2023/0481

Mr Mike Robinson

Installation of solar PV system to roof of building (Prior Approval)

Shafton Primary Academy, High Street, Shafton, Barnsley, S72 8QA

Site Description

The application site refers to Shafton Primary Academy located on High Street in Shafton. The main part of the building is constructed from red brick with a pitched roof, is set back from the road with a hard surfaced forecourt area to the front of the site – between the school and the road which is used for informal parking. On the front boundary line of the site is a mid-height red brick wall with metal toppers, and the school benefits from external play areas to the South and North of the building. The school has undergone extensions in the past with the application site referring to a cladded, flat roofed section which projects from the rear/North-East elevation of the school.

To the rear of the academy is Shafton Parish Bowling Green, the Parish Council offices and children's play café. These uses can be accessed via an access road which runs past the South of the application site.

Site

History

B/87/1280/HR – Erection of games equipment store

B/89/1724/HR – Extension to school

B/03/0745/HR – Replace existing roof with Britmet Tileform Slate 2000 and new Sarkin Felt

2011/0911 – Erection of 2m high paladin fencing and erection of 4m high ball-stop fencing along the north western and south western boundaries of the site.

2012/0448 - Erection of classroom extensions to primary school.

2014/0126 - Erection of single storey side and rear extensions to existing school building

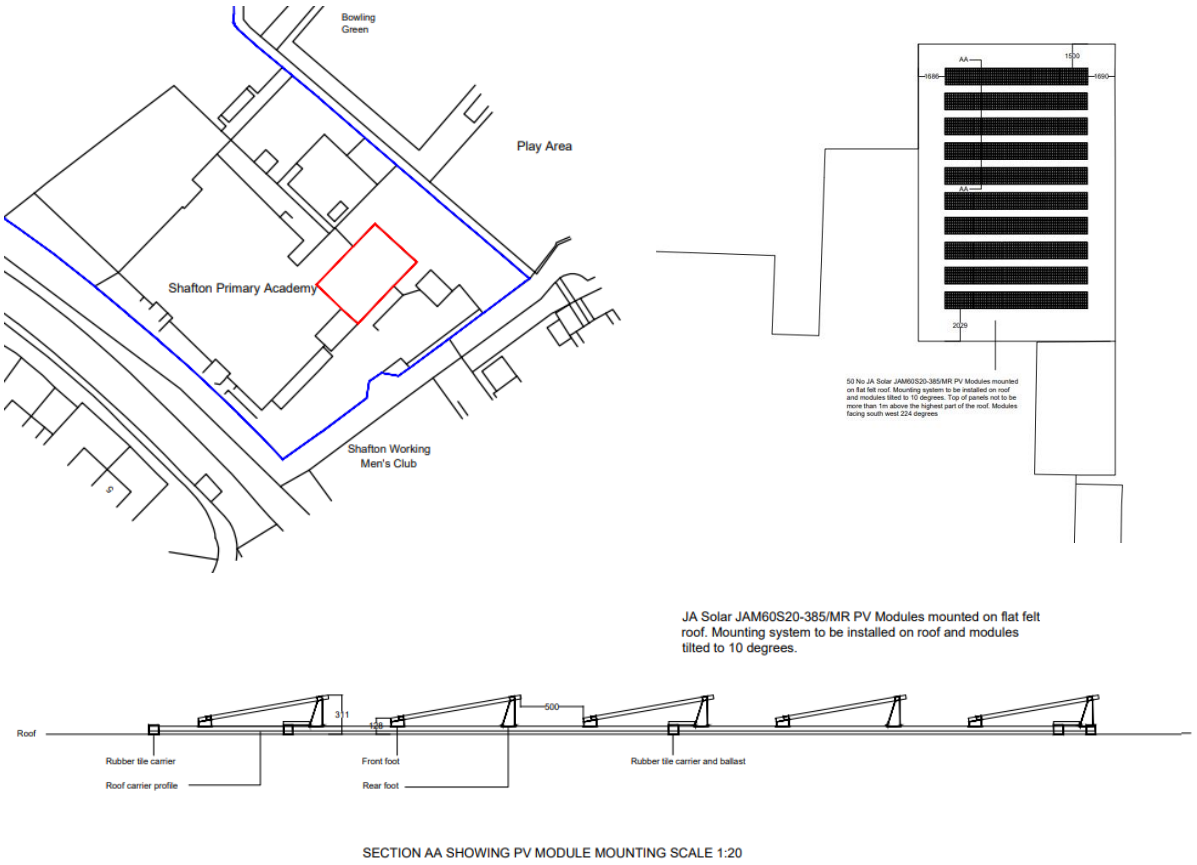
Proposed Development

The applicant has submitted an application to determine if prior approval is required for the installation of solar PV system on the roof of Shafton Primary Academy. The panels are to be located on a flat roof which is situated to the North/rear of the building/site, facing South-West.

The panels themselves are in a row of 10 x panels, situated on a mounting system with the modules tilted to face slightly upwards at 10 degrees. There is a 0.5m gap between each row, with the tilt creating a maximum height of 0.31m for each tilted row of panels.

The applicant has provided the following information in support of the proposal:-

- The solar panel system will consist of 50 Solar modules which equates to a maximum output of 19.25kWp (which equates to 0.01925mW).
- As covered above, the Solar PV system installed on the building would not exceed 1 megawatt.
- The solar panels will not protrude more than 1m above the flat roof.
- The solar panels are not proposed to be installed within 1metre of the external edge of the roof.
- The site is not within an area defined as article2 (3) land.
- The site is not a schedule ancient monument.
- The building is not listed.
- The solar panels are not proposed to be installed on a wall.
- The solar panels are proposed to be sited in a way which seeks to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building and amenity as practicably possible.



Policy Context

Schedule 2 Part 14, Class J (*installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises)* of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) states that development is is permitted for 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.

The applicable classes related to the proposed development are Class J(c). Development is not permitted by Class J (c) if—

A) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a pitched roof and would protrude more than 0.2m beyond the plane of the roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof slope;
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 1m above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney);
C) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed within 1m of the external edge of that roof;
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;
E) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument; or
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.

Development is also 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.

Conditions

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

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

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.

Consultations

Highways DC – The scheme will have no long-term highway implications. However, given that the site is a school, any proposed access by construction machinery should be subject to a construction management plan – in this instance a short statement explaining times of access and the proposed route taken by these vehicles should suffice. Please ask the applicant to provide these details to confirm that the construction phase will be timetabled to ensure the least disruption to the school access at busy times (opening and closing time and break periods).

On receipt of the requested construction management plan, Highways DC did not raise any objection subject to a condition which ensures that the CMP, as submitted and approved by the LPA, shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Ward Councillors – No comments received.

Representations

Neighbouring properties were consulted on the proposal, no comments were received.

Assessment

The proposed solar PV installation does not exceed any of the thresholds set out in Class J(c) of Part 14 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order as set out in the application proposal above. The proposed panels are to be situated on a flat roof on a mounting system which is to be tilted at 10 degrees resulting a maximum height of 0.31m when measured from the base of the respective panels to the highest point. This height is well below the height which is allowed under permitted development (1m) and is situated on a roof which is an extension to the rear of the main/original part of the building. The nearest panel will be set back from the site frontage by 34m and from High Street by c.45m, given the forecourt/informal parking area which resides to the front of the site. There is an access road to the South/side of the site/building which leads to a parking area to the rear of the site, alongside other uses such as Shafton Parish Council offices, a children's play café and the bowling green. The panels will be partially visible from users of the access road which serves as a parking area for school drop offs. However, to the rear of the site is a row of mature trees which provide substantial screening, and there is a separation distance of 15m from the panels to the access road.

The roof where the panels are situated is single storey and from the front, the panels will largely be screened by a mixture of the main part of the school, and from nearby buildings such as Shafton WMC to the immediate South/side which is two storey.

It should also be noted that there are other potential areas on the roof plane of the existing building which would potentially have been feasible for the installation of solar panels on what are more visible and prominent roof planes. The main bulk of the building features several pitched roofs which face South and these would have had a greater visual impact on the public realm.

Taking into account all of the above, the development is considered to comply with condition J(a) in that the panels are sited to minimise the impact on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.

Colleagues in Highways DC have been consulted on the proposal and have not raised any objection to the development but given it is a school, a construction management plan was requested indicating how construction vehicles will enter the site and park. The Construction management plan (CMP) was submitted on 6th July 2023 with Highways issuing a response on the same day indicating that that the CMP gives all the details required and is therefore acceptable from a highways perspective.

To conclude, the proposed development meets all the parameters of Class J(c) of Part 14 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order, are situated on a roof which will minimise the impact on the external appearance of the building, and no objection has been raised from highways DC subject to the submitted Construction Management Plan being strictly complied with. The LPA will attach a condition ensuring that the CMP is adhered to.

Recommendation

Prior Approval – Grant subject to conditions