

East Area Planning Committee

7th January 2015

Application Number: 14/03177/CT3

Decision Due by: 15th January 2015

Proposal: Installation of PV panels to the lower half of the roof to the rear.

Site Address: Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Pegasus Road (**site plan: appendix 1**)

Ward: Blackbird Leys Ward

Agent: David Bamforth

Applicant: Mr Ian Brooke

Recommendation:

APPROVE

Reasons for Approval

- 1 The Photovoltaic Panels create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the existing building and are sited in a manner to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building and on views of the building from the surrounding area. The photovoltaic tiles in combination with the other technologies employed on site will help optimise the energy efficiency of the building. The proposal would accord with the policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 referred to in the report. No third party representations have been received
- 2 The Council considers that the proposal accords with the policies of the development plan as summarised below. It has taken into consideration all other material matters, including matters raised in response to consultation and publicity. Any material harm that the development would otherwise give rise to can be offset by the conditions imposed.

Conditions:

- 1 Develop in accordance with approved plans

Main Local Plan Policies:

Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

CP1 - Development Proposals

CP8 - Design Development to Relate to its Context

CP9 - Creating Successful New Places

CP10 - Siting Development to Meet Functional Needs

Core Strategy

CS18_ - Urban design, town character, historic environment

CS9_ - Energy and natural resources

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Site History:

11/00242/CT3 - Extension to existing Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre to provide 25m swimming pool, learner and fun pools and ancillary facilities. Alterations to existing leisure centre including new entrance, plus external works including landscaping and alterations to existing car parking to provide 121 spaces and 50 cycle spaces. (Additional Information): Approved

Representations Received:

No comments from third parties or statutory consultees have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any additional comments will be reported to the committee verbally at the meeting.

Officers Assessment:

Site Location and Description:

1. The site is located on the northern side of Pegasus Road, and is bordered by the Oxford and Cherwell Valley College to the north-west, playing fields and Blackbird Leys Park to the north and east, and Evenlode Tower to the west. The site is within a predominately residential area with properties on the southern side of Pegasus Road facing the site (**site plan: appendix 1**).
2. The site comprises the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre which includes a multi-use sports hall, gym, exercise studios, spin studio, crèche, and café. The centre has undergone various refurbishment works in recent years and planning permission for the provision of a new 25m swimming pool, learner and fun pools and ancillary facilities is currently being implemented.
3. The site is accessed via Pegasus Road with a car park located to the west of the multi-use sports hall which has 89 spaces including a small area for disabled parking. There is also cycle parking of 30 spaces and pedestrian access to the facility along the frontage.

Proposal

4. Planning permission is sought retrospectively for the installation of an array of photovoltaic panels to the lower half of the rear roof slope of the swimming pool extension.

5. Officers consider that the principle determining issues in this case would be the visual impact of the panels and their benefits to the energy efficiency of the centre.

Visual Impact

6. The Oxford Core Strategy 2026, through Policy CS18 encourages development to demonstrate high-quality urban design by responding to the site and its surroundings; creating a strong sense of place; contributing to an attractive public realm and providing high quality architecture. The Local Plan supports these aims through Policy CP1 which requires new development to enhance the overall quality of the environment, and CP8 which states that the siting, size, scale, and massing of development should be integrated with the built form and grain of the area in which it is sited.
7. The photovoltaic panels are sited on the lower half of the rear roof slope of the swimming pool across the full width of the building. The panels are laid flat on the roof slope fixed and clipped to the standing seams in order to follow the shallow pitch. The northern elevation of the pool extension faces towards the Blackbird Leys Park, and so would be visible from parts of the public realm. The panels have been installed on site and so the visual impact can be readily assessed. In this case their location on the lower half of the roof and the fact that they are laid flat on the standing seam of the roof help to integrate them into the built fabric of the building.
8. As a result officers consider that the array of panels would create an appropriate visual relationship with the built form of the existing building and has been sited in a manner to minimise their effect on the external appearance of the building and also on views of the building from the surrounding area. The proposal would accord with the above-mentioned policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 and Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.

Sustainability

9. Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS9 states that all development should optimise energy efficiency by minimising the use of energy through design, layout, orientation, landscaping and materials.
10. The Competition Pool is a flagship project for Oxford City Council. The pool extension to the leisure centre has surpassed the minimum requirements of the Natural Resource Impact Assessment to achieve 20% on-site renewable energy production. The heating demand for the building is dealt with through the use of a biomass boiler and a Combined Heat and Power System. The Photovoltaic Installation will take the project beyond the minimum requirements of the NRA by enabling part of the electrical demand to be met through solar energy.
11. The Council has a corporate target of reducing carbon by 5% per year - the Solar PV installation at BBL Pool will contribute to progress against this target. There is also a city-wide carbon reduction target of 40% by 2020. The council has a key

leadership role in encouraging the rest of Oxford to adopt low carbon technologies to deliver progress against this. The benefits of the Solar PV will be that an additional ca45tonnes of CO2 emissions per year can be improving the BREEAM score and overall low carbon credentials of the building.

12. Overall officers consider that the provision of the photovoltaic tiles and the benefits that they will provide towards the energy demands of the building would accord with the aims of Oxford Core Strategy Policy CS9.

Conclusion:

13. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the relevant policies of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026, and the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016, and therefore officer's recommendation is to approve the development.

Human Rights Act 1998

Officers have considered the Human Rights Act 1998 in reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, subject to conditions. Officers have considered the potential interference with the rights of the owners/occupiers of surrounding properties under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Act and consider that it is proportionate.

Officers have also considered the interference with the human rights of the applicant under Article 8 and/or Article 1 of the First Protocol caused by imposing conditions. Officers consider that the conditions are necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others and to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest. The interference is therefore justifiable and proportionate.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Officers have considered, with due regard, the likely effect of the proposal on the need to reduce crime and disorder as part of the determination of this application, in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In reaching a recommendation to grant planning permission, officers consider that the proposal will not undermine crime prevention or the promotion of community safety.

Contact Officer: Andrew Murdoch

Extension: 2228

Date: 22nd December 2014