

REF -FILLONGLEY SOLAR FINAL -DOCUMENT SURVEY
SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE /OFFICIAL DATA OMISSIONS

(NOV 2024 FINAL JANUARY 10TH 2025)

Planning Appeal APP/R3705/W/24/3349391
(NORTH WARWICKS BOROUGH COUNCIL -Land 800 metres south Park
Farm House, FILLONGLEY CV7 8PB -SOLAR)

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Author



**British government*

SUMMARY

This submission highlights omissions and, apparent lack of consideration by the appellant of certain key records and documents, including ‘official data’. It is in 7 sections.

In summary, one document (see 1) which underpins both NWBC Local Plan and Fillongley Neighbourhood Plan and significantly, was part of an English Heritage programme, has been ignored. This was part of a national programme which identified Fillongley heritage as being significant. It is based on a high degree of research, written by experts at Warwickshire County Council and English Heritage covering significant and the rich heritage of Fillongley. This document, consisting of a central heritage documentation core moves the area’s history forward to today’s rich agricultural environment.

The second ignored document, (see 2) is a primary source on centuries of local history (Coventry and environs) and contains specific references to Fillongley and area, indicating importance of the church, chapel and castle sites in context. This document at The National Archives has been published by a 'learned society in the last few years. This 'survey' supports heritage and landscape submissions opposed to solar industrial development , and covers additional information which has been ignored by the applicant.

Additionally, see references re valuation of land and soils assessments in agricultural production within UK and soils security (see submission from Prof R Ziarati on impacts of imports of grain lost from this high yields zone.)

Other data, for example, from Environment Agency not considered.

1 Document-report by experts on heritage ignored by appellant.

**Fillongley Historic Character Assessment,
Warwickshire Historic Towns Project,
ENGLISH HERITAGE PROJECT NO. 5922**

**Benjamin Morton, Warwickshire Historic Environment Record,
Warwickshire County Council Jan 2015**

This was supervised by Ben Wallace, Historic Environment Record Manager, Warwickshire County Council. It formed part of **English Heritage National Programme of Extensive Urban Surveys (EUS)**. (This document can be confused with Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation documents.)

This document informs the planning sector.

It is important because it sets in context OldFilyngley (stet) and Yong (stet) Fillongley, (Fynglingaleage), describing the heritage in detail which is visible today in the Arden landscape setting and working farmed environment. The significant footpath i.e. through the proposed solar site 'demonstrates' the history in linking the early growth from at least Anglo Saxon, early Anglo Saxon 5th-7th century to late c10th. The ruined Norman castle, circa 1080, on route to Old Fillongley demonstrates the story. Other evidence starting with the St Mary's church (c11TH) and it's

link with St Mary's Priory, Coventry is of national significance. It links to the ruins/stone evidence of the other Benedictine chapel (Chapel Green) and medieval building phases (High Medieval 1086-1350 and Late Medieval 1350-1540). The views from this path and of its setting, high on one of several ridges are remarkable in understanding the unique Arden countryside and choices for early building, with access to several water sources.

Archives/the primary source documents, transcriptions, translations etc underpinning this EH and WCC document are located with easy access -The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust-Stratford on Avon, The National Archives (additional to the second document-see below), Warwickshire Record Office, Staffordshire Record Office -as Lichfield Cathedral has associations etc .

This remarkable research document, singles out Fillongley as a significant and special environment, by providing detailed context, historical development through to its historic character and therefore meets its main aim. NB It functions especially at an area scale above that of individual sites and features, although sites are noted. It bridges research and ground survey. Techniques used include those developed in archaeology, historical geography, history and architectural history resulting in a holistic understanding of the historical development and historic character of Fillongley. The proposed solar location impacts this 'character' environment.

It can be read in conjunction with the **Warwickshire Historic Towns Project Report** and **North Warwickshire Borough Strategic Report**. Whilst Fillongley is not a town, but a small village with a Conservation area of listed buildings, scheduled monument, both heritage and non-designated heritage assets, this is a key survey. The area has dispersed rural settlements, each with strong visual and documented heritage evidence continues in a strong farming economy today.

WCC recommend that these reports and GIS data generated from the project should be consulted for the full picture. See introduction to the study.

NB Dr N Alcock is cited and has provided a representation to this solar proposal.

The footpaths pass through a rich heritage area, over 20 pre-1350 documentary references mostly within the medieval park area are mapped within this survey. Today, an overlay of **Environment Agency** hydrology/geology mapping show the park area to be an area of springs (issues on OS maps) creating the 3rd watercourse to the castle moat/medieval fish ponds.

The proposed solar farm, adjacent fields, would form an **industrial ‘back drop’ to the castle.**

Access to the solar site from the footpath /PRoW to edge of the castle, a SCHEDULED MONUMENT and SSSI will be via metal high fenced footway (width unknown), resulting in a ‘caged experience’ for visitors to Fillongley and the Arden through the site. Continuing the historic trail, views from Old Fillongley, Chapel Green, the moat house etc, the solar site and it’s related industrial buildings rise above, as one mass of intrusive hard shining surfaces. The links to the grid some distance away mean further disturbance.

2 Document -a primary source and edited transcription/translation publication, omitted by appellant

A) Coventry Priory Register (E164/21 The National Archives) date c 1491 (262 folios)

B) Coventry Priory Register, Ed Peter Coss, Joan C Lancaster Lewis Coventry in 1411 Nat Alcock Indexes, Publisher -The Dugdale Society /Shakespeare Birthplace Trust ISBN 978-0-85220-096-X

One of the ‘primary source’ documents providing significant background to land interests of **Coventry’s St Mary’s Priory** in rural Warwickshire including Fillongley, Old Fillongley/Chapel Green and Corley, is the **Coventry Priory Register (E 164/21 at The National Archives)**. The Priory had and has *national* significance. 262 folios are excellent records, precious survivors of the rich records that existed of the Benedictine monastery, when so much has been lost including cartularies. The compiler was an unknown monk working in circa 1419 in order to produce a statement of the priory’s income including Warwickshire estates. He refers

back to earlier records. Other records at National Archives fill in the heritage.

The events relating to manorial, religious, commercial and social matters are played out over the centuries in this text. Likewise, walking the ancient footpaths as defined in this solar application (one via proposed solar site and 1 other at the eastern edge) link Fillongley's St Mary and All Saints Church c10th, the Norman castle circa 1080? (rare earthworks / moat) located in the field next to solar. The footpaths head to the chapel ruins. Benedictine style cut stone can be seen in the areas of the footpath destinations. Chapel Green, Old Fillongley Hall, Moat house Farm are fascinating features and should be included on the site (and setting) visit. Walking this precious barely altered landscape is a dynamic experience.

Access to these important records is now possible, as they have been transcribed, translated, edited and published. The key experts were-

Professor Peter Coss, Prof of Medieval History at Cardiff University

Joan Lancaster original initiator, former **Coventry City Archivist**

Dr Nat Alock -Emeritus Reader at the University of Warwick -see his submission to the Inquiry

The Dugdale Society, an important learned society, publishes original documents relating to the County of Warwick and in association with The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

With this written evidence and additional documents snap shots of history are in the buildings we see, for example, the Priory of St Mary held ½ a hide in Fillongley in 1086, and it was conferred by the Pope 1221 and had further links in 1527 (VCH)

3 Location descriptors 'The North Warwickshire ridge'

The extremely high ground in North Warwickshire, includes the highest ground -The Meriden Ridge'. The solar site is proposed on the second highest 'dome'.

Solar site height approx. 145m-150m, max, **in comparison with Fillongley village height 110-115m. The changes in height actually within the site are significant.**

Whilst the village is level of the Bourne Brook, the church stands prominently on a high point -hard sandstone point. Therefore this is a highly visible site from the castle and other points as one climbs the ridge, demonstrating the openness of Green Belt.

Omission An important view not logged/photographed by the appellant is the fact that the solar site is very visible from **Fillongley Conservation Area** (eg from Castle Farm/historic farmsteads complex*). The view from these buildings also from within stream bridge, in the direction of the castle site, is of a series of ridges each getting higher. ***The view over the Norman Castle/ Ring & Bailey site, would have the solar site as it's setting, i.e. it is highly visible being the large ridge beyond-like a theatre backdrop. Additionally, as the land slopes to east and west at either end of the further raised area -it is indeed very prominent.***

Data sets in Contour Mapping, at Warwickshire County Council, and Landscape Character Assessment clearly demonstrate height, and steep incline.

Site selection process ? A different, and more appropriate location, could have been chosen with use of this and other tools in the applicant's site selection process.

Apart from Shakespeare's Arden, there are other literary connections. Re Fillongley Conservation Area, the mother of writer Mary Ann Evans (better known as famous internationally known writer George Eliot) lived here. Records exist (Nuneaton Archives) of the writer's visits to Fillongley -Castle Farm). The area attracts visitors from much further afield.

4 Essential topographical data omitted/'glint and glare' impact omitted

Significantly too, demonstrated in this mapping, is the undulating surface of the solar park means arrays/panels incline in different directions thus increasing **'glint and glare'**, and over a wider area. The lowest parts of the site are 122m -at least 26m differentiation so not a flat site.

To spell it out, the appellant in it's planning application stated the panels face south only but because of layout and topography of the site

they will face south, south west or south east depending on the slopes.

Wider area impacts.

There will be impact -an industrial site in the middle of historic Arden countryside.

NB It appears the 'glint and glare' calculations of the solar arrays have been calculated as if this was a flat area. It is not.

5 Environment Agency data omitted.

Water sources play an important part in the historic living landscape

The Meriden ridge is a key watershed, with 2 water courses including Bourne Brook flowing into the moat of Castle Yard and eventually flowing north to the Humber Estuary. (A watercourse, on the south side flows towards Meriden /and then towards the Bristol Channel).

Geology/hydrology no doubt informed the location for the castle as the 3rd watercourse flows from the parklands area of springs /'issues'.

Environment Agency mapping show the key areas of springs especially an area in the identified 'parklands' with tributaries flowing into the moat and fish ponds of the Castle Yard.

A functioning heritage landscape is on display.

6 Arden

A) Warwickshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Report

B) Arden -Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines

B) North Warwickshire -Landscape Character Assessment HLC project

North Warwickshire ARDEN landscape type.

There are 7 distinct types of Arden including Arden parklands, Arden pastures, Arden river valleys all distinctly different. This is ANCIENT ARDEN and this has a different character-there is not so much left of this specific area.

NB 'Shakespeare's Arden' /Forest of Arden landscape is infact the North Warwickshire countryside-

Key reference -Professor Carl Chinn.

Fillongley Neighbourhood Plan references HLC and Arden countryside descriptions. The documents indicate the historic development, very evidence in walking and viewing the landscape. The patternsd of settlement, shape and size of fields, meandering lanes and roads, high banked lanes.

7 Setting specifics-historic routes

The solar site impacts 2 historic footpaths and a 3rd regional offering - one path to the east edge of the site and the most **significant route going through the site serving/linking Fillongley and OLDFILYNGLEY (stet) ie CHAPEL GREEN, Corley area. The 3rd is The Coventry Way, where long distance walkers come to The Arden. Refer to sections herewith 1 and 2 re heritage aspects of the 3 key routes, PRow.**

Used over the centuries without change, they are well used by locals, walkers, young people and schools keen on the history, regional visitors etc

CONCLUSION

The detailed primary evidenced history over the centuries from Ango Saxon times especially medieval, with visible features part of the remarkably preserved Arden landscape, offers dynamic experiences via the historic footpaths. There are sensory, intellectual, and health gains from the foot paths especially from the experience of being in the landscape and with open views.

The historic landscape has the focal points of church, and chapel, and castles with church and lordship history on show.

This unique countryside, the Arden countryside, has high grade soils and agricultural land, this site has 95% BEST MOST VERSATILE SOILS. The site has grade 2 a and nearby there is rarer Grade 1 land, and is a fully functioning rural farmed landscape playing a key role in food production and future food security.

Food security -area yields. A further impact of approving this solar project in this region, could be the ‘cracking open’ of the Arden area and destruction of a valuable regional asset, delivering on food production.

The project is not green -see Prof R Ziarati on emissions re import of grain from Canada. There is huge scope for solar on roofs in North Warwickshire’s industrial zones.

The sense of identity, and work for local people is gained from the Arden. It’s aesthetic value would be destroyed by solar industrial site, including support works, and excavations 10 k from the substation.

“Ultimately they (the Arden landscape guidelines) aim to ensure that the diversity and beauty of Warwickshire, Shakespeare’s County, is conserved for present and future generations to enjoy”.

WCC and Countryside Commission.

This is an irreplaceable resource, vital for future generations as much as the present times.

SITE VISIT This might be informed by walking the heritage footpaths, from Fillongley -Conservation area then via the Castle Yard/moated site to Old Fillongley/Moat house farm via the site to the west (to be fenced). The M6 slices through the area but paths can be located and picked up, round to Chapel Green. Walking also on the eastern footpath from Fillongley towards The Coventry Way. The Coventry Way. Route map/s to be drawn up.

OTHER RESEARCH

Environmental impacts of this site include FOOD SECURITY and adding to INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING EMISSIONS -40% of UK grain is imported from Canada and is increasing with loss of grain from Ukraine. **The loss of 94% of high grade agricultural land (i.e. BMV Best Most Versatile land, Grade 2 =24% and 3a =71%) resulting in significant grain imports from Canada over 40 years.**

Prof R Ziarati has submitted shipping emission calculations for the impact of this planning application-i.e. import of grain ‘lost’ from this site.

It is not therefore a 'green' project at this location, and with potential to crack open this prime agricultural and historic landscape for solar industrial projects over 40 years is highly damaging to environment and especially heritage.

Sources

British Geological Survey

Coventry Priory Register REF E 164/21 The National Archives, (262 folios-bound) (see below for published translation)

Coventry Priory Register, Eds P Coss and J Lancaster, Nat Alcock Dugdale Society and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust 2013

978-0-85220-096-X

Environment Agency-mapping (water courses, areas of springs, geology)

Fillongley Historic Character Assessment

English Heritage Project EH no 5922 and Warwickshire County Council

Ordnance Survey Maps, inc 1st edition.

1846 Tithe map with field patterns

Victoria County Histories
