

Planning Committee: 20 September 2006

Item Number: 8

Application No: W 06 / 0884

Registration Date: 24/05/06

Town/Parish Council: Warwick

Expiry Date: 19/07/06

Case Officer: Steven Wallsgrove
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Hill Close Gardens, St Pauls Terrace, Warwick, CV34 4DX

Erection of wind turbine FOR Hill Close Gardens Trust

The application is being reported to Committee due to the number of objections received.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Warwick Town Council: no objection.

Environmental Health: Originally objected since no information on noise on Swift web site and could be excessive since background levels very low at night. Subsequent information suggests it is unlikely for a problem to occur.

English Heritage: no comment.

Neighbours: 7 residents object strongly as being aesthetically damaging and likely to cause noise problems since only 25m away.

CAAF: Proposal in line with aims of garden and should be considered acceptable. Some concerns that other forms of alternative energy may have been better than a wind turbine.

Garden History Society: no comment.

Warwickshire Gardens Trust: no comments received.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- (DW) ENV3 - Development Principles (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV6 - Protection and Enhancement of Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV18 - Historic Parks and Gardens (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)
- (DW) ENV3A - Sustainable Development and Energy Conservation (Warwick District Local Plan 1995)

PLANNING HISTORY

The site was originally identified as a housing site and was gradually purchased, allotment by allotment, for that purpose by the former Warwick Borough Council and then Warwick District Council. The site was subsequently included in the English Heritage list of Historic Parks and Gardens and some of the summerhouses were listed. Planning permission was granted for a resource and activity centre building in 2004, with the restoration of the gardens.

KEY ISSUES

The site and its location

The application site lies at the south west corner of Hill Close Gardens, which lie on the western slope between the town centre and the racecourse. The site lies in the Conservation Area and is included in the English Heritage list of Historic Parks and Gardens. The site to the south, Bread and Meat Close, has been redeveloped for flats and houses, with its access road coming from the racecourse entrance up to the corner of this site.

Details of the development

The proposal is to erect a single pole wind turbine which would have a maximum height of 7.1 m (compared with the flat roofed resource centre of 3.6 m). The turbine itself would have five blades inside a 2 m diameter circle and can be coloured to suit the setting.

Assessment

The issues in this case relate to the duty to protect the character of the Conservation Area, to protect the amenities of nearby residents, and to balance these requirements against the increasing need to reduce emissions and be self sustainable in terms of energy requirements (PPS22: Renewable energy).

In this context, PPS22 states that, in Conservation Areas, "planning permission for renewable energy projects should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of designation of the area will not be compromised by the development".

In this particular case, the wind turbine will be in a prominent position when viewed from the approach road to Bread and Meat Close and, as such, will be seen against the open landscape of the leisure gardens, while the resource centre building is quite well screened by fencing and hawthorns due to its low height. The pole on which the turbine is mounted, however, will be seen in fairly close association with other "street" furniture such as telegraph pole and lighting column and there are some hawthorns (albeit sparse) close to the site boundary. In terms of the wider townscape, the resource centre building and attached

turbine are sited in a corner of the historic gardens and at a low level in terms of the topography of this part of the town.

In terms of its impact on the new residential properties, Environmental Health are satisfied that there will be no noise problem and whilst the turbine will be visible from some of the adjacent properties, it is not considered that it has such an unacceptable impact on their outlook as would justify a refusal.

My conclusion on the issue of impact on the Conservation Area is that, given that the installation would not be unduly prominent on skyline views of the Conservation Area, its character and appearance would not be compromised to an extent which would justify a refusal on these grounds.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. **REASON** : To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the approved drawing(s) and specification contained therein, submitted on 24th May 2006 unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Local Plan Policy ENV3.
- 3 No development shall be carried out on the site which is the subject of this permission, until details of paint colour to be applied to the wind turbine have been submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in full accordance with such approved details. **REASON** : To ensure an appropriate appearance for this conservation area site, in accordance with the objectives of policy ENV 6 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1995.

INFORMATIVES

For the purposes of Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2003, the following reason(s) for the Council's decision are summarised below:

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the development is of an acceptable standard of design which does not adversely affect the architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area and Historic Garden within which the site is located. The proposal is therefore considered to not materially prejudice the policies listed.
