KINGSWOOD LEARNING AND LEISURE GROUP LTD
PEAK VENTURE, HUDDERSFIELD ROAD, PENISTONE, S36 7GF
REPLACEMENT BOILER ROOM AND NEW OIL TANKS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in accordance with the legislative requirement as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006 and the Planning Applications for Planning Permission, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006.

Background to the application

Kingswood Learning and Leisure Group Ltd (Kingswood) has been operating the Peak Venture centre since 2005. Prior to this time, the centre was operated by Barnsley Council through a Trust. The Peak Venture centre provides accommodation and outdoor educational activities for visiting children.

Historically all hot water and central heating for the Centre has been provided from a coal fired boiler, located to the rear of the main building. Coal is brought to the site in lorries which have to reverse to get close to the boiler room. Coal is stored in hoppers in the upper part of the building. The coal is then fed into 2 boilers in the basement of the building. Hot water produced by the boilers is pumped into the building via 2 central heating pipes and 2 hot water pipes. The pipes run beneath the ground in a concrete slab topped cavity. The pipes split before reaching the building into one set which feed the boys accommodation and one which feeds the girls.

The two existing boilers are approximately 50 - 60 years old and reaching the end of their useful life. Indeed one of the boilers has recently ceased to operate altogether. The second boiler continues to operate but heating engineers believe that it could fail to operate at any time. The problems caused by non operational and defective boiler are exacerbated by a network of pipes which have leaks and allow ingress of air which makes the central heating system continually requiring maintenance.

Kingswood has taken advice from a Heating Engineer who has recommended that the coal fired boilers should be replaced by modern efficient oil fired boilers. Consideration was given to the removal of the existing coal fired boilers from the plant room and their replacement by oil fired boilers. This was considered to be impractical as the Centre continues to require heating and hot water at all times. The ‘down time’ when there is neither hot water nor central heating must be kept to an absolute minimum period.

The proposal involves constructing a new free standing boiler room immediately adjacent to the existing boiler room to allow new pipework from the oil fired boilers to be connected directly to the existing pipes feeding the centre. Any leaks in the existing pipe feeds would be rectified as part of the commissioning process.

The construction of a new free standing building to house the new oil fired boilers would allow the demolition of the existing coal fired boiler room including chimney stack. The date for demolition of the existing coal fired boiler room is currently uncertain but would be likely to be linked to future plans for other new buildings in the vicinity of the boiler room (as yet undecided).

In addition to the proposed free standing building, there would also be a requirement for 2 new oil tanks adjacent to the new building.

The Design Component

This statement sets out to explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of the proposal including amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance.

Amount – the proposed new boiler room essentially comprises a double garage of dimensions 4.9m wide by 6.2m long. The internal space available would be sufficient to accommodate the 2 no. 100KW oil fired boilers and the necessary switches, pumps and pipework to supply the Centre. A single garage sized building was considered to offer insufficient space for the 2 boilers.

With regard to the oil tank, initially a single 5000L sized tank was specified. This was changed to 2 smaller 2500L tanks as the lower height of these would be more easily accommodated without adverse impacts on visual amenity.

Layout – the layout of the proposed building and oil tanks was dictated by the need to connect into the existing underground pipe network. As mentioned previously, the existing boiler room is connected to the buildings in the Centre via a network of underground pipes within a concrete slab covered trench. Subject to making the necessary repairs to the leaks, it is intended that this existing network remain largely unchanged.

The proposed boiler room needed to be located at a point which could be easily connected to the existing piped network. Given that there was a grassed area immediately adjacent to the pipe network, this was the obvious location for the proposed boiler room to be sited.

The layout of the garage was determined by the need:

- to minimise changes to ground levels
- to minimise the impact of the garage in view from the Centre by setting it low into the site rather than having it high and on a plinth which would potentially be more visually prominent from surrounding views
- to leave other elements of the adjacent storage compound undisturbed
- to orientate the garage to relate to the existing close boarded fence surrounding the storage compound
- to ensure that the orientation of the building had some perpendicular rationale in relation to the existing centre buildings

The layout of the oil tanks was determined by the need:

- for proximity to the proposed boiler room
- for the tanks to be elevated above the level of the oil fired boilers to assist gravity supply of oil to the boilers and avoid the need for building additional support structures elsewhere on the site to create this elevated position
- to ensure that the orientation of the tanks had some perpendicular rationale in relation to the Centre buildings
- for a location which was easily accessible for tanker deliveries of oil

The grassed area with some shrub borders comprises one of the few areas of greenery at the rear of the Centre buildings. It does some an amenity value, albeit to Centre staff and visitors and its loss is regrettable. However it is felt that the

functional needs of the Centre provide an overriding case in favour of its use for the new boiler room.

Scale – the existing Centre buildings are largely flat roofed 60's style buildings or portacabins. The proposed building will fit in with the surrounding buildings at the rear of the Centre by being single storey, having a modest size and a low monopitch roof.

Landscaping – the application site covers a quadrant shaped piece of land which has approximately 1:8 slope and is mainly maintained as a mown grass area with small shrub borders around its edge. The grassed area is surrounded by a timber post and two railed fence which deters access by Centre staff or visitors and helps to guide vehicles manoeuvring close to the Centre buildings.

Areas of grass which would remain unaffected by the development will be retained as either mown grass or more likely low maintenance shrubs, given the difficulties of maintaining such a small area of sloping ground.

The oil tanks would be screened by close boarded fencing to allow continuity of features found elsewhere on the site. Gates would be set into the close boarded fence to facilitate deliveries of oil.

Appearance – given that the building is being supplied by a garage manufacturer, there will be a limited choice of finishes available. This particular model of garage comes supplied with a Canterbury spar finish – this can be coated with masonry paint to a colour to suit.

The up and over door will be supplied in a galvanised finish but will be painted to either green or white to fit in with colour scheme used elsewhere around the centre.

The roof is proposed to be a fibre cement construction. This is not considered to be a critical issue, given its monopitch design and its limited visibility from elevated locations close to the Centre buildings where not screened by the close boarded fencing around the oil tanks.

All materials used in the garage construction are non-combustible which was an important factor when choosing the building to house these boiler units.

The Access Component

The statement sets out to explain how all users will have equal and convenient access to the building and spaces.

In reality the proposed boiler room is a functional building forming part of the essential infrastructure of the Centre. It will only be accessible to operational staff at the Centre and it will be out of bounds to all visitors to the site.

Access issues relate to the need to:

- gain access to the boiler room itself to service and maintain the boilers and allow access to underground pipes to the rear
- gain access to the oil tanks to deliver and supply oil
- carry out maintenance work on the building

- carry out maintenance work on the oil tanks and surrounding close boarded fence
- carry out maintenance work on the remaining part of the quadrant to be planted with low maintenance shrubs

Easy access to the boiler room will be allowed by having a floor level very similar to the adjacent ground level. Whilst the finished level of the concrete slab will be above the level of the car park to ensure it does not suffer from surface water ingress, any difference in level will be accommodated through local adjustment to the level of the car park. A personnel door will also be provided in the rear wall of the building to allow easy access to the underground pipe network in case of future maintenance requirements.

The proposed oil tanks have been located to allow easy access for oil deliveries. Delivery lorries will be able to manoeuvre easily to a point in the car park where hoses can be used to fill the tanks.

Sufficient space has been left around the edge of the building to allow future maintenance to be carried out. The building is largely maintenance free but may require occasional leaves or pieces of debris to be removed. This will be easily carried out using ladders from the hardstanding around the building.

The oil tanks are low maintenance units which are only likely to require an occasional non essential clean for cosmetic reasons. The tanks will be largely concealed by the proposed close boarded fencing whose longevity will be increased by routine application of timber preservative. This can be easily achieved from outside and within the compound.

Maintenance of the low maintenance shrubs on the remaining portion of the quadrant will occur very infrequently to remove pernicious weeds and litter. This will be easily accessed either via the personnel door at the rear of the boiler room or via the post and rail fence.

David Clough, AXIS, 25 November 2010
on behalf of
Kingswood Learning and Leisure Group Ltd