

Date of Meeting	12 August 2010
Application Number	E/10/0396/FUL
Site Address	Harding Severalls, Newtown, Shalbourne, Marlborough, SN8 3PR
Proposal	Erect a 6.6m freestanding tower supporting wind turbine.
Applicant	Mr Adrian Wiltshire
Town/Parish Council	SHALBOURNE
Grid Ref	430360 162643
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Andrew Guest

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application is before committee at the request of the divisional member Cllr Wheeler.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendation that the application be approved.

2. Report Summary

The main issues in this case are the impact of the proposed development on:

- The surrounding Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Residential amenity.

The application has generated an objection from Shalbourne Parish Council and one objection from a third party.

3. Site Description

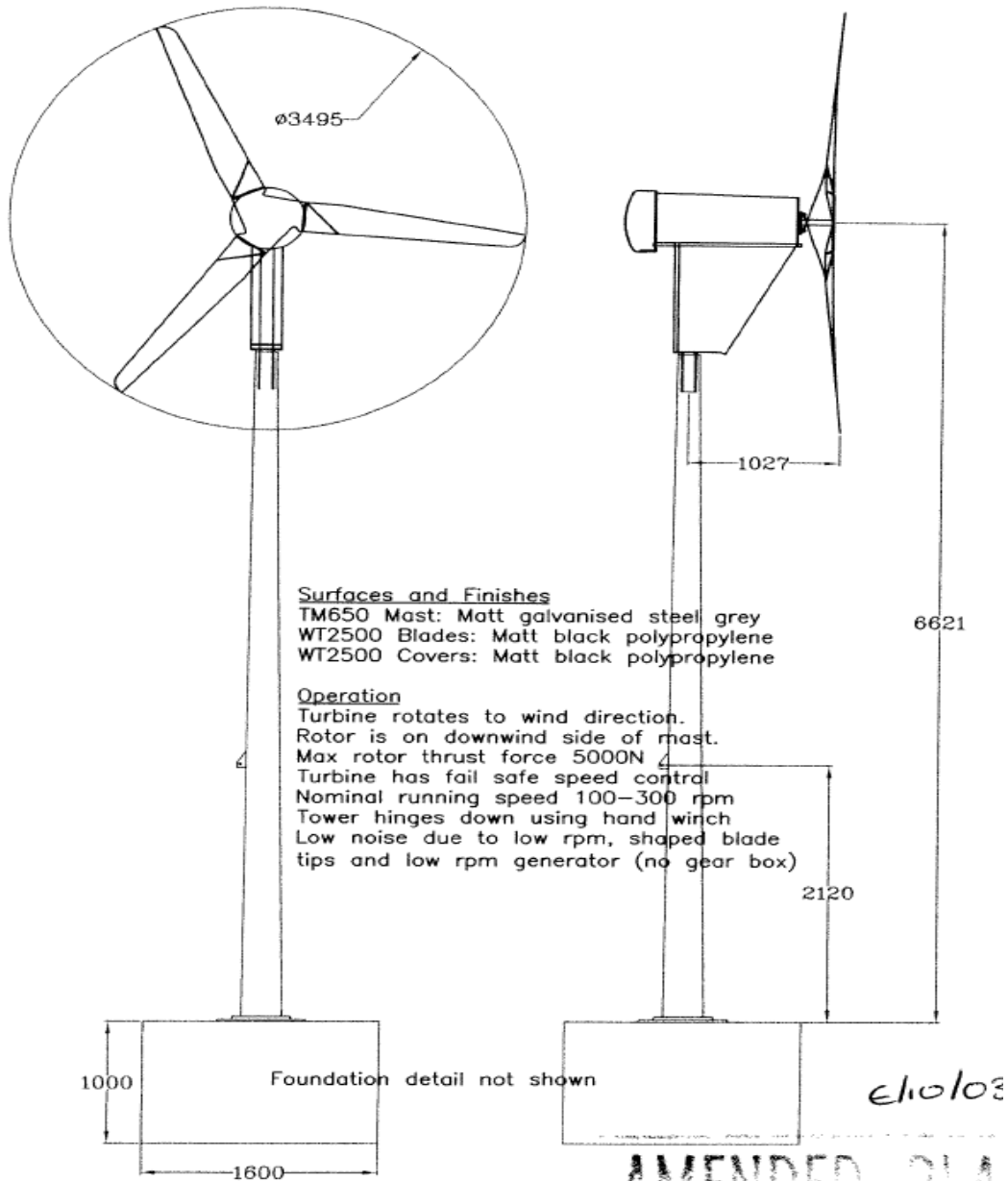
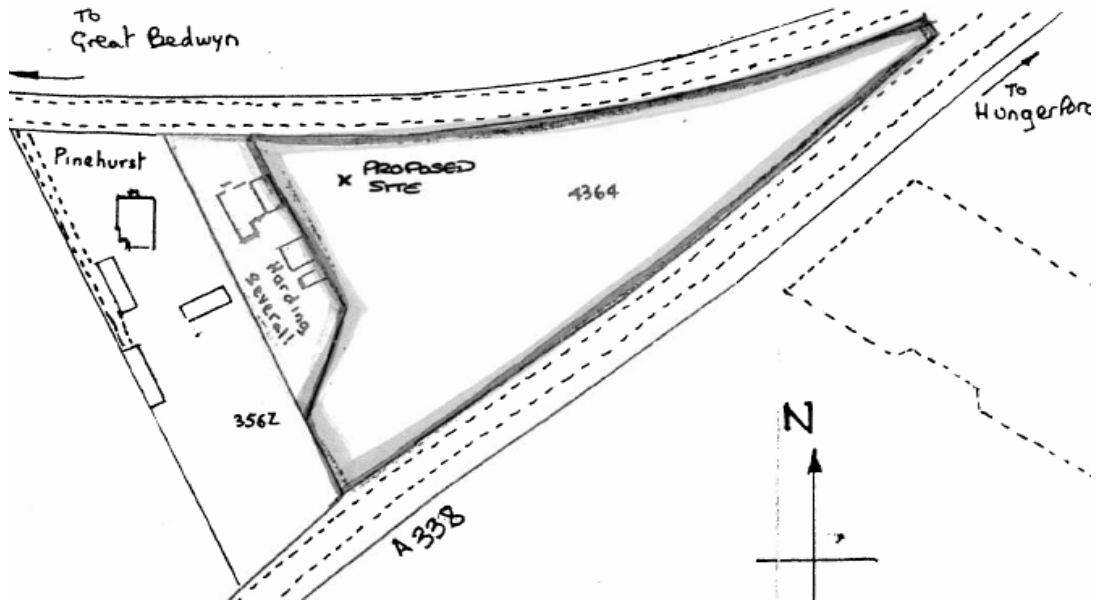
The site relates to a paddock which lies adjacent to Harding Severalls, a residential property located approximately 1km to the west of the village of Shalbourne. With the exception of the adjacent residential property (Pinehurst) the site is fairly isolated, bound to the south by the A338 and falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB boundary.

4. Planning History

No relevant planning history.

5. The Proposal

Application relates to a freestanding wind turbine proposed to be sited on paddock land adjacent to the applicant's property. The turbine would be 6.6m high to hub; with a rotor diameter of 3.5m (maximum overall height including blades therefore 8.35m). The material construction of the turbine would be galvanised steel in grey, with black turbine blades. The purpose of the wind turbine is for domestic use; however the applicant has indicated that the tower would be connected to the Local Distribution Network to allow surplus electricity to be returned to the local grid.



Proposed Wind Turbine & Location Plan (not to scale)

6. Planning Policy

The relevant policies are as follows:

Kennet Local Plan 2011 – PD1, NR7, NR19

Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016- RE1, RE2, C9

Government Policy - PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) and PPS22 (Renewable Energy)

7. Consultations

Shalbourne Parish Council – Strongly objects to the proposal considering that it is an unattractive intrusion into an AONB. Comment that structure would be close to and visible over wide area including from Shalbourne Conservation Area. Concerned would set unfortunate precedent and landscape could become scattered with numerous such installations. Parish Council respect applicants wish to conserve energy resources, but comment that as application particulars indicate that turbine will at best only be capable of supplying energy for domestic needs of the applicant, the damage to the environment from this unsightly structure outweighs any saving that might be obtained from its installation.

Wiltshire Council Environmental Health Officer - In response to additional information can confirm that the Environmental Protection Team has no adverse comments. This decision was based on the information submitted in the noise assessment report, which states that at 30m (distance from proposed turbine to neighbour's boundary) that the noise will be 45db in high winds of 20m/s and 25db during low wind of 5m/s. 25db is a very low noise level that would not be noticeable amongst background noise in the area. During high wind the background noise would be expected to be louder, therefore the increased noise from the turbine would not be likely to cause nuisance. With regard to the tonality of the turbine, the manufacturer provided the following information, stating the turbine model is non tonal:

'We have three wind turbines – P7, P11 and P35-2. The P11 and P35-2 have been independently tested for tonal noise and both have been found to be non-tonal. As the architecture of all three wind turbine models is the same Proven is confident that the P7 is also non-tonal.' Paul Parker, Proven Energy

Wiltshire Council Landscape Consultant - visited the site at the pre-application stage and discussed the proposals with the applicant in the light of the concerns that were raised over the siting and dimensions of the originally proposed turbine.

The new location, reduced height of the tower and smaller rotor diameter (compared to that proposed in a pre-application discussion) have significantly reduced the potential impacts of the turbine on the AONB landscape. Despite the elevated nature of the site, the new location is relatively close to the dwelling and the tall roadside hedge. There will be glimpsed views of the hub and rotor, which will be exacerbated by the movement of the rotor, but these views will not be significant, which is helped considerably by the reduction in tower height.

Therefore, I feel that the proposals are acceptable and will not significantly detrimentally impact on the character and visual qualities of the AONB. The proposed coloration will be acceptable for the small-scale of the structure.

8. Publicity

The application has been publicised by site notice and neighbour notification.

A representation has been received from the owner/occupiers of Pinehurst (property adjacent to site), commenting that the area is peaceful and quiet and expressing concerns regarding the noise that maybe given off by the turbine, considering it will be continuous and intrusive, spoiling the pleasure they have in own home.

The applicant has responded to this representation inviting the neighbour to visit other sites with similar turbines so they can experience noise first hand. Also comments that he does not consider that the turbine would be particularly visible or intrusive when viewed from public rights

of way or roads within Shalbourne Conservation Area. He states that he has planted thirteen new trees and restored the boundary hedge in the direct line between Shalbourne and the proposed turbine which over time, will further lessen any visual impact. Regarding precedent believes that as with all developments, any future wind turbines would be subject to their own individual planning applications and appropriate scrutiny. Would welcome proposal from Parish Council to implement community wide renewable energy scheme to benefit whole village. Strongly believes in sanctity of AONB but considers we must take proactive steps to protect it and the wider environment.

9. Planning Considerations

The key issue when assessing this application is balancing the importance of renewable technologies and the need to reduce carbon emissions against the impact of the proposal on visual and residential amenity. The application particulars indicate that the turbine would typically generate sufficient energy to power a standard three bedroom home (excluding heating) and would be connected to the Local Distribution Network to allow surplus electricity to be returned to the local grid.

Impact on Visual Amenity.

The site of the proposed development falls within the area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). The prime reason for AONB designation is conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Government guidance contained in PPS22 (Renewable Energy) encourages the development of renewable energy generation and targets 10% of electricity requirements to be met by renewables by 2010 with the contribution of small-scale projects being recognised. It is however necessary to balance the benefits of renewable against the environmental impacts such development may have and the requirement to conserve and enhance the environment. The Council is therefore generally supportive of proposals where they are appropriate to the character of the landscape in which they are to be located, inline with guidance in PPS22, Kennet Local Plan policies PD1, NR7 and NR19 & Structure Plan Policies RE1, RE2 and C9. A similar structure was granted planning permission to the south of the Devizes - Andover road (A 342) adjacent to 10 Andover Road, Chirton, a year ago and has been constructed. The turbine there is 7.5 metres in height, slightly higher than this one, with rotor blades of the same 3.5 metre dimension. However, this site is admittedly on lower lying ground and just outside of the AONB.

The proposed development is on elevated land, just below the crest of a ridge to the north of Shalbourne. In this position, the turbine will be visible, particularly from nearby roads. However, it is domestic in scale, with the tower comparable in height and width to a telegraph pole. Its appearance and siting (in close proximity to existing built development and roadside hedge) will help mitigate its visual impact and as a result Officer's share the view of the Council's Landscape Consultant, considering that the turbine should not detract significantly from the surrounding environment. Whilst it will be visible in more distant views, its limited scale means that its impact will be muted.

Impact on residential amenity (in particular visual and noise related impacts)

Although the paddock is quite isolated, one neighbouring residential property (Pinehurst) lies approximately 30 metres to the west of the site, albeit separated from the development by the applicant's property.

The applicant has submitted information regarding the predicted noise levels and tone and as a result of this data, the Council's Environmental Health Officer's are satisfied that the turbine will not cause a noise nuisance. This is because at a 30 metre distance, in low wind the noise from the turbine would not be noticeable above background noise in the area and when wind speeds are higher, the higher background noise that would be expected would prevent the turbine causing a noise nuisance. Given its domestic scale and siting, the development will not be readily visible when viewed from the adjacent residential property (Pinehurst).

10 Conclusion

The technical evidence demonstrates that there should not be any unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of the neighbour's property. This leaves the main issue as the impact on the

appearance of the landscape, balanced against the Government's encouragement of renewable technologies. Taking account of the limited size of this structure, it is considered that on this occasion, the balance lies in favour of approving the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years of the date of this permission.

REASON:

To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The external finish of the wind turbine shall be as specified on the approved drawings (namely matt grey for tower/hub with black rotor blades) and shall be maintained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

REASON:

In the interests of the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

- 3 If the turbine ceases to be used for the purposes of generating renewable energy, the steel turbine structure and associated turbine and blades shall be removed within six months of the use ceasing.

REASON:

To protect the character and appearance of the area, as the visual impact is only justified by the benefits of the renewable energy being produced.

- 4 This decision relates to documents/plans submitted with the application, listed below. No variation from the approved documents should be made without the prior approval of this Council. Amendments may require the submission of a further application. Failure to comply with this advice may lead to enforcement action which may require alterations and/or demolition of any unauthorised buildings or structures and may also lead to prosecution.

Plan Ref: 2500 PL 001 rev5 dated 17/09/03, Location of Tower (scale 1:200) Location Plan (scale 1:1250) received on the 26/03/10, Supporting Statement and Proven Noise Emission Report received 26/03/10 and additional noise information contained in email from Adrian Wiltshire dated 15/06/10.

Reason for granting planning permission -

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken on the grounds that the proposed development would not cause any significant harm to interests of acknowledged importance and having regard to the following policies and proposals, namely policies PD1, NR7 and NR19 of the Kennet Local Plan 2011, policies RE1, RE2 and C9 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016 and Government Policies PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and PPS22: Renewable Energy.

Appendices:

None

Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:

Planning application file and associated history files