

Our ref: PR4447.SC
Planning Portal ref: PP-14094095

Date: 12 June 2025

Mr Shazad Ghani
Head of Planning Services
Gravesham Borough Council
Civic Centre
Windmill Street
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 1AU

Dear Mr Ghani,

**Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015
(As amended)**

**Application for Prior Approval under Class J of Part 14 Schedule 2, for the proposed
installation of solar panels on an existing storage/security building and the recently
extended section of an existing packhouse/coldstore**

Site Address: Land at Little Mockbeggar Farm Town Road Higham ME3 8ER

Background

Prior approval is sought for the installation of the proposed solar panels on two buildings within the WB Chambers Farms Ltd holding at Little Mockbeggar Farm, Town Road, Higham Kent ME3 8ER.

For the purposes of paragraph J.4(3) of the GPDO, a written description of the development is set out below and the submitted drawings indicate the location and extent of the proposed solar panels. The Developer's contact address is WB Chambers Farms Ltd. Oakdene Farm Leeds Road Langley Maidstone Kent ME17 3LS (The Developer). However contact should be made via Graham Simpkin Planning Ltd. (address and contact details as set-out above and on the application form.)

The panels are proposed for installation following a successful application for a grant from the Rural Payments Agency by the applicants under the Improving Farm Productivity Grant Round-2 scheme.

It is a requirement of the Grant Application Process that relevant permissions and consents including planning permission have been obtained prior to the grant finance being released. This prior approval application will ensure compliance with this requirement,

The application comprises

- Supporting Letter

- Solar Panels Technical Details
- Drawing nos.
 - 4447.01 Site Location Plan
 - 4447.02 Existing Block Plan
 - 4447.03 Existing Packhouse Elevations 1 of 2
 - 4447.04 Existing Packhouse Elevations 2 of 2
 - 4447.05 Existing Storage Building Elevations
 - 4447.06 Proposed Block Plan
 - 4447.07 Proposed Packhouse Elevations 1 of 2
 - 4447.08 Proposed Packhouse Elevations 2 of 2
 - 4447.09 Proposed Storage Building Elevations

Class J of part 14 to the GPDO allows for the installation of solar equipment on non-domestic buildings subject to criteria being met and an application for prior approval being submitted.

Written Description of Development

The proposed development proposes the installation of solar panels onto the recently extended section of the existing packhouse/coldstore located on the western side of the yard and also the existing storage/security building located close to the main entrance to the farmstead from Town Road on the east side of the main yard.

The panels would be installed on the east and west facing roofs of both buildings.

The installed panels would be 'Environmental Energies : Suntech panels 420W', they would be 1722mm x 1134mm x 30 mm in size.

The panels would be sited to ensure that they are not within 1m of the external edge of the roof on either building. They would be installed so they do not project more than 0.2m (200mm) above the plane of the roof that they are installed on.

Glare

The proposed panels would be located on buildings set within the existing yard and the applicants working holding which comprises predominantly polytunnel cultivation and a number of mobile homes occupied by the applicant's employees. The holding is largely screened from nearby properties by existing landscaping including a substantial tree screen along Town Road and Two Gates Hill to the north and Lower Rochester Road.

Glare will not affect the mobile homes as they are located to the south of the buildings on which the panels are to be installed.

The nearest dwellings to the site unconnected with the applicant's holding, are 1 and 2 School Cottages located to the south east of the application buildings approximately 107m from the smaller storage/security building and 130m from the larger packhouse/coldstore. The existing landscaping and tree screen along Town Road ensures no intervisibility. It is contended that no unacceptable glare would occur.

Mockbeggar Farm is located approximately 141m north east of the two application buildings with intervening screening and planting. No glare would affect this property and the commercial units located within the wider farmstead.

'The Stables' located on the north side of Two Gates Hill is located approximately 170m directly north of the application buildings and as such the proposed panels would not face towards this property. No glare would result

Numbers 1 and 2 Rose Cottages are located to the south of the application buildings adjacent to the junction of Town Road and Lower Rochester Road approximately 235m from the application buildings. The occupiers of these properties would also not suffer from glare as a result of the proposed panels given the separation and existing landscaping and tree belts.

It is considered that the proposed panels would not result in a loss of amenity to the occupiers of nearby residential properties arising from any glare as to warrant approval for the installation of the panels being withheld in this case.

Assessment

The relevant section of the GPDO 2015 as amended in 2023 is set out below together with commentary on how the applicants' proposals meet the requirements and conditions.

Class J sets out the following parameters which if breached would not be permitted development

Development not permitted

J.1 Development is not permitted by Class J if—

(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;

CRITERION MET

(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); **NOT APPLICABLE**

(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; **CRITERION MET**

~~(d) in the case of a building on article 2(3) land, the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof slope which fronts a highway;—~~ **NO LONGER APPLICABLE**

(e) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument; or **THE SITE IS NOT A DESIGNATED ANCIENT MONUMENT**

(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 BUILDINGS ARE NOT OR WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF A LISTED BUILDING**

J.2 The criteria of paragraph J.2 are not applicable as it is not proposed to install the solar panels on a wall.

Paragraph J.4 sets out conditions which must be met for the proposed development to be permitted development.

J.4— (1) *Class J development is permitted subject to the following 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

THE PROPOSED INSTALLATION HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF ENERGY IS GENERATED MOST EFFICIENTLY AND IN THE MOST PRACTICABLE WAY. PANELS INSTALLED ON THE WALLS WOULD HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON THE EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDINGS. THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE VISUAL AMENITY OR CHARACTER OF THE WIDER AREA.

(b) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed **NOTED**

(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. **THIS APPLICATION MEETS THIS REQUIREMENT**

(3) NOTED THE REQUIREMENT OF PARAGRAPH 3 ARE MET THROUGH THE DETAILS SET OUT IN THIS SUPPORTING LETTER. THE APPLICANT WILL PAY THE APPROPRIATE FEE.

(4) to (12) inclusive CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS NOTED & WILL BE COMPLIED WITH AS NECESSARY BY THE APPLICANT.

Conclusion

The proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the appearance of the application buildings nor would they result in any unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of the area.

The proposed panels would not result in glare that would adversely affect the occupiers of adjoining land to warrant prior approval being withheld.

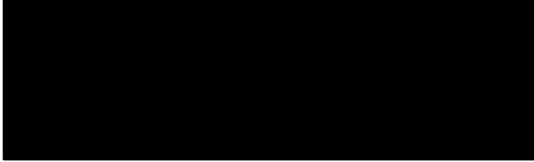
It is government policy to encourage the provision and use of renewable/low-carbon energy in order to assist in combating climate change and reducing CO₂ emissions. On this basis the range and extent of 'Permitted Development Rights' for such installations on both Domestic and Non-domestic properties has been increased and relaxed in recent years.

The proposed development in this application should also be considered in the light of the Council's 2019 declaration of a Climate Emergency. The fact that the GPDO requirements in respect of renewable energy continue to be broadened and relaxed, demonstrates the Government's commitment to this type of project and their aim to

increase the percentage of renewable energy that is generated throughout the economy as a whole.

Sufficient detail has been given in the application for Prior Approval to be given by the Council and we would respectfully request that such approval is given at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of Steve Clarke.

STEVE CLARKE
Associate Planner