DELEGATED REPORT

Reference:- 11/00816/FUL **Parish:- Witherley Parish Council**

Applicant:- Mr Charles Harding
Lodge Farm
Atterton
Nuneaton
Leicestershire

Location:- Lodge Farm From A444 Atherstone Road To Lodge Farm Atterton Nuneaton Leicestershire

Proposal:- ERECTION OF SOLAR PANELS (RETROSPECTIVE)

Introduction:-

Full planning permission is sought for the installation of solar photo voltaic panels to the west roof slope of an existing barn. The solar panels have already been implemented and therefore this application seeks retrospective consent.

The panels with a projection of 0.046 metres, will be supported by brackets measuring a maximum of 0.100 metres from the roof plane resulting in a total projection from the roof plane by 0.146 metres. The PV panels are to be strategically sited in four blocks along the western roof slope. The barn has an eaves and ridge height of 3.69 and 6 metres, respectively. The barn currently used for livestock is positioned to the south of the site with other agricultural buildings located to the east.

Lodge Farmhouse and attached stable and barn are Grade II Listed Buildings. The site is located outside of the settlement boundary of Atterton, as defined by the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan.

The application is not accompanied by any technical documentation.

Relevant Planning History

The most relevant planning history is:-

97/00220/FUL	Erection of agricultural building for livestock	Approved	08.05.97
97/00456/FUL	Erection of agricultural building for housing of sheep	Approved	17.06.97
82/00467/4	Erection of bungalow and garage outline	Refused	26.10.82

Consultations:-

Site notice displayed and neighbours notified.

No letters of representation have been received within the statutory consultation period.

Development Plan Policies:-

Central Government Guidance

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development.

Planning Policy Statement: Planning and climate change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1

Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4): Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Planning Policy statement 22 (PPS22): Renewable Energy

Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (2009)

Spatial Objective 12

Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan (2001)

Policy NE5: Development in the Countryside

Policy BE1: Design and Siting of Development

Policy BE5: The Setting of a Listed Building

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Sustainable Design

Appraisal:-

The main considerations in respect of this application are the principle of development, siting, design and impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside, impact upon the setting of Listed Buildings and impact upon residential amenity. No weight can be given to the retrospective nature of this application.

Principle of Development

The application site lies outside of the current settlement boundary of Atterton, as defined on the proposals map of the adopted Local Plan and is therefore within an area designated as countryside.

Both Planning Policy Statement 7 in paragraph 15(iv) and Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22) encourage sustainable development and the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources. The proposed development will meet the key principles of PPS22 which recognises in paragraph 1(vi) and paragraph 18 that small-scale projects on existing buildings can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and, in this case, can demonstrate potential environmental and economic benefits required by paragraph 1(viii).

Spatial Objective 12 on climate change and resource efficiency within the adopted Core Strategy seeks to minimise the impacts of climate change by promoting the prudent use of resources through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies.

Whilst Saved Policy NE5 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to protect the character and appearance of the countryside for its own sake it recognises that certain forms of development that are important to the local economy may be acceptable in the countryside subject to no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the landscape. The site is a working farm and it is considered that the scheme will support existing operations at the site, by providing a renewable on site energy resource and potential income.

In summary, it is considered that the scheme would contribute to the overall outputs of renewable energy whilst also bringing benefits to the existing agricultural business, and wider rural economy, consistent with national and local planning policy. The principle of siting the Photo Voltaic (PV) panels on the roof of existing agricultural buildings within this countryside setting is therefore considered to be acceptable, subject to all other planning matters being adequately addressed.

Siting and Design and Impact Upon the Character and Appearance of the Countryside

PPS22 makes it clear that the visual effects of renewable energy developments will vary on a case by case basis according to the type of development, its location and the landscape setting of the proposed development.

Given the height of the barn within a low roof pitch, combined with the presence of other buildings to the east, it is not considered that the that the solar panels would be highly visible when viewed at a close proximity or from wider views from the open countryside beyond.

In terms of design, the solar panels will be photovoltaic modules and are standardised rectangular shape and will project 0.146 metres from the roof plane. It is considered that the design will not have an adverse impact upon the character of the barn and therefore are acceptable in design terms.

In summary, by virtue of the buildings siting, the PV panels sitings and height and pitch of the barn there would not be any significant detrimental impacts upon the character and appearance of the countryside in accordance with Saved Policy NE5 of the Local Plan.

Impact upon the Setting of a Listed Building

Saved Policy BE5 of the adopted Local Plan states that the setting of Listed Buildings will be preserved and enhanced by appropriate control through the design of the new development in the vicinity, having regard to the scale, form, siting and design of the proposal in relation to the Listed Building and its setting. Where appropriate, regard should also be had to the preservation of trees and landscape features.

The barn itself approved under application ref: 97/00220/FUL is not Listed. The farmhouse, attached stable and barn to the east are Listed Buildings. Given the siting of the barn and the siting of the PV panels to the western roof slope it is not considered that the solar panels would be read in conjunction with the Listed Buildings. Given their siting on a low pitch roof it is not considered that they are detrimental to the setting of the Listed Buildings.

In summary, by virtue of the buildings siting, the PV panels sitings and height and pitch of the barn there would not be any significant detrimental impacts upon the setting of the Listed Buildings in accordance with Saved Policy BE5 of the Local Plan.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

The nearest residential dwellings to be impacted upon as a result of the PV panels would be 'The Lodge' located to the north of the barn. Given that the solar panels are set to be positioned on the western roof slopes and protrude 0.146 metres it is not considered that there would be any significant detrimental impacts upon the residential amenity of the neighbouring occupiers.

There are no other residential properties impacted upon as a result of the proposal.

In summary, the proposal is considered to have minimal impacts upon amenity of neighbouring residents. As such the scheme is considered to be in accordance with Saved Policy BE1 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed PV panels will contribute to renewable energy production and provide wider environmental benefits together with economic benefits to the agricultural operations on the site and the rural economy. By virtue of siting and scale the panels would not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the countryside, upon the setting of Listed Buildings or residential amenity and no other material impacts have been identified, that would indicate that the proposal is not in compliance with local development plan policies. Accordingly the application is recommended for planning permission, subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:- Permit subject to the following conditions:-

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation and Relevant Development Plan Policies :

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area, representations received and relevant provisions of the development plan, as summarised below, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this permission, the proposed development would be in accordance with the

development plan as the photovoltaic panels will contribute to renewable energy production and provide environmental and economic benefits whilst as a result of their location, scale and design they will not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the countryside, the setting of Listed Buidlings or residential amenity.

Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan (2001):- Policies NE5, BE1, BE5

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (2009): - Spatial Objective 12.

1 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the following details: Block Plan (Scale 1:500); Side elevations (Scale 1:100) and SW elevation (Scale 1:100) received by the Local Planning Authority on 20 January 2012.

Reasons :-

1 For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Notes to Applicant:-

1 This permission does not grant approval under the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2000 (as amended) for which a separate application may be required. You are advised to contact the Building Control Section.

Contact Officer:- Ebbony Mattley Ext 5691