

Gravesham Borough Council  
Development Control  
Civic Centre Windmill Street  
Gravesend  
Kent  
DA12 1AU

**Our ref:** KT/2022/130150/01-L01  
**Your ref:** 20221036  
**Date:** 24 October 2022

**Application for permanent retention of an office building, raised open storage platform with timber deck, metal clad shed and open sided shed**

**Optimus Access Ltd, Highfield Works Site, E Dering Industrial Park, Dering Way, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2FP**

Thank you for consulting us on the above planning application.

We have reviewed the information and **object** to the application.

**Reason:**

For this application, we require a Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) upfront. The site history indicates medium polluting potential from previous use which always flags significant concerns about land contamination. The site is also underlain by an aquifer, meaning there is also a risk of pollution to water resources. We need to ensure that the proposals, with associated foundation and drainage designs and the required ground disturbance, will not cause an unacceptable risk to the aquifer. Our own guidance on groundwater protection (*formerly known as GP3*) states that:

*'1. We expect developers to provide adequate information to statutory bodies when submitting their proposals, so that the potential impact on groundwater resources and quality can be adequately assessed. Developers should be prepared to supply specific relevant data to allow the risk to groundwater to be assessed.*

*2. We expect developers to comply with any relevant statutory codes of good practice and to have due regard to our advice and guidance, and to other reputable standards and guidance. This applies particularly to the handling, use, storage and treatment of substances that can potentially result in an unacceptable input to groundwater.'*

This is supported by paragraph 183 ground conditions and pollution of the NPPF which states that planning decisions should ensure that adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform assessments.

We understand that responsibility is with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to make a decision on whether the applicant should submit the PRA now, or to condition the proposal if you grant planning permission. However, in the context of good practice, we believe the PRA is necessary to make an informed decision and to comply with

Environment Agency

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your duty under the Water Framework Directive as a public body. We always advise that we see a PRA when reviewing medium/high pollution potential sites before we can offer proper advice on relevant conditions or safe development, unless we know the site well from past involvement. This approach is in keeping with the precautionary principle which is embedded in sustainable development and a theme running through the NPPF.

We would like to refer the applicant to the 'Managing and reducing land contamination: guiding principles (GPLC)' page which provides guidance for the land contamination risk management process.

If you are minded to approve the planning application contrary to our advice, we will need you re-consult us to allow further discussion and/or representations from the Environment Agency.

Do not hesitate to contact me to discuss further.

Yours faithfully,

**Abbie Philpott**  
**Planning Advisor**

KSLPLANNING@environment-agency.gov.uk