

Allen, Tim

From: Allen, Tim
Sent: 30 January 2024 19:55
To: 'CottamSolarProject@planninginspectorate.gov.uk'
Cc: Midlands ePlanning
Subject: Cottam Solar Project Historic England response ExA 2nd Questions Individual ref 20037186 Our ref PL00763242

Dear ExA,

Cottam Solar Project Historic England response ExA 2nd Questions.

Individual ref 20037186
Our ref PL00763242

Our apologies for not attending ISH2. Our answers to ExA's 2nd questions are set out below in *italics*.

2.9.2 Historic England With regard to the Thorpe Medieval Settlement Scheduled Monument (SM), can Historic England please explain:

- i) how the former historic east-west boundary relates to the significance of the SM;

This former boundary has a direct historic landscape relationship to the shrunken settlement remains to its south and the rising round upon which Thorpe le Fallows sits. The irregular line of this east-west boundary as shown on the 1st edition OS 1:2500 mapping suggests it sat in an organic relationship to the pattern of open-field cultivation strips and associated land tenure, in contrast to the straighter more regular subdivision of strips characteristic of more structured enclosure.

As explored in the schedule entry "The monument includes the earthwork remains of the medieval village of Thorpe, a small settlement established before the late 11th century. Documentary evidence for a church at Thorpe first occurs in the mid-12th century. Throughout the medieval period the parish was divided into four different holdings, some part of monastic estates; during this time the population of the village remained fairly static at about 10-15 households. Following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century, the parish came under the single ownership of the dean and chapter of Lincoln, and in the 17th and 18th centuries the village gradually became depopulated. The church was demolished early in the 17th century, and in the early 18th century the parish was enclosed. Two farms in the village continued working into the 20th century. While the medieval ridge and furrow cultivation remains which formerly surrounded the village have been levelled by modern ploughing, most of the area of the medieval village is still visible as a series of earthworks."

The former field boundary to the north of the monument is part of the story of a small settlement with an Anglo Scandinavian name indicative of a secondary settlement perhaps not on the best of land, it never grew particularly large and seems to have made it through the deprivations of the Black Death in the 14th century and subsequent economic pressures to fade away relatively late. The former boundary that we suggest is reinstated is part of that story and would set the new development in a structured historic landscape with the monument thereby addressing rather than wholly imposing upon its significance.

The significance of the monument is not set in a singular medieval moment of fully open fields and peak population that can be juxtaposed to an equally static post-medieval landscape of depopulation and enclosure. Central to the understanding and appreciation of shrunken or deserted medieval villages is that the archaeological remains we encounter relate to complex and extended processes of social and economic change; sudden changes may occur but they do not define the limit of interest or understanding. Significance is therefore [diachronic] concerned with the

history and evolution of the monument in this landscape rather than [synchronic] confined to certain particular points in time.

- ii) what the setting of the asset to be in that direction; and

As set out in the NPPF Glossary (Dec 2023) "Setting of a heritage asset: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral." The setting of Thorpe Medieval Settlement scheduled monument is the landscape in which it is experienced and understood. In this instance that includes both the extensive landscape context which give a feel for how the medieval village sat in relation to other settlements and natural features but also the more immediate context of the field which provided subsistence for this agrarian peasant community and surplus to support the church, lordship and taxation. Thorpe le Fallows / in the Fallows is quite literally a settlement set within its former fields which will have been turned to grazing as population fell (prior to modern re-cultivation). Whilst setting is not spatially fixed in this case the ability to see the settlement earthworks in the context of the fields which supported them is of great importance. A 50m offset taken to an arbitrary line would not in our view sustain the ability to experience the monument in context, taking the edge of the array back to the other side of an historic boundary line and reinstating that line as a hedge would allow the monument a coherent field as agrarian setting in direction.

- iii) how the solar arrays would relate to the former historic east-west boundary and whether the proposed boundary treatment has a bearing in this regard as mitigation. These were matters that were raised by the ExA at ISH2 where it concerned the historic environment.

We have set out a reasonable measure to conserve and better reveal the significance of the scheduled monument, and reframe it in the context of the harm resulting from development's transformation of its agrarian setting. The reinstatement of this former boundary as a limit to the solar array is both proportionate and necessary to a sustainable planning outcome. The irregular character of the boundary is important to the effectiveness of this mitigation, any functional straight-line security fencing would need therefore to sit north of the reinstated boundary. To be effective as mitigation the reinstated boundary would need to be a laid hedgerow and would benefit from the inclusion of some standard trees for instance crab apple, field maple etc.

Historic England envisages that the historic boundary would be reinstated on or about its former line derived from the first edition ordnance survey 1:2500 scale mapping. The historic mapping does not indicate the physical form of the boundary but the slightly irregular line and character of extant boundaries in the area would suggest a hedge and bank. The reinstatement of the former boundary would put the array in a separate space from the immediate environs in which the monument is appreciated and understood, its immediate context would be agrarian rather than solar. Whilst the array would likely still be visible from the monument the reinstated (hedge boundary) would provide some screening of the security fencing and the panels themselves. We assume the panels would start once they were clear of the shadow from the new hedge.

2.9.3 Applicant/Historic England Please provide an update on the position with the Thorpe Medieval Settlement SM, as it was understood from ISH2 that discussions were still ongoing and an agreed SoCG is outstanding.

Historic England met with Lanpro heritage consultants to the applicant today (10/01/24) both Historic England and the Applicant's positions are unchanged which will be noted in the Draft SoCG. Historic England's position remains that the scheme should be revised to the former field boundary north of the scheduled monument (to mitigate setting impacts upon its significance), the applicants have thus far declined to make that amendment.

2.9.4 Historic England Further to Historic England's response to ExQ1.9.8 [REP2-084] on Fillingham Castle, if the likely level of impact would be not worse than moderate would this equate to a potentially harmful impact? If so, please indicate whether Historic England considers it would be substantial or less than substantial.

This would be a potentially harmful impact in NPS/NPPF terms at a level of less than substantial harm (in respect of the Grade I listed Castle in its Grade II registered park etc), the impact upon the significance of monument (that it derives from the character of its historic landscape setting to the east of the Castle) is limited by distance and scale

and location of the arrays beyond the more immediate and structured designed landscape relationship to Fillingham village, lake etc.

2.9.5 Historic England Please comment on the revised outline Traffic Management Plan and in particular the provisions [REP3- 008] on movement management in relation to the boundary wall of the Site of a college and Benedictine Abbey, St Marys Church, Stow Scheduled Monument, at 6.14. Does Historic England consider that it would provide adequate protection against damage to this asset?

The measures set out at 6.14 in [REP3-008] appear appropriate to provide adequate protection against damage to this asset.

2.9.12 Historic England, LCC, NCC Please comment on the Archaeological Trial Trenching Evaluation Fieldwork Report

We defer to the expertise of the local authority archaeologists who will be best placed to comment on the Archaeological Trial Trenching Report having lead on this aspect of curation.

Yours sincerely
Tim Allen

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