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South Tyneside Council,
Town Hall & Civic Offices,
Westoe Road,
South Shields,
Tyne & Wear,
NE33 2RL

Application for determination of prior approval

09 October 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Notification of prior approval for the installation of Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the roofs of Mortimer Community College, Reading Road, South Shields NE33 4UG.

We are aware that whilst the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 under Part 14 Class J allows for permitted development of solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 1 megawatt on the roofs of non-domestic buildings, there are several restrictions, limitations and conditions.

These have been considered and are addressed below:

- To show that the proposed installation does constitute permitted development and
- To assist in the prior approval process.

This notification is therefore accompanied by:

- 00 Prior Notification Approval
- 01 Design and Access Supporting Statements
- 02 Proposed design
- 03 Site & Building location plan
- 04 Arrangement of panels
- 05 Supporting images
- 06 Roof Cross Section
- 07 Example of a standard panel data sheet
- 08 Anti-glare Declaration

solar for schools

Permitted development assessment:

Given that the solar panels would be installed on the pitched roofs of the school buildings (see Proposed design 02), the proposed development can be considered under Part 14, Class J (c,) as *"the installation, alteration or replacement of other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building"*.

Site

Mortimer Community College is located in South Shields. Its buildings sit to one end of the site which is primarily playing fields. Playing fields lie to the South East of the school buildings and the college has a neighbouring primary school. The main college building has a contemporary look and its buildings are much taller than the surrounding two-storey homes that line Reading Road.

So although certain roof sections for the proposed installation can be seen, they are much taller than other surrounding buildings and face a different direction: the anti-glare coated panels will be aligned according to the existing direction of the roof and not incident towards residing properties or roadways. The presence of anti-glare coating on the proposed solar arrays greatly reduces the chance of glint and glare. In the off chance glare is experienced, it would be to such an extent to not be materially different from when seeing the sun and therefore under no circumstances will affect their living standard.

It is also considered that the proposed installation would only enhance the school building and appeal of being a modern learning centre looking towards the future and creating a vision of sustainability for students.

Neither the college building, nor its curtilage, are in a Conservation Area, National Park, AONB or a World Heritage site.

Description of the proposed development

It is proposed to install around 717 solar photovoltaic panels on the pitched and flat roofs, with a total generation capacity of about 325kWp. The proposed installation will help the school in its ambition to maximise on the potential of on-site for zero-carbon electricity generation as part of its wider decarbonisation strategy.

Design of the proposed development

The layout of the panels of the proposed installation are spatially arranged in such a way that the appearance will be adhering to permitted development and prior notice requirements.

A. One metre margin and protrusion no greater than 0.2 metres
B. Below 1MW

(A) One metre roof margin and protrusion greater than 0.2 metres

To comply with permitted development and prior notice criteria, the layout of the panels on the flat and pitched roof areas are spatially arranged in such a way that the solar panels would be offset by at least 1 metre from the external edge of the roofs (Arrangement of panels 04) and will

not protrude on the pitched roofs or be higher on the flat roofs than the criteria specified for permitted development.

For the flat roofs, the panels will be mounted to the roof structure using seam clamps that rest on padding to protect the underlying roof membrane set at an angle of 10 degrees. To comply with permitted development J.1 Part (C) and Part (B): "the solar panels would need to be off-set by at least 1 metre from the external edges (Arrangement of panels 04) and not be higher than 1 metre above the highest point of the roof (excluding chimneys)". In fact, according to the proposed tilt of the panels they will be less than 0.3 metres high (Roof cross section 06) and so J1. Part (C) and Part (B) will be complied with.

For the tiled roofs, the panels will be mounted on roof hooks to fasten a series of rails to the roof, with panels then being mounted on to these rails and for the seam roofs, the panels will be mounted on seam roof clamps to fasten a series of rails to the roof, with the panels then being mounted on to these rails. To comply with permitted development J.1 Part (A): "the panels of the proposed installation will not protrude more than 0.2 meters beyond the plane of the existing pitched roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof" and Part (C): "the solar panels would need to be off-set by at least 1 metre from the external edges of the roof" (Arrangement of panels 04); so Part 14 J.1 (A) & (C) will be complied with.

(B) Below the 1MW size

With around 717 panels and a total capacity to generate around 325kWp of renewable solar electricity, the design also falls well within the 1 megawatt permitted under the legislation for a solar PV installation to be recognised as permitted development on a school. Please note that the exact number and total capacity will depend on the panels and their wattage at the time of installation, but the installation will only be on the roof areas indicated and any change will be 'de minimus' i.e. of such a small scale to not be materially different to this prior notification.

Notification of Prior Approval

Although the installation is classed as permitted development, under Class J (c.) the development requires Prior Approval from the Local Planning Authority as the 717 panels and capacity of around 325kWp, is greater than the permitted development capacity of 50kWp. As such please find more details as to

A. Design and external appearance of the development and in particular,
B. Impact on neighbouring land users and the likely impact of glare and glint

(A) Design and Appearance

The panels on the flat roof structure will be mounted using seam clamps at an angle of 10 degrees. The panels on the pitched tiled roofs will be mounted on roof hooks to fasten a series of rails to the roof, with panels then being mounted on to these rails and for the seam roofs the panels will be mounted on seam roof clamps to fasten a series of rails to the roof, with the panels then being mounted

on to these rails. As shown on the Roof Cross Section Drawing (06), will not protrude more than 0.2 meters beyond the plane of the existing pitched roof slope.

The solar panels would therefore be of a standard design and appearance (see attachment 07), complementary to the character of the school buildings. The visual appearance of the solar panels is considered appropriate and positive for the school buildings:

- enhancing the visionary appearance of the site as an up-to-date centre for learning while creating responsible citizens for tomorrow's world with an appreciation for their surroundings and a duty of care towards the environment.
- The panels could therefore have a very positive impact on the character of the building, while having no identifiable detrimental impact on the surrounding area.

(B) Impact on Neighbouring land occupants

Considering the position of the college roofs, and the difference in height between the buildings, although the proposed panels can be seen from certain vantage points any likelihood of glint and glare towards the neighbouring and adjacent land users and occupiers from the proposed installation will be highly unlikely as the panels where seen are not incident towards an individual's line of sight or are too far away. The presence of anti-glare coating further reduces the possibility for glare.

In the event of glint and glare occurring, it would be at such a small scale to not be different from when seeing the Sun daily and hence would easily be overshined so as to not be detrimental towards their living.

Summary

In summary, the proposed scheme to install around 325kWp of solar on the roofs of Mortimer Community College meets with the criteria for permitted development under Part 14 Class J (c) of the Town and County (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Class J (c) is subject to prior approval by the Local Planning Authority and therefore, the necessary information required for prior approval also accompanies this notification. This includes evidence to show:

- the suitability of design and appearance of the proposed installation
- that it will have a positive impact on the character of the building
- that no overall detrimental impact on neighbouring land users is expected

We would be grateful for your written prior approval towards the proposal of this installation.

Yours faithfully,

Ardesh Sarangam
Planning Project Manager
Solar Options for Schools Limited