

**PDAS Appendix L – Bentley**  
**Neighbourhood Plan Design Checklist**





# Grove Farm Solar, Bentley

## Bentley Neighbourhood Plan Development Design Checklist

Prepared for



Green Switch Capital Limited

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# Document Control

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 The Bentley Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037 was adopted in November 2022 and forms part of the Local Development Plan for Babergh District.
- 1.1.2 'Policy BEN 3 Development Design' requires Applicant's to complete the Development Design Checklist included at Appendix A of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.3 This Appendix to the Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) provides a response to each of the matters raised in the Bentley Neighbourhood Plan Development Design Checklist.
- 1.1.4 It should be noted that the Development Design checklist prepared for the Bentley Neighbourhood Plan is targeted at housing and residential development, and not wholly applicable to solar development. Matters not relevant to the design of the Proposed Development are labelled as 'not applicable', with justification provided where appropriate.

## 2.0 BENTLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN CHECKLIST

- 2.1.1 Table 1 presents the Applicant's responses to the matters raised in the Development Design Checklist.

Development Design Criterion	Applicant Response
<b>Is there evidence that development proposals have considered and applied the following general design principles, so that the proposal:</b>	
Harmonises with and enhances the existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement pattern and land use.	<p>This criterion is more relevant to new residential development than solar development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is separated from the existing settlement at Bentley in the south of the Parish. The Proposed Development therefore does not have a close relationship with its physical form, movement pattern and land use.</p>
Relates well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent long-distance views.	<p>The Proposed Development has been designed to integrate with its existing landscape pattern and context, reinforcing the historic field pattern, and introducing new hedgerows, hedgerow trees, woodland belts, and meadows. There will inevitably be a degree of dissonance between the Proposed Development and its rural context due to the particular characteristics of the development, however the Applicant has sought to reduce its impact through the layout and</p>

	design of mitigation measures. There are no long-distance views that include the Site.
Reinforces or enhances the established character of streets and other spaces.	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Integrates with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity.	<p>This criterion is more relevant to residential development than solar development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development retains all existing public rights of way. The Applicant has developed an access strategy that utilises a track connecting to Station Road to the south-west in order to avoid bringing traffic through the village of Bentley or along Church Lane.</p> <p>There would be new access points created along Potash Lane, Church Lane and the road north of the Substation Site but these would not be for public use.</p>
Provides adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.	Not applicable – the Proposed Development includes open space but this is not public open space, and there is no requirement to provide such open space as part of a solar development.
Reflects, respects and reinforces local architecture and historic distinctiveness.	<p>This criterion is more relevant to residential development than solar development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is a solar farm which inevitably includes the use of utilitarian materials that do not relate to local vernacular architecture. The heritage impacts of the Proposed Development are set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment at PDAS Appendix D.</p>
Retains and incorporates important existing landscape and built form features into the development.	The Proposed Development retains existing hedgerows and trees as far as practicable by providing buffers between existing features and the development fenceline. There are very short sections of hedgerow that would require removal at Church Lane and at Potash Lane, and two trees would require removal adjacent to the point of connection. These removals cannot be avoided but have been compensated for through the extensive proposed hedgerow and tree planting as part of the Proposed Development.
Respects surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Adopts contextually appropriate materials and details.	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Incorporates necessary services and drainage infrastructure	The Proposed Development includes a sustainable surface water drainage strategy set

without causing unacceptable harm to retained features.	out in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy in PDAS Appendix F.
Ensures all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other; to provide a safe, attractive and cohesive environment.	This criterion is more relevant to residential development than solar development.  The Proposed Development has been designed to locate transformer stations, control buildings, and substations away from the public realm and out of view as far as possible.
Makes enough provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours.	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Sensitively integrates energy efficient technologies within the scheme at the start of the design process.	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
<b>Landscape structure or settlement pattern</b>	
Are the essential characteristics of the existing settlement and street pattern reflected in the proposal?	This criterion is relevant to residential development and not solar development. The Proposed Development cannot relate to urban design, settlement or street patterns.
Does the proposal respect local landscape features including topography and hydrology?	The Proposed Development retains existing hedgerows and trees as far as practicable by providing buffers between existing features and the development fenceline. There are very short sections of hedgerow that would require removal at Church Lane and at Potash Lane, and two trees would require removal adjacent to the point of connection. These removals cannot be avoided but have been compensated for through the extensive proposed hedgerow and tree planting as part of the Proposed Development.  The topography is retained across the Main Site such that at decommissioning the Site could be returned to agricultural use. The landform at the Substation Site would require minor cut-and-fill to construct, but the benefits of this in this location in terms of maximising visual screening using existing landform are considered to outweigh the small change in landform. The small change in landform is such that at the point of decommissioning the topography at the Substation Site could be reinstated to existing levels.
What are the important landscape or historic features	The important landscape or historic features around the Site primarily relate to the existing

<p>within and surrounding the site? Have these features including existing trees been considered in the proposal?</p>	<p>ancient woodland at Engry Wood, as well as the hedgerow and tree stock. In addition the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has identified a number of possible Ancient and Veteran trees.</p> <p>The AIA has been submitted as Appendix I of the PDAS and demonstrates that the Proposed Development will not harm the ancient woodland, or any ancient or veteran trees. The majority of trees around the Site boundary have also been retained with the exception of two trees, the removal of which cannot be avoided due to their position in relation to the point of connection.</p>
<p>How does the proposal relate to its setting? Are there any important links both physical and visual that currently exists on and adjacent to the site?</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is set within a mature landscape framework of hedgerow trees and woodland that limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape, as demonstrated by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility mapping included with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in PDAS Appendix B.</p> <p>There are no existing physical links across the Site that would be substantially affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Views across the Site are incidental and not important visual links. The important views identified in the Neighbourhood Plan do not include any views across the Site, which is not identified in the document.</p>
<p>Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?</p>	<p>This criterion is more relevant to residential development where housing can cause coalescence between settlements and the loss of individual identities between two settlements by their merging.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is located within the landscape between the modern settlement of Bentley in the south of the parish, and the historic settlement of Bentley in the north of the parish. Once planting is established the Proposed Development would not be prominent in views from within either settlement, and would not be prominent in views for people travelling between the two areas.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not cause coalescence and would maintain the perceived gaps between areas of settlement.</p>
<p>How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?</p>	<p>The Proposed Development utilises two existing access points at Station Road and on the east side of Church Lane, but also requires three new access points at Potash Lane, the west side of Church Lane, and from the unnamed road north of the Substation Site. These access points would not affect existing street arrangements and</p>



	following construction would very rarely be used by traffic.
Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-de-sac models? If not, why?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?	The Proposed Development has developed an access strategy that actively seeks to avoid taking traffic through the village of Bentley in the south of the parish, or the hamlet of Bentley in the north of the parish. This is achieved by utilising the access from Station Road and creating a crossover of Church Lane. This is seen as appropriate and a suitable means to avoid taking traffic through areas of settlement.
Do the new points of access and street layout take regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirement?	The points of access conform to statutory technical requirements as set out in the Transport Statement in PDAS Appendix H.
<b>Green spaces, public realm and street scape</b>	
Does the new proposal respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?	An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on local landscape character is set out in the LVIA in PDAS Appendix B. The conclusion of the LVIA is that once planting has established the Proposed Development would result in moderate to minor adverse effects over a highly localised area.
Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features including trees on or adjacent to the site?	The Proposed Development retains almost all woodland, trees and hedgerows around the Site boundaries. The exception are two short sections of hedgerow, one 3m section along Potash Lane and one 3m section along Church Lane, and two trees adjacent to the point of the connection.  Details of tree and hedgerow retention and removal around the Site boundary is set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment at PDAS Appendix I.
How does the proposal affect the character of a rural or edge of settlement location?	'Rural' or 'Edge of Settlement' locations do not appear to be defined within the Neighbourhood Plan, however the landscape effects of the Proposed Development are as set out in the LVIA in PDAS Appendix B.
In rural and edge of settlement locations does the development impact the tranquillity of the area	'Rural' or 'Edge of Settlement' locations do not appear to be defined within the Neighbourhood Plan, however the landscape effects of the

and has this been fully considered?	Proposed Development are as set out in the LVIA in PDAS Appendix B.
Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been considered?	The impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape character are set out in detail in the LVIA included at PDAS Appendix B.
Does the proposal positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and streetscape?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Is there adequate amenity space for the development?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Have all aspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the buildings and open spaces?	The Proposed Development includes deer / stock fencing that is suitable for a rural environment as a deterrent to prevent public access to the site. Higher security fencing is proposed around the two substation compounds where infrastructure could pose a risk to life.
<b>Pattern and layout of buildings</b>	
What is the pattern and layout of existing buildings and have these been respected in the proposal?	Not applicable – this criterion is relevant to residential development and not solar development.
Does the proposal maintain the character of existing building layouts and their relationship with the main roads through the settlement?	Not applicable – this criterion is relevant to residential development and not solar development.
If the design is within or adjacent to a heritage asset, have the elements which contribute to their significance been considered in the proposal? (Heritage assets include listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered landscapes and registered battlefields.)	The Applicant has prepared a Heritage Impact Assessment which is submitted as Appendix D of the PDAS. The Heritage Impact Assessment sets out the significance of the surrounding heritage assets and the effect of the Proposed Development.

Does the proposal affect or change the setting and significance of a heritage asset?	The Applicant has prepared a Heritage Impact Assessment which is submitted as Appendix D of the PDAS. The Heritage Impact Assessment sets out the significance of the surrounding heritage assets and the effect of the Proposed Development.
Views and landmarks	Not applicable – responded to under the Views and Landmarks section below.
<b>Views and landmarks</b>	
What are the existing key views and visual landmarks in the area and have these been retained and enhanced in the proposal?	<p>The Bentley Neighbourhood Plan identifies 'Important Views' within the Parish. The Proposed Development would not be seen in any of these views, such that they are retained.</p> <p>There are no specific visual landmarks on the Site which are required to be retained. The Church of St Mary to the north is predominantly screened by existing vegetation around its boundaries but is intermittently visible from the western end of Potash Lane to the south-west of the Site. From these locations, views of the church tower would be screened, but this is not a prominent visual landmark in the local area and views of the tower are considered to be incidental rather than an important contributor to local character.</p>
Where long distance views exist, how are these respected in the design?	Due to the extent of mature hedgerows and woodland around the Site there are no long distance views that include the Site.
Are new views and visual connections with the existing settlement and surrounding area incorporated into the proposal?	<p>This criterion is more relevant to residential development than solar development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development does not seek to create new views and visual connections with the surrounding area.</p>
Are new landmarks to be formed within the proposals?	Not applicable – it would not be appropriate to create new landmarks within a solar development.
<b>Building line and boundary treatment</b>	
Does the proposal respect the existing building line and harmonise with the adjacent properties?	This criterion is more relevant to residential development than solar development. The Proposed Development could not be designed to respect and harmonise with existing building lines.
Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?	The Proposed Development's boundary treatment includes deer and stock fencing set behind proposed hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland. Existing vegetation around Site

	boundaries is retained as far as possible. The overall boundary treatment is suitable for a rural environment.
<b>Building heights and roofline</b>	
Does the proposed development compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?	This criterion is more relevant to residential development than solar development. The Proposed Development does not contain building heights or rooflines that would affect the amenity of adjoining properties.
Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Has careful attention been paid to height, form, massing and scale of new buildings? Is it appropriate to reflect the adjacent scale or could a taller development be considered?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
If a proposal is an extension, is it subsidiary to the existing property so it does not compromise its character?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
<b>Parking and Utilities</b>	
Has adequate provision been made for car and cycle parking both private and public?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Do the proposed private car and cycle parking locations complement the existing provision or introduce new approaches? If new, do these new approaches change the character of the street?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Has adequate provision been made for bin storage including facilities for waste separation and recycling?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Is the location of the bin storage facilities appropriate in relation to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Has the impact of the design of bin storage facilities been considered, including quality of materials and location on the whole development? Could	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.

additional measures be incorporated to help integrate facilities into the development?	
Has the location of utilities including appropriate maintenance access been integrated into the proposal?	The Proposed Development would not require additional utilities. Maintenance access to the on-site infrastructure is retained.
Is the use of energy saving/efficient technologies encouraged and maximised? Are these technologies integrated into the proposal and not 'bolt on'?	Not applicable - this criterion is relevant to new residential development and not solar development.
Has the lighting scheme been designed to avoid light pollution?	The Proposed Development would not be permanently lit with the only on-site lighting located at the Substation Buildings and Control Building. The lighting would only be operated in emergency situations, and would be motion activated. The Proposed Development would therefore not contribute to light pollution.

