

**BISHOPS CASTLE BIOMASS
POWER LTD**

**Section 78 Appeal by Bishop's
Castle Biomass Power Ltd, Site at
Land to the South East of Bishop's
Castle**

The Planning Inspectorate

Reference

APP/K3225/A/08/2086011/NWF

**Summary Proof of Evidence on
Landscape Volume 3**

by

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DRAWINGS

JK1	Photoview Location Plan
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1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Personal Details

- 1.1 My name is Jonathan Christopher King and I am a Technical Director with Wardell Armstrong LLP engineering and environmental consultants based in Stoke-on-Trent.
- 1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Horticulture from the University of London and a Master of Landscape Design from the University of Manchester. I am a Chartered Landscape Architect and Member of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.3 I joined Wardell Armstrong in 1999 where I am responsible for project management within the landscape group specialising in landscape related projects.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1 In January 2009, Wardell Armstrong was instructed by Bishop's Castle Biomass Power Ltd to consider the landscape impacts of the proposed scheme. This evidence, which reflects my own professional opinion, is given on behalf of the appellant in support of the application.
- 2.2 This evidence deals with issues relating to landscape and visual impact. It considers related planning policy but does not consider other matters relating to planning issues which are dealt with by Mr Anthony Kernon.
- 2.3 In my evidence I will demonstrate that the proposed development will not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the local area. I will demonstrate that in terms of landscape and visual impact, the development will not have a significant impact. My evidence will deal with the following key issues:-
- The appeal site and its relationship with the surrounding landscape character.
 - Planning policy in relation to the landscape and visual issues of the scheme.
 - Impacts on visual amenity and landscape character of the scheme which is the subject of this appeal.
- 2.4 Volume 2 of this Proof of Evidence has a plan, photoviews and appendices which are referred to in this text as appropriate.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

- 3.1 The development is located within an allocated Industrial/Business park, which is surrounded by tree planting/screening. The development comprises of a proposed pelletiser building, a wood chip bunker/power plant building and stack/cooling plant. The building height is limited to 10 metres for the pelletiser, 12m for the power plant building and 16m for the stack, in order to limit visual impact.
- 3.2 The appeal site is located on relatively flat topography. Existing development, hedgerow trees and tree cover surrounding the site provide significant screening of views of the appeal site.

4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In order to assess the development within its planning context, I have examined the current planning policies within the Regional Spatial Strategy and the adopted Local Plan in relation to specific landscape and visual issues.
- 4.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands – January 2008 contains the following policy which is of relevance to landscape issues:
- QE6: The Conservation, enhancement and restoration of the Region's landscape.
- 4.3 The South Shropshire Local Plan 2004 – 2011 contains the following policy which is of relevance to landscape issues:
- E1: Landscape Conservation.
- 4.4 My evidence establishes that visual receptors would experience very limited adverse change from the scheme and that the proposed development would not have a detrimental effect on the landscape character of the surrounding area.
- 4.5 The proposed development would therefore accord with Policy QE6 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and Policy E1 of the local plan.

5. THE APPELLANTS STATEMENT OF CASE

- 5.1 The appellant's statement of case states that the scheme does not have a significant adverse impact in the landscape.
- 5.2 I agree with this conclusion as will be illustrated by the following landscape and visual assessment.

6. VISUAL AND LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 In undertaking the landscape and visual impact assessment, 'The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' published in 2002 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Core Document A) have been utilised. Site surveys were carried out in January 2009.

- 6.2 The methodology for assuming landscape and visual effects are addressed in my main proof of evidence (Section 6).

7. IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT ON VISUAL AMENITY AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Visual Impact

7.1 In undertaking the visual assessment of the proposed development all adjacent roads, footpaths, areas of public open space and residential properties have been considered and photographs taken from relevant public vantage points, including from within the Shropshire Hills AONB. Detailed descriptions are included on Photoviews 1-11 (JK2-JK12) which analyse existing views and the scheme which is subject to this public inquiry. I will explain this process, using examples of photoviews, during the course of the inquiry. Views are described below.

Impacts on Views from Public Highways

7.2 The scheme will generate visual impacts for sections of:

- The A488 (Love Lane)
- B4385
- The access road to Oakeley Farm

7.3 Impacts range from nil to slight adverse.

7.4 Views towards the site from remaining roads in the area are screened by vegetation, topography or existing development. Visual impacts from these roads would therefore be nil.

Impacts on Views from Public Rights of Way

7.5 The scheme will be visible from some sections of the following footpaths:

- Footpaths linking the access road to Oakeley Farm and the A488.
- Footpath linking Oakeley Farm and Totterton.
- Footpath linking Stank Lane with Lydbury North.
- Shropshire Way.
- Footpath linking two sections of the Shropshire Way.
- Footpaths between Bankshead and Kerry Lane.
- Footpath between the Montgomery Road and the A488.

7.6 Impacts range from nil to slight adverse.

7.7 Views from remaining public rights of way are blocked by intervening topography, development and/or vegetation. Visual impacts from these rights of way would therefore be nil.

Impacts on views from areas of Public Open Space

7.8 Two areas of public open space in close proximity to the site would be affected by the proposed scheme. These are:

- Allotments adjoining the business park.
- Playing fields to the south of the junction of the A488 and the B4385.

7.9 Impacts range from slight to moderate adverse.

Impacts on Views from Residential Properties

7.10 Very few properties have views of the site and where these exist they are from upper floor windows.

7.11 Impacts range from nil to moderate adverse

Impacts on Views from the Shropshire Hills AONB

7.12 No areas of Open Access Land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), have been identified within the AONB which are within the visual envelope of the scheme. Consequently views of the scheme from the AONB would be from roads, public rights of way and residential properties.

7.13 The scheme will be visible from the following viewpoints:-

- Section of the B4385 (described above in the analysis of views from roads).
- Section of footpaths between Oakeley Farm and the A488 (described above in the analysis of views from Public Rights of Way).
- Section of footpath between Oakeley Farm and Tottenham (described above in the analysis of views from Public Rights of Way).
- Section of footpath linking Stank Lane and Lydbury North (described above in the analysis of views from Public Rights of Way).
- Oakeley Farm (described above in the analysis of views from Residential Properties)

7.14 The significance of visual impacts from these receptors within the AONB would range from nil to slight adverse.

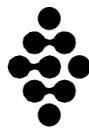
7.15 Views of the scheme from remaining public vantage points within the AONB would be nil.

Landscape Impact

- 7.16 The following documents describe the landscape character of the area:
- Countryside Character Volume 5: West Midlands [Core Document B]
 - The Shropshire Landscape Typology (2006) [Core Document C]
- 7.17 Extracts from these documents are set out in Appendix B.
- 7.18 This analysis of landscape impact is presented in Table 1 in Appendix C. The overall significance of landscape impact is within the range of slight adverse to slight beneficial.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The development comprises a proposed pelletiser building, a wood chip bunker/power plant building and stack/cooling plant located within an existing business park to the south-east of Bishop's Castle.
- 8.2 The visual impact from highways, footpaths, areas of public open space and residential properties, including from within the Shropshire Hills AONB, would generally be within the range of nil to slight adverse significance. The impacts on the landscape character of the site and surrounding area would be in the range of slight adverse to slight beneficial. Landscape mitigation is proposed as part of the scheme which will complement the surrounding landscape character.
- 8.3 Whilst the project did not require the production of an Environmental Statement, my evidence demonstrates that the development will not have a "significant" adverse visual impact and would not affect landscape character to a "significant" degree in the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (refer to Appendix G).



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