Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/0594
4 Nursery Cottages , Blackstone Street, Blackstone, West Sussex, BN5 9TD

DESCRIPTION:
Installation of solar panels with an air source heat pump. Internal improvements and construction of timber frame garden room (Full Application).

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/0595	Installation of solar panels with an air source heat pump. Internal improvements and construction of timber frame garden room (Listed Building Consent).	Under Consideration

SITE AND SURROUNDS
The application site lies to the south of Blackstone street within the Blackstone Conservation area and is a Grade II listed building. Nursery Cottages 1-4 are listed and the application site is in close proximity to a number of other Grade II listed buildings including 'Stockmans', 'Blackstone House', 'Yeomans Hall' and 'Old Timbers'.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION
The application would involve the installation of 6 solar panels on the eastern roof slope of the host dwellinghouse, and the installation of an air source heat pump at first floor level. Included in the application is the erection of a garden room with a ridge height of 3.32 metres, an eaves height of 2.9 metres and would have a half hipped appearance. The depth of the garden room would be approximately 2.9 metres, a width of 4.75 metres and the outbuilding would have three solar panels. The door would be a three panel sliding door and the external material would be horizontal timber weatherboarding. The application form indicates that the tiles would match those on the host dwellinghouse.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
Policy 30 - Protected Landscapes
Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2017-2031):

Policy 12: Design Standards for New Development

Henfield Parish Design Statement

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:
Natural England: Standing Advice:-

It cannot be concluded that existing abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone is not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites. Developments within Sussex North must therefore must not add to this impact and one way of achieving this is to demonstrate water neutrality. The definition of water neutrality is the use of water in the supply area before the development is the same or lower after the development is in place.

To achieve this Natural England is working in partnership with all the relevant authorities to secure water neutrality collectively through a water neutrality strategy. Whilst the strategy is evolving, Natural England advises that decisions on planning applications should await its completion. However, if there are applications which a planning authority deems critical to proceed in the absence of the strategy, then Natural England advises that any application needs to demonstrate water neutrality.

HDC Conservation: Objection: -

It is understood that the applicant is seeking to adapt their property to meet the needs of climate change however a balance has to be made between the significance of the heritage asset and the public benefits (that is positive climate action) provided by the proposal. Conservation of the heritage asset should always be given great weight and the more important the heritage asset, the greater that weight should be.

It would be considered that the provision of solar panels on the eastern roof slope would appear overly prominent in the street scene and would be visually incongruous against the existing clay roof tiles. This would result in harm both to the special interest of the listed building and the historic and architectural character of the conservation area.

In terms of the air source heat pump concern would be raised about the siting of the main unit. Its location on the side wall would not be considered appropriate. An objection would therefore be raised. It is suggested that further consideration is given to the siting of the main unit to a more sympathetic location which could possibly include screening.

There is also limited information on the changes that would be required to the radiators/ pipework or the type of insulation to be utilised in the roof space. It is important that the insulation still allows the building to breath.

The application also seeks permission for a garden room to the rear – in principle I would not raise an objection subject the use of timber cladding rather than the composite proposed.'

Parish Comments:
None received

Representations:
None received

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:
The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Character and Appearance:

Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF promote development, which is of high quality and design, and is sympathetic to the distinctiveness of its surroundings. Development should protect, conserve, and enhance the landscape character, taking account of the natural environment, landscape and landform pattern to which, it forms a part.

Policy 34 of the HDPF states that the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets, and that applications will be required, inter alia, to reinforce the special character of the district's historic environment through appropriate siting, scale, form and design.

Policy 12 of the Henfield Neighbourhood plan has relevant policies in regard to development, stating that:

'c. The scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials of all development proposals, including alterations to existing buildings, are of a high quality and reflect the architectural and historic character and the scale of the surrounding buildings and street-scene/ landscape.

d. The design preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Henfield Conservation Area and/or preserves any adjacent listed buildings and its setting.'

Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that "when considering the impact of 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)." Paragraph 206 continues to state that "any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alterations or destruction, or for of development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."

4 Nursery Cottages forms the end property of a terrace of two storey cottages. The property is described within the Historic England National Heritage List for England as "C18 block. Two storeys. Four windows. Red brick. Hipped tiled roof. Horizontally- sliding sash windows." The dwelling is also within the Blackstone Conservation Area.

There is a uniformity of character to the cottages when viewed from the streetscene, appearing largely in red brick and weatherboard or render added and clay tiled roofs, with some of the properties having been extended to the rear.

The proposal would install 6 solar panels on the eastern facing roof slope and an Air source heat pump, also on the eastern elevation at first floor level. A garden room would be erected within the garden and would have also have solar panels on its roof slope.

It is considered that the provision of solar panels on the eastern roof slope would represent overly prominent additions which would be clearly visible from the street scene, and which would be visually incongruous against the existing clay roof tiles given the height and location of the solar panels. The

prominence of the solar panels as an incongruous addition would be exacerbated by the context in which they would sit, on the eastern roof slope of a dwelling where the terrace row is set forward when compared to the neighbour to the east, such that they would be particularly noticeable when approached from the east of the streetscene. This would result in harm both to the special interest of the listed building and the historic and architectural character of the conservation area.

The Air Source Heat Pump would be a modernising feature to the dwellinghouse and would not be sympathetic to its historic significance. Being situated within the eastern elevation at first floor height and set towards the front half of the dwelling would be a particularly prominent location when viewed from the streetscene and would not be considered to conserve the character of the conservation area.

The rear outbuilding is considered modest in form and scale and would not adversely impact on the setting of the listed building or the wider conservation area. It is noted that the outbuilding would feature composite cladding in a location where timber cladding would be preferred. It is considered that this would need to be resolved, potentially by way of a planning condition, were planning permission to be granted.

For the reasons set out, the proposed solar panels and air source heat pump would represent incongruous and unduly prominent features that would fail to respect the important architectural features of the heritage asset and result in harm to the setting of the row of terraces to which it is attached. The proposed development would not preserve, reflect or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the designated heritage asset, and would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is further considered that the proposals are not assessed solely in isolation to one another and their harm to the character of the listed building and conservation area, and the row of cottages which are all grade II listed would be cumulative. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015). Whether there is any public benefit which would outweigh the identified harm in considered in a subsequent section of this report.

Amenity Impacts:

Policy 33 of the HDPF provides that development will be required to ensure a design that avoids unacceptable harm to the occupiers/users of nearby property and land.

The nature and siting of the proposed development, in its entirety, would not result in an unacceptable relationship with the neighbouring dwellings. The garden room would be of a modest scale and single-storey in height such that it would not result in unacceptable loss of light, outlook or privacy, with the use not expected to result in significant potential for harmful levels of noise or disturbance.

Climate change:

Policies 35, 36 and 37 of the HDPF require that development mitigates to the impacts of climate change through measures including improved energy efficiency, reducing flood risk, reducing water consumption, improving biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport modes. These policies reflect the requirements of the NPPF that local plans and decisions seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change.

The provision of solar panels and an air source heat pump would create a renewable energy source which would reduce the reliance of the property on alternative energy sources. This represents a material consideration of significant weight.

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone as defined by Natural England which draws its water supply from groundwater abstraction at Hardham. Natural England has issued a Position Statement for applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone which states that it cannot be concluded with the required degree of certainty that new development in this zone would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites.

Natural England advises that plans and projects affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate, with sufficient certainty, that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The received advice note advises that the matter of water neutrality should be addressed in assessments to agree and ensure that water use is offset for all new developments within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

Conclusions:

The proposal would not result in any unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity or on protected sites, and there are no concerns in respect of the siting or design of the outbuilding. It is though considered that the solar panels and heat pump would result in less than substantial harm, and on the moderate end of the scale (if there were one). Paragraph 208 sets out 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.

The provision of a renewable source of energy at the site represents a public benefit of considerable weight. There is though potential for the resulting adverse impacts on the listed building to be reduced, by relocating the heat pump to a lower screened location (such as ground level), and to revisit the roofslopes on which the solar panels would be installed (with smaller south and west facing roofslopes also present at the site). It is has not therefore been demonstrated that the same public benefit could not be derived from a more sensitive scheme which addresses the concerns raised elsewhere in this report.

The public benefit is not therefore considered to outweigh the harm identified on the historic interest and significance of the listed building, and wider terrace row, and the surrounding conservation area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Recommendation: Application Refused

Reason(s) for Refusal:

1. The proposed solar panels and air source heat pump would represent incongruous and unduly prominent features that would fail to respect the important architectural features of the heritage asset and result in harm to the setting of the row of terraces to which it is attached. The proposed development would not preserve, reflect or enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the designated heritage asset, and would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. The are no public benefits which would outweigh the identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies 32, 33 and 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/24/0594

(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **not approved**:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Received Date

Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed Garden Room	2024.414.06	17.04.2024
Design & Access Statement		NONE	17.04.2024
Supporting Statement	Heritage	NONE	17.04.2024
Elevation & Floor plan	Existing roof	2024.414.02	17.04.2024
Elevation & Floor plan	Proposed roof	2024.414.02	17.04.2024
Location plan		2024.414.03	17.04.2024
Block plan	Proposed	2024.414.04	17.04.2024
Site plan	Proposed sections	2024.414.05	17.04.2024

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Hannah Darley Date: 08/07/2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 11.07.2024