Howard Cole
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR ARRAY ON LAND ADJACENT TO ARMINGER HOUSE, PARKERS LANE, KINGTON LANGLEY SN15 5PH

Prepared on behalf of
Mr and Mrs Stables

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Stables to accompany a planning application for a ground mounted solar array, and associated works, on land adjacent to Arminger House, Parkers Lane, Kington Langley.

1.2 The accompanying planning application has been prepared in light of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework which encourages Local Planning Authorities to approach decisions on development proposals in a positive and creative way.

1.3 Section 2 of this Statement outlines the site and surrounding area, considering site constraints and planning history. The proposed development is outlined at Section 3. Relevant planning policy at both national and local level is set out at Section 4.

1.4 Town planning issues and considerations are addressed at Section 5. Finally, Section 6 concludes this Planning Statement by addressing the issues pertinent to the determination of the accompanying planning application, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations.

1.5 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following plans and documents that accompany the planning application:

- Site Location Plan
- Site Plan as proposed
- Technical information on array supports

2. Site Context

Site Characteristics

2.1 The applicant site is within a field adjacent to and west of the applicant's home, Arminger House off Parkers Lane. The proposed array measures approximately 62m^2 in area and is accessed solely from Arminger House. It is not within part of the curtilage of the dwelling.

2.2 The field is currently grazed and is bounded by mature trees and hedgerows and contains wooden sheds on its western boundary. There is a bridleway running along the northern boundary which is below the site ground level and therefore has no intervisibility with the proposed solar array.

2.3 The site also falls within the designated Kington Langley Conservation Area on its northwest edge. In addition, there are two grade II listed dwellings (Tally Ho and Owl Cottage) to the south on Parkers Lane both over 100 meters from the location of the proposed solar array. On this basis a heritage assessment is set out below.

2.4 The property is not located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or the Green Belt.

2.5 There are no registered World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields within the site, nor within relevant proximity.

2.6 The site contains no watercourses, and it is located within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk) as defined within the Environment Agency's latest mapping data.

2.7 There are no Public Rights of Way located within the application site.

2.8 The site is not set within an area designated as having any ecological or nature conservation value.

Planning History

2.9 The site has a very limited planning history confined to 16/04111/FUL - Replace Existing Buildings with Sectional Timber Storage Building for Agricultural Equipment Used to Farm & Maintain Land was approved in June 2016.

2.10 Arminger House itself has a modest, planning history as set out below.

6/08332/FUL - Replacement of existing UPVC conservatory with orangery style rear extension was approved in March 2016.
N/07/00830/FUL - Erection of First Floor Extension Above Existing Garage was approved in May 2007.
13/01959/FUL – For a two-storey extension was approved in September 2013.

3. The Development Proposal

3.1 The proposal is for a 9.6kW solar array comprising 24 panels in two banks of 12. The panels are to be mounted on frames at 30 degrees (see accompanying technical information on array supports) and south facing. The support frames are secured with above ground concrete block ballast.

3.2 The arrays measure 13.6 metres by 4.5 metres and have a maximum height of 861mm.

3.3 In terms of their benefits the system will save 1.9t of CO_2 per year.

3.4 The array is to be located in the northern part of the site where it will be screened from view by existing vegetation.

3.5 The proposals therefore are considered to not cause harm and provide significant carbon saving benefits.

4. Planning Policy Considerations

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the operative development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This section provides an overview of planning policy and guidance relevant to the proposed development.

The Operative Development Plan

4.2 The operative development plan applicable to the application site comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy which covers the period to 2026 and was adopted in January 2015. In terms of national policy in the NPPF the Wiltshire Core Strategy is not up to date and a Local Plan Review will soon be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination. Therefore, policies in the Core Strategy are considered first, followed by commentary on the Local Plan Review Policies.

4.3 The following Core Strategy policies are relevant to the consideration of the accompanying planning application.

Core Policy 42 'Standalone renewable energy installations'

4.4 Whilst the proposal is not technically a standalone installation providing power solely to the grid, Policy 42 provides a helpful checklist of relevant factors to be considered including national and local designations, landscape, heritage and residential amenity.

4.5 As set out above, the application site falls outside of any national designation. In addition, the array is located in a position where it is not visible from public rights of way or neighbouring properties. In terms of impacts on the nearby listed buildings and the Conservation Area, these are discussed below under Core Policy 58 and found not to cause any harm.

4.6 Therefore, the proposals are in conformity with Core Policy 42.

Core Policy 58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment'

4.7 The purpose of this policy is to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment including designated heritage assets and their settings.

4.8 As set out in the site description, the proposals fall within the Kington Langley Conservation Area and there are two listed buildings to the southeast of the site, on Parkers Lane. Therefore, the following Heritage Assessment describes these assets significance and setting as well as the impact on that significance.

Heritage Assessment

4.9 Both Tally Ho and Owl Cottage are Grade II listed dwellings located to the southeast of the site both over 100 metres from the location of the proposed array. Their settings are confined to their respective domestic curtilages. Given the existing buildings and mature vegetation between these heritage assets and their settings, which obscure the proposed array, it is considered that the application proposals cause no harm to either the buildings or their settings.

4.10 In terms of the Kington Langley Conservation Area, this has no conservation area appraisal or management plan. The application proposals are small scale and located in an area of the site which is visually screened. Therefore, it is considered that the proposals do not impact on the conservation of the Kington Langley Conservation Area.

4.11 It is concluded, therefore, that the proposals meet the current requirements of Core Policy 58.

4.12 In terms of the relevant Local Plan Review policies, these are contained in **Policy 86 Renewable Energy** and **Policy 99 Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment**.

4.13 The differences between Core Strategy Policy 42 and the emerging Local Plan Review Policy 86 are that Policy 86 applies to all renewable energy schemes and that grazing practises are to be maintained together with ensuring mechanisms to require the removal of the equipment on cessation of energy generation.

4.14 Grazing practices are not impacted by the proposals and the applicants are happy to accept a condition requiring the removal of the equipment on cessation of energy generation.

4.15 The differences between Core Strategy Policy 58 and the emerging Local Plan Review Policy 99 include reference to any harm to the significance of designated heritage assets requiring to be justified and outweighed by public benefits and the requirement for a heritage assessment.

4.16 As set out in the Heritage Assessment above, it is not considered that the application proposals cause any harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.

4.17 Notwithstanding, should the Council consider that there is harm then there are clear public benefits in terms of reduction in CO_2.

4.18 In terms of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan Review, therefore, the proposals are in accord with the operative development plan and 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, should be permitted.

4.19 The following paragraphs explore whether other material circumstances indicate that permission should not be forthcoming.

National Planning Policy

4.20 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated and re-issued in December 2023. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how those policies are expected by the Secretary of State to be applied.

4.21 **Paragraph 7** sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with **paragraph 8** setting out that the planning system has three overarching objectives that are interdependent: economic, social, and environmental.

4.22 As set out at **paragraph 10**, so that sustainable development can be pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.23 **Paragraph 11** sets out that plans and planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date plan without delay.

4.24 Section 14 of the Framework addresses the challenge of climate change and our transition to a low carbon future. In particular, **paragraph 163** states that the LPA's should recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and such applications should be approved if its impacts are acceptable.

4.25 **Paragraph 164** is clear that LPA's should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings. Where such proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets the policies in NPPF Chapter 16 will need to be applied.

4.26 **Paragraph 205 in Chapter 16** sets out that in considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

4.27 **Paragraph 206** states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

4.28 From the appraisal at paragraphs 4.4 to 4.19 above it is clear that the requirements of the NPPF are fully met.

Other Material Planning Policy Considerations.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4.29 **Section 72(1)** - obliges the decision maker to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.30 The assessment above demonstrates that there is no harm to either the Grade II Listed buildings on Parkers Lane nor the Kington Langley Conservation Area or its setting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

5.1 The previous section of this Planning Design and Access Statement has identified all relevant planning policies, national planning policy and local guidance relevant to the consideration of the development proposal subject of the accompanying planning application. Having considered the nature of the site, this section seeks to assess the application proposal against the above noted policy requirements. Those considerations are addressed under the following headlines:

- The principle of development.
- Design and layout
- Impact upon heritage assets and their setting.

Principle of Development

5.2 The proposal subject of the accompanying application seeks planning permission for a new solar array to meet the needs of Arminger House.

5.3 Therefore, the principle of development can only be considered acceptable.

Design and layout

5.4 As highlighted earlier within the site and proposal descriptions, the application proposal is sited so that intervisibility is not an issue for neighbouring properties, listed buildings or the Conservation Area.

Impact on designated heritage assets

5.5 Similarly, and as detailed in the Heritage Assessment the proposals are screened and distant from the listed dwellings on Parkers Lane and causes no harm to them or their settings nor on the Conservation Area.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to assess a scheme for a ground mounted solar array, and associated works. It has highlighted that the principle of the proposed scheme is accepted by the operative development plan.

6.2 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has highlighted that the application proposals will not affect the setting of the listed buildings on Parkers Lane nor the Conservation Area.

6.3 In conclusion, it is evident the application proposal represents appropriate development.

6.4 Overall, it has been demonstrated within this Planning, Design and Access Statement that the proposed development meets the requirements of the operative Development Plan and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

6.5 It is, therefore, recommended that in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework planning permission ought to be granted without delay.

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