

# Solar Farms

## Heritage and Archaeological Impact Assessment

The NPPF<sup>1</sup> states “Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.” We regularly provide these for clients across the UK.

### Archaeological Potential

Development opportunities exist on former airfields, isolated rural locations and edge of village and town plots. Increasingly, solar farms are integrated with new residential developments and are associated with Electric Vehicle Charging Station/s. These locations may formerly have been part of Medieval field systems, some have a longer use and hedgerows bounding the land may lie along roman or prehistoric trackways and boundary markers.

We are adept at spotting the signs of former land use in field systems and can advise on the likely uses to which a piece of land has been put.

### Identifying previous land use

Modern agricultural fields are frequently ploughed and cropped into either flat, or rolling landscapes. The densely planted crops accentuate the uniformity. However, beneath the fields there are traces of many previous landscapes and land uses. Former settlements, burial grounds and battlefields are some of the archaeological remains. Also, traces of modern airfields and areas of industrial activity and even large scale mineral extraction can fast become hidden below a modern ploughed field.

We research a site using historic maps, LIDAR data, aerial photographs and through walking the land and checking for signs of earthworks or cropmarks locally.

### Setting of Heritage Assets

Many of our rural landscapes lie close to historic villages or estates. Registered Parks and Gardens, Battlefields and village Conservation Areas are

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

#### Who often uses this service?

Renewable Energy developers

#### Why use this Service?

To fulfil a requirement of the local planning authority

Recognise the level of destruction/preservation on a site

To inform design, especially in terms of understanding the spatial distribution of archaeological remains

#### Relevant Project Examples

Tophams Solar Farm, Bygrave, North Hertfordshire

Steeraway Solar Farm, Telford, Shropshire

Birchall Green Solar Farm, Malvern Hills District Council

#### Professional Standards and Guidance

Standard and guidance for desk-based assessment. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)

Commercial Renewable Energy Development and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 15

The Setting of Heritage Assets Standard 2. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3

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all considered in our assessment process. We pick up on Listed Buildings and locally Listed Buildings. Such Heritage Assets will have a setting and the degree to which that setting contributes negatively or positively to their significance is a key point. We have experience in assessing the significance of heritage assets and in recognizing and distinguishing the role played by setting in that significance. We carry out a site visit to the development plot, and we visit heritage assets which may potentially be affected. We carry out bespoke setting assessment of each asset which has the potential to be affected. In so doing our clients are informed on this important topic.

We are familiar with the need to consider *glint and glare* with regard to solar farms. Also, whether cumulative impact will be an issue and whether there are regional variations in how solar farm developments are viewed.

## Data-Gathering to support an application

We can advise on the most efficient methods to gather data in support of an application. We have designed and successfully managed many evaluations in support of a Solar Farm. Typically, this will mean geophysical survey evaluation, but can also include trial trenching and other methods of gathering data.

## Impact Assessment

Whether your application needs an Environmental Statement chapter or a stand alone assessment, we will fit in. If the project falls within the EIA regulations, then we are able to work with the house style of your team.

## Go ahead and ask.....

If you would like to talk over a site or any of the topics mentioned above, please give us a call or send an email. We are happy to help out with some preliminary observations on archaeology and heritage.

Find out More:

<https://www.abramsarchaeology.co.uk/>

<https://www.abramsarchaeology.co.uk/blog-commercial-archaeology>

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