



The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Refusal of Full Planning Permission
Application Reference Number: PL/2023/10332
Decision Date: 03/07/2025

Applicant:	Potterne Solar Project Limited 306 The Plaza, 100 Old Hall Street, Liverpool, L3 9QJ
Particulars of Development:	Installation of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 49.9 MW, including mounting system, permanent on site grid connection hub, inverters, underground cabling, stock proof fence, CCTV, internal tracks and associated infrastructure, landscaping, biodiversity net gain and environmental enhancements for a temporary period of 50 years.
At:	Land South of Potterne Park Farm, nr Potterne, Devizes, Wilts, SN10 5QT

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this planning application has been processed in a proactive way. However, due to technical objections or the proposal's failure to comply with the development plan and/or the NPPF as a matter of principle, the local planning authority has had no alternative other than to refuse planning permission.

In pursuance of their powers under the above Act, the Council hereby **REFUSE TO GRANT PERMISSION** for the development referred to in the above application and plans submitted by you, for the following reason(s):

Refusal Reason(s)

- 1 The application fails to provide sufficient information to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on archaeological assets within the site. The County Archaeologist has confirmed that further detailed investigation is required to understand the archaeological significance of the area, particularly given that the

proposed development involves ground disturbance through pile driving and subsoil boring, which may affect buried heritage assets.

Paragraph 213 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) requires that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be clearly and convincingly justified. In this case, no such justification can be made in the absence of a comprehensive understanding of the archaeological context. Despite being given reasonable opportunity to address this issue, the applicant declined to proceed with the agreed trenching strategy and failed to commission the necessary further investigations. The subsequent submission did not resolve the concerns raised by the County Archaeologist.

In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, the potential harm to heritage assets must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. While the renewable energy benefits of the scheme are acknowledged and carry significant weight, the lack of essential archaeological information prevents the ability to carry out a balanced and informed assessment. As such, the Local Planning Authority must also give significant weight to the protection of heritage assets.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policies 42(v), 57(iv), and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), as well as Section 16 of the NPPF, and is recommended for refusal on this basis.

- 2 The proposed development would result in significant and unacceptable harm to the character, quality, and visual amenity of the local and wider landscape. The site is a valued landscape, including heritage value, located in a prominent position within a sensitive rural setting, forming part of the setting of a designated National Landscape. The introduction of a large-scale solar installation, along with associated infrastructure and extensive mitigation planting, would create a conspicuous and urbanising form of development that is out of keeping with the prevailing landscape character.

The site lies partially within the designated Potterne Neighbourhood Plan area. The proposed development is considered contrary to Paragraph 2.1.2 of the Plan, as it does not prioritise the protection of agricultural land. Furthermore, the scheme fails to safeguard key countryside views, does not adequately limit development in other parts of the Parish, and undermines the distinctive character of the village and its rural setting by introducing inappropriate development in an unsuitable location.

As such, the proposal is contrary to Core Policies 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015). The scheme also fails to comply with Core Policy 42, which supports renewable energy development only where it can be demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable landscape harm.

Parvis Khansari ~ Corporate Director, Place

NOTES

1. **Appeals.** If the applicant is aggrieved by the decision of the local planning authority to refuse permission, they may appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment in accordance with Section 78(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 within six months of the date of this decision. (Information and forms relating to the appeals process can be found at the Planning Portal - [Appeal a planning decision: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appeal-a-planning-decision-overview)).