

**Application No: 18/00396/FULL Full Application**

**Site:** Heathermoor House, Hale Purlieu, Hale, Fordingbridge, SP6 2NN

**Proposal:** Ground mounted solar panel array

**Applicant:** Dr Goodfellow

**Case Officer:** Liz Young

**Parish:** HALE

**1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

Contrary to Parish Council view

**2. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DESIGNATION**

Conservation Area

**3. PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

DP1 General Development Principles  
 CP8 Local Distinctiveness  
 CP4 Climate Change  
 CP5 Renewable Energy

**4. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Not applicable

**5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Sec 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment  
 Sec 14 - Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change.

**6. MEMBER COMMENTS**

None received

**7. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Hale Parish Council: Recommend permission:

- Understand that the proposal would be within the curtilage.
- Installation will not be visible from the road or adjoining neighbours.

## **8. CONSULTEES**

- 8.1 Landscape Officer: No objections subject to the development being located within the residential curtilage of the main house.

## **9. REPRESENTATIONS**

- 9.1 No comments received.

## **10. RELEVANT HISTORY**

- 10.1 Greenhouse (17/00743) approved on 24 October 2017.
- 10.2 Replacement stables / storage building (17/00473) refused on 8 August 2016.
- 10.3 Single storey addition linking house and garage (69709) refused on 15 September 2000.

## **11. ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 This application relates to a parcel of land which lies immediately north east of Heathermoor House and its curtilage. The site lies within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area and the open forest lies immediately across the road to the west. The properties are dispersed and typically located within spacious mature plots, set back from the road with wooded areas and paddocks between.
- 11.2 Consent is sought to site a solar array alongside the north east boundary of the site. The proposal would serve the main house and would have a surface area of approximately 35 square metres. There would not be any direct implications for the amenities of neighbouring residents and the main issue to assess would be the impact the development would have upon the character and appearance of the conservation area and New Forest landscape.
- 11.3 As set out within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, open spaces within conservation areas are important because they define the built environment and create a sense of place. Copses of trees and areas of woodland interspersed with fields and settlements are one of the key characteristics identified in the appraisal document. In addition to the open forest to the east, the enclosed garden areas of properties which extend along Forest Road are separated by small parcels of agricultural land or belts of trees which further contribute to the rural character of this part of the conservation area. These areas of open space (including the application site which clearly does not form part of the residential curtilage) are undeveloped. Whilst two sheds lie adjacent to the proposal, these have clearly only recently been introduced onto the site, do not have planning consent and would need to be investigated further by the Authority as a separate matter.

11.4 Policy CP8 importantly recognises the cumulative, long term impact that individual, small scale developments can have over time in terms of eroding the rural character of the National Park. There is significant demand for renewables serving individual residential properties and Policy CP5 is supportive of such proposals subject to ensuring they would be small-scale, located to reduce visual impact and would avoid any harm to the special qualities of the New Forest National Park.

11.5 The proposal would, by virtue of its significant size and location on open, non-domestic land have a detrimental impact upon the intrinsic landscape character of the New Forest National Park. It is important that a distinction must be drawn between built up areas, including domestic garden land and adjacent open land, if the surrounding countryside is to be protected from unwarranted development and encroachment. The proposal would therefore undermine local policies if such domestic development were permitted outside developed areas, particularly when having regard to the potential precedent which would be set for similar developments in the longer term which would lead to a harmful and urbanising impact upon the wider landscape character of the New Forest.

11.6 In response to the concerns set out above, the applicant has submitted some additional information which is summarised as follows:

- Alternative locations have been considered but the current proposal is the best location in terms of minimal shading and enabling efficient operation.
- The option of solar roof tiles have also been explored but this is considered to be harmful to the character of the property.
- Flat roofed areas of the house are not large enough to accommodate a solar array.
- The cost of solar tiles on the outbuilding now under construction (17/00473) would be twice that of the ground mounted system, particularly as the roof is currently under construction.
- Planning permission was granted for a solar array for domestic use outside the residential curtilage of a property in the Mole Valley, Surrey.

Based upon this it would appear to be the case that, whilst there could be cost implications, there would be scope to position a solar array on the southern elevation of the recently constructed barn. Whilst it could be argued that the appearance of solar roof tiles would not match the natural slate, the overall level of harm would be significantly less than the introduction of a significant freestanding ground mounted system (a new structure in its own right which does not relate closely to any existing buildings or hardsurfaces) on land outside the residential curtilage. It is also not clear whether options to locate a solar array within the extensive garden area to the south of the main house have been explored.

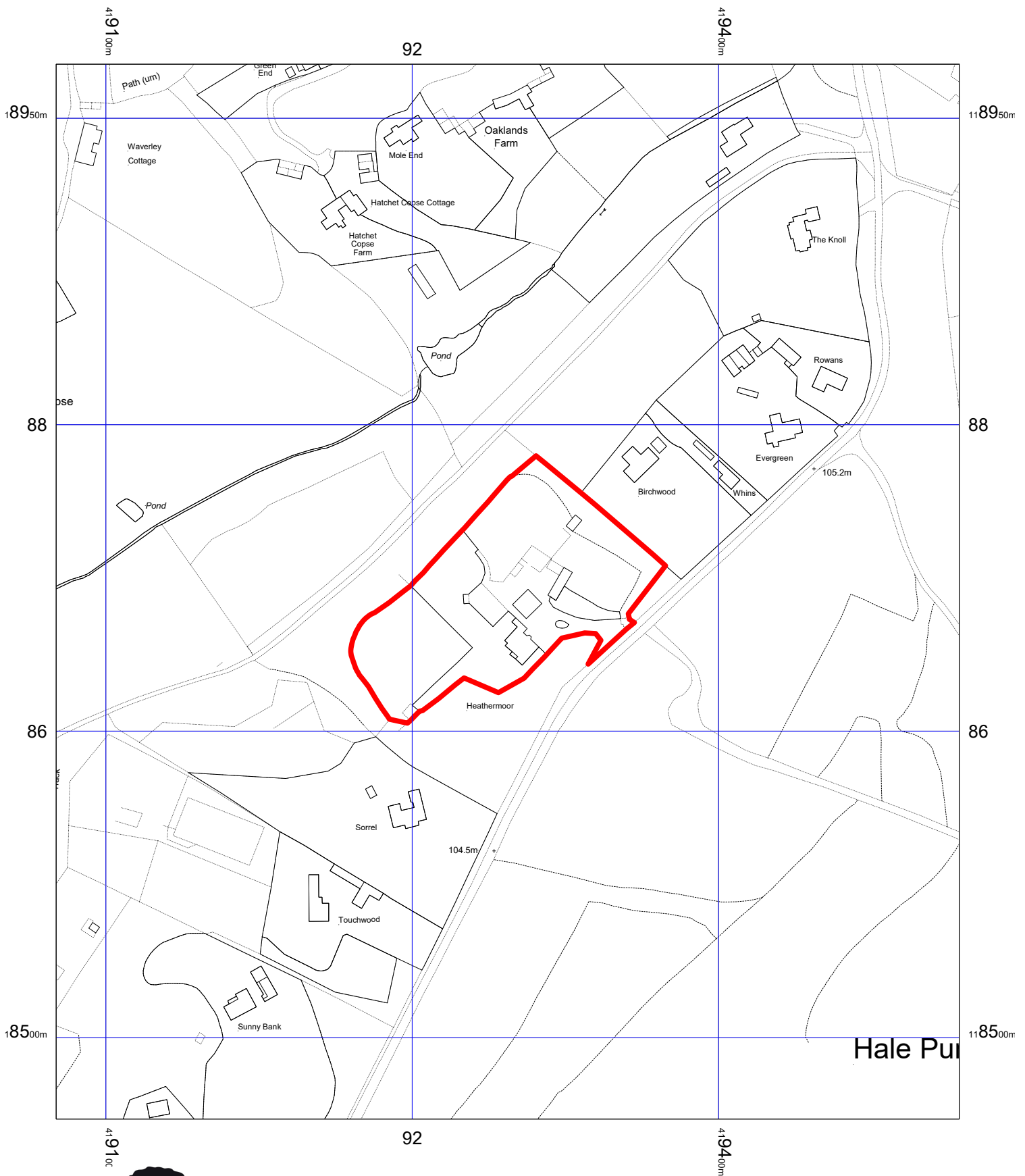
- 11.7 With regards to the case referred to in the Mole Valley it is evident from the submitted plans that whilst the proposal was not within the curtilage it was directly adjacent to a substantial workshop building, suggesting the existence of non-agricultural structures on the site at the time the development was under consideration. Furthermore, the site at Mole Valley was not within a designated conservation area (which brings about an additional need to preserve intrinsic landscape character) or directly adjacent to the open forest. In contrast to Policy CP5, the relevant Mole Valley Policy does not stipulate that renewables should be small scale or sited in order to reduce visual impact. Having regard to this along with the significant landscape harm identified above, the development would be contrary to Policies DP1, CP5 and CP8 of the New Forest National Park Core Strategy and it is recommended that the application should be refused.

## **12. RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse

### **Reason(s)**

- 1 The proposed solar array would essentially be an inappropriate and unjustified form of development onto open countryside. It would not relate to any existing built development and would set an unwanted precedent for this form of development which would result in the cumulative erosion of the rural qualities of the New Forest landscape. Having regard to the domestic nature of the development it would be reasonable to site it within the confines of the domestic curtilage and not on the surrounding countryside. The development is therefore contrary to Policies DP1, CP5 or CP8 of the adopted New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.



New Forest National Park Authority  
Lymington Town Hall, Avenue Road,  
Lymington, SO41 9ZG

Tel: 01590 646600 Fax: 01590 646666

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