

Supporting Planning Statement



Proposed timber storage and processing development with associated site access; landscaping; SUDs and related works

Land at Westloch Farm, Peebles, EH45 8QY

On behalf of: Pentland Biomass



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June 2022

Pentland Biomass

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- 5: Copy of Advert Placed in the Scottish Farmer & Agrimart
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- 7: Sales Brochure for Application Site

1.0 Introduction & Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant and site owners, Pentland Biomass by Chartered Town Planning Consultants, John Handley Associates Ltd.
- 1.2 It is submitted in support of an application for full planning permission for the proposed development of a new timber storage and processing development with associated site access, landscaping, SUDs and related works; and planning permission in principle for the siting of an associated dwelling house/office on a 1.98 hectare site at Westloch Farm, Peebles.
- 1.3 This Supporting Planning Statement provides background information on Pentland Biomass and the proposed development, and assesses the proposals against relevant planning policy to set out why planning permission should be granted for the development.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Statement is to explain how the development satisfies the terms of the relevant policies set out in the approved Strategic Development Plan and the adopted Local Development Plan, as well as the relevant sections of the Scottish Planning Policy.
- 1.5 The Statement is structured as follows:
- Sections 2 & 3: Provide an overview of Pentland Biomass and the need for the proposed development.
 - Section 4: Summarises the site selection process that Pentland Biomass has undertaken over the past 3 years.
 - Section 5: Provides a description of the application site and the surrounding area.
 - Section 6: Discusses the planning history of the application site and its allocation in the adopted Local Development Plan.
 - Section 7: Describes the proposed development.
 - Section 8: Reviews the pre-application consultation on the proposals.
 - Section 9: Assesses the proposals against the identified policy context.
 - Section 10: Provides a summary and conclusions.
- 1.6 This Supporting Planning Statement should also be read in conjunction with the accompanying Design Statement and package of detailed drawings that has been prepared in support of the application by cb3 design architects. The package of drawings and supporting information submitted with the planning application has been prepared to provide a detailed assessment of the proposed development and addresses relevant policy requirements set out in the Development Plan. These documents provide support for the proposals and confirm that there are no technical or physical constraints to developing the site for the scale and type of development being proposed.

2.0 The Applicant

Pentland Plants Limited

2.1 The applicant, Pentland Biomass, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Loanhead-based Pentland Plants Limited. Pentland Plants is a successful, independent, family run horticultural nursery and garden centre business, which has been growing plants for professional growers and parks departments throughout the UK from its commercial nursery, and on-site garden centre and coffee shop at Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead, Midlothian for over 50 years. The nursery, garden centre and export operations run by Pentland Plants is a significant local employer, with over 100 employees. It generates significant expenditure for the local economy and exports home grown products throughout the UK and beyond.

2.2 Photos of the nursery and garden centre are shown below and further information on Pentland Plants is available at its website: www.pentlandplantsgardencentre.co.uk



Photographs of the Nursery and Garden Centre at Pentland Mains, Loanhead



Pentland Biomass

- 2.3 In 2006, Pentland Plants installed a 2 megawatt woodchip boiler to provide all the heating and hot water for its large glass house site at Loanhead. This was a significant investment which allowed the company to reduce its on-going fuel costs by 66%, and the change to woodfuel to meet their energy needs helped reduce annual heating costs by £300,000. In doing so, Pentland Plants was the first horticultural business in the UK to switch to woodfuel and, at the time, it was the biggest privately funded biomass project in Scotland. This (at the time) experimental approach to reducing the significant heating costs of the greenhouses was recognised by the Forestry Commission Scotland and was promoted by the FCS as a Case Study for other business to follow (see Appendix 1).
- 2.4 The business was so pleased with its own move to woodchip, carbon neutral fuel, and the 66% reduction in on-going fuel costs, that they launched a subsidiary business, Pentland Biomass in 2007 to enable the supply of wood fuel products and services to other business and domestic users, as well as supplying the needs of the nursery operation. This allowed the company to help other businesses and domestic customers put in place efficient energy solutions.
- 2.5 Pentland Biomass has now been established for 15 years in its own right and is a successful diversification of the main horticultural business which has itself been operating for over 50 years. Confirmation of the establishment, annual turnover and current number of employees of the Pentland Biomass business is confirmed in the letter from their accountants which is included as Appendix 2.
- 2.6 The decision taken by Pentland Plants to move to biomass fuel was critical to the long-term future of the main horticultural business. The introduction of the biomass boiler and the significant savings on heating costs (savings of over £1.5M in first three years alone) helped to secure the future of the nursery business and the long-term future of 100 local jobs. The on-going success of the Pentland Biomass part of the wider business is therefore crucial and directly linked to the future of the main horticultural business.
- 2.7 Pentland Plants now sources and produces all its woodfuel through its subsidiary wood fuel business, Pentland Biomass. Roundwood is purchased directly from local forests and stacked to dry for at least a year to bring down the moisture content before it is chipped into fuel. The annual woodfuel consumption warranted the company's own investment in woodfuel processing equipment, which was also funded through the significant fuel cost savings and the Scottish Biomass Heat Scheme. This self-supply fuel model further reduced the costs of their heating as well as creating a new income stream from sales of woodfuel to third parties.

Timber Storage and Processing Site at Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead

- 2.8 At present, Pentland Biomass's main timber storage and processing site is located at Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead, and photographs of the current site and the extent of operations is shown in the photos below.



Photographs of the existing timber storage yard at Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead



- 2.9 In addition to the storage of harvested timber at the Pentland Mains Farm site, the company owns and operates a mobile wood chipper which is stored at its Loanhead base, but which is transported around the country to meet customer requirements for local on-site wood-chipping. Pentland Biomass also stores woodfuel at other locations throughout Scotland to meet specific customer requirements in those areas, but the main facility is currently located at Loanhead.
- 2.10 Pentland Biomass also provides a commercial contract chipping service to external customers. The company purchased its own fleet of mobile wood chippers to ensure a clean and reliable source of woodchip for fuel to meet demand. This includes a 400 hp tractor operated whole tree chipper which can chip up to 45 tonnes per hour.



Photographs of the existing timber processing operations at Loanhead



Current Forestry and Timber Operations

- 2.11 Having put together the means to source and produce their own wood fuel, Pentland Biomass further diversified their operations in order to supply the Edinburgh and South of Scotland area with firewood wood pellets, and other biofuels.
- 2.12 Pentland Biomass is now one of South of Scotland's leading suppliers of kiln dried hardwood logs, delivering firewood and wood pellets throughout Edinburgh, Lothians and the Scottish Borders. Pentland Biomass now supplies homes and businesses across the south of Scotland, with high quality firewood. To ensure they have a continuing supply of locally sourced logs, they connect directly with forest estates and landowners throughout Scotland and have their own commercial timber harvesting and forestry management services.
- 2.13 At the current time, all logs are dried at the Loanhead site using woodchip powered dryers, ensuring that the firewood has an excellent low moisture content and is delivered ready to burn. Pentland Biomass provides the following forestry and associated services:
- Timber Harvesting
 - Timber & Log Haulage
 - Tree Chipping Services
 - Woodchip for Biomass
 - Bulk Kiln Dried Logs
 - Bulk Kindling
 - Dry & Fresh Roundwood Timber
 - Timber Products
- 2.14 Further details on Pentland Biomass and its current services are available from its website: <https://www.pentlandbiomass.com/>, and additional background information on the company can also be found at: <https://usewoodfuel.co.uk/casestudy/pentland-plants/>. An independent report on the biomass business is also set out in the Forestry Journal at: <https://www.forestryjournal.co.uk/features/17831477.pentland-biomass--fuel-family-others/>

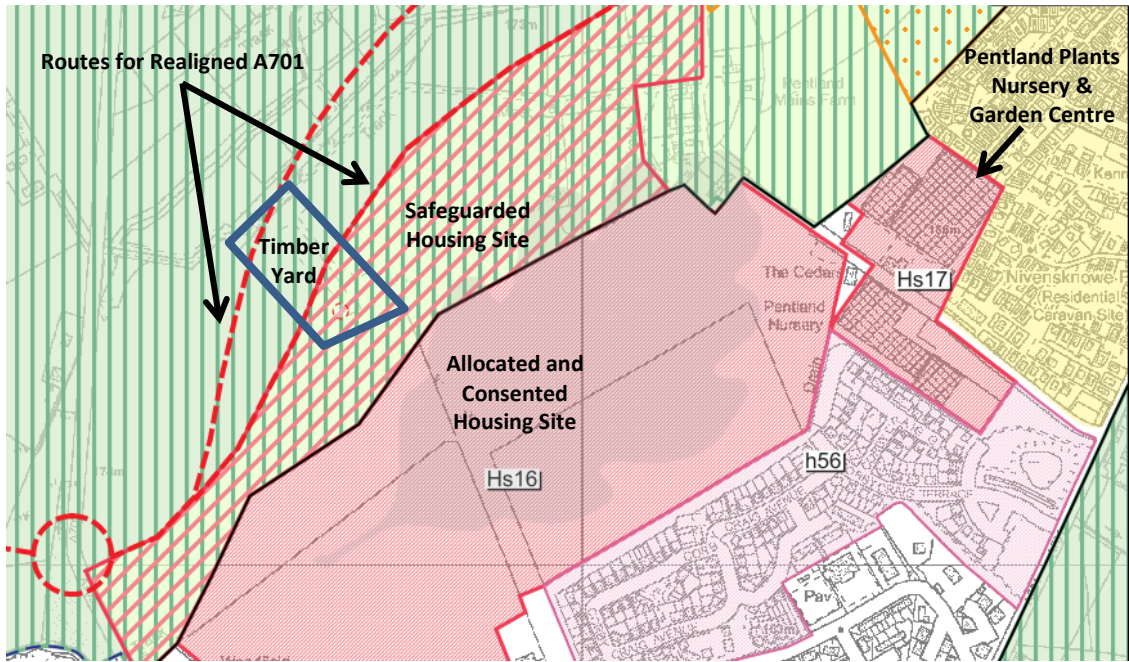
Summary

- 2.15 The above information provides background information on the applicant and their connections to an existing horticultural business which has diversified into a forestry and biomass enterprise. It also provides a summary of Pentland Biomass's current operations at their wood storage and processing facility at Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead. It confirms that the forestry and timber processing business is a successful and long established part of the horticultural business, Pentland Plants, which is itself a long established and successful company and significant local employer. The businesses are both growing, indigenous and innovative companies, and collectively are one of the largest of its kind in Scotland

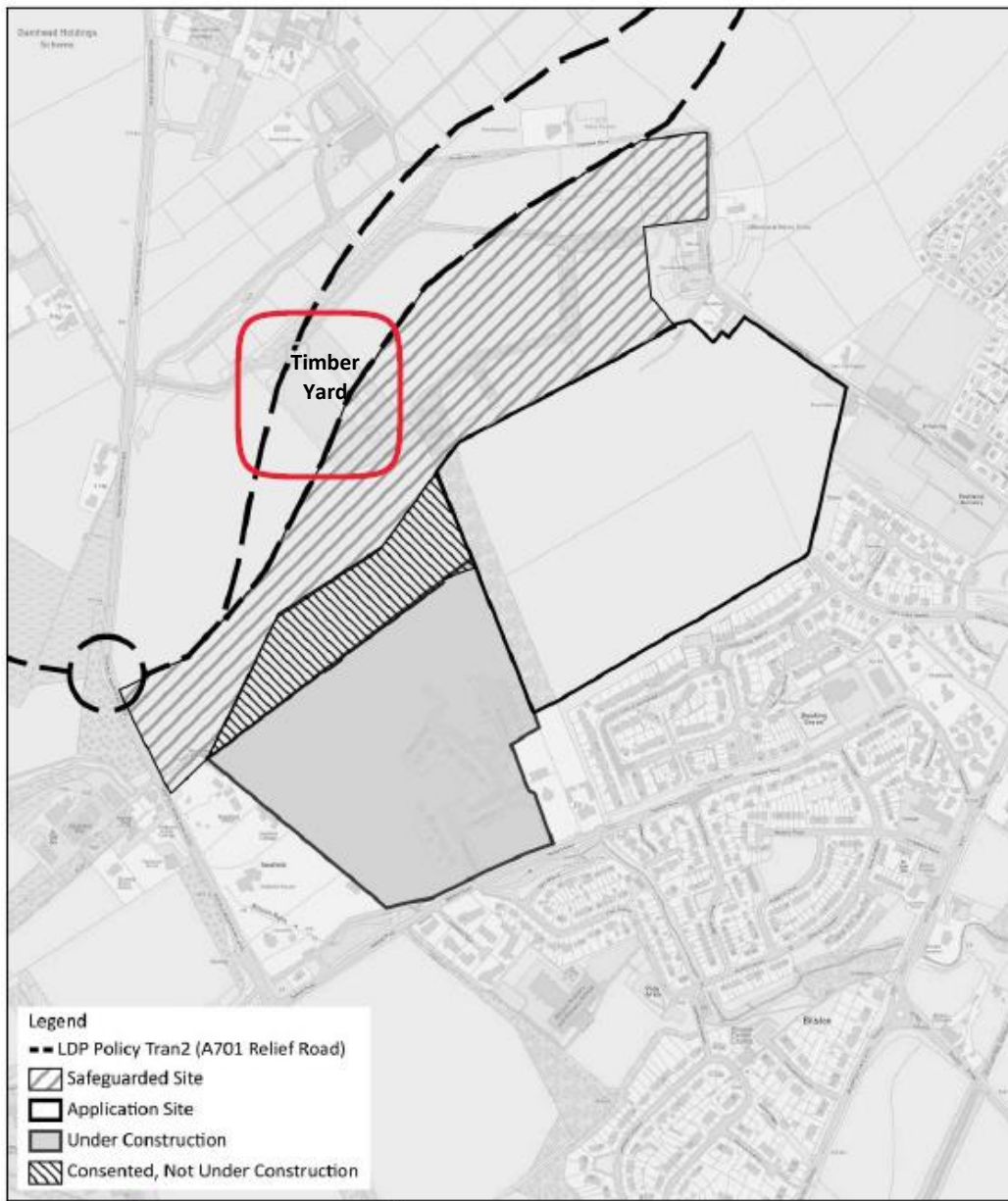
2.16 Both companies generate significant expenditure for the local economy and export home grown products throughout Scotland and the UK. The original horticultural business has adapted and diversified its business to remain successful and reduce costs. The introduction of the biomass operation was a further successful diversification of this innovative business which has pioneered biomass heating in Scotland, and is now recognised and promoted by the Forestry Commission as a successful case study for this type of renewable energy.

3.0 Need to Relocate the Timber Storage & Processing Yard

- 3.1 Whilst Pentland Plants owns the land at Loanhead occupied by the horticultural business and garden centre, the site of the current timber storage and processing yard at Pentland Mains Farm is not owned by the company and has been occupied on the basis of a short term lease arrangement with the owner of Pentland Mains Farm.
- 3.2 Following Pentland Biomass's establishment of the existing timber storage and processing yard the site has been identified by Midlothian Council as the preferred route for the realignment of the A701 road. It has also been allocated in the Midlothian Local Development Plan ("LDP") as part of an area of land that is identified as long-term safeguarded land for housing, and lies adjacent to an allocated housing site (Midlothian LDP Proposal Hs16) which was granted planning permission in principle, subject to the signing of a legal agreement in August 2021.
- 3.3 The extract from the Midlothian LDP which confirms these allocations is copied below, and the Midlothian Council Planning Committee Report for the planning application is included as Appendix 3 with the relevant sections referring to the timber yard site highlighted.
- 3.4 This Committee Report, from August 2021, confirms that the timber yard site is located on both of the preferred routes for the indicative alignments of the A701 Relief Road which will form part of the infrastructure to support the development strategy in the Midlothian LDP. The relief road is the subject of a current scoping request, and a planning application for the relief road was expected to be submitted (following public consultation) in late 2021/early 2022 and will require the relocation of the Pentland Biomass timber yard (see paragraphs 8.6 and 8.10). A condition on the planning in permission has also been imposed which effectively requires the relocation of the timber yard (see paragraphs 5.12, 5.13, 5.16, 5.17 and Condition 17).
- 3.5 As a consequence of the current timber yard site being identified on the preferred route for the A701 realignment and the granting of planning permission for major new housing development of 436 units directly adjacent to the site, Pentland Biomass have been forced to relocate their operations away from their current site and Loanhead base. The company has therefore undertaken a site search for a new and permanent base for its biomass operations and this search has been on-going since 2019. The outcome of this site search exercise has led to the identification of the application site and this is explained further in section 4.0 below.



Extract from Midlothian LDP with the existing Timber Yard site highlighted in blue



Extract from Committee Report with the existing Timber Yard site highlighted in red

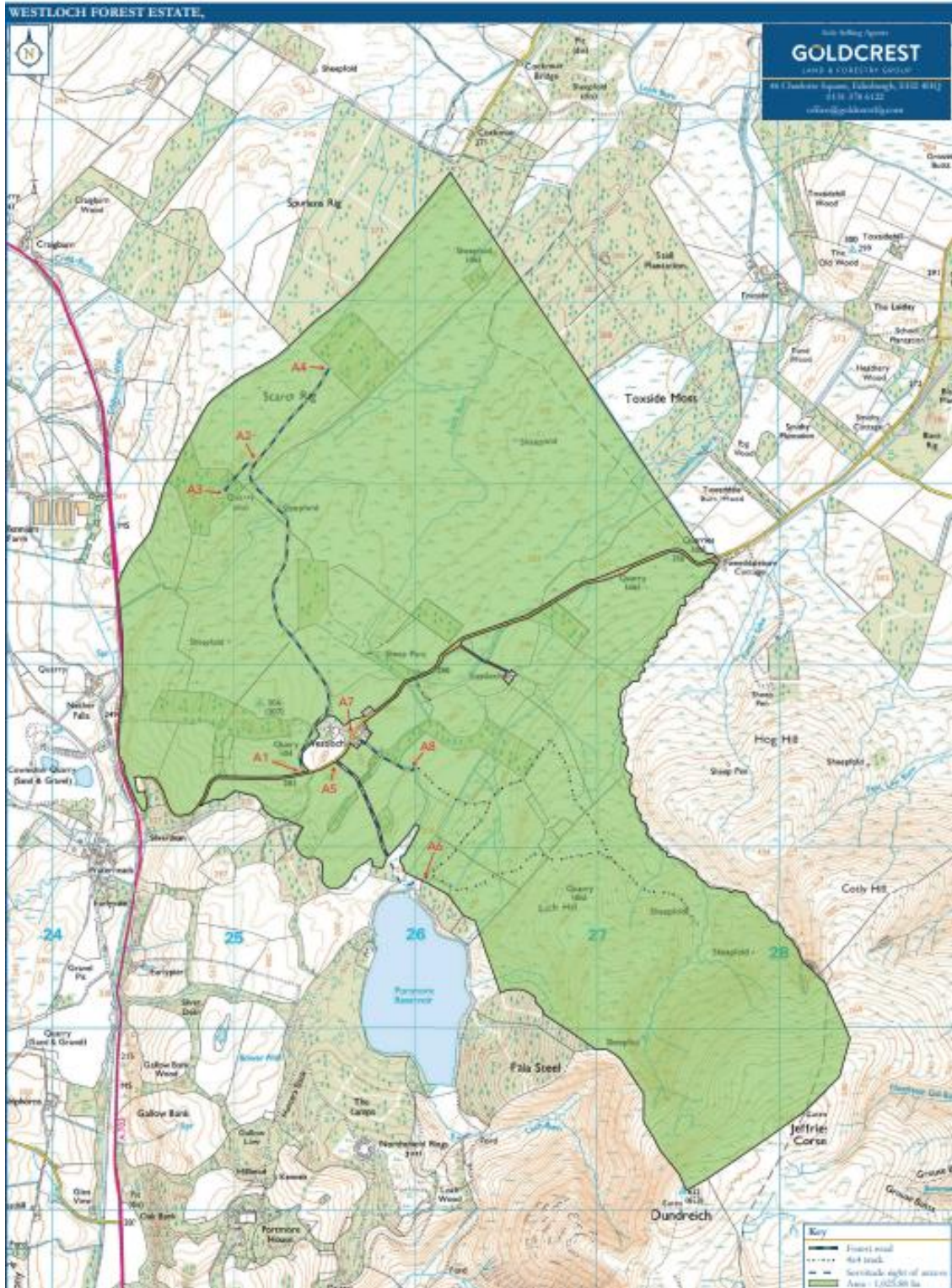
4.0 Site Search Exercise

- 4.1 As the Biomass operations are crucial to the running of the main horticultural business and are now a successful and thriving business in its own right, employing 10 staff and providing a range of valuable forestry and biomass fuel services across the south of Scotland, the directors have been searching for a new site for the timber storage and processing operations for a number of years, and we were formally instructed to commence a detailed site search exercise for them in October 2019.
- 4.2 The site search exercise involved a review of potential sites throughout the Midlothian and Scottish Borders areas with a preference for sites within easy access of the A701/A702/A703/A7. This location was selected as the majority of the company's sources of timber are located within the Scottish Borders area and an accessible location close to existing timber stocks was important from a sustainability perspective and to reduce haulage costs. The majority of the staff employed by the Biomass company also live in the Scottish Borders area and a site within the Scottish Borders area offered further advantages in terms of a reduction in staff commuting distances.
- 4.3 Sites away from existing or planned residential areas were preferred, but locations had to have good road access. Sites with existing, or potential access to a 3 phase electrical power supply were essential, as were sites in windy or elevated positions which would allow the stored timber to dry out naturally. Sites of around 2.5 hectares were preferred and this included undeveloped sites; former quarry sites; or an existing small farm or sites containing existing storage buildings and yards with/without power and water supply.
- 4.4 The site search was undertaken in stages, and included the following key stages:
- (1) agreement of the site search criteria to establish site requirements and preferred locations;
 - (2) an online search of property sites to check for suitable properties/sites currently available for sale or known to be on the market;
 - (3) a search of Council planning portals to check for potential development sites and sites with planning permission or previous consents;
 - (4) the preparation of a contact list database and site search letter which was issued to agents, landowners, agencies and other potential site owners known within the search area which was issued via post and email;
 - (5) the placing of an advert in the Scottish Farmer and Agrimart magazines to widen the search;
 - (6) a review of initial responses to the letter and adverts; discussions with contacts, follow-up emails and a review of potential sites including the preparation of background notes on site suitability;
 - (7) the preparation of a Schedule of Sites and Contacts to allow short-listed sites to be progressed via follow-up discussions with landowners and agents; and
 - (8) a review of the planning status and history of any selected sites and a review of its planning potential.

- 4.5 The site search letter was issued by post and email in December 2019, and again in January 2020, to over 45 contacts. A copy of the letter and the advertisements placed in the Scottish Farmer and Agrimart magazines in December 2019 and January 2020 are included as Appendix 4 and 5.
- 4.6 Both the letter and the adverts generated a good response with a total of 25 sites identified as having potential for further consideration. These sites were assessed against the site search criteria and also reviewed in relation to any existing uses and their planning potential. A large number of other sites were received as a result of the letters and adverts but the majority of these were discounted due to the lack of access or power connections or their location outwith the search area or too close to existing residential areas. A number of sites were also discounted due to potential planning issues.
- 4.7 A copy of the Site Search Schedule which confirms the short-listed sites and the contact database is included as Appendix 6. As this schedule contains private contact details and commercially sensitive information we would ask that this is treated as a confidential document and not uploaded to the public planning portal. It does, however, confirm the range and extent of sites considered and assessed in detail as part of the site selection process. It also confirms the extensive and wide ranging site search undertaken by the applicant.

Westloch Forest Estate

- 4.8 As a result of this extensive site search exercise a clear favourite emerged in the form of the Westloch Farm site which was part of the larger 1,000 hectare Westloch Forestry Estate which had been acquired in 2017 and was the subject of an extensive restocking and replanting programme. The new owners of the Westloch Forestry Estate contacted Pentland Biomass in response to the Scottish Farmer advert.
- 4.9 Following a site visit, the Westloch Farm Estate was identified as an ideal candidate for the new timber yard due to its location within a forest estate which had recently been planted as a highly commercial conifer forest. It was within the preferred area of search and the location also benefited significantly from excellent ground and climatic conditions, and particularly its direct access to the A703 which is an Approved Route for Timber Transportation. From the A703, Westloch is accessed via an unnamed minor public road which is also classified as a Consultation Route for timber transport. This property therefore benefits from existing, direct access to approved timber transport routes. It is also located in an area noted for its major timber processing facilities. These are all significant benefits of the Westloch location. The full extent of the Westloch Forest Estate is shown in the site plan and further details on the Estate can be accessed on-line at: <https://goldcrestfg.com/assets/uploads/2021/10/Westloch-Estate-Leadburn-Peebles-2021.pdf>



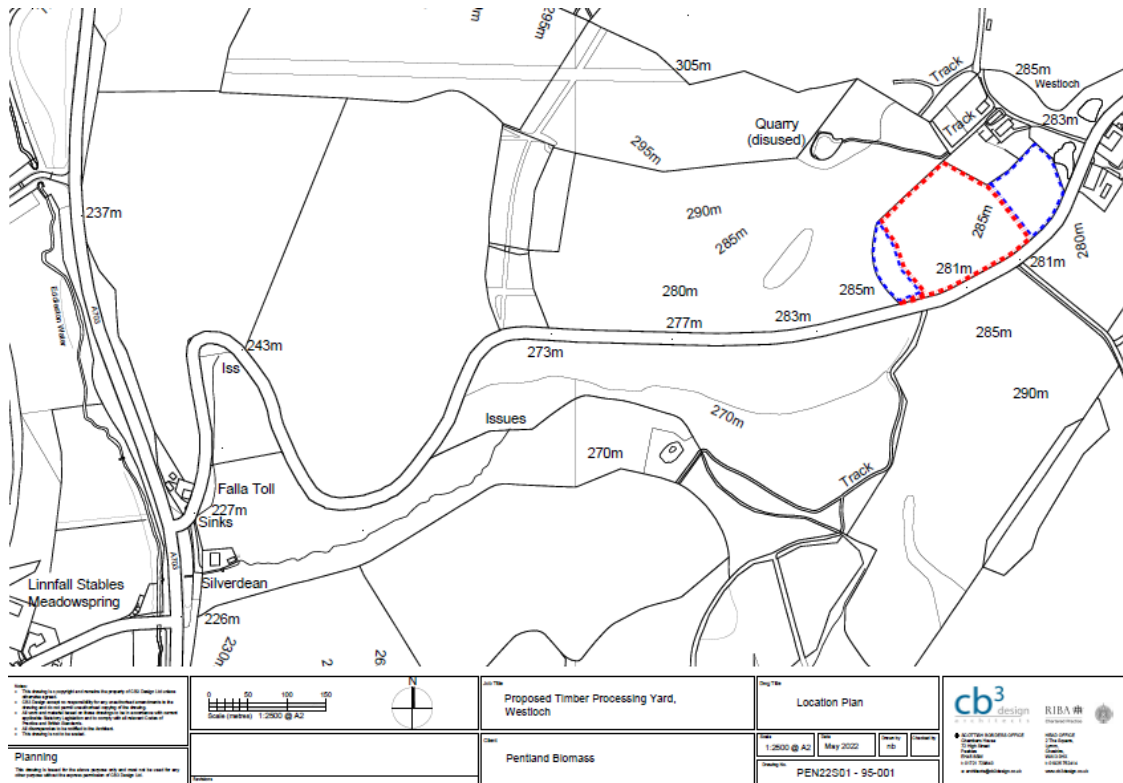
Extent of the Westloch Forest Estate

4.10 Having identified the Westloch Estate as the preferred location for the new timber yard, a number of potential sites around the Estate were considered and assessed in detail. This included the existing farm buildings and storage sheds, and also fields directly adjacent to these existing buildings. The owners of the Estate were unable to release these existing farm storage buildings and adjoining fields for sale due to their desire to see the existing steading buildings refurbished and redeveloped for new housing (and planning permission has been granted for this) and also a requirement to avoid any conflict with the existing residential cottages to the east of the farm buildings.

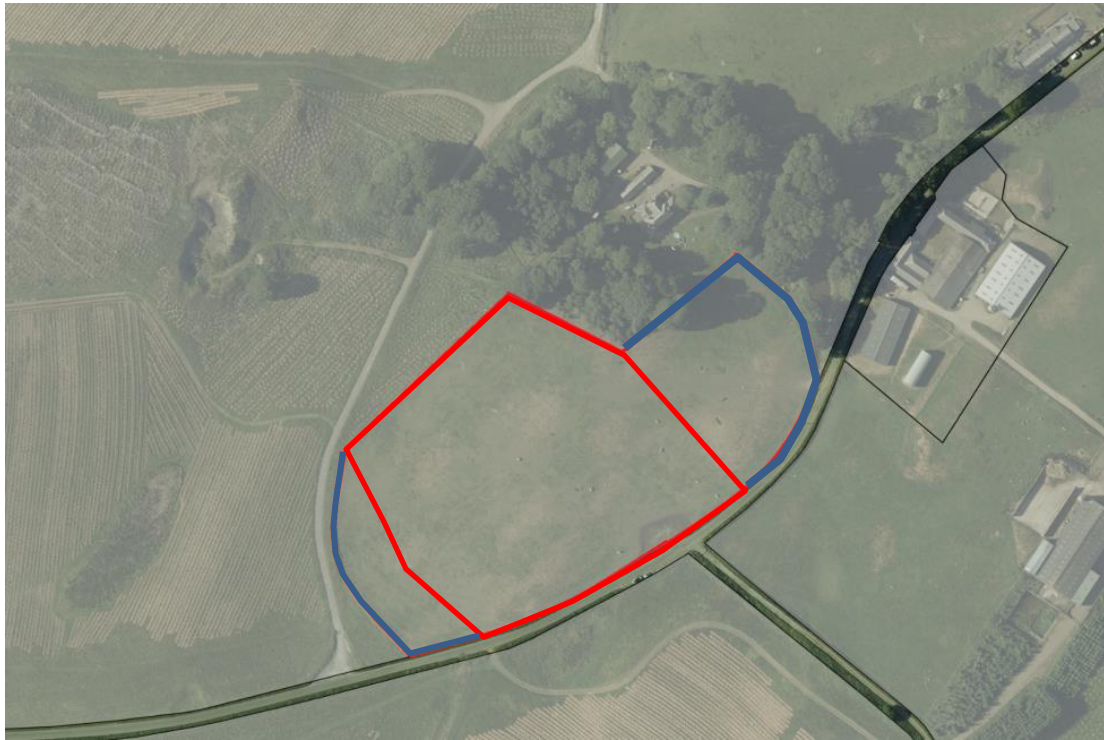
- 4.11 There was also an essential requirement for the new timber yard to be located within reach of an existing 3 phase electric supply and within easy access of existing timber transportation routes. This ruled out a number of more remote locations within the Estate which didn't meet those requirements.
- 4.12 Following extensive discussions and negotiations with the Estate Owners they opted to release to the market a 3 hectare field to the north east of the existing farm buildings and south west of the Westloch Farm House, and this site was acquired by Pentland Biomass in April 2022. A copy of the sales brochure for the property is enclosed as Appendix 7.
- 4.13 This site was purchased as it met all of the site search requirements; and following a review of Scottish Borders Council's planning policies was considered to be a suitable and appropriate site for the proposed new timber yard facility.
- 4.14 Following the completion of the purchase, Pentland Biomass engaged cb3 design architects to work up plans for the development of the site and this is described in section 7.0 below, with a description of the application site and surrounding area set out in section 5.0.

5.0 Site & Surrounding Area

- 5.1 Pentland Biomass acquired the full 3 hectare paddock in April 2022, but have restricted the planning application boundary for the new timber yard facility to the middle portion of the site, primarily to avoid any potential conflict with the siting and setting of the Westloch Farm House, and to ensure adequate visibility splays for the new site access.
- 5.2 The extent of the application site is shown in the location plans and aerial photographs below.



Location of the Application Site



Aerial Photograph of the Application Site & Wider Ownership Boundary

- 5.3 The application site extends to 1.98 hectare and is located within the Westloch Forest Estate which is situated in northern Tweeddale about 15 miles south of Edinburgh and 6 miles north of Peebles on the edge of the Moorfoot Hills.
- 5.4 As noted above, the application site is accessed via an unnamed minor public road which is classified as a Consultation Route for Timber Transport. This minor road connects to the A703 which is c. 1 mile to the west of the site and is an Approved Route for Timber Transportation.
- 5.5 The site is located within a wider countryside area and is not allocated for development in the Scottish Borders LDP. It is not within any defined settlement boundary, but a grouping of buildings forming the Westloch Farm steading buildings are located to the east of the site and the Westloch Farm House is located to the north east. The farm house is enclosed by a grouping of well established, mature trees. To the north of the site is an area of more recent tree planting with the site of a former quarry beyond this. To the west is a recently constructed forest access road with further recent tree planting beyond this. To the south is the unclassified road which runs along the site's southern boundary and links the A703 to the A7 via the B6372 at Temple.
- 5.6 The site consists of part of a larger area of uncultivated ground which slopes in a generally south to north direction. Prior to the site's acquisition by Pentland Biomass, it was used as agricultural land but this has been limited to rough grazing. The site lies at 285m above sea level and is classified as grade 5 agricultural land. It is not prime quality farmland and its development would not affect the viability of any farm holding, or lead to the loss of land that is in short supply.

5.7 Apart from the application site's undefined eastern boundary, the site is well defined and has clearly distinguishable boundaries to the north, south and west comprising a traditionally built stone wall along the north and western edge, and a post and wire fence around the south and eastern boundaries. The site itself has no trees or other landscape features and there are no buildings on the site. It is generally south-facing and, apart from the undefined eastern boundary, benefits from well-defined boundaries. Photographs of the site and the surrounding are provided below.



Aerial Photograph of the Application Site looking north west.



Photograph of the Application Site looking east towards Westloch Farm House which is screened by the existing mature tree belt along the site's boundary.



Photograph of the Application Site looking north west from the recently upgraded unclassified road forming the site's southern boundary



Photograph of the Application Site looking north from the unclassified road forming the site's southern boundary

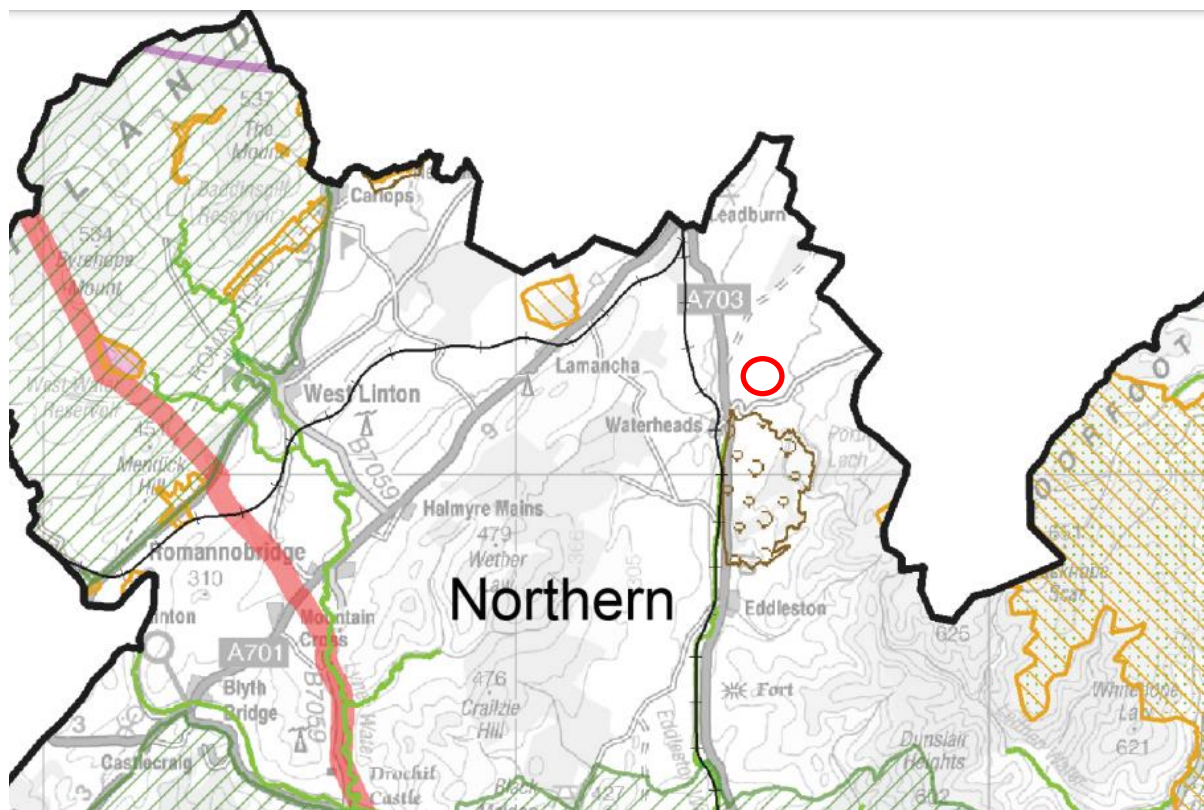


Photograph of the Application Site looking east from the unclassified road forming the site's southern boundary with the Westloch Farm steading buildings in the background

6.0 Development Plan Allocation & Planning History

Development Plan Allocation and Designations

- 6.1 The application site is located within a wider countryside area and is not allocated for development in the Scottish Borders LDP, or subject to any designations or safeguards. It is not located within any defined settlement boundary, but the grouping of buildings forming the Westloch Farm steading and Westloch Farm House is located to the east of the site. The extract from the LDP Proposals Map is copied below.



Extract from the Adopted LDP Proposals Map with the Application Site highlighted

Planning History of Application Site

- 6.2 There have been no previous planning applications submitted for this site, and no relevant planning history associated with the application site.
- 6.3 The redundant farm steading buildings to the east of the application site were, however, the subject of a detailed planning application for a change of use and alterations to form three dwellinghouses in 2017 (Application Ref: 17/01462/FUL). This application was approved by the Council and planning permission was issued in July 2018. A review of the Report of Handling for this planning application has confirmed that the Westloch Farm location is not subject to any landscape, environmental, archaeological, ecological or heritage designations. It is not located within any Sensitive Areas. This information has been used to inform the preparation of the proposals for the application site.

7.0 Proposed Development

7.1 As explained above, due to the need to relocate their existing timber storage and processing yard at Loanhead, Midlothian, Pentland Biomass are proposing to establish a new facility at the Westloch Farm site in the Scottish Borders.

7.2 The locational benefits and advantages of this site have been explained in detail in section 4.0 above, and include: the site's location within an established forest estate and proximity to major timber processing facilities; its direct access to existing approved timber transportation routes, including the A703; the site's proximity to Pentland Biomass's existing staff, customers and existing timber stocks; its location adjacent to a 3 phase electrical power supply; its relatively elevated position which allows the stored timber to dry out naturally; its remoteness from any sensitive designations and residential areas; and its generally south facing aspect which provides opportunities for further sustainable energy initiatives.

7.3 The proposals for the site are shown in the package of application drawings and are explained in the Design Statement prepared by cb3 design architects. The site layout plan is copied below.



7.4 The proposals for the site include the following key elements:

- New Site Access
- Timber Storage Areas
- Timber Storage and Processing Sheds, totalling 450 sqm
- SUDs features
- Staff Car Parking
- HGV Parking

- Weighbridge
- Temporary Office & Staff Welfare Facilities, totalling 30 sqm
- Landscaped Bunds and Tree Planting
- Site for a New House and Permanent Office & Staff Accommodation (in principle only)

Design Approach – Layout, Landscaping and Biodiversity

- 7.5 The site does not fall within any protected landscape areas, and the timber storage and processing yard has been laid out and designed to provide a safe working environment, which minimises the visual impact on the landscape and works to improve the biodiversity of the environment.
- 7.6 The timber storage areas have been located to minimise their visual impact and to ensure a safe environment for vehicles and machinery to load and unload.
- 7.7 The topography of the site will be altered through a cut and fill process, to provide a level site area, allowing for safe storage of timber and provide suitable locations for the processing buildings. The surplus earth will be utilised to create mounds to the east, south and south west boundaries, reducing the visual impact of the yard. The mounds will be planted with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees to improve the aesthetics, offer further screening and encourage greater biodiversity.
- 7.8 To the west and north of the site there will be new wildlife hedgerows planted, consisting of a mixture hawthorn, blackthorn and elder, again to improve the visual impact and provide a natural habitat for nesting birds and small mammals.
- 7.9 As noted above, the application site is an area of rough grazing and has no trees or ecological features. It is not subject to any landscape, environmental, archaeological, ecological or heritage designations or located within any sensitive areas. There will therefore be no adverse impact on any ecology interests either on the site or in the surrounding area.

Access and Parking

- 7.10 The application site benefits from its proximity and direct links to approved timber transportation routes. The site entrance has been located to ensure the longest sightlines can be achieved across land owned by the applicant. This will require levels being reduced to the south west of the entrance and new fencing being positioned behind the sightlines. The new access road will be tarmacked with 1.8m high gates located at the road head, after the weighbridge.
- 7.11 Designated parking zones, with turning areas have been located to the west of the site, for both staff and visitor parking, as well as heavy goods vehicles.

- 7.12 In terms of average vehicle trips, it is anticipated that this would match the current trips experienced at the company's current Loanhead facility which is limited to around 20 car trips per day (10 into/out of the site) and an average of 8 lorry trips per week into/out of site. There will be no sales to the public from the site and therefore very few visitor trips are expected.

Processing and Storage Buildings

- 7.13 There will be 3 buildings erected on site, and two main areas for open timber storage. The main building will extend to 342 sqm (gross floorspace) and will be used as the chipping shed, which is an agricultural barn with precast concrete wall panels and profiled metal clad wall and roof panels. Located to the rear will be the smaller timber processing shed extending to 108 sqm. This will be clad in larch timber to the front and south west, with profiled metal cladding to the rear and north east elevation.

- 7.14 The temporary office & staff facility will be housed in a portakabin, to be clad in larch vertical timbers. The building will extend to 30sqm and will provide welfare facilities which will be connected to waste tanks that will be emptied on a regular basis by a commercial company.

Services, Drainage and Flooding

- 7.15 The SEPA Flood Map confirms that the site is free from flood risk from nearby water bodies. In relation to the requirement for sustainable drainage provision, the main vehicle and timber store areas will have a permeable crushed stone base forming a safe surface, while allowing rainwater to naturally percolate.

- 7.16 A heavy duty Aco drain will be located at the site entrance to prevent any run off on to the highway. The Aco drain will be connected to a surface water interceptor, then to a soakaway system to be located a minimum of 5 metres distance from the highway.

- 7.17 Rainwater water from the chipping and processing shed roofs will be collected and stored, in a below ground rainwater harvesting tank, for grey water use on site. The harvesting tank is to be connected to a soakaway, to accommodate excess rainwater.

- 7.18 In terms of site services, the only building requiring a water supply and foul drainage is the temporary office and staff portakabin building which will be serviced via a waste tank and water bowsers which will be supplied and emptied by Portakabin.

Sustainable Development

- 7.19 A key consideration of the proposal is its approach towards sustainability which has in built properties from a site level, for example through the approach to SUDS, landscaping and the design of the buildings.

- 7.20 The broader sustainability of the buildings will be enhanced through the inclusion of renewable energy technologies. The chipping and processing sheds will have solar panels installed on the south west side of their roofs. The electricity generated will be used on site, with any excess power diverted back into the grid.
- 7.21 A selection of building materials will also be from recycled local sources further reinforcing the sustainable development approach. The proposals for the site and the design of the buildings therefore include low and zero carbon generating technologies and measures to ensure compliance with the current carbon emissions reduction targets set by the Scottish Government.

Waste Management & Recycling

- 7.22 Pentland Biomass operate a waste management and recycling strategy at their existing Loanhead facility and similar arrangements would be put into place as part of the replacement facility at the Westloch site. Locations for the required waste and recycling areas are shown on the layout plan.

Noise and Amenity Issues

- 7.23 One of the key criteria for the site selection process was the need to locate the site away from established residential areas. The necessary separation distances have been achieved and the siting and location of the processing shed and the inclusion of landscaped mounds has been specifically designed to ensure that the development will not present any direct noise or amenity conflicts for the Westloch Farm House or the converted farm steading buildings once these have been completed.
- 7.24 The proposed development has therefore been designed to ensure that it will not cause any increase in noise or disturbance to the detriment of the amenity of any residential properties, the nearest of which is some considerable distance from the processing shed. The amenity of the existing and planned residential properties will also be safeguarded by way of the existing mature trees and will be further separated by the proposed landscaped bunds which will defined the site's eastern boundary. There would also be no overlooking, access to light or sunlight issues.
- 7.25 The layout and design of the proposed development does not therefore cause any detrimental residential amenity implications and it would not impact on the efficient operation of any farm or forestry enterprise carried out in the surrounding area.

Site for New House/Office

- 7.26 The primary purpose of this planning application is to secure detailed planning permission for the new timber storage and processing facility on the site, to allow the relocation of the existing facility from its current Loanhead base. However, and as shown on the submitted drawings, a site for the erection of a new house and permanent office/staff accommodation has also been included to the west of the proposed new site access.
- 7.27 This part of the site would provide a new house for the manager of the new timber yard operation as well as permanent office and staff accommodation. It would in effect become the new base for the Pentland Biomass operation following the closure of the Loanhead timber yard, and would provide on-site management and security of the new facility which is considered necessary.
- 7.28 At this stage, it is only planning permission in principle that is being sought for that element, with all detailed design, access and siting matters for the proposed house and permanent office/staff accommodation to be reserved for future approval. This reflects the proposed phasing and delivery of the new timber yard facility and the anticipation that it will take time for the new timber storage area to be fully operational following the closure of the current facility at Loanhead. For this reason, the applicant would be happy to accept a condition on any grant of planning permission requiring the proposed house and permanent office/staff accommodation only to be occupied once the main timber yard has become fully operational. This approach will ensure that the new house is directly linked to the forestry enterprise.

Local Economic Benefits & Job Creation

- 7.29 As explained above, Pentland Biomass is an established and successful business with a significant turnover and currently employing 10 staff. The proposed relocation of the timber yard operation from Loanhead to Westloch would represent a significant investment in the local rural area and would help to secure the long term future of the existing workforce as well as provide a range of new local employment opportunities. It is anticipated that the new facility at Westloch would employ 10 to 15 staff on both a full and part time basis.

8.0 Pre-Application Consultation

- 8.1 As the application site area extends to less than 2.0 hectares, and the total floorspace is less than 500sqm, the development is classed as a “Local Development” in terms of the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, and no formal pre-application consultation is therefore required to be undertaken prior to the submission of this planning application.
- 8.2 The applicant had hoped to engage with the Council by way of a formal pre-application enquiry, but the Council’s pre-application advice service has been suspended from 1 January to 30 June 2022. There has therefore not been an opportunity to discuss this proposal prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 8.3 Nonetheless, we would welcome the opportunity to review the proposal with the Council’s Planning Officers and agree the approach for the consideration of this planning application prior to its determination. It is anticipated that as a result of the small scale of this application it will be treated as a local application and delegated to the Council’s Planning Officers to determine.

9.0 Assessment of Planning Policy & Other Material Considerations

- 9.1 Sections 25 and 37 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Any development proposals should be consistent with relevant planning policy as set out in the development plan, unless there are other over-riding matters which would allow a departure from such policy.
- 9.2 This section reviews the development plan as well as relevant national planning policy guidelines and other non-statutory policy documents which are considered to be important considerations when assessing the proposal. This includes relevant sections of the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP); the approved strategic development plan and adopted local development plan; and relevant supplementary planning guidance. We have set out a review of the key planning policy documents relating to this proposed development in the following section, starting with a review of the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy.

National Planning Framework 3 (2014)

- 9.3 The third National Planning Framework (NPF3) was published by the Scottish Government in June 2014. Until it is formally replaced by the new National Planning Framework, NPF3 provides the statutory framework for Scotland's long-term spatial development. It sets out the Scottish Government's spatial development priorities for the next 20 to 30 years and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 9.4 Given the relatively small scale of the proposed development, NPF3 is of limited relevance to this planning application. However, paragraph 4.2 of NPF3 confirms that woodlands and forestry are an economic resource, as well as an environmental asset. Paragraph 4.23 advises that biomass has a growing role to play in providing heat, and as our forests mature, there will be a need to consider requirements for processing facilities. Page 49 also recognises the need to support the biomass supply chain. The application proposals therefore accord with the strategy and objectives set out in the current National Planning Framework. This is a material consideration in support of the proposed development.

Scottish Planning Policy (2014)

- 9.5 The Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) was published in June 2014 and, until it is formally replaced by the new National Planning Framework, it continues to set out the policy that will help to deliver the objectives of NPF3. The SPP is a statement of Scottish Government policy on how nationally important land use planning matters should be addressed. It is a material consideration that carries significant weight in the determination of planning applications.

- 9.6 The SPP (at paragraphs 1 and 24) confirms that the Scottish Government's central purpose is to focus on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Page 9 of the SPP confirms the presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development. Paragraph 28 explains that the planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places by enabling development that balances the costs and benefits of a proposal over the longer term. Paragraph 29 explains that policies and decisions should be guided by a number of principles, including giving due weight to net economic benefit.
- 9.7 In terms of the approach to rural development, paragraph 75 of the SPP advises that the planning system should encourage rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable businesses whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality. Paragraph 79 confirms that there is an overarching aim of supporting diversification and growth of the rural economy; promoting economic activity and diversification; and this should include sustainable development linked to forestry diversification and renewable energy developments. The SPP also supports the provision of housing in rural areas.
- 9.8 Paragraph 83 further advises that decision-making should generally encourage sustainable development that will provide employment in remoter rural areas; and where appropriate, allow the construction of single houses outwith settlements provided they are well sited and designed to fit with local landscape character, taking account of landscape protection and other plan policies. Specific reference is made in the SPP to the building of new houses linked to rural business.
- 9.9 The SPP's support for new business and employment opportunities is further confirmed at paragraph 93 which advises that the planning system should promote business and industrial development that increases economic activity and give due weight to net economic benefit of proposed development.
- 9.10 In terms of the approach to the natural environment, paragraph 202 advises that the siting and design of development should take account of local landscape character. Decisions should take account of potential effects on landscapes and the natural environment, and developers should seek to minimise adverse impacts through careful planning and design, and maximise the potential for enhancement.
- 9.11 The proposals put forward for the application site are therefore consistent with and supported by relevant guidance set out in the SPP. This is a further material consideration in support of the proposed development.

SESplan Strategic Development Plan (2013)

- 9.12 The application site is covered by the South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (“SESplan”) which was approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2013. It is now 9 years old and is therefore classed as an out-of-date development plan. Its weight is therefore diminished.
- 9.13 Due to the relatively small scale, and local nature of the proposals, there is no directly relevant strategic policy applicable to this type or scale of development. The SESplan therefore has very limited relevance to this planning application.
- 9.14 The current SDP does, however, confirm that South East Scotland is the main growth area and the key driver of the Scottish economy. Paragraph 11 confirms the importance of forestry and other rural based enterprises to the local economy, and paragraph 18 advises that one of the objectives of the SESplan is to enable growth in the economy by developing key economic sectors and supporting rural development. The application proposals do not therefore raise any issues of strategic significance and more specific planning policies are set out in the Adopted LDP.

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016)

- 9.15 The Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in May 2016 and sets out policies on development and land use within the Scottish Borders. It was prepared to accord with the 2013 SESplan. As the LDP is now over five years old it is also classed as an out-of-date development plan, and its weight is therefore diminished as a result.
- 9.16 Nonetheless a review of the LDP has been undertaken and paragraph 2.6 on page 11 of the LDP confirms the importance of forestry production and related activities to the Borders economy and its significance to the long term viability of the rural area. A key benefit of the application proposals is the potential to attract a new rural enterprise to the area which will support and enhance the local economy.
- 9.17 The following LDP policies are therefore considered to be of relevance to the application proposals for a new forestry enterprise and ancillary house/office development which will be located on an unallocated, greenfield site within the countryside.
- PMD1 - Sustainable Development
 - PMD2 - Quality Standards
 - ED7 - Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside
 - ED9 - Renewable Energy Developments
 - HD2 - Housing in the Countryside
 - HD3 - Protection of Residential Amenity
 - EP3 - Local Biodiversity
 - EP8 - Archaeology
 - EP13 - Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
 - EP16 - Air Quality

- IS7 - Parking Provision and Standards
- IS8 - Flooding
- IS9 - Waste Water Treatment Standards and Sustainable Urban Drainage

9.18 The proposed development has been assessed against these policies and our assessment of how the application proposals meets the relevant requirements of each policy is set out in the table below.

| Relevant LDP Policies | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Policy | How Policy Requirement is Met or Addressed |
| PMD1 Sustainable Development | <p>As we have explained in sections 4.0 and 7.0 above, the application site has been selected following an extensive site search exercise which has adopted a range of sustainability principles as key considerations for selecting this particular location for the relocated timber yard operation.</p> <p>As set out above, and in the accompanying Design Statement, the applicant has incorporated a number of key sustainability principles as part of the layout and design of the new development.</p> <p>This will ensure that the proposed development supports the long term sustainable use and management of the forest estate within which the facility is to be located. The development has been designed to ensure no adverse impact on air and water quality, or light pollution and public health and safety has been an integral part of the design process.</p> <p>The site has been chosen to avoid impact on any identified natural resources, landscapes, habitats, species or any built and cultural resources. The design approach makes efficient use of energy and resources, particularly non-renewable resources; and has been prepared to minimise waste and wastewater through sustainable on-site management.</p> <p>A key benefit of the new development will be the provision of new jobs and the resultant support to the local economy. The application proposals therefore accord with the relevant requirements of Policy PMD1.</p> |
| PMD2 Quality Standards | <p>As required by Policy PMD2 the proposed development has been designed to respect the environment in which it is contained. The siting, layout and design of the various elements have been carefully considered to ensure that the new timber yard development does not negatively impact on the surrounding landscape or the visual amenity of the local area.</p> <p>As discussed in section 7.0 above, and set out in detail in the accompanying Design Statement, the proposals for the site have been specifically designed to accord with the requirements of Policy PMD2 to ensure that the development contributes positively to the quality of the surrounding built and natural environment. The development has been designed with reference to climate change, mitigation and adaptation. The design and siting of the proposed development respects the character and amenity of its location, and will incorporate substantial areas of new landscape and planting which will act to screen the new timber yard facility but also enhance the biodiversity of the local area. The application proposals have therefore been designed to comply with all relevant criteria set out in Policy PDM2 to ensure that the application proposals accord with relevant requirements.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>ED7 Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside</p> | <p>Page 49 of the LDP confirms that Policy ED7 relates to timber processing facilities and advises that any proposal for a new timber processing facility should, where possible, be accessible to the strategic road and rail network. As discussed in the site search section above, the application site has direct access to approved timber haulage and transportation routes, including the A703 and is accessible to the strategic road network. This was a particular reason for selecting this site for the new timber yard.</p> <p>Policy ED7 confirms that proposals for business development in the countryside will be approved and rural diversification initiatives will be encouraged provided that the development is to be used directly for agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations, or for uses which by their nature are appropriate to the rural character of the area; or cannot be reasonably be accommodated within the Development Boundary of a settlement. The application proposals for a new timber processing facility (which are also linked to an established horticultural business) clearly comply with these requirements and can be fully supported under the terms of Policy ED7.</p> <p>As we have set out above, the proposed development has been designed to respect the amenity and character of the surrounding area, and will have no significant adverse impact on nearby uses, particularly housing.</p> <p>As we have explained in the site search section above, the applicant has fully considered a range of other sites within the Westloch Farm area, including the existing farm buildings but these are unavailable due to the owner's aspiration to convert these to residential use in accordance with the planning permission granted in 2018. The reuse or conversion of an existing building in this location is not therefore possible.</p> <p>In relation to the requirement for the proposed use and scale of development to be appropriate to the rural character of the area, the proposal is for the storage and processing of timber within a forest estate. It is clearly a compatible use. The new buildings on the site are essentially agricultural buildings and are therefore entirely appropriate to the character of the local area.</p> <p>We have also established above that the proposed development meets all relevant siting, and design criteria in accordance with Policy PMD2. In addition, the location of the proposed development will help to reduce transport movements associated with the Biomass operation as the new facility is located closer to the company's existing timber stocks, its customer base and its employees. The development will have no impact on any planned transport developments or infrastructure.</p> <p>For these reasons the planning application can be supported by Policy ED7.</p> |
| <p>ED9 Renewable Energy Developments</p> | <p>Policy ED9 confirms that the Council will support proposals for both large scale and community scale renewable energy development including biomass where these can be accommodated without unacceptable significant adverse impacts or effects, giving due regard to relevant environmental, community and cumulative impact considerations.</p> <p>The application proposals include the production of woodchip for biomass and have been designed and located to avoid any adverse impacts on the environment or communities.</p> <p>The planning application can be supported by Policy ED9.</p> |
| <p>HD2 Housing in the Countryside</p> | <p>Policy HD2 encourages housing development in appropriate locations in the countryside if it meets certain criteria. The policy restricts isolated new housing in the countryside unless it can be satisfactorily substantiated by an economic justification. In doing this the policy protects the environment from inappropriate and sporadic new housing development whilst still being able to support rural communities and businesses.</p> <p>The housing element of the application proposals meets the requirements of criteria (F) ECONOMIC REQUIREMENT as it is a direct operational requirement of the proposed forestry enterprise which is itself appropriate to the countryside. It is also required for a worker directly employed in the enterprise and the presence of that worker on-site is essential to the safe and efficient operation of the enterprise.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Further support can be taken from the fact that the proposed timber yard development is a business that would cause disturbance or loss of amenity if it was located within an existing settlement. In addition, the proposed house on the site would include permanent office and staff accommodation for the business and would therefore help support a business that will provide new employment provision to the local area in a manner that would not negatively impact on the landscape or existing communities.</p> <p>The planning application can therefore be supported by criteria F of Policy HD2.</p> |
| <p>HD3 Protection of Residential Amenity</p> | <p>As we have set out above, the proposed development is for a forestry enterprise located in a forest estate. It is an appropriate location for this type of facility. It has been specifically designed to respect the amenity and character of the surrounding area, including the existing house to the north east and the planned houses east of the application site within the former farm steading complex.</p> <p>The design and siting of the proposed development has been carefully planned to respect the character and amenity of its location, and will incorporate substantial areas of new landscaped bunding and tree planting which will act as both a visual and acoustic screen for the new timber yard facility to avoid any noise or visual impact issues.</p> <p>The application proposals therefore meet the requirements of Policy HD3.</p> |
| <p>EP3 Local Biodiversity</p> <p>EP8 Archaeology</p> <p>EP13 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows</p> | <p>As explained above, the application site contains no trees or landscape features and due to its agricultural use as grazing land has limited ecological interest. It is not subject to any landscape, environmental, archaeological, ecological or heritage designations and is not located within any Sensitive Areas.</p> <p>As such, there will be no adverse impact on any trees, areas of archaeological interest or protected species and a range of ecological enhancements will be provided as an integral part of the development.</p> <p>This includes the provision of a substantial landscape framework to the new development which has been designed to ensure that the visual appearance of the development is sensitive to the existing setting, when viewed from the south, east and west.</p> <p>New tree planting is a key element of the development, and the proposed landscaping areas will be populated with local species of trees and shrubs to create an attractive boundary to the site, organic in shape and design which will enhance the landscape setting of the site. A range of ecological enhancements will also be provided as an integral part of the development. This will include new wildlife hedgerows, consisting of a mixture hawthorn, blackthorn and elder, to improve the visual impact and provide a natural habitat for nesting birds and small mammals.</p> <p>The application proposals therefore meet the requirements of Policies EP3; EP8 and EP13.</p> |
| <p>EP16 Air Quality</p> | <p>Although the proposals will involve the processing of timber, there will be no adverse air quality impact as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>The application proposals therefore meet the requirements of Policy EP16.</p> |
| <p>IS7 Parking Provision and Standards</p> | <p>The application proposals have been designed to comply with Policy IS7 and the Council's parking standards. Suitable provision for car and HGV parking on site has been included and if required staff cycle parking can also be provided.</p> |
| <p>IS8 Flooding</p> <p>IS9 Waste Water Treatment Standards and Sustainable Urban Drainage</p> | <p>As discussed above, the application site is not at risk of flooding and will not cause flooding problems elsewhere. The application proposal have been designed to provide suitable SUDs treatment on site in accordance with Policy IS9, and the only building requiring foul drainage is the temporary office and staff portakabin building which will be serviced via a waste tank which will be supplied and emptied as required. Drainage arrangements for the proposed new house and office development will be submitted at the AMSC stage and can be controlled by a condition.</p> |

Planning Policy Review – Summary

- 9.19 Having undertaken this detailed review of the relevant LDP policies, it can be concluded that the applications proposals have been designed to accord with, and are supported by all relevant policies and provisions of the adopted LDP and there are no material considerations that would justify a departure from these provisions.

10.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1 We have demonstrated in this Supporting Planning Statement, and the accompanying plans that the proposed development can be determined in accordance with the relevant policies of the approved Strategic Development Plan and the adopted Local Development Plan.
- 10.2 We have demonstrated that the proposal is an appropriate type, form and scale of development for this location and would sit comfortably within the surrounding area making a positive contribution to the local rural economy.
- 10.3 We have confirmed that the applicant is an established and successful business with a significant turnover and currently employing 10 staff. The proposed relocation of the existing timber yard operation from Loanhead in Midlothian to Westloch in the Scottish Borders would represent a significant investment in the local rural area and would help to secure the long term future of the existing workforce as well as providing a range of new local employment opportunities. It is anticipated that the new facility at Westloch would employ 10 to 15 staff on both a full and part time basis.
- 10.4 We have also confirmed that the proposals can be further supported by the relevant sections of the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy which support development linked to forestry diversification and renewable energy developments, and are both material considerations in support of the proposed development.
- 10.5 The detailed review of relevant planning policy therefore confirms that the proposal can be considered favourably in terms of all relevant national, strategic and local planning policies, and particularly the provisions of LDP Policies ED7, ED9 and HD2 which specifically cater for this type of development in this location.
- 10.6 Under the terms of Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 planning permission should therefore be granted for this proposed development.

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Appendix 1: Forestry Commission Case Study on Pentland Biomass



Scottish Forestry
Coilltearachd na h-Alba

Search GO

usewoodfuelscotland

Submit an enquiry

Home | An introduction to biomass | Biomass policy, facts and figures | Guidance for biomass users | Guidance for biomass installers | Technical Library | Case Studies


Home : Case Studies : Wood Chip Case Studies : Pentland Plants

Pentland Plants

Log Case Studies

Wood Chip Case Studies

- Community Woodland Management for Woodfuel
- Woodfuel in the Dairy Sector – Outer Blair Farm
- Hanover Housing Association
- NHS Highland Biomass Case Study
- Uist Asco
- Kincairdine Castle Case Study
- Lovat Arms Hotel
- Pentland Plants**
- Woodfuel in Practice – the Hospitality industry
- Lakeland Smolts
- Gilbert Properties
- East Dumbartonshire Council Biomass Experience
- Albyn Housing Society district heating



Pentland Plants

- Location:** Loanhead, Midlothian
- Wood fuel usage:** heating for commercial horticultural glass houses
- Installation date:** November 2006

Reasons for changing to woodfuel

Pentland Plants was the first horticultural business in the UK to switch to woodfuel and, at the time, it was the biggest privately funded biomass project in Scotland.

Aided by the Carbon Trust, a business energy audit and evaluation of the site requirements was undertaken and a range of renewable technologies considered. Biomass was judged to be the easiest and most cost effective method of meeting the business energy needs. The decision to change to woodfuel was taken in an attempt to reduce the annual heating costs of £300,000.

Key benefits

- Significant financial benefits over oil alternative
- Secure fuel supply chain - self-reliant
- Investment in woodfuel production machinery possible through fuel savings

System features and benefits

A wood fuel boiler was connected to the existing heating system in the company's glass houses to supersede the existing oil boilers as the primary source of heating.

Although the oil boilers are not required for daily heating, space allowed their retention and they were in good serviceable condition, so it was sensible for them to be retained to provide extra capacity and security for the future.

The fuel storage shed contains a robust **walking floor system** that efficiently moves the large quantities of wood chip to the boiler.

Wood fuel supply

Pentland Plants sources and produces its woodfuel through its own wood fuel business, Pentland Biomass. Roundwood is purchased directly from local forests and stacked to dry for a year to bring down the moisture content before it is chipped into fuel.

The annual woodfuel consumption warranted the company's own investment in woodfuel processing equipment, which has been funded through the significant fuel cost savings and the Scottish Biomass Heat Scheme.

This self-supply fuel model further reduces the costs of their heating as well as creating a potential new income stream from sales of woodfuel to third parties.


Installation issues

Very little modification was required to the existing heat distribution system due to spare pipe work previously installed in advance of business expansion. This made the retention of the original oil boilers simple.

district heating

- Whittingehame Estate: Self supply of woodfuel through farm woodland management
- Forfar Eco Park wood fuel case study

Wood Pellet Case Studies



Lessons learned

- Underground fuel storage would allow more space for storing roundwood on site
- Dealing with the same boiler manufacturer representative throughout the installation process can smooth the process
- A large area is required to produce and store a large volume of wood chip for self-supply
- Large enough chip storage to run your system for a suitable time, in case of breaks in production, ensures continuous operation of your boiler
- Plan for and allow the appropriate time to gain planning approval for your development, if required.
- Planning issues should to be addressed at the earliest opportunity to reduce delays
- Planning permission for the fuel storage shed and boiler house proceeded without delay, however the flue height requirement for the boiler slowed the process

Facts and figures

Note: figures are approximate

| Building | |
|--|--|
| Heated area | 21,000 m ² |
| Heated volume | 75,000 m ³ |
| Fabric | Glass and aluminium |
| Heating system | |
| Boiler manufacturer | Reka |
| Maximum boiler output | 2,000 kW |
| Fuel type | Wood chips |
| Fuel specification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moisture content: <40% (M40) • Particle size: 80% of chips are <45 mm (P45) |
| Store capacity | 180 tonnes (800 m ³) |
| Back-up/top-up system | Existing oil boilers (2 MW) retained |
| Fuel consumption, costs and savings | |
| Weekly woodfuel use | 270 tonnes (900 m ³) at peak 45 tonnes (150 m ³) |

| Annual woodfuel use | 2,500 tonnes |
|---|---|
| Annual energy consumption | 8,000,000 kWh |
| Annual CO ₂ savings | 2,500 tonnes |
| Wood fuel cost | £125,000 |
| Annual fuel cost saving at 2008/09 prices | £256,000 |
| Payback period | 1 year (due to high oil prices during 2008) |
| Installation cost and funding | |
| Boiler system | £260,000 |
| Funding source | Private finance |
| Funding support rate | n/a |

Appendix 2: Accountants Letter



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www.mazars.co.uk

Private & Confidential
Mr John Handley
Director
John Handley Associates Ltd
Chartered Town Planning Consultants

Our ref:
Your ref:
Direct line: +44 (0)7500 999435
Email: Keith.Marshall@mazars.co.uk
Date: 26 May 2022

Dear Mr Handley

PENTLAND PLANTS LIMITED t/a Pentland Biomass

I refer to my above client and can advise that Pentland Biomass is a trading division of Pentland Plants Limited. Pentland Biomass has traded for 15 years. The turnover of Pentland Biomass in the year to 30 November 2021 was £2.2M, out of a total turnover for the whole company (Pentland Plants Limited) of £8M. Pentland Biomass has 10 employees.

If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards.

Keith Marshall

Keith Marshall (May 25, 2022 12:49 GMT+1)

Keith Marshall

Partner

Appendix 3: Midlothian Planning Committee Report Confirming Need to Relocate Existing Timber Yard at Pentland Mains Farm, Loanhead

(Attached as a separate document)

Appendix 4: Site Search Letter

Ref: Site Search Letter

11 December 2019



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Land/Development Site/Small Farm Wanted Midlothian/Scottish Borders

We are a firm of Chartered Town Planning Consultants based in Edinburgh and are assisting a long established rural forestry business which is currently operating from a site in Midlothian. Due to the expiry of their existing lease, our clients are seeking to purchase a site in the Midlothian/Scottish Borders area for the relocation of their existing timber storage yard.

We are therefore writing to you on behalf of our clients and are keen to hear from any landowners or their agents who may have land available, or a small farm (or part of a larger farm holding) which is currently available for sale or which may become available in the near future.

The area of search extends from Midlothian to the Scottish Borders and ideally within access of the A701/A702/A7.

Due to the nature of our clients' operation they have identified some key preferences, although they are happy to consider any sites that might be available – either with existing development on site, or unallocated, greenfield sites with no previous use or development. Ideally, they are looking for sites in a rural location which meet the following criteria:

- The minimum site size required is 6 acres (2.5 hectares).
- Due to noise from machinery, the site should be located at least 1000 metres from any existing or planned residential properties.
- The site should have good road access, or potential for access improvements.
- Sites in elevated or windy locations are preferred.
- Undeveloped sites with no previous use or planning permission will be considered as our clients can progress any necessary planning applications themselves.
- Alternatively, they would also consider an existing small farm or sites containing existing storage buildings and yards with/without power and water supply.
- They would also be happy to consider the purchase of part of an existing farm holding or a forestry holding.

Should you/your clients have land or property for sale which may be suitable please give us a call to discuss further. Thanks for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you should you have anything suitable. Please also pass this enquiry onto any colleagues that may find this of interest.

Yours faithfully

John Handley, BSc (Hons), MRTPI

Director

John Handley Associates Ltd

Tel: 0131 220 8253 or 07826 870806

Email: john.handley@johnhandley.co.uk

John Handley Associates Ltd is a private limited company registered in Scotland No. SC413392. Registered Office: 7-11 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7PE

LAND WANTED

Midlothian/Scottish Borders Area

Rural forestry business seeking site for relocation of existing storage yard.

Minimum 6 acres with good road access in rural Midlothian or Borders area. Ideally within access of A701/A702/A7

All sites considered. Would also consider small farm or part of farm

Contact:

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t: 0131 220 8253
e: john.handley@johnhandley.co.uk

LAND WANTED

Midlothian/Scottish Borders Area

Rural forestry business seeking site for relocation of existing storage yard. Minimum 6 acres with good road access in rural Midlothian or Borders area.

Ideally within access of A701/A702/A7
All sites considered (including greenfield sites).
Would also consider small farm or part of farm

Contact: John Handley Associates Ltd
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Appendix 6: Site Search Schedule and Contact Database

(Please see separate document which should be treated as private & confidential)

Appendix 7: Sales Brochure for Application Site

Peebles
Call 01721 723999

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WESTLOCH, PEEBLES, EH45 9QY



PROPERTY

Situated almost equidistant between Peebles and Penicuik, a substantial paddock of 7.5 acres or thereby. Easily accessible, just a mile off the A703 and conveniently situated within easy commutable distance of Edinburgh (16.5 miles), Peebles (8 miles) and Penicuik (7.5 miles).

DIRECTIONS

Follow the A703 until you reach the turning for Waterheads on your left hand side coming from the north and right hand side coming from the south. Follow this road for around a mile and the paddock is on your left hand side next to Westloch farmhouse which is also on the market for sale.

PRICE

Offers over £100,000 are invited

OFFERS

Offers should be submitted in proper legal form to the Selling Agents. Any prospective purchaser wishing to be informed of a closing date should notify the Selling Agents as soon as possible. The Selling Agents reserve the right to sell the property without setting a closing date and do not bind themselves to accept the highest of any offer.