

Item No. 9**SCHEDULE C**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/09/05123/TP
LOCATION	Linslade Lower School, Leopold Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 2QU
PROPOSAL	The proposal is to install 30 solar PV panels on the roof of the school in order to generate sustainable electricity. 22 of the panels will be on the flat roof and 8 units will be on the sloped roof of the older school building.
PARISH	Leighton Buzzard
WARD	Southcott
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr David Hopkin and Cllr Peter Snelling
CASE OFFICER	Mr C Murdoch
DATE REGISTERED	27 May 2009
EXPIRY DATE	22 July 2009
APPLICANT	Linslade Lower School
AGENT	
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE RECOMMENDED DECISION	The land is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council Grant Planning Permission

Site Location

Leopold Road lies off the southern side of Soulbury Road between the mainline railway to the east and the Southcott residential estate to the west. Linslade Lower School is located on the outside of a sharp bend in the road, on its western side. The site is bounded on all sides by residential properties. The school buildings are single storey and grouped in the north-eastern part of the school site. They include a hip roofed older 'early years' building adjacent the northern boundary and a flat roofed more modern main school building to the south.

The Application

Permission is sought to install two solar photovoltaic panel arrays on the roofs of the school buildings. Constructed of silicon crystals and framed in aluminium and stainless steel, each panel would measure 1.3m wide by 0.9m high. The larger array, on the main school building, would comprise two parallel rows of eleven panels with a 3m gap between each row. Here, to enable the panels to face south they would be mounted on an aluminium and stainless steel framework and inclined at an angle of 30 degrees. The smaller array, on the 'early years' building, would comprise two rows of four panels affixed to the south-facing roof slope.

RELEVANT POLICIES:**National Policies (PPG & PPS)**

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development.

Supplement to PPS1 - Planning and Climate Change.

PPS22 - Renewable Energy.

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

Policy SS1 - Achieving Sustainable Development.

Policy ENV7 - Quality in Built Environment.

Policy ENG1 - Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance.

Policy ENG2 - Renewable Energy Targets.

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005)

Strategic Policy 3 - Sustainable Communities.

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

Policy BE8 - Design and environmental considerations.

Planning History

SB/CC/79/0051	Permission for temporary double classroom.
SB/CC/84/0465	Permission for temporary classroom.
SB/CC/93/0002	Permission for construction of additional parking area.
SB/TP/05/0321	Permission for external covered play area.
SB/CC/0143	Permission for three timber shelters and cycle racks.

Representations:

(Parish & Neighbours)

Leighton-Linslade Town Council Representations awaited.

Neighbours No representations received.

Consultations/Publicity responses

No representations received.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of development
2. Impact on character and appearance of buildings and surrounding area

Considerations

1. Principle of development

Planning Policy Statement 22 (Renewable Energy) states that small-scale projects can provide a limited but valuable contribution to overall outputs of renewable energy and to meeting local needs and that local planning authorities should not therefore reject planning applications simply because the level of output is small. PPS22 states further that local planning authorities should specifically encourage small-scale renewable energy schemes, such as solar panels and photovoltaic cells, through positively expressed policies in local development documents.

The applicant advises that the reasons for wishing to install the solar panels are as follows:-

- to educate the pupils regarding renewable energy and climate change;
- to enable the school to obtain a proportion of its energy from a renewable source;
- the panels would act as a beacon for renewable energy within the local community.

Clearly, the proposal accords with national guidance in PPS22 and it is considered that, at the local level, there would be educational, economic and environmental benefits that would accrue from the installation of the solar panels.

2. Impact on character and appearance of buildings and surrounding area

The larger array on the flat roof would have a maximum height of 0.5m. It is considered that the panels here would have a minor visual impact, as they would not be particularly visible from ground level. Furthermore, there are already features on this roof that are more than 0.5m high. The smaller array on the hipped roof would be visible from Leopold Road. The panels would have a dark blue, non-shiny finish and would be viewed against the grey slates of the roof. It is considered that the colour contrast between the panels and the slates would not be unduly jarring. Accordingly, the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the school buildings and on the surrounding area would be acceptable.

Roof mounted solar panels are becoming an accepted feature of the urban roofscape and are likely to become more common on residential properties in particular, given the likely increase in energy costs and the permitted development rights available to householders.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following:

- 1 The development shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.
REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 This permission relates only to the details shown on Drawing No. 09/LLS/001 received 18/05/09 and the Site Location Plan and the Block Plan received 27/05/09 or to any subsequent appropriately endorsed revised plan.
REASON: To identify the approved plans and to avoid doubt.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with Article 22 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as Amended), the Council hereby certify that the proposal as hereby approved conforms with the relevant policies of the Development Plan comprising of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (the East of England Plan and the Milton

Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review and material considerations do not indicate otherwise. The policies which refer are as follows:

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

- Policy SS1 - Achieving Sustainable Development.
- Policy ENV7 - Quality in Built Environment.
- Policy ENG1 - Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance.
- Policy ENG2 - Renewable Energy Targets.

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005)

Strategic Policy 3 - Sustainable Communities.

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 - Design and Environmental Considerations.

2. In accordance with Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as Amended), the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011 (BSP) and the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR).
3. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

DECISION

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