

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE –
13 August 2013**

Agenda Item	5.3
Report No	PLN/075/13

**12/04399/FUL : Mr Jeffery Bannerman
Land 240M SE Of Balmore Farm, Dounreay**

Report by Area Planning Manager North

SUMMARY

Description: Erection of Single Wind Turbine 78 metres to blade tip, 49m to Hub with 58 Diameter Blades, Formation of Access Track and New Road Junction along with Ancillary Electrical Switchgear Housing

Recommendation: REFUSE

Ward: 04: Landward Caithness

Development category: Local

Pre-determination hearing: none

Reason referred to Committee: Local member request.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 Application is made in detail for the erection of 1 no. 900 kW Gamesa G58 turbine with a height to blade tip of 78 metres, a height to hub of 49 metres and a rotor diameter of 58 metres. The proposed development includes the formation of a new access track with a new road junction and ancillary electrical switchgear housing. The associated infrastructure includes turbine foundations; crane hardstanding; pole mounted transformer and associated cabling. The development also includes Temporary Construction Compounds of approximately 50 x 25m behind the farm buildings and 40m x 20m which would be located within the site adjacent to the turbine. The temporary "portacabin" type structures are to be used for site offices, the monitoring of incoming vehicles and welfare facilities, chemical toilets containerised storage containers for tools, small plant and parts, parking for around 10 cars/construction vehicles and a receiving area for incoming vehicles.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the turbine and construction components will utilise the A386 Reay to Thurso public road.
- 1.3 The applicant has provided a number of supporting documents including an Ecological Assessment, Heritage Desk based Assessment, Highways and Traffic Assessment, Location and Landownership Plan, Noise Impact Assessment,

Photomontage, Planning Statement, Shadow Flicker Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment and a Neighbour Plan.

1.4 A formal Screening Opinion was issued on 8 September 2011, advising that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

1.5 **Variations:** A variety of plans including elevation drawings, access and site layout plans were received on the 29 November 2012.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is located approximately 2.3km from the south eastern extent of the Dounreay Nuclear Establishment. The site is located approximately 5km from the south eastern extent of Reay which is the nearest main settlement. The area is predominantly flat and made up of agricultural land sloping down to the north. This includes an existing access via an existing farm and courtyard area. The site is used for storage purposes. There is an overhead line that crosses the site. The site lies on agricultural land approximately 240m southeast of Balmore farm. There are small settlements located at Lybster 700m to the east, Skaill, approximately 1km to the southeast, Achreamie 1.3km to the southwest and Buldoo 1.8km to the southwest. The site is located 2.4km to the northwest of the existing 21 wind turbine development at Stemster Hill.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1
1. 10/00022/FULCA: Erection of Agricultural Building at Balmore Farm. Approved 11/02/2010.
 2. 05/00218/FULCA: Demolition of Existing Farm Building and Erection of 60' x 40' General Purpose Agricultural Building at Balmore Farm. Approved 16/06/2005.
 3. 04/00342/S36CA: Erection of 21 wind turbines at Stemster Hill, 70 metres to hub and associated infrastructure. Approved by Scottish Ministers 14/01/2010

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised : Schedule 3

Representation deadline : 28/12/2012

Timeous representations : 0

Late representations : 2

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Turbine is not a small farm sized turbine but one the same size as those over the road at Forss.
- Cumulative Visual Impact/alien to local environment
- Safety issues

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Environmental Health** : No objections subject to noise conditions.

5.2 **Area Roads** : No objections subject to access conditions.

- 5.3 **Landscape Officer:** Please refer to main body text of this report.
- 5.4 **Scottish Natural Heritage :** Have no objections to this proposal. There are natural heritage interests of international importance on the Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA), North Caithness Cliffs SPA and Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA. In Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) view, these will not be adversely affected by the proposal.

Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site

The proposal lies approximately 6.2km from Broubster Leans Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 8km from Loch Calder SSSI, both of which are components of this SPA and Ramsar site. This site is classified for its wintering populations of Greenland white fronted geese, (Icelandic) greylag geese and whooper swans. The Ramsar site is designated for the same features and occupies the same geographical boundaries as the SPA.

SPAs are strictly protected site and it is important to note that works taking place out-with the SPA boundary can still have an impact on the site. This is especially true for SPAs and turbine developments, where the birds are often at risk of collision and disturbance while outwith the boundary of the SPA they are connected to.

The proposal lies within foraging distance for two of the qualifying features of this SPA (Greenland white-fronted geese and greylag geese). These species, if regularly feeding in this area, may be at risk of collision (with the moving turbine blades) and / or disturbance and displacement from regularly used feeding areas. In SNH's view, this proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interests of the site. As a consequence the Highland Council is required to carry out an Appropriate Assessment in view of the site's conservation objectives for its qualifying interests. However, based on the information provided, SNH considers that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

North Caithness Cliffs SPA

The proposal lies approximately 4.2km from the nearest part of this SPA. This site is classified for breeding populations of seabirds and peregrine falcon.

SNH consider that, it is unlikely that this proposal will have a significant effect on any of the qualifying interests of this SPA either directly or indirectly. An appropriate assessment is therefore not required. This is due to most of the qualifying interests foraging out at sea with the exception of peregrine falcon, which may fly inland to hunt. Results from the Vantage Point (VP) surveys concluded that only one flight was observed within a 200m buffer of the proposal. Therefore peregrine falcon flights inland in the Balmore area are likely to be infrequent. SNH therefore have no objection to the proposal in regards to this SPA.

Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA and Ramsar site

The proposal lies approximately 8.1km north of East Halladale SSSI, the closest component of this SPA and Ramsar site. This site is classified for its populations of upland breeding birds. The Ramsar site occupies the same geographical boundaries as the SPA and is designated for its blanket bog, breeding birds and

populations of dunlin and (Scottish) greylag geese.

In our view, it is unlikely that this proposal will have a significant effect on any of the qualifying interests either directly or indirectly. An appropriate assessment is therefore not required. This is due to the separation distance between the turbine and the SPA and habitats present on and around the site. Results from the VP surveys show no flights of bird species from this SPA. It is likely that more suitable habitat is available in closer proximity to the SPA and birds flying to the coast (such as red-throated diver) are unlikely to take routes which pass through the turbine site. SNH therefore have no objection to the proposal in regards to this SPA.

Protected Species

The supporting ecological report states that checks will continue for protected species. SNH recommend these should take place prior to, and during, construction for evidence of any EPS and other protected species using the site.

Wider Countryside Birds

SNH agree that pre-construction checks for nesting birds should be made, especially if construction coincides with the breeding season (April – July inclusive). During this time the birds, their nests, eggs and chicks are protected from disturbance and destruction.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

This proposal is for a single turbine, 78m to blade tip. As a result, it requires a detailed LVIA to consider cumulative and sequential impacts. SNH note that a LVIA has been provided. There are no landscape designations near to this proposal. However, there could be significant landscape and visual impacts at this site. This is due to the proximity to the A836 and other wind farm developments, which could contribute to cumulative impacts and cumulative sequential impacts. The A836 (the north coast tourist route) in this area is part of a key transition from the open farmed and more settled landscapes of the Caithness coast to the undulating moorlands and woods of the Sutherland coast. SNH have significant cumulative concerns for this area. SNH advise that the visual impact is considered in relation to the nearby existing wind farms at Forss and Baillie Hill. From some views this individual turbine may appear to be isolated from the other groups of turbines in this area. SNH note that the LVIA includes a cumulative assessment in conjunction with nearby wind farms, but it does not incorporate all single turbines, a number of which are in relatively close proximity.

- 5.5 **Highland and Island Airports Limited** : No objections to this development at the given position and height. This development would not infringe the safeguarding surfaces for Wick Airport.
- 5.6 **Ministry of Defence** : No objections to the proposed turbine, however, we would require the turbine to be fitted with aviation lighting with an optimised flash pattern of 60 flashes per minute of 200ms to 500ms duration at the highest practicable point. MOD also require to be notified if the planning permission is granted.
- 5.7 **Civil Aviation Authority** : No objections.
- 5.8 **UKAEA** : No comments received

- 5.9 **Scottish and Southern Energy Plc (SSE)** : An 11,000 volt overhead line is in the vicinity. SSE have overhead line clearance guidelines which must be adhered to. The distance between the wind turbine and the nearest overhead line conductor should be at least 1.5 times the maximum height of the turbine.

All works in proximity to overhead lines must be carried out in accordance with The Health and Safety Guidance note GS 6. The legislation dictates that where works are to be undertaken within 9 metres horizontal distance from an overhead line, positive steps must be taken to manage the risk identified on site. These steps can include, making the line dead, erecting barriers at ground level, erecting high level bunting and goal posts (6 metres from the line), using appropriate excavator, restricting jib movement, etc.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

6.1 **Highland-Wide Local Development Plan 2012**

Policy 28	Sustainable Design
Policy 30	Physical Constraints
Policy 57	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
Policy 58	Protected Species
Policy 59	Other Important Features
Policy 60	Other important habitats
Policy 61	Landscape
Policy 63	Water Environment
Policy 67	Renewable Energy Developments
Policy 72	Pollution
Policy 77	Public Access

6.2 **Caithness Local Plan (2002) (in so far as it remains in force)**

There are no specific policies relating to renewable energy.

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 **Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance**

Although the planning guidance has been superseded, the strategy remains a useful reference point in respect to the Council's aspiration for Highland to make a significant contribution to the Scottish Government's targets. It sets out installed capacity targets for on-shore wind in Highland of 800MW for 2010, 1200MW for 2015, 1400MW for 2020 and 2900MW for 2050.

7.2 **Interim Supplementary Guidance on On-shore Wind Energy**

The guidance assists with identifying areas to be afforded significant protection from development, identify other constraints and policy criteria in order to identify broad areas of search for wind energy developments. It is principally aimed at large scale wind farms which are 20MW in size but also to the scale of turbines. Despite the small output the proposed turbine it is considered to be of a large scale given the 78m height of the turbine to blade tip. The turbine lies within a Stage 3 'Area of Search'. However, the fact that this is a broad area of search does not mean that a turbine would be supported at this location if the visual impact was considered to be unacceptable.

7.3 **Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance**

SPP — Scottish Planning Policy

PAN 45 — Renewable Energy Technologies

PAN 56 — Planning and Noise

PAN 58 — Environmental Impact Assessment

PAN 60 — Planning for Natural Heritage

8. **PLANNING APPRAISAL**

8.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8.2 This means that the application requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.

8.3 **Development Plan Policy Assessment**

Scottish Government policy is favourable towards renewable energy schemes. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPF2) and Scottish Planning Policy provide the planning policy context and support the commitment to achieving 50% renewable output in Scotland by 2010. The Government has changed this target to 100% of Scotland's gross annual electricity consumption by 2020.

It is recognized that increasing energy production through renewable means and the need to protect and enhance Scotland's natural and historic environment must be regarded as compatible goals. The planning system has a significant role in securing appropriate protection to the natural and historic environment without unreasonably restricting the potential for renewable energy.

In terms of consented development, the Council is on track to exceeding its 2015 installed capacity target of 1200MW. While this does not prevent developments being submitted it does place the Council in a position where it has greater opportunity to accept only the most appropriate developments located in the most appropriate areas. The developer needs to demonstrate that the proposal would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties or on the community as a whole.

The supporting Environmental Report and assessments contained therein have in

some areas failed to address or properly test the development against the Development Plan. There remains uncertainty about some of the potential effects and, therefore some doubt as to the rigor that has been applied. Some aspects are however more clear and are considered sufficient to determine the application.

The elements of the proposed development that do not accord with Development Plan Policy are set out in the Material Considerations Section 8.4 of this report below.

8.4 **Material Considerations**

Roads and Transport

Subject to conditions, it is not considered that access and accessibility would be an issue for this proposal. However it is noted that minimal information has been provided on how the turbine will be transported to the site. The traffic management details do not cover in sufficient detail the full impact of the development on the surrounding infrastructure. It is unclear if public roads would be temporarily closed or how much disruption or required mitigation there would be. The agent has indicated in their supporting statement that the turbine components will be constructed over an anticipated period of approximately 4 months. No details of the crane have been provided or what this will entail on site. Additional construction traffic will be required to transport aggregate to the site.

These details would need to be provided and secured by condition if this development was approved.

It is not considered that there would be any significant issues arising from the construction of the turbine. Although survey work has been undertaken and submitted with the application in relation to the impact of the development on the habitat, protected species and other species, no mitigation measures have been provided in the supporting statement to indicate how the development would be mitigated to third parties or protected species. It is noted that the developer has considered a phased construction time for the turbine. It is also noted that the developer has considered decommissioning in the supporting statement. This envisages that the turbine would be decommissioned after 25 years, the operational life of the machine. If consent was to be granted this would be limited to a maximum period of 20 years and subject to maintenance conditions.

Noise and Shadow Flicker

Balmore Animal Welfare is located 700m to the west of the proposed turbine. No background noise survey has been undertaken at any of the noise sensitive premises in the small settlements of Lybster and Skail.

No objections have been received in relation to Shadow Flicker. The agent has provided a summary based on survey work undertaken by Pegasus Environmental. The report concludes that shadow flicker may occur at Balmore Farm itself and the house Ocean View. Both of these properties lie within the 10x blade diameter Residential Buffer. The agent has confirmed in the submitted Planning Statement that these properties belong to and are in the control of the applicant. The agent has confirmed that if shadow flicker is found to be a nuisance that the applicant would be willing to accept a condition in order for mitigation measures to be put in place in order to reduce the occurrence of shadow flicker. It is unclear from the

information provided what the full extent of the shadow flicker will be to nearby properties. Environmental Health have not objected subject to conditions being placed on the development to address noise and shadow flicker.

Natural Heritage

Scottish Natural Heritage have raised concerns regarding the impact of the development on Special Protection Area (SPA), North Caithness Cliffs (SPA), Caithness Peatlands, European Protected Species.

European Protected Species, Wider Countryside Birds, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Cumulative Impact Assessment. SNH have raised some concerns in relation to the findings in some areas; however they have not objected to the proposed development. As SNH are the Council's advisors in such matters, it is considered that the applicant has satisfactorily addressed this aspect of the proposals. Effects or impacts on other species and habitat could be mitigated by condition.

Built and Cultural Heritage

The Historic Environment Team are the Council's advisors with regards the impact of the development on archaeological heritage. The Historic Environment Team have not commented on this application and it is therefore considered that there are no specific cultural heritage issues with this application.

Visual, Landscape and Accumulative Impacts

The Agent requested the Council seek the comments of the Landscape Officer with regards this development. As requested these comments were sought and are considered particularly relevant to this section of the report and are set out below. The agent subsequently requested the opportunity to consider whether to reduce the height of the proposal or withdraw the application as result of the comments received from the Landscape Officer. The agent has subsequently confirmed that they wish the application to be determined as submitted.

Methodology

The methodology appendix states they used MAGIC datasets for rural designations. The only rural designation that the mapping covers in Scotland is RSPB reserves.

Special Landscape Areas: These do not seem to be discussed at all in the text, the Environmental Designations Plan shows Dunnet Head but not Strathy Point SLA, both overlap with the study area.

High Sensitivity in Visual Receptors is limited to 'occupiers of residential properties and users of public rights of way and POS'. While Public Rights of Way do exist in Scotland the core path network and general rights of access are much more significant in Scotland.

The methodology itself is not clear. Information is given on definition of terms, thresholds of sensitivity, levels of significance etc, but not how the assessment itself will be conducted.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Landscape Effects

The LVIA makes repeated reference to the development being 'tall and thin'. This is not accurate, the tower is tall and thin, the blades are narrow, but moving and covering an area 58m across. When the blades are viewed head on, the effect is not of a narrow structure.

However, overall it is agreed that, individually, the turbine would not constitute a significant impact on the immediate landscape character. The report does not make a clear assessment of cumulative effects on Landscape Character, where the turbine may relate to the development at Forss and thus blur the distinction between Open Intensive Farmland and Mixed Agriculture and Settlement in this location.

Visual Effects

In the Residential Properties section the author describes the Forss turbines as characterising and defining the landscape north of the site. Elsewhere, in relation to the proposed development, that the same portion of LCT is described as follows: 'this narrow section of 13 [Open Intensive Farmland LCT] is dominated by the sea which means that "new elements tend to appear minor in comparison to its large scale"'. It is not clear how new elements that tend to appear minor can also characterise and define an area.

Visual Analysis of Viewpoints

Sensitivity is defined as being the sensitivity of the 'view' rather than the viewer or location. The advice from the Landscape Officer is that this is not in accordance with the methodology outlined in Appendix 3.

Viewpoint 1 is found to have major to moderate effects which are insignificant. Given that the general composition of the view is also representative of the wider area and A863 approach to the site, it is considered that the impacts are being underplayed because of specific limitations on the view from the Forss House Hotel. This is overly specific for assessment of a representative view and a potentially significant impact should be recognised. Despite the Forss turbines being a part of this view, they are only noted in the Visual Impact analysis as 'providing context'. They are an existing part of the scene and it is appropriate that an analysis of the combined effects should be presented at this point.

Viewpoint 2. Here it is stated that, because there are existing turbines in the view, the magnitude of change is low. This reduces assessment of visual impacts to a tick-box process, which is further underlined by the repeated use of stock descriptions for different viewpoints.

There is no recognition that the movement of turbine blades can make them more prominent in a view than static objects. Again, the impacts of the proposed development are understated in this analysis.

Viewpoint 5. The visualisations provided are not adequate, with weather conditions shown not being appropriate or in accordance with the HC Standard.

Cumulative Impact Assessment.

The applicants submitted assessment demonstrates is poorly presented and represents a poor understanding of the nature of potential cumulative impacts.

The combined effect of several developments taken together need not simply be the sum of the effect of A plus the effect of B; it may be more, or less.

The conclusions in this instance are over-reliant on the assertion that a single turbine causes a low magnitude of change and therefore cannot combine significantly with other developments, other aspects of experience of the combined development are not considered.

The report also repeatedly refers to 'cumulative developments' which is not helpful in keeping the concepts clear. The assessor should be specific that they are looking into the potential cumulative impacts arising from perceived interaction of similar developments. The developments themselves are not 'cumulative'.

For viewpoint 4 the Landscape Officer considers that it is unlikely that the separation between Forss and Balmore is sufficient for it to read as a separate development and it is likely to read as a continuation of Forss. The cumulative impact assessment should be made on this basis.

It is unclear how the Forss turbines change from 'prominent vertical elements' in the initial Visual Impact Assessment to being 'unlikely to be easily discernible' in the Cumulative Impact Assessment. Likewise, Balmore itself changes from 'clearly visible in the view' to 'being unlikely to be easily perceived'.

Overall it is considered that the proposed turbine would not constitute a significant impact on the immediate landscape character. The submission does not clearly assess the cumulative impact of the proposal and the existing development at Forss. However, in this assessment, when taking into account the Forss turbines, it is considered that there would be a significant cumulative impact on the Landscape Character of the area as a result of the development proposal, if it were to proceed.

Assessment of Transport Corridors

This part of the applicant's submitted assessment is extremely weak. Visibility is described as transitional from the A836 and no assessment made of the impacts on, or sensitivity of the road users. Transitory is not the same as negligible and the impact of visibility over a stretch of 7km or longer should be assessed.

Overall the applicant's submitted assessment lacks completeness in that, while some discussion is given to each prescribed element, Landscape Character Types, viewpoints etc, this somehow neglects the actual site context, proximity to Dounreay, the experience of travelling along that road, past Forss, past Dounreay. The elements of the study are never pulled together to demonstrate an understanding of how those elements might work together and what impacts the development might have on this particular place and setting.

In the Landscape Officer's opinion the LVIA is poor and should not be relied on for decision making. There are unlikely to be significant cumulative impacts arising at more distant vantage points, but the visual impacts, both individually and cumulatively, particularly within the 5-6km radius may be both significant and adverse. There are likely to be some effects on the distinction between Landscape Character types locally, with the development's visual links to Forss causing some blurring of the boundary between Open Intensive Farmland and Mixed Agriculture Settlement. However the location of Forss at the periphery of the Open Intensive Farming type limits this effect and it is unlikely to be significant.

The Landscape Character of the Supporting Statement sets out the rationale behind the developers 20km assessment of Zone of Theoretical Visibility.

Although there are some areas of the Supporting Statement that indicate that "a turbine" would be suitable at this location, the visual impact and the impact that the development has on the wider area are the main reasons why this development is not considered appropriate. The turbine lies within a Stage 3 'Area of Search' as identified in the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance. However, the fact that this is a broad area of search does not mean that a turbine would be acceptable at this location if the visual impact or landscape impacts were considered to be unacceptable. As the area is predominantly flat and made up of very gently undulating lowland, the proposed turbine would sit very uncomfortably in this flat landscape. There is no topographical feature to assist to soften or screen the turbine and as such the visual impact is magnified in the local landscape

The proposed site is considered to be unacceptable as it cannot be easily screened; a tall moving structure cannot be accommodated in the area without having an adverse visual impact to its detriment by virtue of its scale, protrusion and height."

Scottish Natural Heritage has also raised concerns regarding the impact of the development on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Cumulative Impact Assessment.

There could be significant landscape and visual impacts at this site. This is due to the proximity to the A836 and other wind farm developments, which could contribute to cumulative impacts and cumulative sequential impacts. The A836 (the north coast tourist route) in this area is part of a key transition from the open farmed and more settled landscapes of the Caithness coast to the undulating moorlands and woods of the Sutherland coast. SNH have significant cumulative concerns for this area and have advised that the visual impact is considered in relation to the nearby existing wind farms at Forss and Baillie Hill. From some views this individual turbine may appear to be isolated from the other groups of turbines in this area. SNH note that the LVIA includes a cumulative assessment in conjunction with nearby wind farms, but it does not incorporate all single turbines, a number of which are in relatively close proximity.

The turbine lies within a Stage 3 'Area of Search' as identified in Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance as set out in the Visual and Landscape Impacts section above.

The Planning Authority considers that this development would introduce a visual

link between larger windfarms, in an area where such development is presently locally absent. The proposed development would cumulatively have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts, particularly in relation to the erection of 21 wind turbines at Stemster Hill which have a height of 70 metres to hub (04/00342/S36CA) and are positioned approximately 2.4 km away from the current proposal. These impacts as identified by SNH have not been fully considered by the developer's Environmental Report. The accumulative and visual dominance of this proposal together with the 21 turbines at Stemster Hill and the Forss turbine development will be most significant for Balmore, Buldo, Forss and Skail. The visual dominance on residential and community amenity is likely to be significant and detrimental. This development would act as a 'stepping stone' visually linking this type of a development across an area currently devoid of windfarms, thus cumulatively extending by a significant degree the perceived dominance of this type of development across Caithness.

In light of the foregoing **it is concluded that the proposed turbine would have an overbearing visual impact and appear incongruous in the landscape.**

On account of the cumulative impacts of the proposal, it is highlighted that, if this turbine is consented and constructed, it may significantly limit the potential design and extent of additional wind turbines and windfarms within the area.

Impacts on the Local Economy

There is potential for such development to have a negative impact on the economy. The Caithness economy is fragile and tourism plays an important role. There is a wider concern that there is potential for this development, in combination with others, to reduce the attractiveness of Dounreay and Caithness as a whole for business and tourism.

Although much weight is given to increased renewable energy targets, a balanced view needs to be taken to avoid the effects in significant detrimental harm to the environment and community. In this case the benefits of the scheme are not seen to outweigh the cost to the environment, individuals or the community.

8.5 Other Considerations – not material

It is not considered that there would be any significant issues arising from the construction of the turbine. Although survey work has been undertaken and submitted with the application in relation to the impact of the development on the habitat, protected species and other species, no mitigation measures have been provided in the supporting statement to indicate how the development would be mitigated to third parties or protected species. It is noted that the developer has considered a phased construction time for the turbine.

This application has been considered on its planning merits and is considered to be unacceptable.

8.6 Matters to be secured by Section 75 Agreement

Not applicable

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. **It is considered that the proposal does not accord with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is unacceptable in terms of applicable material considerations.**

It is recommended that permission be refused.

10. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued

Notification to Scottish Ministers N

Subject to the above, it is recommended the application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy 67 – Renewable Energy Developments – as detailed by the Highland Wide Local Development Plan as it would result in a single, tall and isolated moving structure that will have a significant and unacceptable visual impact to the detriment of individual and community amenity. The site lies within an area that is predominantly flat and as such the proposed turbine site will in this instance be totally alien and out of character with it.
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy 28 – Sustainable Design, Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage, Policy 67 – Renewable Energy Developments – as detailed by the Highland Wide Local Development Plan as it would result in the siting of a single, tall and isolated structure that would in this instance be totally out of scale and character with the surrounding landscape.
3. The proposal is contrary to Policy 61 – Landscape – as detailed by the Highland Wide Local Development Plan as it would result in unacceptable visual impact as it would result in the siting of a single, tall and isolated structure to the detriment of individual and community amenity; both on its own and in combination with adjacent existing proposed developments.
4. The proposal is contrary to Policy 61 – Landscape – as detailed by the Highland Wide Local Development Plan as it would result in a significant cumulative impact to the detriment of the wider landscape character of the area, taking into account the existing windfarm at Forss.

Signature: Dafydd Jones

Designation: Area Planning Manager North

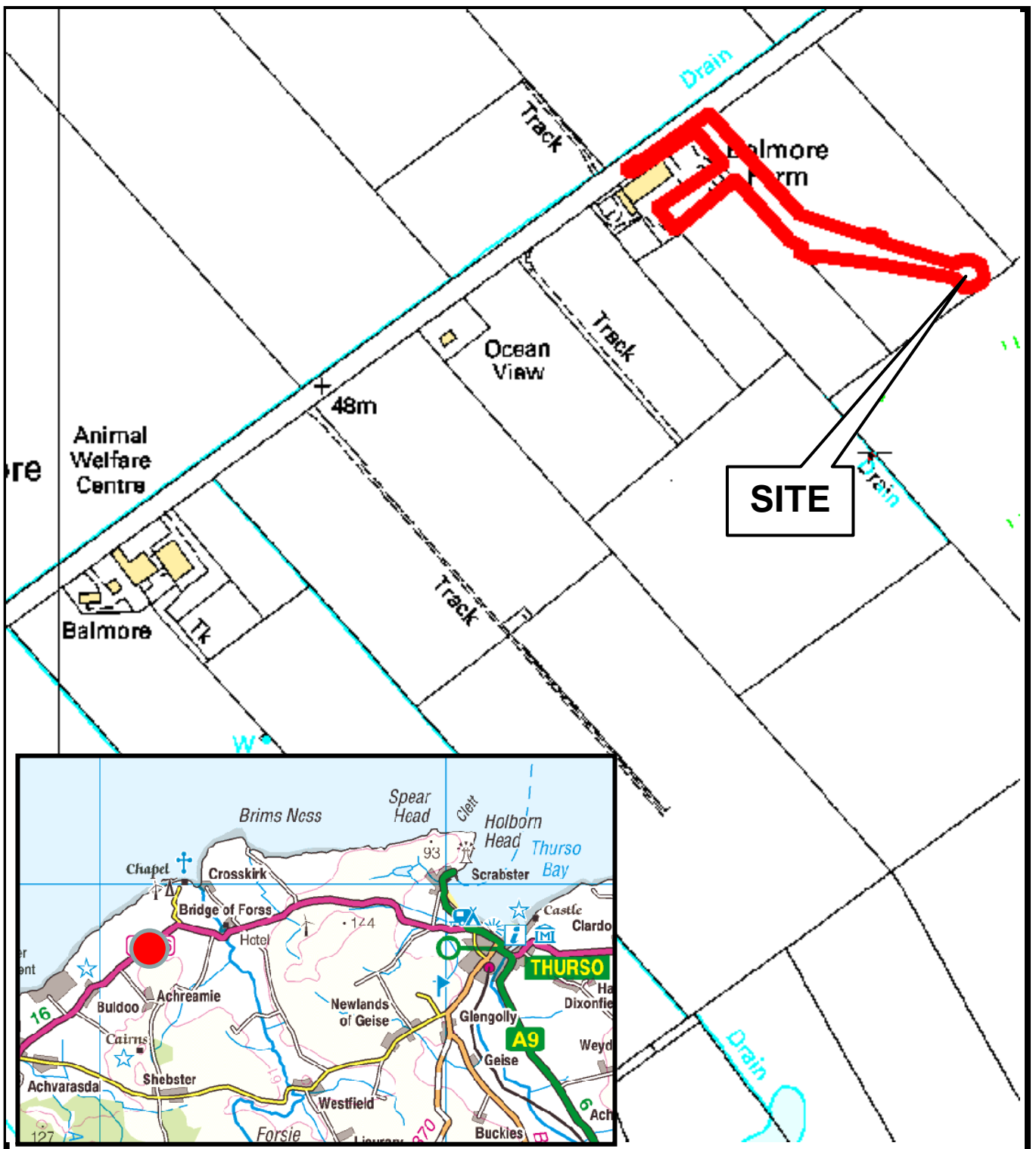
Author: Andrew Parker

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Plan A206_14-A Location Plan A3
Plan 000001 General Plan A4 – Turbine
Plan 416-04066-0001-20-H001 Access Layout A1
Plan A206_01-H - 1 OF 2 Site Layout Plan A3
Plan A206_10-A Site Layout Plan A3 - Sub Station
Plan A206_11-A Elevation Plan A3 - Sub Station
Plan A206_12-A Site Layout Plan A3 - OHL
Plan A206_12-A Rev 01 General Plan A2
Plan A206_13-A Location Plan A3
Plan G58-1 Elevations A3 - Turbine

Appendix – Letters of Representation

Name	Address	Date Received	For/Against
Mr William Brown	Dunvegan Achscrabster Achscrabster Road, Thurso, Highland, KW14 7QN	14.03.2013	Against
Mr David Craig	Sandford House, Achvarasdal, Reay, Thurso, KW14 7RR	14.03.2013	Against



The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

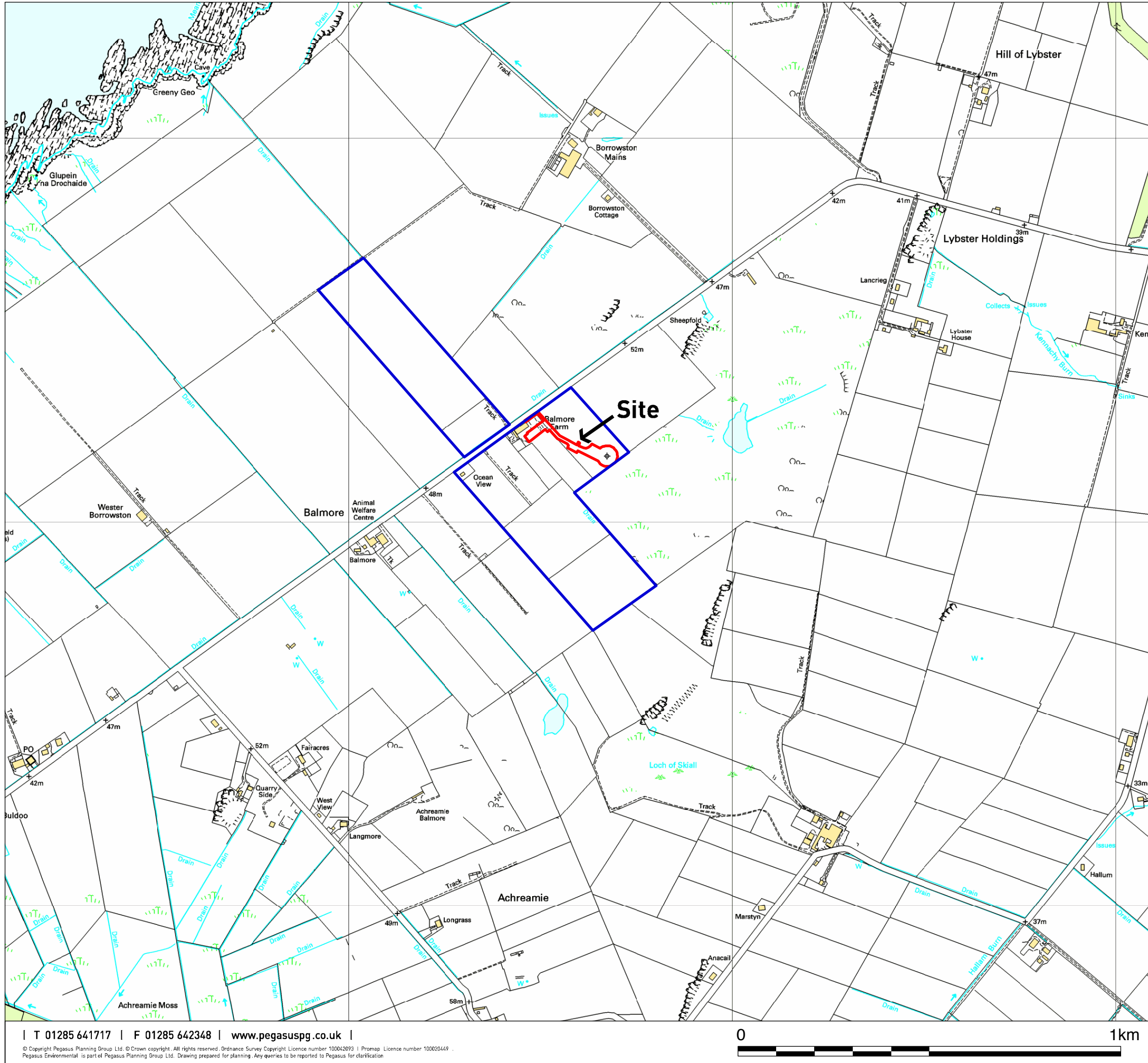
Planning & Development Service

Plan 1
12/04399/FUL

Erection of wind turbine at
Land to South East of Balmore Farm, Dounreay

13 August 2013





KEY

- Application Site Boundary (0.65ha)
- Land in Same Ownership
- Location of Proposed Turbine

Grid Co-ordinates
E301674, N968172

Baltimore Wind Turbine

Location and Land Ownership Plan

Client : J. Bannerman

Drawn by : JS

Checked by : SC

Date : 16.11.2012


A.0206_14-A

1 : 10,000 @ A3





KEY

 Location of Proposed Turbine

Grid Co-ordinates
E301674, N968172

Bannerman Wind Turbine

Site Context Plan

Client : J. Bannerman

Drawn by : AD

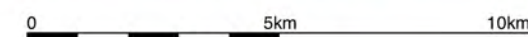
Checked by : SC

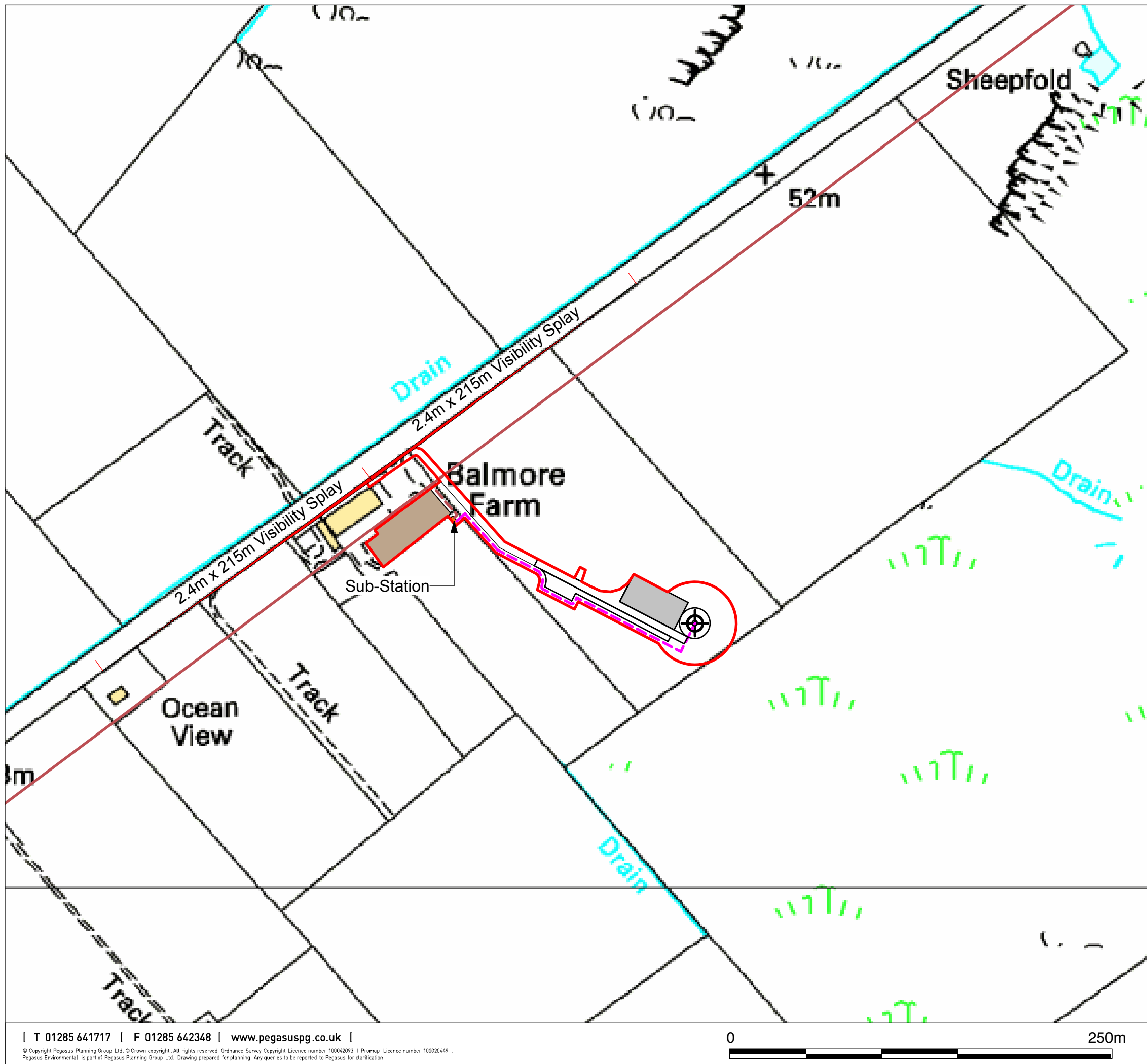
Date : 18.10.2012

A.0206_13-A

1 : 150,000 @ A3

Pegasus
Environmental





KEY

- Application Site Boundary - 5m wide track with 8m turning points (0.65ha)
- + Location of Proposed Turbine
- Temporary Construction Compound
- Substation - 6.2m x 2.6m
- Crane pads - main pad 40m x 20m
- Overhead Power Lines
- Cable Trench

Grid Co-ordinates
E301674, N968172

Balmore Wind Turbine

Site Layout Plan

Client : J. Bannerman

Drawn by : JS

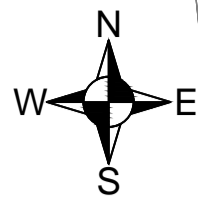
Checked by : SC

Date : 28.08.2012

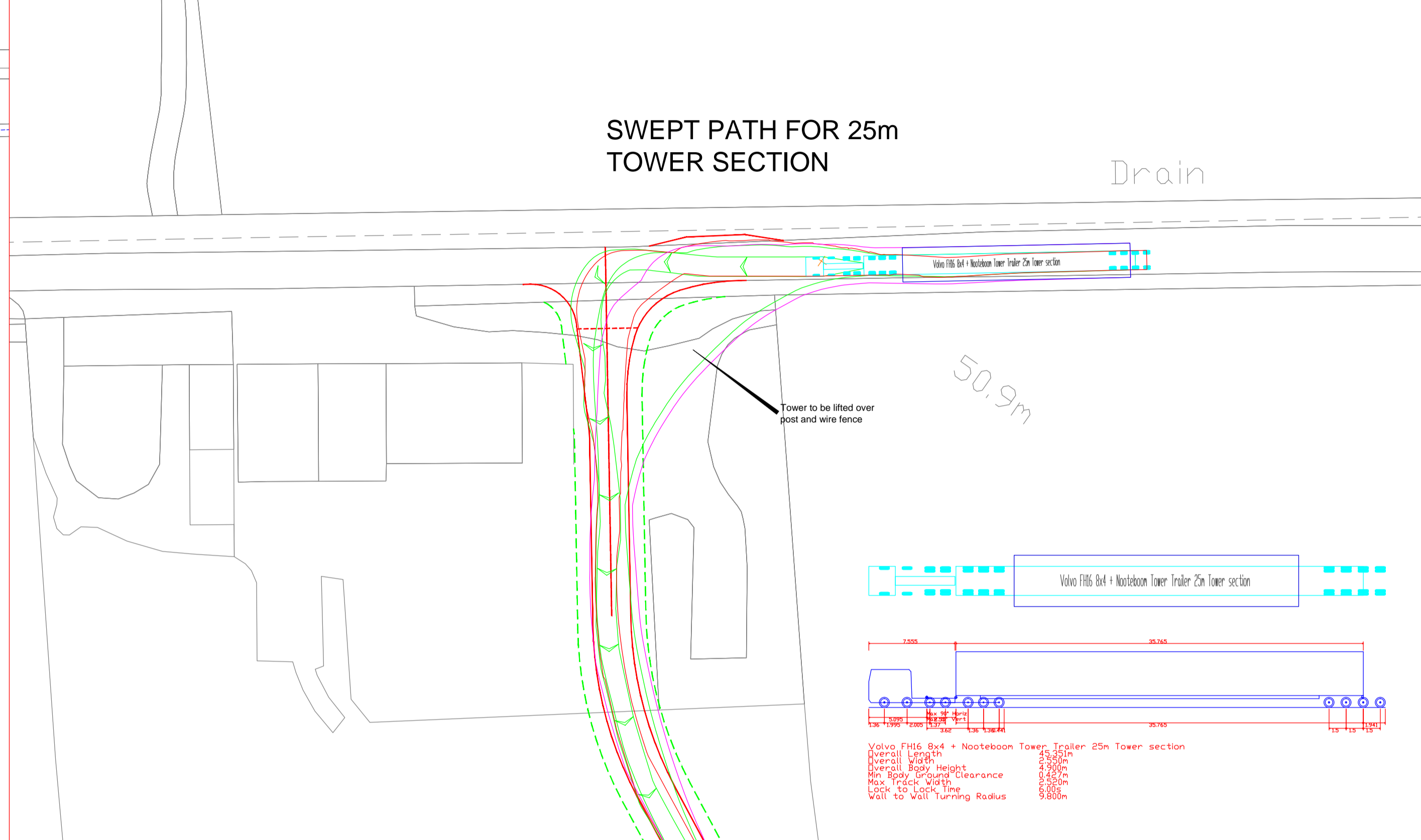
A.0206_01-H (1 of 2)

1 : 2500 @ A3

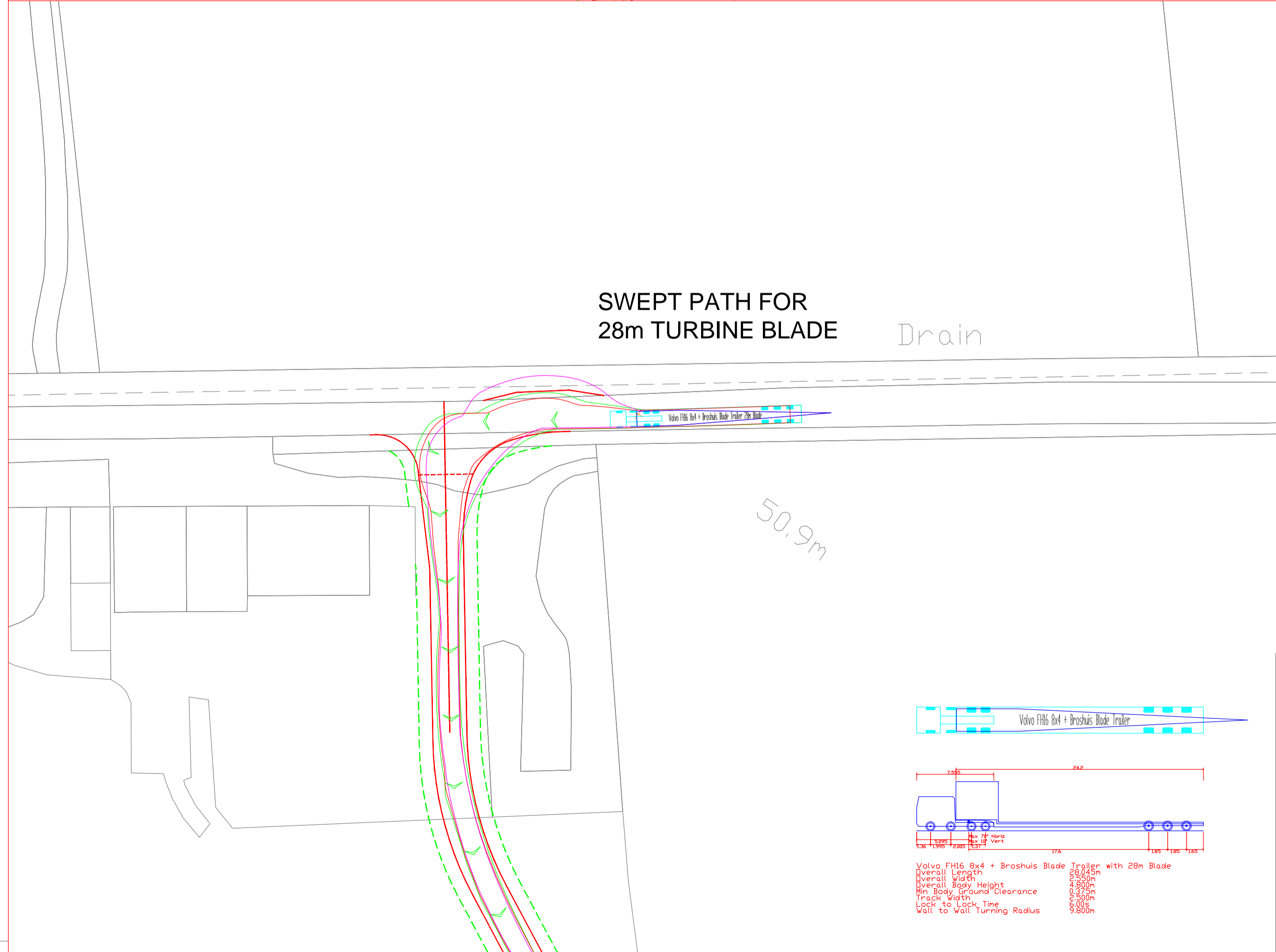




SWEPT PATH FOR 25m TOWER SECTION



SWEPT PATH FOR 28m TURBINE BLADE



416-04066-0001-20-H001-R1.dwg

TREENWOOD HOUSE
 ROWDEN LANE
 BRADFORD-ON-AVON
 WILTS, BA15 2AU
 T: 01225 309401
 F: 01225 309401
 www.slrconsulting.com

SLR

BALMORE FARM

THURSO WIND TURBINE

PROPOSED ACCESS JUNCTION

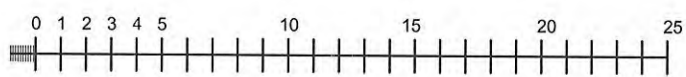
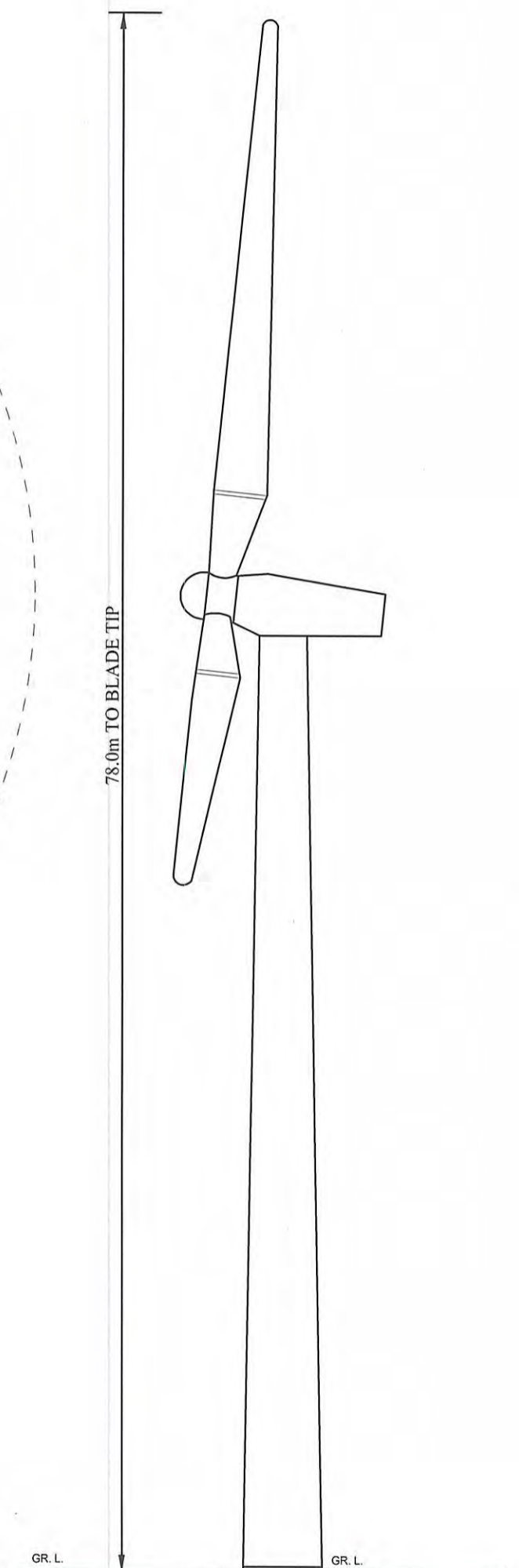
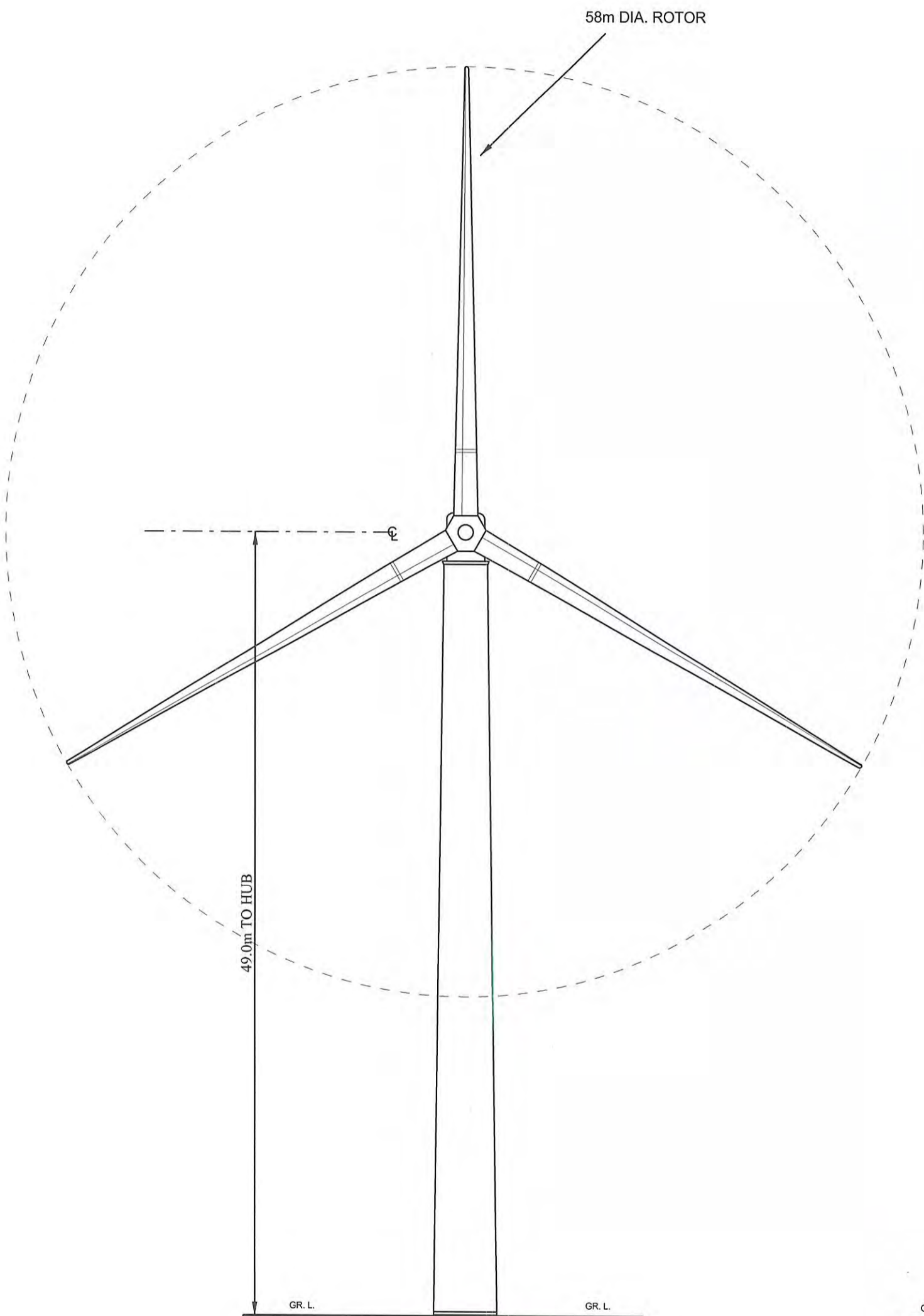
416-04066-0001-20-H001

Scale: 1:500 Date: JUNE 2012

Gamesa G58

Drawing No. G58-1

Scale 1:300

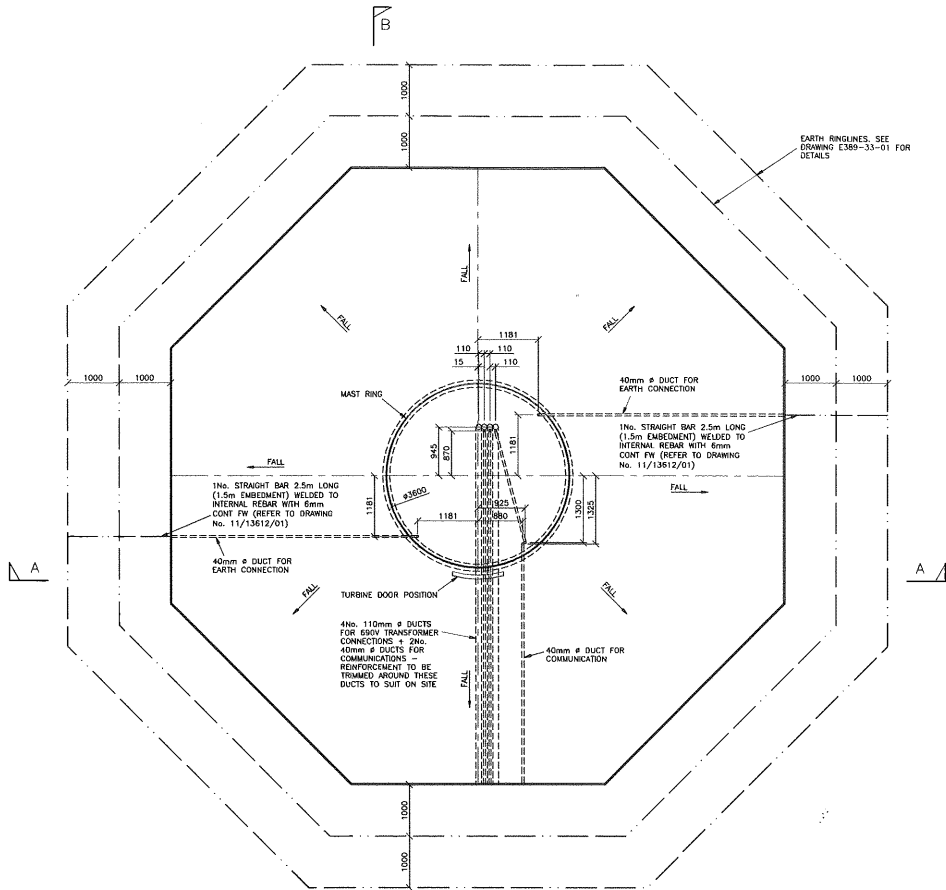


Scale of metres

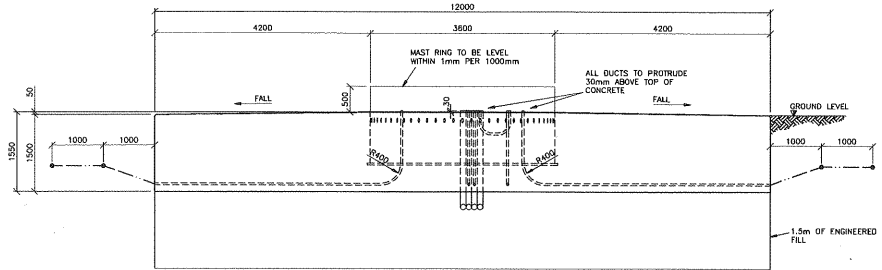
Mr. Bannerman - Balmore Turbine

Notes

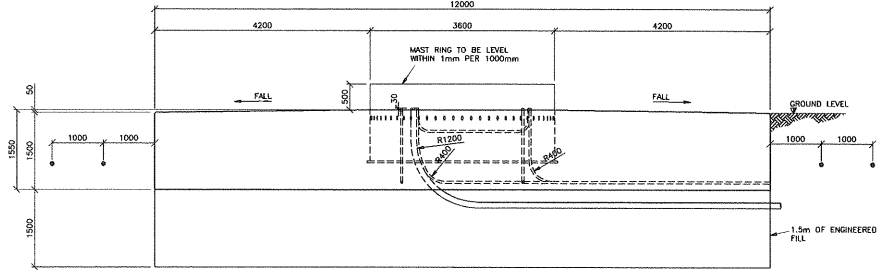
1. IF IN DOUBT - ASK !!! DO NOT SCALE
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS DRAWINGS.
3. ALL WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT BRITISH STANDARDS, CODES OF PRACTICE AND BUILDING PRACTICE.
4. ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED PRIOR TO STARTING THE WORKS ON SITE. ANY DISCREPANCIES TO BE REPORTED TO THE ENGINEER IMMEDIATELY.
5. CONTRACTOR TO ASCERTAIN THE LOCATION OF SERVICES ON SITE PRIOR TO STARTING THE WORK.
6. ALL DIMENSIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION ARE TO BE OBTAINED FROM SITE MEASUREMENTS OR ARCHITECTS SETTING OUT DRAWINGS PRIOR TO MANUFACTURE/BUILDING.
7. FOR CONCRETE SPECIFICATION AND REINFORCEMENT DETAILS SEE DRAWING No. 11/13612/02



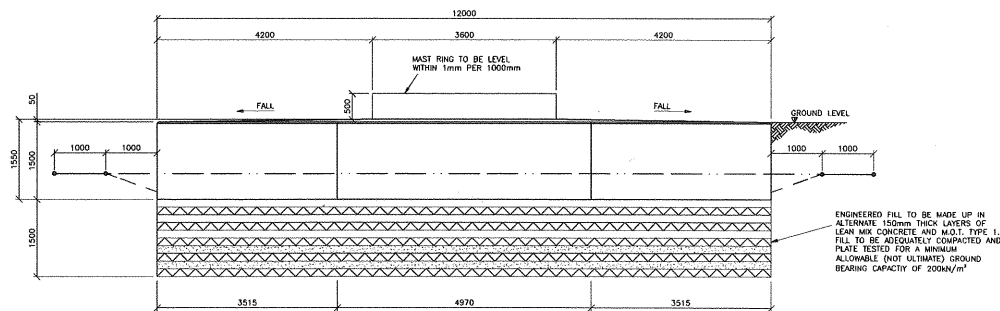
SETTING OUT PLAN



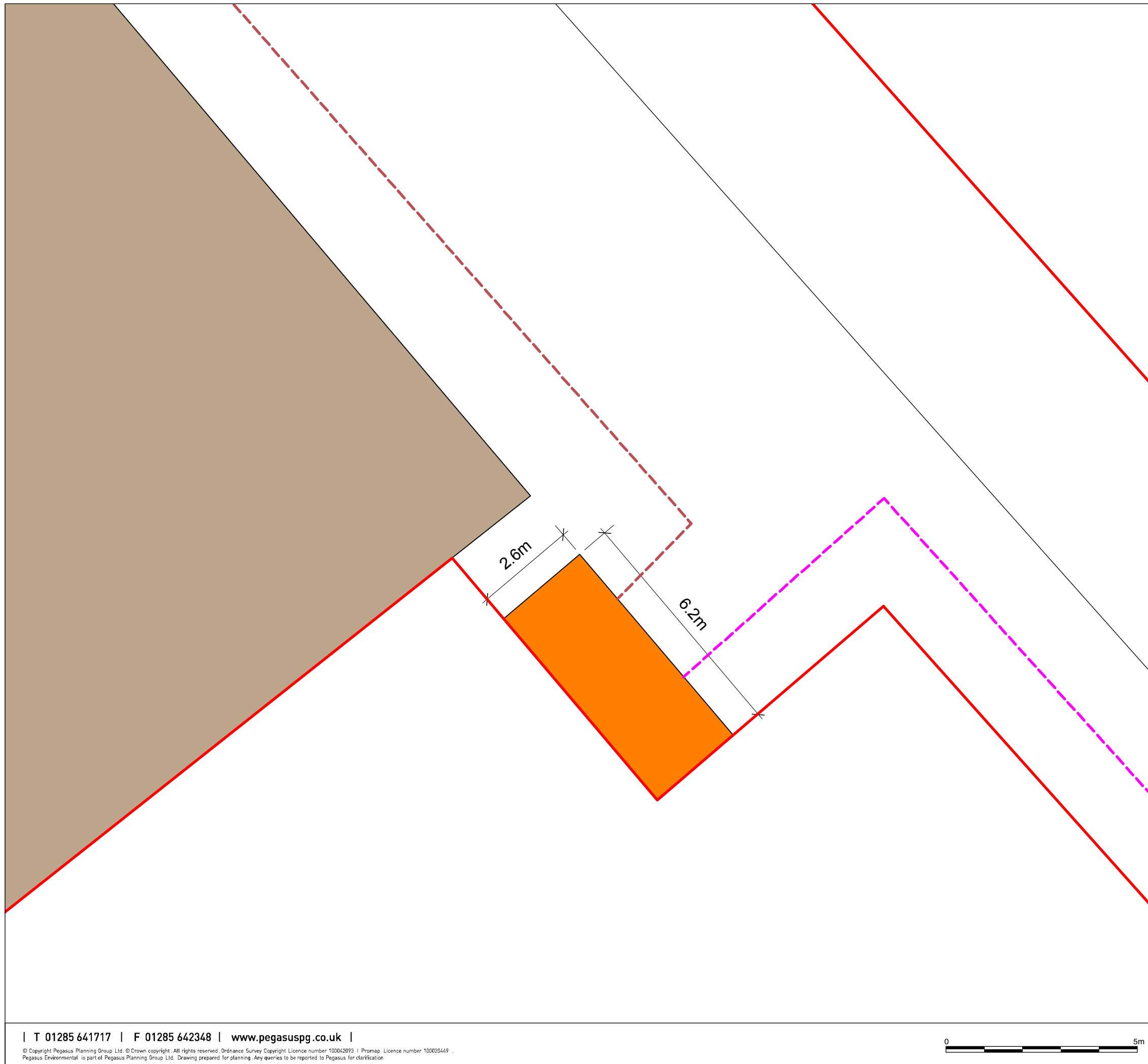
SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B



TYPICAL ELEVATION



KEY

- Application Site Boundary (0.65ha)
- Temporary Construction Compound
- Substation - 6.2m x 2.6m
- Grid Connection
- Cable Trench

Grid Co-ordinates
E301674, N968172

Baltimore Wind Turbine

Sub-Station Layout Plan

Client : J. Bannerman

Drawn by : JS

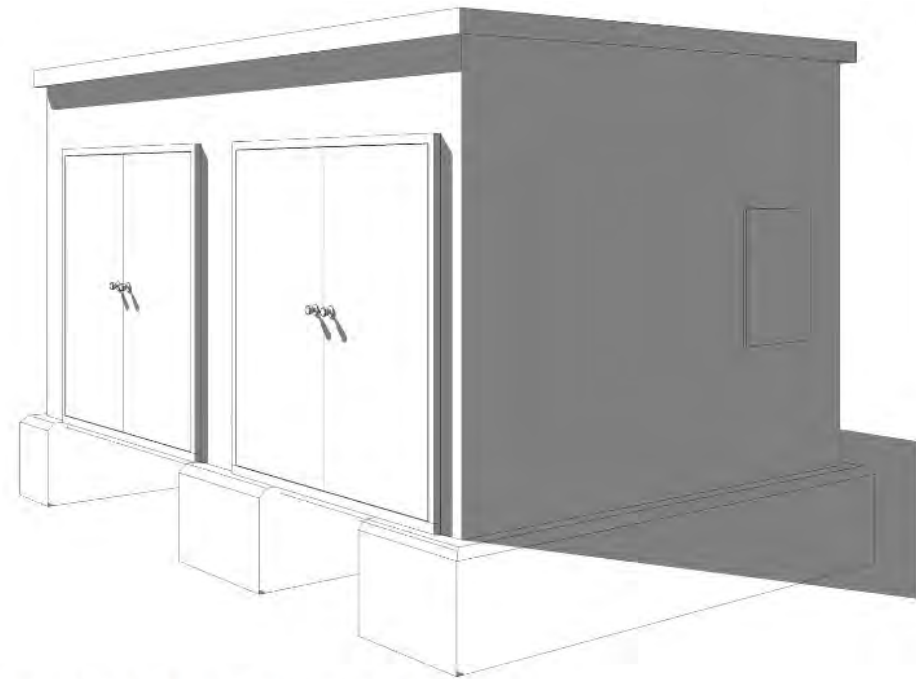
Checked by : SC

Date : 28.08.2012

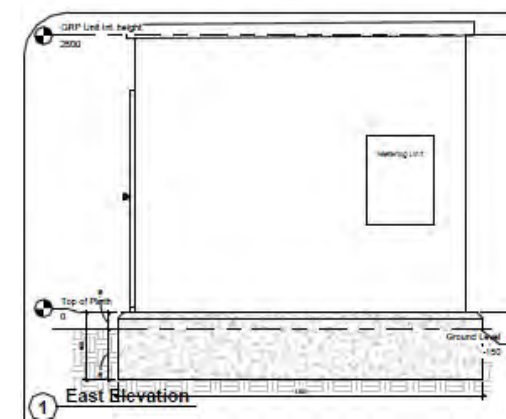
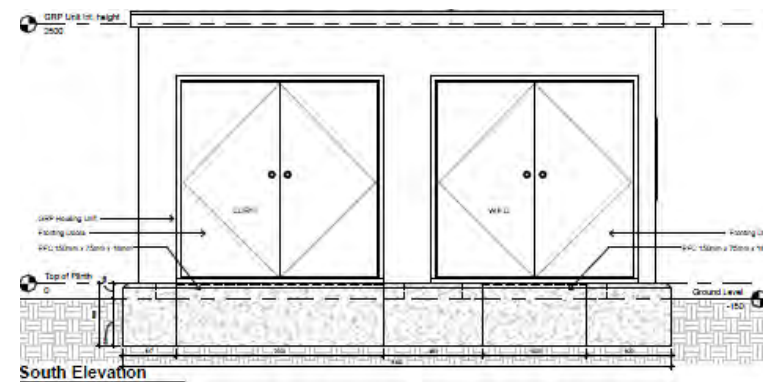
A.0206_10-A

1 : 100 @ A3





Foundation Plinth with GRP Unit 3D



KEY

Baltimore Wind Turbine

Sub-Station Elevations

Client : J. Bannerman

Drawn by : JS

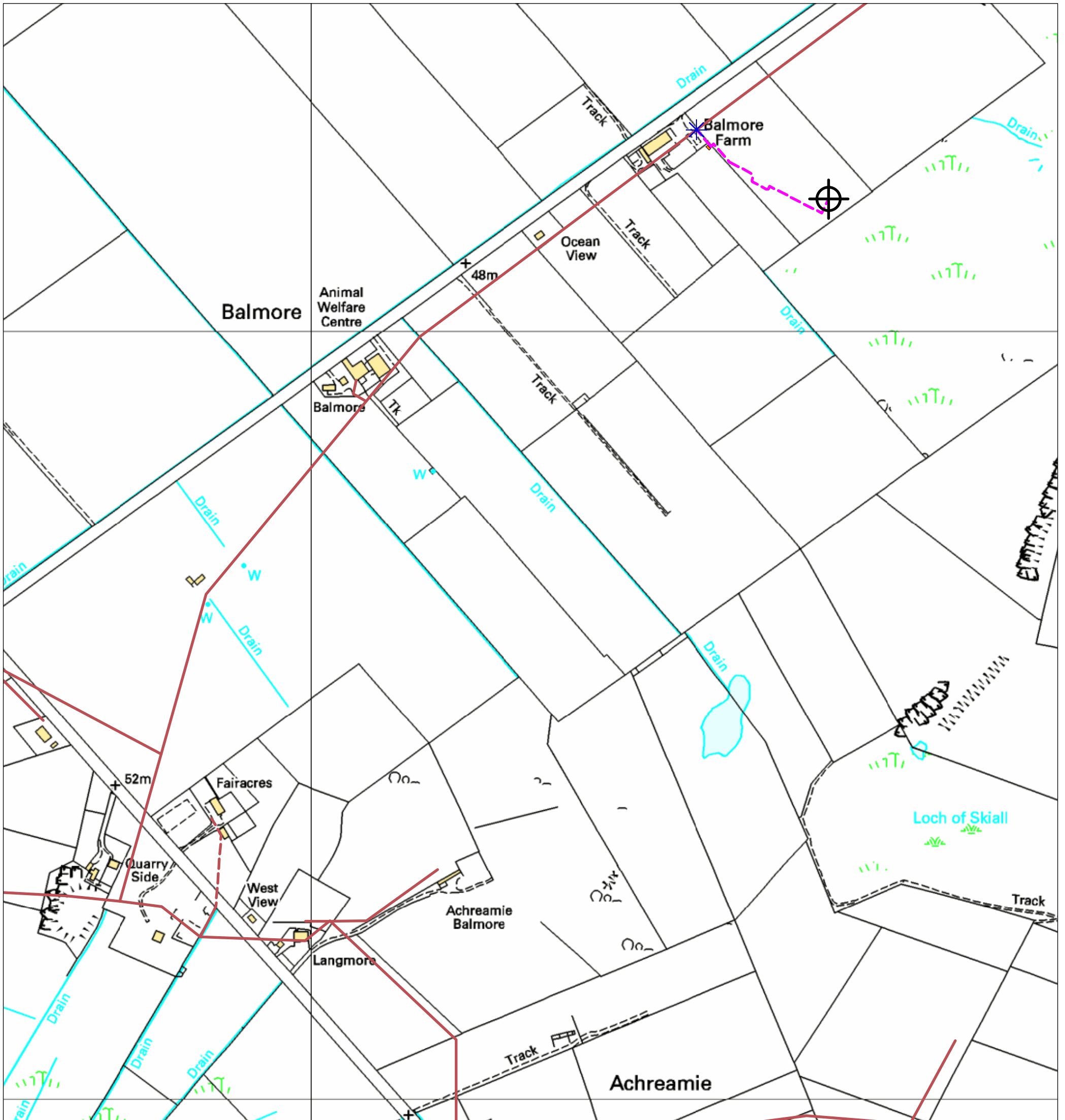
Checked by : SC

Date : 28.08.2012





A.0206_11-A

NTS @ A3





KEY

-  Turbine Location
Turbine Co-ordinates
301674, 968172
-  Proposed Substation Building
-  Grid Connection to Turbine
-  Overhead Power Line

Balmore Wind Turbine

Grid Connection Plan

Client : J. Bannerman

Drawn by : JS

Checked by : SC

Date : 26.09.12

A.0206_12-A

1 : 5000 @ A3

Pegasus
Environmental

