

Head of Planning
 Guildford Borough Council
 Millmead House
 Millmead
 Guildford
 Surrey
 GU2 4BB

Wednesday, 3rd January 2024

My ref: AJ/CP/MC-001

Dear Sir/Madam,

4 MODEL COTTAGES, VAPERY LANE, PIRBRIGHT, GU24 0QB
PLANNING APPLICATION: ERECTION OF ROOF BASED SOLAR PANELS

Please find attached, on behalf of Messrs C. Potts and M. Hulme (the applicant), a householder application proposing the erection of roof based solar panels on the rear roofscape of the above residential property.

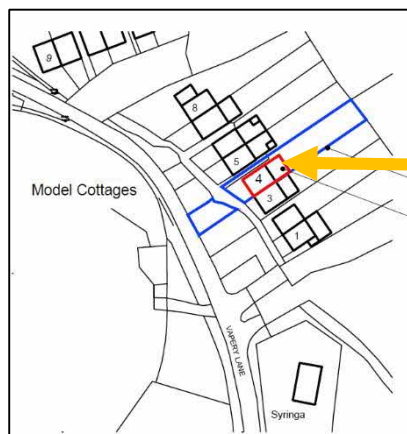
The application is supported by this planning letter, incorporating a review of heritage matters and the following details:

- Planning Application Form and Owner's Notice.
- Location Plan.
- Existing and Proposed Plans.

I set out a site description, details of the development proposal, review the local and national development plan context and provide a heritage assessment below.

Application Site

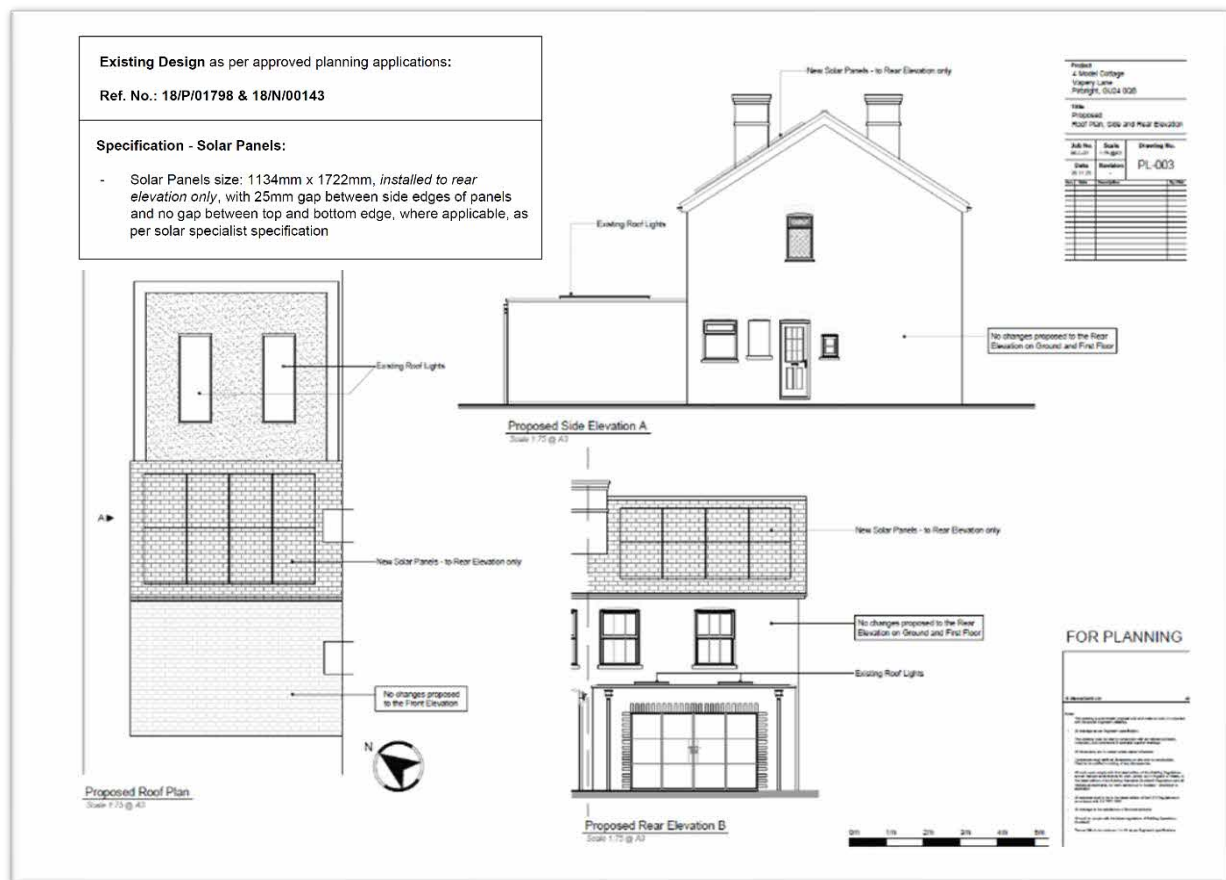
4 Model Cottages is a two storey, mid-terrace dwelling house of pitched roof, traditional appearance. In review of local character, it is observed that the adjoining semi-detached home has solar panels installed to the front elevation (see below). The locale is within Pirbright Conservation Area, as identified in the Local Plan.



Application Proposal

The development proposal, as shown on the plan extracts below, relates to the installation of solar panels to the rear roof of the subject property at 4 Model Cottages in Pirbright. The individual panels (8 in total) measure 1.134 metres by 1.722 metres, installed to the rear elevation only. The applicant, in presenting the proposal, evidently duly considers the visual appearance of the Conservation Area setting and has discretely placed the panels on the rear roofscape. As above, the neighbour also has solar panels installed on the adjoining semi-detached property; therefore, the small-scale development proposal is considered to be equally in keeping with the street scene.

Proposed Roof Plan, Side and Rear Elevation Extract



Planning Appraisal

The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be assessed.

Paragraph 2 of the guidance advises that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into

account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Chapter 2 of the NPPF: Achieving Sustainable Development identifies that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being, and environmental protection.

The development proposal is supportive of the promotion of sustainable technologies in relation to the applicant's householder needs, with the aim of reducing their 'carbon footprint' and those of future occupiers of Model Cottages, with the incorporation of roof based solar panels. This is an important material consideration in favour of the development proposal.

Paragraph 8 of the guidance states that "*Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

- a) *an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) *an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

The small-scale development proposal for the erection of solar panels on the rear roof of the dwelling house is evidently supportive of environmental objectives for the promotion of sustainable technologies and would be supportive of local short-term employment during the installation phase.

Chapter 12, Paragraph 131 relates to design and informs that "*The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*".

In assessing the design of this small scale, it is considered that the positioning of the solar panels on the rear roofscape of the subject dwelling achieves an appropriate and sensitive aesthetic

Guildford Local Plan

The Guildford Local Plan contains the development management policies for planning decision making purposes. Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (Adopted on 22 March 2023) informs that the detailed planning policies seek to protect and enhance the borough for generations to come.

Key policies of relevance include, but are not limited to:

Policy H4: House Extensions and alterations, which requires house alterations to take account of the form, scale and appearance of the host property, adjacent buildings and immediate surrounding area in presenting proposals.

Policy D4: Achieving High Quality Design and Respecting Local Distinctiveness, which sets out policy aims and objectives in consideration of character and sense of place.

Policy D14: Sustainable and Low Impact Development, which promotes energy improvements through new development to meet the aims of enhancing energy efficiency.

Policy D17: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage sets out ways to incorporate the strategic priority to expand renewable energy generation capacity across the county with a focus on solar PV installations as the greatest carbon reduction potential.

Policy D18: Designated Heritage Assets, which states that the level of supporting information should be proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to facilitate an understanding of potential impact.

Policy D20: Conservation Areas, which seeks to preserve or enhance the quality and interest of the area in relation to its special characteristics/historic aspects.

Supplementary Guidance, including the Pirbright Conservation Areas Appraisal.

In review of the above strategic and local development plan context, it is evident that the small-scale domestic proposal, which incorporates the installation of renewable solar technology, as prioritised within the Development Plan (Policy D17 refers), is supportive of the identified sustainability credentials.

Given the small scale and operation, discrete siting and appearance of the solar panel installation on the rear roofscape only, there will be no recognisable adverse impacts upon the local environment presented.

Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposals affecting heritage assets

Local Plan Policy 20 'Conservation Area' advises that development proposals within or which would affect the setting of a Conservation Area are expected to preserve or enhance its special character and appearance.

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Within Pirbright Conservation Areas Appraisal, it is stated that, “*To the north of West Heath is Vapery Lane. This is a road characterised by estate type cottages built by Lord Pirbright in the first years of the 20th century. New Cottages lie on an unmade track facing an area of cleared heath, enclosed by trees and sheltered from School Lane. The relationship of the cottages to this open field is an attractive one and gives the row of buildings a character and distinction.*” In review of the key threats to the fabric of Pirbright Conservation Area, there is no mention to solar PV installations on rear roofscapes of properties at Vapery Lane.

Against the above context, the development proposal presents a small-scale solar panel scheme, with the installation solely relating to the rear roofscape of the host property. As such, there are no clear views of the development on approach to the property along Vapery Lane with views restricted to the rear gardens of neighbouring homes. As established above, the adjoining neighbour has solar panels installed to the front roofscape of their property, which also lies within the Conservation Area. The development proposal will have no recognisable impact upon the locale and/or any listed building.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ provides the national planning policy context for development and heritage assets. The advice includes the following policy threads:

Paragraph 195 - Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. ***No major alterations are proposed to the dwelling house, the proposal relating to a solar panel installation to the rear roofscape. The development is of a minor scale and consistent with local character and the host property.***

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF advises that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The advice states that “*The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance*”. This advice is consistent with local plan policy, as outlined above. As stated, the domestic scale development is carefully sited and of appropriate appearance.

The NPPF further advises local planning authorities that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

In review of the policy criteria, the development proposal does not alter the main building structure; in terms of the need for the development, the solar PVs will enhance the energy

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efficiency of the dwelling. Furthermore, there will be no significant adverse impact from noise, glint, or glare, recognising that the application proposal is of small domestic scale.

The scheme will deliver the public benefit of clean, renewable energy generation which contributes to tackling the climate emergency; thus, it is considered that the application fully accords with the national and local development plan.

Conclusion

The development proposal relates to the installation of rear roofscape of No 4 Model Cottages in Pirbright. Given the minor nature of the development and the discreet siting of the panels, it is asserted that there are no recognisable adverse impacts upon the Conservation Area setting.

In review of policy, the development proposal complies with the policy aims and objectives in consideration of design, heritage, and sustainability requirements. There would be no recognisable impact on the natural, historic, and built environment. The Council are invited to approve the scheme in accordance with the Development Plan.

I look forward to receiving the council's acknowledgement letter and will then touch base with the planning case officer accordingly in addressing any queries.

Yours Faithfully,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Andrew Ayles.

Andrew Ayles
Director