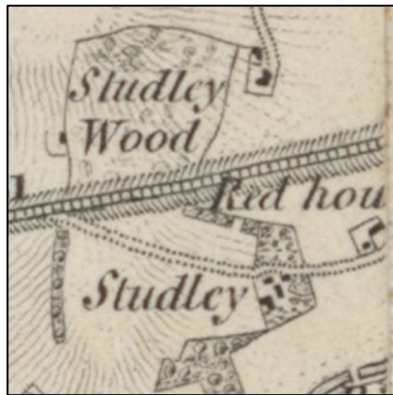




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Studley Grange Wroughton Swindon

Proposed Solar Development



Heritage Statement March 2026

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Cover photograph: View across the Site

1. Introduction

1.1 SCOPE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

This Heritage Statement, commissioned by Heatons Limited on behalf of Biffa Waste Services Limited, presents the findings of a heritage assessment for a proposed solar development at Studley Grange, Wroughton, near Swindon. (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1 Location of the Site

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The Site is centred at approximately SU 10102 81694. The Site is to the south and south east of Studley Grange Farm, a Grade II listed house, approximately 200m south of Great Western Railway (GWR), 700m south-west of the M4 and to the west of Studley Grange Garden Centre. The Site – that is the proposed solar park - comprises rough pasture, restored following landfilling. The solar panels will cover an area of approximately 4.6ha. A site compound would be located within an existing gas management compound, to the north east of the solar park and 40m south of a Grade II listed farmhouse. A cable will be laid in a trench between the two. The proposed layout is shown on **Figure 2**.

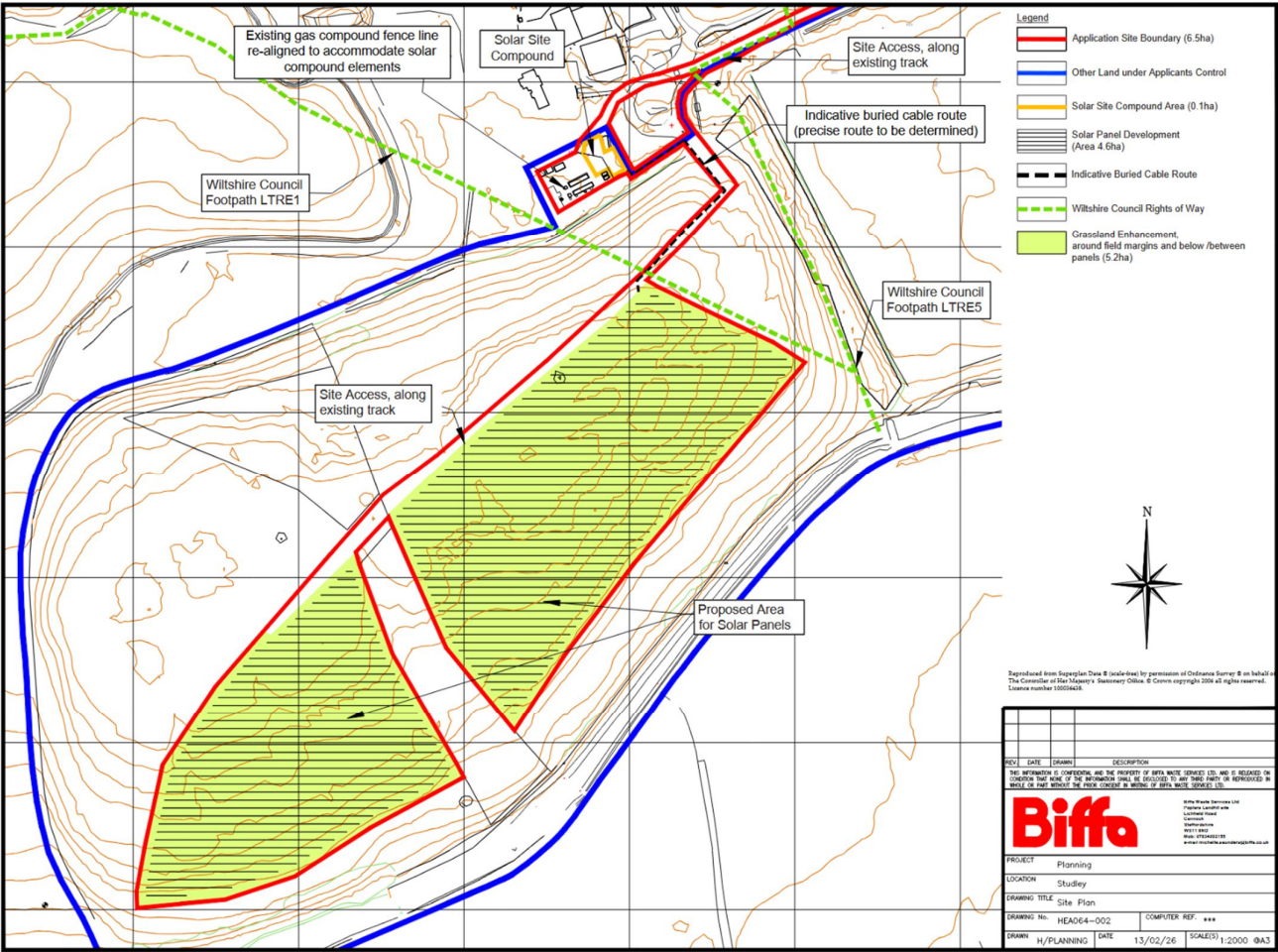


Figure 2 Proposed site layout

1.2 SCOPING AND CONSULTATIONS

An extract from the Wiltshire Council scoping report is set out below.

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)	C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))
12. CULTURAL HERITAGE/ARCHAEOLOGY		
12.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes. Grade II listed 'Studley Grange Farmhouse' adjacent to the site boundary.	No. Any potential impacts can be adequately assessed as part of the determination of a planning application and do not require the submission of an Environmental Statement (ES). The submission of a detailed Heritage Statement would be expected with the need for an archaeological trial trench evaluation possible.

1.3 SCOPE OF WORK UNDERTAKEN

Cultural heritage is represented by a wide range of features that result from past human use of the landscape. These include historic structures, many still in use, above ground and buried archaeological monuments and remains of all periods, artefacts of anthropological origin and evidence that can help reconstruct past human environments. In its broadest form cultural heritage is represented by the landscape and townscape itself.

Below-ground archaeological potential is not addressed within this Heritage Statement as all the land within the Site has previously been worked for minerals and restored to landfill. It is proposed that should undisturbed ground be included within infrastructure – such as cable trenches – this is mitigated by a watching brief (see **Section 4**).

The scope of work was as follows:

Box 1 Scope of Heritage Statement

- Description of the PDA and surrounding area
- Define significance and extent of the heritage assets
- Assessment of historic maps and aerial photographs
- Assessment of setting of designated assets
- Assessment of change and whether beneficial, adverse or neutral
- Reference to all relevant policies and guidance, and discussion of how the proposed works (incorporating any mitigation) comply or conflict with the same

1.4 LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The surveys and baseline information were based on a snapshot in time and the information, including that obtained through secondary sources, is assumed correct at that time.

1.5 RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

1.5.1 Historic Environment Statutory Legislation

The importance of cultural heritage is clearly recognised at both national and local levels.

Table 1 summarises the statutory legislation relating to the historic environment relevant to this study.

Table 1 Historic Environment Statutory Legislation

Legislation	Key Issues
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	It is a criminal offence to carry out any works on or near to a Scheduled Ancient Monument without a Scheduled Monument Consent.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	No works can be carried out in relation to a listed building without listed building consent. Designation of an area as a 'conservation area' introduces general controls over demolition and development within that area.

1.5.2 National Policy and Guidance

In accordance with best practice the significance of an effect should be identified as part of this assessment. This is achieved using a combination of the following published guidance and professional judgement.

- National Planning Policy Framework, 2024. Department for Communities and Local Government.
- Planning Practice Guidance: *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk>
- Historic England¹ 2008. *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*.
- Historic England 2017. *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA3)
- Historic England 2019 *Statements of Heritage Significance* (HE Advice Note 12)

1.5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

National planning policy on how cultural heritage should be assessed is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024). This covers all aspects of heritage and the historic environment, including listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, battlefields and archaeology.

Significance (for heritage policy) is described at Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Setting is defined within the NPPF as:

¹ Historic England includes its former name English Heritage

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

The most relevant policies within NPPF to this proposal are reproduced below,

207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

212. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

216. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

218. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

1.5.4 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment was published in April 2014 (updated in 2019) as a companion to the NPPF, replacing previous Circulars and other supplementary guidance. In respect of heritage decision-making, the PPG stresses the importance of determining applications on the basis of significance, and explains how the tests of harm and impact within the NPPF are to be interpreted.

In particular, the PPG includes the following in relation to the evaluation of significance and harm:

“Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an

important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

1.5.5 Historic England: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3)

This Good Practice Advice Note published in 2017 observes that amongst the Government's planning objectives for the historic environment is that conservation decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of a heritage asset's significance and are investigated to a proportionate degree. Historic England recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to complex or more straightforward cases:

- Step 1: identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- Step 3: assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
- Step 4: explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm;
- Step 5: make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

1.5.6 Historic England: Statements of Heritage Significance (HEAN 12)

HEAN 12 notes that significance is one of the guiding principles running through the historic environment section of the NPPF. The NPPF defines significance as '*the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest*'. Such interest may be '*archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic*' and it may derive '*not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting*'. Significance is what conservation sustains, and where appropriate enhances, in managing change to heritage assets.

HEAN 12 sets out three stages that should be followed to provide the planning authority with an understanding of significance of the heritage asset. That understanding:

- must describe significance following appropriate analysis, no matter what the level of significance or the scope of the proposal;

- should be sufficient, though no more, for an understanding of the impact of the proposal on the significance, both positive and negative; and
- sufficient for the LPA to come to a judgment about the level of impact on that significance and therefore on the merits of the proposal.

This approach is embedded into the following assessment.

1.5.7 Local Planning Policy

The relevant local plan is the Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted January 2015).

Of relevance to the historic environment is the following policy:

Core Policy 58

Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- i. nationally significant archaeological remains
- ii. World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire
- iii. buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest
- iv. the special character or appearance of conservation areas
- v. historic parks and gardens
- vi. important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).

Heritage assets at risk will be monitored and development proposals that improve their condition will be encouraged. The advice of statutory and local consultees will be sought in consideration of such applications.

1.6 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The following assessment has been undertaken in accordance with planning policy (NPPF) and best practice where there is a requirement to identify the significance of an effect in a measurable and transparent way.

The prediction of effects and the assessment of their significance is based upon the published guidance cited above, measured using the criteria set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, 2020, LA104 *Environmental Assessment and Monitoring*, and informed by professional experience. These are considered the most transparent available for heritage assessments.

1.6.1 Type of Impact

Impacts may be beneficial, adverse, neutral (i.e. no discernible effect) or none. They may be permanent or temporary, of long, medium or short duration, direct or indirect. They may also be cumulative or combined with other effects occurring in the vicinity.

Direct impacts have a physical effect upon an archaeological site, structure or cultural heritage asset. This may lead to the partial or total destruction of that asset. It may also result from changes in the hydrological régime that can cause drawdown some distance from the application boundary resulting in impacts upon waterlogged archaeological sites.

Indirect impacts of development upon scheduled monuments, listed buildings, parks and gardens and other designated assets of the cultural heritage landscape are more difficult to assess. Consideration should include the context (or setting) of a cultural heritage asset (or place) and how we should assess its significance. Contextual relationships may be visual, but can also be, for example, functional, historical or intellectual.

1.6.2 Likelihood of the impact occurring

An assessment is made as to the likelihood of the identified impact occurring. Probability is considered as certain, likely, unlikely or not known.

1.6.3 Sensitivity

Five categories of sensitivity are identified. These are expanded upon in **Table 2**, below.

Table 2 Sensitivity of receptor

Value (Sensitivity) of receptor/resource	Definition
Very high	Sites and settings of <i>international importance</i> , for example World Heritage Sites.
High	Sites and settings of <i>national importance</i> . Scheduled Monuments. Registered Battlefields. Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings, and Registered Historic Parks and Gardens. Sites may also be discovered as a result of new research that are also of national importance and are candidates for scheduling.

Moderate	Sites and settings of <i>regional importance</i> . Archaeological sites and features that are not considered sufficiently important or well-preserved to be protected as Scheduled Monuments. Grade II Listed Buildings and Registered Historic Parks and Gardens.
Low	Sites and structures, and other components of the historic environment that contribute to the local landscape.
Very Low	Archaeological sites and other components of the historic environment of very low importance.

1.6.4 Magnitude

The magnitude of change to an archaeological asset or landscape is considered in terms of its vulnerability, its current condition, and the nature of the impact upon it. Magnitude is assessed as major, moderate, minor, negligible or none and the criteria used in this assessment are set out in **Table 3**, below.

Table 3 **Magnitude of Change**

Magnitude of Impact (change)		Typical Description
Major	Adverse	Loss of resource and/or quality and integrity of resource; severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Large scale or major improvement of resource quality; extensive restoration; major improvement of attribute quality.
Moderate	Adverse	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting the integrity; partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of attribute quality.
Minor	Adverse	Some measurable change in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements
	Beneficial	Minor benefit to, or addition of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring.
Negligible/Neutral	Adverse	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Very minor benefit to or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features or elements.

1.6.5 Assessing significance

The criteria are considered together to reach a conclusion upon the significance of residual effects taking into account any mitigation measures. They may be beneficial or adverse or neutral effects (i.e. no change to the existing situation). In some cases, it may not be possible to quantify the significance of an effect, for example due to a gap in information, and this is noted.

Table 4 presents a matrix of the inter-relationship of environmental value (sensitivity) with magnitude that leads to a conclusion on the significance of an effect.

Table 4 Matrix of Significance

		Baseline Sensitivity				
		Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Magnitude of Change	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Major-Moderate Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate/Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial
	Moderate Beneficial	Major-Moderate Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate/Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor/Negligible Beneficial
	Minor Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate/Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Minor/Negligible Beneficial	Negligible
	Neutral	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	Minor Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor/Negligible Adverse	Negligible
	Moderate Adverse	Major-Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor/Negligible Adverse
	Major Adverse	Major Adverse	Major-Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

1.7 AUTHORSHIP

This assessment has been written by Andrew Josephs (BA Hons Archaeology and Environmental Studies), Managing Director of Andrew Josephs Associates, a consultancy specialising in cultural heritage founded in 2002. Andrew has extensive experience of all periods and facets of cultural heritage. He is involved primarily in planning applications, EIA and the design of mitigation strategies on developments with heritage constraints. Currently Andrew is heritage consultant to over 150 companies across Europe.

He has undertaken in excess of 1200 cultural heritage assessments since becoming one of the UK's first archaeological consultants in 1992. He was previously Principal Consultant (Director of Heritage) at Entec (now Wood) and Wardell Armstrong. Prior to 1992, he worked as a field-based archaeologist and researcher for universities and units in the UK, Europe and the USA.

He has lectured widely and was a visiting lecturer in Environmental Impact Assessment at the University of Nottingham.

2. Baseline

2.1 DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The Historic England Archive (Listing the List) and Defra's Magic map were consulted to verify the location of designated heritage assets.

Given the local topography created by landfilling, and the influences of infrastructure such as the GWR and M4, a study area of 750m from designated assets was considered appropriate.

The assets are summarised in **Table 5** and shown on **Figure 3**.

Table 5 Heritage Assets Scoped into initial assessment

Ref on Fig. 3	Asset	Grade	National Heritage List reference	Distance from solar park boundary	Distance from solar compound
1	Studley Grange Farmhouse. Farmhouse, late C18 to early C19, rubble limestone, Roman tile roofs. 2-storey, 3-bay, gable stacks, original entrance blocked. 2-bay extension to right. Facade whitewashed, timber casement windows, door in extension under recent porch. Upper windows with segmental brick arches.	II	1022664	100m	40m
2	Upper Studley Farmhouse. Farmhouse, c1625. Coursed limestone rubble with ashlar quoins, Roman tiled roof. 2-storey, 3-bay on L plan, the 2 bays extended by further bay as agricultural space, also C17. Gable stacks to the 2-bay block, door in right bay.	II	1022662	500m	460m
3	Can Court Farmhouse. Farmhouse, late C16. Coursed limestone with ashlar quoins, stone slated roof. 2-storey, 3 bays; cellar and attics. Central hall with 2-storey porch, flanking reception rooms and rear extension. Gable stacks with diagonal flues.	II	1022663	575m	760m

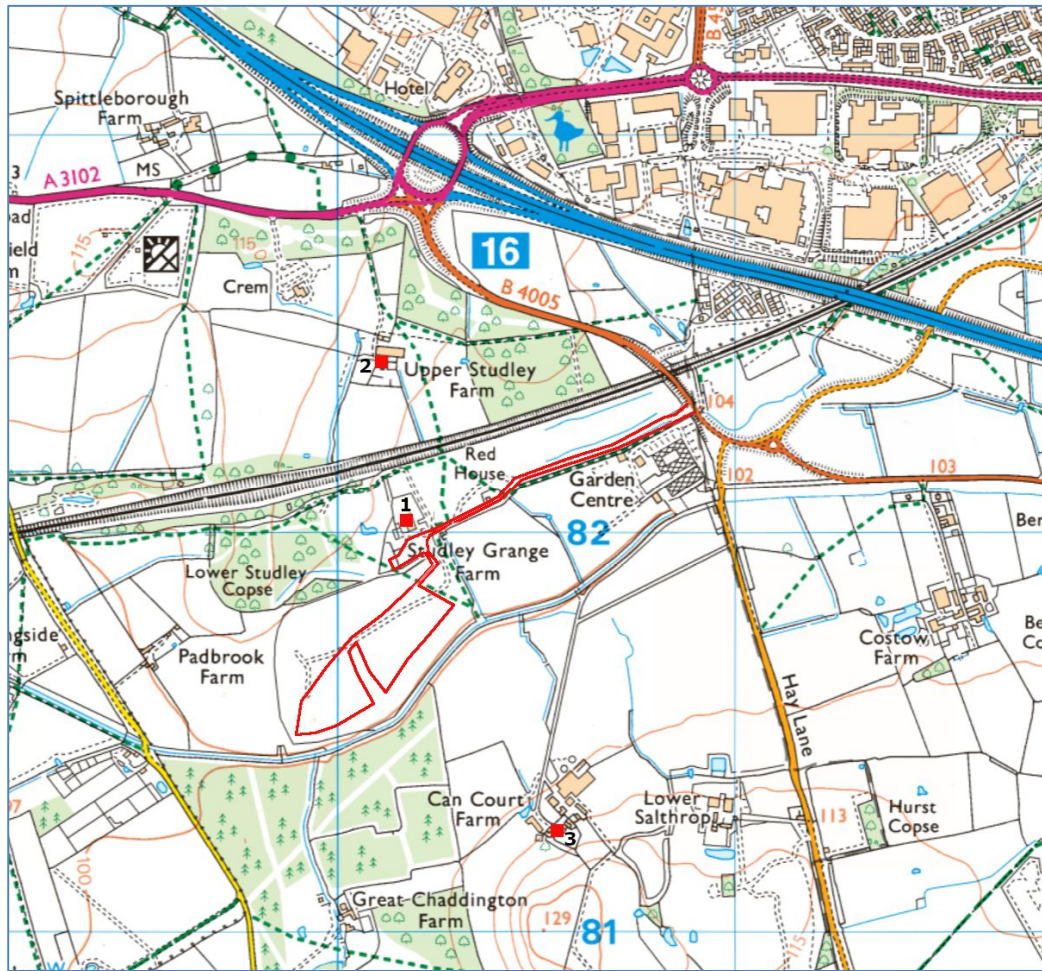


Figure 3 Designated Assets within 750m of the Site

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The nearest scheduled monument is 1730m west of the Site, a Medieval rural settlement 240m south of Lower Woodshaw Farm (list entry 1018388), and north of the GWR.

There are no Grade I or Grade II* designated assets within 3km of the Site.

The nearest Registered Park and Garden is Grade II Lydiard Park, 2.2km north of the Site, and to the north of the M4.

There would be no effect upon the setting of any of these assets.

3. Assessment of The Setting of the Designated Assets

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The impact of a development can be either direct, or indirect. Indirect impacts are those that do not physically affect a cultural heritage asset, townscape or landscape, but that alter the context or setting. Setting is defined through law, policy and good practice guidance.

Law: The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that when considering any planning application that affects a listed building a local planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that asset and its setting. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 does not include powers to protect setting, but such a requirement is made clear in policy such as National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and GPA3 The Setting of Heritage Assets.

Policy: Paragraph 200 of NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets likely to be affected by development proposals. The paragraph states that the level of detail should be proportionate to an asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.

Significance (for heritage policy) is described at Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Setting is defined within the NPPF as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Good practice: The essential good practice guide for assessment is provided by Historic England's *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2nd Edition, December 2017). That gives general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views contribute to setting.

The 5-step approach recommended by GPA3, (see section 1.5.5, above), has been followed below.

3.2 STEP 1: IDENTIFY WHICH HERITAGE ASSETS AND THEIR SETTINGS ARE AFFECTED

3.2.1 *Assets scoped out*

Upper Studley Farmhouse and Can Court Farmhouse were scoped out of detailed assessment. The former is separated from the Site by the GWR and the latter sits within a context of modern farmbuildings that block the view towards the Site. Distance would ensure that there could be no effect upon their setting, **Figures 4 and 5**.

Studley Farmhouse is scoped into the assessment – **Section 3.3-3.5**.



Figure 4 Current setting of Upper Studley Farmhouse © Google base photo



Figure 5 Current setting of Can Court Farmhouse showing modern farmbuildings shaded orange © Google base photo

3.3 STEP 2: ASSESS THE DEGREE TO WHICH THESE SETTINGS AND VIEWS MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET(S) OR ALLOW SIGNIFICANCE TO BE APPRECIATED

3.3.1 Historical and current context of Studley Grange Farmhouse

Studley Grange Farmhouse (**Figure 6**) is an unoccupied farmhouse, dating to the late 18th or early 19th century, according to the listing description. However, Save Britain's Heritage website suggests an earlier origin²:

This site was the medieval grange of Stanley Abbey from at least 1460. It remained in the possession of the Abbey until the Dissolution when it came into the ownership of Sir Edward Seymour. It is likely that the original farmhouse was built in this period. Interior photographs show that the building is cruck-framed, and recent dendrochronology studies by the Wiltshire Buildings Record have shown that crucks are not found in Wiltshire after c.1530. There are other features which suggest an earlier date, such as a finely moulded beam.



Figure 6 Grade II Studley Grange Farmhouse from the east

The tithe map of 1839 does not include detail of the farmhouse. It is likely to have been owned by Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, who owned the surrounding land, and the reason it is not included within the apportionment is unclear. Viscount Bolingbroke was a peerage created in 1712 for Henry St John. He was simultaneously made Baron St John, of Lydiard Tregoze in the County of Wiltshire.

The Ordnance Survey 1" to the mile, revised in 1838, shows the farmhouse within woods and to the north the recently constructed Great Western Railway, **Figure 7**.

² <https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/news/item/817/building-of-the-month-august-2022-studley-grange-farmhouse-cancourt-swindon-wiltshire-sn4-9qs>

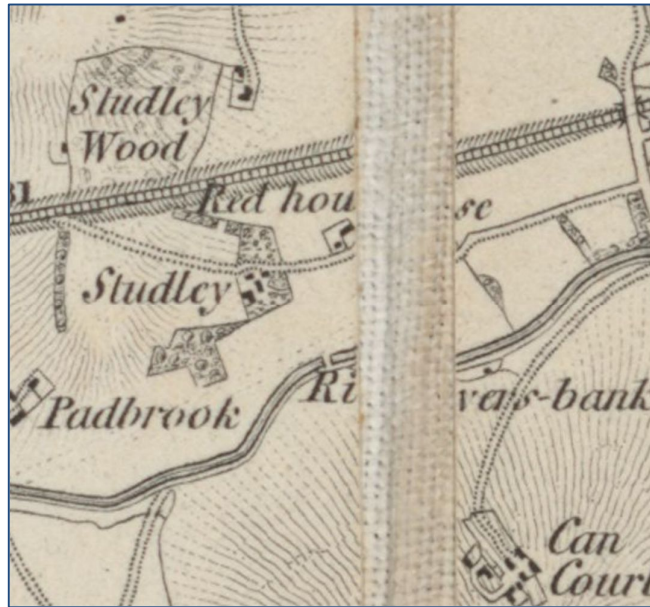


Figure 7 Ordnance Survey, revised 1" to mile, 1838.

The Ordnance Survey 25" to the mile of 1883 (**Figure 8**) shows the farmhouse set within an orchard. The field within which the solar development is proposed retains the same boundaries.

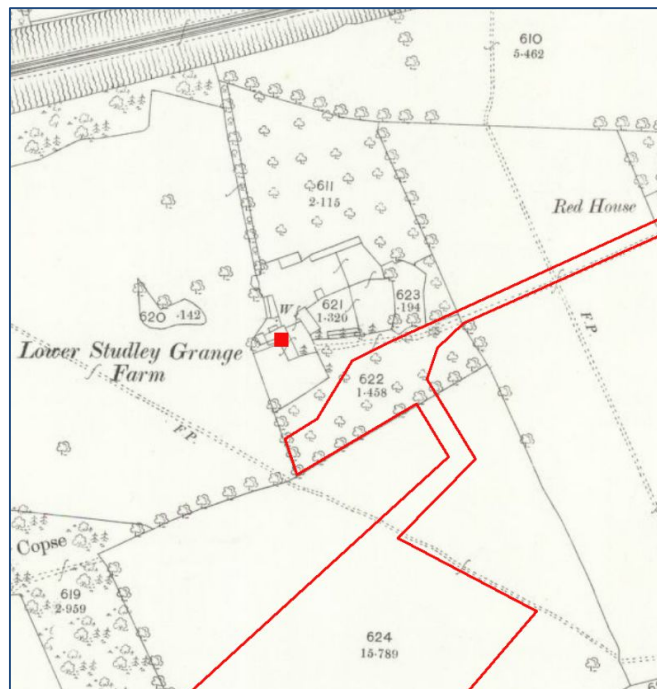


Figure 8 Ordnance Survey, 1883

The Site was worked and landraised before 2002, when a Google Earth satellite image shows the restored land within the Site and ongoing activity to the south of the Farmhouse, **Figure 9**.



Figure 9 Google Earth, 2002 ©Google Earth

By 2012, the area to the west of the proposed control building, transformer and switchgear was tarmacked and used as a gas installation, **Figure 10**.



Figure 10 Google Earth, 2012 ©Google Earth

A recent close-up of the gas installation and the Farmhouse is shown on **Figure 11**. This shows that although close to the listed building, at a distance of about 35m, the gas installation is screened by mature trees.

The current setting has changed significantly from that of an agricultural farmstead with landraising and other infrastructure within the former farmland.

This can clearly be seen on LiDAR that shows a modified landform to the south of the Farmhouse, **Figure 12**.

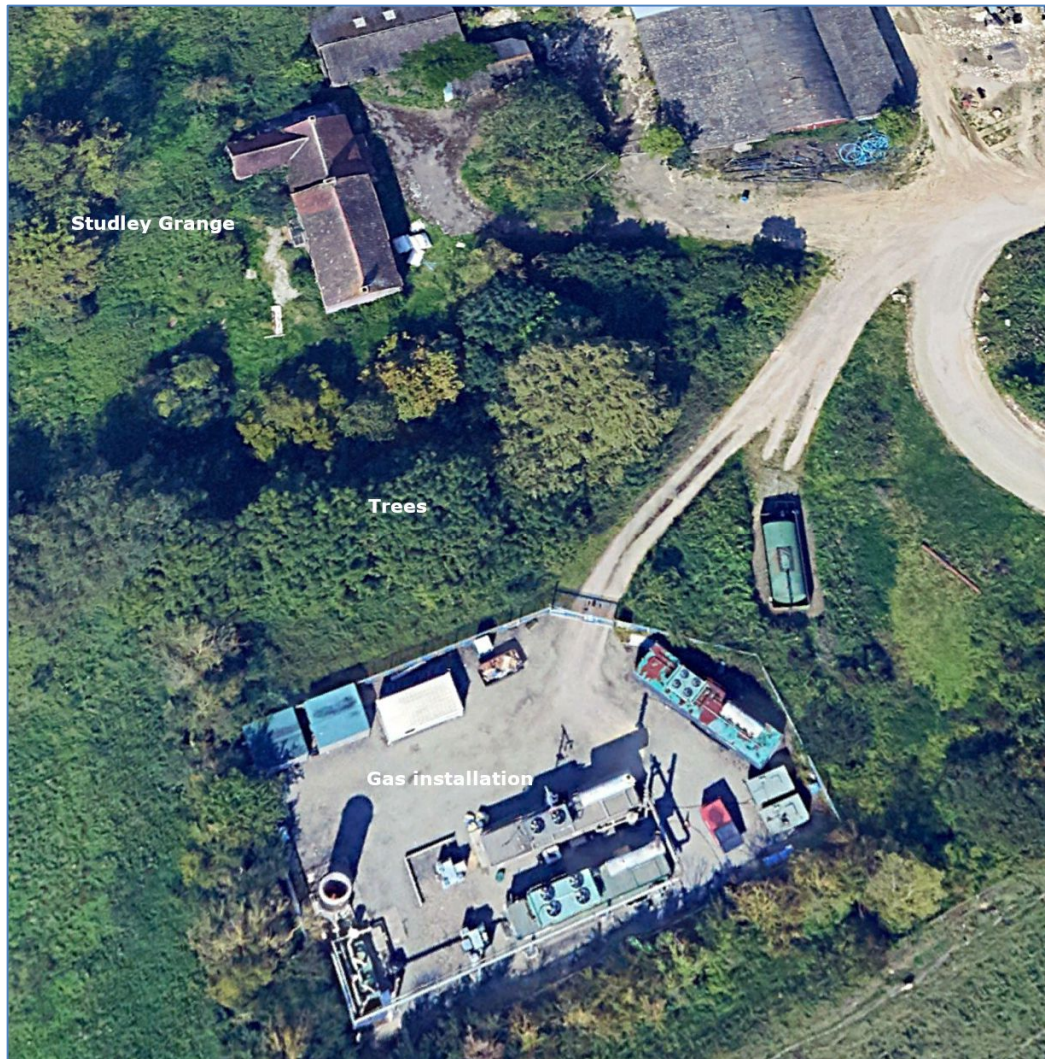


Figure 11 Google Earth, 2023 ©Google Earth



Figure 12 LiDAR DTM 0.50-1m showing extent of modification of the landscape

3.3.2 Proposed setting

The proposed solar farm would be on former landfill which at its nearest boundary would be approximately 100m from the listed Farmhouse, **Figure 13**.

The proposed control building, transformer and switchgear would sit adjacent to the existing gas installation, approximately 50m south east of the listed building, **Figure 14**.

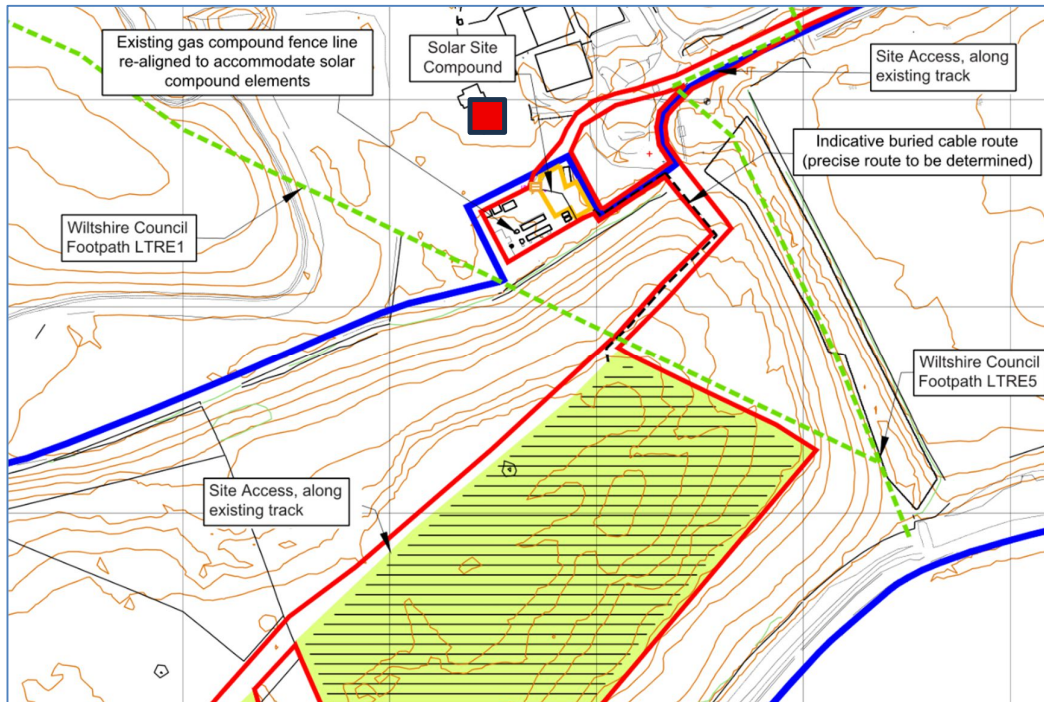


Figure 13 Proposed layout near listed Farmhouse



Figure 14 Proposed new control buildings in relationship to the existing gas installation and the listed building. The extent of new development is edged with a solid red line. ©Google Earth

3.3.3 Views and intervisibility

The Farmhouse is orientated to the east (**Figure 15**) There are no views from the listed building of either the proposed solar park or the existing gas installation/proposed control buildings due to trees and vegetation (**Figure 16**).



Figure 15 View from front elevation of Studley Grange looking towards existing access road



Figure 16 View from southern gable end of Studley Grange looking towards the proposed control building and solar park

From a distance of approximately 80m east of Studley Grange, the listed Farmhouse and the gas installation/proposed control buildings can be viewed in the same visual envelope, **Figure 17**. In summer this view would highly filtered due to leaves on the trees.



Figure 17 View west looking to front elevation of Studley Grange and to the left the existing gas installation (arrowed).

3.3.4 Step 2 Checklist

GPA 3 recommends a checklist of potential attributes to a setting:

The starting point for this stage of the assessment is to consider the significance of the heritage asset itself and then establish the contribution made by its setting. The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of potential attributes of a setting that may help to elucidate its contribution to significance. It may be the case that only a limited selection of the attributes listed is likely to be particularly important in terms of any single asset.

Table 6 Potential attributes to the setting of Studley Grange and effects of the proposed development upon its significance

Potential attributes of a setting	Effect of proposed development on the listed building	Comment
Asset's physical surroundings	None	The current surroundings are of a post-industrial landscape
Topography	None	The local, historic topography has significantly changed as a result of landraising
Aspect	None	The Farmhouse faces east at an oblique angle from the solar farm and at 90° from the control building
Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)	N/A	
Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces	None	Landraising has been extensive around the listed building
Formal design	N/A	
Orientation and aspect	N/A	
Historic materials and surfaces	N/A	

Green space, trees and vegetation	None	The remaining greenspace and trees around the Farmhouse will not be affected
Openness, enclosure and boundaries	None	The Site is separated from the Farmhouse by trees that enclose it. These will remain.
Functional relationships and communications	None	
History and degree of change over time	None	The setting of the Farmhouse has experienced significant change during the past 40 years.
Experience of the asset	None	The Farmhouse is best experienced from the east, close to the gate of the curtilage. This view will not change.
Surrounding landscape or townscape character	None	Significant changes as a result of landraising
Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset	None	No change
Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features	None	
Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point	N/A	.
Noise, vibration and other nuisances	Negligible, temporary	Temporary noise during construction.
Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness'	None	The dominant influence on tranquillity is the GWR that passes 170m to the north.
Busyness, bustle, movement and activity	Negligible, temporary	Some activity would be perceptible during construction, but none during operation
Scents and smells	None	The proposed development does not generate scents and smells
Diurnal changes	N/A	No lighting is proposed
Land use	None	The Site would be on the former farmland of the Farmhouse, now landraised, but still defined by historic field-boundaries
Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement	None	There would be no change to the existing situation
Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public	N/A	
Rarity of comparable survivals of setting	None	The setting of the listed building is degraded and unremarkable in a national context.
Cultural associations	N/A	
Celebrated artistic representations	N/A	
Traditions	N/A	

3.3 STEP 3: ASSESS THE EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, WHETHER BENEFICIAL OR HARMFUL, ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OR ON THE ABILITY TO APPRECIATE IT

The key factor is to determine the effects upon significance and how that can affect our ability to appreciate the asset, the test set in Historic England guidance.

The above assessment has demonstrated that the immediate setting of the listed building has been significantly degraded during 40 years.

The land within the Site has landfilled and restored at a higher level.

Trees around the Farmhouse will be retained and there would be no views of the proposed solar farm or control building. The latter will be constructed adjacent to an existing gas installation.

It has been assessed that there would be a negligible adverse effect on the setting of the Farmhouse through noise, movement and activity that would occur during construction. This would be a temporary effect. This would have no effect upon our appreciation of significance of the asset.

During operation there would be no perceptible noise from the control building, the dominant noise source is the GWR that passes 175m to the north of the Farmhouse

There will be no additional cumulative nor combined adverse effect deriving from the proposed development.

3.4 STEP 4: EXPLORE WAYS TO MAXIMISE ENHANCEMENT AND AVOID OR MINIMISE HARM

No enhancement in respect of heritage is required.

3.5 STEP 5: MAKE AND DOCUMENT THE DECISION AND MONITOR OUTCOMES

The residual effects, taking into account the proposed layout are documented below, **Table 7 (Section 4)**.

4. Archaeology

Other than the location of the proposed control building (an area of 0.03ha) and potentially the route of the cable connection between there and the solar park, there would be no construction within undisturbed land.

An archaeological watching brief could be held during these works.

5. Evaluation of Significance of Effects

The significance of an effect should be identified, in accordance with guidance and best practice. This is achieved using the methodology set out in **Section 1.5** and **1.6**, assessed in **Section 3**, and incorporating the embedded mitigation set out in planning application documents. These are often referred to as residual effects.

The results of the evaluation of significance are drawn together in **Table 7**, below, together with the rationale behind the evaluation.

Table 7 **Effects and Evaluation of Significance**

	Type of Effect	Probability of Effect Occurring	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change caused by the proposed development	Significance of change (effect) caused by the proposed development	Rationale
Adverse direct effects upon designated heritage assets	None	Certain	High/Medium	No change	Neutral	There will be no direct adverse effects upon statutorily designated assets.
Indirect effects upon significance of listed buildings	Neutral	Certain	Medium	No change	Neutral	There would be no effect upon the significance of designated heritage assets from the proposed development
Adverse direct effects upon archaeology	Adverse if present	Unlikely	Not known	Not known	Not known	Other than the location of the proposed control building and potentially the route of the cable connection between there and the solar farm, there would be no construction within undisturbed land. A watching brief could be held during this works. It is considered highly unlikely given the limited extent of disturbance that archaeology would be located

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6. Conclusion

6.1 ARCHAEOLOGY

Other than the location of the proposed control building (an area of 0.03ha) and potentially the route of the cable connection between there and the solar park, there would be no construction within undisturbed land.

An archaeological watching brief could be held during these works.

6.2 THE SETTING OF DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Given the local topography created by landfilling, and the influences of infrastructure such as the GWR and M4, a study area of 750m from designated assets was considered appropriate.

Three Grade II listed buildings sit within 750m. Upper Studley Farmhouse, 500m to the north, is separated from the Site by the GWR. Can Court Farmhouse sits within a context of modern farmbuildings that block the view towards the Site, a distance of 575m north west. Distance would ensure that there could be no effect upon their setting.

Studley Grange Farmhouse is an unoccupied farmhouse, dating to the late 18th or early 19th century, that sits 100m north of the solar park, and 40m north of the control compound,

The immediate setting of the listed building has been significantly degraded over a period of 40 years. The land within the Site has landfilled and restored at a higher level. The Farmhouse is orientated to the east. There are no views from the listed building of either the proposed solar park or the proposed control buildings due to trees and vegetation. The proposed control buildings will be constructed adjacent to an existing gas installation.

There would be no effect upon appreciation of the significance of the asset, the test set by NPPF.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Paragraph 207 of NPPF 2024 *‘requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.... and where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment.’*

This assessment has concluded that there would be no adverse effects upon the significance of designated heritage assets.

The planning application for the proposed development therefore satisfies Paragraph 207 of NPPF and policy EN10 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan.



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