

**Application Number: F/YR12/0469/F**  
**Minor**  
**Parish/Ward: Gorefield**  
**Date Received: 15 June 2012**  
**Expiry Date: 10 August 2012**  
**Applicant: Mr M Patrick, Mark Patrick Ltd.**

**Proposal: Erection of 2 x 14.97m high (hub height) turbines**  
**Location: Land West of Old Wood Yard, Birds Drove, Gorefield**

**Site Area/Density: 00.10 hectares**

**Reason before Committee: Level of objections received.**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION**

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 2 x 14.97 metre high (hub height) wind turbines at Land West of Old Wood Yard, Birds Drove in Gorefield.

The key issues to consider are:

- Siting and Design
- Visual Impact on the surrounding area
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Impact on Wildlife.

The proposal is to be sited within an existing unused paddock area and it is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the rural character of the area or on any nearby residential properties. Therefore, the application is recommended for approval.

**2. HISTORY**

Of relevance to this proposal is:

2.1 None relevant

**3. PLANNING POLICIES**

**3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:**

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 93: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.

Paragraph 109: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

**3.2 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.

ENV3: Ensure that new development minimises damage to biodiversity.

ENV4: Ensures that the landscape, historic and wildlife value of farmland is increased whilst responding to issues such as climate change.

### 3.3 **Draft Fenland Core Strategy:**

CS12: Responding to climate change and managing the risk of flooding in Fenland.

CS14: Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.

### 3.4 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan:**

EMP1: Proposals will normally be favoured for new, or the extension or expansion of existing, firms ... outside DABs the expansion of existing firms will only be permitted where certain criteria are satisfied.

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 any development which by its nature gives rise to unacceptable levels of noise, nuisance and other environmental pollution.

### 3.5 **Fenland District Council Wind Turbine Policy Guidance June 2009 (The Landscape Partnership)**

Seeks to ensure that future wind turbine development is in balance with the local landscape and the population within it. This document sets out a number of landscape types and sets out the criteria for evaluating the sensitivity of each type.

## 4. **CONSULTATIONS**

### 4.1 ***Parish/Town Council***

Support renewable energy initiatives but wish to make comment on the visual impact, setting a precedent, views of local residents and querying the need to produce electricity for a site that has been disused for many years.

### 4.2 ***Chatteris Airfield***

No objections to the proposal.

4.3	<b><i>FDC Scientific Officer (Land Contamination)</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.4	<b><i>CCC Archaeology</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.5	<b><i>Countryside Access Team</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.6	<b><i>Environment Agency</i></b>	Raise no objections. Provides guidance notes to be forwarded to the applicant.
4.7	<b><i>CCC Police Architectural Liaison Officer</i></b>	The height of the turbines should have no detrimental impact on the emergency services air operations unit. Recommend that any cabling is buried at least 1.8 metres underground to prevent theft. The crime impact of the site is low. No objections to the proposal.
4.8	<b><i>NATS</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.9	<b><i>The Ramblers Association</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.10	<b><i>Defence Estates</i></b>	No objections to the proposal.
4.11	<b><i>The Wildlife Trust</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.12	<b><i>RSPB</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.13	<b><i>Cambs Bat Group</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.14	<b><i>Natural England</i></b>	The proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes, or have significant impacts on the conservation of soils. Provide standing advice on species.
4.15	<b><i>Network Rail Town Planning Technician (South East)</i></b>	Have no observations or objections to the proposal.
4.16	<b><i>CCC Highways</i></b>	Carriageway is narrow however the traffic generated during the very short construction phase is minimal and vehicles will be no larger than could be expected to be generated by the agricultural use. Therefore no objections.

- 4.17 **FDC Environmental Protection** Requests that conditions are added to any permission given relating to noise levels (day and night), remedial action, proposed noise monitoring and cumulative noise impacts.
- 4.18 **Raptor Foundation** Not received at the time of writing this report.
- 4.19 **Local Residents:** 9 letters of objection received:
- Concern over location and the visual impacts on residential properties.
  - The overall height will be 17.72m to the blades.
  - The turbines will look out of place.
  - Approval will set a precedent.
  - Concerns over potential noise.
  - Impact on house prices.
  - Finding renewable energy should not be at the detriment of local peoples' comfort.
  - Turbines are not cost-effective
  - The effect on animals and wildlife in the area.
  - The site is not suitable for an industrial use.
  - The rash of turbines throughout the District is ruining the landscapes.
  - Wind cannot be guaranteed making the turbines inefficient.
  - Interference with mobile phone signals and TV.
  - Owls regularly hunt over this site.
  - There may be bats present in the trees or adjacent buildings.
  - The adjoining dykes are habitats for reed warblers.
  - Will the electricity generated allow industry to come into this part of the countryside?
  - Potential for the turbines to ice up.
  - Badgers are present.
  - From the biodiversity checklist it would appear that no ecological survey has been done.
  - Highway safety due to the turbines being a distraction.

## 5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The site is located on land to the West of Old Wood Yard off Birds Drove in Gorefield. The site has an area of 0.10 hectares and currently comprises of an unused area of paddock. There is a small field shelter on site currently. The disused wood yard sits to the East of the proposed location of the turbines, with a row of trees along the boundary. The front and rear boundaries of the site are relatively open with some post and rail fencing present. The turbines will sit towards the rear of the paddock, with access off Birds Drove. There is a dwelling to the South East of the site, on the junction with Birds Drove and Mill Lane.

## 6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The key considerations for this application are:
- Siting and Design
  - Visual Impact
  - Residential Amenity
  - Wildlife

### ***Siting and Design***

The proposal is for 2 wind turbines, which are to be sited within an existing paddock area. They are to be sited towards the rear of the site, to the West of the existing disused wood yard. The access will be from Birds Drove. There are trees to the East of the proposed siting. The Local Highways Authority have raised no objection to the scheme in terms of traffic generation and the access.

The turbines are to be 14.97 metres in height to the hub, with the total height to blade tip being approximately 17.5 metres. The rotor diameter is 5.5 metres. The turbine is of a 3-bladed design and has a tripod base. The Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance (June 2009) advises that in this instance the site falls within 'The Fens' landscape type, which has a high capacity for a small scale group of turbines. This report is mainly used to consider the impact of commercial turbines with a height of 100 – 125 metre as opposed to the smaller scale installations under consideration here, however, it is useful in so far as the recommendations show that the site is located in an area, which has the capacity to accommodate turbines without causing material harm to the landscape. As such the proposed siting and design is considered to be acceptable in this location.

### ***Visual Impact on the Surrounding Area***

A key consideration of this proposal is the overall visual impact that the 2 wind turbines will have on the surrounding area. The proposal is within an existing paddock area, which benefits from existing tree screening to the West, on the boundary with the wood yard. Birds Drove is a narrow, unclassified road, which sits to the South of the main settlement of Gorefield, and to the North of Leverington Common. The height of the proposed turbines has been chosen for this site as it is felt that this would strike a balance between capturing the wind efficiently and minimising the visual impacts of the proposal as much as possible. It is considered that although there will be a change to the character of the area and the visual appearance, however, this is not considered to be of

a detrimental nature. There are no other turbines in close proximity to these proposed turbines and, therefore, there will be no cumulative visual impact in this instance.

### ***Impact on residential amenity***

A further key consideration with this proposal is the potential impact on neighbouring residential properties. 9 letters of objection have been received from local residents in relation to the proposal. The key points of objection have been summarised at the beginning of this report. One of the issues raised was the potential noise that would be generated by the proposed turbines. These turbines are of a relatively small scale and the Environmental Protection Team have assessed the proposal and raised no objections in terms of noise. They have recommended that a number of conditions are attached to any permission given relating to night-time and day-time noise levels and any associated remedial action that may be required. The impact on the views of nearby residents have been taken into consideration and in terms of the siting and overall height of the proposed wind turbines in relation to the surrounding area and the existing screening and buildings in the area the visual impact is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

### ***Impact on wildlife***

The application has been accompanied by a biodiversity checklist. A number of objections have been received in relation to the impacts upon the wildlife of the area. The objections advise that the biodiversity checklist has been completed incorrectly and that there are badgers, and the possibility of owls, reed warblers and bats in this area. Natural England have raised no objections to the proposal and have referred the Authority to their standing advice, a copy of which will be forwarded to the applicant should the application be approved. The application states that the turbines have been sited to minimise and avoid any impacts upon bats and other wildlife and an independent ecological consultant carried out an assessment of the site. An informative relating to the procedure should any protected species be found on site can be attached to any permission given.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 In planning policy terms the proposal is considered to accord with national, regional and local planning policy in contributing to the need for renewable energy without adversely affecting biodiversity, noise, access, visual impact, or cumulative impact. The location of the site is considered to be acceptable and will not give rise to any adverse visual or residential amenity impacts. As such the proposal is recommended for approval with appropriate planning conditions.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

**Grant – with 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. 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 (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.

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.

For information the period of hours used are as defined in ETSU-R-97 (The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms). Quiet 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.

*Reason - In the interests of protecting residential amenity.*

3. In the event that noise exceeds the limits specified in the planning permission remedial action must be taken 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.

*Reason - In the interests of maintaining acceptable noise levels from the development.*

4. 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.

*Reason - In the interests of maintaining acceptable noise levels from the development and to safeguard the amenities of nearby properties.*

5. Within a period of 25 years from the date of the first electricity generation on site the development hereby permitted shall be removed from the site in its entirety and the site restored to its former condition unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason - To allow the Local Planning Authority to re-assess the condition of the development in line with the potential lifespan of the installation.*

6. **Not later than 12 months before the end of this permission, a decommissioning and site restoration scheme shall be submitted for the written approval of the local planning authority. The scheme shall make provision for the removal of the wind turbines and associated ancillary equipment to a depth of at least 0.2 metres below ground. The scheme shall include the management and timing of any works, a traffic management plan to address likely traffic issues during the decommissioning period, an environmental management plan to include details of measures to be taken during the decommissioning period to protect wildlife and habitats and a programme of implementation. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented within 12 months of the expiry of this permission.**

*Reason - In the interests of the appearance of the locality.*

7. **If the wind turbine fails to produce electricity for supply to the grid for a continuous period of 12 months then, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the wind turbine and its associated ancillary equipment shall be removed from the site within a period of 3 months from the end of the 12 month period. The land shall be reinstated in accordance with a scheme (including management and timing of the works and a traffic management plan) submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

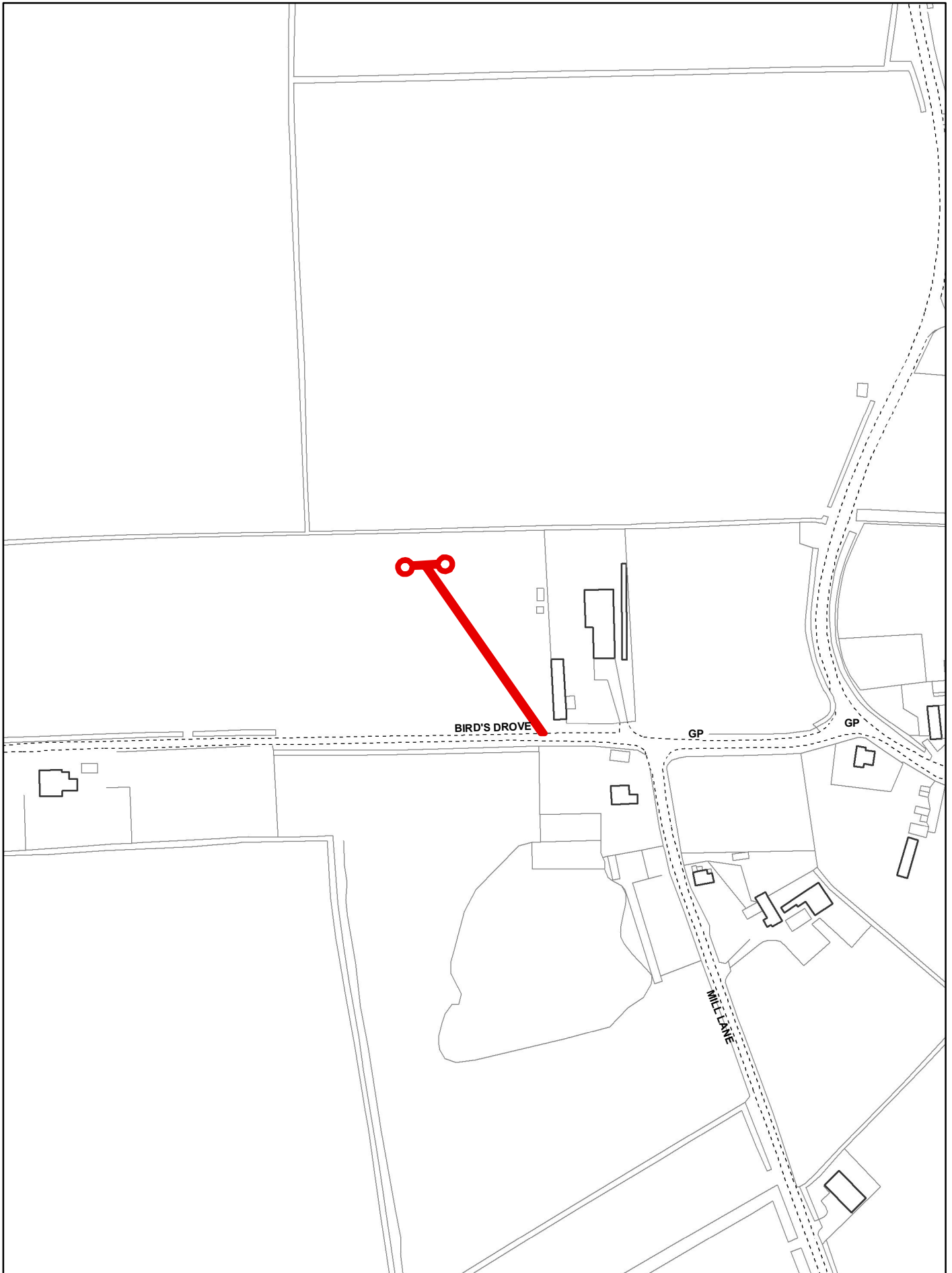
*Reason - In the interests of the appearance of the locality.*

8. **Construction work and material deliveries shall only take place between the hours of 07:00 – 18:00 on Monday to Friday inclusive, 08:00 – 13:00 hours on Saturdays with no such construction work on a Sunday or Public Holiday. Outside these hours, works at the site shall be limited to emergency works and dust suppression, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority shall be informed in writing of emergency works within three working days of the occurrence.**

*Reason - In the interests of residential and recreational amenity.*

9. **Approved Plans**





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**F/YR12/0469/F**

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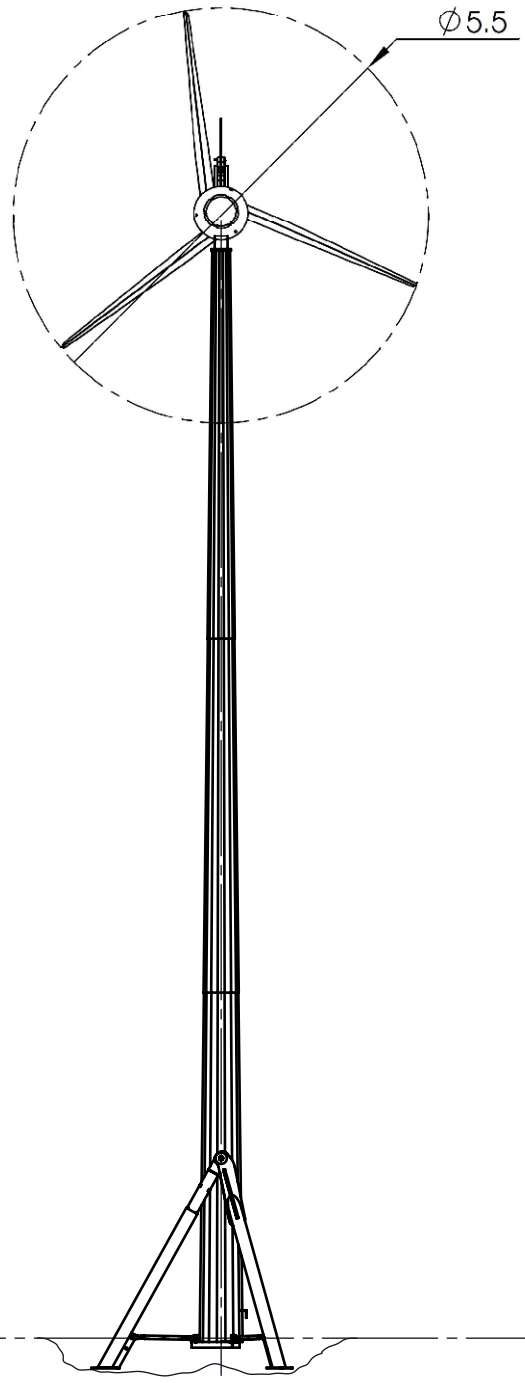
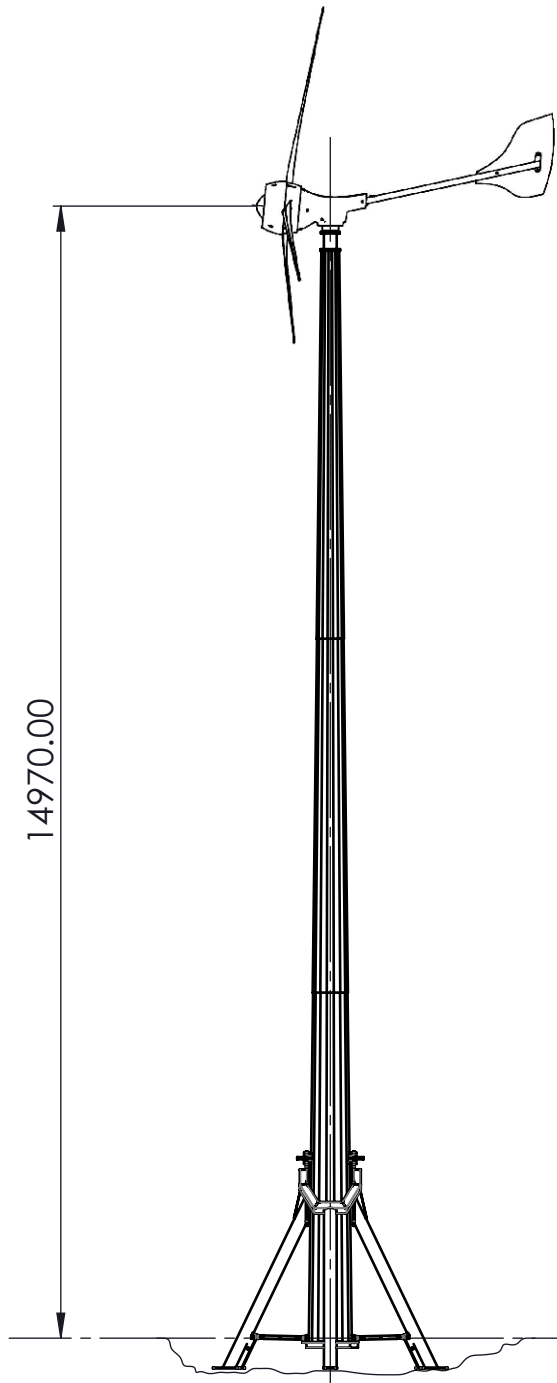
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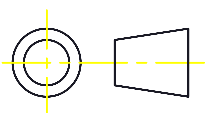
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