

Application Number: F/YR13/0052/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: Benwick/Coates/Eastrea
Date Received: 25 January 2013
Expiry Date: 22 March 2013
Applicant: Mr & Mrs H Whittome
Agent: Miss M Stacey, Hallmark Power Ltd

Proposal: Erection of a 30.0 metre (hub height) 250 kW wind turbine with associated temporary infrastructure
Location: Land South East of Pondersbridge Farm, Oilmills Road, Pondersbridge

Site Area/Density: 00.10 hectares

Reason before Committee: This proposal is before the Planning Committee as it is in the wider interest.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

<p>This is a full application for a proposed single wind turbine at land to the South East of Pondersbridge Farm, Oilmills Road in Pondersbridge. The proposed wind turbine has a hub height of 30 metres with the blades taking it to an overall height of 45 metres. The proposal is considered to accord with national regional and local planning policy in contributing to the need for renewable energy. The site currently comprises agricultural land, which is unclassified in terms of Grade according to Defra.</p>
--

2. HISTORY

There are no historical applications relevant to this proposal.

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 Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy: Proposed Submission – February 2013:

CS14: Responding to climate change and managing the risk of flooding in Fenland.

CS16: 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 The Fenland Wind Turbine Development Policy Guidance June 2009 (WTDPG)

Details contained under assessment section.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|--|
| 4.1 | <i>Town Council:</i> | Recommend refusal as the development is not in keeping with the area and is overintensification of wind turbines in the area. |
| 4.2 | <i>Natural England</i> | The application is not likely to result in significant impacts on statutory designated sites, landscapes or species. Provides details of their standing advice for LPAs. |
| 4.3 | <i>Chatteris Airfield</i> | No objections due to the distance from the Airfield. |
| 4.4 | <i>Cambridge Airport</i> | No objections to the proposal. |
| 4.5 | <i>Anglian Water</i> | No concerns from a groundwater perspective. |

4.6	NATS/NERL Safeguarding	No safeguarding objection to the proposal.
4.7	Cambs Police Architectural Liaison	The only prevalent risk is theft of cabling therefore it is recommended that cables are buried to a substantial depth, i.e. at least 1.8m below ground.
4.8	Civil Aviation Authority	Provided general comments relating to the need for all structures over 91.4m to be plotted on aeronautical charts and for any structure over 150m to be lit.
4.9	CCC Archaeology	No objections or requirements for this proposal.
4.10	CCC Highways	Initially required further details in relation to auto-tracking templates for the delivery route and access to the site. This was provided and following receipt of this the LHA have asked for further clarification in relation to the vehicle shown on the auto tracking template. Further comments will be updated at or prior to the meeting.
4.11	MOD	No objections to the proposal.
4.12	FDC Environmental Protection	Recommend that conditions relating to daytime and night-time noise levels are included if permission is granted. Due to the distances involved and the size of the turbine proposed noise or shadow flicker will not cause a problem with neighbouring properties.
4.13	Middle Level Commissioners	There have been pre-application discussions between the Board and the applicant. It is understood that the current turbine layout does not detrimentally affect the Board's system. Provides general advice for the applicant.
4.14	Environment Agency	Consider that, in accordance with the NPPF, small scale wind turbines are 'less vulnerable' to flooding and are unlikely to result in any adverse impact on the water environment. Provides general advice to be forwarded to the Applicant.
4.15	Huntingdonshire Council	District No specific objections to the proposal.

- 4.16 **Joint Radio Company** Do not foresee any potential problems based on known interference scenarios.
- 4.17 **Local residents/interested parties** The applicant has submitted copies of a letter of support signed by local residents which total 27 letters.
- 1 letter of objection received concerning (in summary):
- The visual impact of the turbine which will impact on all residences in the village.
 - The size of the turbine is beyond the immediate personal energy requirements of the owner.
 - The amount of electricity to be sold back to the grid is insufficient to warrant the visual intrusion.
 - A superimposed turbine of the total height proposed should have been an essential part of the submitted LVIA.
 - Noise impacts. The Glassmoor Wind Farm produces high sound levels when using the footpath.
 - Can the owners guarantee that in all circumstances the noise generated will not exceed the general background noise levels? What redress will they offer if the turbine noise figures do not match those stated.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The site is situated on an area of agricultural land to the South East of the settlement of Pondersbridge. The site is relatively flat and open and adjoining sites consist predominantly of agricultural land with some farm premises and some isolated dwellings. The land has no grade classification according to the Defra records and is arable land. In addition the existing Glassmoor Wind Farm sits approximately 1.5km to the east of the proposed turbine at its nearest point.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 Nature of Application

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 3 bladed wind turbine with a hub height of 30.0 metres and an overall height of approximately 45 metres to blade tip. The turbine consists of a tower, nacelle and 3 blades. The turbine will be connected directly to the National Grid. Access to the site will be via the existing farm access.

The following key issues have been considered;

- Principle and policy implications
- Visual Impact/Landscape Impact
- Design and access

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, and the new Fenland Local Plan Core Strategy – February 2013; 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*
- 9 *Within the 2km settlement buffer.*

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:

- *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 turbines 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.*

Visual Impact/ Landscape Impact

The site is not located within any national or locally designated landscape areas. The turbine is to be situated within an existing area of arable land at a distance of approximately 210m from the road. The proposal is for a single turbine with a hub height of 30m and an overall height of approximately 45m. By the very nature of the development it will be visible within the landscape, which is flat and relatively open in nature. The Glassmoor Wind Farm sits to the East of the proposal at a distance of approximately 1.5km at its closest point to the nearest turbine. It is noted that the WTDPG advises that any new wind turbines, detached from existing turbine sites by more than 500m but within 4km are unlikely to be acceptable in visual terms however the WTDPG does point out that it refers to the impacts of a commercial turbine with a typical height of 100 – 125 metres, therefore the issues have to be taken in context and balanced with the need for, and benefits of providing, renewable energy. This turbine is 30 metres to the hub and approximately 45 metres height overall and as such is less than half of the height referred to in the WTDPG document in relation to existing turbines. As such, on balance it is considered that this turbine would be acceptable in terms of visual, landscape and cumulative visual impacts in this instance.

The nearest property to the proposed turbine, not within the applicants' ownership, is at a distance of approximately 524 metres. The height and positioning of the turbine is not considered to have an adverse impact on residential amenity. The Environmental Protection Team have assessed the proposal and advise that there is unlikely to be any adverse impact in terms of noise or shadow flicker.

Design and Access

The proposed turbine is to consist of a tower, nacelle and three blades. The hub height is 30m and the blades will take the overall height to 45m. The turbine is to be light grey in colour with a matt finish. Access to the site will be via an existing farm track off Oilmills Road and the turbine is to be located adjacent to an existing concrete hardstanding. The hardstanding may need to be temporarily reinforced or extended during the construction period through the use of aluminium panels to allow use as a crane pad.

Delivery of the turbine components will be via the A142 Chatteris, along Doddington Road. The LHA have requested auto-tracking information in relation to the left hand turn at Childs Bridge and the access into the site itself. This has been provided to the LHA who have asked for further clarification on the vehicle to be used for the delivery, namely a HCV 45ft articulated vehicle. Members will be updated on any further comments from the LHA.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed wind turbine has an overall height of 45 metres. The proposal is considered to accord with national regional and local planning policy in contributing to the need for renewable energy. The renewable benefits of the proposal should be considered in line with the impacts on the surrounding area and nearby dwellings.

This proposal has been considered in line with the relevant policies and it is considered, due to its overall height and location, there would not be an adverse impact on the surrounding area or nearby residential amenity and as such, the proposal is considered to be, on balance, acceptable in this instance. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval with appropriate conditions.

8 RECOMMENDATION

Grant

- 1 **The development permitted shall begin 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. Night-time fixed minimum levels can be increased to 45dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the night hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) as measured in accordance with ETSU-R-97 where the occupier has a financial interest in the wind farm development.**

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. Noise levels can be increased to 37dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the Quiet Waking Hours background noise (LA90, 10 minute) where the occupier of the property has a financial interest in the wind farm development.

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.

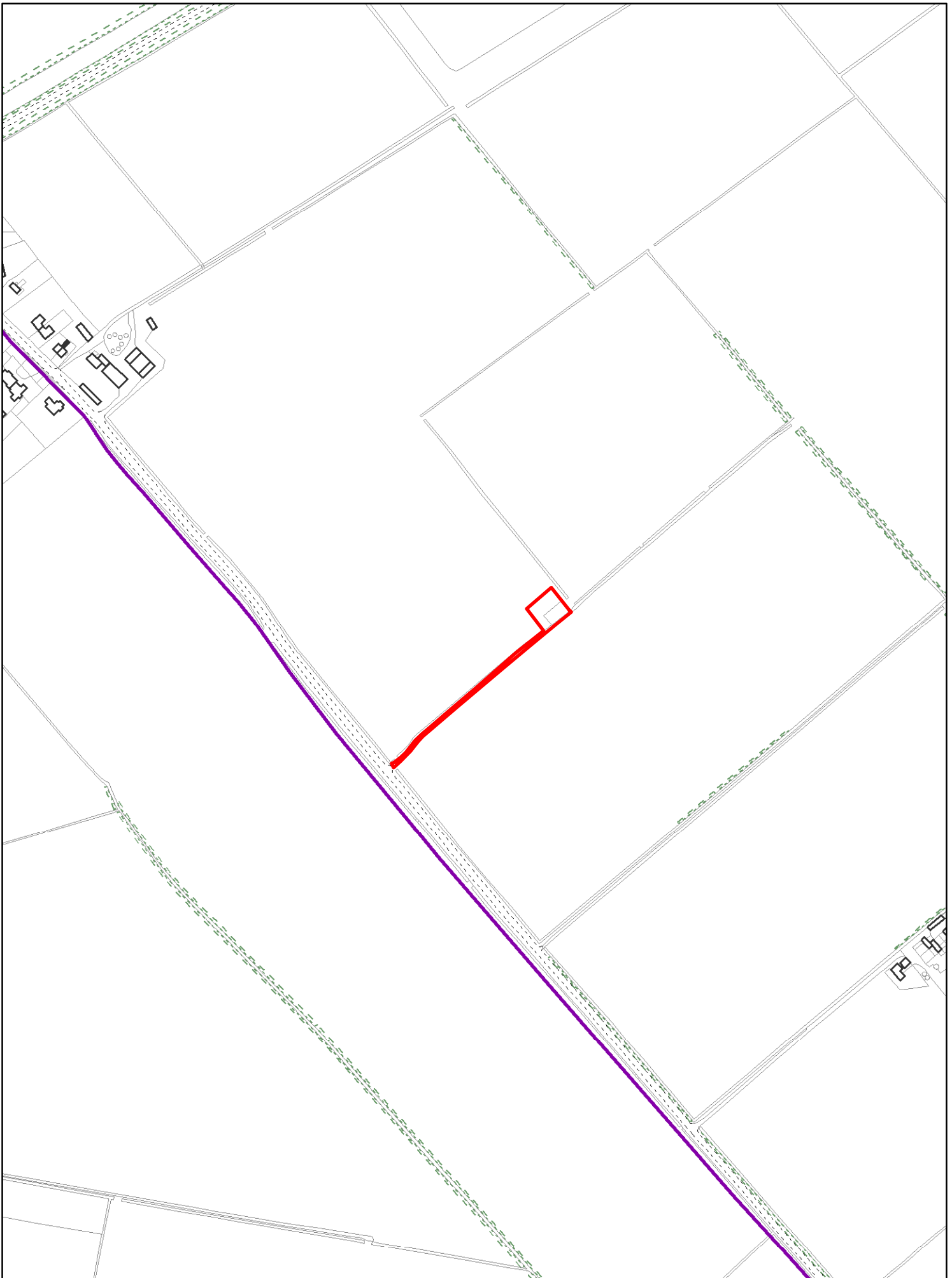
The scheme shall include the management and timing of any works, a traffic management plan to address likely traffic issues during the decommissioning period, an environmental management plan to include details of measures to be taken during the decommissioning period to protect wildlife and habitats 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. Any additional conditions deemed appropriate from the Local Highways Authority.**
- 9. Approved Plans.**



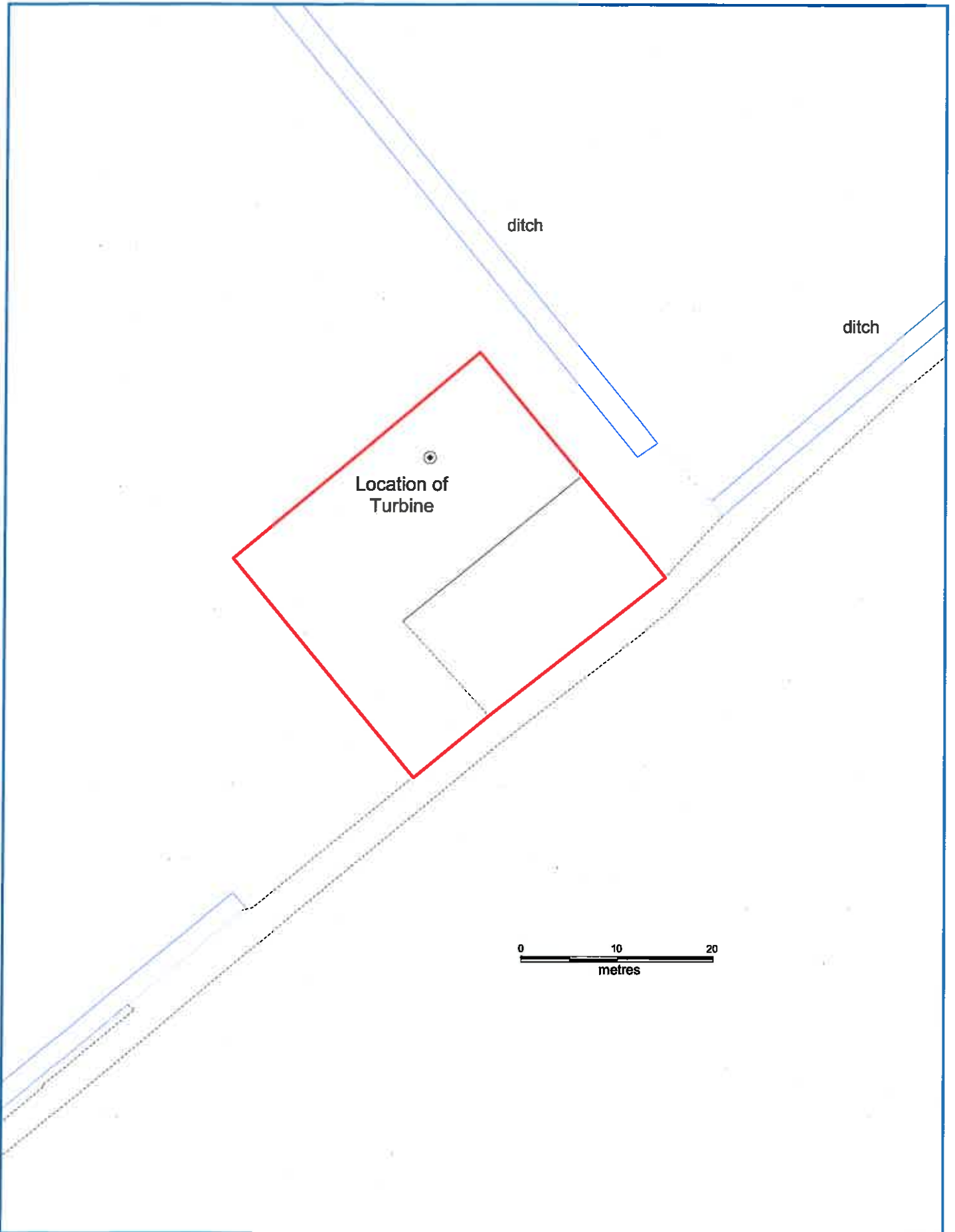
Created on: 29/01/2013

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 10023778

F/YR13/0052/F

Scale = 1:5,000



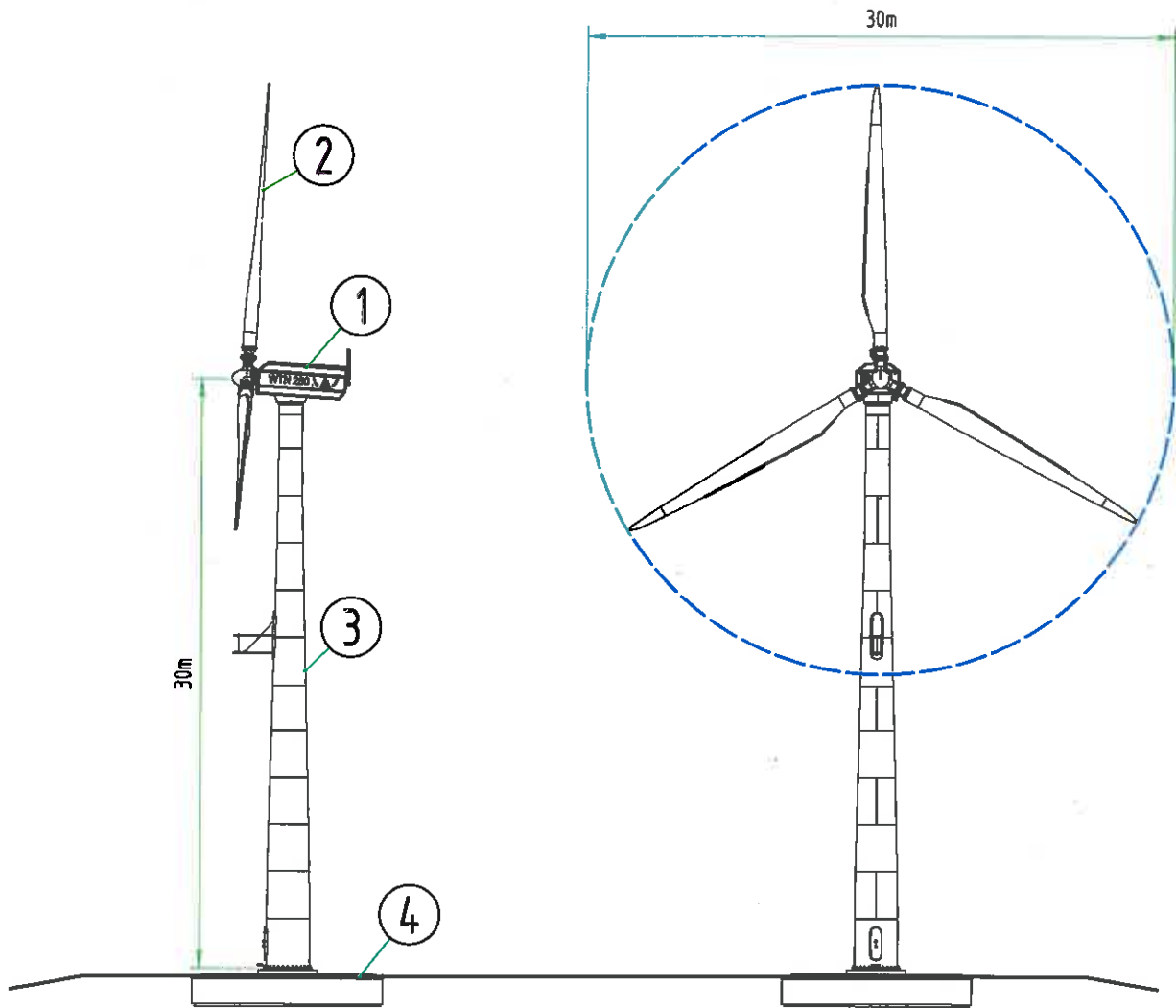



Drawing No. L4951-02 Date 21.12.12
Scale 1:500 @ A4
Grid Ref TL 267 916

Site at Pondersbridge Farm



Based on Ordnance Survey 1:2500
mapping with the permission of
the Controller of HMSO
© Crown Copyright
Licence No VA 100033416



 Wind Technik Nord		Weight: 374469,81 kg	Material:
		According to the law we reserve the right of property of the present drawing, which cannot be printed or transmitted without our written authorization.	
Name: WTN 250 Tubular Tower 30m		Drawing No.: 250-00-1500	Scale: 1:250 at A3
Drawn: 28.01.2010	Date: 28.01.2010	Name: Andresen	Page: 2 of 2
Check:		Production tolerance: DIN ISO 2768-T1 m (mittel)	
		Correction:	Date:
		Name:	