

| Environmental Statement: | Technical Appendix 7.6 – Residential | Visual Amenity Assessment

ES TA 7.6

Development of National Significance

Alaw Môn Solar Farm

Land west of the B5112, 415m south of Llyn Alaw, 500m east of Llantrisant and 1.5km west of Llannerch-y-Medd, Anglesey

February 2024



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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) has been prepared as an appendix to the Landscape and Visual Chapter (7) of the Environmental Statement (ES) for the construction of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farm and associated energy storage facility, together with associated landscaping, works, infrastructure and access (the 'Development'). It has been prepared by Stantec in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/2019 Residential Visual Amenity Assessments and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3).
- 1.2 This RVAA should also be read in conjunction with ES Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Effects and supporting Figures 7.1 to 7.17.
- 1.3 This RVAA is accompanied by the following Figures:
- Figure 1a: ZTV with property locations
- Figure 2a: Assessment sheets for individual properties 1 to 14
- 1.4 Residential Amenity comprises a range of visual, aural, olfactory and other sensory components and development can cause effects on one or more of these components, for example effects relating to noise, dust, access to daylight, vibration, glare, outlook and visual amenity. These can also be referred to as 'living conditions'. Residential Visual Amenity, which is one component of Residential Amenity, is defined as "the overall quality, experience and nature of views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties, including views from gardens and domestic curtilage" in TGN 02/2019.
- 1.5 Whilst changes in views and visual amenity are a material consideration in the planning process, and views from private locations may be considered as part of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), nobody has 'a right to a view'. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before. This RVAA sets out judgements in respect of Residential Visual Amenity and assesses whether the effect of the Development on Residential Visual Amenity is of such a nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity, i.e. whether the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold has been reached.
- 1.6 The requirement for RVAAs has to date been concerned with wind farm planning applications that would potentially give rise to unacceptable effects on residential visual amenity due to their vertical elevation. In this regard, Inspector Lavender within the Carland Cross Appeal Decision (APP/D0840/A/0921030260) summarised within paragraph 23 that:
- 1.7 "The planning system is designed to protect public rather than private interests, but both interests coincide here where, for example, a visual intrusion is of such a magnitude as to render a property an unattractive place to live. This is because it is not in the public interest to create such living conditions where they did not exist before. This I do not consider that simply being able to see a turbine or turbines from a particular window or part of a garden of a house is sufficient reason to find the visual impact unacceptable (even though a particular occupier might find it objectionable). However, when turbines are present in such number, size and proximity that they represent an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as unattractive (rather than simply less attractive, but not necessarily uninhabitable) place in which to live."
- 1.8 In recent years RVAAs have been conducted for a number of solar energy schemes, which due to the economy of scale have become increasingly larger. This is particularly relevant to solar energy developments that fall within the definition of major infrastructure projects, taken through the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.
- 1.9 This threshold regarding the acceptability of visual effects on the living conditions of residential properties in the public interest has become widely known within the renewables sector as the 'Lavender Test'. This RVAA seeks to determine whether or not the Proposals would give rise to significant visual effects on the surrounding residential properties and whether the proposed infrastructure would appear oppressive, overbearing or overwhelming on living conditions as a matter for the public interest.

METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The RVAA has been undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out below, which has been drawn from guidelines set out in GLVIA3 and TGN 02/2019. The RVAA has been undertaken by professional landscape architects as competent experts and judgements are based on training and experience, and are supported by clear evidence and reasoned argument.
- 2.2 The RVAA follows the four steps recommended in TGN 02/2019, informed by the principles and processes of GLVIA3:
 - Step 1: Define study area, and identify the properties to be assessed;
 - Step 2: Evaluate baseline visual amenity of properties;
 - Step 3: Assess change to visual amenity of properties & identification of significant effects in accordance with GLVIA3;
 - Step 4: Further assessment in respect of the acceptable threshold for residential visual amenity and living conditions in the public interest.

STUDY AREA

- 2.3 The Study Area was identified based on professional judgement, taking into account the type of development proposed and the landscape context. The identification of the Study Area has been aided by Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, using a bare earth model which does not account for the screening effects of existing built form and/or vegetation. With respect to the Study Area extents, this has also been informed by TGN 02/2019 which cautions against a disproportionately extensive study area and recommends focusing on properties in very close proximity to the development, defined as 50 250m for development types other than wind turbines.
- 2.4 The Study Area extents and ZTV has been used to identify the residential receptors to be assessed in the RVAA.
- 2.5 The remaining neighbouring and indeed more distant residential properties that are excluded from this RVAA can be assessed by proxy, based on the findings of this Chapter.
- 2.6 The appropriateness of the scope and study area has been confirmed in consultation with Isle of Anglesey County Council, see Chapter 7, Table 7.1: Key Correspondence with Statutory Consultees.

BASELINE VISUAL AMENITY

- 2.7 The existing baseline visual amenity of the residential receptors that have been scoped into the assessment has been described, based on a desktop assessment and site visits. The visual amenity baseline has been described in terms of the type, nature, extent and quality of views that may be experienced 'in the round' from the dwelling itself, including its 'domestic curtilage' which includes domestic gardens and access drives.
- 2.8 The following aspects have been considered when evaluating the baseline:
 - the nature and extent of all existing views potentially available from the property and its garden / domestic curtilage, including the proximity and relationship of the property to surrounding landform, land cover and visual foci. This may include primary / main views from the property or domestic curtilage, as well as secondary / peripheral views; and
 - views experienced when arriving at or leaving the property, for example from private driveways / access tracks.
- 2.9 Seasonal and diurnal variation are considered when assessing the visual amenity baseline and likely visual effects.

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

2.10 With respect to the assessment of visual effects, GLVIA 3 Paragraph 6.1 states that:

"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity."

2.11 The significance of visual effects is derived from a combination of assessments of the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of effect (change) experienced as a result of the Development.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 2.12 The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a consideration of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor, the latter being primarily based on consideration of the extent to which a visual receptor is focused on appreciation of the landscape. Professional judgement is used to determine these factors; however, it is well-established that residents at home are most susceptible to change and therefore have high susceptibility. Table 1 sets out the considerations that underpin the judgements made about the value attached to the views experienced.
- 2.13 The sensitivity of a visual receptor results from the combination of value and susceptibility and is rated as high, medium or low. Typically a high value and high susceptibility would result in a high sensitivity; and a low value and low susceptibility would result in low sensitivity.

Table 1: Value of Views

VALUE	CRITERIA
High	View of/from a location that is likely to be of national importance, either designated or with national cultural associations.
Medium	View of/from a location that is likely to be of local importance, either designated or with local cultural associations.
Low	View of/from a location that is not designated, with minimal or no cultural associations.

Visual Magnitude of Effect (Change)

2.14 In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified residential receptors, the magnitude of visual effect (change) is typically described with reference to:

- Distance of property from the Development having regard to its size / scale and location relative to the property (e.g. on higher or lower ground);
- Type and nature of the available views (e.g. panoramic, open, framed, enclosed, focused etc.) and how they may be affected, having regard to seasonal and diurnal variations;
- Direction of view / aspect of property affected, having regard to both the main / primary and peripheral / secondary views from the property;
- Extent to which the Development / landscape changes would be visible from the property (or parts of) having regard to views from principal rooms, the domestic curtilage (i.e. garden) and the private access route, taking into account seasonal and diurnal variations;
- Scale of change in views having regard to such factors as the loss or addition of features and compositional changes including the proportion of view occupied by the Development, taking account of seasonal and diurnal variations;
- Degree of contrast or integration of new features or changes in the landscape compared to the existing situation in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture, having regard to seasonal and diurnal variations;
- Duration and nature of the changes, whether temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous, reversible or irreversible etc.; and
- Mitigation opportunities consider implications of both embedded and potential further mitigation.
- 2.15 The criteria for magnitude of visual effect (change) are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Visual Magnitude of Effect (Change)

VALUE	CRITERIA
Large	The proposals will cause a pronounced change to the existing view, resulting in the loss or addition of features that will substantially alter the composition of the view. The change may be long-term or may be irreversible.
Medium	The proposals will cause a noticeable change in the view, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the composition of the view. The change may be medium-term or may be irreversible.
Small	The proposals will cause a limited change in the view, which would not materially alter the composition of the view. The change may be short-term or reversible.
Very Small	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change in the view. The change may be short-term or reversible.
None	No change discernible in the view.

Significance of Effects

- 2.16 In order to draw conclusions about the significance of visual effects, the combination of the sensitivity of the residential receptors and the magnitude of effect (change) are considered for the Development at Year 1 of operation; and, depending on the assessment, also at a point where planting associated with the Development will be establishing e.g. Year 15. In certain circumstances, it may also be appropriate to consider effects at construction and on decommissioning of the Development.
- 2.17 Significance of effects are rated on a scale of Neutral to Major.
- 2.18 Assessment of significance of effects is subject to professional judgement but in broad terms, where a receptor of high sensitivity experiences a large magnitude of effect (change) as a result of the Development, the significance of effect is likely to be major. Conversely, where a receptor of low sensitivity experiences a very small magnitude of effect (change) as a result of the Development, the significance of effect is likely to be negligible.
- 2.19 Where it is considered that there is potential for both beneficial and adverse changes, these magnitudes of effect (change) are noted and the balance of these considerations used to inform conclusions on significance of effect.

Table 3: Establishment of significance of effects

Najor

Neutral

Low

Significance of Effects

Major

High
Sensitivity of Receptor

2.20 For schemes subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, as governed by the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU), an assessment of whether or not the effect is considered 'significant' is required. This is relative to each scheme but, in the ES the RVAA is appended to, effects of Major or Moderate (adverse/beneficial) significance are deemed 'significant'.

2.21 Where 'significant' visual effects on residential receptors are identified this does not imply that they create unacceptable living conditions or engage the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. Residential receptors identified as experiencing major visual effects will be assessed further in the final step, Step 4, in order to reach a judgement regarding the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

Table 3: Significance of Visual Effects - Criteria

able 5. Significance of visual Effects - Criteria									
VALUE	CRITERIA								
Major Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view.								
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.								
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view.								
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.								
Neutral	Neither beneficial nor adverse effects on the existing view.								
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.								
Minor Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.								
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.								
Major Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced deterioration in the existing view.								

FORMING THE RVAA JUDGEMENT

2.22 Residential properties identified as experiencing a major magnitude of effect will be assessed to determine whether the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold is engaged. The judgement is explained in a narrative format, using text with clear descriptions and commonly understood terminology, setting out why the effects are considered to reach or not reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

STUDY AREA & SCOPE

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Chapter 7: Landscape & Visual Effects of the ES describes the Site and its context in greater detail, including a description of the likely effects of the Development on landscape and visual receptors.

STUDY AREA

- 3.2 The majority of the Development comprises solar panels that range in height from 0.8m above the ground level to 3m, and are therefore of limited height. However, due to the size of the Site and the nature of its context, residential properties within 250m of the Site boundary have been scoped into the RVAA, although this is likely to include properties that will not experience significant visual affects as a result of the Development.
- 3.3 The location of residential properties included within this RVAA are identified on Figure 1a accompanying this report with the photographic evidence and plans and Site Photography provided at Figure 3a of this report.
- 3.4 Given the type and scale of the development and the dispersed nature of the surrounding residential properties, the likelihood of any significant visual effects is considered to be restricted to those within the immediate surroundings.
- 3.5 The layout of the proposed development has been subject to a number of refinements, see Figure 3.1-Working Indicative Site Layout (Revision A), Figure 3.2- Working Indicative Site Layout (Revision E), and Working Indicative Site Layout (Revision H) (document reference 6.2.3) for visualisations of the iterative design process.
- 3.6 See Chapter 3: Site Description, Site Selection and Iterative Design Process (document reference 6.1.3) for further details on the iterative design process.
- 3.7 As illustrated by Figure 1a, 14 residential properties have been scoped into the RVAA, with the remaining residential properties scoped out as they are the residential properties of interested parties. The ZTV shows that all of the residential properties have potential intervisibility with the Development, based on a bare earth ZTV which does not account for the screening effects of existing built form and/or vegetation.
- 3.8 Letters were sent to each of the residential properties identified based upon post code data to request access to the individual properties, If no response was received, 'proxy viewpoints' have been undertaken from publicly accessible locations. All but one property provided access.
- 3.9 It is accepted that distant views of the solar modules and proposed substation and central Energy Storage Compound may be perceptible beyond the identified 1km study area. The effects on residential visual amenity and living conditions, however, are unlikely to be significant or unacceptable beyond this identified scope.

SCOPE

- 3.10 The RVAA focusses exclusively on private views and private visual amenity of residents within 250m of the Site boundary who are not interested parties. The report makes judgements only with respect to Residential Visual Amenity, which is just one element of Residential Amenity. The purpose of the RVAA is to determine whether the Development triggers the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.
- 3.11 Where possible, the RVAA process has informed the design of landscape and visual mitigation measures as part of an iterative 'mitigation by design' rationale. Where relevant the iterations are described in Figure 2a in relation to each property assessed.

LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT

- 3.15 In undertaking the visual assessment in relation to the RVAA, there are limitations and constraints affecting the outputs from this work. These include:
- During the site visits, weather condition, the time of day, and seasonal factors have influenced the assessment and photographic record of the proposed development and its surroundings.
- Baseline views were taken in April with some of the broadleaved structural vegetation coming into leaf with further viewpoints recorded in May. The site and surroundings were also revisited in August.
- The assessment of the proposed development is based on application drawings that accompany this ES and is assessed on the assumption that the proposed development is delivered within the stated parameters outlined on these drawings and associated timescales.
- Where distances and measurements are given, these are approximate and generally calculated from the nearest point of the proposed development (or as otherwise stated) to the receptor in question.

4. BASELINE EVALUATION

- 4.1 Figure 2a: Property Appraisal Sheets provides an evaluation of the baseline visual amenity for properties 1 to 14, the locations of which are shown on Figure 1a: ZTV and property locations.
- 4.2 The evaluation of baseline visual amenity considers the type, nature, extent, and quality of the existing views from the residential properties including building curtilages, private gardens, and driveways. Technical Guidance Note 2/19 advises in paragraph 4.11 that: "When evaluating the baseline, it is recommended that the following aspects are considered:
- the nature and extent of all potentially available existing views from the property and its garden / domestic curtilage, including the proximity and relationship of the property to surrounding landform, landcover and visual foci. This may include primary / main views from the property or domestic curtilage, as well as secondary / peripheral views; and
- views as experienced when arriving at or leaving the property, for example from private driveways / access tracks"
- 4.3 In accordance with the principles and processes of GLVIA3, the visual effects have been determined by cross-referencing the sensitivity of the visual receptor with the magnitude of change arising from the proposed development. Residential properties are generally considered to be of high sensitivity within GLVIA3. However, TGN 2/19 advocates a further detailed review and refined survey of the residential properties in question with regards to the potential sensitivities in relation to the proposed development.
- 4.4 Higher sensitivity areas of the residential properties might include:
- Views from ground floor windows on principal elevations of the building and are likely to correspond to primary living rooms such as lounge, dining rooms, kitchens, or conservatories.
- Views from rear gardens or heavily frequented parts of a garden where an appreciation of the surrounding landscape is likely to be fundamental to the enjoyment of the space.
- 4.5 Medium sensitivity areas of the residential properties might include:
- Views from upper floor windows on principal elevations of the building likely to correspond to bedrooms and study / office rooms.
- Views from front gardens or parts of the curtilage to the building where it is likely that the focus of attention is on an activity such as gardening rather than on the surrounding landscape.
- 4.6 Lower sensitivity areas of the residential properties might include:
- Views from windows on side elevations and from windows likely to correspond to utility rooms, bathrooms, etc.
- Views from parts of the garden or building curtilage with a purely functional purpose such as a driveway or storage area, etc. or land worked as part of a business
- 4.7 Each baseline evaluation includes diagrams showing the relationship between the property and the Site. Due to the scale of the Site, a distinction is made between where the Site lies in relation to the property and what part of the Site could potentially be seen from the property, given the screening effect afforded by intervening landform and vegetation.
- 4.8 None of the properties are located within any designated landscapes.
- 4.9 With respect to landscape character and visual perception, the Site straddles two County Landscape Character Areas (LCA): LCA 5: North West Anglesey, to the north-west, and LCA 17: West Central Anglesey, to the south-east. The transition between LCAs is defined by the local ridge-line, along which Property 1: Penllidiart and Property 11: Glan-y-gors are located.
- 4.10 At a local level, LANDMAP maps and classifies landscapes, dividing Wales into geographical areas known as aspect areas, each of which is identified by its own landscape characteristics and qualities. With respect to the Cultural Landscape and Visual and Sensory aspect areas, LANDMAP differentiates between the North-west drumlins aspect area, to the north-west, and the Central smooth belt aspect area, to the south-east. Property 1: Penllidiart and Property 11: Glan-y-gors are located on the local ridge-line that marks the transition between the two aspect areas, falling within the North-west drumlins aspect area.

5. ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 5.1 Figure 2a: Property Appraisal Sheets include an assessment of the magnitude and significance of likely visual effects at properties 1 to 14. This is undertaken in accordance with GLVIA3 principles and the Methodology described in Section 1 and is based on visits to all of the individual properties except for Property 12.
- 5.2 The Development has a lifespan of 40 years, after which it will be decommissioned and removed from Site. As such it is considered to have a long term temporary duration and reversible. Due to the nature of the Development, the baseline is readily reinstated following the end of the 40 year period.
- 5.3 Likely significant effects are predicted for years 1 and 15 to take account of the effects of established mitigation planting.
- 5.4 Table 4 below provides a summary of the assessment of effects, mitigation and residual effect predicted for each property assessed in Figure 2a.

MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT

- 6.1 As described in ES Chapter 7 the layout of the proposal incorporates a number of built-in mitigation measures and changes as a result of the iterative assessment process. These are as follows:
- Reduction in the extent of the proposed solar modules and refinements to the layout to provide increased physical separation from nearby residential properties.
- The siting of more visually prominent elements, such as the substation and battery storage facility has been carefully considered to reduce the landscape and visual effects of this larger infrastructure, particularly in relation to higher sensitivity receptors. The design of these elements was amended to reduce the extent of cut and fill required (with the facility extending across three levels to integrate it better into the surrounding landform). A seeded retaining wall and slope stabilisation system and recessive colours for equipment and containers have been specified to further assimilate the Development into views.
- Security fencing is limited to around the battery storage facility and substation, with stock proof fencing and gates used throughout the majority of Site.
- A Landscape Strategy has been prepared that incorporates landscape and ecological mitigation measures into the Development and has been informed by the strategy and guidelines of the landscape as set out by the LANDMAP assessment and local planning policy and by ecology and tree surveys and recommendations, as illustrated by Figures 7.13 to 7.17: Landscape Strategy Plans and Planting Schedule and this includes the following mitigation measures:
- Existing hedgerows surrounding and within the Site will be retained and enhanced (through gapping up and enhanced management). Internal field boundary hedgerows will be encouraged to fill out and maintained at a minimum height of 2.5 3m. Over 4,000 linear m of proposed native hedgerow will be planted to gap up and reinstate field boundaries and enhance habitat connectivity within the Site.
- 5.14ha of native woodland planting is proposed, including sessile oak Quercus petraea, downy birch Betula pubescens and Rowan Sorbus aucuparia in line with the Ecologist's recommendations. Woodland is located where it will enhance the existing landscape character and provide some visual screening of the Development.
- 1.49ha of native scrub planting has been incorporated into the Development to enhance biodiversity. A greater range of grassland types are proposed, with the fencing associated with the Development enabling changes in management regimes for different parts of the Site that would benefit from less intense grazing to encourage greater species diversity. The Landscape Strategy includes the preparation and seeding of existing grassland and changes in management regimes to achieve less agriculturally improved areas; hay meadow; rough tussocky grassland and marshy grassland.
- The Landscape Strategy includes 4 Specific Landscape Management Areas: Nantanog SSSI (5.94ha), a 25m buffer to Pond 11 (2.03ha); Hedgerow Buffer Corridors (2.52ha); and Scheduled Monument Buffer (0.47ha) as well as 45.27ha of grassland outside the proposed perimeter fences and 6.59ha of grassland seeding that will be cut no more than once annually

to allow for a tall grass sward to develop.

GLINT AND GLARE ASSESSMENT (GGA)

- 6.2 Whilst the GGA study concludes that Low impacts are predicted for Residential Receptors, and therefore, no significant effects, it is acknowledged that any reflectivity perceived by visual receptors has the potential to make the Development more noticeable at certain times of day. On this basis, the potential for solar reflections has been taken into account in this assessment for the following receptors where some reflectivity may be percieved:
- Residents of Pennant (Residential Receptor 25 in the GGA)
- Residents of Hen Nantanog (Residential Receptor 46 in the GGA)
- Residents of Gorsgoch (Residential Receptor 49 in the GGA)
- 6.3 Residential Receptor 4, Rhyd-y-coed, lies beyond the 250m study area for effects on residential visual amenity and therefore was scoped out of the RVAA.

RESIDUAL EFFECTS

6.4 Following the implementation and successful establishment of the proposed additional mitigation measures – the proposed perimeter hedgerow, it is predicted that all of the identified major adverse and significant effects would have diminished to moderate - minor adverse – refer to Table 4 below and detailed assessment provided in Appendix 2a.

CUMULATIVE AND IN-COMBINATION

- 6.6 Due to the location of the proposed Energy Park, it is predicted that there is no potential for any cumulative effects
- 6.7 There are a number of wind turbines within the Study Area and the potential for In-combination effects has been taken into account in this assessment. However it is predicted that in-combinations effects are likely to give rise to minor/negligible effects. This is due to the nature of views experienced from properties of the proposal and the separation distances with the existing wind turbines.

7. FORMING THE RVAA JUDGEMENT-THE RVAA THRESHOLD

- 7.1 None of the above identified significantly affected properties have been judged to fail the test of overbearing effects i.e no major significant effects are predicted. In other words, the properties would continue to provide an attractive outlook and good living environment, from a visual point of view, albeit affected by the proposed development. The residents would continue to benefit from views in other directions, gained from the remaining unaffected elevations, and parts of their curtilage not affected by the proposed development. The properties would remain an attractive place to live when judged objectively, and would not be subject to any overbearing effects.
- 7.2 At year 1 Moderate adverse Significant effects on residential and visual amenity are predicted at Properties 7: Pennant and 13: Gorsgoch. However as mitigation planting establishes over time these effects are predicted to reduce to become not Significant by year 15. The detailed analysis of each property provided in Appendix 2a demonstrates that the Development would not reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold at year 1. The scale of the development is such that it would not be overbearing, although it would introduce a noticeable change in the views primarily from the second floor which is not considered to be a primary living space.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This RVAA concludes that the Development would not reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold at any of the properties scoped in to this assessment.

FIGURE 1a: STUDY AREA WITH ZTV AND PROPERTY LOCATIONS

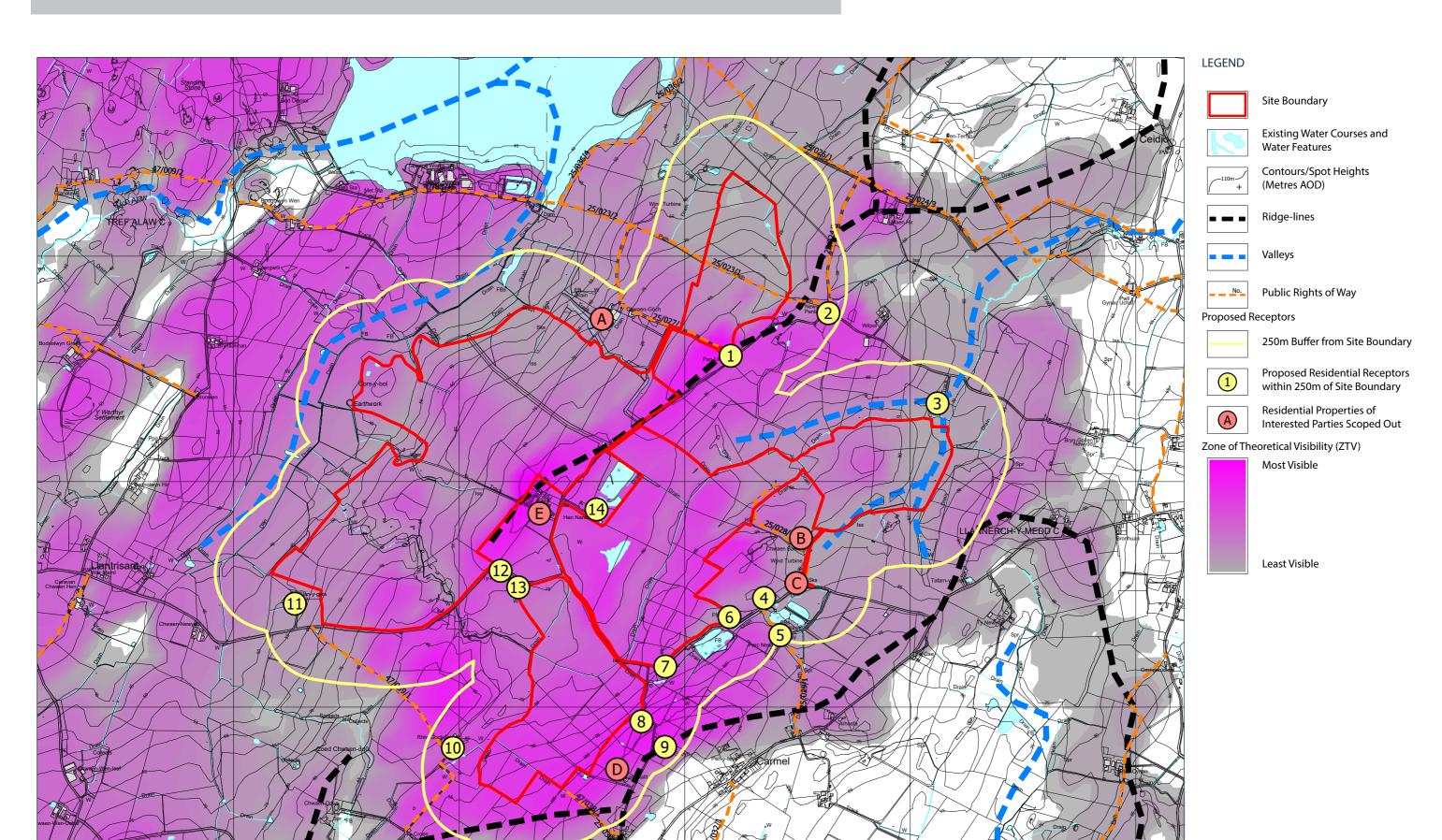


Figure 1: RVAA Receptors

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF EFFECTS

PROPERTY NAME	SENSITIVITY	SITE (approx.) &	DIRECTION OF VIEW / ASPECT OF PROPERTY	NATURE OF VIEW ¹	DEGREE OF VISUAL INTRUSION ²	DURATION	MITIGATION OPPORTUNITIES	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE YEAR 1	SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECT	SIGNIFICANCE YEAR 1	SIGNIFICANCE YEAR 15	RVAA THRESHOLD / LAVENDER TEST MET
1 - Penllidiart	High	Adjacent to Site 90m AOD (Site falls away to north)	N/ W&E	None from house Predominantly enclosed views with occasional framed, partial view from curtilage	None from house Glimpse from curtilage	Temporary but long- term Reversible	The long-distance view from the north-western part of the garden will be retained as open. Residents were supportive of proposals for habitat creation (including ponds, native scrub, hibernacular and grassland) adjacent to property as this will complement the pond on the property. Proposed landscape strategy was amended to omit woodland planting along property boundary to retain views.	None (property) Very small (curtilage)	Neutral (property) Negligible (curtilage)	Not Significant	J	No
2 - Ty Newydd Penbryn	High	185m 85m AOD (Site falls away to north beyond ridge- line)	W / N-W	None from house or curtilage	None	Temporary but long- term Reversible	N/A	None (property and curtilage)	Neutral		j	No
3 - Traian	High		S-W / S-W	Open from house Predominantly enclosed fromresidentialcurtilage, with single framed view	Almost full within views from main habitable rooms	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Set back between solar panels and property increased, to benefit from screening of existing hedgerow field boundary. Line of field boundary to be extended with new hedgerow planting and proposed tree planting along watercourse to screen views of Development. Manage hedgerows to height of 2.5 to 3m.	Small (property) Very small (curtilage)	Moderate to Minor Adverse (property) Negligible Adverse (curtilage)	Not Significant	Not Significant	No
4 - Chwaen Bach, Bronllwyn	High	204m	S-W / N-W / S-E	None from house Partial from curtilage	None from house Glimpse from curtilage	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Proposed hedgerow restoration (gapping up and positive management to height of 2.5 - 3m) along the Site boundary near Ffridd would screen views into the Site from the property.	None (property) Very small (curtilage)	Neutral (property) Negligible Adverse (curtilage)	Not Significant	Not Significant	No
5 - Parc Newydd	High	255m 95m AOD (Site set within valley'bowl' falling away to west and beyond local ridgeline to north-east)	N-W / N-W / S-E	None from house or curtilage	None	Temporary but long- term Reversible	N/A	None (property and curtilage)	Neutral (property and curtilage)	Not Significant	Not Significant	No
6 - Ffridd	High	Adjacent to Site	W W/E	Enclosed from house in summer, Filtered in winter Filtered from curtilage in summer, open in winter	Partial	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Solar panels are set back from Site boundary and stone wall enclosing property. Woodland belt extended along boundary	Medium to small (property and curtilage)	Minor to Moderate Adverse (property and curtilage)	Not Significant	Not Significant	No

- 1 Nature of View (degree of visibility): Panoramic, Open, Framed, Enclosed, Partial, None
- 2 Degree of Visual Intrusion (extent of the view that would be occupied by the development): Full, Partial, Glimpse, None
- 3 Nature of View: Change in View from property (or parts of)
- 4 Magnitude of Change: Large, Medium, Small, Very Small, None
- 5 Significance of Visual Effect: Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, Neutral

PROPERTY NAME	SENSITIVITY	DISTANCE FROM SITE (approx.) & ELEVATION	DIRECTION OF VIEW / ASPECT OF PROPERTY	NATURE OF VIEW ¹	DEGREE OF VISUAL INTRUSION ²	DURATION	MITIGATION OPPORTUNITIES	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE YEAR 1	SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECT	SIGNIFICANCE	SIGNIFICANCE YEAR 15	RVAA THRESHOLD / LAVENDER TEST MET
7 - Pennant	High	10m to the north and 50m to the west 90m AOD (Site falls away to north from 90m to 80m; Site rises to the west from 75m to 95m)	N & W / N, W & S	•	Almost full, with Site visible from numerous rooms from house Glimpse from curtilage	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Proposed native woodland tree belt along Site boundary to the north to reinforce the enclosed lane character of road and enhance screening of Site in views to the north. Restoration and gapping up of existing hedgerows to help retain grain of landscape and break up massing of panels, as seen on rising land to the west. Substantial set back of panels to north beyond field adjacent to road	Medium (home) Small (curtilage)	Moderate Adverse (home) Negligible Adverse (curtilage)	Significant	Not Significant	No
8 - Plas Carmel	High	Adjacent to Site 105m (Site falls away to north from 100m down to 75m)	N & N-W / N-W & N-E	and curtilage through tree belt along north-	Full in views to north-west and partial, oblique views from north-east facade, although elevated view looks over and across Site	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Proposed setback of solar panels increased and proposed native woodland tree belt increased and therefore lying at a lower level relative to the property. Lower level of tree planting will help to screen Development, without preventing views across the valley from the property. Development extends across fields as they fall away from the property, and does not go beyond watercourse, onto rising slopes facing towards the property. Landscape enhancements to existing hedgerows and watercourse will improve quality of landscape features.	Small (property and curtilage)	Moderate to Minor Adverse	Not significant	Not significant	No
9 - Cefn Gribyn	High	138m 110m AOD (Site falls away to north- west from 100m down to 75m AOD)	N-W / N-W & S-E	None	None	Temporary but long- term Reversible	N/A	None (property and curtilage)	Neutral	Not significant	Not significant	No

- 1 Nature of View (degree of visibility): Panoramic, Open, Framed, Enclosed, Partial, None
- 2 Degree of Visual Intrusion (extent of the view that would be occupied by the development): Full, Partial, Glimpse, None
- 3 Nature of Change in View from property (or parts of)
- 4 Magnitude of Change: Large, Medium, Small, Very Small, None
- 5 Significance of Visual Effect: Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, Neutral

PROPERTY NAME	SENSITIVITY	DISTANCE FROM SITE (approx.) & ELEVATION	DIRECTION OF VIEW / ASPECT OF PROPERTY	NATURE OF VIEW ¹	DEGREE OF VISUAL INTRUSION ²	DURATION	MITIGATION OPPORTUNITIES	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE YEAR 1	SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECT	SIGNIFICANCE	YEAR 15	RVAA THRESHOLD / LAVENDER TEST MET
10 - Rhiw Goch Fawr	High	133m 85m AOD (Site rises up valley sides to east of property from 75m to the north to 100m to the south)	S-E to E / N-W & S-E	Panoramic views as property sits on top of drumlin	Partial	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Proposed native woodland planting along watercourse will help to soften views of the edge of the Development and sides of solar panels. Proposed hedgerow restoration, including gapping up and enhanced management to a height of 2.5 to 3m would help to maintain the grain of the existing field boundaries, and protect the long-term landscape character of the valley. The Development does not extend up into the more elevated fields to the south-east of the property around Carmel, maintaining a backdrop of pastoral fields.	Medium to small (property and curtilage)	Moderate to Minor Adverse	Not Significant	Not Significant	No
11 - Glan-y-gors	High	Adjacent to Site 55m AOD (Site extends along north-west facing slopes from 80m to the east down to 45m to the north-west)	N to E / N-W, N-E & S-E	Views predominantly enclosed from property and residential curtilage, with filtered views through enclosing tree belts Valued views from residential curtilage are long-distance views across valley, over the Site in the foreground, seen below and through the trees From pastoral fields within farmstead curtilage there are open views to the north and partially screened views to the east beyond the hedgerow boundary.	Glimpse from house and residential curtilage Partial from farmstead curtilage	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Solar panels are set back from property boundary, with a proposed native hedgerow defining the Site boundary and providing low-level screening of the solar panels and retaining long distance open views across the valley. Remove proposed woodland belt along northern edge of property to preserve open views and replace with hedgerow along field boundary with set back to hedgerow corridor. Land falls away quickly and this should screen near-distance views of the Site (test with cross-section), with only long distant views remaining.	Very Small (property) Very Small (immediate curtilage) Medium (wider curtilage i.e. fields)	Minor Adverse (property) Minor (immediate curtilage) Moderate (wider curtilage)	Not significant	Not significant	No
12 - Ty Newydd	High	86m from the Site boundary 80m AOD (Site extends from 80m AOD falling away to the north-west down to circa 50m AOD)	N-W / N-W	None	None	Temporary but long- term Reversible	N/A	None (property and curtilage)	Neutral	Not significant	Not significant	No

- 1 Nature of View (degree of visibility): Panoramic, Open, Framed, Enclosed, Partial, None
- 2 Degree of Visual Intrusion (extent of the view that would be occupied by the development): Full, Partial, Glimpse, None
- 3 Nature of Change in View from property (or parts of)
- 4 Magnitude of Change: Large, Medium, Small, Very Small, None
- 5 Significance of Visual Effect: Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, Neutral

PROPERTY NAME	SENSITIVITY	DISTANCE FROM SITE (approx.) & ELEVATION	DIRECTION OF VIEW / ASPECT OF PROPERTY	NATURE OF VIEW ¹	DEGREE OF VISUAL INTRUSION ²	DURATION	MITIGATION OPPORTUNITIES	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE YEAR 1	SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL EFFECT	SIGNIFICANCE	SIGNIFICANCE YEAR 15	RVAA THRESHOLD / LAVENDER TEST MET
13 - Gorsgoch	High	Approximately 240m from the Site 80m AOD (Site extends from watercourse to the south-east, at 75m AOD up to circa 90m AOD across the valley to the east)		No views from north- west facing windows or enclosed residential curtilage to the north of the property. Open views from south-east facing windows and south-facing courtyard / drive. Framed views from windows, particularly upstairs studio. Panoramic views from courtyard, looking across valley.	Partial in views from south-east facing windows and south-facing courtyard.	Temporary but long- term Reversible	The Development is set back from the property, located beyond the existing watercourse to the south-east and set back from the road to the east. Proposed native woodland planting along watercourse will help to soften views of the edge of the Development and the sides of solar panels. Proposed hedgerowrestoration, including gapping up and enhanced management to a height of 2.5 to 3m would help to maintain the grain of the existing field boundaries, and protect the long-term landscape character of the valley. The Development does not extend up into the more elevated fields to the southeast of the property around Carmel, maintaining a backdrop of pastoral fields.	Medium (property and curtilage)	Moderate Adverse	Significant	Not Significant	No
14 - Hen Nantanog	High	Adjacent to Site 80m AOD (Site wraps property, extending over local ridge-line of circa 85m to north and fills valley bowl to south and east dropping down to 75m and rising up to 100m AOD)	Surrounds Property / N-W, N-E & S-E	Panoramic views from property on relatively elevated location on north-western edge of valley with views enclosed to the south-west due to mature coniferous tree belt Views to south-east are across working yard	Full from house and parts of curtilage, although where Site is visible in open views it is set back from house due to size of property curtilage and existing screening	Temporary but long- term Reversible	Solar panels are set back from existing pond and area managed to benefit wildfowl.	Small (property and curtilage)	Minor Adverse	Not significant	Not significant	No

- 1 Nature of View (degree of visibility): Panoramic, Open, Framed, Enclosed, Partial, None
- 2 Degree of Visual Intrusion (extent of the view that would be occupied by the development): Full, Partial, Glimpse, None
- 3 Nature of Change in View from property (or parts of)
- 4 Magnitude of Change: Large, Medium, Small, Very Small, None
- 5 Significance of Visual Effect: Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, Neutral

Figure 2a Assessment sheets for properties

SURVEY DETAILS:

Access granted to property curtilage. Owner confirmed that there were no views facing north towards the Site.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DWELLING:

Single storey building with relatively small windows on the western and eastern façades.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURTILAGE:

The garden is generally sheltered and enclosed by built form and vegetation.

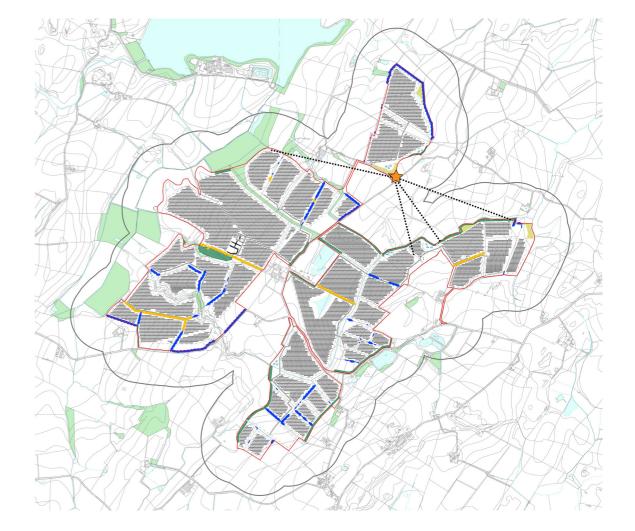
NATURE AND EXTENT OF VIEWS OF THE SITE FROM THE PROPERTY:

There are no views of the Site from within the dwelling as the windows of habitable rooms are either not oriented in the direction of the site or intervening landform screens any views.

From within the curtilage a partially open, framed view of the Site to the north is possible from the north-western corner of garden, between and through trees. The view is a long-distance view across and over the Site, and across Llyn Alaw. Elsewhere within the curtilage the site is screened from view by existing vegetation both within and beyond the property.

MITIGATION RECOMMENDATION / RESPONSE:

The long-distance view from the north-western part of the garden will be retained as open. Residents were supportive of proposals for habitat creation (including ponds, native scrub, hibernacular and grassland) adjacent to property as this will complement the pond on the property. As requested by the client the proposed landscape strategy was amended to adjust woodland planting along the property boundary.



LIKELY CHANGE OF VISUAL AMENITY OF PROPERTY:

Solar panels and associated infrastructure (access tracks, fencing and CCTV) will be introduced into the fields to the north of the property. However, due to the fall of the land away from the property, and the enclosed nature of the property, there would be very little change in visual amenity from the curtilage and none from the home itself.

As the habitat creation establishes over time there will be a positive benefit to the visual amenity of occupants.

The duration and nature of change would be temporary, Long term (40 years) and reversible.

Legend Views from habitable rooms towards Site Open views Filtered / screened views Extent of potential views of development Extent of potential views of development screened by substantial vegetation, buildings and/or landform Cloddiau to be retained/restored Native woodland planting Proposed native scrub planting Proposed hedgerow (to a minimum height of 2.5 -Location

AT YEAR 1 AT YEAR 15

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE: None (home) None (home)

Very small (curtilage)

Neutral (home) Neutral (home)

Neutral (curtilage) Minor to moderate beneficial (curtilage)

SIGNIFICANCE: Not Significant Not Significant



PROPERTY REFERENCE:

VISUAL EFFECT:

PROPERTY NAME: Penllidiart

THE SITE:

ORIENTATION East OF FRONTAGE:

DIRECTION TO Predominantly North THE SITE:

DISTANCE TO 15m



View taken from north west corner of curtilage looking northwards - wider context



View taken from north west corner of curtilage looking northwards - single frame



View taken from southern corner of curtilage adjacent to entrance looking south eastwards



View to show east facing aspect (frontage) of dwelling

1

SURVEY DETAILS:

Access granted to property curtilage. Owner confirmed that living room faced out towards the north-west.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DWELLING:

Single storey building. Main habitable room facing north-west.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURTILAGE:

Curtilage of property is largely enclosed by vegetation and the adjacent barn.

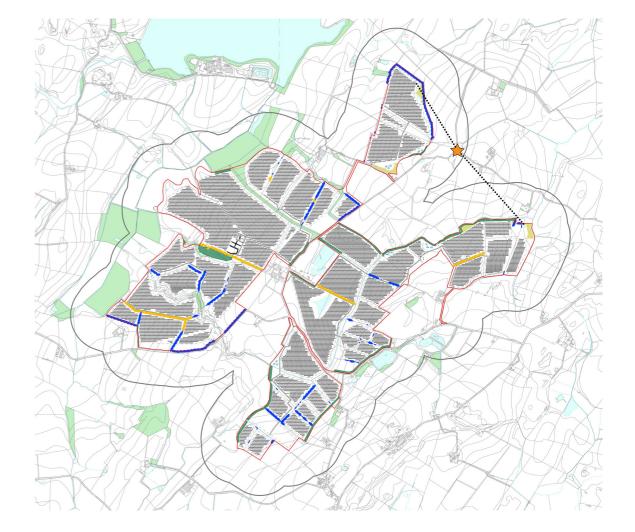
NATURE AND EXTENT OF VIEWS OF THE SITE FROM THE PROPERTY:

There are no views of the site from habitable rooms within the dwelling due to the nature of the intervening landform and vegetation within and outside the property's curtilage.

The nature of the landform is such that the property is on the opposite side of a low hill to the site such that the site is hidden from view

MITIGATION RECOMMENDATION:

None required.



LIKELY CHANGE OF VISUAL AMENITY OF PROPERTY:

No change in visual amenity.

Legend Views from habitable rooms towards Site Open views Filtered / screened views Extent of potential views of development Extent of potential views of development screened by substantial vegetation, buildings and/or landform Cloddiau to be retained/restored Native woodland planting Proposed native scrub planting Proposed hedgerow (to a minimum height of 2.5 -Location

AT YEAR 1

AT YEAR 15

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE: None (home and curtilage) None (home and curtilage)

VISUAL EFFECT: Neutral

2

Neutral (home)

SIGNIFICANCE:

Not Significant

Not Significant

PROPERTY REFERENCE: PROPERTY NAME:

Ty Newydd Penbryn

DISTANCE TO 195m THE SITE:

ORIENTATION South-west OF FRONTAGE:

DIRECTION TO Predominantly North-west THE SITE:





View taken from outside north west facing aspect of property looking towards the Site



View to show north west facing aspect (frontage) of dwelling

SURVEY DETAILS:

Access granted to property and curtilage.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DWELLING:

Single storey building. Conservatory, lounge and bedrooms oriented south-west towards the Site.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURTILAGE:

The property is accessed via a long track from the north which is heavily enclosed by vegetation on either side (trees and shrubs), which leads to an enclosed courtyard that comprises the residential curtilage.

The southeast and south west aspects of the property look immediately over two small pastoral fields that slope downwards to meet the route of a watercourse and field boundary at a distance of approximately 40m. Vegetation surrounding the watercourse marks its location in their view. The Site is located on the rising slopes of the hillside beyond.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF VIEWS OF THE SITE FROM THE PROPERTY:

The main views from the property are from the conservatory, lounge and bedrooms which are oriented south-west towards Site, with limited oblique views from windows to the south-east plus a glimpse from the courtyard.

Some screening/filtering of views of the site is provided by the trees along the watercourse. There are near-distance views of the eastern-most part of the Site, across approximately 3 or 4 fields on the hillside that rises beyond the watercourse. The rest of the site is not visible due to the undulating nature of the landform that is hidden beyond the hill and skyline seen in the view.

MITIGATION RECOMMENDATION:

context.

Following the findings of the initial visit to the property the proposed location of the solar panels was adjusted to increase their set back from the property by approximately another 50m to the south of the watercourse to take advantage of the screening provided by the existing hedgerow field boundaries and thus reduce the visual impact of the scheme.

A subsequent site visit and re-appraisal of the potential visual effects was carried out and that has resulted in an additional increase of the set back of the panels to over 150m from the watercourse.

In addition, the hedgerows will be managed to a height of 2.5 to 3m to maintain their screening effect. Additional screening and filtering of views of the proposal would also be provided by the new hedgerow planting that would extend the existing hedgerow field boundary further west, to the south of Traian. Additional tree planting is proposed along the watercourse plus other biodiversity benefits that reflect the surrounding wildlife site. See Landscape Strategy Plan.

LIKELY CHANGE OF VISUAL AMENITY OF PROPERTY:

Solar panels and associated infrastructure would be introduced into the fields to the south and southwest of the property. They would appear in the middle distance beyond existing hedgerows and fields that are located to the south and southwest of the water course.

Beyond the intervening watercourse, fields and hedgerows the proposed development would extend across approximately three fields on the hillside seen beyond. The existing landscape pattern i.e., field enclosure by hedgerows would be maintained and enhanced such that the appearance of the solar panels in the view would be fragmented and well-integrated with its surroundings.

Whilst the proposal would appear as an evident new element within views from the southwest facing aspect of the property, it would be unlikely to dominate these views. The proposal would be sufficiently set back, partially screened and views would also encompass wider views of the surrounding countryside.

Overtime as the mitigation planting establishes there would be additional screening and filtering of views of the proposal and other biodiversity benefits that reflect the surrounding wildlife site.

The duration and nature of change would be temporary, Long term (40 years) and reversible.

AT YEAR 1 AT YEAR 15

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE: Small (home)

Small to very small (home)

Very small (curtilage)

Very small (curtilage)

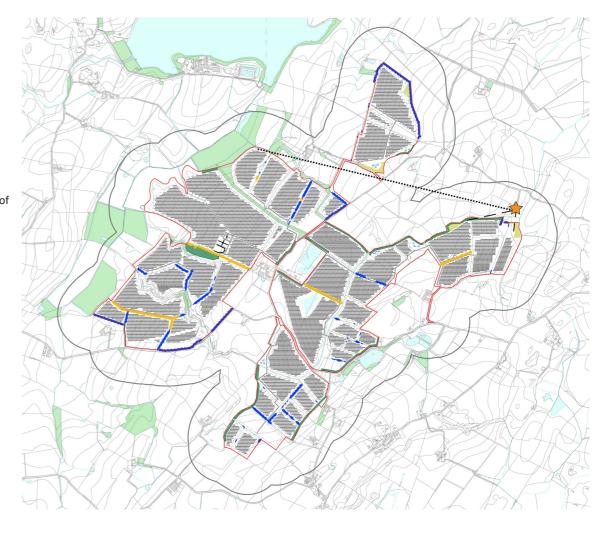
VISUAL EFFECT: Moderate to Minor Adverse (home) Minor Adverse (home)

Negligible Adverse (curtilage) Negligible (curtilage)

SIGNIFICANCE: Not Significant Not Significant

Views from habitable rooms towards Site Open views Filtered / screened views Extent of potential views of development Extent of potential views of development screened by substantial vegetation, buildings and/or landform Cloddiau to be retained/restored Native woodland planting Proposed native scrub planting Proposed hedgerow (to a minimum height of 2.5 -Location

Legend





PROPERTY 3 PROPERTY Traian NAME:

DISTANCE TO 65m THE SITE: ORIENTATION North-east OF FRONTAGE:

DIRECTION TO South-west THE SITE:



Views taken from within dwelling from windows to the right of the conservatory looking southwards towards the Site



Views taken from within the conservatory looking southwards and south westwards towards the Site



View taken from within curtilage looking south westwards towards the Site





View taken from within curtilage showing north east and north facing aspects from which there are no views of the site.



View taken from access track looking northwards towards the Site



Views taken from within the curtilage looking south westwards towards the Site

SURVEY DETAILS:

Access granted to property and curtilage.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DWELLING:

Single storey building. Views from house to north-west screened by local ridge-line. Partial views into Site from curtilage looking west beyond Ffridd and woodland (1 field visible over 200m away).

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURTILAGE:

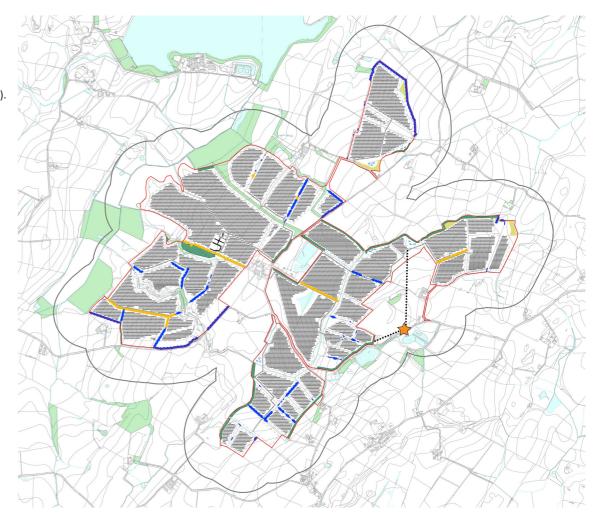
Relatively small curtilage, with driveway extending along western edge and wrapping around house to the north. Limited vegetation, with trees to the north-west and a tall hedge along the road frontage. Trees to the north-west provide some screening, but views are generally open across the surrounding fields.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF VIEWS OF THE SITE FROM THE PROPERTY:

The landform rises to the north of the property, screening views of the Site to the north and north-east. Trees and hedgerows to the west of the curtilage provide some screening, but there is a glimpsed view into the Site from the north-western part of the curtilage looking west beyond Ffridd (1 field visible over approximately 200m away).

MITIGATION RECOMMENDATION:

Proposed hedgerow restoration (gapping up and positive management to height of 2.5 - 3m) along the Site boundary near Ffridd would screen views into the Site from the property.



LIKELY CHANGE OF VISUAL AMENITY OF PROPERTY:

Possible glimpsed views of the edge of the Development from curtilage, during the winter months when vegetation is more open, becoming entirely screened as the hedgerow is restored and managed to greater depth and height.

The duration and nature of change would be temporary, Long term (40 years) and reversible.

Legend Views from habitable rooms towards Site Open views Filtered / screened views Extent of potential views of development Extent of potential views of development screened by substantial vegetation, buildings and/or landform Cloddiau to be retained/restored Native woodland planting Proposed native scrub planting Proposed hedgerow (to a minimum height of 2.5 -Location

AT YEAR 1 AT YEAR 15 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE: None (home) None (home) Very small (curtilage) Very small to none (curtilage) Neutral (home) Neutral (home) Negligible Adverse (curtilage) Negligible Adverse (curtilage)

PROPERTY REFERENCE:

VISUAL EFFECT:

SIGNIFICANCE:

PROPERTY NAME:

Not Significant

Chwaen Bach, Bronllwyn

DISTANCE TO 215m THE SITE:

Not Significant

OF FRONTAGE: east

ORIENTATION North-west and South-

DIRECTION TO West THE SITE: