



# Botley West Solar Farm

Environmental Statement

**Volume 3**

**Appendix 8.2: Landscape Value**

November 2024

---

PINS Ref: EN010147

Document Ref: EN010147/APP/6.5

Revision P0

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a); Planning Act 2008; and Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations

## Approval for issue

Jonathan Alsop

15 November 2024

The report has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of the Applicant and solely for the purpose for which it is provided. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by RPS Group Plc, any of its subsidiaries, or a related entity (collectively 'RPS') no part of this report should be reproduced, distributed or communicated to any third party. RPS does not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose from which it is intended, nor to any third party in respect of this report. The report does not account for any changes relating to the subject matter of the report, or any legislative or regulatory changes that have occurred since the report was produced and that may affect the report.

The report has been prepared using the information provided to RPS by its client, or others on behalf of its client. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RPS shall not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the client arising from fraud, misrepresentation, withholding of information material relevant to the report or required by RPS, or other default relating to such information, whether on the client's part or that of the other information sources, unless such fraud, misrepresentation, withholding or such other default is evident to RPS without further enquiry. It is expressly stated that no independent verification of any documents or information supplied by the client or others on behalf of the client has been made. The report shall be used for general information only.

---

**Prepared by:**

**RPS**  
**20 Western Avenue,**  
**Milton Park, Abingdon,**  
**Oxfordshire, OX14 4SH**  
**United Kingdom**

**Prepared for:**

**Photovolt Development Partners GmbH,**  
**on behalf of SolarFive Ltd.**

---

## Contents

1 LANDSCAPE VALUE.....1

## Tables

Table 1.1: Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value from Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations .....1

# 1 Landscape Value

**Table 1.1: Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value from Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations**

Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value				
Factor	Definition	Examples <sup>1</sup> of Indicators of landscape value	Example <sup>2</sup> of evidence	Evidence present
Natural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape	Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place.	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. National, Regional and District level only. Site-specific assessment completed within this LVIA.
		Extent and survival of seminatural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type.	LANDMAP Geological Landscape and Landscape Habitats Aspects (in Wales)	n/a
		Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological or pedological features.	Ecological and geological designations	Ecological designations within the Project site are limited, with an Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site occupying a small part of the cable route between the middle and southern sections. However, within the wider 5 km study area and in some cases immediately abutting the Project Site, there are a number of designated sites of ecological interest. Including, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Cherwell District Wildlife Site(s).
		Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services, for example distinctive ecological communities and habitats that form the basis of ecological networks.		
		Landscape which makes an identified contribution to a nature recovery/ green infrastructure network.	SSSI citations and condition assessments	None on the Project site. There are a number of SSSI in proximity to the Project site. Including, Sheep's Bank SSSI, Blenheim Palace SSSI and Wytham Woods SSSI, located near the northern, middle and

<sup>1</sup> These examples are not exhaustive.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence may be set out in development plans (or evidence that sits alongside development plans). Online mapping may also provide useful information

**Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value**

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
				southern sections of the Project respectively.
			Geological Conservation Review	There are several Geological Conservation Review sites within the study area. Including, No. 545 Kirtlington Cement Works falls within the northeast of the study area and no. 1065 Shipton on Cherwell Quarry to the east of Woodstock. No. 544 Stonesfield Slate Mines sits on the outer edge of the 5 km study area but is not within it.
			Habitat surveys	Phase 1 and National Vegetation Classification (NVC) habitat surveys undertaken on the Project site. Reported in Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation.
			Priority habitats	The Project site is not included within the UK Priority Habitats Map (MAGIC, 2023). There are a number of Priority habitats within the wider study area.
			Nature recovery networks/ nature pathways	The Project site is not included within any nature recovery network.
			Habitat network opportunity mapping/ green infrastructure mapping	The Project site does not form part of a published Green Infrastructure network.
			Catchment management plans	n/a
			Ecosystem services assessment/ schemes	n/a
			Specialist ecological studies	No published ecology study for the Application Site available.
Cultural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest	Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape	LANDMAP Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape	n/a

**Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value**

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
	which contribute positively to the landscape	elements (e.g. follies, monuments, avenues, tree roundels). Presence of historic parks and gardens, and designed landscapes. Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies). Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth. This includes natural time depth, e.g. presence of features such as glaciers and peat bogs and cultural time depth e.g. presence of relic farmsteads, ruins, historic field patterns, historic rights of way (e.g. drove roads, salt ways, tracks associated with past industrial activity).	Services Aspect (in Wales)  Historic environment and archaeological designations  Conservation Area appraisals, Village Design Statements  Historic maps  Historic landscape character assessments <sup>3</sup> Historic Land Use Assessment <sup>4</sup> and Historic Area Assessments <sup>5</sup>  Place names  Specialist heritage studies	No statutory historic designations associated with the Project site.  The Project site does not fall within a CA. There is no village / town / neighbourhood design statement or plan covering the Project site.  n/a  The Project site is covered by the published Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation project (2016).  n/a  n/a
Landscape condition	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and	Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g.	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. National, Regional and District level only. Site-specific assessment completed within this LVIA.

<sup>3</sup> Historic Landscape Characterisation has developed as a GIS mapping tool to capture how land use has changed and the 'time-depth' of the present-day landscape.

<sup>4</sup> Mapping of Scotland's Historic Landscape: [redacted]

<sup>5</sup> [redacted]

**Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value**

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
	overall landscape structure	walls, parkland, trees). Good health of elements such as good water quality, good soil health Strong landscape structure (e.g. intact historic field patterns). Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence).	LANDMAP condition and trend questions (in Wales) Hedgerow/ tree surveys Observations about intactness/ condition made in the field by the assessor SSSI condition assessments Historic landscape character assessments/ map regression analysis	n/a No known published hedgerow surveys. The Application Site is typical of the agricultural landscape within which it sits. A series of small to medium size fields with scattered trees and largely intact hedgerows to the boundaries. n/a The Project site is covered by the published Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation project (2016).
Associations	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts	Associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape. Associations with science or other technical achievements. Links to a notable historical event. Associations with a famous person or people.	Information about arts and science relating to a place Historical accounts, cultural traditions and folklore Guidebooks/ published cultural trails LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Services aspect (in Wales)	No known relevant to the Application Site. No known relevant to the Application Site. No known relevant to the Application Site. n/a
Distinctiveness	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	Landscape character that has a strong sense of place (showing strength of expression of	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. National, Regional and District level only. Site-specific assessment completed within this LVIA.

**Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value**

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
		landscape characteristics). Presence of distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place. Presence of rare or unusual features, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity.	LANDMAP Visual & Sensory question 3 and 25, – Historic Landscape question 4 (in Wales)  Guidebooks	n/a  No known relevant to the Project site. There are a number of areas in the wider study area associated with guidebooks. Blenheim Palace park for example.
		Landscape which makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement. Settlement gateways/ approaches which provides a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of the settlement (may be ancient/historic)	Observations about identity/ distinctiveness made in the field by the assessor	The Application Site is typical of the agricultural landscape within which it sits. A series of small to medium size fields with scattered trees and largely intact hedgerows to the boundaries.
Recreational	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important	Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way (particularly National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths and Core Paths) where appreciation of landscape is a feature.	Definitive public rights of way mapping/ OS map data	The local PRoW network is assessed in the LVIA. There are several PRoW which pass through the Project site and throughout the wider study area.
			National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths, Core Paths	None within the Project site itself. The Thames Path is in proximity to the southern section of the Project site.
		Areas with good accessibility that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and spiritual	Open access land (including registered common land)	None within the Project site itself. There are several CRoW access land areas within the wider study area. Including Tackley Wood, approximately 550 m to the east of the northern section of the Project.



### Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
		experience/ inspiration Presence of town and village greens Other physical evidence of recreational use where experience of landscape is important Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity.	Database of registered town or village greens Visitor surveys/ studies Observations about recreational use/ enjoyment made in the field by the assessor	The Application site of immediate vicinity is not designated as a Local Green Space. No known relevant to the Application Site. The local PRoW network is assessed in the LVIA. There are several PRoW which pass through the Project site and throughout the wider study area.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features, such as dramatic or striking landform or harmonious combinations of land cover Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors, coastal edges) Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks.	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. National, Regional and District level only. Site-specific assessment completed within this LVIA.
			LANDMAP Visual and Sensory scenic quality question 46 (in Wales)	n/a
			Protected views, views studies	n/a
			Areas frequently photographed or used in images used for tourism/ visitor/ promotional purposes, or views described or praised in literature	None known. Parts of the PRoW network within the Application Site appear on Google StreetView.
			Observations about scenic qualities made in the field by the assessor	The Project site is within rural landscape which is well managed. There are a number of major communication routes, including the A34 and A420, passing through the study area. Much of the Project site is in open countryside and has a scenic quality and is relatively undeveloped. Other rural lanes

**Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value**

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
				/ roads appear to be well used by traffic.
			Conservation Area Appraisals	n/a
			Village Design Statements, or similar	n/a
Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet <sup>6</sup>  Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness (resulting from a high degree of perceived naturalness <sup>7</sup> , rugged or otherwise challenging terrain, remoteness from public mechanised access and lack of modern artefacts)  Sense of remoteness, seclusion or openness  Dark night skies  A general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting.	Tranquillity mapping and factors which contribute to and detract from tranquillity  Dark Skies mapping	CPRE tranquillity mapping covers the whole of England. The Project site has a tranquillity value predominantly at the higher end of the most tranquil. With areas, particularly the southern section of the Project site in the middle of the least tranquil.  It is not within a Dark Skies area. CPRE have assessed the light pollution for the whole of England. The Project site has predominantly 0.25 – 1 NanoWatts/cm/sr, of night light, which is at the darker end of the spectrum. Within small areas within the southern section particularly at 1 to 2 NanoWatts/cm/sr. However, no night-time lighting is proposed either during construction or during operation of the solar farm.
			Wildness mapping, and Wild Land Areas in Scotland	n/a
			Land cover mapping	n/a
			Field survey	n/a
			LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect	n/a

<sup>6</sup>More about tranquillity can be found in Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 01/2017 (Revised; Landscape Institute, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Relating to extensive semi-natural vegetation, presence of wildlife and presence of natural processes/ lack of human intervention.

**Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value**

Factor	Definition	Examples1 of Indicators of landscape value	Example2 of evidence	Evidence present
Functional	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape	Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, e.g. natural hydrological systems/ floodplains, areas of undisturbed and healthy soils, areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands and oceans, areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation), pollinator-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows  Areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network  Landscapes and landscape elements that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities	Land cover and habitat maps	At the time of field work, the Project site was cleared arable fields / winter crops, with areas of arable crops partly cleared and scattered trees and largely intact hedgerows.
			Ecosystem services assessments and mapping (particularly supporting and regulating services)	Apart from information contained in Natural England's NCA profiles there is no published mapping of ecosystem services for Oxfordshire County Council.
			Green infrastructure studies/strategies	The Project site does not form part of a published GI network.
			Development and management plans for nationally designated landscapes, Local Plans and SPDs	The Project site does not feature in any published management plans or supplementary planning documents
			Landscape character assessments	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. National, Regional and District level only. Site-specific assessment completed within this LVIA.