



# Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte 5a

This is one of a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes based on Wrexham LANDMAP (adopted November 2004), setting out recommendations for each Landscape Character area.

East-facing slopes dominated by the strategically sited Chirk Castle and Estate, with the landscape reflecting the historical tensions between upland and lowland, Wales and England

## Landscape context

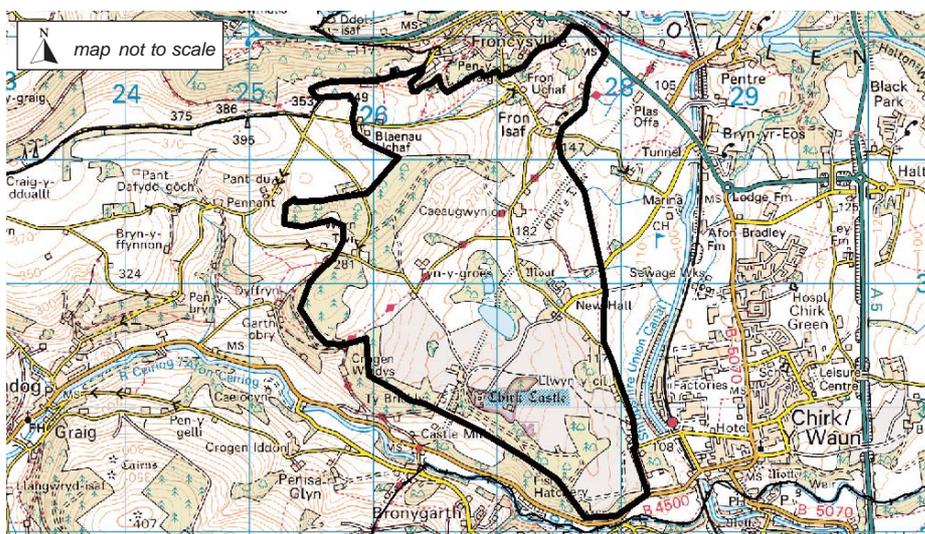
This landscape type lies on the edge of the uplands, but faces the lowlands. There are two such areas in Wrexham, the other being the eastern slopes of Ruabon Mountain. The slopes above Froncysyllte, reflected by the slopes above Trevor, form a gateway to the Vale of Llangollen in Denbighshire. To the south of the character area Chirk Castle stands guard over the steep wooded entrance to the Ceiriog Valley



## Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte summary:

- Hill slopes facing settlement and industrial developed lowlands
- Castle and estate parkland, woodlands and farmland
- Gateway to Ceiriog Valley and Vale of Llangollen
- Traversed by Offa's Dyke
- Focus for tourism

Map of Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte Landscape Character Area



Character Area boundaries should be considered transitional rather than precise © Crown copyright. All rights reserved Licence No.100023429. 2006

## Key characteristics

### Visual character:

- Dominated by the designed landscape of the Chirk estate with castle, parkland, associated farmland and encircling belts of mixed woodland
- Smaller scale woodland and pasture mosaic is found on the steeper slopes above Froncysyllte
- Lower edges of area are generally affected by views of industry in Chirk and Cefn Mawr
- Good views from higher areas,

### Geological character:

- East-facing slopes from about 150 m to

350 m above sea level, with higher areas underlain by older sedimentary rocks of Silurian age, part of the Berwyn Dome and lower slopes by sedimentary rocks of Carboniferous age, overlain by glacial deposits

- Chirk Castle is built on an outcrop of Carboniferous sandstone and limestone Limestone also outcrops above Froncysyllte where it has been quarried
- Soils of the Chirk estate are generally loamy and well-drained, with more acid or seasonally wet soils at higher elevations

### Ecological character:

- Chirk wood-pasture and parkland and veteran trees are a national



biodiversity priority habitat supporting a range of saproxylic (dead wood) invertebrates

- The area contains valuable broadleaved woodland and mixed woodland, as well as conifer plantations. There are individual veteran trees within the Chirk woodlands of particularly high value and small semi-natural ancient woodlands are found near Froncysyllte
- Some small vulnerable grassland habitats on moorland margins

**Historical and cultural character:**

- The present landscape has evolved through its strategic location on the upland/lowland and English/Welsh border
- Chirk Castle is a major focal point for tourism, of national importance, as is Offa's Dyke footpath which passes through the grounds
- Offa's Dyke is a medieval military feature on a former political boundary which crosses Wrexham north-south.
- Chirk Castle is a 13th century castle adapted as a gentry dwelling, and now partly under National Trust management, as are the gardens. It has many historical and cultural associations
- Much of the surrounding farmland was once owned by the Chirk estate, and some is still in estate ownership

**Landscape sensitivity**

Because of its prominent and strategic location, the area is sensitive to change. It is also strongly affected by development in adjacent landscape character areas, particularly Chirk to which it is historically and visually linked

**Overall management strategy:**

Conservation

**Management Guidance**

Aims	Guidelines
Conserve historic landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain present management of parkland, woodland and farmland</li> <li>● Protect the setting of Offa's Dyke</li> </ul>
Reduce impact of nearby industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Carry out strategic planting to filter views</li> </ul>
Preserve geological features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain the integrity of existing landforms</li> <li>● Maintain the integrity and continuity of geological exposures, and assess new ones</li> <li>● Promote awareness of the geological heritage of the area</li> </ul>
Conserve and perpetuate habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Retain old and veteran trees and plant new generations of veteran trees,</li> <li>● Replace coniferous trees with native species</li> <li>● Avoid chemical use in parkland and wood pasture</li> </ul>
Preserve archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Protect archaeological sites, maintain historic field pattern</li> <li>● Maintain Offa's Dyke monument through adoption of management plan drawn up by Offa's Dyke Officer at Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust</li> <li>● Maintain existing field systems and carry out further surveys</li> </ul>
Strengthen links between Chirk estate and local areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue present management regime of Chirk Castle between Chirk estate and estate</li> <li>● Further enhance area for walkers and visitors and improve access from Chirk village and other areas through better walking routes, and low key public transport initiatives</li> <li>● Consider selective tree clearance to improve views of castle from Ceiriog Valley and vice versa</li> </ul>
Support sustainable land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote sustainable land management through agri environment schemes</li> <li>● Encourage sustainable tourism and cultural initiatives</li> </ul>

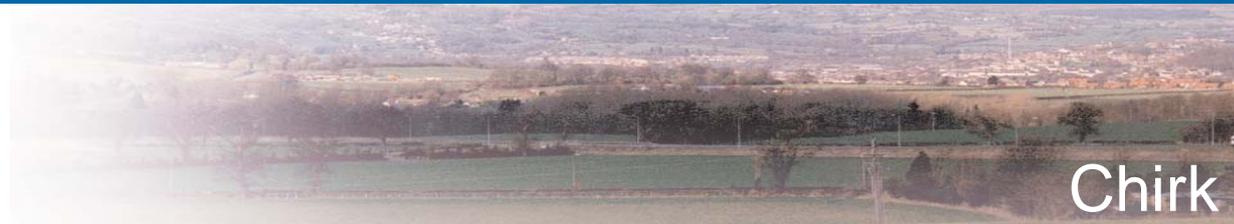


**For further information contact:**

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**All our information is available in accessible formats**





# Chirk 7a

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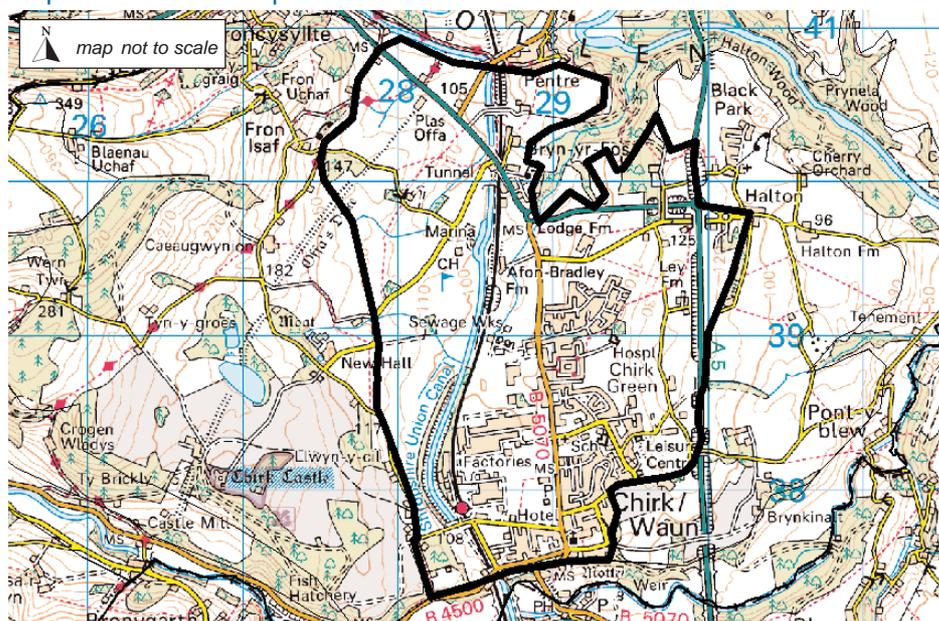
An area on the Welsh-English border, and on historic transport routes, with strongly contrasting rural, suburban and industrial elements.

## Landscape context

Chirk is the southernmost and smallest of four character areas in Wrexham which border the uplands and have a mixed rural and urban landscape. The other areas are Cefn Mawr, Rhosllanerchrugog-Rhostyllen, and West Wrexham Ridges and Valleys.



Map of Chirk Landscape Character Area



Character Area boundaries should be considered transitional rather than precise © Crown copyright. All rights reserved Licence No.100023429. 2006

## Chirk summary

- Industrial Structures within a wider rural setting visually dominating much of the area and beyond
- Canal (a major tourist attraction) road and rail corridors pass through the area
- Chirk is within a shallow valley with open views to hills.
- Contains nationally important viaduct and aqueduct historical landscape features
- Village lies between the historic estates of Chirk Castle and Brynkinallt

## Key characteristics

### Visual character:

- Area enclosed by hills to west and ridge to east but with generally open views
- Chirk village and valley are in places influenced by industrial land use, structures, steam phume and occasionally by background noise and odours
- Countryside with large regular fields in mainly pastoral use, with hedgerows and sparse hedgerow trees
- Visually diverse with mixture of historic and modern land uses.
- Communications corridor, with road, rail and canal running north-south along edge of uplands

- To the east of Chirk a ridge cuts Chirk off the rest of lowland Wrexham

### Geological character:

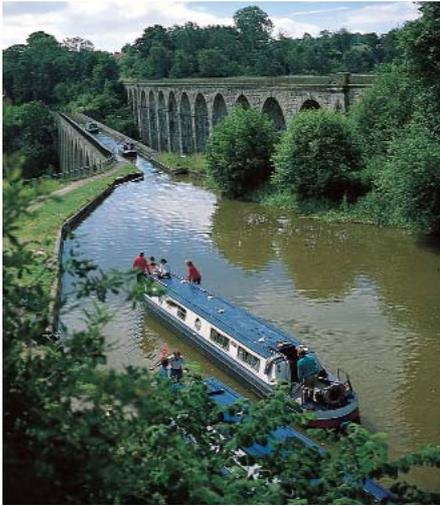
- The minor ridge to the east of Chirk is formed from Coal Measures. Restored coal tips can be found at Chirk Green and Halton
- Much of the area is covered by glacial till (clays) from which the clayey loam soils of the area are derived

### Ecological character:

- Farmland and golf course are mainly improved grassland of low biodiversity value
- The Shropshire Union Canal is an aquatic habitat of high value



- Small but valuable areas of broadleaved and coniferous woodland are found in the area



**Historical and cultural character:**

- The Shropshire Union Canal corridor, in cutting, has its own tranquil character. It includes a visually and historically outstanding aqueduct over the River Ceiriog, close to the Chester-Shrewsbury railway viaduct, and is a visitor attraction, with a small marina next to Chirk Golf course
- Chirk (English form of Welsh 'Ceiriog') is a medieval non-planned settlement with an earth motte and early church. It developed on the old A5 at the Welsh-English border
- Whitehurst is an important, but neglected, 17th century walled garden which was once part of the Chirk estate
- The former Brynkinallt Colliery is now restored to community woodland and open space, and new business uses are developing on restored colliery land at Halton

**Landscape sensitivity**

High sensitivity because of the close proximity of tourist attractions and scenic areas. Whilst already urbanised, Chirk is vulnerable to further development which could affect the historical and rural landscape character of the surroundings.

**Overall management strategy:**

Enhancement, restoration and conservation

**Management Guidance**

Aims	Guidelines
Conserve undeveloped rural hillside character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resist siting of masts and other built development on skylines and open slopes</li> <li>● Ensure new development is integrated into existing village</li> </ul>
Mitigate impact of industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase urban and rural tree planting generally</li> <li>● Reduce visual impact of business development in prominent rural setting at Halton through low rise building and colours which blend with countryside</li> </ul>
Conserve and restore historic designed landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preserve walls, landform and features of Whitehurst 17th century gardens and Brynkinallt estate</li> <li>● Encourage restoration and beneficial uses for Whitehurst Gardens and Brynkinallt walled gardens</li> </ul>
Preserve geological features and assess new exposures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure new development or management practices do not damage natural features or geological exposures</li> <li>● Assess any exposures for scientific or educational interest and protect if of value</li> </ul>
Enhance and extend existing habitats for wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follow recommendations of Wrexham Biodiversity Action Plan</li> <li>● Manage canal banks for water vole, protect bats in buildings, walls and old trees</li> <li>● Promote agri-environment schemes, restore hay meadow management</li> <li>● Retain, enhance and extend woodlands</li> <li>● Protect existing wildlife corridors, including aquatic corridors and hedgerows, and develop new ones - refer also to the Green Network Strategy</li> </ul>
Preserve archaeological development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate archaeology in advance of development within the medieval core area of Chirk, protect motte from loss of features</li> <li>● Continue existing British Waterways management strategy for canal, conserve A5 (Telford's road)</li> <li>● Carry out further assessment of fieldscapes and develop a management strategy</li> </ul>
Encourage local/sustainable tourist and business initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintain historic appearance of rural areas and promote awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the historic dimension of landscape character</li> <li>● The area is particularly sensitive to residential conversions of farm buildings, which lose the original character of the building</li> <li>● Refer to Green Network Strategy due March 2007 and implement new links</li> </ul>



**For further information contact:**

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