

SOUTH MOOR FARM, LANGDALE END, SCARBOROUGH

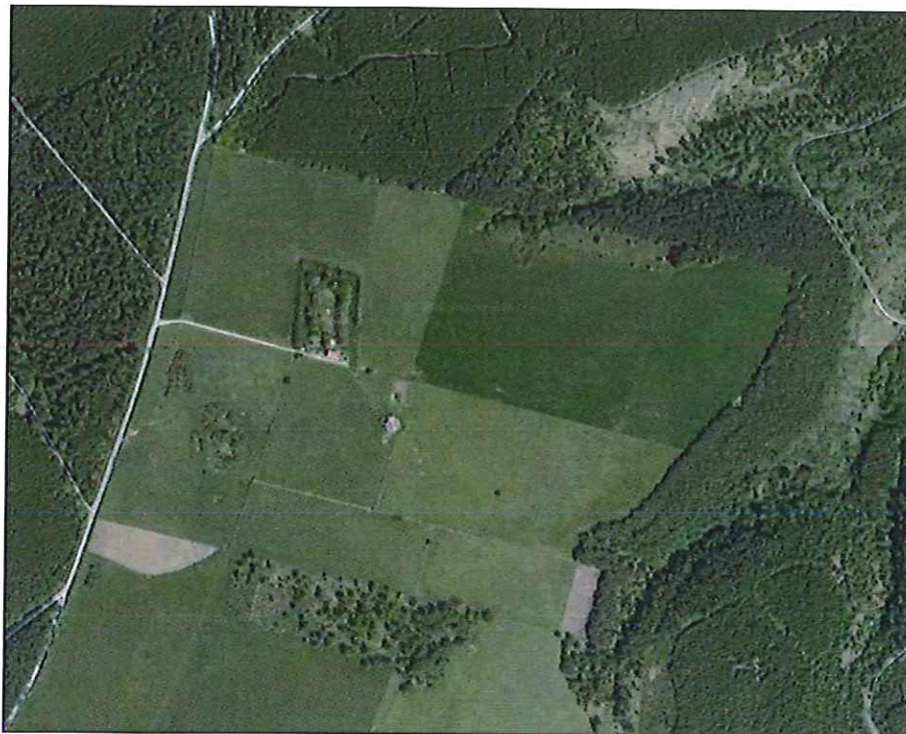
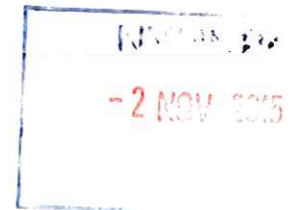
NYM 2014/0819/FL

**The impact of a proposal for two grass runways and storage
building on designated heritage assets, their setting and
significance**

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For
Mr R Walker

February 2015

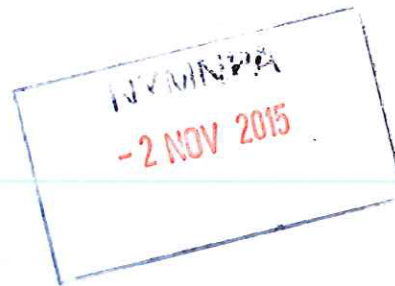
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*Figure 1 Aerial view of South Moor Farm. Imagery ©2015 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky.
Mapdata © 2015 Google.*

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1.0 Summary

A planning application for grass runways and ancillary buildings has been lodged with the North York Moors National Park Authority. The holding on which the application is sited contains a scheduled monument and there are a number of others close by. These assets are assessed, in light of the National Policy Planning Framework, for the impact of the proposals on their significance and setting within an important prehistoric landscape. Harm to their setting and significance is likely to arise from aircraft movement and noise, which can be mitigated.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report seeks to address points raised by English Heritage, in a letter dated 6 January 2015 to the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNP) (Appendix 1), in response to a planning application. Reference NYM 2014/0819/FL is for proposed change of use of land for formation of an airstrip including two grass runways, storage building and pilot/restroom facilities, at South Moor Farm, Langdale End, Scarborough YO13 0LW. The holding contains a scheduled monument named as Round barrow cemetery (including the barrows known as Three Howes) 220m and 360m north west of South Moor Farm, National Heritage List for England (NHLE) entry number 1019936. A number of other scheduled monuments lie off the holding but adjacent to it, leading to the opinion expressed by English Heritage that an assessment of the impact of the planning application on designated heritage assets, their setting and their significance, was required in order to inform their response.

The farm is centred at SE90483 90320 and lies within Ebberston and Yedingham parish, within the North York Moors National Park, Ryedale District.

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2.2 Geology and soils

The application area falls within the North York Moors and Cleveland Hills National Character Area (Natural England 2012). It is situated on freely draining slightly acid loamy soils with freely draining natural drainage and low natural fertility (Soilscape (England) 2005). These soils overlie calcareous sandstones and limestones of the Upper Jurassic (Natural England nd). The land is situated on the south facing Tabular Hills with the highest point at 247m AOD dropping down to less than 220m AOD at the head of White Beck; the main runway as proposed would run along a finger of the 220m contour. Current land use is rough grazing by cattle and sheep on grass, with an area of gorse and scrub on the disused Bickley Quarries (North York Moors Historic Environment Record (HER) 9064).

2.3 Historic background

The Tabular Hills are well known for their linear embanked dykes which are thought to be territorial markers dating from the middle to early Bronze Age. In addition there are many Bronze Age funerary round barrows, field clearance cairns and pit alignments found in the area. Their survival on and adjacent to the holding and application area is apparently the result of two major factors: the poor nature of the soils that favour pastoral farming and preclude major improvement to the fields; and

the late creation of the farm holding at South Moor which post-dates the Ordnance Survey 1st edition mapping published in 1854. Some fields appear, from their flattened surface, to have been ploughed in the past and there is a suggestion of ridge and furrow in one field close to and east of, the farm house. The farm was previously moorland enclosed in the later nineteenth century whilst the land adjoining seems to have been enclosed earlier, probably in the eighteenth century. The Forestry Commission bought the surrounding land to plant Dalby Forest in the 1920's and today Dalby Forest is managed by the Forestry Commission.

2.4 Methodology and data sources: brief and aims of the report

Searches were carried out using the using the central grid reference of the holding as the centre point. Mapped and textual information on scheduled monuments within 1km was downloaded from the English Heritage web site (Table 1 and Figure 2). HER data on undesignated features held at the NYMNP office in Helmsley was searched for the same area and downloaded in tabular and mapped form (Table 2 and Appendix 2). The EH PastScape web site was also checked for background data that might yield information on undesignated features within the application area but the purpose of this report is not to produce a full desk-based assessment covering all known and potential archaeology. Instead, it will concentrate on the designated features and assess them in the light of the points raised by English Heritage.

2.5 Conditions at time of visit and date

A site visit was made by the author on 22 January 2015, accompanied by the applicant Mr Walker. The weather was cold and mostly bright. A few inches of snow which had fallen a few days earlier was melting sufficiently for the grass to begin to show through: about an inch was left, making some of the barrow mounds visible in the fields. Photographs were taken by the author during a walk around the entire holding including the application site and scheduled monument NHLE number 1019936, Three Howes Round Barrow Cemetery.

3.0 Archaeological activity on and off the application area

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3.1 Designations

3.2 There are 13 scheduled monuments within about 1km of the central NGR, as on Table 1 below. The designated archaeology represents a significant area of prehistoric landscape with upstanding earthwork remains. It is characterised by three main feature groups. The round barrow cemetery including The Three Howes NHLE 1019936, most of which is on the holding, comprises the remains of seven barrows; such a density is unusual for this part of the moors where scattered individual barrows and small groups of twos and threes predominate. Off the holding a large area is scheduled as NHLE 1019601 on Ebberston Low Moor, where embanked pit alignments, linear earthworks, round barrows and cairns form an important grouping. Their significance lies in their preservation, which includes the extant upstanding earthworks of a Bronze Age pit alignment flanked by banks, and for the complexity of different archaeological features in close proximity. A prehistoric linear boundary known as Snainton Dykes NHLE 1020299 almost touches

one of the pit alignments in 1019601 and bounds the plateau to the east. Within the forestry, the other scheduled features in the search area are all round single or paired round barrows and cairns. There are no other designations within the search area.

Table 1: Scheduled monuments within ca. 1km of application NGR

List entry Number	Name	NGR
1019937	Round barrow on Ebberston Low Moor, 200m north west of Ebberston Common House	SE 90020 89594
1019601	Embanked pit alignments, linear earthworks, round barrows and cairns on Ebberston Low Moor	SE 90485 89752
1019936	Round barrow cemetery (including the barrows known as Three Howes) 220m and 360m north west of South Moor Farm	SE 90325 90635, SE 90346 90505
1019938	Round barrow 820m south east of South Moor Farm	SE 91006 89692
1020299	Prehistoric linear boundary known as Snainton Dikes, 740m east of Ebberston Common House	SE 90750 89138
1020334	Round barrow in Dalby Forest, 870m east of Ebberston Common House	SE 90951 89655
1020427	Fox Howe round barrow	SE 90259 90964
1020429	Round barrow on Low Moor, 565m north east of South Moor Farm	SE 90778 90802
1020519	Round barrow 550m west of South Moor Farm	SE 89955 90218
1020524	Round barrow 520m north of Ebberston Common House	SE 89980 89915
1020587	Northern of two round barrows in Dalby Forest known as the Brown Howes	SE 89708 90837
1020588	Southern of two round barrows in Dalby Forest known as the Brown Howes	SE 89738 90774
1020590	Round barrow in Dalby Forest, 70m south of Waitcliff Howe	SE 91191 90984

See Figure 2 for mapped locations.



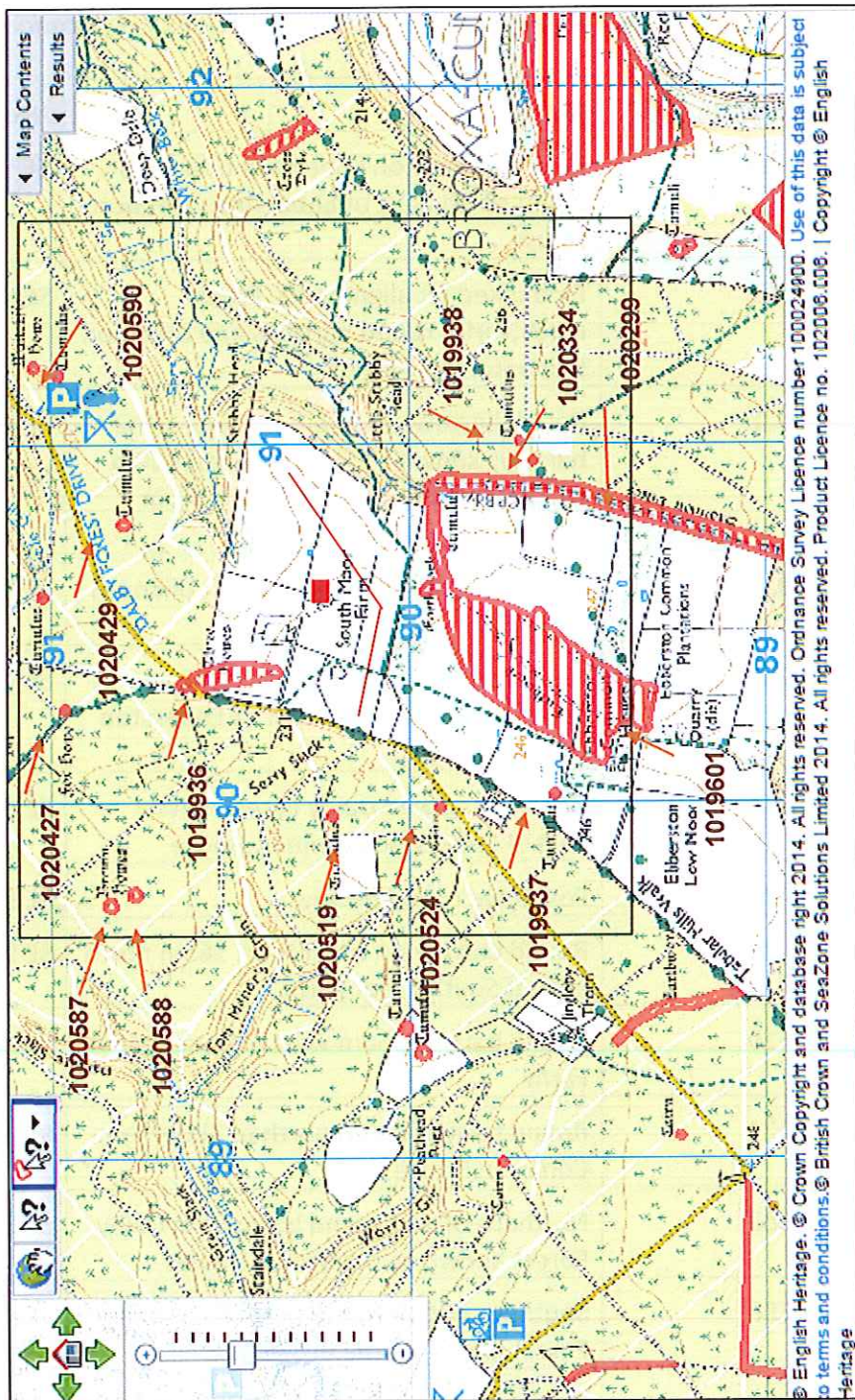


Figure 2 Scheduled monuments within the search area (green square). Application features in red, not to scale. Crown copyright and database rights [2014] Ordnance Survey [licence 100056158]

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3.3 Undesignated archaeology

3.4 There are eight undesignated sites within the holding and application area (Table 2 and Appendix 2). The HER records four barrows 6289 – 6292 which are marked on the OS 1st edition map of 1854, situated south of the Three Howes group and in a similar SSE alignment, with one off-line to the east. As with the Three Howes, they are also on the 240m contour plateau. None are currently visible above ground and the existence of surviving below-ground deposits is likely, making them significant features due to their proximity to the scheduled group. An area between these barrows and the Forest Drive (which is on the line of a road extant in 1854) contains a limestone quarry known as Bickley Quarries which was also extant in 1854 (1st edition OS) and is still visible as an area of disturbed and scrubby ground. It might once possibly have contained other barrows but there is no other evidence to support this tenuous suggestion other than the proximity to the other barrow groups.

Table 2: Undesignated archaeology recorded on the HER

HER Number	Name	Monument Type	X Coordinate	Y Coordinate
6269	Three Howes	Barrow cemetery	490360	490515
6269	Three Howes	Round barrow	490360	490515
6270	Three Howes	Round barrow	490350	490580
6271	Three Howes	Round barrow	490329	490636
6272	Three Howes	Round barrow	490342	490530
6273	Three Howes	Round barrow	490368	490530
6274		Round barrow	490345	490473
6275		Round barrow	490352	490421
6276		Round barrow	490360	490370
6289	South Moor Farm	Barrow cemetery	490460	490170
6290	South Moor Farm	Round barrow	490407	490227
6291	South Moor Farm	Round barrow	490396	490149
6292	South Moor Farm	Round barrow	490533	490131
9064	Bickley Quarries west of South Moor Farm	Limestone quarry	490281	490147
9065	Gravel pit at Stubby Head	Gravel pit	490738	490474
15062	Boundary stone at Stubby Head	Boundary marker	491115	490433
15070	Boundary stone north east of South Moor Farm	Boundary stone	490758	490495

See Appendix 2 for mapped locations

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- 3.5 Other features in the area are of purely local interest: two boundary stones near Stubby Head 15062 and 15070 and a small surface gravel quarry 9065. An area of slight ridge and furrow was noted on the site visit east of the farmhouse and north of the current farm buildings, on a gentle slope (photo 382 and C2). The farm buildings occupy the site of Low Moor Cottage which is depicted on the 1st edition OS map of 1854. There are two standing buildings, of local limestone with pantile roofs, and a ruinous and roofless former blacksmith's shop (Mr Walker pers. com.) forming three sides of a small covered yard (photos K, L and M). An embanked and dry pond is in the north-eastern field (photo 384).
- 3.6 There is a notable east-west difference between the two sides of the holding as separated by the central NNE/SSW field boundaries; this may be due to a difference in topography between the finger of ridge on the east side and the relatively flat or gently sloping plateau on the west. It is well known that barrows tend to be located on high ground with good visibility from or to lower ground in at least one direction. The western side of the holding has been favoured in this respect.
- 4.0 **Assessment of the impact of the standing features of the planning application on designated and undesignated heritage assets.** Photographs are in Appendix 3.
- 4.1 No designated features on the holding will be physically impacted by the proposals but NHLE 1019936 is visible from the main runway (photo E1), which runs along a ridge line to the east. The monument can be seen from the runway. Views from and to the ancillary runway and the monument are restricted by the farm house shelterbelt and the scrub on the former Blickley Quarries with a narrow angle between which they are intervisible (photo B3). This angle includes the locations of two mapped but otherwise not visible barrows, one of which is on the site boundary; its proximity on line with the group to the north makes it potentially significant. The shelterbelt also blocks views from and to the aircraft storage building and 1019936. It is likely that there was originally intentional visibility between scheduled sites 1019936 and 1019601 but this was lost when the farmhouse was built in the nineteenth century and surrounding shelterbelt planted. The issue of aircraft movements and noise are examined in paragraph 5.
- 4.2 No designated features off the holding will be physically impacted by the proposals but NHLE 1019601 on the adjacent holding has intervisibility in the angle between the main and ancillary runways through the gap between Ebberston Common Plantations and the forestry at Little Stubby Head (photo 389). The monument lies slightly lower than the ground on the application area and there is a stone wall with a shooting ladder stile in the immediate foreground between the two and it is thought there is likely to be a minimal impact from the aircraft storage building over 250m away. NHLE 1019937 may be visibly impacted by the western end of the ancillary runway due to its position at 246m AOD on farmland. None of the scheduled features within the forestry are visibly impacted. All the scheduled features are nationally significant.
- 4.3 The planning consultant's report (Gregory 2014, para 3) asserts that the applicant proposes to underground power lines crossing the auxiliary runway if planning

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permission is granted. The route of the trench depicted on the Google Earth plan on report page 32 shows it crosses the sites of HER barrows 6291 and 6290 and it is likely, given the experience on Fylingdales Moor, that others not previously recorded may exist below ground. This barrow group is significant in terms of its relationship with the scheduled groups to north and south. Rolling and mowing the ancillary runway is unlikely to be damaging to below-ground deposits remaining from the barrow group HER 6289-6292 given that the field appears to have been ploughed in the past. Removal of lengths of two walls will have an impact on the nineteenth century farm landscape but will have no impact on archaeological features. There is no known archaeology within the footprint or close to, the proposed aircraft storage building, pilot/restroom or main runway.

4.4 Public access and experience of the features described above is important given that a bridle path and PROW cross the holding and application area. The PROW runs northwards across the proposed ancillary runway and cuts across the field north-westwards just above the old quarries. It therefore passes very close to below-ground barrows HER 6291 and 6290 and has clear views to the Three Howes group to the north. The bridleway runs inside the southern wall of the holding, which forms the southern site boundary, and is parallel to the ancillary runway, turning north-east at its eastern end to cross a hollow before entering the forestry near Little Stubby Head. This length is parallel to the main runway which is above it on a ridge to the north whilst NHLE 1019601 is over the wall to the south. It is difficult to see these features on foot from the bridle path owing to the hollow, but on a horse the rider's view will be raised considerably above that of a walker. Aside from this, there will be no visual impact from or to the rights of way.

5.0 Noise and visual impacts of aircraft as proposed

5.1 The nature and impact of noise and visual intrusion from planes taking off and landing is a consideration in the context of the setting and significance of the heritage assets described in paragraph 3 above. That paragraph described South Moor Farm and the adjacent property as containing a number of nationally significant prehistoric features, and the potential for other significant features, set within a remote upland landscape. The applicant's environmental report (Clothier 2014) states that the runways will be used for small light aircraft with up to twenty movements a day, i.e. ten take-offs and ten landings; a maximum of eighty movements per week has been suggested. The report concludes that there will be negligible environmental impact on horses but the potential harm as per paragraph 132 of the NPPF, arising from aircraft movement and noise on this quiet rural area with nationally significant and other groups of prehistoric monuments, was not considered. The Setting of Heritage Assets (EH 2011) sets out English Heritage's guidance on assessing setting. Experience of the asset makes a contribution to its significance and hence setting, which may be affected by noise, vibration and other nuisances (EH 2011, 19). The effect of aircraft noise and movement is material at South Moor Farm.

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6.0 Conclusions, impacts and mitigation

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that substantial harm or loss to heritage assets such as scheduled monuments should be wholly exceptional. There are two groups of scheduled monuments close to the application area, NHLE 1019936 and 1019601, both of which are visually impacted by the proposed runways but will not be harmed by them. Aircraft movement and noise will affect their setting and significance but this may be mitigated by setting controls on numbers of aircraft movements. These effects will need to be weighed against the Inspector's appeal decision dated 28 August 2014 (Gray 2014, 3) for the previous application NYM/2013/0435/FL which states that the technical evidence shows no real likelihood of noise levels that would be harmful to residential amenity or the enjoyment of the area by visitors.

Resiting the power line underground across the auxiliary runway will have an impact on designated barrows HER 6289 and 6290 and others as yet unrecorded on the line. This can be mitigated with an archaeological watching brief during excavation of the trench.

The proposed aircraft storage building and wind turbine will have no impact on the significance and setting of the monuments. There is no known undesignated archaeology on or close to the footprint and it is too far east to be a likely location for undiscovered archaeology, as indicated in paragraph 3.6 above.

1019936
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