

PLANNING INQUIRY

CONSTRUCTION OF A SOLAR FARM AND BATTERY STATIONS TOGETHER WITH
ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS, EQUIPMENT AND NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE

LPA Reference: 20/01242/FULM

Summary of Proof of Evidence

on behalf of Newark and Sherwood District Council

Prepared by Adam Partington MSc BA Hons

October 2021

LOCUS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Summary Proof of Evidence has been prepared by Adam Partington Director of Locus Consulting Ltd, a heritage consultancy. I have held the position for nearly 10 years.
- 1.1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Joint Honours in Geography and Archaeology from Nottingham University in (2002) and a Master of Science in Professional Archaeology from Oxford University (2006).
- 1.1.3 This evidence is presented on behalf of Newark and Sherwood District Council ('the Council') in response to the appeal lodged on behalf of JBM Solar Projects 6 Ltd ('the Appellant') against the refusal of planning application 20/01242/FULM.
- 1.1.4 I confirm that this Summary of Proof of Evidence is true and has been prepared, and is given, in accordance with prevailing professional guidance. I further confirm that the opinions expressed in my evidence are my true and professional views.
- 1.1.5 The application for the proposed development was considered at a meeting of the Council's Planning Committee on 2nd March 2021. The Planning Committee resolved to refuse planning permission for the proposed development. The reasons for refusal are provided in full in my main proof of evidence.

2 LEGISLATION, POLICY, AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1.1 Under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the decision-maker should have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. Section 72(1) of the same Act requires that special regard must be paid to the desirability to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 2.1.2 These legislative requirements, alongside relevant case, require that considerable weight and importance must be afforded to the desirability to preserve the setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.1.3 In examining the impacts upon the significance of heritage assets, great weight must be afforded to the conservation of designated heritage assets, in accordance with Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm or less than substantial harm.
- 2.1.4 Where a development will bring harm to the significance of heritage assets, it must be convincingly justified, and the cumulative weight of less than substantial harm must be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme in accordance with the Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.
- 2.1.5 The Council has an up-to-date Development Plan on the basis of which the appeal should be considered:
 - Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2011)
 - Newark and Sherwood Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document (adopted July 2013)

- 2.1.6 The Core Strategy policies considered of particular relevance to the historic environment in this appeal are Core Policy 14 (Historic Environment) and Policy DM9 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment).
- 2.1.7 Planning Guidance, other guidance and advice notes relevant to the appeal are referred to within my main proof.

3 MAIN ISSUES

3.1 IMPACT UPON THE HALLOUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA

Description and Significance

- 3.1.1 Halloughton Conservation Area was designated in 1972 and is an asset of the highest significance. The significance of the area is derived from its architectural and historical interest, the character and appearance of which clearly reflects the dominance of a prebendal house and operations of its agricultural estate from the 13th century to the modern day. It is an outstanding example of its type, rare, and of high importance. Its character and appearance derive both from its built form and verdant landscape qualities.
- 3.1.2 Lying on the route of pilgrimage and as a prebendary of Southwell Minster, the village has strong associations with Southwell Minster.
- 3.1.3 With few modern additions to its architecture or public realm, the rural village retains a remarkable sense of historic integrity. Fundamental to its persisting character has been, and remains to be, the continuing operations of a single dominant manorial landowner at the helm of a rural estate that includes the majority of the village's traditional working building stock and surrounding agricultural land.
- 3.1.4 Halloughton is the principal and only settlement within its parish and valley. There are few other remarkable built features. All remaining land in the parish is actively managed as farmland, with localised areas of woodland cover. The character of the area's setting is uncomplicated, comprising the fundamental components of a rustic landscape that remains strongly reflective of medieval land management regimes, and is remarkably so for the wider area.
- 3.1.5 The area has a contained and intimate rural setting within its watershed, enabling short to medium range views across and down towards it from higher ground. Views out from the village are few and generally observed from higher ground. Due to their infrequency, the views are of high value. The restricted nature of the area's visual setting places emphasis on the entrances of the village and the non-visual aspects of its experience from within its setting.
- 3.1.6 The experience of the village in its rural setting is critical to appreciating the core architectural and historical narratives that underpin the character and appearance of the Halloughton Conservation Area including:
- i. The medieval origins and later genesis of the rural village;
 - ii. Its enduring agricultural economy;

- iii. The ownership and operations of the prebendal manor and associated estate
- iv. The contribution of Tithes raised to the Church and key social and cultural festivals (e.g. Harvest Festival)
- v. The traditional character, functions and phasing of the agricultural building stock which prevail throughout the village.

Impact and Weight

- 3.1.7 The proposal will directly harm a localised part of the conservation area.
- 3.1.8 The extent and/or character of multiple important views, approaches and entrances critical to the appreciation of the core architectural and historical narratives that underpin the character and appearance of the Halloughton Conservation Area will be harmed. The fundamental balance and integrity of the relationship between rural settlement centre and its parochial agricultural setting will be severely altered through uptake of a significant proportion of the parish.
- 3.1.9 Accounting for the magnitude of the proposed development, its longevity and the integrity of the area's setting, the degree of adverse impact is less than substantial, at the higher end of the scale. The impact is contrary to S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan alongside national policy and guidance.

3.2 LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN HALLOUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA

HALLOUGHTON MANOR FARM HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES

Description and Significance

- 3.2.1 Halloughton Manor Farmhouse is a Grade II* listed building of the highest importance. The Barn and Pigeoncote, Granary, and Stable Block at Halloughton Manor Farm are designated as a Grade II listed buildings of at least high importance.
- 3.2.2 The buildings' phasing has high evidential value and generates a pleasing fortuitous aesthetic externally. The 13th century stone tower is an exceptional building, relative landmark, and rare surviving feature in Nottinghamshire. The prebendal house, manor and farmstead, charts the development of the village over 8 centuries and has notable historic interest as the centre of local power and administration. Prolonged associations with the Diocese of Southwell offer an elevated degree of historical value.
- 3.2.3 18th century extensions to the house alongside the construction of the barn, stables, pigeoncote and granary, are illustrative of improving techniques of the Agricultural Revolution and have both high designed aesthetic and historical illustrative value.
- 3.2.4 Alongside the church, the assets are a gateway complex of buildings at the eastern end of Halloughton, the character of which reflects the continuing dominance and operations of the prebendal house and estate from the 13th century. Elements of the village's phasing

corresponding with that of the assets, illustrating their symbiotic relationship. With the village and extent of its manorial estate not markedly changed since the 13th century, the manorial complex survives as a rare example of a 13th century house set within its estate.

- 3.2.5 The sense of integrity extends out from the village into surrounding farmland which remains strongly reflective of medieval land management regimes associated with the manor and medieval village. The uncomplicated and ancient character of the asset's rural setting enables appreciation of their roles and influence over both the village and parish since the Middle Ages.
- 3.2.6 From the north and east, views of the assets are generally limited to those along Bridle Farm Road. Long range views of the manor are few and are limited to glimpse views of its tower. The restricted nature of its visual setting places great emphasis on the non-visual aspects of its experience.

Impact and Weight

- 3.2.7 Changes to the immediate setting of the manor and associated listed buildings will not impact upon its significance.
- 3.2.8 Within their intermediate and distant settings, the fundamental balance and integrity of the agricultural landscape will be severely altered through the significant uptake of land by the proposed development. The nature of the valued relationship between the assets and their agricultural estate will be detrimentally impacted upon, weakening the ability to appreciate their core historical and architectural interest.
- 3.2.9 Accounting for the magnitude of the proposed development, its longevity, and the integrity of the asset's setting, the degree of adverse impact is less than substantial, at the higher end of the scale for the manor, and lower end of the scale for the associated barn and pigeoncote, granary and stable block. The impact is contrary to S.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan, alongside national policy and guidance.

CHURCH OF ST JAMES

Description and Significance

- 3.2.10 The Church of St James is a Grade II listed building of at least high importance.
- 3.2.11 13th century and largely rebuilt in 1879-82, the phasing has evidential value and associations with redesigns by architect Ewan Christian. Modest designed aesthetic value with simple ecclesiastical form.
- 3.2.12 The church has strong social, spiritual and a symbolic value, serving as a place of worship and location of communal festivals and events for over 700 years. As a prebend of Southwell Minster, it has fundamental and longstanding historic associations with the Diocese of Southwell.
- 3.2.13 Set in its tranquil church yard plot, the church is a gateway building at the eastern end of Halloughton and a relative landmark building in the settlement. The character of the village

clearly reflects the dominance and operations of the prebendal house (opposite) and estate, with which the church shares fundamental historical links from the 13th century. There is a strong sense of historical integrity which assists in appreciating the church's appointed role within a rural community from the Middle Ages.

- 3.2.14 Outside of the village all remaining land in the parish is actively managed as farmland, with some localised areas of woodland cover. The character of the asset's intermediate and distant rural setting is uncomplicated, comprising the basic and fundamental components of a rustic and bucolic landscape. The field morphology around the village remains strongly reflective of medieval land management regimes and is remarkably so for the wider area.
- 3.2.15 The church is setback in linear east/west views along the village's lane, but there are good views from the roadside and filtered views from the north that locate the place of worship in its village and parish. Deeper views from the north and south are prohibited by established tree planting and intervening development respectively.

Impact and Weight

- 3.2.16 Changes to the immediate setting of the church will not impact upon the ability to appreciate its significance.
- 3.2.17 Within its intermediate and distant settings, the fundamental balance and integrity of the agricultural landscape will be severely altered by the uptake of a significant proportion of land by the proposed development. The nature of the valued relationship between the church and its rural parish will be detrimentally impacted upon, weakening the ability to appreciate its historical and architectural interest.
- 3.2.18 Accounting for the magnitude of the proposed development, its longevity, and the integrity of the asset's setting, the degree of adverse impact is less than substantial, at the middle to higher end of the scale. The impact is contrary to S.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan, alongside national policy and guidance.

BARN AT BRIDLE ROAD FARM

Description and Significance

- 3.2.19 Bridle Road Farm is a Grade II listed building of high importance.
- 3.2.20 The late 18th century barn has historic illustrative value as an example of a vernacular combination threshing barn. The functional and decorative form has high designed aesthetic value and is an expression of status, including its extant historical associations with the prebendal manor of Halloughton.
- 3.2.21 The barn lies at the centre of Halloughton, the character of which has a high degree of integrity and clearly reflects the dominance and operations of the manor's agricultural estate from the 13th century to the modern day, which the barn forms a key working element of.
- 3.2.22 The sense of integrity extends outside of the village and into the surrounding rural land, much of which remains part of the manor's estate. The physical character of the asset's setting is uncomplicated, comprising the basic and fundamental components of a rustic landscape. The

field morphology remains strongly reflective of medieval land management regimes and is remarkably so for the wider area.

- 3.2.23 The barn presents as a relative landmark within enclosed east and western views along Bridle Farm Lane. From the north there are glimpse views of uppermost parts of the barn and from elevated land to the south there are fine views of the barn with a rural foreground and backdrop.

Impact and Weight

- 3.2.24 The extent and/or character of important views and approaches to the barn, critical to the appreciation of its core architectural and historic interest, will be harmed. The fundamental balance and integrity of the valued relationship between the barn, the manor and the rural landscape will be eroded through the uptake of a significant proportion of its setting by the proposed development, weakening the ability to appreciate its significance.
- 3.2.25 Accounting for the magnitude of the proposed development, its longevity, and the integrity of the asset's setting, the degree of adverse impact is less than substantial, at the upper end of the scale. The impact is contrary to S.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan, alongside national policy and guidance.

3.3 LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE BRACKENHURST COMPLEX AND SOUTH HILL HOUSE

BRACKENHURST HALL AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES

Description and Significance

- 3.3.1 Brackenhurst Hall and associated buildings are Grade II listed buildings of at least high importance.
- 3.3.2 Modest and aggrandised 19th century country house, now university campus, in classical, loosely Greek Revival style, with elevated features including tower and cupola. Clear and well-formed designed aesthetic aligned to take advantage of multiple rural prospects. Incorporation of landmark tower is notable, as architectural centrepiece and expression of status. 19th century ornate lodge in Renaissance Revival style with associated gate piers and gates have designed aesthetic value, forming a formal entranceway. Functional additions to the rear, including garden wall and potting shed, equally reflects the late 19th century investment and upgrading of the country retreat.
- 3.3.3 Brackenhurst Hall has local, regional and national associations with historical figures affording it a notable historical interest.
- 3.3.4 The hall, associated structures and small informal gardens to the south form a nested group and are located towards the top of a broad summit of land overlooking Southwell to the north and the village of Halloughton to the southwest. The busy modern Nottingham Trent University Campus encircles much of the assets to the north.

3.3.5 Land falls to the south and southwest, but rises gently along the broad ridge towards Stubbins Farm, offering rural prospects and approaches over a broad undeveloped and ancient rustic setting characterised by farmland and woodland reflective of medieval land management regimes. Built features are very few.

3.3.6 Uppermost parts of the building, notably the tower, appear as a distant landmark feature within intermediate and distant glimpse views on approach from the south and west.

Impact and Weight

3.3.7 Within its intermediate and distant settings, the character and rural qualities of a significant proportion of the assets' landscape setting will be severely altered. The nature of the relationship between the hall and its setting, including key approaches and glimpse views, will be eroded, weakening the ability to appreciate the assets' historical and architectural interest, particularly the hall.

3.3.8 Accounting for the magnitude of the proposed development, its longevity, and the character of the assets' landscape setting, the degree of adverse impact is less than substantial, at the lower end of the scale. The impact is contrary to S.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan, alongside national policy and guidance.

SOUTH HILL HOUSE

Description and Significance

3.3.9 South Hill House is designated as a Grade II listed building of at least high importance.

3.3.10 Modest country residence with associated outbuilding. Designed aesthetic built in polite, loosely classical style. Now forms an extended part of the NTU campus and is converted to office accommodation.

3.3.11 The house sits within a small informal garden located towards the top of a broad summit of land overlooking rural land and the village of Halloughton to the southwest.

3.3.12 Land falls to the south and southwest but rises gently along the broad ridge towards Stubbins Farm, offering rural prospects and approaches over a broad undeveloped and ancient rustic setting characterised by farmland and woodland reflective of medieval land management regimes. Built features are very few.

3.3.13 The house is most readily appreciated from the roadside and garden plot. More distant views are few due to intervening woodland cover. However, there are limited glimpse views of the uppermost parts of the principal elevation from elevated ground to the south and west.

Impact and Weight

3.3.14 Within its intermediate and distant settings, the character and rural qualities of a significant proportion of the assets' landscape setting will be severely altered. The nature of the relationship between the country residence and its rural setting, including key approaches and glimpse views, will be eroded, weakening the ability to appreciate the asset's historical and architectural interest.

- 3.3.15 Accounting for the magnitude of the proposed development, its longevity, and the character of the landscape setting, the degree of adverse impact is less than substantial, at the lower end of the scale. The impact is contrary to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Development Plan, alongside national policy and guidance.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The Halloughton Conservation Area, heritage assets therein, Grade II South Hill House and group of Grade II listed buildings at Brackenhurst Hall are of at least high significance. The Grade II* Manor Farm House, also located in the Halloughton Conservation Area, is of the highest interest.
- 4.1.2 The assets' rural and village settings, which the Site makes a significant proportion of, retain a remarkable degree of integrity, observed both in their physical character and their entwined historic relationships. The character and qualities of the landscape are critical to appreciating the significance of the heritage assets.
- 4.1.3 In each case, the proposed solar array would cause harm to the setting of the assets. Harm is experienced through direct visual impacts, changes to general views and approaches, and notably through erosion of the innate historic relationships between the assets and the Site.
- 4.1.4 In all cases the degree of harm is less than substantial, either at the lower or upper end of the scale.
- 4.1.5 As such, the proposal is contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Development Plan.
- 4.1.6 In accordance with the NPPF, bearing in mind the statutory objectives of Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, any harm should be clearly and convincingly justified and the cumulative degree of less than substantial harm outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed development.