

**EAST RUSTON – PF/20/2049 Slaneys Barns (Seaglass Barn), Chequers Street,
East Ruston, Norwich, NR12 9JT: Mr Duncan**

Target Date: 11 February 2021

Case Officer: Jayne Owen

Full application

CONSTRAINTS

SFRA - Flood Warning Area

Landscape Character Area

SFRA - Areas Susceptible to Groundwater Flooding

SFRA - Flood Alert Area

LDF - Countryside

Unclassified Road

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PF/06/1650 Conversion of former agricultural buildings to five units of holiday accommodation.
Appeal Allowed 6 August 2007

THE APPLICATION

The proposal is for a total of 15.18 kWp solar PV to be installed at Seaglass Barns, which is an existing barn conversion comprising four holiday lets. The PV panels would be mounted on a wooden frame (referred to in the submission as a 'solar carport') and would also enable a total of 4 parking spaces and Electric Vehicle charging facilities to be provided, two spaces each side of the central frame. The central frame is designed to angle the PV array at 7 degrees.

The solar carport would be located on an area of existing hardstanding within an unused central area of an existing vehicle turning circle leaving clear access. The carport would also incorporate EV charging facilities and maximise the generation capacity of the panels by orientating them 180 degrees south.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

The applicant is related to a Head of Service at North Norfolk District Council

PARISH COUNCIL:

No objections

REPRESENTATIONS:

None

Environmental Health

Limited environmental concerns. It is noted that the site has converted into holiday barns for a number of years. However, as this would appear to have been a previous agricultural site there remains some risk of contamination of the land. An advisory note that in the event of any

contamination becoming evident (from storage or oil/fuel/agrochemicals, disposal pits etc), the applicant/developer is advised to halt works and seek advice from the District Council's Environmental Protection Team is recommended.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, approval of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

POLICIES

North Norfolk Core Strategy (Adopted September 2008):

SS 1 - Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk

SS 2 - Development in the Countryside

SS 4 - Environment

SS 5 - Economy

SS 6 - Access and Infrastructure

EN 2 - Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character

EN 4 - Design

EN 7 - Renewable energy

CT 5 - The transport impact of new development

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 4 - Decision-making

Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Principle
2. Design
3. Landscape
4. Amenity
5. Highway impact

APPRAISAL

1. Principle (SS 1, SS 2, SS 4, EN 7):

The application site lies within an area of designated countryside. Policy SS 2 states that in areas designated as countryside development will be limited to that which requires a rural location and is for one of a number of specified types of development. This includes renewable energy projects.

The proposal is for solar photovoltaic panels mounted on a wooden frame, referred to as a 'solar carport' within the submitted design and access statement, to generate electricity for existing holiday lets and to provide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points for holidaymakers staying at the barns. A total of 15.18 kWp of solar PV is proposed to be installed.

The barns were converted from former piggery buildings in 2010 (PF/06/1650) by the application to provide holiday accommodation. The solar carport would be sited to the south of the existing converted barns on an area of existing hardstanding within the centre of a turning circle used by visitors to the holiday lets for vehicle access and informal parking. There are 4 existing on-site parking spaces which would increase to 8 as a result of the proposal.

Policy SS 4 states that renewable energy proposals will be supported where impacts on amenity, wildlife and landscape are acceptable.

Policy EN 7 states that renewable energy proposals will be supported and considered in the context of sustainable development and climate change taking account of the wider environmental, social and economic benefits of renewable energy. Proposals for renewable energy technology, associated infrastructure and integration of renewable technology on existing or proposed structures will be permitted where individually or cumulatively there are no significant adverse effects on the surrounding landscape, townscape and historical features/areas, residential amenity, highway safety or designated nature conservation or biodiversity considerations.

In addition, The National Planning Policy Framework provides that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Paragraph 154 of the framework states that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, 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 and approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle having regard to Policies SS 1, SS 2, SS 4 and EN 7 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Design (EN 4)

Policy EN 4 states that all development should be designed to a high quality, reinforcing local distinctiveness. Design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable.

The proposal is for a single carport, providing a total of 4 car parking spaces, one for each holiday barn.

The structure comprises a wooden carport frame, which would support the roof mounted solar panels. The PV panels will be mounted on a wooden frame constructed of Douglas Fir which has been harvested from a sustainable managed forest in Northumberland and cut to shape by a local sawmill, each frame has a support base which is mounted to the ground using a concrete base.

The proposed carport would measure approximately 6.8 m in depth by 9.6 m in depth (10.6 m including overhang of the solar panels) and would have a monopitch roof measuring 2.4 m to 3.3 m at its highest point (angled towards the south orientation).

The carport would comprise a central frame with two supporting frames at either end. A total of 4 parking spaces will be provided, with two spaces either side of the central frame. The wooden framework provides a cantilever onto which the purlins are mounted, which support the PV panels. The frame system designed for Seaglass Barns is referred to as a 'Mono Pitch' frame, whereby the frame is angled in a single direction to maximise the southern orientation of the site. The central frame has been designed to enable the PV array at 7 degrees, such that it will enable a standard sized car to comfortably park underneath the frame, but prevent the pooling of rainwater and subsequent deposit of dirt.

A surface area of approximately 78.9 sq m would be covered by the solar carport. The installation comprises 44 No. photovoltaic panels. The modules comprise thermally pre-stressed glass with anti-reflection technology and a black anodised aluminium frame.

The existing holiday lets are sited to the rear of existing built form, accessed via an existing access. The structure would therefore have no significant impact within the established street scene.

In summary, the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its design and appearance and would accord with Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

3. Landscape (EN 2)

The solar carport would be sited within a small section of unused land within the centre of an existing turning circle and informal parking area in front of the holiday lets. The structure would be screened to the north by the existing holiday lets and there is existing brick and panel fencing of approximately 2.9 m high on the common boundary with the property known as Goosander which would screen the development to the south, views from the east would be from Back Road across an arable field 152 m from the site boundary. To the west of the site there is an existing dutch barn and small scale vineyard.

The solar PV panels specified are construction of dark-coloured black materials and have an anti-reflective coating (ARC) in order to maximise transmission of light and limit the possibility for reflections. No permanent visible spectrum lighting is proposed to be installed as part of the development proposals.

Owing to the relatively small scale and open-sided nature of the building, its natural wooden frame and the siting of the building which minimises its visual impact within the site itself, it is

considered that the proposal would not give rise to any overriding concerns with regard to landscape or visual impact in this location.

The proposal would therefore accord with Policy EN 2 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

4. Amenity (EN 4)

Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy requires that proposals should not have a significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and new dwellings should provide an acceptable level of amenity.

The nearest dwellings are the property known as Goosander which lies to the south and the residential properties at High Hill Road to the north. Views from the residential properties at High Hill Road which lie approximately 132 m to the north would be screened by the existing holiday barns which are approximately 4 m in height. There is existing brick and panel fencing (approximately 2.9 m high) on the common boundary with Goosander to the south.

It is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any overriding concerns in relation to the amenity of any nearby occupiers and therefore the proposal would accord with Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

5. Highway Impact (CT 5)

No additional or new access is required for the installation of the solar PV array. The area where the solar PV is proposed is accessible from the existing private farm track off Chequers Street.

The proposal would accord with Policy CT 5 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

6. Conclusion

The proposal is to install a wooden solar carport to generate electricity for the existing holiday barns and to provide electric vehicle (EV) charging for visitors to the barns. Energy generation from renewable sources is supported by local and national planning policies. The NPPF supports the approval of applications for renewable and low carbon development if the impacts are or can be made acceptable.

The solar carport is appropriately sited minimising its visual impact and any adverse impacts in the immediate and wider landscape setting.

The proposal is for a renewable energy project which would have no significant adverse effects on the surrounding landscape, residential amenity or highway safety. The proposal accords with Policy EN 7 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy and the aims and objectives of Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to meeting the challenge of climate change and supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to conditions relating to the following matters and any others considered necessary by the Assistant Director for Planning.

- Time limit for implementation
- Approved plans

Final wording of conditions to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning.