

From: Oliver Scott
Sent: Mon, 1 Mar 2021 10:53:05 +0000
To: Honor Whitfield
Cc: Laura Gardner
Subject: RE: 20/01242/FULM - Land North Of Halloughton, Southwell

Honor

Many thanks for sharing the rebuttal from the applicant.

There are a number of clarifications required.

I do not agree that we have misunderstood the site or overstated the scale of harm. The original proposal included solar panel to the northeast of the church, which taken from boundary to boundary is 100m, hence the reference in our report. Whilst the latest version of the scheme has sought to mitigate this proximity by removing an area of panels at this juncture, our concerns continue to be that the scale and magnitude of the proposal results in significant landscape impact on the setting and significance of designated heritage assets at Halloughton. Not to re-rehearse this argument, but if the scheme is permitted, when travelling through this sensitive landscape, one's experience of the historic environment will be significantly impacted.

As set out in Historic England advice, when assessing the likely impacts of a proposal on the historic environment, it is important to consider not only the direct physical impacts of the development, but also any impacts on the contribution setting makes to the significance of identified heritage assets. In this case, the landscape setting to the north of Halloughton contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within it. The applicant has sought to make the development more acceptable in the most recent revisions, but these changes do not sufficiently address our concerns for us to be able to revise our stance. Indeed, only a very significant reduction in the scale of development north of Halloughton would lead us to reduce the magnitude of harm identified. In addition, I am also mindful that new hedges and planting to provide screening also change the landscape setting of the historic environment, and are capable of having a negative impact (particularly where they bisect or change long standing historic field patterns- see paragraph 70 of HE's advice note on 'Commercial Renewable Energy Development, recently published).

The applicant and I agree that the harm caused by the proposal is less than substantial. Where we disagree is the magnitude of that harm, and whether or not the decision is merely a weighing up exercise. As set out in my report, I do not agree that the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 can be treated merely as material considerations. That being said, I recognise that the output of the proposal in terms of renewable energy is very significant (very close to a national infrastructure project at just under 50MW), and therefore carries with it a substantial contribution towards national renewable energy targets. As highlighted in their Swindon example, a substantial contribution to renewable energy targets can be seen as decisive when weighed against harm to the historic environment. It is fully appreciated that this is a complex decision, but whatever decision is made, significant weight should be accorded to the provisions of the Act in reaching a decision.

Kind regards

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