

3 THE APPLICATION SITE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 This chapter of the ES provides a description of the Application Site (or "Site") and the surrounding context. The Application Site boundary is identified on **Figure 1.2**.

3.2 APPLICATION SITE

3.2.1 The Application Site comprises approximately 156 ha of land which includes a route for the proposed grid connection near to the St Asaph, approximately 2km east of Bodelwyddan and approximately 2.5km south of Rhuddlan. The Site is located to the north of the A55 and to the west of the A525.

3.2.2 The Site is located within the administrative boundary of Denbighshire County Council.

3.2.3 A number of trees and hedgerows are present across the Site along with several ponds. An area of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland is located within the Site to the north-west of Gwernigrion Farm House. The River Elwy is located approximately 150m east from the eastern site boundary.

3.2.4 The Site is not subject to any statutory designations relating to its environmental or historic value. However, the Grade II Listed Gwernigrion Farmhouse and its Grade II* Listed Dovecote is excluded from, but surrounded by, the Application Site. In relation to Non-Designated Archaeological Sites, three historical assets are recorded within the Application Site which include:

- Cropmarks of a possible medieval field system in the north-eastern corner;
- Possible location of a First World War temporary tented camp in the south-western area;
- A Royal Observer Corps monitoring post in the southwestern area.

3.2.5 Various PRoW cross the Site and link to the wider area. These comprise short and longer sections of footpaths, bridleways and other public byways. Many follow field edges and other physical boundaries.

3.2.6 Areas of potential archaeological interest have been identified within the Site following initial site investigations.

3.3 APPLICATION SITE CONTEXT

3.3.1 The surrounding area comprises predominantly agricultural land along with road and electrical infrastructure, small copses of woodland and farm buildings or individual properties as well as the settlements of St Asaph and associated employment areas / light industry (which also contains electrical and energy infrastructure). Bodelwyddan is located approximately 2km to the east and Rhuddlan approximately 2.5km to the south.

3.3.2 In relation to ecological habitats, the Application Site is located to west of the River Elwy and comprises a series of arable fields and grazed pasture bordered by a series of hedgerows and fencing, with scattered isolated mature trees. In the wider context the Site is surrounded by further arable farmland and scattered pockets of deciduous woodland. There are several statutory designated sites in the surrounding area within 1-10km of the Site which will require consideration, including: Elwy Woods SSSI/SAC, Liverpool Bay SPA, the Dee Estuary SSSI/Ramsar/SPA/SAC and Coedydd ac ogofau Elwy a meirchion SSSI. Coedydd ac Ogofau Elwy a Meirchion is a SSSI for Semi Natural Broadleaved woodland, assemblage of rare and scarce plants, veronica spicata, lesser horseshoe bat, mixed bat assemblage and geology and the SSSI underpins the SAC woodland. The closest non statutory site of local nature conservation interest is Coed Cord Local Wildlife Site (LWS), located approximately 200m from the Application Site.

3.3.3 There are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Battlefields, Landscapes of Historic Interest or Registered Parks and Gardens located within or immediately surrounding the Site. St Asaph Conservation Area is located approximately 400m south-east of the Site and Rhuddlan Conservation Area is located within 2km.

3.3.4 The Application Site is not located within any international or national statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 3.6 km to the east of the Site. The Site is covered by both National Landscape Character Areas (NLCA) NLCA 08: North Wales Coasts and NLCA 11: Vale of Clwyd.

3.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

3.4.1 A review of the Denbighshire County Council adopted Local Development Plan has been undertaken. The proposed Application Site is located outside of the defined Development Boundary for St Asaph, being in open countryside in planning terms, and none of the land is allocated in the Local Plan for development. The site is located within a Mineral Safeguarded Area (Sand and Gravel).

3.4.2 Denbighshire County Council has published a list of additional candidate sites for the replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033. Consultation on the additional candidate sites was undertaken between 13th January 2020 and 13th March 2020. The site is identified for solar PV development within the additional candidate sites document.

3.4.3 Further background on the Local Plan and planning context is provided in the **Planning Statement**.