Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/0595
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 (Listed Building consent)

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/24/0594	Installation of solar panels with an air source heat pump. Internal improvements and construction of timber frame garden room (Full application).	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 an approximate ridge height of 3.32 metres, an eaves height of 2.9 metres and would have a half hipped appearance. The approximate 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 to this 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 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets

Henfield Neighbourhood Plan (2017-2031):
Policy 12: Design Standards for New Development

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:
HDC Conservation: Objection

‘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.

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.’

Woodmancote Parish Comments: Object, the proposed solar panels on the East side of the property and the heat pump would be clearly visible from the street which is contrary to the restrictions of the Conservation Area, and out of keeping with surrounding properties. The Council would support the installation of 'greener' forms of energy provided it was not visible from the street and does not contravene Conservation Area requirements.

Representations:
1 representation was received, objecting for the following reasons:-

- This house is a grade 2 listed property in a conservation area in an historic hamlet. The solar panels would be seen from the road and is detrimental to the landscape and views of the hamlet. The benefit of the few roof panels would be of no benefit to the wider community and the siting of the pump is not at all appropriate to the village views. They would cause harm to the listed building. Feel the application for the garden room should be assessed separately.

1 representation was received, supporting the application which would make no difference to the overall aesthetic of the village, but will provide the cottage with clean energy and heat source.

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

Policy 34 of the Horsham Development Framework aims to sustain and enhance the historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. By reassuring development preserve and ensure clear legibility of, locally distinctive vernacular building forms and their settings, features, fabric and materials.

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 (2018) 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.
Some internal alterations would be incorporated including loft insulation and the installation of a water tank and new radiators. The conservation officer has been consulted during the application and there are no objections to the internal alterations specifically, although it is noted that there is limited information on the changes proposed in respect of the radiators/ pipework or the type of insulation to be utilised in the roof space. It is considered that if the application had otherwise been acceptable, this information could have been requested as a pre-commencement condition to ensure that there would be no harm to the special character of the listed building.

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. 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 is considered in the following section of this report.

Conclusion

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

Reasons 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. The are no public benefits which would outweigh the identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 34 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Plans list for: DC/24/0595
(The approved plans will form Condition 1 on the Decision Notice of all Permitted applications)

Schedule of plans/documents **refused**:

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 Hannah Darley Date: 08/07/2024

Authorising Officer sign/initial Guy Everest Date: 11.07.2024