

South Brooks Solar Farm

Preliminary Environmental Information

Volume 2: Appendix 8.1: Cultural Heritage Assessment Criteria

Document Reference: EN0110027
May 2026
Blue Planet Solar Limited



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1 Cultural Heritage Assessment Criteria

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This appendix sets out the cultural heritage assessment criteria for the Project and is intended to be supplementary technical information to Chapter 8 of the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Volume Two report.

1.2 Assessment of Potential Effects

Stages of Assessment

1.2.1 For each phase of the Project (construction, operation and decommissioning), a staged assessment will be carried out using professional judgement and taking into account national legislation, planning policy, guidance and best practice documents, including:

- National Planning Policy Guide (NPPG 2014) (updated 2019)¹;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2025)².
- Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020)³;
- Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2022)⁴;
- The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Historic England, 2017)⁵;
- Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019)⁶;
- Commercial renewable energy development and the historic environment (Historic England Advice Note 15, 2021)⁷;

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2014), National Planning Policy Guide, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Revised February 2025), available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

³ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020), Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment, available to view at <https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/2023-11/ClfA-SandG-DBA-2020.pdf>

⁴ Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2022), Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology, available to view at <https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/2023-11/ClfA-Code-of-Conduct-2022.pdf>

⁵ Historic England (2017), The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, available to view at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

⁶ Historic England (2019), Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets, available to view at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/heag279-statements-heritage-significance/>

⁷ Historic England (2021), Commercial renewable energy development and the historic environment, available to view at <https://historicengland.org.uk/images->

- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2, 2015)⁸;
- Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2021)⁹.

1.2.2 The staged approach to assessment that will be employed is largely based on the above guidance issued by Historic England and IEMA, IHBC and CIfA.

1.2.3 The first stage of assessment identified by IEMA, IHBC and CIfA is understanding heritage assets. This is defined as:

- describing the asset (what it is and what is known about it);
- ascribing significance (a description of the heritage interest of the asset from which the asset derives its significance); and
- attributing importance (a scaled measure of the degree to which the significance of that asset should be protected).

1.2.4 The ascribing of significance will be made with reference to the types of heritage interests an asset has as described by Historic England (historical, archaeological, architectural and artistic/aesthetic, although it is acknowledged that this list of interests is by no means exhaustive).

1.2.5 The second stage of assessment identified by IEMA, IHBC and CIfA is evaluating the consequence of change. This will be undertaken in three separate analytical stages:

- understanding change (a factual statement of how a proposal would change a heritage asset or its setting, including how it is experienced);
- assessing impact (a scaled measure of the degree to which any change would impact on the heritage interest of the asset and therefore its significance); and
- weighting the effect (the measure that brings together the magnitude of the impact and the heritage asset's importance to assess the significance of effect that the change represents).

1.2.6 The following staged methodology will be employed:

- Description of the significance of each assessed asset, including what is valued about it (i.e. what its significance is derived from).
- Description of how the Project may change these values and therefore impact on the heritage significance, through both physical impacts or changes within the setting of the asset.

[books/publications/commercial-renewable-energy-development-historic-environment-advice-note-15/heag302-commercial-renewable-energy-development-historic-environment/](#)

⁸ Historic England (2015), Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2, available to view at

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/gpa2/>

⁹ Institute of Historic Building Conservation and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2021), Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK, available to view at

https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/2024-11/CIfA-IEMA-Principles-Cultural-Heritage-Impact-UK_2021.pdf

- Discussion of embedded and/or additional mitigation which may avoid or reduce physical or settings impacts to the asset.
- Assessment of whether the predicted impact(s) following embedded and/or additional mitigation constitutes harm to the significance of the asset, and, if so, the severity of this harm. This is referred to below as 'magnitude of impact'.
- Assessment of the nature and severity of residual effects, obtained through combining the importance of the asset and the magnitude of impact (referred to below as 'significance of effect').

Assessment criteria

Importance of heritage assets

- 1.2.7 The importance of a heritage asset is a measure of the degree to which the heritage significance of that asset is sought to be protected.
- 1.2.8 The criteria presented in Table 1-1 will be used to establish the importance of heritage assets. Assessment of importance is based on a combination of designated status or, in the case of non-designated assets, the professional judgement of the assessor. The assignment of the degree of importance is made with reference to regional research priorities (as set out in the South East Research Framework¹⁰) and takes into account Historic England's Listing Selection Guides¹¹ and the Folkestone and Hythe District Heritage Strategy¹².
- 1.2.9 It is recognised that, occasionally, heritage assets may have a lower or higher importance than the criteria below would normally indicate. Where this is the case, full explanation and justification will be given within the assessment.

Table 1-1 Criteria for establishing importance of heritage assets

Importance	Description of receptors
Very High (International)	World heritage sites; assets of acknowledged international importance; assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives; Historic landscapes of international value (designated or not) and extremely well-preserved historic landscapes with exceptional coherence, time depth or other critical factor(s).
High (National)	Scheduled Monuments and non-designated assets of schedulable quality and importance; Grade I and II* Listed Buildings and Grade II Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or associations; Conservation Areas with exceptional qualities; non-designated structures of clear national importance; designated and non-

¹⁰ Kent County Council (2014), South East Research Framework, available at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/south-east-research-framework>

¹¹ Historic England (2024), Scheduling Selection Guides, available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/scheduling-selection/>; Historic England (2024), Listing Selection Guides, available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/listing-selection/>; Historic England (2024), Selection Guidance for Landscapes, Battlefields and Wrecks, available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/landscapes-battlefields-wrecks-selection/>

¹² Folkestone and Hythe District Council (2024), Heritage Strategy, available at <https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/downloads/file/6045/heritage-strategy>

Importance	Description of receptors
	designated historic landscapes of historic interest; assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.
Medium (Regional or National)	Grade II Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens; Non-designated assets that contribute to regional research objectives; Locally listed buildings and other historic unlisted buildings that have exceptional qualities; Conservation Areas.
Low (Local)	Non-designated assets of local importance including those compromised by poor preservation; assets of limited value but with the potential to contribute to local research objectives; robust non-designated historic landscapes.
Negligible	Assets with very little surviving archaeological interest; buildings of little architectural or historic note; landscapes with little historic interest.

Magnitude of impact

- 1.2.10 The magnitude of impact reflects the scale of change which would be caused by the Project and the effect this would have on ability to appreciate and interpret the significance of heritage assets. Impacts can result either from physical changes to the fabric of a heritage asset or through changes within its setting.
- 1.2.11 An impact may be positive where, for example, as part of the Project, an intrusive building or feature is removed or replaced with a more harmonious one; historic features are restored or revealed; a new feature is added which adds to public appreciation; new views are introduced that add to public experience of an asset; or public interpretation or access is improved to an asset or its setting.
- 1.2.12 Impacts may impart major change, for example where groundworks completely destroy important archaeological remains, to minor change to part of a heritage assets' setting, leading to a limited impact on our ability to interpret it, or its context.
- 1.2.13 Utilising the key principles for assessing the implications of change outlined above, an assessment of the magnitude of impact will be implemented for each heritage asset scoped into the assessment using the criteria presented in Table 1-2 below.
- 1.2.14 Conclusions of the assessed magnitude of impacts are a product of the consideration of the elements of an asset and its setting that contribute to its heritage significance and the degree to which the Project would change these contributing elements.
- 1.2.15 Where an assessment of the scale of harm is required to be made impacts of major magnitude will be considered to be "substantial harm" whilst impacts of moderate or lower magnitude will be considered to be "less than substantial harm". Where no harm is identified the impact magnitude will be "no change". This reflects the National Planning Policy Guide (NPPG) (specifically Paragraph: 018, Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723)¹³.

Table 1-2 Criteria for classifying magnitude of impact

Impact Magnitude	Criteria
Major	Change to key historic building elements so that an asset is totally altered; OR change to most/all key archaeological materials such that the resource is totally altered;

¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2014), National Planning Policy Guide, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Impact Magnitude	Criteria
	OR comprehensive change to the setting such that the significance of the asset is severely compromised.
Moderate	Change to many key historic building elements, such that the asset is significantly modified; OR changes to many key archaeological materials such that the resource is clearly modified; OR changes to setting of an asset, such that the significance of the asset is compromised.
Minor	Change to key historic building elements, such that the asset is slightly different; OR changes to key archaeological materials such that the asset is slightly altered; OR changes to setting of an asset, such that its significance is slightly compromised.
Negligible	Very minor changes to historic building elements, archaeological materials or setting that hardly affect the asset's significance.
No Change	No change to fabric, archaeological materials or setting.

Significance of effect

- 1.2.16 The assessment of the significance of effect will be based on a combination of the importance of the asset (receptor) and the magnitude of impact upon that asset's significance. The significance of effect matrix is presented in Table 1-3 below and provides a guide to decision-making but is not a substitute for professional judgement and interpretation, particularly where the importance or impact magnitude levels are not clear or are borderline between categories.
- 1.2.17 For the purposes of this preliminary assessment, **'very large'**, **'large'** and **'moderate'** effects are regarded as **'significant'** while **'slight'** and **'neutral'** effects are regarded as **'not significant'**. Effects can be either adverse or beneficial.
- 1.2.18 Where the significance matrix indicates a range for the effect significance (e.g. 'slight or moderate'), professional judgement can be applied to select one option (which would be justified by evidence, as appropriate) or an effect significance range can be applied. If a significance of effect is assigned as 'slight or moderate', this would be considered significant unless further information could be provided to downgrade the significance effect to 'slight'. Where both effect categories within the range fall within either 'significant' or 'not significant', it may not be necessary to adjust the range to a single descriptor (for example if the range is 'neutral or slight', as both effects are considered to be not significant; or if the range is 'large or very large', as both effects are considered to be significant).
- 1.2.19 Permanent effects are considered to be those which are not reversible on decommissioning (i.e. direct physical impacts to below ground archaeological remains). Temporary effects are considered to be those which are reversible and typically relate to changes in the setting of heritage assets. There is no established guidance for determining if a temporary effect to a heritage asset is short, medium or long term. For the purposes of this preliminary assessment, only short term and long term durations are considered. Short term effects are considered to be those that last less than 5 years (generally the construction and decommissioning phase effects) and long term effects are considered to be those lasting more than 5 years (i.e. from the operation phase of the Project). This is because although 50 years is a short span of time in the duration of a heritage asset, it is a long time for the people who are able to appreciate the asset and experience the effects of the Project.

Table 1-3 Criteria for classifying significance of effect

Importance	Magnitude of Impact				
	No change	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Very high	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Slight or Moderate	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate or Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Slight or Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight



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