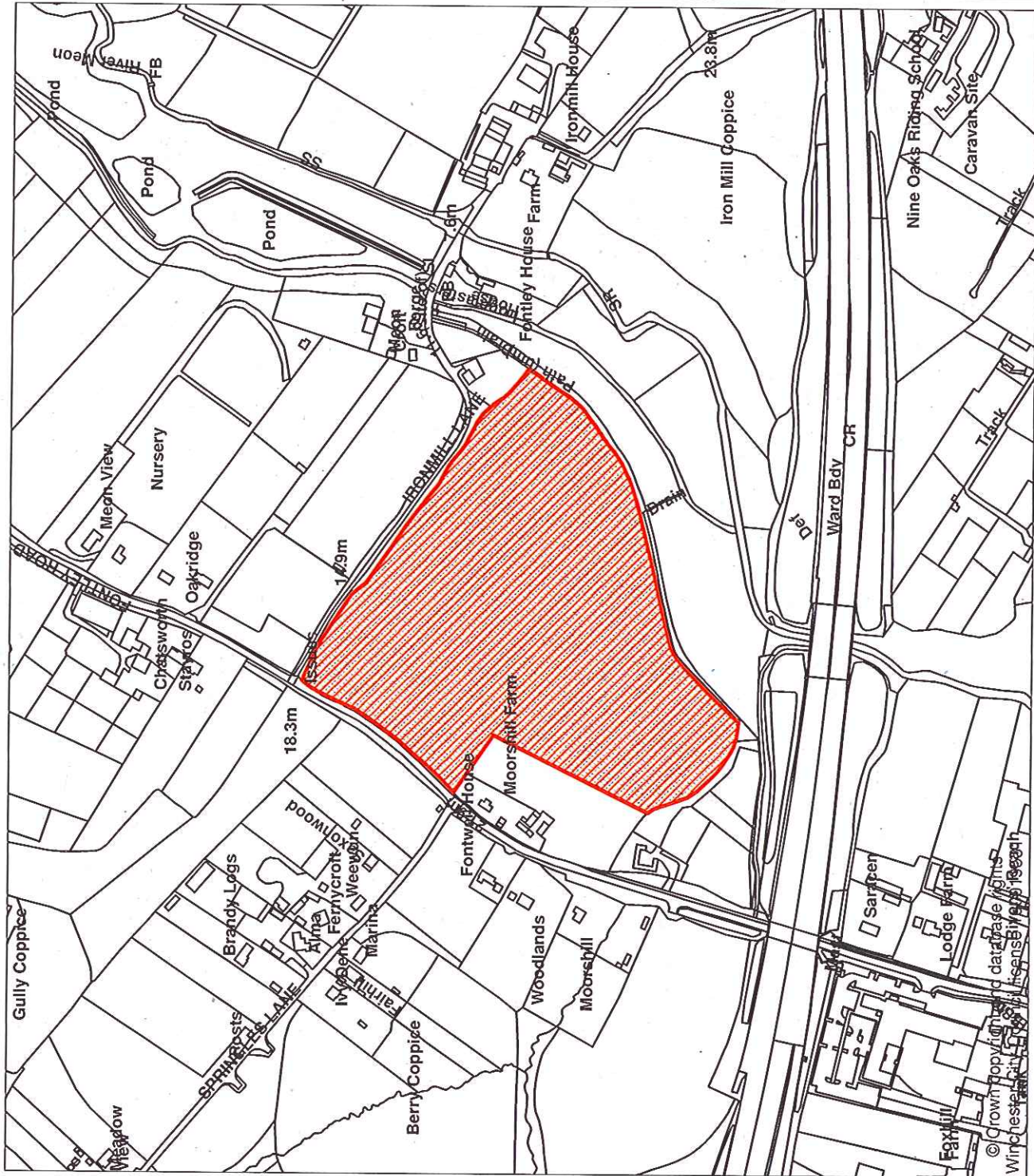


# Land Adj to Moorhill Farm, Fontley Road, Titchfield, Hampshire

16/00863/FUL





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**Item No:** 02  
**Case No:** 16/00863/FUL/05072406  
**Proposal Description:** Installation of solar farm  
**Address:** Land adjacent to Moorshill Farm, Fontley Road, Titchfield.  
Hampshire.  
**Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City:** Wickham.  
**Applicants Name:** Jardin Smith International Pte Ltd  
**Case Officer:** Mr Stephen Cornwell  
**Date Valid:** 22 April 2016  
**Site Factors:**  
**Recommendation:** Approve

**General Comments**

This application is reported to Committee at the request of Wickham Parish Council, whose request is appended in full to this report and because of the number of objections received. Both of these representations are contrary to the officer's recommendation.

The proposal was screened in July 2015 and it was determined that the application did not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement.

**Site Description**

The application site consists of an irregular shaped piece of agricultural land 7.6 hectares in area and which lies on the eastern side of Fontley Road north of the M27. The ground slopes gently from west to east reflecting its position on the western side of the River Meon valley. The land is presently divided up by post and wire fences into a number of paddocks and is being used for grazing horses.

The outer boundary of the site is defined by a combination of hedges, hedgerows with trees and post and wire fences. The boundary features vary in condition with parts being quite thin resulting in views into the site from public vantage points around the perimeter of the site.

On the northern side the site is bounded by Ironmill Lane which offers the only vehicle access with a farm gate part way down the lane. This lane runs down towards the river giving access to a number of properties on both banks. The lane also carries a public footpath that continues down to the river but with a spur looping around the eastern boundary of the site through a number of paddocks and then running back towards Fontley Road alongside the motorway. This path offers views into the application site.

To the south, the site adjoins a small section of land beyond which is the M27 on a raised embankment as it crosses the Meon valley. Part of the western boundary runs alongside Fontley Road with the boundary hedge tight to the roadside. The site boundary then runs around one side and the rear of Moorshill Farm. This "farm" consists of a residential property (divided into two flats) and a number of outbuildings. The domestic curtilage to this property is weakly defined on the ground but on plans associated with the 2016 application referred to in the history section; the garden boundary is close to the farmhouse. East of this is a paddock that runs down to the boundary with the application site. This boundary is a post and wire fence with some sections of neglected hedgerow. The separation distance from the farmhouse to the application site boundary is 40m.



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South of the junction of Fontley Road and Springles Lane there are a number of residential properties on the western side of Fontley Road. They have strong boundaries to the road. South of the motorway there are numerous properties but the embankment forms a visual barrier obstructing any views from these towards the site.

Fontley Road is an unlit rural lane linking Wickham to Titchfield. In the vicinity of the site there are no footpaths on either side of the road. The speed limit is 40mph. It is a busy road reflecting the fact it is one of the limited means of crossing the M27 corridor which it negotiates by an underpass.

The site itself does not carry any nature conservation, landscape, heritage designations or tree preservation orders. There is a statutory ancient monument down Ironmill Lane near the river. This recording relates to the site of a former foundry that once existed. This is no longer present although the foundry house still exists and is listed.

### **Proposal**

Since its first submission, the application has been amended and the details set out below incorporate the final revised details.

This application proposes to create a solar farm on the site. It would be formed with banks of panels orientated to the south and be operational for 25 years.

A new access would be created 40m down Fontley Road from Ironmill Lane. The radii on the new access are shown as 7m on the northern side and 10m on the southern side. The softer radius on the southern side reflects the intention for traffic to approach from that direction. The first 15m of the new access road into the site would be 6m wide and then beyond a set of gates, the roadway would be 5.5m wide up to a temporary turning facility for low loaders. An area of ground between this access roadway and the northern boundary would be used as a storage area during the construction phase. When construction is complete this area will be landscaped. The service roadway would continue down the northern and eastern boundaries with two spurs striking off into the area occupied by the panels.

A traffic number and speed count undertaken on Fontley Road has shown the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed to be in the region of 41-42mph. Both 90m and 120m sightlines in both directions are achievable within highway land so no third party land is included. The vegetation that will need to be cut back is a row of trees on the south east side of Fontley Road and all the trees between the new access and Ironmill Lane. Some vegetation within the highway verge on the north side of Ironmill Lane will need to be cut back.

The panels would be supported by frames with vertical posts spaced 7.5m apart, set in a small foundation in the ground. The panels are 1m wide by 3.25m long and set at an angled of 15-25 degrees from the horizontal. At their tallest point (the back) they would be 1.7m above ground level and at their lowest (front) 0.7m. A revision to the layout has resulted in an increase in the distance the rows are spaced apart. Originally this was to be 1.5m but will now be 4.25m from the edge of one panel to the edge of the panel in the next row. This spacing allows for mowing or sheep grazing to take place as a way of managing the land.

A substation would be built in the northern corner of the site. A number of other structures to house the inverters, transformers and monitoring unit are shown.

The site would be secured by a 2.1m high green polymer coated wire mesh fence



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running inside the boundary. It would be topped by a single strand of barbed wire. At the bottom the mesh fencing would stand 0.122m above ground level to allow small animals to move freely in and out of the site.

The plans show the retention and enhancement of the boundary vegetation as well as wild flower seed planting in the space between the security fence and the boundary vegetation. Bird, Bat and dormice boxes are also to be installed.

During the 8 week construction phase, it is estimated that 50 people will be employed on site. Banksmen would be used to assist deliveries by large vehicles. If necessary, a wheel washer is to be installed. Parking for construction workers will be provided on site. Delivery traffic will follow a pre determined route utilising the M27, junction 9, A27 and Mill Lane so they approach the site from the south. Traffic movements would be timed to take place outside peak hours and would consist of an average of 2-3 deliveries per day and a maximum of 7. There would be no abnormal loads. Working hours would be 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 on Saturdays. Noise control measures will be implemented.

In the operational phase it is estimated traffic flows would be 1 visit per month by a light van or 4x4 type vehicles.

The site will be decommissioned after 25 years and the land returned to pasture.

The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents:

- Planning Design & Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Implications and Method Statement
- Biodiversity Management Plan
- Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources
- Winter Bird Survey
- Construction Management Plan

The following points have been taken from these documents:

- Site in open countryside characterised by mature hedgerows, mature individual trees with small groups of trees.
- Landscape and visual impact assessment shows impact contained by boundary planting. Some views from farmhouse and consider application supported by NPPF, NPPG and local policies
- Regarding land use classification 70% grade 2 & 30% grade 3b
- Recognise guidance that discourages use of better quality land but this site a small area, separated from any farm business or buildings.
- Changes to landscape localised, wider effects neutral to low.
- Site can accommodate development without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual effects.
- No undue impact on landscape character.
- Extended phase one habitat survey undertaken.



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- PV farm can result in increase in biodiversity.
- Trees on site mix of species typical of rural or semi rural location. Key feature is presence of individual common oaks around boundary.
- No trees to be lost but section of hedgerow will need to be removed to form access.
- No work will take place within root protection areas.
- Will enhance screening to Moorshill Farmhouse.
- Site adjacent zone 3 flood risk area but site itself not within this zone.
- Potential landscape effect during construction high but of short duration. After construction impact on landscape considered low.
- Impact from footpaths is greatest and this to be reduced through planting.
- Site is grassland with mix of species recorded. Will lose 3% to roads and storage areas. Partial loss for duration of development. Any losses short term with no adverse impact.

### Relevant Planning History

None relating to the red lined site itself.

Two other decisions in the locality of relevance to this application are:

- 13/01247/FUL Construction of 14MW solar photovoltaic (PV) farm and gas management system with associated works on site of former Funtley tip, approved August 2013. This permission has not been implemented within the three years since being approved and has now expired.
- 16/00092/FUL Demolition of existing building comprising 2 self contained flats, demolition of outbuildings and construction of pair of semi detached dwellings with associated car ports, access with boundary changes to improve sight line and road safety, Moorshill Farmhouse Fontley Road. Refused March 2016.

### Consultations

WCC Highways Engineers: Note intention to create new bell mouth vehicle entrance located 40m south of Ironmill Lane junction. Proposal to form visibility splay of 2.4m by 90m in each direction. With speed limit of 40mph requirement is 2.4m by 120m and therefore relaxation to normal standard. This will need to be considered by the Highway Authority.

New junction will need approval of HCC and completion of a 278 agreement. Details should be forwarded to colleagues at HCC for official response.

HCC Highway Engineer: If access can achieve visibility splay of 120m which is level required then no objection.

WCC Head of Strategic Planning: The key policy is CP12 in Local Plan Part 1, which supports renewables generation subject to various factors which should be taken into account. These include impact on designated areas (the site is in the 'Meon Gap' – LPP1 policy CP18) and effect on landscape and surrounding location, as well as the benefits of renewables. The policy position is, therefore, generally positive, subject to the impact of



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development, which other specialist consultees will need to comment on. In terms of the Gap (CP18), the development should 'retain the generally open and undeveloped nature' of the Gap and 'not physically or visually diminish' it.

WCC Head of Environmental Protection: Have examined proposal in detail and have no adverse comments to make.

WCC Head of Landscape: Following revisions to proposals scheme now acceptable. However all works should be in compliance with the updated (Dec2016) Biodiversity Management Plan by David Archer Associates.

WCC Head of Landscape - Principle Tree Officer: No objection subject to conditions.

WCC Head of Landscape - Ecologist & Biodiversity Officer: To be reported

WCC Head of Historic Environment - Archaeology: Site is in proximity to Scheduled site (Funtley Ironworks) Site destroyed by fire in 1880s and only Iron Masters house survives and this a grade 2 listed building. Waste slag and iron nodules incorporated into lane. Application site lies west of scheduled site and listed building and separated from them by several plots of land with buildings. There are also intervening tree belts. Considering intervening land and trees proposed solar farm will not have an adverse impact on setting or iron works. However, advise Historic England should be consulted.

Highways England: Highways England has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport as strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network (SRN). The SRN is a critical national asset and as such Highways England works to ensure that it operates and is managed in the public interest, both in respect of current activities and needs as well as in providing effective stewardship of its long-term operation and integrity.

In the case of this development proposal, our interest is in the M27.

Having examined the above application, we do not object to the proposals but do recommend that conditions should be attached to any planning permission that may be granted, see Annex A – Highways England recommended Planning Conditions, contained within our attached formal recommendation.

The Condition requires that ALL metal work within the site has a matt finish to ensure that the potential for glint and glare is minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.

Environment Agency: None received.

HCC Rights of Way: None received.

Fareham Borough Council: Raise no objection subject to:

- no objection from Highways England
- any conditions suggested by Highways England
- Additional boundary planting
- Adherence to measures in biodiversity plan
- Adherence to measures in Stilwell Partnership Construction Management Plan
- A construction environment management plan
- A condition that after 25 years all panels removed and site restored to previous

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use.

Historic England: None received.

**Representations:**

Wickham Parish Council

Objection- inappropriate development in a strategic gap.

Visually intrusive in an important green space.

Request application head by planning committee if officers minded to grant permission.

Neighbour Representation

7 representations received all objecting to the scheme.

- Would destroy enjoyment of our property that borders site.
- Proposed solar farm on far too big a scale and would dominate landscape in what is essentially a rural road.
- Wholly inadequate access provision for volume and safety of vehicles needed.
- Fontley Road already congested; speeds in excess of 40mph leave insufficient distance to break.
- Site openly exposed visually to people on Fontley Road and motorway.
- Site, scale and glare would be a huge distraction.
- Hedgerows transparent in winter.
- No consideration given to impact on wildlife.
- Concerned over loss of good farmland. 80% of land classified as very good and 20% of moderate quality.
- Under impression this sort of development only allowed
- Already another solar farm approved 1 mile up road at Funtley Tip two close together not justified.
- Transportation and installation will cause havoc on country roads, pollution and distress to wildlife.
- Will destroy landscape and outlook.
- Solar Farm will come within 15m of Moorshill Farmhouse. We hope to redevelop it.
- Question results of bird survey undertaken just in winter.
- Mammals (deer and foxes) roam across land, not clear what will happen to them.
- Concerned over traffic levels especially during construction.
- Site next to public right of way on slope facing Meon Valley which means environmental impact on scenic attractiveness will be considerable especially when viewed from Fareham side of valley.
- Site close to site of great historic importance, one of first places in world to manufacture a form of steel. Lane also holds evidence of this use. Solar panels so



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close to former ironworks and house will be great visual distraction.

- Road heavily used by traffic associated with industrial estate to south.
- Road should be improved by widening or creating footpath.

**Relevant Planning Policy:**

Winchester District Local Plan Review (WDLPR)

DP3- General Design Criteria  
DP4-Landscape and the Built Environment  
DP10 Pollution Generating Development  
CE1 Strategic Gaps  
HE1 Archaeological Site Preservation  
HE2 Archaeological Site Assessment  
T2-Development Access

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1)

MTRA4 Development in the Countryside  
CP12 Renewable and Decentralised Energy  
CP13 High Quality Design  
CP16 Biodiversity  
CP17 Flooding, Flood Risk and the Water Environment  
CP20 Heritage and Landscape Character

Emerging Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) Development Management and Site Allocations Proposed Modifications 2016

DM1 Location of New Development  
DM15 Local Distinctiveness  
DM16 Site Design Criteria  
DM17 Site Development Principles  
DM18 Access and Parking  
DM19 Development and Pollution  
DM20 Development and Noise  
DM23 Rural Character  
DM24 Special Trees Important Hedgerows & Ancient Woodlands  
DM26 Archaeology  
DM29 Heritage Assets

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

National Planning Policy Framework

**Planning Considerations**

- Principle of development
- Impact on landscape character of area
- Impact on nearby residential properties
- Highways
- Biodiversity
- Heritage Assets
- Other Matters



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### Principle of development.

The site lies outside any settlement boundary in what is considered to be open countryside. LPP1 policy MTRA4 seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development. The site is also part of the area designated as a strategic gap separating the settlements of Fareham and Whiteley/Wickham. Policy CE1 of the WDLPR reflects this intention. Wickham PC has raised this issue in their comments on the scheme.

The nature of the proposal will change the character of the application site for the duration of the permission (25 years) and as a consequence have some impact on the open gap. However the site is not viewed in the landscape as part of a larger open area but is very much viewed within the confines of the area immediately adjacent the site. The M27 creates a hard barrier that separates land north and south of the motorway. Consequently, the clusters of businesses just south of the motorway are not viewed in association with the proposal. It is noted that the Funtley tip solar farm was also approved in the strategic gap. On balance when taking into account the nature of the proposal, the duration of its presence and the restoration of the site at the end of its life, any impacts on the strategic gap are not considered to outweigh the benefits of promoting a renewable form of energy production. This is supported at both national level and through local plan policy CP12 of the LPP1.

As a principle, having considered the potential impact on the strategic gap in the context of the surrounding character, it is considered that the benefits of the scheme in terms of their renewable credentials outweighs any harm that might be caused to the gap over the life of the operation of the solar farm.

Guidance is to discourage the loss of good agricultural land (grade 2) and 70% of the application site falls within this category. The applicant has pointed out that the site was acquired ten years when Fontley House Farm was sold off in a number of lots. At that time it was promoted as pony paddocks and this has been the ongoing use. The applicant states it is now separated from any building and is considered too small to form a viable farm on its own. In 2007 it was sold with an indication it could be used as a series of paddocks, reflecting the general demand for such land in the area. Having considered the situation, it is considered that the case put forward by the applicant holds merit and in those circumstances, the loss of this quantity of grade 2 agricultural land is considered acceptable. It should also be noted that at the end of the proposed use the site will revert back to agricultural use.

Any concern relating to cumulative impact with two solar farms in close proximity does not need further consideration as the permission at the former tip site has expired.

### Impact on landscape character of area

WDLPR policies DP3, DP4 and RT11 together with LPP1 policy CP13 seek to protect the landscape character of the area. The site lies within the Lower Meon Valley landscape character area. Of the key characteristics for this area the following apply to the application site:

- A distinctly riparian character
- Area typified by paddocks and pastures
- Medium irregular fields
- Well treed creating sense of intimacy and enclosure



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The main impact will be localised to the immediate vicinity of the site as views are obtained from Fontley road, Ironmill Lane and the footpath along the eastern boundary.

The formation of the access will change the appearance of that section of the site in the northwest corner immediately abutting Fontley Road. The creation of the access and the visibility splays will require the removal of some trees that presently contribute to screening the site. Their loss will open up that corner of the site. New planting can be undertaken but securing the site will be necessary by some form of hard fencing. The local area does exhibit a range of roadside features and the loss of sections of hedgerow is not uncommon in the area. In some locations north and south of the site, hedgerows have been removed to improve access and visibility to properties and businesses. On balance the loss of this section of vegetation is considered acceptable in the context of the overall benefits of the scheme being in mind that replacement planting can be conditioned and the overall positive work to enhance the rest of the hedgerows that are to be retained.

Discussions have taken place with the applicant on the use of different material in surfacing the access to reduce its impact. On the basis the full access may be needed during operational phase if any of the panels need replacement and it will be needed at the decommissioning stage, it is not practical to narrow the entrance after construction has been completed. The use of different materials in the construction of the access should help reduce its impact on the immediate area to some degree.

The trees and hedgerows that border the site make a significant contribution towards the landscape character of the area. With a suitable standoff distance not only will these features be retained but the proposal also offers the ability to reinforce them and obtain a scheme for their management over the next 25 years.

A view will be open to a short section of users of the M27. For drivers and passengers the site will form part of the peripheral view and with no moving parts on site any impact will be short lived.

There are some partial views of the southern section of the site from the northern end of the Fareham Park Road and Hillson Drive which lie off to the south east on the other side of the motorway. From here only part of the site can be seen with trees and hedgerows around and beyond. The motorway dominates the landscape both in terms of its physical presence and the noise generated. Taking all factors into consideration it is not considered that the proposal will have a significant adverse impact on the landscape when viewed from Hill Park.

The landscape officer has assessed the proposal and following a number of revisions to the scheme that have seen a reduction in the number of panels allowing a greater separation distance between the rows and confirmation that the boundary hedgerows and trees will be enhanced, no objection to the proposal is made.

Given the circumstances outlined above, with appropriate conditions, the scheme is capable of being successfully integrated into the landscape.

### Impact on nearby residential properties.

WDLPR policies DP3, DP10 and RT11 seek to protect sensitive properties from any adverse impact arising from a development. The main concerns that could arise from the development are disturbance to residents during the construction phase and then any impacts during its operational phase. The nearest residential property to the application site is Moorshill House. Whilst this property has a paddock that abuts the application site



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the domestic garden and the property are 40m away. There are a number of other dwellings on the west side of Fontley Road. A combination of their existing screening to the road and their distance from the site should protect their amenity.

The main potential for disturbance during the construction phase is likely to arise from traffic deliveries to the site and the preparation of the site and the assembly of the panels. These concerns can be adequately addressed through the use of appropriate conditions. When the time comes for the decommissioning of the site in 25 years, adequate controls to ensure there will be no adverse impact at that time can also be conditioned.

Regarding the potential impact on residential amenity during the operational phase, there will be no moving machinery on the site which could cause a noise or distraction. The orientation of the panels is towards the south which is away from these residential properties. The level of traffic movements during the operational phase will be limited to one light vehicle per month for monitoring/maintenance purposes. Moorshill House which is the closest property and is presently divided into two flats has limited windows facing the site and it is not considered that this will materially harm their amenity.

Objections to the application have been made by the joint owners of Moorshill House making reference to their desire to build a replacement dwelling. It is not considered that the presence of the solar farm will fundamentally inhibit the redevelopment of this property. Under these circumstances the proposal is not considered to be contrary to the intentions of the policies outlined above.

Highway safety

WDLPR policy T2 seeks to ensure that any new development can access the highway network in a safe manner.

The proposal is to form a new access onto the Fontley Road south of the junction with Ironmill Lane. The details associated with the formation of the access have been clarified with further information. Visibility splays of 2.4m by 90m or 2.4 by 120m are shown.

The greatest concentration of traffic movements will occur during the construction phase with a similar number also occurring when the site is decommissioned. No abnormal loads are expected and all deliveries will be specifically routed to approach the site from the south off the motorway at junction 9 on the A27 and up Mill Road into Fontley Road. The applicant has also indicated that they will look to reduce the number of employee's cars visiting the site during the construction phase. One possible method of achieving this is to require contractor's staff that might be staying in the local area at one location to be brought to the site in a minibus.

During the operational phase the traffic level drops dramatically to the occasional visit of a small van for routine maintenance.

The Highway Engineer and his colleagues at HCC have reviewed the proposal and raise no objection. A list of appropriate technical highway conditions is currently being drawn up and will be set out in the late update sheet. Those highway related conditions in the recommendation reflect the proposals set out in the application to protect highway safety.

Given the proximity and orientation of the site relative to the motorway Highways England have been consulted to ensure there is no adverse impact on drivers on the M27 by virtue of glare or reflection. The applicant commissioned a specific report on this topic which was



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reviewed by Highways England who they now raise no objection subject to a condition seeking the use of dull non reflective metalwork.

Whilst a number of objectors have raised concerns over the access, having undertaken the consultations with the Highway Engineer, HCC Highways and Highways England there are no technical reasons to withhold consent on these grounds.

### Biodiversity Considerations

LPP1 policy CP16 seeks to protect the biodiversity value of any proposed development site. The applicants have undertaken a number of studies relating to the land that have focused on assessments of the impact on both flora and fauna. The following key characteristics have been identified:

- The site is dominated by grassland
- The perimeter is hedgerows with trees
- The site provides a foraging area for badgers
- The site supports a low population of common reptile species
- Common amphibians may be present.
- A low number of dormice use hedgerows
- Boundary is suitable for bats, nesting birds and invertebrates
- Site has low ecological value for wintering birds

The assessments have considered potential implications of the development on loss of habitat, loss of connectivity and general disturbance. The overall judge is that the impact on biodiversity is moderate. A biodiversity management plan has been submitted that sets out a mitigation strategy to address issues during the construction phase and to enhance the overall biodiversity value of the site over the period of the development. Measures put forward include:

- Position of fencing to protect hedgerows and badger sett.
- Allowing space below fencing for badgers to enter site
- Ceasing work 1 hour before sunset near a sett
- Not using artificial lights
- Closing over open trenches overnight
- Enhancing grassland
- Additional planting around boundaries
- Installation of bat boxes, bird boxes, dormice nest boxes & reptile/amphibian/invertebrate refuges/hibernacula

The Principle Tree Officer has seen the submitted details and raises no objections to the proposals. The formal comments of the Ecologist on the latest version of the Biodiversity plan will be reported at the meeting. Initial informal feedback is positive. On the basis suitable conditions are imposed to seek the implementation of the actions set out in the Biodiversity Management Plan the proposal is considered to comply with policy.

### Heritage assets.

WDLPR policies HE1 and HE2 both seek to protect Heritage Assets from any damage as a result of development taking place. Records have identified a Statutory Ancient Monument located down Ironmill Lane. This is a site where iron forging took place. Unfortunately, the actual buildings involved were destroyed in the 19th century. The original Millhouse remains and is a listed building. The separation distance between these two sites and the application site is sufficient to ensure that the proposal will not affect them or their setting. This view has been confirmed by the Archaeological officer.



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Regarding the application site itself, it is not recorded as holding any features of interest and a watching brief is proposed to cover its development. Accordingly, there is not considered to be any conflict with the policies outlined above.

### Other Matters

The size of the application site at 7.6 hectares means the development crosses the threshold for the requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan. The nature of the proposed development means that the main opportunities will exist in the construction phase. Whilst this type of development may require specialist technicians to install the panels the terms of any plan are flexible enough to acknowledge this and recognise that the benefits may focus on links with educational establishments. This would be achieved through a legal agreement.

The application has attracted a number of objections from the parish council and a number of local residents. These concerns have been taken into account in the assessment of the application, but it is considered that the amended scheme has addressed most of the points raised whilst in weighing up the relevant policies the balance is found to favour support of the application.

### Conclusion

This proposal will see the establishment of a solar farm on a site presently in use as pony paddocks located within the open countryside and an area that is part of an open gap. Any reduction in the open gap is limited in extent and in time, whilst the support for a renewable energy proposal is compelling. The loss of the agricultural land is noted but the circumstances do not lead to any reasonable conclusion that resisting the application will see the site revert to a productive agricultural use that is typical of grade 2 land. It is noted that the proposal is only for a temporary period and the site will revert back to agriculture after decommissioning. Potential adverse impacts relating to landscape character, residential amenity, highways, ecology and heritage assets have all been considered and where necessary are all capable of being mitigated. In the context of the existing use of the site, the proposal will have a positive outcome by increasing its biodiversity value. At the end of 25 years the site will be decommissioned and return to agricultural use. When all aspects are reviewed, it is considered that the application can be supported subject to the completion of a legal agreement relating to an Employment and Skills Plan and the imposition of suitable conditions. This is reflected in the recommendation below.

### **Recommendation**

#### **APPROVAL**

- (a) Subject to the completion of a legal agreement that an Employment and Skills Plan will be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority before any development is commenced on site.
- (b) That following the completion of the legal agreement that the planning permission is issued with the following condition(s):

#### **Conditions**

1. Time Limit



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The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission

Reason

To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

WS Planning & Architecture:

- Drawing number J002128/PL01 dated April 2016 entitled Location Plan
- Drawing number J002128/PL02. dated April 2016 entitled Site Plan as Existing.
- Drawing number J002128/PL03A dated April 2016 entitled Site Plan as Proposed.
- Drawing number J002128/PL04A dated April 2016 entitled Typical Sections thru Modules.
- Drawing number J002128/PL05A dated April 2016 entitled Solar Panel Module Elevation & Section.
- Drawing number J002128/PL06 dated April 2016 entitled Proposed Fence Elevation/Section.

Petrow Harley Landscape Architects:

- Drawing number 689-L-01 dated December 2016 entitled Landscape Proposals.
- Drawing number 689-L-02 dated December 2016 entitled Landscape Sections.

David Archer Associates:

- Drawing number TPP 01 dated April 2016 entitled Tree Protection.

Stilwell Partnership:

- Drawing number TSP/JSI/P3025/03 revision B dated April 2016 entitled Proposed Access Arrangements Sightlines & Swept Paths.
- Unnumbered drawing entitled Highway Ownership Plan.

Reason

For the avoidance of doubt.

3. Construction Environmental Management Plan

Before any development including any work to trees or hedgerows, is commenced on site a Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. The plan will include the following:

- Timing of sequence of actions associated with construction phase.
- Timing of work to avoid bird nesting season or disturbance to wildlife during any dormancy period.
- Measures to prevent the risk of any ground pollution.
- Measures to protect licensed species.



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The approved scheme shall be implemented during the construction phase.

Reason: To ensure the surrounding area during the construction phase.

4. Arboricultural Work

The following arboriculturally related work shall comply with the details as set out in the Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement reference DAA AIR01 date April 2016 written by David Archer Associates and specifically:

Appointment of Arboricultural consultant...Section 3.1  
Actions of Arboricultural consultant.....Section 3.2, 3.5.1, 3.6  
Tree Removals & pruning..... Section 3.2  
Protective fencing .....Section 3.3  
Underground services.....Section 3.4  
Safeguarding Root Protection Areas...Paragraph 3.5.2

Any changes to the submitted proposals shall be approved in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the existing trees and hedgerows including their root protection areas are adequately protected during the construction phase.

5. Biodiversity Management Plan

The actions and measures to protection, maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the site as set out in the Biodiversity Management Plan prepared by David Archer Associates dated April 2016-updated December 2016 shall be implemented in accordance with the details as set out in sections 4 & 5 of the plan and at the appropriate times within the development as detailed in the plan. These relate to protective measures during the construction phase and then enhancement measures followed by management, maintenance and monitoring during the operational phase.

The enhancement works as detailed in Table 4 page 24 of the Biodiversity Management Plan shall then be undertaken no later than the date set out in the Table (timing) as that month occurs following the commencement of the development on the site. All new plants shall be sourced from native stock.

Reason: To ensure that the existing biodiversity value of the site is not harmed and is enhanced in value throughout the life of the development.

6. Planting New Section of Hedgerow at Access.

Within one month of the formation of the new access into the site, a scheme for the planting of the new sections of hedgerow on either side of the access roadway behind the visibility splay shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall show the position and number of native plants in the new sections of hedgerow including individual native tree species and measures to protect the plants. The planting shall be undertaken in the first planting season following the construction of the access.



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Reason: To ensure that an effective screen to the site is maintain as far as possible and to reduce any gap between sections of hedgerow to a minimum to maintain connectivity.

7. Maintenance of Planting

Any planting and maintenance work shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved scheme. If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree, that tree or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree of the same local indigenous species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the enhancement of the landscape screening.

8. Materials and Finish of Buildings

Before any of the buildings or structures hereby permitted are constructed on site, details of the materials and finish to be used shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. The buildings or structures shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the general character of the surrounding area.

9. Formation of Access, Visibility Splay and Turning Area

The access up to and including the onsite temporary turning feature as shown on the Stilwell Partnership Drawing number TSP/JSI/P3025/03 revision B dated April 2016 entitled Proposed Access Arrangements Sightlines & Swept Paths, shall be formed before the delivery or construction of the solar farm hereby permitted is first commenced. The turning area shall be kept free of any obstruction and retained for this use hereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

10. Traffic Management

The following actions as set out in the Construction Management Plan dated April 2016 and prepared by Stilwell Partnership shall be implemented during the construction phase of the development hereby permitted:

Temporary Highway Signage.....	Section 2 paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6
Delivery Procedures.....	Section 8 paragraphs
Vehicle Routes.....	Section 4
Measures to reduce employee traffic.....	Section 5.3

Reason: To ensure that traffic associated with the development does not have any adverse impact on the local road network.

11. No Mud on Highway

No vehicle shall be allowed to exit the site and enter the public highway unless it is clean of material and does not deposit any material on the road.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.



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12. Details of Roads

Before any of the roadways are formed, details of their construction shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. The principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage shall be adopted (where practical) and consideration given in their construction to the requirement for them to be removed at the end of the use hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

13. Environmental Mitigation (Dust & Noise)

The environmental mitigation measures relating to dust and noise as set out in Section 9 paragraphs 9.4 and 9.5 and paragraphs 9.10 to 9.11 of the Site Access section in the Construction Management Plan dated April 2016 and prepared by Stilwell Partnership shall be adopted during the construction phase of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the construction phase on the surrounding area and nearby residential properties

14. Non Reflective Surfaces

All metal work including the solar panels, within the site shall be installed with a matt colour or finish to ensure its has a non reflective surface and shall be retained and maintained in this condition throughout the operational life of the site. The colour shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority before any such metal work or panels are brought onto the site

Reason: To ensure that none of the drivers of the nearby M27 motorway are dazzled from the sun light reflecting off any metalwork at the site.

15. Contractors Compound

The storage area and the contractor's compound shall be enclosed with a 2,4m tall metal or wooden hoarding painted in a colour to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority in advance of the enclosure being installed. The enclosure shall then be painted in the agreed colour. Within one month of the site first exporting electricity to the grid the enclosure shall be dismantled and removed from the site.

Reason: To protect the general character and appearance of the surrounding area

16. Landscaping of former Contractors Compound Area

Within one month of the site first exporting electricity to the grid a scheme for the landscaping of the area previously used as the contractor's compound shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of position of new planting, native species numbers, seed mix, measures to protect the new plants and a timetable for the planting to take place. The maintenance and management of this area shall then be incorporated into the programme of future work as set out in the Biodiversity Management Plan to reflect the management of other similar areas of the site.

Reason: To protect the landscape character of the surrounding area.



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17. Lighting Scheme

Before any lights are installed on the site full details shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. Only approved lights shall be displayed on the site.

Reason: To ensure that the character of the surrounding area is protected.

18. Notification of Commencement to Export to Grid

Within 14 days of the date of the first export of any electricity from the site to the grid, the applicant shall inform the local planning authority in writing, that such transmissions have taken place.

Reason: For the avoidance of any doubt when establishing a baseline for the implementation of other conditions

19. Restoration of site

The use of the site as a solar farm shall cease no later than 25 years from the date of the commencement of electricity being exported to the grid. After this date, the solar panels shall be dismantled and the site shall be restored to its former use as agricultural land, in accordance with a scheme that has submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. This scheme shall be submitted no later than three month prior to the cessation date. The submitted details shall include the proposals for the removal of the perimeter fencing, all structures, cabling and underground features within the site. In the event that the site fails to generate any electricity for a period in excess of 6 months then the restoration phase shall be triggered unless the written consent of the local planning authority has been obtained for an extension to the non generating period.

Reason: To ensure that the site is cleared of all equipment and structures at the end of the use and is returned to an open site.

**Informatives**

01 In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Winchester City Council (WCC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WCC work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service and,
- updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.
- In this instance the applicant was updated of any issues after the initial site visit.
- Offering the chance to consider the draft planning conditions.

02 The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-  
Winchester District Local Plan Review 2006- DP3, DP4, DP10, CE1 HE1, HE2, & T2.



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Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1) MTRA4, CP12, CP13, CP16, CP17 & CP20.

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) DM1, DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, DM20, DM23, DM24, DM26 & DM29

- 03 This permission is granted for the following reasons:  
The development is in accordance with the Policies and Proposals of the Development Plan set out below, and other material considerations do not have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.
- 04 All building works including demolition, construction and machinery or plant operation should only be carried out between the hours of 0800 and 1800 hrs Monday to Friday and 0800 and 1300 hrs Saturday and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Where allegations of noise from such works are substantiated by the Environmental Health and Housing Department, a Notice limiting the hours of operation under The Control of Pollution Act 1974 may be served.
- 05 No materials should be burnt on site. Where allegations of statutory nuisance are substantiated by the Environmental Health and Housing Department, an Abatement Notice may be served under The Environmental Protection Act 1990. The applicant is reminded that the emission of dark smoke through the burning of materials is a direct offence under The Clean Air Act 1993.



## **Wickham Parish Council Comment**

## **APPENDIX A**

Please return this form to the Case Officer

From: Wickham Parish Council

Case No 16/00863/FUL

Location Land adjacent to Moorshill Farm Fontley Road Titchfield

Proposal Installation of a solar farm

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### **Comments:**

**Object: inappropriate development in a Strategic Gap. The proposals will be visually intrusive in an important green space. Request application is heard by the Planning Committee if officers are minded to grant permission**

Signed:

Nicki Oliver  
Parish Clerk

Date: 9.6.16