

Design & Access Statement

Application For Portal Frame Wood/Machinery Store, 4No External Biomass Boilers & 2No. Steel Drying Skips,
The Woodyard, Off Draycott Cross Road, Brook Houses, Cheadle,
For UK Renewable Energy Ltd.

The Site

The red edged site contained in this application is situated off Draycott Cross Road, Brook Houses, Cheadle and comprises a hard surfaced yard with a steel portal frame forestry shed and log biomass fuel processing business.

The site is relatively flat throughout and at a low point compared with adjoining neighbouring land.

There is currently a hard surfaced commercial vehicle entrance off Draycott Cross Road providing access to this site and business.

Land Use & History

The site has always been used as a woodyard for the manufacture of timber garden furniture and fencing etc, and log processing for fuel supplies. A biomass boiler and 12.2m [40'00"] steel shipping container kiln was installed in 2014 for the purpose of providing kiln dried logs. This was formalised by a Lawful Development Certificate application ref SMD/2023/0077.

In 2004, planning consent was given for a new steel portal frame factory unit for steel fabrication and engineering ref 04/00215/FUL, measuring 518m² in floor area and 8.5m high, but was not implemented.

In 2023, a prior notification application for a forestry building ref DET/2023/0036 was submitted for a steel portal frame unit which was approved but limited through condition to the processing of timber grown on site.

Policy

The NPPF seeks the promotion of renewable and low carbon energy and heat sources to tackle climate change and drive down greenhouse gas emissions through the reduction of burning fossil fuels such as gas, oil and electricity. In support of this, the Government has put in place a scheme which financially rewards low carbon heat generation technologies such as biomass boilers, known as the "Renewable Heat Incentive" [RHI] scheme.

The NPPF also supports sustainable business enterprise in rural areas to provide employment and economic growth to support village communities.

This application is in accordance with national and local policies as it seeks to generate a form of biomass fuel for the wider community resulting in the low carbon generation of heat whilst providing sustainable employment in the rural environment.

Design

It is proposed to erect a small steel clad portal frame building for both the storage of dried timber/logs and the associated machinery for cutting and splitting raw material. This building will be located at the far end of the site adjacent the west boundary leaving the central area for lorry turning and delivery, and in exactly the same shape and position as approved in 2023.

The existing steel building will be used for timber storage and drying, and next to this will be a bank of 4 external free standing [2 x 295kW & 2 x 210kW] biomass boilers with 300mm diameter twin wall stainless steel flues. These will be coupled in tandem to create 2No 505kW capacity units which will output heat to the existing building and 2No steel drying skips located to the rear. The boilers and skips will be located close to the existing building on site so as to form part of the current built form and minimise any further visual intrusion into the countryside. The boilers will be fuelled using secondary kiln dried timber from the skips that is not suitable for supplying to customers, together with virgin wood sourced externally from various accredited suppliers in accordance with the "Woodsure" certified scheme.

Landscaping

There is currently no planting of any kind within the site. Beyond the northern boundary is a bund with tree and shrub planting separating the yard from the neighbouring recycling centre and industrial estate. The southern boundary consists of a large dense Leylandii hedge and several mature trees which provide visual screening into the yard from neighbouring residential properties. These will be retained as outlined in the Arboriculture report.

The yard is surfaced mainly with hardcore and used for manoeuvring of delivery vehicles and storage of raw timber for processing. The existing vehicular entrance will be retained. Views into the yard and buildings are obscured from the highway due to the long access drive, planted bund to the north and tree/hedge planting to the south. The building, boilers and skips will integrate within the current mix of plant and equipment stored around the site typical of such a rural agricultural engineering business, and will not adversely impact on the street scene or surrounding open countryside.

Vehicle Movement

The current vehicular entrance will be retained off Draycott Cross Road which will continue to provide suitable access for cars and commercial delivery vehicles. There is suitable yard area within the site for vehicles to enter, manoeuvre and exit in a forward gear. The wood fuel log business currently cannot cope with the volume of drying and so processed timber is being transported off site to other kilns. This proposal will enable the processed timber to be dried on site hence reducing the number of vehicle movements, which will offset the slight increase in raw material deliveries.

Impact

It is considered that the proposed development will not adversely affect the area or neighbouring residential properties by virtue of the position of equipment and layout of the site. There will be an insignificantly small increase in the number of vehicles visiting the site over a 12 month period resulting in no harm, nuisance or compromise to highway safety.

There will be no bio-diversity or arboricultural implications as the equipment will be located in the centre of the current working yard. The site is not affected by flooding.

The project will enable the progression of an existing rural timber business providing secure ongoing employment with an expanding company who have a good history and proven business track record within the industry sector, by providing an excellent quality product to the surrounding area for which there is an ever increasing demand, resulting in a viable and sustainable scheme.

Access

There are no access issues relating to this application.