THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

The Droves Solar Farm

Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

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8 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

8.1 Introduction

8.1.0 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of effects on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology as a result of the Scheme.

8.1.1 This chapter identifies and proposes measures to address the potential impacts and likely significant effects on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.

8.1.2 The information presented within this chapter has been informed by the Scheme information provided in **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1]**.

8.1.3 The following aspects have been considered within the Cultural Heritage and Archaeology assessment process:

- An assessment of potential effects upon archaeological assets resulting from direct impact during the construction phase of the Scheme
- An assessment of potential effects upon archaeological assets during the operational phase of the Scheme
- An assessment of potential effects upon designated and non-designated heritage assets resulting from direct impact during the construction phase of the Scheme; and
- An assessment of potential effects upon designated and non-designated heritage assets due to changes in their settings during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.

8.1.4 Assessment of effects upon archaeological assets during the decommissioning phase has been scoped out as any impacts will occur during the construction and operational phases only.

8.1.5 This Cultural Heritage and Archaeology chapter has been prepared by GHC Archaeology & Heritage (See **ES Appendix 1.1: Statement of Competence [APP/6.4]**).

8.2 Consultation

Scoping Opinion

8.2.0 On 8 November 2024, the Applicant submitted a Scoping Opinion Request to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) (see **ES Appendix 2.1: EIA Scoping Opinion Request [APP/6.4]**) in support of a request for a Scoping Opinion from PINS on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS) pursuant to Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations.

8.2.1 A Scoping Opinion (see **ES Appendix 2.2: Scoping Opinion [APP/6.4]**) was adopted by PINS on 18 December 2024.

8.2.2 The issues raised in the Scoping Opinion relating to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology are summarised and responded to within **ES Appendix 8.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP/6.4]** which demonstrates how the matters raised in the Scoping Opinion are addressed in this ES.

Statutory Consultation and Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)

8.2.3 Statutory consultation was held between 21 May 2025 and 9 July 2025. Relevant responses to the PEIR relating to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology and how these have been addressed through the ES are set out within **ES Appendix 8.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP/6.4]**.

8.2.4 Further engagement has been undertaken as part of stakeholder engagement specific to Cultural Heritage, as detailed within **ES Appendix 8.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP/6.4].**

8.2.5 A further round of targeted consultation was undertaken between 3 September 2025 and 1 October 2025 following changes to the development boundary area of the Scheme presented in the PEIR and during Stage Two Statutory Consultation. Further detail regarding the targeted consultation is provided in **ES Chapter 1: Introduction [APP/6.1]**.

8.3 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

8.3.0 A summary of applicable legislation, planning policy and other guidance documents against which the Scheme will be considered relating to assessment of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology is set out in **ES Appendix 8.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP/6.4]**.

8.4 Assessment Assumptions and Limitations

8.4.0 The Cultural Heritage and Archaeology assessment has considered the following assumptions:

- Baseline information has been collated from **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]** and **ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments [APP/6.4]**, as well as the results of archaeological evaluation (**ES Appendix 8.5: Air Photo Services Report [APP/6.4]**, **ES Appendix 8.4: Geophysical Survey Report [APP/6.4]** and **ES Appendix 8.6: Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP/6.4]**). It is assumed that information provided by secondary sources (i.e. HER, PAS, NRHE, NHLE, cartographic information) and third parties is accurate.

- Assessment of impact has been undertaken with consideration to the concept masterplan and parameters detailed in **Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1].** A number of the detailed design aspects and features of the Scheme cannot be confirmed until the tendering process for the design and construction of the Scheme has been completed. Therefore, where assessment has been made on the significance of effects, this has been undertaken applying the Rochdale Envelope principle as described in **Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology** section 2.4; and
- The setting assessment assumes all solar infrastructure would be at the maximum possible height as set out in **Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1].**

8.4.1 The Cultural Heritage and Archaeology assessment has considered the following limitations:

- Whilst the extent and nature of piling for the metal frames upon which the PV panels will be mounted is reasonably well understood, and its impact is recognised as being extremely low (typically less than 0.5% of site area), the details of the amount and location of associated Cabling are not yet available. It is, however, recognised that during the construction and decommissioning phases of the Scheme, relatively low levels of below ground disturbance are expected, depending upon the exact layout and construction methods utilised (typically in the region of 5%-7% of site area).

8.5 Assessment Methodology

8.5.0 This section sets out the scope and methodology for the assessment of the impacts of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology.

Sources of Information

8.5.1 The following sources of information have been consulted in the preparation of this chapter:

- Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER)
- National Heritage List for England (NHLE)
- The BC and the KLWN websites for information on Conservation Areas
- Relevant and accessible archives along with online repositories for historical maps, LiDAR data, aerial photographs, plans and relevant documentary sources, including published and unpublished documentary sources
- The East of England Regional Research Framework (Ref 8-1)
- British Geological Survey borehole data
- Walkover surveys (undertaken in Summer 2024) undertaken in sunny, dry conditions to provide an assessment of the character of the Site and appraise the likely significant effects of the Scheme on heritage assets

- A geophysical survey was conducted across Summer and Autumn 2024 (Ref 8-2). The geophysical survey was undertaken to inform the initial appraisal of the Site. Several fields could not be surveyed at the time due to the presence of livestock, and it was subsequently agreed that the survey undertaken was sufficient to inform the next stage of evaluation (i.e. trial trenching) without the need for further geophysical survey of the Site.
- An assessment of aerial photographs, airborne remote sensing and satellite imagery data for archaeology (Ref 8-3); and
- Archaeological trial trench evaluation was undertaken in July and August 2025 (Ref 8-4).

Study Area

8.5.2 Good practice guidance does not suggest a specific radius for assessing the effects resulting from a proposed development on the historic environment, and therefore, professional judgement has been used.

8.5.3 It is common practice for a 1km search area to be employed in evidence to support planning applications. However, given the scale of the Scheme, a wider Study Area has been adopted in order to ensure a rigorous approach, with a wider area for higher grade assets which have a higher sensitivity. A flexible approach has been adopted for heritage assets located beyond these extents, where necessary, in consideration of their physical and historical relationships with other monuments and the wider landscape.

8.5.4 The Cultural Heritage Study Area extends to 5km from the Site for higher grade heritage assets (i.e. World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings); 2km for remaining designated heritage assets (i.e. Grade II listed buildings and Conservation Areas); and 1km for non-designated heritage assets and HER entries. As per the **ES Appendix 2.2: Scoping Opinion [APP/6.4]**, this includes a consideration of possible effects on heritage assets outside of the above radii indicated by models showing ZTVs, ground-truthed by walkover surveys.

Potential Impacts

8.5.5 Embedded mitigation measures being incorporated into the design and construction of the Scheme are set out in Section 8.7 below. Prior to the implementation of any mitigation (embedded or additional), the Scheme has the potential to have an effect on heritage receptors (beneficial or adverse), during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases in the following ways:

- Direct impacts upon below ground archaeological remains caused by groundwork during the construction phase resulting in their partial/total loss
- Direct impacts upon heritage assets beyond the Scheme boundary remains caused by traffic and piling vibration during the construction and decommissioning phases

- Beneficial impacts upon below ground archaeology by removing fields from agricultural use during the operational phase of the Scheme; and
- Indirect impacts on the significance of heritage assets brought about by changes to their setting and the way in which they draw significance from that setting during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.

Impact Assessment Methodology

8.5.6 The Cultural Heritage and Archaeology assessment follows the general approach to undertaking EIA, explained in **ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1]**, albeit it has been modified in order to encompass the full range of heritage assets, magnitude of impact and scale of effect, these informed by professional judgement. The methodology for attributing sensitivity of receptors, magnitude of effects and the significance of effects in relation to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology is described further below in this chapter of the ES.

Sensitivity of Receptor

8.5.7 The sensitivity of likely impacted receptors defined depending on the vulnerability, recoverability and value/importance of the receptor, to potential effects arising from the Scheme is assessed in line with the below, as detailed in Table 8.1. The value of a heritage asset (its heritage significance) is guided by its designated status but is derived also from its heritage interest which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic (NPPF Annex 2, Glossary). In EIA terms, this is defined as the receptor sensitivity, as detailed in Table 8.1.

8.5.8 Using professional judgement and the results of consultation, heritage assets are also assessed on an individual basis, and regional variations and individual qualities are taken into account, where applicable.

Table 8.1: Sensitivity Criteria of Identified Receptor

Sensitivity	Description
Very High (International)	World Heritage Sites
High (National)	Scheduled Monuments Grade I and II* Listed Buildings Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens Registered Battlefields Archaeological sites of schedulable quality and significance
Medium (Regional)	Grade II Listed Buildings Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens Conservation Areas Archaeological sites that can be shown to have demonstrable regional importance
Low (Local)	Locally listed buildings Archaeological sites that can be shown to have demonstrable local importance Assets where the significance is limited by poor preservation and poor survival of contextual associations
Negligible	Heritage assets with very little or no surviving research value. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor contextual association, or very common archaeological features/buildings of little or no value at local or other scale.

Magnitude of Impact

8.5.9 The categorisation of the magnitude of impact takes into account the following factors:

- Extent
- Duration
- Frequency; and
- Reversibility

8.5.10 Impacts can potentially be caused during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases and can be direct (affecting the physical fabric of a heritage asset) or indirect (affecting the significance of a heritage asset through the contribution made by its setting).

8.5.11 The magnitude of impact is the level of change caused by the Scheme and is defined in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Criteria for Determining Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude of Impact	Description
High	Adverse: Total or substantial loss of the significance of a heritage asset. Substantial harm to a heritage asset's setting, such that the significance of the asset would be totally lost or substantially reduced (e.g. the significance of a designated heritage asset would be reduced to such a degree that its designation would be questionable or the significance of a non-designated heritage asset would be reduced to such a degree that its categorisation as a heritage asset would be questionable.
	Beneficial: Restoration of a heritage asset that is at risk of complete loss or an element of its setting that makes a substantial contribution to significance.
Medium	Adverse: Partial loss or alteration of the significance of a heritage asset. Considerable harm to a heritage asset's setting, such that the asset's significance would be materially affected/considerably devalued, but not totally or substantially lost. This equates to less than substantial harm in terms of the NPSs EN-1 and EN-3.
	Beneficial: Preservation of a heritage asset that is in a deteriorating condition or an element of its setting that makes a contribution to significance. Reintroduction of public access to an asset to better reveal its significance.
Low	Adverse: Slight loss of the significance of a heritage asset. This could include the removal of fabric that forms part of the heritage asset, but that is not integral to its significance (e.g. the demolition of later extensions/additions of little intrinsic value). Some harm to the heritage asset's setting, but not to a degree that it would materially compromise the significance of the heritage asset. Perceivable level of harm, but insubstantial relative to the overall interest of the heritage asset.
	Beneficial:

	Suspension of an activity that is causing harm to an asset. Increase of understanding about the significance of an asset e.g. information board.
Negligible	Adverse: A very slight change to a heritage asset. This could include a change to a part of a heritage asset that does not materially contribute to its significance. Very minor change to a heritage asset's setting such that there is a slight impact but not materially affecting the heritage asset's significance.
	Beneficial: Very slight improvement to a heritage asset or minor improvement to its setting that results in no material change to its significance

Categorising Scale of Effect

8.5.12 The scale of effect that the Scheme may have on an impacted receptor will be influenced by a combination of the sensitivity of the identified receptor and the magnitude of impact.

8.5.13 There are four categories demonstrating the scale of effect:

- Neutral (i.e. no or inconsequential change)
- Minor
- Moderate; and
- Major.

8.5.14 The term Neutral has been used for the lowest scale of effect in this chapter as opposed to Negligible, which has been used in other chapters. This is based on professional judgement and the reasoning that a Negligible impact is so small as to be inconsequential/not worth of consideration meaning that the end effect is effectively no change, or Neutral.

Table 8.3: Scale of Effect

Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Neutral
Medium	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Neutral
Low	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Neutral
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

8.5.15 The nature of effects will be defined as either beneficial or adverse.

Determining Significance of Effect

8.5.16 The matrix is not intended to 'mechanise' judgement of the significance of effect but acts as a check to ensure that judgements regarding value, magnitude of impact and scale of effect are reasonable and balanced in order to allow for professional judgement.

8.5.17 In some cases, the matrix allows a choice of significance of effect when a magnitude of impact and a value are combined. In these cases, the individual attributes of a specific asset, along with any relevant site-specific factors and consideration of other influencing elements, have been considered, based on which is the most appropriate significance of effect to apply. There may also be situations where the tabulated nature of the matrix presents a restriction on the assessment of the effect, for example where professional judgement suggests an impact falls between categories.

8.5.18 Based on professional judgement, a 'significant' effect in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is considered to be one of Moderate or above scale.

8.6 Baseline Conditions

The Order limits

8.6.0 The Scheme is located within the administrative areas of Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Breckland Council (BC) who are the host authorities. A full description of the Order limits is provided in **ES Chapter 3: Order limits and Context [APP/6.1]**.

Existing Baseline

8.6.1 The following baseline information has been collated from **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, **ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment [APP/6.4]**, **ES Appendix 8.4: Geophysical Survey** Report **[APP/6.4]**, **ES Appendix 8.5: Air Photo Services Report [APP/6.4]** and the results of **ES Appendix 8.6: Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP/6.4]**.

8.6.2 It should be noted that the red line boundary for the Site shown in **ES Appendix 8.4: Geophysical Survey Report [APP/6.4]** and **ES Appendix 8.5: Air Photo Services Report [APP/6.4]** differ from the Order limits. These surveys were undertaken at an earlier stage in the process based on an initial boundary that has been subject to change. The surveys have, however, covered the areas of the Site proposed for Solar PV Arrays, Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS. The surveys do not cover the areas for skylark and curlew mitigation as these will not be subject to below ground disturbance. Whilst the temporary working areas for Grid Connection Infrastructure may see some below ground disturbance, it has been agreed with NHES that any further archaeological investigation of these areas could be secured post consent as detailed in the Archaeological Mitigation Strategy.

Designated Heritage Assets

8.6.3 Chapter 8 of the PEIR outlined that no impacts were identified to numerous heritage assets within both the 5km and 2km Study Areas surrounding the Site. Responses to the PEIR provided by statutory consultees agreed that the fifteen designated heritage assets identified in the PEIR as sensitive are those that require consideration within the Cultural Heritage and Archaeology assessment presented here with other designated heritage assets being 'scoped out' of assessment within this ES Chapter.

Castle Acre Castle

8.6.4 Castle Acre Castle (Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1017909) with Grade I Listed elements (NHLE 1171480)) is located c.900m to the north-east of the Site. It is considered to be of High Sensitivity due to it being a relatively well-preserved example of a Shell Keep castle. Where surviving, these monuments hold all three heritage interests: archaeological interest for their potential to yield evidence of past human activities; architectural interest as both great feats of engineering and places of high aesthetic value; and historical interest in their nature as physical remnants of key historic events. Castle Acre Castle is also significant in its association with the de Warenne family, who were heavily involved in the Conquest of 1066 and continued to be prominent local figures in the centuries following.

8.6.5 The immediate setting of the Scheduled Monument is defined by Castle Acre village. Although a settlement existed at this location from at least the Roman period, the current formation of Castle Acre largely follows that of the planned Norman town dating to the 12th century, when William de Warenne's country house (built c.1070) was converted into a defensible castle. It was at this time that the town itself was laid out in the precinct of the castle, broadly following a grid between this monument to the east and the priory,

positioned a short distance to the west. This layout has been largely preserved within the current settlement despite several subsequent periods of development and expansion, particularly throughout the 16th and 19th centuries.

8.6.6 In its current form, the village, which is designated as a Conservation Area, has retained a great deal of historic character informed both by the way the village fabric follows the bounds of the 12th century castle precinct and how it is bracketed by two impressive medieval structures (the castle and priory). Moreover, the character of the village is greatly enhanced by the antiquity of its aesthetic nature drawn from historic cottages, narrow streets, sunken lanes and village greens, all interspersed with mature planting. Castle Acre Castle is set at the village limits and is partially screened from the settlement itself by mature trees planted to the west of the motte, but there are several views afforded that demonstrate the connection between the monument and this important element of its setting.

8.6.7 The physical positioning of Castle Acre Castle and the Priory at each end of the historic settlement core is another key element of both heritage asset's setting. Both scheduled monuments were built in the c.12th century by the de Warenne family and their relative sitings may have been partially due to the visual connection between the two, which has been preserved despite later expansion and development within the former Norman town limits. These views form a key aspect of the setting of the monument and the appreciation of its significance. There are also views afforded of the medieval Church of St James, a Grade I listed building situated between the castle and priory, which although not contemporary in origin is a key part of the medieval settlement that contributes to the historic character of the setting of both monuments.

8.6.8 Castle Acre and its castle are situated in an east to west orientated valley. The wider setting of the village and the monument is decidedly agricultural in character, with small pastures occupying much of the immediate environs and larger arable fields encompassing the more distant, higher ground. The slightly elevated position of the castle at the eastern extent of the settlement allows the monument to maintain a prominent position within the village, allowing for long-reaching views of these agricultural surroundings. The topography of the valley in which Castle Acre is nestled directs views to the east and west in particular, with later buildings and mature trees further channelling these outlooks. The situation of Castle Acre Castle at this highly defensible elevated position is a key aspect of the strategy behind its intentional design and views illustrating this have remained largely uninterrupted. These elements provide a key contribution to the setting of the heritage asset and aids in the understanding and appreciation of the monument's significance.

8.6.9 The setting of Castle Acre Castle on a slightly elevated position at the eastern extent of Castle Acre settlement, with a clear visual connection with medieval structures surviving within the village as well as the surrounding countryside, serves as a visual representation behind some of the reasonings behind the castle's intentional design and siting at this location and aids the aesthetic value of the monument. In these ways, the setting provides some contribution to its significance. However, as a relatively rare example of a surviving

Shell Keep castle of 12th century date, connected with several notable medieval events and persons, the castle would still hold a high level of significance if removed from this setting.

8.6.10 The Site is situated to the south of Castle Acre Castle and forms part of the largely arable landscape occupying the distant, higher ground to the south of the monument and the village. These agricultural surroundings form part of the wider setting of the monument, but it is the topography that largely serves as an illustration of part of the reasoning behind the castle's siting in this location, being a highly defensible position with wide-reaching views across the valley.

8.6.11 The majority of the Site is visually isolated from the castle by topography, extensive mature plantations and hedged boundaries between the two. Due to this, there is very little intervisibility between Castle Acre Castle and the study site at ground level. Only three fields out of the total 34 that encompass the Site are visible from the castle and vice versa (see **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 2 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 8). All three are located at a considerable distance from the monument and make up a very small section of the wider vista available from the castle. They are not located within any of the key views to or from the castle, which are particularly directed to the east and west, which contribute to or demonstrate its significance. Indeed, views towards the Site from the castle are already scattered with wind turbines, pylons, large silos and pig farms, all of which have had a negligible influence on the castle's significance or ability to appreciate said significance.

Castle Acre Priory

8.6.12 Castle Acre Priory (Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1015870) with Grade I Listed elements (NHLE 1342389)) (located c.490m north of the Site) is also considered to be of High Sensitivity, vested in its architectural interest as a building with impressive appearance and scale, which is a factor of its intentional design as a collection of buildings with undeniably high aesthetic value; historic interest as a medieval priory and in its association with the de Warenne family; and archaeological interest in the surviving below ground elements that have the potential to further elucidate our understanding of this monument.

8.6.13 Castle Acre priory was founded in c.1090 by the second Earl of Surrey nearby to his father's country lodge, built in c.1070 to the east. The latter was converted in the 12th century into a fortified castle, at which time the priory itself was considerably extended. The two structures have been intangibly linked from their shared founding by the de Warenne family in the 11th century throughout their subsequent development to the present day, and their retained physical and visual connection remains an important element of both monuments' setting.

8.6.14 Sprawling between the priory and the castle is the village of Castle Acre, which comprises the immediate setting of the heritage asset. The village in its current form largely follows the streetscape of the Norman town that was set out in a grid between the priory to the west and castle to the east. There is great historic character apparent in the settlement, conveyed through the narrow streets, sunken lanes, village greens and multitude of

historic buildings including numerous listed cottages and the three prominent medieval structures of the priory, castle and Church of St James.

8.6.15 The wider landscape surrounding the priory is predominantly agricultural in character, with smaller areas of pasture in the foreground and larger arable fields on the more distant higher ground visible to the east, north and south. Views are particularly channelled along an east to west valley in which the priory and village are sited. The priory was designed as a visually impressive, intricate and imposing series of structures highly visible within this wider setting, with long-reaching views afforded of the buildings from much of the surrounding landscape.

8.6.16 The priory buildings are situated alongside the River Nar, which presumably was a crucial element of the reasoning behind its siting in this location. The connection with the river has been maintained and forms another important part of its setting.

8.6.17 The Site is situated at some distance to the south of the priory and shares very minimal intervisibility (**ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 9). It is a small part of the agricultural surroundings of Castle Acre Priory that forms part of its wider setting. The majority of the Site is shielded behind dense tall planting and topography that restricts, and in most places totally obscures, any views from the priory and vice versa. However, there are limited views between the priory and Fields 35, 36 and 38, and heavily filtered views of Fields 12, 13 and 25 and 21 of the Site from the northern part of the priory (though not from the principal buildings of the priory closer to the valley bottom). The visibility of small parts of the Site from the priory merely form a small part of much wider vistas and do not contain any distinguishing features that could be said to add to the significance of the monument.

Church of St George

8.6.18 The Church of St George (NHLE 1306357) (c.165m north of the Site) is a Grade I Listed Buildings considered to be of High Sensitivity as a as much restored church of medieval origin.

8.6.19 The significance of the Church of St George is largely vested in its architectural, archaeological and historic interest as a much-restored church of medieval origin. It features a range of architectural styles although it is primarily of a Gothic style with later Perpendicular additions and is built in the local vernacular style of flint construction with ashlar dressings. The Church of St George is an aesthetically pleasing building in its scale, form and traditional materials set within the green space of its historic plot, which also provides a contribution to its architectural interest.

8.6.20 Churches often hold archaeological interest, and the Church of St George is no exception to this. The building fabric is an amalgamation of numerous periods of expansion and renovation from the 12th to 20th centuries and it is clear that there is substantial potential for earlier elements to be preserved within later constructions. The church and its fabric therefore holds potential to reveal information about earlier building elements as well as the significant potential held within its surrounding burial ground.

8.6.21 To a lesser extent, the church can also be said to hold historic interest vested in its origins in the 12th century, meaning it has served as a continuous place of worship for over 800 years. Over the course of its use, the church has provided a focal point for the community of the parish and remains an active element of this.

8.6.22 Both the church and the village in which it is sited are positioned within a valley orientated east to west with the River Nar situated to the north, dividing this parish from that of Castle Acre. Surrounding the church along the valley to the east and west, and on higher ground to the south is widespread agricultural land mostly comprising broad arable fields, substantial pig farms and smaller areas for pasture.

8.6.23 The most notable views of the church itself are largely derived from within the church grounds and from the main road that runs through the village of South Acre. Views from the latter tend to be channelled, partial or filtered by the dense mature planting prolific throughout the villagescape, although views of the church from the churchyard itself are largely unobscured. The building is set towards the centre of the historic plot which does limit to some extent views of all parts of the building but the tower from the surrounding area. Beyond this, views towards the church tower from outside of the village are generally very limited and where available, the church tower predominantly sits back within views amongst the considerable planting along its borders and throughout its environs. It is a small constituent part of the wider landscape.

Church of St James

8.6.24 The Church of St James (NHLE 1342386) (c.930m north-east of the Site) is a Grade I Listed Buildings considered to be of high sensitivity as a much restored church of medieval origin.

8.6.25 The Church of St James is designated as a Grade I Listed building in recognition of its high significance, drawn from its historic, architectural and archaeological interests. As a church of medieval origins that has undergone numerous periods of expansion and renovation in the subsequent centuries, the Church of St James holds architectural interest as it serves as an example of an amalgamation of different periods and styles preserved within its form. It was founded in the 12th century and surviving elements dating to this period are of particularly interest in that they offer insights into early church design in the region, specifically the rise of Norman ecclesiastical architecture in England. The church underwent significant modifications in the 14th and 15th centuries resulting in an impressive tower, wide nave with tall aisles and the installation of the grand east window all reflecting the shift in architectural fashions towards vertical and light-filled designs during this period. Churches are structures of prominent archaeological interest as buildings that hold preserved earlier fabric within later constructions and the Church of St James is no exception to this.

8.6.26 The grand scale of the building combined with its aesthetically pleasing appearance preserves the Church of St James as a prominent feature of Castle Acre and its Conservation Area, the first to be established in Norfolk encompassing the historic core of the 12th century town. The close proximity of the church to the castle and priory of Castle

Acre, which are situated to the east and west of St James respectively, collectively convey the historic importance of the settlement.

8.6.27 The Site is situated to the south of the Church of St James and forms a part of the wider countryside environs that form its setting. The majority of the Site is entirely screened from the church by the topography of the local landscape and numerous plantations scattered amongst the arable fields. Views are afforded of the church tower from a single field of the Site. The visibility analysis (**ES Appendix 8.2: Setting Assessment**, Figure 13 **[APP/6.4]**) indicated the potential for partial, heavily filtered views across the eastern part of the Site, however, site visits undertaken in June and October 2024 did not identify any visibility of the Site from the church. Given the distance involved, the lack of any historic connections and the very limited potential visibility the Site is not considered to make any appreciable contribution to the significance of the monument.

Church of All Saints

8.6.28 The Church of All Saints (NHLE 1077266) (c.1.9km north-east of the Site) is a Grade I Listed Buildings considered to be of High Sensitivity as a as much restored church of medieval origin.

8.6.29 The significance of All Saints Church is vested in its architectural, historical and archaeological interest as a much-altered ecclesiastical building with medieval origins. It is a good example of the regional architectural style of churches, being built of flint with limestone dressings, much like the other churches described above.

8.6.30 The Church of All Saints is situated in the small hamlet of Newton, one of many such settlements located on the main route between Swaffham to the south and Fakenham to the north. It is positioned within a small historic plot, enclosed on all sides by tall mature trees. To the north of the church is the double moated site of a medieval manor (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1019668). To the south is the settlement itself, largely comprising a small number of residential dwellings and a historic pub. The wider setting of the listed building is decidedly rural in character and comprises large arable fields intersperse with small plantations extending to all sides of the hamlet.

8.6.31 The Site is located at a considerable distance from the Church of All Saints and does not share any historic connection with the listed building. The theoretical visibility model suggests that there may be limited, heavily filtered intervisibility with Fields 14 and 25, however, site visits undertaken in June and October 2024 did not identify any shared intervisibility between the two and the Site is not considered to make any contribution to the significance of the church.

High House and High House Stable Court and Curtain Wall

8.6.32 High House (NHLE 1305453) and High House Stable Court and Curtain Wall Attached at East of High House (NHLE 1342411), both Grade I listed buildings and of High Sensitivity principally derive their significance from their architectural interest as notable examples of 18th and 19th century Greek Revival architecture, with features including a unique piano

nobile arrangement. There is further historical interest in the connection with W. J Donthorn, a notable 19th century architect born in Swaffham. The important elements of their setting are linked to their interrelationship and the parkland setting within which they are situated.

8.6.33 The Site is located approximately 5km south of the listed buildings and there is no shared historic connection between the two. No intervisibility was observed during site visits to the Site and the High House estate in June and October 2024, despite visibility analysis models indicating the theoretical possibility of heavily filtered views. Given the distances involved, the lack of any historic associations and the extremely limited nature of any potential visibility the Site is not considered to make any contribution to the significance of High House.

Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church

8.6.34 Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church, a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1019668) is of High Sensitivity hold significance in its archaeological interest as a medieval moated site, with significant potential for evidence to be present that could shed light on settlement activity here during the medieval period. The historical relationship between the two moated sites and the Grade I Listed All Saints Church also confers historic interest, as it displays the closely related secular and ecclesiastical power structures of the medieval period.

8.6.35 The Site is located at a considerable distance from the scheduled monument (over 2km) and does not share any historic connection with the moated sites. The theoretical visibility model suggests that there may be limited, heavily filtered visibility of Fields 14 and 25 from the monument, however, site visits undertaken in June and October 2024 did not identify any shared intervisibility between the two. The Site is, therefore, not considered to make any appreciable contribution to the significance of these monuments.

Deserted Medieval Village of Great Palgrave

8.6.36 Deserted Medieval Village of Great Palgrave (NHLE 1002894) is a Scheduled Monument of High Sensitivity whose significance is derived from its archaeological interest as a shrunken medieval village. Extensive field walking and metal detecting have demonstrated the Site's potential to reveal evidence of past occupation across the scheduled area.

8.6.37 The Site is situated c.830m to the west of the scheduled monument. The visibility analysis indicated the potential for partial, heavily filtered views across the eastern part of the Site, however, site visits undertaken in June and October 2024 established that a plantation combined with the topography of the area restricted intervisibility between the two and no views were identified that could impinge on the heritage asset. Given the distance involved, the lack of any historic connections and the very limited potential visibility the Site is not considered to make any appreciable contribution to the significance of the monument.

Little Palgrave Hall

8.6.38 Little Palgrave Hall (a Grade II listed building (NHLE 1169833) (c.1.3km east of the Site) is of medium sensitivity and appears to have been designed along utilitarian lines, although the combination of its 17th century form with the later 18th to 19th century façade have made it an aesthetically pleasing and elegant country house. Externally, it is a good example of the rural vernacular architectural style of the local area, which informs its significance. It is positioned within the Norfolk countryside and much of the topography of this area comprises gently undulating fields, with Little Palgrave Hall positioned at a high point in the landscape. This rural setting serves to enhance the agricultural nature of the listed farmhouse and enhance its traditional character.

8.6.39 The Site forms part of the wide-reaching agricultural land to the west of Little Palgrave Hall and as such forms a small (and distant) part of its setting. As the historic farmhouse is a residential property, its grounds have been laid out to afford the building a degree of privacy with the mature planting visually isolating it from all but its associated historic barns to the north. Due to this, there is no intervisibility between the Site and Little Palgrave Hall.

Narford Hall Park

8.6.40 Narford Hall (Grade II Registered Park and Garden (NHLE 1000337) (c.400m west of the Site) is an asset of medium sensitivity. It holds significance in its illustration of early landscape design and association with the renowned 18th century architect, Colen Campbell, a pioneering figure in the establishment of Georgian design. The current layout of the registered park predominantly represents its transition to a landscape park in the 18th and 19th centuries and remains a good illustration of the changing fashions of the period in the shift towards a more naturalistic, romantic aesthetic. This interest is furthered by its physical and historic association with the Grade I listed Narford Hall, a 17th century grand country residence (c.1.5km north-west of the Site and not considered sensitive to development within the Site). The enclosed nature of the park's borders combined with the relatively level topography greatly restrict views from and to this heritage asset and where afforded, these tend to be short, channelled views of particular elements of the listed building and its park. The surrounding landscape of Narford Hall park comprises agricultural land predominantly used for arable farming.

Castle Acre Conservation Area

8.6.41 Castle Acre Conservation Area (c.450m north-east of the Site) is an asset of medium sensitivity.

8.6.42 There is significant archaeological interest inherent in the village. Although a settlement is known to have existed here from at least the Roman period, it is Castle Acre's medieval phase from which this archaeological interest is principally drawn. It is nationally recognised for the importance of the two ruinous medieval complexes that bookend the settlement (the castle and the priory) both of which greatly contribute to the archaeological interest of Castle Acre.

8.6.43 The significance of the Conservation Area is also vested in its historic interest, particularly in the historic association between Castle Acre and the de Warenne family, who were the first Earls of Surrey. William de Warenne, an advisor of William the Conqueror who not only helped to plan the conquest but is known to have present at the Battle of Hastings, was responsible for the first iteration of the castle, which in the 11th century was a lightly defended house. William's immediate descendants were responsible for the construction of the priory and later, the conversion of the castle into a shell keep and the setting out of the medieval town between the two.

8.6.44 The setting of Castle Acre is predominantly agricultural in character, with large arable fields spreading into the distant landscape beyond the village, and smaller areas of pasture fields immediately adjacent. Castle Acre is prominent in this landscape and has a clear skyline, particularly of the castle, priory and St James church, visible from this wide-reaching rural landscape beyond the village limits.

8.6.45 The Site is situated to the south-west of the Conservation Area and forms part of the larger arable fields in the distant higher ground forming part of the Conservation Area's wider setting. There are some views between the Conservation Area, particularly from the prominent structures of the village's skyline including the priory, castle and St James church, and the north-western most fields of the Site. However, these views tend to be partial, filtered or oblique.

South Acre Conservation Area

8.6.46 South Acre Conservation Area (immediately north of the Site) is an asset of medium sensitivity.

8.6.47 The significance of South Acre Conservation Area is predominantly vested in its architectural interest, and specifically the group of historic buildings that comprise the village centre. These include the Grade I Listed Church of St George and the Grade II Listed South Acre Hall, amongst a small collection of historic farmhouses and agricultural buildings. The level of preservation of historic fabric at the centre of South Acre combined with the very low proportion of modern construction has allowed it to retain a great sense of comprehensiveness despite much of the village having all but disappeared over the course of the post-medieval and modern periods.

8.6.48 South Acre is situated in the Nar Valley, a prominent east to west aligned valley that slopes steeply on the northern side towards the river, which Nar itself, which is situated c.480m north of the village. The historic settlement core, clustered around the Church of St George, is nestled into the valley and, with the numerous matures trees and hedgerows throughout the settlement, sits harmoniously in the landscape with only the church tower visible from the surrounding area.

8.6.49 South Acre is a rural settlement, and its environs are dominated by farmland, mostly arable with some smaller areas of pasture. There are frequent plantations of varying sizes interspersed between these fields and many of the boundaries are formed of mature tree

lines and hedgerows. This countryside location forms the setting of the village and emphasises its rural, traditional character.

8.6.50 The Site is situated to the south of South Acre Conservation Area and comprises part of the wider countryside that forms the village's setting. Views between the Site and South Acre Conservation Area are largely obscured by the southern slope of the valley in which South Acre is sited alongside the frequent mature planting between the two. Due to this, views of the northernmost fields of the Site (35, 36, 37 & 38) are afforded from the very southern limit of the Conservation Area to the south of the Church of St George.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

8.6.51 In accordance with Planning Practice Guidance (2021) (Ref 8-5) and Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, HE Advice Note 7 (Ref 8-6), non-designated heritage assets can only be identified by planning bodies when they justifiably have a degree of heritage significance and their status as non-designated heritage assets is made clear through their inclusion in local heritage lists, local & neighbourhood plans, Conservation Area appraisals and decision making on planning applications.

8.6.52 Consultation undertaken on the Scheme, including the Scoping Opinion and PEIR responses, has elucidated that both Historic England and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk consider that the inclusion of a monument within the Norfolk Historic Environment Record is generally sufficient to classify it as a non-designated heritage asset. However, not all HER records are non-designated heritage assets; but rather are often an indication of archaeological potential. For example, the HER records cropmarks that may or may not be archaeological, isolated findspots where the artefact itself is no longer in situ, areas where archaeological remains are known to have existed but have since been destroyed and even areas of negative evidence (i.e. no archaeology found). It is, therefore, clear that not every entry in a HER can be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. Given the consultation responses, for the purposes of this report archaeological remains (both those identified by the HER and those identified by archaeological fieldwork undertaken to inform this study) are considered as potential non-designated heritage assets.

Historic landscape

8.6.53 The Brecks National Character Area (NCA), also known as Breckland, lies at the heart of East Anglia, occupying much of south-western Norfolk and north-western Suffolk, together with a small part of north-eastern Cambridgeshire. The Site largely comprises fields with irregular or piecemeal 18th to 19th century enclosure as classified by the historic landscape characterisation (HLC). The remaining Fields 22, 23, 26, 27 and 29 are characterised by the HLC as 20th century agriculture; whilst Fields 14 and 18 are classified as post-20th century boundary loss. Historic map regression has shown that the amount of tree planting within and immediately surrounding the Site has steadily increased through the 19th and early 20th centuries (with very little being present in the late 18th century).

Buildings

8.6.54 The only building within the Site which is potentially considered a non-designated heritage asset is a concrete bunker that is associated with a World War II bombing decoy (HER MNF29538). This asset is considered to be of low sensitivity.

8.6.55 There are no non-designated built heritage assets beyond the Site that are identified by BC that could be considered sensitive to the Scheme. Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Council have identified a number of built heritage assets within Castle Acre, however, none of these share any visual or historic connectivity with the Site and are, therefore, not considered sensitive to the Scheme.

Archaeological and Historical Context of the Site and the Study Area

8.6.56 The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) contains 145 records within a 1km search area, consisting of 136 'monuments' and nine 'events'. The details of all HER records are listed in a gazetteer in **ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment [APP/6.4]** and locations within the Study Area are illustrated within this appendix as Figures 4 to 6.

8.6.57 Limited prehistoric activity has been recorded within the Site, most notably relating to three concentrations of 'pot-boilers' thought to represent burnt mounds situated in a cluster towards its centre (within Fields 16 and 23 of the Site, see Field Numbering of Site boundary at **ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 1). Burnt mounds are prehistoric monuments relatively common across the UK and Ireland and are usually represented by spreads of stones that have been fractured from intense and repeated exposure to fire, commonly found associated with large vats or troughs where water would have been heated. These monuments are generally artefact poor, but radiocarbon dating indicates that they were formed in the Neolithic to Iron Age periods, with the majority dating to the Bronze Age. Interpretations of burnt mounds are numerous and include brewing or cooking, sweat lodges or saunas and industrial processing.

8.6.58 There are several HER entries relating to prehistoric findspots primarily recovered during metal-detecting and fieldwalking within and in the immediate environs of the Site, including pottery, lithics and metal items dating from the Neolithic to the Iron Age. Of note is a hoard of four Bronze Age copper alloy rivetted rapier blades, recovered in 1939 at the southern boundary of the Site. However, it is possible that the recorded location of this hoard is inaccurate, and may have been identified further south, within Swaffham Parish.

8.6.59 Across the wider 1km Study Area, there are scattered Prehistoric finds and features dating from the Palaeolithic to the Iron Age, with a large proportion relating to Bronze Age activity including up to ten barrows.

8.6.60 The projected route of the Fen Causeway, a potentially Roman road thought to have prehistoric origins (although this has recently been called into question), is recorded by the HER as extending into the western part of the Site followed by the current route of

Fincham Drove. A second Roman road, the Peddars Way, is purported to extend c.1km to the east of the Site on a perpendicular alignment (orientated north-west to south-east) to the Fen Causeway.

8.6.61 Early medieval artefacts have been recovered during fieldwalking and metal-detecting within the Site itself and throughout the 1km Study Area. The most extensive evidence of early medieval activity relates to a cemetery c.1km north of the Site situated within a Bronze Age barrow. Excavations prior to gravel extraction identified that it was re-used as a burial ground for a considerable time throughout the Saxon period and may have been used to inter the remains of executed criminals or others who were denied more formal Christian burial elsewhere. A second early medieval inhumation cemetery may be located c.1km north-east of the Site, where metal-detecting recovered a notable group of Early Saxon finds from a relatively small area, including brooch fragments, a strap fitting, wrist clasp, copper alloy rings and the copper alloy handle from a stave-built bucket (MNF69676).

8.6.62 Around the time of the Conquest (AD 1066), the Site would have been situated in the hinterland between several settlements, all of which would presumably have been established either by the Late Saxon period or very soon following the invasion, including Swaffham to the south, Palgrave to the east and Castle Acre, South Acre, Custhorpe and Narford to the north. Further, there are several known deserted medieval villages (DMV) in the surrounding area. Of most interest is Stow DMV which incorporates the site of St Guthlac's Chapel, located c.180m from the southern boundary of the Site. The Site does not appear to have been heavily utilised in this period, although the HER records a small number of findspots recovered from within its boundaries. Post-medieval activity from the Site itself is similarly sparse.

8.6.63 In the 20th century, the Site was used as the location for a World War Two bombing decoy designed to divert enemy bombers away from the real airfield, situated at Marham c.7.5km to the west. No evidence of this monument survives at surface level, but the HER entry records that the Site's bunker remains, which is currently in a very overgrown state and inaccessible.

Geophysical Survey Results

8.6.64 The report on a geophysical survey (magnetometry) of the Site, undertaken in Autumn 2024 is included as **ES Appendix 8.4: Geophysical Survey** Report **[APP/6.4]**. The only anomalies correlating with the locations of potential burnt mounds within the Site were identified by the geophysical survey were identified within the southern part of field 23. Several other anomalies present that may be representative of other Prehistoric activity. A double ring-ditched feature positioned within a square enclosure was identified in field 15, which could be morphologically consistent with a Bronze Age date, although further evidence would be required to confirm this. A large polygonal enclosure identified to the north of Fincham Drove within field 9 is also of likely prehistoric date and potentially dates to the Bronze Age or Iron Age. There were also several anomalies identified in Fields 8, 9, 10, 15, 18, 23, 27 and 32 that could potentially relate to Iron Age and/or Roman activity representing settlement and stock enclosures.

8.6.65 The purported route of the Fen Causeway (followed by Fincham Drove) crosses the Site and the geophysical survey identified a possible area of activity to the north (Field 9) closely aligned to the droveway. However, enclosures which could be Roman in origin (on morphological grounds) further to the east within Fields 15 and 23 do not align with the droveway and there is no indication of any continuation of the droveway (or earlier track/road) to the east of where the current drove turns to the north. The purported date of this feature as Roman has, therefore, been called into question, and these features hold substantial potential to elucidate this.

8.6.66 No anomalies of clearly medieval origin have been identified by the geophysical survey undertaken so far and there is no evidence to suggest that the Site contains any particularly intensive activity during this period.

Aerial Photography Assessment

8.6.67 An assessment of airborne remote sensing and satellite imagery data was carried out in December 2024 (**ES Appendix 8.5: Air Photo Services Report [APP/6.4]**) to inform this baseline for assessment. However, very few traces of buried archaeological features were recorded by the survey, and there were no visible microtopographic features beyond residual small chalk and gravel pits. An undated ditch and two ditched enclosures, shown in greater detail as anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, were recorded. As with the geophysical survey, no evidence was present of the prehistoric burnt mounds and World War II bombing decoy recorded by the HER as within the Site. There was further no evidence for medieval ploughing.

Archaeological Trial Trenching

8.6.68 A programme of archaeological trial trenching outlined in **ES Appendix 8.6: Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP/6.4]**, agreed with the Historic Environment Officer at Norfolk County Council was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology between the 13 July and 29 August 2025. The evaluation comprised the excavation of 109 trenches, designed to target anomalies identified by the geophysical survey. Archaeological remains were identified in 73 of the trenches, dating between the prehistoric and Romano-British periods.

Field 6

8.6.69 A single trench was excavated in this field targeting a possible enclosure. This was not present but two pits were recorded that produced a small quantity of prehistoric (likely Iron Age) pottery.

Field 8

8.6.70 A single trench was excavated within Field 8 to examine a potential sub-square enclosure surrounding a ring ditch that had been tentatively identified by the geophysical survey. No archaeological features were found.

Field 9

8.6.71 A total of 27 of the 29 trenches excavated in this field contained archaeological remains. These mostly comprised numerous enclosure and boundary ditches, the layout of which combined with the distribution of finds recovered suggests a phased settlement with associated stock enclosures. The earliest phase is Late Iron Age to Early Roman in date and is represented by a polygonal enclosure that appears to be cut by Fincham Drove. The settlement appears to have been reorganised in the Romano-British period with a rectilinear arrangement of enclosure ditches to the west respecting the layout of Fincham Drove, indicating that it may well be a Roman road as recorded by the HER. Finds from the latter phase of enclosure ditches included almost 6kg of pottery, small quantities of fired clay and ceramic building material and five iron artefacts, one piece provisionally identified as the arm of a Roman steelyard.

Field 10

8.6.72 Three trenches were excavated within Field 10 to examine a potential sub-square enclosure and ring ditch that had been tentatively identified by the geophysical survey. No archaeological features were found.

Field 11

8.6.73 Four trenches were excavated within Field 11 to examine a series of potential linear features that had been tentatively identified by the geophysical survey. No archaeological features were found.

Field 13

8.6.74 Two trenches were excavated in this field, targeting linear anomalies detected by the geophysical survey. Only one of these anomalies corresponded with a ditch revealed by the trenching and produced a single small sherd of prehistoric pottery. In addition to this ditch. a small pit in the same trench contained a large deposit of Late Bronze Age pottery.

Field 14

8.6.75 One trench was excavated in this field, targeting a linear anomaly detected by the geophysical survey (which continued into Field 28). No archaeological features were found.

Field 15

8.6.76 Archaeological remains were present in 11 of the 17 trenches excavated within this field, broadly relating to the continuation of the Iron Age field system identified in Field 9 on the opposite side of Fincham Drove together with a large rectilinear enclosure of putative prehistoric date. A small nearby pit contained a near-complete pottery vessel provisionally dated to the Middle Bronze Age. The lack of Roman finds in this field indicates that activity

here may have predated the major phases of Roman activity identified to the west in Field 9.

8.6.77 Trenches targeted on a circular ring ditch like anomaly detected by the geophysics in the interior of the enclosure failed to reveal any sub-surface traces of this feature.

Field 16

8.6.78 One trench was excavated in this field, targeting a group of pit like anomalies detected by the geophysical survey which were in proximity to a potential burnt mound recorded on the HER. No archaeological features were found.

Field 18

8.6.79 Trenches excavated in the northern part of the field encountered the remains of a single large Late Iron Age ditch, to the south of which were two ditches likely to correspond to the sub-squared enclosure visible on the geophysical survey. Small quantities of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the latter. Two small discrete features of unknown date were also recorded.

Field 23

8.6.80 A total of 19 of the 31 trenches excavated within this field contained archaeological features. A series of boundary and enclosure ditches were present in the western part of the field, elements of which comprised a continuation of those recorded in Field 15 to the west. There were also several discrete features amongst the ditches. Finds predominantly comprised Roman pottery, most of which dated to the 1st-2nd century AD.

8.6.81 To the east were several conjoined sub-rectangular enclosures and numerous other small ditches and discrete features. Datable finds spanned the Early to Middle/Late Roman period. On the eastern edge of the enclosure complex was evidence of the burnt mound feature recorded by the HER. This was characterised by a thin, discontinuous layer of charcoal rich silty sands and calcined flint.

8.6.82 An L-shaped ditch of Roman date was identified in the southern part of the field, but no evidence of the D-shaped enclosure visible on the geophysical survey was encountered.

Field 27

8.6.83 All of the trenches excavated within this field were designed to target a rectangular enclosure, which was represented by a series of predominantly linear ditches. Additional features were also recorded, including pits, postholes and smaller ditches within the interior of the enclosure. The finds assemblage overwhelmingly indicates a Roman date for these features, although the relatively small quantity may suggest agricultural rather than settlement activity.

Field 29

8.6.84 One trench was excavated in this field, targeting a large pit like anomaly detected by the geophysical survey. No archaeological features were found.

Field 30

8.6.85 Two linear ditches were identified in this field, which produced a small assemblage of Romano-British pottery.

Field 34

8.6.86 A continuation of the ditch identified in Field 30 was present in Field 34, along with three undated pits.

Interpretation

8.6.87 Several phases of activity were identified by the trial trench evaluation. The earliest relates to a series of Bronze Age features, particularly the enclosure and nearby pit in Field 15 and a possible burnt mound in Field 23. No evidence of the other burnt mounds recorded by the HER was encountered during the evaluation.

8.6.88 Activity in the Iron Age period appears to have been more widespread and comprises an area of probable settlement centred on the trapezoidal enclosure within Fields 9 with a series of associated stock enclosures, boundaries and discrete features of a more agricultural function in Fields 6, 15 and 18.

8.6.89 A road on the same trajectory as Fincham Drove appears to have been laid out in the Roman period (considering that it transects the Iron Age settlement area in Fields 9 and 15), and a roadside settlement of mid 2nd to 3rd/4th centuries AD in date was established. Agricultural activity, potentially a small farmstead, of Roman date was also encountered in Field 23 and further, smaller-scale, agricultural activity was recorded in Fields 18, 27, 30 and 34.

8.6.90 The results of the trial trench evaluation generally correlated well with those of the geophysical survey, although no evidence was present of several of the potential enclosures and there were numerous discrete features not identified on the survey.

8.6.91 The significance of any archaeological remains would be vested in their evidential value and their relative importance linked to their potential to add to national and regional research agendas. Available evidence at this time would suggest that any surviving remains would make only limited contributions to regional research importance and as such are considered to be of Low (local) sensitivity. Of the archaeological remains present, those with the greatest potential to contribute to the regional research objectives are the prehistoric burnt mound in Field 23 and the Iron Age to Roman settlement in Fields 9 and 15 together with the Fen Causeway Roman road between the two fields. The lower-level agricultural activity in the remaining fields, predominantly of Iron Age and Roman date, is of less interest and value.

Future Baseline

8.6.92 This section considers changes to the baseline conditions as far as changes can be established, described above, that might occur in the absence of the Scheme coming forward during the time period over which the Scheme would be in place. The future baseline scenarios are set out in **ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1]**.

8.6.93 The Cultural Heritage and Archaeology baseline would not likely substantially change in relation to built heritage assets beyond the Site should the Scheme not proceed. With regards to archaeological remains within the Site, should the Scheme not proceed and the Site remain under arable farming there would be a continued deterioration of archaeological remains brought about by truncation from ploughing.

8.7 Embedded Mitigation

8.7.0 Likely environmental effects have been or will be avoided, minimised, mitigated or reduced through design measures and/or management of the Scheme, as outlined in this section. Proposed environmental enhancements are also described where relevant.

Embedded Construction Phase Mitigation

8.7.1 The following embedded mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Scheme's design for the construction phase:

8.7.2 Transportation routes have been identified to avoid, where possible, additional traffic movements past sensitive heritage assets. The construction traffic associated with the Scheme will be subject to measures and procedures, to include the restriction of construction traffic to Light Goods Vehicles and staff vehicles along Route C, defined within the **oCTMP [APP/7.7],** which will be secured through the detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), prepared substantially in accordance with the oCTMP and secured via a requirement of the DCO. Construction traffic and Site access is discussed further in **ES Chapter 9: Transport and Access [APP/6.2]**.

8.7.3 The locations of the temporary construction compounds have been sited to avoid areas of known archaeological remains and to be unobtrusive to the settings of heritage assets. Details of locations are provided in Figure 5.2 Construction Masterplan **[APP/6.3]**.

8.7.4 The landscape strategy for the Scheme includes the gapping up and reinforcing of historic hedgerows and use of planting to provide screening from heritage assets, as shown in the Appendix 1: Green Infrastructure Plan of the **outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (oLEMP) [APP/7.11]**.

8.7.5 Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33 will reduce/remove impact on heritage assets from construction works to the north (particularly Castle Acre

Castle and Castle Acre Priory, from which there are views encompassing the area to the north of Bartholomews Plantation) as shown in the **Figure 5.2 Construction Masterplan [APP/6.3]**.

8.7.6 Removal of Field 35 from any built development and setting back of Solar PV Arrays from northern half of Field 33 as shown in the **Figure 5.2 Construction Masterplan [APP/6.3]** to mitigate potential setting impacts from construction activities on heritage assets to the north of the Site.

8.7.7 The remains of the World War II bombing decoy are located on the western edge of Field 11 will not be impacted as they fall within an area of ecological mitigation; however, these have been identified in the **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** to ensure no accidental damage occurs.

8.7.8 Embedded mitigation might also comprise the overgrounding of cable runs in areas known to contain significant archaeological remains.

8.7.9 All embedded mitigation as outlined above is detailed in the **oCEMP [APP/7.6].**

Embedded Operational Phase Mitigation

8.7.10 The following embedded mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Scheme's design for the operational phase:

8.7.11 The landscape mitigation proposals (e.g. planting of shelter belts and scattered trees, planting of new hedgerows, existing hedgerow reinforcement), which should reach maturity by Year 15, are the main embedded operation mitigation measures for Cultural Heritage. Where preservation in situ has been identified as embedded mitigation for buried archaeological remains during the construction, this will be maintained during the operational phase.

8.7.12 The National Grid Substation, Customer Substation, and BESS have been located to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation to reduce impact on heritage assets to the north of the Site (particularly Castle Acre Castle and Castle Acre Priory), as shown in the **Works Plan [APP/2.3]**.

8.7.13 Removal of Field 35 from any built development and setting back of solar arrays from northern half of Field 33, at the point where the land begins to fall to the northeast, as shown in the **Works Plan [APP/2.3]**. This is designed to mitigate potential setting impacts upon heritage assets to the north, particularly Castle Acre Castle and Priory, where consultees had raised concerns over the visibility of infrastructure from the assets. Whilst it is noted that the operational phase of the Scheme will see replacement of PV panels and BESS, it is not anticipated that there will be additional piling or ground disturbance beyond that caused during the operational phase. For example, it is assumed that in areas where there is a potential for archaeological impact, PV panels will be replaced using the same Mounting Structures, and vehicles will only use Access Tracks installed during the construction phase. As such no additional impacts to archaeological sites have been identified during the operational phase. Specific embedded mitigation measures during

the operational phase should be maintained in line with the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [APP/7.8]**, with which the detailed OEMP will be prepared substantially in accordance, as secured via a requirement of the DCO. These measures should be kept under review for the Scheme's duration and updated as required to ensure the safeguarding of heritage assets.

Embedded Decommissioning Phase Mitigation

8.7.14 The following embedded mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Scheme design for the decommissioning phase:

8.7.15 Banksmen must be aware of areas with archaeological assets and will be responsible for ensuring no vehicle/plant movement that could impact the archaeological horizon occurs in these areas. In line with **ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4]**, a Decommissioning Strategy will be agreed with the Archaeological Advisor to the relevant Local Planning Authority prior to decommissioning, which will be sufficient to safeguard any archaeological remains during the decommissioning phase. The methodology for removal of such measures will include locating the decommissioning compounds in areas of low sensitivity to both the archaeological resource and the settings of designated heritage assets, and ensuring that minimal below ground disturbance is undertaken in the removal of infrastructure.

8.7.16 Historic England's Advice Note 15: Commercial Renewable Energy Development and the Historic Environment (Ref 8-7, p.15) provides the following examples of best practice embedded mitigation measures to be considered during decommissioning, which have been included in the **oDS [APP/7.10]**, which will be detailed in the DS that will be secured via requirement of the DCO:

- The appropriate routing of vehicles (where possible avoiding areas known for their historic character)
- Adherence to an agreed approach on activities that generate noise (which can impact on the appreciation of heritage assets nearby); and
- The avoidance of any archaeological remains preserved below ground during construction.

8.8 Assessment of Likely Effects

8.8.0 This section identifies and characterises potential impacts arising during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme upon Cultural Heritage and Archaeology.

8.8.1 Taking into account the embedded mitigation measures as detailed in Section 8.7, the potential for the likely effects of the Scheme on Cultural Heritage and Archaeology receptors has been assessed using the methodology as detailed in Section 8.5 of this chapter. In the sections below, effects during the construction, operational and

decommissioning phases of the Scheme are assessed for Cultural Heritage and Archaeology receptors scoped into the ES chapter.

8.8.2 Any additional mitigation required to reduce these effects is then set out in Section 8.9 below. Thereafter, an assessment is made of the significance of any residual effects after all mitigation measures have been accounted for.

Overview of Receptor Sensitivity

8.8.3 As detailed in the accompanying **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, of the 151 designated heritage assets within the 5km Study Area, a combination of viewshed analysis and walkover surveys have confirmed that only 15 designated heritage assets share (or potentially share) intervisibility with the Site, which may, therefore, be considered to form a part of their setting. These assets comprise four Scheduled Monuments (Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre Priory, Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church and Deserted Medieval Village, Great Palgrave); seven Grade I listed buildings (Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre Priory, Church of St James, Church of St George, Church of All Saints, High House, High House Stable Court); one Grade II listed building (Little Palgrave Hall); one Grade II Registered Park and Garden (Narford Hall); and two Conservation Areas (Castle Acre and South Acre).

Very High Value Assets

8.8.4 There are no Very High Value heritage assets within the Site or Study Area.

High Value Assets

8.8.5 Out of the 15 designated heritage assets identified as potentially sensitive to the Scheme, 11 are considered to be High value assets. These are as follows:

- Castle Acre Castle (Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1017909) with Grade I Listed elements (NHLE 1171480))
- Castle Acre Priory (Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1015870) with Grade I Listed elements (NHLE 1342389))
- Deserted Medieval Village of Great Palgrave (Scheduled Monument NHLE 1002894)
- Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church (Scheduled Monument NHLE 1019668)
- All Saints Church (Grade I Listed Building NHLE 1077266)
- Church of St James (Grade I Listed Building NHLE 1342386)
- Church of St George (Grade I Listed Building NHLE 1306357)
- High House (Grade I Listed Building NHLE 1305453); and
- High House Stable Court and Curtain Wall Attached at East of High House (Grade I Listed Building NHLE 1342411).

Medium Value Assets

8.8.6 There are four designated heritage assets considered to be of Medium value, as listed below:

- Little Palgrave Hall (Grade II listed building (NHLE 1169833)
- Narford Hall (Grade II Registered Park and Garden NHLE 1000337)
- Castle Acre Conservation Area; and
- South Acre Conservation Area.

Low Value Assets

8.8.7 The Site has been assessed as having potential to contain archaeological remains specifically relating to the Prehistoric, Roman and Modern periods. The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (**ES Appendix 8.3 [APP/6.4]**), Geophysical Survey (**ES Appendix 8.4 [APP/6.4]**) and Trial Trenching (**ES Appendix 8.6 [APP/6.4]**) have identified a series of Late Iron Age to Romano-British enclosures, boundary systems and areas of potential domestic/settlement activity within the southern portion of the Site (Fields 9, 15 and 23) to either side of Fincham Drove, which follows the route of the Fen Causeway Roman road. Prehistoric enclosures and other field systems of Iron Age to Roman date were identified across the Site in Fields 6, 13, 18, 27, 30 and 34. Although the HER records several prehistoric burnt mounds within the Site, evidence of only one burnt mound was identified during the evaluation undertaken in support of this ES chapter. The Site also includes the bunker of a World War II bombing decoy (MNF29538).

Construction Phase

Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets – Direct Impacts

8.8.8 The PINS Scoping Opinion received in December 2024 (**ES Appendix 2.2: Scoping Response [APP/6.4]**) in response to the Scoping Opinion Request (**ES Appendix 2.1: EIA Scoping Opinion Request [APP/6.4])** stated that direct impacts to heritage assets during the construction phase should be scoped into the assessment due to activities such as driving piles for the Ground Mounted PV Modules and vehicle movement having potential to cause physical damage to heritage assets in the proximity of the Site. Whilst the Scoping Opinion stated ‘Heritage Assets’, the Scoping Opinion Request considered only Designated Heritage Assets.

8.8.9 The Scoping Opinion made reference to heritage assets beyond the Site, but in close proximity, potentially being susceptible to direct impacts during the construction phase. There are no designated heritage assets in what could be described as ‘close proximity’ to the built form of the Scheme, i.e. no designated heritage assets within c.475m and no high grade assets within c.500m, there are also no non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity that could be considered sensitive to such impacts. Therefore, direct impact upon any heritage asset beyond the Site boundary, from activities undertaken during the construction phase, including vibration from piling will not occur. Details on the potential

vibration effects of piling for the Ground Mounted PV Modules are set out within **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP/6.2]**. With the embedded mitigation measures of distancing the built form of the Scheme from the northern edge of the Site (that in closest proximity to sensitive heritage assets), the construction phase will have no direct impact upon any designated or non-designated heritage asset beyond the Scheme boundary.

8.8.10 Detail of the proposed transport routes for construction traffic to be used during the construction phase are set out within **ES Chapter 9: Transport and Access [APP/6.2]**. As set out within **ES Chapter 9: Transport and Access [APP/6.2]** the proposed access routes to the Scheme from the Strategic Road Network (SRN are shown at **Figure 9.1: Vehicle Routing and Constraints [APP/6/3].** There are no designated heritage assets along proposed access Route A. Access Route B lies immediately adjacent to the Scheduled Monument Moated Site north of All Saints Church (NHLE 1019668) and within c.30m of the Grade I listed All Saints Church (NHLE 1077266). Access Route B is, however, a well-used main road (the A1065) and there is no potential for any swipes and strikes to heritage assets along the route and there is no reason to believe that additional traffic movements could have any direct impact upon these heritage assets. Access Route C does pass through a Conservation Area and Narford Hall Registered Park, is adjacent to one Scheduled Monument, West Acre Priory and Square Barrow within the precinct, and has five listed buildings within c.50m of the route (the closest being c.10m from the road) and, partly for these reasons, the route will be confined to use of staff vehicles and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), as detailed in the **oCTMP [APP/7.7]**, although these limitations relate more to setting issues than any realistic potential for any direct impact. No non-designated heritage assets with potential to be sensitive to the movement of construction traffic have been identified. With the embedded mitigation measures provided by the proposed transport routes, the construction phase will have no direct impact upon any designated or non-designated heritage asset beyond the Order limits.

Conclusion

8.8.11 There will be no direct impact on any designated or non-designated heritage asset during the construction phase of the Scheme and thus, **no significant** effects are considered.

Archaeological Remains – Direct Impacts

8.8.12 Impacts to archaeological assets within the Order limits would largely occur during the construction phase through activities such as the installation of Solar PV Arrays, BESS, Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, Cabling, Access Tracks, and Temporary Construction Compounds, which all have the potential to have an adverse, permanent, and irreversible impact upon buried archaeology.

8.8.13 The Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and the BESS will likely result in total destruction of archaeological remains within their footprint.

8.8.14 Impacts from piling for the Ground Mounted PV Modules will be at a very low level, typically ranging between 0.1% and 0.05% by area, depending upon the separation between rows.

8.8.15 Cabling within the Solar PV Site will have a greater impact than piling, yet will still be relatively low, typically involving c.110m in length per hectare at widths of between 1.6m and 0.6m. Unlike piles, however, this impact will not be evenly spread and has potential to cause more localised impact.

8.8.16 Other elements of the Scheme, such as construction of Access Tracks, Conversion Units, Grid Connection Infrastructure, and Temporary Construction Compounds, will have further localised impacts.

8.8.17 Trial trenching of the Site has established the depth of the archaeological horizon ranges from 0.2m to 0.8m, and as such, remains are shallow enough to be sensitive to the above impacts. The possible burnt mound in Field 23, the Iron Age settlement in Fields 9 and 15, the Roman settlement in Field 9 and the Roman road between Fields 9 and 15 (followed by Fincham Drove) are considered to have the most potential to address the research priorities of the region and are potentially of low (local) sensitivity. The remaining fields contain features relating to low-level agricultural activities of less interest.

Conclusion

8.8.18 Impacts resulting from piling for the PV panel mounting structures would result in very low percentages of truncation and are considered to have a negligible impact. Excavations for cabling and other below ground elements of the Scheme would result in partial truncation of archaeological remains resulting in a low impact. For archaeological remains of low sensitivity (as indicated by the informative trial trenching to be present within the Site), this negligible and low magnitude of impact to archaeological remains, prior to additional mitigation measures being put in place, would result in a Neutral and Minor Adverse effects, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

8.8.19 The archaeological remains in Fields 27 under the Scheme would be either substantially or wholly truncated by below ground impacts required for the construction of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation and BESS. This would be a high magnitude of impact to archaeological remains of low sensitivity which, prior to additional mitigation measures being put in place, results in a Moderate Adverse effect, which is **significant** in EIA terms.

Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets – Indirect Impacts

8.8.20 During the construction phase there is potential for indirect impacts to heritage assets within the Study Area and beyond the boundary of the Site through changes to their setting. These changes would be most evident during the operational phase and would commence during construction but are most closely linked to the operational phase and indirect impacts that might occur during the construction phase would be of no greater magnitude than those experienced during the operational phase and would be of a short-term duration and reversible. They would, however, be of a different nature, for example including the possible visibility of plant and the presence of Temporary Construction Compounds. These might result in very localised indirect impacts that could be of a different nature than what would occur during the operational phase, but the reversibility

and short-term duration of these impacts would mean that the scale of the effects would soon return to Neutral.

8.8.21 As set out in **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1]**, the construction phase is anticipated to take up to 24 months. As the indirect visual impacts would be at their greatest in terms of magnitude and duration during the operational phase those impacts are discussed below in the section relating to operational phase impacts. In terms of impacts that would be greater or different during the operational phase, embedded mitigation in the form of positioning of Temporary Construction Compounds and traffic routes will result in these aspects having no indirect impacts on any heritage assets. Indirect impacts during the construction phase are, therefore, considered to be limited to noise levels.

Conclusion

8.8.22 As detailed above, there are 15 heritage assets within the Study Area that are considered sensitive to the Scheme. Of those 15 assets, the majority are sufficiently removed from the Scheme for noise to present no more than a negligible impact resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms. Three assets lie in closer proximity (the Church of St George, Narford Hall RPG and South Acre Conservation Area), however, the noise assessment presented in **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP/6.2]** has not identified any potentially significant effects upon residential receptors which lie in closer proximity than these designated heritage assets and it, therefore, stands to reason that, whilst construction noise may be audible from these designated heritage assets the effect would be no greater than on residential receptors. Furthermore, whilst the construction activity is likely to take up to 24 months, the noise generated will vary depending upon activity and be at varying distances from the receptors. Given the distances involved and variability of noise levels this is considered of negligible magnitude on high sensitivity receptors as a worst case resulting in a Neutral effect that is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Operational Phase

Archaeological Remains – Direct Impacts

8.8.23 Any adverse impacts to the archaeological resource will have taken place during the construction phase, with the bulk of the archaeological resource being preserved in situ. The impacts to buried archaeological features during the operational phase would, therefore, be of a beneficial nature, due to these remains being taken out of the agricultural cycle of regular ploughing which most of the field parcels within the Site are currently subject to. Ploughing is recognised as having a widespread detrimental impact upon archaeological remains. Therefore, archaeological remains of low sensitivity (as indicated by the informative trial trenching to be present within the Site), subject to a low beneficial magnitude of impact would result in a Minor Beneficial effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets – Indirect Impact

8.8.24 There are potential indirect impacts on heritage assets within the Study Area during the operational phase of the Scheme. These impacts lie in the contribution that the setting of heritage assets makes to their significance and could include changes in land use altering the character of heritage landscapes and the surrounding environs of heritage assets, visual intrusion affecting the dominance/prominence of heritage assets within their settings, glare and shadowing caused by the reflection of sunlight off solar arrays, and noise pollution.

8.8.25 It should be made clear that in assessing heritage assets, in accordance with current guidance, it is the impact upon the significance of the asset as a whole (encompassing all of its values and its entire setting) that is assessed, not the impact upon one particular view from a discrete part of the asset.

Scenarios A and B

8.8.26 As part of the Scheme, the Applicant is required to establish a connection to the National Grid Substation. This can be achieved through a minimum of one overhead transmission circuit. The Applicant has proactively assessed and included the option to divert and connect both existing transmission lines, enabling either a single or double turn-in to the substation.

8.8.27 For the purposes of this assessment, two scenarios have been defined to allow an appropriate worst-case to be considered in the event that part of the existing 400kV overhead line cannot be decommissioned following the installation of the Grid Connection Infrastructure.

8.8.28 The worst-case scenario therefore comprises the installation of new pylons and overhead lines, and the retention in situ of part of the existing overhead line and associated pylons; this has been assessed as Scenario A.

8.8.29 The Applicant's preferred solution is the double turn in option which would allow for the decommissioning and removal of the existing section of overhead line (Scenario B), thereby reducing long term visual and heritage impacts on the local area.

8.8.30 For completeness, an assessment has been presented in this chapter which covers the removal of the decommissioned pylons and overhead line (Scenario B). The ultimate conclusions, though, are as assessed from Scenario A, as the worst-case assessment.

8.8.31 Further details of the ongoing engagement and flexibility required under the DCO Application are set out in **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1]** and within the **Grid Connection Statement [APP/7.1].**

8.8.32 There are 15 heritage assets (as detailed in **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**) within the Study Area that are considered sensitive to the Scheme. These assets are discussed below:

Castle Acre Castle

8.8.33 Castle Acre Castle (both the Scheduled Monument and Grade I Listed Building) are assets of high sensitivity. The setting of the Castle can be described as encompassing five principal elements:

- Castle Acre village: The settlement in which the heritage asset is located largely follows that of the planned Norman town dating to the 12th century, which was laid out in the precinct of the castle. Both the village and castle were constructed by the de Warenne family in this period
- The spatial connection with Castle Acre Priory – the two Scheduled Monuments with Grade I listed elements bookend the village of Castle Acre and share 12th century origins. Furthermore, they were both built by the de Warenne family
- The slightly elevated position of the castle at the eastern extent of the village – the situation of the castle at this highly defensible elevated position is a key aspect of its intentional design and affords far reaching views to the east and west in particular
- The wider valley that surrounds the castle – the heritage asset and the village in which it is located are situated in an east to west orientated valley. The wider setting is predominantly agricultural in character with small pastures in the foreground and larger arable fields in the more distant, higher ground; and
- The connection to the Peddars Way – Castle Acre is the only major settlement located along this ancient routeway and it likely part of the reasoning behind its intentional siting. The relationship between the two has been preserved and forms part of the castle's setting.

8.8.34 The setting of Castle Acre Castle on a slightly elevated position at the eastern extent of Castle Acre settlement, with a clear visual connection with medieval structures surviving within the village as well as the surrounding countryside, serves as a visual representation behind some of the reasonings behind the Castle's intentional design and siting at this location and whilst the agricultural surrounds aids the aesthetic value of the monument, it is the topography of the surroundings that allow an appreciation of the reasoning behind the castles siting. In these ways, the setting provides some contribution to its significance. However, as a relatively rare example of a surviving Shell Keep castle of 12th century date, connected with several notable medieval events and persons, the castle would still hold a high level of significance if removed from this setting.

8.8.35 The wider setting of Castle Acre Castle encompasses some parts of the Site, principally Fields 21, 25, 26, 33, 35, 36, 37, and 38, which are partially visible from the Castle. Those parts of the Site that do not share any intervisibility with the Castle are not considered to make any appreciable contribution to its significance. Fields 35, 36, 37 and 38 will not be subject to any substantive change. Fields 21, 25, 26 and 33 are proposed for solar panels and these will be partially visible from the Castle. Embedded mitigation in the form of additional planting at the north-east corner of Field 12 and northern side of Field 26 along with the enhancement of existing hedgerows along the eastern limit of the Site at the

A1065 will reduce this visibility but will not remove it entirely. The resulting intervisibility will, therefore, be filtered and/or partial.

8.8.36 There will be no impact on the majority of the Castle's setting, specifically the elements encompassing the village siting, the visual and spatial connection with the Priory, the connection to the Peddars Way and the vast majority of the surrounding landscape visible from the heritage asset's elevated position. The majority of views will be unchanged, with only very small elements of the wider Scheme (at least partially screened under the proposals) remaining.

8.8.37 There is some visibility of the Site from the Castle, though this is limited (See **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 8) and any visibility of the Scheme from the Castle will form a very small part of a much wider vista. As such, it is not considered that areas of the Solar PV Site would dominate or intrude into such views, but would be visible. Whilst the visibility of Solar PV Arrays would represent a change in the setting of the Castle, they would not alter any appreciation of the topographic siting of the castle and the vast majority of any vista from the Castle would remain in agricultural use, as such the impact from visible Solar PV Arrays is considered to be negligible. The Grid Connection Infrastructure will be highly visible from the Castle, especially as it punctuates the skyline. Whilst here are already pylons visible in these views, under Scenario A the combined effect of both existing and new pylons will increase their prominence in the landscape, but not to a degree that they may draw the observer's eye away from elements that add to the appreciation of the castle's significance (see **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual**, Figures 6.14 and 6.15) . Under Scenario B, however, whilst there may be more pylons present than is currently the case they would be located further away from the Castle, reducing their prominence in the landscape.

8.8.38 Conclusion: Under Scenario A, prior to additional mitigation measures being put in place, the impact on Castle Acre Castle, a high sensitivity receptor, would be of ow/negligible adverse magnitude of impact resulting in a Minor Adverse effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms. Under Scenario B, prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact is negligible, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant**.

Castle Acre Priory

8.8.39 Castle Acre Priory (both the Scheduled Monument and Grade I Listed Building) are assets of high sensitivity. As with Castle Acre Castle, the key elements of the heritage asset's setting can be summarised as the village location, the connection with other medieval structures (the Castle and the Church of St James) and the wider, predominantly agricultural, landscape. The Priory buildings are also situated alongside the River Nar, which was a crucial element behind its siting.

8.8.40 The setting of Castle Acre Priory at the western extent of Castle Acre settlement alongside the river, with a clear visual connection with medieval structures surviving within the village as well as the surrounding countryside, serves as a visual representation behind some of the reasonings behind its intentional design and siting at this location and aids the aesthetic value of the monument. In these ways, the setting provides some contribution to

its significance. However, as a grand medieval complex with significant archaeological interest, the priory would still hold a high level of significance if removed from this setting.

8.8.41 The Scheme is situated c.600m to the south of Castle Acre Priory and shares very minimal intervisibility. This is not afforded from the majority of the designated area of the priory but predominantly from a small section of the northern part of the monument or from the adjacent footpath. There is no visibility of the Site from any position near the main priory buildings. The Site is part of the agricultural surroundings of Castle Acre Priory that forms part of its wider setting. The majority of the Scheme is shielded behind dense tall planting and topography that restricts, and in most places totally obscures, any views from Castle Acre Priory and vice versa. However, there are limited views between parts of Castle Acre Priory (largely limited to the northernmost extent of the Scheduled area, but not from the lower lying ground) and a small part of the Site, comprising parts of Fields 12, 21, 25, 33 and 35. The latter field (35), however, is allocated for mitigation and enhancement under the Scheme. Visibility of the remaining fields will be further screened through landscaping proposals as part of the embedded mitigation, specifically planting at the northern side of Field 26, but there will be partial and filtered views remaining. The visibility of small parts of the Site from the priory merely form a small part of much wider vistas and do not contain any distinguishing features that could be said to add to the significance of the monument. It is not considered that areas of the Solar PV Site would dominate or intrude into such views but would be visible. Whilst the visibility of Solar PV Arrays would represent a change in the setting of Castle Acre Priory, they would not alter any appreciation of the topographic siting of the monument and the vast majority of any vista from the priory would remain in agricultural use, as such the impact from visible Solar PV Arrays is considered to be negligible. The proposed new pylons will be highly visible from Castle Acre Priory, especially as they punctuate the skyline. Whilst there are already pylons visible in these views, under Scenario A the combined effect of both existing and new pylons will increase their prominence in the landscape, but not to a degree that they may draw the observers eye away from elements that add to the appreciation of the priory's significance (see **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visua**l, Figures 6.14 and 6.15).Under Scenario B, however, whilst there may be more pylons present than is currently the case they would be located further away from the Priory, reducing their prominence in the landscape.

8.8.42 Conclusion: Under Scenario A, prior to additional mitigation measures the impact on Castle Acre Priory, a high sensitivity receptor, would be of low/negligible magnitude resulting in a Minor Adverse effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms. Under Scenario B, prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact is considered to be negligible resulting in a Neutral scale of effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Church of St George

8.8.43 The Church of St George (Grade I Listed Building) is an asset of high sensitivity. The immediate setting of the listed building encompasses its historic plot, which includes the Church graveyard; the small settlement and Conservation Area of South Acre, in which the church was sited; and the wider, surrounding landscape of the River Nar valley, which is broadly agricultural in the section visible from the heritage asset. The most notable views

of the Church itself are largely derived from within the church grounds and from the main road that runs through the village of South Acre, although there are views of the Church tower from outside the village that are limited and where available, a small constituent part of the wider landscape. The setting of the Church of St George informs its significance to a limited degree, in the preserved historic connection to the village in which it was designed to serve to the local community. However, as a medieval Church, its significance is predominantly vested in its architectural and archaeological interests.

8.8.44 There is some visibility of the Site from the Church, but this is confined to the area north of Field 33 which may see some temporary works during the construction phase but will otherwise not be subject to any change (See **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 12). There are some occasional views of the tower of the church available from Washpit Drove which passes along the northern boundary of the Site, however, as the Scheme will be behind the viewer these views will not be changed. It is considered likely that one of the new pylons will be visible from the churchyard, to the south of the church, but not from the north, and, whilst there are already pylons visible, under Scenario A the combined existing and new pylon will slightly increase their prominence in views. However, under Scenario B, whilst there may be more pylons visible they will be located further away from the church, reducing their prominence in the landscape.

8.8.45 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, Scenario A would result in a low/negligible magnitude impact to a high sensitivity receptor resulting in a Minor Adverse effect which is **not significant** in EIA terms. Prior to additional mitigation, Scenario B would result in negligible magnitude impact to a high sensitivity receptor resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church and All Saints Church

8.8.46 The Moated site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church (Scheduled Monument) and All Saints Church itself (Grade I Listed Building) are assets of high sensitivity. The setting of the heritage asset is formed by the small hamlet of Newton, with the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary and All Saints situated directly to the south, beyond which are a small number of predominantly residential dwellings. Large arable fields bound the moated sites on all other sides. The setting, particularly the spatial connection to the nearby church, informs the heritage asset's significance to a limited degree, but this is largely vested in its archaeological interest.

8.8.47 Viewshed analysis suggests that there may be some slight visibility of the northeastern edge of the Scheme from these assets (**ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 10), however, no such visibility was noted during the Site visit.

8.8.48 Conclusion: No elements of the Scheme will be visible from the Church and any impact upon these assets (either for Scenario A or B) is, therefore, considered to be a negligible magnitude impact to a high sensitivity receptor resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant.**

Church of St James

8.8.49 The Church of St James (Grade I Listed Building) is an asset of high sensitivity. It is set within the historic church plot and Castle Acre village, in which the church is centrally sited. Beyond this, widespread countryside spans to the east, south and west, forming the wider setting of the church. Views towards this landscape are largely filtered, partial or channelled by the topography, surrounding buildings and numerous mature trees. Views of the church tower from the wider environs are more prevalent, which is part of its intentional design. The setting informs its significance to a limited degree in the enhancement of its aesthetic value and preserved connection to other medieval structures within the village.

8.8.50 There is some limited visibility of the Site from the Church of St James, (See **ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment**, Figure 13) and any visibility of the Scheme from the Church of St James will be heavily filtered by extant development and at some considerable distance. As such it is not considered that it would dominate or intrude into such views, but it is possible that Solar PV Arrays would be visible, although all other elements should be screened by existing landscape features.

8.8.51 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on the Church of St James, a high sensitivity receptor, is considered to be negligible under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms. This will remain unchanged following additional mitigation.

High House and Stable Court and Curtain Wall

8.8.52 High House and Stable Court and Curtain Wall (Grade I Listed Buildings) are assets of high sensitivity. High House and its associated stable court are situated within the rural countryside of West Norfolk, specifically in the parish of West Acre, the village of which is situated a short distance to the south. The listed buildings are accessed from a country lane, Tumbleyhill Road, to the west. The setting of the Grade I listed buildings is defined by the historic parkland estate in which it is sited. Part of the gardens have been converted into a garden centre and are publicly accessible.

8.8.53 The Scheme is located a considerable distance from the listed buildings and does not form any meaningful part of their settings. Viewshed analysis suggests that there may be some slight visibility of the northern part of the Scheme from these assets (**ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4],** Figure 14), however, no such visibility was noted during the Site visit. Should any visibility be available it would be at a distance of over 4.5km and would merely form a small part of a much wider vista.

8.8.54 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on the High House and Stable Court and Curtain Wall, both high sensitivity receptors, is considered to be negligible under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Little Palgrave Hall

8.8.55 Little Palgrave Hall (Grade II listed building) is an asset of Medium sensitivity. It is part of a historic farmstead, with a regular U-plan arrangement of unlisted farm buildings to the north and scattered barns of modern date beyond this. It is an isolated farmstead, not situated within or close to any specific settlement. Little Palgrave Hall is positioned within the Norfolk countryside and much of the area comprises gently undulating agricultural fields. It is set at a high point in the landscape. The immediate landscaped setting of Little Palgrave Hall along with its wider countryside surroundings strengthen its aesthetic value as a historic farmhouse, and in this way contributes to its significance.

8.8.56 Viewshed analysis suggests that there may be some slight visibility of the eastern edge of the Scheme from this asset (**Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP/6.4]**, Figure 15), however, no such visibility was noted during the Site visit. Visibility is afforded of the U-plan farm buildings to the north of Little Palgrave Hall from the eastern edge of the Scheme. However, these buildings are not considered as curtilage listed when considering the guidance (Ref 8-8).

8.8.57 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on Little Palgrave Hall, a medium sensitivity receptor, is considered to be negligible under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant**.

Deserted medieval village of Great Palgrave

8.8.58 The Deserted medieval village, Great Palgrave (Scheduled Monument) is an asset of high sensitivity. The Scheduled Monument encompasses the area to the west and south of the existing hamlet of Great Palgrave, a small settlement situated to the north of South Acre Road in the parish of Sporle with Palgrave. The hamlet predominantly comprises a single farmstead with a complex of historic and modern agricultural structures. Surrounding the scheduled monument on all sides are large arable fields interspersed with smaller plantations. The significance of the scheduled monument is derived from its archaeological interest as a shrunken medieval village and this setting makes no meaningful contribution to said significance.

8.8.59 Viewshed analysis suggests that there may be some partial, filtered visibility of the eastern part of the Scheme from this asset, however, no such visibility was noted during the Site visit.

8.8.60 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on the Deserted medieval village of Great Palgrave, a high sensitivity receptor, is considered to be negligible under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Narford Hall Park

8.8.61 Narford Hall (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) is an asset of medium sensitivity. It lies to the north of the A47 and incorporates c.118ha of parkland surrounding the Grade I listed Narford Hall. Plantations border the park on all sides and the resulting enclosed

nature of these boundaries combined with the relatively flat topography of the area greatly restrict views to and from the heritage asset. Where afforded, these tend to be short, channelled views of particular elements of the listed building and its park. The setting of Narford Hall park, specifically the preserved connection to Narford Hall itself, contributes to its significance as the hall and its surrounding park and gardens represent a relatively complete historic estate.

8.8.62 Viewshed analysis suggests that there may be some slight visibility of the extreme western edge of the Scheme from this asset and it is possible that Solar PV Arrays may be visible, particularly from the tree-lined routeway at the southern edge of the heritage asset. The other elements of the Scheme (i.e. BESS, National Grid Substation, Customer Substation, and Grid Connection Infrastructure) will not be visible.

8.8.63 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on Narford Hall Registered Park and Garden, a medium sensitivity receptor, is considered to be of negligible magnitude under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant.**

Castle Acre Conservation Area

8.8.64 Castle Acre Conservation Area is an asset of medium sensitivity. It is situated on the steep northern slope of the Nar Valley, which affords dramatic outward views from the village to the countryside setting beyond, particularly from the south and east of the settlement. This setting emphasises the rural character of the designated parts of the village, enhancing its aesthetic value from which its significance is partially derived. However, its significance is primarily vested in its historic and archaeological interest as a planned 12th century town within the precinct of a medieval castle, combined with the number of high and medium value heritage assets situated within the village.

8.8.65 There are some views of the Scheme from the Conservation Area, particularly from the heritage assets within the designated area previously mentioned (the castle, priory and Church of St James). These views tend to be partial, filtered or oblique and where afforded, will be further reduced by the introduction of enhanced hedgerows and new planting schemes. It tends to be those individual assets that are being experienced rather than the Conservation Area as a whole.

8.8.66 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on Castle Acre Conservation Area, a medium sensitivity receptor, is considered to be negligible under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA.

South Acre Conservation Area

8.8.67 South Acre Conservation Area is an asset of medium sensitivity. Its setting is defined by the Nar Valley location and the rural nature of the settlement, with environs dominated by farm land. It is located a short distance from Castle Acre, and the connection between the two is also an important element of both Conservation Area's settings. The significance of South Acre Conservation Area is predominantly vested in its architectural and

archaeological interests. However, the setting does form a minor contribution to this in the emphasis of the settlement's traditional character.

8.8.68 Viewshed analysis and a site visit have confirmed that there is some visibility of the Site from the Conservation Area, however, this is confined to that described for St George's Church above. As it is an individual asset rather than the Conservation Area as a whole that shares visibility with the Site.

8.8.69 Conclusion: Prior to additional mitigation, the magnitude of impact on South Acre Conservation Area, a medium sensitivity receptor, is considered to be negligible under both Scenarios A and B, resulting in a Neutral effect, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

Decommissioning Phase

Direct Impacts

8.8.70 It was agreed with PINS through **ES Appendix 2.2: EIA Scoping Opinion [APP/6.4]** to scope out direct impacts to cultural heritage assets during the decommissioning phase of the Scheme. There will be no further impact on archaeological remains as these will have been fully mitigated prior to this phase of the Scheme.

Indirect Impacts

8.8.71 It is considered, however, that the decommissioning phase has potential for indirect impacts to the settings of designated and non-designated heritage assets, which was confirmed by PINS through **ES Appendix 2.2: EIA Scoping Opinion [APP/6.4].**

8.8.72 It is considered that the decommissioning phase has the potential to temporarily affect the settings of identified designated and non-designated heritage assets, particularly in relation to plant movement and the presence of Temporary Construction Compounds as confirmed by PINS through **ES Appendix 2.2: EIA Scoping Opinion [APP/6.4].** These impacts are anticipated to be similar in level or lesser to those experienced during the construction phase, and as with this, would be of a temporary nature, with an expected duration of 12 to 24 months (as per **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1]**). The scale of effect is, therefore, considered to be Neutral which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

8.8.73 After decommissioning, several impacts on designated heritage assets resulting from the operational phase of the Scheme would be reversed, specifically the removal of solar arrays and possibility of returning the land to an agricultural function. The exception to this would be the Grid Connection Infrastructure and National Grid Substation, both of which will not be decommissioned and will remain extant. However, the continued use of these elements of the Scheme would cause no additional impacts to those identified during the operational phase. As such, it is not considered that any significant effects on cultural heritage will arise from this phase of the Scheme. Of further note is that new engineering approaches and technologies are likely to emerge over the Scheme's operational life that could ultimately reduce potential decommissioning impacts, or remove them altogether.

8.9 Additional Mitigation Measures

Additional Construction Phase Mitigation Measures

8.9.0 The following additional mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Scheme's design for the construction phase:

8.9.1 The mitigation measures for the archaeological resource within the Site will be secured via a requirement of the DCO and are detailed in **ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4]** and summarised below. Following discussions with Norfolk Historic Environment Service, it has been agreed that the mitigation will be led by, and proportionate to, the below ground impacts of the Scheme. However, as the precise layout of aspects such as cable trenches, inverter locations, new pylon locations and the depth of impact of aspects such as Access Tracks and the temporary working areas for the grid connection infrastructure are not yet available as the precise details of areas of mitigation cannot yet be determined. It can, however, be said that the mitigation will take one or more of the following methods:

Geophysical Survey

8.9.2 Geophysical survey (magnetometry) will be completed on the areas that area currently not available for survey (part of Field 3, Field 12, Fields 19 and 20, and part of Field 24). The need for geophysical survey along the working corridor for Grid Connection Infrastructure will be determined once the details of potential below ground disturbance are known.

Informative Trenching

8.9.3 The areas of known extensive impact (National Grid Substation and Customer Substation, BESS and Temporary Construction Compounds) will be subject to informative trenching at 3.5% by area.

8.9.4 Informative trenching will be undertaken in the remaining areas of the Site not subject to previous trenching. It has been agreed with NHES that the amount and location of any additional trenching will be targeted on areas of higher impact and proportionate to the overall impact. As such the amount and location of the trenches can only be confirmed following detailed design.

Geoarchaeological Assessment

8.9.5 The need for and location of deep impacts (up to 15m for piles and/or directional drilling) are not yet known and so it is not possible to firmly identify the need for and location of any geoarchaeological assessment. Once details are available the need for and scope of any geoarchaeological assessment will be agreed with NHES.

Archaeological Excavation

8.9.6 Precise details of areas that will be subject to full archaeological excavation will be defined following completion of the geophysical survey and informative trenching and finalisation

of the location and extent of development impacts. Some of the archaeological excavation areas may take the form of 'compensation' excavation rather than mitigation of individual impacts (i.e. certain areas may be examined in more detail in order to compensate for the loss of other areas).

8.9.7 It is known that the Roman period enclosure within Field 27 will be subject to almost complete removal by the installation of the Customer Substation and National Grid Substation and these remains will, therefore, require full excavation. Based on the information provided in **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1]** this will be a minimum of 2.5 ha but the area may extend following results of informative trenching.

8.9.8 It is known that the proposed construction will necessitate cable trenches to be excavated across some of the existing droves. Fincham Drove in particular is likely to have been formed in the Roman period, but the date of other elements of the droves within the Order limits is not yet known. Therefore, any locations of cable trenches crossing droves will be subject to detailed archaeological excavation.

Archaeological Monitoring

8.9.9 Archaeological monitoring (a 'watching brief') may be required in certain areas where the impacts is limited and/or where full excavation is not warranted.

Preservation in situ

8.9.10 It has been agreed with NHES that the impact of piling for the panel support structures is of such a low level that it will not compromise the integrity of the archaeological or limit the ability to understand the remains should archaeological investigation be carried out at a future date, with the proviso that certain archaeological features would need to be avoided or fully excavated. Such features would include (but are not limited to) structures, waterlogged remains, features with high artefactual or environment potential, industrial features and human remains. Should such features be identified by the informative trenching this would require either the adjustment of the pile layout to avoid particular archaeological features and/or the targeted use of concrete feet rather than piles to support the panel support structure. It is not envisaged that extensive areas will require this treatment but any such works would be targeted and localised.

8.9.11 The option for localised areas of above ground cabling to preserve significant archaeological remains in situ where it is not practicable or desirable to mitigate by archaeological excavation will be available and will be informed by the detailed design and informative trenching.

Additional Operational Phase Mitigation Measures

8.9.12 Under Scenario A, which is the worst-case assessment of heritage impacts, the combined effect of both existing and new pylons will increase their prominence in the landscape from certain aspects of Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre Priory and St George's Church. This will result in Minor effects (**not significant**) to all three designated heritage assets through

changes to their settings and the impact on the ability to experience their significance. There is no further mitigation possible under this scenario to reduce this effect, and therefore, there would be a Minor residual effect, which is **not significant**.

8.9.13 Under Scenario B, due to the decommissioning of the existing overhead line, there are no significant effects identified for any receptors during the operational phase once embedded mitigation is taken into account. As such, under this scenario, no additional mitigation would be required.

Additional Decommissioning Phase Mitigation Measures

8.9.14 There are no significant effects identified for any receptors at the decommissioning phase and as such, no additional mitigation measures are required. However, it is suggested that the detailed Decommissioning Strategy (DS), to be prepared in accordance with the **outline Decommissioning Strategy [APP/7.10]** submitted with the DCO Application, will be submitted to the relevant local planning authority in consultation with NHES, which will be sufficient to safeguard any archaeological remains during the decommissioning phase. Such measures will include locating the decommissioning compounds in areas of low sensitivity to both the archaeological resource and the settings of designated heritage assets, and ensuring that minimal below ground disturbance is undertaken in the removal of infrastructure.

8.10 Residual Effects

8.10.0 This section summarises the residual effects of the Scheme on following the adoption of embedded and additional mitigation.

Construction Phase

Residual Effects for Designated Heritage Assets

8.10.1 There will be no direct impacts on designated heritage assets during the construction phase of the Scheme.

8.10.2 Prior to additional mitigation measures being put in place, there is potential for negligible impacts on all 15 designated heritage assets identified as potentially sensitive to the Scheme. This would result in a Neutral effect which is **not significant** and would remain unchanged following additional mitigation. These effects will, however, be of a short-term and reversable nature.

Residual Effects for Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Archaeological Remains

8.10.3 Prior to additional mitigation, the scale of effect on archaeological remains within the Site is considered as Moderate Adverse, which is **significant** in EIA terms.

8.10.4 For buried archaeological remains, 'preservation by record' and 'preservation in situ', according to their degree of sensitivity, is proposed by means of the additional mitigation strategy detailed in Section 8.9 above. The impact on archaeological remains is the same despite the excavation and ultimate destruction of some elements of the archaeological features present, 'preservation by record' offsets these effects by recovering artefactual and ecofactual evidence, and providing a greater understanding of the archaeological resource and its evidential value. As such, the residual effect on archaeological remains after additional mitigation is Neutral, which is **not significant**.

Operational Phase

Residual Effects for Designated Heritage Assets

8.10.5 Assessment of the Scheme's impact on designated heritage assets has identified that, prior to additional mitigation, there will be a Minor Adverse effect under Scenario A and a Neutral effect under Scenario B on three designated heritage assets during the operational phase of the Scheme:

- Castle Acre Castle and Castle Acre Priory, both Scheduled Monuments with Grade I Listed elements; and
- St George's Church, a Grade I Listed Building.

8.10.6 Embedded mitigation in the form of additional planting at the north-east corner of Field 12 and northern side of Field 26 along with the enhancement of existing hedgerows along the eastern limit of the Site at the A1065 will reduce impacts on views of the Site from Castle Acre Castle, Priory and Church of St George. However, this will not reduce visibility of the new pylons, resulting in a minor change to a small element of these heritage assets' settings. There are no additional mitigation measures possible to reduce the scale of effect. As such, there will be a residual Low/Negligible impact on these designated heritage assets only under Scenario A, which is **not significant** in EIA terms.

8.10.7 Prior to additional mitigation, there will be a Neutral effect on the remaining ten designated heritage assets. This will remain the same residual level of impact following mitigation:

- Moated Site 230m and 100m north of All Saints Church (Scheduled Monument)
- Deserted Medieval village of Great Palgrave (Scheduled Monument)
- All Saints Church (Grade I Listed Building)
- Church of St James (Grade I Listed Building)
- High House (Grade I Listed Building)
- High House Stable Court and Curtain Wall (Grade I Listed Building)
- Little Palgrave Hall (Grade II Listed Building)
- Narford Hall (Grade II Registered Park and Garden)
- Castle Acre Conservation Area; and

- South Acre Conservation Area.

8.10.8 Under Scenario B, prior to additional mitigation, there will be a negligible impact on all 15 identified designated heritage assets, resulting in Neutral effect that is **not significant** in EIA terms. This will remain unchanged following additional mitigation and there will be a residual Neutral effect.

Residual Effects for Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Archaeological Remains

8.10.9 Prior to additional mitigation, there will be a low impact resulting in a Minor Beneficial effect, which is **not significant**, on archaeological remains during the operational phase of the scheme through their removal from agricultural regimes (i.e. ploughing). This scale of effect remains unchanged following additional mitigation.

Decommissioning Phase

Residual Effects for Designated Heritage Assets

8.10.10 It is considered that the decommissioning phase has the potential to temporarily affect the settings of identified designated heritage assets, particularly in relation to plant movement and the presence of Temporary Construction Compounds, but that these would be of a temporary nature. Furthermore, decommissioning will remove several aspects of the scheme considered as potentially impactful (though the Grid Connection Infrastructure and National Grid Substation will remain in use). As such, it is considered that there is a residual Neutral effect on the 15 identified designated heritage assets, the scale of which will remain unchanged following additional mitigation. This effect is considered **not significant** in EIA terms**.**

Residual Effects for Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Archaeological Remains

8.10.11 There will be no residual effects on non-designated heritage assets or archaeological remains during the decommissioning phase of the Scheme.

8.11 Cumulative Effects Assessment

8.11.0 This section presents an assessment of cumulative effects between the Scheme and other existing and/or approved developments.

8.11.1 As set out in **ES Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology [APP/6.1]**, a Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) has been undertaken as part of the EIA in accordance with PINS Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment (September 2024) and has considered two types of cumulative effects.

- In combination effects: the combined effect generated by individual effects on a particular receptor (presented within **ES Chapter 17: In-Combination Effects [APP/6.2]**; and
- Cumulative effects: effects generated by the Scheme and other planned or approved developments on the same receptor (presented in **ES Chapters 6 to 16 [APP/6.2]**).

In-Combination Effects

8.11.2 In-combination effects occur when receptors are subject to effects under more than one environmental topic. As such, the effects presented in **ES Chapters 6 to 16 [APP/6.2]** (regardless of whether they are classed as significant or not significant) have been reviewed to identify receptors subject to one or more types of effect to ensure that the interrelationship between each of the aspects of the environment likely to be affected by the Scheme has been properly evaluated and considered.

8.11.3 The assessment of in-combination effects is presented in **ES Chapter 17: In-Combination Effects [APP/6.2].**

Cumulative Effects

8.11.4 Cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The list of developments has been narrowed down to focus on those developments which are most likely to give rise to cumulative effects. A long-list was generated which was then refined following consultation with relevant local planning authorities, this short-list forms the basis of this assessment.

8.11.5 A short list of cumulative developments/allocations can be found in **ES Appendix 2.4: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.4].**

Relevant Developments

8.11.6 Those developments which have the potential to result in cumulative effects on Cultural Heritage within the associated Study Area are set out below. Only High Grove Solar is considered to have any potential cumulative effect, the remaining schemes are not considered to have cumulative effects within the Cultural Heritage Study Area as there are no heritage assets, archaeological remains or other elements of the historic environment whose settings encompass both the Site and the other schemes.

Table 8.4: Short List Developments/Allocations relevant to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Short List Ref	Planning Ref	Description	Distance from the Scheme
1	EN0110010	High Grove Solar - RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Ltd The Scheme comprises the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) generating panels, on-site energy storage facilities, grid connection infrastructure and ancillary works. The Scheme would have a generating capacity of approximately 720MW.	Adjacent

8.11.7 At PEIR stage, a second development was considered to have the potential for cumulative effects, being Land at Great Friars Farm, proposed development of a 400,000 bird broiler farm (3SO/2024/0002/SCO). However, further information is now available on the location and extent of the proposed development which have made it clear that there are no heritage assets that share visibility with both the Scheme and Great Friars Farm. As such, this has not been further assessed herein.

8.11.8 High Grove Solar, located to the south and south-east of the Scheme, is the single development where there is potential for cumulative effects on cultural heritage. Viewshed analysis would suggest that the only designated heritage assets likely to be sensitive to both schemes are Castle Acre Castle (Scheduled Monument with Grade I Listed Elements); Castle Acre Priory (Scheduled Monument with Grade I Listed elements); Church of St James (Grade I Listed Building); Little Palgrave Hall (Grade II Listed Building) and Great Palgrave Deserted Medieval Village (Scheduled Monument, NHLE 1002894).

8.11.9 For the majority of these, there are no significant effects caused by the Scheme, and it is not considered that the cumulative impact of High Grove Solar would result in harm.

8.11.10 The remaining heritage assets are Castle Acre Castle and Castle Acre Priory, and it is considered that the cumulative effect of the Scheme and High Grove Solar would be Minor Adverse, resulting from a slight change to the heritage asset's settings that does not detract from its significance. Embedded mitigation in the form of landscaping initiatives will serve to minimise impacts on views of the Scheme from both heritage assets. Views to the east and west, directed along the valley, will be unchanged under both proposals and it will only be a small section of both settings that will be potentially affected. As such, magnitude of impact is considered to be Low/Negligible resulting in residual effects of Minor scale, which is not **significant** in EIA terms.

8.11.11 In archaeological terms it is not yet known what archaeology has been identified within the High Grove Solar scheme or how the archaeology across both High Grove Solar and the Scheme relate; however, it is clear that the works undertaken to date, and those to come, will add greatly to the understanding of the archaeology across a large section of the county. Prior to mitigation, the impact on archaeological remains for both sites would be High on low value receptors resulting in a Moderate Adverse effect, which is significant. However, following an appropriate additional mitigation strategy that ensures archaeological remains are preserved either in situ or in record according to their sensitivity, the magnitude of impact is considered to be of low beneficial in the elucidation of public understanding of the archaeological resource. The residual effect of this would be Neutral, which is **not significant**.

8.12 Conclusion

8.12.0 This chapter has set out and assessed the likely effects of the Scheme in relation to Cultural Heritage. Likely effects have been assessed for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. Following the implementation of embedded mitigation and additional mitigation as detailed in Sections 8.7 and 8.9 respectively, residual effects have been identified in relation to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology.

8.12.1 Table 8.5 in relation to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology sets out a summary of the residual Cultural Heritage and Archaeology environmental effects.

Table 8.5: Summary of Residual Effects for Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
Construction Phase								
Field 6, Iron Age pits	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS
Field 9, Iron Age settlement remains	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure;	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
		compaction and dewatering						
Field 9, Roman settlement remains	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS
Fincham Drove, Fen Causeway Roman Road	Low	Possible direct impacts from the excavation of trenches for cables	Low	Fincham Drove will be retained.	Minor Adverse	Archaeological excavation of areas of impact	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS
Field 13, prehistoric archaeological remains	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
		Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering						
Field 15, Iron Age to Roman enclosure	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS
Field 23, Roman agricultural features	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
Field 23, possible Bronze Age burnt mound	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS
Field 27, Roman enclosure and associated features	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS
Field 27, Archaeological Remains	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains by construction works	High	None	Moderate Adverse	Further archaeological investigation as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
		for the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation and BESS						
Field 30, Roman ditches	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS Yes – Defined within AMS
Field 34, Roman ditch and undated remains	Low	Possible direct impacts to buried archaeological remains from piles to secure for PV panels, cables and other below ground Site infrastructure; compaction and dewatering	Low	None	Neutral to Minor Adverse	Potential further archaeological investigation and/or preservation in situ as detailed in AMS	Neutral	Yes – Defined within AMS

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
Church of St George Grade I Listed Building	High	Possible indirect impacts through changes to setting including views of temporary pylons, visibility of other temporary works, noise from construction	Negligible	Transportation routes Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33	Minor Adverse	None	Minor Adverse	N/A
Narford Hall Grade II Registered	Medium	Indirect impacts through changes to setting, visibility of	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
Park and Garden		temporary construction works						
South Acre Conservation Area	Medium	Possible indirect impacts through changes to setting including views of temporary pylons, visibility of other temporary works, noise from construction	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Heritage Assets beyond Site boundary	Medium to High	Possible indirect impacts through visual intrusions to setting	Negligible	Transportation routes Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				
Operational Phase (Scenario A)								
Castle Acre Castle	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset; combination of new and existing pylons increasing their prominence in landscape	Low	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of	Minor Adverse	None	Minor Adverse	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				
Castle Acre Priory	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset; combination of new and existing pylons increasing their prominence in landscape	Low	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from	Minor Adverse	None	Minor Adverse	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				
Church of St George	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset; combination of new and existing pylons increasing their prominence in landscape	Low	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built	Minor Adverse	None	Minor Adverse	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				
Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Church of St James	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
High House and Stable Court and Curtain Wall	High	Presence of proposed development within	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
		the setting of the heritage asset						
Little Palgrave Hall	Medium	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Deserted Medieval Village of Great Palgrave	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Narford Hall Park	Medium	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Castle Acre Conservation Area	Medium	Presence of proposed development within	Negligible	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
		the setting of the heritage asset		Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				
South Acre Conservation Area	Medium	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
Operational Phase (Scenario B)								
Castle Acre Castle	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				northern part of Field 33				
Castle Acre Priory	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				northern part of Field 33				
Church of St George	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				northern part of Field 33				
Moated Site 230m and 110m north of All Saints Church	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	
Church of St James	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	
High House and Stable Court and Curtain Wall	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	
Little Palgrave Hall	Medium	Presence of proposed development within	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
		the setting of the heritage asset						
Deserted Medieval Village of Great Palgrave	High	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Narford Hall Park	Medium	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A
Castle Acre Conservation Area	Medium	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				
South Acre Conservation Area	Medium	Presence of proposed development within the setting of the heritage asset	Negligible	Gapping up and reinforcement of hedgerows Positioning of the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS to the south of Bartholomew's	Neutral	None	Neutral	N/A

Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Impact	Magnitude of Impact	Embedded Mitigation	Scale and Nature of Effect (with embedded mitigation)	Additional Mitigation	Residual effect (with additional mitigation)	Monitoring requirement
				Hill Plantation, the removal of Field 35 from built development and the setting back of Solar PV Arrays from the northern part of Field 33				

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