

10 DCCW2005/3683/F - WIND TURBINE WITH 9M DIAMETER BLADES ON A 15M TOWER AT NEW WHITECROSS HIGH SCHOOL, THREE ELMS ROAD, HEREFORD, HR4 0RN

For: Stepnell Ltd. per Stepnell Ltd., Site offices, New Whitecross High School, Three Elms Road, Hereford, HR4 0RN

Date Received: 16th November 2005 Ward: Three Elms Grid Ref: 48718, 41518

Expiry Date: 11th January 2006

Local Members: Councillors Mrs. P.A. Andrews; Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels and Ms. A.M. Toon

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 This site is located at the new Whitecross School presently under construction to the west of Three Elms Road, Hereford.
- 1.2 The wind turbine would be positioned to the rear of the school in the north-west corner of the proposed grassed play area. The turbine would be 15 metres high to the hub supported on a single tapering galvanized pole. The three blade black plastic rotor would have a blade length of 4.819 metres. A substantial field boundary hedge lies immediately to the west of the site.

2. Policies

2.1 National:

PPS22 - Renewable Energy
PPG24 - Planning and Noise

2.2 Hereford & Worcester County Structure Plan:

Policy CTC9 - Development Criteria

2.3 Hereford Local Plan:

Policy ENV10 - Renewable Energy
Policy ENV14 - Design
Policy H21 - Non-Residential Uses

2.4 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft):

Policy S2 - Development Requirements
Policy DR1 - Design
Policy DR4 - Environment
Policy DR13 - Noise

3. Planning History

- 3.1 DCCW2003/2113/O Site for construction of new high school and associated playing fields. Approved 5th January, 2004.
- 3.2 DCCW2004/1308/RM A new secondary school (1 single and two 2-storey teaching blocks) with associated sports fields, hard courts, car parking, and associated landscaping. Approved 16th July, 2004.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Traffic Manager - No objection.
- 4.3 Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards - "I have read through the acoustic information supplied with the application. Taking into account the distance of the closest properties and the expected noise levels detailed in the suppliers report I am satisfied that the turbine is unlikely to cause significant nuisance with regards noise. Although some level of noise is to be expected from an installation of this type I believe the distance to the closest houses is sufficient to minimise the noise impact, however it is likely that the turbine will be audible from school buildings on site."

5. Representations

- 5.1 Hereford City Council - "Hereford City Council has considered this application and recommends refusal on the grounds of the detrimental environmental impact on the immediate locality as well as the detrimental visual impact when viewed from afar."
- 5.2 Three Elms Action Group – "A number of residents in the area have raised serious concerns about the planning application. At the meeting of the Three Elms Action Group committee on Monday 5th December, it was unanimously agreed that a strong formal objection should be registered with you, it should be noted that the Group represents 400 residents and in addition we have received objections from residents in the Huntington Lane area.

The objections are as follows:

1. The wind turbine will be visually intrusive in what is a residential area. We question if there is any precedent in the County or elsewhere with a large turbine in an urban area.
2. The noise level and noise distribution - what evidence will be residents have that the sound will not cause disturbance especially at night when every thing is still?
3. Uncertainty that once planning permission is given for one turbine, will it follow in later years that a whole row will appear? The opinion of everyone is that the Council frequently takes advantage of a situation once permission is granted. It was mentioned that the mobile telephone mast that was erected in Three Elms Road has already without any prior notice been changed into a much larger mast!

4. There was strong criticism regarding the lateness of the decision to have a wind turbine to provide electricity that was environmentally friendly. Why was this not approached when plans were first drawn up and surely solar roof panels would have been a much more environmentally friendly option than a sedum roof and would have saved money? This appears as a very late addition to the school plan, which has not been fully thought through.

The general consensus was that we are all aware of the need to help save the planet in as many ways as we can but we felt that wind turbines have a place in the ocean and the countryside but not in the back garden of a residential area.”

5.3 Four letters of objections have been received from:

P. Henchoz, Huntington Court, Huntington Lane, Hereford (two letters).
Dr. A.L. Murgatroyd, 196 Three Elms Road, Hereford.
Dr. C.W.M. Pratt, Huntington House, Huntington Lane, Hereford.

The main points raised are:

1. Disturbance from noise generated by the turbine and blades in a quiet environment.
 2. Visual impact of the tower and its blades on a rural setting.
 3. It will create a precedent for the siting of wind turbines in residential areas.
 4. A more environmentally friendly source could be obtained from solar panels.
 5. The turbine would only produce 6% of the energy use of the school.
- 5.4 One letter of support has been received from Mr. A.R. Richards, 5 Lambourne Gardens, Kings Acre, Hereford.
- Excellent idea but why only one!

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

6. Officers Appraisal

- 6.1 The main issues are considered to be the benefits of the renewable resource provided by wind power, the impact of the mast on noise and amenity and the issue of precedent.

Renewable Energy

- 6.2 PPS22 sets out a number of key principles. Two of these are of particular relevance in this proposal. Firstly, renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily and secondly, small scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall output of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs both local and nationally. Therefore although the contribution to the school energy use of approximately 6% is

minor, it is still a contribution towards the Government's target of providing renewable sources by 2011.

- 6.3 Hereford Local Plan Policy ENV10 also supports the provision of renewable energy projects subject to impact on neighbouring property.

Impact on Amenity of Neighbours

- 6.4 The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Officer has thoroughly assessed the proposal and is satisfied that with the nearest residential dwelling being over 160 metres away the turbine is unlikely to cause significant noise nuisance. Noise will be generated but this is minimal with the distances involved.

- 6.5 Visually the turbine will be seen against the backdrop of a tree lined hedge and the school. However a more detailed appraisal of its visual impact on the landscape will be undertaken when the 'cherry picker' is erected on or around the 12th/13th January, 2006.

Precedent

- 6.6 Members will be aware that each application is judged on its own merits and if any further proposals come forward the cumulative impact of development would be taken into account.

Conclusion

- 6.7 The proposal is considered to accord with the advice contained in PPS22 and policy contained in both the Hereford Local Plan and emerging Unitary Development Plan. The distance from dwellings is considered sufficient to limit any noise impact and although relatively small in terms of energy generation it will go some way towards meeting renewable energy targets.
- 6.8 Finally, the visual impact on the landscape will be more fully addressed following erection of the 'cherry picker', however its siting is such that it will be seen against the backdrop of trees and the new school.

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.

- 2. A06 (Development in accordance with approved plans).**

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development.

- 3. No trees along the boundary of the school site, other than those expressly authorised by the local planning authority, shall be felled, topped or lopped without the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority.**

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenity of the area.

- 4. The turbine tower shall be coloured dark green, the details of which shall be submitted for approval of the local planning authority prior to work commencing on site.**

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenity of the area.

- 5. The wind turbine and associated equipment shall be kept in a good decorative order and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specification until removed.**

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenity of the area.

- 6. Within six months of the wind turbine becoming redundant it shall be removed together with all associated equipment and the land restored.**

Reason: In the visual interest of the locality.

Informative:

- 1. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP.**

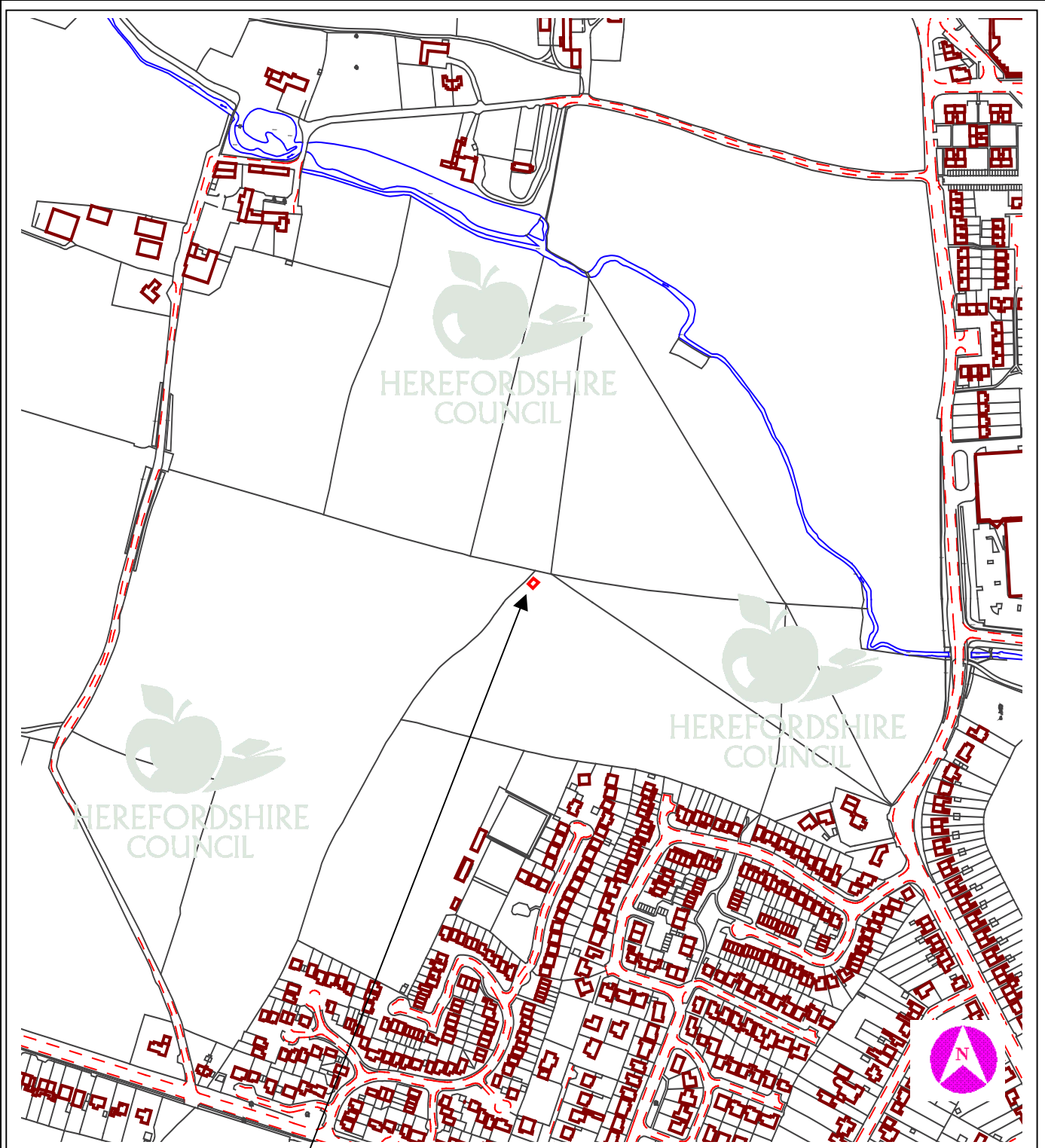
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: DCCW2005/3683/F

SCALE : 1 : 5000

SITE ADDRESS : New Whitecross High School, Three Elms Road, Hereford, HR4 0RN

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