



Context Planning Ltd
Cambridge House
Henry Street
Bath
BA1 1BT

Development Management
Wiltshire Council

5th March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION SEEKING THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS ACROSS TWO BUILDINGS AT CRICKLADE MANOR PREP SCHOOL.

- 1.1** Context Planning Ltd have been instructed to prepare this application for the addition of solar panels to the roofs of 2 buildings at Cricklade Manor Prep School. The additional information being provided is at the request of the local authority following a previous application (PL/2025/05262). The application site is located on Calcutt Street in the town of Cricklade. Please see the accompanying site location plan for further details. The site resides within the Cricklade Conservation Area and near to a Grade II listed building but is not affected by any other planning constraints.
- 1.2** The school is seeking permission to install 98 roof-mounted solar panel modules across two buildings (which are not listed, connected to or in sight of the listed building) on their site to assist with renewable power generation to meet the school's energy demands. The proposed solar panels would deliver tangible benefits, comprising of reduced carbon emissions, decreased operational costs for the school, and an enriching educational experience for students who would be able to observe and learn from renewable energy technology first-hand.

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- 1.3** The proposed locations of these can be seen on the drawing below and would encompass installing 33 on one roof and 65 on the other roof (Figure 1). The proposed location on the southern roof slopes has been chosen to maximise the solar energy output of the panels.



Figure 1- The locations of the proposed installations.

- 1.4** The panels will be installed using mounted rails that are directly fixed to the roof rafters (under the tile). This allows for them to be fixed close to the roof, resulting in very modest height of 130mm (Figure 2).

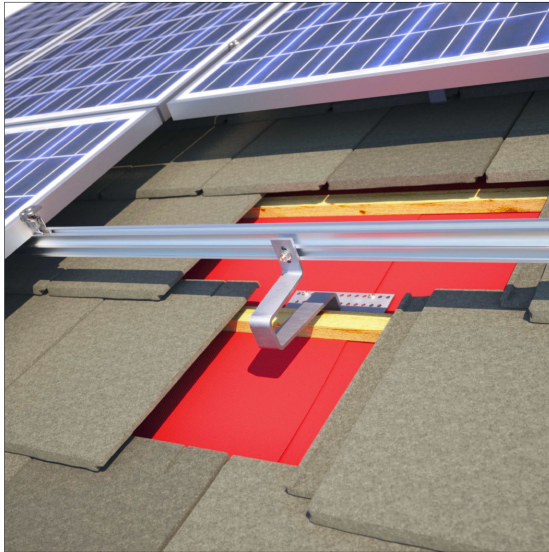


Figure 2- Roof mounting system.

- 1.5** The panels are 510W and would individually measure 1.134m by 1.954m. Full specification details of the panels can be found in the accompanying documentation.
- 1.6** As the site contains a Grade II listed building known as The Manor (listing entry number 1356093), planning permission is being sought for the proposed solar panel installation. This follows on from advice received from Wiltshire Council after a withdrawn prior approval application (PL/2025/05262) for the same proposal.
- 1.7** Relevant policies from the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted in 2015) include:
- CP41: Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy
 - CP57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
 - CP58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Principle of Development:

- 1.8** This development is being sought to allow the school to generate renewable energy to utilise in meeting their energy requirements.
- 1.9** Paragraph 161 of the NPPF guides that *‘the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts. Paragraph 167 advises that ‘Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.’.*
- 1.10** The Wiltshire Council Core Strategy (2015) identifies climate change as one of the six main challenges facing the local authority. It notes that *“Climate change is a central issue to be addressed by the Wiltshire Core Strategy. This necessitates both adapting to the consequences of unavoidable climate change and mitigating the causes by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”* The plan seeks to address this through strategic objective 2. There is a clear commitment from the Council to promote and support developments that seek to address climate change.
- 1.11** CP41 concerns the sustainable construction and transitions to a low-carbon energy. Regarding existing buildings, the policy text notes that *“opportunities should be sought to facilitate carbon reduction through retrofitting”* and notes the use of *“building integrated renewable or low-carbon technologies”*. The proposed solar panel installation directly aligns with this policy text, through the retrofitting of two existing buildings with a low-carbon method of energy generation. The

proposal would offer a clear enhancement through the reduction of the school's reliance on non-renewable energy sources and would positively contribute towards the strategic objectives set out in the Council's strategy.

- 1.12** There is clear support outlined for renewable energy generation in both national and local policies. Subject to other planning considerations which will be discussed in the following sections, the proposal should find support on this basis.

Character and Heritage:

- 1.13** Located on the wider site is a Grade II listed building known as the Manor, which was listed (1356093) in 1967. The building is of a 17th Century style and was erected in the late 19th Century (subsequently extended in the early 20th Century). Further details from the listing are as follows *"Limestone ashlar, tile roof. Two storeys and attic, nine bays with wing to left and small wing to right. Central porch remodelled C20, segmental pediment in front and triangular pediments to sides, corner ball finials. Cross windows with stone mullions and transoms. One large 3-light mullioned and transomed window to left wing. Seven dormers with wood mullions and alternate segmental and triangular pediments. Roof to central section hipped and with wooden modillion eaves. Modillions smaller on left wing. Chimneys have moulded strings and cappings."* The site also falls within the Cricklade Conservation Area.
- 1.14** In determining this application, the Council is required under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, and under Section 72(1) to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 1.15** The NPPF makes it clear that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight

attaches to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed through development within an asset's setting. The NPPF defines the setting of heritage assets as the surroundings in which they are experienced. The extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Historic England guidance adds that the Setting of Heritage Assets embraces all of the surroundings from which an asset can be experienced or that can be experienced from or within the asset. Elements of the setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset; may affect the ability to appreciate that significance; or may be neutral.

- 1.16** The proposed solar panels will be installed on existing roofs and buildings on the site. There will not be a change to the overall scale, appearance or position of these buildings. In the context of being in an area of built development, the addition of solar panels will not seem out of place in the immediate landscape. The mounting system (shown in Figure 2 earlier in this letter) selected was chosen to ensure that there would be a very minimal increase in the height (only 130mm). This is very modest and when considered in the context of the panels being perceived from a distance, this small increase in height will not be perceivable. The proposed solar panels will therefore be appropriate in the context and setting of the site.
- 1.17** The proposed solar panels will not be near the Grade II listed building, as demonstrated by Figure 3 below. Owing to this physical separation and the orientation of the respective roof planes, the panels will not be visible from the setting of the listed building, nor will the listed building form part of the backdrop or wider appreciation of the solar array. The two elements are experienced independently, with no intervisibility between them and no shared roofscape when viewed from publicly accessible vantage points. As a result, the installation would not alter the character, appearance, or significance of the listed building, either directly or through changes to its setting.

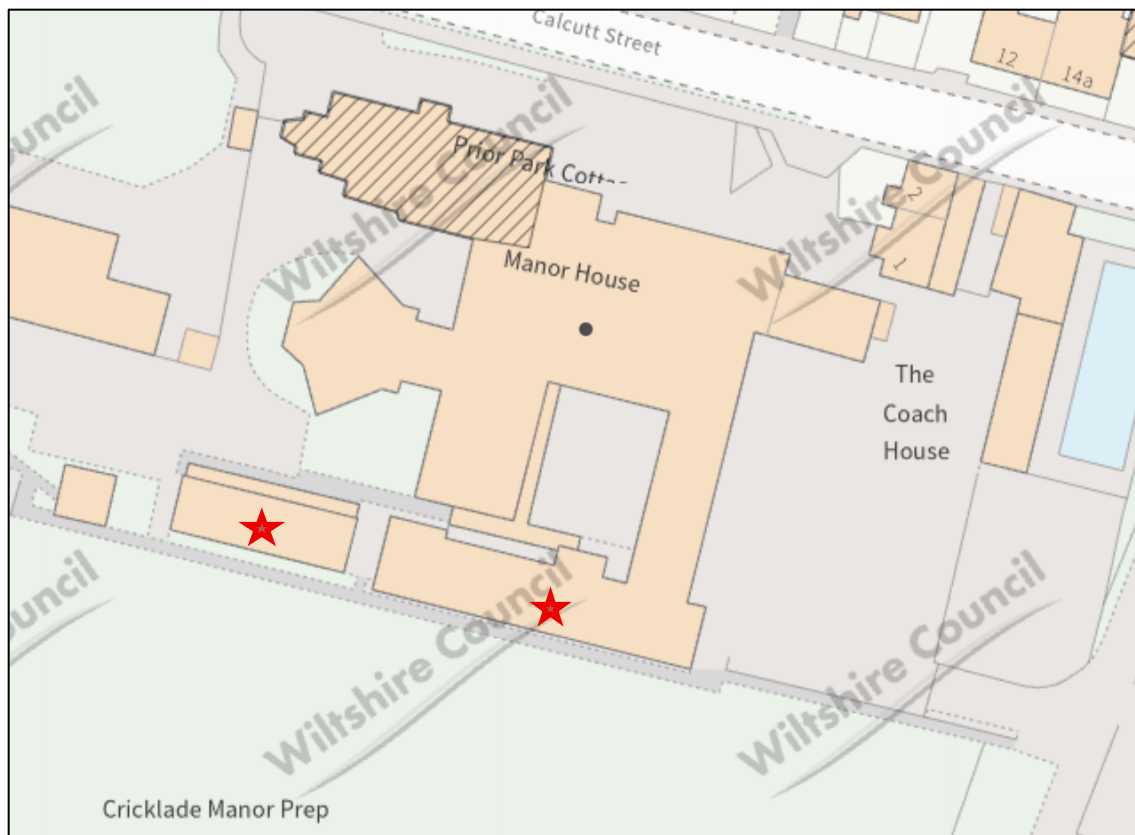


Figure 3- The Manor (shaded) in relation to the proposed buildings (red stars).

- 1.18** For the reasons outlined above, it is not the applicant's position that the heritage asset will be harmed in this instance however, in the event that '*less than substantial harm*' were to be identified to the setting of the heritage assets, NPPF paragraph 215 advises this '*less than substantial*' harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The PPG advises that '*public benefits...could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives*'.
- 1.19** The proposed scheme would deliver a range of benefits to both the local community and the school itself. There is a clear environmental benefit through the generation of renewable energy which will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions. Where energy generation exceeds the demands of the school, any surplus electricity would be fed back into the national grid, further supporting the transition

to clean, renewable energy and benefiting the wider community beyond the school site. Furthermore, by generating electricity on site, this would also result in considerably lower energy bills for the school. These savings will be reinvested directly into the school, supporting the continued provision of high-quality education and helping to sustain the range of opportunities available to students.

1.20 Beyond these financial and environmental advantages, the solar panels would also provide a unique and valuable educational opportunity for students. Having renewable energy technology installed and operational in their own school grounds would allow pupils to engage with sustainable energy in a tangible, real-world context that enriches the curriculum and their learning. Considering all of the above, it is argued that the *'less than substantial harm'* would be clearly outweighed by the public benefits delivered by this scheme.

1.21 Moreover, given the localised/minimal visual impact of the proposals it would also not result in any harm to the significance of the conservation area. The panels would not be experienced as part of the historic townscape or roofscape that contributes to its special architectural and historic interest. The development therefore preserves the significance of the designated heritage assets and accords with relevant heritage CP58 policy objectives.

Summary:

1.22 The proposal is considered to be in accordance with development plan policies and the NPPF. The Council are therefore respectfully encouraged to approve this planning application. Should anything further be required, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Isabelle Reynolds BSc (Hons)

Planner | Context Planning Ltd