

Conservation Officer – Initial refusal, however, if amendments are made to the scheme as suggested I would withdraw my refusal.

Policy

Before proceeding to consider the policy context of the NPPF, it is of primary importance that the correct weight should be attributed to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building from the outset, in accordance with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990: *“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”*

The need for the decision taker to attach considerable or special weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings has been reinforced through two recent high court decisions of: Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Limited vs. East Northamptonshire District Council et al (2014); and North Norfolk District Council vs. DCLG and Mack (2014).

The above statute and its subsequent and consistent interpretation in recent high court decision emphasises the need for the policies of the NPPF to be implemented whilst always having regard to the need to give special or greater weight to the preservation of the setting of a listed building.

However, the National Planning Policy Framework, which places sustainable development at its heart, also requires proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets to weigh any harm against the public benefits of the proposal. One of the core planning principles set out in the Framework encourages the use of renewable resources and the development of renewable energy. Another principle is that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Therefore a careful balance between these principles needs to be sought in this proposal.

Impact upon Streetscene/Conservation Area

There is no visibility of the solar panels from outside the immediate site area except for glimpse views from the Royal Oaks Pub garden. It is therefore considered that there is no impact upon the streetscene. The panels do constitute a notably modern addition within the garden area itself, and are of a significant contrasting feature within this part of the wider Conservation Area. However, it could not be argued that the installation would cause harm to the wider conservation area.

Impact upon Curtilage Listed Building and the Setting of the Grade II listed dwelling

Whilst noting the limited visibility of the installation from much of the site, the array of panels are highly visible when viewed from within the site and from the Grade II listed dwelling. It is therefore considered that the panels will impact upon the setting and character of the listed dwelling, and will fail to preserve the special interest of this building and its wider setting.

It is also considered that the works have resulted in harm to the character of the curtilage Listed structure, and the contribution it makes within the wider collection of buildings in the area. The proposed solar panels by virtue of their number (**14 panels**) reflective frames and regimented appearance do not contrast well with the simple form of this building and as such visually jar its appearance. The use of modern materials also result in a detrimental contrast with the more restrained arrangement of traditional materials found upon both the curtilage listed building and the surrounding properties, and it is considered that the installation works, whilst conducted to a high standard, have resulted in harm to the fabric of this curtilage listed structure.

If this proposal had come forward at a pre-application stage then a proposal such as this would not have been recommend for submission. However, a reduced scheme of 9 panels with a darker matt finish may have negated the harm caused, allowing for better appreciation of the host building and reducing the visual impact from within the site. If this comes forward as an amendment to the scheme then it is something that could be looked on positively.

I note that there are some solar arrays located within the neighbouring Mill Lane, Conservation Area. These additions are to properties that are not listed and as such the works are considered to be permitted development. The application is materially different in that it affects the setting of a listed building (the dwelling) and the appearance of a curtilage listed building (the barn).

If amendments are not forthcoming then I would recommend refusal for the following reason:

The proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the curtilage listed building, and the setting of the parent listed building 13 - 14 Langstone High Street. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS11 and CS16 (1a) of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011), policy DM20 of the Havant Allocations Plan 2014 and national guidance contained in the NPPF and section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

The granting of listed building consent would create an undesirable precedent for applications of a similar nature which the Local Planning Authority would then find difficult to resist in this historically significant area. The cumulative impact of such development would considerably exacerbate the adverse impact on the character and appearance of the curtilage listed building, and the setting of the parent listed building 13 - 14 Langstone High Street. Accordingly the proposal is ontrary to Policies CS11 and CS16 (1a) of the Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011), policy DM20 of the Havant Allocations Plan 2014 and national guidance contained in the NPPF and section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990.