

Galbraith

PLANNING

Design and Access Statement

Application for the erection of solar panels within the
Walled Garden

Walled Garden, Styford Hall, Stocksfield, Northumberland,
NE43 7TY

Ref: 2022/05/15/KC

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Galbraith has been instructed to submit an application for planning permission on behalf of A Dickinson for the erection of ground mounted solar panels within the walled garden at Styford Hall to supply the Hall and associated buildings with power. The location is to the north of Riding Mill across the River Tyne. For the purpose of this document, it will hereafter be referred to as the Site.

The purpose of this Supporting Planning Statement is to assess the background information in relation to the Site, including information on the current and proposed use and the planning history. The planning policy context is outlined in the adopted Northumberland Local Plan 2016 – 2036 adopted March 2022.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the following submitted documents:

- Site Plan
- Location Plan
- Planning Application Form
- Heritage Statement
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
- Existing and Proposed Elevations

1.2. Planning History

- **17/01579/LBC** – Listed Building Consent for the addition of roof light, stove flue and extract grilles to the roofs and wall of the existing building. PERMITTED
- **16/00303/DISCON** – Discharge of conditions 4 (openings) & 5 (damp proof survey) of planning permission 15/04105/LBC. PERMITTED
- **15/04105/LBC** – Listed Building Consent: Internal refurbishment and changes to internal layout to included minor works to main house including east and west wings to the rear. PERMITTED
- **T/20040576** – Listed Building: Formation of opening in top floor bedroom wall and creation of ensuite bathroom in attic space adjacent, and refurbishment of existing shower room. PERMITTED
- **T/970113** – Listed Building Consent: Internal alterations to create additional office room. PERMITTED

2. SITE DESCRIPTION & PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Site Description

The Site comprises of a walled garden associated with Styford Hall located to the north of Riding Mill. The site currently forms an herbaceous border within the walled garden.

The Garden Walls are listed under Listing NGR: NZ0181962227 and were built c.1800.

The Site is accessed via a wooden door to the east which is owned by the applicant.

The Site does not lie within any designations.

2.2. Proposed Erection of Ground Mounted Solar Panels

The application seeks to erect ground mounted solar panels within the Garden Walls in order to provide renewable energy to supply Styford Hall and associated buildings.

As the panels will be ground mounted there would be no attachments to the listed Garden Walls and therefore, a listed building consent is not required.

The walled garden will be accessed via a wooden door on the eastern Garden Walls.

The proposed solar panels will be installed in 2 rows with 28 panels per row with a length of 29.20 metres. The peak power output provided by the solar array would be 20.44kw.

3. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Planning Policy & Material Considerations

The local planning policy applicable to the proposals is outlined in the adopted Northumberland Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (March 2022).

The planning policies and associated statutory and non-statutory guidance considered most applicable to the submitted proposals are:

- Policy STP 1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy STP 2: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy STP 3: Principles of sustainable development
- Policy STP 4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Policy QOP 1: Design Principles
- Policy QOP 2: Good design and amenity
- Policy QOP 5: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy QOP 6: Delivering Well Designed Places
- Policy REN1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Energy Storage

Other documents of relevance to the proposal are:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Historic England Guidance 'Low and Zero Carbon Technologies 2021'
- Historic England Guidance 'Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings Solar Electric (Photovoltaics) 2018'

3.2. Principle of Development

At a national level, the National Planning Policy states at Paragraph 130 (c) that *"planning policies and decisions should ensure the developments: are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change"*

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF outlines that at the core of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy STP 2 of the NCC local plan states that the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF and will work proactively with applicants to support proposals that improve environmental conditions in the area. In this instance, the erection of solar panels will allow for renewable energy to be generated and used on site which will reduce the reliance on fossil fuels as

the property currently uses oil and an air source heat pump for the underfloor heating in the west wing. This coincides with Policy STP 3 which outlines that proposals should make prudent and effective use of Northumberland's renewable resources and should maximise energy efficiency and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

The importance of renewable and low carbon energy is acknowledged in Policy REN 1 of the NLP which states that plans for development utilising renewable energy sources will be supported subject to highway safety, heritage, amenity and environmental concerns being suitably addressed. Please see the accompanying Heritage Statement produced by Roger Higgins BA Hons, MATP, MAUD, IHBC which addresses heritage concerns.

Chapter 14 of the NPPF seeks to support the transition to a low carbon economy. Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Paragraph 158 states that applications for renewable and low carbon development should be approved if its impacts are acceptable. In this instance, the benefits outweigh the minor harm to the listed garden walls.

With regards to Policy STP 4 outlines that development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Support will be given to proposals that help to mitigate climate change by being designed to reduce energy consumption and incorporate decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy. The proposal meets this criteria as it will allow Styford Hall to use renewable and low carbon energy. The proposal will also reduce the daily running costs of the property as a result of the living crisis which has seen the monthly bills increase 5 times the previous monthly amount.

3.3 Design

The design of the site will remain as existing as the ground mounted solar panels will cover a total of 130.5 square metres and be sited in the north east corner of the wall garden as to minimise the impact and to allow the area to continue to be utilised as a walled garden. The solar panels are proposed to be ground mounted on aluminium frames so there will be no physical impact to the Grade II listed walled gardens.

Within Policy QOP 1, the policy states developments should make provisions for efficient use of resources, respond to the climatic conditions of the location and mitigate climate change whilst ensure the longevity of the buildings and spaces.

The solar panels have been designed to be sited in the south facing walled garden to make the most of the renewable resource, solar, whilst retaining use of the walled garden for growing produce. The surrounding land is enclosed by mature trees and therefore, would not be suitable for siting solar panels due to the shading.

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF attached significant importance to the design of the built environment and states that superior design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 127 seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and design.

3.4 Amenity

Policy REN1 outlines that any renewable energy proposal must ensure that residential amenity is not adversely affected by noise emission, shadow flicker, reflected light or visual intrusion. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that developments will create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

There are no third party residential properties affected by the proposal. Therefore, it is concluded that there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity as the proposed solar panels are well screened by the walled garden itself.

3.5 Access, Parking & Services

There is no proposed access, parking or services required as part of the erection of the ground mounted solar panels. A small trench will be dug in the existing lawns to lay the cable from the proposed site to Styford Hall itself.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development sits comfortably with planning policy at all levels of the hierarchy in that:

- The proposal does not cause harm to the fabric of the heritage assets on the site.
- The proposal helps to generate low carbon renewable energy which will be used on site and reduce the carbon footprint.
- The proposal allows for the continued use of the walled garden to grow produce as well as providing renewable energy.
- The proposal is well screened and does not impact on any residential amenity.
- The proposal complies with local and national planning policy.