

APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL – PART 14 CLASS J CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/02759
APPLICATION TYPE:	Prior Approval Part 14 Class J: Installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises
SITE ADDRESS:	Ministry of Defence, Building 406, Westwells Road, Corsham, SN13 9GB
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Installation of a 100.98 kWp Solar PV system (198 x 510Wp PV panels) on the roof-top of Building 406.
RECOMMENDATION:	That Prior Approval is Not Required

PROPOSAL

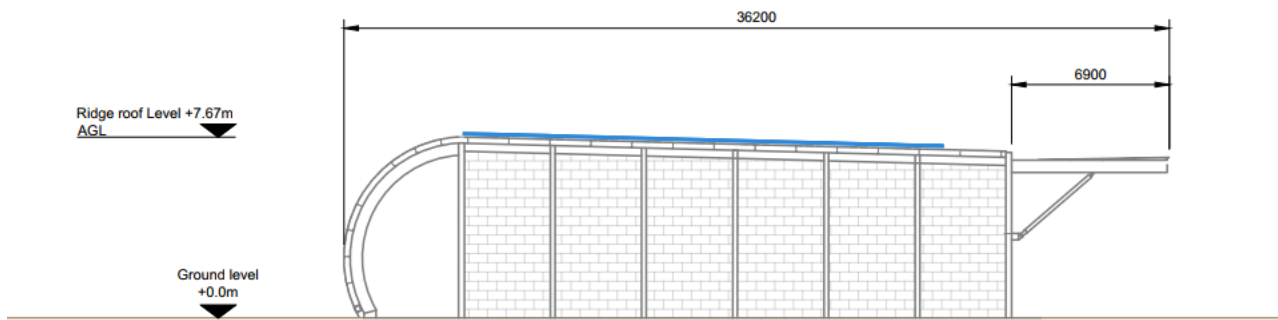
The proposal seeks prior approval under Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) for the installation of roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) equipment on existing non-domestic Building 406, Westwells Road, Corsham, SN13 9GB

The proposed development comprises the installation of a roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system on Building 406, located at Westwells Road, Corsham.

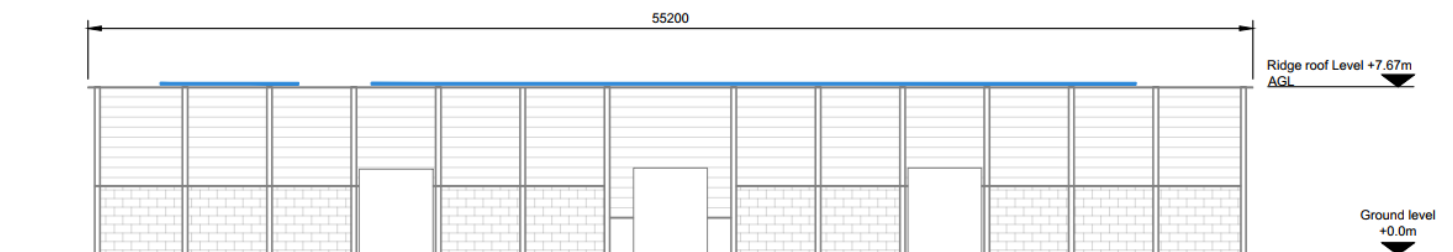
The system would consist of 198 solar panels with a total installed capacity of approximately 100.98 kWp. Below – extract of submitted proposed site plan showing the PV layout:



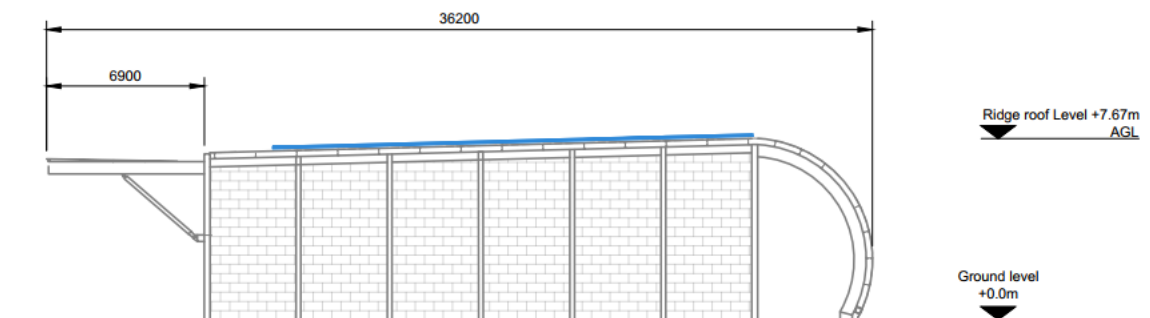
The panels would be mounted on the existing roof using a low-rise mounting system. The submitted plans indicate that the panels would be arranged across the roof slopes of the building and installed in a manner that follows the profile of the existing roof form as shown on the submitted elevations, extracts below:



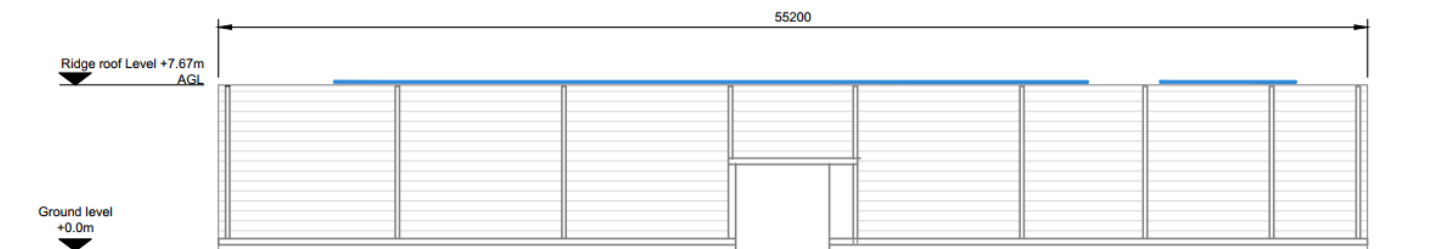
PROPOSED SITE ELEVATION A



PROPOSED SITE ELEVATION B



PROPOSED SITE ELEVATION C



PROPOSED SITE ELEVATION D

The plans show that the roof is gently pitched, and the panels would not be within 1m of the edge of the roof.

SITE DESCRIPTION / CONTEXT

The building is within an MOD site on Westwells Road, south west of the market town of Corsham. An extract of the submitted location plan is below, with the building outlined in red. The building is also indicated in red on the aerial photograph of the area, below:



The building can be seen from Westwells Road, as indicated by the red arrow on the google street view image below:



PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to this application.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

This application is assessed under Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), which grants planning permission for certain types of development described in Schedule 2 of the Order. The grant of permission is subject to the limitations, conditions, and provisions set out within the relevant Classes of permitted development.

Under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), certain forms of development relating to the installation or alteration of solar equipment may be permitted subject to prior approval from the Local Planning Authority.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Corsham Town Council: No objection.

“Resolved: that no objection be raised.”

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was publicised by site notice displayed near the site on 21.05.2026. No representations have been received at the time of writing.

PLANNING ISSUES

This submission is not a planning application, rather it is a prior notification application submitted pursuant to the Permitted Development rights enshrined within Schedule 2, Part 14 Class J of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the installation of, alteration or replacement of solar photovoltaic equipment on the roofs on non-domestic buildings. There is no requirement for planning permission for such development providing the conditions and caveats set out with Class J are satisfied. The legislation is shown below with comments related to the proposals added by the case officer in response to each section.

ASSESSMENT

Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the General Permitted Development Order (England) 2015 (hereafter referred to as the GPDO), provides permitted development rights concerning the *“installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises”*. This is stated to include 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 block of flats. The GPDO states that development would not be permitted in the following circumstances.

J.1 (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.

The proposed panels are to be installed on a pitched roof and as shown on the submitted elevations, would have a low profile. The submitted application form also confirms that no part of the solar photovoltaic equipment 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) and describes the development as being *“flush fitted to the roof using a low-rise mounting kit”*.

J.1 (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).

N/A –the panels would be sited on a pitched roof.

J.1 (c) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof and within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof.

The submitted plan demonstrates that all panels would be at least 1m from the external edge of the roof.

J.1 (d) was omitted in December 2023.

J.1 (e) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a

scheduled monument; or J.1 (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.

The site is not a scheduled monument, listed building, or located within the curtilage of a listed building.

Section J.2 concerns development specified under J (a) and (b) and subsequently all sections relate to development affixed to the wall of a building which does not apply to this application.

Section J.4 concerns conditions which apply to these permitted development rights.

J.4 (1) *States that development is permitted subject to the 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 (b) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.*

The proposed solar PV panels would be installed on the roof slopes of existing non domestic buildings and would appear as a low-profile addition. The panels would be viewed in the context of a large-scale MOD base. As such, the development would not appear visually incongruous within the established military setting and would have an acceptable impact on the external appearance of the buildings.

The requirement for removal when no longer needed is controlled by condition J.4(1)(b) of the GPDO and does not require further assessment under this application.

J.4 (2) *Class J(c) development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the design or external appearance of the development, in particular the impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land, and the following sub-paragraphs apply in relation to that application.*

In accordance with paragraph J.4(2) of Schedule 2, Part 14 of the GPDO, the local planning authority has considered the design and external appearance of the proposed development, including the potential impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land. The application site forms part of a large Ministry of Defence complex characterised by substantial operational buildings and associated infrastructure. The nearest residential property is located approximately 90 metres to the south-east of the site, with existing tree planting providing intervening screening.

The proposed solar panels would be mounted on a gently pitched roof using a low-profile system and would follow the plane of the roof slope. Given the orientation and relatively shallow pitch of the roof, the potential for glint and glare effects is considered to be limited. Furthermore, solar panels are designed to absorb, rather than reflect, light. Having regard to the separation distances, intervening vegetation and the nature of surrounding land uses, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to harmful impacts by way of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land.

J.4 (3) *The application must be accompanied by (a) a written description of the proposed development; (b) a plan indicating the site and showing the proposed development; (c) the developer's contact address; and (d) the developer's email address if the developer is content to receive communications electronically; together with any fee required to be paid.*

This condition is considered to have been complied with by virtue of this application.

J.4 (4) *The local planning authority may refuse an application where, in the opinion of the authority (a) the proposed development does not comply with, or (b) the developer has provided insufficient information to enable the authority to establish whether the proposed development complies with, any conditions, limitations or restrictions specified in Class J applicable to the development in question.*

Sufficient information has been submitted to allow the local planning authority to assess the proposal against all relevant limitations and conditions of Class J. The details demonstrate that the development falls within the scope of permitted development, and no conflict with the requirements of Part 14 has been identified. The application contains adequate plans, specifications, and descriptions to confirm full compliance, and there are no grounds to conclude that the proposal fails to meet the requirements of Class J or that insufficient information has been supplied.

J.4 (5) *Sub-paragraphs (6) and (8) do not apply where a local planning authority refuses an application under sub-paragraph (4) and for the purposes of section 78 (appeals) of the Act such a refusal is to be treated as a refusal of an application for approval.*

J.4 (6) *The local planning authority must give notice of the proposed development (a) by site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the application relates for not less than 21 days of a notice which (i) describes the proposed development; (ii) provides the address of the proposed development; (iii) specifies the date by which representations are to be received by the local planning authority; or (b) by serving a notice in that form on any adjoining owner or occupier.*

The local planning authority has fulfilled its statutory duty to publicise the proposed development by displaying the required site notice for a minimum period of 21 days. The notice set out the nature of the proposed works, identified the site address, and specified the deadline for receipt of any representations. This ensured that all interested parties were afforded a reasonable opportunity to comment. The authority has therefore complied with the publicity requirements of the GPDO, and the consultation process was undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Class J.

J.4 (7) *The local planning authority may require the developer to submit such information as the authority may reasonably require in order to determine the application.*

No further information has been considered necessary to support this assessment.

J.4 (8) *The local planning authority must, when determining an application (a) take into account any representations made to them as a result of any notice given under sub-paragraph (6); and (b) have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in July 2021, so far as relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application.*

No public representations were received, and Corsham Town Council responded to state no objection to the proposed development.

J.4 (9) *The development must not begin before the occurrence of one of the following (a) the receipt by the applicant from the local planning authority of a written notice of their determination that such prior approval is not required; (b) the receipt by the applicant from the local planning authority of a written notice giving their prior approval; or (c) the expiry of 56 days following the date on which the application under sub-paragraph (3) was received by the local planning authority without the authority notifying the applicant as to whether*

prior approval is given or refused.

J.4 (10) *The development must be carried out (a) where prior approval is required, in accordance with the details approved by the local planning authority; (b) where prior approval is not required, or where subparagraph (9)(c) applies, in accordance with the details provided in the application referred to in subparagraph (3), unless the local planning authority and the developer agree otherwise in writing.*

J.4 (11) *The local planning authority may grant prior approval unconditionally or subject to conditions reasonably related to the subject matter of the prior approval.*

J.4 (12) *When computing the number of days in paragraph (6)(a), any day which is a public holiday must be disregarded.*

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is permitted development and prior approval is not required.

RECOMMENDATION: That prior approval is not required.