

**TOWN AND COUNTRY
PLANNING ACT 1990 - SECTION 78**

**APPEAL BY
BROADVIEW ENERGY
DEVELOPMENTS LTD.**

**LAND AT SPRING FARM RIDGE,
NORTH OF WELSH LANE
BETWEEN GREATWORTH
AND HELMDON**

**SUMMARY OF
PROOF OF EVIDENCE
ANDREW N. BROWN
BA BArch MSc MRTPI RIBA IHBC**

The Planning Inspectorate Ref. No:
APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035

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I.00 SUMMARY

- I.01 I am Andrew Newman Brown, BA, BArch, MSc, MRTPI, RIBA, IHBC. This Inquiry relates to an appeal against the decision of South Northamptonshire Council to refuse an application for planning permission for a wind farm comprising five wind turbines and associated works on land at Spring Farm Ridge, north of Welsh Lane between Greatworth and Helmdon. The Appellant's case is being presented by a number of witnesses and my evidence relates to the impact of the proposed development upon the setting of heritage assets around the Appeal Site.
- I.02 The Council's Statement of Case indicates that it would focus on the impact of the proposed development upon seven designated heritage assets or groups of heritage assets. It also states that the Council considers the harm to these heritage assets is 'less than substantial'. Concern about other heritage assets has been raised by consultees and third parties. I note that, despite the various comments set out in its letter of 14th January 2011, English Heritage did not recommend refusal of the application.
- I.03 The Council is not expressing any concerns regarding the potential of the proposed development to have a direct effect upon the non-designated heritage assets (principally archaeological remains) on the Appeal Site. Also, heritage concerns expressed by third parties relate entirely to the impact of the proposal on the setting of heritage assets. My evidence therefore solely considers the impact of the proposed turbines on the setting of heritage assets.
- I.04 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework as *'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced.'* Whilst the settings of various heritage assets need to be understood in assessing the impact of this proposal, I consider that any attempt to closely define the extent of setting is of limited usefulness. Setting is not a heritage asset in itself, nor is it a heritage designation; its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of a heritage asset. As a result, within my evidence I have not attempted to define the geographical extent of the setting of the various heritage assets but have sought to identify whether and to what extent elements of the setting of a heritage asset contribute to the significance of that asset. I have then assessed the impact of the proposed wind turbines on the significance of the various heritage assets, including any impact on those elements of their settings that contribute to their significance.

- I.05 I have set out the statutory requirements and the policies of the Development Plan that relate to the historic environment, together with other relevant documents adopted by the Council. I have also considered central government policy relating to the historic environment and guidance provided by English Heritage.
- I.06 Within my evidence I have considered the impact of the proposed development upon those heritage assets set out in paragraph 4.8 of the Council's Statement of Case, together with those assets where specific heritage concerns have been raised by third parties.
- I.07 My assessment makes use of the five step approach set out in the English Heritage document *The Setting of Heritage Assets*. However, I have omitted Step 4 (maximising enhancement and minimising harm) as no enhancement or mitigation specifically related to heritage assets is proposed. In relation to Step 5, I have only considered the public benefits to the historic environment (in my conclusions) as the wider public benefits of the proposed development are considered within the evidence of Mr. Bell.
- I.08 As a result of my assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon the setting of the various heritage assets, I have concluded that the proposed development would impact as follows:
- Greatworth Hall (Grade II listed building) – Moderate adverse;
 - Greatworth Conservation Area – Slight Adverse;
 - Church of St. Peter, Greatworth (Grade II* listed building) - Slight Adverse;
 - Astwell Castle (scheduled ancient monument and Grade II* listed building) – Moderate Adverse;
 - Sulgrave Conservation Area – Moderate Adverse;
 - Castle Hill Ringworks and Church of St. James, Sulgrave (scheduled ancient monument and Grade II* listed building) – Moderate Adverse;
 - Sulgrave Manor (Grade I listed building and Grade II registered park and garden) – Neutral;
 - Church of St. Mary Magdelene, Helmdon (Grade II* listed building) – Slight Adverse;
 - Canons Ashby (Grade I listed building and Grade II* registered park and garden) - Neutral;
 - Stowe (Grade I listed building and Grade I registered park and garden) – Slight Adverse;
 - Site of deserted village, Stuchbury (non-designated heritage asset) – Slight Adverse; and

- Railway Viaduct, Helmdon (non-designated heritage asset) – Neutral.

- I.09 The proposed development would be contrary to the specific wording of ‘saved’ Policies G3 and EV11 of the Local Plan. However, these two policies do not contain a balancing provision and are therefore considered to be inconsistent with the relevant parts of the Framework. I consider that the proposed development would accord with Policies EV10, EV12 and EV 28 of the Local Plan.
- I.10 For the purposes of the Framework I consider that all the identified impacts are ‘less than substantial’ and therefore paragraph 134 is relevant. Inevitably, some observers may not like the fact that the proposed wind turbines will be experienced in relation to some or all of the heritage assets that have been considered. It may even be the case that an understanding of the significance of some of these assets would be easier if the turbines were not erected. However, in no case would the turbines impact on elements of setting which contribute to significance to such a degree as to cause substantial harm. Paragraph 134 of the Framework indicates that ‘less than substantial harm’ needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
- I.11 The English Heritage document, *Wind Energy and the Historic Environment*, indicates that reversibility is an important feature and should be taken into account and this has been explicitly confirmed in the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN-3. This aspect of the proposed development is of particular significance in relation to the historic environment. Whilst 25 years is not a short period in human terms (being approximately one generation), in relation to the enduring significance of the heritage assets around the Appeal Site it only represents a small slice of their history up to the present day (and a much smaller slice of their potential history). Whatever adverse effect the proposed development may be considered to have on heritage assets, this will be capable of being reversed after 25 years.
- I.12 Climate change is likely to be detrimental to the historic environment. Whilst there will be some diffuse benefits to the historic environment from the proposed development, I do not consider that these by themselves are sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified.
- I.13 The wider public benefits of the proposed development, against which the identified harm needs to be balanced, are outside the scope of my evidence but are set out within the evidence of Mr. Bell.