

**5g 3/11/1786/FP - Construction of a pre- fabricated green kiosk to house water treatment plant and upgrading of an existing green kiosk building to ensure the security of the borehole housed within at Hare Street Pumping Station, Worstead Road, Hare Street, SG9 0EE for Veolia Water Central Ltd**

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**Date of Receipt:** 07.10.2011

**Type:** Full – Minor

**Parish:** HORMEAD

**Ward:** BRAUGHING

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. Approved plans (2E10) – 110411/FRA/01, 110411/PWTK/1, 110411/PBK/1, 41518652/02/008/G0001A, 41518652/02/008/G0002A, 41518652/02/008/G0003B, 41518652/02/008/G0004A,
3. Tree retention and protection (4P05)

**Summary of Reasons for Decision**

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies GBC3, ENV1, ENV2 and ENV19. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies, the need to provide water of an appropriate quality to the local area and the limited harm to the character and appearance of the Rural Area is that permission should be granted.

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**1.0 Background:**

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. It is situated to the east of Hare Street within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. It is bounded to the north, east and south by agricultural fields and to the west by Thames Water sewerage pumping station.
- 1.2 Hare Street Pumping Station has an established use as a potable water production site and currently consists of a borehole kiosk (2.2 metres by

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1.6 metres by 2.2 metres in height) and a control and treatment building (6 metres by 2.6 metres by 2.5 metres in height). The site is bounded by an 1.8 metre high chain link fence and is accessed from Worstead Road via a lockable chain link gate.

- 1.3 The application proposes to replace the existing borehole kiosk with a larger kiosk which will house an ultraviolet disinfectant plant as well as the existing borehole headworks. The building will be some 5.5 metres by 4.4 metres in floor area and 2.7 metres in height with a flat roof.
- 1.4 In addition it is proposed to replace the existing control and treatment building, which is in a poor state of repair, with a marginally larger building which will be some 6.85 metres by 3.6 metres in floor area and 2.75 metres in height with a flat roof.
- 1.5 The increase in kiosk sizes will cause a small reduction in the flood water holding capacity of the site by approximately 9 square metres. To compensate for this it is proposed to reduce the ground level of a small area of the site (some 6 metres by 4 metres) by 400mm which will increase the sites flood water holding capacity by 9.6 metres.
- 1.6 The application is supported by a flood risk assessment and a habitat and protected species site assessment report.

### **2.0 Site History:**

- 2.1 There is no planning history relating to the site.

### **3.0 Consultation Responses:**

- 3.1 County Highways raise no objections to the proposals.

### **4.0 Parish Council Representations:**

- 4.1 Hormead Parish Council comments that the pumping station is in a very attractive part of the parish and therefore it is requested that fencing sympathetic to the surrounding rural environment be provided to minimise its impact.

### **5.0 Other Representations:**

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notice.
- 5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

**6.0 Policy:**

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

- GBC3 Appropriate Development within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
- ENV1 Design and Environmental Quality
- ENV2 Landscaping
- ENV19 Development in Areas Liable to Flood

**7.0 Considerations:**

7.1 The main determining issue in this case relates to whether the proposal is appropriate within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt, where the aims and objectives of policy are placed firmly on growth restraint. Consideration also needs to be given to the design and appearance of the replacement buildings, any impact the proposal may have on neighbouring properties, flood risk and landscaping.

**The Principle of Development**

7.2 Within the Rural Area under the provisions of Local Plan Policy GBC3, permission will not normally be given for the construction of new buildings or changes of use, other than for those purposes listed under the policy as appropriate development. The proposal does not fall within any of these exception categories and so constitutes "inappropriate" development within the rural area. It therefore needs to be considered whether there are any special circumstances in this case to warrant a decision that overrides Rural Area policy.

7.3 The applicant states that, in order to ensure adequate levels of disinfection is provided to the water, and in line with the Veolia Water Central Water Treatment Disinfection Policy and the Drinking Water Inspectorate requirements, they need to introduce an ultra violet disinfection stage to the treatment process which needs to be housed. The current buildings on the site are not large enough to accommodate this. In addition, the existing control building is in poor condition and needs to be replaced to prevent future damage to plant from water ingress and to improve site security.

7.4 Officers consider that, in this case, the proposed development constitutes essential infrastructure required to ensure that water of an appropriate quality is provided to the community. This in Officers view is

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an adequate justification to warrant permission being granted contrary to Rural Area policy.

#### Design and Appearance

- 7.5 Turning to the design and appearance of the proposed buildings; whilst the buildings will be utilitarian in appearance they are not dissimilar to the existing buildings on the site and their form and appearance is dictated by their function and that of the site. In Officers view, given the limited increase in the size of the replacement over and above those existing, the function of the site and the surrounding landscaping which in part screens the site from the surrounding countryside, Officers are satisfied that the proposed buildings will not unduly impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.6 Officers note the request from Hormead Parish Council regarding fencing, however for the reasons set out above Officers consider the existing chain link security fencing to be adequate.

#### Neighbour Amenity

- 7.7 Officers are satisfied that, given the location of the site in relation to neighbouring residential properties, the nearest of which is some 250 metres away, the proposed development will not unduly impact upon any neighbouring residential properties in terms of loss of privacy, loss of light or similar.

#### Flood Risk

- 7.8 The site is situated in Flood Zone 2. Under the Environment Agencies' standing advice the proposed development is classed as a water compatible development and therefore the Local Planning Authority needs to be satisfied that adequate measures, if necessary, can be put in place to ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding and that surface water is adequately managed. The application includes a flood risk assessment which recommends lowering the ground level of a small area of land to increase the flood capacity on the site and to compensate for the increase in building footprint. Officers are satisfied that this, in addition to the limited increase in overall floor area being proposed, will ensure that the proposed development will not result in any undue increase in flooding and that surface water can be managed.

#### Landscaping

- 7.9 As outlined above, the proposal includes lowering the ground level of a

small part of the site some 24 square metres in size. Whilst the applicant has stated the proposed development does not require the removal of any trees, this area is in close proximity to two ash trees and the lowering of this land could impact upon their long term viability. The trees are not however protected and sufficient space is available for replacement planting should they become damaged during works. Officers therefore consider it reasonable to attach a condition requiring these trees to be retained and protected during works and if necessary replaced.

**8.0 Conclusion:**

- 8.1 To conclude, having considered the above matters it is Officers opinion that the proposed development is acceptable and special circumstances exist to warrant a departure from Local Plan policy. The size, siting and design of the proposed buildings are acceptable and would not adversely impact upon the rural character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, there would not be an unacceptable impact on neighbour amenity, flood risk or landscaping. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the condition outlined at the start of this report.