

APPLICATION NO	PA/2015/0382
APPLICANT	G R Bletcher & Son Ltd
DEVELOPMENT	Planning permission to erect a 500kW wind turbine with a hub height of 53m and height blade to tip of 80m including associated cabling, access track and substation
LOCATION	Land off Bonnyhale Road, Ealand, Crowle
PARISH	CROWLE
WARD	Axholme North
CASE OFFICER	Emma Stanley
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION	Refuse permission
REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE	Member 'call in' (Councillor Briggs – significant public interest)

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 28 – Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

Paragraph 93 – Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Paragraph 95 – To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should...plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Paragraph 97 – To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources.

Paragraph 98 – When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects

outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.

National Planning Practice Guidance: Local planning authorities should not rule out otherwise acceptable renewable energy developments through inflexible rules on buffer zones or separation distances. Other than when dealing with set-back distances for safety, distance itself does not necessarily determine whether the impact of a proposal is unacceptable. Distance plays a part, but so does the local context including factors such as topography, the local environment and nearby land uses.

North Lincolnshire Local Plan: Policy DS1 (General Requirements)

Policy DS16 (Flood Risk)

Policy DS21 (Renewable Energy)

Policy RD2 (Development in the Open Countryside)

Policy LC7 (Landscape Protection)

SPG13 (Wind Energy Development)

North Lincolnshire Core Strategy: Policy CS1 (Spatial Strategy for North Lincolnshire)

Policy CS2 (Delivering More Sustainable Development)

Policy CS3 (Development Limits)

Policy CS5 (Delivering Quality Design in North Lincolnshire)

Policy CS16 (North Lincolnshire's Landscape, Greenspace and Waterscape)

Policy CS18 (Sustainable Resource Use & Climate Change)

Policy CS19 (Flood Risk)

Supplementary Planning Document – Planning for Renewable Energy

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: Advise the imposition of conditions relating to improvement of the existing access and submission of a construction phase traffic management plan.

Historic Environment Record: No objections subject to conditions.

Network Rail: No objections but recommend the applicants discuss the protection of network rail assets with their Asset Protection Manager.

Environment Health: No objections subject to conditions relating to noise levels and contaminated land.

Environment Agency: No objections.

NATs: Object on the grounds that the turbine will result in a reduction in the radar detection operations at Prestwick Centre ATC.

PROW Officer: No objections.

Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board: No objections but recommend discussions with the Board regarding works in the vicinity of the watercourse/culvert.

Robin Hood Airport: Believes that the turbine will be visible to the Primary Surveillance Radar and has submitted a holding objection whilst the possibility of mitigation measures to deal with this impact is investigated.

Canal and River Trust: No objections.

MOD: No objections.

Environment Team (Ecology): No objections subject to a condition regarding water voles.

TOWN COUNCIL

Observation that the town already has its fair share of turbines.

PUBLICITY

Neighbouring properties have been notified and a site notice posted. Two letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:

- we are visually overwhelmed by turbines to the north and east and the new turbine would affect the view to the west
- the cumulative effect is unacceptable and one more turbine would lead to others, further spoiling the character of the area
- noise impact has a detrimental impact on health
- the turbine would have an impact on views of the area
- Adverse impact on wildlife.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal involves the erection of a single 500kW wind turbine on agricultural land off Bonnyhale Road to the south-east of Ealand. The turbine measures 53 metres to hub height and 80 metres to blade tip and is required to generate income for the farm through the supply of electricity whilst also offsetting the energy demand and carbon footprint of the farm operations, contributing to renewable energy generation and enhancing the farm business as a more sustainable farming practice. The proposal also includes associated cabling, access track, substation and concrete crane pad.

The main issues in the determination of this application are the principle of development, the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area, and impacts on residential amenity, heritage assets, ecology and aviation.

Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages local authorities to recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources. Furthermore, policy DS21 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan (NLLP) states that proposals for the generation of electricity from renewable sources will be permitted provided that any detrimental effect on features and interests of acknowledged importance, including local character and amenity, is outweighed by environmental benefits. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF supports this view, stating that renewable energy applications should be approved where the impacts of the development are (or can be made) acceptable. Therefore it is established that there is planning policy support for renewable energy development provided that the environmental benefits of the development outweigh any detrimental effects or that such detrimental effects can be mitigated.

It should be recognised that in addition to helping with the reduction of CO₂ emissions, the proposed wind turbine is also intended to support the applicants' existing local rural agricultural business.

Policy LC7 of the NLLP states that where development is permitted within rural settlements or within the open countryside, special attention will be given to the protection of the scenic quality and distinctive local character of the landscape. Development which does not respect the character of the local landscape will not be permitted. A comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been submitted as part of the planning application and concludes that the proposed turbine will not have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape, or upon visual amenity in the area. It also finds that there will be no significant impacts on the landscape character of the site or the immediate area.

The area in which the turbine is proposed to be located is characterised by flat open landscape which, together with the open fields at Belton, Epworth and Haxey, forms the distinctive historical character which is representative of the Isle of Axholme. There are a number of isolated dwellings in the area, with scattered farm groups. Other wind farm developments in the area can also be viewed in the context of the application site, including Tween Bridge and Keadby. Although it is considered that the proposed wind turbine will be an additional visual intrusion in to the setting of the historic landscape, it is not significant enough to disrupt the setting, its legibility or how it is experienced, therefore the harm to the significance of the historic landscape is less than substantial.

A professional desktop noise assessment has been submitted as part of the planning application. This assessment models noise emissions from the turbine and assesses the impact on the local area. The noise assessment concludes that the predicted noise levels at the nearest residential receptors are below 35 dBA LA_{90,10 min} level at wind speeds of up to 10 metres per second and at 10 metres height, in accordance with the guidance contained in ETSU-R-97. On this basis, the development complies with the requirements of ETSU-R-97 and confirms that there will be no loss of amenity as a result of noise. The council's Environmental Health department has been consulted on the application and has confirmed that, subject to the stated noise levels being secured by way of a condition, they have no objection to the development with regard to noise.

A comprehensive ecological assessment has been submitted as part of the planning application. This assessment finds that the turbine is unlikely to lead to direct impact on protected or priority species. The council's ecologist has been consulted on the application and has reviewed the submitted information, confirming that the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant impact on protected or priority species, and that there is no

Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on the Humber Estuary SAC/SPA Ramsar site, Thorne Moors SAC or Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA. A condition is requested to ensure that there is no adverse impact on water voles or their habitat.

The MOD has no objections to scheme from a technical point of view. However, Robin Hood Airport and NATs have both submitted holding objections based on concerns that the turbine will affect radar detection operations at the Airport and Prestwick Air Traffic Control. The applicants have been in discussions with both consultees, and mitigation measures can be put in place to overcome these objections. It is considered that, subject to conditions to provide such mitigation measures, the development would not have a detrimental impact on aviation systems in the locality.

A recent ministerial statement clearly sets out the government's current position on renewable energy development with an emphasis on wind farm development. It sets out considerations to be applied to proposed wind energy development so that local people will have the final say on wind farm applications. This provision took effect from 18 June 2015, and makes some changes to current planning guidance. When determining applications for one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if the development site is an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan and following consultation with the affected local communities that the planning impacts have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

Where a valid application for a wind energy development has already been submitted to a local planning authority and the development plan does not identify suitable sites, the provisional transition provision applies. In such instances local planning authorities can find the proposal acceptable if, following consultation, they are satisfied it has addressed the planning impacts identified by affected local communities and therefore has their backing. This is also reflected in the updated National Planning Policy Guidance on Renewable Energy.

In this particular case, the applicants have chosen the location of the turbine to try to minimise any potential negative impacts on residential properties in the area. A statement of community involvement has been submitted with the application, which shows the publicity undertaken with local residents and the parish council before submission of the current proposal. This states that no adverse comments were received. The nearest residential properties are located approximately 540 metres away from the site. In planning terms, it is considered that the proposed turbine will not have an overwhelming or overbearing impact on these residential properties which will have filtered, oblique views of the turbine at a significant distance. The potential for shadow flicker occurs where turbines cast shadows from the sun's rays onto other properties. The potential for flicker is generally accepted to be limited to a distance of 10 times the rotor diameter of the turbine. As there are no dwellings within 10 times the rotor diameter of the proposed turbine in this instance it is considered that there is no significant potential for the loss of residential amenity as a result of flicker and that further attenuation measures are not necessary. However, two near neighbours and the parish council are concerned that the development will harm residential amenity and that another wind turbine in the area will further affect the rural character of the area. This indicates that the local community does not support the proposal as submitted.

It is considered, therefore, that whilst the development will have no significant detrimental impact on the area with regard to landscape character, visual amenity, heritage assets, ecology or aviation, it is clear that the local community does not support the proposal, and

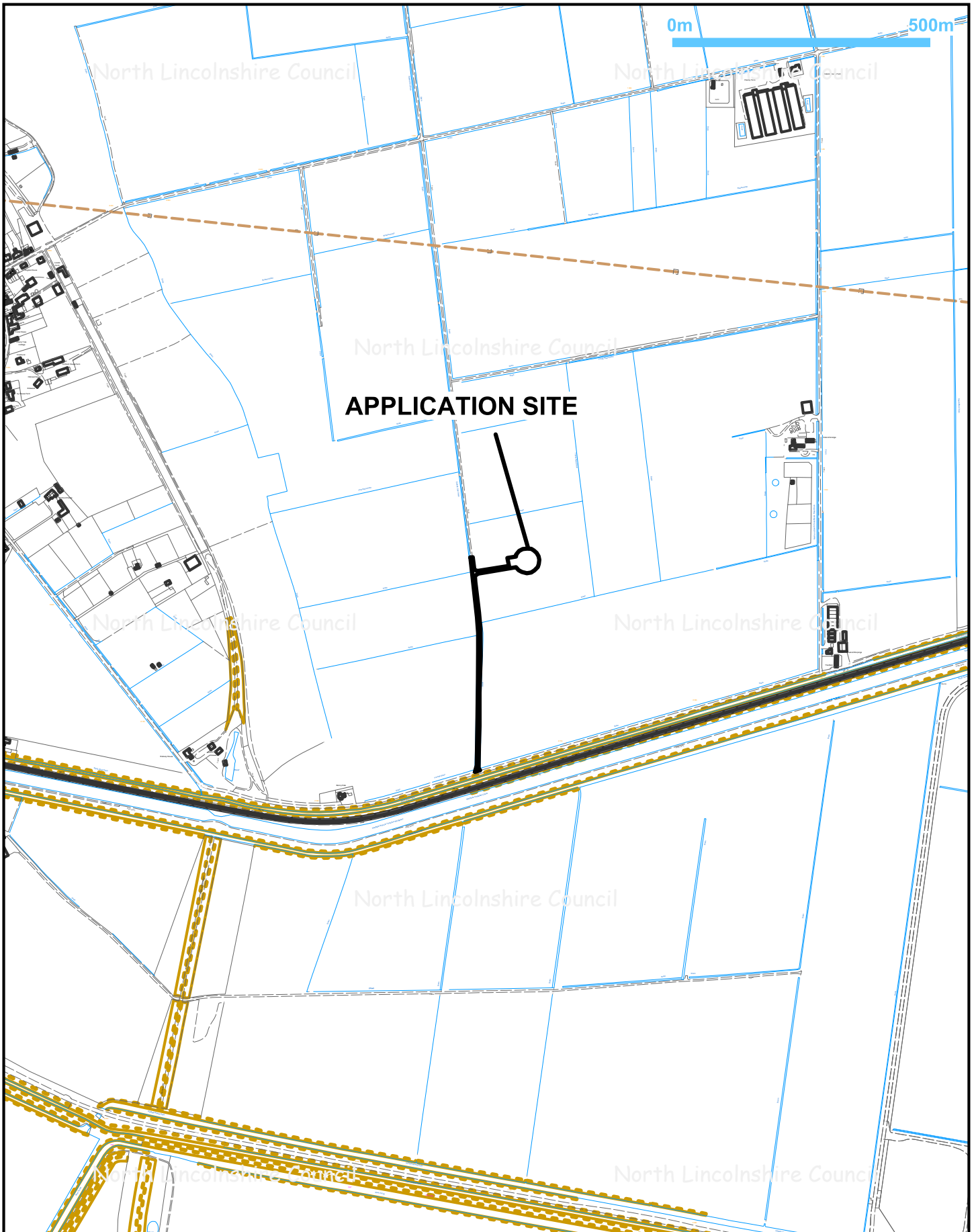
despite the fact that the proposed turbine will provide up to 500kW of clean, renewable energy, making a valuable contribution to the area's renewable energy provision, and will support the existing rural business of the landowner which will help secure its future viability and the employment of local people, the proposal does not comply with the recent ministerial statement as described above, and is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION Refuse permission for the following reasons:

The proposed wind farm fails to accord with the recent ministerial statement and updated Planning Practice Guidance on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy because the development is not on land which is allocated within the local development plan for wind energy development and does not have the backing of the local community.

Informative

In determining this application, the council, as local planning authority, has taken account of the guidance in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework in order to seek to secure sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.



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Drawn by: Sue Barden	Date: 18/08/2015	Scale 1:10000	



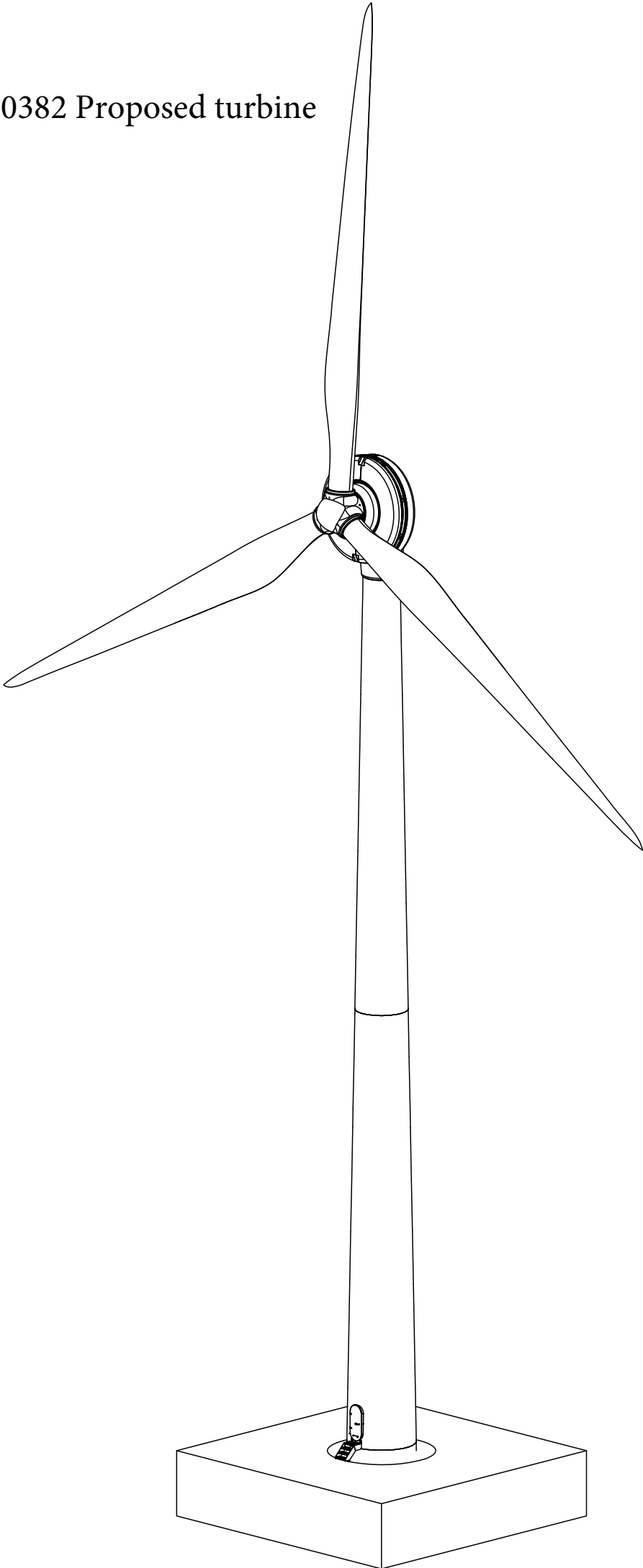
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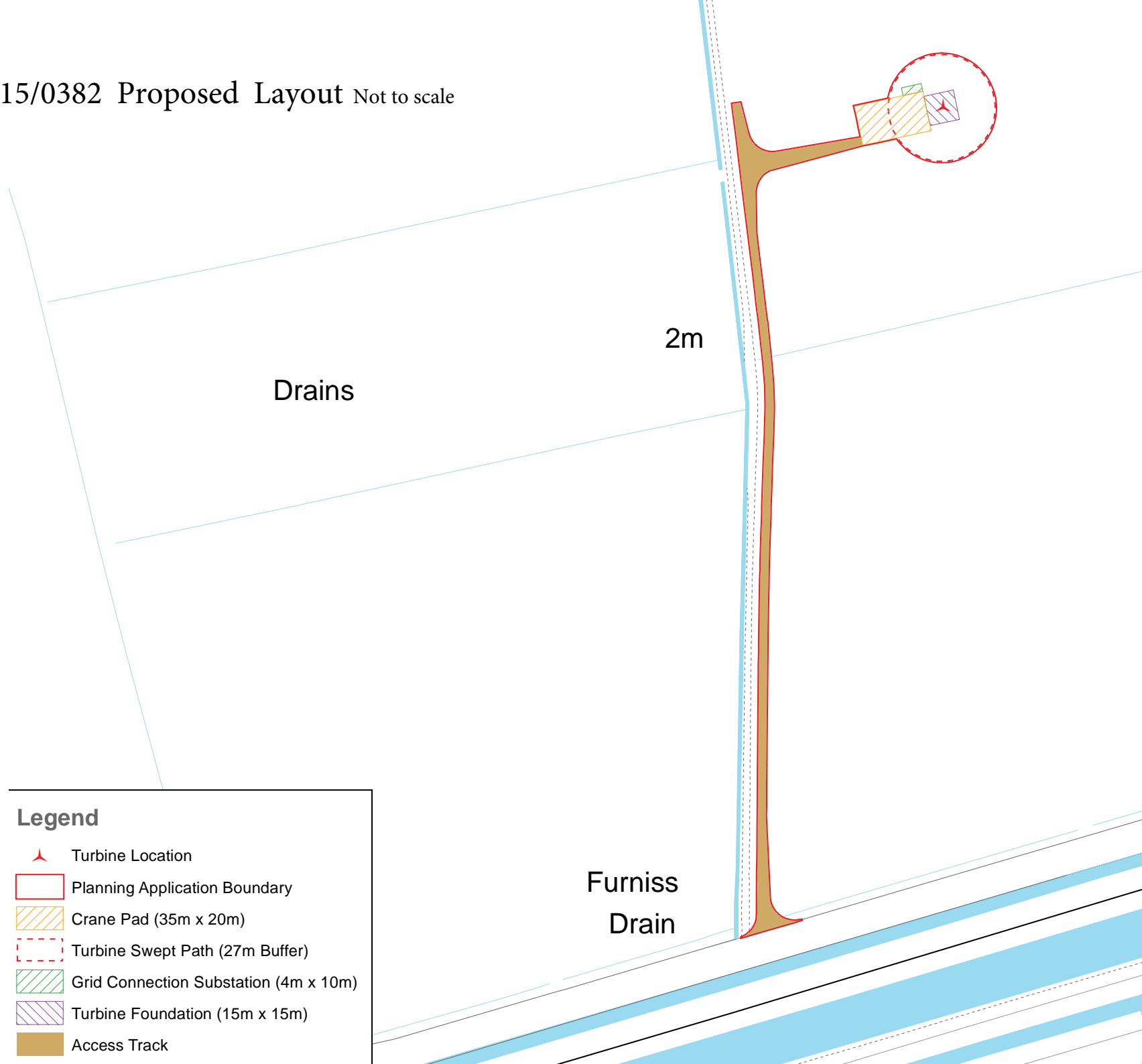
Director of Places
Peter Williams
BSc,DMS,CEng,MEI,MCMI,AMIMechE

PA/2015/0382 Proposed turbine








Not to scale



PA/2015/0382 Proposed Layout Not to scale



Legend

-  Turbine Location
-  Planning Application Boundary
-  Crane Pad (35m x 20m)
-  Turbine Swept Path (27m Buffer)
-  Grid Connection Substation (4m x 10m)
-  Turbine Foundation (15m x 15m)
-  Access Track