

**Attn. of 'NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE'
BYERS GILL SOLAR PROJECT: EN010139**

Objection to Part of Panel 'A' Byer's Gill Solar

**Myra Vasey Mckeown on behalf of the 'Myra McKeown 2014
Discretionary Settlement'.**

Registration Identification number: 20048002

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RWE Byers Gill Solar application.

Response made by trustees of the farm known as High House Farm, Brafferton near Darlington DL1 3LE. This farm is tenanted.

Background:

Byers Gill Solar plan includes Panel 'A' Brafferton.

We are concerned about one part of Panel 'A'.

It sits to the north-east of the village. An 'outlier'. Illustration 1.

For ease of identification we shall name it the 'Spur'.

The 'Spur' is reached by High House Lane.

Section 1: THE SPUR AND ITS SUITABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT.

RWE suggest that High House Lane is an entirely plausible construction access and also suitable for cabling.

We presume additional use for maintenance and emergencies.

How is the Lane used now?

Today the movement on the Lane is that of three farmers whose land is adjacent and also any pedestrian who wishes to visit, as this Lane is a designated footpath ie.'no 9' (D.B.C. Brafferton area).

It is not therefore part of the 'Local Transport Network'.

In the RWE application the ProW status of this Lane is not included in the relevant map showing 'all' ProWs affected.

Regarding the GEART guidelines ie a measurement of traffic increase, the developers investigations are again questionable.

They report this Lane carries 121 vehicles, including HGVs, daily.

This is an impossibility as the majority of High House Lane is a 'Green Lane'. Refer to illustrations 2 and 3.

Should 121 vehicles travel up this Lane they will not return as it is a 'cul de sac', narrowing to the width of a footpath.

The developer's confusion is typified by the quote:-

"High House Lane has a concrete pathway and a 30 mph limit".

Their statements all refer to The Green at Brafferton, and not to High House Lane which stretches beyond the perimeter to the east of the village.

We consider that an in-depth survey of this Lane has yet to take place.

For example in this application there is no illustrative views of the parts of the Lane which are relevant to construction access.

Landscape Character

It is a fact that many of the lanes associated with this south-west part of County Durham are rich in historical and cultural association.

The list is long for those who have formed their landscape character.

Stone Age peoples, Romano-British communities, Medieval traders, and Salt Routes, now Agricultural mainstays and Community use.

We question the possibility of full reinstatement, particularly on the lanes in this area that have retained their character.

The Three Fields of the Spur

Are all fields (identified here as A, B & C) similarly compromised in this solar plan?

Below we present the case for all to be amended.

Surface Water Drainage: Field A

The fields of this area are formed by glacial intervention and are comprised of hillocks and small valleys.

A small number of remaining tributaries are testament to their origin.

Field A exhibits all the above.

Work is likely to start in Field A as it is first access point to the Spur.

The nature of the site, elongated and narrow, lends itself to an increase in soil compaction and 'run-off'. Field 'A' will get the brunt of this.

We also note in this application that the developers do not intend to give any consideration to field drains, even in the period of construction.

Planning Problems: Field A

Field 'A' will also be affected by a 'reasonably foreseeable development'.

We refer to the Darlington North Link Road, bypass and relief route.

HS2 monies will be used for it's construction. Tees Valley Authority

have sanctioned the finance and a start date of 2025-26 is mooted.

It has already gone to public consultation.

All information we have points to the two major developments we

are discussing clashing at the 'pinch point' on High House Lane.

During construction both developers will need to use the same land.

This could lead, depending on timing, to unwanted delay for all.

In Illustration 4 the pedestrian bridge/structure no.9, designed for High

House Lane, and the solar panel entrance for Field 'A' together clearly

signal 'over development'.

'Glint and Glare': Field B

We note that this disruptive feature has been 'scoped out' at an early stage. However we introduce it here as it is not the only instance of this phenomena present at High House Farm.

'Glint and glare' to a 'moderate' level in Field B could be intrusive for some decades. It is situated on a steep slope.

Whinfield Solar', 114 metres to the north of our farmstead and 'in construction' features large 'sections' of eighteen jointed panels. It also has predicted 'moderate' glint levels. Ref. Committee Planning Report for Whinfield Solar D.C.C.

These factors in our opinion establish the need for consideration to be given to the 'cumulative effect of glint and glare' on our tenants.

The Gas Pipe: Field B and C

A major gas pipe crosses the 'Spur' from north to south in Field C.

In National Grid documents questions are raised as to electrical problems arising when solar and gas meet. A broadband line is adjacent. To accommodate these there is land loss on a small site.

Historical Evidence; Field C

Geophysical surveys indicated several anomalies in the Spur area, some indicative of enclosures.

These are close to the line of Catkill Lane which traverses Field C.

It is one of the acknowledged Roman routes from the Tees to the Wear.

When it reaches the 'dog leg' junction on Lime Lane it veers west to Binchester. Crucially it passes by the 'SSI', now known as the 'Carrs'.

In the period 100-400 A.D. this was still 'a lake'. The water left behind as the ice melted, and for the invaders a mode of transport by waterway.

Catkill Lane is of an era dependent on Romano-British trading.

Fields B and C have their part to play in the meeting of two cultures.

So far there is little acknowledgement of this in the DCO.

Section 2: SPECIFIC CONCERNS FOR OUR BUSINESS

We have focused our response on four areas that will affect our business going forward.

ACCESS

Our tenant is one of the farmers mentioned as using High House Lane. Given it's name it is easy to consider it our farm entrance/exit or even to suggest it is all in our ownership. It is none of these and yet it is more. This Lane is THE link between the two main blocks of land on our farm. The tenant considers the viability of his business is tied into this access. A typical medieval schema. Illustration 6.

The movement of flocks along this route constitutes both good husbandry and efficiency of land use.

We regret that the relevant ProW Management and CMPT are not finalised in this document, and draw attention to the incorrect assumption seen in the accompanying 'Book of Reference' that the lease-giver has the right to lease to the solar company the full length of High House Lane.

The following should also be noted:-

Under Darlington Borough Council's Local Plan 2016, ratified 2022.
Page 76: Section 7 'Employment for Economic Growth'
Policy E4. 'Economic development in the Open Countryside'.

Point 'b':- "Proposals for the expansion of all types of business.....should not prejudice any viable agricultural operations on an active farm unit".

SECURITY: Confidential.

Due to past events the gate of entry to the farm is locked at night.

However it is still the case that a determined intruder could gain access.

In this a number of ProWs on our land play a part. See Illustration no 7.

Such interest is know to be encouraged by the presence of solar.

We contend in the circumstance of a working farm, enveloped in solar and with a clear exit and entrance on to a main road, the developers should be considering their responsibilities beyond the immediate perimeter of the Spur site.

At the moment there is no such consideration.

SAFETY

This RWE development relies in an electrical storage known as BESS.

There is one such on the Spur.

The siting of this particular storage container, a possible fire risk, is close to the hedge which lead up to our farm buildings.

We urge that greater attention be given to this feature beyond that which is easiest for site maintenance.

There are also safety implications for those who reside in the farmhouse when three large developments seek to build in the immediate area.

Eg. Will it be possible for the contractors to maintain the Spur site when access is denied by the size- suitable ProW bridge over the DNLR?

The provision of emergency services could be similarly queried.

How can the developers state "it will be alright if we get there first".

(A comment made by their representative at a consultation meeting).

Are they forgetting that their cabling would need to go either below or above the proposed DNLR road?

What is the affect on the safety of our tenants if this 'elephant in the application' remains unresolved?

DRAINAGE/WATER MANAGEMENT

Our tenant is responsible for drainage on High House Farm.

In this he has improved the land he rents.

There is a fear that the introduction of some types of mitigation, including trees, will tamper with the 'status quo'.

Immediate neighbours on the boundaries of any solar development are at particular risk.

Where is the consideration in these proposals to the effect on adjacent land which could arise in the lifetime of a solar plan?

Also over the plus 40 years ahead to whom do any of the affected go for recourse? Developers and large companies can 'move on'.

Further both solar installations near to our drainage boundaries are owned by global entities namely German and South Korean.

The momentum in this application is given to the completion of the development, there is a nod to decommissioning, but very little space is given to the operational phase. The long term responsibilities that flow from the latter, so important for all the community, are less entertained in this application.

CONCLUSION

The shape of a solar panel is rectangular.

We deduce from that a solar plan is at its most efficient when on a large, single and near rectangular site.

Byers Gill is not.

It would be more concise to refer to it as a 'Solar City'.

The fact is this scheme oversees a huge and diverse area running all the way from Newton Aycliffe to Stockton-on-Tees.

Were there enough people employed to deal with such complexity?

Did they underestimate the research involved?

Did a fondness for 'Google Earth' cloud their appreciation of fact?

Finally we note here a number of areas which are 'beyond ES'.

In other words yet to be decided. "Consultation to take place" etc.

Should this application go forward we call for more open and public 'interim updates' in order for those affected to be fully informed.

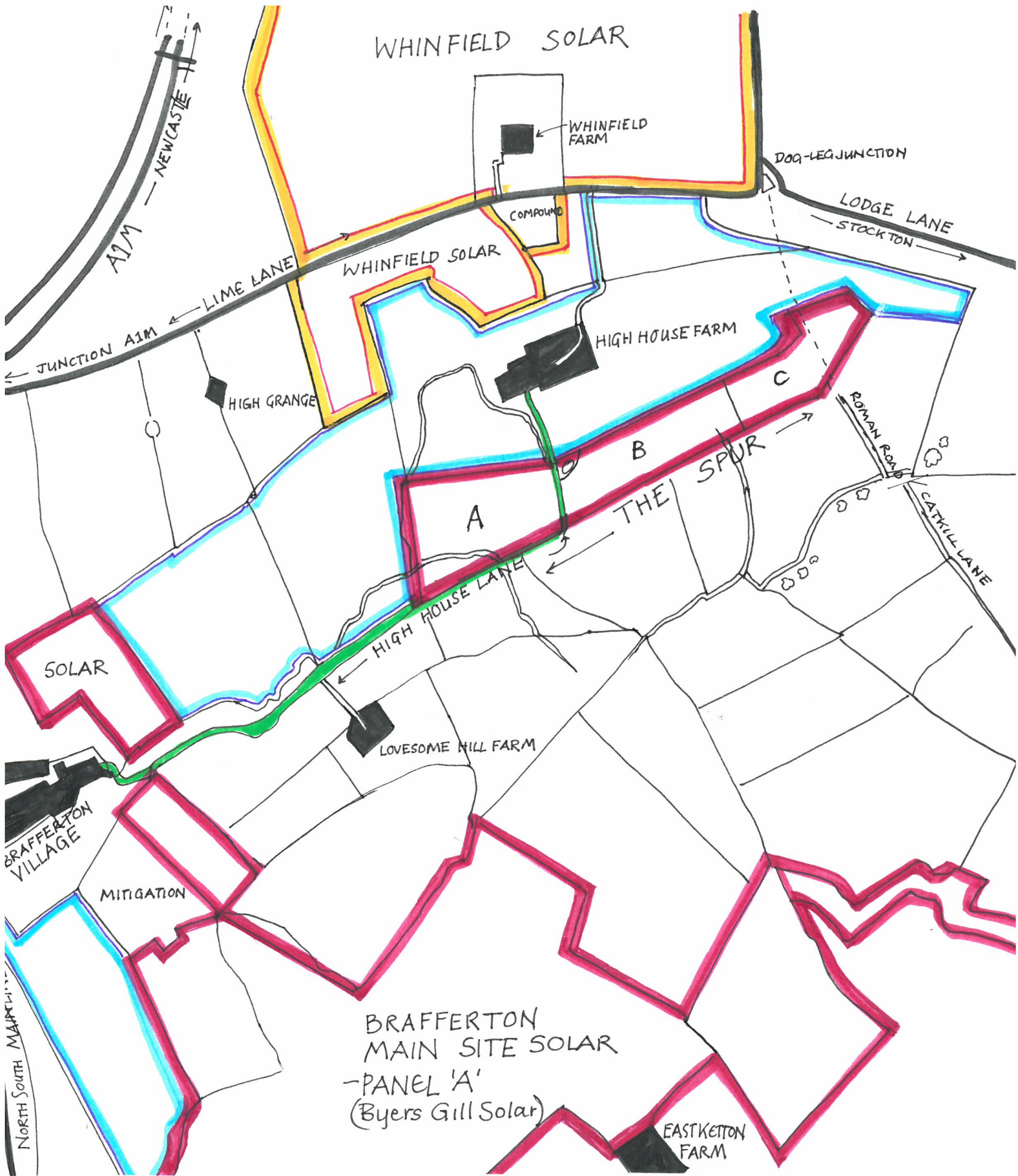


Illustration 1: The 'Spur' in relation to the Main Site Panel 'A'.

- Proposed Byers Gill Panel 'A' Brafferton
- Whinfield Solar (in construction)
- High House farm boundary
- Road, Rail, village, farmholdings outlined.

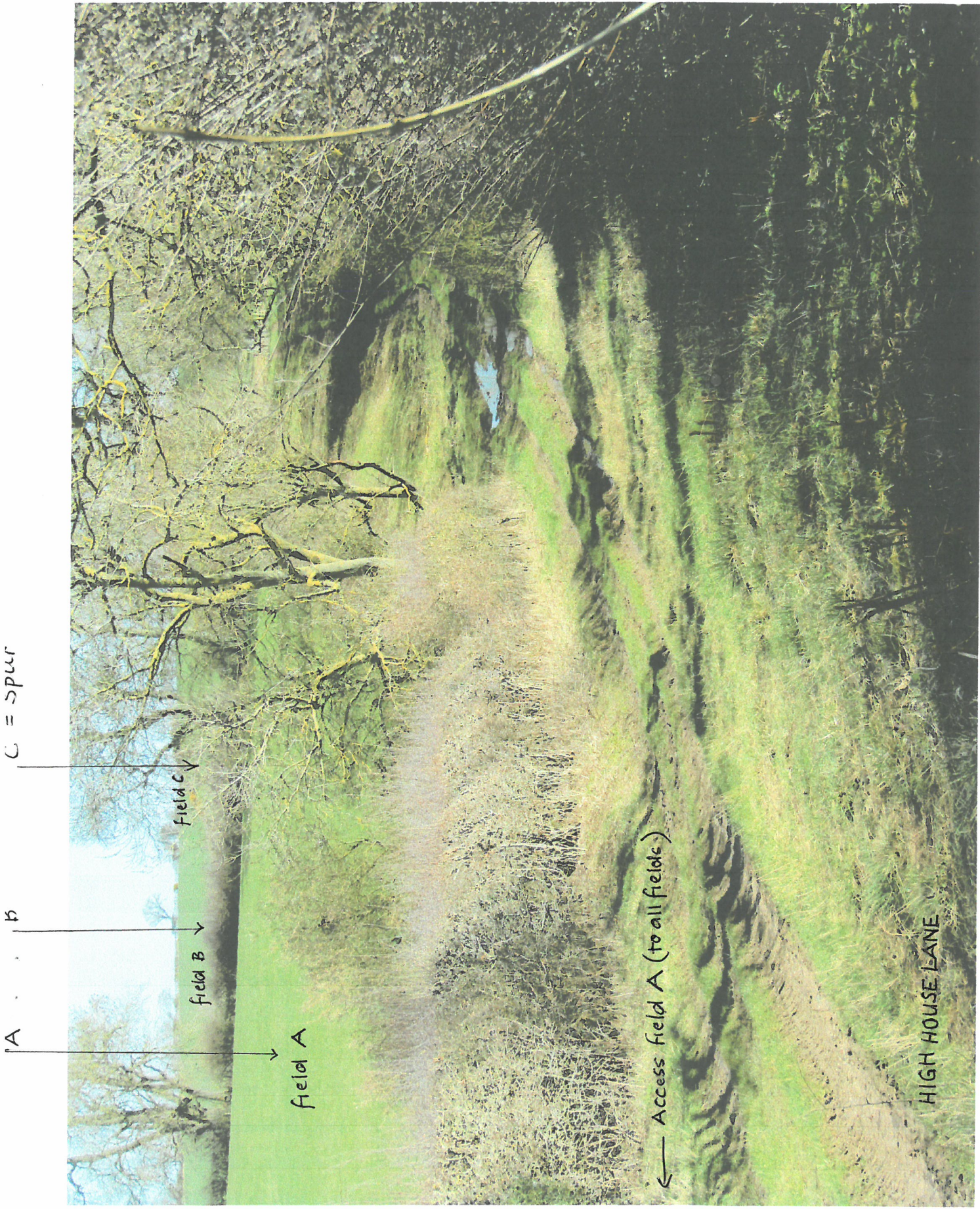


Illustration no 2a)
width-widest area.
View of all three
fields of 'Spur'
from High House lane
NOTE access point
to 'A' at widest part
green lane.



Illustration 2
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(Illustration 26)
High House
Lane reaching
narrow part
Note ancient
trees.





Illustration no 3

View on foot from High House Lane. Enclosed lane hedge foreground.

Solar field 'A' Spur/middle ground. High House beyond.

Illustration no 3



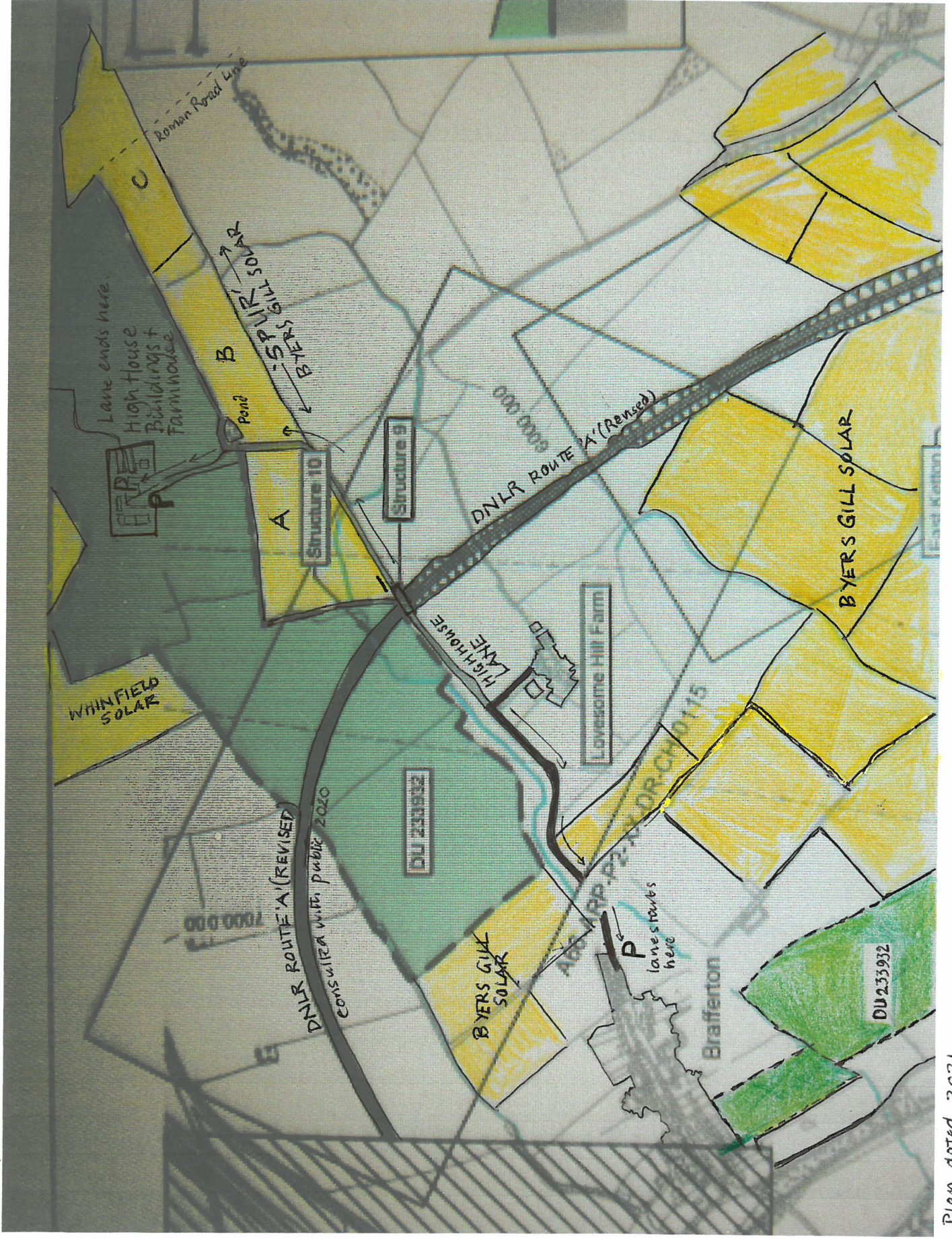


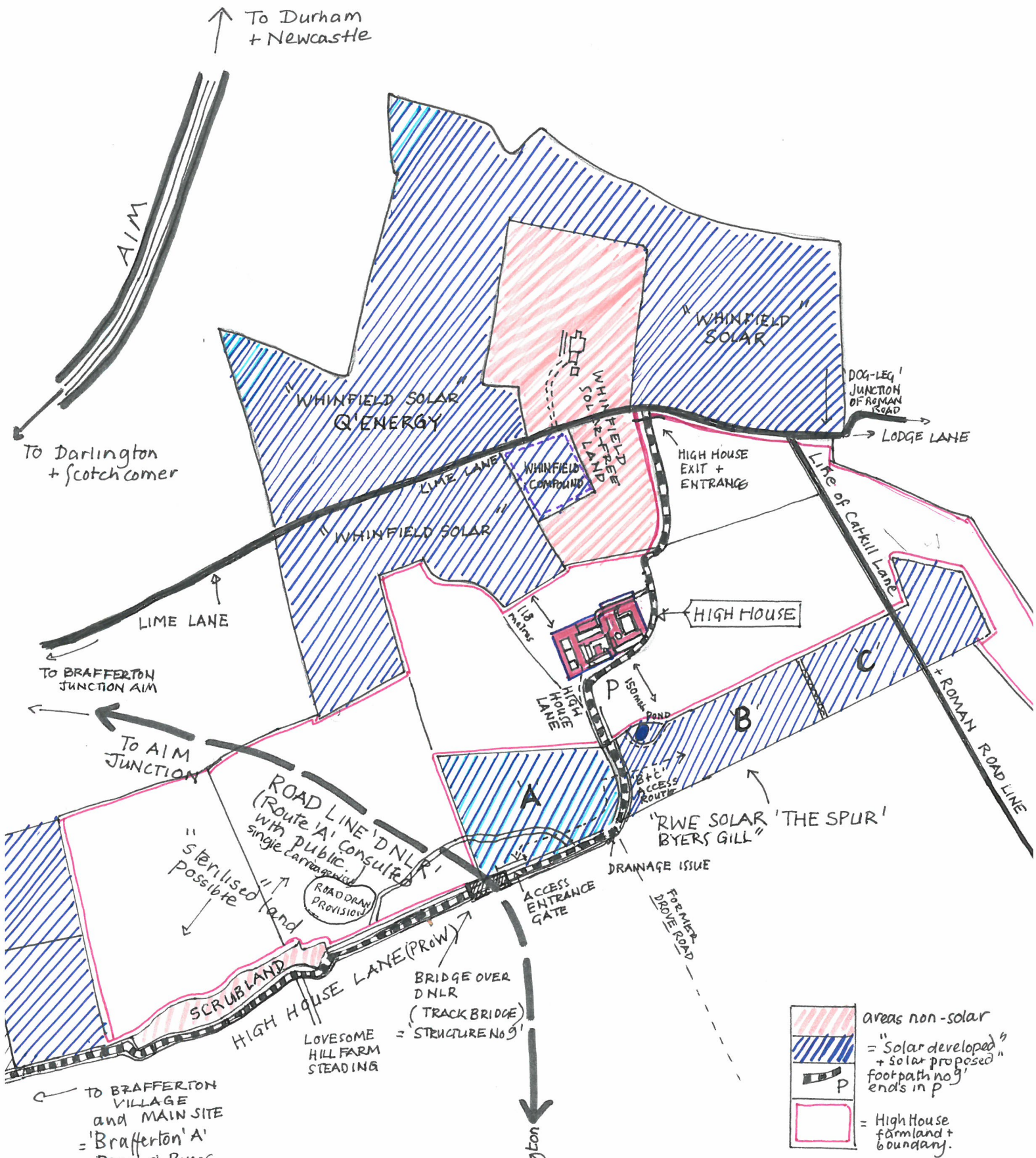
Illustration no 4
 (permission from
 Copy Over Arrup
 + TV Authority
 Darlington North
 Link Road.
 Public Consultation
 December 2020.
 Structure 9' is a
 PROW bridge.
 green colouring is High
 House Farm Land
 yellow is solar proposed.

Plan dated 2024



↑
N

Illustration 4



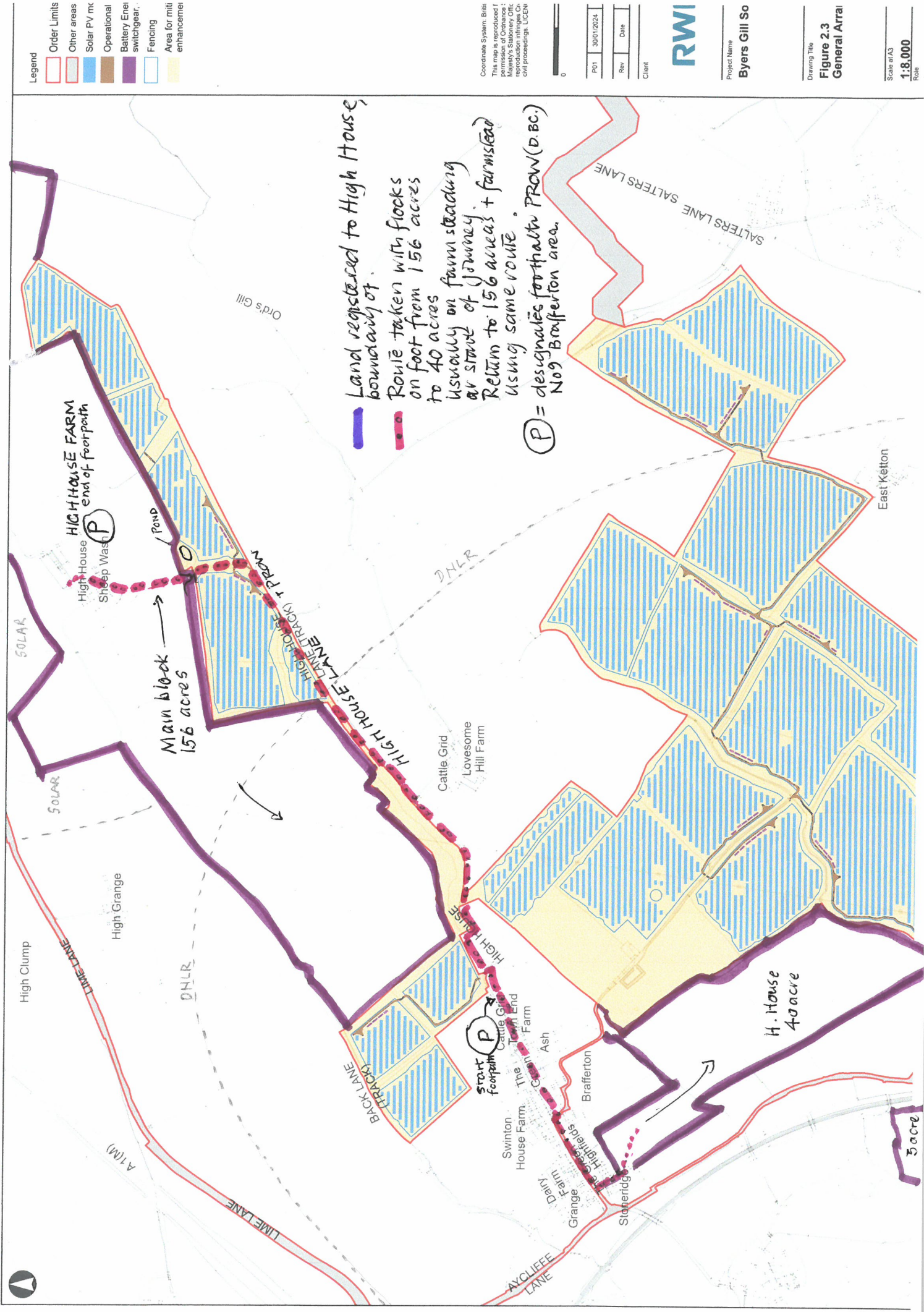
Proximity of 2 solar farms to High House.
 illustration no. 5
 "Whinfield" in construction (2024)

Illustration 5



Blocks of land High House Farm. Route taken by flocks/between blocks.

Illustration No 6



- Legend
- Order Limits
 - Other areas
 - Solar PV mc
 - Operational
 - Battery Ene/switchgear
 - Fencing
 - Area for milti enhancement

Land registered to High House boundary of.

Route taken with flocks on foot from 156 acres usually on farm steading or start of journey. Return to 156 acres + farmstead using same route.

(P) = designates footpath PROW (D.B.C.) No 9 Bryfferton area.

Coordinate System: British
 This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey MasterMap (© Crown Copyright and the Ordnance Survey) and is reproduced in this document by permission of the Ordnance Survey. LICEN

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P01	30/01/2024
Rev	Date
Client	

RWI

Project Name
Byers Gill So

Drawing Title
Figure 2.3 General Arrai

Scale of A3
1:8,000

Role



Illustration No 6
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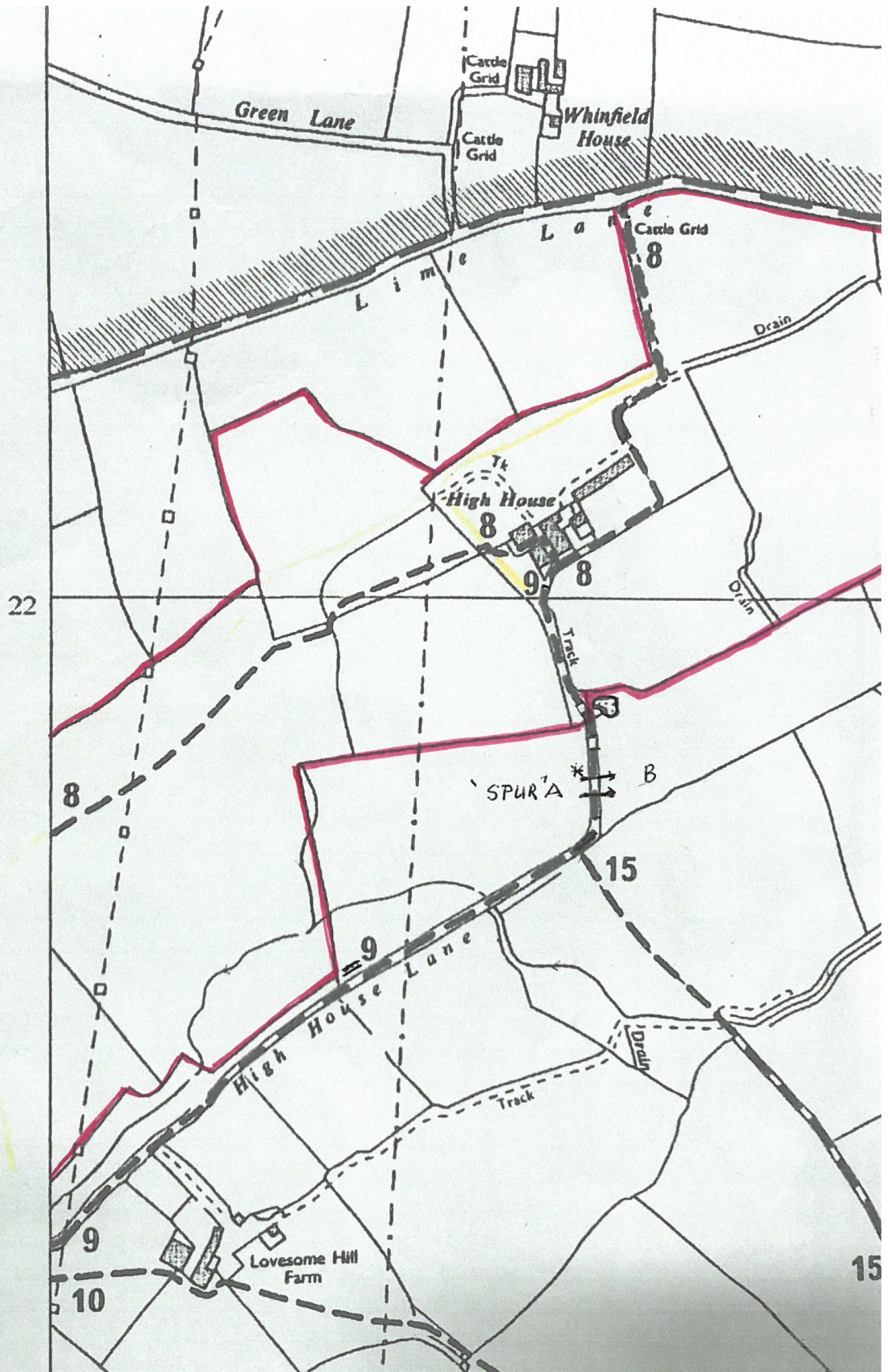


Illustration no. 7 'Definitive map' of High House Lane (D.B.C) — High House land registration boundary (relevant to footpaths). * = Developer access across High House Lane. Courtesy of PRO officer Dartington Borough Council. Footpath No 9 Brafferton area DBC

Illustration 7

