Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/24/0853
Hammonds, East Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9DA

DESCRIPTION:

Installation of solar panels on the roof, in valley gutter (Householder Application)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 31- Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 33- Development Principles
Policy 34- Cultural and Heritage Assets

Neighbourhood Plan:
Billingshurst Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031
BILL 1: Billingshurst Built-Up Area Boundary
BILL 2: Housing Design and Character

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Consultations:

Natural England: Standing Advice:-

It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

HDC Design and Conservation: No objection, subject to a condition

Parish Comments:

No objection

Representations:

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

The application has been assessed on the basis of the submitted details, together with the planning history of the site and adjoining properties, available images and photographs supplied by the agent. These details were considered sufficient to allow the application to be properly considered and determined.

Principle of Development

Paragraph 163 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities in determining applications for renewable or low-carbon development should, firstly, not require applicants to demonstrate a need for renewable or low carbon energy, recognising that small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse emissions and, secondly, approve applications if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

Paragraph 164 continues 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.

Policy 35 of the HDPF states that development will be supported where it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the District's carbon reduction targets. Measures which should be used to mitigate the effects of climate change includes improved energy efficiency in new developments; and the use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy supply systems.

Policy 36 of the HDPF relates to energy use and stipulates that schemes for renewable energy schemes will be permitted where these do not have a significant adverse effect on landscape and townscape character, biodiversity, heritage or cultural assets or amenity value. It is considered that the existing policy basis would provide a general presumption in favour of development comprising of photovoltaic panels. Policy 36 of the HDPF notably draws no distinction between the nature of energy generation; being either for agricultural, domestic, or commercial purposes.

The use of renewable energy resources is favoured within national and local planning policy, where it considers that increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to secure a reliable energy supply, and also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is therefore considered that the principle of the development is acceptable, subject to all other material considerations.

Character and Appearance

Policy 32 and 33 of the HDPF seeks to ensure 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 development is required to reinforce the special character of the District's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form, and design. Development should make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area, ensuring that development in conservation areas is consistent with the special character of those areas. Development should also preserve and ensure the clear legibility of locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.

Policy BILL2 of the NP states that development should be guided by the Parish Design Statement and, amongst other criteria, reflect the scale and local vernacular of the surrounding buildings and use materials that are in keeping with existing buildings.

The solar panels would be well contained within the roof slope on the southern elevation and given their modest projection from the plane of the roof, would not appear intrusive or unduly dominant additions. The proposal is not therefore considered to result in harm to the visual amenities of the site and wider surrounds.

Following consultation with the Council's Design and Conservation Officer, it is recognised that the proposal would have some impact on the special interest of the Listed Building. It is noted that there may be some oblique views of the panels, but these will not be at a close distance. There are clear public benefits in terms of reducing the reliance on fossil fuels, and in spite of the potential to become aware of the panels, it is not considered that this will result in harm to the special interest of the building.

The proposal is considered appropriate to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and which would not harm the character or appearance of the wider area, including the special interest of the Listed Building and wider Conservation Area. It is therefore considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and would accord 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 solar panels would not cause any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, being sited on the southern elevation and largely hidden from public view by mature planting around the site boundaries. It is therefore considered that the siting and layout of the proposal and the resulting relationship with adjoining properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity.

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.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Pre-Commencement Condition**: No development shall commence until a method statement for the fitment of the solar panels and all associated hardware has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved steps must thereafter be undertaken in full to protect the roof structure from damage for the duration of the works hereby permitted. The statement should include details of the load placed on the roof and confirmation no additional structural support is needed.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The solar panels hereby permitted shall be retained in accordance with the approved details. In the event of the solar panels ceasing to be used, the panels shall be removed from the roof, and the roof made good, as soon as is reasonably practicable and be no later than six months after the cessation of the panels.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

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/24/0853
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location plan	Location Plan	5	29.05.2024
Block plan	Existing Block Plan	1	29.05.2024
Block plan	Proposed Block Plan	2	29.05.2024
Supporting Docs	n-type Bifacial Double Glass High Efficiency Mono Module JAM54D41 LB 430-455 Solar Panel Details	NONE	29.05.2024
Elevation plan	Existing East Elevation	3	29.05.2024

Elevation plan	Proposed East Elevation	4	29.05.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Marie Riggs Date: 05.09.2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial Tamara Dale Date: 11.09.2024