

Heritage & Conservation

Application consultation response

Application reference:	24/02696/fp
Site:	The Old School House 4 Market Hill Royston
Proposal	Raise existing roof ridge height and replace existing slate roof coverings with fibre cement slates and flush mounted photovoltaic panels following removal of existing roof vent.
Action required prior to determination:	No (see below)

Summary

There is an objection to the installation of the pv panels on the flank roof as this is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area by changing the appearance of the roof.

There is no objection to the raising of the ridge height as this is minimal and will not cause harm.

Heritage Assets

Building of Local Interest
Conservation Area

Discussion

The proposed PV panels are considered to cause harm to the character of the conservation area as they would be visible from both Market Hill and Fish Hill. Although there are intermediate buildings which may reduce the visual impact the expanse of the proposed pv panels overall the proposed will not enhance the character of the conservation area. Any development should seek to enhance or better reveal the character and appearance.

There is no objection to the raising of the roof ridge to accommodate internal insulation as this is considered to be of minimal impact and not have a negative impact of the character and/or significance of the conservation area and building of local interest.

Heritage Policy Assessment

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 26H of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or Sections 16 (1) & 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as supported by the aims of the NPPF.

The Local Plan and NPPF

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 and the policies contained within it i.e., Policy HE1. The plan was adopted November 2022.

The relevant paragraph numbers at Section 16 of the July 2021 version of the NPPF have been changed as follows:

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

199. When considering the impact of a 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). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.....

202. 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.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – December 2017

At para 14 under the sub-heading 'Landscape Assessment and Amenity' it states that "Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. **Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than just an incidental element within the wider landscape.**"

At para 17 it states (my emphasis in bold): "All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. **Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.** This capacity may vary between designated assets of the same grade or of the same type or according to the nature of the change. It can also depend on the location of the asset: an elevated or overlooked location; a riverbank, coastal or island location; or a location within an extensive tract of flat land may increase the sensitivity of the setting (i.e. the capacity of the setting to accommodate change without harm to the heritage asset's significance) or of views of the asset. This requires the implications of development affecting the setting of heritage assets to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Conclusion

For the reasons given above it is felt that in heritage terms:

The proposed photo voltaic panels would not preserve the architectural and/or historic interest of the local listed building and therefore does not comply with sections 16 (1) of the Act.

The proposed photo voltaic panels would not preserve the character and/or appearance of the conservation area and does not comply with section 72 (1) of the Act.

There is an **OBJECTION**. The scheme will not satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.

From	Tricia Craggs
Date	4.2 2025

