

**HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

Date 24th March 2025

Application No:	HPK/2025/0032	
Location	New Mills Leisure Centre, Hyde Bank Road, New Mills, Derbyshire SK22 4BP	
Proposal	Installation of PV panels and other plant equipment to existing roof	
Applicant	Mr Simon Allaway (on behalf of High Peak Borough Council)	
Agent	N/A	
Parish/ward	New Mills	Date registered: 03/02/2025
If you have a question about this report please contact: Stuart Talbot, email: stuart.talbot@highpeak.gov.uk		

REFERRAL

The application is before committee as it is submitted on behalf of High Peak Borough Council

1. Summary of Recommendations

APPROVAL with conditions

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site refers to New Mills Leisure Centre which is located on Hyde Bank Road within the established settlement boundary of New Mills. The site is bounded by Hyde bank Road to the north and west, by the Sett Valley Medical Centre to the east and New Mills Secondary School and additional residential dwellings further to the south and Church Lane to the north.

2.2 The application building itself is a large leisure facility building which comprises a Sports Hall, Swimming Pool, and Squash courts.

2.3 According to available mapping the facility dates back to its initial construction in 1979 before being extended further to include the sports hall element in 1988.

2.4 The application site is also located directly adjacent to the New Mills Conservation Area.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of solar PV panels to the roof and an Air Handling Unit (AHU). The AHU is to replace the existing unit albeit with a larger unit to serve the swimming pool within the Leisure centre. The proposed PV system is a 110.075 kW array. Which will generate an estimated 83,765 kWh annually. The system has an expected lifetime of 20 years.

3.2 The proposed panels would be located to the south east facing and south west facing roof elevations with a maximum tilt of 22 Degrees. The proposed PV panels would occupy an area of approximately 504.22 Sqm which equates to 24.35% of the overall roof area.

3.4 The AHU plant equipment will have an overall height of 2.3m located to the roof of the existing plant room towards the centre of the main Leisure Centre building.

3.5 The application, the details attached to it, including the plans and the responses of the consultees can be found on the Council's website at:

[Planning Application - High Peak Borough Council](#)

4. Relevant Planning History

Reference no. HPK/0000/8684

Description: Proposed Swimming Pool and Squash Courts

Decision: Refused (20/10/1978)

Reference no. HPK/0002/5756

Description: New changing room, store and sports hall.

Decision: Approved (21/09/1987)

5. Planning Policy

5.1 High Peak Local Plan (Adopted 2016)

S1 Sustainable Development Principles

S1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

S2 Settlement Hierarchy

S6 Central Sub-Area Strategy

EQ1 Climate Change

EQ6 Design and Place Making

EQ7 Built and Historic Environment

5.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

High Peak Design Guide (2018)

Landscape Character Assessment SPD - Urban (2006)

6. Consultation

6.1 Public comments

No neighbour representations have been made with regard to this application.

6.2 Conservation Officer Comments (No Objection)

The proposed PV panels and AHU unit have been located to minimise the aesthetic impact and visibility of the installation. The New Mills Leisure Centre does not offer any architectural merit, and as such offers a neutral contribution to the setting of the New Mills Conservation Area. As such the introduction of the solar PV panels and AHU unit will cause a minor degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of the adjacent conservation area.

It is also noted that the proposal is likely to provide some public benefit through the reduction of costs to the running of a local amenity building. The host building functions as a leisure centre for the local community. As such securing the future of the building is likely to provide public benefits in line with paras 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

7. Officer Comments and Planning Balance

7.1 The main issues relate to:

- The principle of the development
- Design and impact upon the Street Scene
- Impact upon residential amenity
- Impact upon the Heritage Asset (Conservation area)
- Highway safety

Principle of the development.

7.2 Local Plan Policy S1 relates to sustainable development and states that *“The Borough Council will expect that all new development makes a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protecting, and where possible enhancing, the environment; and mitigating the process of climate change, within the Plan Area.”*

7.3 Planning Policy S1a ensures that *“When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the*

application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

7.4 The application site relates to a commercial building which is in use as a Leisure Facility. The proposal seeks to add Solar PV panels and plant equipment to the roof of the site and to improve the sustainability and operation of the site in a more sustainable manner in accordance with policies S1 and S1a.

7.5 The application site is located in New Mills which is defined by Policy S2 within “Market Towns” The High Peak Local Plan identifies that these towns “*will be the main focus for housing, employment and service growth, consistent with maintaining and where possible enhancing their role, distinctive character vitality and appearance.*”

7.6 Moreover, the site lies with the Central Sub-Area Strategy area as defined by Local Plan Policy S6. The Central Sub-Area Strategy seeks to “*Promote the sustainable growth of the Central Area such that it reflects the historic character of the settlements, provides increasing range of employment opportunities, promotes the growth of a sustainable tourist economy and meets the housing needs of the local community*”

7.7 The proposals would support the ongoing use of a leisure facility within the High Peak Central Area which provides local community facilities and the works would facilitate the ongoing sustainable growth of the site for the future.

7.8 The proposals would maintain the existing facility and allow the continued function and retention of the site in its existing commercial use and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle in accordance with Local Plan Policies S1, S1a, S2 and S6. Subject to matters relating to design, residential amenity and impact upon the setting of heritage assets.

Impact upon the Street Scene and Designated Heritage Asset (New Mills Conservation Area)

7.9 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan requires that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Local Authority’s Design Guide SPD. The SPD outlines a requirement for high quality designs that add value to the surrounding area and the use of materials that are appropriate to the local area.

7.10 Local Plan policies S1, EQ6 and EQ7 and sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF seek to achieve high quality design and conserve (or enhance) heritage assets. Specifically, Policy EQ6 sets out that “*All development should be well designed and of a high quality that responds positively to both its environment and the challenge of climate change, whilst also contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place.*”

7.11 High Peak Local Plan policy EQ7 relates to the impact upon Heritage Assets and states that “The Council will conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of sustaining and

enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment in accordance with sub area strategies S5, S6 and S7”.

7.12 Paragraph 167 of the NPPF adds that *“Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.”*

7.13 Chapter 16 of the NPPF affords protection to the preservation and enhancement of designated heritage assets *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”*

7.14 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF outlines that *“ Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”*

7.15 Although the application site does not lie within the New Mills Conservation Area, the site does directly abut the boundary of the Conservation Area and therefore its impact upon the setting of this heritage asset must be assessed.

7.16 The proposed PV and plant equipment would be located on top of a roof of the leisure centre building. The solar PV panels would be angled to no more than 22 Degrees and would sit no higher than 0.5m above the height of the existing roof structure at the point where they are mounted. As such the proposed PV panels would have very limited opportunities for intervisibility from ground level. Additionally, the majority of the solar panels are to be located to the south east roof slope which faces away from the conservation Area and therefore could not be seen from the Conservation Area and will therefore have no impact upon its setting. Whilst the AHU plant equipment would be of an increased height at 2.3m given its location towards the centre of the roof and enclosed on three sides by the existing roof profile, the plant equipment is still considered to have limited visibility within the Street Scene.

7.17 Given the nature of the site and the adjacent Conservation Area, the Conservation Officer has provided comments with regards to the proposed development which states that *“New Mills Leisure Centre does not offer any architectural merit, and as such offers a neutral contribution to the setting of the New Mills Conservation Area”*. And also makes reference to the fact that the *“ A small amount of the PV panels and the proposed AHU unit will be visible when viewing the north-west elevation. These will be placed on a lower roof level, enclosed on three sides. This minimises the visibility of the panels and plant equipment when traveling*

along Hyde Bank Road". As such the introduction of the solar PV panels and AHU unit will cause a minor degree of less than substantial harm to the setting of the adjacent conservation area."

7.18 Therefore, the proposed Solar PV panels not judged to have any substantial harm upon the setting of the Conservation Area and that any less substantial harm is considered to be outweighed by the benefits of the proposals and that the existing Leisure Centre building does not afford any enhancement to the setting of the Conservation Area.

7.19 With consideration to the above, the proposed development is deemed to have no unacceptable harm upon the setting of the designated heritage asset and would not have any adverse impacts upon the character of the existing building or the visual amenity of the wider locality in accordance with High Peak Local Plan policies EQ6 and EQ7, SPD's and the NPPF.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

7.20 Policy EQ6 requires development achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

7.21 The nearest residential properties to the application site are located at Hyde Bank Mill approximately 35m to the north west, and Foundry cottage located 45m to the south west along Hyde Bank Road. Further residential dwellings are located approximately 75m to the north west along Hyde Bank Road and 100m to the southeast along Church Lane.

7.22 The proposed development would not result in any additional outlook or increase in the site of the application site and therefore the proposed works are not considered to have any impacts upon overlooking or loss of privacy and would not result in any overbearing impacts or overshadowing.

7.23 To ensure that the proposals would not have any adverse impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers an Environmental Noise Study has been undertaken.

7.24 The aforementioned Environmental Noise Study determines that the calculated noise levels would comply with applicable environmental noise criteria. Given the proximity of the nearest residential properties to the site it is not considered the proposals would have any unacceptable impacts upon residential amenity with regards to noise.

7.25 The majority of the solar panels would be located along the pitched roof profile facing towards the south east and would not be in the direction of any residential dwellings. New Mills Secondary School is located in this direction. However, given that the panels would be flat mounted to the shallowly pitched roof elevation to this section and not pointing towards the school premises, they are not considered to have any potential glaring impacts upon users of the school. It is acknowledged that

there are panels to the western side of the leisure centre building closer to residential dwellings. Nonetheless with regards to the limited acute angle of the panels, the height to which they are mounted (significantly above the height of neighbouring properties) and that they would be enclosed on three sides, it is therefore judged that there would be no unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity with regards to glint and glare.

7.26 The proposed development would not have any detrimental impacts upon neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy EQ6 and the NPPF with regards to residential amenity.

8. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion the proposals are deemed to be acceptable in principle and are considered to sustain and preserve the setting of the Conservation Area. There would be no adverse impacts upon visual or residential amenity in accordance with the relevant planning policies set out in the High Peak Local Plan (2016), Supplementary Planning documents and the NPPF. Consequently, the application is recommended for approval.

9. RECOMMENDATION

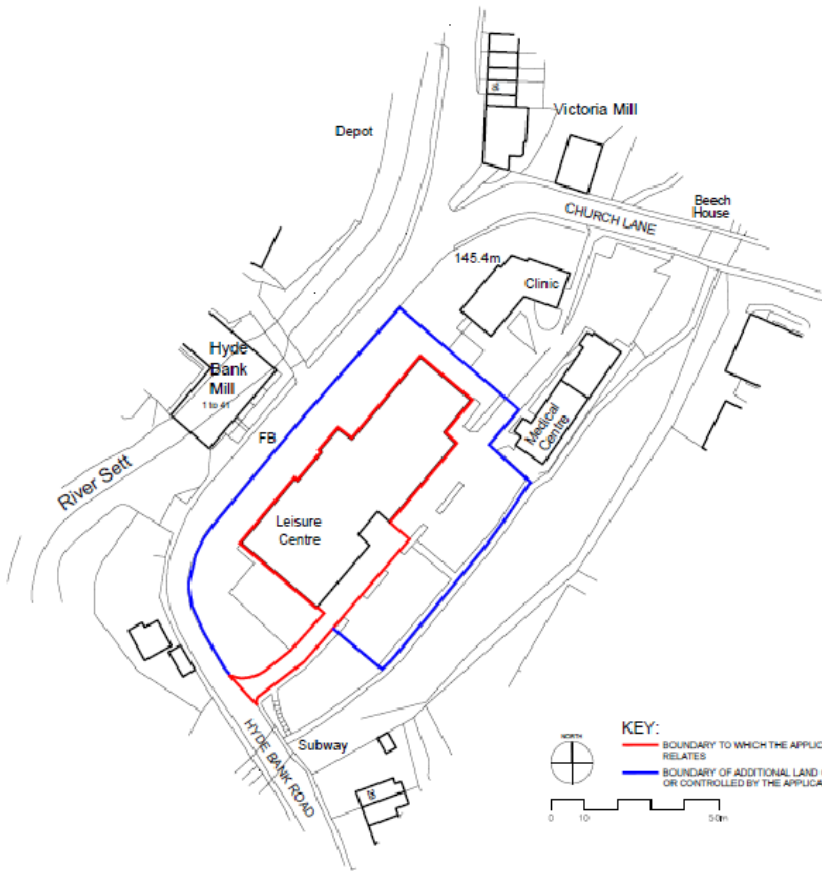
A. That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions outlined below:

- 1. Standard Time Limit**
- 2. Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans**
- 3. Materials matching**

B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informative/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

This recommendation is made following careful consideration of all the issues raised through the application process and thorough discussion with the applicants. In accordance with Paragraph 187 of the NPPF the Case Officer has sought solutions where possible to secure a development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Location Plan



The line should measure 40m when printed correctly.
 This drawing is the copyright of Roberts Limbrick Ltd and should not be reproduced in whole or in part or used in any manner whatsoever without their written permission.
 Responsibility is not accepted for errors made by others in relying on this drawing. Use only figured dimensions and report any discrepancies or omissions to the architect immediately.

Rev	Date	By	CHK	Description
R01	20/01/2025	AM	OK	Issued for Heritage Statement
R02	20/01/2025	AM	OK	Issued for planning



Roberts Limbrick
 02833 405 500
 mol@robertslimbrick.com
 roberts@robertslimbrick.com

Registered Office: England No. 08880020

Project Name
 New Mill
 Leisure Centre

Client Name
 Alliance Leisure

Drawing Title
 Location Plan

Scale 1/1250 = A4 **Project No.** 10584

Status A3 **Purpose Of Issue** Issued for Planning

Project	Dwg	Vol	Level	Form	Size
10584	RL	ME	00	DR	A

Number	Revision
PL-001	P02