

Application Number: F/YR12/0678/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: Tydd St Giles
Date Received: 3 September 2012
Expiry Date: 29 October 2012
Applicant: Mrs J Fox, Fox and Son
Agent: Mr S Oborn, Bagshaws

Proposal: Erection of a 24.6m high (hub height) 50kw wind turbine and control unit

Location: Land south west of Nutwalk Farm, Bythorne Bank, Tydd St Giles

Site Area/Density: 0.004ha

Reason before Committee: Wider interest

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

The proposal accords with national, regional and local planning policy in contributing to the need for renewable energy without adversely affecting design, access, shadow flicker and noise. However, the proposed turbine is located in an area where the access, landscape, and visual impacts are considered to be determining issues. Due to the height of the proposal and the isolated location of the site, the proposal is considered to have a dominating and adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area. There is insufficient information within the submission to indicate whether or not temporary works are necessary to the public highway in order to gain a satisfactory access to the site. These elements 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| 2.1 | F/YR12/0394/F | Erection of 1 x 36.6metre high (hub height) wind turbine | Withdrawn 11/07/12 |
| | F/YR06/1317/F | Erection of a 20.0metre high (hub height) wind turbine with 10.4metre diameter rotor | Granted 28/12/06 |

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.

Paragraph 98: Need for renewable energy and acceptable impacts.

3.2 **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.

3.3 **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 and provide adequate access.

E20: To resist any development which by its nature gives rise to unacceptable levels of noise, nuisance and other environmental pollution.

E3: To retain existing trees and hedgerows. To impose, where appropriate, conditions on planning applications requiring landscaping and tree planting schemes. To request the submission of a landscaping scheme with planning applications on visually important sites.

3.4 **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.

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

ENG1: Carbon dioxide emissions and energy performance.

SS1: Achieving sustainable development.

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

Details contained under assessment section.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 4.1 | <i>Parish/Town Council:</i> | Not received at time of report |
| 4.2 | <i>FDC Environmental Protection:</i> | Requests conditions relating to noise levels should permission be granted |
| | <i>Sutton Meadows Airfield:</i> | Not received at time of report |
| | <i>Anglian Water:</i> | No concerns from a groundwater perspective |

CCC Archaeology:	Not received at time of report
Ministry of Defence:	No objection
Cambs Bat Group:	Not received at time of report
Civil Aviation Authority:	Not received at time of report
CCC Countryside Access Team:	There are no public rights of way within the fallover height therefore no objections
Campaign to Protect Rural England:	Not received at time of report
FDC Head of Housing and Neighbourhood Services:	Not received at time of report
EDF Energy:	Not received at time of report
Environment Agency:	No objections, provide advice relating to protection of cabling
Fenland Aerodrome:	Not received at time of report
CCC Highways:	Information with regard to the proposed route that the turbine delivery vehicles and construction vehicles will be taking to the site. Concerns that certain sections of the public maintained highway within the location of the site may not be suitable in terms of width and construction to safely accommodate such vehicles.
Defence Estate Organ Safeguarding Bylaws:	Not received at time of report
Natural England:	The proposal does not appear to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes, or have significant impacts on the conservation of soils, nor is the proposal EIA development.
NATS:	No safeguarding objection to the proposal
National Planning Casework Unit:	Not received at time of report
Police Architectural Liaison Officer:	The height of the turbine should have no detrimental effect on operation of emergency services air operations unit. The only risk prevalent to the development is the theft of cabling.

	Joint Radio Company Ltd:		Not received at time of report
	Network Rail:		Not received at time of report
	The Ramblers Association:		Not received at time of report
	Raptor Foundation:		Not received at time of report
	RSPB:		Not received at time of report
	Save our Skyline:		Not received at time of report
	South Holland District Council:		Not received at time of report
	Save our Swans:		Not received at time of report
	British Telecom:		Not received at time of report
	Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust:		Not received at time of report
	Chatteris Airfield:		No objection due to the distance of the site from the airfield
	Sibson Airfield:		Not received at time of report
	Peterborough Airfield:	Business	Not received at time of report
	Marshals Paddock Club:	Gliding	Not received at time of report
	Cambridge Airport:		Not received at time of report
	The Wildlife Trust:		Not received at time of report
4.4	Neighbours:		21 letters of objection from separate sources received, concerns regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - impact on character of the fens, - detrimental to stewardship scheme which includes 5ha of land reserved for conservation, - the benefits of on shore wind farms do not outweigh the visual and negative impact they have on the surrounding area, - the proposal would be a blight on the landscape, it would have an overbearing and adverse effect on the area, - loss of visual amenity, - one application has already been withdrawn, - still against this regarding peoples views, height, - visual intrusion, change the skyline,

precedent,

- harm to wildlife
- solar panels would be better for the environment
- loss of view
- the proposal is selfish
- devaluation of neighbouring properties
- the proposal is as a result of greed and monetary value
- impact on horses using the neighbouring bridleway
- noise
- blades breaking and ice being thrown from blades
- the proposal should be refused for the same reasons as the Treading Field application
- local residents will receive no positive benefits from the proposal
- flicker
- Tydd St Giles Fen will become a wind farm
- the proposal will be a distraction to passing motorists
- vibrations
- heavy traffic during construction
- little or no reduction in Co2 emissions
- grossly inefficient way to produce electricity
- increased costs to the consumer because of subsidies collected by electricity companies
- pollution
- who will pay for their removal?
- interference with telephone and radio reception
- the proposal is not in keeping with the surroundings or sensitive to the community
- the smaller turbine which was approved on this site was never built
- no evidence to suggest why a more powerful turbine is now needed
- 2 smaller turbines would be more sensible
- the existing road is insufficient to take the construction vehicles

5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The site is located on the southern side of Bythorne Bank on land identified as being Grade 5, which is the lowest quality, of the Agricultural Land Classification. The turbine is positioned over 400m away from the nearest dwelling and approximately 120m away from the associated farm. The electricity generated by the proposal will fuel the associated dwelling and farm known as Nutwalk Farm and will replace an existing diesel generator. This is a rural location, characterised by open fields and uninterrupted views.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 3 bladed wind turbine assembly with an overall height of 33.2metres to the top blade tip. The turbine will be used to generate electricity to reduce the farms reliance on fossil fuels, energy bills and carbon emission. Access will be via Bythorne Bank.

The following key issues have been considered;

- Site history
- Principle and policy implications
- Visual Impact
- Biodiversity
- Design
- Access.

(a) Site History

Planning permission for a 20m (hub height) wind turbine was granted in a similar position in 2006. However, this was not installed as it was considered that it would not generate sufficient power.

(b) 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. Wind turbines are a sustainable and efficient source of renewable energy and, therefore, comply, in principle, with the provisions of the NPPF and emerging Core Strategy.

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 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.*

Where wind turbine development is considered appropriate in the light of the above criteria, schemes should then be considered 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 (6-10),*
- 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,*
- 8 *Within the 2km ‘prominent’ zone for existing and proposed turbines.*

In terms of landscape capacity within the Drained Fenland character type the WTDPG advises that the “cumulative impact of wind turbine development needs to be carefully considered”.

In terms of visual impact the WTDPG advises 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*

footpath). The WTDPG advises that for National Trails this should be 3 times the distance of the overall height of the turbine.

- Residential properties and users of recreational routes/facilities are likely to be considered more sensitive as receptors.

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. To prevent this it advises that within the Drained Fenland character type not more than 25% of the area should be within 2km of a turbine development (prominent zone) and not more than 75% within 5km (conspicuous zone).

- Proposals for new wind turbine development, detached from existing turbine sites by more than 500m but within 4km of existing turbine developments are unlikely to be acceptable in visual terms. In some circumstances a distance greater than 500m is required.
- Proposals for new development within 10km of existing turbine developments need to be carefully considered.
- 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)
- Turbines within 4km of each other are likely to demonstrate a significant cumulative impact from a number of locations and are less likely to be considered acceptable in visual/landscape terms, unless they form a relatively modest extension to an existing turbine development.

(c) Visual Impact/Landscape Impact/Cumulative Visual Impact

The nearest residential property is situated at a distance of approximately 430metres from the application site. 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. The turbine would be highly visible in the immediate locality and is in an isolated position.

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’.

Given the isolated location of the site, with minimal visual mitigation in terms of existing structures, or landscaping, it is considered that the proposal would

appear as an incongruous and dominant feature. The situation is exacerbated by the height of the turbine, which will result in the visual dominance being apparent for distances up to 1km from the site.

d) Biodiversity

The biodiversity checklist indicates that surveys have been carried out for bats, barn owls, breeding birds and badgers. The recent survey submitted as part of the application indicates that there are no protected habitats present on site and that the proposed turbine is likely to have a low ecological impact on the locality providing that is located more than 50m from the boundary hedgerow to the north of the site. Since the proposal is positioned in excess of 55m from any hedgerow, no concerns are raised with regard to biodiversity.

e) Design

The proposal is for a standard 34.2m height (to tip), 3 blade wind turbine with a 2.2m high cabinet box. Shadow flicker created by the turning of the turbine blades at certain times of day should also be considered. However, in terms of this proposal the impact is considered to be minimal given the proximity of the nearest property. It is unlikely that there will be noise impact from the turbine.

f) Access

Access to the site would be via a temporary road across the field. Further information is required regarding the proposed route that the turbine delivery vehicle and the construction vehicles will be taking to the site. Given the likely size of the vehicles (particularly the turbine delivery vehicle and crane) there are concerns that certain sections of the public maintained highway within the location of the site may not be suitable in terms of width and construction to safely accommodate such vehicles. There are also a number of tight corner/bends along these sections of highway. Auto-tracking templates for the largest vehicle should, therefore, be provided for these locations in order to establish that they can be safely negotiated or whether any temporary works will be required to the highway to accommodate these vehicles.

In the absence of auto-tracking information indicating whether or not temporary works are necessary to the highway in order to facilitate the safe passage of the delivery vehicle, planning consent should not be granted.

g) Representations

Concern has been expressed about the unique feature of the Fenland landscape, landscape character and the precedent that will be created. These are considered to be valid issues but with regard to the latter point each application must be treated on its merits. Issues of noise and flicker are not considered to be issues of concern in this location and whilst horse riding may take place in the surrounding countryside there are no established bridleways within the fall over distance of the proposal which may be affected. No adverse wildlife interests have been identified but, although not a concern for this application, cumulative turbine development is a planning consideration, however, given the isolated nature of this proposal it is not an issue. Property values and loss of view are not a planning consideration. The turbine will be clearly visible in the locality and this is a cause of concern in such an open Fenland setting.

7. CONCLUSION

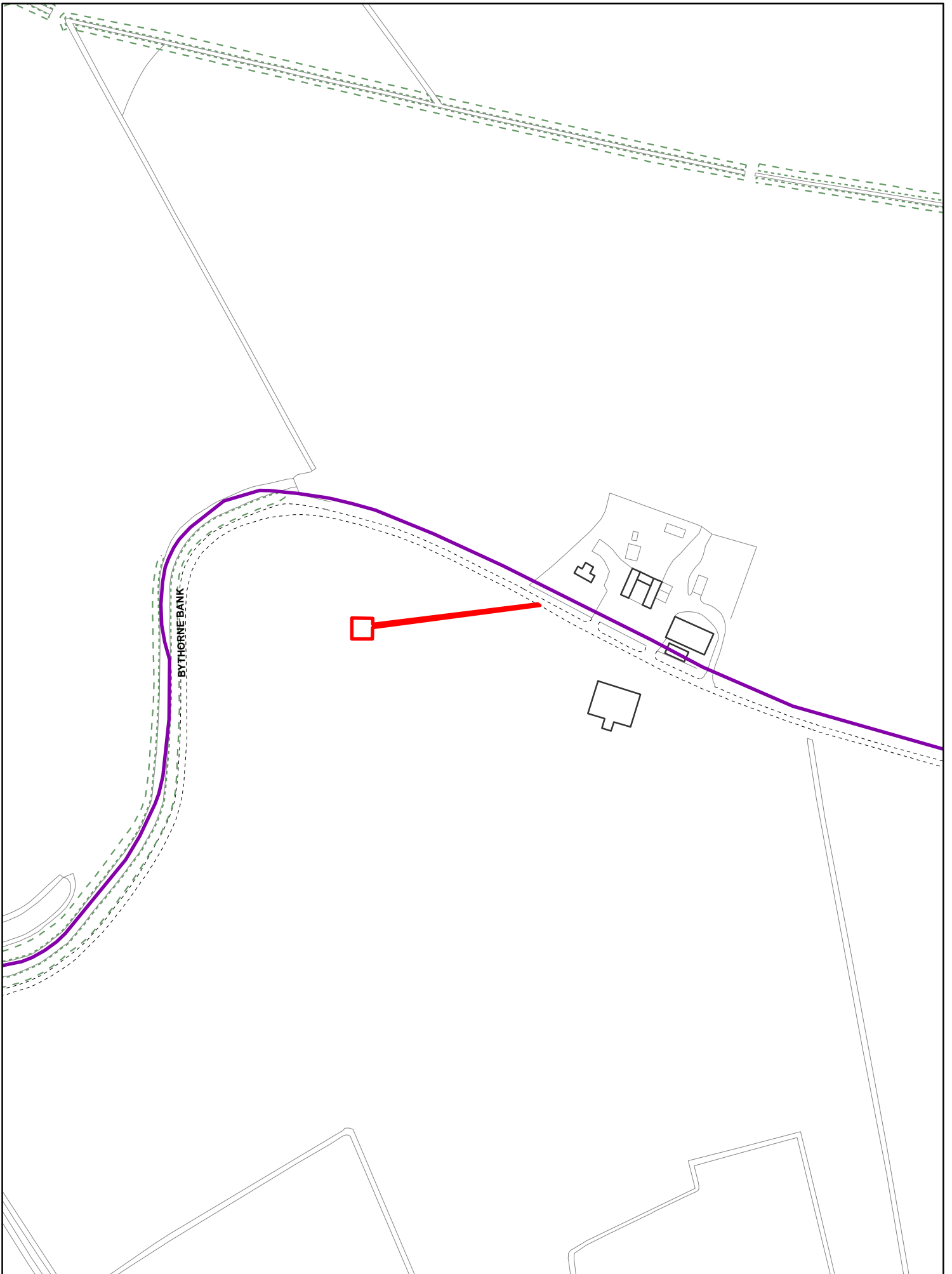
- 7.1 In planning policy terms the proposal is considered to accord with national, regional and local planning policy in contributing to the need for renewable energy without adversely affecting design, access, shadow flicker and noise. However, the proposed turbine is located in an area where the access, landscape, and visual impacts are considered to be determining issues. The proposal is considered to have an adverse visual impact due to its isolated location, lack of mitigating factors and its height. No auto-tracking information has been submitted to indicate whether or not temporary works are necessary to the public highway in order to gain a satisfactory access to the site.

This scheme 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 - subject to expiry of site notice and no new issues raised

1. **The proposal is contrary to the Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance June 2009 as it is considered to have a dominant and adverse visual impact in the area.**
2. **The proposal does not conserve and enhance the surrounding natural environment as such it is contrary to paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
3. **The proposal is contrary to Policies CS12 (Renewable energy) and CS14 (Delivering and protecting high quality environments across the District) of the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan July 2012.**
4. **The proposal is contrary to Policies E1 and E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan which seek to resist development likely to detract from the Fenland landscape and have regard to amenities of adjoining properties.**
5. **The proposal is contrary to Policies ENV2 and 4 of the East of England Plan which seek to protect and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of countryside character and ensure development respects/enhances local landscape character.**
6. **No auto-tracking information has been submitted for a suitable route to indicate whether or not temporary works are necessary to the public highway in order to gain a satisfactory access to the site for construction proposes – accordingly the scheme is considered contrary to Policy E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan.**



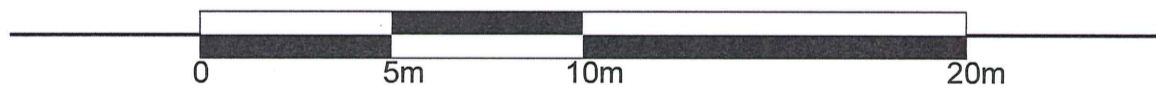
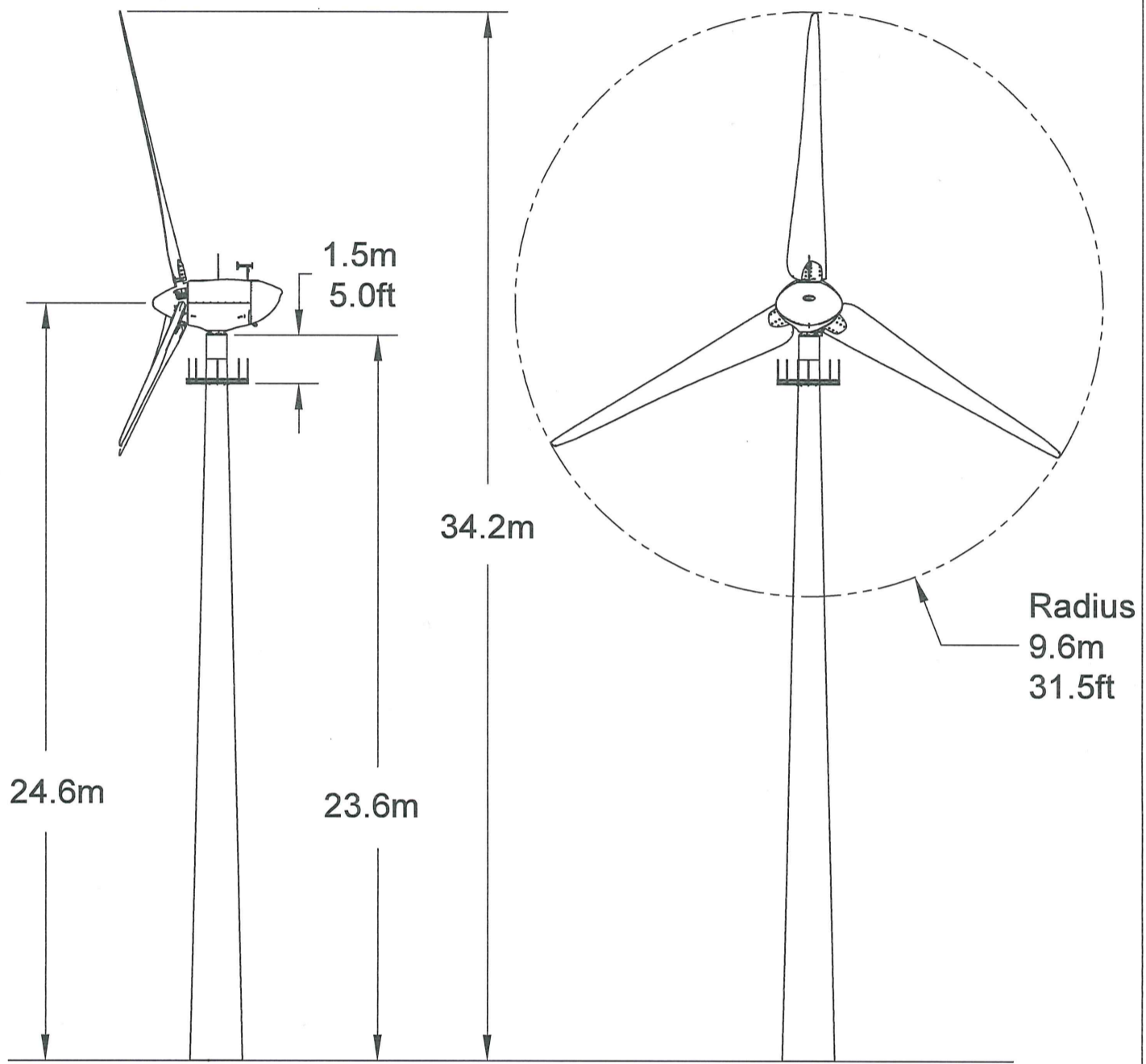
Created on: 14/09/2012

F/YR12/0678/F

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 10023778

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.



E-3120 Elevation

SIZE	DWG. NO.	REV.
A	E-3120 - 50 kW Monopole	A

SCALE 1:200