

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR THE PLANNING APPLICATION TO INSTALL EIGHT BIOMASS BOILERS AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT AND THE ERECTION OF A MONOPITCH BIOMASS BOILER/FORESTRY MACHINERY STORAGE SHED, ASSOCIATED WOOD FUEL STORES, ALTERATIONS TO HAY BARN, SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT SCHEME, ALTERATIONS TO THE ACCESS AND FORMATION OF PERMEABLE STONE HARDSTANDING AREA WITH LANDSCAPING AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

AT

**BIRD GROVE FARM
HILDERSTONE
STAFFORD
ST15 8SL**

Prepared by:

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been produced by Philip Plant of Mid West Planning Ltd and is based on the guidelines as set out in the CABE publication: 'Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them' 2006 and the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant planning practice guidance.
- 1.2 Philip Plant holds a Bachelor of Science with Honours Degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management and is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.
- 1.3 Philip Plant is the Managing Director of Mid West Planning Limited and is a former Senior Consultant at ADAS and Acorus Rural Property Services. Phil Plant has been the Managing Director of Mid West Planning Ltd since 2010 and he provides mainly rural planning advice to both applicants and to Local Planning Authorities.
- 1.4 The preparation of this report by Mid West Planning Ltd has been commissioned by the applicant Mr Mark Gellatly.
- 1.5 Bird Grove Farm is located on Cresswell Road approximately 2 miles south west of Cresswell and 4 miles east of Stone. The application site is outside the Stoke-on-Trent Green Belt.

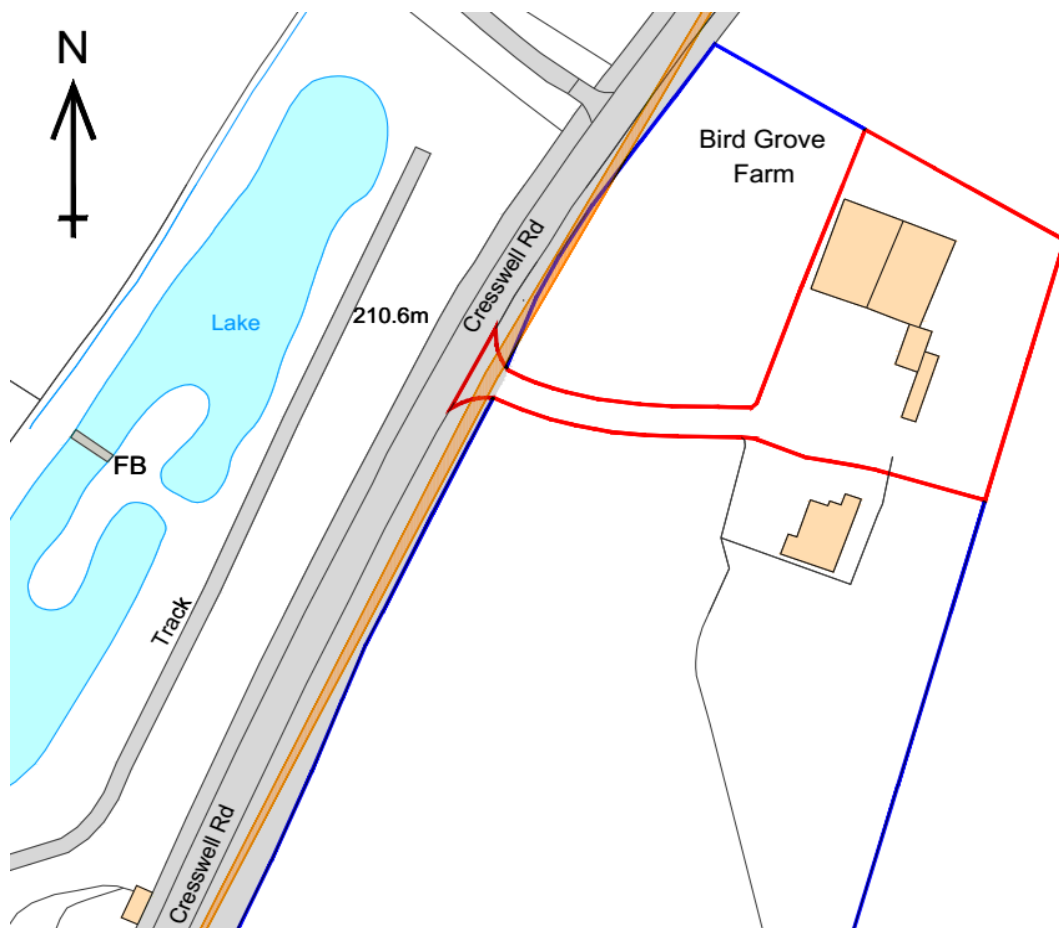


Figure One: Location plan of application site at Bird Grove Farm

2. USE

- 2.1 Bird Grove Farm is a former agricultural small holding set in approximately 5.7 acres of grazing land. The small holding benefits from a concrete yard and a substantial range of former agricultural outbuildings, and a residential bungalow. The small holding was recently purchased by the applicants who intend to live in the bungalow at Bird Grove Farm from which Mr Gellatly will operate his forestry business.
- 2.2 As stated, Mr Mark Gellatly operates a forestry business, Gellatly (Stafford) Ltd, which he intends to relocate to Bird Grove Farm. Mr Gellatly is involved in the harvesting of timber and its transportation and sale. He will therefore comply with the occupancy condition, limiting occupation of the bungalow to a person working or last working in agriculture or forestry.



Plate One: Photograph of the property

Proposed Use

- 2.3 This application proposes the installation of eight biomass boilers and associated equipment, including wood drying kilns, and the erection of a monopitch machinery/biomass boiler shed to store forestry machinery and equipment, , alterations to the former hay barn and workshop into a wood fuel store and formation of a hardstanding area to east of the building where the timber lorry will unload timber for kild drying.
- 2.4 The biomass boilers will generate heat to dry the logs produced by Gellatly (Stafford) Ltd, from forest timber, to be re-sold as kiln dried logs for use in log burners by private home owners and commercial enterprises that have opted for biomass heating.
- 2.5 This application is a re-application for a revised scheme of an application submitted in September 2021 SMD/2021/062. Following the site visit from Case Officer Ailsa Berry and consultee comments from Environmental Health and Ecology it was decided to withdraw this application and re-apply once the required additional information could be submitted.



Plate Two: Existing former agricultural outbuildings at Bird Grove Farm



Plate Three: Existing hay barn at Bird Grove Farm which will be clad and heated for the storage of kiln dried firewood.

3. AMOUNT & SCALE

Wood Drying Kilns

- 3.1 3no. 40-foot, and 1 no. 20-foot-long re-purposed shipping containers, converted to Glen Farrow wood drying kilns will be brought on site and connected to the boilers to provide heat to dry the firewood. These containers are supplied fully finished, and just need to be sited and connected to the biomass boilers before commissioning.

Machinery/ Boiler Shed

- 3.2 A monopitch machinery /boiler shed will be erected to abut the south east corner of the workshop building. The proposed shed will have a footprint of approximately 128m². The shed will replace two former agricultural buildings that were located in this area. This building will house a FACI boiler 199 and be a secure store for forestry machinery and equipment used in the applicant's forestry business.

- 3.3 The FACI woodchip boiler, model FSS, burns wood residues of various centimetres long that are loaded through an automatic system. The fuel used varies and it can be made of sawmill rejects and will utilise the waste sawdust and bark etc arising at the site.

Haybarn and adjacent barn

- 3.4 4no. small biomass boilers will be installed in the hay barn and adjacent workshop building with associated flues. Each boiler flue is finished in galvanised steel. The chimney height will need to reflect the health and safety guidelines to ensure the safe evacuation of the products of combustion. These will be used to heat this space which will be used to store kiln dried timber for sale.
- 3.5 The front elevation of the hay barn will be enclosed with green steel profile sheeting and green roller shutters to match the adjacent outbuilding.

Drainage

- 3.6 A French drain will be dug around the periphery of the existing steel portal frame buildings to receive surface water runoff from the roofs of the buildings, in order to upgrade the current soakaway system where roof water is simply left to run onto the field with no formal drainage system. There may be scope to harvest some rainwater from the roofs to be used in washing down the equipment and yards. Please see the site plan, Gellatly-PL-02 Site plan, for further details.

Landscaping

- 3.7 75 metres of hedging along Cresswell Road to the north east of the main entrance and 46 metres of hedging to the south east of the main entrance to Bird Grove Farm has been removed and will be replanted with native species hedging further back from the highway to improve visibility splays and safety. In addition, a further 120m of new native species-rich hedgerow will be planted along the northern and eastern boundaries and grassland areas improved with native species wildflower seeding. Please see Landscaping Plan Gellatly-PL-03 Landscaping plan, and the updated Habitat Survey from Chris Seabridge and Associates Ltd for further details.

Biodiversity Enhancements

- 3.8 In addition to the landscaping measures described above three bat boxes will be erected on the trees and buildings within the land owned to incorporate biodiversity improvements into the scheme.

4. LAYOUT



Figure Three: Layout of site showing alterations to the existing access drive, location of the biomass boilers, shipping containers, proposed machinery/ biomass boiler house, and landscaping.

- 4.1 The existing access driveway will be retained and widened to make it suitable for HGV access, with improved visibility splays.
- 4.2 The existing concrete hardstanding will remain and will continue to be used to gain access to the former hay barn and the adjacent workshop and the proposed forestry storage building. An area permeable hardstanding to the rear of the site will allow access for timber delivery/collections and timber storage on site.

5. LANDSCAPING

Soft Landscaping

- 5.1 The re-planting of 121m of native species hedging along Cresswell Road will be in accordance with the Ecology Report from Nigel Baskerville of Chris Seabridge and Associates Ltd using locally found species. In addition a further 120m of new native species-rich hedgerow will be planted along the northern and eastern boundaries.

Species	%	Size
Hawthorn- <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	50	40-60cm
Hazel - <i>Corylus avellana</i>	10	40-60cm
Crab apple – <i>Malus sylvestris</i>	2.5	40-60cm
Field maple - <i>Acer campestre</i>	15	40-60cm
Dogwood - <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	5	40-60cm
Dog rose - <i>Rosa canina</i>	2.5	40-60cm
Blackthorn - <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	15	40-60cm

- 5.2 The disturbed ground adjacent to the hedgerow will then be seeded with native species wild flowers as detailed in the ecological report.
- 5.3 Grassland to the south and west of the site will be improved through the introduction of native species suitable for this lowland meadow area as detailed in the ecological report.

Hard Landscaping

- 5.4 An area of hardstanding has been constructed to the rear of the existing buildings, which is shown on the site and landscaping plans

6. APPEARANCE

- 6.1 The proposed forestry machinery storage and boiler house shed will be concrete with an Olive green profiled steel roof. (Olive Green RAL 100 30 20)
- 6.2 The boiler chimneys are steel painted in Goosewing Grey RAL 080 70 05, to minimise visual impact. The chimney height reflects the health and safety guidelines to ensure the safe evacuation of the products of combustion.
- 6.3 The existing hay barn will be enclosed to the front (south) elevation with steel profile sheeting in green and a roller shutter in green to match the adjacent outbuilding.
- 6.4 The shipping containers will be finished in green paint to match the existing buildings. (Olive Green RAL 100 30 20).

7. ACCESS & PARKING PROVISION

- 7.1 The roadside hedge had not been maintained for many years and was overgrown and contained a number of dangerous trees and hedge plants that were in danger of falling into the highway. Access to the site is considered to be good now that the original hedge has been removed and the full extent of the available visibility splays have been exposed. The hedgerow will be replaced with a new native mixed species hedgerow set back slightly further from the road this planting season.

- 7.2 Other than for timber delivery once per week, parking for the VW pickup (for customer wood fuel deliveries) and for maintenance operatives visiting the site occasionally, additional parking will not be required as part of this application. A suitable turning area is made available for timber lorries and service vehicles, away from the residential property.



Plate Four: Cresswell Road looking north east from the access drive to Bird Grove Farm



Figure Five: Cresswell Road looking south west from the access driveway to Bird Grove Farm prior to hedge being removed.

- 7.3 It is considered that with the proposed widening of the existing farm access drive to 6.1m with 10m radii and a bound surface to gates set back 15m from the highway boundary, together with the realignment of the roadside hedge will be appropriate to meet the requirements of the proposed business use.

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January 2022.