

Woodchip will do very nicely, says Charles



Carbon cuts: Prince Charles

WHEN one is building a multi-million-pound mansion fit for the future king of England, one might think woodchip would not get the royal seal of approval.

Yet that's exactly what Prince Charles is considering for the new Georgian-style home in Herefordshire long-tipped as a future home for Prince William.

But this woodchip has nothing to do with wallpaper – but rather woodchip central heating.

The man in charge of transforming the 900-acre country estate in Harewood End that many believe will be William's future home has been told to consider eco-friendly energy systems.

Orders have come from the prince to reduce the amount of carbon used by the royal household, and his eldest son's ex-

pected home may be included. The mansion has not been built yet, but the woodchip system has been installed in other Harewood End complexes.

Restored Twyford Barn and Grange Farm are both using boilers which run on wood pellets and the same system could be used for the new six-bedroom, mansion house with stables where the polo-loving young prince is expected to live.

David Curtis, the man who manages the duchy estates in Herefordshire, said it was too soon to say for sure if Charles would be installing woodchip heating into the Craig Hamilton-designed mansion because they have not yet laid the first brick and the technology is still evolving. But he said: "The duchy is trying hard to reduce its carbon footprint and this in-

volves considering alternative heat sources.

"In a rural area the usual choice has been oil but now we are starting to install biomass boilers and ground heat source systems.

"We are using woodchip at Grange Farm and biomass systems will be considered whenever we have to replace or install a boiler in any of our properties."

Mike Webb, of Midland Wood Fuel Ltd, which installed the royal biomass systems, believes many more of us will be following the prince's example in future and using environmentally friendly fuel.

A woodchip boiler for the average house costs about £5,000 to buy without installation but there are government grants of around £1,500.