

**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: Annex 3

Consultation Response from National Trust

2.4.1 Consultation response from National Trust

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28th January 2011

Your ref: S/2010/1437/MAF
Our ref: AH/ah

Mr A Preston
Head of Environment and Development
South Northamptonshire Council
Springfields
TOWCESTER
Northants
NN12 6AE

FAO Mr C Johnston

Dear Mr. Johnston,

Re: Application Ref: S/2010/1437//MAF Erection of Five Wind Turbines and Associated Development at Spring Farm Ridge, land to the north of Welsh Lane, Greatworth – response from National Trust

Thank you for your letter of 18th November 2010 inviting the National Trust's comments upon the above application for planning permission. I apologise that this response is somewhat beyond your requested deadline.

National Trust, Property Interests and Renewable Energy

National Trust

National Trust is a charity and Europe's largest conservation organisation with a membership of 3.8 million people. With the support of our Parliamentary Act we are legally responsible for the protection of some of the most beautiful, historically important and environmentally sensitive places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is made up of nearly 250,000 hectares of land, including 700 miles of coast and 300 historic buildings.

Within the East Midlands, the Trust has 270,000 members, some 6% of the East Midlands' population. We manage approximately 21,000 hectares of land, including 15 SSSIs and 13% of the Peak District, and are probably the region's single largest tourism operator.

Property Interests in the Wider Area of the Proposed Windfarm

Canons Ashby – The home of the Dryden family it has survived more or less unaltered since around 1710. It contains wall paintings and Jacobean plasterwork of the highest quality and is set within a formal garden and adjacent to an orchard. In addition there is the surprisingly grand Church, the sole survivor of the Augustinian priory from which the house takes its name.

The overall site cared for by the National Trust at Canons Ashby contains two Grade I Listed Buildings (the main house and the Priory Church), two Grade II* Listed Buildings and seven Grade II Listed Buildings. The quite extensive Historic Park and Garden extends in all directions from the House but principally to the south west, it is Registered as Grade II*. It is clear that this is a significant collection of historic assets that are multi-dimensional and indeed they are valued and enjoyed by some 42, 000 visitors each year as well as numerous specialist and school groups.

Stowe Landscape Gardens – The scale, beauty and grandeur of Stowe has inspired writers, philosophers, artists, politicians and members of the public from the 18th Century to the present day. One of the most remarkable creations of Georgian England, Stowe was created by a family once so powerful they were richer than the King. Since the National Trust acquired the Gardens in the late 1980s, an ambitious programme of restoration has ensured that over 40 temples and monuments remain, gracing an inspiring backdrop of lakes and valleys, with an endless variety of walks and trails – a delight to explore throughout the year.

The Garden is Registered Grade I and arguably is the finest, certainly one of the finest, landscape creations in the country.

Current visitor numbers are about 110, 000 per annum and are projected to rise to around 160, 000 in the next few years.

National Trust approach to Renewable Energy

The Trust already has in place a range of innovative renewables developments across its properties as well as a strong commitment to reducing energy use and improving energy conservation. The renewables industry has recognised that the Trust's ambitions are significant and appropriate, resulting in the Trust recently winning the British Renewable Energy Awards "Pioneer Award" for 2010.

The Trust has recently committed to reduce its use of fossil fuels for heat and electricity by 50% by 2020.

Our Energy Policy strongly supports a major increase in renewable energy generation nationally for electricity, heat and power appropriate to the site, and a significant expansion in micro-generation. This is important to mitigate climate change and reduce pollution and other damage to landscape, soils, wildlife, buildings, water and society associated with the exploitation and use of fossil fuels. Many of our properties are already experiencing the impacts of climate change such as flooding, storm damage, rainwater incursion, and habitat and species changes. The Trust believes that appropriate renewable

energy development will help to reduce the damage to our properties from further climate changes and bring long-term benefits to society by reducing the risk of severe impacts in future.

However, we also believe that the location and design of all energy generation and distribution schemes should take account of the full range of environmental considerations, including the protection of valued landscapes, biodiversity, the historic environment, and peoples' well-being.

Response to the Planning Application

It is noted that contrary to the initial assessments the more detailed work submitted with the planning application has confirmed that both theoretically (through the ZTVI analyses) and practically (in terms of specific Viewpoint analyses) that there will be impacts upon the interests that the Trust is charged with safeguarding on behalf the nation.

The ZTVIs indicate that all five turbines would be visible from both Stowe and Canons Ashby.

Viewpoint 18 at Stowe confirms that all five turbines would be seen on the skyline within a quite open landscape. Consequently the turbines would be a relatively constant feature as people utilise the public footpath within the landscaped gardens, with both the scale of the turbines and the motion of the blades being noticeable features in what generally is a very tranquil landscape.

Viewpoint 14 suggests less direct inter-visibility with Canons Ashby, albeit the siting is closer and the turbines will accordingly appear more dominant. The specific Viewpoint chosen indicates that just one the turbines would be visible from that location. However, as people move around the property, including between the house, the garden, the former priory Church and the arrival point, a shifting range of viewpoints will be experienced several of which will not benefit from screening effect of the mature hedging in the foreground of Viewpoint 14. From some parts of the property, such as the roof of the tower of the Grade I Canons Ashby House, it is anticipated that there would be relatively uninterrupted views of all the turbines.

Overall it is considered that the visual impacts would be somewhat greater than is acknowledged in the Environmental Statement in sections 2.15 and 2.19.

It is noted that whilst correspondence between the Trust and the applicant's consultants is included at the end of the Cultural Heritage section of the Environmental Statement there is in fact no discussion in Appendix C of the impacts upon designated assets at Stowe and Canons Ashby. This is a little surprising given the number and the grading of assets clustered at these locations – indeed the Registered Historic Park and Garden at Stowe is considered to be of international importance. Policy as set out in PPS5 is

clear about the importance to be attached to the settings of heritage assets and clearly in terms of the visual component of the setting of both Stowe and Canons Ashby there will be noticeable impacts as a result of the proposed development. Those impacts will be adverse. The extent of those impacts has not been assessed in cultural heritage terms in the Environmental Statement but as set out above it is considered that the visual impacts from these important locations would be somewhat greater than is acknowledged in the Landscape and Visual Appendix.

It is nonetheless also the case that the cumulative adverse impacts upon cultural heritage assets (including those that the Trust does not own) need to be assessed in the context of PPS5 Policy HE1.2 and considered against the extent of the benefit of the renewable energy that would be generated. In undertaking this assessment it is requested that the Council has regard to the matters set out above in terms of importance of, and the impact upon, the designated heritage assets at Stowe and Canons Ashby.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Hubbard

Alan Hubbard

Land Use Planning Adviser