



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/25/1960

Picts Barn , Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AN

DESCRIPTION:

Installation of Solar Panels.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/20/0002	Replacement of an oil fired boiler with a new air source heat pump system (Householder)	Application returned
DC/20/0003	Replacement of an oil fired boiler with a new air source heat pump system (Listed Building Consent)	Application returned
DC/20/0115	Replacement of an oil fired boiler with an air source heat pump (Householder)	Application Permitted on 13.03.2020
DC/20/0116	Replacement of an oil fired boiler with an air source heat pump (Listed Building Consent)	Application Permitted on 13.03.2020

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use

Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2031

Policy 9: Residential Development Principles

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use

Policy 19: Development Quality

Policy 20: Development Principles

Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at

www.horsham.gov.uk.

Consultations:

HDC Conservation Officer: Object. The panels are a modern technology and will be visible in relation to the principal historic building diluting an appreciation of its historic significance. Appreciate

there will be benefit to the owners and some public benefit in reducing usage of fossil fuel energy but this public benefit is negligible and does not outweigh the harm that will result.

Representations:

3 representations were received, objecting to the application for the following reasons: -

- Overdevelopment
- Privacy, light and noise
- Affecting the trees and landscaping
- Not within keeping of the existing design

Parish Comments:

None received.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

Principle of Development:

Policy 36 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) 2015 seeks to ensure that the Council permits schemes for renewable energy (e.g. solar) where they do not have a significant adverse effect on landscape and townscape character, biodiversity, heritage or cultural assets or amenity value.

This application seeks to install ground mounted PhotoVoltaic Panels and associate apparatus. It is acknowledged that the proposal aims to reduce the carbon footprint of main dwelling by the proposed use of renewable energy source. The principal of ground mounted solar panels to support the energy requirement of Needs Farmhouse would be acceptable. However, there are concerns with regards to the proposed location where the panels would have a significant adverse impact on the setting of the heritage assets which is discussed further in the sections below.

Character and Appearance

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to maintain that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy 34 of the HDPF states that “The Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets”. It expects applications which affect heritage assets to “Make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, and ensuring that development in conservation areas is consistent with the special character of those areas”. As well as “Retain and improves the setting of heritage assets, including views, public rights of way, trees and landscape features, including historic public realm features.”

Historic England have issued guidance on ‘Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency’ (2024), which includes advice on solar panels on land associated with a listed building. The guidance sets out that: -

- The installation of panels away from the listed building can often be done without any direct harm to the building’s special interest.
- However, consideration will still need to be given to the effect of an installation on the setting of the listed building.
- Where an installation can be made away from the listed building, and would cause no, or less, harm to its special interest, there will be less justification to install panels on the building itself.
- Consideration should be given to reducing the visual impact of ground mounted panels in the setting of listed buildings, for instance using hedges to screen them and designing unobtrusive security measures.

Policy 9: Residential Development Principles

- i. Residential Development proposals will be supported where they are within the built-up area of Cowfold and:
 - a. are of a sympathetic scale, relating positively to the character, function and layout of the area;
 - b. maintain appropriate distances between buildings to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on existing facilities or amenity of adjacent residential properties;
 - c. Incorporate the use of high-quality building materials and finishes consistent with high thermal efficiency;
 - d. are of a density that is appropriate to its location and has regard to current levels in the immediate area;
 - e. are designed to account for the unavailability of mains gas; and
 - f. Provide appropriate infrastructure to facilitate EV charging for car parking spaces without the need for further groundworks

Picts Barn is a Grade II Listed curtilage which comprises two Grade II Listed timber-framed barns. There are several other buildings as part of the site. The site is in a rural location, which is located on its own track from Picts Lane. The proposed solar panels would be installed on a later addition to the barn, facing the track on the northwest elevation.

The single-storey building proposed to accommodate the panels forms part of the historic farm complex and although now converted to domestic use it remains clearly identifiable as a component of the listed building. It is considered that the proposed solar panels would introduce a modern and visually intrusive element that is wholly out of keeping with the established character and appearance of the area. Their visibility in relation to the principal historic building would diminish the ability to appreciate its architectural form, rural setting, and historic significance. The solar panels would therefore cause harm to the setting of the listed building and does not comply with the above policies.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The siting and layout of the proposed solar panels would introduce an intrusive and modern feature that is not in keeping with the historic and rural setting. Their elevated visibility and reflective surface would have a negative effect on the outlook from neighbouring properties, thereby harming the visual amenity currently enjoyed by nearby residents and visitors to the area.

As such, the proposal would not comply with Policy 33, as it would result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity through adverse visual impact and the erosion of the area's established character and appearance.

Water Neutrality

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the dwelling necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 180 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain

In accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, all householder applications are current exempt from the statutory requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The solar panels have resulted in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed heritage asset. The NPPF sets out that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The Historic England Guidance Note sets out that any such benefits should be "of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit". The provision of a renewable source of energy at the site represents a benefit, this would though primarily be a private benefit for occupants of the related dwelling. Further, there is no evidence within the application to set out whether potentially less harmful locations for the solar panels had been considered, together with the reasons for their dismissal, or whether alternative technologies would be preferable.

The proposed development would not preserve, respect or enhance the setting of designated heritage assets and it has not been demonstrated that any public benefit could not be derived from a more sensitive scheme which addresses the concerns raised elsewhere in this report. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to local and national planning policies.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The siting of the solar panels would introduce an inappropriate modern feature that harms the character and appearance of the historic farm complex and fails to preserve the setting of the Grade II listed buildings. The solar panels would have a harmful impact on the special interest of the listed building(s) and would fail to preserve, reflect or enhance its special character and distinctiveness. There are no public benefits which would outweigh the identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/25/1960

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Supporting Statement	Heritage	NONE	28.11.2025
Site plan	Proposed	04 REV 1	28.11.2025
Roof plan	Existing	03	28.11.2025
Site plan	Existing	01 REV 1	28.11.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed	05	28.11.2025
Roof plan	Proposed	06	28.11.2025
Elevation plan	Existing	02	28.11.2025
Location plan		00	19.12.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Meg Bayliss Date: 17/02/2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 17.02.2026