

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE AGENDA 27 April 2005

**Item No:** 05  
**Address:** Alresford Salads The Nythe Bighton Road Old Alresford Alresford  
Hampshire SO24 9DZ

**Parish/Ward** Old Alresford

**Proposal Description:** New cold store; repositioning of vacuum cooler, removal of temporary cold store and replacement storage unit complete with new landscaping

**Applicants Name** Alresford Salads

**Case No:** 05/00057/FUL

**W No:** W07763/13

**Case Officer:** Mr Dave Dimon

**Date Valid:** 4 January 2005

**Delegated or Committee:** Committee Decision

**Reason for Committee:** 4 or more representations contrary to the Officer's recommendations have been received

**Site Factors:**  
Area Liable to Flood  
County Heritage Site



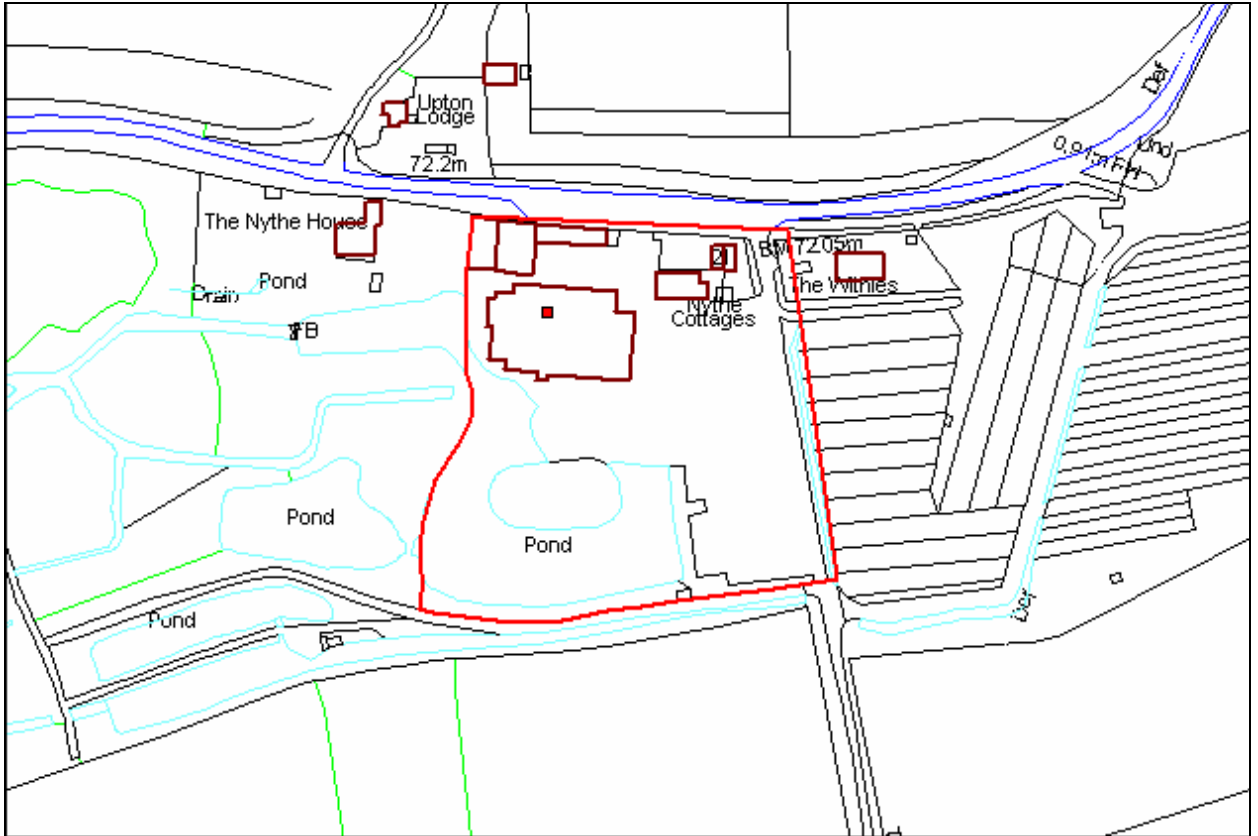
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**SITE LOCATION PLAN**

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**Site Description:**

- The Nythe is a large salad processing factory that is situated on the southern side of Bighton Lane Old Alresford adjacent to watercress beds.
- It is within the Itchen Valley ASLQ and adjacent the area designated as SSSI.
- From its origins as a small cleaning and packing facility for locally grown cress the site has grown rapidly over recent years with the addition of a range of large modern industrial buildings to provide processing facilities for watercress and associated salad crops and has become a major local employer.
- This has also led to the creation of an extensive area of hard standing that stretches into a filled and reclaimed pond area to provide for staff parking, manoeuvring space for the large lorries that service the site and open storage of pallets and equipment.
- The area of parking / hardstanding was undertaken without the benefit of planning permission and was regularised retrospectively by permission W07763/08 which also included temporary permission for 2 portacabins to provide additional office space. The portacabins have been subsequently renewed by /06 & /12 and their replacement by a new two storey office has been permitted by /11 but not as yet implemented.
- The present offices comprise a single storey timber clad building that is sited parallel to the road. To the east of which, are Nythe Cottages, a semi-detached pair of cottages that front the road and are now surrounded by the commercial site with the main access having been moved to the east side of the cottages. To the eastern side of the access is a modern agricultural workers bungalow that is associated with the cress growing business, which is now operated quite separately from the Nythe.

**Relevant History:**

- W07763/12 Continued use of 2 No. portacabins for offices ancillary to packing use,; (RENEWAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION W07763/09).
- W07763/11 Two storey office extension (to replace existing temporary offices) access alterations and car parking: Permitted 20 November 2003.
- W07763/10 Single storey extension for storage and distribution: Permitted 4 July 2003.
- W07763/09 Continued use of 2 No. portacabins ancillary to packing use, provision of 50 car parking spaces and landscaping: (RENEWAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION W07763/06): Permitted 15-11-2002.
- W07763/08 Extension to cold store - Permitted 12-03-02.
- W07763/07 Enclosure of existing loading/unloading area - Permitted 09-04-01.
- W07763/06 2 No. portacabins ancillary to packing use, provision of 50 car parking spaces and landscaping (RETROSPECTIVE) Permitted 3-11-00.
- W07763/05 Front and side extensions to existing processing building. side extension to existing office block. – Withdrawn 5 February 1999.
- W07763/04 Extension to main building to provide additional cold storage. – Permitted 17 April 1998.
- W07763/03 Extension to provide cold store to the west end of the processing building with associated work. – Permitted 21 April 1997.
- W07763/02 Extensions to storage and processing buildings. – Permitted 12 October 1995.
- W07763/01 Erection of storage building - Permitted 18 October 1984.
- W07763 Erection of extension to packing shed to provide cold storage - Permitted 4 January 1984

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**Proposal:**

- The proposal involves the erection of a steel framed industrial building of 336 sq m footprint to provide new cold store on the southern side of the existing processing buildings.
- The building is 21m x 16m with a maximum eaves height of 3.5m and ridge height of 5.5m taking account of the falling site level. It will have colour coated metal sheet cladding to match the existing buildings.
- The proposal also involves removal of an existing temporary cold store, repositioning of exiting vacuum cooler and associated plant and landscaping.
- The applicant has explained in a supporting statement to the application that this proposal is viewed as **Phase 1** of the proposed combining of the present operations at the Nythe and Manor Farm to make a more efficient set up than currently exists with the operation split between two sites.
- The provision of the new cold store and additional processing wash line within the main processing and packing building at the Nythe will not provide the same combined production capacity as exists but will provide a short term solution.
- **Phase 2** will seek further redevelopment at the Nythe site to provide a long term solution that will replace but not extend the present full production capacity of the present two site operation.
- The proposals for phase 2 will not seek to expand the current developed area (buildings plus external paved areas) and will not encroach further into the countryside.

**Relevant Policy**

Development Plan Policies/Government Planning Policies

Development Plan Policies/Government Planning Policies

HCSP(R) C1, C.2, EC1, EC3, UB3, T4, T5, T12,

WDLP C1, C2, C7, C.9, C.10, EN.5, T.12,

WDLP Review Deposit and Revised Deposit C1, C.12, C.13, DP.3, DP.15, T.1,

Other material considerations:- PPS.7

**Consultations:**

Engineers Highways

- In view of applicants intention to terminate his lease of the Manor Farm site and operate Alresford Salads solely from the Nythe site, if this is permitted, with a consequent reduction in lorry movements I could not sustain a highway objection to this application. This is however only on the basis that Alresford Salads dispose of its interest in the Manor Farm site, so that there will genuinely be a reduction in lorry traffic on Bighton Road.

Environment Agency

- Initial holding objection withdrawn following site meeting which showed that the flood risk would not conflict with PPG25 advice and subject to inclusion of conditions.

Environmental Protection

- No objection.

English Nature

- No objection. In view of the scale of the works and the manor in which they are to be carried out the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the features of interest of the River Itchen c SAC. Nor would it be likely to cause damage to the features of interest of the River Itchen SSSI.

Hampshire Wildlife Trust

- No objection on basis that proposal is taking place all within an existing hardstanding area and will not involve need for further expansion to replace lost pallet storage space or lead to increased discharges.

HCC Environment Dept Ecology

- No objection as proposal is within the boundaries of the already developed area and unlikely to have any adverse impact. But suggest that the landscaping proposals be amended to replace *Euonymus japonicus* which is a non-native species.

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Landscape

- Overall the landscaping proposals are as discussed but some amendments to the plan are desirable to clarify the planting proposals, subject to this and inclusion of standard landscaping implementation and maintenance condition the proposals are acceptable.

**Representations:**

Old Alresford Parish Council - no comment.

Letters of Representation. There have been 26 letters of representation which raise the following concerns:

- Traffic through Alresford - large articulated vehicles damaging to properties, the environment, character of conservation area, road construction and verges and dangerous to pedestrians and other road users. Despite the assurances the proposal will give rise to even more heavy traffic.
- Damage to Great Weir by huge size and frequency of large lorries serving the site.
- Increased frequency of lorry movements through The Soke, Broad Street, East and West Street, day and night and at weekends damaging quality of life of residents, noise and pollution damaging to health of residents.
- Site is an industrial not agricultural operation and should not be in such a location.
- Site already overdeveloped to a dangerous and inappropriate degree.
- Existing site is blot on the landscape and the proposal will just make matters worse.

**Planning Considerations**

The main considerations in respect of this application are:

- Principle of development in terms of compliance with policy.
- Affect on operations at Manor Farm
- Impact of proposals on character and amenities of area.
- Traffic

Principle of Development

- The site is within the countryside where development of this nature would not be permitted other than to meet the needs of agriculture or an established business.
- The business has evolved on the basis of meeting local need to serve the watercress industry and is now a well established and important local employer.
- EC1 of the County Structure Plan allows for development of land for industrial commercial or business uses where such land is already in lawful use for such purposes. EC3 allows buildings associated with agriculture, horticulture or forestry having regard to the countryside policies of the Plan.
- C.9 of the WDLP allows for development which is essential for agriculture, horticulture or forestry and for which a rural location is essential provided.
  - (i) no suitable alternative building or facility is available which could reasonably be used for the intended purpose;
  - (ii) there is adequate provision for the disposal of toxic or otherwise unpleasant effluent
  - (iii) it is consistent with Proposal C.2 and other relevant proposals of the Plan and reflects the advice "Farm Buildings - A design Guide for Hampshire"
- C.10 allows for "agri-industrial" and "agri-distribution" development in the countryside only where they accord with Proposal C.9.
- Proposals C.12 and C.13 of the Local Plan Review are essentially the same in their requirements as C.9 and C.10 of WDLP.
- PPS7 states that planning authorities should support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas and set out in their Local Development Document's (LDD's) the criteria for permitting economic development in different locations, including the future expansion of business premises to facilitate healthy and diverse economic activity in rural areas.

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Affect on operations at Manor Farm

- This proposal will replace the satellite operation that the applicant operates from leased premises at Manor Farm Old Alresford. This will address a long standing problem to the residents of Old Alresford due to traffic movements between the two sites and unsociable operating hours.
- The premises at Manor Farm will nevertheless remain with an extant permission for watercress processing so the owner could lease to another operator. Change of use to a different use would be likely to require planning permission but this would be possible within the terms of C.13 of the existing Local Plan and C.16 of the WDLPR.

Impact of proposals on character and amenities of area

- As explained above the site is already a significant industrial complex in the countryside and as stated under the proposal section this application is intended to be phase 1 of a larger redevelopment of the site to combine the present split operation into a more efficient one site operation.
- The cold store the subject of this application, due to its siting and the existence of screening to the south, will not in itself significantly change the impact of the existing development. Phase 2 could however have a greater impact and the cumulative impact of the many developments that have occurred in recent years at the Nythe have undoubtedly changed the character of the site to that of a major industrial complex in the countryside, albeit that the impact of this is localised and not generally visible in any long views.
- The application is supported by a landscaping scheme that will further improve the visual containment of the site in the countryside.

Traffic

- As is evident from the representations, by far the greatest concern with this application is that of traffic because the many very large lorries that serve the site pass through the centre of Alresford to reach the A31 and thence to the motorway. Traffic is stated to be 32 deliveries of product and 70 collections of processed and packaged salad products each week mostly by large articulated lorries.
- The effect of such traffic on the narrow Bighton Lane, across the Great Weir through the Soke and Broad Street with the bends, right hand turns and lack of pedestrian facilities are all cited by objectors.
- The application will however not increase that traffic but will reduce traffic movements that presently occur between the two sites of the Nythe and Manor Farm. The Engineer has therefore raised no objection.
- There is some 63 permanent and 36 agency staff that work a shift system between 6.00 am and 10.00pm 7 days a week and a cleaning shift operates over night from 10.00pm to 6.00am. By concentrating the whole operation at the Nythe this would, following phase 1 implementation, change to 79 permanent and 30 agency staff.

**Planning Obligations/Agreements**

In seeking the planning obligation(s) and/or financial contributions for public open space provision, and highway traffic management measures, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the tests laid down in Circular 1/97 which requires the obligations to be necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects.

**Recommendation**

**APPROVE (Provided the applicant entering into a legal agreement to cease all operations at the Manor Farm Old Alresford site) - subject to the following conditions:-**

**(Note: If the Legal Agreement is not completed within 6 months then the application may be refused without further reference to Committee)**

**Conditions/Reasons**

01 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

01 Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

02 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual relationship between the new development and the existing.

03 The method of construction for the development shall be carried out in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any development commencing.

03 Reason. The site is in a very sensitive location with respect to groundwater, and in order to protect the quality of drinking water supplies, the working methods will need to be carefully considered.

04 Drainage from high risk areas shall not be discharged to any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway.

04 Reason To prevent pollution of the water environment.

05 Any facilities for the storage of oils, fuels or chemicals shall be sited on impervious bases and surrounded by impervious bund walls. The bund capacity shall give 110% of the total volume for single and hydraulically linked tanks. If there is multiple tankage, the bund capacity shall be 110% of the largest tank or 25% of the total capacity of all tanks, whichever is the greatest. All filling points, vents, gauges and sight glasses and overflow pipes shall be located within the bund. There shall be no outlet connecting the bund to any drain, sewer or watercourse or discharging onto the ground. Associated pipework shall be located above ground where possible and protected from accidental damage.

05 Reason To prevent pollution of the water environment.

06 No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include proposed finished levels, boundary treatment, hard surfacing materials, a specification of tree and shrub planting, including species, density, planting size and layout. The scheme approved shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner.



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If within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, any trees, shrubs or plants die, are removed or, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, become seriously damaged or defective, others of the same species and size as originally planted shall be planted at the same place, in the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

06 Reason To ensure the development contributes to maintaining the character of the area and In the interests of improving the visual amenity of the locality.

07 The scheme for planting as shown on landscape drawing 342.1 on the plan hereby approved to re-establish and reinforce the vegetation between the factory building and the SSSI shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the extension hereby approved or within such other time scale as may be first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, any trees, shrubs or plants die, are removed or, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, become seriously damaged or defective, others of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, in the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

07 Reason To help maintain the character of the SSSI and mitigate the visual impact of the development upon that character in the interests of the visual amenity and ecological importance of the area.

**Informatives**

01. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Hampshire County Structure Plan Review C1, C.2, EC1, EC3, UB3, T4, T5, T12,  
Winchester District Local Plan Proposals: C1, C2, C7, C.9, C.10, EN.5, T.12,  
Emerging Development Plan  
WDLP Review Deposit and Revised Deposit C1, C.12, C.13, DP.3, DP.15,

02. If dewatering of the site and discharge of associated water is necessary during construction operations, the Environment Agency should be notified regarding the dewatering and consulted regarding the need for discharge consent.

03. Any subsequent proposals for the provision of additional accommodation shall be supported by a Company Transport Plan