

Delegated Report

Planning Ref: 26/00118/P14J

Applicant: c/o Agent

Ward: Hinckley DeMontfort

Site: Aldi Foodstore Ltd Holliers Walk Hinckley

Proposal: Notification to determine if Prior Approval is required for the installation of solar PVs

Officer(s): Zahra Jam-Rotbeh (Planning Officer)



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Recommendations

1.1. Prior approval given

2. Planning application description

2.1. The application is made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) equipment on the roofs of non-domestic buildings, for which prior approval is required.

2.2. In considering the application the local planning authority are restricted to expressing opinions on matters of design, external appearance, and glare impact upon neighbouring occupiers only.

2.3. The proposals consist of the installation of 268 No. solar panels onto the roof of the existing ALDI food store. As demonstrated on the Solar Panel Specification Sheet, the total maximum power output of the proposed PV panels is 140KW.

3. Description of the site and surrounding area

3.1. The application site comprises land at Holliers Walk, Hinckley which is located within Hinckley Town Centre although outside of the Primary Shopping Area as defined in the Hinckley Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD. The site is adjacent to but not within Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area.

3.2. The site is 0.93 ha and is an irregular shape, extending south from Holliers Walk towards Stockwell Head, New Buildings and bound to the west by Baptist Walk. The site was a vacant brownfield site, which had former industrial premises on which has since been replaced by the consented Aldi store.

3.3. The surrounding area is predominantly residential and commercial in character. There is a vacant Primary School opposite the site on Holliers Walk as well as some residential properties. Hinckley Methodist Church and the Pathways Centre and some residential premises line Baptist Walk to the west, to the south and east are a number of commercial units and residential properties.

3.1. Documents submitted with the application:

- Application form
- Solar Panel Specification Document
- Solar Panel Installation Manual
- Proposed Roof Plan, Drg No. AR175-IE-GL-07-P1
- Site Location Plan, Drg No. 22602 THPK ATH 175 DR A 0100

4. Relevant planning history

17/01166/FUL

- Proposed food retail store (use class A1) with associated car parking, servicing and landscaping.
- PER
- 21.12.2018

19/00041/ADV

- 2 no. internally illuminated 6.4m high free-standing totem signs, 2 no. internally illuminated wall mounted signs, 2 no. 1.4m high free standing directional signs, 2 no. vinyl window signs and 1 no. board-mounted vinyl sign
- ADV
- 22.03.2019

19/00043/DISCON

- Application to discharge conditions 9, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 attached to planning permission 17/01166/FUL
- SPLDIS
- 13.06.2019

19/00044/CONDIT

- Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 17/01166/FUL to remove solar panels from the roof slope and amend the colour of some external finishes.
- PER
- 03.11.2021

19/00156/DISCON

- Application to discharge condition 18 attached to planning permission 17/01166/FUL
- DISCHA
- 18.03.2019

19/00221/DISCON

- Application to discharge condition 15 attached to the planning permission 17/01166/FUL.
- NDC
- 13.06.2019

19/00274/CONDIT

- Variation of condition 7 to remove restricted delivery times on Public Holidays and variation of condition 8 to remove restricted opening hours on Public Holidays, of planning permission 17/01166/FUL
- PER
- 03.11.2021

19/00293/DISCON

- Application to discharge condition 26 attached to planning permission 17/01166/FUL
- NDC
- 13.06.2019

19/00951/CONDIT

- Variation of conditions 1, 2, 11 and 13 and removal of conditions 12 and 14 of planning application 19/00274/CONDIT to amend the boundary and landscape treatment to Baptist Walk and to consider a Surface Water Drainage Strategy and associated long term maintenance
- PER
- 01.12.2021

20/00339/DISCON

- Application to discharge condition 26 (external lighting) attached to permission 17/01166/FUL
- DISCHA
- 19.05.2020

20/00695/FUL

- Erection of queueing shelters for customers and a trolley enclosure (retrospective)
- PER
- 21.09.2020

21/01457/DISCON

- Application to discharge condition 13 (drainage) attached to planning permission 19/00951/CONDIT
- DISCHA
- 31.03.2023

22/01086/DISCON

- Application to discharge condition 3 (Drainage) of planning permission 19/00951/CONDIT
- APPRET
- 23.11.2022

5. Publicity

- 5.1. The application has been publicised by sending out letters to local residents. A site notice was also posted within the vicinity of the site.
- 5.2. No comments have been received.

6. Consultations

None-required

7. Policy

7.1 Core Strategy (2009)

- Policy 1: Development in Hinckley

7.2. Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016)

- Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DM2: Delivering Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development
- Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest
- Policy DM7: Preventing Pollution and Flooding
- Policy DM10: Development and Design

7.3. National Planning Policies and Guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

7.5 Other relevant guidance

- Good Design Guide (2020)
- National Design Guide (2019)
- Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO) (as amended)

Appraisal

8.1. The key issues in respect of this application are therefore:

- Whether the proposal meets the criteria set within Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the GPDO
- Design and external appearance
- Conditions

8.2 Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the GPDO permits the installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic properties.

8.3 Permitted development

8.4 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 a block of flats

This application is relevant to Class J(c) because it refers to solar PV equipment that exceeds the definition of ‘microgeneration’ as per section 82(6) of the Energy Act 2004.

8.5 The criteria of Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the GPDO is 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

The solar PV equipment is not on a pitched 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 highest part of the solar PV equipment installed on the roof is not higher than 1 metre above the highest part of the flat roof.

(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;

The solar PV equipment is not installed within 1 metre of the external edge of the roof of the property.

(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;

The building is not on article 2(3) land.

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

The solar PV equipment is not on a site designated as a scheduled 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.

The solar PV equipment would not be installed on a Listed Building or on a building 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

The development is not installed on a wall.

(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

The scheme is not installed on a wall or within 1 metre of a junction of that wall with another wall or with the roof of the building.

(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.

The development is not installed on a building on article 2(3) land.

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.

The development does not generate electricity that exceeds 1 megawatt.

Conditions

8.6 The conditions for Class J development is as follows:

J.4 – (1) Class J development is permitted subject to the following conditions–

(a) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment must, so far as practicable, be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area; and

As the development is on the roof of the property, it would be largely unseen from the street and has a minimal effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.

(b) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.

(2) 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.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support renewable energy developments and approve them where their impacts are acceptable.

Policy DM2 of the adopted SADMP supports appropriately designed and sited renewable energy and low carbon developments.

Policy DM10 requires new development to complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area with regards to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials, and architectural features.

The application seeks determination on whether prior approval is required regarding the design and external appearance of the proposed development, including any potential glare impacts on neighboring land. The roof-mounted solar panels are proposed to be positioned in a number of locations on the roof of the building. Due to the height of the building, the proposed solar panels will be limitedly visible from public viewpoints and are therefore considered to form acceptable additions in such locations from a visual amenity perspective. As there are no directly adjacent residential buildings, it is considered that there would not be any adverse loss of residential amenity or resulting glare from the panels for neighbors. This is in accordance with Class J.4(2), and, since there will be no result in glare to residential properties. Therefore, the visual impact is considered to be limited.

The sites is adjacent to the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area, however due to the pitch and orientation of the proposed solar PVs, it is unlikely that these will be visible from the Conservation Area and are unlikely to have any adverse impact upon design or character of the surrounded conservation area.

Therefore, there is minimal impact to the character of the surrounding area and to neighbouring amenities. By virtue of these factors, the application respects the character of the existing dwellings and the surrounding area, which is in accordance with Paragraph 154 of the NPPF, Policies DM1, DM2 and DM10 of the adopted SADMP, and the Good Design Guide. Prior approval is therefore granted.

- (3) The application must be accompanied by—
- (a) a written description of the proposed development;
 - (b) a plan indicating the site and showing the proposed development;
 - (c) the developer's contact address; and
 - (d) the developer's email address if the developer is content to receive communications electronically;
- together with any fee required to be paid,

The following information has been accompanied with the application.

- (4) The Local Planning Authority may refuse an application where, in the opinion of the Authority—
- (a) the proposed development does not comply with, or
 - (b) the developer has provided insufficient 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

The application complies with Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the GPDO.

- (5) Sub-paragraphs (6) and (8) do not apply where a local planning authority refuses an application under sub-paragraph (4) and for the purposes of section 78 (appeals) of the Act such a refusal is to be treated as a refusal of an application for approval.

This is not applicable

- (6) The Local Planning Authority must give notice of the proposed development—
- (a) by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days of a notice which—
 - (i) describes the proposed development;
 - (ii) provides the address of the proposed development;
 - (iii) specifies the date by which representations are to be received by the local planning authority; or
 - (b) by serving a notice in that form on any adjoining owner or occupier.

A site notice was placed near the land to which the application relates to on 17 February 2026.

- (7) The Local Planning Authority may require the developer to submit such information as the authority may reasonably require in order to determine the application

The developer has submitted sufficient information in order for the Local Planning Authority to determine the application.

- (8) The Local Planning Authority must, when determining an application—

(a) take into account any representations made to them as a result of any notice given under sub-paragraph (6); and
(b) have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in July 2021, so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application.

(9) The development must not begin before the occurrence of one of the following—
(a) the receipt by the applicant from the Local Planning Authority of a written notice of their determination that such prior approval is not required;
(b) the receipt by the applicant from the Local Planning Authority of a written notice giving their prior approval; or
(c) the expiry of 56 days following the date on which the application under sub-paragraph (3) was received by the Local Planning Authority without the authority notifying the applicant as to whether prior approval is given or refused

(10) The development must be carried out—
(a) where prior approval is required, in accordance with the details approved by the Local Planning Authority;
(b) where prior approval is not required, or where sub-paragraph (9)(c) applies, in accordance with the details provided in the application referred to in sub-paragraph (3),
unless the Local Planning Authority and the developer agree otherwise in writing.

(11) The Local Planning Authority may grant prior approval unconditionally or subject to conditions reasonably related to the subject matter of the prior approval.

(12) When computing the number of days in paragraph (6)(a), any day which is a public holiday must be disregarded.

Equality implications

- a. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states: -
 - (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- b. Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.
- c. There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.
- d. The decision has been taken having regard to all relevant planning legislation, regulations, guidance, circulars and Council policies, including General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and The Human Rights Act (1998) (HRA 1998) which makes it unlawful for the Council to act incompatibly with Convention rights, specifically Article 6 (right to a fair hearing); Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life); Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination).

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The application seeks installation, alteration or replacement of solar photovoltaic (PV) equipment on the roofs of non-domestic buildings, for which prior approval is required for a proposal of this nature. The proposal meets the relevant criteria of Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GDPO) (as amended). The design, external appearance and glare of the proposed development does not have a significantly adverse impact upon the character of the site or neighbouring amenity. This proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies DM1, DM2 and DM10 of the SADMP. Prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is therefore given.

Recommendation

11.1 Prior approval given

a. Notes to applicant

1. The approved development may require Building Regulations Approval, for further information please contact the Building Control team via e-mail at buildingcontrol@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk or call 01455 238141.