REF. NO. F/12/70172

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

DESCRIPTION/ ADDRESS	-	Erection of building to enclose concrete clarifier tanks and addition of roof to rapid gravity filter tanks. River Itchen Water Treatment Works, Allington Lane, West End, Southampton, SO30 4HQ

SITE VISIT DATE – 3rd Feb 2011

ARE PLANS ACCURATE? - yes

HAVE ALL NECESSARY NEIGHBOURS BEEN CONSULTED? – yes, site notice also erected.

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	The application seeks permission for the construction of a new building to cover and enclose the existing concrete clarifier tanks and a new steel clad roof to be attached to the existing rapid gravity filter tanks, supported on the existing concrete walls.
SITE AREA	0.38ha
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (NET)	No residential development proposed
TOPOGRAPHY	Slight downhill slope along entrance road from Allington Lane, level area around clarifier tanks and gravity filters.
TREES	Quite dense tree planting along southern boundary with M27 and around houses and boundary with Allington Lane. No trees affected by proposals.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Planting/fencing, substantial tree planting
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	Purpose built site, with number of buildings and currently uncovered tanks/filter tanks for water processing and treatment. Three dwellings positioned either side of entrance road leading into site. Open grassland around tanks. Quite substantial tree screening along Allington lane and southern boundary with motorway embankment.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	Site lies within area designated as strategic gap and countryside. M27 lies to the south of the site.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
Q/11/69914	Proposed installation of ground mounted photovoltaic system	Permission not required – Nov 2011
F/05/55759	Erection of detached building to house membrane filtration plant	Permit – Jan 2006

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT
None received	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
BAA	We refer to your email dated and received in this office on 5th January 2012. The proposed development has been examined from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective and could conflict with safeguarding criteria unless any planning permission granted is subject to the condition detailed below: **Submission of a Bird Hazard Management Plan** Development shall not commence until a Bird Hazard Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority**.** The submitted plan shall include details of: - *management of any flat/shallow pitched/green roofs on buildings within the site which may be attractive to nesting, roosting and "loafing" birds. The management plan shall comply with Advice Note 8 'Potential Bird Hazards from Building Design' attached* **** See next page for information **** The Bird Hazard Management Plan shall be implemented as approved, on completion of the development and shall remain in force for the life of the building**.** No subsequent alterations to the plan are to take place unless first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. **Reason:** It is necessary to manage the site in order to minimise its attractiveness to birds which could endanger the safe movement of aircraft and the operation of Southampton Airport. The Bird Hazard Management Plan must ensure that flat/shallow pitched roofs be constructed to allow access to all areas by foot using permanent fixed access stairs ladders or similar. The owner/occupier must not allow gulls, to nest, roost or loaf on the building. Checks must be made weekly or sooner if bird activity dictates, during the breeding season. Outside of the breeding season gull activity must be monitored and the roof checked regularly to ensure that gulls do not utilise the roof. Any gulls found nesting, roosting or loafing must be dispersed by the owner/occupier when detected or when requested by BAA Airside Operations staff. In some instances it may be necessary to contact BAA Airside Operations staff before bird dispersal takes place. The owner/occupier must remove any nests or eggs found on the roof. The breeding season for gulls typically runs from March to June. The owner/occupier must obtain the appropriate licences where applicable from Natural England before the removal of nests and eggs.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
	We, therefore, have no aerodrome safeguarding objection to this proposal, provided that the above condition are applied to any planning permission. It is important that any conditions requested in this response are applied to a planning approval. Where a Planning Authority proposes to grant permission against the advice of BAA, or not to attach conditions which BAA has advised, it shall notify BAA, and the Civil Aviation Authority as specified in the Town & Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosive Storage Areas) Direction 2002.
Highways Agency	No objection
Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy	The applicants indicate that covering these tanks is a requirement of the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Relevant policies are: Policy 1.CO – restricts development in the countryside unless it is essential for the provision of a public utility service, which arguably this is. Policy 18.CO – indicates that development which fails to respect, or has an adverse impact on the intrinsic character of the landscape will be refused. There must be concerns about landscape impact of these proposals and the potential industrialising effect on this area of the countryside. They are very large sheds in a rural area. However, the site is reasonably well screened from view and also includes a scatter of other buildings. Policy 34.ES – as these are in effect large industrial sheds, they should meet the Council's requirements for sustainable construction as set out in Policy 34.ES and the Council's Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD – see Design Officer comments. In the emerging Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, strategic policy S13 indicates that the Council's strategy for the countryside is to retain rural character and avoid urbanisation. A holding objection is raised pending the outcome of further landscape and sustainability work as required by the Design Officer, including investigation of the potential for use of green roofs and sustainable drainage. <u>Design Officer:</u> This site is currently in the gap between Southampton and Eastleigh. Although this location is not carried over into the forthcoming local plan, it is still designated as countryside in the draft local plan.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
	Although unheated, these are still buildings each over 500sqm and as such, should be subject to the Environmentally Sustainable SOD requirement to both provide sustainable surface water drainage (ESD 4) and provide a green roof (ESD 7). The larger of the two buildings is between 6 and 7m high and more than 3000sqm in area. Although an existing facility these are two completely new buildings and the landscape impact needs to be considered from any public vantage points, including the motorway, public footpaths and Allington Lane. A series of photomontages are needed to help assess the likely visual impact of this development. Design Officer additional comments – 22nd Feb 2012 The visual impact from public realm routes (including the motorway and Allington Lane) appears to be minimal. I believe this and the evidence provided by the applicant shows that the proposed development does not present a significant visual impact.
Head of Countryside & Recreation – Biodiversity	I have no objection to the proposal. I am satisfied that the application will not adversely affect any designated habitats or species subject to the following condition being applied: The development must proceed in accordance with the recommendations in the Ecological Recommendations letter from ECOSA, dated 11th May 2011. Reason: To protect priority species.
West End Parish Council	No objection

POLICY CONTEXT

DESIGNATION APPLICABLE TO SITE
Outside Built-up Area Boundary Within strategic gap

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) Saved Policies: 1.CO, 2.CO, 18.CO, 34.ES, 59.BE
Supplementary Planning Guidance : Residential Amenity in the Borough of Eastleigh
Environmental Sustainable Development Supplementary Planning Document

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE / STATEMENT

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with

POLICY COMMENTARY

particular regard to the visual impact and relationship to the surrounding countryside and strategic gap location.

COMMENT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Please see below

COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None received

PLANNING OBLIGATION/CONSIDERATIONS

Not required

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

> *"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

The application seeks permission for the construction of a new building to enclose the existing clarifier tanks and the erection of a steel roof attached to the existing building surrounding the rapid gravity filter units.

Portsmouth Water has entered into a legal undertaking with water industry regulator, the 'Drinking Water Inspectorate', to construct roofs over the existing tanks to ensure a consistent quality of water is maintained in the treatment works and supplied to customers. This application is related to a second application, F/12/70171, which proposes a new building to enclose Highwood Reservoir, again to prevent algal blooms within the drinking water to protect the quality of the drinking water being supplied to customers.

The proposed new building would completely enclose the existing clarifier tanks, measuring approx 53.4m by 61.6m in footprint. The building would have a shallow curved roof, measuring approx 9.6m in height at the central section. There would also be a 'mansafe' protection system around the edge of the roof, which consists of steel posts and wires.

The roof to the gravity filter tanks would be attached to the walls of the existing tanks, and would be of a similar design/appearance to the building enclosing the clarifier tanks. With the addition of the new roof, the tanks would measure approx 7.8m at its highest point and would again have the mansafe roof protection system around the perimeter of the roof.

The proposed works would result in quite a significant change to the appearance of the site and the new building in particular would result in the addition of a considerable built form in this area of both countryside and strategic gap.

Policy 1.CO relates to development in the countryside and criterion iii allows development which is"…essential for the provision of a public utility service". Policy 2.CO relates to strategic gaps and states that development which would physically or visually diminish the strategic gap.

The proposed works are required for the provision of a public utility service, in order to address existing problems with the quality of drinking water arising from algae in Highwood Reservoir, which then affects the treatment of water in the clarifier and gravity filters. The enclosure of these

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

tanks is required to prevent contamination of the water and ensure an acceptable quality of drinking water being delivered to customers.

The concerns raised by Policy in respect the visual impact and sustainability issues are duly noted. A series of photographs have been provided by the applicant demonstrating the existing views from within the site and surrounding vantage points – these indicate that there will be very limited views of the new roof/building, due largely to the significant tree screening around the site. As such, Policy have taken the view that there is unlikely to be an adverse visual impact to the strategic gap and countryside setting.

The issue of a more sustainable built form has also been explored with the applicant – however, the use of green roof technology is not an acceptable option to Portsmouth Water due to structural concerns and the risk of contamination to the water – this would negate the point of the roof/building in the first place. Whilst it would have been preferable to have a more sustainable form of building, it is accepted that there are genuine operational reasons which preclude this here.

A sample of the proposed metal cladding has been submitted showing the colour – Moorland Green. This is considered an acceptable colour and blends in well with the surroundings.

The concerns raised by the BAA regarding the Bird Hazard Management Plan are noted – a condition is recommended requiring this information to be submitted prior to work commencing on site.

With regard to ecology, the site is less than 200m from the River Itchen SAC and SSSI – the application is supported by an Ecological Assessment which states that the proposed work is not considered to result in any impact to these protected sites. The Council's Biodiversity Officer has raised no objection to the proposals, subject to a condition being applied requiring the development to be constructed in accordance with the recommendations within the Ecological Assessment – these relate primarily to birds, requiring the work to be carried out outside the bird nesting season and/or setting out restrictions if work is carried out within this period.

Whilst the structures will result in significant built forms within the strategic gap, the requirement to safeguard the quality of the water and the limited public views mean that the proposals, on balance, are considered acceptable and are in accordance with Policies 1.CO and 2.CO of the adopted local plan. It is not considered that there will be any adverse impact to nature conservation interests. It is therefore recommended that permission be granted.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is considered that there are no other material considerations to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with the Development Plan and/or legislative background.

CONCLUSIONS

Recommend approval, subject to conditions.