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Mr Alex Sebbinger
Planning Department
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Your ref: 18/0048/15/F
Our ref : E14/127
21 January 2015

Dear Sirs

Erection of wind turbine (50kw) with 24.6 metre hub height, 34.2 metre tip height (112ft). Field at SX 2839 5364, Capton, Dartmouth

Thank you for consulting The Garden History Society on the above planning application which would appear to affect Sharpham, and possibly Greenway, Sandridge and Waddeton Court.

The Devon Gardens Trust acts for The Garden History Society in responding to consultations on planning applications. The Devon Gardens Trust, formed in 1987, has considerable knowledge, expertise and experience of developments affecting historic designed landscapes. One of its roles is to help safeguard the heritage of historic landscapes within the County of Devon by advising local planning authorities on statutory and non-statutory parks, gardens and designed landscapes of importance.

We have studied the documents on your web site and ask you consider the following comments:

The proposed 112ft high wind turbine at Capton would be in an Area of Great Landscape Value adjoining an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Wind turbines are often seen from many view points across the wider landscape of Devon and can be highly visible alien features which would have a seriously detrimental visual effect. It seems inconceivable that the applicant should consider that a 112ft high wind turbine would be acceptable in this outstanding landscape.

The wind turbine would be visible from the carriage drive to Sharpham House, an historic designed landscape of exceptional interest, which is included by English Heritage on the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* at grade II*.

The proposed wind turbine may also affect Greenway, an historic designed landscape of exceptional interest, which is included by English Heritage on the *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest* at grade II.

It may also affect the heritage assets of Sandridge Park and Waddeton Court, both of which are historic designed landscapes on the Devon Gazetteer of Parks and Gardens of Local Historic Interest. The Devon Gazetteer can be accessed at <http://www.devongardenstrust.org.uk/?q=devon-gazetteer>

The National Planning Policy Framework states a presumption in favour of sustainable development in both plan making and decision making, but recognises that there is a need to balance any adverse impacts against the benefits. The NPPF sets out 12 core planning principles that should underpin both plan making and decision making.

Principle 10 states that planning should “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

NPPF para 126 states that ‘heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.’ In para 128 the NPPF reiterates the previous advice of PPS5 that LPAs, in determining applications, should require the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.’

Country estates such as Sharpham, Greenway, Sandridge and Waddeton Court are set in parkland landscapes designed to enhance their presence. The carriage drives were aligned to provide visual interest, drama and sometimes surprise, on the approach to the principal building. The C18 parkland at Sharpham is attributed to Capability Brown, who was adept at creating views and vistas, including lines-of-sight to more distant heritage assets or natural features beyond the boundary of the estate. The view of the 120ft wind turbine would seriously detract from the significance of Sharpham.

The Supporting Planning Statement makes no reference to the impact of the proposed 112ft high wind turbine on the setting of the designed historic landscapes of Sharpham, Greenway, Sandridge and Waddeton Court. We consider this to be a serious omission. In the absence of an assessment of significance and potential impact on these heritage assets we would suggest that the application has failed to comply with para 128 of the NPPF.

Whilst the The Garden History Society and the Devon Gardens Trust support the principle of renewable energy, we have to consider the impact of such development on historic landscapes. Historic landscapes are a limited resource. In our opinion, the siting of wind turbines or solar arrays in or near Historic Parks and Gardens should, wherever possible, be avoided because of the effect on the character and appearance of these extremely important heritage assets. The Devon Gardens Trust, together with The Garden History Society, advise that development which adversely impacts upon the historic environment should not be permitted.

In conclusion, we are concerned about the possible adverse visual impact of the proposed wind turbine on the heritage asset of Sharpham, and possibly Greenway, Sandridge and Waddeton Court . We recommend that your authority should refuse consent for this proposal as it clearly conflicts with national planning policy with regard to the conservation of the historic environment.

Yours faithfully,
John Clark
Conservation Officer