ASHLEA FARM, SUTTON ST JAMES

Design & Access Statement

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'The Hideaway', 4A Station Road, Little Bytham Grantham, Lincs. NG33 4RA

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Andrew Woodward on behalf of CS Gent & Sons Ltd. It is submitted in support of a full planning application to South Holland District Council for the installation of ground mounted modular photovoltaic energy cells on farm land off the B1165 at Ashlea Farm, Guanockgate Road, Sutton St. James PE12 0LU.

1.2 This Design and Access Statement is intended to explain the rationale behind the design and location of the proposed scheme and to assist in the consideration of the planning application.

1.3 The Design and Access Statement is in accordance with Government Circular 01/06 “Guidance on changes to the Development Control System” and reflects the steps that are set out in the CABE’s document “Design and Access Statements, How to write them, read and use them”.

1.4 The application is to erect a ground mounted 50kW photovoltaic solar array.

2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 The application site is located off the B1165, Sutton St James. A location plan AF01 is included with this application.

2.2 The site to which this application relates is a small parcel of grassland to the south of the existing poultry shed.



Aerial view showing panel layout for proposed development.

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 International, European and national policy commit the UK to reducing its impact on climate change and increasing the supply of energy from renewable and low carbon sources. These commitments are reflected in existing and proposed national and regional policy and need to be translated into local policy and action. Planning has a significant role to play in meeting these commitments by understanding the local potential for renewable and low carbon technologies, identifying suitable locations for renewable low-carbon energy production and supporting infrastructure, and setting standards for delivering these kinds on new development. The UK has a legally binding target to supply 15% of all of the energy it uses from renewable sources by 2020. The UK Renewable Energy Strategy White Paper (July 2009) describes how the UK will meet this via a combination of renewable technologies and government incentives including the Feed In Tariff.

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 states that: 'Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.'

3.3 Point 95 of the NPPF goes on to say: 'To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.'

3.4 The NPPF 2012 also goes on to say: 'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should: not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also 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. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.'

3.5 East Midlands Regional Plan – This encourages Local Authorities to promote sustainable and renewable energy sources to work towards National targets. These are reflected further in core policy 9 “Sustainable Design” and core policy 10 “Climate Change”. These policies strive towards sustainable design incorporating sustainable elements. Policy 10 commits Local Authorities to tackling the causes and effects of climate change and indeed the reduction of CO2 emissions. It is felt that in this case, the scheme represents a renewable solution for electricity generation to the applicant. The ground mount has been sited to fully resource it’s potential and to be away from public views.

4 DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL

4.1 The proposed development comprises around 200 solar panels attached to a ground mounted system as shown in the photo plan in Section 2. The top of the panels will be around 2.3m above ground level.



Similar but larger PV array

4.2 The highest point of the solar panels will be 2.32m off the ground. Full details of the dimensions of the solar panel arrays and length of runs can be seen on Technical Drawing AF03.

4.3 The proposed development provides 50kW per annum of electricity and will largely be used on site during the operating periods of the grain store and other farm buildings, the remainder will be fed in to the grid. This in turn will not only cut down on energy costs but also significantly reduce the carbon footprint of this business. The cost effective production of energy on site will also increase the efficiency and viability of the farm. The arrays are sited as close as possible to the existing farm building as connection will be made via the electrical infrastructure in the building. Solar PV is a clean, safe and reliable technology. There are no emissions from the site and it is silent in operation. The panels are designed to absorb and not reflect light and therefore glare is not an issue.

4.4 The proposed installation has risen in response to national government targets to lower carbon footprints by 80% by 2050.

4.5 A full PV assessment was carried out in order to ascertain the suitability of the location as well as the structural build qualities and its specific orientation.

4.6 The proposal involves MSC accredited installers and professionals in the field of renewable energy.

4.7 The access to the site for installation and maintenance will be gained through the existing field entrance through the farm which in turn comes off the B1165.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 We believe that the proposal outlined within this application is appropriate and in line with national and local planning policy. There is overriding Government and planning policy support for renewable energy development, provided that the benefits of new installations are not outweighed by other material planning considerations. We feel that there are no such adverse impacts arising from this proposed solar array. Over the likely life of the proposed PV installation there will be substantial benefits in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions as well as economic benefits in helping to kick-start and sustain the UK renewable energy industry. This will be a significant development in Lincolnshire, helping to sustain the county's sustainability credentials.