

**Byers Gill Solar
EN010139**

6.4.7.3 Environmental Statement

Appendix 7.3 Landscape and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment

Planning Act 2008

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms
and Procedure) Regulations 2009

Volume 6

February 2024

Revision C01



APPENDIX 7.3: LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

This appendix provides a detailed review of value and susceptibility criteria to inform the landscape sensitivity judgements within the LVIA. The sensitivity of the host landscape character areas are assessed below. Landscape (or townscape) sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the Proposed Development. Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the development of the type proposed, with additional comments regarding the Site Area where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the Darlington Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in italics) as well as site observations. The sensitivity criteria set out in Appendix 7.1 are considered below for landscape and townscape character areas. The assessment for Bishopton is informed by the Bishopton Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2008).

Host Landscape: 6 Great Stainton Farmland

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Landscape Value		
Designated scenic quality	No national or landscape designations	Community
Natural Heritage	<i>“The woodlands in the centre-east of this landscape character area provide shelter and habitats for various species, while broad verges and small becks may act as pathways for species travelling between habitats. Newton Ketton Meadow is a small SSSI in the centre of the area, and there is a local wildlife site at Carr House Pond.”</i>	Community
Cultural Heritage	Some listed buildings a non-scheduled archaeology. <i>“The course of a Roman road runs through the area.”</i>	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Generally in good condition with some areas where hedges have been replaced by fences and/or field sizes are larger – notably within and nearby to Panel Areas A and B, south of Brafferton and around Hauxley Farm. Limited modern development except for power lines, some larger modern barns and Moor House wind farm.	Regional
Cultural associations	No specific cultural associations noted.	Community
Distinctiveness	Forms the setting to the villages of Great Stainton and Brafferton. Not distinctive in terms of the landscape type.	Community
Amenity and recreation	There is a good network of rights of way through the area, which has few roads.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	An attractive rural landscape contrasting with the urban areas nearby.	Regional
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	<i>“The area is generally quiet with few roads passing through, and there are many opportunities to access this rural landscape.”</i> Local roads can be busy during peak hours.	Community
Function	No specific function.	Community
Overall judgement of value		Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Susceptibility		
Scale	<i>"... large in scale on elevated ridges, but much smaller in scale in visually contained areas. Many human-scale features including trees and farmsteads, and small villages."</i>	High/ medium
Landform	<i>"A more rolling terrain than elsewhere in the Borough, and relatively elevated, with rounded hills and enclosed valleys, though with few strongly distinctive landforms."</i>	High/ medium
Openness/ enclosure	Mixed – as noted above.	Medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Mostly medium scale with some larger rectilinear fields, with irregular patterns from becks and woodlands.	Medium
Built Environment	Farmhouses have traditional built character. Modern barns, Moor House wind farm and power lines are larger scale and contemporary.	Medium/ low
Views intervisibility	<i>"elevated areas are widely visible, particularly from the flatter ground to the south and east ... and the rising ground provides containment to the Bishopton Vale ... Skerne Valley is framed by this landscape, which is also seen from locations in County Durham."</i>	High/ medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	<i>"Skylines in this area are formed by the rounded hills and ridges of higher ground, often with trees, though these are not particularly distinctive for the most part."</i>	Medium
Overall judgement of susceptibility		High/ medium
Sensitivity		Medium

Host Landscape: 7 Bishopton Vale

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Landscape Value		
Designated scenic quality	No national or landscape designations	Community
Natural Heritage	<i>"In terms of semi-natural habitats, there are series of small water-bodies in the lower, broader part of the vale in the centre and east of the area, though these are not protected by designation."</i>	Community
Cultural Heritage	Sadberge has a Conservation Area and there are a number of listed buildings.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	<i>"The Bishopton Vale is rural but for the most part has an intensive, man-modified character arising from historical drainage and relatively few trees or hedges."</i>	Community
Cultural associations	No specific cultural associations noted.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Distinctiveness	<i>“there are fewer distinctive landscape features, though there is a series of ponds along the Newbiggin Beck.”</i>	Community
Amenity and recreation	There is a good network of Public Right of Way (ProW) and few roads.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Intensive man-made character as noted above, power lines are noticeable crossing the open landscape.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Rural and relatively quiet due to limited road access, but not wild.	Community
Function	No specific function.	Community
Overall judgement of value		Community
Susceptibility		
Scale	<i>“Very large scale landscape across most of the vale, comprising large arable fields with limited enclosure. Areas of pasture in the north-east... tend to be smaller in scale and have more trees as well as human-scale traditional buildings and houses”</i>	Medium/ low
Landform	<i>“A generally flat or very gently undulating landscape with limited topographic variety, except around the Bishopton Beck.”</i>	Low
Openness/ enclosure	<i>“...contained by rising ground to the north and south. The vale becomes broader and more open to the east of the area.”</i> Large arable fields and “no significant woodland plantations in this area, but occasional clumps of ash trees do occur, with riparian scrub along watercourses.”	High/ medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Typically rectilinear field patterns.	Low
Built Environment	Villages have a traditional character, the countryside around has large scale modern agriculture and power lines.	Low
Views intervisibility	<i>“The area is overlooked from higher ground to south, around Sadberge, and north from the Great Stainton area. There are long views along the vale and across the flat landscape towards Stockton and Tees and Hartlepool, and to the edge of the North York Moors to the south.”</i>	High/ medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	<i>“This landscape does not contribute to skyline character. Skylines are indistinct or obscured by scattered trees.”</i>	Low
Overall judgement of susceptibility		Medium
Sensitivity		Medium/ low

Brafferton

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Townscape Value		
Cultural Heritage	Grade II listed buildings at Manor Farm.	Community
Townscape condition, quality and distinctiveness	Some older stone buildings, in particular around Manor Farm, but predominantly a mix of more recently built homes. Materials and placement of houses around the small village green and along the main street create a unified and harmonious character with few incongruous elements (see Illustrative view D in Appendix 7.2).	Regional/ community
Cultural associations	No known cultural associations	Community
Amenity and recreation	Village green provides as a small central open space, there is good connectivity to rights of way.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	The visual appearance of the village and views out from and towards it are pleasant but not notably scenic (see Illustrative views A-D in Appendix 7.2 and viewpoint 3).	Community
Overall judgement of value		Community
Susceptibility		
Scale	Small scale buildings and streetscape and a small-scale field pattern in the fields around the village.	High
Landform	The village is set in a slightly elevated position compared to the landscape to the south, west and northwest, with higher ground to the east as shown by Figure 7.6.1.	High/medium
Openness/ enclosure and views	There are limited views out from the main street and village green, where views are channelled along the main street by the houses to either side. Private views from homes and gardens have elevated outlooks over the surrounding landscape – particularly from the south and northeast edges (see Illustrative views B and C in Appendix 7.2 and viewpoint 3). The only public location where such views can be experienced is from the bridleway as it leaves the village heading south (viewpoint 3).	Medium
Complexity and patterns	The village has a simple linear form as shown by Figure 7.6.1.	Medium/low
Built Environment	Mostly modern, smaller houses, relatively frequent use of stone.	Medium
Settlements that form landmarks	Brafferton is visible from the countryside to the south and west and from Lime Lane (see viewpoints 1, 5 and 33), but does not form a particular landmark.	Medium
Overall judgement of susceptibility		High/medium
Sensitivity		Medium

Great Stainton

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Townscape Value		
Cultural Heritage	Several listed buildings within the village including the pub, church and water pump.	Community
Townscape condition, quality and distinctiveness	A mix of houses of varied ages, sizes, types and materials including the former pub and large car park set along the two streets and around a small village green as shown by Illustrative Views G in Appendix 7.2. Church is separated from the rest of the village by Elstob Lane.	Community
Cultural associations	No known cultural associations.	Community
Amenity and recreation	No parks or recreational areas within or adjacent to the village. Connectivity to public rights of way is good in theory, but more difficult in practice with access to routes discouraged by needing to walk along busy local roads without footpaths, waterlogging and other obstacles.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Views within the village around the village green are pleasant. Views from the roads and rights of way to the south and east are expansive and striking if not particularly scenic given the outlook over an intensively farmed landscape and the wind farms, pylons and distant industrial areas seen along with the Cleveland Hills and Roseberry Topping which form the backdrop to the southeast.	Regional/ community
Overall judgement of value		Community
Susceptibility		
Scale	A mix of scales with some of the houses, the barns at Town Farm and the pub and its car park being of markedly larger scale than the smaller terraced houses. Streets and the village green are small scale spaces. The small scale of the fields closest to the village is more pronounced to the west and less so to the east and southeast as shown by Figure 7.6.2.	High/medium
Landform	The village itself is largely on level ground, set above the vale to the southeast and below a gentle rise to the west as shown by Figure 7.6.2.	High
Openness/ enclosure and views	There are limited views out from the main streets and village green, where views are channelled along the streets by the houses to either side (see Illustrative Views G in Appendix 7.2). Private views from homes and gardens on the south and east edges of the village have elevated outlooks to the southeast (see the view from Hawthorn House in Appendix 7.6). The only public locations where such views can be experienced are from the roads and footpaths as they leave the village heading east and south (viewpoints 17 and 18).	High/medium
Complexity and patterns	There is no obvious pattern to the village although the general pattern of the streets and surrounding fields are more rectilinear than complex.	Medium
Built Environment	A wide variation of materials including modern houses on the southern edges and existing solar panels on roofs facing towards the site.	Medium
Settlements that form landmarks	The village forms a key landmark in views from the east and south (see viewpoints 19, 31 and 32 and Illustrative View F in Appendix 7.2), but not from other directions (see Illustrative View E).	High
Overall judgement of susceptibility		High/medium
Sensitivity		High/medium

Bishopton

Factors affecting sensitivity	Explanation	Judgement
Townscape Value		
Cultural Heritage	Several listed buildings within the village, the castle mound and surrounding field are identified as a Scheduled Monument and the village and castle are identified as a Conservation Area.	Regional
Townscape condition, quality and distinctiveness	As shown by Illustrative Views K in Appendix 7.2, the main street has mostly older houses along with the pub and church, with a distinctive character which is enhanced by the linear greenspaces and mature trees which line the road. This character is less pronounced along Mill Lane where there is a mix of newer houses and the primary school, and towards the castle where the garage and sewage pumping station are incongruous elements.	Regional
Cultural associations	No known cultural associations.	Community
Amenity and recreation	A small recreation ground is located at the northeast edge of the village. Good access to rights of way to the north and Mill Lane to the east. Reasonable access to the south and west although the connectivity to the west beyond Folly Bank would benefit from improvement given need to walk along the roadside and across a ploughed field.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Views along the High Street and the Green are scenic as shown by illustrative views K in Appendix 7.2. Views from homes looking out to the north and southwest and views from the roads and rights of way are predominantly rural, but include modern barns and wind turbines and are not particularly scenic as illustrated by viewpoint 23.	Regional
Overall judgement of value		Regional/ community

Susceptibility

Scale	Generally smaller scale streets and buildings, with larger scale barns at the equestrian centre at the eastern edge of the village. The small scale of the fields closest to the village is more pronounced to the northwest and south and less so to the east and west (where they have been changed by the former airfield in the site of Panel Areas E) as shown by Figure 7.6.3.	Medium
Landform	The village is set on the north side of Bishopton Beck, with the south side of the village sloping steeply toward the beck and the land to the north and east gently sloping upwards as shown by Figure 7.6.3. Slightly higher land (at 60-65m AOD compared to the village at 40-45m AOD) provide containment except along the beck valley as can be seen by comparing Illustrative View H in Appendix 7.2 which looks across the beck valley from the west, with viewpoint 29 which looks along the line of the valley from the south.	High/medium
Openness/ enclosure and views	There are limited views out from the main streets, where views are channelled along the streets by the houses to either side (see Illustrative Views K in Appendix 7.2). The main public views out of the village to the wider countryside are available on leaving the village by the local roads to the south and east, or on the footpaths to the north, and from the recreation ground. Private views from upper floors of homes on the northeast edge of the village have outlooks to the north (see the Illustrative View I in Appendix 7.2). Houses on the south side of the village occupy an elevated position but have limited outward views due to screening by trees (in summer) as shown by Illustrative View H.	High/medium
Complexity and patterns	The village follows the terrain of the valley side and the branches of the road network.	High/medium
Built Environment	The materials used in the village buildings are quite varied. There is greater use of modern materials and larger buildings evident when looking towards the northeast edge (see Illustrative View J) than there is looking towards the southwest edge (see Illustrative view H).	Medium
Settlements that form landmarks	The village is set within a valley and does not form a key landmark in views with the only relatively long view towards the village arising when approaching from the south (see viewpoint 29). The castle mound is only noticeable at close quarters, being screened from wider views by higher ground to the west, east and southeast as shown by Figure 7.6.3.	Low
Overall judgement of susceptibility		High/medium
Sensitivity		High/medium