



Sulgrave Manor

**PROPOSED WINDFARM AT SPRING FARM RIDGE,
HELMDON/GREATWORTH/SULGRAVE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

(APPEAL REFERENCE APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035/NWF)

**SECOND PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF PLANNING
PERMISSION**

**STATEMENT BY NICHOLAS WARD, CHAIRMAN,
ON BEHALF OF THE SULGRAVE MANOR TRUST**

I make this statement in my capacity as Chairman of The Sulgrave Manor Trust (“SMT”) (formerly The Sulgrave Manor Board), the registered charity which owns and operates Sulgrave Manor (“the Manor”).

I do so to express the concerns of the Trustees of SMT in respect of the proposed wind farm development at Spring Farm Ridge. Our views may be summarised as follows:-

- The Manor is of national importance, not only because of its intrinsic merits as a rare example of a modest Tudor manor house, but also because of its links to the ancestral family of General George Washington, the first President of the United States of America, and the circumstances of the purchase of the Manor in 1914.
- The Manor is of huge international importance because of its place in the heritage of the United States of America.
- The Manor is a uniquely significant symbol of the special relationship between the UK and the USA.

Sulgrave Manor, Sulgrave, Banbury, OX17 2SD

Telephone 01295 760205 Fax 01295 768056

Email enquiries@sulgravemanor.org.uk

www.sulgravemanor.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 1003839; The Sulgrave Manor Trust (a company limited by guarantee);

Registered in England and Wales no. 2627034; VAT no. 408 5634 48

- After years of decline, a new management team has been appointed and a new strategy adopted which it is hoped will put the finances and operations of the Manor onto a sound basis, which will be sustainable in the long term.
- For visitors, especially American visitors, the Manor represents an opportunity to experience the intimate qualities of the ancestral building, the village and the surrounding English landscape just as they were a hundred years ago. The presence of turbines within the hitherto unspoilt landscape, dominating the village and seen from the Manor house and garden, would greatly diminish this experience.
- Any consequential decline, however small, in the number of visitors or the amount of donations would undermine the new strategy and threaten the viability of the Manor for future generations.
- The Broadview proposal will have a very serious adverse effect on the setting of the Manor and the views from it and will therefore seriously damage our prospects of raising the money we need for our new strategy.
- The Manor is so important that no risks whatsoever should be taken which may result in damage to it, and the Broadview proposal should therefore be refused.

SULGRAVE MANOR

The Manor is a Grade 1 Listed Building in Sulgrave surrounded by a Registered Park and Garden.

The original core of the Manor was constructed in 1539-60 and it is a rare example of a small Tudor manor house. Compared to other surviving Tudor houses, open to the public, it is quite unusual in its modesty, which makes it particularly special.

The Manor has varied in size over the years and the building that currently exists comprises the original Tudor hall and a wing constructed in the following century, with a further extension built in the 1920s.

The 16th century rooms, the Great Hall, the Bedchamber, Inner Chamber and Porch Room are all fine examples of the period with a greater air of authenticity than many on public show as they are free from modern accretions, having been open to the public since 1921. The North Wing, built in the late 1680s, contains the Oak Parlour, the Kitchen – believed to be one of the best preserved in the country - and two bedrooms, all furnished in the style of the mid-18th century.

Immediately outside there is a Brew House adapted now to house an exhibition and space for school work but which retains many of its original features. In the late 1990s there was a development to the west of the Manor, in what is now known as the Courtyard, to increase the facilities available to support the work we do at the Manor, including a new Courtyard Hall, a Buttery, an entrance lobby and shop and office accommodation.

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Externally, the gardens and orchard are laid out in accordance with a design by Sir Reginald Blomfield in the 1920s and are a rare surviving instance of a small-scale Blomfield garden. According to H. Clifford-Smith, in his authoritative study of "Sulgrave and the Washingtons" Sir Reginald was "*a recognised authority on the planning of the English formal garden and gradually a rose garden, herb and flower borders, a grass terrace, lawn and bowling green, an orchard and thick hedges of close clipped yew came into being – the right and proper setting for a Tudor dwelling*". The main part of the garden is to the south-east of the Manor, between the Manor and the proposed wind farm development.

In addition to the core house and garden, SMT owns three Grade II listed houses, a farm yard and a total of 40 acres of land at the northern end of Sulgrave.

The Manor is an accredited museum which has proudly displayed the Enjoy England Visitor Quality Assurance badge for over five years and has in the last four years received a total of five county and three East Midland regional awards by Renaissance Heritage.

Each year we have something of the order of 20,000 visitors. Of these, approximately half are schoolchildren who come to us to learn about the history of Tudor Britain and to experience at first-hand the excitement of learning about daily life then while wearing Tudor clothing. We are planning to increase our capacity to handle our schools visitors, which is a good indicator of the success of our educational programmes.

Many of our visitors come from the United States and we also have visitors from a number of other countries. Not only do these overseas visitors pay good money to us, they also contribute substantially to the rural economy in the immediate area about us. In its own way, the Manor makes an important positive contribution to the UK balance of payments through the donations it receives and the money spent locally by our overseas visitors. The local hotels, inns, B&Bs and the village shop draw much business from the additional UK visitors brought to the area by the weddings and other celebrations held at the Manor.

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION

In addition to its intrinsic merit as a rare example of a modest Tudor manor house, the Manor is most noted for its links to the ancestral family of General George Washington, the first President of the United States of America.

It is important that the Inquiry should be aware of the significance to Americans of George Washington. He is by far the most loved and respected American there has ever been. The capital city of the United States is named after him, as is one of the States. George Washington has more schools, universities/colleges, streets, avenues, squares, entire neighbourhoods, bridges, parks, forests, forts, ports, villages, towns, cities, counties, a state and mountains named after him than any other American. His own former home, Mount Vernon in Virginia, is the most visited

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heritage site in the US. He is the most iconic and recognised figure in the psyche of Americans and national surveys consistently show him the most highly thought of and admired American.

It is also important that the Inquiry should understand the importance of the Manor in the history of the Washington family. The original Manor House was built by Lawrence Washington, the great-great-great-great grandfather of President George Washington, in 1539-40 and was occupied by Lawrence and the next three generations of Washingtons right up to when it was sold in the 1650s. This was the decade in which George Washington's great grandfather, Colonel John Washington, moved to America. Sulgrave Manor and the political events of the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century played a hugely important part in influencing those generations of the family who lived their lives in America. There is no other property in the United Kingdom that has anything like this importance in the heritage of George Washington.

This importance was highlighted in 1914 when the Manor was acquired as part of the celebrations of the centenary of the 1814 Treaty of Ghent, the last peace treaty between the United States of America and the United Kingdom. We have never fought each other since.

The purchase and restoration of the Manor was funded by public subscription in the USA and the UK, including donations from the King and the Prince of Wales. The official opening was in June 1921, when the Manor was dedicated by the Marquess of Cambridge, the King's brother-in-law, as a "centre from which sentiments of friendship and goodwill between the British and American peoples will forever radiate." Next year, in 2014, we celebrate the centenary of the purchase of the Manor and the bicentenary of the Treaty of Ghent.

We emphasise our links to the United States. We celebrate a number of American festivals, including George Washington's birthday (the Sunday nearest to 22 February), Independence Day (4 July) and Thanksgiving (the last Thursday in November). Weather permitting, we fly the flags of the United States of America and the United Kingdom outside the Manor throughout the year. We organise a number of events which focus on specific aspects of Anglo-American relations. The Cultural Attaché at the US Embassy in London is one of our Honorary Advisors.

Amongst the many famous visitors to the Manor there have been two former Presidents of the United States of America, Taft and Hoover. We will be endeavouring to attract further illustrious visitors to the Manor in future years, including especially in 2014 at the time of our joint centenary/bi-centenary celebrations.

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REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF SMT FOR 2012

The Report and Accounts of SMT for the year to 31 December 2012 are attached.

The Accounts show that, although there have been some improvements in 2012, the SMT's finances are still in a very weak position. The following highlights should be noted:-

- The overall result for the year was a surplus of £23,708 compared to a deficit in 2011 of £141,316. This is the first time that the Trust has made a surplus since the late 1990s. This surplus arose from a combination of an increase in donations and from a reduction in net operating losses.
- The donations received in 2012 are included in Note 2 on page 15 of the Report and Accounts, but may be summarised as follows:-

	2012	2011
National Society of the Colonial Dames of America ("NSCDA")	18,184	18,594
Friends of Sulgrave Manor ("FSM")	80,349	54,963
UK donors	90,075	34,306
Loan forgiven	<u>13,500</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>202,108</u>	<u>107,863</u>

- The substantial increase in donations from UK donors and from FSM, and the loan-forgiveness, are all due to a one-off emergency appeal largely funded by present and former Trustees in order to persuade me to take over the chairmanship of SMT. It is unlikely that this level of donations from these sources can be sustained on a recurring basis.
- If one excludes the donations, it will be seen that the Charity is continuing to operate at a substantial net operating loss before donations, £179k in 2012 compared to £249k in 2011. Although there has been an improvement in 2012, net operating losses at this level are not sustainable and we have had to take a number of measures to try to reduce our losses. Manpower levels have been reduced significantly and we have also had to reduce our opening hours for 2013.
- Although we have taken steps which will reduce the net operating deficit before donation income, the Trustees are of the view that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate such operating deficit entirely. We think that we need to plan that we may have a continuing regular deficit of about £100,000 per annum.
- The fact that we have made a surplus after donation income is highly welcome and very encouraging, but it must be clearly understood that this does not mean that the problems of the Manor have been resolved forever; it is merely a

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small step along a long road which we hope will lead to financial stability but which is not certain of success.

- In the Balance Sheet, it will be noted that SMT had net current liabilities of £36,146 at 31 December 2012. Although lower than the figure at the end of the previous year (£53,909), this is still a deficit. The Trust has to monitor its cash forecasts on a weekly and monthly basis and this is indicative of the tightness of the existing resources of the Trust, even after the generosity shown by those who have made donations in 2012.

BACKLOG MAINTENANCE

In June 2012, the Trustees engaged a firm of architects to help develop a new strategic plan for the Trust's properties.

As a starting point for their work, the architects carried out thorough surveys of the Manor itself and all its ancillary buildings and listed all the works required to bring them into a state which is appropriate for their future use. These surveys show the appalling condition of the Trust's properties following years of cash shortages which had made it impossible for previous Boards of Trustees to tackle the many important issues which need addressing urgently.

The work identified by the architects has been costed by a firm of chartered quantity surveyors at £1.7 million. This figure is indicative of the scale of the backlog maintenance task facing the Trustees.

OPERATING IMPROVEMENT WORKS

As part of their work, the architects have also considered the various options open to the Trustees to make much-needed operating improvements on the site.

The works identified in these discussions, together with the repairs and improvements identified in the surveys referred to above, have been taken into account in the Pre-Application Enquiry which was submitted to SNC on 6 March and which is currently the subject of discussions with SNC, English Heritage, the Parish Council, our neighbours in Sulgrave and other stakeholders.

Once this consultation exercise has been completed, the Trustees will review what they have learnt from the process and then decide, in conjunction with their advisers, what to include in a formal planning application to the Council.

FUNDRAISING TARGET AND CENTENARY APPEAL

The Trust is very short of funds for its day-to-day operations and it certainly does not have the money to pay for the various works costing a total of £1.7 million identified in the General Condition and Building Surveys conducted by our architects. We also need further additional funds to cover the other initiatives described in the Pre-

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Application enquiry and to provide working capital and to set up an Endowment Fund. The strategy we are following is described in the Chairman's Statement in the attached Annual Report and Accounts for 2012.

2014 marks the centenary of the purchase of the Manor by public subscription and the bi-centenary of the Treaty of Ghent. The Trustees have decided to launch a Centenary Appeal later this year and are in the process of recruiting members for our proposed International Centenary Appeal Board.

Having reviewed the requirements in detail, the Trustees have concluded that we need to raise at least £3 million (\$5 million) and that will be the target for the proposed Centenary Appeal.

Although our intention is to try to arrange matters so that any net operating deficit is covered by endowment income, we will still need to generate annual donation income for enhancement projects and to carry out any works that may be required from time to time. The creation of the proposed Endowment Fund will not eliminate the need for annual donations but merely reduce our dependence upon annual donations to cover operating losses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF US DONORS

It is the view of the Trustees that the money needed to put SMT onto an even keel is far more likely to come from American donors, including Americans who live in the UK, than it is to come from British donors. It is a fact of life that there are many historic buildings in the UK but, for Americans, Sulgrave Manor is the only UK building which has such a close and recent association with the family of George Washington.

Because the Manor is so important in the background of the Washington family and because George Washington is so important to Americans, it is the intention of the Trustees that the Centenary Appeal, which we will launch later this year, should be directed largely at potential American donors. Running such a campaign will take time and will require help from our friends in NSCDA/FSM, but the Trustees believe that this is the only way that we are likely to get the money we need.

I think it is important that the Inquiry should understand the position of NSCDA and FSM in our affairs:-

- NSCDA is an organisation of ladies in America who can trace their ancestry back to Colonial times before the 1776 Declaration of Independence. These ladies are known as "Dames" and there are 15,000 of them. NSCDA is a national organisation and there are separate societies in nearly all the States of the US, who comply with the rules of the National Society but are otherwise independent. The Dames manage and help to finance in various ways a total of approximately eighty historic properties throughout the United States. The only property they support outside the United States is Sulgrave Manor.

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- FSM is an American-registered charity set up by NSCDA as a means of raising money for The Sulgrave Manor Trust, a United Kingdom charity, in a manner which is tax efficient under US tax law.

NSCDA first became involved with Sulgrave Manor at the time that the Manor was purchased by public subscription in 1914 and has supported the Manor ever since. Amongst their many donations, they purchased the Wool House in 1960 and gave it to the Manor. I think it is fair to say that if it had not been for the support received from the Dames over the years, the Manor would not now exist.

There are two Dames on the SMT Board of Trustees – Mrs Laura Rutherford, who is our Vice Chairman, and Mrs Bess Fuchs, who is President of FSM.

The Dames' giving process revolves around a series of annual "solicitation letters" which are written by the champions of each of the 80 properties and are sent to all 15,000 Dames. The champion for Sulgrave Manor is the President of FSM. Whilst there are a number of Dames who are wealthy, the vast majority are not. Competition amongst the 80 properties for available funds is very fierce and FSM has to work especially hard to bring in money for SMT. In the last year or two, FSM has been very successful in its solicitation campaign and we have received donations, many of them very small, from over 1,800 of the 15,000 Dames. We understand that this may be the largest number of Dames to donate to any one property. In 2012 the Dames were able to remit \$155,000 to SMT, some of which was on account of 2013. This is an exceptionally high figure and the Trustees do not believe that we will be able to sustain this level of support from the Dames in future years.

It therefore follows that most of the money we need will therefore have to come from non-Dame American sources. SMT does not have the resources to mount a fundraising campaign in the US and will therefore have to rely significantly on help from the Dames in mounting the US campaign directed largely at non-Dames.

Donors (Dames and non-Dames alike) are increasingly sophisticated in the policies they pursue and it is the belief of the Trustees that prospective donors will simply not understand how it is possible that such an important part of the heritage of the United States of America should be damaged completely unnecessarily by the building of an intrusive wind farm in the setting of the Manor.

Because of the importance of the Dames to the Manor, I felt it right that the Inquiry should be aware of the views of the Dames on the Broadview Wind Farm proposal. I therefore invited the Dames to write to the Inquiry and hope to be in a position to hand over their letters at a time which is nearer to the start of the Inquiry.

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THE IMPACT ON SULGRAVE MANOR OF THE BROADVIEW PROPOSAL

At the First Inquiry, Broadview contended that the impact of the proposed turbines upon the Manor would be “minor and not significant”, and produced two photo montages. The first featured extremely wide angle photographs taken from a point on a footpath leading from Sulgrave towards Weston, as follows:



The Manor can just be seen at the extreme right of the picture and one of the turbines towards the left. The picture was taken from the same level as the Manor in a location which, one would have to suggest, was not well chosen to illustrate the setting of the Manor in the conservation area and the local landscape. Had the photographer chosen a viewpoint to the north of the village and a little higher so as better to demonstrate the setting, the resulting photo montage would have been as shown below:



This photograph clearly illustrates the unspoilt landscape setting of the village and the Manor, which would be totally dominated by all five turbines appearing on the horizon. From whichever direction the visitor approached the village, the constantly moving blades of the turbines would be an irritating and incongruous element in an otherwise harmonious scene.

The Trustees are very concerned that the Broadview turbines would be highly visible from all three roads into Sulgrave, be it from the north along Weston Road, from

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Helmdon in the east or from the Magpie to the west. They would also be very visible from the road between the Welsh Lane and the Magpie. Our visitors will travel in and out of Sulgrave on these roads and their perception of the Manor will undoubtedly be adversely affected by seeing the five wind turbines dominating the skyline of the village.

The second photo montage submitted by Broadview with the planning application was produced from photographs taken in the sunken area outside the front door of the Manor as shown below:



Broadview contend that this single montage "*shows that views (plural) would be fully screened by a combination of vegetation and built features in the direction of the wind farm*". It is hard to see how a single example can be said to demonstrate that all views would be fully screened and it is only necessary to climb the steps to another part of the Blomfield Garden to gain a completely different impression, as shown below:



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This view will be seen from the path along which we normally take all our tour groups to get them into the Manor via the main entrance from the Bloomfield Garden.

In places it can be shown that four out of the five turbines would be seen at any one time, as here in the Tudor Village Vegetable Garden:



Despite the intervening vegetation, the sheer scale and the constantly irritating movement of the turbines is such that the frequent perception of one or more of them in the view would be a distraction to those enjoying the timeless historic nature of the Manor gardens and the adjoining land holding. The gap between Sulgrave House and the Woolhouse is our only distant view to the east or south-east of the Manor and it is therefore important to us. The Broadview turbines would damage that view, especially in winter.

The turbines will also be visible from the window of the Great Bedchamber, and, again, this will be most visible in the winter months.

The Manor is a key part of the Sulgrave Conservation Area, encompassing practically the whole of the village which, in turn, nestles harmoniously into its landscape setting and is inseparable from it. The enjoyment and appreciation of the Manor and the rest of the Conservation Area from many accessible and popular viewpoints is greatly enhanced by this landscape setting and we believe it should be preserved and enhanced in the same ways as the Manor and other buildings in the Conservation Area. For many of our visitors, the village and its unspoilt pastoral setting is as close as they may come to the historical environment in which many of their ancestors lived. Most of the surrounding fields were, in Tudor times, part of the Manor's estate and our visitors' attention is always drawn to the essential continuity of viewing today, as in Lawrence's time, sheep in those same fields.

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It is important to understand that visitors to the Manor do not just come to look at the Manor itself. Many of them also visit the famous Washington Pew and stained glass windows at Sulgrave Church and stroll around the streets of this quintessentially English village which is the setting of the Manor.

Some of our visitors also go to Greatworth Church, which contains a memorial to the Pargeter family, one of whose members, Amy Pargeter, was Lawrence Washington's second wife, George's five-times great grandmother, and who helped Lawrence build Sulgrave Manor. The proposed Spring Farm Ridge Wind Farm will be particularly visible from Greatworth Churchyard.

CONCLUSION

My fellow Trustees and I believe that the Spring Farm Ridge Wind Farm proposal would have a very serious adverse effect on Sulgrave Manor and its setting and would make it more difficult for us to attract visitors and funding, especially from our American supporters. We are now planning our celebrations in 2014 of the centenary of the acquisition of the Manor and the bi-centenary of the Treaty of Ghent and we hope that these events and the enjoyment of Sulgrave Manor by visitors over the next century will not be marred by the presence on our skyline of the Broadview turbines.

Nicholas Ward
21 May 2013

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