



Planning Inspectorate

Application by Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP) on behalf of SolarFive Ltd for the Botley West Solar Farm Project

Case reference: EN010147

Examining Authority's note of unaccompanied site inspection 3 (USI3) to which the application or specified matters relates on Wednesday 26 February 2025

There were two parts to the Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI).

Part 1 – 09:00 to 10:30

Part 2 – 10:30 to 17:00

All members of the Examining Authority (ExA) undertook the early morning session of the USI, described as 'Part 1' in the text below. For 'Part 2' which spanned the morning into the afternoon, Katharine Metcalfe of the ExA undertook all the visits recorded below. This note is a brief record to inform the Applicant, Interested Parties and other parties of the actions taken by the ExA.

The ExA used a combination of driving and walking routes to experience and record the local area, the details of which are broadly summarised below. All inspections took place from a public highway, public footpath or public place.

During Part 1, there was persistent heavy rainfall, some localised puddles and flooding of carriageways, causing a lot of spray on the roads and reducing visibility considerably. The weather improved and stabilised during Part 2, with overcast skies affording moderate visibility from the viewpoints observed.

The following is a summary of the visit:

Part 1

The ExA travelled out of Oxford towards Sturdy's Castle on the Banbury Road, pulling into the lay-by just north of that property. From here, the position of the proposed northern construction compound was observed.

The ExA travelled north on the A4260 and took a left turn on a country road route towards the village of Wootton. The ExA passed Dornford Lane, crossed over the River Dom, and headed due south to the crossroads with the B4207.

The ExA followed the B4207 eastward back to the Banbury Road (A4260), taking in the extent of the Order limits and the location of various properties including Hordley House, the Oxford School of Drama and the Crematorium.

Part 2

The ExA travelled on the A44 and local roads to Begbroke and parked near the Church of St Michael. From there the ExA took the footpath northwest towards Bladon Heath and walked up to the reservoir and Round Castle, then returning to the Church, observing landscape characteristics as well as varying views towards Begbroke Conservation Area and the Listed Buildings therein.

From here, the ExA drove along Spring Hill Road to observe Hall Farm and reached the private driveway to Spring Hill Farm but did not access the private land.

The ExA drove on local roads to Cassington and parked close to the Church of St Peter, walking from there along a footpath out of the village in a northerly direction. After a short time, the path turned east towards the playing fields, with views towards and outwards from the Conservation Area observed, noting the locations of Heritage Assets in Cassington, including the Church.

From here, the ExA drove along the A40 and local roads to Church Hanborough and parked adjacent to the Church of St Peter and St Paul.

The ExA then walked south on the unnamed road leading to New Farm Farmhouse and subsequently the public footpath heading south. The ExA observed the Church Hanborough Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings, as well as the wider landscape visible to the east from this footpath.

On return to the Church, the ExA walked around the Churchyard to observe views out of the Conservation Area.

The topography of the landscape, views from public footpaths, the drainage conditions of the soil and the general ambience of the locality were observed throughout.