
2022/0461

Applicant: BMBC – Karen Buttery (Project Manager)

Installation of external and internal wifi access points to the mill cottage, the learning centre and bagging room (Listed Building Consent)

Worsbrough Mill Museum, The Mill House, Park Road Worsbrough, Barnsley, S70 5LJ

Site Description

Worsbrough Mill Museum is located within a Country Park, off Park Road, approximately 3km to the South of Barnsley Town Centre. The site consists of a water powered corn mill constructed circa 1625 and a later 19th century engine mill, set in over 200 acres of Country Park including a 60-acre reservoir built in 1804. The two main buildings on the site are Grade II* listed and are constructed from deeply coursed dressed sandstone with stone slate and Welsh Slate rooves.

The buildings in which this application relates to is the Grade-II listed Mill Cottage, the historic bagging room and the more modern learning centre. There are multiple entrances into the sites with an abundance of public footpaths nearby and walking routes. However, the main route into the site is via an footpath from the public pay and display car park located to the East of the site, which sweeps North into the main complex of the Mill. There are other buildings in the complex including temporary toilets to the East, a storage container to the North and several other scattered outbuildings. There is also a children's play area to the North-East of the complex.

Main entrance into Mill Complex and Eastern-facing elevation of the Mill House:



Grade-II* listed Worsbrough Mill – Frontage and partial Rear facade:



Front elevation (Northern facing) of The Mill House and Bagging House:



South-facing elevation of Teaching block



Planning History

B/76/0119/WB – Erection of temporary reception centre and temporary (Historic)

B/82/1607/WB – Erection of disabled persons portable W.C. and sewage plant for wardens house and to re-site existing portable toilet unit (Historic)

2009/1231 – Erection of 3 no. timber clad composting toilet units and compound to Worsborough Mill Museum (Withdrawn)

2020/1299 – Alterations to Mill Cottage including replacement windows and doors and to Corn Mill including electric motor and new grain silo and external site works including re-grading of land for accessibility reasons and provision of storage container (Approved with conditions)

2020/1416 - Alterations to Mill Cottage including replacement windows and doors and to Corn Mill including electric motor and new grain silo and external site works including re-grading of land for accessibility reasons and provision of storage container (Listed Building Consent) (Approved with conditions)

2022/0020 – Removal of existing container and erection of larger replacement container in new location for storage of machinery and tools (Approved with Conditions)

2022/0125 - Fitting of defibrillator to the exterior wall of an outbuilding adjacent to the Millers Cottage (Millers Tea Rooms) (Listed Building Consent) (Approved with Conditions)

Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the addition of several WIFI Access Points (APs) to various buildings within the Worsbrough Mill complex. The development also includes bridge links located at various points in the complex which will enable two or more buildings to be connected to the data network without the need for cables. The development includes the following:

- 3 x Internal APs – 2 of which are located within the Mill House, 1 is located within the Learning Block. The APs within the Mill House have already been installed prior to the application being submitted.
- 3 x External APs – 2 of which are located on the Mill House on the Northern elevation and Eastern elevation respectively, the other is located on the Bagging house
- 4 x Bridge Links – 1 is located on the Mill House, 1 is located on the bagging house and 2 x are located on the Learning Centre.

Proposed Site Plan

Green Dots (Internal APs)

Red Dots (External APs)

Yellow Dots (Bridge-to-Bridge Links)



The various APs have the following dimensions:

External APs:

External AP

The Cisco Catalyst 9124AX Series outdoor access points are next-generation Wi-Fi 6 access points encased in a rugged and robust design that service providers and enterprises can easily deploy.



Figure 1.
Cisco Catalyst 9124AX Series Access points

Dimensions : W x L x H : 25.9 x 23.3 x 8.1 cm (excluding mounting bracket)

Internal APs:

The Cisco Catalyst 9120AX Series Access Points are the next generation of enterprise access points. They are resilient, secure, and intelligent.



Access point (without mounting brackets): C9120AXI: 21.6 x 21.6 x 4.3 cm

Mounting bracket is invisible behind the AP and is attached to the wall/ceiling by four screws.

Bridge to point bridge link equipment:

60 GHz cnWave V1000 Client Node



Dimensions

H x W x D: 16.9 cm x 10.0 cm x 5.4 cm

Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the

starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the adopted Local Plan and Joint Waste Plan. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents, which are other material considerations.

Local Plan

The Local Plan (adopted January 2019), alongside the Joint Waste Plan and relevant neighbourhood plans, form the statutory development plan for Barnsley. It establishes policies and proposals for the development and use of land up to the year 2033 and will be used when considering planning applications and to coordinate investment decisions that affect the towns, villages and countryside of Barnsley. The Local Plan supersedes the remaining saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in the year 2000) and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011). In reference to this application, the following policies are relevant:

Policy GD1: General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making – Development is expected to be of a high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

Policy HE1: The Historic Environment – We will positively encourage developments which will help in the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of Barnsley's historic environment, especially for those assets which are at risk.

Policy HE2: Heritage Statements – Proposals that are likely to affect known heritage assets or sites where it comes to light there is potential for the discovery of unrecorded heritage assets will be expected to include a description of the heritage significance of the site and its setting.

Policy HE3: Developments affecting historic buildings – Proposals involving additions or alterations to listed buildings should seek to conserve and where appropriate, enhance that building's significance.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

General design principles in the NPPF are specified from paragraph 126 onwards with specific reference to how applications should be decided on by Local Authorities outline in paragraph 130 (general design considerations) and paragraph 134, which state that 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'.

In relation to proposals affecting Green Belt land:

Paragraph 149 - A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would: – not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or – not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 202 states where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Consultations

Conservation Officer – This proposal is the result of a wider project to improve the Wi-Fi connectivity to a number of our sites including Cannon Hall, The Cooper Gallery, The Town Hall, Elsecar and Worsbrough Mill. I have been briefed early in the project by Council Colleagues and we have had a number of meetings (including site meetings) to discuss this matter. We discussed in detail the various sensitivities we have at each of our historic and designated sites and the need to balance the enhancement of the Wi-Fi provision without harming the heritage significance of the building or the place it serves. In relation to Worsbrough Mill I was keen to avoid an installation (especially external) to the mill building itself due to its age, high grade of listing, and the relatively sensitive principal elevation that exhibits a high degree of originality. Consequently, the internal and external access points and the associated link bridges are all mounted either on the mill cottage, the bagging room on the lower terrace, or on / in the study centre. The Internal AP's constitute a negligible impact or harm to the mill cottage as this is an area of clear modern C20 fabric, with fit and finish and spaces of very low sensitivity. Similarly, the study centre is a building of no (historic) merit. Externally, I feel the main area of concern relates to the AP and link bridge on the northern elevation that faces towards the bagging room and the study centre of the upper terrace. This is a place where visitors will dwell and is in close proximity to the mill. Even so, I accept that whilst in the setting of the grade II*, the cottages are themselves grade II and are less sensitive to change. I also accept that there are already essential items of equipment on this façade. Consequently, the impact can be mitigated by locating the new equipment in areas where modern paraphernalia already exists. This and the possibility of using coloured wraps or simply adopting black decoration should reduce the visual impact of the new equipment. Physically, I have requested that all new equipment is mounted using the jointing in the masonry (only) and cable runs be either invisible or follow existing risers or routes. Clearly, there will be some visual and direct impact and I would suggest this represents a small amount of reversible harm. However, the installation will be small scale and reversible and I feel this is justified in terms of the wider benefit of connectivity for visitors and staff alike.

Ward Councillors – No comment

Representations

Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties and a site notice placed nearby; no comments were received.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The application site is within the Green Belt with Local Plan Policy GB1 and Green Belt policies within the NPPF therefore relevant which restricts inappropriate development within the Green Belt, primarily in relation to the erection of new buildings and structure with certain exceptions. However, the development is in relation to the installation of WIFI equipment located on existing buildings which will support the existing and future users, visitors and staff at Worsbrough Mill complex and the associated grounds. How the buildings/complex functions and its relationship to the Green Belt will not be altered in any way. Therefore, in regard to Local Plan Policy GB1, the equipment will have a very minimal impact on the openness of the Green Belt and is considered to be in line with Local and National Green Belt Policies and is acceptable in principle.

The application site is within the Worsbrough Mill Historic Complex with two individually-listed buildings including the Grade-II* listed Worsbrough Mill itself. However, the complex as a whole could be considered to be listed by attachment and/or by virtue of the close proximity. In turn, any development in the site will be considered to affect the setting of the listed buildings within the complex. This places a much greater emphasis on excellent levels of design and possibly mitigation techniques which would ensure that relevant design and historic environment policies are complied with. This will be covered in more detail in the below sections.

The application is BMBC-related and has been submitted and will be fulfilled by colleagues in Facilities Management.

Visual Amenity and Impact on Historic Environment

The application site is in reference to the Worsbrough Mill Complex which has numerous listed buildings/structures. Most pertinently, the grade-II* listed Worsbrough Mill, but also the Grade-II Mill House and Bridge located 60m to the North of the Mill. As such, any development within the complex is generally considered to affect the setting of the Listed Buildings and the development itself features alterations to both listed and non-listed buildings within the Complex. The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the proposal and has not raised any objections to the scheme. The Conservation Officer has been closely involved with the proposal at an early stage, prior to the application being submitted. Advice was given on how to minimise the impact of the development on the historic buildings and complex as a whole and the Access Points (APs) and bridge links have been purposely positioned to avoid Worsbrough Mill. The chosen buildings to contain the APs are the Grade-II listed Mill House which is currently leased as a café/coffee shop and has modern external and internal features, the unlisted (but historic) Bagging House and the modern teaching block.

Two of the internal APs are located in the Mill House and have already been installed prior to the application being submitted, with the other internal AP being located within the learning block. Two of the external APs will be located on the Mill House with the other being located on the bagging room. Two of the bridge links will be positioned on the learning block, with one each on the bagging house and the Mill House.

The Conservation Officer has stated that the internal APs have a negligible impact or harm to the mill cottage as this is an area of clear modern C20 fabric with fit and finish and spaces of very low sensitivity. The other internal AP is to be installed to the modern teaching block which itself has little historic importance. The external APs are located on various elevations of the buildings with the most potentially harmful being identified as the front/Northern elevation of the Mill House which faces towards the Mill and the bagging house. However, it has also been identified that this elevation contains modern paraphernalia and equipment in association with the current leased use. Advice was followed from the Conservation Officer in regard to the APs being positioned as high as possible on the building and painted in black or wrapped in a colour to match the elevation. This method will reduce the visual impact of the installations as they will better blend into the building.

There have been several other recommendations suggested by the Conservation Officer which seek to reduce the harm caused to the historic fabric of the buildings and on the setting of the Listed Buildings. These measures have been communicated with the applicant and shall be covered under conditions attached to the decision notice. The installation methods will ensure that any harm to the stonework is kept to a minimal and the works are reversible, as well as utilizing existing cable/trunking where possible – or via invisible risers/routes.

On balance, it is acknowledged that the installation of the APs and bridge link will cause less harm to the Listed Building and setting of such given that they are modern paraphernalia on historic buildings. However, it is considered to be in line with NPPF paragraph 201 which states that the Local Authority needs to measure minor harm against the public benefits of the scheme. The public benefits of connectivity and accessibility to support the users, staff and visitors to the complex is considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the development. Close collaboration has been made between the Conservation Officer and the applicants with the advice followed to reduce the visual harm as well as some recommended conditions to the scheme. Clearly there is a balance to be found between retaining the historic fabric of the buildings and modernising to improve the experience for staff, users and visitors, with the public benefits being clear. The proposed development is considered to be in line with Local Plan Policies HE1 and HE3 and is acceptable in terms of visual amenity and its impact on the Historic Environment.

Impact on Residential Amenity:

The Council's mapping system indicates that there is a flat above Mill Cottage within the complex who have been consulted on the application. However, the proposed development is in relation to upgrading the connectivity and accessibility of the complex, serving and supporting its users and staff and is not considered to have any direct detrimental impact on the residential amenity enjoyed by the residents on site or elsewhere.

The proposed development is in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Impact on Highways Safety:

No impact on highways safety.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions: