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EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

PLANNING ACT 2008 (AS AMENDED) – SECTION 88 AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE  
PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES 2010 (AS AMENDED) - RULE 6

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS  
COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND (HISTORIC ENGLAND)

APPLICATION BY SUNNICA LTD

FOR AN ORDER GRANTING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR THE: SUNNICA  
ENERGY FARM

APPLICATION REF: EN010106

OUR REFERENCE: PL00528152

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (HBMCE) is better known as Historic England, and we are the Government's adviser on all aspects of the historic environment in England - including historic buildings and areas, archaeology and historic landscape. We have a duty to promote conservation, public understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment. We are an executive Non-Departmental public body and we answer to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Digital Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
- 1.2. The development would be for the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Sunnica Energy Farm. This is a large-scale solar project set across four proposed areas in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, with associated infrastructure for connection between these sites and the national grid, via an extension to the National Grid Substation at Burwell.
- 1.3. As set out in our S.56 response we are aware the proposed development lies in a highly sensitive area for the historic environment. The red line boundary includes a number of prehistoric burial mounds which form a scheduled monument, and the development would be within the setting of a range of other high value and designated heritage receptors. It would also have direct impact upon a range of non-designated heritage assets, and other heritage assets that have been identified during the pre-application works.
- 1.4. Historic England has been engaged in pre-application discussions with the applicant at and before the Scoping Opinion Stage of the proposals and our engagement is summarised in the application.
- 1.5. The historic environment is a serious consideration in relation to this examination. The Development Consent Order (DCO) would, if granted, result in a number of significant effects on historic environment receptors.
- 1.6. The applicant has provided a full ES with a Cultural Heritage chapter (Chapter 7). The appendices include DBA, and the geophysical survey reports, heritage specific visualisations. This historic environment is also noted in other chapters not least the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) which seeks to cover heritage matters (see Appendix 10I).





- 1.7. Historic England considers the baseline data provided in the Cultural Heritage Chapter of the ES and its appendices, are broadly appropriate in allowing the project to be examined. We consider the methodology used to assess the cultural heritage datasets is therefore sufficient for this assessment.
- 1.8. There are however a number of issues we would like to highlight to the examining authority and request that they are considered during the examination.
  - Chippenham Park (RPG) NHLE 1000615 and associated listed buildings including the Hall and southern gates
  - The Scheduled Monuments with NHLE Numbers 1015246 (Four bowl barrows north of the A11/A14 junction, part of the Chippenham barrow cemetery) and 1006868 (Roman villa S of Snailwell Fen)
  - Management of archaeological sites within the development and comments in relation to the draft LEMP, DAMS, WSI and DCO documents.
- 1.9. Please note that as per our remit we have not provided advice on other grade II buildings, with the exception of Chippenham RPG and Hall and the majority of the non-designated and archaeological matters. We would defer to the LPA heritage, landscape, conservation and archaeological advisers in this regard.
- 1.10. We broadly support the conclusions reached in the ES for the majority of the assets considered. However, Historic England note some inaccuracies and concerns with regards to the assessment of the significance of heritage assets that is derived from their settings. We have previously expressed concerns about the use of matrices to assess impacts and harm, particularly in relation to the translation of language around the significance of impacts from EIA assessment to the language used in Planning Policy documents such as the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Policy Statements (NPS) documents.
- 1.11. We have therefore provided additional narrative in relation to a small number of assets below where we feel the approach has led to the effects of the scheme on some assets being downgraded.
- 1.12. We have concluded the representation with some recommendations that the Examining Authority may wish to consider.





## 2. Designated Heritage Assets

*Chippenham Park (RPG) and associated listed buildings including the Hall and southern gates*

### *Significance*

- 2.1 Chippenham Hall is a late 19th century Queen Anne revival-style country house (grade II; NHLE list entry 1331778), built on the site of an early 17th century house and incorporates fabric from two later 17th and 18th century houses. North of the house lie the late 17th century stable block (grade II\*; NHLE list entry 1126375), 18th century dovecote (grade II; NHLE list entry 1309915), and a matching pair of neo-classical lodges with flanking gateways on the edge (grade II; NHLE list entry 1331779) at the entrance from Chippenham village.
- 2.2 The house and its ancillary buildings lie within an associated designed landscape comprising 19th century pleasure grounds overlaying early 18th century formal gardens. These are set within an accompanying landscape park, laid out at the beginning of the 18th century with input in the 1790s from William Emes and Samuel Lapidge. Perimeter woodland belts and a red-brick estate wall enclose the landscape park, separating it from the surrounding agricultural landscape.
- 2.3 The (disused) 18th century main approach drive originally led from the house to Newmarket and leaves the landscape park through a matching pair of mid-18th century Neoclassical lodges linked by a Triumphal Arch (grade II\*; NHLE list entry 1126376). It then runs some 4.3 km south towards Newmarket along a tree-lined and open route with views across adjacent arable fields. The unlisted early 20th century High Lodge, sits at the Newmarket end of the drive. This represents a complex, multi-phased designed landscape of national interest, reflected in its registration at grade II (NHLE list entry 1000615).

### *Impact*

- 2.4 The proposed development would occupy open agricultural land to the east and south of Chippenham Hall and its registered park and garden, notably on both sides of the 4.3 km long south drive. The solar array would be set back from the boundary of the registered park and garden, retaining close-to-middle distance views from local roads





to the boundary wall, perimeter belts and exotic planting within the landscape park, which stand out in contrast to the wider agricultural landscape.

- 2.5 Nevertheless, it would infill a large expanse of the existing open agricultural land with modern infrastructure of an industrial character out of keeping with the historic context of the landscape park.
- 2.6 The proposed buffer planting would assist in reducing some of the visual impacts, but there would remain a perceptible change to the character of the setting of the registered park and garden and, to a lesser extent, its associated listed buildings, notably the grade II\* neoclassical lodges and Triumphal Arch. This would result in harm to their significance.

### *Policy*

- 2.7 In relation to this asset, we consider the primary consideration in policy terms would be via the NPS EN-1 which also reflects the NPPF heritage policies. In particular, consideration needs to be given to sustaining and enhancing designated heritage assets, including the 'contribution of their settings' (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.13). In addition, great weight is given to their conservation in decision making (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.21) This policy goes on to say that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Likewise, any impacts, significant effects or harm need clear and convincing justification (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.22).

### *Position*

- 2.8 The Cultural Heritage chapter of the ES recognises that even with carefully designed mitigation in the form of new woodland and hedgerow planting, the proposed development will have a medium magnitude of impact on the registered park and garden, resulting in a moderate adverse effect. It goes on to record that this is a this as a significant effect.





- 2.9 Although we broadly agree with these conclusions, the applicants goes on to assert that the harm is ‘temporary’ and ‘reversible’ as it would be decommissioned and removed, and the Order limits would be re-landscaped after an operational period of around 40 years (no earlier than 2065). In practice, however, the proposed development would be in place for nearly two generations and would establish the principle of built form of an industrial character in land between Chippenham Hall and Newmarket, thereby creating a precedent for potential extended operation or intensification. In our view this creates a fully residual effect and equates to a higher magnitude of impact and a greater level of harm than stated.
- 2.10 As it is likely only to be possible to reduce, rather than prevent any harm arising from the proposed development, we remain concerned about Sunnica West Site A on heritage grounds. We have concluded there would be a significant residual impact and effect from the permeant changes to the landscape and would result in the loss of the significance through changes to their setting
- 2.11 The Secretary of state would therefore need to have regard to polices in NPS EN-1 in particular paragraphs 5.8.13, 21 and 22 in coming to a decision. Given the policy considerations the ExA would therefore need to be content that the benefits outweigh the harm and that the impact can be justified in terms of those and the wider policy tests of the policy statement.
- 2.12 This element of the scheme would also result in harm, in terms of the NPPF, and although it falls below the bar of substantial harm, similar heritage policy tests must be applied.
- 2.13 The ExA may wish to ask the applicant if any further mitigation is possible, in order to further reduce the harm to the designated heritage assets. For example, strengthening the planting on the northern side of Sunnica West Site A, and potentially widening out the undeveloped areas along the sides of the former southern carriage way to push the panels back and reduce the visual impact.

*Four bowl barrows north of the A11/A14 junction, part of the Chippenham barrow cemetery (NHLE 1015246)*





## *Significance*

- 2.14 Although included under one scheduled monument entry this designated asset actually includes the visible and buried remains of four Bronze Age bowl barrows located within an arable field to the east of the A11 (four separate mapped areas). All four barrows remain unexcavated, and are found within the red line boundary for Sunnica West Site A.
- 2.15 Ploughing has reduced the mounds to low earthworks in the otherwise level field, but the barrows were first recorded in 1923 and are known to form part of a larger cemetery. This includes at least ten similar barrows spread over a large distance to the south and east of Chippenham Park (known as the Chippenham barrow cemetery). Some of these, such as the Hilly Plantation bowl barrow and the Rookery bowl barrow, on the east side of the A11 are also designated. The furthest known barrow in the group is probably at Pin Farm in Kentford some way to the east although a number of other barrows exist in a wide arc to the north, east and south of Chippenham Park - some of which (e.g. the Chalk Hill Barrow) are picked up in the ES chapter.
- 2.16 The east-west alignment of the barrow cemetery, together with the positions of isolated barrows to the south west of Newmarket and to the north east near Kennett and up to Barton Mills, broadly correlates with and form a prehistoric precursor to the Roman road that runs between Great Chesterford and Thetford (also thought to be part of the eastern alignment of the Icknield Way), and the Peddars Way going north around the Fen Edge. The locations of the barrows suggest that they were positioned to be visible in the Bronze Age landscape in relation to the contemporary settlement sites and the routeway corridors around the south eastern fen edge.
- 2.17 We note from the geophysical survey provided with this application that the barrow group may also include a number of previously unknown ring ditches relating to Bronze Age funerary monuments. These include ring ditches located in compartments W07, W08 and Eco1. There is also good evidence for contemporary settlements that have been identified as part of this project. The juxtaposition of known and previously unknown funerary monuments has the potential to add much to our knowledge of Bronze Age ritual landscapes. The evidence of contemporary settlement sites is rare and valuable. The identification of both the settlement and funerary monuments is exciting and has potential to be highly informative about how the landscape was utilised during the Bronze Age the lives of the population who occupied it.







## *Impact*

- 2.18 As discussed, 4 barrows remain within the red line boundary. This is recognised within the application, and we acknowledge there are no direct construction impacts from the proposed scheme. Figure 3-2 (Sunnica West A and B Parameter Plan) shows the barrows would be situated south of development compartment W09 and in an archaeological mitigation area with new hedgerow planting on the southern side of this compartment.
- 2.19 The placing of the barrows in a mitigation area, under pasture is supported by Historic England and we recognise it provides a degree of public benefit through improved management. The proposed mitigation will however not fully reduce the impact of the development upon monument. The large expanse of panels to the north and west of the scheduled monument and the industrial nature the development would in our view change their setting considerably. In addition, the new hedges planted as mitigation would further enclose these heritage assets. This scheme would therefore represent harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets through development within their setting.
- 2.20 Furthermore, we consider the barrows cemetery is best experienced as part of a extensive landscape of similar features. The scheme would therefore infill a large expanse of the existing open agricultural land with modern infrastructure of an industrial character. This is land which serves the wider hinterland of the barrow group and the development is out of keeping with the historically open an undeveloped context of the barrow cemetery.

## *Policy*

- 2.21 In relation to this asset, we consider the primary consideration in policy terms would be via the NPS EN-1 which also reflects the NPPF heritage policies. In particular, consideration needs to be given to sustaining and enhancing designated heritage assets, including the 'contribution of their settings' (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.13). In addition, great weight is given to their conservation in decision making (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.21) This policy goes on to say that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Likewise, any impacts, significant effects or harm need clear and convincing justification (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.22).





## *Position*

- 2.22 We acknowledge the applicant has identified that the impact upon the barrows of the development would, even after mitigation, be a moderate adverse impact and a significant effect. In our view we would suggest this equates to a high degree of harm in relation to the NPPF policies.
- 2.23 Although we broadly agree with this conclusion, the applicants goes on to assert that the harm is ‘temporary’ and ‘reversible’ as it would be decommissioned and removed, and the Order limits would be re-landscaped after an operational period of around 40 years (no earlier than 2065). In practice, however, the proposed development would be in place for nearly two generations and would establish the principle of built form of an industrial character in land adjacent to the barrows and thereby creating a precedent for potential extended operation or intensification.
- 2.24 In our view this creates a fully residual effect and equates to a higher magnitude of impact and a greater level of harm than stated
- 2.25 As it is likely only to be possible to reduce, rather than prevent any harm arising from the proposed development, we remain concerned about Sunnica West Site A on heritage grounds. We have concluded there would be a significant residual impact and effect from the permeant changes to the landscape which would result in the loss of the significance through changes to their setting. This element of the scheme would also result in harm, in terms of the NPPF, and although it falls below the bar of substantial harm, the NPPF's heritage policy tests would also need to be applied.
- 2.26 In coming to a decision, the Secretary of State would therefore need to have regard to polices in NPS EN-1 in particular paragraphs 5.8.13, 21 and 22. The ExA would therefore need to be content that the benefits outweigh the harm and that the impact can be justified in terms and the wider tests of the policy statement.
- 2.27 We do however acknowledge that the applicant has proposed to place a number of settlement and burial sites out of the development in archaeological mitigation areas. This is an appropriate mitigation measure and also represents conservation, enhancement and potentially public benefit in policy terms. The barrows themselves are however not mentioned in the ES Appendix 10I: Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (see comments below) and this needs to be rectified (see comments below).





- 2.28 The ExA should seek clarification on the overall management and advice of the barrows from the applicant to see if any further mitigation would be possible, in order to further reduce the harm to the designated heritage assets, for example, further research into the barrows in the landscape and their contemporary settlements, as well as public access and interpretation.

*Roman villa S of Snailwell Fen (NHLE 1006868)*

### *Significance*

- 2.29 This is a scheduled monument which represents the remains of a Roman Villa situated between the villages of Fordham and Snailwell. It is located immediately west of the Sunnica West Site B site. Although little investigated, there is sufficient detail known to provide a picture of a high-status Roman dwelling from the 1st and 2nd centuries. Known finds include building foundations, a hypocaust system, building material, painted plaster and pottery. The high status and well-preserved finds suggested this was a site of national importance suitable for designation.
- 2.30 The villa was located adjacent to a water course on the edge of a low-lying wetland area known as Chippenham Fen and close to the Roman road network. It was also located in close proximity to a range of other possible Roman period settlement site and sits in a contemporary Roman landscape. One possible Roman site is located within Sunnica West Site B on the opposite side of the watercourse to the villa

### *Impact*

- 2.31 We acknowledge the scheduled monument is outside of the red line boundary and there are no construction impacts from the development. However there is clear inter-visibility between the development and the villa site including sustained views across the development areas from the scheduled monument.
- 2.32 The setting of the heritage asset contributes much to its significance and we considered that Sunnica West Site B is within the setting of the villa. This development would then result in a change to this setting causing an adverse effect. In NPPF terms this would cause harm to the significance of the asset through development within its setting. The level of the harm would be less than substantial but we consider this to be a significant effect in EIA terms.





## *Policy*

2.33 As above, we consider the primary policy considerations would be the need to sustain and enhance this asset, including any 'contribution of their settings' (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.13). In addition, great weight is given to conservation in decision making (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.21), and this policy goes on to state that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Likewise, any impacts, significant effects or harm require clear and convincing justification (see NPS EN-1 para 5.8.22).

## *Position*

2.34 We note the applicant has stated at 7.7.109 that '...As a villa, its setting was not a key factor in its location, other than in relation to the Roman road network and agricultural land which would have served it. As a consequence, the setting of the asset does not contribute to the significance of the asset other than in a minor way'.

2.35 We find this a curious statement which does not bear scrutiny in relation to our understanding of the way in which a settlement would work in a landscape. Resources for example may have been a significant factor in its location, particularly given the richness of the adjacent fen. This assessment does not consider the experiential nature of setting as set out in the NPPF nor the guidance on assessing setting as set out in the Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practise Advice in Planning 3.

2.36 We feel the impact of the development upon the significance of the asset has therefore been undervalued and that there are setting issues to be considered. We accept there are some mitigating factors proposed, such as existing vegetation along part of this boundary between the development and the Scheduled Monument, however we consider it likely that there will be sustained views to the north from the scheduled monument that will include the panels.

2.37 We have concluded there would be a significant residual impact and effect from the permeant changes to the landscape which would result in the loss of significance through changes to their setting





- 2.38 As it is likely only to be possible to reduce, rather than prevent harm from arising from the proposed development, we remain concerned about Sunnica West Site B on heritage grounds.
- 2.39 The Secretary of state would therefore need to have regard to policies in NPS EN-1 in particular paragraphs 5.8.13, 21 and 22 in coming to a decision. Given the policy considerations the ExA would therefore need to be content that the benefits outweigh the harm and that the impact can be justified in terms of those and the wider policy tests of the policy statement. This element of the scheme would also result in harm, in terms of the NPPF, and although it falls below the bar of substantial harm, similar heritage policy tests must be applied.
- 2.40 The ExA may wish to ask the applicant if any further mitigation is possible, in order to further reduce the harm to the designated heritage assets. For example, strengthening the planting on the western perimeter of Sunnica West Site B, and potentially reducing the northerly extent of the panels in land parcel W01 to reduce the visual intrusion into the setting of the asset.

## 3.0 Specific Comments on the ES

### *Chapter 3: Scheme description*

- 3.1 Table 3-2 - Foundation choices selected for the various elements of the scheme can be summarised as either:
- Piles – between 3.5 m to 12 m below ground level
  - Concrete base that would require a 1 m thick layer of sand

The final design of some of these elements has not yet been finalised, and so the worst-case scenario is being considered. The impact that the foundation design would have on any buried archaeology, both in terms of the direct and indirect impacts needs to be considered. The ES needs to demonstrate it has considered these impacts, in particular by stating what mitigation is being proposed in the Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (DAMS) and Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) documents.





- 3.2 Section 3.5.2 - This section mentions that drainage would also be needed. We consider information would need to be provided in the ES about the dimensions of the drainage channels and what archaeological deposits will be impacted. This is important as cutting through certain deposits may impact the preservation conditions of archaeological remains in adjacent areas. The ES needs to demonstrate it has considered these impacts. The proposed mitigation needs to be fully and clearly established in the DAMS and WSI.

## *Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage*

- 3.3 Section 7.2.6 - This states that some areas of the scheme could not be investigated using techniques such as geophysics for a variety of reasons (access issues, ground conditions, the presence of livestock etc.). In these areas it was agreed that a higher percentage of Trial Trench evaluation works would take place to fill in any gaps in the understanding, we support this approach however this would need to be reflected in the DAMS and WSI.
- 3.4 Section 7.2.7 and 2.8 - We note that the limitations of trial trenching are acknowledged in the application however the applicant needs to take into consideration issues relating to conservation and preservation *in-situ* of assets of national importance should any be uncovered during the works. This includes wetland and former wetland/fen areas (particularly with the cable trenches and the sub-station). The applicant should also acknowledge that finds of equivalent value to designated assets, may be uncovered (particularly Roman finds in Sunnica West Site B area which are adjacent to the Roman Villa SM). This reflects the NPS EN-1 Policy at Paragraph 5.8.4. There is a requirement to ensure the LPA are satisfied with progress and these issues need to be addressed in the ES and reflected in the DAMS and WSI.
- 3.5 Section 7.3.5 - It is stated that the Environment Agency Lidar data has been used; the resolution of this data is either 1 m or 2 m. It should be noted that a resolution of 1 m is the basic minimum needed for archaeological assessments, but where greater detail is required, higher resolution is preferable (Historic England, Using Airborne LIDAR in Archaeological Surveys, 2018):

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/using-airborne-lidar-in-archaeological-survey/>.





- 3.6 7.5.59 and 7.5.60 - We noticed a tendency to slip into specific archaeological jargon and shorthand - it would be useful to review the use of language to ensure the ES is suitable for non-specialists. For example, at 7.5.59 the text says '...the 'infill' type pattern.' The question is a 'pattern' of what? Again at 7.5.60 line 1 the text says '...a multi-phase complex'. Again, the question is a 'complex' of what?
- 3.7 Sections 7.5.64 (Zone B), 7.5.70 (Zone C) and 7.5.213 (Zone H) - This summarises the results of the geophysical surveys in the Fenland areas. It was noted that the waterlogged ground conditions can impact the formation of magnetic enhancement related to human activity, which in turn makes it difficult to identify archaeological features due to a poor magnetic contrast. Consequently, it is not surprising that there was an apparent absence of archaeological anomalies identified in the Fenland zone compared to other areas examined. This discrepancy highlights that alternative approaches are required to investigate the archaeological potential of the fenland areas.
- 3.8 It is stated in Sections 7.5.64 and 7.5.213 that fenland/waterlogged areas would be unsuitable for settlement or arable cultivation in periods of the past, but it should be noted that due to past sea-level changes settlements of earlier periods can exist on land surfaces beneath the peats. Also, that the wetland areas provided valuable resources that could have been utilised by past populations. The associated activities may not leave a big trace in the archaeological record but there is still the potential for waterlogged artefacts and more ephemeral finds, as well as evidence derived from the deposits themselves such as paleo-environmental and climatic data.
- 3.9 There is therefore a requirement to ensure the LPA are satisfied with provision to manage these specific archaeological environments during the development and this needs to be addressed in the DAMS and WSI.
- 3.10 Section 7.6.2 - We are pleased to see that the Embedded Design Mitigation is using an iterative approach, and that areas of significance and potential have been removed from the development following the Geophysical survey work (Section 7.6.2). It is noted that mitigation planting has been considered to help screen views (Section 7.6.3), but it is important to consider the impact that new plantings may have on buried archaeology, on the wetland/fenland areas where waterlogged remains may be preserved. This needs to be addressed by the ES in the LEMP document.







- 3.11 Sections 7.7.5 and 7.7.11 - This section summarises the impacts that could result from the construction activities, but we note that impacts from dewatering and drainage have not been mentioned, or that works could potentially impact groundwater levels. This should be addressed.
- 3.12 This is particularly important for the works in the areas of former fenlands where waterlogged organic remains may be preserved (e.g. wood, leather, textiles, palaeoenvironmental evidence etc.); any changes to the water environment may alter the preservation conditions of an archaeological site, which could lead to the damage and/or loss of these vulnerable remains. We would recommend that the Historic England document 'Preserving Archaeological Remains' (2016) is consulted:
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/preserving-archaeological-remains/>
- 3.13 This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed in the ES and any findings will need to be addressed in the DAMS and WSI.
- 3.14 Section 7.7.10 - It is good to see that an archaeological strategy has been developed to deal with any potential breakout of drilling fluid that may occur during the proposed HDD works. This also would need to be addressed in the ES and any findings will need to be addressed in the DAMS and WSI.
- 3.15 Section 7.7.13 - It is acknowledged that alternative approaches are needed to assess the archaeological potential and significance in areas categorised as former fenland. This has included the use of Trial Trench evaluation as well as a detailed environmental sampling strategy, that was agreed with the Local Authorities and Historic England
- 3.16 The environmental report(s) that were produced following the environmental sampling strategy should be added as an additional appendix to the ES. This is to ensure all parties have access to the data. This should be requested prior to the end of the examination in order that it can form part of the evidence plan for the application. Any findings and recommendations will need to be addressed in the DAMS and WSI.







- 3.17 Section 7.7.119 - The impact to non-designated remains throughout the proposed scheme area does not mention impacts to deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest, such as the peat identified during the evaluation works. These deposits can be impacted by the use of piled foundations, the required excavation work or through changes to the water environment. For example, deposits identified on the edge of the floodplain of the River Snail have included peat, thought to have developed in the late prehistoric and Roman periods.
- 3.18 None of the deposits were well dated, but the assets have been classed as being of low value. This seems at odds with best practice which show information preserved within waterlogged deposits can provide details about how the landscape and environment changed over time, placing the sites discussed in this chapter into a broader context. We recommend the dating of deposits is addressed in the ES and also considered in the WSI. In addition, Historic England documents would need to be consulted and they can be found on our website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/archaeological-science/environmental-archaeology/>

- 3.19 Sections 7.8.1 & 7.8.2 - It is stated that sites will be preserved where feasible as part of the embedded mitigation strategy. The strategy to preserve sites should include reference to the principles outlined in the Historic England document 'Preserving Archaeological Remains' (2016), leading through the process to decide if it is possible and appropriate to preserve a site.

*Preserving Archaeological Remains* (2016): <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/preserving-archaeological-remains/>

*Piling and Archaeology* (2019): <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/piling-and-archaeology/>

- 3.20 Section 7.8.3 - For sites that cannot be preserved a programme of archaeological mitigation will be implemented, including a programme of archaeological fieldwork. Strategies would need to be developed to investigate the areas where non-intrusive trenching methods would be used (Section 7.8.7); the sort of techniques that would be used are not discussed in this Section, but it should be noted that some of the areas earmarked for HDD, such as the rivers, maybe waterlogged and so it may be difficult to investigate these areas using trenches. Alternative approaches should be considered, such as borehole surveys and the development of deposit models.





- 3.21 Table 7-10 - The table outlines a summary of the residual effects. Some of the archaeological sites listed in this table are described as having only a 'minor adverse' impact prior to mitigation being implemented (e.g. the archaeology in Field E03 located on the fen edge, or the extensive linear feature recorded running through Fields E19, E20, E21, E17 and E18), despite being within the area of the array.
- 3.22 Historic England does not consider that the direct physical impact of a development on buried archaeology and associated deposits should only be classed as 'minor adverse'. Surely it follows that direct impacts from a development of this nature on known heritage assets cannot be minor. We recommend this is assessment revisited and the table revalued accordingly.

*Appendix 7F: Sunnica East & West Sites Geophysical Report*

- 3.23 A fluxgate gradiometer survey was carried out as part of the evaluation works. It was clear from the desk-based assessment that some areas of the site were waterlogged and positioned within former Fenland areas. This was supported by the geophysical survey with several areas returning poor magnetic contrast, making it difficult to detect activities in these areas (see 3.7 above).
- 3.24 Alternative evaluation techniques may need to be considered in these areas, such as alternative geophysics equipment, borehole surveys and deposit modelling, or an increase in the number of trial trenches investigated.

*Appendix 7H: Interim Sunnica East Sites A and B Archaeological Trial Trench Report*

- 3.25 Section 3.23.11 - This states that the samples collected through a peat sequence using a monolith tin has not been processed at this evaluation stage. The sampled material would have provided information about the presence and/or absence of different indices and therefore the potential of the peat to preserve palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- 3.26 Understanding the condition of any remains present would also allow questions to be asked about the vulnerability of the remains present to changes that may occur as part of the proposed development. We are pleased that additional sampling has been recommended as part of the excavation stage, but processing the samples collected during the evaluation works would have helped develop a more robust strategy.





3.27 Section 3.3.3 - This section presents the results of the environmental remains sampled as part of the evaluation excavations. It was stated that “the total volume (up to 20L) of each sample was processed”. This is much smaller than the 40-60L (or 100% of deposits if smaller) sample size recommended in the Historic England document Environmental Archaeology (2011). This is disappointing as the method statement for the evaluation work stated that “sampling methods will follow guidelines produced by Historic England” (Appendix 5, Section 5.10.1), and this was evidently not the case.

## 4.0 Others matters (LEMP, DAMS & WSI & DCO)

### *Appendix 10I: Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)*

- 4.1 We are pleased to see Section 1.5 seeks to deal with heritage a matter as 'Existing Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity Features'. There are for example three mentions of scheduled monument in the LEMP. These however are all in the negative. For example Para 1.5.4 and 1.5.8 says '... There are no scheduled monuments nor listed buildings within Sunnica East Site A and B and Para 1.5.23 goes on to say '...there are no scheduled monuments within 1 km from the Burwell National Grid Substation Extension.'
- 4.2 The LEMP does not however mention the four designated barrows which are part of the red line boundary in Sunnica West site A south of compartment W09. This is a significant failing.
- 4.3 We acknowledge archaeological mitigation areas are noted in Section 1.7.7 (and shown on Figure 3-1) and 1.7.9 (and shown on Figure 3-2). There is however no specific mention of the scheduled monuments or the designated heritage assets. We consider this would best have been included at say 1.7.9 f (Parcels W08 and W09).
- 4.4 In our view this represents a lack of interconnectedness across the application. We are of the view that there needs to be a specific mention of the designated heritage assets in this LEMP, and there should be a specific parcel or mitigation number allocated to the scheduled monument compartment. This matter needs to be addressed in order to give confidence in the approach.





- 4.5 We also consider there would need to be a specific prescription for the designated barrows, in which the applicants seek to address any potential conflicts with the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, particularly around the establishment of suitable ground cover (ploughing and seeding) as well as the owner's loss of class consent under the Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1994.
- 4.6 Any legal matters identified in the LEMP would need to be reflected in the DCO wording, or a clarification would need to be provided in the ES that states why the 1979 or 1994 Acts do not apply in this case. This should be done prior to consent being granted.
- 4.7 We have also previously requested from the applicant a specific draft management plan for the scheduled monument that sets out how the barrows will be managed during the lifetime of the project, additional mitigation, such as public access, interpretation and publication. The management document would need to cover safeguarding the assets during the construction and decommissioning of the project, and the issue of the loss of class consent if appropriate. We would normally expect this document to be provided as a draft and as part of the evidence base for the ES to provide confidence in the overall management strategy.

### *DAMS and WSI*

- 4.8 We are pleased to see that the applicant has committed to producing a Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (DAMS). This is an important document that will provide a strategy for archaeological mitigation and seeks to minimise the impacts on the archaeological and non-designated heritage assets. This would need to include a strategy for managing waterlogged deposits and preserved organic archaeological remains *in situ*.
- 4.9 It is noted that a targeted approach to mitigation will be utilised, focusing effort on the site-specific questions and maximising knowledge gained and building on the findings of the evaluation work (see Sections 7.6.9, 7.7.14 and 7.8.6). It is also stated that the evaluation trenching has not yet been completed and so a strategy has not been developed at the point of submission (Section 7.8.5).
- 4.10 We are also pleased to note that the applicant has committed to producing a separate WSI for each site (Section 7.6.10). This is also appropriate and welcomed.





- 4.11 However, in our view, Draft DAMS and WSI's are necessary in order to understand the sort of approaches that are being considered, especially at the examination stage. There is a considerable potential for the scheme to adversely impact on important archaeological sites, including burials and waterlogged deposits of archaeological interest. The draft DAMs and WSI documents are necessary to give confidence to all interested parties that these matters will be dealt with appropriately.
- 4.12 It would also be important to set out the project's overarching research questions, state who would be responsible for developing them, and how it be decided which sites will be targeted for further work.
- 4.14 Furthermore, the draft WSI should address the bigger topics such as environmental sampling, wetlands and paleo-environments, buried human remains, post excavation timeline, publication, public participation as well as wider dissemination of evidence. We also recommend all these key documents (WSI, DAMS and LEMP) are linked and cross-referenced, to ensure the transfer from planning to construction is suitable documented and managed.
- 4.15 We consider Outline WSI and a draft DAMS or CEMP style documents to be good practice and now industry standard for projects at this kind of scale. we recommend that the applicant is asked to produce an Outline WSI and a draft of the DAMS documents.

*DCO wording.*

- 4.16 Although we note the applicant has provided in the ES Appendix 7A (Relevant Legislation and Policy for Cultural Heritage) it is not clear if the applicant has given consideration to the maintenance and ongoing management of the scheduled monument (*Four bowl barrows north of the A11/A14 junction, part of the Chippenham barrow cemetery - NHLE 1015246*) as noted in our advice in relation to the LEMP.
- 4.17 We recommend the applicant is asked to clarify whether, and in the event of the DCO being granted, they would need to assume the statutory powers for consenting works to a Scheduled Monument. In effect taking the power of the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. If this is the case then the 1979 Act needs to be appropriately reflected in the wording of the DCO.





4.18 Given that works will also need to be undertaken within and around the Scheduled Monument we would also consider that the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, or known under our adopted name as Historic England, should be a statutory consultee on the DAMS, the WSI and the revised LEMP, should the DCO be granted.

4.19 We would therefore anticipate that this also needs to be reflected in the wording of the DCO at Schedule 2. Historic England is not a named party in the DCO nor noted in Scheduled 2 at present and we recommend the ExA seek further information from the applicant in this regard.

## 5.0 Concluding Comments

5.1 Historic England are broadly content with the ES documentation as well as the proposed layout and design. We have however provided further information with regards to the scheduled monument and the non-designated heritage assets.

5.2 We have identified that the development would result in harm in Planning Policy terms, and an adverse and significant residual effect in EIA terms to a range of designated heritage assets, which include

- Chippenham Park RPG (NHLE 1000615) and associated listed buildings including
- Chippenham Hall (grade II; NHLE list entry 1331778),
- A stable block (grade II\*; NHLE list entry 1126375),
- 18th century dovecote (grade II; NHLE list entry 1309915),
- a matching pair of neo-classical lodges with flanking gateways on the edge (grade II; NHLE list entry 1331779) at the entrance from Chippenham village.
- Four bowl barrows north of the A11/A14 junction, part of the Chippenham barrow cemetery (NHLE 1015246)
- A Roman villa S of Snailwell Fen (NHLE 1006868)

5.3 When coming to a decision we recommend the ExA would need to weigh the harm against the benefits, as set out both the NPS and NPPF policies relating to designated heritage assets.





- 5.4 In relation to Chippenham RPG and associated buildings we recommend the ExA also seek advice from the applicant as to whether any further mitigation is possible to further reduce the harm to the assets. For example, strengthening the planting on the northern side of Sunnica West Site A, and potentially widening out the undeveloped areas along the sides of the former southern carriage way to push the panels back and reduce the visual impact.
- 5.5 For the barrow group scheduled monument we would recommend the ExA should seek clarification on the overall management of the barrows should the DCO be granted and seek advice from the applicant to see if any further mitigation would be possible. We consider further research, public access and interpretation would potentially be appropriate for this asset.
- 5.6 Historic England also recommends the ExA explore with the applicant if any further mitigation is possible to the development adjacent to the Roman Villa. We have recommended strengthening the planting on the western perimeter of Sunnica West Site B, and potentially reducing the northerly extent of the panels in land parcel W01 to reduce the visual intrusion into the setting of the asset.
- 5.7 We have also noted some minor comments with regards to the ES chapters in relation to the historic environment and we recommend the applicant is asked to address and respond to these matters.
- 5.8 A greater concern is that the applicant has not provided a draft DAMS or WSI document. As set out above submission of these documents is standard practise for large NSIP schemes and would give confidence to all parties in the handling of heritage assets during development. We recommend the applicant is asked to provide draft versions of these documents which would sit as appendices to the ES.
- 5.9 We have also expressed concerns with the management of the scheduled barrows following development and the archaeological provision which is set out (or not) in the LEMP. We recommend the way to provide confidence in this matter would be for the applicant to provide a draft Management Plan for the SM's and the other archaeological exclusion areas. This would then form part of the evidence base for the ES.







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5.10 We also recommend the LEMP is revised in light of our concerns.

5.11 Finally we have also raised some matters with regards to the DCO wording and the role of Historic England. The DCO wording would also need to be amended to ensure we are consulted with regards to the finalisation of this plan should the DCO be granted.

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