

8 DCSW2006/1298/F - NEW NATURAL GAS PRESSURE REDUCTION INSTALLATION AND ASSOCIATED WORKS. (TIE-IN TO EXISTING PETERSTOW COMPRESSOR STATION AND NO. 2 FEEDER OUTSIDE THE COMPRESSOR STATION AND EXTENSION TO EXISTING SITE ACCESS ROAD), LAND ADJACENT TO PETERSTOW COMPRESSOR STATION, TREADDOW OFF THE A4137, HENTLAND, HEREFORDSHIRE, GRID. REF. SO: 545/240

For: National Grid per Mouchel Parkman Gel, Meridian House, Wheatfield Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1YG

Date Received: 4th May 2006

Ward: Llangarron & Pontrilas

Grid Ref: 54584, 23997

Expiry Date: 24th August 2006

Local Member: Councillor Mrs. J. A. Hyde
Councillor G. W. Davis

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site of the proposed installation is currently an open field with a standing crop due to be harvested in the current growing season. Immediately to the south is a double hedgerow which marks a historic parish boundary and has, in the past, been used as a route albeit not a public right of way shown on the definitive map. This double hedgerow is known locally as 'Hell's Ditch'. On the south side of this feature is the existing Peterstow Gas Compressor Station which is comprised of a secure compound containing several buildings, gas pipeline infrastructure and related plant. This existing site is surrounded by mature planting which is the dominant feature when the site is viewed from distance. Access is obtained by an un-metalled track from the A4137 south of Great Treadow.
- 1.2 Members visited the site on 20th June, 2006.
- 1.3 The proposal is to create a new 'Pressure Reduction Installation' on the north side of Hell's Ditch. The total site area will be around 1.9 hectares (4.5 acres) but much of this will be given over to a landscape belt around the installation itself. Within the landscaped perimeter there will be a secure compound containing five buildings and the pipeline infrastructure. In order to achieve a level site a degree of 'cut and fill' will be required because the site slopes downwards significantly from west to east.
- 1.4 The installation is required as part of the Brecon to Tirley (Gloucestershire) link for transporting natural gas from the port terminal at Milford Haven and feeding it into the National Grid. This overall project is of national importance.

1.5 The new long distance gas pipeline is permitted development, for town planning purposes, where it is underground. However, it is of such a scale that it is subject of its own Environmental Impact Assessment which will be submitted to the Secretary of State in the near future. Planning permission is required for the new Pressure Reduction Installation because the works are above ground. The planning application has also been the subject of its own Environmental Impact Statement which has assessed the proposal against the following headings:

- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
- Ecology
- Water Resources
- Agriculture
- Landscape and Visual
- Noise and Vibration
- Traffic and Transportation
- Socio-Economic
- Air Quality
- Work Management

1.6 The Environmental Statement describes the detailed proposals in the following terms:

'The secure compound would be primarily surfaced with chipping with some areas of hardstanding and a concrete roadway running through the site. The buildings within the security fence would comprise:

- an instrument building
- two pipeline inspection gauge trap facility buildings
- a boiler house with vent stack, and
- a standby generator building

In addition, a number of above ground gas pipeworks would be located within the compound including:

- a meter area
- two boiler pressure reduction skids
- a heater area
- a filter area, and
- a regulator area

1.7 The non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement is attached as an appendix.

2. Policies

2.1 Planning Policy Statements

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| PPS.1 | - | Delivering Sustainable Development |
| PPS.7 | - | Sustainable Development in Rural Areas |
| PPG.4 | - | Industrial and Commercial Development &
Small Firms |
| Circular 2/85 | - | Planning Control over Oil and Gas Operations |

2.2 Hereford and Worcester County Structure Plan

Policy CTC.6	-	Landscape Features
Policy CTC.9	-	Development Requirements
Policy A.1	-	Development on Agricultural Land
Policy E.6	-	Industrial Development in Rural Areas

2.3 South Herefordshire District Local Plan

Policy GD.1	-	General Development Criteria
Policy T.3	-	Highway Safety Requirements
Policy C.9	-	Landscape Features
Policy C.11	-	Protection of Best Agricultural Land
Policy C.16	-	Protection of Species
Policy C.48	-	Health and Safety

2.4 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)

Part 1

Policy S.1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy S.2	-	Development Requirements

Part 2

Policy DR.12	-	Hazardous Substances
Policy DR.13	-	Noise
Policy DR.14	-	Lighting
Policy CF.1	-	Utility Services and Facilities

3. Planning History

3.1	SH960993PF	Gas Compressor Station	-	Refused 13.11.96
	SH961054MZ	Proposed 132/11KV outdoor sub-station and associated overhead line supply	-	Objection 13.11.96
	SH1/96	Hazardous substances consent for a gas compressor station	-	Not determined
	SH970178PF	Gas Compressor Station	-	Withdrawn
	SH970179PF	Gas Compressor Station	-	Approved 02.05.97
	SH2/97	Hazardous substances consent for a gas compressor station	-	Approved 02.05.97

4. Consultation SummaryStatutory Consultations

- 4.1 The Environment Agency has no objections in principle but has suggested conditions to be attached to any approval.

- 4.2 English Nature have not commented.
- 4.3 The Countryside Agency have acknowledged receipt of the consultation but made no comment.
- 4.4 Department of Communities and Local Government has acknowledged receipt of the Environmental Statement but made no comments.

Internal Council Advice

- 4.5 The County Archaeologist is satisfied that the mitigation measures proposed are appropriate and has no objection subject to the imposition of an appropriate watching brief condition on any permission.
- 4.6 The Team Leader, Landscape and Bio-diversity, has been involved in negotiations with the developer over the precise siting of the development and its landscaping. She supports the view that the development will result in enhanced habitat opportunities through landscape mitigation works and that, along with the habitat which has been created around the existing site, the development will encourage a greater diversity of flora and fauna. She has requested adjustments to the details of the landscaping scheme which, at the time of drafting this report, are in preparation.
- 4.7 The Building Conservation Officer does not object and considers that the development will not detract significantly from the setting of the Grade II Listed buildings at Great Treadow.
- 4.8 The Transportation Manager does not object, subject to conditions on visibility splays and routing arrangements.
- 4.9 At the time of drafting this report the comments of the Public Rights of Way Officer were still awaited.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Neither Hentland nor Peterstow Parish Councils have objected.
- 5.2 Representations have been received from the Herefordshire branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England:
- acknowledging the national importance of the development
 - expressing concern at the visual impact on 'this rolling countryside, which is very close to the Herefordshire part of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'
 - recommending an increase in the landscaped 'bunds' around the site
 - questioning whether an alternative site nearby could be used instead
 - raising the issues of light and noise pollution.
- 5.3 Representations have been received from, and on behalf of, the following properties in the vicinity of the site:

Minnett Farmhouse, Peterstow
Little Peterstow Farm
Little Peterstow Barn
Hendre Cottage, Glewstone
Little Peterstow Orchards

They raise the following concerns:

- an alternative siting to the south or to the west of the existing site would be less visually obtrusive
- the development would prevent the use of the historic right of way along Hell's Ditch
- expressing concern at the cumulative effect of a second installation
- concern about noise, fumes and light pollution
- the development involves the loss of grade 2 agricultural land
- there will be a severe adverse visual impact especially when viewed from Little Peterstow Barn.

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

6. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 The development proposals which are the subject of this planning application are part of a wider strategic development of national importance, i.e. the connection from the port facilities at Milford Haven into the national grid for transporting natural gas. At some point along the route there has to be a connection with existing infrastructure and, as is made clear in the Environmental Statement, it needs to be somewhere along the length of the line east of the Brecon Beacons. The existing gas compressor station at Peterstow is the most practical point. The applicant has assessed some 13 alternative lines for the main pipeline and the one which passes through Peterstow is the result of exhaustive testing of alternatives. There can be no doubt that it is in the national interest to have this installation somewhere in the close vicinity of the existing Peterstow site.
- 6.2 The choice then becomes one of exactly where to place the new facility. It cannot, practically, be added on to the existing infrastructure within the existing compound and therefore requires its own separate compound. The Environmental Statement which accompanies the planning application canvasses five different options close to the existing site and demonstrates that the one now proposed is the one with the least impact on the wider landscape, including public views from the A4137 and the nearest dwellings, with one exception. The site is clearly visible from Little Peterstow Barn from a distance of around 260 metres and it will have an adverse impact on the outlook from that property.
- 6.3 The most appropriate development plan policy is the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan Policy CF.1, Utilities and Infrastructure, to which the Inspector has recommended no change. It therefore carries significant weight. The policy is:

CF1 Utility services and infrastructure

Proposals for the development of new utility infrastructure or extensions to existing facilities or works designed to meet the needs of the community or the local economy or to improve the environment should not:

1. adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents or other sensitive uses; or

2. adversely affect the character and quality of the Malvern Hills or Wye Valley AONB or significantly impact upon the landscape character of other parts of the County.

Where necessary, proposals should include measures to mitigate any environmental impact.

- 6.4 One of the objectors has drawn attention to Regional Spatial Strategy Policy EN.1 but, as this is concerned primarily with renewable energy policy, it is not as directly relevant as UDP Policy CF.1.
- 6.5 In the above context the key potential adverse impacts of the development are likely to be:

impact on the wider landscape
impact on heritage assets
impact on bio-diversity
noise
light
visual impact on Little Peterstow Barn

Landscape

- 6.6 Considerable efforts have gone into minimising the impact of the proposed installation in the landscape. The total land take of two hectares is much larger than is required solely for the actual level area of compound itself. The total site includes a wide margin of landscaping along with a cut-and-fill layout to minimise impact of the site. However, because the land slopes down significantly to the east, at this end of the site it will sit up out of the landscape. An extensive perimeter planting layout has been negotiated and, assuming that the landscaping develops as well around this installation as it has around the existing installation, then within a few years public views will largely comprise of the perimeter planting rather than the installation itself.
- 6.7 There are significant constraints on all the other alternative sites examined, including those suggested by some of the objectors. The site currently proposed has the advantage of space around it for substantial planting which should ameliorate the adverse impact on the wider landscape.
- 6.8 In response to concerns about the impact on Little Peterstow Barn and the apparent availability of an alternative siting (identified as 'Site D') the applicant has submitted the following further information about site D.

"As part of the site selection process, Site D was considered but discounted for a number of environmental and engineering reasons.

Environment

The overall constraints map indicates the features in Site D. These include a locally important archaeological feature (a historic parish boundary) which runs across Site D to the corner of Peterstow Compressor Station and a field boundary with Site E, which is made up of a mature tree and hedgerow mix. Consequently, Site D would be too small to accommodate the proposed PRI without extensive loss of trees and hedgerow along field boundaries.

Drainage issues within Site D have also become apparent. Sites D, E and C naturally drain to the low-lying eastern corner of Site D. The high lying north and north-eastern areas of Site D also naturally drain into a wet area between Peterstow Compressor Station and the historic parish boundary, as witnessed in our recent site visit where significant surface water was evident on the site. These natural flows would require extensive diversions and it is doubtful if the Flood Risk Assessment would indicate the site acceptable.

Engineering

The overall constraints map also indicate engineering features, i.e. gas main feeders 2 and 23 extending east, west across the northern edge of Site D, these mains constrain the site making it too small to accommodate the proposed PRI.

Putting aside the environmental constraints, locating the PRI in Site D would require extensive engineering works. As the new 48" pipe approaches the site from the north-west, it would require pipework crossings of the gas main feeders in no less than 5 locations.

These include 2 nr. 48" dia. Crossings, 2 nr. 24" dia. Crossings for connection to feeder 2 and 1 nr. 24" dia. Crossing for connection to Peterstow Compressor Station. These works would generate significant additional excavations and associated earthworks, increasing the construction impact on the site.

In summary, considering the archaeological, environmental, potential drainage and engineering constraints, as well as the limitations in physical size of the site, D is considered unsuitable for the proposed PRI."

Heritage

- 6.9 The principal heritage assets are the setting of the listed buildings at Great Treaddow and the archaeology of the site. Both the Building Conservation Officer and the County Archaeologist find the proposals acceptable.
- 6.10 Hell's Ditch has been treated as a heritage asset not to be damaged in any way. An example of this is the pipework connections between the existing and proposed site will be bored underneath it rather than using a trench cut and fill. However, one objector has produced evidence that the former Hereford and Worcester County Council regarded it as a public right of way. The development proposals do not directly impact on it as a public (or private) right of way but future users will find themselves passing between two securely fenced compounds, one to each side, as they travel along the existing line of the route. The field access gate at the western end will be reinstated as part of the development but this does not of itself prevent its potential use as a right of way.

Bio-diversity

- 6.11 The Team Leader, Landscape and Bio-diversity has confirmed that the development will lead to an improvement in the bio-diversity of the site.

Noise

- 6.12 Apart from construction noise the new use is unlikely to create any noise nuisance to the nearest residential properties.

Light

- 6.13 The security lighting for the site will be as low key as possible. The lighting for the existing site is not visible from outside the site. It is only required in limited circumstances anyway and will not, typically, be evident outside the early evening hours in winter.

Visual Impact on Little Peterstow Barn

- 6.14 This is the key de-merit of the development as will have been seen from the site visit. Little Peterstow Barn is the only residential property with a direct line of sight to the site. It is approximately 260 metres away. The principal view affected is from the rear garden rather than the principal lounge windows in the house itself. The existing site is very well screened by Hell's Ditch such that the largest building on the site, which is over 8 metres high, can only just be seen. There is a realistic prospect that, when the landscaping around the existing site matures, a similar degree of screening will be achieved. In these circumstances the degree of impact on the view from this one residential property is not sufficient to demonstrate non-compliance with UDP Policy CF.1 or to outweigh the other material benefits of the development taking account of the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Assessment and the degree of compliance with the other planning policies referred to in Section 2 above.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

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

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

- 2. B11 (Details of external finishes and cladding (industrial buildings))**

Reason: To secure properly planned development.

- 3. D01 (Site investigation - archaeology)**

Reason: To ensure the archaeological interest of the site is recorded.

- 4. F06 (Restriction on noise levels)**

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of the area.

- 5. If during development, contamination not previously identified, is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the local planning authority for an addendum to the Method Statement. This addendum to the Method Statement must detail how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.**

Reason: To ensure that the development complies with approved details in the interests of protection of Controlled Waters.

6. Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The volume of the bunded compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of the tank plus 10%. If there is multiple tankage, the compound shall be at least equivalent to the capacity of the largest tank, vessel or the combined capacity of interconnected tanks or vessels plus 10%. All filling points, associated pipework, vents gauges and sight glasses must be located within the bund or have separate secondary containment. The drainage system of the bund shall be sealed with no discharge to any watercourse, land or underground strata. Associated pipework shall be located above ground and protected from accidental damage. All filling points and tank/vessels overflow pipe outlets shall be detailed to discharge downwards into the bund.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

7. Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and hardstandings shall be passed through an oil interceptor designed and constructed to have a capacity and details compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the interceptor.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

8. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme for the treatment and disposal of condensate discharge from the boiler shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

9. All foul drainage shall be contained within a sealed and watertight cesspool, fitted with a level warning device to indicate when the tank needs emptying.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

10. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation system including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and pollution prevention techniques has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Surface water generated from the site shall be limited to the equivalent Greenfield run-off rate for the site (101/sec/ha). The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment and the increased risk of flooding.

11. F32 (Details of floodlighting/external lighting)

Reason: To safeguard local amenities.

12. G01 (Details of boundary treatments)

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure dwellings have satisfactory privacy.

13. G05 (Implementation of landscaping scheme (general))

Reason: In order to protect the visual amenities of the area.

14. G11 (Retention of hedgerows (where not covered by Hedgerow Regulations))

Reason: To ensure that the application site is properly landscaped in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

15. G18 (Protection of trees)

Reason: To ensure adequate protection to existing trees which are to be retained, in the interests of the character and amenities of the area.

16. H26 (Access location)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

17. Routing of vehicles during the construction phase shall be in accordance with the applicants' Environmental Statement, i.e. restricted to use of the 'A' and 'B' category road network.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

18. Traffic control and management (including temporary signs and traffic lights) shall be in accordance with the Traffic Management Plan submitted for the main pipeline project as set out in the Environmental Statement.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

19. H03 (Visibility splays)

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

Informative(s):

1. HN01 - Mud on highway

2. HN05 - Works within the highway

3. HN22 - Works adjoining highway

4. Developers should incorporate pollution prevention measures to protect ground and surface water. We have produced a range of guidance notes giving advice on statutory responsibilities and good environmental practice which include Pollution Prevention Guidance Notes (PPG's) targeted at specific activities. Pollution prevention guidance can be viewed at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444251/444731/ppg/>.

The applicant should also contact Jeremy Churchill to agree pollution prevention measures that may be required during construction and post construction phases.

- 5. Site operators should ensure that there is no possibility of contaminated water entering and polluting surface or underground waters.
- 6. Your attention is drawn to Annex B10, of PPS.25, which states that ... 'In making an assessment of the impacts of climate change ... increases in rainfall intensities of up to 15% by 2110 may provide an appropriate precautionary response to the uncertainty about climate change impacts on rainfall intensities'.
- 7. Surface water run-off should be controlled as near to its source as possible through a sustainable drainage approach to surface water management (SUDS). This approach involves using a range of techniques including soakaways, infiltration trenches, permeable pavements, grassed swales, ponds and wetlands to reduce flood risk by attenuating the rate and quantity of surface water run-off from a site. This approach can also offer other benefits in terms of promoting groundwater recharge, water quality improvement and amenity enhancements. Approved Document Part H of the Building Regulations 2000 sets out a hierarchy for surface water disposal which encourages a SUDS approach.

8. N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission

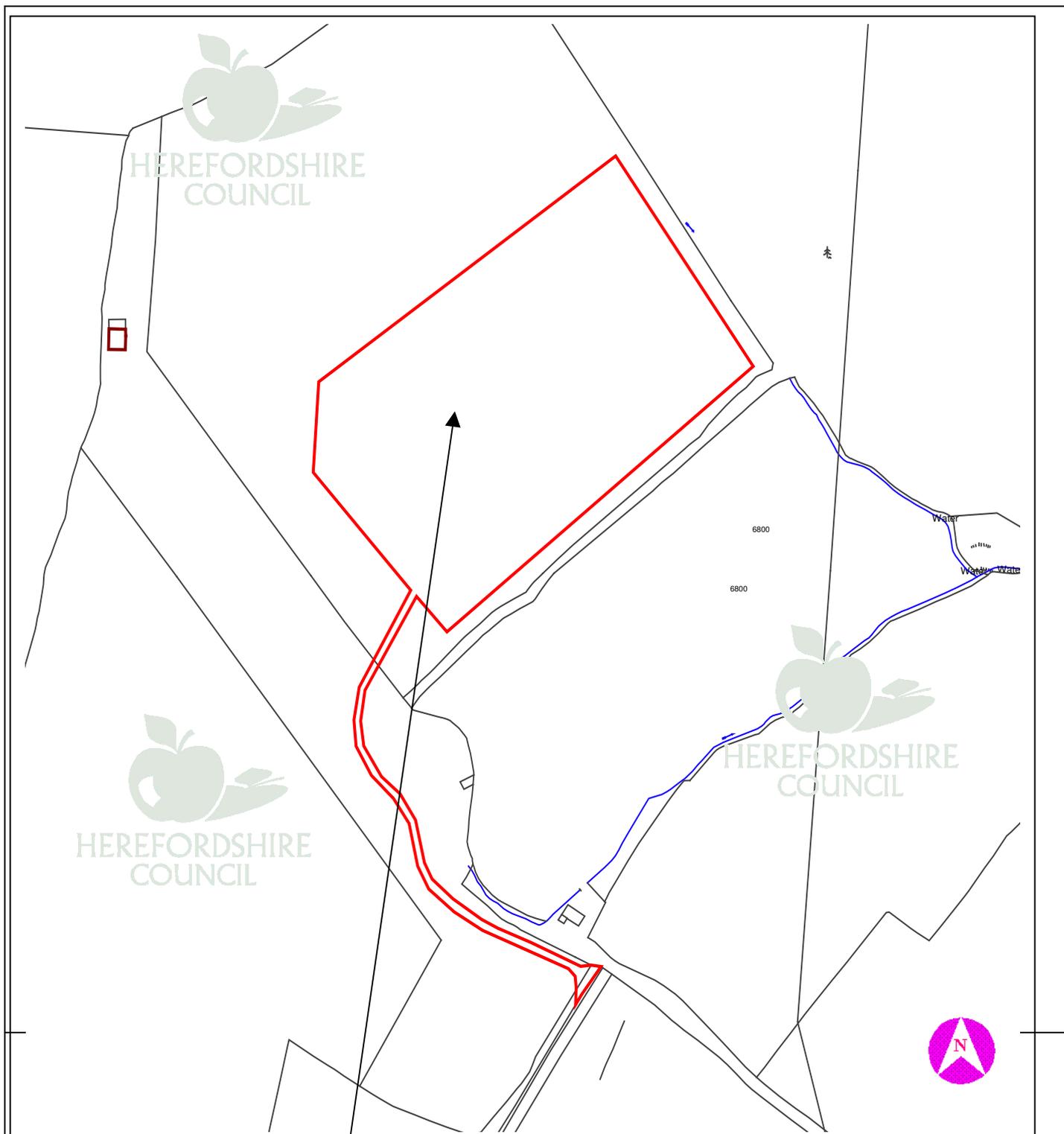
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO. DCSW2006/1298/F

SCALE: 1:2500

SITE ADDRESS : Land adjacent to Peterstow Compressor Station, Treaddow off the A4137 Hentland, Herefordshire, Grid. Ref. SO: 545/240

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