

## Proposed Wolds Valley Wind Collective Turbine

### Impact on Heritage Assets

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 The site lies on the northern slope of the Great Wold Valley. Geologically it is situated on Middle Chalk of the Cretaceous system, and the area is characterised by rolling dry valleys.

1.2 At the bottom of the valley is a string of villages, the most relevant to this development being Weaverthorpe and Butterwick. A feature of this valley bottom is the Gypsey Race, an erratic, spring fed stream, which in this part of the valley is dry, or almost dry, for most of the year but flows occasionally in winter.

	
The village of Weaverthorpe.	The Gypsey Race

1.3 The turbine site is within the administrative parish of Weaverthorpe.

#### 2. Historical context.

2.1 As a whole the Yorkshire Wolds are particularly rich in prehistoric remains, especially from the Bronze Age, including barrows [burial monuments] and extensive boundary earthworks mostly dating from the period 2400-1500BC. Many have been ploughed out and cannot be identified at ground level but, in the case of barrows, the contents of grave pits may survive below ground. Through aerial photography it has been possible to reconstruct a dense pattern of fields, settlements and boundaries from this period. The greatest concentration of surviving monuments in this area is near to top of the southern slope of the valley, close to High Street [the B1253] some 3km to the south of the proposed turbine site. Only the tip of the blades of the proposed turbine would be visible from this position [View 25 of Fig 07] and it would not affect appreciation or understanding of the monuments.

2.2 There does not appear to be evidence of prehistoric features close to the proposed site of the Wold Valley Wind Collective turbine, but it is possible that some features identified by the geophysical survey of the manor site south and east of St Andrews Church in Weaverthorpe [see below], approx. 1km WNW of the proposed turbine, might be Bronze Age.

2.3 There is some evidence of Roman activity on the manor site, where Roman pottery has been found during excavations.

2.4 The area may have been settled by the Danes in the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century. ['Thorpe' means a secondary settlement].

2.5 By the 11<sup>th</sup> century Weaverthorpe was at the centre of a very important manor belonging to the Archbishop of York, and substantial 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century buildings have been excavated at the site of Weaverthorpe manor, immediately south and east of St Andrew's church. These excavations are well documented and are interpreted on plaques in the churchyard. By the early Middle Ages Weaverthorpe was one of the most prominent and wealthiest settlements on the North Wolds. There was a windmill on Mill Hill, [off Ropery lane, just south of Weaverthorpe], by 1326.

2.6 The population declined from about the mid 14<sup>th</sup> to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The village became part of the Sledmere estate in 1739. Inclosure came late to this area in 1801-4. Most farmhouses stayed within the village, but some were built in the fields, generally protected from the wind by shelterbelts.

2.7 In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Weaverthorpe was a service village for the valley, with craftsmen, shops, a blacksmith and post office. The school was rebuilt in 1912 and the Village Hall built on the site of the old school in 1949. The village has recently lost the last of its shops, but the school [which had 63 pupils in 2006] has survived together with two 19<sup>th</sup> century pubs, the Blue Bell [1823] and Star [1840].

2.8 Butterwick is more of a hamlet than a village, and is not linear, being a cluster of 4 farms and some cottages around a cross roads. By the time the Gypsy Race reaches here it has largely disappeared underground. There are earthworks south of Manor Farm which indicate that historically the village was bigger. It was once a parish in its own right and has its own church which supports that idea. With Boythorpe it is now part of Foxholes Parish. Butterwick Manor had a windmill in 1359 and there was also a windmill in North Field in 1563.

**The effect of the proposed Wolds Valley Wind Collective turbine development on Heritage Assets.**

**3. Archaeology**

3.1 There are no recorded monuments or archaeological finds on the proposed site of the turbine, or its access track.

	
<p>View from St Andrews churchyard eastwards over the more recent burial ground which is part of the Manor site, towards the turbine site.</p>	<p>Interpretation boards within the churchyard.</p>

3.2 The nearest feature of note, and the most important archaeological feature in this part of the valley, is the site of the mediaeval manor of the FitzHerberts, approx. 1km to the WSW of the proposed turbine site. This Scheduled Monument is a series of earthworks which wraps around the east and south of St Andrews Church and includes part of the present graveyard. Before the Norman Conquest Weaverthorpe was owned by the Archbishops of York and was the centre of a major estate that incorporated land westwards along the Great Wold Valley and beyond. Herbert, Chamberlain to Henry 1, was granted the manor between 1108 and 1114. Herbert's descendants, the FitzHerberts, then held the manor until 1356.

3.3 Excavations took place on the manor site in 1951 and 1960 and geophysical surveys were undertaken in 2011. Evidence of Bronze Age and Romano-British occupation has been found as well as pottery from 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries, but of most significance are the remains of two large halls from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

3.4 The site is valuable evidence of the one time importance of the village and it is well interpreted on boards in the churchyard. The church is open to the public most days and is frequently visited.

3.5 Views from the churchyard to the south and east over the manor site are significant. The proposed turbine would be visible looking ENE from the churchyard past the eastern end of the church. However, it is over 1km from the site and five fields away. It will not detract from appreciation and understanding of the Scheduled Monument.

3.6 There are earthworks south of Manor Farm in Butterwick which are recorded as a monument but not scheduled. They are considered to be remains of crofts and garths and to be indicative of a shrunken village. Their appreciation will not be affected by the turbine development.

3.7 Although there are no finds recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposed turbine site, it is proposed to maintain a 'watching brief' during construction of the foundations of the turbine and access road.

#### 4. Listed Buildings

4.1 There are no Listed Buildings directly affected by the development of the proposed turbine.

4.2 The most important Listed Building in the vicinity is the church of St Andrew in Weaverthorpe [Grade 1], a Norman Church from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century. Although restored by G.E. Street for Sir Tatton Sykes II in 1870-72, this church has retained many earlier features including the unusually tall Norman tower. The church is situated immediately north west of the manor site described above. Also Listed within the churchyard are a stone effigy, probably 14<sup>th</sup> century, near to the porch, and the lychgate, attached churchyard walls and footgate to the south, all Grade 2. Currently the church is open to the public most days and is well visited. Plaques within the churchyard explain the history and significance of the church and churchyard.

	
<p>St Andrews Church Weaverthorpe with its distinctive Norman tower. The turbine will be hidden behind the church in this view.</p>	<p>View from the south wall of the churchyard looking ENE towards the turbine site.</p>



4.3 The proposed turbine site is over 1km ENE of the church. It will be visible from the churchyard after passing the eastern end of the church. However, there is no reason why the turbine should prevent visitors from understanding and appreciating the special architectural and historic interest of the church and other churchyard features.

4.4 Other Listed Buildings in Weaverthorpe are farm houses and their associated outbuildings and walls, all Grade 2 [Rarey Farmhouse and attached walls, Dotterel Cottage Farmhouse and Dale Farm]. The special interest of these buildings is best appreciated from close up; from such viewpoints the turbine will be either not visible or only glimpsed between buildings, trees and hedges. In all cases, the special architectural and historic interest of these buildings will not be affected by the proposed development.

4.5 There are no Listed Buildings in Butterwick.

## **5. Visual Impact**

5.1 The unusually tall tower [for a Norman Church] and location of the church on the side of a hill, suggest a building that was designed to be seen from a distance. Views of the church are therefore important and any effect the proposed turbine might have on these views needs to be taken into account.

5.2 An assessment has been taken of the view from the public bridleway south of the village, passing Rosemount Farm [position No 14 on Fig 07]. This is an interesting view with the church clearly visible on the hillside although the village is hidden in the valley. From this position the turbine would be seen. However, from this vantage point, the church and turbine are seen to be far apart, and the turbine is unlikely to detract from appreciation of the view of the church. This is also the case for views from the road south between Helperthorpe and Weaverthorpe [No 13].

5.3 An assessment has also been taken from the main road between Helperthorpe and Weaverthorpe near the access to Dotterel Cottage Farm [position No 12 on Fig 07], looking towards Weaverthorpe. From this position both the turbine and church are in view and closer together than the previous viewpoint. The turbine could be considered to draw the eye away from the church in this position. However, the road soon curves round to present a more central view of the church. Views from other positions along the road would tend to be masked or part masked by trees, hedgerows or buildings [views Nos 5 and 10 looking east]. The turbine would be more in view from further up the north slope of the valley [views No 9 and 18]. However the church is hidden from these viewpoints.

5.4 The setting of a heritage asset [such as a listed building or scheduled monument] is the surroundings in which it is experienced. [National Planning Policy Framework Annex 2]. 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.

5.5 From some viewpoints the proposed Wolds Valley Wind Collective development will be within the broad setting of St Andrews Church. From those viewpoints it could be considered to have the potential to draw the eye away from the focal point which is the church tower. However, it will not affect the ability to appreciate and understand the significance of this or any other heritage assets. On balance it is considered that any negative effect will be minor.

## 6. Village Character

6.1 Weaverthorpe village is not a Conservation Area. Nevertheless it does have a distinctive character, with a linear form following the road through the valley, which also follows the Gypsy Race. Farms within the village, with long low outbuildings generally presenting a blank wall to the street, are also a characteristic feature. The village could be considered a 'non designated heritage asset' [NPPF para 135]. Buildings and hedgerows will largely prevent views of the turbine from within the village, but it will be visible from some viewpoints outside the village. However, there is no reason why it should impinge on appreciation of the special character of the village.

	
<p>Traditional farm buildings [Grits Farm] at the entrance to Weaverthorpe from the east, approx. 0.7km from the turbine site entrance. Tall hedges will tend to screen the turbine from the main road.</p>	<p>A typical shelter belt of trees surrounding a farm [Dotterel Cottage Farm].</p>

6.2 Butterwick is a small collection of farm buildings and cottages near a crossroads and departs from the linear nature characteristic of villages in this valley. It would not be classed as a 'heritage asset'.

6.3 The Ryedale Rural Design Guide of 1995 references the surroundings of Weaverthorpe as “large, arable fields set in ‘tree less’ Wolds valley”. In practice, this valley is less ‘tree less’ than is implied, and shelter belts of trees around farms are a distinctive feature of the landscape.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 The addition of the Wolds Valley Wind Collective development will, together with other wind turbines existing and proposed, introduce a new element into this landscape, but the whole history of this valley has been one of change and the introduction by people of new elements into the landscape. None of this change detracts from the appreciation and understanding of the heritage assets of the valley.

## **References**

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- [6] Statutory List of Listed Buildings.

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