

Tillbridge Solar

PEI Report Volume II Appendix 12-2: LVIA Methodology
April 2023

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1. Methodology for Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

1.1 Assessment Criteria

1.1.1 This preliminary environmental assessment has been undertaken following relevant guidance, including:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), Third Edition (GLVIA3), (Ref. 12-1);
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Ref. 12-2);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 12-3);
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations. Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (Ref. 12-4);
- Infrastructure. Technical Guidance Note 04/2020 (Ref. 12-5);
- Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 01/17: Tranquillity, (Ref. 12-6); and
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment, (Ref. 12-7).

1.1.2 GLVIA3 places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape and visual effects. The LVIA has been undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect who is experienced in undertaking assessments of similar types and scale. Professional judgement has been used in combination with structured methods and criteria to determine the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors (informed by their value and susceptibility to change), the magnitude of effects on those receptors (i.e. the nature of the effect), and the significance of effects.

1.1.3 The following section summarises the methodology for the LVIA which builds on the general assessment methodology presented in **PEI Report Volume I Chapter 5: EIA Methodology**. For clarity and in accordance with good practice, the assessment of potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity, although closely related, are undertaken separately.

1.2 Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

1.2.1 Landscape receptors are described as components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by The Scheme. These can include overall character and key characteristics; individual elements or features; and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects. It is the interaction between the different components of The Scheme and these landscape receptors which has potential to result in landscape impacts and effects (adverse, neutral and beneficial).

- 1.2.2 The sensitivity of the landscape receptor has been derived by combining of the value of the landscape (undertaken as part of the baseline study) and the susceptibility to change of the receptor to the specific type of development being assessed.

Landscape Value

- 1.2.3 Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional, and local designations. Absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. The evaluation of landscape value has been informed by Technical Guidance Note 02/21 and undertaken considering the following factors and classified as high, medium, low or very low with evidence provided as to the basis of the evaluation:

- *Natural heritage* - landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape;
- *Cultural heritage* - landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape;
- *Landscape quality/condition* - the measure of the physical state of the landscape including the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements;
- *Scenic quality* - the level of visual and sensory appeal of the landscape;
- *Perceptual aspects* - the extent that the landscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities (e.g. scenic, wildness or tranquillity);
- *Functional* - landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape;
- *Rarity* - the presence of unusual elements or features;
- *Representativeness/distinctiveness*- the presence of particularly characteristic features;
- *Recreation* - the extent that recreational activities contribute to the landscape receptor; and
- *Association* - extent that cultural or historical associations contribute to the landscape receptor.

- 1.2.4 With reference to the above, landscape value will be ascribed the broad values described in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Landscape Value Criteria

Classification	Description
High	A landscape with elements of national or regional designation / importance and / or which is characterised mainly by key characteristics and/or rare features.
Medium	A landscape with elements of local or neighbourhood designation / importance and / or a landscape with some key characteristics and/or distinctive features.
Low	A landscape with elements of community designation / importance and or commonplace features and few key characteristics.
Very Low	Landscape with weak or discordant elements and characteristics that detract from the quality of the area.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 1.2.5 Landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate The Scheme. It is assessed through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, and in particular, the scale or complexity of a given landscape.
- 1.2.6 GLVIA 3 paragraph 5.40 defines landscape susceptibility as:
- “the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be overall character or condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or features, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.”*
- 1.2.7 GLVIA3, paragraph 5.43 it states that judgements about susceptibility of landscape receptors to change should be recorded on a verbal scale and this will be applied as set out in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2: Susceptibility to Change of Landscape Receptors

Classification	Susceptibility to change
High	The receptor has a low capacity to accommodate a proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to have a strong pattern/texture or is a simple but distinctive landscape and/or with high value features and essentially intact. Undue consequences are likely to arise from the Scheme.
Medium	The receptor has some capacity to accommodate a proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The pattern of the landscape is mostly intact and/or with a degree of complexity and with features mostly in reasonable condition. Undue consequences may arise from the Scheme.
Low	The receptor is robust; it can accommodate a proposed development without effects upon its overall integrity. The landscape is likely to be simple, monotonous and/or partially degraded with common/indistinct features and minimal variation in landscape pattern. Undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the Scheme.

Very Low	Damaged or substantially modified landscapes, capable of absorbing major change; and/or landscape elements/features that might be considered to detract from landscape character such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large scale developments, etc.) or derelict or developed/industrial land. Consequences are likely to be beneficial for the landscape.
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Landscape Sensitivity

1.2.8 The overall sensitivity assessment of the landscape receptor has been made by applying professional judgement to combine the identified value and susceptibility. Overall sensitivity has been rated as high, medium, low or very low. Table 1-3 outlines indicators that inform landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity. The basis of the assessment is made clear in the evaluation of each landscape receptor.

Table 1-3: Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	Description
High	<p>Landscape of national or regional value with distinctive elements and characteristics, highly susceptible to small changes of the type of development proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Typically, these would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of high quality with distinctive elements and features making a positive contribution to character and sense of place; • likely to be designated, but the aspects which underpin such value may also be present outside designated areas, especially at the local scale. • areas of special recognised value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations; and • likely to contain features and elements that are rare and could not be replaced.
Medium	<p>Landscape of local or community value, with mostly common elements and characteristics, which by nature of their character would be able to partly accommodate change of the type proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Typically, these would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprised of mostly commonplace elements and features creating generally unremarkable character but may include some rarer elements and with some sense of place; • locally designated, or value may be expressed through non-statutory local publications; • containing some features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations; and • likely to contain some features and elements that could not be replaced.
Low	<p>Landscape of community or limited value and relatively inconsequential elements and characteristics, the nature of which is potentially tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed. Typically, these would be:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprised of some features and elements that are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place;• not designated;• containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations; and• likely to contain few, if any, features and elements that could not be replaced.
Very Low	Landscape of very low or limited value that is damaged, degraded or a substantially modified landscape pattern, with few or no natural or original features remaining, such that it is tolerant of change.

1.3 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 1.3.1 Visual effects result from changes in the composition of views and or changes to the overall visual amenity. GLVIA3 notes that the visual sensitivity of receptors is dependent upon:

“the susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views” (paragraph 6.31).

- 1.3.2 Visual sensitivity includes a combination of parameters, such as the activity/occupation/pastime of the receptors at particular locations; the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience. It will comprise the location, relative focus and orientation of particular views, the quality or importance of the existing view and its attractiveness / or scenic quality; the principal or secondary interest in that particular view; the static or sequential nature of views; the ability of the view to accommodate the type of development and the frequency and duration of the view.

Visual Value

- 1.3.3 GLVIA3 stresses the importance of considering the value attached to views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations. It provides a list of indicators of the value of views in paragraph 6.37, including:
- Appearance in guidebooks our tourist maps;
 - Provision of facilities, such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive materials; and
 - References in literature or art.
- 1.3.4 The assessment of the value of views is also informed by the location of the viewing place and the quality or designation of the existing elements in the view, as shown in Table 1-4 Table 1-4below.

Table 1-4: Landscape Sensitivity

Classification Value of View

High	<p>A recognised high quality view, well- frequented and/or promoted as a beauty spot/visitor destination.</p> <p>A view with cultural associations (recognised in art, literature or other media).</p> <p>A view which relates to the experience of other features, for example heritage assets.</p>
Medium	<p>The view, whilst it may be valued locally, visited to experience the view and/or identified in a Neighbourhood Plan, is not widely recognised for its quality or has low visitor numbers. The view has no strong cultural associations.</p>
Low	<p>A view with no recognised quality and/or with relatively common element; and is unlikely to be visited specifically to experience the views available.</p>
Very Low	<p>A poor quality view which is generally likely to be unvalued or regarded as degraded.</p>

Visual Susceptibility

- 1.3.5 GLVIA3 notes that visual receptors “*most susceptible to change*” include residents “*especially using rooms normally occupied in waking or daylight hours*” (para 6.36) and visitors engaged in outdoor recreation “*whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views*” (para 6.33).
- 1.3.6 However, in paragraph 6.35, GLVIA3 notes that the divisions between categories are not always clear cut and “*in reality there will be a gradation in the susceptibility to change*”, (paragraph 6.35).
- 1.3.7 For the purposes of this assessment therefore, susceptibility of visual receptors to change will be defined as presented in Table 1-5.

Table 1-5: Susceptibility to change of views

Susceptibility Susceptibility to Change

High	<p>Typical receptors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents at home; • people engaged in outdoor recreation, whose attention/interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views, including strategic/ popular PRoW; • visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are a significant contributor to the experience; • communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents; and • travellers on identified scenic routes which people take to experience or enjoy the view. <p>For whom:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development type would be of high incongruity in the context of the view. Susceptibility would be reduced for development of lesser incongruity.
Medium	<p>Typical receptors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travellers on road, rail, or other transport routes who anticipate some enjoyment of landscape as part of the journey but where the attention is not primarily focused on the landscape; users of local, and less used PRow or where the attention is not focused on the landscape; and schools and other institutional buildings and their outdoor areas, play areas. <p>For whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development type would be of medium incongruity in the context of the view. Susceptibility would be reduced for development of lesser incongruity.
Low	<p>Typical receptors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes not focused on the landscape/particular views e.g., on motorways and “A” road or commuter routes; and people engaged in outdoor sport/recreation which does not involve/depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape. <p>For whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development type would be of low incongruity in the context of the view. Susceptibility would be reduced for development of lesser incongruity.
Very Low	<p>Typical receptors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work/activity and not their surroundings. <p>For whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development type would be of very low incongruity in the context of the view.

Visual Sensitivity

1.3.8 In combining susceptibility to change and value it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a very low susceptibility and very low value is likely to resulting in the lowest level of sensitivity. A summary of the likely characteristics of the different levels of sensitivity is described below in Table 1-6. It must be noted that these are indicative and in practice do not have a clear distinction between criteria levels.

Table 1-6: Sensitivity of visual receptors

Classification Sensitivity of visual receptors

High	Activity resulting in a particular interest or appreciation of the view (e.g. residents with principal private views, or people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention is focused on the landscape and where people might visit purely to experience the view, such as promoted viewpoints) and/or a view of national value (e.g. within/towards a designated landscape).
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Medium	Activity resulting in a general interest or appreciation of the view (e.g. residents or people engaged in outdoor recreation that does not largely focused on an appreciation of the landscape, people passing through the landscape on defined scenic routes) and/or a view of local or community value (e.g. suburban residential areas, or agricultural land or urban areas).
Low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is secondary to the activity or the period of exposure to the view is limited (e.g. people at work, motorists travelling through the area or people engaged in outdoor recreation that does not focus on an appreciation of the landscape) and/or a view of limited value (e.g. featureless agricultural landscape, poor quality urban fringe).
Very Low	Activity where interest or appreciation of the view is inconsequential (e.g. people at work and/or very low value of existing view (e.g. industrial areas or derelict land).

1.4 Assessing magnitude (nature) of landscape and visual effects

- 1.4.1 GLVIA 3 notes the use of different terms for 'impact' and 'effect' within LVIA. For the purpose of this assessment and in line with GLVIA3 (paragraph 1.15), the term 'impact' is defined as the action being taken and the 'effect' is defined as the change resulting from that action.
- 1.4.2 GLVIA 3 notes that magnitude of change is informed by combining considerations relating to the scale, extent, duration and reversibility of effect). This includes the geographical extent of influence, the spatial extent of the effect, the level of integration of new features with existing elements, its duration and degree to which the effect is reversible.
- 1.4.3 Effects can be direct, where they involve a physical change to a defined element or characteristic of the landscape, or indirect, where effects are secondary and perceived on the wider pattern of elements or on visual amenity, away from a proposed site.

Nature/magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 1.4.4 The nature of the effect that is likely to occur, i.e. its magnitude, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:
- Size/scale;
 - Geographical extent;
 - Duration; and
 - Reversibility.
- 1.4.5 Making judgements regarding the size or scale of the changes to the landscape need to be made for each potential effect. GLVIA 3 (para 5.59) specifies that these judgements should take the following into account:
- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of

that element to the character of the landscape – in some cases this may be quantified;

- The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones; and
- Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.

Nature of Landscape Effect Categories

- 1.4.6 The factors above as considered in combination to provide an overall nature of effect/ magnitude for each receptor as per the indicative scales in Table 1-7:

Table 1-7: Magnitude of Landscape Effect

Magnitude	Typical Criteria Descriptors
High	Total loss or large-scale damage to key characteristics or distinctive features, and/or the addition of new features or components that will substantially alter the character, setting or perceptual qualities of the area.
Medium	Partial loss or damage to key characteristics or distinctive features, and/or the addition of new features and whilst notable or obvious, the change would not fundamentally alter the balance of the key characteristics or perceptual qualities.
Low	Limited loss or damage to key characteristics or alteration of common features, and/or the addition of new features such that post development the change would be discernible or appreciable, but the underlying pattern of characteristics or perceptual qualities would remain similar to the baseline condition.
Very Low	Very limited loss, damage or alteration to key characteristics, features or perceptual qualities. The change would not influence the wider character and would be barely discernible or appreciable, approximating to a “no change” situation. The addition of new features or development would not degrade, or may enhance, the baseline condition.

Beneficial or Adverse Change: Landscape Effects

- 1.4.7 The magnitude also needs to be assessed as to whether it is a beneficial, adverse or neutral change. These are defined as follows:

- For beneficial change the proposed development, or part of it, would appear in keeping with existing landscape character and would make a positive visual and/or physical contribution to key characteristics. Removal of uncharacteristic features would also be a beneficial change; and
- For adverse change the proposed development, or part of it, would be perceived as an alien or intrusive component in the context of existing landscape character and would have a negative visual and/ or physical effect.

Assessing the Significance of Landscape Effects

- 1.4.8 The overall Significance of landscape effects is a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of the effects. GLVIA

3 (para 5.56) states that there is no definitive rule regarding what defines a Significant effect, but in making the judgement it is reasonable to say that:

- Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on element and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspect that are key to the character of nationally valued landscape are likely to be of the greatest Significance; and
- Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of landscape value are likely to be the least Significant and may, depending upon the circumstance, be judged as not Significant.

Nature/Magnitude of Visual Effects

1.4.9 The guidance provided in GLVIA 3 (para 6.38) requires that each of the following variables need to be evaluated for each of the visual effects identified:

- Size or scale of the change of view, including loss of or additional views, degree of contrast in terms of form, mass, scale, colour and texture etc;
- Geographic extent in terms of angle of view, distance etc; and
- Duration and reversibility in term of longevity of effects and whether reversible.

1.4.10 These factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement, based on the indicative criteria set out in Table 1-8.

Table 1-8: Magnitude of Visual Effect

Sensitivity	Description
High	<p>Likely to result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive changes to the existing view and/or a change to an extensive proportion of the view or views where the proposed development would become the dominant landscape feature or contrast heavily with the current scene and/or. • Changes where the proposed development is located in the main focus of the view. • And/or at close range or over a large area. • And/or long term (10+ years). • And/or change is irreversible.
Medium	<p>Likely to result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes will result in changes to the view but not fundamentally change its characteristics. • Changes that would be immediately visible but not be the key features of the view. • Changes where the proposed development is located obliquely to the main focus of the view. • And/or at medium range.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• And/or over a narrow area.• And/or medium term (5-10 years).• And/or change is partially reversible.
Low	<p>Likely to result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes which would not result in a change to the composition of the view.• Changes that would only affect a small portion of the view or introduce new features that are not discordant.• Changes where the proposed development is located on the periphery of the main focus of the view.• And/or at long range.• And/or over a small area.• And/or short term (1-5 years).• And/or is partially or substantially reversible.
Very Low	<p>Likely to result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes which would not result in a change to the composition of the view or changes that would only affect a small portion of the view or introduce new features that are not discordant or changes where the proposed development is located on the periphery of the main focus of the view.• And/or at long range.• And/or over a small area.• And/or temporary (Less than 12 months).• And/or fully reversible.

Beneficial or Adverse Change: Visual effects

1.4.11 The magnitude also needs to be assessed as to whether it is a beneficial or adverse change. These are defined as follows:

- For beneficial change the proposed development, or part of it, would appear in keeping with existing landscape character and would make a positive visual and/or physical contribution to key characteristics. Removal of uncharacteristic features would also be a beneficial change; and
- For adverse change the proposed development, or part of it, would be perceived as an alien or intrusive component in the context of existing landscape character and would have a negative visual and/ or physical effect.

1.5 Significance of Effect

1.5.1 The overall significance of visual effects is derived following the combination of the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of the change/impact, in order to determine the level of effect. GLVIA 3 (para 6.42) states “...*there is no definitive rule regarding what defines a Significant effect, but in making the judgement it is reasonable to say that:*

- *Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in the views and visual amenity are more likely to be Significant;*

- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be Significant; and*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant features or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be Significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.”*

1.5.2 The level or nature of the landscape or visual effect and the resulting determination of significance is derived from the relationship between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect.

1.5.3 A guide to this relationship is set out in the matrix in Table 1-9 below. However, should professional judgement consider that the effect is different to that in the matrix, then a reasoned justification is presented in the LVIA.

Table 1-9: Classification of Effects Matrix

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Potential change/impact				
	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	None
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor	Neutral
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Neutral
Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral
Very Low	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral

1.5.4 Following the classification of an effect, clear statements has been made within the LVIA as to whether that effect is significant or not significant.

1.5.5 Residual effects found to be ‘moderate’ or ‘major’ are deemed to be ‘significant’ and may be important or relevant to the decision-making process. Effects found to be ‘negligible’ or ‘minor’ are considered to be ‘not significant’ and may not be important or relevant to the decision-making process, although they may be matters of local concern.

1.5.6 GLVIA 3 dictates that this is not a prescriptive process: tables and matrices are provided as a guide to how combinations of sensitivity and magnitude are typically combined. Conclusions of significance may differ from those in the table when supported by evidence.

1.5.7 The level and significance of landscape and visual effects are described with reference to the criteria presented in Table 1-10 below.

Table 1-10 Significance of Effect

Level and Significance of Effect	Landscape	Visual
Major Beneficial (Significant)	Alterations that result in a considerable improvement of the existing landscape resource.	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view.

Level and Significance of Effect	Landscape	Visual
	Valued characteristic features would be restored or reintroduced.	
Moderate Beneficial (Significant)	Alterations that result in a partial improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely restored or reintroduced.	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that result in a slight improvement of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially restored.	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that result in a very slight improvement to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
Neutral	No alteration to any of the components that contribute to the existing landscape resource.	No change to the existing view.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that result in a slight deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be partially lost.	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate Adverse (Significant)	Alterations that result in a partial deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be largely lost.	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Major Adverse (Significant)	Alterations that result in a considerable deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be wholly lost.	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced deterioration in the existing view.

1.6 References

- Ref. 12-1. Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2013). Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition.
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