

MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	25 APRIL 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	<p>N113363/F- DEMOLITION OF GALVANISED DRILL TOWER & CONCRETE BASE, REMOVAL OF METAL FENCE, ERECTION OF NEW GALVANISED STEEL FENCE, CONSTRUCTION OF NEW KERBED AREA. CONSTRUCTION OF TRAINING TOWER CONSISTING OF THREE FRAMED STOREYS AND ROOF. CONSTRUCTION OF NEW METAL CLAD BUILDING TO HOUSE BREATHING APPARATUS FACILITIES ACCOMMODATION FOR TRAINING CAGE AND FOR AT KINGSLAND FIRE STATION, ARBOUR LANE, KINGSLAND, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 9RZ</p> <p>For: Mr Hay per Mr Malcolm Hay, Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester, WR5 1JR</p>
WEBSITE LINK:	http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/58286.aspx?ID=113363&NoSearch=True

Date Received: 29 November 2011 Ward: Bircher

Grid Ref: 344231,261224

Expiry Date: 29 February 2012

Local Members: Councillor WLS Bowen

Introduction.

The following report has been updated to include the update of additional representations received following publication of the previous report, presented to Committee on 4 April 2012. The application was deferred to enable members to make a visit to the site.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site consists of agricultural land located to the side and rear of the existing fire station, from which it is separated by a low hedgerow. The station is located alongside the C1036 public highway known as 'Arbour Lane', Kingsland. The existing fire station is occupied by one fire engine and is externally constructed of brick under a tiled roof.
- 1.2 Within the surrounding area, which forms part of the Kingsland Conservation Area, are dwellings of various scale and character. 130 metres distance from the fire station's eastern elevation is a dwelling known as Kingsland House, this is grade II* listed. Within a similar distance from the western elevation of the fire station is The Arbour, this is grade two listed.
- 1.3 Within the yard to the rear of the fire station is an existing galvanised drill tower which sits on a concrete base, and is approx. 12 metres in height.

- 1.4 Information in support of the application indicates pre-application consultation did take place with the Local Parish Council.
- 1.5 The application proposes new strategic training facilities, (alongside the existing fire station), in order to provide improved fire fighter and accident training for fireman covering the northern area of Herefordshire. The proposal includes the demolition of the existing on site drill tower and removal of its base and removal of part of the existing boundary hedgerow.
- 1.6 New development on site consists of :
- Construction of a new 12 metre high galvanised steel training tower.
 - Two-storey training building approx. 7 metres in height in order to provide hot fire training facilities.
 - A metal clad building in order to house breathing apparatus compressor and cylinder store and other equipment as well as shelter provision for new trainees during briefing sessions.
 - Provision of a concrete formed training trench in order to provide practice facilities for the recovery of cars and large animals from ditches and watercourses.
 - A brick training wall in order to provide training facilities for temporary propping and cutting.
 - A new 2.4 metre high galvanised security fence alongside the inner boundary and native hedgerow on the fence's outer boundary and stock proof fence adjacent to the field boundary.

2. Policies

2.1 Central Government advice:

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.
- Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1: Planning and Climate Change
- Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth.
- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 24: Planning and Noise.

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

- S1 - Sustainable Development
- S2 - Development Requirements
- S11 - Community Facilities and Services
- DR1 - Design
- DR2 - Land Use and Activity
- DR3 - Movement
- DR4 - Environment
- DR13 - Noise
- E10 - Employment Proposals Within or Adjacent to Main Villages
- E15 - Protection of Greenfield Land
- HBA4 - Setting of Listed Buildings
- HBA6 - New Development Within Conservation Areas
- LA2 - Landscape Character and Areas Least Resilient to Change
- NC1 - Biodiversity and Development
- CF1 - Utility Services and Infrastructure
- CF5 - New Community Facilities

3. Planning History

- 3.1 79/105/N – Proposed fire station with drill tower. Approved 6 November 1979.
- 3.2 DCNW2004/0245/F – Single-storey extension. Approved 15 March 2004.

4. Consultation Summary

- 4.1 Welsh Water recommend conditions with regards to discharge of surface and foul water from the site should the application be approved.
- 4.2 English Heritage recommend refusal to the application stating that they consider the proposal will cause substantial harm to the setting of the grade II* listed Kingsland House, and Kingsland Castle, a scheduled ancient monument. Comment is also made that the proposal will also affect the settings of the grade II listed farmhouse known as The Arbour and its attached barn and Showers Cottage which is also grade II listed as well as the character of the surrounding Conservation Area. Their response further states that the applicants should be encouraged to find another site, in an industrial area with good road connections. Comment is also made that if the Council is minded to grant planning permission, then the adverse impact could be mitigated to a limited extent by planting indigenous and well managed woodland in the fields around the application site.
- 4.2.1 The Transportation Manager raises no objections.
- 4.2.2 The Public Rights of Way Manager raises no objections.
- 4.2.3 The Conservation Manager comments that the proposed development will have an impact which on the whole will be damaging to the character of the area and the setting of the listed buildings. (Grade II* Kingsland House and Grade II The Arbour), which presently occupy a more or less unspoilt rural context and that this must be weighed against the justification and wider benefits of the proposal. The response recommends that the likely damage to the Conservation Area and the settings of the listed buildings be given full weight against the likely benefits of the proposal and if the application is approved consideration be given to reserve by means of conditions with regards painting the tower, external materials, boundary treatment and planting.
- 4.6 The Landscape Manager initially responded to the application concluding that the proposed development is not considered to meet the requirements of UDP Policy LA2 as an identifiable significant change in the character of the landscape and visual amenity will occur as a result of the proposal. Evidently, this loss of character and negative impact on the edge of the village will have to be weighed against the needs of the Fire and Rescue Service. The response further stated that if the application is to be approved that a landscape condition is attached to any approval notice in consideration of visual amenities.

A further response dated 28 March 2012 to an amended plan indicating additional landscaping in the form of a small tree plantation alongside the eastern side of the application site is welcomed as it will provide improved mitigation for the surrounding area. A condition with regards to protection of an existing tree and hedgerow is recommended to be attached to any approval notice issued.

- 4.7 The Planning Ecologist comments that the grassland on the application site is improved grassland and that the hedgerow proposed for removal is predominantly hawthorn and a hedgerow that appears to have been planted around the time period of the fire station's construction. The response welcomes the planting of a native mixed species hedgerow outside the proposed boundary security fence and that any hedgerow removed must take

place outside of the bird nesting season. A condition with regards to habitat protection and enhancement is recommended to be attached to any approval notice issued as well as the attachment of informative notes, with regards to protection of birds and protected species as referred to in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

- 4.8 The Environmental Health Manager raises no objections indicating proposed external lighting detail provided as part of the application appears to adequately address issues in respect of overspill/light nuisance and that smoke generated on site from the proposed hotbox/smokerroom should not have any noticeable effect beyond the boundaries of the application site. Potential noise generated on site is not considered to be an issue of undue concern. An additional response concludes that the proposed development is not a sufficient intensification to be likely to cause nuisance.
- 4.9 The Economic Development Manager has responded to the application in consideration of a suggestion that the proposed development would be better situated at Leominster Enterprise Park. The response states that all of the remaining land at the Enterprise Park is currently under offer to one large occupier and as a consequence no land is available at the Enterprise Park for the proposed development. The response further states that within North Herefordshire there appears to be a distinct lack of opportunity for the development subject to this application to be located onto recognised employment allocated land or commercial buildings.
- 4.10 The Archaeology Manager raises no objections, indicating that the site for the proposed development is 200 metres west of the scheduled ancient site of Kingsland Castle, and as such does not consider the proposed development will have an adverse effect on the setting of the castle. The response recommends that a condition with regards to site recording in relationship to any possible undiscovered heritage assets that could be affected as a result of the proposed development is attached to any approval notice issued.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Kingsland Parish Council comments as follows:

'The Parish Council is opposed to the proposed development of the fire station at Kingsland. The proposal to develop within the Conservation Area of a rural village adjacent to a grade II listed property is inappropriate. The Parish Council believes the training site should be located near the major A roads and not in Kingsland.'*

- 5.2 Two letters of objection have been received from Mrs. Sarah Sharp-Smith, Kingsland House, Kingsland and K. A. Hughes, 8a, Ford Street, Wigmore. Issues raised are summarised as follows:

- The proposed development falls outside the village envelope.
- The proposed development would form an intrusion into the open countryside and would have an impact on the character of the Conservation Area in this area of the village.
- The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character of the adjacent Grade II* former Rectory known as Kingsland House.
- The proposed development has an industrial outlook which is at odds with the nature of adjacent properties.
- Little attempt at minimising the impact of the proposed development and consideration should be given to lowering the proposed development into the landscape and using the resulting excavated material to form a bank around the proposed development.
- Insufficient consultation with regards to the proposed development.
- Consideration should be given to locating the proposed development at Leominster Enterprise Park, a location considered more suitable for access from fire stations at Tenbury Wells, Bromyard and other fire stations in North Herefordshire.

- The site will be used outside of normal working hours including Sundays.
- Other development proposals within the surrounding vicinity have been considered unsuitable, such as a proposal for affordable housing.
- The proposed development will mean the loss of farmland and will have an impact on livestock that graze the adjacent field.

5.3 One further letter of comment has been received from a member of the public who resides in Kingsland, querying if land is available on Leominster Enterprise Park. The letters suggests that the Fire Service hold a public meeting in Kingsland, as the existing fire station is considered to be a community asset that should be retained and that further discussions with the Community would result in a better understanding of the need for the training venue and its use.

5.4 An email has been received from the applicants referring to an offer to purchase a section of a site on the Leominster Enterprise Park by a third party in order that the applicants can constructed the proposed development at a location considered more suitable by the third party.

5.5 The Ramblers Association comments that there is a footpath within close proximity to the application site and that there must remain unhindered access to this footpath.

5.6 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/searchplanningapplications.aspx

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:-

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community_and_living/consumer_advice/41840.asp

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 This is a finely balanced application. It is acknowledged that the proposed development will have an impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and this will need to be assessed against the requirements of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to provide improved training facilities for the part time fire and rescue workers that operate in the northern area of Herefordshire, which is one of the two western areas of the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

6.2 The key Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan policy is Policy CF1: Utility Services and infrastructure. This policy emphasises how proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents or other sensitive uses or significantly impact upon the landscape character and that where necessary proposals should include measures to mitigate any environmental impact.

6.3 The key issues in consideration of this application are:

- Need for the facilities as proposed and sequential test in relationship to site selection.
- Impact of the proposed development on surrounding Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings.
- Landscape impact and biodiversity issues.
- Environmental health issues.

Need for the facilities as proposed and sequential test in relationship to site selection

6.4 Information in support of the application indicates that Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service have identified a number of areas of initial and continuing training for fire-fighters that are required, in order to support improvements to its service delivery. It has been

established to consolidate fire training facilities at four strategic locations across the service. Present training facilities are based at Kidderminster, Evesham and Malvern. Within the Herefordshire area it is proposed to provide training facilities at Kingsland in order to serve North Herefordshire and at an additional location in the southern area of Herefordshire at a location yet to be decided.

- 6.5 Kingsland Fire Station falls into the north Herefordshire area, which also includes fire stations at Leintwardine, Kington, Tenbury Wells, (Worcestershire) and Leominster. Kingsland has been selected as the venue for the training facilities due to its central location in relation to other fire stations within its group, (all are manned by firemen on a part time basis), and also because there is land adjacent to the fire station that the Fire Service consider is suitable and available for development. It is also considered that Kingsland Fire Station is easily accessible, (30 minutes travelling distance from other fire stations within the same Fire Service area), and within very easy reach of the A4110 public highway.
- 6.6 The applicants' statement that Kingsland Fire Station is the most appropriate fire station at which to locate the proposed development is considered reasonable strategically, as it is the most centrally located station in the Fire Service's northern area, with easy access to the A4110 public highway. The other stations, except Leominster, are not only located on the boundary of the northern area, but of the County itself, except for the one in Tenbury, which is in Worcestershire. It has been suggested that such facilities would be better provided at Leominster. A site visit to Leominster Fire Station has revealed that this station houses three fire appliances and that there is no land available for construction of training facilities as required, being adjacent to a public car park that serves Leominster town centre and within closer proximity to residential areas, than Kingsland Fire Station.
- 6.7 Land adjacent to Leominster Police Station on the Enterprise Park, has also been suggested as a suitable location for the proposed development. The applicants have indicated that available land at this location is insufficient and the training facilities as proposed would conflict with the adjacent helicopter landing pad. Further still existing police welfare facilities at this site are also considered insufficient for use by users of the facilities due to the dirty nature of the proposed training operations. Kingsland Fire Station has adequate facilities, which are required by health and safety legislation and hence a separate site unrelated to a fire station is not considered feasible. Enquires to the Police have confirmed that insufficient land is available at the Leominster Police Station for the required fire and rescue service training facilities.

Impact of the proposed development on surrounding Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings.

- 6.8 The site is adjacent to the Kingsland Fire Station, which is located on the eastern fringe of the village outside of the recognised development boundary for the settlement, and within the designated Conservation Area. The development represents a community service facility, and as such the principle of the proposal at a location outside of the recognised development boundary is acceptable in consideration of local plan policies.
- 6.9 The Kingsland Conservation Area covers the majority of the built up area of the village as well as a considerable swath of farmland and more scattered built environment along the southern side of the settlement in which area the fire station is situated.
- 6.10 Located approximately 130 metres from the application site in an easterly direction is Kingsland House, (former Rectory), this is a Queen Ann style dwelling which is Grade II* listed. Located approximately 110 metres in a westerly direction from the application site is the property known as The Arbour, a Grade II listed timber framed farmhouse. Both of these properties and their curtilages are separated from the existing fire station by a grassland field.

Kingsland Castle, a scheduled ancient monument is located on the opposite eastern side of Kingsland House, to the application site.

- 6.11 The proposal is for development no higher than the existing steel training tower on site proposed for removal, however the proposed fire and rescue training facilities will have greater visual impact as they are far more bulky in scale and form, covering wider area than that presently in situ. The application also includes provision for a boundary security mesh fence measuring approx. 2.2 metres in height with an outer planted hedgerow of mixed natives species with an outer livestock proof fence.
- 6.12 There can be no doubt that the proposed development, which is industrial in character, and although of no greater height than the existing steel tower, will have a greater visual impact than the tower currently on site. Thus there will be an impact on the character of the surrounding Conservation Area, which includes the setting of the two nearest listed buildings. However both listed buildings are separated from the application site by the field, the distance of which will moderate the impact. The grade II* listed building is surrounded by mature vegetation and the applicants' proposal to plant a native boundary hedgerow and trees alongside the site's boundary will help mitigate the visual impact of the development. It is not considered that there will be any significant impact on the setting of Kingsland Castle, or Showers Cottage, due to the separation distances. Therefore the impact will be greatest on the Conservation Area itself.

Landscape impact and biodiversity issues.

- 6.13 The application site is located in a landscape character type of Principal Settled Farmlands as defined by the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, the key characteristics of which are hedgerows used for field boundaries and mix farming land use. The existing fire station is a relatively small building enclosed with a fence and hedgerow with an existing steel tower that is not typical of the surrounding landscape.
- 6.14 The proposal will double the amount of the fire station ground area with increased development and structures on site, representing an industrial form of development, albeit on a level site, it represents development which will have a greater impact on the character of the surrounding Conservation Area.
- 6.15 The hedgerow proposed for removal appears to be a hedgerow of mainly hawthorn species that was planted at some time during or after construction of the fire station. The adjacent land is currently used for farm livestock grazing and is considered to be of low importance with regards to the existing grass sward.
- 6.16 The planting of a new native mixed species hedgerow and a buffer planting of trees adjacent to the eastern boundary of the application site is welcomed and will help mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape and the setting of the nearby Grade II* listed building.
- 6.17 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development will have an impact on the character of the surrounding landscape, additional landscaping in the form of the boundary hedgerow and tree planting will help mitigate this form of industrial development and contribute towards integrating the development into the surrounding landscape.

Environmental Health issues

- 6.18 It is noted that the Environmental Health Manager raises no objections to the proposed development, indicating that smoke generated on site is not considered sufficient enough to cause sufficient nuisance to surrounding dwellings in consideration of the location. Proposed

external lighting is also considered acceptable. Use of the training facilities considered acceptable in consideration of the location for the development and intensity of use.

- 6.19 Therefore concerns as raised about environmental issues, such as escape of smoke from the site, noise and external lighting cannot be sustained in the event of a refusal of the application.

Other outstanding issues.

- 6.20 The issue with regards to the offer to purchase a section of a site at the Leominster Enterprise Park for construction of the proposed development is not considered a material planning issue in relationship to this application. Further still the applicants have indicated that there is no economic viable solution to enable the proposed development to be constructed at Leominster Enterprise Park in accordance with the offer as suggested by the third party.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The application proposes much needed improved training facilities for retained fire and rescue workers covering the North Herefordshire Area.
- 7.2 It has been established that strategically Kingsland Fire Station is the most suitable and convenient location at which to construct the facilities. Land is available immediately adjacent to the existing station. Other fire stations within the North Herefordshire area are located on the area's boundaries. It has also been established that no other fire stations have suitable land available adjacent to their station structures, whilst other land options for training facility construction have also proved unviable. Therefore the sequential test in relationship to site selection is considered to be satisfied.
- 7.3 There is no doubt that the training facilities will have an impact on the quality of the surrounding landscape and Conservation Area. The proposal to plant a native boundary hedgerow and trees, will help mitigate the proposal into the surrounding landscape to an extent, but will not entirely ameliorate its impact. The impact on the listed buildings in close proximity to the site will be limited, as Kingsland House is surrounded by mature vegetation and separated from the site by a field. Arbour House is positioned at a different angle in relationship to the existing fire station than Kingsland House, and also has a significant separation distance from the fire station, by means of the said field and landscaping and planting within its curtilage. Landscaping as proposed will help mitigate the development and conditions attached to any approval notice issued will ensure landscaping of the site.
- 7.4 It is noted the Environmental Health Manager raises no objections in consideration of residential amenity issues.
- 7.5 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal will have an impact on the Conservation Area the need for the facility is considered to be a material consideration of sufficient weight to justify approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- 1. A01 Time limit for commencement (full permission)**
- 2. B01 Development in accordance with the approved plans**
- 3. C01 Samples of external materials**
- 4. G09 Details of Boundary treatments**

5. **G10 Landscaping scheme**
6. **G11 Landscaping scheme - implementation**
7. **I33 External lighting**
8. **E01 Site investigation - archaeology**
9. **L01 Foul/surface water drainage**
10. **L02 No surface water to connect to public system**
11. **L03 No drainage run-off to public system**
12. **Prior to commencement of the development, a habitat protection and enhancement scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the scheme shall be implemented as approved.**

Reason: To comply with policies NC7, NC8 and NC9 within Herefordshire's Unitary Development Plan in relation to Nature Conservation and Biodiversity and to meet the requirements of PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and the NERC Act 2006

INFORMATIVES:

1. **N11A Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) - Birds**
2. **N11C General**
- 3 **Reasons for granting of planning permission.**

The proposal is for improved fire and accident training facilities for fire and rescue workers who cover the North Herefordshire Area in accordance with the Hereford and Worcester Fire Service proximity of strategic training buildings data map supplied by the applicants

The sequential test in relationship to site selection is considered satisfactory, the applicants having adequately demonstrated why the development should be located adjacent to the existing Kingsland Fire Station.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the applicants have submitted amended plans indicating improved landscaping mitigation and with suitably worded conditions attached to any approval notice issued on balance the proposed development is considered acceptable in consideration of landscape/biodiversity impact.

However the site is located within the Kingsland Conservation Area, to which it is considered that the development will have a negative impact upon and therefore not considered to be in accordance with Policy HBA6: Development within Conservation Areas, of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

Within close proximity to the site are two listed buildings, (One Grade II* and the other Grade II), in consideration of the separation distance from the site and additional landscape mitigation the proposed development is considered acceptable in consideration of the setting of these listed buildings. The proposed development is also considered acceptable in relationship to the setting of other

listed buildings within the vicinity of the site and this includes the setting of Kingsland Castle.

The proposed development in consideration of residential amenity and privacy is considered acceptable, as well as public highway issues in consideration of the Fire Station's location.

In consideration of the need to provide adequate training facilities for Fire and Rescue workers within the North Herefordshire area and the sequential test in relationship to the site selection and overall impact on the surrounding landscape, historic environment, and consideration to environmental health issues, on balance the proposed development is considered acceptable. Whilst explicitly not considered to be in accordance with Policy HBA6 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan, it is considered that material considerations identified above outweigh the requirements of the historic environment in relationship to the Conservation Area, the proposal therefore is considered to be in accordance with other policies of the said Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Key Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan Policies are considered to be Policies S1, S11, DR1, DR2, DR3, DR4, DR13, E10, HBA4, HBA6, LA2, NC1 and CF1.

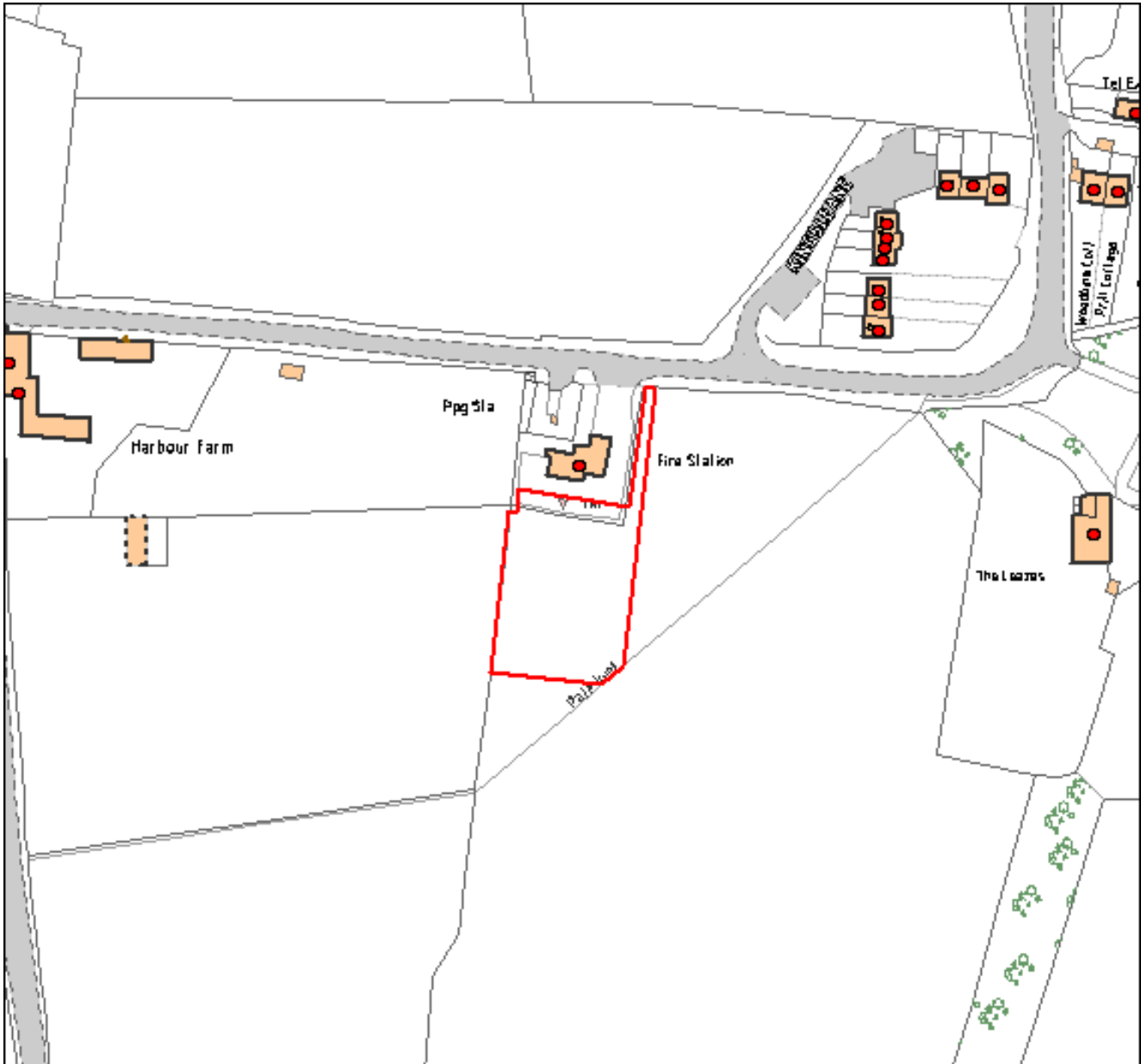
Decision:

Notes:

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Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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APPLICATION NO: N/113363/F

SITE ADDRESS : KINGSLAND FIRE STATION, ARBOUR LANE, KINGSLAND, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 9RZ

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