

<b>Bassetlaw District Council Heritage/Conservation Consultation</b>			
<b>From: Jamie Wignall</b> <i>Conservation Officer</i>		<b>To: Kirsty Harte</b> <i>Development Team Officer</i>	
<b>Application ref:</b> 24/00384/FUL		<b>Date:</b> 15/12/2024	
<b>Proposal</b>	Installation and Operation of a Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System (Output up to 40 MW), With Associated Works, Equipment, Infrastructure and Landscaping		
<b>Location</b>	Land Adjacent to A614, Worksop		
<b>Date consulted</b>	27/11/2025	<b>Site visit date</b>	Previous visit
<b>Significance of site</b>	<p>The proposal site relates to an area of land which lies adjacent to the eastern aspect of the A614 on the outskirts of the Worksop. The proposal site is situated within the immediate setting of the grade I listed 'Clumber Park' Registered Park and Garden (List Entry Number: 1001079; Designated: 1<sup>st</sup> January 1986). The site is also located within the immediate setting of several other designated heritage assets, including that of: the grade II* listed 'Gate Piers and Flanking Walls to Normanton Gate' (List Entry Number: 1156026; Designated: 19<sup>th</sup> September 1977); the grade II* listed 'Drayton Gate' (List Entry Number: 1045058; Designated: 13<sup>th</sup> February 1967); and the grade II listed 'West Bridge' (List Entry Number: 1370411; Designated: 31<sup>st</sup> March 1985), which is itself also designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (List Entry Number: 1006400).</p> <p>The site itself is comprised of a series of relatively modern agricultural fields that are located along the eastern aspect of the A614 road. The boundaries of the site are primarily comprised of mature trees and hedgerows, as one would expect of an area of open rural countryside. The proposal site runs parallel to the main thoroughfare of the A614, which encompasses the sites western boundary. The southern boundary of the site runs parallel with West Drayton Avenue, which is itself a historic thoroughfare. The northern boundary of the site runs roughly parallel with the southern banks of the River Poulter, beyond which lies another publicly accessible footpath. The western boundary of the proposal site abuts a swath of mature woodland. The proposal site presently contributes to the open rural countryside setting of the heritage assets outlined above.</p>		
<b>Overview of proposal</b>	<p>The current scheme relates to the proposed construction and operation of a Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System that has an approximate output of up to 40 MW on land to the east of the A614 on the outskirts of the town of Worksop. The proposed works would also include all associated works, infrastructure and landscaping. The following comments relate to the revised/amended plans that were submitted on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025.</p> <p>The amended plans include the introduction of the following measures: the reduction in the number of solar panels adjacent to public thoroughfares/vantage points, in particular those removed from plot numbers 1, 7 &amp; 8; the increase in scale of buffer zones between the development area and adjacent thoroughfares/vantage points; the addition of further woodland planting to provide further visual screening from the development area and adjacent thoroughfares/vantage points; the addition of new native hedgerows between the development area and adjacent thoroughfares/vantage points; the provision of native grassland, scrub planting and specimen trees.</p>		
<b>Assessment of proposal</b>	The key consideration is the scheme's impact upon the setting of the surrounding/nearby designated heritage assets, including that of: the grade I		

listed 'Clumber Park' Registered Park and Garden (List Entry Number: 1001079; Designated: 1st January 1986); the grade II\* listed 'Gate Piers and Flanking Walls to Normanton Gate' (List Entry Number: 1156026; Designated: 19th September 1977); the grade II\* listed 'Drayton Gate' (List Entry Number: 1045058; Designated: 13th February 1967); and the grade II listed 'West Bridge' (List Entry Number: 1370411; Designated: 31st March 1985), which is itself also designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (List Entry Number: 1006400).

Previous Consultation Response(s)

Conservation had previously raised concerns with the earlier iterations of the proposed development, on the basis that: they would have resulted in the erosion of a large swathe of open rural countryside which currently contributes to the setting of the surrounding/nearby heritage assets; the existing swathe of open rural countryside would have been replaced by a large scale industrial energy complex that would have appeared as a visually incongruent and overbearing feature within the setting of the aforementioned heritage assets. In their assessment of the earlier iterations of the proposed scheme, Conservation had concluded that the development would have resulted in 'less than substantial harm' to the signifi/nance/special interest of the aforementioned designated heritage assets, with that level of harm varying in severity between the 'middle' to 'upper-end' of "less than substantial harm".

Assessment of Amended Plans

The most recent set of amended plans propose a range of measures that are intended to further mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development. In regards to the Conservation of the surrounding built heritage, the most pertinent of these measures includes: the reduction in the number of solar panels adjacent to public thoroughfares/vantage points, in particular those removed from plot numbers 1, 7 & 8; the increase in scale of buffer zones between the development area and adjacent thoroughfares/vantage points; the addition of further woodland planting to provide further visual screening from the development area and adjacent thoroughfares/vantage points; the addition of new native hedgerows to provide further visual screening between the development area and adjacent thoroughfares/vantage points.

Conservation welcomes the proposed amendments, on the basis that they would further reduce the perceived presence of the proposed development within the context of the surrounding public thoroughfares/vantage points. The implementation of the proposed scheme would still result in the loss of a significant swathe of open rural countryside, even with the reduction in the number of proposed solar panels and the increase in scale of buffer zones. However, Conservation would concede that the visual presence of the proposed solar farm is likely to be substantially less imposing in its current iteration compared that which was initially proposed. Conservation is unable to professionally assess the veracity of the proposed scheme of planting as a means of visually mitigating/screening the development, and as such would refer to the views/assessment of the Councils landscape consultant. However, in light of these amended plans and the subsequent/further mitigation that they offer, and contingent upon the views/assessment of the Councils landscape consultant, Conservation would reassess the level of harm incurred to those aforementioned affected heritage assets as being at the lower end of 'less than substantial'.

<b>Summary</b>	Taking into consideration the supplementary measures of visual mitigation that have put forward as part of the current set of amended plans, in
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particular those measures relating to a reduction in the number of solar panels adjacent to public thoroughfares/vantage points, the increase in visual buffer zones, the increase in further woodland planting and the increase in native hedgerow planting, Conservation would concede that the visual presence of the proposed solar farm is likely to be substantially less imposing in its current iteration compared that which was initially proposed. The scheme would still result in the loss of an area of open rural countryside which forms part of the setting of the surrounding/nearby designated heritage assets and is regarded as being a positive contributor to those assets signifiace/special interest. However, Conservation would also concede that the impact arising from this aspect of the scheme is lessened by the provision of the proposed buffer zones and the reduction in the number of solar panels, in particular the reduction which is proposed in plots 1, 7 and 8.

In light of these amended plans and the subsequent/further mitigation that they offer, and contingent upon the views/assessment of the Councils landscape consultant, Conservation would reassess the level of harm incurred to those aforementioned affected heritage assets as being at the lower end of 'less than substantial' as for the purposes of the NPPF (December 2024). In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, Conservation would advise that this demonstrable level of 'less than substantial harm' be given appropriate weight when considered against the benefits of the wider proposal.

In reaching the above views, Conservation has had regards for: Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990; Policies ST40 and 41 of the Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2038; and Paragraphs 202, 207, 208, 210, 212, 213, 215 216 and 219 of the NPPF (December 2024).

***These are the views of the Conservation Team only and should be taken into account alongside other material planning considerations in determining the merits of the application.***