



APPENDIX G: CULTURAL HERITAGE ADDENDUM

Longhedge Solar Farm

22/09/2023



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Contents

1. Introduction	5
Background	5
Statement of Authority	5
Reason for Refusal.....	6
2. Planning Context	8
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023	8
Rushcliffe Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 (adopted December 2014)	8
The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)	10
3. supplementary cultural heritage assessment.....	12
Hawksworth Conservation Area	12
Thoroton Conservation Area	14
4. Analysis.....	16
5. Conclusion	19

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- 1.1. A planning application for the proposed 49.9MW Longhedge Solar Farm (the “Proposed Development”) was submitted to Rushcliffe Borough Council (the “LPA”) in 2022 (22/02241/FUL) (“the Planning Application”).
- 1.2. The Proposed Development is located on lands between Hawksworth and Thoroton, approximately 15.5km east of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (the “Appeal Site”), the approximate centre point of which is Grid Reference E476129 N343467.
- 1.3. A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (“CHIA”) was undertaken as part of, and submitted with, the Planning Application as **Technical Appendix 3 of Volume 3 - Planning Reference 22/02241/FUL**.
- 1.4. The CHIA was conducted to evaluate the potential direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development upon heritage assets, as well as appraise the potential for the Appeal Site to contain sub-surface archaeological remains. The CHIA was supported by the results of an initial site walkover survey (undertaken on 24 and 25 January 2022) and geophysical survey (undertaken between 14 March and 23 March 2022).
- 1.5. Following an iterative design process, elements of the Proposed Development were sited to mitigate potential impacts upon heritage assets, which were subsequently assessed as ‘moderate to low’ for the Grade I listed Church of St Helena (NA18), while overall ranging between ‘low’ and ‘negligible’ for all other heritage assets within the calculated ZTV of the Proposed Development.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

- 1.6. The aforementioned assessment and the additional information provided within this document were produced by registered archaeologists with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), of Associate (ACIfA) level or above, and in accordance with their professional guidance. Michael Briggs BSc (Hons) MSc ACIfA MIAI was the primary author in both cases. He has undertaken many cultural heritage and archaeological impact assessments for developments across the UK and Ireland, with a particular focus on renewable projects and solar farms. He has over 10 years of professional experience, including assessments for the initial stages of feasibility and heritage impacts through to a wide variety of fieldwork and mitigation measures.

- 1.7. Paul Neary BA H.Dip MA MSc MIEEnvSc MIAI ACIfA CEnv was the second archaeologist and editor in both cases. Paul is dual-qualified as a Chartered Environmentalist and archaeologist. Paul has over 18 years of archaeology and heritage experience within the UK and Ireland, including large road projects, EIA developments and energy projects. He is licensed to direct archaeology work in the Republic of Ireland and has also held archaeology director licenses in Northern Ireland.

REASON FOR REFUSAL

- 1.8. The Planning Application received a refusal notice on the 30 March 2023 (the “Refusal”, see **Appendix B of Statement of Case**), with two reasons given. The first of these was a concern over the potential impact upon landscape character and visual amenity, which is considered in **Appendix F – Landscape and Visual Appeal Report (LVAR)**.
- 1.9. The second considered the potential impact upon the settings of the Hawksworth and Thoroton Conservation Areas and their listed buildings, with the view that although these impacts are ‘less than substantial’, the perceived benefits of the Proposed Development would not be sufficient to outweigh the potential harm to the heritage assets, as set out below:
- “The proposed development does not contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the setting of the Hawksworth and Thoroton Conservation Areas and does not contribute to the preservation of the setting of a number of listed buildings within these conservation areas. The harm to the heritage assets would be ‘less than substantial. Whilst the significant benefits of the proposal in terms of renewable energy are acknowledged the public benefits do not outweigh the harm to the assets of national and local heritage value. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy 11 (Historic Environment) and Policy 28 (Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets) of LPP1 that seeks to ensure that there is no significant adverse effect on any historic sites and their settings including listed buildings, buildings of local interest, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, and historic parks and gardens. The proposals would also be contrary to Policy 16 which requires that renewable energy schemes must be acceptable in terms the historic environment and paragraphs 200 and 202 of the NPPF which require that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration, or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification and that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.”*
- 1.10. The Officer’s Report, dated 17 March 2023, generally agrees with the findings of the CHIA, specifically that some degree of impact is anticipated upon the conservation areas and listed buildings, and that this harm falls within the ‘less than substantial harm’ threshold set out in Paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”). However, the view in the Officer’s Report is that the magnitude of these impacts is nonetheless sufficient to merit refusal in relation to Paragraphs 200 and 202 of the NPPF and Policies 11 and 28 of the Rushcliffe Local Plan.

- 1.11. The comments from the Officer's Report regarding heritage can be split into three main considerations:
- The potential indirect effects upon the setting of Hawksworth Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings;
 - The potential indirect effects upon the setting of Thoroton Conservation Area and its Listed Buildings; and
 - The environmental and public benefits of the Proposed Development are not sufficient to outweigh the potential indirect effects outlined above.
- 1.12. An additional site visit and appraisal were subsequently undertaken on 10 May 2023 to further investigate the first two concerns, the results of which are provided within this appendix.
- 1.13. As the third consideration does not strictly fall into the scope of an assessment of impacts on heritage, this cannot be commented on further here, and is addressed within the Statement of Case (SoC) to which this document is an appendix.

2. PLANNING CONTEXT

- 2.1. Relevant planning policies as referred to within the Officer's Report are outlined below for ease reference. In addition, guidance documents on the appraisal of settings published by Historic England are summarised here, as they provide an overview of standard industry methods for the assessment of potential effects upon the settings of heritage assets.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) 2023

Paragraph 200

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”*

Paragraph 202

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.

RUSHCLIFFE LOCAL PLAN PARTS 1 AND 2 (ADOPTED DECEMBER 2014)

Policy 11: Historic Environment (Part 1)

- “1. Proposals and initiatives will be supported where the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings are conserved and/or enhanced in line with their interest and significance. Planning decisions will have regard to the contribution heritage assets can make to the delivery of wider social, cultural, economic and environmental objectives.*
- 2. The elements of Rushcliffe's historic environment which contribute towards the unique identity of areas and help create a sense of place will be conserved and, where possible, enhanced with further detail set out in later Local Development Documents. Elements of particular importance include:*

- a) *industrial and commercial heritage such as the textile heritage and the Grantham Canal;*
 - b) *Registered Parks and Gardens including the grounds of Flintham Hall, Holme Pierrepont Hall, Kingston Hall and Stanford Hall; and*
 - c) *prominent listed buildings.*
3. *A variety of approaches will be used to assist in the protection and enjoyment of the historic environment including:*
- a) *the use of appraisals and management plans of existing and potential conservation areas;*
 - b) *considering the use of Article 4 directions;*
 - c) *working with partners, owners and developers to identify ways to manage and make better use of historic assets;*
 - d) *considering improvements to the public realm and the setting of heritage assets within it;*
 - e) *ensuring that information about the significance of the historic environment is publicly available. Where there is to be a loss in whole or in part to the significance of an identified historic asset then evidence should first be recorded in order to fully understand its importance; and*
 - f) *considering the need for the preparation of local evidence or plans.*
4. *Particular attention will be given to heritage assets at risk of harm or loss of significance, or where a number of heritage assets have significance as a group or give context to a wider area."*

Policy 28: Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets (Part 2)

- "1. Proposals that affect heritage assets will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the assets and their settings, identify the impact of the development upon them and provide a clear justification for the development in order that a decision can be made as to whether the merits of the proposals for the site bring public benefits which decisively outweigh any harm arising from the proposals.*
- 2. Proposals affecting a heritage asset and/or its setting will be considered against the following criteria:*
 - a) *the significance of the asset;*

b) whether the proposals would be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the asset and any feature of special historic, architectural, artistic or archaeological interest that it possesses;

c) whether the proposals would conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage asset by virtue of siting, scale, building form, massing, height, materials and quality of detail;

d) whether the proposals would respect the asset's relationship with the historic street pattern, topography, urban spaces, landscape, views and landmarks;

e) whether the proposals would contribute to the long-term maintenance and management of the asset; and

f) whether the proposed use is compatible with the asset."

THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT GOOD PRACTICE ADVICE IN PLANNING NOTE 3 (SECOND EDITION)

2.2. The above Practice Advice Note (the "Note") offers guidance and advice regarding consideration of the setting of heritage assets. The Note was produced by Historic England and is contextualised by the NPPF and the related guidance in the National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG).

2.3. There are useful concepts regarding setting illustrated in the Note, which lays out the recommended procedure for assessing the effects a development proposal may have on the surrounding assets and their settings. The Note defines 'setting' as the 'surroundings in which an asset is experienced', and discusses the effects that developments can have on the different types of setting heritage assets have:

"The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, across, or including that asset." (Paragraph 10)

"Settings of heritage assets change over time. Understanding this history of change will help to determine how further development within the asset's setting is likely to affect the contribution made by setting to the significance of the heritage asset. Settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting in which the asset was constructed or formed are likely to contribute to significance but settings which have changed may also themselves enhance significance, for instance where townscape character has been shaped by cycles of change and creation over the long term. Settings may also have suffered negative impact from inappropriate past developments and may be enhanced by the removal of the inappropriate structure(s)." (Paragraph 9)

“Conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change; indeed, change may be positive, for instance where the setting has been compromised by poor development. Many places coincide with the setting of a heritage asset and are subject to some degree of change over time. NPPF policies, together with the guidance on their implementation in the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), provide the framework for the consideration of change affecting the setting of undesignated and designated heritage assets as part of the decision-taking process.” (Paragraph 18)

- 2.4. Historic England, therefore, are not seeking to ensure that heritage assets do not preclude development and their protection should not prevent change. However, the more important a designated asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation.

3. SUPPLEMENTARY CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1. Following the Refusal, a second heritage site visit and walkover survey were undertaken by Michael Briggs on the 10 May 2023 at the Appeal Site. The objectives of the survey were to provide additional information in response to the concerns raised within the Officer's Report, in particular the potential impact upon the settings of the two conservation areas and their listed buildings, by identifying the extent of views and intervisibility at various points within the local landscape and within the contexts of Hawksworth and Thoroton villages.
- 3.2. The scope of the survey included land within both Hawksworth and Thoroton, as well as the Appeal Site, local public rights-of-way (PRoWs), historical footpaths, and roads.
- 3.3. The survey included a thorough walkover of both conservation areas and their connecting footpaths, as well as through the Appeal Site itself. Views and intervisibility at points throughout each of these locations were assessed and the character and sensitivity of the conservation areas considered by way of the survey and consultation with their published appraisal documents, available on their respective pages on the LPA's website^{1,2}.
- 3.4. Conditions during the survey were dry and ranged from overcast to clear. Selected plates referred to below are contained within the photo register in **Appendix G1** and their locations are shown on **Appendix G2 - Figure 1**.
- 3.5. The findings of the survey are summarised below.

HAWKSWORTH CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.6. Hawksworth has infrequent views over surrounding arable fields from within the conservation area itself (NA45), with most glimpses being orientated west and south (**Plates 6, 8, 10 & 12**) and therefore not at risk of being impacted by the Proposed Development. The only direct views of the Appeal Site from within the ground level of the conservation area were identified to be from its northern extent, where views into the arable land of Field 1 are possible from a specific point on Main Road, at the northernmost tip of Hawksworth (**Plates 2 & 3**). This section of Field 1 has now been removed from the Proposed Development with the intention to lower impacts upon this section of the conservation area (see **Appendix D: Updated Layout**).

¹<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planning-growth/conservation/conservation-areas/conservation-areas-in-rushcliffe/hawksworth/#:~:text=The%20boundary%20of%20this%20small,contribution%20to%20the%20village%20scene>

²<https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planning-growth/conservation/conservation-areas/conservation-areas-in-rushcliffe/thoroton/#:~:text=It%20was%20granted%20Conservation%20Area,lanes%20on%20the%20main%20approaches>

- 3.7. Some residual visual impacts will nonetheless be possible at this location, but will be limited and mostly screened by existing hedgerow along the east side of Main Road (**Plates 1 & 2**). In addition, intervisibility with the conservation area at this point is not expected to result in any significant impacts due to the lack of any views into the core of the village, which is screened by views of the nearby houses, hedgerow and farm buildings (**Plates 4 & 5**).
- 3.8. No other views towards the Appeal Site were identified to be possible from ground level within the designated conservation area boundary, primarily due to screening effects from buildings and vegetation, which help to contain the conservation area itself (**Plates 7, 11 & 14**).
- 3.9. The village of Hawksworth itself benefits from the key characteristics described within the Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022)³, particularly derived from the architectural merit of its buildings. In addition, the conservation area benefits from its internal village features such as grass-lined verges, hedgerow and individual or groups of trees. The appraisal document also indicates that views of the surrounding countryside also contribute to the heritage value of the conservation area, although it notes that:
- “paddocks and small fields on the outskirts of the village provide a more traditional rural setting than intensively farmed arable land”.*
- 3.10. These elements are evident throughout the village (**Plates 7 – 10 & 12 – 14**) and clearly contribute to its setting.
- 3.11. Due to the presence of vegetation and the built environs of the village, the setting of the conservation area is largely contained and does not possess frequent views with the wider landscape. The only identified exceptions to this were glimpses over wider farmland, which were occasionally possible from within the village through gaps provided by its small enclosures and paddocks (**Plates 8, 10, 12 & 13**). Such views are similarly key to the character of the conservation area, but none of the views identified were orientated towards fields within the Appeal Site.
- 3.12. Potential views between Field 1 of the Appeal Site and houses within the north of the conservation area were identified to be partially possible over this field (**Plate 24**). However, views towards the Grade II listed Hawksworth Manor (NA11) were screened by a line of mature trees, with the exception of a small gap in this treeline which allowed for a small and inconsequential glimpse between the Appeal Site and the outer grounds of Hawksworth Manor (**Plate 23**).
- 3.13. There are fewer views towards the conservation area from a point on the east side of ‘The Gutter’ due to its screening effects (**Plate 21**) but glimpses between the two areas remain. The grounds of Hawksworth Manor are more visible from these points, but such views are largely limited to the large farm buildings on its northeast side rather than Hawksworth Manor itself (**Plate 22**).

³ Rushcliffe Borough Council (2022) *Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan*. RBC <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/1bijm0o5/hawksworth-conservation-area-appraisal-final-document.pdf>

- 3.14. In addition, while no clear visual links were identified between the grounds of Hawksworth Manor and the fields within the Appeal Site during the walkover survey, potential upper storey views from the Manor house with the western extents of the Appeal Site are expected to be possible. Such views would be low in magnitude and will not be harmful to the setting of Hawksworth Manor, which itself derives its primary benefit from its immediate grounds and inward views from its position at the terminus of Town Street.
- 3.15. Intervisibility from meaningful third points within the surrounding landscape were also considered during the walkover survey, including local roads, PRoWs and historical footpaths. A historical footpath (Hawksworth FP3) is depicted on the OS 1883 map, connecting the southeast extent of Hawksworth with the local road and consequently a second footpath (Thoroton FP2), which in turn connects with the west side of Thoroton. Views and intervisibility of the Proposed Development from this footpath would have the potential to be of significance, but all views towards the Appeal Site were found to be blocked by intervening ridgeline, with no views of any internal fields being possible (**Plates 15 – 20**). It was also noted that visibility with both Hawksworth and Thoroton was very limited from these points. No other meaningful intervisibility between Hawksworth and the Appeal Site was identified.

THOROTON CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.16. As with Hawksworth, infrequent views over surrounding arable fields are possible from within Thoroton Conservation Area (NA46), some of which are similarly facilitated through small, open enclosures along Thoroton Road (**Plates 30 & 31**). However, none of these fields are located within the Appeal Site.
- 3.17. The Thoroton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022)⁴ emphasises the contribution of hedgerow, grass verges, trees and ‘open lawns’ to the heritage value of the conservation area, each of which are evident within the core of the village (**Plate 29**).
- 3.18. The 2022 Plan makes numerous references to ‘open countryside’, although views over which appear limited to one or two fields at a time from within the conservation area itself. Views from the northern extent of the conservation area allow for visibility of the field adjacent to the north (through its field entrance gate) but do not extend to the Appeal Site. As such, no clear views of the Appeal Site were possible at ground level due to topography and intervening vegetation (**Plates 26 – 28**).
- 3.19. No views of the Appeal Site from within the core of the conservation area were identified at ground level due to screening effects from surrounding buildings and vegetation (**Plate 29**). In addition, while the potential for such views is higher within the upper storeys of listed

⁴ Rushcliffe Borough Council (2022) *Thoroton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan*. RBC <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/media/2bgfwc0a/thoroton-conservation-area-appraisal.pdf>

buildings and other structures in the village, their stature is not considered to be sufficiently high to facilitate these views.

- 3.20. The exception to the above is the Church of St Helena (NA18), the tower of which is partly visible above the treeline from much of the surrounding area, including from the historic footpath to the west of the village (**Plate 38**) and faintly visible from the Thoroton BW6 bridleway within the eastern extent of the Appeal Site (**Plate 25**). Views of the Proposed Development would therefore result in some degree of indirect impact to the church setting, assessed within the CHIA as 'moderate to low' at this distance of c. 1.2km from the bridleway and c. 350m from the nearest point of the Appeal Site.
- 3.21. The design of the Proposed Development has utilised topographical height data to exclude an elevated section of the Appeal Site where these views are most prominent, helping to mitigate the magnitude of the effects while also avoiding the potential for blocking views between the Thoroton BW6 bridleway and the church tower. As a result, the original assessment of indirect effects for the tower appears to be accurate and reinforced by the results of the additional walkover survey.
- 3.22. Limited intervisibility between the Appeal Site and the conservation area may also be possible from along the Thoroton FP2 footpath to the west of the village, which follows its depicted line on the OS 1883 map. Views from this path will be restricted to the tops of panels within the southernmost field only (**Plates 32 – 34, 36 & 39**), while views into Thoroton from the path are largely of modern housing units on its west side (**Plates 35, 37 & 38**), with glimpses of other elements and views of the upper tower of the Church of St Helena just possible amongst the treeline (**Plates 37 & 38**). As the Thoroton FP2 footpath is part of a network of established footpaths which connect the villages of Thoroton and Hawksworth, views and intervisibility with the Proposed Development from this location may result in impacts to their settings. However, the partial and limited nature of the expected views suggests low indirect effects from these points.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. The additional walkover survey helped to define the extent of views and intervisibility at various points within the containing landscape and within the contexts of Hawsworth and Thoroton villages. Results from this survey confirmed that the appraisal of settings and level of indirect effects determined for assets within Hawsworth and Thoroton within the CHIA are accurate and appropriately weighted. In addition, as the Appeal Site does not encroach into the designated areas for either conservation area, or the curtilages of any of their listed buildings, no direct effects upon designated heritage assets will occur.

4.2. In summary, these indirect effects are:

- Hawsworth Conservation Area (NA45) – **Low**;
- Hawsworth Manor and Adjoining Pigeoncote (NA11) – **Low**;
- Hawsworth Place and Adjoining Garden Walls (NA12) – **Low**;
- Church of St Mary and All Saints (NA13) – **Low to negligible**;
- Model Farm Buildings at Top Farm (NA14) – **Low to negligible**;
- Boundary Walls at Top Farm (NA15) – **Low to negligible**;
- Yew Tree Farmhouse and Adjoining Garden Wall (NA16) – **Low to negligible**;
- Thoroton Conservation Area (NA46) – **Low**;
- Manor Farmhouse (NA17) – **Low to negligible**;
- Church of St Helena (NA18) – **Moderate to low**;
- Stable, Coach House, Blacksmith's Forge and Adjoining Wall (NA19) – **Low to negligible**;
- Thoroton Hall (NA20) – **Low to negligible**; and
- Thoroton Pigeoncote (NA21) – **Low to negligible**.

4.3. The significance of the indirect effects assessed above are therefore '**not significant**' and 'less than substantial' as per the threshold of Paragraphs 200 and 202 of NPPF. Similarly, the level of indirect effects assessed upon the above assets indicates that the Proposed Development has been designed in a way to sufficiently conserve their settings in compliance with Policies 11 and 28 of the Rushcliffe Local Plan.

4.4. The arguments for 'significant' indirect effects upon the conservation areas and listed buildings within the Refusal overstated both the extent to which views with the surrounding

countryside are possible from within the conservation areas, and the importance of such views to their character and setting.

- 4.5. It is clear from the survey, as well as a review of the Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022) and the Thoroton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022), that the primary contributions to their settings are made by the hedgerow, grass verges, trees, paddocks and small fields, each of which will not be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 4.6. Similarly, the Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022) specifically highlights a lower sensitivity and significance from large arable fields, as the aforementioned elements “*provide a more traditional rural setting than intensively farmed arable land*”.
- 4.7. The Appeal Site falls under this characterisation of ‘intensively farmed arable land’ and therefore does not contribute to the setting of the conservation area in the same way that the aforementioned elements do.
- 4.8. Surrounding arable fields inevitably contribute to the character of the villages but the above makes it clear that this is not to the extent that the Officer’s Report has suggested. The possible exceptions to this are where views of wider farmland are facilitated by the open spaces provided by small enclosures and paddocks within the conservation areas themselves. The conservation areas and listed buildings are therefore considered to be potentially sensitive to any changes or impacts within these views. However, there were no instances identified where fields within the Appeal Site were visible in these views from the two village centres.
- 4.9. While open views across the surrounding countryside were implied in the Officer’s Report, such views from in and around the villages were found to be almost entirely limited to their adjacent fields and more distant views were much more infrequent. This is reinforced by the presence of hedgerow and trees in the local area, which themselves are mentioned as making beneficial contributions to the character of the conservation areas within both appraisal documents.
- 4.10. The Proposed Development includes additional hedgerow planting in line with these elements, with the intention of screening the Proposed Development so far as possible, such that the visible elements of the Proposed Development will be largely restricted from view. Views of any additional hedgerow would be in keeping with the rural character described within the two conservation area appraisal documents and would not be considered an alteration or harm to the setting of any heritage assets.
- 4.11. Possible views and intervisibility identified in Section 3 above are relatively infrequent and limited to partial glimpses of the Proposed Development. As such, these views form only a small proportion of the visible surroundings from any point and is not expected to alter the character or setting of either conservation area or their listed buildings.

- 4.12. The highest potential for impacts upon Hawksworth itself is derived from visibility of the western extent of the Proposed Development from the northernmost point of the conservation area. Indirect effects from these views were assessed as **low** within the CHIA and confirmed during the survey informing this addendum.
- 4.13. Following the Refusal, the Proposed Development has been amended to remove the section of solar PV arrays nearest the conservation area, specifically the southwestern section of Field 1, to keep the magnitude of impacts minimal and retain a separation area between the two points. Indirect effects upon Hawksworth conservation area are therefore anticipated to be low overall.
- 4.14. The Officer's Report commented on the possible impacts of the Proposed Development upon the visual connectivity between the villages of Hawksworth and Thoroton. While it is clear that the surrounding farmland comprises a connecting landscape for the two villages, no significant intervisibility between the villages was identified during the walkover surveys.
- 4.15. Points of intervisibility during periods with lower vegetative cover or within the wider landscape cannot be ruled out but are expected to be infrequent due to screening effects from intervening vegetation and topography. Nonetheless, no such intervisibility was identified during the first archaeological walkover survey undertaken on 25 January 2022, when vegetative cover was minimal. No significant effects upon the visual connection between the two villages are therefore anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 4.16. Public footpaths are highlighted in the appraisal documents as a way of preserving and facilitating connection between Hawksworth and Thoroton. The Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2022) refers to a "*good network of footpaths, bridle tracks and country lanes*" being integral to the characteristics of the village, which the Proposed Development has adopted as a key element within its design through the enhancement of the internal bridleway and footpaths and addition of permissive paths. As previously discussed, some views between these routes and the Proposed Development are expected but will be relatively low in magnitude. These views are therefore not expected to interfere with the visual connectivity between the two villages.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The indirect effects assessed above are **not significant**, contrary to the statements within the Officer's Report, which cited heritage impacts as being too significant a consideration against the Proposed Development for the public benefits of the Proposed Development to sufficiently outweigh.
- 5.2. Specific analysis of the planning balance is set out in the SoC; however, in consideration of the above, the appraisal of settings and level of indirect effects determined for assets within Hawksworth and Thoroton within the CHIA are considered to be accurate and will not constitute significant indirect effects as suggested within the Officer's Report.
- 5.3. In fact, the walkover survey results indicate that the level of harm is likely to be notably lower than that suggested within the Officer's Report.