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ARCHITECTURE • LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE • PLANNING • LAND REMEDIATION

RO BISHOPTON ENVIRONMENTAL TEST FACILITY
ERECTION OF A SECURITY FENCE

PLANNING APPLICATION STATEMENT

November 2006

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ERECTION OF A SECURITY FENCE

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The BAE Systems Land Systems Environmental Test Facility (ETF) at Bishopton carries out the environmental testing of military hardware containing explosives. The site is currently enclosed within a secure fence which surrounds the whole Bishopton site and is patrolled 24/7 by BAE Systems security team.
- 1.2 With the planned regeneration and diversification of uses within the whole site it is essential that this ETF be separated. The rigorous explosives licensing regime, strict security requirements, and general operational safety of the ETF demands that a robust physical separation is maintained between the facility and unauthorised persons. Access to and from the facility will be strictly controlled at all times.
- 1.3 The proposed security fence will fulfil the requirements outlined above. The long-term plan for the ETF is that it will be a self contained operational facility with its own office accommodation and security presence. BAE Systems Land Systems require that physical containment of ETF should be carried out within the next twelve months before regeneration activity commences on the remainder of the site. The proposed fence will be routed around any buildings or obstructions thus minimising any physical disturbance of the site at this time. The proposed route of the fence has been planned to ensure disturbance to mature trees and known habitats is minimised or avoided. Consideration of the area that is to be enclosed by the proposed security fence has taken account of the buildings (active and storage) that are to be in daily use, the relevant explosives safety distances imposed by the licensing regime for those buildings and the need for security and safety for any explosive stores that are transported between buildings. Access to the enclosed site will be via existing infrastructure, more permanent arrangements will be incorporated in the future redevelopment of the remainder of the Bishopton site.

2 Development Need

- 2.1 As part of the consolidation of business activity at RO Bishopton the Applicant wishes to ring fence its Environmental Test Facility, for both security and the establishment of a clearly defined safety zone (drawing 925-01).
- 2.2 The facility is already bound to the east and south by an existing security fence (marked in yellow on drawing 925-02). This application seeks planning permission for the erection of approx 3.14km of new fencing to the north and west (marked in red on drawing 925-02), to complete the required enclosure of the facility.

3. Specification

- 3.1 The fencing will meet the requirements of Class 2 BS 1722, Part 10, Anti-Intruder Fence (Welded Mesh).
- 3.2 Construction incorporates approximately 3.7M x 50mm x 50mm x 4mm metal posts concreted into foundations of approximately 800mm x 300mm x 300mm, set at 3M centres. These will support 2.7M x 25mm x 75mm x 3mm galvanised rectangle weld mesh fencing, which will be dug in 300mm and trench backfilled. The fencing will be topped with 3 lines of 2ply barbed wire (drawing 925-03).
- 3.3 One set of 4M x 2.4 M high, double leaf, galvanised rectangle weld mesh gates, topped with 3 lines of 2ply barbed wire (drawing 925-03), will form the entrance to the site on Mosshall Road (drawing 925-02).

4 Ecological Considerations

4.1 Ecological survey for the wider site at Bishopton (in Outline Planning Application reference 06/0602/PP) for the redevelopment of the site, has identified the presence and conservation concern of the following:

4.2 Badgers

4.2.1 Legislation: Badgers (*Meles meles*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), as amended by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. Where setts are, *unavoidably*, to be lost to the development through, for instance, essential remediation works, they will need to be destroyed under licence. A licence is required to exclude any 'active' badger sett, and this will be applied for from SNH. Licences are not generally issued within the months December to June inclusive as this period represents the sensitive period of breeding for badgers.

4.2.2 There are several badger setts in the planning application area, associated with long-term presence of badgers in the Georgetown area of the site. While no badger setts are directly affected by the installation of the proposed ETF fence, several badger paths are crossed (drawing 925-04). Badger tunnels beneath the fence are proposed in mitigation (drawing 925-05). Because of the large number of tracks in this area, the passages provided beneath the fence have been rationalised, with one passage providing a through-route for two or more tracks where those tracks are in close proximity (drawing 925-04).

4.3 Otters

4.3.1 Legislation: The Otter is a European Protected Species; Otters, SNH (1997) guidelines state that any works within 20 m of a lying-up site and 30 m of a breeding holt may cause disturbance. Noise and disturbance during construction works and increased human activity following construction could affect use of water-bodies. This could potentially deter an otter from passing through the area and cause stress as it temporarily divides a home range. The affect of disturbance on otters is not fully known, although females with cubs in particular are very sensitive to disturbance (Chanin 1993). A licence will be required from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD) for disturbance of a European Protected Species. There is no provision for development as such under existing legislation. However, under Regulation 44 (2e) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations (1994), licences may be granted for: preserving public health or public safety or other imperative of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment. Additionally, a licence will not be granted unless, under 44 (3) of the same regulations, the appropriate licensing authority is satisfied: a) that there is no satisfactory alternative; and b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

4.3.2 Otters are known to be active along the Dargavel Burn. The proposed extended fence line will straddle the burn at one point only (drawing 925-02). Whilst the fence will run along the existing road bridge, there is a need to secure the channel beneath the road bridge. The proposal to accommodate otters is to erect security palisade style fencing with the vertical bars being spaced at a distance of 180-200mm to allow otters to pass, unhindered, as identified through discussion with SNH (drawing 925-08).

4.4 Trees and Scrub

- 4.4.1 An external clearance of 5M and an internal clearance of 3M will run along the full length of the fence line. The internal clearance is required for security patrol (which will involve the construction of basic gravel tracks suitable for 4x4 patrol vehicles, in some areas) and the external clearance for establishing sight lines for security.
- 4.4.2 Whilst the route of the fence line follows existing roads and tracks to minimise disturbance, some tree and branch removal and the cutting back of scrub will be required to facilitate these requirements. The area where the trees are to be removed is shown on drawing 925-07, the trees in question are immature coniferous.

4.5 Nesting Birds

- 4.5.1 Legislation: all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).
- 4.5.2 Work to trees or scrub will, wherever possible, be undertaken outside the bird-breeding season. Bird boxes will be provided in mitigation where nesting opportunities have been removed.

4.6 Bats

- 4.6.1 Legislation: If roost sites are to be lost, a licensed exclusion will be necessary along with suitable mitigation. A licence will be required from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD) for disturbance to a European Protected Species. The likely method of exclusion will involve the placement of a one-way device over the entrance / exit hole which will be left in place for several weeks. There would be restrictions to the timings when this work can be carried out. It is likely that exclusion would not be licensed during the hibernation (November to March inclusive) or breeding seasons (June to August inclusive). Specific measures should be formulated with the licensing body, following consultation with SNH, where health and safety considerations restrict access.
- 4.6.2 With few specific exceptions bats follow established paths along continuous landscape features – such as, hedgerows and avenue trees - to feed and to 'commute' to feeding areas. For the most part the site either runs in open grassland adjacent to access road or skirts around established groups of trees. The survey of the RO site to establish bat flight paths and possible roost sites did not identify any flight paths crossing the line of proposed fence and no mitigation measures are required.