

# DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

## APPLICATION NUMBER N120927/F

Canon Frome Court, Canon Frome, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 2TD

**CASE OFFICER: Mr Matt Tompkins**

**DATE OF SITE VISIT: 24/07/2012**

**Relevant Development Plan Policies:**      **Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan**  
    **S1 – Sustainable Development**  
    **S11 – Community facilities and services**  
    **DR1 – Design**  
    **DR4 – Environment**  
    **LA2 – Landscape character and area least resilient to change**  
    **HBA4 – Setting of a listed building**  
    **CF4 – Renewable Energy**

**Relevant Site History:**      None applicable to this site

### CONSULTATIONS

	Consulted	No Response	No objection	Qualified Comment	Object
Parish Council	X			X	
Transportation	X		X		
Historic Buildings Officer	X			X	
Ecologist/Landscape Officer	X			X	
Neighbour letter/ Site Notice	X			X	
Local Member	X		X		
Environmental Health	X			X	

### PLANNING OFFICER'S APPRAISAL:

#### Site description and proposal:

Canon Frome Court is located in open countryside approximately 5 miles to the east of the city of Hereford. It is within the principal settled farmlands landscape character type and is considered of local historic interest. The site comprises a number of buildings, including a Grade II listed property.

The application relates to the installation of a biomass heating system approximately 40 metres east of the listed building and 100 metres east of a large pond in an area of undergrowth currently surrounded by Yew trees. The heating system will be located within the existing service area of Canon Frome court in close proximity to outbuildings, farm machinery and equipment stores. A goat shed is situated directly to the south-east of the plot. All structures will be painted juniper green to match existing Yew trees.

The Proposal comprises of three steel structures:

- Circular wood chip storage hopper: 5.2 metres diameter with a 4.8 metre high conical roof
- Fuel unloading facility: 3.7(l) metres x 1.4 metres (w) x 1.1 metres (h)
- Rectangular steel container: 6.06 metres (l) x 2.44 metres (w) x 2.89 metres (h)

In addition to the above, a flue is attached to steel container and measures 7 metres in height.

It should be noted that although an application for Listed Building Consent was submitted, it is not required as no alterations have been requested to the listed building.

#### Representations:

##### A) Consultations

1. The **Landscape Officer** states that the location of the development was the most practical and acceptable, minimising the negative impact on the listed building, the historic park and the wider landscape. It is recommended that suitable trees be planted between the historic building and the biomass heating system to provide a visual buffer.
2. The **Conservation Officer** states that the application would have minimal impact on the listed building due to the most suitable location being found for the heating site. The colour of the heating system, the existing vegetation, barns and photovoltaic development are considered to reduce the impact on the landscape. The fuel trucks will use existing tracks and further plantation of yew trees is recommended to increase the shield between the listed building and the heating system.
3. The council's **Ecologist** was consulted in regards to the possibility of the presence of protected species on the site. It was concluded that the plot did not lend itself as a suitable habitat to any protected species and thus an ecological survey was deemed necessary. However, care should be taken when clearing the plot to ensure that any wildlife which is found on site is appropriately relocated.
4. The **Parish Council** express concerns over the possible problems which smoke could cause in adverse metrological conditions. Professional advice has been sought and they conclude that this should not be a problem if properly fuelled and maintained. It is requested that a condition be attached to ensure the necessary upkeep of the heating system.

5. The **Environmental Health Officer** states that although the biomass heating system is located within 50 metres of a borehole, it is not considered to be a potential source of pollution to the borehole. The structure has no foundations and the entire system and fuel supply will be held within sealed containers.

#### B) Letters of support

1. **Mr Seb Bacon** supports the application stating that the proposal:

- a. Will provide sustainable and affordable heat for residents of Canon Frome Court.
- b. Is in keeping with the council and governmental policies for sustainable development.
- c. Benefits wider community as Woolhope Dome Community Woodfuel Project supply the fuel.
- d. Will demonstrate environmental, social and economic benefits.

2. **Mr Bryn Higgs** supports the application stating that the proposal:

- a. Is the culmination of 7 years research into providing sustainable heating for the community.
- b. Will be located discretely in the service area.
- c. Will replace numerous oil and gas heating systems, thus reducing fuel delivery traffic.
- d. Forms part of a wider response to sustainability challenges .
- e. Generates sustainable heat whilst rejuvenating Herefordshire woodland.

3. **Ms Alice Coles** supports the application stating that the proposal:

- a. Will actively support the on going maintenance and care of the Grade II listed building.
- b. Will enable many local community members to continue to actively use the facilities.

#### C) Letters of opposition

1. **Mr Richard James** opposes the application stating that the proposal:

- a. Will industrialise the Grade II listed building.
- b. Fails to use an existing chimney which is appropriate for use.
- c. Does not supply an ecological survey.
- d. Will see an increase in Lorry movements.
- e. Has been sent from Windflower Housing Association to the Planning Department without the knowledge of Mr James.

2. **Mr Robert Nock**

- a. Currently 7 of the 19 properties do not intend to connect to the biomass boiler
- b. The increase in frequency of large vehicles delivering fuel for the boiler
- c. Installation will take many weeks causing disruption, noise & dirt
- d. There will be an adverse impact on the listed building
- e. An increase in noise from the boiler
- f. The proximity to a bore hole which is the sole water supply for Canon Frome Court and 2 neighbouring properties
- g. An increase in the likelihood of a fire in close proximity to livestock sheds

#### Pre-application discussion:

Pre-app discussion undertaken with the Landscape Officer and the Conservation Officer in order to situate the heating system in the most suitable location. Guidance provided by the officers appears to have been taken on board and has been incorporated in the plans submitted with the full planning application.

#### Constraints:

1. Open Countryside
2. Within the Curtilage of a listed building

#### Appraisal:

The scheme will provide a form of renewable energy to the site at Canon Frome Court. The council is keen to support suitable applications which promote sustainable development as demonstrated by Policy S1 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. Renewable energy is a key component of sustainable development and Policy CF4 dictates that a proposal will be permitted where there was no significant detrimental effect upon the character of the particular landscape qualities of that location and it would not significantly impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents. The scheme provides a sustainable heating system for the 19 households at the Court and consequently, I am of the opinion that the application satisfies the aforementioned policies.

Pre-application discussion took place regarding the most suitable location for the biomass heating system. The advice has been taken on board which is reflected in the plans submitted with the full planning application and thus policies DR1 and HBA4 are satisfied. The proposal is seen to provide the most suitable compromise between providing a sustainable supply of energy and minimising negative impact on the listed building, the historic park and the wider landscape.

The elevations show that the storage hopper and chimney will have an industrial appearance. However, this would be seen as part of the functional buildings associated with the farm within the service area and not in immediate competition with the historic buildings. Views in to the site from the public realm are limited to those gained from the public right of way, approximately 100

metres to the south of the proposed site. The scale and bulk of the equipment will be shielded from most views along the footpath by the existing mature vegetation, trees, conditioned planting of further yew trees, barns and the photovoltaic array installed to the immediate south of this site. In addition the equipment is to be coloured dark green to reduce its impact on the wider landscape.

The plot where the biomass heating system would be situated is not considered to be an ideal habitat for any protected species. Great Crested Newts could be located 100 metres to the west around the large pond, however they would have to negotiate a large amount of existing development and hard surfaces in order to reach the plot and thus it is considered unnecessary to request a full ecological survey. Exact details of what would be required to be undertaken should wildlife be encountered when developing the plot is stipulated in a condition attached to this determination.

A borehole which is the sole water supply of Canon Frome Court and 2 neighbouring properties is located approximately 15 metres from the proposed site of the biomass heating system. It is recommended that the boiler and subsequent machinery should be located at least 50 metres from the borehole. Within this application it is clearly stated that the fluid used within the machinery is of a negligible amount, all equipment and fuel will be stored within sealed containers and that no foundations are required. Therefore the biomass heating system is not considered to have the potential to pollute the borehole.

Overall the scheme represents a sustainable response to the heating needs of a very large property and its associated buildings. There is relatively little impact on the character of the area and the setting of the listed building due to the appropriate location of the heating system within an existing service area. Views in to the site will remain relatively unharmed with no impact upon the neighbouring residents. Consequently, the scheme is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan and is therefore recommended for approval.

*Local member contacted 10/8/12 - No response - Happy to be dealt with under delegated powers*

RECOMMENDATION:    PERMIT ☒    REFUSE ☐

**CONDITION(S) & REASON(S) / REASON(S) FOR REFUSAL:**

1. C01
2. C06 – 13347-002, Windflower Housing Assoc Biomass Installation Looking South, Windflower Housing Assoc Biomass Installation Looking West, Windflower Housing Assoc Biomass Installation Looking North, Windflower Housing Assoc Biomass Installation Looking East
3. C96 – Soft Landscaping: a) b) c)
4. CBK

## Reasons for Approval

The proposed Biomass District Heating System would provide a feasible, sustainable form of heating to Canon Frome Court whilst having minimal impact on the setting of the nearby listed building. The location, scale, design and colour of the machinery and equipment in conjunction with the large amount of natural and constructed screening ensures that the proposal is as inconspicuous as possible from both within the site and from the public realm. The system is considered not to be a potential threat to the nearby borehole. Therefore the proposal is considered to accord with the policies S1, S11, DR1, DR4, LA2, HBA4 & CF4 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

## Informatives

1. I33

Signed:  Dated: 17/10/12

### TEAM LEADER'S COMMENTS:


DECISION:

PERMIT



REFUSE



Signed:  Dated: 17/10/12

### REASON FOR DELAY (if over 8 weeks)

Negotiations

☐

Consultees

☐

Other

☐

(please specify)