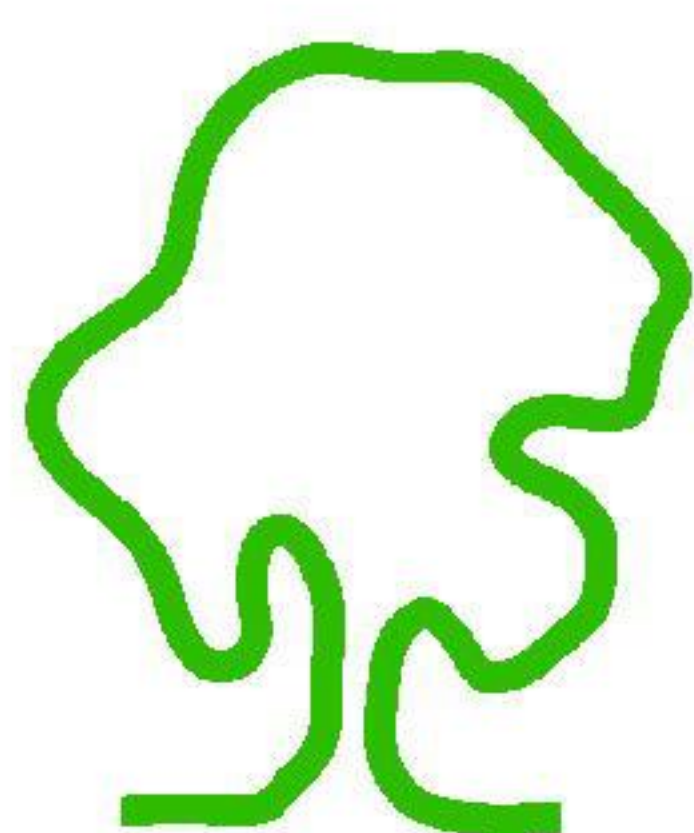


EMMETT EDWARDS

LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, RH17 5AA

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

July 2025



eas ltd

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

REPORT DATA SHEET

Requirement	Data
Report Reference	820/GB/EEwards/LowerLainesFarm/PEA
Date	July 2025
Client	Mr Emmett Edwards
Report type	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Purpose	Submission to Planning
Revisions	N/A
Prepared by	Lucy Monday BSc (Hons), ACIEEM
Approved by	Eur Ing Malcolm McKemey BSc (Hons), CEng, CEnv, MICE, MIEAust, MCIWEM, MIEnvSc

EMMETT EDWARDS

LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, RH17 5AA

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

July 2025

CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Background**
- 1.2 Aim of the Report**
- 1.3 Legislation**
- 1.4 Assessment Method**

2. CONSULTATION AND BASELINE DATA SEARCH

- 2.1 Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Data Search**
- 2.2 Mid Sussex District Council**
- 2.3 Local Geology and Soil Type**

3. SITE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Habitat Assessment**
- 3.2 Designated Sites and Priority Habitats**
- 3.3 Protected and Controlled Species**
 - 3.3.1 Trees and Hedgerows*
 - 3.3.2 Plants*
 - 3.3.3 Invertebrates*
 - 3.3.4 Amphibians*
 - 3.3.5 Reptiles*
 - 3.3.6 Birds*
 - 3.3.7 Bats*
 - 3.3.8 Badgers*
 - 3.3.9 Common/Hazel Dormice*
 - 3.3.10 Other Protected and Notable Species*
 - 3.3.11 Non-native Invasive Species*

4. MITIGATION

- 4.1 Grassland Habitat**
- 4.2 Amphibians and Reptiles**
- 4.3 Birds**
- 4.4 Bats**
- 4.5 General Recommendations**
- 4.6 Non-native Invasive Species**
- 4.7 Other Protected and Notable Species**

5. ENHANCEMENT

6. CONCLUSIONS

APPENDIX A

Site Location and Existing Site Plans

APPENDIX B

Proposed Site Plans

APPENDIX C

Site Photographs

APPENDIX D

SxBRC Record Data Summary

EMMETT EDWARDS

LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, WEST SUSSEX, RH17 5AA

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

July 2025

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd has been appointed to prepare a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in relation to the proposed installation of 40No. solar PV panels and associated infrastructure on land at Lower Laines Farm in Cuckfield, West Sussex.

It is proposed to install the PV panels, which will be mounted on frames above the ground, within the northeast corner of a plot of land located to the west of the farmyard buildings, together with associated below ground level cabling and battery storage within an existing building within the yard area to the east.

The aim of this report is to collate preliminary, baseline information on the conservation and ecological status of the site in terms of habitats and species within the framework of current environmental legislation and provide recommendations in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the site, where appropriate.

The assessment comprised consultation with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre to obtain records of protected, rare and notable habitats and species within 1 km of the site, consultation with Mid Sussex District Council regarding Tree Preservation Orders for trees within and adjacent to the site, and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) undertaken on 3 July 2025 to identify habitats and features of ecological value and the site's likely potential to support protected, rare and other notable species.

Consultation with Mid Sussex District Council has confirmed that there are no trees within or adjacent to the site which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders and the site does not lie within a conservation area. Assessment of the site, along with a review of consultation data provided by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, confirmed that the site does not lie within or immediately adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

The PV panels are to be mounted on frames within an area of existing modified grassland. A patch of transplanted garden planting is also located within the proposed installation site. This will be removed and the area restored to grassland. The cables will be run below ground level from the grassland along an existing access track to an existing building which will be utilised to house the batteries and provide a vehicle charging point. There will be no significant alterations to the building from an ecological perspective.

The proposed installation of the PV panels, cabling, batteries and charging point are considered unlikely to have any significant ecological impact on the site. However, basic protection and enhancement measures are still recommended in order to deliver biodiversity net gain and avoid potential harm to species including reptiles and amphibians during installation works.

EMMETT EDWARDS

LOWER LAINES FARM, CUCKFIELD, WEST SUSSEX, RH17 5AA

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

June 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The following report, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Limited, is a preliminary assessment of the baseline status of the ecology of land at Lower Laines Farm in Cuckfield, West Sussex.

The site (within the redline boundary) comprises the corner of a larger plot of land which extends south and west, located to the west of Lower Laines Farm buildings, together with the proposed access route and buildings which surround the proposed solar PV battery storage site. The Ordnance Survey map reference (centred on the proposed solar panel location) is TQ 30169 24097. See Appendix A for the site location and existing site plans.

It is proposed to install 40No. solar PV panels mounted on frames above the ground within the northeast corner of a plot of improved grassland, previously used as a mixed crop field. Below ground level cables will be installed to the proposed battery storage site along the existing access track. The batteries will be housed in an existing barn within the yard, and a charging point will be installed on the outer wall. See Appendix B for the proposed site plans.

1.2 Aim of the Report

The aim of the report is to collate preliminary, baseline information on the conservation and ecological status of the site in terms of habitats and species, within the framework of current environmental legislation.

The report also evaluates the potential of the site to support protected species, in particular for:

- Animals and plants listed under Schedules 1 and 5, and Schedule 8, respectively, of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) as amended, and those European protected species listed under Schedules 2 and 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- Plants and animals with Red Data Book¹ or Notable² status.

¹ The World Conservation Union Red List of threatened species provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on taxa (species or group of related species) evaluated to determine their relative risk of extinction.

² Notable (or Nationally Scarce) species occur in 16 – 100 10 km squares in Britain.

³ Species derived from Section 41 list of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 + the hen harrier.

- Plants, animals and habitats identified as Priority Species / Habitats or Species / Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation in England (formerly UK Biodiversity Action Plan)³.

Where the site includes habitats and/or features of ecological value and/or has potential for use by protected species, an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposal is made, together with recommendations for any further surveying, mitigation and/or enhancement as considered appropriate.

1.3 Legislation

The legislation relevant to this study is:

- i. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (known as the “Bern Convention”) and the Birds Directive 2009.
- ii. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, which strengthens the legal protection for threatened species.
- iii. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, which through Section 41 provides a list of habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity conservation (Priority Habitats and Species) in England.
- iv. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, which transposed the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.
- v. Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which safeguards both the animals and their setts.
- vi. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (made under section 97 of The Environment Act 1995), which make provisions for the protection of important hedgerows.
- vii. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which makes requirements for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system.

1.4 Assessment Method

This assessment has been prepared generally in accordance with the CIEEM EcIA guidelines, as applicable, as recognised by the British Standard on Biodiversity BS42020:2013.

The assessment was undertaken in two stages:

- a) Consultation: comprising data searches by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) and Mid Sussex District Council.
- b) Preliminary ecological appraisal (walkover survey) carried out on 3 July 2025 to:

- Assess the baseline status of the site.
- Identify its potential for use by species of flora and fauna protected or controlled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and associated European legislation.
- Identify notable habitats and features of interest that should or could be retained and/or enhanced as part of the proposed development.

2. CONSULTATION AND BASELINE DATA SEARCH

2.1 Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Data Search

2.1.1 Data obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) provided information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within the search area. The search was conducted for a 1 km radius surrounding the Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ 30169 24097. The search area was selected based on the scale and likely impacts of the proposed development.

2.1.2 The statutory and non-statutory designated sites identified by SxBRC within 1 km of the site are set out in section 3.2 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these sites. Mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

2.1.3 Records of protected and rare species within 1 km of the site have been provided by SxBRC. These records are discussed under the protected species headings in Section 3.3 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these species. Further surveying and/or mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

2.2 Mid Sussex District Council

2.2.1 Mid Sussex District Council's Tree Preservation (TPO) and conservation area mapping was used to identify TPO's and conservation areas within the vicinity of the site on 17 June 2025. There are no trees protected by a TPO within or adjacent to the site and the site does not lie within a conservation area. The Cuckfield conservation area covers land to the north of Newbury Lane, north of the site.

2.3 Local Geology and Soil Type

2.3.1 Soil type will impact factors including site drainage, nutrient availability and pH, this together with other factors such as site topography, as well as anthropogenic activity will impact site flora and fauna.

2.3.2 According to the British Geological Survey (available online), the site lies on Cuckfield Stone Bed (sandstone, calcareous), with Lower Grinstead Clay (mudstone) to the east.

3. SITE ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) was carried out on 3 July 2025. The following is based on the findings of that assessment, together with a review of information provided by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) and Mid Sussex District Council. Photographs taken during the site survey are provided in Appendix C.

3.1 Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The site is located within farmland to the south of Cuckfield. The proposed PV panel installation site includes the northeast corner of a small field in which we understand mixed crops were grown in the past. Cabling is to run south from the installation area to an existing access track, east along the access track to an existing barn where the batteries are to be housed. Access to the site is via a track which extends north towards Cuckfield. The wider plot within the ownership extends south to the A272 and west to the B2036.
- 3.1.2 The grassland, where it is proposed to install the PV panels and lay the first section of cabling is dominated by common herbaceous plants (white clover dominant) and few grass species (Yorkshire fog and annual meadow grass). Herbaceous planting recorded within the grassland during our site visit included white clover, silverweed, creeping thistle, creeping buttercup, broad-leaved dock, field bindweed, scarlet pimpernel, bristly oxtongue, common nettle, common field speedwell, bittercress, mayweed, selfheal and redshank, together with sharp rush. These species indicate high nutrient availability and damaged soil structure, which ties into the past use as a multi-crop field and later storage area.
- 3.1.3 Within the grassland is a small patch of transplanted garden planting including a phormium, privet, box, camelia and cotoneaster. This planting is to be removed as part of the installation.
- 3.1.4 The northern and eastern boundary of the field comprises a strip of uncut grassland with five small ornamental conifers and a wild plum along the northern boundary. Along the eastern boundary is an area of bramble which has overgrown what is likely to a small (dead) tree or tall post. This planting is to be retained as existing, and will not be impacted by the proposed installation.
- 3.1.5 No significant works are to be undertaken on the existing outbuilding / barn which is to house the batteries.

3.2 Designated Sites and Priority Habitats

Statutory and Non-statutory Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 The site lies to the east (outside) of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which extends up to the B2036. There are no other statutory sites within 1 km of the study site. There is one non-statutory site within 1 km of the site as identified (by SxBRC): This is the designated road verges along the Cuckfield Bypass to the south of the site. The proposed installation is not considered likely to

have any significant ecological impact on any statutory or non-statutory sites, associated habitats or species.

- 3.2.2 The site does not lie within the 7 km impact zone for Ashdown Forest. No further impact assessment is required in this case.

Priority Habitats

- 3.2.3 The site has been assessed for its potential to include or be part of (BAP) Priority Habitat as listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act).

- 3.2.4 Section 41 Habitats recorded within 1 km of the site include:

- Traditional orchard
- Wood-pasture and parkland
- Deciduous woodland
- Ancient woodland
- Ghyll woodland

- 3.2.5 The site includes an area of modified grassland, reinforce track and sealed surface. There are no section 41 habitats within or adjacent to the site.

3.3 Protected and Controlled Species

3.3.1 *Trees and Hedgerows*

There are no trees or hedgerows within the installation area which are considered likely to be impacted by the proposed installation. There are five small conifers and a wild plum (*prunus sp*) located on the northern field margin, however, these small trees are unlikely to be impacted by the installation within the field.

No further surveying or protection measures are recommended in relation to trees or hedgerows in this case.

3.3.2 *Plants*

Planting within the site is limited to common herbaceous plants and grass species associated with nutrient rich and mechanically damaged soils, together with a patch of transplanted garden shrubs considered to be of low ecological value.

It is proposed to remove the garden planting and restore the area to grassland. The proposed installation is not considered likely to have a significant impact on the existing vegetation during installation, however, the installation will result in increased shading, which is likely to influence conditions on site, for the benefit of more shade tolerant species. This is not considered likely to result in the loss of any significant planting / species from the site.

No further botanical surveying or protection measures are recommended in this case.

3.3.3 *Invertebrates*

Large blue butterfly, Fisher's estuarine moth and lesser whirlpool ramshorn snail are protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Other protected invertebrates are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

There has been some invertebrate recording undertaken in the wider area. Species recorded include a number of Priority beetles, butterflies, moths and true flies.

The proposed installation is not considered likely to have any significant impact on habitat of high value to invertebrate species. The garden planting is to be removed and the grassland cut to permit access for the installation, however, the PV panels are to be mounted on frames above ground level, so the loss of grassland will be negligible. Planting within the grassland is likely to alter as a result of increased shading, however, this is unlikely to have a significant impact on invertebrates.

No further invertebrate surveying is recommended in this case.

3.3.4 *Amphibians*

Great crested newts (GCN) and natterjack toads are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), making them a European Protected Species. It is an offence (amongst other things) to: deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill an individual of the species; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Meaning that both the individual and its habitat are protected.

There are records of common toad, a Priority Species, palmate newt, smooth newt, common frog and Great Crested Newt within 1 km of the site. The majority of records are fairly old (1980's and 1990's). The most recent record is for a single Great Crested Newt recorded in March 2020, despite the presence of habitat considered likely to be suitable for use by amphibians within the area.

There are no ponds within or immediately adjacent to the site. The closest water features include a pond approximately 180 m southwest, a second pond some 235 m north, and a small watercourse some 330 m east. These features have not been assessed and may, or may not, be suitable for use by amphibians.

The site proposed installation area comprises disturbed grassland, an access track and sealed surface. The grassland appears to be subject to irregular cutting, the area presently not under cultivation or other use. The boundaries of the field, which are not cut, are considered more suitable habitat and may be used for foraging and navigation through the area, however, the boundary of the field is to remain as existing, unaffected by the proposed installation.

The installation area is considered to be of low but not negligible potential for amphibians. The proposed installation is not considered likely to result in the loss of any suitable amphibian habitat or block navigation between potential breeding

ponds or terrestrial habitats, however, there is the potential to cause harm to these species during installation should amphibians pass through the site. It is therefore recommended that precautionary protection measures are implemented. See section 4.2 below.

3.3.5 *Reptiles*

The more widespread reptiles; grass snake, slow-worm, viviparous lizard and adder, are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). It is an offence, amongst other things, to intentionally kill or injure any individual. The more restricted species; sand lizard and smooth snake, are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making them European Protected Species.

There are records of grass snake, slow-worm, viviparous lizard and adder within 1 km of the site. Grass snake appears to be the most frequently and recently recorded (in both 2019 and 2020).

The site is considered to be of low but not negligible potential for use by reptiles. The proposed installation is not considered likely to result in the loss of any suitable reptile habitat or block navigation between suitable habitat, however, there is the potential to cause harm to reptiles during installation should they enter the installation area during installation works. It is therefore recommended that precautionary protection measures are implemented. See section 4.2 below.

3.3.6 *Birds*

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by UK law. It is an offence to take, kill or injure any wild bird, or to take, damage or destroy any nest (whilst being built or in use) or egg of any wild bird under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In addition to this protection, those birds and their young listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) must not be disturbed at or near the nest. Part I birds are protected at all times and Part II during the closed season only.

The site is considered to be of generally low value to birds, with little nesting potential. The boundaries of the field include some more dense vegetation which could be used for foraging and nesting, however, this habitat is to remain as existing and will not be impacted by the proposed installation.

The proposed installation is considered unlikely to have any significant impact on birds or their habitat, providing the habitat is not permitted to improve (i.e. vegetation cover increase) prior to installation. See section 4.3 below. No further surveying is recommended in this case.

3.3.7 *Bats*

All species of bat are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and

Species Regulations 2017 (meaning all species of bat are both UK and European Protected Species).

It is illegal to:

- Kill, injure or capture (take) bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not).
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost.

Disturbance is unlawful where bats ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear/nurture their young, hibernate or migrate is impaired or where local distribution or abundance is significantly impacted. This may occur where actions impact their roosts, flight lines or foraging areas.

There are records of serotine, whiskered bat, common and soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat within 1 km of the site. Habitat within 1 km of the site comprising parkland, ancient, deciduous and ghyll woodland, areas of grasslands with treelines connecting to the woodlands, ponds and scattered old buildings, is considered to be of high value to bats.

The proposed installation area for the PV panels is considered to be of low-negligible value to bats. The buildings within the site, including the building in which the batteries are to be housed, have greater potential for use by bats, but are not to be altered in any way likely to impact bats.

No further bat surveying is recommended in this case.

3.3.8 *Badgers*

Badgers are protected in the UK under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 (as amended). It is an offence, amongst other things, to take, injure or kill a badger, or interfere with a badger sett (this includes intentionally or recklessly disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett). To avoid committing an offence a permit must be obtained to damage, destroy, obstruct or disturb a badger when it is occupying a badger sett.

No evidence of the presence of badgers was identified within the site during the site walkover assessment. The installation of mounted PV panels, cabling and batteries is not considered likely to have any significant impact on badgers.

No further recommendations are made in this case.

3.3.9 *Common/Hazel Dormice*

The common (or hazel) dormouse is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making common dormice a European Protected Species.

There are records of hazel dormice within 1 km of the site. It appears that surveying for hazel dormice was undertaken and confirmed presence on land to the north of

Cuckfield in 2007. There is suitable habitat present for dormice within land surrounding Cuckfield, however, land surrounding the site appears less suitable.

There is no significant potential for hazel dormice within the site, and the proposed installation is not considered likely to impact hazel dormice habitat.

No further recommendations are made in this case.

3.3.10 *Other Protected and Notable Species*

There are records of European hedgehog, a Priority Species, within 1 km of the site. The proposed installation is not considered likely to impact this species or its habitat.

3.3.11 *Non-native Invasive Species*

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) lists those non-native species that are established in the wild but which pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats. Schedule 9 aims to regulate further release of these species by making it a criminal offence to release them into the wild.

Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre has records of 17 plant and five animal Schedule 9 species within 1 km of the site.

No non-native invasive species were identified within the site during the site walkover assessment.

Standard protection measures should be implemented to prevent the transfer of non-native invasive species. See section 4 below.

4. **MITIGATION**

The preliminary ecological appraisal identified some features / habitats within the site that may potentially be used by protected species. The following recommendations are given in this case.

4.1 **Existing Planting**

The site includes a patch of transplanted garden planting which is considered to be of low ecological value and inappropriate planting within the wider habitat. It is recommended that the garden planting is removed from the site, and the area replanted (seeded) with an appropriate grass/wildflower mix.

The existing grassland is typical of nutrient rich soil which has been subject to mechanical damage. The proposed installation of PV panels on frame mounts is considered unlikely to significantly impact the existing planting, which will quickly recover back to its existing condition post installation. Action may be taken as part of the installation to enhance the grassland habitat.

The PV panels will result in some shading of the ground, this may inhibit the existing dominant herbaceous species. More shade tolerant species may be introduced to enhance the site ecologically. This may include species usually more suited to woodland habitat.

4.2 Amphibians and Reptiles

Precautionary protection measures should be implemented for amphibians and reptiles to avoid / minimise the risk of harm during installation of the PV panels and cabling.

Either, the installation should be undertaken between November to February, when amphibians and reptiles are unlikely to be using the installation area, or the vegetation within the proposed installation area should be cut to ground level and kept low leading up to and during the installation period. This will deter amphibians and reptiles from using the site during the installation works. Post installation, the vegetation may be permitted to regrow, which will restore the habitat for future use.

The risk level in this case is not deemed high enough to trigger the need to join the District Level licence offered by NatureSpace and Mid Sussex District Council. However, the installer should be made aware that this is an option, should they have concerns.

4.3 Birds

The potential for ground nesting birds within the proposed installation area is presently low, but may improve if the grassland is permitted to grow. It is therefore recommended that either, installation is scheduled outside of the bird nesting season, or the grassland is regularly cut during the period leading up to the installation period in order to avoid impact to ground nesting birds.

4.4 Bats

No works likely to impact the roof structure or roof void are to be undertaken on the buildings within the site.

4.5 General Recommendations

During the cable installation any excavations should be covered overnight, or a suitable means of escape provided for wildlife should any animals fall into the excavation.

Open excavations should be checked daily and any animal which may become trapped should be assisted.

4.6 Non-native Invasive Species

All non-native invasive species should be appropriately dealt with to restrict their spread into the wild.

Biological protection measures should be implemented when transferring soil and plant material. This includes transferring vehicles and machinery on and off site, the disposal of soils and importation of soils which could contain plant matter, and the importing of new planting as part of any landscaping scheme.

4.7 Other Protected and Notable Species

If any new evidence of protected species is discovered whilst site clearance and construction work is in progress, Natural England should be informed immediately and appropriate advice on how to deal with the situation should be sought from a qualified ecologist.

5. ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Planting

Habitat enhancement is to be delivered in accordance with the current Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations which require the delivery of 10% net gain. Please refer to the BNG report prepared in relation to the proposed installation.

It is recommended that the grassland habitat within the site is enhanced through on going management. The grassland should be cut or grazed to provide areas of varying sward length which may benefit invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and nesting birds.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The site (as existing) comprises the northeast corner of a small field which has been used for market garden (non-cereal) crops and more recently agricultural storage. The grassland has been identified as modified grassland, dominated by species common to nutrient rich soils which have been subject to mechanical damage and compaction. Within the proposed PV panel installation area there is also a small patch of transplanted garden planting, which is to be removed as part of the proposal. Cabling associated with the panels is to run south from the PV panels to an existing track, and east along the track to an existing outbuilding / barn which is to be utilised to house the batteries. There is to be no significant alteration to the barn as part of the proposal.
- 6.2 The proposed installation will cause a temporary disturbance to the grassland and cable route during installation, however, once installed there will be no significant habitat loss. The PV panels are to be mounted on frames above the grassland. This will result in additional shading of the grassland but, given the low ecological value of the grassland, this is not considered likely to have a significant ecological impact.
- 6.3 The site is generally considered to be of low ecological value and the proposed installation is considered to be low impact, however, there is a low level potential risk of harm to amphibians and reptiles, and possibly nesting birds, for which protection measures are recommended. Protection measures include timing works

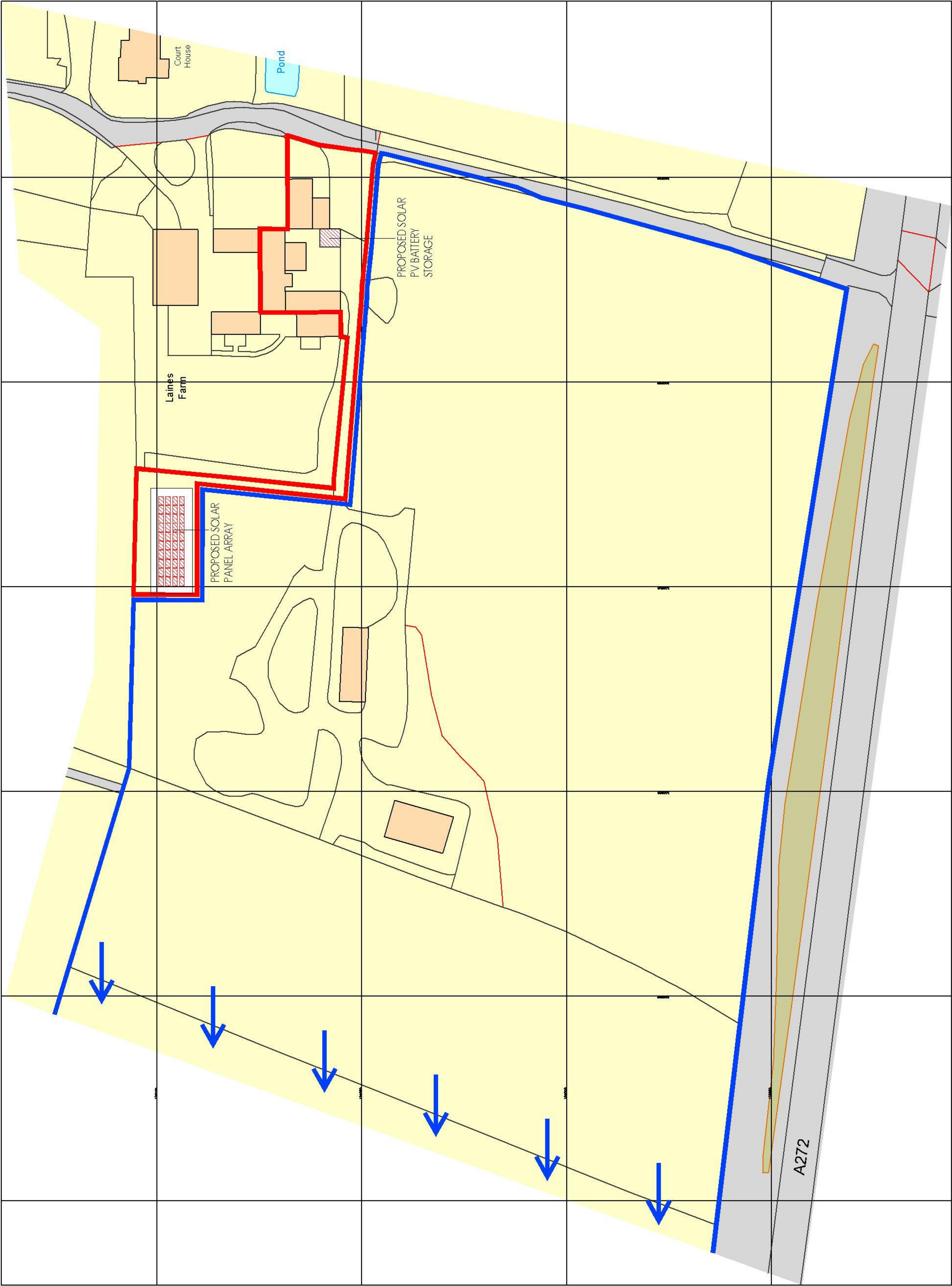
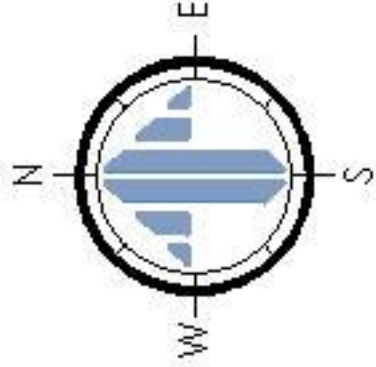
outside of the active/nesting season or maintaining the existing grassland with a short sward to discourage use of the grassland leading up to and during the installation works. Post installation, the grass length may be increased to restore and improve the habitat for wildlife.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

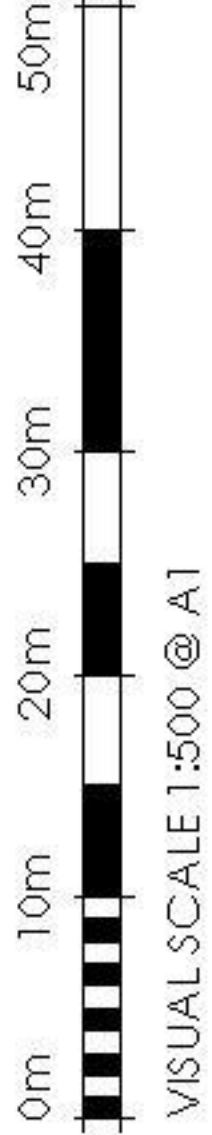
APPENDIX A
Site Location and Existing Site Plans

FOR
PRE-APPLICATION
PLANNING
PURPOSES ONLY

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



SITE BLOCK PLAN - AS PROPOSED
SCALE @ 1:500 ON AN A1 SHEET



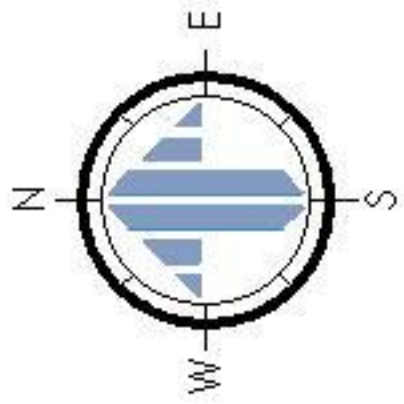
Ordnance Survey, (c) Crown Copyright 2025. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432

			*	*	*																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				
--	--	--	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

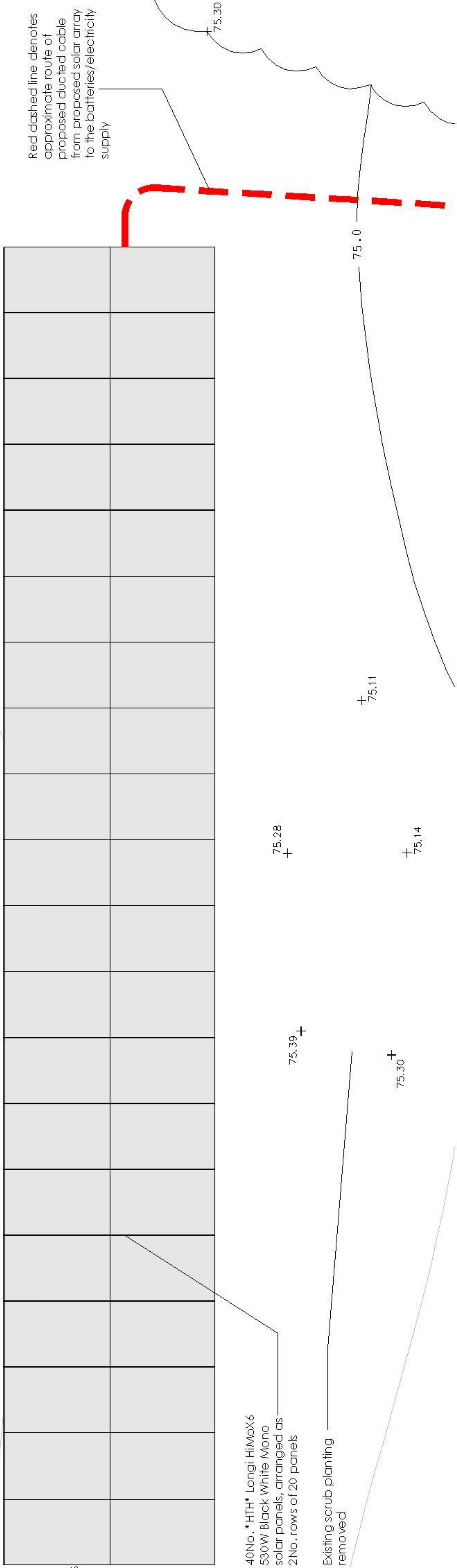
APPENDIX B
Proposed Site Plans

FOR PLANNING
PURPOSES ONLY

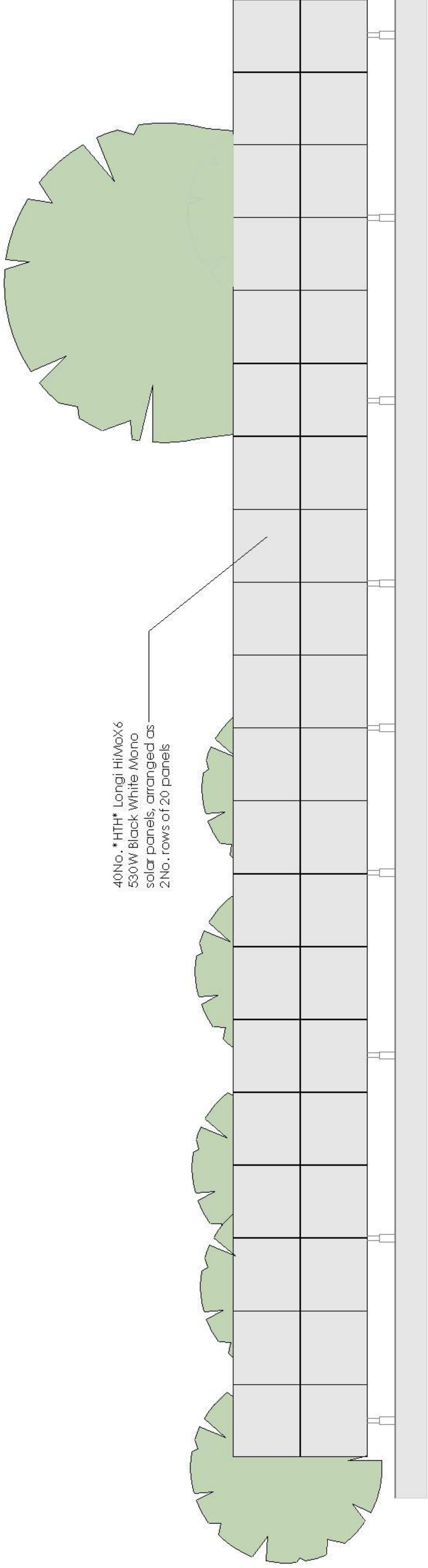
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



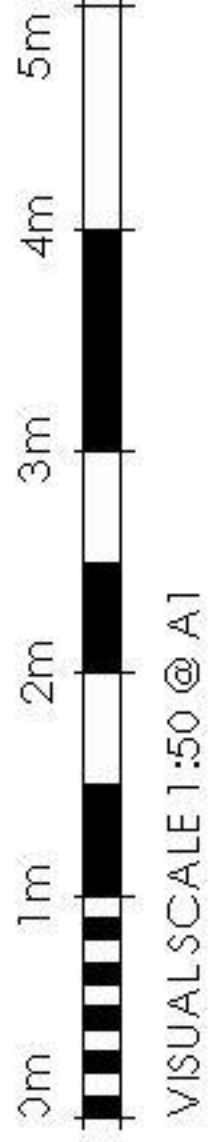
DRAFT



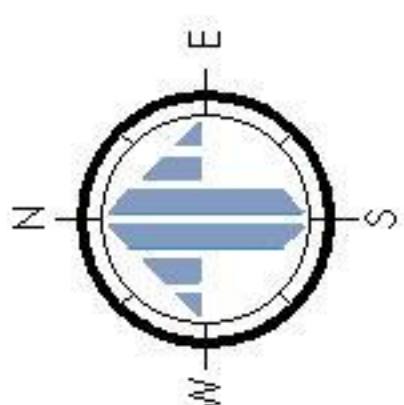
SOLAR PV ARRAY PLAN - AS PROPOSED
SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



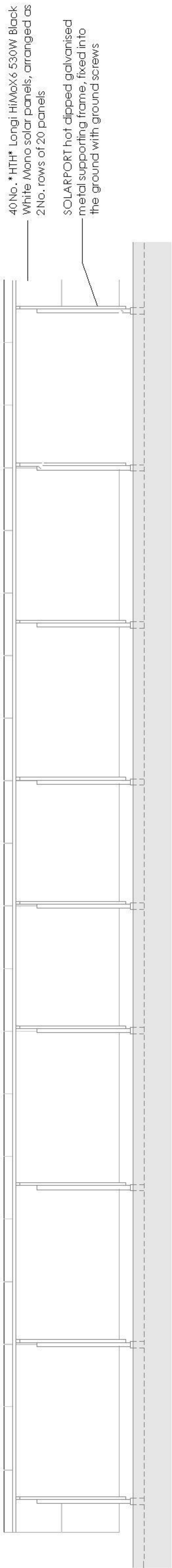
SOLAR PV ARRAY SOUTH ELEVATION - AS PROPOSED
SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



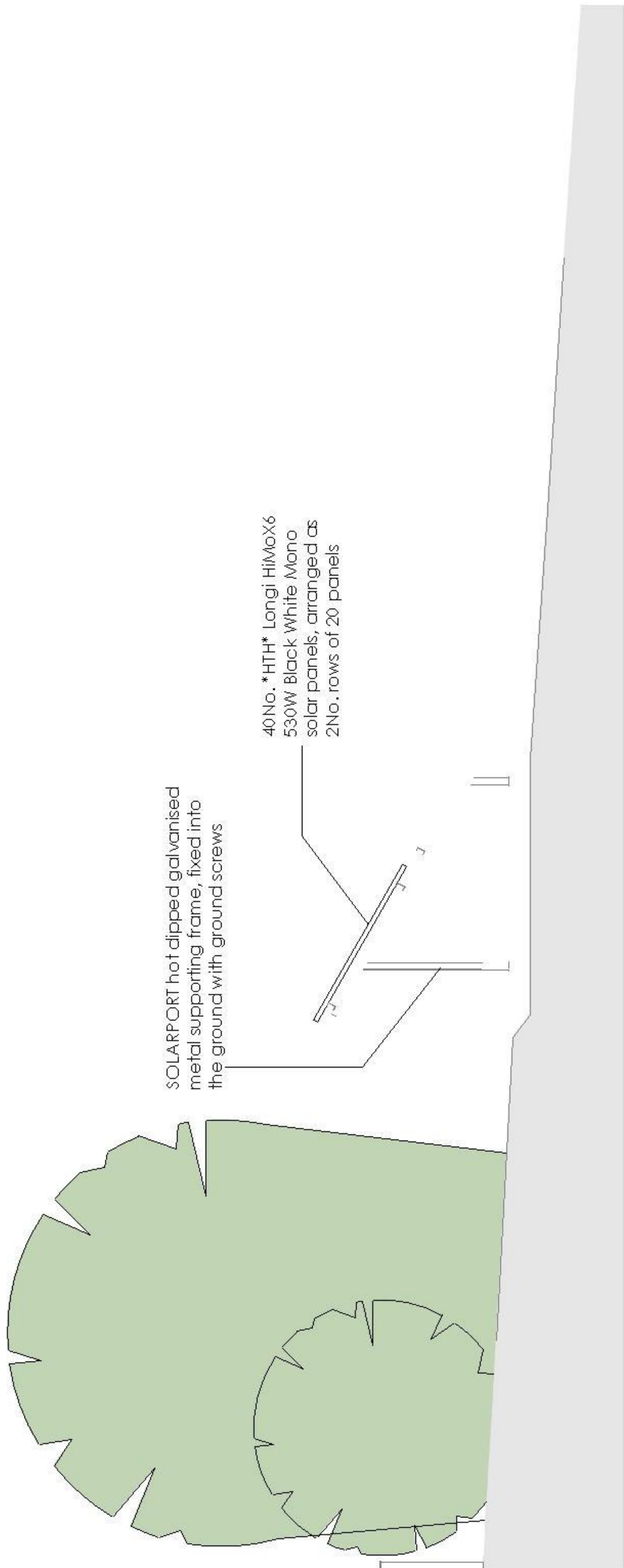
																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																					</
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	----



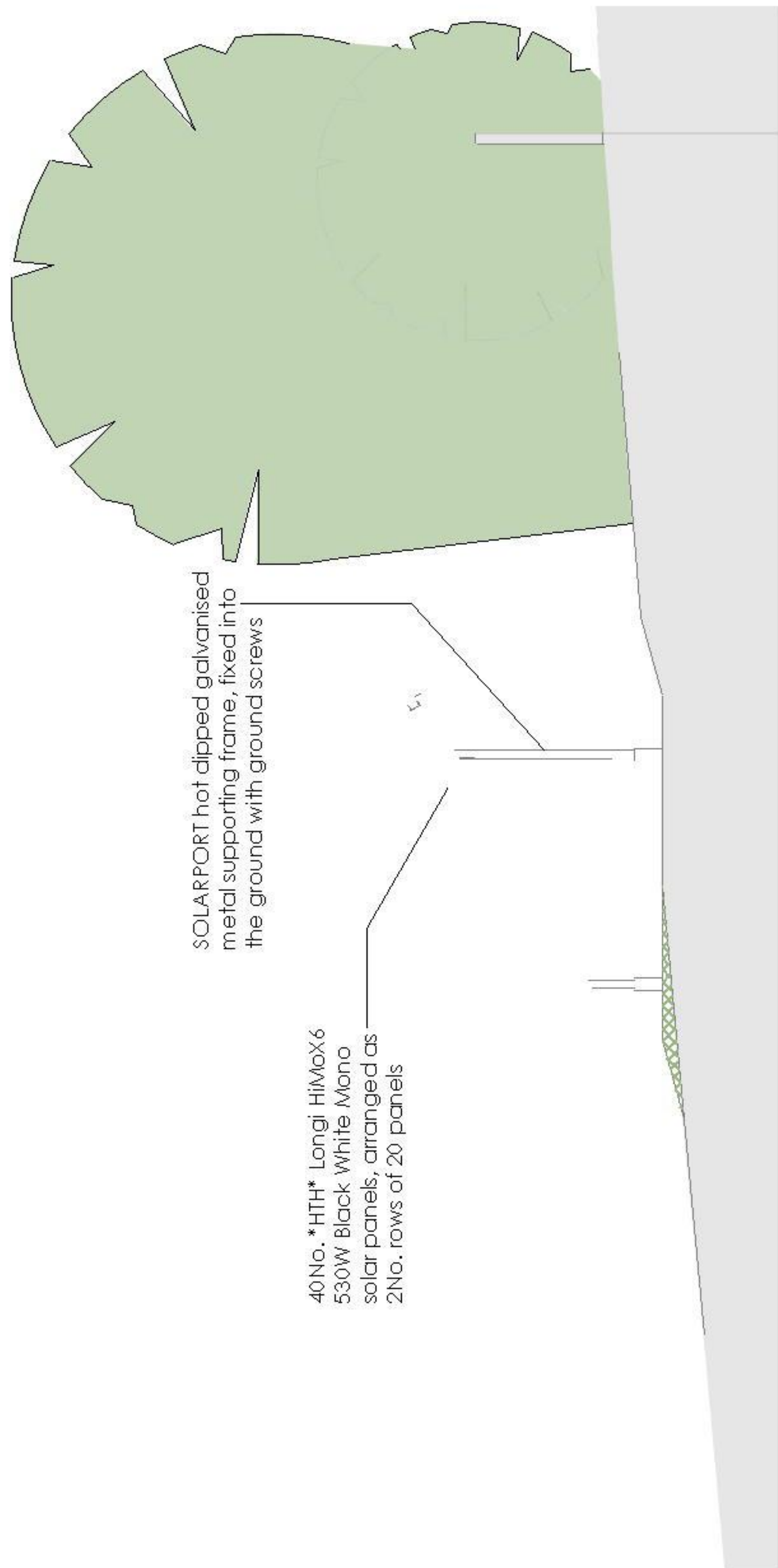
DRAFT



SOLAR PV ARRAY NORTH ELEVATION - AS PROPOSED
SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



SOLAR PV ARRAY NORTH ELEVATION - AS PROPOSED
SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET



SOLAR PV ARRAY NORTH ELEVATION - AS PROPOSED
SCALE @ 1:50 ON AN A1 SHEET

	*
	*
	*
	*
	*

PLANNING



2 Lucastes Mews, Paddockhall Road,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex, RH16 1HE
(01444) 452604
hh@gouldbaxter.co.uk
www.gouldbaxter.co.uk

NOTES:
DO NOT SCALE OFF THE DRAWING UNLESS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES.
CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE ANY WORK IS COMMENCED.
ALL GOODS, MATERIALS AND WORKMANSHIP MUST CONFORM WITH
CURRENT BUILDING REGULATION, BRITISH STANDARDS AND CODES OF
PRACTICE.

CLIENT.
Mr & Mrs D. Edwards

PROJECT:
Lower Laines Farm
Newbury Lane
Cuckfield, West Sussex
RH17 5AA

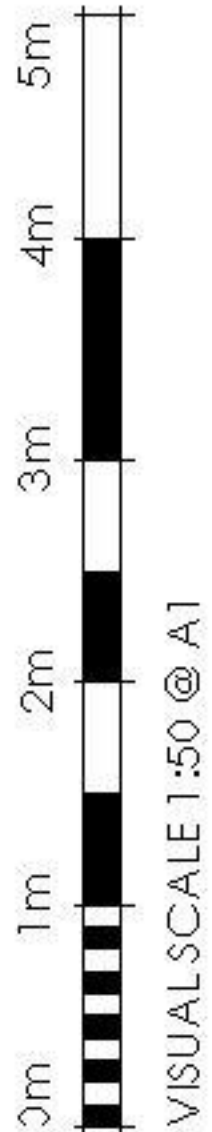
DRAWING.

Solar PV Elevations

As Proposed

DATE	SCALE AT AI	DRAWN BY	RH
02.07.2025	1:50	CHECKED BY	MC

JOB NO. GH877	DRAWING NO. D.PL.005	REV. *
------------------	-------------------------	-----------



APPENDIX C
Photographs



Photograph 1:

View looking north across the proposed PV installation area. The area of garden planting (to be removed), the five conifers (and two additional conifers to the west of the site) and the wild plum can be seen.



Photograph 2:

View towards the eastern boundary of the field and route of the proposed cables from the PV panels within the northeast corner of the field, south to the existing access track which extends east to the farm buildings including the outbuilding which is to house the batteries.

APPENDIX D
SxBRC Record Data Summary

Ecological Data Search SxBRC/25/251 - Summary Report

An ecological data search was carried out for land at Lower Laines Farm, Cuckfield on behalf of Lucy Monday (EAS Ltd) on 30/06/2025.

The following datasets were consulted for this report:

	Requested	Radius/buffer size
Designated sites, habitats & ownership maps	Yes	1km
Protected, designated and invasive species	Yes	1km

Summary of results

Sites and habitats

Statutory sites	1 AONB
Non-statutory sites	1 Designated Road Verge
Section 41 habitats	2 habitats
Ancient and/or ghyll woodland	Present

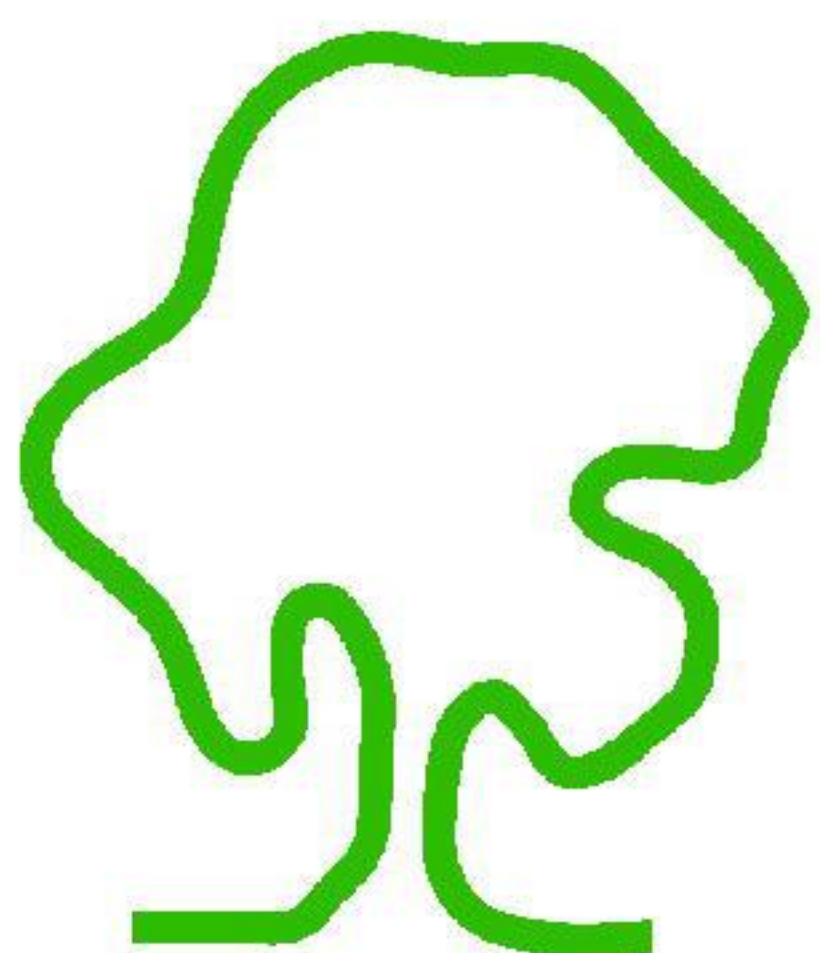
Protected and designated species

International designations	18 species	50 records
National designations	63 species	556 records
Other designations	130 species	1,191 records
Total	140 species	1,232 records
Invasive non-native	23 species	55 records

The report is compiled using data held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at the time of the request. SxBRC does not hold comprehensive species data for all areas. Even where data are held, a lack of records for a species in a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur there – the area may simply not have been surveyed.

**This summary page may be published.
The full report and maps may not be published or otherwise shared.**

The data search report is valid until 30/06/2026 for the site named above.



eas ltd

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

Unit 4B, The Courtyard, Holmsted Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield,
West Sussex, RH17 5JT

Phone : +44 (0) 1444 882552

email : info@easltd.co.uk

web site : www.easltd.co.uk