



3 Kenfig Industrial Estate, Port Talbot, SA13 2PE
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www.thechocfactory.co.uk

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Reason for the planning application

Michton is a family run chocolate factory based in 3 Kenfig Industrial Estate, Margam trading as The Chocolate Factory. The business began in 1992 as a partnership between Tony Wadley and Michelle Wadley, which traded in Enfield, Middlesex. In 1998 the business relocated to Swansea and Michton Ltd was incorporated.

To facilitate further expansion, the company relocated to its new site in Margam in 2013. The site had been vacant for a number of years and a comprehensive refurbishment plan began to bring the site up to the standard necessary for food production. One of the requirements necessary was to invest in a new heating system for space heating and process heating. Michton Ltd has a very ethical approach to running its operations and a decision was made to invest in biomass boilers because their fuel is renewable. This investment proved to be both a financial success and an ethical success. Michton Ltd now uses zero natural gas, which saves a vast amount on greenhouse gases and is helping the Wales and the UK reach its greenhouse gas targets.

Part of the challenge in using biomass boilers is the requirement to have a constant supply of fuel at the correct specification. It is vital that the boilers are fed with the correct size wood particles at the correct moisture level.

- If the wood chips are oversized, they may cause the machine to jam or the fuel supply to bridge and not flow into the burner. Both these situations would cause the boiler to extinguish which in turn would mean that the heat would no longer be generated.
- If the wood chips are too small, then the burner may become flooded with a compact mass of wood which would not burn efficiently and again the burner may become extinguished or not burn efficiently which would mean the boiler would not get up to temperature to operate correctly.
- If the wood chips are too moist, then they will not burn correctly and the boiler will not generate the required heat. The boiler will most probably smoke excessively which will create pollution and tar up the exhaust flue which could become a fire risk.
- If the wood chip is too dry then it may jam the augers because the wood is too hard. If this happens then there is a risk of burn back down the augers and create a fire in the hopper. Very dry wood may also cause the boiler to run too hot which will damage the boiler.
- If the wood is both too small and too dry you may get into a situation where you are getting unburnt sawdust blown up the flue. This would be a waste of wood and may mean the boiler does not reach the optimal running temperature because the fuel is not being burnt.

We require planning permission to:

- 1) Store the required amount of roundwood on our site to ensure a constant supply of fuel
- 2) To chip the roundwood
- 3) To store the chip inside, where it will be sieved to the correct sizes
- 4) To site and operate the wood chip drier machines that we have in our yard

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We feel that this development is an appropriate development in an industrial estate. We propose storing the round wood along the perimeter fence to the rear of our factory. This location is chosen because it has the least visual impact on people driving past and is the safest from a fire risk. We propose siting the drying containers in a line to the side of our factory unit, nearest the perimeter fence. The containers will all be grey to ensure they have a uniform look. We do not feel that the containers will look out of place in an industrial estate.

The biomass plant is vital for the future of our company. Michton Ltd prides itself on its ethical achievements and the biomass investment is a major focus our marketing, along with the way we treat our customers, the way we treat our suppliers, the speed in which we pay our suppliers, our continued drive to reduce waste, our insistence of buying packaging which is FSG sourced etc. Michton has been an early adopter of renewable energy and it is part of our companies DNA and we intend to reduce our carbon footprint even further.

Michton Ltd has been operating for approx. 30 years and it has grown from humble beginnings to the size it is now. The company is well respected in the industry and we supply a number of large outlets in throughout the UK. We employ a large number of staff, and there are currently 3 employees directly employed in running and maintaining our biomass machinery.