

APPLICATION FOR HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING PERMISSION DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/00491
APPLICATION TYPE:	Householder planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Green Leaves, Hollow Street, Great Somerford, Chippenham, SN15 5JD
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Solar panels on detached garage roof
RECOMMENDATION:	That Planning Permission be GRANTED

PROPOSAL & SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal seeks planning permission for solar panels on a detached garage roof within the curtilage of Green Leaves, Hollow Street, Great Somerford. The host dwelling is a detached two storey building. The garage has a flat felt roof, with a sedum finish.

The application site is subject to the following planning policy constraints:

- Great Somerford Conservation Area

PLANNING HISTORY

Proposal / Summary
18/03284/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 28/8/2018 – Replacement porch canopy
18/03290/FUL - Full planning permission Decision - Approve with Conditions Date: 28/8/2018 – Proposed shed extension
PL/2023/01547 - Householder planning permission Decision - Withdrawn by Council Date: 18/8/2023 – Balcony and spiral staircase to the rear (North) side of dwelling, existing dormer window to be extended vertically to create access to first floor level and construction of timber balcony

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Great Somerford (incorporating Startley) Neighbourhood Plan:

- No policies of relevance

Wiltshire Design Guide: Appendix D – Design Guidance for Householder extensions

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Great Somerford Parish Council: No objection

REPRESENTATIONS

No comments were received.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans.

Design and Heritage Impact

Policy context

Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that all new development is of high design quality, reflecting local context, character, and distinctiveness.

From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 72(1) of the Act requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The Council's Core Strategy Policy CP58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance and encourages proposals which improve the condition of heritage assets at risk.

The Council's Core Strategy CP 57: Ensuring high quality design requires a high quality of design in all new developments. The policy requires applicants to "demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through (amongst other things) responding to the value of the natural and historic environment and being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and landscapes. Development is required to respond positively to the existing in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting.

The NPPF outlines government policy for planning. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Assessment

The proposal seeks permission for the installation of nine solar panels on the roof of a detached garage, arranged in three rows of three panels. The existing sedum roof would be removed as part of the installation works.

The property is accessed via a private drive from Hollow Street, and the detached garage is located to the rear of the dwelling known as Brown Leaves. Due to its siting, the garage and consequently the proposed panels, has very limited visibility from the public realm.

The solar panels are modest in scale and are confined to the roof of an ancillary outbuilding. Given their limited visibility and discrete positioning, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not result in harm to its significance. No objections have been raised in relation to heritage or design considerations.

Proposals should integrate successfully with their surroundings in terms of scale, form, materials, and appearance, while also supporting sustainable construction and renewable energy, in accordance with CP57 and the Wiltshire Design Guide.

The development is therefore considered to comply with Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide, as well as the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Amenity

Point vii of Core Policy 57 - Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that developments do not adversely affect neighbouring properties.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Paragraph 135(f), stresses that planning decisions should ensure developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The proposed development has been assessed in terms of its potential impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with particular regard to loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, and overbearing effects.

Loss of Light / Overshadowing

The detached garage is single storey with a flat roof. The proposed solar panels are low-profile and would not materially increase the height of the structure. The neighbouring property to the south, Brown Leaves, is located in close proximity. However, as shown on the elevations, the roof of the garage is a similar height to the eaves of this single-storey neighbouring dwelling. It is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant loss of light or unacceptable overshadowing.

Loss of Privacy

The proposal does not give rise to any overlooking. The installation of solar panels on the garage roof would have no impact on privacy.

Overbearing Impact and Glare

The solar panels are mounted on a low-profile ballasted system with a tilt of 10°, resulting in a maximum height of approximately 270 mm above the roof surface. Given the modest scale of the development and its ancillary nature, the proposal would not appear overbearing when viewed from neighbouring properties. Given the low profile height of the solar panels and height of the adjoining neighbour, it is not considered that the proposals would result in any overbearing or give rise to unacceptable glare. Furthermore, no objections have been received from neighbouring occupiers in respect of residential amenity.

The proposal therefore accords with Core Policy 57 point vii in respect of safeguarding residential amenity and Appendix D of the Wiltshire Design Guide.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Householder planning applications are exempt from the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under Schedule 7A, Section 4(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021.

The loss of the sedum roof is regrettable, but on balance it is considered that the loss would not be significant and would be outweighed by the significant weight that paragraph 167 of the NPPF directs to give to supporting energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings. The applicant states this is an all-electric house and so the panels in producing renewable energy could support low carbon heating solutions while the mains grid is still decarbonising.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its design, scale, and relationship with the surrounding area. It would not result in any unacceptable harm to the character of the locality or the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Wiltshire Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework. As such, the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

- 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 received 23/02/26:

Location Plan
Proposed Site Plan P-Site-04
Proposed Roof Plan and Front Elevation 3
Side Elevation 10
System Datasheet Renusol FS Pro 10-S

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

- **INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:**
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.
- **INFORMATIVE TO APPLICANT:**
The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:
 - (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
 - (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Wiltshire Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. For further information on exempt developments please refer to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is considered to apply.

