Design and Access Statement, Dalby Forest

Location

Dalby Forest lies on the southern slopes of the North York Moors National Park, and is both a popular visitor attraction and important habitat for wildlife. A £4.3 million investment (2003-2007) has resulted in the remarkable transformation of Dalby forest into a Regional Centre of Excellence for sustainable economic activity. With an attractively refurbished courtyard, a sustainably constructed Visitor Centre, and a vast network of cycle trails, Dalby Forest is proving to be a valuable asset in the region, giving the local economy a much needed boost by drawing in tourists from far and wide.

Proposed Development

This planning application proposes to install integrated solar tiles (PowerGlaz RI Roof Integrated Solar Tiles) onto:

- the southern facing roof of workshop units 3/4/5 in the Courtyard in Dalby (roof P on the aerial view of the Courtyard attached)
- The southern facing roof of workshop unit 6 and the Community Resource Room (roof U on the aerial view)
- And Sharp NU180E1, 180Wp, Monocrystalline PV modules on the façade of the new Visitor Centre.

The tiles from roof P and U are relatively new (1993) and these will be re-used to re-roof the café (roof T) and/or bicycle shop (roof R). For the roof of the kitchen Solar Slate Tiles will be used. The replaced roofs will be insulated at the same time.

Design Ethos

It is our intention that renewable energy systems be integrated effectively into the existing fabric of the buildings. However, at the same time it is accepted that in order to make buildings more efficient and sustainable in energy terms, minor changes to design must be acceptable. In this instance integrated roof panels are to be used in order to maintain the existing roof plane.

The Visitor Centre is of a distinctive modern form with main finishes being wood and glass. The solar panels will be attached to the façade and will read as glazed areas. This will fit comfortably in the general form and appearance of the building and will not detract from the original design idiom of the building.

As you will be aware, one of the main aims of Dalby forest for the last ten years has been to improve and develop the forest as a Regional Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development.

Tourism activity has been and is being developed in a way that builds upon and enhances the distinct character of the forest, maintains those aspects, which contribute to the special qualities of the National Park and creates real benefits for the local community in terms of economic regeneration, quality of life and an enhanced environment.

The objectives of this project are to: NYM / 2010 / 0 4 6 0 / F L

- To showcase sustainability in building construction and operation and to provide the forest with facilities built to a high specification, which put into practice a number of environmentally sustainable building techniques and shows what a difference each visitor can make.
- Contribute to a wider understanding of the economic, environmental and social value of the forest, through forest interpretation and interpretation of wider sustainability issues that are relevant to individual visitors.

The installation of these panels fits with improvement plans for the forest, which we have developed in partnership with the National Park Authority. It fits within the Forestry Commission's ethos of sustainability throughout its operation and helps to meet Government targets for Carbon Reduction.

- We have minimised the visual impact by using integrated tiles.
- Roofs P and U are not visible when visitors enter the forest, nor for visitors in the Courtyard. The panels will be visible when entering the village, but only for approx 100 meters. The village has no public access.
- Roof S will be highly visible to visitors and this will be used to educate them of the benefits of these panels, on an information board.
- The panels on the façade of visitor centre are also visible to visitors walking towards and driving past the centre. These panels will also be explained in the exhibition in the centre.

This development will not detract from the character or appearance of the host buildings, nor the wider landscape character of the National Park.

Access
The existing access to the site will remain unaltered.

Legislation
We are very much aware that if the Courtyard was a domestic dwelling, planning permission wouldn't be required according to the General Permitted Development Order.

In the Small-scale renewables and Low-carbon technology Non-domestic permitted development review carried out by Entec UK Ltd in November 2009 for the Department of Communities and Local Government (page 6 and 23), solar panels on pitched roofs are recommended to be permitted development. This is unless the building is in a conservation area or a world heritage site, which the Courtyard in Dalby is neither. This recommendation to the Government is likely to be adopted shortly, which will remove the need for planning permission for this type of development.

A planning application is submitted to ensure we remain ahead of the game and shows our pro-active attitude regarding our ethos.

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Conclusions
There are no access implications raised by this application.

The use of an integrated panel design allows the panel to sit within the roof plane and as such will not detract from the overall form and appearance of the buildings in the courtyard.

With regard to the Visitor Centre, the proposed panels attached to the façade will read as glazed areas and again will not detract from the overall form and appearance of the building.

This development will have no detrimental impact on the landscape character of the National Park and will contribute to the interpretation and sustainability of the site.