SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

On behalf of BeBa Energy UK Ltd and Primrose Hill Farm

At Primrose Hill Farm, Bardney Road,

Wragby, Lincolnshire LN8 5JE

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For and on behalf of Brown & Co JHWalter

Brown & Co JHWalter is a leading provider of agency, professional and consultancy services across the whole range of rural, commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared by Brown&Co JHWalter to support a full planning application submitted on behalf of BeBa Energy UK Ltd and Primrose Hill Farm for the installation of a 127.26kWp ground-mounted solar array at Primrose Hill Farm, Bardney Road, Wragby, Lincolnshire LN8 5JE.

Extent of Report

1.2 The purpose of this statement is to outline the background to the Applicant's proposals and to address any key planning issues raised by them. This statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 1:** Introduction.
- **Section 2:** Describes the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
- **Section 3:** Outlines the proposed development and associated material considerations.
- **Section 4:** Planning history
- **Section 5:** Summarises the relevant national and local planning policy context.
- **Section 6:** Provides a planning assessment of the key considerations raised by the proposal.
- **Section 7:** Conclusion.

1.3 This supporting planning statement should be read in conjunction with the following application documents submitted as part of the planning application:

- Planning Application Form
- Location Plan
- Site Plan
- PV Layout
- Detailed PV Layout
- Side Profile
- Front and Rear Elevations
- Equipment Layout
- Trench Details
- Stringing Layout

Context of Development

1.4 This application relates to the pasture immediately north of Primrose Hill Farm, and proposes the installation of photovoltaic panels to facilitate the generation of renewable energy for both on and off site use.

1.5 Primrose Hill Farm is a working pig and poultry farm that supplies produce of the very highest standards. This is facilitated by ensuring the welfare and environmental conditions of livestock are far higher than what is required by law.

1.6 Consumers are continually requiring ever more from producers, not only in terms of cheaper and healthier foods, but also in terms of environmental sustainability.

1.7 High levels of energy are required in animal husbandry, namely in the supply of heat, ventilation and temperature control in barns and laying houses, essential for promoting the healthy growth of young animals and improving productivity.

1.8 The proposed installation intends to harness renewable energy from the Sun to produce electricity. By implementing this, the farm seeks to diminish dependency on fossil fuels and reduce running costs, thereby contributing towards environmental sustainability efforts and continued future viability.

SITE & SURROUNDINGS

Site & Surroundings

2.1 The development site is situated on pasture immediately north of Primrose Hill Farm, circa 1km south of Wragby village and west of Langton-by-Wragby.

2.2 The surrounding area is agricultural-led, with Badgermoor Wood to the north and open arable fields to the east. An existing, larger solar farm is located to the south-west.

2.3 Access to the site is via an access track connected to Bardney Road (B1202), approximately 470m to the west. The installation would not be visible from Bardney Road due to extensive roadside hedgerow screening and the presence of the existing solar panels. There is a public footpath located aside the proposed site. However, the development would also benefit from screening from this vantage point.

2.4 The closest residential property is Primrose Hill Farmhouse, situated south of the site alongside several farm buildings, all owned and occupied by the Applicant. Approximately 130m north-west of the site lies Badgermoor Wood House, which is located within the woodland.

2.5 The site does not fall within any statutorily designated areas, with the closest being Gosling's Corner SSSI, located 1.4km to the south, and Bardney Limewoods, situated 1.8km southwest. Additionally, the Lincolnshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is approximately 9km to the east.

Figure 1—Indicative Site Plan and Surroundings

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Development

4.1 The proposal includes the installation of a 127.26kWp ground-mounted solar PV array. The solar PV array would consist of 252no. individual modules over 3 rows of double-mounted free-standing solar panels. The installation would have a total length of 62.86m and a width of 26.5m.

4.2 The panels would have a 25° angle and would be south-facing in order to maximise energy collection from the Sun. They would have a maximum height of 2.43m above ground level and be 0.6m from ground level at their lowest point. All associated elevational plans have been submitted alongside this application.

4.3 The proposed development would produce renewable energy by converting solar radiation to electrical energy. The renewable energy produced would contribute towards the energy demand of the farm, reducing energy bills and carbon emissions, with excess energy (approximately 30%) being supplied for off-site use.

4.4 The panels will be constructed using the existing access from Bardney Road. Despite thorough screening, the panels would have a non-reflective coating and full metal framework, ensuring they are congruent with the existing landscape which includes a nearby larger solar farm.

Figure 2—Proposed PV Layout

PLANNING HISTORY

Planning History

4.1 Numerous planning applications have previously been submitted at Primrose Hill Farm, however only one is considered relevant to the subject application, as below.

S/216/00470/14

Planning Ref: S/216/00470/14
Description: Erection of a 3.7MW ground mounted solar farm with associated infrastructure including internal access roads, provision of inverter, transformer and DNO cabinets, pole-mounted CCTV and security fencing to a maximum height of 2.68m
Address: Primrose Hill Farm, Bardney Road, Wragby, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire LN8 5JE
Decision: Approved
Decision Date: 9th July 2014

4.2 The application was submitted for the installation of a commercial-scale 3.7MW ground-mounted solar farm along with associated infrastructure. This constituted major development and received approval in July 2014. This application proposed a significantly larger solar array compared to the subject application, with the capacity to meet the power needs of the entire Wragby Parish.

4.3 Given the proximity and similarity of this installation to the subject application, it is deemed important to review the reasons for its approval. Although granted permission under a now superseded Local Plan (East Lindsey Local Plan Alteration 1999 - Saved Policies), the key planning considerations according to the Officer's Report included:

The suitability of development in this specific location

4.5 The Case Officer concluded that applications of this nature typically require substantial land areas, which are commonly found in rural areas. Given the additional support provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for such developments, it was deemed that the location was acceptable in principle.

The potential impact on the rural character of the surrounding area

4.6 The Case Officer recognised that the installation could be perceived as an intrusive feature in the landscape, despite the presence of existing agricultural buildings and screening. However, it was concluded that this potential intrusion would not be significant enough to justify refusal, particularly considering the positive contributions to energy generation and support from national policy.

The potential impact on neighbouring properties

4.7 The Case Officer found that the proposed development would not adversely impact the amenity of neighbours due to its distance from occupied premises, presence of intervening landscape features, and the quiet, stationary nature of solar panels.

4.8 It was concluded that approval was warranted after considering all other relevant material considerations, of which none outweighed the recommendation to approve.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Planning Policy Context

4.1 Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan is, therefore, the starting point for the assessment of all planning proposals.

4.2 The Government's planning policies and guidance, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are also significant material considerations in deciding planning applications.

4.3 Local and national planning policies and guidance considered of most relevance to this application have been identified below:

East Lindsey Local Plan (July 2018)

- SP2 - Sustainable Development
- SP10 - Design
- SP11 - Historic Environment
- SP23 - Landscape
- SP24 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SP27 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

National Planning Policy Framework

- Paragraph 157
- Paragraph 163

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

5.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has thus far outlined the proposed development and highlighted the relevant planning policy context by which this application should be determined.

5.2 This section seeks to bring this all together and discuss why it is considered the proposed development adheres to local and national planning policy and should be approved without delay.

Policy SP27 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy)

5.3 Provided this application is for the installation of photovoltaics, SP27 is the key policy by which this proposal should be assessed.

5.4 Footnote 5. as found within 14.4 of the pre-ample to Policy SP27, outlines that small-scale energy proposals are defined as those falling outside those energy developments listed in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2011.

5.5 Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2011 identifies the threshold for industrial installations for the production of electricity to be 0.5ha site area. Considering the site area of the proposed installation is 1200m², the installation therefore constitutes small-scale in regard to SP27.

5.6 Provided the previous, only Part 4 of SP27 is relevant to this proposal. This states "small scale and micro renewable energy development will be supported where their individual or cumulative impact, when weighed against the benefits, is not considered to have an unacceptable impact on:

- residential amenity;
- the context and setting of any areas of cultural or historic importance or heritage assets; and
- local landscape character and visual qualities.

5.7 Each of these material considerations are to be discussed henceforth, as well as further matters considered pertinent to this application.

Residential Amenity

5.8 As discussed in *Site & Surroundings,* the proposed development site is only in notable proximity to two dwellings: Primrose Hill Farmhouse and Badgermoor Wood House.

5.9 The latter would be entirely screened from the installation due to the dense woodland situated between them, while the former is owned and occupied by the Applicant.

5.10 It is asserted that given the quiet and stationary nature of solar panels, the presence of intervening landscape features and the general distance from occupied premises, the development would not lead to any adverse impacts upon residential amenity.

Heritage

5.11 As shown in Figure 3, the proposed installation would not be located near or visible from any listed heritage assets. The closest asset, a Scheduled Monument (Moated Manorial Complex and Church Site), is approximately 1km north of the site and completely obscured by Badgermoor Wood.

In fact, Badgermoor Wood would entirely conceal the installation from all heritage assets in Wragby.

5.12 As such, it is asserted that the proposed development would have no impact upon and thus preserve heritage assets and their setting, including Wragby Conservation Area, in accordance with Policy SP11 Historic Environment.

5.13 The installation of the solar panels would necessitate the insertion of piles, not exceeding a depth of 1.6m. Trenching for cables would be no deeper than c.500mm wide and 600mm deep. The overall footprint of excavation would be minimal, typically occupying only a fraction of a percent of the site.

5.14 These limited physical construction activities would result in negligible direct impact on, if any, below-ground archaeological remains. Moreover, a desk-based review of the Heritage Gateway database revealed no previous Historical Environmental Records within the proposed development site.

5.15 The negligible physical footprint of the solar installation, coupled with the absence of historical records in the vicinity, collectively indicate that the proposed development is unlikely to have any significant adverse impact on archaeological remains in the area, and thus does not conflict with Policy SP11 in this regard.

5.16 Finally, Policy SP11 outlines that development must preserve or enhance the quality and experience of the historic landscapes and woodland within the District and their setting. Badgermoor Wood is identified as Ancient Woodland. However, with the installation being located in the adjacent field and the low-impact nature of the proposed development, it would be physically unaffected.

5.17 A public footpath is located to the immediate east of the proposed photovoltaics. It is acknowledged that the presence of solar panels in this location may diminish the experience of historic woodland, conflicting with Policy SP11. However, this impact is alleviated by the panels' positioning to

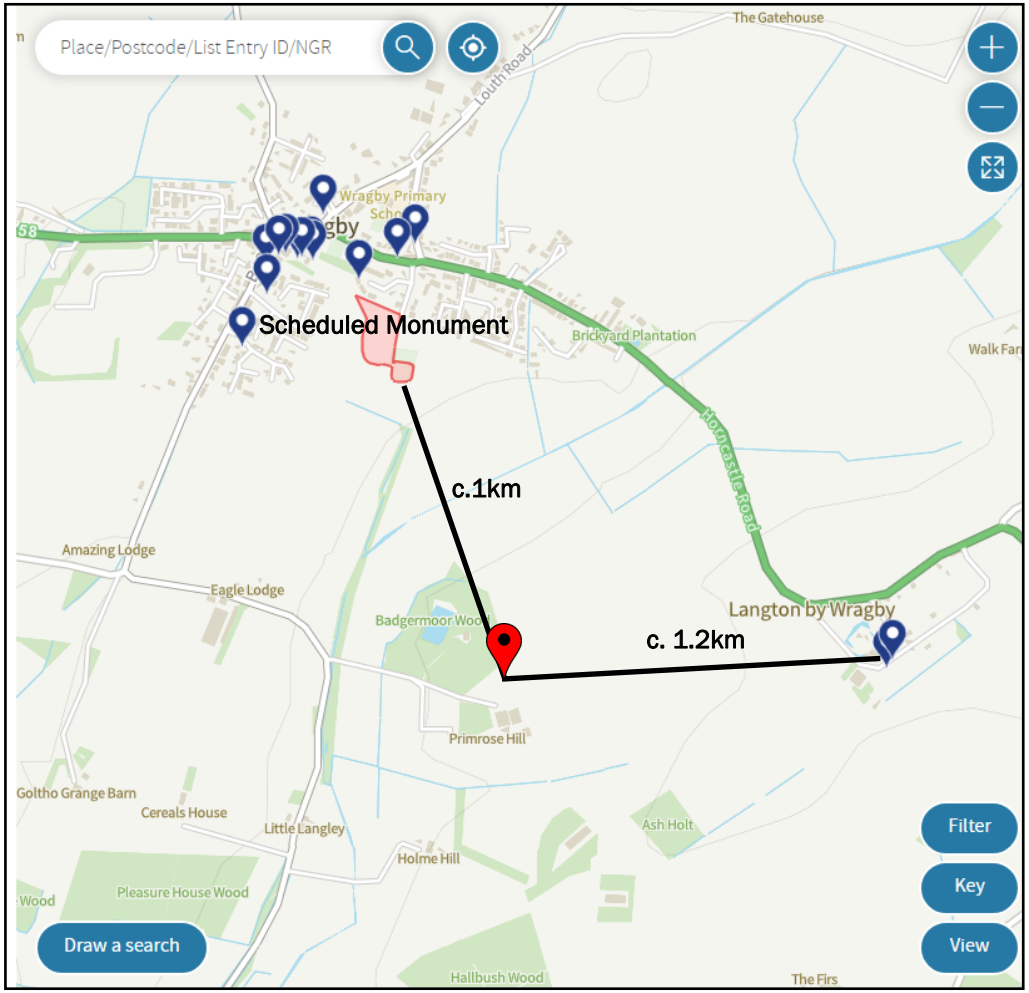

Figure 3—Distance to Heritage Assets

the south of Badgermoor Wood, within an already developed setting due to the presence of Primrose Hill Farmstead and an existing solar farm, as well as considerable screening limited views of the development from the footpath. It is considered the limited visual impact should not outweigh the clear benefits that would be secured from this renewable project

5.18 In conclusion, it is asserted that the proposed development would not adversely impact any designated heritage assets or sites of archaeological importance. Despite some impact on the experience of Badgermoor Wood, it is maintained that the development broadly aligns with SP11, thereby meeting the heritage considerations outlined in SP27.

Landscape and Visual Impact

5.19 SP23 asserts that the District's landscapes shall protected to ensure they are not compromised by development, particularly those defined as highly sensitive.

5.20 In regard to the District's Landscape Character Assessment (2011), the proposed development site is located within *E1 Wragby to Horsington Vale Woodland and Farmland* **(Figure 4).**

5.21 According to the Landscape Character Assessment, the area is characterised by open, gently rolling valleys intersected by smaller drainage valleys. Agriculture dominates with mixed fields surrounding villages. Trees, including ancient woods and hedgerow trees, enhances the area which remains a peaceful, distinctive and intact rural landscape.

5.22 The Assessment identifies the landscape area to have moderate to high sensitivity, with an Area of Great Landscape Value along its eastern boundary. It should be noted that the proposed development site is located on the western boundary, away from the AGLV and Lincolnshire Wolds AONB.

5.23 The Assessment also outlines that screening features, such as undulating landform and woodland provide enclosure within the landscape, restricting the visibility of future changes. Its

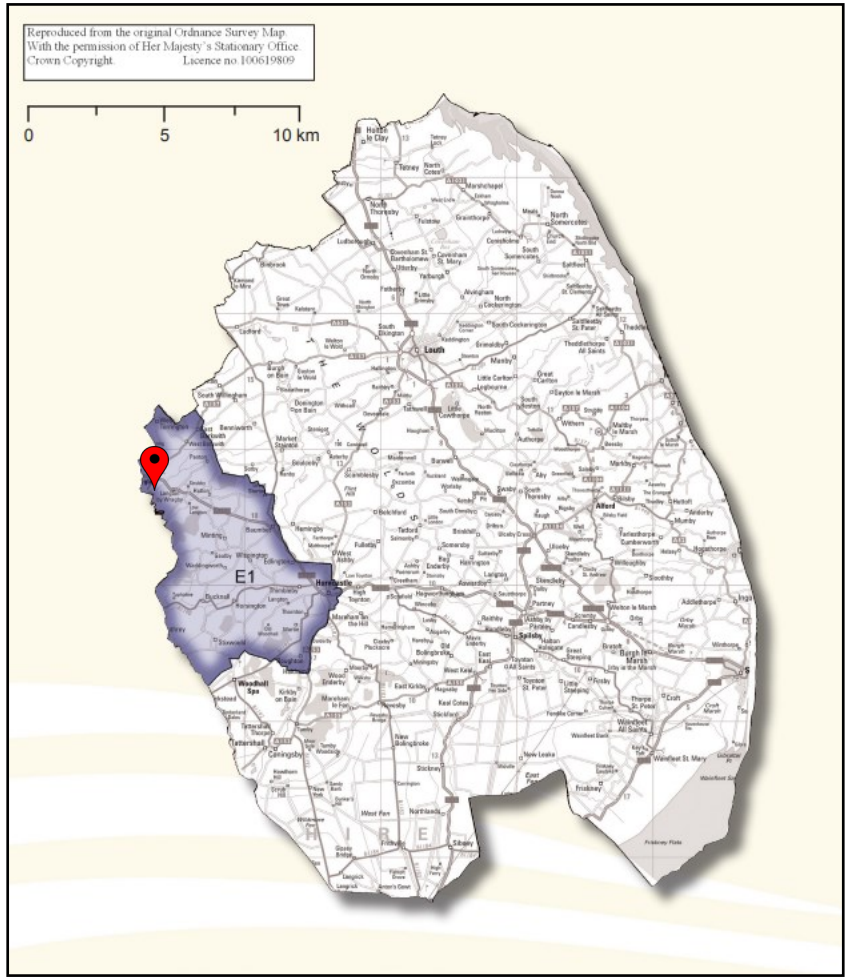

Figure 4 - Extract From Landscape Character Assessment

asserted that to reduce landscape and visual impacts, the location of new development should take advantage of the screening provided by existing landform and tree cover.

5.24 In the instance of the proposed development, firstly, the development is located on terrain that rises gently eastwards, which would contribute toward restricted views of the development from eastern areas where landscape sensitivity is highest.

5.25 Secondly, the development is extremely well shielded by woodland cover from the north, existing solar panels from the west and the farmstead to the south. The development would also be considerably screened from the footpath to the eat.

5.26 To conclude, the development, by way of considerable screening and location within the developed context of Primrose Hill Farmstead and the existing solar farm, would preserve and not have a significant adverse impact upon the landscape. While it is acknowledged some localised disruption to setting will arise it is asserted that this would be outweighed by the wider environmental benefits of securing the development.

5.27 Subsequently, it is considered the development does not conflict with SP23, and thus the consideration of landscape impacts within SP27.

Ecology

5.28 The proposed development site comprises grass pasture and falls outside of any nature conservation designations. Badgermoor Wood has been designated as Ancient Woodland by Natural England, as well as a Local Wildlife Site within the East Lindsey Local Plan. The proposed installation site lies beyond and a sufficient distance from the boundaries of this designation, ensuring no adverse impact or detriment to the woodland.

5.29 Solar installations are inherently non-intrusive, producing no noise, light, or pollution. Moreover, this specific solar panel installation requires minimal disruption to ground conditions, involving solely the insertion of a series of slender 1.6m metal piles and trenching for cables with no permanent hardstanding surfaces.

5.30 While cable trenching does entail some disturbance, it is temporary in nature, and any grass removed during this process can be promptly reinstated. Additionally, the excavation area for trenching is a fraction of the total site area.

5.31 Solar panels offer ecological benefits by creating cooler, more stable microclimates through shading, which encourages the growth of plant species uncommon in open fields. Additionally, the spaces underneath panels provide habitats for smaller wildlife like rodents, reptiles, and ground-nesting birds. Such features contribute to increased biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

5.32 Considering the aforementioned factors and the relatively small scale of the installation, it is affirmed that the development would not exert negative impacts on any priority species. Any adverse effects on the broader local ecology are expected to be de minimis and outweighed by the broader environmental advantages conferred by the proposal.

Drainage

5.33 Rather than employing a continuous impermeable surface, the design features a dispersed arrangement of modules incorporating intermittent gaps of 7.5m between rows which would allow precipitation to directly reach the ground. Rainwater would not accumulate on the panels due to their 25° angle and smooth surface, ensuring effective runoff to the ground.

5.34 While some areas beneath the panels may receive more rainwater, it is expected that the precipitation would evenly disperse across the ground under the panels. Given the absence of hardstanding surfacing in the proposal, it is anticipated that the drainage conditions after development would closely resemble those before, with limited runoff generated.

5.35 The site is not situated in an area of high flood risk from either pluvial nor fluvial sources as indicated by the EA's flood risk map for planning. Furthermore, the area is grassed over clay-loam soil with moderate drainage. The grass length is kept relatively long, which will help to attenuate water and promote infiltration.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

6.1 In conclusion, beyond its immediate benefits to operational needs, the proposed development embodies unwavering commitment to sustainable practices. By significantly reducing energy costs, providing surplus energy for off-site use and fundamentally decreasing reliances on fossil fuels, this extension encapsulates the Applicant's dedication to environmental stewardship.

6.2 The proposed development is aligned with local and national planning policies, particularly Policy SP27 for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy. Through an assessment of the project's anticipated impact it has been demonstrated that the development meets the necessary criteria for approval.

6.3 By facilitating a transition to cleaner, renewable energy sources, this development represents the Applicant's commitment to a greener future. In light of the compliance with local and national policies, and the negligible adverse impacts arising from the development, it is considered that this application meets the objectives of sustainable development and should be approved without delay.

6.4 The development encompasses a responsible stride toward a more sustainable future for the community and our planet, aligning with the broader global imperative for clean energy adoption.

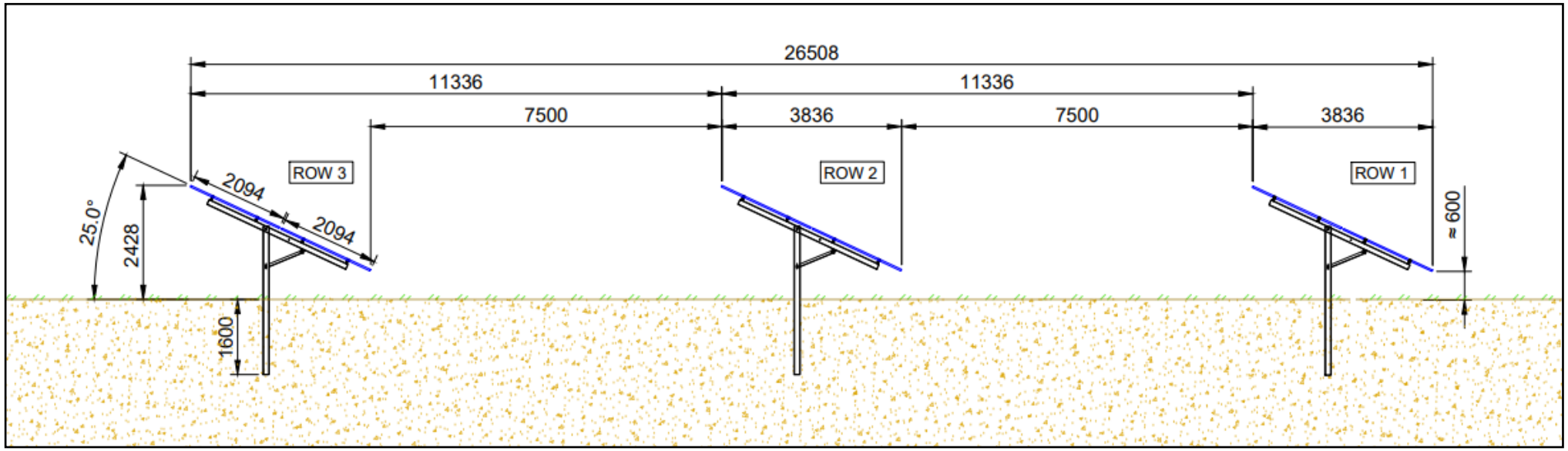

Figure 5—Side Profile