OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02374/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Installation of Solar PV Panels to the roofs on front elevation.

Location: 18, 20, 22, 24 And 28 The Avenue Leighton Bromswold

Applicant: Mr Ian Cushlow

Grid Ref: 511382 275389

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application relates to terraced bungalows situated close to the centre of Leighton Bromswold within the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area. No 18, 20 and 22form one built structure and no 28 is the end terrace of a second set of similar bungalows. The dwellings are of brick and tile construction.

This application seeks to install solar panels to the front roof slope of the bungalows.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) paragraph 8 sets out the three objectives - economic, social, and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 also sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* making effective use of land
* achieving well-designed, beautiful, and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP 11 Design Context
LP 12 Design Implementation
LP 14 Amenity
LP 34 Heritage Assets and their Settings

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
3.1 Place Making Principles
3.7 Building Form

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Supplementary Planning Document 2022

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

93/00476/FUL - Part change of use to post office 24, The Avenue, Leighton Bromswold - Permission - 17.05.1993

1406505PDE - Solar panels - NREQ - 03.06.2014

CONSULTATIONS

Leighton Bromswold Parish Council were consulted and support the application.

HDC Conservation team were consulted and raise no objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

Representations have been received from the following addresses.
26 The Avenue, Leighton Bromswold
29 The Avenue, Leighton Bromswold

Full comments can be viewed online but broadly relate to;
- Failure to consult (No consults and Site Notice displayed)
- Steam washing of the roof slopes prior to permission
- Erection of scaffolding
- Visual Amenity of solar panels to the front
- Glare for neighbouring properties

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
* Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area;
* Residential Amenity.

Design and Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage assets and conservation area
With regard to design and visual amenity, the relevant policies within the local plan to 2036 (LP 11 Design Context and LP 12 Design Implementation) seek to manage development that responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings. Achieving this by applying the guidance set out in supplementary design documents of both the Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 and the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2022.

With regard to the impact on Heritage Assets and Conservation areas, the relevant policy within the local plan to 2036 (LP34 Heritage assets and their settings).

18,20,22 and 28 are situated within Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area.

Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority

shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (as amended) states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification…'.

Local Plan policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.

Policy LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036 details "Great weight and importance is given to the conservation of heritage assets and their settings. The statutory presumption of the avoidance of harm can only be outweighed if there are public benefits that are powerful enough to do so”

The proposal seeks to install solar panels to the front elevation of the dwellings.

HDC Conservation team has been consulted and raise no objections.

Officers have considered the special character of the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area, a historic rural settlement within open countryside based around The Avenue which runs from the St Marys Church (Grade I listed) and The Green Man PH both a short way from the application site.

Officers acknowledged that the character of The Avenue is of mixed design, and there is a level of uniformed sections of built form. The application seeks to introduce solar panels to the front roof slopes of the single storey unlisted terraces of modern design. The buildings do not contribute to the special historic or architectural interest of the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area. Therefore, officers consider that the character of the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area would not be harmed by these additions.

In terms of design and visual amenity solar panels to the roof slopes of the modern structures is not considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.

Given all of the above, officers consider the proposal unlikely to introduce harm to the designated heritage asset of Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area and respects the character and appearance of the immediate locality. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal accords with policy LP11, Lp12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshires Local plan to 2036 and Section 16 of the NPPF (December 2024) and S72 of The Planning (Listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990.

Residential Amenity

Regarding residential amenity, the relevant policy within the local plan to 2036 (LP 14 Amenity), applies.

Officers acknowledge third party comments with regard to glare on neighbouring properties. No objections have been received in terms of overlooking, overbearing, or overshadowing.

Due to the orientation of the neighbouring properties, Officers consider that the proposal will unlikely give rise to unacceptable overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing impact.

Officers have considered the impact of glint and glare from the panels on neighbouring properties. Due to angle and height of the panels, it is acknowledged that during a cloudless day there may be some glare from the panels however this is unlikely to be for a significantly prolonged period as the sun moves from East to West. There Officers consider that any glare would be limited and not so significant to warrant a refusal on this basis.

Overall, the development is considered acceptable and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Other Matters:
Officers acknowledge the comments made by third parties in relation to failure to consult (No consults and Site Notice displayed), Steam washing of the roof slopes prior to permission and the Erection of scaffolding.

Officers have checked records and note that all statutory consultees have been sent consultation letters and the Notice of Proposed Development has been displayed. Therefore, officers are satisfied that the correct consultations have taken place.

Steam washing and the erection of scaffolding are not planning matters and therefore have not been considered as part of this application.

CONCLUSION:

Taking the above matters into consideration the proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policies, in that it

- Is of an appropriate scale and design;
- It would not have a harmful impact upon the significance of the Leighton Bromswold Conservation Area;
- It would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the immediate locality; and
- It would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of the neighbours.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Andrea Dollard**