

REPORT UPDATE

Application No: BR/184/25/PL

Reason for the Update / Changes

Reason for Update/Changes:

Additional comments have been received from the conservation officer, stating that the amendments to the front elevation represent an improvement over the original scheme. The removal of visible solar panels from the front elevation will reduce their impact on the character and appearance of the building when viewed from the public realm. The proposals no longer result in 'less than substantial harm' as previously identified. Instead, the level of harm is now considered to be neutral, with no adverse effect on the assets when considered as a whole. On this basis, the conservation officer raised no objection to the revised scheme from a heritage perspective.

Notes: Changes to recommendations, conditions and / or reasons for refusal will always be reflected in the recommendation section of the attached Officer's Report.

Recommendation Report for Planning Permission

REF NO: BR/184/25/PL

LOCATION: The Royal Norfolk Hotel
The Esplanade
Bognor Regis
PO21 2LH

PROPOSAL: Installation of 101 solar panels across roof. This application affects the setting of listed buildings, affects the character and appearance of The Steyne, Bognor Conservation Area and is in CIL Zone 4 (Zero Rated) as other development.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	This application seeks to install 101 No. solar panels on various roof slopes.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site is a Grade II listed building, likely constructed in the 1840s, with extensions. The building presents an imposing and elongated stuccoed facade, set diagonally at the junction with West Street. It has three storeys and has been extended from its original seven bays to seventeen.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The building is in the western part of The Steyne, Bognor Regis Conservation Area.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

BR/185/25/L Listed building consent for the installation of 101 solar

panels across roof.

The Listed Building application will consider the impact on the Listed Building and will be determined under delegated powers following the Committee decision on this application.

REPRESENTATIONS

Bognor Regis Town Council - Objection.

- The solar panels would harm the significance of the listed building in conflict with the NPPF.
- The panels would not preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area in conflict with the Arun Local Plan and Bognor Regis Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- If the panels were removed from the front roof slope, the Town Council would have no objection.

Conservation Area Advisory Panel - Objection

- The hotel occupies a prominent position on the Esplanade, and makes a distinctly positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- Solar panels on the front (seaside) elevation of the roof would appear incongruous and detract from the character and appearance of the building and the Conservation Area.
- Flat roofed areas between roof structures, or inward facing roof slopes would be better locations for panels.

One letter of support was received stating the development was positive, as it would provide energy with lower emissions. Support was expressed for the inclusion of the conditions recommended by Environmental Health.

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED:

Comments noted. Following comments received, the design has been amended to reduce the number of panels on the front roof slopes and to make those that remain less visible. The impact of the panels on the designated heritage assets is addressed in the conclusions.

CONSULTATIONS

CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED:

Conservation Officer

- The hotel occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of Aldwick Road/West Street, set back in its extensive grounds. This arrangement allows the full principal elevation to be experienced and appreciated, contributing significantly to the building's visual prominence.
- The building's scale, detailing, and relationship to the seafront are integral to the historic townscape and the significance of the designated heritage asset.
- The number of solar panels is substantial, with a significant proportion along the front roof slope, which forms part of the principal elevation. This elevation is clearly of architectural and historic significance, and any alterations here have the potential to affect its character. The submitted drawings confirm the solar panels, or at least part of them, would be visible above the parapet.
- The introduction of solar panels in this location would result in a visually intrusive feature on a highly prominent elevation. This would appear incongruous against the established roofscape and architectural character of the building, detracting from its contribution to the Conservation Area.
- The location of the panels on the principal elevation would result in a visually intrusive feature on a

highly prominent elevation. As a result, the proposal is such that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

Environmental Health - No objection subject to conditions.

- The application does not contain details of any plant associated with the solar panels such as the inverters which produce a high-pitched hum. If these are internal then there should be no impact on the nearby properties, however any external plant has the potential to be an issue.
- Condition proposed requiring details of any external plant prior to its installation.

COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

Comments noted. Amended plans address some of the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer. The agent has confirmed that the inverter would be located internally.

POLICY CONTEXT

Designation applicable to site:

Grade II Listed Building

The Steyne, Bognor Regis Conservation Area

Article 4

Pagham Harbour Zone B

2km Buffer for SSSI

Built Up Area Boundary

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

[Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031:](#)

DDM1	D DM1 Aspects of form and design quality
DDM4	D DM4 Extensions and alter to exist builds (res and non-res)
ECCDM1	ECC DM1 Renewable Energy
HERDM3	HER DM3 Conservation Areas

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance

POLICY COMMENTARY

The Development Plan consists of the Arun Local Plan 2011 - 2031, West Sussex County Council's Waste and Minerals Plans, The South Inshore & South Offshore Marine Plan and Made Neighbourhood Development Plans. The policies are published under Regulations 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material

considerations indicate otherwise."

The proposal complies with relevant Development Plan policies in that the impacts on designated heritage assets are outweighed by the public benefits.

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provides that

(2) in dealing with an application for planning permission the authority shall have regard to -

(a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,

(aza) a post examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,

(b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and

(c) any other material considerations.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no other material considerations to be weighed in the balance with the Development Plan.

CONCLUSIONS

PRINCIPLE

This proposal relates to the installation of solar panels on a building in the built-up area boundary. Policy ECC DM1 of the Arun Local Plan (ALP) states that proposals for appropriately located renewable energy development will be supported where the proposal is designed and located to minimise adverse impact to landscape, habitats, the historic environment and residential amenity. The impact of the proposals on the historic environment is of primary concern in this instance and is addressed below.

DESIGN AND VISUAL AMENITY

The site is a three storey building set diagonally on the corner of Aldwick Road /West Street. The building has a stuccoed principal elevation with a parapet roof. Behind the parapet, the roof is made up of a mix of flat and shallow pitched sections, finished with tiles. The proposal is for the installation of 101 solar panels on the roof, which would be mainly on the pitched sections, with one row of panels on the flat roofed area behind the front pitched section.

Amended plans were received following comments made during the consultation period. These plans show a reduced number of panels on the front roof slopes, and the remaining panels on that slope have been reorientated so as to minimize their visibility. The panels will no longer have significant views from the front elevation, either from the front of the building or from the opposite side of Aldwick Road. Fleeting views of the remaining panels, particularly those on sections of roof where the ridge line runs from the front to the back of the building will be gained from Norfolk Square and West Street. However, most significant views of the panels would be from Norfolk Place and the upper floor flats at Grosvenor Court, rather than the public realm. The solar panels would not be unduly prominent feature either of the hotel or surrounding area, and would not harm the character or visual amenity of the area.

The proposals preserve the character and visual amenity of the building and the surrounding area, in accordance with ALP policies D DM1 and D DM4.

NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The solar panels would be on the roof of the building and would not impact neighbouring occupiers by way of overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking.

Comments have been received from Environmental Health raising concerns that plant associated with solar panels which is outside of the building has the potential to cause disturbance. The agent has

confirmed the inverter would be located internally, and would not result in adverse noise impacts for neighbouring properties. If any external plant was required, this would require a separate consent.

The proposals would not result in adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers and is in accordance with ALP policy D DM4.

HERITAGE

The Royal Norfolk Hotel is a Grade II Listed Building, in The Steyne, Bognor Regis Conservation Area. ALP policy HER DM1 states that proposals should preserve or enhance the significance of listed buildings, and ALP policy HER DM3 states proposals should also preserve or enhance the significance of Conservation Areas. The NPPF sets out several steps when considering impacts on heritage assets. Paragraph 208 requires the Local Planning Authority to identify the significance of the heritage asset affected by a development. The Royal Norfolk Hotel dates from the mid-19th century, with later extensions. Its position, scale and detailing contribute to the significance of the building as a heritage asset. The Steyne, Bognor Regis Conservation Area is illustrative of the growth of Bognor Regis in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and derives its historic interest from its links to the development of Bognor Regis as a seaside resort town as well as its association with the founder of Bognor Regis, Sir Richard Hotham.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The Local Planning Authority must then consider the level of harm associated with the proposal and decide whether there is any harm and if so, whether this is 'less than substantial harm' or 'substantial harm'.

Comments from the Conservation Officer indicate the installation of solar panels results in less than substantial harm to the significance of the hotel and the Conservation Area, given the hotel's prominent location and status as a landmark building in the historic environment of the Conservation Area. The majority of the harm identified derives from the panels which would be visible on the principal elevation. Following amendments, the number of panels on the principal elevation has been reduced, and the remaining panels have been orientated so that they are set down further from the ridge, and would be more concealed by the parapet. More solar panels have been positioned on roof slopes to the rear of the property in compensation. Following this alteration, the solar panels would not be seen when standing directly in front of the hotel, or when standing on the opposite side of Aldwick Road, or the promenade. Limited views of the solar panels would be gained from the surrounding streets. These alterations have reduced the degree of harm to both the Listed Building and the Conservation Area.

Although some harm may remain following the alterations, the NPPF states that any harm to designated heritage assets should be weighed against the public benefits. The solar panels would increase the sustainability of the hotel in terms of increasing use of sustainable energy and reducing harmful emissions, and helping towards the running costs of the hotel. Energy generation helps towards national climate change reduction targets and national energy security goals. Reduction in running costs helps retain the hotel in a tourism town leading to continued employment and economic activity. Given that the harm has been reduced following the Conservation Officer's comments, and the solar panels are minimal visibility on the property's most significant elevation, the sustainability benefits, and the contribution that solar panels may make to ensuring the continuing viability of the hotel are considered to outweigh the harm to the heritage assets. The proposals are acceptable in accordance with paragraph 212 of the NPPF.

SUMMARY

The proposals are in accordance with the relevant development plan policies and are recommended for approval subject to the following conditions and informatives.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

The Council in making a decision should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as Arun District Council to act in a manner, which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Consideration has been specifically given to Article 8 (right to respect private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). It is not considered that the recommendation for approval of the grant of permission in this case interferes unreasonably with any local residents' right to respect for their private and family life and home, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation for approval is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

DUTY UNDER THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010

In assessing this proposal the following impacts have been identified upon those people with the following protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

The proposal would have a neutral impact on the protected characteristics.

CIL DETAILS

This application is not CIL liable.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE CONDITIONALLY

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

 - Location Plan 2025830.01 REV A1
 - Existing and Proposed Site Plan 2025830.02 REV A1
 - Proposed Elevations 2025830.06 REV A2
 - Proposed Roof Plan 2025830.05 A2
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of amenity and the environment in accordance with Arun Local Plan policies HER DM1 and HER DM3.
- 3 When the photovoltaic (PV) panels cease to be used for the generation of electricity, the PV panels and all the associated framework installed onto the roof slopes of the building shall be permanently removed and the roof restored to its former condition.

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Listed Building in accordance with Arun Local Plan policy HER DM1 and the NPPF.

- 4 Based on the information available, this permission is exempt from the requirement to provide a biodiversity gain plan under Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The following exemption applies:

This planning permission is de-minimis as the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat and the development impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5m in length of onsite linear habitat.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).