
2021/0403

Mr William Emtage

Erection of solar panels on the roof of Penistone Grammar School (Prior Notification)

Penistone Grammar School, Huddersfield Road, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 7BX

Site Location and Description

Penistone Grammar is a modern school building located to the North of Penistone, off Huddersfield Road. The building is a large, 2 storey building with flat roof, constructed of block and render and set within its own grounds.

Proposed Development

The proposal is a prior notification application for Solar PV panels which would be installed on select areas on the roof-space of Penistone Grammar School.

The installed capacity would be between 400 and 600 kWp. The solar technology installed will likely be Trina Solar TSM-375DE14H(II) (375W) panels. These are dark/black in appearance in order to fit inconspicuously with the grey roof. The panels will only be installed on flat roofspace – not on the pitched roofs.

The panel arrays themselves will be pitched at a shallow angle of 10-15 degrees from horizontal. This will mean that the maximum vertical height from the surface of the roof will be around 40cm.

The flat roofs at Penistone are mostly bordered by a parapet which should also minimise visibility of the panels

Policy Context

Local Plan – Urban Fabric

The proposal has been submitted through the prior notification procedure as follows:

Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J (C) of the Permitted Development Order (GPDO) which permits the installation, alteration or replacement of solar equipment on the roof of non-domestic premises

Development is not permitted if:

- 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 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 solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof and within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof;
- 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 solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument; or

- 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 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.

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.

(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.

Consultations

Conservation Officer – As you know, my concerns are the potential for visual impact and harm from areas within the conservation area or areas that are in the setting of the conservation area or the listed buildings around Nether Mill. Given the grammar school is a significant and prominent feature of the landscape setting already I was keen to ensure further development did not add to its visibility. Looking at the plans I can see the photovoltaics are mounted on the roof at a low angle and so I think it highly unlikely this will have any impact at all on the setting of Nether Mill. However, I am less clear how this would change longer distance views of the building from vantage points around where it can be seen in context with the conservation area. Its probable visibility may be reduced (the PV's are dark in tone) from further afield, but I have no real way of knowing this. The status as a prior / PD means I think it is unlikely we can ask for further visual impact assessment, but I just wanted to alert you to the fact I can't be 100% certain over this.

Penistone TC – No comments or observations.

Ward Councillors – Councillor Kitching has commented in support of the application.

Representations

The application was advertised via site notices and neighbour letters. No comments have been received

Assessment

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 building is not Listed or located in a Conservation Area and it not a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The applicant has provided sufficient details to confirm that the proposed solar panels are designed and located in accordance with the requirements of class J (c) in that the PV equipment will be located on a flat roof but will not protrude higher than 1m. Further, the electricity being generated will not exceed 1 megawatt.

The plan provided is not to scale so it is not clear if the panels would be within 1m of the roof edge, but this can be conditioned.

This leaves only the impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land (J.4(2)). Penistone Grammar is located prominently on the hillside above Penistone and is visible from areas within and around the town. The roof scape is behind a parapet, however, with the panels confirmed to not protrude above this (the parapet is 1.1m whereas the panels will be protruding 40cm at their highest point). Therefore, the panels will be screened from view in the immediate vicinity and from some longer distance views. The school is visible from the conservation area to the south but because of topography and existing development, these views are partly obscured, and the roof is less visible, with the school on higher ground in most cases. The roof and panels will be more visible from the north, where the roof of the school can be seen because of the rising topography, however as the panels will likely be tilted to face the southern aspect, glare from this direction would be minimal with the parapet and varied design of the roof providing additional screening.

The proposed is considered acceptable and prior approval granted subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Prior Approval Granted

The solar panels shall be located to be more than 1m from the roof edge.