Falcon House
3 King Street
Castle Hedingham,
Halstead, Essex
CO9 3ER, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1923 965511

London Borough of Hillingdon,
Resident Services,
3N Civic Centre,
High Street,
Uxbridge,
Middlesex,
UB8 1UW

Application for determination of permission to install solar panels at Yeading Infants and Nursery School

14 June 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Application for planning permission for the installation of Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the roofs of Yeading Infants and Nursery School, Carolyn Road, Hayes UB4 0NR.

We are aware that whilst the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 under Part 14 Class J allows for permitted development of solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 1 megawatt on the roofs of non-domestic buildings, there are a number of restrictions, limitations and conditions.

The criteria have been considered and whilst the proposed development of solar panels meets some of them it fails to meet one of these conditions, so we are seeking full planning consent for the installation.

Below we have addressed the following:

- *To show that the proposed installation does constitute permitted development in terms of much of its design.*
- *To highlight why planning permission is being sought and*
- *To illustrate how the proposed installation meets with the national policy to encourage decarbonisation but maintains the integrity of the area.*

To assist in the planning approval process, this application is also accompanied by supporting documents, including:

- 00 FP & LBC Application form
- 01 Design and Access Supporting Statements
- 01A Heritage Statement
- 02 Proposed design
- 03 Site &Building location plan
- 04 Scaled map
- 05 Supporting images

- 06 Roof Cross Section
- 07 Example of a standard panel data sheet
- 08 Arrangement of Panels

Permitted development assessment:

Given that the solar panels would be installed on the pitched roofs of the school buildings (see Proposed design 02), the proposed development can be considered under Part 14, Class J (c,) as *"the installation, alteration or replacement of other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building"*.

Site

Yeading Infants and Nursery School located in Hayes . can be accessed from Carolyn Road in the north. The Infants and nursery School site occupies an area of approximately 2.5 hectares of land beside Yeading Junior School campus. The roofs suitable for solar are the inner south and east facing roof slopes and will have anti-glare coated panels positioned according to the orientation of each roof. The possibility of the proposed installation being seen is very unlikely because there is a forest of trees blocking any and all visibility into the school campus. The proposed installation will be hidden in plain sight from all adjacent and neighboring land occupants and will only aid in the development of the school as a learning centre.

Neither the school building, nor its curtilage, are in a Conservation Area, National Park, AONB or a World Heritage site. One of the school buildings is locally listed but the proposed installation does not consider this building nor will be there be panels directly incident towards it. The proposed installation only considers the south and east facing sloped roofs.

Under most circumstances such an installation could be considered as Permitted Development or Prior Notice Application, but the proposed development does not meet the one-meter margin rule for permitted development on a non-residential building and has a locally listed building on site, so for this reason planning approval is being sought.

National policy for decarbonisation

The proposed installation is in keeping with the school's ambition to install solar panels which will deliver zero-carbon electricity and an energy literacy educational programme. This is in line with the government's drive to encourage public sector decarbonisation and the installation of solar panels on publicly owned buildings.

Description of the proposed development

The proposed development is for around 344 panels on the pitched roofs with a total install capacity of around 155kWp.

To meet the school's ambitions to maximise the opportunity to generate as much zero-carbon on-site electricity as possible on its roofs and the government targets for decarbonisation: the panels on the buildings considered for installation are as close to the edges as possible.

Design of the proposed development

The layout of the panels of the proposed installation are spatially arranged in such a way that the appearance will adhere to most permitted development and prior notice requirements and where not, as detailed below:

A. One metre margin
B. How the development would fit with Permitted Development
C. Why Planning permission is required

(A) One metre roof margin:

Under permitted development criteria on a non-residential building there is a requirement for a 1 metre margin. This requirement does not exist for residential properties with similar pitched roofs as the school. The proposed development on the school building follows permitted development criteria for residential properties with panels that go less than one meter to the edges of the pitched roof plane, a system that maximises the opportunity for the school on their pitched roofs. (04, 05,06 & 08).

(B) How the development would fit with Permitted Development:

The solar panels which will be installed on the school's pitched roofs (Roof Cross section 06), can be considered under Part 14, Class J (c,) as "the installation, alteration or replacement of other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building".

In terms of design, the arrangement of the panels meets with most of the criteria for permitted development.

The panels will be mounted on roof hooks to fasten a series of rails to the roof, with panels then being mounted on to these rails. As shown on the Roof Cross Section Drawing (06), the panels of the proposed installation will not protrude more than 0.2 meters beyond the plane of the existing pitched roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof, so Part 14 (J.1.) (A): "the panels of the proposed installation will not protrude more than 0.2 meters beyond the plane of the existing pitched roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof" will be complied with.

(C) Why Planning Permission is required:

To comply with permitted development the layout of the panels on the pitched areas would need to be spatially arranged in such a way that the solar panels would be set back by at least 1 metre from the external edge of the roofs (04 Scaled map) to comply with J1.

Part (C): “the solar panels would need to be off-set by at least 1 metre from the external edges of the roof” and with no equipment within 1 metre of a roof junction for Part 14 (J.1.) (C) to be complied with, this is where the design fails to meet the criteria for permitted development on a non-domestic building.

The proposed panels on Yeading Infants and Nursery School will not have the 1 metre margin to a roof junction or edge (08). The roofs of the school are being treated like a residential property solar installation under permitted development where there is no 1 metre-margin rule. So, like a residential property, the maximum roof area possible can be used for the benefit of the residents of the building, in this case the school. But given that this is a non-domestic property, we are seeking planning approval for the installation.

The exact brand of the panels, number of panels, and total capacity will depend on the panels and their wattage at the time of installation, but the project will involve the roof areas indicated in the Proposed design (02). Any changes from this proposal will be ‘de minimus’ i.e., of a such a small scale to not be materially different to this planning application and the example panel data sheet provided.

The solar panels are of standard design and appearance (07 Example standard panel data sheet) and are proposed to run in rows, positioned on the roof, the panels will be mounted on roof hooks to fasten a series of rails to the roof, with panels then being mounted on to these rails. As shown on the Roof Cross Section Drawing (06), the panels of the proposed installation will not protrude more than 0.2 meters beyond the plane of the existing pitched roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof so J.1 Part (A) will be complied with.

Listed plan of School site

The school site consists of one Locally Listed building. Although it is not as significant as a Heritage Listed building it is still of considerable importance to the Hillingdon Council, residing land occupants and the school so for this reason full planning permission is being sought for the proposed installation of panels on the school roofs.

The listed building of the school is not considered for installation only the roof slopes other than this have been considered. The proposed panels on the roof slopes will not be incident towards the listed building so under no circumstances will be detrimental towards it and since the presence of the panels will be barely known of the existing architectural setting created by listed building will not change. The proposed installation will quietly improve the school as a modern learning centre looking towards the future and inspiring its students to do the same with the sustainability and decarbonisation education programmer which is part of the installation.

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Adding positively to the school's image

It is considered that the proposed solar panels would be complementary to the character of the school, depicting a "sustainable and green future" that the school wants to adopt. The visual appearance of the solar panels is considered appropriate for the school building enhancing the visionary appearance of the site as a modern learning centre, creating responsible citizens for tomorrow's world with an appreciation towards their surroundings and a duty of care for the environment. The panels enable the school to further improve its decarbonisation journey, teaching and learning how to live more sustainably. It is considered that the panels would have a positive impact on the character of the building and no overall detrimental impact on the surrounding area.

Impact on Neighbouring Land uses

Considering the positioning of the school amongst its surroundings the proposed install has no possibility of being seen and affecting the amenity of the area, there will be no impact towards the neighbouring and adjacent land occupiers.

Summary

Although the proposed scheme to install 344 solar panels on the roofs of Yeading Infants and Nursery School meets most of the criteria for permitted development under Part 14 Class J (c) of the Town and County (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, there is no 1 metre margin on the school roofs (just like residential solar power permitted development) to maximise the opportunity to generate solar electricity. So given the design of the panels on the school roofs and the presence of a Locally Listed School building, planning permission for the installation is being sought.

In terms of the design and appearance of the solar panels to be installed on the roof areas indicated, they are of standard design; they will have no adverse impact on either the character of the surrounding area or residents; nor on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent properties to the site (neighbouring land uses).

In addition, the installation would be in keeping with the character and goals of the school, helping it builds its ambitions to use its buildings and land, as a centre of learning and beacon of sustainability and student wellbeing helping decarbonise its activities and reduce its impact on the local environment.

We would be grateful for your written confirmation that the proposed installation could be granted planning permission so the panels can start to generate low-carbon electricity for the school, which in addition to cutting carbon, is supported by an energy literacy programme for students.

Yours faithfully,

Ardesh Sarangam
Planning Project Manager
Solar Options for Schools Limited