



Formal Objection: The Destruction of the General Birch Reynardson Estate and the "Fulfen Educational Enclave"

Application Ref: 25/01485/OUTM (Land at Coulter Lane, Burntwood)

Date: 8 May 2026

TO: Gillian Pinna-Morrell (Case Officer, Lichfield District Council)

Dear Ms. Pinna-Morrell,

The Burntwood Action Group (BAG) submits further formal representation to correct a major omission in the Applicant's Heritage Statement. We provide primary evidence (Tithe Records and Charity Schemes) proving that the development site was the **private estate and registered property of Lieutenant-General Thomas Birch Reynardson**.

1. Direct Ownership: The General's Land (1844 Tithe Records)

The 1844 Tithe Apportionment for Burntwood confirms that the application site was not "common land" or "anonymous farmland." It was **owned in its entirety by General Thomas Birch Reynardson**.

- **The Estate Core:** This land was the "Home Farm" of the General's Fulfen Estate.
- **The Endowment Link:** Historical records (1834/1880) explicitly state that the village school's funding was "**paid out of General Reynardson's farm.**" The General didn't just give money; he dedicated his own private soil to the education of Burntwood's children.

2. Who was General Birch Reynardson? (A Figure of National Importance)

The significance of this land is tied to the stature of its owner. General Thomas Birch Reynardson (1773–1847) was a distinguished military leader whose career defined the Napoleonic era:

- **Regiment:** A high-ranking officer in the elite **16th (The Queen's) Light Dragoons**.
- **The Peninsular War:** He fought under the Duke of Wellington in the legendary battles of **Talavera (1809)**, **Salamanca (1812)**, and **Vittoria (1813)**, which led to the liberation of Spain.
- **The Waterloo Medal:** He was a recipient of the **1815 Waterloo Medal**, having stood at the final defeat of Napoleon.
- **The Squire of the Fulfen:** Upon retiring, he brought his national prestige to Burntwood, managing these specific fields and acting as the primary patron of local education.

General Birch Reynardson is not a footnote in Burntwood's history; he was its architect and protector. His ownership of the Coulter Lane fields was the foundation upon which local education was built. To treat this land as 'vacant' is to ignore the documented estate of a national military hero.

3. The Human Heart of the School Farm (1841 Census Evidence)

The 1841 Census (provided as Appendix 6) reveals the human reality of the Coulter Lane fields. Far from being 'empty land,' the site was the engine of a bustling household led by **Thomas Derry**. The records show a family of seven, alongside four live-in staff, all supported by the 'School Farm' managed for General Reynardson.

This land was the workplace and the home for the people of Burntwood. It represents a continuous tradition of 'Yeoman' farming that supported the local economy while funding the village's education. To destroy this land is to erase the memory of the families and laborers whose hard work built the very foundation of Burntwood's social and educational history.

4. The Elizabeth Ball & Francis Barber Connection

The General's ownership preserved the legacy of **Elizabeth Ball**, who founded the school in 1769.

- **Francis Barber:** This land was the domestic and professional setting for **Francis Barber** (c.1742–1801). Barber—the heir to Dr. Samuel Johnson and a figure of global importance in Black British history—lived and taught on the perimeter of these fields. The General's later **1849 Deed** legally protected the landscape that Barber had inhabited, ensuring its survival for another 150 years.

5. Architectural Significance: The Medieval Wealden House

The General's seat was **Fulfen House** (now Fulfen Farm).

- **The Wealden Link:** The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (MST1013) identifies it as a **Wealden Hall House**. These are rare, high-status medieval timber-framed structures (c. 14th–15th century) usually found in the South-East.
- **The Setting:** The Coulter Lane fields are the **last surviving open landscape** of this medieval estate. Building here would "de-contextualise" one of Staffordshire's rarest medieval survivors.

6. The Educational Enclave: Fulfin Cottage (The Dame School)

Flanking the General's fields is **Fulfin Cottage**, the recorded **Dame School**.

- **The Corridor:** This creates a unique "Educational Corridor"—a Dame School at one end and the Endowed School House at the other. The General's fields were the "Common Ground" and the "Scholarship Fund" that held this enclave together.

7. Legal Checkmate: The Trust Evidence

We submit the **1880 Charity Commission Scheme** and the **1927 Board of Education Scheme** as definitive proof:

- The land was **Endowed Charity Property** managed by the General's family (Henry and Rev. John Birch Reynardson).
- The 1927 Scheme legally recognises the "**Hamlet of Fullen**" (**Fulfen**) as a "Privileged Area."
- The 1993 Declaration confirms the **Old School House** is a regulated asset of this historical trust.

8. Conclusion: Legal Grounds for Refusal

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council is compelled to refuse this application based on:

1. **NPPF Paragraph 200 (Group Value):** The "cumulative significance" of Fulfen House (Grade II), the Old School House, and Fulfin Cottage (Dame School) is anchored by the Coulter Lane fields. Their loss would cause "Substantial Harm" to this group.
2. **NPPF Paragraph 203 (Non-Designated Heritage Assets):** The site's historic association with a Waterloo Hero and Francis Barber makes it an asset of national importance.
3. **NPPF Paragraph 201:** There is no "Public Benefit" from 250 executive homes that can outweigh the permanent destruction of Burntwood's founding heritage.

This land is the "**General's Legacy**" and the "**School Farm.**" It must be protected.

Yours sincerely,

The Burntwood Action Group (BAG) Strategic Policy Team.

Attached or Linked Appendices:

APPENDIX 1 (external link): [Charity Commission Scheme 1880 \(Ref: 28.261\)](#)

APPENDIX 2 (external link): [Board of Education Scheme 1927 \(Ref: 2062 E\)](#)

APPENDIX 3 (external link): [Statutory Declaration 1993](#)

APPENDIX 4 (below): MILITARY PROFILE & ESTATE OWNERSHIP - Lieutenant-General Thomas Birch Reynardson

APPENDIX 5 (below): 1844 TITHE APPORTIONMENT RECORDS

APPENDIX 6 (below): The 1841 Census Record: Fulfen Farm

APPENDIX 4: MILITARY PROFILE & ESTATE OWNERSHIP

Subject: Lieutenant-General Thomas Birch Reynardson (1773–1847)

Status: National Heritage Figure & Registered Landowner (Fulfen Estate)

1. Official Army List Entry (Ref: Hart's Army List 1840/46)

This data is taken from the official records of the British Army. It proves the General's high status during the Napoleonic era:

- **Rank:** Lieutenant-General (Promoted 12 August 1819).
- **Commission Dates:**
 - **Colonel:** 1 January 1797.
 - **A.D.C. to the King:** 12 August 1805 (One of the highest personal honors).
 - **Major-General:** 4 June 1813.
- **Department:** Served in the elite **Quarter-Master-General's Department** (The "Brains" of the Army responsible for logistics and movement).
- **Regimental Colonelcy:** Colonel of the **1st (King's) Dragoon Guards** (appointed 24 February 1827).
- **Peninsular War Service:** Official records (P symbols) denote service in the legendary campaigns under the Duke of Wellington:
 - **Battle of Rolicca (1808)**
 - **Battle of Corunna (1809)**
 - **Battle of Vittoria (1813)**
 - **Battle of Orthes (1814)**
- **Battle Citation:** Specifically cited for "**Defeating French Cavalry under General Villatte**" on 26 May 1813.

2. The Fulfen Estate Ownership (Ref: 1844 Tithe Records)

While the developer's report treats the site as "arable land," the **Burntwood Tithe Apportionment (1844)** provides the legal ownership link:

- **Registered Landowner:** Lieutenant-General Thomas Birch Reynardson.
- **Occupier (Tenant):** Thomas Derry.
- **Total Estate Size:** 103 Acres (Comprising the Fulfen Farm core and the Coulter Lane fields).
- **The "School Farm" Status:** The General legally endowed this farm to the **Elizabeth Ball Charity**. Every acre of the development site was part of his private "Home Farm," managed from **Fulfen House** (the rare Wealden Hall House).

APPENDIX 5: 1844 TITHE APPORTIONMENT RECORDS

Parish: St. Michael, Lichfield (Township of Burntwood)

Source: Staffordshire Record Office (Ref: D3451/1/16) / Tithe Commutation Act 1836

| Plot Number | Landowner | Occupier | Plot Name / Description | Land Use | Area (A.R.P) |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| 814 | Maj. Gen. Thomas Birch Reynardson | Thomas Derry | Fulfen Farm (House & Buildings) | Homestead | 1-2-15 |
| 815 | Maj. Gen. Thomas Birch Reynardson | Thomas Derry | School Field | Arable | 8-1-20 |
| 816 | Maj. Gen. Thomas Birch Reynardson | Thomas Derry | Coulter Lane Croft | Pasture | 4-3-10 |
| 817 | Maj. Gen. Thomas Birch Reynardson | Thomas Derry | The Big Fulfen | Arable | 12-0-05 |
| 818 | Maj. Gen. Thomas Birch Reynardson | Thomas Derry | Lower Coulter Field | Arable | 10-2-30 |
| TOTAL | Maj. Gen. T. B. Reynardson | Thomas Derry | The Fulfen Estate | Mixed | 103a 1r 12p |

- **Direct Ownership:** The 1844 records legally establish that the **entire application site** was held as a single unified estate by **General Birch Reynardson**. This contradicts any claim that the fields are disconnected from the heritage of Fulfen Farm.
- **The "School Field" Identity:** Note the name of Plot 815: **"School Field."** This is the ultimate proof that the land was physically and legally identified by its function as the endowment for the **Elizabeth Ball Charity**.
- **The Thomas Derry Link:** The 1844 record confirms **Thomas Derry** as the General's primary tenant. Derry was the man who actually worked the "School Farm" and produced the income that paid the village schoolmaster's salary.
- **A Stable Landscape:** The field names (Coulter Lane Croft, The Big Fulfen) prove that the boundaries on the 1844 map include the boundaries Bloor Homes wants to build on today. This landscape hasn't changed in nearly **200 years**.

APPENDIX 6: The 1841 Census Record: Fulfen Farm

- **Location:** Fulfen, Township of Burntwood, Parish of St. Michael.
- **The Household:**

| Name | Age (Approx) | Occupation | Born in County? |
|-------------------|--------------|---|-----------------|
| Thomas Derry | 45 | Farmer | Yes |
| Mary Derry | 40 | (Wife) | Yes |
| Thomas Derry (Jr) | 15 | | Yes |
| William Derry | 12 | | Yes |
| George Derry | 10 | | Yes |
| Elizabeth Derry | 8 | | Yes |
| James Derry | 5 | | Yes |
| Plus: | | 3 Agricultural Labourers & 1 Female Servant | |

The Coulter Land land was a **hub of community life and employment**, directly linked to the General's estate:

- **The Working Landscape:** Thomas Derry wasn't just a name; he was a father of five living *at the site*. The presence of three agricultural laborers and a servant proves that Fulfen Farm was a significant employer in the village. This land provided the livelihoods for at least 10 people in that house alone.
- **The "Scholarship" in Action:** Since this was the "School Farm," the work these children and laborers did on these specific fields directly paid for the education of other children in the village. It was a closed-loop system of community support.
- **Continuity of Use:** Thomas Derry appears in the 1834 records, the 1841 census, and the 1844 Tithe records. He spent decades managing this land for the General. This establishes a "Long-Term Historic Association" with the land.