CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/07361
Application Type:	Wiltshire Council R3
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	05 October 2023
Case officer:	Ruaridh O'Donoghue

Site Address:	Pewsey Community Centre, Wilcot Road, Pewsey, SN9 5EL
Proposal:	Installation of an external ground mounted biomass silo (3.0 x 3.0 x 7.37) - model number UM-300 (resubmission of PL/2022/05974)
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

POLICIES:
Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) 2015:

- CP 51 – Landscape
- CP 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance

ISSUES:

- Principle
- Design, scale and siting
- Impact on neighbour amenity

REPRESENTATIONS:
Pewsey Parish Council
No objections but would welcome an element of cladding.

ASSESSMENT:
The application relates to The Vale Community Campus in Pewsey which is a Wiltshire Council-owned facility containing sports facilities, community and meeting rooms as well as a cafe.

The site lies within the limits of development of Pewsey surrounded to the north, east and south by housing and to the west by a secondary and primary school. The village of Pewsey is washed over by the North Wessex Downs AONB.

PEWS21, a public right of way (PRoW) runs along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site.

The application proposes the installation of one external ground-mounted biomass silo (3.0 x 3.0 x 7.37m) adjoining the southern elevation of the building. This is a resubmission of an earlier application (PL/2022/05975) that proposed two external ground-mounted biomass silos (2.5X 2.5 X 5.87) (model number MU-300) in the same location and the current scheme.

Principle of Development

Proposals for the generation of energy from renewable sources are in principle supported by national and local planning policy due to their contribution to sustainable development, meeting the challenges of climate change, air quality and fuel security. Indeed, policy asserts that such applications should be encouraged and approved if the impacts are acceptable or can be made to be, through planning conditions and/or mitigation, particularly given the high potential reversibility of the installations. This equipment will be used to feed the existing boiler and so is related infrastructure to renewable energies. The current silos are internal and the Council is looking to improve efficiencies by having larger silos installed externally.

Design and Visual Impact

The proposed silo will be located to the side of the main entrance where the existing plant rooms are located within the building - the same position as the extant permission for two silos. As such, it will not be readily visible to people accessing the campus.

Whilst, there will be some views possible from PEWS21 immediately to the south of the site, in the context of a large sports centre that is contemporary in design and located within the built-up area of the village, the addition of the proposed silo is not considered to impact significantly the visual amenities enjoyed along this route. Although greater in height than the previous scheme (7.37 vs. 5.87m), the previous proposal was for two silos and therefore of greater mass and bulk.

As the silo is proposed in the same location as the extant permission, it will remain well contained with the built form such that it can still be concluded that the silo will have a negligible impact on the surrounding landscape notably, the AONB.

The design is clearly centred around functionality and whilst they are not the most aesthetically pleasing structures, they are facilitating the use of renewable energies at the Campus which is a positive. However, it would appear possible to reduce the impact by painting the silo so that it doesn't appear as a large shiny, galvanised steel structure. Indeed, this is something Wiltshire Council agreed on the previous consent and has also done elsewhere on similar sites. A condition to secure details of this will suffice to overcome this concern - in line with the previous consent.

Neighbour Amenity

Wiltshire Public Protection were consulted on the proposal but, they had no comments to make. Two silos were previously considered acceptable in this regard and therefore, despite the height increase, it is still considered that due to the siting and distance away from residential properties, there will be no detrimental impacts on neighbour amenity.

CONCLUSION:

The proposal is considered to be acceptable by virtue of its scale, design and materials, with no significant impact on neighbouring amenities, hence it is considered to be in accordance with CP51 and CP57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions.

Conditions: (3)

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

- Dwg ref: 1027-2023-101 Rev O Proposed Silo
- Dwg ref: MAFA Data Sheet MU300
- Dwg ref: Silo size and measurements

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

3 Before the silo is first brought into use, it shall be painted in a colour that is first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenities of the surrounding area.