
Planning Statement

Holt Farm – BA14

6RT

Spirit Solar Ltd

Document ref: 40621-1

Introduction

This planning statement has been produced to support the planning application for the installation of 95 no' monocrystalline 475W ground mounted solar photovoltaic panels at Holt Farm, BA14 6RT.

The installation of on-site renewable generation will benefit the client by reducing their dependency on the national grid and therefore also reducing their dependency on fossil fuels. As well as benefitting the homeowner, installing a solar PV system will also aid Wiltshire Council in achieving their carbon footprint targets as set out in the 'Climate Strategy Delivery Plan 2025'.

The client has chosen to site the solar PV array within the adjacent field to the property, in order to minimise any visual impact from the property, neighbouring properties, and public highways.

The application illustrates the careful selection and positioning of the development to maximise the generation rates and reducing the client's carbon footprint, whilst considering the contextual surroundings, environment, and visual impact to the public.

This statement assesses the impact of the proposal to install the ground mounted solar PV system at the adjacent field to Holt Farm, BA14 6RT.

How the development accords with local and national policies

The installation is expected to generate in the region of 36,567 kWh/year which will offset circa 7,313 kg CO₂/year (based on MCS approved carbon intensity values). Wiltshire Council declared a climate emergency in February 2019. One of the council's strategic objectives is to become carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030. The council also committed to seeking to make the county of Wiltshire carbon neutral in the same timeframe. The installation will contribute towards this by offsetting roughly 7,313 kg CO₂/year. The expectation is that the site would initially use 44.8% of the energy generated by the scheme and that this would deliver 32.7% of their electricity.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the national planning policy context for renewable energy. This framework supports a transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourages the use of renewable energy. The NPPF states that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to have a positive strategy to promote renewable or low carbon sources. The NPPF paragraph 98 states that when determining planning applications for renewable energy developments, local authorities should not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

The general consensus is that the requirement for homes to have their own clean energy sources is steadily increasing. This is reflected in the government implementing the 0% VAT rate on domestic solar PV installations incentivising more homes to install systems. The government expect a five-fold increase in solar installations in

UK by 2035 and so to align with these government figures it is hoped that solar PV proposals will generally be viewed favourably by both the general public and the planning office.

The installation of solar panels will help to contribute to a reduction in CO₂ emissions aiding in the sustainability of the property. This will help to achieve Wiltshire Council's aim of supporting residents to reduce their carbon emissions and increase the uptake of green energy.

Assessment of Impact and Mitigation

General visual impact – The impact on the area is considered to be minimal and limited. The ground mounted system has been chosen such that the highest part of the panel will be sitting ~400mm off the ground. To further minimise any visual impact the solar PV panels will have an all-black finish. The visibility of the array from any public highway is likely to be minimal.

Racking system and end of system life – The mounting system will use a low-pitched, ballasted design by Van der Valk, which does not require any penetration into the ground. Concrete ballast blocks will hold the array securely in place without the need for ground screws or permanent fixings. The entire installation — including panels, mounting structures, and ballast — can be removed at the end of its operational life with minimal to no lasting impact on the ground or the surrounding area.

Wider impact – The residential property and adjacent field in which the ground mounted system will be installed is in a rural area, surrounded by tree cover, meaning that the client will gain all the benefits of solar and a reduced carbon footprint, with few residents seeing the solar PV panels. Therefore, the sustainable advantage of the installation is great whilst the visual impact of the installation is very minimal to the wider community.

Reflection and glare – it is often perceived that solar panels produce glint and glare that can affect nearby vehicular traffic and aircrafts, this is somewhat unfounded for the reasons below. The panels are black in appearance with black outer frames and have anti-reflective glass. The principle technologies behind the solar panels are to absorb as much light as possible to convert to electricity and thus there is no discernible reflection or glare produced as a by-product. This when compared to other reflective materials such as metal roof sheeting, polytunnels and greenhouses gives confidence in any adverse effects of the solar panels being negated.

Example installation photo of an equivalent mounting



The image above shows an example of the proposed racking system, which pitches the panels up by 10 degrees, with the highest point being ~0.4m above the ground. Note, that the whilst the proposed racking system is the same, as in the above, the proposed panel is all black in aesthetic to further reduce the visual impact. An example photo of the proposed all-black module can be seen below.

