# CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

| | |
|---|---|
| **Application Reference:** | PL/2023/05399 |
| **Application Type:** | Householder planning permission |
| **Site Inspection:** | 03 August 2023 |
| **Consultation ends:** | 03 August 2023 |
| **Case officer:** | Helena Carney |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Site Address:** | 11 THE SQUARE, ALDBOURNE, MARLBOROUGH, SN8 2DU |
| **Proposal:** | Proposed Solar Panel Installation |
| **Recommendation:** | Approve with Conditions |

**POLICIES**

Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015):
Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low-carbon Energy
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design & Place Shaping
Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Aldbourne Conservation Area Statement, June 2003

Aldbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2036, made March 2023

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**ISSUES**

• Principle of development
• Impact upon the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties
• Impact upon visual amenity, significant unlisted buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area
• Impact upon the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Aldbourne Parish Council: no objection

Third party representations: none received at time of writing

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

• K/85/0195 - Alterations, approved 23/04/1985
• K/86/1332 - Alterations and extension, approved 22/01/1987
• 17/06716/FUL - Demolition of existing corridor and construction of new single storey rear extension comprising of conservatory, boot room and WC, approved 04/09/2017

**ASSESSMENT**

This application relates to No. 11 The Square, a two-storey mid-terrace property located in in the conservation area in the centre of Aldbourne. The application property and the adjoining properties in the terrace are designated as significant unlisted buildings within the Aldbourne Conservation Area Statement.

The application site lies within the conservation area and is washed over by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Proposals:
This planning application is seeking planning permission for the installation of roof mounted photovoltaic solar panels on the south and west facing roof slopes. It is proposed to install one row comprising 6no. panels on the south facing roof slope and one row comprising 4no. panels on the west facing roof slope. The proposed panels will be black in colour.

Principle of Development:
Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015, sets out the Council's policy for sustainable construction and low-carbon energy. Retrofitting measures to improve the performance of existing buildings is to be encouraged in accordance with the following hierarchy:

i. Reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency measures
ii. Use renewable or low-carbon energy from a local/district source
iii. Use building-integrated renewable or low-carbon technologies.

In February 2019, Wiltshire Council resolved to acknowledge a climate emergency, seeking to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. Carbon reduction in the county is also a key theme of the Council in its recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This application involves the installation of two sets of solar PV panels onto the roofs of two existing extensions, which will be used to generate electricity for use in the host dwelling and any residual energy will be sold back to the national grid. The Council is generally supportive of such technologies and they are permissible subject to not creating any harm to heritage assets or to surrounding residential or landscape amenities. These matters will therefore be assessed in more detail below but it is clear that the proposals are acceptable in principle.

Impact upon the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties:

The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy CP57 requires that development should ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and ensure that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself.

The proposed design, colour and positioning of the solar panels are such that they will not have an adverse impact on the occupiers of neighbouring properties as a consequence of overshadowing, overbearing impact or overlooking. These are the main neighbour amenity considerations.

The key consideration of the proposed development is the potential impact upon visual amenity, the significant unlisted buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these will be covered in the next section of the report.

Impact upon visual amenity, significant unlisted buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area:
The adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 57 requires a high standard of design in any new developments including alterations or extensions to a dwelling. Development is to create a strong sense of place through drawing on local context and being complementary to the locality. The policy seeks for any new development to positively respond to the existing townscape and landscape and effectively integrate into its settings.

The Council's Core Strategy Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved and where possible enhanced.

Section 72 of the Act further states that in the exercise of any functions, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in this Section, 'special attention' shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The application property and the adjoining properties within the row are designated as significant unlisted buildings in the Aldbourne Conservation Area Statement.

There are no concerns from a planning perspective. The proposed development is considered to be of an acceptable scale and design. The assessment is therefore based on the impact of the development on the significant unlisted buildings and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposed solar panels will be installed on the west and south facing roof slopes, facing towards the rear amenity space of the application site. The rear of the application property is not readily visible from public vantage points and the proposed solar panels will only be visible from immediate neighbouring properties. Therefore, the proposals will not result in harm to visual amenity. Furthermore, it is noted that the proposed solar panels will be black in colour and as such they will integrate well with the slate roof.

Due to the minor nature of the proposals, it is considered that the proposed development will not harm the significant unlisted buildings, or to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that the proposed solar panels are not a permanent addition as they can be removed. In the interests of preserving the significance of heritage assets and the character and appearance of the conservation area, a condition will be imposed on this approval requiring their removal within 3 months of their last use (should they become damaged, redundant or superfluous to requirements), along with any associated equipment, along with any disturbed surfaces being made good as to how they were pre-installation.

Impact upon the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):
As the proposal will be within the main built-up part of the settlement and there will be no encroachment into the open countryside, no harm will be caused to the special qualities of the AONB.

Conclusion:
There will be no negative impact to neighbour or visual amenity or harm to the listed building and conservation area as a result of the proposed development. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in the context of its surroundings and is in accordance with the general criteria set out in the aforementioned policies of the local development plan.

---

**Conditions:** (3)

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Application Form; Location and Block Plans; Proposed Plans

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 The photovoltaic panels hereby approved shall be removed within 3 months of them no longer being needed for microgeneration purposes and within 3 months of their removal, the roof slopes and the surface of the building shall be made good to its appearance at the time immediately before the panels' first installation.

REASON: In the interests of preserving the significance of undesignated heritage assets and the character and appearance of the conservation area.