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East Yorkshire Solar Farm

Landscape & Visual Written Representation

Client: Mr & Mrs Taylor

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CONTENTS

FIGURES

APPENDIX A

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This representation has been prepared by Golby + Luck Landscape Architects in relation to the East Yorkshire Solar Farm Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (the proposed scheme) following instruction by Mr & Mrs Taylor of [redacted], near Spaldington; see **GLY0042 LV01.**

1.2 It considers the documents submitted for the proposed scheme's Development Consent Order, in particular those pertinent to the landscape and visual effects of the proposal. The submitted landscape and visual baseline and landscape and visual impact assessment have been reviewed, along with proposals for mitigation.

1.3 A series of main issues have been highlighted. These include:

1) A deficient landscape baseline that does not consider the immediate setting of each area of the array, in particular where this concerns local settlement. In addition, an apparent underassessment of landscape sensitivity that is contrary to the local landscape evidence base;

2) A deficient landscape assessment that does not assess change against landscape receptors at an immediate setting scale, contrary to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3);

3) A deficient visual assessment that does not identify all visual receptors relevant to areas 2e and 2f and underestimates magnitude, contrary to the ES LVIA methodology, resulting in an underassessment of the number and magnitude of likely significant visual effects relevant to areas 2e and 2f;

4) An inconsistent approach to landscape and visual mitigation, particularly in the case of local settlement near to areas 2e and 2f, that is over reliant on 'cosmetic' screen planting, contrary to guidance laid out in GLVIA3 and discordant with the objectives of relevant national and local character area assessments that highlight the importance of respecting the open character and long views in the landscape.

1.4 This representation sets out a revised approach for landscape mitigation and encourages a review of the *Indicative* Site layout to ensure the balance of land set aside for mitigation is proportionate, in turn promoting a consistent approach of a 'one field buffer' to local settlement that restores and respects local landscape character.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This representation has been prepared by Golby + Luck Landscape Architects in relation to the East Yorkshire Solar Farm Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (the proposed scheme) following instruction by Mr & Mrs Taylor of [redacted] near Spaldington; see **GLY0042 LV01.**

2.2 The purpose of this report is to consider, in landscape and visual terms, the design of the proposed scheme in relation to areas 2E and 2F of the proposed array layout; see **Appendix A**. These parcels occupy land surrounding [redacted] is located to the west of the junction of [redacted]. The property dwelling is located broadly central to the site with its principal elevation facing south. Domestic gardens extend to the south and east, together with an area of equestrian land and horse grazing to its immediate west (planning reference: 20/02488/PLF). To the north, a series of commercial buildings and associated parking and hardstanding are present, associated with the operation of Filsplastic UK Ltd, trading as Filstorage.

2.3 This representation has been prepared taking into consideration the following guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition (2013) - Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA3);
- Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designation – Landscape Institute; and
- Technical Guidance Note 02/19 – Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) – Landscape Institute.

2.4 This representation is supported by a series of figures that identify:

- Site location, study area and photographic view locations;
- Photographic views; and
- Proposed landscape mitigation.

2.5 Site work has been completed during winter in February 2024 with no leaf cover, representing the period of the highest visibility across the landscape.

2.6 In the production of this report, consideration has been given to the following documents and information:

- Department for Energy Security & Net Zero - Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (November 2023);
- Department for Energy Security & Net Zero - National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (November 2023);
- Department for Energy Security & Net Zero - National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (March 2023);
- East Yorkshire Solar Farm EN010143 Environmental Statement, Volume 1 (Document Reference: EN010143/APP/6.1);
- East Yorkshire Solar Farm EN010143 Design and Access Statement (Document Reference: EN010143/APP/7.3);
- East Yorkshire Solar Farm EN010143 Framework Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Document Reference: EN010143/APP/7.14);
- Natural England National Character Area Profiles 2014 – National Character Area Profile 39: Humberhead Levels (NCA39);
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council Landscape Character Assessment Update (October 2018);
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council East Riding Local Plan 2012 – 2029 (adopted April 2016)
- Historic England National Heritage List;
- DEFRA Magic environmental data base; and
- Ordnance Survey Mapping - Promap.

3 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

3.1 The following section of this report considers the baseline landscape setting of the study area covering issues relating to character and appearance. The study area considered in this representation is identified on the Site Location Plan and comprises the landscape setting extending to the southwest of Spaldington and forming the immediate setting of areas 2e and 2f; see **GLY0042 LV01.**

3.2 When considering character, published landscape character documents have been referenced alongside a more detailed consideration of the study area and its local setting. Reference is made to the baseline assessment outlined in Chapter 10 of the Environmental Statement (the ES) where relevant. d

National Landscape Character

3.3 At a national level the study area is identified as within National Character Area Profile 39: Humberhead Levels (NCA39). The NCA profile provides Key Characteristics and Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO). Of particular relevance to the study area are the following key characteristics identified in the NCA profile:

- *"A low-lying, predominantly flat landscape, with large, regular and geometric arable fields without hedges but divided by ditches and dykes, many of which form important habitats and key corridors for species movement.*
- *Widespread evidence of drainage history, in particular the extensive drainage from the 17th century, revealed through canalised rivers, dykes, old river courses, canals, bridges and pumping stations.*
- *Views to distant horizons are often long and unbroken, with big expansive skies, and vertical elements like water towers, power stations and wind turbines are very prominent."*

3.4 These characteristics are well represented in the study area. Views experienced from Spaldington Road, dwellings on Spaldington Road including [redacted], PRoW SPALF18 and EASTB17 are long and unbroken, and feature limited to no detracting features. Ditches and dykes form field boundaries and mature hedgerows and tree cover are present at the fringes of fields in the study area.

3.5 Of particular relevance to the study area, SEO4 states:

> *"SEO 4: Protect the open and expansive character of the landscape, its cultural features and sense of remoteness, by ensuring that new development is sensitively located, accommodates green infrastructure,* ***retains long views*** *and makes a positive contribution to biodiversity."*

Emphasis added.

3.6 The NCA Profile provides examples of how this objective can be implemented, including but not limited to:

- *"Ensuring that new developments are located and designed with* ***particular consideration for keeping long views open, and limiting the use of native tree and shrub planting to integrate structures but without unduly impacting on the open character of the area****.*
- *Maintaining the long and unbroken views to distant horizons."*

Emphasis added.

3.7 The importance of limiting tree and shrub planting, and carefully considering its placement, is central to respecting the open character of NCA39 and retaining long views.

3.8 The ES concludes that NCA39 is of **medium** sensitivity which is considered an accurate combined judgement of its value and susceptibility to the proposed change.

Local Landscape Character

3.9 The East Riding of Yorkshire Landscape Character Assessment (October 2018) (ERYLCA) identifies the study area as being with Landscape Character Type 5: Open Farmland. Specifically, Character Area 5A: Howden to Bubwith Farmland (LCA 5A).

3.10 The ERYLCA notes this is an ordinary, but pleasant landscape and identifies Positive Landscape Features relating to the LCT as a whole. These are listed as:

- *"Openness, long distance views over flat arable land.*
- *The sky dominates open views.*
- *Rural and relatively remote.*

- *Views of key land marks such as Howden Minster, Wressle Castle and country houses are important.*
- *Landscape pattern contributes to historic character.*
- *Hedgerows reinforce landscape pattern where they are intact.*
- *Hedgerows are not characteristic of all areas, e.g. Barmby on the Marsh"*

3.11 Of these positive features, all are well represented in the local setting of the study area with exception to views of Howden Minster and Wressle Castle, and with the area being remote from Barmby on the Marsh. There are frequent long distance open and skyline views experienced from Spaldington Road, a rural and remote lane, together with from the Howden20 and public rights of way SPALF18 and EASTB17.

3.12 The ERYLCA continues to identify the LCT as being of **medium value,** noting it has a strong rural character which is open, remote and rural. It continues to confirm that LCT 5A is of **medium sensitivity** to residential, commercial, industrial and recreational development. The assessment makes reference to energy infrastructure when considering industrial development. There has been no material change in the local setting of the study area since the ERYLCA Update was published in 2018 to suggest any change in this finding.

3.13 When considering the value and susceptibility of LCA 5A Table 10-11 of the ES states:

> *"An intensive arable landscape with fragmented hedgerow boundaries and landscape pattern with few distinguishing features, influenced by industry including energy generation and traffic using A roads. Therefore, the LCA has some Low capacity to absorb the Scheme without damage to the key characteristics and impacts on the perceptual qualities. Overall LCA 5A is assessed of having low susceptibility to the Scheme. Combining low value and low susceptibility results in low sensitivity."*

3.14 It is unclear why the ES places emphasis on the influence of energy generation and traffic using A roads, which are particularly sparse in areas 2e and 2f. There are 3no wind turbines to the west of Spaldington at Spaldington Airfield Wind Farm, but these are well contained from area 2f which is also remote from busy roads. It should also be noted that susceptibility is assessed relative to the **proposed change.** The proposed change is an

alien and urbanising land-use that is capable of retaining part of the landscape pattern and its features but that will fundamentally change its character and function. It will introduce frequent urbanising features including, but not limited to, solar panels, CCTV and external lighting, that will affect its rural perceptual aspects and tranquillity. Noise associated with the operation of the array and its maintenance will also affect tranquillity. LCA 5A is therefore considered to be of medium susceptibility to the proposed change.

3.15 Appendix 10-2 of the ES provides the LVIA Methodology. Table 2 identifies Landscape & Landscape Elements Sensitivity Criteria. Under Medium, the table states:

> *"Areas that have a **positive landscape character but include some areas of alteration/degradation/or erosion of features**; and/or **perceptual/aesthetic aspects has some vulnerability to unsympathetic development**; and/or features/elements that are **locally commonplace**; unusual locally but in moderate/poor condition; or **mature vegetation that is in moderate/poor conditi**on or readily replicated."*

Emphasis added.

3.16 All of those elements highlighted bold above are represented in the immediate setting of the study area, confirming this is a landscape setting of **medium sensitivity** which would reflect the findings of the local landscape evidence published in the ERYLCA.

3.17 It is therefore unclear how the ES has applied a judgement of **low sensitivity** to LCA 5A. This has implications for the subsequent assessment of effects laid out in the ES which will be considered later in this representation.

Immediate Setting & Settlement Character

3.18 It is commonplace to complete a baseline assessment of the immediate setting of the site, not only relevant Landscape Character Areas. This is reinforced by paragraph 5.50 of GLVIA3 that, when considering magnitude of landscape effects, states:

> *"In general effects may have an influence at the following scales, although this will vary according to the nature of the project and not all may be relevant on every occasion:*
>
> *At the **site** level, within the development site itself;*

*At the level of the **immediate setting** of the site;*
*At the scale of the **landscape type or character area** within which the proposal lies;*
*On a **larger scale**, influencing several landscape types or character areas."*

3.19 The immediate setting of areas 2e and 2f is of particular relevance to this proposal given it contributes to an area of dispersed rural settlement at Spaldington Road, and Spaldington village itself. When considering Forces for Change within LCT 5, including the effect of agriculture and development, the ERYLCA states:

"The cumulative effect [of development] *on remoteness and character of scattered housing can be detrimental to landscape character over time."*

3.20 Despite the susceptibility of rural settlement highlighted in the ERYLCA, there is no assessment of the immediate setting of settlement completed in the ES.

3.21 Areas 2e and 2f adjoin Spaldington to the northeast, together with a series of scattered dwellings present on Spaldington Road. On Spaldington Road, these including Spaldington Grange, [redacted] Sandwood Cottage and Sandwood Villas. The immediate setting of Spaldington Road is a remote and rural area of dispersed and isolated housing, that takes it setting from the surrounding context of undeveloped arable farmland. Like the wider LCA, this is an area open in character with distant skyline views. The understanding of the rural character of settlement on Spaldington Road, as experienced by the public and residents, is defined by its open agricultural setting and treed horizons.

3.22 [redacted] dates to the 18th century and, like Spaldington Grange, is a rural country house, representative of the Positive Landscape Features identified for LCA 5A. The extract below illustrates the 1855 Ordnance Survey for the area which demonstrates Spaldington Grange and [redacted] in the historic landscape setting of open agricultural land that largely persists today. This extract demonstrates field boundaries and Sandpit Wood that have been lost to intensive agriculture, but in turn illustrates surviving features including woodland at The Rush and to the east of area 2f, and Featherbed Lane; a historic right of way which now forms PRoW EASTB17. The condition of vegetation cover surrounding area 2f is generally intact, with continuous hedgerows and intact tree belts and woodland. These components are indicators of moderate

landscape condition, natural heritage and cultural heritage value, that are experienced from, and contribute to setting of, the Howden20 promoted recreational route.

3.23 There is a moderate strength of character to the landscape in this location and therefore a medium susceptibility to the proposed change, again suggesting the immediate setting and settlement character of Spaldington Road is also of **medium sensitivity.**

Extract 1 – 1855 Ordnance Survey, Yorkshire Sheet 223

Visual Setting

3.24 When considering the appearance of the study area, a number of representative views have been identified through field work to supplement those presented in the ES. The following text summarises each representative and contextual view; see **GLY0042 LV02 to LV05**. View locations are identified on the site location plan; see **GLY0042 LV01.**

3.25 View 1 is taken from [redacted] and provides a representation of private views experienced from primary rooms on the first floor of the dwelling's principal elevation, facing looking over Spaldington Road and adjacent agricultural land within area 2f. The field to the south provides a long, attractive and expansive view to the wooded horizon of mature vegetation cover present along Featherbed Lane and EASTB17. There are no detracting features in the view.

3.26 View 2 is taken from the gardens of [redacted] and provides a representation of private views that offer a similar expansive outlook, partly filtered by intervening vegetation but offering a series of clear views over the field south of Spaldington Lane from numerous vantage points within the garden.

3.27 Views 1 and 2 offer an open appreciation of the landscape setting of [redacted], experienced by residential receptors that are of high susceptibility to change and in overall terms considered to be of high sensitivity, as confirmed under the assessment of Viewpoint 5 in the ES.

3.28 View 3 is taken from the equestrian land to the west of [redacted]. There are open views over farmland to the north, with vegetation cover at the fringe of Spaldington providing distant and filtered views of dwellings off Spaldington Road. Wind turbines are visible at Spaldington Airfield Wind Farm. This view offers an appreciation of the distant expansive views characteristic of the landscape, experienced by private users of the land including horse riders that have an elevated line of sight across the landscape, partaking in a rural-based recreational activity where the countryside setting is central to its enjoyment. These receptors are again of high sensitivity, but do not appear to have been considered in the ES.

3.29 Views 4 and 5 illustrate the visual setting of Spaldington Road. The road is largely enclosed by hedgerows, presenting as a rural lane with limited street furniture and timber mounted overhead power lines alongside the road. A traditional white road sign is visible at the junction with Willitoft Road. Gaps in hedgerows provide intermittent attractive views south over the adjoining arable field (area 2f). In the distance, the mature tree-line at Featherbed Lane and neighbouring woodlands provide a treed skyline in views. These views offer a moderate appreciation of the landscape setting and rural nature of Spaldington Road, experienced by motorists, cyclists, horse-riders and pedestrians that include users of the Howden20. Motorists are considered to be medium susceptibility, with pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders considered to be of high susceptibility. In overall terms, views from Spaldington Road are considered to be of medium to high sensitivity.

3.30 Views 6 and 7 illustrate the open setting of PRoW SPALF18 and route of the Howden20 in this location. The views provide an open appreciation of the large arable field extending south from Spaldington Road (area 2f) together with mature tree, woodland and hedgerow cover at its boundaries. Broad treed skies characterise the views and are again representative of the expansive views that characterise the local landscape.

3.31 Views 6 to 8 are experienced by users of SPALF18 and the Howden20 that are of high sensitivity. This is reflected in the assessment of Viewpoint 4 in the ES which also confirms these receptors are of high sensitivity.

3.32 In summary, the visual setting of Area 2f in particular, and that of [redacted] Sandwood Cottage or Sandwood Villas, is experienced principally by receptors of high sensitivity, together with receptors of medium to high sensitivity on Spaldington Road. Chapter 10 of the ES does not consider views northward from equestrian land associated with [redacted] that are also of high sensitivity.

4 PROPOSED SCHEME

4.1 Chapter 2 of the ES sets out the Scheme Description. Section 2.5 describes the components of the scheme, including descriptions of the solar PV array and associated infrastructure including, but not limited to, inverters, field station units, fencing, lighting, CCTV and substations. These features are alien and urbanising in an otherwise rural agricultural landscape.

4.2 The layout of the solar PV array is provided at Figure 2-3 Indicative Layout and the Landscape Masterplan forming part of the Framework Landscape & Ecological Management Plan (document reference: EN010143/APP/7.14) (the Framework LEMP) includes a Landscape Masterplan (Sheets 1 to 11). These plans illustrate proposed landscape mitigation measures.

4.3 Area 2e is proposed to the north of [redacted] and west of Willitoft Road and extends to approximately 62ha in area. Receptor groups relevant to area 2e include public and private receptors to the northeast at Willitoft Road and associated dwellings at the edge of Spaldington; public receptors on Willitoft Road, the Howden20 and PRoW SPALF02 to the west, private receptors at [redacted] including residents, users of the equestrian land and people at their place of work at Filstorage, public receptors on Spaldington Road and the Howden20 to the south, and receptor groups partaking in recreational activity at Spaldington Golf Course to the west.

4.4 In terms of primary mitigation (scale and extent), the array occupies the significant proportion of the land holding. Its scale has been reduced in proximity to Spaldington to the northeast, where a traditional orchard and area of ecological enhancement is proposed, extending to approximately 4.4ha in area. Retention of open land near to neighbouring dwellings and Willitoft Road will contribute to retaining an understanding of its open rural landscape character, and respecting the fore and midground of open skyline views experienced from Willitoft Road and associated dwellings. In terms of secondary mitigation (planting), the ecological enhancement area to the northeast is bound by proposed native woodland at its south and west edges and includes orchard creation. A woodland buffer is also provided to the west of area 2e where it adjoins the recreational land-use of Spaldington Golf Course. These measures will, over time, create a substantial visual buffer to the array. To the south adjoining [redacted] and its adjacent equestrian land-use, mitigation predominantly includes grassland, with a proposed hedgerow with trees adjoining the equestrian land.

4.5 Area 2f is proposed to the south of Spaldington Road, extending to approximately 47ha with the significant majority of this land set out as solar PV array. Receptor groups relevant to area 2f include public receptors using Spaldington Road, Willitoft Road and the Howden20 and private receptors including [redacted] Sandwood Cottage and Sandwood Villas to the north; public receptors using Feathered Lane and PRoW EASTB17 to the south, and public receptors using PRoW SPALF18 and the Howden20 to the west.

4.6 In terms of primary mitigation, the layout accommodates a buffer of approximately 20m to the north, south and west boundaries of area 2f. In terms of secondary mitigation, these buffers are mainly proposed as grassland. To the north, a narrow woodland buffer is proposed, together with enhancement of the existing hedgerow. To the south, enhancement of the hedgerow is again proposed. To the west, small narrow areas of woodland edge mix planting are proposed along an otherwise open fenced boundary overlooking the array from SPALF18.

4.7 It is also noted that at a site-wide level, almost all areas of settlement within the proposed scheme are buffered with a single field or area of land set aside as ecological mitigation; a 'one field buffer'. Examples include:

- Ecological enhancement area to the south of area 1a, providing buffer to existing dwellings at the junction of Willitoft Road and Tottering Lane;
- Ecological enhancement area to the south of area 1b, providing a buffer to Gribthorpe. This area measures approximately 110m to 140m north to south and approximately 620m east to west;
- Ecological enhancement area to the north of area 2c, providing a buffer to the property located at the junction of Street Lane and Wood Lane;
- Ecological enhancement area and proposed orchard the northeast of area 2e providing a buffer to the nearest dwellings and retaining part of the experience of open agricultural land adjacent to Willitoft Road when approaching Spaldington. This area measures approximately 160m north to south and approximately 275m east to west;
- Ecological enhancement area and proposed woodland to the east of area 2g providing a buffer to existing properties off the A614; and

- Ecological enhancement area to the north of area 3b providing a buffer between to the property to the south of Brind Lane.

4.8 Paragraph 4.1.10 (f) of the Framework LEMP states:

> *"Solar PV Panels within Solar PV Area 2e set back from properties at the south of Spaldington by a wide margin of species-rich grassland, orchard tree planting and linear woodland planting (approximately 150 m) which screens views from the properties."*

4.9 No such buffer is accommodated within area 2f, despite a similar concentration and quantum of private receptor groups and a notable number of public receptors associated with Spaldington Road, the Howden20 and PRoW SPALF18 and EASTB17 that, as identified in the ES, are of high sensitivity.

4.10 It should also be noted that the aforementioned buffers, in particular those in areas 1b and 2e, occupy land that is identified as unconstrained in Figure 4-7 of Chapter 9 of the ES (Flood Risk) and all occupy subgrade 3b agricultural land as identified by Figure 15-3. The entirety of the Goose Mitigation Zone is also within unconstrained land and predominantly identified as subgrade 3b agricultural land. This suggests potential flexibility to reconsider the location and distribution of the array to accommodate suitable buffers while maintaining ecological mitigation measures.

4.11 In relation to the Goose Mitigation Zone, paragraph 2.6.79 of the ES states:

> *"The amount of land required to deliver effective mitigation for each of Golden plover and Pink-footed goose is 15 ha (30 ha total). The land within the both the Golden Plover Mitigation Zone (28.75 ha) and the Goose Mitigation Zone (79.09 ha) is appreciatively greater than the 15 ha required. This ensures that a minimum of 15 ha of suitable habitat/foraging resource is available to each species at all times within each overwintering period."*

4.12 The Goose Mitigation Zone will allow for retention of stubble and a rotational cropping regime for overwintering bird species. It is noted that there are benefits to its location near to the River Foulness due to populations of pink-footed geese having been recorded in this area, the opportunity to establish of a mosaic of enhanced arable and wet grassland habitats adjacent to the Golden Plover Mitigation zone, and geese benefiting from a single, flat open habitat area for threat detection; see ES paragraph

8.8.9. It is also noted a surplus of land above 15ha is required to ensure a minimum of 15ha foraging and habitat resource is available at any time to account for fluctuations in land management and seasonal flooding (although it is noted this land is identified as unconstrained and of low risk to flooding). Agricultural rotation typically relies upon a 3 to 4 year rotation cycle whereby a different crop is grown in each field each year, or a field is left fallow for a single year. It therefore follows that threefold the required 15ha would be more than adequate to sustain substantia habitat resource in excess of 15ha in any year. While acknowledging the importance of this mitigation to the Lower Derwent Valley Special Protection Area and associated designations, it is unclear if such a significant surplus (some 64.09ha) represents effective use of land and whether this could be more appropriately balanced across the proposals to deliver both ecological mitigation and secure a consistent approach to reducing adverse landscape and visual effects.

5 MAIN ISSUES

5.1 The following summarises the main issues identified in the review of the Order Documents outlined in the preceding section.

Assessment

Landscape Baseline

5.2 This representation has outlined a description of the landscape baseline relevant to areas 2e and 2f. The ES is inconsistent in its assessment of landscape sensitivity that conflicts with the local landscape evidence base (ERYLCA) that confirms LCA 5A is of **medium** sensitivity. The ES assesses LCA 5A as a low sensitivity but this is at odds with the definitions of sensitivity provided in its methodology; see ES Appendix 10-2.

5.3 No baseline assessment of the immediate setting of the site, specifically the immediate setting of each varying area of the proposed array, is provided. This representation confirms the immediate setting of area 2f, in particular the immediate setting of settlement on Spaldington Road, is of **medium** sensitivity.

Landscape Assessment

5.4 The absence of considering the immediate setting as a landscape receptor and the influence of the site at this scale results in an inequitable assessment of magnitude, whereby the geographic extent of proposed change is only assessed against the substantially broader extent of LCA 5A as a whole. As noted, this is inconsistent with the recommendations of paragraph 5.50 of GLVIA3 and does not provide a true representation of all significant effects of the proposal.

5.5 The underassessment of sensitivity results in an inaccurate assessment of landscape effects. If applying the ES methodology, the medium sensitivity of landscape receptors and high magnitude of change occurring at a character area and immediate setting scale, is likely to result in major adverse effects to LCA 5A and immediate setting of settlement on Spaldington Road. This emphasises a need for a greater level of mitigation measures in areas 2e and 2f that has been overlooked by the proposed scheme assessment process.

Visual Assessment

5.6 Appendix 10-2 of the ES sets out the LVIA methodology for visual assessment. When considering size and scale of visual change at Table 11, it defines 'Large' as:

> *"The Scheme may result in extensive changes to the existing view (including the loss of existing characteristic features and/ or introduction of new discordant landscape features); and/ or A change to an extensive proportion of the view;"*

5.7 Table 15 continues to define 'High' visual magnitude of effect, stating:

> *"The Scheme, or a part of it, would become the* ***dominant and contrasting*** *feature or focal point in the view"*

Emphasis added.

5.8 The ES provides only one representative viewpoint (VP4) when considering the visual setting of Featherbed Lane and PRoW EASTB17. It fails to assess the most open visibility of parcel 2f from SPALF18 and the Howden20 which is a significant omission and does not represent the most likely significant impact, contrary to the very purpose of EIA.

5.9 When assessing VP4 in operational phase year 1, the ES concludes the magnitude of change as medium in the operational phase Year 1, reducing to low at Year 15. This is a misapplication of the methodology where it the array would clearly become a **dominant and contrasting** feature in the view, resulting in **high** magnitude. This is confirmed by the Proposed (Winter Year 1) Photomontage for VP4 provided at Figure 10-41(b). The resulting Year 1 effect is therefore likely to be major adverse, rather than moderate adverse. Turning to Year 15, mitigation measures are likely to reduce the magnitude of change to medium, but critically this means a significant moderate adverse effect would persist in the long-term where this is currently reported as minor adverse and not significant.

5.10 It should also be noted the mitigation shown in the Figure 10-41 (e) Proposed (Summer Year 15) illustrates planting along the full western boundary of the array, which does not currently reflect the planting proposals outlined in the Framework LEMP Landscape Masterplan. In turn, this is a summer view that does not represent the winter period when visibility across the landscape is at its highest.

5.11 The same effects are likely to be reported to users of SPALF18 and the Howden20 at the west of area 2f. This representation has provided views 6 and 7 to illustrate the visual setting of SPALF18 and the Howden20; see **GLY0042 LV04 and LV05.** These demonstrate the substantially more open visibility of area 2f that would clearly also result in a high magnitude of change in Year 1, reducing to medium in Year 15 if effective mitigation planting was adopted along the entirety of its western edge. When applying the ES methodology, a significant moderate adverse effect is therefore also likely to persist in the long-term.

5.12 Magnitude again appears to be underassessed in respect of VP5 where users of Spaldington Lane will experience open views of the array in Year 1 that will extend across the entirety of the view. Views 1 and 2 provided with this representation also illustrate the dominance of the array likely to be experienced in south facing views from [redacted] where the substantial 47ha array will be openly visible and dominant across the field to the south of the house. This effect is also likely to be experienced by residents of Sandwood Cottage and Sandwood Villas. As a result, significant moderate adverse effects are again likely to persist in the long-term for residential receptors.

5.13 No assessment of receptors looking north from [redacted] are included. These are likely to report significant adverse effects.

5.14 In summary, the ES has failed to identify all significant visual effects associated with users of the Howden20, Spaldington Road, SPALF18 and EASTB17 and local residents, and has repeatedly underassessed magnitude. A more robust mitigation approach must be adopted to address these effects.

<u>Residential Visual Amenity Assessment</u>

5.15 Technical Guidance Note 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (TGN 02/19) provides guidance on the impacts on residential visual amenity and the degree to which it is appropriate to engage RVAA in addition to visual assessment carried out as part of the LVIA process. While acknowledging the established planning principle that 'no one has a right to view', TGN 02/19 promotes RVAA where the most significant impacts on residential visual amenity are apparent. Its purpose is:

> *"to form a judgement, to assist decision makers, on whether a proposed development is likely to change the visual amenity of a residential property to such an extent that it becomes a matter of 'Residential Amenity'"*

5.16 The guidance sets out a 4 stage approach. Steps 1 to 3 effectively fulfil the conclusions made in respect of magnitude and significance of visual effects identified through the EIA and LVIA process. Where the largest magnitude is identified, TGN 02/19 states a further judgement is required on the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. This should be informed by fieldwork and property inspection, which has been completed at [redacted] to support this representation. TNG 02/19 states:

> *"This concluding judgement should advise the decision maker whether the predicted effects on visual amenity and views at the property are such that it has reached the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold, therefore potentially becoming a matter of Residential Amenity "*

5.17 It continues to provide guidance on what clear judgements and rational conclusions, providing examples of descriptions that include:

> *"'blocking the only available view from a property', or 'overwhelming views in all directions'; and 'unpleasantly encroaching' or being 'inescapably dominant from the property'."*

5.18 The extent of the array experienced from [redacted] will be entirely dominating and overwhelming. Notwithstanding the existing commercial buildings to its immediate north, the proposed layout intends to substantially contain [redacted] and its associated amenity space within the proposed array. Views from its principal south-facing elevation will be materially changed with open visibility of a 47ha solar PV array extending from its immediate boundary at Spaldington Lane to Featheredbed Lane in the distance, particularly experienced from first floor living space. These views will also be experienced from the property's garden to the immediate east; see **GLY0042 LV02**. Similar effects are likely to be experienced by receptors at Sandwood Cottage and Sandwood Villas. The proposal for woodland planting alongside Spaldington Road may over time hide the array, but this will result in the loss of open views across the landscape to the south that is a key component of the visual amenity experienced from these dwellings and entirely contrary to SEO4 of NCA39. Such planting is also still likely to reveal views of the array during winter, with the extent of proposed mitigation planting appearing particularly narrow (considered further below).

5.19 Taking these proposed changes into account, it is considered that Residential Visual Amenity Threshold is reached in the case of [redacted] and this must necessitate a revised approach to mitigation.

Duration & Reversibility of Effects

5.20 It is widely accepted that long-term landscape and visual effects are assessed at Year 15. The proposed decommissioning phase is proposed to occur at 40 years. While it is acknowledged the effects of this proposal are temporary and reversible in terms of the capacity for them to restore the landscape to its baseline condition, this should not be taken as a means to diminish the impacts to local receptors groups for which adverse effects will persist significantly beyond the long-term.

Mitigation & Landscape Strategy

5.21 Section 5.10 of NPS EN-1 sets out guidance on the landscape and visual effects of energy projects. Paragraph 5.10.6 states:

> *"Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate."*

5.22 NPS EN-3 requires applicants to carry out a landscape and visual assessment and will be expected

> *"direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape and visual impact of solar PV arrays".*

5.23 GLVIA3 also outlines guidance on mitigation and describes the importance of primary mitigation measures embedded in the scheme design. It considers prevention and avoidance, reduction of and, as a last resort, offsetting or compensating for adverse effects.

5.24 In considering prevention and avoidance, GLVIA3 emphasises the importance of site selection and alternatives. It is accepted that the low lying topography of the Humberhead Levels represents a landscape preferential for the delivery of solar development.

5.25 In considering reduction, GLVIA3 is clear that mitigation should be adopted to reduce adverse effects, where they cannot be prevented or avoided. It continues to offer guidance on what mitigation is most effective. Paragraph 4.26 states:

> *"In general the emphasis should be on modifying a scheme design through successive iterations to reduce adverse effects. Sympathetic treatment of external areas can, in some circumstances, help the integration of a new development into the surrounding landscape,* ***but measures that are simply added on to a scheme as 'cosmetic' landscape works, such as screen planting designed to reduce negative effects of an otherwise fixed scheme design, are the least desirable"***

Emphasis added.

5.26 GLVIA3 continues to discuss enhancement proposals. Paragraph 4.37 states these should be based on a sound baseline assessment and should consider:

- *"Can the development help to improve the visual amenity of the area?*
- *Can it help to* ***restore****, reconstruct or provide new local landscape character and distinctiveness?*
- *Can it assist in meeting landscape management objectives for the areas?"*

Emphasis added.

5.27 It is apparent the proposed scheme is a fait accompli and product of land assembly. This is not a proposal that has carefully or consistently considered its scale and extent to prevent, avoid or reduce significant effects, and it is not one that responds to the character of the landscape or adopts measures for its restoration. In the case of parcel 2f, the approach to mitigation disregards guidance laid out in GLVIA3 that discourages the use of 'cosmetic' screen planting to reduce adverse effects. Its over reliance on this 'cosmetic' approach undermines the national and local level landscape character assessment objectives that highlight the importance of retaining open views in the area.

5.28 The proposals to introduce east to west woodland planting to the south of Spaldington Road that would enclose the otherwise attractive open setting of the lane and its associated properties and greatly restrict skyline views of the wooded horizon at Featherbed Lane.

6 PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

6.1 Section 4 of this representation has considered the baseline landscape setting of the study area relevant to areas 2e and 2f. It has considered the historic landscape setting and field pattern recorded on early Ordnance Survey mapping, together with identifying key objectives of NCA39 and LCA 5A that relate to respecting the open setting of the landscape.

6.2 Section 5 of this representation has reviewed the approach to mitigation near to other local settlement in the proposed scheme that generally adopts a 'one field buffer' to local settlement, but with this neglected to properties on Spaldington Road including [redacted]. This 'one field buffer' should be applied consistently.

6.3 Section 6 of this representation has highlighted an unbalanced assessment of landscape effects and landscape character, notably the immediate setting of areas 2e and 2f, and an underestimation of the likely effects to visual receptors associated with area 2f. It has highlighted the importance of RVAA for a proposal of this nature and confirms the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold is reached at [redacted]. The inadequacy of a sound and reasonable mitigation strategy reflects the inaccuracies and omissions of the ES LVIA.

Proposed Design Modification

6.4 A Landscape Mitigation Plan has been prepared to outline the proposed modifications to area 2e and 2f. This adopts a simple and logical approach:

1) Restore – a framework of historic field boundary and woodland restoration to **restore** landscape character, in accordance with the recommendations of GLVIA3.

2) Respect – a 'one field buffer' and spatial primary mitigation measure that **respects** and maintains part of the the open character and distant views of Spaldington Road, part of SPALF18 and the Howden20, in accordance with the objectives of NCA39 and LCA 5A.

3) Reduce – a framework of secondary planting measures that will complement spatial buffers to **reduce** residual adverse landscape and visual effects.

6.5 This strategy seeks to introduce an open buffer of land that will be consistent with the 'one field buffer' that is consistent with the buffers afforded to other settlement in the

wider scheme. applied elsewhere in the proposed scheme. This will avoid the need for extensive cosmetic screen planting immediately adjacent to Spaldington Road, allowing a continued perception and understanding of its open setting to be enjoyed by both existing residents and users of the Howden20. In turn, part of the Howden20 travelling on PRoW SPALF18 will also retain part of its journey through an open field, albeit substantially reduced. This approach directly responds to guidance laid out in GLVIA3 which seeks mitigation through siting and scale and that responds to opportunities to restore or respect landscape character.

6.6 A greater proportion of mitigation planting is introduced to the immediate northwest of [redacted] to mitigate visual effects likely to be experienced by private receptors in land associated with [redacted], including people at their place of work. Hedgerow planting is also added to the perimeter fencing of the array along the west boundary adjacent to SPALF18 and south boundary to EASTB17. This is a principle that should be applied across the site as a whole. Open views of the array through stock fencing should not be acceptable as hedgerows can readily mitigate short distance views with limited likelihood of shading the solar array.

Alternative Layout

6.7 It is recognised that the scale of the scheme attracts a broad range of constraints that must be balanced and mitigated. Paragraph 5.10.26 of NPS EN-1 states:

> *"Reducing the scale of a project can help to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design of a proposed energy infrastructure project may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function – for example, electricity generation output."*

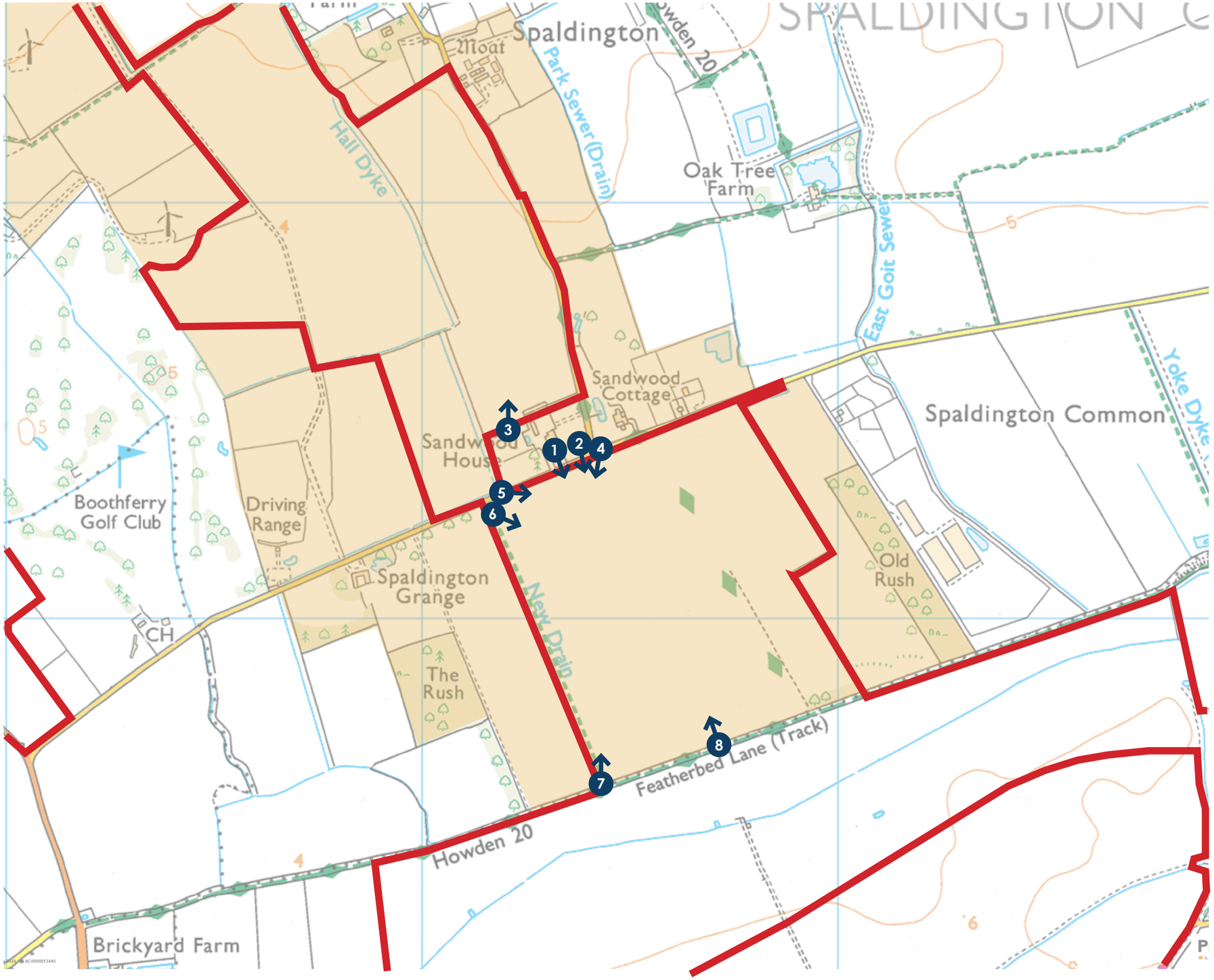
6.8 The proposed modifications do not seek the wholesale loss of this part of the solar PV array, but promote further iterative development of the proposed scheme to mitigate adverse effects, as recognised and promoted by industry guidance.

6.9 It is questioned whether the Indicative Site shown in Figure 2-3, noting it is indeed indicative, has been appropriately tested to ensure the balance of mitigation measures to all environmental constraints is appropriate. For example, the ES suggests the Goose Mitigation Zone substantially over-provides in area. This representation questions whether part of this land, being remote from public visual receptors, would be more appropriate

for use as solar PV, with an alternative area of ecological mitigation introduced to the south of Spaldington Road that would serve a combined function for landscape and visual mitigation as outlined above. Equally, there are frequent areas within the layout where there appears to be open land within the array that may exceed what is reasonably required for maintenance access.

6.10 The proposed modifications outlined in this representation relate to the relocation of approximately 15ha of the proposed solar PV array, a particularly minimal amount of its overall 966.4ha extent, equating to just 1.5% of its total area. In turn, the proposed mitigation would secure a framework of measures that restore and reflect landscape character, and reduce residual effects. These measures would respond to objectives of the identified national and local landscape character areas and reinforce consistent application of a 'one field buffer' to local settlement. Consideration of landscape and visual constraints and application of iterative design and mitigation in this manner should be a minimum requirement for nationally significant proposals and does not appear to have been appropriately applied in the current scheme.

Figures



Key

- Application boundary
- View locations
- Study Area

Number/Figure
GLY0042 LV01

Scale
1:10,000 @ A3

Date
13/06/2024

Checked
APF

Project
East Yorkshire Solar Farm

Drawing Title
Site Location Plan

Client
Mr & Mrs Taylor

Landscape Institute Registered Practice

north

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landscape architects

View 1 - Taken from the second storey of [redacted], approximately 50m from the application site looking south.

View 2 - Taken from within the gardens of [redacted], approximately 35m from the application site looking south.

Number/Figure
GLY0042 LV02

Scale
nts A3

Date
05/03/2024

Checked
APF

Project
East Yorkshire Solar Farm

Drawing Title
Photographic Views 1 & 2

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View 3 - Taken from within the equestrian land at [redacted], adjoining the application site looking north.

View 4 - Taken from Spaldington Road, approximately 5m from the application site boundary looking southwest.

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Number/Figure
GLY0042 LV03

Scale
nts A3

Date
05/03/2024

Checked
APF

Project
East Yorkshire Solar Farm

Drawing Title
Photographic Views 3 & 4

Client
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View 5 - Taken from Spaldington Road, at the application site boundary looking southeast.

View 6 - Taken from public right of way SPALF18, on the route of the Howden20, within the application site looking southeast.

Number/Figure	Project
GLY0042 LV04	East Yorkshire Solar Farm
Scale	Drawing Title
nts A3	Photographic Views 5 & 6
Date	
05/03/2024	
Checked	Client
APF	Mr & Mrs Taylor

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View 7 - Taken from public right of way SPALF18, on the route of the Howden 20. Within the application site looking northeast.

View 8 - Taken from public right of way EASTB17, within the application site looking north.

Number/Figure
GLY0042 LV05

Scale
nts A3

Date
05/03/2024

Checked
APF

Project
East Yorkshire Solar Farm

Drawing Title
Photographic Views 7 & 8

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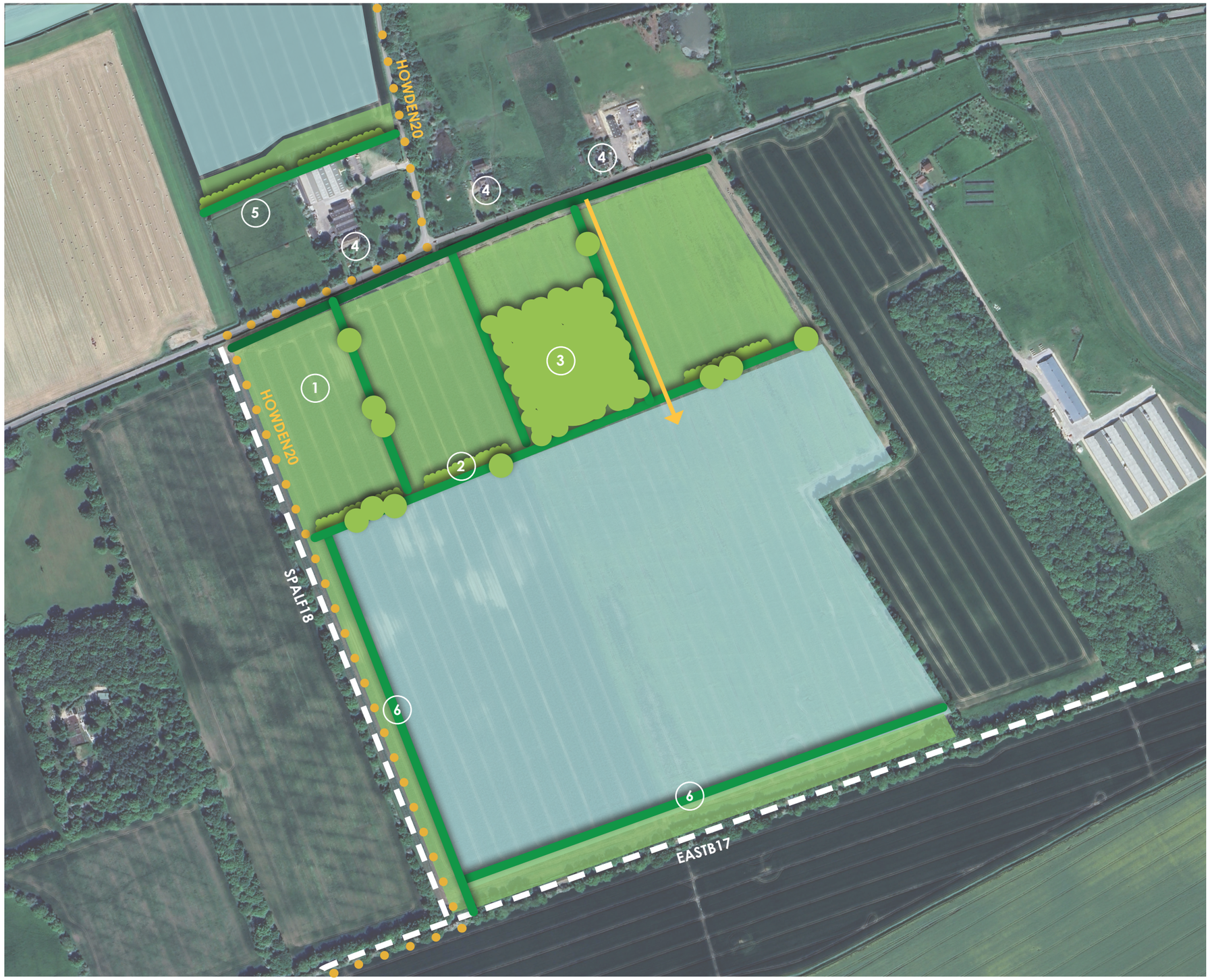

Key

Application boundary

Revised extent of solar PV array.

Revised access to solar PV array.

Existing hedgerows to be retained and reinforced.

Proposed native hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Proposed woodland creation.

Proposed native scrub.

Proposed grassland creation or arable crop.

1. Proposed reinstatement of historic field pattern and maintainence as grassland or arable crop for ecological mitigation and to retain an open setting to Spaldington Road.
2. Proposed hedgerow reinforced with native scrub to provide meaningful visual buffer over distance.
3. Partial reinstatement of Sandpit Wood, creating a characteristic woodland block that buffers the arrray while retaining a sense of openness.
4. Retained open land to the south of the road reduces the overdominance of the array and contributes to respecting open skyline views from the road and residential properties.
5. Proposed native scrub planting and hedgerow trees providing a visual buffer to the array while respecting open skyline views.
6. Hedgerows introduced along boundary fencing to provide effective visual mitigation.

Number/Figure
GLY0042 LV01

Scale
1:5,000 @ A3

Date
05/03/2024

Checked
APF

Project
East Yorkshire Solar Farm

Drawing Title
View Location Plan

Client
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See GLY0042 Landscape & Visual Written Represenation for full details of proposed mitigation and 1855 Ordnance Survey extract.

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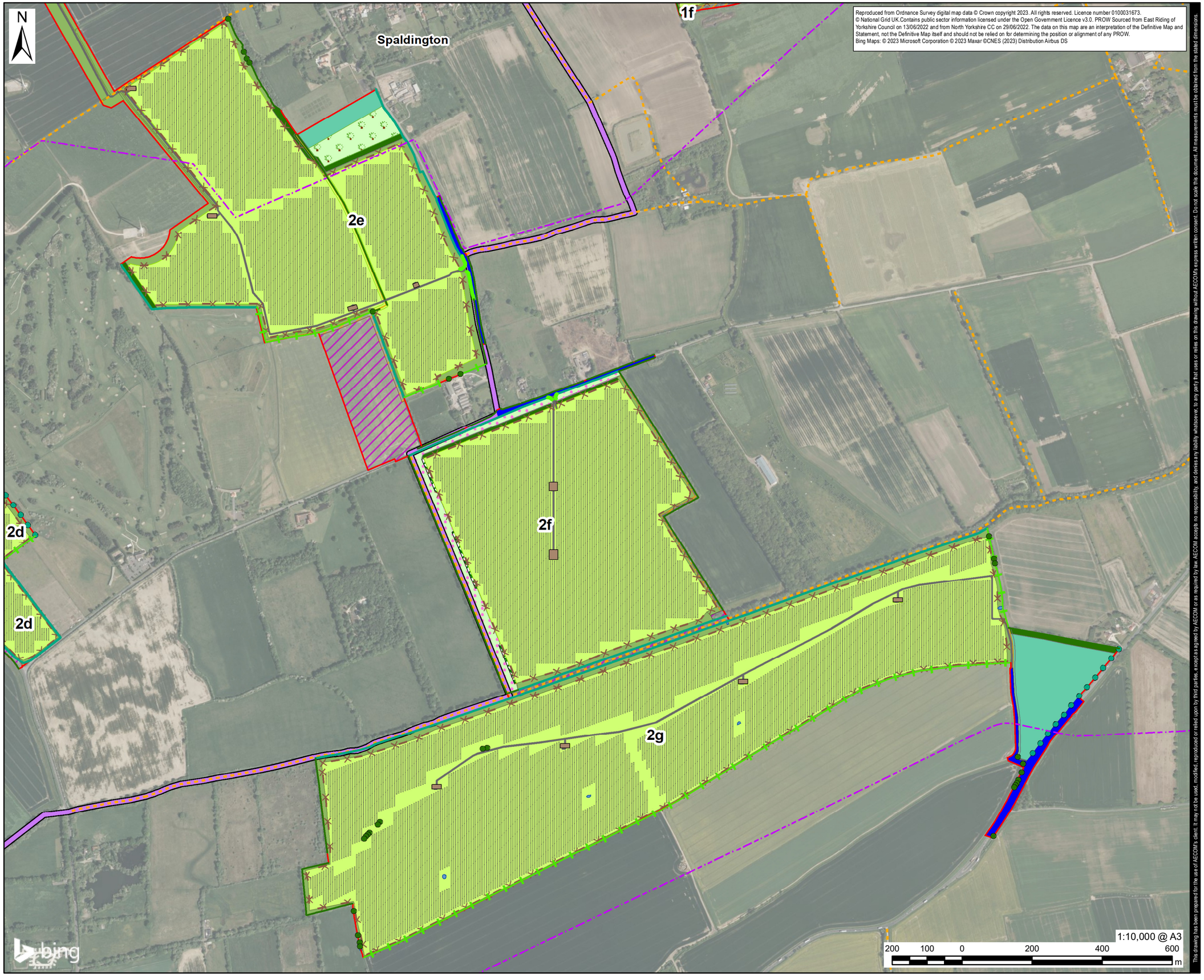
Appendix A

Version 4.3 Revision: 0 Drawn: CA Checked: JW Approved: HS Date: 2023-11-17



AECOM

PROJECT

East Yorkshire Solar Farm

CLIENT

East Yorkshire Solar Farm Limited

CONSULTANT

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LEGEND

- Order limits
- Land not included in the Order limits
- Solar PV Site (xx = Solar PV Area) (XX)
- Ecology Mitigation Area (xx = Ecology Mitigation Area)
- Grid Connection Corridor - Habitat to be Reinstated
- Interconnecting Cable Corridor - Habitat to be Reinstated
- Retained Habitat
- Existing Individual Tree
- Existing Hedgerow
- Existing Pond
- Operations and Maintenance Hub (Johnson's Farm)
- Solar PV Table
- Field Station
- Site Access
- Solar PV Site Perimeter Fencing
- Grid Connection Substation Fencing
- Overhead Electricity Line
- Gas Pipeline
- Hull to Selby Railway Line
- Public Right of Way
- Proposed Permissive Path
- Proposed Permissive Path (Allowing Travel on Horses)
- Howden 20 Circular Route
- Proposed Hedgerow
- Proposed Hedgerow with Trees
- Enhanced Line of Trees
- Enhanced Hedgerow
- Proposed Ecological Enhancement Area
- Proposed Flower Rich Grassland
- Proposed Hardstanding
- Proposed Internal Access Track
- Proposed Native Scrub with Trees Planting
- Proposed Native Woodland - Mixed
- Proposed Semi-Improved Grassland
- Proposed Species-Rich Grassland
- Proposed Species Rich Wet Grassland
- Proposed Traditional Orchard
- Proposed Woodland Edge Mixed

ISSUE PURPOSE

Environmental Statement

PROJECT NUMBER

60683115

FIGURE TITLE

Indicative Site Layout
Sheet 4 of 7

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 2-3

Filename: J:\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\GEN_ES_Fig2-3_Indicative_Site_Layout_A3_20231116_R0.mxd

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