

WESTHIDE SOLAR

Addendum Ecology Report

for

Ersun (Westhide SPV) Ltd

October 2022

THE **Landmark**
PRACTICE

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**D denotes a Draft version*

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

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Addendum report should be read in conjunction with the Westhide Solar, Ecological Appraisal (TLP, December 2021) and the subsequent Ecological Addendum (TLP, August 2022).
- 1.2 Following discussions with relevant stakeholders, several of the higher quality agricultural fields have been retained for agricultural use, with previously proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure removed from these areas.
- 1.3 This Addendum report provides an updated assessment based upon this latest site layout (**Appendix A** refers).

2.0 SITE DESIGN CHANGES

- 2.1 The following amendments to the site layout have been incorporated since the previous Ecological Addendum was issued:
- Removal of proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure in Fields A, D, E, H and I, these fields will be retained for arable use;
 - Associated removal of proposed hedgerow/boundary tree planting due to reduced need for visual screening and/or retaining original field sizes in the following areas: south of Fields A, H and I, west and east of Field A, and north-east of Field H;
 - Incorporation of a 6000 m² attenuation basin within Field C; and
 - Relocation of footpath through field I, removing the requirement for creating a small gap in the hedgerow.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

Habitats

- 3.1 The proposals continue to avoid potential ecological impacts by retaining boundary features and confining development to the interior of fields currently in arable rotation. Impacts on boundary features are reduced as the redirection of the footpath avoids the need for creating the previously proposed gap in the hedgerow within field I.
- 3.2 The incorporation of a 6000 m² attenuation basin will increase the diversity of habitats offered by the scheme, as the plant species present in this area will be more suited to marshy conditions than across the rest of the site, and the feature will likely be seasonally wet offering increased wetland habitat to local fauna.
- 3.3 The retention of the fields listed above for arable use represents a decrease in the potential ecological value offered by the proposals in ecology terms, compared to the previous site design. This is due to the large area (c. 23.5 hectares) now to remain in arable rotation, a habitat of relatively low value to biodiversity, rather than being converted to species-rich grassland, a habitat of greater value to biodiversity. The level of proposed hedgerow/tree planting for visual screening has also accordingly been reduced.
- 3.4 Nevertheless, the proposals still deliver extensive levels of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) both in area and linear (hedgerow) terms, with c. 25 hectares of species-rich grassland proposed, along with a total of 0.38 km of native species-rich hedgerow, and 0.79 km of

native species-rich hedgerows with trees. The BNG assessment (TLP, 2022) has calculated a net gain of 115.3 habitat (area) units, which equates to 69.87% net gain, and a gain of 21.36 hedgerow (linear) units, representing a 59.06% net gain. The proposals therefore still deliver significant biodiversity gains.

Species

- 3.5 The amendments to site design do not impact upon any of the valuable ecological receptors on site, such as the ponds and woodland areas, which could impact upon protected/notable species. The proposed great crested newt buffer is retained within Field A, which is now to be kept in arable rotation, protecting the pond from encroaching agricultural activities and linking it with the western hedgerow and boundary buffer, thus enabling improved connectivity between the pond and the rest of the site. It is not anticipated that any protected or notable species will be impacted by the revisions and the previous species assessments and recommendations made within the Ecological Appraisal and subsequent Addendum remain valid (with the exception of skylark, as outlined below).

Skylark

- 3.6 The breeding bird survey recorded three skylark territories within fields adjacent to the site (these will not be impacted by the proposed development) and a single territory within the site, although the latter was abandoned prematurely as a result of the ploughing of Field H in order to plant a potato crop.
- 3.7 The retention of some fields in arable rotation (including Field H) will reduce the amount of land in which nesting skylarks are potentially displaced by the solar panels and will therefore have a reduced potential negative impact upon the breeding ability of this species compared to previous proposals. The proposals therefore provide a balance of offering improved foraging habitat (large areas of species-rich grassland and wild bird seed mix) whilst retaining potential nesting habitat for this species.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 This Report provides a summary assessment of the impact of the latest amendments to the site layout following the previous Addendum (TLP, August 2022). The latest design, while reducing the extent of species-rich grassland proposed, continues to deliver considerable Biodiversity Net Gain and has a reduced potential impact upon nesting skylark.

REFERENCES

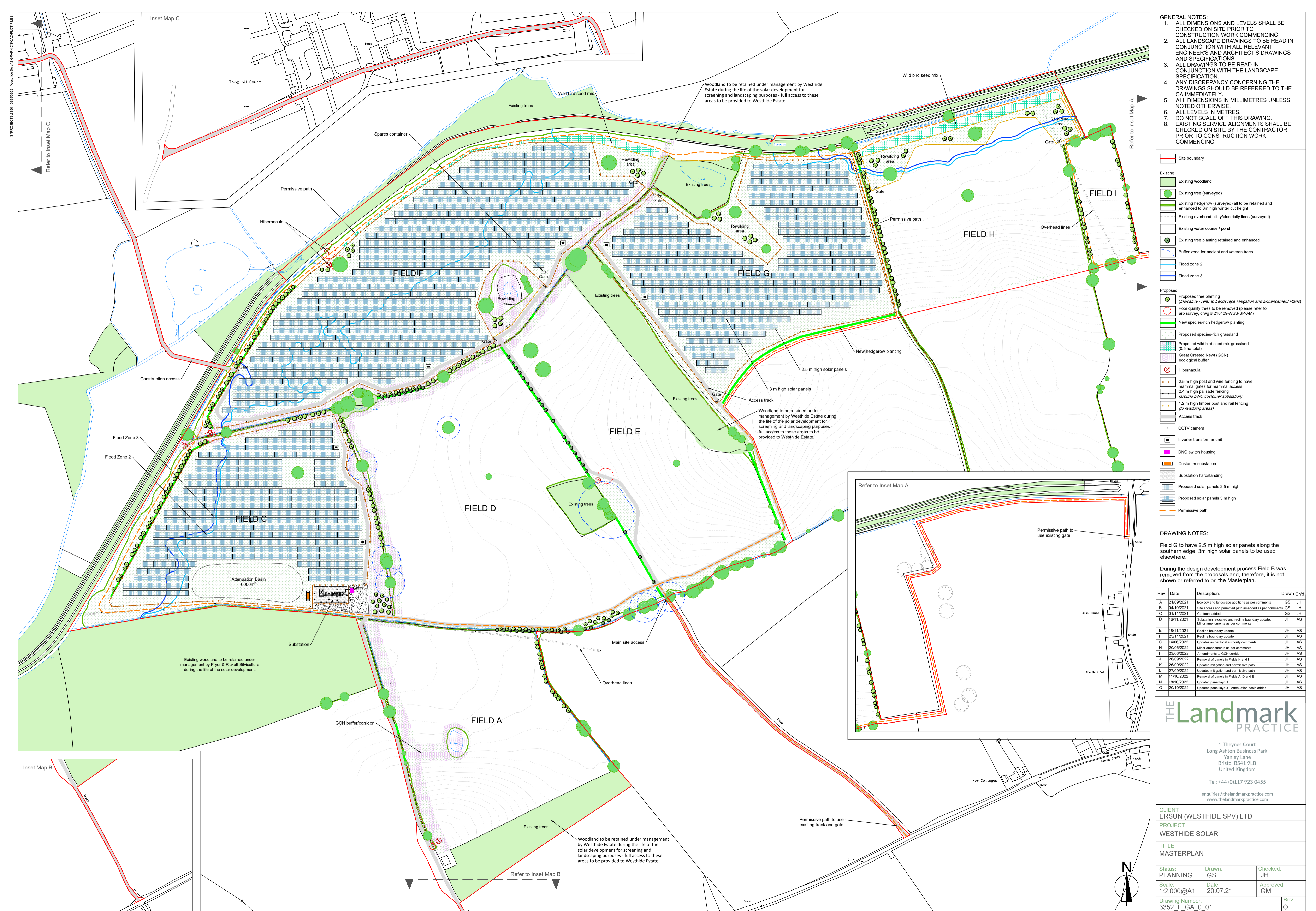
The Landmark Practice (December 2021). Ecological Appraisal – Westhide Solar.

The Landmark Practice (August 2022). Ecological Addendum Report – Westhide Solar.

The Landmark Practice (October 2022). Westhide Solar, Biodiversity Net Gain Metric 3.0 Spreadsheet.

The Landmark Practice (October 2022). Westhide Solar, Biodiversity Net Gain Report.

APPENDIX A: LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN



- GENERAL NOTES:**
1. ALL DIMENSIONS AND LEVELS SHALL BE CHECKED ON SITE PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION WORK COMMENCING.
 2. ALL LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT ENGINEER'S AND ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS AND SPECIFICATIONS.
 3. ALL DRAWINGS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATION.
 4. ANY DISCREPANCY CONCERNING THE DRAWINGS SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE CA IMMEDIATELY.
 5. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
 6. ALL LEVELS IN METRES.
 7. DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING.
 8. EXISTING SERVICE ALIGNMENTS SHALL BE CHECKED ON SITE BY THE CONTRACTOR PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION WORK COMMENCING.

- Existing**
- Site boundary
 - Existing woodland
 - Existing tree (surveyed)
 - Existing hedgerow (surveyed) all to be retained and enhanced to 3m high winter cut height
 - Existing overhead utility/electricity lines (surveyed)
 - Existing water course / pond
 - Existing tree planting retained and enhanced
 - Buffer zone for ancient and veteran trees
 - Flood zone 2
 - Flood zone 3
- Proposed**
- Proposed tree planting (indicative - refer to Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plans)
 - Poor quality trees to be removed (please refer to arb survey, dwg # 210409-WSS-SP-AM)
 - New species-rich hedgerow planting
 - Proposed species-rich grassland
 - Proposed wild bird seed mix grassland (0.5 ha total)
 - Great Crested Newt (GCN) ecological buffer
 - Hibernacula
 - 2.5 m high post and wire fencing to have manual gates for manual access
 - 2.4 m high palisade fencing (around DNO customer substation)
 - 1.2 m high timber post and rail fencing (to rewinding areas)
 - Access track
 - CCTV camera
 - Inverter transformer unit
 - DNO switch housing
 - Customer substation
 - Substation handstanding
 - Proposed solar panels 2.5 m high
 - Proposed solar panels 3 m high
 - Permissive path

DRAWING NOTES:

Field G to have 2.5 m high solar panels along the southern edge. 3m high solar panels to be used elsewhere.

During the design development process Field B was removed from the proposals and, therefore, it is not shown or referred to on the Masterplan.

Rev.	Date:	Description:	Drawn	Ch'd
A	21/09/2021	Ecology and landscape additions as per comments	GS	JH
B	04/10/2021	Site access and permitted path amended as per comments	GS	JH
C	07/11/2021	Contours added	GS	JH
D	16/11/2021	Substation relocated and redline boundary updated. Minor amendments as per comments	JH	AS
E	18/11/2021	Redline boundary update	JH	AS
F	23/11/2021	Redline boundary update	JH	AS
G	14/06/2022	Updates as per local authority comments	JH	AS
H	20/06/2022	Minor amendments as per comments	JH	AS
I	23/06/2022	Amendments to GCN corridor	JH	AS
J	26/09/2022	Removal of panels in Fields H and I	JH	AS
K	26/09/2022	Updated mitigation and permissive path	JH	AS
L	27/09/2022	Updated mitigation and permissive path	JH	AS
M	11/10/2022	Removal of panels in Fields A, D and E	JH	AS
N	18/10/2022	Updated panel layout	JH	AS
O	20/10/2022	Updated panel layout - Attenuation basin added	JH	AS

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CLIENT: ERSUN (WESTHIDE SPV) LTD
PROJECT: WESTHIDE SOLAR
TITLE: MASTERPLAN

Status: PLANNING	Drawn: GS	Checked: JH
Scale: 1:2,000@A1	Date: 20.07.21	Approved: GM
Drawing Number: 3352_L_GA_0_01	Rev: O	