



Cultural Heritage Enhancement Proposal

Blair Hill Wind Farm

Renewable Energy Systems Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline proposals for a potential Cultural Heritage enhancement strategy for the proposed Blair Hill Wind Farm, Dumfries and Galloway (centred at NGR: NX 42118 72034).

SLR Consulting (SLR) and the applicant, Renewable Energy Services Ltd (RES), are mindful of the quality and quantity of the cultural heritage assets both within the proposed development boundary and within the surrounding landscape. It is understood that there are types of enhancement or engagement that are required as part of the archaeological mitigation process, such as sharing of results with OASIS or the HER, preserving archives or preserving finds. The Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook (NatureScot, 2018), states the levels of mitigation as being:

- Avoidance
- Cancellation
- Reduction
- Remedial/Compensatory.

This enhancement proposal comes under the Compensatory step of mitigation. The applicant is aware of the mitigation hierarchy and is aware that the proposed enhancement is deemed to be at the lowest level of mitigation.¹ However, the applicant intends to work alongside the local community, relevant heritage professionals, and statutory consultees to facilitate the enrichment and enhancement of the cultural heritage in the area, as well as within the proposed development boundary.

The enhancement proposals within this report are not intended to be a replacement for higher levels of mitigation, which will be addressed in the application report, but instead are designed to complement the application.

The outlined proposals and recommendations identified within this report are intended to provide public benefits to comply with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023), The EIA Handbook (2018), Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 (2019), and Scotland's Archaeology Strategy (SAS) which was published in 2015.

This report draws from '*Delivery of Public Benefit and Social Value Guidance for Archaeology in the Planning Process*', published by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) in 2023.

1.1 Site Background and Heritage Assets

The proposed development is located approximately 2.8km east of the River Cree and 3.2km north of Newton Stewart in the Dumfries and Galloway Council (D&G) area.

The Site comprises an area of 661 hectares (ha). The Proposed Development is set within open moorland and areas of commercial forestry. The elevation varies from 145m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to 470 m aOD. There are a number of watercourses running through the Site including Coldstream Burn, Black Burn, Glenshalloch Burn and Peat Rig Burn.

¹ Cares, R.A., Franco, A.M. and Bond, A., 2023. Investigating the implementation of the mitigation hierarchy approach in environmental impact assessment in relation to biodiversity impacts. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 102, p.107214.



There are no Scheduled Monuments located within the Site. There are, however, a number of non-designated cultural heritage assets within the Site, which are largely medieval to post-medieval in date and relate to agricultural use of the landscape over time.

In addition to the assets within the Site, the proposed development sits within a rich archaeological landscape, with assets dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval period. A selection of designated cultural heritage assets within proximity to the Site include:

- The Thieves, Standing Stones (SM1044);
- Drumfern, Cairn and Stone Circle (SM1019);
- Nappers Cottage, Chambered Cairn (SM5676
- Dalvaird Cairn (SM1015).
- Cordorcan, Cairn (SM10385);
- Garlies Castle (SM7916);
- Boreland, chambered cairn (SM1004);
- Cairnsmore of Fleet, cairn (SM2316); and
- Machars Hill, motte (SM1126);

Notably, there are two distinct types of cairns which are located along the Cree River Valley to the east of the site; Clyde Cairns and Bargrennan cairns. Clyde Cairns are commonly found in the southwest of Scotland and are typically thought to be the earliest type of chambered cairn in Scotland. Bargrennan Cairns are much more localised, found only in western Dumfries and Galloway and south Ayrshire. There are approximately 12 known Bargrennan Cairns, which are notable due to their difference in structure to the Clyde Cairns. Clyde Cairns are a form of court cairns, with an open courtyard area and one or more roofed chambers, with Bargrennan Cairns being a style of passage cairn. The variety of prehistoric archaeology within the Cree Valley and surrounding landscape provides an insight into prehistoric society, especially their treatment of the dead.

The River Cree and its associated valley continued to be an important feature throughout history. The River Cree is a key routeway inland from the Solway Firth, connecting communities throughout the southwest of Scotland. The river and its tributaries would have played key agricultural roles throughout history and also played a key role in the industrialisation of this part of Scotland. For example, the Cree was the source of power for the textile mills in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Newton Stewart.

The archaeology surrounding the proposed development has the potential to provide an insight into the lives of people living in the Cree Valley over thousands of years.

2.0 Site-Specific Enhancement Proposals

The land within the proposed development therefore holds a moderate degree of archaeological interest, however, due to the location and condition of the Site, at present this landscape is not accessible for the large majority of the public. The following enhancement proposals intend to make this heritage more accessible for everyone, including those who cannot physically access the Site, and increase public knowledge of the history of the Site.

The applicant intends to fund the proposed enhancements and will ensure that any physical installations are kept in good condition and free from vegetation.



Table 1: Site-specific Enhancement Proposals

Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
Interpretation Boards for Selected Non-designated Assets	24 – Improving Site Interpretation	<p>Increased community pride and sense of place.</p> <p>Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution.</p> <p>The local area will be a better place to live/work/visit.</p>	<p>A selected number of non-designated assets will receive an interpretation board, detailing the assets and providing context for their placement within the landscape. This could include detailing visibility/relationships with other landscape features. An archaeological illustrator can provide an artistic interpretation of the assets, making it easier to understand what each asset may have looked like when constructed.</p> <p>Each board can be bilingual in both England and Gaelic, providing a wider link to Scotland's heritage.</p> <p>Each board may have a QR code, providing access to further online information. This information may include, but not be limited to, 3D models of the assets, links to publications, and further interpretation illustrations. The reliability of these QR codes would be subject to the phone signal in the area.</p>
Site Open Days During Archaeological Works and Guided Tours (for both the public and workers on site)	9 and 10 – Site Open Days and Guided Site Tours	<p>Increased understanding and awareness of historic environment.</p> <p>Increased wellbeing.</p> <p>On-site CPD.</p>	<p>Designated open days on the Site during the Archaeological Works, which aim to demonstrate the archaeological process to the general public. This may include guided tours offered by the archaeological contractor.</p>



Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
			In addition, guided tours or talks may be given by the contractor to other site workers to enhance the archaeological knowledge of site workers from other disciplines. This would count as on-site CPD.
Improving Access Throughout the Site to Selected Non-designated Assets	22 – Improving Site Access	<p>Increased community pride and sense of place.</p> <p>Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution; the local area will be a better place to live/work/visit.</p>	<p>Improvement of existing paths and watercourse crossing and installation of new paths, to make access to heritage assets easier (see attached map).</p> <p>This improvement may include making some assets wheelchair accessible from a suitable viewing area.</p>
On-Site Heritage Trail	26 – Heritage Trail	<p>Increased community pride, sense of place.</p> <p>Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution; the local area will be a better place to live/work/visit/play.</p> <p>Improved health and well-being for users</p>	<p>Production of a signposted heritage trail throughout the Site in order to improve access to the heritage assets within the landscape and aid in developing the public's archaeological knowledge.</p> <p>The trail can be accompanied by a leaflet which shows the route and can be distributed from a waterproof box at the trailhead or from a local business or community buildings. The leaflet can be designed by a local artist or graphic design company, in order to involve the local community in its creation.</p>
Improving access to Site through the provision of better parking areas and potential rest areas.	25 – Improving Site (e.g., vegetation removal, stabilisation works, new shelter)	<p>Increased community pride and sense of place.</p> <p>Conservation of historic assets and preservation of community heritage</p>	Access to the Site may be improved by the upgrading and provision of parking areas. These parking areas may be at a designated site entrance, to stop visitors from



Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
			<p>parking along verges and impacting the locals.</p> <p>Rest areas, which may include picnic benches or a shelter, are intended to provide an area to stop during the heritage trail.</p>
Social Media Updates About the Archaeological Works	16 – Social Media Posts	Sharing of new knowledge gained. Positive promotion of site/community/region to wider audience. Increased awareness and understanding of the historic environment.	<p>Social media updates about the progress of the archaeological works and any interesting finds or features can be published by either the applicant or the archaeological contractor.</p> <p>This enhances access to the archaeology and heritage within the site, for those that may not be able to visit in person.</p>
Online Website Regarding Archaeological Works and the Heritage of the Site	15 and 17 – Site Blog/Vlog/Podcast and Remote Site Access for Online Audiences	Sharing of new knowledge gained. Positive promotion of site/community/region to wider audience. Increased awareness and understanding of the historic environment.	<p>The online website would be updated with any key information from the archaeological works, including any key finds.</p> <p>The website could be used to provide more in-depth information about any heritage assets found within the site.</p> <p>Archaeology students could be asked to provide an article.</p>
Modelling of Selected Non-designated Heritage Assets within the Site	29 – Model and/or Reconstruction (physical, digital, 3D scan, photogrammetric) 17 – Remote Site Access for Online Audiences	Sharing of new knowledge gained. Increased understanding of the historic environment.	<p>Modelling could include 3D modelling, LiDAR mapping, earthwork survey and recording to improve understand and knowledge of assets.</p> <p>A digital model selected non-designated assets will be created. These will be available to be viewed on a free website, and a 3D modelling hosting website (e.g., SketchFab).</p>



Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
			<p>The 3D model will be compatible with free software, such as Google Cardboard, which would allow the user to view the monument in VR.</p> <p>This will enable viewing of the assets by people who may not be physically able to come to site.</p> <p>This is a non-intrusive form of recording and investigation. The assets could be recorded by local community archaeology groups, in order to train them in the recording of heritage assets.</p>
<p>On-Site interactive community / school activity sessions/ days</p>	<p>12 - Volunteer engagement / recruitment 13 - Work experience (including university students and further education) and/or Apprenticeship placements 14 - School(s) Project</p>	<p>Wider range of people involved in heritage; new skills learned; increased understanding of historic environment; increased wellbeing</p> <p>Increased pathways into archaeology as a career; Wider range of people involved in archaeology; new skills learned; increased understanding of historic environment</p> <p>Increased understanding and awareness of historic environment; contributing to STEM learning</p>	<p>Community archaeology days could involve members of the public in investigating and recording archaeology. Learn archaeology skills.</p> <p>The developer could fund a training work experience placement within the contractor fieldwork team for the project for a local person to gain experience in the archaeology sector.</p>
<p>Marking the Land Project</p>	<p>12 - Volunteer engagement / recruitment 14 - School(s) Project</p>	<p>Wider range of people involved in heritage; new skills learned; increased understanding of historic environment; increased wellbeing</p> <p>Increased understanding and awareness of historic environment; contributing to STEM learning</p>	<p>Sessions on how land-use and marking the land has occurred over time.</p> <p>Traditional heritage skills sessions could be provided, such as dyke building.</p>



3.0 Enhancement Proposals for the Wider Historic Environment

The proposed development sits within a wider historic environment, with heritage assets dating from the prehistoric period through to the modern era. It is acknowledged that the proposed development has the potential to impact the heritage assets in this wider environment, and as such, it is the intention of the applicant to ensure that assets outwith the Site are also subject to enhancement proposals.

Table 2: Enhancement proposals for the wider historic environment outwith the Site

Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
Heritage Talks with Schools and Community Groups	20 – Public Talk(s) (local, conferences, online, both during and after the project)	Sharing of new knowledge gained. Positive promotion of site/community/region to wider audience. Increased awareness and understanding of the historic environment.	These talks would take place with groups of local school children and community groups from the surrounding communities. The talks would be on a mixture of topics and could include careers talks from archaeologists working on the project, presentations on the archaeology of the Site or presentations on the heritage of the surrounding area. This could also include oral history/ folk tales/ story telling from local people within the community. This list is not exhaustive. The developer may fund external speakers to provide presentations on key topics, if there are speakers whose research is applicable to the proposed development or the surrounding area.
Online Website Regarding Heritage in the Surrounding Area	15 and 17 – Site Blog/Vlog/Podcast and Remote Site Access for Online Audiences	Sharing of new knowledge gained. Positive promotion of site/community/region to wider audience. Increased awareness and understanding of the historic environment.	The online website would be updated with articles about the heritage of the surrounding area. They would aim to make the historic environment more accessible for those who are not physically able to visit it.
Heritage Trail (e.g., Cairns in	26 – Heritage Trail	Increased community pride, sense of place.	The developer would work with the local councils to



Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
the Local Landscape, Historic Buildings in the Local Villages)		Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution. The local area will be a better place to live/work/visit/play; improved health and wellbeing for users.	<p>produce heritage trails of specific themes (e.g., prehistory, historic buildings). These trails would use current paths or pavements where available and would aim to update existing infrastructure to make it more accessible.</p> <p>The trails would have appropriate signage, information boards or accompanying leaflets. These additions would be funded by the developer.</p>
Heritage Pamphlets or Leaflets	26 – Heritage Trail	Increased community pride, sense of place. Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution; the local area will be a better place to live/work/visit/play; improved health and wellbeing for users.	<p>The proposed heritage trails would be accompanied by pamphlets or leaflets, which would be available in local community areas (e.g., libraries, shops, town halls).</p> <p>These would provide more information about the route of the heritage trails and give context to the assets that the trails are visiting.</p> <p>The pamphlets would be designed by local artists or designers, to ensure that there is community involvement in the project.</p>
Local Art Exhibition or Competition	27 – Public Art 30 - Exhibition(s) (pop-up, temporary, permanent, physical/virtual)	<p>Increased community pride, sense of place. Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution; the local area will be a better place to live/work/visit.</p> <p>Sharing of new knowledge gained. Positive promotion of site/community/region to wider audience; increased awareness</p>	<p>An art exhibition, competition, or community art project on the theme of the assets within or surrounding the proposed development.</p> <p>This would aim to develop community interest in the historic environment both within and surrounding the site.</p>



Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
		and understanding of the historic environment.	
Loanboxes for Schools and Community Groups	31 - Learning Resource (including the option for 'Loan Boxes')	Increased understanding and awareness of historic environment; contributing to STEM learning.	Learning resources or loan boxes would be developed that could be loaned out to local schools or community groups in order to develop the understanding of the local historic environment. These boxes could be kept at a central community hub (e.g., a library) and are therefore accessible for anyone who would want to use them.
Production signage boards at key viewpoints in collaboration with LVIA	24 – Improving Site Interpretation	Increased community pride, sense of place; Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution; the local area will be a better place to live/work/visit.	In collaboration with the LVIA team, a selection of viewpoints in the surrounding landscape (e.g., Cairnsmore of Fleet cairn, SM2316) could be chosen. There is the potential for the production of a viewpoint panorama at these locations, highlighting key landscape and heritage locations throughout the surrounding area. This is subject to landowner permissions and any legalities surrounding Scheduled Monuments.
Heritage Ranger or Heritage Champion	10 – Guided Site Tour(s) (both for the general public and for other workers on site) 15 – Site Blog/Vlog/Podcast 20 - Public Talk(s) (local, conferences, online, both during and after the project)	Sharing of new knowledge gained; positive promotion of site/community/region to wider audience. Increased awareness and understanding of the historic environment. Increased understanding and awareness of historic environment; increased wellbeing. On-site CPD.	The applicant understands that implementing the programmes laid out in this document would not be effectively achieved by a volunteer, due to the lack of compensation for such a large undertaking. As such, a heritage ranger role is proposed. A Heritage Ranger would implement the enhancement programme alongside the applicant and would be funded by the applicant. Activities carried



Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
			<p>out by the heritage ranger may include; guided tours, talks and general upkeep of heritage assets or signage. In addition, the heritage ranger may write articles for the website, produce online content or lead community groups.</p>
<p>Improved Access to Surrounding Assets (e.g., Nappers Cottage Cairn, Garlies Castle)</p>	<p>12 – Volunteer engagement / recruitment 22 – Improving Site Access</p>	<p>Wider range of people involved in heritage; new skills learned; increased understanding of historic environment; increased wellbeing</p> <p>Increased community pride, sense of place. Increased visitor numbers and local economic contribution; the local area will be a better place to live/work/visit.</p>	<p>In addition to approving access to the assets within the Site, there are numerous assets within the surrounding landscape, particularly Scheduled monuments, that are currently harder to access or are not being looked after.</p> <p>The improvement of access could be run as a community volunteer project, with the clearance of any vegetation or improvement of paths where it is necessary. This project could be overseen by the Heritage Ranger, as described above.</p> <p>This is subject to landowner permission for each individual asset that may be chosen and removal of vegetation would be limited to areas outside of the designation boundary.</p>
<p>Developer Funded Community Preservation Work</p>	<p>36 - Retention, repair, reuse of historic assets</p>	<p>Protects the embedded carbon reservoir within historic buildings. Enhanced sense of place and character; increased value of development.</p>	<p>There is the potential for a fund for the preservation of heritage assets (e.g., historic buildings) within the surrounding community. This might include retrofitting windows or upgrading insulation.</p> <p>Depending on the status of the building (e.g., is it a Listed Building, is it within</p>



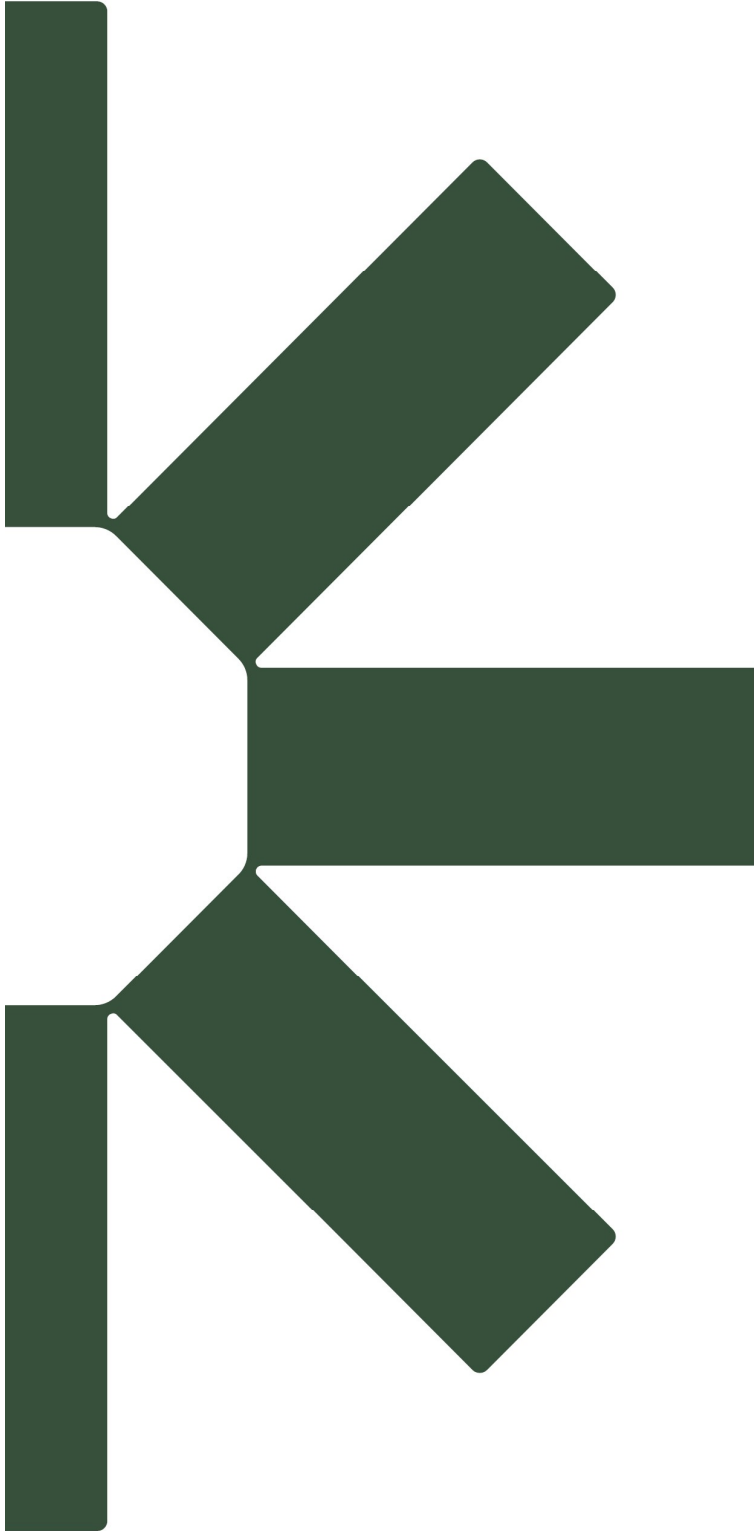
Enhancement Proposal	ALGAO Reference	ALGAO Benefit	Comments
			a Conservation Area), these works may be subject to a planning application or Listed Building Consent.
<p>Funded Research into Local Heritage or Theme that includes the Site</p>	<p>5 - Sharing of results - Publication (printed, online, journal, book etc where results merit such an approach)</p> <p>6 - Sharing of results – Regional and National Research Frameworks</p> <p>13 - Work experience (including university students and further education) and/or Apprenticeship placements</p>	<p>Sharing of knowledge gained; increased understanding of the historic environment</p> <p>Freely accessible information; sharing of knowledge gained; research questions answered, and new research questions identified</p>	<p>A fund could be set up for a specific research project aimed at answering research questions that involve the heritage of the local area or the site itself.</p> <p>This fund could be provided to a university or other research institute and could be aimed at someone looking to undertake a long-term research project (e.g., a PHD).</p> <p>Any results of the research (e.g., publications, datasets) could be made open access in order to allow the wider public to understand more about the heritage of the area that they live in.</p>



4.0 Conclusion

This enhancement proposal sets out a series of suggestions for the enhancement of cultural heritage both within and surrounding the proposed Blair Hill Wind Farm. However, these proposals are not final and do not form a definitive programme of enhancement opportunities. The applicant is committed to working with consultees and local groups in order to identify the best possible approaches to enhancing the historic environment.





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