

Susan Longmuir

From: Susan Longmuir
Sent: 01 May 2012 12:07
To: 'cathy.archibald@moray.gov.uk'
Subject: PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS AT MUIRFIELD, 27 FORTEATH AVENUE, ELGIN - REF. 11/01405/APP

Attachments: 0803_SolarPP_RevA-PA_Elev_A3SP(30).pdf, Marked up photo.pdf

Our Ref: SL/LM 0803
Date: 1st May 2012

Dear Cathy

Following our recent conversations regarding the proposed solar panels to the flat roof at Muirfield, 27 Forteath Avenue, Elgin, we now submit some further information and a marked up photograph indicating the panels on the flat roof as they would be viewed at pavement level.

The drawings submitted with the Planning Application did illustrate the panels in true elevation, which would never be seen. The position of the solar panels was carefully analysed and this area of flat roof with panels on inclined braced supports is the best location for these panels on the south facing elevation. This is the only area of roof that is south facing and large enough to accommodate the panels. As you are aware, this elevation has three gables to the front and limited pitched roof area behind. One of the pitched roof areas between the two gables (a) houses as a dormer window, whilst the other is masked with a chimney stack (b).

There is insufficient garden ground to site the panels, which would not be overshadowed by well established existing trees, boundaries, walls, shrubs, etc. The manufacturers have advised that the best orientation in the UK is facing due south, with panels tilted to an angle between 30° and 45° from the horizontal. Using a solar angle calculator, with the nearest town with recorded data being Aberdeen, the optimum tilt from the horizontal is recorded as 34° in the summer and 57° in spring/autumn. The extent of the existing iron railings to the building at the perimeter of the flat roof allows some masking of the dark coloured panels behind.

In proposing the use of solar panels to be the primary heat source for the hot water, Mr and Mrs Bowlt will incur higher installation costs, as well as professional fees for this Planning Application and a Building Warrant Application, rather than using their gas fire boiler as the only source to heat the water. They do feel, however, that this contribution into the reduction of fossil fuels to their house is worth undertaking.

To date, there is no published guidance from The Moray Council specifically on solar panels, but we would assume that you would follow national Planning Policy acknowledging that an increased use of renewable energy can make an important contribution to the efforts to reduce carbon emissions in support of climate change in renewable energy objectives.

Looking at relevant Moray Local Plan 2008 policies, we feel that this proposal meets the criteria:-

H5 – House Alterations and Extensions

The appearance of the house and the surrounding area is not adversely affected by the mounting of the solar panels on the flat roof. The alteration which is proposed has been carefully considered and is contained and partially masked behind the iron railings. There is no change to the style and materials of the existing dwellinghouse. Set against the scale of the house the

proposed solar panels will be a small and ancillary feature and mostly out of sight.

ER1: Renewable Energy Proposals

The use of solar panels should be considered favourably as they are compatible with policies to safeguard and enhance the built and natural environment and they do not result in an unacceptable impact in terms of visual appearance.

IMP1: Development Requirements

The proposal has been sensitively sited and designed appropriate to the amenity of the surrounding area in terms of scale, density and character using natural environmental resources. It incorporates renewable energy equipment and systems.

There are now many examples in Moray of roof-mounted solar hot water and photovoltaic panels on pitched roofs that do not require Planning Consent, as these are not any higher than 10cm above the roof plane and, from February 2012, are categorised as Permitted Development. Whilst the use of renewable energy should be applauded, there is no control over the position of these panels, other than generally south facing and we can now see panels on multiple roof slopes and sited with no regard to symmetry, existing roof lights, dormers, etc.

In this Application, we have carefully controlled the proposed location being partially masked by the railings, rather than an ad hoc retrofit.

I hope I have been able to summarise our proposals and you will see that we have aimed to reduce the impact of the installation to panels in the roof and have considered their position carefully as a way of providing a sustainable source of low carbon energy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the existing building. We had hoped that the Planning Authority would encourage the promotion of the uptake of micro generation on existing buildings and you would support their use.

As agreed with Beverly Smith, this submitted information will be reviewed with yourself, Beverly and Angus Burnie. We do not feel that this application will set a precedent for others. Applications for solar panels over the 1m height should be regarded individually on their own merits as with any other application.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards.

Susan Longmuir

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