

Application Ref: NP/11/527

Application Type	Full
Grid Ref:	SM80220780
Applicant	Mr P Smithies
Agent	
Proposal	Installation of 15Kw wind turbine and associated foundation pad & underground cable
Site Location	Philbeach Farm, Dale, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA62 3QU
Case Officer	Andrew Richards

Summary

The application is before members as the views of your officers differs from the Community Council.

Philbeach Farm is sited just off the classified road leading between Marloes and Dale. It is a traditional farmstead with the farm house being listed. The farm has recently been diversified into a mix of residential, holiday units and farming enterprise.

This application seeks approval for a single 15Kw wind turbine which has a three bladed design and will be sited within a field some 180 metres south west of the existing farm complex. The turbine will have an overall height of around 21 metres to the tip of the blade and be connected to the adjacent farm complex via an underground cable laid across the agricultural field and through the farm yard.

The proposed turbine would be highly visible in many views within the Marloes Peninsula, and from PROW and the coast path across the Gann estuary, and the waterway. This turbine application, in a prominent location and of a scale which comprises skyline development in many views, would significantly detract from the special qualities of the National Park at the Marloes Peninsula. It would have an adverse visual impact, due to its visual prominence and detrimental impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

There are no opportunities to mitigate the impact from views within the area. The turbine is sited away from farm buildings and they do not provide a context for it from key views. From Musselwick area, the site would have a strong relationship with the coast and 'Gann Estuary' and when viewed from the network of public rights of way within this area it would compromise the landscape backdrop to the estuary.

This proposal would be situated within a local landscape which is largely open and exposed, where there is little vertical context. There is a sense of rural tranquility with undeveloped skylines. The development would be detrimental to the special qualities of this part of the National Park. As such, it would be harmful to public enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

Consultee Response

Marloes & St Brides Community Council: Supporting
Dale Community Council: Reply - No comment
St Ishmaels Community Council: No objection
PCC - Transportation & Environment: No objection
Commercial Pollution Section- PCC: Conditional Consent
MOD: No objection
NATS: No objection
Countryside Council for Wales: No objection

Public Response

Several letters from members of the public have been received supporting the proposal, the letters raise points relating to:-

- Wind as an alternative form of energy must be supported for dwellings, farms and businesses within the National Park to assist in sustaining its economy.
- As this is a single turbine for a dwelling it has minimal impact on the local environment and landscape and is not obtrusive.
- The proposal is set down in a valley away from the coastal edge and away from position e.g. on the skyline.
- The energy created by the wind turbine is crucial for the sustainability of the existing farm house and will be used to heat the building.
- The siting of the wind turbine is sympathetic and utilises local topography, hedges and buildings to conceal it.
- The height at 15 metres to the hub is not excessive and is normal for a domestic situation and the proposal will not impact on amenity.
- The proposal will blend in with the adjacent telegraph poles and airfield buildings, and be no more detrimental to the landscape than these structures.

Policies considered

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 29 - Sustainable Design
LDP Policy 30 - Amenity
LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage
LDP Policy 33 - Renewable Energy

LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic
PPW4 Chapter 04 - Planning for Sustainability
PPW4 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast
PPW4 Chapter 08 - Transport
PPW4 Chapter 12 - Infrastructure and Services
PPW4 Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution
SPG03 - Sustainable Design
SPG06 - Landscape Character Assessment Study, June 2009
SPG08 - Validation of Planning Applications
SPG14 - Renewable Energy
TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning
TAN 06 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
TAN 08 - Renewable Energy
TAN 11 - Noise
TAN 12 - Design
TAN 15 - Development and Flood Risk
TAN 18 - Transport

Officer's Appraisal

Background/History

The farm is located within the Marloes peninsula which is characterised by attractive open rolling farmland contrasting with more sheltered wooded valleys. The applicant would like the existing farming enterprise to become more sustainable and self sufficient in respect of electricity generation with the installation of a wind turbine.

Previous applications are: - agricultural workers dwelling under NP/203/78; new steel frame agricultural building under NP/99/096; the enlargement of an existing utility room and new garage under NP/02/075; the conversion of an existing traditional outbuilding into a holiday unit and the redevelopment of the existing farm house under NP/08/159.

The applicant had pre-application discussions with officers about two turbines and a single proposed wind turbine at locations within the same field.

Constraints

Biodiversity Issue
Potential for Surface Water Flooding

Current Proposal

The current application seeks approval for a single 15Kw wind turbine which has a three bladed design and will be sited within a field some 180 metres south west of the existing farm complex. The turbine will be mounted on a concrete base measuring 5.5 metres square and galvanised steel mast measuring some 15 metres. The blade diameter is 5.55 metres which gives the turbine an overall height of around 21 metres to the tip of the blade. The turbine will be connected to the adjacent farm complex via an underground cable laid across the agricultural field and through the farm yard.

The application is accompanied by a package of supporting information covering such matters as the background to the project, the technical details of the wind turbine and information about the impact of the proposal upon the character and amenity of the area.

Key Issues

The application raises the following planning matters:-

- Policy
- Siting and Sustainable Design
- Amenity
- Access and Parking
- Landscape
- Biodiversity
- Land Drainage

Policy:

Proposals such as these fall to be considered within the context of national and local planning policy, including relevant supplementary planning guidance.

National guidance in relation to renewable energy is set out in PPW4 (paras. 12.8.9 -12.8.10) and TAN 8, Annex D (para. 8.4) 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 1 sets out National Park Purposes and Duty.

Policy 8 seeks to protect and enhance the special qualities of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with priorities to ensure:

- the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is not lost and is wherever possible enhanced.
- the pattern and diversity of the landscape is protected and enhanced.

An assessment has been made of the visual impact of the proposed turbine, in accordance with Policy 15 'Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park', which identifies receptors from which impact should be assessed. These are as follows:

- public access points;
- the Coast Path (a National Trail);
- Public Rights Of Way (as well as the public highway);
- views on entering and leaving settlements;
- views on entering and leaving the National Park itself;
- the offshore islands;
- waterborne craft on the Daugleddau and coastal waters;
- important vantage points within settlements.

In accordance with the guidance at para.4.77, particular attention should be given to medium and distant views, as well as impacts on immediate environs and streetscape and special emphasis on the effects on the settings of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas.

A 'visual shed' has been generated which assessed the likely points of visibility of the turbine, and this has been checked on site from viewpoints at Marloes and further afield to confirm the visual influence of the proposal. A total of 26 potential viewpoints were assessed. The islands of Skokholm and Skomer have not been visited as part of this assessment, however the visual shed shows that there will be some visibility from the central and higher parts of Skomer and the Neck, but that this is likely to be limited to upper parts of the turbine and be from about 6.5kms distance. The visual impact from the islands, although not confirmed on site is likely to be acceptable.

Policy 33 states that, amongst other things, 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 on Renewable Energy, the size and output of the proposed wind turbine would meet the definition of a small scale wind project. As the development site falls within an area of moderate to high landscape sensitivity for this size of turbine, careful consideration of the impact from this type of development on the landscape character and setting is required.

Officers have now considered the above elements and consider that the proposal will be contrary to Policy 8 'Special Qualities, Policy 15 'Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park' and Policy 33 'Renewable Energy' since there are considered to be over-riding environmental considerations.

The proposal has also been assessed in relation to the Landscape Character Assessment and Renewable Energy SPG. These supplementary planning guidance documents are derived from the CCW Land map information system which provides a consistent all Wales approach to landscape assessment as recognised in Planning Policy Wales Edition 4 (5.3.13). As such, officers

consider the proposal raises several conflicts with the sensitivity of the landscape, and does not comply with the requirements of the Renewable Energy SPG.

Siting and Sustainable Design:

Officers have made several visits to the surrounding area to consider the proposed siting and it is considered that the turbine would inevitably be seen from various viewpoints in the locality as well as from more distant views. In this instance, officers consider that the proposal will have an adverse impact on the landscape and its setting. Several other locations within the same field have also been considered at pre-application stage and officers raised similar concerns on these locations.

The applicant has submitted a visual impact assessment to support the proposal; however it is noted from the submitted details that the device on site (for pre-application purposes) was placed at 15 metres high. The proposed turbine as proposed is approx 21metres high.

In respect of the design and sustainability offered by the proposal, officers consider that whilst this aspect does provide an element of sustainable design for the benefit of the farm complex and the listed farm house directly, it does not however, outweigh the concerns raised on the proposed scale and siting of the wind turbine and the likely effect of such development on this sensitive landscape.

Amenity:

The siting of the proposed wind turbine is around 325 metres away from the nearest residential property not in the ownership of the applicant. The Commercial Pollution Control section has been consulted as part of the application process, and concludes that a simplified noise condition is suitable in this instance given the large separation distance between the turbine and the nearest properties.

Access and Parking:

The access to the proposed site is via the existing main farm entrance through the yard into the adjacent field. The submitted details indicated there is adequate space available within the site to enable vehicle to park, turn, load and unload. This along with the existing visibility at the main entrance is considered to be acceptable and the Transportation and Environment section raise no objections.

Landscape:

The site is within the Marloes Peninsula, which as indicated in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) forms a large broad promontory, comprises of rolling lowland and associated coastal fringe, sea cliffs to the north west and south along St Anne's Head and

estuarine land along the outer northern shores of Milford Haven. The special qualities of this area include the Marloes peninsula featuring attractive open rolling farmland contrasting with more sheltered wooded valleys, notably south of St bridges, around Dale, St Ishmaels and bordering the Sandy Haven Pill. Land to the west is however, largely open and exposed in character and has little existing vertical emphasis.

The guidance within the Renewable Energy (SPG) states that there may be limited opportunity for small scale turbines close to existing built elements (such as farm buildings), as long as they are sited sensitively, sited away from coastal edge to protect views, and the important relationship between land and sea. Also to ensure that any wind turbine development located within LCA 9 (Marloes) does not sacrifice the essential integrity, coherence and character of the landscape or the special qualities of the National Park.

In this respect officers consider the proposal is not close to existing built elements, it is located some 200 metres from existing farm buildings at Philbeach farm and 290 metres from the adjacent Dale airfield buildings. The site and surrounding area retains strong connections to the coast, particularly from views across the estuary, from the coast path and public rights of way west of St Ishmaels and the waterway itself. From these areas the proposal would compromise the relationship between land and sea, as it would be viewed in a prominent position as skyline development across the coast, and would not sit well with existing built elements and would adversely affect the relationship with the coast from these views. The proposal is out of scale and detrimental to the landscape qualities of the National Park in this area, its visibility across large areas, and in particular from the viewpoint (Marloes Beacon) and Marloes to the west and coast path and inland PROW to the east significantly detract from the special qualities of this area of the National Park.

The possible impact on trees and hedges on and immediately adjacent to the proposed development has also been considered. Several issues have been raised which include means of protection for the adjacent hedge banks during the proposed development, hedgerow management and post development landscaping. Officers consider that these elements could be covered by planning conditions if the application is approved.

Additional proposals within the public domain at the time of this application are:

- Single turbine 11.75 metres at Windmill Park, St Brides (approved)
- Single 64.7 metre turbine screening opinion Sandy Haven.

However officers consider there to be no cumulative impact in respect of this proposal with the two above turbines.

Biodiversity:

The proposed wind turbine is to be sited close to existing field boundary and hedge banks. The Countryside Council for Wales has been consulted as part of this application. However, in this instance CCW do not consider that such a

survey is required as both the hedge banks and field boundary appear to be very sparsely vegetated and therefore unlikely to be used by bats as flight lines.

The application has been submitted with an ecological walkover survey which provides baseline data on habitat and species both on and adjacent to the site and investigates potential impacts that may occur during construction and operational stages. This then enables the applicant to propose any mitigation measures to overcome any issues identified. The conclusion of the walkover survey indicates that the proposal does not present a significant ecological risk to habitats or species in the area. During the construction phase, no protected species or habitats of conservation concern will be affected, and once operational, the turbine does not pose a significant collision risk to bats and birds. As such, CCW do not raise objections on these grounds but note that not all species and habitats listed in section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 have been considered as part of this consultation.

Land Drainage:

The site is recognised as having potential for surface water flooding, given the nature of the proposal and its modest base foundation, it is not considered to have an adverse impact on the surface water runoff from this area.

Conclusion

The proposed turbine would be highly visible in many views within the Marloes Peninsula, and from PROW and coast path across the Gann estuary, and the waterway. The coast path allows people to access and enjoy many of the special qualities of the National Park. This turbine application, in a prominent location and of a scale which comprises skyline development in many views, would significantly detract from the special qualities of the National Park at the Marloes Peninsula. It would have an adverse visual impact, due to its visual prominence and detrimental impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

There are no opportunities to mitigate the impact from views within the area. The turbine is sited away from farm buildings and they do not provide a context for it from key views. From Musselwick area, the site would have a strong relationship with the coast and 'Gann Estuary' and when viewed from the network of public rights of way within this area it would compromise the landscape backdrop to the estuary. The development would be detrimental to the special qualities of this part of the National Park.

This proposal would be situated within a local landscape which is largely open and exposed, where there is little vertical context within proximity, and a sense of rural tranquillity and undeveloped skylines. This proposal is contrary to Policy 33 Renewable Energy of the Local Development Plan due to its environmental impact, and is contrary to Policy 8 Special Qualities, and Policy 15 'Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park'. As such, it

would be harmful to public enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park.

Recommendation

The proposal by reason of its prominent location, its height and scale resulting in a skyline development which will be visible from many public vantage points. This will have an adverse visual impact and will therefore significantly detract from the special qualities of the National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Development Plan (adopted September 2010), Policy 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty) (a and b); Policy 8 (Special Qualities) (c); Policy 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (a, b, c and d) and Policy 33 (Renewable Energy). It is also contrary to Planning Policy Wales Edition 4 (paras. 12.8.9-10) and TAN 8 (Annex D para.8.4).

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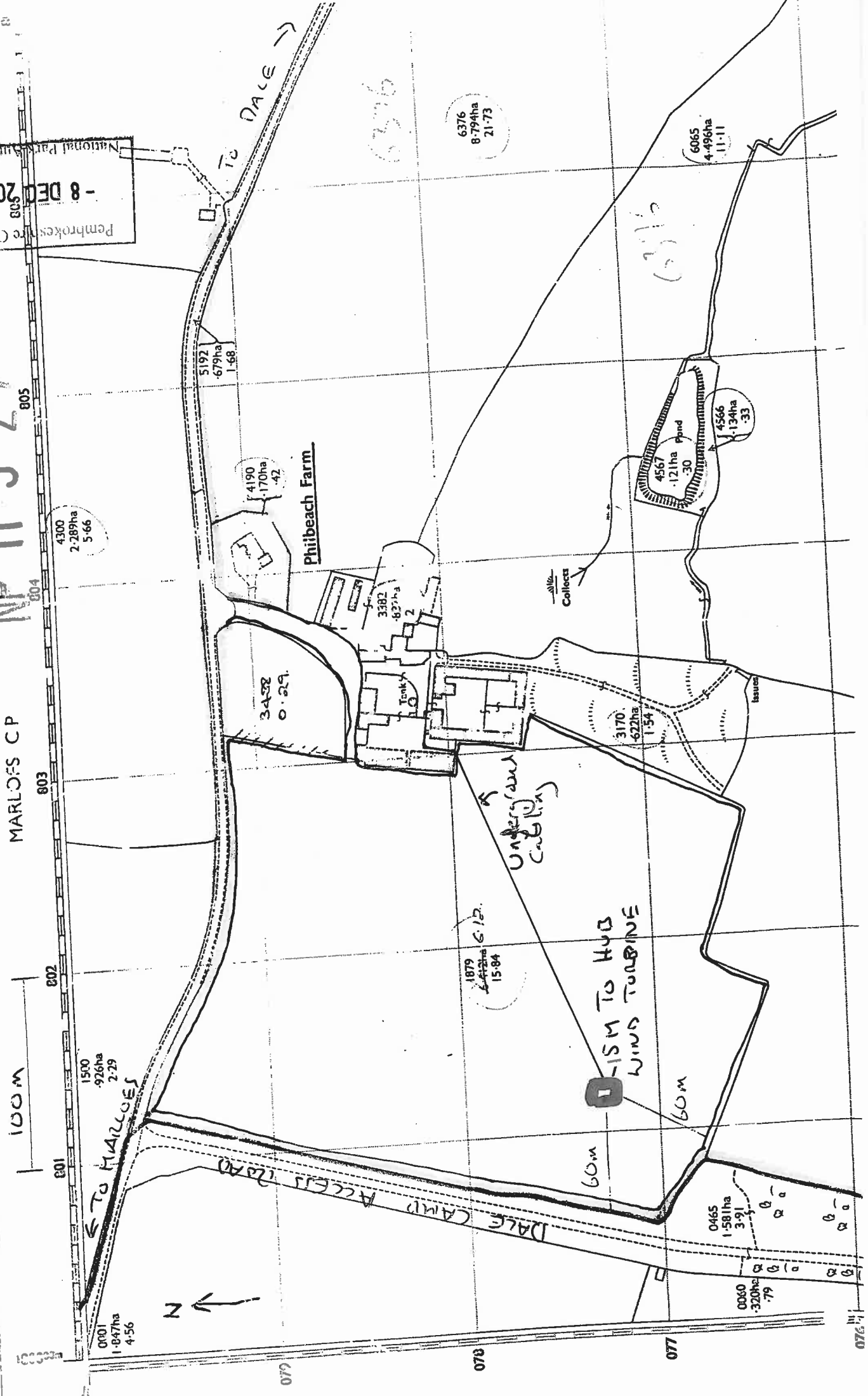
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NATIONAL GRID PLANS Scale 1:2500

NP 11 5 27

MARLOES CP

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- 8 DEC 2011



6376

6065

1879

1-15M TO HUB
WIND TURBINE

Phibeach Farm

Underground
cabling

Collectors

Issue

100m

001

002

003

004

076

077

078

OVERALL DIMENSIONS FOR CF15 TURBINE:
15kW GENERATOR / 15m MAST / 5m BLADES

