



Appeal Decision

Inquiry held on 7-9 October 2025

Site visits made on 10 and 11 October 2025

by **J Woolcock BNatRes(Hons) MURP DipLaw MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/25/3364628

Land east of Aylesbury Road, Ledburn LU7 0QD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Novus Renewable Services Limited against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
- The application Ref is 23/02313/APP.
- The development proposed is the installation of a renewable energy generating solar farm comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with substation, tower connection, transformer stations, switchroom, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of a renewable energy generating solar farm comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with substation, tower connection, transformer stations, switchroom, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements at Land east of Aylesbury Road, Ledburn, LU7 0QD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/02313/APP, and the plans submitted with it, as amended, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary matters

2. The Council refused the application against officer recommendation for approval for two reasons, which are summarised as follows. Firstly, that the proposed development by virtue of its siting, layout and scale would result in the loss of the historic agricultural landscape to the detriment of the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. Secondly, that the proposal in conjunction with other existing solar farms would result in undue cumulative visual effects from sensitive public vantage points.
3. The appellant requested that minor amendments be made at the appeal stage to the siting of the proposed panels in two areas at flood risk. The Council indicated at the Case Management Conference (CMC), held on 30 June 2025, that it had no objection to considering the amended scheme. The proposed changes would not significantly alter the appeal scheme and there was the opportunity to discuss any implications arising from the requested amendment at the Inquiry.¹ No one would be prejudiced by consideration of the alterations, and I have dealt with the appeal on the basis of the amended scheme.

¹ ID6.

4. The 100.75 ha appeal site comprises agricultural fields, with woods and hedgerows, and lies between the village of Ledburn and the west coast mainline railway.² The Grand Union Canal is further to the east of the railway and runs parallel to it. A Public Right of Way (PRoW MEN/4/1) crosses the site from Ledburn to the B488 via a footbridge over the railway lines. The appeal site is gently undulating land, which ranges from 93 m AOD in the north, down to a watercourse that traverses the site at about 85 m AOD, rising up to 98 m AOD in the south.
5. The locality has been associated with the Rothchild family since 1832, with the Ascott and Mentmore estates forming part of the family's extensive landholding in Buckinghamshire. The appeal site is situated to the south-east of Ascott House, which is a Grade II* listed building that has an associated Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest (RPG). Ascott House is a former 17th century farmhouse that was heavily remodelled by the Rothschilds as a hunting lodge. Mentmore Towers (Grade I listed) and its Grade II* RPG are located to the south-west of the appeal site. There are also Grade II listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets in the locality. Mentmore village was extensively rebuilt under the auspices of the Rothchild family and now forms part of the Mentmore Conservation Area.
6. The appeal scheme would have an export capacity of 49.9 MW ac and an operational lifespan of 40 years. The proposed solar farm would connect to the electrical grid via a proposed substation to the overhead cables that cross the appeal site via pylons. The south facing solar panels would be sited within six fields and mounted on frames. Solar panels would be up to 3.1 m high and have a ground clearance of at least 0.6 m. Security fencing is proposed to be 2 m high and CCTV columns to have an elevation of 3 m.³ Two existing field gates would be used to access the site from Aylesbury Road, one serving the land north of the watercourse, and the other providing access to the part of the appeal site that lies to the south of the watercourse. A circular permissive path off PRoW MEN/4/1 is proposed, along with a community recreation and amenity area located adjacent to Ledburn. The amenity area would extend about 200 m along Aylesbury Road and would be between approximately 175 m and 100 m wide.⁴ Suggested planning conditions were discussed and agreed at the Inquiry.⁵
7. The appeal site lies about 6 km to the north-west of the nearest part of the Chilterns National Landscape. National Landscapes have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Section 85(A1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the 2000 Act) states that in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscape) in England, a relevant authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.⁶ I am required in determining the appeal to discharge this duty.

² The site area is taken from the application form.

³ Suggested Condition 5 at ID17 states that the approved plans would represent the maximum parameters of the proposal. PV Panel Details – Drawing 4 and CCTV and Security Fence Elevations Drawing 1 specify these heights.

⁴ CD3.03.

⁵ ID17.

⁶ Following amendments made by virtue of section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which came into effect on 26 December 2023.

8. I am also required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in considering development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. An Addendum to the Statement of Common Ground was submitted for heritage assets (HeritageSoCG), which was updated orally in the evidence given by the heritage experts at the Inquiry.
9. At the CMC I requested that the landscape experts prepare a cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment for the appeal scheme having regard to the Landscape Institute's *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment* (GLVIA3).⁷ This was included as section 5 of the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG).
10. The Council issued a screening opinion that the proposal was not Environmental Impact Assessment development for the purposes of the EIA Regulations.⁸ Having considered all the evidence and seen the site and surrounds, I concur that the appeal scheme is not EIA development.
11. The development plan for the locality includes the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 (VALP), adopted 2021, and the Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013-2033 (SPNDP). I have also taken into account the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 and its Schedule of Amendments 2025-2030 (the Management Plan), along with a *Position Statement about Renewable Energy* by the Board. I have had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) and National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) are material considerations in determining this appeal.⁹ The capacity of the appeal scheme falls just below the current threshold for a nationally significant infrastructure project.
12. In addition to my accompanied site visit, I also visited Ledburn unaccompanied on 10 October to assess the effects of the appeal scheme on the residential amenity of nearby dwellings and to consider the likely effects of the proposed accesses to the solar farm. On 11 October I visited Ivinghoe Beacon and drove in the locality to assess the likely cumulative effects of the appeal scheme with existing and proposed solar farms.

Main issues

13. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - (1) The effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and on the landscape, scenic and natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape.
 - (2) Whether the proposed development would preserve the settings of listed buildings, and its effects on other designated and non-designated heritage assets.

⁷ CD6.23.

⁸ The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations).

⁹ EN-1 paragraphs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 and EN-3 paragraph 1.3.1.

I have also assessed whether the benefits of the appeal scheme would outweigh any harm. Both landscape/visual issues and planning matters were considered at the Inquiry in Round Table Discussions. Heritage matters were subject to evidence and cross-examination.

Reasons

Character and appearance

14. The landscape experts at the Inquiry agreed that the judgements in the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) submitted by the appellant are a fair and reasonable assessment of landscape and visual, including cumulative, effects.¹⁰ I have no reason to find otherwise.
15. The appeal site is not covered by any landscape designations, and it is agreed that it is not a valued landscape for the purposes of paragraph 187 a) of the NPPF. It lies within a lower lying area encompassing the railway and canal that is excluded from an Area of Attractive Landscape designated in the VALP, which is located on more elevated land to the north and west of the appeal site. In considering the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, I deal first with the solus effects of the appeal scheme, taking into account mitigation and a baseline that includes existing solar farms, and then assess the likely cumulative impact of the proposed development with other proposed solar farms.
16. In the Aylesbury Landscape Character Assessment, the appeal site lies within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 8.3: Ouzel Valley Catchment.¹¹ Key characteristics of LCA 8.3, which comprise significant landscape receptors here, include a wide shallow valley with a meandering stream fed by ditches, with large open arable fields along with a mosaic of pastoral fields parallel to the canal corridor. Distinctive features include Ascott House parkland, the canal, orchards and circular clumps of trees on low hills. The railway and pylons are listed as intrusive elements. In this vale landscape the alignment of the railway is evident from the overhead catenary lines and gantries. It was also apparent at my site visit that the number and frequency of trains on this busy line, including brightly coloured freight wagons at times, detract from the agricultural landscape.
17. The guidelines for LCA 8.3 include restoring and enhancing the original field pattern, supporting the management and replanting of hedgerows and infilling of gaps and encouraging the establishment of new hedgerow trees. Where arable farming occurs next to watercourses, the guidelines encourage the creation of buffer strips of grassland and bank side vegetation to provide more diverse habitats. It also promotes the establishment of new orchards.
18. In terms of landscape fabric, the existing field pattern would be maintained, and existing and proposed vegetation would be managed and would mature over the lifetime of the proposed solar farm. However, the solar panels, substations and access tracks would be a significant change in land use that would result in a loss of openness in this part of the countryside. The solar arrays, along with their regular arrangement in long rows, would be a utilitarian feature that was out of keeping with the character of the area. The colour and texture of the solar arrays would not be typical of its agricultural and rural settlement context, and so the

¹⁰ The Landscape and Visual Assessment by Pegasus is at CD1.17a and CD2.23.

¹¹ CD6.10.

proposed development would introduce a discordant element into the local landscape.

19. The proposed tree and hedgerow planting would accord with the guidelines for LCA 8.3. So too, would the management of the wetlands/riparian corridor along the watercourse and provision of the proposed community orchard and meadow. The proposal gains some support from VALP Policy NE8, which seeks to enhance and expand Aylesbury Vale's tree and woodland resource. However, tree planting would not mitigate all the harm to landscape receptors. The proposed development would have a 'Moderate' adverse level of effect on the landscape character of the appeal site and its immediate surroundings, and a 'Moderate/Minor' adverse level of effect on the character of LCA 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment.¹² The proposal would not have an adverse effect on the character of surrounding LCAs.
20. Turning to visual impact, the trees were in full leaf at the time of my site visits, but the appeal documentation includes photographs taken in the winter. I am satisfied that the evidence before the Inquiry, along with what I saw at my site visits, has enabled me to properly assess the likely effects of the appeal scheme on the visual amenity of the area. Adverse visual effects would be significant locally during construction and decommissioning, but this would be for a limited period of time.
21. Users of PRoW MEN/4/1 across the appeal site would initially experience a 'Major' adverse level of effect on visual amenity. As planting matured, the level of effect from this footpath would be 'Major to Major/Moderate' by Year 15. Notwithstanding the proposed planting, the footpath would afford open views of solar farm infrastructure, and some longer distance views to the countryside outside the appeal site would be lost. The Council considers that the proposed development would require fundamental rearrangement of the layout to safeguard these longer views. This would not be necessary to make the scheme acceptable because the solar panels would be set back in places from the footpath.¹³ The outlook from the PRoW MEN/4/1 would change, but those using the footpath would not experience an unacceptable tunnel or corridor effect.
22. Other PRoW in the wider area beyond the appeal site, which include the Outer Aylesbury Ring and Grand Union Canal Circular Walk, would be less affected because of the separation distance and screening vegetation. Walkers travelling north on PRoW MEN/3/1 from Mentmore would experience a 'Moderate' level of adverse visual effect. From lower elevations, views would be more filtered and screened in places by woodland and field boundary vegetation, with at worst 'Moderate to Moderate/Minor' levels of adverse long-term effects. Road and rail users would experience at worst 'Moderate/Minor' levels of adverse visual effect when travelling through this part of the vale.
23. It was apparent at my site visit that parts of the proposed solar farm would be seen in some views from Ascott House and its lawns. The proposed substantial new native woodland buffer areas, incorporating some larger tree species along the western edge of the appeal site, would screen much of the solar farm from

¹² The relative level of effect for landscape and visual amenity, as determined by combining judgements about sensitivity of landscape or view, magnitude of change and duration of the effect, is described in Appendix 1 of CD2.23 as either: 'Major', 'Major/Moderate', 'Moderate', 'Moderate/Minor' or 'Minor'.

¹³ Cross-sections at CD1.17b and indicative illustrations at CD2.20.

Ledburn and would soften the visual impact of the solar panels in more distant views from the north-west. Infilling and strengthening the existing hedgerow and tree planting along Aylesbury Road would also effectively filter distant views to the proposed development. The LVA accorded receptors (people) visiting Ascott House 'Very High' sensitivity. But with an assessed 'Low' magnitude of change from the proposed development, the LVA recorded a 'Moderate' level of adverse visual effect at Year 1 and Year 15.

24. In views from elevated vantage points within the Chilterns National Landscape, including Ivinghoe Beacon at a distance of about 6.5 km and Pitstone Hill (8 km), as well as along sections of long-distance footpaths (the Ridgeway, Icknield Way and the Two Ridges Link), the appeal scheme would be a very small addition to the existing wide panoramic views. With a 'Very Low' magnitude of change the long-term level of visual effect would be no greater than 'Minor' in long distance views from the Chilterns escarpment.
25. The Council's reasons for refusal specifically cite cumulative effects. GLVIA3 recognises different types of cumulative and visual effects. It differentiates between cumulative assessments that focus primarily on the additional effects of the proposed development or the combined effects of all the past, present and future proposals together with the new project. However, the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 2024-01 clarifies that typically a 'combined' cumulative assessment would consider the addition of all unbuilt schemes, including the proposed development, to the existing baseline (rather than against a 'bare landscape').¹⁴ GLVIA3 also notes that cumulative assessments can include incremental change as a result of successive individual developments such that the combined landscape and/or visual effect is significant even though the individual effects may not be.
26. The SoCG agreed a study area extending to about 8 km from the appeal site for the assessment of cumulative effects. Within this area the SoCG identified six existing solar farms; Long Meadow Farm, Church Farm, Land at Great Seabrook Farm, Land to the east of Gib Lane Bierton, Folly Farm and Land north of Leighton Road (Ref 14/03113/FULL). Six other solar farms yet to be built out were included in the assessment; Bury Farm, Hale Farm, Land to the west of Tring Road Wingrave, Land north of Leighton Road (Ref 22/04934/FULL), Tilsworth Solar Farm and Tebworth Solar Farm.
27. The consented scheme at Bury Farm would be about 800 m from the appeal site, with limited intervisibility, especially in summer. However, both schemes would be viewed sequentially in views from local footpaths. Cumulative landscape effects would result in an increase to a 'Moderate' adverse level within LCA 8.3 if the appeal scheme and the Bury Farm solar farm were built out together. Users of PRoW MEN/4/1 and the Mentmore and Grand Union Canal Circular Walk would experience a small increase in adverse visual effects as a result of sequential views of Bury Farm and the appeal scheme.
28. The other schemes assessed would range from about 3 km to 6.9 km from the appeal site and any intervisibility would be likely to be nil or negligible. It was evident on my site visits that the separation distances between existing and proposed solar farms, along with extensive roadside screening vegetation in the

¹⁴ CD6.24.

locality, would provide few opportunities for sequential views of solar farms in this relatively flat part of the vale. The appeal scheme would not significantly increase the risk that solar development would be perceived as one of the defining characteristics of the vale landscape. Nonetheless, in terms of incremental change, the appeal scheme would add to the solar farms that could be viewed in combination from the Chilterns National Landscape.

29. From Ivinghoe Beacon (Viewpoint 21) Lower Meadow Solar Farm, Great Seabrook Solar Farm and Church Farm Solar Farm are visible within the setting of the National Landscape. Folly Farm, Gib Lane, Hale Farm and Tring Road developments would be apparent in successive views to the west and seen sequentially from footpaths. But it was apparent at my site visit that solar farms make up a small component of the wide panoramic view. The appeal scheme and Bury Farm solar farm would be seen in this expansive panorama at a minimum distance of 5 km, well beyond the existing developments, as a small part of the wide view and as distant features within a baseline that already includes solar development.
30. The overall combined effect of consented and proposed solar farms would add little reinforcement to the current experience of operational solar development within this landscape. However, the SoCG acknowledges that cumulative landscape effects would result in some limited adverse effects from the Chilterns National Landscape, resulting in some low-level harm to the special character and quality of the National Landscape by virtue of adverse effects on its setting. With respect to visual impact, with high sensitivity receptors within the National Landscape, along with a low magnitude of effect, I concur with the landscape experts at the Inquiry that if the appeal scheme operated in combination with consented schemes, the long-term level of effects on visual amenity would remain 'Minor' adverse.
31. The LVA considered those occupying residential properties in the locality as receptors with 'High' sensitivity to visual effects. With the exception of Mentmore Barns, the level of adverse visual effect at residential dwellings assessed, including those in Ledburn, did not exceed 'Moderate'. For Mentmore Barns a 'Major' adverse level of effect was assessed in Year 1, reducing to 'Major to Major/Moderate' adverse at Year 15. The nearest solar panels would be over 100 m to the north of Mentmore Barns. It was apparent at my site visits that the appeal scheme would not have an overbearing or dominating effect on nearby dwellings. The outlook would not be so affected by the proposed solar farm as to give rise to an unacceptable adverse impact on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers that would need to be avoided in the public interest.
32. VALP Policy NE4 requires development to recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of LCAs. It adds that development should consider the characteristics of the LCA by meeting specified criteria. Insofar as consideration of a large-scale solar farm can do so, the appeal scheme reasonably complies with most of these criteria. But it would not fully satisfy criterion f) about ensuring that the development is not visually prominent in the landscape.
33. The harm to Chilterns National Landscape would be of 'Minor' significance.¹⁵ However, the evidence adduced at the Inquiry and from what I saw at my site visits

¹⁵ In considering the planning merits of the proposal, I have applied the following 5-point scale: 'Nominal', 'Minor', 'Moderate', 'Significant', 'Major' in assessing the relative significance of effects.

indicates that the proposed development would result in an overall 'Significant' adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Heritage assets

34. The Council's first reason for refusal states that the proposed development does not contribute to the preservation of the setting of a number of designated heritage assets, including: Ascott House; Ascott House RPG; Mentmore Conservation Area; Keepers Lodge; Gate, Piers and Railings (of Mentmore Towers); Stone Lodge; Longfields; Ledburn Manor; Manor Cottage; Wing Conservation Area; Domestic Stables (Ascott House); curtilage listed (to Ascott House) Huntsman's Park and House; Mentmore Towers; Red House; The Old Laundry; Laundry Cottage and Mentmore RPG. And that the proposal would also harm the setting of Rosebery House, Hop Cottage, Barley Cottage, Ascott Home Farm, The Gas House, The Coach House and The Old Vicarage, which are all non-designated heritage assets.
35. The NPPF defines Listed Buildings, RPGs and Conservation Areas as designated heritage assets and states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account. The proposed development would not have a direct impact on the fabric of these heritage assets. The issue here is the effect on the significance of the asset and the ability to appreciate it because of development within its setting.
36. NPPF paragraph 208 refers to the identification and assessment of the particular significance of any heritage asset that might be affected by a proposal and taking this into account when considering the impact of a proposal, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Historic England (HE) refers to this paragraph of the NPPF in its 23 September 2023 consultation response, in which it expressed concerns regarding the proposal on heritage grounds.¹⁶
37. HE referred to the proposed solar farm introducing a large scale and modern form of development within the agricultural setting of Ascott House and its RPG, as well as Mentmore Conservation Area, which would result in 'less than substantial harm' (LTS) when applying the terminology used in the NPPF. The consultation response states that the agricultural setting forms an important aspect of these assets' significance and therefore the proposal would be harmful, with the harm particularly driven by the impact the appeal scheme would have on the unimpeded rural views from Ascott House and parkland across the Aylesbury Vale. HE added that these views were intentionally exploited in the Rothschilds' designs of the parkland and evolution of the house. Insofar as the effect on Grade II listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets is concerned, HE deferred to the advice of the Council's conservation team.
38. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. HE's *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA3) notes that extensive heritage assets, such as historic parks and gardens, can include many heritage assets, historic associations between them and their nested and overlapping settings, as well as having a setting of their own. GPA3 also

¹⁶ This was paragraph 195 in the then version of the NPPF.

states that the setting of a historic park and garden may include land beyond its boundary which adds to its significance, but which need not be confined to land visible from the site, and can include detached land that makes an important contribution to its historic character by reason of historical association.

39. All the heritage experts who have considered the proposal have found that the scheme would result in LTSH to heritage assets in the locality. However, at various stages in the application and appeal process there have been differences between the experts about which assets might be affected, along with disagreement about the level of the likely harm to those assets within the LTSH scale.
40. At the Inquiry the heritage experts agreed a 'resting position' for 22 heritage assets and set out their respective judgements as to whether there would be 'Neutral/No Harm', 'Low' or 'Medium' harm to assets within the spectrum of LTSH.¹⁷ Neutral harm would conserve the asset and so I have interpreted 'Neutral/No Harm' as meaning no harm. From the evidence before the Inquiry and what I saw on my site visits, I am satisfied that the appeal scheme has the potential to affect the significance of these 22 assets, but that other heritage assets in the wider area would not be harmed. I deal with these 22 identified assets later in this section of my decision. But it is instructive to first examine the key issues that lie behind much of the disparity in the heritage experts' weighing of harm. These centre around disagreement about the extent to which the views from Ascott and Mentmore were intentionally exploited in the evolution of the landscape, and the degree to which hunting influenced the historic landscape.
41. HE refers to the siting of Ascott House on the south slope of a ridge, where the Rothschilds' remodelling of the house and landscape was deliberately laid out to take advantage of its position and those views out to the south, east and west. The consultation response states that the designed view for the south-east front of the house adds to the visual appeal of both the house and the RPG. The Council considers that designed views across the landscape are an important feature of the heritage assets at Ascott and Mentmore. The appellant acknowledges that the parkland integrates the formal gardens into the wider countryside, as a natural part of the designed landscape but considers, in the absence of any evidence to indicate otherwise, that the wider panoramic views of agricultural land were incidental rather than designed.
42. The List Entry for Ascott RPG notes that the gardens and much of the park was laid out at the same time as the enlargement of the farmhouse in 1874-88, with the agricultural setting highly visible from the house to the west, south and east. The original main drive to the house gave views of the park and Vale of Aylesbury to the south-east. The south-east front of the house and the formal garden elements overlook the park with views across to the Chiltern Hills to the south-east. The List Entry also records that the panoramic views south and south-east from the lawns are a significant feature.
43. The *Mentmore Conservation Area Review* describes views to the northern side of the Mentmore ridge from Ascott Park as a key designed view, and states that the wider setting in the rural Vale of Aylesbury is of the highest significance, particularly in views relating to the Wing and Ascott scarp to the north. It refers to

¹⁷ Table in Dr Well's Rebuttal Proof of Evidence at section 1.3 of CD12.01a.

spectacular views from the western side of Mentmore Green to the Ascott House estate on the scarp opposite marked prominently with a sweep of mature ornamental trees.¹⁸

44. In the *Mentmore Setting Study*, Place Services found that there are significant inter-connected views visually linking the properties at Mentmore and Ascott that make a major positive contribution to the setting of the heritage assets, and that this intervisibility was deliberate. The assessment refers to wide views from Ascott House south towards Mentmore Towers and beyond to the Chiltern Hills.¹⁹
45. The Council contends that the proposed development would be conspicuous in wide views between the Rothschilds' estates at Ascott and Mentmore, and points to the importance of the connections between these groups of assets.²⁰ However, the Ascott Estate's own House and Collections Historian Librarian has, in her research, not come across anything to validate the Council's submissions about designed views. She points out that Ascott already existed as a small farmhouse before Mentmore was built, and that after Ascott was developed trees lining its south lawn would have impeded any views to Mentmore. The Council acknowledges that without additional evidence we cannot be certain of the intentions of individuals at any one point in time regarding landscape design.
46. The heritage experts also differ on the degree to which hunting is relevant to the consideration of the likely effects of the appeal scheme on the significance of heritage assets. At the Inquiry the Council stated that the appeal site forms part of the "agricultural and hunting landscape".²¹ The Council's closing submissions state that the appeal site "forms part of a hunting and agricultural landscape that is integral to the significance of the heritage assets".²² But the Council's first reason for refusal refers to the loss of the "historic agricultural landscape". HE also refers to the "agricultural setting" of Ascott House and its RPG, and to the "agricultural landscape" of the Aylesbury Vale.
47. It seems to me likely that the Rothschilds chose elevated ridges for their grandiose buildings, which afforded extensive views over their wider estates, and that hunting was likely to have been a factor in drawing them to this area, as was accessibility by rail. The appeal site has had association with the Rothschilds since at least 1852 and by 1878 over two-thirds of the site was owned by or leased from Mentmore. Furthermore, it is likely that the Rothschilds made some changes to the agricultural landscape, beyond the formal gardens and parkland, to facilitate hunting, such as creating coverts. However, I consider that at the Inquiry the Council overstated the significance of hunting as an influential factor in assessing the effects of the appeal scheme on the significance of heritage assets at Ascott House and Mentmore Towers. Taking all the above into account, I turn next to consider in more detail the likely effects on the identified 22 heritage assets.
48. The Official List Entry for Ascott House RPG (Grade II*) states that it is a late 19th century park and garden including formal features, informal lawns and woodland, with late 20th century additions. The list notes that the RPG is bounded to the east by farmland, and that the agricultural setting is highly visible from the site to the west, south and east. The original drive to the house, lined with an avenue of lime

¹⁸ CD10.03a.

¹⁹ CD10.05.

²⁰ CD11.02b paragraphs 6.1.4-7, 6.3.20, 6.4.26 and 6.5.29.

²¹ CD12.02a.

²² ID18 paragraph 33.

trees, curves gently south-west giving views of the park and Vale of Aylesbury to the south-east. Ascott RPG is split into two distinct areas. The earlier north-east park is on the flatter area of the ridge with more mature specimen trees. The later (c1890s) south-east park is more agricultural in character, with several large clumps of trees and some arable land. This part of the park slopes from the gardens down to the valley in a wide sweep, but is cut visually by a low ridge which runs south-east from Round Spinney. By 1900 the park had been extended south as far as the brook, enhancing views from the gardens down the south-east facing slope.

49. The Ascott RPG principally derives its significance from its historic and artistic interest as an example of a late 19th century designed landscape. The appeal site has an historical association with the RPG by reason of the Rothschilds' land ownership and influence on the local landscape. There is some evidence for how the Rothschilds modified the landscape from the number of circular 'clumps' of trees to the east and west of the RPG that were likely managed as game coverts. It seems to me that the wider agricultural landscape outside the RPG serves primarily as an incidental visual backdrop to some views from higher vantage points within the RPG. But it also has some historic association with the RPG through hunting. The RPG contains the buildings and grounds for the personnel, horses and hounds required for the hunt, including Gun Alley, which was designed to provide access for the hunt to the countryside beyond the RPG. The appeal site was likely part of the wider agricultural landscape through which the hunt occasionally passed. The agricultural land in the surrounds of the RPG makes some contribution to an understanding of the way the RPG functioned as part of a grand hunting lodge and so adds to its historic value. Because of this aesthetic and historical association, the setting of the RPG makes a positive contribution to its significance.
50. The appeal site lies to the south-east of the RPG and comprises only a small part of its setting. Furthermore, many of the hedgerows within the appeal site shown on the 1852 tithe map have been removed. Nevertheless, the appeal site, as part of the wider agricultural context for the RPG, plays a role in the ability to appreciate the significance of this Grade II* asset. The winding brook that forms the southern boundary of the RPG extends further to the east and is the watercourse that traverses the appeal site. I saw at my site visit that this is a notable feature in the local landscape because of the vegetation along the alignment of the brook, which provides visual linkage between the RPG and its wider setting. The south-eastern corner of the RPG is some 250 m from the appeal site. The proposed solar panels would be sited about 150 m to the south of the circular group of trees at Chelsea Clump, which is a significant feature within the setting of the RPG. The proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure, particularly to the north of the watercourse, would detract from the agricultural setting of the RPG, and so, to some degree, would impair the ability to appreciate its significance. The appellant considered that there would be a low level of harm, but I agree with the Council and HE that the appeal scheme would have a medium level of LSH to the significance of Ascott House RPG.
51. Some of the considerations about the setting's contribution to the significance of Ascott RPG, outlined above, also apply to the setting of Ascott House. But the appeal site is much closer to the RPG than it is to the Grade II* listed house. Ascott House derives most of its significance from its architectural, artistic and

historical illustrative value as a well-preserved Arts and Crafts style Victorian dwelling with 17th century origins. There is some group value between the house and its associated buildings. Insofar as its setting contributes to the significance of Ascott House, it is the RPG and views to the south over the vale towards Mentmore that are of the most consequence. The Council acknowledges that the primary focus of the house is the wider landscape setting to the south.²³

52. The appeal site lies to the south-east of Ascott House and when visible it is seen peripherally in views from the house and its lawns. Trees and woodland within the RPG, along with the topography, screen all or parts of the appeal site from many vantage points in and around the house. Notwithstanding some intervisibility, the appeal scheme would not become an unintended focal point in views from the house and lawns.
53. HE notes that the house and its landscape was deliberately laid out to take advantage of its position on the south slope of a ridge, with views out to the south, east and west. The harm from the proposed solar farm would be serious according to HE, with a medium level of LTS, as it would impact on the agricultural setting of a key designed view out from the house. The Council also assessed a medium level of harm. HE refers to the strong visual link and aesthetic power of the country house surrounded by its formal garden, parkland and views over the agricultural landscape of Aylesbury Vale and beyond.
54. The wider agricultural landscape, of which the appeal site is a part, has an historical association with Ascott House. However, given the separation distance and limited intervisibility, the land to the south-east of the house between the RPG and the railway, which was constructed in the 1830s, makes a minor contribution to the significance of Ascott House and its curtilage listed structures. I agree with the appellant that the appeal scheme would have a low level of LTS to the significance of Ascott House.
55. Keepers Lodge (Grade II), which is listed as 'Lodge 900 metres to NE of Ascott House', formerly marked the arrival to the parkland and the start of the drive to the house. The main element of its setting is the surrounding parkland. The lodge is now a domestic dwelling with a garden area and planting that obscures direct views towards the agricultural landscape outside the RPG. The appeal site does not contribute to the heritage significance of this asset. The Council assessed a low level of harm, but I agree with the appellant that the proposed development would result in no harm to the significance of Keepers Lodge.
56. The Hunting Stables (Grade II) are also referred to as Domestic Stables at Ascott House and comprise a series of stables and lodgings arranged around a courtyard. The building is located to the north of the original drive to the house and set back on the ridge beyond extensive planting within the RPG. Its heritage significance derives from its physical fabric, and the main element of its setting is the associated parkland. The proposed solar farm would not have an adverse impact on the setting of this asset. The Council assessed a low level of harm, but I agree with the appellant that the appeal scheme would result in no harm to the Hunting Stables.
57. Huntsman's House and Park House are curtilage listed to Ascott House and appear to have served the main house as kennels. They are separated from the

²³ CD11.02b paragraph 6.4.5.

appeal site by vegetation in the RPG. The heritage experts agreed at the Inquiry that the appeal scheme would have a 'Neutral/No Harm' effect on the significance of Huntsman's House and Park House. I have no reason to disagree and find no harm to these assets.

58. Ascott Home Farm is a non-designated heritage asset. It is located to the north-west of the appeal site. The nearest solar panels within the northern part of the appeal site would be about 700 m from Ascott Home Farm. Woodland to its east and south-east limit intervisibility, but the farm has an historic relationship with the agricultural land in the wider area. The appeal site makes a minor contribution to the setting of the farm. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LTSH to the significance of Ascott Home Farm.
59. Mentmore Towers (Grade I) is about 1.6 km to the south-west of the appeal site. This impressive asset is of the highest significance, some of which is derived from its setting in a RPG, wider parkland and its agricultural surrounds.²⁴ The latter helps in understanding the rural setting of the asset. There is also a historic ownership connection between the appeal site and Mentmore. However, the setting of Mentmore Towers lies primarily to the south of Mentmore ridge. Only the tops of some of the towers are visible in views from the north. HE makes no mention of any adverse effect on Mentmore Towers. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LTSH to the significance of Mentmore Towers. But given the limited historic rural associations between the appeal site and Mentmore Towers, I find this to be near to the bottom of the scale.
60. Mentmore Towers RPG (Grade II*) is at its closest about 1.3 km to the south-west of the appeal site. This extensive area of parkland is mostly located on the south-eastern, southern and south-western sides of the Mentmore ridge. Its primary focus is towards the Chilterns escarpment, not north-east towards the appeal site. There is a belt of trees within the northern part of the RPG. The road to Wing adjoins part of this northern boundary to the RPG and affords glimpses across the intervening agricultural land towards the appeal site. To this extent the proposed development would impinge to some degree on the rural surroundings that comprise the wider setting for the RPG. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LTSH to the significance of Mentmore Towers RPG, but again I consider this to be near to the bottom of the scale because of the limited historic rural associations between the appeal site and the RPG.
61. Gates, Piers and Railings to East of Stone Lodge (Grade II) comprise an imposing entrance feature to Mentmore Towers located about 1.45 km from the appeal site.²⁵ This ensemble derives its significance from its design as an example of a decorative 19th century neoclassical style gate, with views in and out of the parkland. Other than forming part of the wider Mentmore estate to which the gates belonged, the appeal site makes no contribution to the setting of this asset. The Council assessed a low level of LTSH, but I agree with the appellant that the appeal scheme would result in no harm to the significance of the Gates, Piers and Railings to East of Stone Lodge.
62. Stone Lodge (Grade II) is an entrance lodge for Mentmore Towers, which is located just inside the gates, piers and railings. Its heritage significance lies in its physical fabric and its historical association with the grand house. Its setting,

²⁴ ID9.

²⁵ ID11.

which comprises the surrounding parkland, contributes to its significance. There are glimpsed views towards the appeal site from this parkland. However, it was apparent at my site visit that the intervening topography and vegetation limits any visual relationship between the appeal site and the lodge. The Council assessed a low level of LSH, but I agree with the appellant that the proposed development would result in no harm to the significance of Stone Lodge.

63. Laundry Cottages (Grade II) at Mentmore is one listed building but now converted into three dwellings known as Red House, Laundry Cottages and the Old Laundry. The heritage experts agreed at the Inquiry that the appeal scheme would have a 'Neutral/No Harm' effect on the significance of Laundry Cottages. I have no reason to disagree and find no harm to these assets.
64. The Old Vicarage at Mentmore would have some intervisibility with parts of the proposed development. It has an historical association with its wider rural context, which includes the appeal site. The rural context makes a minor contribution to the significance of this non-designated heritage asset. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LSH to the significance of The Old Vicarage.
65. The Gas House and The Coach House at Mentmore are located off the road to Wing at a lower level than The Old Vicarage. In this location they are appreciated in their immediate context and the proposed development would not affect their setting. The heritage experts agreed at the Inquiry that the appeal scheme would have a 'Neutral/No Harm' effect on the significance of The Gas House and The Coach House. I have no reason to disagree and find no harm to these non-designated heritage assets.
66. HE describes Mentmore as a high quality, historic linear settlement, and one of the best preserved of the Rothschilds' estate villages. Mentmore Conservation Area encompasses the listed buildings, pleasure grounds and park that surround the village. It is a conservation area of high significance, characterised by a strong sense of unity, with a village green, set within the surrounding rural area. Within the village itself views are largely contained along Wing and Cheddington Roads, which lead to the green. The conservation area derives some of its significance from the designed agricultural/parkland landscape. The agricultural fields in the wider area also help to illustrate the former role of the village as an agricultural settlement. The *Mentmore Conservation Area Review* identifies significant views from the western side of the green towards the north. The appeal site lies to the north-east in these views and is partly screened by the local topography.²⁶ Any views from this vantage point would include part of the railway, which the *Review* states is a major visual intrusion in this overwhelmingly rural landscape.
67. The nearest solar panels, in the southern part of the appeal scheme, would be about 500 m from the northern part of the Conservation Area. There are views towards the appeal site from the road opposite the gated entrance to Mentmore Towers, in which those leaving the RPG would appreciate aspects of the village's rural context. The Conservation Area extends down the sloping land and includes views of an area described as 'North Park' and beyond to farmland. North Park is an agricultural area within the Conservation Area that is contiguous with the wider rural landscape. The *Review* notes that the area now known as North Park was

²⁶ Viewpoint 6 CD1.17c.

an integral part of the estate's mid-late 19th century model agricultural regime as an extensive area of ornamental agricultural land. However, views are filtered by roadside vegetation, which even in winter would facilitate only fleeting glimpses towards the wider setting of the Conservation Area. More pronounced views of the surrounding countryside would be apparent from PRoW MEN/3/1 that extends down the sloping land in this part of the Conservation Area towards Ledburn.²⁷ In this lower part of the Conservation Area intervening trees and vegetation would limit any adverse impact from the proposed solar farm on the setting of the Conservation Area.

68. It was evident at my site visit that visible parts of the appeal site would comprise only a small part of the wider view of the rural area. This part of the agricultural landscape, which adjoins the railway, makes only a minor contribution to the significance of Mentmore Conservation Area. Nonetheless, the proposed development would, to some degree, detract from the rural setting and the historic understanding of the village's agricultural origins. The Council assessed a medium level of harm, but I agree with the appellant and HE that the appeal scheme would have a low level of LTS to the significance of Mentmore Conservation Area.²⁸
69. Longfields (Grade II) at Ledburn principally derives its heritage significance from its built form, which can best be appreciated from its garden plot and in views from Aylesbury Road. Views towards the appeal site would include some of the solar panels and associated infrastructure, at a distance of more than 160 m. The western part of the appeal site makes a minor contribution to the significance of this asset. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LTS to the significance of Longfields.
70. The listing for Ledburn Manor (Grade II) includes a Stable Block beyond the manor house. The assets are set back within the plot and accessed by a long driveway. Land within the western part of the proposed solar farm makes a minor contribution to the significance of the manor as part of its historic rural setting. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LTS to the significance of Ledburn Manor.
71. Manor Cottage (Grade II) is located some 325 m from the proposed solar panels. The cottage is set far back in its associated plot, from which it is best appreciated and understood. Agricultural land which is intervisible with the cottage allows its historic interest to be appreciated in this rural context. Some of the solar farm would be located within this agricultural land, which makes a minor contribution to the significance of this asset. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LTS to the significance of Manor Cottage.
72. Rosebery House is the former Hare and Hounds Public House at Ledburn. Hop Cottage and Barley Cottage were formerly outbuildings associated with the public house. These are non-designated heritage assets that are now in residential occupation. They are situated to the west of the appeal site on the opposite side of Aylesbury Road. There would be some intervisibility between these dwellings and the solar farm. The buildings are best experienced and appreciated from their

²⁷ Viewpoint 7 CD1.17c.

²⁸ HE stated that the proposal would constitute "...less than substantial harm to the conservation area, which would be at a low level." But then sets out its overall position as "...the harm would impact key designed views out from Ascott House and its RPG, as well as important views out from Mentmore Conservation Area. The harm would therefore be medium on the scale of less than substantial harm."

garden plots and from Aylesbury Road. The former public house has an historic connection with the Mentmore estate, as does the appeal site, and so land within the appeal site makes a minor contribution to the significance of these assets. The proposed community orchard and meadow would be sited between these buildings and the solar panels, which would limit any adverse effects of the appeal scheme. I concur with the heritage experts' assessment of a low level of LSH to the significance of Rosebery House, Hop Cottage and Barley Cottage.

73. Wing Conservation Area covers the historic core of the settlement. Its rural context contributes to the overall significance of the Conservation Area. The *Wing Conservation Area* appraisal states that Wing is notable for scenic views out of the older part of the village, particularly to the south and west.²⁹ The nearest solar panels in the appeal scheme would be over 2 km to the east of Wing Conservation Area. There are views from Park Gate and a nearby PRoW leading out of the village towards the appeal site, which I saw on my site visit. However, given the separation distance and intervening land uses, the proposed development would be absorbed into an extensive rural landscape. Construction traffic would pass through Wing, but this would be for a limited period and would not have a significant adverse effect on the appreciation of the historic character of the village. The Council assessed a low level of harm, but I agree with the appellant that the appeal scheme would result in no harm to Wing Conservation Area.
74. There is evidence of possible archaeological features within the appeal site that potentially might need to be left in situ. This is a consideration that could be adequately addressed by the imposition of appropriate planning conditions. There would be scope within the details required to be approved by suggested Condition 5 to safeguard archaeological interest in the site.
75. Some of the heritage assets at Ascott and Mentmore have group value with associative or visual connections, which I have taken into account in my consideration of the effects of the proposal on the historic environment. Given the number of heritage assets affected by the proposed development, the Council argues that the cumulative and collective harm to the historic environment is a determinative factor in this case. However, harm to assets should be assessed on an individual basis. Cumulative or collective impact would not add to this harm. But the number of heritage assets affected here is a relevant consideration in determining the weight to be given to the overall harm to the historic environment.
76. VALP Policy BE1 sets out that the historic environment, unique in its character, quality and diversity across the vale is important and will be preserved or enhanced, that proposals for development shall contribute to heritage values and local distinctiveness, and that development affecting a heritage asset should achieve a high quality of design. The policy goes on to apply similar provisions to those in the NPPF about harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets, which is considered further in the *Planning balance* section of this decision. To the extent that there is any inconsistency between Policy BE1 and the NPPF, I have given preference to the provisions of the national policy.
77. NPPF paragraphs 215 and 216 provide that the LSH to the significance of designated heritage assets that I have identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, and that a balanced judgement is required for non-

²⁹ CD10.03b.

designated heritage assets having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset. The NPPF also states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset the greater the weight should be given). The resultant harm from the proposed development would include some harm to a Grade 1 listed building (albeit near to the bottom of the LTHS scale), a Grade II* listed building and two Grade II* RPGs, which are assets of the highest significance. I have taken this into account in applying great weight to the identified LTHS harm to designated heritage assets. However, I consider that the non-designated heritage assets affected here make a limited contribution to the historic environment, and that the LTHS to these assets is of 'Minor' significance.

Renewable energy

78. With a generating capacity of up to 49.9 MW ac the proposed development would provide enough energy to power up to 11,887 homes and would reduce up to 9,889 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year. This would accord with national policy in the NPPF, which supports the transition to net zero by 2050. The need for renewable energy provision is reinforced by EN-1 and EN-3. The Government's objectives for the energy system are to ensure the supply of energy always remains secure, reliable, affordable, and consistent with meeting the target to cut greenhouse gasses to net zero by 2050. EN-1 states that this will require a step change in the decarbonisation of the energy system.³⁰
79. The *British Energy Security Strategy* (2022) calls for a five-fold increase in solar capacity by 2035.³¹ *Powering up Britain* (2023) reiterated this goal.³² The pathway to achieving the Government's ambitious plans was set out in *Clean Power 2030* (2024).³³ The *UK Solar Roadmap* (2025) aims to increase capacity for all types of solar from the current 18 GW to 45-47 GW by 2030.³⁴ The importance of planning for renewable energy is identified in the PPG because increasing the amount of energy from renewable sources will help to secure the national energy supply and contribute to mitigating climate change.
80. The appellant has a grid connection offer from UK Power Network for 2031 but has applied to accelerate the connection date for the appeal scheme to 30 March 2028.³⁵ This was not decided at the time of the Inquiry. However, even if the proposed development was unable to contribute to meeting the 2030 *Solar Roadmap* ambition, it would still assist in achieving the Government's longer-term goals for reducing carbon emissions. The SoCG acknowledges the urgent need for renewable energy and that this is a significant material consideration. This reflects provisions in EN-3 that the Government is committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions by 2050.³⁶ NPPF paragraph 168 provides that the benefits associated with all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure should attract significant weight. Given the scale of

³⁰ EN-1 paragraph 2.3.3.

³¹ CD6.4.

³² CD6.5.

³³ CD6.7.

³⁴ 18 GW at first quarter 2025. *UK Solar Roadmap United Kingdom Powered by Solar June 2025* Department for Energy Security & Net Zero cited at paragraph 6.21 of CD11.01i.

³⁵ ID16.

³⁶ CD6.03 EN-3 paragraph 2.10.9.

the proposed solar farm, along with the policy context, the renewable energy benefits of the proposed solar farm are of 'Major' significance.

Other matters

81. The proposed development would utilise four separate parts of fields that comprise Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land that in total extend to 4.98 ha.³⁷ The SoCG notes that the extent of this loss is not considered significant, and given the limited scale of the affected area it is not regarded by the Council as a determinative factor warranting a reason for refusal. However, the Council awarded negative weight to this impact and there is local concern about the loss of productive arable land. Suggested planning conditions would require grazing and soil management plans, and the site could be returned to a solely agricultural use after the 40-year operational period for the solar farm. The appellant submitted evidence about land quality in the locality.³⁸ I am satisfied that reasonable consideration has been given to using poorer quality land having regard to other constraints.
82. Given the requirements for a solar farm of this scale, including an available grid connection, I consider that it would be necessary to use agricultural land, and that land of poorer quality is not available. Using 4.98 ha of BMV agricultural land for renewable energy generation would be justified in the circumstances that apply here. The appellant includes farm diversification as a benefit of the proposed development on the basis that rental income generated would enable the landowner to invest in the retained land. But there is no evidence about how this would be secured. I find that any harm to agricultural land and food production would be of 'Nominal' significance.
83. The proposed development would deliver a biodiversity net gain (BNG) of 36.45% in habitat units, a hedgerow unit gain of 26.94% and watercourse units gain of 16.77%. The proposed BNG could be secured by planning conditions in accordance with VALP Policy NE1i. Skylark mitigation plots could be secured within the appeal site.³⁹ The Council believes that this BNG provision would be lower than is now typically achieved by solar farms of this scale. The policy requirement here derives from VALP Policy NE1, which seeks an unspecified net gain in biodiversity, and the NPPF, which states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Notwithstanding that some of the planting would assist in mitigating the impact of the development, the proposed provision for wildlife would be a benefit of 'Moderate' significance. Subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions the appeal scheme would accord with VALP Policy NE1. It would also comply with VALP Policy NE2 concerning the biodiversity of watercourses.
84. The appeal scheme would also have economic benefits in providing employment and contributing to the local and wider economy. During its operation the solar farm would support a small number of jobs. However, the total build cost of an estimated £35 m would provide construction employment. The *UK Solar Roadmap* states that deployment of solar is crucial for creating new, good quality

³⁷ CD1.18.

³⁸ CD2.31.

³⁹ Suggested Condition 15 k).

jobs and promoting stable and consistent economic growth. This contribution to the economy would be a benefit of 'Moderate' significance.

85. Local residents have reservations about the benefit of the proposed community recreation and amenity area as an orchard and meadow. It was pointed out at the Inquiry that many nearby occupiers have gardens with fruit trees and that an orchard would be of little advantage to Ledburn. That part of the appeal site is also at a 1 in 30 year risk of flooding. I accept that the utility of the proposed community recreation and amenity area might be impaired at times by drainage issues or local flooding, even if this was a low hazard risk for users. However, the community recreation and amenity area would provide a space for recreational activities on the appeal site, whereas access is currently restricted to the right to use the PRoW across the site. The proposed circular permissive footpath would be a useful additional route for some walkers, albeit close to solar panels for part of its length. These are benefits of 'Minor' significance.
86. Access to the site would be from Aylesbury Road via two existing field gates. HGVs would use some narrow and winding rural roads to access the site. The highways evidence indicates that the imposition of conditions could mitigate adverse impacts on the local road network. Similarly, planning conditions could safeguard those using the PRoW and proposed permissive path. I find no conflict with VALP Policy C4 about enhancing and protecting public rights of way. Highway safety does not weigh against the proposal.
87. Suggested Conditions 4 and 5 would determine the location of the substation and transformer substations. These would be located away from residential properties and so the proposal would not result in unacceptable noise levels for those living nearby.⁴⁰ The Officer's Report recommended a planning condition to ensure that the equipment was installed and operated in accordance with the submitted noise assessment.⁴¹ With appropriate landscaping, glint and glare from solar panels would not harm the residential amenity of nearby occupiers or adversely impact people driving along Aylesbury Road.⁴² I find no conflict with VALP Policy BE3 concerning the protection of the amenity of residents.
88. The submitted Flood Sequential Test Statement applies an appropriate methodology and demonstrates that there are no sites that are sequentially preferable to the appeal site.⁴³ Drainage is a matter that could be addressed by planning conditions.⁴⁴ I find no conflict with VALP Policy I4 concerning flooding.

Planning balance

89. The proposal would not preserve the setting of listed buildings and the harm I have identified to listed buildings attracts considerable importance and weight. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 215, the LTSH to the significance of designated heritage assets must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which are set out in paragraph 92 of this decision. I have, in accordance with the NPPF, awarded great weight to the conservation of the designated heritage assets. In my judgement, the public benefits of the appeal scheme attributable to the generation of renewable energy, contribution to the economy, biodiversity net gain and the

⁴⁰ CD1.19.

⁴¹ CD4.20 paragraph 8.10.

⁴² CD2.39.

⁴³ CD3.04.

⁴⁴ CD1.16.

provision of community facilities, outweigh the LTHS I have identified to the designated heritage assets. In the balanced judgement required by NPPF paragraph 216 for Rosebery House, Hop Cottage, Barley Cottage, Ascott Home Farm and The Old Vicarage, I consider that the low level of harm to these non-designated heritage assets, when combined with their limited significance, should attract 'Slight' weight against the proposal.⁴⁵

90. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 189, the limited adverse impact to the Chilterns National Landscape attracts great weight in the planning balance. However, I find that 'Considerable' weight should be given to the overall harm to the character and appearance of the area.
91. The proposal would minimise the conflict between the solar farm and the conservation of the affected heritage assets, but some harm would result to 8 designated and 5 non-designated heritage assets. Great weight must be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, and the harm to the settings of listed buildings attracts considerable importance and weight. In the overall planning balance, I find that 'Considerable' weight should be given to the LTHS to heritage assets.
92. Given the contribution of the proposed development to the reduction of carbon emissions and towards energy security considerations, along with national support for the generation of renewable energy, I consider that the benefits of the proposed solar farm attract 'Substantial' weight in the overall planning balance. The scheme would also have economic benefits in providing employment and contributing to the local and wider economy, which should be given 'Moderate' weight. The benefits of the scheme to biodiversity also justify awarding 'Moderate' weight in the planning balance. 'Slight' weight should attach to the benefits of the proposed community recreation and amenity area, and the permissive path, given their limitations. Any harm resulting from the loss of agricultural land attracts only 'Minimal' weight.
93. The proposed development would be temporary and reversible. That would not of course ameliorate the harm during its operational lifetime. But beyond its 40-year duration, and subject to appropriate site restoration, there would be no residual harm. In the intervening period there is an acknowledged urgent need to increase renewable energy generation capacity to secure a pathway that would allow net zero emissions by 2050 to be met. The appeal scheme would make a small but timely contribution to building this pathway. EN-1 states that meeting the Government's objectives necessitates a significant amount of new energy infrastructure, both large nationally significant developments and small-scale developments determined at a local level.⁴⁶ The proposed solar farm would, cumulatively, help to achieve the Government's objectives for the energy system. Taking all these considerations into account, I find that the overall planning balance falls in favour of the proposed development.

Planning policy

94. The proposal would accord with the heritage planning balance provisions in VALP Policy BE1 and the NPPF. I find no conflict with VALP Policy NE7, which provides for the loss of BMV agricultural land where there are no otherwise suitable sites of

⁴⁵ In attributing weight, I have applied a 5-point scale as follows: 'Minimal', 'Slight', 'Moderate', 'Considerable', 'Substantial'.

⁴⁶ EN-1 paragraph 2.3.4.

poorer agricultural quality that could accommodate the development, and the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the harm resulting from the loss of agricultural land.

95. The Council's reason for refusal cites conflict with VALP Policy BE2 concerning design. This policy was not referred to in the Council's planning evidence to the Inquiry.⁴⁷ However, the Officer's Report to Committee found that the proposal would respect the physical characteristics of the site but would not complement the natural qualities or features of the area. I agree with this finding, which would bring the proposal into some conflict with the requirement to respect and complement the criteria set out in Policy BE2.
96. The proposal would not fully satisfy criterion f) of VALP Policy NE4, and this gives rise to some policy conflict concerning the visual prominence of the appeal scheme in the landscape. The part of the appeal site to the north of the watercourse lies within Slapton Parish. The proposal would be at odds with SPNDP Policy SLP1, which supports development that would, amongst other things, contribute to the landscape and be in harmony with the character of the Ouzel Valley Catchment Area. The proposed development gains some support from VALP Policy NE8 concerning the tree and woodland resource. VALP Policy C3 is a key policy in determining this appeal.
97. Policy C3 states that all development schemes should look to achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources. The policy encourages renewable energy development provided that there is no unacceptable adverse impact, including cumulative impact on, amongst other things: a. landscape and biodiversity, protected habitats and species; b. visual impacts on local landscapes; c. the historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings; f. highways and access issues; and g. residential amenity. Neither Policy C3 or its supporting text provides any guidance about how to assess what is an 'unacceptable adverse impact'. There will be circumstances where the harm is so severe in its nature and extent that it results in serious adverse impacts. That is not the case in this appeal. It seems to me that an unacceptable adverse impact could also arise where the harm outweighed the benefits in the planning balance.
98. The assessment about whether development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on heritage assets should properly be informed by application of VALP Policy BE1 and the NPPF. An unacceptable adverse impact on the historic environment would be unlikely to arise where the public benefits of a scheme outweighed the LTSH to heritage assets. Given the planning balance in this case, I find that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the historic environment for the purposes of applying part c. of Policy C3.
99. Subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity or highways. Similarly, conditions could safeguard protected habitats and species. The appeal scheme would have a positive impact on biodiversity. Whether the harm I have found to the character and appearance of the area amounts to an unacceptable adverse impact is a matter of judgement. However, it seems to me, where the overall planning balance falls in favour of development, that it would be unlikely that the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the matters set

⁴⁷ CD8.02 paragraph 6.5 and CD11.02a paragraph 9.12. However, Policy BE2 is included in ID18 paragraph 94, which lists policies with which the proposal would conflict.

out in parts a. and b. of Policy C3. Notwithstanding some harm to the character and appearance of the locality and to Chilterns National Landscape, the proposal would not, in my view, result in an unacceptable adverse impact on landscape and visual amenity.

100. Policy C3 adds that planning permission will normally be granted for off-site renewable energy, including solar, where it has been demonstrated that specified criteria have all been met. Of relevance in this case are criteria: p. there is no significant adverse effect on landscape or townscape character, ecology and wildlife, heritage assets whether designated or not, areas or features of historical significance or amenity value; q. there is no significant adverse impact on local amenity, health and quality of life as a result of noise, emissions to atmosphere, electronic interference or outlook through unacceptable visual intrusion; and r. there is no adverse impact on highway safety. The policy adds that where development is granted, mitigation measures will be required as appropriate to minimise any environmental impacts. The supporting text for off-site renewable energy refers to national policy promoting the development of renewable energy sources and adds that the Council supports renewable and low carbon energy provision wherever any adverse impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.
101. Criteria q. and r. of this part of Policy C3 would be met in this case. However, significant adverse effects would occur for landscape and heritage assets. The wording of the policy refers to permission 'normally' being granted where all the criteria are met. This would allow for some discretion in how the policy was applied. Furthermore, the policy wording would not necessarily bring development that does not fully meet all the criteria into conflict with Policy C3 when read as a whole.
102. The proposal would contribute to achieving greater efficiency in the use of natural resources and adverse impacts could be addressed satisfactorily. Taking all these considerations into account, I find that the proposal would satisfy VALP Policy C3, and that the proposed development's compliance with this key policy weighs heavily against the conflict I have identified with other development plan policies.
103. I find no conflict with national policy statements EN-1 and EN-3. Having regard to NPPF paragraph 213, I am satisfied that there is clear and convincing justification for the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets from the development proposed within their respective settings. VALP Policy NE3 concerns the impact on the Chilterns National Landscape and its setting, which is considered further in paragraph 117 of this decision.

Chilterns National Landscape

104. Defra's December 2024 guidance about the amended duty under section 85(A1) of the 2000 Act states that the duty is intended to complement statutory functions by ensuring that the purposes for which protected landscapes are designated are recognised in reaching decisions.
105. The Management Plan for the Chilterns National Landscape notes that 'natural beauty' is a subjective characteristic of a landscape and ultimately involves a value judgement in the designation process, which is often expressed in terms of 'special qualities' of an area. It goes on to cite Natural England's definition of factors that

contribute to the perception of natural beauty, which include; "Scenic quality: The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses".⁴⁸

106. The Management Plan lists 13 special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape. This includes a dramatic chalk escarpment and panoramic views from and across the escarpment interwoven with intimate dip-slope valleys and rolling fields, along with a dense network of rights of way. The section in the Management Plan on Landscape Character refers to the chalk scarp as a spectacular ridge that rises high above the vale to the west and dominates views over a wide area.
107. Policy DP4 of the Management Plan provides that in the setting of the National Landscape full account will be taken of whether proposals harm the natural beauty of the area. The supporting text adds that development outside the National Landscape's boundary can cause harm to its natural beauty, even if it is some distance away, for example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment. The Chilterns Conservation Board's *Renewable Energy Position Statement*, albeit dated January 2014, expresses a similar view.⁴⁹
108. Panoramic views from and across the escarpment, a special quality of the Chilterns National Landscape, contribute to its natural beauty. However, the evidence before the Inquiry is that the level of long-term visual effect of the appeal scheme would be no greater than 'Minor' in long distance views from the Chilterns escarpment, and that cumulative landscape effects would result in some limited adverse effects, resulting in some low-level harm to the special character and quality of the National Landscape by virtue of adverse effects on its setting. With respect to cumulative visual impact the evidence is that if the appeal scheme operated in combination with consented schemes the level of long-term effects on visual amenity would remain 'Minor' adverse. This low-level of harm would, to some extent, undermine or interfere with the fulfilment of the purposes for which the Chilterns National Landscape was designated.
109. The duty in section 85(A1) of the 2000 Act is to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape. It is difficult to square the appellant's submission, that the legal position is that harm to visual amenity may occur which does not cross the threshold of undermining the special qualities underlying the National Landscape designation, with the established principle that to 'conserve' in the planning context means to do no harm.⁵⁰ In this case the low-level of harm would, to some extent, undermine or interfere with the fulfilment of the purposes for which this National Landscape was designated. The appeal scheme would not, therefore, conserve the natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape. Furthermore, there is limited scope for the appeal scheme to enhance its natural beauty. The proposed tree planting when mature would, at a distance of some 6 km, add to the tapestry of trees, woodland and fields in the panoramic views of the vale from the escarpment. But this would be an enhancement of 'Nominal' significance for the purposes of applying section 85(A1) of the 2000 Act.
110. I turn next to consider whether the overall harm to natural beauty can nonetheless be justified in the circumstances that apply in this case and whether a grant of

⁴⁸ CD6.22.

⁴⁹ ID5.

⁵⁰ ID19 paragraph 4.22 and paragraphs 40-41 of the *Wadhurst* judgment at ID10.

planning permission would be in accordance with my duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. In this regard, I was referred to the *New Forest National Park Authority* judgment.⁵¹ This concerned a duty imposed under subsection 11A(1A) of the National Parks Act 1949, which is worded differently to the section 85(A1) duty in the 2000 Act. However, it includes the phrase “a relevant authority … must seek to further the purposes specified…”, which is similar to the wording used in the duty for National Landscapes.

111. The *New Forest National Park Authority* judgment held that the duty is expressed in qualified terms, with the determining authority required “to seek to further” the purposes but is not under a duty necessarily to fulfil those purposes. Where development is in conflict with those purposes it would be necessary to consider whether and to explain why planning permission may justifiably be granted, having regard to the circumstances, including the size and scale of the development and the extent and severity of its conflict with the purposes of designation. But this requires more than merely weighing the effect of the proposed development on the purposes of the designation in the overall planning balance, and in addition might require the imposition of conditions to secure mitigation measures.
112. The proposed solar farm would be a large-scale development. However, it would be located some 6 km from the nearest part of the Chilterns National Landscape. Furthermore, it would be sited in a relatively flat part of the vale where it was apparent from my site visit that intervening woodland and trees can significantly soften the visual impact of large buildings and infrastructure in distant views from elevated vantage points.
113. In this case the extent of the conflict with the purposes of the designation would be limited to panoramic views, which is only 1 of the 13 special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape listed in the Management Plan. The remaining 12 special qualities would be unaffected by the proposed development. Harm to just one special quality might sometimes be a decisive consideration, but that is not the case here given the limited harm.
114. In terms of the severity of the harm to panoramic views, the evidence of the landscape experts is that the appeal scheme would have a ‘Minor’ level of adverse effect. There is no lower level of effect in the scale applied in the LVA. In my judgement, the harm to the natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape, by dint of the adverse impact of the appeal scheme on panoramic views, would fall far short of being severe.
115. The assessed adverse effect on the Chilterns National Landscape takes into account mitigation planting. It is relevant to highlight the extensive planting proposed in the submitted landscape masterplan and the requirement to safeguard existing trees and manage hedgerows as required by suggested Conditions 4, 6, 15 and 24.
116. These are relevant factors that point towards justifiably granting planning permission for the appeal scheme notwithstanding its limited conflict with the purposes of designation for the Chilterns National Landscape. They are also relevant in deciding whether the appeal scheme is ‘major development’ for the purposes of applying VALP Policy NE3 and paragraph 190 of the NPPF. Given its nature, scale and setting, along with the likelihood of a significant adverse impact

⁵¹ *New Forest National Park Authority v SoSHCLG* [2025] EWHC 726 (Admin) at CD7.17.

on the purposes of designation, as set out in the section on *Character and Appearance* in this decision, I find that in applying relevant policy in determining this appeal that the proposal is not major development.⁵²

The development plan and section 85(A1) duty

117. VALP Policy NE3 specifies criteria to be met for non-major development that would have an impact on the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. These include demonstrating that proposals conserve and enhance the special qualities, distinctive character, tranquillity and remoteness in accordance with national policy and the overall purpose of the designation. The appeal scheme, given the identified limited harm, would not conserve the special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape in accordance with the overall purpose of the designation. This gives rise to some conflict with VALP Policy NE3.
118. I have found that the proposal would not fully accord with VALP Policies BE2, NE3 and NE4. It would also be at odds with SPNDP Policy SLP1. Other development plan policies pull in favour of the proposal. It gains some support from VALP Policy NE8. Most relevant to this appeal is the proposed development's compliance with VALP Policy C3. Overall, I find that the appeal scheme accords with the up-to-date development plan taken as a whole.
119. Planning law requires that this appeal is determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. NPPF paragraph 11 c) states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for decision-taking means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
120. I have found that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan taken as a whole. The fact that the proposal would not conserve the natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape does not, in my view, give rise to a material consideration that indicates that the appeal should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. I have discharged my duty to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape, but in the circumstances that apply in this case I consider that planning permission should be granted.

Alternative sites

121. Possible alternative sites for the proposed development were suggested by third parties to the appeal. In this case the proposal accords with the development plan and the harm I have identified would not be so great that a need to consider whether it might be avoided would arise. The possibility of an alternative site lacking such drawbacks necessarily itself becoming a relevant planning consideration does not apply in this case.

Conditions and obligations

122. Draft planning conditions, including pre-commencement conditions, were discussed at the Inquiry and agreed between the appellant and the Council. The wording of some of the suggested conditions would need to be amended to ensure that they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the proposed development,

⁵² NPPF footnote 67.

enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. The following condition numbers refer to the numbering in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

123. The standard commencement condition would apply (Condition 1). Conditions would need to specify the duration for the development and require restoration on decommissioning, for the site and for any parts of the site where export of electricity ceased before the end of the 40-year period (Conditions 2 and 3). It would be necessary to define the permission and ensure that the development was carried out in accordance with the approved plans (Condition 4). A condition would be required to enable approval to be granted for specific details of the development (Condition 5). These conditions are to safeguard the amenity of the area.
124. Details about hard and soft landscaping, including a Landscape and Hedgerow Management Plan, would be necessary in the interests of the appearance of the area (Condition 6). For similar reasons, external lighting and CCTV cameras would need to be controlled (Condition 7). Temporary storage yards and access tracks would need to be removed post construction and decommissioning in the interests of the amenity of the area (Condition 8). Unexpected contamination would need to be remediated in the interest of human health and to accord with VALP Policy NE5 (Condition 9). Measures to ensure that archaeological interest in the site was safeguarded would also be necessary to comply with VALP Policy BE1 (Conditions 10, 11 and 12).
125. In the interests of highway safety, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) would need to be approved, site accesses created (Conditions 13 and 14) and provisions made for pedestrian safety on site (Conditions 21 and 22). A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Habitat Management Plan (HMP) would be necessary to safeguard wildlife and to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (Condition 15). Conditions concerning licences for newts are required here to accord with the NPPF, Circular 06/2005 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Conditions 16 and 17).
126. A sustainable drainage strategy would need to be approved prior to the commencement of the development and implemented prior to the First Export Date to ensure that there is a satisfactory solution to managing flood risk in accordance with VALP Policy I4 (Condition 18). A 'whole life' drainage maintenance plan would also be required (Condition 19) and evidence submitted to demonstrate implementation in compliance with the approved scheme (Condition 20).
127. The installed export capacity for the development would need to be specified to ensure that it accorded with the details of the scheme that has been assessed and to comply with VALP Policy C3 (Condition 23). Measures would be necessary to safeguard trees in accordance with VALP Policy NE8 (Condition 24). The scheme proposes grazing and doing so would require a management plan (Condition 25). A soil management plan would assist in the effective restoration of the site on decommissioning (Condition 26). Provision would need to be made for the implementation and management of the Community Recreational Land and Permissive Path, which are part of the appeal scheme, in the interests of the amenity of the area (Condition 27). A noise condition is not included in ID17 but would be necessary to safeguard the residential amenity of nearby occupiers (Condition 28).

128. A draft unilateral undertaking concerning the proposed Community Recreational Land and Permissive Path was submitted at the Inquiry.⁵³ However, the appellant later decided that these were matters that could reasonably be addressed by the imposition of an appropriate planning condition and the draft obligation was not completed.

Conclusion

129. The planning balance falls in favour of the proposed development, and the scheme is in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

J Woolcock

INSPECTOR

⁵³ ID3.

APPEARANCES

FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL:

Odette Chalaby Counsel	Instructed by Rachel Steele Solicitor Buckinghamshire Council
She called	
Simon Neesam BA Hons Dip LA CMLI	Director The Landscape Partnership
Joanna Horton BA(Hons) MA IHBC	Team Leader for Heritage and Archaeology Buckinghamshire Council
Zenab Hearn MRTPI MRICS	Principal Planning Officer Buckinghamshire Council

FOR THE APPELLANT:

David Hardy LLB(Hons) BCL(Hons) Counsel	Partner CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP
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He called

Daniel Leaver BSc(Hons) BLD CMLI	Associate Director of Landscape Planning Stephenson Halliday
Dr Emma Wells IHBC MCIIfA FSA	Director of Heritage at Heritage Potential
Chris Cox BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI	Associate Director at Corylus Planning and Environmental

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Cllr Daniel McGinty	Chairman Mentmore Parish Council
Cllr Peter Brazier	Ward Councillor Buckinghamshire Council
John Seaman	Local resident
Marion Wale	Local resident

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS (1-28)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
2. The planning permission hereby granted is for a period of 40 years from the date of first export of electricity from the development to the grid (First Export Date), after which the development hereby permitted shall be removed in its entirety. Written notification of the First Export Date shall be given to the local planning authority no later than 14 days after the event.
3. Within 3 months of the development ceasing to generate electricity for a period of 12 months or not less than 12 months before the expiry of this permission, a Decommissioning Method Statement (DMS) shall be submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority. The DMS shall include details of the removal of the arrays, cables, fencing, tracks and structures together with the repair of damage that may have occurred, restoration of the site, hours of operation, protection of biodiversity during removal and the management of traffic during the decommissioning process, along with a timetable for completion of the decommissioning. The development shall be decommissioned in accordance with the approved DMS.
4. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/details:

Site Location Plan AE9.5
Planning Layout V10
Landscape Masterplan P22-3096_EN_005 Rev: H
CCTV and Security Fence Elevations Drawing 1
Security Gate Details Drawing 7
132kv Substation Drawing 1
Access Tracks Drawing 17
Onsite Power Connection Station – Drawing 6
PV Panel Details – Drawing 4

5. Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved in Condition 4, no development shall take place until full details of the final locations, alignment, design, finishes and materials including details of non-chrome, non-reflective material to be used for the panel arrays, inverters, substation control building, substations, transformers, CCTV cameras, fencing and any other structure required for the operation of the site as a solar farm shall be submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority. The plans approved in Condition 4 represent the maximum parameters of the proposal. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposed locations of panel arrays or any other structure required for the operation of the site as a solar farm shall not extend any further than as shown on the Planning Layout Drawing V10. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

6. Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved in Condition 4, no development shall take place until full details of proposed hard and soft landscaping, including a Landscape and Hedgerow Management Plan, have been submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority. The proposals for hard and soft landscaping shall include the following:
 - a) A planting plan, including identification of existing hedgerow gaps and details of proposed infill / replacement planting, to include mixed, native hedgerow and tree species.
 - b) Written specifications including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment.
 - c) Schedule of plants noting species, plant supply sizes and proposed numbers / densities and location.
 - d) Implementation programme including any phasing of work.
 - e) Details of the proposed surface and construction method of the access tracks, including the point at which PRoW Number MEN/4/1 crosses the proposed access track.

The hard and soft landscaping shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme no later than the end of the first planting season following the First Export Date. In the event of any tree, shrub, hedge or plant so planted dying or being seriously damaged or destroyed within 5 years of the implementation of the approved hard and soft landscaping, a new tree, shrub, hedge or plant equivalent to the tree, shrub, hedge or plant shall be planted in the same location and maintained.

The Landscape and Hedgerow Management Plan shall include:

- a) Details of long-term design principles and objectives.
- b) Management responsibilities.
- c) Programme for establishment of new planting.
- d) Summary plan detailing maintenance and management procedures.
- e) Replacement provisions for existing retained landscape features and any landscape to be implemented as part of the hard and soft landscaping. The approved hard and soft landscaping shall be maintained in accordance with the approved Landscape and Hedgerow Management Plan.

7. No external lighting or CCTV cameras other than those shown on the approved plans shall be installed on the site without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.
8. All temporary construction yards and temporary access tracks required to provide temporary storage of materials, parking and access in conjunction with the development shall be removed within three months of the First Export Date. All temporary access tracks required to provide temporary storage of materials, parking and access in conjunction with the decommissioning of the site shall be removed and the land shall be restored to its former condition following completion of the works set out in the approved Decommissioning Method Statement.

9. Should any unexpected contamination of soil or groundwater be discovered during development of the site, the local planning authority shall be contacted immediately. Site activities within that sub-phase or part thereof shall be suspended until such time as a procedure for addressing any such unexpected contamination has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and any required remediation work has been completed in accordance with the approved details.
10. No development shall be undertaken until an archaeological evaluation in the form of trial trenching across previously unevaluated areas has been undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted evaluation shall include details of any archaeological assets significant enough to warrant preservation in situ.
11. Where archaeological assets significant enough to warrant preservation in situ are confirmed, no development shall take place until a methodology for their preservation in situ has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved methodology.
12. Where archaeological remains are recorded by evaluation and are not of sufficient significance to warrant preservation in situ, but are worthy of recording, no development shall take place until a programme to record or safeguard any archaeological evidence has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved programme.
13. No development shall take place until a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved CTMP shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The CTMP shall include the following details:
 - a) The routing of construction vehicles, including temporary directional signage where appropriate.
 - b) Co-ordination and management of deliveries to avoid multiple deliveries at the same time and spread HGV movements.
 - c) Delivery hours outside of highway network peak periods.
 - d) Traffic management within the site to include signage, speed limits, baysmen, and internal access track widths / passing places.
 - e) The parking of vehicles of site personnel, operatives, and visitors off the highway.
 - f) Construction Staff Travel Plan.
 - g) Loading and unloading of plant and materials and storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development off the highway.
 - h) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding.
 - i) Wheel-washing facilities.
 - j) Before and after construction condition surveys of the extent of the highway network to be approved and surveyed and a commitment to rectify and repair any damage caused.

14. No development shall take place, other than works directly required for the delivery of the accesses referenced by this condition, until the site accesses as shown on Figures 3.1 and 3.2 within the Pegasus Construction Traffic Management Plan Revision A, dated March 2024, have been constructed.
15. Before any construction works are commenced, including hedgerow removal/clearance, a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and Habitat Management Plan (HMP) detailing measures to protect existing habitat during construction works and the formation of new habitat to secure a habitat compensation and biodiversity net gain as detailed within the Ecological Impact Assessment by Tyler Grange (15439_R01_JW), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include pre-commencement checks, sensitive working measures, specific species mitigation and biodiversity enhancement features. Within the CEMP/HMP document the following information shall be provided:
 - a) Aims and objectives of management which will, without limitation, include the provision of the following biodiversity net gains; a minimum of 77.75 habitat units (+36.45%), 18.58 hedgerow units (+26.94%) and 1.95 watercourse units (+16.77%) within the site.
 - b) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
 - c) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management, including details of woodland, watercourse and hedgerow buffers.
 - d) Current soil conditions of any areas designated for habitat creation and detailing of what conditioning must occur to the soil prior to the commencement of habitat creation works.
 - e) Descriptions and mapping of all exclusion zones, for both vehicles and the storage of materials, to be enforced during construction to avoid soil compaction in areas to be utilised for habitat creation.
 - f) Proposed pre-commencement check details for invertebrates and nesting birds for the sections of any hedgerow to be removed, along with a pre-commencement check for badger setts to identify if there have been any changes to the baseline data.
 - g) Details of sensitive working methods for required works within the hedgerow and woodland natural buffers.
 - h) Details of both species composition and abundance where planting is to occur.
 - i) Details of appropriate biodiversity enhancement features, including their location and model specifications, which shall include a minimum of five bat boxes and a minimum of five bird boxes.
 - j) Details of proposed mammal gates.
 - k) Details of skylark mitigation plots within the site and the inclusion of fencing to avoid disturbance.
 - l) Reptile precautionary method statement.
 - m) Proposed management prescriptions for all habitats for the operational lifetime of the development.
 - n) Assurances of achievability.
 - o) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the CEMP/HMP.
 - p) Timetable of delivery for all habitats.

q) A timetable of future ecological monitoring to ensure that all habitats achieve their proposed management condition as well as a description of a feed-back mechanism by which the management prescriptions can be amended should the monitoring deem it necessary.

All ecological monitoring and all recommendations for the maintenance and amendment of future management shall be submitted for approval in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be undertaken, and thereafter maintained, in accordance with the approved CEMP and HMP.

16. No development hereby permitted shall take place except in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Council's Organisational Licence (WML-OR152, or a 'Further Licence') and with the proposals detailed on plan "Redborough Solar Farm: Impact plan for great crested newt District Licensing (Version 1)", dated 16 October 2024.

17. No development hereby permitted shall take place unless and until a certificate from the Delivery Partner (as set out in the District Licence WML-OR152, or a 'Further Licence'), confirming that all necessary measures regarding great crested newt compensation have been appropriately dealt with, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the authority has provided authorisation for the development to proceed under the district newt licence. The delivery partner certificate must be submitted to the local planning authority for approval prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted.

18. Prior to commencement of the development, a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the submitted Pegasus Drainage Strategy (Drawing P22-3096-PEG-XX-XX-DR-C-0110 to C113-P2) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the First Export Date. The scheme shall also include:

- a) Assessment of SuDS components as listed in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) and provide justification for any exclusions.
- b) Demonstrate that water quality, ecological and amenity benefits have been considered.
- c) Water quality assessment demonstrating that the total pollution mitigation index equals or exceeds the pollution hazard index. Priority should be given to above ground SuDS components.
- d) Existing and proposed discharge rates and volumes.
- e) Ground investigations including infiltration in accordance with BRE365 Groundwater level monitoring over the winter period (from November until April).
- f) If infiltration is unviable, the scheme shall demonstrate that an alternative means of surface water disposal is practicable subject to the drainage hierarchy as outlined in paragraph 056 of the Planning Practice Guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change.
- g) Flootation calculations based on groundwater levels encountered during winter monitoring (from November until April) or based on the worst-case scenario of groundwater at surface level.

- h) Full construction details of all SuDS and drainage components.
- i) Detailed drainage layout with pipe numbers, gradients, and pipe sizes, together with storage volumes of all SuDS components.
- j) Calculations to demonstrate that the proposed drainage system can contain up to the 1 in 30 storm event without flooding. Any on site flooding between the 1 in 30 and the 1 in 100 plus climate change storm event should be safely contained on site.
- k) Details of proposed overland flood flow routes in the event of system exceedance or failure, with demonstration that such flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to adjacent or downstream sites.

19. Prior to the First Export Date, a whole-life drainage maintenance plan for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall set out how and when to maintain the full drainage system, including a maintenance schedule for each drainage/SuDS component, during and following construction, with details of who is to be responsible for carrying out the maintenance. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

20. Prior to the First Export Date, as-built drawings, photographic and/or other evidence that the approved surface water drainage scheme has been carried out, must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

21. No development shall take place until an Internal Access Road and Public Footpath Crossing Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include:

- a) Details of a flush surface with the surrounding land.
- b) A surface specification for pedestrians at the crossing.
- c) Advisory signs denoting the presence of the public footpath crossing the road.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

22. Prior to the internal service road being brought into use, pedestrian intervisibility splays of 2 m by 2 m shall be provided from each edge of the access, the depth measured 1 m back of the footpath edge and the widths outwards by 2 m from the edges of the access. The area contained within the pedestrian visibility splays shall be kept clear of any obstruction 0.6 m above ground level.

23. The development hereby permitted shall have an export capacity of not more than 49.9 MW ac.

24. The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the details set out in the Redborough Solar Farm Arboricultural Impact Assessment V3 July 2023, including all Tree Protection Measures as identified on Tree Protection Plans JSL4719_710 Rev C, JSL4719_711 Rev C, JSL4719_712 Rev D, JSL4719_713 Rev C, JSL4719_714 Rev D, JSL4719_715 Rev C, JSL4719_716 Rev C, JSL4719_717 Rev C and JSL4719_718 Rev C.

25. Prior to the First Export Date, a Grazing Management Plan (GMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The GMP shall detail which parts of the site are to be used for the grazing of livestock, during which months of the year, what livestock are to be grazed there, and it shall set out details of how the grazing is to be managed. Within three years of the First Export Date, the grazing of livestock shall be implemented on the site in accordance with the GMP. Any changes to the GMP during the lifetime of the permission shall be first submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing prior to implementation on site and shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved revised GMP.
26. No development shall take place until a Soil Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development hereby permitted shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The soil management plan shall include:
 - a) Measures to protect soils during development with reference to the guidance found in Defra's Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.
 - b) A works programme showing how all soil handling and trafficking operations will be undertaken, and which makes allowance for poor weather / ground conditions stoppages.
 - c) Details of how construction activities will be managed across the site to minimise impact on soils.
 - d) Details of appropriate equipment and methods for stockpiling, re-spreading and ameliorating of soil compaction in accordance with good practice techniques.
27. Prior to the First Export Date, a detailed management plan for the Community Recreational Land and Permissive Path shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall set out:
 - a) Management and maintenance measures for the Community Recreational Land and Permissive Path.
 - b) Details of public access arrangements, including signage, hours of access, and any restrictions.
 - c) A schedule for implementation and ongoing maintenance responsibilities.The Community Recreational Land and Permissive Path shall be laid out in accordance with plans P22-3096_EN_009_B and P22-3096_EN_005 Rev H, implemented on site within three months of the First Export Date, and thereafter maintained and made accessible in accordance with the approved management plan for the lifetime of the development.
28. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the acoustic assumptions and recommendations in the Noise Impact Assessment for Planning Application by inacoustic, dated August 2023.

End of Conditions

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE INQUIRY (ID)

- ID 1 Opening Submissions on behalf of the Appellant
- ID 2 Opening Statement on behalf of the Council
- ID 3 Draft Unilateral Undertaking concerning Community Recreational Land
- ID 4 Statement by Daniel McGinty
- ID 5 Chilterns Conservation Board – *Position Statement Renewable Energy* adopted January 2014
- ID 6 Clarification Note on Layout Changes
- ID 7 Statement by Marion Wale
- ID 8 1878 Mentmore Estate Plan – land in hand / leased out with appeal site outlined
- ID 9 Agreed Note and Photographs about Mentmore Towers
- ID 10 *Wadhurst Parish Council and SoS LUHC [2025] EWHC 1735 (Admin)*
- ID 11 Photograph of the Queen entering Mentmore Towers
- ID 12 Possible alternative sites air photo submitted by Cllr Brazier
- ID 13 *Vistry Homes Limited and SoS LUHC [2024] EWHC 2088 (Admin)*
- ID 14 Replacement paragraph 5.15 Mrs Hearn's Proof of Evidence
- ID 15 Note requested by Inspector regarding justification of Great Crested Newt Conditions
- ID 16 Redborough Solar Farm Grid Connection Rebuttal 3 October 2025
- ID 17 Agreed Planning Conditions 9 October 2025
- ID 18 Closing Submissions on behalf of the Council
- ID 19 Closing Submissions on behalf of the Appellant

CORE DOCUMENTS (CD)

CD 01 Original Plans and Reports submitted with the Application

- 1.01 Ascott Estate Site Location Plan-1
- 1.02 Access Tracks (Solar)-17
- 1.03 Planning Layout with Compound AE9.3
- 1.04 132kV Substation (Teed Connection)-1
- 1.05 PV Panel Details-4-V2.0
- 1.06 Onsite Power Conversion Station-6- V2.0
- 1.07 Security Gate Detail-7- V3.0
- 1.08 CCTV and Security Fence Elevations-1- V2.0
- 1.09 Design and access statement- July 2023
- 1.10 F105 Ecology and Trees Checklist- July 2023
- 1.11 Construction Traffic Management Plan- July 2023
- 1.12 Planning Statement- July 2023
- 1.13 Redborough Solar Farm Statement of Community Involvement-14/07/23
- 1.14 Statement of Community Involvement Appendix 1-14/07/23
- 1.15 Application form -31/07/23
- 1.16 FRA and Surface Drainage Strategy-07/08/23
- 1.17a Landscape and Visual Appraisal- Aug 2023
- 1.17b Landscape and Visual Appraisal Appendix 6- Aug 2023
- 1.17c Landscape and Visual Appraisal Appendix 2- Aug 2023
- 1.17d Landscape and Visual Appraisal Appendix 3- Aug 2023

- 1.18 Agricultural Land Classification-March 2023
- 1.19 Noise Assessment for Planning V3- Aug 2023
- 1.20a Ecological I Impact Assessment Part A- Aug 2023
- 1.20b Ecological Impact Assessment Part B- Aug 2023
- 1.20c Ecological Impact Assessment Part C- Aug 2023
- 1.20d Ecological Impact Assessment Part D- Aug 2023
- 1.21a Ascott Estate Heritage Statement Part 1- Aug 2023
- 1.21b Ascott Estate Heritage Statement Part 2- Aug 2023
- 1.21c Ascott Estate Heritage Statement Part 3- Aug 2023
- 1.21d Ascott Estate Heritage Statement Part 4- Aug 2023
- 1.21e Ascott Estate Heritage Statement Part 5- Aug 2023
- 1.22a Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 1-July 2023
- 1.22b Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 2-July 2023
- 1.22c Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 3-July 2023
- 1.22d Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 4-July 2023
- 1.22e Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 5-July 2023
- 1.22f Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 6-July 2023
- 1.22g Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 7-July 2023
- 1.22h Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 8-July 2023
- 1.22i Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 9-July 2023
- 1.22j Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 10-July 2023
- 1.22k Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 11-July 2023
- 1.22l Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 12-July 2023
- 1.22m Arboricultural Impact Assessment Part 13-July 2023

CD 02 Additional Plans and Reports Submitted to the LPA During Determination

- 2.01 Design and Access Statement October 2023
- 2.02 LVIA Update Note October 2023
- 2.03 Flood Sequential Test- October 2023
- 2.04 Photomontages Dec 2022
- 2.05 Cover letter P22-3096 January 2024
- 2.06 House Survey Report November 2023
- 2.07 Ecology response January 2024
- 2.08 Skylark Plots- 15439/P09 TG October 2023
- 2.09 Listed Wintering Bird Species- 15439/P10 TG October 2023
- 2.10 Response to Landscape architect October 2023
- 2.11 Appendix 2 Photo record including winter views Dec 2022
- 2.12 Appendix 3 Photo record including winter views Nov 2022
- 2.13 Ascott Estate Heritage Response- P22-3096 Jan 2024
- 2.14 Appeal Judgement- High Court Case No: CA-2023-000087 Jan 2024
- 2.15 Badger Sett Entrance Plan-15439/P06 April 2023
- 2.16 Badger Sett Plan (over laid onto layout) - 5439/P08 Oct 2023
- 2.17 Natural Buffer Plan-5439/P07 Oct 2023
- 2.18 Amendments letter April 2024
- 2.19 Landscape Masterplan- P22-3096 Rev D July 2023
- 2.20 Indicative illustrations of proposed development A- P22-3096 EN 100 Jan 2024
- 2.21 Indicative illustrations of proposed development B -P22-3096 EN 0101 Jan 2024
- 2.22 Construction Traffic management plan Rev A March 2024
- 2.23 Landscape & Visual Assessment- P22-3096-002 March 2024
- 2.24 Capacity information April 2024

- 2.25 Planning Layout plan- AE9.3.1 Feb 2024
- 2.26 Buffers letter April 2024
- 2.27a LLFA Response part a March 2024
- 2.27b LLFA Response part b March 2024
- 2.27c LLFA Response part c March 2024
- 2.27d LLFA response part d March 2024
- 2.28 Heritage Response April 2024
- 2.29 Skylark Plots-15439_PO9 March 2024
- 2.30 BNG Metric July 2023
- 2.31 Site Selection Assessment April 2024
- 2.32 Planning Layout - AE9.3 Sep 2024
- 2.33 Landscape Masterplan - P22-3096_EN_005 REV: F July 2023
- 2.34 District Licence Report for Redborough Solar Farm Oct 2024
- 2.35 Tree Protection Plan- RPS – 712 Rev D July 2023
- 2.36 Site Location plan - AE9.5 Oct 2024
- 2.37 Planning Layout With Arb - AE9.5 Oct 2024
- 2.38 Planning Layout - AE9.5 Oct 2024
- 2.39 Glint and Glare Study Sep 2023

CD 03 Post Application Plan and Documents Submitted

- 3.01 Planning Layout- V10
- 3.02 Landscape Masterplan-P22-3096 EN 005 Rev H
- 3.03 Community Orchard Landscape Masterplan-P22-3096 EN 009 Rev B
- 3.04 Flood Sequential Test

CD 04 Consultee Responses, Committee Report and Decision Notice

- 4.01 Archaeology Comment – 16 August 2023
- 4.02 Archaeology Comment – 16 May 2024
- 4.03 Sustainable Drainage Team comments – 29 August 2023
- 4.03a Sustainable Drainage Team comments – 21 May 2024
- 4.04 Internal drainage board comments – 22 August 2023
- 4.04a Internal drainage board comments – 30 October 2024
- 4.05 Clerk Mentmore PC comments – 23 August 2023
- 4.06 Councillor Chris Poll comments
- 4.07 Councillor Deerl Town comments
- 4.08 Councillor Peter Brazier comments
- 4.09 Ecologist comments – 8 September 2023
- 4.10 Ecology comments - 23 February 2024
- 4.11 Environmental Health comments – 25.08.2023
- 4.12 Heritage Comment– 25 September 2023
- 4.12a Heritage Comment– 31 May 2024
- 4.13 Heritage response comments – 15 February 2024
- 4.14 Highways comments – 14 September 2023
- 4.15 Historic England comments – 19 September 2023
- 4.16 Landscape comments – 24 October 2023
- 4.17 Newt Officer comments – 3 October 2023
- 4.17a Newt Officer comments – 23 October 2023
- 4.18 Public Rights of Way comments – 30 August 2023
- 4.18a Public Rights of Way comments – 14 June 2024

- 4.19 Network Rail Comment – 30 September 2024
- 4.20 Officer's report to Committee - 23/02313/APP
- 4.21 Decision Notice 23/0231/AP
- 4.22 Corrigendum Report to North Area Planning Committee – 06.11.2024
- 4.23 Mentmore Parish Council Appeal Objection
- 4.24 Ledburn residents' submission to Planning Inspectorate

CD 05 The Development Plan and Evidence Base

- 5.01 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (VALP) (Adopted 2021)
- 5.02 Slapton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013-2033 (April 2018)
- 5.03 Buckinghamshire Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy (2021)
- 5.04 Aylesbury Vale District Council, Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, 2008.
- 5.05 Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Characterisation Type 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment
- 5.06 Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council, Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Characterisation Type 8 Vale
- 5.07 Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust, 2022. Site Dossier: Ascott Old House, Wing Park, Aylesbury Vale

CD 06 National Planning Policy and Other Guidance

- 6.01 Planning Practice Guidance (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy)
- 6.02 NPS EN-1, January 2024
- 6.03 NPS EN-3, January 2024
- 6.04 British Energy Security Strategy, April 2022
- 6.05 Powering Up Britain March 2023 (Overview)
- 6.06 Climate Change Committee Letter (June 2023)
- 6.07 Clean Power 2030 Action Plan
- 6.08 National Character Area NCA 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridge Claylands
- 6.09 Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, LCT 8: The Vale
- 6.10 Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, LCA 8.3
- 6.11 Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, September 2019.
- 6.12 Bury Farm (21/02775/APP) LVIA
- 6.13 Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment
- 6.14 Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets, Historic England Advice Note 12
- 6.15 Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment
- 6.16 Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 2nd edition, February 2019
- 6.17 Jon Gregory, Sarah Spooner, Tom Williamson, 2013. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown
- 6.18 National Trust, Renewable Energy Guidance for Development Proposals
- 6.19 Archaeological Watching Brief
- 6.20 The Changing Landscape of the Chilterns
- 6.21 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 to 2024

- 6.22 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan (Schedule of Amendments) 2025 to 2030
- 6.23 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) GLVIA3 Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013
- 6.24 Notes and Clarification on Aspects of GLVIA3, August 2024, Landscape Institute
- 6.25 Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute

CD7 Relevant Appeal Decisions and Judgements

- 7.01 Kemberton, Telford (Appeal ref: 3329815)
- 7.02 Roydon, Essex (Appeal ref: 3334690)
- 7.03 Land to South of Marsh Farm, Fobbing (Appeal ref: 3328712)
- 7.04 Penhale Moor, Cornwall (Appeal ref: 3334658)
- 7.05 Stratford (Appeal ref: 3292579)
- 7.06 Canon Barns Road, East Hanningfield, Chelmsford (Appeal ref: 3300222)
- 7.07 Leeming Substation, Scruton (Appeal ref: 3315877)
- 7.08 Great Wymondley (Appeal ref: 3323321)
- 7.09 Walpole Marsh, Wisbech (Appeal ref: 3295140)
- 7.10 Land west of Honiley Road (Appeal ref: 3332671)
- 7.11 Sheepwash (Appeal Ref: 3321094)
- 7.12 Wisbech (Appeal Ref: 3323065)
- 7.13 Great Barr (Appeal Ref: 3347424)
- 7.14 Thaxted (Appeal Ref: 3319421)
- 7.15 Burcot (Appeal Ref: 3350890)
- 7.16 Wakefield (Appeal Ref: 3354032)
- 7.17 New Forest National Park Judgement
- 7.18 Vigo Lane, Sittingbourne (Appeal Ref: 3360089)
- 7.19 Land west of Berrington, Shrewsbury (Appel ref: 3332543)
- 7.20 Palmer v Herefordshire Council & Anor
- 7.21 Forge Field Society v Sevenoaks District Council
- 7.22 Kenneth Kayv and Ribble Valley Borough Council
- 7.23 City & Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing
- 7.24 Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited v East Northamptonshire District Council
- 7.25 Jones v Mordue
- 7.26 East Quayside v The Council of the City of Newcastle Upon Tyne
- 7.27 Pugh v SSCLG
- 7.28 Edith Summerskill House 3277137
- 7.29 South Lakeland DC v Secretary of State
- 7.30 Catesby Estates Ltd v Steer
- 7.31 Bedford BC V Secretary of State - Nuon
- 7.32 Land West of Great Wheatley Farm Appeal Ref: 3329891
- 7.33 Land at Graveley Lane and the east of Great Wymondley Appeal ref:3323321
- 7.34 Granborough 3360815

CD 08 Statement of Case

- 8.01 Appellant's Statement of Case
- 8.02 LPA - Statement of Case FINAL
- 8.02a LPA Appendix A - Decision Notice
- 8.02b LPA Appendix B.a - Officer Report
- 8.02c LPA Appendix B.b - Officer Report – Update

CD 09 Statements of Common Ground

- 9.01 Initial Statement of Common Ground
- 9.02 Heritage Statement of Common Ground
- 9.03 Statement of Common Ground 27.08.25
- 9.04 Statement of Common Ground Addendum: Heritage 2025 08 21

CD 10 LPA Heritage Background Documents

- 10.01 HE List Descriptions
 - 10.01a HE List Description - Ascott House, Wing - 1291467 Historic England
 - 10.01b HE List Description - ASCOTT RPG, Wing - 1000593 Historic England
 - 10.01c HE List Description –Gates Piers and Railing to the East of Stone Lodge
 - 10.01d HE List Description - Hunting Stables, Wing - 1115983 Historic England
 - 10.01e HE List Description – Lodge 900 meters to Northeast of Ascott house, Wing
 - 10.01f HE List Description - STONE LODGE, Mentmore - 1117862 Historic England
- 10.02 Conservation Area SPD and Management Plan
 - 10.02a CAMP-Part-1-and-2
 - 10.02b CAMP-Part-3
 - 10.02c CAMP-Part-4
 - 10.02d CAMP-Part 5
- 10.02e CD-MIS-004-Conservation-Areas-Supplementary- March-2011
- 10.03 CA appraisals Neighbourhood Plan and relevant appeal decision
 - 10.03a Mentmore CA Review 2019
 - 10.03b Wing CA Review-2009
 - 10.03c Wing Neighbourhood Plan
 - 10.03d Orchard Herb Appeal Costs Decision Inspector reports
 - 10.03e Mentmore CA Adoption - agenda Cabinet Meeting 10 March 2020
- 10.04 HE Guidance and National Trust publications
 - 10.04a HEAG279 Statements of Heritage Significance
 - 10.04b HEAG301 - Local Heritage Listing HEAN7
 - 10.04c HEAG180 GPA3 The setting of Heritage Assets
 - 10.04d National Trust Archaeological Survey Ascott - Matthews 1989
 - 10.04e National Trust Gardens Leaflet - Ascott_120825-095913
 - 10.04f GPA 2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- 10.05 Mentmore Setting Study by Place Services

CD 11 Proof of Evidence

- 11.01 Appellants Proof of Evidence
 - 11.01a Heritage Proof of Evidence Sept2025 V2-Part1
 - 11.01b Heritage Proof of Evidence Sept2025 V2-Part 2
 - 11.01c Heritage Proof of Evidence Sept2025 V2-Part 3
 - 11.01d Heritage Proof of Evidence Sept2025 V2-Part 4
 - 11.01e Heritage Proof of Evidence Sept2025 V2-Part 5
 - 11.01f Heritage Proof of Evidence Sept2025 V2-Part 6
 - 11.01g Landscape proof of Evidence
 - 11.01h Planning Proof Appendices 09.09.25
 - 11.01i Planning Proof of Evidence 08.09.25
 - 11.01j Summary Landscape Proof of Evidence

11.01k Summary Planning Proof of Evidence 08.09.25
11.01l Summary Proof Heritage_Sept2025_V1
11.02 LPA Proof of Evidence
11.02a LPA Ledburn Solar Farm Planning Proof of Evidence Final
11.02b LPA Proof of Evidence - Heritage - JH FINAL draft 4
11.02c LPA Proof of Evidence of Simon James Neesam
11.02d LPA Summary Heritage POE - JH FINAL

CD12 Proof of Evidence Rebuttals

12.01 Appellant rebuttal documents
12.01a Heritage Rebuttal Sept 2025
12.01b dl.ascott landscape rebuttal
12.01c Planning Rebuttal 22.09.25
12.02 LPA Rebuttal documents
12.02a-LPA Rebuttals - Heritage - FINAL v 2
12.02b-LPA Planning PoE Rebuttal ZH FINAL