

HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Forward Planning Section: Landscape comments

Date: 6.12.12

Response for Development Control Officer: Hannah Morrell

Planning Application Ref: 6.149.112.FUL

Proposal: Erection of 1 wind turbine on 46m high wind turbine on 36.4m hub with associated infrastructure.

Location: Land To the north of Office Complex. Paddock House Farm Paddock House Lane Sicklinghall North Yorkshire

PHYSICAL CONTEXT:

This site is 250m to the south of business premises at Paddock House and the turbine is to be located 850m to NE of Sicklinghall.

Land slopes away from turbine in a south-western direction and the turbine is to be 60 m from the track adjacent to a public footpath.

The land is presently densely covered in vegetation, a willow plantation which is approximately 2-3 m in height. As such views from the site are quite restricted, however once harvested or coppiced the landscape will feel much more open as the land drops away steeply to the south and southwest towards the River Wharfe Corridor.

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 and 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 the area 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*

and on the edge of Area 64 known as the *River Wharfe Corridor*.

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 and even though the fields are densely planted, 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:

A wind turbine of 46 m would be seen over a wide area and particularly in a rolling landscape where long views are prevalent. An outline visual assessment was undertaken on 04.10.12 to investigate the visibility of the site from various distances and locations, including:

- The southern edge of Kirby Overblow;
- Various points along Kearby 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 locations at short, medium and long distance ranges: These include:

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

In doing so, it is apparent that there are shortcomings in the 3 identified locations in which the applicants judged that the impact of this scheme would have minimal visual impact:

Close range:

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 land 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;
- Trip Lane up towards Woodhall to the east;
- Woodhall Bridge and Ebor Way to the south where views would be sustained for a long distance along this established public right of way;
- Barrowby and Kirby (where an application is also currently pending on a 34m high turbine in a field off Kirby 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 Sicklinghall with 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 the 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 Barrowby; and
- The turbine is potentially visible from East Keswick, Collingham, Stockeld, areas south and east of Kirby Overblow and Harewood Avenue.

Associated with existing settlement:

The turbine is positioned away from any host building. This is an open rural landscape providing extensive views particularly across the River Wharfe Corridor. The closest main settlement is Sicklinghall and there are scattered farmsteads and houses between the main settlements. The proposed turbine would not be perceived as being associated with the host buildings, but rather as a separate structure with no clear physical association with the existing buildings.

SUMMARY:

The turbine would dominate views at close range and in medium distant views. The turbine would be mostly visible 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.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

The applicant has provided a limited Landscape and Visible Impact assessment with 3 viewpoint locations. This is inadequate number for a turbine of this scale.

SUPPORT OR NON-SUPPORT:

The fact that the wind turbine has the potential to make 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 Bowrake Turbine.

In the Green Belt, this land serves an important function of separating Leeds from small villages and settlements along the Wharfe Valley. Sicklinghall and the surrounding villages attract many visitors, walkers, horse riders and cyclists. The area has an extremely high amenity value.

Landscape objection.

FORWARD PLANNING: Conservation and Design

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