

Volume 4B

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Residential amenity is a planning matter that involves a wide number of effects and benefits, of which residential visual amenity is just one component. The Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is limited to the consideration of visual effects on residential amenity. The RVAA for the Project is set out in this appendix and should be read in conjunction with the LVIA in **Chapter 7** of the Volume 2 (the EIA Report). Figures supporting this assessment are illustrated in **Figure 7.6**.
- 1.1.2 The methodology of the RVAA is set out in **Section 1.9** of **Appendix 4A**. The methodology accords with the advice in GLVIA 3, the Landscape Institute's *Residential Visual Amenity Assessment: Technical Guidance Note*, 2019.

Scope of Assessment

- 1.1.3 Based on GLVIA 3 and the Landscape Institute's *Residential Visual Amenity Assessment: Technical Guidance Note*, 2019, a study area of approximately 1km distance from the Project has been selected for the RVAA and is illustrated in **Figure 7.6**.

1.2 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

- 1.2.1 There are five residential properties within 1km of the Project which are illustrated in **Figure 7.6**. A summary of the assessment is provided in **Table 1** and a detailed assessment record for each of these properties is provided in **Table 2**.
- 1.2.2 The views from the private access track to Cauldstanes would be significantly affected by the solar PV farm component of the Project, however, views from the property itself would not be significantly affected by the Project. None of the other properties within 1km would also be significantly affected by the Project.
- 1.2.3 The experience of a significant view of the Project is not the same as an unacceptable effect or indicative of a failure in terms of maintaining residential amenity.
- 1.2.4 In terms of residential visual amenity, the RVAA concludes that the Project would not affect the living standards and the properties would not become an unattractive place to live (as opposed to less attractive) when judged objectively, and in the public interest. This is due largely to the intervening distance, partial screening, use / orientation of the property and the smaller scale of the components of the Project in comparison to the prominence of the existing Whitelee turbines, such that the living standards would not be affected and the property would not be adversely affected by 'visual dominance'.
- 1.2.5 One of the properties, Moor, is currently unoccupied. It is owned by the Applicant and would remain unoccupied for the lifetime of the Project. It has therefore been excluded from this assessment.

Table 1 Summary of Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

Residential Property No. and Name	Distance of property from the Proposed Development (m)	Level of Effect	Comments
Residential properties within 1km			
1. Best Friends	312	Moderate and Not Significant	The greatest visual effect would be from the southeast elevation, front garden and access.
2. Cauldstanes	353	Moderate to Slight, to Negligible and Not Significant (main property and garden) Moderate and Significant (access track to property)	The greatest visual effect (significant) would be from the access track to the property, and to a lesser extent (not significant) from parts of the northern elevation of the property.
3. Kingswell	351	No View and Not Significant	Property outwith ZTV
4. Moor	530	N/A	<i>Excluded from assessment</i>
5. Drumtee	868	Slight to No View and Not Significant (property and garden) Moderate and Not Significant (access track to property)	The greatest visual effect would be from the access track to the property with very limited effects from the property itself.



Table 2 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

Residential Property 1: Best Friends									
Description	Best Friends is a bungalow located to the west/northwest of the Site. The property is orientated broadly northwest/southeast, with the southeast elevation facing towards the Site. A garden surrounds the house with the main areas to the northwest and southeast with some associated deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs to the west, northwest and northeast. The front (southeast) garden is relatively open. A large outbuilding is located to the northeast of the property. The property is accessed directly from the B764. The existing Whitelee wind turbines are prominent to the east, southeast and south affecting a large horizontal Field of View (FoV) and punctuate the skyline and recede beyond the horizon, partially screened by the landform and trees. Figure 7.7a-b (Viewpoint 1) illustrates a similar view from the B764 junction towards the Project.								
Distance to Project	312m towards the east.								
Magnitude of Change	<p>Whilst in Operation:</p> <p>The western edge of the solar PV farm would be visible from the southeast elevation, front garden and main access to the property, to the fore of the coniferous forest and on the skyline, and in the context of other built-elements including wind turbines and telegraph poles. The solar panels would be visible low on the horizon following the landform, partially screened by undulating topography, affecting approximately 35° of the horizontal FoV. The access track would also be partially visible, spanning the lower slopes of Tent Knowe to the fore of the solar PV farm in the middle ground of the view. Other components of the Project including the green hydrogen production facility and the BESS would be screened by rising landform from this location . Although the solar panels would appear as a new element in the view, their low horizontal form and small vertical FoV blends with the existing landform such that the existing Whitelee turbines would remain the most prominent element in the view. The magnitude of change would be <i>Medium to Low</i>.</p> <p>Whilst Under Construction and Decommissioning:</p> <p>There would be views of the temporary construction compound, and construction activities associated with the solar PV farm and access track during construction and decommissioning.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would range from <i>Zero to Medium to Low</i>.</p>								
Assessment	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Sensitivity</td> <td>High</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Magnitude</td> <td>Medium to Low</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level of Effect</td> <td>Moderate and Not Significant (southeast elevation, front garden and access)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Type of Effect</td> <td>Long term, direct and adverse to neutral</td> </tr> </table>	Sensitivity	High	Magnitude	Medium to Low	Level of Effect	Moderate and Not Significant (southeast elevation, front garden and access)	Type of Effect	Long term, direct and adverse to neutral
Sensitivity	High								
Magnitude	Medium to Low								
Level of Effect	Moderate and Not Significant (southeast elevation, front garden and access)								
Type of Effect	Long term, direct and adverse to neutral								
RVAA	<p>The views from the southeast elevation of the property, front garden and access track would be affected with the solar PV farm appearing from the property to the east and southeast, however, the effect would be Not Significant. Views from other elevations of the property including the northern garden areas would be unaffected . The solar panels would appear low in the view, partially screened, with the existing Whitelee turbines remaining the main element prominent in the view.</p> <p>For these reasons, the Project would not affect the living standards of the property overall or render it an unattractive place to live when judged objectively and in the public interest .</p>								



Residential Property 2: Cauldstanes									
Description	Cauldstanes is a one and a half storey house, set as a U-shape, located to the southwest and west of the Site. The property is orientated broadly north/south with the south elevation facing away from the Site. Parts of the northern elevation would have oblique views towards the Proposed Development. The main, southern garden is surrounded by mature, deciduous trees and shrubs to the west, south, southeast, and further to the east. A large outbuilding is located to the northeast of the property. The property is accessed via a private track from the B764 which is relatively open. A block of young woodland has been planted in the field to the north of the property. The existing Whitelee turbines are prominent to the east and south, affecting a large horizontal FoV and punctuating the skyline and receding beyond the horizon, partially screened by the landform and trees.								
Distance to Project	353m towards the northeast.								
Magnitude of Change	<p>Whilst in Operation:</p> <p>The majority of the views from the primary southern elevation of the property and southern garden would be limited due to orientation and some screening by mature, garden vegetation (Low to Negligible magnitude). There would be partial, oblique views of the western edge of the solar PV farm and the proposed link / haul road beyond the large outbuilding in the foreground and above the young woodland to the north from the property's northern elevation (Low magnitude), seen in the context of wind turbines visible across the view. Other components of the Project including the BESS and green hydrogen production facility would not be visible from the property including the northern elevation due to screening from intervening vegetation and farm outbuildings. The greatest visibility of the Project (parts of the solar PV farm, green hydrogen production facility and link / haul road) would be from the private access track to the property where there would be relatively open views to the east towards the existing Whitelee turbines. Views from the access track would be transient and the solar panels would be visible low on the horizon following the gently undulating landform to the fore of the Whitelee turbines. The upper parts of the green hydrogen production facility would also be visible from the access track beyond the solar panels in the distance (Medium magnitude). The proposed link / haul road would also be partially visible to the north. The BESS would not be visible from the access track to the property due to screening from intervening landform. The magnitude of change would range from <i>Low to Negligible</i> from the main property and garden area, and <i>Medium</i> from the access track to the property.</p> <p>Whilst Under Construction and Decommissioning:</p> <p>There would be partial views of the temporary construction compound, and construction activities associated with the solar PV farm, green hydrogen production facility and link / haul road during construction and decommissioning.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would range from <i>Zero</i> to <i>Medium</i>.</p>								
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Level of Effect	Moderate to Slight, to Negligible and Not Significant (main property and garden) Moderate and Significant (access track to property)								
Type of Effect	Long term, direct and adverse to neutral								
RVAA	<p>The views would from the private access track would be significantly affected by the solar PV farm component of the Project, however, these views would be transient. Views from the north elevation of the property would not be significantly affected by the Project. The solar panels would appear low in the view, whilst parts of the Project and the Whitelee turbines would be visible together in the same view, the turbines would remain the most prominent element in the view. Views from the primary, southern elevation of the property including the southern garden areas would be largely unaffected due to orientation and some screening by mature, garden vegetation.</p> <p>For these reasons, although there would be a significant visual effect on views only from the access track to the property, and not from the property itself, the Project would not affect the living standards of the property overall or render it an unattractive place to live when judged objectively and in the public interest .</p>								

Residential Property 3: Kingswell									
Description	This property is outwith the ZTV and would have No View of the Project.								
Residential Property 4: Moor									
Description	This property is excluded from the assessment as described in paragraph 1.2.5 .								
Residential Property 5: Drumtee									
Description	Drumtee is a one and a half storey house, set as a U shape, located to the southwest, west and northwest of the Site. The property is orientated broadly southwest and southeast. The garden is located to the southwest and southeast with a few mature, deciduous trees and shrubs. The northeast elevation of the property abuts two large farm outbuildings which restrict any outward views in this direction. Further outbuildings and a row of mature, deciduous trees are located to the north. The property is accessed via a private track from the A77 and a bridge over the M77 in the west. The existing Whitelee turbines are prominent to the northeast, east and south, affecting a large horizontal FoV and punctuating the skyline and receding beyond the horizon, partially screened by the landform and trees. Figure 7.8a-b (Viewpoint 2) illustrates views from the access track to this property.								
Distance to Project	868m towards the northeast.								
Magnitude of Change	<p>Whilst in Operation:</p> <p>There would be no views of the any of the components of the Proposed Development from the house due to orientation, and screening from intervening outbuildings and mature vegetation (Negligible to Zero magnitude). Views from the garden would be limited as the solar PV farm and green hydrogen production facility would be screened by outbuildings and garden vegetation, and there would be no views of the BESS due to intervening landform (Negligible magnitude). The greatest visibility of the Project (parts of the solar PV farm and green hydrogen production facility) would be from the private access track to the property where there would be views to the east-northeast towards the existing Whitelee turbines, affecting approximately 40° of the horizontal FoV. In these views, the solar panels would appear low between undulating topography beyond Cauldstanes and to the fore of the Whitelee turbines and would broadly appear in line with forestry on the horizon . The upper parts of the green hydrogen production facility would also be visible beyond the solar panels. Although the solar panels would appear as a new element in the view, they would be visible in the middle distance beyond expansive foreground moorland and scrub vegetation where they would occupy a small part of the vertical field of view near the skyline . As such they would appear as a midground element, relating to the agricultural field pattern . The solar panels’ low horizontal form closely follows the contours of the landform and blends with other existing horizontal elements such as forestry, further integrating the solar PV farm into an agricultural view where the Whitelee turbines would remain the most prominent element. The BESS would not be visible from this property due to screening from intervening landform. The magnitude of change would be <i>Medium to Low</i> .</p> <p>Whilst Under Construction and Decommissioning:</p> <p>There would be partial views of construction activities associated with the solar PV farm and green hydrogen production facility, primarily from the access track to the property during construction and decommissioning. The magnitude of change would range from <i>Zero to, Medium to Low</i>.</p>								
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Level of Effect	Slight to No View and Not Significant (property and garden) Moderate and Not Significant (access track to property)								
Type of Effect	Long term, direct and adverse to neutral								
RVAA	The most affected views would be from the access track to the property however the effect would be Not Significant. The solar panels would appear low in the view, with the existing Whitelee turbines remaining the								



Residential Property 5: Drumtee

main element prominent in the view. Views from the property including the southern garden area would be largely limited due to orientation and further screening by outbuildings and mature, garden vegetation.

For these reasons, the Project would not affect the living standards of the property overall or render it an unattractive place to live when judged objectively and in the public interest .