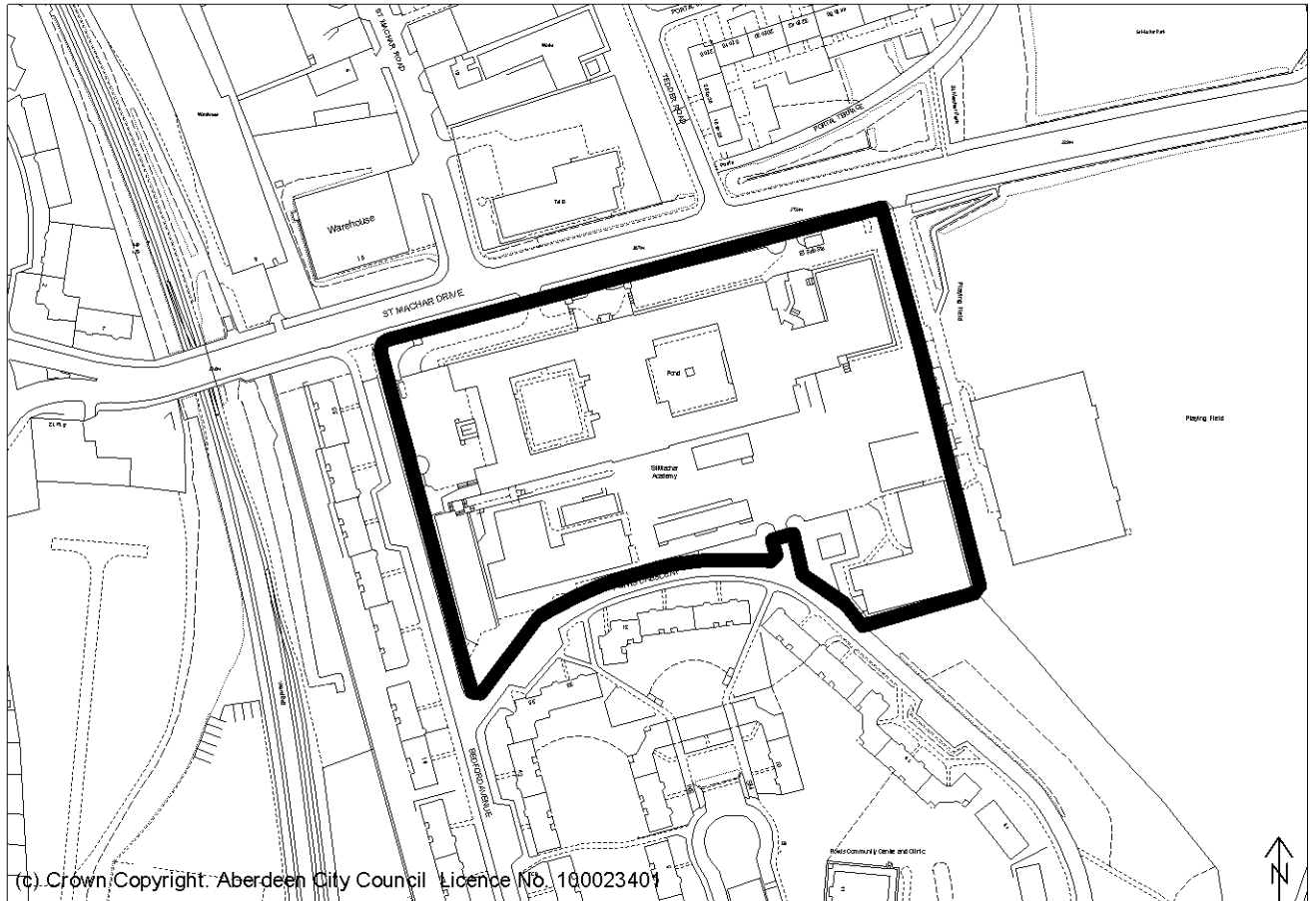


ST. MACHAR ACADEMY, ST. MACHAR  
DRIVE, ABERDEEN

THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR  
PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) PANELS ON THE  
SOUTH FACING ROOF OF THE  
PROPERTY (BUSINESS BLOCK).

For: Aberdeen City Council (C/O Agent)

Application Ref.	: P121736	Advert	: Full Notify not poss.
Application Date	: 14/12/2012	(neighbours)	
Officer	: Sally Wood	Advertised on	:
Ward: Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen (J Noble/R Milne/R Grant)		Committee Date	: 15 February 2013
		Community Council	: No response received



**RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions**

## **DESCRIPTION**

St. Machar Academy is located off the A978 St. Machar Drive, located to the north of the City Centre. The complex is a school, with the main school building facing towards St. Machar Drive. The school is located primarily within a residential area. The location of the proposed development is on a detached building to the rear of the school, which is referred to as the business block. The business block is predominantly T-shaped, with the longest frontage facing onto Powis Crescent.

The building is three storeys in height with a flat roof; external materials of the building include granite and harled walls. The location of the proposed development would be visible from Powis Crescent to the south of the school building, and from Bedford Avenue.

The site is identified as being within a Residential area as allocated within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012)

## **HISTORY**

Aberdeen City Council has applied for the 'Rent a Roof' scheme and is in the process of installing solar panels on a number of 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. A number of the proposals require planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent.

## **PROPOSAL**

Detailed planning permission is sought for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the flat roof of the business block located in the southern part of the school grounds. There would be a total of 160 PV panels. The PV panels would be joined together in lines and fixed to a frame mounting system. The array would be positioned facing south to maximise solar gain, with the longest edge of the panels running parallel with the roof, and sited at an angle. The highest part of the array would project 0.3 metres above the flat roof. Each solar panel would measure 1.65 metres long by 0.922 metres wide, and would be dark blue in colour. The submitted plans show the PV panel as 0.046 metres thick.

## **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE**

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

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Roads Section – comments, No observations.  
Environmental Health – No comments received.  
Flooding – comments, No observations.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

**Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) February 2010** – The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations should be related to the development and use of land (25).

The planning system should promote development that supports the move towards a more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable society (35).

**Planning Advice Note 82 : Local Authority Interest Developments** – council's planning officials and committee to reach a decision in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Aberdeen Local Development Plan, 2012.**

**Policy D1 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.

**Policy H1 Residential Areas** – within existing residential areas proposals must not adversely affect residential amenity.

**Policy R8 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments** – Development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes is supported in principle if proposals; do not cause significant harm to the local environment (including the character and appearance of listed buildings); 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.

## **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.

Tesco Stores Ltd has submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court against the decision of the Inner House of the Court of Session to refuse its application to quash the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Tesco has been unsuccessful regarding both an interim suspension and a full appeal in front of three judges in the Inner House and the Council has received robust advice from Counsel that the reasoning of the Inner House is sound and there are strong grounds to resist the appeal.

Planning applications continue to be determined in line with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan but the appeal is a material consideration and the Council has to take into account the basis for the legal challenge when determining applications. It should also be pointed out that the Court indicated that, even if Tesco's arguments had found favour, it would have been inclined to quash the plan only in so far as it related to Issue 64 (Allocated Sites: Woodend...Summerhill... etc.) and that it would be disproportionate to quash the whole plan.

This evaluation has had regard to and taken into account the legal challenge. None of the policies or material considerations which apply to this application would be affected by the terms of Tesco's challenge. The recommendation would be the same if the application were to be considered in terms of the 2008 Aberdeen Local Plan.

Scottish Planning Policy states that development which is sustainable should in principle be supported.

The proposed PV panels would be located on the flat roof of the business block which is located within the southern part of the school grounds. It is considered that the PV arrays will have some visual impact upon the building, and will be clearly viewed from Powis Crescent, to the south of the building, and from Bedford Avenue. It is considered that the siting of the panels have been carefully considered, with a minimal projection of 0.3 metres above the flat roof. Furthermore, the plans show that the panels would be sited with a minimum two metres clearance from the edge of the roof of the building. Due to the small projection above the roof of the building, and due to the height of the building, it is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on visual amenity. The nearest residential property opposite is approximately 19 metres away from the proposed development. Given the height of the building, over three storeys, and the projection above the roof of the proposed development it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity.

The application is accompanied with a design statement and other supporting information, which comments that the installation of the solar panels would have a positive contribution in raising awareness to the needs of renewable energy.

It is considered that the panels would not negatively impact on air quality or on tourism, given their proposed location and therefore it is considered to comply with planning policies D1, H1 and R8 and of the Local Development Plan (2012).

In conclusion, the PV array would have some visual impact upon the building and immediate locality, but it is not considered detrimental to either the visual or residential amenity as described above. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to conditions**

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

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 planning policy R8, and as such have been designed with due consideration for their context, in accordance with planning policies D1 and H1 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan; and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).

**it is recommended that approval is granted with the following condition(s):**

(1) The monitoring equipment and Inverter shall be located internally within the building, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Should the monitoring equipment and Inverter be installed externally then full details of their location, including block plan and elevation plan(s) to scale, shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for consideration. The development thereafter shall be fully completed in accordance with the details approved in writing. - The application details failed to show the location of the proposed monitoring equipment and inverter. Should they be installed externally then details are required to be submitted for approval in the interests of visual amenity and for the purposes of clarification.

**Dr Margaret Bochel**

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.