

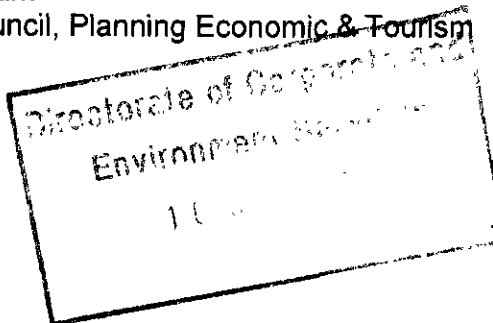


P/1400/06

ENGLISH HERITAGE  
SOUTH EAST REGION

Mr Andrew Pegram  
Isle of Wight Council, Planning Economic & Tourism  
Seaclose  
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NEWPORT  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 2QS

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Our ref: P00031879

7 July 2006

Dear Mr Pegram

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001 & GDPO 1995**  
**LAND SOUTH OF WELLOW, EAST OF HOLMFIELD AVENUE, WEST OF**  
**STONEOVERS, OFF BROAD LANE, SHALCOMBE, BRIGHSTONE, ISLE OF**  
**WIGHT, PO41**  
**Application No TCP/27774**

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2006 notifying English Heritage of the above application. I have inspected the site with my colleague Richard Massey and we have the following comments.

**Summary**

The site of the intended wind farm at Wellow is part of a rich archaeological landscape which would require archaeological mitigation. The effect on the setting of numerous monuments, historic buildings and conservation areas and one registered landscape is not considered such as to affect the outcome of the application.

**English Heritage Advice**

We wrote to Mr Ashcroft on the policy framework for this proposal in 2004. Since then English Heritage has published relevant advice, *Wind Energy and the Historic Environment* (2005), a further copy of which I enclose for your convenience. The Environmental Impact Assessment included with the application covers most of the heritage-related questions contained in our letter, although it does not cover the overarching question of how the impact on landscape might affect the Island's tourism and thus its economy - an indirect effect not so easily assessed as the visual, cultural and ecological effects, but significant for the heritage of the Island in the longer term. This issue of the effect on the general landscape, and on areas which



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are AONBs or otherwise singled out, is clearly the most problematic in this case and is not glossed over in the very striking diagrams of the visibility of the rotors (Ch.8). In the comments which follow, we must be clearly understood to comment solely on the heritage aspects of the case, leaving the landscape issues (especially those relating to the AONB) for others to examine.

The effects on heritage assets can be summarised as being significant in the case of the archaeology that would be disturbed or destroyed, and substantial in relation to the setting of numerous monuments, historic buildings and conservation areas.

Desk-based assessment of the proposed development site has identified a series of archaeological features associated with two round barrow complexes of assumed Bronze Age date. Air photographic interpretation identifies the first of these, centred at SZ 3775 8780, as comprising a non-linear cluster of ring-ditch features. A further discrete cluster lies just outside the proposed development area, at approx SZ 3830 8815. The barrow complexes, which are no longer recognisable as earthwork features as ground level, are associated with a densely series of recorded air photographic features, which appear unlikely to be contemporary, and may indicate the continued use of the barrow sites as foci for funerary or ceremonial activity in later periods. SMR data indicates extensive multi-period activity across the site. Of particular significance may be the location of a number of rectilinear enclosures, which may indicate burial activity of the later Iron Age/early Romano-British, or possibly early Medieval periods. In addition there are a number of unspecified linear features and pits, and possible evidence of a small field system. The chronological relationship of these features to the barrow complexes is unclear. This evidence strongly identifies the proposed development area as one of high archaeological potential, and quite possibly of national importance. The impact of proposed installation of wind turbines will involve deep-level disturbance of any associated archaeological features, of which burials and associated deposits may be considered to be particularly vulnerable.

The archaeological potential of the site has been amply demonstrated by your Development Control Archaeologist, who has determined the need for mitigation by design in the optimal positioning of turbine installations in relation to plotted air-photographic features, and for pre-determination evaluation of the site. This was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in January, when strip trenching across the areas proposed for wind turbine installation revealed relatively little archaeological evidence. Further provision should be made for post-consent evaluation. It is recommended that this should take the form of a total "strip-map-sample" exercise, which would be more effective in evaluating an impact area than conventional evaluation trenching. Further provision should be made in respect of post-determination evaluation to cover those impacts relating to service trenches, roadway access and ancillary structures. This should include scope for contingent investigation and recording, in the event of significant archaeological finds. All the above provisions can be expressed in terms of

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site-specific conditions to be attached to detailed planning permission. If necessary, consideration should be given to the inclusion of archaeological conditions within a Section 106 arrangement.

In respect of the setting of monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, and registered landscapes, the considerations are broadly the same. Wind farms as features of the countryside may be accepted - in purely heritage terms - unless the historic sites would be dominated by the pylons, or a pattern of interconnection might be disrupted by them, or planned vistas unbalanced or interrupted. There are many barrows and similar features in the area but no certain pattern to their placing. The listed buildings of the area were mostly not of such ambition as to dominate the landscape, with the possible exception of Thorley Manor (Grade II\*), but this had declined to a farmhouse by the early nineteenth century. The registered landscape at Westover, in Calbourne, is Grade II but surrounds a Grade II\* house. Part of this landscape, Westover Plantation, runs up to the Down and from this area the farm would be particularly visible, but the plantation appears to have been made to form a feature in the views from the house rather than as a vantage point. However, Westover would of course be visible at the same time as the farm, in views from the top of the Downs. These longer views would also take in Calbourne, Yarmouth, Wellow and other clusters of historic buildings or conservation areas; the rotors would also be visible from Newtown.

The immediate site could be defined as a 'historically dynamic landscape' (*Wind Energy and the Historic Environment*, p.8): one which has changed substantially over time, and suitable in itself for this kind of development. This has been well demonstrated in the map regression in the Impact Assessment, which shows how many hedges have disappeared from it. The wider landscape, and especially the Downs, has changed much less than this, but this sensitivity should not be considered as purely, or even substantially a heritage issue. English Heritage therefore takes the view that the balance of the arguments is for your council to determine using its own advice, the heritage constraints, assuming full archaeological mitigation, not being such as to lead us to recommend refusal.

### Recommendation

The application could be approved with appropriate archaeological safeguards, as the effect on heritage assets, apart from the deposits directly affected, is not such as lead to refusal.



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It is not necessary to consult us again on this application. Please send us a copy of the decision notice in due course. This will help us to monitor actions related to changes to historic places.

Yours sincerely

**Graham Steaggles**

Historic Areas Adviser

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cc



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