



# One Earth Solar Farm

**Volume 6.0 Environmental Statement [EN010159]**

**Volume 3: Technical Appendices Supporting ES Volume 2**

**Appendix 9.2: Assessment Methodology**

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## A.9 Assessment Methodology

### A.9.1 Overview and Assessment Criteria

- A.9.1.1. This ES Chapter has been undertaken following the relevant Key Policy, Guidance and Legislation set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1: Summary of Relevant Legislation, Planning Policy and Technical Guidance [EN010159/APP/6.21]**.
- A.9.1.2. This section describes the approach and technical methods used to determine the **significance** (value, or **sensitivity**) of the buried heritage assets, the **magnitude of changes** (effects) caused by the Proposed Development and the resulting overall **significance of effects**.
- A.9.1.3. The principles of the impact assessment methodology rest upon independently evaluating the sensitivity of the heritage assets and the magnitude of impact arising from the proposed development. By combining the sensitivity of the heritage asset with the predicted magnitude of impact, the significance of the effect can be determined.
- A.9.1.4. The ES Chapter includes an assessment of the value of potentially affected assets, in line with NPS EN-1<sup>1</sup>. This requires the provision of information sufficient to enable adequate understanding of the potential impacts on the value of any buried heritage asset, which is consistent with the requirements of the NPPF<sup>2</sup> and is proportionate to the importance of the asset. Both the NPS and NPPF also require this assessment to take account of changes to both the physical asset and its setting.<sup>3</sup>
- A.9.1.5. Both NPS EN-1 and the NPPF set out criteria which should be considered when assessing the sensitivity of heritage assets, which include archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic interest. These criteria have been used in the assessment of sensitivity for each affected buried heritage asset in conjunction with applying professional judgement.
- A.9.1.6. There is no direct correlation between the significance of effects identified through the EIA process and the level of harm caused to heritage significance. The assessment of harm arising from the impact of the Proposed Development will be determined using professional judgement and with regard to the following considerations:

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Energy and Net Zero (November 2023). National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

<sup>3</sup> Discussed in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage [EN010159/APP/6.10]**.

- > A major (significant) effect on a heritage asset would more often be the basis by which to determine that the level of harm to the value of the asset would be substantial. However, substantial harm is considered to be a high test, and a case-by-case assessment should be made.
- > A moderate (significant) effect is unlikely to meet the test of substantial harm and would therefore be the basis to determine that the level of harm to the value of the asset would be less than substantial.
- > A minor or negligible (not significant) effect would still amount to less than substantial harm.
- > A neutral effect would be classified as having no harm.

A.9.1.7. For the purposes of this ES chapter:

- > Archaeological 'receptors' are also referred to as 'buried heritage assets; and,
- > To avoid conflict with the EIA use of the term 'significance', the heritage significance (value) will be referred to as 'sensitivity'.

### Sensitivity Criteria

A.9.1.8. Significance values are guided by its designated status and its heritage interest. Each identified heritage asset can be assigned a value in accordance with the criteria set out in **Table 1** which is based on the distinctions presented in the NPS EN-1. Using professional judgement and the results of consultation with relevant stakeholders, heritage assets are also assessed on an individual basis. Regional variations and individual qualities are also considered where applicable. This includes aspects such as the regional scarcity of specific asset type, or whether assets can be considered to be of schedulable quality due to them being of national importance.

Table 1: Buried Heritage Significance

Sensitivity	Designation of Asset
<b>International / National (very high)</b>	The highest status of asset and indicative of national importance: e.g. World Heritage Sites (WHS), Scheduled Monuments (SMs), Grade I and II* Listed Buildings (LBs), Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs), Protected Wrecks, Heritage assets of national importance, well preserved historic landscapes with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factor(s).
<b>National / Regional / County (high)</b>	Archaeological sites that may be designated or undesignated, may contain well preserved or in situ structures, buildings of historical significance, historic landscapes with a reasonably defined extent, or reasonable evidence of occupation/settlement or activities (ritual, industrial etc.). e.g. Grade II RPGs, Conservation Areas (CAs), Designated historic battlefields, Grade II LBs, burial grounds, protected heritage landscapes such as Ancient Woodland, heritage assets of regional or county importance.

Sensitivity	Designation of Asset
<b>Sub-regional / District (medium)</b>	Designated or undesignated archaeological sites with reasonable evidence of human activity. Assets may be of limited historic value but may contribute to district or local knowledge and/or research objectives. May contain structures or buildings of potential historic merit. e.g. Historic village settlements, associated historic field systems and boundaries, historic road systems.
<b>Local Area / Parish (Low)</b>	Heritage assets with a local level cultural or education value only e.g. Historic field systems and boundaries, agricultural features such as ridge and furrow, ephemeral archaeological evidence, artefacts of poor contextual stratigraphy.
<b>Very Low</b>	Historic assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest or stratigraphic integrity. Buildings and landscapes of no historical significance. e.g. Destroyed objects, buildings of no architectural merit, relatively modern landscape features or disturbances such as quarries, field boundaries, drains etc.
<b>Unknown</b>	Insufficient information exists to assess the importance. Sensitivity of below ground archaeological remains is often unknown until their nature and extent has been sufficiently determined through archaeological fieldwork.

## Magnitude of Impact

A.9.1.9. Impacts upon buried heritage assets can arise during the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development; they can be positive or negative; direct or indirect; irreversible (long term) or reversible (temporary); and/or cumulative. Impacts can affect the physical fabric of the asset or their setting. Direct physical impacts are considered permanent and result in the total, or partial loss of a buried heritage asset; these impacts are not reversible. Impacts arising from changes to setting are split between those resulting from construction activities, which can be temporary, or long-term, lasting for the duration of the operational Project but reversible upon decommissioning.

A.9.1.10. The level and degree of impact (magnitude of impact) will be assigned with reference to a five-point scale as set out in **Table 2**. The assessment of the magnitude of impact will be made in consideration of any design mitigation (embedded mitigation), when available at the time of the writing. If no embedded mitigations are proposed at the PEIR stage, a worst-case scenario has been applied whereby all remains will be entirely removed. This will be reviewed for the submission of the ES.

Table 2: Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude of Impact	Description
<b>High</b>	Change such that the Sensitivity of the heritage asset is totally altered or destroyed through physical impact or comprehensive alteration to its setting affecting its Sensitivity, seriously impeding the ability to understand and appreciate the asset.
<b>Medium</b>	Change such that the heritage Sensitivity of the asset is affected due to alterations to its physical form or noticeable change to its setting through alterations resulting in erosion in the ability to understand and appreciate the asset.
<b>Low</b>	Change such that the heritage Sensitivity of the asset is slightly affected through physical alteration to its physical form or slight change to its setting affecting the ability to understand and appreciate the asset.
<b>Very Low</b>	Changes that barely affect the Sensitivity of the asset or its setting, resulting in no real change in the ability to understand and appreciate the asset.
<b>No Change</b>	No alteration or change to the Sensitivity of the asset or its setting.

### Significance of Effect

- A.9.1.11. The overall effect on the asset, caused by the impact, is determined by consideration of the sensitivity of the asset (**Table 1**) and the magnitude of the impact (**Table 2**), with a level of professional judgement included in the determination (**Table 3**). This is identified by the degree of change that would be experienced by the asset and its setting if the Project were to be completed as compared with a 'do nothing' situation. Effects can be neutral, adverse, or beneficial.
- A.9.1.12. Residual major or moderate effects are deemed to be 'significant' for the purposes of the EIA Regulations, in accordance with standard EIA practice. Minor and negligible effects are deemed to be 'not significant.'

*Table 3: Significance of Effect*

Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change				No Change
	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	
<b>Very High</b>	Major	Major	Moderate	Moderate	Neutral
<b>High</b>	Major	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Neutral
<b>Medium</b>	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Low</b>	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Very Low</b>	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral

### Buried Heritage Potential

A.9.1.13. The potential for unknown buried heritage assets is assessed on known baseline evidence, but the physical nature and extent of any archaeological resource surviving within the Site cannot be fully confirmed without investigation. At this stage of the assessment, the potential is identified using professional judgement and knowledge, applying the information available in the baseline data. The Site's baseline potential is compared to the level of existing impact upon it, from modern and historic developments.

A.9.1.14. The potential for surviving buried heritage of various periods can be assigned a value in accordance with the criteria set out in **Table 4**.

*Table 4: Buried Heritage Surviving Potential*

Potential	Description of receptors
<b>High</b>	The available evidence suggests a high likelihood for past activity within the Order Limits and a strong potential for archaeological evidence to survive intact or reasonably intact.
<b>Moderate</b>	The available evidence suggests a reasonable likelihood for past activity within the Order Limits and a potential that archaeological evidence may survive although the nature and extent of survival is thought to be limited.
<b>Low</b>	The available evidence suggests archaeological evidence of activity is unlikely to survive within the Order Limits, although some minor land-use may have occurred.
<b>Uncertain</b>	Insufficient information to assess.



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