DELEGATED REPORT

Application Reference:	PL/2024/00472
Application Type:	Householder planning permission
Site Inspection:	
Consultation ends:	18 April 2024
Case officer:	Brook Bishop

Site Address:	69 Great Mead, Chippenham, SN15 3GS
Proposal:	The installation of 16 435w solar panels on a single pitch, 20 degree sloped, southerly facing roof. The installation will not involve any modifications to the existing roof.
Recommendation:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The application site relates to a two-storey, four-bedroom dwellinghouse externally constructed from a mix of materials in a modern architectural style. It has a roughly square footprint and a mono-pitched roof facing southwards topped with a chimney stack. The site is set in a modern residential area called the Former Cattle Market, built around 2010, and, although there is a distinct architectural style, the materials and textures found in the development create an eclectic character.

The site lies within the settlement boundary of Chippenham. The site is nearby to archaeological sites recorded on the Swindon and Wilts Historic Environment Record. The site is not subject to any other sensitive or special land-use designations, but it is noted that permitted development rights have been removed.

PROPOSAL:

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of sixteen photovoltaic (solar) panels on the roof of the host dwelling. They are arranged in a rectangle and mounted close against the profile of the roof.

POLICIES:

Legislation:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

• Schedule 2, Part 14, Class A

National Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

• Paragraphs 11, 131, 135, 163, 164.
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guidance (Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places) 2019 (NDG)

Local Policy:
Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS):
• Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy (CP1)
• Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy (CP2)
• Core Policy 10: Spatial Strategy for Chippenham Community Area (CP10)
• Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy (CP41)
• Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations (CP42)
• Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design & Space Shaping (CP57)

Neighbourhood Plan:
Draft Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (2023)
• Chippenham Identity Objective 4

Supplementary Planning Documents:
Wiltshire Design Guide – Adopted March 2024

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 be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:
N/06/01005/FUL – 256 Dwellings, Access, Parking and Landscaping (Approved with Conditions 28/06/2006)
• Condition 7: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) there shall be no extension or external alteration to any building forming part of the development hereby permitted.
N/10/03558/FUL - Amendment to 9 Dwellings Approved Under 06/1005/FUL (Approved with Conditions 15/02/2011)
• Condition 2: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No.2) (England) Order 2008 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting or amending that Order with or without modification), there shall be no additions/extensions or external alterations to any building forming part of the development hereby permitted.

ISSUES:
The main considerations which are material to the determination of this application are listed below:
• Principle

• The Climate Emergency and Impact on Local Character and Appearance
• Impact on Residential Amenity

CONSULTEE RESPONSES:
The following consultees were invited to comment on this application:
• Chippenham Town Council: Support (22/04/2024).

RESPRESENTATIONS:
No letters of representation were made by members of the public.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:
Principle:
The application site is within the defined settlement of Chippenham; The principle of providing and extending facilities in association with existing residential accommodation is considered acceptable and in accordance with policies CP1, CP2 and CP10 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy, subject to assessment of site-specific impacts, related policy considerations and compliance with the other policies contained within the development plan and the guidance and provisions as contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Climate Emergency and Impact on Local Character and Appearance
CP57 requires a high standard of design for all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Well-designed development should create a strong sense of place, reinforce local distinctiveness, and promote community cohesiveness and social wellbeing. No two sites share the same landscapes, contours, relationship with surrounding buildings, street pattern and features and so the design of new developments must draw on an understanding of the site itself and the local context, seeking to maximise the benefits of those characteristics and enhance the overall character of the locality. New development should integrate into its surroundings, but the proximity of poor quality or indistinct development is not a justification for standard or poor design proposals.

CP57 (v) also states that well-designed development will maximise opportunities for sustainable construction techniques, use of renewable energy sources and ensuring buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, in accordance with Core Policy 41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy).

In February 2019, Wiltshire Council resolved to acknowledge a climate emergency and to seek to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. CP41 confirms that proposals that aim to retrofit existing buildings, by improving their energy efficiency or by integrating low-carbon or renewable energy technology, should be supported and CP42 states applicants will not be required to justify the need for such measures.

The NPPF (164) advises that significant weight be given to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, and this is irrespective of their size or scale for even small-scale projects make a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and achieving a low-carbon future.

The submitted application documents suggest that the application site forms part of a development that was marketed as eco-friendly residences. The planning history suggests that energy efficiency and sustainability were a design consideration.

The proposed location for the solar panels is limited by the site's mono-pitched roof, but it fortuitously faces southwards offering a prime opportunity to generate energy from the sun. This proposal would likely see among the first roof mounted solar panels installed on a dwelling forming part of the estate. However, by virtue of the host dwelling and area being of a distinctly modern character and appearance, designed to maximise their sustainability and energy efficiency, the installation of solar panels on this dwelling would not appear incongruous. Although the panels would be visible to neighbours and, albeit not easily, from the public realm, it is not considered to result in unacceptable harmful impacts on local character and appearance.

The proposal is in accordance with CP41, CP42, and CP57 and can be supported, subject to relevant conditions.

Impact on Residential Amenity:
CP57 (vii) requires that development should ensure the impact on the amenities of existing occupants/neighbours is acceptable and that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter). Residential amenity is affected by significant changes to the environment including privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and living areas within private gardens and this, therefore, needs to be carefully considered accordingly.

The installation of solar panels, by virtue of their nature, is not considered to result in significant impacts on the residential amenity of neighbours or occupiers. No letters of representation have been received which would affect consideration of this proposal and it is in accordance with CP57 (vii).

CONCLUSION:
The proposal is not considered to conflict with the statutory requirements, the national and local planning policies nor the draft Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan. It would not result in harmful impacts to the character and appearance of the local area or residential amenity that are not outweighed by the benefits of the scheme. The proposal can be supported, subject to relevant conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:
It is recommended that planning permission be GRANTED subject to relevant conditions.

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:

Proposed Roof Plan. AA.23.09.13. Received 20 March 2024.
Proposed Elevations. AA.24.09.12. Received 20 March 2024.
Proposed Site Plan. AA.24.09.11. Received 20 March 2024.
Solar PV Panel Detail. AA.24.09.14. Received 20 March 2024.
435 Watt Solar Panel Specification Sheet. Received 17 January 2024.
Application Form. Received 17 January 2024.

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

3 The solar PV equipment hereby approved shall be removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.

REASON: To protect the long-term visual amenity of the area.

Informatives: (2)

4 Any alterations to the approved plans, brought about by compliance with Building Regulations or any other reason must first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of work.

5 The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.