

Planning Statement

Riverside Hotel, Trout Road, Yiewsley, UB7 7RT

Proposal: Installation of Photo-Voltaic Panels (48.96 kWp system, made up of 144 x 340W panels)

April 2021

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Harefield Oil Terminal
Harvil Road
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Introduction:

The applicant (Registered Charity – Trinity) has applied for Installation of Photo-Voltaic Panels (48.96 kWp system, made up of 144 x 340W panels) to serve the temporary homeless accommodation which has received recent planning approval (75945/APP/2020/3314).

The proposed panels will harvest solar energy which will be sent to the main distribution board to the site and distributed between the buildings inhabited by Trinity's clients to reduce their energy bills of which they are responsible paying as part of their journey into permanent accommodation. Any excess generated energy will be sent to an outgoing distribution board and sent back to the Grid for usage as part of the 'Feed-Back Tariff'.

Site and Surroundings:

The site is an existing brown-field site located within Greenbelt land with an established use.

The proposed panels will be placed within the enclosed site which is surrounded by hedging and greenery and thus will not negatively affect the sites of the greenery.

There has recently been a change of use application on the site from Hotel to Temporary Supported Accommodation for the Homeless approved under reference 75945/APP/2020/3314.

Due to the close proximity to the River Frays there is an element of Flood Risk at the site, however there is a raised kerb flood defence around the site and as can be seen in Hydro-Logic's flood report there are further suggestions to mitigate flood risk.

The electronics on the panels will be at high level to ensure safety in the case of flooding.

We further propose to submit a further application for a footbridge to site for use of the residents and emergency personal to further prepare for the event of a flood.

The site is situated on Trout Road; the sites along this road have mixed uses, such as Lizard's Fishing Pond and a Waste Transfer Centre.

The Design Component:

In this proposal, we aim to create to get permission to install the panels to provide energy saving measures and make the development greener overall.

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We propose chain link fencing 2m around the solar panels.

This chain link fencing will help us maintain openness while protecting site users. We proposed to use native plants to screen the panels from the view of those around the site.

We feel this area is optimal for the use of the panels due to the positive benefits to the users of the site and also as this is brownfield site is not accessible to the general public does not affect the general outlook of the greenbelt. With this in mind and appropriate thought to planning policy we feel like the scheme is one that will positively benefit the site and both the residents of the site and borough.

Environmental and Economical Impacts:

The solar panel scheme should ensure energy usage improves; the suppliers anticipate panels will generate approximately 46,500kWh per annum.

Below are some approximate rough estimations and should only be taken as a small indication of the possible benefits of the project.

If we take the electricity consumption from the property's previous use as a hotel (116,517 kWh/annum) and allow an additional 1,000 kWh/year per apartment on a dual electricity and gas supply this would give an expected electricity consumption of 147,517 kWh/annum.

The proposed PV system is expected to generate 46,500 kWh/year and based on the assumed electricity consumption, approximately 80% of the generation is estimated to be used on site. The remaining 20% would be exported to the grid at a rate of ~5.5p/kWh. 80% on site usage of solar generation equates to roughly a quarter of the electricity bill being covered by the solar PV.

A summary of the estimated benefits are as follows:

- Carbon reduction 11,518 kg/year
- PV generation used on site ~80% or 37,200 kWh/year
- Expected first year energy savings ~ £5,580
- Expected first year export payment ~ £500

It is worth noting that annual savings will increase as electricity prices increase with inflation.

Planning Considerations:

Although we acknowledge that paragraph 91 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states: “When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. **Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with an increased production of energy from renewable sources**”, we believe this application and site fall into special circumstances and thus should be approved.

The NPPF also states that the planning system should support a low carbon future such as schemes that reduce carbon emissions and include renewable energy.

We believe that any potential harm to the Green Belt posed is clearly outweighed by the environmental renewable energy sources provide and the substantial reduction in greenhouse gases produced. Due to the location within the site of Riverside Hotel which is enclosed and only accessible by its residents (and is partially located on what could be described as wasteland), the openness and character of the Greenbelt are upheld and thus this application meets the ‘special circumstances’ required to justify the proposal and therefore the scheme does not conflict with Policy GBSP1 of the WHSP or the Framework .

Hillingdon's Local Plan Part 1 makes reference to the NPPF and states 'Any proposals for development in Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will be assessed against national and London Plan policies, including the very special circumstances test.'

Hillingdon's Local Plan Part 2 reiterates this point and in paragraph 6.18 states the NPPF provides guidance on what is acceptable or not in the green belt. Development on Green belt land is inappropriate unless it meets one of the points listed. One of these points is that 'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.' is acceptable. The Riverside Hotel Site has obviously been developed previously and thus meets this criteria.

Local Plan Part 2 Paragraph 6.3 states that there is 'an expectation that on-site renewable energy generation should be used where feasible' and we believe this is such a location.

The Policy DMEI 2: Reducing Carbon Emissions also states that:

- A) 'All developments are required to make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emissions in accordance with London Plan targets.' The move-on living accommodation being provided by the Charity is committed to reducing their carbon footprint as much as possible and has therefore pursued this scheme to benefit both the local and national community by utilising renewable energy sources to assist the running of their unit.

Paragraph A1.29 of the local plan also states 'Planning permission may be required for the installation of solar panels. While the Council acknowledges the environmental benefits of solar panels, their size and placement should be carefully located to ensure there is no adverse visual impact on the building or surrounding area. Solar panels should not be placed in a position where they can be seen over a great distance or from a public place.'

We believe that the solar panels will not cause an adverse impact to the visual amenity of the green belt as it is in an area located in an enclosed space not utilised by the general public and is shielded from view by greenery to the rear and buildings both sides of the array. Located on the same stretch of road just a 3-minute walk from site is Quick Skip Hire Yard, which is arguably a significantly more of a detriment to the green belt's visual amenity than the proposed solar panel array.

National Planning Policy also puts a large emphasis on the 'transition to a low-carbon economy' the policy acknowledges that to allow the development of infrastructure to contribute to this change there are likely to be some effect on biodiversity and amenity. It also states that 'The UK must reduce over time its dependence on fossil fuels' and that 'an increase in renewable energy is essential for the UK'

Although our development is only a small-scale contribution to this objective, it is making a contribution none-the-less. As noted above, this scheme's effect on such factors are likely to be minimal.

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Conclusion:

We believe that our proposal is appropriate for the site and will ensure the site will be sustainable. We trust this is acceptable but at any point of the application there are any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Points of Contact:

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