



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20221264 & 20221265

Location: Little St Katherines Forge Lane Shorne Gravesend

Description: 20221264 - Installation of solar panels onto garage roof

20221265 - Application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of solar panels onto garage roof

Applicant: Mr Ian Scandang

Site Visit Date: Desktop

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. 01 – Plans & Elevations As Existing;
- Drawing no. 02 – Plans & Elevations As Proposed
- Drawing no. 03 – Site Location Plan;
- Drawing no. 04 – Block Plans As Existing & As Proposed; and
- Heritage Statement.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20010511	Erection of a detached triple garage at the rear.	Permitted	13.12.2001

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles
- CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC2 – Listed Buildings
- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC7 – Other Archaeological Sites

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as

necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant planning permission.

Section 72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021);
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009);
- Shorne Rural Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document, 2017
- Management Plan Rural Conservation Areas Appraisals Supplementary Planning Document, 2017

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Shorne Parish Council

The Parish Council has no objection in principle to this proposal, subject to there not being any significant valid objections from neighbours, but also has the following comments:

- The property is located in the Shorne Conservation Area and is a Grade II* listed building. The garage is of modern but period style construction and is some distance from the main house. It is viewed nearly side-on from the house and the black surfaced and framed solar panels will be on the eastern (road facing) elevation, so will have relatively little impact on the house and the Conservation Area itself.
- The same applies to the view from St Katherine's itself which is also in the Conservation Area and Listed Grade II.
- We note that a similar application at the neighbouring property Davenpen was recently granted permission under ref 20220951.

No response from:

- GBC Conservation Officer
- Natural England
- National Amenity Societies

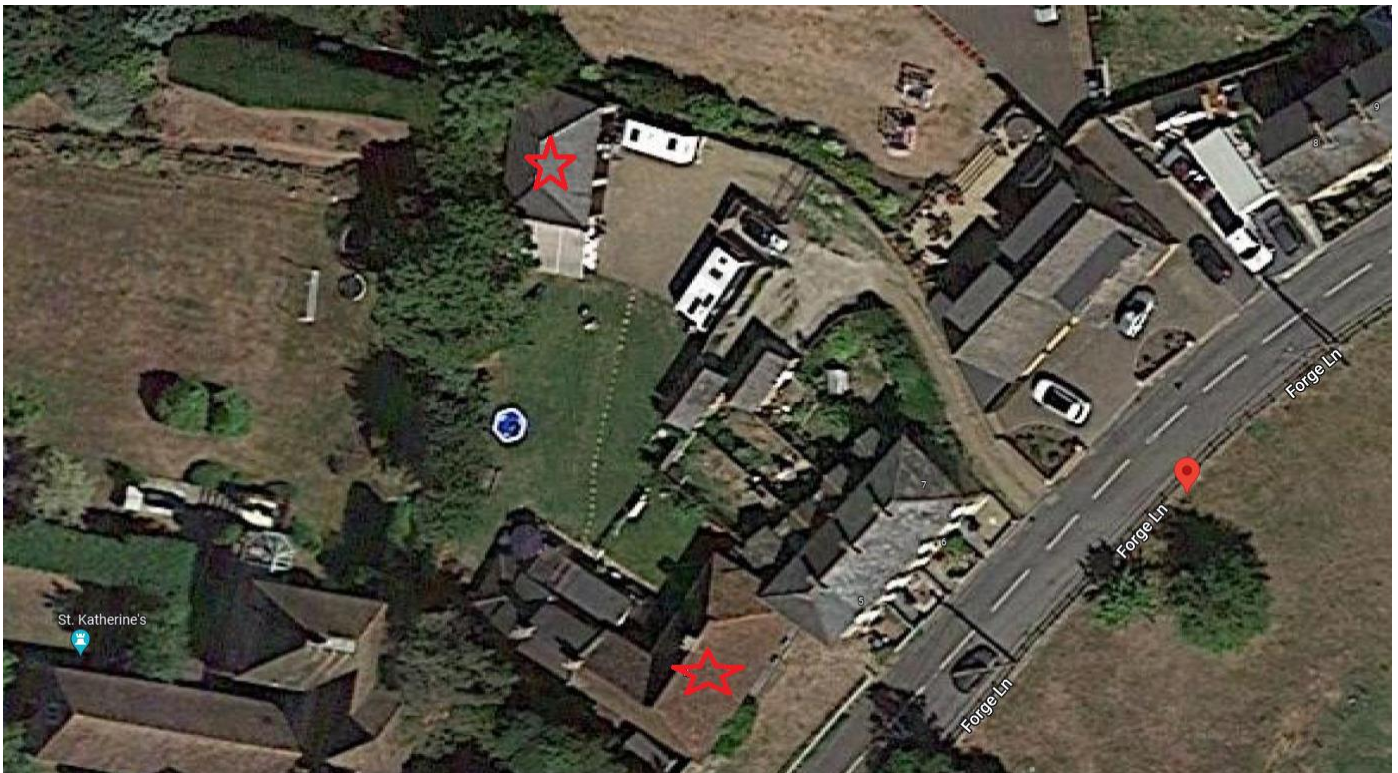
Neighbouring properties

20221264 – 6 neighbouring properties consulted plus site and press notices – no responses received.

20221265 – Site and press notices – no responses received.

Officer's Analysis

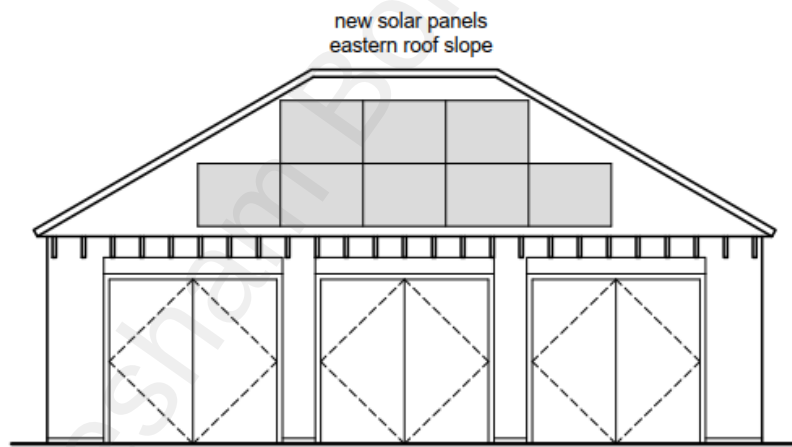
The application site consists of a two storey detached dwelling situated on the western side of Forge Lane. The property is a grade II* listed building situated in the Shorne Village Conservation Area, in the Green Belt, in Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area and in an Area of Archaeological Potential. The main dwelling and the garage building are highlighted in the image below:



The proposal seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of solar panels on the garage roof. There would be eight panels measuring 1134mm x 1722mm and they would all be located on the front eastern roof slope. The below images show the existing garage and the proposed solar panels:



Existing garage



FRONT ELEVATION

Proposal



Sample of solar panels

The principal issues for consideration in this application are:

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Whether the proposal would affect the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it;
- Impact on the setting of the listed building and character and appearance of Conservation Area;
- Design including landscape character;
- Occupier amenity,
- Neighbouring amenity;
- Archaeological Impact;
- Any Other Material Considerations

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt. Policy CS02 (LPCS) states that development outside of rural settlements in the Green Belt (as is the case here) will only be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

Paragraph 137 (NPPF, 2021) states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts and the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 147 (NPPF, 2021) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 148 advises that 'Very Special Circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 149 (NPPF, 2021) provides certain exceptions for development in the Green Belt and this includes the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Paragraph 151 (NPPF, 2021) states that when located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to

demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased protection of energy from renewable sources.

The solar panels on the garage roof are considered to fall under an alteration to the building. The eight solar panels would be located wholly within the eastern roof slope and would project no more than 200mm from the roof slope. They are not considered to constitute a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and are therefore not considered inappropriate development and as such the proposal is compliant with Policy CS02 (LPCS).

Whether the proposal would affect the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it

As stated above, paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2021 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. Paragraph 001 of the Planning Practice Guidance (2019) on Green Belts looks to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt by taking the following into account:

- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
- the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
- the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

In this case, the proposal is for solar panels to be installed on the eastern roof slope of an existing garage detached garage building which is located in the curtilage of an existing dwelling. The solar panels would be eight in number, measure 1134mm by 1722mm and all eight panels would be located solely in the parameters of the eastern roof slope of the garage. The panels would be black in finish and with the roof of the garage being black tiles they would blend into the roof slope in terms of their colour and appearance. As such it is considered the proposed solar panels would not reduce the current openness of the site and would not constitute encroachment into the countryside.

Impact on the setting of the listed building and character and appearance of Conservation Area

Little St Katherines is a grade II* listed building and situated in the Shorne Conservation Area. The proposal relates to a modern garage building (permitted in 2001) located in the north-western corner of the site and is some 24m away. Due to the distance of this modern garage building from the listed building, the small scale nature of the proposal where all eight panels would be located on the eastern roof slope only which would face to the east and not facing the listed building to the south, along with the fact the panels would be black which would match the existing black tiles of the garage roof means that the proposal would not cause any harmful impact on the setting of the grade II* listed building Little St Katherines. By extension for these reasons and by virtue of the fact the garage building is set well back from the streetscene and there are very limited views of it, means the proposal would also preserve the character and appearance of the Shorne Conservation Area and would not cause any harm to it.

The site is adjacent to St Katherines, a grade II listed building but given the distance of the garage building to this property and the scale of the development there would be no impact at all on the setting of St Katherines.

In respect of heritage matters the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS) and saved Policies TC2 and TC3 (LPFR).

Design including landscape character

The proposed solar panels would be located on the front roof slope of an existing garage building and be contained fully within the roof slope area with no part of the panels extending over the sides or ridgeline of the roof. They would be black in colour which would blend in with the black tiled roof of the garage. They are considered a minor addition to the roof slope which would not affect or harm its character or appearance in general design terms.

The site is located in the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area of which a key characteristic is its very gently undulating topography and open arable farmland. Policy CS12 (LPCS) states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced.

Given the proposal relates to solar panels on an existing garage building which is in the curtilage of an existing dwelling and the solar panels would be the same colour as the roof tiles on the garage it is considered the proposal would not cause any undue impact on the wider landscape character of the area and in this respect the proposal is considered compliant with Policy CS12 (LPCS).

Occupier amenity

The proposal would have no impact on the amenity of existing or future occupiers of the application site and in regards to occupier amenity the proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Neighbouring Amenity

Due to the scale of the proposal and distance from neighbouring properties there would be no impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and in respect of neighbouring amenity the proposal is compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS). No representations have been received.

Archaeological Impact

As no groundworks are required, the proposal would not have any archaeological impact and in this respect the proposal is compliant with saved Policy TC7 (LPFR).

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

The provision of renewable and low carbon energy is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development set out in the NPPF (2021). There is strong national policy support for the development of renewable energy sources, including solar power, to ensure the country has a secure energy supply, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Paragraph 158 of the NPPF (2021) states that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

- a) not require applicant's 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
- b) approve the application if its impacts are acceptable.

Policy CS18 (LPCS) also seeks to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the Borough, and supports stand-alone renewable energy development where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in the LPCS.

In June 2019, this Council declared a climate emergency which commits the Council to taking a lead in achieving Carbon Neutral status. As acknowledged by the Council and its Climate Change strategy, Climate Change is a reality and over the course of the last 250 years, the actions of humanity have increased carbon dioxide emissions by more than 30%, resulting in higher temperatures and changing the world we live in. Without taking action now, the impact will be devastating.

Given the above policy support, the renewable energy benefits of the proposal add substantial weight to the proposal.

Other Matters

A very similar proposal for solar panels on both roof slopes of the detached garage in the garden of the adjacent property to the north 'Davenpen' were permitted in November 2022 under application reference number 20220951. It is similar to the current proposal in many respects and indeed it consisted of more coverage of the roof given both roof slopes of the pitched roof of the garage were to have the solar panels. As such this permission is considered to add some weight to the proposal.

Conclusion, Balancing Exercise & Recommendation

The proposed development is not considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt, would not harm its openness, would not harm the setting of the grade II* listed Little St Katherine's or the character or appearance of the Shorne Conservation Area, is acceptable in design and would not harm landscape character, would not harm occupier or neighbouring amenity and have no archaeological impact. The proposal would have positive environmental benefits from renewable energy provision which weighs heavily in support of the scheme and a very similar proposal has been permitted at the adjacent property in 2022. Overall it is considered the proposal is acceptable and compliant with national and local planning policy.

Recommendation: 20221264: Permission

Recommendation: 20221265: Permission (LBC)

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	20th January 2023	Dated:	20 January 2023