

Design and Access Statement

Land at Rosedew Farm

February 2015



Summary

Proposal

Construction of a solar pv generation project and associated works

Location

Land at Rosedew Farm, Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan

Date

February 2015

Project

14.284

Client

DR & EG Davies Ltd.

Product of

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Introduction

Synopsis

The purpose of a Design & Access Statement (DAS) is to provide a clear and logical document to demonstrate and explain the various facets of design and access in relation to the site and to outline planning policy relevant to the proposal. The DAS also acts as a method of demonstrating the details of a planning application in a way that can be read both by professionals and the public. The diagram below, extracted from the Welsh Government guidance on preparing a DAS, illustrates the various considerations that need to be taken into account when preparing such a document. The circular nature of the diagram represents the equal weightings that need to be given to each of the 5 Objectives of Good Design: Access; Movement; Character; Environmental Sustainability and Community Safety.



In this respect, the statement is subdivided into five sections, commencing with a brief overview of the proposal in this section. Section 2 outlines a description of the application site whilst Section 3 provides a brief overview of the site context proposal. Section 4 identifies the relevant national and local planning policies which provide the framework for appraising the application. Following this, Section 5 explores the relevant design and access

facets associated with the application, addressing the requirements of each of the 5 objectives of good design. The document then concludes with an appraisal of the application justifying why it should be granted permission.

Proposal

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Asbri Planning Ltd. on behalf of DR & EG Davies Ltd. to accompany a full planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment for the construction of a solar PV generation project and associated works on land at Rosedew Farm, Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan. The development will relate to a total site area of 10.7 hectares and comprises of part of 2 no. field parcels. The development will provide an output of approximately 5 megawatts (MW), which equates to powering approximately 4000 homes.

The proposal constitutes the construction of PV panels laid out in rows of arrays running from west to east across the site. Each array will be mounted on a simple metal framework; the height of any installation will be limited to 2.1 m above ground level. The framework will be driven into the soil, removing the need for deep foundations or piling. The solar panels will be installed at approximately 25 degrees from the horizontal due to the need to maximise solar exposure.

The panels will be connected to a national grid connection beyond the site boundary. It should be noted that the proposed development would have a relatively low impact on the existing ground conditions, and would not have significant foundation or infrastructure requirements. As such the integrity of the agricultural fields would not be impacted.

Key Considerations

Giving due regard to the context of the proposed development, and notwithstanding the inherent sustainability benefits of establishing renewable energy sources and the low impact of solar pv installations on agricultural value of the land, the key considerations for assessing the planning merits of the scheme are outlined, as follows.

Landscape

In light of the site's rural character, and location within the designated Glamorgan Heritage Coast, the visual impact of the proposal needs to be carefully considered and as such a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken in support of the planning application.

Ecology

The site is greenfield in nature and therefore has potential for ecological value; subsequently, an Ecological Survey has been commissioned in support of the planning application.

Highways

Traffic movements and volumes associated with the proposed development will be greatest during the construction stage. Given the nature of local access roads it was considered best practice to commission an Access Appraisal and a Construction Stage Assessment to support the planning application.

Archaeology

Despite there being no designated historic landscape areas, Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the proposed development area, the extent of intrusion into this greenfield site has necessitated a precautionary approach. As such, a Desk Based Archaeology Assessment has been

undertaken in support of the planning application.

Glint and Glare

The application site is located to the west of both St Athan Airfield and Cardiff Wales International Airport. So as to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on aviation interests, a Glint and Glare Assessment has been undertaken in support of the planning application.

Involvement

The applicant initially engaged with the local planning authority in respect of a request for an EIA Screening Opinion based on a much larger site area. The formal response from the Vale of Glamorgan Council dated 4th March 2014 was that an EIA would be required.

A further request has been submitted to the local planning authority based on the intended site area. The response dated 23rd September 2014 indicated that an EIA would be required.



Site Context

Location

The site is centred on OS Grid Reference SS 97744 67637, on land at Rosedew Farm, to the south of Llantwit Major, and the south-west of Boverton. The coast is approximately 500metres to the south of the site.

The site is situated within the Vale of Glamorgan's open countryside and is currently used as agricultural land for arable purposes. The site falls within the designated Glamorgan Heritage Coast. The site is generally open and lies on an area of relatively flat land.

Site Features

The application site extends over an area of 10.7Ha. The site comprises of the northern parts of two fields and is shown on the map on the previous page.

The site generally has a south facing aspect; a necessity for an application of this nature.

Being agricultural fields, the site does not encompass any buildings and are used solely for agricultural purposes. There are no structures situated within the application site.

The topography of the site area is relatively flat, with a gradual increase in levels towards the coast (see photograph). The northern section of the site is mostly at a level of around 35m AOD however levels start to rise away towards the southern part of the site, to a height of 40-45m AOD, as the coast is approached. Due to the topography of the site, views from the coastline are limited.

Photograph taken facing the Coast



The site's boundaries to the north, west and east are currently demarcated by a mixture of mature hedgerows, fences and traditional clawdd walls (banks). There is also an agricultural track, which runs across the north of the site, and along the western boundary. This track accesses fields to the east of the site. The southern boundary is demarcated by low-level agricultural fencing.

There are no public rights of way within the site or immediately adjacent, albeit there is the Wales Coastal Path (otherwise known as Heritage Coastal Path) approximately 500metres to the south, and a public right of way 520metres to the west. However, again, viewpoints of the site from these pathways are limited due to the distance, the mature vegetation, and the topography of the area.

There are no records of historic flooding on the site and flood zone maps indicate that watercourses in the vicinity have floodplains of limited extent that do not encroach onto any part of the application site (See Natural Resources Wales Flood Map). The flood risk across the application site is considered to be negligible.

Natural Resources Wales Flood Map



As previously noted, the site falls within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast. This national designation seeks to protect the special environmental and landscape character of the coastal zone. There are no other designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields, within the application site.

Access

The site is located off Mill Lay Lane, via an un-named private road running through Ham Manor Park, a retirement residential park south of the settlement boundary.

At the southern end of Ham Manor Park, the un-named private road leads to the junction that forms the entrance to Acorn Camping and Caravan Park. The agricultural track which stems to the south of this junction accesses the site, and the fields to the west of it.

The access into the site will be from the agricultural access track, to the north western corner of the site. The agricultural track measures a length of 300metres, and continues to run parallel along the north and west boundaries of the site.

The agricultural track is 5metres wide, and it is currently used by agricultural vehicles and machinery to access the site and fields to the west it.

As stated before, there are no Public Rights of Way crossing, or in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Surroundings

The site, as aforementioned is located on land to the south of Llantwit Major. The site forms part of Rosedew Farm, a family run enterprise, which in recent years has diversified into various tourism and agriculturally related businesses, as well as continuing to actively farm the land. Notably, there is the camping and caravan park to the north.

The character of the wider area to the east of the site consists of predominately agricultural fields and the agricultural dwelling and associated buildings which serve Rosedew Farm. To the south of the site, there is the resultant southern section of the two fields, and ultimately the coast.

The northern boundary is bounded by the agricultural track which provides access into the site, and a subsequent hedgerow. To the north of the boundary, there is the camping and caravan park, and furthermore the settlement of Llantwit Major.

Llantwit Major is one of four small towns in the Vale of Glamorgan, and is predominantly urban in character. The town is served by a range of services and facilities, and it is closely connected to the nearby settlement of Boverton.

Site History

The following applications have some relevance to the current proposal.

14/01004 – the formal Environmental Impact Screening Opinion for the construction of a ground mounted solar PV generation project, which is subject

to this application. The outcome of this indicated that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required.

13/00574 – Planning application for an agricultural building for additional grain storage, located immediately to the east of the site. Approved subject to conditions.

Context Analysis

Residential Context

The site is located within the open countryside, approximately 1.3km to the south of the town centre of Llantwit Major, and the south-west of Boverton.

The site is immediately surrounded by agricultural fields. To the far north-west of the site, there is Acorn's Camping and Caravan Park, a touring holiday park, which is separated from the site's boundaries by a field and mature trees and hedgerows.

The nearest residential dwellings to the site are located in the residential park, 175metres to the north. There is a dense screening of mature trees and hedgerows to the north of the site, and therefore visual impact upon these properties would be negligible (see photograph below showing properties in distance, and the mitigating dense boundary).

Photograph taken facing north-wards towards Caravan Park and Llantwit Major



In terms of the dwellings within the wider area, such as those in Heol Y Felin and Yr Adar Nant to the south of Llantwit Major, and those in Tre-Breferred to the south of Boverton, no views of the arrays are anticipated due to the existing dense woodland to the north of the site.

Overall, all residential dwellings are all within a distance and location, as well as sufficiently screened, so as to ensure that the proposed application would not be of detriment to their individual living amenity.

Local Land Uses

The local land use is characterised by predominately agricultural fields as well as residential dwellings and farmsteads sporadically located around the open countryside.

Other local land uses including the majority of health, education and public services are provided at the nearby town of Llantwit Major, to the north of the application site.

Socio-Economic Considerations

As aforementioned, the application site is located within the ward boundary of Llantwit Major, which has a population of 10,621 inhabitants. The wider local authority of Vale of Glamorgan, in which the settlement is located, has a population of 127,159 persons.

The population of the output area (W00005857) within the ward boundaries which the site falls under, is 177. Due to its rural location, there is a total of 113 households within this area, 84 of these households are caravans, or other mobile or temporary structures, which are located in the residential park to the north of the site.

Heritage Context

The Glamorgan Heritage Coast is a 14-mile stretch that was awarded Heritage

Coast status in 1972. The designation begins at Aberthaw and goes all the way to Porthcawl in the west. The site subject to this application aforementioned falls within the designated Heritage Coast, however, the proposed solar farm is not irreversible, and the panels would be raised above the ground, preventing any harm to the wildlife underneath. In addition, the halves of the fields closest to the coast will be retained as open countryside. Therefore, the proposed development would not have an adverse or irreversible impact upon the natural environmental qualities of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

The site is not within and does not fall adjacent to any conservation areas. Llantwit Major Conservation Area is located approximately 800metres in a north-western direction from the site. Boverton Conservation Area is located over 570metres from the site's boundaries. Given the distance, and the number and density of mature natural boundaries, such as trees, hedgerows, fences and clawdd walls, there will be no adverse impact upon these Conservation Areas.

Planning Policy Framework

The planning policy framework for the determination of this application is provided by the content and scope of National Planning Policy, which is contained within the Wales Spatial Plan, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and its associated Technical Advice Notes (TANs), together with the Development Plan for the local area.

Wales Spatial Plan

'People, Places, Futures, the Wales Spatial' (updated in 2008) provides an overall strategic framework for the future spatial development of Wales. The primary aim of the plan is to promote sustainable development which is to be delivered through its area strategies. In this case the application site is covered by the South East Wales Capital region which is described as:

'An innovative skilled area offering a high quality of life – international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally by increasing its global visibility through stronger links between the Valleys and the coast and with the UK and the rest of Europe, helping to spread prosperity within the Area and benefiting other parts of Wales'

The plan includes an objective which seeks to reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions, highlights the implications of climate change and promotes a low-carbon economy.

Planning Policy Wales 2014

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) – Edition 7 (July 2014) is the principal document of the Welsh Government which sets out the context for sustainable land use planning policy, within which Local

Planning Authorities' statutory Development Plans are prepared and development control decisions on individual planning applications and appeals are made.

The Government's aim is to secure an appropriate mix of energy provision for Wales, whilst minimising the impact upon the environment. This will be achieved in part by strengthening renewable energy production which includes solar and through a greater focus on energy efficiency and conservation. The document also includes specific development control advice requiring local authorities to consider the effects of sustainable energy schemes in relation to sustainable development criteria, particularly with regard to meeting the Welsh Government's renewable energy targets and to minimising potential detrimental environmental effects on local communities.

Chapter 4: Planning for Sustainability

Under Chapter 4 (Planning for Sustainability), the main objective stated which relates to the installation of pv panels is as follows:-

'Supporting the need to tackle the causes of climate change by moving towards a low carbon economy. This includes facilitating development that reduces emissions of greenhouse gases in a sustainable manner, provides for renewable and low carbon energy sources at all scales and facilitates low and zero carbon developments.'

Design is defined under this particular chapter (Para 4.11.1) as:

"The relationship between all elements of the natural and built environment. To create sustainable development, design must go beyond aesthetics and include the social, environmental and economic aspects of the development, including its

construction, operation and management, and its relationships to its surroundings.”

Planning Policy Wales emphasises that good design is also inclusive design (4.11.4)

Chapter 12: Infrastructure and Service

In terms of determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development (and associated infrastructure), PPW paragraph 12.10.1 advises that local planning authorities should take into account:-

- **The contribution a proposal will play in meeting identified national, UK and European targets and potential for renewable energy, including the contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;**
- **The wider environmental, social and economic benefits and opportunities from renewable and low carbon energy development;**
- **The impact on the natural heritage, the coast and the historic environment;**
- **The need to minimise impacts on local communities to safeguard quality of life for existing and future generations;**
- **Ways to avoid, mitigate or compensate identified adverse impacts;**
- **The impacts of climate change on the location, design, build and operation of renewable and low carbon energy development. In doing so, consider whether measures to adapt climate change impacts give rise to additional impacts;**
- **Grid connection issues where renewable (electricity) energy developments are proposed; and**
- **The capacity of and effects on the transportation network relating to**

the construction and operation of the proposal.

Chapter 12 (Infrastructure and Services) states that it is the aim of the Welsh Government to promote the generation and use of energy from renewable and low carbon energy sources at all scales and promote energy efficiency, especially as a means to secure zero or low carbon developments and to tackle the causes of climate change.

It is intended that local planning authorities should facilitate the development of all forms of renewable and low carbon energy to move towards a low carbon economy to help to tackle the causes of climate change.

Technical Advice Notes

Planning Policy Wales is supplemented by a series of 21 topic-based Technical Advice Notes (TAN's) which provide practical guidance relating to various forms of development and the role of the planning system in dealing with the determination of planning applications.

Technical Advice Note 6: Sustainable Rural Communities (TAN 6)

Technical Advice Note 6 was produced in 2010. It states that an important part of moving towards a sustainable rural community is the creation of renewable energy sources. One way in which this can be done is through farm diversification where, for example, it is considered technologies like solar PV can be situated without damaging the agricultural value of the land.

Technical Advice Note 8: Renewable Energy

This Technical Advice Note was produced in 2005 to replace the previous version from 1996. This TAN focuses on the land use planning

considerations of renewable energy. The TAN emphasises that the provision of electricity from renewable sources is an important component of the UK energy policy.

More specifically, paragraph 3.15 specifies that:-

'Other than in circumstances where visual impacts is critically damaging to a listed building, ancient monument or a conservation area vista, proposals for appropriately designed solar thermal and PV systems should be supported.'

Technical Advice Note 12: Design

Technical Advice Note 12 provides advice on design considerations and, in relation to the design of new development it states that local planning policies and guidance should aim to ensure that:

New development should harness the intrinsic resources or "natural capital" of the site or area to help create the conditions for more environmentally sustainable development and in particular to consider measures to help reduce effects related to climate change and to build in resilience to the measures"

The TAN also documents a definition of "character", which is contained within the guidance on designing in context (Paragraph 4.8)

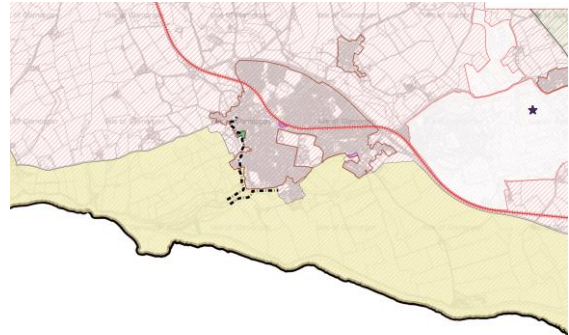
Furthermore, The TAN advises that opportunities for innovative design will depend on the existing context of development and the degree to which the historic, architectural, social or environmental characteristics of an area may demand or inhibit a particular design solution. A contextual approach should not necessarily prohibit contemporary design.

Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The current local planning policy framework is contained in the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development (1996-2011).

The UDP Proposals Map shows the site to be located outside of any settlement boundaries and is therefore within the open countryside (See Proposals Map Extract below). The site also falls within the designated Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

Proposals Map Extract



Policy ENV1 'Development in the Countryside' contains a presumption against new built development in the open countryside, unless justified under national planning policy and/or for the purposes of agriculture, forestry and recreation, or if the development is approved under other policies in the plan. Policy ENV10 'Conservation of the Countryside' also aims to maintain and improve the countryside.

Policy ENV2 'Agricultural Land' is also relevant as it seeks to protect the most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3A).

Policy ENV5 relates to the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, seeks for development to conserve and enhance the environmental qualities of the designated coastline.

The most relevant policy for considering the proposals is Policy COMM8 'Other Renewable Energy Schemes' which states that:

'Proposals for renewable energy schemes will be permitted if all of the following criteria are met:

- 1. The proposal has no unacceptable effect on the immediate and surrounding countryside.**
- 2. The proposal has no unacceptable effect upon the sites of conservation, archaeological, historical, ecological and wildlife importance;**
- 3. Adequate measures are being taken, both during and after construction, to minimise the impact of development upon local land use and residential amenity.'**

Another policy of relevance to the proposals is Policy EMP7 'Farm Diversification' which states that all new proposals for the diversification of farmsteads will be permitted if:

- i. The diversification proposals are for small scale employment, commercial, recreational or tourism purposes;**
- ii. Proposals for new structures are specifically designed for**

and necessary for the purpose of diversification.

- iii. Proposals are compatible with the surrounding landscape, adjacent land uses, and any existing related structures in terms of their scale, siting, design and external appearance of any new building and extension to new buildings;**
- iv. Proposals do not unacceptably affect the interests of agriculture, conservation, areas of ecological, landscape, wildlife, historic, or archaeological importance;**
- v. The provisions of car parking, servicing and amenity space are in accordance with the approved guidelines;**
- vi. Vehicular access is available or can be provided from the public right of way without any unacceptable affects upon the appearance of the countryside;'**
- vii. Proposals do not have an unacceptable affect upon the amenity and character of the local environment, in terms of noise, smell, traffic congestion or visual intrusion.**

Policy ENV27 'Design of New Developments' requires that new development is of a good standard of design and respects the qualities of the surrounding context.

Other relevant policies from the UDP are listed below:

- Policy ENV16 – Protected Species
- Policy ENV18 – Archaeological Field Evaluation
- Policy REC12 – Public Rights of Way and Recreational Routes

The UDP is the statutory development plan for the purposes of section 38 of the 2004 Act, however, the plan is time-expired. As such, chapter 2 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, 2014) provides the following advice on the weight that should be given to policies contained with the adopted development plan:

'2.7.1 Where development plan policies are outdated or superseded local planning authorities should give them decreasing weight in favour of other material considerations, such as national planning policy, in the determination of individual applications. This will ensure that decisions are based on policies which have been written with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development (see 1.1.4 and section 4.2).

2.7.2 It is for the decision-maker, in the first instance, to determine through review of the development plan (see 2.1.6) whether policies in an adopted development plan are out of date or have been superseded by other material considerations for the purposes of making a decision on an individual planning application. This should be done in light of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (see section 4.2).'

Objectives of Good Design

Overview

This chapter explores the relevant design and access facets associated with the application for the construction of a solar pv generation project, and is to holistically assess the planning merits associated with the scheme.

The Five Objectives of Good Design are a set of principle considerations, as outlined in Technical Advice Note 12, to ensure developments effectively respond to local context so that they assimilate into the locality and are functional for their intended user. The Five Objectives of Good Design are Access, Movement, Character, Environmental Sustainability and Community Safety – each of which will be dealt with separately in turn below.

Access and Movement

Given the nature of the scheme the main considerations over access will centre on the construction phase of the development. For example, movements to and from the site during construction will be of a quantity and frequency greater than movements post construction. This is because movements during the construction stage will involve the delivery of all materials required to build the solar arrays, whereas, movements post construction will be restricted to the maintenance of the solar arrays which will only require a small number of movements from the maintenance company which are expected to number in the single digits per annum.

Access into the application site is to be obtained from the north-west of the site, off the existing agricultural track. This access point is situated approximately 700m from the junction with Ham Lane and is currently utilised as a point of

access for the existing the camping and caravan park, and the farmhouse and wider agricultural unit. The access into the site from the lane is wide, and will be able to accommodate safely the range of construction and delivery vehicles expected at the site.

The proposed access way into the site will follow the existing access towards the farm unit, which will then feed into the existing agricultural track to the south. The access road is already utilised by large farm machinery, however, the existing agricultural road is heavily rutted and therefore will be temporarily upgraded with locally sourced materials and is to be the solitary access way into the site, capable of accommodating all vehicular movement during and post construction including large vehicles at construction stage.

A bespoke Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the application and sets out a strategy detailing the safest and most efficient way with which to transport materials to the site.

With regards to access and movement post construction, it is not considered movements will be of any great quantity or frequency and will mainly be in the form of maintenance visits which could potentially number as little as 4 per year, albeit this is yet to be confirmed. Once construction is complete the access will be reduced to a simple gated arrangement.

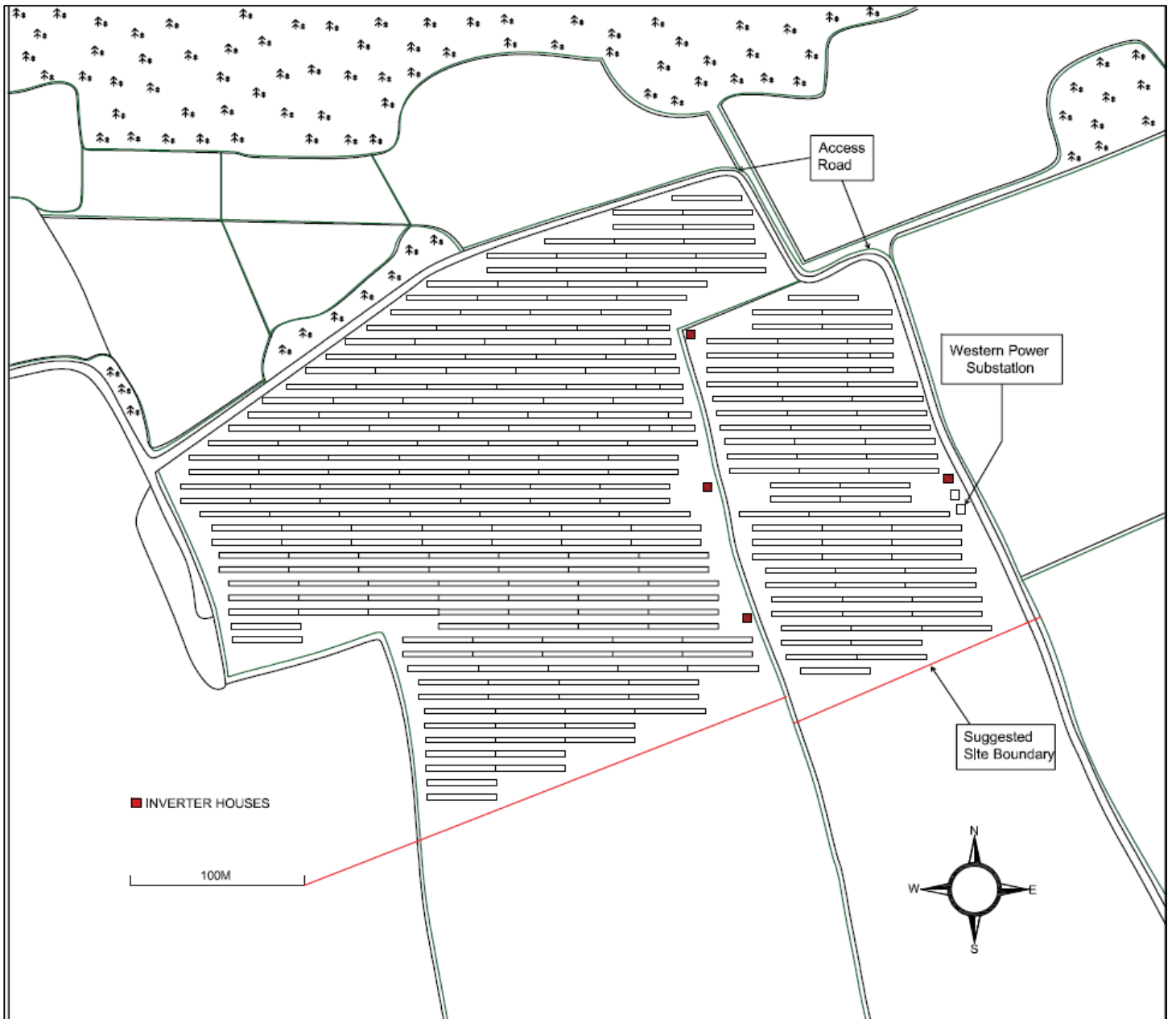
When maintenance is required vehicles will access the site in the same manner as detailed earlier during the construction phase. Once within the site there will be sufficient width between the solar panel arrays, at 5 metres, to traverse accordingly.

Given the type of proposal it is considered that no parking or public transport provisions are required.

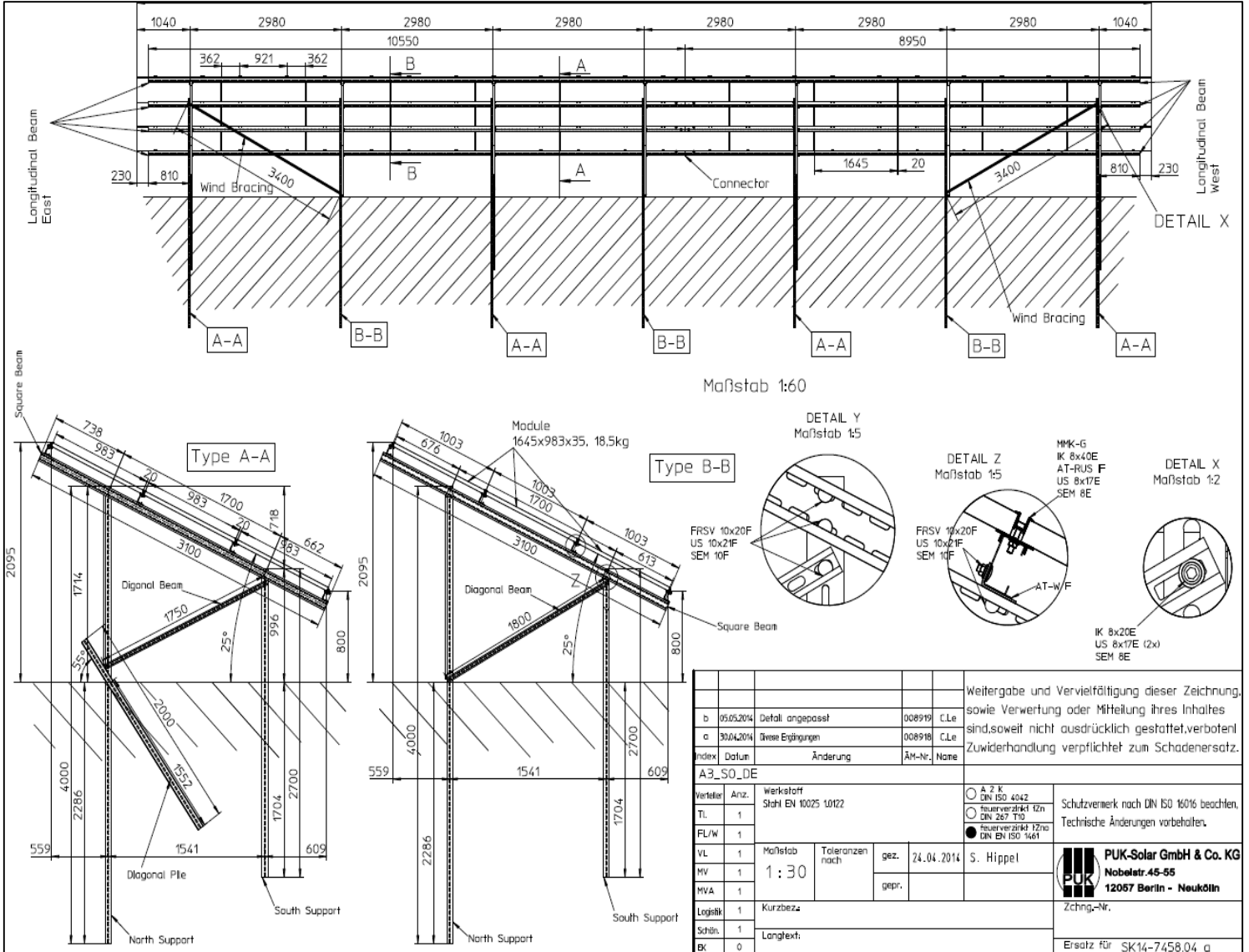
Due to the distance of the site from the Public Right of Ways, the scheme will not interrupt the designated pathways. There will also not be any prominent views from these pathways.

Based on a review of the proposed access to the site, it is considered that with the implementation of mitigation measures and the construction routing strategy, as detailed further in the accompanying Access Appraisal, construction vehicles can be accommodated without undue adverse impact on the public highway.

Site Layout Plan



Panel Details/Cross Sections



Character

Amount

The application site consists of the northern parts of two greenfield parcels of land measuring approximately 10.7 hectares in area, the use of which for ground-mounted solar generation purposes will provide up to 5 megawatts (MW) of output. The energy produced will be directed towards a National Grid connection located beyond the site's boundary, via permitted development rights. It is important to note that there is capacity at this grid connection, identified through consultations with the National Grid organisation themselves.

Scale

Each array will be mounted on a simple metal framework; the height of any installation will be limited to 2.1m above ground level. The framework will be driven into the soil, removing the need for deep foundations. The solar panels will be installed at approximately 25 degrees from the horizontal allowing for sufficient angle to capture solar energy. It should be noted that the proposed development would have a relatively low impact on the existing ground conditions, and would not have significant foundation or infrastructure requirements. As such the integrity of the agricultural fields would not be impacted.

Ancillary buildings in the form of substations will be present to the east of the site. There will also be the erection of 4 inverter houses in locations as shown in the plan on the previous pages. However it is requested that the scale of these structures be dealt with at a later date via a condition as the details will only be discussed with the network developer following the granting of consent.

Layout

A temporary construction compound will be sited immediately adjacent to site and the developable area. This will be

dealt with under permitted development rights following determination.

The solar panel arrays are positioned so that there is sufficient clearance space in-between structures so as to allow maintenance vehicles to manoeuvre effectively. The existing agricultural access route which bounds the north and west of the site will enable a direct route for maintenance vehicles through the site.

The arrays are to be south facing to ensure that the site fulfils its purpose and generates sufficient solar power to ensure it operates to its maximum efficiency.

Appearance

The appearance of the solar farm arrays has been thoroughly appraised within the accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The conclusions that came out of this assessment were overall positive in terms of the developments impact on the wider character of the area. The typical appearance of the solar arrays is shown on the previous page.

Landscaping

The principal material consideration with regards to this solar PV proposal, given its location within the open countryside on greenfield land, and within the designated Glamorgan Heritage Coast, centres on how it interacts with the existing landscape and whether or not it disrupts important viewpoints or negatively impacts sensitive visual receptors such as residential dwellings.

Tirlun Design Associates have been commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. This assessment concludes that whilst the landscape character of the site will significantly change, the overall impacts on the surrounding landscape will be not significant.

There will be only very limited and localised changes to topography, given the largely flat nature of the site terrain and the modest structures needed to mount the solar arrays. The protection, retention and reinforcement of existing mature landscape features is the key feature of the landscape and visual mitigation. A mature landscape framework of hedgerows and the topography of the area, visually contains the development in both the local and the wider landscape and ensures that there are no significant residual visual effects identified for residential receptors or road users around this site.

Environmental Sustainability

The proposed application will fundamentally underpin the region's ability to conserve natural resources, minimise carbon generation and help deliver zero carbon standards by providing a regionally significant level of renewable energy.

The application site is to be contained by substantial natural buffer in the form of the retention and reinforcement of hedgerows where necessary to achieve complete curtailment and comprehensive screening of the site from external viewpoints. In addition to the benefits associated with curtailment and screening, the retention and reinforcement of the hedgerows would also preserve and enhance biodiversity opportunities on site. When the favourable impacts of the hedgerows are coupled with the favourable topographical characteristics of the site the solar array structures will be encapsulated within the natural landscape so as to successfully mitigate visual impacts on sensitive receptors.

The development will therefore not prejudice the overall landscape character or the biodiversity value of the area.

Community Safety

The solar arrays will be encapsulated by appropriate fencing which will satisfy both the insurers' requirements as well as the local planning authority's guidelines, in order to ensure the site remains secure from outside influences. Additionally, the site will be monitored by fixed CCTV mounted in protective enclosures which will be allocated around the site perimeter in order to keep track of onsite conditions.

Appraisal and Conclusion

The principle of development can be established by considering the environmental sustainability benefits of the scheme in the context of Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Notes and the Vale of Glamorgan's Unitary Development Plan (1996-2011), all of which provide a presumption in favour of sustainable development, an element of which involves implementing a greater number of renewable energy sources and reaching clean energy output targets in order to move away from carbon based energy dependence.

Chapter 4 of Planning Policy Wales has set out clear objectives which seek to achieve a low carbon economy so as to be commensurate with UK guidelines on climate change. As such, the principle of renewable energy schemes is fundamentally supported by Planning Policy Wales, subject to other material considerations regarding, for example, landscape impact.

Chapter 12 of Planning Policy Wales re-emphasises the importance of generating renewable energy, stating that the planning system should be geared towards supporting renewable energy schemes on appropriate sites.

The Welsh Government published Technical Advice Note 8 in 2005 in order to provide specific guidance on how Wales should plan to meet UK renewable energy targets. In regards to Solar PV developments, the Technical Advice Note requires that other than in circumstances where visual impact is critically damaging to a listed building, ancient monument or conservation vista then appropriate design solutions should be supported.

The Technical Advice Note also stipulates that Local Planning Authorities should ensure there are mechanisms in

place within their development plans capable of facilitating renewable energy schemes on appropriate sites.

The Vale of Glamorgan's Unitary Development Plan includes a specific policy on renewable energy under Policy COMM8 which states that such schemes are to be permitted providing that the following criteria are met:

- 1) ***The proposal has no unacceptable effect on the immediate and surrounding countryside.***
- 2) ***The proposal has no unacceptable effect upon the sites of conservation, archaeological, historical, ecological and wildlife importance;***
- 3) ***Adequate measures are being taken, both during and after construction, to minimise the impact of development upon local land use and residential amenity.'***

The proposal, whilst falling within the open countryside and Glamorgan Heritage Coast, is not irreversible, and will continue to protect the ecology and wildlife importance within on the site and within the wider area.

Furthermore, the design of the proposal conforms with the UDP's design principles, as set out under Policy ENV27 in that the detailing has been carefully administered to ensure that it is sensitive to the landscape and wider context.

It is considered that this Design and Access Statement and accompanying documents clearly establishes that the

proposed development would be sympathetic to the local context and responds positively to the 5 objectives of good design, as set out in Planning Policy Wales.

Conclusion

Asbri Planning Limited has been instructed by DR & EG Davies Ltd. to prepare a full planning application for the construction of a solar pv generation project and associated works on land at Rosedew Farm, to the south of Llantwit Major in the Vale of Glamorgan. The development will relate to a site area of approximately 10.7 hectares and provide an output of approximately 5 megawatts (MW), which equates to powering a total of approximately 4000 homes.

The proposal constitutes the construction of PV panels laid out in rows of arrays running from east to west across the site. Each array will be mounted on a simple metal framework; the height of any installation will be limited to 2.1m above ground level. The framework will be driven into the soil, removing the need for deep foundations or intrusive piling. The solar panels will be installed at approximately 25 degrees from the horizontal. The panels will be connected to a national grid connection beyond the site boundary via permitted development rights. It is important to emphasise that the proposed development would have a relatively low impact on the existing ground conditions, and would not have significant foundation or infrastructure requirements. As such the integrity of the agricultural fields would not be unduly impacted.

The proposed development is considered to be supported in principle by national and local planning policy in that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that renewable energy proposals are fundamentally part of achieving sustainability by providing a renewable

alternative to finite carbon based energy resources.

To establish the acceptability of the proposed development a number of material considerations needed to be addressed, these were; landscape impact; ecological impact and highways impact. An assessment of each material consideration was underpinned by a specialist technical statement. Each statement concluded that the site could support the proposed development without causing undue harm.

Taking all of the above into consideration, it is contended that there are no material considerations of sufficient merit or weight to resist the accompanying planning application for the proposed development and therefore it should be approved.

As such is respectfully requested to grant full planning permission for the construction of a ground mounted solar PV development and associated works on land at Rosedew Farm, Llantwit Major.