

APPENDIX 5.2: LANDSCAPE VALUE

Value of Non-designated Landscapes

The Application Site does not lie within a nationally or locally designated landscape. This does not mean that the Application Site has no value. The *European Landscape Convention* (Council of Europe, ratified 2006) (ELC) requires that each party (member state) “*establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning...*” through the adoption of specific measures (Article 5). Landscape Protection is defined in Article 1d as “*actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.*” The specific measures set out at Article 6 require, amongst other matters, each party to undertake an analysis of the characteristics and the forces and pressures on its landscapes (Article 6C, 1a (ii)) and “*to assess the landscapes identified taking into account the specific values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned*” (Article 6C, 1b).

The ELC requires that account should be taken of all landscapes, designated or not. GLVIA Box 5.1 and the complimentary Landscape Institute *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations* (26th May 2021) (TGN). Table 1 of the TGN, set out a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. Table 1 below considers the value of the Application Site against these criteria. More detail on the method used in this LVIA for assessing the value of non-designated landscapes is provided at Appendix A: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology.

Table 1: Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value from *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations*

Range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value				
Factor	Definition	Examples ¹ of Indicators of landscape value	Example ² of evidence	Evidence present
Natural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape	Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. LANDMAP character profiles only.
		Extent and survival of seminatural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type	LANDMAP Geological Landscape and Landscape Habitats Aspects (in Wales)	The application Site is located predominantly within the ‘Taff Valley’ (CYNONGL015).
		Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological or pedological features Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services,	Ecological and geological designations	No ecological designations on site. Although the Willowford SINC (comprising blocks of ancient woodland) directly adjoins the eastern boundary and part of the northern boundary of the development.

¹ These examples are not exhaustive.

² Evidence may be set out in development plans (or evidence that sits alongside development plans). Online mapping may also provide useful information

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		for example distinctive ecological communities and habitats that form the basis of ecological networks	SSSI citations and condition assessments	The Application Site is not covered by an SSSI designation, and therefore, no citation or condition assessment is available.
		Landscape which makes an identified contribution to a nature recovery/ green infrastructure network	Geological Conservation Review	N/A
			Habitat surveys	<p>No published habitat survey for the Application Site. The RPS Ecological Appraisal found the majority of the site comprises grazed poor semi-improved grassland (bounded by hedgerows, field ditches and watercourses).</p> <p>Other habitats are also present and though smaller in extent they also have with value for wildlife – marshy grassland, watercourses and field ditches, a small section of woodland and ponds.</p> <p>The offsite woodland is located to the north and east of the site. The woodland to the north is designated as an Ancient Woodland</p>
			Priority habitats	<p>The Application Site is not included within the UK Priority Habitats Map (MAGIC, 2021).</p> <p>Priority Habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows (at least 80% woody species) • Broadleaved woodland (older than 120 years with oak dominated canopy) <p>Notable / priority grassland species such as purple moor grass and sharp flowered rush have been identified within localised parts of the Application Site.</p>
			Nature recovery networks/ nature pathways	The Application Site is not included within any nature recovery network.
			Habitat network opportunity mapping/ green infrastructure mapping	The Application Site does not form part of a published Green Infrastructure network.

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			Catchment management plans	N/A
			Ecosystem services assessment/ schemes	N/A.
			Specialist ecological studies	RPS undertook an Ecological Appraisal of the Application Site which comprised a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, and species scoping survey. Additional surveys undertaken were: eDNA for great crested newts, water vole and otter, breeding birds were undertaken following the phase 1 habitat survey.
Cultural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements (e.g. follies, monuments, avenues, tree roundels)</p> <p>Presence of historic parks and gardens, and designed landscapes</p> <p>Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets (especially if identified in specialist studies)</p> <p>Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth. This includes natural time depth, e.g. presence of features such as glaciers and peat bogs and cultural time depth e.g. presence of relic farmsteads, ruins,</p>	LANDMAP Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape Services Aspect (in Wales)	The Application Site is located predominantly within the small Historic Landscape aspect area 'Garth-fawr' (CYNONHL994).
			Historic environment and archaeological designations	All relevant designations have been identified and discussed within the Heritage Statement prepared in support of the application (RPS 2022). There are no designated heritage assets adjacent to or within the Application Site.
			Conservation Area appraisals, Village Design Statements	The Application Site does not fall within a CA. There is no village/town/neighbourhood design statement or plan covering the Application Site.
			Historic maps	All available historic maps have been assessed within the Heritage Statement prepared in support of the application (RPS 2022).
			Historic landscape character assessments ³ Historic Land Use Assessment ⁴ and Historic Area Assessments ⁵	The Application Site is not located within a registered historic landscape.

³ Historic Landscape Characterisation has developed as a GIS mapping tool to capture how land use has changed and the 'time-depth' of the present-day landscape.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/characterisation/historic-landscape-characterisation/>

⁴ Mapping of Scotland's Historic Landscape: <https://hmap.org.uk/>

⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-place-historic-area-assessments/>

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Factor	Definition	Examples ¹ of Indicators of landscape value	Example ² of evidence	Evidence present
		historic field patterns, historic rights of way (e.g. drove roads, salt ways, tracks associated with past industrial activity)	Place names Specialist heritage studies	N/A None
Landscape condition	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure	Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g. walls, parkland, trees) Good health of elements such as good water quality, good soil health Strong landscape structure (e.g. intact historic field patterns) Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence)	Landscape character assessment LANDMAP condition and trend questions (in Wales) Hedgerow/ tree surveys Observations about intactness/ condition made in the field by the assessor	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. LANDMAP character profiles only. The Application Site is located within the unnamed landscape habitat aspect area (CYNONLH101) and Visual and Sensory aspect area 'Hendre' (CYNONVS572). The aspect areas have unassessed in respect of condition. The trend in respect of habitat and visual and sensory is declining. Although there are areas of semi improved acid grassland and marshy grassland, including notable / priority species such as Purple Moor Grass and rush species within parts of the Application Site which are of value. No known published hedgerow surveys. A site-specific tree survey was undertaken (2022) for the Application Site, which followed the guidance in BS5837:2012. The survey recorded trees and other vegetation both within and directly adjacent the Application Site (where applicable) predominantly growing along field boundaries. It is noted that many boundary hedgerows are gappy and it is recommended that selective planting in gaps is carried out as some of the hedgerows include taller trees and are large and scrubby and would be retained. The Application Site exhibits characteristics typical of the LANDMAP aspect areas, within which it is located. These are detailed in section 6.2 of the LVIA and described in the relevant aspect area profiles. Hedgerow condition generally average along route of PROW

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				with gappy fragmented hedgerows within grazed poor semi-improved grassland (bounded by hedgerows, field ditches and watercourses).
			SSSI condition assessments	N/A – no SSSIs on or adjacent to Application Site.
			Historic landscape character assessments/ map regression analysis	See note re HLC above. A map regression analysis and illustration of HLC type is contained within the Heritage Statement prepared for the Application Site (RPS, 2021)
Associations	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts	Associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape Associations with science or other technical achievements Links to a notable historical event Associations with a famous person or people	Information about arts and science relating to a place Historical accounts, cultural traditions and folklore	None known relevant to the Application Site. None known referring to significant historic events, traditions or folklore. The LANDMAP cultural aspect area, within which the Application Site is located refers to "... <i>variously historic and contemporary evidence of human occupation and exploitation in the form of prehistoric monuments, redundant industrial workings and transport systems, and of forestry.</i> "
			Guidebooks/ published cultural trails	None known relevant to the Application Site.
			LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Services aspect (in Wales)	The Application Site is located with the 'Designated Landscape Areas' (CYNONCL056) Cultural Landscape Aspect Area. Described as " <i>Large expanses of (mostly) upland and moorland landscape that are present throughout...</i> ". More detail is given within section 6.2 of this LVIA.
Distinctiveness	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	Landscape character that has a strong sense of place (showing strength of expression of	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. LANDMAP character profiles only.

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Factor	Definition	Examples ¹ of Indicators of landscape value	Example ² of evidence	Evidence present
		landscape characteristics) Presence of distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place Presence of rare or unusual features, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity Landscape which makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement Settlement gateways/approaches which provides a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of the settlement (may be ancient/historic)	LANDMAP Visual & Sensory question 3 and 25, – Historic Landscape question 4 (in Wales) Guidebooks Observations about identity/distinctiveness made in the field by the assessor	Land cover for the Application Site and surrounding area is described in the corresponding LANDMAP assessments, summarised in Section 6.2 of the LVIA as “ <i>A rolling rural landscape with small/medium sized fields, predominantly grazing, defined by hedgerows with scattered blocks of broadleaf and mixed woodland ...</i> ”. The Application Site is located within a Special Landscape Area (SLA). None known relevant to the Application Site. The Application Site is representative of local landscape character in consisting of arable farmland with large regular fields bounded by hedgerows, isolated farmsteads and nucleated settlement. There are no features present on the site that confer a strong or distinctive sense of place or a particular identity.
Recreational	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important	Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way (particularly National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths and Core Paths) where appreciation of landscape is a feature Areas with good accessibility that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and spiritual experience/ inspiration Presence of town and village greens Other physical evidence of recreational use where experience of	Definitive public rights of way mapping/ OS map data National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths, Core Paths Open access land (including registered common land) Database of registered town or village greens Visitor surveys/ studies	The local PRoW network is assessed in the LVIA. PRoW DRE /47/2 and 3, along with DRE/50b/1 run north-south and east-west respectively through the Application site. None within the immediate vicinity or Application site itself. None within or adjacent to the Application Site. A number are located within the wider 5km study area as illustrated on Figure 1. The Application site of immediate vicinity is not designated as a Local Green Space. None known relevant to the Application Site.

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		landscape is important Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity	Observations about recreational use/ enjoyment made in the field by the assessor	During the site visit the use of PRoW DRE/47/2 and 3 and DRE/50b/1 and 2 were observed. There was very limited use of these particular PRoW at the time of the field work.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features, such as dramatic or striking landform or harmonious combinations of land cover Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors, coastal edges) Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks	Landscape character assessment	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. LANDMAP character profiles only. the majority of the site comprises grazed poor semi-improved grassland (bounded by hedgerows, field ditches and watercourses), delineated by hedgerows of variable value and condition.
			LANDMAP Visual and Sensory scenic quality question 46 (in Wales)	The Application Site is located within the Visual and Sensory Aspect Area 'Hendre' (CYNONVS572), which is described in section 6.2 of the LVIA. The overall evaluation for this aspect area is Moderate.
			Protected views, views studies	No views / photographs of the Application Site noted in the Local Plan.
			Areas frequently photographed or used in images used for tourism/ visitor/ promotional purposes, or views described or praised in literature	None known.
			Observations about scenic qualities made in the field by the assessor	The predominantly flat landscape gives rise to extensive views of open farmland, occasional woodland and isolated farmsteads. Views to the north, east and west are predominately rural with urban development within Whaley common present in views to the south. The Application site and surrounding area does not contain any distinctive features, landform or distinctive combinations of features. The area contains no especially memorable or distinctive views, however Whitwell quarry chimney, located to the north-east of the Application site forms a distant landmark in

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				local views. Woodland associated with Clumber Park and Manor Hills, located to the north-east of the Application site forms a backdrop to views to the north and east.
			Conservation Area Appraisals	The are no conservation areas within or directly adjacent to the Application site.
			Village Design Statements, or similar	There are no village design statements or similar covering areas within or directly adjacent to the Application site.
Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies	High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet ⁶ Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness (resulting from a high degree of perceived naturalness ⁷ , rugged or otherwise challenging terrain, remoteness from public mechanised access and lack of modern artefacts) Sense of particular remoteness, seclusion or openness Dark night skies A general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport and lighting	Tranquillity mapping and factors which contribute to and detract from tranquillity Dark Skies mapping	NRW tranquillity mapping covers the whole of Wales. The Application Site sits within the middle zone (Zone B) of tranquillity. It is not within a part of Wales considered to be a Dark Skies area. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have assessed the light pollution for the whole of Wales. The southern parts of the Application Site has a range of 1-2 NanoWatts/ cm ² / sr, of night light, which is at the bottom end of the lightest parts. While the northernmost parts of the Application Site, nearest the development areas od Church Village and the A473 has a range of 2-4 NanoWatts/ cm ² / sr. However, no nighttime lighting is proposed either during construction or during operation of the solar park.
			Wildness mapping, and Wild Land Areas in Scotland	N/A
			Land cover mapping	Land cover for the Application Site and surrounding area is described in the corresponding LANDMAP assessments, summarised in Section 6.2 of the LVIA as " <i>A rolling rural landscape with small/medium sized fields, predominantly grazing, defined by hedgerows with scattered blocks of</i>

⁶More about tranquillity can be found in Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 01/2017 (Revised; Landscape Institute, 2017).

⁷ Relating to extensive semi-natural vegetation, presence of wildlife and presence of natural processes/ lack of human intervention.

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Factor	Definition	Examples ¹ of Indicators of landscape value	Example ² of evidence	Evidence present
				<i>broadleaf and mixed woodland ...</i>
			Field survey	The Application site is not located in, but is in close proximity to major road / transport corridors (A473 and mainline railway). Maesmawr Road is the nearest road and was observed to have only very occasional vehicle use. The mainline Railway line (Cardiff to Pontypridd) is located some 250m to the east of the Application Site at its nearest point and has train use approximately once per hour. The trainline is contained by a landscape buffer of tree and woodland. Fieldwork concluded the area is not wild but does possess a sense of remoteness and areas of tranquil away from the Application site boundary. With wilder areas within the wider study area, including areas such as Garth Hill to the south.
			LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect	The Application Site is located within the Visual and Sensory Aspect Area 'Hendre' (CYNONVS572), which is described in section 6.2 of the LVIA. The overall evaluation for this aspect area is Moderate.
Functional	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape	Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape, e.g. natural hydrological systems/ floodplains, areas of undisturbed and healthy soils, areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands and oceans, areas of diverse landcover (benefits pest regulation), pollinator-rich habitats such as wildflower meadows Areas that form an important part of a multifunctional Green Infrastructure network Landscapes and landscape elements	Land cover and habitat maps Ecosystem services assessments and mapping (particularly supporting and regulating services)	Land cover for the Application Site and surrounding area is described in the corresponding LANDMAP assessments, summarised in Section 6.2 of the LVIA as " <i>...scattered villages and farmsteads sit within this attractive rural landscape, slightly spoilt by the presence of intrusive/visually detractive elements eg M4, pylons, sharply defined urban edges.</i> " Information regarding the landscape habitats is contained within LANDMAP aspect area CYNONLH101, which defines parts of the area as having " <i>Much of area is improved grassland which is low value but there are valuable (including Priority) habitats scattered throughout and a number of areas worthy of</i>

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		that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities		<i>SINC designation which raise the value of the area...</i> . Additionally, the NRW national landscape character area profile (NLCA 37) contains information related to ecosystem services and defines areas of the landscape habitat as being "...areas of semi-improved and marshy grassland are also present between the valleys, some of which are of considerable ecological value...".
			Green infrastructure studies/strategies	The Application Site does not form part of a published GI network. Though the adopted LDP details strategies for protected an enhancing the natural environment.
			Development and management plans for nationally designated landscapes, Local Plans and SPDs	The Application Site does not feature in any published management plans or supplementary planning documents.
			Landscape character assessments	No published site-specific landscape character assessment. District / Regional characterisation only as contained within the LANDMAP assessments. As reviewed above in Section 6.2 of this LVIA.