

Report to	Planning Committee
Date	8 August 2019
By	Director of planning
Local Authority	SDNPA (Wealden District Council)
Application Number	SDNP/19/02055/FUL
Applicant	Vanessa Rowlands
Application	Planning Application for two solar arrays at Clapham House, Clapham Lane, Litlington, Polegate BN26 5RQ
Address	Clapham House, Clapham Lane, Litlington, Polegate, BN26 5RQ

Recommendation for SDNP/19/02055/FUL:

- 1. That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out at paragraph 9.1 of this report.**

Executive Summary

The application proposes the introduction of a solar array, including both ground and roof mounted panels, within the grounds of a Grade II listed building.

The proposed arrays would support the production of renewable energy and would conserve the landscape character of the National Park. Whilst the ground mounted array would not result in harm to the setting of the listed building the roof mounted array would result in less than substantial harm. However, this is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the conditions listed at paragraph 9.1 of this report. The application requires committee consideration as the applicant is a Member of the SDNPA.

1. Site Description

- 1.1** The application site constitutes a dwelling and its associated curtilage located approximately 200m southeast of Litlington Conservation Area. The building, Clapham House, is Grade II listed and is set within the immediate context of its walled garden and (curtilage and non-curtilage listed) outbuildings and a wider context of arable fields and woodland. The outbuildings are currently being used in connection with the main dwelling. The stable, which would accommodate the proposed roof mounted array, is a later addition which is not considered to be curtilage listed.
- 1.2** The site, which is well contained by existing vegetative screening, already benefits from a ground mounted solar array located approximately 35m northwest of the dwelling. The nearest PRow is approximately 190m to the west of the property.
- 1.3** Clapham House was listed on 13th October 1952 with the listing description referring to it as an eighteenth century L-shaped dwelling which become a grander residence during the 19th Century. It was also the home of Rev. Thomas Scutt from 1830-1852. It derives its special architectural and historic interest from its design and standing within the local area.

2. Relevant Planning History

- 2.1 NP/2011/0083/F. Installation of 42 ground mounted solar PV panels in the field adjacent to Clapham House to provide for domestic electricity needs. Approved 19/12/2011.
- 2.2 WD/2009/1254/F & WD2009/1255/LB. Erection of a covered pool link and the refurbishment and conversion of an existing outbuilding to provide ancillary facilities together with the extension of the upper part of the wall and the blocking up of an existing opening in the garden wall and creation of a new opening (revised proposal following WD/2008/1535 & 1536). Approved 10/07/2009.
- 2.3 WD/2008/1535/F & WD/2008/1536/LB. Erection of a covered pool and link and the refurbishment and conversion of an existing outbuilding to provide ancillary facilities together with the extension of the upper part of the wall and the blocking up and creation of a new opening in the wall. Approved 02/09/2008.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission to 1) install a ground mounted solar PV panel system, consisting of 42 panels, adjacent to the previously approved solar array to the northwest of Clapham House and 2) install a roof mounted solar PV system, consisting of 35 panels, on a (non-curtilage listed) stable roof.
- 3.2 Both the roof and grounded mounted arrays would make use of the point of connection to the electrical grid used by the existing array. The installation is estimated to be sufficient to provide electricity to Clapham House for the lifetime of the panels with any surplus electricity available for the National Grid.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Conservation Officer: There would be no harm to the listed building arising from the ground-mounted arrays whilst the roof-mounted arrays would result in a low-level of less than substantial harm.
- 4.2 Cuckmere Valley Parish Council: Support - The additional panels, which are not reflective and cannot be seen from the road, would cover a modest area and would reduce the carbon footprint of the property.

5. Representations

- 5.1 No public representations.

6. Planning Policy

The South Downs National Park Local Plan 2014-2033

- 6.1 The following policies of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 are relevant:

- SD1: Sustainable Development
- SD2: Ecosystems Services
- SD4: Landscape Character
- SD5: Design
- SD6: Safeguarding Views
- SD7: Relative Tranquillity
- SD12: Historic Environment
- SD13 Listed Buildings
- SD48: Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources
- SD51: Renewable Energy

Statutory Requirements

- 6.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a series of duties on planning authorities when determining applications for planning permission that may affect listed buildings or their setting.

- 6.3 Section 66 (1) states that “in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting the local 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”.

7. Planning Assessment

- 7.1 In principle policy SD51 of the Local Plan supports small-scale solar arrays serving individual properties where they are appropriately sited, are appropriate in scale to the property being served and have no unacceptable impact upon local amenity or public safety.

Landscape Character

- 7.2 It is considered that, in landscape capacity terms, the site could acceptably accommodate the additional 77 panels proposed (of which 42 would be ground mounted and 35 roof mounted) which would be appropriate to the scale of the dwelling and its grounds. The proposed panels would be sensitively located and fit comfortably within the ground of Clapham House. Furthermore, neither the proposed ground-mounted or roof-mounted arrays would be widely visible from the public realm with the flint boundary walls and existing dense vegetation, both within and outside the grounds of Clapham House, providing significant screening.

- 7.3 It is therefore considered that the proposal would conserve the landscape character of the National Park in accordance with policies SD2, SD4, SD5 and SD51 of the Local Plan.

Setting of the Listed Building

- 7.4 With regard to the ground mounted solar array these would be viewed within the context of the existing solar array. Furthermore, there is limited intervisibility between the dwelling and the panels due to the substantial flint wall and the location of the array approximately 60m away in a lower position. It is therefore considered that the ground-mounted array would not result in harm to the setting of the listed building.

- 7.5 With regard to the roof mounted array it is considered that there would be harm to the setting of the Listed Building due to their proximity. However, the level of harm would be modest as it is mitigated by the single pitch of the stable roof and the colour of the proposed solar panels which would not contrast with the stable roof. Therefore, given that the proposal would provide public benefits, with regard to further securing the viable future of the listed building it is considered that the public benefits outweigh the identified less than substantial harm.

- 7.6 The ground-mounted and roof-mounted solar arrays would also have an acceptable impact upon the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area.

- 7.7 It is therefore considered that the proposal is in accordance with policies SD12, SD13, SD14 and SD51 of the Local Plan.

Public Safety

- 7.8 It is considered that the proposal would, due to its modest scale and location on private property, not harm public safety in accordance with policy SD51 of the Local Plan.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations to otherwise indicate that permission should not be granted. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted.

9. Recommendation and Conditions

- 9.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

- I. The development, hereby permitted, shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed under the heading "Plans referred to in Consideration of this Application".

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Within 12 months of the solar arrays ceasing to operate details of how the arrays would be removed, and the site restored, shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The arrays shall be removed and the site restored within 6 months of the details being approved in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To safeguard the landscape character of the National Park and the setting of the listed building in accordance with policies SD4 and SD12 of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 and the NPPF.

10. Crime and Disorder Implication

- 10.1 It is considered that the proposal does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

11. Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 This planning application has been considered in light of statute and case law and any interference with an individual's human rights is considered to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised.

12. Equality Act 2010

- 12.1 Due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010.

13. Proactive Working

- 13.1 In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the NPPF.

TIM SLANEY

Director of Planning

South Downs National Park Authority

Contact Officer: Katie Sharp

Tel: 01730 819245

Email: Katie.sharp@southdowns.gov.uk

Appendices 1. Site Location Map

SDNPA Legal Services, Development Manager.

Consultees

Background Documents All planning application plans, supporting documents, consultation and third party responses

<https://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PQPQBITULK C00>

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

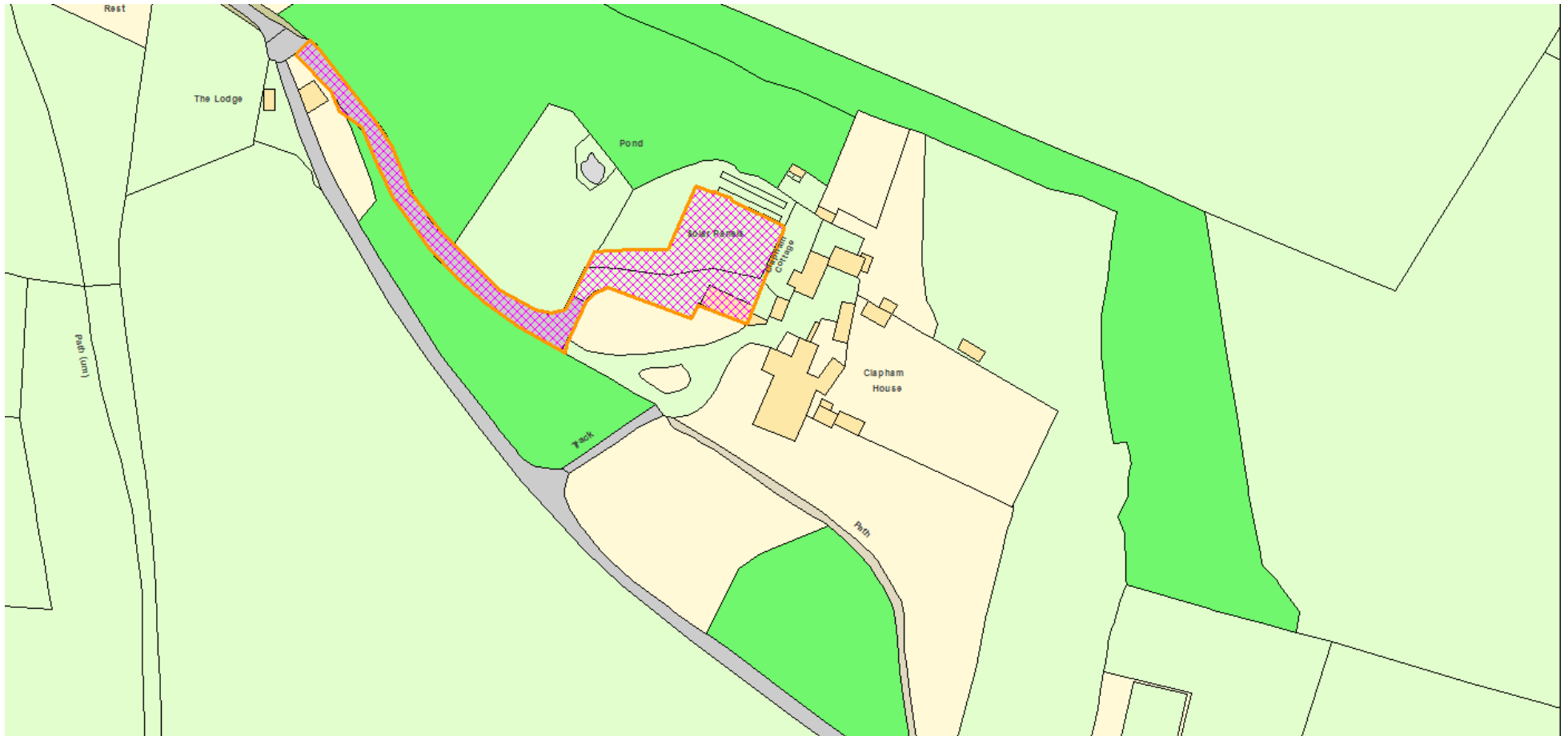
South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2013

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/key-documents/partnership-management-plan/>

South Downs National Park Local Plan 2014-2033

https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/south-downs-local-plan_2019/local-plan/

Agenda Item 8 Report PCI9/20-08 Appendix I
Site Location Map



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Downs National Park Authority, Licence No. 100050083 (2012) (Not to scale).

