Planning Statement

Proposal:	Erection of stables, haystore and tack room; and installation of photo-voltaic array to serve dwelling
Site:	Rowden Farmhouse, Rowden Lane, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2AB.
Our Reference:	PS_2304B_v1.docx

Land Development and Planning Consultants Ltd. is a Rural Planning Practice based in Corsham, Wiltshire. The Practice was established in 1989 to provide advice and representation on the range of town and country planning issues relating primarily to the countryside, villages and the market towns of Wessex. Clients include individuals, developers, legal and land agencies, commercial and residential developers, local authorities and amenity groups.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Land Development and Planning Consultants Ltd. have been instructed by Jeremy and Charlotte Difazio to prepare and present an application for the erection of a stable block including tack, hay and feed storage, and the installation of a 30-cell photo-voltaic array to provide electricity to Rowden Farmhouse.

2.0 Context

2.1 The application site lies in the open countryside to the south of Bradford on Avon within the West Wiltshire Green Belt, entirely within Flood Zone 1.

2.2 Rowden Farm comprises a total area of some 1.85 hectares; 0.70ha to the east of Rowden Lane (bridleway BRAD25) containing the dwelling, residential curtilage and associated outbuildings (replaced under reference PL/2021/09311 dated 17th February 2022), and a paddock of 1.15ha to the west of the bridleway.

2.3 Access to the paddock is gained through a field gate at the northeast corner of the field. During the works to replace the original dwelling the hardstanding at the access was replaced and extended to provide parking for trade persons and a location to receive deliveries and some uprisings from the development of the house and garden.

2.4 The paddock, subject of this application, is enclosed on all four sides by native hedges, including a number of more mature trees and laid to grass, which is cut yearly for hay by a local farmer.

2.5 Under reference 03/00395/FUL planning permission was granted for 3no. adjoining stables, to replace a pair of pre-existing stables on the land. The approved stables were to be located in the south east corner of the land and served by an additional access. Subsequently a second planning permission was granted under reference 04/00394/FUL for the change of use of the land from agriculture to equestrian uses; non-commercial grazing and schooling of horses and the erection of 6no. jumps in connection with the previously approved stables.

2.6 Both consents required the discharge of details prior to the commencement. The Agent has not seen any information pursuant to a discharge of conditions for either consent and therefore it appears that both planning permissions have lapsed.

3.0 Proposed development

3.1 The application, subject of this statement, requests planning consent for two distinct elements within the same paddock, west of Rowden Lane; these are;

3.2 A). The relocation of a 30no. panel photo-voltaic (P.V.) array from the position approved under reference PL/2021/09311 to the east of the dwelling, to a location adjacent to the northern hedge of the paddock facing south; drawings LDC.2304B_04C and ~07 refer;

3.3 B). The use of land for equestrian purposes; and

3.4 C). The erection of a stable block to include 3no. stables, a larger foaling stable, tack room and a hay & feed store for private, non-commercial use; drawings LDC.2304B_04C, ~05 & ~06 refer.

4.0 Policy Context

4.1 The starting point for the determination of this application is the provisions of the Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise. The relevant Development Plan for this form and scale of proposal comprises Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS).

4.2 The application site also falls within the Bradford on Avon Parish and Neighbourhood Plan boundary, which was made in October 2017.

4.3 Both the WSC and Neighbourhood Plan support the principle of renewable energy installation and use, as is clear from the approval of this element of the application for replacement of the original dwelling at Rowden Farm. Therefore the main issues regarding the relocation of the PV array is the impact on landscape and openness of the Green Belt; relevant policies are therefore Core Policy 51 of the WCS.

4.4 Equally, the erection of a stable block will be subject to the same policy assessment of landscape impact and Green Belt policy contained within the Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 ('the NPPF').

4.5 The NPPF sets out the Green Belt policy against which the local Development Plan has been tested. Para.138 of the NPPF confirms that;

4.6 Green Belt serves five purposes;

4.6.1 To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

4.6.2 To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

4.6.3 To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

4.6.4 To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

4.6.5 To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.7 'Inappropriate development' is harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances; while the construction of new buildings in the

Green Belt is considered inappropriate development, exceptions, contained within para.149 of the NPPF include *'the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport [or] outdoor recreation'.*

4.8 Para.150 goes on to confirm that *'certain other types of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including within [the Green Belt]'. 'Other types of development'* include '*engineering operations'* and '*material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation'.*

5.0 Planning Assessment

5.1 As previously discussed, the main issues in relation to the development proposals are the impact of the development on the Green Belt and on the landscape character.

Relocation of the photo-voltaic array.

5.2 Consent PL/2021/09311 granted permission inter alia for an array of 30no P.V. panels to the east of the replacement dwelling, positioned as shown in drawing 145_3002_P3 and elevations shown in drawing 145_3016_P1 (reproduced as **Appendix 1** of this statement). The approved location lies outside of the residential curtilage and in a sub-optimal position in relation to the site and in clear view of the primary living space of the dwelling.

5.3 The proposed location is discretely located adjacent to the well-established hedge forming the northern boundary of the field, facing almost directly south. The existing uprisings from the development of the replacement dwelling will be sculpted and retained to form a lower bund that will limit views of the panels from the bridleway, and completely obscure the array once vegetation is established.

5.4 The panels will be secured to the ground with earth screws that will be entirely demountable enabling the area to be returned to it's present state in the future should the panels no longer be required. The units will be connected to the house through a preexisting culvert under the bridleway that had previous brought piped water from the dwelling to the field.

5.5 Grass will be able to grow below the panels which will be maintained through grazing and periodic cutting.

Proposed stable block

5.6 The proposed stables will be located in the approximate position of the original two stables that formerly occupied the field. The building will comprise three standard stables and a foaling box to accommodate the potential for a brood mare in the future. A tack room and hay/feed store will enable the site to operate as a self-contained equestrian unit without the need for ancillary storage or associated equine paraphernalia.

5.7 The design and form of the stables reflects their function and customary scale to meet the welfare needs of the horses, resulting in a building that is entirely expected within the rural landscape.

5.8 Manure will be stored on site and removed periodically by a local farmer for use on the land. Horse boxes or trailers will be kept within or adjacent to the residential curtilage on the east side of the bridleway.

5.9 The stables have been located away from the hedgerow to enable access to the hedge for maintenance purposes and to preserve flight lines for bats. In accordance with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Smart Ecology, there will be no external lighting on the stables, other than warm white LED fittings operated by motion sensors on the south west elevation for essential need during night time visits. Bat and bird boxes will be erected on the building and on standard trees in the hedge line.

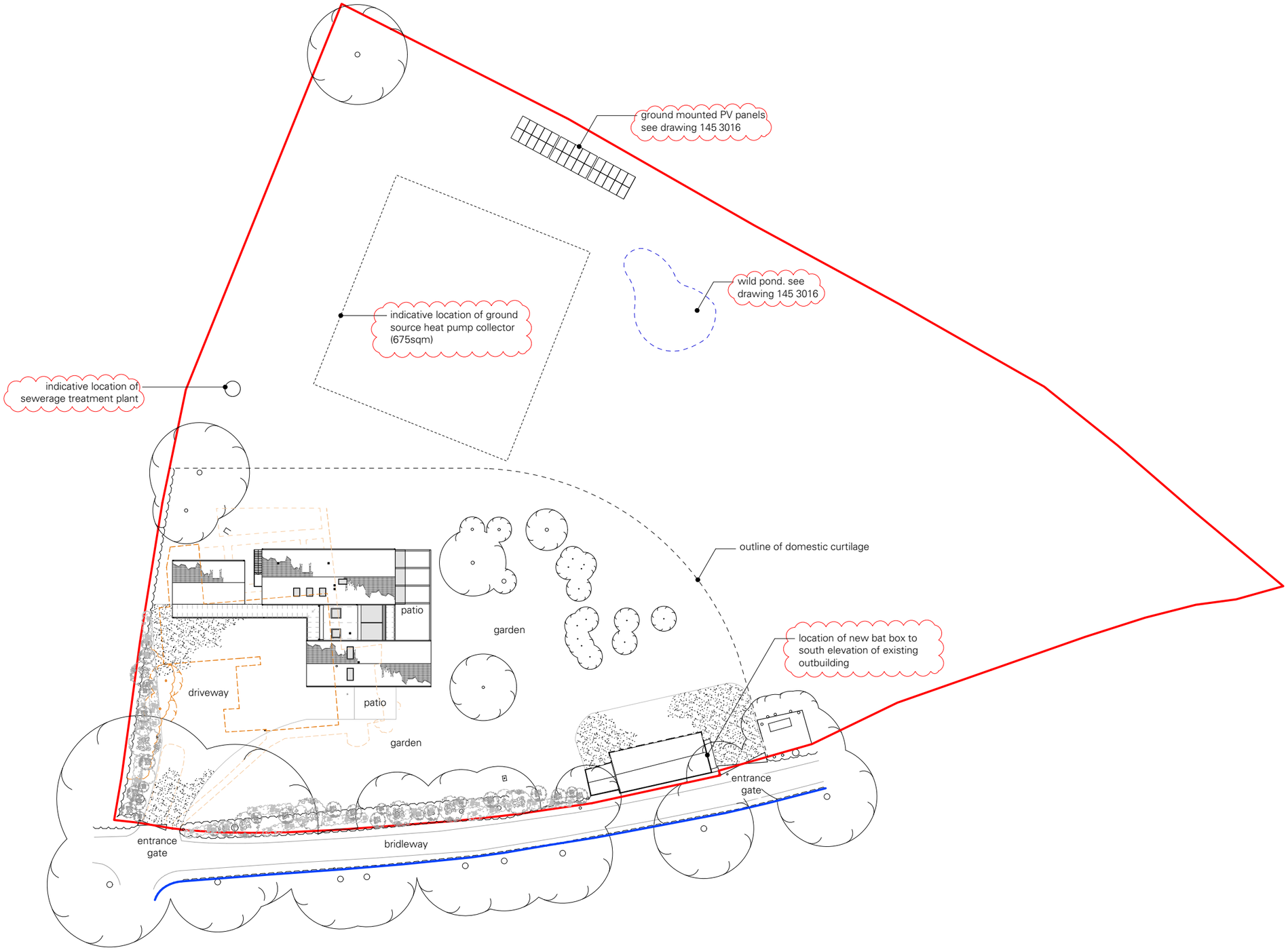
6.0 Concluding notes and planning balance

6.1 The proposed relocation of the P.V. array will have a minimal impact on the wider landscape or Green Belt and will be entirely reversable in the future. The proposed stables enable the use of the land for rural outdoor recreation and have a negligible impact on the landscape and Green Belt, nor does the development conflict with the reasons for designation of the Green Belt in this area.

6.2 It is trusted that the local planning authority will be able to support the application in its submitted form. The Applicant would welcome the opportunity to discuss in detail the proposals and to provide further information as required to enable a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken. Please contact the Agent at the earliest opportunity should such details be necessary.

Appendix 1

Previously approved PV Array



Rev.	Date	Description
P1	27.09.21	Issued for planning
P2	11.11.21	Updated following planning consultant comments
P3	20.12.21	Updated following planning officer comments

- line of site boundary
- line of adjacent land in same ownership
- line of demolitions

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Site plan as proposed

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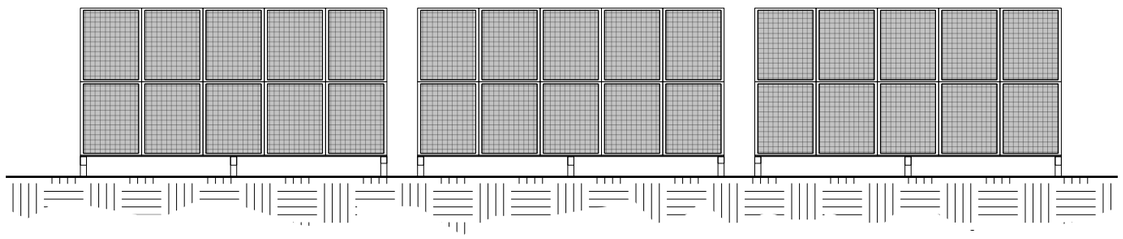
Drawing. 145_3002_P3

Issue. PLANNING

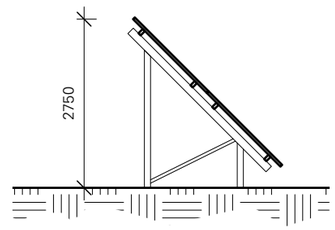
Scale. 1:500 @ A3

Date. 14.06.2021

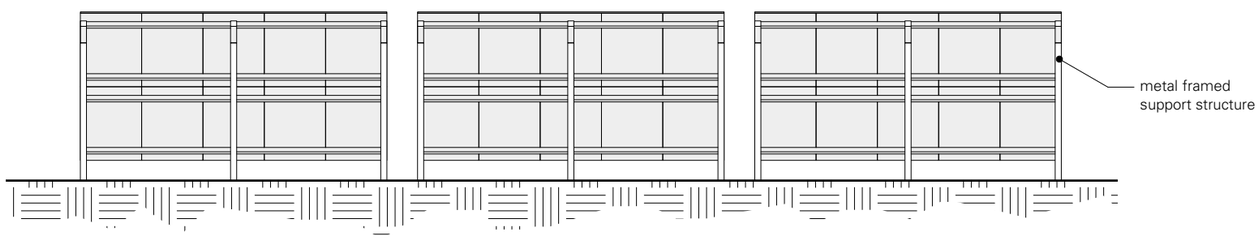
01 West elevation of solar panel array



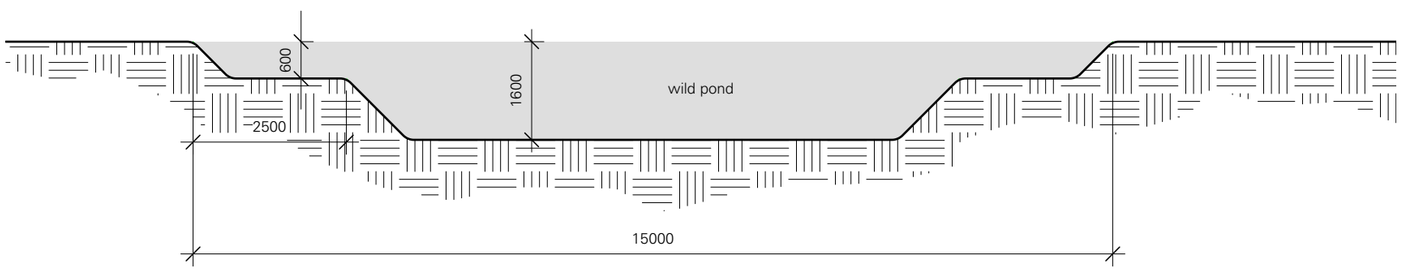
02 Section through solar panel array



03 East elevation of solar panel array



04 Long section (North-South) through wild pond



Rev.	Date	Description
P1	20.12.21	Issued for planning

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Wild Pond & Solar Panel Array as Proposed

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Drawing. 145_3016_P1
Issue. PLANNING
Scale. - 1:100 @ A3
Date. 20.12.2021