

PROJECT: Land to the north-west of Westhide, Herefordshire, HR1 3RQ (Ref: P214619/F)

CLIENT: Ersun (Westhide SPV) Ltd

Date: 23rd June 2022

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Addendum: Amendments to Landscape Proposals

Introduction

This addendum provides an update on landscape and visual matters in respect of amendments made to the Masterplan and Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plans submitted with the planning application (Ref: P214619/F). It is in response to comments from the Landscape Officer, Tree Officer and Ecology Officer at Herefordshire Council.

The amended drawings are included at the end of this note, which include the following:

3352_L_GA_0_01 Masterplan Rev I

3352_L_GA_0_02 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Rev D

3352_L_GA_1_01 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 1 Rev A

3352_L_GA_1_02 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 2 Rev A

3352_L_GA_1_03 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 3 Rev A

3352_L_GA_1_04 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 4 (New drawing)

Amendments to proposals

Mitigation screening

Comment:

- *‘Review views looking onto the site and establish if the mitigation is relying on existing trees and vegetation that is outside of the site boundary, and determine what the impact would be if this would be removed. The intent is to ensure that all mitigation is achievable as part of the development.’*

View from the north:

The assessment of views from the north was reliant on screening provided by the existing mature vegetation along the route of the disused Hereford to Ledbury Canal (refer to Viewpoints 9-10 of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [LVIA]). Where the canal follows the northern edge of the site, this vegetation has been secured within the site boundary and will be retained and managed by the Westhide Estate for screening purposes. This will retain the screening afforded to receptors in Viewpoint 10. Along the north-western boundary of the site, the vegetation along the canal falls outside of the site boundary and cannot be guaranteed for the life of the development.

In the instance that this vegetation is removed, it is anticipated that users of the Three Choirs Way long distance footpath near Thinghill Court (Viewpoint 9 refers) would experience an open view of the development in the western half the site (Fields A, C, D, part of Field E and the western end of Field F). The view, from a gap in the hedgerow, would be brief and would look to the rear elevations of the array. The existing internal trees and hedgerows, and the mitigation planting already proposed, on maturity, would assist in filtering views of the development in Fields A, D and E with some potential partial views of solar panels on the higher ground of Fields A and E. To maintain screening of the development in Fields C and F, a new band of native hedgerow and tree planting is proposed adjacent to the canal. The densest tree planting along this edge has been positioned to assist in screening the substation in Field D and the areas of panels on the higher ground in Fields A and E.

Views from the south:

The assessment of views from the south was partially reliant on existing vegetation along the southern boundary of the site (refer to Viewpoints 1 and 2 of the LVIA). The block of woodland to the south of Field C is outside of the redline boundary, however, will be retained under management by Pryor and Rickett Silviculture during the life of the development (please refer to accompanying letter). Woodland to the south of Field A is within the redline and will be retained and managed by Westhild Estate for screening purposes. Mature hedgerows and trees to the southern of Field E fall outside of the redline boundary and cannot be guaranteed for the life of the development.

If the existing vegetation is removed, it is anticipated that users of the road between Westhild and Withington (Viewpoints 1 and 2 refer) and residents of nearby properties in Westhild, would experience an open view of the development in Field E. The existing internal trees and hedgerows, and the mitigation planting already proposed would, on maturity, assist in filtering views of the wider development. To maintain the screening of the development in Fields D and E, a new band of native hedgerow and tree planting is proposed along the southern boundary.

Views from the east:

The assessment of views from the east (refer to Viewpoint 7 of the LVIA) including residential views, was partially reliant on the few mature trees in the adjacent fields and mature vegetation along the road. If the existing vegetation was to be removed, the existing vegetation and proposed tree planting around Field I will, on maturity, assist in screening most of the development in views from the road. Additional trees have been included along the boundaries of Field I to bolster these edges, limiting the potential for visual openings to form should any mature trees in adjacent fields be removed.

Root protection zones

Comments:

- *'Go beyond actual root protection areas to respect what could be considered a reasonable distance for the solar panels to be away from the tree';*
- *'Ensure substantial protective zones around all Black Poplar, and all important trees is provided';*
- *'Protect existing tree roots from footings, vehicles and infrastructure.'; and*

- *'Relocate substation to protect and give space for important trees.'*

The positioning of panels around the existing trees across the site has been reviewed to ensure that they are a reasonable distance from the trees, going beyond the root protection areas (RPA) identified on the tree survey by Hillside Trees. Access tracks, where possible, have also been realigned to avoid RPAs. Any construction works within RPA to be of no dig construction, as specified in the Arboricultural Report by Hillside Trees Ltd (December 2021).

Around the ancient and veteran trees identified by the Woodland Trust an increased buffer of 15 times the diameter of the tree was used, as requested by the Tree Officer (T1, T2, T3, T23, G24, T26, T28 and G62 on the Tree Survey by Hillside Trees). The position of the solar panels, access roads and fence lines have all been amended to provide greater protective zones around these important trees.

The substation has been repositioned further to the west to sit behind the existing woodland to provide more space for the nearby veteran Wild Black Poplars, as per the mark up from the Landscape Officer. A larger group of trees has been introduced to the east of the substation to provide additional screening of the substation in views from the road (refer to Viewpoint 2) and to respond to the comment that *'there should be larger groupings of trees within the site'*.

Isolated trees and rewilding areas

Comments:

- *'Give trees adequate space and aim to maintain well defined landscape areas, that can be fenced planted with trees and 'rewilded'; and*
- *'Remove solar panels to create the opportunity to create one single large habitat area. The reduction of solar panels is minor, compared to the opportunity to make a lasting woodland or 'rewilding' area'.*

Panels along the boundaries of Fields F, G and H have been removed to provide areas for rewilding which connects with existing habitat areas and isolated trees on the site, as per the mark up provided by the Landscape Officer. These areas will be secured by the previously proposed 2.4 m high timber post and wire fencing, along the boundaries of the solar panel areas, and a newly proposed 1.2 m high timber post and rail fence, along the edges adjacent to the proposed permissive path.

These areas will be sown with a species rich grassland mix, as per the wider development, with limited ongoing management to allow for the natural regeneration of these areas. It is proposed that these areas could be planted with new Native Black Poplars as part of a wider replanting of the species across the Westside Estate, as per the recommendations of the Tree Officer. This would be subject to further guidance from the Wildlife Trust.

Please note that the area of Wild Bird Seed Mix has been relocated from the western edge to this northern boundary alongside the rewilding areas. This is due to the overshadowing that would be create by the new native hedgerow and planting proposed along the western edge.

Conclusion

In the instance that the screening vegetation which falls outside of the redline boundary is removed, it is anticipated that the additional planting proposed along the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the site will, on maturity and in combination with other onsite mitigation measures, maintain equal levels of screening of the development as currently assessed within the LVIA. If the vegetation outside the boundary is not removed, then this additional planting will enhance the screening of the development further, most notably in views from the road to the south (Viewpoints 1 and 2).

The additional hedgerow and tree planting, along with the proposed areas of rewilding and groups of trees proposed, will also contribute to the management objective of the LCT Riverside Meadows to '*conserve, restore and enhance continuous linear tree cover along hedge lines, ditches and watercourses*' and the management objective of LCT Estate Farmlands to '*enhance tree cover through further planting of small scale plantations and tree belts*'. These amendments also provide an opportunity to enhance the locally characteristic and rare Wild Black Poplar tree planting across the site.

The visualisations for Viewpoints 1-6, submitted with the LVIA, have not been revised for this addendum. The amendments made to the proposals are either too small, in locations largely obscured from view by existing vegetation or landform, or at a distance from the receptor whereby their addition would be barely perceptible.

Following a review of the amendments it is confirmed that no changes have been made to the overall assessment or the conclusions drawn in the LVIA submitted with the planning application. This review confirms that the LVIA (16th December 2021, Revision FV2) continues to be a valid assessment of landscape and visual effects of the scheme.

24 March 2022

Gulya Isyanova
Head of Development
TEKSS Ltd
Fountain Court
Victoria Square
St Albans
AL1 3TF

Dear Gulya

Thank you for your note. I can confirm that the woodland you refer to, which lies to the south of field C, is a long term woodland and the intention is for it to remain so for a long period of time.

In woodland management terms, it was established in 2002 as a mixed woodland on a former arable field with an array of native broadleaved species. The establishment was successful, and the trees have developed generally as one would expect. The trees are now between 4m and 8 m in height and will continue to develop and grow upwards. Some of the trees have suffered from pest and disease issues, the impacts of which have been managed through.

We would envisage that, as the woodland develops, it will be silviculturally thinned to allow the better trees to fill out and develop their crowns, a normal forestry practice, perhaps once a decade for a period over the next 80-100 years. The woodland has become a permanent feature in the landscape, and the intention is that it will remain so.

The canopies will slowly develop upwards over the next 60-80 years to attain a height in excess of 30m, thus providing increased landscape benefit.

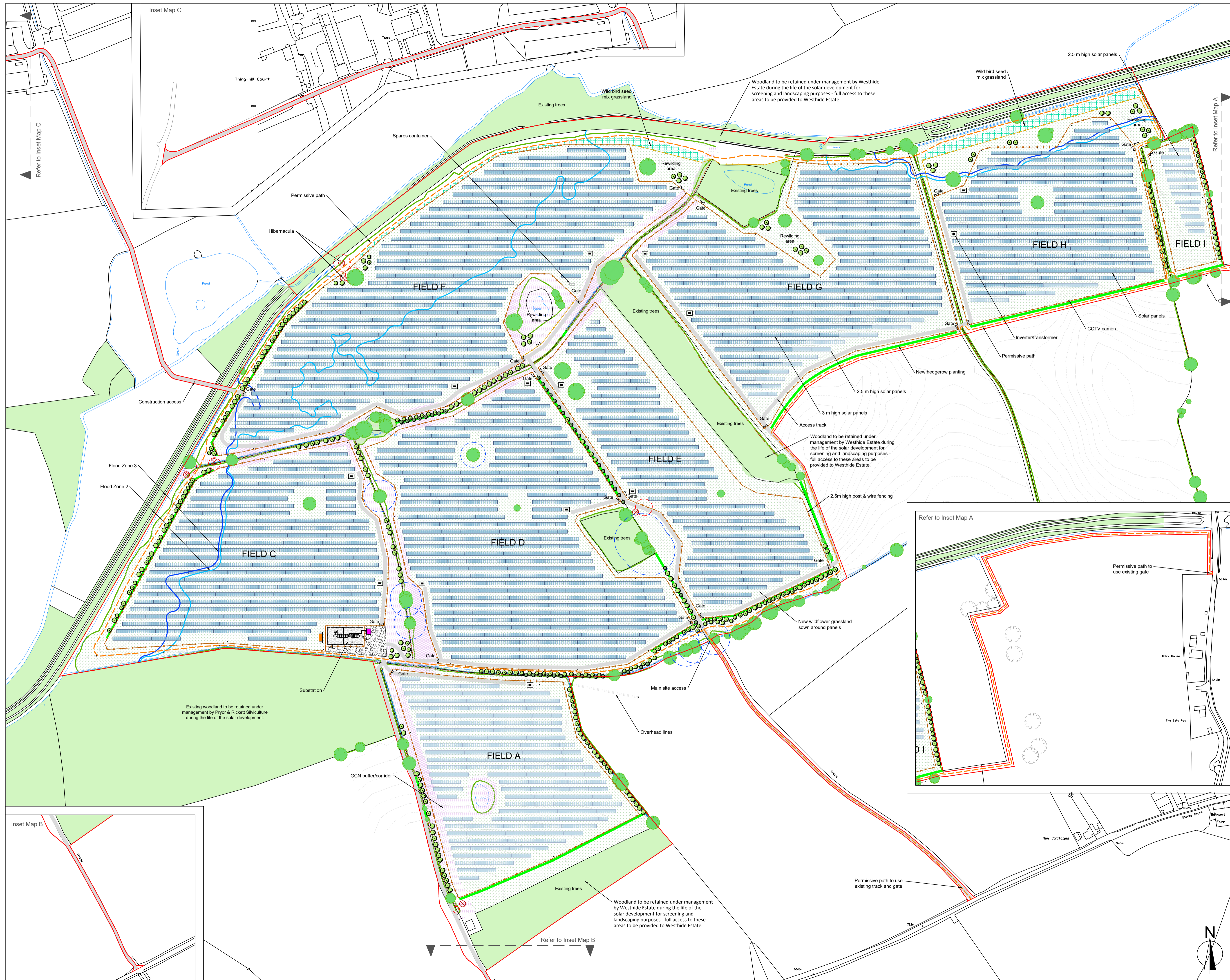
The woodland was established with a wide ride around the outside edge of the planting, much as one does with an outer ride around each field in a solar development. The impact of the growing trees on the solar panels will thus be modest, albeit with some swifter shading at sunset, as the sun goes down.

I hope the above commentary helps, if you need anything else, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards



Graham Taylor



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Legend:

- 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 mammal 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:

Fields A, G, H and I to have 2.5 m high solar panels and 3m high for the others.

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

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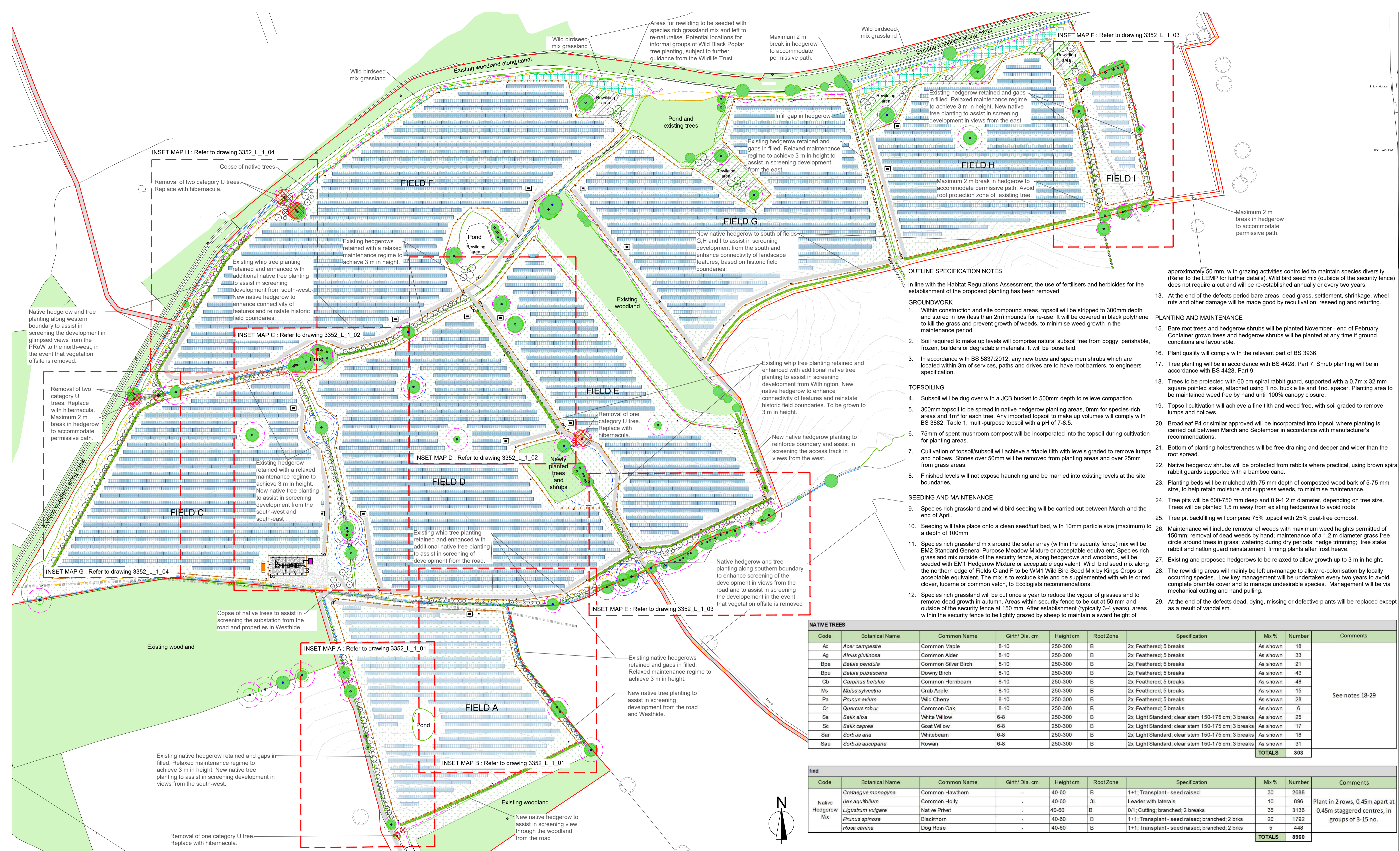
PROJECT
WESTHIDE SOLAR

TITLE
MASTERPLAN

Status: PLANNING	Drawn: GS	Checked: JH
Scale: 1:2,000@A1	Date: 20.07.21	Approved: GM

Drawing Number:
3352_L_GA_00_01

Rev:
I



OUTLINE SPECIFICATION NOTES

In line with the Habitat Regulations Assessment, the use of fertilisers and herbicides for the establishment of the proposed planting has been removed.

GROUNDWORK

1. Within construction and site compound areas, topsoil will be stripped to 300mm depth and stored in low (less than 2m) mounds for re-use. It will be covered in black polythene to kill the grass and prevent growth of weeds, to minimise weed growth in the maintenance period.
2. Soil required to make up levels will comprise natural subsoil free from boggy, perishable, frozen, builders or degradable materials. It will be loose laid.
3. In accordance with BS 5837:2012, any new trees and specimen shrubs which are located within 3m of services, paths and drives are to have root barriers, to engineers specification.

TOPSOILING

4. Subsoil will be dug over with a JCB bucket to 500mm depth to relieve compaction.
5. 300mm topsoil to be spread in native hedgerow planting areas, 0mm for species-rich areas and 1m² for each tree. Any imported topsoil to make up volumes will comply with BS 3882, Table 1, multi-purpose topsoil with a pH of 7-8.5.
6. 75mm of spent mushroom compost will be incorporated into the topsoil during cultivation for planting areas.
7. Cultivation of topsoil/subsoil will achieve a friable tilth with levels graded to remove lumps and hollows. Stones over 50mm will be removed from planting areas and over 25mm from grass areas.

SEEDING AND MAINTENANCE

9. Species rich grassland and wild bird seeding will be carried out between March and the end of April.
10. Seeding will take place onto a clean seed/turf bed, with 10mm particle size (maximum) to a depth of 100mm.
11. Species rich grassland mix around the solar array (within the security fence) mix will be EM2 Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture or acceptable equivalent. Species rich grassland mix outside of the security fence, along hedgerows and woodland, will be seeded with EM1 Hedgerow Mixture or acceptable equivalent. Wild bird seed mix along the northern edge of Fields C and F to be WM1 Wild Bird Seed Mix by Kings Cross or acceptable equivalent. The mix is to exclude kale and be supplemented with white or red clover, lucerne or common vetch, to Ecologists recommendations.
12. Species rich grassland will be cut once a year to reduce the vigour of grasses and to remove dead growth in autumn. Areas within security fence to be cut at 50 mm and outside of the security fence at 150 mm. After establishment (typically 3-4 years), areas within the security fence to be lightly grazed by sheep to maintain a sward height of

approximately 50 mm, with grazing activities controlled to maintain species diversity (Refer to the LEMP for further details). Wild bird seed mix (outside of the security fence) does not require a cut and will be re-established annually or every two years.

PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE

13. At the end of the defects period bare areas, dead grass, settlement, shrinkage, wheel ruts and other damage will be made good by recultivation, reseeding and returning.
15. Bare root trees and hedgerow shrubs will be planted November - end of February. Container grown trees and hedgerow shrubs will be planted at any time if ground conditions are favourable.
16. Plant quality will comply with the relevant part of BS 3936.
17. Tree planting will be in accordance with BS 4428, Part 7. Shrub planting will be in accordance with BS 4428, Part 9.
18. Trees to be protected with 60 cm spiral rabbit guard, supported with a 0.7m x 32 mm square pointed stake, attached using 1 no. buckle tie and 1 no. spacer. Planting area to be maintained weed free by hand until 100% canopy closure.
19. Topsoil cultivation will achieve a fine tilth and weed free, with soil graded to remove lumps and hollows.
20. Broadleaf P4 or similar approved will be incorporated into topsoil where planting is carried out between March and September in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.
21. Bottom of planting holes/trenches will be free draining and deeper and wider than the root spread.
22. Native hedgerow shrubs will be protected from rabbits where practical, using brown spiral rabbit guards supported with a bamboo cane.
23. Planting beds will be mulched with 75 mm depth of composted wood bark of 5-75 mm size, to help retain moisture and suppress weeds, to minimise maintenance.
24. Tree pits will be 600-750 mm deep and 0.9-1.2 m diameter, depending on tree size. Trees will be planted 1.5 m away from existing hedgerows to avoid roots.
25. Tree pit backfilling will comprise 75% topsoil with 25% peat-free compost.
26. Maintenance will include removal of weeds with maximum weed heights permitted of 150mm; removal of dead weeds by hand; maintenance of a 1.2 m diameter grass free circle around trees in grass; watering during dry periods; hedge trimming; tree stake, rabbit and netlon guard reinstatement; firming plants after frost heave.
27. Existing and proposed hedgerows to be relaxed to allow growth up to 3 m in height.
28. The rewinding areas will mainly be left un-manage to allow re-colonisation by locally occurring species. Low key management will be undertaken every two years to avoid complete bramble cover and to manage undesirable species. Management will be via mechanical cutting and hand pulling.
29. At the end of the defects dead, dying, missing or defective plants will be replaced except as a result of vandalism.

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name	Girth/ Dia. cm	Height cm	Root Zone	Specification	Mix %	Number	Comments
Ac	<i>Acer campestre</i>	Common Maple	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	18	
Ag	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Common Alder	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	33	
Bpe	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Common Silver Birch	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	21	
Bpu	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Dowry Birch	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	43	
Cb	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Common Hornbeam	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	48	
Ms	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	15	
Pa	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild Cherry	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	28	
Qr	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Common Oak	8-10	250-300	B	2x; Feathered; 5 breaks	As shown	6	
Sa	<i>Salix alba</i>	White Willow	6-8	250-300	B	2x; Light Standard; clear stem 150-175 cm; 3 breaks	As shown	25	
Sc	<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat Willow	6-8	250-300	B	2x; Light Standard; clear stem 150-175 cm; 3 breaks	As shown	17	
Sar	<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam	6-8	250-300	B	2x; Light Standard; clear stem 150-175 cm; 3 breaks	As shown	18	
Sau	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan	6-8	250-300	B	2x; Light Standard; clear stem 150-175 cm; 3 breaks	As shown	31	
TOTALS								303	

Code	Botanical Name	Common Name	Girth/ Dia. cm	Height cm	Root Zone	Specification	Mix %	Number	Comments
	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common Hawthorn	-	40-60	B	1+1; Transplant - seed raised		30	2888
	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Common Holly	-	40-60	3L	Leader with laterals		10	896
	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Native Privet	-	40-60	B	0/1; Cutting; branched; 2 breaks		35	3136
	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	-	40-60	B	1+1; Transplant - seed raised; branched; 2 brks		20	1792
	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose	-	40-60	B	1+1; Transplant - seed raised; branched; 2 brks		5	448
TOTALS								8960	

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- KEY:**
- Site boundary
 - Permissive footpath
 - Existing overhead utility/electricity lines
 - Proposed solar panels 2.5m high refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_01
 - Proposed solar panels 3m high refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_01
 - Proposed DNO switch housing
 - Proposed customer substation
 - Proposed inverter transformer unit

- Softworks**
- Existing woodland
 - Existing tree (surveyed) refer to arboricultural survey by Hillside Trees
 - Existing tree (not surveyed) for context
 - Existing tree to be removed - Category U refer to arboricultural survey by Hillside Trees
 - Buffer zone for ancient and veteran trees
 - Existing whip tree planting Based on topographical survey and field survey
 - Existing hedgerow Based on topographical survey

- Hardworks**
- Proposed access track refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_04
 - Proposed 3m high CCTV camera refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_03
 - Proposed 2.5m high post and wire security fencing refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_02
 - 1.2m high timber post and rail fencing (to rewinding areas) refer to note 11
 - Proposed wild bird seed mix grassland (0.5 ha total) refer to note 12
 - Hibernacula
 - Proposed steel palisade security fencing - 2.4 m high (around DNO customer substation) Finish: Powder coated, matt finish, Colour: Green RAL 6005 Moss Green
 - Proposed substation hardstanding to engineers specification

- DRAWING NOTES:**
- To be read in conjunction with:
- 3352_L_GA_0_01 Masterplan
 - 3352_L_GA_1_01 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 1 of 3
 - 3352_L_GA_1_02 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 2 of 3
 - 3352_L_GA_1_03 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 3 of 3
 - 3352_L_GA_1_04 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 4 of 4
 - 3352_P_DT_3_01 PV Mounting System Detail
 - 3352_P_DT_3_02 Fence and Gate Detail
 - 3352_P_DT_3_03 CCTV Detail
 - 3352_P_DT_3_04 Access Tracks Detail
 - 3352_P_DT_3_05 Transformer Substation Detail
 - 3352_P_DT_3_06 Inverter Detail
 - 3352_P_DT_3_07 Spares Container Detail
 - 3352_LEMP_Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Rev.	Date:	Description:	Drawn	Ch'd
A	09/12/2021	Minor amendments	JH	AS
B	16/12/2021	Updated drawing notes	JH	AS
C	17/06/2022	Updated proposals to respond to comments from the local authority	JH	AS
D	23/06/2022	Updated specification notes - removal of fertilisers and herbicides	JH	AS

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Environmental Planning EIA Landscape Architecture Ecology

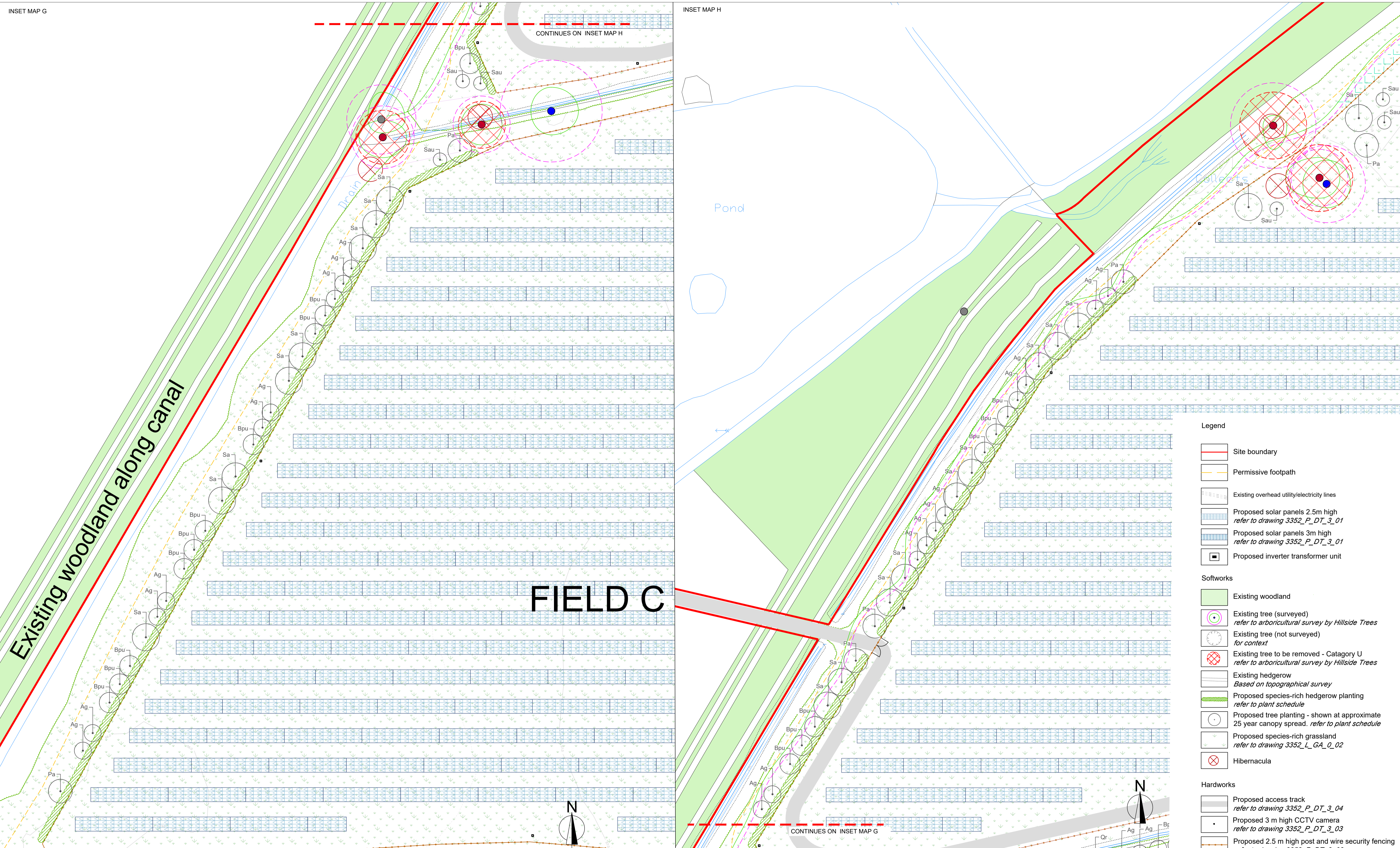
CLIENT
ERSUN (WESTHIDE SPV) LTD

PROJECT
WESTHIDE SOLAR

TITLE
LANDSCAPE MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Status: PLANNING	Drawn: JH	Checked: LF
Scale: 1:2000@A1	Date: 03.12.2021	Approved: AS
Drawing Number: 3352_L_GA_0_02		Rev: D

S:\PROJECTS\3350 - 3399\3352 - Westhild Solar\0 GRAPHICS\CAD\PILOT FILES



- Legend**
- Site boundary
 - Permissive footpath
 - Existing overhead utility/electricity lines
 - Proposed solar panels 2.5m high refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_01
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- Softworks**
- Existing woodland
 - Existing tree (surveyed) refer to arboricultural survey by Hillside Trees
 - Existing tree (not surveyed) for context
 - Existing tree to be removed - Category U refer to arboricultural survey by Hillside Trees
 - Existing hedgerow Based on topographical survey
 - Proposed species-rich hedgerow planting refer to plant schedule
 - Proposed tree planting - shown at approximate 25 year canopy spread. refer to plant schedule
 - Proposed species-rich grassland refer to drawing 3352_L_GA_Q_02
 - Hibernacula
- Hardworks**
- Proposed access track refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_04
 - Proposed 3 m high CCTV camera refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_03
 - Proposed 2.5 m high post and wire security fencing refer to drawing 3352_P_DT_3_02

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To be read in conjunction with drawings:

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- 3352_L_GA_0_02 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan
- 3352_L_GA_1_01 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 1 of 4
- 3352_L_GA_1_02 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 2 of 4
- 3352_L_GA_1_03 Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan Inset 3 of 4

and report

- 3352_LEMP Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Rev:	Date:	Description:	Drawn	Ch'd

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Environmental Planning EIA Landscape Architecture Ecology

CLIENT
ERSUN (WESTHIDE SPV) LTD

PROJECT
WESTHIDE SOLAR

TITLE
LANDSCAPE MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN - INSET 4 OF 4

Status: PLANNING	Drawn: JH	Checked: AS
Scale: 1:2,000@A1	Date: 17.06.2022	Approved: AS
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