



RIBBLE VALLEY  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

FOR THE  
ATTENTION OF

07 OCT 2011

For office use only

Application No

Date received 320110829P

Fee paid £

Receipt No:

Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 2RA Tel: 01200 425111 www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Application for Planning Permission.  
Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Publication of applications on planning authority websites.

Please note that the information provided on this application form and in supporting documents may be published on the Authority's website.

If you require any further clarification, please contact the Authority's planning department

1. Applicant Name, Address and Contact Details

|                 |                        |             |   |                   |                 |                  |  |
|-----------------|------------------------|-------------|---|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|
| Title:          | Mr                     | First name: | M | Surname:          | Noblet          |                  |  |
| Company name:   |                        |             |   |                   |                 |                  |  |
| Street address: | New Higher Alston Farm |             |   | Country Code      | National Number | Extension Number |  |
|                 | Preston road           |             |   | Telephone number: |                 |                  |  |
| Town/City:      | Ribchester             |             |   | Mobile number:    |                 |                  |  |
| County:         | Lancashire             |             |   | Fax number:       |                 |                  |  |
| Country:        | England                |             |   | Email address:    |                 |                  |  |
| Postcode:       | PR3 3XL                |             |   |                   |                 |                  |  |

Are you an agent acting on behalf of the applicant?

☒ Yes ☐ No

2. Agent Name, Address and Contact Details

|                 |                |             |       |                          |                 |                  |  |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------|-------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|
| Title:          | Mr             | First Name: | simon | Surname:                 | oborn           |                  |  |
| Company name:   | Bagshaws       |             |       |                          |                 |                  |  |
| Street address: | 69 Derby road  |             |       | Country Code             | National Number | Extension Number |  |
|                 |                |             |       | Telephone number:        | 01889 562811    |                  |  |
| Town/City:      | Uttoxeter      |             |       | Mobile number:           |                 |                  |  |
| County:         | Staffordshire  |             |       | Fax number:              |                 |                  |  |
| Country:        | United Kingdom |             |       | Email address:           |                 |                  |  |
| Postcode:       | ST14 8EB       |             |       | simon.oborn@bagshaws.com |                 |                  |  |

3. Description of the Proposal

Please describe the proposed development including any change of use:

Proposed installation of solar photovoltaic panels to the roof of an existing building to the south eastern elevation sq.

Has the building work or change of use already started?

☐ Yes ☒ No

#### 4. Site Address Details

Full postal address of the site (including full postcode where available)

House:  Suffix:   
House name: NEW HIGHER ALSTON FARM  
Street address: PRESTON ROAD  
RIBCHESTER  
Town/City: PRESTON  
County:   
Postcode: PR3 3XL

Description:

Description of location or a grid reference  
(must be completed if postcode is not known):

Easting: 363826  
Northing: 436103

#### 5. Pre-application Advice

Has assistance or prior advice been sought from the local authority about this application?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please complete the following information about the advice you were given (this will help the authority to deal with this application more efficiently):

Officer name:

Title: Mr First name: N/a Surname: N/a

Reference:

N/a

Date (DD/MM/YYYY): 07/10/2011 (Must be pre-application submission)

Details of the pre-application advice received:

Telephone call to planning authority in order to discuss application, but was advised that planning authority do not deal with telephone calls

#### 6. Pedestrian and Vehicle Access, Roads and Rights of Way

Is a new or altered vehicle access proposed to or from the public highway?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Is a new or altered pedestrian access proposed to or from the public highway?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Are there any new public roads to be provided within the site?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Are there any new public rights of way to be provided within or adjacent to the site?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Do the proposals require any diversions/extinguishments and/or creation of rights of way?

☐ Yes ☒ No

#### 7. Waste Storage and Collection

Do the plans incorporate areas to store and aid the collection of waste?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Have arrangements been made for the separate storage and collection of recyclable waste?

☐ Yes ☒ No

#### 8. Authority Employee/Member

With respect to the Authority, I am:

- (a) a member of staff
- (b) an elected member
- (c) related to a member of staff
- (d) related to an elected member

Do any of these statements apply to you?

☐ Yes ☒ No

#### 9 Materials

Please state what materials (including type colour and name) are to be used externally (if applicable):

Walls- description:

Description of existing materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of proposed materials and finishes:

N/a

**9. (Materials continued)****Roof - description:**Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

Fibre cement sheets

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

Glass solar photovoltaic panels to be installed to south eastern elevation

**Windows - description:**Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

N/a

**Doors - description:**Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

N/a

**Boundary treatments - description:**Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

N/a

**Vehicle access and hard standing - description:**Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

N/a

**Lighting - add description**Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

N/a

**Others - description:**

Type of other material:

N/a

Description of *existing* materials and finishes:

N/a

Description of *proposed* materials and finishes:

N/a

Are you supplying additional information on submitted plan(s)/drawing(s)/design and access statement?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please state references for the plan(s)/drawing(s)/design and access statement:

Design and Access Statement; Roof plan; Location plan; Technical detail of proposed panels

**10. Vehicle Parking**

Please provide information on the existing and proposed number of on-site parking spaces:

| Type of vehicle                              | Existing number of spaces | Total proposed (including spaces retained) | Difference in spaces |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Cars                                         | 0                         | 0                                          | 0                    |
| Light goods vehicles/public carrier vehicles | 0                         | 0                                          | 0                    |
| Motorcycles                                  | 0                         | 0                                          | 0                    |
| Disability spaces                            | 0                         | 0                                          | 0                    |
| Cycle spaces                                 | 0                         | 0                                          | 0                    |
| Other (e.g. Bus)                             | 0                         | 0                                          | 0                    |
| Short description of Other                   |                           |                                            |                      |

### 11 Foul Sewage

Please state how foul sewage is to be disposed of:

Mains sewer ☐ Package treatment plant ☐ Unknown ☐  
Septic tank ☐ Cess pit ☐

Other

N/a

Are you proposing to connect to the existing drainage system? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Unknown

### 12. Assessment of Flood Risk

Is the site within an area at risk of flooding? (Refer to the Environment Agency's Flood Map showing flood zones 2 and 3 and consult Environment Agency standing advice and your local planning authority requirements for information as necessary) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, you will need to submit an appropriate flood risk assessment to consider the risk to the proposed site

Is your proposal within 20 metres of a watercourse (e.g. river, stream or beck)? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Will the proposal increase the flood risk elsewhere? ☐ Yes ☒ No

How will surface water be disposed of?

☐ Sustainable drainage system ☐ Main sewer ☐ Pond/lake  
☐ Soakaway ☒ Existing watercourse

### 13. Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

To assist in answering the following questions refer to the guidance notes for further information on when there is a reasonable likelihood that any important biodiversity or geological conservation features may be present or nearby and whether they are likely to be affected by your proposals

Having referred to the guidance notes, is there a reasonable likelihood of the following being affected adversely or conserved and enhanced within the application site, OR on land adjacent to or near the application site:

a) Protected and priority species

☐ Yes, on the development site ☐ Yes, on land adjacent to or near the proposed development ☒ No

b) Designated sites, important habitats or other biodiversity features

☐ Yes, on the development site ☐ Yes, on land adjacent to or near the proposed development ☒ No

c) Features of geological conservation importance

☐ Yes, on the development site ☐ Yes, on land adjacent to or near the proposed development ☒ No

### 14. Existing Use

Please describe the current use of the site:

Agriculture - working farm

Is the site currently vacant? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Does the proposal involve any of the following?

If yes, you will need to submit an appropriate contamination assessment with your application

Land which is known to be contaminated? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Land where contamination is suspected for all or part of the site? ☐ Yes ☒ No

A proposed use that would be particularly vulnerable to the presence of contamination? ☐ Yes ☒ No

### 15. Trees and Hedges

Are there trees or hedges on the proposed development site? ☐ Yes ☒ No

And/or: Are there trees or hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes to either or both of the above, you may need to provide a full Tree Survey, at the discretion of your local planning authority. If a Tree Survey is required, this and the accompanying plan should be submitted alongside your application. Your local planning authority should make clear on its website what the survey should contain, in accordance with the current 'BS5837: Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations'

### 16. Trade Effluent

Does the proposal involve the need to dispose of trade effluents or waste? ☐ Yes ☒ No

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**17. Residential Units**

Does your proposal include the gain or loss of residential units?

☐ Yes ☒ No**18. All Types of Development: Non-residential Floorspace**

Does your proposal involve the loss, gain or change of use of non-residential floorspace?

☐ Yes ☒ No**19. Employment**

If known, please complete the following information regarding employees:

|                    | Full-time | Part-time | Equivalent number of full-time |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Existing employees | 1         | 0         | 0                              |
| Proposed employees | 1         | 0         | 0                              |

**20. Hours of Opening**

If known, please state the hours of opening for each non-residential use proposed:

| Use | Monday to Friday |          | Saturday   |          | Sunday and Bank Holidays |          | Not Known |
|-----|------------------|----------|------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|-----------|
|     | Start Time       | End Time | Start Time | End Time | Start Time               | End Time |           |

**21. Site Area**

What is the site area?

130

sq.metres

**22. Industrial or Commercial Processes and Machinery**

Please describe the activities and processes which would be carried out on the site and the end products including plant, ventilation or air conditioning. Please include the type of machinery which may be installed on site:

N/a

Is the proposal for a waste management development?

☐ Yes ☒ No**23. Hazardous Substances**

Is any hazardous waste involved in the proposal?

☐ Yes ☒ No**24. Site Visit**

Can the site be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If the planning authority needs to make an appointment to carry out a site visit, whom should they contact? (Please select only one)

☐ The agent ☒ The applicant ☐ Other person**25. Certificates (Certificate A)****Certificate of Ownership - Certificate A****Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 Certificate under Article 12**

I certify/The applicant certifies that on the day 21 days before the date of this application nobody except myself/the applicant was the owner (owner is a person with a freehold interest or leasehold interest with at least 7 years left to run) of any part of the land or building to which the application relates

Title: Mr First name: Simon Surname: Oborn

Person role: Agent

Declaration date: 06/10/2011

☒ Declaration made**25. Certificates (Agricultural Land Declaration)****Agricultural Land Declaration****Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 Certificate under Article 12**

Agricultural Land Declaration - You Must Complete Either A or B

(A) None of the land to which the application relates is, or is part of an agricultural holding.

(B) I have/The applicant has given the requisite notice to every person other than myself/the applicant who, on the day 21 days before the date of this application was a tenant of an agricultural holding on all or part of the land to which this application relates, as listed below:

If any part of the land is an agricultural holding of which the applicant is the sole tenant, the applicant should complete part (B) of the form by writing 'sole tenant - not applicable' in the first column of the table below

**25. Certificates (Agricultural Land Declaration - continued)**

| Notice recipient                                       |                                    | Date notice served                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Name:                                                  | sole tenant - not applicable       | <div></div>                                          |
| Number:                                                | <div></div> Suffix: <div></div>    |                                                      |
| Street:                                                | <div></div>                        |                                                      |
| Locality:                                              | <div></div>                        |                                                      |
| Town:                                                  | <div></div>                        |                                                      |
| Postcode:                                              | <div></div>                        |                                                      |
| Title: Mr <div></div> First Name: Simon Surname: Oborn |                                    |                                                      |
| Person role:                                           | Agent Declaration date: 06/10/2011 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Declaration Made |

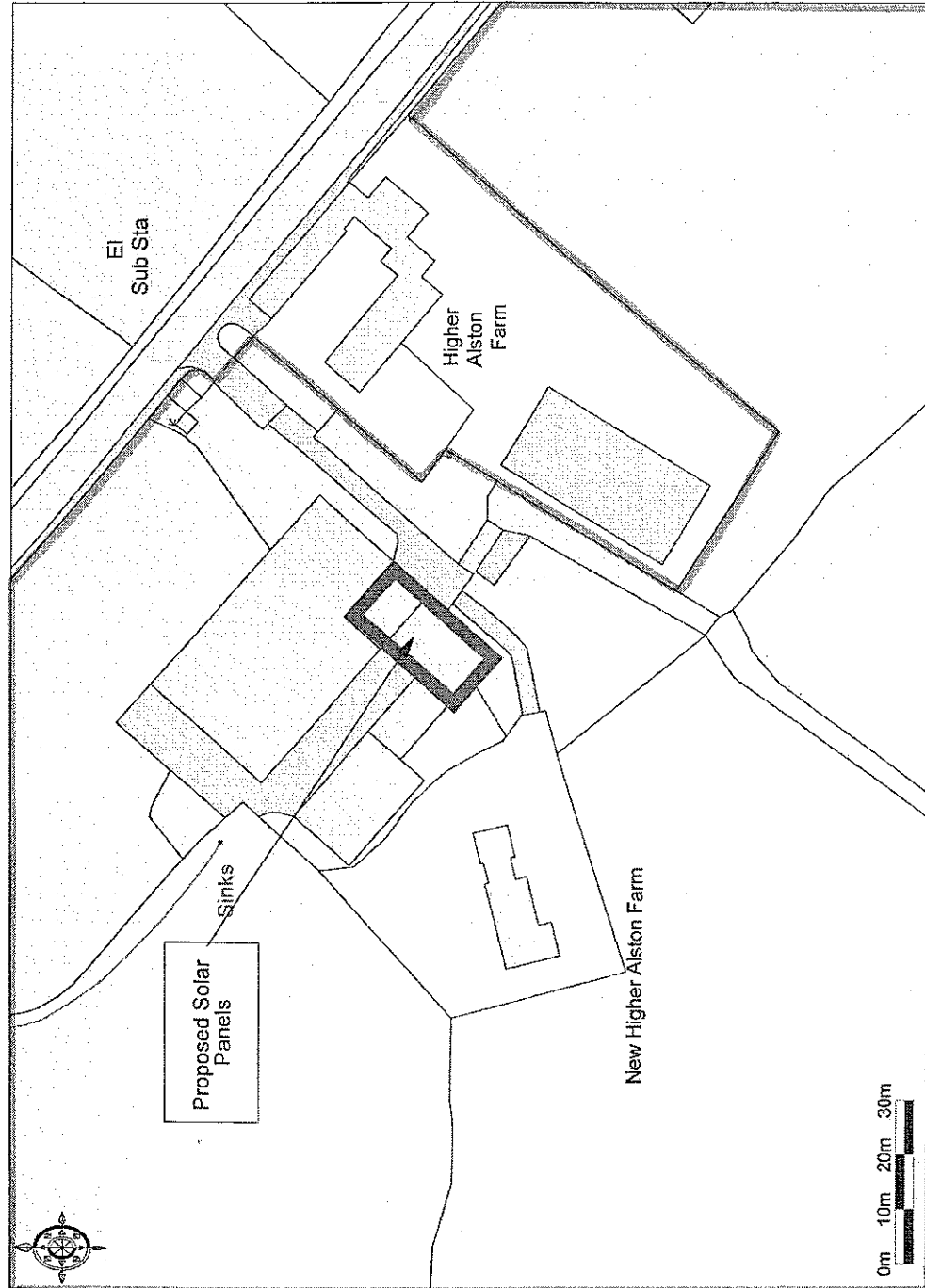
**26. Declaration**

I/we hereby apply for planning permission/consent as described in this form and the accompanying plans/drawings and additional information



Date 06/10/2011

# New Higher Alston Farm. Location Plan. Scale 1:1250



Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2011. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020149. Printed Scale = 1:1250

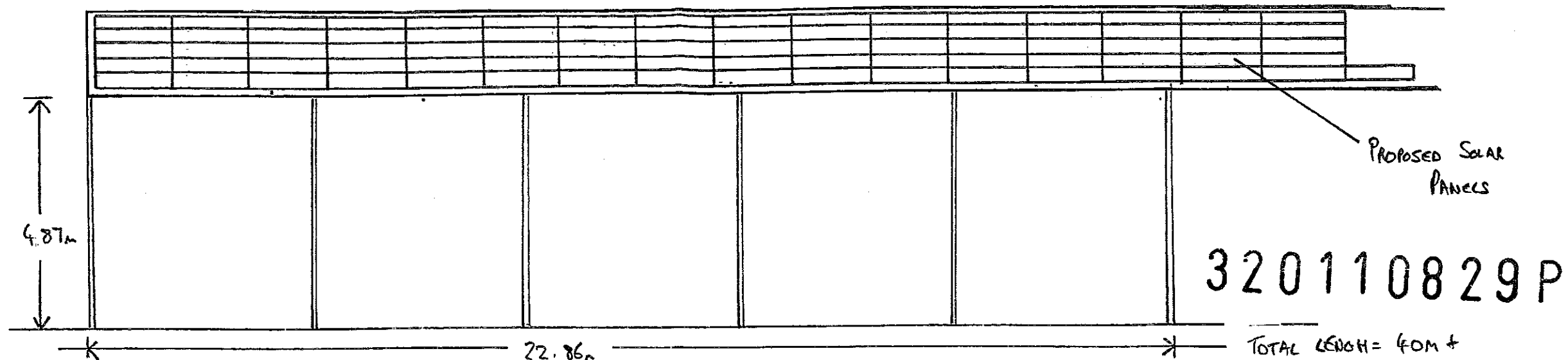


Bagshaws Uttoxeter Office. Tel.: 01889 562811

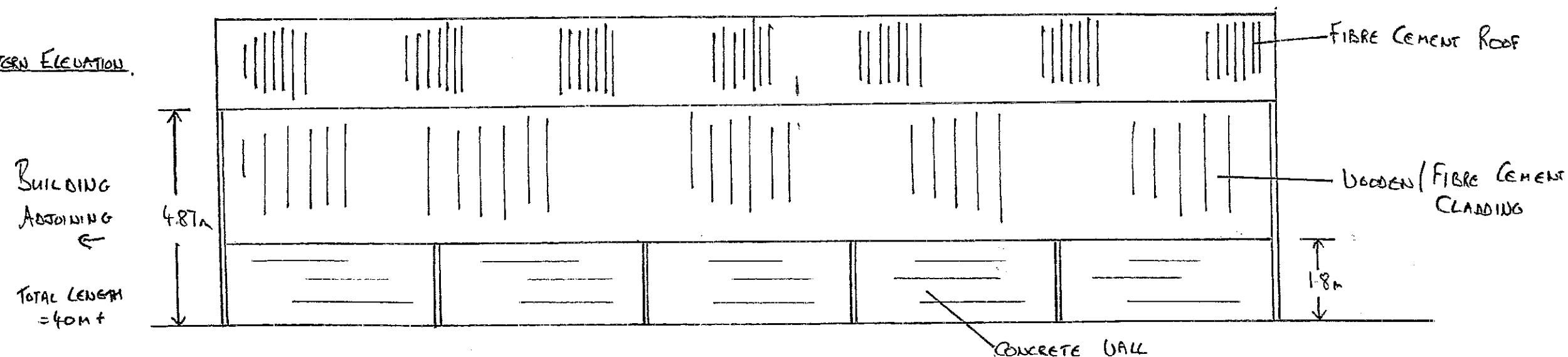


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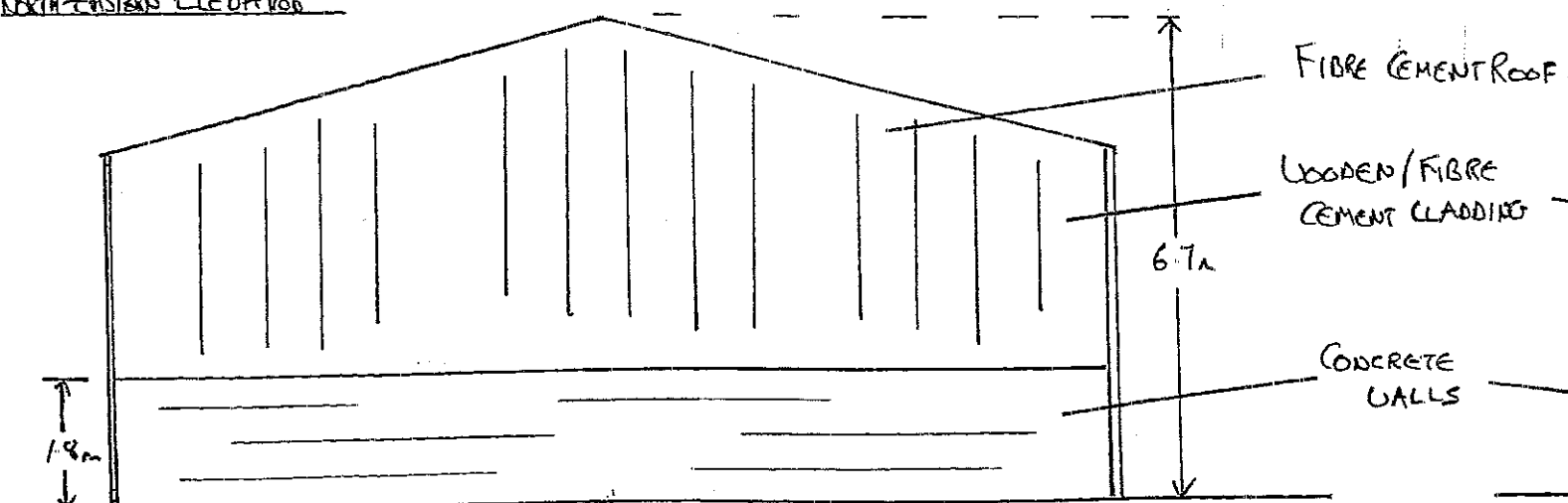
SOUTH-EASTERN ELEVATION



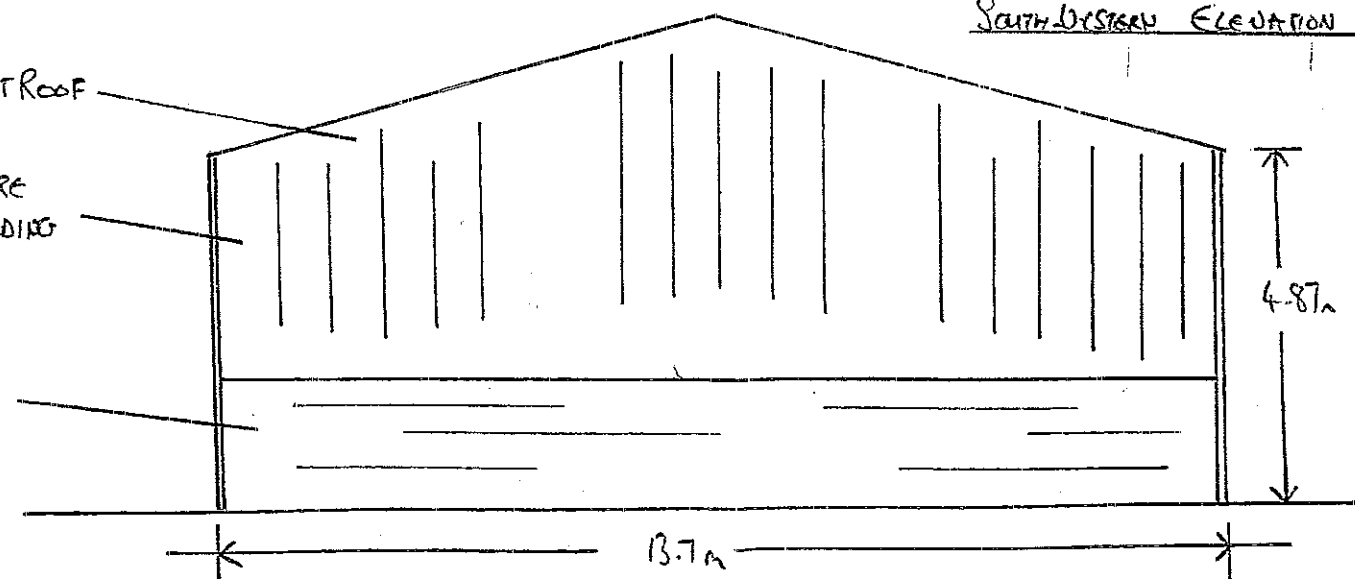
NORTH-WESTERN ELEVATION

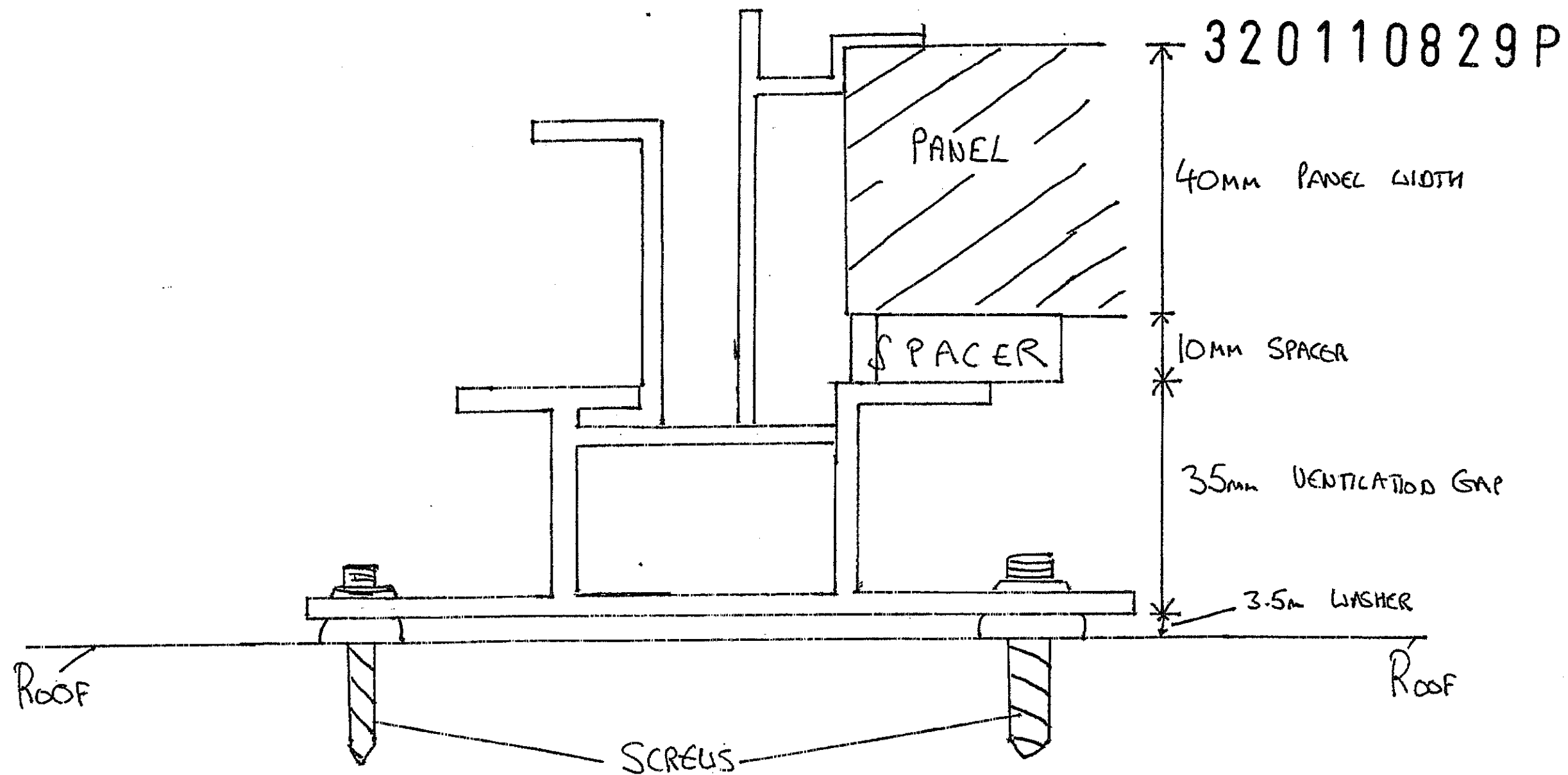


NORTH-EASTERN ELEVATION



SOUTH-WESTERN ELEVATION

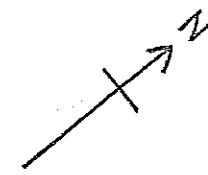




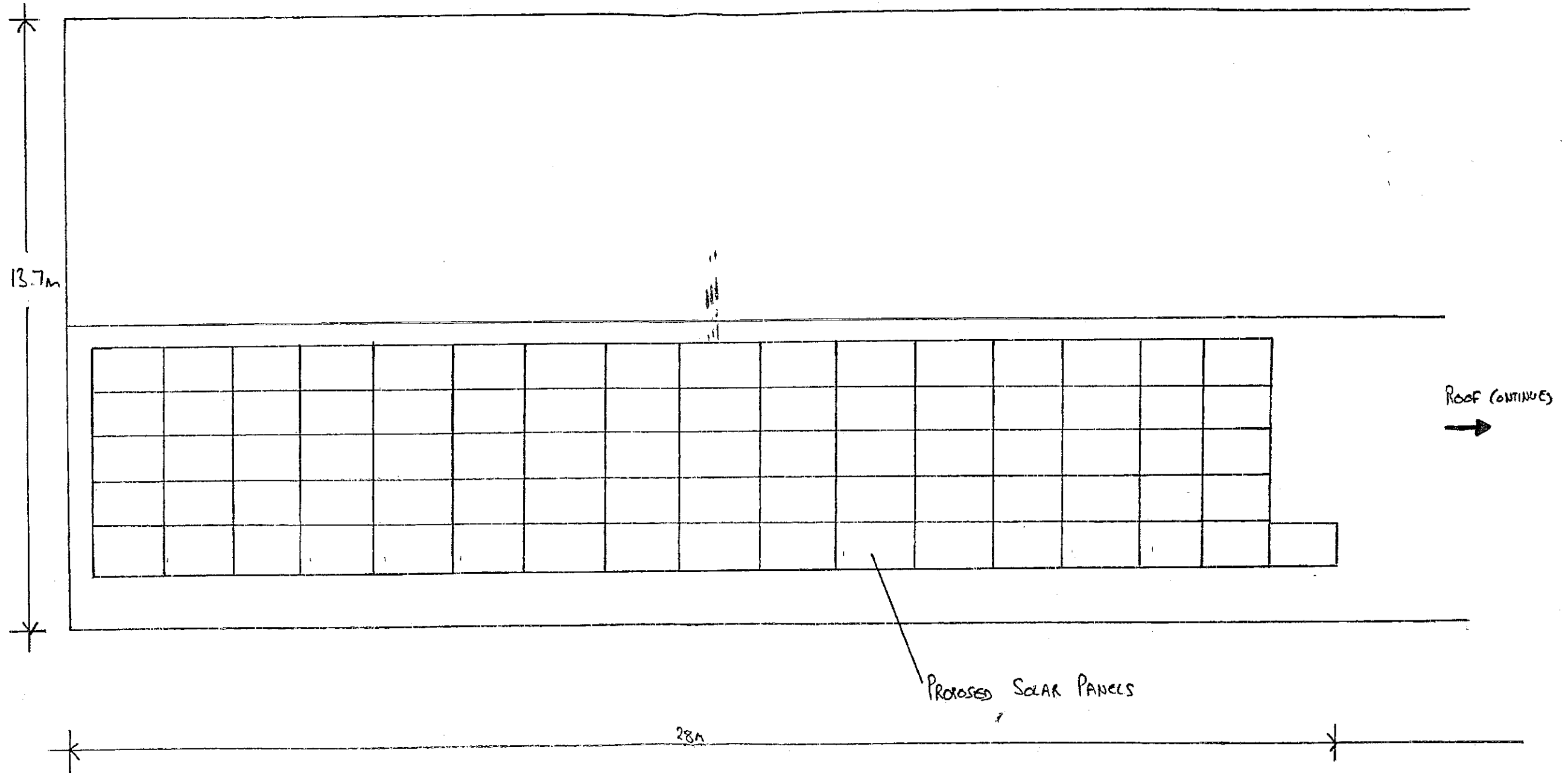
PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS

FIXING DRAWING

SCALE 1:1



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PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS AT HIGHER ALSTON FARM, RIBCHESTER

ROOF PLAN

SCALE 1:100

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**STP250S - 20/Wd**  
**STP245S - 20/Wd**

**SUNTECH**

Solar powering a green future™

## 250 Watt

### MONOCRYSTALLINE SOLAR MODULE

#### Features



**High module conversion efficiency**  
 (up to 15.2%), through superior cell technology and leading manufacturing capability



**Positive tolerance**  
 Guaranteed positive tolerance from 0~5% ensures power output reliability



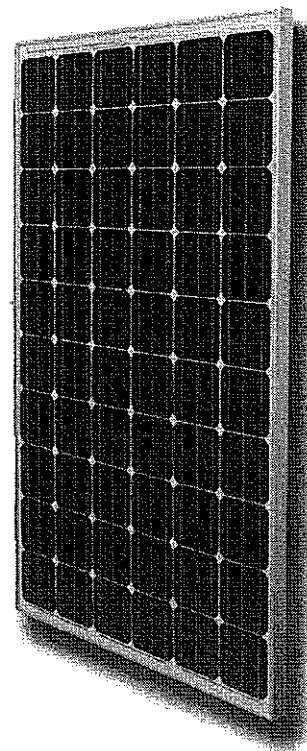
**Suntech's TruPower™**  
 Suntech's TruPower™ process neutralizes the initial LID effect



**Excellent weak light performance**  
 Excellent performance under low light environments (mornings, evenings, and cloudy days)



**Withstand high wind and snow loads**  
 Entire module certified to withstand high wind loads (2400 Pascal) and snow loads (5400 Pascal) \*



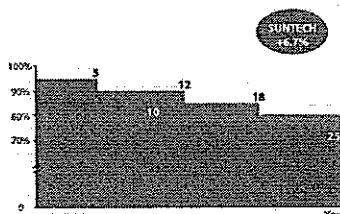
Certifications and standards:  
 IEC 61215, IEC 61730, conformity to CE



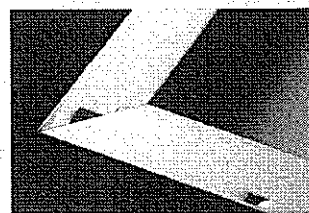
#### Trust Suntech to Deliver Reliable Performance Over Time

- World's No 1 manufacturer of crystalline silicon photovoltaic modules
- Unrivalled manufacturing capacity and world-class technology
- Rigorous quality control meeting the highest international standards: ISO 9001: 2008 and ISO 14001: 2004

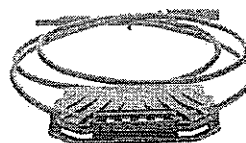
#### Industry-leading warranty



- Warrants 6.7% more power than the market standard over 25 years
- 25-year transferrable power output warranty: 5 years/95%, 12 years/90%, 18 years/85%, 25 years/80% \*\*
- Based on nominal power
- 5 years material and workmanship warranty



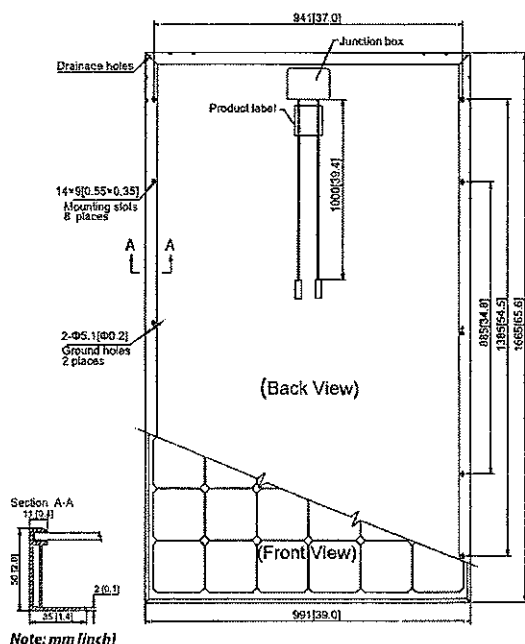
Specially designed drainage holes and rigid construction prevent frame from deforming or breaking due to freezing weather and other forces



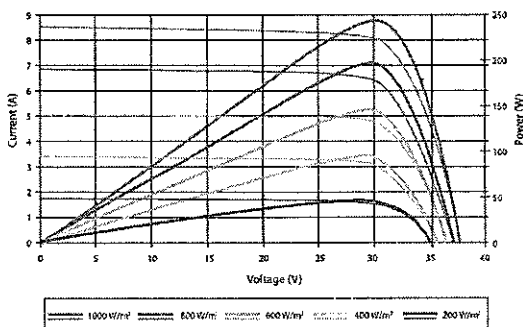
Latest IP67 rated junction box improves module performance stability. High performance connectors provide low resistance interconnection to ensure the full utilization of module power output

\* Please refer to Suntech Standard Module Installation Manual for details.  
 \*\* Please refer to Suntech Product Warranty for details.

STP250S-20/Wd  
STP245S-20/Wd



### Current-Voltage & Power-Voltage Curve (2455-20)



Excellent performance under weak light conditions: at an irradiation intensity of  $200 \text{ W/m}^2$  (AM 1.5,  $25^\circ\text{C}$ ), 95.5% or higher of the STC efficiency ( $1000 \text{ W/m}^2$ ) is achieved

### Temperature Characteristics

|                                           |            |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| Nominal Operating Cell Temperature (NOCT) | 45±2°C     |
| Temperature Coefficient of Pmax           | -0.45 %/°C |
| Temperature Coefficient of Voc            | -0.34 %/°C |
| Temperature Coefficient of Isc            | 0.050 %/°C |

### Dealer information

Specifications are subject to change without further notification

### Electrical Characteristics

| STC                             | STP250S-20/Wd                   | STP245S-20/Wd |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Optimum Operating Voltage (Vmp) | 30.7 V                          | 30.5 V        |
| Optimum Operating Current (Imp) | 8.15 A                          | 8.04 A        |
| Open - Circuit Voltage (Voc)    | 37.4 V                          | 37.3 V        |
| Short - Circuit Current (Isc)   | 8.63 A                          | 8.52 A        |
| Maximum Power at STC (Pmax)     | 250 W                           | 245 W         |
| Module Efficiency               | 15.2%                           | 14.8%         |
| Operating Module Temperature    | -40 °C to +85 °C                |               |
| Maximum System Voltage          | 1000 V DC (IEC) / 600 V DC (UL) |               |
| Maximum Series Fuse Rating      | 20 A                            |               |
| Power Tolerance                 | 0/+5%                           |               |

STC: Irradiance 1000 W/m<sup>2</sup>, module temperature 25 °C AM=1.5  
Power measurement tolerance: ± 3%

| NOCT                        | STP250S-20/Wd | STP245S-20/Wd |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Maximum Power (W)           | 183 W         | 180 W         |
| Maximum Power Voltage (V)   | 28.0 V        | 27.9 V        |
| Maximum Power Current (A)   | 6.52 A        | 6.45 A        |
| Open Circuit Voltage (Voc)  | 34.4 V        | 34.3 V        |
| Short Circuit Current (Isc) | 6.96 A        | 6.89 A        |

NOCT: irradiance 800 W/m<sup>2</sup>, ambient temperature 20 °C, wind speed 1 m/s  
Power measurement tolerance: ± 3%

## Mechanical Characteristics

|               |                                                                                                                               |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Solar Cell    | Monocrystalline 156 × 156 mm (6 inches)                                                                                       |
| No. of Cells  | 60 (6 × 10)                                                                                                                   |
| Dimensions    | 1665 × 991 × 50 mm (65.6 × 39.0 × 2.0 inches)                                                                                 |
| Weight        | 19.8 kgs (43.7 lbs.)                                                                                                          |
| Front Glass   | 3.2 mm (0.13 inches) tempered glass                                                                                           |
| Frame         | Anodized aluminium alloy                                                                                                      |
| Junction Box  | IP67 rated<br>TUV (ZPfG1169:2007), UL 4703, UL 44                                                                             |
| Output Cables | 4.0 mm <sup>2</sup> (0.006 inches <sup>2</sup> ), symmetrical lengths (-) 1000 mm (39.4 inches) and (+) 1000 mm (39.4 inches) |
| Connectors    | RADOX® SOLAR integrated twist locking connectors                                                                              |

### Packing Configuration

| Container             | 20' GP | 40' HC |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| Pieces per pallet     | 21     | 21     |
| Pallets per container | 6      | 28     |
| Pieces per container  | 126    | 588    |



320110829P

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**IN RESPECT OF**

**THE INSTALLATION OF**

**81 SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) PANELS**

**TO THE ROOF OF AN EXISTING BUILDING**

**AT**

**NEW HIGHER ALSTON FARM**

**PRESTON ROAD**

**RIBCHESTER**

**LANCASHIRE**

**PR3 3XL**

**ON BEHALF OF**

**MR. M. NOBLET**

**Report produced by:-**

**Simon Oborn  
Bagshaws LLP  
69 Derby Road  
Uttoxeter  
Staffordshire  
ST14 8EB**

**Tel: 01889 562811**

**Email: [simon.oborn@bagshaws.com](mailto:simon.oborn@bagshaws.com)**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

320110829P

This document provides information that both explains and supports the proposed installation of 81 solar PV panels to the roof of an existing agricultural building at New Higher Alston Farm. These panels will be used to generate electricity that will be largely used by the applicant.

The proposed scheme will help support and sustain the existing farming business with the key benefits summarised as follows:-

- The proposed scheme complies with both national and local planning policy
- National and Local Government supports the production of renewable energy via schemes such as this
- The structure of the building will not be altered
- There will be no impact on any residential properties or any loss of visual amenity
- The building is a large agricultural building and is of appropriate design and the positioning of the panels will ensure that it continues to blend in well with the landscape
- The proposal will ensure that the panels are well-screened. There will be no visual impact on the surrounding area and the existing nature of the site will remain unchanged
- This is an existing farming business and therefore development to sustain an existing unit should be supported
- Landscaping features around the site have been reviewed and no additional tree planting or other screening is considered necessary

As a result of these factors, it is considered that the proposal will complement the existing site and it should therefore be viewed favourably by the Local Planning Authority.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Sustainable Agriculture**

- The farm comprises approximately 190 acres of land which is owned and utilised as a livestock farm, with beef and sheep being the primary enterprises. In the current agricultural climate, any investment and opportunity is considered especially vital to ensure a sustainable rural economy. Following the changes in legislation that are effectively de-coupling subsidies from production through the implementation of the single-farm payment scheme, it is imperative that in order to survive, Farmer's look at profitable ways in which they can continue to maintain and grow their business. Indeed, many Farmer's are likely to find it difficult to find sustainable opportunities and will be forced out of business.
- It is considered vital that in order to not only maintain but also support and enhance a sustainable rural farming community, that proposals like this are viewed favourably by the Local Planning Authority. This proposed development will help to support the ongoing viability of the existing farming enterprise; will comply with the relevant guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7); and also the guidance contained within PPS22 - Renewable Energy.

### **1.2 Compliance with Planning Guidelines**

- As briefly mentioned above, the scheme that is proposed has been designed in accordance with relevant planning guidelines, and in particular PPS7. The panels will be fixed to the southern aspect of the roof of a substantial agricultural building which sits at the south-eastern side of the main concentration of buildings at the farmstead. The building is of suitable size and construction, and is positioned such that the existing fabric and visual amenity of the surrounding area will not be impacted. There is no negative environmental impact whatsoever with this proposal.
- Under Section 30 of PPS7, Local Planning Authorities should be supportive of schemes such as this that contribute to sustainable development objectives and help to sustain the agricultural enterprise, and are consistent in scale with their rural location.

## 2.0 COMPLIANCE WITH PLANNING POLICY

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### 2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY - PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 7 (PPS7)

The Government's objectives for rural areas are stated within PPS7. Within PPS7, the policy items that are most relevant to this application are as follows:-

#### 2.1.1 Government Objectives for Rural Areas

The Governments primary objectives for rural areas are:-

*(i) "To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of:*

- *sustainable economic growth and diversification;*
- *good quality, sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside; and*
- *continued protection of the open countryside for the benefit of all...*

*(ii) To promote more sustainable patterns of development:*

- *focusing most development in, or next to, existing towns and villages;*

*(iii) Promoting the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that all are able to reach their full potential*

- *by developing competitive, diverse and thriving rural enterprise that provides a range of jobs and underpins strong economies.*

*(iv) To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture sectors where farming achieves high environmental standards, minimising impact on natural resources, and manages valued landscapes and biodiversity; contributes both directly and indirectly to rural economic diversity; is itself competitive and profitable; and provides high quality products that the public want's"*

#### 2.1.2 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning land use planning. The following key principles are those most relevant to this proposal:-

*(i) "Decisions on development proposals should be based on sustainable development principles, ensuring an integrated approach to the consideration of:*

- *social inclusion, recognising the needs of everyone;*
- *effective protection and enhancement of the environment;*
- *maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.*

*(ii) Good quality, carefully-sited accessible development within existing towns and villages should be allowed where it benefits the local economy and/or community...*

*(iv) New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all.*

*(v) Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed ('brownfield') sites in preference to the development of greenfield sites, except in cases where there are no brownfield sites available...*

*(vi) All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness"*

### 2.1.3 Relevant Policy Items

Additional planning policies contained within PPS7 and which are considered relevant to this proposal are detailed below:-

- Paragraph 14 is entitled 'The Countryside' and states:-

*"The policies in this section apply to the largely undeveloped countryside that separate cities, towns and villages. Whilst much of the land use activity in the countryside is outside the scope of the planning system, planning has an important role in supporting and facilitating development and land uses which enable those who earn a living from the, and help to manage the countryside, and continue to do so..."*

- Paragraph 15, entitled 'Countryside protection and development in the Countryside' states:-

*"Planning policies should provide a framework for facilitating sustainable development that supports traditional land based activities..."*

- Paragraph 16 states:-

*"When preparing planning policies for LDD's and determining planning applications for development in the countryside, local planning authorities should:-*

- Support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises"*

- Furthermore, PPS7 contains specific policies for agricultural development in paragraph 27:-

*"The Government recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including the maintenance and management of the countryside and our most valued landscapes. Planning policies in RSS and LDDs should recognise these roles and support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to:-*

- become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly;*
- adapt to new and changing markets*
- comply with changing legislation and associated guidance,*
- diversify into new agricultural opportunities*
- broaden their operations to 'add value' in their primary produce"*

This final paragraph is especially pertinent to this proposal. The proposed solar PV panels will enable the applicant to produce cheaper electricity at a time when the costs are rising year on year. Electricity is a key cost and it is imperative that the applicant can minimise costs wherever possible. The PV panels will operate extremely efficiently and will consequently provide the applicant with the significant economic benefits over the period in which they will be in operation

## 2.2 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 22 (PPS22): RENEWABLE ENERGY

The key principles of PPS22 which are relevant to this proposal are as follows:-

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*"1. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should adhere to the following key principles in their approach to planning for renewable energy."*

- i) *Renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic, and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.*
- ii) *Regional spatial strategies and local development documents should contain policies designed to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the development of renewable energy resources. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should recognise the full range of renewable energy sources, their differing characteristics, locational requirements and the potential for exploiting them subject to appropriate environmental safeguards.*
- iii) *At the local level, planning authorities should set out the criteria that will be applied in assessing applications for planning permission for renewable energy projects. Planning policies that rule out or place constraints on the development of all, or specific types of, renewable energy technologies should not be included in regional spatial strategies or local development documents without sufficient reasoned justification....*
- iv) *The wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission.*
- v) *Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should not make assumptions about the technical and commercial feasibility of renewable energy ....*
- vi) *Small-scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting energy needs both locally and nationally. Planning authorities should not therefore reject planning applications simply because the level of output is small".*

In addition to the key principles, **Paragraph 19** of PPS22 deals with the Landscape and Visual Effects of Renewable Energy Developments and it states that *"The landscape and visual effects of particular renewable energy developments will vary on a case by case basis according to the type of development, its location and the landscape setting of the proposed development. Some of these effects may be minimised through appropriate siting, design and landscaping schemes, depending on the size and type of development proposed."* This proposal is considered to comply with these guidelines, as the proposal is small in scale and has been designed to ensure that it will have not detrimental visual or other impact.

## 2.3 DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. PLANNING AND CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPLEMENT TO PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 1

In addition to the relevant provisions of PPS7 and PPS22 it should be further noted that this supplementary document sets out how planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change. Tackling climate change is acknowledged as a Government priority for the planning system. In developing their core strategy, planning authorities are advised to provide a framework that promotes and encourages renewable and low carbon energy generation. It goes on to clarify that planning policy should be designed to promote and not restrict renewable and low carbon energy and supporting infrastructure.

Finally, this document confirms that planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate either the overall need for renewable energy, nor question the justification for why such a development must be sited in a particular location.

## 2.4 COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

In addition to compliance with relevant national planning policy, this proposal also complies with the relevant saved policies from the Ribble Valley Local Plan.

The key policy which is relevant to this application and with which it complies is as follows:-

### 2.4.1 Policy ENV24 – Renewable Energy

This policy states that:-

*“In view of the general environmental benefits associated with harnessing renewable energy schemes, the Borough Council will support the development of renewable energy schemes provided it can be shown that such developments would not cause unacceptable harm to interests of acknowledged importance in the local environment”.*

This proposal complies with this policy as there will be no impact on the character of the landscape and furthermore, there will be no unacceptable harm caused to the interests of any interests of acknowledged importance in the local environment. The provision of a small scale solar installation on the roof of an existing building will have no detrimental impact on the landscape character of the area and it is proposals of this type that local planning Authorities should be supportive.

In addition to the above, it was also noted that this proposal complies with the provisions of policies relating to the Green Belt, Open Land and Agricultural Land amongst others.

The proposal itself is for the installation of 81 solar PV panels to the roof of an agricultural building at this farm. The panels will be located on the south-eastern aspect of the roof, and this will maximise the potential to harness the sunlight in order to produce renewable electricity. The proposal will have the capacity to produce a maximum of 20kW of electricity. In addition to the above, and for the reasons listed below, the proposed solar installation is considered to have no visual or other negative impact on either the environment or local residents.

### 3.1 Existing Agricultural use

- The agricultural building will continue to be used for the housing of livestock and hence its predominant use will not change in any way.
- Due to pressure on prices and increased competition it is vital that the farming business can benefit from economies of trade wherever possible. As the farm will be able to produce electricity significantly more cheaply than the current cost of procurement then the running costs of the farming business will be reduced. This will not only have financial benefits, but will also improve the environment with reduced reliance on fossil fuel produced power.

### 3.2 Financial / Legislation

- The proposed scheme will help generate significant savings in electricity costs and this will help to support and sustain the existing farming enterprise. The electricity that will be produced will qualify for the Feed in Tariff payment (FiT), with the generation tariff (32.9p kwh) being sufficiently high so as to merit the significant investment that this proposal will require. Based on the predicted income from the FiT over the next 25 years, this will ensure that the development will payback in a number of years and then derive considerable financial benefit.
- Farming in general is faced with high production costs, particularly in comparison with European and other competitors. Through installing the proposed number of PV panels it should enable sufficient electricity to be produced which will significantly reduce current costs. This will assist in prolonging the longevity of the enterprise, particularly in the current climate in which many farmers are being forced out of business. Over the coming years it is expected that there will be a significant increase in energy prices, and therefore by producing renewable energy on site it will enable considerable savings to be made.
- In addition to the above, the proposal will produce 'green' energy and this is something fully supported by Government. Renewable energy is key to the UK's low-carbon energy future and it needs to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as diversify energy sources to do so. The UK has signed up to the EU Renewable Energy Directive which includes a UK target of 15% of energy being produced from renewable sources by 2020. In order to achieve this, it is vital that proposals like this are supported.

### 3.3 Technical

- A full structural survey has been undertaken to ensure sufficient structural capacity and the building will be capable of supporting the proposed number and layout of solar panels. Mono-crystalline modules / panels will be utilised and these have a high level of efficiency and output. The panels have a 25 year warranty and are supplied by Suntech, who are an extremely reputable manufacturer.
- Based on the proposed 81 panels, it is envisaged that the development is sized at 20kWp and this will require a roof area of approximately 130 square metres.
- The panels will be fitted to the roof via rails which will be screwed in to the existing roof structure. As a consequence, the panels themselves will essentially fit on top of the existing roof cover. A key element of solar installations is that the area where the panels are to be located should not be shadowed in any way as this reduces operational performance. The size and location of this building means that it will not be shadowed.

## **4.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS**

### **4.1 Appraising the Context**

It is considered important that the context in which the proposed development sits is fully understood, and consequently in this case, this understanding has been used to prepare the application. This appraisal of context included the following process:-

#### **Assessment of the sites immediate and wider context:-**

- The existing site was reviewed, as was its location in relation to surrounding settlements, public areas, and residential properties.

#### **Involvement**

- Professional input has been provided by Hallmark Power which has considerable experience in installing solar PV panels to rural buildings such as this.
- In addition, Bagshaws, which has considerable experience in such renewable energy and rural planning applications, has ensured that valid planning considerations are clarified.

#### **Evaluation**

- Using the information that has been collected, the design has been formulated and access principles established.
- This design has taken into account the context of the existing site and its surroundings, and ensures that the site will maintain the same level of visual amenity.

#### **Design**

- Utilising the above three elements brought together, the design has been produced
- Through the overall development of understanding around the developments context, it has enabled a design to be produced which will blend in completely with the existing site.

In light of understanding the context of the site, this statement confirms the wider design aspects of the proposed development. Although this proposal will not have any impact on the surrounding area, this document confirms that all relevant factors have been given appropriate consideration. The context of the site has been considered in relation to its physical aspects, and these are discussed briefly below.

### **4.2 Design**

Following on from understanding the site context, the following principles and concepts have been applied to the design of this proposal to ensure it matches the existing site:-

### **4.3 Amount**

- The proposal is for a total of 81 solar PV panels to be installed to the south facing aspects of a substantial agricultural building at New Higher Alston Farm
- In total, the solar panels will cover an area of approximately 130 sqm of roofspace.

#### 4.4 Layout

- The building which is to be utilised is located at the south-eastern side of the main concentration of buildings at the farmstead, and the use of the roof of this building together with the existing features will effectively screen / shield the panels from view. The compact nature of the unit will be maintained.
- The building is of appropriate height and is significant scale in terms of overall floor area. The panels will cover the south-eastern aspect of the roof and will not create a visual intrusion when viewed from the surrounding landscape.
- The building will only have PV panels on the south-east facing aspect of its roof and this is so as to ensure that it captures the appropriate sunlight and thus generates electricity.

#### 4.5 Scale

- The building itself has the following dimensions:-
  - 6.7m high to the ridge (4.87m to eaves), 13.7m wide and approximately 45m long, although only part of this total length is to be utilised (at the southern end of the building).
- There will be no material change to the existing structure or shape of the building. The solar panels will be fixed to the roof of the building although there should be no discernible increase in height.
- The panels each have dimensions 1665mm (l) x 991mm (w) x 50mm (d), with 81 panels in total. The panels will be positioned in a landscape format over the southern aspect of the roof of the building.
- The building itself is of steel portal frame construction and is clad with concrete panels and timber boarding / fibre cement sheets. The roof is made of fibre cement sheets.

#### 4.6 Landscaping

- Due to the site being an existing farm and the building being screened by a mixture of natural features and distance from any properties then it is considered that no additional landscaping is required.
- Views from all directions are contained, with the farm being situated in an isolated position away from other properties.

#### 4.7 Appearance of the Development

- The appearance of the development once complete will be extremely minimal and will not vary greatly from that currently at the farm. Views in all directions will be fully contained. Although the roof of the south-east facing elevation of the building will have solar panels installed upon it, this should not impact on any views nor result in any material change in appearance.
- The panels themselves are of dark blue colour and are made of tempered white glass, EVA plastic and weather protection film. The panels have a silver anodised aluminium frame with drainage holes for long-term use.
- The panels will be positioned in landscape format along the south-eastern aspect of the roof.
- Due to the orientation of the building, the solar panels will not be visible at all to views from the north, south, or west due to the distance from surrounding properties, presence of existing buildings and other screening. Views to the north and west in particular will be protected by the other buildings themselves and the fact that the panels will be on the south-eastern elevation.
- Views to the east will be minimal, with the panels blending in with the fabric of the roof. As a consequence, the panels will therefore be largely invisible when viewed from any public vantage point.

#### 4.8 Access to the Development

- Access to this development is proposed on the same basis as that for the existing site. Consequently, there is considered little requirement to go into great detail. The proposed use of the site is the same as that existing, and vehicular access will not change.
- The site has an existing entrance into it / exit from it, and this ensures that all users have easy and convenient access. The access is suitable for the lorry's that would visit the site during the construction period.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

- Having reviewed all relevant factors, it is requested that this proposal be approved. The proposal is for the installation of solar PV panels to the roof area of an existing building at this farm site. As part of the design process the impact on the surrounding area has been fully factored in, and this has ensured that the proposal will positively enhance the site.
- This scheme will provide a positive benefit to the existing farming business whilst having no detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding area. The siting, size, scale and design of the solar panels will ensure that they are not visible from the surrounding area, and the site benefits from the significant natural screening already in existence.
- The panels themselves will generate electricity that will help to ensure the sustainability of this business. The applicant should be able to generate significant revenue and savings and this is a major benefit.
- The proposal is compliant with all relevant national and local planning policies. By utilising the existing features as much as possible it has ensured that a design has been produced that is not only sympathetic to the landscape, but which also provides the over-riding functionality that is required to ensure that the panels produce an appropriate amount of electricity to make them economically viable. As a consequence, this proposal should be positively supported.