

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	252226
Site Address:	Mereoak Park And Ride, MereOak Lane, Three Mile Cross, Wokingham
Expiry Date:	12 November 2025
Site Visit Date:	26 September 2025
Proposal: Prior approval submission for installation of solar canopies above the existing MereOak Park and Ride.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Scale and Location of Development – Countryside.
Allocated Transport Site – MereOak Roundabout, Shinfield.
Strategic Development Location – South of M4.
Thames Basin Heath SPA Mitigation Zone – 7km Linear Mitigation Zone.
Major Nuclear Site Consultation Zone – AWE Burghfield.
Great Crested Newt Impact Zone – Red and Amber.
Landscape Character Assessment 2019 – Grazeley Farmed Clay Lowland.
Spencers Wood and Swallowfield Ward.
Shinfield Parish.

PLANNING POLICY/LEGISLATION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Section 55	Provides that 'development' includes the carrying out of building operations on land, and 'building operations' includes structural alterations or additions to buildings.
Section 57	Planning permission is needed for all development of land.
Section 187a	Enforcement for breach of conditions

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Section 7	Prior approval applications: time periods for decision
Article 3	In conjunction with Schedule 2, Part 14 Class OA grants planning permission for installation etc of a solar canopy on non-domestic, off-street parking
Article 4	Provides that the planning authority may give direction to restrict the effect of Article 3

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
161470	Application for a non-material amendment to planning consent F/2013/0884 to allow the previously approved development in order to	Approved 18/07/2016

	facilitate the use of the site for National Express Services.	
150103	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent F/2013/0884. 5. External lighting. 6. Landscaping. 9. Ecological Mitigation. 16. Access Improvements. 21 Safer Parking Award.	Deemed Consent – Out of Time 03/08/2015
143029	Application for submission of details to comply with conditions 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 17, & 18 of planning consent F/2013/0884. 3. Samples and Details of Materials. 4. Boundary Treatments. 6. Landscaping. 1 1. Construction Management Plan. 13. Directional Signage. 17. Noise Mitigation Scheme. 18. Limitation to Site Noise Levels.	Replied 02/11/2014
142984	Application for submission of details to comply with the following conditions of planning consent F/2013/0884: 5 Details of external lighting 8 Details of arboricultural works 9 Preliminary Ecology Appraisal 10 Badger survey 16 Details of A33 access improvements 20 Details of Archaeological work 22 Details of management of the operation.	Replied 30/09/2014
131356	Proposed construction of a new park and ride facility providing approximately 600 bays: terminal building together with blue badge holder, cycle and motorcycle parking.	Approved 02/09/2013
112398	Temporary change of use of former temporary site compound and offices for use as a construction skills training and examination facility for a period of four years.	Approved 11/01/2012
040743	Proposed highway junction improvement replacing roundabout with staggered signalised T junctions, widening A33 to three lanes/carriageway for 600m.	Approved 08/09/2004
980317	Proposed Bus Based Park And Ride.	Approved 30/03/1999

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

None.
External
None.

REPRESENTATIONS	
Parish/Town Council	No comments received.
Ward Member(s)	No comments received.
Neighbours	Fifteen (15) letters of support received.

Relates to Part 14 Class OA

PART J.1.2.3 APPRAISAL				
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)			Yes	No
1	s.55	Does it constitute development?	✓	
2	s.191	Would it be contrary to an enforcement notice?		✓
3	s.187a Art.3 (4)	Would it be contrary to any condition imposed by any planning permission granted or deemed to be granted?		✓
The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)			Yes	No
4	Art.3 (5)	Are the building operations involved in the construction of the original building lawful?	✓	
5	Art.4	Is there an 'Article 4 Direction' in effect for the site?		✓
6	Sch.2 Pt. 14	Does it consist of the installation, alteration or replacement of— (a) microgeneration solar thermal equipment on a building; (b) microgeneration solar PV equipment on a building; or (c) other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building		✓
7	OA.1. (a)	Would any part of the development - (i) exceed 4m in height above ground level?		✓
8	OA.1. (a)	(ii) be within 10m of the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or block of flats;		✓
9	OA.1. (b)	Would any part of the development be within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or block of flats?		✓
10	OA.1 (c)	Would any of the development be on a site designated as a scheduled monument or on land within the curtilage of a scheduled monument?		✓
11	OA.1 (d)	Would any of the development be within the curtilage of a listed building?		✓
12	OA.1 (e)	Would any of the development be for the display of an advertisement?		✓
13	OA.1 (f)	Would any of the off-street parking area be in use by virtue of Class B (temporary use of land) of Part 4 (temporary buildings and uses)?		✓
16		Would it affect or be within the Root Protection Area of a TPO'd tree?		✓

PART J.1.2.3 APPRAISAL

		<i>* Does not affect Article 3 permission but separate TPO approval will likely be needed.</i>		
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PART J.4 APPRAISAL

The application site is located northwest of the A33. Vehicular access to the site is via the existing site entrances on MereOak Lane, Three Mile Cross. There would be no increase in the number of vehicle parking spaces, therefore, the likely traffic generation from the proposed development is likely to be consistent with the existing car parking arrangement.

Development under Class OA is permitted subject to the developer applying to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the points listed above and:

OA.2 (2) In the case of development above a permeable surface, provision is made to direct run-off water from the solar canopy to a permeable or porous area or surface within the off-street parking area.

The canopy frame is designed to channel water flow that will utilise the existing drainage arrangement. The surface water drainage strategy (Section 4 of Flood Risk Assessment, PBA, January 2013 was approved under permission 131356.

OA.2 (3) Before beginning development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the local planning authority will be required with respect to—

- (a) the solar canopy's siting, design and external appearance, in particular the impact of glare on the occupiers of neighbouring premises; and**
- (b) in the case of a solar canopy on article 2(3) land, the impact of the appearance of the solar canopy on that land.**

(a) As existing, the site comprises hard-standing, walkways, lighting, bus shelters, and other street furniture associated with the established use of the site for car parking.

The site is well screened along the site boundaries by the existing dense and mature trees and hedging which would largely obscure any views of the proposed solar canopies from outside the site. The closest residential properties to the site are Great Lea House Farm which is located approximately 147m to the southwest and Barnsdale which is located approximately 177m to the north. The proposed canopies would have a maximum height of 4m and are designed with a near flat arrangement. Therefore, there are no concerns of any glint or glare that would be generated to highway safety or residential amenity.

In conclusion, it is considered that the design and external appearance of the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the host site or surrounding local area.

(b) The application site is not located on article 2(3) land.

OA.2 (4) Paragraphs J.4(3) to J.4(12) of this Part apply in relation to an application under sub-paragraph (3) as if “Class OA” substitutes the reference to “Class J” in paragraph J.4(4).

The application is accompanied with the required documents to support the application. This includes a written description as contained in the application form and supporting cover letter along with the relevant plans, fee and contact details.

OA.2 (5) Development must be completed within a period of 3 years starting with the date on which—

(a) prior approval is given; or

(b) a determination that such approval is not required is given or the period for giving such a determination set out in paragraph J.4(9)(c) of this Part has expired without the applicant being notified whether prior approval is required, given or refused.

The proposed development must be completed within 3 years should prior approval be required and granted, or per paragraph J.4(9) (c) should prior approval not be required.

OA.2 (6) Where the solar canopy is no longer needed, it is removed as soon as reasonably practicable and the land is restored to its condition before the development took place so far as reasonably practicable.

The solar canopies must be removed as soon as reasonably practical when no longer needed, and the land restored to its former condition (Park and Ride vehicle parking).

Case law has established that the local planning authority can only have regard to matters relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval.

There are no other particular aspects of the NPPF that would be able to be considered relevant to the subject matter of the prior notification application.

In conclusion, the proposed installation of solar canopies would meet the requirements set out under Article 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, the proposal being in accordance with Schedule 2 (Part 14) (Class OA) of the Order. Prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is not required in this instance.

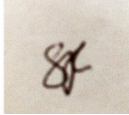
The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
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Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	7 November 2025
Earliest date for decision:	

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	10.11.25