

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0658
Valid 05/01/2024

**QUARRY WALK CARAVAN
PARK
COPPICE LANE
WINNOTHDALE**

**BIOMASS BOILER AND
BUILDING

(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Design appearance
- Pollution

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Woodland – operated as a mixed caravan, camping and lodging site progressively expanded. The original permission in 1993 reference SM93-0119 was for 40 touring pitches allowed on appeal. The location of the development is internal to the site with no visibility of it from public locations.

PROPOSAL

The structure comprises two elements – a timber shed housing the boiler and a separate but linked metal hopper to supply the wood pellet fuel. A covering letter dd 23rd Dec 2023 summarises the application as consisting of:

Application form

Location plan (drawing C619 BM1)

Block Plan (drawing C619 BM1)

Elevations, Plan and Site Plan (drawing C619 BM1); and

Biomass Boiler Specification – largely in Italian.

A mechanical auger feeder delivers the fuel into the lower part of the combustion chamber and from here the fuel is pushed into the hearth. A diagram with notes says:

- Steel boiler with low heat load, with three-flame passing hearth and five effective turns of smoke and wet floor.
- In the terminal part of the combustion chamber, an opening connects to a cylindrical duct (second flue gas circuit) thus obtaining a clear separation in the phase of inversion of the combustion gases from the hearth, decisive for the reduction of nitrogen oxides (Nox).
- In the last step, the fumes converge towards the tube bundle through the recess made in the insulation of the closing door.
- The model has a power supply unit with fuel withdrawal from the storage silos using automatic transport and handling devices.

- Supply shaft with control opening, cover with safety switch. Feed auger with special support up to a diameter of 250 mm.
- Brazier composed of high quality refractory materials to reach high temperatures and have perfect combustion even with problematic or variable fuels.
- The combustion chamber hatch is a glass porthole, which allows visual inspection of the hearth.
- The boiler is also equipped with an automatic control panel for the operation of all the movement and control parts.

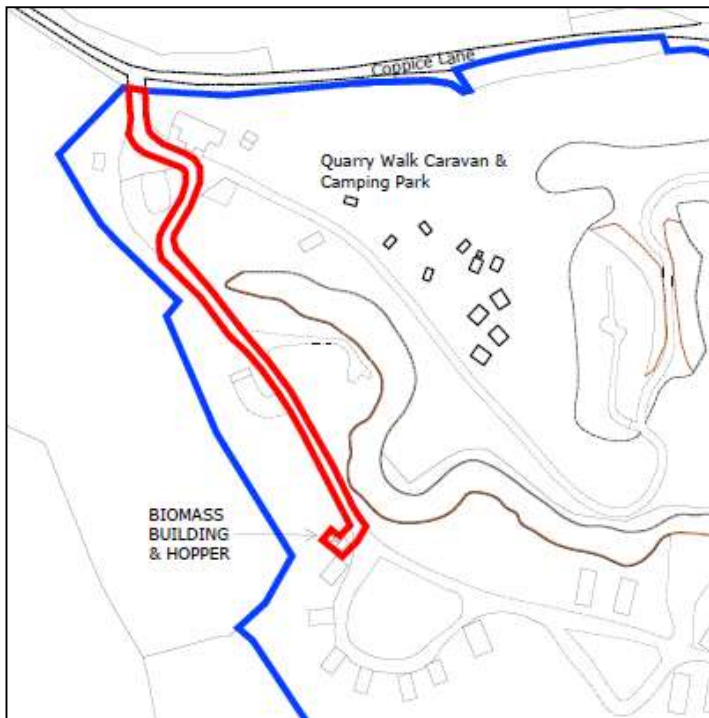


Fig. 1

BNG

The application is exempt from the need to meet the new 2024 biodiversity net gain requirements as its submission was accepted as valid 23rd February 2024 and BNG only became mandatory for minor sites 2nd April 2024.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- E1 New Employment Development
- E4 Tourism and cultural development
- NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources

NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024)

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy; Promoting healthy and safe communities; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

This application has been submitted concurrently with:

SMD/2023/0660 – a lawful Development Certificate for – the erection of 10 glamping pods for holiday accommodation and an earlier biomass building at the site – pending

SMD/2024/0082 – retrospective application for 11 ‘glamping pods’ – approved

Recent past applications:

SMD/2020/0385 – erection of 16 log cabins (re-submission of SMD/2017/0391) – approved

SMD/2017/0391 – erection of 17 log cabins – refused

08/00973/FUL_MJ – Replacement of 20 touring caravan pitches with 20 log cabins – approved. See drawing 6100 (29th May 2008).

05/01449/FUL – erection of 6 log cabins – approved

05/00892/ FUL_MJ – Replacement of 14 touring caravan pitches with log cabins – refused – ALLOWED on appeal for 8, six having by then been approved under 05/01449 (above)

04/00187/FUL Replacement of six static caravans with six log cabins and extension to form managers accommodation – approved

- this related to six caravans permitted under SM96/0522 – see plan marking the six

00/00434/FUL – reception lodge – approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 04.03.2024
Neighbour consultation period ends: 01.02.2024
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

The Parish council acknowledge that the Applicant further to Application SMD/2023/0660 is now seeking Retrospective Planning Permission for a Biomass boiler and building erected on site and in use from 2 August 2019 without Prior Planning permission on a site that forms part of Quarry Walk Caravan Park which is a long-established holiday park.

The Parish Council however are disappointed and concerned that the Applicant is not seeking Retrospective Planning Permission for the 10 glamping pods for holiday accommodation that were erected on site at the same time and in use from 2 August 2019 without Prior Planning permission.

Checkley Parish Council are therefore of the opinion that in this instance the Applicant should be required to submit a revision to this Application or a further full retrospective Planning application for the Development of 10 glamping pods for holiday accommodation.

Environmental Health

In an e-mail dated 24th October 2024 EH have stated that: "Following further consideration of the application and submission of the biomass screening assessment, Environmental Health have no objections to the proposals. However, as surrogate plant has been used for the flow rate to undertake the assessment, validation of the actual plant installed will be needed. This can be accomplished either prior to determination or recommended as a condition of the planning application to be completed within 3 months should permission be granted and obtained through sampling of the stack flow rates, calculation or manufacturer information if it becomes available."

An initial consultation response dated 12th April 2024 stated: refusal recommended pending further information to address air quality impacts.

The reason for refusal at this stage is due to insufficient information being provided to determine impacts to local air quality. Attached to this memo is a form which should be completed and returned to the Planning Department for assessment.

There is insufficient information contained within this application for Environmental Health to make recommendations at this stage. Where Environmental Health are consulted with regards to the installation of boilers, the following information is required:

- Make and model of the boiler
- Manufacturers specification details
- Fuel type
- Net rather thermal input in MW
- Burn rate: for solid fuel in kg/hr; for liquid or gaseous matter in kw

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS10

The relevant strategic spatial policy is SS10 for the Other Rural Areas beyond development boundaries: "These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside."

The application shares its access with that serving all the previous developments at this location but is otherwise outside of land to which any previous approval has been applied. It can be accepted as in principle being 'essential' at this proposed location on the grounds the development would not be relevant unless it were carried out here.

SS10(2) is to sustain the rural economy by [first point]: Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified. Again, the location can be justified because it is here that the existing business is located. There is however a consideration to be given to the scale of the proposal and whether it should be regarded as 'limited expansion' given the cumulative expansion that has occurred since the original 1993 consent. In this case the proposal is modest in scale and smaller than is typical of many of the existing site lodges. It is a minor development relative to the overall range of buildings at the site.

Also relevant is SS10(3) giving a 'priority' to protecting the quality and character of the area and SS10(5) which is to enhance tourist opportunities by allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas [meaning areas outside the Churnet Valley Masterplan area].

Checkley Neighbourhood Plan

EMP2 is that: Development proposals that will result in a growth of rural enterprise and tourism will be supported where:

- there is no significant adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties or landscape character;
- they demonstrate consideration of any opportunities for sustainable travel; and
- the scale of development is appropriate in accordance with Local Plan policies

Under the interpretation section for EMP2 the plan says: “This is an enabling policy, to encourage expansion of visitor accommodation and facilities. In considering impacts on the amenities of nearby residents, additional vehicle movements should be considered. The potential for noise to travel along the valley should be taken into account in applying the policy.”

DES3: Development should minimise impact on, and where possible enhance wildlife habitats, ecology, local landscape character, and landscape features (see Plans Checkley Parish Green Infrastructure, Distribution of Known Priority Habitats and Landscape Setting), including: [relevant to this site] Trees, hedgerows, seminatural broad woodland, ancient woodland and other woodland.

Design

The outward appearance of the timber shed is very much in keeping with the appearance of the chalets and accommodation pods established nearby on the site which are all finished externally in timber. Distinctly different is the metal fuel hopper c. 1.85m x 1.85m and stand to 5.5m in height. There is also a medium tall 5m flue chimney to the boiler shed. There is therefore an obvious utilitarian characteristic to the development. This is not seen to be overly problematic in this location – noting that it is not visible outside of the site and it stands alongside or to the edge of one of the areas of existing accommodation development within the woodland. Nevertheless the appearance of the development would be greatly aided if the tall and prominent metal hopper were to be finished to a recessive dark colour. A condition should be attached to this effect.

Amenity

The main consideration is with regard to the combustion emissions. Subject to the EH recommended condition any risks of pollution can be appropriately quantified and regulated. There would need to be a second part to the condition that, in the event the monitoring reveals a level of emission that is unacceptable to the EHO, steps must be taken to adapt the unit so that the outputs can be made acceptable.

There has been an extended e-mail exchange between the council's EHO and representatives for the applicant. Emission rates are required in mg/m³ or g/hr to standard reference conditions 6% oxygen, 273oK and 101.3kPa whereas the supplied certificate used g/GJ. The applicant's specialist referenced an RHI regulatory scheme and stated (e-mail 04.10.2024): “The emissions certificate proves that the Nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and Particulate Matter (PM) rate is compliant with environmental standards”. EHO responded “This is about screening the boiler for

impacts on human health and the environment to determine if a more detailed assessment is required. Meeting the requirements for RHI is not related to this and some boilers that are "compliant" with the RHI scheme may not be suitable in all locations."

Highway Safety

No considerations arise.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

That in consideration of all of the above the application be approved subject to conditions. The agent has confirmed by e-mail that the suggested conditions would be accepted.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve subject to condition**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 17th Dec 2024

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council