

East Area Planning Committee

6th August 2014

Application Number: 14/01487/CT3

Decision Due by: 6th August 2014

Proposal: Erection of woodchip store to supply biomass boiler.

Site Address: Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre Pegasus Road (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Blackbird Leys Ward

Agent: David Bamforth

Applicant: Oxford City Council

Recommendation:

The East Area Planning Committee is recommended to approve planning permission for the following reasons:

- 1 That the proposed development would be of a size, scale, and design that would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the leisure centre, and sited in a practical location that would help facilitate the functional requirements of the store whilst also minimising the visual impact in views from the public realm. The store would also improve the choice of a biomass boiler as a means for incorporating sustainable design and construction methods into the design of the pool extension. The proposal would therefore accord with the relevant policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 and Oxford Core Strategy 2026. No third party comments have been received.
- 2 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

- 1 Development begun within time limit
- 2 Develop in accordance with approved plans
- 3 Materials as specified

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP6 - Efficient Use of Land & Density

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP9 - Creating Successful New Places

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

CP11 - Landscape Design

Core Strategy

CS9 - Energy and natural resources

CS18 - Urban design, town character, historic environment

CS21 - Green spaces, leisure and sport

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Relevant Site History:

11/00242/CT3 - Extension to existing Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre to provide 25m swimming pool, learner and fun pools and ancillary facilities. Alterations to existing leisure centre including new entrance, plus external works including landscaping and alterations to existing car parking to provide 121 spaces and 50 cycle spaces. (Additional Information): Approved

13/01397/CT3 - Erection of single storey extension to accommodate additional change room facilities to the north elevation: Approved

13/03192/CT3 - Variation of condition 2 (develop in accordance with approved plans) of planning permission 11/00242/CT3 (Extension to existing Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre to provide 25m swimming pool, learner and fun pools and ancillary facilities. Alterations to existing leisure centre including new entrance, plus external works including landscaping and alterations to existing car parking to provide 121 spaces and 50 cycle spaces) to allow replacement of escape ramp with stairs, increase in floor level by 250mm and removal of an additional tree: Approved

Representations Received:

None

Statutory Consultees:

None

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description:

1. The site is located on the northern side of Pegasus Road, and is bordered by the Oxford and Cherwell Valley College to the north-west, playing fields and Blackbird Leys Park to the north and east, and Evenlode Tower to the west. The site is

within a predominately residential area with properties on the southern side of Pegasus Road facing the site (**site plan: appendix 1**).

2. The site comprises the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre which includes a multi-use sports hall, gym, exercise studios, spin studio, crèche, and café. The centre has undergone various refurbishment works in recent years and has an extant planning permission in place for the provision of a new 25m swimming pool, learner and fun pools and ancillary facilities.
3. The site is accessed via Pegasus Road with a car park located to the west of the multi-use sports hall which has 89 spaces including a small area for disabled parking. There is also cycle parking of 30 spaces and pedestrian access to the facility along the frontage.

Proposal

4. In 2011 planning permission was granted for an extension to the leisure centre to create a 25m swimming pool, learner and fun pools, and ancillary facilities under reference number 11/00242/CT3.
5. The permission included the provision of a Biomass Boiler with an underground store for the fuel. This underground store was relocated internally through a minor amendment approved under 13/03192/CT3.
6. The biomass boiler was originally designed to be fuelled by pellets, however, it was considered more flexible to allow for future flexibility on the fuel type and develop the boiler to include the option of utilising wood chips or pellets. The application therefore seeks permission for the erection of an external woodchip store measuring 6m x 6m x 4m which would be sited in the service area to the rear of the swimming pool extension.
7. Officers consider that the main determining issues in this case are the visual impact of the woodchip store, and the benefits in terms of energy efficiency.

Form and Appearance

8. The Oxford Core Strategy 2026, through Policy CS18 encourages development to demonstrate high-quality urban design by responding to the site and its surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; contributing to an attractive public realm and providing high quality architecture. The Local Plan supports these aims through Policy CP1 which requires new development to enhance the overall quality of the environment, and CP8 which states that the siting, size, scale, and massing of development should be integrated with the built form and grain of the area in which it is sited.
9. The woodchip store has been sited to the rear of the pool extension at the end of the service access road in order to enable easy access for delivery vehicles and provide a link to the biomass boiler. The store would be formed from Forticrete textured pewter coloured facing blockwork, metal fascia, and a single ply membrane roof.

10. Officers consider that the store would be sited in the most practical location in terms of meeting the functional requirements for deliveries and enabling ease of access to the biomass boiler within the plant room of the pool extension. The building would be a simple structure which would be formed from the same materials as the rear elevation of the pool extension and also pavilion extension to the leisure centre. The store would be screened from Pegasus Road by the leisure centre and pool extension, whilst views from within the park would be limited by the grass embankments to the rear of the pool extension and also the landscaped mounds and landscaping proposed as part of the improvements to Blackbird Leys Park. Therefore the store would accord with the above mentioned policies of the Oxford Local Plan and Core Strategy.

Energy Efficiency

11. Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS9 states that all developments should seek to minimise their carbon emissions, and incorporate sustainable design and construction methods into their design in order to optimise energy efficiency.

12. The provision of a Biomass Boiler was approved as part of the Natural Resource Impact Analysis for the pool extension. The ability for the boiler to have the option of utilising wood chips as well as pellets would provide flexibility in the long term and adapt to any shortages in a specific fuel. In addition wood chips have a lower life cycle cost, and are a lower carbon option to pellets as it can be produced by the Council through maintenance works to their own tree stock.

13. The store would therefore allow this flexibility between the use of wood chips and pellets, and would accord with the overall aims of Policy CS9.

Conclusion:

14. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, and the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and therefore officer's recommendation is to approve the development.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

Extension: 2228

Date: 22nd July 2014

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