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Design and Access Statement

213kW Ground Mounted Solar Array for
installation at:

**Jepco,
Norfolk House Farm, Gedney Marsh, Gedney
Drove End, Spalding PE12 9PB**

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1/ Purpose of this Design, Access and Supporting Statement

1.1 The purpose of this Statement is to provide, in addition to the Application itself, a better understanding of the scheme, which involves the installation of a 213kW Ground Mounted Solar PV array to supply the farm with low-carbon electricity to assist in its salad-growing and dispatch processes.

1.2 The array will sit on ground mount framing in a field next to the refrigerated store and dispatch area. Further visual representation of this is shown in the attached images and OS plans.

1.3 This Statement will help to show how regard has been given to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other relevant guidance notes, including habitat, highways and visual.

1.4 We hope that this document and attachments will assist the Local Authority and the public understand the merits of the project.

2/ Reason for this Application

2.1 Installation of Ground Mounted Solar Panels is covered under Permitted Development Rights (PDR) under the Town and Country Planning Act (as Amended) under certain conditions. These are accepted as being for domestic-scale installations in residential curtilages.

This is a commercial site (farming) and also a non-domestic scale installation, proportional to the farming activities and its power requirements. The installation therefore requires Planning consent.

3/ Understanding the scale of the installation / client motivation / the business itself

3.1 It is important to understand the scale of the installation, and its need. The system proposed is one that will allow the site to offset a percentage of its power requirements.

3.2 This proposal is NOT for a solar farm. As noted in 3.3, the array covers a mere 0.2 acres and is sized at a quarter of a megawatt. Solar farms are substantially larger, generating multiple megawatts of power and often cover tens or hundreds of acres of farmland.

3.3 To further understand the scale on the site itself, the array as noted will cover a collective area of 0.2 acres (810m²), using a total of 452 solar panels. This in relation to a farm of some 1,200-acres, means that only a fraction of 1% of the farm is being set aside for this purpose. This is therefore not an installation that is designed to be majority-grid-feeding, but instead will support the site and help to ensure its longevity.

In fact, in relation to the nature of the installation, this scheme can also be argued as one of necessary farming diversification. The land in question will be used to farm an energy crop if you like, in order to assist in growing and refrigerating crop for human consumption.

3.3 The client wishes to offset some of their existing electrical consumption to increase energy security and thus protect themselves from exposure to increasing grid-electricity costs. The need for this has been re-highlighted by the recent conflict in Iran, which has resulted in the sharp rise of fuel costs and therefore increased upcoming electricity costs.

This same scenario (and cost impact) was also experienced no more than 4-yrs ago as result of the Russia / Ukraine conflict.

The business itself

3.4 The client is a grower of salad to the UK food production sector. Salad is grown traditionally at present, but future plans on site include the addition of hydroponics greenhouses, where salad can be grown under cover year-round using state of the art growing processes and science, to allow for food crops to be produced without impact from weather or climate, and with consistency year-round (unlike traditional crop growing which is seasonal).

3.5 The proposed solar array will help to offset the daytime electricity costs used to provide extensive irrigation pumping and refrigeration requirements to ensure lifespan of salad and condition to clients.

4/ Location and Position

4.1 The site is located in a rural area in Spalding, Lincolnshire.

4.2 The surrounding area is generally occupied by farms with small village and hamlet housing clusters, as shown on the google images below.

Solar array is seen drawn to scale in red.



Zoomed in Satellite image. The array footprint shown in red is to scale



4.3 It is considered that this is the ideal site for this kind of low-carbon development. It makes use of an open and unshaded area to maximise benefits from the array (this also maximises carbon offset too).

It also uses land directly adjacent to existing electrical infrastructure and packing and distribution sheds.

5/ National, Local and associated Planning Policy

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1 The Proposed Development is in line with Renewable Energy guidelines set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The installation will make a positive and necessary contribution to the energy needs of the client, together with the associated Carbon reductions and Environmental benefits.

Carbon Offset

5.2 The array can produce up to 233,000 kWh of electricity per annum and represents a significant reduction to the client's annual electricity consumption. It also has the potential to displace some 40-tonnes of Carbon per annum; 1,000 tonnes across the expected 25+ yr lifespan of the installation. This is a very important consideration given the raised awareness of reducing Carbon to mitigate Global Warming acceleration.

5.3 NPPF Para 14 reinforces Government's belief that a Sustainable Development should be favoured, and is key to Planning decision-making.

5.4 NPPF Core Planning Principles outline that Planning should also 'encourage the use of Renewable Energy (for example, by the development of Renewable Energy)' and promote schemes that reduce pollution.

This is a direct fit with the scheme we propose.

5.5 NPPF Section 10: 'Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change', highlights that Planning plays a key role in helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, should assist in providing resilience to the impacts of Climate Change, and support the delivery of Renewable and Low Carbon infrastructure.

Importantly, Para 97 of this section states that 'Local Planning Authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from Renewable or Low Carbon sources'.

It goes on to say that Local Authorities should 'have a positive strategy to promote energy from Renewable and low-Carbon sources'.

5.6 Para 98 also states that when determining Planning Applications, Local Authorities should recognise that even small-scale Renewable or Low-Carbon projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting Greenhouse Gas emissions, and Approve the Application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

5.7 The proposed scheme achieves all these points. In fact its Carbon-offset potential is significant.

5.8 The installation will assist the client with their energy requirements but is also grid-connected, so the wider community can benefit from any back-fed electricity unused by the client at any time of lower .

The scheme and this Application should be Approved in all aspects – it meets the NPPF brief conclusively.

Planning Practice Guidance - *Renewable and low carbon energy (2015)*

Specific reference is given to particular planning considerations that relate to active photovoltaic solar energy. Where a planning application is required, factors to bear in mind include:

- the importance of siting systems in situations where they can collect the most energy from the sun

- need for sufficient area of solar modules to produce the required energy output from the system

- the effect on a protected area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other designated areas

- the colour and appearance of the modules, particularly if not a standard design

Comments specific to this proposal:

The chosen position of the solar panels has been the result of a selection process, based upon a combination of location and shade-free aspect.

There are no specific landscape designations to consider. The site is not in an AONB or National Park

The design is a standard design, albeit using solar modules with an all-black appearance using anti-glare glazing have been selected in order to benefit visual impact. It must be noted that solar panels are designed to absorb light, not reflect it.

The array is only 3m tall.

No associated impacts via noise / air / water / highways / health.

As above, the site has no intrinsic biodiversity / natural / historic value.

No associated impacts via radar / telecommunications / aircraft safety.

6/ Suitability of Solar Array Size and site Electrical demand

6.1 The installation has been sized to help offset a portion of the electricity consumption of the site. As noted in 5.2 it has the potential to generate some 233,000 kWh per annum which although invaluable to the site, is still significantly less than its current annual grid-consumption. It is therefore certainly not over-scaled, or designed to be a grid-feeding solar farm.

7/ Access

7.1 The installation can be adequately accessed from the local road network for service and maintenance. There is no need to change or create new roads, paths or access.

8/ Conclusion

8.1 As noted in Paragraph 1, this information has been provided to further explain the merits of the proposal, and to raise awareness and understanding of the proposed Installation.

8.2 The proposed development fully embraces the guidelines set out in National Planning Policy and makes a positive and significant contribution to the future energy needs of the client, as well as increasing their energy security. It also makes a small but important contribution to the Country's wider need to adopt localised, low-impact, green and sustainable power.

We would conclude that planning approval should be given for the project, and would ask that you contact us if you require any further information, or if we can further assist the planning process in any way

STATEMENT ENDS