

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 11th February 2026
Application Ref: SMD/202/0538 & SMD/2025/0539
Site Address: 2 Overton Hall Barns, Overton Road, Congleton
Proposal: Listed building consent for 10no Solar PV panels fitted to south facing roof

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Overton Hall – Grade II (listing ref: 1374750) - Barn approx. 30m south of Overton Hall – Grade II (listing ref: 1037815) - Barn approx. 10m south of Overton Hall – Grade II (listing ref: 1190190)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve a listed barn to the south of Overton Hall and adjacent another listed barn, all of which are separately Grade II Listed Buildings.

Overton Hall (Grade II) is a late-17th century farmhouse with 19th century additions. The building is constructed in stone with a stone slate roof and kneelers. The significance of the building relates to its retention of historic fabric and layout, illustrative different phases of development, association with the development of agricultural holdings in the post-medieval period and illustrative traditional and vernacular construction.

The barn 10m south of the hall and barn 30m are both separately Grade II listed. They both date from early- to mid-19th century and are constructed in sandstone with blue tiled roof and verge parapets. Their significance derives from the retention of historic plan form, association with agricultural developments during this period, association with Overton Hall, illustrative traditional construction and agricultural character.

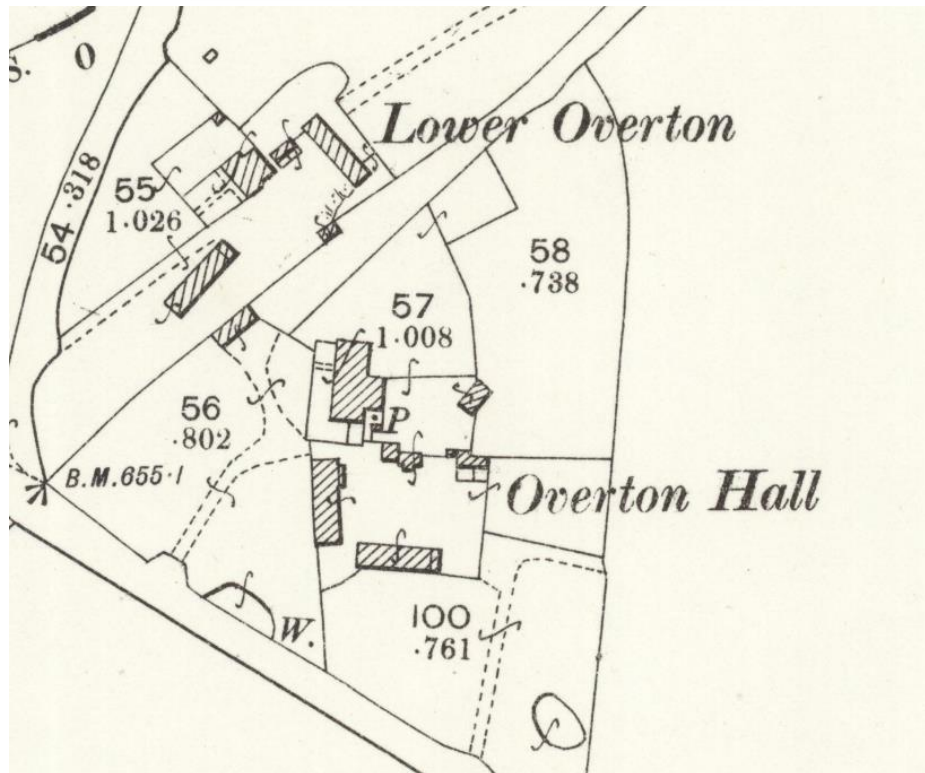


Fig.1 c.1899 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve the installation of 10 solar panels to the south elevation of the listed barn conversion.

The solar panels would have a distinctly engineered appearance which would contrast with the traditional palette of materials of the barn's roof which make a positive contribution to the vernacular character of the building. This would distract from the building's agrarian character and its architectural interest as a result. Due to the orientation of the building, the south elevation faces the main road and is quite visually prominent from Overton Road (even with tree coverage around the site). The proposed works also have the potential to impact some views and appreciation of the adjacent separately listed barn and Overton Hall (Grade II).

As noted in Historic England's advice note 'Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency', the installation of solar panels on principal roof slopes or visible roofslopes will generally not be acceptable as it would detract from the building's special interest. It is acknowledged that the Design & Access Statement makes reference to other alternative locations such as freestanding options within the grounds being excluded due to practical reasons of tree coverage. However, great weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the building's special interest (s.16 and 66 of the Act) and the significance of the heritage asset (par.212 of NPPF).

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting and special interest of the Listed Buildings (s.16 and 66).

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 result in moderate harmful impact on the special interest of the Listed Building and minor harm to the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings. This would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.16 and 66 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage assets (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). Whilst it is recognised there may be public benefits arising from the proposal in terms of climate change, great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset (par.212 of NPPF). We, therefore, object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend it is refused.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson