

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: West/Centre Area
Date: 17 July 2008

Ward: Rural West York
Parish: Upper Poppleton Parish
Council

Reference: 08/00504/FUL
Application at: Argent Barn Burlands Lane To Burlands Farm Upper Poppleton
York YO26 6QL
For: Erection of a 17.7m high micro wind generator on land adjacent
to Argent Barn
By: Mrs A Gioello
Application Type: Full Application
Target Date: 29 April 2008

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application is for the erection 17.7metre high micro wind generator on land adjacent to Argent Barn.

1.2 The proposed turbine would be 15 metres to the hub; the rotor diameter would be 5.4 metres so the full height of the turbine would be 17.7 metres high. The turbine would have a concrete base but no dimensions have been given. The turbine would be horizontal axis.

1.3 The housing development of which Argent Barn is part of was a conversion of farm buildings. From a distance it still retains it agricultural appearance.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

Air safeguarding Air Field safeguarding 0175

City Boundary York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams West Area 0004

2.2 Policies:

CYGP1
Design

CYSP2
The York Green Belt

CYSP3
Safeguarding the Historic Character and Setting of York

CYGP5
Renewable energy

CYGB1
Development within the Green Belt

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT - No objections

EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

3.2 UPPER POPPLETON PARISH COUNCIL - No objections
- Do not have sufficient information to give an informed opinion

3.3 1 LETTER OF OBJECTION

- Design and access statement has a number of errors. There have been no electricity interruptions in the last two years.
- Concerned about noise disturbance, agent states that there is background noise such as rustling of trees, there are no trees within several hundred yards of the proposed location, noise of agricultural machinery is sporadic and not continual like the noise from a turbine, therefore it will not blend into the background noise as suggested
- Prevailing wind would carry the noise towards the dwellings
- Ambient noise level from the proposed turbine is high and there are no trees or buildings in the vicinity to absorb the noise
- Twice the height of the nearby dwellings and considerably taller than telegraph poles or trees, will have a significant impact on the openness of the greenbelt
- Cause interruption to television and radio signals
- Should be on lower land to the west of Argent Barn to provide screening and provided noise barriers.

4.0 APPRAISAL

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

4.1 08/00024/REF or APP/C2741/A/08/2071229/WF - First floor pitched roof extension and alterations (resubmission) - In Progress

4.2 07/02447/FUL - First floor pitched roof extension and alterations - Refused
- Impact on openness of green belt

4.3 06/02680/FUL - First floor pitched roof extension and alterations - Refused
- Impact on openness of green belt

4.4 02/01690/FUL - Conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to form 2 dwellings, alterations to existing dwelling and removal/relocation of agricultural buildings - Approved

KEY ISSUES

1. Energy Efficiency
2. Impact on the Green Belt

ASSESSMENT

PLANNING POLICY

4.5 Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy advises that the development of renewable energy supplies will make a vital contribution to the Government's energy policy as set out in the Energy White Paper. It is considered that the increased development of renewable energy resources is vital to facilitate the delivery of the Government's commitments on both climate change and renewable energy. The Energy White paper indicates that local and regional bodies should be involved to deliver the Government's objectives, including establishing regional targets for renewable energy generation. This statement is supported by "Planning for Renewable Energy - A Companion Guide to PPS22".

4.6 Policy GP1 'Design' of the City of York Council Development Control Local Plan includes the expectation that development proposals will, inter alia; respect or enhance the local environment; be of a density, layout, scale, mass and design that is compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces, ensure residents living nearby are not unduly affected by noise, disturbance, overlooking, overshadowing or dominated by overbearing structures, use materials appropriate to the area; avoid the loss of open spaces or other features that contribute to the landscape; incorporate appropriate landscaping and retain, enhance or create urban spaces, public views, skyline, landmarks and other features that make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

4.7 Policy GP5 'Renewable Energy' in the City of York Development Control Local Plan (2005) states that the development of renewable energy will make a vital contribution to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, facilitating the delivery of the Government's commitment on climate change. Proposal for the development of renewable energy facilities will therefore be encouraged providing there is no significant adverse effect on the existing landscape, air quality, biodiversity, water resources, agricultural land or sites of archaeological or historic importance.

4.8 Policy SP2 'The York Green Belt' in the City of York Council Development Control Local Plan (2005) states that the primary purpose of the York Green Belt is to safeguard the setting and historic character of the City of York.

4.9 Policy SP3 'Safeguarding the Historic Character and Setting of York' in the City of York Council Development Control Local Plan (2005) states that high priority will be given to the protection of the historic character and setting of York. The following principles will be applied when considering planning applications: The protection of

key historic townscape features, particularly in the City Centre, that contribute to the unique historic character and setting of the City; the protection of the Minster's dominance, at a distance, on the York skyline and City Centre roofscape; the protection of the environmental assets and landscape features which enhance the historic character and setting of the City. These comprise the river corridors and the green wedges, both existing and extended. They also include areas of open countryside, which provide an impression of a historic city, such as locations which allow good view of the Minster or an urban edge including a conservation area, and views of the City from a number of main transport routes; the protection of the main gateway transport corridors into York from development which, cumulatively, could have an adverse impact on the character and setting of the corridor and the surrounding environment. If development is allowed, early and substantial planting of sensitive boundaries will be required.

4.10 Planning Policy Guidance note 2 'Green Belts' sets out the purposes of including land within Green Belts and establishes specific categories of development that are appropriate within Green Belts. All other development is deemed inappropriate and therefore harmful to the Green Belt. For such development to be acceptable in Green Belts very special circumstances must be demonstrated to show that the harm is outweighed by other considerations. The boundaries of the Green Belt are detailed on the Proposals Map of the City of York Council Development Control Local Plan (CYCDCLP) and this site clearly falls within the Green Belt. Policy GB1 'Development in the Green Belt' of the CYCDCLP follows the advice contained in PPG2 in stating that permission for development will only be granted where: the scale, location and design would not detract from the open character of the Green Belt; it would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt; and it would not prejudice the setting and special character of the City, and is for a type of development listed as appropriate development. All other forms of development are considered to be inappropriate and very special circumstances would be required to justify where the presumption against development should not apply.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

4.11 The proposed turbine would be 15 metres in height to the hub; the rotor diameter would be 5.4 metres so the full height of the turbine would be 17.7 metres high. The turbine would have a concrete base but no dimensions have been given. The turbine would be horizontal axis. The turbine would be set 106 metres to the south west from Argent Barn. Argent Barn is 8 metres in height.

4.12 The agent has confirmed that the energy produced by the turbine would be used by Argent Barn although it would not produce enough power to cover the dwelling's usage. The applicant uses approximately 16Mwh per annum. The agent has stated that the wind speed at the applicant's site is low and is considered to be a marginal wind speed. It is not effective to operate a wind turbine at less than 5m/s. It would be 5.3m/s for a 15 metre high turbine. A 15 metre high mast would generate 8.77Mwh based on an average wind speed of 5.3 m/s. The agent states that the 15 metre high mast is the most economically viable height for this location.

4.13 PPS22 states that small scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs both locally and nationally and therefore a planning application can not be rejected simply because the level of output is small.

IMPACT ON THE GREEN BELT

4.14 PPS22 states that when proposals are sited within the green belt many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development impacting on the openness of the greenbelt. Applicants/agents need to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm if projects are to proceed. Such special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

4.15 The agent has stated that the special circumstances for erecting the turbine within the greenbelt are the reduction in house bills and the reduction in CO² emissions. A 15 metre mast would reduce carbon savings by an extra 500kg per annum and 10 tonnes of CO² over the lifetime of the turbine. A turbine on a 15 metre high mast would have a total carbon saving of 100 tonnes of CO² over the lifetime of the turbine. Although no figures were provided of the CO² emissions of the manufacture of the turbine and the logistics of getting it to the site.

4.16 This part of the green belt is particularly open and flat and there is no screening of the proposed turbine from the road (A59 - a main transport route into York), the nearby York to Harrogate railway line, or the wider greenbelt. Indeed any screening may reduce the efficiency of the proposed turbine. The agent has stated that a group of small trees would provide screening however by virtue of the age of the trees it would be up to 20 years before these would provide sufficient screening of the proposed turbine. The average lifespan of a small-scale wind turbine is 20 - 25 years.

4.17 Any reduction in the height of the turbine (to reduce the impact on the greenbelt) would reduce the amount of power it could produce. The full height of the proposed turbine would be 17.7 metres there is concern regarding the height and the visibility from a distance. The colour of the monopole would reduce the visual impact to some extent. It is considered that the stated benefits do not constitute very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm and inappropriateness caused by the height and the prominent position of the proposed turbine on the openness of the green belt. There is concern regarding the potential visual cumulative impact of turbines of this type on the openness of the greenbelt. Approving the turbine would create a precedent, which whilst in itself not a reason for refusal is a material consideration.

OTHER ISSUES

4.18 It is advised in "Planning for Renewable Energy - A Companion Guide to PPS22" that there is evidence to suggest that the risk of collision of birds with moving of the rotor blades is minimal for both migrating birds and for local habitats.

4.19 An objection has been received regarding possible noise pollution from the proposed turbine. However the Environmental Protection Unit do not have any concerns regarding this issue by virtue the lack of gearbox and the significant distance between the turbine and the nearby group of dwellings.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The proposed turbine is considered to be inappropriate development in the green belt. There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt. Policy GB1 and PPG2 state that very special circumstances will be required to justify instances where this presumption against development should not apply.

5.2 Central Government policy on renewable energy contained within PPS22 advises that projects within the green belt that harm the openness of the greenbelt will be inappropriate unless very special circumstances exist.

5.3 It is considered that the proposed wind turbine would by virtue of its height and prominent location would (in a particularly flat and open part of the greenbelt) impact on the openness of the greenbelt. The justification from the agent of a partial reduction in energy bills and the reduction in CO² cannot be considered very special circumstances as this would justify all such projects.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1 The proposed 17.7 metre high wind turbine is considered to be inappropriate development within the green belt which by virtue of its height and prominent location within flat and open countryside would harm the openness of the green belt. The applicant has not demonstrated very special circumstances that would justify such inappropriate development in the green belt and therefore the proposal is contrary to Policies GP1, GP5, and GB1 of the City of York Council Development Control Local Plan (2005); national planning guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 2 - Green Belts and Planning Policy Statement 22 - Renewable Energy.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

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