



Planning • Heritage

Specialist & Independent Advisors to the Property Industry

Approach to Assessing effects of Wind Farm Proposals on Cultural Heritage

The following stages set out CgMs' preferred approach to the assessment of the effects of wind farms on cultural heritage. This encompasses direct impacts on below ground remains and indirect (setting) impacts on above ground structures - that is, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas. This approach may need to be adapted to suit specific sites but it represents the ideal way forward for a project.

This approach is based on experience of dealing with real situations, and is divided into three categories, namely (i) initial assessments at pre-scoping stage in order to establish whether there may be fundamental cultural heritage problems with the site, (ii) the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Chapter within an ES, and (iii) where we are asked to give Expert Witness at public inquiry but where we have not prepared the relevant ES - that is, where we inherit an ES that has been prepared by another organisation.

Assessments at Pre-Scoping stage

Stage 1

Desk-top identification of all historic assets within the anticipated red/blue line area, and of all major historic assets within 5km of a central point (or the edge of the red line, by agreement, in the case of very extensive proposals) including obvious exceptions beyond that distance. Typical sources would be maps and standard data sets such as NMR and local HER data.

Stage 2

Site visit to briefly assess the main impacts, direct and indirect, based on known assumptions about the topography and the likely height of the turbines. Inspections would only normally be made from publicly accessible land.

Stage 3

Compilation of a baseline study, with observations on likely impacts, and recommendations.

N.B. The baseline data at this level would be incomplete, but it could reasonably be assumed that all major cultural heritage issues would be identified. Only desk-based research would be undertaken.

Assessments for Cultural Heritage Chapters in Environmental Statements

Stage 1

Desk top identification of all known historic assets (or groups of assets) within 5km of the proposed turbines, and obvious exceptions (e.g. major historic assets where views could be affected) beyond that distance. Research would include, as a minimum:

- i. Historic maps for the 5km study area, normally the mid-19th century Ordnance Surveyors' Drawings (British Library) for consistency of coverage and cartographic quality.
- ii. NMR and HER/SMR, including the relevant record office(s) and local archives - to include published sources on parishes/localities, and more detailed searches on key historic assets as necessary.

Stage 2

Desk-top compilation of baseline tables showing distances from the historic assets (or groups of assets) to the nearest turbine, and small-scale mapping to show their distribution in relation to the proposed wind farm.

Stage 3

General Site Survey:

- i. All historic assets within 2km of a turbine (including any on the application site) to be inspected as closely as reasonably possible by a Director and at least one other surveyor. In each case a standard reporting note to be filled in, and where appropriate at least one photograph and video clip to be taken for reference. Non-scheduled archaeological remains recorded

within the site will be visited. Unless remains are of national importance, non-scheduled sites beyond the site boundary will not be visited.

- ii. All designated historic assets within 2-5km of a turbine and within the ZTV to be inspected as closely as reasonable possible by at least one person (erring on the side of including the site if the ZTV is in any way uncertain). In each case a standard reporting note to be filled in, and where appropriate at least one photograph and video clip to be taken for reference.
- iii. All exceptional assets beyond 5km to be surveyed as in (ii) by a Director.

Stage 3a

Geophysical survey and/or trenching will not be undertaken as a standard procedure. However, LPAs increasingly require additional information on possible direct impacts on below ground archaeological remains. Where such additional information is necessary, the use of geophysical survey will be considered as a first (and often, only stage) of evaluation. This will usually comprise a survey of a 1ha areas around each turbine in order to incorporate micro-siting parameters. Where turbine locations are fixed and/or anticipated remains are of importance, consideration will be given to limited trenching of turbine locations and possibly other elements of a scheme where appropriate.

Stage 4

Desk-top refinement of the baseline tables to include all data. Preparation of a baseline report (either as an appendix or as part of the Cultural Heritage Chapter).

Stage 5

Desk-top preparation of the assessment tables (to be agreed with the client and ES co-ordinator), and the draft text of the Cultural Heritage Chapter.

Stage 6

Specific Site Survey by Director to review any cases where issues have arisen or where significant impacts have been provisionally identified.

Stage 7

Final compilation of the Cultural Heritage Chapter and any relevant appendices.

Reassessment of ES Chapters for Expert Witness Purposes

Where Expert Witness is requested in cases where the ES has been undertaken by others, it is not possible or desirable to repeat the whole process of assessment leading to the Cultural Heritage Chapter. The following procedure provides an appropriate basis on which to reassess the conclusions of the ES reliably:

Stage 1

Three people, including the Director or potential Expert Witness, to review and comment on the whole Cultural Heritage Chapter (and related Chapters where necessary), as a desk based exercise. The baseline data in the ES would be assumed to be complete, but if there were obvious gaps, these would be identified and relevant sources consulted. For example, if conservation areas had not been assessed, or had been partly assessed in another chapter, it would have to be clearly established at the outset what the Expert Witness would be dealing with. Normally, however, no additional documentary research would be undertaken. The position with regard to HLC would need to be established at this stage.

Stage 2

Site visit by the same three people to include all historic assets where significant impacts were identified in the ES, or by consultees or third parties at the application stage, and all other relevant locations where other issues were raised internally in Stage 1. In each case a standard reporting note to be filled in, and at least one photograph and video clip (where appropriate) to be taken for reference. Where access is by permission of the landowner, we would expect the client to facilitate the visit.

Stage 3

Written summary of findings by the expert witness, in liaison with the other people who visited the sites.

Stage 4

Preparation of a Proof of Evidence if the conclusions of the Cultural Heritage Chapter can be supported.

Notes

Access to historic assets

Historic assets will be inspected as closely as possible. Where large numbers of buildings or structures are very difficult to access (either because of their remoteness, or because of the difficulty in locating them, or because they are privately owned farms where visits are effectively impossible to pre-arrange) we will make the assessment from the nearest available public places. Where access cannot be pre-arranged, and is declined by the occupier, we will normally make an assessment from the next best possible public location.

Groups of historic assets

In some cases historic assets may be grouped for the purposes of assessment because they are in close proximity to each other, and the effects of the wind farm would apply almost equally to the whole group. Typical examples of this would include a group of listed buildings in a street, or a cairnfield. As a general rule, the process of grouping will apply to those historic assets that are more distant from the turbines. It would be unusual for all the listed

buildings in a conservation area or a village to be considered as a single group, although impacts on a conservation area would always be assessed in addition to any sub-groups of buildings within it. In other instances listed structures may form a coherent and interrelated group, with a shared setting – e.g. a church with listed headstones in the graveyard, and boundary walls and a lych gate.

Definitions

For the purposes of these assessments, Historic Asset means:

- Statutory listed buildings (Grade II, II* and I)
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- World Heritage Sites
- Historic Battlefields
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Archaeological sites recorded in an HER/SMR

Abbreviations

- HLC Historic Landscape Characterisation
- SMR Sites and Monuments Record
- HER Historic Environment Record
- NMR National Monuments Record
- OS Ordnance Survey
- ES Environmental Statement
- ZTV Zone of theoretical visibility (of turbines)

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