

**ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 (SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 8)  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (SECTION 90)  
THE ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATIONS AND OVERHEAD LINES (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE)  
(ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2007**

**PUBLIC INQUIRY TO CONSIDER SECTION 36 ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 APPLICATION BY  
STEADINGS WIND FARM LIMITED FOR CONSENT AND DEEMED PLANNING PERMISSION TO  
CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A WIND FARM AT KIRKWHELPINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND  
(KNOWN AS STEADINGS)**

**SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF  
SIMON COLLCUTT MA(Hons) DEA DPhil FSA  
CULTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS  
ON BEHALF OF STEADINGS WIND FARM LIMITED**

**BERR REFERENCE: GDBC/ 001/ 00278C**

**TYNEDALE COUNCIL REFERENCE: 20060540**

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNCIL REFERENCE: 06/ 00023/ CPC**

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TO CONSIDER SECTION 36 ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 APPLICATION  
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**CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF  
Dr. S.N. Collcutt**

on behalf of  
**Steadings Wind Farm Limited**

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**Oxford Archaeological Associates Limited**

**November 2007**

**BERR Ref : GDBC/001/00278C**

Planning | Inspectorate Ref : APP/R2928/A/07/2039188/NWF

Tynedale District Council Ref : 20060540

Northumberland County Council Re : 06/00023/CPC

- S.1 I am Simon Nicholas COLLCUTT *MA(Hons) DEA DPhil FSA*, a professional archaeologist and cultural heritage manager with twenty-five years of consulting experience [1.1-1.4].
- S.2 I have been appointed by Steadings Wind Farm Limited (SWFL) to give evidence on all cultural heritage (historic environment) matters (archaeology, standing buildings, Conservation Areas, parks) [2.1-2.14]. The unifying principle fundamental to this evidence is an appreciation, in accordance with current Government policy, of the special architectural, historic and archaeological interest of the cultural heritage resource in the area [2.15].
- S.3 I first consider Historic Landscape but note that results of the ongoing County and English Heritage Characterisation programme will not be available within the Inquiry timescale [3.1-3.3.2]. An independent consultants' general Landscape Characterisation has been issued for Tynedale District but I find the Historic Landscape component wanting [3.4.1-3.4.21]. The SWFL proposal does not affect the National Park [3.51]. I note the reasonable survival of patches of Medieval and, in more restricted locations, Romano-British, earthwork remains, which often still show through the post-Medieval enclosure pattern across much of the District and County beyond. This is a landscape in which the historic environment shows and in which due care must be taken during development [3.6.1-3.6.4].
- S.4 Turning to cultural heritage fabric within the Application Site, I note the desk-based assessment and two phases of field evaluation carried out during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process [4.1.1-4.1.6]. I mention the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), including the agreed Brief for a scheme of archaeological mitigation works [4.1.7] and an option, should the Inquiry so decide, to reduce the impact upon ridge & furrow near Crookdene [4.1.8-4.1.11]. I also note the intent to provide linkage between the archaeological provisions and the future Construction Management Statement and Land Management Strategy [4.1.12].
- S.5 I consider both the proposed Grid Connection Corridor [4.2.1-4.2.3] and Transport Route [4.3.1-4.3.6], beyond the actual Application Site.
- S.6 I conclude that the SWFL proposal would not cause significant harm to cultural heritage fabric and that there are no outstanding objections from the Local Planning Authority or its consultees [4.4.1-4.4.2].

- S.7 Turning to the setting of cultural heritage features [5.1.1-5.1.6], I note that discussion in the existing EIA documentation has centred upon simple visibility characteristics, largely driven by comments, requests and objections from consultees and respondents. I reiterate the need to consider the special interest of cultural heritage features and refer to my Appendix **[SWFL4.3]** on the principles involved, with particular stress on historic environment relevance and authenticity.
- S.8 I then deal with those individual cultural heritage features about which various parties have expressed concern, beginning with St. Aidan's Church, Thockrington, a Grade II\* Listed Building. I note long discussions over visualisations (photographs, wireframes, photomontages), revision of the turbine layout designed to try to accommodate objectors and eventual lack of agreement between the various objectors over what visibility issues are considered significant and how SWFL should respond. I then move to the specific objections of English Heritage which are better framed in terms of historic relevance, beyond mere visibility. However I find all the key ideas underpinning the English Heritage Statement of Case (deliberate isolated location of the church, former village location on low ground to the east, destruction of the village by cholera, etc.) to be false, a conclusion which I have reached after conducting the historical appraisal reported in my Appendix **[SWFL4.5]**. I contrast English Heritage's image of a 'mausoleum' with the historical record of a parish church integrated into a busy village and surrounding landscape, still widely evidenced by archaeological remains. Using data from the County Historic Environment Record, general data from the web and a compilation of iconic photographs (in my Appendix **[SWFL4.4]**), I challenge English Heritage's statement that the church is widely known and celebrated as 'quintessentially Northumbrian'. It is clear that St. Aidan's deserves to be better known but this should be for reasons of authentic special interest which are the source of its character and historic appearance. I conclude that the SWFL proposal would not cause harm to the relevant setting of this Listed Building [5.2.1-5.2.35].
- S.9 In respect of Hadrian's Wall, I agree with English Heritage's conclusion that visibility (at great distance) of the SWFL turbines would not interfere with the ability to comprehend and interpret Roman military planning and control, and that no harm would result to this World Heritage Site [5.2.36-5.2.40].
- S.10 In the remainder of this section of my evidence [5.2.41-5.2.149], I deal with the setting of a further group of cultural heritage features (Scheduled Ancient Monuments, another

important archaeological site, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, a Registered Park) which, for one reason or another, have been questioned in the EIA process, finding no significant indirect negative impact in any of these cases. I mention three instances here, since I believe (but am not sure) that they will be the topic of objections from the District. Ladywell Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building) [5.2.60-5.2.74] is part of a highly modified set of buildings, converted to domestic use and no longer articulated with the original agricultural surroundings; its setting, which must be drawn very close, will not be damaged by the SWFL proposal. West Harle Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building) [5.2.75-5.2.93] is part of a much better preserved group of stock-raising buildings and enclosures but it too has been converted to domestic use and is no longer well articulated with its agricultural surroundings (many of which are now arable); claims of Medieval structure within the house are mistaken and there are no obvious signs of a deserted Medieval village in the vicinity. The setting of West Harle Farmhouse must be drawn quite close and will not be damaged by the SWFL proposal. Great Bavington Conservation Area [5.2.102-5.2.117] already contains currently undeveloped land with traces of Medieval settlement and agriculture; the draft Conservation Area Appraisal explicitly advises that a further block of undeveloped land to the west should be taken into an enlarged Area, to "include the whole of the historic settlement" and "protect the wider setting" of the village. Having looked at the topographic surroundings of the village, and also at the special interest of the two included Listed Buildings, I accept the definition of the historically appropriate setting of Great Bavington as being the current Conservation Area and the proposed western enlargement; this setting would not be harmed by the SWFL proposal.

- S.11 Turning to potential cumulative impacts, I ask: 'were the Ray, Green Rigg or both sets of turbines to be already present, in addition to the existing Kirkheaton turbines, would the addition of the Steadings turbines of itself create a significant negative impact upon the cultural heritage interest?' [6.1.1-6.1.5]
- S.12 In the SoCG, a set of seventeen Scheduled Ancient Monuments (broadly, those more or less 'between' the proposals and thus perhaps more likely to be affected) was agreed for cumulative analysis. I have again looked at each of these on the basis of their special interest [6.2.1-6.2.95]. As an example in the present summary, I mention Great Wanney Iron Age Hillfort [6.2.4-6.2.24], the long views out from which having occasioned considerable discussion during the EIA process for the three proposals; I contribute my observations that this site is, in fact, very poorly defensible and that, in accordance with

recent published interpretations of hillforts, the primary objective was more likely to have been 'show and community solidarity', thus inviting views in towards the site. At this site, as at all others on the agreed list, I have not found that the addition of the Steadings proposal would cause harm.

- S.13 English Heritage have expressed concern that cumulative impact could arise with respect to Hadrian's Wall. I note a series of existing relevant visualisations. English Heritage have requested further visualisations from four specific viewpoints; the Green Rigg team have been good enough to show me their results, whilst the SWFL versions of these visualisations will appear in my Appendix **[SWFL4.6]** (which, unfortunately, has not yet been finalised). I am satisfied that, using English Heritage's test of relevance to the understanding of the Roman military interest, no harm will result from the addition of the Steadings proposal [6.3.1-6.3.7].
- S.14 Finally, I have examined the potential cumulative impact upon the setting of St. Aidan's Church [6.4.1-6.4.3], and upon the historic environment fabric of the area [6.5.1], again finding no likely harm.
- S.15 Turning to climate change, I note that it is a basic tenet in physical conservation of cultural heritage fabric that micro-environmental change is more likely than not to be damaging. Any initiative to limit, retard or decelerate climate change, even by very small increments, will be beneficial (other things being equal) to the historic environment, locally, nationally and internationally [7.1-7.6].
- S.16 The SWFL proposal will involve change but not harm to the historic environment. It is my view that, given appropriate on-site mitigation measures, the SWFL proposal, on its own or cumulated, would create no significant adverse impact, whether direct or indirect, upon the special architectural, historic and archaeological interest, or upon the resulting character and appearance, of important historic environment features (a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks & Gardens and other cultural heritage elements), whether severally or collectively, in the vicinity. I also note that any indirect (setting) effect of the turbines and ancillary equipment would be temporary and largely reversible. Should the Secretaries of State be minded to adopt a different analysis, I would respectfully submit that any cultural heritage detriment that might still be perceived would be outweighed, even within the confines of

the historic environment topic alone, by concerns over climate change and need for green energy [8.1-8.4].