

Application Number: F/YR12/0624/F

Minor

Parish/Ward: Doddington

Date Received: 14 August 2012

Expiry Date: 9 October 2012

Applicant: Mr A Lawson

Agent: Miss R Goodfield, Mosscliff Environmental Ltd

Proposal: Erection of a 24.6m high (hub height) wind turbine

Location: Coneywood South Farm, Wood Street, Doddington

Site Area/Density: 00.029 hectares

Reason before Committee: Wider Interest

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection a 50kW, 24.6metre (hub height) wind turbine at Coneywood South Farm, Wood Street, Doddington.

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, however, the proposed turbine is located in an area where the cumulative landscape and visual impacts are considered to be determining issues along with the effect on the established sporting uses at Chatteris Airfield. In this context, the proposal is considered to have an adverse impact in the area. These impacts have been evaluated against the requirements to contribute to regional and national targets for renewable energy generation and the benefits of reducing carbon consumption but are, on balance, sufficient reason to resist this proposal.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

2.1	F/YR12/0148/F	Erection of 24.6m (hub height) wind turbine with associated works	Withdrawn 13/04/12	–
-----	---------------	---	-----------------------	---

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. Further details of this policy are set out in the assessment section of this report.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 ***Parish/Town Council***

Strongly object as erection of turbines causes damage to environment and this damage is more than can be saved from their performance. There are views of turbines all around the village and parishioners can only see the detrimental effects and a continued rise in electricity bills.

4.2 ***Chatteris Airfield***

Strong objection for following reasons;

- The height of the tip of the blades is 34.2m.
- The proposed turbine will be sited in the agreed 3km radius safeguarding zone as set out in the in the adopted Fenland Wind Turbine Study which states that 'Turbines are unlikely to be found acceptable in this zone'.
- Application omits reference to the safeguarding zone.
- The proposal will introduce an unacceptable obstruction in the

vicinity of the airfield and associated parachute drop zone (DZ) which will risk the safe operation of the existing and well established sporting activities.

- The airfield is nationally recognised by the Sports Council as a Significant Area for Sport with parachuting being one of only four such designated sites.
- The microlight operators, who are not subject to the parachuting 'no fly zone' are concerned on flight safety grounds that if erected the proposed turbine will limit their circuit and approach options, especially for trainee pilots, and also create an additional hazard in the event of aircraft emergencies. There will also be a safety issue for visiting pilots who are unfamiliar with the area.

4.3	<i>Sport England</i>	Awaited
4.4	<i>Middle Level Commissioners</i>	Awaited
4.5	<i>CCC Archaeology</i>	Not received at the time of writing this report.
4.6	<i>Countryside Access Team</i>	No objections as no rights of way or bridleways within the fall over height of the turbine nor any public bridleways, where horses travel, within 200m of the proposed location.
4.7	<i>Environment Agency</i>	No comments to make as site located within Flood Zone 1.
4.8	<i>CCC Police Architectural Liaison Officer</i>	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.
4.9	<i>NATS safeguarding</i>	No safeguarding objection to the proposal.
4.10	<i>Defence Estates (MoD)</i>	No objections to the proposal.

- 4.11 ***Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Save our Swans, CPRE, Ramblers, RSPB, Raptor Foundation, Wimblington PC, EDF Energy, Save our Skyline, Wildlife Trust, Sibson Airfield, Peterborough Airfield, Marshals Paddock, Cambridge Airport, Sutton Meadows Airfield, Fenland Aerodrome, CCC Waste and Minerals.*** No observations received.
- 4.12 ***Natural England*** 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.
- 4.13 ***Anglian Water*** No concerns from a groundwater perspective.
- 4.14 ***CCC Highways*** Further information required regarding the type of delivery vehicle and photographic survey of condition of highway at Coneywood Fen prior to any works on site.
- 4.15 ***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.
- 4.16 ***Network Rail*** No observations to make.
- 4.17 ***Local Residents:*** 7 letters of objection received from 6 properties in the locality. Stating the following:
- Concern raised over location and the visual and noise impacts on residential properties.
 - Abundance of turbines already on skyline of village with 47 around March.
 - Detrimental to wildlife in area, especially birdlife.
 - Solar panels on properties are less obtrusive and more effective.
 - A biodigester would be more appropriate in this agricultural location.
 - Ice from the blades could cause a hazard in extreme weather conditions.

- Shadow flicker will cause nausea and headaches.
- Risks to children playing on local playing field.
- Will reduce property values in the area.

5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The proposal is to be sited within the confines of Coneywood Farm approx.160 metres to the east of Coneywood Road. The turbine is considered to be one of the smaller models, with an overall height of approx. 34.2m and it is proposed to generate electricity for the farming enterprise which operates from the site.

The site comprises an area of predominantly open and flat agricultural land, with the main settlement of Doddington to the south and a sewage works to the north. The wind farm at Ranson Moor lies to the west of the site. The nearest residential properties are approx. 300m to the east of the proposed turbine and lie on Coneywood Road, Holly Drive, The Rowans, Cedar Avenue and Cypress Close.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 Nature of the Application

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 3 bladed wind turbine with an overall height of 34.2 metres to blade tip. The 50 kW turbine has a hub height of 24.6 metres. Access to the turbine will be via the existing farmyard.

The application is considered to raise the following key issues;

- Site History
- Principle and policy implications
- Landscape and visual impact assessment
- Air sports safety considerations.

It is considered that, by assessing the above issues, it should be determined whether any adverse effects might outweigh the positive benefits of a renewable energy project.

Site History

Earlier this year an identical application was submitted for a wind turbine at Coneywood South Farm. This application was withdrawn as objections of a similar number and nature had been received as reported above. In addition an objection from the MoD was received; however, this objection appears to have been resolved in relation to the current application.

An application for an equestrian enterprise has recently been approved on land directly to the south of the application site.

Principle and Policy Implications

The proposal has been considered in line with National Guidance, in the form of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Development Plan Policy in the form of the Fenland District-Wide Local Plan 1993, the East of

England Plan and also the new Fenland Communities Development Plan Draft Core Strategy; these are listed in the relevant section of this report.

The Government has set a target of generating 20% of the UK's electricity by 2020 and also aims for the UK to be on a path to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050, as well as maintaining reliable and competitive energy supplies. The development of renewable energy is considered to form a key part of meeting this target which has led to the view that renewable energy schemes should be supported where they do not result in other adverse impact upon the area that outweigh the renewable energy benefits. This application is for the erection of a wind turbine and associated infrastructure, which is considered to be a sustainable, efficient source of renewable energy. Therefore, in principle the proposal complies with the provisions of the NPPF and the emerging Core Strategy.

The Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance June 2009 (WTDPG)

This document provides detailed local guidance particularly targeted at wind turbine development. It is recognised that there is a need to ensure that future development is in balance with the local landscape and the population that lives within it. As a result the Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance (WTDPG) was produced by landscape consultants for FDC in April 2008. The WTDPG has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council. The WTDPG sets down a number of landscape character types and then sets out criteria for evaluating the sensitivity of each type.

Section 6 sets out the criteria for assessing planning applications based on:

- *Landscape character*
- *Landscape capacity*
- *Visual impacts*
- *Cumulative landscape impacts*
- *Cumulative visual impacts*
- *Biodiversity considerations*
- *Heritage considerations*
- *Recreation and transport routes*
- *Mitigation*
- *Guidance on Form and Siting.*

The WTDPG advises that in this instance the site falls on the borders of 'The March Clay Island' and 'The Fens' landscape type which have a high capacity to accommodate small scale 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.

However, the cumulative landscape and visual impacts should also be considered in this location as there are a number of turbine installations which are already operational or have gained consent.

In terms of cumulative landscape impact the WTDPG advises that that there is a danger that excessive development of wind turbines in any landscape would

at some point result in such material change as to unbalance and overpower the existing key characteristics of the landscape.

Landscape and Cumulative Visual Impact Assessment

The site is not located within any national or locally designated landscape areas, but it is important to consider the impact of the turbine on the overall appearance of the Fenland landscape. Landscape and cumulative visual impact must, therefore, also be considered in relation to existing and proposed turbines in the area. The WTDPG seeks to set an appropriate framework to assess emerging proposals and applications but specifically as stated in para 6.2:-

‘Non-compliance with an individual criterion should not necessarily preclude turbine development. All the environmental factors should be carefully evaluated and then balanced by the planning authority against the requirements to contribute to regional and national targets for renewable energy generation and the benefits of reducing carbon consumption. The guidelines should also always be considered in conjunction with a detailed study of the site and its surroundings, particularly in terms of existing trees, hedges, buildings and structures that may provide visual mitigation of a wind turbine development’.

There are 12 large scale operational, approved or submitted wind turbine developments, all within 5km of the proposed turbine. Whilst proximity to existing turbine locations can be seen as an effective way to reduce cumulative landscape effects, this assessment must be balanced with the negative impacts that additional turbines can have on wider views.

The ‘Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance’ report considers that small groups of turbines can work well as focal points and landmarks. However, the relationship with other groups in the locality needs careful consideration to avoid undesirable conflict by effectively spreading the cumulative visual impact over an extensive area.

The proposed turbine at Coneywood Farm is of sufficient distance to not be considered an extension of the Ranson Moor development; however the prominence of the turbine group is clear within the landscape when viewed from the edge of the established settlement and locations around the site. The WTDPG shows that site as being within the 2km zone where the impact of the existing Ranson Moor turbines is prominent within the landscape. As a result, the effect of the existing turbines tends to negate the effect of any landscape features which would help to mitigate the effect of the proposal.

The applicant considers that the impact of the proposed turbine would have a medium effect on the landscape as a result of the assessments prepared and submitted for the planning application. It is acknowledged in this material that from closer viewpoints within the 300m metre range the turbine will be discernible as a new individual element in the landscape and have a slightly adverse effect. Whilst in general terms the turbine would be located within landscape of a type, which has high capacity to accommodate an individual turbine and medium-high capacity to accommodate small turbine groups of 2 to 5, in more specific terms the proposal would further add to the growing feeling of being within a wind farm landscape within the vicinity of the site, giving rise to particular concerns over the cumulative visual impacts with other existing and consented schemes.

Air Sports Safety Considerations

A strong objection to the proposed wind turbine has been made by Chatteris Airfield. The North London Parachute Centre operates parachute jumps and microlight activities from this airfield and is nationally recognised by the Sports Council as a Significant Area for Sport.

The objection is based on concerns that the proposed turbine will be sited in the agreed 3km radius safeguarding zone as set out in the in the adopted Fenland Wind Turbine Study. The WTDPG shows the 3km airfield safeguarding zone on drawing 07044/13B and it is depicted as being to the east of the airfield. The supporting text, however, states that *'a 3km radius informal safeguarding zone should be applied to the parachute drop zone to the north west of the airfield and turbines are unlikely to be found acceptable in this zone.'* The application omits reference to the safeguarding zone and the applicant's comments on this matter along with those of Sport England are awaited.

Those acting for Chatteris Airfield have produced additional information to show that the application site lies within the informal 3km safeguarding zone. In addition extracts from the British Parachuting Association Operations Manual have been supplied, which identify wind turbines with a height greater than 15m to the blade tip as a special hazard which require greater attention to safety and special consideration given to their presence in the neighbourhood of parachute landing areas (PLA). The operators of the site are of the opinion that the proposal will introduce an unacceptable obstruction in the vicinity of the airfield and associated parachute drop zone (DZ), which will risk the safe operation of the existing and well established sporting activities.

There is an identified 'no fly zone' which applies to the parachutists operating from the airfield and this is mostly centred over the built up areas of Doddington and Wimblington. The microlight operators are not subject to this parachuting 'no fly zone' so are concerned that if erected the proposed turbine will limit their circuit and approach options, especially for trainee pilots. Furthermore they express the fear that there will also be a safety issue for visiting pilots who are unfamiliar with the area.

As a result it can be concluded that, in the absence of any counter information from the applicant's, the turbine cannot be supported in this location as it will be located within the informal safeguarding zone as identified at para 4.7 of the WTDPG where turbines are unlikely to be found acceptable for safety reasons.

Design

The turbine model is an Endurance E-3120, which is identified as being ideal for larger farms, schools, hospitals and commercial/industrial sites and capable of producing 100,000 – 250,000 kWh per year in appropriate winds. The turbine has a galvanised and white finish with 3 rotors.

Shadow flicker may be created by the turning of the turbine blades at certain times of day. In terms of this proposal shadow flicker is not thought to be a concern as the nearest properties are approximately 300m from the turbine. Noise impact from the turbine has been assessed and could be controlled by an appropriate planning condition should consent be granted.

Access

Access into the site will be via the existing farm. CCC Highways have suggested conditions related to the delivery of the turbine should planning permission be granted.

7. CONCLUSION

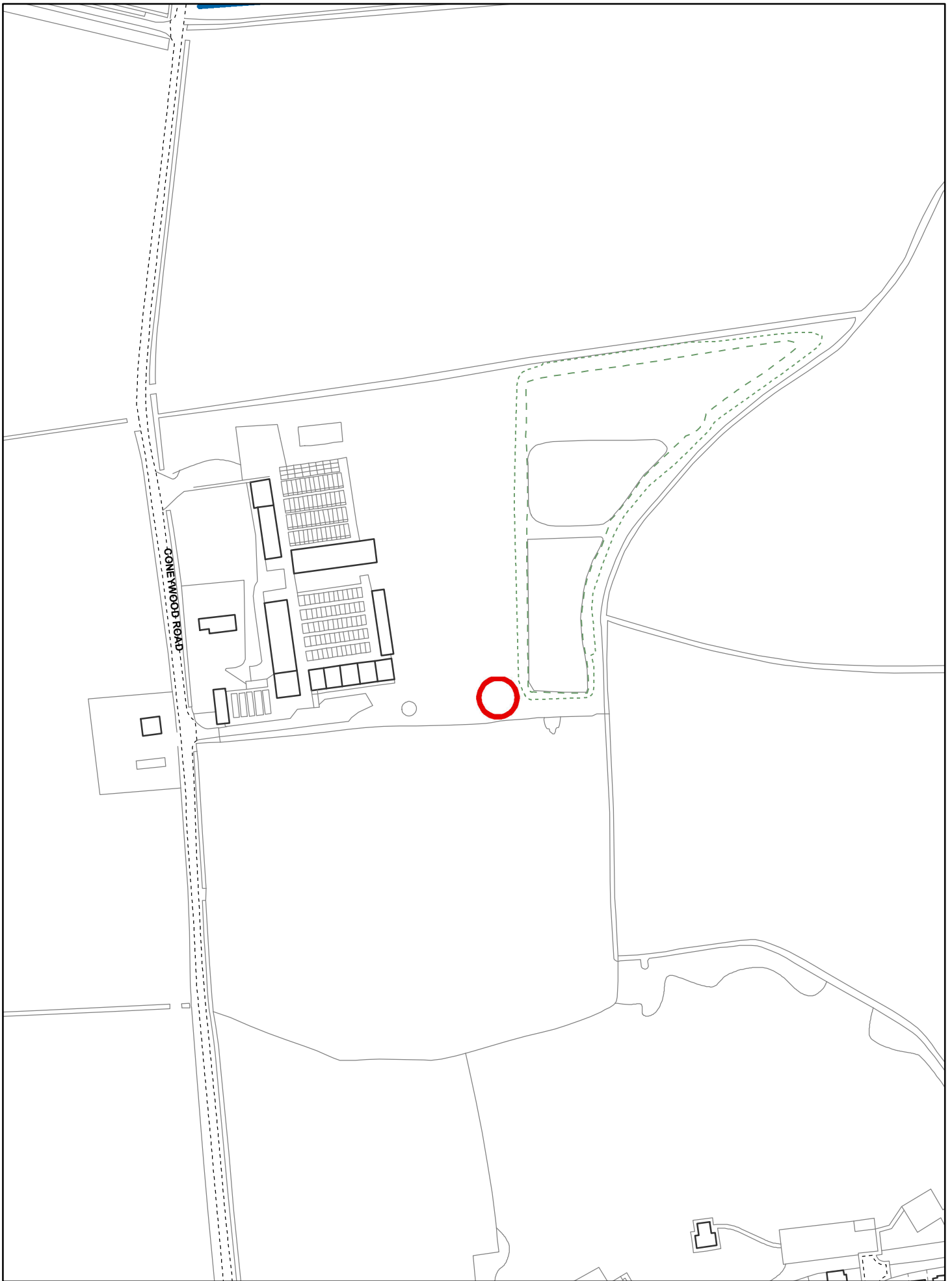
- 7.1 In planning policy terms the proposal is considered to accord with national, regional and local planning policy in contributing to the need for renewable energy without adversely impacting on biodiversity, design, access and noise. However, the proposed turbine is located in an area where the cumulative landscape and visual impacts are considered to be determining issues along with interference with the safe operation of air sports activities at Chatteris Airfield. In this context, the proposal is considered to have adverse cumulative impacts in the area. This has been evaluated against the requirements to contribute to regional and national targets for renewable energy generation and the benefits of reducing carbon consumption but is, on balance, sufficient reason to resist this proposal.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

The proposal is contrary to:-

- 1 The Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance June 2009 as it is considered to have an adverse cumulative visual impact in the area and has failed to take account of the informal safeguarding zone which applies to the parachute drop zone at Chatteris Airfield,**
- 2 Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 in that it does not conserve and enhance the surrounding natural environment,**
- 3 Policy CS14 of the Draft Fenland Core Strategy July 2012 which seeks to deliver and protect high quality environments across the District,**
- 4 Policies E1 and E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan which seek to resist development likely to detract from the Fenland landscape, be of a design compatible with their surroundings and have regard to amenities of adjoining properties, and**
- 5 Policies ENV2, 3 and 4 of the East of England Plan which seek to protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of countryside character, ensure development respects/enhances local landscape character and minimise damage to biodiversity.**



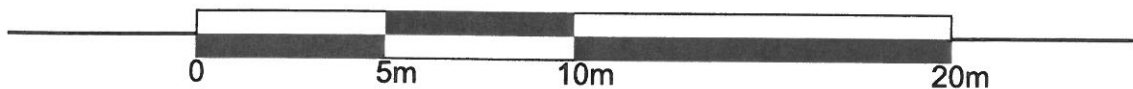
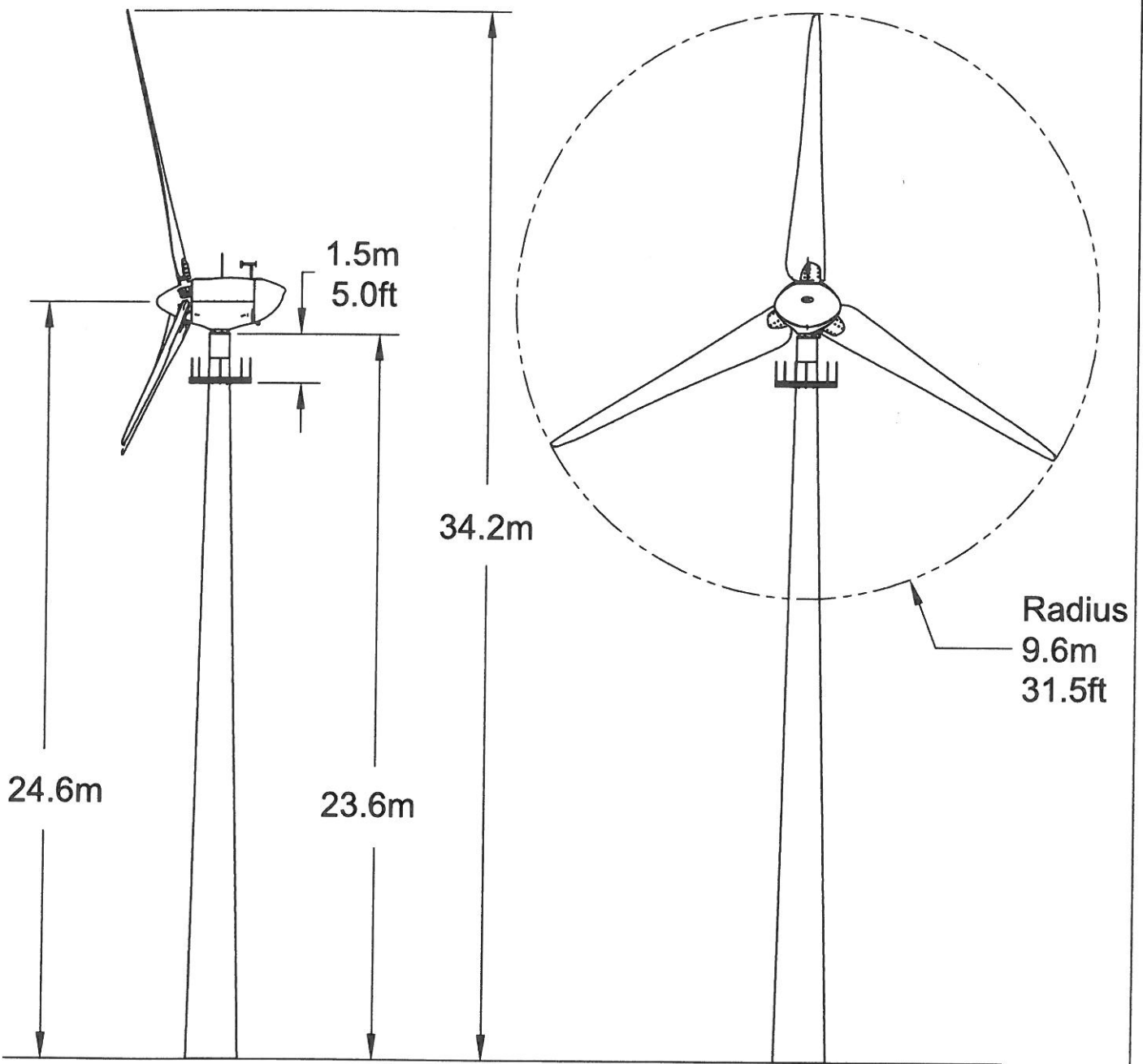
Created on: 28/08/2012

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 10023778

F/YR12/0624/F

Scale = 1:2,500





Flange Elevation		Hub Elevation		Max Blade Elevation		Notes
ft	m	ft	m	ft	m	
77.4	23.6	80.7	24.6	112.2	34.2	EU Countries Only
97.1	29.6	100.4	30.6	131.9	40.2	North America Only
116.1	35.4	119.4	36.4	150.9	46.0	North America Only
135.8	41.4	139.1	42.4	170.6	52.0	North America Only

Note: Dimensions approximate and provided for planning purposes only. Final construction elevations are available in a permitting package on a per-tower basis.

Endurance
wind power

E-3120 Elevation

1:200 at A4