

Title: Proposed items following planning review meeting
Location: Croxley Green Watercress Farm and Fisheries
Address: Rousebarn lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 3GG
Date: 28 April 2009
Version: Application 09/0163/FUL – v101

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1 Committee access – health and safety

Access has been requested for the morning of Saturday 16th May 2009. It should be remembered that this is a working farm and appropriate care should be taken in walking around the site. Access is granted on the basis that:

- Visitors do so at their own risk and have suitable insurance in place
- That visitors wear suitable clothing (especially appropriate footwear)
- That visitors have a health and safety briefing before walking around
- That visitors sign in and sign out

Key areas of the farm are below water. Much of the farm is in Flood zone 3b as you would expect for a watercress farm.

2 Why we want to grow watercress

In the 1940s there were more than 1,000 acres of watercress under cultivation in the UK. By the end of the 20th century that figure had shrunk to 150 acres.

The main reason for the reduction in UK cultivation was the perception that watercress was just a garnish, served up at steak houses and posh hotels.

In 2003 British watercress farmers joined forces to once again raise the profile of this great British ingredient. A promotional campaign, "Not Just a Bit on the Side", was launched, which has resulted in the industry enjoying a renaissance, with watercress once again being recognised as ***the original superfood***. Gram for gram, watercress contains more vitamin C than oranges, more calcium than milk, more iron than spinach and more folate than bananas.

The UK cannot currently meet its own needs for supply. This farm is the fifth largest in the UK and if properly managed could produce 4% of the current UK requirement.

There is a clear market requirement and need. If properly run the farm could produce between 2 and 4 million packs per annum depending upon weather and environmental conditions.

Based on sales of 2 million packs

The growing and processing costs are £0.15 per pack

The sales price to local supermarkets is £0.30 per pack

The retail price is £1.20 per pack

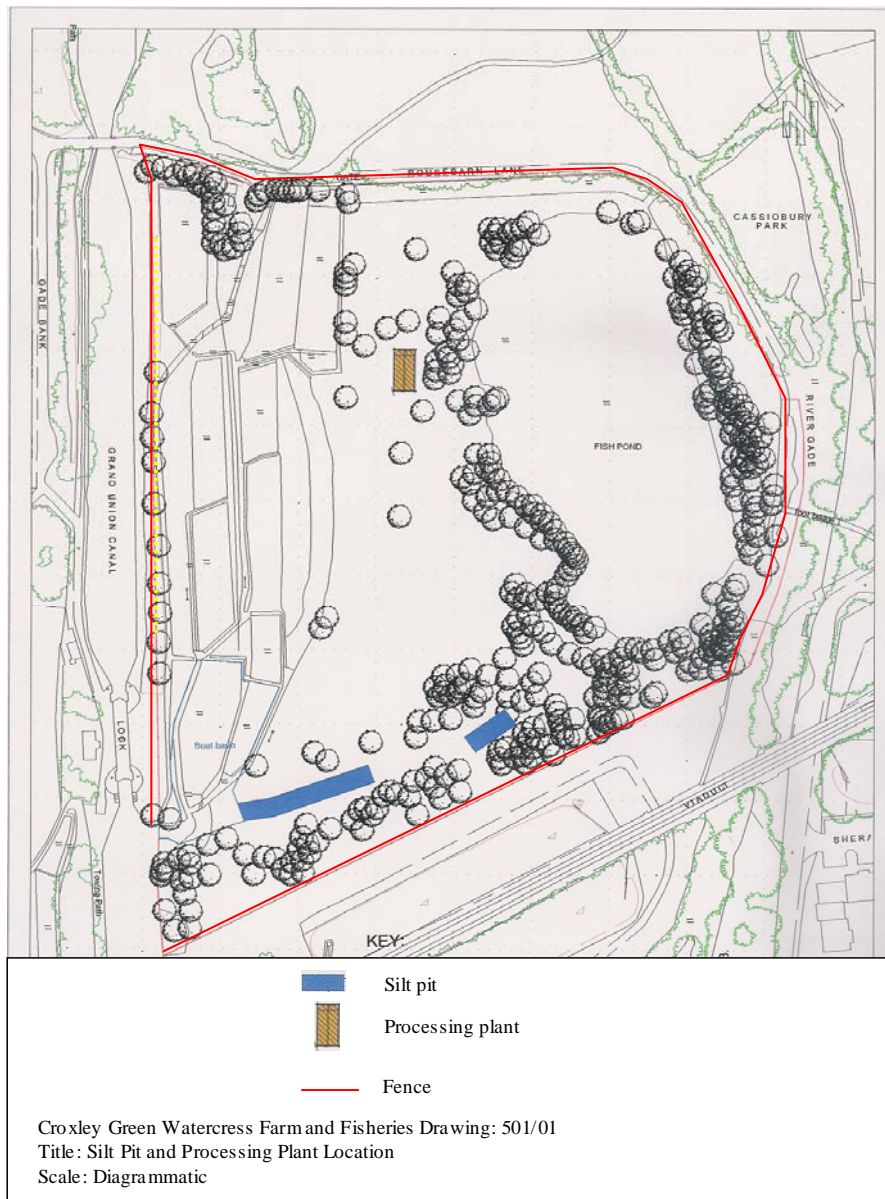
The breakeven point for profitability is a minimum of 900,000 packs per annum.

3 Position of fence

The position of the fence within the three rivers boundary that may cause concern is the section that runs along the grand union canal. A proposal may be to move a section of the fence 1 to 2 metres further away from the canal so that it is installed down the bank resulting in the top of the fence only being slightly over the raised level canal bank. The fence would be further obscured by the canal boats which are permanently moored.

The fence between the two British waterways gates could be moved down the bank as long it remained connected to the gates to ensure a continuity of the enclosure.

See dotted yellow line below:



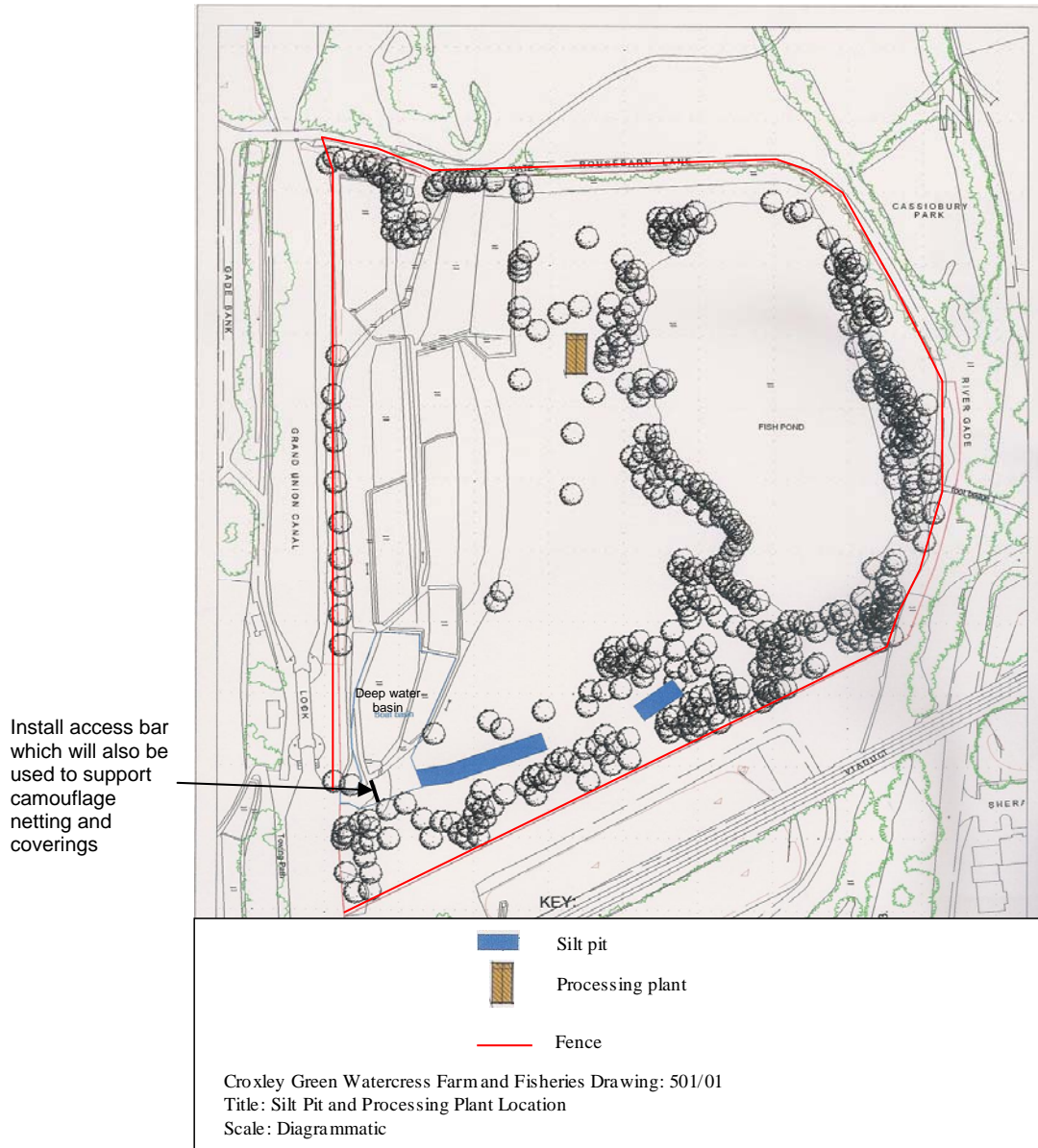
4 Boat basin

A review of the old Ordinance survey plans provided in the preliminary investigation and risk assessment provides useful information and background to the site.

The area that has been labelled “boat basin” used to accommodate the old boat house, and was connected to the main lake (previously watercress beds).

Proposed actions:

- To change the wording “boat basin” from the drawings and to replace with deep water basin as shown below
- To install a barrier over the front of the deep water basin from which to hang camouflage netting and branch coverings
- To notify the three rivers planning department in advance (at least 24 hours) before the barrier is raised and a boat enters the deep water basin



5 Timescale for using silt pits

Both silt pits are currently being used. Unfortunately due to the high levels of crime on the site their use is limited as is the pace of the current bed cleaning.

Previous attempts to install the silt pit sheeting on a permanent basis have resulted in the theft of the scaffolding used to support the sheets.

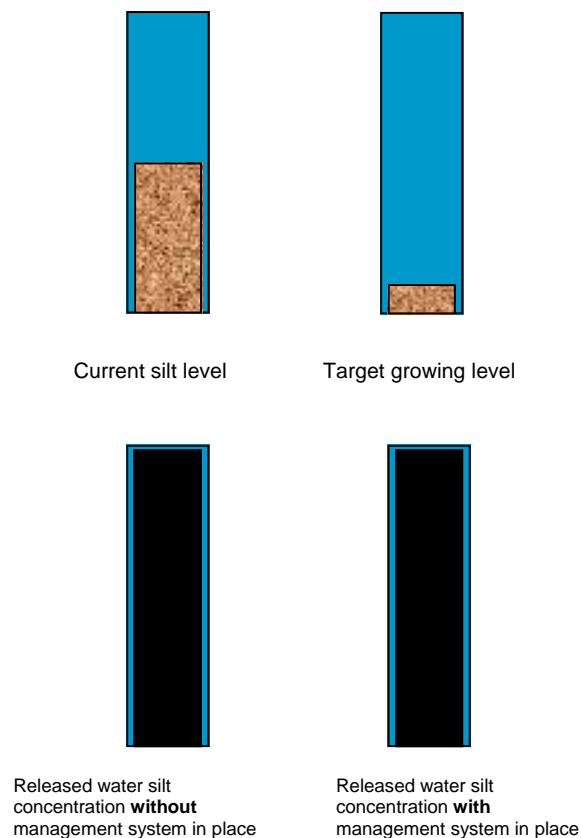
There are currently two items preventing the “good” use of the silt pits:

- The installation of the fence and a site security system need to be completed
- Watford planners have imposed a restriction on certain works between March and August each year

The silt pits can be up and running within 7 working days of the completion of the fencing and the installation of site a security system.

The cleaning of all the watercress beds has been calculated to take 18 months (+/- 6 months)

When fully operational a specific bed will be cleaned every 2 months, the cleaning of a bed will take 4 to 5 weeks and we will need to clean 6 beds per annum.



Pictorial representation for silt concentration

6 Rubbish disposal

For deliveries and collection the farm can be accessed from Rousebarn lane (going past Gade Bank and crossing the bridge) or from Gade Avenue. To date (not including asbestos) we have had no contracted rubbish collections from the farm. We have no plans or intention to have a regular waste collection from this site as we do not plan to generate significant waste.

The fishermen are instructed to take all their litter home with them and the area around the lake is in good order.



Farm workers take their meal rubbish home with them. The farm is mainly self sufficient in its running.

Fly tipping is collected bagged and then taken away (3 or 4 dustbin bags at a time). It is hoped that the installation of fencing and a site security system will reduce or eliminate the incidents of flytipping.



If there were any major items then it is envisaged these would be taken away by boat if they could not be recycled or could be collected by refuse collection from Gade Avenue (**not Gade Bank**).

7 Loss of Car parking spaces

A resident in Gade Bank expressed concern that the loss of car parking spaces proposed by this planning application would result in increased “trespass” car parking in Gade Bank.

It should be noted that the parking spaces to be removed are not public parking spaces. The cars parked are currently trespass parking at Croxley Green Watercress Farm and Fisheries. The parking spaces are currently used by boaters from the canal on British waterways moorings. It should also be noted that British waterways make it very clear that there are no parking rights attached to a mooring.

If there is an increase in trespass parking in Gade Bank then this is a civil matter and the parking enforcement should be the responsibility of the residents of Gade Bank.

The planning permission has already been granted by Watford to install the fencing and subsequently remove these parking spaces. The parking places will be removed within the next few weeks.

As a sign of good will this outline proposal has been made to British Waterways, the Royal Marsden Hospital and the Three Rivers Planning department:

Note: the finer details are yet to be complete and agreed. Below is a draft outline only that is yet to be agreed.

1. In communication with the local moorers and British Waterways it has been assessed that those moored locally require 5 car parking spaces (the other spaces are used by random boaters on a changing and irregular basis)
2. The farm will provide 5 car parking spaces for the current moorers at a cost of £0.40 per day (of which £0.20 will be donated to the Royal Marsden hospital for research into secondary breast cancer)
3. When the boaters give up their mooring adjacent to the farm then the car parking space will be lost and a new moorer will not be given a space
4. The farm will review this agreement on an annual basis and may vary the terms for any renewal

Summary: we have presented a plan which immediately loses three spaces but over a period of years slowly removes the remaining car parking spaces.

8 Removal of asbestos

To date we have only used licensed collectors and waste carriers for the collection and removal of asbestos. It is our intention to only use licensed collectors and carriers in the future.

Windsor waste management and asbestos solutions have carried out all the work to date.

<http://www.winwaste.com/AsbestosDisposalService.aspx>

<http://www.asbestossolutions.com/>

Invoices for assessment work and asbestos collection to date can be made available for inspection.

9 Crime update for 2009

In this year alone 13 crimes have been reported. Some incidents have caused financial damage that have costs thousands pounds. The most disgusting event was to find human excrement (faeces) on the seats of our farm equipment.

21st April 2009

13.) Human excrement found at key areas of the site including on the seats of the farm machines and equipment

21st April 2009

12.) Semi bridge / platform like structure built over the water, a fire made, waste and rubbish left, the storage sheds had been turned over

16th Mar 2009

11.) Destruction of water dams

20th February to 3rd March 2009

1.) heavy damage to our digger and dumper truck - youths were observed hitting both machines for a period of time with metal bars - the police were called but would not access the site to stop or investigate the damage. The police did attend when the crime was reported again 3 days later.

2.) theft of diesel in storage drums (over 400 litres)

3.) Break in to the air raid shelter and the deposit of presumed stolen equipment including arc welder and circular saw

4.) Theft of diesel from farm machinery tanks

5.) A second incident of damage to digger and dumper truck with specific damage to hydraulic pumps, and the dumper throttle cable

6.) Attempted theft of digger buckets, and pins

7.) The creation of bridges across streams and silt pits

8.) Theft of all the crayfish baskets

9.) Damage / killing of watercress crop in main bed

10.) A trespasser was observed on the afternoon of Monday 2nd March. Even though there was footprint evidence in the mud the police were unable to investigate the matter with the trespasser. They did however take the trespasser's details. The police were unable to prevent the trespasser causing further aggravation to our workers on site. They indicated that boundary clarification and fencing was vital for this site before they could act.