

Design and Access Statement

Retrospective Listed Building Consent Application for the Retention of Roof-Mounted Photovoltaic Solar Panels

Falcon Lodge, Sedgewick Lane, Horsham, RH13 6QD

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective Listed Building Consent application for the retention of photovoltaic solar panels installed on the roof of a Grade II listed dwelling.

The panels were installed under a government-funded energy efficiency grant scheme. Regrettably, the applicant was not advised that Listed Building Consent was required prior to installation, and this application is submitted in good faith to regularise the position.

2. Site Context and Location

The Site

The application property is a Grade II listed residential dwelling located in Sedgewick Lane, Horsham. The property is set within its own grounds with a private driveway providing access.

Surrounding Area

The immediate surroundings comprise the applicant's private driveway and adjacent agricultural land. The property is not located within a Conservation Area. There are no neighbouring residential properties with views of the roof slope on which the panels are installed.

3. Heritage Significance

Listing Description

HORSHAM RURAL MAGPIE LANE 1. 5404 Magpie House TQ 12 NE 12/307

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2. Circa 1830. T-shaped building. Two storeys. Two windows. Slate roof. Casement windows with dripstones over. Gable to east wing with scalloped bargeboards. Gabled porch to north. Gabled dormer to south.

Listing NGR: TQ1896829575

Assessment of Significance

The roof structure and covering contribute to the overall character of the building, though the specific roof slope on which the panels are installed is an elevation not visible from public vantage points and of lesser architectural sensitivity.

4. Description of Works

The Installation

The works comprise the installation of roof-mounted photovoltaic solar panels on the south-east facing rear roof slope. The panels are mounted on a framework system fixed to the existing roof structure.

Specification

Number of panels: 10

Colour/finish: Black-framed panels with dark photovoltaic cells

5. Design Considerations

Siting and Positioning

The panels have been positioned on a roof slope selected to maximise solar gain whilst minimising visual impact. This roof slope faces the applicant's private driveway and agricultural land beyond, ensuring the installation is not visible from any public highway, footpath, or neighbouring property.

Appearance

The panels are of a standard domestic specification with dark-coloured frames and cells, which helps reduce their visual prominence against the roof covering. Whilst modern in appearance, their siting on a non-principal elevation ensures they do not detract from the architectural character of the listed building when viewed from publicly accessible areas.

Reversibility

Solar panel installations of this type are designed to be removable. Should the mounting system have been installed in accordance with best practice, the panels can be removed in future without permanent harm to the historic roof covering. However, if the mounting system does not allow for non-invasive removal, taking down the panels would cause damage to the historic fabric. In this scenario, retention represents the less harmful option.

6. Impact Assessment

Visual Impact

The visual impact of the installation is negligible. The panels are not visible from:

- Any public highway or adopted road
- Any public footpath or right of way
- Any neighbouring residential property

The only views of the panels are from the applicant's private driveway and the adjacent agricultural field, neither of which constitutes a sensitive receptor.

Impact on Heritage Significance

The installation does not affect the principal elevations or key architectural features that contribute to the significance of the listed building. The internal layout, historic fabric, and character of the building remain unaltered.

Paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that where a development causes less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this instance, any harm is considered negligible, and the public benefits of renewable energy generation provide clear justification for retention.

7. Access

Existing Access Arrangements

The property is accessed via an existing private driveway from Sedgewick Lane. No changes to access arrangements have been made or are proposed as a result of this installation.

Construction Access

The installation works have been completed. No further construction access is required.

8. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF places significant emphasis on supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. Paragraph 163 states that local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable energy, and paragraph 165 confirms that applicants are not required to demonstrate overall need for renewable energy projects.

Paragraph 205 requires that great weight be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. However, paragraphs 207 and 208 establish a balanced approach where harm must be weighed against public benefits. The negligible harm arising from this installation is clearly outweighed by the environmental benefits of renewable energy generation.

Historic England Guidance

Historic England's guidance document "Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Solar Electric (Photovoltaics)" acknowledges that solar panels can be acceptable on listed buildings where they are sensitively sited and do not cause unacceptable harm to significance. The guidance recommends positioning panels on less sensitive roof slopes away from principal elevations, which has been achieved in this instance.

Climate Change and Sustainability

The UK Government has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The installation of domestic solar panels directly contributes to this objective. The fact that this installation was funded through a government grant scheme demonstrates national policy support for such measures.

9. Zoo Licensing Considerations

The applicant holds a Zoo Licence under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 for the operation of Huxley's Bird of Prey Centre. The Standards of Modern Zoo Practice, issued by the Secretary of State under Section 9 of the Act, encourage licensed premises to adopt sustainable practices and promote conservation messaging.

The installation of solar panels at the applicant's home demonstrates a personal commitment to environmental sustainability consistent with the conservation objectives underpinning the zoo licensing regime. This is a material consideration that should be afforded weight in the determination of this application.

10. Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the retention of the solar panels is acceptable in planning and heritage terms. The key considerations are summarised as follows:

1. **Limited Visual Impact** — The panels are not visible from any public vantage point or neighbouring property
2. **Negligible Heritage Harm** — The installation does not affect the principal elevations or key features contributing to the significance of the listed building
3. **Reversibility or Retention as Least Harmful Option** — Either the panels can be removed without damage, or their removal would cause greater harm than retention
4. **Strong Policy Support** — National planning policy and government funding programmes actively support domestic renewable energy installations
5. **Conservation Credentials** — The applicant's Zoo Licence obligations reinforce the appropriateness of sustainable energy measures
6. **Good Faith Application** — The applicant was not made aware of the Listed Building Consent requirement and has submitted this application promptly upon becoming aware of the position

For the reasons set out above, the applicant respectfully requests that Listed Building Consent be granted for the retention of the solar panels.

Prepared by: Luke Lloyd

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