

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

G. E. PORTER & SONS LTD

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO ACCOMMODATE 1.6 MW BIOMASS BOILER HEATING SYSTEM AND ANCILLARY HARDSTANDING AT G. E. PORTER & SONS LTD, CASTLE FARM, CASTLE LANE, LOWFIELDS, NAVENBY, LINCOLN LN5 0LL

July 2022
(JHG/017/22)



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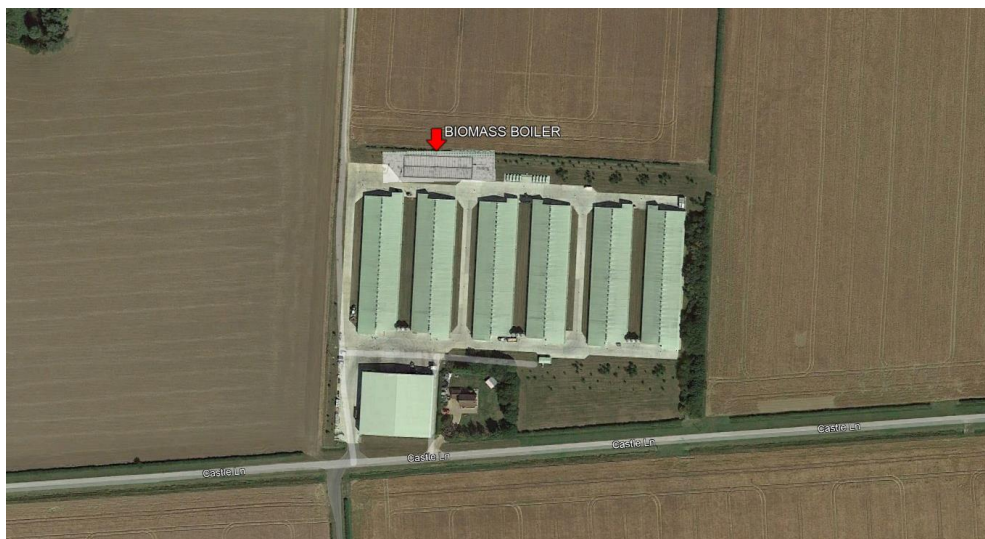
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document comprises a Design & Access Statement produced in support of an application seeking full planning permission for erection of an agricultural building to accommodate a 1.6 megawatt biomass boiler heating system and associated straw biomass fuel store plus ancillary hardstanding at G. E. Porter & Sons Ltd, Castle Farm, Castle Lane, Lowfields, Navenby, Lincoln LN5 0LL (grid reference: Easting 496422, Northing 358949). The following serves to appraise the development scheme in light of its operational, design, economic, environmental and strategic context. Reference should be made to the submitted site location, site layout, elevation and floor plan drawings:

- F-3086-01 (Site Location and Proposed Site Layout Plan)
- F-3086-02 (Proposed Elevation/Floor Plans)

2.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 The proposed site adjoins the north-western periphery of an established group of agricultural buildings and poultry houses at Castle Farm. The application site presently comprises an area of landscaping (amenity grass with dispersed sapling trees) and vacant concrete surfaced hardstanding. Land to the immediate south and southeast is host to 6 No. broiler poultry units, each of which accommodates up to 40,000 chickens. LPG fuel storage tanks, which are currently used in association with the poultry unit heating systems, are located approximately 30 metres to the east of the application site. A modern agricultural storage building and farmhouse are situated to the south of the poultry units. A tree belt landscaping scheme occupies adjoining land to the east and west of the application site. A recently established hedgerow delineates the site's northern boundary. As evident in the aerial photograph included below, open countryside comprising arable farmland used for the growing of cereal crops surrounds the wider Castle Farm complex.

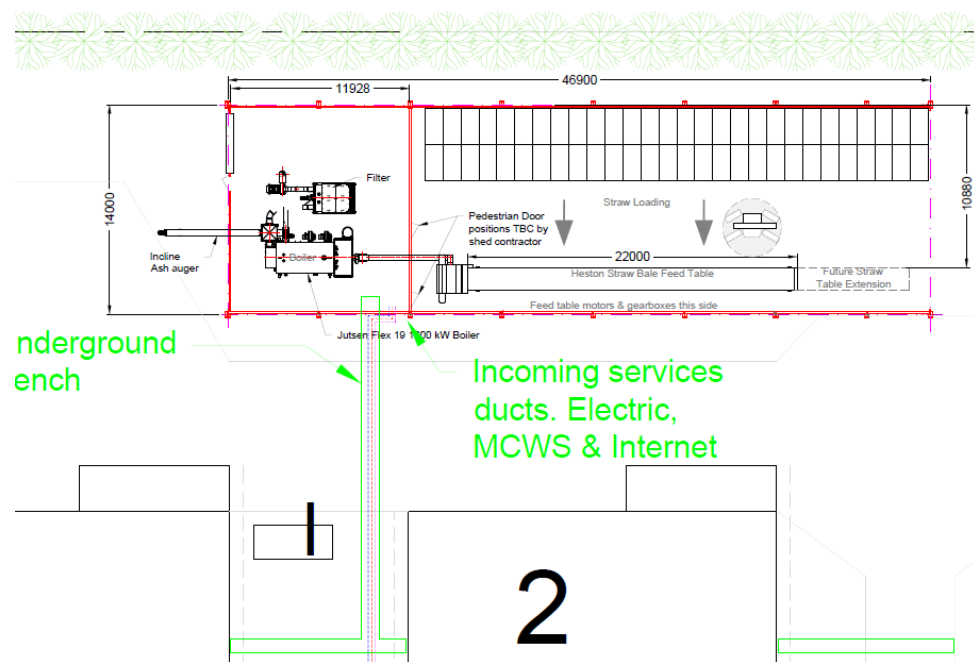


Aerial Photograph with Plan Overlay depicting location of proposed biomass boiler.

2.2 The application site will gain access to the public highway via an existing network of hardstanding and private carriageway. Concrete surfaced hardstanding associated with the existing poultry complex extends westwards from the site then southwards

approximately 190 metres in order to connect with Castle Lane. The point of juncture is constructed to a heavy duty specification designed for heavy goods vehicle use and affords excellent X and Y dimension visibility splays. Direct access to Castle Farm's associated field systems is achieved via a farm track located to the immediate west of the proposed biomass boiler building.

- 2.3 The site's locality is relatively flat and level with no significant variations in gradient or notable topographic features. The Lincoln Cliff escarpment is however clearly evident within the wider landscape setting. An increase in gradient is evident approximately 1.0 kilometres to the east of Castle Farm. This rises in elevation by approximately 65 metres to an apex located approximately 2.0 kilometres away from the application site.
- 2.4 The Environment Agency flood hazard map depicts the entirety of the proposed site within flood zone 1, which indicates that there is low risk of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not therefore required in support of this application. A drainage ditch is situated adjacent to the farm complex's western boundary. This is connected to a well-managed land drain system. The application site does not have a history of localised flood events.
- 2.5 The proposal essentially comprises a form of eco-agricultural development designed to allow transition away from liquid petroleum gas (LPG) poultry unit heating systems to renewable energy produced via a 1.6 MW (megawatt) straw fuelled biomass heating system. Installation is to be undertaken by specialists Carbon Focus Engineering Ltd. The proposed biomass boiler will incorporate the latest clean burning technology including free standing bag filter and cyclonic dust arrestor emission abatement systems designed to achieve full compliance with the Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD). The biomass boiler plant will undergo daily inspection and regular maintenance when in use. All servicing will be performed by a HETAS certified engineer.



Internal layout plan depicting proposed biomass boiler with straw bale feed conveyor and ash auger. Bale storage area within eastern section of building.

- 2.6 The proposed scheme will necessitate installation of the biomass boiler with straw bale feed table (conveyor with shredding plant) and ash auger into a new agricultural building with integrated straw fuel store (note internal layout plan above). Bales can then periodically be efficiently loaded from the storage section onto the feed table with a small forklift. Cooled ash from the combustion process will be removed and stored within a covered trailer prior to being re-used as fertiliser within the wider farm holding. Heat generated by the new biomass boiler will be pumped directly into the adjacent poultry houses via subterranean pipes. The new biomass boiler house will measure approximately 14.8 metres by 47.27 metres (700 m²) with a roof ridge height of 8.4 metres. A narrow exhaust flue will project 2.5 metres from the western section of the building's roof. A small area of ancillary hardstanding will be constructed adjacent to the eastern and western elevations to facilitate access.
- 2.7 The applicants' surrounding arable land (comprising part of a wider 3000+ acre holding) produces a large quantity of cereal crops including wheat and barley. Hundreds of tonnes of straw are an inevitable by-product. The bales are presently being sold to various customers. This generates a significant volume of traffic. However, the straw by-product is a highly sustainable biomass fuel feedstock. Unlike many biomass fuel types (such as wood chip), straw fuel technically exhibits a rapid CO₂ release and absorption cycle. The cereal plant stems (which, once dry, form the straw bales) comprise only a proportion of each plant's biomass. During the growth phase, the majority of atmospheric CO₂ is photosynthesised to create the seed head (grains) and retained in the root section. Each whole cereal plant therefore absorbs more CO₂ than that released from stem combustion. On the basis of the farm's sustained cereal heavy crop rotation, the proposed scheme will facilitate a net reduction in heating system derived CO₂ emissions.
- 2.8 By virtue of the biomass fuel already being grown within the associated farm holding, the new boiler system can be supplied without prompting notable tractor and trailer/HGV trip generation. Use of the public highway will be extremely minimal as straw bales will not need to be either exported to or imported from remote farms. This reduces annual vehicle derived fuel (diesel) usage associated with bale transportation and logistics previously associated with LPG deliveries. The proposal will also significantly reduce farm business overheads. The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and consequent sanctions have resulted in an unprecedented increase in fuel/energy prices. This is proving damaging to the viability of the poultry farm enterprise. The proposed development presents an environmentally friendly self-sufficient and timely solution.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The statutory Development Plan includes the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, which was formally adopted on 24th April 2017. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan was produced following a partnership between North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and City of Lincoln Council. Its strategic and spatial provisions are therefore applicable across these three jurisdictions. It should be noted that the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan now supersedes the 'saved' policies of the North Kesteven Local Plan (2007). Significant weight is also given to the relevant provisions of the recently adopted National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017

- 3.2 Policy LP2 outlines the Plan's spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy. The primary objective of the strategy is to: *'...focus on delivering sustainable growth for Central Lincolnshire that meets the needs for homes and jobs, regenerates places and communities, and supports necessary improvements to facilities, services and infrastructure.'* In order to deliver a sustainable distribution of new development across the Central Lincolnshire Area, the various settlements therein have been categorised within an eight tier hierarchy. The first tier concerns the most sustainable location for new development whilst the eighth tier is considered to be the least sustainable. The application site is located beyond the confines of any identified settlement and is therefore classed as land within the countryside (tier 8). With specific regard to tier eight land, Policy LP2 states that development within the countryside will be restricted to: *'...that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services.'* As previously stated, the proposed scheme comprises development essential to the effective operation of agriculture within the applicants' farm holding. Erection of the proposed agricultural biomass heating system building is therefore considered to achieve strategic alignment with the provisions of Policy LP2.
- 3.3 **Policy LP17** concerns 'Landscape and townscape views' and notes with regard to the creation and protection of views: *'All development proposals should take account of views in to, out of and within development areas: schemes should be designed (through considerate development, layout and design) to preserve or enhance key local views and vistas, and create new public views where possible. Particular consideration should be given to views of significant buildings and views within landscapes which are more sensitive to change due to their open, exposed nature and extensive intervisibility from various viewpoints.'*
- 3.4 The application site is situated amidst a local landscape characterised by a relatively 'flat' topography, exhibiting very little variation in gradient, host to hedgerow delineated field boundaries and sporadically distributed woodland/copse areas. The 'Lincoln Cliff' is however a key feature within the wider landscape with the gradient increasing at a point approximately 1.0 kilometres to the east of the site. The relative rise in ground level at the escarpment's apex is of over 65 metres. The proposed development essentially concerns erection of a modest sized agricultural building within an established farm complex. The proposed changes will exhibit a limited primary zone of visual influence (ZVI) by virtue of obscuration provided by surrounding buildings and outlying landscaping features. The development will be evident in long range vistas obtained from the Lincoln Cliff escarpment to the east, though changes to visual baseline conditions will be relatively minimal and the proposed development will not prove conspicuous. The development will certainly not appear as an alien or intrusive feature within the setting of the surrounding rural landscape. The site's immediate surroundings are already characterised by agricultural development, including the established poultry farm (units 1 to 6) and adjoining agricultural storage building with farm manager's dwelling to the south. One would expect to see ancillary agricultural development in a location such as that proposed. The local landscape is not considered to exhibit a high sensitivity to change. The proposal will not give rise to significant visual effects when viewed in combination

with the established agricultural building cluster. Under GLVIA3 criteria, the development's cumulative landscape and visual impact are both regarded as 'small magnitude'. The proposal will therefore achieve compliance with the provisions of Policy LP17.

- 3.5 Policy LP19 concerns renewable energy development. The policy is considered to be specifically applicable for reason that the proposed scheme seeks installation of a renewable fuel powered biomass boiler, which will serve to replace existing LPG fuelled poultry house heating systems. With regard to 'non-wind' renewable energy development, the policy states:

'Proposals for non-wind renewable technology will be assessed on their merits, with the impacts, both individual and cumulative, considered against the benefits of the scheme, taking account of the following:

- *The surrounding landscape and townscape;*
- *Heritage assets;*
- *Ecology and diversity;*
- *Residential and visual amenity;*
- *Safety, including ensuring no adverse highway impact;*
- *MoD operations, including having no unacceptable impact on the operation of aircraft movement or operational radar; and*
- *Agricultural Land Classification (including a presumption against photovoltaic solar farm proposals on the best and most versatile agricultural land).*

Proposals will be supported where the benefit of the development outweighs the harm caused and it is demonstrated that any harm will be mitigated as far as is reasonably possible.

Renewable energy proposals which will directly benefit a local community, have the support of the local community and / or are targeted at residents experiencing fuel poverty, will be particularly supported.'

- 3.6 In light of the above, it is emphasised that:

- The development will change the cumulative scale of the farm complex by introducing a new agricultural building adjacent to the northern periphery. However, the biomass boiler house is of relatively small size (notably under 1000 m²) and its design is entirely commensurate with the site's wider agricultural character and appearance. As previously discussed within the context of Policy LP17, it is reasonable to state that the proposal will have no significant adverse impact upon the setting of the surrounding landscape.
- A review of the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) has not identified any archaeological features within the confines of the application site. The poultry farm is situated upon the site of the former 'Lowfields Farm House' (HER Ref: MLI120972). This comprised a 19th Century farmstead with a range of working buildings forming a courtyard. However, these features were located adjacent to Castle Lane and thus some distance from the proposed biomass boiler site. The new steel portal framed building will only require modest concrete pad foundations and

ancillary hardstanding. Construction of the biomass boiler system building thereon will not have any impact upon known archaeological resources. The development will not intrude within the setting of designated/non-designated heritage assets (including the Grade I listed Somerton Castle located a kilometre to the west).

- The development will entail development over hardstanding and an area of managed amenity grassland with a small number of immature trees growing thereon. It will not have any significant impact upon protected flora, fauna or land of notable habitat value. Tree specimens potentially affected by the development are capable of being relocated onto the adjoining boundary landscaping scheme. Furthermore, the development is remote from sites of designated habitat value such as SSSI's, Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) etc. It is therefore reasonable to state that the relatively low levels of emissions from the biomass boiler system will not adversely impact sensitive ecology.
- There are no dwellings situated within 400 metres of the proposed biomass boiler system. Indeed, the closest dwelling not associated with the farm is located over 1.3 kilometres to the southeast of the site. Regardless, following initial combustion, the clean burning boiler system will not emit visible exhaust plumes or notable odour. The plant is designed to achieve quiet operation. There is no reason to believe that the development will compromise levels of amenity afforded by outlying occupants.
- The proposal will not have any detrimental impact upon the safety of neighbouring land users. Neither will it have any adverse impact upon the safety of the local highway network. The straw bale biomass fuel will be transported to the Castle Farm complex directly from the surrounding field systems. Use of the public highway (Castle Lane) will not ordinarily be required. Consumption of straw bales on-site will also negate the need for bales to be sold and exported to remote customers. Again, this will result in a significant reduction in trip generation/and distance. The scheme will essentially replace the existing LPG poultry unit heating systems, thus also resulting in a net reduction of associated delivery vehicle activity.
- The proposal will merely result in the construction of a modest sized 8.4 metre high agricultural building with a 2.5 metre high chimney flue protruding from the western roof section. The structure's cumulative height will be comparable to the adjacent associated agricultural storage building to the south. There is no reason to suspect that the scheme will impact upon MoD operations or present a hazard to low flying aircraft associated with RAF Waddington.
- The application site primarily encompasses existing surfaced yard and managed amenity grassland. The proposal will not therefore entail the development of versatile/high grade arable farmland.

3.7 The proposed development will reduce medium to long term overheads associated with the applicants' poultry farm business, thereby increasing its viability. G. E. Porter & Sons Ltd makes a significant contribution to the local rural economy and, through jobs provided, helps to support local communities. The development will promote renewable energy self-sufficiency without giving rise to any significant adverse

environmental effects. The scheme is therefore considered to be inherently sustainable and supported by the provisions of Policy LP19.

3.8 **Policy LP55** concerns 'Development in the Countryside' and, with specific reference to 'non-residential development, states: *'Proposals for non-residential developments will be supported provided that:*

- a) *The rural location of the enterprise is justifiable to maintain or enhance the rural economy or the location is justified by means of proximity to existing established businesses or natural features;*
- b) *The location of the enterprise is suitable in terms of accessibility;*
- c) *The location of the enterprise would not result in conflict with neighbouring uses; and*
- d) *The development is of a size and scale commensurate with the proposed use and with the rural character of the location.'*

3.9 In context of the above criteria, it is emphasised that:

- a) The proposed scheme seeks erection of an agricultural building and installation of a biomass heating system therein. The scheme will allow replacement of current LPG fuelled poultry unit heating systems with self-sufficient renewable energy technology. This will improve the viability and competitiveness of the poultry farm enterprise by reducing overheads associated with poultry unit heating. Such is now of increasing importance given the implications of the growing energy crisis that has arisen following the outbreak of war in Eastern Europe. Supporting the farm business will in turn benefit the local rural economy and contribute towards enhancing UK food security.
- b) The proposed development will utilise an existing heavy duty access that junctures with Castle Lane at a point adjoining the farm complex's southern boundary. Straw bales are currently transported from Castle Farm via this route for export. The proposed development will allow the majority of bales produced within the adjacent field systems to be stored on site (within proposed building and existing adjacent barn) for use as biomass fuel. Trips via the public highway will therefore be significantly reduced as a result of the development. The site is therefore conveniently located in terms of accessibility.
- c) The site is situated within a rural location remote from sensitive receptors (such as land in residential use). The development/operation will achieve a high level of compatibility with all outlying land uses and there is no reason to suspect that any residential or commercial premises will experience adverse effects.
- d) The development is of a size commensurate with the scale of the associated poultry farming operations. The 1.6 MW biomass heating system will be entirely accommodated within a bespoke agricultural building. The scale of the new building is relatively modest compared to existing adjacent livestock units and the

proposal is therefore considered to be appropriate to the site's agricultural landscape setting.

- 3.10 Part F' of Policy LP55 specifically refers to farm diversification. Though not technically diversification, installation of the agricultural biomass heating system is supported by 'Part F' in principle for reason that it will allow the farm business to improve the long term viability of an established agricultural enterprise (broiler farm). The sub criteria of 'Part F', which effectively mirrors the key provisions of 'Part E' discussed above, also indicate that the development is spatially and environmentally acceptable in the selected location. On this basis, the agricultural development is considered to achieve accordance with the strategic direction and qualifying criteria of Policy LP55.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 3.11 The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was formally adopted in July 2021. This updated document now replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework adopted in February 2019 and the preceding NPPF of July 2018.
- 3.12 **Paragraph 84** outlines objectives for 'supporting a prosperous rural economy' and, of particular relevance to the proposed scheme, states that: *'Planning policies and decisions should enable:*
- a) *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
 - b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- 3.13 The development seeks erection of an agricultural building to accommodate a straw fuelled biomass boiler, which will be used in association with the adjacent poultry farm's heating/climate control systems. The proposed development will reduce medium to long term overheads associated with the applicants' farm business, thereby increasing its viability. The business contributes to the local rural economy and, through jobs provided, it helps to support local communities. The development will promote renewable energy self-sufficiency without giving rise to any significant adverse environmental effects. The development is considered to be entirely appropriate to the site location and such will integrate successfully within the setting of the surrounding countryside. The provisions of Paragraph 84 therefore indicate that retention of the development should be supported.
- 3.14 **Paragraph 155** concerns objectives for combating climate change through the promotion of renewable energy development. Of relevance to the proposed scheme, it notes: *'To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should: ...identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.'* In this context it is emphasised that the proposed development will allow the established poultry farm's heating requirements to be addressed by renewable fuel (straw produced within the wider farm holding) as opposed to fossil fuel derived sources (LPG). Decentralised energy production of this nature is essential if Central Government targets for 'net zero' CO₂ emissions are to be

addressed. Cumulatively, on-site renewable energy generation schemes are important in achieving UK energy independence and driving down energy costs. The need for such is now particularly acute as a consequence of the outbreak of war in Eastern Europe. The proposed development is therefore considered to be timely, sustainable and necessary.

4.0 DESIGN & ACCESS

Use

- 4.1 The application site encompasses agricultural land within the periphery of the Castle Farm complex. The proposed development seeks erection of an agricultural building and installation of a biomass heating system therein (Use Class *Sui Generis*). The development is necessary to provide renewable energy derived heating in support of the associated poultry farming operation. The application site has an excellent spatial relationship with the poultry farm and surrounding arable field systems. The proposed agricultural building clearly achieves a high level of land use compatibility. The ‘Moorland green’ elevation cladding will avoid the development appearing conspicuous within the setting of the surrounding countryside. There is no reason to believe that the development will compromise levels of amenity afforded by neighbouring land users/occupants or give rise to any adverse environmental effects. The agricultural development is considered to be a necessary, appropriate and beneficial land use option. As demonstrated within the Planning Policy Context section of this statement, the agricultural use is considered strategically acceptable in light of the Development Plan, national planning policy and other material considerations.

Amount

- 4.2 The application site, as outlined in red upon the submitted Site Location Plan F3086-01, encompasses an area of 0.35 hectares. However, the majority of the site area is occupied by the established site access/hardstanding. The proposed agricultural building will measure approximately 14.8 metres by 47.27 metres (700 m²) with a roof ridge height of 8.4 metres. A new 1.6 MW biomass boiler will be installed within an internal plant room that will occupy the western end of the building. The remaining section of the building will accommodate a ‘feed table’ (essentially a conveyor with shredding device that allows straw bales to be incrementally transported via an auger into the boiler’s furnace) and space to allow storage of straw bale fuel. The building will be of steel portal framed construction. The pitched roof is to be clad in profiled steel sheeting coloured Moorland Green. The northern, western and southern elevations will also feature profiled steel sheeting cladding coloured ‘Moorland Green’ BS: 12B21. The eastern elevation will be open sided. A personnel door and 5.0 metre by 4.0 metre roller shutter door will be included within the western elevation. A low steel chimney flue will project 2.5 metres from the western roof section. An ash auger will also protrude through the western elevation. Only a relatively small area (361 m²) of concrete hardstanding will need to be constructed adjacent to the building’s western and eastern elevation (entrance) in order to facilitate access. The proposed ‘amount’ of development is directly commensurate with the operational requirements of the associated poultry farm.

Layout

- 4.3 The layout of the proposed development seeks to: maximise the presence of existing private road infrastructure; avoid profligate use of land; minimise visual intrusion within the setting of the surrounding countryside; and achieve a high level of operational integration. These objectives have been achieved by siting the proposed development upon agricultural land adjoining the north-western periphery of the established poultry farm complex. By siting the building in the chosen location and orientating it to front eastwards, a high level of accessibility can be achieved by maximising existing hardstanding designed for use by larger agricultural vehicles. Only a small section of additional hardstanding will need to be constructed adjacent to the proposed building's end elevations. The siting/layout of the scheme accounts for the presence of screening landscaping features (including the positioning of outlying tree belts and planting within the wider Castle Farm complex) and obscuration by buildings, resultant in a zone of visual influence host to very few proximate receptors. The selected site is also remote from outlying dwellings, thereby avoiding any potential compromise of residential amenity arising from vehicle manoeuvring etc. The proposed biomass boiler building has been located in close proximity to the associated poultry units, thus allowing efficient connection to their heating/climate control systems.

Scale

- 4.4 Considerations of scale are multifaceted for reason that they relate both to the proportions of the various buildings/structures proposed and the overall size of the development scheme. In addition, scale is a relative term. The perceived scale of a development is usually appraised against the baseline of existing built surroundings.
- 4.5 The 700 m² square metre agricultural building will have an 8.4 metre roof apex height. By comparison, each of the adjacent poultry houses have a 2280 square metre gross external area and 6.3 metre roof apex height. The new biomass boiler heating system building is therefore substantially subordinate in footprint and volume when compared to these adjoining livestock units. The existing barn/grain store to the south of the poultry houses is of larger floor area than the proposed biomass boiler building and of greater stature. The scale of the proposed agricultural building will not therefore appear discordant or out of character with the scale of the site's surroundings. The development technically expands the built periphery of the poultry farm complex. The perceived scale of the building complex will therefore marginally increase as a result. Regardless, the cumulative increase in scale is considered to be *de minimis* and such will have no significant impact upon the setting of the wider surrounding landscape.

Landscaping

- 4.6 The proposal will entail development within an area of recently established boundary landscaping adjoining the farm complex's eastern periphery. This comprises managed grassland with a number of immature trees (evident in photograph included below). A mixed deciduous hedgerow adjoins the application site's northern boundary.



Photograph depicting sapling trees and existing hedgerow within/adjacent to application site

- 4.7 The proposed scheme will necessitate removal of a small number of immature (sapling) trees. These will be replanted within the boundary tree belt area in a location adjacent to the proposed biomass boiler house's eastern and western elevations, thereby increasing planting density and providing an element of medium to long term screening. The existing hedgerow will be protected and safeguarded by the development. The proposed development will afford a close spatial relationship with the established building cluster and it will not prove unduly visually intrusive. The application site is not host to protected flora or fauna and it is of limited habitat value. Mitigating landscaping measures beyond the above are not therefore considered to be necessary in this case. It can be observed that the Castle Farm complex already benefits from a wider landscaping scheme.

Appearance

- 4.8 The biomass heating system building's elevations and roof will be clad in profiled steel sheeting coloured 'Moorland Green' (BS: 12B21). It should be noted that the front/eastern elevation will be open to facilitate ease of access to the straw storage area. The rear/western elevation includes a grey galvanised roller shutter door and personnel door. The design of the scheme, which will essentially appear visually akin to a conventional barn, seeks to achieve consistency in materials and finish with the existing adjoining poultry houses and adjacent agricultural storage building. The contemporary agricultural architectural vernacular combined with the natural green colour of cladding material will result in the biomass boiler house integrating congruously with both the established farm complex and surrounding countryside. The character and appearance of the area will not be adversely affected by the proposed development.

Access

- 4.9 Access to the proposed biomass boiler house will be facilitated by a small extension of existing private service carriageway/hard standing. This will be concrete surfaced and sufficient in area to allow vehicle turning/manoeuvring. Existing private carriageway, which junctures with Castle Lane at a point approximately 190 metres to the south, will provide access to the public highway. The straw biomass fuel will be sourced from an extensive surrounding arable field system accessed directly from the farm complex via a network of private trackways. Reliance upon use of the public highway will be negligible. As previously stated, the development will result in a significant net reduction in trip generation/road mileage for reason that bales will no longer be sold to

remote customers and the scheme will negate the requirement for LPG heating fuel deliveries. For this reason, it can be stated that the proposed scheme will contribute towards enhancing the safety and capacity of the local highway network.

5.0 SUMMARY

- 5.1 The proposed development seeks erection of an agricultural building in order to accommodate a new biomass boiler. The scheme will provide sustainable low cost heating within the Castle Farm broiler poultry complex. The biomass boiler system will be fuelled by straw produced within the surrounding associated arable farm holding, thereby addressing heating requirements via renewable energy and reducing traffic generation. The system will essentially replace the existing fossil fuel (LPG) heating system. The biomass boiler has been engineered to avoid adverse impacts upon local air quality and such will not give rise to tangible noise emissions. The development will allow G. E. Porter & Sons Ltd to reduce energy costs and net CO₂ emissions, thereby improving the company's commercial viability, safeguarding existing jobs and helping to combat climate change.
- 5.2 The application site, being remote from land in residential use yet adjoining the existing poultry farm complex and surrounding arable field systems, is considered to be a prime location for the scheme. The proposed development will be subject to visually unobtrusive cladding and complemented by outlying screening landscaping, thereby reducing its visual impact. The development/operation will not give rise to any significant adverse environmental effects and should be considered inherently sustainable. The granting of planning permission would strongly accord with the provisions of the Development Plan and national planning policy. The proposal will cause no demonstrable harm.