

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 16th December 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0484
Site Address: Wall Grange Farm, Newcastle Road, Leek
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent - Installation of solar panels to roof of detached stable blocks.

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Wall Grange Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1268586)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would impact a curtilage listed building to Wall Grange Farmhouse, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

Wall Grange Farmhouse (Grade II) is a late-17th century farmhouse constructed in coursed and squared stone with plain tiled roofs. The significance relates to its association with retention of historic fabric and plan form, development of farmsteads in the post-medieval period and illustrative vernacular construction. The stable block to the east is considered a curtilage listed building as it is visible on historic mapping, was in the same ownership of the building at the time of listing, is ancillary in function to the farmhouse and is in close proximity to the principal Listed Building.

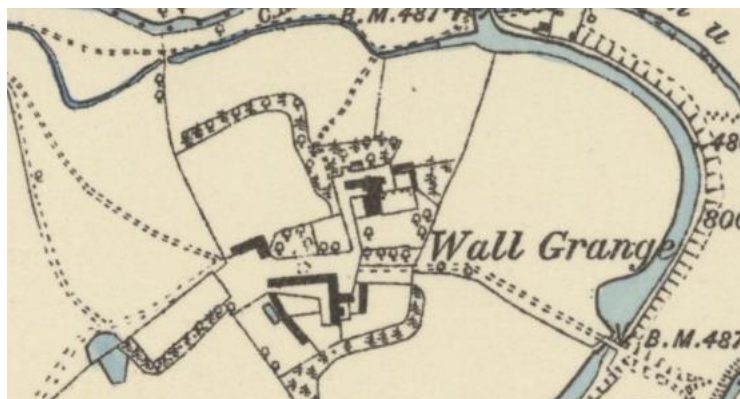


Fig.1 c.1887 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve the installation of approx. 15 panels to the southern and western roofslopes of the stable block adjacent to Wall Grange Farmhouse. As set out above, the stable block is considered a curtilage listed building.

The panels would have an overtly engineered appearance which would clash with and distract from the traditional palette of materials and vernacular character of the curtilage listed building and adjacent principal listed building.

The technical datasheet for the panels outlines these would be black framed, which would help minimise the visual starkness of the panels. As shown in the visualisations in the Design, Access & Heritage Statement, the colour would help somewhat blend in with the plain blue tiles of the stable block. The battery storage would be mounted internally to the stable block, which would minimise the visual impact on the external architectural interest of the designated heritage asset.

Historic England's guidance 'Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency' (2024), outlines that the principle of solar panels may be acceptable on less prominent roofslopes or outbuildings within the grounds of the Listed Building. The proposed works would align with these design principles as they would be sited on a building of less visual prominence and would help maintain the designed hierarchy of the farmstead.

Overall, the proposed works would have a minor-moderate harmful impact on the architectural interest of the curtilage and principal listed building. However, it is recognised that there would likely be public benefits in terms of climate change arising from the proposal and the panels have been designed and sited sensitively to minimise the visual harm on the designated heritage asset.

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).

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

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposal would have a minor-moderate degree of harm to the special interest of the Listed Building. This would fail to satisfy the provisions of 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). There is, however, clear and convincing justification for this level of harm (par.213 of the NPPF) and the proposed works have been sited on a less sensitive and prominent roofslope to minimise the visual impact on the architectural interest of the principal Listed Building. It is also recognised there would likely be public benefits in terms of energy efficiency and climate change that would arise from the proposal, which may balance or outweigh the heritage harm identified (par.215 of NPPF). Therefore, there are no objections to the proposed works from a conservation perspective.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson