

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
MR. D NICHOLS, DAVIES TIMBER YARD 'A'	Siting of Environmental Incinerator - Wythall Sawmills, Alcester Road, Wythall	GB	B/2007/0682 21.06.2007

Councillor J. T. Duddy has requested that this application be determined by Planning Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: that **DELEGATED POWERS** be granted to the Head of Planning and Environment Services to determine the application on expiry of the publicity period on 14th August 2007 (minded to approve).

Consultations

Wythall PC	Object - proposed siting too close to adjacent property and concerned over the type of materials that may be burnt and the times of operation - received 18.07.2007. Further comments awaited.
Wythall Residents' Association	Object to fumes and smells in this residential area. Also, concerns over possible toxic fumes from treated wood. If granted, a condition that no imported waste should be burnt to be imposed - received 23.07.2007. Further comments awaited.
WCC(HP)	No objections - received 05.07.2007.
EHO	No objections subject to conditions - received 26.07.2007.
Natural Environment Officer	Supports the application due to the recycling of waste energy on site - received 30.07.2007.
Publicity	Site notice posted 27.06.2007 (expired 17.07.2007). 2 notification letters sent out 26.06.2007 (expired 16.07.2007). 2 emails and 1 letter received objecting on the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscaping condition to previous application has not been implemented. ▪ Unsustainable - no recycling of timber waste. ▪ Possibility of imported waste. ▪ Inappropriate in a residential area. ▪ Will lead to the generation of smell and smoke. ▪ Inappropriate siting so close to no. 323 Alcester Road. ▪ Proposed height of the flue would be visually intrusive. Further comments are awaited.

The site and its surroundings

This application relates to the Wythall Saw Mills site on the east side of Alcester Road. A drive running under a canopy from Alcester Road through the timber yard site ends at a

security fence between the sawmill and a field. To the south of the site is a dwelling; to the north a public house; and open space on the opposite side of Alcester Road.

An elevational drawing has been received showing the incinerator and the height of the flue. Interested parties have therefore been reconulted asking for comments by 14th August 2007.

Any further comments received will be reported to Members as a verbal update at the meeting.

Proposal

This is a full planning application proposing the installation of an environmental incinerator against the south elevation of the sawmill.

Currently timber waste is taken to a registered tip in skips. The proposed incinerator will negate the necessity of these transfers.

It is also intended that heat generated by the incinerator will be used to heat the sawmill.

Relevant Policies

WCSP	EN.1, EN.3, WD.1, WD.2, CTC.1, D.38, D.39
BDLP	DS1, DS2, DS13, C4, S19, E4, ES15
Others	SPG1, PPG2, PPG4, PPS7, PPS10, PPS23

Relevant Planning History

None

Notes

The main issues in the determination of this application are:-

- (a) whether the proposal represents appropriate development in the Green Belt; and, if not,
- (b) whether very special circumstances exist that clearly outweigh the harm that would be caused.

Although the site has a commercial use, the site is located in the Green Belt with open fields nearby. I consider the installation of an incinerator and flue, 8.8 metres in height, would harm the openness of the Green Belt and I therefore find the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It therefore follows to consider whether very special circumstances exist by considering the harm caused as well as any advantages to the proposal.

Harm Caused

PPG2 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful in the Green Belt. As well as harm caused by its inappropriateness, I consider the proposal would go against the fundamental aims of Green Belt policy to preserve openness and character.

The high flue would be seen from adjoining properties and would, to my mind, harm the appearance and character of the landscape. As such, I find the proposal to be contrary to policy CTC.1 of the WCSP and policy C4 of the BDLP which seek to protect landscape from insensitive and harmful development.

I note the concerns of interested parties regarding the hours of operation and the possible import of waste material. Both these points can be conditioned to restrict use of the incinerator to Mondays to Fridays, 8.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. (times specified by applicant), and that no waste will be incinerated apart from that generated on site.

I also note the concerns of possible visual impact. The incinerator will be located approximately 7 metres from no. 323 Alcester Road. 2 metres of the flue will be above the roof of the sawmill building. However, the northern elevation of no. 323 has no habitable room windows and the flue will be near an existing flue to the boiler which is approximately 7.8 metres in height. I do not consider the proposal will be visually intrusive from no. 323 bearing in mind the lack of habitable room windows. The location of the proposed incinerator down the side of the sawmill will not adversely affect the street scene.

Points in support of the application

The current operation appears to generate 2 or 3 journeys per week to a registered tip to offload waste timber. Getting rid of the timber waste by incineration on site will either greatly reduce or eliminate these journeys.

Regarding possible fumes and smell, the type of incinerator proposed is specifically approved for smoke control areas (smokeless zones) - it should be noted that Wythall does not lie within a smokeless zone. The manufacturers have stated that there will only be smoke for the first 5 minutes of lighting the incinerator. The Environmental Health Section have had discussions with Birmingham City Council's Environmental Health officers as this incinerator is being used at a sawmill in Birmingham with housing nearby. Birmingham CC have commented that it has not given rise to any statutory nuisance or complaints. I do not consider the proposed development to be contrary to the provisions of PPS23 - Planning and Pollution Control.

It is intended to recycle heat generated by the incinerator to heat the sawmill. Such recycling of waste energy is one of the Key Planning Objectives in PPS10 and is further encouraged by Structure Plan policies EN.1 and EN.3.

Other Issues

Complaints have been received because the landscaping scheme for a previous application - B/2004/1389 - has not been implemented successfully. The landscaping

was wrongly carried out outside the perimeter fence and was eaten by horses. The correct scheme should be implemented in October / November this year.

The situation is being monitored by the Enforcement Section.

Conclusions

The proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, I consider very special circumstances exist, detailed above, that clearly outweigh the harm that may be caused.

Also, I do consider that some concerns can be adequately addressed through the imposition of conditions, such as those restricting hours of operation and the limiting of waste to be incinerated to that generated on site.

I further do not consider the incinerator and flue would compromise residential amenity or adversely affect the street scene.

The publicity period does not expire until 14th August 2007 and I therefore request that delegated powers be granted to me to determine the application on or after this date. I am mindful to grant permission for the reasons outlined above.

RECOMMENDATION: that **DELEGATED POWERS** be granted to the Head of Planning and Environment Services to determine the application on the expiry of the publicity period on 14th August 2007.