

Heritage Statement - SMD/2025/0418

Proposal: Installation of 14 all-black, matt anti-glare solar panels on the rear roof slope of Cranford, 10 Fynney Street, Leek, Staffordshire (Grade II Listed, List Entry Number: 1268594).

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement supports an application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the rear roof slope of Cranford. It describes the heritage significance of the building, assesses the impact of the proposal, and demonstrates how the scheme balances conservation requirements with sustainability and climate-change obligations.

2. Heritage Asset Identification

Cranford (listed as 'Ferne-Lea and Cranford and Attached Wall') is a Grade II listed early 20th-century Arts and Crafts style house by architect Reginald Longden (1912). The building contributes positively to the Leek Conservation Area and is characterised by its asymmetrical gables, leaded mullioned and transomed windows, and tall decorative chimneys with diamond shafts.

3. Significance

The building's significance derives from its architectural style, craftsmanship, materials, and its contribution to the wider Conservation Area. The rear roof slope, although of good quality, is of secondary significance compared with the principal street-facing elevations and is largely screened from public viewpoints.

4. The Proposal

The proposal comprises the installation of 14 all-black, matt, anti-glare solar panels, each measuring 1762 × 1134 mm, mounted on low-profile brackets projecting approximately 30 mm above the roof tiles. The panels will be arranged in a compact, regular formation and aligned with the existing roof pitch. Their recessive finish ensures minimal visual impact. Ancillary equipment will be located internally or discretely at the side of the property, hidden from view. Installation will use reversible roof hooks, ensuring no loss of historic fabric.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 Heritage Impact: The proposal results in no impact on principal elevations and does not affect key architectural features such as gables, chimneys, or mullioned windows. Visibility from the public realm is minimal to negligible due to the rear siting. Installation is fully reversible, and no historic materials will be removed or damaged. In accordance with the NPPF, the proposal represents 'less than substantial harm' at the lowest end of the scale.

5.2 Conservation Area Impact: The character and appearance of the Leek Conservation Area will be preserved. The panels are not visible from the primary public frontage and do not alter the building's architectural relationship with the surrounding streetscape.

5.3 Public Benefits: The installation contributes to renewable energy generation, reduces carbon emissions, and enhances long-term resilience and sustainability for the continued occupation of the listed building. These public benefits clearly outweigh the minimal heritage harm identified.

6. Policy Context

The proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) paragraphs 152–158, which support the transition to a low-carbon future, and paragraphs 199–202, which require weighing less-than-substantial harm against public benefits. The scheme is consistent with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019) and the Local Plan (2020), both of which encourage renewable energy where heritage impacts are acceptable.

7. Conclusion

The proposed solar panel installation on the rear roof slope of Cranford preserves the building's special architectural and historic interest while contributing significantly to carbon reduction and energy efficiency. The proposal is low-impact, fully reversible, minimally visible, and consistent with national and local policy. Listed Building Consent should therefore be granted.