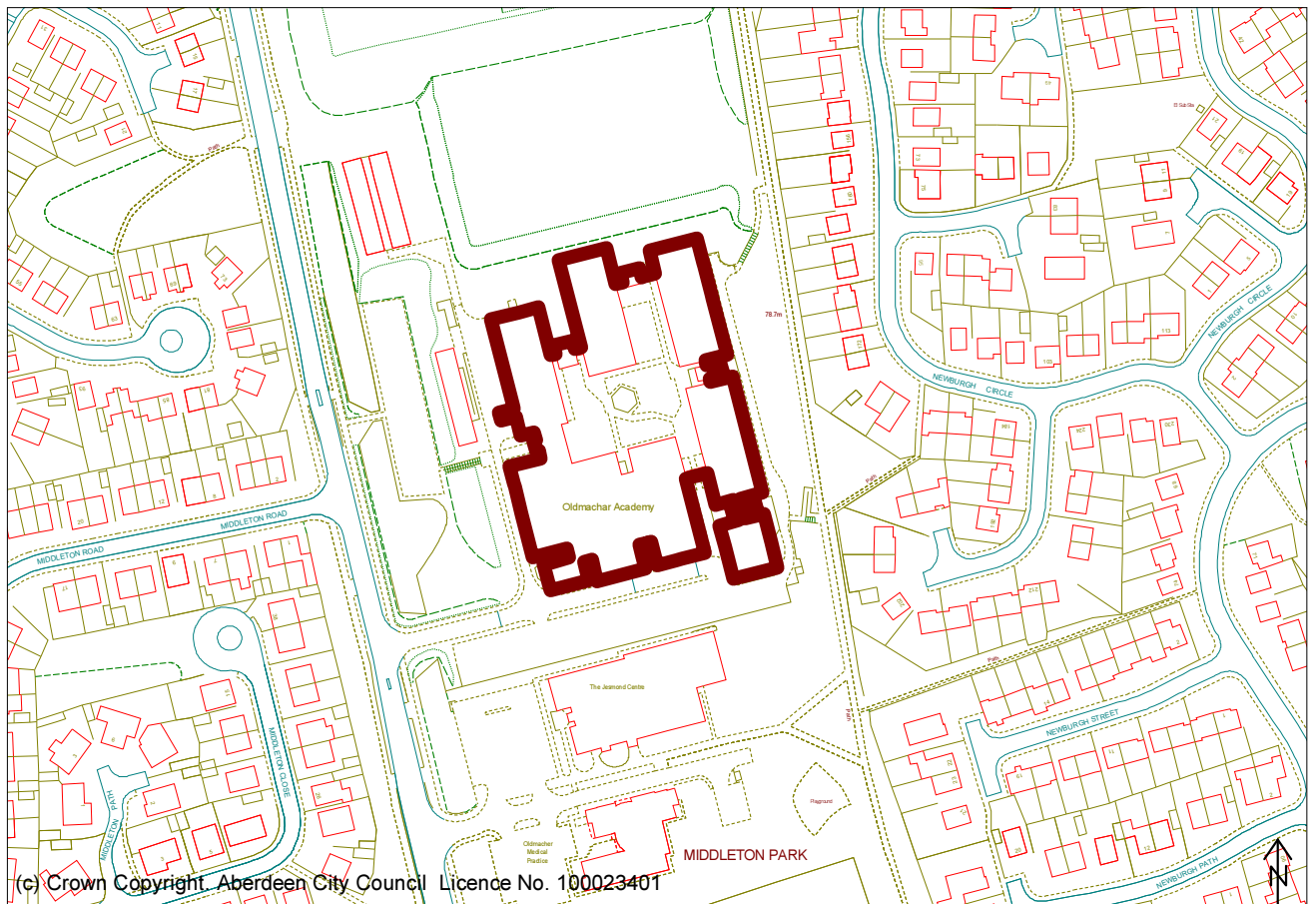


OLDMACHAR ACADEMY, JESMOND
DRIVE, BRIDGE OF DON

THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR
PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) PANELS ON 3
WEST FACING ROOFS ON THE MAIN
BUILDING OF THE PROPERTY.

For: Aberdeen City Council

Application Ref.	: P120535	Advert	:
Application Date	: 19/04/2012	Advertised on	:
Officer	: Frances Swanston	Committee Date	: 14 June 2012
Ward: Bridge of Don (M Jaffrey/J Reynolds/S Stuart/W Young)		Community Council	: No response received



RECOMMENDATION: Approve Unconditionally

DESCRIPTION

Oldmachar Academy is situated to the north of Middleton Park in the Bridge of Don area with Jesmond Drive to the west and Newburgh Circle to the east. To the north lies the school playing fields and the Jesmond Centre and associated car park to the immediate south. The Academy building comprises a number of blocks, the three most northerly of which it is proposed to install solar panels on. The building is predominantly two-storeys in height, with a mixture of flat and pitched roofs. There is a small tree belt to the east of the site which acts as screening to the properties on Newburgh Circle.

HISTORY

Aberdeen City Council is the first local authority in Scotland to apply for the 'Rent a Roof' scheme and is in the process of installing solar panels on 90 public buildings around the City, which include sheltered housing developments, schools, offices and Council depots. The scheme involves the Council buying the electricity generated by the panels to power Council buildings. 12 of the buildings require planning permission to install the solar panels primarily due to the size/number of the panels involved.

PROPOSAL

Detailed planning permission is sought for the installation of 424 solar panels on the western facing pitches of the three most northerly buildings. The panels would cover almost the entire roof space on the east and west blocks with the central block being approximately 1/3 covered in panels. The panels would be fixed to a frame mounting system and will be positioned south-west facing flush with the existing roof plane, at a tilt of 30 degrees.

Each panel would measure 1650mm by 941 mm and would be 46 thick and would appear dark blue in colour.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE

The application site is owned by Aberdeen City Council and therefore the application does not fall within the Council's agreed Scheme of Delegation and requires to be determined by the Development Management Sub-Committee.

CONSULTATIONS

ROADS SECTION – No comments.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – No comments received.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

PLANNING POLICY

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

Policy R8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments – the development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes is supported and applications will be supported in principle if proposals:

- Do not cause significant harm to the local environment, including landscape character and the character and appearance of listed buildings and conservation areas.
- Do not negatively impact on air quality.
- Do not negatively impact on tourism.
- Do not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of dwelling houses.

Policy D 1 Architecture and Placemaking - To ensure high standards of design, new development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. Factors such as siting, scale, massing, colour, materials, orientation, details, the proportions of building elements, together with the spaces around buildings, including streets, squares, open space, landscaping and boundary treatments, will be considered in assessing that contribution.

EVALUATION

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy R8 states that the development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes is supported and applications will be supported in principle subject to a number of criteria. The proposed solar panels would have a visual impact upon the building and would be visible from points along Jesmond Drive due to the direction of the pitched roofs. However, the closest residential properties that would see the panels are almost 90 metres away and as such the visual impact of the panels would be minimal as would be their impact upon the amenity of the wider site. The orientation of the panels reflects the optimum solar gain.

The agent in supporting information states that the installation of the solar panels would have a positive contribution in raising awareness to the needs of renewable energy. The solar panels would not negatively impact on air quality or on tourism, given their proposed location in accordance with Policy R8.

Therefore in conclusion, the solar panels would have some visual impact upon the school building and wider area, but this would not be detrimental to either visual or residential amenity in accordance with Policy R8. The panels have been sited with due consideration for their context and would make an overall positive contribution to their setting, in accordance with Policy D1 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Unconditionally

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

that the visual impact of the proposed solar (PV) panels would be acceptable upon the appearance of the building and would not detract from the overall visual amenity of the area in accordance with Policy R8, and as such have been designed with due consideration for their context, in accordance with Policy D1 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.