

COCKFIELD - BUTTONS GREEN FARM, BUTTONS GREEN

Erection of 9 metre high wind turbine.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Ackroyd-Cooper

Case Officer: Deborah Board

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BACKGROUND

1. The application was originally submitted for a 15 metre turbine. In response to concerns raised by the Parish Council and neighbouring residents the applicant has agreed to reduce the proposal to a 9m installation and it is this proposal that is before members for consideration.

SITE

2. The application site is part of Buttons Green Farm. The main dwelling (Grade II Listed) is located to the north east area of the site and is surrounded by a group of farm buildings. Hedges mark the site boundaries and within the site there is a run of tall poplar trees. There are no significant changes in level.

PROPOSAL

3. The application proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 9m high wind turbine 3 metres from the south boundary and 60 metres from the west boundary of the site, as detailed on the site location plan dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006. The diameter of the rotor would be 5.5m, giving an overall height of about 12m.

HISTORY

4. B/05/02121/FUL - Conversion and alterations to single-storey building to form 2 no. holiday units, Approved, 10.04.2006.
5. B/04/01187/LBC – Application for Listed Building Consent - Retention of insertion of 1 no. replacement window on rear elevation; reinstatement of 2 no. mullion windows on front elevation; reinstatement of 1 no. mullion window on side elevation. Approved, 20.08.2004.
6. B/04/00610/LBC - Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of render. Approved, 03.06.2004.

POLICY

**Suffolk Structure Plan 2001**

- ENV4 (Countryside)
- ENV10 (Renewable Energy)

## **Babergh Local Plan, Alteration No.2 (2006)**

- HS04 (Protecting the Countryside)
- CN01 (Design Standards)
- CR01 (Landscape Quality)
- CN05 (Listed Buildings)
- CN06 (Listed Buildings)
- EN09 (Conservation of Energy)
- EN10 (Renewable Energy)

*\* please note that details or extracts of policies are no longer included in reports - see page 4 of these papers.*

### **Relevant Government Guidance**

7. PPS22 (Renewable Energy) provides advice and guidance for local authorities when considering proposals for development for renewable energy provision. The key points are:
  - Issues of landscape and visual impact should be addressed at the scheme-specific level. Cumulative impacts should also be assessed and mitigated at this level;
  - Local planning authorities should recognise that the landscape and visual effects will only be one consideration to be taken into account in assessing planning applications, and that these must be considered alongside the wider environmental, economic and social benefits that arise from renewable energy projects;
  - Applications should be determined with reference to criteria-based regional and local plan policies and supplementary planning documents where applicable;
  - By comparison with most applications, there is likely to be an increased level of public interest in renewables schemes. This makes community involvement essential if the public is to be kept informed about the proposals.
8. In determining a planning application, planning authorities must assess the case for each project put forward by a developer and come to an objective view on:
  - The extent to which the project is in conformity with the development plan, in particular relevant criteria-based policies and any 'broad area' policies in RSS;
  - The extent to which the reasons for any area based designations may be compromised;
  - The extent of any positive or negative impacts, and the means by which they may be mitigated, if negative; and,
  - The contribution towards meeting the regional target, but recognising that a small contribution cannot be in itself a reason for refusal of permission.

### **PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)**

- This sets out the government's objectives for development in the Countryside.

### **PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment)**

- (PPG15) was issued in September 1994 and remains the main document for Government advice and guidance to Local Planning Authorities on the operation of the planning system in relation to the historic environment.

## OBSERVATIONS

### **Original Plans**

9. PC – reservations on the visual impact of a 15m construction as proposed in the open countryside and close to listed buildings. The parish council would prefer a 9 metre construction. Members of the public were also present at the meeting and raised issues of visual impact and the need to control access and noise.
10. There have been three neighbour representations received with the main points being, in summary:
  - Detrimental to listed property;
  - Turbine would be highly visible;
  - The structure cannot be concealed;
  - The proposal will be noisy.

### **Amended Plans**

11. To be reported.

## ASSESSMENT

12. The main issues to consider are:
  - The provision of the structure for renewable energy balanced against the impact on the landscape;
  - The impact of the proposal on the setting of the Listed Building; and
  - Relationship to adjoining dwellings.
13. PPS22, policy ENV10 of the Structure Plan and policies EN09 and EN10 of the Babergh Local Plan support proposals for the provision of renewable energy development subject to there being no material conflict with residential amenity or the protection of the environment. Policies within the Structure Plan and also the Babergh Local Plan seek to protect the countryside for its own sake from development that would materially harm the landscape character. All new development should be essential in the countryside.

14. The location of the proposed turbine is proposed to serve the residential dwelling and previously approved holiday lets (ref B/05/02121/FUL) at Buttons Green Farm. In this regard it would have to be located in the countryside in this location in order to serve this dwelling. Therefore it is necessary to assess whether this is the least intrusive position within the site. The site proposed is as close to boundaries/landscape feature that would mitigate its impact as is possible. When viewed from the north the group of building would be read before the proposal and landscaping beyond. The primary views of the proposal would be from the south with views from east/west being blurred by the existing tree screen. Overall it is considered that the impact of the structure within the landscape would not be significant enough to demonstrate harm, in particular as the structure would be no more intrusive than the telegraph pole located to the south of the site boundary.
15. In terms of relationship to and impact of the proposal on the Listed Building the siting proposed is most appropriate and would not impact on primary views to and from and of this building in the landscape.
16. The proposal is at least 150m from other dwellings in the locality. Neighbour objections refer to noise from the proposal. Information submitted with the application seeks to demonstrate that the proposal would be acceptable in this regard. Noise issues are primarily a matter for alternative legislation and given the material submitted it is considered that to refuse permission on this ground would be untenable. The views of Environmental Health have been sought and members will be updated verbally on this issue.

#### REASONS FOR APPROVAL

17. The proposed wind turbine is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the area, given its size and position in relative isolation in a well screened site. The noise impact has been assessed and it is not considered that the turbine will give rise to any adverse noise impact. The proposal is not considered to reduce the level of amenity enjoyed by neighbouring occupants so as to justify refusal of planning permission. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies ENV10, ENV4, HS04, HS17, CR01 and CN01, CN05, CN06, EN09 and EN10 of the Development Plan.

#### RECOMMENDATION

- A. Subject to no adverse comments being received from the re consultation the Head of Planning Control) be authorised to grant planning permission.

Otherwise,

- B. Refuse planning permission (as may be appropriate)

#### DECISION

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