

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 14/02021/FULL1

Ward:
Bickley

Address : Land At Southwood Close Bickley
Bromley

OS Grid Ref: E: 542959 N: 168226

Applicant : Ms G Alker

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Biomass Boiler cabin containing internal plant room, flue and wood pellet store to provide renewable heat to flats in Southwood Close.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
London City Airport Safeguarding Birds

Proposal

- Biomass, boiler cabin containing internal plant room, flue and wood pellet store to provide renewable heat to flats 1-39 Southwood Close
- The proposed boiler cabin would measure approximately 10m long x 3.2m wide with a mono-pitched roof max height 3m high with the addition of a flue measuring 6m high above ground level
- The external surfaces of the cabin would be clad in timber while the flue would be dark brown with a matte finish
- Approximately 12 deliveries of wood pellets would be required for the boiler per year
- Pellets would be delivered using a specialised pellet delivery lorry
- Deliveries would last approximately half an hour

Location

- The boiler would be positioned on the southern side of a treed landscaping bund separating Southwood Close from Oldfield Road
- The site incorporates land currently used for refuse bin storage, along with part of the grassed bund and one of the existing parking spaces
- Southwood Close is characterised by a mixture of flatted development and detached houses

- The boiler cabin would be sited directly opposite, approximately 11.5 metres away from a two storey flatted development comprising No's 1 - 6 Southwood Close
- To the north of the site in Oldfield Road are a number of detached dwellings
- The ground where the boiler would be positioned rises steeply to the north, forming the landscaped bund
- It contains a number of mature trees and planting
- There are two entrances to Southwood Close: one directly adjacent to the site of the proposed boiler cabin and one further along Oldfield Road to the east.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- drawings are inconsistent with photo images
- Oldfield Road is a quiet residential road
- does not suit the siting of a large industrial plant on side of road
- flue is excessively large and out of keeping with the area
- not aware of any problems of fly-tipping as mentioned in documents
- planting should extend around two elevation and go up to eaves level
- should have climbing plants and big bushes in front
- object to wood furnace 6 yards from bedroom window
- already have refuse bins at entrance of close
- do need anything else to make it look like an industrial area
- this is a smokeless zone
- houses in Southwood Close not allowed to park a caravan on the drive so why would a boiler cabin be allowed with a chimney with smoke coming from it?

Comments from Consultees

The Council's Highways Development Engineers raise no objections on the basis of the parking bays being moved by 2m from the turning so there is enough space for the delivery lorry to swing around between the parking bays and the plant room.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer states that the application site lies within close proximity of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). However, given the results of the accompanying air quality assessment, no objections are raised, in principle, to the development.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- BE1 Design of New Development
- NE7 Development and Trees

T3 Parking
T18 Road Safety

London Plan:

Policy 7.14 - Improving Air Quality

Policy 7.15 - Reducing Noise and Enhancing Soundscapes

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

Planning History

An application for a similar development sited at the southern end of Southwood Close was refused under ref.14/00043 on the following grounds:

- 1 The application site is within an area designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and in the absence of an air quality assessment to demonstrate that the proposed biomass boiler would be 'air neutral', the proposal is likely to have an adverse impact on local air quality, contrary to policy 7.14 of the London Plan
- 2 The proposed development, by reason of its siting and size, would be unduly obtrusive in the street scene and out of scale and character with the surrounding area, contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan
- 3 The proposed development, by reason of its size and location in close proximity to windows of habitable rooms at adjacent properties, would have a significant visual impact, detrimental to the amenities that the occupiers of adjacent properties might reasonably expect to be able continue to enjoy, contrary to policy BE1 of the unitary Development Plan
- 4 In the absence of sufficient information to demonstrate the capacity of the highway layout to accommodate satisfactorily the additional traffic generated by associated delivery vehicles to the site, combined with adequate on-site parking and vehicle turning facilities, the proposal would be prejudicial to the safety and free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety within the local road network and would be likely to result in inconvenience to other road users, contrary to policy T18 of the unitary Development Plan

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area, the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties and the impact it would have on air quality.

New shrub planting is proposed to the northern and western sides of the boiler, helping to screen views of the boiler from Oldfield Road and all of the existing trees would be retained. The proposed boiler would be clad in a timber finish and additional landscaping should be secured by way of condition, should permission

be granted. All of this would help to soften the appearance of the development in the surrounding landscape. While the development would still be highly visible from the flats opposite in Southwood Close, it is considered that it would have a less harmful appearance than the existing arrangement of refuse and recycling bins (which would need to be relocated) and a large fenced-off container, and would not appear unduly industrial.

In terms of the impact on the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties, the main impact would be on those occupiers of flats 1 - 6 Southwood Close, which are directly opposite the site of the boiler cabin. While the development would be highly visible from these properties, the boiler cabin would not appear overtly stark against the surrounding landscaping, given the materials proposed, and its gently sloping roof which would be pitched away from adjacent flats. Furthermore, the current outlook from the flats is onto an assortment of bins, all of which would be relocated as part of the proposal. On this basis, the visual impact of the development is not considered unduly harmful to neighbouring amenities. A condition requiring additional planting around the boiler would further reduce the impact.

Conditions are also recommended limiting noise output from the boiler and from delivery vehicles, and the time of deliveries should be controlled by way of condition. With regard to visible smoke emissions, this should also be restricted by way of condition.

The application site is within an area designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The AQMA was introduced in 2007 to take account of the likelihood of exceedance of the annual average nitrogen dioxide level. Furthermore, the London Plan, at Policy 7.14, states that development proposals should at least be 'air quality neutral' and not lead to the deterioration of existing poor air quality and permission should only be granted if no adverse air quality impacts from the biomass boiler are identified (7.14e). The Air Quality Assessment submitted with the application concludes at section 6 that "predicted concentrations of NO₂ and PM₁₀ were below the relevant air quality limit values at all sensitive receptor locations throughout the assessment", consequently the proposal is considered acceptable from an air quality perspective.

The proposal would result in the loss of one parking space at the site. Parking spaces are not allocated in the road and, in addition, there is available on-street parking along Southwood Close. As such, the proposal is unlikely to have a significant impact on parking and highways in the vicinity, subject to two of the parking bays being moved so there is enough space for the delivery lorry to swing around between the parking bays and the plant room.

The existing bin storage area would need to be relocated as a result of the proposal and no details of this have been included as part of the application. A condition is therefore recommended requiring details of a suitable alternative refuse and recycling storage facility.

No trees would be removed as part of the proposal and a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment has been submitted which demonstrates that the

proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the existing trees on the bund behind the proposed boiler location.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in that it would not have a significantly harmful impact on the visual amenities of the area, nor have a serious detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby residential buildings. Furthermore, no undue impact on parking or road safety is anticipated.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the files refs. 14/02021 and 14/00043 set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

as amended by documents received on 20.06.2014 27.06.2014 04.07.2014 15.07.2014

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 ACA04 Landscaping Scheme - full app no details
ACA04R Reason A04
- 3 ACB01 Trees to be retained during building op.
ACB01R Reason B01
- 4 ACB18 Trees-Arboricultural Method Statement
ACB18R Reason B18
- 5 ACC07 Materials as set out in application
ACC07R Reason C07
- 6 ACH03 Satisfactory parking - full application
ACH03R Reason H03
- 7 ACH18 Refuse storage - no details submitted
ACH18R Reason H18
- 8 At any time the combined noise level from the approved development in terms of dB(A) shall remain 10 decibels below the relevant minimum background noise level, LA90(15mins) measured at any noise-sensitive building. If the plant has a distinctive tonal or intermittent nature the predicted noise level of the plant shall be increased by a further 5dBA. Thus if the predicted noise level is 40dB(A) from the plant alone and the plant has a tonal nature, the 40dB(A) shall be increased to 45dB(A) for comparison with the background level. The L90 spectra can be used to help determine whether the plant will be perceived as tonal.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of nearby properties and to accord with Policies BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and 7.15 of the London Plan.

- 9 Heavy and light goods vehicles along with plant machinery under the control of the operators which deliver wood pellet fuel for the approved boilers shall only use non-intrusive broadband and/or vehicle noise alarms or reversing cameras. On such vehicles there shall be no use of single or multi pitch reversing beepers.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of nearby properties and to accord with Policies BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and 7.15 of the London Plan.

10 Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, there shall be no delivery of wood pellets (or any other approved fuel), filling of storage silos or removal of ash from the boilers from the site except between the following hours 0930 and 1530 hours Monday to Friday There shall be no such activities at the weekend, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and in the interest of the amenities of the area.

11 The biomass boiler shall only be operated using clean wood pellets that comply with a recognised fuel quality standard (such as CEN/TS 14961:2005). A written guarantee shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the development with a declaration that wood pellets conform to a recognised fuel quality standard and will be consistently used in the biomass boiler. A statement shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority specifying the quantity of wood pellets used in the biomass boiler and the fuel specifications in accordance with CEN/TS 14961:2005 or a similar recognised standard (the statement shall be obtained from the fuel supplier).

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the area and to accord with Policies BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and 7.14 of the London Plan.

12 The biomass boiler shall be associated with a written schedule of maintenance which shall include removal of ash, inspection and maintenance of particulate arrestment equipment, boiler servicing and stack cleaning. The maintenance schedule shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the area and to accord with Policies BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and 7.14 of the London Plan.

13 There shall be no visible smoke emissions from the boiler flue during normal operation of the plant except during the start-up procedures, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the area and to accord with Policies BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan and 7.14 of the London Plan.

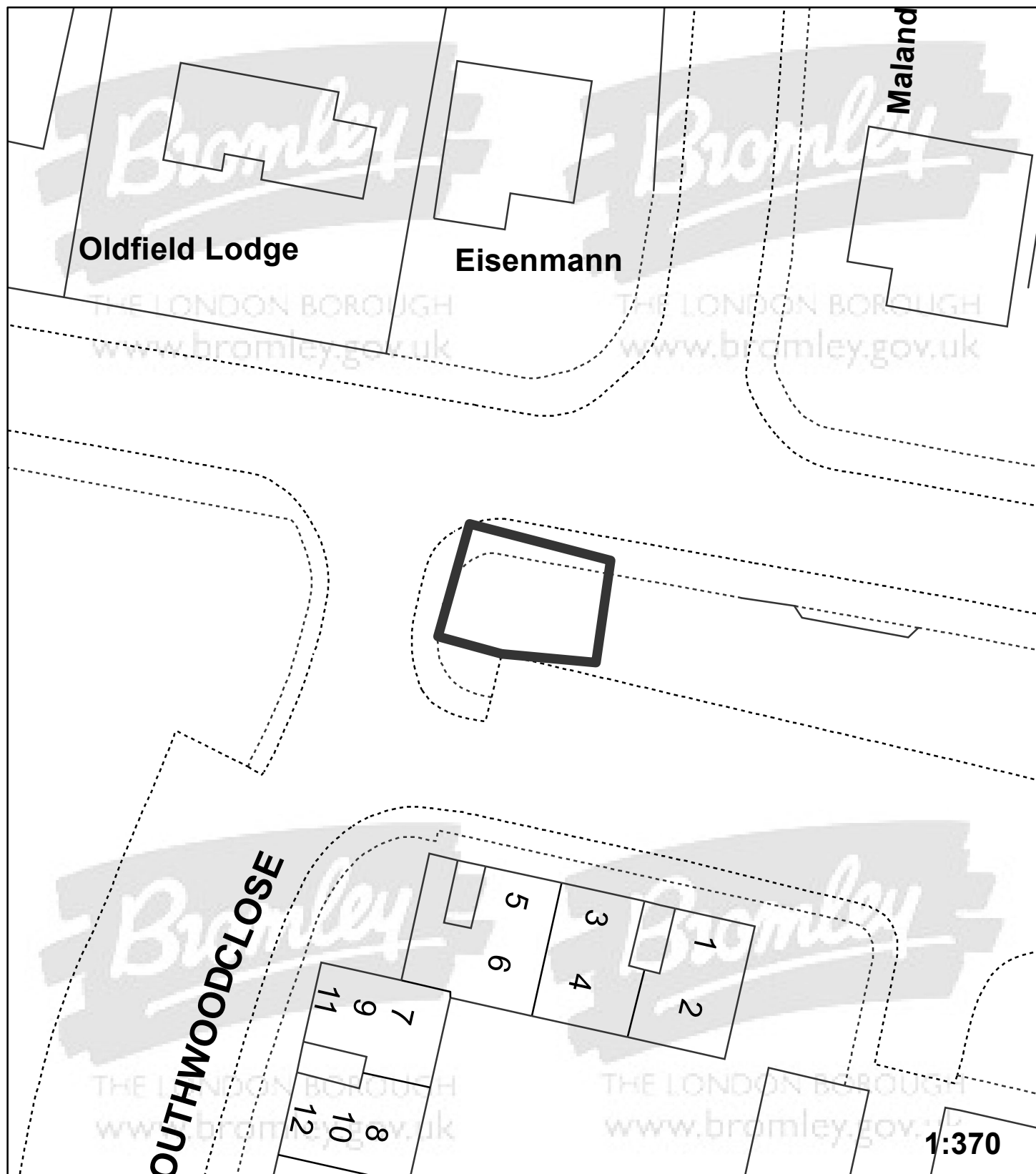
INFORMATIVE(S)

1 Before works commence, the Applicant is advised to contact the Pollution Team of Environmental Health & Trading Standards regarding compliance with the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and/or the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Applicant should also ensure compliance with the Control of Pollution and Noise from Demolition and Construction Sites Code of Practice 2008 which is available on the Bromley web site.

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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