Development Management – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: NOTICE/0022/24 Recommendation: Prior Approval not required

Site: Sussex Yacht Club, 85 - 89 Brighton Road, Shoreham-by-sea

Proposal: Notification for Prior Approval for the installation of a 27.28kWp Solar PV System on existing building rooftop.

Date of Site Visit: 18th December 2024

Neighbours Checked: Y

Additional neighbour notification: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings:

This application relates to the modern yacht club building on the north side of the River Adur, adjacent to the Shoreham footbridge. The application seeks a determination as to whether prior approval is required for the proposed installation of a PV array on the roof, as required by Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the GPDO.

Part 14, Class J states that the installation of solar PV on the roof of a non domestic building is permitted development subject to various criteria, including not being higher than 1m above a flat roof and being at least 1 metre from the external edge of that roof. It is also 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.

It is also 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.

The current proposal seeks to install an array of solar panels on the pitched metal roof of the yacht club. The panels will not project more than 1m from the roof surface and will be at least 1m from the edge of the roof. The array will cover much of the roof.

Planning History:

AWDM/0709/18 - Demolition of existing clubhouse for Sussex Yacht Club and reconfiguration of site including the erection of new clubhouse on south-east part of site with car park to north-east part of site and boatyard and workshops/stores on west part of site. Realignment of vehicular access, new pedestrian entrance from west and associated landscaping and external works.

Consultations: None

Representations

1 letter of support received: Proposal fully accords with Government plans to increase energy generation by natural green sources

Relevant Planning Policies

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 15, 18, 19
National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Planning Assessment

The yacht club is a prominent and striking building on the riverfront and is very visible from the footbridge and the south side of the river. The solar panels will therefore be a very visible addition to the roof of the building. The roof is metal and the building has a contemporary appearance. It is in the Conservation Area and is in the foreground of views of St Mary's Church further to the north. While the panels will be visible, they are to be sited on a modern building and will lie flat on the roof with a low profile. They are not considered to be visually harmful.

With regard to glare, a similar application in Worthing (NOTICE/0012/22) contained the following supporting information which is considered to be relevant here:

"*Light reflectance from light coloured roofs most typically found on factory and warehouse type buildings is many times higher than from the surfaces of solar panels which are designed to absorb the maximum amount of light, not reflect it, therefore a roof covered with solar panels will appear darker than one without in most cases.*

The other factor to consider is that basic physics states that the angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflection for light falling on a planar surface, so for a visual receptor to experience glare or glint from solar panels at the roof pitches most typically used for industrial buildings in the UK the person experiencing such an effect will almost certainly be looking almost directly at the sun itself and

consequently the glare will be from this much brighter and larger source rather than any reflection off of surfaces. Alternatively they will be looking down at the surface of the roof from an elevated position."

In this case the panels are to be sited on an existing metal roof and the amount of glare is not expected to be significant.

Recommendation

Prior Approval is not required

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation N

Case Officer: Peter Barnett Date: 16 January 2025

Authorised by: Jo Morin Date: 17.01.2025