DELEGATED REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2023/09068
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Site Address:	Box Recreation Field, Valens Terrace, Box, Wilts
Proposal:	Proposed installation of six PV Solar panels on roof of the Tractor Shed situated on the Recreation Ground, Box
Recommendation:	Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the Proposed installation of six PV solar panels on roof of a single storey building used by the parish council for the storage of equipment involved in the maintenance of the Box village recreation ground.

The solar panels are to be affixed to the surface of the south facing slope of the roof.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is wholly within the village of Box, within the Box Conservation Area. The site is also within the North Wiltshire Green Belt and the Cotswold AONB (now known as the Cotswold National Landscape).

The site is a tractor shed within the recreation ground. The wider site is surrounded predominantly be residential development.

POLICIES

Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS)
Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
Core Policy 51: Landscape
Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

Saved policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011
CF2 Leisure facilities and open space

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Green Belt
- AONB/National Landscape
- Conservation Area
- Scale and design

- Amenity

CONSULTATION

Box Parish Council: Support

> *"The Box Parish Council supports the application."*

Wiltshire Council Conservation: No objection

> *"No objection - the works are to the roof of a modern storage building which is shielded from view from the main body of the open space."*

Wiltshire Council Climate Team: Support

> *"The proposal, due to it being about the provision of renewable energy will make a contribution to the NPPF's aim of radically reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is a positive measure against the spatial planning objective of the Wiltshire Core Stratgey to address climate change. The proposal accords with the principles of CP41 and CP42. Siting the panels on an existing building means that they will be hidden from view by, or seen against, the existing building. The existing building has modern corrugated sheet materials to the roof that do not contribute to the significance of the conservation area or the setting of the nearby listed buildings. Nor is the building prominent in public vantage points. Furthermore, I note that the conservation officer raises no objection.*
>
> *This is a positive development on the journey to net zero. Support."*

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received.

ASSESSMENT

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a key material planning consideration. Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations.

Principle of Development

Decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the policies contained in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and government guidance.

The principle of minor external alterations such as the installation of solar panels on an ancillary building storing equipment used by the parish council to maintain the village recreation ground, is established as acceptable. Saved policy CF2 to the North Wiltshire Local Plan confirms that proposals for the redevelopment, replacement or improvement of existing leisure facilities or open spaces, will be permitted.

Criterion (iv) is relevant in this instance since the proposals will improve facilities ancillary to its use by reason of its green energy generating properties.

Section 14 to the NPPF also advocates development that contributes towards low carbon energy generation, with paragraph 163 confirming that an application does not need to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy generation and to recognise that even small scale projects can make a valuable contribution.

In the sections below, the detail of the proposals is considered against other policies within the development plan.

Green Belt

The proposal is wholly within the North Wiltshire Green Belt but is within the village of Box. As such the proposal will be viewed in the context of the built-up area of Box.

The proposal is wholly within the North Wiltshire Green Belt but is within the village of Box and constitutes an addition to south elevation roof plane of the existing building. However, the panels are slim and do not sit so proud of the roof that they could be regarded as being a disproportionate addition to the original building, as allowed for by the exception set out in paragraph 154(c) to the NPPF.

For the above reasons, the proposals are not considered to constitute inappropriate development in the green belt.

AONB (National Landscape)

The installation of the solar panels on the roof of the building is noticeable when compared to the current built form. However, the proposal in this instance is again wholly contextualised within the built form of the village of Box. As such the proposal will not have a detrimental impact upon the character and setting of the Cotswold National Landscape. The proposal has therefore complied with the requirements of CP51 of the WCS.

Impact upon Conservation Area

The proposal is wholly within the Box Conservation Area and as required by CP58 of the WCS due consideration is given to the potential impacts or harm which may arise to the BCA.

The proposal will see the introduction of solar panels on the south elevation of the roof plane of a relatively modern storage building. The panels are located in a historic core of the BCA and surrounded by predominantly residential properties.

The proposed panels are modest and situated on a modern building. As such the proposal in this instance is not considered to be a detrimental or deleterious addition to the character and setting of the BCA or result in harm to the heritage asset in this case the BCA.

As no harm has been identified to the heritage asset, no public benefit is required to offset any harm. However, as is advised in section 14 to the NPPF and as noted within the comments of the Council's

Climate Change team, there are tangible benefits associated with even small scale renewable energy projects. Nevertheless, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of CP58 of the WCS.

Scale and design

WCS Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, elevational design, materials amongst other things. Sections 12 of the NPPF expects a good standard of design.

The addition of the solar panels to the roof are of a modest nature and is of a typical proportion in relation to the host building and this form of development. Furthermore, in terms of scale the addition of the solar panels not considered to result in an addition to the host building, which suggests that either the building or the wider site is being overdeveloped.

In terms of design, the addition of the panels is a fairly typical example of this form of development. Its resulting appearance is typical of a semi-industrial building and as such it is not considered that the result design is harmful or deleterious to the character of the host building or the wider area.

In terms of scale and design the proposal in its totality is considered to comply with the requirements of CP 57 of the WCS.

Amenity

Core Policy 57 states that development should have regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself. Section 12 of the NPPF also states that planning decisions should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Due to the proposal's location within the plot and the relative distance from neighbours it is not considered that the proposal will result in unacceptable impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, loss of light or overshadowing.

The potential for glint and glare is noted, however, due to the limited scale and nature of the proposal it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring properties.

As such, on balance the proposal is acceptable in terms of amenity in relation to CP57 of the WCS.

CONCLUSION

The proposal does not constitute inappropriate development in the green belt. Similarly, the development is not considered to impact unacceptably upon the character of the area, wider landscape and is not considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity or living conditions of the adjoining occupiers. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Core Policy 51, 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, saved policy CF2 to the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 and relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

See decision notice