

## Planning and Heritage Statement

Proposed Installation of Domestic Garden, Ground Mounted 25kw Solar PV Array  
and removal of small Apple tree

at

Arch House, 84 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5EN



Picture 1 – Proposed Garden Area Site for PV Array

Applicant: Mr Peter Goodliffe

November 7<sup>th</sup> 2023

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Statement is submitted in support of a Householder Planning Application for the proposed installation of domestic garden, Ground Mounted 25kw Solar PV Array (Picture 1) for the purpose of providing domestic energy at Arch House, 84 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5EN. The applicants purchased the above property in 2023 and have been working towards reducing their carbon footprint beginning with their domestic energy usage. The proposed installation is part of a renewable energy scheme at their property with the applicants keen to deliver a carbon reduction scheme which will also include air source heat pumps and a hydrogen-ready boiler. The scheme is being designed to replace existing fossil-fuel based equipment and therefore reliance on external energy suppliers. Extensive Pre-Application advice was sought from TWBC in December 2023.

## 2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The property and garden site for the proposed solar PV array is located within the Madeira and Warwick Park **Conservation Area**, on a corner plot at the junction of Roedean Road and Warwick Park. Warwick Park is known to be the largest and one of the last of the parkland developments by large landowners in Tunbridge Wells, and is the culmination of what began with the nationally important development of Calverley Park, by Decimus Burton. Of note are the spacious, 'sylvan' residential streets with mature trees, strong boundary features including laurel hedges, and many sections of traditional red brick paver footpaths. The substantial detached, Arch House being a fine example, and semi-detached houses that are generously proportioned with well-proportioned gardens with most exhibiting vernacular details including turrets, balconies, half-timbered gables, tile hanging and leaded light windows.

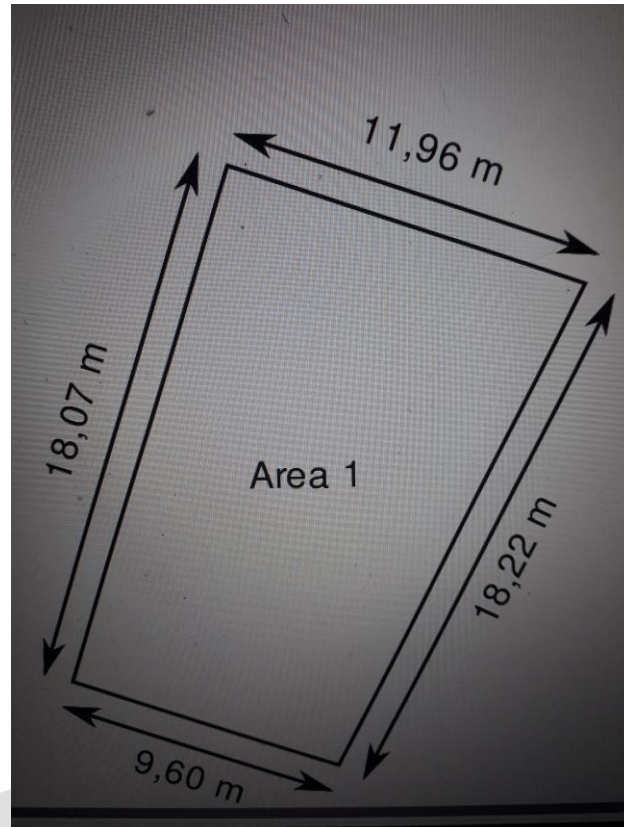
The garden site for the proposal is at the most southern part of the rear, upper garden that rises from the main dwelling by approximately 2 metres. All neighbouring properties are detached with private, rear gardens that adjoin the proposal site and there is no public view of the area. The Array will be mounted on an area currently used for composting/scrub and rough grass. A small, young Apple Tree, approximately 6-8ft high, will need to be removed for the installation to proceed. The Case Officer's pre-Application written response states that "I do not believe the removal of this tree would be objected to." The development and

removal of the tree will have no detrimental impact or effect to the Conservation Area.

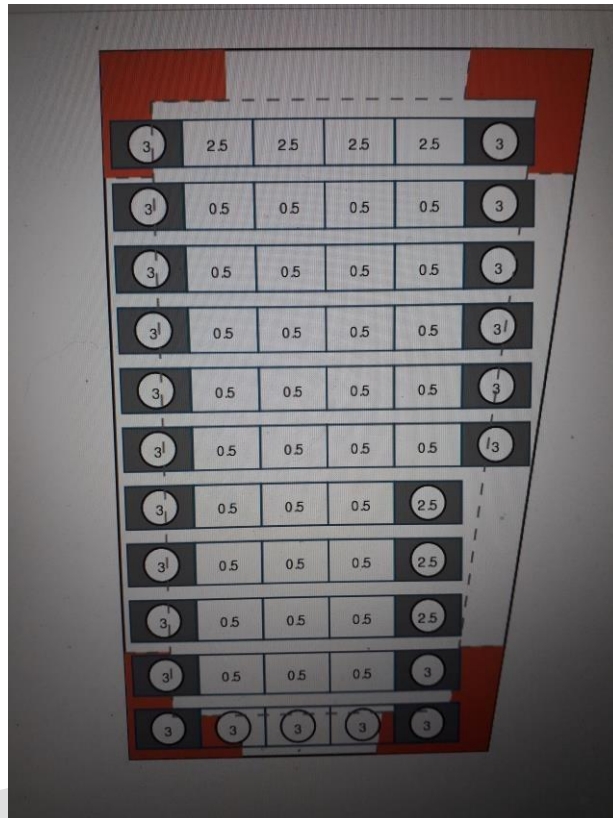
### 3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

This application seeks permission for the erection of ground mounted solar PV panels for the purpose of domestic energy supply. The proposed development involves the installation of a Ground Mounted 25kw Solar PV Array of 61 panels measuring 18.2m x 12m (Picture 2 & 3) within the southern, garden area for the purpose of providing domestic energy at Arch House, 84 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5EN. The installation is part of a renewable energy scheme at the above property with the applicants keen to deliver a carbon-reduction scheme which will also include air source heat pumps and a hydrogen-ready boiler. The current domestic consumption of electricity at the property is approximately 13,000kw/annum with an additional 5,700 cubic metres of gas with the intention of converting to an electric-based scheme. The scheme is therefore being designed to replace all existing fossil-fuel based equipment and therefore reliance on external energy suppliers.

A small, young Apple tree, approximately 6 – 8ft high, will need to be removed for the installation to proceed. The Case Officer's pre-Application written response states that "I do not believe that the removal of this tree would be objected to". The development and removal of this tree will have no detrimental impact or effect on the Madeira and Warwick Park Conservation Area.



Picture 2 – Proposed PV Array Dimensions



Picture 3 - Ground Mounted 25kw Solar PV Array

The panels are situated within the garden area on frames that are supported by simple ground mounts (Picture 4). The array is not enclosed and therefore provides an unintrusive installation. This mounting solution ensures that the panels are raised and the ground below remains permeable. The capacity provided will also enable the applicants to move to future electric vehicle use with the panels providing sufficient capacity.



Picture 4 – Ground Mounted PV Array Framework

The main dwelling has been subject to applications for residential extensions in recent years but there have been no comparable applications elsewhere within the site or any previous applications for solar generation. There are no adverse impacts arising from the development on the Conservation Area.

#### 4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The purpose of the statement is to demonstrate how the proposed scheme meets national and local planning policy requirements and would result in the provision of renewable energy generation that will significantly contribute towards the District's climate change and sustainability objectives at the application site.

Extensive Pre-Application advice was sought from TWBC in December 2023 with the following response "I have spoken with our Conservation Officer in relation to the proposal and they have raised no notable concerns in relation the proposed solar panels; similarly I am of the opinion that the panels would not detrimentally impact the character of the building or the wider street scene."

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)(September 2023) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF provides three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development as economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 11 states that for decision taking the presumption in favour of sustainable development means approving proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. Paragraphs 152 – 173 seek to support developments that seek to tackle climate change, including in terms of future resilience and infrastructure. Paragraph 158 in particular supports the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy development and requires that local planning authorities approve applications for renewable energy. Paragraph 174 seeks to protect valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity value and other important environmental areas. Developments should deliver net gains for biodiversity.

Relevant Local Planning Policies include The Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy (TWCS) 2010 and Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (TWLP) 2006:

Within the TWCS, adopted in 2010, are the most relevant policies that relate most directly to the proposed development:

Core Policies 4 – Environment

Core Policy 5 – Sustainable Design and Construction

Within the TWLP, adopted in 2006, are the most relevant policies that relate most directly to the proposed development  
Policies

EN1 – Environment (Conservation Area and Energy Efficiency)

EN5 – Development in Conservation Areas

All National and Local Policies reflect the need for an active, positive approach to sustainable development and the requirement to approve applications for the provision of renewable energy.

## 5. ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

As stated above, the NPPF strongly supports the delivery of renewable and low/no carbon energy through the planning system. Paragraph 158 in particular states that local planning authorities should not require applicants to “demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and



recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions". The urgent requirement for new and additional renewable energy developments is therefore encapsulated in national policy and would favour the development proposed. Paragraph 158 also requires local planning authorities to approve applications delivering renewable energy development if the impacts are (or can be made acceptable). The principle of development is therefore strongly supported by national planning policies.

Additionally, the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy (TWCS 2010) and Local Plan (TWLP 2006) further endorse the delivery of renewable energy under the key policy EN1. Policy EN5 (TWLP), which covers development in a Conservation Area, is further satisfied given that all 7 criteria can be achieved with this proposal.

In summary, as a renewable energy proposal, the development strongly contributes towards sustainability objectives:

- There are no adverse impacts arising from the development on the Madeira and Warwick Park Conservation Area.
- The proposal will provide clean energy and significant carbon reductions.
- The development will also help contribute to wider goals of energy resilience and reduce reliance on petrol/diesel vehicles
- The development is discretely located within a large residential plot and are sited well away from neighbouring properties.
- The site is self-contained and benefits from a significant amount of natural screening, including woodland on three sides.
- The solar panels are therefore well-located in a suitable position that will avoid adverse visual harm and meet local and national policy requirements as a result. The ground mounted solution means that the panels are low-lying and are significantly less prominent than roof mounted solar panels.
- Both public and private views into the site are limited due to the mature natural screening and corner, back garden area.
- The proposals therefore do not result in the loss of any existing natural landscape features.
- It is the applicant's intention to introduce additional sympathetic native hedgerow planting and trees along site boundaries in the near future to further strengthen these natural features and provide additional features to support the existing natural biodiversity of the site and surrounding area.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This Householder Application seeks permission from TWBC for the installation of a Ground Mounted solar PV Array for the purpose of domestic energy supply and the removal of an Apple Tree. The development consists of 61 panels on ground mount frames capable of delivering an estimated 25kw/h of solar energy. Local and national policies, together with TWBC Case Officer support, strongly endorse the delivery of small-scale renewable projects and enshrine the need for new renewable energy developments of all kinds.

The development will meet the long-term energy needs of the dwelling, including enabling a switch to EV vehicles and there are no adverse impacts arising from the development on the Madeira and Warwick Park Conservation Area. TWBC is respectfully requested to grant permission for the proposed installation and removal of the Apple tree.

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**January 16<sup>th</sup> 2024**

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