

The Planning Inspectorate  
Botley West Solar Farm Consultation

Date: 1 July 2025

Our ref: 6630\506219689.2\120382.00025

Your ref:

Direct tel: [REDACTED]

E-mail:

[REDACTED]@gateleylegal.com

[BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:BotleyWestSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Dear Sirs

### **Response to Botley West Solar Farm Development Consent Order ("DCO") Consultation**

**DCO Development: Solar photovoltaic array and connection infrastructure, with a maximum intended generation capacity of 840M**

**Client: The Chancellor Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford**

We write on behalf of The Chancellor Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford.

Further to our Client's previous Relevant Representation dated 25 February and the summary of oral representations dated 7 June 2025 in response to the Botley West Solar Farm DCO Consultation, the University has reviewed the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations and comments as follows.

#### Applicant's Response regarding Change in use of Productive Agricultural Land.

Reference has been made in the Applicant's response to the Relevant Representations that *'the Code of Construction Practice would ensure that farming within landholdings will continue to operate effectively during the construction phase'*, however, until such time as cable routes, detailed design and construction phasing are finalised it is impossible to be able to guarantee this. The University understands work continues to narrow down the proposed cable routes but it appears that is some time away until this can be confirmed, accordingly uncertainty will persist.

#### Applicant's Response in relation to Wytham Woods

Reference has been made to there being *'no significant effects identified from representative viewpoints within or at the edge of Wytham Woods'* and while this may be the case from certain viewpoints it is also likely that there will be many viewpoints from which the completed scheme will have an impact on the character of the landscape particularly the views to the south from the elevated position of Wytham Woods, (145m above sea level), towards Cumnor, (120m above sea level).

As advised by Mark Juniper, (Rural Surveyor for the University of Oxford), at the Issue Specific Hearing 1 on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, the University owns land occupied by Hill End Outdoor Education Centre, (copy Tenancy Plans attached at **Appendix 1**), which has operated nature-based outdoor learning and activities from the site for over 100 years.

The site runs from the B4044, Eynsham to Botley Road, (70m above sea level), rising steeply up to the north to Cowleaze Copse, (over 135m above sea level), with far reaching views to the south, (as

1 Forbury Square  
The Forbury  
Reading RG1 3BB  
DX 4014 Reading  
0118 952 0820

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shown on the attached marked-up plan at **Appendix 2**). The concern here is that during the construction phase there will likely be significant adverse impact on access to and enjoyment of the site owing to increased traffic, road closures and associated works. Post completion the scheme will impact the enjoyment of the existing far-reaching views to the south, which are a particular highlight for visitors to the 'High Dorm' at Hill End.

The Applicant's comments in relation to mitigation strategy as relate to the Wytham Woods/Stroud Copse SSSI are noted and the University look forward to reviewing detailed Method Statements, Work Plans and Phasing Schedules as these become available.

#### Applicant's Response in relation to Cable Routes

The University has been engaging with the Applicant in respect of a preferred route for the cable corridor over its landholding. Discussions are still at an early stage but the University has confirmed to the Applicant its favoured cable route which would be the shortest and therefore is anticipated to provide the lowest impact. Further survey work is to be undertaken along the proposed route to ensure the feasibility of the same. This will provide comfort for the Tenant and University and allow engagement around easements, mitigation strategy, likely timing, remediation strategy and cropping for future harvest years.

In summary, while the Code of Construction Practice and Compensation Code are noted as providing mechanisms aimed at protecting a Landowners interest, the University feels that these should not be relied upon in isolation and that ongoing engagement and communication between the Applicant, the Landowner and their Tenants is the best way to keep all informed and to ensure that multiple interests are accommodated in scheme design, phasing and planning.

#### Accompanied Site Visit Nomination

In light of the University's comments in respect of the Hill End Outdoor Education Centre, the University would propose to nominate an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) to Hill End Outdoor Education Centre to view the Southern Site, (proposed location as marked on the plan at **Appendix 2**).

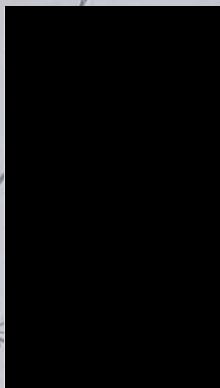
Yours faithfully,



**Gateley Legal**

**APPENDIX 1  
TENANCY PLANS**

Lease Plan 5



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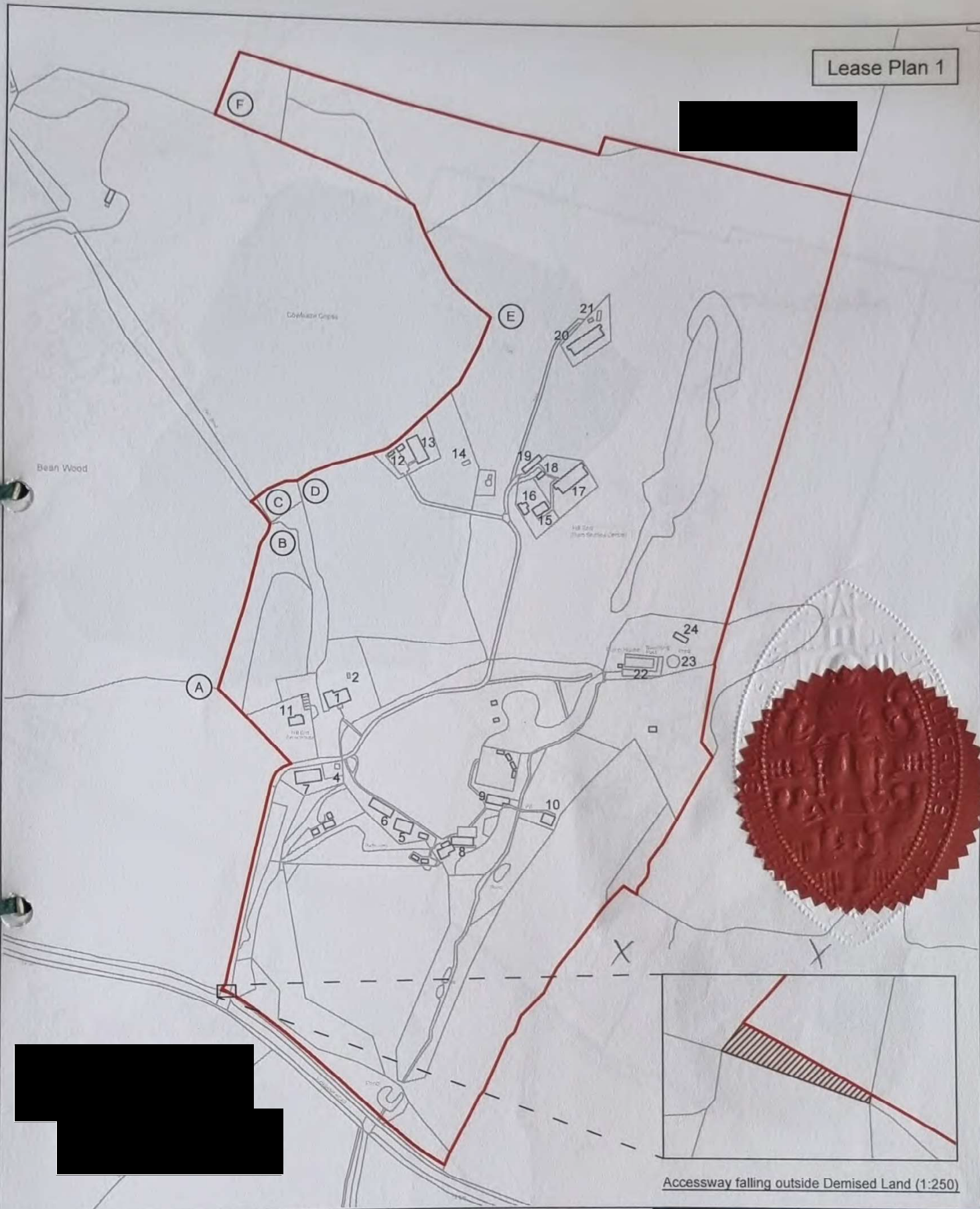
ESTATES SERVICES

GENERAL NOTES		DRAWING TITLE	DRAWN BY		D.M.S.	CHECKED BY	C.H.
© Crown Copyright 2019. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence Number 100005215	DRAWING NO	833/LP5/PM/21/01/26	SCALE	PAPER SIZE	A4	APPROVED BY	I.B.C.
	BUILDING	Hill End Farm (833)	1:20,000	DATE		01 February 2021	
	FLOOR	-	REVISION	CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS, DO NOT SCALE			
	SITE / AREA	Wytham Area (015)	B	© OXFORD UNIVERSITY ESTATES SERVICES			





# Lease Plan 1



Accessway falling outside Demised Land (1:250)

## GENERAL NOTES



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## DRAWING TITLE

Lease Plan 1 - Demised Land

## DRAWING NO

833/LP1/PM/21/01/26

## BUILDING

Hill End Farm (833)

## FLOOR

-

## SITE / AREA

Wytham Area (015)

## DRAWN BY

D.M.S.

## SCALE

1:4000

## CHECKED BY

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## PAPER SIZE

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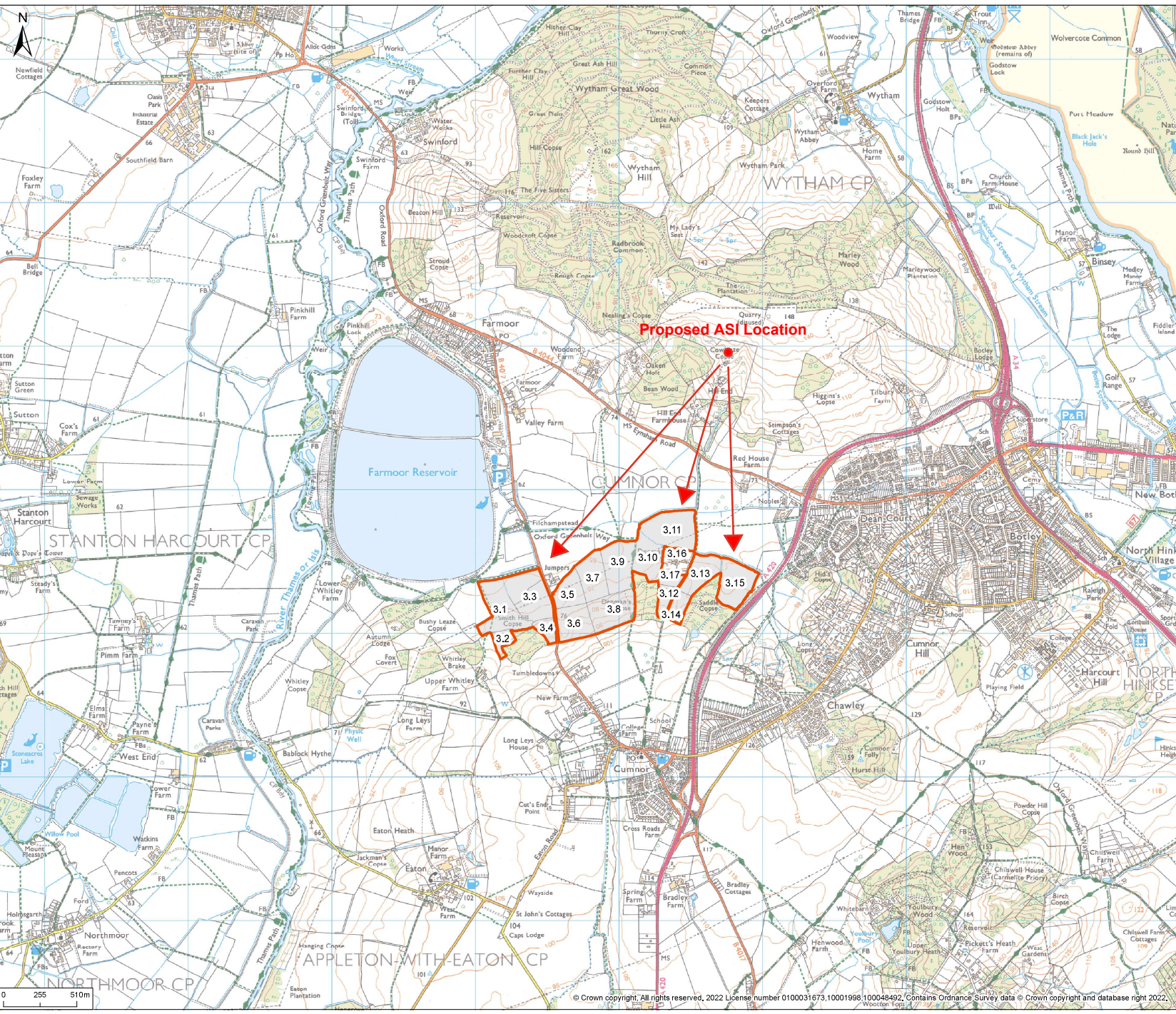
## DATE

01 February 2021

**APPENDIX 2**  
**HILL END OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE**



O:\12428 Proposed DCO Scale Solar Development 860m\TechDrawings\12428-0404-01.mxd



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Notes  
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**Legend**  
 Site Location

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date
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PHOTOVOLT  
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Client	-	Status	DRAFT	Drawn By	JM	PM/Checked By	CD
Project	Botley West Solar Farm	Project Number	OXF12426	Scale @ A3	1:25,000	Date Created	NOV 2022
Title	Site Location Plan - South	Figure Number	1			Rev	-