

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS & CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990**

**CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FROM Paddock TO RESIDENTIAL
AND ERECTION OF A SOLAR ARRAY ON LAND TO THE REAR
OF CRUDWELL HOUSE, CRUDWELL, MALMESBURY, SN16 9EW**

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Prepared by

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Our Reference: DJD.LPC6407

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 LPC (Trull) Ltd have been instructed by Mr & Mrs Kaner to prepare a full planning application for the change of use of land from paddock to residential and erection of a solar array on land to the rear of Crudwell House, Crudwell, Malmesbury, Wiltshire.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to identify the site and describe the proposals before going on to identify the relevant Development Plan policies for the application and the main planning considerations. This will include identifying the main heritage assets that are relevant to this application, describing their significance, and assessing the impacts of the proposed development.

2.0 APPLICATION SITE & RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The application site comprises an existing paddock located to the rear of Crudwell House. The existing paddock occupies an open area to the west of Crudwell House and other houses adjacent to the main road (A429) and to the east of a relatively modern housing estate. To the south is the Potting Shed Public House and Car Park and to the north is open agricultural land. A Public Footpath (CRUD8) runs close to the paddock's southern boundary, in between the paddock and the Potting Shed Car Park. A satellite photograph showing the is provided below.

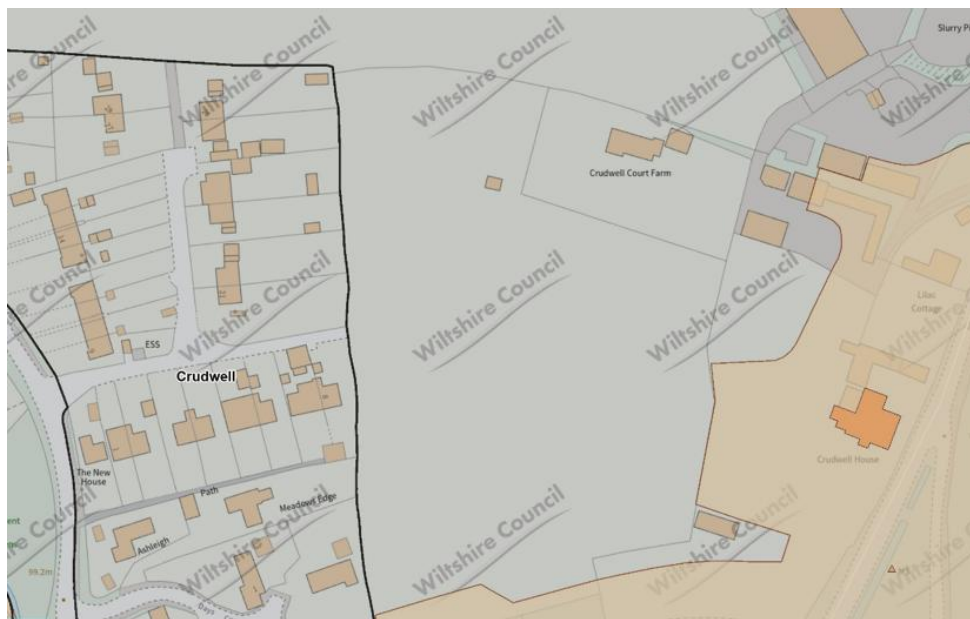


- 2.2 In planning policy terms, the site lies in the open countryside immediately to the east of the village settlement boundary. Additionally, located to the east is the Crudwell Conservation Area and Crudwell House itself which is a Grade II Listed Building.
- 2.3 The statutory listing description of the property is as follows:

Detached house. Early C19. Squared and coursed rubble to side and rear walls, ashlar to south front; gabled Welsh slate roof and end rebuilt stone stacks. Three-storey, 3-window south front. Tripartite 12-pane sashes to outer bays, single 12-pane sash to centre first floor and 9-pane sash to centre

*second floor, all in deep reveals. Central Doric porch with glazed 2-leaf outer door and part-glazed 2-leaf inner door. Moulded plinth course, first and second floor platbands, moulded cornice and blocking course. Late C19 single-storey extension to left. Interior: stone flags to entrance hall, cantilever staircase with square balusters and mahogany handrail, marble chimneypiece in ground floor room to left. (N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire*, 1975)*

- 2.4 Provided below is an extract from the Council's Explorer Map showing the relevant policy designations.



- 2.5 Other than forming part of the open countryside, the paddock itself does not have any relevant planning history. Crudwell House has recently had Planning and Listed Building Consent for alterations to ground floor of house, demolish existing modern conservatory and lean-to and build new garden room. This was approved in 2018.

3.0 APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a ground mounted solar array in the paddock with the intention of providing renewable electricity to serve the host dwelling, Crudwell House. The solar array will be located in the northwest corner of the paddock close to the field boundary and to the west of Crudwell Court Farmhouse. A below ground power cable will then run from the array into the rear garden of Crudwell House to an existing outbuilding within the curtilage transferring the electricity generated from the solar array to a storage battery.
- 3.2 The ground mounted solar array will comprise a total of 50 separate panels joined together to form a rectangular array set at an angle of some 35 degrees facing southwards. The array will measure some 29 metres across, with a depth of 2.5 metres and a height of 2.65 metres from ground level. The panels will be black and will be flush with each other appearing as one large panel facing the field. The cable running to the house will be buried and will run along the edge of the field into the rear garden into an existing outbuilding on the property where the main battery will be stored. The trench where the cable will be laid will be backfilled and the field restored to its previous state.



4.0 RELEVANT POLICY CONTEXT & GUIDANCE

Planning Legislation

- 4.1 The most relevant legislation to this application is considered to be the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 4.2 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. With respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Development Plan

- 4.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that all applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Development Plan policies applicable to the assessment of these proposals comprises the Adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and the Made Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan (2021). The relevant policies to this application are considered to be as follows: -

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 13: Spatial Strategy for the Malmesbury Community Area
- Core Policy 41: Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy
- Core Policy 42: Standalone Renewable Energy Installations
- Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life

- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment

Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy DD2: Design

National Guidance

4.4 Documents that do not have the weight of the Development Plan, but which are material considerations to which differing weight is attached include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Significant weight is attached to this document,
- National Planning Practice guidance (NPPG).

4.5 Policy CC12 of the NPPF states 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.

4.6 Other relevant guidance to this proposal can be found in the historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN-18) Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency.



Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency

Historic England Advice Note 18 (HEAN 18)



5.0 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

5.1 In light of the context of the site and relevant national and local planning policies the key material planning considerations are considered to be as follows:-

- Principle of development
- Impact on heritage assets
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity and Trees

Principle of development

5.2 In policy terms, Core Policies CP1 and CP2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seek to ensure that development is sustainably located and responds positively to the character and function of Wiltshire's settlements and countryside. Core Policy CP42 also supports appropriate development within the countryside where it conserves landscape character, while Core Policy CP41 positively supports the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure, including the retrofitting of existing buildings to improve their energy performance.

5.3 In this case, the proposed solar array would be positioned within the adjoining paddock rather than the established residential curtilage of Crudwell House. Although this requires the use of a small area of paddock land for a purpose ancillary to the main dwelling, the array is closely related to the existing house, is modest in scale, and is solely intended to provide renewable electricity for the property. The proposal therefore comprises both small scale operational development and a material change of use of a limited area of land to an incidental domestic use.

5.4 Therefore, given the small extent of land affected, the retention of the paddock's open character, and the minimal physical intervention proposed, the development would not result in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the countryside. Furthermore, it would deliver clear

sustainability benefits through the generation of renewable energy, consistent with the objectives of Core Policy CP41 and national planning policy supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in principle and accords with Core Policies CP1, CP2, CP41 and CP42 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 5.5 In this case, the relevant identified heritage assets are the Grade II Listed Crudwell House and Crudwell Conservation Area. Both of these assets are located approximately 150 metres to the east of the proposed solar panels. There will be no physical alteration to either of these heritage assets and whilst it could be argued that the development would lie within the ‘setting’ of these assets there would be very little visual change or other environmental effects. Apart from the solar array itself, the cabling will be laid below ground, and the battery will be stored within an existing domestic outbuilding resulting in no external change. Consequently, it is considered that the development proposals will succeed in preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Listed Building.
- 5.6 Historic England Advice Note 18 supports the sensitive integration of renewable energy technologies into the historic environment and advises that the siting of solar panels should seek to minimise harm to the significance of listed buildings. The guidance identifies that, where sufficient land is available, locating photovoltaic panels on associated land or less sensitive structures is often preferable to fixing them directly to the principal roof of a listed building. This approach preserves the historic fabric, avoids intervention into significant roof coverings and reduces visual impact on the building’s architectural character. A carefully sited and appropriately screened ground-mounted solar array therefore represents a heritage-led solution that enables low-carbon energy generation whilst conserving the significance of the listed building.
- 5.7 Furthermore, the Advice Note recognises that improvements to energy and carbon performance is an important component of achieving national net zero objectives and helping historic buildings remain viable for long-term use. The

generation of renewable electricity through a sensitively designed solar array delivers clear public benefits, including reduced carbon emissions, lower reliance on fossil fuels, improved energy resilience and reduced operational costs that support the sustainable conservation of the heritage asset. These environmental and societal benefits are capable of carrying substantial weight in the planning balance and, where any heritage impact amounts to less than substantial harm, can outweigh that harm in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.8 In this context it is very relevant to point out that Wiltshire Council acknowledged a Climate Emergency in February 2019 and has committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 through its Climate Strategy and associated delivery plans. The Council recognises that increasing renewable energy generation and improving the energy performance of buildings are fundamental to reducing carbon emissions and supporting a resilient, low-carbon future. In this context, the proposed ground-mounted solar array would make a positive contribution towards the Council's climate objectives by generating clean renewable electricity whilst supporting the long-term sustainable use and conservation of the listed building.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 5.9 In terms of the relevant policy context for this issue, Core Policy 51 requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.
- 5.10 Core Policy 57 also makes clear that applications should make a positive contribution, having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses. A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Proposals should respond positively to the existing townscape and landscape features 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.

- 5.11 In this case, the proposed solar array will be discreetly located in the northwest corner of the existing paddock, well away from the host listed building and Crudwell Conservation Area. In landscape and visual terms, views of the solar array will be localised to the immediate paddock area and whilst there is a nearby public footpath, which runs along the outside of the paddocks southern boundary (CRUD8), this is well screened by trees and other mature vegetation.
- 5.12 As part of this Statement, the following visual assessment of the site has been undertaken showing the location of Photo Viewpoints. These demonstrate the limited and modest nature of the proposals and that views will be localised to the immediate paddock area only, and in particular that views will be very limited from within the curtilage of Crudwell House and from the wider Conservation Area.





Photo Viewpoint 1 – Facing directly east towards the location of the proposed solar array. Crudwell Court Farmhouse is located in the background.



Photo Viewpoint 2 – Facing northwest close to Crudwell Court Farmhouse, plot boundary towards the location of the solar array – views into the site from the wider landscape beyond will be screened by these mature hedgerows.



Photo Viewpoint 3 – View facing directly west towards location of proposed solar array. Views into the paddock from surrounding land uses are screened by mature hedgerows.



Photo Viewpoint 4 – View facing southeast looking back towards Crudwell Court Farmhouse, Crudwell House and Conservation Area where views are very limited by intersecting hedgerows and trees.



Photo Viewpoint 5 – From within the paddock facing northeast towards the site of the proposed solar array and which will be framed by mature hedges.



Photo Viewpoint 6 – Facing north towards the site of the solar array from the far southern end of the paddock. From here at a height of 2.65m the solar array will be discreetly sited within the surrounding landscape features.



Photo Viewpoint 7 – View from within the garden of Crudwell House facing west. Views of the site of the proposed solar array are completely obscured due to existing landscaping and the sloping topography of the land which gradually drops from west to east.



Photo Viewpoint 8 – Additional view from within the garden of Crudwell House facing west towards the site of the proposed solar array confirming views will be obscured.

- 5.13 In summary, the proposed ground-mounted solar array has been carefully sited within the north-west corner of the existing paddock, where it will be viewed in the context of established field boundaries and mature vegetation. The development is modest in scale and occupies only a small proportion of the paddock, ensuring that the open and undeveloped character of the wider landscape is retained. Existing hedgerows, trees and boundary planting provide substantial natural screening, whilst the gently sloping topography further limits visibility from the surrounding area.
- 5.14 The above visual assessment demonstrates that views of the solar array will be highly localised and largely confined to the immediate paddock, with negligible visibility from the public footpath, Crudwell House and the wider Crudwell Conservation Area. As a result, the proposal would not give rise to any material adverse effect on landscape character or visual amenity and fully accords with the objectives of Core Policies 51 and 57, which seek to conserve landscape character through sensitive siting and high-quality design.

Residential Amenity

- 5.15 Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents. Additionally, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2026), particularly reinforces the need for development to provide a high standard of amenity for both existing and future users. These policies guide the assessment of amenity impacts.
- 5.16 In this case, due to the proposal's nature as the erection of a ground-level solar array sited away from any neighbouring properties, there is no risk of any overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing impact arising as a result of the proposed works.

Biodiversity and trees

- 5.17 In terms of the relevant policy context, Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to protect and enhance ecological assets, deliver measurable improvements in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, support habitat restoration and ecological connectivity, and incorporate

biodiversity into the design of development. These objectives are reinforced by the Wiltshire Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022–2030), which promotes nature recovery, resilient ecosystems and improved habitat connectivity through sustainable development.

- 5.18 In this case, the application site does not lie within an ecological sensitive area or near to a designated area of ecological importance or SSSI. The site itself comprises part of a paddock which is simply pasture. Therefore, it is considered that the ecological value of the site is negligible, and no further investigations are required.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Planning and Heritage Statement demonstrates that the proposed change of use of a small area of paddock to residential and the erection of a ground-mounted solar array represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development. The proposal is modest in scale, remains closely related to Crudwell House, and will generate renewable electricity solely for the benefit of the host Grade II listed dwelling, supporting its long-term sustainable use and reducing its operational carbon emissions.
- 6.2 The assessment concludes that the development will preserve the significance and setting of both Crudwell House and the Crudwell Conservation Area, with no physical alteration to either heritage asset and only negligible visual change. Equally, the landscape and visual effects are highly localised due to the discreet siting of the array, existing mature hedgerows, trees and the site's natural topography, ensuring that the character of the surrounding countryside is maintained. There would be no adverse impacts on neighbouring residential amenity, biodiversity or trees.
- 6.3 The proposal accords with the relevant provisions of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, the Crudwell Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. It delivers clear environmental and public benefits through renewable energy generation while preserving the area's landscape and historic character.