

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2025/1269
Location: Parr Rochdale Ltd, Builder Merchants, Lomax street, OL12 0DN
Proposal: Install external free standing biomass boiler and associated works
Recommendation: Approve with Conditions
Officer: Majid Mir

SITE

The application relates to the enclosed car park with Parr Rochdale Ltd Builders Merchants off Lomax Street. Parr Rochdale site is set on either side of Lomax Street. To the north of the site is Townhead Works and Nordale Springs. To the east is Bunyan Street with St. Patrick's Church on the opposite side of Bunyan Street.

The site is located within the Defined Urban Area as identified under UDP policy G/D/1. The site is also located within a Smoke Control Zone. The surrounding area is commercial in nature with Yorkshire Street Local Centre located to the south of the site.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the installation of an external free standing biomass boiler with associated equipment within the car park of Parr Rochdale Ltd.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – June 2019

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-S1 Sustainable Development

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

JP-S3 Heat and Energy Networks

JP-S5 Clean Air

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO1 Delivering a more prosperous economy

E3 Focussing on economic growth corridors and areas

SO3 Improving design, image and quality of place

P3 Improving design of new development

SO4 To promote a greener environment

G1 Tackling and adapting to climate change

G3 Renewable and low carbon energy developments

G9 Reducing the impact of pollution, contamination and land instability

DM1 General Development Requirements

SD1 Delivering sustainable development

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 Defined Urban Area

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document, April 2012

Manchester Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2016-2021

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

08/D50845 - Alterations To Elevations Of Building Including Installation Of New Windows.
Decision: Approve with conditions.

06/D47462 - Change Of Use From Manufacturing Unit With Offices To Warehouse/Trade Counter & Offices For The Sale Of Architectural Ironmongery. Decision: Approve with conditions.

94/D30734 - Change Of Use From General Industry (Class B2) To A Builders Merchants For The Retail And Wholesale Distribution Of Building Materials. Decision: Approve with conditions.

90/D25051 - Change Of Use Of Part Of Foundry To General Engineering. Decision: Approve with conditions.

80/D10277 - Extension For Pattern Storage. Decision: Approve with conditions.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Public Protection (Air Quality) – Additional information/clarification requested.

Following additional information and clarification being received: The information provided is sufficient.

Public Protection (Noise/Odours) - No comments received to date.

Land Contamination - This application doesn't warrant a contamination condition.

Highways - The intended location of the biomass boiler within the existing service yard is unlikely to have any real impact upon the highway. We have no objection to these proposals.

REPRESENTATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to surrounding neighbours and a site notice displayed in the vicinity. No representations have been received.

ANALYSIS

Principle of Development / Renewable Energy / Climate Change

One of the core planning principles of the NPPF is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, including through encouraging the use of renewable resources. The NPPF has identified biomass as a renewable energy source. Paragraph 161 of the NPPF states that the planning system should help to 'shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.' Paragraph 167 adds that local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic. Paragraph 168 states that 'when determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should:

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future;
- b) recognise that small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;
- c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site.'

The PfE in policy JP:S2 states that retrofitting of existing buildings with measures to improve energy efficiency and generate renewable and low carbon energy, heating and cooling will be

supported. Additionally, a positive approach will be taken to renewable and low carbon energy schemes, particularly schemes that are led by, or meet the needs of local communities.

The applicant has confirmed that the biomass boiler will be fuelled by wood sourced from various accredited suppliers in accordance with the “Woodsure” certified scheme and from sustainable sources. Additionally, the applicant has also stated that as they are a timber supplier and a builders merchant, there is a constant amount of waste timber. The waste timber will be graded and selected for fuel if it meets the required criteria. Furthermore, the applicant has stated that the moisture content will be below 20% and assessed by a BSL approved company as required by Defra for use in Smoke Control Zones.

Further to the above, the biomass will also help support the local business reduce energy costs and make it more resilient to price fluctuations.

Taking note of the above, the proposed biomass boiler is considered acceptable and in accordance with the relevant policies within the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Impact on Surrounding Uses and Air Quality

Core Strategy Policy G3 (renewable and low carbon energy development) permits sustainable energy installations where harm is minimised and appropriately mitigated. Policy G9 states that development should not have impacts that lead to

unacceptable increase in air, noise, light or other pollution. Policy DM1 requires developments to be compatible with surrounding land uses and to not adversely affect the amenity of residents or users.

The site is located within a Smoke Control Zone and is surrounded by commercial properties. Considering the distance from sensitive uses it is not considered likely that unacceptable impacts would arise. Furthermore, it is noted that the Council’s Public Protection service has statutory powers to investigate any future complaints regarding noise, odours and air quality if the use of the boilers is intensified beyond their current levels. Following additional information being provided, the Public Protection service considered the information provided sufficient and confirmed that the information will be placed against the premises.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is considered to be generally acceptable in this location and accords with the relevant policies in this regard within the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Impact on Visual Amenity

Policy P3 of the Core Strategy requires all new developments, including associated landscaping, regardless of location in the borough to adhere to high standards of design, and have regard to the scale, density, massing, height, layout, landscape, materials and access of surrounding buildings and areas. Additionally, policy P3 requires development to minimise impact upon the environment, and help adapt to the impacts of climate change, including by re-using existing buildings and materials (maximising the benefits of existing embodied energy).

The proposed boiler would be sited within an enclosed car park a commercial unit used as a timber and builder’s merchant. The proposed boiler will be screened from view by the existing tall brick boundary wall and the buildings of the application site. Views of the flue would be

visible; however, the views would be limited and would be in the context of the commercial use of the site.

As such, it is considered that the proposal has an acceptable visual amenity impact and therefore complies with the relevant policies in this regard within the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Highways

The proposed development would be sited in the car park used by workers of the site. With the placement of the boiler within the car park, it will lead to a loss of existing parking spaces. The highways department however raised no objection on the proposal, and concluded that the proposal is unlikely to have any real impact upon the highway.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in regard to parking and highway safety and therefore accords with the relevant policies in this regard within the Core Strategy, PfE and NPPF.

Recommendation: Approve with Conditions

Condition(s) (3)

- 1 The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason. Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents hereby approved:

- Location & Site Plan. Sheet number: 1 of 4. Drawing number: 01
- Existing Elevations. Sheet number: 2 of 4. Drawing number: 02 A
- Proposed Elevations. Sheet number: 3 of 4. Drawing number: 03
- Proposed Plan. Sheet number: 4 of 4. Drawing number: 04

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the policies contained within the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved Rochdale Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 3 Biomass Boiler hereby approved shall be operated and maintained in accordance with the Biomass Boiler and Kiln Operator Manual for the life of the approved Biomass Boiler unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For the

avoidance of doubt, wood used must have a maximum moisture content level of 20%.

Reason: To ensure the safe development of the site in the interests of the amenity of neighbours and occupiers in accordance with policies DM1 and G9 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-S1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Approval Reason(s) (1)

- 1 The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively to issue the decision without delay.

Informatives (1)

- 1 The applicant is reminded that as the site is located within a Smoke Control Zone and not exempt under the Clean Air Act 1993. It is an offence to emit any smoke from the chimney during normal operation.
- 2 The applicant is reminded that as the site is located within a smoke control zone and is not exempt under the Clean Air Act 1993. Wood used must have a maximum moisture content level of 20%.