

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	21 August 2013		
Application Number	N/13/00746/FUL		
Site Address	Hardenhuish Comprehensive School, Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, SN14 6HR		
Proposal	Biomass Plant Room		
Applicant	Wiltshire Council		
Town/Parish Council	Chippenham Town Council		
Electoral Division	Chippenham Central	Unitary Member	Cllr Nina Phillips
Grid Ref	391298 174604		
Type of application	Full		
Case Officer	David Cox	01225 716774	david.cox@wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been brought into Committee as it is a Wiltshire Council application to which there have been neighbouring objections.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

Chippenham Town Council have raised no objections.

2. Main Issues

The main issues in considering the application are:

- Principle of development
- Impact on the host building
- Impact on the conservation area
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- S106 contributions

3. Site Description

Hardenhuish Comprehensive School is a large school set within large grounds. The application site is towards the north east of the School grounds and is relatively alongside Long Ridings and Portal Close, residential areas.

The application area is partly screened by mature trees on the site. Access to the site would be via Malmesbury Road or Long Ridings.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
09/01048/FUL	Installation of Solar Panels and PV Solar Panels on 6th Form Centre	Permission.
07/02657/FUL	Erection of wind turbine and solar panels	Permission.

5. Proposal

The proposal is to erect an 'Ecoblox' which would house a Biomass boiler and storage for the fuel. The box would measure 3.3 metres wide, 10.3 metres deep and 3.9 metres tall. The box would have timber cladding on its external walls. The Biomass boiler would be located next to Block "S" of the school grounds.

The biomass boiler is only expected to operate between 5am and 10pm including non heating season. In extreme cold weather events the boiler would start from 2am.

6. Consultations

Chippenham Town Council – No objection.

Environmental Health Officer – No objection.

Initial Comments 12 July 2013:

Noise

The number of deliveries of pellets throughout the year is limited to approximately 9 and as a result will have minimal impact on amenity. However I recommend that the deliveries are restricted to occur between Monday to Friday 16.00 -18.00. Additionally the applicant has offered to acoustically screen the area at a later date if the deliveries are having an adverse impact on the neighbours as a result of noise.

Plant and machinery

I have undertaken a noise calculation based on the levels provided by the applicant. I have taken the 55 dB(A) level provided by the applicant and extrapolated this level through a distance calculation to provide a level at the facade of the nearest noise sensitive receptor approx 75 metres away.

Through prediction the level should drop off to below 20 dB (A) which will be below both the daytime and background noise levels and as a result should not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the nearest noise sensitive receptors.

Smoke and Particulates

The biomass boiler is not being installed in an Air Quality Management Area, the flue height has been calculated correctly (this has been done so using the EPUK toolkit) and that not any old waste wood is burnt. In this case specific wood pellets are being used. The biomass boiler is designed with abatement equipment built in to maximise the particulate capture from the flue gases ensuring consistently low emissions.

They have ensured that the boiler supplier meets a number of maintenance contract details such as regular ash clearance, parts and consumables to be held on site, regular maintenance in line with manufacturers details.

As the application states the boiler is exempt boiler and does not require a Permit from the council. There is likely to be visible smoke on start up, however once combustion is underway this should subside – good maintenance and quality fuel use will reduce the smoke emitted.

Conclusion

I am satisfied that the information provided by the applicant has answered my initial concerns. I have no additional concerns and comments regarding this application and recommend approval. Additional comments received 18 July 2013.

The levels given to me are 55 dB(A) at source (next to a boiler with no enclosure), the boiler will be located within a building so the levels will be greatly reduced, however my calculations have been taken based on the source being unenclosed.

I've re calculated the shorter distance to the boundary of the nearest property No 28. Taking the 55 dB(A) level provided the likely reduction over distance is to be 30 dB(A) therefore $55 - 30 = 25$ dB (A).

Background noise level (L_{A90}) is the level of residual noise that is exceeded for 90% of the time daytime or night time i.e. the remaining noise without the noise source running.

I advise that the following condition is placed upon the permission:

The biomass boiler plant shall be so sited and designed in order to achieve a Rating Level of 35 dB(A) at the boundary contiguous with the school and the neighbouring noise sensitive receptors. Measurements and assessment shall be carried out in accordance with BS4142:1997 .

Highways Officer – No objection. The proposal does not affect existing parking on site (even if deliveries are made during school hours).

English Heritage – As Hardenhuish House is an important grade II* listed building, the conservation of its significance should be given the highest priority. However, it is considered that there will be no significant impact on the setting of the listed building.

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre – Bats recorded within 100m of school in 2001.

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation.

5 letters of objection received.

- Concerned over deliveries, noise and traffic disruption.
- Traffic is horrendous because of the schools. Don't want anything to make this worse.
- Concerned over noise from the boiler.
- Please supply a guarantee that the noise won't reach 55db at my garden boundary
- Concerned over ash collection and other emissions.
- Will there be any smell?
- Will this increase the fire hazard?
- Past summer building works have tended to start early and finish late to our disruption.

8. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development:

Renewable energy schemes are encouraged by central government and local plan policy subject that they don't cause harm to neighbouring amenity. Therefore, the principle of development is supported.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity:

This issue has been a major concern for neighbouring residents and the main reason for the delay in determination of the application was due to awaiting further information on the proposal.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer has no objection to the proposal.

The further submitted information clarifies that the boiler could, in extreme weather events, operate as early as 2am, but in normal circumstances from 5am to 10pm. Therefore the generation of noise is expected to last for some time.

The worst case sound level taken from a test of another working Ecoblox was 55dB, although normal operating levels are expected to be lower because the proposed boiler will have an enclosure, where the source 55db measurement did not have one. It is also important to assume that between 2-5am during extreme cold winter months, the majority of people will be inside with their windows shut. The distance to No 1 The Ridings should therefore be realistically measured to the windows (approx 75 metres) and not the garden (approx 46 metres). The Environmental Health Officer states that over this distance the dB level should drop to around 20dB, which will also be below the expected background noise level at this time. This level of noise would not cause demonstrable harm, especially when windows are shut as houses would be insulated against this noise level.

The boiler would be in operation during summer months too but not overnight and therefore when background noise levels drop and windows are open, the boiler would not be in operation, causing no harm.

Further clarification was sought from Environmental Health when it was established that No 28 Portal close is closer than other neighbours (approx 55 metres). Revised calculations show that the db level would be 25dB at No 28, which is also considered to be acceptable.

Although the calculations are worst case scenario and the level that will reach neighbouring properties will be acceptable; it is nevertheless considered necessary and reasonable to add a condition that states that the boiler must not exceed 35 dB on the boundary with the neighbours. Environmental Health are confident that this condition can be achieved given the distance to the gardens and from the boiler being enclosed.

The further information also clarified that there will be only a maximum of 9 deliveries over a 6 month period, with approximately 3-4 more to collect ash. This is a low figure that would cause some disruption whilst it occurred, but not to a frequency that would cause sufficient harm to warrant the refusal of the application.

The flue is designed to minimise emissions, to which the Environmental Health Officer has no objection.

Impact on Highway Safety:

The Council's Highways Officer has no objection to the proposal. The applicants submitted an additional plan to show a turning head for the delivery vehicles which will not affect existing parking spaces.

The additional information has shown that it is only anticipated for there to be 9 deliveries over 6 months with only 3-4 journeys needed to collect ash. This would not have any detrimental impact on traffic levels in the area. Additionally the applicants have agreed to delivery times of 1600-1800 on weekdays only which can be added as a condition to this permission.

Impact on the setting of the adjoining listed buildings:

The former Manor House is a grade II* listed building is approximately 60 metres away and screened by the Library block. The Ecoblox would also be tucked in against Block 'S' and screened by existing fir trees. In this context, no harm would be caused to the setting of the Grade II* listed building. It has not been necessary to consult English Heritage on this application.

Impact on bats:

The Ecoblox is unlikely to cause any harm to bats or protected species as it is a new building that will occupy a grassed area.

9. Recommendation

Planning Permission be GRANTED for the following reason:

The proposed development, will not harm the setting of the adjacent Grade II* listed building or the amenity of adjoining residential dwellings. The proposal therefore accords with Policies C3, NE9, NE16, CF1 and HE4 the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and Sections 10 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions:

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

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. No development shall commence on site until samples of the timber cladding to be used on the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

POLICY- C3

3. The biomass boiler plant shall at all times achieve a Rating Level of 35 dB(A) at the boundary contiguous with the school and the neighbouring residential properties. Measurements and assessment shall be carried out in accordance with BS4142:1997.

REASON: In the interests of neighbouring amenity.

POLICY: C3.

4. No deliveries or collections in connection with the development hereby approved shall take place outside of the hours of 16.00hrs – 18.00hrs on weekdays. No deliveries or collections shall take place at weekends or bank holidays.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity.

5. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan - Received 8 March 2013.

2888(L) H041 - Received 8 March 2013.

2888(L) H051 - Received 8 March 2013.

2888(L) H010A Rev A- Received 1 May 2013.

Supporting Statement - Received 16 June 2013.

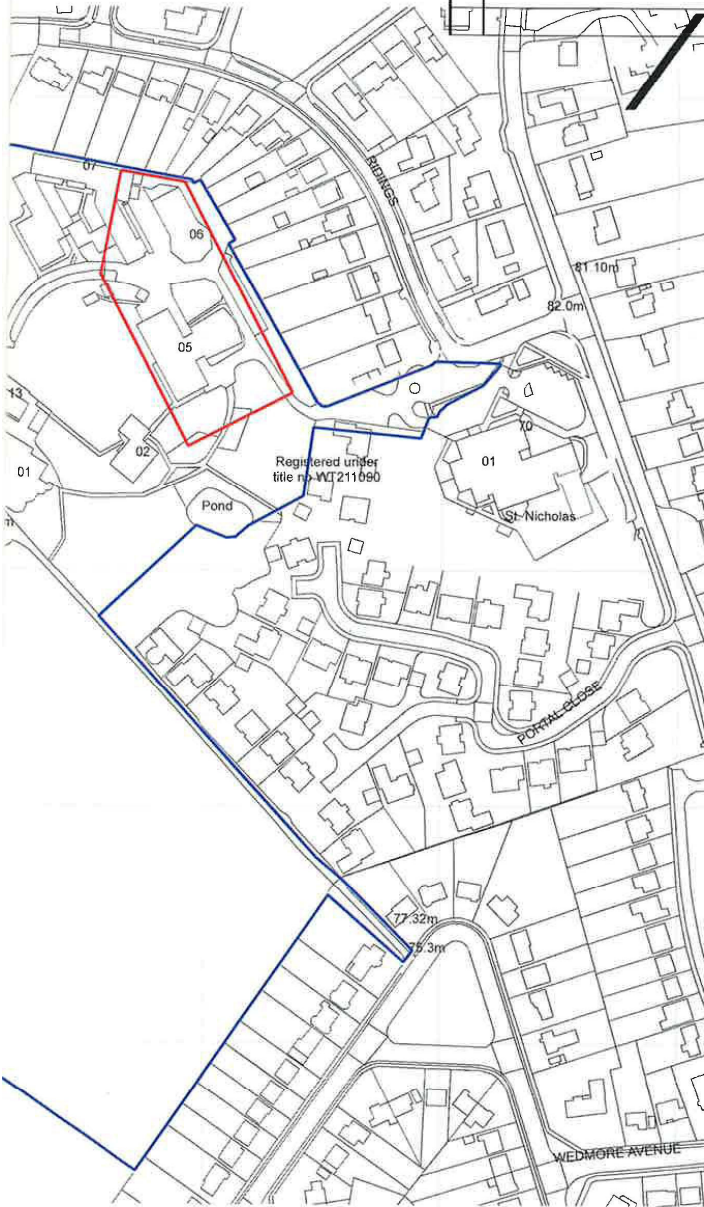
REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

POLICY- C3, NE9, NE16, CF1 and HE4.

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Construction (Design and Management) Regulations - 2007 Record of Risk Assessment																							
No	Risk Identified	Hazard Description	Phase			Likely Severity			Likelihood			Options											
			Construction	Maintenance	Decommission	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	Redesign	Consider	Control									



PLANNING
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08 MAR 2013
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Drawn	AH	Project	WILTSHIRE BIOMASS
Scale	1:2500 @ A3	Drawing	Hardenhuish School, Chippenham Location Plan
Date	08.03.13	Number	2888 (L) H001
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