

**Council Name: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**Planning Development Services,  
Municipal Buildings,  
Church Road,  
TS18 1LD**Application for determination of prior approval****06 March 2024**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Notification of prior approval for the installation of Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the roofs of Northfield School & Sports College, Thames Rd, Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5EG.**

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 several restrictions, limitations and conditions.

These have been considered and are addressed below:

- To show that the proposed installation does constitute permitted development and
- To assist in the prior approval process.

This notification is therefore accompanied by:

- 00 Prior Notification Approval
- 01 Design and Access Supporting Statements
- 02 Proposed design
- 03A Site & Building location plan
- 04 Scaled Map
- 05 Supporting images
- 06 Roof Cross Section
- 07 Example of a standard panel data sheet

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### **Permitted development assessment:**

Given that the solar panels would be installed on the flat and 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**

The Northfield School and Sports College established in 1972 is located in the town of Billingham. It occupies an area of approximately 11 hectares of land most of which is occupied by its playing fields. The school buildings are almost to the centre of the school site, settled farther away from the residential dwellings and can only be accessed from Thames Road in the south. The school site includes a multitude of roofs: one, two and three storeys tall, nearly all of which are considered for installation using an east-west system on the flat roofs because the school buildings are perfectly oriented towards the south and depending on the orientation of the pitched roofs face south and west. Since most of the neighbouring and residential properties are along Thames Road in the south their visibility towards the school roofs and the proposed installation is to such an extent that the panels would barely be seen. The possibility of this installation being detrimental in any way towards the surrounding properties is very unlikely.

It is also considered that the proposed installation would only enhance the school building and appeal of being a modern learning centre looking towards the future and creating a vision of sustainability for students.

Neither the school building, nor its curtilage, are in a Conservation Area, National Park, AONB or a World Heritage site.

### **Description of the proposed development**

It is proposed to install around 1252 solar photovoltaic panels on the flat and pitched roofs, with a total generation capacity of about 540kWp. The proposed installation will help the school in its ambition to maximise on the potential of on-site for zero-carbon solar electricity generation as part of its wider decarbonisation strategy.

### **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 be adhering to permitted development and prior notice requirements.

- A. One metre margin and protrusion no greater than 0.2 metres on a pitched roof and below 1m on a flat roof
- B. Below 1MW

#### **(A) One metre roof margin a protrusion no greater than 0.2 metres and less than one meter high on a flat roof**

To comply with permitted development and prior notice criteria, the layout of the panels on the flat and pitched roof areas are spatially arranged in such a way that the solar panels would be offset by at least 1 metre from the external edge of the roofs (Scaled Map 04) and will not protrude on the pitched roofs or be higher on the flat roofs than the criteria specified for permitted development.

For the flat roofs, the panels will be mounted on ballasted frames that rest on padding to protect the underlying roof membrane at an angle of 10 degrees. To comply with permitted development J.1 Part (C) and Part (B): “the solar panels would need to be off-set by at least 1 metre from the external edges (Scaled map 04) and not be higher than 1 metre above the highest point of the roof (excluding chimneys)”. In fact, according to the proposed tilt of the panels they will be less than 0.3 metres high (Roof cross section 06) and so J1. Part (C) and Part (B) will be complied with.

For the pitched roofs, a mini rail mounting system will be screwed onto the crests of the roofs, with the panels then being clamped to these railings using end clamps and mid clamps. To comply with permitted development J.1 Part (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” and Part (C): “the solar panels would need to be off-set by at least 1 metre from the external edges of the roof” (Scaled map 04); so Part 14 J.1 (A) & (C) will be complied with.

### **(B) Below the 1MW size**

With around 1252 panels and a total capacity to generate around 540kWp of renewable solar electricity, the design also falls well within the 1 megawatt permitted under the legislation for a solar PV installation to be recognised as permitted development on a school. Please note that the exact number and total capacity will depend on the panels and their wattage at the time of installation, but the installation will only be on the roof areas indicated and any change will be ‘de minimus’ i.e. of such a small scale to not be materially different to this prior notification.

### **Notification of Prior Approval**

Although the installation is classed as permitted development, under Class J (c.) the development requires Prior Approval from the Local Planning Authority as the 1252 panels and capacity of around 540kWp, is greater than the permitted development capacity of 50kWp. As such please find more details as to

- A. Design and external appearance of the development and in particular,
- B. Impact on neighbouring land users and the likely impact of glare and glint

### **(A) Design and Appearance**

#### **Flat Roof Mounting assembly**

The panels will be mounted on a ballasted frame that sits on pads to protect the underlying roof membrane. As shown on the Roof Cross Section Drawing (06), they will not be higher than one metre from the highest part of the building, excluding chimney.

#### **Pitched roof Mounting assembly**

A railing system will be screwed onto the crests of the roofs with panels then fastened to the mini rails using clamps. As shown on the Roof Cross Section Drawing (06), will not protrude more than 0.2 meters beyond the plane of the existing pitched roof slope.

The solar panels would therefore be of a standard design and appearance, complementary to the modern character of the buildings. The visual appearance of the solar panels is considered appropriate and positive for the school buildings:

- enhancing the visionary appearance of the site as an up-to-date centre for learning while creating responsible citizens for tomorrow's world with an appreciation for their surroundings and a duty of care towards the environment.
- The panels could therefore have a very positive impact on the character of the building, while having no identifiable detrimental impact on the surrounding area.

### **(B) Impact on Neighbouring land occupants**

The only residential properties around the school are located to the far east and south residing on Thames Road, in both directions they are significantly away from the school buildings, such that the school buildings are almost indiscernible. The possibility of the proposed installation being seen and having any sort of impact from anywhere beside the school when they are set at least 60 metres apart at the height of each school building one metre away from the edges would be very unlikely (05 Supporting Images).

### **Summary**

In summary, the proposed scheme to install around 540kWp of solar on the roofs of Northfield School & Sports College meets with the criteria for permitted development under Part 14 Class J (c) of the Town and County (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Class J (c) is subject to prior approval by the Local Planning Authority and therefore, the necessary information required for prior approval also accompanies this notification. This includes evidence to show:

- the suitability of design and appearance of the proposed installation
- that it will have a positive impact on the character of the building
- that no overall detrimental impact on neighbouring land users is expected

We would be grateful for your written prior approval towards the proposal of this installation.

Yours faithfully,

**Ardesb Sarangam**

Planning Project Manager

Solar Options for Schools Limited