

F/YR11/0925/F

29 November 2011

**Applicant : Mr R Davis
Robert Davis Potatoes**

**Agent : Mrs T Dorling
Windcrop Limited**

Land South East Of Pipers Farm, Barton Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire

Erection of 3 x 14.97 metre high (hub height) wind turbines

This proposal is before the Planning Committee due to level of objection received and the Town Council comments being at variance to the Officer recommendation.

This application is an other.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is currently vacant agricultural land to the south east of Pipers Farm and measures 0.10 hectares in area. It lies within Flood Zone 3. The nearest residential properties front Barton Road and Mile Tree Lane to the north/north west at a distance of approximately 250 metres from the proposed turbines and the Secret Garden Touring Caravan Park lies approx 100m to the north. The locality consists of a mix of residential and business premises with an element of open agricultural land and drainage ditches. Pipers Farm is used mainly for the storage and distribution of potatoes. The western edge of the Wisbech Conservation Area and the Grade II* Manor House and Church of St Mary at Wisbech St Mary are within 2km of the site.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| F/YR11/0781/F | - Erection of 3no wind generators (14.97 metres hub height) with associated works – Withdrawn 25/11/11 |
| F/YR04/3495/F | - Extension to existing potato stores – Granted 23/07/04 |

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 the planned turbines are too many, and too high, not being in keeping with the surrounding residential properties.

Local Highway Authority (CCC):

There are no highway issues in respect of this particular application.

Environment Agency

The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is considered to be acceptable for the scale and nature of the proposed development. However, the FRA has not acknowledged that the site is located approximately 1km from the River Nene (designated a main river) and is, therefore, likely to flood in the event of a breach of flood defences. We have no objection to the proposed development but wish to make the following comments:

As the site lies within an area at risk of flooding, the applicant should ensure that all sensitive electrical equipment is installed above the predicted flood levels. This will ensure the development remains operational during flood events. Appropriate protection (which should allow for inspection of joints) should be afforded to any oil-filled underground cabling and regular leak testing should be carried out.

As part of the decommissioning of this wind turbine, all below ground cables should be removed as electrical cables contain insulation oils which, if left to degrade within the ground, could lead to localised contamination of soils and potential.

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 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 HE 9 and 10 of PPS 5.

Request a condition requiring the turbines to be removed and the site made good at the end of their operational life, or whenever they become redundant, whichever is the sooner.

Safer Fenland Manager

No apparent crime and disorder issues – no objections.

<i>Civil Aviation Authority</i>	Awaited
<i>Save our Swans</i>	Awaited
<i>CCC Archaeology</i>	Awaited
<i>Countryside Access Team</i>	Awaited
<i>Anglian Water</i>	No objection
<i>Campaign to Protect Rural England</i>	Awaited
<i>National Planning Casework Unit</i>	Awaited
<i>Cambs Constabulary Liaison Officer</i>	Awaited
<i>EDF Energy Works</i>	Awaited
<i>NATS (NERL safeguarding)</i>	Awaited
<i>The Ramblers Association</i>	Awaited
<i>Save our Skyline</i>	Awaited
<i>Defence Estate Organ Safeguarding</i>	Awaited
<i>British Telecom</i>	Awaited
<i>The Wildlife Trust</i>	Awaited
<i>RSPB</i>	Awaited
<i>Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust</i>	Awaited
<i>Cambs Bats Group</i>	Awaited
<i>Natural England</i>	Awaited
<i>Chatteris Airfield</i>	Awaited
<i>Sibson Airfield</i>	Awaited
<i>Peterborough Business Airfield</i>	No objection -outside radius of concern
<i>Marshals Paddock</i>	Awaited
<i>Cambridge Airport</i>	Awaited
<i>Network Rail</i>	Awaited

Fenland Aerodrome

Awaited

Joint Radio Company

Awaited

Raptor Foundation

Awaited

FDC Environmental Protection

I have considered the above mentioned planning application, in respect to the impact of the noise of the proposed development on the nearest noise sensitive properties. Due to the distance to neighbouring properties noise should not be an issue. I have noted the information provided and in response recommend that the following conditions should be added to a planning permission should it be granted.

Night-time noise levels

The noise emission (LA90, 10 minute) from effects of the wind turbine, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed during night hours 2300 – 0700, the greater of 43dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the night hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.

Day-time noise levels

At all other times the noise emission (LA90, 10 minute) from the effects of the wind turbine, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed the greater of 35dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the Quiet Waking Hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) at wind speeds within the site not exceeding 10 metres per second.

Informative:

Period of hours have been used are as defined in ETSU-R-97 (The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms).

Quite day-time periods are defined as:

All evenings from 6pm to 11pm,
Plus Saturday afternoons from
1pm to 6pm,
Plus all day Sunday, 7am to
6pm.

Night-time is defined as 11pm to 7am

Remedial Action

In the event that noise exceeds the limits specified in the planning permission remedial Action must be undertaken to reduce the noise levels. This would include, checking the source noise level of individual turbines (if this has not already occurred as part of any warranty agreement with the turbine supplier or by compliance testing). Mitigation applied may involve slowing of turbine rotational speed, thus reducing noise, or even shut-down of individual turbines, under critical wind conditions.

Operator monitoring

At the reasonable request of, and following a complaint to, Fenland District Council the operator of the development shall, measure and assess 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.

Cumulative impact

Monitoring undertaken to identify compliance of planning conditions or justify complaints must consider the cumulative impact of other wind farms. The existence of other wind farm noise should not be considered as part of the prevailing background noise.

Local residents/interested parties:

Eight letters of objection have been received from neighbours in the vicinity on the following grounds;

- Noise disturbance from the turbines especially at night and will add to already persistent noise from ventilation fans on the site
- Devaluation of properties
- Potential of exploding turbines in high winds
- Property is licensed by Ofcom to use wavelengths for transmission and reception that would be seriously affected.
- Increased noise/visual intrusion from the turbines will be

detrimental to the attractiveness of established leisure businesses in the area.

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 south east of Pipers Farm, 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;

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

Site History

The site has been used for many years for the storage and distribution of potatoes. This takes place from a number of warehouses on the site. The proposed turbines will provide the business with a suitable method of generating an electrical supply which will be grid connected to a Three Phase supply making the business more sustainable.

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, Noise, Shadow Flicker and Scattering of Signal
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. The majority of responses from immediate neighbours indicated that they did not feel that the visual impact of the turbines would be significant and this is a view shared by officers. The turbines will be visible in the immediate locality, however, due to their height and colouring it is considered that their impact in the wider landscape will be minimal.

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. Many residents are concerned that the current use of the site generates an excessive amount of noise and the proposed turbines will make the situation worse. The response from consultation with Environmental Protection Officers is that noise should not be an issue in respect of the impact on the nearest noise sensitive properties due to the distances involved and data provided. The objection relating to the likely noise disturbance to the touring caravan park has been considered and whilst it is accepted that the site is within 100m of the proposed turbines the same level of protection cannot be afforded to the site as it is not classed as a noise sensitive property. Conditions and informatives, as recommended by Environmental Protection, relating to maximum noise emissions, remedial action and operator monitoring can be used to control this aspect of the proposal.

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 the 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.

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 Pipers Farm. 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 will not adversely affect the residential amenity of the nearest neighbours. 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. The noise emissions (LA90, 10 minute) from effects of the wind turbines, as measured in free field conditions at any dwelling, shall not exceed during night hours 2300 - 0700, the greater of 43dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the night hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.

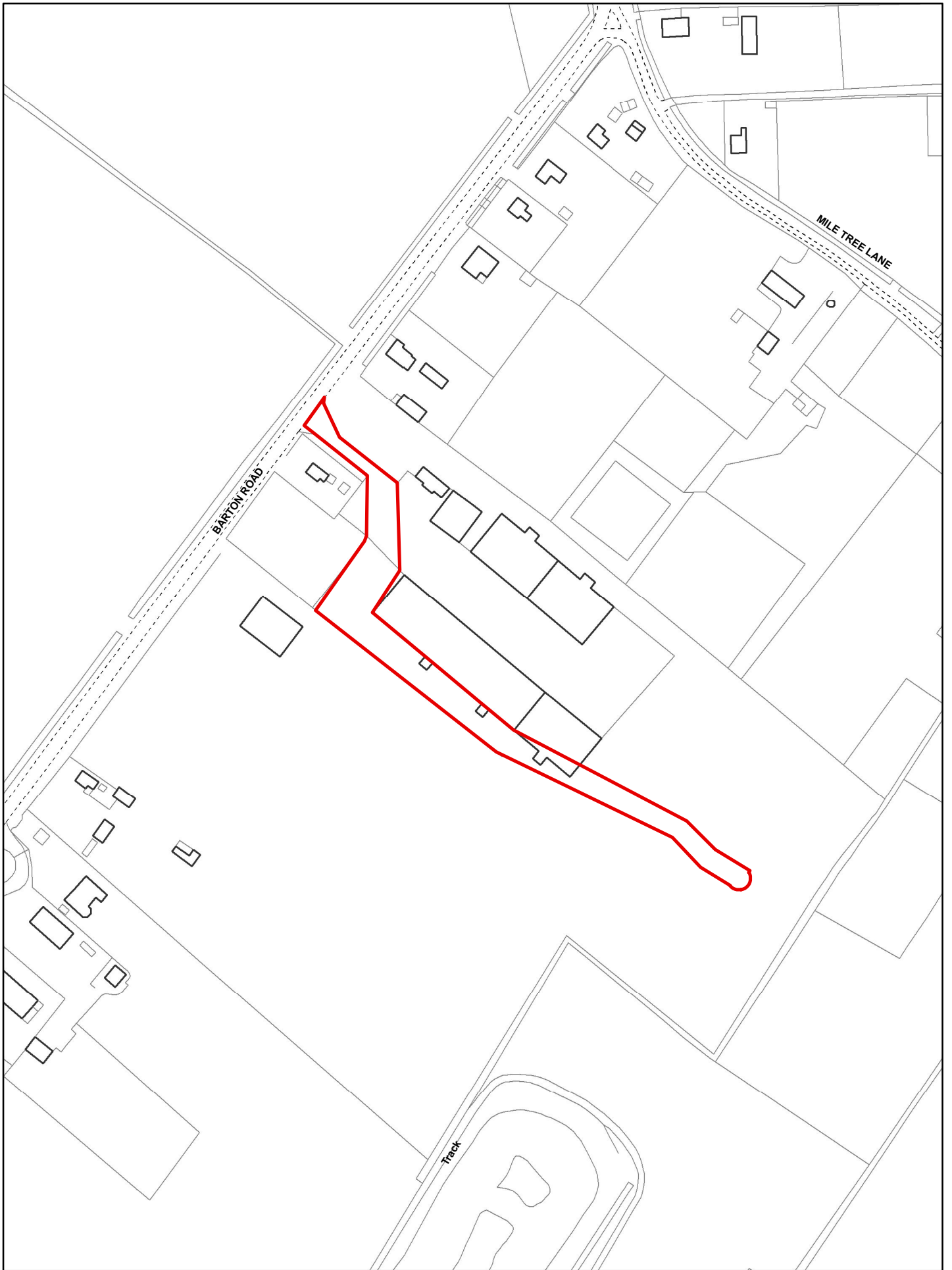
Reason - To protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

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Reason - To protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Informatives

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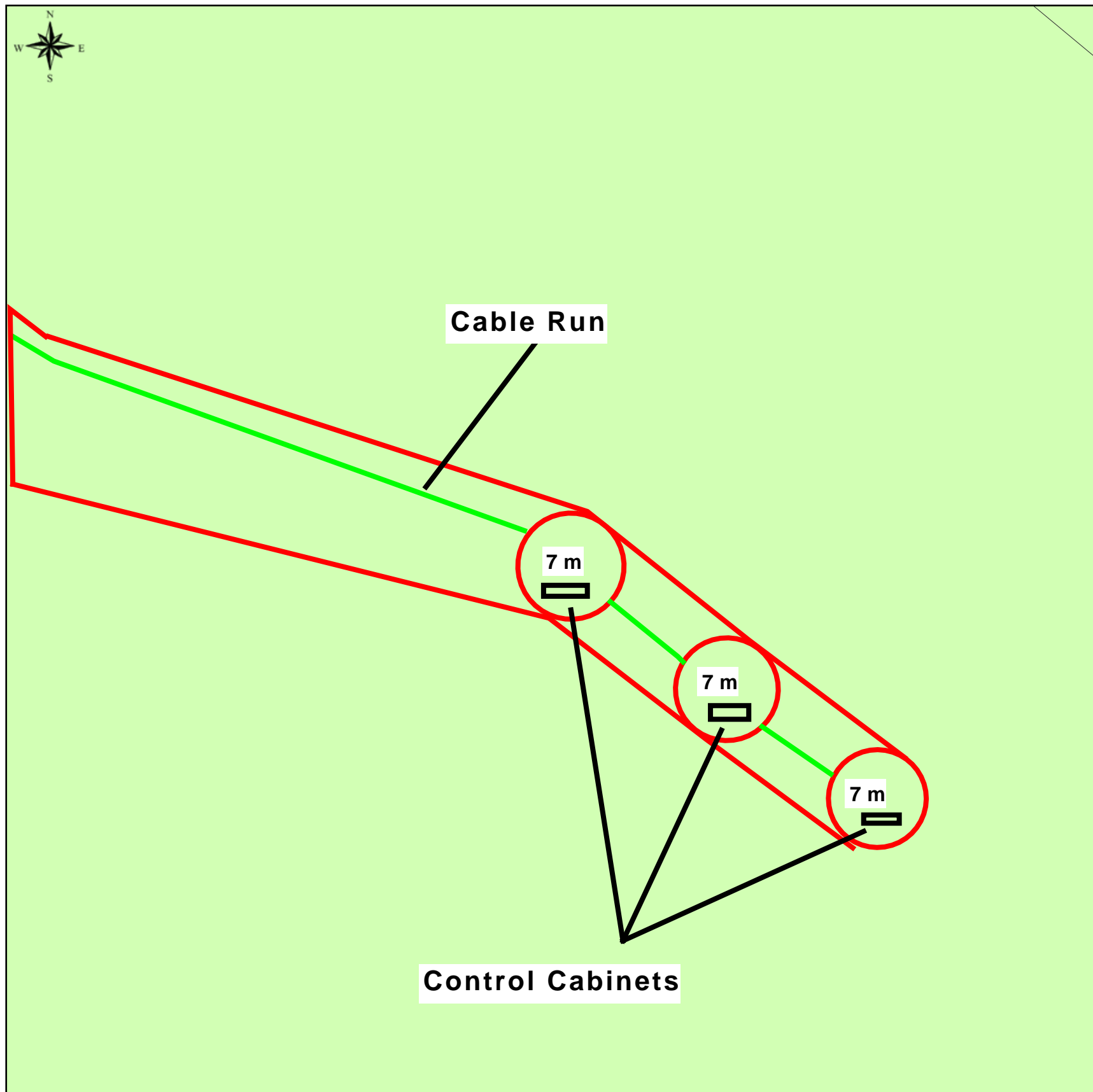
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Robert Davis Potatoes PE13 4TL - Block Plan



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Robert Davis Potatoes, Pipers Farm, Barton Road,
Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4TL.

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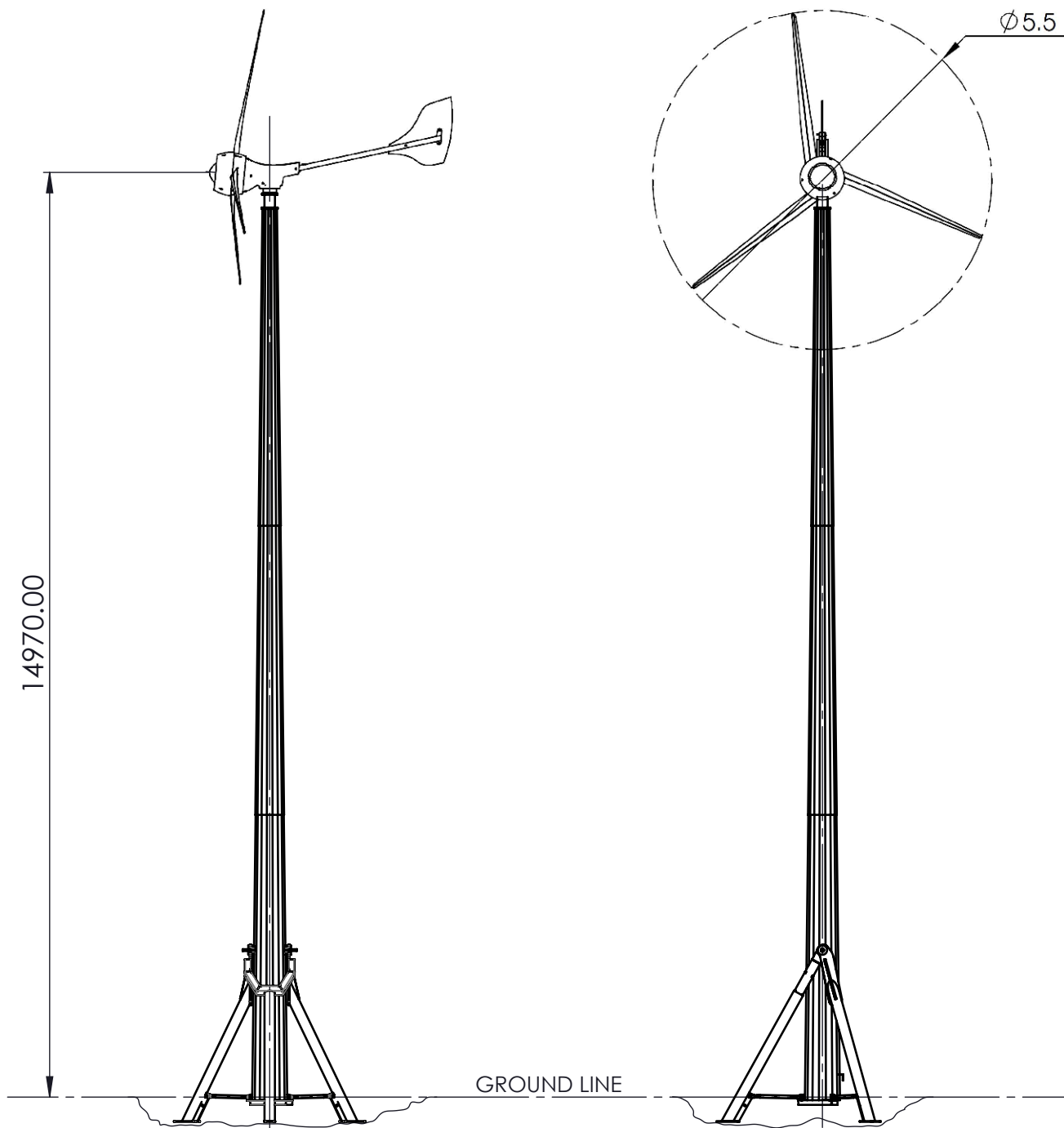
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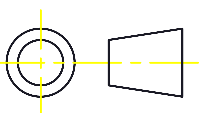
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