

REPORT FOR SOUTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	19TH December 2024
Application Number	PL/2024/03227
Site Address	The Homestead, Sutton Hill, Sutton Mandeville, Salisbury, SP3 5ND
Proposal	Installation of a ground mounted solar array and associated works
Applicant	Ms. E. Lodge
Town/Parish Council	Sutton Mandeville
Electoral Division	Fovant & Chalke Valley ED – Cllr N. Najjar
Type of application	Full
Case Officer	Mrs. Becky Jones

REASON FOR THE APPLICATION BEING CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE

The application is before the Planning Committee at the request of the Local Division Member for the following reason(s) –

- High levels of concern from local parish council and neighbours
- Visual impact upon the surrounding area
- Design – bulk, height, general appearance

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to assess the merits of the proposed development against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations. Having considered these, the report recommends that planning permission be APPROVED and subject to planning conditions.

2. MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of development
2. Scale, design and impact on the National Landscape, settings of heritage assets, rights of way
3. Impact on neighbouring amenity
4. Ecology, protected species and Biodiversity Net Gain

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is approximately 0.04ha in area and located about 60m south east of an existing dwelling called 'The Homestead'. The site consists of a two-storey detached house with additional detached outbuildings including a barn and stables. The site is within the small village of Sutton Mandeville which designated as a Small Village in the Wiltshire Core

Strategy (WCS) and accessed by Sutton Hill. Sutton Mandeville is located within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (AONB). The site is not within a Conservation Area, there are no Tree Preservation Orders affecting the site, there are no listed structures on site. Footpath SMAN13 Public Right of Way runs north/south through the field, east of the main house. SMAN 3 runs north/south in the field to the east of the site. The application site area for the solar array lies to the east of the dwelling, on an existing bund on a sloping field.



Nearby, Townsend is Grade II listed and lies to the west, Bonds is Grade II lies to the east, The Old Rectory Grade II lies to the east. Church Farmhouse Grade II lies opposite to the northeast. The Church of All Saints grade II* lies to the northeast with 4 designated associated monuments to the south side of the church.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

14/02330/FUL Single rear and two storey side extensions Approved

PL/2021/08926 Change Menage to tennis court Approved

PL/2023/00647 Demolition of existing two storey extension and erection of single storey extension. Barn and stable conversion and installation of new swimming pool and land for mounted solar array Approved

PL/2024/03228 – undetermined partner application for new agricultural building and associated works

5. PROPOSAL

The development involves the installation of six linear arrays of 15 ramped solar panels, 90 panels in total. Additionally, a field shed measuring 3.6m x 3.6m would be installed as a secure plant room for the solar array. The location of the installation would be on the south eastern corner of the field, to the east of the dwelling house and other associated buildings.

The solar panels would be orientated to face northwest, the total length will be circa 26m with a clearance above ground level (front) edge of approximately 0.18m and a height at the higher (rear) edge of up to 0.43m, at an angle of approximately 30 degrees. The batteries and inverters would be housed in the timber clad field shed with a standing seam metal roof. The connection works from the solar array to the dwelling would involve the excavation of a single trench which would contain the necessary cables which would be located at an appropriate depth below ground level.

The applicant intends to screen the solar array and its infrastructure from public view behind a landscaped bund, with additional new soft landscaping proposed. This is in addition to existing mature trees and hedgerows in the vicinity.

The 33KW output is intended to heat the swimming pool and other domestic needs. The application has been subject to a series of amendments to reduce the site area and increase the levels of proposed landscaping for the bund.

6. CONSULTATIONS

Climate - support – see principle section below

Conservation – no objection

Ecology – no objection subject to conditions

Natural England – no objections subject to conditions to secure mitigation. Appropriate Assessment agreed.

AONB Office – comments and advice

Public Protection – no objection to expected sound levels from solar array. Noise assessment not required.

Highways – No objection – proposal is not detrimental to highway safety

Rights of Way – no objection subject to informatives

Parish Council: Objection

At a public meeting held at The Stalls cafe on Monday 13th May 2024 Sutton Mandeville Parish Council voted to object to the proposal for a solar array due to its scale and position in the open field. Despite assurance of screening with vegetation the footprint of the array would have a detrimental and adverse impact on the landscape. It would be visible from several places along SMAN 3 and SMAN 13, and because of the industrial materials will be obtrusive in its proposed location and is inconsistent with any notion of cultural heritage within the parish. A 33kW array may be considered a micro power station in that it is several times larger than what may be found on an average house roof. The PC did not object to PL/2023/00647 which sited a slightly smaller array nearer the house and a mature hedge. Permission was granted for this, although nearby residents were not properly consulted for comments in the post covid period of winter 2022/23 and subsequently raised concerns. Any proposal which seeks to remove agricultural land must be carefully assessed on its merits, and in this case SMPC cannot see clear and compelling justification which would be acceptable to the parish as a whole.

Sutton Mandeville Parish Council held a second public meeting on 1st July to consider revised plans for this application. The plan for the solar array remains unchanged from the previous application except for a planting scheme designed to screen the array. Residents and councillors were unconvinced that this proposal would significantly mitigate the adverse impact of the solar panels on the landscape. Any planting would have to be monitored and assessed for its effective purpose ongoing and it is doubtful that any condition of planting can be precisely enforced. Therefore the PC's views remain the same as previously stated. It should however be noted that the PC previously supported a prior application for a slightly smaller solar array in a different location at the Homestead. The current proposal sites the extensive array in an open agricultural field at a distance from the domestic curtilage. Despite the proposed efforts to screen the array, it would be a prominent feature in the landscape, highly visible from RoWs and neighbouring properties. Given the existing permission to install a ground mounted array near the house and hedge, the PC firmly objects to this application.

7. REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by letters posted to near neighbours and a site notice.

Objections summary – 4 households represented

- Scale of development on a slope, visual impact and harm to National Landscape (not small scale and unobtrusive)
- Inappropriate development in an agricultural field – change of use
- Ecological impact of a solar array, scale is unjustifiable and harmful
- Inadequate levels of existing vegetative screening, deciduous and ornamental plants. Inadequate to screen site from local homes
- Proximity of listed buildings and negative impact on their settings
- Impact on watercourse, increased risk of flooding
- Contours and land slopes not properly assessed or clear from plans – site is elevated and bund is higher than surroundings. Visible from listed buildings and rights of way
- Pedestrian gateway – *now removed from scheme plans*
- Air Source Heat Pumps - *now removed from scheme plans*
- Re-location of existing Right of Way SMAN13 – *this is not a matter for this planning application and is subject to a separate process and rights of way legislation.*
- A right of way up against the proposed solar array would be considered pleasant.

8. PLANNING POLICY

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S66

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 and PPG

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy

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 52: Green Infrastructure

Core Policy 51 Landscape

Core Policy 57 Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

Core Policy 58 Conservation of the Historic Environment

Other:

Wiltshire Climate Strategy, adopted February 2022.

Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan (2019 – 2024) and Position Statement 5

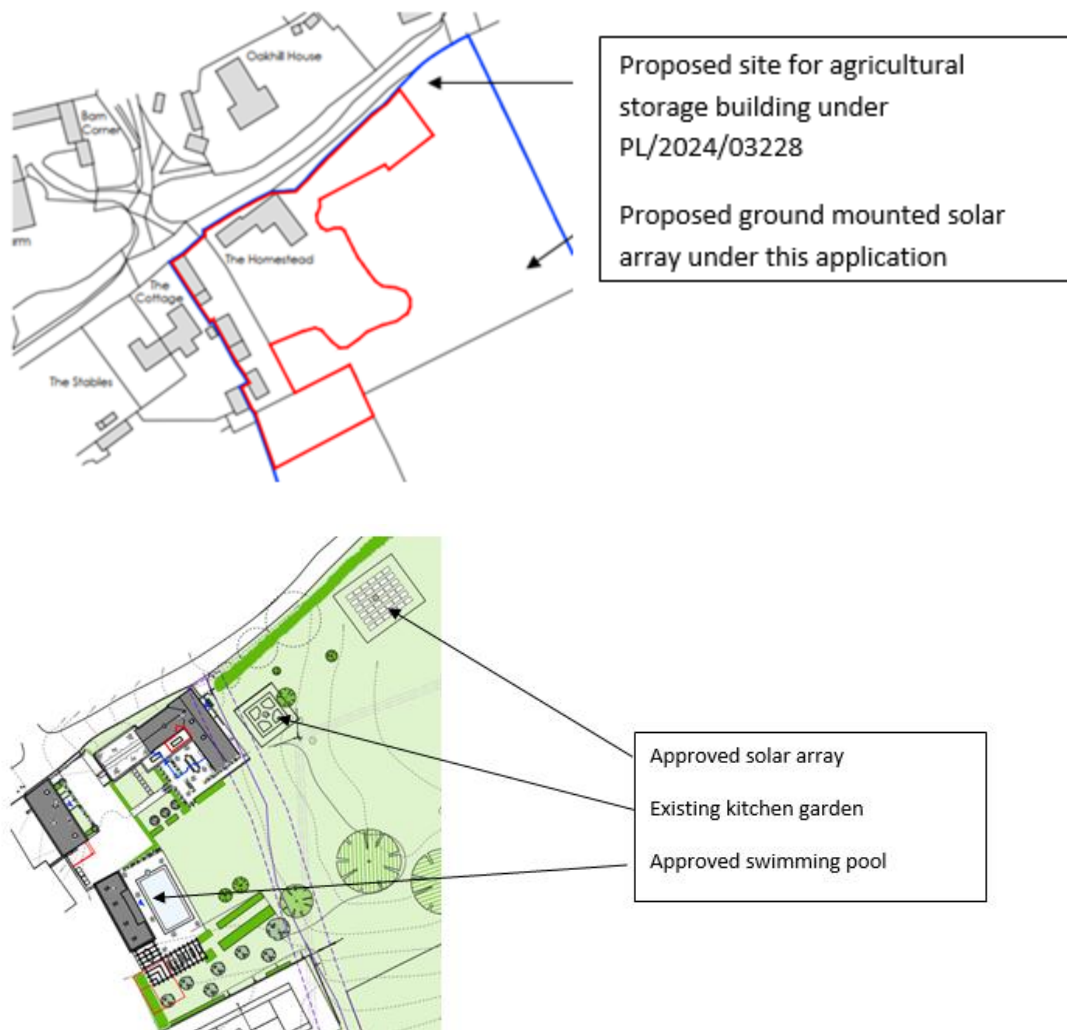
Neighbourhood Plan - undesignated

9. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 Background

The applicant has previously received planning consent to create a solar array closer to the house (at a lower ground level than the proposed site) but in the field to the east of the house. It is noted that the bund is shown on the existing site plan for PL/2023/00647.

Approved red line and site plans for PL/2023/00647:



The applicant is now seeking to relocate the solar array and provide a self contained building to house the inverters and batteries. The solar array would be sited on the existing bund and provided with a landscaped hedge and tree screen.

There is an accompanying application PL/2024/03228 for an agricultural storage building and this application is also being presented to committee for determination.

The estimated area of the existing holding outlined in blue is 2.6 hectares.

9.2 Principle

Planning permission is required for the development. The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (Section 70(2) of the Town and Country planning Act and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004). The NPPF 2023 confirms in para 11 that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable. For decision making, that means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

The site lies within the National Landscape (AONB) in the Chilmark Quarries bat SAC. These are protected sites under para 11 footnote 7 of the NPPF and therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development would not automatically apply to development where harm is identified to these designations.

Development in the countryside is normally strictly controlled. The application seeks to provide a ground mounted solar array in an agricultural field adjacent to a dwelling. Its purpose is to produce about 33KW of energy output to serve the domestic needs of Homestead, including an approved swimming pool.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states: *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”* and paragraph 8 (c) makes it clear that mitigating and adapting to climate change is a core planning objective. Paragraph 157 states that the *planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.... It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.... and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.”*

When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development paragraph 163 is clear that local planning authorities should:

- *not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to significant cutting greenhouse gas emissions;*
- **approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable**

Paragraph 164 states that: *“In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should 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.*

Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) sets out that retrofitting measures to improve the energy performance of existing measures will be encouraged in accordance with.... the Energy Hierarchy. Core Policy 42 sets out that the principle of standalone renewable energy projects is acceptable.

The *principle* for the development of a solar array within the agricultural field adjacent to The Homestead has already been established by the consent under PL/2023/00647. The development is therefore acceptable in principle, as set out in the NPPF and WCS policies, subject to the detailed landscape and heritage considerations set out below.

9.3 Scale, design and impact on the National Landscape, settings of heritage assets, rights of way and neighbouring amenity

The site is located near to and is visible from several listed buildings which form part of the small village of Sutton Mandeville. S66 of the 1990 Act make provision to ensure that LPAs have **special regard** to the setting of listed buildings when considering development that may affect them. The NPPF Section 15 sets out the considerations for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, **great weight** should be given to the asset's conservation. CP58 states that designated heritage assets and their

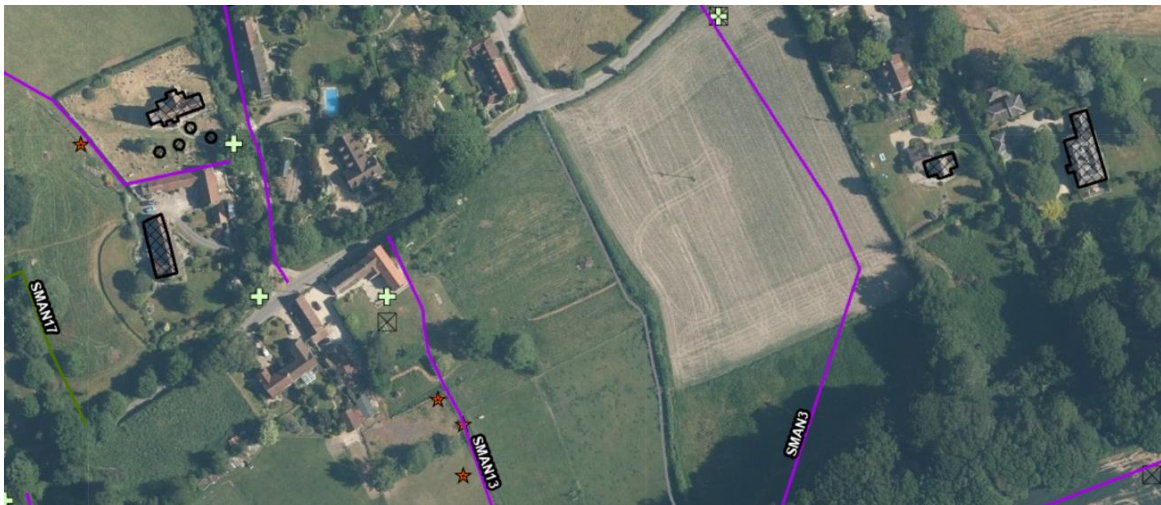
settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The site (and the small village of Sutton Mandeville) is located within the countryside of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (AONB) and great weight must be attached to the importance of landscape conservation and enhancement in this area (NPPF para 182). CP51 sets out the criteria for landscape conservation within the AONB and seeks to ensure that development proposals have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. CP57 sets out general design criteria for new development.

These objectives must be balanced against the *significant weight* that LPAs must apply when considering the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings through installation of solar panels. Where the impacts are or can be made acceptable, LPAs should approve the application.

The site is located on sloping land, between two rights of way, and close to several listed buildings. A scheme of landscaping is proposed to screen the solar array positioned on the bund. However, the development is *likely* to be visible from the rights of way and *may* be visible from upper floors of nearby dwellings, particularly in winter time. The strong concerns expressed by several households in the vicinity of the site have been noted, and appropriate consultees including the NL Partnership, rights of way and the conservation officer have been asked to consider the scheme.

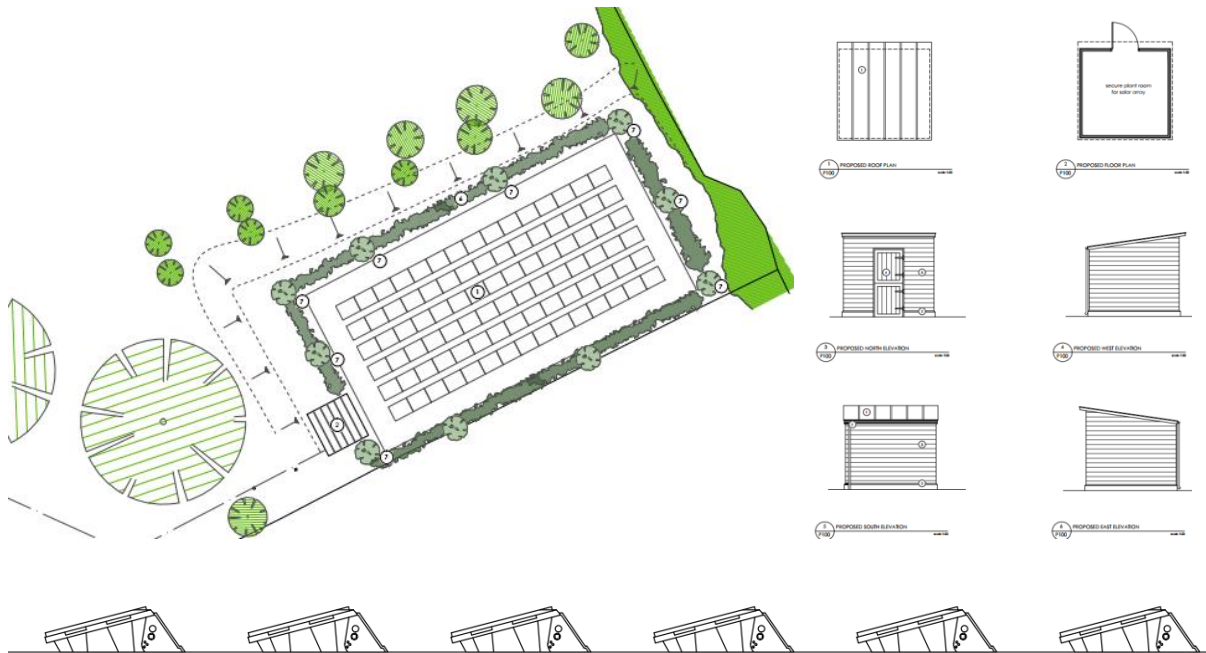
Rights of way (purple) and listed buildings (hatched)



Landscape Impact

The **Cranborne Chase Partnership Plan 2019-2024** recognises the challenges posed by proposals to install fields of photovoltaic (PV) panels in the NL and the long term changes they can bring to the appearance of the countryside. However, the plan also seeks to encourage *domestic* and *farmstead* scale schemes that offset existing energy use. Policy PT16 seeks to:

PT16	Support renewable energy generation by technologies that integrate with the landscape character, are neither visually intrusive to the AONB or its setting, nor impair significant views to or from it, are not harmful to wildlife, and are of an appropriate scale to their location and siting.
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The NL's **Position Statement No 5: Renewable Energy** considers:

This AONB Partnership recognises that small scale renewable energy projects may well be able to be accommodated within the landscape without causing significant harm. However, what constitutes “small” and the significance of any visual impact must be judged in relation to the critical characteristics which make that landscape special.

Projects which are close to existing settlements, where the impacts of manmade structures are more prevalent, are likely to be more acceptable than projects in the open countryside where visual clutter and intrusion should be avoided. It is expected that all renewable energy proposals will be subjected to a landscape and visual impact appraisal. Extra care will be necessary in connection with Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas where otherwise relatively innocuous equipment can have detrimental impacts.

The proposal is considered to be *relatively* small scale, it is for domestic purposes, and is in proximity to the existing built area of a small village. It does not constitute major development in planning terms. The National Landscape Partnership has not objected to the revised scheme. However, they emphasised the importance of securing appropriate screening and stated:

The PRoW does not appear to be shown on the submitted plans. I presume the route for underground services means all cabling will be underground? Assuming the representation of the panels is accurate, there would be 6 rows each comprising 15 panels. In order to achieve speedy establishment of the proposed hedge it would be advisable to specify / condition the use of readyhedge / instanthege which comprises hedging grown in troughs, similar to pot grown trees. Similarly, the proposed trees shown be standards and not whips.

Therefore, it can be reasonably concluded that subject to appropriately worded conditions, the scheme is not expected to have an adverse impact on the character of the National Landscape. No objection is raised to the modest timber clad inverter building. The Dark Night Skies Reserve can be protected by a suitable condition to control new external artificial

light – see ecology section. The proposal is considered to comply with CP51, CP57 and the NPPF and would not harm the character and appearance of the National Landscape.

Heritage Impact

The conservation officer undertook a site visit to look at The Homestead and the potential impact of the scheme on the settings of nearby listed buildings and other heritage assets. She concluded:

The Homestead - The significance of the building lies largely with its historic fabric and architecture - its form, layout and architectural expression/detailing and use of high-quality design materials which have significant aesthetic and architectural interest and which contribute to the character of the area. Homestead provides a significant contribution to the street scene due to its architectural form, materials, design and likely history.

Homestead lies to the south side of the main road running parallel to the road with an historic thatched building at its core and a larger L shaped extension to the east. There is a detached stone and tile building to the west side which lies gable end on to the road and all form an attractive group within the village. To the south, the land slopes, but then rises up to a belt of trees known as Townsend Copse. The fields to the east side of the Homestead are bounded by hedgerows.

Given the gradient of the land and existing hedgerows and bund it is considered the panels would not be seen from the road, nor from wider viewpoints at ground level providing the bund and hedgerows are maintained.

If the case officer is minded to approve the scheme, the height of the panels could be conditioned as could maintaining the roadside hedge and bund height with associated landscaping. If the hedgerows and bund were to be removed the panels would be more visible. There is no lighting proposed with the panels nor security fencing which would be obtrusive. If the panels are approved for a period of time a condition could be added so that the infrastructure including below ground cabling should also be removed. The inverter building is approx. 3.6m square and it is queried whether this can be inset into the bund to lessen additional buildings in the landscape.

The Church of All Saints and Church farmhouse is well concealed by trees and hedgerows and though Bonds can be seen in the distance it is not considered that it impacts on setting.

The applicant then responded to the points above and accepted the suggested conditions for height and hedgerows. Regarding the temporary nature, they stated:

This development is not intended to be temporary, we therefore prefer to avoid this becoming a condition. The solar array and associated infrastructure, including the below-ground cabling, are integral to the long-term functionality of the site. As such, we see this as a permanent installation that will contribute to the site's energy needs and sustainability goals over the long term.

The preference would be to keep the inverter building in the current proposed location. Insetting the building would require additional excavation and earthmoving work. This would also involve more extensive groundwork and possibly additional foundations. Additionally there may be increased long term maintenance costs associated with potential water ingress issues. This could require ongoing repairs or additional systems to manage water around the building.

We opted against the installation of the previously proposed ASHP. Instead, we are now planning to install a pool heater. Therefore, any reference to the ASHP is no longer relevant to this application

In conclusion, the conservation officer has examined the potential impacts of the development on heritage assets and concluded: *The NPPF confirms that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. The impact of the proposals on heritage assets will be **neutral** and the requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and there is therefore no objection to the approval of the application.*

Therefore, subject to suitable conditions to ensure conservation of the landscape character of the NL and the settings of heritage assets including Homestead, there is no objection under CP58.

Rights of Way Impact

The existing right of way is subject to a separate process regarding potential diversion. The Rights of Way officer commented:

Public footpath SMAN13 runs to the south west of the proposed solar array. I do not consider it to have an adverse effect on the footpath. I therefore have no objection to the proposal.

Under a separate process for which consultation has not yet taken place (not related to this planning application) the applicant has submitted an application to divert the footpath along the field boundary at the east of the property. The proposed diversion route would run alongside the proposed solar array and it is not clear if the array would make the proposed diversion route unsuitable/ impassable. While this is not a consideration of this planning application it may mean that the applicant will not be able to provide a suitable route for the path to be diverted onto. These comments are not made in support of the proposal to divert the path but as an informative to ensure the applicant is aware of the potential conflict.

9.4 Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Neighbours have strongly objected to the proposal on several grounds including the impact on their amenity and loss of outlook.

Core Policy 57 is not phrased in such a way as to *prevent* development which affects neighbouring properties, but it does require development to have regard to such matters. Similarly, the test of the NPPF is that the existing occupiers would still have a high standard of amenity and not that their existing amenity is not affected at all. Residential amenity refers to the quality of residential areas and the value to local residents and is affected by significant changes to the environment including privacy, outlook, daylighting and sunlight inside the house, living areas and within private garden spaces (which should be regarded as extensions to the living space of a house). It is an inherent part of the decision-making process for the LPA to assess the effects that a proposal will have on individuals and weigh these against the wider public interest in determining whether development should be allowed to proceed.

The public protection officer requested details of potential noise from the solar equipment then concluded there is no need for a noise assessment to be submitted for the scheme. No air source heat pumps are proposed as part of this application.

Therefore, whilst the solar array and storage building may be visible from neighbouring dwellings, their gardens and the rights of way, this is not an automatic reason for refusal on amenity grounds. The development is acceptable in appearance and would be screened by new hedge planting on the bund. The development would not impinge on light levels, cause any overlooking or generate undue noise or disturbance. Therefore, it can reasonably be concluded that appropriate levels of amenity are considered achievable in compliance with CP57.

9.5 Ecology, protected species and Biodiversity Net Gain

CP50 sets out the criteria for biodiversity and development. The ecologist has considered the proposals and concluded that there are no objections to the scheme, subject to conditions. The application site sits within the Chilmark Quarries bat SAC. The application therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impacts either alone or in combination with other projects within the statutorily designated sites. As required by the Habitats Regulations an Appropriate Assessment has been completed by the LPA. The assessment has reached a favourable conclusion, assuming the recommended conditions below are included in any permissions granted. The AA was sent to Natural England and approved by them, subject to the mitigation being secured by condition.

Due to the nature and location of the proposal, it is considered that there will be no mechanism for effect in terms of impacts upon bats. The submitted survey notes that there is low potential for reptiles within the vegetation and recommends two stage clearance which would allow for dispersal into the wider area which is welcomed. No water bodies have been identified within 250m of the site and therefore presence of Great Crested Newts is considered negligible. A condition would be imposed to ensure that there is no additional vegetation removal.

This application was submitted prior to Small Sites Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) becoming mandatory. However, Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains. No demonstration of ways to deliver no net loss have been included within the application. However, the inclusion of enhancement measures for example bird and bat boxes can be secured by condition.

Natural England has endorsed the Appropriate Assessment and its recommendations. Further comments from NE are reflected in the proposed conditions and in conclusion, no objection is raised under CP50.

10. CONCLUSION – the ‘planning balance’

The application seeks to provide a ground mounted solar array in an agricultural field, to serve domestic needs. The site is on sloping land, between two rights of way, near to existing homes and listed buildings, within the National Landscape and Chilmark Quarries bat SAC.

The LPA should 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 solar panels. The proposal meets this objective and the NPPF para 163 advises that such schemes should be approved if the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Great weight must be given to landscape conservation in the National

Landscape. The proposal generally meets the objectives of the NL Management Plan and no objection is raised by the NL Partnership, provided a robust condition to secure adequate screening is imposed. Great weight must also be applied to the conservation of the settings of heritage assets and in this case, the conservation officer considers that the impact on the settings of listed buildings is neutral and raises no objection.

There are no identified harms that are likely to arise from the development in terms of neighbouring amenity, impacts on the existing rights of way, or to protected species. Some very modest weight may be attached to these considerations.

The development presents the opportunity to control lighting levels on the site and to reinforce native planting to the benefit of bat species within the Chilmark Quarries SAC. Biodiversity enhancement may also be achieved by condition and these considerations may all be afforded moderate weight in favour of the scheme.

In conclusion, provided appropriate conditions are imposed, the scheme is unlikely to have any negative effects on the National Landscape or the settings of heritage assets. The scheme meets the objectives for supporting energy efficiency and significant weight must be given to this matter. Given that consultees consider that the scheme can be made acceptable with suitable conditions and mitigation, the NPPF indicates that the scheme should be approved and the planning balance weighs in favour of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be GRANTED planning permission subject to the following 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 and documents:

Existing site plan ref 23/782/E003 Rev D Dated Nov 2023

Site Location Plan ref 23/782/E001 Rev B Dated Nov 2023

Proposed Site Plan (with additional screen planting and ASHPs removed) ref 23/782/P003 Rev F dated Nov 2023

Proposed Solar Panel Details ref 23/782/P101 Rev A Dated Nov 2023

Proposed Plant Store for Solar Array ref 23/782/P100 dated Nov 2023

Proposed Visibility Sections ref 10156/07/2023 dated July 2023

Planning Statement dated March 2024

Preliminary Ecological Assessment by Ecosupport dated 27th March 2024

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

3. The inverters and batteries for the solar panels hereby approved shall at all times be enclosed within the Plant Store building, which shall be maintained for this purpose for the lifetime of the development, in accordance with plan ref 23/782/P100 dated Nov 2023

Reason: To minimise noise disturbance in the interests of neighbouring amenities.

4. The solar panels hereby approved shall not be installed and no removal of any trees or shrubs shall take place until full details of a Wildlife Protection and Enhancement Scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include:

- i) Measures that will be taken to avoid harm to wildlife, including timing of works to avoid nesting birds and reptiles, and pre-commencement checks for protected species including badger.
- ii) Quantification of biodiversity net gain provision including a plan showing the location(s) and type(s) of feature(s) to enhance the site for biodiversity (such as swift or bat boxes or designing lighting to encourage wildlife).
- iii) Measures to control lighting during construction
- iv) Measures to ensure no negative impacts on the quality of any water courses or bodies
- v) Measures to control dust during construction

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed WPES

REASON: To avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and to secure biodiversity enhancements.

5. The existing trees and hedges shown on the Existing Site Plan ref 23/782/E003 Rev D shall be retained and protected with an enclosure/fencing during any excavation works and installation of the solar panels. The hedgerow/ tree root protection areas (RPAs) shall be included and buffered accordingly.

The existing bund shall be maintained as part of the development, thereafter for the lifetime of the development and in accordance with the plans hereby approved.

The development, including the additional planting scheme for the site and bund, shall be carried out in strict accordance with the planting schedule (including readyhedge / instanthege or equivalent) on the following documents:

- Site Location Plan ref 23/782/E001 Rev B Dated Nov 2023

Any new trees shall be standards, in accordance with the schedule.

Reason: To avoid direct damage to hedgerow, shrubs and trees, through the compaction and disturbance of root protection zones which could cause deterioration of individual trees or shrubs. To protect potential habitat for bats. To ensure that the height of the screen planting on the bund is sufficient in height and density to adequately screen the development. For the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity and the character of the National Landscape.

6. All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner; All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which, within a period of ten years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

7. The solar panels hereby approved shall be installed in accordance with the proposed site section ref Proposed Visibility Sections ref 10156/07/2023 dated July 2023. The height of the panels above ground level shall not exceed 0.43 metres at an angle of 30 degrees.

Reason: In the interests of the landscape amenity of the National Landscape and the visual amenity of the settings of heritage assets.

8. No new artificial external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site or on the building until details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation. The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standard (E0 for the National Landscape) as set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats and to protect the International Dark Skies Reserve in the National Landscape. To protect the character of the area in the interest of the settings of heritage assets.

9. Notwithstanding the approved plans and materials schedule, the plant store building hereby approved shall not commence above slab level until the exact details and samples of the materials to be used for the external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Materials shall be matt in finish and dark in colour. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained in that condition thereafter.

REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable this matter to be considered prior to granting planning permission and the matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before development above slab level commences in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, in the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the National Landscape.

10. Upon cessation of the use of the solar panel array, the site shall be decommissioned, the plant store shall be removed and the site shall be restored to its former agricultural use.

Reason: To ensure that the site is restored to its former agricultural use after the use ceases. In the interests of landscape amenity and biodiversity.

Informatives:

Rights of Way

The applicant has applied to divert public footpath SMAN13 between the field boundary and the proposed solar array. They should ensure that there is a minimum width of 3 metres available between the existing fence and the hedge around the solar array which must be maintained at all times.

Nesting Birds

The adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding.

Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds from March to August inclusive. All British birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 while birds are nesting, building nests and sitting on eggs. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season. This season is usually taken to be the period between 1st March and 31st August but some species are known to breed outside these limits.

Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

Reptiles

There is a residual risk that reptiles could occur on the application site. These species are legally protected and planning permission does not provide a defence against prosecution. In order to minimise the risk of these species occurring on the site, the developer is advised to clear vegetation during the winter, remove all waste arising from such clearance and maintain vegetation as short as possible in line with the recommendations made in (insert details of ecological report). If these species are found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the Council Landscape and Design Team (ecologyconsultations@wiltshire.gov.uk) Energy Efficiency
The applicant is encouraged to consider measures in their home to reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency measures. This ensures the Energy Hierarchy is being supported.

Biodiversity: The applicant's attention is drawn to the advice and website links in the comments received from Natural England dated 4/11/24