

WOODHALL
PLANNING AND CONSERVATION

**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**

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

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1.00 REBUTTAL

- 1.01 The rebuttal evidence is necessary as the Cultural Heritage Proof of Evidence of Ms. Archer on behalf of South Northamptonshire Council covers two heritage assets that are not referred to within paragraph 4.8 of the Council's Statement of Case (which identifies the designated assets that the Council will focus on).
- 1.02 Within Ms. Archer's evidence she asserts that the proposed development would have a negative impact upon the Culworth Conservation Area (see paragraphs 1.1.152 to 164). Not only is this Conservation Area not identified within the Council's Statement but the assertion of negative impact is not included in Summary Table I, which forms part of paragraph 1.1.22 of Ms. Archer's Proof of Evidence. As I noted in paragraph 3.03 of my Proof of Evidence, as a result of paragraph 4.8 of the Council's Statement of Case, it was believed that the Council's concern regarding the Culworth Conservation Area (which had been raised at the previous Inquiry) had been dropped. As a result, I did not include any assessment of the impact of the proposed development upon Culworth within my Proof of Evidence. I therefore set out such an assessment below.
- 1.03 In addition, Ms. Archer's evidence includes comments upon the archaeological remains at Stuchbury (see paragraphs 1.1.165 to 168) that align her professional opinion (and therefore the Council) with a case being put forward by others. The archaeological remains at Stuchbury are not referred to within the Council's Statement of Case and (as Ms. Archer acknowledges) the Council does not object to the proposed development on archaeological grounds. As a result of the concerns expressed by the Helmdon, Stuchbury and Greatworth Windfarm Action Group, I have already assessed the impact of the proposed development upon the setting of this heritage asset within my Proof of Evidence (see paragraphs 6.55 to 6.58).

Impact on Culworth Conservation Area

Step 1 – Identify the heritage asset

- 1.04 The Culworth Conservation Area is located approximately 3.5km north-west of the main section of the Appeal Site and the designated area covers the majority of the village. In January 2013 (after the previous Inquiry) the Council published a *Culworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* (CD 10.6). Within the Summary section of this document Culworth is described as:

... an attractive village comprising essentially one long street which winds down a fairly steep slope in a westerly direction with views across open countryside to the south from the periphery of the conservation area.

Culworth is typical of small agricultural settlements within this part of the country. I consider that the Conservation Area is of archaeological, architectural and historic interest.

Step 2 – Assessment of setting

- 1.05 The setting of the Culworth Conservation Area is largely provided by the surrounding agricultural land and this contributes to its significance. However, as a result of the inward-looking form of the village and the enclosing effect of its buildings and trees, views out of the designated area from the roads and other public areas are limited. The enclosed nature of the village is noted in Section 4.2 of the Council's Appraisal (CD 10.6), which states:

An integral part of the village's character and charm is the network of walls linking buildings and open spaces. These walls are essential in the creation of the strong sense of unity and enclosure within the village. This sense of enclosure is reinforced by the positioning of buildings and terraces close to the edge of the highway. ... if it is the case that a building is set back there are usually boundary walls or hedges to maintain the visual links between the buildings and maintain the sense of enclosure.

The public right of way footpaths ... that lead away from the core of the village, are almost entirely enclosed by walls. This continuity of enclosure methods help to link the peripheral areas ... with its historic core.

- 1.06 The principal areas of the Conservation Area from which views towards the Appeal Site are possible are from the open spaces around the church (including the cricket ground). Section 4.3 of the Council's Appraisal (CD 10.6) states:

Other important open spaces include the area of land opposite the Church currently used as a cricket ground. This particular space is a pleasing break from the ribbon effect of the main street and provides superb views of the countryside to the south

Step 3 – Effect of the proposed development

- 1.07 The proposed wind turbines would be located to the south-east of the Culworth Conservation Area and the nearest of the proposed wind turbines would be approximately 3.5km from the edge of the designated area. From my assessment, I consider that public views of the turbines from within the Conservation Area would only be possible from part of the graveyard around the parish church, the adjacent section of Queen Street, and the cricket ground to the south; as a result of intervening trees even these views would be limited. There would also be some private views of the turbines, primarily from the first

floor windows of some residential properties. The turbines would not be seen in any major views towards the Conservation Area. As a result of the distance between the turbines and Culworth, the partial screening provided by intervening trees, and the way in which they would be seen as part of the wider landscape, I do not consider that the turbines would be visually dominant in views from the Conservation Area, although the movement of the blades will attract attention to them. The scale of the proposed development is relatively limited (consisting of five turbines) and they are all located to the south-east so there would be no sense that they surround the Conservation Area.

- 1.08 The agricultural land adjacent to the Culworth Conservation Area will remain unaltered as a result of the proposed development and views of the proposed wind turbines will be limited. As a result, I consider that the proposed development will have a neutral impact on the significance of this heritage asset.
- 1.09 I note that following the previous Inquiry, the Inspector's decision letter stated in paragraph 46 (CD 6.16) that:

Culworth lies to the north west of Sulgrave and, like Sulgrave has a ringwork and church complex within a conservation area. The ringwork is behind the church and therefore would not afford views of the proposal. Views of the proposed wind turbines from the churchyard, which is elevated above the road, would be very limited due to the line of trees along the sports field opposite The proposed wind farm some 3.5 km away would not impact on the significance of the heritage assets or their setting.