



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Formation of a Solar Park,
At Land Part of Tyr Mably Farm,
Croesyceiliog, SA32 8DP**

**On Behalf of
Mr M. Scaife**

Our Ref: 1570.a
Date: January 2025
Prepared by: Shannon Stone

Reviewed by: Richard Banks

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Evans Banks Planning has been instructed by Mr M. Scaife in preparing an application for Full Planning Permission for the “*Formation of a Solar Park*” at land part of Tyr Mably Farm, Croesyceiliog, Carmarthen.
- 1.2 This Design & Access Statement has been compiled under the provisions of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 “Design” (2014) and the Town & Country Planning (GDPO) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2009, No. 1024: Design and Access Statements: Wales. It has been prepared as part of the planning application and its contents should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans. It has been prepared on the basis of the nature and type of the above proposal, and the proposed scheme has been assessed against the following key areas, as well as the site’s context:
- Character
 - Local Development Plan Policies
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Movement to, from and within the development
- 1.3 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared following the guidance set out in *Planning Policy Wales (12th Edition) (February 2024)* and *Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2014)*.

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT

2.1 SITE ANALYSIS

- 2.1.1 The application site comprises a large field enclosure with a relatively steep gradient, which is some 1.5 hectares (circa 3.71 acres) in size. The site comprises an area of agricultural pasture characterised by good drainage properties and dry conditions. The ground shows limited vegetation growth apart from semi-improved grassland. The farm is no longer in agricultural activity. This underutilised holding state makes the site well-suited for development purposes, such as the proposed solar farm, without significant disruption to existing land use or natural habitats.
- 2.1.2 The field enclosure is set to the rear and directly south of Tyr Mably Farm which is orientated to front the southern flank of a lane adjoining the Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog C class road. Tyr Mably Farm is dominated by the farmhouse accompanied by several agricultural outbuildings. The farmstead is accessed via a private road branching from the Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog C-class road, which also serves as the primary point of entry to the application site. The site itself is surrounded by open fields and agricultural buildings, with boundaries defined by hedgerows and tall trees flanking the private roadway.
- 2.1.3 The entire field lies approximately 600 metres west of the Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog C-class road, which runs in a north to south alignment to the north of the village of Croesyceiliog. This rural road connects to the A484 both to the north and south, facilitating access to the nearby town of Carmarthen. Additionally, the C-class road forms part of National Cycle Route 4 and is designated as a future shared walking and cycling path. The surrounding area predominantly reflects an agricultural and rural landscape, characterised by open fields, hedgerows, and occasional farmsteads.
- 2.1.4 The River Tywi is located approximately 500 metres to the west of the application site. The river follows a meandering north-south course, eventually forming a tidal estuary to the south and southwest of Croesyceiliog, at Llansteffan and Ferryside. The main railway line connecting Carmarthenshire to Ferryside runs parallel to the River Tywi.
- 2.1.5 Figure 1 illustrates a wider OS Map of Croesyceiliog to highlight the position of the land. Figure 2 provides a “Google Earth” image of the site, with the above features identified. Figure 3 below depicts an Ordnance Survey map extract with the application site edged in red.



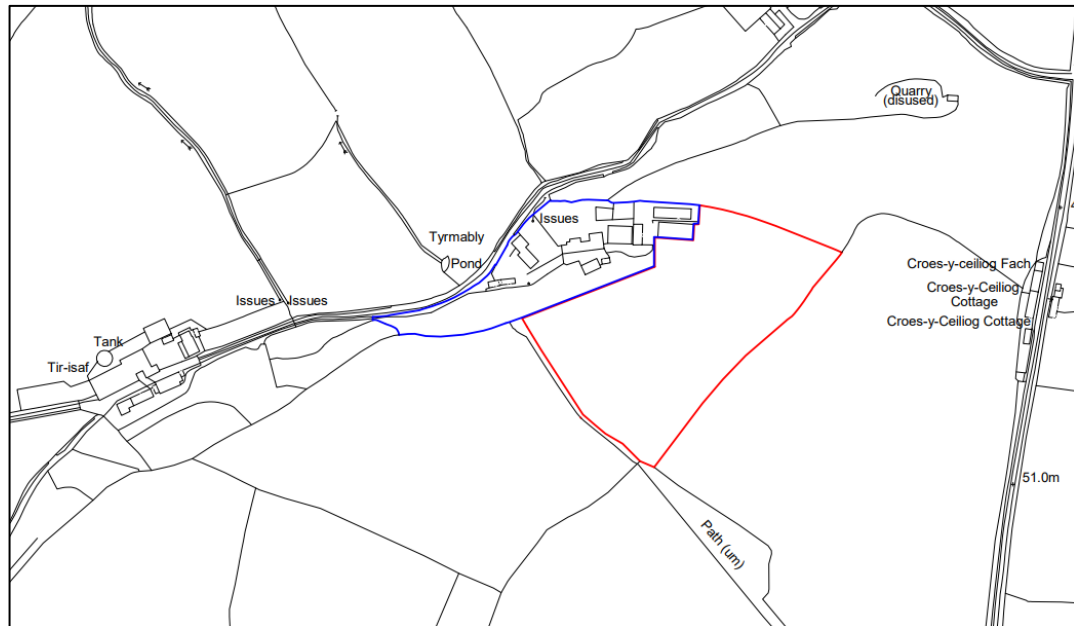


Figure 3 – Location plan of the application site

2.2 SETTING OF SITE WITHIN CROESYCEILIOG

- 2.2.1 The application site is surrounded by agricultural fields that extend in all directions, with further farmhouses located to the northeast and southwest. The site is bounded by native, deciduous hedgerows and occasional copses of deciduous trees, particularly to the north and west. The landform features an upward slope to a crest within the site, before descending towards the adjacent highway to the east.
- 2.2.2 The well-defined perimeters of the application site, combined with its proximity to existing agricultural outbuildings to the south, are depicted in the photographs below. These boundaries, marked by hedgerows and fencing, illustrate the enclosed nature of the site while visually integrating it with the surrounding rural environment.
- 2.2.3 Photographs 1–5 below provide views of the site from various vantage points within its boundaries. These images illustrate the site's topographical features, including its upward slope towards the east, as well as the surrounding landscape and boundary treatments.



Photo 1 – Agricultural outbuildings at Tyr Mably Farm, located to the north of the application site



Photo 2 – View towards the south highlighting the steep topography of the site



Photo 3 – Hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site



Photo 4 – Western view showing the farmhouse, agricultural outbuildings, site topography and the railway line



Photo 5 – View of the eastern boundary of the application site

- 2.2.4 The application site lies within a 5-minute driving distance of the village of Croesyceiliog which is predominantly made up of individual residential dwellings.
- 2.2.5 **National Cycle Route 4** passes through the section of the C-class road connecting Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog, which is situated to the east of the site.

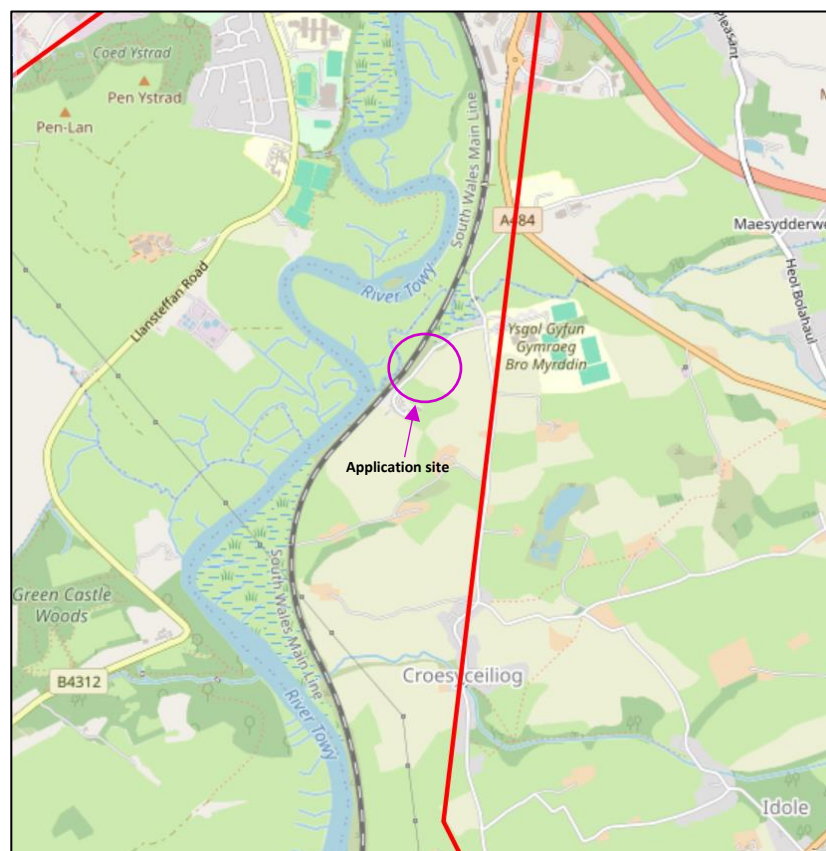


Figure 4 – National Cycle Route 4

- 2.2.6 A future shared walking and cycling path (CN29) is planned along the C-class road connecting Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog, which is located to the east of the site.

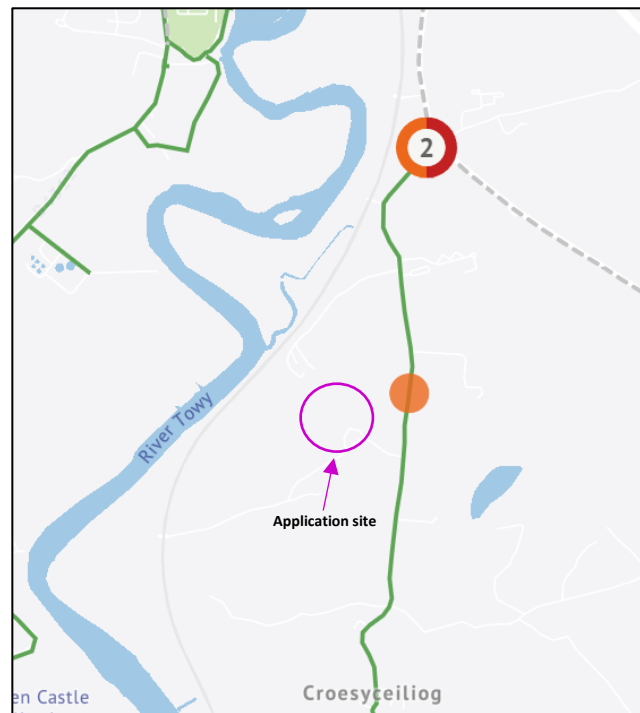


Figure 5 – Future shared waking and cycling path

- 2.2.7 Croesyceiliog lies upon a primary public bus route, with **Services 198** running to Carmarthen to the north.

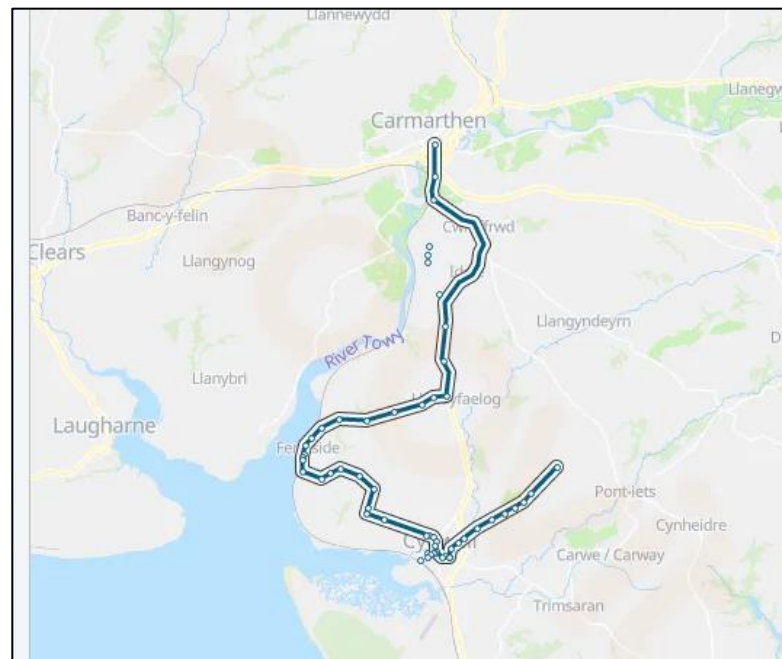


Figure 6 – 198 Bus Service Route

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1.1 The development plan in form for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compensation Act 2004 is the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan, which was adopted in December 2014.
- 3.1.2 The application site is located north the defined settlement limits of Croesyceiliog, as reproduced in extract as Figure 7 below.

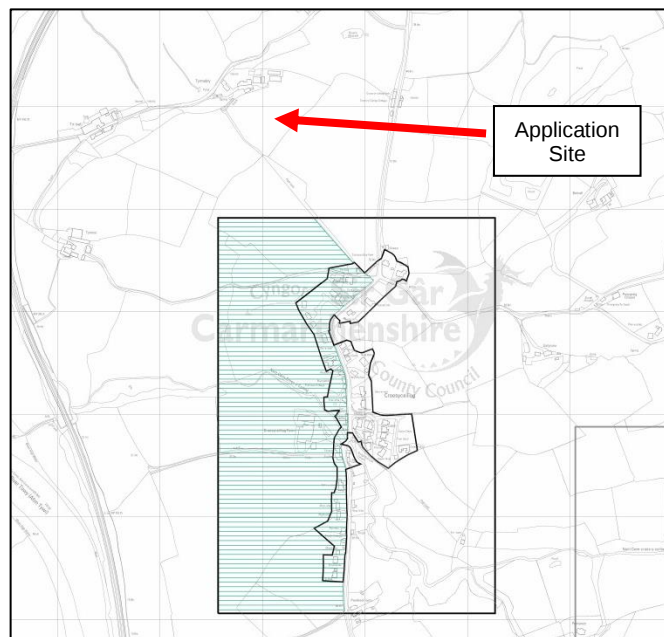


Figure 7 – LDP Proposals Map extract – Croesyceiliog

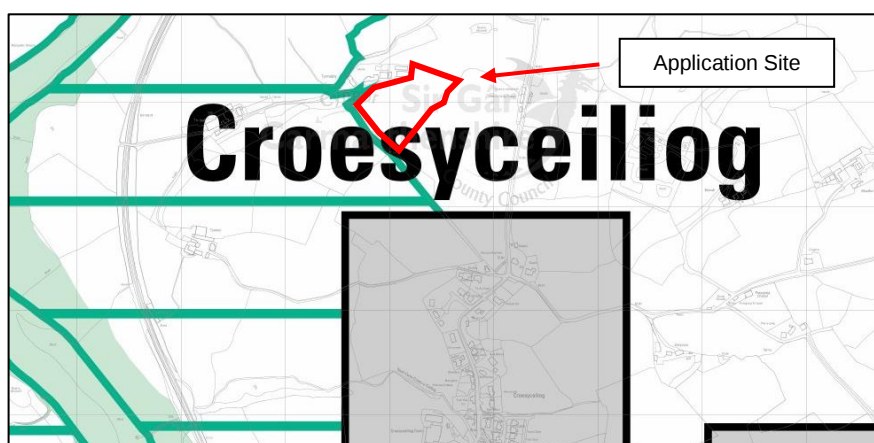


Figure 8 – LDP Proposals Map extract – Special Landscape Area

- 3.1.3 The site, as shown in Figure 8, lies immediately adjoining land allocated as “*Special Landscape Area*” within the LDP, however crucially, lies outside the defined Special

Landscape Area of Carmarthen Bay & Burry Estuary, which is shown above in green hatching.

- 3.1.4 The relevant LDP Policy for schemes involving the placement of renewable energy generation, including solar arrays and associated apparatus, is **Policy RE3 “Non-wind Renewable Energy Installations”**. It distinguishes between non-wind forms of renewable energy generations such as Solar, Biomass, Hydro-Power and Combined Heat and Power. The scheme proposed as part of this application is expected to **generate up to 1 Megawatt of electricity**, as thus accordingly under the supporting text to the LDP policy is classified as a “large scale development”.

Policy RE3 indicates that in such circumstances *“Large scale schemes located outside defined Development Limits may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, where there is an overriding need for the scheme which can be satisfactorily justified, and the development will not cause demonstrable harm to the landscape. Proposals that would cause demonstrable harm to the landscape, visual impact, noise, ecology, or ground and surface water as a result of the cumulative effect of renewable energy installations will not be permitted.”*

- 3.1.5 LDP Policy SP11 “Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency” is also supportive of new forms of renewable energy generation, stating that: *“Development proposals which incorporate energy efficiency measures and renewable energy production technologies will be supported in areas where the environmental and cumulative impacts can be addressed satisfactorily. Such developments will not cause demonstrable harm to residential amenity and will be acceptable within the landscape. Each proposal will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.”*

- 3.1.6 Policy GP1 of the LDP promotes development proposals which should be compatible with their surroundings in terms of scale, height, massing, and the general topography of the locality. Proposals must not adversely affect local amenity in terms of visual impact, loss of light or privacy, disturbance and traffic movement.

The Policy requires the siting of new proposals for development to have regard to the physical character and topography of the site and surroundings. Particularly being seen to integrate with the landscape, conserve and utilise existing boundary features, and having full regard to adjoining developments. This Policy also in particular advocates that proposals must not adversely affect local amenity in terms of visual impact, loss of light or privacy, disturbance, and traffic movement.

3.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.2.1 Planning Policy Wales (12th Edition) (February 2024) and “*Future Wales: The National Plan 2040*” provide guidance as to renewable energy generation proposals. Paragraph 5.9.14 of PPW advises that “*Planning authorities should support and guide renewable and low carbon energy development to ensure their area’s potential is maximised.*” When assessing planning applications for schemes proposing to generate less than 10 MW, PPW advises that Local Planning Authorities “*should also identify and require suitable ways to avoid, mitigate or compensate adverse impacts of renewable and low carbon energy development.*”

The construction, operation, decommissioning, remediation and aftercare of proposals should take into account:

- *the need to minimise impacts on local communities, such as from noise and air pollution, to safeguard quality of life for existing and future generations;*
- *the impact on the natural and historic environment;*
- *cumulative impact; • the capacity of, and effects on the transportation network;*
- *grid connection issues where renewable (electricity) energy developments are proposed; and*
- *the impacts of climate change on the location, design, build and operation of renewable and low carbon energy development. In doing so, consider whether measures to adapt to climate change impacts give rise to additional impacts.”*

(Paragraph 5.9.20)

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

4.1 DESIGN CONCEPT

- 4.1.1 The application seeks to form rows of photo-voltaic panels set over arrays in a uniform formation across the field's enclosure. The arrays will be arranged to all be orientated south to maximise solar gain and be arranged with 3.0 metres wide open aisles between rows. Each array is shown with two panels banked vertically with a plane height of 4.6 metres, set to be a minimum of 0.5 metre above ground level, as shown in Figures 9 and 10 below, with the panels set at an angle of 30 degrees, resulting in the **upper most height of the array being 4.6 metres above ground level**.

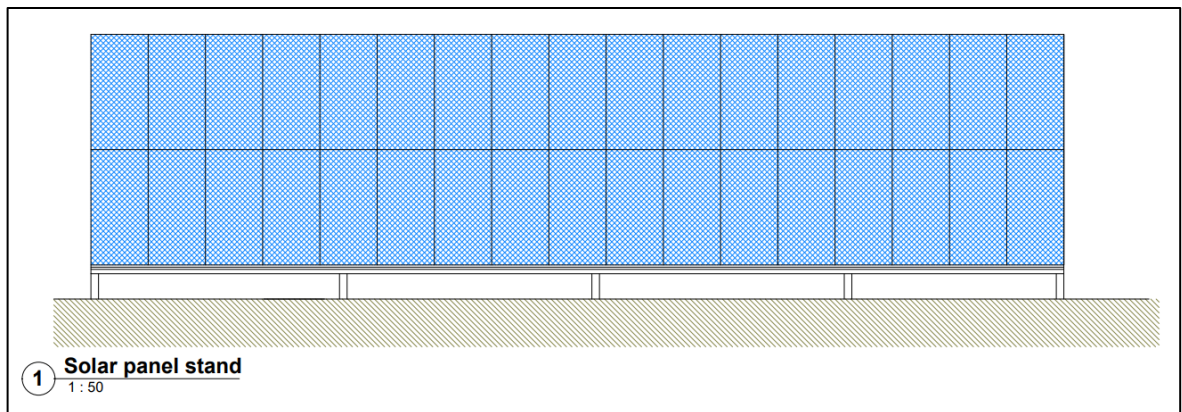


Figure 9 – Typical sections of PV panels set into solar arrays

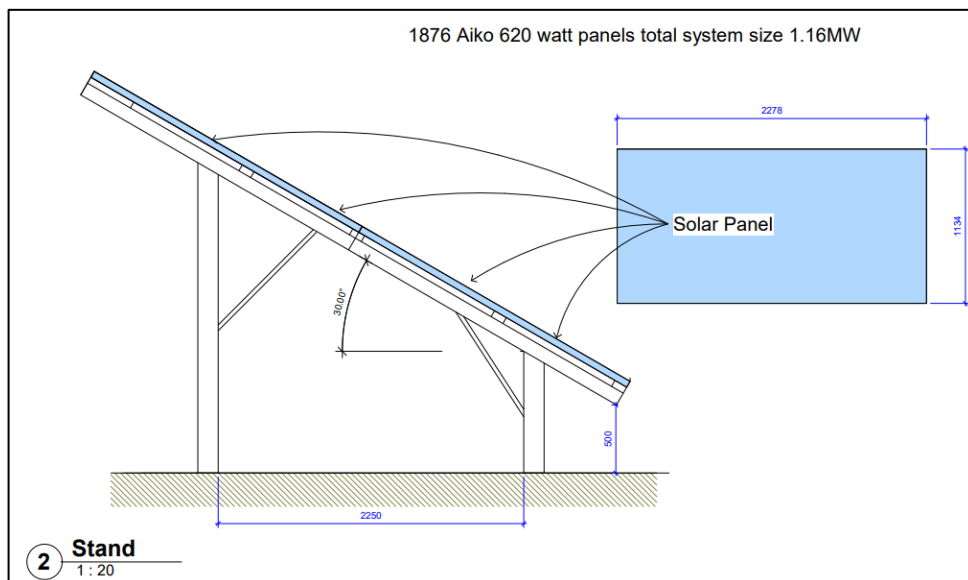


Figure 10 – Cross sectional view of array and proposed heights above ground level

- 4.1.2 An OS Explorer Map extract reveals that generally the site has an ordnance datum (OD) level of between 40 to 55 metres, which reflects its sloping topography. Figure 11 below provides an extract from the OS Map.

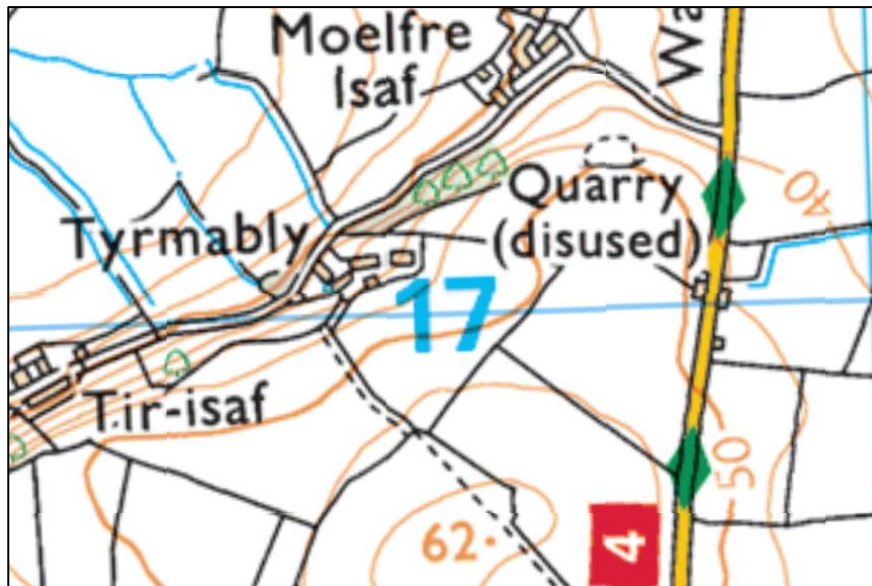


Figure 11 – OS Map reflecting the site's topography

- 4.1.3 As can be seen in Figure 11, the farmhouse along with the outbuildings (labelled A) lie at around an OD level of around 40 metres while the eastern boundary (labelled B) lies at around 50 metres above OD. This demonstrates the sloping nature of the application site.

4.2 Layout

- 4.2.1 The proposals have sought to utilise the uniform contours of ground across the site to form a series of linear solar arrays set in horizontal row formations over the majority of the field enclosure, as reproduced in Figure 12 below. A single point of access exists via an established agricultural access to allow access by construction vehicles and future maintenance operatives.

The solar park will be equipped with below ground connections to a transformer unit set near the western perimeter of the field but surrounded by solar arrays rising to heights in excess of that facility.

- 5.2.2 The proposed solar farm at Tyr Mably Farm aligns with **Policy RE3 for Non-wind Renewable Energy Installations**, despite being outside defined Development Limits. The design integrates with the topography, retaining existing hedgerows and trees along the northern, southern, eastern, and western boundaries (as shown in Figure 12) for effective screening, minimising visual and environmental impact. These features preserve the site's natural character, reduce visibility from nearby vantage points, and

maintain ecological value. By retaining them, the proposal minimizes disruption to wildlife habitats, supports biodiversity, and aligns with sustainable, environmentally sensitive design principles.



Figure 12 – Proposed Site Layout Plan

- 4.2.3 The small-scale development does not interfere with any public rights of way, as there are none in the vicinity of the site. It has no significant cumulative impact on nearby renewable energy projects, further aligning with **Policy RE3 for Non-wind Renewable Energy Installations**.
- 4.2.4 The proposed site layout as shown illustrates that the perimeter vegetation as depicted in the Google Earth imagery at Figure 2 is wholly retained. Photos 6 and 7 below provide a view from the Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog C-class road from both the northbound and southbound carriageways passing the site to its west. The images highlight how the application site is not readily visible from these prominent vantage points, even in the winter months, with the photos taken in mid-January when the extent of leaf cover is at its lowest.



Photo 6 – View southbound with application site to the west



Photo 7 – View northbound with application site to the west

4.3 SCALE

- 4.3.1 The submitted site layout provides that the panelled arrays will be formed to a maximum height of 4.6 metres above ground level. The above road level photographs illustrate that the Pibwrlwyd to Croesyceiliog C-class road at this point is at the same elevation as the application site.
- 4.3.2 The proposed solar panel farm is situated on a steep hill, with the slope reaching its steepest point at the southern edge, as shown in Photo 8. The panels are designed to face south, which significantly reduces their visibility from public vantage points. Photo 9 illustrates the hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site, which provides effective natural screening. Beyond this hedgerow, the terrain descends sharply, creating a natural barrier that ensures the panels remain hidden from view from the

south. This strategic positioning means the solar panels will have minimal impact on the character of the area and will not detract from the surrounding visual landscape.



Photo 8 – View to the south of the site illustrating the steep topography



Photo 9 – View of the southern hedgerow, demonstrating that the site is not visible from the south

4.3.3 As shown in Photo 10, **the view from the north would only reveal the back of the panels, effectively eliminating any risk of glare or reflection.** This is particularly important given the railway line located to the north, shown in Photo 11, ensuring there is no potential visual disturbance for passing trains.



Photo 10 – View from the northern section of the site



Photo 11 – View of the railway line which runs to the north of the site

- 4.3.4 As shown in Appendices 1, the site has very limited visibility from the surrounding areas due to the naturally hilly terrain, as well as the presence of trees, woodlands, and hedgerows that provide effective screening. The Appendix provides views from public vantage points taken upon the public roads near Croesyceiliog and across the River Towy near Llangain. Only a few small openings in roadside hedgerows offer glimpses of the site, ensuring that the proposed solar farm has a negligible impact on the surrounding landscape and does not detract from the area's character.

4.4 APPEARANCE

- 4.4.1 Figure 11 below illustrates a typical appearance of the proposed solar arrays at the site will appear uniform in appearance, formed over existing ground levels with no changes in ground profile proposed.



Figure 13 – Typical solar array appearance

- 4.4.2 Photo voltaic panels and their supports have a uniform appearance comprised from prefabricated materials and will appear no different to other solar farm schemes implemented in Carmarthenshire. Two much larger schemes which are highlighted are at nearby Ffos Las racecourse and at Brynteg Farm between Five Roads and Furnace, near Llanelli, the latter being prominently located alongside the B4309 main road in / out of Llanelli.

4.5 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- 4.5.1 The site at Tyr Mably Farm is considered to be inconspicuous within the surrounding landscape due to its position on a steep hill, bordered by hedgerows and agricultural fields, which provide natural screening. The proximity of the C-class road and scattered farm buildings further reduces the visual prominence of the site. In line with the policy provisions of LDP Policy SP11, it is noted that no residential properties are located in close proximity to the application site. **In line with the policy provisions of LDP Policy SP11 it is noted that no residential properties lie in proximity to the application site, and thus no cause for any adverse effects to residential amenity.**
- 4.5.2 The selection of photographs contained in this Statement and Appendix 1 are evidence that the precise location of the application site is one which remains unseen from all directions. The application site cannot be seen from the east due to its sloping nature away from the C-class road along with the boundary features of the site. The

outbuildings and woodland to the north and west of the site, enclose the site from being seen from the west.

The application site is by contrast “sandwiched” between significant man-made structures, being the farmhouse along with its outbuildings and surrounding woodland and tall hedgerows along the eastern border of the application site.

- 4.5.3 The general public are not afforded access into the enclosure, as there are no public rights of way crossing nor alongside the field. For all intents and purposes, it is land-locked between established uses and thus **inaccessible and inconsequential in the semi-rural landscape.**

The Local Development Plan acknowledges the inconspicuous location of the site at Tyr Mably Farm through the **non-inclusion of the site in the Special Landscape Area**, which lies just to the west of the site's border. This distinction highlights the site's minimal visual impact and its seamless integration into the surrounding landscape.

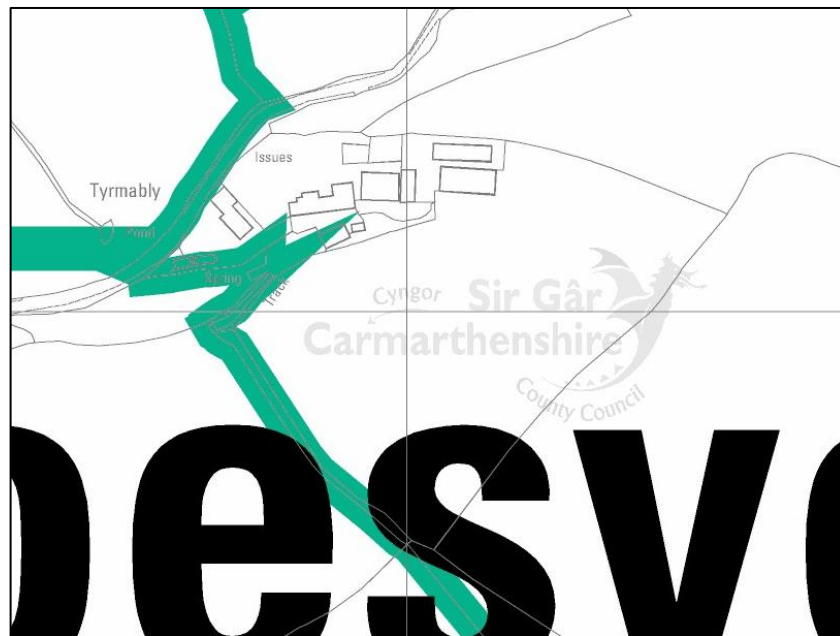


Figure 14 – Map showing the border of the Special Landscape Area to the west of the site

- 4.5.4 The proposals seek to retain all perimeter vegetation and thus utilise this natural landscape envelope to provide wholesale landscaping about the site, continuing to naturally obscure views into the site from wider public vantage points. **For these reasons and for the purposes of evaluation under LDP Policy RE3, the proposals will not pose any detrimental effect upon the landscape quality of the locality.**

5.0 ACCESSIBILITY

- 5.1 The application site lies upon sloping ground, and accordingly the proposed solar arrays have been proposed to be formed over that corresponding terrain. The site will be accessible to future maintenance workers post completion via the existing agricultural access at Tyr Mably Farm. Those workers will be able to drive onto the site and those workers who are less abled will be able to access freely over that ground without obstruction.

6.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 6.1 The proposed solar panel farm will not permit general public access to the site, ensuring it remains a secure and controlled enclosure. The site will be protected by appropriate fencing and maintained in a gated state to prevent unauthorised entry. Furthermore, the site will benefit from natural surveillance provided by the applicant's farmhouse, ensuring that activity in and around the site can be monitored to maintain community safety.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- 7.1 The proposals will facilitate the generation of renewable energy on-site, providing a sustainable and clean source of electricity for public use. By reducing reliance on conventional energy supplies derived from fossil fuels, the development will contribute to lowering carbon emissions and promoting environmental sustainability. This initiative aligns with broader goals of transitioning to renewable energy sources and combating climate change.

8.0 MOVEMENT

- 8.1 The proposed development has been designed to facilitate unrestricted movement for construction and maintenance operatives throughout the site. Each row of solar panels is fully integrated into the site's layout, ensuring all components are easily accessible. The design prioritizes operational flexibility, allowing for future adjustments while maintaining clear and unobstructed pathways both within and around the solar arrays, ensuring efficient and safe movement at all times.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This Statement has sought to examine the attributes of the under-utilised grazing land at Tyr Mably Farm, situated on a steep hill to the south of the farmhouse and agricultural outbuildings. The site is unique in its natural topography, bordered by hedgerows along its southern, eastern, and western perimeters, and surrounded by agricultural fields, with a railway line running parallel to the River Tywi to the north.
- 9.2 The proposed site layout seeks to maximise the 1.5-hectare site area with uniform rows of photo voltaic panels arranged in continuous arrays and thus allow for significant renewable energy generation. The panels' orientation and natural screening ensure minimal visual impact on the surrounding landscape. Existing boundary vegetation, including the hedgerows to the south, east, and west, will be retained to provide effective screening and maintain the site's integration into its surroundings.
- 9.3 The scheme proposes an ecological buffer zone along the southern and western site perimeters to safeguard ecological interests. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment appended to this Statement confirms that while the site is dry and supports limited flora, the ecological measures will enhance biodiversity and protect surrounding ecosystems.
- 9.4 The site's position on a steep hill ensures it is not at risk of flooding, and its location outside the Special Landscape Area further demonstrates that the proposals will not detract from the visual character or quality of the area.
- 9.5 This Statement has illustrated that the proposals meet the "objectives of good design" as listed within Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12, together with the underlying policies of the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.
Throughout, the focus is made upon ensuring that the proposal is a legible development, well designed to integrate comfortably into its surroundings, and; is wholly visually inconsequential upon the surrounding semi-rural landscape.