

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: H/24/97065

Site Address: 2 Farmhouse, Gaters Hill, Southampton, SO18 3HW

Case Officer: Dorothy Hei-Tung-Hoh

Description: Solar panels to be installed on roof of detached garage

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Within Strategic Gap • Outside the urban edge – Countryside • Outside Built-up Area Boundary • Within Designated Conservation Area – Gaters Mill and Romill Close West End Conservation Area (the eastern boundary of the Gaters Mill portion) • Listed Building Grade II		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• L/14214/001/00 - Replacement of two windows with one bay window - Refuse Listed Building Consent - 01/02/1979 • L/19/85390 - Listed Building Consent: resurfacing of access drive and parking area - Grant Listed Building Consent - 31/05/2019 • L/24/97066 - Listed Building consent for solar panels to garage within curtilage of listed property in a conservation area - Under Consideration (L/24/97066 accompanies this current application H/24/97065)		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	No comments were received.		
Parish Council:	No comments were received.		
Built Heritage Consultant:	<u>9th April 2024</u> The principle of this application is not a great problem but as they face the front of a significant heritage asset and therefore affect the setting of it, the detail is most important. Holding objection until a suitable detail is presented and approved. <u>7th May 2024</u> Withdraw objection.		
Ecologist:	The installation of solar panels on a metal corrugated roof is not likely to affect any protected species. The photo of the interior of the garage shows that it is lit by several windows and not likely to have bats roosting inside. I don't see any signs of nesting birds.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 23 rd April 2024.		

Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan:

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1, S5 and S8; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM11, DM12 and DM14.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals.

Assessment:

2 Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building situated within the Gaters Mill and Romill Close – West End Conservation Area. Its listing, dating back to 3rd October 1978, describes it as "*C16 and later. Two-storeyed timber-framed house, with irregular fenestration, now 2 dwellings. Modern tile roof, half-hipped. Upper walls have exposed half-timber, the filling and lower walls being in red brick of different periods and patterns. Casements; some old leaded lights. Triple diagonal chimneys on massive square stack. single-storeyed outshots, of recent date, at each end.*". Adjacent to the Farmhouse was a former factory building, which has since been repurposed into a care home. The current planning application seeks approval for the installation of 5 solar panels on the detached garage located to the bottom right of the main house within the curtilage.

Principle

- The application site lies outside the urban edge within designated countryside. Here the basic principle of development is not usually considered acceptable unless for justifiable agricultural, horticultural, or recreational purposes. Strategic policy S5 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) also restricts development in the countryside principally in order to maintain its rural character and to limit urbanisation. However, Policy DM26 of Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) allows extensions to existing dwellings in the countryside that are not subject to an agricultural occupancy condition and are not likely to result in the subdivision of the plot. The policy requires that new extensions do not result in the dwelling becoming disproportionate in size to its plot and neighbouring dwellings.
- 2 Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building. Therefore, the policy requirements and criteria in Policy DM12 are relevant. The policy states that the proposed development within the setting of a heritage asset will be permitted provided it does not harm or detract from the significance or special interest of the asset and sustains and enhances its special character and qualities.

Layout, design, and impact upon the character of the area

- Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that all new development should respect the character and appearance of urban areas, take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood, and be compatible in terms of mass, scale, layout density, design, and siting.
- Due to the elongated driveway preceding its curtilage entrance, both the application property and its detached garage have a relatively low visual prominence. Their visibility from the wider street scene and Mansbridge Road is limited, suggesting that the proposed installation of solar panels on the garage would likely have minimal visual impact on the surrounding area.
- While there may be slight glimpses of the solar panels from the nearby care home, it's noted that the application site and the adjacent care home are now separated

from the boundary by gardens and hedges. This spatial arrangement effectively screens both properties, reducing the prominence of the panels and contributing to the preservation of the heritage asset's setting.

- The confirmation by the agent that the solar panels will be fixed directly to the existing roof, rather than being elevated on frameworks, alleviates concerns regarding visual disruption to the listed building's setting. This approach ensures that the proposed installation will integrate into the existing structure without standing out. With the withdrawal of the objection by the Built Heritage Consultant, it is evident that the proposal is not considered to result in harmful impacts on the listed building.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) amongst other matters, stipulate that all new development should not have an unacceptable impact upon residential amenities of both new and existing residents.
- Given their nature, scale, location, and unimposing design of the solar panels, there are no foreseeable issues with regard to overshadowing, overlooking, or any other disturbances that might typically concern neighbouring properties. The proposed solar panels are not expected to cause any adverse impacts on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties.

Ecology

- Policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that the Borough Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers to; protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations, and promote the net gain of biodiversity on all sites through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing provisions and new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.
- The Council's Ecologist has confirmed that the installation of solar panels on a metal corrugated roof is unlikely to affect any protected species. The composition of the roof, being metal and corrugated, does not offer suitable crevices for bats to roost. Additionally, the presence of windows in the garage ensures adequate lighting, further discouraging bats from roosting in the area. Therefore, no ecological concerns have been identified in relation to the proposed installation.

Trees and landscaping

- The site does not contain any trees offered protection by a tree preservation order. Furthermore, the proposal has been deemed not to be in conflict with any trees or landscape features of particular amenity to the area.

Highways and Parking

- Policy DM14 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires residential development to provide off-highway parking which is adequate in terms of highway safety/traffic management.
- The application relates to the installation of solar panels, and therefore the proposal does not impact upon the current parking provisions.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion:

- Permit subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐