

From: Paul Jackson
To: Peel, Alex
Date: 20/10/2009 11:13
Subject: Re: 09/02339/FUL - OS Field 0001, North Moor Lane, Yearsley

Alex

I think the main problem is that landscape impact, at the end of the day, is a subjective judgement. What one person thinks is acceptable another person thinks isn't. And when there may be a fine line between the two, that's where the difficulty lies.

Any development of this type is going to have an impact on the AONB landscape and the issue is whether or not it will be 'significant'. In line with our Management Plan Objective D5.2, I'm happy that it's the right technology and it's certainly a location I'd envisaged would come forward for a turbine development. As for scale I'd probably prefer a slightly lower tower height, but I didn't feel strongly enough about it to suggest that in my original response letter.

As best as I can estimate, the communications mast in the nearby woodland is about 23m tall, which would make the tower lower than this but the overall height (to tip of rotor blade) about the same.

I think we're agreed that the most conspicuous, continuous view is when approaching from Yearsley to the west, as it runs past the site of the proposed development. The views from the B1363 to the north and south, and the minor road as it comes from Hovingham, are long-distance or significantly interrupted and aren't therefore significant.

The most open section of the western approach is the last 300m or so, where a new hedge and trees were planted 3 years ago. Although these aren't tall enough yet to provide significant screening, they are growing very quickly and are in a good place for effective screening, i.e. close to the viewer. I therefore felt that these would provide useful interruptive screening once they had grown up, although of course they will take a while to do that. If the development was approved you may consider putting a Landscaping Condition on it, for example to safeguard the value of the existing hedges, specify minimum heights, ask for more planting, etc, etc. If that was the case I'd ask that you keep us in the loop, to ensure that any landscaping scheme fits in with the landscape character of the locality.

Another aspect I considered was the permanence of this development and any precedent it might set. Turbines have a life of approx. 25 years maximum and, if a Removal Condition was imposed, then the development could in essence disappear at the end of its life. That therefore puts it in a different category to say the adjacent house and barns, which are now likely to be there permanently. The AONB Committee's acceptance of a turbine now also isn't any guarantee of acceptance of any future proposals, because they would be judged on their own individual merits again.

I accept that this one is a close call, but my initial reaction was not that this was of an inappropriate height or location. This view was supported by the responses I had from our Committee members, to whom I had circulated the details and asked for comments.

Whilst I am pleased that our engagement with planning applications is very good, at the end of the day we are one of many responses you are likely to have received on this proposal, and our comments are restricted almost entirely to the issue of landscape impact. I haven't sought to judge it against all the relevant LDF policies, as in order to be consistent that is the LPA's role. I therefore always accept that the final decisions will depend upon wider factors than the comments I have submitted and that sometimes decisions go in-line with our views and sometimes they don't.

I hope this is useful.

Paul

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>>> Alex Peel <Alex.Peel@hambleton.gov.uk> 14/10/2009 11:36 >>>

Hi Paul

Thank you for your response received 22 September 2009, regarding the above application.

I have to admit I was surprised by your response and had expected a recommendation for refusal. I have therefore been back to carry out a further site visit and spend some more time driving and walking around the site. I agree that the turbine is fairly well screened from most view points around the site by the existing landform, hedgerows and trees. However, the turbine will be visible when approached from the west and this is my main concern. I note that you feel that the hedgerows and trees along the main road will interrupt the view of the turbine and it will therefore not have an adverse impact upon the special qualities of the AONB. When I revisited the site and drove from Yearsley and along the main road, I noted large rows of trees which would indeed interrupt the views, however, once past these trees I felt that the landscape was open and although there is a boundary hedgerow this would not screen the turbine. Therefore, the turbine would be highly visible from the main road and prominent within the AONB. I am concerned that the site is too conspicuous and the structure would be an incongruous feature which would harm the attractive qualities of the landscape.

I really would appreciate your views on this.

Kind Regards

Alex