

P/2017/0700 – Development of Raw Board Store – This proposal is largely a re-submission of application P/2016/0534 for a proposed building extension to store medium density fibreboard and chip board. This application was previously refused in line with comments made by the group as summarised below:

‘...in this instance the proposal would see an existing warehouse building increased to a height of almost 27metres along a length of 150metres. This increases the mass of the building substantially having greater dominance than other taller structures, comprising mostly stacks and flues, of much smaller overall volume. The warehouse buildings at present are relatively low lying within the landscape set at the approximate height of the adjoining woodland belt which provides a degree of screening at certain times of the year. The proposed development would not only rise considerably above the tree level but would see industrial operations spread outwards and away from the existing concentration of tall structures thereby detrimentally increasing the visual influence of the industrial operation within the wider landscape and from key views from the AONB and WHS Buffer Zone as well as the setting of the Chirk Castle Estate.

This would be an unwelcome addition to the site with a sizeable, wider impact than previous developments. The applicant should consider more sensitive storage arrangements within the facility.’

The proposed extension, as now submitted, has been slightly reduced in size (reduced in height by 3m and length by 27m), however we do not feel these amendments sufficiently address previous concerns and therefore the above comments still apply and the group objects to these proposals.

P/2017/0699 – Development of Log Delivery and Transfer System and Building to House a Replacement Wood Chipping and Flaking System and Demolition of Existing Debarking and Chipping Facilities - The same issues are presented by this application, as in P/2017/0700, in terms of height, mass and sprawl. In addition encroachment of the facility towards the relatively undeveloped northern part of the site closer to the canal and the resultant visual impact upon the setting of the WHS, as indicated in viewpoint M, is unacceptable and therefore the group objects to these proposals.

There is the potential for these proposals, particularly in conjunction with those for the extension to provide a Raw Board Store and OSB facility, to cause cumulative harm to the significance of the WHS in its wider context through extending the visual influence of modern manufacturing within the historic landscape. Any opportunity to contain this additional volume within the existing physical and visual envelope of structures on the site should be assessed as a primary location for such a facility.