

PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING, AUXILIARY TRANSFORMER AND CCTV CAMERAS

SITE OF PROPOSED TAVELLS LANE SOLAR FARM, LAND ADJACENT TO TAVELLS LANE, MARCHWOOD, HAMPSHIRE

PROJECT REFERENCE: Tavells Lane Additional Application

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1 INTRODUCTION

This planning and design and access statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for full permission for the installation of the following items within the solar farm at land adjacent to Tavells Lane:

- A Pre-Fabricated Communications Building
- An Auxiliary Transformer and Fence Enclosure; and
- Pole Mounted CCTV Security Cameras

Planning permission was granted on the 8th May 2012 at the land adjacent to Tavells Lane (Planning reference: 12/98402) for the installation and operation of a solar farm and associated infrastructure, including PV solar panels, mounting frames, inverters, a 11kV substation, a control room and fencing. Lightsource Renewable Energy Ltd (Lightsource) is currently preparing to construct the solar farm.

The specialist solar farm design and construction firm contracted by Lightsource to install the solar farm has reviewed the approved layout and advised that a number of amendments are required to the layout to allow for an efficient operational solar farm to be development. Most of the amendments have been addressed in a Non-Material Amendment application (submitted alongside this application). However, the above listed items of equipment were not show on the approved layout and therefore a new planning permission is sought for these items.

The **Communications Building** is required to house the system for on-going remote operational monitoring of the performance of the solar farm and security system. This identifies whether there are any faults in the system requiring action. It will also be used for the onsite storage of spare parts and tools for the required upkeep and maintenance of the site.

CCTV cameras are an insurance requirement for all solar farms. Without them the site would not be insurable because it is not staffed. A solar farm represents a significant investment, and whilst design features make theft of infrastructure very difficult without causing damage rendering any stolen goods of scrap value only it is important that the site is protected from attempted theft and vandalism. The requirement for pole mounted CCTV cameras was identified in the original planning application and is listed in the development description in the decision notice for the solar farm at land adjacent to Tavells Lane; however details of their design and location were not shown on the layout.

The DNO requires a low voltage electricity supply for the substations to provide internal lighting. This is a health and safety requirement to ensure any faults can be addressed during hours of darkness. In order to “step down” the voltage of electricity produced by the solar panels, a small **Auxiliary Transformer** is required adjacent the previously approved Client Side Substation.

The Auxiliary Transformer has permitted development rights under Part 17 Class G (a) of the General Permitted Development Order as it is required for grid connection purposes and does not exceed permitted dimensions. However given the requirement for a new planning permission for the communications building and CCTV cameras it was thought best to include these items in the planning application.

2 COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING

The Communications building will be a dark olive green (RAL colour 6013) pre-fabricated structure which is built off-site to be installed on a concrete base in the location identified in the site and location plan and layout submitted alongside this application. The building will be 3m in length, 3.6m in width and 2.4m in height. The building will be sited within the enclosed solar farm and therefore will not require any additional screening to what has previously been approved or additional security beyond what is proposed in the current application.

2.1 APPEARANCE

Elevations of the proposed communications building are provided with this application.

2.2 LANDSCAPING

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken for the solar farm application and it was concluded that a solar farm and associated infrastructure could be “successfully accommodated and assimilated into the surrounding landscape without causing significant harm to the landscape character, visual amenity or landscape setting of the area”.

The communications building is located in behind the mature boundary vegetation of Tavells Road. Given this existing screening it is considered that no additional changes are required to the planting plan.

2.3 ACCESS

The communications building is to be located adjacent to other buildings on site and will be accessible via the site access approved for the solar farm. No additional access requirements are created from the current proposal and no additional traffic generation is anticipated.

3 CCTV SYSTEM

The CCTV cameras work on motion sensor, so they are not constantly recording. When movement is detected along the fence line, or within the site, the cameras send a live feed to our appointed security contractors who determine whether there is a security threat or not based on the images. The cameras are focused on the fence line and solar farm area. They will not have a range long enough to extend to neighbouring properties. The CCTV cameras use infrared technology and therefore there is no need for lighting during the hours of darkness.

3.1 APPEARANCE

Each CCTV camera will be contained in a white camera house mounted on a 3.5m pole. There will be 21 CCTV cameras on site which will be situated inside the fence line. The

location of the CCTV cameras and their elevation has been submitted as part of this application.

3.2 LANDSCAPING

It is considered that the installation of the CCTV cameras within the solar farm area will not materially alter the potential visual impact of the solar farm and the conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment apply equally to the current application.

The pole mounted security cameras will be effectively screened from most viewpoints by existing vegetation and proposed planting. Furthermore, the use of CCTV cameras was anticipated in the original application, and form part of the description of the approved activity, therefore it is assumed that council considers the erection of CCTV cameras within the solar farm to be appropriate.

3.3 ACCESS

As with the communications building, the CCTV cameras do not require any new access arrangements for the site, and will not generate any additional traffic to the site.

4 AUXILIARY TRANSFORMER

The auxiliary transformer is used to provide low voltage energy for internal lighting and ventilation within the two substations. As shown in the elevation plan the transformer is 1.05m high, 1.55m in length and 1.35m wide. It will be surrounded by a 1.8m high palisade fence with a width of 2.34m, this is a health and safety precautionary measure to ensure the safety of any site visitors as the Auxiliary Transformer can become hot.

4.1 LANDSCAPING

The auxiliary transformer will be effectively screened by the existing shelter belt of trees south of the site along Tavells Lane and other vegetation around the site and should not be visible beyond the site boundary.

4.2 ACCESS

The Auxiliary Transformer does not require any new access arrangements for the site, and will not generate any additional traffic to the site.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The installation of a Communications Building and pole mounted CCTV cameras within the approved solar farm at Land Adjacent to Tavells Lane will ensure that the site is effectively monitored to check for any faults or security issues. The onsite storage of tools and spare parts will allow for quick repairs in the event of a fault.

The installation of the Auxiliary Transformer will provide the infrastructure required to connect the solar farm to the grid network and export the electricity generated by it.

It is considered that the proposed installation of a Communications Building, Auxiliary Transformer and CCTV cameras within the approved solar farm will not have any adverse impacts on the site or surrounding area, and will not result in a significant increase in impacts beyond those associated with the solar farm as already approved.