

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(INQUIRIES PROCEDURE)(ENGLAND)
RULES 200**

Appeal by Broadview Energy Limited In respect of the refusal of planning permission for: Wind Farm comprising the erection of five wind turbines plus underground cabling, meteorological mast, access tracks, control building, temporary site compound and ancillary development (Includes Environmental Statement)at Spring Farm Ridge, land north of Welsh Lane between Greatworth and Helmdon

Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035

Local Authority Ref: S/2010/1437/MAF

Cultural Heritage Proof of Evidence

Proof of Evidence of

**Naomi Archer BA(Hons) PGDip PGCert
Conservation Officer**

**ON BEHALF OF SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
COUNCIL**

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Introduction

1.1.1. Qualifications and experience

1.1.2. My name is Naomi Archer. I am employed by South Northamptonshire Council as a Conservation Officer. I have held this post for just under 4 years. I have over 10 years experience in historic conservation and planning and hold a Postgraduate Diploma in Urban Planning Studies and a Postgraduate Certificate in Historic Conservation. I am an affiliate member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

1.1.3. My role as Conservation Officer requires me to handle listed building case work and comment on development proposals affecting the historic environment, in particular in relation to built heritage.

1.1.4. I was consulted on the Spring Farm Ridge planning application in 2010 and gave comments to the planning case officer on the likely impact of the proposal on the historic built environment. In February 2012 amendments to the application were made and Further Environmental Information was submitted. I have taken these into account in this proof of evidence. I am familiar with the appeal site and its surroundings and have visited the area on more than one occasion including for the purposes of this second inquiry. Indeed, I gave evidence on behalf of the Council on cultural heritage matters in May 2012.

1.1.5. The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions

1.1.6. Scope of evidence

1.1.7. This proof of evidence relates to the effect of the proposed Spring Farm Ridge wind farm on the historic built environment of South Northamptonshire, in particular the impact on the setting of heritage assets. The evidence will focus on those designated assets where the effect on setting is considered likely to cause greatest harm to the significance of the asset.

1.1.8. **Heritage policy and methodology**

1.1.9. The relevant planning policy, national guidance, advice and assessment methodology is set out in Annex 1.3.

1.1.10. There are a number of English Heritage guidance documents referred to in the Core Documents.

1.1.11. The English Heritage guidance document “The Setting of Heritage Assets” sets out a methodology for assessing harm to the

setting of heritage assets as part of the planning process. The document sets out a five step process as follows:

Step One identifies which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

Step Two assesses whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage assets;

Step Three assesses the effects of the proposed development on that significance;

Step Four explores ways to minimise harm;

Step Five is the making and documenting of the decision. This assessment process has been used to determine the harm to the setting of heritage assets which is likely to result from the proposed development.

I have drawn on the first three stages in my assessment of the cultural heritage impacts in this proof.

1.1.12. The English Heritage document “Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment” provides a comprehensive national framework for the management of the historic environment. It articulates the value of heritage for its evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value. While traditionally in the UK greatest weight has been placed on the more academic and intellectual elements of historic significance – evidential and historical value – this document articulates the importance of aesthetic and communal value. These elements of significance are easily overlooked and more difficult to quantify than evidential and historical value, but are important to individuals and communities. Conservation Principles is a useful document and was used in assessing the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposed development.

1.1.13. The NPPF postdates the Conservation Principles guidance document, but in my view it does not affect the importance of its advice. ‘Significance’ for the purposes of heritage policy is defined in the Glossary of the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Although aesthetic and communal values are not specifically mentioned in what heritage interest may be, I do not consider the definition to be exhaustive, and the definition goes on to state that significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

1.1.14. The ‘experience of an asset’ and ‘the asset’s associative attributes’ are separate categories in the assessment of the ways in which settings make a contribution to significance under Step 2 of the Setting of Heritage Assets guidance document, and are categories quite

distinct from the asset's physical surroundings (p.19). In my view this indicates that aesthetic and communal values remain important to the assessment of impacts on setting and are considerations consistent with an analysis of setting impacts under the NPPF.

1.1.15. The DCLG document "Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy" published July 2013 emphasises the importance of the impact of setting on heritage significance when considering wind turbine development. The guidance requires that careful consideration should be given to the impact of wind turbines on the setting of heritage assets and specifically provides that a wind turbine within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of an asset (para. 34).

1.1.16. The Ministerial Statement which preceded the publication of the DCLG guidance made clear the Government's concern that current planning decisions on onshore wind were not always reflecting a locally-led planning system (Pickles 6/6/13). Given the emphasis in that guidance on the importance of settings impacts on heritage significance, it seems clear to me that the government's concern is in part that impacts on the setting of cultural heritage assets have been downplayed or ignored in planning decisions for onshore wind.

1.1.17. Impacts arising from the proposed development

1.1.18. Northamptonshire has a rich and varied historic environment. It is a county famed for its churches, and is also well known for its great country houses, many of which lie in landscaped parks and gardens of exceptional quality. While very few of its country houses are open to the public and are therefore little known to the general public, they are of considerable architectural and historic importance. The vernacular architecture is shaped by the use of oolitic limestone in conjunction with soft ironstone used for contrasting decorative work. The limestone vernacular buildings give a character similar to (but distinctive from) that of the Cotswold villages which are not far from the county's south-west border.

1.1.19. The county is also rich in archaeological remains. During the early medieval period the county marked the border between Saxon Wessex and Viking Danelaw. The defensible ringworks close to the application site date from around this period.

1.1.20. The application site is located in an area with a high concentration of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated. Within a 5km radius of the application site there are eight scheduled ancient monuments, 319 listed buildings, eight conservation areas and one registered park and garden. In addition to the designated heritage assets there is an undesignated deserted medieval village at Stuchbury, adjacent to the application site.

1.1.21. There has been limited 20th Century development in the area affected by the application. Post-war development has mainly been limited to low-rise residential development and agricultural structures which have had a negligible impact on the wider historic environment. There has been little 20th Century large-scale industrial or commercial development in the area.

1.1.22. It is SNC's view that the proposed development will have a negative impact on the significance of various heritage assets by adversely affecting their setting. The summary tables below sets out the impact on the heritage assets.

Summary Table 1

Assessment of impact of the proposed development on heritage assets

Heritage asset	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Impact on significance
Castle Hill Ringwork, Sulgrave	High	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Church of St James the Less, Sulgrave	High	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Sulgrave Manor	High	Slight adverse	Minor adverse
Sulgrave Manor Registered Park and Garden	High	Slight adverse	Minor adverse
Astwell Castle, Helmdon	High	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Church of St Peter, Greatworth	High	Slight adverse	Minor adverse
Greatworth Hall	High	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Greatworth Conservation Area	Medium	Slight adverse	Minor adverse
Sulgrave conservation area	Medium	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse

1.1.23. Impact on Castle Hill Ringwork, Sulgrave

1.1.24. Identifying the asset and its value

1.1.25. Castle Hill ringwork is located at the southern edge of Sulgrave village, approximately 2km north of the application site. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is a fortification built and occupied from the late Anglo-Saxon period to the later 12th Century. It comprised a small defended area which contained buildings surrounded by a substantial ditch and a bank surmounted by a palisade. In addition to the Scheduled area, the former bailey area of the castle - now referred to as Castle Green - survives in good condition although with a little encroachment by later development. Evidence of a Norman manorial centre has been established on this site. Castle Hill Ringwork is considered to be of national importance.

1.1.26. Historical and evidential value

1.1.27. Castle Hill ringwork dates from the late Saxon period and has high historical and evidential value.

1.1.28. Ringworks with bailey are rare nationally, with fewer than 60 recorded examples and are of particular significance to our understanding of the period. The ringwork site at Sulgrave has survived well and is one of only seven ringworks in Northamptonshire.

1.1.29. Ringwork/church complexes also survive in the nearby villages of Culworth and Lois Weedon and together the three sites form a distinctive and unusual group and make a highly significant contribution to the historic character of the area. Of these, Sulgrave is the best preserved and most legible. Its designation as a Scheduled Ancient Monument together with its rarity confirms the national significance attributed to this structure.

1.1.30. As a defensive structure with close association with the ringworks at Culworth and Lois Weedon, its elevated position in the landscape and views to and from the monument form a key element of its significance. The structure would have been deliberately positioned to see from and be seen, and views out from the ringwork form part of its significance.

1.1.31. The proposed wind turbines will be a highly intrusive element in views southward and south-westward from the ringwork. This will harm the evidential value of the site by diminishing its dominating position in the landscape. Command of height is an architectural expression of power and the proposed turbines would dominate the ringwork, usurping the present impact of its elevated defensive position.

1.1.32. Aesthetic value

1.1.33. The ringwork is of considerable aesthetic value, which is inseparable from its group setting with the castle green, the church, churchyard and wider historic landscape. Unimpeded access to the ringwork and mound allows visitors to draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the asset as they climb up and down and experience the steepness of the mound, the changing views and command of space, which gives an understanding and appreciation of the monument beyond its historic and evidential value. The tranquil rural setting of the monument and the absence of intrusive modern development is an important element of this aesthetic value.

1.1.34. The intrusive nature of the proposed turbines, their size, industrial character and the movement of their blades will have a negative impact on the monument's aesthetic value.

1.1.35. Communal value

1.1.36. Castle Hill Ringwork and the Castle Green are highly valued by the local community of Sulgrave. The villagers set up the Sulgrave Historical Association and raised funds to purchase the Castle Green for the long term benefit of the community. The outer stone wall has been repaired and an interpretation board placed on the site. In addition the Castle Green is used as a public space for various village functions. The commitment of the village to purchase and maintain this area illustrates the commitment and value placed by the local community on the castle area, not just in a historical context but for its community value and contribution to the inhabitants' sense of place and local identity.

1.1.37. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance

1.1.38. The setting of the Castle Hill Ringwork is an important element of its significance. Views out from the site are very important in reinforcing appreciation of the site's defensible and dominating role. The striking impact of views to the south largely rests on the unspoilt and undeveloped landscape in this direction when viewed from the ringwork. The impact of northward views has been somewhat diminished by 20th Century low-rise residential development, although the views are still legible. The southward views are therefore all the more significant because of their undeveloped open character.

1.1.39. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance

1.1.40. The proposed development will have a negative impact on the setting of this Scheduled Ancient Monument. The intrusion of five turbines into the rural undeveloped views southward and south-westward from the monument will diminish the impact of its dominating position in the landscape. The introduction of tall turbines competing for dominance of the skyline will harm the evidential and aesthetic value of the

monument. The kinetic nature of the turbines and their height will further intrude on the setting.

1.1.41. Conclusion

1.1.42. The significance of Castle Hill ringwork lies in its historic and evidential value, its rarity, its communal value and its aesthetic value. The setting of the asset forms part of its significance. Views of and from the ringwork form part of its significance. The character of views of and from the monument, in particular the aesthetic value and the experience of interacting with the monument, will be harmed by the proposed development in such a way as to cause harm to the significance of the designated asset through harm to its setting. While this harm is considered to be less than substantial, it is considered to be significant.

1.1.43. Impact on Church of St James the Less, Sulgrave

1.1.44. Identifying the asset and its value

1.1.45. The Church of St James the Less, Sulgrave, is located immediately to the east of Castle Hill Ringwork. It lies approximately 2km to the north of the application site. It is listed Grade II* and is considered to be of national importance.

1.1.46. Historical and evidential value

1.1.47. The Church of St James the Less is a building of medieval origin with 19th Century additions which remains in regular use for its original intended purpose. Much of the fabric dates from the 13th – 16th Century, although there is some evidence of re-set Saxon work which may relate to an earlier church on the site.

1.1.48. Stained glass shields with arms of the Washington family in the east window of south aisle and brasses link the church to the American president George Washington. The church/castle complex attracts many American visitors each year for this reason.

1.1.49. Aesthetic and communal value

1.1.50. The church plays an essential role in the life of the local community. It forms the setting for major life events including weddings and funerals. The aesthetic and communal value of the church and its setting are interlinked. Views of the church and churchyard have profound significance for the local community and those who have historic family links to Sulgrave. In addition to the local community the church has aesthetic and communal value for the many American visitors who travel great distances to visit the church.

1.1.51. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance

1.1.52. In common with many historic parish churches, the Church of St James the Less is a prominent landmark in views of the village from the surrounding countryside. The church tower is a clear landmark in views towards the settlement from the north and west, reinforcing the historic importance of the church in the life of the community.

1.1.53. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance

1.1.54. The character of views toward the church from the north and north-east will be significantly altered by the proposed development. The proposed turbines are likely to appear behind the church tower when viewed from the road and public rights of way to the north and north-east.

1.1.55. Conclusion

1.1.56. The significance of the Church of St James the Less lies in its historic and evidential value, its aesthetic value and its communal value, both to local residents and to international visitors. Its aesthetic value is formed in part by its setting on elevated ground adjacent to Castle Hill ringwork and bailey, which makes it prominent in views toward the settlement from the north and north-west. This setting will be harmed by the proposed development. While the harm is considered to be less than substantial, it is considered to be significant.

1.1.57. Cumulative impact on group of heritage assets Castle Hill Ringwork, Castle Green and Church of St James the Less

1.1.58. The heritage assets discussed above form a group, consisting of the Grade II* listed Church of St James the Less, the Scheduled Castle Hill Ringwork, and the unscheduled Castle Green to the south of the scheduled area.

1.1.59. This grouping of heritage assets has a significance which is additional to the significance of each individual asset. This significance lies in the juxtaposition of the early manorial site with the church and churchyard, the importance of the group to the special historic character of Sulgrave and the value placed on the group of assets by the local community.

1.1.60. The group of heritage assets aids understanding and appreciation of the organisation of medieval communal life, in particular the inseparable nature of ecclesiastical and secular power.

1.1.61. This group of heritage assets has historic, evidential and communal value which is reinforced and enhanced by its aesthetic value and relatively undeveloped context.

- 1.1.62. Impact on Sulgrave Manor and Registered Park and Garden**
- 1.1.63. Identifying the asset and its value
- 1.1.64. Sulgrave Manor lies approximately 2.5km to the north of the application site in the northern part of Sulgrave village.
- 1.1.65. The Manor House is a Grade I listed building set in its own garden, which is registered as a Grade II Park and Garden.
- 1.1.66. Sulgrave Manor was the ancestral home of the Washington family and is associated with the first American president George Washington. The village receives many American visitors annually, primarily to visit Sulgrave Manor but also to explore the surrounding area.
- 1.1.67. As a Grade I listed building, Sulgrave Manor is a highly sensitive heritage asset and is afforded the highest level of protection from harm.
- 1.1.68. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance
- 1.1.69. While Sulgrave Manor and gardens occupies a relatively enclosed site, views out over the surrounding countryside form the backdrop to its vernacular rural character. The setting makes a contribution to the aesthetic value of both the house and the garden.
- 1.1.70. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance
- 1.1.71. The proposed development is likely to be visible in southward views out from the garden, particularly from the area around the vegetable garden and the blacksmith's hut.
- 1.1.72. There is some screening of these southward views from the Manor gardens, but this consists of deciduous trees. Screening is therefore likely to be effective only during the summer months when the trees are in full leaf.
- 1.1.73. While the direct effect on the significance of the Manor house will be minimal, there will be a slight adverse effect on the significance of the Registered Park and Garden.
- 1.1.74. Conclusion
- 1.1.75. The significance of Sulgrave Manor and its associated Registered Park and Garden lies in its historic and evidential value as a small late medieval manor house, its aesthetic value, and its communal value in particular its association with the family of George Washington. While the manor's historic and evidential value is unlikely to be harmed

by the proposed development, there will be some harm to its aesthetic value as a result of change to the rural landscape in which it is set.

1.1.76. Impact on Sulgrave Conservation Area

1.1.77. Identifying the asset and its value

1.1.78. Sulgrave Conservation Area lies approximately 2km to the north of the application site. It includes the heritage assets discussed above.

1.1.79. A conservation area appraisal and management plan for Sulgrave was adopted in June 2013 following public consultation.

1.1.80. Castle Hill Ringwork, the Castle Green and the church of St James the Less form an attractive and historically highly significant group within Sulgrave Conservation Area. This group is enclosed on the south side by the curvilinear route of Park Lane and Church Street, marking the outer limit of the castle bailey. This streetscape is an important part of the significance of the conservation area, with aesthetic, historic, evidential and communal value.

1.1.81. Post-medieval vernacular stone cottages flank Church Street, some of which are listed in their own right. These cottages form an attractive and important group in the conservation area.

1.1.82. To the south of the built up area of the village, key elements of the medieval and post-medieval historic landscape are clearly legible. There is survival of ridge-and furrow in the fields between the application site and the conservation area, making clear the existence of the pre-Enclosure common field system and linking the conservation area with the surrounding historic landscape. The ridge-and-furrow formerly extended over the application site, but that on the application site has now been lost to deep ploughing.

1.1.83. The rising farmland to the south of the village, which rises to the application site, simultaneously provides a sense of enclosure to the village and also gives continuity with the wider historic landscape.

1.1.84. Key views are an important element of the significance of the conservation area. This includes views within and through the conservation area as well as to and from it.

1.1.85. Views within and through the conservation area in the castle/church area will be significantly affected by the proposed development. The character of views over the open countryside to the south of the village will be harmfully altered by the presence of the turbines.

1.1.86. While the turbines will be set just to the south of the top of Spring Farm Ridge, their height and scale means they will nevertheless dominate both the setting of the conservation area and views within, through and from this part of the conservation area.

1.1.87. The size of the turbines will have a significant effect on the experience of the conservation area. Their very large size will affect the scale at which the existing environment will be viewed, making the existing buildings and spaces appear small and insignificant in comparison to the dominance of the turbines.

1.1.88. The kinetic nature and industrial character of the turbines will not sit comfortably with the existing built environment of the conservation area.

1.1.89. Views towards the conservation area from the north will be negatively affected by the proposed turbines.

1.1.90. When viewed from the roads and public rights of way to the north of the village, the conservation area nestles comfortably in its setting, flanked by trees and with the church as the key landmark.

1.1.91. The size and scale of the turbines will over-dominate the conservation area in these views, harming its aesthetic value and diminishing its importance in the landscape.

1.1.92. Conclusion

1.1.93. The significance of Sulgrave Conservation Area lies principally in its aesthetic value but also in its communal, historic and evidential value. The aesthetic, historic and evidential value of the conservation area is formed by the juxtaposition of individual heritage assets and the physical spaces between and around them, and their interaction with the wider historic environment.

1.1.94. The proposed development will harm views towards the conservation area from the north, views within, through and from the conservation area toward the south, and the aesthetic experience of spaces within the southern part of the conservation area. It will also harm the setting of the conservation area. While the harm to the character of the conservation area and to its setting are considered to be less than substantial it is considered to be significant.

1.1.95. Impact on Astwell Castle

1.1.96. Identifying the asset and its value

1.1.97. Astwell Castle is a Grade II* listed 15th Century building attached to a late medieval tower which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It lies

approximately 3km to the east of the application site. The sensitivity of the site and its setting is high.

1.1.98. The remote rural setting of the tower and house make an important contribution to the historic character of this unusual group of heritage assets.

1.1.99. Commanding views westward from Astwell Castle over the rolling countryside toward the application site are important to the experience and understanding of the asset. They have both evidential and aesthetic value.

1.1.100. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance

1.1.101. Astwell Castle's commanding views are important to the siting and significance of the castle, which in common with the majority of late medieval castles and great houses was set in the landscape primarily in order to demonstrate power and wealth. Practical use for attack and defence was of lesser importance to great houses of this period than the demonstration of power and dominance. Command over the landscape is an important element of the significance of the tower.

1.1.102. The views now provide a sense of tranquillity and remoteness, allowing the castle to be experienced as a picturesque element in the landscape. The tranquillity of the setting enables full attention to be focused on the heritage asset.

1.1.103. Fortuitous views of Astwell Castle from the east, particularly on the approach from Syresham, are also of aesthetic value and aid understanding of the tower's command of the landscape to the west. The proposed turbines will appear visible behind the castle in these fortuitous views.

1.1.104. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance

1.1.105. The proposed development will introduce an intrusive industrialising element into the landscape and will harm the rural setting and landscape context of the heritage assets. The height and scale of the turbines will diminish the impact of Astwell Castle in the landscape and detract from its significance as a display of power and dominance.

1.1.106. Conclusion

1.1.107. Commanding views over the landscape and dominance of height are important to the significance of Astwell Castle. The proposed development will introduce an intrusive element into views from and of the designated assets, harming their aesthetic value and diminishing the impact of Astwell Castle in the landscape.

- 1.1.108. **Impact on Greatworth Conservation Area**
- 1.1.109. Identifying the asset and its value
- 1.1.110. Greatworth lies approximately 1km to the south-west of the application site and occupies a position high on the southern slope of the same ridge as the application site. The land falls away steeply to the south and west of the village.
- 1.1.111. Greatworth Conservation area was designated in June 1985. A conservation area appraisal and management plan for Greatworth was adopted in June 2012 following public consultation.
- 1.1.112. Greatworth conservation area is considered to be a heritage asset of local importance.
- 1.1.113. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance
- 1.1.114. Greatworth conservation area has a strong sense of enclosure formed by the strong building line and the existence of high stone boundary walls. There are few views from within the conservation area out over the surrounding countryside which forms its setting.
- 1.1.115. The view looking east through the churchyard has been identified in the conservation area appraisal as being of particular importance.
- 1.1.116. The 2012 conservation area appraisal states, “An important view within the conservation area is the view looking east through the churchyard. Due to the enclosed nature of the village this is the only view of the open countryside that can be seen from directly within the central core. It is therefore very significant as it makes the visual connection between the village and its rural setting.”
- 1.1.117. Eastward views through the churchyard are progressive, with the breadth of the vista over the countryside beyond increasing as one moves through the churchyard toward the footpath across the open countryside to the north and east.
- 1.1.118. From outside the conservation area the settlement is mainly experienced as a hillside settlement, with many important views toward the conservation area being from lower ground. The land falls away steeply to the south and west, giving Greatworth its distinctive landscape context.
- 1.1.119. Views of the conservation area from the north are limited because of its position in the landscape.

1.1.120. In views toward the conservation area from the west and south, the church tower stands out in the landscape as the most prominent structure in the conservation area.

1.1.121. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance

1.1.122. The proposed development will have a negative impact on the important eastward views through the churchyard out of the conservation area. These progressive views will be negatively affected by the kinetic nature and industrial appearance of the turbines, particularly when viewed through limited screening when deciduous trees are not in leaf.

1.1.123. The turbines will appear in views toward the conservation area from the south and west and will compete for dominance of the skyline with the church tower.

1.1.124. Impact on St Peter's Church, Greatworth

1.1.125. Identifying the asset and its value

1.1.126. The Church of St Peter is a Grade II* listed building and considered to be of national importance. It lies approximately one kilometre south-west of the application site.

1.1.127. Historical and evidential value

1.1.128. The Church of St Peter dates from the 13th and 14th Centuries, with 17th Century additions and 19th Century alterations. It lies in a sizeable churchyard which extends to the east of the church and makes a particular contribution to the setting of the church.

1.1.129. Aesthetic and communal value

1.1.130. The church plays an essential role in the life of the local community. It forms the setting for major life events including weddings and funerals. The aesthetic and communal value of the church and its setting are interlinked. Views of and from the church and churchyard have profound significance for the local community.

1.1.131. The approach to the south porch of the church along the path from the lych gate reveals progressive views of the churchyard, which open up further as one progresses eastward beyond the church into the churchyard. Mature deciduous trees provide some level of screening during the summer months when the trees are in full leaf, but at other times of year views eastward from the path through the churchyard to the countryside beyond are of particular value.

1.1.132. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance

- 1.1.133. The church tower stands out in the landscape as the most prominent structure in views toward the village from the lower-lying land to the west and south. This emphasises the church's communal and aesthetic value, piercing the skyline and intended to be seen as the most important building in the settlement.
- 1.1.134. Eastward views through the churchyard toward the open countryside beyond make an important contribution to the setting of the church. While these views are screened to some extent by deciduous trees during the summer months, they are nevertheless of importance.
- 1.1.135. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance
- 1.1.136. The proposed turbines will be sited approximately 1.5 to 2km from the eastern edge of the churchyard. The comparatively close proximity of the turbines will have a negative impact on the character of eastward views through and from the churchyard.
- 1.1.137. The proposed wind turbines will compete with the church tower as the dominant element in the landscape when viewed from lower ground to the west and south. This will harm the aesthetic value of the church and diminish its evidential value by reducing its prominence and its dominance over the landscape.
- 1.1.138. Conclusion
- 1.1.139. The significance of the Church of St Peter rests in part in the aesthetic value of views experienced within the churchyard and in the impact of the church tower on long views toward the village from the west and south.
- 1.1.140. These views will be negatively affected by the proposed development, diminishing the impact of the church tower in the landscape and harming the tranquil rural character of views through and out of the churchyard.
- 1.1.141. Impact on Greatworth Hall**
- 1.1.142. Identifying the asset and its value
- 1.1.143. Greatworth Hall is a Grade II listed building dating from the early 18th Century and enlarged in the 19th Century. It is of simple Classical design, of three bays, with a central porch supported by Doric columns and fluted pilasters flanking the main door.
- 1.1.144. Greatworth Hall lies to the north-east of the village, between St Peter's Church and the application site. The manor house is less than 1km south-west of the application site.

1.1.145. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance

1.1.146. The setting of Greatworth Hall is formed principally by its rural agricultural setting. To the south, this consists of agricultural land with surviving visible ridge-and-furrow earthworks. Public rights of way across this agricultural land afford public views towards the principal elevation of the house.

1.1.147. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance

1.1.148. The manor house is oriented to face south and was designed to be viewed from the approach from the village. Key views of and toward the principal public elevation of the house will be significantly disrupted by the dominance of the turbines which will appear prominently in the line of sight to the north of the house.

1.1.149. The relatively close proximity of the proposed turbines and their size will draw attention away from appreciation of the architectural composition of the principal elevation.

1.1.150. Conclusion

1.1.151. The setting of Greatworth Hall will be negatively affected by the proposed development. The turbines will appear prominently as an immediate backdrop to all views of the principal elevation of the house. The proximity of the turbines and their size will dwarf the house. This will harm the aesthetic value of the asset's significance and have a negative impact on the enjoyment of its architectural composition.

1.1.152. Culworth Conservation Area

1.1.153. Identifying the asset and its value

1.1.154. Culworth conservation area lies to the north of the application site. While it is some distance from the application site it forms part of the local historic environment with Sulgrave. Both settlements contain castle earthworks of similar date, both in close association with a church and churchyard.

1.1.155. A conservation area appraisal and management plan for Culworth was adopted in January 2013 following public consultation.

1.1.156. Culworth conservation area is considered to be a heritage asset of local importance.

1.1.157. Assessment of contribution of setting to significance

1.1.158. The view southward out of the conservation area across the cricket ground immediately to the south of the church was identified in the recent conservation area appraisal as being of particular significance to the character of the conservation area.

1.1.159. It is one of the few views of the open countryside beyond the village that has a marked impact on the character of the conservation area.

1.1.160. Assessment of effect of proposed development on significance

1.1.161. The southerly view across the cricket ground will be negatively affected by the proposed development. The moving blades of the turbines are likely to be visible in this view, particularly at times of year when the trees on the southern side of the cricket ground are not in leaf.

1.1.162. The moving blades of the turbines will introduce an alien and intrusive element into this important view.

1.1.163. Conclusion

1.1.164. The proposed development will have a negative impact on an important view out from Culworth conservation area.

1.1.165. Impact on archaeological remains at Stutchbury

1.1.166. As made clear in the Statement of common ground, South Northamptonshire Council does not object to the proposed development on the grounds of impact on archaeological remains.

1.1.167. However, I am aware that the Sulgrave Residents' Association will address issues relating to impact on setting of Stutchbury deserted medieval village in their evidence to the inquiry.

1.1.168. As explained above, this part of Northamptonshire is rich in heritage assets of varying degrees of significance. The Council has sought to focus on those assets which it considers would be most affected by the development and its focus has been on designated assets. However, I appreciate that there might be other assets in the immediate area which, although at present undesignated, may be revealed to have a significance which is worthy of consideration. Omission of any discussion in this proof of evidence of those assets does not imply that I disagree with the case put forward by the Sulgrave Residents Association on those points.

1.1.169. Timescale of development (reversibility)

1.1.170. The point is made by the appellant that due to the nature of the development any effect on the setting of heritage assets is considered to be temporary, indirect and fully reversible. It is argued that the temporary

nature and reversibility of the proposed development diminishes the harm to the historic environment to an acceptable level.

1.1.171. The operational life of the wind turbines is anticipated to be around 25 years, roughly the timescale of one human generation. This is a very long time for anything to be considered temporary in any normal sense of the word.

1.1.172. English Heritage “Conservation Principles” states, “...Unless of very short duration... intrusive changes are certainly not justifiable simply because they are theoretically temporary or reversible...” (paragraph 100). The English Heritage guidance document ‘Wind Energy and the Historic Environment’ does refer to the general reversibility of the wind energy developments as ‘one important feature’ (p.9), however the advice does not go on to provide how reversibility should be taken into account, particularly where a scheme is for a 25 year period. The advice in EN-3, para. 2.7.43, is that the IPC should take into account the length of time for which permission is sought. It should be noted that that advice was given in the context of 50MW plus schemes albeit I accept that the advice remains relevant here.

1.1.173. Regardless of the possible state of affairs after the end of the productive life of the proposed turbines, continuous harm to the setting of heritage assets for 25 years should not in my view be disregarded solely because at the end of that time the harm may be removed. The harms caused by the visual appearance, impact on setting and context will be present for 25 years and decisions on their appropriateness should be made on this basis.

1.1.174. As with the previous inquiry, I have again taken account of the weight to be attached to reversibility. I do not attach significant weight to this as a factor given the 25 year period of this scheme. This aspect also has to be considered afresh given the thrust of the recent planning practice guidance in which it is made clear that impacts on the setting of heritage assets should be considered carefully. An approach which seeks significantly to downgrade the harm simply because the scheme is for a 25 year ‘temporary’ period, fails in my view to give proper weight to the guidance in the NPPF that such assets should be appropriately conserved so that they can be enjoyed by this and future generations (NPPF, para. 17).

1.1.175. Appeal decisions

1.1.176. I am aware that Inspectors have had to grapple with the impacts of wind farm proposals on cultural heritage assets in a number of appeals and I have sought to familiarise myself with those decisions. I have had regard to the comments in those decisions but remain of the view that I have assessed the impacts properly here. This is particularly so given the recent planning practice advice to the effect that there is a

concern at central government level that planning decisions have not given proper weight to the impacts (which include those on cultural heritage assets). Each case, ultimately, must be decided on its own merits.