



PROPOSED NURSERY GLASSHOUSE DEVELOPMENT

WOODLANDS NURSERIES LOWCA WHITEHAVEN

PHOTOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

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Bruce Walker BSc Hons MPhil CMLI

Chartered Landscape Architect

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Westwood Landscape Design LLP, Chartered Landscape Architects, were commissioned in March 2025 by SB Associates Planning Consultants on Behalf of the client Mr Anthony Blomfield of Blomfields Ltd to assess the landscape and visual impact of a proposed extension to a commercial glasshouse and to provide landscape mitigation proposals. The proposed development is for 1.8 Ha of glasshouse to extend an existing glasshouse and to share the established access and infrastructure. It will include substantial earthworks to achieve a level platform for the glasshouse, swales to manage the surface water, services extended from the adjacent glasshouse and landscape improvements to ensure good integration with the landscape setting. The work will involve a landscape assessment to ensure the protection of the landscape character is carefully considered.

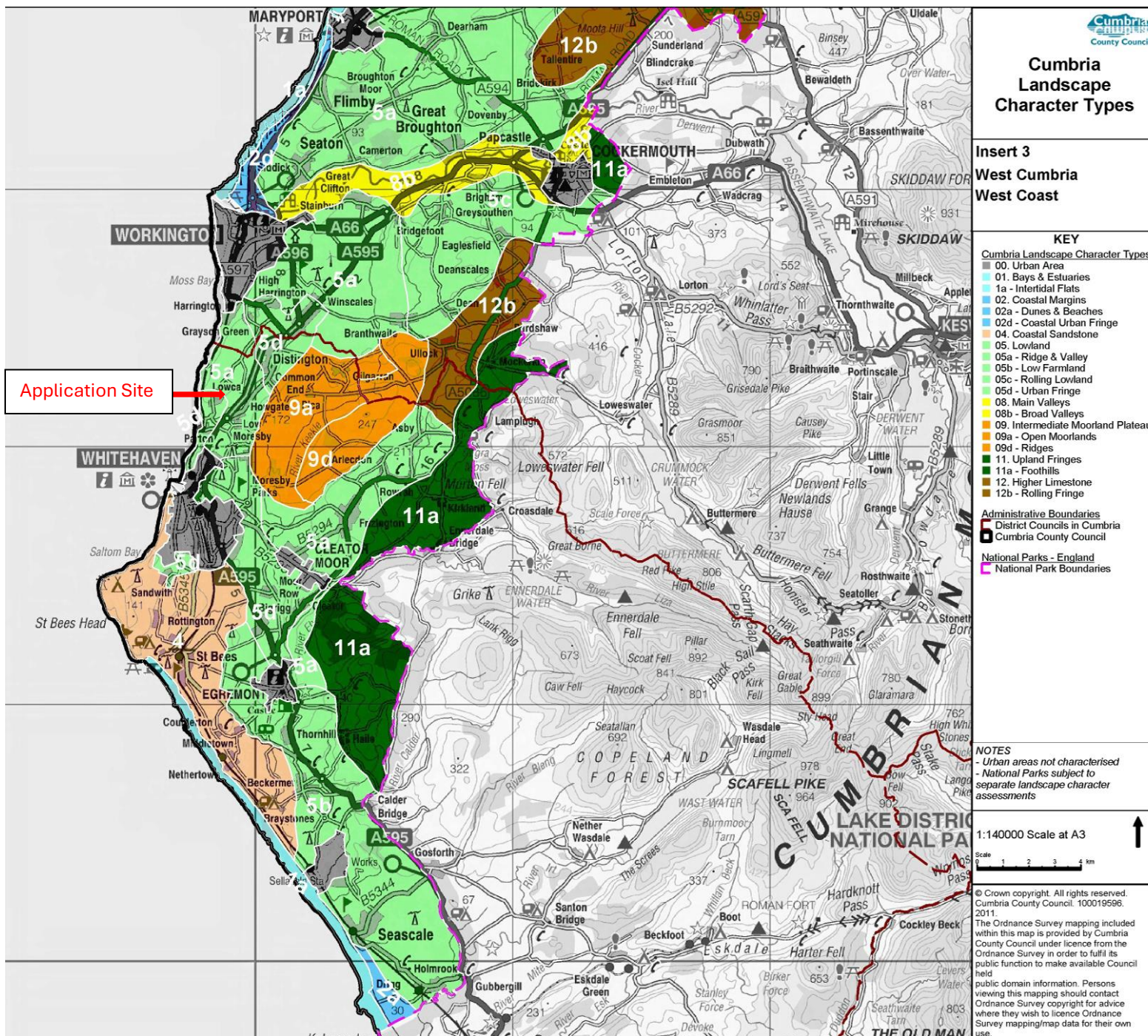
1.2. This report will inform the design process and will form part of a planning application to Cumberland Council. The objective of the exercise is to demonstrate that the landscape and visual issues have been carefully considered in the siting and design of the proposals and that appropriate mitigation measures are considered.

2.0. Landscape and Visual assessment

2.1. The potential effect on the landscape character was assessed including the impact on the setting of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments within the study area of approximately 2 Km radius and the designated landscape which are sensitive to change from development. The capacity of the landscape to accommodate development change was considered and how landscape mitigation measures could help to integrate the development with its landscape setting.

2.2. The quality of the wider landscape setting is considered, particularly the setting of the Parton Roman Fort Scheduled Monument which is situated to the north of the settlement of Parton. Sensitivity to the landscape character is very important when considering even minor landscape changes.

2.3. The site lies within the West Cumbria Coastal Plain and Cumbria Landscape Character Type 5 Lowland and 5a Ridge and Valley as indicated on the plan below. These landscape types are considered to be sensitive with a low capacity to accommodate development change. However there are currently several components which detract from this character locally to the Application Site including wind turbines, electricity pylons, commercial premises and the A595 road.



2.4. The Application Site is agricultural land adjacent to the established plant nursery on the eastern edge of Lowca which is a small coastal settlement just north of Whitehaven, Cumbria. It is situated on the north-western slopes of the broad Lowca Beck Valley which rises to 92m AOD to the north and 17m AOD to the south-east at Watch Hill. The valley floor at Lowca Beck is approximately 25m AOD adjacent to the site and the Application Site is at approximately 50m AOD. The valley floor supports many mature trees associated with Lowca Beck and the former railway line which is now a long- distance footpath and cycleway route 72. There are also younger tree groups alongside the A595 Distington Bypass which runs along the valley floor and some small woodland blocks. These mature trees are prominent landscape features which contribute to the landscape character of the valley and provide some visual enclosure for visual receptors along the valley floor. The surrounding landscape supports large irregular shaped agricultural fields enclosed with hedgerows, many of which are sparse.

2.5. The broad open valley landscape means that the Application Site is widely visible from within the valley, particularly from visual receptors on the south-east slopes although this will be restricted beyond the undulating ridge between Common End and Moresby Parks which includes Watch Hill (1.4Km from the Application Site). Views from areas further to the south-east will be screened by this undulating higher ground. More distant views will be possible from the higher fells of the Lake District National Park but as the closest boundary lies 8.4Km to the south-east the potential landscape and visual effect on this sensitive landscape setting and on visual receptors within the park will be negligible. Due to the gradient of the site cut and fill earthworks are required to achieve the required levels, as for the existing glasshouses, which will result in the south-eastern area of the glasshouse being elevated above the existing ground level which increases the visual prominence in the landscape.

2.6. The OS plans and photographs below should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Plan which is annotated to explain the landscape design objectives and mitigation measures to address the landscape and visual issues as well as to maximise biodiversity net gain. The study area incorporated potential visual receptors including residential properties, roads and footpaths.

2.7. Potential key visual receptors were visited to assess the potential effect on views resulting from the development. Photographs were selected to illustrate the landscape character and potential landscape and visual impact from visual receptors and in some cases to illustrate that views of the development are screened by landform or vegetation.

2.8. The key visual receptors assessed include:

- Residents in properties on the eastern edge of Lowca
- Residents in properties in Howgate and along the Howgate to Distington Road
- Residents in properties on the higher ground in Low Moresby
- Residents in properties in Quality Corner
- Residents in properties along the undulating ridge between Common End and Moresby Parks

- Walkers on the PROW network including the footpath and cycleway Route 72 between Lowca and Distington and the footpath on the eastern edge of the Lowca settlement.
- Motorists on the A595 particularly northbound between Parton and Howgate
- Motorists on the B5306 road from Common End to Howgate
- Motorists on the minor road from Common End to Moresby Parks and the minor roads around Low Moresby.

2.9. The residential visual receptors are considered to have high susceptibility to changes in their view and the magnitude of the negative visual effect of the development will range from high for a few properties on the eastern edge of Lowca (photos 8, 9 and 10 with view distance of 55 to 125m to the nearest boundary) to moderate and low for the other properties assessed. Some of the views are partially obscured by hedges and trees. The property Overwater at the entrance to the nursery was disregarded as this is the home of the Applicant.

2.10. The visual receptors using the PROW footpaths are considered to have high susceptibility to changes in their view and the magnitude of the negative visual effect of the development will range from high for users of the Route 72 cycleway for a short section only from the entrance to the nursery to the start of the reservoir within the nursery (approximately 450m) and some of the views will be partially screened by trees (photos 1 and 2). The magnitude of visual effect will also be high for walkers on the less well used footpath at the eastern edge of Lowca (photos 8, 9 and 10).

2.11. For users of the other footpaths assessed the magnitude of the negative visual effect will be mostly low as the proposed development will not be the main focus of the view.

2.12. The motorist and other road user visual receptors are considered to have medium susceptibility to changes in their view and the magnitude of the negative visual effect of the development will range from high for travellers on the A595 between Parton and Howgate (photos 19, 20 and 21) a distance of approximately 900m only before the Application Site is obscured from view and medium on the B5306 road from Howgate to Distington (photos 23 and 24) with views from some parts of the road obscured. The view distance to the proposed glasshouse ranges from 350 to 1100m for the A595 and 450 to 1000m for the B5306. For the other minor roads assessed within the Lowca valley the magnitude of visual effect will be mostly low and occasionally moderate.

3.0. Direct Landscape effects

3.1. The proposed development will result in the loss of 2.86 Ha of modified grassland and 103m of defunct hedgerow. No trees or hedgerows will be affected. Refer to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Reports by Envirotech Consultants 26.02.25.

3.2. The extension of swales will control the surface water runoff and discharge to the existing outlets for the nursery.

4.0.Potential effect on the Landscape Character

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

4.1. The potential landscape and visual effect on the historic landscape character was assessed in particular the potential effect on the setting of the Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings.

4.2. The Scheduled Monument at Parton Roman Fort has limited inter-visibility with the Application Site. (refer to photographs 18, 19 and 32 from viewpoints at the boundaries). The anticipated increase in landscape effect on the setting of the monument as a result of the proposal is considered to be slight as the proposed extension will be in the foreground of the existing glasshouse and will not increase the extent of the view affected despite the glasshouse becoming closer to the monument boundary (1100m to 930m for viewpoint 19).

4.3. Photograph 18 from St Bridget's Church illustrates that the setting of the northern part of the monument area will not be affected.

4.4. Photographs 19 taken from the Lowca road junction with the A595 and photograph 32 taken from Brewery Brow on the northern edge of Parton confirm that there will be some intervisibility between the Application Site and the southern part of the monument.

4.5. No listed buildings will be affected by the proposals. The closest listed buildings are St Bridget's Church (Grade II) and Moresby Hall (Grade I) on the road to Lowca. The setting of these will be unaffected as illustrated by Photograph 18.

DESIGNATED LANDSCAPES

4.7. The landscape and visual effect on the designated landscape of the Lake District National Park will be negligible due to the separation distance of 8.4Km to the nearest boundary. The nearest boundary of the Solway Coast National Landscape (formerly AONB) and the Frontiers of the Roman Empire Hadrians Wall World Heritage Site lie 16 Km to the north and will be unaffected.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES

4.8. The National and Cumbria landscape character types are confirmed in section 2.3 above. Whilst no formal appraisal has been applied the increase in landscape effect on the landscape character types due to the proposed development is considered to be low as the existing glasshouses are already prominent components in the landscape and the proposed extension will not register as a new landscape component. Refer to the annotated photographs which illustrate this point.

4.10. The landscape strategy indicated on the Landscape Plan will help to reduce the potential effect on the landscape character of the receiving environment and improve the integration with the existing landscape setting. As the proposed tree and hedge planting matures the effect on the landscape will reduce.

5.0. Summary Comments

5.1. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Assessment but aims to provide a broad assessment of the key landscape and visual issues and demonstrate that these have been carefully considered in the landscape design process.

5.2. The proposal is for the extension of the existing commercial nursery Woodlands, Lowca, Whitehaven which will use the existing access and infrastructure.

5.3. The receiving environment is the broad valley of Lowca Beck with mature trees along the valley. The location of the Application Site midway on the north-west valley side increases the visibility of the proposed development particularly from visual receptors across the valley. The landscape character type identified, Ridge and Valley, is sensitive with a low capacity to accommodate change from development. However there are currently several components which detract from this character locally to the Application Site including wind turbines, electricity pylons, commercial premises and the A595 road. The increase in landscape effect on the landscape character type due to the proposed development is considered to be low as the existing glasshouses are already visually prominent components in the landscape and the proposed extension will not register as a new landscape component.

5.4. The potential visual effect from the proposals is limited to visual receptors within the Lowca Beck Valley by the undulating ridge between Common End and Moresby Parks as views from further eastwards will be screened by the landform.

5.5. The key visual receptors identified include residents in properties within the Lowca Beck Valley and particularly at the edge of Lowca, users of the PROW network and roads within the valley. From viewpoints where the Application Site will be visible the anticipated increase in visual effect as a result of the proposals is likely to be high for a few properties at the eastern edge of Lowca only and low to moderate for the other receptors assessed. The existing nursery glasshouses are already visually prominent in these views which limits the increase in visual intrusion imposed by the extension.

5.6. The proposed planting will comprise predominantly native species to ensure the local biodiversity is enhanced with evergreen species included to improve winter screening. This has been designed to achieve the required net gain in biodiversity and to improve low-level screening. There are opportunities to introduce native Hawthorn kest hedgerows with native trees to extend existing habitats and restore former field boundaries to provide low level natural screening which will help to integrate the proposed development with its landscape setting. Extension of the hedgerow along the popular walking and cycling route adjacent to the site will be particularly effective to reduce the visual potential effect on these receptors (photos 3a and 4).

LIST OF FIGURES

The following four figures indicate the location of the proposed development on Ordnance Survey plans and aerial images and the viewpoint location of the photographs. These have been reproduced with permission: Westwood Landscape Design LLP Ordnance Survey Licence No. TT:009737163.

1. OS Leisure map to show the Application Site in the context of the surrounding landscape, roads and settlements with photograph locations.
2. OS plan to show the Application Site in the context of the settlements of Lowca, Parton, Low Moorsby and Common End, Distington.
3. Application Site on OS base with photograph locations
4. Aerial image to show the proposed Application Site in the context of the adjacent residential areas, A595 road and the surrounding landscape.
5. Application Site on OS base showing the proximity of the Scheduled Monument Parton Roman Fort highlighted in blue.
6. Photographs annotated to illustrate the landscape character, current views experienced and the likely landscape and visual impact on key visual receptors. Some photographs are included to demonstrate that the Application Site will be screened from view.

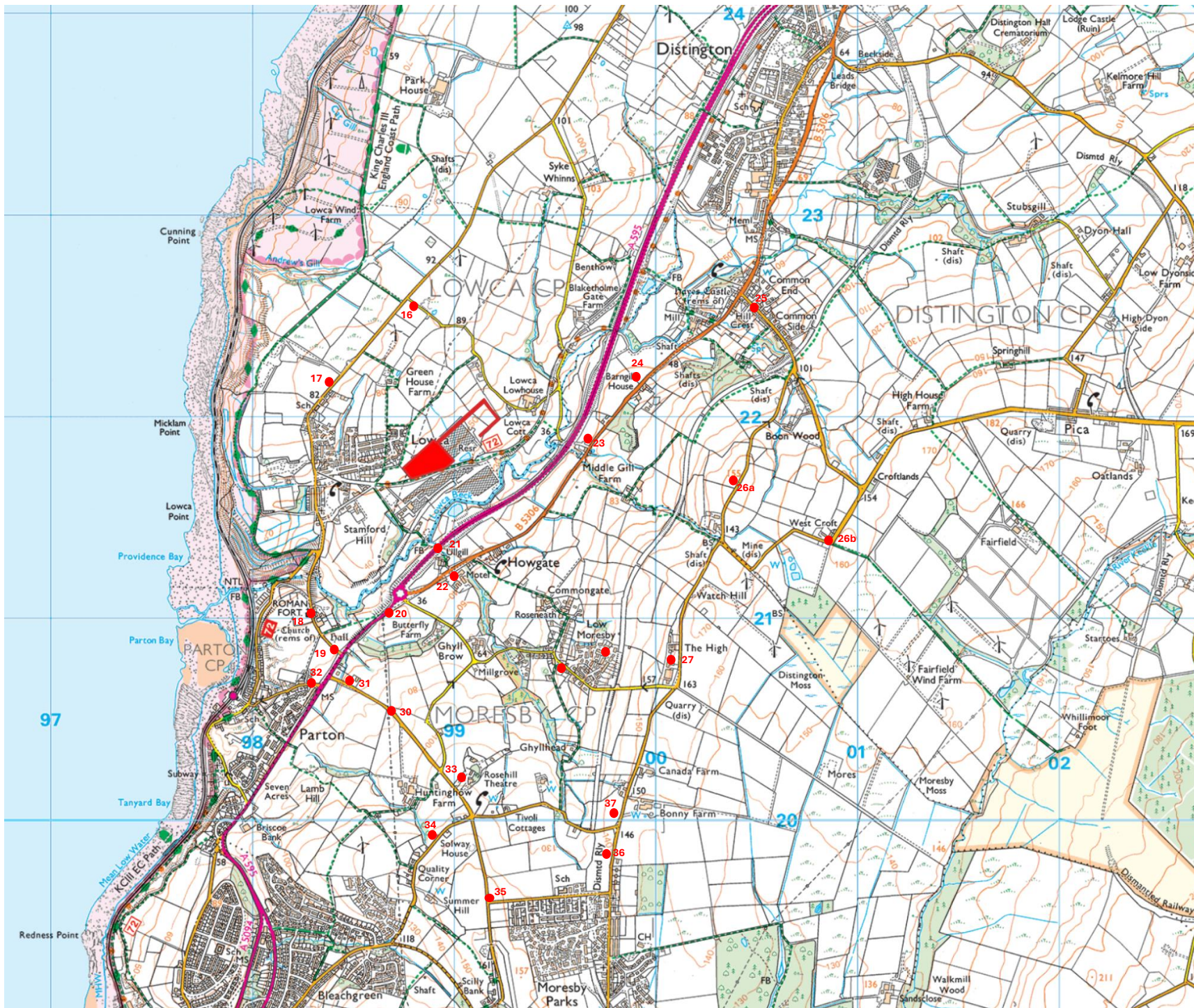


Figure 1 OS Leisure Map to show the Application Site in the context of the surrounding landscape, roads and settlements.

Photograph Locations: ● 59

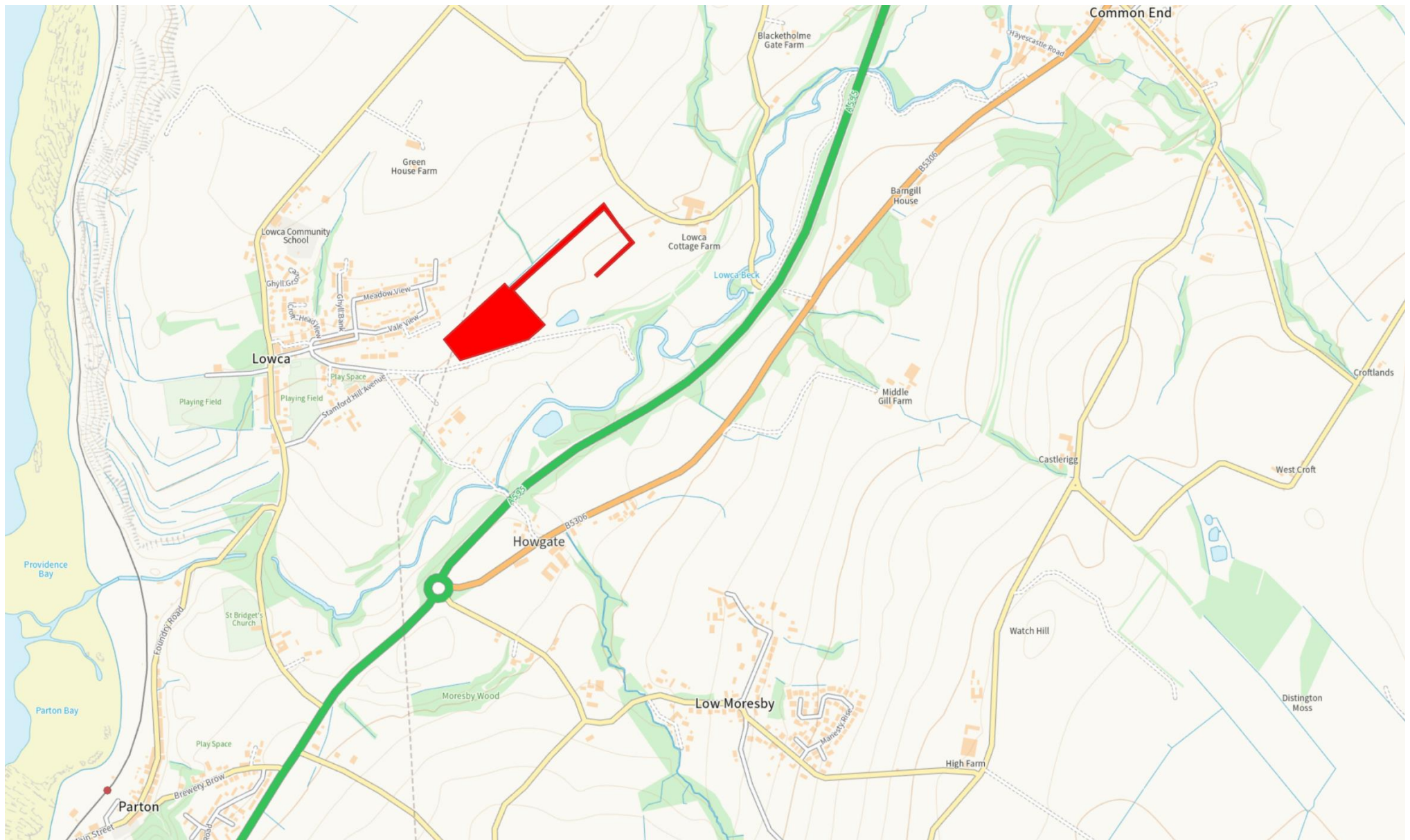


Figure 2 OS plan to show the Application Site in the context of the settlements of Lowca, Parton, Low Moresby and Common End, Distington.

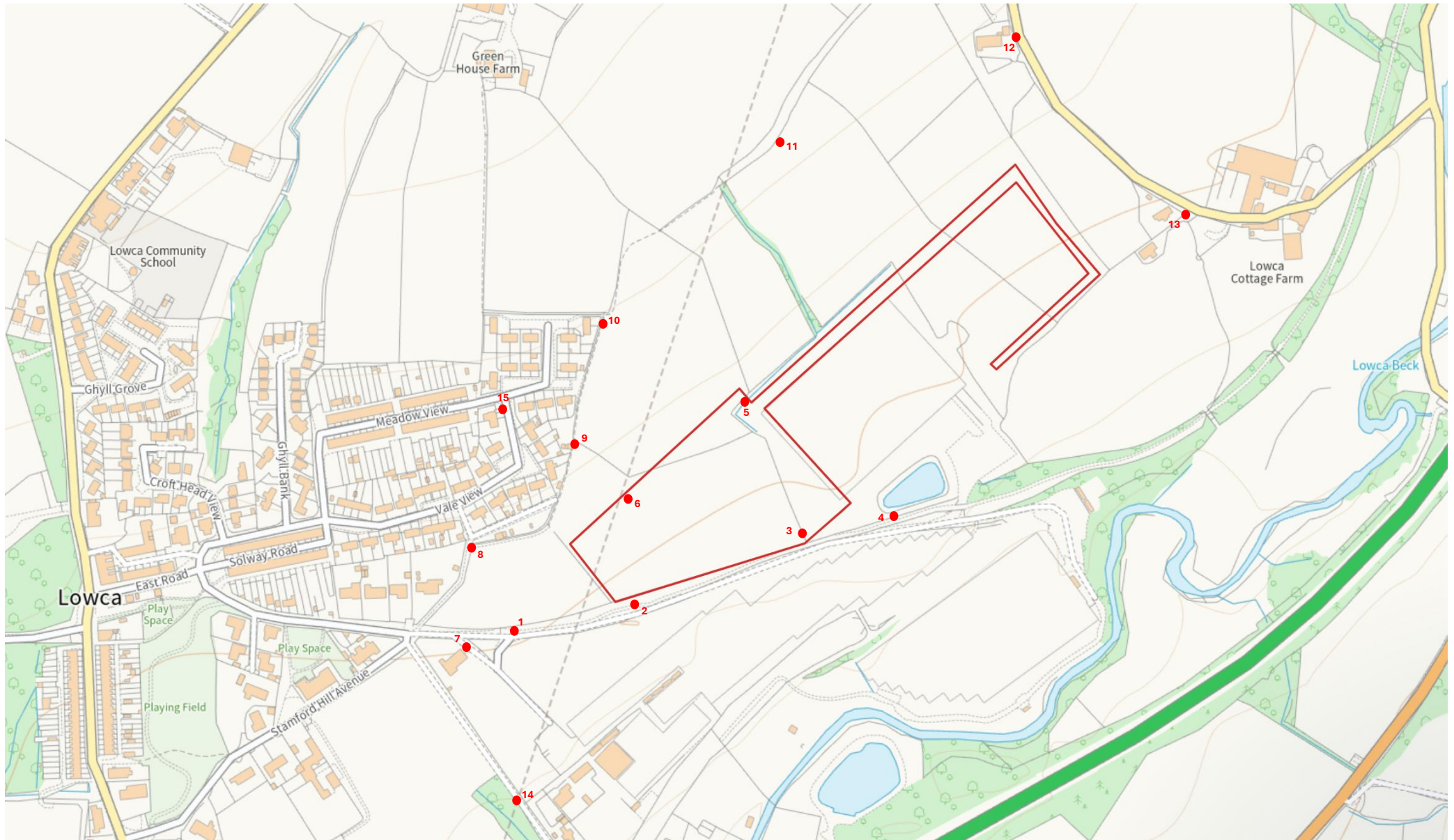


Figure 3 Application Site on OS base with Photograph location shown as: ● 59



Figure 4 Aerial image to show the proposed Application Site in the context of the adjacent residential areas, A595 road and the surrounding landscape.

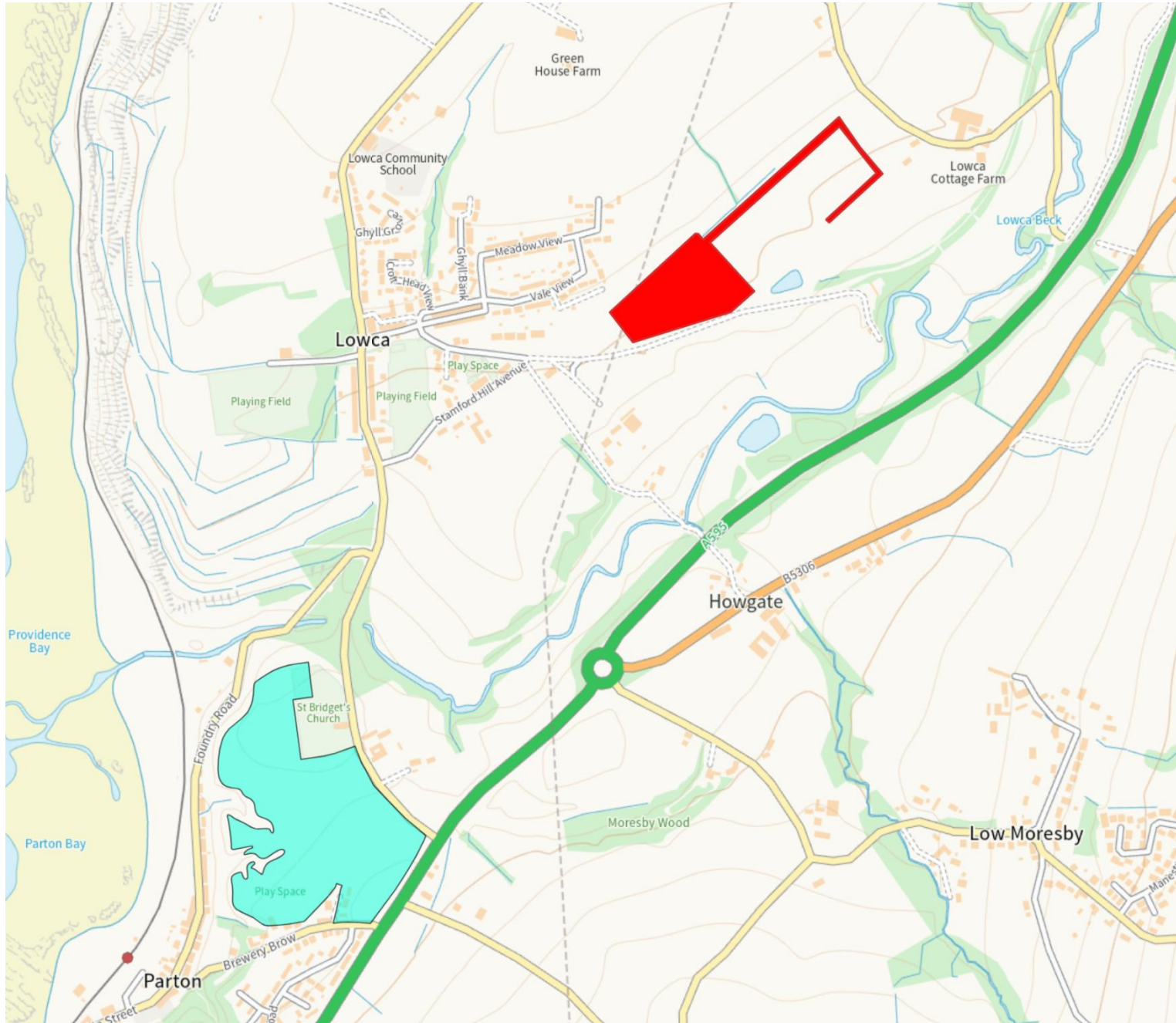


Figure 5 Application Site on OS base showing the proximity of the Scheduled Monument Parton Roman Fort highlighted in blue.



1(8) View north-eastwards from the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway showing the remnant hedgerow at the west Application Site boundary which will be retained. The proposed glasshouse will have a floor level approximately 3.5m below the existing ground level to the left of this view and will therefore have only approximately 2m showing.



2a (9) View north-westwards from the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway showing the remnant hedgerow at the west Application Site boundary which will be retained. The houses at Vale View Lowca overlook the site with views partially screened by trees and hedge.



2b (10) View north-eastwards from the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway showing the defunct hedge to the right of the electricity pylon which will be partially removed to accommodate the development.



2c (11) View north-eastwards along the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway showing the hedge and trees of mainly Alder, Sycamore, Willow and Hawthorn which provides a natural low- level screen to the Application Site.



3a (36) View south-westwards from the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway close to the existing glasshouse to be extended showing the long gaps in the boundary hedgerow which will be restored to extend the screening to the recreational route.



3b (37) View north-westwards from the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway close to the existing glasshouse to be extended showing the housing at Vale View, Lowca. The north-west boundary of the Application Site will be in the foreground of the pylon.



4(38) View south-westwards from the Lowca to Distington footpath and cycleway adjacent to the irrigation reservoir. For Lowca-bound travellers this is the first point the proposed glasshouse extension will be visible as the route is screened by hedge and trees further to the north-east. The proposed restoration of the boundary hedge will reduce the landscape and visual impact on these visual receptors.



5a(23) View westwards from the north corner of the proposed glasshouse extension showing the landscape character of the broad valley and the Ridge and Valley landscape character type.



5b (24) View north-eastwards from the north corner of the proposed glasshouse showing the swale which will be extended. All the embankment grassland will be enhanced with wildflower seeding.



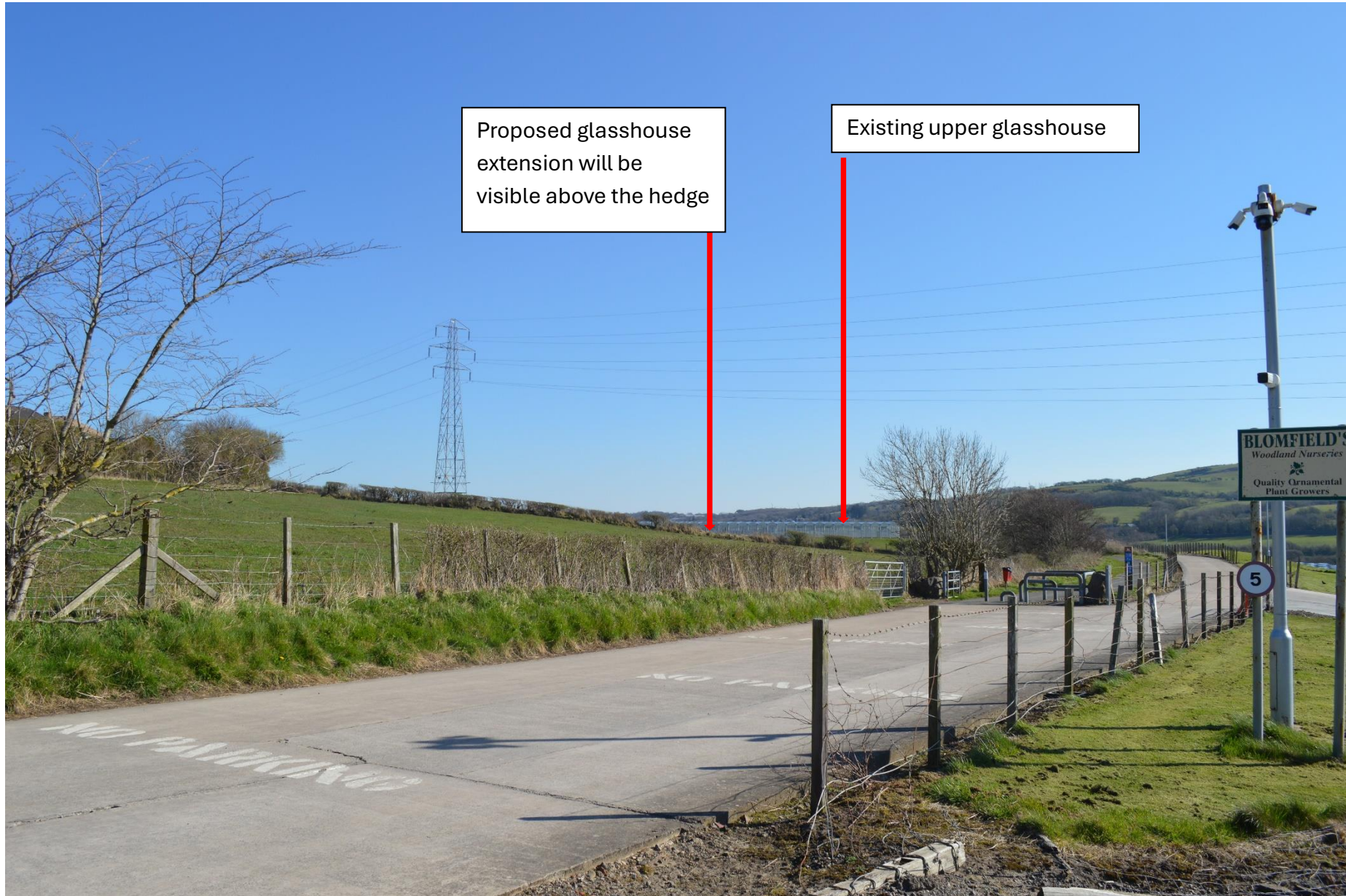
6a (19) View north-westwards from the boundary of the Application Site showing the section of hedgerow which will be retained. The proposed landscape mitigation includes extending this hedge along the north-west boundary of the Application Site to join the west boundary hedge. This will reduce the potential visual impact on views from residential receptors at Vale View.



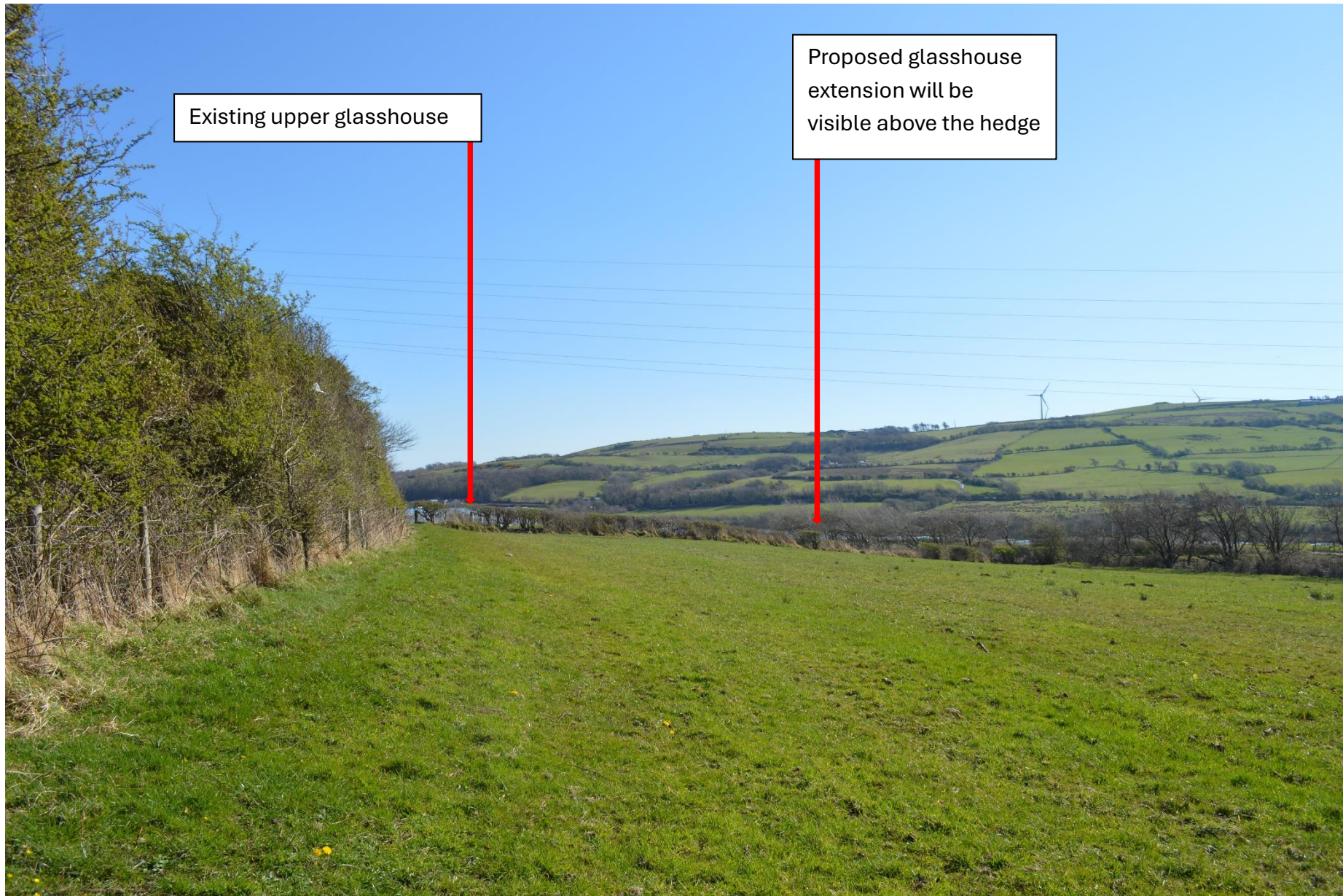
Defunct hedge to be removed

Existing upper glasshouse

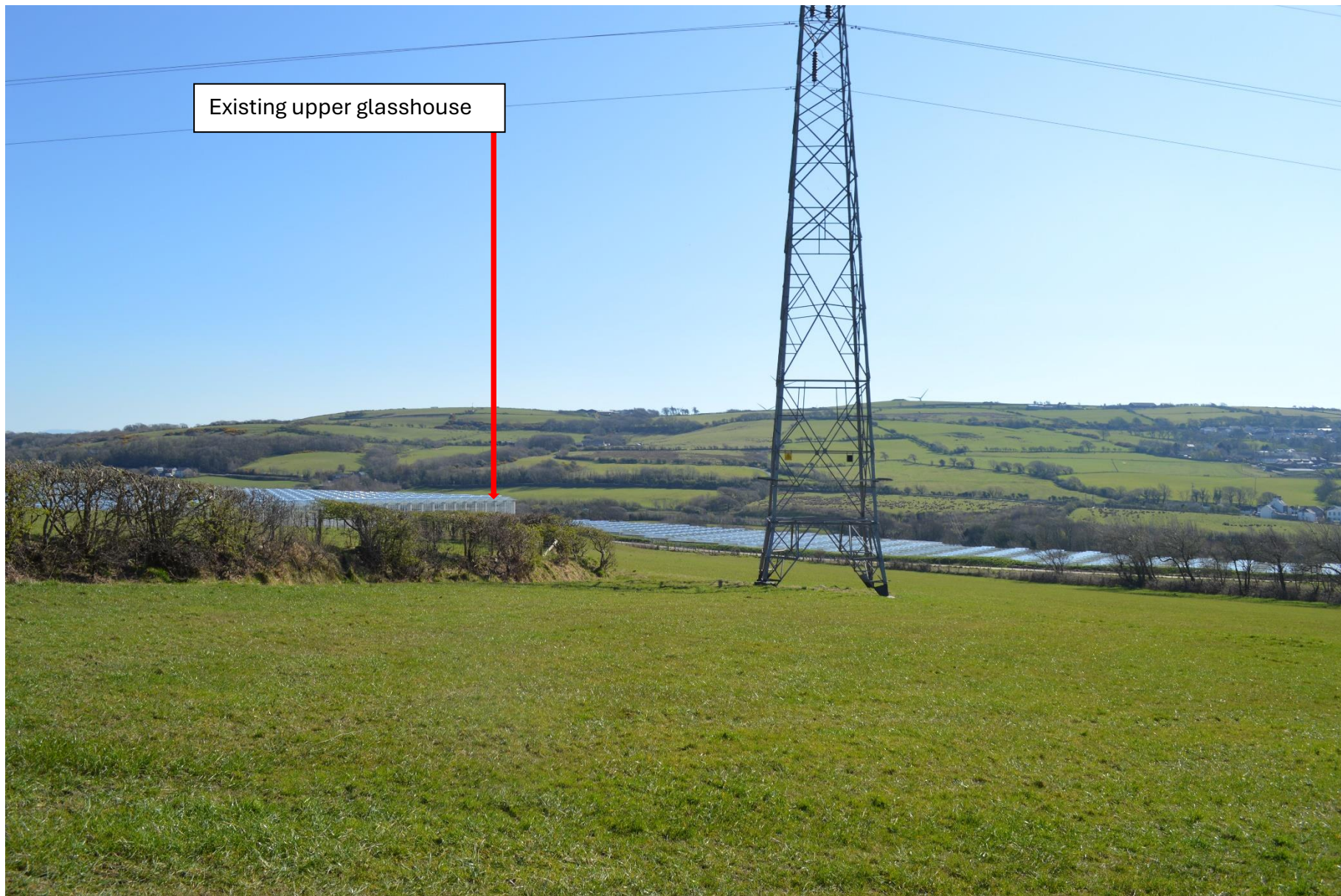
6b (14) View north-eastwards from the boundary of the Application Site showing the defunct section of hedge which will be removed.



7 (7) View north-eastwards from the property Overwater which is currently the home of the Applicant. The proposed glass house will be visible only from smaller gable elevation windows as the house is orientated to face south-eastwards to take advantage of the fine views.



8 (44) View eastwards from the PROW which runs along the eastern boundary of the settlement of Lowca. The upper part of the proposed glasshouse will be visible above the hedge in the foreground. The views for residential receptors in the adjacent houses at Vale View will be similar but partially screened by the retained hedge and trees at the garden boundaries.



9 (45) View south-eastwards from the PROW which runs along the eastern boundary of the settlement of Lowca. The proposed glasshouse will be visible above the hedge in the foreground. The views from rear windows for residential receptors in the adjacent houses at Vale View will be similar but partially screened by the retained hedge and trees at the garden boundaries.



10a (49) View south-eastwards from the PROW which runs along the eastern boundary of the settlement of Lowca. The proposed glasshouse will extend the upper glasshouse on the left of the view. This photo shows the extent of visibility from the south-eastern slopes of the Lowca Beck valley.

Proposed glasshouse extension

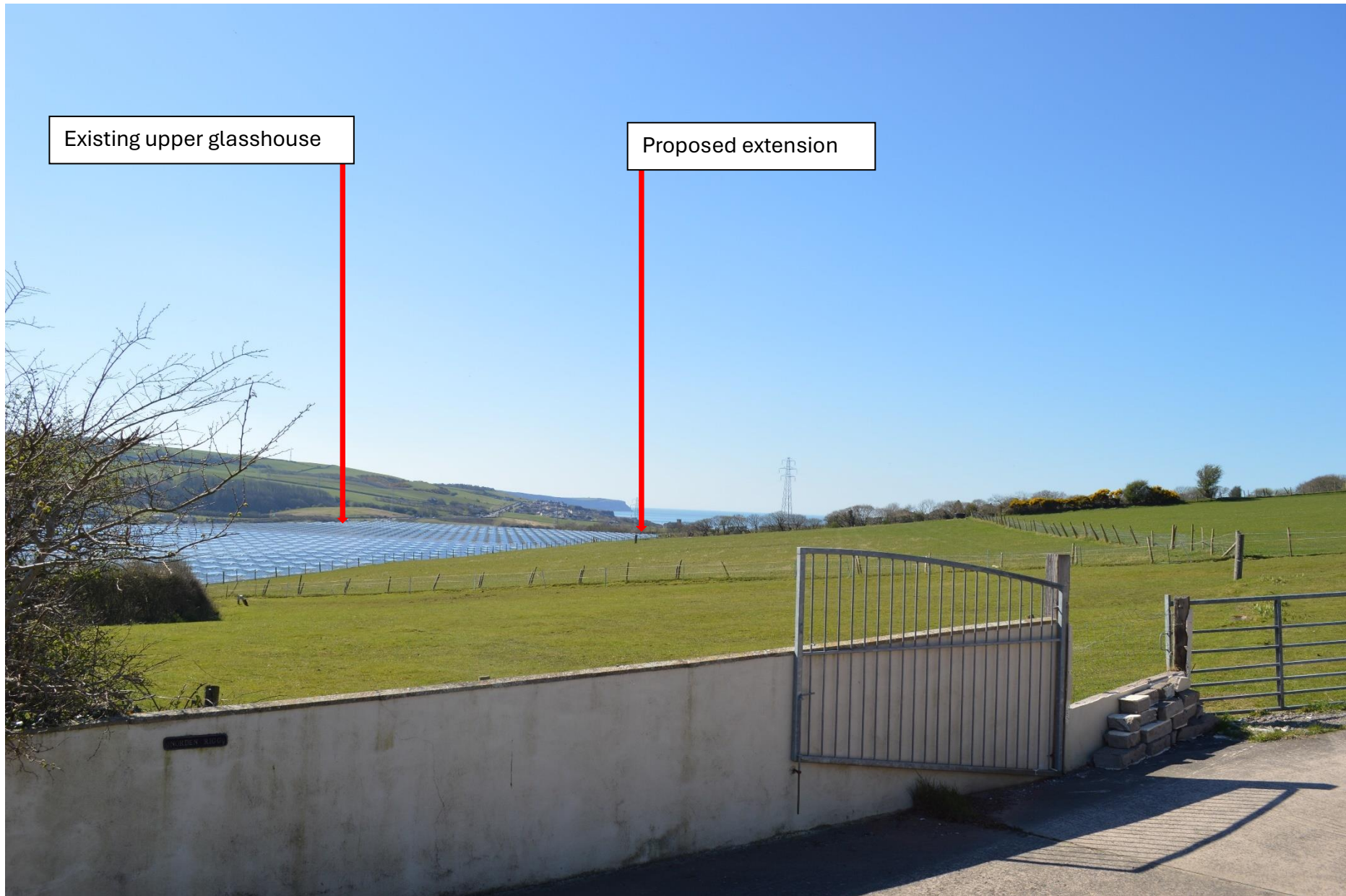


10b (50) View southwards from the PROW which runs along the eastern boundary of the settlement of Lowca. The hedgerow in the foreground will be retained and extended to maximise the low- level screening to reduce the potential visual effect on walker on this route and residents in the adjacent house in Meadow View.



Proposed glasshouse
extension screened

11 (53) View southwards from the PROW running north-eastwards from Lowca. The hedgerow in the foreground and landform screens views of the proposed development from here and further north-east from here.



12 (62) View south-westwards from Norden Rigg on the minor road to Lowca Cottage Farm from where the existing glasshouses are prominent in the view. The proposed extension will be visible as highlighted but the increase in landscape and visual effect will be negligible as it will occupy only a small proportion of the view at an oblique angle.



13 (63) View south-westwards from the minor road at Lowca Cottage Farm from where the existing glasshouses are prominent in the view on elevated ground. The proposed extension will be visible in the distance but the increase in visual effect on these receptors will be negligible. The proposals will not detract from the fine view across the Lowca Beck valley.



14 (54) View north-eastwards from the Lowca to Howgate public Bridleway from where the high kest hedges screen the view towards the Application Site along the whole length. The adjacent property Woodlands is orientated north-westwards and therefore residents are unlikely to get views of the proposals. As the bridleway falls steeply to Lowca Beck there will be no view from this area including from Eden View.



15 (56) View south-eastwards from outside number 49 Meadow View Lowca representing a typical view from within the housing area where most residential receptors will have views screened or partially obscured by houses and trees. Only properties on the edge of the settlement will get unobstructed views.



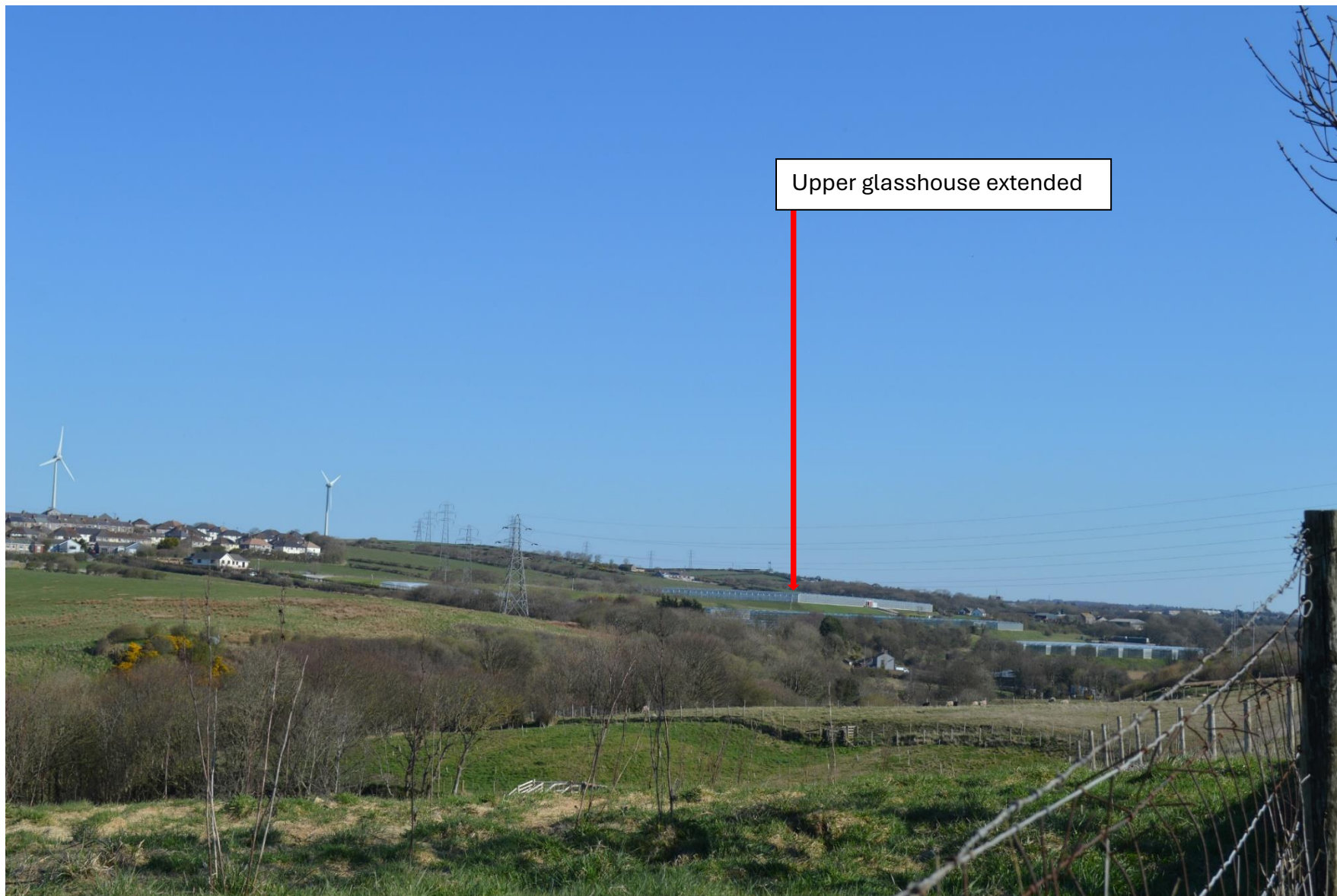
16 (60) View southwards from the minor road just south of the Lowca to High Harrington Road. The Application Site is fully screened by the landform and hedges.



17 (58) View south-eastwards from the Lowca to High Harrington Road on the northern edge of the Lowca settlement adjacent to Micklam House. The Application Site is fully screened by the landform and hedges.



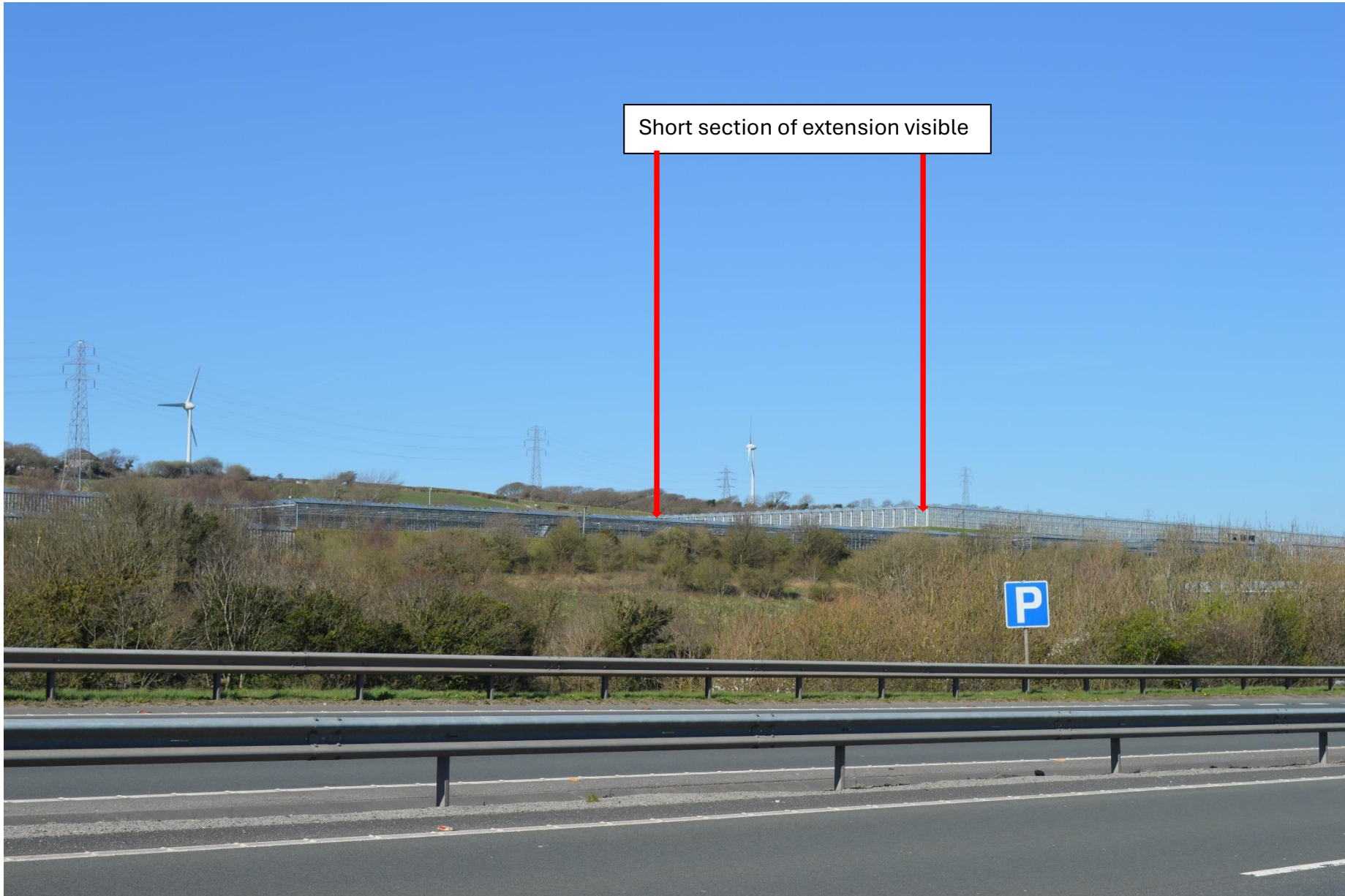
18 (2) View north-westwards from St Bridget's Church Lowca from where the Application Site will be screened by the landform and vegetation. This viewpoint is on the northern edge of the Parton Roman Fort Scheduled Monument and the photograph confirms that the landscape setting of this section will not be affected by the proposals.



19 (1) View north-eastwards from the A595/ Lowca road junction from where road users and residential receptors will get views of the proposal as indicated. The existing glasshouses are prominent landscape components and the proposed extension will register in the view as an extension to the upper glasshouse rather than a new component. The skyline will not be interrupted. The pylons and wind turbines are also prominent components. The effect on the setting of the adjacent Parton Roman Fort Scheduled Monument will be negligible.

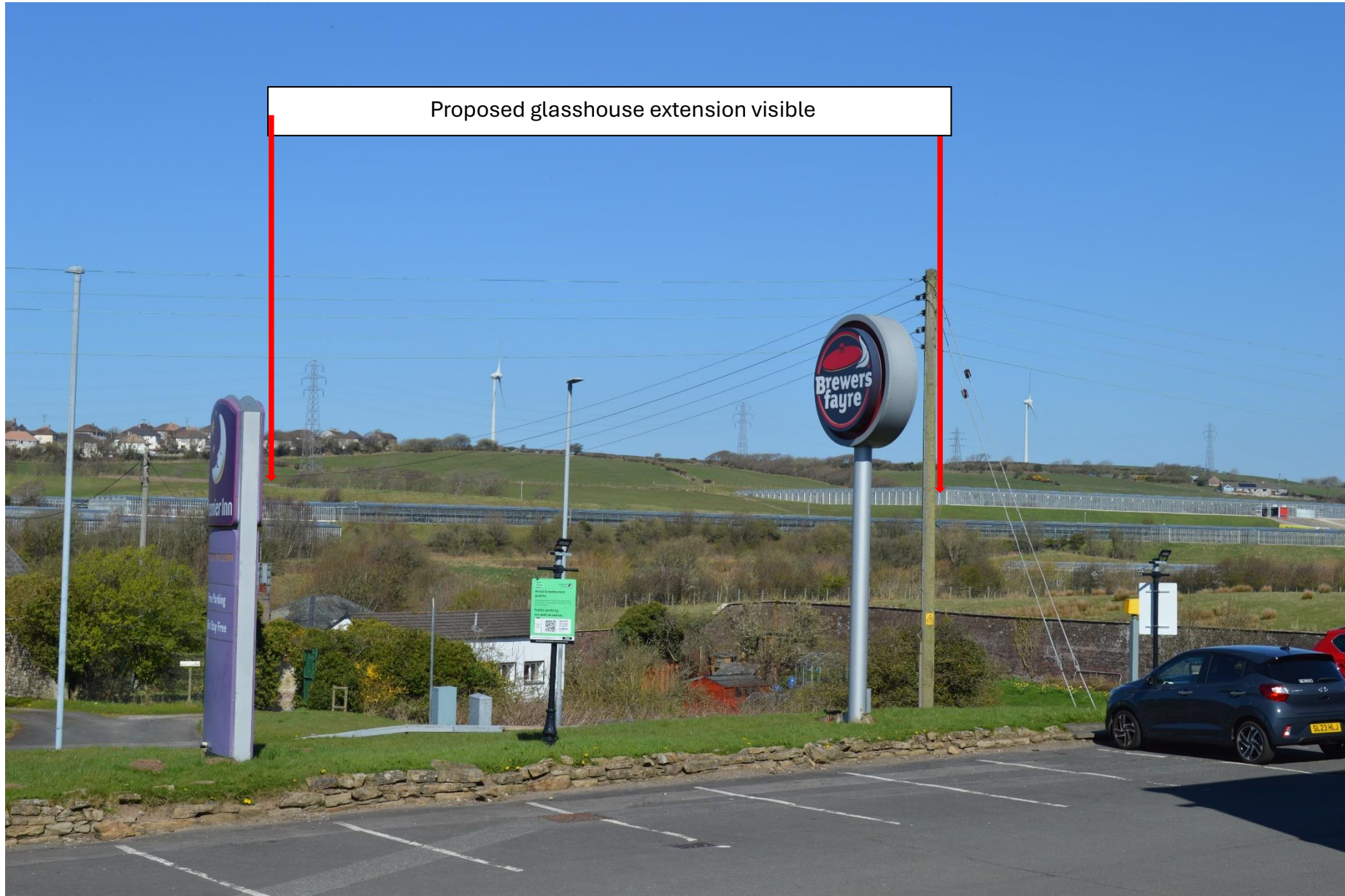


20 (68) View north-eastwards from the Howgate Cycleway adjacent to the A595 at the start of the Distington Bypass representing views of motorists, walkers and cyclists. The proposed glasshouse will be visible as an extension to the existing rather than a new landscape component. The view is cluttered with wind turbines, pylons, light columns and signage as well as the glasshouses which all detract from the landscape setting.



Short section of extension visible

21 (107) View northwards from the A595 Distington Bypass as it crosses Ullgill from where most of the proposed glasshouse will be screened by the existing lower glasshouse and vegetation. The proposed development will only be visible in partially obscured oblique views from a short 260m section of the bypass road. From this point to Distington views of the Application Site are screened by vegetation and landform.



22 (69) View north-westwards from the Hotel in Howgate representing views from several adjacent residential properties on the lower slopes of the Lowca Beck valley. The proposed glasshouse will register in the view as an extension to the existing landscape component.



Proposed
glasshouse
extension

23 (72) View westwards from the B5306 road close to Plough House from where the existing glasshouses are prominent in the view. The proposed glasshouse will increase the proportion of the view affected but the overall increase in landscape and visual effect will be slight.



24 (73) View south-westwards from the B5306 Lowca to Distington road adjacent to the group of houses at Barnhill House from where the existing glasshouses are visible but the proposed extension will be screened.



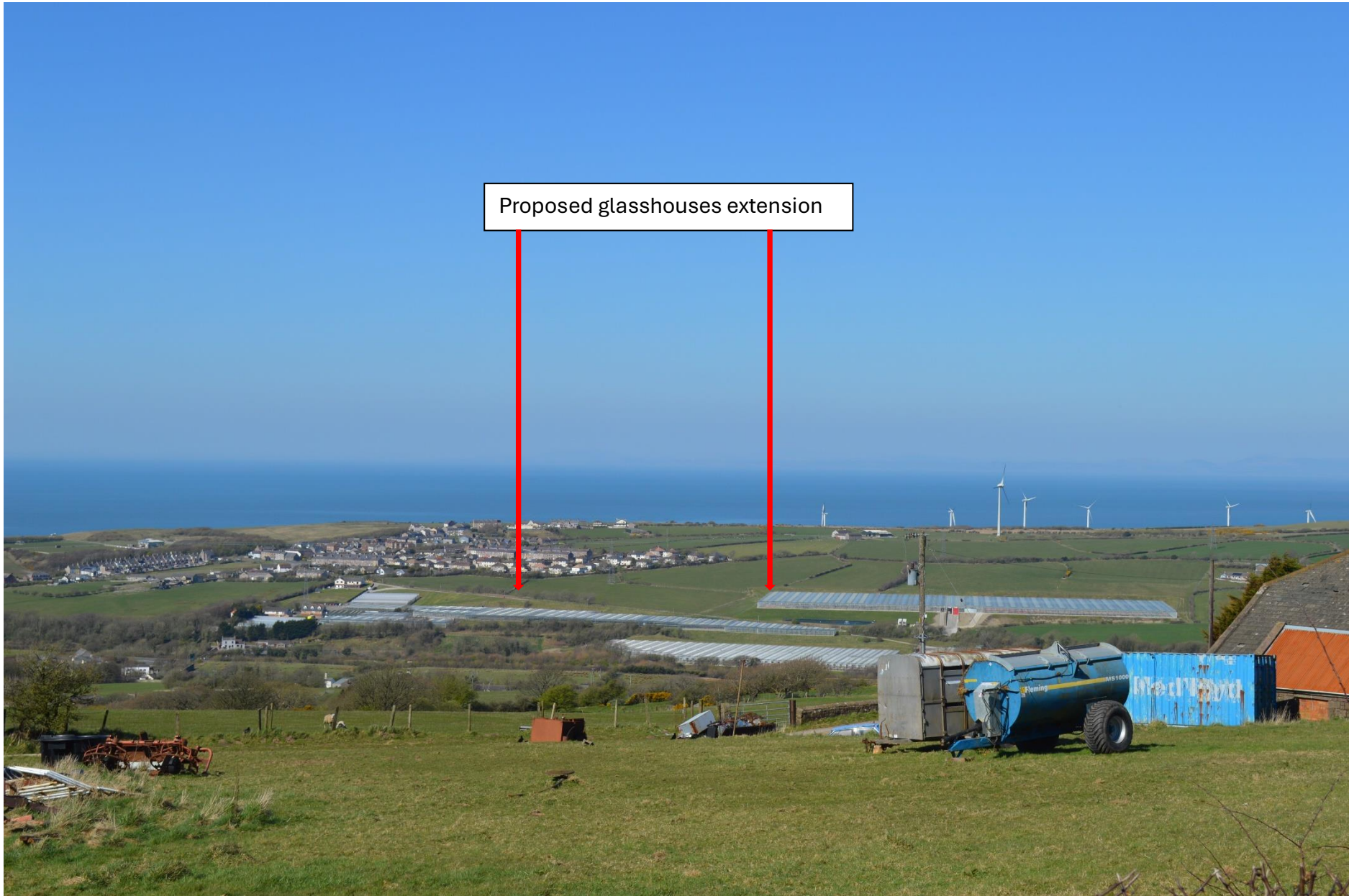
25 (112) View south-westwards from the minor road at Common Side in Common End. The existing glasshouses are partially visible between the houses and residents in these elevated properties will get views of the Application Site. However most of the properties in Common End are situated lower in the valley with no views towards the Application Site.



26a(75) View westwards from the undulating ridge between Common Side and Moresby on the minor road. From this elevated viewpoint the proposed glasshouse will be visible registering as an extension to the existing nursery and not a new landscape component.



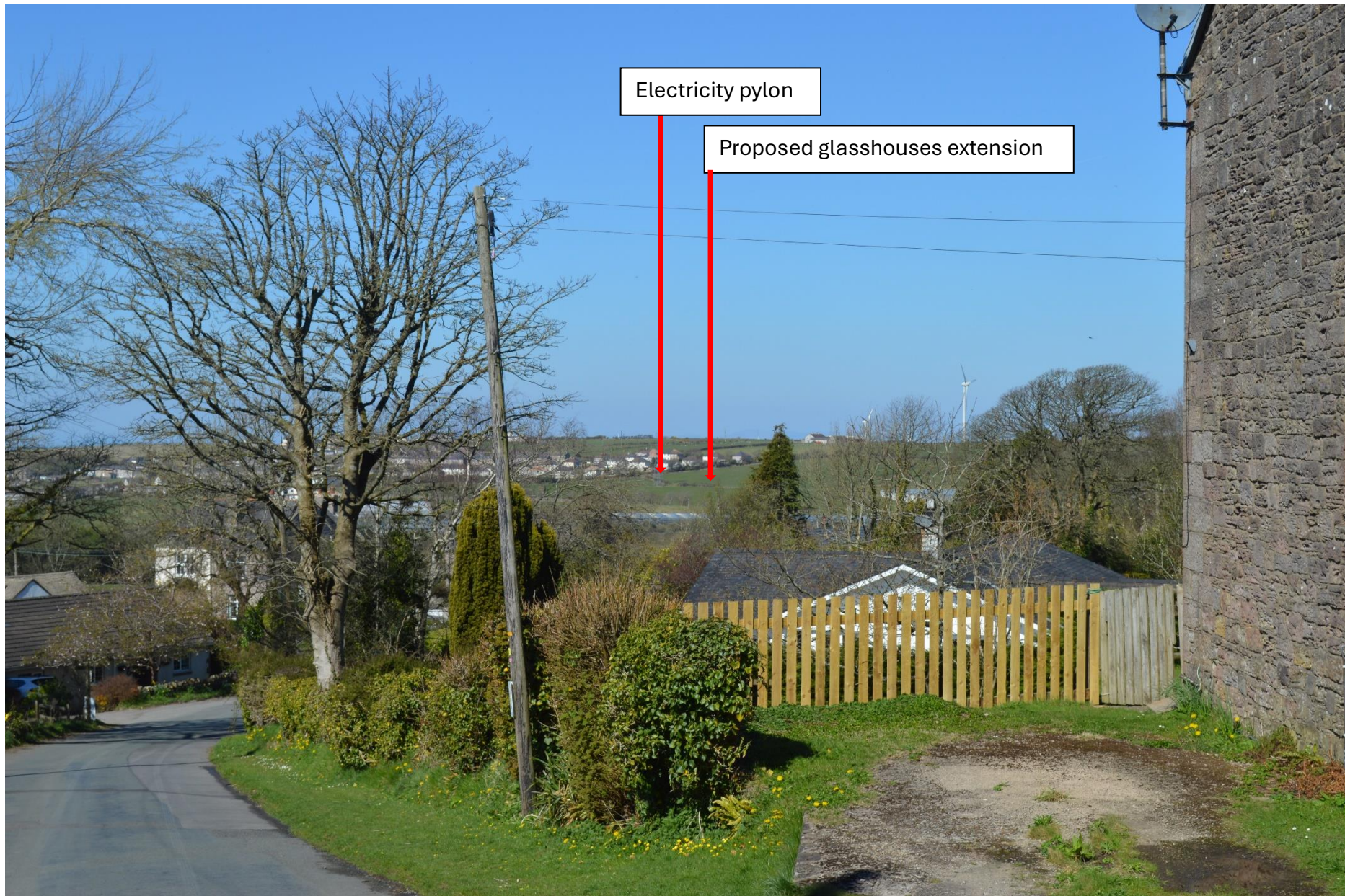
26b (114) View north-westwards from West Croft on localised high ground. The landform in the foreground prevents views of the Application Site which confirms the limit of visibility to the east.



27 (80) View north-westwards from the minor road at High Farm at Watch Hill from where the Application Site is visible. The proposals will register as an extension to an existing landscape component rather than a new intrusion on the view but the proportion of the view affected will increase.



28 (81) View north-westwards from Manesty Rise Low Moresby. Some residents will get partial views of the proposed development as indicated by this obscured view. The proposed glasshouse will be in the foreground of the electricity pylon highlighted.



29 (84) View north-westwards from the minor road adjacent to Stonehow, from where the Application Site is partially visible in the foreground of the electricity pylon.



30 (104) View northwards from the Moresby Parks to Parton minor road from where the Application Site is visible.



31 (105) View north-eastwards from Moresby Church Hall car park adjacent to Firth House from where the proposed development will be partially screened by trees.



32 (106) View north-eastwards from Brewery Brow the Parton road junction with the A595 representing views from the adjacent houses within Parton on the highest ground. This road has a steep gradient falling south-westwards into Parton from where the landform prevents views from most of the settlement. This viewpoint is on the northern edge of the Parton Roman Fort Scheduled Monument and the photograph confirms that the landscape setting of this section will not be affected by the proposals.



33 (910) View north-westwards from the Rosehill Theatre car park from where the Application Site is screened from view by the tall hedgerow and trees.



34 (92) View north-eastwards from Solway House, Quality Corner representing views from several properties in which the Application Site is visible.
View distance 1.8Km.



35 (95) View north-westwards from School Brow to Moresby Parks from where the Application Site is mostly screened by intervening trees.



36 (97) View north-westwards from Moresby Parks Road from where the Application Site will be fully screened by landform and trees.



37 (98) View north-westwards from Moresby Parks Road opposite Bonny Farm in which the proposed development will be visible registering in the view as part of the existing glasshouse development rather than a new landscape component. With a view distance of 1.9Km the landscape and visual effect will be low.