

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Whitley

App Ref: PL/25/0651 Prior approval Part 14 Class J: Installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises

Address: WHITLEY WOOD FIRE STATION, 270 WHITLEY WOOD ROAD, READING, RG2 8FS

Proposal: Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Installation, Alteration or Replacement of other Solar Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the Roofs of Non-domestic Buildings. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J

Applicant: Miss Sophie Fox

Received date: 01/05/2025

Target Decision date: 03/07/2025

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal, submitted on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, is Whitley Wood Fire Station, a specialist training facility and community asset located within Whitley Ward. The site is located on the eastern side of Basingstoke Road and at the junction of Whitley Wood Road and Vernon Crescent. Whitley Wood fire station comprises a number of buildings including an existing training building at the rear of the site, storage buildings with access onto Whitley Wood road for their specialist vehicles and fire engines, the fire station, a fire house structure at the front of the site for training, fuel and LPG tanks. Planning permission was granted to demolish the existing training centre and portacabin office on the site and replace them with a new training building.

The site is in close proximity to the M4 motorway and the A33 Basingstoke Road. Buildings on site are not listed or located within a conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Installation, Alteration or Replacement of other Solar Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the Roofs of Non-domestic Buildings. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J to be installed on the main office and storage building.

Plans Considered

5229549-502 Whitley Wood fire station proposed site plan

8242692839417232 Designer report – PV markup, solar edge, Sept 2023

24/1994/WW/E/02 Proposed Electrical Services Layout ground floor

As submitted 1 May 2025

DMxxxM10RT-B54HBW, 445-465W, infinity RT, n-type product specification

As submitted 15 May 2025

5229549-1000-01 Whitley Wood Fire Station Proposed PV elevations South East & North West

5229549-1000-02 Whitley Wood Fire Station Proposed PV elevations South West & North East

As submitted 29 May 2025

Relevant planning history

90/00992/RG Fire station and garage with drill yard and fire/smoke house GRANTED 10/1991.

91/00934/REG3 Erection of a Training Centre for Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. OBSEN - 9.01.92.

92/00749/REG3 Erection of three storey training block for fire station. OBSEN - 5.11.92 02/00132/FUL

Installation of modular office accommodation to the west of the main fire station building. Permitted

09/04/2002. 04/01014/FUL Extension of warehouse facility and conversion to operational vehicle bay, plus new link between buildings. Permitted 01/010/2004

231841 Demolition of the existing training centre and portacabin office on the site and its replacement with a new training building, relocation of existing fuel and LPG tanks together with associated development. Permitted 15/05/2024

3. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed in the vicinity of the proposal.

No letters of representation have been received.

4. EQUALITIES ACT 2010

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Under Class J, Part 14 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) (England) Order 2015, as amended, the following is permitted development:

J. 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.

In assessing these issues, officers must have regard to the NPPF as if the application were a planning application, and also have regard to the Local Development Framework (the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6. APPRAISAL

To comply with Class J, the following are considered:

Development not permitted

J.1 Development is not permitted by Class J if—

*(a) 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; **Complies***

*(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 1 metre above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney); **Complies***

*(c)the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof; **Complies***

*(e)the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument; or **Complies***

*(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. **Complies***

J.2 Development is not permitted by Class J(a) or (b) if—

*(a)the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall and would protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the wall when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the wall; **Not applicable.***

*(b)the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall and within 1 metre of a junction of that wall with another wall or with the roof of the building; or **Not applicable.***

*(c)in the case of a building on article 2(3) land, the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall which fronts a highway. **Not applicable.***

Conditions

J.4—(1) 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 **Complies***

*(b)the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed. **Condition recommended to this effect.***

7. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the above, the proposed installations, part on an sloping roof and part on a flat roof comply with the requirements of Class J of the General Permitted Development Order (2015) as amended, and is therefore recommended for approval.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Prior Approval Given.