

**Planning Supporting Statement**

**On behalf of**

**Mr R Corrie**

**Proposed Small Ground-Mounted Domestic Solar Array**

**At**

**Lower Littlecott Farm, Goatacre, Calne, SN11 9HZ**

**Dolman**

**Tel: 01380 729456**

**Email: [info@dolmansurveyors.co.uk](mailto:info@dolmansurveyors.co.uk)**

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# **C O N T E N T S**

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## Introduction

This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared by Dolman Building Surveyors to support a full planning application seeking permission for the installation of a ground-mounted, domestic solar array at Lower Littlecott Farm, Goatacre, Calne, SN11 9HZ.

The application is described as follows:

### *Installation of small ground-mounted domestic solar array*

This application is submitted in the context of Wiltshire Council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030. The Wiltshire Climate Strategy, published in 2022, reiterates this commitment and supports the use of low carbon technologies for energy generation in its core objectives around "Homes and the Built Environment" and "Energy".

The applicant purchased Lower Littlecott Farm in 1999 as a family home. Since then, the applicant has undertaken a long-term programme of restoration and improvement to the various buildings and wider grounds, with design and the environment at the heart of every project. This has included conversion and refurbishment works, alteration and extension of buildings, landscaping and the planting of new trees along the access drive and a new woodland plantation to the southwest of the buildings.

The proposal would continue to modernise the site for its long-term future by providing a sustainable source of electricity for the property in line with national objectives and the Wiltshire Climate Strategy.

This Statement examines the proposed development against key planning policy considerations.

## **The Site**

The application site is part of a field, owned by the applicant, to the south of the buildings at Lower Littlecott Farm.

The property and wider land owned by the applicant comprises of a collection of buildings. Adjacent to the main dwelling are associated outbuildings that have been converted and extended to provide ancillary facilities, a separate tenanted dwelling, specialist accommodation and an indoor swimming pool.

The grounds around the buildings include a tennis court to the northeast, a croquet lawn to the southwest and domestic outdoor garden and food growing areas to the east. There is a car port/outbuilding to the southwest of the dwellings, beyond which a semi-mature woodland plantation, bordered to the north by a mature hedgerow. An access drive, lined with trees and estate railings, runs to the northwest of the property in a diagonal alignment. The route crosses a stream and continues uphill then takes a sharp bend to connect to Goatacre Lane.

The buildings are not listed, and the wider site and grounds are not located in a Conservation Area.

The proposed array is located at the northeast corner of an agricultural field, which is bordered by the woodland plantation and croquet lawn to the northwest and north respectively. The location of the array is approximately 50m to the south of the dwelling. There is no planning history associated with the application site specifically.

There are Public Rights of Way that run along hedgerows to the southeast of the application site (ref. HILM18) and to the northeast (ref. HILM14B).

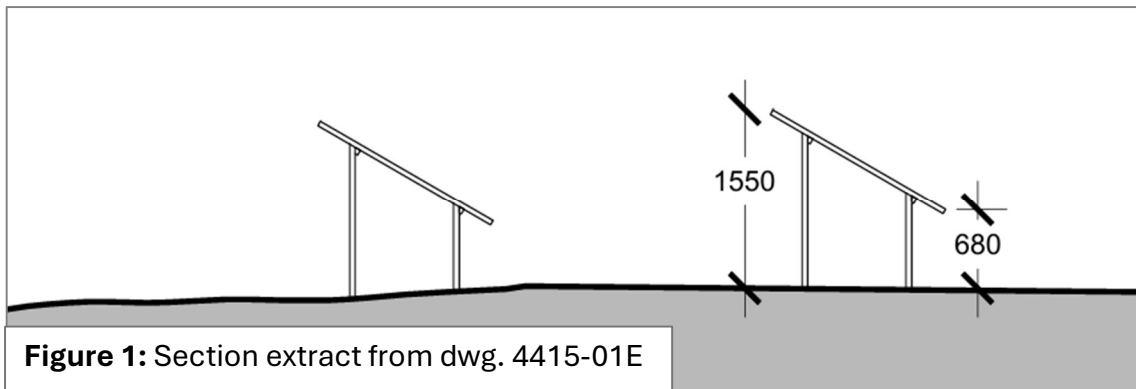
The site is outside of a settlement boundary in open countryside but not within a National Landscape. The site is located at the boundary of Grade 2 and Grade 4 agricultural land as shown on the Natural England Provisional Agricultural Land Classification mapping.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 as shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning.

## The Proposed Development

### Proposal Description

The proposed array comprises two rows of single-stacked Aiko Neostar 2S panels with each panel measuring 1757mm high, 1134mm wide and 30mm deep. The panels would be ground-mounted in a portrait orientation on metal frames as shown in Figure 1 below (extracted from submitted drawing no. 4415-01E).



The array would be secured in the ground with small concrete pads (approximately 300mm by 300mm) that would be covered by soil. The two rows of panels are proposed to be arranged and spaced to ensure that they achieve the optimum energy output. The total area required for the array would be 24.5m by 5.5m (133sqm). The wider site area measures 246sqm to include land to deliver 12.24% Biodiversity Net Gain.

The panels are proposed to be connected to an inverter on the swimming pool outbuilding via an underground cable that is proposed to be laid.

### Proposed Siting

Pre-application advice was sought from Wiltshire Council on the proposed development in August 2025. A response letter was received on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026.

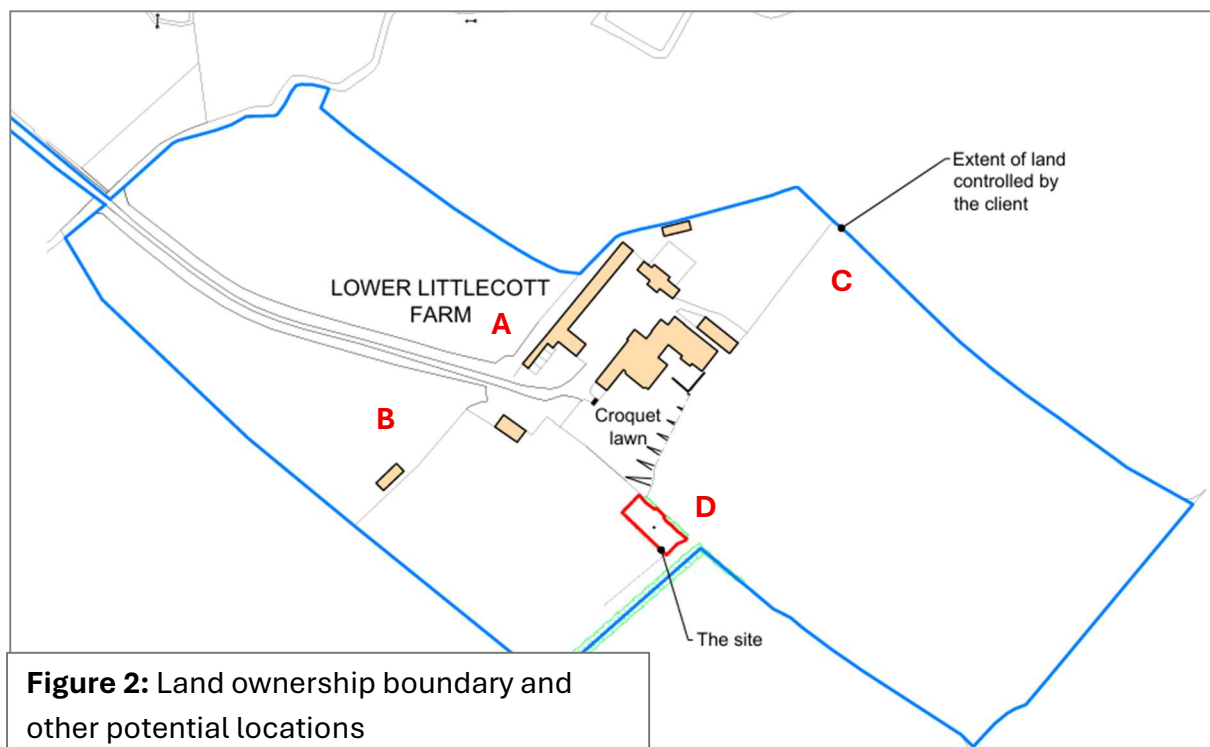
The route of the Public Right of Way HILM14B was also queried in the pre-application response. The digital mapping has subsequently been updated and agreed directly with the Public Rights of Way team. The route of HILM14B as shown on drawing 4415-01 E therefore accurately reflects the route of the footpath on the ground.

Among other things, the pre-application response letter also states that a planning application should demonstrate justification for the chosen location. The siting of the proposed array has been chosen based on the following key considerations:

- Land ownership and use;
- Extent of land required for arable farming;
- Ensuring that there is enough distance from existing hedgerows for maintenance;

- Proximity to and visual relationship with the dwelling and location of the inverter on the swimming pool outbuilding;
- Relationships with adjacent Public Rights of Way and wider landscape impact;
- Topography and orientation to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of the panels.

As a starting point, the array needs to be in proximity to the dwelling and on land owned by the applicant that is not required for another use. The land within the control of the applicant is indicated in blue on Figure 2 below. Some of this land is let to a local farmer who actively farms it.



Alternative potential locations for the proposed array are identified by red letters on Figure 2 and have been discounted for the following reasons:

**A** – The inverter is located at the dwelling, so the array should be sited as close as possible to minimise energy losses and maximise efficiency. In this location, the cable would need to run around existing buildings for more than 100m. This location is also highly visible in longer distance views from the north as the land slopes from Lower Littlecott Farm as a high point.

**B** – Similarly, the cable from this location would need to be over 100m long. Overshadowing from the adjacent woodland plantation to the south would mean that the array needs to be located further into this field, in a more isolated location away from the buildings. This location is also highly visible in longer distance views from the north.

**C** – This field is under tenancy to a local farmer and is being actively farmed. It falls within Grade 2 agricultural land on the Natural England Provisional Agricultural Land

Classification mapping. The ground also slopes towards the buildings into a 'dip' and there is no direct route to the inverter. The output from a solar array would not therefore be optimal.

**D** – This field is under tenancy to a local farmer and is being actively farmed. It falls within Grade 2 agricultural land on the Natural England Provisional Agricultural Land Classification mapping. To avoid overshadowing from the boundary hedgerow to the south, the array would need to be sited further into the field where it would be more exposed than the proposed site location.

## Planning Assessment

Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### Relevant Planning Policy

The development plan relevant to the determination of this application comprises:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015
- Saved policies from the North Wiltshire Local Plan

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance are also material considerations.

The Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 sets out policies to guide development across Wiltshire. The following policies are of relevance to the proposed development:

- Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy
- Core Policy 42: Standalone renewable energy installations
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

At the core of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes economic, social and environmental objectives (Paragraph 8).

Paragraph 11 states that where proposals accord with an up-to-date Development Plan, they should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or such policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- i. The application of policies within the NPPF provide a strong reason for refusing development; or
- ii. The adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF is clear that Local Planning Authorities (LPA) should give *significant weight* to the need to support low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, including through installation of solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights.

Paragraph 168 goes on to state that when determining applications for renewable and low carbon energy developments, LPA should (emphasis added):

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give *significant weight* to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future;
- b) *recognise that small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;*
- c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site.

## **Principle of Development**

Core Policies 41 and 42 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seek to encourage and promote the use of sustainable resources and low carbon energy generation. Additionally, the NPPF states that significant weight should be given to the need to support low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings. Furthermore, the Wiltshire Climate Strategy reiterates the council's commitment to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030, which includes renewable energy generation as part of the efficient and environmentally sensitive use of land.

The proposal is for a solar array to provide a renewable source of energy for the collection of buildings at Lower Littlecott Farm. The policy context, at a national and local level, sets a positive presumption and supports proposals for renewable energy, which should be given significant weight in the planning balance. The principle of development is therefore broadly acceptable, subject to satisfying site-specific material considerations and other relevant local plan policies.

## **Design, Landscape and Visual Impact**

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to secure good design and Core Policy 51 expects development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. Section 12 of the NPPF also expects a good standard of design. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF seeks for decisions to protect and enhance valued landscapes, in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.

The site is not within a National Landscape. The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005) indicates that the site falls within the Swindon-Calne Rolling Clay Lowland Character Area, at the edge of a Limestone Ridge Character Area. This is considered at an area specific level in the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (June 2004) where the site is at the edge of the Hilmarton Rolling Lowland before it meets the Lyneham Hills.

The Hilmarton Rolling Lowland is an area between the scarp slope of the Wessex Downs to the east, the Lyneham Hills to the west and Bowood to the south. The land is described as gently undulating and the landcover is predominantly pasture and

meadow with pockets of arable farming. The Assessment sets out that much of the hedge system in the area is well developed and maintained, creating a sense of enclosure and restricted views. In areas that are more intensively farmed, the hedges become discontinuous and are cut low or replaced by fences.

Wiltshire Council published a Renewable Energy Study Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (RESLSA) (dated March 2023) as part of the evidence base for submission of the Local Plan Review. This uses the spatial framework identified by the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005) and judges the landscape suitability and sensitivity to different scales of solar PV development.

The RESLSA focuses on landscape considerations associated with ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV). For solar development up to 1ha, the site falls within an area of lesser landscape impact in terms of landscape sensitivity. It notes:

- There are no significant variations in landscape sensitivity throughout this Landscape Character Type;
- There is a dense network of Public Rights of Way (PROW);
- The landscape has a rural character with high levels of tranquillity;
- Features include a relatively simple landform and a network of hedgerows with mature trees that disrupt views.

The proposed solar array would be a modest feature, visible in local views from the PROWs adjacent to the site location, however, it would not be visible in longer distance views from other public routes due to intervening hedgerows, trees and topography.

The landscape and visual impact of the proposed array is mitigated as far as possible in the following ways:

- Alternative locations for the proposed development have been appraised as set out in the preceding section of this Statement.
- The boundary between the croquet lawn and the adjacent field is defined by a ha-ha and a section of hedge. The array is located where the existing hedgerow would provide visual screening from the PROW to the northeast.
- The location of the array means that the woodland plantation and rising topography would screen longer distance views from the northwest.
- The arrangement of single-stacked panels over two rows means that the height of the proposed array is minimised as far as possible to a maximum height of 1.55m, allowing footpath users to see over the array.
- No compound or boundary is proposed around the array to preserve open views of the countryside over the array for footpath users.
- The location immediately adjacent to the garden means that the array would be visually associated with the residential use and related to existing built development when seen in views from the PROWs to the west and south. Given the proximity and open nature of the boundary between the array and

the dwelling's garden, the array would not be viewed as a separate urbanising feature.

- The proposed inverter is at the dwelling and the panels themselves would be completely silent with no moving parts. The proposed array would not materially impact upon the tranquillity experienced in the area, other than during construction which would be temporary and for a short period.

Therefore, although the array would be visible in the limited local views, the proposed siting is the most appropriate location that preserves landscape character. The site is not within a National Landscape, and the local landscape is characterised by a strong network of hedgerows with views interrupted by mature vegetation. Where the proposal would be visible in local views it is well-related to existing built development.

By virtue of its modest scale, siting and design, the proposal is not considered to give rise to material harm to landscape character. The proposal therefore complies with the NPPF and Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to protect features of nature conservation. The site is not subject to any ecological designations and currently comprises modified grassland. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a statutory requirement for certain types of development that was introduced by the Environment Act 2021.

A Small Sites Metric and BNG Supporting Document has been submitted with the application. The proposal incorporates land for the planting of 1 no. tree, which will provide 12.24% Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and statutory BNG requirements.

### **Other Planning Considerations**

Core Policy 42 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy supports standalone renewable energy schemes subject to assessing certain site-specific factors as follows:

- i. Landscape:* This is considered in detail earlier in this section and it is concluded that the proposed development would not cause material harm to landscape character.
- ii. Green Belt:* The site is not within the Green Belt.
- iii. New Forest National Park:* The site is not within the National Park.
- iv. Biodiversity:* This is considered earlier in this section.
- v. Historic environment:* The site is not near to any listed buildings, Conservation Areas or other designated heritage assets.

- vi. *Local transport network:* The proposed development would not generate additional vehicle movements beyond the short construction phase, which would be managed. There would be no adverse impacts on the local highway network.
- vii. *Residential amenity:* The proposed array would serve the buildings at Lower Littlecott Farm. There are no nearby neighbours that would be impacted. It has been sited to preserve the visual amenity of the dwelling and there would be no unacceptable noise, odour or safety impact arising from the development.
- viii. *Agricultural land:* The site is located at the boundary of Grade 2 and Grade 4 agricultural land as shown on the Natural England Provisional Agricultural Land Classification mapping. Given the small scale of the proposed array and its location in a field margin, the loss of a small area of land does not give rise to a material adverse impact from the loss of such land.

## Conclusion

This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared by Dolman Building Surveyors to support a full planning application seeking permission for the installation of a ground-mounted, domestic solar array at Lower Littlecott Farm, Goatacre, Calne, SN11 9HZ.

The application is described as follows:

### *Installation of small ground-mounted domestic solar array*

This Statement has examined the key planning policy considerations, and the following conclusions are drawn:

- The proposal is for small-scale renewable energy generation to serve an existing dwelling, which should be given significant weight in the planning balance.
- The national and local policy context in the NPPF and Wiltshire Core Strategy is supportive of renewable energy generation, and the principle of development is acceptable subject to site-specific considerations.
- The impact of the proposal on factors i – viii within Core Policy 42 has been assessed and it is demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable impacts.
- The site is not within a National Landscape and the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable harm to local landscape character in accordance with Core Policy 51.
- The proposal will deliver 12.24% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain.

The proposed development therefore accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and should be approved without delay.