PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A SOLAR PARK, AT MANOR FARM NEAR SHRIPNEY

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

for

BNRG Renewables Ltd

May 2014

THE Landmark PRACTICE

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL BE/63/14/PL

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The information which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.



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SUMMARY

This landscape and visual assessment has been prepared to inform a planning application for the development of a photovoltaic (PV) power generating installation (a 'Solar Park') within approximately 50 hectares of arable farmland at Manor Farm, Shripney, West Sussex, PO22 9UR (National Grid Ref SU 926 023).

There are no landscape, cultural or heritage designations covering the site although the southern boundary of the South Downs National Park lies 5km to the north and the Chichester Harbour AONB lies 8km west. Approximately 450 m east of the site, lies the hamlet of Shripney, which is a designated conservation area.

The application site is virtually flat agricultural land lying within the Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain. It is mostly open on the eastern and western boundaries with only a few fragmented hedgerows offering screening. The northern and southern boundaries benefit from well-established screening vegetation. The flat topography and existing hedgerows and trees limit the extent of the views within the surrounding landscape

The development comprises modules of solar panels which will be orientated to the south in order to capture maximum solar energy. These modules will be mounted on metal frames on piled foundations and will be fully removable on decommissioning. The modules will be approximately 2.4 m set at a fixed angle of approximately 25 degrees.

Additional equipment will include approximately 12 housing units for Inverters (of a suitable colour, to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority), and Distribution Network Operator sub-station located centrally adjacent to an access track. The Solar Park will be protected with an approximately 2.4 m high agricultural deer fence. A number of CCTV cameras will be installed at approximately 3m height.

The proposed solar park will not be a prominent feature within the landscape due to its low height set within the low flat coastal plain. The majority of the glimpsed views from surrounding roads, PRoWs and properties can be screened by enhancing existing vegetation and establishing new hedgerow and tree planting along the perimeter boundary. There will be no significant views of the Solar Park from the South Downs National Park which lies 5km to the north. Although the high ground will afford views towards the Solar Park, the distance, angle of view and intervening horticultural tunnels and field boundaries will make it difficult to discern. The array will also face away from the National Park, thus the effect on the visual amenity of the National Park is considered to be negligible.

The most significant view of the array will be from PRoW No 149 which skirts around the west side of Shripney Hamlet, in front of Myddleton Terrace, although the effect should be considered in the context that views from here are already adversely affected by overhead utility lines and Manor Farm's (the neighbouring farm) horticultural tunnels to the west. The proposed planting on this perimeter will be beneficial in that it will provide screening to both the proposed solar park and the existing horticultural tunnels.

There are two clusters of listed buildings within 1km of the site, one to the south and one to the east in the nearby settlements of Shripney and North Bersted. None of these afford views the application site.

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Halnaker Windmill is a prominent Grade II Listed Building sitting on a hill 6.75 km from the site, 123 m AOD, and although it affords views of the site, due to the distance, the effect on the windmill's setting is deemed negligible.

Dwellings which potentially overlook the site include houses on Myddleton Terrace and New Barn Farm. Views of the site from these properties will be mitigated. Some houses to the south of the relief road will also afford views of the solar park but these views will be blocked by both acoustic fencing and, once established, by the proposed relief road planting.

The main landscape effects include the temporary, reversible loss of the site's rural character during operation. Although evident, this will have a low impact on the surrounding views due to the already light industrial character created by horticultural estates and overhead utility lines.

A 10 metre wide band of trees will be planted along approximately two thirds of the eastern boundary, and a new native hedgerow with feathered trees will link the band of trees and existing boundary vegetation along the southern section of this boundary. A new native hedgerow with feathered trees will also be planted along the western boundary of the site. New planting is not necessary along the north western corner due to pre-existing screening vegetation and the absence of sensitive receptors.

An existing solar park of approximately 11 hectares lies 2.8 km northwest of the site, to the south of Tangmere. A second Solar Park is proposed on similar arable land 2.5 km to the west. The three sites are not inter-visible. Although all sites are visible from the South Downs National Park, the cumulative effect to users will be **minor adverse** due to the distance and aspect, making the solar parks barely distinguishable within the surrounding landscape.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact.

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GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this report the following terms are used to describe the components of the proposed development:

Glare:
The term for a continuous source of brightness, relative to diffused lighting. Unlike 'glint', this is not a direct reflection of the sun, but is instead a reflection of the bright sky around the sun. Glare is generally significantly less intense than glint.

Glint:
Also known as specular reflection. An effect that is produced by direct reflection of the sun in the surface of the PV solar panel. This is likely to be transient but can be the main concern in terms of visual issues regarding viewer distraction.

Inverter:
A type of electrical device that changes the direct current (DC) electricity produced by a photovoltaic material into alternating current (AC) that is suitable for feeding into the national grid.

Module:
A manufacturer assembled group of Solar PV Cells within a supporting frame that provides simple interfaces to, and physical protection for the cells.

Photovoltaic (PV):
Material that converts solar radiation into direct current electricity

Solar panel:
A manufacturer assembled group of Solar PV Cells within a supporting frame that provides simple interfaces to, and physical protection for the cells.

Solar park:
The collective term for an installation of equipment and infrastructure that forms a photovoltaic power generating installation

Solar PV Array:
A group of Solar PV Panels or Modules.

Solar PV Cell:
A single, none divisible group of Photovoltaic Material, which can generate electricity from Solar Energy.

Substation:
A group of Electrical Switchgear that connects the Solar PV Park to the National Grid.

Table:
The supporting framework onto which a number of Solar PV Panels are mounted.

Transformer:
An electrical device that transfers electrical energy from one voltage level to another.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This landscape and visual assessment has been prepared to inform a planning application for the development of a solar photovoltaic (PV) power generating installation (a 'Solar Park') in agricultural land at Manor Farm, approximately 450 m west of the hamlet of Shripney, West Sussex. (OS Grid Ref: SU 926 023 Post Code: PO22 9UR) (Figure 1 refers). The application site itself is approximately 50 hectares in area.

1.2 This report assesses the significance of the impact of the visual changes arising from the proposed development, together with the changes to the character and quality of the landscape.

1.3 The existing landscape character and the visual environment have been separately surveyed and assessed. The landscape assessment identifies characteristics, features and elements which constitute this particular landscape and its character. The visual baseline identifies existing views to, across or from the application site, and identifies the visual receptors, such as nearby residents or users of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) who might be affected by the proposed development.

2.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

International Landscape designations

2.1 There are no international landscape designations relating to the application site or its immediate surroundings.

National Landscape Designations

2.2 The application site does not lie within any area which is nationally designated for its landscape value or historical and cultural value. The South Downs National Park is the nearest designated landscape and lies approximately 5 km to the north.

National Planning Policy

2.3 The **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) sets out 13 key categories to support the 12 core planning principles in the delivery of sustainable development. Category 11 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', paragraph 109 notes that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, *inter alia:*

> *"Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils"*

2.4 With regard to developments that might affect protected species, geodiversity sites or landscape areas, paragraph 113 advises that:

> *"Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks."*

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2.5 In terms of the significance of different landscape designations, paragraph 115 states:

> *"Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads."*

2.6 **National Planning Practice Guidance** (NPPG) notes that:

> *"The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.*

2.7 With specific reference to landscape and visual effects of field scale solar farms, NPPG advises that local planning authorities need to consider:

> *"the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;…*
>
> *the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;….*
>
> *the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;*
>
> *The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero."*

2.8 Turning to effects of development on heritage assets, NPPG notes that:

> *"great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset".*

Local Plan Policies

2.9 The application site lies in West Sussex and the relevant saved policies are found within the Arun District Council, Current Local Plan 2003-2011.

POLICY GEN3 Protection of the Countryside

> *"Outside the Built-Up Area, as defined on the Proposals Map, the countryside will be safeguarded for its own sake. Development will not be permitted unless:*
>
> *(i) it meets the operational needs of agriculture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or the deposit of waste; or*
>
> *(ii) for quiet, informal recreation; or*
>
> *(iii) for the diversification of the rural economy; or*
>
> *(iv) for essential road schemes; or*

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(v) it is in accordance with a policy in Sections 2 and 3 of the plan referring to a specific use or type of development.

Permission will not be given for the extension of isolated groups of buildings or the consolidation of linear or sporadic development unless the proposal accords with criteria (i) to (iii) or (v)."

POLICY GEN21 Renewable Energy

"Planning permission will be granted for development for renewable energy generation provided that:

(i) there is no significant harmful environmental effect on the quality of the natural and built environments;

(ii) there is no unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents;

(iii) there is no adverse effect on public safety;

(iv) development will make a contribution to meeting need on a local, regional or national basis and the reduction in emissions of damaging greenhouse gases."

Draft Policies

2.10 Arun District Council is preparing a new local plan which will cover the period 2011-2029. The following policies are taken from Local Plan – Publication Version 2014 as agreed by full council on February 11th 2014, and can be given weight as a material planning consideration as it progresses to adoption.

POLICY SD SP1 Sustainable Development

"When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that will contribute to the social, economic and environmental conditions south of the National Park through to the coast and throughout its settlements (both coastal and inland).

Planning applications that help to achieve the central aim of this Local Plan, which is to increase employment density and which accord with the policies in this Local Plan and/ or adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no relevant policies in this Local Plan (and where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Development Plans) development proposed will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether: Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted."

POLICY C SP1 Countryside

"Outside the defined Built-Up Area Boundary (as identified on the Proposals Map) the countryside will be safeguarded for its own sake. Development will not be permitted there unless:

a. it meets the operational needs of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or the deposit of waste; or

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b. for quiet, informal recreation; or

c. for the diversification of the rural economy/creation of sustainable communities; or

d. for essential road schemes; or

e. is in accordance with other policies in the Plan which refer to a specific use or type of development.

Permission will not be given for the extension of isolated groups of buildings or the consolidation of linear or sporadic development unless the proposal accords with criteria (i) to (iii) or (v). The Council will take into account cumulative impact of development in the consideration of planning applications. To ensure better management of the rural-urban fringe in those areas where significant new development is proposed, early consideration will need to be given to landscape and biodiversity enhancement, woodland management, recreation provision and access routes."

POLICY LAN DM1 Protection of Landscape Character

"Development will be permitted where: Landscape character, including its natural features, are conserved or enhanced; The historic character and development pattern of settlements is respected, taking into account their distinct identity and setting; Either individually or cumulatively development does not lead to actual or perceived coalescence of settlements or undermine the integrity or predominantly open and undeveloped character of the area; and It does not negatively impact upon the setting of, or upon views into and out of South Downs National Park

All proposed development either adjoining or in close proximity to the South Downs National Park planning authority boundary (see Proposals Map) shall have particular regard to the setting of and views in to and out of the South Downs National Park.

Developments shall only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no or a minimal negative visual impact on either the landscape character of Arun or the setting of and views into and out of the South Downs National Park.

Developments shall also be consistent with all other Local Plan policies."

POLICY ECC SP1 Adapting to Climate Change

"The Council will support development which is located and appropriately designed to adapt to impacts arising from climate change such as the increased probability of tidal and fluvial flooding; water stress; health impacts as a result of extreme temperatures and a decline in the quality of habitats and richness of biodiversity. In order to achieve this, development must be designed to take account of the following issues:

a. Location (in relation to flood risk and vulnerability to coastal erosion);

b. Water efficiency;

c. Shade, cooling, ventilation, solar gain;

d. Connectivity to the green infrastructure network;

e. Layout and massing;

f. Resilience of buildings and building materials to extreme weather events; and

g. Capacity of drainage systems and incorporation of Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)."

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POLICY ECC DM1 Renewable Energy

"The Council will support renewable energy development subject to the criteria in this Policy. Schemes will be expected to contribute to the social, economic and environmental development and overall regeneration of the District. Within areas of protected or sensitive landscapes, areas or buildings, development should generally be small scale or community based. The Council will support proposals for appropriately located renewable energy development, and their ancillary development where they meet the following criteria:

a. *The proposal is located and designed to minimise adverse impacts to landscape, habitats, the historic environment and residential amenity including visual, noise and odour impacts;*

b. *The location and design of proposals will need to take account of the Council's landscape assessment and landscape sensitivity studies (or successor documents) and proposals for large scale renewable energy projects will need to be supported by a zone of theoretical visibility and viewpoint assessment;*

c. *Proposals will need to demonstrate that there are no detrimental cumulative impacts on landscape character, biodiversity, key species or residential amenity;*

d. *Proposals located within or close to the boundaries of areas designated for their landscape, ecological, or historic interest should demonstrate that development will not impact upon the purposes of designation;*

e. *Proposals will need to demonstrate the potential benefits of the development to the host communities and identify opportunities for environmental enhancement;*

f. *Priority should be given to proposals that integrate with existing or new development where appropriate to do so having regard to (i);*

g. *For proposals that make use of biomass or energy crops, applicants will need to demonstrate the proposal is appropriately located so that it will not result in the loss of high grade agricultural land and to the local transport network and that the network has sufficient capacity to safely absorb additional traffic resulting from the development; and*

h. *All proposals will need to demonstrate a suitable connection to the electricity distribution network, or appropriate energy storage facility, and provide evidence to demonstrate that the connection will not result in unacceptable impacts upon the landscape, natural and historic environment or visual and residential amenity.*

Schemes falling within landscape or nature designations will be considered where there are no alternatives and where a considerable community benefit is demonstrated and considered to outweigh the landscape impact.

Developments shall also be consistent with all other Local Plan Policies."

POLICY HER SP1 The Historic Environment

"The Council will grant planning permission for development proposals that conserve or enhance the historic environment of the District, specifically:

For Conservation Areas, development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area including its setting;

For Statutory Listed Buildings, development proposals must preserve the building, its setting and any features of special architectural and historic interest it possesses;

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For Areas of Special Character, development proposals must respect the intrinsic character of these areas; and

For Locally Listed Buildings or Structures of Character, development proposals must preserve the building, its setting and any features of value it possesses;

Development likely to prejudice any of the above, including their settings, will be refused.

Any proposals for development will be required to comply with all other relevant policies and reflect any relevant appraisals or management proposals adopted by the Council.

The Council will encourage the re-use of vacant or underused Listed Buildings or unlisted buildings by approving proposals that contribute positively to their conservation either individually or as part of wider strategies for regeneration. Where changes of use are proposed, the Council will consider these in a flexible way but will favour proposals which improve public access where these are not prejudicial to existing character or appearance.

The Council will take a pro-active stance to any heritage assets that may be at risk. This will include working with property owners to find a use that will enable them to be put back in to use.

Development proposals involving the demolition of Listed Buildings or adversely affecting a Conservation Area will not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances where repair or re-use are not practicable options and where replacement buildings and uses of exceptional quality are proposed."

POLICY HER DM1 Listed Buildings

a. *"Proposals affecting statutory Listed Buildings will be required to:*
b. *Preserve or enhance the historic character, qualities and special interest of the buildings;*
c. *Be necessary and not detrimental to the architectural and historical integrity and detailing of a Listed Building's exterior;*
d. *Protect the architectural and historical integrity and detailing of a Listed Building's interior;*
e. *Protect the special interest of buildings of architectural or historic interest; and*
f. *Protect, and where possible enhance the setting of the building."*

POLICY ENV DM3 Non Designated Sites

"Within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA's) (see Policies Map), development shall:

a. *Retain and sympathetically incorporate locally valued and important habitats, including wildlife corridors and stepping stones*
b. *ii. Be designed in order to minimise disturbance to habitats."*

Local Landscape/Cultural Designations (Figures 4.1 and 4.2 refer)

2.11 There are no local landscape designations in the application site. Part of the hamlet of Shripney, some 475 m east of the site boundary, is designated as a Conservation Area.

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2.12 Listed buildings are located around the site. Within a 3 km radius, the majority of these are Grade II listed, with two being Grade II* and one being Grade I (approx. 2.5km SSW of the site). Within the immediate 1 km radius, there are 16 Grade II listed buildings divided between two separate clusters, one to the east and one to the south of the site. A further isolated Grade II listed building lies to the north-east. The closest and most significant listed buildings are as follows:

1) The Priory and The Elms Grade II, approx. 450 m south-west of the site, in the village of North Bersted. It is not inter-visible with the application site nor does the application site form part of its setting.

2) Shripney Manor Grade II, approx. 500 m east of the site, along Shripney Lane, in Shripney hamlet. It is not inter-visible with the application site nor does the application site form part of its setting.

3) Lidsey House, Grade II, approx. 700 m east of the site is isolated from the two clusters. Situated along Shripney Road, between Shripney and Woodgate. It is not inter-visible with the application site nor does the application site form part of its setting.

4) Halnaker Windmill, Grade II, approx. 6.75 km north of the site. The windmill sits prominently on top of Halnaker hill at 123 m AOD although it affords views of the site, due to the distance, the effect on the windmills setting is deemed negligible. The solar park, due to its low lying and open nature, will not interrupt views towards the windmill nor will it affect views from the windmill because it is similar in character to the existing glasshouses and polytunnels.

2.13 There are no Scheduled Monuments within a 3 km radius of the site.

Countryside recreation (Figure 4.2 refers)

2.14 There are no PRoW's which cross the site. The closest PRoW, No 200, runs east to west along a historic canal route, passing as close as 60 m to the north of the site. The majority of the PRoW is screened by well-established vegetation and a glimpsed view can only be afforded through a single gap in vegetation, caused by the overhead utility line way leave.

2.15 To the east PRoW No 149 skirts around the hamlet of Shripney approximately 440 m from the site. From here a partial view of the site can be afforded through the fragmented vegetation on the eastern border of the site. There is also PRoW No 139 670 m to the south west of the site in North Bersted, but a recent housing development has surrounded this PRoW, obscuring any views of the site.

2.16 Some PRoW's within the hills of the South Downs National Park afford open, panoramic views over the application site, but at considerable distance (**Figure 7**, Viewpoint 6 refers). The PRoW network is shown on the OS map extract.

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3.0 ASSESSMENT METHOD

The Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (Figures 3 and 7 refer)

3.1 The study area is determined by the Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI). This is generated by computer software which places a 3 m high structure (slightly higher than the maximum height of the panels) on the highest point of the application site and one at each corner and then calculates the TZVI based on a 3D topographical terrain map. The TZVI is based on topography alone and does not take into account trees, hedgerows and buildings which will provide additional screening.

3.2 The actual Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is then determined during a site visit by a qualified landscape professional, using the TZVI as guidance. The actual area from which the proposed development will be visible is determined by observation from the highest point on the application site and then by visiting receptors in the surrounding landscape.

Data Collection and Guidance

3.3 This assessment has followed guidance set out in the '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

- DECC National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)
- Natural England National Character Areas and Joint Character Areas
- National Planning Policy Framework
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11

3.4 Existing background Information on the study area has been sourced from:

- Ordnance Survey – 1:50,000 and1:25,000 scale maps.
- Magic Website (www.magic.gov.uk)
- Google Earth and Street View
- Bing maps (www.bing.com/maps)
- Arun District Council website, for policies and maps (http://www.arun.gov.uk)
- GIS designation data sets from Natural England and English Heritage

Landscape Resources

3.5 This study identifies the landscape resources within the landscape which may be affected by the proposed development. The types of resources assessed are described below:

Landscape Character

3.6 Landscape character is defined as:

> *"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse." (Natural England)*

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3.7 Impacts on the landscape may arise where the landscape character of the area is modified by the development. It is important to consider the application site and the proposed development in its landscape context.

Landscape Features

3.8 Landscape features include physical features such as trees and hedgerows, topography, water courses and structures. Impacts to these may arise where valued features are lost, gained or substantially modified as a result of the development. The loss or depletion of important landscape features can adversely affect the character of the landscape. Conversely, the addition of significant beneficial features can constitute an improvement in landscape character.

Visual Receptors

3.9 Visual receptors are individuals or groups of people that are appreciating the view from locations where it is possible to obtain views of the application site. These views may be partial or full, glimpsed or direct. Impacts on the visual amenity of a particular location may arise where features intrude into or obstruct views, or where there is some other qualitative change to the view.

3.10 Views from such receptors are illustrated by photographs taken from key viewpoints (**Figure 8**), located on a plan (**Figure 7**). Receptors may be private viewpoints, such as views from domestic residences, or public viewpoints like highways, footpaths or other places with public access.

Analysis of Landscape Resources and Visual Receptors

3.11 Each resource/receptor is assessed first in terms of its value and importance. This value is then combined with an assessment of each resource's/receptor's vulnerability to the changes proposed. This process gives the assessor a rational basis on which to assign the resource/receptor a level of sensitivity to changes in the landscape or visual environment

3.12 The sensitivity level is then combined with the predicted magnitude of change to the resource/receptor arising from the development. The nature of the effect, its duration and reversibility are all considered and used to determine the significance of the effect on each receptor resulting from the proposed development.

3.13 The methodology for the analysis of the resources/receptors is set out **Appendix A**. The methodology determines the degree of significance of the impact, the definitions for which are set out in **Table 1** below.

3.14 It is not straightforward to predict how a solar park will be visually perceived in the countryside and so, for the purposes of this assessment, a 'worst case' approach has been adopted and it is assumed that the panels, if visible, will be regarded as intrusive structures within the landscape. As with wind turbines, public perception can be mixed; some people find them intrusive, others consider that they are an acceptable feature of the landscape, particularly if it is appreciated that they are providing green energy. Generally solar parks are likely to be far less visible than wind turbines due to the low height of the structures and many regard them as a more acceptable alternative. People's perception or tolerance of renewable energy schemes is often mitigated by an understanding of a 'greater need' for such developments.

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Table 1: Significance Criteria

Significance	Definition
Major adverse	The proposed development will cause substantial degradation of the landscape character/landscape features/existing views. These adverse effects are key factors in the decision-making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national or regional importance that are likely to suffer a most damaging impact and loss of resource integrity. However, a major change in a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category.
Moderate adverse	The proposed development will cause noticeable degradation of the landscape character/elements/existing views. These adverse effects may be important, but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such factors may influence decision-making if they lead to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor.
Minor adverse	The proposed development will cause small degradation of the landscape character elements/existing views. These adverse effects may be raised as local factors. They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process, but are important in enhancing the subsequent design of the project.
Negligible adverse	The proposed development will cause barely perceptible degradation of the landscape character/elements/ existing views.
Neutral	Beneficial effects balance out adverse effects such that there is no overall beneficial or adverse effect
No significance	No effects or those that are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
Negligible beneficial	The proposed development will cause barely perceptible improvement to the landscape character/elements/existing views.
Minor beneficial	The proposed development will cause a small improvement to the landscape character/elements/ existing views.
Moderate beneficial	The proposed development will cause noticeable improvement to the landscape character/elements/ existing views.
Major beneficial	The proposed development will cause substantial improvement in landscape character/elements/existing views. In making a decision about the proposal this advantageous effect may be considered to compensate to some degree for other, non-landscape, adverse effects.

Limitations to survey methods

3.15 The landscape character and views have been assessed from public vantage points. Although there is no right in planning law to a view from a private property, visual impact assessment protocol normally requires such views to be considered. In this case, however, it was impractical to seek access to private property. Potentially significant private viewpoints have, nonetheless, been established from a relevant similar public viewpoint for which access was possible. All assessment work has been undertaken at ground level and on foot.

3.16 The photographic survey work was undertaken on 28 August 2013 at a time when the deciduous trees were in leaf, the hedges had a season's growth and the screening effect of this vegetation was at its most effective. Visibility across the landscape is therefore likely to be greater in winter. Allowance has therefore been made in the assessment for less complete cover in winter to ensure that the assessment of visual impact is meaningful.

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Photography and imaging

3.17 The photographic surveys were carried out by qualified Landscape Architects who are experienced in the methods and best practice required to produce verifiable photographs to be used in LVIA and visual representations.

3.18 Photographs illustrating views from each viewpoint were taken using a Nikon D3200 digital camera fitted with a Nikon 18 -55 mm zoom lens set to a focal length 45 mm. The best focal length to use to represent the view available to the human eye varies between different makes and model of digital camera. The method we used to establish the correct focal length setting for the camera and lens used is to repeatedly compare the view through the optical viewfinder with that seen by a single naked eye and adjust the focal length to accurately match the views.

3.19 Individual frames have been stitched together with '*Photo stitch*' software. These panoramic views give a better understanding of the receptor's visual context.

3.20 These panoramas are used as a base to create accurate photomontages. The Photomontages are based on single frame shots taken at 45-55 mm focal length which, when printed one to a page, results in an image similar to the naked eye. The montages are produced using specialist software to model 3D digital terrain data and the proposed structures, and visualise the PV array from virtual viewpoints set up in the same locations as the panoramic photographs were taken (**Figure 7** refers).

4.0 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

Topography and water courses

4.1 The application site lies within the intensively farmed, low lying, south coast plain which forms part of the larger Hampshire Basin. As illustrated by **Figure 3**, this is an extensive flat area ranging from 1 m to 20 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Southward flowing streams or '*rifes*' cut through the plain along with drainage ditches forming field boundaries. 4 km to the north of the site, the land begins to rise significantly over a distance of 6 km, peaking at 239 km AOD, forming the hills of the South Downs National Park and affording elevated views across the plain. The application site is virtually flat at around 2 m to 5 m AOD. A large drain defines the western boundary, adjacent to which and the application site two large above ground reservoirs with bunded earth sides have been built. Part of the eastern boundary is defined by a smaller drainage ditch.

Land Use

4.2 The application site comprises two large, intensively farmed, arable fields, dissected by a central access track which cuts from east to west. The site contains a small reservoir just north of the central access track. Two overhead utility lines traverse the site, feeding into a large electrical substation which lies immediately to the south of the application site. The aerial photograph in **Figure 5** illustrates land use and the type of vegetation cover.

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Land to the north

4.3 The northern boundary of the site is defined partly by a row of fragmented vegetation, (predominantly hawthorn) which forms the field boundary with the neighbouring field to the north. Further along to the west of the northern boundary, an area of unimproved neutral grassland borders the site, part of the same field as the site. Beyond the unimproved grassland the field boundary comprises of a band of mature trees typically 15 m in width. This screens views from PRoW No 200 which runs from east to west along the north side of the tree planting. Beyond the PRoW a further band of dense vegetation follows alongside the PRoW. The dense vegetation on the north side of the site is designed to mitigate Lidsey Landfill Site (50 hectares), which lies in the field immediately north of the site and is visible from the site itself. The majority of this landfill has now been capped and returned to agriculture.

4.4 Further north (approximately 5km) are the hills of the South Downs National Park.

Land to the east

4.5 The eastern boundary is defined by lengths of dry ditches running alongside the field boundary, accompanied by sparse and fragmented low hedgerows and occasional windswept trees forming a characteristically open landscape. Adjacent to the site are further low lying agricultural fields. PRoW No 149 lies approximately 450 m east, skirting the edge of the hamlet of Shripney and Marigolds Caravan Park, which, with Lidsey Caravan Park, lie further the east of the site. Although partial views are afforded from this PRoW, Shripney hamlet and associated caravan parks are well screened by various private vegetated boundaries and are not particularly prominent within the landscape.

4.6 Closer to the site, approximately 300 m to the east, and along the main access track, lie Manor Farm worker's caravans and Manor Farm itself. From here, open views are afforded across a portion of the site.

Land to the south

4.7 The southern border is defined by a dry ditch along with a well-established hedgerow and trees. On the far side of this hedgerow runs Shripney Lane which historically connected Shripney and North Bersted. Since the construction of the Bognor Regis Northern Relief Road (under construction), the road is closed to vehicular through traffic and is likely to become more important as a pedestrian link. The road is lined by mature trees on its southern side, partially screening the substation lying just south of the site. Further south lie arable fields with the Aldingbourne Rife meandering through them. Beyond the rife, the Northern Relief Road skirts around North Bersted village. North Bersted itself lies 335 m to the south west of the application site and forms part of the urban fringe landscape around the coastal town of Bognor Regis on the south coast. A new housing development is being constructed on land south of the relief road, and those properties on the outer edge will afford views across the site until the landscaping to the relief road has established.

Land to the west

4.8 The western boundary is defined by a series of drainage ditches which run along the majority of the application site boundary. These are accompanied by sparse and

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irregular windswept hedgerows and trees, forming a characteristic open coastal landscape character.

4.9 Adjacent to the site, large scale overhead utility lines skirt the western border connecting with the electricity substation to the south. The Aldingbourne Rife follows a similar route.

Landscape features

4.10 Internally the site is mostly arable land, but contains occasional landscape features including two overhead utility lines, a central access track, a bunded reservoir (to irrigate crops) and planting to screen farm infrastructure at the centre of the site.

4.11 The most notable landscape features in the wider landscape are the horticultural tunnels to the north west of the application site and the new Northern Relief Road and urban extension to Bersted.

Landscape character

National

National

4.12 The site lies within the National Character Area 126: South Coast Plain, and the key characteristics are described as follows:

- *"Major urban developments including Portsmouth, Worthing and Brighton linked by the A27/M27 corridor dominate much of the open, intensively farmed, flat, coastal plain.*
- *Coastal inlets and 'harbours' contain a diverse landscape of narrow tidal creeks, mudflats, shingle beaches, dunes, grazing marshes and paddocks. From the Downs and coastal plain edge there are long views towards the sea and the Isle of Wight beyond.*
- *Trees are not a dominant feature – there are some small woods and a few windswept individual trees in the farmland or the occasional poplar shelter belt.*
- *A pattern of large arable fields, defined by low hedgerows, are often interspersed by horticultural glasshouse 'estates' and isolated remnants of coastal heath.*
- *The complex series of creeks, mudflats and shingle beaches along the coastal edge becomes less apparent to the east with the intensively-farmed plain increasingly dominated by disordered seaside towns and leisure developments."*

Local

4.13 The site lies within the character area SC9, Chichester to Yapton Coastal Plain, as identified in the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment. This area is described as follows:

Overall character

"This Character Area extends from Chichester in the west to the edge of the Arun Valley in the east, and around Bognor Regis to the south. Over time a large part of this area has been reclaimed from the sea, and remains below the current high spring tide level. It comprises a mainly flat, open landscape crossed by meandering rifes. Dominated by highly productive

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arable fields and modern farm buildings, it has a fragmented hedgerow and hedgerow tree pattern. The spire of Chichester Cathedral is a widely visible feature. Rows of large light reflecting glasshouses, equestrian facilities, horse paddocks and industrial buildings, for instance in the Ford and Tangmere areas, are strong suburban elements. Where these occur, they create visual confusion and poor definition between town and countryside, and erode distinctive landscape character. Major suburban settlements in the area are Tangmere, Barnham, Yapton, and Westergate. In contrast, there are areas of a smaller scale, more varied rural landscape with quiet hamlets and traditional villages enclosed by small pastures."

Key Characteristics:

- *"Low lying flat open landscape*
- *Meandering rifes and straight drainage ditch systems, with associated unimproved grassland and edged by reed beds*
- *A low density of hedgerows and hedgerow trees with occasional shelterbelts*
- *Large-scale arable farming and market gardening. Extensive farms with both traditional and modern farm buildings and silos*
- *Clusters of glasshouses*
- *Scattered, historically nucleated villages with mixed building materials of flint, brick, half timber and stone*
- *Large farmsteads along roads, and on dead-end tracks*
- *Long views to Arundel, the Downs and to the distinctive spire of Chichester Cathedral*
- *The relatively open character of much of the area allows long views so that village church towers are important landmarks in views*
- *Frequent urban fringe influences of horse paddocks, light industry and disused airfields, with busy minor and major roads*
- *The urban fringes associated with Bognor are particularly obvious, with sporadic urban development in suburban settlements of Tangmere, Barnham, Yapton and Westergate*
- *Large gravel pit lakes around the edge of Chichester*
- *Few trees or hedgerows, partly as a result of Dutch Elm Disease, from the 1970s and the Great Storm of 1987 and overall high quality agricultural land, although, where they do exist, they form prominent features*
- *Light industry in the countryside at Ford and Tangmere."*

Landscape value, vulnerability and sensitivity to development

4.14 The landscape is considered to be of medium, local value (see Table A.1, Appendix A). It is not a designated landscape and is adversely affected by intrusive elements such as the extensive area of horticultural tunnels, substation, the Bognor Regis Northern Relief Road and the urban extension to Bersted. The application site and the surrounding area is very sensitive to any development of height since any tall built form is likely to be seen rising above the network of hedgerows. The area is less sensitive to low level development and, due to the lack of vantage points, can absorb an extensive area of low level horizontal development. The application site benefits from enclosure provided by the Northern Relief Road to the south, horticultural tunnels to the west and tree cover to the north west and south east, making it less

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sensitive to development. The area immediately around the application site does not have a particularly strong recreational use, partly due to the limited PRoW network in the locality and the intensive agricultural uses.

5.0 VISUAL BASELINE

5.1 A set of representative public and private viewpoints have been selected using desk study, the TZVI and field work. These are listed in **Table 2** in **Section 7**. This table describes the existing view and then the changes arising from the proposed development. For more detail on the assessment methodology please refer to **Paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16**.

5.2 The photographs taken from each public viewpoint are presented in Figure 8. It has not been possible to take photographs from individual private properties.

5.3 Private receptors have been identified through fieldwork and the analysis of photographs taken from the site, labelled A – F on Figure 7. It is not possible to take representative photographs from these private locations and therefore the visual impact of these receptors is estimated.

5.4 For the purpose of this assessment the private receptors have been grouped as follows:

- New residential edge north of North Bersted (A)
- Private properties to the east of the site (B, C & D)
- Private properties to the north east of the site (E & F)

Predicted Evolution of baseline without the Proposed Development

5.6 Without development the site is likely to remain in agricultural production. The boundaries are maintained but are not likely to be enhanced.

5.7 The new relief road around North Bersted will be landscaped to screen the road from external views. Once the new landscape planting has established it will block views of the application site from the urban area to the south of the road.

6.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Construction and Layout

6.1 The proposed development involves construction of a solar park with associated infrastructure and equipment on agricultural land. The masterplan is illustrated in **Figure 9** and details of the panels, security fence, CCTV, inverter and grid connection housing are shown in **Figures 10 - 14.**

6.2 The park will be set out in rows of module tables, lined from the east to west and orientated to the south in order to capture maximum solar energy. Sufficient space will be required between the rows to avoid one row of PV modules overshadowing the next.

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6.3 The PV modules will be mounted on metal frames on posts which will be piled into the ground whilst maintaining the existing topsoil and vegetation in situ and causing minimal impact to the ground surface. The development will be fully removable on decommissioning. The modules will be approximately 2.4 m in height, comprising 2 panels mounted in portrait format on a backing plate (table), set at an angle of approximately 25 degrees from horizontal (see **Figure 10**).

6.4 The additional PV equipment will include approximately 12 housing units for inverters/transformers and one small grid connection unit centrally located. The application site will be protected with an approximately 2.4 m high deer netting security fence.

6.5 Infra-red CCTV will be installed on circa 3 m masts discreetly located around the periphery of the development. Cameras would be angled into the development and will avoid surveillance of third party private property. The application site will not be artificially lit.

6.6 All the boundary and internal hedgerows and trees will be retained. The security fence will be off-set from the existing hedgerows by a minimum of 8.0 m with the panels off-set internally from the fence by varying distances to allow for operational maintenance access. Where drainage ditches are present, a maintenance gap of at least 8m will be maintained between the external security fence and ditch.

6.7 New native hedgerows with trees will be planted where necessary around the periphery of the development to visually screen the views into the panels. This proposed mitigation planting is shown on the Planting Plan in **Figure 15** and described below in **Section 8** of this report.

Maintenance

6.8 Once the solar park is established, the system will require minimal ongoing maintenance. Experience has shown that the PV modules are cleaned to a considerable degree by rainfall, but will also be thoroughly cleaned manually 3 or 4 times a year.

6.9 Activity at the park will be limited to periodic repair or maintenance. Grassland will be managed over the likely 30 year life of the installation by a mix of sheep grazing and/or mowing and strimming. The surrounding new hedgerows will be managed to a winter cut height of 2.5m.

Layout - design iterations

6.10 The factors which have influenced the choice of location are:

1) The land is within the ownership of the Langmead Group which, in association with the Nature Way Foods brand sees the solar park as an essential part of their strategy to achieve carbon neutrality.
2) The proximity to the substation provides ease of connection
3) The field is free of horticultural tunnels unlike other part of the landholding.
4) The field is at an appropriate distance from residential properties and PRoWs.

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7.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The landscape impact assessment has been carried out using the criteria set out in **Appendix A**. The following paragraphs include assessment of landscape impacts both during construction and operation of the proposed development.

7.2 The operational life of the development is expected to be 30 years, subject to planning condition, and so any direct visual or landscape impacts will be temporary and of medium term duration.

Perception of Solar Parks within the landscape

7.3 Large scale solar parks are very new features within the English landscape and so are currently unusual and could be viewed by some as being out of character (or too industrial) in a rural setting, but the English landscape has evolved over time to adopt and adapt to new beneficial infrastructure. Motorways, railways and electricity pylons were once alien elements but the nation benefits from them and they are now part of the English landscape. Solar parks are not entirely industrial in terms of character and bear some similarities with glass houses, vineyards and other crops grown in or under agricultural tunnels. The latter examples are low elements in lines which follow the contours of the ground and are temporary. A solar park has some of the characteristics of the intensive horticulture which is prevalent on this coastal plain.

7.4 Solar parks are most prominent when viewed from the south where the glass face of the panels faces the observer and generally only if they occupy south facing slopes. Solar parks are far less visible when viewed at an angle or from the rear where they appear as a series of dull lines within the landscape of light and shadow. If the site is almost flat only the first row of panels is visible and can be readily be screened by managing the existing hedge structure to a winter height of around 2.5-3 m. It is beneficial that the only high ground lies over 5 km to the north, affording views of the rear of the panels.

Landscape and Visual Impact during Construction

7.5 The construction phase of the proposed development is expected to last approximately 4 months and the construction process is simple, requiring few operatives and machinery. All the elements will be factory assembled and will be lifted or craned into position. There will be some disturbance to the ground by machinery, but this should be minimal and will be made good following construction

7.6 There will be no night time working and therefore no requirement for construction lighting.

7.7 As such landscape and visual impacts during construction will be **negligible**. As the development is built out, the impacts will gradually reach those discussed below for the operational phase.

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Landscape and Visual Impacts during Operation

Effect on topography and watercourses

7.8 There is no need to alter the levels on the application site. The array will be constructed to follow the existing contours of the land. The proposed PV frame foundations can be installed and removed without damaging the ground and so will not significantly affect the topography of the application site. There will be no physical alteration to watercourses. Overall the impact on topography is considered to be **negligible.**

Effect on land use

7.9 The development does not preclude agricultural use. Once operational, the application site will be grazed and/or mown and a hay cut taken.

7.10 It is anticipated that the soil structure may gradually improve over time on cessation of intensive farming, and the panels will be sufficiently spaced to avoid shading out of ground vegetation. The impact on land use is considered to be temporary, **adverse** of **minor significance.**

Effect on landscape features

7.11 No landscape features will be lost. The existing hedgerows, trees and the reservoir and its associated vegetation will be retained and managed to maintain their functional, aesthetic and wildlife value.

7.12 Hedgerow planting, tree planting and management of the hedgerows at a slightly taller winter height around the boundaries (see mitigation) will increase tree cover in the area which in terms of landscape features is considered **beneficial** and of **minor significance.**

Effect on landscape character

7.13 The solar park will result in a loss of rural character to the fields in which it is located, converting it to one of electrical infrastructure. The development will, however, to a certain extent, mimic the character of the existing horticultural tunnels to the east. The permanent mitigation planting across the centre of the site will result in more enclosure of the two fields. The proposed solar park will have limited visibility in the wider landscape so its effect on the character of the immediate surrounding landscape will be **adverse but of minor/moderate significance**. The high ground to the north affords views over the coastal plain which is already characterised by extensive areas of horticultural tunnels and glass houses. Such structures appear as patches of silver, white and grey within a patchwork of fields. The proposed solar park will reinforce this character (see also discussion of cumulative effect at paragraph10.1).

7.14 The proposed development is also temporarily and once removed, the agricultural character of the fields will be fully restored.

Effect on the setting of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

7.15 With the exception of Halnaker Windmill (Grade II listed) which overlooks the site from a considerable distance, there will be no effect to the setting of listed buildings within 3km of the site.

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Effect on the visual amenity of Public Rights of Way

7.16 The PRoW network surrounding the application site is sparse and the network will only afford a few partial views of the proposed solar park. In summer when the vegetation is in leaf and once the mitigating planting has established, the proposed solar park will have a negligible effect on the visual amenity of users of the network. In winter it will have an adverse effect of minor significance and primarily to users of Shripney Lane. The visual impact on views are assessed, described and explained in **Table 2** using the criteria set out in **Appendix A**.

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Table 2: Assessment of visual effect for public views

VIEW NO.	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING VIEW	PREDICTED CHANGES TO THE VIEW AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT	VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	VISUAL IMPACT (without mitigation)	MITIGATION	EFFECT ONCE MITIGATION IS EFFECTIVE
See Figure 7 for locations								
1	View looking north-west through the gateway from Shripney Lane Distance to Development 30 m	A glimpsed view through the gateway which leads to the application site. A narrow and fragmented line of vegetation, approx. 5 m in height, follows the boundary of the application site screening it partially from view. The eye is drawn down the track towards the mid-distant open views of horticultural estates and scattered farmsteads.	Due to the flat topography, Only the nearest panels and security fence would be partially visible as a narrow sliver amongst the landscape and only where there is a gateway opening in the vegetation, and where there are gaps in the vegetation, particularly in winter.	Low The view is only afforded at the single gateway point along the road.	Medium	Minor Adverse .	A 1.5 m wide mixed native hedgerow will be planted amongst the gaps of the existing hedgerow along the southern end of the western boundary. Partial in distinct glimpses of the solar array may be possible in winter months.	Negligible
2	View looking north from new relief road construction Distance to Development 200 m	A flat open view slightly elevated above the surrounding area showing the fragmented and windswept site boundary vegetation. Overhead utility lines traverse the site, dominating the view. In the mid-distance, the horticultural tunnels are visible. Distant views of the South Downs Hills are also afforded.	The solar park will be visible through the many gaps in the boundary vegetation. However due to the flat topography, the solar park will appear as a compressed grey sliver in the landscape.	Low The view is from the new relief road under construction and although this view may be afforded by many, it is likely this will only be visible as a fleeting glance as one drives past. Landscaping associated with the relief road will restrict views further once established.	Medium	Minor Adverse	A 1.5 m wide mixed native hedgerow will be planted amongst the gaps of the existing hedgerow effectively screening the view of the panels from this receptor.	Minor beneficial. The new hedgerow will restore the existing field boundary blocking views of the solar park and the existing horticultural tunnels.

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VIEW NO.	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING VIEW	PREDICTED CHANGES TO THE VIEW AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT	VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	VISUAL IMPACT (without mitigation)	MITIGATION	EFFECT ONCE MITIGATION IS EFFECTIVE
3	View looking south from PRoW No 200 to the north. Distance to Development 120 m	The majority of this PRoW is flanked by solid hedge and does not afford views towards the application site. The view of the site is glimpsed through a single gap in a dense band of vegetation, due to the overhead utility lines way leave. Through the gap, the open character of the landscape is evident, allowing a long view across open fields towards North Bersted. From here, the site is partially visible above a well-established line of boundary vegetation. The view is dominated by the presence of the overhead utility lines and the glint from existing horticulture tunnels catches the eye, creating visual confusion.	The solar park will be partially visible above the top of the boundary vegetation. The panels will be viewed from the rear.	Medium	Low Although the change will be partially visible from the gateway, it will only be glimpsed at a very specific point along the PRoW	Minor adverse/ Negligible	None possible	Minor Adverse/ Negligible

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VIEW NO.	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING VIEW	PREDICTED CHANGES TO THE VIEW AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT	VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	VISUAL IMPACT (without mitigation)	MITIGATION	EFFECT ONCE MITIGATION IS EFFECTIVE
4	View looking west from PRoW No 149 to the east. Distance to Development 440 m	A semi-rural view of a flat open landscape. The fragmented field boundary trees and hedgerows allow long views through the gaps. The horticultural tunnels are visible in the mid-distance and overhead utility lines traverse the view, creating a light industrial character. The South Downs hills are just visible on the horizon.	The lack of trees and hedgerows along the field boundaries means that the solar panels will be partially visible and more so in winter. However, the flat nature of the landscape results in only the nearest row of panels being visible, with further panels being screened behind those closest.	High/medium The PRoW is easily accessible to residents and holiday makers.	Medium The panels will be partially visible however will not impede the openness of view	Moderate Adverse	A 10 metre band of trees along the eastern boundary will screen views during the summer and winter months.	Minor Beneficial The proposed mitigation will not only restore the field boundary, but also screen the mid-distant horticultural tunnels from view as well as the solar panels. Improving the visual quality of the landscape.
5	View looking south-west from the main access road through private land. Distance to Development 230 m	A characteristic open rural view with occasional windswept individual trees along the boundary of the application site, allowing long mid-distant views. To the left, dense vegetation effectively screens Shripney Lane and associated dwellings. Utility lines protrude within the landscape.	The solar panels will be a prominent feature in the landscape, however their low-lying nature will not interrupt the open character of the view. Due to the flat topography, only the nearest row of panels would be visible, with further panels being screened behind those closest.	Medium The view is taken from private land and represent views from the workers caravan accommodation.	Medium	Minor Adverse	A 1.5 m wide, mixed native hedgerow with trees will be planted along the eastern boundary. Partial in distinct glimpses of the solar array may be possible in winter months. Tree and hedge planting has been carried out along the western boundary of the park to screen it from the surrounding countryside and this will also screen views of the solar park from the caravans.	Minor beneficial The proposed mitigation will not only restore the field boundary and Improve the visual quality of the landscape.

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VIEW NO.	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING VIEW	PREDICTED CHANGES TO THE VIEW AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT	VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	VISUAL IMPACT (without mitigation)	MITIGATION	EFFECT ONCE MITIGATION IS EFFECTIVE
6	View looking south-east from St Roche's Hill within South Downs National Park Distance to Development 9.46 km	Open and distant view of the wooded hills of the South Downs NP, falling down into the vast coastal plain as far as the sea. The site is almost indistinguishable amongst the urban sprawl character surrounding Bognor Regis. Light reflecting glasshouses are prominent in the view and emphasize the horticultural character. The Butlins holiday centre on the coastline is a dominant landmark.	In amongst the sporadic urban sprawl, the solar park will become lost in the view, appearing as a narrow grey smudge within the greater landscape. Furthermore, due to the panels facing south towards the sea, no glare would be suffered by the viewer, making the panels less noticeable than the characteristic scattered glasshouses and horticultural tunnels.	Very High	Negligible The panels will be not be discernable in the wider landscape.	Minor Adverse	None possible	Minor Adverse
Private receptors – see Figure 7 for locations								
New residential edge to the north of North Bersted (A) *(Site photographs B, C, I, L, O and R)* Distance to development 0.45 km		The new residential edge faces north east looking over newly constructed northern relief road and flat agricultural fields with hedgerow and tree boundaries. Approximately 10 -20 properties will have partial second storey views of the site.	Through intervening vegetation there will be partial views of the solar park.	High	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Proposed hedgerow planting interspersed with tree planting at strategic locations along the western boundary. New hedgerow will be maintained at a winter height of 3 m. Views will be screened in summer and winter months due to the combination of proposed mitigation measures and the acoustic fencing and new planting associated with the new relief road.	Minor Adverse / negligible

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VIEW NO. LOCATION	DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING VIEW	PREDICTED CHANGES TO THE VIEW AS A RESULT OF THE DEVELOPMENT	VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	VISUAL IMPACT (without mitigation)	MITIGATION	EFFECT ONCE MITIGATION IS EFFECTIVE
Private properties to the east of the site (B, C and D) B – Single property on the edge of Shripney C – Farm worker's caravans *(Site photograph T)* D – Edge of caravan park and Myddleton Terrace on the edge of Shripney (Site photograph Q and viewpoint 4) Distance to development 0.25 – 0.45 km	East of the site, the identified private properties on the western edge of Shripney have views over a flat, open semi-rural landscape partially screened by fragmented hedgerows and tree boundaries.	The lack of trees and hedgerows along the field boundaries means that the solar panels will be partially visible and more so in winter.	High	Medium	Moderate Adverse	A 10 metre band of trees along 2/3 of the eastern boundary will screen views during the summer and winter months. Along the southern part of the eastern boundary proposed hedgerow planting interspersed with proposed tree planting at strategic locations and the existing mature vegetation along Shripney Lane will screen views during the summer and winter months.	Minor Beneficial The proposed mitigation will not only restore the field boundary, but also screen the mid-distant horticultural tunnels from view as well as the solar panels. Improving the visual quality of the landscape.
Private properties to the north east of the site (E and F) E - Lidsey Caravan Park *(Site photographs D, M, P and Q)* F – New Barn Farm *(Site photograph D and M)* Distance to development 0.40 – 0.55 km	North east of the site the single property of New Barn Farm and the western edge of Lidsey Caravan Park have views over views over a flat, open semi-rural landscape partially screened by fragmented hedgerows and tree boundaries.	The lack of trees and hedgerows along the field boundaries means that the solar panels will be partially visible and more so in winter.	High	Medium	Moderate Adverse	A 10 metre band of trees along 2/3 of the eastern boundary will screen views during the summer and winter months.	Minor Beneficial The proposed mitigation will not only restore the field boundary, but also screen the mid-distant horticultural tunnels from view as well as the solar panels. Improving the visual quality of the landscape.

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Summary of visual impact

7.17 Overall there are very few public areas from where the application site will be visible and even these views will be partial and glimpsed. There are no viewpoints from which views of the entire proposed development will be possible. Apart from the distant views from the high ground of the South Downs National Park the short and medium views can entirely be mitigated in summer by retaining the existing boundary vegetation, strengthening it in places, planting of new hedgerows and trees along the western boundary, and a 10 metre band of trees along 2/3 of the eastern boundary (see mitigation para.8.2). During winter months it may be possible to experience partial and glimpsed views of the solar park from the west

7.18 Views from private properties to the east will be screened by mitigation measures along the eastern boundary, whilst views from the new residential development north of North Bersted will be screened by the combination of proposed mitigation measures and the new acoustic fencing and planting associated with the Northern Relief Road.

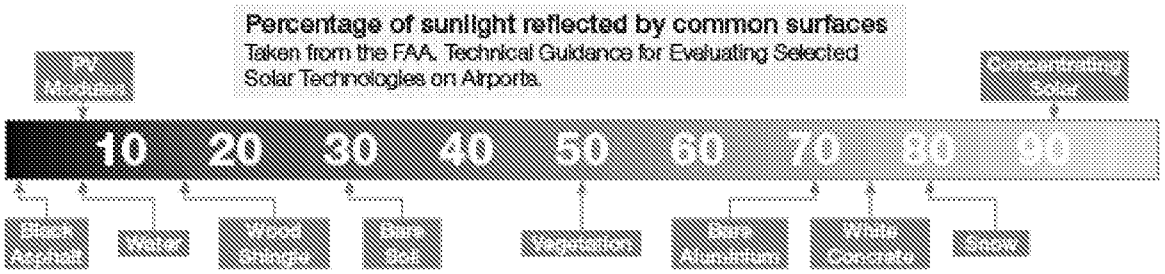
7.19 Mitigation planting, in most cases, results in a minor beneficial impact due to the visual improvement gained by restoring hedgerow field boundaries, creating a more rural character to the landscape and screening elements of the surrounding horticultural industry.

7.20 The low lying topography means that the solar park, is easily and effectively screened by a 2.5-3m hedge in most locations (see example photographs in **Figure 17**).

7.21 Overall, the significance of the visual effects is assessed as **Minor beneficial**, and of a temporary nature.

Glare

7.22 PV panels absorb sunlight and the glass is coated with translucent coating materials to improve light transmittance into the glass. Thus panels appear to have a dull sheen and do not reflect light as strong glint or glare. Studies into the likely impacts from glare on aviation have shown that glare from a photovoltaic installation is less than that from a similar sized water body, such as a lake.



7.23 Glint is a more intense, but intermittent direct reflection of the sun from reflective surfaces, which can occur on rare occasions when several environmental conditions coincide. The sun has to be at the right height in the sky (seasonal) and at the right angle (time of day) and there must be no cloud obscuring the sun. Assuming that there is no cloud cover, these circumstances would only result in glint impacts on each receptor for a short period of time each day and for a few days twice a year.

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With the added constraint of cloudy weather, and other variables such as the slight differences in the pitch of panels and undulations in topography, it is almost impossible to predict these impacts. However, the PV panels and the frames are all designed with non-reflective surfaces and so any glint impacts would be minimal.

7.24 There are two receptors to the south of the site, including residential properties and a short section of minor road along the southern boundary of the site. Overall the potential adverse effect from glint is considered to be temporary and of negligible significance. The proposed mitigation planting is considered to be suitable mitigation in respect of further minimising the risk of any potential glint or glare impacts. As such no additional glare-specific mitigation measures have been designed into the proposed development.

8.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

8.1 Mitigation measures have been described in the assessment tables and can be summarised thus:

Secondary mitigation measures (**Figure 15** refers)

8.2 These measures are designed to specifically address the remaining residual adverse effects of the final development proposals and are as follows:

- The existing boundary vegetation will be retained and, where hedgerows are present, managed to a winter height of 3m;
- A 10 metre wide band of trees is proposed along approximately 2/3 of the eastern boundary;
- A new mixed native hedgerow interspersed with tree planting will be planted and cut to a winter height of 3m. This proposed hedgerow will link the proposed 10 metre band of trees and existing boundary vegetation along the southern section of the eastern boundary;
- On the eastern and northern boundary, gaps in the existing hedgerows are to be planted with 1.5m wide mixed native hedgerow managed to a winter cut height of 3m;
- A new mixed native hedgerow interspersed with tree planting will be planted and cut to a winter height of 3m along the western boundary of the site.
- An 8 metre buffer zone between the security fence and the site boundary edge will protect existing mature trees and water ditches that are an important habitat for water voles.

8.3 **Figure 17** illustrates how a well maintained field boundary hedgerow can, on relatively flat topography, successfully screen close up views of a solar park.

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9.0 COMPLIANCE WITH PLANNING POLICIES

9.1 The proposed development is compliant with adopted and emerging local plan policy.

9.2 With particular reference to landscape and visual effects, the location, design and layout of the solar park has been informed by adopted Local Plan Policy GEN21 and emerging policy ECC DM1 (both pertaining to Renewable Energy). The LVIA also demonstrates that there is no unacceptable impact to the amenity of neighbouring residents and that proposed mitigation measures will ensure that there are no significant visual impacts on views from residential properties. Overall, the proposed mitigation measures will improve views from Shripney and the east by also screening the mid-distance views of the horticultural tunnels in the west.

10.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACT

10.1 There is an existing solar park of approximately 11 hectares located to the south of Tangmere, some 2.8 km north west of the site. A second solar park is proposed on similar arable land 2.5 km to the west and a third has recently been consented at the Langmead Group landholding at Bilsham, which is a similar distance to the east. The four sites are not inter-visible.

10.2 From further away, although all four sites are visible from the South Downs National Park, their aspect and distance between the South Downs is such that the solar parks will be barely distinguishable within the surrounding landscape. The cumulative effect to users will be **minor adverse.**

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The proposed solar park will not be a prominent feature within the landscape due to its low height and setting within a low coastal plain landscape. The few partial / glimpsed views from surrounding roads, PRoWs and properties can be screened by enhancing existing vegetation and establishing new hedgerow and tree planting along the perimeter boundary. There will be no significant views of the solar park from the South Downs National Park or Halnaker Windmill. Although the high ground will afford views towards the solar park, the distance, angle of view and intervening horticultural tunnels and field boundaries will make it difficult to discern. The array will also face away from the National Park, with the result that any effect on the visual amenity of the National Park is considered to be negligible.

11.2 The most significant view of the array will be from PRoW No 149, which skirts around the west side of Shripney in front of Myddleton Terrace, although views from here are already adversely affected by overhead utility lines and horticultural tunnels at Manor Farm (the neighbouring farm) to the west. The proposed planting on this perimeter will be beneficial in that it will provide screening to both the proposed solar park and the existing horticultural tunnels.

11.3 There are two clusters of listed buildings within 1km of the site, one to the south and one to the east, in the nearby settlements of Shripney and North Bersted. None of these afford views the site.

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11.4 The cumulative effect of one existing and other proposed solar parks, between 2.5 and 2.8 km from the site, will be minor adverse due to the distance and aspect making the solar parks barely distinguishable within the surrounding landscape.

11.5 The main landscape effects include the temporary, reversible loss of the site's rural character during operation. Although evident, this will have a low impact on the surrounding views due to the already light industrial character created by horticultural estates and overhead utility lines.

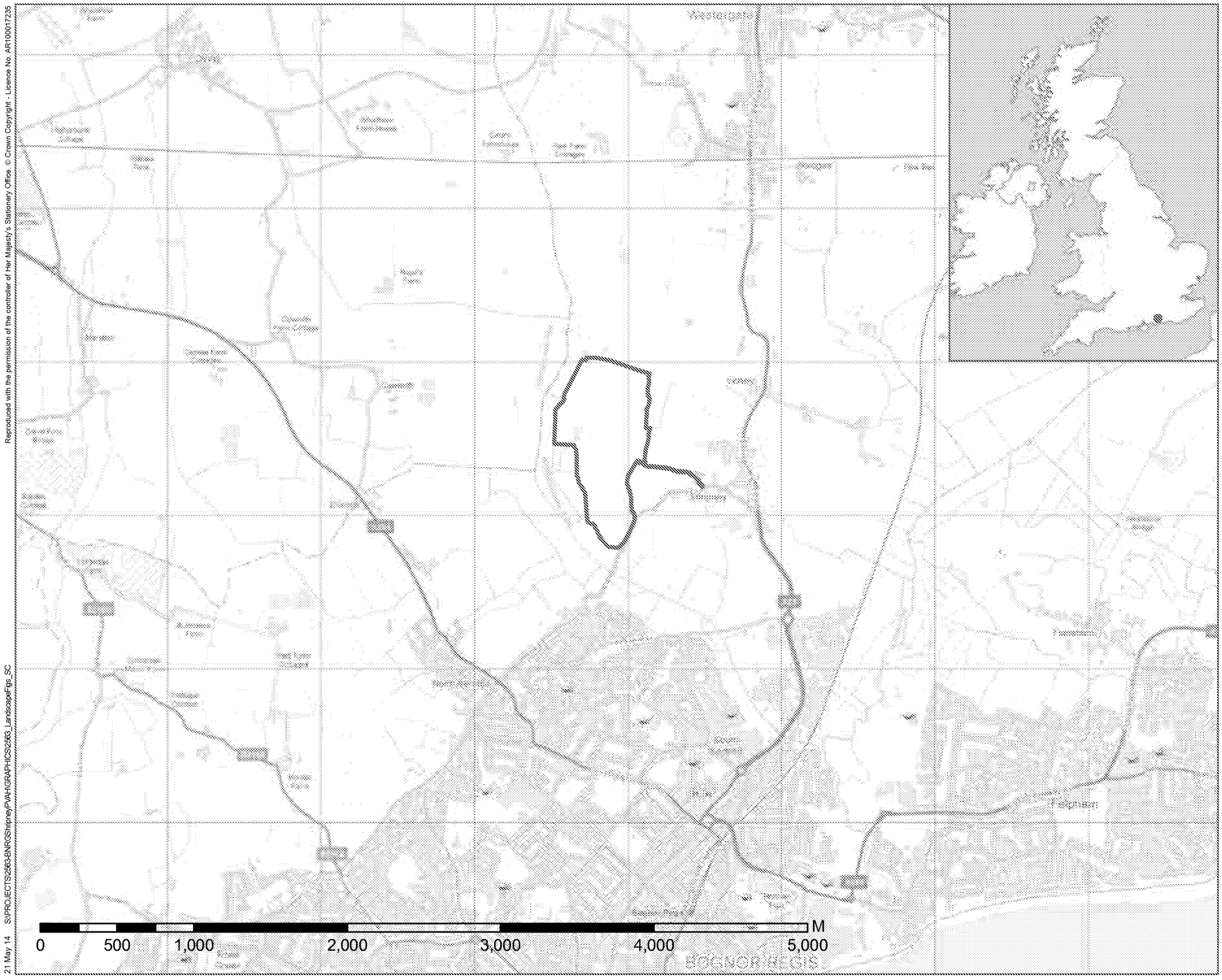
11.6 The proposed development is temporary and will be constructed in such a way that it will not have any adverse impact on the landscape once it is removed. Even while operational the development is considered acceptable in landscape and visual terms.

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FIGURES

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Site location

SHRIPNEY PV PARK

FIGURE 1
Site Location

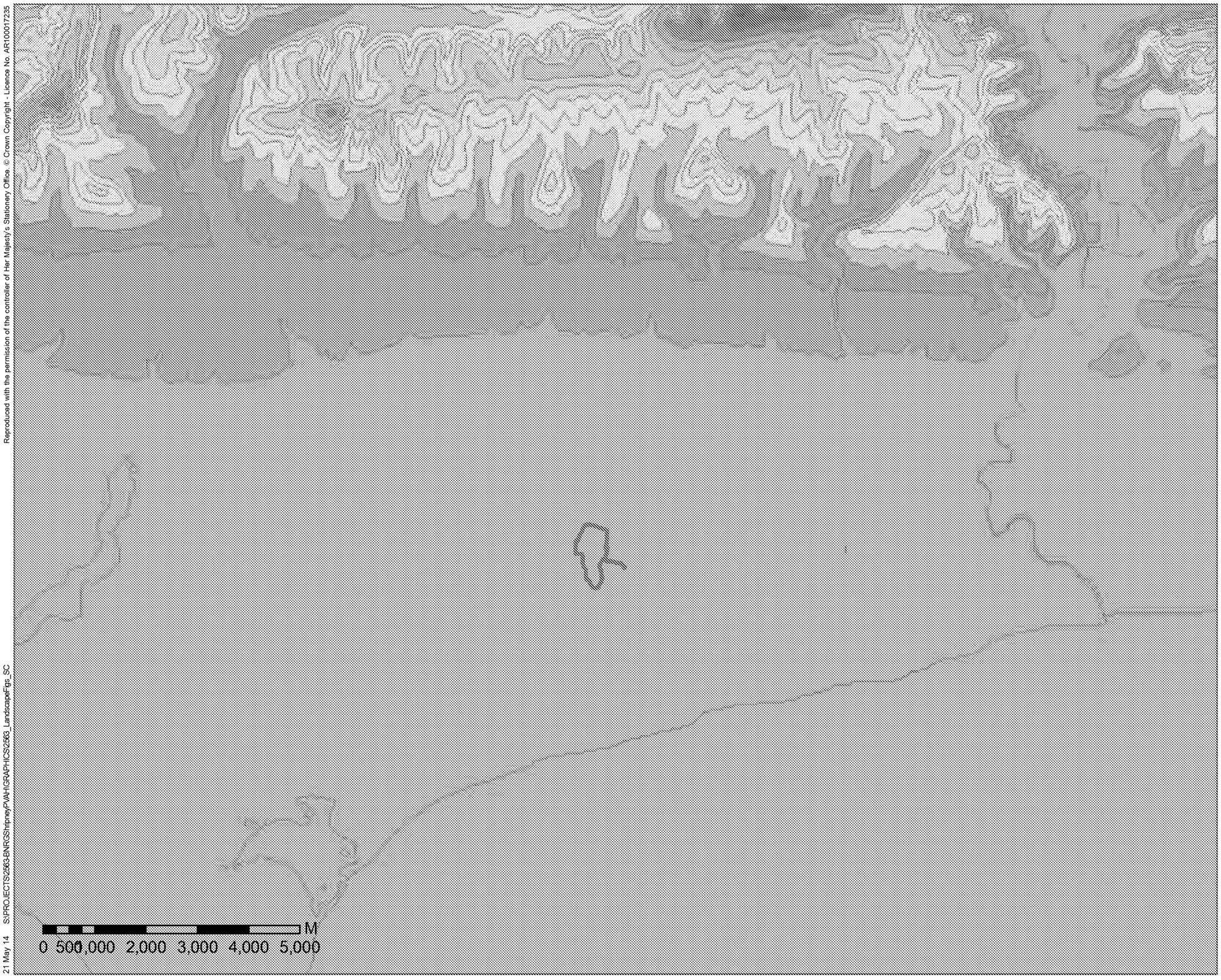
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Site location

- 240 - 260m
- 220 - 240m
- 200 - 220m
- 180 - 200m
- 160 - 180m
- 140 - 160m
- 120 - 140m
- 100 - 120m
- 80 - 100m
- 60 - 80m
- 40 - 60m
- 20 - 40m
- 0 - 20m
- Sea level

SHRIPNEY PV PARK

FIGURE 2
Topography

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Site location

Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI)

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FIGURE 3
Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (TZVI)

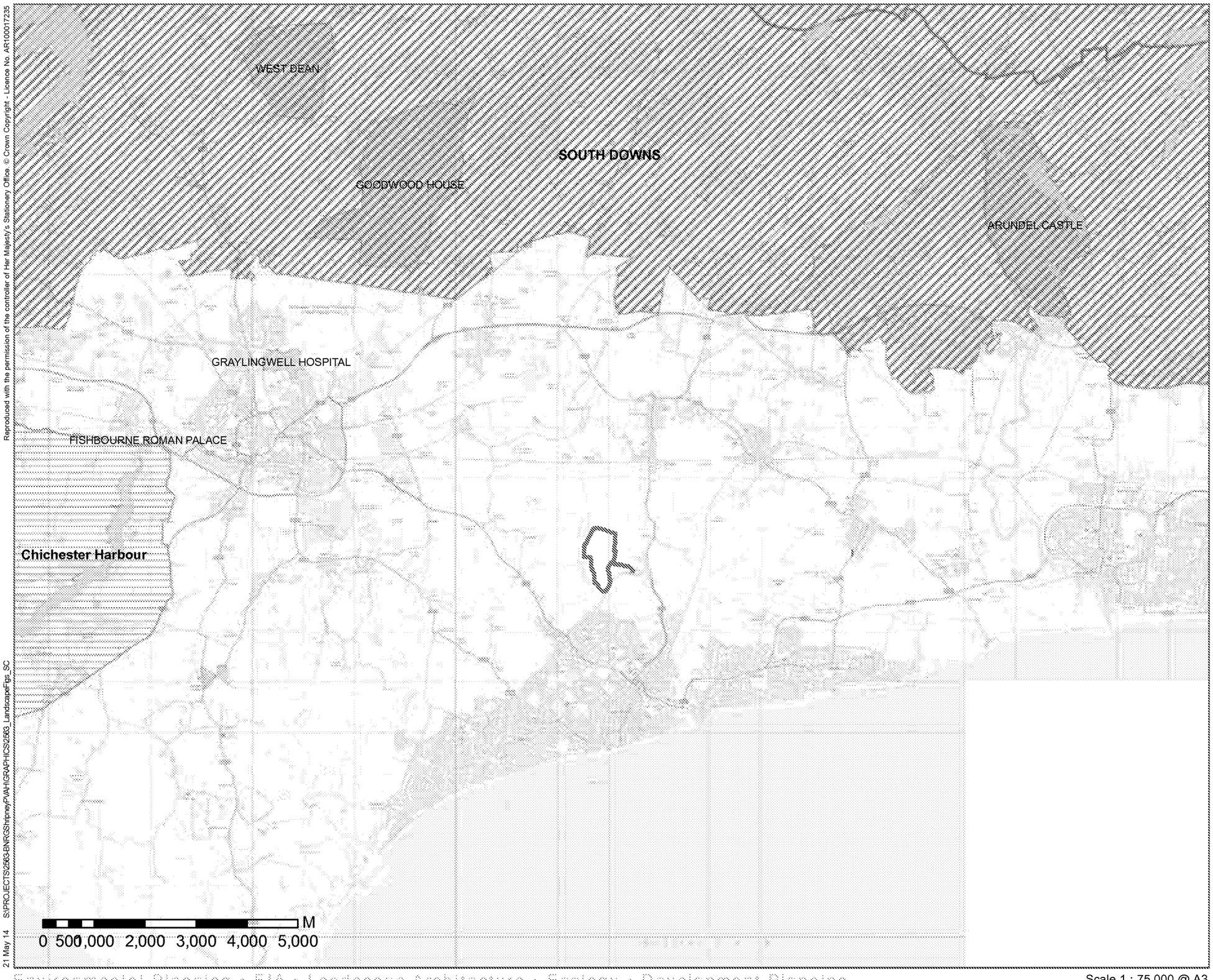
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Application site boundary

National Trail (South Downs Way)

AONB (Chichester Harbour)

National Park (South Downs)

Parks and Gardens

Open Access Areas

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FIGURE 4.1
Planning designations and landscape constraints and opportunities

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THE GRIBBLE INN II
RUSHMANS II
MANOR FARMHOUSE II
OVING POST OFFICE II
MADAM GREEN FARMHOUSE II
MILLIARDS MANOR FARMHOUSE II
TIMBERS II
BARNHAM COURT
PRoW No 200
THE OLD PARSONAGE II
MERSTON HOUSE II
BUILDING AT NORTH WEST CORNER OF THE CHURCHYARD OF ST GILES'S CHURCH II
ST GILES'S CHURCH I
LIDSEY HOUSE II
PRoW No 149
SHRIPNEY HOUSE II
STUDIO BARN II
SHRIPNEY MANOR II
PRoW No 139
THE PRIORY & THE ELMS
ROOKERY FARMHOUSE II
THE CHASE II
GREEN FARMHOUSE II
THE OLD COTTAGE II
THE MANOR HOUSE II
HOMING COTTAGE II
BARN AT CRIMSHAM MANOR TO THE SOUTH WEST OF THE HOUSE II
GARDEN WALL TO NORTH WEST OF NO 375 III
CRIMSHAM MANOR II
THE WHITE HOUSE II
PENNICOTT'S FARMHOUSE II
LAGNERSH FARMHOUSE II
NEAL FARMHOUSE II
COPYHOLD FARMHOUSE II
MORELLS FARMHOUSE II
WALL ALONG ROAD TO WEST OF NOS 1 AND 2 (THE FARM) II
THE FARM II
NAN'S COTTAGE II
HOLLYWOOD HOUSE II
DAUBENY HOUSE II
DAUBENY COTTAGE II
THE WHYKE HOUSE I
LAVENDER COTTAGE I

0 500 1,000

- Application site boundary
- PRoWs (West Sussex County)
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation areas

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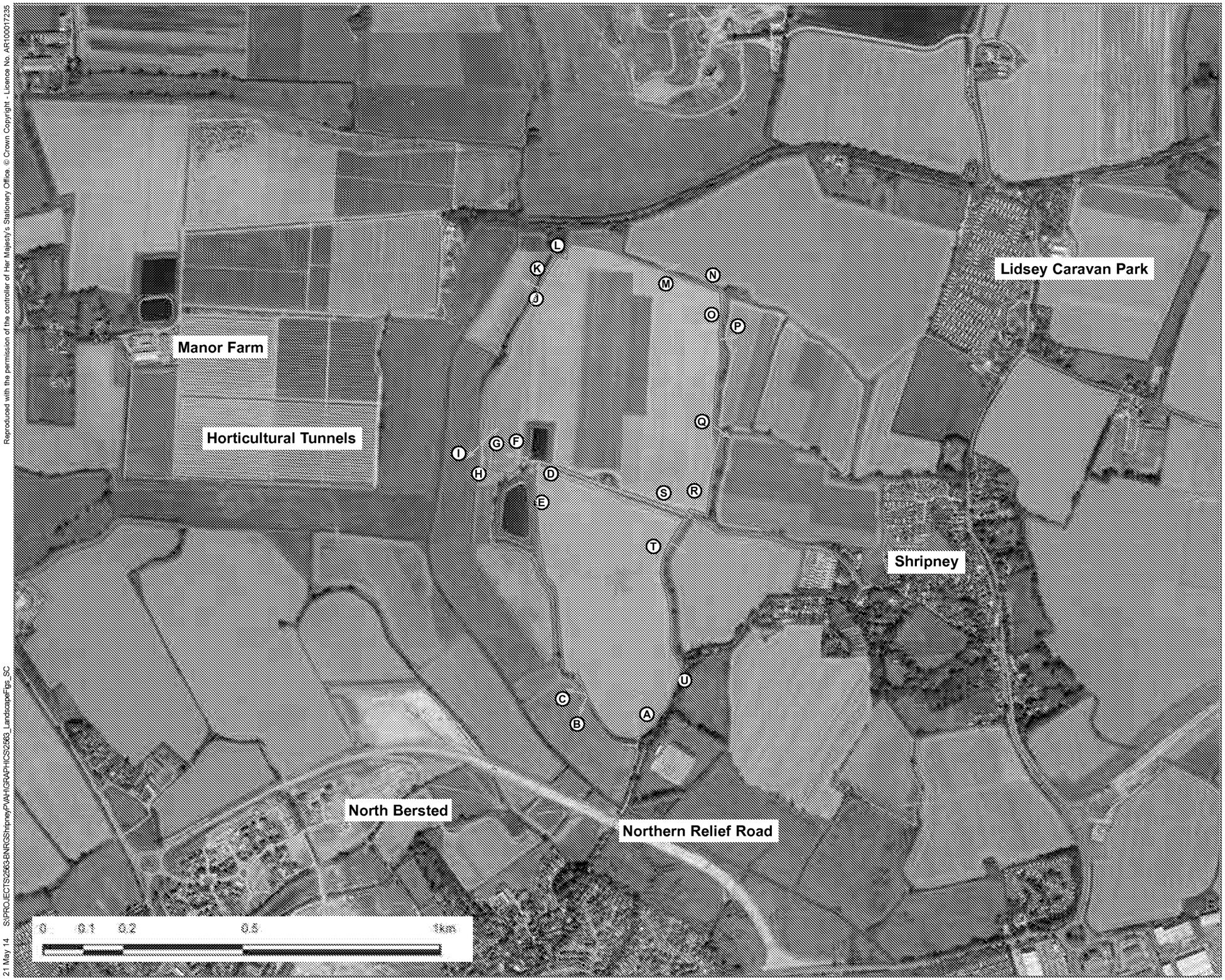
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FIGURE 4.2
Planning designations and landscape constraints and opportunities

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Application site boundary

Internal viewpoints (A -U)

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FIGURE 5
Aerial photograph

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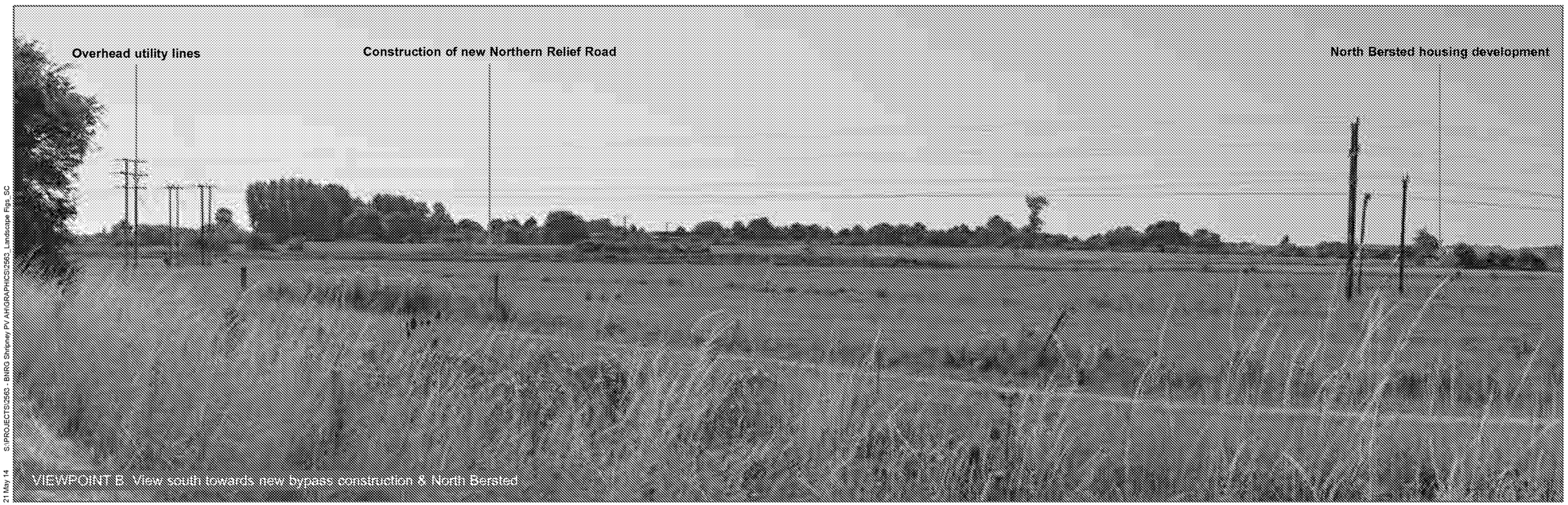
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Scale: See scale bar

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VIEWPOINT A. View north showing distant view of the South Downs National Park



VIEWPOINT E. View south towards new bypass construction & North Bersted

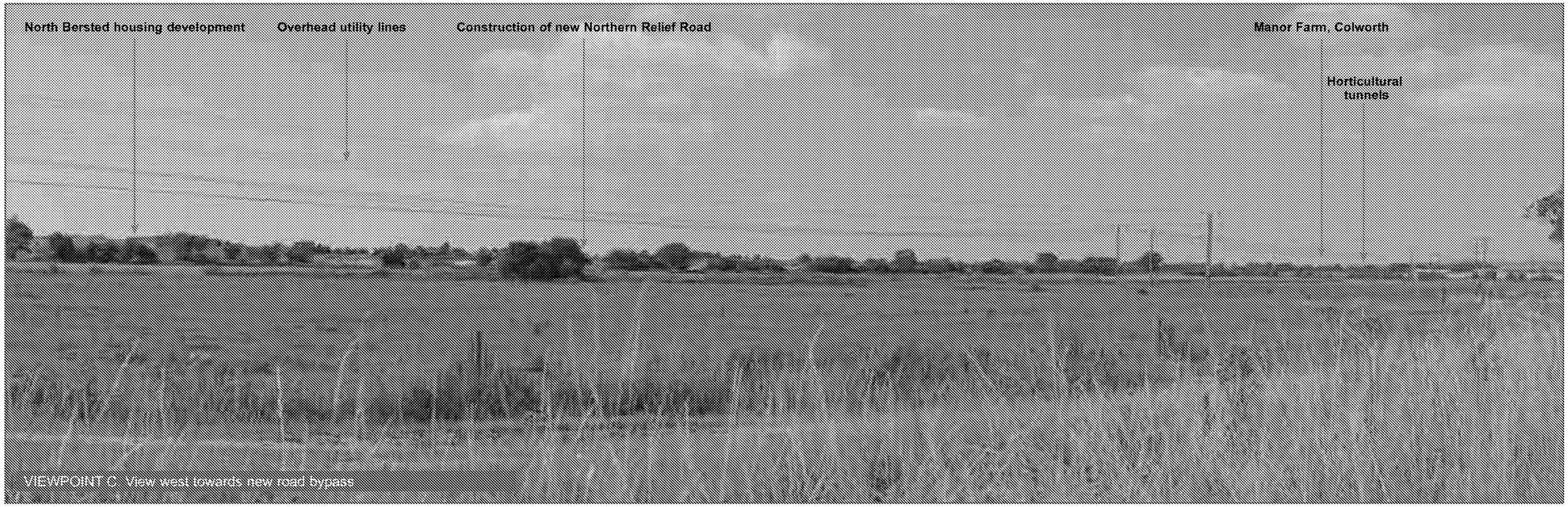
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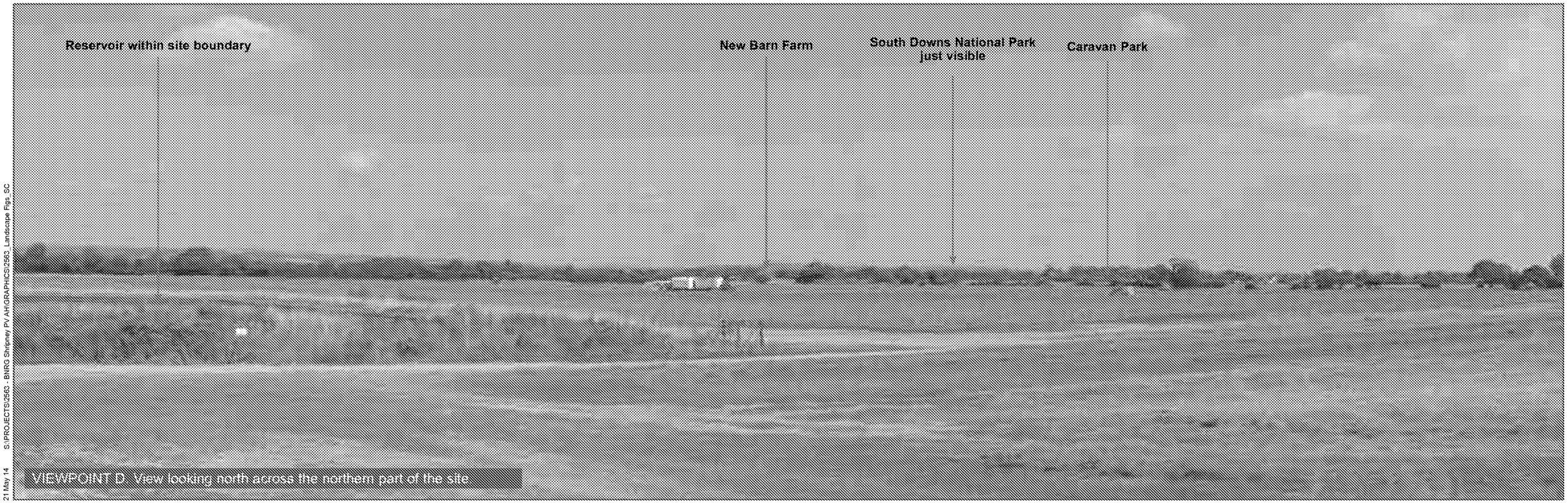
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FIGURE 6.1
Photographs taken from the site

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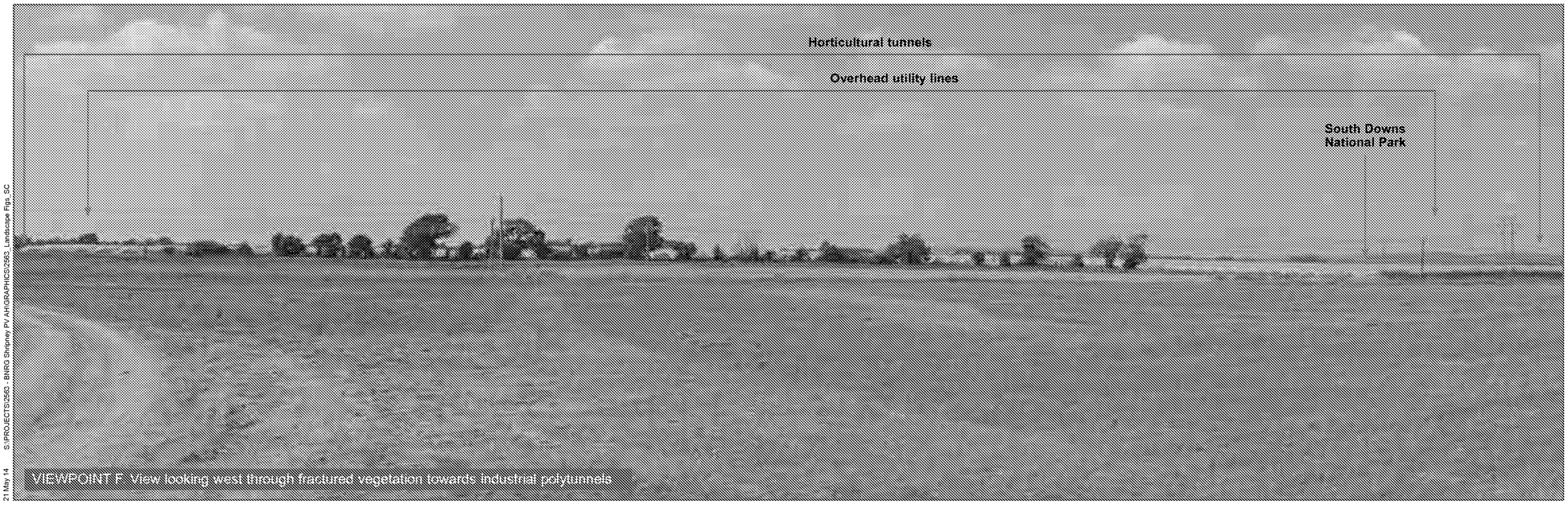
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FIGURE 6.3
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VIEWPOINT G. View looking north-east towards the northern section of the site



VIEWPOINT H. View looking south from the western boundary of the site

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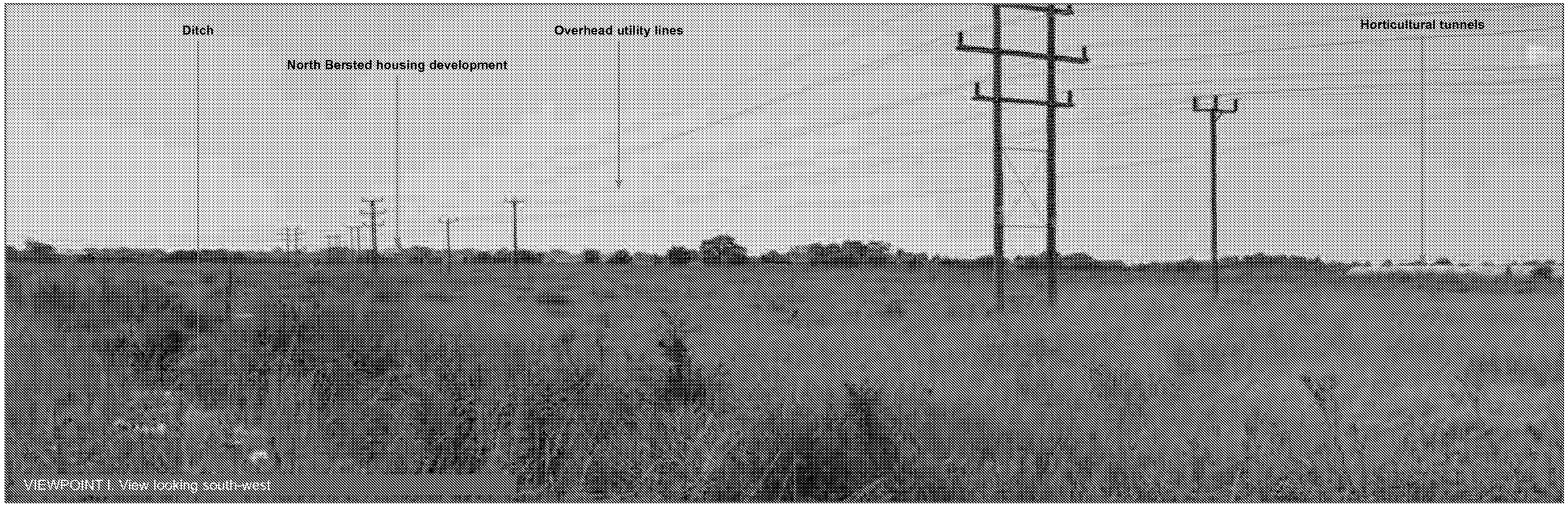
FIGURE 6.4
Photographs taken from the site

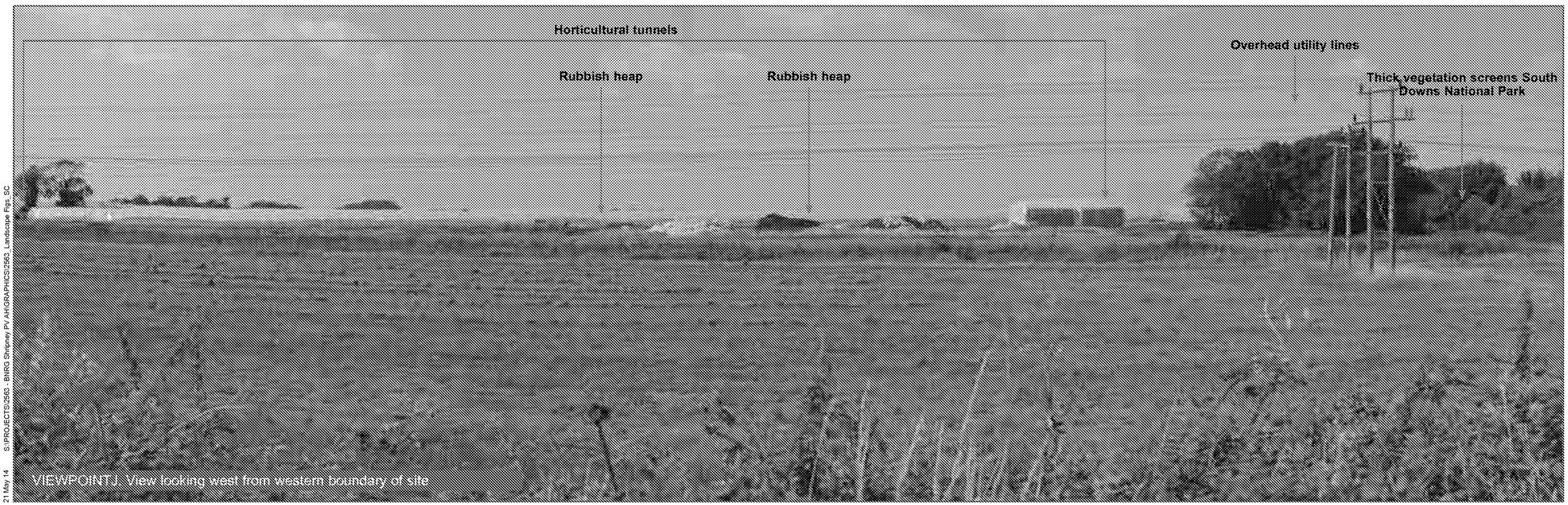
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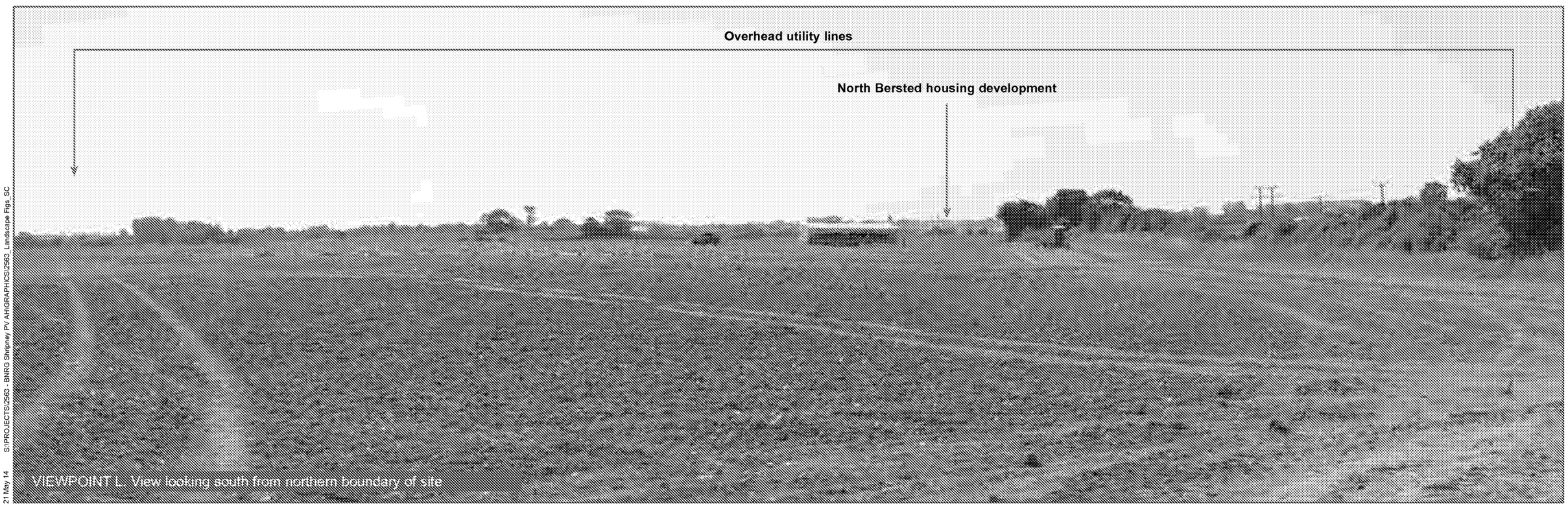
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FIGURE 6.5
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FIGURE 6.6
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VIEWPOINT M. View looking north-east from northern boundary of site



VIEWPOINT N. View looking west along northern border of site

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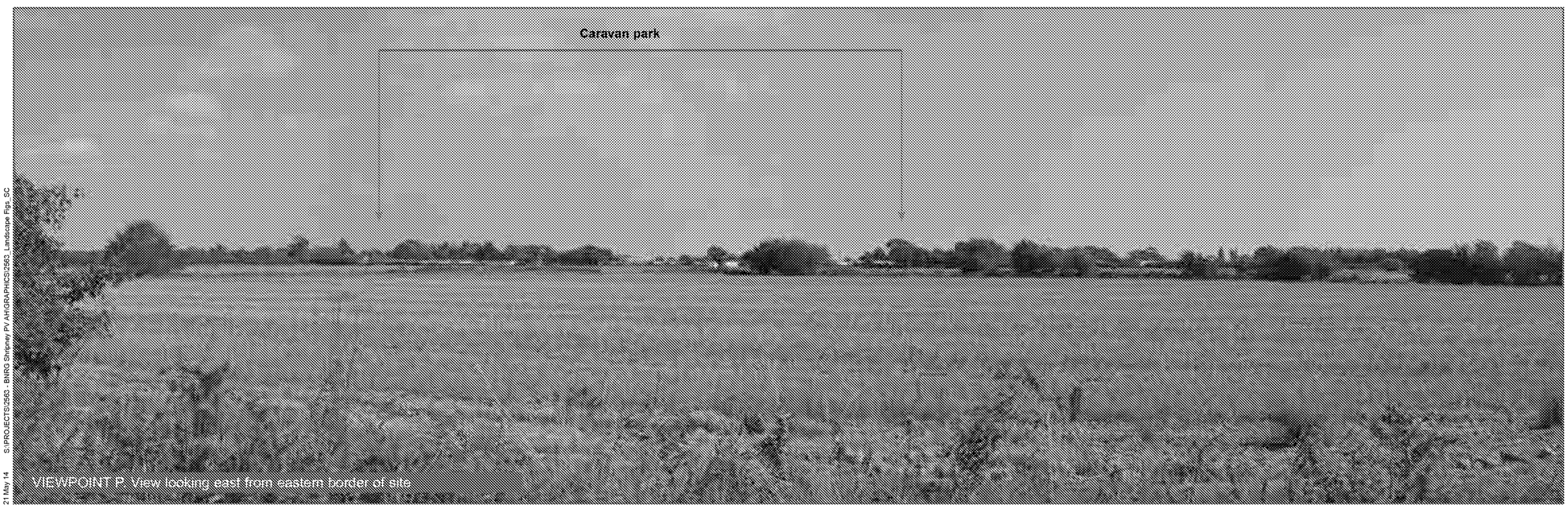
FIGURE 6.7
Photographs taken from the site

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VIEWPOINT O: View looking south-west from north-east corner of site



VIEWPOINT P: View looking east from eastern border of site

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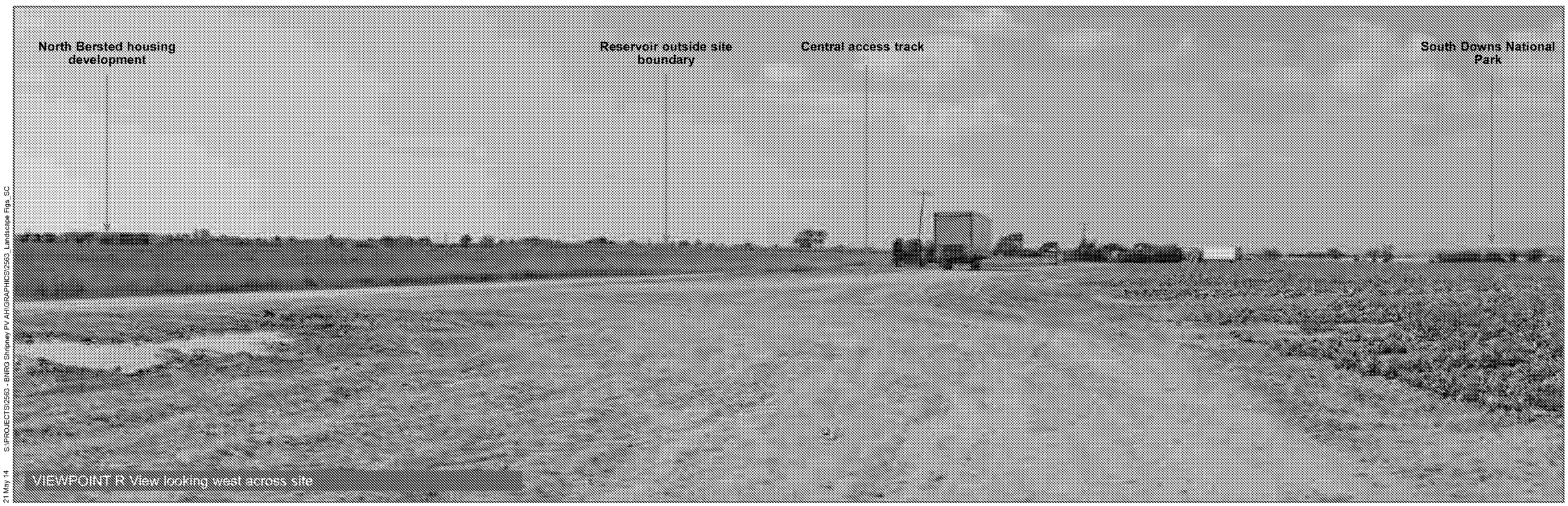
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FIGURE 6.8
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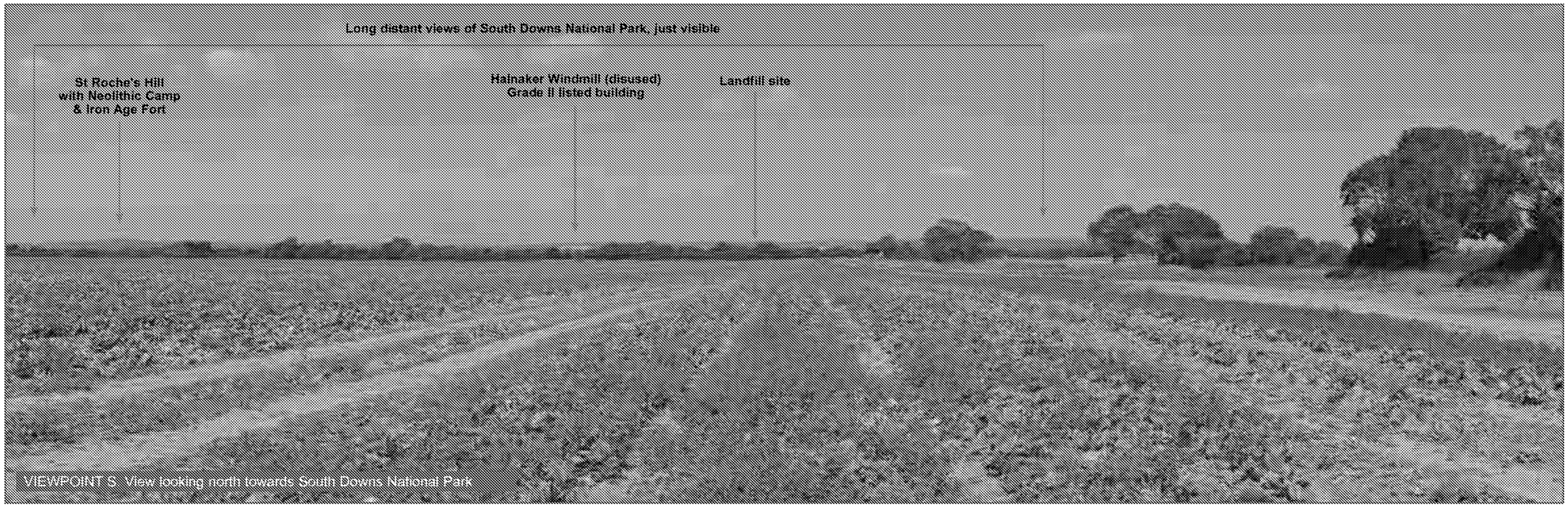
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SHRIPNEY PV PARK

FIGURE 6.9
Photographs taken from the site

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VIEWPOINT S. View looking north towards South Downs National Park



VIEWPOINT T. View looking south-east from eastern border of site

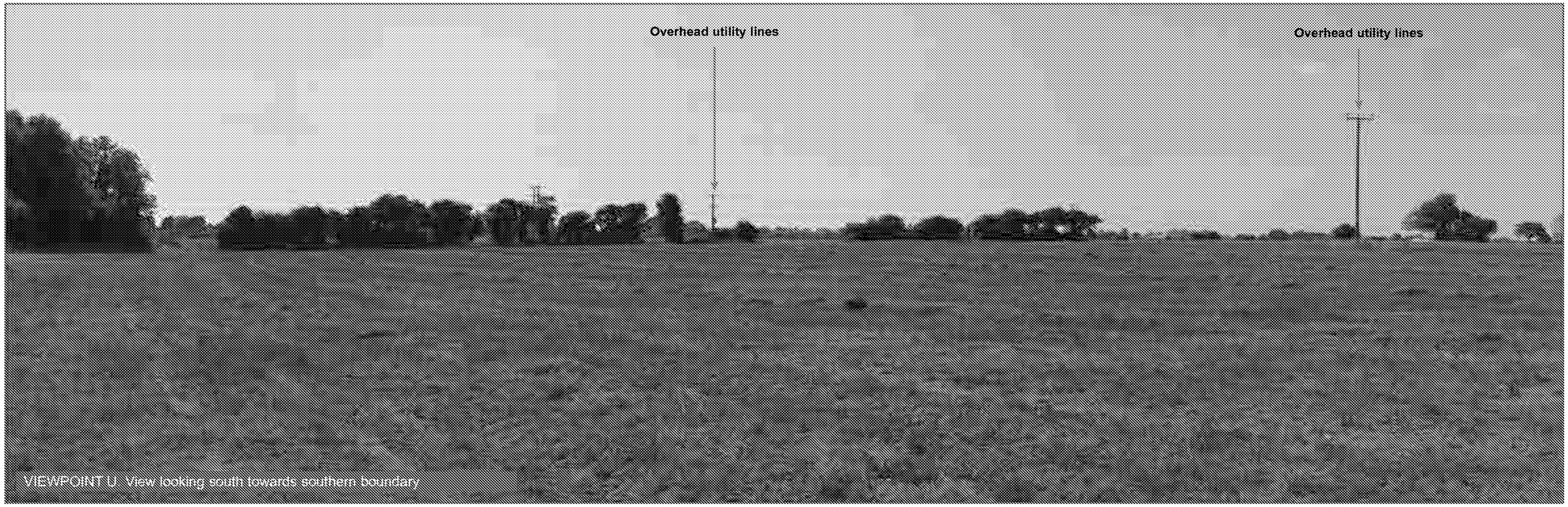
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SHRIPNEY PV PARK

FIGURE 6.10
Photographs taken from the site

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VIEWPOINT U. View looking south towards southern boundary

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FIGURE 6.11
Photographs taken from the site

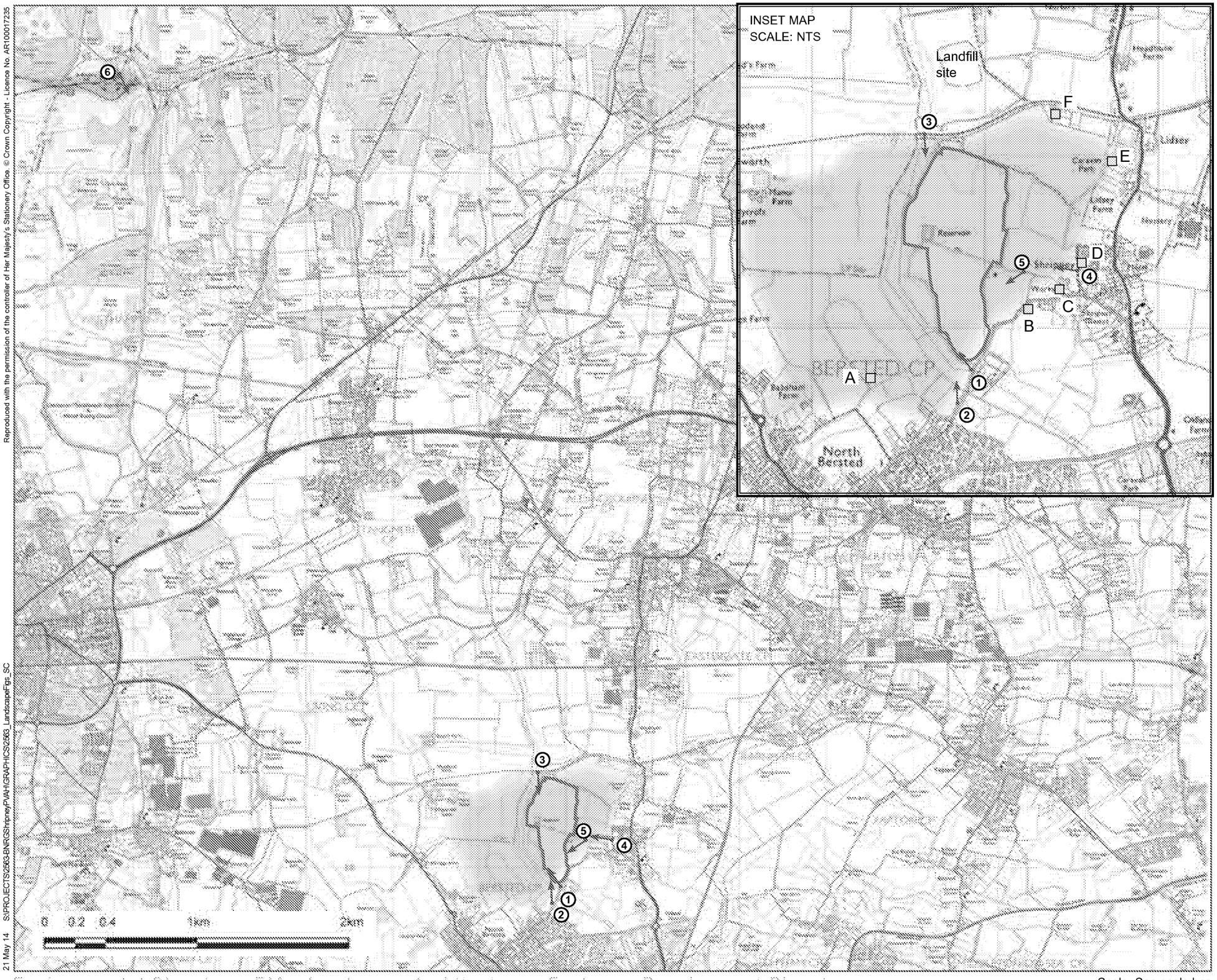
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Application site boundary

Viewpoint locations (1- 6)

Zone of Visual Influence

Private receptors (see text)

Through fieldwork and the analysis of photographs taken from the site (Figure 6.1 - 6.11) the following private receptors will have partial or glimpsed views of the site.

- **A** New residential edge of North Bersted
- **B** Single property on the edge of Shripney
- **C** Farm worker's caravans
- **D** Edge of caravan park and Myddleton Terrace on the edge of Shripney
- **E** Lidsey Caravan Park
- **F** New Barn Farm

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FIGURE 7
Viewpoint location plan and Zone of Visual Infulence

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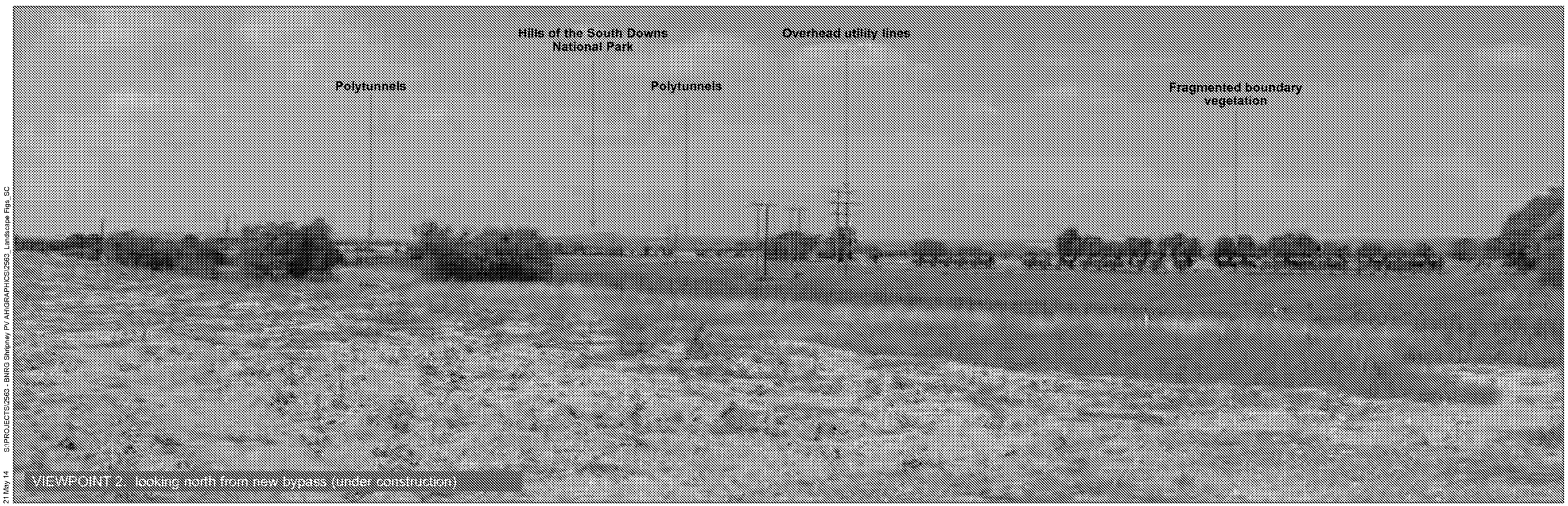
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Scale: See scale bar

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VIEWPOINT 1. Looking north-west through gateway from Shripney Lane



VIEWPOINT 2. looking north from new bypass (under construction)

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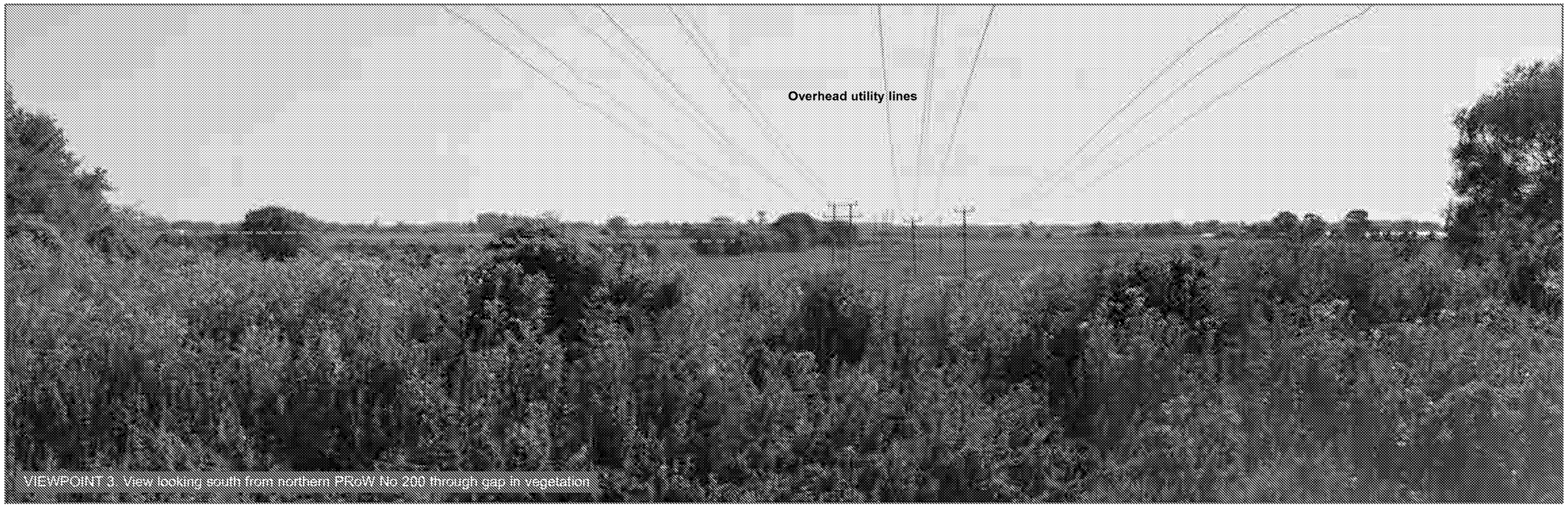
FIGURE 8.1
Viewpoint Photographs

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VIEWPOINT 3. View looking south from northern PRoW No 200 through gap in vegetation



VIEWPOINT 4. View looking west from PRoW No 149 to the east

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FIGURE 8.2
Viewpoint Photographs

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VIEWPOINT 5: View looking south-west from main access road



VIEWPOINT 6: View looking south-east from St Roche's Hill within National Park

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FIGURE 8.3
Viewpoint Photographs

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Manor Farm, Shripney — Landscape Masterplan

Proposed trees planted in gaps to screen views from New Barn Farm

Proposed hedgerow planting interspersed with proposed tree planting at strategic locations to screen views.

Indicative location of Polytunnels

Grassland to be seeded within the 8 metre buffer zone

Grassland within the solar park to establish naturally through an agreed management regime

Proposed native hedgerow planting

DNO switchgear

Site boundary

Proposed hedgerow planting interspersed with proposed tree planting at strategic locations to screen views

Proposed 10m wide band of tree planting

South facing solar panels in rows aligned east-west

Proposed 10m wide band of tree planting

Inverters/ transformers

Security fencing

Access

Proposed hedgerow planting interspersed with proposed tree planting at strategic locations to screen views and reinforce existing boundary

Existing hedgerows and trees

Fill gaps in existing hedgerow with like species

Route of new bypass under construction

Indicative location of new housing development

FIGURE 9
Layout Plan

0 50 100 250 500m
SCALE 1:5,000

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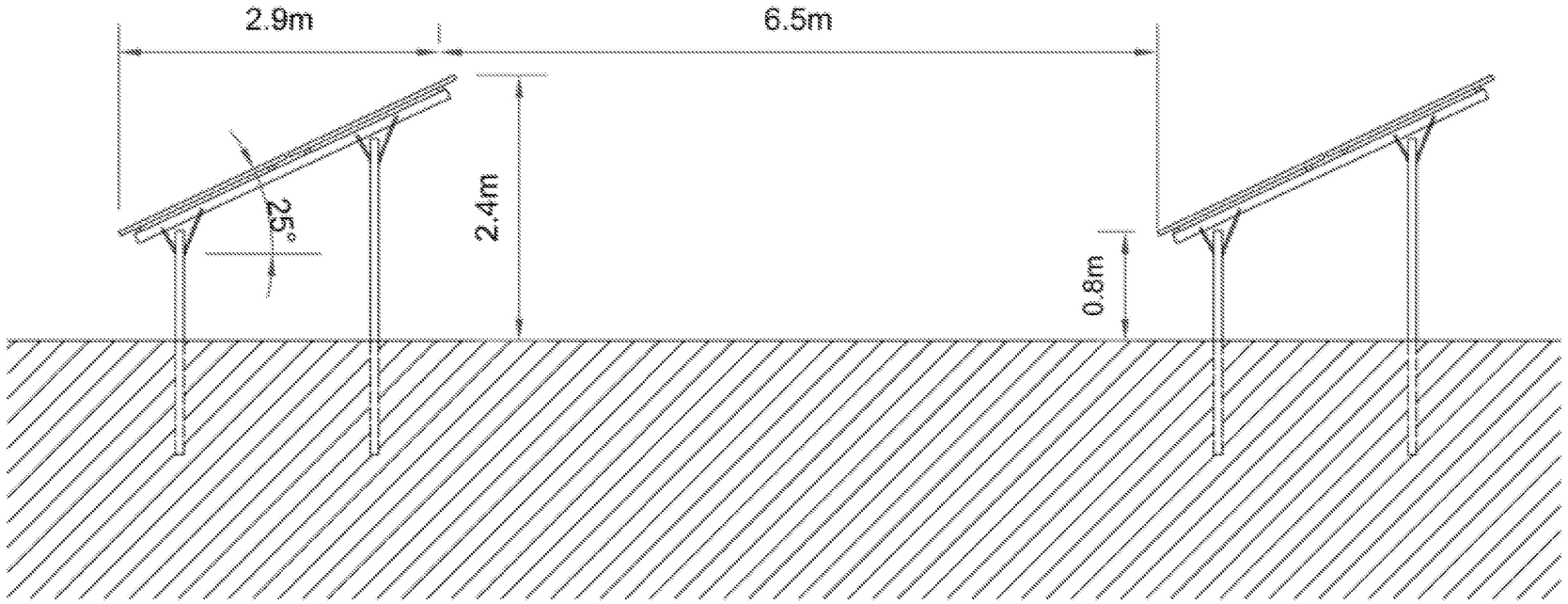
Indicative fence line
Red line boundary
Existing trees & hedgerows
solar PV panels @ 2 x portrait with 6.5m spacing
Proposed hedgerow
Proposed hedgerow interspersed with trees
Proposed tree coppice

REV	DATE	COMMENTS
A	20.05.14	Red line extended to roadway

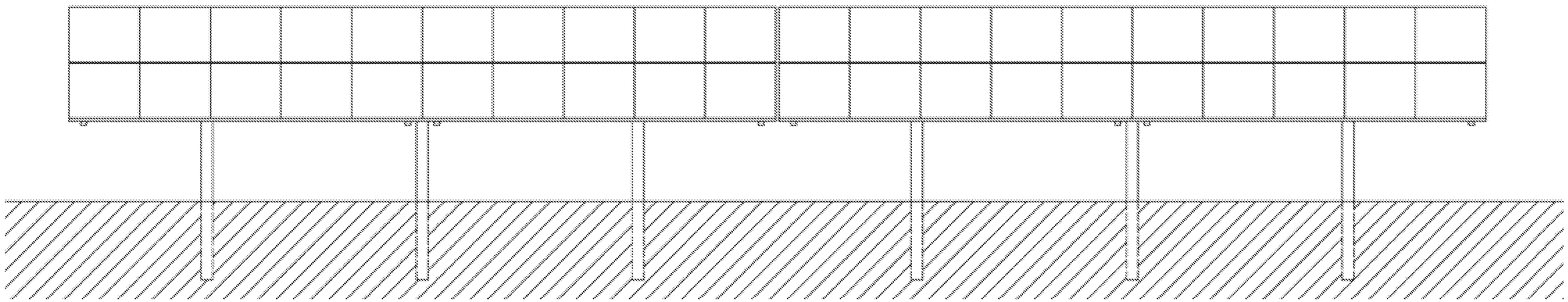
Date:	20.05.14	Status:	Planning
Scale:	1 : 5000 @ A3	Project:	Manor Farm, Shripney
Drawn:	GRMS		
Chkd:	BR	Drawing Title:	Landscape Masterplan
Auth:	AH	Drawing No:	2563_101_Rev A

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Side Elevation



Front Elevation



SCALE 1:50

SHRIPNEY PV PARK

FIGURE 10
Typical panel elevations

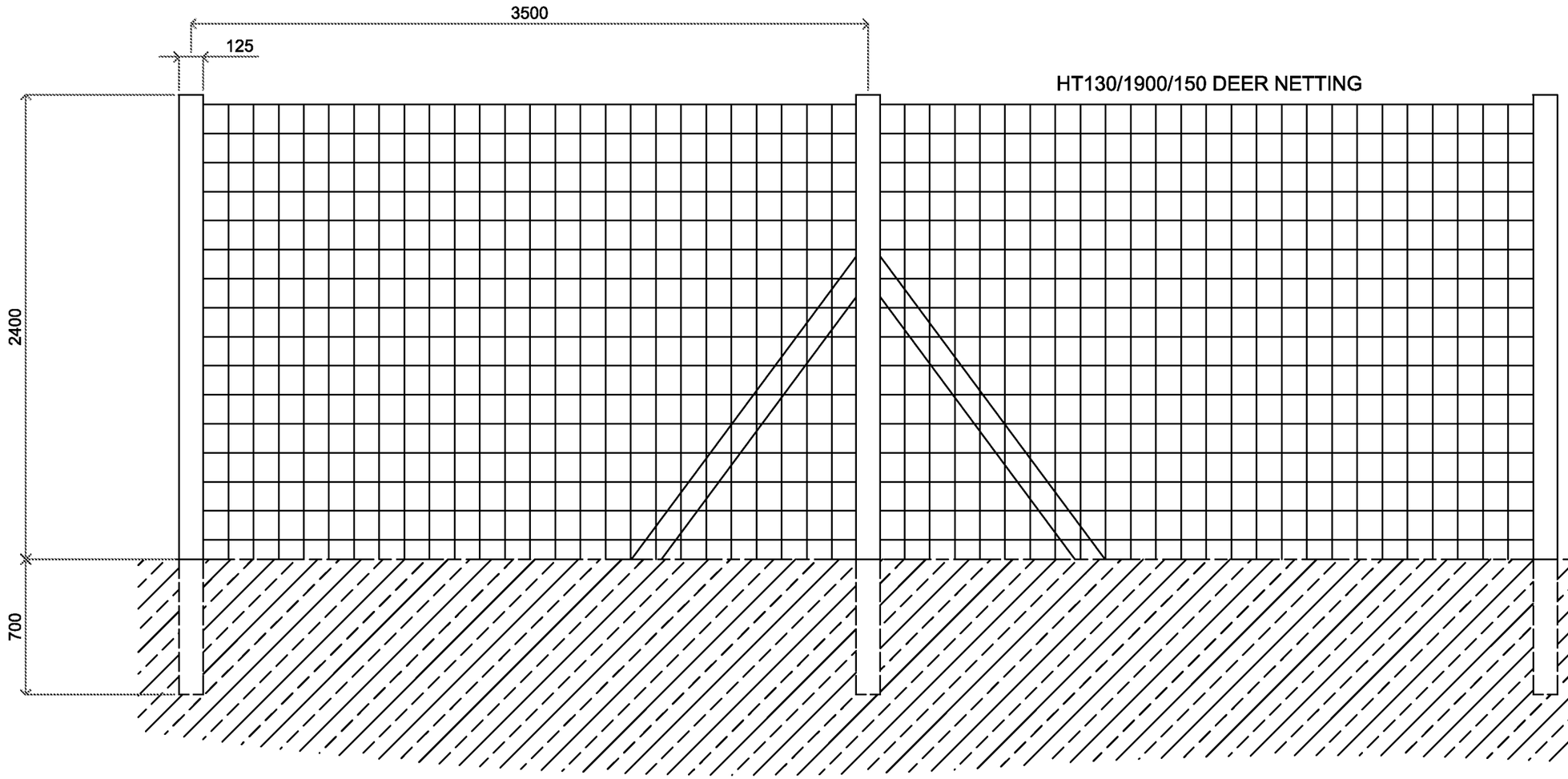
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Scale 1:25 @ A3

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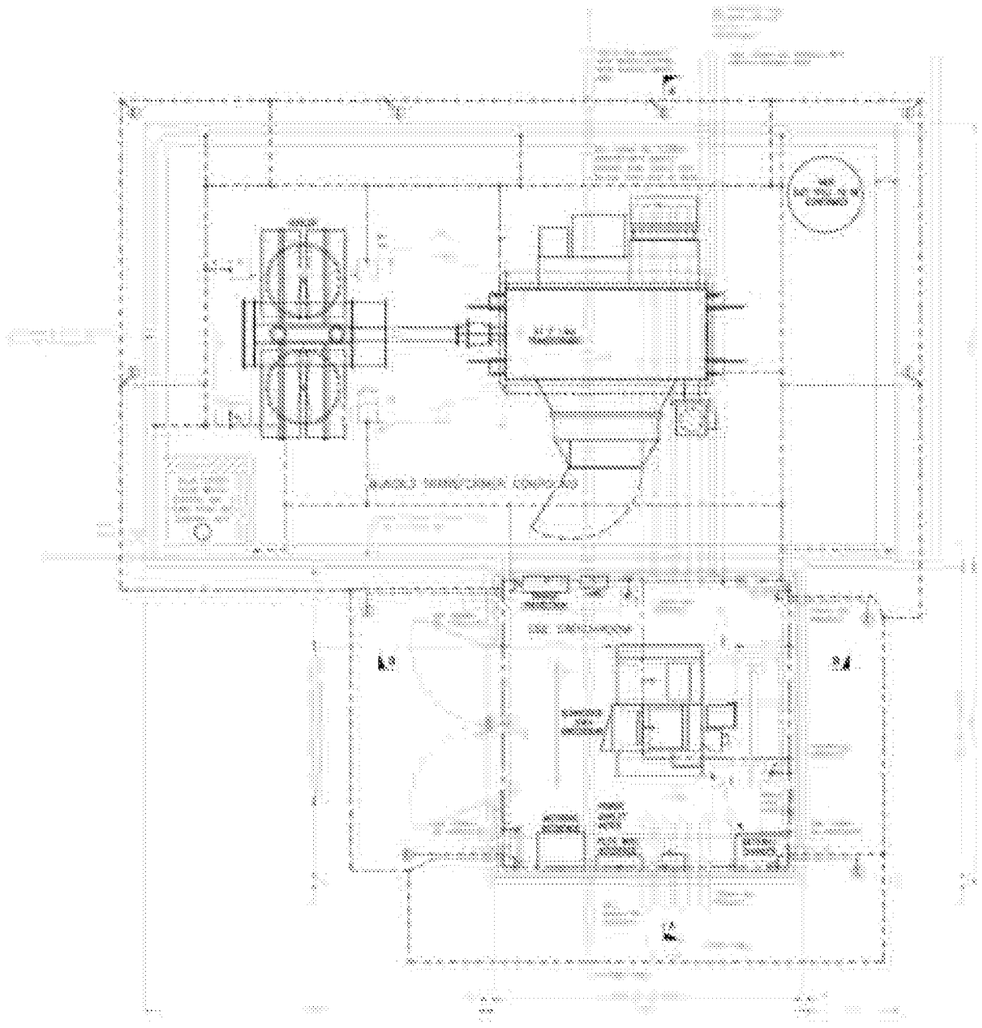
FIGURE 11
Typical fence details

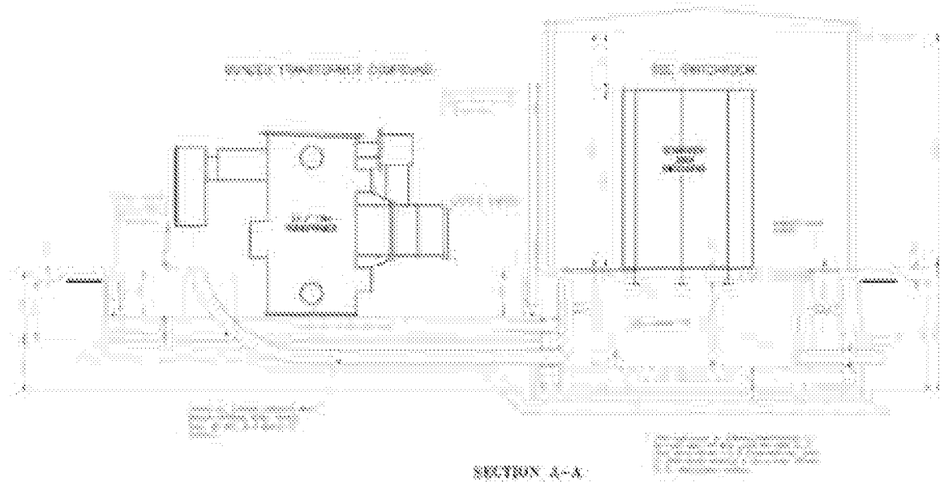
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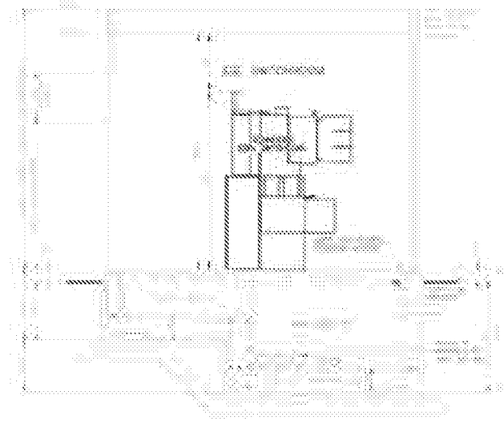
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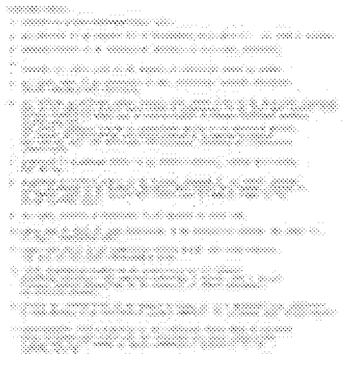


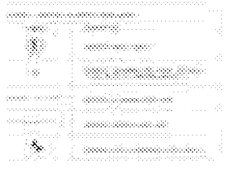


SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B

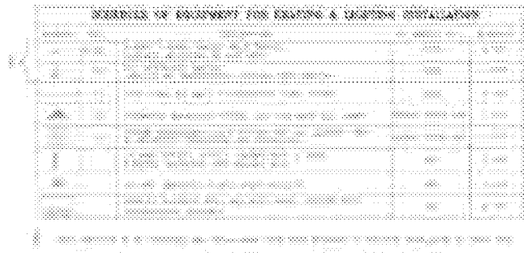






DETAIL AT EARTH FIXING

SCHEDULE OF EQUIPMENT FOR HOUSING & LIGHTING INSTALLATION



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Scale: NTS

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FIGURE 12
Housing for electrical infrastructure, typical details

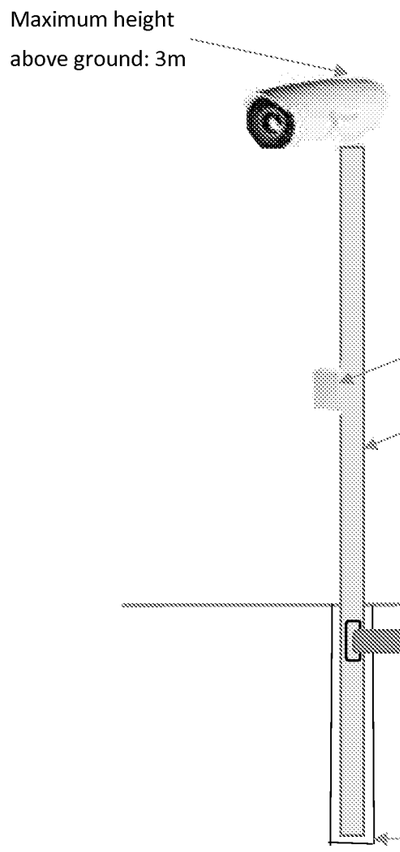
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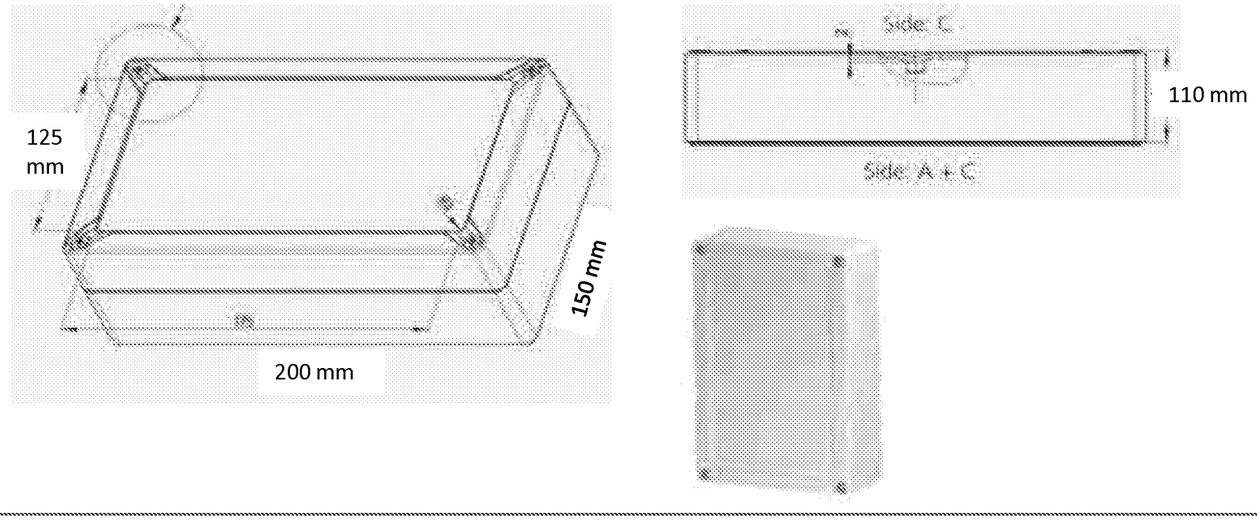
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One Vision Security WEC special 2.4m and 2.9m columns for direct burial
Shown here is 2.9m, for sites with 3m planning height limit.



Dimensions and illustration of IP enclosure



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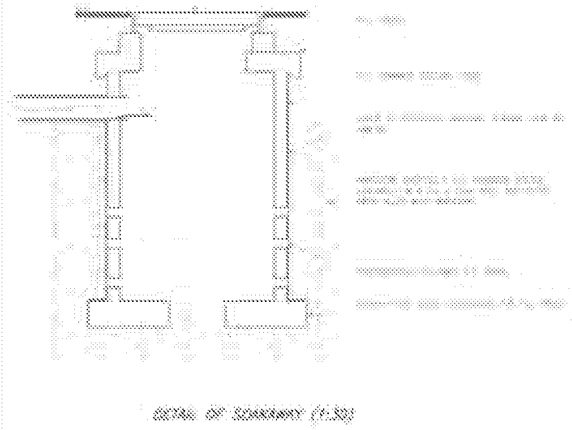
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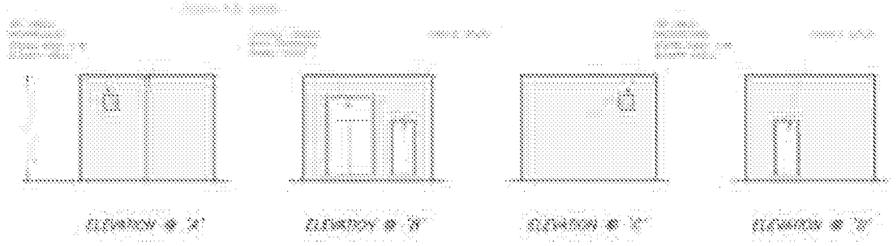
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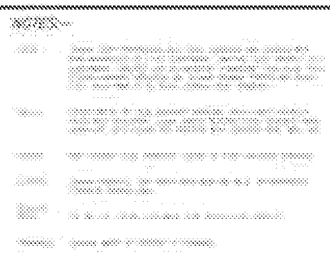
FIGURE 13
CCTV infrastructure, typical details

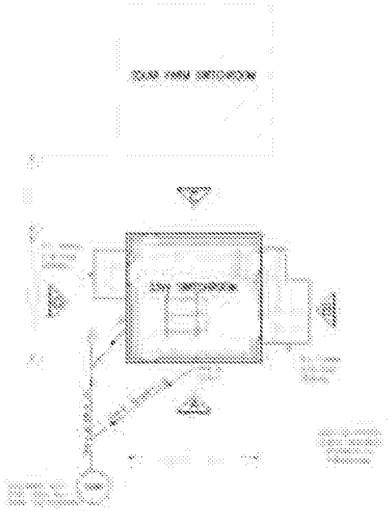
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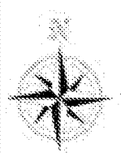
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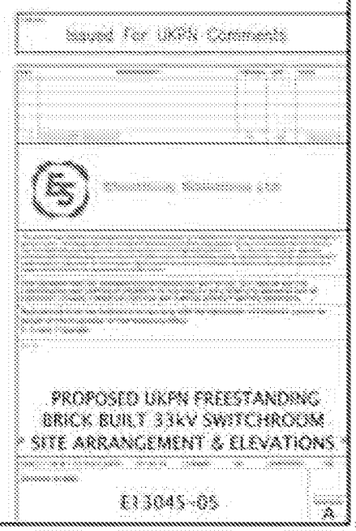












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Scale: NTS

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FIGURE 14
Switchroom elevation

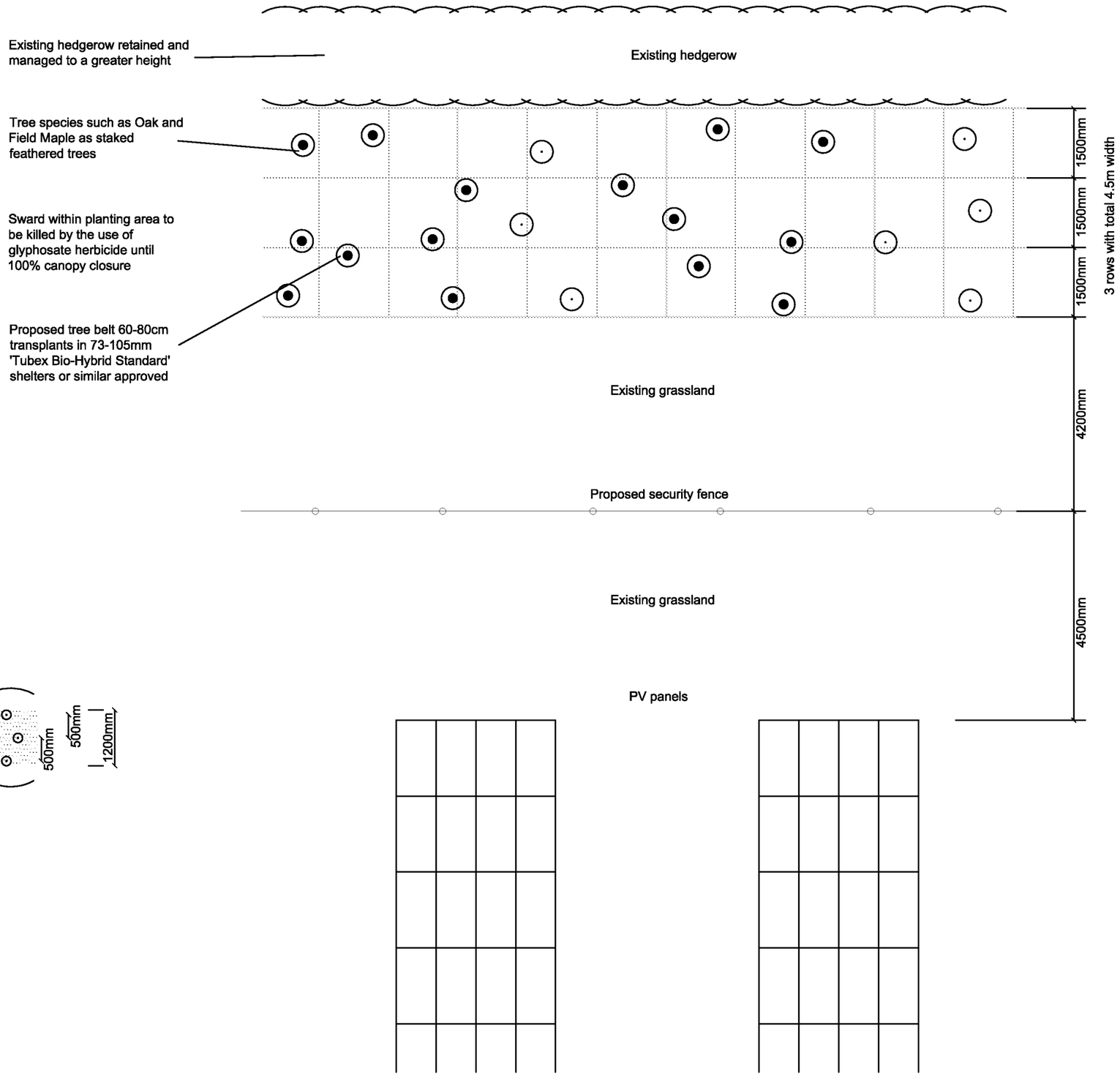
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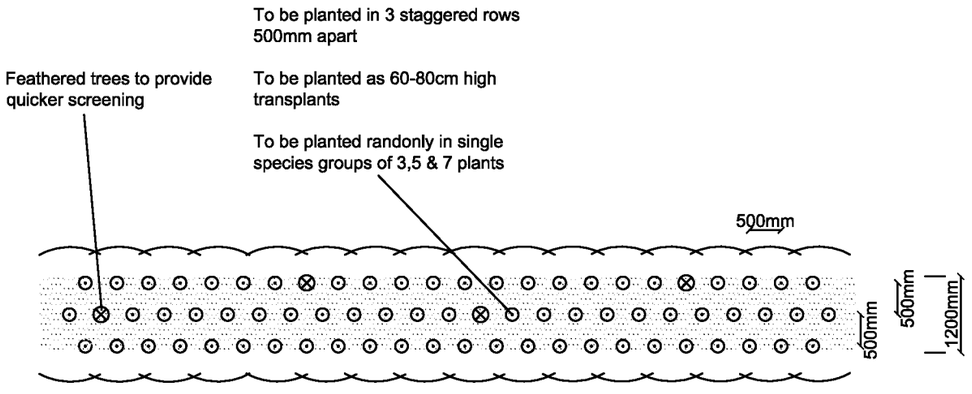
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Tree belt
(southwestern boundary)





Indicative plan of hedge planting
(northeastern boundary)

0 1 2 5 10m

SCALE 1:100

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FIGURE 15
Planting detail

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Photograph 1: Typical close up view of a recently built solar park without mitigation planting.



Photograph 2: The screening value of a typical, well maintained 2.3 m high field boundary hedgerow. Even in winter panels are only just visible when viewed at 90 degrees directly through the hedge.

NOTE:
Actual photographs, not photomontages, of an operational SPGL solar park at Chilton Cantello, built summer 2012

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FIGURE 16
Example photographs of a typical solar development

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APPENDIX A

Assessment Methodology

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APPENDIX A: Assessment Methodology

Assessing the Nature of Landscape Receptors (Sensitivity to Change)

A1.1 Assessment of landscape sensitivity is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes Sensitivity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape feature or character area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its components or overall character. and susceptibility

A1.2 In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is via application of local or national landscape designations. A landscape can nonetheless be valued by different communities for many different reasons without any formal designation.

A1.3 The assessment of landscape quality (condition) is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape and about its intactness from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements that make up the character in any one place.

A1.4 It usually follows that higher quality landscapes have higher sensitivity to change, but this must also be assessed in conjunction with landscape value to give an overall assessment of sensitivity.

A1.5 This study assigns a degree of sensitivity to landscape features and to each landscape character area identified (Table A.1 refers).

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Table A.1: Landscape Quality/Sensitivity

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	DEFINITION	TABLE A5 DEFINITION
Very high/ International	Landscape of exceptional scenic quality, harmonious and unified with pleasing landscape patterns and combinations of landscape features. Demonstrates strong landscape structure, characteristics, patterns, balanced combination of landform and land cover, distinct features, and land under appropriate management. Has no or very few detracting features and is typically considered very attractive by most people. These landscapes are highly valued and often designated of international importance such as World Heritage sites. They are extremely susceptible to small changes.	Very High
High/ National	Landscape of exceptional scenic quality, harmonious and unified with pleasing landscape patterns and combinations of landscape features. Landscape containing many attractive features and no visually intrusive or incongruous features. Vegetation in good condition and where appropriate, well maintained. Typically considered very attractive by most people. Designated landscapes of international or national importance Qualities typically found within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks.	High
Medium/ Regional	An attractive landscape but with some minor blemishes, such as unattractive buildings. Vegetation generally in good condition and well maintained. Designated landscapes of regional, county or district importance. A quality typically exhibited by Areas of Great landscape Value.	
High/Local	A reasonably attractive landscape with a mix of attractive features but only a few intrusive elements. Vegetation condition varies in quality. Typical of many landscapes throughout Britain	Medium
Medium/ Local	A pleasant but ordinary landscape with numerous blemishes, such as industrial areas and pylons. Vegetation structure and management poor. Typically an urban fringe landscape.	Low
Low/Local	A degraded or disturbed landscape with a severely damaged landscape structure, for example many hedges removed. Many unattractive and intrusive features. Typical of urban fringe landscapes in need of restoration	Negligible

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Assessing the magnitude of change to landscape features

A1.6 The magnitude of the change to existing landscape character and features is assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in Table A.2. These criteria can be applied to both positive and negative impacts.

Table A.2: Magnitude of change to the Landscape

LANDSCAPE IMPACT MAGNITUDE	DEFINITION
Very high	The proposed development will either cause a large improvement or complete loss of or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics. Or introduction of elements considered entirely characteristic or totally uncharacteristic.
High (dominant)	The proposed development will cause either a significant improvement or deterioration of one or more key elements/features/characteristics or introduction of elements that may be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic or characteristic.
Medium (prominent)	The proposed development will cause a noticeable improvement or deterioration of/minor loss to one or more key elements/features/ characteristics or the introduction of elements that are uncharacteristic or characteristic.
Low (present)	The proposed development will cause a barely perceptible improvement or deterioration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics, or introduction of elements that are characteristic or uncharacteristic.
Negligible/No Change	The proposals will cause no actual change or no discernible change.

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Analysis of Visual Receptors

Assessing the Sensitivity of Visual Receptors to Change

A1.7 The sensitivity of visual receptors depends on its location and context, the expectations and occupation or activity of the viewer and on the importance of the view (the latter is derived from the receptors popularity of frequency of use)

A1.8 The purpose of describing the baseline visual environment is to identify the most important sensitive visual receptors around the site which have views to or across the proposed development. A visual receptor is essentially any viewer who would be likely to be affected as a result of the proposed development. The sensitivity of any receptor is categorised in Table A.3 below.

Table A.3: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	INDICATIVE DEFINITION
Very high	Views from within internationally and nationally designated high quality landscapes (National Parks, AONB), scheduled monuments or Grade 1 listed buildings and their setting, where views from, or near to public rights of way/public roads (where the attractive nature of the environment is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the visit typically National Trails and Long Distant Footpaths.). Views from large numbers of residential properties in the same location (typically 100+)
High	Views from within high or medium high quality regionally designated landscapes (Areas of Great Landscape Value), parks or gardens listed in the National Gardens Register, Grade II* and II listed buildings and their settings. Views from well used public rights of way (where the attractive nature of the countryside is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the walk). Views from a numerous residential properties within a similar location (typically between 10-100)
Medium	Views from within medium quality non-designated but locally important landscapes, outdoor sports or recreation (where the landscape is not a factor in the enjoyment of the sport). Views from public rights of way used locally and passing through attractive rural landscapes. Views from or near to residential properties including Grade II listed buildings, or people within cars on local roads. Views from single or small groups of residential properties (less than ten)
Low	Views from within medium-low non-designated but locally important landscapes. Views from less well used public rights of way which pass through less attractive landscapes or townscapes and are not used for enjoyment of the scenery. Views from passenger trains, and from or near to motorways, major roads, or business premises.
Negligible	Views from within unattractive non-designated landscapes of local importance.

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Assessing the Magnitude of Visual Change

A1.9 The magnitude of change to the current (baseline) visual environment depends on a combination of factors, such as the size of change, the nature of change and the ability of the viewer to appreciate the change. Table A.4 provides definitions for the magnitude of both positive and negative impacts.

Table A.4: Magnitude of Visual Change

VISUAL IMPACT MAGNITUDE	DEFINITION
Very high	The proposed development will either cause complete loss of the view or a very large improvement in the view.
High (dominant)	The proposed development will either be visually dominant and intrusive and will disrupt views or will result in a significant improvement or deterioration of the view.
Medium (prominent)	The proposed development will be visually prominent within the view and will result in either a noticeable improvement or deterioration of the view.
Low (present)	The proposed development will either cause barely adverse or barely positive change within the view.
Negligible/No Change	The proposed development will cause no actual change or no discernible change within the view.

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Assessment of Significance

A1.10 The significance of impacts is assessed using the appropriate national and international quality standards and professional judgement. For clarity and transparency, criteria have been used to attribute levels of significance. Broadly, the significance is a function of the magnitude of the impact and the number and sensitivity of receptors. The reversibility and duration of the effect are also important considerations.

A1.11 For each assessment factor the sensitivity of the effect is combined with magnitude to give an overall score for the significance of the impact as set out in Table A.5

Table A.5: Table used to determine the significance of either landscape or visual effects

		SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTOR FEATURES				
MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT		**Very High**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**
	Very High	Major	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

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