

Application Number: F/YR12/0533/F

Minor

Parish/Ward: March/March East

Date Received: 17 July 2012

Expiry Date: 11 September 2012

Applicant: Mr. P. Grout

Mrs. Tracy Dorling, Windcrop Ltd

Proposal: Erection of 2 x 41.97 metre high (hub height) wind turbines

Location: Coleseed Business Complex, Upwell Road, March

Site Area/Density: 0.010 ha

Reason before Committee: This proposal is before the Planning Committee as it is contrary to the views of the Town Council and in the wider interest.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

The proposed wind turbines have an overall height of 17.72 metres. In planning policy terms the proposal accords with national, regional and local planning policy in that it contributes to the need for renewable energy, does not adversely affect noise and has an appropriate access. Section 6 of the Council's Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance (WTDPG) sets out the criteria for assessing planning applications based on biodiversity, landscape character, landscape capacity, visual impacts, cumulative landscape impacts and cumulative visual impacts. The proposal is considered to be an acceptable feature in this immediate industrial landscape and as such would meet the aims of the WTDPG, and other National, Regional and Local Policy. The application is, therefore, recommended for grant.

2. HISTORY

Numerous small applications relating to the use of various industrial activities have been granted on the complex in the past but have no immediate bearing on the application.

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 Draft Fenland Core Strategy July 2012:

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.

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.

The 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.

4. CONSULTATIONS

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| 4.1 | <i>March Town Council:</i> | Recommend refusal – Too close to railway line. |
| 4.2 | <i>Network Rail</i> | No response received. |
| 4.3 | <i>Architectural Liaison Officer</i> | The height of the turbine should have no detrimental effect on operation of the emergency services air operations unit. The crime impact assessment of the proposals is low and we would not object to granting of permission for this application. Advice offered |
| 4.4 | <i>Anglian Water</i> | No concerns from a groundwater perspective. |
| 4.5 | <i>Local Highway Authority (CCC):</i> | No response received. |
| 4.6 | <i>NERL Safeguarding</i> | No safeguarding objection. |
| 4.7 | <i>Middle Level Commissioners</i> | The nearest Board drain is 380 metres to the north west of the site. Advice offered. |
| 4.8 | <i>MOD</i> | Advice offered. |

- 4.9 **Environmental Protection Officer** The following conditions should be added to a planning permission should it be granted.
- Night-time noise levels
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 noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.
- Day-time noise levels
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.
- 4.10 **Chatteris Airfield** No objection.
- 4.11 **Environment Agency** The site is located within Flood Zone 3 (high risk) on our flood map. Tidal and designated main river flood risk sources are considered to be acceptable for the proposal.
- 4.12 **CCC Rights of Way Team** No objection.
- 4.13 **Local residents/interested parties** None received.
- 4.14 **MOD (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) Safeguarding Officer** No Objection.

5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The application site is located on an existing industrial site at Coleseed Business Complex, Upwell Road, March. It comprises a number of industrial buildings in various styles with open yard storage/parking. The closest residential property is 139 metres from the site. Coleseed Road is approximately 41 metres from the turbine and the elevated main railway line is located at a distance of approximately 20 metres at its nearest point, but outside the turbines 'topple distance'. Each turbine has a rated power output of 5kW and will provide the business complex with a renewable, sustainable and efficient electrical supply. The towers and blades are grey in colour. The

turbines will be completely screened by existing mature landscaping from the nearby busy Upwell Road, but will be partly visible from the lesser trafficked Coleseed Road adjoining the elevated railway line. However, the turbines will have a backdrop of trees from the latter location and visual impact will be minimal.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 Nature of Application

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 2 turbines with an overall height of 17.72 metres. The turbines will be used to generate electricity to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, energy bills and carbon emission. The colour of the turbine is grey with 3 grey blades. Access to the site will be via the existing industrial access roadway.

The following key issues have been considered;

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

Principle and Policy Implications

The 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 2 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)*

Visual Impact

As noted above the height of the proposed turbine hub is 17.72 metre. The turbine can be seen from Coleseed Road. However, the impact of the turbine on the visual amenity of the surrounding area is considered to be acceptable under the terms of the WTDPG policy given its location within an existing industrial area, distance from residential properties and containment within the setting.

Environmental/Amenity Considerations

Shadow flicker created by the turning of the turbine blades at certain times of day should also be considered. The impact is considered to be minimal given the size of the turbine and proximity of the nearest property over 139m from the turbine. Noise impact from the turbine has been assessed and noise conditions

have been recommended by Environmental Protection as a safeguard in the event of any justified complaint being received.

Access

Access to the site will be via the existing industrial access roadway and is acceptable for construction and ongoing maintenance traffic for these small turbines.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal contributes to the need for renewable energy, does not raise any issues in respect of amenity and noise and has an appropriate access. It is also considered to be an acceptable visual feature in the landscape, which would comply with the aims of the WTDPG, and other National, Regional and Local Policy. The application is, therefore, recommended for grant subject to conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant Planning Permission subject to the following planning 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 permission hereby granted shall expire not later than 25 years from the date when electricity is first exported from the wind turbine to the electricity distribution grid ("First Export Date"). Written notification of the First Export Date shall be given to the Local Planning Authority no later than 14 days after the event.**

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

- 3 **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 turbine 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.

- 4 **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.

- 5 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.

- 6 The overall height of the wind turbines shall not exceed 17.72 metres to the tip of the blades when the turbine is in a vertical position as measured from natural ground conditions immediately adjacent to the turbine base.

Reason - To safeguard the visual amenities of the area

- 7 **Night-time noise levels**
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 noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97.

Day-time noise levels

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.

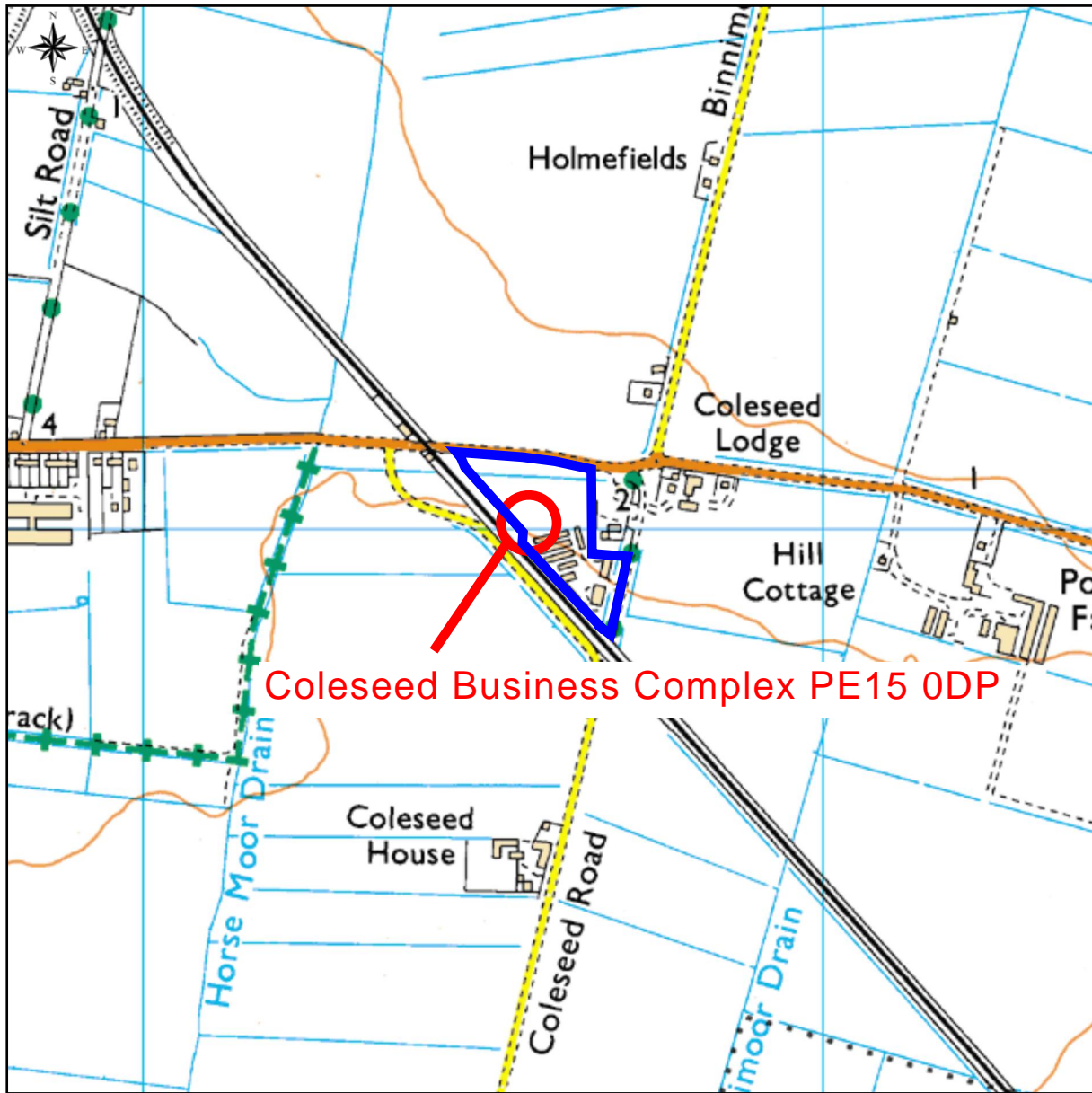
Reason - In the interests of residential amenity.

- 8 At the reasonable request of Fenland District Council the operator of the development shall, at their expense, employ an independent consultant approved by the Council to 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 residential amenity.

- 10 Approved plans.

Coleseed Business Complex PE15 0DP - Area Plan



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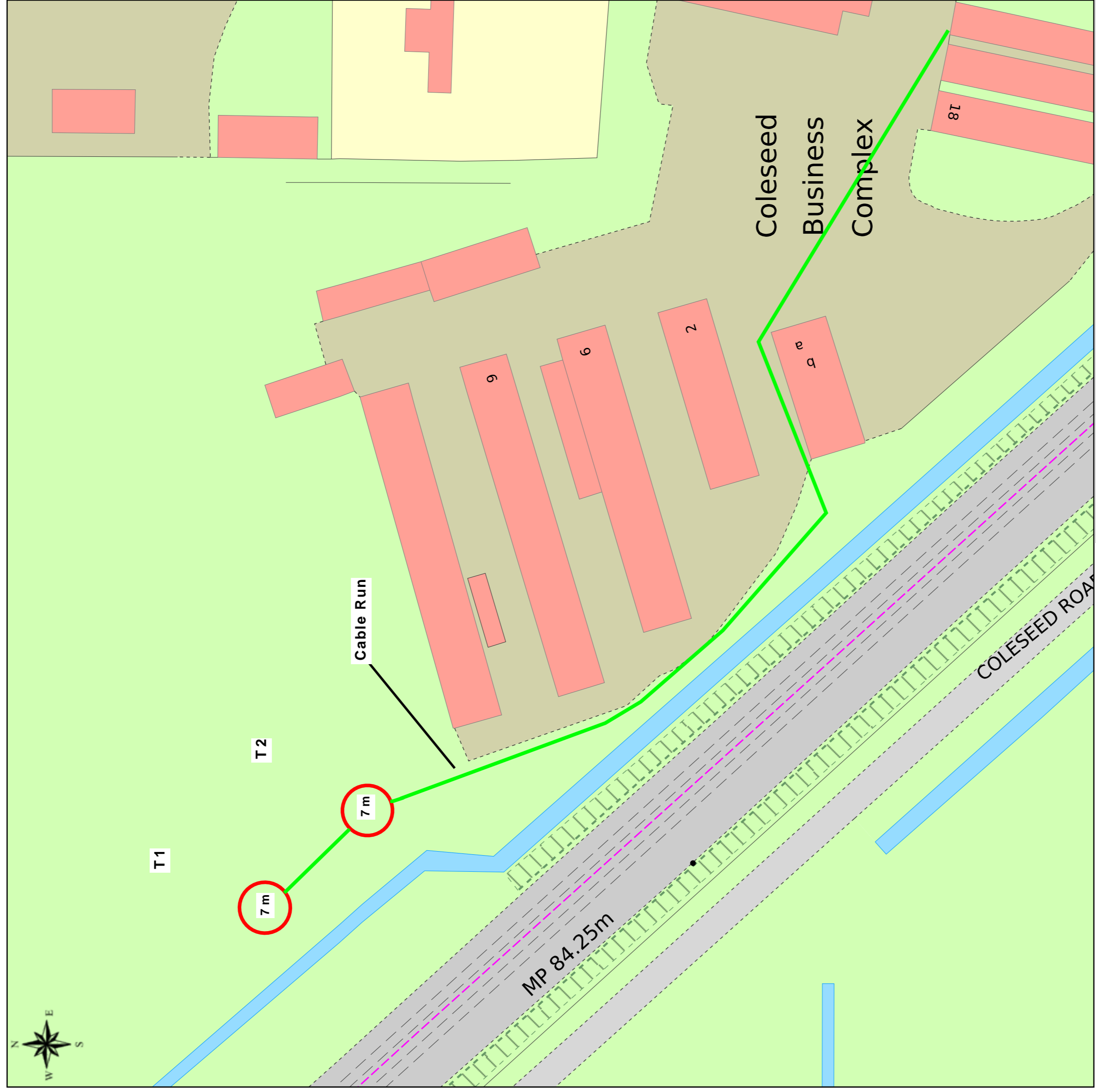
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Coleseed Business Complex, Upwell Road, March,
PE15 0DP

Coleseed Business Complex PE15 ODP - Block Plan A2



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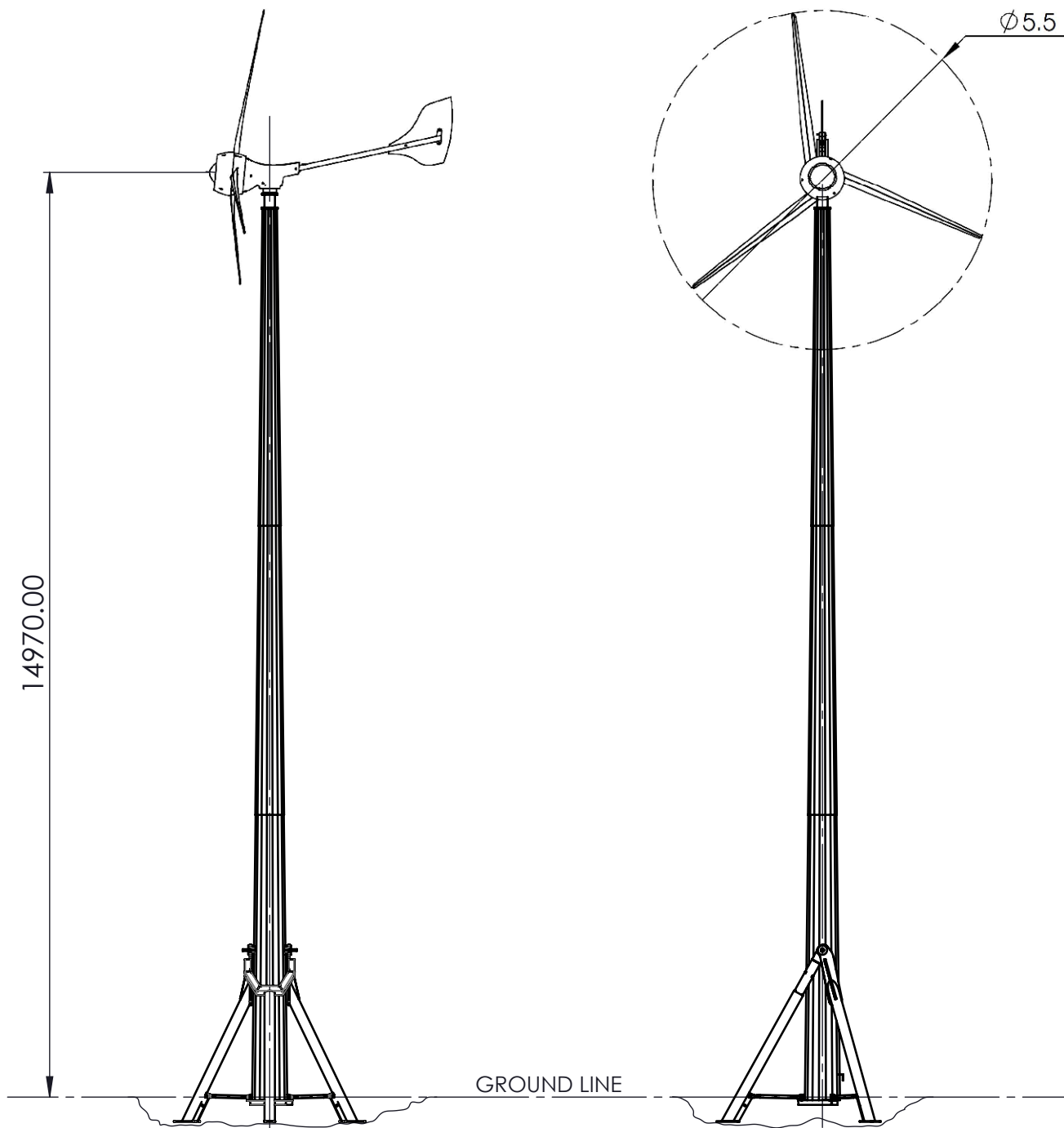
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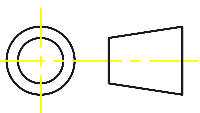
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