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Your ref: PP-12789157

Our ref: Oxford High School

Planning Services  
Oxford City Council  
Oxford Town Hall  
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OX1 1BX

24 April 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015 (AS AMENDED)**

### **PRIOR APPROVAL FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR EQUIPMENT AT OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL, BELBROUGHTON ROAD, OXFORD, OX2 6XA**

Carter Jonas is instructed by Girls' Day School Trust to submit an application for a determination as to whether the prior approval of Oxford City Council is required for the installation of solar PV equipment at Oxford High School, Belbroughton Road, Oxford, OX2 6XA.

In addition to this covering letter, the following documentation has been submitted via the Planning Portal (PP-12789157) to accompany the application:

- Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Panel Detail – Metal Trapezoidal Roof
- Panel Detail – Clay Tile Roof

#### **Site and Surroundings**

This application relates to the buildings that are contained within the Oxford High School campus on Belbroughton Road. The primary access into the site is taken from Belbroughton Road but access is also available from Marston Ferry Road. The buildings on campus are located towards the southern most part of the site, with playing fields to the north.

The site is bounded to the east by The Cherwell School and to the west by residential properties. The southern boundary of the site marks the edge of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area.

### Planning History

A search of the planning records for the Belbroughton Road campus of Oxford High School shows an extensive planning history.

An examination of all decision notices attached to the previous applications was undertaken. Some previous permissions included the installation of renewable and low carbon energy sources such as solar thermal panels, PV arrays and air source heat pumps.

None of the previously approved applications resulted in any restrictions being imposed on the permitted development rights of the school site in relation to works carried out under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

In addition, a search of Oxford City Council's website was undertaken with regards to Article 4 Directions. This identified only one Article 4 Direction which covers the site and this relates to the change of use of single family houses to Houses of Multiple Occupation. Given that this is a school site, the Article 4 Direction is not relevant.

### Proposed Development

This application proposes the installation of solar PV panels on the roofs of a large number of the school buildings that make up the school campus. The extent of the installation is shown on the Proposed Site Plan which accompanies this application.

The panels will be installed on both metal and clay tiled roofs. Detailed plans submitted with this application show how the panels will be affixed to each roof type.

### Assessment

It is proposed to carry out the works under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

Class J allows for the installation of solar PV on the roof of non-domestic premises. Development is not permitted by class J if:

- a) *the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a pitched roof and would protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof slope;*

**The accompanying plans show that the solar equipment would protrude a maximum of 140mm from the roof.**

- b) *the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a flat roof, where the highest part of the solar PV equipment would be higher than 1 metre above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney);*

**The accompanying plans shows that the solar equipment would protrude a maximum of 140mm from the roof.**

- c) *The solar equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof and within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof;*

**The plans show that the panels will be set in from the edge of the roof.**

- d) *this has been removed;*

- e) *The solar equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument; or*

**The school campus is not designated as a scheduled monument.**

- f) *the solar equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a listed building or on a building within the curtilage of a listed building.*

**None of the buildings on the school site are designated listed buildings.**

The requirements set out under part J.2 are not relevant to this proposal.

This application is accompanied by an existing and proposed site plan. The existing plan indicates the number and location of the existing PV panels which have been installed at the school. The proposed site plan shows the number and location of the PV panels which are proposed to be installed under permitted development. These panels are to be set in from the edge of each roof.

Where possible, the panels have been located on roofslopes which face into the application site and therefore many of the panels would not be visible from outside of the school campus. A small proportion of the panels are to be installed on roofslopes which face towards residential properties on Cunliffe Close. The closest panels would lie approximately 30 metres from the common boundary between the school and the nearest residential curtilage. Mature trees and landscaping along this common boundary provide significant screening of the school site from its neighbours and the panels would therefore hardly be visible in wider views.

The energy company who provided the supporting information for this application (and who would be appointed for the installation) have confirmed that the panels would not generate substantial glare. The purpose of solar panels is to absorb and convert sunlight into electricity. The panels are therefore designed not to reflect considerable amounts of sunlight as the more light that is reflected, the less efficient the panels will be. The glass that is used in the manufacture of solar panels produces smaller amounts of reflectance and glare than normal glazing.

The position of the panels within the school site, the existing screening provided by the mature soft landscaping and the design of the panels ensure that there would be minimal impact on the nearby residential neighbourhood.

### **Conclusion**

As can be seen from the plans accompanying this submission and the assessment set out above, the proposed works fall within Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

I trust that the above and enclosed is sufficient to enable validation of this application. However, should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



**Ellie Neal**  
Senior Planner

