

Subject: Consultation response 2023/91838 New Hall Farm, New Hall Lane, Overton

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This application relates to the installation of renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with substation, transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, and other ancillary structures. The application covers an irregular area that extends approximately 1300m east west and 450m north south. The proposed arrays are in 4 blocks (No.s 1-4). The site lies south of the village of Overton and north of New Hall Farm

The archaeological potential of the site is referred to in both the Planning Statement and the Design and Access Statement and the former refers to an "Archaeology and Built Heritage Statement" prepared by the Pegasus Group, however this has not been submitted with the planning application.

The Archaeology and Heritage Statement need to be submitted so that the basis on which the summaries provided in the Planning and the Design and Access Statements can be assessed.

Comments were provided by the WYAAS during the EIA Screening which identified the two main known heritage assets as

MWY1115 Class III Possible Neolithic Flint Scatter I the NE of the site.

MWY803 Class III Prehistoric Enclosure; this is large and atypical I plan form. East of site.

The comments concluded with the recommendation that "a geophysical survey is carried out to establish the application site's archaeological potential and that suitable mitigation should be developed to preserve the known remains and any future discoveries."

The proposal to attach the photoelectric panels to concrete blocks rather than posts fixed in the earth is potentially acceptable in the vicinity of the prehistoric enclosure but the impact of any cables and ducts in this area should also be considered. In addition, the area marked on the plans as the location of the area for the concrete blocks to be used is smaller than the area shown on the West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record and does not appear to coincide with the location of the enclosure as shown on google earth (see air photos). The exact location for this enclosure needs clarification as does the potential for other cropmark features to be present. A geophysical survey should be undertaken to confirm the exact location of the enclosure and the location of other potential features that are adjacent to the enclosure.

A further possible feature is shown on google earth at the extreme west of the site. This is visible on several google earth image as a roughly rectangular area where the crops show different growth. One google earth image (see air photo) shows greater detail with a rectangular area on the edge of the field with a possible feature inside. The south western side of the main features is shown on historic OS maps as a pond (see map). In addition Jeffreys 1771 map of Yorkshire has the label New Hall at this site, not at the current site of New Hall Farm (see map). The nature of the feature is uncertain, it could be a former pond, it could relate to the past mining activity in the area or it could be a former moated site. In order to determine what this is and its potential significance a geophysical survey should be undertaken to accurately plot this feature and to gain additional evidence as to its function.

Recommended Course of Action

Based on the currently provided evidence it is not possible to adequately assess the impact of the proposed scheme on the archaeology present on the proposed development site. Additional information is required to identify the archaeological potential of known and potential archaeological features. The required information includes:

- The “Archaeology and Built Heritage Statement” prepared by the Pegasus Group needs to be submitted for assessment.
- A geophysical survey needs to be undertaken on the site of the enclosure and adjacent flint scatter to determine its exact location and any adjacent features.
- A geophysical survey needs to be undertaken on the possible new site at the western end of the development site to determine what it is, its exact location and if there are any adjacent features.

This information is required to adequately assess the impact of the proposed development and to agree an appropriate mitigation strategy for the proposed development works. Without this information the impact of proposed scheme cannot be determined. The application should not be determined until the information is provided and the proposed mitigation is agreed.

Yours

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