

HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Forward Planning Section: Landscape comments

Date: 06.12.12

Response for Development Control Officer: Hannah Morrell

Planning Application Ref: 6.148.71.C.FUL

Proposal: Erection of 1 wind turbine on 24.6m high mast (tip height 34.2m)

Location: Land Comprising Part of OS Field 7000 Kirby Lane Kearby North
Yorkshire

PHYSICAL CONTEXT:

The site lies within a moderate-scale landscape occupying the dip of a broad escarpment to the south east of Harrogate. The landform is rolling and falls away from Kirkby Overblow towards the northeast towards the Crimple Valley.

Small woodland blocks grow on higher ground and enclose and disperse views and there are also trees scattered along field boundaries.

The landscape pattern is random due to a diverse mix of land management including manicured fields managed for horses with stark post and rail fencing, which contrast with the less notable agricultural fields.

As well as post and rail fencing the view of communications masts detracts from the area. However despite these negative elements the area is pleasant and attractive and can feel remote with a sense of peacefulness. Its connection with Harrogate and Leeds makes it an important rural link valued by both local residents and visitors.

There are numerous public rights of way throughout this area and the relatively quiet lanes are popular with dog walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER:

The Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment (HDLCA) is used in support of 'saved' Policy C2 and the site lies within Area 65 known as *South East Harrogate Farmland*.

Sensitivities and pressures associated with this particular character area address the fact that the landscape has some capacity to absorb rural development, but only providing it is:

- *Small in scale;*
- *Associated with existing settlement; and*
- *If appropriate planting is used to help integrate development.*

Small in scale:

The important consideration is whether the existing landscape might accommodate the turbine. This is a large installation reaching a total height of 34.2m and even though the fields are bordered by continuous hedgerows with a good network of trees, the turbine would be still greater in vertical scale than these surrounding landscape features. It would be dominant when viewed on the skyline.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT:

An outline visual assessment was undertaken on 04.10.12 to investigate the visibility of the site from various distances and locations. The potential extent to which the turbine would be visible from these locations is set out below:

- The southern edge of Kirby Overblow;
- Various points along Kearby Lane;
- Marsh Lane; and
- Sicklinghall.

A further desk top study, involving the study of local maps, public rights of way, land contours, local settlements and important historic features has identified a number of other significant visual receptors at short, medium and long distance ranges; these include:

- Woodhall at Linton;
- Woodhall Bridge;
- Spofforth;
- East Keswick; and
- Harewood.

Close range views:

In the assessment of the views up to 1 km away, there is likely to be a high degree of visibility at close range from various points along Kearby Lane and numerous public rights of way in all directions from the turbine.

Middle distant views:

Between 1 and 2 km away, because of the topography of the land and the landscape dipping down into the Wharfedale Valley to the south, there are likely to be extensive and potentially very damaging views from the following locations:

- Sicklinghall Village;
- Stockton;
- Ebor Way to the south where views would be sustained for a long distance along this established public right of way;
- Sicklinghall (where an application is also currently pending on a 46m high turbine in a field off Paddock House Lane);
- This turbine would be seen in conjunction with a 34m high size turbine at Bowrake Farm, located approximately 1.5km to the north in Sicklinghall, which is highly visible from a number of locations along Kirby Lane both nearby Kirby Overblow and Sicklinghall; and
- It is also likely to be seen from numerous points along well used public rights of way and public highways which connect Kirby and Barrowby to Sicklinghall and other villages and settlements in this landscape character area.

Long distant views:

- Between 2 and 3 km away to the south there are long and important views from A61 and A659. Leaving the Leeds area these are long and classic views of the Wharfedale Valley. It is highly likely that this wind turbine would be seen across Wharfedale in the same view as the existing turbine at Bowrake Farm and the proposed turbine in Sicklinghall; and
- There is potential visibility from East Keswick, and areas south and east of Kirby Overblow and Harewood Avenue and Harewood Bridge. There are also potential long distance views from Spofforth.

SUMMARY OF VISUAL ASSESSMENT:

In the assessment of the views there is likely to be a high degree of visibility at close range from the adjacent tracks and from Barrowby Lane.

There are also clear views from the edge of Kirby Overblow.

This turbine would be seen in conjunction with a similar size turbine at Bowrake Farm, located approximately 2km to the north east in Sicklinghall, which is highly visible from a number of locations along Kirby Lane both nearby Kirby Overblow and Sicklinghall. It is also likely to be seen from other villages in the Wharfe Valley.

Bordering trees and rising land would screen the turbine from the nearest properties west of the turbine, however where there are open long distant views across agricultural land it is likely to be visible from a number of properties, particularly to the east in Sicklinghall.

SUMMARY:

The turbine would dominate views at close range, and in medium distant views. The turbine would be mostly above the skyline and has the potential to damage historic and classic long distance views. It is felt that that this will be harmful to the landscape character.

Associated with existing settlement:

The turbine is positioned on land to the south east of the existing main farm site, which comprises a farmhouse, and associated out-buildings. This is an open rural landscape providing extensive views particularly to the west towards Kirkby Overblow. The closest main settlement is Sicklinghall and there are scattered farmsteads and houses between the main settlements. The traditional farmsteads in this area are characterised by the compact grouping of buildings. The proposed turbine would be located some distance to the east of the farmstead and would not be perceived as being associated with the group of buildings, but rather as a separate structure with no clear physical association with the existing buildings. The turbine would be close enough however to read its functional association with the farmstead, but would always appear as being inappropriately sited, being too far from the main building group.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

The applicant has not submitted a suitable LVIA with the current application.

SUPPORT OR NON-SUPPORT:

The fact that the wind turbine has the potential to makes a positive and responsible provision for renewable energy should be taken into consideration. However, the proposed turbine as a standalone turbine will result in adverse landscape and visual impacts and this impact will be increased by the cumulative impact of the existing Bowrake Turbine and the proposed turbine at Paddock House in Sicklinghall.

Landscape objection.

FORWARD PLANNING: Conservation and Design

Landscape Architect: Debbie Samuel BA (Hons) Dip LA AMLI