

Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposed East Pye Solar Farm South Norfolk

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN0110014



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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared on behalf of Block East Pye Solar (BEPS) and considers the impact on the significance of designated heritage assets, arising from the proposed development of East Pye Solar Farm on land within South Norfolk. Site visits have been undertaken to all of those listed buildings and Conservation Areas potentially affected by the proposed development. An assessment has been made of the historic landscape character of the area and of the significance of heritage assets, including the contribution of setting and the impact of the proposed development, in accordance with good practice advice published by Historic England.

The applicant's Heritage Statement concludes that, with the exception of two designated heritage assets, the level of impact arising from the proposed development is considered to be negligible in general and causing no harm. In both cases, where the potential to cause some harm has been identified, East Pye Solar considers this to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale through minor adverse impacts arising from changes to their setting.

It is agreed that there will be no direct impacts (other than potentially at The Old Rectory, Saxlingham Nethergate, depending upon the extent of the works) and no '*substantial harm*' to the significance of any heritage assets arising from the proposed works. However, the proposals will affect the setting of a total of 41 heritage assets, resulting in '*less than substantial harm*' to their significance, and these adverse impacts will affect a greater number than those identified in the applicant's Heritage Statement. The report also raises a number of concerns relating to the applicant's methodology for assessing setting and impact, the scale and height of the proposed solar panels which, together with the BESS, National Grid Substation (permanent infrastructure therefore affecting settings permanently) and Project Substations will introduce alien and industrial features within the rural, open and undeveloped surrounding landscape which forms the setting of heritage assets, and the potential for the proposed mitigation measures to have a harmful impact in themselves.

The report identifies the potential for the development to have **a harmful impact on a total of 41 designated heritage assets including two Grade I and three Grade II* listed, high status buildings**. It concludes that **there are considerable adverse impacts requiring great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets in the overall planning balance**, in accordance with the requirements of Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).

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Cover photographs from top left: Grove Farmhouse, Hempnall; Church of St Catherine, Fritton; Barn Cottages, Tivetshall St Margaret; Church of St Michael & The Old Rectory, Stratton St Michael; Oldhouse Farmhouse, Brooke; Moulton Farmhouse, Great Moulton; Holly Cottage, Saxlingham Green; Seething Conservation Area; Tivetshall St Margaret and Manor Cottage, Saxlingham Nethergate.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report makes an assessment of the impact on the significance of heritage assets, arising from the proposed development of East Pye Solar Farm on land within South Norfolk, as set out in the application for a Development Consent Order, submitted by Island Green Power.

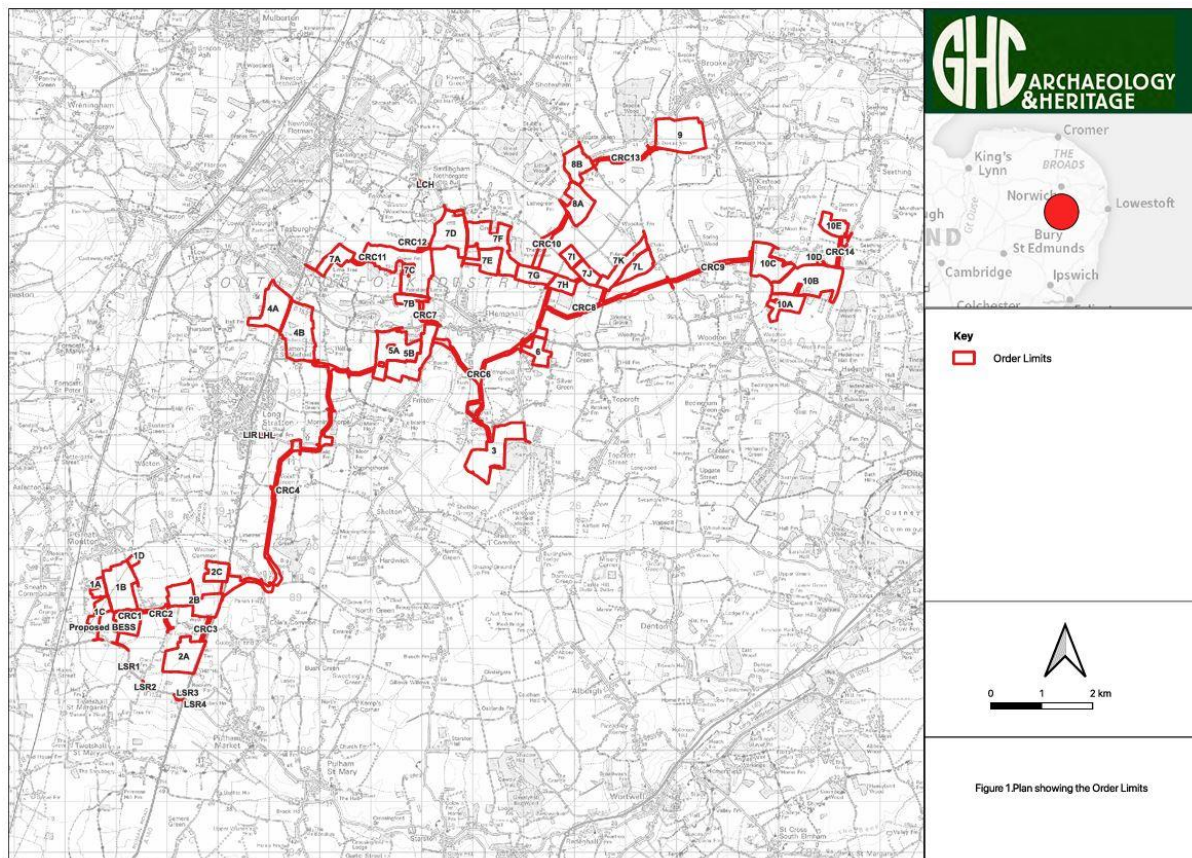
1.2 The Heritage Impact Assessment has been commissioned by Block East Pye Solar (BEPS) and prepared by David Edleston who is a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has over 40 years' experience in dealing with design and development affecting the historic built environment in both the public and private sectors, including acting as an expert witness on cultural heritage at several major public inquiries; design and conservation advice on applications for listed building consent and planning permission; Conservation Area designation, character appraisals and enhancement schemes; preparation of design guidance and adoption as SPDs; Heritage Statements; Statements of Significance and Heritage Impact Assessments. As the manager of the Conservation, Design and Landscape Team at South Norfolk for 18 years he was responsible for the historic built environment, listed buildings, conservation areas, design advice, trees and landscape, ecology and biodiversity. He was project manager for the South Norfolk Placemaking Guide SPD including the vernacular architecture of South Norfolk and the architectural and landscape appraisal of the District. For the past 12 years he has worked as a heritage consultant, with recent projects including a Heritage Impact Assessment for the National Grid Sea Link NSIP in East Suffolk, and preparing an architectural and landscape character appraisal for Broadland to support the South Norfolk and Broadland Design Code SPD.

1.3 This report initially considers the Environmental Statement on Cultural Heritage submitted with the application for a DCO, including the methodology used, assessment of significance and setting, identification of heritage viewpoints and the conclusions on the heritage impact of the proposals. A Heritage Impact Assessment has also been undertaken, informed by site visits to all of those heritage assets potentially affected. This has been prepared in accordance with the policies contained in the National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), the NPPF, and guidance in Historic England's Advice Note 12 *'Statements of Heritage Significance : Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets'* and Good Practice Advice 3 *'The Setting of Heritage Assets'*. The assessment focusses on listed buildings and Conservation Areas and the impact of proposed built development including Solar PV Arrays, Project Substations, the National Grid Substation and the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), together with the impact of proposed road widening works to suit access requirements. The assessment does not include non-designated heritage assets or below ground archaeology or the impact of the provision of cable route corridors and other similar works.

1.4 Research has been undertaken on the history and development of the area and its context. The National Heritage List for England and the Norfolk Historic Environment Record have also been consulted along with historic maps of the area, together with archive documents and other relevant information found through internet research.

2.0 Proposed development and landscape context

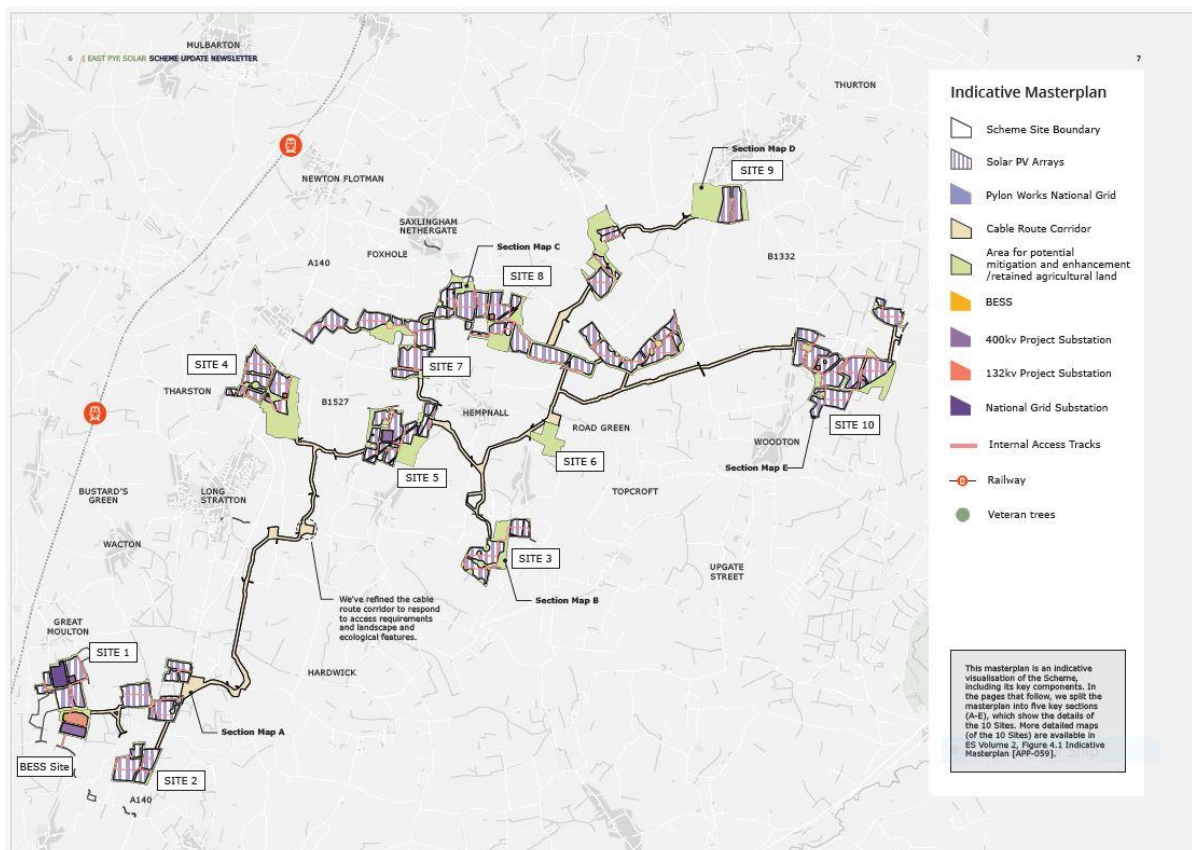
2.1 The proposed development is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), being an onshore generating station in England with a capacity exceeding 100 megawatts. The scheme comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station including a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), up to three 132kV Project Substations and up to three 400kV Project Substations, Grid Connection Infrastructure and a new National Grid Substation, located on 1,212.3 hectares of land (the Order Limits) within the administrative areas of South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council, as illustrated on the plan below. An application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) was submitted by Island Green Power on 5 March 2026 and was accepted for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 2 April 2026.



01: Site Plan showing Order Limits

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2.2 The scheme extends across several parishes within South Norfolk from Great Moulton in the west to Brooke, Woodton and Seething in the east and from Tivetshall in the south to Tasburgh and Saxlingham in the north. The solar panels proposed are large in scale, 4.5 metres high and are to be of the tilting (tracker) type. In addition to the provision of several solar arrays across a total of up to 10 sites, a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and a National Grid Substation, the scheme includes associated infrastructure – cable corridors, access routes, grid connection works and a number of substations with large transformer compounds, gantries and associated plant.



02: Indicative Masterplan, Scheme Update Newsletter April 2026 © East Pye Solar

2.3 In terms of the landscape context, all of the proposed development sites lie within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area. The area has a slightly undulating topography comprising large areas of chalky glacial till plateau with little relief, except where incised by small rivers and streams. It has a mix of remnant mediaeval Ancient Countryside with irregular small fields and hedgerow oaks, early co-axial field patterns and large modern field sometimes devoid of hedges and trees. Large areas of woodland are relatively scarce, especially on the plateau. Views are predominantly open, occasionally being confined by hedges, hedgerow trees and scattered smaller copses that are still notable elements of the landscape. There is sometimes a feeling of exposure, although within the valleys it is possible to find quite confined landscapes with intimate views. The widespread, moderately fertile, heavy

clay chalky plateau soils support farming, predominantly for arable crops, which utilises 90 percent of the land area. This mainly ancient, long-settled landscape and above all farmland has a strong rural character, experienced through its irregular field patterns which are still recognisable over much of the area, its mediaeval churches, historic timber-framed barns and houses with colourwashed walls and thatched or tiled roofs. The settlement pattern is mixed with nucleated villages in the west and along the river valleys, intermixed with dispersed hamlets and moated farmsteads. Large, often interconnected village greens or commons with settlement around the edge, are a key feature of the area. There are few major transport routes with the area having an extensive network of narrow lanes and byroads.

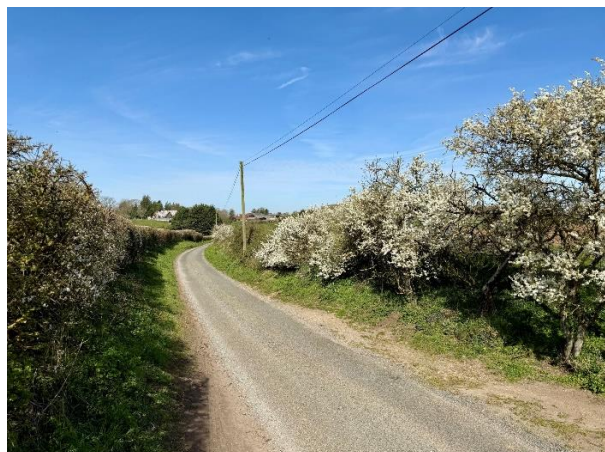
2.4 Within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area, there are a number of local Landscape Types, as set out in the South Norfolk Landscape Assessment Report. The proposed development lies within five of these areas: A1 Tas Rural River Valley; B1 Tas Tributary Farmland; B5 Chet Tributary Farmland; C2 Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland and E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland. The key characteristics of each of these areas are as follows:

A1 Tas Rural River Valley

- Some long views within the valley but restricted external views
- Sparsely settled character with buildings of a rural vernacular appearance clustered around fording points or linear development at the upper and or lower areas of the valley sides
- Characteristic vernacular buildings including distinctive weather-boarded mill houses and Dutch gable ends
- Presence of a small number of distinctive halls and parkland



03: Tasburgh undulating landscape



04: Tasburgh, Fairstead Lane

B1 Tas Tributary Farmland

- Framed open views across the countryside and into adjacent character area
- Settlements characterised by a small number of large villages including Long Stratton, with smaller hamlets and scattered farmsteads dispersed across the wider landscape, frequently clustered with small areas of woodland
- Agricultural buildings occur at intervals across the landscape, the more traditional being built of red brick, together with many timber-framed houses and thatched cottages
- Churches are a distinctive feature within this landscape and are visible across the character area when located on areas of higher ground including round towered churches at Topcroft, Fritton and Aslacton and square towered churches of Stratton St Michael and Tibenham
- Mixed vernacular of timber-frame, stepped and Dutch gables, thatch and round towered churches



05: Saxlingham Nethergate



06: Stratton St Michael



07: Saxlingham Green

*08: Shotesham**09 : Hempnall*

B5 Chet Tributary Farmland

- Flat to gently undulating landscape
- Settlement is dispersed across the character area and is generally compact, often clustered around greens of 12th or 13th century origin, with intricate network of minor roads
- Areas of historic parkland and some moated sites such as Moat Farm to the south of Kirstead Green
- Distinctive and extensive areas of common land and smaller village greens
- Norman round tower churches are a distinctive feature of the landscape, either within villages or as isolated landmarks, forming very visible features on the highest ground, generally built of brick and flint
- Most villages have a distinctive core comprising red brick and timber-framed houses with mixed building styles and materials at the more recent, suburban edge. Village ponds are also a feature
- Large farm buildings and farm processing units occur throughout the landscape with older farm buildings being characteristically red brick and tiled

*10: Woodton**11: Seething*

C2 Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland

- Land rising gently from low lying Waveney valley with areas of flatter plateau cut by narrow tributaries
- Presence of large estates with associated 18th and 19th century halls and distinctive historic parkland
- Relatively sparsely settled, villages mainly residential with absence of centre/core
- Isolated and round tower churches are key features and prominent in views. Red brick barns occur as landmark features
- Modern development plus traditional vernacular of red brick, Dutch and stepped gable ends

E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

- Flat, elevated plateau landform
- Large scale landscape of openness and exposure
- Number of greens and commons
- Distant views and farm buildings, some of large scale, exposed and visible in the open landscape
- Timber-framed houses and associated moats
- Distinct absence of churches within the landscape
- Sparsely settled with scattered farmhouses and farm buildings, some linear settlement with absence of centre/core



12: *Tivetshall*

2.5 The Historic England Farmstead and Landscape Statement for the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area, identifies the historic character of traditional farmsteads and their buildings within the area and how they relate to their surrounding landscape. This notes that the area is an intensively farmed landscape predominantly under arable cultivation, with 98% of the Character Area being open landscape and 90% of that land under cultivation. Less than 2% of the Character Area

is urban or classified as non-agricultural, while 3% is wooded. Although the landscape underwent significant change following World War II, mostly in the form of boundary removal, much still survives from earlier centuries including greens and their ditches, moats, mediaeval or earlier lanes and field boundaries. There is a high survival of traditional farmsteads in this area, their significance being enhanced in the context of mediaeval moated sites, coherent patterns of early enclosure, commons and greens. There is also a high survival in a national context of pre-1750 farmstead buildings, particularly farmhouses, but also mediaeval and later aisled and unaisled barns, stables, cartsheds and granaries. Their significance is enhanced in the context of mediaeval field boundaries. Some barns in the area display an exceptionally early use of brick by national standards. Thatch was the predominant roofing material for most farm buildings into the 19th century and surviving examples are important to the local distinctiveness of the character Area. Clay lump buildings, most from the 19th century, are also significant survivals.

2.6 The landscape within which the proposed development sits has a distinctive rural character and a strong sense of place with its predominantly open, green, and agricultural qualities. There is a fundamental intrinsic relationship between the locally distinctive traditional buildings and their surrounding landscape, which are rooted in their location having been constructed from locally available materials. Buildings sit within this landscape which positively contribute to its character, whilst the landscape forms an important element of their setting. Settlement patterns, land form, field patterns and boundaries, commons and greens, traditional farmsteads and their buildings, vernacular buildings and historic churches, all combine to create the historic and cultural characteristics of the landscape as a whole, which although it has changed and evolved over time, still remains a predominantly open and agricultural landscape which is largely undeveloped.

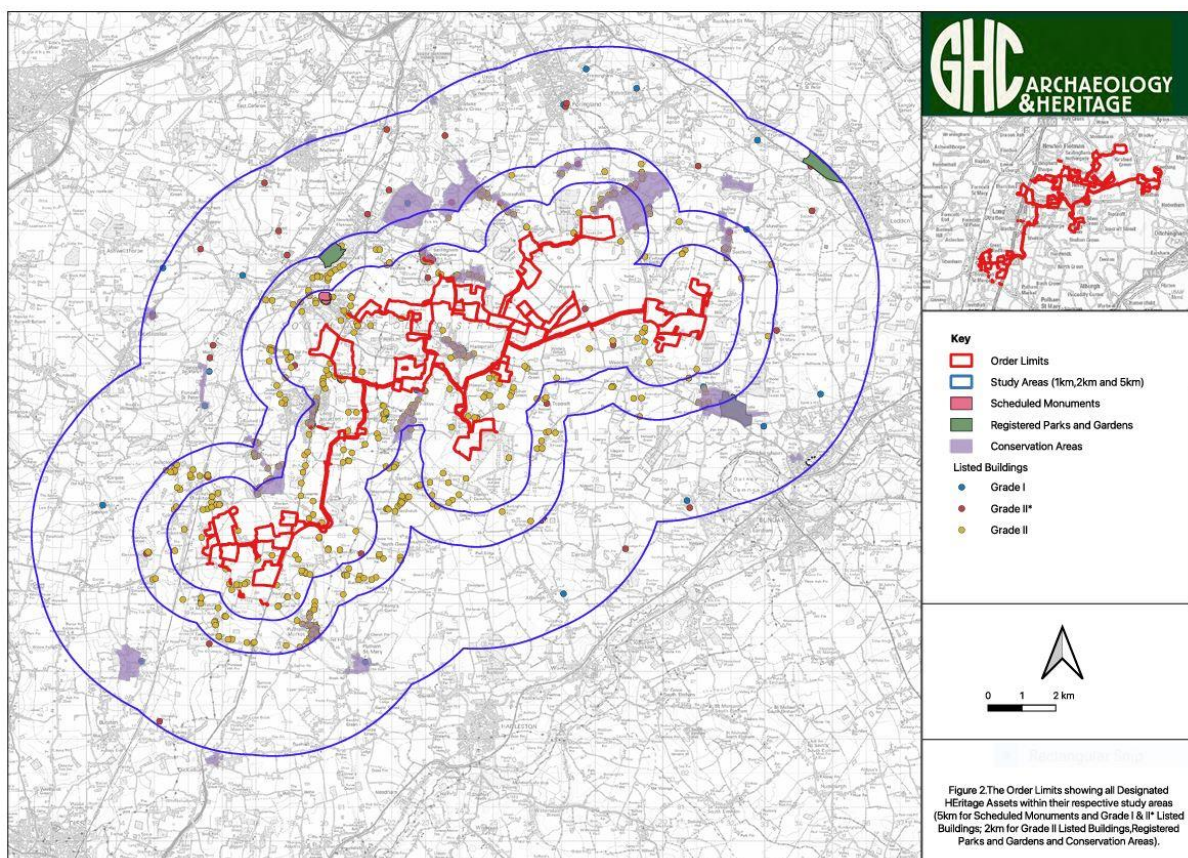


13: Fritton Common

3.0 Environmental Statement: Cultural Heritage

3.1 An Environmental Statement supports the application with Volume 1: Chapter 10 relating to Cultural Heritage. This includes an assessment of potential effects upon designated and non-designated heritage assets during the construction stage and 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. Section 10.5 sets out the scope and methodology for the assessment of the impacts of the scheme on Cultural Heritage.

3.2 The Heritage Statement for the scheme is provided in Volume 3: Appendix 10.1 Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Environmental Statement. Following an initial assessment of those designated heritage assets identified within 5km and 2km of the Order Limits (see the location plan 06 below), through a combination of desk-based research, viewshed analysis and site visits, a total of 51 designated heritage assets were scoped in for further assessment. This includes one Scheduled Monument, two Grade I listed buildings, two Grade II* Listed Buildings, 42 Grade II Listed Buildings and four Conservation Areas.



14: Location of Designated Heritage Assets in relation to the Order Limits (5km for Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings; 2 km for Grade II Listed Buildings, Registered Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas)

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3.3 The statement includes an assessment of the significance of those heritage assets identified as potentially affected by the proposed scheme, including their setting, along with an impact assessment of the development, based on good practice advice published by Historic England. This is supported with a number of illustrations including photographs and heritage viewpoints. The scheme includes a number of mitigation measures mainly comprising tree planting and hedgerow reinforcement to minimise any harmful impact on the significance of heritage assets.

3.4 The Heritage Statement concludes that with the exception of two designated heritage assets, the level of impact arising from the proposed development is considered to be negligible in general and causing no harm. In both cases, where the potential to cause some harm has been identified, this is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale through minor adverse impacts arising from changes to their setting.

4.0 Assessment of significance and setting of heritage assets affected

4.1 The starting point of any analysis is to identify those heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposed development, as set out in the first stage of the Historic England Guidance. The National Heritage List for England and the Norfolk Historic Environment Record have also been consulted. Site visits were carried out over a period of five days during April 2026 to assess all 10 sites and their context and the significance and setting of assets affected. This includes all 51 designated heritage assets identified in the Environmental Statement submitted with the application, as potentially affected by the proposed development, along with a number of additional heritage assets, due to their proximity to the proposed site boundaries.

4.2 The second stage of the Historic England Guidance, is to assess whether the setting of a heritage asset makes a contribution to its significance and the extent and/or nature of that contribution. This should initially address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider

- the physical surroundings of the asset
- the way the asset is appreciated
- the asset's associations and patterns of use

4.3 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF glossary as *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'*

4.4 'Setting' is also defined in the NPPF glossary as *'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'*.

4.5 The Historic England Guidance provides a checklist of potential attributes of a setting to assist with assessing the extent that setting contributes to significance. In particular, it is noted that settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to significance. It is also important to recognise that setting is dynamic and the relationship between an asset and its surroundings changes as one moves around. Setting is not simply about views or experience from a single viewpoint and there are a number of key considerations which need to be taken into account in defining the setting of a heritage asset and how it contributes to significance. The attributes of setting in relation to physical surroundings include topography; associative relationships with other heritage assets; scale and grain of surrounding landscape and

spaces; green space, trees and vegetation; openness, enclosure and boundaries; history and degree of change over time. Key elements in relation to experience of the assets include surrounding landscape character; views from, towards, across and including the asset; visual dominance, prominence or role as a focal point; tranquillity, remoteness, wildness; sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy; land use.

4.6 Sites 1 and 2 and BESS: There are 7 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity, including Broadgate Way to the south-west of site 1A, Moulton Farmhouse to the east of site 1B, Laurels Farmhouse and Laurels Farm Barn to the north of site 1B, Hill House to the east of site 2A, Frenchs' Farmhouse to the east of site 2C and Barn Cottages to the south of the BESS.

4.6.1 Broadgate Way, Great Moulton is a timber framed and rendered 17th century cottage with a steeply pitched pantile roof, gable ends and a central brick chimney stack, with later alterations and extensions. Its significance is derived from its architectural and historic interest, being a typical, locally distinctive, vernacular building of simple traditional form and materials. In terms of its setting, it is experienced mainly in views from Broadgate Lane, along with open views across the agricultural land to the west. It sits in a relatively isolated location and there is some degree of seclusion, being surrounded by a number of mature trees and vegetation. Apart from the addition of a dwelling immediately to the north and a couple to the south, there has been little change in its setting since the first edition OS Map of 1884, where it is shown as being surrounded by open agricultural land. This rural and relatively undeveloped setting positively contributes to the experience of the building and its overall significance.



15 & 16: Broadgate Way seen from Broadgate Lane

4.6.2 Moulton Farmhouse, Great Moulton (now known as Woodlands Farm), is a 17th century timber framed and rendered farmhouse with a steeply pitched gable ended thatched roof and an external brick chimney stack at the south end. There is a later 17th century addition to the north with a lower thatched roof and a brick chimney stack at the junction and a further lower extension beyond, with a pantile roof. As an important example of the scattered farmsteads throughout this area, the significance

of the building is derived from its architectural and historic interest. The farmhouse is in an isolated location, surrounded by open agricultural land, which forms the setting of the building. There are several important views to the north and south along Frith Way as well as to the east and west, where the buildings are experienced in this open, undeveloped farmland. There are also important historic associations between the farmhouse, its associated outbuildings and the surrounding agricultural land, which, apart from changes to the field pattern, remains open and undeveloped as evidenced from map regression, particularly the first edition OS Map of 1884. As a consequence, its setting makes an important contribution to the overall significance of the farmhouse.

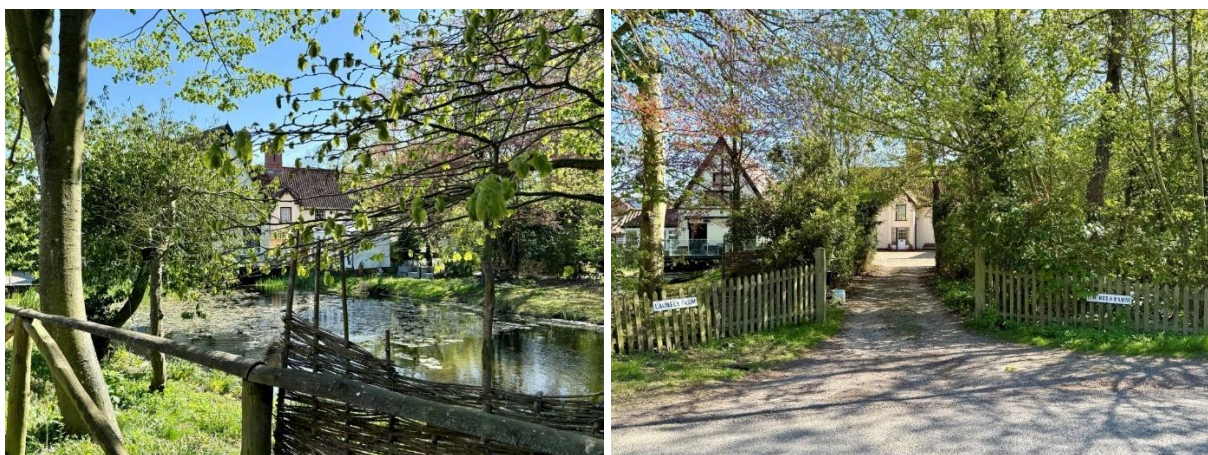


17-22: Moulton Farmhouse and its setting



23: Moulton Farmhouse & outbuildings, OS Map 1884 © National Library of Scotland

4.6.3 **Laurels Farmhouse, Great Moulton** is an early 17th century timber framed and rendered house with a steeply pitched pantile roof with gable ends and a central brick chimney stack. It has a two storeyed gabled porch to the front and rear and a 16th century timber framed wing to the west end with a pantile roof. The farmhouse is listed for group value with the **Barn to the east of Laurels Farmhouse**, which is separately listed. The barn dates from the 17th century and is timber framed and rendered with a steeply pitched gable-ended roof. Together they form an important group and are mainly appreciated in views from High Green, although they are set back from the street and are relatively secluded, being surrounded by mature trees and vegetation. The 1884 OS Map shows the buildings having an open aspect to the east with parcels of undeveloped land, although this has since been infilled with residential development. There are open views from the buildings towards the south and views towards the buildings to the north, across open farmland which forms their setting, where their roofscape and chimneys are visible and form the backdrop to these views.



24 & 25: Laurels Farmhouse and Barn in views to the south from the street



26 & 27: View north towards Laurels Farmhouse and open farmland to the south

4.6.4 Hill House, Pulham Market dates from 1836 designed by William Thorold as a workhouse, now subdivided and converted to residential use. Built of red brick with blue headers and slate roofs, it has a central octagon with a bellcote and four 3-storey wings with a cross plan, linked at the ends by single storey ranges forming an octagonal plan overall. It is an imposing and prominent building with the principal west façade having a pedimented gable with a large first-floor sash window with glazing bars and a main entrance door with a cornice hood on brackets, flanked by lower wings also having sashes with glazing bars. Its significance is derived mainly from its architectural interest along with its historic use and community value as a former workhouse. Set back from the adjoining road it is mainly appreciated in views towards the east, where it is seen as a highly visible feature in the landscape. It is largely surrounded by flat areas of farmland which form its setting in views to the north and south along the road. With the exception of the garden centre building to the south-east, its setting has remained relatively unchanged. Many of the occupants of the workhouse in the 19th century are likely to have worked in the surrounding fields and its historic connection with this open setting, contributes greatly to its significance.



28 & 29: West façade of Hill House and open setting to the north and west

4.6.5 French's Farmhouse, Pulham Market is a three storey house dating from the 18th century, roughcast with a low pitched pantile roof with gable ends and a central pilastered doorcase. To the north is a further wing, possibly of earlier date with a steeply pitched pantile roof with gable ends. Its significance is derived mainly from its architectural and historic interest as an isolated farmstead along with its associated outbuildings to the north-west which are shown on the 1884 OS Map. With the exception of the farm shop which has been developed immediately to the north, its setting is relatively unchanged, being surrounded by areas of open, flat farmland. Its setting contributes to its overall significance due to the historic association with this agricultural land. The farmhouse is relatively secluded being surrounded by mature trees and vegetation, although it is appreciated in many views in the open setting with greater visibility in the winter months.



30 & 31: French's Farmhouse surrounded by open farmland in views to the west

4.6.6 Barn Cottages, Tivetshall St Margaret are a pair of 17th century, timber framed and rendered cottages with a thatched roof and gable ends, an internal brick, off centre, chimney stack, casement windows and boarded doors. Its significance is derived from its architectural and historic interest as a locally distinctive, vernacular building of simple form, traditional materials and details. It is relatively isolated and sits surrounded by open farmland and can be appreciated as a distinctive building in many views, particularly in views towards the north, together with several viewpoints from the winding road. With the exception of the small terrace of dwellings on the opposite side of the road, map regression shows that its setting has remained open and undeveloped, as illustrated on the first edition OS Map of 1884. This open, rural farmland setting, positively contributes to the overall significance of the building, particularly through historic associations between the cottages and surrounding land and the likelihood of occupants working as part of the local farming community.



32-38: Barn Cottages in views to the south and north-west



39: Barn Cottages and adjacent buildings to the east OS Map 1884 © National Library of Scotland

4.7 **Site 3:** There are 4 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity, including Townhouse Farmhouse, Rose Cottage, Three Feathers and the Barn and Stable Range adjoining Three Feathers. all located to the north of site 3. All of these buildings are noted as being of group value as they form an important group with other listed buildings in Lundy Green.

4.7.1 **Townhouse Farmhouse, Lundy Green, Hempnall** is a 17th century timber framed house which was encased in brick in the 20th century. It has a steeply pitched roof with gables, a brick chimney stack off centre and an external stack at the end. There are a number of associated outbuildings immediately to the east. It is mainly appreciated in views along the street where it is seen amongst other surrounding buildings which form a tightly knit group and create a sense of enclosure. In contrast, to the rear of the building, there is open farmland and there are long, distant views to the south from the street where there is a gap alongside the outbuildings, with this area forming its wider setting.



40 & 41: View west along the street and open farmland to the south

4.7.2 Rose Cottage, Lundy Green, Hempnall is a 17th century timber framed and rendered house with a thatched roof and gable ends, a brick chimney stack off centre and external end stack. It has mullion windows, a plank door and gabled dormers. It is located on the north side of the street and set back with glimpses of the building through surrounding trees and vegetation. It is mainly appreciated from the street along with other surrounding buildings. There are views from the building to the open farmland to the south.



42 & 43: Rose Cottage looking north and along the street to the west

4.7.2 Three Feathers, Lundy Green, Hempnall is a timber framed and rendered house dating from the 17th and 18th centuries with a steep black glazed pantile roof and a central brick chimney stack. The **Barn and Stable Range** adjoining **Three Feathers** is separately listed and dates from the early-mid 19th century. This long range of former small stables is of plastered clay lump construction with a pantile roof and a further small barn of painted flint with brick dressings and a pantile roof adjoins to the south-west. Their significance is derived from their architectural and historic interest and in particular the use of locally distinctive materials and details. Their setting is mainly appreciated in views from the street where they are seen together with surrounding buildings.

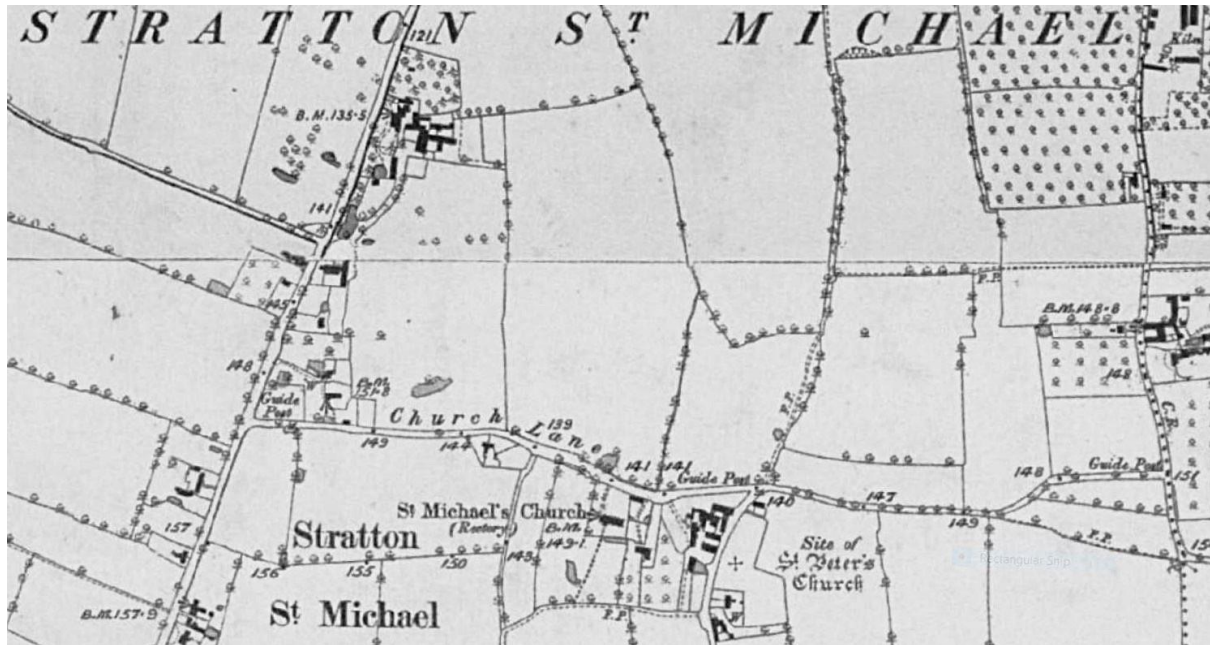


44 & 45: Three Feathers, Barn & Stable Range looking west along the street

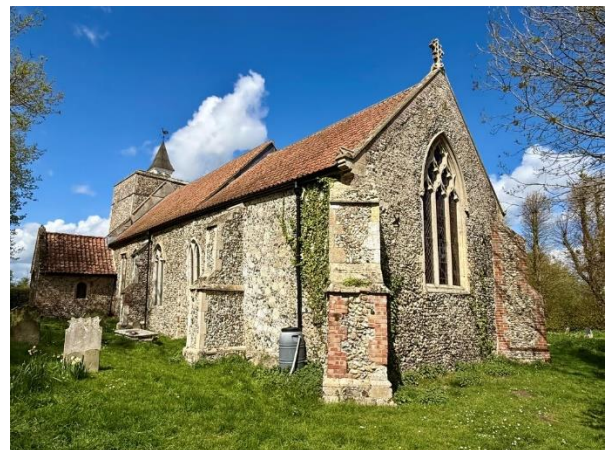
4.8 Site 4: There are 9 listed buildings in close proximity, including the Grade I listed Church of St Michael and the Grade II* listed Old Rectory, both to the south of site 4B and the following Grade II listed buildings: Barn to the north of the Old Rectory, Cottage occupied by Mr & Mrs Wood and Church Farmhouse to the south of site 4B; The Cedars, Pair of houses occupied by Mr B R Weeden and Cottage occupied by Mrs Rye to the west of site 4B and The Hollies to the east of site 4A.

4.8.1 As a high status, Grade I listed building, the significance of the **Church of St Michael, Stratton St Michael, Long Stratton** is derived from its considerable architectural, historic, archaeological and artistic interest. Dating mainly from the 14th century, including the nave and chancel with arch braced roofs, it has a south porch and a low tower with moulded coping to the parapet and a later wooden bellcote. Built of flint with a pantile roof there is evidence of 15th, 17th and 18th century work. As the principal building within the hamlet of Stratton St Michael, it has considerable communal value as the spiritual focus of community life for many centuries as well as being a key part of the traditional rural scene, making an important contribution to locally distinctive character and creating a strong sense of place. The immediate setting of the church is formed by the green and open space of the churchyard which surrounds the church and although there is some degree of enclosure by hedgerows and mature trees, there are several views looking out where the church can be seen along with the surrounding, undeveloped, agricultural land, particularly towards the north, with the degree of visibility increasing during the winter months. There are also several locations within the churchyard where there are views of the Grade II* listed Old Rectory which lies immediately to the south-east and the Grade II listed barn in close proximity, to the north-east of the church. These two buildings form a key element of the setting of the church and as a group, have an important association with each other, both historically in terms of their use and purpose, as well as visually. Considering the degree of change over time, map regression shows that the physical relationship between these buildings and the church along with the surrounding open and undeveloped, rural landscape, remains much the same today, as at the time of their development in the 16th and 17th centuries. This same relationship can be seen on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884. However, it must be noted that the recent construction of the Long Stratton bypass and associated works immediately to the south of the church has changed its setting, with some degree of visual intrusion and the otherwise tranquil experience of the churchyard has been affected by the noise of vehicles travelling along the bypass. Although this has resulted in a negative impact, part of the recent works have included the construction of a public footpath to Long Stratton and a new footbridge over the road. This has created and opened up an important viewpoint where the church can be appreciated in its wider landscape, particularly in views towards the north and north-east, where the open, undeveloped agricultural setting forms the backdrop and defines the long term historic use of the surrounding land. There are further viewpoints looking south towards the church from within the agricultural land where the church tower with its

bellcote, can be appreciated as a distinctive and isolated feature amongst the trees. The character of this land helps to illustrate its historic development as a mediaeval parish church and complements its value as a building which for centuries served as a spiritual centre for a small, but primarily rural and agricultural community. Its relative isolation, reinforced by the undeveloped agricultural landscape are key attributes of the setting of the building, which positively contribute to its overall significance.



46: First edition OS Map of 1884 Stratton St Michael © Norfolk Historic Maps Explorer
With the exception of the recent construction of the Long Stratton bypass to the south of Church Lane and some changes to field boundaries, there has been very little new development since then.



47 & 48: Views of the Church of St Michael from within the churchyard looking north-east and north-west



49: View to the north-east from the new footbridge where the Church of St Michael, the Old Rectory and Barn to the north can all be seen together with open agricultural land beyond forming their setting



50 & 51: View towards open farmland to the north from within the churchyard and view to the south from open farmland where the Church tower is an important feature with its distinctive bellcote and the Barn to the north is also visible

4.8.2 The Old Rectory, Stratton St Michael, Long Stratton is a Grade II* listed, high status timber framed building dating from the 16th century. The ground floor is rendered with the first floor being jettied and supported on curved brackets with close studded timber framing. It has a steep pantile roof and a central brick chimney stack with the west end having a steeper pitched and hipped roof. The lower rear wing to the south is also timber framed and plastered with a brick chimney stack. Its significance is derived from its considerable architectural and historic interest. In addition, it forms part of an important group, having historic associations and visual connections with the adjacent Grade I listed Church of St Michael and the Grade II listed Barn immediately to the north. In terms of its setting, it is set back from Church Lane and views towards the south of the principal façade are restricted by surrounding mature vegetation. There are a number of views towards the east from within the churchyard where the principal façade and roof of the building are visible. However, it is in wider views towards the north-east where it can be appreciated along with the church and

barn, including from the green open space immediately to the south-east of the church, but in particular, from the footpath and footbridge where all three can be seen with the open and undeveloped agricultural land beyond forming their setting. This spatial and visual relationship between the three buildings has remained unchanged for centuries, with the open setting of the agricultural land beyond making an important contribution to understanding the function and significance of the Old Rectory.



52 & 53: View of the Old Rectory looking east from within the churchyard



54: View to the north-east where the Church and the Old Rectory can be seen together

4.8.3 The **Barn to the north of the Old Rectory, Stratton St Michael, Long Stratton** is a Grade II listed, timber framed and plastered building originating from the 17th century with a pantile roof and modern weatherboarding to the north elevation. The section to the east was rebuilt in the 19th century in red brick and there is a further addition with a lower pantile roof originally used as stables, although the building is now in residential use. Its significance is derived mainly from its architectural and historic interest as a traditional vernacular building of simple form and character. The barn is mainly experienced in views along Church Lane, being located immediately to the south. There are also several views from within the churchyard where it is seen in conjunction with the Church and the Old Rectory. In views to the north, also from within the churchyard, the open, undeveloped agricultural land form the backdrop, which is visible through the trees, particularly during the winter. The barn is also visible in views

towards the south from the surrounding open land, together with the church tower. From the new footpath and footbridge there are wide panoramic views towards the north-east, where the barn, the Church and the Old Rectory can all be seen together as an important group with the open agricultural land beyond. This undeveloped, open setting positively contributes to the significance of the barn.



55 & 56: The Barn looking west along Church Lane and view to the north from within the churchyard with open farmland beyond



57 & 58: View of the Barn looking north-east from within the churchyard with open farmland beyond and view looking south across open farmland towards the Barn and the Church tower

4.8.4 The **Cottage occupied by [REDACTED] Stratton St Michael, Long Stratton**, (now referred to as the Thatched Cottage), is a Grade II listed, timber framed and plastered building dating from the 17th century. It has a thatched roof with gables, an eyebrow dormer, brick chimney stack and casement window. Its significance is derived from its architectural and historic interest as a simple, traditional vernacular building, built within a small rural and agricultural community. It is mainly experienced in views along Church Lane being located immediately to the south. Although its setting to the south has changed with the recent construction of the bypass, there are several wide views to the north, including from the new footbridge where the

surrounding agricultural land forms its setting. The cottage has a historic association with this land, with its occupants likely to have worked as part of the local farming community and this setting makes an important contribution to its significance.



59-62: Views of the Thatched Cottage to the east and west along Church Lane and to the south and north, across and towards surrounding open farmland forming its setting



63: The Thatched Cottage looking north-east across the recent works associated with the new bypass with open land beyond forming its wider setting

4.8.5 Church Farmhouse, Stratton St Michael, Long Stratton is a Grade II listed, timber framed and roughcast building originating from the 16th century with later alterations. It has a pantile roof with gable ends and two brick chimney stacks, the gable to the south being brick faced. It has traditional casement windows and a mullion

window to the rear at first floor level along with a short gabled wing to the rear. Its significance is derived mainly from its architectural interest and its historic use as part of a traditional farmstead. It occupies a relatively secluded position with its principal façade facing west, although it is screened by mature trees and vegetation in views to the south from Church Lane. The east facing rear is seen from the adjoining track, although this is experienced amongst several surrounding mainly traditional ancillary farm buildings, predominantly of brick and pantile construction. There are limited views and glimpses of the farmhouse as a consequence of surrounding buildings and trees with its setting being tightly defined.



64 & 65: Church Farmhouse looking west from the adjoining track with surrounding ancillary farm buildings forming its setting

4.8.6 The Cedars, Long Stratton is a Grade II listed grey brick building with a slate roof. The west facing block dates from the late 18th century and is an imposing three storey building, with the principal façade having sash windows and a central doorway with fluted pilasters and entablature, rectangular fanlight and panelled door. The east facing block is the original house dating from the 17th century or earlier and is timber framed and plastered with a steeply pitched pantile roof with gable ends. The Cedars is set amongst a number of mature trees and adjoins the A140 which is immediately to the west and there are a number of other buildings immediately to the south and to the east, beyond which it is surrounded by open areas of farmland. The building is seen in various views when travelling along the A140 along with and in between the surrounding trees and vegetation. The principal façade is seen in views to the east and the north-east from the open land to the west of the A140. There are also views to the north from Church Lane where the façade of the original 17th century house is visible amongst the surrounding trees and adjoining buildings along with views looking west across open farmland, where the roof and chimneys of The Cedars are seen above the surrounding buildings. The open character of the land which surrounds The Cedars and the cluster of adjoining buildings set amongst mature trees, forms its wider setting and having remained undeveloped for many years, positively contributes to its overall significance.



66 & 67: Setting of The Cedars in views to the east and north-east from the open farmland to the west of the A140



68 & 69: Setting of The Cedars in views across open land looking north from Church Lane and across open land looking west

4.8.7 The Grade II listed **Pair of houses occupied by [REDACTED]** [REDACTED] date from the late 17th or early 18th century. Constructed from plastered and painted brick with the east end faced in later red brick and a steep tiled roof with gables and brick chimney stacks. The adjacent Grade II listed **Cottage occupied by [REDACTED] Long Stratton**, (now known as Well Meadow Cottage) dates from the 17th century. It has a plastered and painted brick gable end with a steep pantile roof, wedge shaped dormer and central brick chimney stack. Well Meadow Cottage is accessed from the A140 and sits in a relatively secluded position behind and immediately to the north of the pair of houses which face onto and are accessed from Church Lane which forms their setting in views to the north. There are views of the surrounding open land to the north and east, as well as views looking west towards the buildings across this open land, which forms their setting. There are historic associations between these cottages and the surrounding agricultural land, with occupants likely to have contributed to the work of the local agricultural community. This open, agricultural land which forms their wider setting therefore contributes to understanding the function and significance of these buildings.



70 & 71: Pair of houses and Well Meadow Cottage beyond looking north and north-east from Church Lane



72 & 73: Adjoining open farmland immediately to the east and view looking south-west over open farmland towards the buildings

4.8.8 The Hollies, Morningthorpe and Fritton is a Grade II listed early 19th century, two storey, red brick house with a low pitched and hipped black pantile roof. The west facing, symmetrical principal façade has sash windows with glazing bars and a central pilastered doorcase. The north end has a late 19th century bay window. The main façade of The Hollies faces west onto Brick Kiln Lane. Although there are a number of surrounding mature trees and vegetation, there are glimpses of the building in views from the lane, particularly looking east from the two access driveways. There are a number of adjoining buildings to the north and east referred to as Hollies Farm Barns and although the land to the west is open farmland, mature trees and vegetation limit wider views of the building and its setting is therefore relatively restricted, with the building generally being experienced in close proximity rather than from a wider setting.



74 & 75: The Hollies looking east from the access driveway off Brick Kiln Lane and open farmland to the west with screening from mature trees and vegetation

4.9 Site 5: There are 3 listed buildings in close proximity including the Grade I listed Church of St Catherine to the south of site 5B and the Grade II listed Church Farmhouse and the Barn to the north-west of Church Farmhouse, both to the south-east of site 5B. In addition, Fritton Conservation Area lies immediately to the south and adjoins the south-east boundary of site 5B.

4.9.1 The Church of St Catherine, Morningthorpe and Fritton is a high status, Grade I listed building, its significance being derived from its considerable architectural, historic, archaeological and artistic interest. Built of flint rubble, brick and stone dressings with a slate roof, the round tower is of 12th century origin, with an octagonal belfry stage added in the 15th century and a later embattled parapet. There is a 12th century north doorway to the nave, a 15th century south porch and 19th century Perpendicular windows to the nave. There are several internal features which make an important contribution to its significance including 15th century wall paintings and an octagonal font and early 16th century dado to the rood screen with eight painted panels including the donor John Bacon and his family. The church stands amongst surrounding fields in an isolated and secluded location some distance away from the village which lies to the south. A path from the road leads up to the oak lychgate of the churchyard which was gifted by Mrs Irby of Boyland Hall in 1879. Upon arrival at the green and open space of the churchyard, which forms the immediate setting of the church, there is a distinct sense of peace, tranquillity and isolation. Although there is some degree of enclosure of the churchyard by mature trees and vegetation as well as along the path from the east, there are several views out, particularly to the north over the surrounding, undeveloped agricultural land, with the degree of visibility increasing during the winter months. Considering the degree of change over time, map regression shows that the relationship between the church and the surrounding rural landscape, remains much the same today, as at the time of development which can be seen at the time of publication of the first edition Ordnance Survey map in 1884. The character of this land helps to illustrate its historic development as a mediaeval parish church and complements its value as a building which for centuries served as

a spiritual centre for a small, but primarily rural and agricultural community. Its relative isolation, reinforced by the surrounding undeveloped agricultural landscape are key attributes of the setting of the building, which positively contribute to its overall significance. As the principal building within Fritton, it is a key part of the traditional rural scene, making an important contribution to locally distinctive character and creating a strong sense of place.



76: First edition OS Map of 1884 Fritton

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77 & 78: View to north-west and lychgate from the path looking west



79 & 80: Views from the churchyard to east and north towards surrounding open land



81 & 82: Pathway to lychgate entrance to churchyard and views to north over adjoining open land



83-86: Photographs illustrating increased intervisibility between the church and the surrounding open land during winter months

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4.9.2 Church Farmhouse, Morningthorpe and Fritton is a Grade II listed, timber framed and plastered farmhouse dating from the 17th century. It has a steeply pitched pantile roof with gable ends and an off-centre brick chimney stack. The **Barn to the north-east of Church Farmhouse, Morningthorpe and Fritton** is a 17th or 18th century timber framed, plastered and weatherboarded barn with steeply pitched gable

ended roof. Together the farmhouse and barn form an important group. Both buildings are mainly appreciated in views towards the east when travelling along The Street with the barn adjoining and set at right angles to the road and the farmhouse set back within the site. Their wider setting is formed by open and undeveloped farmland which surrounds the properties and due to historic associations between the buildings and land, this rural landscape setting positively contributes to an understanding of their historic function and significance.



87 & 88: Views of the barn and farmhouse looking east from The Street



89 & 90: Open farmland rising to the west immediately opposite the entrance to Church Farmhouse from The Street and view to the east from the path adjoining the churchyard towards Church Farmhouse and Barn

4.9.3 Fritton Conservation Area, originally designated in 1976, lies immediately to the south of site 5B and adjoins the site boundary to the south-east corner. Key characteristics include:

- Large well-preserved grazed common with numerous ponds which are important natural habitats
- Concentration of dwellings at the north end of the hamlet
- Importance of verges with buildings set back behind hedges

- Variety of vernacular architecture including a number of thatched buildings

The Conservation Area is distinctly rural in character with buildings dispersed around the common, which back onto surrounding agricultural land. The common is well enclosed by mature trees to the perimeter and feels separate from the relatively flat surrounding countryside, creating its own distinctive sense of place.



91: View to north from Fritton Common

4.10 **Site 6:** There are 3 listed buildings in close proximity. However, Site 6 is now to be retained for habitat management with no built development proposed within the site. As a consequence, there will be no changes to the setting of surrounding heritage assets and they have therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

4.11 **Sites 7A – 7C:** There are 7 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity including The Countryman Public House and Hill Farmhouse to the west of site 7A, Tramp's Hall and Barn to the east of Tramp's Hall, both to the south of site 7A, the Former Quaker Meeting House to the south-west of site 7A and Wood Farmhouse and Grove Farmhouse to the south of site 7C.

4.11.1 **The Countryman Public House, Tasburgh** is a Grade II listed 18th century, three storey, stuccoed brick building with a pantile roof, Dutch gables and sash windows. There is a single storey wing to the south and a two-storey wing to the east, both with hipped pantile roofs. It adjoins the A140 and is seen as a prominent building due to its 3-storey height and Dutch gabled form, in views mainly towards the east when travelling along the road. Its wider setting is formed by the undulating and gently rising farmland of the Tas Rural River Valley which form the distant backdrop to the building in views to the east. There are also views from the open farmland towards the west where the building is seen as a feature on the horizon amongst the surrounding mature trees. Although there are no historic connections between the

use of the land and the building as a public house, the surrounding land forms the wider landscape setting within which the building is appreciated.



92 & 93: Views towards the north-east and south-east from the A140 with open farmland forming the backdrop



94 & 95: Setting of The Countryman in views to the west from open farmland

4.11.2 Hill Farmhouse, Tasburgh is a Grade II listed 17th century timber framed and plastered farmhouse with a steeply pitched slate roof, brick chimney stacks, wedge shaped dormers, sash windows and a pilastered doorcase. It occupies a prominent position on the main A140 Long Stratton Road at the junction with Fairstead Lane and is seen in views when travelling along the road, mainly towards the north-east and south-east. There are a number of ancillary farm buildings immediately to the north and from the main access drive there are views towards the east where the surrounding open and undulating farmland within the Tas Rural River Valley forms the setting of the building. There are also views towards the west from this open farmland where the farmhouse and its ancillary buildings are seen within a rural landscape setting. There are historic associations between the farmhouse and the use of the surrounding open land which forms its setting and positively contributes towards the understanding of its historic function and its overall significance.



96 & 97: Hill Farmhouse looking south-east from the A140 and view looking east from the entrance drive with open farmland beyond



98 & 99: View to north-east from the A140 and view towards the west with open and undeveloped farmland forming its setting

4.11.3 **Tramp's Hall, Tasburgh** is a Grade II listed 17th century timber framed and roughcast house with a steep pantile roof with gable ends and a brick chimney stack. The **Barn immediately east of Tramp's Hall, Tasburgh** is a Grade II listed timber framed barn dating from the 17th century with a steeply pitched roof clad in corrugated iron. It has a gabled porch to the east and waggon entrance opposite to the west, and collar and tiebeam roof trusses with curved braces to the tiebeam. Tramp's Hall and the adjacent barn form an important group. The buildings are located on the south side of Fairstead Lane immediately after the junction with the A140 and being surrounded by mature trees and vegetation, occupy a relatively secluded position. The barn sits at right angles and can be seen in views from the lane. However, the hall is set well back within the site and is only glimpsed when passing the entrance driveway. There are more distant views looking west across open farmland where the roof of the barn can be seen within this wider rural setting.



100 & 101: The barn looking east from Fairstead Lane and views to west across open farmland with the roof of the barn seen on the left

4.11.4 Former Quaker Meeting House, Tasburgh is a Grade II listed, two storey, early 18th century meeting house now converted into a dwelling, comprising a red brick rectangular block with a black pantile hipped roof, moulded brick eaves course and mullion and transom windows. Located on Quaker Lane to the south side of Fairstead Lane, the building occupies a secluded position and is mainly appreciated in close up views from the entrance driveway. There are more distant views looking towards the south across open farmland where the roof of the building is seen above surrounding hedgerows, although it is not a particularly prominent feature as it is set against a backdrop of mature trees.



102: View looking south across open farmland

4.11.5 Wood Farmhouse, Hempnall is a Grade II listed 17th century brick house with a steep black glazed pantile roof with parapeted gable ends, brick chimney stacks, a moulded doorcase with cornice and a panelled door. It is located at the end of a long track to the north of Fairstead Lane and is seen within a wide, open landscape setting. There are a number of ancillary and other buildings surrounding the farmhouse and an area of woodland to the west, with open farmland to the north and south. There are important historic relationships between this wider landscape setting and the

traditional rural farm buildings which sit within an open agricultural context, which positively contributes to their significance.



103: Wood Farmhouse in centre looking north from Fairstead Lane

4.11.6 **Grove Farmhouse, Hempnall** is a Grade II listed, timber framed and plastered house dating from the 17th century. It has a brick faced wall to the south end, a steeply pitched slated roof with gable ends, a brick chimney stack off centre and an external end stack. It is located at the end of a long track from Fairstead Lane and sits parallel to the track with its gable being visible in distant views from the south. Its principal façade faces east with an adjoining pond forming its immediate setting. There are several single storey brick, flint and pantile ancillary farm buildings immediately to the west and to the north and a wooded area further to the east. There are a number of mature trees and a moat to the south and the buildings are surrounded by open farmland to the north and the south. As traditional rural farm buildings within an open agricultural setting, there are important historic associations between the buildings and surrounding land which positively contributes to their significance.



104 & 105: Immediate setting of Grove Farmhouse in views to the west with the adjoining pond and farm access track looking west with adjoining ancillary farm buildings to the north and west



106 & 107: Adjoining farm buildings in views to the north-west and north with surrounding open farmland beyond



108 & 109: Access track in views to the north-west and north leading to surrounding open farmland

4.12 Sites 7D – 7H: There are 5 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity including Manor Cottage, Manor Farmhouse and Manor Farmhouse Barn to the north-east of site 7D and Hill Cottages and Hill House to the north of site 7D. In addition, the Grade II listed Holly Cottage lies to the north of site 7F and although it has been scoped out of further assessment in the Heritage Statement submitted with the application, it has been included because it is potentially affected by the proposed development. Saxlingham Green Conservation Area also lies immediately to the north-east of site 7D and to the north of site 7F.

4.12.1 Manor Cottage, Saxlingham Nethergate is a Grade II listed rendered and timber framed, former farmhouse dating from the 17th century with later alterations, which was converted into two, but is now a single dwelling. It is two storeys with attic to the east, a pantile roof with off-centre axial chimney stack and a mixed fenestration including two, three and four light metal casements with horizontal glazing bars. The building occupies a prominent corner plot and there are key views from the road towards the south, west and north. It lies within the Saxlingham Green Conservation

Area and marks the entrance into the area on the approach from the south where there is a distinct change in character from open land to built development formed by a small cluster of buildings. Immediately to the south is open undeveloped farmland with distant views looking north towards the building. There are historic associations between the building as a former farmhouse and the open farmland which forms its setting to the south, positively contributing to its significance.



110-113: Setting of Manor Cottage in views to the south, west and north from the road

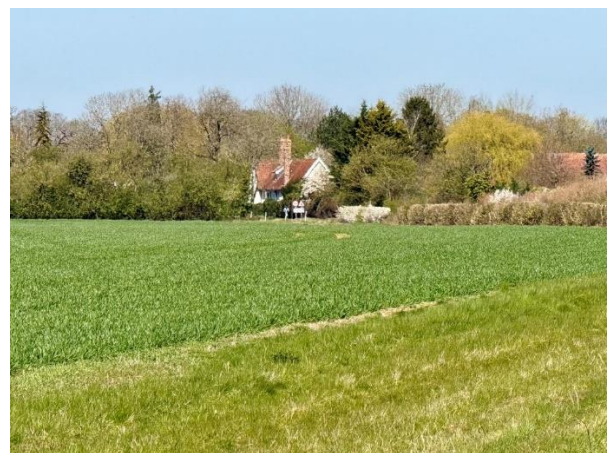


114 & 115: View to north at the entrance to the Conservation Area and view to south across open farmland adjoining the boundary of Manor Cottage

4.12.2 Manor Farmhouse, Saxlingham Nethergate is a Grade II listed former farmhouse dating from the 16th and 17th centuries with later alterations. It is timber framed with a pantile roof and has been refaced and extended in colourwashed brick. The original house was extended to the side with a later cross wing then being added. Key architectural features include a mixed fenestration of casements, a blocked mullion and transom window, a moulded stringcourse on the 17th century side extension, platbands to the cross wing, brick chimney stacks, tumbling in to the cross-wing gable and a sloping dormer window. It is located within Saxlingham Green Conservation Area in a prominent corner position at the junction with The Green where there are key views of the building to the west and to the north-east. There is open farmland to the south which forms its wider setting with the building being seen in views towards the north across the open landscape. As a former farmhouse there are historic associations between the building and surrounding land with its setting positively contributing to its overall significance.



116 & 117: Setting of Manor Farmhouse looking west and north-east



118 & 119: Approach to the east and setting across open farmland looking north

4.12.3 Manor Farmhouse Barn, Saxlingham Nethergate is a Grade II listed timber framed and weatherboarded barn dating from the 17th century which has been converted to a dwelling with a later lean-to extension to the rear. It comprises 13 bays

of a clasped purlin and butt purlin roof with alternate arch braced ties and wind bracing. The barn forms a group with the adjacent farmhouse which historically would have been part of the farmstead. It occupies a slightly more secluded position being set back into the site with its setting being fairly tightly defined, although there are views to the south dominated by the roof and the gable end is seen in views towards the east from the road



120 & 121: The Barn looking to south and gable looking east from the road adjacent to Manor Farmhouse

4.12.4 Hill Cottages, Saxlingham Nethergate is a Grade II listed former farmhouse originating from the 16th century which was converted into three cottages and is now a single dwelling. It is timber framed and rendered with colourwashed brick to the front and sides and a thatched roof, casement windows, three eyebrow dormers and brick chimney stacks. It is mainly appreciated in views towards the east where it is set back from the road with an open green frontage. There are also views of the building across open farmland to the west and to the south which forms its wider setting.



122 & 123: Setting looking east across open green frontage from the road



124 & 125: Adjoining open farmland looking south-west along the road and view of Hill Cottages looking east across open farmland

4.12.5 Hill House, Saxlingham Nethergate is a Grade II listed large house dating from the 17th century with later 19th century alterations and additions. It is timber framed and rendered with colourwashed brick gable ends and a plain tiled roof. Architecturally the building is quite decorative and distinctive with seven bays of 19th century three-light mullion windows (above) and mullion and transom windows (below) with rectangular hood moulds, three gabled dormers, a pair of small oval windows in each side wing gable end, elaborate moulded gable corbels, crow-stepped gables and brick chimney stacks with octagonal shafts. Mainly appreciated from its open setting to the west, it is slightly set back from the road and is a distinctive building when passing along the street. There are adjacent buildings to the south beyond which is open farmland.



126: Hill House in centre looking north with adjoining buildings to the south

4.12.6 Holly Cottage, Saxlingham Nethergate is a Grade II listed cottage dated 1834 on the porch, constructed from rendered clay lump with a colourwashed brick porch and a black pantiled roof. It has four Gothick 2-light casement windows, a rear extension with a catslide roof and a central brick chimney stack with a pair of tall octagonal stacks. Holly Cottage is located with the Saxlingham Green Conservation

Area in an open setting with key views towards the north where it is set back from The Green. Open and undeveloped farmland to the north and south forms its wider setting.



127 & 128: Setting to north and north-west with Holly Cottage set back from The Green



129 & 130: Approach to The Green towards the west and open farmland to the south

4.12.7 Saxlingham Green Conservation Area lies immediately to the north-east of site 7D and to the north of site 7F and was originally designated in 1973. Key characteristics include:

- Natural character dominates with the buildings being secondary to it
- Number of fine historic buildings dispersed within the area
- Situated on a 'plateau' site to the south east of Saxlingham Nethergate
- Linked to surrounding countryside by a matrix of footpaths and bridleways
- Much of The Green enclosed by mature trees together with hedgerows
- The Green follows the line of the road but is made up of separate areas which provide a series of changing views and vistas

The Conservation Area is defined by the natural elements in the landscape with a series of buildings siting at various intervals within it and it is the interaction between these two components which defines and creates its distinctive character. The area is set amongst a rural agricultural topography, typical of this part of South Norfolk.

Although there is a strong sense of enclosure from mature trees and vegetation with buildings scattered throughout the area, there are a number of important views, from within the area, particularly towards the south, where the open and undeveloped rural landscape which surrounds the Conservation Area can be appreciated. There is a strong sense of arrival when approaching the Conservation Area from the south along Broaden Lane from Hempnall. There is a distinct change in character from wide open views of surrounding farmland to a cluster of buildings which define the west entrance to the Conservation Area.



131 & 132: Views looking south out of the Conservation Area to open and undeveloped farmland beyond



133: Approach to the Conservation Area from the south through open farmland

4.13 Sites 7I – 7L: The Grade II* listed Oaks Farmhouse lies to the east of site 7L.

4.13.1 Oaks Farmhouse, Woodton is a high status, Grade II* listed house dating from the 16th and 17th centuries which was partly refaced in the 18th century. Of timber framed and brick construction with a pantile roof, its significance is derived from its architectural and historic interest and in particular, its 16th century 2-cell plan and 17th century 3-cell lobby entrance type plan set at right angles, with an L-shaped plan form overall. Key architectural features include 16th century brickwork to the west gable with parapet and kneelers, gable end brick chimney stack, polygonal end turrets to gable corners, moulded brick pediments, diamond mullion to the north wall and a mix

of later casement windows. Map regression shows that the building is located in an isolated location surrounded by open and undeveloped land which still remains today. Although surrounded by some mature trees and vegetation there are views of the building towards the north and the east, with visibility increasing during the winter months. There are also views out from the building across the surrounding land especially to the south and to the west. Its setting in an isolated rural position surrounded by open land which has remained undeveloped for centuries makes an important contribution to its overall significance.



134 & 135: Setting of Oaks Farmhouse in views to the north-east



136-139: Surrounding open farmland in views to the west and the south

4.14 Site 8: There are 2 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity, including Upgate Green Farmhouse and the Outhouse north of Upgate Green Farmhouse, both of which are to the north of site 8B.

4.14.1 Upgate Green Farmhouse, Shotesham is a Grade II listed 18th century brick farmhouse with a pantile roof. It has a T-shaped plan form and is 2 storeys with 3-light casement windows with horizontal glazing bars at first floor level and transom windows to the ground floor with segmental arches. It has an off-centres porch with pediment, external gable end brick chimney stacks and tumbled in brickwork. Adjoining is the **Outhouse immediately to north of Upgate Green Farmhouse, Shotesham** which is separately listed Grade II. Possibly a former bothy, this 18th century two-storey building is brick and pantile. It has horizontal lattice ventilation openings beneath segmental brick arches and a gable end brick chimney stack. Both the farmhouse and outhouse form an important group, which together with a number of other outbuildings are located in an isolated position in Upgate Green which lies to the south of the main settlement of Shotesham. There are views of the buildings when travelling along the adjoining road, together with views looking towards the north where they form the backdrop across the open farmland. This rural, undeveloped and gently undulating landscape has important historic associations with these buildings as the surrounding farmland and this setting positively contributes to their significance.



140-143: Setting of farmhouse and outbuilding from the adjoining road



144 & 145: View looking south along Brooke Road adjacent to the farmhouse and open farmland immediately to the south



146 & 147: View looking north towards farmhouse across open farmland and view to south along Brooke Road

4.15 **Site 9:** There are 4 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity including Waterfield Cottage to the north-west of site 9, Oldhouse Farmhouse and the Barn at Oldhouse Farm to the west of site 9 and Littlebeck Farmhouse to the south-east of site 9. The Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area also lies to the north and east of site 9.

4.15.1 **Waterfield Cottage, Brooke** is a Grade II listed, timber framed, brick and rendered house with a thatched roof, originating from the early 17th century. A further cell was added in the late 17th century, leaded casements date from the 18th century, with further alterations and extensions in the 20th century. Two eyebrow dormers have Gothick leaded casements and the brick axial chimney stack is 17th century. The building is set back from the road and occupies a relatively secluded position being surrounded by hedges and mature trees with only glimpses of the building when passing the entrance drive and its setting therefore being tightly defined.



148 & 149: View of Waterfield Cottage looking west and access driveway from High Green with building set back from the road

4.15.2 **Oldhouse Farmhouse, Brooke** is a Grade II listed, early 17th century farmhouse with later alterations. It has a gabled clay pantile roof, English bond brickwork and render to the front, with a timber framed cross-wing to the south faced in Flemish bond brickwork during the mid-19th century. Key architectural features which contribute to its significance include moulded brick kneelers to coped gables, 17th century brick axial chimney stack with moulded bases to 4 octagonal brick shafts, casement windows with glazing bars and a 3-unit lobby-entrance plan form with parlour in cross wing and a stair turret to the rear. Immediately to the south is the **Barn at Oldhouse Farm, Brooke**, which is separately listed Grade II. This also dates from the 17th century and is timber framed and weatherboarded with a corrugated iron roof. It has a 4-bay plan with a gabled projection to the south, a later brick extension to the east, arched braces to tie beams and curved wind braces to the upper purlins. The farmhouse and adjacent barn are also listed for group value, forming an important historic group. The key views of the farmhouse and barn are mainly appreciated from the adjacent road looking towards the west where there are open views of the principal façade of the farmhouse and the gable of the barn and adjacent yard. Open farmland surrounds the properties particularly to the east and to the south and there are views across this area towards the buildings looking west. There are important historic connections between these buildings and the surrounding farmland and this setting positively contributes to an understanding of their historic function and the overall significance of the buildings.



150-153: Setting of farmhouse and adjacent barn in views to west from the road



154-155: Open farmland looking east and view to the west across open farmland toward the farmhouse and barn

4.15.3 Littlebeck Farmhouse, Brooke is a Grade II listed house dating from the early 19th century with a 17th century wing to the rear. Built of brick and a rendered timber frame, it has a hipped, black glazed pantile roof. Key architectural features contributing to its significance include a symmetrical façade with 16 pane sash windows, a central porch with pilasters and a moulded flat hood, 6 panel door, brick cornice, 2 chimney stacks to the rear wall and a large central axial chimney stack to the rear with 17th century brickwork to the lower courses. It has a 19th century, 3-cell

plan form and a 17th century 2-cell lobby entrance type plan to the rear wing. The main façade of the building faces east and there are views of the building from the adjacent track, where it is set back from the surrounding hedge, with the building mainly being seen through the entrance driveways. There are further buildings immediately to the north as well as along the opposite side of the track in a linear pattern. The building is surrounded by open areas of farmland and there are views across this looking to the east where the rear (earlier) wing of the farmhouse along with the chimneys and roof are seen amongst the trees, with the degree of visibility increasing during the winter. The farmhouse has historic associations with the surrounding farmland and this open undeveloped setting positively contributes to its overall significance.



156 & 157: Setting of the farmhouse with its principal façade being visible in views towards the west from the adjoining track



158 & 159: View to the east across open farmland with the farmhouse visible through surrounding trees and view to the east along Littlebeck Lane through open farmland with the farmhouse visible in the background

4.15.4 Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area, originally designated in 1975, lies to the north and east of site 9. The Conservation Area has four distinct character areas with the historic linear south-west to north-east settlement along High Green being

closest to the north of site 9. This area has a number of historic buildings including the Victorian school and a number of red brick cottages on the south side of High Green. The Conservation Area lies within a relatively flat plateau and there are several views towards the settlement from the surrounding fields. However, much of the development is interspersed with verdant landscaping and tree belts around the settlement and as a consequence, views of buildings within the area from the open countryside are limited. The Conservation Area does however retain a rural backdrop of agricultural fields, with the boundary backing on to open countryside all along the south side of the village.



160 & 161: Views to the north across open farmland towards High Green within the Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area

4.16 Site 10: There are 3 Grade II listed buildings in close proximity, including the Old Rectory, Beulah House and Beulah Barn, all to the west of site 10B. In addition, Seething Conservation Area lies to the north of site 10E and although it has been scoped out of further assessment in the Heritage Statement submitted with the application, it has been included because it is potentially affected by the proposed development.

4.16.1 Old Rectory, Woodton, is a Grade II listed, colour washed brick and timber framed house with hipped slate and tile roofs, comprising a 19th century 3-cell range and a 17th century 2-cell range to the rear. The south façade has a central doorcase, 6-panel door, sash windows with glazing bars, a 19th century bay window and a 20th century glazed conservatory. The rear range has brick to the ground floor and plaster to the first floor, casement windows with glazing bars, timber porch with plank door, a canted bay window, axial chimney stack and a brick gable wall to the north. The building is set back on the east side of Norwich Road and is surrounded by mature trees and vegetation, although there are some views through the trees with the degree of visibility increasing during the winter. There are a number of other buildings immediately to the north with open land to the south and east. To the north there is an track with views towards the building looking west, although there is very limited visibility of the building which is largely obscured by surrounding mature trees.



162 & 163: Views of the Old Rectory seen through surrounding mature trees looking east from Norwich Road



164 & 165: Views from the track looking west towards the Old Rectory which is largely obscured by surrounding mature trees

4.16.2 **Beulah House, Woodton**, is a Grade II listed 19th century brick house with a slate roof comprising 2 parallel 3-cell ranges. The west facing formal façade has sash windows with glazing bars and a central 6 panel door with fanlight. The rear east façade also has a formal composition with sash windows with glazing bars and a central door. The end brick gables have parapets and brick chimney stacks. Beulah House sits on the east side of the main Norwich Road and is set back beyond a low brick boundary wall. Although surrounded by mature trees and vegetation there are glimpses of the principal façade in views towards the east when travelling along the road, with the building being more visible during the winter. Immediately to the east is open farmland and there are views of the house towards the west across this open land, particularly from the track to the south. There is further open farmland to the east on rising and gently undulating ground, which forms the backdrop in views to the east from the house.



166 & 167: Views to the north-west across adjoining open farmland



168 & 169: View looking east along the track which runs to the south of Beulah House through open farmland with rising and undulating farmland beyond and wider view looking north-west towards Beulah House across open farmland

4.16.3 **Beulah Barn, Woodton** is a Grade II listed former threshing barn dating from circa 1600. It is a timber framed four-stead barn on a brick plinth, weatherboarded with a steeply pitched pantile roof and a gabled wing to the east forming an L-shaped plan. There are large double waggon entrance doors to the west wall and later double doors and window opening to the south gable. The wing to the east has catslide extensions to the north and south sides. Beulah Barn is located to the east of the main Norwich Road and to the north of Beulah House. Although surrounded by mature trees and vegetation there are views of the gable and roof of the barn from the road. Immediately to the north and east is open farmland and there are views of the barn towards the west across this open land, particularly from the track to the south, where it can also be seen along with Beulah House. There is further open farmland to the east on rising and gently undulating ground, which forms the backdrop in views to the east from the barn.



170 & 171: View of Beulah Barn to the north-west and together with Beulah House across adjoining open farmland



172 & 173: Wider view to the north-west from the track to the south and view to the east across open farmland with rising and undulating farmland beyond

4.16.4 Seething Conservation Area, designated in 1994, lies to the north of site 10E. Key characteristics include:

- Linear settlement based on rural agricultural economy
- Picturesque mere at the centre of village with Mere House facing the pond to the west
- Partially moated village church with triangular green to south

Seething is surrounded by relatively flat agricultural land and as a consequence, some buildings within the settlement can be viewed from some distance away. However, the extent of mature trees and vegetation means that there are partial glimpses into the area from surrounding fields. The village has not been extended with any large scale suburban or estate type development and therefore, its linear characteristics are well preserved, with the Conservation Area including most of the settlement.



174 & 175: Views looking north across open farmland where buildings mark the start of Seething Conservation Area



176 & 177: Views across open farmland looking north towards the Conservation Area and to the south from the Conservation Area

5.0 Relevant Legislation, Policies and Guidance

5.1 In relation to heritage assets the following policies and guidance are considered to be relevant when assessing the proposed development of the site :

5.2 **Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) 2025 and National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) 2025**

5.3 **National Planning Practice Guidance : Historic environment** (updated July 2019) sets out the main legislative framework for planning and the historic environment and states : *'Any decisions where listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas are a factor must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 66 and 72) as well as applying the relevant policies within the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.'*

5.4 **Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** states *'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall have regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.*

5.5 **Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** imposes a general duty on local planning authorities in relation to the exercise of planning functions affecting Conservation Areas which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

5.6 **National Planning Policy Framework**, (revised August 2026), Section 20 : Conserving & enhancing the historic environment.

5.7 **Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance : Historic England**, (April 2008).

5.8 **Historic England Guidance : Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning : GPA2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment'** (July 2015) and **GPA3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'** (Dec 2017).

5.9 **Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance : Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets'** (October 2019).

5.10 **Greater Norwich Local Plan**, March 2024

5.11 **Neighbourhood Plans**

6.0 Assessment of the heritage impact of the proposed development

6.1 Section 5.9 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) sets out policy details in relation to the historic environment, with paragraphs 5.9.11 – 5.9.17 referring to applicant assessment, paragraphs 5.9.18 – 5.9.22 referring to mitigation and paragraphs 5.9.23 – 5.9.37 referring to Secretary of State decision making.

6.2 Paragraph 5.9.11 states that consideration needs to be given to the possible impacts, including cumulative, on the wider historic environment and paragraph 5.9.14 requires the applicant to *‘ensure that the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of any heritage assets affected can be adequately understood from the application and supporting documents.’*

6.3 Paragraph 5.9.28 states that: *‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give great weight to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance.’*

6.4 Paragraph 5.9.29 states that: *‘The Secretary of State should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving all heritage assets. Any harm or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.’*

6.5 Paragraph 5.9.33 states that: *‘Where the proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.’*

6.6 Paragraph 5.9.37 states that: *‘When considering applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of such assets and treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, the Secretary of State should give great weight to any negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application, The greater the negative impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.’*

6.7 The third stage of the Historic England Guidance is to assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or the ability to appreciate it. The assessment should address those attributes relevant to the proposed development from the following checklist:

Assessment Step 3 Checklist The following is a (non-exhaustive) check-list of the potential attributes of a development affecting setting that may help to elucidate its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. It may be that only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development.	
Location and siting of development ■ Proximity to asset ■ Position in relation to relevant topography and watercourses ■ Position in relation to key views to, from and across ■ Orientation ■ Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset	Wider effects of the development ■ Change to built surroundings and spaces ■ Change to skyline, silhouette ■ Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc ■ Lighting effects and 'light spill' ■ Change to general character (eg urbanising or industrialising) ■ Changes to public access, use or amenity ■ Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover ■ Changes to communications/accessibility/permeability, including traffic, road junctions and car-parking, etc ■ Changes to ownership arrangements (fragmentation/permitted development/etc) ■ Economic viability
Form and appearance of development ■ Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness ■ Competition with or distraction from the asset ■ Dimensions, scale and massing ■ Proportions ■ Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through), reflectivity ■ Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc) ■ Architectural and landscape style and/or design ■ Introduction of movement or activity ■ Diurnal or seasonal change	Permanence of the development ■ Anticipated lifetime/temporariness ■ Recurrence ■ Reversibility

178: Step 3 Checklist, Historic England GPA3 'The setting of heritage assets'

6.8 The assessment of significance undertaken in Section 4.0 of this report identifies a total of 45 listed buildings and 4 Conservation Areas where there is potential for the proposed built development to impact on their setting. An assessment now follows on a site by site basis, using the relevant criteria from the Historic England checklist as set out above, to determine the impact of the proposals and whether or not there will be any harm caused and if so, the degree of harm.

6.9 **Sites 1 and 2 and BESS** In addition to several areas of solar PV arrays proposed throughout various parcels of land, the north part of site 1B is the proposed location for the new National Grid Substation, along with associated overhead line works and a 400kV substation, and the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a 400kV substation to the south.

6.10 **Broadgate Way** is in close proximity to the proposed site which lies to the east. It sits in a relatively isolated location with mature trees and vegetation providing a degree of seclusion with open views across the land to the west. Although the

surrounding open agricultural land contributes to its overall significance, there is limited intervisibility with the site to the east and it is therefore agreed that there will be no harmful impact on the significance of Broadgate Way.

6.11 Moulton Farmhouse sits in an isolated location with surrounding open farmland forming its setting and making an important contribution to its significance. The principal façade of the farmhouse faces west and there are several important open views both from and towards the site where the building is experienced in its rural, agricultural setting, particularly to the west, north-west and south-west, as illustrated in photographs 17-22. Although the existing field immediately to the west is to remain undeveloped the proposed solar panels are to be located in the adjoining field to the west, in relatively close proximity to the farmhouse where there are currently open views. In addition, the proposed National Grid Substation and a 400kV substation are to be located to the north-west of the farmhouse and the BESS and a 400kV project substation to the south-west. The submitted impact assessment acknowledges that the solar PV arrays and the project substation will be visible to the west of Moulton Farmhouse and views of the farmhouse from the public footpath will be largely obscured by the proposed substation. Although it is intended to plant a native linear tree belt along the boundary of sub-site 1B to restrict views once matured (after approximately 15 years), the impact assessment concludes in Paragraph 4.44, that the proposals will result in less than substantial harm to the significance of Moulton Farmhouse, although at the lower end of the scale. However, taking account of the height of the proposed panels and their proximity to the farmhouse, additional planting is unlikely to effectively screen them from view, thereby introducing incongruous and industrial features within its setting. Furthermore, the proposed mitigation measures will in themselves have an adverse impact by severing the historic visual relationship between the farmhouse and the open character of the surrounding landscape. It is therefore agreed that although there will be an adverse impact which is considered to be less than substantial, this will be at a higher level of moderate harm.

6.12 Laurels Farmhouse and Barn to the east are mainly appreciated in views from High Green, although being set back from the street and surrounded by mature trees and vegetation they are relatively secluded. However, there are open views from the buildings to the south and towards the buildings looking north across open farmland which forms their setting (see photos 26 & 27). Although the land immediately to the south is to remain undeveloped, the area beyond is to include both solar panels and a substation, in addition to the proposed National Grid Substation to the south-west. The submitted impact assessment notes that their rural setting contributes to their significance, but concludes at Paragraphs 4.45 and 4.46 that there will be no harm to the significance of the farmhouse or the barn. However, there is no assessment of the degree of visibility or impact of the proposed National Grid Substation, particularly in views to the west and to the north where it will form the backdrop across open farmland in conjunction with the farmhouse and barn. The solar panels will also be seen along

the horizon in these views although visibility will be reduced after the proposed planting has matured (approx. 15 years). It is therefore concluded that there will be some degree of harm which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.13 Hill House is a prominent three-storey building with its principal façade facing west and is surrounded by flat areas of farmland which form its setting with key views both to and from the building to the north and south and across open land to the west. Solar panels are proposed in sub-site 2A, immediately to the west, setback only 20m from the road, in close proximity to the building. The submitted impact assessment notes that the panels will be effectively screened by tree and hedgerow planting, once matured, after a period of approximately 15 years and concludes in Paragraph 4.49 that although there will be minor changes to its setting, there will be no noticeable impact on the significance of the building or the ability to appreciate it and there will be no harm resulting from the scheme. Paragraph 4.48 also states that *‘Setbacks incorporated into the design of the scheme, combined with the proposed landscape mitigation, will ensure that the roadside prominence of the designated heritage asset is preserved and that the presence of solar PV arrays will not distract from views and therein appreciation of the listed building’*. On the contrary, it is considered that the addition of 4.5 m high solar PV arrays in close proximity to Hill House, will result in alien and industrial features being clearly visible within its existing open setting. Furthermore, the proposed mitigation measures, which will not create any effective means of screening for several years, will in themselves have an adverse impact by creating a sense of enclosure and severing the visual relationship between Hill House and the surrounding open and undeveloped landscape. Important views towards the building, such as those from the west from public footpaths, where it is appreciated in an open, rural landscape setting, will also be blocked. In addition, views from the building towards the west, particularly from the upper floors, which are currently open and rural in character, will change to an industrial landscape dominated by solar panels. It is therefore concluded that there will be a harmful impact on the significance of Hill House arising from the proposed development of sub-site 2A, which is considered to be less than substantial, but at a moderate level.

6.14 French’s Farmhouse is part of an isolated farmstead with associated outbuildings and is relatively secluded being enclosed by mature trees and vegetation, but is appreciated in several glimpsed views from the extensive, surrounding flat and open farmland which forms its setting. Solar PV arrays are proposed on sub-sites 2B and 2C some distance away to the west of the farmhouse on the opposite side of the A140. Although there will initially be some visibility of the panels along the horizon in views towards the west, this will be screened by the proposed landscaping mitigation measures once matured. Taking into account the distance between the proposed panels and the farmhouse, it is agreed that there will be no harmful impact on the significance of French’s Farmhouse.

6.15 **Barn Cottages** are a pair of cottages in a fairly isolated location surrounded by open farmland and are appreciated in many views as illustrated in photos 32-38, particularly towards the south where the main façade is seen, as well as to the north and west from Station Road. The proposed BESS and 400kV substation are to be located within site 1, around 280m to the north of Barn Cottages.

6.16 Paragraphs 4.52 and 4.53 of the submitted impact assessment state *‘The listed building is set back from the frontage of Station Road which, on the opposing side, there is an intervening range of two-storey cottages that effectively block intervisibility between Barn Cottages and the site’* and *‘It is not thought likely that built elements of the scheme will be visible from Barn Cottages due to its position, particularly if they are located within the eastern part of the BESS site. However, if located at the western limit of the BESS site, visibility analysis would suggest that taller elements of the Project Substation may be visible from the listed building although these views would be restricted to a small section of the sub-site, be oblique and largely obscured by the property situated to the north’*.

6.17 Paragraph 4.55 goes on to say *‘However, when travelling northwards along Station Road and to the south-east of Barn Cottages, both the listed building and 400kV substation would be visible. The substation would be at a sufficient distance so as not to be prominent in this view, but would certainly be another element in the landscape included in this wider ranging vista of Barn Cottages. Landscaping initiatives as part of the scheme will include tree planting along the southern boundary of site 1, which will obscure intervisibility with the substation once matured. This is however, expected to take an estimated period of 30 years for the new woodland to reach sufficient height to screen the substation’* and Paragraph 4.65 *‘The wider setting of the listed building is overwhelmingly rural, but not exclusively as there are several industrial buildings, including a large maltings, visible to the west of the cottages and the numerous pylons that dot the surrounding landscape. The BESS, noise barrier screening and substation would introduce another industrial looking element to this wider landscape setting but would not be overall incongruous due to the presence of other more industrial structures in the vicinity, albeit not a large number of these. The setting of Barn Cottages provides a minor contribution to its significance in the emphasis of its traditional, rural architecture but does not inform the significance to any major degree. Views best illustrating the rural surroundings are to the south and these will be unaffected by the scheme’*.

6.18 The impact assessment concludes at Paragraph 4.57 that *‘The Project Substation will be situated to the south of the BESS within the BESS sub-site. It is considered that, depending on the exact final solution of the Project Substation within this area, there will be either no or oblique, partial views of taller elements of the structure from the listed building itself. In the latter case, this would result in a minor adverse effect resulting from some change to the heritage asset’s setting, but not to a degree that it would materially compromise the significance of the heritage asset. It is*

considered that this change has the potential to cause less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale, reducing to no harm once the landscape screening has matured’.

6.19 The approach to the assessment of the impact of the proposals, as set out above, together with the conclusions reached, raise a number of concerns:

- The impact of the proposed substation and the BESS on the significance of Barn Cottages cannot be fully assessed without further information including such details as scale and height; details of proposed built structures, plant and equipment; noise barrier screening; boundary treatment and enclosures; materials etc.
- The assessment makes reference to the existence of other industrial type buildings and structures within the setting of Barn Cottages, in particular the maltings to the west. However, they are located some considerable distance away on the other side of the railway line, being largely screened by mature trees with very little intervisibility between the cottages and the maltings. Nevertheless, the existence of any industrial type structures is not considered to be a valid reason to introduce further incongruous structures in much closer proximity to the cottages, which would have a harmful impact on their significance, by eroding the distinctive and predominantly rural and agricultural character of their setting.
- The assessment states that the setting of Barn Cottages provides a minor contribution to their significance, emphasising their traditional rural architecture, but does not inform their significance to any major degree. However, it is important to note that, with the exception of the small terrace of cottages on the opposite side of the road, their setting has historically remained open and undeveloped. Furthermore, there are historic associations between the cottages and use of the surrounding land and the likelihood of occupants working as part of the local farming community. It is therefore considered that the open, rural farmland setting of Barn Cottages makes a very positive and important contribution to their overall significance as a locally distinctive, vernacular building of simple form, traditional materials and details.
- The assessment of setting focusses on views to the south and concludes that they best illustrate the rural surroundings of the cottages and that they will be unaffected by the scheme. However, the setting of a heritage asset is dynamic and the relationship with its surroundings changes as one moves around, rather than being defined by a single viewpoint. The siting of the cottages within the open surrounding landscape and the twisting and winding nature of the B1134 Station Road mean that the building is experienced within this setting in numerous views and from several different angles. The cottages on the opposite side of the road are unlikely to provide effective

screening of the proposed works as claimed, with the development being visible along with Barn Cottages from many viewpoints along Station Road. The proposed substation and BESS will introduce potentially visually dominant, alien and incongruous industrial features, into an open and undeveloped rural landscape.

6.20 In conclusion therefore it is agreed that the proposals will have a harmful impact on the significance of Barn Cottages which will be less than substantial. However, on the basis of the limited information provided and taking into account the points raised in the preceding paragraph, this harm is likely to be at a higher level of moderate rather than low.

6.21 **Site 3** proposes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land. The three listed buildings on the north side of the street, **Rose Cottage**, **Three Feathers** and the adjacent **Barn and Stable Range** are all experienced in views looking to the north from the street. Although there are some limited and restricted views of the site towards the south from these buildings, mainly from Rose Cottage, it is agreed that the existing open farmland does not contribute to their overall significance and there will be no adverse impact arising from the proposed development of site 3.

6.22 **Townhouse Farmhouse** is located on the south side of the street and there are long, distant and open views towards the site both from the farmhouse and in conjunction with the farmhouse looking from the street. This open, undeveloped farmland forms the wider setting of the farmhouse and there are historic associations between the use of the land and the farmstead. The submitted impact assessment concludes that there will be no harm to the significance of Townhouse Farmhouse arising from the proposed development of site 3. However, even though the field immediately to the south of the farmhouse is to remain open, without any built development or landscaping and the proposed solar PV arrays are some distance away, taking account of their height, movement and potential glare, they will be visible and form the backdrop in views to the south. Furthermore, although some linear planting is proposed, this will not effectively screen visibility of the panels for a number of years until well established with some degree of visibility remaining during the winter months. The panels will introduce an alien and industrial feature into this agricultural landscape setting which has remained undeveloped over time. It is therefore concluded that there will be some harmful impact on the significance of Townhouse Farmhouse which is considered to be less than substantial at the bottom end of the scale.

6.23 **Site 4** includes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land within site 4A to the west of the A140 and site 4B to the east, along with a 132kV substation within site 4B.

6.24 The Grade I listed **Church of St Michael** and the Grade II* listed **Old Rectory** are high status buildings which, together with the Grade II listed **Barn to the north**, form an important group. The submitted heritage statement acknowledges at Paragraph 6.17 that the rural setting adds to the significance of the Church which has served a small, agricultural community for hundreds of years, at Paragraph 6.21 that the Old Rectory also derives significance from its historic interrelationship and therefore, group value with the Church and Barn to the north and at Paragraph 6.25 that the setting of the Barn is rural with views overlooking the surrounding countryside reinforcing its agricultural character. However, the submitted impact assessment concludes in Paragraphs 6.61 to 6.63 that there will be no harm to the significance of the Church, the Old Rectory or the Barn to the north, principally as a consequence of the retention of the south portion of site 4B, located closest to these buildings, as open land without any development. It also notes in Paragraph 6.61 that *'The remainder of site 4 does not contribute in any meaningful way to the church's setting and the diminishing effects of distance would mean that any remaining views of solar PV arrays would be both very limited and small elements of wider vistas.'*

6.25 A detailed assessment of the setting of this important group of buildings shows that there are views looking north towards the site from the Church and from several viewpoints within the churchyard where the surrounding open farmland is visible, often in conjunction with the Church and the Barn. There are also views looking south from the site where the Barn and Church tower are clear features within the landscape, with the degree of visibility to and from the open surrounding land being greater in the winter months. These views are illustrated in photographs 47, 50 & 51, and 56-58 within this document. In addition, although there has been some negative impact on the setting of the group arising from the recent construction of the Long Stratton bypass to the south, the new footbridge and footpath have opened up panoramic views towards the north and north-east where this group of buildings can be appreciated in the surrounding open, rural landscape which forms their setting. In these views all three buildings can be seen together, as illustrated in photograph 49 of this document. A 132kV substation is also proposed within site 4B, located to the north of this group of buildings. In the absence of full details of the proposed substation including plant, equipment, boundary treatment etc., there is inadequate assessment of the impact of this part of the development, particularly visibility from in wider views and from within the churchyard. Although set back within the site, taking account of the height, scale and movement of the proposed solar panels, along with the substation and associated equipment, they will introduce alien and industrial features, as a continuous addition along the horizon, forming the backdrop in views towards the north and north-west, across the open land in the foreground. They will also be seen in views from within the churchyard, with visibility and prominence increasing during the winter months. Given the high status of these buildings and the important contribution that this rural setting makes to their significance, with the land historically remaining open and undeveloped, it is therefore concluded that there will be some degree of harm to the significance of

the Church, the Old Rectory and the Barn, which is considered to be less than substantial at a moderate level.

6.26 The **Cottage occupied by Mr and Mrs Woods** (now known as Thatched Cottage), is relatively isolated with its rural setting defined by the surrounding open and undeveloped landscape, making an important contribution to its significance. The submitted impact assessment concludes at Paragraph 6.64 that *‘As the southern fields of sub-site 4B are not allocated for built elements under the scheme and rather will be planted with new grassland. This does not have the potential to impact the ability to appreciate the significance of the cottage and there will be no harm to the listed building’*. However, there are several wide views to the north, including from the new footbridge, where the surrounding open agricultural land including the proposed site, forms its setting, along with views to the south from the site, where the cottage is seen in an open rural landscape setting, as illustrated in photographs 59, 60, 62 and 63 of this document. Although some distance away, the proposed solar panels and substation will form the backdrop to these views, seen across the open land in the foreground in conjunction with the cottage, as incongruous features in the landscape. It is therefore concluded that this will result in a degree of harm to the significance of the cottage which is considered to be less than substantial, although at the lowest level of the scale.

6.27 **Church Farmhouse** occupies a secluded position being largely screened by mature trees and vegetation and surrounding ancillary farm buildings, with no views between the farmhouse and the proposed development site. It is agreed that the existing open farmland does not contribute to the overall significance of the farmhouse and there will be no adverse impact arising from the proposed development of site 4.

6.28 Although **The Cedars** and the cluster of adjoining buildings are set amongst mature trees, the open character of the surrounding land forms its wider setting and positively contributes to its overall significance, having historically remained undeveloped. Paragraphs 6.66 and 6.67 of the submitted impact assessment conclude that *‘there will be no harm to the heritage asset mainly due to limited intervisibility and the retention of open land immediately to the east’*. However, as a three-storey building, The Cedars is a prominent feature in the landscape and although surrounded by mature trees it is clearly visible in many views. These include views to the east and north-east from the land on the west side of the A140; views travelling along the A140, particularly in a southerly direction, where it is seen within the open landscape setting, which adjoins to the west; views to the north from Church Lane, where the original, 17th century two-storey house is visible and views to the west across open land (see photos 66-69). Solar panels are proposed on existing open and undeveloped land to the north and east of The Cedars and either side of the A140 to the north-east and north-west. Taking account of the height of the solar panels, they will be visible in several of these views which form the setting of The Cedars, introducing incongruous and industrial features visible alongside the building. In

addition, as a three-storey building, there are views from The Cedars, particularly from the upper floors across the surrounding landscape which is predominantly open and rural in character. In views to the west, north and east this will change to an industrial landscape dominated by solar panels. It is therefore concluded that this will result in a degree of harm to the significance of The Cedars which is considered to be less than substantial, although at the lower level of the scale.

6.29 The **Pair of Houses owned by Mr B R Weeden** are mainly appreciated in views towards the north from Church Lane, with the surrounding open agricultural land to the east forming their setting. Paragraph 6.68 of the submitted impact assessment states that *‘Intervisibility between site 4 and the listed building are limited to a small section at the south-eastern extent of sub-site 4B and the upper storey of the gable end. The only changes that will be made to these views will be the removal of intensive farming and new grasslands planted. As such, there will be no harm to the heritage asset’*. However, there is a greater degree of intervisibility, with long views from Church Lane to the north and north-east towards the surrounding open land which forms the setting of the pair of houses (see photos 71 & 72), as well as views from the area where solar panels are proposed looking south west with the houses being visible across open land (see photo 73) and the degree of intervisibility increasing in the winter months. Although some distance away, the proposed solar panels and substation will form the backdrop in views to the north and north-west in particular, seen across the open land in the foreground in conjunction with the pair of houses, as incongruous features in the landscape. It is therefore concluded that this will result in a degree of harm to their significance, which is considered to be less than substantial, although at the lowest level of the scale.

6.30 The **Cottage occupied by [REDACTED]** (Well Meadow Cottage) is located in a secluded position behind the pair of cottages on Church Lane. Although there are likely to be historic associations between the occupants of the cottage and the use of the surrounding land for agricultural purposes, there is very limited intervisibility between the two with only distant glimpses of the roof in views to the west across the open land. Taking this into account along with the distance between the proposed solar panels and the cottage, it is agreed that there will be no adverse impact on its significance arising from the proposed development of site 4.

6.31 **The Hollies** is located in a relatively isolated position to the east of site 4 surrounded by mature trees and hedges with the surrounding agricultural landscape forming its wider setting. Intervisibility between the house and the site is restricted due to existing trees and vegetation, with only the roof being seen in distant views to the east from the site. Taking account of the distance between the house and the proposed location of the solar panels and the degree of screening from existing mature vegetation, it is agreed that there will be no adverse impact on the significance of The Cedars arising from the proposed development of site 4.

6.32 **Site 5** proposes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land within sites 5A and 5B, along with a 400kV substation within site 5A. **Church Farmhouse** and the **Barn to the north-east** form an important group, located on the east side of The Street and are mainly experienced in views looking towards the east from the adjoining road. However, they are surrounded by open farmland which has remained undeveloped over time and there are historic associations between the use of the land and the farm buildings. This forms their wider setting and positively contributes to their overall significance, particularly in views to the north and south when travelling along The Street. The submitted impact assessment concludes that there will be no harm to the significance of either the farmhouse or the barn arising from the proposed development of site 5 and states in Paragraph 7.30 of the heritage statement that *'the only elements of the scheme that will be visible from Church Farmhouse and Barn would be the proposed community space. This will result in no harm to either listed building'*. However, although the field immediately to the west is to remain open and undeveloped, the land beyond, where PV arrays are proposed rises further towards the west and in addition, a large area of land to the north-west is allocated for the construction of a 400kV substation. In the absence of full details of the proposed substation including plant, equipment, boundary treatment etc., there is inadequate assessment of the impact of this part of the development, particularly visibility on the skyline. Historically, this land has remained open and undeveloped and forms the wider setting of the farmhouse and barn. The addition of solar panels taking account of their scale, height and movement along with the substation and associated equipment, will introduce alien and industrial features, forming the backdrop in views towards the west and north-west, with visibility and prominence increasing during the winter months. It is therefore concluded that there will be some degree of harm to the significance of Church Farmhouse and Barn, which is considered to be less than substantial at the bottom end of the scale.

6.33 The Grade I listed **Church of St Catherine** is a high status building which adjoins the southern boundary of site 5. It occupies a remote and secluded position with a distinct sense of peace, tranquillity and isolation being experienced on arrival at the lychgate entrance as well as within the surrounding churchyard and along the track leading to the church from The Street. Its rural setting has remained unchanged for centuries and makes a very important and positive contribution to its overall significance, serving many generations of the local agricultural community. The submitted heritage statement acknowledges that this interrelationship between the church and its surrounding churchyard and the wider agricultural landscape contribute to its significance.

6.34 The impact assessment is set out in Paragraph 7.29 of the submitted heritage statement as follows *'Views to and from the Church of St Catherine from Site 5 are primarily limited to the southern portion of Sub-Site 5B, which is situated immediately to the north of the listed building. Under the Scheme, this area would be used for a*

community space and there will be no built elements of the solar farm within the church's immediate vicinity. This will help to ensure that the Scheme does not overwhelm or detract from the prominence of the church and its rural setting, especially on the approach along The Street where it will still be appreciated and understood. There may be limited, filtered views of the church from Sub-Site 5B, but no views vice versa. On this basis, it is considered that the Scheme would cause no harm to the significance of the building.

6.35 However, having fully assessed the setting of the church, contrary to the statement above, there are views looking north into site 5B both from the access track and from within the churchyard, along with views to the west and to the north-west looking out from the churchyard. Although these views are between surrounding trees and vegetation, they do provide an important visual connection with the surrounding open and undeveloped farmland from within the intimacy of the churchyard, which forms the distinctively rural setting of the church . These views can be seen in photographs 79-82 of this document. Furthermore, there is a considerably increased degree of intervisibility during the winter months, as illustrated in photographs 83-86. The Scheme proposes solar panels to the west and to the north-west of the churchyard and in addition, a large area of land to the north-west is allocated for the construction of a 400kw substation. In the absence of full details of the proposed substation including plant, equipment, boundary treatment etc, there is inadequate assessment of the impact of this part of the development, particularly visibility from within the churchyard. Also during the winter months there are glimpses of the church seen through the trees when travelling south along The Street, with open farmland forming its setting to the west. The proposed location of the solar panels on land to the west will mean that they are visible on the horizon alongside these views of the church. Taking account of the proximity of the solar panels along with their scale, height, and movement, they will introduce alien, incongruous and industrial features within the rural setting of the church. It is considered that any visual intrusion of solar panels or the substation and its associated equipment, either in conjunction with the church or seen from within the churchyard will result in a harmful impact. In addition, any background noise generated by the substation will adversely affect the existing sense of peace and tranquillity within the churchyard. The degree of harm is considered to be less than substantial, although given the high status of the church and the contribution of the undeveloped rural setting to its significance, this will be at a moderate to high level.

6.36 The northern boundary of the **Fritton Conservation Area** adjoins the south and east boundary of site 5, with the Church of St Catherine, Church Farmhouse and Barn all lying within the Conservation Area. The area is distinctly rural in character with buildings dispersed along the road and around the common. Beyond the boundaries, the area is surrounded by open and undeveloped farmland which forms the setting of the Conservation Area. The submitted impact assessment acknowledges that there

will be some intervisibility between built elements of the scheme and the Conservation Area and Paragraph 7.28 of the heritage statement concludes that *'The approach to the Conservation Area from The Street to the north will have slight changes in views, through the introduction of solar PV arrays, but these will be located at least 500m from the Conservation Area boundary itself and consequently the immediate approach will remain unchanged. There will be no impact on views or other elements of the Conservation Area's setting and it is considered that the scheme will cause no harm to the heritage asset'*. However, when travelling north along The Street and out of the Conservation Area, the solar panels and substation will form the backdrop in views towards the west and north-west and although some distance away, will introduce incongruous features into an otherwise undeveloped, rural and agricultural landscape. It is concluded therefore that this will cause a degree of harm to the setting of the Conservation Area, which is considered to be less than substantial at the bottom end of the scale.

6.37 **Site 6** will not now contain any solar infrastructure and will remain in use for farming and wildlife habitat management. As a consequence, it is therefore agreed that there will be no harmful impact on the significance of surrounding heritage assets. However, it is unclear whether the site will be used during the construction phase of the project and if so, what works are proposed such as any surface treatment, storage of materials and consequent vehicular movements etc. Further details are therefore required in order to fully assess any impact on nearby heritage assets.

6.38 **Sites 7A – 7C** propose several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land

6.39 The **Countryman Public House** is a prominent building on the A140 Long Stratton Road with its wider setting to the east formed by the undulating and gently rising farmland of the Tas Rural River Valley. There are views to the east from the building towards site 7A where solar PV arrays are proposed as well as views from the site across open land towards the building to the west. Although there is likely to be some visibility of the solar panels in distant views, there are no historic connections between the use of the land and the building as a public house which is not considered to make any key contribution to its significance. It is therefore agreed that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on its significance.

6.40 **Hill Farmhouse** has a prominent location at the junction of the A140 and Fairstead Lane. There are several ancillary farm buildings to the north and views to the east where the surrounding open and undulating farmland within the Tas Rural River Valley forms its setting. There are also views towards the west across the open farmland where the farmhouse and its ancillary buildings are appreciated within a rural landscape setting. A solar PV array is proposed on sub-site 7A on existing open land which rises to the east of Hill Farmhouse. Paragraph 9.43 of the submitted impact assessment states that *'There are no views of site 7A from Hill Farmhouse with views*

towards the farmhouse restricted to only its roofline from a limited range within sub-site 7A from where this does nothing to demonstrate the farmhouse's significance. It is considered that the scheme will cause no harm to the significance of Hill Farmhouse'. However, an assessment of the setting of Hill Farmhouse shows that there are views towards the east from the front of the building along the access driveway where the rising ground of site 7A can be seen in conjunction with the farmhouse and outbuildings (see photos 96 & 97) . As a consequence of historic associations between the farmhouse and this surrounding open agricultural land which forms its setting, this positively contributes to its overall significance. The solar panels will be visible on the skyline and taking account of their scale, height and movement will introduce incongruous, industrial features on land which form its setting. It is therefore concluded that this will cause harm to the significance of Hill Farmhouse which is considered to be less than substantial and the lower end of the scale.

6.41 **Tramp's Hall and Barn immediately east** are located in a secluded position, surrounded by mature trees and vegetation. The barn is seen in views along Fairstead Lane, but the hall is set well back within the site and is only glimpsed when passing the entrance driveway. There are distant views across open farmland towards the west where the roof of the barn is seen in the wider rural setting. However, there are no views towards site 7A from either of these buildings and it is agreed that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the significance of the hall or the adjacent barn.

6.42 The **Former Quaker Meeting House** occupies a secluded position on the south side of Fairstead Lane and is mainly appreciated in views from the entrance driveway on Quaker Lane. Although the proposed solar panels are in close proximity, it is only the roof that is visible in views towards the south which is seen against a backdrop of mature trees and it is agreed that the proposed development will not result in any adverse impact on its significance.

6.43 **Wood Farmhouse** is experienced within a wide, open landscape setting, particularly the open farmland to the north and south, which positively contributes to its significance due to the historic relationship between the use of this land and the traditional rural farmstead buildings. A solar PV array is proposed on site 7C on land to the north of Wood Farmhouse. Paragraph 9.49 of the submitted impact assessment states that *'due to the retention of the open farmland closest to the farmhouse, the solar panels will not be prominent within any views from or of Wood Farmhouse and they will not encroach into the immediate setting of the listed building'*. The assessment also states that *'the proposed planting in the form of woodland planting, grassland borders and linear screening between the listed building and the solar PV arrays will in the medium to long term, effectively remove any views of these elements from the heritage asset'* and concludes that *'the scheme will cause no harm to the significance of Wood Farmhouse'*. However, even though there is a degree of setback between the farmhouse and the proposed solar panels, taking account of their height

and movement, they will be visible on the horizon in views from, as well as towards, the farmhouse. Furthermore, the proposed mitigation measures in the form of planting, will not provide sufficient screening of the panels for a considerable number of years and more importantly, will have an adverse impact on the setting of the farmhouse by creating a sense of enclosure and severing the historic visual relationship with the open farmland beyond. It is therefore concluded that this will cause harm to the significance of Wood Farmhouse, which is considered to be less than substantial and the lower end of the scale.

6.44 **Grove Farmhouse** is also experienced in a rural agricultural setting with open farmland to the north and south, pond to the east and several attractive outbuildings to the north and west. A solar PV array is proposed on site 7C on land to the north of Grove Farmhouse, with the scheme being set back and adjoining land being retained as farmland. Paragraph 9.51 of the submitted impact assessment states: *'It is possible that solar PV arrays within sub-site 7C may be visible to the north-east of Grove Farmhouse. However, these views will be glimpsed between the existing plantation to the east and the new woodland planting to the north. There will be a buffer of new grassland to the east and north-east that, although not screening the solar PV arrays from view, will soften the prominence of any built elements within the scheme'*. Paragraph 9.52 states: *'There will be minor alterations to the setting of Grove Farmhouse through the presence of a small section of the scheme in views to the north-east of the property. The majority of views from and of the listed building will remain unchanged. Elements of the listed building's setting that inform its significance are generally limited to the immediate grounds of the farmhouse including its yard and associated structures, although the wider agricultural surroundings provide a connection to the historic and current context of the listed building as a farmhouse and do somewhat highlight the rural nature of the building's design and intended purpose. However, it is not considered that the wider setting informs the significance to any meaningful degree and the presence of a small section of the scheme in one wide vista from the property will not result in harm to the heritage asset's significance or the ability to appreciate this'*.

6.45 The setting of Grove Farmhouse is wide and positively contributes to its significance due to the historic relationship between the use of the surrounding land and the traditional rural farmstead buildings (see photos 104 – 109). Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that this has remained unchanged and undeveloped over time. The submitted assessment is therefore considered to have undervalued the contribution of the setting of Grove Farmhouse to its overall significance. Even though the open farmland closest to the farmhouse is to be retained, taking account of the height and movement of the proposed panels, visibility of such alien and industrial structures is considered to be harmful to its open agricultural setting. Reference is also made to new woodland planting to the north and such mitigation measures are also considered to be harmful by severing the historic visual relationship with the open

farmland beyond. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development within site 7C will cause harm to the significance of Grove Farmhouse, which is considered to be less than substantial and the lower end of the scale.

6.46 **Sites 7D – 7H** propose several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land, along with a 132kV substation within site 7F. **Manor Cottage**, **Manor Farmhouse** and **Manor Farmhouse Barn** are located to the north of sites 7D and 7F, and form an important group of Grade II listed buildings at the west entrance to Saxlingham Green Conservation Area.

6.47 **Manor Cottage** located in a prominent corner position, is appreciated in many views to the south, west and north and as a former farmhouse there are historic associations with the open farmland which forms its setting to the south and positively contributes to its significance. There are open views across this farmland from the boundary of the cottage (see photo 115). Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 7D to the south and site 7F to the south-east. Paragraph 10.45 of the submitted impact assessment states *‘Embedded mitigation in the form of setbacks will ensure there is no intervisibility between Manor Cottage and built elements of the scheme within sub-site 7D and beyond. The scheme will result in no harm to the listed building’*.

6.48 **Manor Farmhouse** is also located in a prominent corner position with key views of the building to the west and to the north-east with open farmland to the south forming its setting and the building being seen in views towards the north across the open landscape (see photo 119). Also a former farmhouse, there are historic associations between the building and the surrounding land which forms its setting, positively contributing to its significance. Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 7D to the south-west and site 7F to the south. Paragraph 10.43 of the submitted impact assessment states *‘Although there is no intervisibility between site 7 and Manor Farmhouse, it is situated in close proximity to sub-site 7D. Due to this, setbacks have been included in the design of the scheme and the part of this sub-site closest to the listed building will remain as open land. The nearest built elements of the scheme (solar PV arrays) will be situated at a distance of nearly 300m to the south-west and will not encroach into the setting of the farmhouse. There will be no harm to Manor Farmhouse’s significance’*.

6.49 **Manor Farmhouse Barn** adjoins the farmhouse and historically would have been part of the farmstead. Although occupying a slightly more secluded position there are views of the roof and gable end in views to the east and looking north from the open farmland, with visibility increasing during the winter months. Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 7D to the south-west and site 7F to the south. Paragraph 10.44 of the submitted impact assessment states *‘The setbacks incorporated into the design of the scheme within sub-site 7D will ensure that no solar PV arrays or other built elements will be visible from the barn and there will be no impact on its setting’*.

Therefore, it is considered that there will be no harm to the significance of the listed barn’.

6.50 Although the area of site 7D closest to Manor Cottage, Manor Farmhouse and Manor Farmhouse Barn is to remain undeveloped, the conclusions noted in paragraphs 6.47 to 6.49 above, focus on views towards the site looking south from these listed buildings. However, when they are approached towards the north along Broaden Lane, their setting is wide and open, with the buildings being visible on the horizon amongst surrounding trees and vegetation, with visibility increasing in the winter months. Taking account of the height and scale of the proposed solar panels, which are intended to be located immediately to the west of Broaden Lane, the ability to appreciate these buildings in their wide, open and undeveloped agricultural setting will be lost, being obscured by alien and industrial features in a rural landscape. Furthermore, paragraph 10.48 of the impact assessment refers to additional tree and hedgerow planting and concludes that once matured, built elements of the scheme within these sub-sites will be effectively screened from surrounding heritage assets. However, apart from taking a considerable number of years to effectively screen the solar panels, these mitigation measures in the form of planting will in themselves have an adverse impact by creating a sense of enclosure and severing the visual relationship between the buildings and their open setting. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a harmful impact on the significance of Manor Cottage, Manor Farmhouse and Manor Farmhouse Barn, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.51 As a former farmhouse, **Hill Cottages** are mainly appreciated in views towards the east but they are also seen in views across open farmland to the west and to the south, which forms their wider setting (see photos 122-125). Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 7D to the south of the property. Paragraph 10.46 of the submitted impact assessment states *‘Setbacks have been designed into the paraments of sub-site 7D and the northernmost field, in closest proximity to Hill Cottages, will not contain any solar PV arrays or other built elements. As such, there will be no visibility of any parts of the scheme beyond the new landscaping initiatives in this field and there will be no impact to the listed building’s significance. There will be no harm to the listed building resulting from the scheme’*. Even though the area closest to Hill Cottages is to remain open and undeveloped, taking account of the height and movement of the solar panels, they will be visible in views along with the property, particularly to the south-west, introducing alien and industrial features within their rural agricultural setting. Any mitigation measures including tree and woodland planting will take a considerable number of years to effectively screen the solar panels and will also have a negative impact by creating enclosure and severing the visual relationship between the building and the surrounding open setting. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a harmful impact on the significance of Hill Cottages, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.52 **Hill House** is slightly set back from the road with its chimneys and roof visible in views to the north (see photo 126). It is mainly appreciated from its setting to the west, with the surrounding open and undeveloped farmland to the south forming its wider setting. Although it is separated from areas of open farmland by adjacent buildings to the south, as the taller and more prominent structure, there is intervisibility between the building and the site of the proposed solar panels, with the degree of visibility increasing during the winter months. Paragraph 10.47 of the submitted impact assessment states that no built elements of the scheme will be visible from Hill House and that there will be no harm arising from the scheme on its significance. However, taking account of the height and movement of the solar panels, they will be seen in views from Hill House to the south and from the site in views to the north towards Hill House. Introducing alien and industrial features within this rural agricultural setting. Any mitigation measures including tree and woodland planting will take a considerable number of years to effectively screen the solar panels and will also have a negative impact by creating enclosure and severing the visual relationship between the building and the surrounding open setting. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a harmful impact on the significance of Hill House, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.53 **Holly Cottage** was scoped out of further assessment in the submitted heritage statement as it was considered that it would not be impacted by the proposed development. However, it is located at the east end of the Saxlingham Green Conservation Area in an open setting where it is set back from The Green with open and undeveloped farmland to the north and south forming its wider setting (see photos 127-130). Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 7F on existing open farmland to the south of Holly Cottage. There are panoramic open views looking west where this site is visible along with Holly Cottage with intervisibility between the two increasing during the winter months. Taking the height and movement of the proposed solar panels into account, they will introduce alien and industrial features as a visual intrusion into this rural setting. Mitigation measures including tree planting will take a considerable number of years to effectively screen the solar panels and will also have a negative impact by creating enclosure and severing the visual relationship between the building and the surrounding open setting. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development will have a harmful impact on the significance of Holly Cottage, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.54 **Saxlingham Green Conservation Area** has a distinctive green and rural character with a strong sense of intimacy and enclosure formed by mature trees and vegetation with occasional buildings scattered along the road or set back from the open green spaces. There are occasional open views, particularly out towards the south, from within the Conservation Area, which provide important visual connections with the open and undeveloped countryside which surrounds and forms the setting of the Conservation Area (see photos 131 & 132). Approaching the Conservation Area

from the south along Broaden Lane from Hempnall, there is a distinct change in character, from a strong sense of openness provided by undeveloped farmland, to a cluster of buildings which create a sense of arrival and define the west entrance to the Conservation Area (see photo 133). Paragraph 10.39 of the submitted impact assessment refers to the proposed mitigation measures and states that *‘These proposed landscaping initiatives will ensure that the scheme does not encroach onto the setting of Saxlingham Green by obscuring it from views within the Conservation Area itself. This will therefore maintain the rural agricultural character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The woodland and grassland planting will improve the surrounding outlooks to the west of the Conservation Area and will render impacts to the setting as negligible, once matured’*. Paragraph 10.41 concludes that the scheme will cause no harm to the character and appearance, and/or significance, of Saxlingham Green Conservation Area. However, taking account of the height and location of the proposed solar panels within site 7D to the south-west of the Conservation Area, not only will the proposed planting take many years to provide any effective screening, but more importantly, it will sever the visual relationship between the Conservation Area and the open and undeveloped surrounding land which forms its setting and will result in the loss of the sense of arrival when approaching from the south. Solar panels are also proposed to the south of the Conservation Area within site 7F and although there is no specific reference to this in the submitted impact assessment, mitigation in the form of planting will also result in a harmful impact by severing the visual relationship between the Conservation Area and the surrounding open land in views out to the south. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development of sites 7D and 7F will have a harmful impact on the setting of Saxlingham Green Conservation Area which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.55 **Sites 7I – 7L** proposes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land. **Oaks Farmhouse** is a high status, Grade II* listed building originating from the 16th century located in an isolated rural position to the east of site 7L, surrounded by open land which forms its setting and has historically remained undeveloped. Solar panels are proposed in relatively close proximity on existing open land on the west side of Woodton Road which is bounded by a low hedgerow. The submitted impact assessment acknowledges that sub-site 7L does contribute to the significance of Oaks Farmhouse and that there is intervisibility between the site and the listed building, but concludes at Paragraph 11.17 that the scheme will result in no harm to this heritage asset, noting that although there will be views of the solar PV arrays, proposed planting with screen them from the farmhouse once matured after approximately 15 years. However, although surrounded by some mature trees and vegetation, there are views out from the building across the surrounding open land to the south and to the west, along with views of the building towards the north and the east, with the degree of visibility increasing during the winter months (see photos 134-139). Taking account of the scale and height of the solar panels and their proximity to the west of the

farmhouse, they will be highly visible in views from and towards the building, introducing alien and incongruous, industrial features within its setting, standing above the existing hedgerow which forms the site boundary. Furthermore, it is noted that proposed augmentation of existing boundary planting will not effectively screen the panels until maturity after around 15 years. However, it is also considered that the proposed mitigation measures, will in themselves have a harmful impact by severing the visual relationship between the farmhouse and the surrounding open land. Taking account of the high status of the building and its distinctly rural setting which has remained undeveloped for centuries, it is concluded that the proposed development of site 7L will have a harmful impact of the significance of Oaks Farmhouse. This is considered to be less than substantial, but at a moderate level.

6.56 **Site 8** proposes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land. **Ugate Green Farmhouse** and the **Outhouse immediately to north** form an important group and are located in a relatively isolated position to the north of site 4B. They are surrounded by open and undeveloped farmland which has important historic connections with these buildings and this rural and gently undulating landscape setting, positively contributes to their significance. There are open views of this open land looking south from the buildings and looking north across the open land from the adjacent Brooke Road where the buildings are visible (see photos 144-147). The submitted impact assessment acknowledges that there will be some changes to their setting arising from the scheme but concludes at Paragraphs 12.22 and 12.23 that there will be no harm to their significance. Although the adjoining land immediately to the south of the buildings will remain open, the proposed solar panels are to be located on rising ground which will be visible on the skyline in views from the buildings. Taking into account the height of the proposed panels, the existing hedgerow will not provide sufficient screening and the enhanced planting proposed will not completely screen the panels for several years. The panels will introduce incongruous and industrial features into this attractive, open and undeveloped rural landscape setting and visibility both from and including these buildings, will result in a degree of harm to their significance. This is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.57 **Site 9** proposes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land.

6.58 **Waterfield Cottage** occupies a secluded position surrounded by hedges and mature trees, set back from the road, with only glimpses of the building when passing the entrance driveway. It is therefore agreed that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on its significance.

6.59 **Oldhouse Farmhouse** and **Barn** form a group which are appreciated in views towards the west both from the adjoining road and from more distant views (see photos 150-153). They are surrounded by open and undeveloped farmland which forms their setting, particularly to the east and to the south, with views across these areas both

from and towards the buildings (see photos 154-155). Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 9 to the east of the farmhouse and barn and paragraph 13.41 of the submitted impact assessment concludes that due to intervening vegetation screening and distance, there will be no intervisibility and the scheme will result in no harm to the significance of Oldhouse Farmhouse or the barn at Oldhouse Farmhouse. However, although the area closest to the buildings is to remain undeveloped, there are views both from and towards the site with the degree of intervisibility between the two increasing in the winter months. In views towards the site the proposed panels will be visible on the horizon and will introduce incongruous, industrial features within their open and undeveloped setting. It is therefore concluded that this will result in a harmful impact on their significance, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.60 **Littlebeck Farmhouse** is surrounded by open areas of farmland and although the main later façade faces east, there are views to and from the open land to the west where the earlier 17th century wing to the rear is visible, with greater visibility during the winter (see photos 158 & 159). Solar PV arrays are proposed on site 9 to the north-west of the farmhouse and paragraph 13.42 of the submitted impact assessment concludes that there will be no harm to the significance of the listed building as a result of the proposals. However, there is intervisibility between the proposed site for the solar panels and the farmhouse and in particular, views towards the east along Littlebeck Lane, where the development will be seen in the same view as the farmhouse, especially during the winter months. There is currently a distinctive open character to the existing farmland on either side of the lane, seen in these views towards the farmhouse, which forms its wider setting to the west. Solar panels are proposed immediately on the north side of Littlebeck Lane and taking account of their height and movement, this will introduce alien and industrial features into this open and undeveloped rural landscape. Any mitigation measures in the form of tree planting will take several years to provide any effective screening of the solar panels particularly given their proximity to the edge of the lane and furthermore, will create a strong sense of enclosure along the lane, resulting in the loss of the open character of the setting of the farmhouse from the west. It is therefore concluded that the development of site 9 will result in harm to the significance of Littlebeck Farmhouse which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.61 **Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area** lies to the north and east of site 9 with the High Green Character Area being closest. The existing open agricultural land to the south forms the setting of the Conservation Area. There are views to the north across this open land from Littlebeck Lane and from the footpath immediately to the west of the proposed solar panels within site 9, towards the Conservation Area, where buildings within the area are visible on the horizon interspersed amongst trees (see photos 160 & 161). Paragraph 13.39 of the submitted impact assessment acknowledges that there may be limited views of solar PV arrays within site 9 from the

cricket club, but concludes that there will be no harm to the setting of the Conservation Area and that the scheme will not result in negative impacts to its significance. However, considering the open setting of the Conservation Area to the south, views towards the north from the footpath and lane will be blocked by the addition of the solar panels creating an industrial landscape setting to the area. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development of site 9 will have a harmful impact on the setting of Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.62 **Site 10** proposes several areas of solar PV arrays on a number of parcels of land, along with a 132kV substation within site 10C

6.63 There are glimpses of the **Old Rectory** through surrounding mature trees towards the east from Norwich Road, but there is very limited visibility of the building in views to the west from the site of the proposed solar panels, being largely obscured by surrounding mature trees. It is therefore agreed that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on its significance.

6.64 **Beulah House** and **Beulah Barn** are set back from the main road with open farmland immediately to the north, to the east and to the south. This open area, forms their setting, with wide open views both from and towards the buildings (see photos 171 & 172) across this area. Further to the east, rising and undulating open farmland forms the backdrop in views from both properties (see photos 168 & 173). Solar PV arrays are proposed on this rising ground within sites 10A, B and C, along with a 132kV project substation. Paragraph 14.12 of the submitted impact assessment states *‘.....the setting (of Beulah House) is largely rural with some restricted views over the fields to the rear of the house towards site 10. Even within the winter months, it is unlikely there would be any significant views of site 10 from the house’*. However, following a site visit, it is clear that due to the rising ground which forms the backdrop in views to the east, and noting the height and movement of the proposed panels, they will be clearly seen in a number of views, with the extent of visibility considerably increasing in the winter months. This is clearly illustrated in plate 57 ‘View from Beulah House towards sub-sites 10A and 10D facing east’ within the submitted report. The assessment concludes that due to the proposed landscaping initiatives in the form of woodland planting and enhanced hedgerows, visibility will be removed or drastically reduced and no part of the scheme within site 10 will be visually prominent, the change in the settings of Beulah House and Beulah Barn will be negligible and therefore there will be no harm to their significance. Taking into consideration the site topography and the extent of visibility of the rising land along the horizon in views to the east, it is questionable whether the proposed planting will provide an effective degree of screening of the solar panels, which will in any case, take a considerable number of years to mature. In addition, a project substation is proposed within site 10C, close to the west boundary, and therefore likely to be visible in views to the east, which is neither referred to, nor any assessment made of its visual impact. It is therefore

concluded that there will be some adverse impact on the significance of Beulah House and Beulah Barn which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.65 Seething Conservation Area lies to the north of site 10E and was identified as potentially affected but an impact assessment is not included in the submitted heritage statement. There are no large scale or suburban type extensions to the village which is largely included in the Conservation Area and retains its linear characteristics with surrounding relatively flat agricultural land forming its setting. This includes open and undeveloped land to the south which is experienced on approach to the Conservation Area along Upgate Road. Site 10E includes solar PV arrays which given their size and movement will be visible both when approaching the Conservation Area from the south and in view towards the south from within the area. This will introduce alien and industrial features within the open and undeveloped rural setting of the Conservation Area. It is therefore concluded that this will have an adverse impact on the setting of Seething Conservation Area which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

6.66 The following table sets out a summary of all those designated heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed built development at East Pye Solar Farm on a site by site basis, along with the outcome of the heritage impact assessment submitted by the applicant and that of the heritage impact assessment carried out on behalf of BEPS as set out in section 6.0 of this report. Highlighted columns indicate those heritage assets where it is considered that there will be a greater degree of harm to their significance, than that identified in the applicant's assessment.

Heritage Asset	Impact assessment in statement submitted by applicant	Impact assessment undertaken on behalf of BEPS
Sites 1 & 2 and BESS		
Broadgate Way	No harm	No harm
Moulton Farmhouse	Low level of harm	Moderate level of harm
Laurels Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Barn to east of Laurels Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Hill House	No harm	Moderate level of harm
French's Farmhouse	No harm	No harm

Barn Cottages	Low level of harm	Moderate level of harm
Site 3		
Rose Cottage	No harm	No harm
Three Feathers	No harm	No harm
Barn and Stable Range	No harm	No harm
Townhouse Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Site 4		
Church of St Michael	No harm	Moderate level of harm
The Old Rectory	No harm	Moderate level of harm
Barn to the north	No harm	Moderate level of harm
Cottage occupied by Mr and Mrs Woods (Thatched Cottage)	No harm	Low level of harm
Church Farmhouse	No harm	No harm
The Cedars	No harm	Low level of harm
Pair of Houses owned by Mr B R Weeden	No harm	Low level of harm
Cottage occupied by Mrs Rye (Well Meadow Cottage)	No harm	No harm
The Hollies	No harm	No harm
Site 5		
Church Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Barn to the north-east	No harm	Low level of harm
Church of St Catherine	No harm	Moderate to high level of harm
Fritton Conservation Area	No harm	Low level of harm
Site 6		

	No harm to surrounding heritage assets	No harm to surrounding heritage assets
Sites 7A – 7C		
Countryman Public House	No harm	No harm
Hill Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Tramp's Hall	No harm	No harm
Barn immediately east	No harm	No harm
Former Quaker Meeting House	No harm	No harm
Wood Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Grove Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Sites 7D – 7H		
Manor Cottage	No harm	Low level of harm
Manor Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Manor Farmhouse Barn	No harm	Low level of harm
Hill Cottages	No harm	Low level of harm
Hill House	No harm	Low level of harm
Holly Cottage	Scoped out of further assessment as not considered to be impacted	Low level of harm
Saxlingham Green Conservation Area	No harm	Low level of harm
Sites 7I – 7L		
Oaks Farmhouse	No harm	Moderate level of harm
Site 8		
Upgate Green Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm

Outhouse immediately to north	No harm	Low level of harm
Site 9		
Waterfield Cottage	No Harm	No harm
Oldhouse Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Oldhouse Farmhouse Barn	No harm	Low level of harm
Littlebeck Farmhouse	No harm	Low level of harm
Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area	No harm	Low level of harm
Site 10		
Old Rectory	No harm	No harm
Beulah House	No harm	Low level of harm
Beulah Barn	No harm	Low level of harm
Seething Conservation Area	Identified as potentially affected but no impact assessment made	Low level of harm

6.67 In addition to the proposed works involving built development of solar panels, the BESS, National Grid and Project Substations etc., the impact of which is considered above, there are a number of road widening and abnormal load routes proposed where there is also potential to impact on heritage assets. These include the proposed widening of the west end of Fairstead Lane, Tasburgh from the junction with the A140 Ipswich Road and the route through Saxlingham Nethergate along The Street and Church Hill.

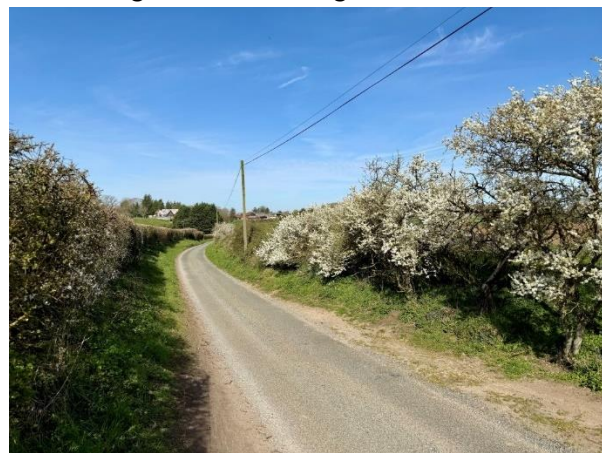
6.68 The proposed works at Fairstead Lane include alterations to and widening of the junction with the A140, widening of the lane and hedgerow removal. Hill Farmhouse, a Grade II listed, 17th century timber framed and plastered building lies immediately to the north of Fairstead Lane at the junction with Ipswich Road. A further two, Grade II listed buildings, lie immediately to the south of Fairstead Lane; Tramp's Hall, a 17th century timber framed and roughcast house and the Barn immediately to the east of Tramp's Hall, which is also timber framed, dating from the 17th century. Despite the proximity of these heritage assets to the proposed works, the submitted Heritage

Statement neither makes reference to the proposals, nor assesses the impact of the works on their setting and overall significance.

6.69 Fairstead Lane is a narrow, single track, ancient sunken lane, lined by hedgerows and is distinctly rural in character. It forms part of the rural setting of Hill Farmhouse which adjoins the north side of the lane with a hedgerow lining its rear boundary along the lane. The lane also forms the setting of Tramp's Hall and the adjacent barn, with curtilage outbuildings abutting the verge on the south side. The proposed road widening works and alterations to the junction, together with the loss of hedgerows and green verges will introduce an incongruous urban character within the setting of these buildings. Furthermore, taking account of the proximity of buildings to the lane, there are concerns about the impact of continuous large vehicle movements on these timber framed structures. It is therefore concluded that the works proposed on Fairstead Lane will have a harmful impact on the significance of Hill Farmhouse, Tramp's Hall and the Barn immediately to the east, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.



178 & 179: Hill Farmhouse to north-east at the junction of Ipswich Road & Fairstead Lane and view west along Fairstead Lane with hedgerow and verge to the rear



180 & 181: Fairstead Lane looking east at the entrance to Tramp's Hall with the barn on the right and outbuildings abutting the verge and looking west along Fairstead Lane lined by hedgerows

6.70 With regard to the proposed works within Saxlingham Nethergate, paragraph 15.7 of the submitted Heritage Statement notes the following: *'An abnormal load route has been identified as potentially being required within the Saxlingham Nethergate Conservation Area, along the roadside of a total of 13 Grade II listed buildings and 10 non-designated heritage assets. Of these, there are three buildings situated close to the bend in the roadside on this route: the Grade II listed the Old School (NHLE 1050668), and two non-designated heritage assets: Orchard View and Orchard View Barn. This route will likely be used for a small number of movements (less than ten) required to deliver abnormal loads to construct the substation within site 7. The swept path analysis of the route has identified this section of the road within the Conservation Area as most likely requiring temporary roadworks and the suspension of all on street parking areas along the road. Where the load may potentially oversail, it is further possible that tree canopies within the Conservation Area may need to be trimmed back and the roadside railings or bollards may need to be temporarily removed. The latter are modern and will be reinstated immediately following. There will be no changes made to the Conservation Area or other designated heritage assets. There will also be a construction traffic management plan in place to ensure that the movements are closely monitored so as to reduce any risk to surrounding structures, It is therefore, considered that this will result in no harm to the identified heritage assets or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area'*.

6.71 The works proposed are along The Street and Church Hill which lie within the Saxlingham Nethergate Conservation Area, originally designated in 1973. There are numerous listed buildings and buildings of local interest (non-designated heritage assets) either abutting or in close proximity to the road, including several timber framed and clay lump structures. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines adopted by South Norfolk Council in December 2018 describe Saxlingham Nethergate as one of the principal historic villages in the District, which developed as a linear settlement along the line of a stream. It also notes that mature hedgerows and low brick and flint walls at front boundaries are key features which positively contribute to the character of the area. The Grade II listed War Memorial provides an attractive focal point set within the green triangular space where The Street curves round towards Church Hill. At the top of the hill is an important group of high-status buildings, each of which is Grade II* listed, including The Old Rectory, the Church of St Mary and The Old Hall. The Old Rectory, dating from 1784, was designed by Sir John Soane. It sits within its own secluded landscaped setting, with the tall mature hedgerow, trees and boundary wall enclosing its surrounding gardens, forming an important feature abutting the verge on the north side of Church Hill.

6.72 The precise nature of the works required in order to create sufficient space to accommodate the abnormal load route for transportation of equipment to construct the substation within site 7, is unclear. However, it is understood that it is intended to compulsory purchase land from the War Memorial and from the Church Hill frontage

of The Old Rectory to enable the removal of the roadside hedge and the listed boundary wall. Any proposed works involving widening of the road, removal of green verges and the loss of hedgerows would impact on the setting of the War Memorial and The Old Rectory. Furthermore, taking account of the proximity of historic buildings to the road, there are concerns about the impact of continuous large vehicle movements on these timber framed and clay lump structures. It is therefore concluded that the works proposed in Saxlingham Nethergate will have a harmful impact on the significance of the War Memorial and the Old Rectory, which is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale. There will also be an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which would neither be preserved nor enhanced. Any works involving removal or demolition of historic fabric, such as the original brick and flint boundary wall to The Old Rectory, would result in harm at the high end of the scale.



182-185: View to the north along The Street and views around the War Memorial green showing the relationship with surrounding buildings and proximity to The Street



186-189: Views to the east and west along Church Hill showing buildings abutting the verge and the mature hedgerow, trees and wall forming the boundary to The Old Rectory on the north side of Church Hill.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The Heritage Statement submitted with the application notes that, following an initial assessment using a combination of desk-based research, viewshed analysis and site visits, a total of 51 designated heritage assets were identified for further assessment, being potentially affected by the proposed development. This includes one Scheduled Monument, two Grade I listed buildings, two Grade II* listed buildings, 42 Grade II listed buildings and four Conservation Areas.

7.2 It is agreed that this list includes those heritage assets most likely to be impacted, although a small number of other heritage assets have been added to the list for further consideration. Site visits have been made to all of these listed buildings and Conservation Areas and an assessment undertaken of their significance and setting and the impact of the proposed development, as set out in Sections 4.0 and 6.0 of this report.

7.3 It is important to have a thorough understanding, prior to undertaking any assessment, of the fundamental and intrinsic relationship between the locally distinctive, traditional historic buildings within the area proposed for development and their surrounding landscape formed by the South Norfolk Claylands. Buildings are firmly rooted in their location, having been constructed from locally available materials and positively contribute to the character of the landscape, whilst the landscape itself forms an important part of their setting. This landscape has a distinctive, rural character creating a strong sense of place, with its predominantly open, green and agricultural qualities. The Historic England Farmstead and Landscape Statement for the area notes that it is an intensively farmed landscape, predominantly under arable cultivation, with 98% of the Character Area being open landscape, 90% of that land being under arable cultivation and less than 2% being urban or classified as non-agricultural and 3% being wooded. The area contains several important examples of pre-1750 farmstead buildings, along with historic churches and other vernacular buildings. This landscape, which forms the setting of many historic buildings is therefore highly sensitive to change, with relatively small changes having the potential to have a harmful impact on the relationship between landscape and buildings, which has in many cases remained open and undeveloped for several centuries.

7.4 Paragraph 2.10 of the applicant's Heritage Statement refers to the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), 2025, which sets out government policy on developments for Solar Photovoltaic Generation, with paragraphs 2.10.99-111 referring to specific conditions in regard to cultural heritage. In particular, it is noted that: *'The impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment will require expert assessment in most cases and may have effect both above and below ground. Above ground impacts may include the effects on the setting of Listed Buildings and other designated heritage assets as well as on the **Historic Landscape Character**'*. The historic agricultural landscape which surrounds the proposed development is not merely background to the listed buildings which sit within it and the key characteristics noted in the above paragraph and set out in more detail within Section 2.0 of this report, are entirely relevant considerations in the assessment of the overall heritage impact. There are concerns at the wider cumulative impact of the proposals on the historic landscape character. Whilst the assessment identifies low to moderate harm to the setting of several individual buildings across the landscape, cumulatively, when experienced moving through the landscape, there will be greater negative impact than on any one building individually. The proposed development will change the character of the whole historic area, with negative consequences even for listed buildings not directly affected by the scheme.

7.5 The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) requires cumulative effects to be considered. The relevant representation from Historic England notes that changes to setting are likely in some cases to equate to policy harm, that residual effects are likely to remain and raises potential concerns about the cumulative effects

with Tasway Energy Park and associated BESS projects, which requires further consideration. Although the assessment of the cumulative impacts does not lie within the scope of this assessment undertaken on behalf of BEPS, it should be noted that the points raised by Historic England are supported and consideration should therefore be given as to whether successive infrastructure changes will cumulatively erode the rural historic setting of heritage assets as part of the overall heritage impact assessment.

7.6 Table 10-3 'Sensitivity Criteria of Identified Receptor' within the Environmental Statement Volume 1 : Chapter 10 -Cultural Heritage, refers to Grade II listed buildings as being of medium (regional) sensitivity. The majority of listed buildings potentially affected by the proposed development are Grade II listed, indeed 92% of listed buildings nationally are Grade II listed. All buildings on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are recognised as being of national importance. Grade II buildings are buildings of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them. The Environmental Statement is therefore incorrect in describing Grade II listed buildings as being of regional value only. Furthermore, the degree of sensitivity to changes in setting will very much depend on the significance of the asset itself and its relationship with the proposed development, with each case having to be assessed on its own merits. Grade II listed buildings are nationally designated heritage assets, not a regional designation and labelling such buildings as 'regional' as noted in the applicant's statement, has the potential to mislead the assessment and result in reduced policy weight being given to such heritage assets.

7.7 The applicant's Heritage Statement notes that the assessments of setting and impact have been undertaken in accordance with the Historic England Good Practice Advice 3 '*The Setting of Heritage Assets*'. However, the assessments focus heavily on views, with several other relevant factors which contribute to setting not being considered such as openness and enclosure, site topography, associative relationships with other heritage assets, history and degree of change over time, tranquillity, remoteness etc. In some cases, there is insufficient assessment of the extent of intervisibility between the proposed development and surrounding heritage assets and in particular seasonal changes, with increased visibility and prominence of built development during the winter months. This includes, amongst others, the Church of St Catherine, Fritton and its historic relationship with surrounding, undeveloped land; distinct sense of peace, tranquillity and isolation; and considerable increase in intervisibility between the church and the site proposed for development in the winter, along with the Church of St Michael, The Old Rectory and the Barn to the north at Stratton St Michael, which form an important group and have historic connections and intervisibility with surrounding open and undeveloped farmland.

7.8 The Heritage Statement includes a number of 'Heritage Viewpoints'. However, the methodology and criteria for the selection of these viewpoints is unclear. Those included appear to have been chosen to support the conclusion that there will be no

adverse impact arising from the proposed development. There are no viewpoints to illustrate areas where harm has been identified and additional viewpoints would be beneficial to fully assess the overall impact, including modelling of the following:

- Winter view from the churchyard of the Church of St Catherine, Fritton towards Site 5 and the substation.
- Panoramic view of Site 4 from the new footbridge, Stratton St Michael.
- The Cedars, Long Stratton to west and east.
- View to the west towards Site 2A from Hill House, Pulham Market.
- View from Oaks Farmhouse, Woodton towards Site 7L.
- Barn Cottages, Tivetshall St Margaret along Station Road.
- Saxlingham Green approach from Broaden Lane.
- Beulah House and Barn, Woodton towards Site 10 and substation.

7.9 The scale and height of the proposed solar panels at 4.5 metres, together with their movement will increase their prominence and visibility within the setting of heritage assets. It is of particular concern that they will introduce incongruous and industrial features within the distinctly rural, open and undeveloped character of the surrounding landscape.

7.10 There is potential for considerable adverse impacts on the setting of heritage assets arising from the proposed BESS, National Grid Substation and Project Substations through the introduction of structures with an industrial character. Although the applicant's assessment is based on maximum parameters, the exact BESS, substation, gantry, acoustic barrier and enclosure designs remain flexible. In the absence of full details of these substantial elements of the scheme including scale and height; details of proposed built structures, plant and equipment; noise levels and noise barrier screening; boundary treatments and enclosures; materials etc., it is not possible to fully assess their impact on the significance of heritage assets and the effectiveness of any mitigation measures. This is particularly relevant to impacts at Moulton Farmhouse, Barn Cottages, Stratton St Michael, the Church of St Catherine, Fritton and Beulah House and Barn. The impacts of noise from these elements of the project have not been fully considered and in particular the effect on the tranquillity of the churchyard at the Church of St Catherine, along with impacts on Barn Cottages, Stratton St Micheal and rural Conservation Areas.

7.11 The mitigation measures proposed generally include additional landscaping in the form of tree and some woodland planting along with some hedgerow reinforcement. However, a number of these measures will in themselves have a harmful impact on the setting of several heritage assets by creating a sense of enclosure which previously never existed, blocking important views or severing the visual and historic relationships between heritage assets and their open and undeveloped settings, which positively contribute to their significance. Furthermore, it will take several years for planting to mature before providing effective screening of

solar panels etc., (acknowledged to be up to 30 years in some instances) which would in any event be reduced during the winter months. With panels having a height of 4.5 metres, existing hedgerows or indeed hedgerow reinforcement will not provide sufficient screening. Guidance provided by Historic England in paragraph 40 of *'The Setting of Heritage Assets'* states that *'As screening can only mitigate negative impacts, rather than removing impacts or providing enhancement, it ought never to be regarded as a substitute for well-designed developments within the setting of heritage assets'*. Taking account of the extent of mitigation measures required, in the form of planting to reduce harmful impacts, it cannot therefore be said that the proposed development is well-designed. There are a number of particularly sensitive sites where it is considered that the proper heritage response should be avoidance or deletion of development, rather than screening through the provision of planting which cannot preserve significance, in particular sites 4B, 5B and 7L.

7.12 There are a number of areas where it is acknowledged that some recent development has resulted in a degree of harm to the setting of heritage assets, notably the impact of the bypass at Stratton St Micheal. However, it should be emphasised that existing harm is not a justification for causing further harm. A degraded setting may still make a positive contribution to significance and further industrialisation can compound rather than neutralise the effect. This is the case at the group of high status listed buildings in Stratton St Micheal where the new bypass has had some adverse impact, but the construction of the new footbridge has opened up panoramic views of their open and rural setting to the north, which still positively contributes to their significance. Furthermore, the applicant's identification of the existing industrial buildings and structures in the vicinity of site 1, is not a valid justification for the addition of further incongruous industrial structures within the rural landscape which will adversely impact on the significance of surrounding heritage assets.

7.13 It is agreed that there will be no direct impacts and no substantial harm to the significance of any heritage assets arising from the proposed built development works. However, the proposals will affect the setting of several heritage assets, resulting in less than substantial harm to their significance, although it is considered that these adverse impacts will affect a greater number than those identified in the applicant's Heritage Statement.

7.14 The concluding paragraph 16.9 of the applicant's Heritage Statement notes: *'In summary, there are two designated heritage assets where the impact of the scheme will be minor/negligible. The level of harm caused by this impact is considered to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale. There will be no harm to any other designated or non-designated heritage asset arising from the scheme'*. The two designated heritage assets where a harmful impact has been identified are Moulton Farmhouse, Great Moulton and Barn Cottages, Tivetshall St Margaret, although it has also been noted that in the case of Barn Cottages, this will be reduced to no harm,

once the landscaping screening of the project substation within the BESS sub-site has matured (expected to be approximately 30 years).

7.15 The table at paragraph 6.66 of this report summarises the outcome of the impact assessment undertaken on behalf of BEPS, arising from the proposed built development of solar PV arrays, the BESS, National Grid and Project Substations, as set out and described in detail in Section 6.0. This identifies some degree of harm, which will be less than substantial, to the significance of 36 designated heritage assets, compared with only 2 in the applicant's Heritage Statement. This includes a low level of harm to the significance of 24 listed buildings and a low level of harm to the setting of 4 Conservation Areas. In addition, the degree of harm to the significance of a further 8 listed buildings, is considered to be at a higher level than that identified in the applicant's statement. Of particular concern are the impacts on the Grade I listed Church of St Catherine, Fritton; the group at Stratton St Michael comprising the Grade I listed Church of St Michael, Grade II* listed Old Rectory and Grade II listed Barn to the north; Grade II* listed Oaks Farmhouse, Woodton and Grade II listed Moulton Farmhouse, Great Moulton; Hill House, Pulham Market and Barn Cottages, Tivetshall St Margaret.

7.16 In addition there are adverse impacts arising from the proposed road widening works and abnormal load routes in Fairstead Lane, Tasburgh and through the village of Saxlingham Nethergate, as set out in paragraphs 6.67 to 6.72. This identifies less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale to the significance of 3 additional Grade II listed buildings and the Grade II* listed Old Rectory in Saxlingham Nethergate, as well as harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation which will neither be preserved nor enhanced. Any works involving the removal or demolition of the boundary wall to The Old Rectory will have a direct impact on historic fabric resulting in harm at the higher end of the scale. Fairstead Lane is an ancient sunken lane bounded by hedgerows and is distinctly rural in character, Saxlingham Nethergate is one of the principal historic villages within South Norfolk and was designated a Conservation Area in 1973, which includes numerous listed buildings and buildings of local interest. The routes proposed are therefore considered to be wholly inappropriate for the transport of large pieces of equipment and abnormal loads.

7.17 It is therefore concluded that there are considerable adverse impacts on the significance of several heritage assets including high status churches and historic farmsteads, which are greater than those identified in the applicant's statement. Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision makers to give special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings and preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. This statutory presumption in favour of preservation must be given considerable importance and weight.

7.18 Section 5.9 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) sets out policy details in relation to the historic environment. Paragraph 5.9.28 requires great weight to be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be, irrespective of the level of harm. Particular note should be taken of the adverse impacts identified on the following high status buildings:

- Grade I Church of St Catherine, Fritton
- Grade I Church of St Michael, Stratton St Michael
- Grade II* Old Rectory, Stratton St Michael
- Grade II* Oaks Farmhouse, Woodton
- Grade II* Old Rectory, Saxlingham Nethergate

7.19 Where proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 5.9.33 requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Paragraph 5.9.37 requires the Secretary of State to give great weight to any negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.

7.20 Taking account of the negative impacts identified on the significance of 2 Grade I listed buildings and 3 Grade II* listed buildings, together with the cumulative negative impacts identified on the significance of 36 other designated heritage assets, in comparison with the applicant's assessment, this must be given considerable weight in the overall planning balance.

Appendix A : References

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2025
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2025
- National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government revised August 2026
- National Planning Practice Guidance : Historic Environment, Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, www.gov.uk 23 July 2019
- Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning : GPA2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment', Historic England, July 2015
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning : GPA3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', Historic England, Dec 2017
- Making Changes to Heritage Assets; Historic England Advice Note 2, February 2016
- Statements of Heritage Significance : Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets; Historic England Advice Note 12, October 2019
- Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance; Historic England, April 2008
- Greater Norwich Local Plan, March 2024
- Saxlingham Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines, South Norfolk Council, December 2018
- Fritton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines, South Norfolk Council, December 2019
- Brooke and Kirstead Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines, South Norfolk Council, May 2025
- Seething Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines, South Norfolk Council, December 2019
- Saxlingham Nethergate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines, South Norfolk Council, December 2018
- Norfolk Historic Environment Record
- National Heritage List for England www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list
- Historical Map Archive : National Library of Scotland
- Farmstead and Landscape Statement 'South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands' National Character Area 83; Historic England 2020
- 6.1.10 Environmental Statement Volume 1: Chapter 10 - Cultural Heritage (Revision 1)
- 6.3.10.1 Environmental Statement Volume 3: Appendix 10.1 - Heritage Statement (Revision 1) - Parts 1, 2, 3 & 4