



Planning and Design and Access Statement

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Proposed Roof Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation

Music School and Performing Arts Centre, Hurstpierpoint College, College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9JS

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the installation of roof mounted solar photovoltaic equipment at the Music School and Performing Arts Centre, Hurstpierpoint College, College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9JS.

The proposed development comprises the installation of roof mounted solar photovoltaic units to the southern pitched roofs of the existing Music School and Performing Arts Centre, together with photovoltaic units to the eastern part of the flat roof of the Performing Arts Centre, in order to generate renewable electricity for on-site consumption and to assist in reducing the College's operational carbon emissions and reliance on imported electricity.

This statement should be read alongside the submitted application form, site location plan, existing and proposed roof plans, elevations, and manufacturer's product information.

The proposal relates to the installation of photovoltaic units to the southern pitched roofs of the Music School and Performing Arts Centre, together with photovoltaic units to the eastern part of the flat roof of the Performing Arts Centre, as shown on the submitted drawings and supporting information.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

Hurstpierpoint College is a long-established educational campus located at College Lane, Hurstpierpoint. The application building is the existing Music School and Performing Arts Centre, a modern educational building within the wider college campus.

The host building is a contemporary non-domestic structure with a series of roof planes capable of accommodating a roof mounted solar photovoltaic installation without requiring significant alteration to the form of the building. The proposal utilises the existing roofscape and does not involve any extension to the building footprint.

The wider college campus contains a mixture of historic and modern buildings set within a landscaped educational environment. The application proposal is limited to the addition of solar panels on the existing southern pitched roof slopes and part of the eastern flat roof area of the Performing Arts Centre, together with associated inverter and electrical equipment necessary for operation of the system.

3.0 The Proposed Development

The proposal comprises the installation of a roof mounted solar photovoltaic array with a total installed capacity of 80.08 kWp.

The submitted proposal confirms that the scheme comprises:

- 176 no. Trina Solar 455W Vertex S+ dual glass N-type i-TOPCon solar modules;
- 1 no. Solis 80kW three phase solar inverter with logger;
- mounting rails, clamps, isolators, DC cabling, metering and associated ancillary equipment;
- bird exclusion measures to pitched roof areas; and
- associated testing, commissioning and grid application works.

The submitted performance estimate identifies an estimated annual electricity production of approximately 83,630 kWh per annum.

The solar modules are proposed to be fixed to the existing roof planes and, as shown on the submitted drawings, are to be arranged in a neat and ordered pattern aligned with the geometry of the host roof slopes and the eastern part of the flat roof area.

4.0 Legislative and Planning Context

The application is submitted as a full planning application.

Whilst the proposal relates to roof mounted solar equipment on existing non-domestic buildings, the development is not advanced as permitted development under Schedule

2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended. The application buildings are modern structures, but they are located within the curtilage of a listed building, and the proposed photovoltaic installation includes units to part of the flat roof of the Performing Arts Centre which are visible in views from the listed building and its surroundings. The proposal has therefore been prepared and assessed through the full planning application route.

The application has been considered having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, including:

- the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 to 2031 (adopted 2018), in particular policies relating to character and design, heritage, sustainable design and renewable energy;
- the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan, including Policy HurstC5 relating to Hurstpierpoint College; and
- the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.0 Planning Assessment

The key planning issues arising from the proposal are considered to be:

- the effect on the character and appearance of the host buildings and the wider campus;
- the effect on the setting of the listed building and the significance of nearby heritage assets;
- the effect on visual amenity and any potential glare impacts; and
- the wider sustainability and public benefits arising from the development.

The proposed photovoltaic installation has been designed to follow the geometry of the existing southern pitched roof slopes and to occupy only part of the eastern flat roof area of the Performing Arts Centre. The development does not involve any increase in the building footprint, does not create additional enclosed accommodation, and does not materially alter the massing or overall form of the host buildings.

The array has been arranged in an orderly and coherent manner so that it reads as a planned sustainability intervention rather than a visually fragmented addition. On the pitched roofs, the panels sit parallel with the existing roof slopes. On the flat roof, the panels are confined to the eastern part of the roof area and remain subservient to the host building.

Given the modern character of the application buildings and the functional educational setting in which they are located, the proposal is considered appropriate in design terms. The works represent a modest and proportionate alteration to the roofscape which supports the ongoing operational use of the College.

6.0 Design and Visual Impact

The proposal is modest in physical terms when considered against the scale of the existing Music School and Performing Arts Centre and the wider college campus. The development does not introduce new built form at ground level and does not materially alter the established bulk, massing or footprint of the building.

The principal visual effect arises from the introduction of dark photovoltaic panels on the existing roofscape. However, the submitted proposal has been designed so that the panels sit parallel with the roof slopes where mounted on pitched roofs, with additional panels confined to the eastern part of the flat roof of the Performing Arts Centre, appearing as a coherent group rather than as a visually fragmented or ad hoc addition.

The use of a high quality proprietary panel system is also relevant. The Trina Vertex S+ modules are slimline units with anti-reflective coated glass, a black anodised aluminium frame and a low profile form appropriate for rooftop deployment. These characteristics assist in limiting visual prominence and reducing reflective effects.

At longer range, the proposal will be read as a functional and expected sustainability upgrade to an existing modern educational building. Within the context of the college campus, which includes a range of contemporary and utilitarian structures, the development is considered entirely appropriate.

The proposal therefore preserves the character of the host building and does not result in material harm to the appearance of the wider area.

7.0 Glare and Amenity

In this case, the proposal is considered acceptable in glare and amenity terms for the following reasons:

1. The panels to the pitched roofs are to be mounted flush with the existing roof slopes rather than on steeply angled frames, thereby limiting the potential for abnormal reflection. Panels to the flat roof are confined to part of the roof area and are intended to remain low in profile.
2. The proposed module specification incorporates anti-reflective coated glass, which is specifically intended for photovoltaic use and is materially different in character from highly reflective glazing.
3. The host building is an existing non-domestic building within a developed school campus rather than an isolated building in open countryside, and the visual context is therefore already one of built form and managed activity.
4. The proposed equipment is roof mounted at high level and does not create overlooking, overbearing impact, noise disturbance or loss of privacy.

5. Solar PV equipment is specifically intended to absorb, rather than reflect, solar radiation as part of its operation.

Having regard to the panel specification, roof mounted arrangement and campus context, it is considered that any additional glare effects would be limited and would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity or the wider setting of the site.

8.0 Heritage Considerations

The wider Hurstpierpoint College campus includes heritage assets and buildings of historic interest. The application buildings are modern structures dating from after 1948 and are not themselves listed buildings. However, they are located within the curtilage of a listed building, and the proposal has therefore been assessed having regard to its potential effect on heritage significance and setting.

The proposal does not involve alteration to listed fabric, demolition, excavation, or substantial intervention in any historic structure. The works are limited to the installation of photovoltaic units on the roofs of existing modern buildings within the college campus.

In visual terms, the development will be experienced as a limited roofscape intervention on existing educational buildings. The principal impact arises from the appearance of dark photovoltaic panels on the southern pitched roofs and, to a more limited degree, on part of the eastern flat roof of the Performing Arts Centre. The proposed flat roof photovoltaic units on the eastern side of the Performing Arts Centre may be visible in limited longer-distance views from the listed building, principally in views from the north-east side of the Senior School building. However, the separation distance between the heritage asset and the proposed flat roof photovoltaic units is in excess of 100 metres. In addition, the flat roof photovoltaic units are set at a shallow inclination of approximately 22 degrees to optimise performance, which assists in keeping the array relatively low in profile within the wider campus setting. Even where visible from the listed building or within its surroundings, the panels would be seen in the context of existing modern campus buildings and as part of a modest sustainability upgrade.

The proposal does not compete with the form, scale, or architectural detailing of the listed building. Nor does it erode the appreciation of the listed building as the principal heritage asset within its setting. Any effect on setting is considered to be very limited and would amount to less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum.

That limited level of impact must also be weighed against the clear public benefits of the proposal, including carbon reduction, renewable energy generation, reduced operational energy demand, and the ongoing sustainable improvement of the College estate.

Overall, the proposal is considered to give rise to very limited less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building, and that limited harm is clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.

9.0 Sustainability and Public Benefits

The proposal would deliver clear sustainability and operational benefits.

The submitted scheme would provide 80.08 kWp of installed solar generation capacity and is estimated to generate approximately 83,630 kWh of renewable electricity each year. This represents a meaningful reduction in grid electricity demand and supports the transition of the college estate towards lower carbon operation.

The submitted performance estimate also identifies a significant annual carbon saving associated with the system. In addition to the environmental benefits, the proposal will contribute to reduced operating costs for the College over the life of the installation and improve the resilience of the estate against future energy price increases.

The proposal is therefore wholly consistent with national and local planning objectives which support renewable energy generation, climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

In educational terms, the proposal also carries wider institutional benefit by visibly embedding sustainable infrastructure within the school estate and supporting the long-term function of Hurstpierpoint College as an established educational institution and local employer.

10.0 Relevant Local Planning Considerations

Policy HurstC5 of the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Neighbourhood Plan supports development within the environs of Hurstpierpoint College where it does not detract from the special architectural character and appearance of the existing collection of buildings and their landscape setting, conserves or enhances the character and appearance of listed buildings, complies with countryside policy requirements, and enhances the role of the College as a school and local employer.

The present proposal satisfies those objectives. It is a low impact sustainability intervention to an existing operational school building. It does not extend the developed footprint of the campus, does not introduce an incongruous built form, and directly supports the ongoing use and improvement of the College.

Similarly, the proposal aligns with adopted District Plan policies relating to character and design, heritage, sustainable design and construction, and renewable energy. The

development represents an appropriate environmental upgrade to an existing building and should be supported on that basis.

11.0 Conclusion

This statement demonstrates that the proposed roof mounted solar photovoltaic installation at the Music School and Performing Arts Centre, Hurstpierpoint College, is acceptable in planning terms.

The proposal:

- provides a significant renewable energy installation on existing non-domestic buildings;
- has been designed to sit neatly and discreetly on the existing roofscape;
- is not considered to cause unacceptable visual impact or material harm to the amenity of the area;
- is not considered to result in unacceptable glare or adverse impact on neighbouring occupiers;
- gives rise to very limited less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building, which is outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme; and
- delivers clear sustainability, operational and educational benefits.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted.

Application Document Attached

The following supporting documents accompany the submission:

Drawings

- **727 AL98;** Location Plan
- **727 AL99;** Existing Block Plan
- **727 AL100;** Existing Ground Floor Plan
- **727 AL101;** Existing First Floor Plan
- **727 AL102;** Existing Roof Plan
- **727 AL103;** Existing Elevations, Music School
- **727 AL104;** Existing Elevations, Performing Arts Centre
- **727 AL105;** Existing Elevations, Performing Arts Centre
- **727 AL200;** Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- **727 AL201;** Proposed First Floor Plan
- **727 AL202;** Proposed Roof Plan
- **727 AL203;** Proposed Elevations, Music School

- **727 AL204;** Proposed Elevations, Performing Arts Centre
- **727 AL205;** Proposed Elevations, Performing Arts Centre

Reports and Supporting Documents

- **Planning and Design and Access Statement;** Statement in support of the full planning application for the proposed roof mounted solar photovoltaic installation. Statement explaining the design rationale, site context, layout, appearance and access considerations for the proposed development.
 - **Heritage Statement;** Heritage assessment considering the effect of the proposal on the setting of the listed building.
 - **PV Unit Datasheet;** Manufacturer's technical datasheet for the proposed solar photovoltaic panels, Trina Solar Vertex S+ modules.
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