

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 28th January 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2024/0564
Site Address: 4 Tape Street, Cheadle
Proposal: Listed Building Consent to add solar panel to rear elevation

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Former Black Horse Public House – Grade II (listing ref: 1037952) - Cheadle Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to the Former Black Horse Pub (Grade II), which is situated in Cheadle Conservation Area.

The building is a former inn, dating from the early-19th century. It is constructed in rendered brickwork, with a pitched tile roof. The significance of the building derives from its historic association as a public house, retention of historic fabric, illustrative vernacular design with some polite architectural influence and prominence on a corner plot.

Cheadle Conservation Area was designated for its Saxon origins, its rapid expansion in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, historic association with coal mining and metal and textile industries. Predominantly buildings are constructed in red brick walling with Staffordshire blue and Welsh slate roofing. The Conservation Area is characterised by its linear formation, with buildings tightly knit along the highway. There is a high retention of 18th & 19th century buildings along the principal roads and 4 Tape Street makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve the installation of solar panels to the rear elevation of the 4 Tape Street (Grade II). These would be a mixture of panels attached to the pitched roofs and the flat roof outrigger.

Whilst we are supportive of the principle of improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions in the historic environment, the solar panels would have an engineered appearance which would starkly contrast with the traditional materials and construction of the building. As a result, the proposal would cause a degree of visual harm to the architectural and aesthetic interest of the Listed Building.

The panels would, however, be situated in a less visually prominent location and some of the panels would be attached to a modern flat roofed part of the building of no heritage significance. The technical specification also outlines that the panels would be black framed which would minimise some of the visual harm as this would integrate with the appearance of the tiled roof.

It is not fully clear if some of the projecting panels on the 1-storey aspect of the development would be visible from High Street looking down the rear of 4 Tape Street. If clarification can be provided that the projecting panels on the 1-storey outrigger would not project higher than the timber fence at the rear of the site, this would be useful.

Other matters:

It was noted on site that vertical timber cladding has been installed to the rear elevation of the Listed Building and this is illustrated on the existing and proposed elevations (dwg no. J3834-03 & J3834-05 Rev A). This cladding does not appear to benefit from listed building consent and should be removed from the existing and proposed drawings, so as to not inadvertently permit these works through this listed building consent application.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the special interest of the Listed Building (s.16) and preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).

Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (par.215).

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment
- Cheadle Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposal would result in moderate degree of harm to the special interest of the Listed Building. This would be contrary to s.16 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be ‘less than substantial harm’ to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). However, there has been clear and convincing justification provided for the level of heritage harm (par.213 of NPPF) and there would likely be public benefits secured through the proposal, in terms of climate change and energy efficiency (Section 14 of NPPF), that would balance or outweigh this level of heritage harm (par.215 of NPPF). Subject to the amendments and clarification mentioned above, there are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

For any consent granted, we would recommend the technical specification of the solar panels are condition to ensure that the visual harm is minimised.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson