

W001-12 MD

9th February 2017

Peter Moor
Northamptonshire County Council
Floor 3
Guildhall Road Block
County Hall
Northampton
NN1 1DN

Dear Mr Moor,

**PLANNING APPLICATION 16/00022/WAS/FUL
PROPOSED WOOD YARD, PEBBLE HALL FARM – REVISED SITE LAYOUT AND SUPPORTING
DOCUMENTATION**

Further to a decision of the Development Control Committee to defer consideration of this application and recent conversations with Officers, please find enclosed a revised site layout for the proposed wood yard that supersedes that submitted with the planning application in May 2016.

The original application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) that summarised the environmental impact assessment (EIA) carried out. As a result, it has been necessary to revisit both the EIA and the ES and update those accordingly.

The following documentation accompanies this letter:

- Drawing GPP/WWM/PHWY/17/04 Revision 1 – Proposed Site Layout Plan
- Drawing GPP/WWM/PHWY/16/06 Revision 3 – Proposed Storage Bays
- Environmental Statement Addendum and Appendices, February 2017
- Non-technical Summary, February 2017

Full detail of the revisions to the site layout and the impact of the changes are set out in the documentation.



Scale

The Committee Report presented to the Development Control Committee on 17th January 2017 raised a number of matters and concluded with an Officer recommendation of refusal. Members debated the application at the meeting and it was moved to defer consideration of the application to allow Officers and the applicant to discuss the 'scale' of the proposed development to see if an acceptable site layout could be arrived at.

We thank you for the arranging to meet with us to discuss matters of concern and, in particular, whether the proposed storage could be accommodated in a reduced footprint. We discussed options to achieve that and since our meeting have reviewed the layout in accordance with our discussions. As a result, we have been able to reduce the storage area. As discussed, we intend to submit a retrospective planning application for the shredding shed and an additional 6 storage bays adjacent to the TAD building. This will ensure there is sufficient storage space on site for a consistent and continued supply of fuel to the REGF.

Then original development footprint (i.e. the concreted area) was 3.2 hectares. The physical development footprint has been reduced to 1.75 hectares, which represents a reduction of 45%. This has additional benefits of enabling ground modelling to create screening, retention of some of the residual land in agricultural use and additional planting and screening.

Welland Waste Management have secured the contract to supply wood waste as a fuel for the adjacent Renewable Energy Generation Facility (REGF). The REGF, when fully operational next year, will require a continuous supply of fuel. The sister plant in Tyseley is reliably producing power and operating continuously without issue indicating that this plant at Pebble Hall Farm will require a fuel supply sooner rather than later.

As referred to in the submitted documentation, Welland Waste Management have an existing wood yard that would have supplied the wood for the REGF. However, a change in Environment Agency Guidance on Fire Prevention Plans means that the ability to supply wood from that yard has reduced from 5,000 tonnes (permitted amount) to 400 tonnes of unprocessed wood.

As a result of the revised guidance, Welland Waste Management has been forced, at significant cost, to derive an alternative solution. The solution, which is shown to comply with the Development Plan, is a new wood storage yard with capacity to store around 16-18 days' supply of wood to the REGF. This is sufficient to cover the winter/Christmas period (14 days) with the flexibility of an additional 6 bays (referred to above).

The physical development comprises, in the main, a concrete pad with storage bays. As a result of the latest Fire Prevention Plan Guidance it has been possible to reduce the height of the bays to 5m (previously 6m). A further review of the Fire Prevention Guidance has resulted in a linear storage design, comprising 36 bays (16m x 16m). As well as being safer, this layout is also more efficient in operational terms.

The revised layout has been assessed in landscape and visual impact terms. The reduction in land take is considered to be positive, in principle, and the revised ground modelling and landscape planting proposed remains effective in reducing the impact.

Conclusion

It is clear, from our assessment, that the proposed wood yard is compliant with the Development Plan. As confirmed in National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 196), the planning system is plan-led and planning law requires that applications for planning permission **must** be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004).

The EIA, and updated EIA relating to the revised site layout, demonstrates that the proposal will not give rise to adverse environmental or cumulative effects.

We have taken on board Members', Officers' and the Environment Agency's concerns and present a scheme that we hope meets with your approval. The reduced land take, ground modelling and landscape planting all contribute to a proposal that can be accommodated in this locality.

We firmly believe that the revised layout addresses Officers' concerns and the reasons for refusal and consider that there are no other material considerations that would warrant a refusal of planning permission.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require clarification on any matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maureen Darrie', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Maureen Darrie
Director