

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		30/10/2012	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		15/10/2012	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Rob Tulloch				2012/4359/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Camley Street Natural Park 12 Camley Street London N1C 4PW				See decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Installation of two timber structures to house anaerobic digestion system following demolition of existing storage sheds to the rear elevation of visitors' centre and the installation of 15 solar panels to roof of the visitor centre.							
Recommendation(s):		Grant Planning Permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Application					
Conditions:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	05	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00	
Summary of consultation responses:	Site notice 14/09/2012-05/10/2012 Press advert 20/09/2012-11/10/2012 No responses received						
CAAC/Local group comments:	Regents Canal CAAC raise no objection.						
Site Description							
Camley Street Natural Park is on the south side of the Regents Canal between Goodway and St Pancras Yacht Basin. It is a wetland nature reserve managed by the London Wildlife Trust, The site is largely open, but includes two small lodge buildings, one of which is a visitors centre where the proposed plant is to be located. It is classified as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, and a Local Nature Reserve. It lies within the Regents canal Conservation Area.							
Relevant History							
8600651 Erection of a single storey timber activities building for use in connection with the Camley Street Natural Park. Granted 11/06/1986							
Relevant policies							
LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development CS10 Supporting community facilities and services CS13 Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage CS15 Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity CS18 Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling							

DP15 Community and leisure uses
DP22 Promoting sustainable design and construction
DP24 Securing high quality design
DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage
DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
DP31 Provision of, and improvements to, public open space and outdoor sport and recreation facilities

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

Regents Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2008

NPPF 2012

Assessment

1 Proposal

- 1.1 Consent is sought for the installation of an anaerobic digester system to the rear of the visitors' centre and 15x solar panels to the roof of the visitor centre. The project is part of a two year Council funded initiative to showcase innovative renewable energy systems. The structures are proposed as temporary features with a maximum lifespan of two years.
- 1.2 The 2012 amendment to the General Permitted Development Order permits the installation of non-domestic microgeneration equipment on buildings other than dwellings or flats. However, rooftop solar panels are only permitted if they are more than 1m in from the edge of the roof whereas the proposed panels are 0.67m in from the edge. Only flues forming part of a biomass heating systems or combined heat and power systems are permitted, not the biomass systems themselves.
- 1.3 The main issues are-
- Design
 - Open space
 - Biodiversity
 - Sustainability
 - Amenity

2 Design

- 2.1 The nature park covers approximately 0.8 hectares. The visitors' centre is one of two small buildings located at the rear of the park backing on to the canal. It is a single storey wooden building measuring approximately 14m (w) x 8m (d). As the building is on a slope the height of the building rises from 2.4m to 2.95m. At the rear of the building, facing the canal, are two storage sheds. It is proposed to remove these and replace them with timber structures to house the new plant. One structure would have a footprint of 3.9m x 2.4m and house an anaerobic digester, the other would have a footprint of 4.3m (w) and be between 1.4m and 2.8m in depth and house a gas scrubber. In between the structures would sit a cylindrical gas holder 1.8m high with a diameter of 1.4m.
- 2.2 The proposed structures would be 600mm higher than the roof of the visitor centre. They would be constructed in timber with additional trellising and white framed windows. The windows would allow visitors to view the process. Due to their location at the rear, the structures would only be visible from the canal- there is no towpath on the nature park side of the canal so the rear of visitors' centre is only visible from the towpath on the opposite side of the canal. The proposed structures would be larger than the existing sheds, but are not large enough to dominate the space and would be subordinate to the host building. Their visual impact would be mitigated by planting attached to the trellising and by screening by trees and shrubs on the canal edge.

- 2.3 An array of fifteen solar panels, in five rows of three, are proposed for the roof of the visitors centre. Each row would measure approximately 5m x 1m. The panels would be set at an angle of between 10° and 15° and would extend between 278mm and 355mm above the flat roof. The panels would be largely screened from the canal by the proposed structures to the rear.
- 2.4 The cumulative impact of the structures is limited and the proposal is for a temporary period. As such the proposal is not considered to harm the character or appearance of the host building or conservation area and would comply with policies CS14, DP24 and DP25 of the LDF and Camden Planning Guidance.

3 Biodiversity

- 3.1 There is a row of trees to the rear of the visitor centre. The proposed structures are lightweight and would not require excavation or concrete foundations so should not affect the root systems of nearby trees, but two of the trees will require their crowns to be raised to provide clearance for the new structures. The applicant has submitted an arboricultural report indicating the extent of works proposed and the protection measures that will be utilised. The Council's Tree Officer considers the proposed development would have a minimal impact on the nearby trees to be retained provided the recommendations set out in the arboricultural report are complied with. A condition will require the development to be carried out in accordance with the report.
- 3.2 Although it is within the boundary of the Local Nature Reserve/Metropolitan SINC, the area where the structure will be located is currently used for storage and has limited biodiversity value. The proposal is acceptable in terms of its ecological impact, and a condition will be added to ensure that the planting around the trellis is appropriate for a designated nature site.

4 Open space

- 4.1 Policy CS15 seeks to avoid development on designated open spaces unless it is for limited development ancillary to a use taking place on the land and for which there is a demonstrable need. Extensions and alterations to existing buildings on open space should be proportionate to the size, including the volume, of the original building.
- 4.2 The visitor centre is to the rear of the park and the proposed structures would be to the rear of the visitor centre, occupying a narrow strip between the building and the canal. As such, the proposed structures would be barely visible from within the open space itself and therefore have little impact on the sense of openness. When viewed from outside the open space, the development would be seen as a minor extension to an existing building.
- 4.3 The two proposed structures are single storey and would have a combined footprint of 17sqm. This is considered to be subordinate to the visitors' centre which has a footprint of 112sqm, and would barely encroach into the open space as a whole which covers 0.8 hectares (8,000sqm).
- 4.4 The anaerobic digester would demonstrate the feasibility of micro renewable energy provision in urban locations and would operate alongside the existing educational provision of the park. As such, the proposal is considered to be both proportionate and ancillary to the designated open space.

5 Sustainability

- 5.1 The project aims to develop a cost effective micro anaerobic digestion facility to pioneer a low carbon local approach to urban food waste management and renewable energy generation. The proposal would include a 2m³ anaerobic digester, which would be fed with 50kg of food waste collected locally using the centre's bikes and trailers. This would produce 4m³ of biogas stored in a gasholder situated between the digester and gas scrubber. It would then be cleaned by the

scrubber before going to two combined heat and power units (CHP's). The CHP's would generate heat and electricity for the centre's base load and peak energy requirements. Energy not used would be fed back into the national grid. The digester would operate alongside the rooftop photovoltaics.

6 Amenity

- 6.1 Most of the plant would be housed internally with no ducting. The applicant's statement indicates that the digester would use a 40 watt motor for mixing every few minutes, but due to the low power of the motor this would be almost noiseless. The pre-digester would be fitted with a macerator and pump, the macerator would be sound insulated and operate for a few minutes 3-4 times a week. The CHP's would be installed in the existing boiler room and are anticipated to operate below 45dB(a).
- 6.2 The site is bordered by railway lines to the west and the canal to the east. As most of the plant would be housed internally and there are no residential uses nearby, the proposal is not considered to harm the amenity of any nearby residents or occupiers.
- 6.3 As such the proposal is not considered to harm the amenity of adjoining occupiers and would comply with policies CS5 and DP26 of the LDF and Camden Planning Guidance.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposal is compliant with the Council's policies for reducing carbon emissions and would provide a valuable resource to demonstrate new technology. The structures are proposed as a temporary feature, the plant has a maximum lifespan of two years and funding for the scheme is for two years only. Furthermore, the applicant is planning to build a new visitor centre which the proposed structures will have to make way for. As the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the appearance of the conservation area or to amenity, and is likely to be removed after two years, it is not considered necessary to attach a condition requiring its removal after two years.

8 Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

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