

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This short report is intended as an addendum to an early archaeological appraisal undertaken by Trysor for Seren Energy in relation to a proposal to site a 77 metre high wind turbine (to upright blade tip) at Cefncynfal, Llanddewi Ystradenni, Powys.

1.2 This addendum has been requested by Seren Energy to respond to correspondence from Mark Walters of CPAT (8<sup>th</sup> August 2014), to Holly Hobbs of Powys County Council Development Control, which suggests that the archaeological appraisal may have “understated” the level of impact of the development on views from two scheduled Iron Age hillforts towards the proposed turbine. Mark Walters notes that photomontages of the views were not used for the archaeological appraisal.

1.3 The photomontages in question, V1 and V2, are of the turbine standing 77 metres to blade tip. This is a reduced height from the original proposal of 86.5 metres.

1.4 In order achieve clarity on this point, this addendum includes notes on the visual impact of the turbine on the two hillforts, as well as descriptions of the setting of the hillforts.

## **2. VISUAL IMPACTS AND SETTINGS**

2.1 A letter from Cadw to Seren Energy, dated 28th January 2014 states;

“you should also consider the indirect, visual impact on historic assets as this is a material consideration in the planning process in accordance with *Planning Policy Wales*.”

Planning Policy Wales actually states that “setting is a material consideration when determining a planning application.” (PPW 6.5.1 Archaeological Remains, July 2014)

It is important to distinguish between “setting” and “visual impact”. Whereas visual impact is a general term applied to views from a location, setting is about “the surroundings in which an historic asset is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape” (Cadw, Conservation Principles, 2011, p.38).

The fact that a development (such as a wind turbine) is intervisible with an historic asset does not in itself mean that there is necessarily an impact on the setting of the asset. Setting varies with monument type; for example the setting of a Victorian lighthouse will be very different that of an Iron Age hillfort. They were constructed for very different purposes and have unique associations with their surrounding environment.

Therefore in assessing setting, understanding of the form and function of the monument is critical in describing its relationship with the surrounding landscape and any other contemporary monuments.

Assessing visual impact is a very different process and is not guided by monument type or function. The visual impact of a development can be assessed in the same way for a Telephone Box as for a Bronze Age cairn.

There is of course an overlap between visual impact and setting. If a development occurs within the setting of an historic asset, it may well be assessed as having a much higher visual impact than a development further away. A development within the setting of an historic asset can interrupt views from and to the asset, for example, and also interfere with the understanding and enjoyment of the asset.

### **3. IMPACTS ON GAER HILLFORT (SAM No.RD093; PRN 271)**

Photomontage V1 shows a view from the summit of the Gaer hillfort, looking towards the proposed turbine site.

The turbine is clearly visible in this image, and conforms to the comments made in Trysor's original archaeological appraisal (10.4.1);

*"There would be an unimpeded view of the turbine from parts of the hillfort, most notably the eastern end and southern side of the enclosure."*

Trysor scored the indirect, visual impact that would be caused by the development on the Gaer hillfort as Moderate. This reflects the fact that the turbine would be clearly visible, but in no way dominant or overbearing.

Importantly, the view shown in V1 does not relate to the setting of the Gaer hillfort, nor to essential views of the monument. As the Trysor appraisal states;

*"the defences along the southern side of the hillfort are weak and unimposing. The defences are stronger and more imposing along the northern edge of the fort. Like the neighbouring Cwm Cefn y Gaer hillfort, Gaer was clearly positioned and constructed to make an impression when viewed from lower ground to the north or northwest, including the upper Ithon valley. The turbine would not be visible from the north, as it would be hidden by the hill on which the Gaer sits, as well as the high ridge of Cwm Cefn y Gaer."* (10.4.3)

*"The turbine would not interrupt the essential setting of the monument when viewed from the north or northwest, which would appear to have been the key viewpoints when the site was in use. Good views of the Gaer are also possible from the public footpath in the area around the western entrance into the neighbouring Cwm Cefn y Gaer fort. The turbine would not interfere with these views."* (10.4.5)

Setting also includes relationships with contemporary or similar monuments within the surrounding landscape. In this case, it was identified in the Trysor appraisal that the proposed turbine *"would not interrupt views between this hillfort and those at Cwm Cefn y Gaer... to the east."* (10.4.6)

It is worth noting that V1 is taken from a point that is not accessible to the public, as the Gaer is on private farmland and has no footpath access or open access land.

As the proposed turbine would therefore not interfere with the setting and essential views of the monument, even though it would be visible in the distance, Trysor scored the impact on the setting of the Gaer as Low.

#### **4. IMPACTS ON CWM CEFN Y GAER (SAM NO. RD011; PRN 270)**

Photomontage V2 shows a view from a natural hillock within the Cwm Cefn y Gaer hillfort, looking towards the proposed turbine site.

The turbine is clearly visible in this image, and again conforms to the comments made in Trysor's original archaeological appraisal (10.3.1);

*"There would be an unimpeded view of the turbine from parts of the hillfort, most notably the eastern end and southern side of the enclosure.*

Trysor scored the indirect, visual impact that would be caused by the development on the Cwm Cefn y Gaer hillfort as Moderate. This reflects the fact that the turbine would be clearly visible, but in no way dominant or overbearing as it is just over 1km from the hillfort.

Importantly, the view shown in V2 does not relate to the setting of the Cwm Cefn y Gaer hillfort, or to essential views of the monument. As the Trysor appraisal states;

*"the southern side of the hillfort, which would face the proposed turbine, lies above a very steep valley side and the defences along this side were very weak and unimposing. When viewed from the proposed turbine site, the hillfort is barely visible. The defences are stronger and more imposing at the eastern and western ends of the hillfort, where entrances into the enclosure are found, and along the northern edge of the fort, where a ditch and counterscarp bank can still be seen outside a very substantial rampart. This hillfort was clearly positioned and constructed to make an impression when viewed from lower ground to the north. The turbine would not be visible from the north, as it would be hidden by the high ridge of Cwm Cefn y Gaer."* (10.3.3)

*"In terms of setting, the impact of the development would be Low in relation to this hillfort. The turbine would not interrupt the essential setting of the monument when viewed from the north, which would appear to have been the key viewpoint when the site was in use. It would also not impact on views of the strong defences around the entrances at the eastern and western end of the hillfort. It would be hidden completely from view for anyone viewing the entrance at the western end of the fort and only visible to the south-southeast for anyone viewing the hillfort from the east."* (10.3.5)

Setting also includes relationships with contemporary or similar monuments within the surrounding landscape. In this case, it was identified in the Trysor appraisal that the proposed turbine *"would not interrupt views between this hillfort and... Gaer... to the west."* (10.3.6)

It is worth noting that V2 is taken from a point that is not accessible to the public, as the hillfort lies on private farmland. Footpath access is possible only through the northern side of the hillfort, and the hillock from which the V2 image was taken would actually block views of the turbine along most of the length of the footpath within the hillfort.

As the proposed turbine would therefore not interfere with the setting and essential views of the monument, even though it would be visible in the distance, Trysor scored the impact on the setting of Cwm Cefn y Gaer as Low.

*Addendum to Cefn Cynfal, Llanddewi Ystradenni, Powys, Historic Environment Appraisal*

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