

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

HPK/2024/0188 Valid 16/05/2024	LAND AT WATERSWALLOWS ROAD GREEN FAIRFIELD BUXTON	APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OR VARIATION OF A CONDITION - IN RELATION TO APPLICATION HPK/2022/0047 CONDITIONS 2 & 5 (FULL - MINOR)
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MAIN ISSUES

- Landscape
- Design
- Residential Amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is located to the north-east of Buxton and comprises of battery storage facility (BESS) built on the former industrial land to the south of Waterswallows Road, which also provides the access to the site.

The site is within open countryside but the surrounding area is largely industrial (including a former quarry) and the site is opposite the Waterswallows Industrial Park. There is another BESS situated in close proximity to the site on the junction with Daisymere Lane (planning ref. HPK/2024/0189)

For the purpose of the Local Development Plan, the site lies within the open countryside and within the White Peak Plateau Pastures Landscape Character Area. Waterswallows Quarry SSSI is located to the south and there are also are some dwellings close to the site.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks to vary planning permission HPK/2022/0047 in relation to conditions 2 (approved plans) and 5 (colour finish of switchgear container units). The proposed changes include alterations to the site layout and arrangement of the battery storage units and equipment within the site boundary. The changes are required as a new battery storage operator has taken on the site and has change the proposed battery technology. The size and colour of the switchgear container has changed.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

High Peak Local Plan 2016

Policy S 1 Sustainable Development Principles
Policy S 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy S 7 Buxton Sub-area Strategy
Policy EQ 1 Climate Change
Policy EQ 2 Landscape Character
Policy EQ 3 Rural Development
Policy EQ 5 Biodiversity
Policy EQ 6 Design and Place Making
Policy EQ 10 Pollution Control and Unstable Land
Policy CF 3 Local Infrastructure Provision

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 12 -Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 -Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 -Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

HPK/2022/0047 – Removal of Diesel generator equipment and installation of battery storage equipment – Approved 08/04/2022

HPK/2021/0432 - Variation of condition 2 in relation to HPK/20140440 - Approved - 22/10/2021

HPK/2016/0634 - Retention of 14mw as built flexible electricity generation unit for Short Term Operational Reserve capacity - Approved 13/01/2017

DOC/2015/0096 – Discharge of Conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 relating to Planning Application HPK/2014/0440

HPK/2014/0440 - Proposed Construction Of A 14mw Flexible Electricity Generating Unit For Short Term Operational Reserve (STOR) - Approved 24/10/2014

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 24.06.24
Neighbour consultation period ends:24.06.24

Public Comments

None received.

Derbyshire County Council Highways

No Objection

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The principle of the development of the site for battery storage facilities has been previously accepted by the preceding permissions (see planning history section). Indeed the compound appeared to have been constructed during the officer site visit in June 2024 and the facility may even be operational.

Although in countryside location the site is previously developed land and therefore its development was considered acceptable in terms of local plan policies EQ2 and EQ3 relating landscape and countryside. Policy EQ1 relates to Climate Change and references renewable and local carbon sources of energy which the proposal comprises. Accordingly the principle is acceptable subject to further consideration of the proposed amendments to the scheme layout.

Design

The revised plans submitted in relation to condition 2 seek to change the arrangement of the battery equipment. The change in technology means that the battery storage and invertors as singular plant and separate invertors are no longer required, which will reduce the clutter at the site. The new layout has the batteries arranged in four rows spaced approx. 3m apart. An internal surface road measuring 3.5m wide runs parallel to Waterswallows Lane.

The proposed switchgear container is 8.5m long and 4m wide and its max height (including raised platform) is 4.7m high. It is higher and wider than the approved switch container which was 3.2m high and 3.1m (drawing AUG1154 BUXTON-304) but no platform was shown on the drawing. The colour of switchgear container has changed from Moss Green (RAL 6005) to Bottle Green (RAL 6007).

Beyond the site boundaries, which is contained by perimeter fencing, the appearance of the facility won't significantly alter from the scheme that has previously been approved. The use of the facility has been approved by previous applications and the proposed alterations won't have an adverse impact on its surroundings in visual terms. It is accepted that technology has evolved and this has resulted in the need for further amendments to the approved scheme.

The change in colour of the switchroom is considered negligible as it is still a dark green colour, just a slightly darker hue.

The siting, scale and proposed materials are considered appropriate and accord with requirements of policies S1 and EQ6 and the NPPF.

Amenity

The proposed alterations to the arrangement of the equipment would not give rise to any adverse residential amenity impacts and therefore satisfies the amenity considerations of local plan policy EQ6.

Highway Safety

The use once operational will only generate small transport movements when the site is checked for maintenance purposes. The Highways Authority do not object and therefore the proposal is considered acceptable with regards to local plan policy CF6 and the NPPF.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed alterations to the scheme are considered suitable alternatives to the previously approved plans and are acceptable having regards to design, amenity and highway considerations. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Rosie Dinnen

Recommendation Date: 30.07.24

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of High Peak Borough Council