COMBINED DESIGN & ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

To support the application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of new solar panels in the valley gutter at Hammonds, East Street, Billingshurst, RH14 9DA, May 2024.

Grade II listed Hammonds is an important example of early modern vernacular agrarian architecture, including a Horsham stone roof in excellent condition, that dates to the seventeenth century. It stands at the far eastern end of the Billingshurst Conservation Area.

Our heritage assessment draws on the full structural survey, by Desbrulais Chartered Surveyors of Brighton, commissioned by the owners prior to them buying the freehold in January 2019; and the outline history of the property contained within Geoffrey Lawes, *Billingshurst's Heritage: A Short History of a West Sussex Village* (Hebden Bridge, 2012).

Lawes says of the house "One might speculate that the original timber-framed house on three storeys, with wattle and daub walls, both inside and out was built about 1650 and then had major revisions at 100 year intervals in 1750 or so and again in 1852" He adds "The present restored adjacent barn with tarred weather-boarding probably dates from the seventeenth century". Desbrulais believe the farmhouse is earlier than Lawes' proposed date as "There are a number of anachronistic construction methodologies more consistent with a slightly earlier date of around 1610, or just thereafter".

The 12 new panels on the south facing side of the northern valley roof would comprise an array 13.2m long by 1.75m high. They would be located so high up and so discreetly that they will not be visible from any vantage point whatsoever in the vicinity of Hammonds. The proposal would therefore have zero impact on the appearance, character and setting of the listed building, and none on the wider Conservation Area either. No trees would be impacted. Access to the property would be unaffected.

The panels would be installed to reduce our exposure to very high energy costs. They would also contribute to the reduction of local carbon emissions from residential property. This is in line with the government's National Planning Policy Framework.

Its paragraph 11 states that "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development". This is amplified both by paragraph 7, which states that "The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner" and the environmental objective set out in paragraph 8 which seeks "to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy". Our proposal is highly sustainable and should we believe be viewed favourably as per the NPPF text.

Horsham DC's current Strategic Policy 1, Sustainable Development, states that "When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area".

Its Strategic Policy 33, Development Principles, seeks to "ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy."

Its Strategic Policy 37, Appropriate Energy Use, states that: "The development of renewable and low carbon energy is a key means of reducing the District's contribution to climate change".

Chapter 9 of its current local plan states that: "Development needs to be designed to reduce reliance on carbon-based heat and electricity sources to reach these targets. These include renewable technologies such as heat pumps, district heating schemes or solar energy".

The above demonstrates that the nature of the design, layout, construction and appearance of the proposed solar panels would not harm the character, appearance and setting of the listed building, nor that of the wider Billingshurst Conservation Area.