Appeal Statement of Case

Retention of solar panels to the south facing roof

The Coach House, The Hollow, Washington

prepared by

WPS Planning

Planning Appeal Statement
The Coach House

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement of Case is prepared by WPS Planning on behalf of Mrs A Davis (the 'Appellant') in respect of a planning appeal under the provisions of S.78 of the Town and Country Planning Act (the 'Appeal').

1.2 The Appeal is against the refusal of an application for Householder Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent (the 'Application') by Horsham District Council ('HDC'). The HDC application reference is DC/24/1653 & DC/24/1460.

1.3 The Application was made in relation to The Coach House, The Hollow, Washington (the 'Appeal Site'). The development is for the retention of solar panels to the south facing roof.

1.4 The Applications were validated on 23 October 2024, and refused under delegated officer powers on 18 December 2024, for the following reason:

> ***The solar panels, by reason of their design, siting and extent, represent incongruous and unduly prominent features that draw undue attention when viewing the complex of buildings from The Hollow. The solar panels have a harmful impact on the special interest of the listed building and fail to preserve, reflect or enhance its special character and distinctiveness. 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.***

1.5 The documents which make up the Application as originally submitted are as follows:

- Application Form
- Design & Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Photos
- Drawings:
  - Location plans x 2
  - Existing Block Plan
  - Proposed Block Plan

1.6 The consultation responses resulting from the application process which are relevant to the Appeal are as follows:

- An objection was received from HDC Conservation
- Washington PC made no comment on the application

1.7 The representation letters resulting from the application process which are relevant to the Appeal are as follows:

- 2 letters of representation were received in objection of the application from the occupant of one neighbouring dwelling

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The appeal site is located on the southern side of The Hollow and consists of a large residential curtilage, which comprises a detached dwelling along with a number of outbuildings.

2.2 Neighbouring dwellings are located to the east, north and south of the appeal site. The A24 is located to the west of the site. The appeal site lies outside of

the defined built-up area of Washington and forms part of a complex of building, with the listed building of Rock House to the east.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY OF THE APPEAL SITE

3.1 The appeal site has the following relevant planning history:

- WS/28/96 - Conversion of coach house into 1 dwelling - Application Permitted
- WS/29/96 - Conversion of coach house into 1 dwelling (listed building consent) - Application Permitted

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal is described as:

"Retention of solar panels to the south facing roof"

4.2 The development seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the retention of solar panels to the south facing roof.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that this should run through both plan-making and decision-taking. In terms of the determination of planning applications this should mean the approval of developments that accord with the development plan without delay, and that where the development plan is silent or relevant policies are out of date, that permission

be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies of the NPPF indicate otherwise.

5.2 National planning guidance relevant to the determination of the Appeal will be considered with reference to the following documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
  - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
  - Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
  - Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.3 In terms of the local planning policy context for the Appeal Site, the adopted Development Plan for the Horsham District Council is composed of the following relevant documents:

- Horsham District Council Planning Framework (HDPF) – Adopted November 2017
  - Policy 33 – Development Principles
  - Policy 34 – Cultural and Heritage Assets

- Storrington, Sullington & Washington Neighbourhood Plan
  - Policy 14 - Design

- Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19)
  - Policy 21 – Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment

6.0 OVERVIEW OF APPELLANT'S CASE

6.1 The application was determined by Horsham District Council following formal consultation responses along with one letter of representation and comment from Washington Parish Council.

6.2 When assessed against relevant national and local planning policies, the proposal is considered entirely appropriate in terms of its location and impact upon the surrounding area.

6.3 The appeal proposal seeks planning permission & listed building consent following the refusal of the Local Authority and the following statement would seek to address the reason for refusal.

National Policy

6.4 Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states *"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."*

6.5 Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states *"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)."*

6.6 Paragraph 168 of the NPPF states *"When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should: a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy,*

and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future."

6.7 It is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with all of the above paragraphs of the NPPF. The development has aimed to make the best use of the site, in keeping with the surrounding development.

6.8 The Council gave one reason for refusal in their determination of the application. Therefore, the focus of this statement will be in respect of this area:

- Impact upon the listed building

Impact upon the listed building

Reason 1

The solar panels, by reason of their design, siting and extent, represent incongruous and unduly prominent features that draw undue attention when viewing the complex of buildings from The Hollow. The solar panels have a harmful impact on the special interest of the listed building and fail to preserve, reflect or enhance its special character and distinctiveness. 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

6.9 Policy 34 (Cultural and Heritage Assets) in the HDPF states *"The Council recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and as such the Council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets".*

6.10 Policy 35 (Climate Change) in the HDPF states *"Development will be supported where it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the district's carbon reduction targets as set out in the Council's Acting Together on Climate Change Strategy, 2009…The use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy supply* systems*"*

6.11 Although the dwelling of 'The Coach House' is not a listed building, it is considered to form part of the group of buildings which formed part of the Rock House. As such, consideration needs to be given to the impact upon the Heritage Asset of Rock House and the associated buildings.

6.12 The Officer in their delegated report refers to the Historic England's guidance '*Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency' (2024).* They state the following: "*with this advising that solar panels will be acceptable in some cases as they can often be designed in a way that avoids harm to the special interest of listed buildings. To achieve this the guidance notes that solar panels would generally be acceptable on roof slopes of less prominence or on subordinate parts of a complex building, even if they would be visible. The guidance also notes that mounting panels on land associated with a listed building is generally preferable to installation on the main building."*

6.13 The solar panels are placed on a building associated with the main listed building and as such in line with the above guidance are placed on a roof slope of *"less prominence or subordinate parts of a complex building"*, being the former outbuilding which served 'Rock House' and is separate from the curtilage of the listed building.

6.14 The Officer refers to the visibility of the solar panels from The Hollow. There are limited views of the solar panels from The Hollow. The boundary of the dwellings of Rock House, Rock House Cottage and the appeal site, which fronts

the road has a line of mature trees, which provide a significant level of screening all year round. Additionally, any potential views of the appeal site from the road are on the crest of the hill on the bend, which is not an easy or safe viewpoint. As such, there are very limited opportunities to the see the appeal site and is not be an obvious focal point. Further, there is no footpath along either side of the road,

6.15 The Officer further states *"The solar panels have resulted in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset. Paragraph 208 of the NPPF sets out that where a 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".*

6.16 As stated in both national and local planning policies, in particular paragraph 162 of the NPPF, which states *"Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures."*

6.17 Therefore, whilst there is a private benefit from the solar panels, such as reduced energy costs, the main purpose of renewable energy solutions is the long term wider public benefit to reduce climate change. Which is also goes back to para 167 *"Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings*".

6.18 It is therefore considered that there is an obvious public benefit with the installation of the solar panels, as defined in para 168 of the NPPF, which states *"When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning*

authorities should recognise that small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions".

6.19 Therefore, the installation of the solar panels would be considered to comply with Policies 34 & 35 of the HDPF and the NPPF.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 As explained above, the proposal complies fully with relevant national planning policies and local Development Plan policies that concern climate change, design and effects on the character of the listed building and the surrounding area.

7.2 The Appeal is considered to have addressed the Council's reason for refusal in detail and it is considered that the appeal proposal is appropriate in this location, which would not have a detrimental impact upon the listed building or the wider area, which seeks to address climate change issues.

7.3 In taking all matters into account, it is respectfully requested that the appeal is allowed.