

**10 DCCW2003/2973/F - CONSTRUCTION OF THREE WATER STORAGE TANKS AT LOWER VELDIFER FIELD, ROMAN ROAD, CREDENHILL, HEREFORDSHIRE**

**For: Wyevale Container Plants Ltd., Kings Acre Road, Hereford, HR4 7AY**

**Date Received: 1st October 2003**

**Ward: Credenhill**

**Grid Ref: 47143, 42216**

**Expiry Date: 26th November 2003**

Local Member: Councillor R.I. Matthews

### **1. Site Description and Proposal**

1.1 The application site is located to the north of the main Wyevale Nursery complex in Lower Veldifer field. The site lies approximately 200 metres to the south of Roman Road with the closest residential property being Gartref to the east.

1.2 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of three water storage tanks which are used to hold water collected for the nursery which will be reused as part of the irrigation of the Wyevale operation. The two larger tanks measure 23 metres in diameter with a smaller third tank having a 11 metre diameter and they project just over 3 metres above ground level.

### **2. Policies**

2.1 South Herefordshire District Local Plan:

Policy GD1	-	General Development Criteria
Policy ED5	-	Expansion of Existing Businesses
Policy C1	-	Development within Open Countryside

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Draft):

Policy S1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy S2	-	Development Requirements
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy E6	-	Expansion of Existing Businesses
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character and Areas least Resilient to Change

### **3. Planning History**

3.1 The Wyevale site has a long and detailed planning history and has been subject to a number of applications in recent years. No previous permissions have been granted on the land subject to this application and no other proposals are considered directly relevant to this current scheme.

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 The Environment Agency (letter dated 21st November 2003): "The Agency have no objection to the proposed development. This is on the understanding that the site is not located with the Agency's Indicative Floodplain and the matter of surface water to any drainage ditch being the responsibility of the Local Authority and their Land Drainage Department."

##### Internal Council Advice

- 4.2 Head of Engineering and Transportation (Transportation): There are no transportation/highways issues associated with this scheme.

#### 5. Representations

- 5.1 Stretton Sugwas Parish Council: "The Parish Council has no objection in principle but would like to see the tanks painted a suitable green and provided with a tree screen. We note that two tanks are already in position prior to any expected consent."
- 5.2 One letter of concern has been received from Mr. & Mrs. J. Morris, Gartref, Roman Road, Stretton Sugwas, Hereford who comment as follows:

"We do not object to the principle of storage tanks. The field in which they are proposed to be installed has been built up, drained and fully covered with aggregate so that no rainwater can be absorbed into the ground. This will result in all the water from the area being drained into a system which cannot possibly cope with the additional water however large the proposed storage tanks are. The applicants have acknowledged the current drainage system results in flooding and we are extremely concerned that they could not wait until the drainage problems referred to have hopefully been resolved during the construction of the Roman Road improvements system which should deal with this issue.

We have also been in touch with the Environment Agency and the Council's own Drainage Engineers and although we are advised that planning permission was not required for the earthworks undertaken, the drainage issue alone needs scrutiny in accordance with PPG25 - Development and Flood Risk.

On a personal level, our family property has been flooded since Wyevale's development of Green Farm. Over the 1980's this flooding got continually worse with our property being flooded for a week in 1988. This was made worse by the Council's decision to pipe and run Swainshill water into the system and the Environment Agency allowing a second water borehole to be sunk by Wyevale, again despite our protests. Since 1988 the house and land and the adjoining footpath which runs by our property has been flooded every winter. Whilst Wyevale is obviously not concerned that its working on Lower Veldifer field will lead to another part of its nursery being flooded, we actually have flood in our house along with sewage contamination. There has been a dwelling on this site for over 200 years and previously had no flood problem.

We feel all the above matters should be taken into account when looking at this planning application."

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Central Planning Services, Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## **6. Officers Appraisal**

- 6.1 The key issues in the consideration of this application are the principle of development, the landscaping impact of the three containers and any land drainage matters directly associated with the storage containers.
- 6.2 The proposed water storage containers are sited to the north of the main Wyevale complex and will provide part of an improved and more sustainable irrigation system for the nursery. The containers are intended to collect surface water run-off from Lower Veldifer field which will then be stored and transported for nursery irrigation purposes on the complex to the south. Having regard to the well established nursery operation, it is considered that the storage containers are well related to the existing site and no objection is raised to the principle of this development.
- 6.3 Regarding the visual impact of the containers which are already in situ, the galvanised finish, particularly of the two larger containers, is visible from Roman Road to the north and the footpath to the east. Whilst the site is identified in the emerging Unitary Development Plan under Policy LA2 (landscape least resilient to change), having carefully considered the visual impact, no objection is raised on this particular issue. From the north the containers are viewed against the backdrop of the Wyevale Nursery land use and do not appear out of character in this context. Furthermore, given the height of the containers at approximately 3 metres, they are not significant features in the landscape which would warrant an objection.
- 6.4 The issue of land drainage and flooding is the one which dominates the objection letter which has been received on this application from the occupiers of Gartref to the east of the site. As will be noted above the Environment Agency raise no objection to this development, however point out that land drainage in and around this site would be the responsibility of the land owner and where applicable the Local Authority. Having discussed this matter with the Council's Land Drainage Engineer, it is clear as set out in the objection to this proposal, that surface water drainage and flooding has been a problem around this site for a considerable period of time. Whilst works have recently been undertaken by the applicant to clear out and improve capacity within the land drainage ditches on the site, given the almost flat topography the ditches around this area are continuously holding water through the winter months.
- 6.5 As part of this water storage scheme, the applicant has laid an impermeable surface under Lower Veldifer field in order that surface water is collected and redirected into the storage tanks. It should also be noted that the storage tanks are being used continually through the winter months and as such would not remain full for use solely for summer irrigation. Any excess water would be directed into the recently cleared land drains through a controlled soakaway system. Whilst Officers sympathise with the recent history of flooding which directly affects the adjoining residential property, it is not considered that this development in itself would exacerbate that problem. Indeed, the controlled collection and use of surface water from Lower Veldifer field should in fact improve surface water runoff rates to the adjoining watercourses resulting in a possible improvement to the existing levels.

6.6 In view of the above it is considered that the water storage containers represent a sustainable form of development which have not had an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape in the area. Officers do not consider that the containers require painting as per the Parish Council's comments given the limited visual impact which they have. As such, planning permission is recommended.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following condition:**

- 1. A01 (Time limit for commencement (full permission)).**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

**Informative:**

- 1. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of PP/LBC/CAC.**

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.