effects would diminish over time with the growth of new boundary hedgerows.

6.4.11 **Viewpoint 6** is from Cockbourne Fen Dike, a local minor road, taken near to Clark's Hill Farm. Views of the Site are over the South Holland Main Drain, with the horizon and skyline being formed by treelines and vegetation to the south of the viewpoint punctuated by large pylons. Views of the Proposed Development would be restricted to a narrow horizontal line of ground mounted solar panels. The panels would be largely screened by the intervening mound along the South Holland Main Darin and would not break the skyline. The magnitude of effect is considered to be Small for Low sensitivity local road users and of a non-significant Minor level. The effects would continue to diminish over time as new Site boundary hedgerows develop.

6.5 EFFECTS ON LONG RANGE VIEWS

6.5.1 The most significant views were considered to be those within close and medium range of the Site as described above. With increasing distance to the Site and due to the flatness of the landform, interlying buildings and any vegetation present mean that the Proposed Development is of decreasing visibility and of a non-significant level of visual effect.

6.6 EFFECTS ON VIEWS FROM PRIVATE DWELLINGS

6.6.1 A detailed residential assessment was not possible without owner consent; however assessment from public vantage points indicates some views of the Proposed Development from private dwellings may be achieved and a conservative approach has been adopted for the assessment of any likely effects. It has also not been possible to assess each individual property with potential views and therefore representative properties are selected for the assessment of potential effects.

6.6.2 From the northern edge of Sutton St James, a number of properties west of the village hall may have relatively unrestricted rear views northwards toward the Proposed Development similar to the views illustrated in **Viewpoint 2**. 108 and 106 Chapel Gate are bungalows which do not appear to have extensive planting to the rear. Other two storey properties would also have views towards the proposals. Views would consist of the solar panels at the southern boundary, which would form a narrow horizontal strip of development across the horizon line. As a worst case scenario, unrestricted views in Year 1 from ground floor windows could result in a Large magnitude of effect to potentially High sensitivity visual receptors (assumed to be main living space). The effects could be of a Major and Significant level at Year 1. The effects would diminish with time as new boundary hedgerows surrounding the Site mature, further screening and filtering views. The growth of mitigation would reduce the magnitude to a Small level or less resulting in a Moderate effect (non-Significant) for views from ground level. The new hedgerows would be maintained to at least the same height as the solar panels, thereby providing an effective screen for views from ground floor level.

6.6.3 Views from first floor windows (Medium sensitivity) would be subject to an initial Large magnitude of change and resulting in a Major/Moderate and borderline Significant effect. With the growth of new boundary hedgerows the visibility of the development would diminish over time, with a Medium magnitude of change and a non-significant Moderate effect.

6.6.4 Views from the western edge of Sutton St James and east of the village hall, generally have views

from ground level screened and filtered by interlying hedgerows/treelines and buildings where applicable. First floor views over interlying vegetation, where breaks allow are anticipated to perceive an initial Large magnitude of change and a Major/Moderate and borderline significant level, which would diminish to a non-Significant level as new Site boundary hedgerows mature.

6.6.5 Views from properties on the Southern edge of Sutton St James are generally screened, filtered and restricted by interlying buildings and vegetation such that the magnitude of effect would be Medium at worst, at Year 1, reducing to a Small level with the growth of new boundary hedgerows, at which point the significance of effect would be Moderate at worst from ground level views and Moderate/Minor from first floor view (where views are available).

6.6.6 **Viewpoint 3** is representative of views available from properties looking west towards the Site, from along Jarvis's Gate. Relatively open views are predicted from the rear of property number 51 (adjacent to the viewpoint). The visual effects would be similar in nature as described above for the viewpoint. The magnitude of effects would be Large for High sensitivity ground floor views and Medium sensitivity first floor views at Year 1. Effects would be of a Major and significant level from ground floor views and Major/Moderate level from first floor views at Year 1. These effects would diminish with time as new Site boundary vegetation grows, such that the magnitude of change would decrease to a Small level from ground level and Medium, at worst, from first floor windows. The significance of effect would be Moderate and non-Significant.

6.6.7 The above assessment is also applicable for other properties along Jarvis's Gate with some properties have less significant views due to existing interlying boundary vegetation and the screening effects from any farm buildings or other out-buildings. Residents further north along Jarvis's Gate are also likely to perceive less discernible effects with the Proposed Development set against the treeline back drop. Other properties such as no's. 1 – 4 off Horsemoor Drove only have very oblique views, filtered through interlying boundary coniferous vegetation. The effects are not anticipated to be beyond a Moderate level and non-significant level from these properties in accordance with the assessment above.

6.6.8 Properties on the northeastern edge of Sutton St James (along Jarvis's Gate), would have views that become increasingly oblique and are substantially more restricted by interlying hedgerow vegetation, such that the level of significance is predicted to be lower for properties south of 35 and 38 Jarvis's Gate.

6.6.9 Dwellings further east of Jarvis's Gate (e.g. Holland House) have views obscured by interlying buildings. The Bungalow (on the B1039), would have oblique ground floor views towards the Site with the effects considered to be of a Medium magnitude for High sensitivity views. The effects would be of Major/Moderate and borderline Significant level in Year 1, diminishing to a non-Significant level in the medium term as hedgerows around the Site mature.

6.6.10 Very oblique or gable end views from Home Field and Sunnyholme (northeast of the South Holland Main Drain) would potentially be achieved, filtered by vegetation in close proximity to the properties. As a worst case, Small magnitude views from ground level (High sensitivity) would be of a Moderate and non-Significant level of effect.

6.6.11 Views from ground level at Red House (a Listed Building) would be screened by interlying vegetation and buildings. Filtered, partially screened views from first floor windows of northern

parts of the Site may be achieved, which would be of a Small magnitude to Medium sensitivity users. The effects would be of a Moderate/Minor and non-significant level at worst, which would diminish further over time as new hedgerow planting matures.

6.6.12 Horsemoor House to the west of the Site would have views from ground level obscured by interlying vegetation and very filtered at worst during winter. Glimpsed first floor views over interlying vegetation where available would be of a Large magnitude of effect, at worst, for Medium sensitivity views. The effects would be of a Major/Moderate and borderline significant level at Year 1. These effects would diminish in the medium term, to a non-significant level as new boundary vegetation matures. Any dwellings west of Horsemoor House would have the majority of the Site obscured by interlying vegetation and buildings such that any views would not be significant (for properties along Fisher's Gate including no's 103 and 102, Ash Grove, Bridge House Farm and Nealwood).

6.6.13 **Viewpoint 6** is also representative of views from the dwelling at Clark's Hill Farm. The effects on the view would be similar as described previously for the individual viewpoint. These effects would be experienced from south facing, front ground floor and first floor windows. The magnitude of effects would be Small for High sensitivity ground floor views and Medium sensitivity first floor views at Year 1. Effects would be of a Moderate and non-significant level from ground floor views and Moderate/Minor, non-significant level from first floor views at Year 1. These effects would diminish with time as new Site boundary vegetation matures; such that the magnitude of effect would continue to decrease. This assessment holds true for other dwellings along Cockbourne Fen Dike.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1.1 The review of published landscape character assessments has found some consistency in their description of the landscape with that in which the Site lies. They describe a flat, low-lying and large scale agricultural landscape with primarily, open arable farmland and scattered settlements. Expansive views are afforded of distant horizons, with woodland not a prominent feature. Views take in large skies that are increasingly being punctuated by large scale pylons and wind turbines.

7.1.2 The site and local landscape comprises large scale arable fields with no prominent landscape features, delineated by characteristic drains. It has been evident that, from an early stage in the assessment, the site can provide an opportunity to enhance these linear corridors with native boundary hedgerow vegetation.

7.1.3 There are expansive views across the Site afforded from the locality but due to the flat landform there is little depth of view into the Site such that public views of the Proposed Development would be predominantly restricted to boundary elements. Primary visibility has been assessed to be restricted to close range views, to the north, east, south and west from minor roads and some local public rights of way. Apart from several scattered dwellings and some properties within Sutton St James, other receptors in the locality and further afield are generally well screened and/or filtered by interlying vegetation and given the flat landform across the area, the Site is not considered highly sensitive to a low level solar farm development of the type proposed.

7.1.4 The objectives of the mitigation are to reinforce the landscape features within the site such that they better relate with the wider character and to address any potentially adverse impacts on landscape character or visual amenity. The boundary of the Site would be planted with native hedgerows to reinforce the rectilinear nature of the fields and the prevalent drain lines. Once established, the hedgerow would be brought into regular agricultural management and maintained to a height of c.2.5m (i.e. at least as high as the ground mounted solar panels).

7.1.5 Overall, the proposed scheme would only result in borderline Significant effects upon the existing landscape character at a Site level and would result in some enhancements to landscape fabric, through the establishment of boundary hedgerows. A limited number of visual receptors in the locality, including local rights of way users and private views from residential properties would experience a change resulting in Significant effects upon visual amenity at Year 1; however these effects would reduce over time to a non-Significant level with the growth of the boundary hedgerow planting proposed and residual visual effects are not predicted to be Significant. In conclusion it is therefore assessed that the landscape in the vicinity of the site and surrounding area has the capacity to accommodate the scale of development proposed with only very localised Significant landscape and visual effects.

7.2 COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

7.2.1 The statutory development plan policies which apply to the Site consist of the saved policies of the South Holland Local Plan (South Holland District Council, 2006).

7.2.2 With regard to **Policy SG1**: General Sustainable Development, it is not considered that the

Proposed Development would lead to visual effects on a level that would materially affect a resident's quality of life. In addition, characteristic elements of the landscape including the drain network would be retained and the development would be enclosed by new hedgerow vegetation.

7.2.3 **Policy SG4**: Development in the Countryside states that planning permission would not be granted where there would be unacceptable impacts upon the landscape character (individually or cumulatively). There are no other solar farms with intervisibility with the Proposed Development. This appraisal indicates that there no unacceptable impacts on landscape character and a level of enhancement to landscape fabric would be achieved by new hedgerow planting around the Site. The low lying nature of the ground mounted solar panels would have a localised impact on views in close proximity to the Site. This contrasts to the punctuated skyline effects brought about by the substantially larger pylons and wind turbines in the area.

7.2.4 With regard to **Policy SG14:** covering Design and Layout of New Development it is assessed that the development would respect the setting of Sutton St James, with mitigation incorporated through new hedgerow planting that would minimise visual impacts.

7.2.5 With reference to **Policy SG18:** Landscaping of New Development, positive landscape improvement would be secured through the 2.2km of new native boundary hedgerows which also have the potential to improve wildlife corridors along the drain lines.

7.2.6 With regard **to Policy EC4**: Farm Diversification Including Re-use of Redundant Rural Buildings, this appraisal has shown that it is not anticipated that there would be unacceptable effects from the proposals on local residents and the proposals are compatible with adjacent land-uses.

7.2.7 In conjunction with the publish landscape character information for the area and Crestwood's own site character assessment, this LVA has taken account of the pattern of field boundaries, drains and other landscape features and determined how the scheme can be implemented without substantial harm to this character.

7.2.8 Landscape and Visual effects resulting from solar developments are fully reversible. If the decision is taken to remove the panels at the end of their anticipated operational life of 25 years, the panels would be dismantled, removed and the site returned to full agricultural use.

REFERENCES:

- Countryside Commission & SNH, 2002. *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland.* s.l.:s.n.
- Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012. *National Planning Policy Framework.* s.l.:s.n.
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- Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013. *Guidelines for Landscaoe and Visual Impact Assessment.* Third Addition ed. s.l.:Routledge.
- Lincolnshire County Council, 2011. *The Historic Landscape Characterisation Project for Lincolnshire.* s.l.:s.n.
- Natural England (East Midlands Region), 2010. *East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment.* s.l.:s.n.
- Natural England, 2013. *National Character Area Profile: 46. The Fens.* s.l.:s.n.
- South Holland District Council, 2006. *Local Plan.* s.l.:s.n.
- The Landscape Institute, 2011. *Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment. Advice note 01/11.* London : s.n.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Development Layout Plan

Appendix 2: Glossary

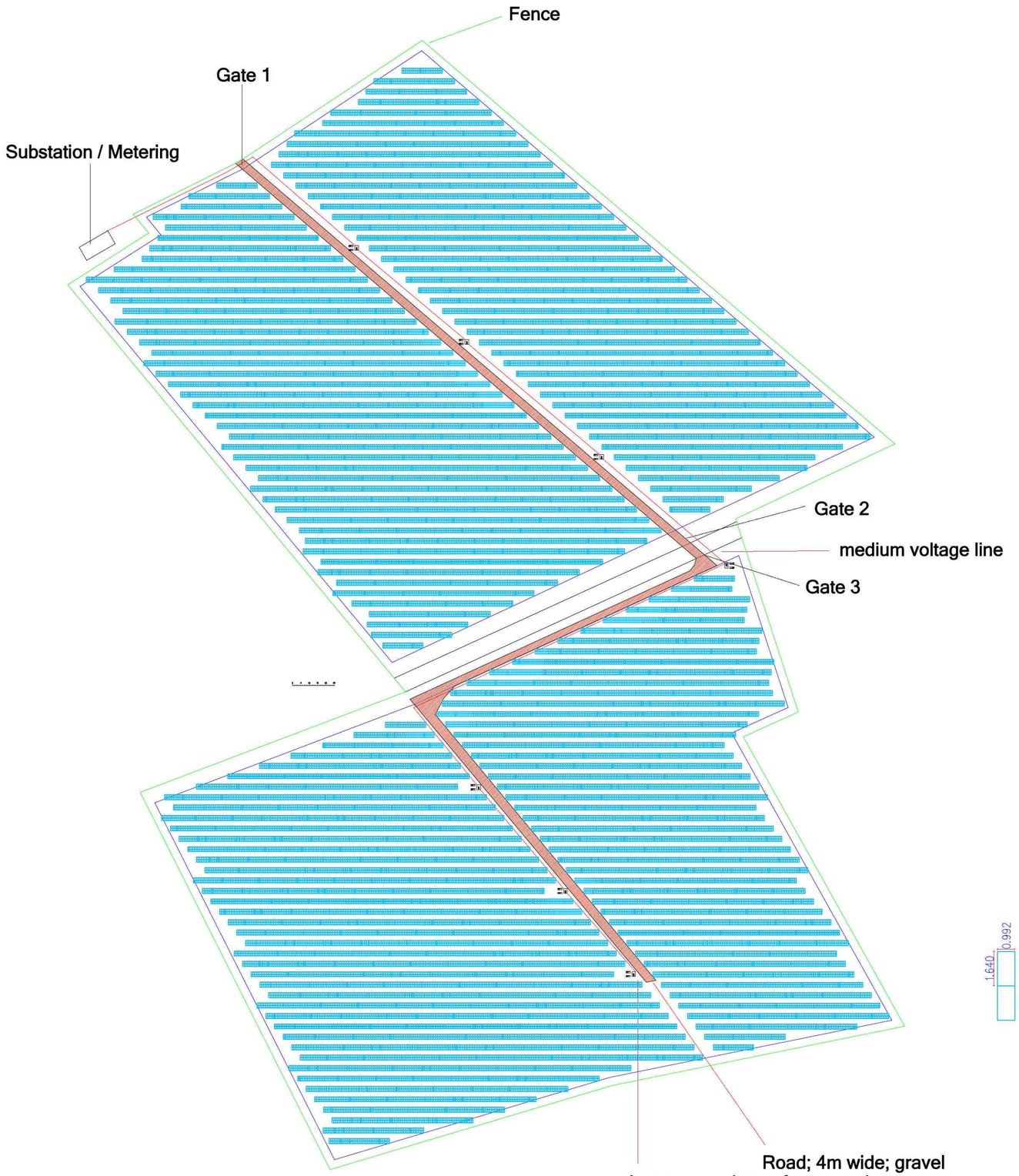
Appendix 3: Landscape and Visual Methodology

Appendix 4: National Landscape Character Assessment extracts

Appendix 5: Local Landscape Character Assessment extracts

APPENDIX 1. DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT PLAN

Grange Farm

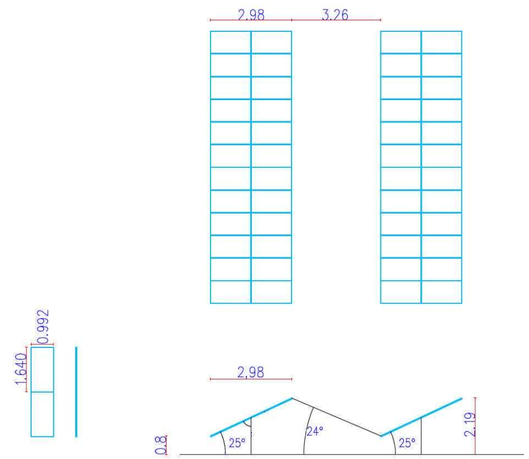




Hight of fence: 2,10m



Increased position of inverters and transformerstation because of flooding
Maximum hight: 3m



highest sun elevation 21.12. : 14.5°
N52.75° E0.06°

Distance to fence: 5m

Photovoltaic power plant specifications

. PV modules: Phono Solar - 240Wp 52128 pcs.

. PV generator capacity: 12,51MWp

. Mounting system: Ideematec safeFix Steel

. Solar inverter: SMA Sunny Central

. Grid connection:

Revision	Name	Date	Description
3			
2			
1			

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Neusling 9c / 94574 Wallerfing
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Project:
Grange Farm_UK
Drawing:
Draft Layout

Ideemasun_Muster_13-10-02.dwg

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale: 1:2000
2013/10/10	2013/10/16	XXX	
J.KAECHELE	F.Achatz	XXX	

APPENDIX 2. GLOSSARY

Ap 2.1.1 For the avoidance of confusion, the terms used in this report follow the definitions given below:

Landscape	An area, as perceived by people (in relation to past experiences, education etc.), whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. Landscape may comprise areas of rural land, urban fringe, urban land (townscape), coastal land, the sea (seascape) etc.
Landscape Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g. landform, roads, hedges, woods).
Landscape Feature	A prominent eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop or church spire).
Landscape Characteristics	Combinations of elements and experiential characteristics (e.g. noise, smell) that make a particular contribution to a Landscape Character Type.
Landscape Scene	The landscape characteristics discernible from a given viewpoint/location. The visual aspects of this can be illustrated in a static two-dimensional manner in photographs to represent a sample **view** of the landscape scene.
Landscape Character	The distinct recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape and how people perceive this, creating a particular sense of place.
Landscape Character Types	**LCT**s refer to multiple areas of the same character.
Landscape Character Areas	**LCA**s refer to specific geographical locations of a particular character type. These can be described and categorised at different scales depending on criteria used.
Landscape Value	The desirability of landscape characteristics (including scenic beauty, tranquillity, wildness, cultural associations, conservation interests etc.) and the acceptability of their loss to different stakeholders (i.e. valued for different reasons by different people and on different scales, e.g. local, national).
Landscape Condition	The strength of expression of landscape character and intactness of constituent characteristic elements from visual, functional, ecological and cultural perspectives. This is not the same as Scenic Beauty.
Landscape Capacity	The threshold at which change to the landscape resource results in significant change to its landscape character. This is directly related to landscape sensitivity.
Landscape Sensitivity	The level of stability, robustness and resilience of the landscape elements present and their ability to be replicated based on their quality, condition and value.
Landscape Character Sensitivity	The landscape value of the landscape character and the degree to which the *combination* of landscape characteristics (including landscape structure and quality) present can resist or recover from change or be replicated.
Landscape Receptor	Landscape element, characteristic or character that would potentially receive/experience an effect.
Visual Receptor	Individuals, special interest groups, a community or population that would potentially experience an effect on their view.