CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

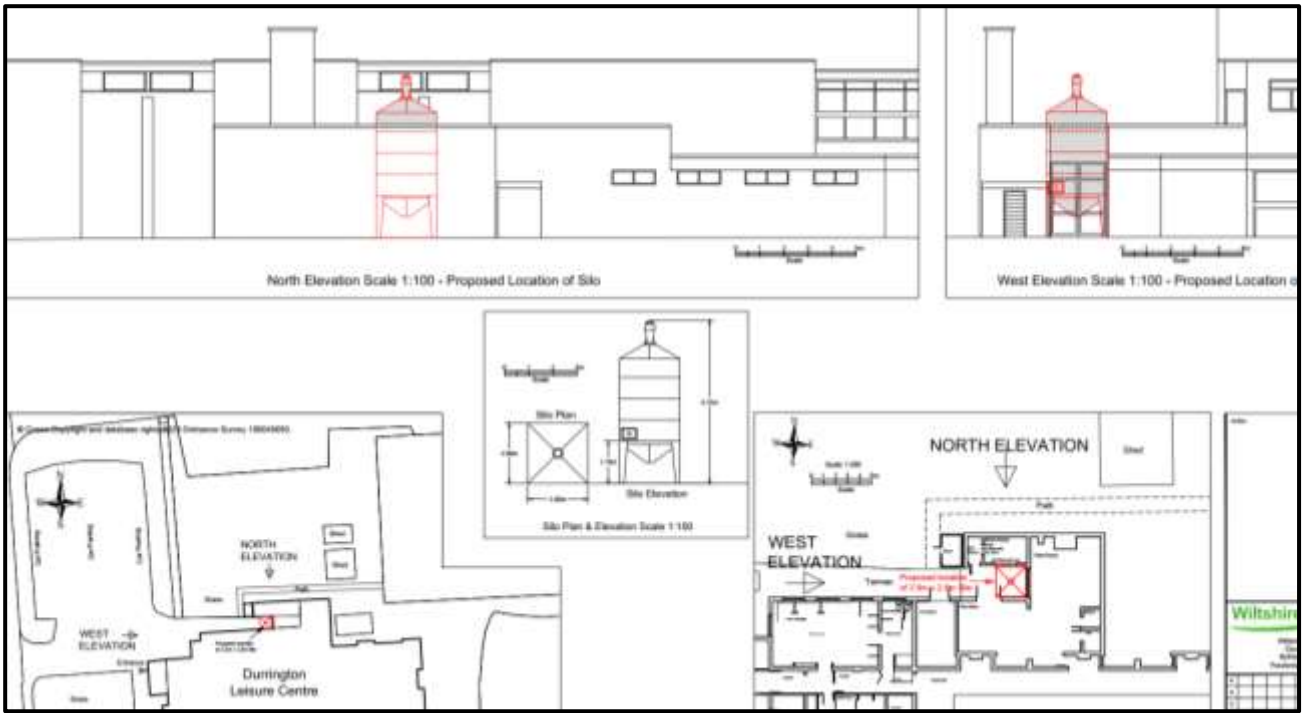
Application Reference:	PL/2023/10127
Site:	Durrington Swimming Pool, Recreation Road, Durrington, SP4 8HH
Date site notice posted:	11.01.2024
Publicity Expired:	01.02.2024
Target Date:	05.02.2023

SITE DESCRIPTION:
The site is situated on the edge of, but fully within the settlement boundary for the Market Town of Durrington, as defined by Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy), CP2 (Delivery Strategy) and CP4 (Amesbury Community Area). The site is surrounded on all sides by the extensive grounds and buildings associated with Avon Valley College, Secondary School, the main buildings of which are to the north of the site. To the immediate front of the building (west) a shared car park exists that serves the site and adjacent school. The site is accessed via a long shared school access road leading from Recreation Road to the south. Whilst the site is not in the immediate vicinity of any river, is in Flood Zone 1 and in an area at low risk of ground water flooding, the site is situated within the catchment of the River Avon Special Area for Conservation (SAC). It is also situated within the 6.4 kilometre recreation buffer of the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA).

The site currently consists of a Council owned leisure centre with indoor swimming pool. It consists of a large linear, flat roof building of single and 2 storey massing. It is of standard local authority architecture with its main entrance facing the shared car park. Playing fields and incidental shed/storage buildings surround the building but otherwise it has a relatively open character and is visible from outside the school grounds.

PROPOSAL:
This is a full application proposing a new silo structure which is required in order to feed a new biomass boiler within the building. The supporting documentation confirms that the Council wish for the leisure centre to be less reliant on gas energy for heating etc and are thus looking to install alternative provision. The new silo structure is to measure 2.5 x 2.5 metres in footprint and will extend to a maximum height of 6.76 metres.

As can be seen from PLAN 1 below, it is to be positioned in a natural alleyway created by the many additions and the design of the existing building and will therefore be enveloped on 3 sides by existing built form. It is shown to be approximately 2 metres taller than the immediate flat roof addition it is to sit next to; but approximately 0.5 metres lower than the full two storey height of the main building; and 2 metres shorter than an existing tower structure that already exists on this part of the leisure centre.



PLAN 1 – Proposed Elevations & Block Plan

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

S/1994/0192 Installation of mechanical ventilation plant on roof. Permission – 27.04.1994

POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guide (January 2021) (NDG)

Salisbury District Local Plan policies (Saved by Wiltshire Core Strategy) (SDLP):
R1A – New Improved Sports/Recreation Facilities
R7 – Dual use of Education and Recreational Facilities

Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2015) (WCS):
CP1 (Settlement Strategy)
CP2 (Delivery Strategy)
CP3 (Infrastructure Requirements)
CP4 (Amesbury Community Area)
CP41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy)
CP42 (Standalone Renewable Energy Installations)
CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping)
CP60 (Sustainable Transport)
CP61 (Transport & Development)
CP62 (Development Impacts on the Transport Network)
CP64 (Demand Management)
CP69 (Protection of the River Avon SAC)
Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (February 2020) (WHSAP)

Supplementary Planning Documents:
Creating Places Design Guide SPG (April 2006)
Achieving Sustainable Development SPG (April 2005)
Durrington & Larkhill Village Design Statement (VDS)
Wiltshire Local Transport Plan – Car Parking Strategy
Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan (2015)

REPRESENTATIONS:
Public Protection – No comments received

Durrington Town Council – No comments received

Letters – None

ISSUES:
The main considerations which are material to the determination of this application are listed below:
- Principle
- Character & Design
- Neighbouring Amenities
- Ecology

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:
Principle:
The site is situated within the settlement boundary for the Market Town of Durrington, as defined by WCS policies CP1 (Settlement Strategy), CP2 (Delivery Strategy) and CP4 (Amesbury Community Area). In such a location new development is considered to be sustainable and is supported in principle.

In addition the site consists of an existing leisure centre which shares grounds/parking/access etc with a Secondary School site and provides important health and leisure facilities to the town. Saved Salisbury District Local Plan (SDLP) policy R1A states that '*Proposals for new indoor or outdoor recreation facilities or the expansion of existing facilities will be permitted subject to there being no significant adverse impact on the landscape'*; whilst saved SDLP policy R7 acknowledges the important dual role of providing health and school facilities on shared sites.

WCS policies CP41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy) and CP42 (Standalone Renewable Energy Installations) also encourage the provision and installation of more energy efficient forms of generating heat and electricity. The proposals, involving the installation of a new biomass silo to service a biomass boiler and to reduce the site's reliance on gas is therefore welcomed and supported in principle within this policy context.

This principle acceptability is however subject to the detail and the potential implications for the character of the area; neighbouring amenities; and ecology. These matters will therefore be addressed in more detail below.

Character & Design:
As has been identified above, the site is situated within an existing school site and is surrounded by the school playing fields, car parking and open space associated with that use. The existing leisure building shares the access and parking facilities with the school and is situated to the front of the main school buildings on a relatively flat and open part of the overall site. It is therefore visible in the public domain but is set quiet far back from Recreation Road to the south by intervening grassed fields and the main access track to the school.

The existing building is a made up of a mix of single and two storey blocks with a flat roof design. It is of typical local authority/public building architecture and is of its time, with a mix of glazing and brickwork. As can be seen in PHOTO 1 below, and as is common of its leisure centre use, the building already benefits from a lot of infrastructure and plant positioned on its roof and in single storey buildings attached around the main building, presumably required in association with the indoor pool that is contained inside the leisure centre.



PHOTO 1 – Front Elevation of the Existing Leisure Centre

It is within an existing inlet created by such buildings/kit that the biomass silo is to be positioned. The silo will be taller than the immediately adjacent flat roof structure it is to be positioned besides, but will not be taller than the overall height of the main building; or an existing tower structure that exists on this part of the building. From Recreation Road to the south, the new structure will be fully screened by the existing building; and from the shared parking area and adjacent school grounds the structure will essentially be tucked away, glimpsed only in the context and against a backdrop of the other plant and associated buildings that exist on this site. It is not therefore considered that the installation of the silo structure will result in any implications for the character of the existing building or area as a whole and is an acceptable addition to the site.

Neighbouring Amenities:

WCS policy CP57 (Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping) requires that new development should be designed to ensure that the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. The NPPF further confirms that planning should '*always seek to secure high quality design and a good*

standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings'. Residential amenity is affected by significant changes to the environment including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and living areas within private gardens and this therefore needs to be carefully considered accordingly.

Given the position of the proposed silo structure it is not considered that it will create any significant implications for any neighbouring amenities. The nearest neighbours are positioned to the west of the site and are separated from the leisure centre by the intervening access track, car park and grass verges as well as an existing substation (at least 66 metres away). The facility is also to be positioned on an existing building which already has large extraction plant equipment on its roof; and within the grounds of a busy school and leisure centre. There is therefore already a steady, background noise level and with a pool use already operating, a certain amount of odour generated from the site. Whilst the Council's Public Protection Team has not commented on the application it is not therefore considered that the proposals are likely to result in any implications for neighbouring amenities in terms of noise, odour or loss of light.

Ecology:
As is identified above, this proposal falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and within the 6.4 kilometre recreation buffer of the Salisbury Plain SPA. However these designations are particularly susceptible to the creation of new households, more people living in the area and an increase in overnight accommodation. It is not considered that the proposed change in the energy consumption and type at this leisure centre site will therefore have an adverse impact on either of these designations and the Council is therefore able to conclude that this development will not lead to adverse impacts alone and in-combination with other plans and projects on the River Avon SAC or Salisbury Plain SPA. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard and satisfy the requirements of WCS policy CP69 (Protection of the River Avon SAC) and the Habitat Regulations.

CONCLUSION:
The site is situated within the settlement boundary and on a busy school site and is already in use as a leisure centre with indoor pool. This proposal merely seeks to change the reliance of the site on natural gas. The new silo is to be tucked within the site and will be seen very much in the context of the existing building and other plant and machinery. It is not considered that it will be particularly visible in the public domain, or will result in any significant implications for the character of the area; neighbouring amenities; or ecology. The application is recommended for permission accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION:
Permission subject to 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. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

   Application Form & Certificate
   Ref: Rev O – Location Plan. Received – 11.12.2023
   Ref: Rev O – Block Plan. Received – 11.12.2023
   Ref: 858/2023/101 Rev O – Proposed Silo Size 2.5m x 2.5m. Received – 11.12.2023

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

3. The silo structure hereby approved shall be finished in a matt, not reflective material.

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