

DCSW2008/2735/F - THE ERECTION OF A WIND TURBINE INSTALLATION AND THE MOUNTING OF EIGHT P.V. ARRAY PANELS ON THE SCHOOL. GARWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL, GARWAY, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR2 8RQ

For: Garway CP School, per Herefordshire Council, Property Services, Franklin House, 4 Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB

Date Received: 3rd November 2008 Ward: Pontrilas Grid Ref: 46080, 22764

Expiry Date: 29th December 2008

Local Member: Councillor R Smith

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 Garway Primary School is located at the western end of the smaller settlement of Garway on rising ground to the northern side of the minor road C1239. Public footpath GW21 leaves the C1239 in a north westerly direction, approximately 3 metres from the southwest corner of the application site.
- 1.2 The site comprises a range of modern single storey brick buildings with playing field to the north and west of the school buildings. There is a mature hedgerow to the southern boundary with the highway and a band of trees along the western boundary. The site is bordered by agricultural land to the north and west, dwellings to the east and the parish hall and, more dwellings to the south.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks to erect a wind turbine (a Proven WT6000 6kw) to the northwestern corner of the school grounds, which is the highest point within the grounds. The blades will be mounted on a 15m high-galvanised steel tower with the three matt black blades forming a 5.5m swept area (maximum height 20.5m). A 1.8m high mesh fence with access gate will be erected at the base of the tower. In addition to the wind turbine, it is proposed to mount 8 photovoltaic arrays each measuring 1.57 x 0.8m on the roof of the school building.

2. Policies

2.1 Government Guidance

- PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning and Climate Change, (supplementary to PPS1)
- PPS7 - Sustainable development in rural areas
- PPS22 - Renewable Energy
Planning for Renewable Energy: a companion guide to PPS22
- PPG24 - Planning and Noise

2.2 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

Policy EN1: Energy Generation

2.3 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

Policy S1	-	Sustainable Design
Policy S2	-	Development Requirements
Policy S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy S11	-	Community Facilities and Services
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to Change
Policy NC1	-	Biodiversity and Development
Policy CF4	-	Renewable Energy

3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCSW2008/0060/F - Installation of nursery unit/classroom on school site - Council Approved 26.02.2008
- 3.2 DCSW2004/3292/F - Extension to increase size of classroom and to provide additional toilets, storage and staff room - Council Approved 2.11.2004
- 3.3 DCSW2000/0979/F - Single storey extension to form new classroom - Council Approved 21.07.2000

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 No statutory or non-statutory consultations required.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 The Traffic Manager has no objection to the proposal.
- 4.3 The Public Rights of Way Manager has no objection to the proposal.
- 4.4 The Conservation Manager has provided the following comments: -
The applicant flew a survey balloon at the proposed position of the wind turbine on 17th September 2008. This facilitated identification and assessment of the views of the proposed wind turbine from the surrounding countryside.

I consider that it is unlikely that there will be any middle distance (0.5 - 2km) or long distance viewpoints (over 2km), of any significance. If there are any vantage points on Garway Hill, to the north, the wind turbine would be viewed against a backdrop of fields and it would appear as a very insignificant element in the wider landscape. The land falls away to the east, south and west, restricting views of Garway.

However, whilst the adverse visual impact of the wind turbine is localised, being visually contained by the topography of the area, nonetheless the wind turbine would have a significant adverse impact on views into the site from the north and south from footpaths GW21, GW23 and GW6 and the C1239, beside the school. This is because

the upper part of the wind turbine would appear on the skyline and because it would be higher than any of the surrounding trees.

Overall, I conclude that the wind turbine would have a moderate adverse impact on the landscape setting of Garway, given that the adverse impact is localised and confined to the western end of the village. The wind turbine will cause a degree of harm to the landscape and this will need to be weighed against the need for wind turbine.

4.5 Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards: Comments awaited

5. Representations

5.1 The Design & Access Statement submitted in support of the application provides the following information:

Garway Primary School is one of a number of Primary Schools in Herefordshire that are known as Eco-Schools. They have already been awarded two green flags for their work in energy reduction and at present are going for a third one.

The school has an Eco-Committee consisting of children who operate under the guidance of the staff. The Eco-Committee has looked at how energy consumption and corresponding costs can be reduced and have identified both the wind turbine and the PV panels as a means of achieving this.

Energy usage is very much part of the national curriculum in education and the school will use both these installations to look at changing behaviours and reducing costs. These wind turbines and PV array facilities will be accessible to all at the school and will be used as a case study for consideration at other schools.

5.2 Garway Parish Council supports the application.

5.3 Six letters of objection have been received from;
Mr & Mrs D Maskell, Windy Ridge, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ
Mr JL Tapper, Kestrels, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ
Mrs A Tapper, Kestrels, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ
KA & KJ Jones, Valley View, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ
Mrs M Smith, Post Office, 1 Fairview, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RG
Mr R Tingle & Ms A Pursey, Litmarsh House, Deerhurst Drive, Hereford, HR2 7XX

In which the following main points were raised:-

- Noise generated by the turbine will affect the quality of life
- The height of the turbine will make it a visible and unattractive landmark over more than the immediate area
- Need to balance the insecure provision of power, which will be solely dependant on wind that cannot be humanly regulated, and therefore doubtful reduction in use of electricity, against the intrusion into the peace and beauty which makes life in Garway so precious
- School may benefit in school hours but outside of school hours the residents will have to put up with the constant noise and eyesore
- The amount of electricity generated does not justify the cost
- Will create a precedent for more wind turbines in the area

- 5.4 Eleven letters of support have been received from;
- Mr A Keenan, Mount Pleasant, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ
 - J & M Howard, The Smithy, The Turning, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RJ
 - Mrs S Hughes, Church House, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RL
 - Mrs K Fowler, Myrtle Barn, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ
 - Mrs W Benjamin, 9 Fairview, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RG
 - Mr & Mrs R Mitchley, Gardd y Ffin, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RE
 - Ms S Dance, 12 Fairview, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RG
 - Ms C Davies, Upper Cottage, St Weonards, Hereford, HR2 86F
 - Mrs P Vincent, 1 Stanley Cottages, Garway, Hereford, HR2 8RQ
 - D Benjamin, 14 Fairview, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RG
 - Mrs Y Button - markbutton@live.co.uk

In which the following main points were raised:-

- Thoroughly endorse the application, although I am likely to be affected visually and audibly by its erection, wind turbines are the way we must go and we have plenty of wind in Garway.
 - The proposed technologies would enable utilities costs to be reduced to the benefit of the school, the community and the Council
 - Dedication to increasing awareness and understanding of future alternative energy systems and the need for the reduction of carbon emission at all levels of society
 - The work collecting data will bring about huge cross curriculum opportunities
 - Garway school has built up a reputation as being at the forefront of Eco awareness. It is one of only two schools in Herefordshire to have achieved one hundred percent funding to be able to install these renewable energy resources
- 5.5 The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Committee meeting.

6. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The main issues for consideration are;
- planning policies (as set out in Section 2 of this report);
 - the impact upon landscape and visual effects of the proposal;
 - the impact on neighbouring amenity;
- 6.2 Planning Policy Statement 22: "Renewable Energy" sets out the Government's objectives to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by 2050 with real progress by 2020. The Government has already set a target to generate 10% of UK electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010. Increased development of renewable energy is vital to facilitating the delivery of the Government's commitments on both climate change and renewable energy. It advises that Local Planning Authorities should adhere to the key principles in their approach to planning for renewable energy.
- 6.3 Paragraph 1(vi) states, "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 (viii) states, "development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic and social benefits as well as how any environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures".

- 6.4 Policy CF4 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan underpins the objectives of national policy in helping to deliver the targets and goals for renewable energy and climate change, which are central to achieving sustainable development, while continuing to protect the countryside. Paragraph 13.4.14 of the UDP explanatory text to the Plan emphasises that the planning system has a vital role to play in helping to deliver the Government's targets and goals for renewable energy. The paragraph also states that when considering proposals the wider environment, economic and social benefits of renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, are material considerations.
- 6.5 Proposals for the production of renewable energy will be permitted provided that, outside of nationally designated sites and areas, there would be no significant detrimental effect upon the character of the particular landscape qualities of that location and would not significantly impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents, through noise, odour or electro-magnetic interference.
- 6.6 The proposal is effectively in two parts and having regard to the less controversial element of the application, it is considered that the mounting of 8 photovoltaic arrays on the roof of the school building will not have any visual adverse effect and will contribute to meeting the national energy target of producing electricity from renewable energy.
- 6.7 Having regard to the representations received in respect of the application it is clear that the wind turbine has attracted divided opinion. The supporting information indicates that the proposed Proven wind turbine has been sited through careful consideration whilst taking into account the optimum operational location. To achieve maximum output from a wind turbine, it is essential it is sited away from obstructions with clear exposure to the prevailing wind. It has been suggested that the turbine should be sited in closer proximity to the school buildings. However, this would hamper the operation of the wind turbine and reduce its efficiency and output of electricity. It would also bring it in closer proximity to existing dwellings, which would conflict with a number of concerns raised by local residents.
- 6.8 The Conservation Manager has considered the position of the turbine within the landscape and in particular whether there are long or middle distance views of the turbine. The site is not within a nationally designated area and the wind turbine due to its relatively small scale, would be viewed against a backdrop of fields and it would appear as a very insignificant element in the wider landscape. There would however be localised views of the wind turbine from neighbouring properties and adjacent public rights of way. The visual impact of the proposal is considered to be moderately adverse and in this case this localised impact is considered to be outweighed by the aim to provide electricity from renewable energy and the benefits that result to the school and community in terms of reducing electricity bills and education. In addition, the Public Right of Way Manager has no objection to the application and considers that any perceived loss of visual amenity from the footpath is not significant.
- 6.9 The concerns of the neighbours are noted. The views of the turbine from adjacent properties would be partially obscured by trees and the school buildings and, it is considered that the visual aspect of the turbine some 128m away would be negligible so as not to cause harm to neighbouring amenity.
- 6.10 With regards to noise, most of the noise associated with wind turbines comes from the gearbox located inside the head. The proposed wind turbine has been designed so that it has no gearbox; therefore there is no mechanical noise. The only noise that

is audible will be the sound of the blades cutting through the air. The turbine is designed to operate at low revs per minutes (RPM) specifically to minimise noise. The data submitted suggests that sound levels would be 45 decibels at a wind speed at 11mph. An increase in wind speed of 45mph would increase sound levels to around 65 decibels. It is generally recognised that the higher the wind speed, the less audible would be the wind turbine due to the increase in background sound of the wind. The sweeping sound of the three blades would be generally abated within 30 to 40 metres of the turbine and given the land lies north of the C1239 road, the background noise of passing traffic and the wind, would not cause further harm in terms of noise levels upon the neighbouring amenity.

- 6.11 The data submitted with the application indicates that the wind turbine will not interfere with electrical equipment in the area and will not produce an electromagnetic field.
- 6.12 The proposal has demonstrated how environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of landscape and amenity of neighbouring residents, as such the proposal satisfies national and local plan policies in achieving sustainable development whilst protecting the countryside and residential amenity

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions

- 1 A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission))**

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

INFORMATIVES:

- 1 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC**
- 2 N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans**

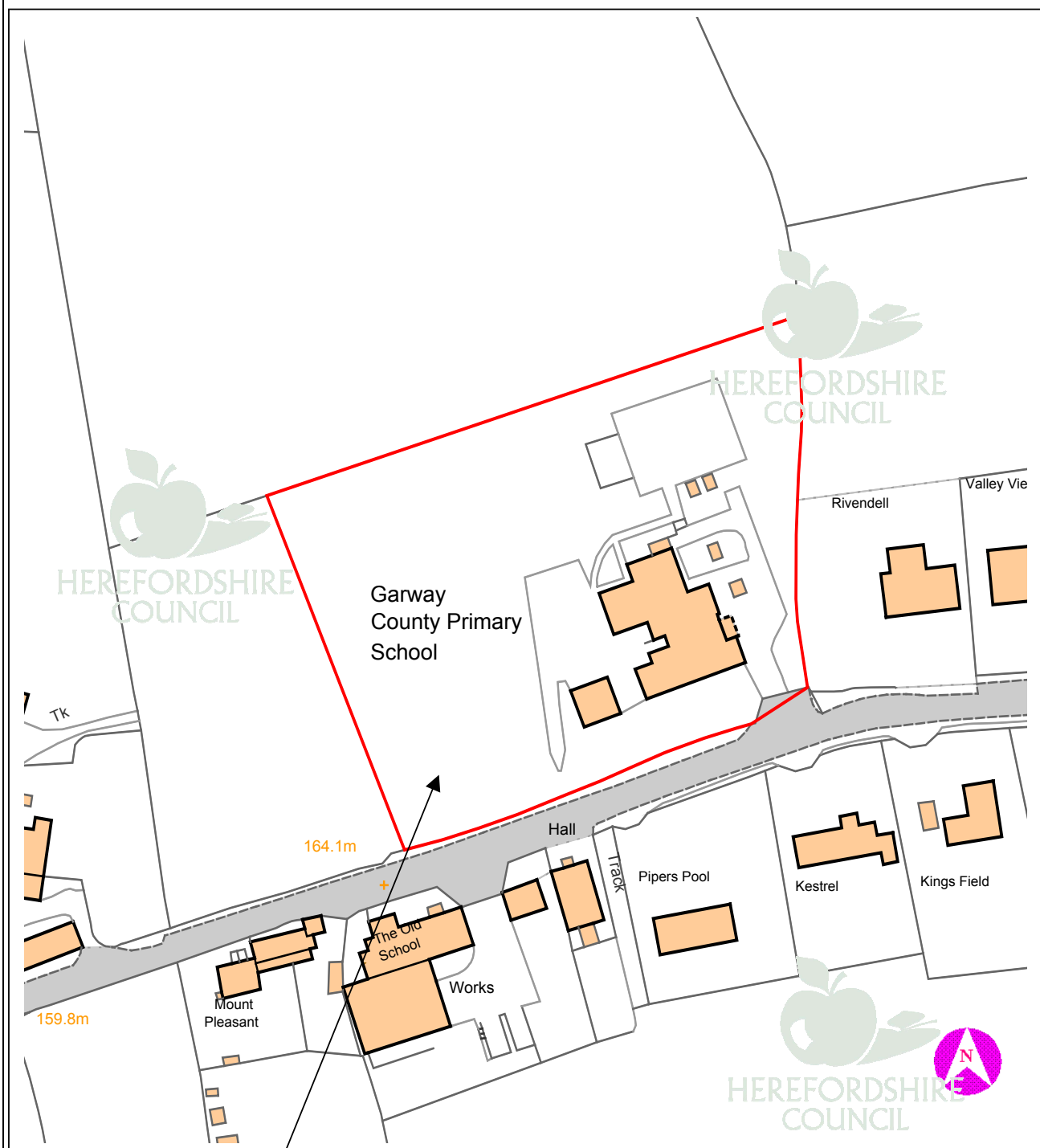
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCSW2008/2735/F

SCALE : 1 : 1250

SITE ADDRESS : Garway Primary School, Garway, Herefordshire, HR2 8RQ

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