

**Application Number: FYR12/0565/F**  
**Minor**  
**Parish/Ward: Elm/Christchurch**  
**Date Received: 26 July 2012**  
**Expiry Date: 20 September 2012**  
**Applicant: Mr A Day**  
**Agent: Mrs T Dorling, Windcrop Ltd**

**Proposal: Erection of a 14.97m high (hub height) wind turbine.**  
**Location: Peartree Farm, Padgetts Road, Christchurch**

**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 a 14.97 metre high (hub height) wind turbine at Peartree Farm, Padgetts Road, Christchurch.

The key issues to consider are siting, visual impact on the surrounding area, impact on residential amenity and the impact on wildlife and wildfowl.

The proposal is to be sited within an area of paddocks, which form part of the grounds of Peartree Farm, approx.150 metres south west from the junction of Scotts Road, Padgetts Road and Church Road. Although the turbine is one of the smaller models, with an overall height of approx. 17.5m, it is considered to be unacceptable in this location due to its situation within the feeding areas used by Bewick and Whooper Swans which roost on the Ouse Washes Special Protection Area (SPA). As a result the recommendation is to refuse the application.

## 2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- 2.1 No relevant planning history.

---

## 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:**

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	<b><i>Parish/Town Council</i></b>	Awaited
4.2	<b><i>Chatteris Airfield</i></b>	No objections to the proposal.
4.3	<b><i>Middle Level Commissioners</i></b>	Awaited
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>	No objections as no rights of way or bridleways within the fall over height of the turbine.
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 safeguarding</i></b>	No safeguarding objection to the proposal.

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 in Association with Welney Wildfowl &amp; Wetlands Trust</i></b>	<p>Objects on the following grounds;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displacement of swans from important feeding areas.</li> <li>• Cumulative impact of turbine proposals.</li> <li>• Compromise the integrity of the Ouse Washes SPA.</li> </ul>
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>Anglian Water</i></b>	No concerns from a groundwater perspective.
4.16	<b><i>CCC Highways</i></b>	Further information required regarding the precise access location.
4.17	<b><i>FDC Environmental Protection</i></b>	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	<b><i>Raptor Foundation</i></b>	Not received at the time of writing this report.

#### 4.19 **Local Residents:**

8 letters of objection received plus a petition of 119 signatures from SOSA (Save our Swans Again)

- Concern over location and the visual and noise impacts on residential properties.
- Possibility of further wind farm development in location.
- There is a proliferation of turbines in Fenland and development seems to be accelerating.
- Evidence exists that badly sited turbines kill birds.
- Located in sensitive ecological site with risk to swan, barn owl and bat species present in the area.
- Sited on direct flight path of migratory and feeding Bewick and Whooper swans.
- Bewick swan population already in decline due to collision incidents.
- Finding renewable energy should not be at the detriment of protected wildlife.
- FDC stated in 2001 that it would not look favourably on this type of development in sensitive areas.
- The turbine would represent a loss of habitat for the swans.
- No recognition of the unique location in providing shelter and food for the migratory birds.
- Not against wind energy in principle but not at the expense of important, internationally recognised wildlife sites.

### 5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

5.1 The site is located on land at Peartree Farm, Christchurch which is a private residence. The site has an area of 0.10 hectares and is within an area of paddocks and field shelters bounded by post and rail fences. The dwelling and associated buildings of Peartree Farm sit to the north of the proposed turbine along with Church Road and the remainder of the village which stretches to the north east.

The nearest neighbouring property lies approx 100m from the proposal with the applicant's stable yard situated between it and the proposed turbine.

### 6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The key considerations for this application are:

- Siting and Design
- Visual Impact
- Residential Amenity
- Wildlife and Wildfowl

#### (a) Siting and Design

The proposal is for a single wind turbine to be sited roughly in the middle of the

applicant's land which extends to a number of paddocks. The access will be from Scott's Road.

The turbine is 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 5.6 metres. The turbine is of a 3-bladed design and has a tripod base with a grey tower and white blades.

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 installation 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.

(b) Visual Impact on the Surrounding Area

A key consideration of this proposal is the overall visual impact that the turbine will have on the surrounding area. The proposal is within an existing paddocked area which benefits from a limited amount of screening from existing landscaping and buildings, but it would lie on the edge the main settlement. The height of the proposed turbine is not considered to be overly dominant in this location and although there will be a change to the character and visual appearance of the area this is not considered to be significant enough to be of a detrimental nature. There are no other turbines of this scale in close proximity to the proposed turbine; therefore there will be no cumulative visual impact.

(c) Impact on residential amenity

A further consideration is the potential impact on neighbouring residential properties. 8 letters of objection and a petition of 119 signatures 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 main issues raised relates to the potential effect on wildfowl and this will be covered in the next section of this report.

In terms of noise impact this turbine is of a relatively small scale. The Environmental Protection Team has 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 the visual impact is considered to be acceptable in this instance, although it is acknowledged that the proposed turbine lies in close proximity to the edge of the village. In terms of the siting and overall height of the proposed turbine when viewed in relation to the existing landscape features in the area it is clear that it would have a presence, but would be of a scale which could be accommodated without severe impacts on residential amenity.

(d) Impact on wildlife/wildfowl

The application has been accompanied by a biodiversity checklist which indicates that no specialist surveys have been carried out. A number of objections and a petition have been received in relation to the impacts upon the wildlife of the area, in particular in the effect on the migratory swans which fly, in the area of the proposed turbine, to their feeding grounds.

The views of local objectors have been supported by the joint comments received from the RSPB and the WWT (Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust). It is pointed out that the site lies approx 4 km from the Ouse Washes which has been designated an SPA (Special Protection Area) under Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), for its internationally important numbers of Bewick's swans (currently in decline), Whooper swans and other species. It is confirmed that the site lies within the feeding areas used by the swans which roost on the Ouse Washes SPA.

There is a requirement under the EC Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and UK Habitats Regulations that an Appropriate Assessment should accompany any plan or project likely to have a significant effect on an internationally important site for nature conservation. This is required to enable the determining authority to be assured that the plan or project will not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the designated site.

The RSPB and WWT have indicated that in the absence of any bird survey work, particularly in relation to the swan's use of Upwell Fen (adjacent to the site) the application should be refused. This is because there is insufficient information to be able to assess whether the proposal will displace swans from their important feeding areas.

In addition, the WWT note that the rotor height of the proposed turbine will be positioned at the flight heights most frequently used by Bewick's and Whooper Swans commuting between their day time feeding areas and the nightly roost. The total absence of any bird monitoring including flight line data and collision risk assessments is a major omission which means the impact of the proposal cannot be assessed.

Local objectors have submitted a number of clips on DVD which show the swans flying at relatively low levels towards the proposed site.

The WWT also have concerns about the cumulative impacts of recent wind turbine development within Fenland and the effect of collision risk and displacement from feeding grounds especially in relation to the Bewick's swan which is considered a vulnerable species.

To conclude the WWT and RSPB believe that the installation of a wind turbine at Peartree Farm would contribute to the displacement of Bewick's and Whooper swans from feeding areas around the Ouse Washes and compromise the integrity of the Ouse Washes SPA.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

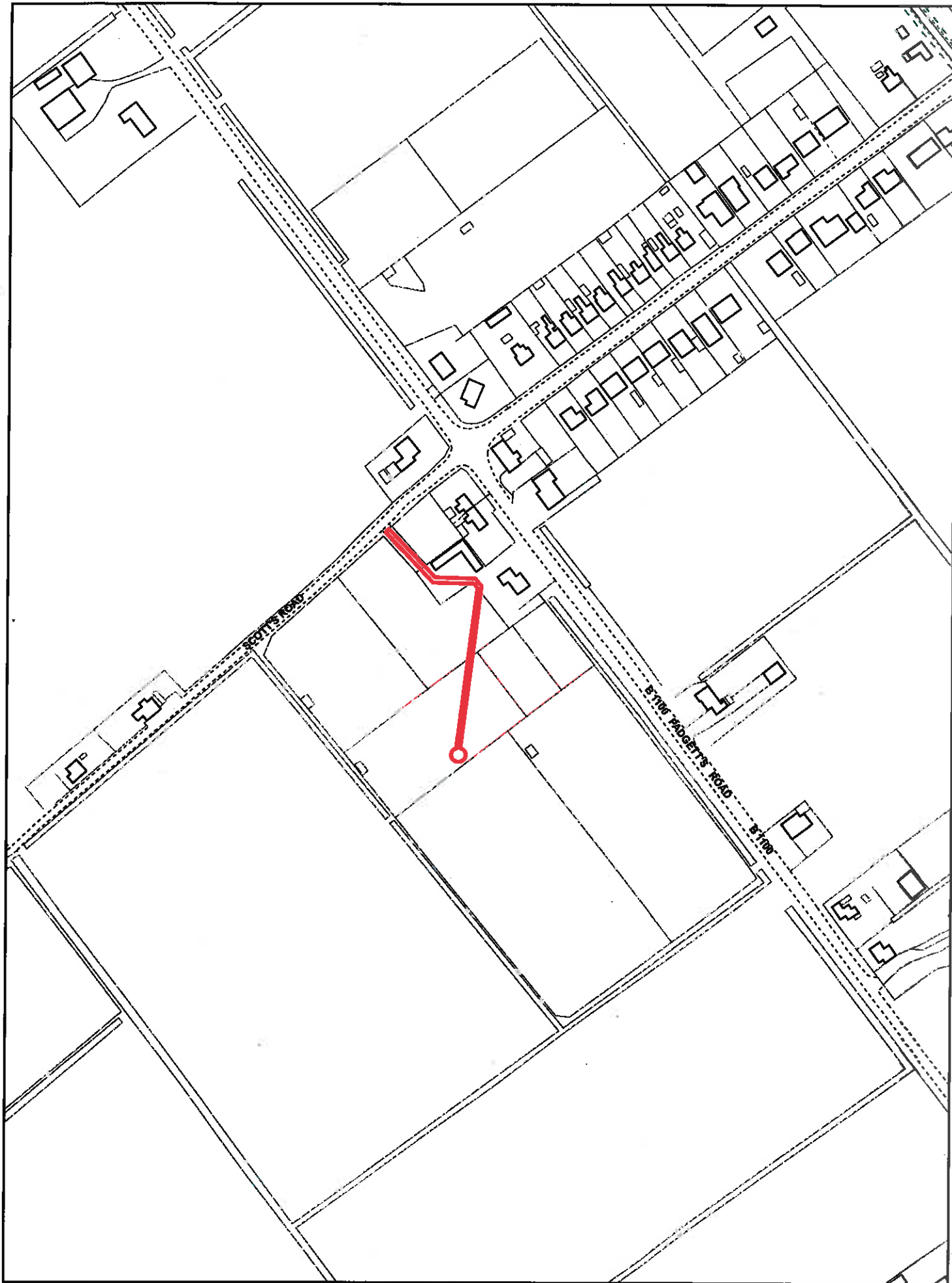
- 7.1 In visual terms, whilst the turbine will be visible in the landscape its scale and positioning will not have an adverse impact on nearby residential properties. However, as the applicant has failed to carry out the required survey and monitoring work involved in siting a turbine in this particular location the effect on the Ouse Washes SPA and its swan population cannot be properly

assessed. As a result the recommendation is to refuse the application.

## 8. **RECOMMENDATION**

### **Refuse**

1. **The proposal has failed to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effect on the nearby Ouse Washes site which is designated as a site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and a RAMSAR site. Therefore the proposal in contrary to Policy ENV2 of the East of England Plan 2008 and E20 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, 1993 together with guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.**



Created on: 06/08/2012

© Crown Copyright and database  
rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 10023778

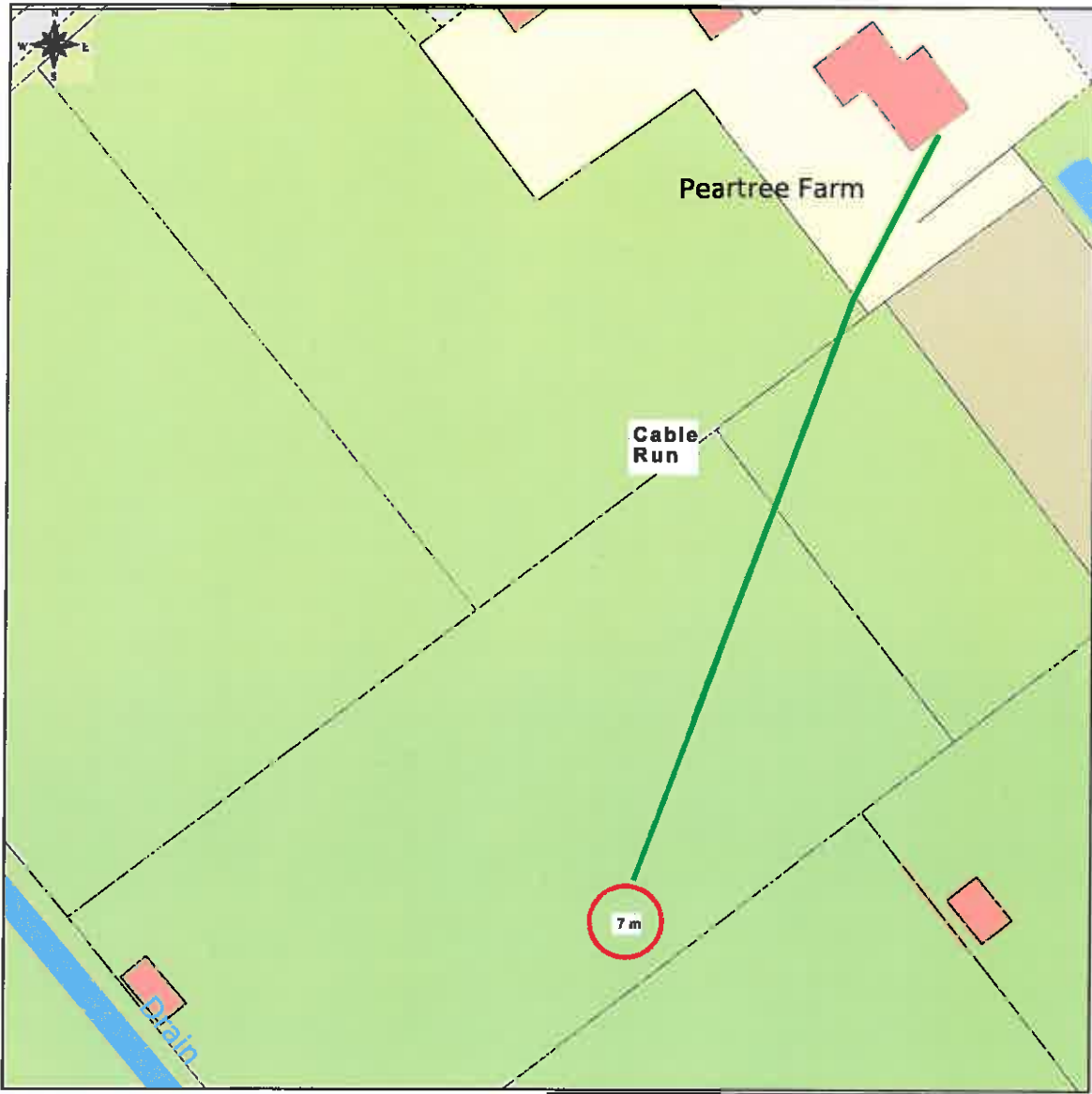
**F/YR12/0565/F**

Scale = 1:2,500





# Pear Tree Farm PE14 9PL - Block Plan A3



This Plan includes the following Licensed Data: OS MasterMap Colour PDF Site Plan by the Ordnance Survey National Geographic Database and incorporating surveyed revision available at the date of production. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without the prior permission of Ordnance Survey. The representation of a road, track or path is no evidence of a right of way. The representation of features as lines is no evidence of a property boundary. © Crown copyright, All rights reserved 2012. Licence number 0100031673

0m 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

Scale: 1:500, paper size: A3

C1039

Pear Tree Farm, Padgetts Road, Christchurch, Wisbech,  
Cambridgeshire, PE14 9PL.

**plans ahead** by **emapsite**

Prepared by: Kevan Gollop, 23-07-2012

4

3

2

1

E

D

C

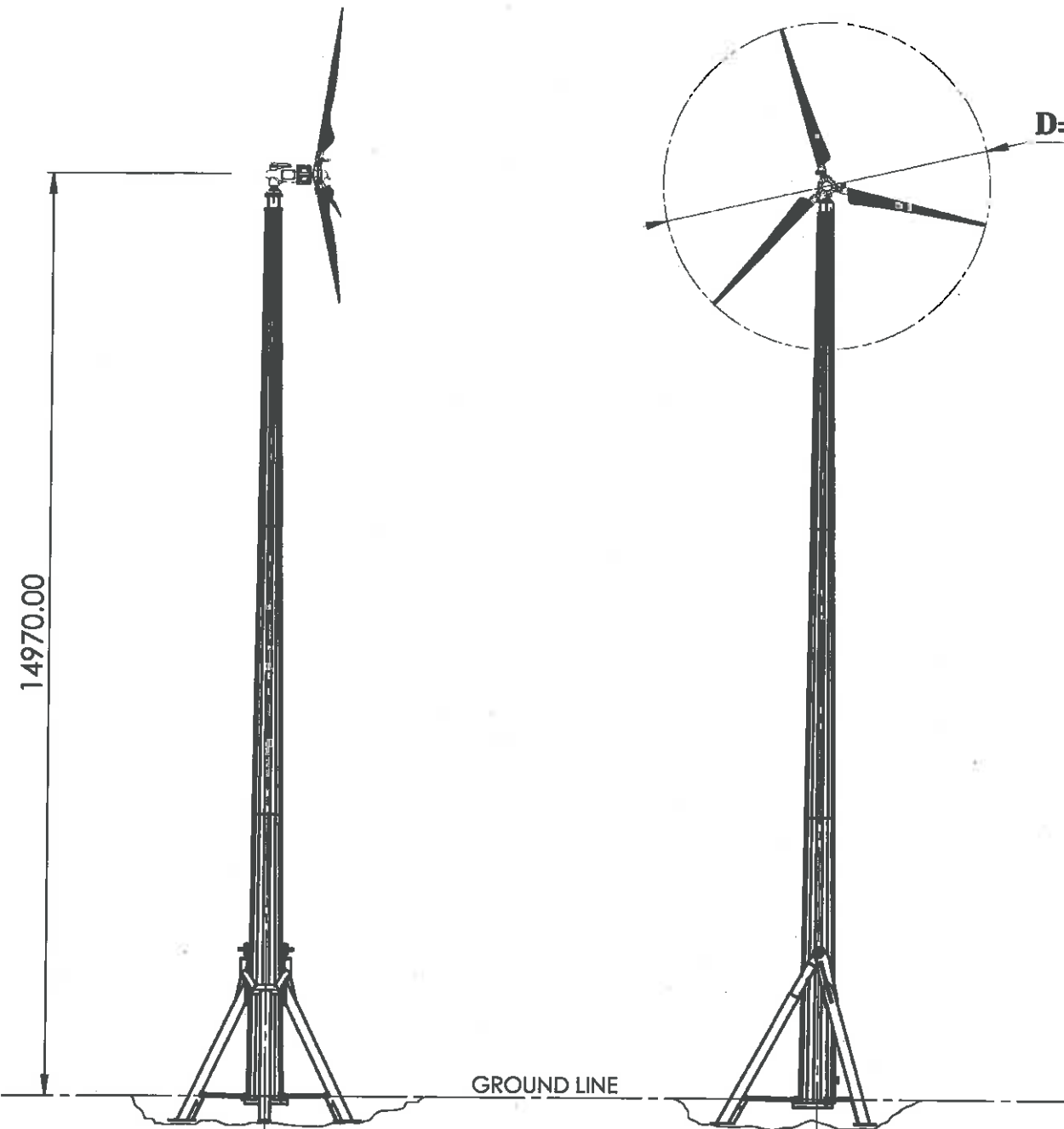
B

E

D

C

B



ACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES  
WWW.ACTIVE-TECHNOLOGIES.CO.UK

COPYRIGHT (c) 2009  
ACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES LTD  
HETHEL ENGINEERING CENTRE, CHAPMAN WAY  
HETHEL, NORWICH, NORFOLK NR14 8FB

UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED:  
DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES  
TOLERANCES: LINEAR  $\pm 0.1$  ANGULAR  $\pm 0.5^\circ$   
SURFACE FINISH =  
DRAWING STANDARDS TO ATQS 6003  
DATE FORMAT: DD/MM/YY

THIS DESIGN IS THE PROPERTY OF  
ACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES LTD AND  
MUST NOT BE REPRODUCED OR  
COMMUNICATED WITHOUT  
AUTHORITY

CAD PLOT  
DO NOT  
SCALE



THIRD ANGLE PROJECTION

SCALE 1:100 | WEIGHT

DRAWN -

DATE - 04/01/12

CHECKED -

APPROVED -

MATERIAL

VARIOUS, MILD STEEL

FINISH

REFER DETAILS

DRAWING TITLE

TRIPOD ASSY, HY5

DRAWING NUMBER

ATC10070-1000\*

SHEET 1 OF 1 A4

4

3

2

A