Landscape Proof of Evidence.

Evidence of Radek Chanas.

In Respect of Section 78 Appeal: Land West of Bradmore Road and North of Wysall Road, Land West of Wysall, Wysall. On behalf of Exagen Development Ltd.

Date: 09/02/2026 | Pegasus Ref: P25-1631

Appeal Ref: APP/P3040/W/25/3375110 / LPA Ref: 24/00161/FUL

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Document Management.

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Contents.

Appendices contents.

1. Witness Particulars

1.1. My name is Radek Chanas, and I hold a Master of Engineering degree in Landscape Architecture and a Master of Arts in Garden and Landscape History. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) and undertook the Integrated Environmental Management module at the University of Bath. I have been employed at Pegasus Group since 2011 and have worked at various private practices in Northern Ireland and England.

1.2. I have over 15 years of landscape planning consultancy experience. Prior to Pegasus Group, I was employed at Soltys Brewster Consulting in Belfast where I worked on a number of Heritage Lottery Funded projects. I was also involved in the preparation of the Village Design Statement (VDS) for Sandymount, Dublin, which was part of an urban pilot VDS for the Heritage Council Ireland's Phase 2 VDS programme, various large scale health care developments, and wind farm projects. I also worked at Portus and Whitton in Cirencester where I was involved in a number of projects for the National Trust, Paragraph 84 houses, and assessment of 'replacement' dwellings.

1.3. I specialise in addressing environmental planning issues which relate to various forms of development such as large scale built form and energy infrastructure. I have had a considerable experience of and involvement in a wide range of residential development and built infrastructure projects throughout the UK, many of which have involved statutory protected landscapes including National Parks and National Landscapes (previously known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)), as well as non-statutory local plan landscape designations such as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). I have been involved in a number of planning appeals, including Public Inquiries, and acted as an expert witness at the Examination for the Heckington Fen Solar Park Development Consent Order (DCO).

1.4. I am based in the Cirencester office of Pegasus Group. The landscape architects within the team at Pegasus Group undertake their work in compliance with the Landscape Institute's Standards of Conduct and Practice for Landscape Professionals (May 2012).

1.5. This Landscape Proof of Evidence, which I have prepared, is based on my professional judgement, and is presented in accordance with the guidance of the Landscape Institute. Its content represents my true professional opinion and is provided to the appeal mindful of my duty to the Inspector and irrespective of by whom I am instructed

2. Introduction and Scope of Landscape Evidence

2.1. This evidence relates to a planning appeal submitted pursuant to Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, concerning Land West of Bradmore Road and North of Wysall Road, Land West of Wysall, Wysall ('the Appeal Site').

2.2. The appeal follows the decision of Rushcliffe Borough Council ("RBC") (CD 4.2) to refuse the application for full planning permission (ref. 24/00161/FUL) ("the Planning Application") on the 19th June 2025. The Planning Application relates to a proposed development ("the Appeal Scheme") comprising the following:

"Construction, operation and subsequent decommissioning of a renewable energy park comprising ground mounted Solar PV with co-located battery energy storage system (BESS) at the point of connection, together with associated infrastructure, access, landscaping and cabling."

2.3. Following the refusal of the application by RBC, minor changes have been made to the design of the Application Scheme to accompany the appeal submission. The proposed changes have been made to address changes to the EA Flood Risk mapping published in March 2025 and to provide additional NFCC compliance for the BESS proposal, alongside some additional landscaping, and further detail on these changes were included in the Summary of Changes Document and Summary of Changes Comparison Plan (CD3.4 and 35 respectively). The Appellant duly requests that the inspector takes the revised information submitted under cover of the appeal into consideration in their determination. These changes were consulted on at the time of lodging the appeal in accordance with the Holborn principles[1] as set out on the Planning Proof of Evidence of Mr Cussen.

2.4. RBC, within their Statement of Case (CD 8.4), asserts that these changes fundamentally alter the nature of the development under consideration at this appeal and at the CMC there was no decision made as to whether the changes had been accepted and as such the appeal would proceed covering two options, the original Appeal Scheme and the amended Appeal Scheme.

[1] R (Holborn Studios Limited) v The Council of the London Borough of Hackney [2017] EWHC 2823
(Admin)

2.5. My Landscape Proof of Evidence (CD 8.6.1) should be read in conjunction with Pegasus' Planning Proof of Evidence (CD 8.6), Landscape Statement of Common Ground ('Landscape SoCG') (CD 8.3.1A), and my Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') (October 2024) (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) submitted as part of the planning application to Rushcliffe Borough Council ('RBC'). The planning application for the Application Scheme was submitted to RBC on 16th February 2024 and was registered under the reference number 24/00161/FUL.

2.6. The Appeal Site comprises two land parcels located to the northwest and west of the village of Wysall, which is the closest settlement. Wysall is separated from the Appeal Site by various pastoral and arable fields with the settlement edge largely enclosed by mature hedgerows and tree vegetation.

2.7. Access to the northern parcel would be from Bradmore Road via a new access junction and track with access into the southern parcel off Wysall Road through an existing field opening which would be upgraded and across Kingston Brook.

2.8. A number of existing mature woodland blocks are present in the immediate area. A linear block of ancient woodland, known as Bunny Old Wood, forms the northern edge of the Appeal Site. Rough Plantation, Wysall Rough Plantation, Long Rough Plantation, and Intake Wood abut the Appeal Site generally to the west. A small unnamed block of woodland is located along Kingston Brook, and south of the proposed BESS and substation compound.

2.9. Immediately to the west of the Appeal Site lies the approved solar farm on Land To North East Of Highfields Farm, Bunny Hill, Costock, Nottinghamshire (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL), hereafter referred to throughout this Landscape Proof of Evidence as the 'consented Highfields Solar Farm'. The consented solar farm includes a 132kv substation and small scale battery storage infrastructure (BESS). It covers approximately 81.8 ha of the arable fields around Holy Cross Convent, west of the Appeal Site and above mentioned woodlands with its northern edge offset from Bunny Old Wood by approximately 100 m.

2.10. The planning application for the Application Scheme was refused by RBC's Planning Committee on 19 June 2025 against the advice and the recommendation of the Officer's Report to Committee (CD 4.1).

2.11. There are four reasons for refusal ('RfR') attached to RBC's Decision Notice (CD 4.2) with RfR 1 being the only relevant one from an LVIA point of view:

"The proposal would result in a significant adverse visual impact upon the landscape character of the area, particularly when the impacts are considered cumulatively with the consented solar farm to the west of the site. The proposal would result in major adverse effects upon users of the Public Rights of Way which run through and near to the site, impacting on their ability to enjoy the rural landscape character which would be diminished and changed by virtue of the industrialisation of the area and the resultant enclosed industrial corridors. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity) of LPP1 and Policy 1 (Development Requirements), Policy 16 (Renewable Energy), Policy 22 (Development in the Countryside) and Policy 34 (Green Infrastructure and Open Space Assets) of LPP2 as the benefits of the development do not outweigh the adverse effects on the users of the Public Right of Way and the wider landscape character."

2.12. During the determination stage of the application RBC appointed Wynne-Williams Associates ('WWA') to review my LVIA with comments provided in June 2024 (CD 4.64) and subsequently updated in February 2025 following my update to the LVIA dated October 2024. The latest round of comments from WWA, issued in February 2025 (CD 4.65), RBC's SoC (CD 8.4), and the Landscape SoCG (CD 8.3.1A) are taken as the Council's position with regards to the LVIA issues.

2.13. RBC's SoC (CD 8.4) at paragraph 1.2.4 states that the refinements to the Appeal Scheme proposed as part of this appeal (such as the introduction of the two fire water tanks at the BESS compound) are unacceptable. This is also identified as a matter in dispute at paragraph 4.2 of the Landscape SoCG (CD 8.3.1). I consider the proposed changes to be inconsequential in LVIA terms. The addition of the two water tanks in such discreet and low lying location, and minute adjustments to the layout elsewhere, do not change the conclusions of the submitted LVIA (October 2024) (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) submitted as part of the planning application. The height of the two water tanks is c. 3.3 m (CD 3.3), which is comparable to the proposed solar panels and BESS units within the substation compound. The increase in quantum – two additional pieces of small scale infrastructure in such discreet location, is inconsequential. I do not find such refinements to be unusual given the evolving technology and design requirements, which might have not been available at the time of submitting the planning application, but which now help in determining this appeal. This is explained in the Appellant's Planning Proof of Evidence, paragraph 4.7 and onwards including paragraph 4.21, which deal with the acceptability of such changes (CD 8.6). I note RBC's SoC (CD 8.4) does not specifically refer to the additional planting shown on Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (dwg no. P25-1631_EN_O2E) (CD 3.6), therefore I take it that RBC does not have any issues with the additional planting introduced as part of the appeal process. Similarly to Mr Cussen, where relevant, I make a distinction between the 'Application Scheme' and the revised

'Appeal Scheme'. Where I refer to the proposed development in general terms I shall use the term 'Scheme'.

2.14. Accordingly, I consider the following matters within my Landscape Proof of Evidence with regard to the alleged harm set out in RfR 1, and as outlined in the Landscape Statement of Common Ground ('the Landscape SoCG') (CD 8.3.1A) between the LPA and the Appellant. The Application Scheme is alleged to result in:

- Materially harmful effects upon the appreciation of the landscape character of the area, particularly in the context of the consented Highfields solar farm located to the west of the Appeal Site.
- Materially harmful effects upon the recreational users of the Public Rights of Way ('PRoWs').
- Incongruous nature of the proposed mitigation planting.

2.15. I note that the issue of residential visual amenity is not included in any of the RfRs. It has been agreed through the Landscape SoCG (CD 8.3.1A) that residential visual amenity is not a 'matter in dispute'. Therefore, whilst adverse in nature, any visual effects would not be overbearing.

2.16. The relevant application documents were identified in Pegasus' Statement of Case (CD 8.2) and where appropriate, my Landscape Proof of Evidence draws upon the information from these documents and seeks to avoid unnecessary repetition.

2.17. Overall, I consider that the Appeal Site and the Application Scheme have been carefully considered by the Appellant and their consultants at the time of the application. I also consider that the revised Appeal Scheme has been carefully considered at the time of the appeal.

2.18. I consider the Appeal Scheme (and also the Application Scheme) to be suitable in landscape character and visual terms, given its location and the current characteristics of the Appeal Site, and its surroundings, including when taking into account potential cumulative effects. The landscape and visual effects arising from this Appeal Scheme (and also the Application Scheme) are highly localised and limited.

2.19. For the benefit of the Inspector, I wish to confirm that I also authored the original LVIA submitted with the planning application and the updated LVIA dated Oct 2024 (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) which was submitted during the course of the application being determined.

2.20. Notwithstanding the above and in light of this Appeal, I have re-considered my submitted assessment - my LVIA (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1), and other supporting information submitted with the planning application and this Appeal, and have revisited the Appeal Site and the study area in mid-August 2025 prior to and to inform my Landscape Proof of Evidence.

Landscape Strategy

2.21. A Landscape Strategy Plan (CD 1.28) was prepared by Pegasus and submitted as part of the aforementioned planning application 24/00161/FUL, and like my LVIA this was updated in October 2024 (CD 2.20). This identifies, in detail, the retained and proposed (at the time) landscape features including new hedgerows, new native hedgerow trees, and woodland and copse planting, and areas of grassland in and around the solar modules.

2.22. As part of this Appeal the proposed landscaping has been refined to account for further technical input from the design team, and this is explained in the Statement of Case. From an LVIA point of view the changes include:

a. the addition of hedgerow trees along the southern boundary of Field 3.

b. the addition of a small scale linear copse along the eastern boundary of Field 15.

c. the addition of hedgerow trees withing the internal hedgerows, between Fields 12 and 15, Field 14 and 15, and Field 13 and 14.

d. The route of Public Footpath Wysall FP4 confirmed to coincide with an existing agricultural track leading from Bradmore Road into the Appeal site.

e. Omission of the previously proposed hedgerow along the northern edge of Field 9.

f. Additional hedgerow to the southern edge of Field 5 and Field 6 to enclose Public Footpath Wysall FP4 to the north.

2.23. The proposed enhanced landscaping is shown on Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' plan (drawing number P25-1631_EN_02E (CD 3.6). The 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' is based on Pegasus' previous plan titled: 'Landscape Strategy' (drawing number P22-2533_EN_06E) submitted as part of the planning application (CD 2.20).

2.24. My Landscape Proof of Evidence has been prepared with regard to the most recent landscape proposals, namely Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (drawing number P25-1631_EN_02E) (CD 3.6) – refer to Plate 1. The details of the re-consultation on these and other changes are set out in the Planning Proof of Evidence (CD 8.6).

2.25. The differences between the submitted 'Landscape Strategy' plan (drawing number P22-2533_EN_06E; CD 2.20) and the 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (drawing number P25-1631_EN_02E; CD 3.6) are also identified on the additional plan titled 'Summary of Changes Comparison Plan' (drawing number P25-1631_EN_03C) (CD 3.5).

Plate 1 Extract from Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (drawing number P25-1631_EN_02E) (CD 3.6).

Representative Viewpoints

2.26. The photographs included in my updated LVIA (October 2024) (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) have been taken from a number of representative and illustrative viewpoints in the landscape surrounding the Appeal Site, both in terms of views of the Appeal Site and its immediate landscape context, the nearby receptors, and the wider surrounding countryside, and the consented Highfields Solar Farm (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL).

2.27. I undertook the site visit, photography, and assessment for my LVIA in late January 2022 and late November 2023 when the level of vegetative screening was reduced. Therefore, my assessments considered the worst-case scenario. In addition, the identified viewpoints have been purposely selected to avoid any features in the foreground that would screen or interrupt views towards the Appeal Site. I carried out an additional site visit on the 1st of August 2024 to support my updated LVIA (October 2024) (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) enabling me to understand the vegetative screening offered by the woodlands and hedgerows around the Appeal Site and those in the wider landscape.

2.28. As part of the LVIA work Pegasus prepared a Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Viewpoint Location Plan, which forms Figure 5 to my LVIA (CD 2.16).

2.29. To confirm the inter-visibility between the Appeal Site and the nearby visual receptors the I have revisited the Appeal Site again in August 2025 and walked the relevant PRoWs in both directions. I have included a number of additional views (shown as Plates in my Landscape PoE) with their locations indicated at my Appendix 1 'Location Plan: Plates 8-26'.

2.30. In addition, the viewpoints photomontaged by The Landmark Practice were used to inform my updated LVIA (October 2024) (CD 2.16.1).

2.31. I anticipate that the Inspector would visit these viewpoints and use all the visuals that have been provided as an aide memoire.

2.32. It should be recognised that it is not practical to include viewpoints from every possible location. The viewpoints which have been selected illustrate a range of visual receptors at different distances and directions from the site. The locations of the viewpoints have been carefully considered to account for a wide range receptors and not just those immediately

around the Appeal Site, in order to provide a balanced view of the potential landscape character and visual effects. The photography has been undertaken when atmospheric conditions and visibility was good. I consider that the photography is appropriate given the type and scale of development. The selected viewpoints and visualisations have been prepared mindful of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (CD 5.28) and Landscape Institute guidance relevant at the time of production (CD 5.29), however, it is recognised that there is no substitute for visiting the local highways and PRoWs, and associated viewpoints in the field, to gain a first-hand appreciation of the viewing context. Neither RBC's SoC (CD 8.4) nor the Landscape SoCG (CD 8.3.1A) question the accuracy or quality of the photomontages.

2.33. With this information, the Case Officer was fully informed of the visual implications of the Application Scheme, including the proposed mitigation planting, and its acceptability.

Professional Judgement and Nature of Effect

2.34. Mindful of the GLVIA3 (CD 5.28) and this appeal process, I have revisited the LVIA viewpoints as part of the field work to confirm the findings of my LVIA. The assessment presented in my submitted LVIA was based on winter views, given the planning application timetable, representing the worst-case scenario in terms of visibility of the Appeal Site.

2.35. Given the comprehensive site photography provided in my submitted LVIA (CD 2.16 and CD_2.16.1) I did not consider it necessary to provide further viewpoints or photography as part of this Landscape Proof of Evidence.

2.36. The degree of landscape or visual effect is identified by means of a descriptive scale in accordance with the *GLVIA3* (CD 5.28). However, it is also necessary to consider the nature of the landscape and visual effects. The *GLVIA3* paragraph 5.37 (CD 5.28) assists by noting that with regard to landscape effects:

"One of the more challenging issues is deciding whether the landscape effects should be categorised as positive or negative. It is also possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape. An informed professional judgement should be made about this and the criteria used in reaching the judgement should be clearly stated. They might include, but should not be restricted to:

- ***The degree to which the proposal fits with existing character.***

- ***The contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character.***

The importance of perceptions of landscape is emphasised by the European Landscape Convention, and others may of course hold different opinions on whether the effects are positive or negative, but this is not a reason to avoid making this judgement, which will ultimately be weighed against the opinions of others in the decision-making process." (underlining is the Author's emphasis)

2.37. With regard to visual effects, *GLVIA3* paragraph 6.29 (CD 5.28) states:

"As with landscape effects an informed professional judgement should be made as to whether the visual effects can be described as positive or negative (or in some cases neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity. This will need to be based on a judgement about whether the changes will affect the quality of the visual experience for those groups of people who will see the changes, given the nature of the existing views." (underlining is the Author's emphasis)

2.38. In this instance and for the purposes of my Landscape Proof of Evidence, I specifically consider effects upon the landscape in terms of effect upon firstly landscape elements and secondly landscape character, which considers the combinations of landscape elements. My Landscape Proof of Evidence also sets out how the Application and Appeal Schemes would have a bearing upon the general visual amenity associated with the local area. The proposed design includes green infrastructure which would be in character and in keeping with the rural area.

2.39. However, people on the whole generally adopt an adverse reaction to change, particularly with regard to their local environments with which they are very familiar. Whilst the proposed green infrastructure is considered to be beneficial in landscape terms, I have adopted a precautionary approach to adverse effects in my Landscape Proof of Evidence.

3. Description of the Appeal Site and Application and Appeal Schemes

3.1. The Appeal Site and Application Scheme are fully described in the submitted Planning Statement (CD 2.4 and CD 24.1), DAS (CD 2.2), LVIA (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) and other information accompanying the planning application, and indeed in Pegasus' Statement of Case (CD 8.2) and Landscape SoCG (CD 8.3.1A). The following paragraphs provide a succinct description of the Site and its context.

3.2. The surrounding landscape is a working agricultural landscape with villages and dispersed farmsteads connected by minor roads. The villages of Wysall and Costock are the two closest settlements. The landform around the Appeal Site and across the central part of the study area forms a band of higher ground drained by Fairham Brook to the north and Kingston Brook to the south. There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations in the local or wider area. Woodlands are a frequent feature in the landscape with hedgerows of variable height but often substantial and with frequent hedgerow trees.

3.3. The Appeal Site comprises two land parcels located to the northwest and west of the village of Wysall, which is the closest settlement. Wysall is separated from the Appeal Site by various pastoral and arable fields with the settlement edge largely enclosed by mature hedgerows and tree vegetation. The Local Plan does not identify the settlement boundary for Wysall but its perceived edge (i.e., that which appears to form a residential curtilage within a clearly identifiable cluster of properties in the village) is located some 320 m away at its closest point between Field 15 and southern edge of the village. Field 9 is located some 650 m away from the northern edge of the village (properties near Bradmore Road). The two parcels which make up the Appeal Site are separated by a number of small scale fields in arable use.

3.4. A linear block of ancient woodland, known as Bunny Old Wood, forms the northern edge of the Appeal Site. Access to the northern parcel would be from Bradmore Road into Field 10, just south of Lodge Farm via a new access junction and track avoiding construction traffic using the Public Right of Way and passing through and close to Lodge Farm. Access into the southern parcel would be off Wysall Road through an existing field opening which would be upgraded and across Kingston Brook. The existing culvert / agricultural vehicular crossing would be utilised to cross the Brook though this will need to be upgraded to take construction traffic.

3.5. The northern parcel includes 9 no. medium to large scale field enclosures with Bradmore Road forming, in parts, its eastern boundary and would be subdivided into Fields 1 - 10. Access to the northern parcel would be from Bradmore Road into Field 10, just south of Lodge Farm, via a new access junction and new track avoiding the need to use Public Footpath Wysall FP4.

3.6. The southern parcel includes 5 no. small to medium field enclosures, and would be subdivided into Fields 11 - 16. Access into the southern parcel would be off Wysall Road through an existing field opening which would be upgraded and across Kingston Brook. The existing culvert / agricultural vehicular crossing would be utilised to cross the Brook though this will need to be upgraded to take construction traffic.

3.7. The two parcels are connected by a buried cable to be laid beneath the bound surface of the public highway.

3.8. A number of woodland blocks are present in the immediate area. A linear block of ancient woodland, known as Bunny Old Wood, forms the northern edge of the Appeal Site. Rough Plantation, Wysall Rough Plantation, Long Rough Plantation, and Intake Wood abut the Appeal Site generally to the west.

3.9. Immediately to the west of the Appeal Site lies the approved solar farm on Land To North East Of Highfields Farm, Bunny Hill, Costock, Nottinghamshire (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL). The consented Highfields Solar Farm includes a 132kv substation and small scale battery storage infrastructure (BESS). It covers approximately 81.8 ha of the arable fields around Holy Cross Convent, west of the Appeal Site and above-mentioned woodlands with its northern edge offset from Bunny Old Wood by approximately 100 m.

3.10. The existing landscape resource and the visual receptors and amenity of the Appeal Site have been considered by the planning and design process, and this has informed the resultant Scheme. This approach has entailed collaboration between various technical professionals. In other words, the proposed landscape components are an integral part of the design for the Scheme.

Landscape Design Principles for the Green Infrastructure

3.11. The vision for the Appeal Scheme (and also the Application Scheme) includes a network of green infrastructure assets that would help reinforce the character of the local farmed

landscape. At a macro level the proposed green infrastructure would ensure that the Appeal Scheme (and also the Application Scheme) would help:

a. Conserve and reinforce local landscape character.

b. Protect and enhance existing green infrastructure assets namely the trees and hedgerows so that they can be appreciated and valued by everyone for future generations.

c. Protect and create habitats to enable biodiversity habitats and flora and fauna species to thrive.

d. Provide a resilient and adaptive environment in the face of climate change.

3.12. The green infrastructure would deliver many benefits including:

a. Climate change adaptation and mitigation.

b. Investment in the proposed green infrastructure bringing benefit to wildlife and the environment generally - with regards the BNG this is detailed in the submitted ecology report - the EcIA (November 2024).

c. Protecting and enhancing landscape character and biodiversity by using land improvements and management to deliver biodiversity gain and overall landscape enhancement.

3.13. The above-described Green Infrastructure also acts as landscape mitigation elements: new hedgerow planting, hedgerow trees, woodland and copse planting, and change to land cover though proposed species rich grassland within the solar arrays and wildflower meadows outside the solar and BESS perimeter fencing). I explain these in the below paragraphs.

3.14. The following mitigation measures relate to the landscape and visual matters, and are considered to be the primary mitigation measures, which form an integral part of the Appeal Scheme (and also the Application Scheme):

a) Retention and protection and enhancement (gapping up where necessary including management) of the existing network of trees and hedgerows along field boundaries.

b) Offset from boundary vegetation to protect their Root Protection Areas (RPAs).

c) By offsetting the proposed panels and other infrastructure from the boundaries, the Scheme avoids any direct effect upon the Root Protection Zone of the existing

boundary vegetation, which is characterised by mature hedgerows and trees. The relatively wide buffer also provides a generous maintenance zone and helps avoid any long-term management risks, which could result in future tree works.

d) Additional areas of copse planting to increase the depth of boundary vegetation, reinforce the sense of enclosure around the Appeal Site, and further reduce views in.

e) Additional hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting.

f) Hedgerow tree species to be large scale trees, such as Oaks, and small scale trees, such as Hawthorn or Maple to reflect the existing tree species within the landscape, and increase the canopy cover.

g) All existing and proposed native hedgerows managed to a height of min 3 m, or over where already taller, to increase the visual enclosure.

h) New areas of native grassland including grazing mix and wildflower meadows, in line with ecological requirements.

i) Ongoing landscape management of planting during the lifetime of the solar farm.

j) Ecological features such as bat and bird boxes, and mammal gates and hibernacula - the location of these can be agreed with RBC and conditioned.

3.15. Overall, I consider that the addition of new hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses and small woodlands would connect the various existing woodland habitats and strengthen the overall landscape framework in this part of the landscape.

3.16. The site photographs included in my LVIA (CD 2.16) illustrate some of the existing elements and features associated with the Appeal Site with further site photographs from within the Appeal Site embedded in the main body of this Landscape PoE.

3.17. The above landscape strategy responds to and reflects design practice in the National Design Guide (updated January 2021).

Decommissioning

3.18. The Appeal and Application Schemes comprise a range of built infrastructure in addition to the solar arrays including inverters and transformation units, BESS modules, substation and transformer, access tracks, perimeter security fencing and CCTV columns. All of the infrastructure associated with the Scheme including the construction and maintenance tracks would be removed as part of the decommissioning stage - as acknowledged in the

Statement of Case, to ensure that the landscape reverts back to its original state prior to construction. It is worth noting that there is the potential for the access tracks to be retained post decommissioning, and retained by the landowner, to facilitate the restoration of land to agriculture and future land management. The mitigation and enhancement planting with regard to hedgerows and trees would remain in place. Where built form is removed, the land will be reinstated to arable farmland to marry in with the existing arable fields. The landowner post-decommission stage will have the opportunity to either continue to practice pastoral farming or convert to arable use where such decisions do not require any planning permission.

4. Effect on Landscape Elements

Introduction

4.1. There are no off-site works required associated with the Scheme beyond the Appeal Site, with the exception of some of the skylark mitigation plots which are located within the land ownership boundary. The cable route, to be laid beneath the bound surface of the public highway, falls within the boundary of the Appeal Site.

4.2. This section of my Landscape Proof of Evidence therefore assesses the effects on those landscape elements (features) that currently characterise the two parcels of land associated with the Appeal Site. I particularly consider how the introduction of the new elements that make up the Scheme will physically affect the existing features present within the Appeal Site. I also explain why the Scheme would, in overall terms, result in a beneficial effect as far as some landscape elements are concerned.

4.3. The existing landscape elements within and immediately surrounding the Appeal Site are illustrated on Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (drawing number P25-1631_EN_02E) (CD 3.6) along with the proposed planting, and are shown in the context of the approved but not yet built cumulative consented Highfields Solar Farm (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL) and its own proposed landscaping.

4.4. The site photography provided at LVIA Figure 3 Site Context Views and Figure 6 Context Baseline Viewpoints and Photoviews (CD 2.16) coupled with the photomontages prepared by The Landmark Practice (CD 2.30) illustrate the landscape features present within the Appeal Site and the local landscape.

Land Use/ Land Cover

4.5. At the time of writing this Landscape Proof of Evidence the arable crop within the northern parcel was harvested with the southern parcel still containing maize crop. According to the Ecological Impact Assessment (Figure 4a and Figure 5a, pp. 27 and 28) the Appeal Site includes arable crop and grass margins along the field boundaries two areas of modified grassland located in the southern parcel (Field 9 and Field 13) (CD 3.8). I recognise that the current land use incorporates rotational planting therefore the ground cover varies from year to year.

4.6. There would be an inevitable change in the existing land cover of the Appeal Site with the Scheme in place. The existing land cover, under arable, would be converted to pastoral use. Therefore, to accommodate the Scheme, the land would retain its agricultural function managed as pasture, whilst still accommodating the solar modules and ancillary solar infrastructure. Whilst there would be no opportunity for grazing within the BESS modules or the substation the remaining areas could be subject to conservation grazing by sheep with some restrictions on sheep numbers and timing of grazing, as and when necessary. The notable point here is that there would be a very limited loss of agricultural land throughout the operational years and upon decommissioning, would allow arable farming to be reintroduced. Switching between pastoral and arable use is an integral part of farm management either short or long term and does not require planning permission. The grazing density for sheep within a solar farm is not materially different to general grazing densities.

4.7. The ephemeral nature of the arable crop is of low susceptibility to change as such form of vegetation can be easily replaced in a relatively short period of time and a number of times a year. In terms of its value arable land use is frequent in the local area and characteristic of the local landscape, suggesting a medium value. Overall, the sensitivity of arable land is medium.

4.8. By conversion to pasture, the land and soil would not only have the opportunity to rest, but there would be removal of intensive agricultural practices of herbicide, pesticide and fertiliser application and an improvement in agronomy terms through sheep being kept on the land with associated increased nutrient levels – this is also covered in the Appellant's Planning Proof of Evidence Section 9 and Section 11 (CD 8.6).

4.9. I consider the conversion to permanent pastures to be beneficial, including as a way of improving surface water drainage, and of medium degree of change, acknowledging the overall physical footprint of the introduced infrastructure. This would result in a moderate (beneficial) effect with regard to land cover associated with the Scheme, as a whole.

4.10. The above analysis is based on a number of considerations relating to this aspect of the Scheme, which I note in the following paragraphs.

4.11. The land is currently farmed as arable land. This requires intensive agricultural practices with the arable crop replaced annually and quantities of herbicides, pesticides and fertiliser applied to the land.

4.12. With the Appeal Scheme as proposed (and also the Application Scheme), the land would be managed as pasture whilst accommodating the solar modules, BESS & substation compound, and other infrastructure within the existing fields.

4.13. This change in the ground cover and management directly addresses the guidelines and recommendations for the host landscape: Regional Character Area of Nottinghamshire Wolds as identified in the published *Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment* (CD 5.53):

- ***"Conserve all areas of permanent pasture particularly where present close to villages and along streams; (…)***
- ***Restore the traditional pastoral character and diversity of scarp grasslands; (…)***
- ***Conserve the character of village side pastoral landscapes;…"***

4.14. The 'Other Key Drivers' for the host NCA 74 'Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds' (CD 5.51) also recognise***: "Restoration of areas of semi-natural grassland will provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity and the landscape, …"***.

4.15. Evidently changing from arable to pastoral land use is considered beneficial by RBC. For this reason, I consider the magnitude of change to be medium beneficial with the effects moderate beneficial.

4.16. Overall, the agricultural land cover would be retained across the entire Appeal Site, with the exception of the substation and BESS compound, with the solar modules superimposed over this managed grassland, in contrast to development that sits in the land and is permanent. The grassland would be farm managed with sheep grazing to ensure that the grassland is appropriately managed and maintained for the lifetime of the Scheme. Sheep are able to effectively graze across any of the grassland whether it is under the solar panel tables or between the rows of modules themselves.

4.17. The amount of actual loss of agricultural land as a result of the Scheme would be negligible given the overall size of the Appeal Site, and any loss would only be temporary. Apart from the BESS units and substations, transformers, inverter units, and access tracks, which may require sub soil foundations, the only other infrastructure that would be superimposed over the grass sward would be the steel supports for the solar panels.

4.18. It is good agricultural practice to break the cultivation of the land with the land left fallow and retained as pasture for periods of time to allow the soil ecology to recover. The Scheme would allow the land to effectively rest from arable use for 40 years. With the land managed for grazing the sheep droppings would allow the soil to become more enriched in soil habitat terms. At the end of the period the soil resource would be a better-quality enriched resource for farming as a consequence. There will be as a result, long term benefits for the soil from being rested for 40 years. Furthermore, with the land managed for pasture with sheep grazing present, the Scheme would allow carbon sequestration with regard to the soil resource within the Appeal Site.

4.19. The ephemeral intensively cultivated arable crop would be replaced by permanent and low impact grassland, which would remain with the Scheme in place. No land will be permanently lost as a result of the Scheme. The installation of the solar modules would not seal the land, nor would it cause any downgrading of quality. Only a small area for access tracks and BESS, substations etc infrastructure would be physically lost, but this land would be restored on decommissioning. The installation and decommissioning process would not have any significant or long term adverse effects on soils following good practice in terms of pasture management and maintenance.

Topography

4.20. The topography within the Appeal Site is simple with a gentle slope detectable across both parcels. The contours are smooth without any pronounced changes in levels. Whilst it forms part of the wider undulating Nottinghamshire Wolds landscape the changes in the ground levels are smooth without any pronounced slopes and the landform simply rises from the valley slope - particularly the northern parcel, and for that reason its value is considered to be medium. The susceptibility of the Appeal Site's topography to the Scheme is assessed as being low given the metal framework for the solar panels (being the main component of the Scheme) can be pile driven. Overall, the sensitivity of the site's topography is assessed as medium.

4.21. Due to its characteristics, the solar modules would follow and reflect the local topography and any localised changes in contours found across the Appeal Site. This allows the landform to influence the layout of the Scheme, ensuring that the topography continues to form a recognisable feature in the landscape. Changes to the topography of the Appeal Site would be very limited and mostly concerned with the localised trenching for underground cabling,

and setting up the temporary construction compound, footings for the inverter kiosks, and access tracks. The solar modules would be pile driven into the ground and not require any footings or foundations.

4.22. This 'light' touch and 'light' footprint of solar farms is a unique characteristic limited to this particular typology, which has been confirmed by a number of Inspectors. Inspector McCoy at the Bramley Appeal notes that panels ***"would not sit heavily upon the land"*** (CD 7.49) and Inspector Baird at the Halloughton Appeal stated that the development would ***"sit lightly on the affected fields"*** (CD 7.1).

4.23. The BESS and substation compound would require some levelling which would be larger in its extent, but this part of the Appeal Site is already relatively level and I judge any change to be inconsequential. Any soil scrapings can be spread across the Appeal Site without changing its overall topographical profile.

4.24. In any case such effects would be temporary with the ground levels in these areas reinstated and soil reseeded at the end of the construction phase.

4.25. Overall, the prevailing simple landform of the Appeal Site would remain largely unchanged, and would not diminish its contribution as a landscape element. Consequently, I assess the magnitude of change to be negligible and effects negligible, thus not materially harmful.

Trees and Hedgerows

4.26. Trees and tree cover are a significant component of the local landscape and Appeal Site. The boundaries of the Appeal Site are characterised by hedgerows and hedgerow trees, which are typical for this landscape. They form positive and strong features of the local landscape that require management and can change over time.

4.27. None of the trees within the boundaries of the Appeal Site are protected by any Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or are part of a designated landscape. Bunny Old Wood to the north is designated as Ancient Woodland and the Scheme typically maintains a 50 m set back from the edge of the solar panels reducing to 38 m when measuring from the proposed hedgerow. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (dated November 2024) prepared by Barton Hyett Associates (CD 2.35), has assessed the tree and hedgerow resource within the Appeal Site as being largely of medium to low quality (Category B and C), from an arboricultural point of view. The majority of the hedgerows associated with the Appeal Site have been assessed in

the Ecological Impact Assessment (December 2023) as being 'native' or 'native with trees' with some of the boundary hedgerows identified as 'species rich' - refer to Figure 4 and Figure 5 of the Ecological Impact Assessment (November 2024) (CD 2.17). The Ecological Impact Assessment (October 2025) echoes the earlier survey (CD 3.8). The hedgerow vegetation represents a traditional but typical field boundary treatment. For this reason, I consider the value of tree and shrub vegetation to be medium. In terms of susceptibility of the hedgerow vegetation, I consider this to be medium, as this type of vegetation requires some time to mature and establish as a landscape element. Trees, as a landscape feature are generally more difficult to replace and require a longer time to establish, thus I judge these to be of high susceptibility. Overall, the sensitivity of hedgerow vegetation is medium, and tree vegetation is high.

4.28. The layout of the Scheme has been purposely developed to allow generous offset from the boundary vegetation to avoid any tree and hedgerow removal with the proposed access tracks utilising the existing gaps / field gates in the boundary and internal hedgerows. There is the potential that the existing gaps / field gates would have to be widened to accommodate the proposed access tracks if they are narrower than the standard 5 m width (proposed tracks are 4 m wide with 0.5 m wide grass verges either side). This is not considered to be materially harmful.

4.29. With the exception of the above, all the remaining peripheral and internal hedgerows will be retained and protected during the construction phase and as a consequence will remain unaffected by the Scheme. The solar modules will be offset from the existing boundary vegetation to provide a clear maintenance and access route and also to protect the Root Protection Zone and tree canopies. This would help protect the condition and longevity of the tree and hedgerow resource within the Appeal Site, minimising any shadowing by the trees or need for tree works during the operation stage of the Scheme.

4.30. The Scheme would bring about a considerable net gain in the site's hedgerow, tree, and woodland resource. The existing hedgerows would be enhanced through additional planting and their management changed in order to increase their height to approximately 3 m - 3.5 m where lower; this would be beneficial for biodiversity as acknowledged in the Ecological Impact Assessment, paragraph 3.4.24: ***"Rotational maintenance of all hedgerows [to] at a height of at least 3m is considered particularly important for the provision of resources and encouraging use by native British wildlife."*** (CD 2.17).

4.31. I note that a number of perimeter hedgerows are taller, and I discuss this later in my Proof of Evidence.

4.32. On balance, and considering the proposed planting, which can be secured by means of a suitably worded condition, I assess the magnitude of change upon the tree and hedgerow resource to be high. This would translate to major beneficial effects upon the tree and hedgerow resource within the Appeal Site.

4.33. It is worth reiterating that the Scheme can be described as long term in nature but temporary, allowing the land to effectively return to its previous use. The introduced structural vegetation, however, would remain present and continue to positively contribute to the character of the Appeal Site and indeed local landscape even after the Scheme has been decommissioned.

Public Rights of Way

4.34. There are a number of PRoWs in the locality and all those beyond the Appeal Site would be physically unaffected with the Appeal Scheme in place.

4.35. There are no PRoWs within or abutting the southern parcel of the Appeal Site.

4.36. There are a number of PRoW routes within the northern parcel of the Appeal Site, with the Midshires Way and Notts Wolds Way coinciding with some of them. The Scheme would not have any direct physical or residual effects upon any of the PRoWs within the Appeal Site during its operational stage. The PRoWs within the Appeal Site would be retained and remain open during the construction stage of the Scheme with specific management measures set out at paragraph 3.10 of the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) (November 2024) submitted as part of the application (CD 2.14).

4.37. Public Footpath Wysall FP 4 connects Bradmore Road with the Appeal Site and to avoid conflict with the PRoW users a new vehicular access is being proposed at a location just to the south as outlined in the submitted CTMP (CD 2.14):

> ***"3.1 It is proposed to utilise a new vehicular access to access the northern parcel of the site, this proposed access is located circa 70 metres south of the existing access to Lodge Farm. The utilisation of this new access means that vehicular movements associated with the Development will remain segregated from the PROW which runs along the access road to Lodge Farm and does not conflict at all with access to the farm."*** (underlining is the author's emphasis)

4.38. Paragraph 3.9 and Figure 3.2 of the submitted CTMP (CD 2.14) cover the issue of the crossing points between the PRoWs and proposed internal access tracks with Paragraph 3.10 outlining the mitigation strategy. With the first bullet point stating:

"The PRoW will remain operational throughout the construction and operational phases of the Development."

4.39. I note that the PRoW Officer, in their latest comments published on 16th of December 2024, did not object to the Application Scheme:

"Thank you for confirmation of the maintenance and management of the RoW over the site for the duration of the construction and life of the development. I would wish to see this in a condition."

4.40. Furthermore, the Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Officer did not raised any objection, as the Scheme has maintained Rights of Way in current location noting:

"…the areas are to be sown with a wildflower mix. It is noted that the PRoW will remain open during the construction phase with suitable fencing securing the development sites on each side. It is noted that banksmen will be used to ensure the public are safe when materials are being delivered and that gates will be across the haul roads to ensure site security and only opened across the footpath when a vehicle movement is required, right of way being given to the footpath users at all times" (CD 4.59).

4.41. The Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Officer was consulted on the changes made through the appeal and did not provide any comments on the Appeal Scheme.

4.42. With a high susceptibility, value and sensitivity combined with no magnitude of change there would be no physical effect on the existing network of PRoWs as a resource and facility.

4.43. At this point it is informative to refer to a plan prepared by the Appellant at the application stage indicating the width of the PRoW corridor (CD 2.25) and subsequent PRoW cross-sections prepared by the Appellant and appended to my Landscape PoE – refer to my Appendix 2.

Water Features

4.44. A single small scale watercourse drains the northern parcel of the Appeal Site.

4.45. Kingston Brook lies to the south of the southern parcel with the proposed access from Wysall Road crossing this watercourse. According to the Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by Clarkson & Woods Ecological Consultants (October 2024) (CD 2.17) and the updated

Ecological Impact Assessment (October 2025) (CD 3.8) Kingston Brook is: ***"…designated as a priority habitat within the Nottinghamshire LBAP, and therefore (…) considered to be of Local Importance"*** with the following mitigation strategy suggested at paragraph 3.4.11 (CD 3.8): ***"Kingston Brook will be protected from damage and accidental pollution / runoff during construction by maintaining an undeveloped, naturally vegetated no works buffer along the course of the feature, apart from the proposed new crossing itself. The buffer will be demarcated by perimeter security fencing, temporary fencing or stock proof fencing installed at the commencement of construction, at least 10m from the banks of the brook, details of which will be provided within the CEMP (Ecology)."*** The Ecological Impact Assessment (October 2024) (CD 2.17) and its updated version from October 2025 (CD 3.8) also define the following residual effects at paragraph 3.4.14: ***"If the design remains free span and specifications within the CEMP (Ecology) are followed, it is anticipated that impacts on Kingston Brook will be negligible and not significant. It is also expected that the reduction of intensive grass cutting along the ditches, and the complete removal of grazing along Kingston Brook will enhance the riparian zone for these watercourses and will result in a slight positive residual effect."***

4.46. The layout of the Scheme has been adjusted to allow physical offset from those two watercourses. The proposed access tracks in the northern parcel utilise the existing crossing and at the southern parcel a new prefabricated bridge will be installed to span Kingston Brook, with no physical work being proposed in the watercourse. The existing structure over Kingston Brook is not considered suitable for construction and operational traffic. Kingston Brook, associated flood zones and easements are considered in Pegasus' Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Version 3, dated 17th January 2024) (CD 1.17) and updated Flood Risk Assessment submitted as part of this appeal (CD 3.7).

Cumulative Effects

4.47. The extent of the Appeal Site does not overlap with any of the identified cumulative schemes. Thus, there is no potential for any direct physical cumulative effects upon the landscape features.

Summary of Effects upon Landscape Elements

4.48. The Scheme would result in some beneficial effects upon the landscape elements within the Appeal Site when considered in the round, as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Effects on Landscape Elements	
Element	**Scale of Effect**
Land Cover	Moderate Beneficial
Topography	Negligible
Trees	Major Beneficial
Hedges	Major Beneficial
Public Rights of Way	No Direct Effects
Water Features	No Direct Effects

4.49. The specific changes to landscape elements, based on Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' plan (drawing number P25-1631_EN_02E (CD 3.6), would include the following:

- Native deciduous species rich hedgerow: 2789 lin. m.
- Copse planting: 9,709 sqm.
- Woodland planting: 19,325 sqm.
- Large scale trees: 142 no.
- Small scale trees: 117 no.
- Willow trees: 5 no.
- Grazing mix : 66,2117 sqm.
- Wildflower meadow: 219,338 sqm.
- Wet Meadow: 10713 sqm.
- Skylark mitigation areas: 35,822 sqm.
- Additional Skylark mitigation areas: 68,709 sqm.

4.50. In overall terms, the Scheme would result in some beneficial effects with regard to the landscape elements that currently define the landscape character of the Appeal Site, which would change from a series of arable fields to one of a solar farm set within pastoral grassland and structural vegetation, with BESS and substation compound also set within pastoral

grassland and structural vegetation. However, the elements that currently contribute to defining the character of the Appeal Site, namely trees and hedgerows would be retained and enhanced to form a more robust collection of landscape elements.

4.51. It is also worth reiterating that the Scheme can be described as long term in nature (i.e., 40 years), with the land cover being temporary; meaning that it will be possible for the land to be returned to its previous arable use. Solar energy and BESS developments are characterised by their low profile, light footprint, and reversible nature. The timescale of 40 years is similar for some other elements in the landscape such as timber crop production.

4.52. The Scheme is time limited for 40 years and therefore with the decommissioning stage all infrastructure would be removed. However, all the new planting introduced would have matured along with the ongoing management and maintenance of the other retained features and as a result, there would be a clear beneficial legacy from this Scheme in terms of landscape elements which collectively would also enhance landscape character as advocated in the published Landscape Character Assessments.

5. Landscape Character

Introduction

5.1. This Section of my Landscape Proof of Evidence explains how the Scheme would have a bearing upon the landscape character of the surrounding area. As defined in the GLVIA3 glossary (CD 5.28) landscape character is defined as

"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different to another…".

5.2. To further clarify a distinction in the use of terms, Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape, as opposed to Landscape Character Types (LCTs), which are defined in *GLVIA3*, page 157 (CD 5.28) as follows:

"These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical lands use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes."

5.3. A number of landscape character assessments have been undertaken in recent years to identify both Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Areas (LCAs) and have been published to assist professionals in understanding how decisions can affect landscape character. These are described in my submitted LVIA (CD 2.16) hence this information is not repeated here.

5.4. To confirm the Appeal Site and study area fall within:

- The National Character Area (NCA) 74 'Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds'.
- The 'Nottinghamshire Wolds' Regional Character Area, and the eastern most part of Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' of the *Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment*.

5.5. The following analysis relies on the photographic evidence included in my submitted LVIA (CD 2.16), which is considered comprehensive and proportionate to the scale of the Application Scheme.

Landscape Value, Susceptibility, and Sensitivity

5.6. I accept the assessment of landscape value, landscape susceptibility, and landscape sensitivity presented in my submitted LVIA (CD 2.16). Therefore, this detailed assessment is

not repeated here. My submitted LVIA concluded that the landscape is of medium value, medium susceptibility, and medium sensitivity.

5.7. Section 15 of the current *National Planning Policy Framework* (*NPPF*) (December 2024) (CD 5.1) is concerned specifically with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 notes that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ***"a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)…"*** with 187 b) stating: **"b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services (…) and of trees and woodland;.."** This is further clarified in Paragraph 188 of the *NPPF* (CD 5.1), which states***: "Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites…"*** therefore, clearly establishing the principle of hierarchy between designated and non-designated countryside.

5.8. The *GLVIA3* (CD 5.28) clearly identifies a hierarchy of valued landscapes when discussing the level of importance which they signify. It clearly states that the value decreases from internationally valued landscapes such as World Heritage Sites, to nationally valued landscapes such as National Parks and National Landscapes, to locally valued landscapes: ***"…locally valued landscapes, for example local authority landscape designations or, where these do not exist, landscapes assessed as being of equivalent value using clearly stated and recognised criteria…"*** (underlining is my emphasis). The site and the surrounding landscape do not fall under any of the above categories. The Appeal Site and its surrounding landscape does not form part of a valued landscape in the context of *NPPF* paragraph 187a. On balance, the value of the site's landscape and that of the study area is taken as medium.

5.9. I note that during the determination stage, WWA acting on behalf of RBC questioned the accuracy of this assessment in their Landscape Review (June 2024) (its Section 4.2) (CD 4.64): ***"It is my opinion that the LVIA, as currently presented, fails to provide an assessment for the individual factors in accordance with GLVIA3 and TGN 02/21, and further fails to provide a judgement regarding overall landscape value. GLVIA3 (Para 5.31) emphasises that the "…assessment of the value attached to the landscape should be carried out within clearly recorded and transparent framework so that decision making is clear". Given the impacts of the proposed development and its inconsistency, as a***

result of the lack of evidence from the baseline study as required by GLVIA3, I consider the judgements of sensitivity are either too low or unclear and should therefore be provided for review. Because of these judgements, there is concern that the landscape receptors' susceptibility, sensitivity, magnitude of change and the overall significance of landscape effects may also differ from that stated."

5.10. As explained in the updated LVIA (CD 2.16) WWA in their Landscape Review (June 2024) (CD 4.64) did not give consideration to RBC's own published *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* (10 May 2024) (CD 6.6), which confirms that the host Landscape Assessment Unit (LAU) A 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarp' is of medium value: ***"The LAU is not covered by any statutory or local landscape designations. Its value is recognised locally due to its distinctive features such as unique topography and prominent hills. The LAU is also valued locally for its recreational access to the rural landscape which is in overall good condition and contains scenic qualities such as dramatic views from lower ground and extensive views from higher ground. The value is therefore considered to be medium."***

5.11. RBC's own published *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* (10 May 2024) (CD 6.6) also confirms that the susceptibility of the host LAU A 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarp' is medium:

"The LAU has an overarching rural character though agriculture is commonly medium to large scale and of modern pattern. Settlement and urban influences are confined to the fringes of the area with East Leake being the exception, which is on lower ground, nestled between elevated landforms.

The following features and characteristics of the landscape are particularly susceptible to solar farm development:

- ***Prominent hills often wooded which are distinctive and visibility of exposed slopes from lower areas, through which winding lanes run.***
- ***Largely rural character with settlement and urbanising features confined to the fringes of the LAU or on lower ground.***
- ***Sense of place derived from locally distinctive landform.***

The distinctiveness of the landform, which includes exposed hillsides contribute to a strong sense of place and the overall undeveloped, rural character of the landscape increase susceptibility. The modern nature and character of agricultural land decreases the susceptibility. Overall, the susceptibility is judged to be medium."

5.12. Finally, the Council's published *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* report (CD 6.6) confirms that the host LAU A 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarp' is of medium sensitivity: ***"The landscape is judged to be of medium sensitivity as a result of its medium value and medium susceptibility to change."***

5.13. I note that WWA in their latest comments issued in February 2025 (CD 4.65) still question the assessment (penultimate paragraph, page 4): ***"Although the assessment for landscape value within 'Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study' is in line with LI (TGN) 02-21, a landscape value assessment that applied specifically to the site would be more informative."***

5.14. WWA goes on to say (same paragraph but earlier) that: ***"The Arup report assesses character areas, these are a larger scale than the site itself and so this assessment is relatively broad. Although the assessment for landscape value within 'Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study' is in line with LI (TGN) 02-21, a landscape value assessment that applied specifically to the site would be more informative."***

5.15. I do not consider such approach appropriate. The Appeal Site forms part of the host character area, which is not extensive, and shares its characteristics: the presence of hedgerows, trees, PRoWs, and landform. I do not find any features or characteristics within the Appeal Site that would be different to the remaining areas of the host landscape. To say that it requires specific assessment of value or susceptibility is to suggest that the Appeal Site is materially different from the rest of the host landscape. The addition of the consented Highfields Solar Farm does not change this judgment as its presence has been acknowledged in the published *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* report (CD 6.6), and which does not differentiate between various parts of the host LAU A 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarp'.

5.16. If we were to follow this logic then one would have to acknowledge that the low lying southern part of the Appeal Site is more enclosed and less visible, thus putting in question both the accuracy of the *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* report (CD 6.6) and indeed the assertions made in RBS' SoC (its paragraph 3.2.23): ***"The landscape sensitivity of the Appeal Site as a whole can therefore be appropriately described as medium to high, whilst the sensitivity of the local landscape character areas 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' and 'Widmerpool Clay Wolds' would be medium."***

5.17. RBC's SoC, paragraph 3.2.21 (CD 8.4) asserts that the landscape value of the northern parcel: ***"…rises to medium-high landscape value due to the presence of the PRoW which offers recreational opportunities where the experience of the landscape is important and is a promoted route (as both Notts Wolds Way and Midshires Way), connecting the ecological interest of Bunny Old Wood (Ancient Woodland and Nature Reserve) with the cultural interest of Wysall Conservation Area and Holy Trinity Church (Grade I), and with extensive views from higher ground / scenic quality (including towards the distant rugged skyline of Charnwood, as well as the undulating Nottinghamshire Wolds)…"***

5.18. I do not consider this true as PRoWs are frequently found in the countryside. The promoted long distance routes are part of this network, but none of them are National Trails. If we follow this approach then each field associated with the northern parcel could be judged to have a variable value depending on the presence of a PRoW or its absence, its proximity to the Ancient Woodland or the Conservation Area which in any case does not have any evident or strong visual relationship with the Appeal Site.

5.19. I am of the opinion that the value, susceptibility, and sensitivity of the Appeal Site would be no different to that of the host landscape.

Effects upon the Character of the Appeal Site

5.20. As far as landscape character is concerned, I acknowledge that the Appeal Site would see some change. With regards to the valued features and characteristics which are listed for the host landscapes - NCA 74 'Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds' (CD 5.51) and Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' (LVIA October 2024, Appendix 2, CD 2.16) these would prevail with the Scheme in place.

5.21. The character of the Appeal Site would change from open agricultural land to one that remains in agricultural use - through active hedgerow and woodland management with sheep grazing, alongside energy infrastructure: solar modules, battery modules, ancillary infrastructure, substation compound etc. Given the amount of open and undeveloped land retained across the various field enclosures, coupled with the proposed typology of solar modules c. 3 m in height, would enable the existing structural vegetation to retain their strong influence and continue to form one of the key features of the Appeal Site. This coupled with the current landform, which would be largely retained, would mitigate against the introduced change. Overall, the magnitude of change would be medium, with effects moderate adverse.

5.22. Given the proposed hedgerow and woodland / copse planting the dominance of this structural vegetation would increase with the residual effects diminishing to minor adverse given the proposed landscaping. Such effects would be limited to the Appeal Site itself, and not the surrounding landscape. The surrounding landscape would not be subject to any direct physical change. The Scheme fits well into the existing field pattern and would retain and enhance the boundary hedgerows through gapping up and planting hedgerow trees. This would exert positive influence over the local landscape with trees / woodlands being one of its characteristic elements.

5.23. It is note that WWA in their latest comments issued in February 2025 (CD 4.65) consider the proposed planting to be incongruous (section 'Landscape Character Effects', page 5):

In addition, introduced vegetation through the landscape proposals will likely long outlast the solar array itself, these are specific to the scheme and are incongruent with existing field patterns. (…) We do not consider that the planting proposals will have a wholly positive influence on the landscape character for the above reasons."

5.24. Whilst not explicitly stated, through the engagement with WWA during the determination stage, I understand that the issue here is the proposed 'green corridor' along Public Footpath Costock FP7, which broadly speaking runs diagonally between Field 1, Field 2, and Field 4.

5.25. In the context of solar farm developments, it is standard practice to enclose existing PRoWs with hedgerows to protect the visual amenity of the associated recreational receptors. The alternative is not to provide any vegetative screening, but this would result in a high degree of change and major adverse visual effects throughout the operational life of the Scheme. I do not consider this to be a suitable approach in managing the change.

5.26. The proposed offset is generous and over and above the 10 m width buffer typically included in other solar farm schemes. At this stage it is worth nothing that the Government's advice to the landowners, with regards to the maintenance of PRoWs, assumes 1 - 1.5 m clear width for maintaining Public Footpath corridors (CD 5.52). The offsets and width of the proposed green corridor are illustrated on a plan prepared by the Appellant during the application stage (CD 2.25) and subsequent PRoW cross-sections prepared by the Appellant and appended to my Landscape PoE – refer to my Appendix 2.

5.27. I understand that, through the engagement with the local community during the community consultation, the idea of the wide 'green corridor' had been developed with further offset from Bunny Old Wood introduced for ecology and visual amenity reasons.

5.28. The new diagonal 'green corridor' along Public Footpath Costock FP7 would subdivide the current large scale field into two smaller field parcels and this would be more akin to the current field pattern. Not all fields are rectilinear, and more sinuous boundaries are already present in the landscape and indeed within the Appeal Site, such as that between Field 3 and Field 7.

5.29. The increase in hedgerow height is comparable to a number of existing hedgerows preset in the locale, and indeed around the Appeal Site, therefore would not be out of character - refer to Plate 2, Plate 3, and Plate 4. The description of the host NCA 74 Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds encourages planting of new hedgerows (CD 5.51) and the *Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment* is clear that: ***" Medium to large scale regular and semi-irregular field pattern, this is less distinctive in arable fields (…) Hedgerows are mostly hawthorn, most are well maintained and intact although around arable fields their condition is more variable "*** (LVIA October 2024, Appendix 2, CD 2.16).

5.30. With regards the host NW01 Gotham and West Leake Hills and Scarps' one of its 'Key Characteristics' states: ***"Field pattern is mostly modern although pockets of older field systems such as irregular geometric and geometric and those reflecting open fields are present."*** (LVIA October 2024, Appendix 2, CD 2.16). Historically, Field 1 was divided diagonally, albeit along a different alignment thus the proposed division between Field 1 and Field 2 is not out of place - refer to Plate 5 and other historic maps included in Pegasus' Heritage Statement (CD 1.6). In any case the diagonal alignment of the hedgerows would not be that apparent in situ with the 'green corridor' relatively wide and the new hedgerows changing their alignment towards Field 4. This localised widening would help retain the views out of the Appeal Site and help retain its character and visual connectivity with the wider landscape.

Plate 2 Relatively tall hedgerow along the southern edge of Field 1.

Plate 3 Relatively tall hedgerow along the northern edge of Field 1.

Plate 4 Relatively tall hedgerow along the western edge of Field 2.

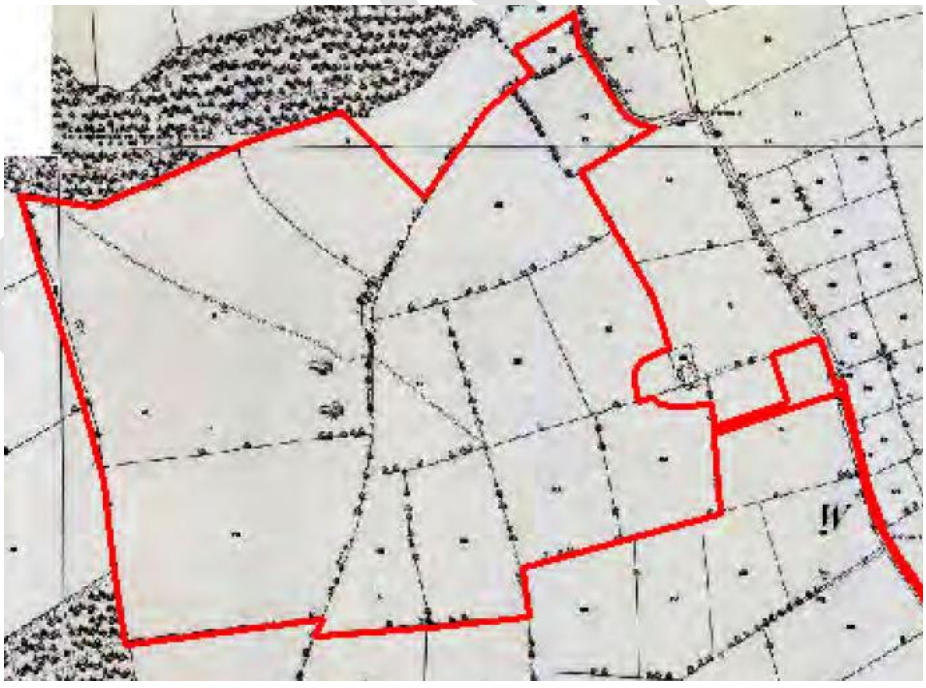


Plate 5 Extract from Pegasus' Heritage Statement (its Plate 13) (CD 1.6).

5.31. Furthermore, during my August 2024 site visit I have walked Restricted Byway East Leake RB30, which coincides with the Midshires Way, and which I discussed in my LVIA (October 2024) paragraphs 7.12 – 7.15 (CD 2.16). I note the PRoW is enclosed by a mature and relatively

tall hedgerow resulting in a narrow PRoW corridor with glimpses of the wider landscape and higher ground gained intermittently. This is evidently a characteristic feature of this PRoW and local landscape, which forms part of the same character area LAU A – refer to Plate 6 and Plate 7. Given the level of screening one is not necessarily aware of the alignment of the PRoW route or its relationship to the field pattern and geometry of the fields. I find this useful as it proves that the diagonal PRoW corridor across the northern parcel of the Scheme would not be incongruous.

Plate 6 View from Restricted Byway East Leake RB30 / the Midshires Way at the site entrance of the approved OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake scheme.

Plate 7 View from Restricted Byway East Leake RB30 / the Midshires Way just north of the site entrance of the approved OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake scheme.

Landscape Character Effects – Beyond the Appeal Site

5.32. With the exception of the additional skylark plots, no off-site works are proposed as part of the Appeal Scheme and as such the character of the local landscape beyond the Appeal Site physical terms would remain materially unchanged with the Appeal Scheme in place.

5.33. I recognise that the Appeal Scheme would bring about an inevitable change to the character of the Appeal Site itself. However, such a change would, in physical terms, be confined within the Appeal Site itself. Off-site, the tree and hedge cover and agricultural mix, undulating topography, the variety of building materials and the settlement pattern etc as identified in the various published reports would all continue and prevail with the Scheme in place.

5.34. Consequently, I consider that those key characteristics of the wider landscape beyond the Appeal Site boundary, as identified above, would be physically unaffected with the Scheme in place. It is only the experiential / visual aspect of character that would be influenced to some limited degree locally.

5.35. I accept that the Scheme would introduce a solar farm in the local landscape where no such typology currently exists acknowledging also that there are two other consented but not yet

built solar farms with the closest one located immediately to the west of the site – the consented Highfields Solar Farm (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL). Other types of renewable energy projects such as isolated small scale farm wind turbines and the windfarm off the A61 are present and exert influence over the local landscape. The windfarm off the A60 is particularly evident in views from the northern parcel of the Appeal Site as one comes out of Old Wood and travels along Public Footpath Costock FP7 towards Wysall.

5.36. Therefore, the landscape pattern would be locally changed. Such change, however, would be highly localised to the Appeal Site itself and the area of the cumulative solar farm, with the surrounding areas of undulating hills and blocks of woodland continuing to prevail, providing a degree of enclosure.

5.37. With regard to the remaining aspects of the local landscape, the Scheme would exert limited influence. The landform would continue to be evident with the low-lying profile of the panels and their uniform height reflecting the local variation in levels and gently undulating topography. The landscape associated with the Appeal Site is more gentle, and none of the "… ***distinctive wooded hills: Gotham Hill, Cottagers Hill, Wright's Hill, Wood Hill, The Odells, the West Leake Hills and Bunny Hill"*** are located within the Appeal Site. In comparison, the topography of the Appeal Site is more akin to ***"…. some gentler slopes – e.g. towards the east of the LCU"*** as identified in the *Landscape Sensitivity Study: Wind Energy Development* (August 2014) referenced by RBC in their pre-application advice (CD 4.3.15).

5.38. RBC's own published *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* (10 May 2024) (CD 6.6) establishes a number of mitigation principles, outlined in its Section 4 'General design principles'. With regards the host landscape it states: ***"The LAU includes prominent hills with exposed slopes, rural settlements, fragmented pattern and areas with localised degradation due to existing industrial or built-form influences. Mitigation principles 5, 6, 7 and 8 are therefore considered key to aiding the integration of any future solar development proposals within the LAU."***

5.39. With reference to Mitigation Principle 5 'Exposed slopes', it is evident that the site cannot be described as being a prominent or exposed slope. By locating the Scheme across the gently undulating, enclosed and in part lower lying ground, the Development meets 'Mitigation Principle 5'.

5.40. Mitigation Principle 6 'Villages in the rural landscape' states: ***"In rural landscapes with villages, solar farm development should be sensitively set back from the settlement edge to minimise visual intrusion and sense of enclosure."*** Views from the village of Wysall are virtually free from any views of the Appeal Site with only one location in the southern part of the village as the road leads west and then south, allowing for highly restricted and glimpsed view towards a small part of the southern parcel of the Appeal Site. This location is indicated on Pegasus' Enhanced Landscape Strategy (CD 3.6).

5.41. With reference to Mitigation Principle 7 'Field pattern restoration': ***"Field boundaries in fragmented landscapes should be restored to improve integration and provide wider benefits to the landscape. Smaller parcels of development divided by field boundaries are also less likely to result in cumulative impacts"*** this has been taken into account when devising the proposed landscaping and 'green corridors'.

5.42. In summary, the Application and Appeal Schemes would bring about a low degree of change resulting in minor adverse effects including the residual effects, during its operational stage. It is important to reiterate that such effects would be temporary and reversible, and the Scheme would be decommissioned at the end of its operational stage. The introduced landscaping, however, would remain in place becoming the legacy planting exerting positive influence over the character of the local landscape in the long term.

Cumulative Effects

5.43. It is agreed that the consented Highfields Solar Farm is the only relevant cumulative scheme for the purpose of this Appeal – Landscape SoCG, paragraph 3.19 (CD 8.3.1A).

5.44. For context, and where relevant, I also refer to the cumulative scheme OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake (application reference: 21/00703/FUL).

5.45. The Appeal Site and the two closest approved cumulative schemes: OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake (application reference: 21/00703/FUL) and the consented Highfields Solar Farm fall within the same NCA 74 'Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds', as identified by Natural England. The below Plate 8 illustrates the location of these two schemes (both in horizontal hatching – blue and magenta) in relation to the Appeal Site (etched in red). The more distant approved cumulative scheme: Land At Fields Farm, Asher Lane, Ruddington (application reference: 23/00254/FUL) falls with the NCA 48 'Trent and Belvoir Vales'.

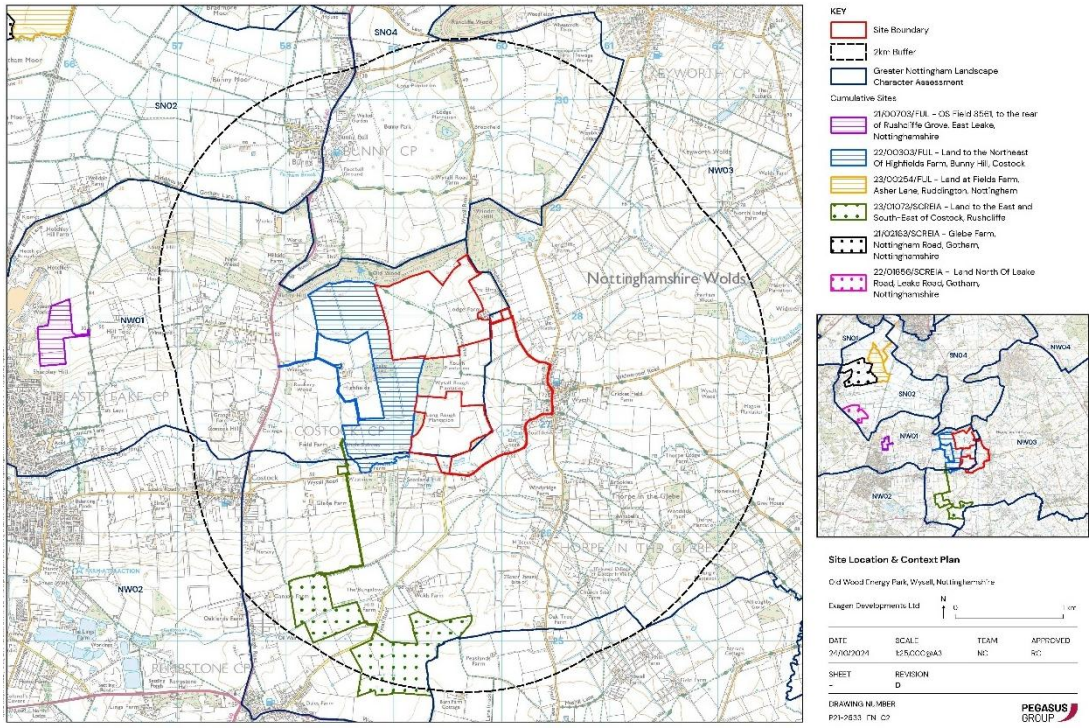


Plate 8 Extract from LVIA (October 2024) Figure 1 Site Location and Context Plan (CD 2.16).

5.46. With regards the *Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment*, the Scheme and two closest approved cumulative schemes: the adjacent Land To North East Of Highfields Farm, Bunny Hill, Costock, Nottinghamshire (application reference: 22/00303/FUL) and more distant OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake, Nottinghamshire (application reference: 21/00703/FUL) fall within the 'Nottinghamshire Wolds' Regional Character Area, and the eastern most part of Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps'. The more distant approved cumulative scheme: Land At Fields Farm, Asher Lane, Ruddington (application reference: 23/00254/FUL) is located within the 'South Nottinghamshire Farmlands' and more specifically the northern part of Draft Policy Zone SNO2 'Ruddington Alluvial Farmland'.

5.47. The consented Highfields Solar Farm increases the complexity of the host landscape, but its working agricultural character would remain unchanged with the approved solar farm in place. The presence of the OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake, Nottinghamshire (application reference no. 21/00703/FUL) is not expected to manifest itself in the local or indeed wider landscape given its location, scale, context, and limited inter-visibility. I accept that some localised views would be available from the closest PRoWs, and these are likely to be limited to Restricted Byway East Leake RB30. Such views would influence the perceptual qualities of the countryside but would be gained in isolation, in cumulative terms, i.e., would

not include the Appeal Scheme. This is confirmed by the then Design and Landscape Officer as explained in my submitted LVIA (CD 2.16).

5.48. At this point it is useful to refer to RBC's SOC (CD 8.4) where RBC is referring to the published *Solar Farm Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* (10 May 2024) (CD 6.6), stating that the host landscape has 'low' capacity to 'large scale' solar farms. At this point I wish to stress that the published document is recent and was written with the full knowledge of the landscape character and indeed the future baseline – the consented Highfields Solar Farm, yet it does not identify any localised change in the landscape value or overall sensitivity. With this knowledge the author of the published document identified the capacity to be 'low' not 'zero'. This means that whilst its capacity might be low, sensitively designed schemes may be made acceptable – subject to its parameters and mitigation planting. It is also worth noting that the adjacent areas have been deemed to have 'moderate' to 'high' capacity and the Appeal Sites lies on the very edge of the character area transitioning to the adjacent character areas.

5.49. With regards to the Land To North East Of Highfields Farm, Bunny Hill, Costock, Nottinghamshire (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL) it is also informative to refer to the comments issued by the RBC's landscape advisor (Wynne -Williams Associates) when they provided pre-determination comments on the planning application. It concluded that the scale of the landscape character effects would not be significant:

"5 Cumulative Effects

This application is one of several solar farm proposals currently being considered by Rushcliffe Borough Council. I have also provided separate landscape reviews for 22/00809/FUL (Land at Church Farm, Kingston on Soar) and 22/00319/FUL (Land to the West of Wood Lane and Stocking Lane, Gotham). Due to intervening vegetation, topography, and elements of built development, I do not identify any intervisibility between the three proposed sites and therefore do not consider there to be cumulative visual effects. In addition, if all were to be approved, I do not believe the scale of landscape change would lead to significant cumulative landscape character effects. There may be a low-level change noticed by people travelling by car or walking along the Midshires Way on routes that come close to multiple solar farm sites, but this would be minor across the wider landscape character areas (the East Leake Rolling Farmland and the Gotham and West Leake Hills and Scarps)."

5.50. In other words, taking into account the two approved schemes the host Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' would remain open countryside and would be still largely rural, in line with the published landscape character assessment,

with localised influence of solar energy developments. Overall, the baseline description of the host landscape, as recorded in the published assessments, would remain valid. The visibility of the two schemes would have some limited influence over the perceptual aspect of the local landscape, where views are gained but its underlying agricultural character, landform, scale and overall landscape pattern would remain largely unchanged.

5.51. Having considered the above, the addition of the Appeal or ApplicationScheme would reinforce the presence of solar energy infrastructure in the local landscape, in terms of landscape pattern, but its underlying character would remain rural, and it would retain an agricultural function. It would avoid the central area of the host LUC A 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarp', which also benefits from a degree of inter-visibility with the wider elevated landscape and would avoid exacerbating the negative effects of the existing large-scale built form such as the British Gypsum facilities, north of East Leake, and utilise the peripheral part of the host character area where the consented Highfields Solar Farm is expected to be present.

5.52. Its undulating landform, the scale and field pattern, blocks of woodland, and field hedgerows would remain unchanged. It has to be acknowledged that localised enhancements and beneficial effects would occur with regards the landscape elements associated with the cumulative schemes. This would exert limited, but nevertheless beneficial influence over the local landscape helping to partially mitigate against the cumulative adverse landscape character effects.

5.53. In reality, only the perceptual aspect of the local landscape would be affected - i.e., views of the countryside and its appreciation.

5.54. Notwithstanding the location of the Scheme and the adjacent consented Highfields Solar Farm the physical extent and scale of the two schemes would not be easily appreciated together. The alignment of the PRoWs and availability of public views, coupled with the fact that both schemes are effectively split into two northern and two southern development parcels fragmented by established woodland plantation blocks of considerable size would reduce the perceived change to the character of the local landscape. In other words, there are very limited opportunities to appreciate either of those schemes in their entirety and this acts to reduce the cumulative visual effects.

5.55. I consider the degree of cumulative change to be low and effects minor adverse - this applies to the eastern part of the host Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' only. The underlying working agricultural character of the local landscape would prevail.

Table 2: Summary of the Landscape Character Effects (incl. cumulative effects)					
Receptor	**Value**	**Susceptibility**	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Scale of Effects**
NCA 74 'Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds'	Medium	Medium	Medium	Negligible	Negligible
Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps'	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor Adverse
Appeal Site	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse

7. Visual Amenity

7.1. In order to gain a better understanding of the extent and nature of the change brought about by the Proposed Development on the appearance of the local landscape, it is necessary to examine its effect on the general and recreational amenity of the landscape and the perception of those visual receptors (people) using the landscape.

7.2. Visual amenity is defined in the *GLVIA3* (Glossary, page 158) (CD 5.28) as:

"The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area."

7.3. As part of my submitted LVIA a Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZV) plan (CD 2.16) was prepared to illustrate theoretical visibility from the surrounding landscape whilst taking into account the landform, built form and vegetation present in the local and wider area. It does not take into account smaller groups of structural vegetation and is reflective of the vegetation present at the time of the survey.

7.4. For context, this area largely coincides with the host Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' and those adjacent to the south and south east – NW02 and NW03 respectively of the published *Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment* (CD 5.53).

7.5. The assessment presented in my submitted LVIA (December 2023) was carried out in late January 2022 and November 2023, as part of an on-site survey. I undertook an additional site visit on the 1st of August 2024 in preparation of my updated LVIA (October 2024) (CD 2.16) and in response to the Council's Landscape Review (June 2024) (CD 4.64).

7.6. The purpose of the August 2024 site visit was to verify the inter-visibility between the Appeal Site and landscape in the southern study area, and establish the potential cumulative effects with the adjacent approved solar farm: Land To North East Of Highfields Farm, Bunny Hill, Costock, Nottinghamshire (application reference number: 22/00303/FUL) and views from around the approved solar farm on the eastern edge of East Leake have also been verified on site: OS Field 8561, Rear Of Rushcliffe Grove, East Leake, Nottinghamshire (application reference number: 21/00703/FUL).

7.7. My submitted LVIA (CD 2.16) provides detailed assessment of the sequential visibility, particularly from the southern study area and this information is not repeated here. The following paragraphs summarise the key findings.

Views around Wysall and on the approach to the Appeal Site

7.8. I note that Mitigation Principle 6 'Villages in the rural landscape' states: ***"In rural landscapes with villages, solar farm development should be sensitively set back from the settlement edge to minimise visual intrusion and sense of enclosure."*** As explained before views from the village of Wysall are virtually free from any views of the Appeal Site with only one location in the southern part of the village, as the road leads west and then south, allowing for highly restricted and glimpsed view towards a small part of the southern parcel of the Appeal Site - refer to Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (CD 3.6).

7.9. I note that until recently there were a number of Permissive Paths leading from the southern part of the village towards the Appeal Site and connecting with the existing Public Footpath Wysall FP3. There are two notices, however, which indicate that access to these routes first ended in September 2010 - Plate 9 and then again on 31st July 2020 - Plate 10. No other notices or information have been obtained to indicate these routes are still accessible. For this reason, these former Permissive Paths are not considered in my Landscape Proof of Evidence. The condition of one of the stiles also suggests that these routes have not been in use for some time. Whilst local residents may well use these routes, without the landowner's agreement, they simply constitute trespass. Notwithstanding this, and to ensure the visual effects of the Scheme are mitigated as far as possible, additional trees have been introduced along the eastern edge of the southern parcel - refer to Pegasus' 'Enhanced Landscape Strategy' (CD 3.6). Should the Inspector be minded to consider these routes, I would conclude that the residual effects would be moderate adverse at most (upon the closest sections or where views are more open) and diminish to negligible where views are restricted.

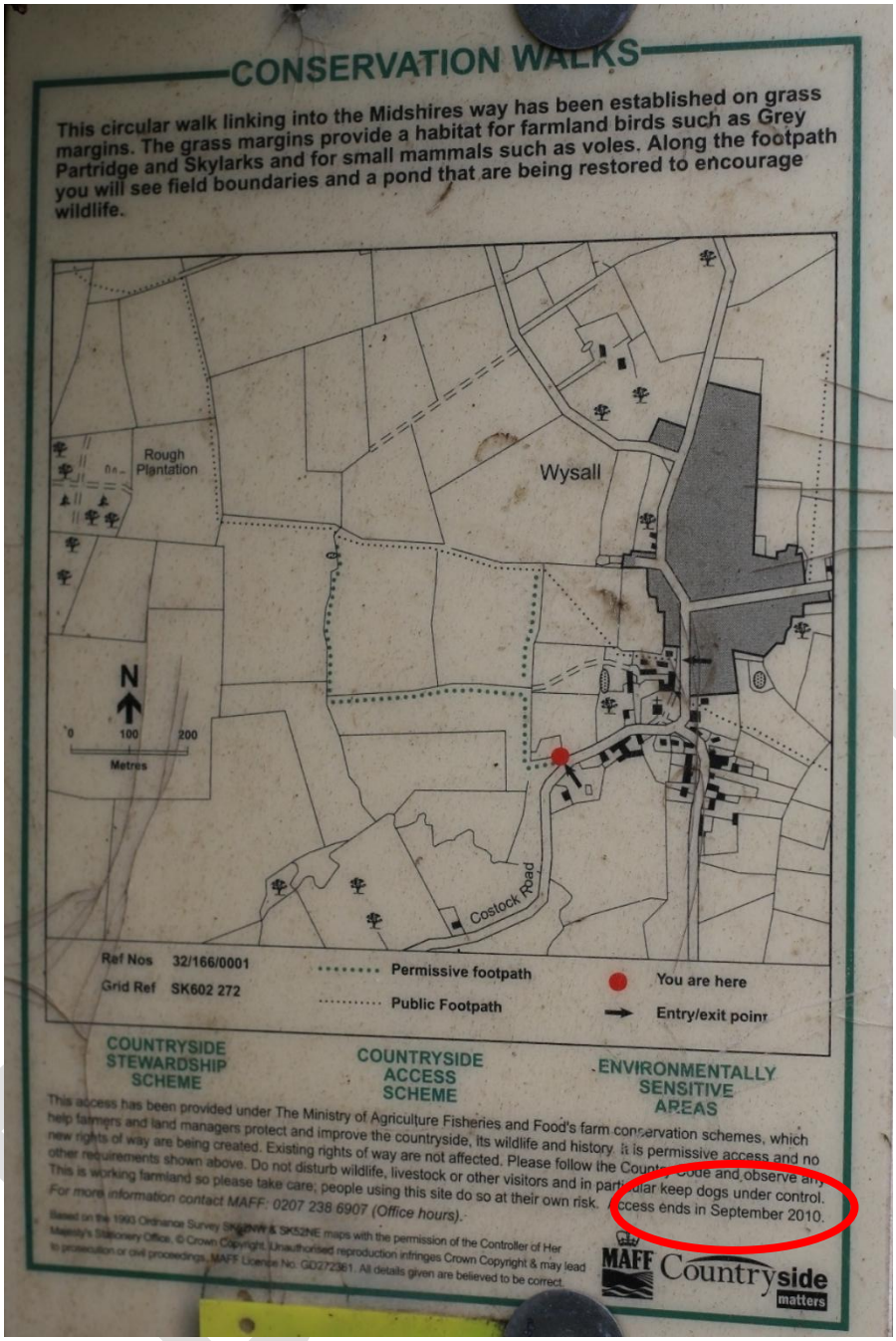


Plate 9 Notice informing the closure of Permissive Paths in September 2010.

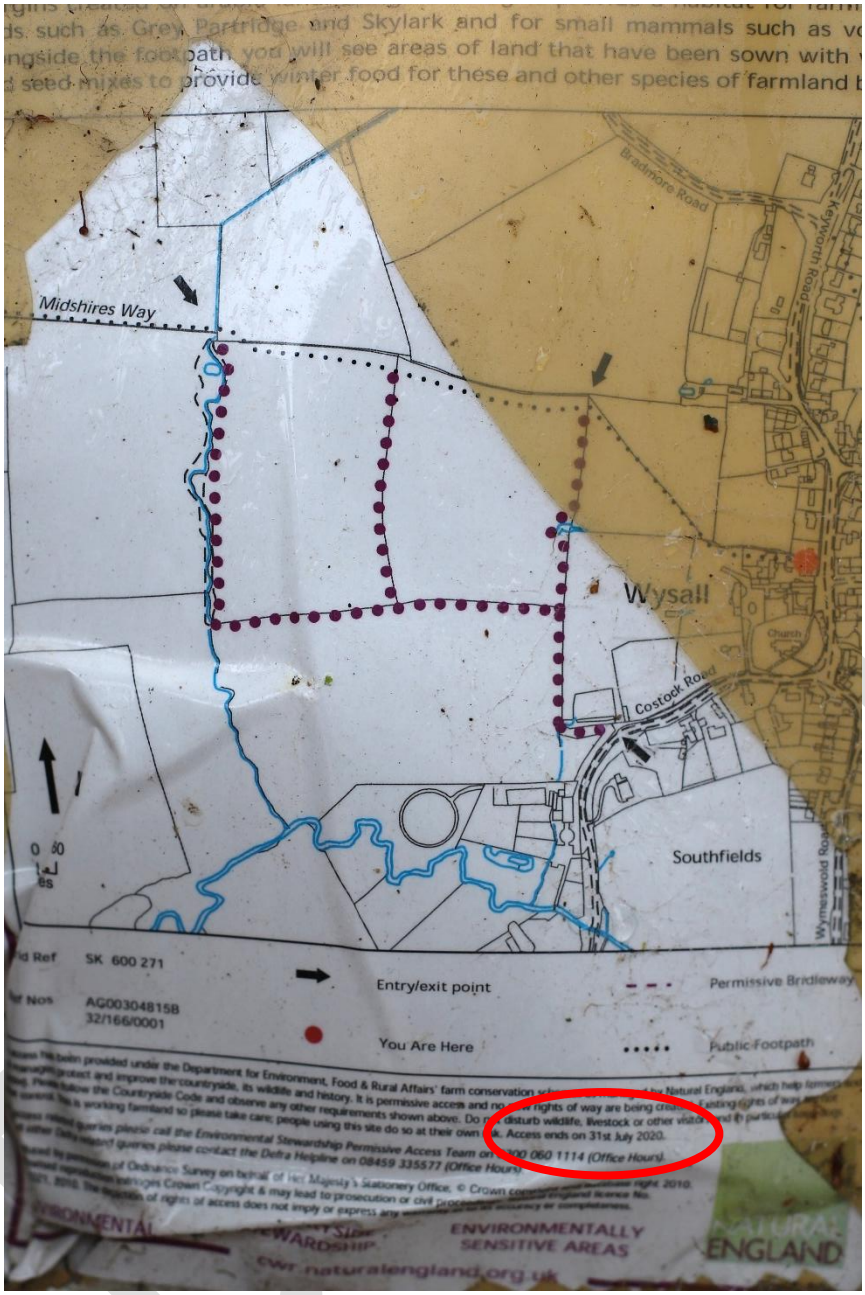


Plate 10 Notice informing the closure of Permissive Paths on 31st July 2020.

7.10. With reference to Appendix 1 Location Plan: Plates 8 - 26, as one leaves the centre of the village and travels along Public Footpath Wysall FP3 views from the edge of the village are focused on the immediate pastoral field with its boundaries almost completely screening views out and only glimpses of the surrounding woodland. There is little connectivity with the wider countryside and no inter-visibility with the Appeal Site. Whilst one of the intervening fields is visible, when looking west, the Proposed Development would not be visible from this

section of the PRoW - Plate 11. Looking north the gently rising landform and field hedgerow screen views - Plate 12.

7.11. Further north west along the PRoW views open up but the Appeal Site continues to be screened due to the interface between the gently undulating landform and intervening vegetation - Plate 13 and Plate 14.

7.12. Further along the PRoW views open up and the southern parcel of the Appeal Site is identifiable – views from this location are illustrated by my LVIA Viewpoint 7 and analysed in the associated paragraphs 6.53 and 6.54 – assessed as subject to medium degree of change and major adverse effects at most at Year 1 and diminishing to negligible at Year 15.

7.13. Views quickly diminish as the PRoW continues past a line of trees that mark a local watercourse, and then diverts north with the landform relatively low-lying and level, and the intervening hedgerows substantially interrupting the line of sight - Plate 15 and Plate 16.

Plate 11 View from Public Footpath Wysall FP3 on the edge of Wysall, looking west.

Plate 12 View from Public Footpath Wysall FP3 on the edge of Wysall, looking north.

Plate 13 View from Public Footpath Wysall FP3 one field away from Wysall, looking south west – southern parcel is screened.

Plate 14 View from Public Footpath Wysall FP3 one field away from Wysall, looking west towards the nearby woodlands: Wysall Rough Plantation and Long Rough Plantation – southern parcel is screened.

Plate 15 View from central section of Public Footpath Wysall FP3 approaching the southern parcel, looking south west. Long Rough Plantation is visible to the right.

Plate 16 View from central section of Public Footpath Wysall FP3 between the northern and southern parcel of the Appeal Site, looking south.

7.14. My LVIA (CD 2.16) analyses views from within the Appeal Site and this information is not repeated here.

Old Bunny Wood

7.15. With regards to views on the approach from the north, Old Bunny Wood largely blocks views out and views are only gained as one enters the Appeal Site. Glimpses towards the adjacent site of the consented Highfields Solar Farm can be intermittently gained but are substantially restricted - Plate 17. In any case, the Appeal Site is not visible although I accept that sequential visibility would be experienced on the approach. It is worth noting that both schemes are offset from the woodland edge to limit the physical and visual effects, c. 100 m for the consented Highfields Solar Farm and c. 38 - 50 m for the Proposed Development. I consider such change to be low with moderate adverse effects at most.

Plate 17 View from a PRoW on the southern edge of Old Bunny Wood looking south towards the site of the cumulative scheme. Views are substantially restricted.

7.16. I note that other PRoWs crossing the woodland are located away and views from these routes are screened. The eastern part of the woodland is private with no public access, according to the information board placed at the entrance from the Appeal Site.

Views from the higher ground to the south

7.17. My LVIA (CD 2.16) provides a detailed sequential analysis of the effect upon the PRoWs in the southern study area. This information is not repeated here.

7.18. It is important to note that the majority of the locations offer nil or negligible inter-visibility and where views of the Appeal Site can be gained the effects are judged to be moderate at most.

7.19. Thus, it follows that the sequential experience and appreciation of the landscape and wooded horizons would not be materially harmed.

Views from rising land south east

7.20. As part of the site work supporting my Landscape Proof of Evidence, I have appraised the PRoWs leading from Rempstone Lane to Wysall and Windyridge Farm again.

7.21. This additional work revealed very limited inter-visibility with the northern parcel of the Appeal Site as seen from Public Footpath FP10, judged to be negligible – Plate 18 and Plate 19.

Plate 18 View from elevated section of Public Footpath FP10 south of the Appeal Site. Views are substantially restricted.

Plate 19 View from lower lying section of Public Footpath FP10 south of the Appeal Site. Views are substantially restricted.

7.22. In views from Public Footpath FP7 and FP8 the southern parcel of the Appeal Site is identifiable due to the presence of the maize crop with the northern parcel also partially visible but of limited consequence. The overall ruralness of the view would not change and the landscape would continue to be primarily influenced by its landform and vegetation. I judge the influence of the Proposed Development to be at the lower end of the spectrum with the degree of change low and effects moderate adverse, regardless of the seasonal changes.

Plate 20 View from elevated section of Public Footpath FP7 looking west.

Plate 21 View from elevated section of Public Footpath FP7 looking north west.

Plate 22 View from elevated section of Public Footpath FP7 looking north.

Plate 23 View from low lying section of Public Footpath FP looking north.

Residential Receptors

7.23. I have also reviewed nearby residential receptors but judge none of them to be subject to any overbearing visual effects. The Proposed Development would not fail the so-called Lavender's test - refer to Table 3.

7.24. Views of The Elms are gained through a gap in the boundary hedgerow H4 (4 m high tall) and this gap would be planted up as part of the mitigation measures - Plate 24 and Plate 25. The gap is relatively narrow, and the landforms slopes away from this dwelling thus their views would inevitably oversail the Scheme, and the angle of view would be exceptionally small. Views from the western edge of Field 2 include glimpses of the property but views are substantially restricted and relatively distant.

Plate 24 View of The Elms through a gap in hedgerow H4, eastern edge of Field 6.

Plate 25 View of The Elms, western edge of Field 2.

7.25. Lodge Farm, in comparison, is enclosed and no views of its dwelling have been gained from within the Appeal Site.

7.26. Some of the dwellings on the edge of Wysall come in and out of the view as seen from within Field 2 but the built form is distant, and views interrupted by landform and vegetation. I judge any change to their outlook to be negligible.

7.27. In terms of the residential receptors at Five Oaks Stables and Scotland Hill Farm, given the views gained from the Appeal Site, distance, and the filtering effect of the intervening trees, I consider the degree of change to be low at most with the effects moderate adverse in winter views at Year 1. The copse and woodland planting proposed along the site's southern edge aims to reduce and mitigate any adverse effects, and I predict the residual effects at Year 15 to be negligible.

Plate 26 Views of dwellings on the edge of Wysall as seen from Field 2.

Plate 27 Views of dwellings on the edge of Wysall as seen from Public Footpath Wysall FP3 (between the northern and southern parcels of the Appeal Site.

Plate 28 View of Five Oaks Stables from north eastern corner of Field 13.

Plate 29 View of Scotland Hill Farm from the southern edge of Field 13.

Table 3: Residential Receptors - Summary of the Visual Effects Year 1					
Receptor	**Value**	**Susceptibility**	**Sensitivity**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Scale of Effects**
The Elms	High	Medium	High	Negligible	Negligible
Lodge Farm / Field View	High	Medium	High	Negligible	Negligible
Edge of Wysall	High	Medium	High	Negligible	Negligible
Five Oaks Stables	High	Medium	High	Low	Moderate Adverse
Scotland Hill Farm	High	Medium	High	Low	Moderate Adverse

8. Planning Policy Context

8.1. This Section of my Landscape Proof of Evidence explains how the Scheme would comply with the relevant landscape planning policies referred to within the RfR. 1. I address these in so far as they relate to landscape and visual issues. It is for planners to determine the weight that should be applied to these policies and the analysis presented in the below paragraphs.

LPP1

Policy 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity)

8.2. I consider the Proposed Development to positively contribute to the local sense of place through native tree, hedgerow, and woodland planting. These are the key local characteristics that are present within the Appeal Site and local landscape, and these would be strengthened.

8.3. With regards to point 2, sub-point h) there are no ***"…important views and vistas, including of townscape, landscape, and other individual landmarks…"*** that would be identified on the OS Explorer map 1:25, 000 or other locally available information. There are views, but these are local and not afforded any special protection beyond that of the ordinary working countryside.

LPP2

Policy 1 (Development Requirements)

8.4. For the reason outlined earlier in my Proof of Evidence and my LVIA (CD 2.16) I consider that, whilst there would be some adverse effects, they are localised and capable of being reduced. The landscape character effects, including the cumulative effects, are not so great to render them significant. In terms of visual receptors, the major adverse effects are limited to the very close range views and these are also capable of being mitigated against.

Policy 16 (Renewable Energy)

8.5. For the reason outlined earlier in my Proof of Evidence and my LVIA (CD 2.16) I consider that the Proposed Development can be made acceptable from an LVIA point of view.

8.6. Most importantly it utilises land that the Council themselves judged to be of medium value and medium sensitivity to large scale solar farms.

Policy 22 (Development in the Countryside)

8.7. In the context of renewable energy schemes, the wording of Policy 22 refers back to Policy 16 which is discussed above.

Policy 34 (Green Infrastructure and Open Space Assets)

8.8. The Proposed Development does not directly affect the existing PRoWs, areas of woodland and hedgerows and is respectful of the existing landscape elements within the Appeal Site. It seeks to strengthened them.

8.9. Part 2 of the Policy is informative and states: "***Development that protects, enhances, or widens their Green Infrastructure importance will be supported, provided it does not adversely affect their primary functions.***" It is evident that Proposed Development would contribute to the existing network of Green Infrastructure with the effects upon the tree and hedgerow vegetation judged to be major beneficial. This is a strong consideration which plays in favour of the Proposed Development.

10. Summary and Conclusions

10.1. This final Section 10 also serves as my Summary Proof of Evidence.

10.2. My Landscape Proof of Evidence has been written on behalf of Exagen Development Ltd (the Appellant).

10.3. My Proof of Evidence should be read in conjunction with Pegasus' Statement of Case and my Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') (October 2024) (CD 2.16 and CD 2.16.1) and other documents submitted as part of the planning application to Rushcliffe Borough Council ('RBC') and the Landscape SoCG (CD 8.3.1A). The planning application was submitted to RBC on 16th February 2024 and was registered under the reference number 24/00161/FUL.

Scale, Location, Layout and Appearance

10.4. With regard to scale, the Scheme seeks to deliver a solar farm, BESS, and substation along with other small scale ancillary infrastructure that, by their nature, would be largely of low profile and light / small footprint. The majority of the introduced built form could be successfully screened by tall hedgerows.

10.5. The quantum of development that is anticipated would extend over 15 no of field enclosures across two separate parcels of land. The overall physical extent of the Scheme, however, would not manifest itself in the landscape due to the existing strong sense of enclosure within and around the Appeal Site and its landscape context also benefiting from enclosure provided by woodland, field boundary vegetation, and landform.

10.6. The combination of topography and mature tree cover, woodlands, tree belts, and hedges, coupled with the vegetation in the intervening landscape, would mean that there would be very limited opportunity to appreciate the scale and appearance of the Appeal Proposal.

Effect on Landscape Elements

10.7. I consider that the Scheme would have a negligible adverse effect on topography. In terms of structural vegetation: hedgerows, trees, and woodlands with the additional planting, I consider there would be a major beneficial effect upon the tree/ woodland and hedgerow resource within the Appeal Site. There would be a moderate beneficial effect with regard to land cover with the intensively cultivated arable land converted to permanent pastures. With regard to public access and water features, I conclude that there would be no direct effects.

10.8. On that basis, I conclude that there would be some beneficial effects with regard to landscape elements that form the green infrastructure of the Appeal Site and the Scheme.

Effect on Landscape Character

10.9. I accept that the character of the Appeal Site would change from open agricultural land to one that remains in agricultural use - through active hedgerow and woodland management with sheep grazing, alongside energy infrastructure: solar modules, battery modules, ancillary infrastructure, substation compound etc. I judge the magnitude of change to be medium, with effects moderate adverse.

10.10. Given the proposed hedgerow and woodland / copse planting, I judge the dominance of this structural vegetation to increase with the residual effects diminishing to minor adverse given the proposed landscaping. Such effects would be limited to the Appeal Site itself, and not the surrounding landscape.

10.11. Notwithstanding the location of the Scheme and the adjacent cumulative scheme at Land To North East Of Highfields Farm, Bunny Hill, Costock, Nottinghamshire (application reference no. 22/00303/FUL) the physical extent and scale of the two schemes would not be easily appreciated together. The alignment of the PRoWs and availability of public views, coupled with the fact that both schemes are effectively split into two northern and two southern development parcels fragmented by established woodland plantation blocks of considerable size would reduce the perceived change to the character of the local landscape. In other words, there are very limited opportunities to appreciate either of those schemes in their entirety and this acts to reduce the cumulative visual effects.

10.12. I judge the degree of landscape character change, when considered in isolation, to be low and subsequently assess the effects to be minor adverse - this applies to the eastern part of the host Draft Policy Zone NW01 'Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps' only. The underlying working agricultural character of the local landscape would prevail.

Effect on the Visual Amenity of the Area

10.13. Overall, I conclude that the visual amenity of the receptors present around the Appeal Site would not be affected at all or effects would generally be not materially harmful. The Site benefits from a sense of enclosure and is characterised by limited inter-visibility with the

surrounding landscape, acknowledging that there are highly localised views from the southern study area and as one approaches the Appeal Site.

Cumulative Effects

10.14. In cumulative terms, I assess the addition of the Appeal or Applications Schemes to bring about minor adverse landscape character effects.

10.15. In visual terms, I judge the effects to be limited and geographically highly localised including views from the distant southern study area.

Conclusions

10.16. For the reasons articulated in my Landscape Proof of Evidence, it is my professional judgement that whilst there would be some limited adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity, including cumulatively with other consented solar farms, these would be localised. Therefore, I consider there are no substantive landscape character, visual amenity reasons from a landscape planning perspective, for refusing planning permission for the Appeal or Application Schemes.

Appendix 1 Location Plan: Plates 8 - 26

KEY

Site Boundary

Plate Locations

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION
-	-	-

APPENDIX 1: LOCATION PLAN: PLATES 8-26

LAND WEST OF BRADMORE ROAD WYSALL

EXAGEN OLD WOOD LIMITED

DATE	SCALE	DRAWN	APPROVED
20/10/2025	1:10,000@A3	EN/EH	RC

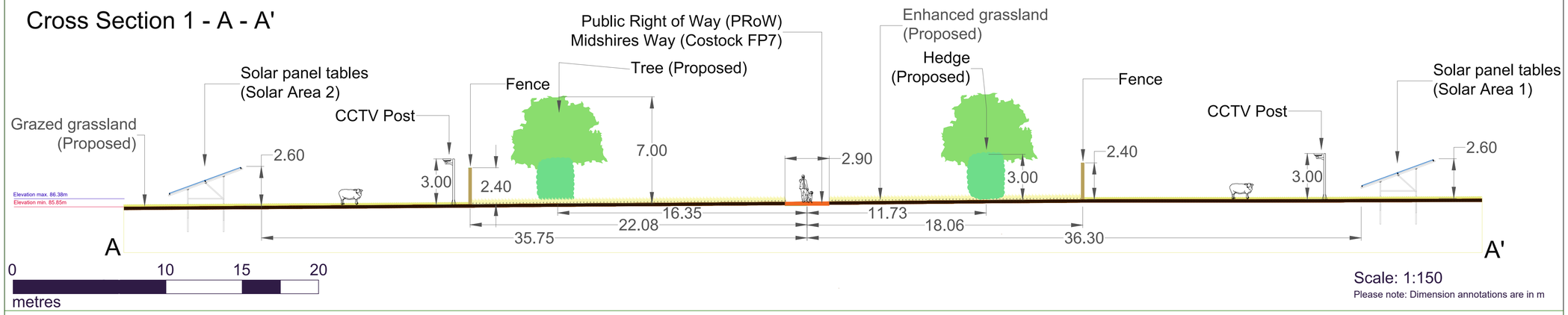
SHEET	REV	N	0	250 M
-	A			

DRAWING NUMBER
P25_1631_EN_04

PEGASUS GROUP

Appendix 2 Cross sections prepared by Exagen ('Public Right of Way Cross Sections', drawing ref. no. WLL02A-EXG-00-00-D-K019 Revision P01.01)

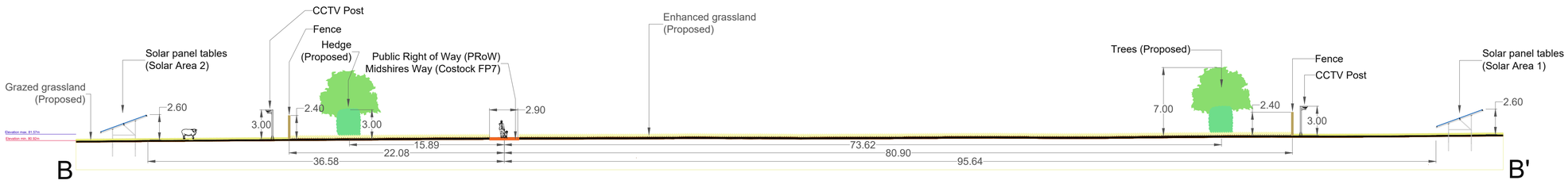
Cross Section 1 - A - A'



Scale: 1:150

Please note: Dimension annotations are in m

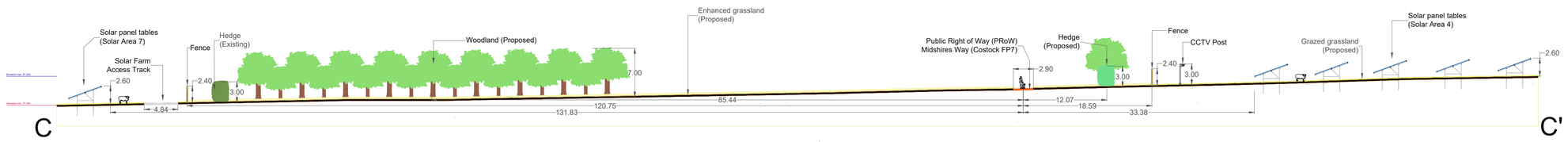
Cross Section 2 - B - B'



Scale: 1:250

Please note: Dimension annotations are in m

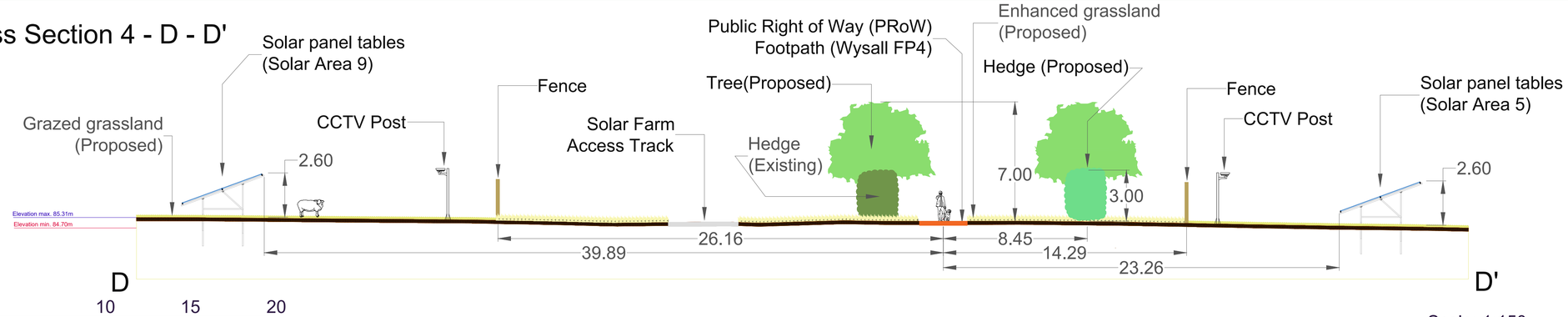
Cross Section 3 - C - C'



Scale: 1:350

Please note: Dimension annotations are in m

Cross Section 4 - D - D'



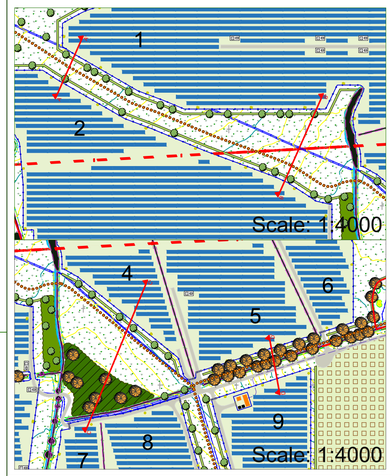
Scale: 1:150

Please note: Dimension annotations are in m

Notes:
View in conjunction with all relevant documents.
All dimensions to be checked on site before proceeding with work.
To be used only for the status specified.
The information contained therein must not be copied or reproduced in any form without written permission.
All dimensions, levels, and coordinates are in metres unless defined.
All areas are approximate and indicative only.
All omissions and discrepancies to be reported in writing to Exagen Development Ltd.

Key

- Proposed hedge
- Existing hedge
- Proposed solar access track
- Proposed solar panel table
- Proposed solar panel racking / piles
- Public rights of way (PRoW)
- Proposed security fence
- Proposed water trough
- Proposed woodland / trees
- Grazed grassland (within security fence)
- Enhanced grassland (outside security fence)
- Earth



01	15.01.26	Cross Sections
Rev	Date	Description

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Client
Exagen Development Limited

Drawing title
Public Right of Way Cross Sections - Northern Parcel

Project
Old Wood Energy Park

Status
Planning Appeal

Date
15/01/2026

Scale at A1
Varies

Status code
S4

Drawing number
WLL02A-EXG-00-00-D-K019

Revision
P01.01

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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Expertly Done.