

Application No:	Ward: Bicester Town	Date Valid: 29/01/10
10/00109/F		
Applicant:	Eco2Build Ltd	
Site Address:	Land at The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester	

Proposal: Single exhibition house constructed to “Passivhaus” standards

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The proposal seeks permission for the construction of an exhibition house, to be sited within the grounds of Bicester Town Council at The Garth.
- 1.2 The house is to be sited on the green space to the rear (South) of the existing car park, with the gable end facing the main entrance to the site. The existing stone wall is to be removed.
- 1.3 The Garth is sited centrally within Bicester, close to the town centre, public transport links and parking, with easy public access.
- 1.4 The Garth sits within the Bicester Conservation Area, and the grounds are an area of maintained public open space, with a play area as well as space for public events. The site is locked from dusk until dawn.
- 1.5 The proposed exhibition house is 6.5 x 10.3m; the ground floor is proposed as an open plan area to allow the house to be used as an exhibition, display and meeting place. The first floor will be divided into three rooms and two bathrooms. The roof space will not be accessible in the exhibition house, but will feature windows to demonstrate externally the possibility of using the roof space as living accommodation.
- 1.6 The proposed exhibition house is likely to be installed on a reinforced concrete pad, with services and utilities from The Garth.
- 1.7 The house is proposed with cedar roof shingles, cedar cladding to the first floor and flint cladding to the ground floor.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notices and press notice. The final date for comment is 26 February 2010.
- 2.2 At the time of writing the report, one objection to the application had been received; this objection stated that the park is recreational space, of which there is a lack. The application should be refused as a result.
- 2.3 Any further objections or comments received will be reported at the Committee Meeting.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 Bicester Town Council – no comments received at the time of writing the report; comments will be reported at the Committee Meeting
- 3.2 Local Highways Liaison Officer – no comments received at the time of writing the report; comments will be reported at the Committee Meeting
- 3.3 Conservation Officer - no comments received at the time of writing the report; comments will be reported at the Committee Meeting

4. Relevant Planning Policies

- 4.1 National Policy:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning and Climate Change Supplement to PPS1
Eco Towns – A Supplement to PPS1
PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

- 4.2 Regional Policy (in the South East Plan 2009):

CC1 – Sustainable development
CC2 – Climate change
CC3 – Resource use
CC4 – Sustainable design and construction
H5 – Housing and density
M1 – Sustainable construction
BE1 – Management for an urban renaissance

- 4.3 Policies C28 and C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996.

5. Appraisal

- 5.1 The proposal is part of the portfolio of ‘early-win’ demonstrator schemes, proposed in the Council’s ‘Outline Bid for Start-Up Growth Funding’ (October 2009).
- 5.2 These schemes are designed to trial and showcase technology and lifestyle choices which will lead to more sustainable forms of eco development when the wider eco-development project moves forward to a larger scale and longer time frame.
- 5.3 The sustainability of this proposal is central to its acceptability in policy terms at national and regional level. PPS1 identifies the delivery of sustainable development as the core principle of the modern system and focuses on the protection and enhancement of the natural environment coupled with the prudent use of natural resources. This is reinforced by the later supplements to PPS1 (Planning and Climate Change, 2007) which emphasise the importance of sustainability to modern planning. The ‘Ecotown’ supplement to PPS1, which is a material consideration for the determination of planning applications, sets out more challenging targets for the standard of homes and housing within ‘eco-developments’ beyond those normally required for new development.

5.4 Specifically, the 'Ecotown' supplement to PPS1 requires that homes be built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or above; this design is capable of achieving Level 6. The supplement to PPS1 also requires that dwellings are completed to Lifetime Homes Standards; this standard is not relevant to this building, as the ground floor to be open plan to allow meeting and displays, but again, the design is capable of meeting this standard.

5.5 In regional policy terms, as set out in the South East Plan 2009, sustainable development, including sustainable methods of construction, resource use and energy efficiency are central for the delivery of new development, especially housing, across the South East.

5.6 As mentioned, this project aims to showcase the technology and principles of eco-development. As a result, this particular project is not likely to achieve the same environmental standards as the final larger scale development (because environmental standards such as Code for Sustainable Homes are calculated on more than the building alone; including transport factors, home working, surface water management, site-wide ecological improvements and other factors which arise when the development is scaled up).

5.7 The proposal has also been designed to accord with the Passivhaus standards. Whilst not mentioned in the relevant national or local policy this standard requires development with good levels of insulation, usage of solar energy (through passive heating and energy generation), energy efficient construction, low running costs as well as comfortable, healthy and sustainable finished developments. This further demonstrates that the proposal is in accordance with the purpose and direction of the national and regional policy

5.8 The materials are to be responsibly sourced; the main structure is to be constructed from sustainably sourced timber with a full chain of custody from managed forests, the wall will be insulated using material produced from recycled bottles and the internal boarding manufactured from clay rather than gypsum. It is intended that development on a larger scale would use more locally sourced and produced materials in order to further improve the sustainability of the scheme.

5.9 With regard to the objections received to the application it is acknowledged that The Garth is open space, but given the temporary nature of the proposal, and the relatively small space it will occupy within the grounds of The Garth, it is not considered unacceptable.

5.10 As the site is within the Conservation Area, the impact of the proposal on the character or appearance must be considered. Whilst the proposal will appear as a new element within the grounds of The Garth and the wider Conservation Area, it is a temporary addition, proposed in naturalistic materials, which does not compete with The Garth in terms of its scale or its relationship to the wider open space and the Conservation Area as a whole. The house is likely to be visible from the Launton Road entrance to The Garth, but it is not considered that the siting or appearance of the exhibition house will harm the legibility of The Garth as a lodge set in landscaped, largely open gardens and the proposal is therefore acceptable as it preserves the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

5.11 In conclusion, this proposal is on balance acceptable; it is a temporary structure which will effectively demonstrate the range of sustainable construction and housing techniques which could be used in a larger 'eco-development', in accordance with the relevant regional and national policy. The impact on the historic environment is minimal and temporary; the building will appear clearly as a step-change from its context.

6. Recommendation

That, subject to the expiration of the consultation period on 26 February 2010, and the delegation of the authority to issue the permission to the Head of Development Control and Major Developments, the application be;

Approved, subject to conditions

- 1) That at the expiration of two years from the date of this permission the building shall be removed from the site and the land shall be restored to its former condition on or before that date. RC42A
- 2) Except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission, the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents including the materials schedules therein:
 - drawing E008/01A
 - drawing E008/02A

Reason - For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009.

- 3) That samples of the material to be used in the external walls and roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the samples so approved. RC4A
- 4) That details of any boundary treatments, hard or soft landscaping required for the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the installation of such features. Any approved installations shall be removed when this permission expires, in accordance with the requirements of Condition 1 above.
Reason - For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009.
- 5) SC 6_2AA (Removal of residential permitted development rights for extensions)
- 6) SC 6_3A (Removal of residential permitted development rights for new windows)
- 7) SC 6_7AA (Removal of residential permitted development rights for aerials/satellite dishes etc)

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the proposal is appropriate and will not unduly impact on public, private or other amenity, the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the character of the context of the development. The proposal will allow the demonstration of sustainable methods of construction, housing delivery and other associated technologies and contribute to the effective delivery of sustainable development in the district as a whole and the delivery of the Eco-Town development in Bicester. As such the proposal is in accordance with government guidance contained within PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (and the Eco-Town and Climate Change supplements thereto), PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment, Policies CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, H5, M1 and BE1 of the South East Plan and Policies C28 and C30 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions, as set out above.

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