

## ***Proposed Botley West Solar Farm***

***Concluding statement*** from Dr L.K. Arciszewska and Professor David Sherratt, [REDACTED]

07/11/2025

In Summary (and as presented in detail elsewhere by many IPs, organisations, as well as ourselves) the proposed Botley West Solar Farm would obliterate outstanding rolling countryside views for residents and visitors, and destroy high quality agricultural land, whose cultivation of valuable crops adds to the visual amenity. The proposed location of solar panels on rolling countryside, where they would be visible from many residencies and viewpoints is indefensible, particularly because the proposed development is adjacent to a large number of residences, village communities and the Blenheim World Heritage site. We strongly endorse the ExA proposal that there shall be a distance of no less than 250m between the edge of any part of the proposed operational solar array and any residential dwellinghouse (as measured from the curtilage of any private residential property or address; this includes [REDACTED]) We note that SBW has assessed that up to 300 properties (including our own, [REDACTED]) likely fall in the range of 50-250m from the proposed panels. We also believe that the many sites within the proposed solar farm with significant archaeological features should also have a 250m minimum buffer zone between them and any solar panels.

The Applicant's insistence that the agricultural land in the area proposed for solar panels is 'degraded and unsuitable for effective agriculture' is totally inconsistent with what agricultural experts, biologists and local farmers have repeatedly stated. These concerns have not been addressed explicitly or objectively by the Applicant.

The Applicant has repeatedly failed to address concerns, requests for clarification and comments from members of the community, local authorities, Stop Botley West (SBW) and the ExA. The Applicant has continued to fail to respond satisfactorily to requests for further information and clarification. When responses have been received, they have frequently been incomplete, misleading and sometimes deceitful (see below). The Applicant's whole approach has been to downplay impacts, undertaking poor assessments, repeating unsupported assertions and repeatedly failing to respond appropriately to ExA, IPs and other organisation questions and requests for information and clarification. Parenthetically, it seems that the Applicant has failed to engage appropriately with the local authorities. Just one example, is that the Applicant's proposed cycle path around the perimeter of CF has never been part of the local authority's plan for a cycle path adjacent to Lower Road to run from the Salt Cross development to Hanborough station.

**RVAA** We welcome the Applicant's decision to belatedly produce a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). Nevertheless, the subjective assessments of likely impacts do not bear objective scrutiny (below and Appendix, page 4). The applicant has been evasive, misleading and deceitful. For example, in the recent response, after their visit to ■ and other residential properties, they provide misleading images of, for example, ■ when they were aware that major views from the house and garden explicitly show the rolling countryside, both in the immediate vicinity of ■ (to the west of the river ■) and further away to the east, north and south, which would obliterated by the proposed solar panels (Appendix, page 4). Furthermore, the Applicant's statement *'College Farm is 50m to the west of the solar panels in the centre section of the Project Site. It appears that views of the solar panels would be partially screened by the hedgerow and trees along the eastern perimeter of the property. Views of the solar panels 100m to the north and 80m to the south of the house would be screened by the vegetation which surrounds the property. There would be more distant views, from upper floors to solar panels on rising ground to the east on the Evenlode Valley side'* is both misleading and deceitful, as the Applicant's representative should recall from the visit, and from the images in the Appendix below. We strongly disagree with the subjective assessment that the magnitude of the effect of the project on our property, ■ *'will be Moderate, Medium, Significant, followed by Medium-Low, Moderate, Not significant in 15 years' time'*. Using the assessment guidelines (Table 1), our assessment is that the magnitude of the

impact of the development on ■ will be **High** (*“Complete or very substantial change in view(s) – the Project appears as a dominant or focal element in prime views from the property occupying a considerably wide angle, in close-proximity view(s), resulting in a substantial change to prime views from the property’s amenity area(s)”*).and the consequences **Oppressive** [e.g see the Applicant’s images in the Appendix, page 4]. The impact will not be diminished in the following years as the vegetation at the border of our property is both mature and maintained. We do not accept the applicant’s visual evidence, which we consider to be heavily biased. We are attaching images from the garden, the house ground floor and upstairs viewpoints within our house. They clearly show the HIGH and OPPRESSIVE impact the project would have on the visual amenity of ■ and of neighbouring viewpoints.


Finally, we endorse the many concerns of the ExA, the local authorities and SBW. Their concerns and misgivings regarding the Applicant’s proposal mirror our own. This is an opportunistic and speculative proposal that would damage the environment, agricultural productivity and visual amenity; as SBW has stated ‘it makes a mockery of the Planning system by failing to respond in a timely manner to or, in some cases completely ignoring, the Examiners’ questions or requirements. This leaves a significant gap in the knowledge and data available on which the ExA is required to make a robust recommendation”; the proposal has little merit and should not be recommended for development.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lidia Arciszewska and Professor David Sherratt

**RVAA-Appendix to Concluding Statement by residents of [redacted] (text in red is our own)**


Photo location maps - aerial imagery (left), OS 1:25,000 mapping with zone of theoretical visibility shown (right).



Taken from  
EN010147-002021-17.13  
Residential Visual Amenity  
Assessment by PVDP\_Part2

[note [redacted] (26) is surrounded by proposed solar panels on 3 sides]-the impact of the proposed development would be oppressive.

[note hedge cutout to allow views from [redacted] to the East]



These images from the Applicant, misleadingly, do not indicate the loss of visual amenity, should the proposal go ahead! In no way do they indicate views from the house and garden. Nevertheless, they show land close to the house that would have solar panels installed!






*This is concerning given that a representative of the Applicant visited the property on October 7th 2025, and saw first-hand views from the ground and at 1st floor indicated below.*

**Comments**  
Views to the south from the side elevation are filtered by garden trees and a low garden fence and views to the east from the side elevation are screened by a maintained garden hedge and filtered by garden trees.

**In our assessment, solar panels on land in the vicinity of [redacted] (which is >80% BMV (ALC classification), would have a 'high impact on visual amenity, with a "Complete or very substantial change in view(s) - the Project appears as a dominant or focal element in prime views from the property occupying a considerably wide angle, in close-proximity view(s), resulting in a substantial change to prime views from the property's amenity area(s). The consequences on the development on the residents of [redacted] would likely be 'Oppressive: 'Effects may be considered intolerable or of such an extent that they result in a sense of ill-ease and discomfort'. The consequences of loss of visual amenity should the development go ahead would not diminish over 15 years, since the maintained hedge and other screening vegetation have been executed and maintained over the past 30 years in order to maximise the visual amenity.**

In order to support this statement, see the views to the top left provided by the Applicant and those to the bottom provided by ourselves.

**Our own images (~1st Nov. 2025) showing views from College Farm that would be highly impacted by the Solar Farm development**

View from the garden and from the house ground floor to the East

View from the garden and from the house ground floor to the SSE

View from the 1st floor balcony and bedroom to the East

View from the 1st floor balcony and bedroom to ENE

View from the 1st floor balcony and bedroom to SSE