

Planning Statement

(Incorporating Design & Access Statement and Heritage Impact Statement)

Scout Hut at Sherston, Wiltshire. SN16 0NP.

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to the existing Scout Hut at Sherston, Wiltshire. SN16 0LL.

The application site lies within a designated Conservation Area. The proposal seeks to enhance the environmental performance of an existing community building while preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

This document incorporates:

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement (as required under Article 8 of the DMPO)
- Heritage Impact Statement

The proposal is illustrated on the submitted planning drawings prepared by SE Architecture (January 2026).

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises an existing, single-storey Scout Hut building located within the village of Sherston. The building is a modest, utilitarian structure typical of mid-late 20th century community facilities.

The Scout Hut is characterised by:

- A pitched concrete tiled roof
- Bradstone block walls
- White uPVC windows and doors

The building is not listed and makes a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area. The surrounding area comprises a mix of residential properties, community buildings, and open spaces typical of a rural village setting.

3. Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the installation of 27 solar PV panels mounted on the existing pitched roof of the Scout Hut, comprising:

- 18 no. panels (each measuring 1134 x 1762mm) on the east-facing roof slope
- 9 no. panels (each measuring 1134 x 1762mm) on the west-facing roof slope

The panels will be mounted flush with the roof plane, following the existing roof pitch, and will not alter the roof form. No other external alterations are proposed.

The solar PV system will provide renewable electricity to support the ongoing use of the Scout Hut as a community facility, reducing energy costs and carbon emissions.

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 National Planning Policy

The proposal accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular:

- Section 14: *Meeting the challenge of climate change*, which strongly supports renewable and low-carbon energy development
- Paragraphs relating to the conservation of heritage assets, which allow for development that results in less than substantial harm, where this harm is outweighed by public benefits

4.2 Local Planning Policy

The proposal has been designed to minimise visual impact and to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with local Conservation Area policies.

Local planning policy supports

- Sustainable development
- Renewable energy generation
- The retention and enhancement of community facilities

Alignment with Wiltshire Council Climate Strategy (2022)

Wiltshire Council adopted its **Climate Strategy** in **February 2022**, following a period of public and stakeholder consultation. The Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency through reducing carbon emissions, supporting renewable energy generation, and promoting sustainable development across the county.

The proposed installation of solar PV panels at the Scout Hut directly aligns with the objectives of the Climate Strategy by:

- Reducing carbon emissions associated with the operation of an existing community building through on-site renewable energy generation
- Improving the energy efficiency and resilience of a valued local facility, helping to reduce long-term operational costs
- Supporting decentralised, small-scale renewable energy solutions that can be delivered sensitively within existing settlements, including Conservation Areas
- Demonstrating leadership and education on climate action, particularly appropriate given the Scout Hut's role in supporting young people and community activities

The proposal represents a practical and proportionate response to the Climate Strategy, delivering measurable environmental benefits without causing harm to heritage significance. As such, it positively contributes to Wiltshire Council's strategic climate objectives while remaining fully consistent with planning and conservation policies.

5. Design and Access Statement

5.1 Design Principles

The design approach is intentionally simple, discreet, and reversible. Key principles include:

- Retention of the existing roof form and materials
- Flush-mounted panels to minimise visual prominence
- Panel layouts that respect roof geometry and avoid roof edges
- No alteration to openings or building massing

The panels will appear as a secondary element on the roof, read against the existing concrete tiles, and will not introduce incongruous forms or materials.

5.2 Amount, Layout and Scale

The number and arrangement of panels has been carefully considered to:

- Optimise renewable energy generation
- Avoid over-dominance on any single roof slope
- Maintain visual balance when viewed from public vantage points

The scale of the development is modest and proportionate to the host building.

5.3 Appearance

The panels will be dark, non-reflective units, reducing glare and visual contrast. Their appearance is typical of modern solar installations and is appropriate for a utilitarian community building of this nature.

5.4 Access

The proposal does not affect pedestrian or vehicular access to the site. Maintenance access to the panels will be undertaken from within the site and will not impact public routes.

6. Heritage Impact Statement

6.1 Significance of the Conservation Area

The Sherston Conservation Area derives its significance primarily from:

- Its historic village layout
- Traditional building forms and materials
- The overall coherence of the rural streetscape

The Scout Hut is not a designated heritage asset and does not exhibit architectural or historic features that contribute positively to the significance of the Conservation Area. It is best described as a neutral building within the designation.

6.2 Impact of the Proposal

The proposed solar panels will be installed on existing roof slopes and will not:

- Alter the roof pitch or height
- Affect historic fabric
- Introduce new built form

Visibility of the panels will be limited and, where views are possible, the panels will be perceived within the context of an existing modern community building rather than a historic structure.

The level of harm to the Conservation Area is assessed as less than substantial, at the very lowest end of the spectrum, in accordance with the NPPF.

6.3 Public Benefits

Any minimal visual impact is clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, which include:

- Reduction in carbon emissions
- Support for national and local climate objectives
- Improved long-term viability of a valued community facility
- Educational and demonstrative value for young people using the Scout Hut

7. Conclusion

The proposed installation of solar PV panels represents a sustainable, well-designed, and policy-compliant form of development.

The proposal:

- Preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Results in no unacceptable heritage harm
- Delivers clear environmental and community benefits
- Is proportionate and reversible

For these reasons, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

*Prepared by SE Architecture
January 2026*