Agn 10/7

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: ADC/0287/07 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Anechoic A, D & E Test Shops, Ricardo Engineers Ltd Old Shoreham Road, Lancing BN43 5FG**

Proposal: **Dilution tunnel and exhaust outlet on east side roof slope of test shop 15 including alteration of existing adjacent exhaust outlets**

The Application

The proposal is for a 0.65m diameter stainless steel exhaust duct (known as a 'dilution tunnel') on the lower part of the eastern roofslope of this relatively recently-built test shop. The larger existing outlets on its roof will be rotated and connected to it. The new tunnel will be below the top of the existing outlets and below the ridge of the roof. The outlets (as existing) project to a height level with the ridge of the shallow pitched roof. The proposal would be 35m long as compared to the building length of about 60m.
The present system is deficient in that, under certain weather conditions, the exhaust emissions fall to ground level and re-enter the test shop through its air intakes. The new system should also eliminate the black smoke that currently is occasionally emitted. Typical test cells within the building each have 2 exhausts, one large and one small. The latter would remain as existing; the larger ones would be connected to the dilution tunnel.

Consultations and Representations

Director of Services: The EHO has no objection.

Lancing Parish Council: No comments received.

Third Parties: No comments received.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC2, NE1, NE5-6, CH1, CH3, ERA1, ERA4-5, DEV1
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AP3, AP7, AC1, AC2-4, AE18
PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development" (ODPM 2005)
PPG4 "Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms (DoE 1992)
PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" (ODPM 2004)
PPS23 "Planning and Pollution Control" (DTLR 2005)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is outside the defined built-up area in the Local Plan and within the strategic gap of countryside separating Shoreham from Lancing. It is also within the boundary of the Sussex Downs AONB as designated in 1966 but now separated from the remainder by the A27T (NB. it is not within the proposed South Downs National Park boundary).

As a major employment site within the District, the site is subject to a specific policy AE18 of the Local Plan. This states:-

"AE18 - In respect of the land shown subject to this policy on the Proposals Map, the DPA will permit business or industrial development as an exception to policies AC1, AC2 & AC4 if it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the DPA that:-

(a) the development is essential to the economic viability of the occupier of the entire site;
(b) the proposal does not conflict with the requirements for safeguarding the runway flightpath at Shoreham Airport;
(c) the development is of a design and construction appropriate to the locality and is unobtrusive in the landscape, and
(d) on-site car parking arrangements and access to the public highway are acceptable under policy AT12."

The Local Plan recognises that Ricardos play an important part in the local economy, being a significant source of employment, and that this is a factor in considering planning applications notwithstanding the location in an area where development would normally be resisted.

In the present instance, the proposals involve upgrading the existing exhaust outlet system on the roof of this test shop in order to overcome a pollution problem with extracted air being drawn back into the building under certain weather conditions. It is also stated that it would help avoid occasional black smoke. Consequently, there is a reasonable need which could be said to, in effect, satisfy (a) of policy AE18 above.

As it is no higher than the existing structure there is no effect on airport safeguarding, so (b) above is satisfied. Requirement (d) is not relevant.

The greatest concern is the appearance as, although below ridge height, the design and construction are entirely functional and add to undesirable clutter on the roof of a building within 40m of the A27T. There are a number of large conifer trees between this complex of buildings and the river and A27T, plus other smaller trees are growing on the banked verge. As a result, the installation would have very little effect on the AONB landscape or that of the strategic gap, although it would be glimpsed in gaps between the trees and groups of trees from the A27. The installation would be visible from the A283 and from the higher ground to the east of the river valley (Lesser Foxholes

and The Paddocks) but, at such a distance, it would blend into the existing complex of buildings and structures on this industrial site and not be so dominant as the existing large plant on the east side of the complex. It is considered that requirent (c) is met.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason that :-

The proposed development would improve air quality and meet the needs of a business important to the local economy without resulting in detriment to the landscape of the Sussex Downs AONB or to the open character of the strategic gap of countryside within which the premises are located, and without affecting airport safety. It consequently does not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AP3, AP7, AC1, AC2-4, AE18) and West Sussex Structure Plan (LOC2, NE1, NE5-6, CH1, CH3, ERA1, ERA4-5, DEV1)

Subject to:-

1. C1Ci (Standard time limit)

Case Officer..... Date... 26/6/07....

Countersigned..... Date... 26.6.07