DELEGATED REPORT

Recommendation Made: 1 September 2011

Reference:- 11/00531/FUL **Parish:- Desford Parish Council**

Applicant:- Mr Carl Barnes
G T Morgan & Co Ltd
Desford Lane
Kirby Muxloe
Leicestershire

Location:- G T Morgan Desford Lane Kirby Muxloe Leicester Leicestershire

Proposal:- INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS

Introduction:-

This application seeks full planning permission for the installation of two arrays of photovoltaic (PV) panels onto the south facing roof slope of an industrial workshop/warehouse building. The arrays will be mounted onto the existing roof structure above the eaves line and below a row of existing roof vents. The photovoltaic panel arrays measure 54 metres x 6.6 metres and 11 metres x 6.6 metres and cover an area of 356 square metres and 73 square metres of roof slope respectively. The system is predicted to generate 49,035KWh of electricity per year.

The application site is located within an allocated employment site to the south of Desford Lane in the countryside between Desford and Kirby Muxloe. The building has two storeys and is constructed of brown facing bricks with grey profiled sheeting over and corrugated fibre sheet roofing material. The site is screened to the south by another industrial building and compound and partial tree screening beyond which lies a disused railway line and agricultural fields beyond. To the west there is a large scale warehouse building, to the north east residential dwellings and Desford Lane to the north and agricultural fields beyond.

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted to support the application which states that the PV panels are unobtrusive, not visible from Desford Lane and will generate a considerable amount of electricity for the business providing green energy, financial benefits and a reduction in the carbon footprint. The PV panels emit no noise when in operation and have no moving parts.

History:-

No planning history relevant to this application.

Consultations:-

No objection has been received from Head of Community Services (Land Drainage)

Ward Members have made no comments.

At the time of writing this report no comments have been received from:-

Desford Parish Council
Site Notice
Neighbours.

Development Plan Policies:-

National Planning Guidance:-

Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22): Renewable Energy
Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Adopted Core Strategy (2009):-

Policy 24: Sustainable Design and Technology

Adopted Local Plan (2001):-

Policy BE1: Design and Siting of Development
Policy NE5: Development in the Countryside
Policy EMP1: Existing Employment Sites.

Appraisal:-

The main considerations with regards to this application are the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding countryside and impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Principle of Development

Both Planning Policy Statement 7 in paragraph 15(iv) and Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22) encourage sustainable development and the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources. The proposed development will meet the key principles of PPS22 which recognises in paragraph 1(vi) and paragraph 18 that small-scale projects on existing buildings can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and, in this case, can demonstrate potential environmental and economic benefits required by paragraph 1(viii). Whilst policy NE5 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to protect the character and appearance of the countryside for its own sake it recognises that certain forms of development that are important to the local economy and extend existing buildings may be acceptable in the countryside subject to no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the landscape. The existing business is well established and the proposed PV panels will support existing operations at the site by providing a renewable on site energy resource and potential income. The principle of siting the PV panels on the roof of an existing industrial building within the open countryside is considered to be acceptable subject to all other planning matters being addressed.

Impact on Character and Appearance

The building is constructed in materials characteristic of a traditional industrial building and it is utilitarian in its appearance. The addition of arrays of PV panels to the corrugated fibre sheet roof will not have any adverse impact upon either its character or appearance and as they are to be mounted on the lower part of the rear roof elevation of the building they will not be a prominent feature. The presence of another industrial building (Berridge Waste) to the south together with some tree screening to the south and the siting of the PV panels on the lowest part of the roof slope will result in the PV panels being largely screened from view from the countryside to the south thereby resulting in minimal impact upon the countryside. However it is conceded that there may be long distance views from locations to the south of the site where the ground levels rise gently from the wide valley floor on which the building is located. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the potential environmental and economic benefits to be gained from the proposed development which, as a result of its location, scale and design will minimise environmental and social impacts as required by paragraph 1(viii) of PPS22 outweigh any potential harm to the character of the countryside in this case.

Impact on Neighbours

The nearest residential properties are to the north east of the building and will not be affected by the PV panels that are located on the south roof slope elevation which is set much further back. The supporting information states that PV panels emit no noise when in operation and have no moving parts. There are some dwellings to the south of the site but these are in excess of 1150 metres to the south and therefore no adverse impact on residential amenity will arise from the proposals through the effects of glare.

Conclusion

The proposed development will contribute to renewable energy production and provide wider environmental

benefits together with economic benefits to the business operations on the site and the rural economy. By virtue of their scale and siting on the lower part of the rear roof slope of the industrial building and taking into account the existing screening from the south the proposed installation of the photovoltaic panels will not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the countryside or highway safety. In addition, as a result of the location of neighbouring residential properties, screening and separation distances involved, they will not have an adverse impact on residential amenity. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with national planning guidance in Planning Policy Statement 22 and Planning Policy Statement 7; the intentions of policy 24 of the adopted Core Strategy and policies EMP1, BE1 and NE5 of the adopted Local Plan and are recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:- Permit subject to the following conditions:-

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation and Relevant Development Plan Policies :

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area, representations received and relevant provisions of the development plan, as summarised below, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this permission, the proposed development would be in accordance with the development plan as the photovoltaic panels will contribute to renewable energy production and provide environmental and economic benefits whilst as a result of their location, scale and design they will not have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the countryside, highway safety or residential amenity.

Hinckley & Bosworth Adopted Core Strategy (2009):- Policy 24

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan (2001):- EMP1, BE1 and NE5

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the submitted application details, as follows: Site Location Plan Drawing No. 17420321C-SLP; Block Plan Drawing No. 17420321C-BP; Proposed Plan Drawing No. 17420311C-ML and Proposed South Elevation Drawing No. 17420311C-PS-EL-A.

Reasons :-

1 To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Notes to Applicant:-

1 Bats, nesting birds, great crested newts and certain other species are protected by law. If any such species are discovered before or during the works the works must be suspended and the local office of Natural England contacted for advice.

2 This permission does not grant approval under the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2000 (as amended) for which a separate application may be required. You are advised to contact the Building Control Section.

3 As from 6 April 2008 this Authority are charging for the discharge of conditions in accordance with revised fee regulations which came into force on that date. Application forms to discharge conditions and further information can be found on the planning portal web site www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Contact Officer:- Richard Wright Ext 5894