

Application No: 11/1683N

Location: UNIT DC 360, FOURTH AVENUE, CREWE

Proposal: Solar Panels to be Affixed to the Roof of an Existing Warehouse Unit

Applicant: Mr A Fornal, Juwi Renewable Energies Limited

Expiry Date: 08-Aug-2011

Date Report Prepared: 28th June 2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- Principle of Development;
- Design – Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Locality and Streetscene; and
- Impact on the Amenity of Adjacent Properties

REASON FOR REPORT

This application is to be determined by Southern Planning Committee as it is a proposal on a site area which exceeds 1ha.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is a large vacant warehouse located wholly within the settlement boundary of Crewe. The warehouse consumes a significant area which is contained by another large warehouse to the east, Fourth Avenue to the west and beyond that is a car garage, to the north are smaller industrial warehouses and to the south is the A5020 and similar warehouses beyond. Located around the periphery of the site is car parking and other ancillary structures.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application proposes the installation of solar PV panels to be located on the roof of the warehouse. There will be a total of 9,360 panels covering a large surface area of 28,511m sq roofspace. The projection of each solar panel from the roof top will be approximately 98mm and due to their location will not be visible from the public realm. This would achieve a potential annual out of 1.375 MW. The unit is currently vacant but it is considered that the production of

energy on site will raise interest in the unit given the possibility of substantially reduced energy costs.

RELEVANT HISTORY

Extensive site history across the application site, none of which are relevant to this proposal.

POLICIES

Local Plan Policy

NE.19 (Renewable Energy)
BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.2 (Design Standards)
BE.3 (Accessing and Parking)

Other Material Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS: Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1
PPS22: Renewable Energy

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

None consulted

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Not Applicable

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement

A Design and Access statement has been submitted to accompany the application. This is available on the application file and provides an understanding of the proposal and why it is required.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Policy NE.19 of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan states that development which is for the generation of renewable energy sources

will be permitted, subject to satisfying a number of criteria relating to impact on the character of the area, highway safety, the amenities of nearby properties and landscape considerations. The proposed development of solar panels is therefore acceptable in principle providing there is no significant harm to those areas identified.

Developments for renewable energy schemes which help to address climate change are encouraged in national planning guidance contained within PPS1, the Climate Change supplement to PPS1 and PPS22.

National planning guidance for renewable energy is contained in PPS 22: Renewable Energy and states that:

'Increased development of renewable energy resources is vital to facilitating the delivery of the Governments commitments on both climate change and renewable energy'.

In setting out the key principles the guidance states that *'The wider environmental and economic benefits of all proposals for renewable energy projects, whatever their scale, are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission.'* (para. 1.iv).

The main issues in this instance are therefore whether the proposed development would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the amenities of nearby properties. There are no landscape considerations due to the nature of the site and, as the proposals do not create additional floorspace and are contained within the site complex, there would be no highways implications.

Design - Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Locality and Streetscene

The application site is a large warehouse sited on the edge of Crewe in a predominately industrial/commercial area. The scale of the site means that it is visible from a wide area. The proposed solar panels (9,360), which would total approximately 28,500m² would be sited completely on the roof of the building lying flat against it. The panels will be set back from the edge of the roof by approximately 1.3m. According to the submitted plans the proposed development does not create any additional floorspace but would project by 98mm from the existing roof. The increase in bulk of the building would be imperceptible from the surrounding area. Due to the design of the host building, the roof is not visible from within the site boundaries or from the adjacent roads. The proposed solar panels, will be a dark colour in appearance, however, given that the panels are not going to be visible it is considered that the proposal would not significantly alter the overall character of the site or cause a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed development would provide significant benefits through the reduction of carbon emissions, this would outweigh any harm in the change in character and

appearance of the site.

Impact on the Amenity of adjacent properties

The proposed development covers a substantial area of roof space. There are residential properties located to the west, which are in excess of 790m away from the proposed development. The proposed development is a renewable energy source which does not generate any significant noise output. In any event, the site is a large scale industrial warehouse located adjacent to similar buildings. It is considered given the separation distances, intervening building and due to the nature of the development there would be no other amenity issues relating to disturbance, pollution, visual intrusion or traffic generation.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development is for a largescale solar panel installation on top of Unit DC 360, which is a large vacant warehouse. The scheme would provide significant environmental and economic benefits. The setting and nature of the site would mean that the proposed development would not cause any significantly detrimental harm on the character and appearance of the area. There would be no amenity issues arising from the proposed development. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policies NE.19 (Renewable Energy), BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards) and BE.3 (Access and Parking) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 and guidance contained within PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS: Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to PPS1 and PPS22: Renewable Energy

Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard Time Limit**
- 2. Plan References**
- 3. Materials as Submitted**

