



Registered UK Charity: 1017387
Company No: 2786730

57 Falkland Road
London
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11 November 2012

Clare Richards
Development Management
Selby District Council
Civic Centre, Doncaster Road
Selby
YO8 9FT

Dear Ms Richards,

Ref no 2012/0979/FUL

This is a formal response from the Battlefields Trust to lodge an objection to the proposal for a permanent position for caravans and out-buildings next to (with a few tens of meters) the historic (and registered) battlefield at Towton (1461, Wars of the Roses). The proposal would have a permanent adverse impact on the setting and potential archaeology of this nationally important registered battlefield.

The Battlefields Trust (BT) is a national charity (Registered No. 1017387, www.battlefieldstrust.com) whose aims are to save battlefields from destruction by motorways, housing developments etc, provide a range of battlefield-related activities and information, including the quarterly journal 'Battlefield', battlefield walks and conferences, liaise with local and national organisations to preserve battlefields for posterity and improve the interpretation and presentation of battlefields. The Trust works closely with English Heritage and with the Towton Battlefield Society.

The grounds for the objection include that:-

- The site is designated Green Belt, an historic site and the Selby District Council development plan gives this land protection,
- The site is adjacent to the Battlefield of Towton as defined by the English Heritage Battlefield Register,
- A recent private survey by Dr Glenn Foard, on behalf of English Heritage, documents that this land should be part of the defined Battlefield, and

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- The risk to archaeology related to the battle is unacceptable given the site's proximity to the battlefield, the 1996 Towton Hall mass grave being found further north, and the difficulty of designating battlefields accurately without full scale surveys. The development would be in breach of the still current guidance in Planning Policy Statement 5, which creates a presumption against development adjacent to a registered heritage asset that might prejudice its setting or archaeology.

The risk to archaeology would be as a result of creating hard standings for caravans which will require some digging into the top soil and the construction of out-buildings which will obviously need foundations. Battlefield archaeology tends to be unstratified, sitting in the top soil, and is therefore particularly vulnerable to the type of development proposed. The Trust asks that a full and detailed archaeological survey should be conducted in advance of any decisions about development.

Towton is as important a battle as any on the English Heritage Register for three main reasons:-

- It was the largest battle with the heaviest casualties (up to 28,000 in some accounts) of any in England before or since – greater than the casualties incurred on the first day of the Battle of the Somme (1916),
- It allowed Edward IV to claim the throne for the House of York and had a profound impact on the future of the English monarchy and body politic, and
- Most of the English peerage were present and the whole country immediately felt the impact of the Yorkist victory.

The battlefield is an invaluable heritage resource still not fully researched and destruction of any potential archaeology means that this development cannot meet the criterion of being "sustainable". Once lost, the heritage value of the site can never be recovered.

Yours faithfully



Frank Baldwin
Chairman Battlefields Trust

CC

Dr Mike Heyworth - Director the Council for British Archaeology
Baroness Andrews - Chair of English Heritage