

F/YR11/0779/F  
3 October 2011

Applicant : Mrs G Warden

Agent : Mrs T Dorling  
Windcrop Limited

Warden and Son, 150 Barton Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire

Erection of 3no wind generators (14.97 metres to hub)

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This proposal is before the Planning Committee due to being called in by Councillor Oliver to assess the effects of the proposal on the landscape and surroundings and the officer recommendation being at variance to the Town Council response.

This application is an other.

1. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The site is currently an area of vacant land which was once part of a commercial yard and measures 11.31 square metres. It lies within Flood Zone 3. The nearest residential properties front Barton Road and back on to the site at a minimum distance of approx 90m from the nearest turbine and Barton Road lies approx 107m from the nearest turbine (turbine 3). Leverington and Wisbech Conservation Areas lie within 1.6km of the site along with two scheduled ancient monuments (Cherry tree Hill Round Barrow and Ronan Bank Sea Defence) and around 30 listed buildings.

2. **HISTORY**

There is no relevant planning history.

3. **CONSULTATIONS**

***Wisbech Town Council:***

Members recommend refusal. They feel that an application for this number of turbines in a residential area sets an unwanted precedent. They feel that the planned turbines are too many, and too high, not being in keeping with the surrounding residential properties.

***Local Highway Authority (CCC):***

Given that the size of the units are only 15.0m which will require only a medium sized delivery vehicle then I foresee no problems affecting the existing highway network regarding the delivery of the units and therefore I have no further comments to make.

***Environment Agency***

We have no objection to the proposed development but wish to state that if that if the applicant is proposing to construct any works to dewater the site they must serve notice on the Environment Agency.

***English Heritage***

English Heritage has assessed the proposal and concluded that while these turbines will result in some change to the landscape and setting of some nearby historic assets, due to the modest nature of the hub heights of the turbines that change would not amount to harm as set out in Policies HE9 and 10 of PPS 5. The application should be determined on the basis of FDC specialist conservation advice.

***FDC Conservation Officer***

The site location for the proposed wind turbines appears to be approximately 800 metres from the Wisbech Conservation Area and nearest Listed buildings at Elgoods Brewery (70-72 North Brink).

What would help to determine the effect on the setting of these listed buildings and on the impact on the important North Brink street scene in general, is for contextual elevations to be submitted, directed from the historic parts of the Conservation Area – from South Brink towards North Brink (with Barton Road behind), and from Old Market towards Barton Road (a distance of 1,340 metres from Old Market), so that we can ascertain whether the turbines will be visible from these important entry points into historic Wisbech.

If visible above the North Brink roofline, as viewed from South Brink, or from Old Market, I feel this would be an unacceptable intrusion into the historic core of Wisbech, particularly when these areas are the most historically important parts of Fenland.

Additional information received shows that at a distance of 200m the turbines seem hardly visible so I wouldn't expect they are visible at all at 800m.

***Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)***

We have no objection to this application. We approve the installation of renewable energy sources where appropriate. Three small wind turbines at this location will have low impact on the landscape.

***Police Architectural Liaison Officer.***

The height of the turbines will have no detrimental effect on operation of the emergency services air operations unit. The only risk, prevalent at this time, is the theft of cabling linking the turbines to the outlet point or buildings. To counter this it is suggested that any cables are buried to a substantial depth. Providing this can be achieved we would not object to granting of permission for this application.

***Civil Aviation Authority***

Councils are reminded of their obligations to consult in accordance with ODPM/DfT Circular 1/2003.

***Save our Swans***

No response

***CCC Archaeology***

No response

***Countryside Access Team***

No response

***Anglian Water***

No response

***National Planning Casework Unit***

No response

***EDF Energy Works***

No response

***NATS (NERL safeguarding)***

No safeguarding objection

***The Ramblers Association***

No response

***Save our Skyline***

No response

***Defence Estate Organ Safeguarding***

No response

<b><i>British Telecom</i></b>	No response
<b><i>The Wildlife Trust</i></b>	No response
<b><i>RSPB</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Cambs Bats Group</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Natural England</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Chatteris Airfield</i></b>	No objections
<b><i>Sibson Airfield</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Peterborough Business Airfield</i></b>	No objection
<b><i>Marshals Paddock</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Cambridge Airport</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Network Rail</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Fenland Aerodrome</i></b>	No response
<b><i>Joint Radio Company</i></b>	<p>Cleared with respect to radio link infrastructure operated by:- UK Power Networks and National Grid Gas Networks</p> <p>JRC analyses proposals for wind farms on behalf of the UK Fuel &amp; Power Industry and the Water Industry in north-West England. This is to assess their potential to interfere with radio systems operated by utility companies in support of their regulatory operational requirements.</p> <p>In the case of this proposed wind energy development, JRC does not foresee any potential problems based on known interference scenarios and the data you have provided.</p> <p>However, if any details of the wind farm change, particularly the disposition or scale of any turbine(s), it will be necessary to re-evaluate the proposal.</p>

In making this judgement, JRC has used its best endeavours with the available data, although we recognise that there may be effects which are as yet unknown or inadequately predicted. JRC cannot therefore be held liable if subsequently problems arise that we have not predicted.

***Raptor Foundation***

No response

***FDC Environmental Protection***

**Condition for Operational Noise**

(a) At the reasonable request of, and following a complaint to, the Local Planning Authority, the operator of the development shall measure and assess at its expense the level of noise emissions from the wind turbine generators following the procedures described in "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, ETSU-R-97" published by ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry.

The level of noise emissions from the combined effects of the wind turbine generators on the site when measured in accordance with section A of the guidance notes shall not exceed the absolute noise target of 35dB(A)  $L_{90,10min}$  at any dwelling lawfully existing at the time of this consent.

(b) If noise emissions exceed the absolute noise target, the local planning authority can by notice in writing to the operator or owner require the operation of the wind turbines to cease, either completely or during specified conditions or times.

***Local residents/interested parties:***

16 letters of objection have been received from the occupiers of 15 properties in Barton Road, Manor Gardens, Ashdale Park, Brampton Close, Grove Park and Marlborough Court. One letter of support has been received from a property in Magazine Lane. The grounds of objection can

be summarised as follows:

- Turbines are too close to residential properties and will have a detrimental impact in terms of their unsightly appearance and the level of noise generated.
- Shadow flicker could be experienced at certain times in some residences.
- The turbines could be unsafe and prone to collapse with wreckage strewn over a large area giving rise to health and safety issues.
- Adverse effects on wildlife in wider locality and around pond in Manor Gardens where many species are found and acts as a marker for migrating birds.
- Quiet character of sought after residential area would be harmed.
- Properties in the area will be devalued.
- Trees in area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders which indicate that the area has a special character and should be protected.
- Siting of turbines could inhibit future residential development in the area.
- No objections to renewable energy but these turbines are inappropriately sited.
- As turbines will be visible from Barton Road they could distract drivers.
- Turbines will be visible from the tourist and historic area of the town and this could reduce its attractiveness to visitors and harm the economy.
- Approval could set an undesirable precedent for future development.
- Proposal is at odds with FDC guidance on wind turbines.

#### 4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

FDWLP Policy

E1

- To resist development likely to detract from the Fenland landscape. New development should meet certain criteria.

	E8	- Proposals for new development should: - allow for protection of site features; - be of a design compatible with their surroundings; - have regard to amenities of adjoining properties; - provide adequate access
	E20	- To resist development which by its nature gives rise to unacceptable levels of noise, nuisance and other environmental pollution.
East of England Plan	ENG2	- The development of new facilities for renewable power generation should be supported with the aim that by 2010 10% of the region's energy, and by 2020 – 17%, should come from renewable sources ( excluding energy from offshore wind)
	ENV2	- Planning Authorities should protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of countryside character by developing area-wide strategies and landscape character assessments to ensure development respects/enhances local landscape character.
Planning Policy Statements	PPS1	- Delivering Sustainable Development
	PPS1	- Climate Change Supplement
	PPS7	- Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
	PPS22	- Renewable Energy (+ Companion Guide)
	PPG24	- Planning and Noise

## 5. ASSESSMENT

### ***Nature of Application***

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of three small scale wind turbines located to the north of 150 Barton Road, Wisbech. Each turbine has a hub height of 14.97m to hub with blades of 5.5m diameter giving an overall height to the blade tip of approx 17.5m. It is proposed that each turbine tower will be pale grey with the turbine housing and blades in a darker grey.

The application is considered to raise the following key issues;

- Principle and policy implications
- Impact – Landscape, Noise etc
- Access

### ***Principle and Policy Implications***

**PPS22** – The main national planning guidance for wind turbines is Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22) issued in 2004 which sets out Government Policy for renewable energy. It identifies a number of key principles in the assessment of renewable energy projects which include the following statements:

- *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,*
- *At the local level, planning authorities should set out the criteria that will be applied in assessing applications for planning permission for renewable energy projects,*
- *The wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission,*
- *Development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic and social benefits as well as how any environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures.*

PPS22 also sets targets for UK renewable energy production of 10% derived from renewable sources by 2010 and 20% by 2020. These figures were originally established in the Energy White Paper 2003.

**PPS1** - Other relevant national policy includes PPS1 and its companion guide the Climate Change Supplement which are generally supportive of sustainable development including renewable energy projects.

**PPS7** is also supportive of sustainable development within rural areas.

**PPG24** provides guidance on how the planning system can be used to minimise the adverse impact of noise without placing unreasonable restrictions on development or adding unduly to the costs and administrative burdens of business.

**East of England Plan** - At Regional Level the East of England Plan currently remains in place and restates Government targets for renewable energy (Policy **ENG2**).

**Fenland Local Plan** - At local level the Fenland Local Plan does not include specific policy relating to renewable development but does include material planning policy relating to landscape (Policy **E1**), impact of development (**E8**) and noise/other nuisance (**E20**).



**Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance** - In accordance with PPS22 the District Council has provided local guidance in relation to wind turbine development in the form of the Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance. This guidance is mainly concerned with the impacts that commercial turbine developments, with a typical height of 100-125m, are likely to have so is of limited application in relation to this small scale proposal (overall height of approx 17.5m).

### ***Impact***

**Landscape** - As noted above the proposed turbines are of a relatively small scale when compared to a typical commercial turbine with the mast height comparable in scale to a telegraph pole. Objections have been received from neighbours in the immediate and wider locality concerning the detrimental effect of the turbines in visual terms and their incongruous appearance in a mainly residential area containing many heritage assets. This was a view initially shared by officers, however, it has become apparent through the consultation process that although the turbines will be visible in the immediate locality their height and colouring will minimise the extent of the impact on the immediate and wider locality. Consultation responses from English Heritage and FDC Conservation Officer conclude that from a distance of 200m the turbines have limited visual impact so there will be no impact on the closest heritage assets which lie approx 800m away from the nearest turbine.

**Noise** - A major concern of the local residents is the level of noise likely to be generated by the turbines. The agent maintains that the turbines are extremely quiet by design with no low frequency noise generation. The low rotor tip speed, coupled with a direct drive (no gearbox) system ensures quiet operation. FDC Environmental Protection Officers have been in consultation with the agent concerning likely noise levels and their impact on the closest properties on Barton Road. The outcome of these discussions has not been totally conclusive, therefore, the noise of the turbines could prove to be an issue in relation to the closest noise sensitive properties on Barton Road. In light of this Environmental Protection have recommended a condition should be imposed relating to an absolute noise level which should not be exceeded.

**Shadow Flicker** – Shadow flicker, when the shadows of the turbine blades play on nearby buildings at certain times, is not generally encountered with turbines of this scale. It would be more likely to affect buildings close to the east or west of the turbines so this installation has been sited to eliminate this risk.

**Scattering of Signal** – The supporting information indicates that the scattering of signal is a phenomenon that occasionally affects large utility scale turbines and is not a relevant consideration for turbines of this size.

**Wildlife** – Local residents have expressed concern about the effects the proposed turbines may have on the existing wildlife. Responses to consultations have not highlighted any particular issues concerning turbines of this scale in relation to the local ecology. The site is not identified as a protected habitat.

**Cumulative Impact** – The cumulative impact is not considered significant due to the small scale of the turbines and their limited impact in the wider landscape setting.

**Access**

Access to the site will be via the existing access to 150 Barton Road. The Highway Authority has no objection and the access is acceptable for construction and ongoing maintenance traffic. It is noted that ground disturbance will be kept to a minimum during the erection of each turbine and each turbine will take approximately one day to put in place

**Conclusion**

The proposed turbines will be visible in the immediate locality but this must be considered against the national need for renewable energy resources and the impact in terms of noise, scale and access. In planning policy terms the proposed scheme is considered to meet the aspirations of PPS22 in contributing to the need for renewable energy and is not likely to adversely affect the residential amenity of the nearest neighbours as a condition to control maximum noise levels is recommended. The relatively low height of the turbines will not cause adverse cumulative visual impact in the wider landscape.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

**Grant subject to the following conditions:**

1. **The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

**Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

2. **This permission is for a period not exceeding 25 years from the date when electricity generated by the development is first exported to the site or regional electricity distribution grid. Notification of the date of this first export shall be given to the Local Planning Authority within 7 days of the date thereof.**

**Reason - The proposal is not one that the Council is prepared to permit other than for a temporary period in the interests of the amenity of the area as the development has a limited operational life.**

3. **Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, within 6 months of the cessation of electricity generation at the site (or the expiry of the permission whichever is the sooner), all parts of the development shall be dismantled down to 0.4 metres below ground level and shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its former use, which is agricultural land.**

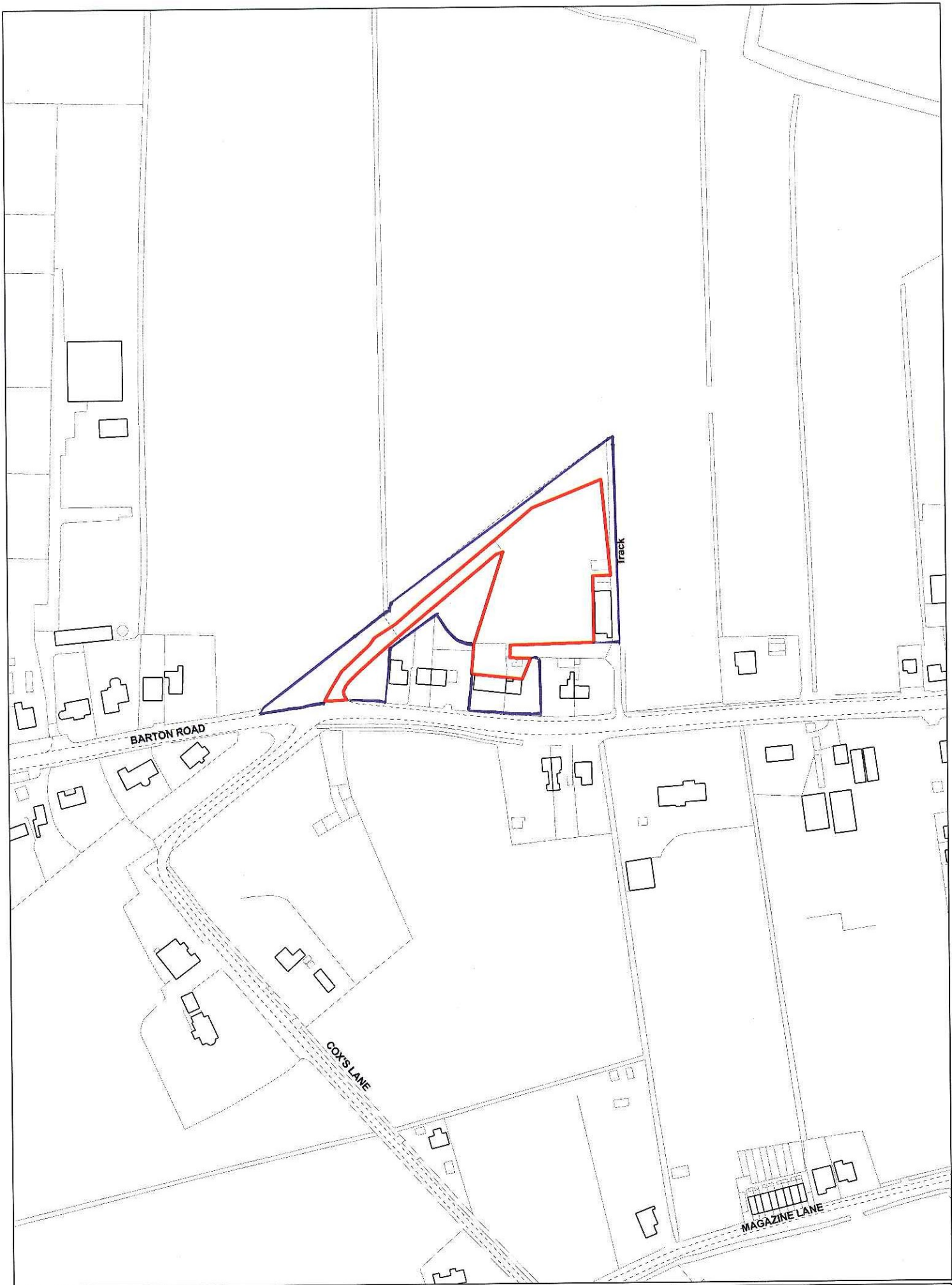
**Reason - In the interests of the amenity of the area.**

4. (a) At the reasonable request of, and following a complaint to, the Local Planning Authority, the operator of the development shall measure and assess at its expense the level of noise emissions from the wind turbine generators following the procedures described in “The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, ETSU-R-97” published by ETSU for the Department of Trade and Industry.

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(b) If noise emissions exceed the absolute noise target, the local planning authority can by notice in writing to the operator or owner require the operation of the wind turbines to cease, either completely or during specified conditions or times.

Reason - To protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.



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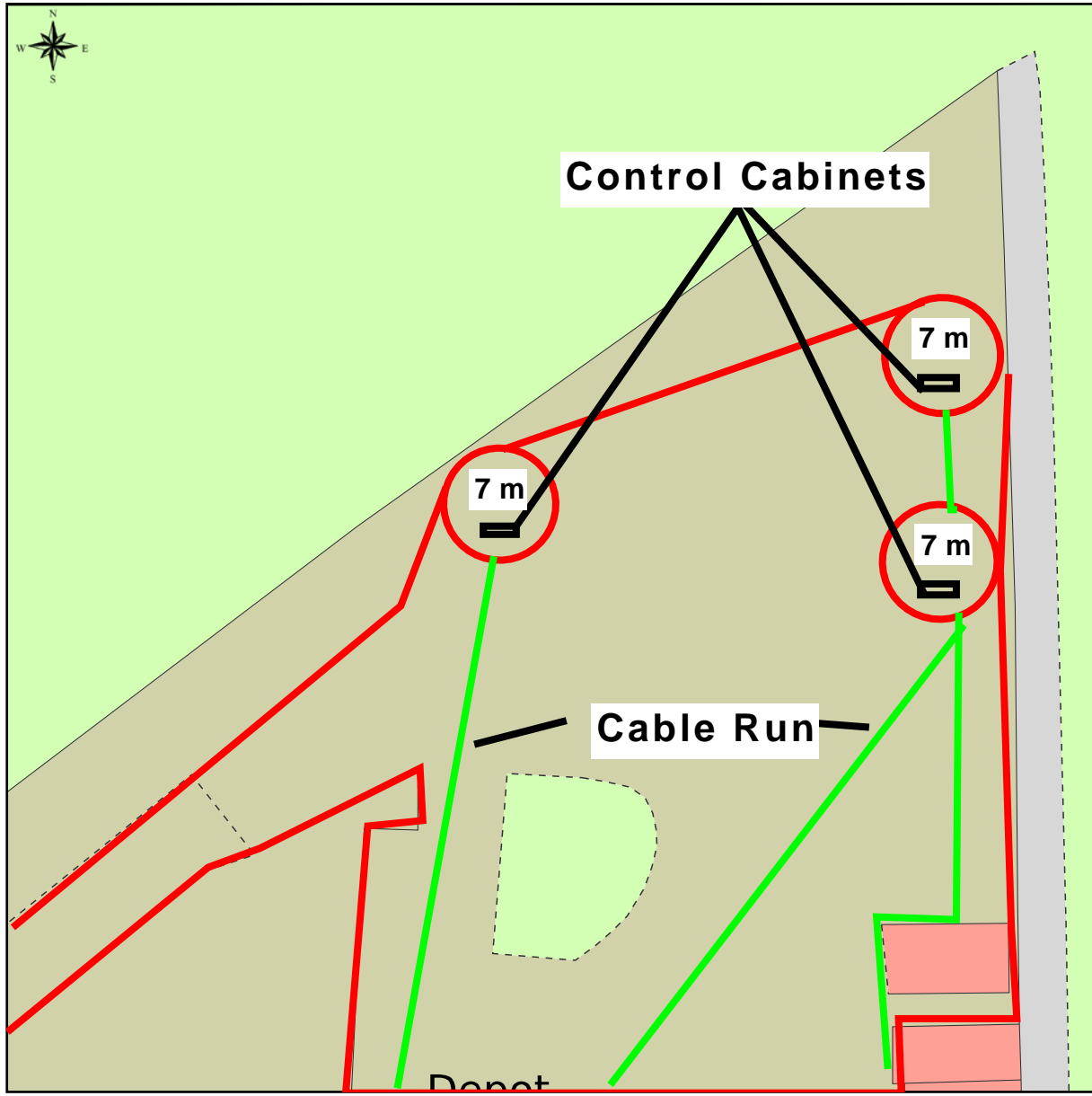
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# 150 Barton Road PE13 4TF - Block Plan



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150 Barton Road, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4TF

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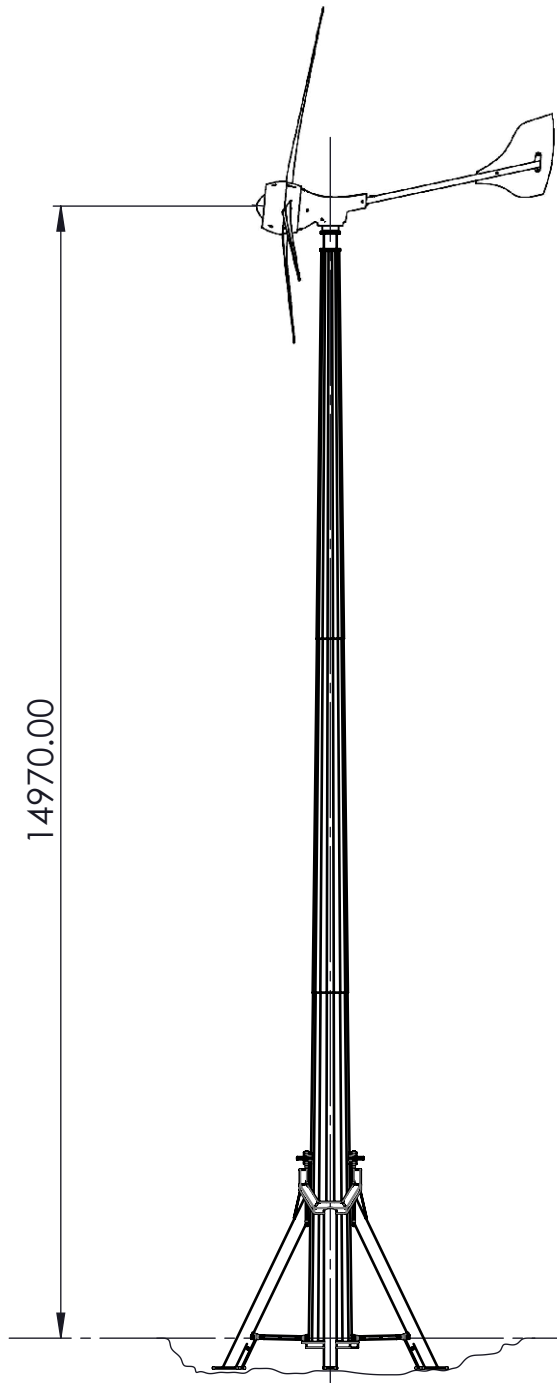
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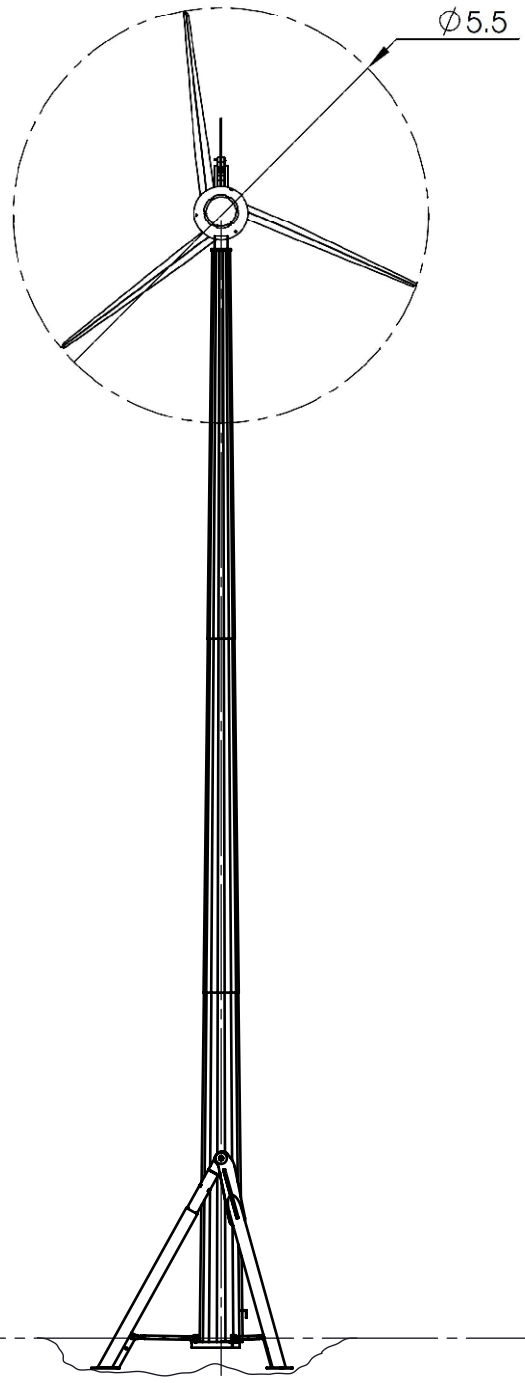
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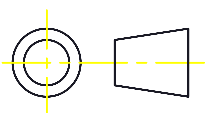
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APPROVED -

MATERIAL

VARIOUS, MILD STEEL

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