

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6 August 2014

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number: S/1352/14/FL

Parish(es): Willingham

Proposal: Retention of 2 x 4 Kilowatt Solar Panels

Site address: 130 Station Road, Willingham, Cambridge

Applicant(s): Mr Ray Manning

Recommendation: Approve

Key material considerations: Landscape character

Committee Site Visit: No

Departure Application: No

Presenting Officer: Andrew Fillmore

Application brought to Committee because: The application has been submitted by a District Councillor.

Date by which decision due: 4 August 2014

Planning History

1. S/0727/14/PA Prior notification for erection of agricultural shed, steel portal frame. Prior approval not required.

Planning Policies

2. National Planning Policy Framework
3. DCLG Publication: Planning Practice Guide for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
4. Written Ministerial Statement by the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government 'Local Planning and Renewable Energy Developments'
5. Adopted Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies

DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development

DP/3 Development Criteria
NE/2 Renewable Energy
NE/4 Landscape Character Areas
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/17 Protecting High Quality Agricultural Land

6. Draft Local Plan

S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC/1 Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
CC/2 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems
CC/9 Managing Flood Risk
NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
NH/4 Biodiversity

7. Supplementary Planning Document(s)

District Design Guide SPD – adopted 2010

Consultations

8. **Willingham Parish Council** – Response awaited

Representations

9. No third party representations received.

Planning Comments

10. The agricultural holding (MA Manning and Son) comprises a parcel of land which extends west from Station Road (B1050), to the southern side of Willingham village. A farmstead is located to the east of this holding, and comprises a number of typical agricultural barns set behind a linear grouping of detached residential dwellings. Vehicular access is provided off Station Road.
11. Further residential properties can be found to the east of Station Road opposite the site. Vegetation planting extends along the sites eastern boundary parallel with Station Road.
12. The application proposal seeks retrospective consent for retention of two rows of 4 kilowatt free standing solar panels. Each row comprises a steel frame set on three concrete strips supporting the panels which are angled to face south. Both rows measure circa 7.8m (length) x 3.6m (width) with the panels rising to a maximum height of 2.6m.
13. The panels were installed between 10/03/2014 and 20/03/2014, and are located to the rear of the residential dwelling (130 Station Road) and forward of the agricultural building recently granted Prior Approval.

Landscape character

14. The panels are located within the farmstead complex and enclosed to three sides by the grouping of agricultural buildings to the north; a recently erected agricultural barn to the west; and the residential dwelling (130 Station Road) to the

east. These buildings are significantly greater in height and bulk than the solar panels. Land to the south comprises an orchard with fruit trees planted in rows running east-west. Beyond the orchard a tree belt extends along the eastern site boundary parallel with Station Road. This tree belt comprises mature trees set at regular intervals.

15. The only public views are from Station Road to the east/south-east. Given this and the panel's height and siting in close proximity to the larger agricultural buildings and dwelling, along with the screening provided by the tree belt and orchard the development does not impact adversely on the landscape character.
16. It is necessary to condition the panels be removed from site within 6 months of the cessation to produce electricity to prevent unnecessary encroachment into the countryside.

Other considerations

17. The panels are sited on an area of hardstanding and have a footprint of circa 60m² and as such do not raise concerns relating to loss of agricultural land.
18. There are no residential properties in the immediate vicinity, other than the applicants dwelling, and the proposal does not give rise to concerns relating to the impact on neighbour amenity through noise or overshadowing.
19. The panels are already installed and no additional vehicle movements are anticipated.

Conclusions

20. Having regard to the above it is considered that planning permission be granted for the development subject to the conditions set out below.

Recommendation

21. Approve subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development hereby permitted shall be retained in accordance with the following approved plans: 'UK Planning Maps 130 Station Road, Willingham, Cambridge, CB24 5HG'
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
 2. All solar panels, their supports and any underground concrete to a depth of 1.5m must be removed from the site within 6 months of the solar farm ceasing to be operational.
(Reason: The site lies in open countryside and it is important that once the development has ceased the site be brought back into its previous use in accordance with the NPPF and policy NE/2 of the adopted Development Control Policies DPD)

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website or elsewhere at which copies can be inspected.

- Nation Planning Policy Framework
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies, Adopted July 2007
<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/local-development-framework>
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Proposed Submission July 2013
<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/localplan>

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