

PROPOSED WINDFARM AT SPRING FARM RIDGE, HELMDON/GREATWORTH,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (SOUTH NORTHANTS COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION
S/2010/1437/MAF)

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION

APP/Z2830/A/11/2165035

APPENDIX 3 TO STATEMENT BY COLIN WOOTTON

ON BEHALF OF

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL

LOSS OF VISUAL AMENITY BY SULGRAVE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

The applicant states that: *“...whilst the ZTV (zone of theoretical visibility) analysis suggests potential visibility of the proposed turbines across the village..... field verification has confirmed that potential views of the proposed turbines within the centre of Sulgrave and from Sulgrave Manor would be extremely limited.”*

It is obvious that views of the turbines would be limited “within the centre of the village” when, for example, standing outside the village shop, where views to the south would be constrained by nearby houses. However, for residents and visitors walking around the village, visiting the church, examining the scheduled ancient monument and relaxing in the Castle Green public open space to enjoy the views out to the countryside to the south, one or more of the turbines would be seen at frequent intervals in views often framed by the many listed buildings in the village conservation area. These irritatingly moving incongruous elements would destroy the continuity of the appreciation of a currently tranquil historic environment. The totality of this experience would represent a considerable loss of public visual amenity.

It is, however, conceded by the applicant that: *“There would be views of the proposals from the southern and western edges of the village at Park Lane, Magpie Road and Helmdon Road”* and photo montages purporting to demonstrate the impact of these views are included in the application documents as follows:

“Viewpoint 4 illustrates views from the village green at Park Lane”, thus:



and *“Viewpoint 5 illustrates views from the bridleway near Sulgrave Manor on the eastern edge of the settlement”,* thus:



It is submitted that the reality of the views from significant parts of the village are better illustrated by the following photo montages prepared as set out in Appendix A:



From Castle Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument.



From Castle Green public open space.



From outside “Threeways” at the heart of Sulgrave Conservation Area.

The applicant states that: *“It is predicted that the majority of residents within Sulgrave would not experience significant effects as a result of the proposals due to a combination of building orientation, mature tree cover and/or the presence of intervening buildings.”* Whilst this is undoubtedly true for the majority of people living in Sulgrave, a **significant minority** of residents would experience a deterioration of their views of open countryside to the south which the applicant concedes *“would be of a magnitude of change of Major to Moderate and the level of effect Major to Major/Moderate and Significant.”*

The applicant further concedes that the turbines would be *“... clearly visible from a limited number of dwellings at the eastern edge of the village”* which would presumably include Rectory Farm and Sulgrave House, where the ha-ha defining the front garden facing south allows an uninterrupted view of the countryside which would be totally compromised by the turning circles of all five turbines being visible above the horizon.

However, no mention is made of the significant effect on a number of houses on the western side of the village, the southerly views from which would be compromised in the same way. These include Church Cottage, the Old Forge, the Old Forge House, Pear Tree Cottage and the Old Byre.

The impact of the proposal on the southerly views from all of these properties can be well seen in this photo montage representing the view from the front garden of The Old Byre:



Here again it can be seen that the full turning circle of the blades of all five turbines would be seen above the horizon with little or no screening by natural vegetation even in summer. The irritation of these almost continuously moving objects seen from the garden and every main room of the house would be constant.

The outlying properties of Sulgrave Farm and Barrow Hill have extensive views over Sulgrave village towards the south and these views too would be significantly compromised by the presence of the turbines, the full height of which would be seen above the horizon in those cases.

Conclusion

The fact that the full turning circle of the blades of the turbines would be seen above the southern horizon from many viewpoints in the village would adversely affect to a very significant level the visual amenity of those enjoying the historic setting of the village.

Whilst “no-one buys a view” it is submitted that the similar views of five constantly moving turbines above the horizon in views from the gardens and main rooms of houses in Sulgrave facing to the south would be such a significant loss of visual amenity that it should be considered as a major addition to the other local disadvantages of the proposal when weighing them against its “wider environmental benefits”.

Colin S Wootton MRICS MRTPI (Rtd)