

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Emmer Green

App Ref: 230921/HOU

Address: 58 Crawshay Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8SY

Proposals: Proposed ground mounted solar panel array within the rear garden (7m x 14m footprint, 1.5m height max.), 2.5m high fence to the southern boundary and 1 x heat pump unit to be installed alongside the existing rendered wall in the rear garden.

Case Officer: James Schofeild

Applicant: Mr Raj Julleekeea

Date received (valid from): 3 July 2023 **Target Decision date:** 16 October 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is a detached house near to Crawshay Drive and includes fields which are within the South Oxfordshire District Council boundary.

Site visit date: 10/08/2023

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal includes a 2.5 meter high fence along the southern boundary between the house and a wedge shaped part of 56 Crawshay Drive's plot. It also includes an air-source heat pump to be installed in a small courtyard currently occupied by a shed. And the proposal includes ground mounted solar panel arrays in the eastern field to the north-west of the house and to the north of 52 Crawshay Drive.

Plans considered:

Drawing No: 1070-PLA-010_A Location + Block Plan As Existing
Drawing No: 1070-PLA-060_A Location + Block Plan As Proposed (*fence and heat pump*)
Heat Pump spec leaflet
Solar Panel spec sheet
Solar Panel Mount spec sheet
As received on the 4th of July 2023

Drawing No: 1070-PLA-080_C Location + Block Plan As Proposed Solar Panels (*cable route*)
As received on the 27th of September 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None applicable.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 8HQ
56 Crawshay Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8SY
60 Crawshay Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8SY
52 Crawshay Drive, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8SY

Letters of representation have been received as follows:

An objection was submitted by 52 Crawshay Drive with concerns relating to jurisdiction as it relates to Reading Borough Council's (RBC) ability to determine an application where parts of it are within South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). The objection also had concerns relating to the use of the land the solar panels would be on, claiming the land is in agricultural use.

The residents of number 56 Crawshay Drive submitted a comment in support of the scheme.

The agent has submitted an application to SODC, reference number: P23/S2603/FUL. The process for these kinds of situations is for the application to be considered in full by both Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

TR3 Access Traffic and Highway-related Matters

EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN13 Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

EN17 Noise Generating Equipment

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that domestic works to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

The location and appearance of the proposed solar panels would be within the garden of 58 Crawshay Drive which appears to be adjacent to farmland. The proposed solar panels appear to be outside of the boundaries of Reading Borough Council. While the site is not of sufficient scale for policy CC4 Decentralised Energy to be applicable, it is welcome and positive. Furthermore, it is noted that the proposed siting of the solar panels behind large trees seems to go some way toward reducing the felt impact of the solar panels and that the site is not within an AONB or similarly protected landscape character area.

The plans for the proposed heat pump will not be visible from the street or harmful to the character or appearance of the host dwelling.

The replacement fence at 2.5 meters is relatively tall, but given the number of trees around the fence, the visual impact is considered to be negligible.

As such, the proposal accords with the aims of policies CC7, H9, and EN13 of the Local Plan (2019) with respect to character, scale and siting.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

The replacement fence at 2.5 meters is relatively tall, but given the topography of the site, the impact of the height would be felt most keenly by the host dwelling. The gains in privacy are seen to offset any concerns relating to overbearingness.

Biodiversity and sustainability

Part 'b' of Policy EN12 indicates that all development sites should not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. These aims are supported by Policy H9 which states that an extension will only be acceptable where it does not result in the loss of biodiversity within gardens.

The site has a number of protected trees which the Trees Officer wanted to ensure the route for the cables of the solar panels would not damage the roots, updated plans showing the route of the cables for the solar panel demonstrate this will not be the case. As such this is not a concern.

Regarding the fence, the potential for impact on vegetation was not of particular concern to the trees officer and the plans indicate these are not to be removed or damaged.

The proposal is not considered likely to result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. As such the proposal is considered to accord with the biodiversity and sustainability considerations of Policies H9 and EN12 of the local plan.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions: