-northeast to west-southwest ridge with scarp and dip slopes, stepped topography in north and northeast dipping U Carboniferous South Wales Pennant Formation sandstones, mudstones and coals. Ridges offset by north to south to northeast to southwest faults..."
- 4.2.5 The rarity/uniqueness (question GL31) of the area is evaluated as **moderate** and the overall evaluation (question GL33) for the area is **moderate**, due to "Widespread Upper Carboniferous, Pennant stratigraphy with coals."

Landscape Habitats

- 4.2.6 **The site** is located within aspect area **West of Gowerton** (SWNSLH944)⁷, which is classified as **Improved Grassland** (Level 3). The key features that define the area's biodiversity character (question LH24) are summarised as "Improved grassland with a number of settlements. A number of small areas of woodland area present."
- 4.2.7 The overall evaluation (question 45) for the area is **moderate**, due to the "Generally low value improved grassland but areas of semi-improved grassland and broadleaved woodland add to value and may host some key species.".

⁵ LANDMAP Methodology Overview, June 2017 <u>https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/681752/landmap-methodology-overview-2017-eng.pdf?mode=pad&rnd=131547814890000000</u>

⁶ <u>https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=1948</u> (accessed March 2024)

⁷ <u>https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=2069</u> (accessed March 2024)

Historic Landscape

- 4.2.8 **The site** is located within aspect area **H3 Gower Subboscus Agricultural** (SWNSHL726⁸), which is classified as **Other Fieldscapes** (Level 3). The aspect area is described as (question HL4) "Complex fieldscape, evolved from open-field system, but with elements derived from encroachments and reclamation; settlement predominantly nucleated; areas of woodland; small-scale agricultural and maritime activity."
- 4.2.9 The overall evaluation (question HL40) for the area is **outstanding**, as "A complex fieldscape, evolved from open-field system, but with elements derived from encroachment and reclamation; settlement predominantly nucleated; areas of woodland; small-scale agricultural and maritime activity. In addition to outstanding integrity, survival and condition, and rarity, this Aspect Area, located within the Gower AONB, and partly within the Gower historic landscape on the register of historic landscapes is considered to have wide-ranging scope for future historic landscape study and potential amenity value. Outstanding in all criteria, this area has returned a maximum score and is considered outstanding in terms of overall evaluation."

Cultural Landscape Services

- 4.2.10 Cultural Landscape Services (CLS) now supersedes the Cultural Landscape aspect layer, which was updated in 2020. CLS responds to "Recent environment and well-being legislation and developments in current thinking relating to culture suggest the dataset would benefit from a different approach to mapping if revisited..."⁹ The data for CLS uses data from the other four aspect layers and provide no overall evaluations for each aspect area.
- 4.2.11 Refer to the Visual and Sensory aspect areas below for further detail.

Visual & Sensory

- 4.2.12 **The east and central part of the site** is located in aspect area **three crosses** (SWNSVS141)¹⁰, which is classified as **Mosaic Rolling Lowland** (Level 3) and Rolling Farmland Mosaic (Level 4). The aspect area is described as (question VS3) "Rolling farmland on land ranging from 20m to 160mAOD, with mosaic pattern derived from hedges and some scattered woodland, mainly broadleaf. Urban influence is strong in the eastern area, where the urban edge encircles the rural area, and elements such as telecom towers and pylons are highly visible detractors. The western area is less influenced by urban pressures and has some views out to estuary."
- 4.2.13 The scenic quality (question VS46) of the area is evaluated as **high**, character (question VS48) is evaluated as **moderate**, and the overall evaluation (question VS50) for the area is also

⁸ <u>https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=2990</u> (accessed March 2024)

⁹ LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Services, Report No 336, prepared by E.K Naumann, Dr K Metcalf, Environmental Systems, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

¹⁰ <u>https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=2905</u> (accessed March 2024)



moderate, as the "Overall balance of criteria is moderate. notable for accessible views (high) and loss of integrity (low)."

- 4.2.14 The west and very southern part of the site is located in aspect area, also named, Three Crosses (same name as above, but capitalised) (SWNSVS201)¹¹, which is classified as Village (Level 3). The aspect area is described (question VS3) "The nucleated settlement of Three Crosses, with triangular outline giving rise to 3 road junctions, hence Three Crosses. Small village with post office and pub. Surrounded by pleasant wider landscape of rolling farmland. Relatively elevated position (approx 130m AOD) affords some views out over the estuary."
- 4.2.15 The scenic quality (question VS46) of the area is evaluated as **moderate**, character (question VS48) is evaluated as **low**, and the overall evaluation (question VS50) for the area is also **low**, as there are "no qualities of note generally, with small exception of some attractive views of estuary 2km to northwest."

LANDMAP Summary

4.2.16 Table 2 below summarises the evaluations for each aspect area that the site is located in (overall evaluations are not provided for the Cultural Landscape Services Aspect Layer):

Aspect Layer	Aspect Area name and Unique ID	Classification (Level 3)	Overall Evaluations
Geological Landscape	Penclawdd UID: SWNSGL029	Lowland Escarpment	Moderate
Landscape Habitats	West of Gowerton UID: SWNSLH944	Improved Grassland	Moderate
Historic Landscape	H3 Gower Subboscus Agricultural UID: SWNSHL726	Other Fieldscapes	Outstanding
Cultural	three crosses UID: SWNSCLS026	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	
Landscape Services	Three Crosses (same name, but capitalised) UID: SWNSCLS033	Village	N/A
	three crosses	Mosaic Rolling Lowland	Moderate

Table 2 Summary of LANDMAP

¹¹ <u>https://landmap-portal.naturalresources.wales/view_survey.php?survey_id=2912</u> (accessed March 2024)

Landscape and Visual Statement

Aspect Layer	Aspect Area name and Unique ID	Classification (Level 3)	Overall Evaluations
	UID: SWNSVS141		
Visual and Sensory	Three Crosses (same name, but capitalised) UID: SWNSVS201	Village	Low

4.3 Site-specific review

4.3.1 The following paragraphs provide descriptions of the site and should be read alongside Site Context **Figure LA.06** and Appraisal Photographs **Figures LA.07**.

The landscape, features, character, and aesthetics of the site

- 4.3.2 The site is located on the north-eastern edge of Three Crosses village, Swansea. The irregular shaped site comprises a series of paddocks on a field that has gradually been encroached and built upon overtime with a small part of the northwest comprising a former garden. The southern, western and northern boundary of the site is defined by the rear gardens of the properties that line Dunvant Road and Gowerton Road. It includes a mix of gappy hedgerows, scattered trees and fencing. Adjacent to the southern site boundary is a concrete water tower that is surrounded by some trees and scrub vegetation. The east boundary of the site is defined by a post and wire fence, consistent with the internal paddock boundaries. The most western part of the site contains several small structures associated with a small holding.
- 4.3.3 The site is situated on part of the top of a small, rounded hill with the highest part in the north of the site at 144m AOD. The site slopes down to the south with the lowest point in the southwest at 139m AOD. Beyond the site, the landform continues to slope down from the small, rounded hill with some small narrow valleys located beyond 0.5km of the site to the northwest, east and southwest, see **Figure LA.05**.
- 4.3.4 The wider study area comprises a range of land uses beyond Three Crosses village. To the north and northwest there is a golf course, to the south there is heathland with broadleaved woodland to the north, and farmland bounded by hedgerows and trees.
- 4.3.5 The character of the site is reflective of Three Crosses village and its context alongside residential rear gardens. The site's integrity contrasts with the adjacent intact rolling farmland due to the site's gappy hedgerows, being subdivided into a series of paddocks by post and wire fencing, containing several structures, and a small part being located in a former garden. The adjacent water tower is a notable feature and a visual detractor in nearby views. Although the site is situated on top of a small, rounded hill, it is relatively well contained due to its



location alongside existing development that restricts distant views out to the west, north and south.

5.0 Visual baseline

- 5.1.1 The visual amenity review has involved desk study and field survey analysis work to identify and record views of the site from publicly accessible locations within the surrounding landscape. These are to illustrate the nature of the views available for several types of receptors, see Appraisal Photographs **Figures LA.07** and **Figure LA.03** for the photo locations.
- 5.1.2 The topographic pattern of the area suggests that the site should be visible from the wider area due to is position on top of a small, rounded hill. However, with surface screening features such as buildings, trees and hedgerows taken into account, the visual envelope is relatively contained. The visual envelop is limited due to the adjacent built development in Three Crosses to the north, west and south of the site, although there would be some near residential views and from locations where there are some gaps. To the east, field boundary hedgerow and trees would provide some visual screening, but some views of the proposed development would be viewed above these features. Seven appraisal views have been selected to represent visibility within the 1km site with another view taken from Dunvant and beyond the study area:
 - Near views residential views in Three Crosses.
 - Distant residential views.
 - Users of the Gower Way long-distance footpath.
 - User of access land to the southwest.
 - Local road users.

5.2 Visual receptors

5.2.1 The following is a review of the viewers (the visual receptors) and the views towards the site that are available to them at the selected representative locations.

People in settlement

- 5.2.2 The representative views of people in settlement include the following:
 - Near views residential views in Three Crosses represented by appraisal photographs 01, 03, 04 and 05.
 - Distant residential views in Fairwood and Dunvant (beyond study area) represented by **appraisal photographs 07 and 08.**

- 5.2.3 Residents immediately adjacent to the site are likely to have views of the site, particularly from first floor windows. Views from the ground floor and curtilage areas are likely to be partially screened and filtered by garden fencing, hedgerows and vegetation, see **appraisal photographs 01, 03** and **04**. As distance increases and the surrounding topography falls, views of the site for residents are likely to become more screened and restricted by buildings and vegetation, see **appraisal photograph 05**.
- 5.2.4 Beyond 0.5km of the site, views of the site itself are screened from view, see **appraisal photographs 07** and **08** (beyond the study area).
- 5.2.5 Residents immediately adjacent to the site are likely to have near views of the proposed residential development. As distance increases from the site, near views of the proposed residential development are likely to be limited to tunnelled views between gaps of properties and from some locations may also be partially screened and filtered by vegetation. The proposed development would be viewed in context to the existing settlement of Three Crosses.
- 5.2.6 Beyond Three Crosses, residents may experience small roofscape views of the proposed development amongst existing views of Three Crosses.

Users of public open space and access land

- 5.2.7 The representative views of people using public open space and access land include the following:
 - Near views within Three Crosses represented by **appraisal photograph 02.**
 - Distant views from access land to the southwest represented by appraisal photograph 07.
- 5.2.8 **Appraisal photograph 02** illustrates that the site is screed from view by buildings and vegetation for users of the access land within the centre of Three Crosses village. Beyond Three Crosses, in the large area of access land to the south, the site is also screened from view by existing buildings within Three Crosses, see **appraisal photograph 07**.
- 5.2.9 From the access land in Three Crosses, there are likely to be views of the proposed development above the community centre single-story building and above existing hedgerows and vegetation. Existing trees would filter some views and existing dwellings may partially screen some views. Beyond Three Crosses, due to the screening effects of surrounding buildings, it is likely that small distant views of the proposed development would be mainly restricted to roofscape views between gaps of existing development.

Users of public rights of way and the Gower Way long-distance footpath

5.2.10 The representative views of people using public rights of way and the Gower Way include the following:



- Near views within Three Crosses represented by appraisal photographs 02, 03 and 04.
- Mid-distant views from the Gower Way represented by **appraisal photograph 06**.
- 5.2.11 **Appraisal photograph 03**, which is immediately opposite the most western part of the site illustrates that there are some narrow views into the site, between adjacent property curtilages. The views of the site include small structures, fencing and gates, which are backdropped by the concreate water tower to the south.
- 5.2.12 As distance increases from the site, views of the site itself become more limited. Appraisal photographs 02 and 04 close to the southwest and northwest of the site, shows that views of the site itself are screened from view by intervening buildings and vegetation.
- 5.2.13 To the northeast of the site, beyond the settlement of Three Crosses, appraisal photograph06 shows that the surrounding vegetation and topography screen views of the site.
- 5.2.14 Immediately adjacent to the site, users of the Gower Way would have views of the proposed development, mainly of the proposed access road. Views of the proposed development would be transient over a short section of the route as it passes close to the site. As distance increases from the site, views of the proposed development would become more limited to tunnelled or roofscape views between gaps of the existing development in Three Crosses.

Local road users

- 5.2.15 The representative views of local road users include the following:
 - Near views within Three Crosses represented by appraisal photographs 01, 03, 04 and 05.
 - Distant views represented by appraisal photographs 07.
- 5.2.16 A description of the near existing view of the site for **appraisal photograph 03** is provided above. To the south of the site, along Dunvant Road, **appraisal photograph 01** illustrates that there are some tunnelled views towards the site between gaps of the semi-detached properties that line the road. However, the site itself is screened from view with the water tower viewed above a garage. **Appraisal photograph 04** close to the northwest of the site, also shows that views of the site itself are screened from view by intervening buildings and vegetation.
- 5.2.17 To the north of the site, **appraisal photograph 05** also illustrates that the site is screened from view by the properties that are orientated towards Pentwyn private road, situated on top of the rounded hill.
- 5.2.18 Beyond 0.5km of the site, **appraisal photograph 07** show that views of the site itself are not possible due to the surrounding buildings and vegetation screening view.

5.2.19 Overall, views of the site itself are generally screened from view, except from Gowerton Road immediately adjacent to the site where there would be views of the proposed site entrance. Views of the proposed residential units are likely to be largely screened from view, particularly from more distant locations. Any roofscape views of the proposed development would be viewed in context to the settlement of Three Crosses and would be experienced over the short duration as they travel through the landscape.

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Scope

- 6.1.1 Tir Collective is instructed by Westacres to prepare this Landscape and Visual Statement (LVS), which relates to the proposed residential development on Crwys Farm, Three Crosses, Swansea. The proposed development would comprise of 27 units consisting of 2 storey detached and semi-detached properties with proposed landscape, SuDS features, and access road via Gowerton Road.
- 6.1.2 The methodology used for reviewing the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area is broadly based on the recommendations in **Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition**, published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in 2013 (GLVIA3).

6.2 Summary of findings

Landscape review

- 6.2.1 Desk studies reviewed landscape designations, public access, and referred to LANDMAP assessments and relevant national and local policy information. The studies confirmed that the site is not located within a designated landscape, however, the east boundary of the site is adjacent to the North East Gower and Crockett Valley Special Landscape Area. Also, approximately 610m to the south of the site is the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A short section skirts the most western part of the site boundary as it follows Gowerton Road through Three Crosses village. The study area also contains some public footpath and areas of access land. Close the southwest boundary there are also 3 Grade II listed buildings associated with Crwys Farm.
- 6.2.2 In relation to LANDMAP, the east of the site lies within the Visual and Sensory aspect area three crosses, which has Moderate due to "accessible views". The west of the site is located within Three Crosses (same name, but capitalised), which has a Low overall evaluation as there are "no qualities of note". The overall evaluations for Geological Landscape and Landscape Habitats aspect layers are also Moderate. The Landscape Habitat notes the "low value grassland".



- 6.2.3 The site-specific landscape review confirmed the location in the northeast of Three Crosses village, Swansea. The site comprises a series of paddocks on a field that has gradually been encroached and built upon overtime with a small part of the northwest comprising a former garden.
- 6.2.4 The site is situated on part of the top of a small, rounded hill with the highest part in the north of the site at 144m AOD. The site slopes down to the south with the lowest point in the southwest at 139m AOD.
- 6.2.5 The character of the site is reflective of Three Crosses village and its context alongside residential rear gardens. The site's integrity contrasts with the adjacent intact rolling farmland due to the site's gappy hedgerows, being subdivided into a series of paddocks by post and wire fencing, containing several structures, and a small part being located in a former garden. The adjacent water tower is a notable feature and a visual detractor in nearby views. Although the site is situated on top of a small, rounded hill, it is relatively well contained due to its location alongside existing development that restricts distant views out to the west, north and south.
- 6.2.6 The proposed residential development would result in the series of paddocks and structures on the site being replaced with a residential development with proposed tree, hedgerow and grassland areas that would be more coherent on the edge of Three Crosses. The proposed landscape provides opportunities to infill and enhance gappy hedgerows that would connect with the stronger field boundaries of the adjacent farmland. The general nucleated pattern of Three Crosses surrounded by farmland would also be retained.

6.3 Visual amenity review

- 6.3.1 To confirm the baseline studies of designations and public access mapping and site visit, eight appraisal photographs were selected to illustrate the study site and its appearance in publicly available views, see **Figures LA.03** for photograph locations.
- 6.3.2 The visual envelop is relatively contained due to the surrounding settlement of Three Crosses, although the site is situated on top of a small, rounded hill.
- 6.3.3 Immediately adjacent to the most western part of the site, there are some narrow views of the structures, fencing and paddocks on the site. As distance increases from the site, views become more limited with views of the site itself screened by intervening buildings, trees and vegetation.
- 6.3.4 For residents, users of the Gower Way, and local road users immediately adjacent to the site there would be near views of the proposed residential development. As distance increases from the site, near views of the proposed residential development would become limited to tunnelled views between gaps of existing properties in Three Crosses and may also be partially screened and filtered by vegetation.

- 6.3.5 Beyond Three Crosses, residents, users public rights of way, access land and the Gower Way long-distance footpath, and local road users are likely to have small roofscape views of the proposed development between gaps of the existing development at Three Crosses.
- 6.3.6 Overall, the proposed development proposals within the site would be visually contained to within close proximity of the site. The proposed development on the site would be viewed in context to the existing settlement of Three Crosses and would not visually encroach beyond the existing line of settlement into the surrounding farmland.

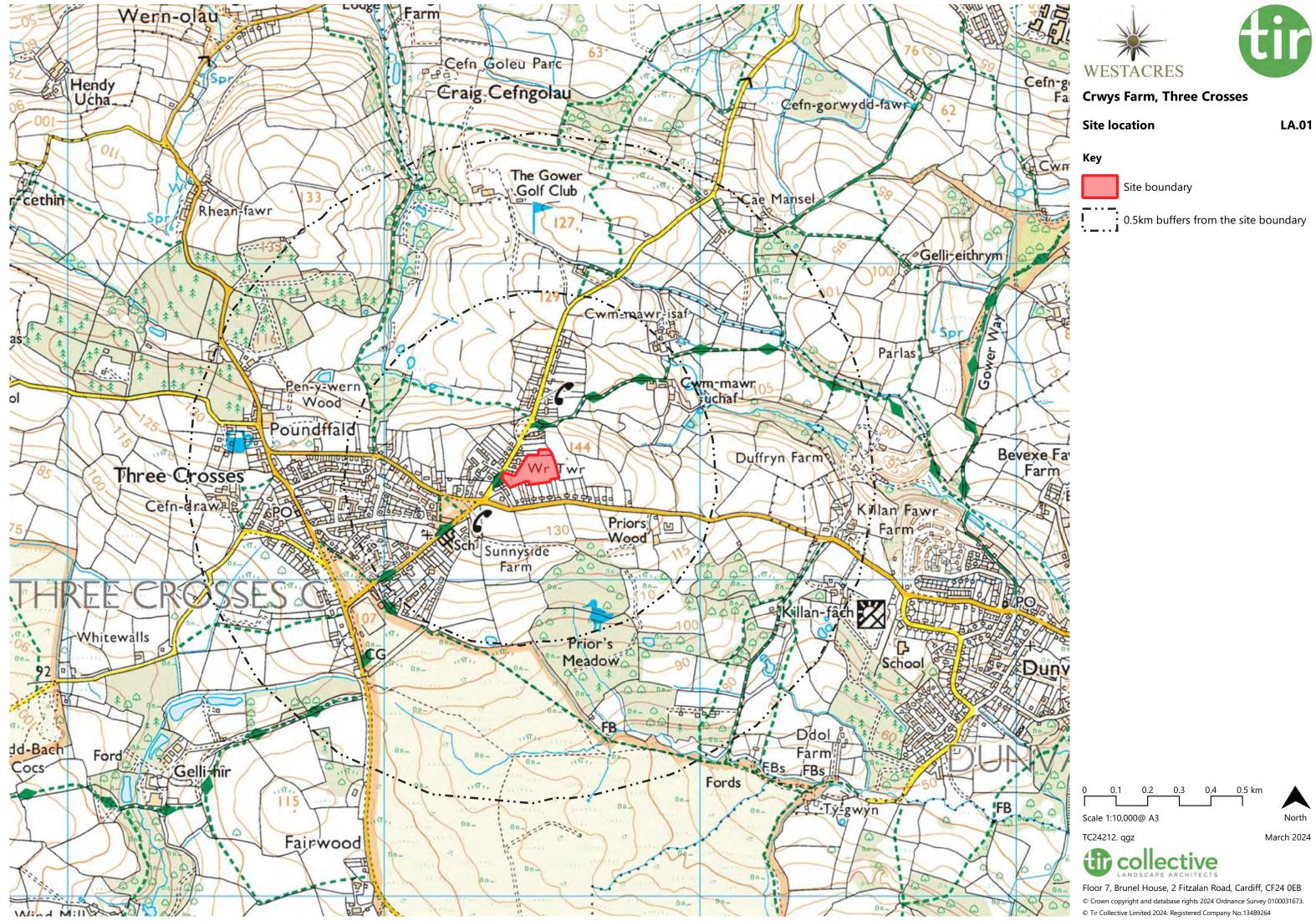
6.4 Conclusions

- 6.4.1 This Landscape and Visual Statement concludes that the site represents an opportunity to accommodate the proposed residential development. The proposed development would result in the paddocks changing to a residential development, but boundary vegetation and connectivity to the adjacent farmland could be enhanced. The general nucleated pattern of Three Crosses surrounded by farmland would also be retained.
- 6.4.2 The proposed development would also be viewed in context with existing settlement of Three Crosses. Views of the proposed development would be largely screened and only available between gaps in building and surrounding vegetation.

Landscape and Visual Statement

Appendix 1 - Figures

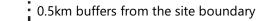
Figure	LA.01	Site location
Figure	LA.02	Designations
Figure	LA.03	Public access
Figure	LA.04	Topography
Figures	LA.05	LANDMAP
Figure	LA.06	Site context
Figure	LA.07	Appraisal Photographs

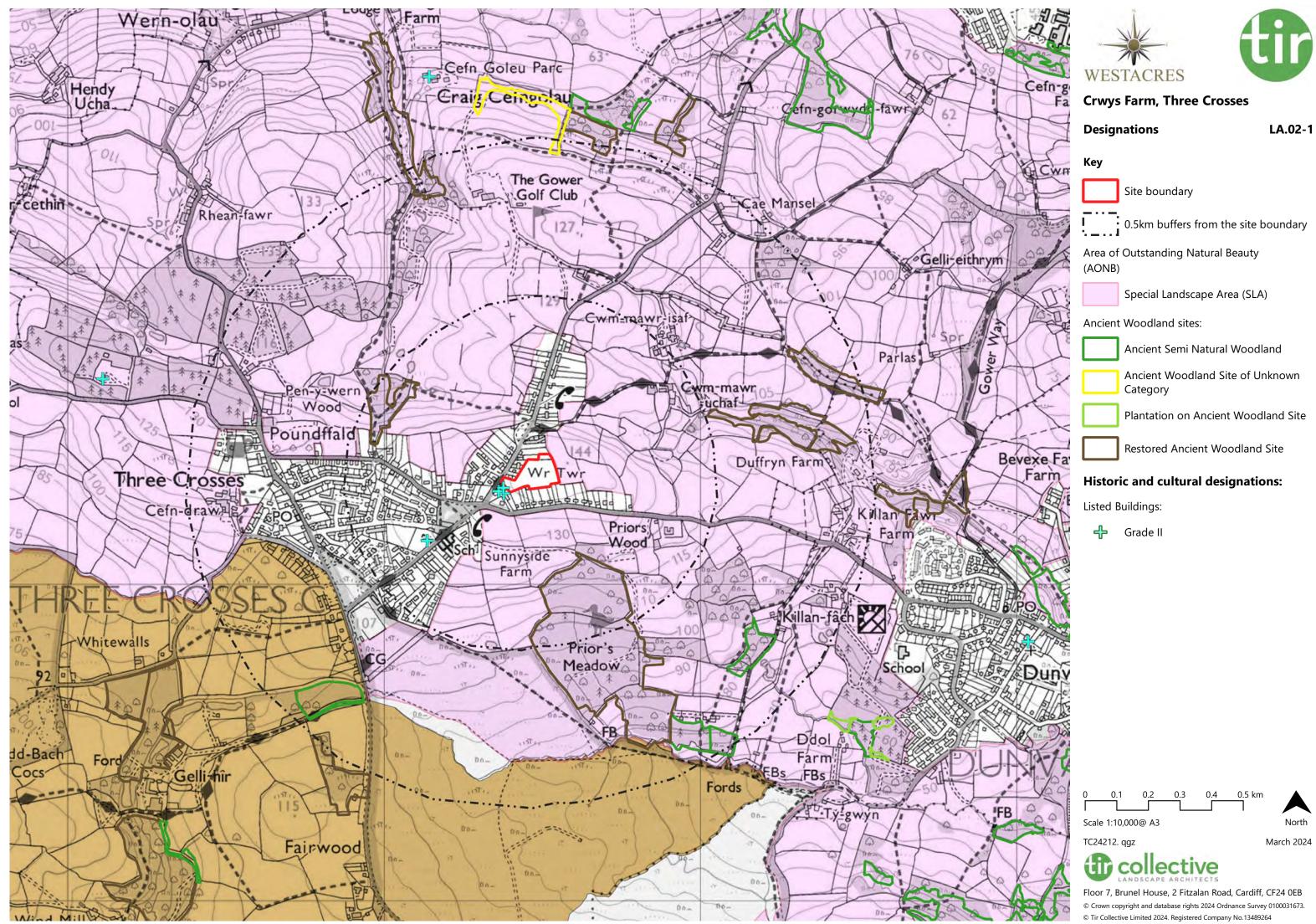








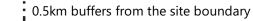


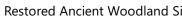




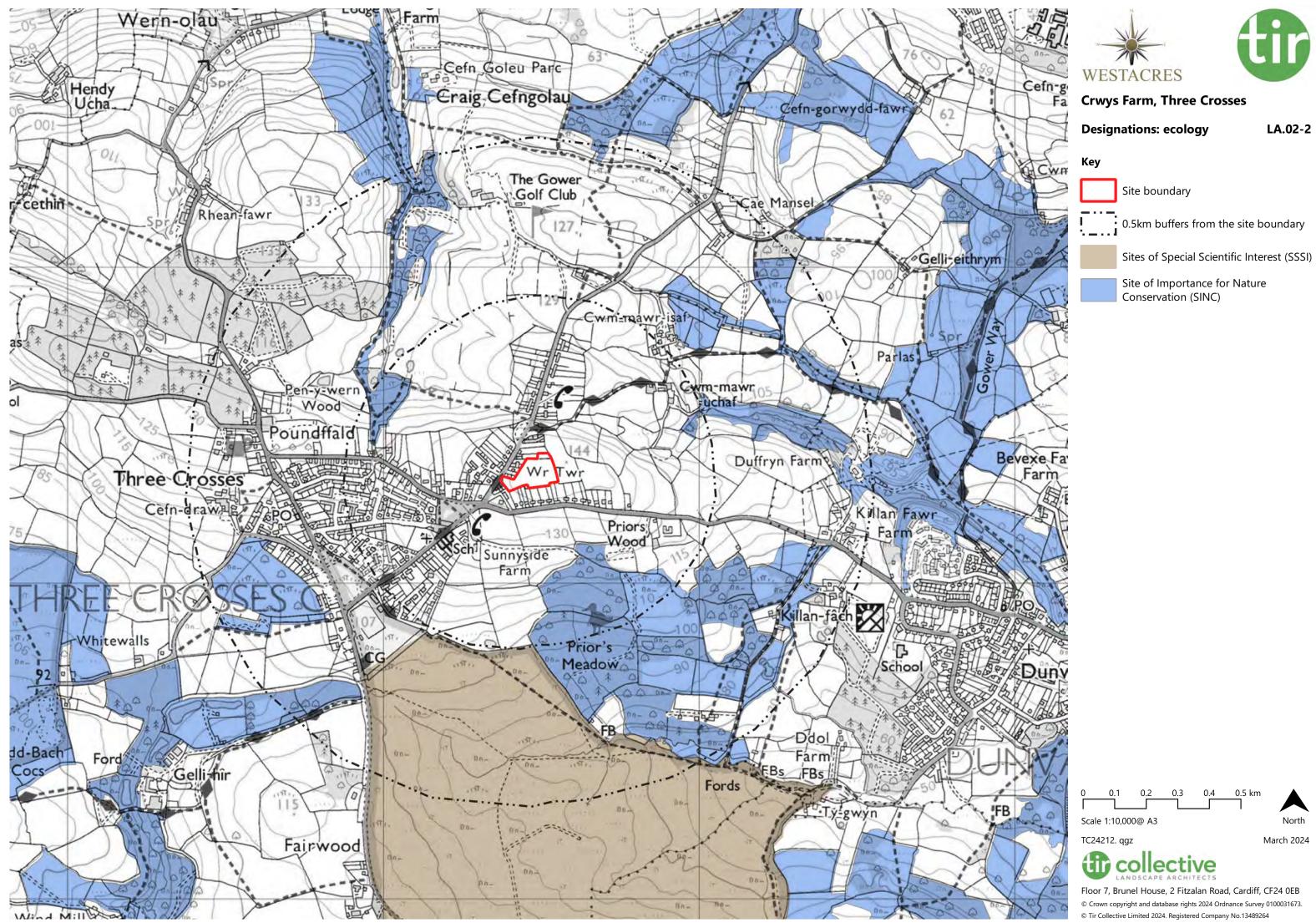








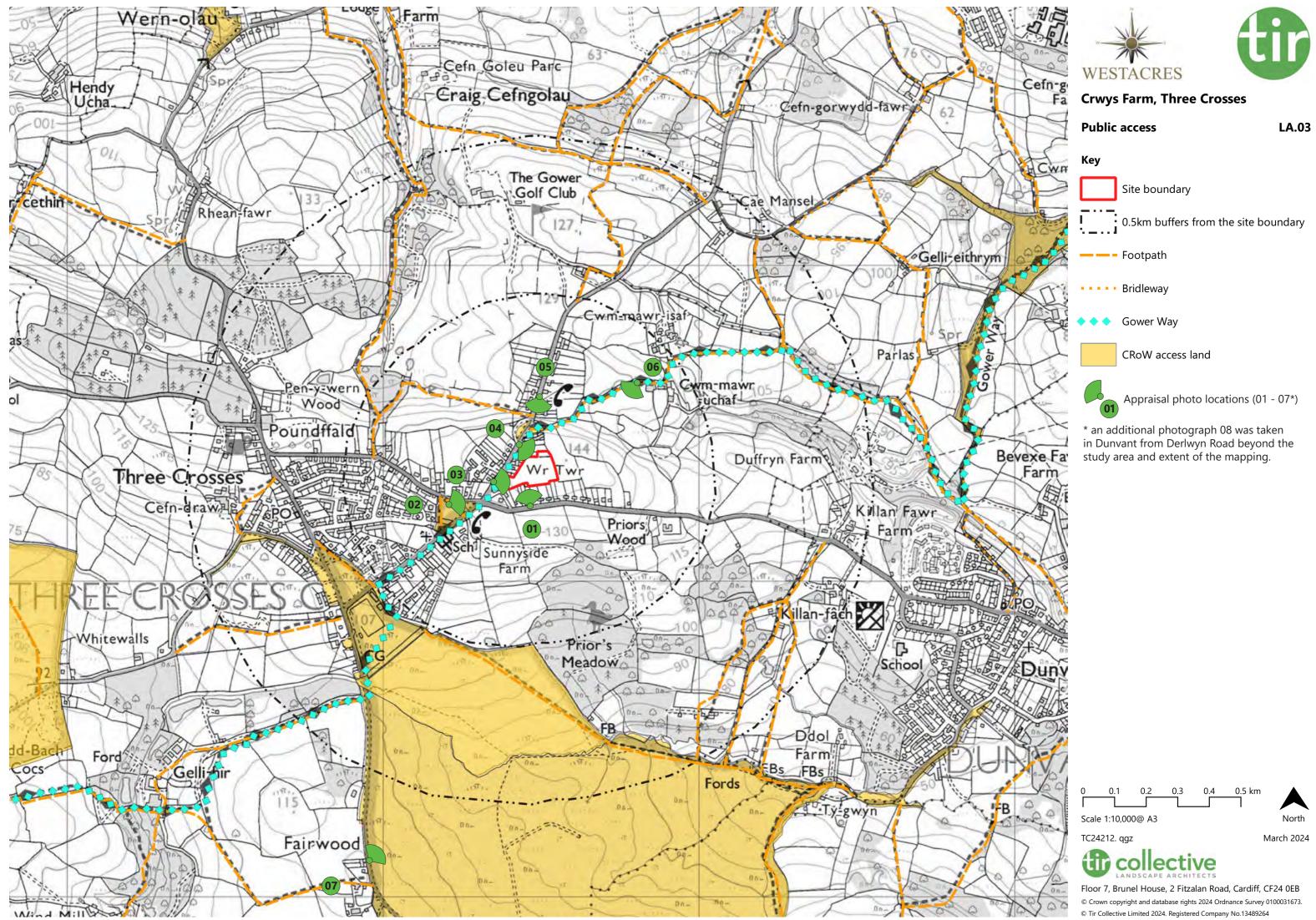








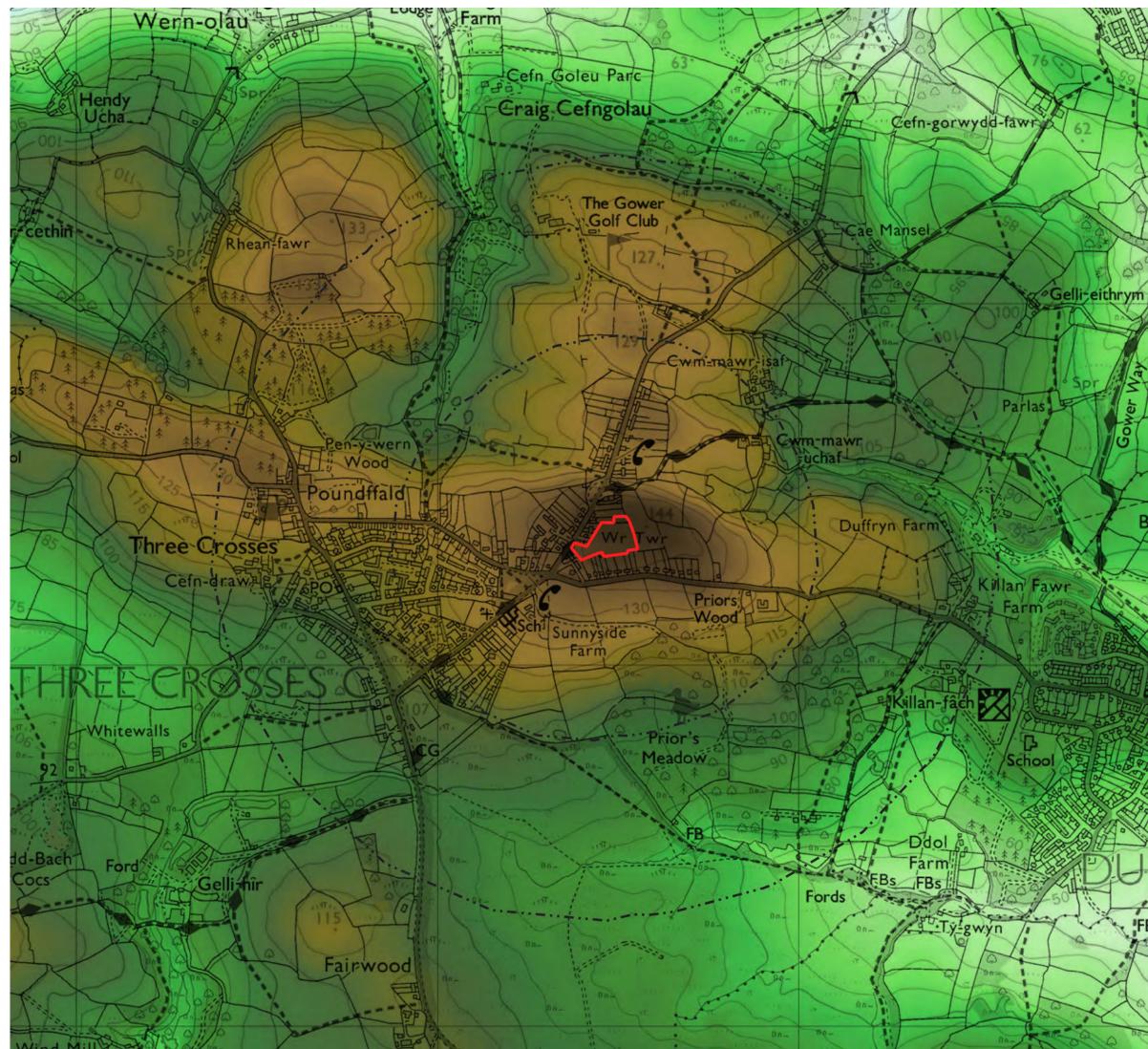


















Topography

LA.04

Key



m AOD:

0.5km buffers from the site boundary

- 35

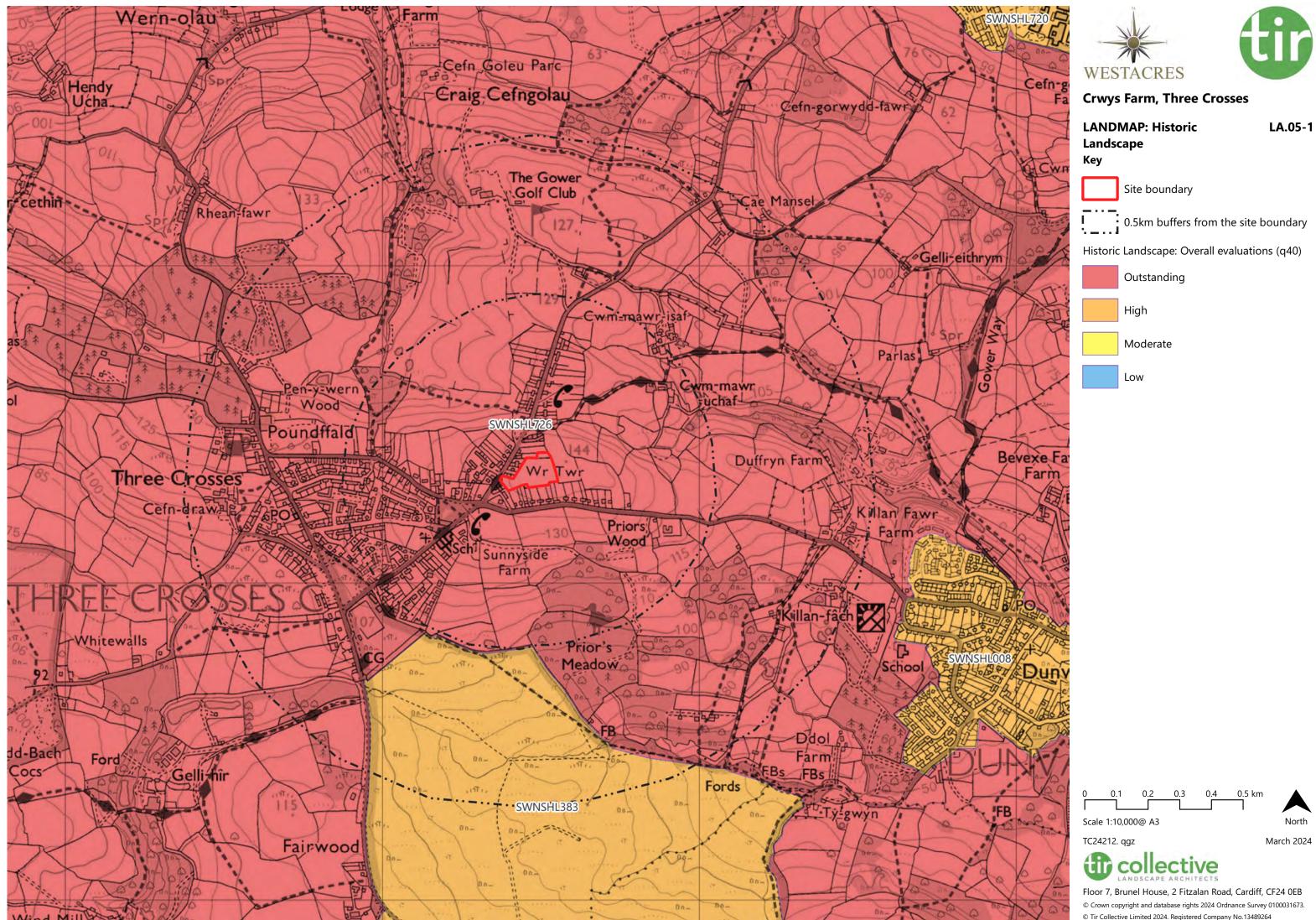
45

65

- 55
- 7
- 75 85
- 95 105 115 125
- 135

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 km Scale 1:10,000@ A3 North TC24212. qgz March 2024 Collective



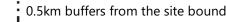




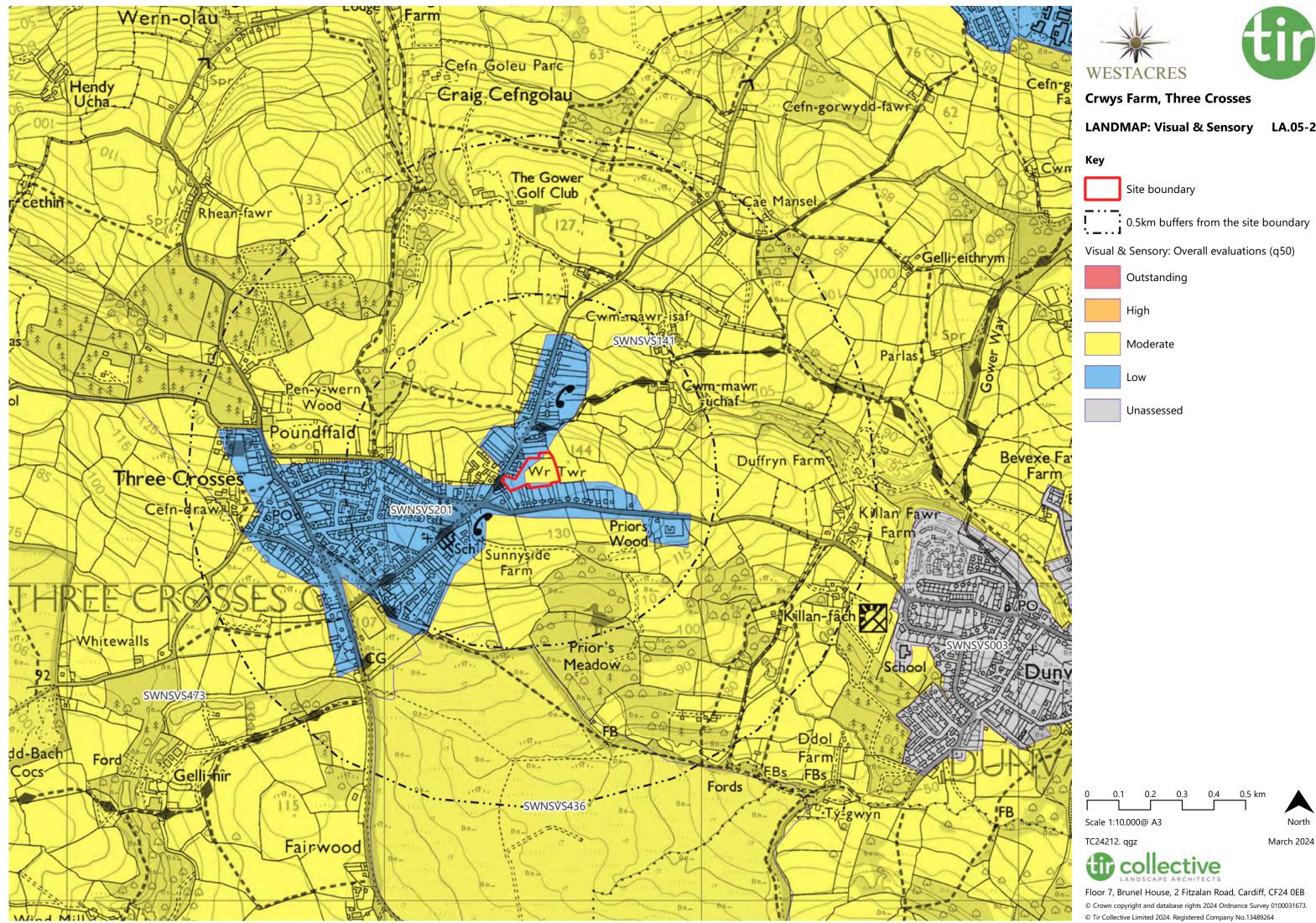


LANDMAP:	Historic
Landscape	
Var	





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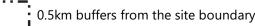




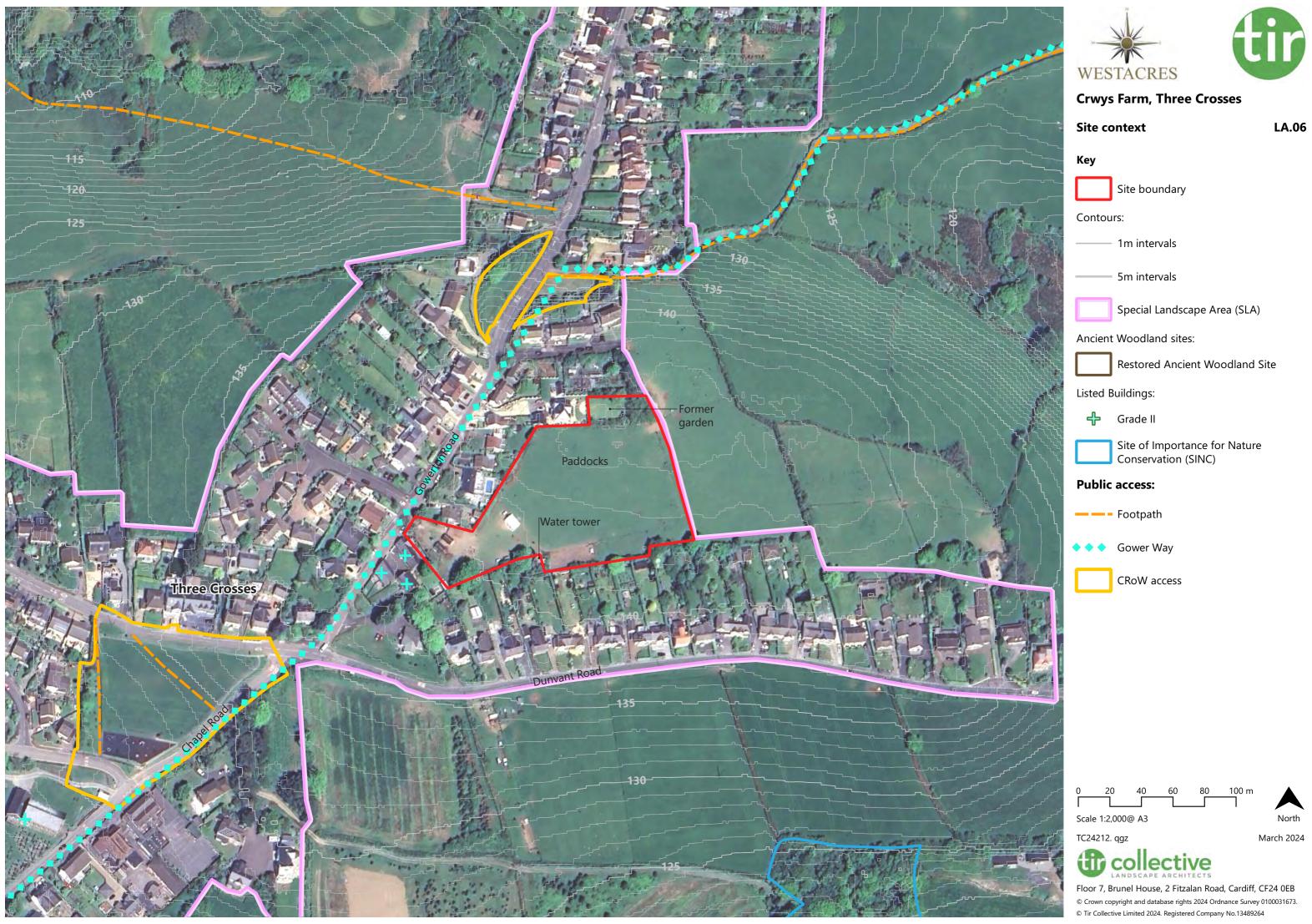


LA.05-2















🕂 Grade







Appraisal Photograph 01: View from Dunvant Road, Three Crosses looking north towards the site



Appraisal Photograph 02: View from the the public open space between Joiners Road and Chapel Road, Three Crosses looking northeast towards the site





Appraisal Photographs LA.07-1 01 and 02

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Appraisal Photograph 03: View from Gowerton Road, Three Crosses looking east towards the site



Appraisal Photograph 04: View from Gowerton Road, by Pentwyn private road looking east towards the site





Appraisal Photographs LA.07-2 03 and 04

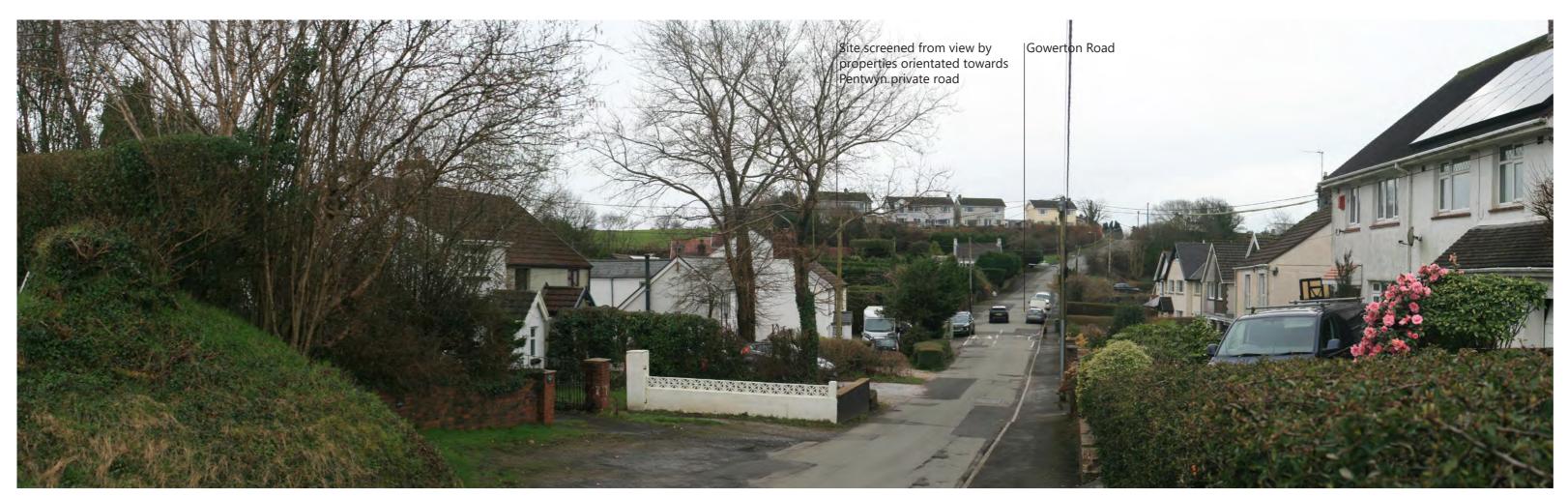
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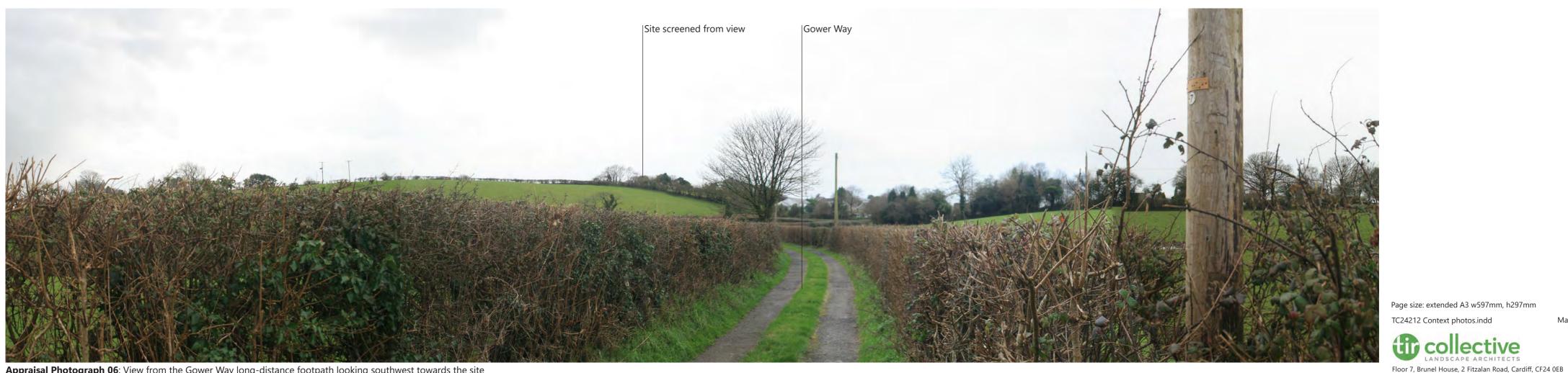


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Appraisal Photograph 05: View from Gowerton Road, north of Three Crosses looking southwest towards the site



Appraisal Photograph 06: View from the Gower Way long-distance footpath looking southwest towards the site



Appraisal Photographs 05 and 06 LA.07-3

March 2024

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Appraisal Photograph 07: View from Tirmynydd Road looking northeast towards the site



Appraisal Photograph 08: View from Derlwyn Road, Dunvant and beyond the study area looking northwest towards the site





Appraisal Photographs LA.07-4 07 and 08

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