

## **OFFICER REPORT FOR COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 03/03/2021**

**P/21/0198/FP  
TITCHFIELD PARISH ROOM**

**TITCHFIELD WARD  
AGENT: MR NICK GIRDLER  
TITCHFIELD VILLAGE TRUST**

REPLACEMENT TILES; INSTALL 3 ROWS OF SOLAR PANELS; REPLACEMENT PAVING SLABS TO IMPROVE DRAINAGE AND CREATE A LEVEL HARDSTANDING.

ST PETERS PARISH ROOM, HIGH STREET, TITCHFIELD, PO14 4AQ

### ***Report By***

Sarah Leete-Groves – direct dial 01329 824380

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The application is reported to the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Mrs Hockley.

### **2.0 Site Description**

2.1 The application site is located within the designated urban area of Titchfield and represents the corner site to Southampton Hill, East Street and High Street. The rear or south side of the site backs onto an off street carpark overlooked by Titchfield Meadows a modern residential block to the west, a Grade II listed War Memorial to the east, the Queens Head Hotel to the south east, the Jubilee Surgery and a well-used public right of way to the south providing access to Barry's Meadow and Southampton Hill Road, for the High Street.

2.2 The site, as a corner plot, includes St Peter's Parish Room which is identified by Fareham Borough Council as a non-designated heritage asset, and a 1914-1918 War Memorial, designated as a Grade II heritage asset.

2.3 The site also falls within Titchfield Conservation Area that has an Article 4 Direction, which includes the need for planning permission for the installation of Solar Panels where they are visible from a highway which is identified as the busy public right of way located to the south of the site.

### **3.0 Description of Proposal**

3.1 The application seeks the installation of 3 rows of solar panels on the southern roofslope of the building and the replacement of paving slabs to the area around the entrance to the building, which is located to the south with direct access from the car park.

## 4.0 Policies

4.1 The following policies apply to this application:

### **Adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy**

CS15: Sustainable Development and Climate Change

CS17: High Quality Design

### **Adopted Development Sites and Policies**

DSP1: Sustainable Development

DSP2: Environmental Impact

DSP3: Impact on Living Conditions

DSP5: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment

### **Other Documents:**

Fareham Borough Design Guidance: Supplementary Planning Document (excluding Welborne) December 2015

### **National Legislation and Guidance:**

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act, 1990

- Section 66 – Listed Buildings and Setting.
- Section 72 – Conservation Areas.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **Historic England Guidance:**

The setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition), 2017;

Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, 2015;

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, 2008; and,

Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings, Solar Electric (Photovoltaics), 2018.

## 5.0 Relevant Planning History

5.1 The following planning history is relevant:

Pre-application request submitted in February 2020.

**Q/0018/20** Installation of solar panels to replacement roof.

5.2 The following conclusion and advice was offered to the applicant at pre-application stage:

*'Based on the information submitted, the installation of the solar panels would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the locally listed building and therefore we would not be able to support this proposal. Whilst the Council do encourage the installation of renewable energy, due to the sensitive location of the site it would not be appropriate in this instance.'*

## **6.0 Representations**

6.1 Twenty-three letters from the consultation process have been received regarding this application, three of which raise objections and twenty are in support of the proposed development.

6.2 The areas of concern regarding the development comprise:

- Detrimental to the character of the locally listed building and surrounding conservation area.
- No alternate location or energy system has been explored.
- Concern over setting a precedent.
- Concern over the loss heritage through lack of maintenance and neglect.

6.3 Support for the development comprise:

- Support for a carbon neutral future.
- Cast aside traditional thoughts move forward with installation of solar panels.
- Strongly supported worthwhile project.
- Will be a benefit for the village for the foreseeable future.
- In no way detrimental to the village.
- Great idea.
- Opportunity to reduce carbon whilst maintaining an old building.
- A good compromise.
- Beneficial to the parish rooms future.
- The installation of the panels is sympathetic and unobtrusive.

6.4 The above points of concern and support have been addressed in the body of the report.

## **7.0 Consultations**

### *Internal*

7.1 No internal consultations undertaken on this application.

### *External*

#### ***Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE)***

7.2 No objections

## **8.0 Planning Considerations**

8.1 The following matters represent the key material planning considerations which need to be assessed to determine the suitability of the development proposal. The key issues comprise:

- a) High Quality Design.
- b) Environmental Impact.
- c) Impact on Living Conditions.
- d) Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

**a) High Quality Design**

- 8.2 The planning application proposes the replacement of all the roof tiles on the Parish Room with like for like tiles together with the installation of 3-rows of solar panels on the south side of the roof. Other works include the repair and replacement of paving slabs on the south side of the building to prevent water ingress.
- 8.3 The Council's adopted Design Guidance seeks to ensure that all development responds positively and is respectful to the key characteristics of the area.
- 8.4 Solar panels are becoming an increasingly popular way for residential and non-residential properties to generate their own electricity. However, the installation of solar panels on a visible roofscape which contributes to the character of both the non-designated heritage asset (St Peters Parish Room) and designated heritage asset (Titchfield Conservation Area) will result in a material effect on the appearance of the surrounding area.
- 8.5 In this respect and taking account the siting, inherent form, scale and colour of the solar panels, the proposal is not considered to respond positively or respectfully to the key characteristics of the area.

**b) Environmental Impact**

- 8.6 Due to the nature of the works proposed there would be no significant adverse impact individually or cumulatively on neighbouring development nor adjoining land, or the wider environment by reason of noise, heat, liquids, vibration, light or air pollution.

**c) Impact on Living Conditions**

- 8.7 Due to the nature of the works proposed there would be no unacceptable adverse impact upon living conditions on the site or neighbouring development by way of the loss of sunlight, daylight, outlook and/or privacy.

**d) Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment**

- 8.8 In considering the impact of the proposed works, great weight is given to the conservation of the designated and non-designated heritage assets. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act, 1990 sets out that when considering planning applications 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 possess. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act, 1990 sets out with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification in accordance with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In this respect, paragraph 200 of the NPPF requires that new development within the setting of a heritage asset(s), should look for opportunities to preserve, enhance or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset(s).

- 8.9 The key characteristics of the area surrounding St Peters Parish Room; are identified as the historic and architectural merit attributed to Titchfield Conservation Area, St Peters Parish Rooms which is classified by Fareham Borough Council as a non-designated heritage asset (locally listed) and the War Memorial, a Grade II listed designated heritage asset, sited within the immediate setting of the Parish Rooms.
- 8.10 In context of the character of the conservation area, St Peters Parish Room is located on the corner of Southampton Hill, East Street and the medieval High Street which contains a mix of houses, offices and shops. Most buildings abut the back edge of the pavement forming a continuous frontage, but a few have small enclosed frontages such as St Peters Parish Room which is a later addition to the historic street pattern. However, the architectural styling of the building is reflective of the built character of the conservation area.
- 8.11 The contribution St Peters Parish Room makes to the identified character of the area, is as a late 19<sup>th</sup> century non-designated heritage asset with high architectural merit, constructed in facing flint and bath stone with pressed tiles to a steeply pitched roof. The consciously designed form of the building and use of vernacular materials, provides the gateway to the character and appearance of the High Street when approached from Southampton Hill and East Street.
- 8.12 Set back from the highway and enclosed by a flint wall the immediate setting of the St Peters Parish Room includes a Grade II listed war memorial commemorating the First World War, located to the east fronting the High Street. Whilst the Parish Room is located within the setting of this Grade II heritage asset, the setting of the asset would not be affected by the proposed works. Section 66 of the 1990 Act is therefore satisfied in this context.
- 8.13 In context of the visual contribution the rear of St Peters Parish Rooms makes to the character of the area, the southern elevation and substantial roofslope addresses an open car park, enclosed by the rear of The Queens Head to the

east, Titchfield Meadows to the west and a brick wall adjoining a timber fence boundary to the south, which defines a well-used public footpath and the entrance to the Jubilee Surgery.

- 8.14 By virtue of the low boundary brick wall, the southern elevation of St Peters Parish Room which includes the formal entrance to the building, is clearly visible from the public realm and makes a valuable contribution to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area.
- 8.15 In this respect the reinstatement of matching pavement slabs to the front entrance which were lost and replaced with tarmac due to tree subsidence is welcomed. In addition, the new slabs will be laid to encourage water runoff into the car park away from the building, providing a long-term solution to future water ingress.
- 8.16 However, turning to the prominent roofscape which contributes to St Peters Parish Room aesthetic value, and the works which include the introduction of three rows of solar panels on the southern slope. As discussed, the southern elevation of St Peters Parish Room is the principal entrance to the building, the aesthetic merit attached to which allows for the interpretation of the buildings form and communal function within the village.
- 8.17 The steeply pitched roof, attractive roof covering and use of flint and stone makes a valuable contribution to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area. In this context, the introduction of solar panels as proposed through this application would result in visual harm to the appearance of the non-designated heritage asset and in turn the character of the surrounding conservation area.
- 8.18 Whilst the Council supports and encourages renewable energy proposals, these do have to be balanced against the conservation of any heritage asset these works are associated with. In this respect and considering guidance offered by Historic England on Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings, we would encourage an alternate location for the panels to be explored, such as a ground mounted solution.
- 8.19 In summary, the re-instatement of paving slabs to the front entrance is welcomed as it would enhance the setting of the non-designated heritage asset and re-direct the flow of water avoiding future water ingress. The reinstatement of the pavement slabs is considered to accord with Section 72 of the 1990 Act as these works would be seen to enhance the character of the conservation area. However, in considering the visual impact of the solar panels on the non-designated heritage asset and the surrounding

conservation area, this element of the proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm to the non-designated heritage assets and in turn does not satisfy paragraph 200 of the NPPF in respect of preserving, enhancing and better revealing the character and appearance of the conservation area. In turn the development would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area; the development would therefore fail to satisfy Section 72 of the 1990 Act.

- 8.20 The development proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable, contrary to Policy DSP5 and the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework and recommended for refusal.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

### **9.1 REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION**

The development would be contrary to Policy CS17 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy and Policy DSP5 of the adopted Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies, together with Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019, and is unacceptable in that:

- a) The introduction of three rows of solar panels, is considered inappropriate to the aesthetic value that contributes to the significance of St Peters Parish Room as a non-designated heritage asset, resulting in less than substantial harm without public benefit.
- b) The introduction of three rows of solar panels to the southern slope of the non-designated heritage asset which is visible from a public footpath within the conservation area is considered inappropriate to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the area. The development fails to preserve, enhance or better reveal the significance of Titchfield Conservation Area a designated heritage asset.

## **10.0 Background Papers**

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