



Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20230586

Location: Kimberly Clark Ltd Northfleet Mill Crete Hall Road Northfleet

Description: Installation of Solar PV System on Roof of Kimberly Clark Warehouse, Northfleet.

Applicant: Relf

Site Visit Date: 15/05/23

Submitted Documents/Plans

Site Location Plan
Site Plan
J5733_01 – External Elevations and Plan
J5733_02 - Elevations
J5733_03 – Existing Elevations
PNF 15 D – General Arrangement Section
Existing Elevations and Section
Northfleet AVO Elevation Plan
South Side Warehouse Elevations – Existing
South Side Warehouse Elevations - Existing
Proposed North and West Elevations
Proposed Elevations
South Side Warehouse Elevations - Proposed
Proposed Roof Layout
Proposed Roof Layout
Proposed Roof Layout
Proposed Roof Layouts (Scaled at 1:2000)
South Side Warehouse Elevation Plan
MOUNTING SYSTEMS FOR TRAPEZOIDAL SHEET AND CORRUGATED SHEET ROOFS
Planning Statement
Solar Panel Details (Hi-MO 5m LR5-66HIH)
Three Phase Inverter with Synergy Technology
Email confirming external materials for external staircase

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20230909	Request for Screening Opinion in Relation to land at Kimberly-Clark Northfleet Mill, Northfleet - Construction of a Green Hydrogen Electrolyser and associated infrastructure.	Pending Consideration	
20230906	Construction and operation of a 20MW Green Hydrogen Electrolyser and associated infrastructure.	Pending Consideration	

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20230265	The Electronic Communications Code (Conditions and restrictions) Regulations 2003 (as amended) - Regulation 5 Notice of Intention to- Remove and replace the existing 3no. VF antenna with new 3no. antenna. TEF antenna to remain in place. The addition of 9no. RRU's to be installed behind the glass fascia and internal refresh upgrade of cabin at ground floor level.	Permitted	30.03.2023
20191048	Refurbishment of the external facade of existing water tower by using new cladding with re-glazing.	Permitted	22.01.2020
20121045	Erection of single storey extension to existing chemical building.	Permitted	24.01.2013
20120610	Demolition of existing single storey and erection of an attached two storey building for a control room and upgrading of equipment within PM3 building.	Permitted	11.10.2002
20110158	Upgrading of existing effluent treatment plant and installation of a new water treatment plant.	Permitted	02.06.2011
20110004	Extension to existing warehouse trailer park to provide an additional 21 bays.	Permitted	13.04.2011
20050849	Erection of a pallet sorting area.	Permitted	28.11.2005
20050790	Erection of new two storey converting hall with offices on three floors at the front and conversion of existing warehouse into an extended packing hall.	Permitted	21.11.2005
20050765	Erection of sub-station switch room and transformer compound.	Permitted	21.10.2005
20050289	Erection of new gatehouse building and yankee storage building.	Permitted	09.06.2005
20041030	Erection of high bay warehouse, pulp barn and sub station to replace premises destroyed by fire including associated staff car park, lorry and trailer parking and incorporating landscaping strip.	Permitted	11.02.2005
20020900	Extension of existing canopy on Thames Roc warehouse.	Permitted	23.12.2002
20010360	Erection of a single storey wooden cabin to house air quality monitoring equipment for Tilbury Power Station.	Permitted	15.06.2001

Remaining planning history is prior to the year 2000

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS03 – Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East Opportunity Area
- CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills

- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Design and Development Principle

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving Well-designed Places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Ward Councillors: No comments received.

Environmental Protection Team:

Generally, there is no noise associated with solar panels themselves, but low frequency or a ‘humming’ noise can be associated with the inverters that connect to the PV arrays. The technical specification for the inverters has been submitted and reviewed. Based on the locations on site of the inverters (which are screened by the buildings themselves), the maximum sound levels and the distance to the nearest noise sensitive receptors (dwellings on London Road), noise is unlikely to be an issue.

Based on this, there is no objection to this application.

Neighbouring properties

A site notice was placed on 13th September 2023. 186 surrounding properties were consulted.

The final date to submit comments ended on 13th October 2023. 0 comments were received from members of the public.

Officer’s Analysis

Policy CS02 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development.

Policy CS03 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) at paragraph 4.4.30 states that the Kimberly Clark Site will be retained in employment use and proposals which expand and support their operation will be supported.

Policy CS07 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) states that when considering development proposals

support will be given to schemes incorporating small and flexible industrial and/or office workspaces of high quality intended to support the start-up and expansion of small and medium sized enterprises. Support will also be given to the refurbishment and upgrading of existing industrial and commercial premises.

Policy CS18 of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) seeks to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the borough. One key point in this policy is that the council will support proposals which lead to a reduction in carbon footprint including the retrofitting of existing homes and businesses.

Paragraph 81 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 states:

81. Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation⁴², and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.

The NPPF (2023) also identifies that the planning system should ‘*support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate...*’

Paragraph 158 of the NPPF (2023) states:

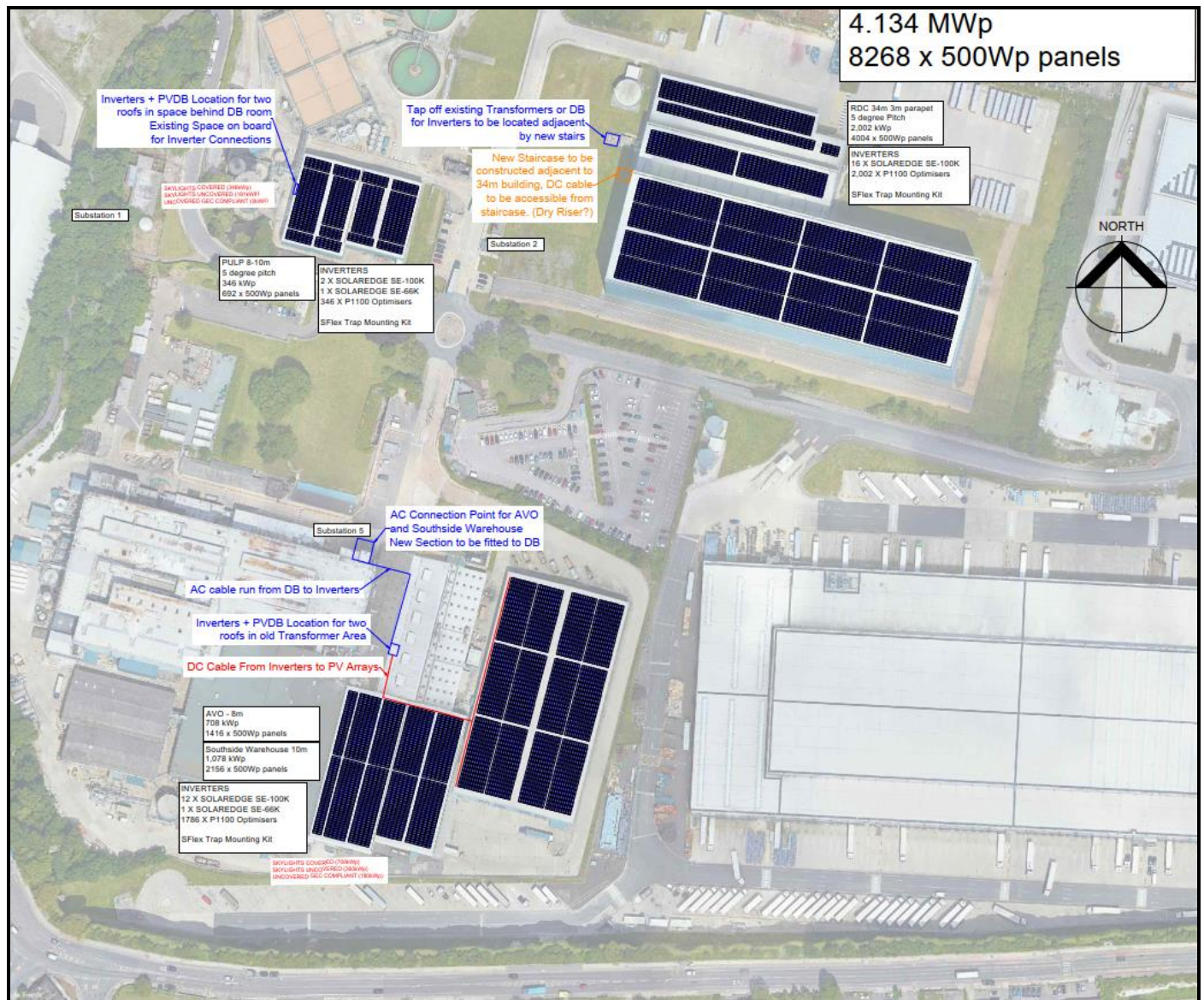
158. When determining planning applications^{53a} for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:
- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;
 - b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable⁵⁴. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas, and
 - c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site, and approve the proposal if its impacts are or can be made acceptable.

In terms of Local Planning Policy, this site is located in an urban area, which is prioritised for development as a sustainable location. The proposed solar panels would be used for the production solar energy, to support the existing paper mill industry on the site. It is a standalone, low carbon proposal which should be supported where it accords with all other policies in the plan. The support for such development is reflected within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Core Strategy Document (2014) as discussed above. It recognises that small scale projects such as this would contribute to cutting greenhouse-gas emissions and that low carbon options can contribute to meeting industry challenges in Britain which in turn would assist in ensuring that Britain is a ‘driving force for innovation’. Not only is this of benefit for environment and climate change, but it would help to create the conditions in which this local industry can invest, expand, and adapt. The proposal would clearly therefore result in a positive impact in terms of the NPPF’s economic and environmental goals, which lie at the core of the NPPF’s definition of sustainable development. In terms of the social goals, there is some community benefit, by supporting

investment and growth of local businesses, local employment is protected and created. There are residences surrounding the site and so to ensure that the social arm of sustainable development is upheld, the design should consider the impacts on the surrounding occupiers and the character and appearance of the area.

Design, Character and Appearance

The existing site has an urban, industrial appearance. The site is not in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or in a Conservation Area. The proposed solar panels would be located in three areas of the industrial site as the below image shows:



Visually the building to the north is a tall flat roofed building. Solar panels placed atop this roof would have limited visibility from the streetscene. The building further to the north behind this building are not immediately visible from the streetscene.

The buildings to the south are gable ended with pitched roof. Again, there would be reduced visibility of solar panels placed on these buildings due to the set back of the buildings from the street.

The building to the west is closer to the street than the southern buildings and solar panels would be somewhat visible on the pitched roof. However, solar panels in an urbanised area, particularly on an

industrial site with limited visual merit, would be acceptable. It is noted that the majority of panels would not be highly visible.

The plans indicate that there would be a new staircase constructed to the building to the north to ensure the cables associated with the solar panels would be accessible. The staircase would be a construction of medium scale and set away from the street and would again have limited impact on the character of the area.

On balance, the proposed development would comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2023) in terms of design, character and appearance.

Neighbouring Amenity

The site is set away from the residential area and would not result in significant impact to residential neighbours with regard to overbearing bulk, overshadowing or overlooking. However, it is noted that noise impacts should also be considered. The Environmental Protection Team were consulted and have advised that the noise from the solar panels is unlikely to have a significant adverse impact on nearby residences.

The proposal is therefore considered to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties in compliance with policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The proposed development would comply with all relevant national and local planning policies. The recommendation is to approve.

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Lisa Williams	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
Signed:		Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	20 th November 2023	Dated:	20th November 2023