

**WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**  
**DELEGATED REPORT**

<b>APPLICATION No:</b>	<b>S6/2009/1167/FP</b>
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**NORTH MYMMS WATER TREATMENT WORKS, WARRENGATE ROAD, AL9 7TU**

**GLASS REINFORCED PLASTIC KIOSK TO HOUSE CHEMICAL DOSING EQUIPMENT AND CROSS SITE DUCTING**

APPLICANT: Three Valleys Water PLC

(North Mymms)

**1 Site Description**

- 1.1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, Landscape Character Area 29 and Watling Chase Community Forest as defined in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and Proposals Map.
- 1.2 The application site consists of a small area of grass located close to the centre of North Mymms Water Treatment Works which itself is located within a fenced compound approximately 100m east of Warrengate Road. There are several buildings within the compound, some of which are two storey in height. A pair of semi-detached dwellings are located adjacent to western boundary of the compound. These dwellings front onto the access road serving the pumping station. The site is well screened by existing buildings and established planting including mature trees and boundary planting surrounding the compound.

**2 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a glass reinforced plastic kiosk to house new chemical dosing equipment and cross site ducting. The proposed development would be situated adjacent to the existing Well House opposite the main site entrance. The kiosk would house 2No. chemical storage tanks and 1No. dosing unit. The kiosk would measure 4.2m in width x 5.3m in depth x 2.5m in height and would be finished in dark green.
- 2.2 Cross site ducting containing power supply, dosing line, water line and cabling would link the dosing kiosk to the existing Filter Building and Dosing Chamber. The ducting would be located within a trough below ground level measuring up to 420mm in depth x 820mm in width. The trough would be finished with concrete chamber covers at ground level similar to paving slabs.
- 2.3 The development also includes a chemical delivery spill containment area within an existing area of hard standing and an emergency shower. These are considered de minimus and therefore do not require consent.

### **3 Planning History**

3.1 None relevant

### **4 Planning Policy**

4.1 National Planning Policy:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Communities  
PPG2 Green Belts  
PPG4 Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms  
PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control

4.2 East of England Plan 2008:

SS1 Achieving Sustainable Development  
ENV1 Green Infrastructure  
ENV2 Landscape Conservation  
ENV5 Woodlands  
ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment  
WAT2 Water Infrastructure

4.3 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

SD1 Sustainable Development  
GBSP1 Definition of the Green Belt  
R1 Maximising the use of Previously Developed Land  
R3 Energy Efficiency  
RA10 Landscape Regions and Character Areas  
RA11 Watling Chase Community Forest  
D1 Quality of Design  
D2 Character and Context  
D8 Landscaping

### **5 Representations Received**

5.1 This application was advertised by site notice, press notice and neighbour notification letters. No letters of representation have been received.

### **6 Consultations**

6.1 **Hertfordshire County Council – Transportation Planning and Policy:** Do not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to suggested planning conditions.

6.2 **Environmental Contract Services:** No response (consulted on 18 August 2009).

6.3 **Environmental Health:** No objection.

### **7 Parish Council Comments**

7.1 North Mymms Parish Council – No response (consulted on 12 August 2009).

## 8 Discussion

8.2 The main issues for consideration with the application are:

1. **Impact on the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area**
2. **Quality of Design**
3. **Impact on Neighbour Amenity**
4. **Watling Chase Community Forest**
5. **Other Material Considerations**

### 1. **Impact on the Green Belt and Landscape Character Area:**

8.3 National Planning Guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 'Green Belts' (PPG2) in paragraph 1.4 identifies that the most important attribute of the Green Belts is their openness. PPG2 identifies the developments that are acceptable within the Green Belt and sets out a general presumption against 'inappropriate' development, adding such development should only be permitted in very special circumstances.

8.4 The proposed kiosk building and cross site ducting do not fall within the criteria defined within PPG2 as appropriate development. It is for the applicant to demonstrate why an exception to Green Belt Policy should be made, to allow permission to be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

8.5 It is the view of the applicant that very special circumstances exist that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The very special circumstances submitted for consideration are summarised below:

*"As part of Three Valleys Water PLC and Government/Drinking Water Inspectorate's directives a policy of continual improvement to the supply and quality of potable water the site is being developed to include additional chemical treatment to improve water quality for the community. This being part of the Companies Business plans agreed with Government Regulator. The scheme provides greater levels of bacterial inactivation and reduction in chlorination levels into water supply.*

*The development location of the treatment process is at the confluence of the raw water sources within the site boundary at North Mymms WTW, which is a major water source for Three Valleys Water. The development location is constrained by the site boundaries, the existing pumping station buildings and the access roads".*

8.6 The proposed development would result in very limited harm to the open character of the Green Belt by virtue of the modest size of the building proposed and its location close to the centre of North Mymms Water Treatment Works. It is considered that the matters submitted by the applicant as very special circumstances outweigh the harm to the Green Belt that would result from the proposed development. The proposal is therefore in accordance with PPG2 Green Belts.

- 8.7 Policy RA10 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan requires developments to contribute to the landscape character and region. The application site is located with Landscape Character Area 29 where there is a strategy to 'Improve and Conserve' the condition and character of the area. The proposal would not have any direct impact upon the local landscape quality of the area and although would not contribute would not be contrary to this policy.

## **2. Quality of Design**

- 8.8 National Planning Policy Guidance PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development requires planning authorities to plan for high quality design which is appropriate in its context. Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 respectively require high quality design in all new development and for proposals to respect and relate to the character and context of their location. The design of the kiosk is simplistic and functional and in keeping with the character of the water treatment works. The proposals comply with PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development, Policy SS1 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008 and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (Statement of Council Policy).

## **3. Impact on Neighbour Amenity:**

- 8.9 The application site consists of a small area of grass located close to the centre of North Mymms Water Treatment Works which itself is located within a fenced compound approximately 100m east of Warrengate Road. The site is well screened by existing buildings and established planting including mature trees and boundary planting surrounding the compound. The proposed plant within the kiosk would not generate any significant noise or odour. The development would not impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and therefore is in accordance with PPS1, Policy SS1 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008, Policy D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005 (Statement of Council Policy).

## **4. Watling Chase Community Forest:**

- 8.10 Within the boundaries of Watling Chase Community Forest the Council seek to achieve the objectives of the Forest Plan, including landscape improvements. The East of England Plan (May 2008) includes a target to increase woodland cover within community forests by 30 percent by 2030 and to do this new development should make a contribution.
- 8.11 The proposed dosing kiosk would be situated within close proximity to four medium sized lime trees and a small hedge. The proposed cross site ducting would pass within the root protection area of two lime trees. It would be necessary to remove at least one lime tree and approximately 9m of hedge. The lime trees and hedge are not considered worthy of protection due to limited amenity value, however, if permitted a condition should be applied to ensure that an appropriate contribution is made to the tree cover within the vicinity of the application site. A reasonable contribution is considered to be three new trees. Subject to the approval of an appropriate landscaping/tree plan, the proposal would comply with Policies ENV1 and ENV5 of the East of England Plan 2008 and RA11 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

## **5. Other Material Considerations**

Sustainable Development:

- 8.12 The applicant has completed the Sustainability Checklist and provided additional information within a Sustainability Statement. The dosing kiosk is designed for minimum heat loss and maximum energy efficiency. There are no greenhouse gas emissions associated with the proposed installation. The proposed installation does not consume water. The proposals are in accordance with Policy R3 of the District Plan and SD1 of the Supplementary Design Guidance.

## **9 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The proposals comply with the relevant national policies and guidance, policies within the East of England Plan 2008, the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the requirements of the Supplementary Design Guidance (Statement of Council Policy).

## **10 Recommendation**

- 10.1 It is recommended that planning application S6/2009/1167/FP be granted subject to the following conditions:
1. C.2.1 – Time Limit
  2. C.13.1 – The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details  
7660101/03/008/1003 ISSUE A & 7660101/03/008/1004 ISSUE A received and dated 5 August 2009 & 41515945/01/201/5150 Rev B & 41515945/01/201/1060 Rev B & 41515945/01/201/1061 Rev A received and dated 25 September 2009 & 7660101/03/008/1000 ISSUE B received and dated 13 October 2009
  3. C.4.1 – Landscaping (f and g)
  4. C.4.2 – Implementation of Landscape Planting
  5. No development shall take place until full details on a suitably scaled plan, of native trees, representing a minimum of three new trees within the boundary of North Mymms Water Treatment Works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Subsequently, these trees shall be planted and maintained as approved.

The approved tree planting shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development and any trees which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

REASON: The application site lies within the Watling Chase Community Forest and the landscaping of this site is required in order to protect and enhance the existing woodland cover. In accordance with Policies ENV5

of the East of England Plan 2008 and D8 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

**SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:**

The proposal has been considered against National Planning Policy PPS1, PPS2, PPG4, PPS23 and Policy SS1, ENV1, ENV2, ENV5, ENV7 and WAT2 of the East of England Plan 2008 and development plan policies (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 SD1, GBSP2, R1, R3, RA10, RA11, D1, D2, D8 and Supplementary Design Guidance) in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the Development Plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

**INFORMATIVES:**

None

**Signature of author..... Date.....**