# Proposed Installation of 40 panel ground mounted solar panel system, using GSE mounting kit, within land to south of main house

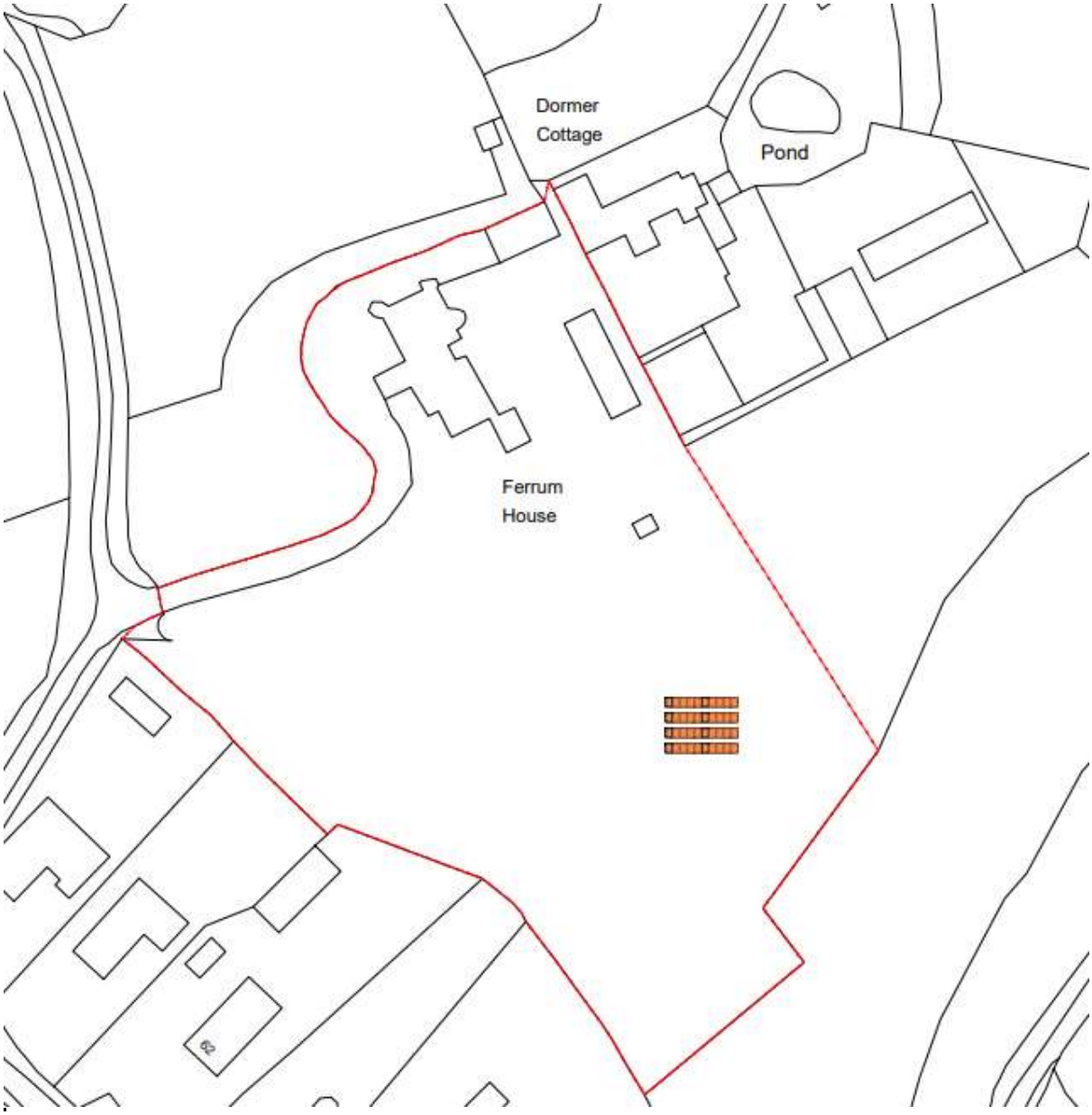
**FERRUM HOUSE**
**PELCH LANE**
**SEEND CLEEVE**
**SEEND**
**SN12 6PZ**

## Planning and Design and Access Statement.

# Application Site

The application site is a substantial detached house, set alongside a private driveway and large garden areas. Dormer Cottage is the nearest neighbour. The property has had a variety of extension an alterations to it since 2007. The application site is not significantly visible from the public realm and is set within large private gardens.

**Fig. 1 Site location with panels shown in orange:**



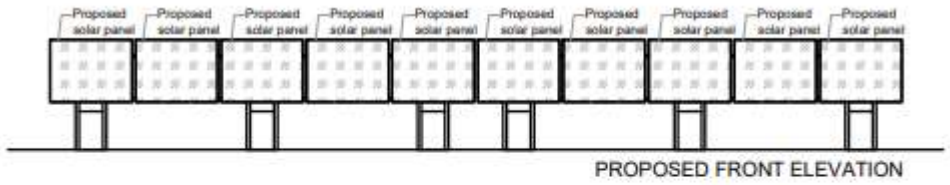
# The Proposal

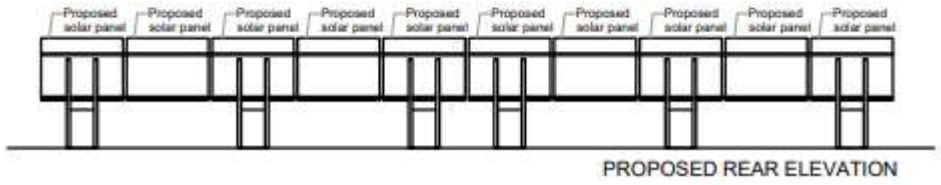
The proposal relates to the installation of a 40 panel ground mounted system, using GSE mounting kit, within land to south of main house

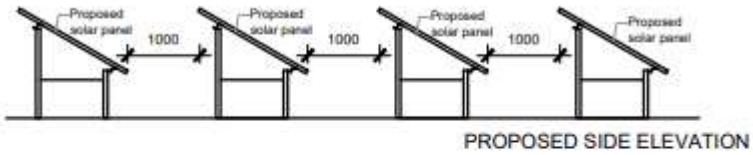
It would consist of 10 single rows of panels within a GSE Ground Mount System as indicated on the submitted drawings provided.

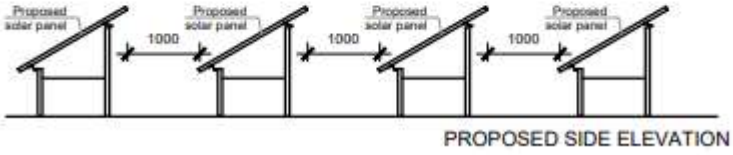
The panels would be positioned at a thrity degree angle and sit on a GSE Ground Mount System. There will be no significant physical changes to the land in terms of earth removal or levelling and during operation the activities will continue with the land being used for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the main dwellinghouse.

**Fig 2: Proposed Panels:**



# Planning Policies

This, and the supporting documentation, will demonstrate that the impacts of the proposed development will not be so significant to warrant a refusal of planning permission. Any impacts will be suitably mitigated and outweighed by the contribution made by the development to the climate change agenda. The proposal is acceptable when assessed against development plan policy and all other relevant material considerations including; national guidance and advice and emerging local policies. Indeed, the fundamental basis of the policy position is entirely supportive of this development. Following the statutory obligations placed upon the Council, as prescribed by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The statutory development plan for the site comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS). Whilst government guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) is a material consideration.

The Local Plan sets out the local policy framework to deliver sustainable growth to within the region. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country planning Act 1990, applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

The delivery of renewable energy plays an important part of the Council's development strategy and forms part of the objectives that underpin the Local Plan. The Local Plan identifies how improving renewable energy generation, together with improvements in the energy efficiency of our buildings, will help the district to become more resilient to the impacts of future fuel costs and fuel scarcity.

Local and national Policy sets out how the Council should take a positive management stance that reflects the presumption on favour of sustainable development. The relevant Policies are listed below:

Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy
Core Policy 42 Standalone Renewable Energy Installations
Core Policy 51 Landscape
Core Policy 57 Ensuring high-quality design and place-shaping

Other Planning Guidance/Documents
- National Policy Statement for Overarching Energy (EN-1)
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks (EN-5)
- UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a Brighter Future
- UK Solar PV Strategy Part 2: Delivering a Brighter Future

As well as incorporating low and zero carbon energy production into new development, Local Authorities will need to encourage stand-alone schemes that contribute to national and regional targets for renewable energy production. This includes the target set in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy 2009 for 30-35% of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of this application as per Paragraph 2 of the Framework and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11) whereby developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social and environmental issues should be granted planning permission unless there are strong reasons that permission should not be granted. In terms of the environmental role, the planning system is required to: 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, help to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy' One of the core planning principles stated in Paragraph 17 of the NPPF is to: 'Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example by the development of renewable energy)'.

Paragraph 93 states that: 'Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development'.

Paragraph 97 lists a number of ways in which to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and confirms that LPAs should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources.

Paragraph 98 advises that when determining planning applications, LPAs should: 'Not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse emissions; and Approve applications, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, if its impact are (or can be made) acceptable'.

Paragraph 170 is also relevant to the proposal. It sets out how decisions should enhance the natural and local environment by: 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)' and 'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem

services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland'. Paragraph 184 onwards relates to the historic environment and seeks to ensure the protection of heritage assets for the enjoyment of future generations.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) The Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Chapter sets out a number of factors that need to be considered by LPAs in determining applications for solar projects such as this.

Whilst not a large scale solar project, paragraph ID 5-013 of the guidance is somewhat relevant and states that 'the deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively'. Paragraph ID 5-007 indicates that local topography is an important factor in assessing whether large scale solar farms could have a damaging effect on the landscape and which recognises that impacts can be just as great in predominantly flat landscapes as in hilly or mountainous areas. Paragraph ID 5-010 states that 'Renewable energy developments should be acceptable for their proposed location'. Also, at Paragraph ID 5-008, the guidance states that distance away from a development is just one consideration, stating that: 'Distance plays a part, but so does the local context including factors such as topography, the local environment and near-by land uses'

In November 2008, the Climate Change Act was published, which created a new legal framework for the UK to achieve a mandatory 80% cut in the UK's C02 emissions and other greenhouse gases by 2050. The two key aims of the Act are to: - Improve carbon management, helping the transition towards a low-carbon economy in the UK, and; - Demonstrate UK leadership internationally, signalling commitment to taking our share of responsibility for reducing global emissions in the context of developing international negotiations. The UK Renewable Energy Directive (RED) (2009) set a Government target of 15% of the country's energy to come from renewable sources by 2020. The step change is required to jump from the 2018 level of 11% to the 2020 target of 15%. This represents a significant need for more renewable and low carbon energy and this should outweigh any potential harm that could result from the development. The 2018 energy figures released by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) highlighted that the UK's production of electricity in 2018 was up 2.9% on 2017, driven by growth in oil, wind, solar, bioenergy, and waste. Although coal reached a record low and declined 25% while natural gas fell 3.8%, overall fossil fuel production increased, illustrating the mixed picture - the UK's overall emissions fell by 9.1 million tonnes, a year-on-year 2.4% decrease, which was the result of more renewable electricity sources. Renewables made up 33% of electricity in 2018, which was up from 29.2% in 2017. However, fossil fuels still made up 79.4% of the overall energy supply while renewables still only accounted for 11% of the final consumption in 2018. This is according to the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics (July 2019 Edition) also referred to as DUKES. The UK target is for that figure to be 20% by 2020 and although each year sets new records for renewables, it is considered that for the UK that the pace of change isn't fast enough, currently sitting at 12% increase year on year between 2017 and 2018. The EU statistical office Eurostat Statistics produced by the EU statistical office show that the share

of renewable across Europe was up to 17.5% in 2017. This is an increase of 0.5% from 2016, and more than double the share in 2004. Eleven of the 28 countries in the EU have already exceeded the EU's target to obtain 20% of energy in gross final consumption of energy from renewable sources. It is aiming to increase this to 32% by 2030. Despite having more offshore wind power than any other nation, it is stated that the UK's renewable transition has been slow. The Eurostat figures show that the UK is predicted to miss its target by 5% in 2020, as not enough is being done to transition the nation to renewables - while phasing out coal power has been relatively successful, natural gas still makes up the majority of the UK's electricity demand with the exception to this being Scotland showing that renewables provided 74.6% of Scotland's gross electricity consumption in 2018.

Other Policy Considerations:

National Planning Statement: Overarching National Policy Statement For Energy (En-1) This sets out the national policy for energy infrastructure and at Paragraph 2.2.6 states that 'the UK needs to wean itself off a high carbon energy mix: to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve the security, availability and affordability of energy through diversification'.

UK Solar PV Strategy (2014) This strategy sets out four guiding principles for solar PV, the third of which states that solar PV should be appropriately sited with proper weight being given to environmental considerations such as landscape, visual impact, heritage and local amenity, and provide opportunities for local communities to influence decisions that affect them

As can be seen from all of the above, there is a wealth of Government legislation, guidance and policy which supports the transition to a low carbon future and the continued roll out of renewables and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Site Constraints:

With regard to planning policy constraints, the site location is not covered or influenced by any significant designations or limitations.

# Assessment

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

i) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

ii) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and

future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

iii) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The proposed development relates to the installation of 40 solar panels. The solar panels when considered within the context of the site and the Local Planning Policies referenced above, would not alter the area's character. In this case, the mass of the proposal would be read in conjunction with the site and surroundings. There are nearby buildings and the panels would also be located at ground level and screened from view by exisitng boundary vegetation round the boundaries of the site and garden area.

In this case due to the angle of the panels, the natural gradients of the surrounding landscape, and the limited size, height and scale of the proposals it would have a very limited imact of the exisitng landscape and rural character and appearance of the area. The solar panels due to existing boundary vegetation around the site and adjacent to it would not be significantly visible from the street scene, nor the setting and natural landscape.

The NPPF paragraph 130 states that developments should be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).

The solar panels are strategically designed and positioned in the existing garden area at a point that faces the sun. The solar panels are sensitive and appropriate to the character of the area as they are sensitively and appropriately located, making them not highly visible from the ground. There are existing buildings and structures close to the application site and surrounding it and as such, the proposal would not appear out of place within the grounds or the surrounding area.

The solar panels would not be visually obtrusive and have low impact on the environment. As they are significantly screened from view by dense vegetation and existing ground levels and largely screened from public realm. As a result of that, there would be no material impact on the area.

With the aim of improving energy efficiency and sustainability as referenced in policies above, the light weighted panels are designed in one row at a low level to minimise any adverse impact.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out how the local planning authority, in making a decision, looks at balancing the harm of a PV scheme against the sustainability benefits of

the proposal. While the solar panel helps to provide additional energy, it will not impact the character of the area.

NPPF advise that there is a presumption in favour of development proposals which seek to protect, preserve, and where possible enhance, the cultural value, architectural character, visual appearance and setting of heritage assets. It is our view that the proposal would not have a material impact on the special interest of the adjacent Listed Buildings. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with local planning policy or National Planning Policy.

In terms of local policy, Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy encourages the retrofitting of building-integrated renewable or low-carbon technologies. It is noted in this case that the solar panels would be sited within the existing curtilage area of the property.

They would improve the energy performance of the existing buildings. The acceptability of this location lies with the impact upon the design and visual impact and impact on the landscape.

Subject to several environmental and amenity considerations, both national and local policies are supportive of proposals for renewable energy generation

In terms of residential amenities and surroundings, the installation of solar panels would not harm the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties by reason of overlooking, overshadowing, visual intrusion, noise, traffic and any adverse effect. Given the scale and location of the development, it is considered the proposal would not have a harmful impact on neighbouring amenities. As such it is considered that the proposal complies policies in this regard.

In this case the proposal is utilizing a very small portion of land which is currently under the ownership of the applicants. The land is not used for any agricultural purposes and is maintained by them just as extra amenity land.

The proposal would respect the design, scale, materials, character, appearance and proportions of the existing buildings and area and would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area and wider street scene. The proposal amounts to Sustainable Development which accords with the prevailing policies of the Development Plan and NPPF.

As highlighted from the supplied proposed plans, the proposal will not have any significant impact on streetscape character or surrounding amenities.

# Conclusion

Following a review of the proposal's applicable policy and material considerations, it is of our professional view that the development is in compliance with all applicable policies as previously illustrated.

The NPPF identifies a series of components that are considered critical to achieving sustainable development. In my opinion, the above assessment of the planning application proposals demonstrates that the application responds to, and is in accordance with, the requirements of the adopted planning policy within the development plan and material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The scheme would provide betterment for future residents allowing a better standard of living accommodation providing sources of renewable energy and reducing the climate change impacts.

As previously outlined, there is a significant level of International and governmental policy that underpins planning policy in respect of developments for the production of electricity from renewable sources. The proposed development is strongly supported by European Energy Policy on Renewables and National Planning Policy in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework. The UK has signed up to the EU Renewable Energy Directive, which includes a UK target of 15% of energy (electricity, heat and transport) from renewable sources by 2020. The need for the development is therefore paramount, with reference to the failing of the UK to meet the 2020 renewable energy targets. Ground-based solar PV can make a significant contribution to meeting these national targets and has the added benefit that it can be brought on-stream quickly, a characteristic that is not shared by its nuclear and fossil fuel counterparts.

We see no reason for the council to refuse our request for planning approval and kindly request for a timely decision to be made in line with applicable guidance of the NPFF.

Should any further information be requested to assist in the council's assessment of the proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you,

Kind regards,

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