

# Appendix 9.5

## Preliminary Residential Visual Amenity Assessment



## Introduction

This appendix presents a summary of the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) work undertaken to date. A detailed RVAA will be provided in the ES once final details of the Proposed Development have been established and mitigation measures developed as appropriate.

The RVAA in the ES will be prepared in accordance with:

- *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment* (15 March 2019).

As defined in the guidance above 'Residential Visual Amenity' is taken to mean:

*"the overall quality, experience and nature of views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties, including views from gardens and domestic curtilage"*

## Background

With respect to visual impact the focus of LVIA is on public views and public visual amenity. RVAA is a stage beyond LVIA and focusses exclusively on private views and private visual amenity and may be used by the decision maker when weighing potential effects on Residential Amenity in the planning balance.

Technical Guidance Note 2/19 (TGN 2/19) identifies that:

*"The purpose of carrying out a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is to form a judgement, to assist decision makers, on whether a proposed development is likely to change the visual amenity of a residential property to such an extent that it becomes a matter of 'Residential Amenity'."*

It further notes that:

*"Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has 'a right to a view.'"*

...

*It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. 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."*

RVAA considers only what the resident may see from their property. Views or 'visual amenity' are just one component of the wider consideration of residential amenity and the two should not be confused. The latter is a planning matter and may also include aspects such as noise, air quality, traffic, etc., in addition to visual amenity. The RVAA presented in the ES will consider the visual amenity aspects of residential amenity. Where necessary, other aspects of residential amenity will be considered in the relevant chapters of the ES and it is for decision makers to weigh all these aspects, and documents/assessments relating to them, in determining the acceptability the Proposed Development as submitted and assessed in the ES.

Overall residential amenity will be discussed within the planning statement accompanying the DCO application for the Proposed Development.

The process of RVAA, seeks to identify where effects on residential visual amenity are of such a nature or magnitude that they may need

to be considered in the overall balance of ‘Residential Amenity’ or ‘Living Conditions’. The point at which this happens is referred to as the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

## Approach

TGN 2/19 advocates a four-step process to RVAA with the first three falling broadly within the scope of LVIA where the magnitude and significance of visual effects is assessed.

The fourth step involves a further assessment of the change to visual amenity of individual properties identified as “having the greatest magnitude of change” and identifying whether the Residential Visual Amenity threshold is reached.

The preliminary assessment presented in this PEIR identifies the potential visual effects at each property and the likely requirement for detailed consideration but does not provide that detailed assessment. This will be presented in the ES once final details of the Proposed Development have been established; including any mitigation measures as appropriate.

## Methodology

### Preliminary Residential Property Visits

Residential amenity has been considered from the outset of the Proposed Development and throughout the design process to date. In order to refine the layout resulting in the current parameters plans presented in the PEIR, numerous residential properties have been visited in the LVIA study area (including most of the properties discussed in this appendix).

At an early stage in the design development, all residents of properties within 500m of the then site boundary were contacted by letter offering a visit by the Applicant’s Landscape Architect to understand the outlook from their dwellings. The only exception was residents of military properties at RAF Digby. The outlook from these properties is easily established from the roads/fields immediately adjoining them.

Table A9.5-1 below sets out the properties contacted and whether property visits were undertaken.

**Table A9.5-1 Preliminary Residential Property Visits**

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
Scopwick Low Field Farm, Blankney	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Brickyard Farm, Blankney	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Scopwick House East Wing, Scopwick	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Scopwick House West Wing, Scopwick	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
Gardeners Cottage (Scopwick House), Scopwick	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining properties
The Cottage (Scopwick House), Scopwick	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining properties

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
The Threshing Barn (Scopwick House), Scopwick	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
Scopwick House Farm, Scopwick	No	Property/properties under construction – viewed from adjacent properties
The Paddock (Scopwick House), Scopwick	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining properties
Sheffield House, Rowston	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
Eastfield Cottage, Rowston	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
Westfield Cottage, Rowston	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
Scopwick Mill, B1191, Scopwick	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
The Windmill, B1191, Scopwick	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
1 Mill Cottages, B1191, Scopwick	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
2 Mill Cottages, B1191, Scopwick	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Hill Top Farm, Rowston Top	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
The Maltings, Rowston Top	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
The Granary, Rowston Top	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
The Hayloft, Rowston Top	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
1-2 Rowston Hill Top Cottages (nr RAF Digby)	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Fieldview (nr RAF Digby)	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Fleur de lys (nr RAF Digby)	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Fieldview (nr RAF Digby)	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Woodview (nr RAF Digby)	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Glebe Farm, B1191, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Ashby Walled Garden, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
The Garden House, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Slate House Barn, B1191, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Slate House, B1191, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
1-2 Slate House Cottage, B1191, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
3 Slate House Cottage, B1191, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
4 Slate House Cottage, B1191, Ashby de la Launde	No	Unable to arrange mutually convenient time but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
Mount Farm, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
The Stone Barn, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
The Coach House, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
1 Peacock Lodge Cottage, Ashby de la Launde	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
2 Peacock Lodge Cottage, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Gorse Hill Farm, Wellingore	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Gorse Hill Bungalow, Wellingore	No	Residents not present but outlook established during visit from adjoining footpath
Toll Bar Cottage, A15, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Lupus Lair, A15, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
1-2 Ashby Lodge Cottages, A15, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
3 Ashby Lodge Cottage, A15, Ashby de la Launde	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
4 Ashby Lodge Cottage, A15, Ashby de la Launde	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
The Old Blacksmiths Cottage (Ashby Lodge) , A15, Ashby de la Launde	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Thompson's Bottom Farm, Temple Bruer	No	No response received but outlook established from adjacent road
1 Thompson's Bottom, Temple Bruer	No	No response received but outlook established from adjacent road
2 Thompson's Bottom, Temple Bruer	No	No response received but outlook established from adjacent road
3 Thompson's Bottom, Temple Bruer	No	No response received but outlook established from adjacent road
4 Thompson's Bottom, Temple Bruer	No	No response received but outlook established from adjacent road
5 Thompson's Bottom, Temple Bruer	No	No response received but outlook established from visit to adjoining property
6-7 Thompson's Bottom, Temple Bruer	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Church View, Brauncewell	No	No response received but outlook established from adjacent road
Old School Cottage, A15, Brauncewell	Yes	Viewed internally and externally

## Refinement of Study Area

The residential property visits outlined in Table **A9.5-1** above influenced the layout of the current plans presented in this PEIR. As a consequence, many of the properties listed above are now substantially further away from any potential development and it is not necessary to consider all of the above properties within the RVAA presented in the ES.

There is no standard criteria for defining a RVAA study area and this is determined on a case by case basis. TGN 02/19 suggests that for large structures, such as wind turbines, a preliminary study area of 1.5-2km radius may be appropriate to begin identifying properties for inclusion within RVAA. However, it goes on to state that:

*“other development types including potentially very large but lower profile structures and developments such as road schemes and housing are unlikely to require RVAA, except potentially of properties in very close proximity (50-250m) to the development.”*

The following study area has been used for the purposes of identifying properties for inclusion in the RVAA; an offset buffer is shown on Figure 9.11 to illustrate this study area:

- 200m of any Solar PV development;
- 400m of any siting zones for structures up to 6m; and

- 800m from any siting zones for structures up to 12m (i.e. including the siting zones for the project substation).

## Initial Analysis of Properties within the Refined Study Area

Within the refined RVAA study area, as defined above, all residential properties have been identified. Preliminary analysis has been undertaken and is presented below in Table **A9.5-2** to identify those properties which are likely to experience the greatest effects, and which therefore require further detailed assessment within the RVAA presented in the ES, as well as those where effects would be less and are unlikely to approach the RVA threshold.

## Further Detailed Assessment in the ES

For those properties that have been identified at the PEIR stage as requiring further detailed assessment at ES stage, the process will be as follows:

- Evaluation of baseline visual amenity;
- Assessment of likely change to the visual amenity of properties; and
- Forming the RVAA judgement.

Properties are usually assessed individually but may be considered in groups where their outlook or views are essentially the same; for example a row of houses that all share an open outlook towards the Proposed Development. Where properties are grouped for assessment this will be clearly identified and reasons for grouping described.

The existing baseline visual amenity will be described for each property and informed by desk study and field work (including property visits already undertaken). Visual amenity will be described 'in the round' and consider both views from the dwelling itself, the domestic curtilage and views experienced when arriving or leaving the property.

The change to baseline views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development will be described for each property and a judgement on the magnitude of effects likely to be experienced will be provided. This may involve consideration of the following factors:

- Distance between the property and proposed development and their relative locations (e.g. up/down hill);
- Nature of available views (e.g. panoramic, enclosed) and the effect of daily or seasonal variations;
- Direction of view or aspect of property affected;
- Extent to which the proposed development may be visible from various parts of the property (e.g. dwelling, rooms, access, garden);
- Scale of change to views, including the proportion of view occupied by the Proposed Development;
- Compositional changes (e.g. loss/addition of landscape features such as woodland);
- Contrast or integration of new features with the existing views;
- Duration and nature of changes (e.g. temporary/permanent, intermittent/continuous); and

## Visualisation and understanding localised mitigating factors.

Within the ES, the RVAA will be supported by a range of visual aids as required including maps, ZTV studies, photography and visualisations. The choice of visual aids is determined on a case by case basis and may be informed by consultation. In line with best practice guidance, the type of visualisation should be proportionate to the nature of the Proposed Development and assessment stage.

In the ES, following assessment, an RVAA judgement will be made for each property or group of properties assessed. This final stage is concerned with identifying “*whether the predicted effects on visual amenity and views at the property are such that it has reached the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold, therefore potentially becoming a matter of Residential Amenity*”. All judgements regarding the RVA threshold will be set out clearly and unambiguously.

## Preliminary Analysis

The preliminary analysis presented in **Table A9.5-2** below has been undertaken assuming a worst case scenario of no mitigation in order to identify those residential properties where a large scale of change in the view may occur (depending on the final layout and mitigation adopted) and where there is the theoretical potential for the RVA threshold to be reached.

Where the potential for significant effects on views to arise has been identified, further detailed assessment will be provided in the ES.

Residential properties referred to in **Table A9.5-2** are illustrated on Figure 9.11.



**Table A9.5-2 Preliminary Analysis of Residential Properties within RVVA Study Area**

N.B. Measurements taken from the nearest elevation of the property or the nearest part of the primary outdoor garden space (excluding paddocks or fields) to the new infrastructure as indicated on the parameters plan.

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
<b>Springwell East</b>						
Scopwick Low Field Farm	Yes	No	No	This property (including all of its primary windows and principal garden space) is orientated due south across a field in which no development is proposed. Large agricultural sheds dominate views to the rear and to the west. Views of solar PV development will potentially be prominent at the main entrance into the property and on the drive along Acre Lane to the property.	Yes	Yes
Brickyard Farm	Yes	No	No	The front elevation, driveway and gardens of this property face northwards away from the Proposed Development whilst the rear elevation and rear garden faces south over a field in which no development is proposed. A tall hedgerow marks the southern boundary of the rear garden and heavily filters views southwards. Oblique views will potentially be possible from first floor windows of solar PV development to the south west but there would be an offset in the field to the south west	Yes	Yes

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				and any additional screen planting would potentially soften any effects. Likely views from the driveway and on the approach to the property along Blankney Walks Lane.		
<b>Springwell Central</b>						
Sheffield House	Yes	No	No	This property's main elevations and primary garden space are orientated south and east away from the Proposed Development. A belt of mature trees to the north east of the property provides a robust buffer to any development in this direction. Any glimpses of Solar PV development through this vegetation in winter months would be heavily filtered. Likely to be some glimpses of Solar PV development along the driveway approaching the property from the B1188.	No	No - despite its relative proximity, any visual effects experienced at this property are unlikely to be significant and therefore will not approach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.
Eastfield and Westfield Cottages (2 properties)	Yes (borderline)	No	No	The front elevation of these two properties is oriented southwards away from the Proposed Development. There may be oblique views from the rear elevations of the Solar PV development in the field to the north but any views would be at least partially filtered by the boundary hedgerow. Likely to be some glimpses of Solar PV development along the	Yes	Yes

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
The Oval (RAF Digby) (multiple properties)	Yes (borderline)	Yes	No	driveway approaching the property from the B1188.  Most of the properties within The Oval are orientated inwards towards a central 'green' and back onto woodland of the playing fields. A single property is accessed off the eastern end of The Oval and has some view eastwards towards the Solar PV development and siting zone for structures up to 6m. Mature trees surround the property and rising land to the east topped by a well maintained hedgerow would largely screen views of any development. Glimpses may be possible from first floor windows.	No	No - despite its relative proximity, any visual effects experienced at this property are unlikely to be significant and therefore will not approach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.
The Maltings. The Hayloft and The Granary (Rowston Top) (3 properties)	Yes (borderline)	Yes (borderline)	No	These three properties have rear elevations which are orientated to the north towards the proposed Solar PV development. Development would be set back some distance beyond paddocks and a hedgerow to the north. There would be some views of the development especially from first floor windows. Mitigation proposals may soften any effects.	Yes	Yes
1 and 2 Rowston Hill Top Cottages, Fleur-	Yes	Yes	No	These 5 properties are tucked in behind a dense block of woodland known as Rowston	No	No – there would be no view of the

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
de-lys, Woodview and Fieldview (5 properties)				Plantation and would therefore have no view of the development.		development from these properties.
<b>Springwell West</b>						
Mallory Road (within RAF Digby) (multiple properties)	Yes	No	No	These properties and the drive leading to them have views westwards towards the Proposed Development. The boundary around RAF Digby is delineated by a tall security fence and, together with tree cover along the boundary, this would filter views towards the development. Whilst solar PV development would most likely be visible from these properties, views would be through the boundary security fence moderating the scale of change. An offset has been proposed around these properties and there is scope for mitigation planting within this area.	No	No – whilst there would be views of the Proposed Development from these properties, views would be interrupted by tall security fencing in the foreground and therefore even if visible the effects are unlikely to be significant
Slate Barn	Yes (borderline)	No	No	This property is surrounded by mature woodland on the western and northern side and by Slate House to the south. There would be no view of the Proposed Development from the property itself although there may be views of the Solar PV development along the driveway to the property and the front garden.	No	No - despite its relative proximity, any visual effects experienced at this property are unlikely to be significant and therefore will not approach the

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
1-2 Slate House Cottage	Yes (borderline)	No	No	This property (including its annex) have views primarily orientated to the south and west and would have views of Solar PV development set back beyond a field from the property. Potential mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may reduce the scale of the change but development would potentially be prominent initially.	Yes	Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. Yes
3 and 4 Slate House Cottages (2 properties)	Yes (borderline)	No	No	These two properties have front elevations views focussed to the east away from the development. Rear elevations and gardens are orientated to the west from which residents would have views of Solar PV development set back by a field from the property. Potential mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may reduce the scale of the effect but development would potentially be prominent initially.	Yes	Yes
1 and 2 Peacock Lodge Cottages (2 properties)	Yes	Yes	No	These two properties are orientated principally to the south with mature trees to the north. Directly due south, in winter months only, there may be glimpses of Solar PV development or structures of up to 6m beyond	Yes	Yes

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				<p>a belt of woodland at Bloxholm Woods but in summer months there would be no view through this vegetation.</p> <p>At an oblique angle from the front elevation and also outside the properties at the front, there would potentially be filtered views of Solar PV development through roadside hedgerows on the B1191 (more so in winter months).</p>		
The Old Blacksmiths Lodge (Ashby Lodge)	Yes (borderline)	Yes	Yes	<p>This property's main elevation faces east whilst there are also views southwards and from the garden. Solar PV development would most likely be visible (set back from the property) in several directions. Potential mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may potentially reduce the scale of the change but development would potentially be prominent initially. Property would also be approached along the A15 though Solar development.</p>	Yes	Yes
3 and 4 Ashby Lodge Cottages (*involved properties) (2 properties)	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>The main elevations from these two properties face north and south and there are also views southwards from the garden. Solar PV development would most likely be visible (set back from the property) in several directions (primarily from first floor windows). Potential</p>	Yes	Yes

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
1-2 Ashby Lodge Cottage	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may reduce the scale of the change but development would be prominent initially. Property would also be approached along the A15 though solar development.</p> <p>The main elevations from this property face north and south and there are also views southwards from the garden. Solar PV development would most likely be visible (set back from the property) in several directions. Potential mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may reduce the scale of the change but development would be prominent initially. Property would also be approached along the A15 though solar development.</p>	Yes	Yes
Thompson's Bottom Farm	No	Yes	Yes	<p>This property is entirely surrounded by woodland and other agricultural outbuildings. Whilst there would be views of the Proposed Development from the road along which the property is accessed, there would be no view of the development from the property itself.</p>	No	No – there would be no view of the development from this property.
1, 2, 3 and 4 Thompsons Bottom Cottages (4 properties)	No	Yes	Yes	<p>These four properties are orientated south east and north west and would have oblique views in both directions across adjoining farmland and past existing overhead</p>	Yes	Yes

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				electricity lines towards solar PV development. Depending on final location, layout and mitigation, the project substation and BESS may also be visible to the north east. Mitigation measures will be developed but it is likely that there will be a large scale of change in view.		
5 Thompsons Bottom Cottage	No	Yes	Yes	This property is surrounded on the eastern garden boundary by a tall mature hedgerow and trees which greatly restricts views in the direction of the site but the Proposed Development would potentially be visible from first floor windows and access to the property would pass through the development.	Yes	Yes
6-7 Thompsons Bottom Cottage	No	Yes	Yes	This property is orientated eastwards towards the Proposed Development and although it is set back beyond garden vegetation and there is an intervening field, the Solar PV development would potentially be prominent initially. Access to the property would pass through the development.	Yes	Yes
Toll Bar Cottage	Yes	No	Yes	This property is relatively screened by a mature hedgerow and trees adjacent to the A15 but the property access/egress opens out onto the A15 opposite the proposed location	Yes	Yes



Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
Lupus Lair	Yes	No	Yes	<p>of the siting zone for structures up to 12m. Whilst views from ground floor windows would largely remain the same, the development would potentially be prominent from first floor windows and adjoining menage. Mitigation will be developed to reduce any effects on this property, but it is likely that there will be a large scale of change in view.</p> <p>This property is relatively screened by a mature hedgerow and trees adjacent to the A15 but the property access/egress opens out onto the A15 opposite the proposed location of the siting zone for structures up to 12m. Whilst views from ground floor windows would largely remain the same, the development would potentially be prominent from first floor windows. Mitigation will be developed to reduce any effects on this property, but it is likely that there will be a large scale of change in view.</p>	Yes	Yes
Gorse Hill Farm	No	No	Yes	<p>This property has a rear elevation and gardens orientated to the east from where there would be views across rising land towards the siting zone for structures up to 12m. Intervening hedgerows would partially filter the view and existing pylons are visible in</p>	Yes	Yes

Property/group of properties	<200m from solar array?	<400m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 12m?	Initial observations	Potential for a large scale of change in views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
Gorse Hill Bungalow	Yes (borderline)	No	Yes	<p>this direction. Mitigation will be developed to reduce any effects on this property, but it is likely that there will be a large scale of change in view.</p> <p>This property is located in a slight depression and has limited views of the site due to dense vegetation on the opposite side of the lane. However, it is possible that structures up to 12m would be visible from this property.</p>	Yes	Yes