



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE



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Our ref: P00137674

22 October 2012

Dear Mr Sexton

**FARMLAND SOUTH OF LITLINGTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE**  
**LPA Ref S/0439/12/FL**

Further to our letter of 25th May 2012 in respect of the application to site five wind turbines south of Litlington, in which we requested additional photomontages in order to finalise our advice; we have been sent a series of four additional images direct by the applicant and are therefore taking this opportunity to update our advice.

**Summary**

The proposed wind farm would be a dominant feature in a sensitive landscape that includes a number of designated heritage assets. From the additional photomontages provided by the applicant, it is apparent that the wind farm would adversely impact on the setting of the prehistoric barrow cemetery on Therfield Heath, the constituent monuments of which were sited in commanding locations, overlook this landscape. In addition, it would interrupt the views of the heath from the Icknield way and from the undesignated war memorial at the former World War II Steeple Morden air base. The siting of a wind farm in this landscape will result in harm to the significance of these assets.

**English Heritage Advice**

As noted in our previous letter, the proposed group of five turbines with a tip height of 100m will be very prominent and alien features in a landscape that is of significant historical interest and currently remarkably free of pylons and similar structures. There are a number of radio and mobile phone masts, but these are far less intrusive than the proposed wind farm. The landscape is also crossed by the A505 dual carriageway and the electrified railway line, but in both instances these are linear features which do not break the skyline and nor do they dominate the landscape in the way that the five turbines on the wind farm would.

Having had the opportunity to examine the additional material provided, English



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Heritage is particularly concerned by the impact that the wind farm would have on the setting of the Scheduled Monuments on Therfield Heath.

The Therfield barrow cemetery (20630-35, 20640-1) comprises a dispersed group of 12 earthwork round barrows, presumed to be of early bronze age date, associated with a neolithic long barrow. The latter is the only extant example of this monument type in Hertfordshire. Its significance as a focal feature in the prehistoric landscape is attested by bronze age, iron age and early medieval material recovered in the vicinity. The distribution of Hertfordshire barrow cemeteries is concentrated in a band along the Chiltern Hills, running along the crest and close to the watershed, with the largest concentration around Royston. The siting of cemeteries, such as Therfield, appears to be governed by principles of prehistoric land allotment, in which the areas given over to the burial and commemoration of the dead are distinctive and separate, making use of marginal, but visually prominent locations, in contrast to the lower ground given over to the living and their settlements.

Their setting is therefore an important component of the overall significance of these monuments and the introduction of five large turbines will necessarily result in harm to their significance, in views both to and from the monuments. The public benefit from understanding and appreciating the current historic environment without the proposed turbines, and this will change if the turbines are erected.

In the terms set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that harm would be less than substantial harm). While we do not consider the degree of harm to have crossed the threshold of substantial harm, harm should be looked upon as a linear spectrum rather than a simple stepped ranking. In such a linear spectrum we would assess the impact on the Scheduled Monuments on Therfield Heath to be a very significant degree of harm, falling just below that of substantial harm.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF requires harm that is less than substantial harm to be weighed against the wider public benefits arising from the proposal, which in this instance will comprise measures to address the impact of climate change. Given the quality of the assets affected by the proposal, we would expect a very substantial degree of public benefit to be necessary to outweigh the harm, and mindful of the outcome of the recent public inquiry at Bicton in Huntingdonshire, we would not be surprised if, in this instance, the benefits failed to outweigh the harm.

### **Recommendation**

English Heritage is of the view that this proposed wind farm will result in harm to the significance of a number of heritage assets on Therfield Heath and, in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF it will be necessary to weigh that harm against the public benefits of the proposal.



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In arriving at this recommendation we have reviewed the findings of recent appeal decisions to inform our balancing of the harm against public benefit, in particular when weighing the harm against the wider public benefit the inspector at the Bicton wind farm inquiry, concluded:

*"In this case, the harm that would occur to the attractive countryside in the Kym valley by reason of the location of turbines on the crest, in direct contravention of adopted supplementary guidance, is the most important factor and it is also the most serious contributing factor to the harm that would occur to the settings of heritage asset. In the light of the adopted LP and CS policies and emerging DPD policies, it amounts to a very substantial objection. The harm to residential amenity also carries weight. Although permission would be for 25 year, after which the turbines would be removed, that is a very long time in which the sensitive character of this valley landscape would be seriously adversely affect, the enjoyment of the attractive valley landscape impaired and the settings of important heritage assets significantly harmed. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the environmental and economic benefits of the scheme would be significantly outweighed; and the appeal must be dismissed."*

Given the quality of the assets affected and the level of harm that will result from this proposal, English Heritage doubt that there would be sufficient public benefit to outweigh the harm and, if the LPA agrees with our assessment, then we would expect the application to be refused.

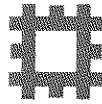
Yours sincerely

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Our ref: P00137674

25 May 2012

Dear Mr Sexton

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001 & GDPO 1995  
FARMLAND SOUTH OF LITLINGTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
Application No S/0439/12/FL**

Thank you for your letter of 30 March 2012 notifying English Heritage of the above application.

**Summary**

The proposed wind farm will be a dominant feature in a sensitive landscape that includes a number of heritage assets. The limited number of photomontages provided with the application makes it difficult to determine the full impact of the proposal on the historic environment but it is likely that the proposal will result in a degree of harm. That harm will need to be weighed against the wider public benefit arising from addressing climate change. However, without more information it is not possible to properly evaluate the harm and English Heritage therefore recommends that the applicant is requested to provide additional photomontages to enable the extent of the harm (and its cumulative nature) to be properly assessed.

**English Heritage Advice**

The proposed group of 5 turbines with a tip height of 100m will be very prominent and alien features in a landscape that is of significant historical interest and currently remarkably free of pylons and similar structures. There are a number of radio and mobile phone masts, but these are far less intrusive than the proposed wind farm.

While there are no designated heritage assets within the site, there are a large number nearby. The impact on some of these assets will be modest, but other assets are likely to have their significance harmed by the construction of the proposed wind farm within their setting. English Heritage is particularly concerned about the series of



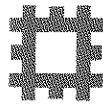
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scheduled monuments on Therfield Heath which lie immediately to the south of the proposed site. A photomontage (no 4) is provided from the heath, but this is taken towards the eastern end of the heath and English Heritage would wish to see a further photomontage prepared from the site of the scheduled monuments which are located at the western end of the heath, and which are in closer proximity to the proposed wind farm. We would also wish to see a photomontage prepared of the view back to the heath with the wind farm in the foreground when viewed from the Icknield Way, and also from the War Memorial at the former Steeple Morden airfield.

A photomontage has been prepared from the village of Litlington, but this does not illustrate the impact of the wind farm on the church (grade II\*) and a further photomontage should be prepared to illustrate how the wind farm might rival the prominence of the church tower in the landscape.

The war memorial on the site of the former Steeple Morden airfield may also be harmed by the proposal. While this is an undesignated heritage asset, English Heritage believes it to be of sufficient significance to warrant assessment as part of the application. While views of the main memorial will not take in the wind farm, the wind farm will be very prominent in view looking out over the site of the former airfield (as illustrated on the engraved plan to the side of the main memorial).

Wimpole Hall (grade I listed and grade I registered park and garden) is located at a little distance from the wind farm, but the asset is of such importance that the impact of the wind farm on its setting should be included in the assessment. We note that the impact on the registered park and garden at Wimpole Hall has been included, with a Moderate/Slight Adverse assessment, but no supporting information is provided and English Heritage would wish to see a photomontage prepared from the top of the steps on the south front of the house, so as to better understand the impact.

## Recommendation

English Heritage is of the view that this proposed wind farm will result in a degree of harm to the significance of a number of heritage assets and, in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF it will be necessary to weigh that harm against the public benefits of the proposal. However, there is insufficient material provided to enable the full extent of the harm to be properly evaluated (as required by paragraph 128 of the NPPF). The applicant should therefore be asked to provide the additional photomontages outlined above and English Heritage would wish to have the opportunity to comment again once that information is available.

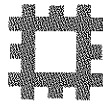


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Yours sincerely

P.P. Andrew Northfield

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