



**CYNGOR**  
**Sir Ddinbych**  
**Denbighshire**  
**COUNTY COUNCIL**

Heading:

06/2013/0253  
 Land at Lletty Farm  
 Gwyddelwern

3

Graham Boase  
 Head of Planning & Public Protection  
 Denbighshire County Council  
 Caledfryn  
 Smithfield Road  
 Denbigh  
 Denbighshire LL16 3RJ



Application Site



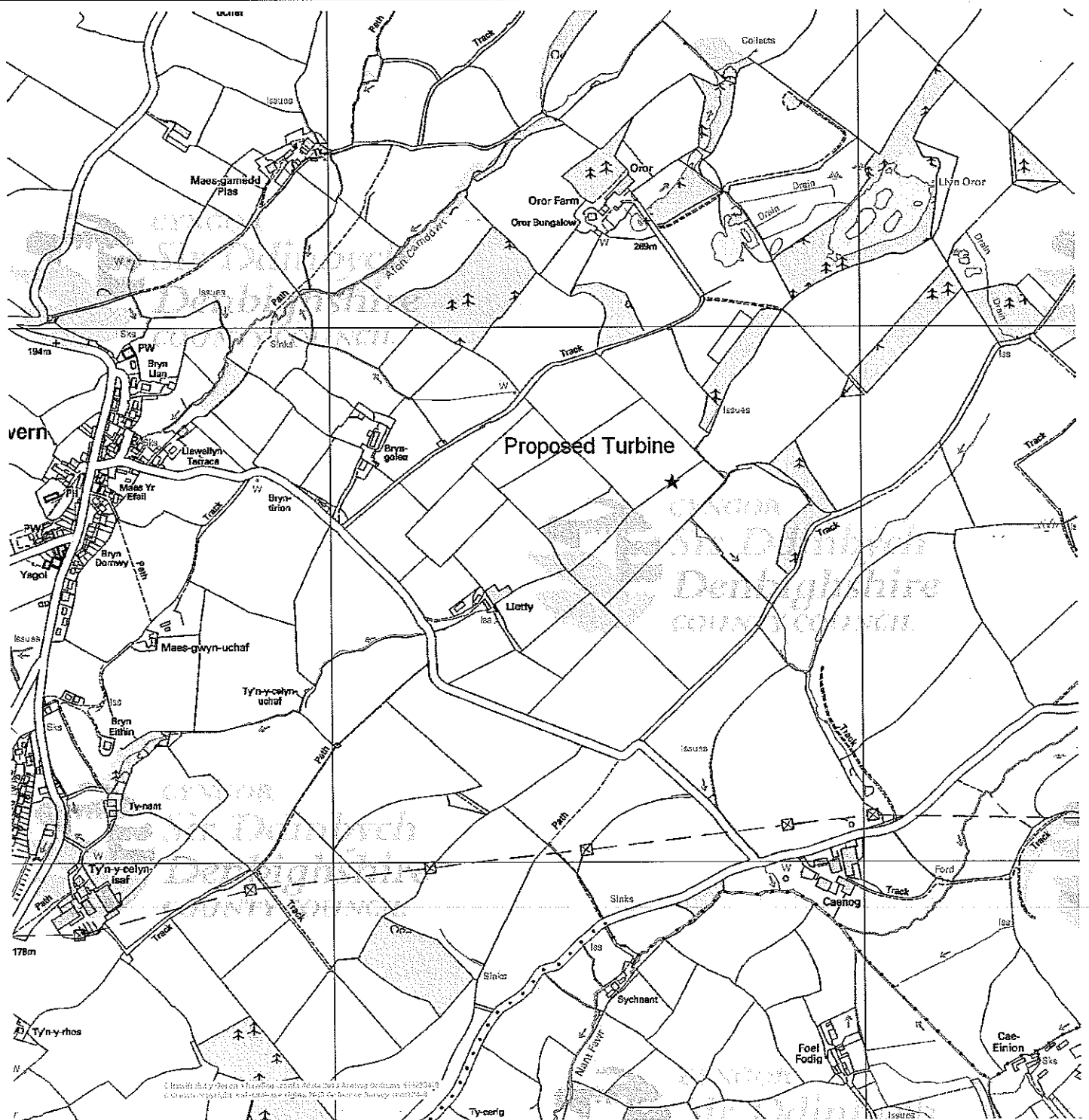
Date 29/4/2013

Scale 1/10691

Centre = 308399 E 346553 N

This plan is intended solely to give an indication of the LOCATION of the application site which forms the subject of the accompanying report. It does not form any part of the application documents, and should not be taken as representative of the proposals to be considered, which are available for inspection prior to the meeting.

Tel: 01824 706800 Fax: 01824 706709



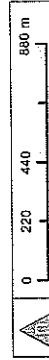
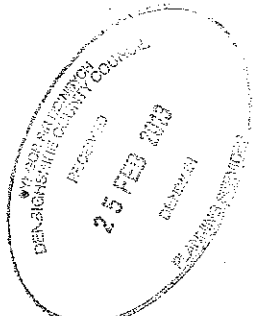
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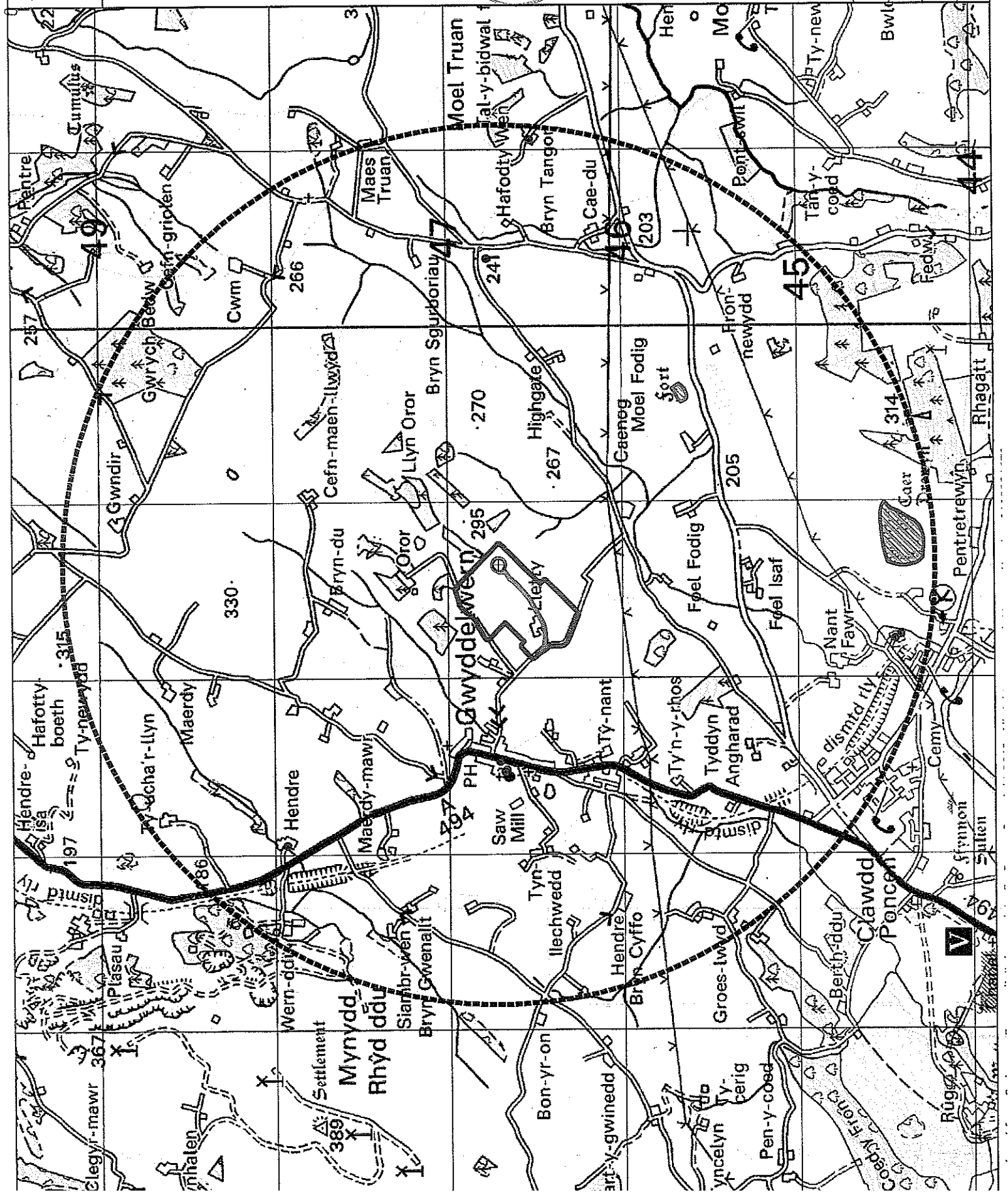


Legend







- Boundary: Application Site
- Boundary: Land in the Ownership/Control of the Applicant
- Turbine Location
- Boundary: 2.5km Study Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings

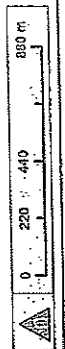
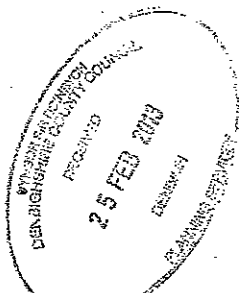


Project	Lletty Farm, Gwyddelwern		
Drawing Name	Heritage Asset Location Plan		
Date	Feb 2013	Scale	1:20,000 at A3
Reference	Appendix 06		

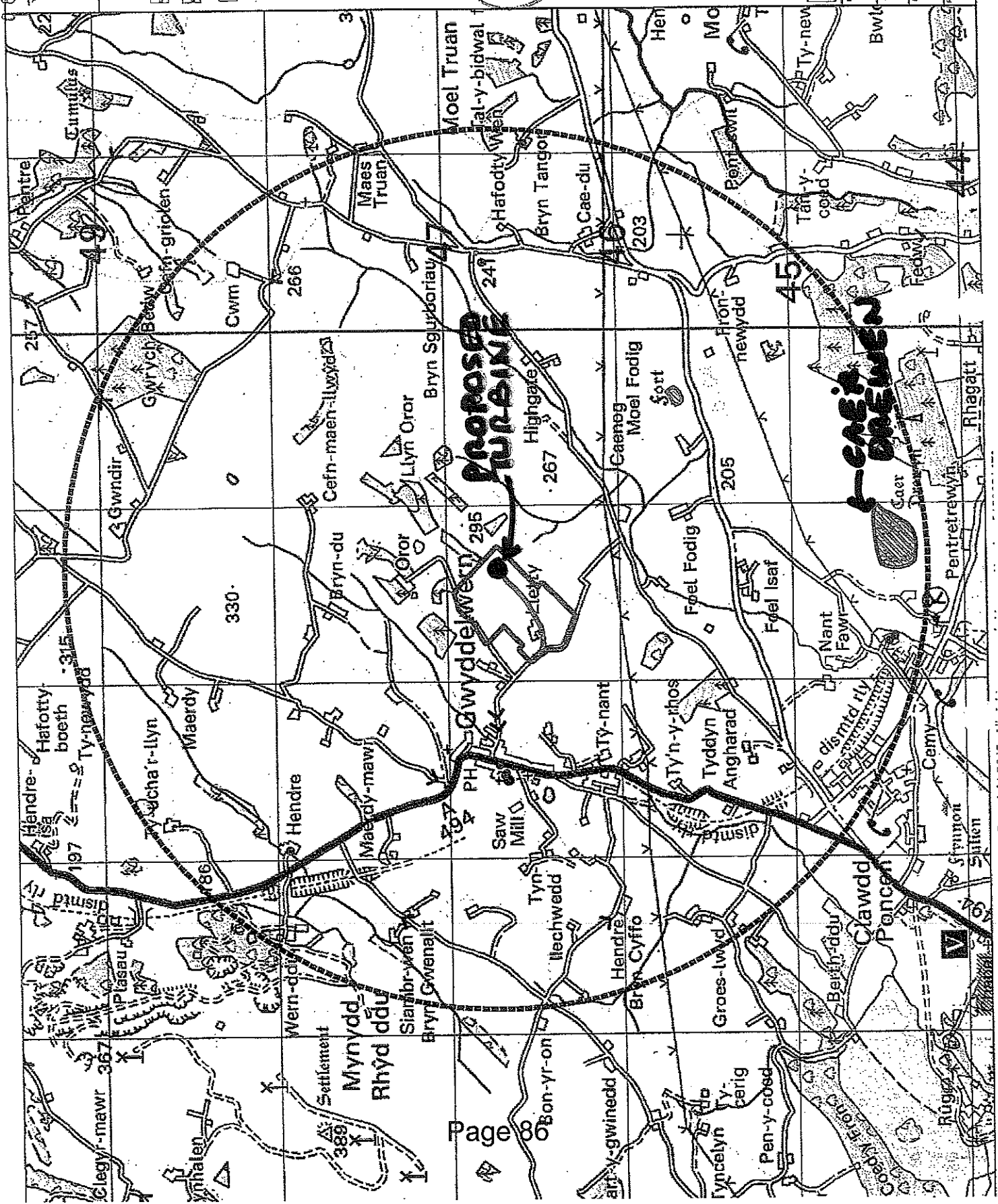


Legend

-  Boundary: Application Site
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Project Name	Lletty Farm, Gwyddelwern	
Drawing Name	Heritage Asset Location Plan	
Date	Feb 2013	Scale 1:20,000 at A3
Reference	Appendix 06	

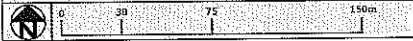


# BLOCK PLAN



Note  
Layout of access track, turbine & hardstanding indicative  
& subject to confirmation.

Turbine Location  
E. 308642 N. 346714  
SJ0864246714



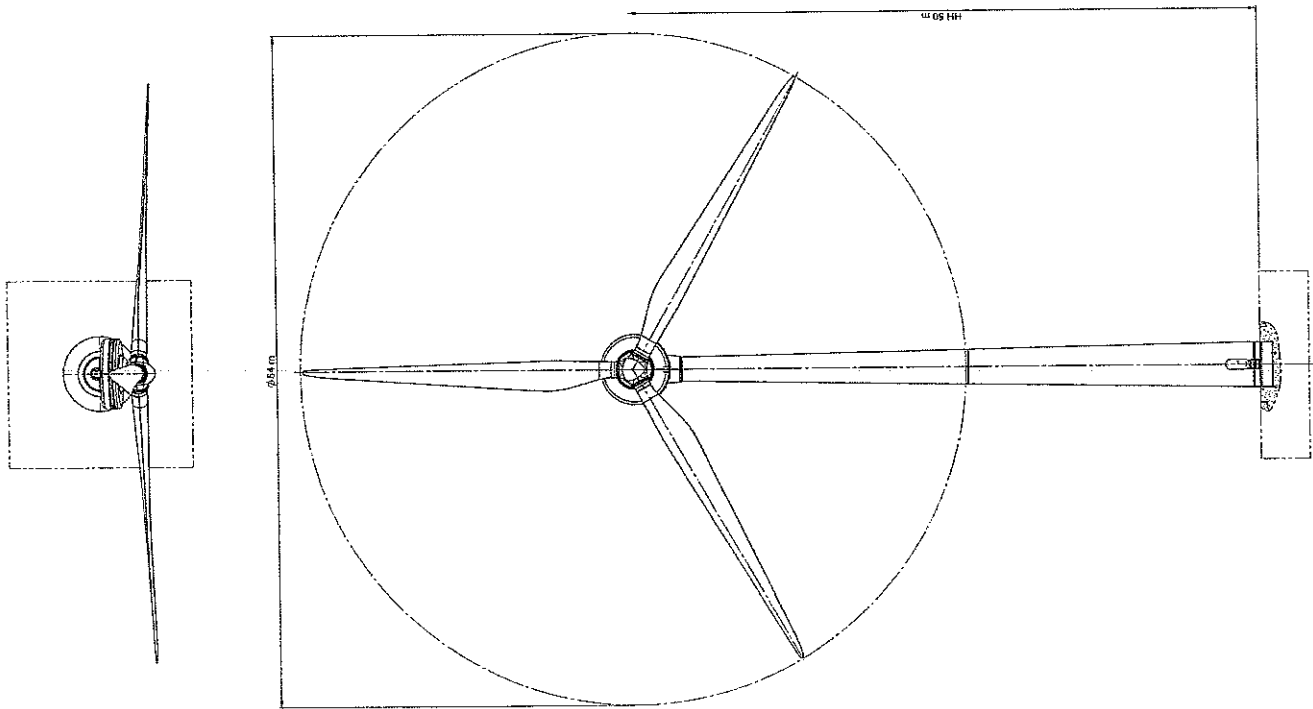
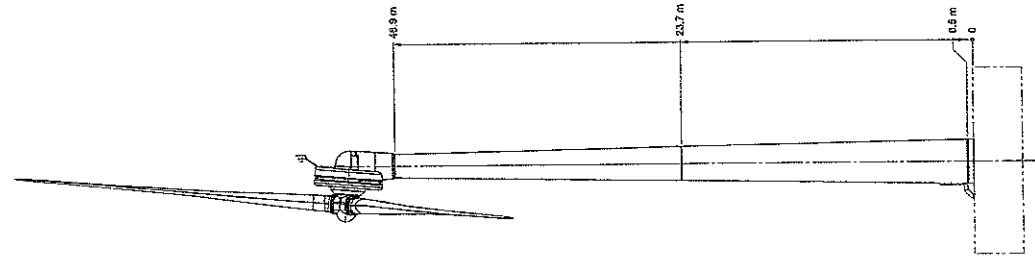
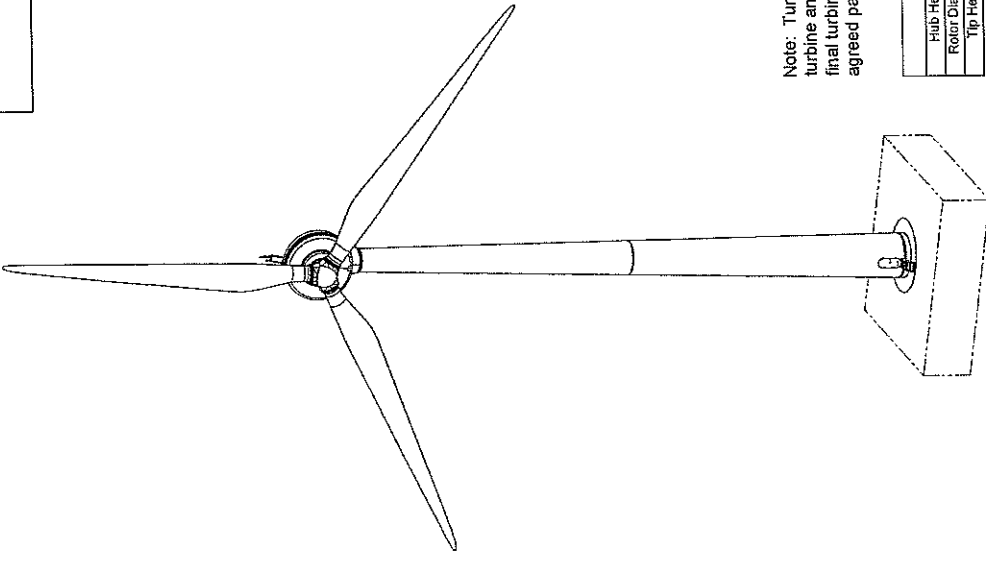
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	Application Area		Hardstanding
	Land in Applicants Ownership/Control		Transformer Station, Utility Housing & Cabling
	Wind Turbine & Turbine Foundation		New Access Track

Site <b>Lletty Farm, Gwyddelwern</b>	
Date Feb 2013	Scale 1:2500 at A3
Title <b>Block Plan</b>	
<b>Figure 02</b>	

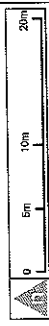


# TURBINE DETAIL



Note: Turbine shown is a candidate turbine and subject to change but final turbine will adhere to the agreed parameters.

EWT DW 54	
Hub Height	50m
Rotor Diameter	91m
Tip Height	77m



Project	Lletty Farm, Gwyddelwern	
Drawing Name	Proposed Turbine Elevations	
Date	Feb 2013	Scale 1:400 at A3
Reference	Figure 03	

NXW

**ITEM NO:** 3

**WARD NO:** Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd / Gwyddelwern

**APPLICATION NO:** 06/2013/0253/ PFT

**PROPOSAL:** Installation of a 500 kW wind turbine up to 77m to blade tip (up to 50m to hub height), access tracks and hardstanding, transformer station and ancillary works

**LOCATION:** Llety Llety Road Gwyddelwern Corwen

**APPLICANT:** Ms M Jones

**CONSTRAINTS:**

**PUBLICITY UNDERTAKEN:** Site Notice - Yes  
Press Notice - No  
Neighbour letters - Yes

**REASON(S) APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE:**  
**Scheme of Delegation Part 2**

- Referral by Head of Planning / Development Control Manager

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES:**

**GWYDDELWERN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
No response received

**CORWEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
"No observations to make "

**NATURAL RESOURCES WALES (NRW) (formerly EA and CCW)**  
Landscape/Ecology  
1 No objection in principle, however it advises that the Local Planning Authority decision making includes detailed assessments of the landscape impacts of the proposal.  
In raising no objection in principle it has commented on the possible effect the proposed development would have on:-  
(a) Statutory sites such as the AONB which is approximately 2Kms away.  
(b) Protected species.  
(c) Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)

Land drainage/water supply/flooding  
Records show a private water supply within 150 metres of the site. As such request that any decision includes a condition to ensure that there is no detriment to private water supplies in the area.

**NATS (EN ROUTE) PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY (NERL)**  
No safeguarding objection to the proposal.

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
No response received

AIRBUS

No aerodrome safeguarding objection.

## **DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTEES**

### **TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (HIGHWAYS)**

Highways Officer

No response at the time of preparing the report

### **POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER**

Recommends that any permission includes planning condition(s) limiting noise levels

### **LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT**

The landscape consultant's original recommendation was to refuse planning permission (see below) on the cumulative impact with other turbines at Gwyddelwern and the fact that one critical viewpoint had not been assessed.

Following receipt of additional information from the agent the landscape consultant's further comments are as follows:

"The following comments supplement my report of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013 and follow my review of Viewpoint 07 cumulative wireframe, which was received on 8th May, in response to my concern regarding potential adverse visual impacts from Caer Drewyn Hill Fort, located within the Clwydian and Dee Valley AONB.

This viewpoint is particularly sensitive to change - It lies within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB where the conservation of landscape setting, visual outlook and AONB special qualities is supported by national planning policy and the AONB management plan (policies: PSQ1, PSQ2, PCP1, PCP2); Caer Drewyn Hill Fort is one of several significant hill forts within the Heather and Hill forts project, which promotes access and enjoyment of these historic sites; and it is one of the closest locations to the TAN 8 Strategic Search Area where landscape is undergoing considerable change through wind development.

I visited Caer Drewyn Hill Fort site on the 14<sup>th</sup> May to compare the wireframe illustration against the existing view. The wire frame illustration once reconfigured to join the 4 turbines at Wern Ddu together, is a very close representation of existing wind development seen within views from the hill fort, just below the walkers cairn marking the highest point of the fort.

Whilst the view is panoramic, the eye is drawn to the 4 large wind turbines along the distant skyline at Wren Ddu (55m to hub height, 70m rotor diameter and 90m rotor tip height) and the 3 medium to large turbines at Tyn Y Celyn (37m to hub height, 18m rotor diameter and 46m to rotor tip height) in the middle distance, which together form a concentration of wind development within a relatively narrow angle of view.

The proposed turbine would be sited to the north east of development at Tyn Y Celyn with noticeable separation distance. The scale of the proposed turbine (50M to hub height, 54m rotor diameter and 77m rotor tip height) would give the turbine size and substance greater than any of the existing adjacent turbines within this view.

I therefore consider the turbine's visual impact would have a medium magnitude of change (WYG report table 1.5) upon a visual receptor of very high sensitivity (WYG report table 1.3).

Whilst recessive dark grey rotor blades can assist visual integration where seen against a hillside backdrop, the turbine would be seen breaching the skyline within this view and its silhouetted form and prominence would not be mitigated by colour choice. Mitigation options cannot effectively ameliorate the visual impact within this view.

I therefore consider the visual impact would lie within the range of Moderate to Substantial Adverse (WYG report table 1.7) and significantly harm the visual outlook from this location within the AONB.

#### Recommendation

Whilst WYG's assessment of other viewpoints indicates the turbine siting and scale of development would result in limited adverse impacts upon local communities and general landscape views, I consider the harmful impact upon the view from Caer Drewyn within a nationally designated landscape cannot be supported. I therefore object to the proposal and recommend refusal."

For Members information the original comments of the landscape consultant were:

"Consider that the main issues are:

- The effect of the proposal upon the landscape character, public views and residential amenity
- How the proposal would relate to existing wind development in the locality, the emerging pattern and implications on cumulative landscape impacts

The comments are set out as follows:-

The site lies 2.2km to the north of Caer Drewyn Hill fort – which is one of the most sensitive public viewpoints within the study area given that it is one of the closest publically accessible locations within the Clwydian and Dee Valley AONB to the site, has promoted public access and is an important cultural feature (Scheduled Ancient Monument) in its own right. This viewpoint has not been assessed by the applicant. I have used this view point primarily to assess the proposal.

Panoramic views northwards from the hill fort take in the 4 large wind turbines at Rhyd Ddu in the distance (southern edge of the TAN 8 Clocaenog Strategic Search Area) and the three 46m high wind turbines above Gwyddelwern 1.5km away within the middle distance. These two areas of wind development appear to have a linear arrangement following the north east - south west topographical grain of hill tops and shallow ridgelines which are a landscape characteristic of the area.

The established presence of wind development at Gwyddelwern reduces the sensitivity of views to change from the proposed additional single turbine.

The proposed turbine would 'read' as a continuation of the three existing turbines at Gwyddelwern and follow the alignment established by this development. In this respect the existing and proposed wind development would have a simple, balanced distribution following the topographical pattern of the landscape, and be seen extending away from Caer Drewyn Hill fort. This balance and relationship to landscape pattern follows good practice (Scottish Natural Heritage) in siting wind development and would also avoid stepping unacceptably closer to the AONB.

The proposed turbine would however be of a very different scale and form than the existing turbines at Gwyddelwern, being more than a third greater in height and having more than twice the rotor diameter (77m high and 50m diameter rotors of this proposal compared to 46m high and 19m diameter rotors at Gwyddelwern).

I consider that the proposal by virtue of its difference in scale and form characteristics would contrast and have a dissimilar, discordant effect when viewed alongside the



turbines at Gwyddelwern, to such a degree that it would have an unacceptable cumulative impact.

Given that there is an evolving 'wind farm landscape' developing here, the siting and wind turbine characteristics of new development needs to be compatible with existing development which it is located near to, if integration and balance within the landscape is to be achieved.

The proposal represents a significant departure in the size of wind turbines being proposed beyond the edges of the Strategic Search Area and within close range of one of Denbighshire's most sensitive landscapes. One of the most sensitive viewpoints from the Clwydian and Dee Valley AONB has not been assessed by the applicant. I consider that the differences in scale and form characteristics proposed by this application in an area evolving towards a 'wind farm landscape' would result in an unacceptable cumulative impact, contrary to policy MEW10. I therefore recommend refusal. "

#### **RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY:**

##### In objection

Representations in objection received from:-

Ramblers Cymru – North Wales Area, Michael Skuse (County Secretary  
Denbighshire)  
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) c/o T.J. and K Culhane, 22 Min  
yr Afon, Ruthin.

J. Broughton, Blaen Dinam, Llandrillo

Summary of planning based representations in objection;

Landscape: countryside evaluated as "High" or "outstanding" implies that the landscape is not suitable for a massive vertical structure within 15 Km of the AONB therefore would affect views out of the protected area and will lead to an industrial landscape.

Proliferation: There are 6 turbines within 3.2kms of the proposed site and this was not the intention of TAN 8 to have so many outside the SSA.

Farm Diversification: The electricity production from a 500Kw turbine must far exceed the needs of the farm therefore must be considered as a commercial venture rather than as a means of reducing farm costs.

##### Principle

Estimate of output and efficiency is flawed/untrue that such turbines save CO<sup>2</sup> emissions overall.

Public health impacts/not in accord with DCC guidance.

##### In Support

A total of 201 identical letters have been received, all individually signed.

Summary of representations in support:

Proposal merits support on the basis of -

- Meeting electricity demands of 400 homes
- In accord with policies
- reduced dependence on fossil fuels
- Limited visual impact
- No noise, access, or tourism impacts

- Contribution to farm diversification /increased farm income

**EXPIRY DATE OF APPLICATION: 22/04/2013**

**REASONS FOR DELAY IN DECISION (where applicable):**

- timing of receipt of representations

**PLANNING ASSESSMENT:**

**1. THE PROPOSAL:**

**1.1 Summary of proposals**

- 1.1.1 Members may recall that consideration of the application was deferred at the May 2013 meeting to allow full opportunity for assessment of information on landscape and visual impact.
- 1.1.2 The proposal is to erect a 77 metre high 500Kw 3 bladed wind turbine on land to the north east of Llety Farm Gwyddelwern.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of the scheme is to provide electricity directly to the local grid network. The supporting information indicates that the 500 Kw turbine should provide enough electricity to supply around 400 households. It is anticipated that the annual generation should equate to 1,314 MWh and this would be estimated to offset 565 tonnes of CO2 from conventional electricity generation.
- 1.1.4 The proposed turbine would have a Hub height of 50 metres with a blade diameter of 54 Metres. The development will also include a hardstanding area for erecting cranes, an on- site access track and a site access route from the main road access, an on-site sub-station and an on-site cabling linking the turbine to the grid connection.
- 1.1.5 The electricity will feed directly to the local electricity network.
- 1.1.6 The construction of the turbine should take approximately 3 months. The area surrounding the turbine will revert to agricultural use on completion.
- 1.1.7 Construction working hours will be 0700 to 2100 Monday to Saturday.
- 1.1.8 At the end of the turbine life (25 years) the turbine would be removed and the land returned to agriculture.
- 1.1.9 The application submission includes the following;
  - Planning Application forms and certificates
  - Environmental Investigation Statement and appendices
  - Design and Access Statement
  - Site Location Plan
  - Block Plan
  - Proposed Turbine elevations
  - Transformer Station Details
  - Swept Path Drawings
- 1.1.10 For Members' information, the developer indicates that this proposed turbine would supply the equivalent of approximately 400 households with an annual generation of approximately 1,314 MWh. It is estimated that this will offset

565 tonnes of Co2 per annum.

### 1.2 Description of site and surroundings

- 1.2.1 Land at Llety Farm is located approximately 1Km to the east of the village of Gwyddelwern and approximately 3.5Km to the north of Corwen.
- 1.2.2 The site comprises improved grassland with small coppices of trees to the north, north east and north west of the site.
- 1.2.3 The site itself around Llety in the control of the applicant comprises approximately 29.6 acres (12ha) of land. The applicant's agent has indicated that there is further land tenanted by the applicant.
- 1.2.4 The site is located at an elevation of approximately 260 m AOD and the land and its surroundings are undulating in nature with small areas of woodland and traditional field boundaries.
- 1.2.5 There is a distance of at least 500 metres from the turbine to other residential properties.
- 1.2.6 The proposed turbine would be some 1km to the north of the three existing operational turbines at Tyn y Celyn, Gwyddelwern with the four turbines at Wern Ddu being further away to the west (see the plan at the front of the report).
- 1.2.7 Visually in the landscape the present proposal will be significantly larger than the three 46 m turbines at Gwyddelwern, and will be of a scale and size approaching the 90 m height and c70 m rotor diameter of those at Wern Ddu.

### 1.3 Relevant planning constraints

- 1.3.1 None.

### 1.4 Relevant planning history

- 1.4.1 A negative screening opinion was issued for one turbine on this site in August 2012 i.e. no Environmental Impact assessment was required with the application.
- 1.4.2 As of December 2012 a total of 92 wind turbines had been granted planning permission within the County.

### 1.5 Developments/ changes since the original submission

- 1.5.1 None.

### 1.6 Other relevant background information

- 1.6.1 Wind turbines of this scale are eligible for feed in tariffs (FIT's), which is a government backed financial incentive designed to encourage renewable electricity generation. FIT payments for wind turbines are guaranteed for 20 years.

## **2. DETAILS OF PLANNING HISTORY**

- 2.1 The applicant submitted a request for a screening opinion in August 2012 for a 500Kw turbine at the land at Llety, Gwyddelwern. A negative screening opinion was issued on the 17<sup>th</sup> August

2012 and therefore a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was not required to accompany the application in this instance.

### **3. RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE**

The main planning policies and guidance are considered to be:

#### **6.1 DENBIGHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** –adopted on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Policy VOE 2 - AONB and AOB  
Policy VOE 5 – Conservation of natural resources  
Policy VOE 9 – On-shore wind energy  
Policy VOE 10 – Renewable energy technologies  
Policy RD 2 – Sustainable and good standard design

#### **6.2 GOVERNMENT POLICY / GUIDANCE**

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 5, 2012)  
TAN 8 Planning for Renewable Energy (2005)  
TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)  
TAN 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)  
TAN 11 Noise (1997)

#### **WELSH GOVERNMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Planning Implications Of Renewable And Low Carbon Energy (Practice Guidance 2011)

#### **6.3 Other material considerations**

Denbighshire Landscape Strategy (2003) / LANDMAP

### **7. MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:**

7.1 The main land use planning issues are considered to be:

- 7.1.1 Principle
- 7.1.2 Context for the development
- 7.1.3 Landscape and visual impact, including cumulative effects of / with other wind turbines
- 7.1.4 Ecology
- 7.1.5 Noise and residential amenity
- 7.1.6 Geology and Hydrology
- 7.1.7 Historic Environment
- 7.1.8 Aviation and Radar
- 7.1.9 Shadow flicker
- 7.1.10 Transport and Access

7.2 In relation to the main planning considerations:

#### 7.2.1 Principle

##### Welsh Government policy and guidance

The UK is subject to the EU Renewable Energy Directive, which includes a target of generating 15% of the UK's total energy demand from renewable energy sources by 2020. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) reaffirms UK and Welsh Government energy policy and recognises that wind energy generation remains the most commercially viable form of renewable energy in Wales. As illustrated in PPW, the total capacity for energy generation from onshore wind by 2020/2025 is estimated at 2GW.

For planning purposes, PPW defines the following renewable and low carbon energy scales, which is of relevance to the application before Committee:

Scale of development	Threshold (Electricity and heat)
Strategic	Over 25 MW for onshore wind and over 50 MW for all other technologies
Local Authority – Wide	Between 5MW and 25 MW for onshore wind and between 5 MW and 50MW for all other technologies
Sub local authority	Between 50kW and 5MW
Micro	Below 50kW

This application therefore falls within the 'sub local authority' scale of development in PPW. Sub local-authority scale renewable energy projects are applicable in all parts of Wales subject to the assessment of site specific impacts.

TAN 8 supplements PPW and provides technical advice and guidance on renewable energy projects; TAN 8 introduced the principle of spatial planning for the delivery of energy policy and identifies 7 Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) where large scale onshore wind developments should be concentrated.

TAN 8 makes reference to smaller scale (less than 5MW) schemes in para. 2.11 - 2.14, however this puts the onus on local planning authorities to define what is meant by 'smaller scale' schemes. It also refers to the need for local planning authorities to consider the cumulative impact of smaller schemes in areas outside of the defined Strategic Search Areas and the need to strike the right balance between the desirability of renewable energy and landscape protection. Whilst that balance should not result in severe restriction on the development of wind power capacity, TAN8 acknowledges there is a case for avoiding a situation where wind turbines spread across the whole of a county.

Chapter 15 of the Welsh Government Practice Guidance: Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (2011) defines cumulative effects as '*where more than one renewable energy scheme is proposed by one or more developers or where a single scheme is proposed in an area with existing schemes, the combined effect of all schemes taken together is known as the 'cumulative effect'*' (para. 15.1). The Guidance mentions that potential cumulative effects of renewable energy developments could impact on landscape and visual amenity; viability of bird populations; ecological features; and noise levels.

Given the increasing number of consented wind turbine development both within the Denbighshire and in neighbouring counties, it is imperative that cumulative effects are fully considered when planning applications are assessed.

#### Denbighshire Local Development Plan Policies

LDP Policy VOE 9 supports the principle of on shore wind turbine development subject to an assessment of environmental and sustainability impacts. It refers to the same scales of development as in the table reproduced above from Planning Policy Wales, and requires that all applications are subject to specific assessment of criteria including for the larger schemes and ones on the periphery of the Strategic Search Area, compatibility with the Clocaenog Statement of Environmental Master Planning Principles, impacts such as cumulative impact on the surrounding area and community (landscape/visual, noise, biodiversity, transport, health), community engagement, mitigation proposals and the colours to be used on the turbines and blades. The turbine at Lletty would fall within the Sub Local Authority Scale, which VOE 9 indicates will be permitted outside AONBs and other sites designated for

ecological, historic, landscape or other value where there is no adverse effect on their setting.

Policy VOE 10 offers general support for proposals which promote the provision of renewable energy technologies, providing they are located so as to minimise visual, noise, and amenity impacts and demonstrate no unacceptable impact on the interests of nature conservation, wildlife, natural and cultural heritage, landscape, public health and residential amenity.

Policy RD 1 is the Plan's 'catch all' development control considerations policy and indicates that development proposals will be supported provided they are acceptable in terms of other Plan policies and meet a range of site specific tests including respecting the site and surroundings, landscape and historic environment, the amenities of residents, assessment of impact on access and highways, flooding and drainage, community safety, and waste disposal.

Taken together, the policies contained in the LDP provide support in principle for renewable energy development subject to the detailed assessment of localised impacts, which includes taking into account the cumulative impact and spread of wind turbine development of varying scales throughout the County.

#### 7.2.2 Context for the development

The application has been put forward on the basis of promoting a form of farm diversification in so far as it will help subsidise the farm enterprise. TAN 6 supports national planning policy on sustainable rural communities and section 3.7 focuses on farm diversification. It states that "*When considering applications for farm diversification projects, planning authorities should consider the nature and scale of the activity*". It goes on to state that "*many economic activities can be sustainably located on farms. Small on-farm operations such as..... renewable energy, are likely to be appropriate uses*". Therefore the principle of installing a wind turbine may be a valid farm diversification activity, subject to consideration of the nature and scale of the activity.

The electricity will be fed directly into the local electricity network and none of the electricity will be used directly on the farm. The submission indicates that the farmer will generate an income from the electricity generation which he will be able to invest in the farm. The applicant's agent has supported the farm diversification element of the scheme by indicating that the present owner has operated the farm for over 40 years, the farm comprises 80 acres of primarily grazing land and has a current stock of 40 cattle and 50 sheep. The farm employs 1 full time and 5 part time contactors. It also indicates the revenue received will enable the farm to survive in the future.

Whilst noting the above submissions by the agent, having regard to the basis of the application, it is suggested that the scheme has to be assessed purely on its own merits as a stand alone commercial venture designed and operated to produce electricity for the grid with the farmer benefitting only by an income from the scheme.

#### 7.2.3 Landscape and visual impact, including cumulative implications

LDP policies relevant to the visual and landscape impact associated with wind energy development are policy VOE 9, VOE 10, and RD 1. These policies require due consideration of impact on the surrounding area and community, including cumulative landscape / visual impact. VOE 9 requires consideration of the potential impact on the setting of an AONB.

PPW and TAN 8 provide the strategic policy framework for assessing wind energy development and contain some specific guidance on the detailed consideration of landscape and visual impact to assist local planning authorities determine planning applications. TAN8 Annex D states that within SSAs, the implicit objective is to accept

landscape change i.e. a significant change in landscape character from wind turbine development. However, given the increasing number of consented wind turbine developments within and on the periphery of the SSA, it is imperative that cumulative effects are fully considered when planning applications are assessed.

The Denbighshire Landscape Strategy is based on the LANDMAP study, which provides useful background material on the essential characteristics and quality of the landscape of the County. The application site lies within the "Llanelidan and Gwyddelwern hills" Character Area where the Visual and Sensory evaluation is identified as 'High'.

The Landscape Consultant has assessed the proposal and has concluded that:

The proposed turbine would 'read' as a continuation of the three existing turbines at Gwyddelwern and follow the alignment established by this development. In this respect the existing and proposed wind development would have a simple, balanced distribution following the topographical pattern of the landscape, and be seen extending away from Caer Drewyn Hill fort. This balance and relationship to landscape pattern follows good practice (Scottish Natural Heritage) in siting wind development and would also avoid stepping unacceptably closer to the AONB.

The proposed turbine would however be of a very different scale and form than the existing turbines at Gwyddelwern, being more than a third greater in height and having more than twice the rotor diameter (77m high and 50m diameter rotors of this proposal compared to 46m high and 19m diameter rotors at Gwyddelwern).

He considers that the proposal by virtue of its difference in scale and form characteristics would contrast and have a dissimilar, discordant affect when viewed alongside the turbines at Gwyddelwern, to such a degree that it would have an unacceptable cumulative impact.

Given that there is an evolving 'wind farm landscape' developing here, the siting and wind turbine characteristics of new development needs to be compatible with existing development which it is located near to, if integration and balance within the landscape is to be achieved.

The proposal therefore represents a significant departure in the size of wind turbines being proposed beyond the edges of the Strategic Search Area and within close range of one of Denbighshire's most sensitive landscapes. He has reassessed the further information provided by the applicant's agent and the possible mitigation measures such as changing the colour tone on the blades but considers that this mitigation cannot effectively ameliorate the visual impact of the view from Caer Drewyn hill Fort site.

The Landscape Consultant concludes that the harmful impact upon the view from Caer Drewyn within a nationally designated landscape cannot be supported. He therefore objects to the proposal and recommends refusal.

#### 7.2.4 Ecology

The general requirement to consider the impact of development on biodiversity interests is set out in PPW Chapter 5, TAN 5, LDP policies VOE 5, VOE 9, VOE 10, and RD 1. Specific to wind turbine development is policy VOE 9 which requires specific assessment / explanation of impact on biodiversity, and mitigation proposals. VOE 5 requires proposals which may have an effect on protected species or designated sites of nature conservation to be supported by a biodiversity statement having regard to the County biodiversity aspiration for conservation, enhancement, and restoration of habitats and species.

The applicants carried out an ecological assessment between September 2011 and February 2013. A walkover survey took place in September 2011 and an updated survey was undertaken in February 2013. The study consists mainly of improved grasslands in use as grazing pasture. There is marshy grassland to the south east of the application site and there are well maintained hedgerows which form the field boundaries.

The ecological assessment did not identify any ecological interests which would prevent the development progressing. The applicants have however indicated that any vegetation clearance required to facilitate the development should take place outside the bird nesting season.

In relation to the impact tests required under Policy VOE 9 most have been addressed by the applicant in the supporting information. The only issue that has not been referred to is whether the proposal is consistent with the Clocaenog Statement of Environmental Master Planning Principles (SEMP). In this respect it is noted that this only needs to be taken into account when the development is in or on the periphery of the SSA-A. In this instance the application is well outside the SSA-A boundary and outside the area of concern raised in the (SEMP) and as such does not need to be addressed as part of the consideration of this proposal.

The Officer opinion is that there are no ecological concerns raised by the proposal.

#### 7.2.5 Noise and residential amenity

LDP Policies VOE 9, VOE 10, and RD 1 seek to ensure development does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity.

TAN 11 relates to the assessment of noise in relation to development proposals. The general guidance is that local planning authorities should ensure noise-generating development does not cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance, but in some instances it may be acceptable to allow noise-generating activities near to noise sensitive receptors.

ETSU-R-97 is the industry standard for the Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms. For single turbines ESTU-R-97 proposes that a simplified noise condition may be suitable and recommends that noise is limited to 35dB<sub>LA90,10min</sub> (A) up to wind speed of 10m/s at 10m height and considers that this condition alone would offer sufficient protection of amenity, and background noise surveys would be unnecessary.

The applicants have identified three properties (one of which is Llety) which are the closest to the site and could be affected by noise emanating from the proposed turbine. The applicants have identified the likely noise generators caused by this development namely the construction period, the operation of the turbine and the decommissioning. The applicants have recognised that there will be a need for different noise limits at night than during the daytime.

The applicants have undertaken noise monitoring surveys in line with ETSU-R-97 guidance, and an assessment of the implication of the operational turbine in that environment.

The assessment indicates that the predicted turbine noise levels will fall below the daytime and night-time criteria at all the three receptors. The study also indicates that even the cumulative noise effects of this proposed turbine with existing turbines locally will not be above the ETSU-R-97 criteria.



The Council's Pollution Control Officer considers that there should not be an issue of either individual or cumulative noise pollution provided that restrictive conditions are attached to any planning permission to control the noise emissions from the turbine

#### 7.2.6 Geology /Hydrology

LDP Policy RD 1 requires that development respects and where possible enhances the local natural environment, and satisfies physical or natural environmental considerations relating to drainage.

The applicants have undertaken an assessment of the baseline data and also undertaken a walkover of the site and its surroundings. The evidence indicates that there are no issues in relation to geology or hydrology which should prevent the development proceeding.

No response has been received from the County's Hydrologist, but it would be appropriate in the event of permission being granted to include a standard condition to ensure mitigation measures are implemented in the event of any impacts of private water supplies etc. as a result of the development.

#### 7.2.7 Historic environment

A desk top study appraisal of the cultural assets in close proximity to the site was undertaken by an on-line search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust records. . The assessment concludes that there will be no significant impacts on designated cultural heritage receptors as a result of the proposed turbine.

It is considered that this assessment is reasonable and is a fair assessment of the position in respect of this single turbine.

#### 7.2.8 Shadow flicker and safety

Policies VOE 9, VOE 10 and RD 1 require due consideration of impacts on the surrounding area and community, public health and residential amenity.

The incidence of shadow flicker depends on a range of climatic factors and tends to only affect properties within 10 rotor diameters of a turbine. The applicants have undertaken a quantitative assessment of shadow flicker using computerised software and have referred to current advice on the subject. The blade diameter of the turbine is 54 metres, therefore the potential impacts should only be experienced up to 540 metres from the turbine location and only then within 130 degrees either side of north. There are only 2 properties within this radius, namely Ogor Farm house and the host property Llety farm house.

The shadow flicker assessment indicates that Ogor Farm house will not experience shadow flicker whilst Llety would have the potential to experience a total of 22.5 days of shadow flicker per year spread over the period from the end of May to mid-July. The report indicates that the property is not orientated towards the site and it has the benefit of additional screening and its location adjacent to existing farm sheds. The assessment therefore indicates that shadow flicker would not be significant and is mitigated by existing and proposed hedgerow and tree screening.

Subject to the inclusion of detailed planning conditions to address shadow flicker, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposal would comply with the basic requirements of the aforementioned policies.

#### 7.2.9 Aviation And Radar

It is not anticipated that the proposed turbine will have any adverse effects on Aviation or Radar interests in the area.

#### 7.2.10 Construction, transport and highways.

LDP policy VOE 9 and RD 1 require due consideration of the transport / access implications of development.

The applicant has undertaken a route assessment and provided a Route Assessment and Traffic Management Plan for the construction stage operations. The plan has identified a designated route along the A5 then the A494 to Gwyddelwern and then along the unregistered road that leads to the site. Delivery of the turbine will entail 9 abnormal loads in total. The applicants have indicated that a routing agreement and a traffic management plan would be designed and agreed with the relevant authorities to address the potential impacts of the proposed development.

Officers consider that there will be some impact on the highway network mainly during construction period but this can be minimised by adequate controls being put in place.

### **8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.2 The report sets out a number of considerations Officers suggest are relevant to the determination of this application. As with all wind energy developments, inevitably there will be factors that weigh against and in favour of the grant of planning permission.
- 8.3 As there are already operational wind turbines at Tyn y Celyn in close proximity to the application site it has been easier for the landscape consultant to see the impact that turbines have had on the landscape, and to assess the cumulative impact the four turbines would have on the landscape and on the amenity residents of Gwyddelwern could reasonably expect to enjoy.
- 8.4 Officers retain concerns over the sporadic spread of 'one-off' medium / sub-local authority scale wind turbine developments outside of the Strategic Search Area, which will have strategic implications upon the ability to conserve the integrity of wider Denbighshire landscapes in the longer term. Officers continue to stress the need for Members to take a strategic approach to the determination of one-off applications such as this, especially considering the volume of applications currently lodged with the Council, which it is not anticipated will abate.
- 8.5 In advance of any Interim Planning Guidance coming into force specific to this type of turbine proposal, it is important to stress the need for the Council to continue to assess the landscape and visual impact of wind turbine development in combination with operational, consented and in-planning wind turbine proposals to ensure cumulative effects are fully addressed and to prevent the wind farm landscape encroaching beyond the boundaries of the Strategic Search Area. In this respect the Council's landscape consultant has recommend that the application be refused.
- 8.6 The application site is within a high quality landscape of County value; taking into account the updated views of the Council's Landscape Consultant, Officers assessment has identified that a turbine of the scale proposed in this location would conflict with the existing turbines at Tyn y Celyn in a way which would give rise to adverse landscape and visual impacts; and cumulative landscape impacts which is contrary to LDP Policies VOE 9, VOE 10, and RD 1.
- 8.7 Members will recall considering the same basic issues in making decisions at planning committee on similar wind turbine applications including the adjacent operational turbines at Tyn y Celyn. Whilst Officers in that instance suggested there should be little weight attached to the farm diversification benefits of these projects, Members were of the view in that location a 50kW/55kW wind turbines would be of

a suitable scale, size and capacity to qualify as a form of farm diversification and used this as a basis of support for the farming community in general. The application for consideration in this instance is for a much larger structure with a power generation of 500Kw, it will supply electricity direct to the grid and is intended purely to provide an income for the farmer. Officers respectfully suggest this application should not be assessed on the basis of being a farm diversification project.

- 8.8** In the absence of a clear policy framework which would enable the Council to take a more strategic approach to the determination of medium/sub-local authority scale wind turbine proposals outside of the SSA, Officers continue to recommend a precautionary approach is taken where adverse landscape and visual impacts have been identified, to ensure the integrity of high quality local landscapes is not eroded by incremental wind turbine development and to ensure a satisfactory level of amenity is maintained for the residents of the area. Whilst Members considered the Tyn y Celyn turbines to be acceptable as farm diversification projects and to support green energy, and that this should outweigh the concerns in respect of the impact on the landscape, in this instance that argument is considered to be much weaker and should not outweigh the landscape and visual impact concerns raised.

**RECOMMENDATION . REFUSE** for the following reason:-

1. It is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that the erection of a 77 metre high 500kW turbine in this part of a high quality landscape of County importance would have unacceptable adverse cumulative landscape and visual impacts when viewed in combination with the smaller operational turbines at Tyn y Celyn Gwyddelwern, and from locations of national and regional importance, including Cae'r Drewyn Hillfort in conflict with national and local policy objectives which seek to protect the local landscape and visual impact, and would further contribute to the spread of wind turbine development in this part of the County's attractive open countryside, giving rise to unacceptable cumulative landscape impacts . The farm diversification merits of the proposal and the potential benefits of increased renewable energy generation are not considered to outweigh these concerns, and the proposal is therefore considered contrary to Denbighshire Local Development Plan policies VOE 9, VOE 10, and RD 1, and the principles set out in TAN 8 (para. 2.11-2.13) and PPW Edition 5 (2012).

**NOTES TO APPLICANT:**

None