

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

By **ML Planning Ltd**

Applicant: Mr. John Ward

Site Address: Old House Farm. Birks Brow, Thornley, Longridge, Preston,
PR3 2TX

Proposal: Erection of a 15kw Turbine on a 15 Meter Mast, 5 Meter Blades,
Total finished height of 21 Meters.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Photomontages shown in this document are intended to show the visual impact of the proposal.
- 1.2 Viewpoints have been selected that are representative of viewing experiences likely to occur for receptors. The photographs selected represent these viewpoints.
- 1.3 The photographs correspond with Viewpoint Information, which detail the position the photograph was taken by grid reference, direction and distance to the proposed development.
- 1.4 An assessment of the specifics of the visualisation, in regards to the landscape character and the impact of the proposal, follows.
- 1.5 The scale, layout and design of the proposal have been demonstrated as best as possible. A stock photograph of an existing turbine has been used as the image superimposed onto the photographs of the proposal site.

The images have been produced using the criteria given in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Second Edition, 2002* (*The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment*), *Visual Representation of Wind Farms Good Practise Guidance, Scottish National Heritage 2006*, *LCC's Forest of Bowland Landscape Character Assessment 2009* and *North West Landscape Character Framework, Natural England*.

2 Photomontages and Viewpoint Information

Photograph 1



Viewpoint 1

Turbine Base Grid Ref :- X:361551 Y:438887

VP Grid Ref :- X: 361644 Y: 438702

Direction North by North West Distance to Turbine 207 meters. Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Photomontage 1



Photograph 2



Viewpoint 2

Grid Ref: X: 361690 Y: 438729

Direction north by north west. Distance to turbine 211 Meters. Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Photomontage 2



Photomontage 2.2 Closer range view



Photograph 3



Viewpoint 3

Grid Ref:- X: 361708 Y: 438753

Direction West by North West. Distance to turbine 206 meters. Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Photomontage 3



Photomontage 3.2 Closer range view



Photograph 4



Viewpoint 4

Grid Ref: - X: 361624 Y: 438753

Direction North by North West. Distance to Turbine 77.9 meters. Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Photomontage 4



Photograph 5



Viewpoint 5

Grid Ref:- X: 361497 Y: 438930

Direction South by south east. Distance 67.2 meters. Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Photomontage 5



Photograph 6



Viewpoint 6

Grid Ref:- X: 361590 Y: 439056

Direction West by south west. Distance to turbine 169 meters. Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Screening blocks the view at this viewpoint with tree line on the eastern boundary.

Photograph 7



Viewpoint 7

Grid Ref:- X: 361822 Y: 438861

Direction West by north West. Distance to Turbine 330 meters



Screening provided by tree line on the eastern boundary of the site and mitigated overall by the drop in land level.

Photograph 8



Viewpoint 8

Grid Ref:- X: 361795 Y: 438763

Direction West by north west. Distance to turbine 267 meters. . Height of Camera 1.6 meters



Screening provided by tree line on the eastern boundary of the site and mitigated overall by the drop in land level.

Photograph 9



Photograph 9.1



Viewpoint 9 – not visible due to screening

Grid Ref:- X: 361887 Y: 439831

South by south west Distance 1 km



Extensive screening in direction towards proposal.

Photograph 10



Photograph 10.1



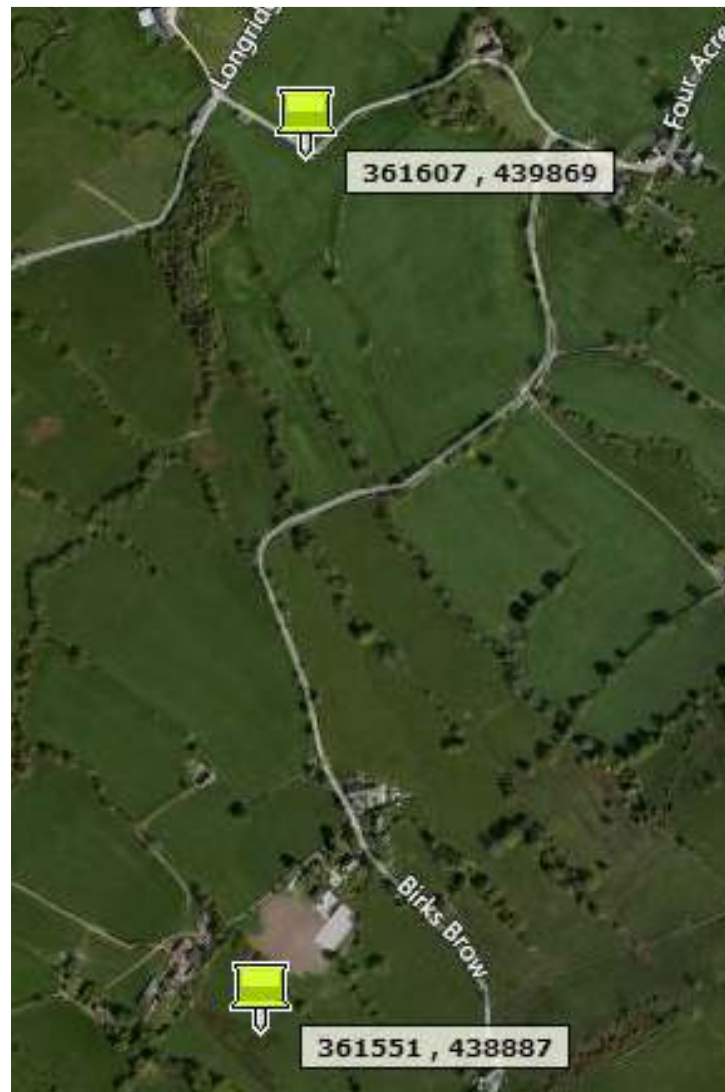
Photograph 10.2



Viewpoint 10

Grid Ref:- X: 361607 Y: 439869

Direction South Distance 969 meters



Screening

Photograph 11



Photograph 11.1 Closer range view



Photograph 11.2 Closer range view



Viewpoint 11

Grid Ref:- X: 361549 Y: 439912

Direction South Distance 970 meters



Screening

Photograph 12



Photograph 12.1 Closer range view



Photograph 12.2 Closer range view



Viewpoint 12

Grid Ref:- X: 361412 Y: 439799

South by south east 906 meters



Photomontage 12 (Photograph 12.2)



Photograph 13



Photograph 13.1 (closer range view)



Photograph 13.2 (closer range view)



Viewpoint 13 Little Town Dairy

Grid Ref:- X: 360699 Y: 439257

Direction East Distance 927 meters



Photomontage 13 (Photograph 13.1)



Photomontage 13.1 (Photograph 13.2)

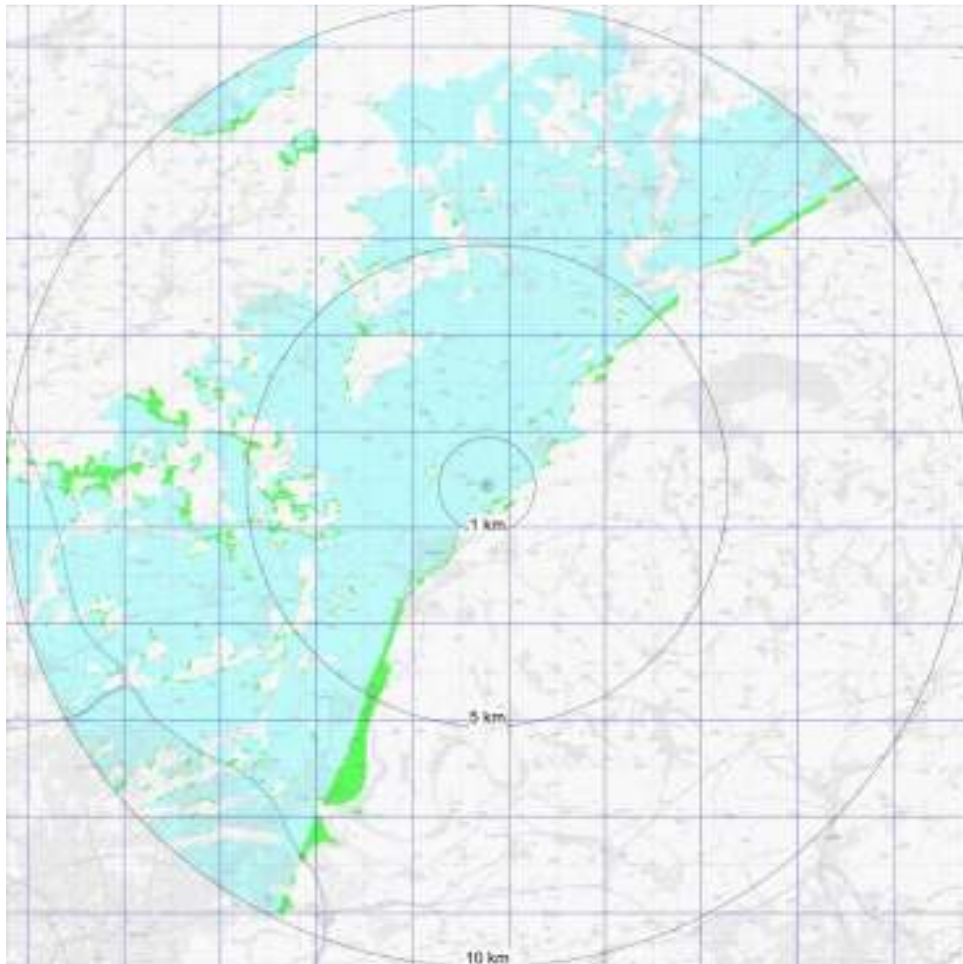


3 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Map

3.1 The Image below is an image of the ZTV that accompanies this L&VA.

3.2 The Key should be read as follows: - 1 (green) – only turbine blades are visible

2 (blue) – turbine hub and blades are visible



3.3

- Visibility maps represent where a development may be seen **theoretically** – that is, it may not actually be visible in reality, for example due to localised screening which is not represented by the DTM; and
- The maps indicate potential **visibility** only - that is, the areas within which there may be a line of sight. They do not convey the nature or magnitude of visual impacts, for example whether visibility will result in positive or negative effects and whether these will be significant or not.¹

¹ Section 2, Point 31 pg. 23, 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility Mapping', Visual Representations of Windfarms, Good Practice Guidance, Scottish Natural Heritage 2009

4. Assessments

Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.1 The site is situated within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as Old House Farm is an area defined in the Forest of Bowland AONB Landscape Assessment as Moorland Fringe. Moorland Fringe is deemed to have medium to Low sensitivity to Wind Turbine development.
- 4.2 However, the AONB is of course highly sensitive to any development and therefore this assessment will look at the specifics of the site, its setting and topography, with an aim to discuss how the proposal can be accommodated for.
- 4.3 The specific landscape characteristics of Birks Brow are that of small pasture farm land, with heavily tree lined boundaries. The roads, lanes and access track are well lined with tall well established hawthorn hedges, stock proof fencing and mature trees such as Beech interspersed.
- 4.4 The vernacular of building and development is predominately well maintained stone buildings and properties. The majority of these dwellings, farm houses and associated agricultural structures appear clean and well cared for, with some having low retaining walls at their curtilage. A lot of the residential properties have had additional works such as extensions and glazed additions.
- 4.5 The overall topography of Birks Brow is of an inline slope up the brow of the hill.



Image at the foot of the site intended to show rising incline at the view facing south.

- 4.6 The views from this vantage point are wide ranging to the north, with Pendle Hill notable in the distance.

Landscape Impact Assessment

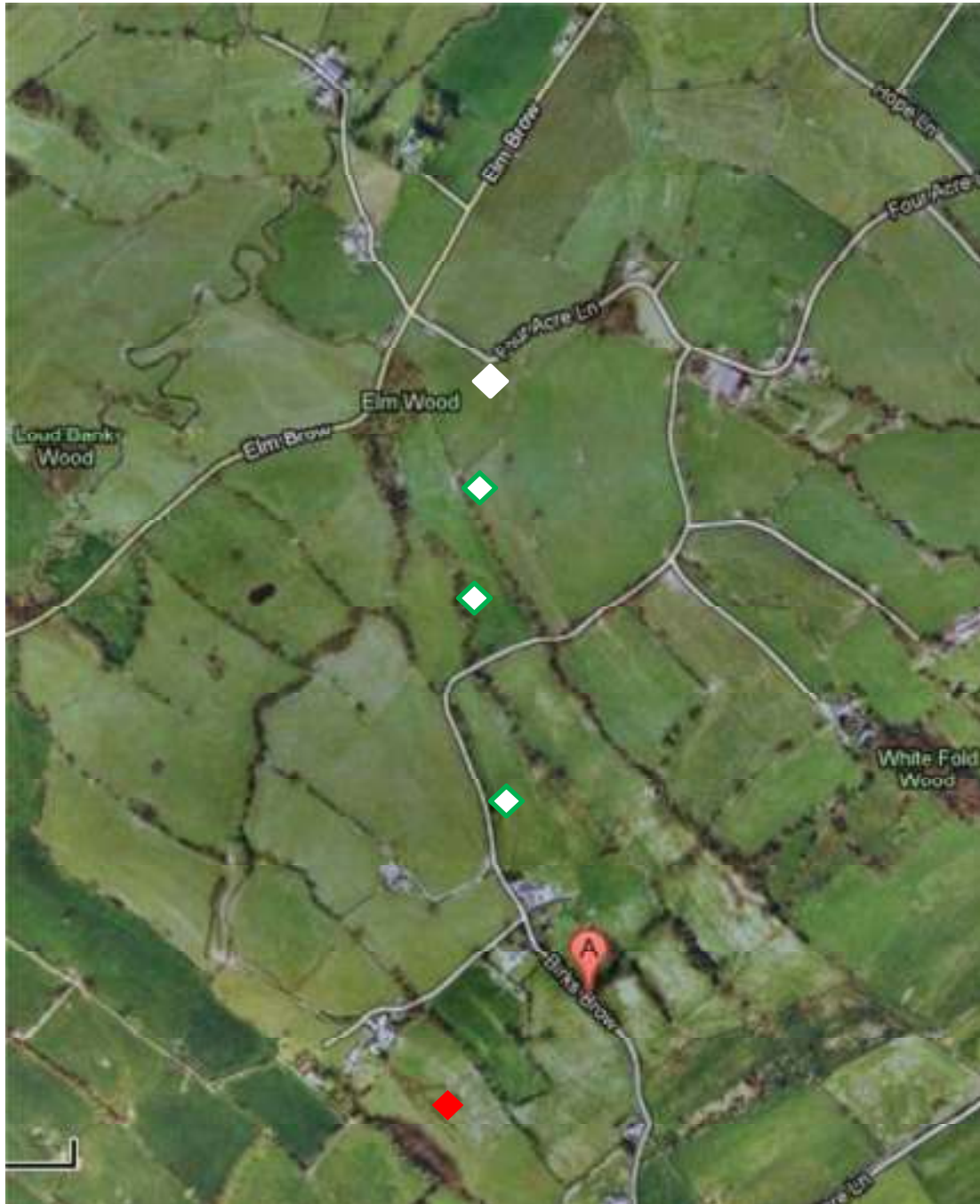
- 4.7 The proposed Turbine will be 108 meters south of the associated property at Old House Farm, the end users of the Turbine. As discussed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, the Turbine will form part of the farm's future sustainability.
- 4.8 An argument can now be made that a Turbine structure should be visual read as an agricultural structure associated with the farm, no different from a concrete panelled silage clamp or grain hopper. The Turbine should be understood as emblematic of the modern diversification of farming, which indeed shapes the landscape and countryside, of which farmers are the custodians.
- 4.9 With this development in how to accommodate the changing nature of the Farmer's environ and how he further manipulates it, the impact of the proposal does not necessarily equate to unacceptable harm and the change in vista must be balanced against policy expectations and guidance encouraging renewable energy.

Residential Amenity Impact Assessment

- 4.10 There are a number of residential properties within range of between 170 – 270 meters of the proposed Turbine; some of these properties will in some way expect to experience a visual impact from the turbine. Please see section 4.3 of the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 4.11 No impact however will fall within a harmful range; issues of health and wellbeing are mitigated by distance, indeed the planning application would not be viable if it contravened safeguarding parameters, those of which that can be assessed at pre-consultation level, matters of air traffic safety, for example, will be assessed during the consultation period.
- 4.12 To deal specifically with the points that are consistently and continually expressed by residents in regards to Visual Impact: – *There is no risk that approval of this development would cause others to be permitted since each case would be considered on the basis of the particular characteristics [] The effect on property values is not a matter to which weight can be attached in land use planning.*²

² Quote Point 15. of Appeal Decision report Appeal ref:- APP/T2530/A/12/2169968

- 4.13 Screening forms a large part of how this proposal, and the associated visual impact, can be made acceptable. The photomontage section of this document demonstrates where screening occurs. It is shown in the photographs and visualisations and the viewpoint information images. An example of how screening occurs and is gauged on site is as follows.



- The white diamond shows the position from which the photograph was taken.
- The green edged diamonds on the satellite image show the location of the screening formed by mature hedge and tree lines.
- Red diamond shows the position of Turbine.



- The red arrow shows the position of the turbine.
- It isn't possible to show the Turbine as it will be screened by trees from this position.
- This vantage point is at a gated entrance at a break in the hedge-line.
- Granted in June foliage and vegetation are at a maximum, which forms a lot of the screening.

4.12 It is a well help planning principle that there is 'no right to a view' from individual residential properties over land in someone else's ownership. With this is mind, and in combination with the distances from residential properties and the screening which will occur, the visual impact of the turbine would be unlikely to harm the living conditions enjoyed by the occupants of neighbouring properties.

Tourism and the General Public

- 4.12 There are no Public Rights of Way or other footpaths near to or through the site; vantage points from any footpaths could not be adequately identified during field work due to this.
- 4.13 The selected vantage point that relates to a possible tourism impact has been chosen at Little Town Dairy. The small local business offers visitors a shop with local produce, a café and a children's play area. The site is shown in photograph 13 (and onwards) in the photomontages section.
- 4.14 As can be seen, Little Town Dairy is both a working farm and rural business; the modern agricultural buildings sit along-side converted old farm buildings which have been changed to a commercial use.
- 4.15 Looking again at the consideration that farm diversification incorporates modern structures into their visual appearance, it could be argued that the proposed turbine, which will be visible from Little Town Dairy, will harmonise with and be visually connected to the site and the associated venture.

Cumulative Impact



Image of satellite map, with approved and existing turbines within a 10km radius.

List of Approved Turbine Applications

1. 3/2011/0935 Haggs Hall Farm

X: 367306 Y: 432011

8.3 km

2. 3/2010/0989

X: 3689058 Y: 443824

8.77 km

3. 3/2010/0975

X: 365737 Y: 440233

4.37 km

4. 2/2010/0937
Carlinghurst Farm
X 366019 Y: 438414
4.52 km

5. 3/2008/0165
Parsonage Farm, Wiltshire
X: 370291 Y: 432464
10.94 km

6. 3/2006/0948
Bowland Boar Park
X: 364502 Y: 445698
7.28 km

- 4.16 There are 6 consented wind turbines in operation, within a 10 km radius of the proposed turbine. These turbines all fall within the small scale development bracket.
- 4.17 As shown in the ZTV, any turbines to the South of the proposal site, over the brow of the hill, will not be visible in combination with this turbine. See the red highlighted applications in the above list, leaving only two which may be visible, although this is unlikely due to screening.
- 4.17 As shown and discussed in the visual impact assessment of the proposal and when put into context of a landscape that includes columnar structures, electricity pylons and farm buildings, the cumulative impact of constructing a small scale wind turbine here would be negligible.

Appendix 2

Camera Information

FinePix S2980

- 18x optical zoom
- 28mm wide-angle lens
- 14 megapixels
- 3 inch LCD screen

