

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

PROPOSED WOOD STORAGE YARD

AT

PEBBLE HALL, THEDDINGWORTH
ROAD, THEDDINGWORTH,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, LE17 6NJ

MAY 2016



Introduction

This non-technical summary supports a planning application for a proposed additional wood storage yard for the storage and shredding of wood waste material.

The proposed wood storage yard is required to store wood waste fuel prior to it being used in the Renewable Energy Generation Facility (REGF) biomass facility. The REGF was granted planning permission by Northamptonshire County Council in October 2014 and is currently being constructed with completion due in 2017.

In March 2015, the Environment Agency published guidance on Fire Prevention Plans (v2, March 2015). This guidance is intended to make the storage of waste safer and reduce the risk of fires occurring. However, it requires operators to store wood waste in smaller piles of material, instead of one large pile, and to increase the separation distances between the piles of material. This is much more land intensive and has caused a significant problem for Welland Waste Management in that they can now only store 750 tonnes of material in the space that they could previously store 5000 tonnes. They are therefore seeking a wood yard which will store approximately 5000 tonnes of material to compensate for the loss that the new guidance has brought about.

The Application Site is located at Pebble Hall, Theddingworth Road, Theddingworth, Northamptonshire, LE17 6NJ, which is shown on the site location plan in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

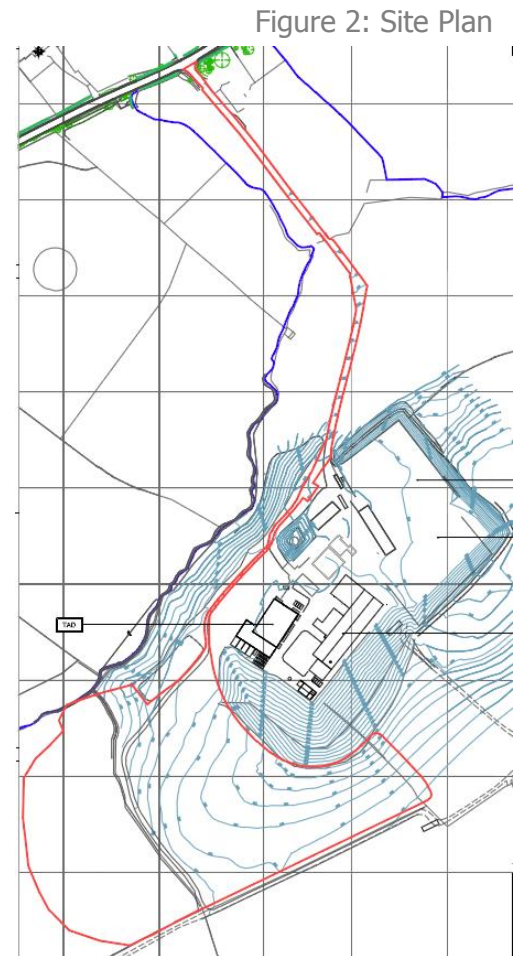


The Site and its Setting

The entire Application Site (Figure 2) covers an area of approximately 7.5 hectares which includes the access track and the proposed recontouring of the land. The size of the concrete pad for the wood yard is 3.2 hectares.

The nearest residential properties are over 500m from the site. Access is from the A4304. East of the site is Hothorpe Hall, which is located approximately 800 metres away. West of the site Bosworth Hall is located 1.2 kilometers away.

There are no international, European or nature conservation sites located nearby. There is an existing Public Footpath located approximately 1300 metres West. There is one SSSI located at 1.98km to the South-East. There is one Scheduled Monument in the form of medieval settlement remains located 750 metres East in Theddingworth.



The Proposed Development

This proposal seeks planning permission for an additional wood storage yard to store fuel for the permitted REGF at Pebble Hall. The planning permission would be for a temporary period, to cover the lifetime of the REGF. After this, the land will be restored to agricultural use.

It is proposed that the wood storage area will be constructed on land currently used for agricultural purposes which lies adjacent to the permitted REGF and existing Pebble Hall Complex. The majority of the Application site is grade "3b" which means it is of moderate quality and not classified as "best and most versatile" agricultural land.

The site has been designed using the Environment Agency's guidance on Fire Prevention Plans. The wood yard will be comprised of 53 bays, each 14.6m x 14.6 in size (Figure 3). The bays will be situated in groups with separation distances of 20m and 6m in order to reduce the risk of fire.

Additional landscape planting and remoulding of the land surrounding the proposed wood yard is proposed in order to provide visual screening. The yard area will drain to the north-west, where the surface water lagoons will be located.

Site Operations

The planning permission for the REGF allows annual imports of 72,000 tonnes, which will not change as a result of this application. There will be no additional traffic increase over the amount permitted by the existing legal agreement with Leicestershire County Council, as no extra waste inputs are being applied for.

Vehicles will bring wood waste onto the site in HGV vehicles. These will be weighed on a weighbridge before travelling to the waste reception area. The wood waste will be tipped onto the concrete floor and then shredded in a slow speed shredder, in order to reduce the void in the material. It will then be transferred to the storage bays using a loading shovel.

The fuel material will be stored in these bays for a maximum of 10 weeks. During this time the material will be turned to reduce the risk of overheating and monitored with temperature probes. The bays will be situated 20m/6m apart to meet the requirements of the Environmental Agency's Fire Prevention Guidance.

Prior to being fed into the REGF biomass facility, the wood waste material will be transferred from the wood storage yard to the existing wood yard using a loading shovel. It will then be shredded to a finer consistency and transferred into the REGF biomass facility using a loading shovel.

Two lagoons will be in place which will take the surface water drainage. This is capable of accommodating fire water run-off and has a valve which can be closed to prevent fire water flowing into the Welland River.

Figure 3: Proposed Site Layout Plan



Restoration and Aftercare

This application seeks temporary planning permission for the wood yard extension for a temporary period for the life of the REGF. Once the REGF is decommissioned, the area of the wood yard will be returned to agricultural use. At that time, a restoration and aftercare scheme will be submitted for approval to the Waste Planning Authority.

Planning Policy

There are many planning policies at national and local level that are relevant to the development. The proposed development has been assessed against the following planning documents:

- Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (October 2014)
- Daventry District Council Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)
- West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (December 2014)

The proposal complies with the considered planning policy which covers the following areas:

- Location of the Development in the Countryside and Rural Hinterland
- Development Criteria for Waste Management (Non-allocated Site)
- Need and Justification
- Site Alternatives Assessment
- The Catchment Area
- Environmental and Local Amenity Considerations
- The Sustainability Credentials Associated with the Development
- Design of the Facility

Consultation

The following consultation was undertaken:

- Pre-application site visit with Northamptonshire County Council.
- Pre-application meeting with Northamptonshire County Council and the Environment Agency.
- Pre-application discussion with the Local Liaison Group, which included representatives of the following:
 - Representatives from Northamptonshire County Council Planning Department
 - A representative from Theddingworth Parish Council
 - A representative from Marston Trussell Parish Council
 - A representative from Lubenham Parish Council
 - A representative from Welford Parish Council
 - Representatives from Husbands Bosworth Parish Council
 - A representative from the Environment Agency
 - A representative from Daventry District Council's Environmental Health Office
 - The local county councillor
 - The local district councillor

Need

In March 2015 The Environment Agency issued new guidance on Fire Prevention Plans. This guidance requires increased separation distances between piles of material in order to reduce the risk of fire. The following extract is taken from page 9 of the guidance. Welland Waste Management can now only store 750 tonnes of material in an area where they could previously store 5000 tonnes. They now require the wood yard extension to compensate for the storage capacity lost.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment is undertaken in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (the EIA Regulations), as amended. These regulations provide an indication of the need for an EIA.

The EIA considers the following topics:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA)
- Surface Water and Drainage
- Ecology
- Noise Assessment
- Air Quality (including Dust and Human Health)
- Archaeology
- Soil Quality
- Traffic
- Odour

Detailed assessments have been carried out on the above environmental topics and it has been concluded that none have an unacceptable impact. The design of the development has been tailored by the findings of the above technical assessments. Regard has also been had to various cumulative effects.

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA)

The potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposal have been fully assessed and the proposals have been designed to have as little landscape and visual impact as possible. Additional landscape planting and recontouring of the land have been proposed to ensure that the proposed wood yard is not visually intrusive. Overall, the potential landscape and visual impacts of the proposal have been concluded to be minor and may be of some benefit through providing screening to the other operations at Pebble Hall.

Drainage and Flood Risk Assessment

The potential flood risk and drainage impacts have been considered. Two lagoons have been proposed that will be capable of accommodating surface water run off as well as any run off from water used for firefighting purposes. The wood storage yard will be constructed on a slight gradient in order to ensure that surface water drains to the lagoons. The lagoons will be fitted with a valve that will be capable of being closed in order to ensure firefighting water does not enter the river Welland. This conclusion has been reached having regard to the extent of all proposed developments and all existing and proposed hardcored areas.

Ecology

A survey has been carried out of the application site in order to understand whether there is any important ecology on the application site. No important ecology was found during the survey. A number of ecology surveys will be carried out if planning permission is granted, before the development commences.

The report also considers the distance between the proposed development area and designated nature conservation sites in the local area. It concludes that it is highly unlikely that there will be any adverse effects on these sites as a result of the works.

Noise

The potential noise generated from the proposed operations has been assessed. This includes the shredding activities, the proposed traffic movements and the noise impact in combination with the other operations at Pebble Hall. It has been concluded that the noise generated from the proposed activities is within the acceptable limits.

Air Quality

The potential air quality impacts of the proposal have been considered. This concludes that the introduction of the wood yard extension will significantly reduce the dust emissions compared to existing wood shredding activities at Pebble Hall. This is because the preparation of fuel for the REGF will require much coarser feedstock than those already employed on site. Therefore, the dust generated from the operations should be considerably reduced.

Archaeology

The potential for archaeological evidence has been considered by a qualified professional and it has been concluded that there is low potential for significant buried archaeological remains. A method for ensuring that there is no below ground archaeology will be agreed with the council during the planning application process.

Agricultural Land Quality

It is proposed that the wood storage area will be constructed on land currently used for agricultural purposes which lies adjacent to the permitted REGF and existing Pebble Hall Complex. The majority of the Application site is grade "3b" which means it is of moderate quality and not classified as "best and most versatile" agricultural land.

Traffic

The potential traffic impacts have been considered and it has been concluded that the proposed traffic will not increase over the amount which is already set by the existing legal agreement with Leicestershire County Council. This allows 240 vehicle movements to access Pebble Hall per day, with an additional allowance of 1000 vehicle movements for the three month harvest period in the summer.

Odour

The potential odour impacts have been considered and it has been concluded that the odour produced from timber processing is extremely low. In addition, no additional wood waste will be imported to the site over that which has been granted planning permission for the REGF. Therefore, it is concluded that the potential for impacts that are close the thresholds of acceptability are extremely low.

Cumulative Effects

The proposed wood yard development has been considered in association with the existing operations and permissions at Pebble Hall, as well as wider developments. The past, present and future impacts of the developments at Pebble Hall have also been considered in order to assess if the proposed wood yard could combine in any way to create an unacceptable impact.

It is concluded that there would be no unacceptable individual areas of environmental impact arising from the proposal. Therefore, when all the impacts are considered together, they are acceptable.

Summary and Conclusions

The proposed wood yard development has been assessed against the most relevant planning policies and is considered to be compliant with the spatial strategy for waste management development.

The Environmental Impact Assessment identifies that there will be no unacceptable impacts from the proposed development relating to landscape and visual impact, surface water and drainage, ecology, noise assessment, air quality, archaeology, soil quality, traffic, odour.

The assessment of cumulative impact has concluded that when the predicted environmental impacts are considered together, there are no unacceptable impacts.

In overall terms, it is considered that the proposed wood yard will not give rise to unacceptable environmental impacts and that there is a strong need for the proposed wood yard at Pebble Hall.

Further Information

A copy of the Environmental Statement (main statement only) or the Environmental Statement (main statement plus technical appendices) can be purchased from GP Planning Ltd for £25 and £75 respectively for printed copies or £5 for a copy on CD. Copies of the Non-Technical Summary are available free of charge.

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