



DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:

DC/26/1098

Ashurst Church of England School, School Lane, Ashurst, Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AY

DESCRIPTION:

Installation of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. (Full Application).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/06/1587	Removal of 2 internal walls (Listed Building Consent)	Application Permitted on 24.08.2006
DC/25/0672	Installation of 2no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. (Full Application).	Application Permitted on 10.07.2025
DC/25/0673	Installation of 2no. air source heat pumps to the rear of the school and associated works, including provision of new metal mesh fence with access gate between heat pumps and the existing external cabin. (Listed Building Consent).	Application Permitted on 10.07.2025
DC/25/1610	Installation of new internal loft hatch within headmaster's office. (Listed Building Consent).	Application Permitted on 16.12.2025
DC/26/1099	Installation of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. (Listed Building Consent).	Under Consideration

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located on the northern side of the School Lane. The main property is a detached school which has been extended in 2000. The original building is a Grade II listed building, built in 1870, is the Former School Master House.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for the installation of 14 all-black rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. The PV array will be mounted on a rail system and positioned on the south facing slate roof of the school building that adjoins the listed School Master's House.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection

Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development

Policy 33 - Development Principles

Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):

Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change

Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use

Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality

Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES

Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Conservation: Object: -

The proposed panels would appear as a modern addition to the building, and due to their materials would stand out against the slate roof. Although black panels are more like the slate tiled roof of the school's extension in colour than tradition blue panels, they would still stand out as they do not have the weathered, individuality of tiles. The panels would detract from the genteel form of the building as a whole including in views of the School Masters House, particularly as the panels are on the most prominent and sensitive roofslope. The panels would therefore cause harm to the significance of the listed building.

Representations:

None received.

Parish Comments:

None received.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

Policy 37 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) states that proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development. To deliver sustainable design, development should incorporate measures that, among other things, maximise energy efficiency and integrate the use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy. Policies 35 and 36 of the HDPF state that all development will be required to contribute to clean, efficient energy, including the use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy supply systems.

Policy CC1 of the NPPF states that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating climate change and supporting the transition to net zero.

The use of renewable energy resources are supported by national and local planning policy, with increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies helping to secure a reliable energy supply and also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is therefore considered that the principle of the development is acceptable, subject to all other material considerations.

Design, Appearance and Heritage

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF seek to ensure that development promotes a high standard and quality of design in order to enhance and protect locally distinctive characters. The policies also seek to ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of development relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views.

Policy 34 of the HDPF aims to maintain that development should preserve, and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.

Section HE5 of the NPPF (2026) states that *'When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance'* (1). *'Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported'* (2) and *'Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight'*, which should be considered in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of policy HE5 (3).

Ashurst Primary School original building was a former School Master's house that forms the principal listed building, with the single storey Victorian school attached to the east. The buildings are intrinsically linked and although the listing description notes that the main school is not of special interest, it is an attractive building that sits comfortably with the curtilage of the school master's house. Therefore, changes to the building would be viewed in the context of the listed building and would be sensitive to its position.

The proposed panels would appear as a modern addition to the building, and due to their materials would stand out against the slate roof. The visual impact would though be somewhat mitigated by the use of black panels and their siting on the main part of the school building which is specifically stated in the list description as not being of special interest. As a result of these factors, it is considered that while the solar panels would clearly be seen alongside the School Master's house, they would not result in harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. Notwithstanding the above, even if harm were identified, it is considered that the orientation of the site is such that there are no apparent alternative locations which would be more preferable, and the public benefit derived from enabling energy efficiency would represent a clear public benefit which would weigh in favour of the proposal. The proposal is considered to accord with the above policies.

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The siting and layout of the proposed solar panels and the resulting relationship with adjacent properties would be sufficient to prevent any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity, in accordance with the above policy.

Water Neutrality:

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development would result in a more intensive occupation of the dwelling necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 180 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024. This application is exempted from the statutory requirement to demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity as the development is below 0.2 hectares.

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Regulatory Condition:** The solar panels hereby permitted shall be installed in accordance with the approved details. In the event of the solar panels ceasing to be used, they shall be removed from the roof, and the roof made good, as soon as is reasonably practicable and no later than six months after the cessation of their use.

Reason: To ensure that the significance of the designated heritage asset, and the character, appearance and integrity of the building, is not prejudiced, thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to comply with Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Biodiversity Net Gain Condition

Based on the information submitted in the planning application documents, the Planning Authority considers that this permission is exempt from biodiversity net gain, and as such does not require approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **approved:**

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date
Location & Site plan		25-8021-01/DWG-001 REV A	05.08.2026
Plans	Existing Site and Elevations	25-8021-01/DWG-002 REV A	05.08.2026
Plans	Proposed Site and Elevations	25-8021-01/DWG-003 REV A	05.08.2026

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Halima Chowdhury Date: 30.09.2026

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 30.09.2026