

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 Members: Councillor Mrs. J. A. Hyde
Councillor G. W. Davis

This application was considered by the Southern Area Planning Sub-Committee at its meeting on the 5th July 2006 when Members resolved to refuse permission contrary to the recommendation of the report. This decision was accordingly referred to the Head of Planning Services to determine if it should be reported to the Planning Committee for further consideration.

At its meeting on 5th July 2006 the Southern Area Planning Sub-Committee was minded to refuse this application due to the adverse impact it would have on the wider landscape of the area and, in particular, the outlook from the nearest residential property at Little Peterstow Barn. Members expressed the view that an alternative site, known as "Site D" was available and the applicant should re-consider this option.

In the debate the members of the Area Sub-Committee took account of the importance of the scheme in the national interest and accepted that a site close to the existing compressor station was needed, however, having visited the site and looked at both principal options, they remained firmly of the view that the current proposal was unsatisfactory being an open field on rising ground where there would be a significant adverse impact on the landscape. By comparison they found that "Site D" was much more appropriate and, being in close proximity to the existing compressor station, should be technically achievable.

In assessing the application the following factors should be borne in mind:

1. The site as currently proposed is not in an AONB, AGLV or conservation area and its landscape impact therefore has to be considered on its own merits. It is, however, in the wider setting of listed buildings at Treaddow Farm (to the west of the site)

2. The site as currently proposed has the support of the Team Leader (Landscape and Biodiversity), the Team Leader (Building Conservation) Officer and the County Archaeologist, all of whom have been involved in negotiations with the applicants to minimise any adverse impacts on the setting of the nearest listed buildings, the landscape generally and the above and below ground heritage assets of the site.
3. The principal objectors, at Little Peterstow Barn, only have a direct view from the southern end of the garden; no principal living room windows face towards the site and views of the site from the raised decking immediately outside the lounge are obscured by trees along the southern boundary of the objectors' garden.

By comparison, the alternative "Site D" would bring the development closer to the setting of the listed buildings at Great Treadow and may give rise to new objections from the two residential properties which have direct views of Site D.

Notwithstanding the above comments a landscape based reason for refusal, as resolved by the Area Sub-Committee does have some merit (albeit, without the support of the expert advice of the officers noted above). The Sub-Committee's view is not one of opposition to the project but one of opposition to the specific site chosen.

Following the meeting the applicants advised that they would submit further details. These will be reported to the meeting.

In considering the merits of the application Members should bear in mind that the scheme is of national significance in terms of the security of energy supplies which are crucial to social and economic wellbeing of the UK. This is made clear in both the supporting information in the Environmental Statement which accompanied the application and in the Ministerial Written Statement of 16th May 2006 (appended to this report). Any refusal of permission should take this into account alongside the local landscape issues.

In view of the fact that the decision of the Sub-Committee to refuse this application raises a strategic issue the application is referred to this Committee for further consideration.

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 The Public Rights of Way Officer advises that there would be no effect on footpath HN.17.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Hentland Parish Council have no objection.
- 5.2 Peterstow Parish Council originally raised no objection. However, subsequently a letter has been received in which the view is expressed that the works will be visually very detrimental to the area and have a generally adverse effect on surrounding land and property, especially that of Little Peterstow Barn. It suggests that 'Site D' would be a more suitable option with far less visual impact. It also supports concerns relating to noise, air and light pollution made by Little Peterstow Barn.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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 and has not been fully considered
- 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
- it would be premature to approve this before approval has been given for the pipeline itself.

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 Treadow 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.

Non-Technical Summary

Introduction

National Grid has a statutory obligation to develop and maintain a safe, efficient, co-ordinated and economical pipeline system for conveying natural gas. The Brecon to Tirley pipeline and associated works are part of the Milford Haven Gas Connection Projects. These involve the construction of new gas transmission pipelines from two new Liquid Natural Gas terminals at Milford Haven in South Wales to Tirley near Tewkesbury at which point they connect with the National Transmission System (NTS) at Treaddow near Peterstow in Herefordshire and at Corse near Tirley in the Forest of Dean.

Murphy Pipelines Ltd has been appointed by National Grid to design and build a section of the proposed pipeline from Brecon to Treaddow to Tirley and its associated works.

This Environmental Statement is focussed upon the proposed Treaddow Pressure Reduction Installation (PRI) that would form one of the connections from the new Brecon to Tirley pipeline to the existing NTS. The function of the Treaddow PRI is to filter, meter and regulate the pressure of in-coming gas before relaying it into the existing NTS.

The proposed Treaddow PRI site is located in an agricultural field in the County of Herefordshire, approximately 500m east of the settlement of Treaddow and approximately 4km to the west of Ross-on-Wye. The existing Peterstow Compressor Station lies directly to the south of the proposed site. The site would be approximately 1.9 hectares in size and would be ringed by a security fence. It is anticipated that the site preparation for the development would begin in late summer/autumn 2006, subject to planning permission.

Site Selection

A connection to the existing NTS pipeline is required at Peterstow as this is the nearest practical point to the existing NTS pipeline network east of the Brecon Beacons National Park. A connection at this point is also required to provide greater security of supply in the event that the section of new or existing pipeline between Peterstow and Tirley needs to be closed for maintenance purposes.

Within the general vicinity of the existing Compressor Station at Peterstow, a number of locations were reviewed during design feasibility study having regard for environmental and engineering design considerations to identify the preferred site. Environmental considerations included avoidance of known environmental features and protected areas, possible visual impact, proximity to sensitive receptors, plus the ability to screen and landscape the site.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

An archaeological desk based assessment was undertaken to identify heritage features and the potential for archaeological finds within the locality of the proposed PRI.

The assessment identified the need to ensure that the setting of two listed buildings, Great Treaddow Farmhouse and Great Treaddow Farm, is not impacted by the proposed development.

The development site borders the Hentland and Harewood/Peterstow parish boundary on its south eastern perimeter which is of possible archaeological interest.

Mitigation strategies to avoid impacts to these archaeological features include the following main elements:

- design of the PRIs is being undertaken in conjunction with Landscape and Visual assessment work to ensure the design is in keeping with setting to avoid detrimental impact to the listed buildings;
- scale and colour of the installation would be carefully considered to avoid detrimental impacts;
- a geophysical survey of the whole site has been undertaken ahead of construction.
- an archaeology watching brief would be undertaken during construction to deal with any un-anticipated archaeological remains.
- where services must cross the parish boundary a cross section would be recorded and sampled.

Ecology

An ecological assessment was undertaken during January, February and April 2006. The report assessed the ecological value of the study area, with consideration for the possible presence of any rare or protected species or sensitive habitats.

No statutory protected sites are located within the study area although a Special Wildlife Site (designated by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust), Wilson Farm Ponds, is located approximately 1km east of the site. This is unlikely to be impacted by the works however.

The development would principally impact arable farmland and habitats of minimal ecological value. Construction of the access track would necessitate loss of a number of poorly conditioned crack willows and an isolated section of hedgerow.

Biodiversity is anticipated to be improved through landscaping and planting with native species typical of the local area, including berry bearing species that may benefit wintering birds as a food source, and through the construction of a reed bed habitat.

Surveys have been carried out to confirm the presence / likely absence of Great Crested Newts in ponds within 500m of the development site. Newts have been found in a pond to the west of PRI site, and a standard capture and exclusion programme will be implemented to minimise impacts to this species. These works will be completed under a licence issued by Defra. Mitigation will include the provision of suitable terrestrial and breeding habitat for this species

No habitats suitable for commuting, foraging or roosting bats are likely to be impacted by the scheme. However, a bat survey would be carried out prior to construction works to make an assessment of activity on site. The landscaping and planting proposals include provision for reinforcing existing hedgerows which should serve to improve their potential value as commuting routes.

Bird surveys have been undertaken to identify species likely to be breeding on site. Additional surveys will be undertaken to check for possible presence of ground nesting birds ahead of construction. Deterrent measures (e.g. use of bird scaring tape) will be implemented to deter ground nesting birds, notably sky lark.

Water discharges would be subject to Environment Agency (EA) control to ensure no detrimental impact to water quality in Luke Brook and other watercourses, including the Wilson Farm Ponds Special Wildlife Site.

The landscaping planting would include native species which would offer increased food and shelter for local species. It is considered likely that biodiversity would increase and overall the project is anticipated to result in a net slightly beneficial impact to ecology and biodiversity.

Water Resources

The proposed Treadow PRI is located within the catchment of the River Wye, which runs approximately 3km to the southeast. Luke Brook, a tributary of the River Wye runs past the east of the site in a south easterly direction. The site is underlain by a minor aquifer, as classified by the EA.

A series of best practice construction measures would be implemented by Murphy Pipelines Ltd to protect surface water runoff and prevent secondary impacts on adjacent water bodies and groundwater. These would include provisions to control storage and handling of fuel oils and chemicals, and measures to control erosion and wash out of silty waters and any effluents, for example. These are standard Murphy Pipeline Ltd environmental management procedures and will be implemented under the supervision of the Murphy Pipeline Ltd management team which includes a dedicated project Environmental Advisor.

Discharge consents would be agreed by the EA to control discharge of condensate from the proposed low pollution boiler as well as storm drainage. The whole site would be drained via an interceptor to prevent release of substances into surrounding water courses in the unlikely event of a leakage or spill.

This combination of effective mitigation measures would ensure that any impact of the development on surrounding water quality would be of minor significance.

The interception of the drainage system would have no more than a very minor impact on groundwater recharge and basal river flow.

Agriculture

The proposed Treadow PRI is located within an arable field classified as Grade 2 under the national Agricultural Land Classification system. Soil of either Grade 1 or 2 extends all around the proposed site and consequently the loss of this good quality Grade 2 field is unavoidable. Topsoil removed during the construction process would be utilised for landscaping purposes.

The field is currently designated under the Environmental Stewardship scheme and thus the development would result in a small reduction of land within the designated area.

Structural damage and soil compaction from construction activities would be minimised by best practice construction methods in accordance with standard Murphy Pipelines Ltd environmental management procedures. Temporary access routes would be covered with suitable material to protect the soil.

An overall adverse impact of minor significance to the local soils and agriculture is anticipated.

Landscape and Visual

The proposed development is in a rural location, characterised by a rolling landform comprising a series of low ridges and fields. Small hamlets and isolated farmsteads scatter the landscape with the existing Peterstow Compressor Station present to the south of the proposed site. The presence of electricity pylons traversing the study area detracts slightly from the overall character.

The loss of short stretches of existing established hedgerow adjacent to the proposed development site and the loss of an agricultural field would result in a minor loss of landscape features characteristic of the immediate area.

The landscape and visual assessment has regard for various sensitive receptors including surrounding residential properties, public rights of ways and highways. These receptors would be provided with a degree of visual screening from both existing, vegetation and proposed mitigation planting which would improve as it matures over time. Nevertheless elevated structures associated with the PRI (e.g. boiler stack) would

remain evident as new feature in the landscape. Earthworks, mounding and planting would impact on the existing rolling landform.

Mitigation would be provided in the form of low mounding and a robust planting framework, utilising species appropriate to the locality. During construction and in the first years of opening, the impacts are considered to be slight to moderately adverse. By year 10 the impacts are likely to be reduced to neutral to slightly adverse. The boiler house stack, which would rise above the vegetation screen, and associated water vapour plume would remain visible.

Noise and Vibration

Construction noise will be managed through standard best practice construction controls in accordance with the standard Murphy Pipeline Ltd environmental management procedures. These will include the specification of low noise generators, for example.

Controls over construction working hours would be agreed with the Herefordshire Council Environmental Health Officer (EHO). Any necessary out of hours work would be agreed in advance with the EHO.

The EHO would be advised in advance of any unusual noise generating events, for example during commissioning. Residents would also be advised of such events by letter drop and provided with telephone contact details for responsible Murphy Pipelines Ltd staff. Murphy Pipelines Ltd are committed to a transparent working relationship with the EHO and local residents to minimise any potential nuisance.

Noise in the operational phase would be mitigated through design and the specification of noise limits for plant to ensure that noise would not cause nuisance to residents of adjacent dwellings. The assessment is based on night time conditions as these are the most sensitive.

Overall a slight adverse impact can be expected as a result of disturbance from traffic and plant during the construction period and from running of plant during operations.

Traffic and Transportation

The generation of heavy vehicular traffic and movement of staff would have a slight adverse impact upon the local road system during the construction phase of the project. This would be managed through implementation of a Project Traffic Management Plan agreed with local highways authorities and police to control the routing and timing of traffic movements and provide for reinstatement of any road damage.

The operational activities associated with the PRI would generate minimal traffic given the low volumes of personnel attending the normally unmanned facility. The overall impact to traffic and transportation is considered to be neutral.

Socio-Economic

The scheme provides strategic national benefits in terms of improved security of gas supply.

The development of the Treadow PRI is not predicted to result in any significant change to the local economy in the long term. There would be some benefits to local trade during the construction period.

Tourists visiting the surrounding Peterstow area would not be significantly affected by the proposed development. The existing and proposed sites are well screened in the surrounding landscape.

Overall the residual socio-economic impact to the local area is considered to be neutral.

Air Quality

Best practice construction measures would be implemented to minimise generation of dust and prevent nuisance. These would include measures such as sheeting of bulk transport lorries and stockpile dampening, for example.

Traffic movements would be controlled in accordance with the Project Traffic Management Plan. Residual impacts of traffic on air quality would be localised and of slight adverse significance.

There is unlikely to be any significant impact on local air quality associated with traffic movements during the operation phase of the proposed development.

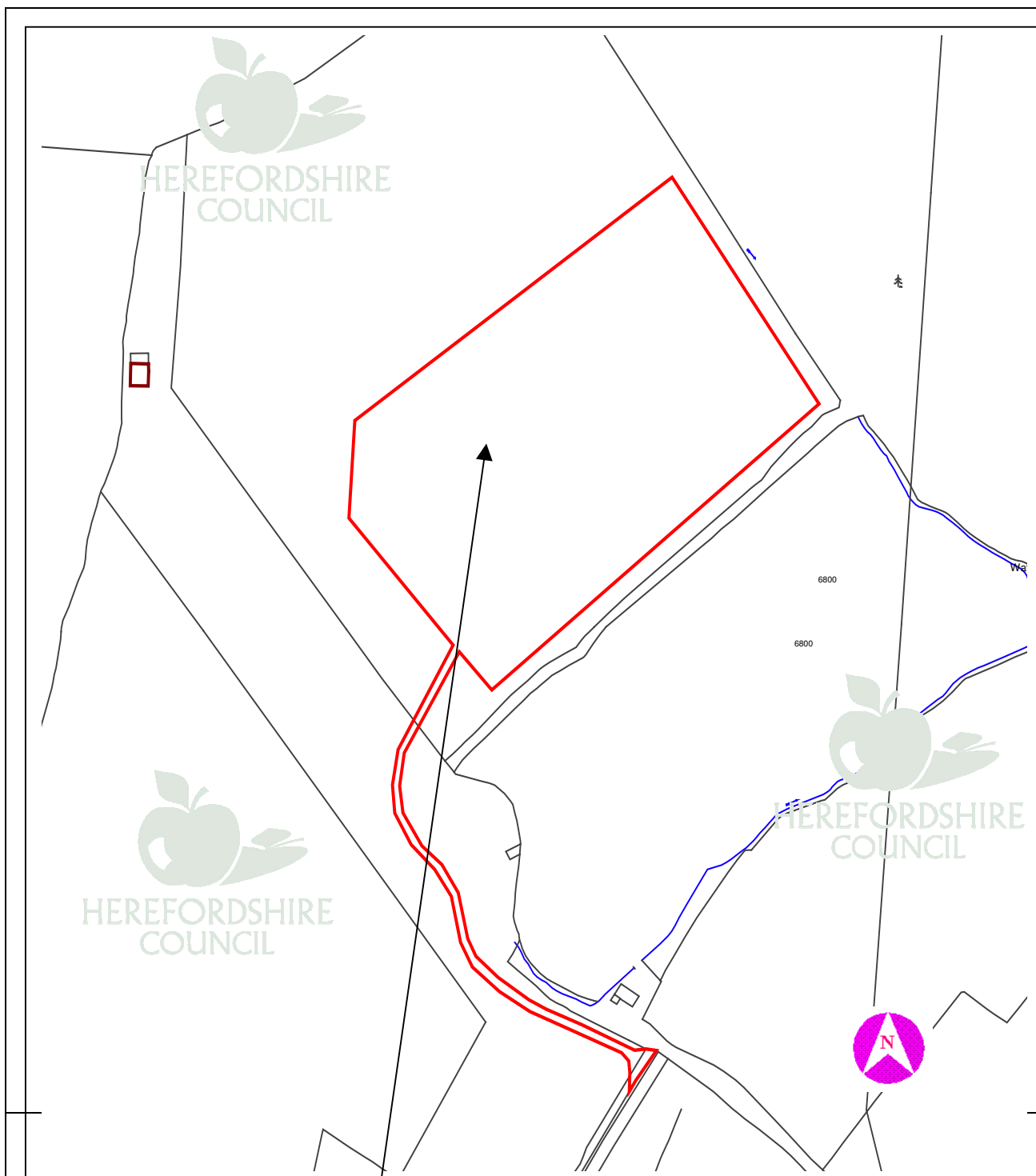
A low emissions boiler is proposed to ensure no significant effects on air quality during operation.

Natural gas conveyed through the PRI facility is pre-treated upstream and presents no odour concern. Natural gas is lighter than air and any emissions would be quickly dispersed and present no significant public health threat.

It is considered that the overall impact on local air quality is likely to be of neutral significance during operations.

Waste Management

The construction and operation of the Treadow PRI would generate small quantities of waste. Waste materials would be recycled where possible or disposed of off site using appropriate licensed waste management contractors. Options for eliminating, reducing, recycling and responsibly disposing of the wastes would be subject to regular review by both Murphy Pipelines Ltd and National Grid subject to the requirements of their respective ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management Systems.



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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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