

**Committee Date** 23-Mar-2011  
**Application Type** Full  
**Application Ref** 10/529  
**Applicant** Mr David Smith  
**Agent**  
**Proposal** Installation of a one 24.8m high Gaia 11kW wind turbine, together with concrete foundation and associated underground cabling on land behind Victoria Hall  
**Site Location** Victoria Hall, Roch, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire

### Summary

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of a single 11kw wind turbine on land behind the Victoria Hall at Roch. The overall height would be 24.8m above ground level. The proposal is a community project and would help to meet the energy needs of the Hall. The proposal would not have any unacceptable impact upon the character or amenity of the natural, historic or built environment and as such is considered to meet the relevant local and national policy requirements for this type of development. A favourable recommendation is therefore given in this instance.

The application has been brought before the Development Management Committee at the discretion of the Head of Development Management as it raised issues considered to be of significant public interest and of a nature that requires it to be determined by members.

The applicant has also applied for grant funding through the Sustainable Development Fund which is also administered by this Authority.

### Consultee Response

**Nolton & Roch Community Council:** No objection  
**Countryside Council for Wales:** No objection  
**Civil Aviation Authority:** No objection  
**Head of Public Health & Environment:** No objection  
**NERL Safeguarding Office:** No objection - No objection.  
**Dyfed Powys Police:** No objection - No objection.  
**Transportation & Environment:** Conditional Consent  
**MOD:** Conditional Consent  
**Environment Agency Wales:** Standard Advice  
**PCC - Planning:** No Response Received

### **Public Response**

A bundle containing 25 letters of support has been received from the head teacher of Roch Community Primary School. These letters highlight the sustainability, community and educational benefits of the proposal.

1 letter of objection has been received from a regular visitor to the area. The letter is quite detailed and a full copy is held on the planning file, however, her concerns may be summarised as follows:-

- The proposal would have an adverse affect upon the special landscape character of the National Park and the setting of Roch Castle.
- The scale of the turbine is too large to meet policy, insufficient supporting information has been provided to show the visual impact of the turbine and any effects on bio-diversity.
- It would set a precedent for other schemes and the cumulative impact of this would cause irreversible harm to the National Park.
- It is also suggested that procedurally the application should have been advertised as a departure, as the proposal affects the setting of a listed building (Roch Castle), and in the objector's view the proposal does not meet local policy and would have an impact on the setting of the Castle.

### **Policies**

Local Development Plan

LDP Policy 01 - National Park purposes and duty

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 16 - Open Space and Green Wedge

LDP Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage

LDP Policy 33 - Renewable Energy

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic

SPG03 - Sustainable Design

SPG06 - Landscape Character Assessment Study, June 2009

National Policy

PPW4 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability

PPW4 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast

PPW4 Chapter 06 - Conserving the Historic Environment

PPW4 Chapter 08 - Transport

PPW4 Chapter 12 - Infrastructure and Services

PPW4 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution

TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning

TAN 08 - Renewable Energy

TAN 11 - Noise

TAN 12 - Design

TAN 16 - Sport, Recreation and Open Space

TAN 18 - Transport

### **Officer's Appraisal**

#### **Background & Description**

Roch is located some 2km inland of the coast in the western area of the National Park where the ground generally rises up from the beach in the direction of the village. In landscape terms the site lies in a gentle depression situated between higher ground to the north and south. It physically lies just beyond the northern limit of the village, behind the village hall and adjacent to a formal play area. Agricultural fields extend to the east, north and generally to the west beyond a minor public road. The A487 main road, extending from Haverfordwest to St.Davids, follows a curved route further to the west again, whilst the built up area of the village lies to the south. This built up area comprises Roch Primary School and beyond that a number of other dwellings. There are also three dwellings, a vacant building plot and a public house on the opposite side of the minor road to the south west of the site. A Baptist chapel and manse lie further away to the north west on the opposite side of the minor road and Roch Castle is situated some distance to the south west on higher ground.

Victoria Hall is an active community building and the applicant has been exploring the feasibility of using renewable energy technology to meet its energy requirements for some time. For example, planning permission was granted in 2009 for the erection of a 10m high meteorological mast at this site to help assess wind conditions prior to the possible submission of an application for a wind turbine. Since that time your officers have also been involved in pre-application discussions in relation to a single wind turbine at this location.

#### **Current proposal**

This proposal involves the erection of a single 11kw wind turbine on land some 70m behind the Victoria Hall. The turbine would have a tower height of 18.3m and a rotor diameter of 13m. The chosen type would be the Gaia 133 which is a 2 bladed design giving an overall height of 24.8m above ground level. It would use a galvanised steel tower, instead of a lattice tower, and the blades would be painted off-white with low reflectivity paint. The scheme also involves the creation of a 5m by 5m foundation pad below ground level and the provision of underground cabling from the wind turbine to the Hall.

The applicant is the Victoria Hall Association which is a registered charity responsible for the management and maintenance of the Hall. The application

is accompanied by a package of supporting information covering such matters as the background to the project, the renewable energy options that have been considered, technical details of the wind turbine and information about the impact of the proposal upon the character and amenity of the area. These details, which include a design and access statement and an environmental appraisal of the scheme are held on the planning file should members wish to inspect them. The visual and technical assessment of the scheme as carried out by the applicant is considered to be appropriate for a proposal of this scale, nature and location and as such it is not considered necessary to require a formal environmental impact assessment for this proposal.

Whilst not directly relevant to your consideration of this application the development, if approved, would be partly funded through the National Park's Sustainable Development Fund via the Newport Eco Centre.

### **Key Issues**

The key issues are considered to be the impact of the proposal upon the character and amenity of the area.

National guidance in relation to renewable energy is set out in PPW4 and TAN 8 and advises that renewable energy projects should generally be supported so long as designated areas such as National Parks are not compromised. This approach is also reflected in LDP policy 33. National guidance, together with the main policies of the LDP (1, 8 and 15) seeks to balance this support with the need to conserve and enhance the special character and natural beauty of the area.

Policy 33 states, amongst other things, that small scale proposals will be considered favourably subject to there being no over-riding environmental and amenity considerations. Having regard to the thresholds set out in the Authority's supplementary planning guidance (SPG) on Renewable Energy Assessment, the size and output of the proposed wind turbine would meet the definition of a small scale wind project with the principle of development also being encouraged at this location. Whilst this approach still requires the details of any scheme to be carefully considered the basic starting point is therefore supportive.

The turbine would inevitably be seen from various viewpoints in the locality as well as from more distant views. However, the siting of the turbine behind the Hall would help to reduce its visual impact from nearby roads, especially the main A road, where intervening hedgerows would further help to reduce its impact. Whilst it would be visible in the landscape from more distant views, such as the minor coast road to the west, it would not be overly dominant or intrusive due to its location below the main skyline and the separation distance (2km) involved. The design of any turbine is hard to disguise, however the use of a column rather than a lattice tower is considered to offer a smoother, cleaner design solution consistent with policy 29. However, the proposed colour scheme of natural metal for the column and off-white for the blades could be improved to help further reduce the visual impact of the

turbine and a suitable shade of matt grey is considered more appropriate. For these reasons the proposal is considered to meet the policy requirements of the LDP in relation to National Park purposes (policy 1), special qualities (policy 8) and conservation (policy 15). The SPG on Renewable Energy Assessment also heavily underpins the policy support for the proposal in this instance as it also carefully considers the landscape issues in relation to the application site.

The objector's concern about the impact of the turbine upon the setting of Roch Castle is noted. This is a grade I listed building of significant architectural and historical value and it is presently undergoing restoration. The key view of the Castle is from the main road to the south although it is also visible from other directions both near and far. The main view from the south would not be affected and the Castle would continue to hold the skyline from the remaining public vantage points. Having regard to the siting of the turbine, some 870m away from the Castle, at a much lower level, it is not considered that it would visually compete with or undermine the existing setting of this historic building. The procedural arrangements that have been carried out in relation to the advertising of the application are also considered to be appropriate in this case.

With regard to precedent and the possibility of other applications being made for similar schemes it is an established planning principle that each proposal is considered on its merits. It does not necessarily follow that all such proposals would be acceptable, either individually or cumulatively, if they would have a significant adverse effect upon the character and landscape appearance of the area.

Turning to the impact of the proposal upon the amenity of other buildings in the locality (policy 30) the applicant has submitted sufficient information to show that the turbine would be sited a sufficient distance away from these buildings so as not to be over-bearing or unacceptable by reason of noise or shadow flicker. This conclusion is reinforced by the favourable consultation response of the Public Protection Division of Pembrokeshire County Council.

The siting of the turbine on land forming part of the open space designation at Roch (policy 16) is not considered to be detrimental as adequate provision of open space would remain for this community. Furthermore criterion f) of policy 7 supports development that involves the enhancement of community facilities. In this context the new turbine would be linked to the upgrading of the existing Victoria Hall and would offer an enhancement in terms of its renewable energy usage.

Having regard to the responses of other consultees as indicated above, the proposal would be acceptable in relation to nature conservation (policy 11), traffic impact (policy 53), drainage (policy 32) and also aircraft movements. However, a number of planning conditions would be necessary to control the development and minimise its impact in the landscape and these are set out at the end of this report.

**Conclusion**

Having carefully considered the application on its planning merits it is considered the scheme would offer sustainability benefits through the development of renewable technology without harming the natural, historic or built environment at this particular location within the National Park. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the policy requirements for this type of development and a favourable recommendation is given in this instance.

**Recommendation**

That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Development to commence within 5 years
2. Development in accordance with submitted plans
3. Colour of the wind turbine and mast to be agreed before the commencement of development
4. Adequate areas for parking, turning, loading and unloading of vehicles to be provided.
5. Details of construction date (start and finish), height of construction equipment and the latitude / longitude of the permitted turbine shall be given to the local planning authority and the Ministry of Defence before the commencement of development.
6. Details of sustainable surface water drainage system to be provided before development commences
7. The wind turbine and all associated apparatus to be removed within 12 months of ceasing to be used for the generation of electricity.



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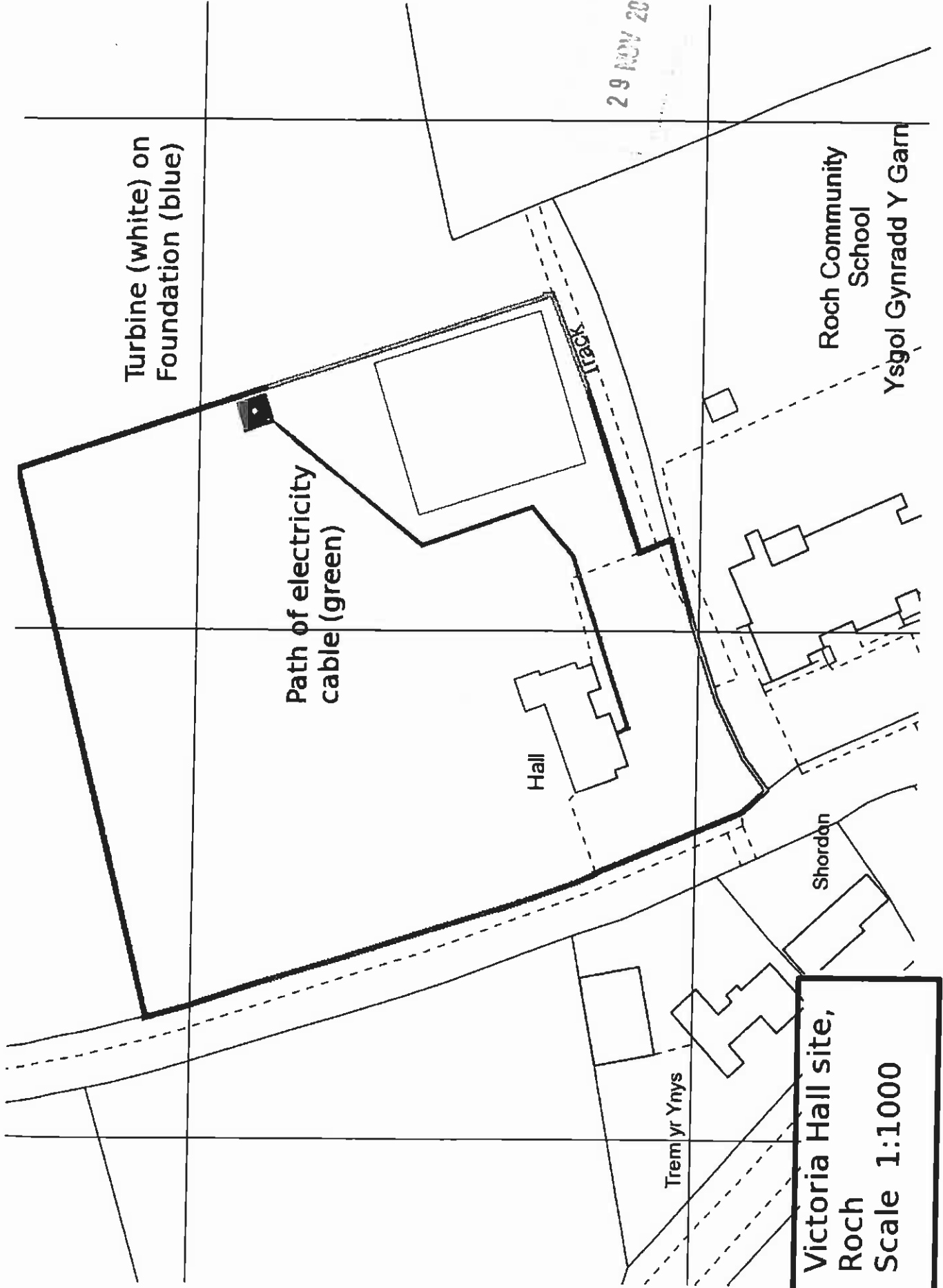
Turbine (white) on  
Foundation (blue)

Path of electricity  
cable (green)

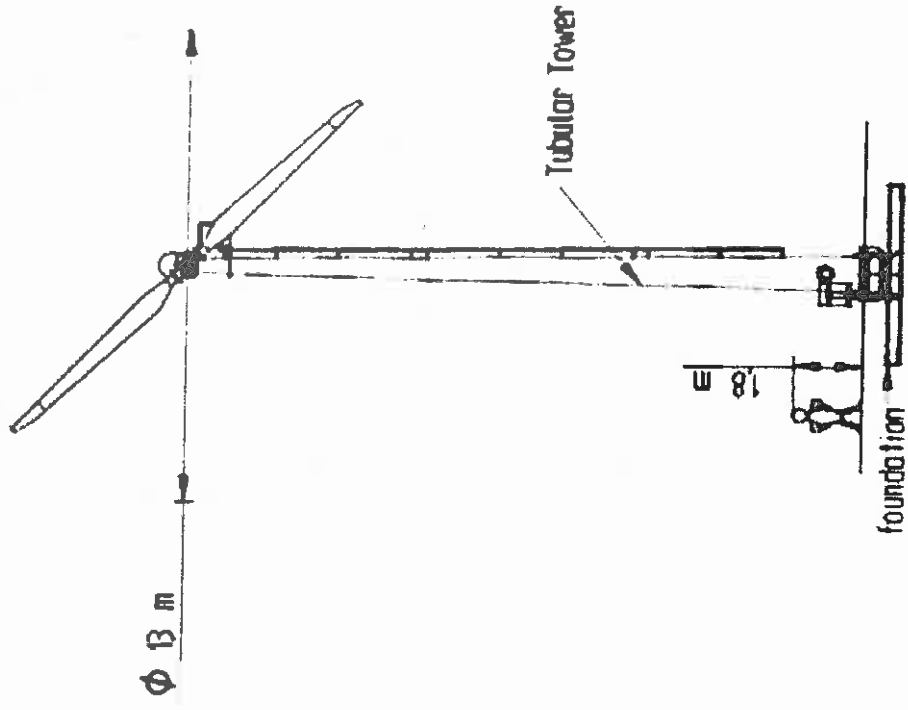
Hall

Roch Community  
School  
Ysgol Gynradd Y Garn

Victoria Hall site,  
Roch  
Scale 1:1000



# Gaia 133 11kW wind turbine



Scale 1:200

0 20m