

Melksham Solar Farm, Atworth, Melksham

TECHNICAL NOTE 1

Public rights of way management

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In June 2022, Wiltshire Council granted planning permission for the installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure on land at Studley Farm near Melksham (PL2021/08690). The application was supported by a Construction Traffic Management Plan dated April 2022. Planning permission was granted subject to a number of conditions. Condition 8 states:

“No development shall commence until a Public Right of Way Improvement Plan has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan will identify the locations of existing structures, replacement structures and any surface improvements to the paths (where necessary). The approved plan will be implemented prior to first commercial export of electricity.

- 1.2. In March 2025, Transport Planning Associates (TPA) prepared a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (PRoWIP) which describes the existing conditions and any improvements that will result from the approved development.

- 1.3. In addition, condition 13 states:

“Notwithstanding the submitted details contained within the approved CTMP dated April 2022, no development shall commence on site (including any works of demolition), until a Construction Method Statement, which shall include the following:

- 1. Routing plan*
- 2. Traffic Management Plan (including signage drawing – wording/size etc)*
- 3. Details of temporary/permanent Traffic Regulation Orders*
- 4. Phases plan*

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.”

- 1.4. In May 2025, Transport Planning Associates prepared a Construction Method Statement (CMS) which addresses points 1 to 4 of Condition 13.

- 1.5. The PRoWIP and CMS fully address the requirements of Conditions 8 and 13; however, they do not address the potential need for temporary footpath diversions or closures during the construction period. This technical note (TN1) therefore provides details of the effect of the construction period on the existing rights of way that cross the site, appropriate methods of ensuring the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and any temporary public rights of way diversions or closures.

- 1.6. This report should be read in conjunction with the CTMP, PRoWIP and CMS.



2. Existing rights of way

- 2.1. The existing rights of way are described in detail in Table 2.1 of the PRoWIP and shown on Drawing SK02 included here as Appendix A. Drawing SK02 also shows the location of a series of site photographs that were taken in August 2025. The photographs are also included in Appendix A.
- 2.2. An additional site reference sheet is included as Appendix B. The reference sheet has key junctions or locations labelled A to K to allow specific lengths of road or path to be referred to more easily (e.g. path ATW020 from C to D).

3. Construction programme

- 3.1. Section 4 of the CMP is entitled 'Phases Plan' and sets out the five construction work stages. The anticipated timescales for each work stage are set out in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 – Anticipated construction programme

	Work stage	Duration	Period
1	Site preparation	6 weeks	Apr - May 2026
2	Solar array installation	4 months	Jun - Sept 2026
3	Electrical infrastructure installation	2 months	Jun - July 2026
4	Testing and commissioning	3 months	Sept - Nov 2026
5	Completion works	2 months	Nov 2026 – Jan 2027

- 3.2. This table shows the duration of each work stage and the anticipated start and end date.

4. Construction access

- 4.1. All vehicles will access the site from Bath Road (A365).
- 4.2. A staff vehicles and construction vehicles for stages 1, 2, 4 and 5 will gain access to the site via Studley Farm Lane which joins Bath Road in the form of a four-arm mini-roundabout. This is shown on reference plan SK03 as point K.
- 4.3. Vehicles accessing the construction compound will travel along Studley Farm Lane between points K and J. This will also be the construction route for the western solar array. Studley Farm Lane will also be used as means of access for the construction of the eastern solar array. Vehicles will travel from K to J and then cross the field to the east of Studley Farm Lane as indicated by the red line boundary.
- 4.4. Public footpath ATW018 runs along Studley Farm Lane between points K and I. The management of this lane is covered in detail Section 5 below.
- 4.5. Access point A on the reference plan SK03 will not be used as a general access for staff vehicles or construction vehicles. However, a power cable will be laid from points A to D (and then into the eastern array) during work stage 3, which will affect footpaths ATW019 and ATW020. This is addressed in Sections 5 and 6 below.



5. Non-motorised user safety

- 5.1. Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders are described as non-motorised users (NMU). All the public rights of way shown on reference drawing SK03 and described in the PRoWIP are public footpaths; none are bridleways. For this reason, the only NMUs that should be using the rights of way in the vicinity of the site are pedestrians/walkers. However, in line with best practice, any measures to ensure the safety of pedestrians will also be applied to cyclists or horse riders who may be using the footpaths, whether they are permitted to do so or not. This section therefore refers generally to NMUs rather than pedestrians.

General

- 5.2. The eastern and western solar arrays will be made secure by the installation of fencing around both parts of the site. The fencing will be installed prior to the installation of the solar arrays. For this reason, the existing rights of way that run along the edges of the site will be protected from general construction traffic once the fences have been installed and for the duration of the construction process. This applies to the west of the western site (ATW013 and ATW021), between the two sites (ATW018) and to the east of the eastern site (BGIF3).
- 5.3. At reference point E, the existing culvert will be widened to maintain a 2.0m wide footpath outside the security fence.

Main access

- 5.4. The primary interaction between construction traffic and NMUs will be on footpath ATW018 between reference points K and J. A Gateman will be stationed at the existing gate, south of reference point K, annotated on the reference plans and shown in photo R20. From this location, the gateman will have a clear view north to K and south to J. Any large vehicles will be escorted between the gate and the site compound. Along this length, Studley Farm Lane varies in width between 3.5m to 4.0m and has clear verges on both sides. There is sufficient width for a slow-moving construction vehicle to safely pass an NMU.
- 5.5. At point J, there is a localised narrowing, shown in photo R15. A banksman will be stationed in this location to halt vehicles if necessary to give priority to any NMUs using the right of way.
- 5.6. A banksman will be located at the entrance into the construction compound to manage all vehicles turning into and out of the compound onto Studley Farm Lane.
- 5.7. Between reference points J and I, temporary stock fencing located to the east of Studley Farm Lane, set back approximately 1m from the edge of carriageway. This is shown in photo R14. This stock fencing will be set back to 2m from the edge of carriageway to ensure a wide verge for walkers, clear of the carriageway.
- 5.8. Subject to the safety measures described above, there will be no need for any temporary closures or diversions of footpath ATW018 along Studley Farm Lane.

Secondary access

- 5.9. As described in Section 4, a power cable will be laid along the secondary access between points A and D (and then west to J). The definitive rights of way plans show footpath ATW020 between reference points C and D, running to the east of the field hedge. In practice, the route on the ground runs to the east of the hedge as shown dashed on drawing SK03. The cable route will run to the east of the hedge. A temporary fence will be installed to separate NMUs from construction traffic. In practice, most NMUs are likely to continue to use the informal route to the west of the hedge line in any case.
- 5.10. At point D, the cable route will cross ATW020 to enter the eastern array. A banksman will be stationed at point D to halt vehicles if necessary to give priority to any NMUs using the right of way.
- 5.11. Works on the access road between A and B will require a temporary closure of ATW019. This is discussed in Section 6 below.



6. Potential diversions or closures

- 6.1. The secondary access from reference point A will not be used for general construction traffic, but a cable will be routed between points A and D along that route. During those works the limited available corridor width means that it would be unsafe for NMUs to continue to use ATW019 between A and B. There is no suitable route for a diversion between A and B. It will therefore be necessary to close footpath ATW019 between A and B for a period of 2 weeks during work stage three.
- 6.2. As the closure will be temporary, no Public Path Order (PPO) will be required, but a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) will be required.
- 6.3. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 gives highways authorities the powers to impose Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). TRO's may be permanent (all year round or for a defined part or parts of the year), experimental, or temporary. They may be used to control any type of traffic on any type of highway. The Act sets out the powers and describes the circumstances and criteria which have to be met. Wiltshire Council's 'Rights of Way and Countryside policies' states¹:

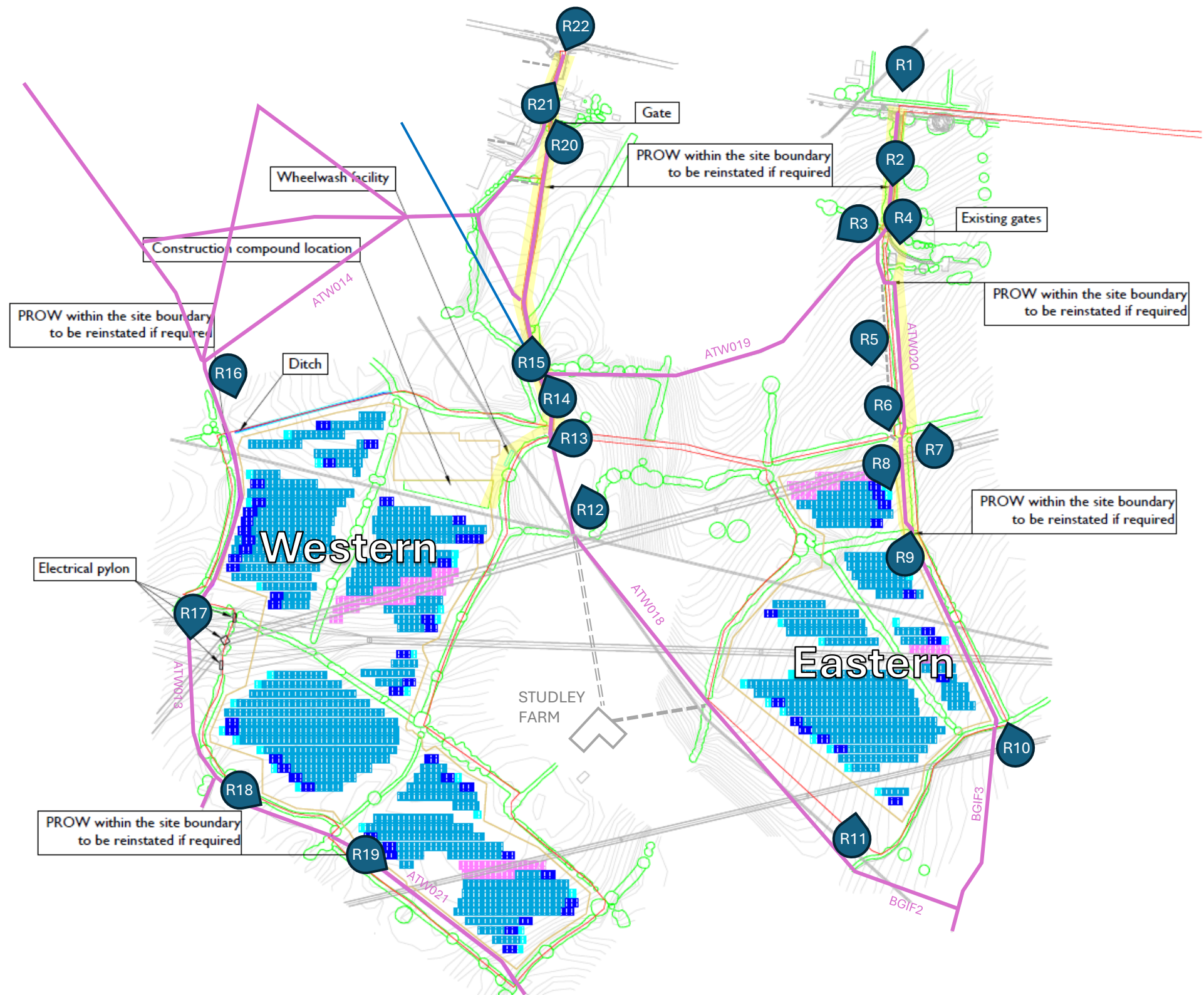
"The council will not rule out the use of a temporary or permanent TRO to close a path or byway to specified types of users, where the safety of all other users is evidently at risk and there are sufficient grounds for the action, or if the extent of physical damage or the likelihood of it is so severe that a TRO is necessary to prevent the problem from continuing or occurring. Temporary TRO's are frequently necessary to allow statutory undertakers to carry out works that affect a public right of way".
- 6.4. This provision is applicable to the proposed temporary partial closure of ATW019 between points A and B. During that closure. Footpath ATW019 will remain open between B and J, as will ATW018. An alternative route will therefore be available during the temporary closure.
- 6.5. Due to the necessary lead-in time, a formal application will be made to Wiltshire Council for the TTRO upon commencement of work stage one.

¹ WC Environmental Services, Rights of Way and Countryside Policies, Section 12 – Traffic Regulation Orders



Appendix A

Existing rights of way and photographic record



78 York Street | London | W1H 1DP
TELEPHONE : 0203 949 9922

PROJECT TITLE

MELKSHAM SOLAR FARM AND BESS

DRAWING TITLE

SITE PHOTOGRAPH LOCATIONS

DATE

AUG 25

SCALE

NTS

STATUS

PRELIM

DRAWN

RF

CHECKED

RGW

APPROVED

RGW

DRG SIZE

A3

DRAWING NUMBER

SK02

REV

-



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PROJECT TITLE
DRAWING TITLE

MELKSHAM SOLAR FARM AND BESS
SITE PHOTOGRAPHS R1 TO R11

DATE AUG 25

SCALE NTS

STATUS PRELIM

DRAWN RF

CHECKED RGW

APPROVED RGW

DRG SIZE A3

DRAWING NUMBER SK03

REV -



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TELEPHONE : 0203 949 9922

PROJECT TITLE

MELKSHAM SOLAR FARM AND BESS

DRAWING TITLE

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS R12 TO R22

DATE

AUG 25

SCALE

NTS

STATUS

PRELIM

DRAWN

RF

CHECKED

RGW

APPROVED

RGW

DRG SIZE

A3

DRAWING NUMBER

SK04

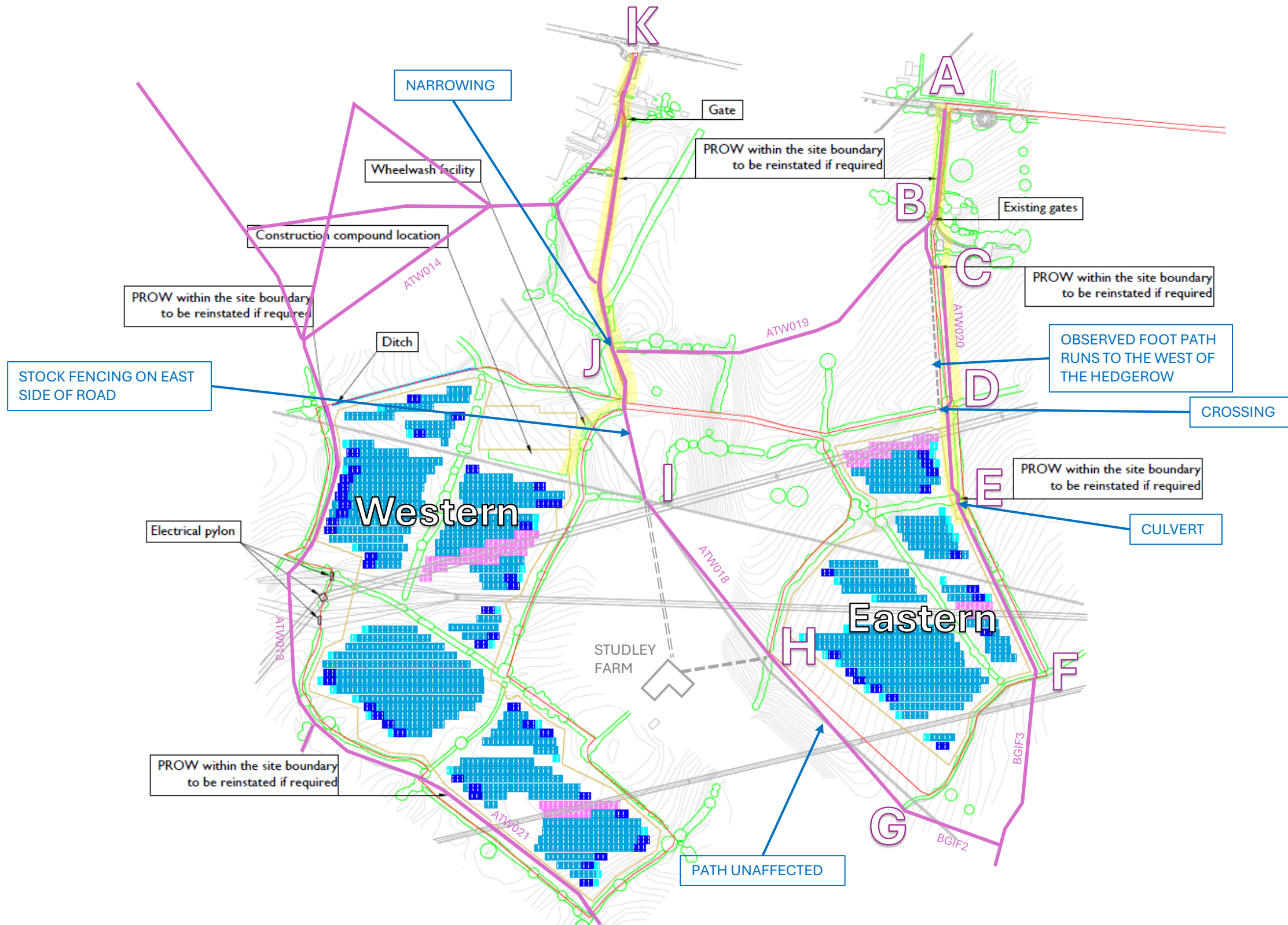
REV

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Appendix B

Annotated reference sheet



78 York Street | London | W1H 1DP
TELEPHONE : 0203 949 9922

PROJECT TITLE		MELKSHAM SOLAR FARM AND BESS			
DRAWING TITLE		SITE REFERENCE SHEET			
DATE	JAN 26	SCALE	NTS	STATUS	PRELIM
DRAWN	RF	CHECKED	RGW	APPROVED	RGW
DRG SIZE	A3	DRAWING NUMBER		SK03	REV -