

Application Number: F/YR12/0672/F  
Minor  
Parish/Ward: Parson Drove/Wisbech St Mary  
Date Received: 30 August 2012  
Expiry Date: 25 October 2012  
Applicant: Mr G Patrick  
Agent: Mrs T Dorling, Windcrop Limited

Proposal: Erection of 3no 14.97 metre high (hub height) wind turbines with associated works.

Location: Southfork Farm, Seadyke Bank, Parson Drove.

Site Area/Density: 00.10 hectares

Reason before Committee: This application is before the Planning Committee due to its wider interest.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 3 x 14.97 metre high (hub height) wind turbines at Southfork Farm off Seadyke Bank in Parson Drove.

The key issues to consider are:

- Principle and policy implications
- Visual Impact
- Environmental/Amenity Considerations
- Access.

The proposal is to be sited within an existing area of unused agricultural land 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 F/YR12/0473/NONMAT Non-material amendment – Approved 25 July  
change of style of 3 x turbine 2012.  
units relating to planning  
permission F/YR12/0672/F  
(Erection of 3no 14.97 metre high  
(hub height) wind turbines with  
associated works).
- 2.2 F/YR12/0172/F Erection of 3no 14.97 metre high Granted 30 April  
(hub height) wind turbines with 2012.  
associated works.

## 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**

SS1: Seeks to bring about sustainable development.

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 | <b><i>Parish/Town Council</i></b> | No response received at the time of writing this report.         |
| 4.2 | <b><i>Chatteris Airfield</i></b>  | No objection due to the distance of this site from the airfield. |

- 4.3 **Environment Agency** Have reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and consider this to be acceptable for the proposed development. No objections and provide advisory comments to be forwarded to the applicant.
- 4.4 **Anglian Water Services Ltd** No concerns from a groundwater perspective.
- 4.5 **NATS** The proposed development does not conflict with the safeguarding criteria and accordingly NATS (NERL) has no safeguarding objection.
- 4.6 **Countryside Access** There are no public rights of way within the fall over height of the proposed turbine locations and there are no public bridleways within 200m. Therefore no objections.
- 4.7 **Civil Aviation Authority** Provides general guidance on other bodies to be consulted and advises that all structures of 300 feet (91.4 metres) or more should be charted on aeronautical charts.
- 4.8 **FDC Environmental Protection** Have considered the proposal in respect of the noise impacts on the nearest noise sensitive properties. Recommend that conditions relating to night-time and day-time noise levels, remedial action, monitoring and cumulative impact be attached to any permission given.
- 4.9 **CCC Highways** Information relating to the size of vehicle and the proposed delivery route required in order to provide full highways response.
- These comments have been forwarded to the Agent for their response and a full update will be provided at Committee.
- 4.1.0 **MOD** No objections to the proposal. Would like to be advised of the date of construction, the maximum height of construction equipment and the latitude and longitude of every turbine.
- 4.1.1 **CCC Police Architectural Liaison Officer** The height of the turbines should have no detrimental effect on the emergency services air operations unit. The only risk is that of cable theft therefore it is advised

that any cabling is buried at least 1.8 metres below ground. No objection to the granting of permission.

4.1.2 **Local Residents:** None received.

## 5. SITE DESCRIPTION

5.1 The site is located off Seadyke Bank in Parson Drove and the settlement of Murrow is relatively close. The proposed turbines are to be located on an unused area of agricultural land to the rear of an area of large storage/commercial buildings, which are part of Southfork Farm. There are 3 existing wind turbines in situ on the site, which were approved under planning application reference F/YR12/0172/F and the proposed turbines are to be the same height as these existing turbines. The surrounding landscape is relatively flat in nature and predominantly agricultural in use. The nearest residential property is Uptons Lodge, which lies approximately 145 metres from the closest turbine. The proposed turbines are to be sited to the west of the existing turbines.

## 6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 3 wind turbines with a hub height of 14.96 metres and a rotor diameter of 5.5 metres, resulting in an overall height of approximately 17.7 metres. The proposed turbines are to be set on a tripod base with a galvanised steel and mast and glass fibre reinforced composite blades and turbine to be coloured Dark Squirrel Grey.

The key considerations for this application are:

- Principle and Policy Implications
- Visual Impact
- Environmental/Amenity Considerations
- Access.

### (a) Principle and Policy Implications

This proposal has been considered in line with the Development Plan Policies and National Guidance, in the form of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993, the East of England Plan and also the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan Core Strategy.

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 3 wind turbines. Wind turbines are a sustainable and efficient source of renewable energy and, therefore, comply, in principle, with the provisions of the NPPF, the East of England Plan and the emerging Core Strategy – but are also subject to other environmental

considerations which will be outlined below.

In addition to the policy framework highlighted under Section 3 above, due regard must also be given to the Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance June 2009 (WTDPG). This document provides local guidance in relation to 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 WTDPG was produced by landscape consultants for FDC in April 2008. The WTDPG has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council and sets down a number of landscape character types and 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, and Mitigation.*

Where wind turbine development is considered appropriate in the light of the above criteria, guidance is then given in terms of how the form and siting of turbine(s) should relate to the characteristics of the landscape type in which it is to be situated. Under the above guidance the proposed site is situated within the following designations:

- 1 *“The Fens” landscape character area which has a medium - high landscape capacity for groups of 17+,*
- 2 *A high landscape capacity for single turbines*
- 3 *A high landscape capacity for small turbine groups (2-5),*
- 4 *A high landscape capacity for small/medium turbine groups (6-11),*
- 5 *A medium-high landscape capacity for medium turbine groups (12-16),*
- 6 *A medium-high landscape capacity for large turbine groups (17+),*
- 7 *Within the 5km conspicuous zones for existing turbines.*

In terms of visual impact relevant sections of the WTDPG advise that:

- *Proposals within 400m of a settlement are highly unlikely to be considered acceptable in visual amenity terms.*
- *There should be no shadow flicker for any residential properties or on A or B roads.*
- *Proposals within 2km of a settlement should be carefully considered as turbines are likely to be highly prominent features*
- *Turbines should be set back a minimum distance of 200m from public Footpaths.*
- *Residential properties and users of recreational routes/facilities are likely to be considered more sensitive as receptors.*
- *Settlements of more than 10 dwellings should not have wind turbines in more than 90° of their field of view from public or residential viewpoints within or around the settlements from a distance of 10km from the settlement.*
- *No more than 25% of the length of A and B roads and railways should be within 2km of wind turbines (prominent zone) and no more than 75% of its length being within 5km of turbines (conspicuous zone)*

(b) Visual Impact

As noted previously in this report the overall height of each proposed turbine is approximately 17.7 metres. The turbines will be partially visible from area surrounding the site, however, this will only be glimpses as there are a number of existing trees and tall hedges which serve to screen the turbines. This greatly reduces the visual impact of the proposals, and combined with their overall height it is, therefore, considered that there will be no adverse visual impact on the surrounding area and nearby residential dwellings. It is noted that there are 3 existing turbines on the site, however, due to their siting and the proposed siting of the new turbines this will not result in any issues with cumulative impact in this instance. As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the visual impact.

(c) Environmental/Amenity Considerations

Shadow flicker created by the turning turbine blades at certain times of the day has also been taken into consideration in relation to this proposal. It is considered that this impact would be minimal given the size of the turbines, the existing screening around the site and the proximity of the nearest property at a distance of approximately 145 metres from the nearest turbine. The noise impact of the turbines has been assessed by the Environmental Protection Team and they have requested that certain noise related conditions are attached to any permission given in order to safeguard the amenities of any nearby residents.

(d) Access

The access to the site is via the existing main access into Southfork Farm. The Local Highways Authority have requested further details in relation to the delivery route and vehicle size and the Agent has been notified of this requirement. It is noted that there are existing turbines on site that would have been delivered in a similar fashion to the proposed turbines, however, further highways comments will be updated at the Planning Committee.

**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 the area or nearby amenity through noise levels, access, visual impact, or cumulative impact. The location of the site is considered to be acceptable. 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.**

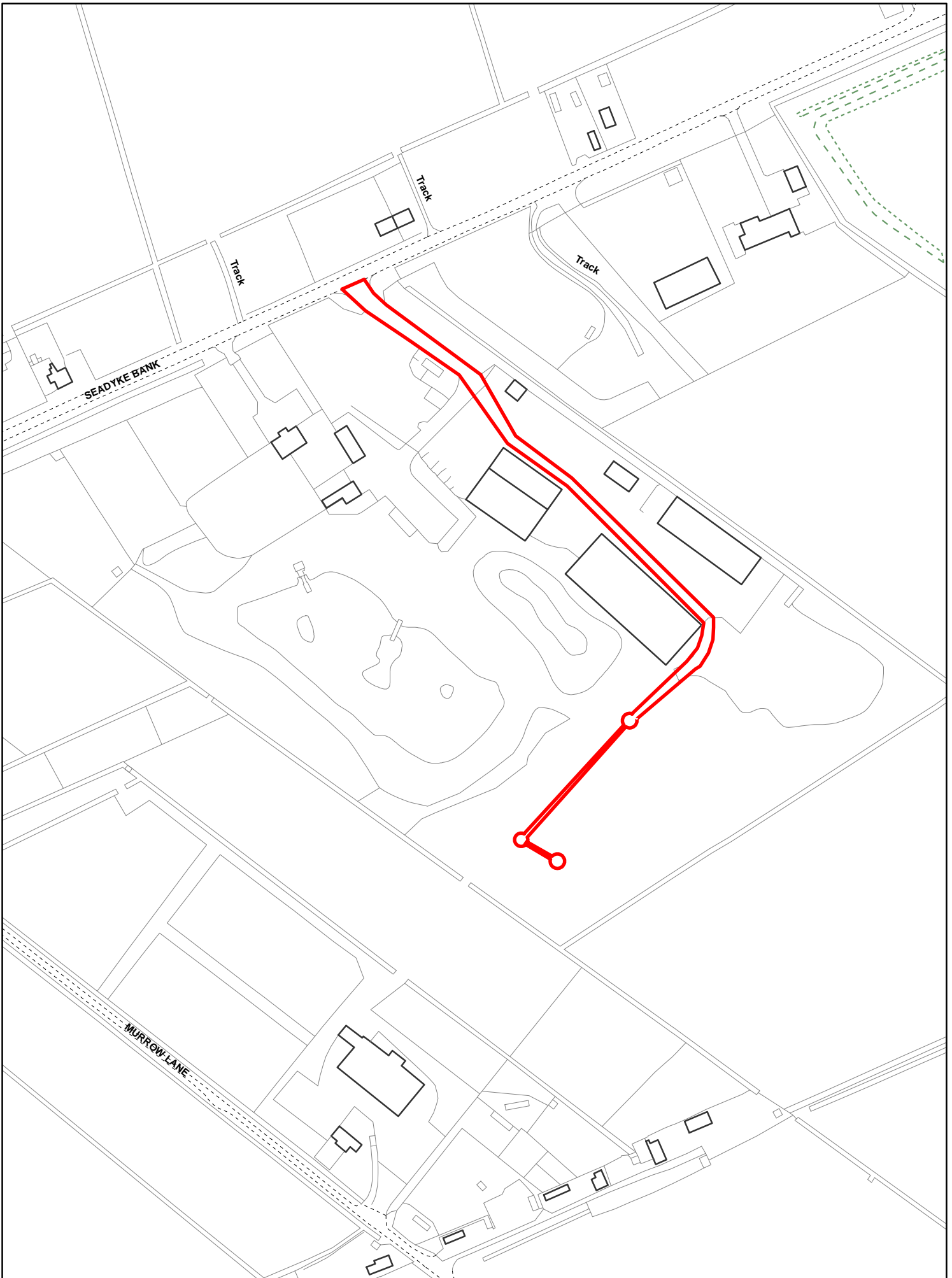
**Reason - In the interests of the appearance of the locality.**

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/YR12/0672/F

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Scale = 1:2,500



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1

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E

D

D

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14970.00

D=5.6m

GROUND LINE



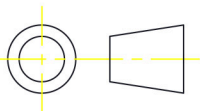
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1:100

WEIGHT

DRAWN -

DATE - 04/01/12

CHECKED -

APPROVED -

MATERIAL

VARIOUS, MILD STEEL

FINISH

REFER DETAILS

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