OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/01165/PSPPA Prior Approval Solar Photovoltaics

Proposal: Installation of static roof mounted solar photovoltaics - 772kWp

Location: 2 - 16 Latham Road Huntingdon

Applicant: Mrs Caroline Casson

Grid Ref: 523363 273726

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application site relates to industrial units 6, 8, 10,12, 14, 16 and 18 off Latham Road, in the Stukeley Meadows Industrial Estate, Huntingdon. The buildings are located to the east of Spittals Way and are positioned at the end of Latham Road. The application specifically relates to the industrial buildings listed above. The site is within Flood Zone 1.

This application is submitted under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

This application seeks to determine if prior approval, as to the design or external appearance of the proposal, is required to install a 772kWp static roof mounted solar photovoltaics across units 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 12).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- achieving well-designed places;
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance, including the National Design Guide, is also relevant and a material consideration.

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF (2024) outlines (amongst other matters) that "local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights)."

Paragraph 165 of the NPPF (2024) outlines (amongst other matters) that when determining planning applications for new renewable or low carbon development local planning authorities "identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems"

Paragraph 166 of the NPPF (2024) outlines (amongst other matters) that when determining planning applications for new renewable or low carbon development local planning authorities " should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy; and recognise that even small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting the greenhouse gas emissions. And approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable"

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (CHSR)

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).
-Chapter 9. Promoting sustainable transport
-Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed places
-Chapter 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY
No relevant planning history associated with the site.

CONSULTATIONS
Local Highways Authority- No objection.

REPRESENTATIONS
None received at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES
The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Whether the development accords with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J

- If prior approval is required relating to design and external appearance of the development in particular glare on occupiers of neighbouring land.

Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) allows the installation, alteration or replacement of

(a) microgeneration solar thermal equipment on a building;
(b) microgeneration solar PV equipment on a building; or
(c) other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building, other than a dwellinghouse or block of flats.

If an application relates to Class J (c) as above, Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J Condition Para (2) requires that before beginning the development the developer must apply to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the design or external appearance of the development in particular the impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land.

In accordance with Schedule 2 Part 14 Class J Conditions Para (4) the LPA may refuse prior approval where the proposed development does not comply, or insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate compliance, with the conditions, limitations or restrictions specified within Class J where applicable to the development. The provisions, and whether the proposal complies, is set out as follows;

J.1 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;

Officer Comment - Application form -details accord.

(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);

Officer Comment - Not Applicable the equipment is to be installed on pitched roofs.

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

Officer Comment - Application form and submitted plan (dwg non33204-SYZ-DR-101) - details accord.

(d) in the case of a building on article 2(3) land, the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof slope which fronts a highway;

Officer Comment - This section of the legislation was omitted in the 2023 update and no longer applies in the determination.

(e) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument; or

Officer Comment - Not applicable - the site is not a scheduled ancient monument.

(f) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a Listed Building or on a building within the curtilage of a Listed Building.

Officer Comment - Not applicable - the building is not listed and not within the curtilage of a Listed Building.

J.2 - Development is not permitted by Class J(a) or (b) if—

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

Officer Comment - Not applicable - installation would be on the pitch roof of the industrial units.

(b) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall and within 1 metre of a junction of that wall with another wall or with the roof of the building; or

Officer Comment - Not applicable - installation would be on the pitch roof of the industrial units.

(c) in the case of a building on article 2(3) land, the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall which fronts a highway.

Officer Comment - Not applicable- The building is not located on article 2(3) land, nor is the development for wall mounted solar PV.

J.3 - Development is not permitted by Class J (c) if the capacity of the solar PV equipment installed (together with any solar PV equipment installed under Class J (b)) to generate electricity exceeds 1 megawatt.

Officer Comment - This section of the legislation was omitted in the 2023 update and no longer applies in the determination.

Class J.4 (2) states that Class J (c) development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development the developer must apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the design or external appearance of the development, in particular the impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land, and the following sub-paragraphs apply in relation to that application.

Officer Comment: The developer has supplied sufficient information to enable the authority to establish whether the proposed development complies with any conditions, limitations or restrictions specified in Class J applicable to the development in question as detailed in the description of the application.

Prior Approval Considerations:

*Design and Visual Amenity
The proposed Solar PV installation is located on industrial units within the built-up area of the established Stukeley Meadows Industrial Estate. The site is surrounded by similar industrial buildings, and public views of the units are limited, particularly from Spittals Way, the main thoroughfare to the north of Huntingdon. The buildings are also positioned to the west of the St Peter's Road Industrial Area and adjacent railway tracks, further reducing visibility from public vantage points.

Several buildings within the estate already feature Solar PV installations on pitched roofs. Given this context, the visual impact of the proposed panels is considered minimal.

Sufficient information has been submitted to enable a full assessment of the proposal. Due to the location of the panels on the roofscape and the site's position within a well-established business park, prior approval is deemed unnecessary.

Taking all factors into account, including the scale, design, and layout of the proposed installation, it is concluded that the development would not result in significant harm to the character or appearance of the local area. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

*Residential Amenity

Units 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18 Latham Road are centrally located within an established business park, designated as an employment area. The site is surrounded by other commercial and industrial units, with no residential properties in close proximity.

Given the height and positioning of the proposed solar panels, along with the site's location within a well-defined business park, it is not considered that the development would give rise to any adverse impacts on residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Highway Safety

s Solar PV installations can potentially result in glint and glare, consideration has been given to any potential impact on highway safety arising from the proposed development. In this instance, the application site is located centrally within an established business park, at the end of Latham Road, an estate road serving the business park.

Spittals Way, the main thoroughfare to the north of Huntingdon, lies to the west of the site and is screened by mature, well-established vegetation. Given the positioning of the proposed panels and the surrounding context, it is not considered that the development would result in significant glint or glare that could pose a hazard to highway users.

Furthermore, Cambridgeshire County Council, in its role as the Local Highways Authority, has been consulted on the application and has raised no objection to the proposed installation.

Accordingly, the development is considered to comply with Policy LP17 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 in respect of highway safety.

*Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered the proposal accords with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) and prior approval is not required to carry out the development as detailed in the application, and it is recommended that it is approved.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Charlotte Dew**