

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Planning Application: Erection of Domestic Wind Turbine

Martin Nest Farm, Victoria, Hepworth, Holmfirth

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 We act for Mr & Mrs Turner and have been instructed to provide advice and submit a planning application for the erection of a domestic wind turbine to serve their farmhouse and agricultural business.

1.2 This document assesses the planning policy and detailed design issues relevant to the proposal. It should be read in conjunction with the supporting information submitted with the planning application.

2.0 ASSESSMENT

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 Martin Nest Farm is located to the east of Hepworth, near Holmfirth. It is an intensive livestock farm involving pigs, breeding ewes and laying hen operations. The farm is located just inside the Barnsley Metropolitan area.

2.1.2 The application site for the wind turbine is to the south of the farmstead, on the northern slope of Wood Royd Hill. It is approximately 250 metres from the farmstead, as shown on the enclosed location plan and aerial photograph.

2.1.3 The site forms part of our clients' agricultural holding and is considered to be the most appropriate location for the turbine, as discussed in the Design section below.

2.2 The Proposal

2.2.1 The proposal is for a Proven WT15000 wind turbine to be erected to provide electricity for the farmhouse and farming activities. This is a modest scale turbine for domestic and small business operations. The turbine will measure 15 metres in height with 4.8 metre blades.

2.3 Planning Policy Considerations

2.3.1 The site is located outside any settlement and within the Green Belt. National planning policies relevant to the proposal are contained with Planning Policy Guidance Note 2

Green Belts, Planning Policy Statement 7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* and Planning Policy Statement 22 *Renewable Energy*. We assess the proposal in terms of these policies below.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts

- 2.3.2 PPG2 sets out that development which is considered to be appropriate in Green Belt locations. Whilst wind turbines are not listed in paragraph 3.4 in the types of development considered to be appropriate we are of the view that nevertheless there should not be an automatic policy presumption against such developments.
- 2.3.3 As development associated with an existing dwelling and agricultural business the wind turbine can be appropriate development in association with agriculture. It could also be considered under paragraph 3.12, which covers other development. We would argue that the turbine can fall within the “engineering and other operations” mentioned and is not therefore inappropriate development provided the openness of the Green Belt is maintained and there is no conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
- 2.3.4 We are therefore satisfied that wind turbines can be appropriate development in the Green Belt. This is confirmed by the presence of two domestic turbines on nearby properties to Martin Nest Farm and the large wind farm at Royd Moor.

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

- 2.3.5 PPS7 is supportive of the exploitation of renewable energy sources in rural areas. It encourages support for agricultural operations to be sustainable and environmentally friendly. The proposed turbine will help our clients achieve this aim to provide a significant amount of their energy from a renewable source.

Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy

- 2.3.6 PPS22 advises that a positive approach should be taken to proposals for renewable energy where the technology is viable and environmental and social impacts can be satisfactorily addressed.
- 2.3.7 Small-scale projects are advised to provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs locally and nationally. Every such application helps to reduce our reliance upon fossil fuels and should be viewed in a positive manner.
- 2.3.8 Being located in the Green Belt the visual impact of the proposal is important and we deal with this issue in the Design section below.

Barnsley Unitary Development Plan

- 2.3.9 Martin Nest Farm is located just inside Barnsley District and therefore any proposals must satisfy the policies set out in the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan.

- 2.3.10 Policies GS6 to GS9 deal with development in the Green Belt. They aim to ensure that development will not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, will maintain openness and cause no significant harm to the visual amenity of this area. We provide an assessment of the proposal in relation to these policies below.
- 2.3.11 Policy ES12 relates specifically to wind energy proposals. It lists a number of criteria that proposals should satisfy and we comment upon these below.

3.0 DESIGN

- 3.1 The proposed turbine is a Proven WT15000 turbine, measuring 15 metres in height. A Planning Pack is enclosed provided by Proven, which details the technical specifications of the turbine and provides information upon noise, visual impact, ornithological issues and examples where such turbines have been determined to be acceptable in sensitive landscape areas.
- 3.2 In addition to the Planning Pack a Noise Emission Report is also provided. This indicates that the level of noise emitted from a Proven WT15000 turbine is not considered to harm the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, being on a similar level to the sound of talking. The turbine will be sited approximately 250 metres away from the nearest dwelling apart from Martin Nest Farm, the adjacent property called The Potting Shed, and this will further diminish any noise emissions.
- 3.3 The best location for the turbine is considered to be on the northern slope of Wood Royd Hill, to the south of the farmstead. This is a position elevated above the main farmstead and will enable the turbine to be most efficient in terms of wind capture.
- 3.4 The turbine will start producing power in winds of 2.5 metres per second. The Government's BERR computer model gives an annual average wind speed reading of 7.2 m/s for the 1 km grid square around the turbine site. This is an exposed position with an exceptional wind speed and it is expected that the turbine will produce approximately 55,000 k Wh per annum here.
- 3.5 The annual electricity usage of Martin Nest Farm is in the region of 100,000 kWh. The turbine will produce approximately 55% of the farm's annual usage thus reducing our client's reliance upon mains grid electricity and reducing the farm's utility bills.
- 3.6 The purposes of including land within the Green Belt around Barnsley are stated in Policy GS6 to check the unrestricted sprawl of the main urban area of Barnsley, prevent the coalescence of the towns and villages in the Borough and provide convenient opportunities for access, informal recreation and nature conservation. The proposed turbine will not conflict with any of these purposes or inhibit their functions.
- 3.7 The turbine will be a thin column, of an off-white colour, which will blend in with the background environment. There will be no other buildings associated with the turbine. Connection to the farm will be via underground cable. The distribution box, meters and inverters will be located within a barn on the farmstead and will feed the farm supply

from there. Impact upon the landscape and the Green Belt is therefore minimised and the openness will not be harmed in any way.

- 3.8 It is acknowledged that the site is relatively visible within the wider landscape however the turbine is small in scale and will not have a significant impact. Additional screening of the turbine is not considered to be appropriate in this location due to the nature of the landscape. Although it may be possible to pick out the turbine in the landscape it will not be a dominant or intrusive feature as it is small in scale therefore long distance views are unlikely.
- 3.9 In terms of near distance views the turbine will be viewed in the context of the farmstead and other surrounding developments. Two properties near to Martin Nest Farm have small, individual turbines. This demonstrates that their installation in this landscape is acceptable. Further to the south is a large wind farm at Royd Moor. This further demonstrates that wind turbines in this area are acceptable.
- 3.10 It is important to consider whether the proposed turbine, considered in the context of the presence of other turbines in the landscape will have a harmful cumulative impact. The large wind farm cannot be viewed from the application site and therefore the turbine will not be viewed in the context of this development. With regards to nearby turbines there are only two small turbines serving adjacent farmsteads. An additional turbine at our client's property is not considered to result in a significant number in the locality. We are therefore satisfied that the turbine will not cause any harm to the visual amenity of the Green Belt, either on its own or in association with any nearby turbines. The proposal therefore accords with Policies GS6 to GS9 of the UDP.
- 3.11 Policy ES12 lists a number of factors that will be considered for proposals for turbines. We have considered criteria A and B above and conclude that the proposal will not have a detrimental effect upon the landscape, visual amenity of the area or residential amenity of nearby dwellings.
- 3.12 Access to the highway network is only required at the time of installation and this can be provided via a field gate leading off Hog Close Lane. There will be no harm to the safety of road users in the vicinity. Being a small scale, individual turbine it is not likely to cause any visual distraction to passing motorists.
- 3.13 The turbine will not have a detrimental impact upon wildlife, ecology or archaeology in the area, impact upon the ability of our clients to continue to farm their land, have any electro-magnetic effects or cause significant shadow flicker or flashing from the blades. Connection to the electricity transmission and supply system has been described above and is satisfactory.
- 3.14 We are therefore of the view that the proposed turbine fully accords with the requirements of Policy ES12.

4.0 ACCESS

- 4.1 As mentioned above, vehicular access to the site is via a field gate leading from Hog Close Lane. Pedestrian access is available across the field from the farmstead or along the lane. The turbine can be safely delivered and installed in this location without harming the safe operation of the local highway network.
- 4.2 Any servicing and maintenance requirements will be arranged via our clients through the farmstead and will not impact upon local road users.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The principle of a turbine in this location is considered to be acceptable. The turbine will have no adverse impact upon the Green Belt or wider landscape in this area.
- 5.2 The provision of alternative, renewable energy sources is strongly supported by Government policy to help meet the UK's targets for cutting carbon emissions. All schemes, however large or small are important to contribute to these targets. Our client's turbine will enable the farm to be served in part by renewable energy to reduce demand upon the National Grid.
- 5.3 The proposal satisfies all relevant national and local planning policies.

CARTER JONAS LLP
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