

Heritage & Conservation

Application consultation response

Application reference:	25/00604/LBC
Site:	Offley Place SG5 3DX
Proposal	Installation of solar panels to roofs of function room building and former stables building.
Action required prior to determination:	No (see below)

Summary

There are no objections to the proposal due to the location of the panels on the function suite. The proposed panels for the stable block although visible that visibility would be mitigated due to the location of the stable block is located behind the principal elevation of Offley Place. And the method of mounting and colour of panels. Please see discussion for detailed comments.

Heritage Assets

Listed Building
Conservation Area

Discussion

The proposed solar panels are considered to be supportable on both buildings for the following reasons.

The function suite building is not listed, being a modern construction but does link to the main building of Offley Place. The proposal would see no loss or intervention into historic fabric of significance and therefore is it considered that there is less than harm substantial harm to and on the setting of the host building.

The proposed solar panels to the curtilage listed stable block although prolific as would cover most the area of the roof is supportable. Although visible this would be somewhat mitigated by the flush mounting and colour of the proposed panels, and its location behind the principal elevation of Offley Place. This is considered to be at the lower end of less than substantial harm.

The works are considered to have no public view and therefore will not cause harm to the character of Gt Offley Conservation Area.

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

The proposals would preserve the architectural and/or historic interest of the listed building and therefore complies sections 16 (1) of the Act.

The proposals would preserve and/or appearance of the conservation area and therefore complies with section 72 (1) of the Act.

There is/are **NO OBJECTION/S**. The scheme will 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
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