



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by Mr R Walker BA HONS DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/24/3354828

26 Blackmile Lane, Grendon, Northamptonshire NN7 1JR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Richard Lee against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref is NW/23/00845/FUL.
- The development proposed is described as the 'Placement of 8 solar panels on flat roof of the stone barn outbuilding/annex. The solar panels would be placed on slight tilt in addition to the 7 degree slanting of the roof. This would increase the height of the roof by 200mm-300mm. However due to fact that the road that runs parallel to the building is sunken, it is not expected that the solar panels will be visible from directly behind the roof from current road level. Amended Plans'.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the 'Placement of 8 solar panels on flat roof of the stone barn outbuilding/annex. The solar panels would be placed on slight tilt in addition to the 7 degree slanting of the roof. This would increase the height of the roof by 200mm-300mm. However due to fact that the road that runs parallel to the building is sunken, it is not expected that the solar panels will be visible from directly behind the roof from current road level. Amended Plans' at 26 Blackmile Lane, Grendon NN7 1JR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref NW/23/00845/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos: 21-24-01; 21-24-02 and Solar Panel Product Brochure - TRINA-VERTEX-S-TSM-DE09E.05.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the appeal site is within the setting of a listed building, I have had regard to the statutory duty under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) in relation to this matter.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building or its setting, known as 26 Blackmile Lane, and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Significance/special interest

4. No 26 Blackmile Lane (No 26) is a mid-eighteenth century house built from a coursed limestone and a thatched roof. It is located with a cluster of housing in a rural area with its front elevation facing onto Blackmile Lane.
5. The special interest and significance of the listed building, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is largely derived from its architectural and historic interest, to which its age, historic fabric, historic residential use all contribute positively. Of particular architectural interest is its strikingly dominant thatched roof.
6. To the west of No 26, within its grounds, is a small stone annexe building with a gently sloping mono pitched roof. From the evidence before me it does not lie within the original grounds of the listed building, which were extended following the purchase of additional land. Moreover, from the historic mapping before me, the annexe building is a more recent addition built after 1 July 1948. As such, the annexe is not treated as part of the listed building for consent purposes, however it does fall within the setting of the listed building forming part of its surroundings from which No 26 is experienced.
7. This setting of No 26 has evolved over time through the expanded grounds and more recent housing developments. The elements of the listed building's setting that contribute to its significance include its relationship with the lane, surrounding farmland and the spacious verdant garden, which provide a narrative to the property as a historic rural dwelling.
8. The modest scale of the annexe is such that it is a clearly subservient structure to the host dwelling and its, stone construction harmonises well with the historic fabric of the listed building. It is detached from the listed building and has a closer physical relationship to the neighbouring property, albeit functionally it is clearly associated with No 26 due to the access point and boundary treatments. However, considering the annexe building is a more recent structure, its detached location and as there is no evidence of a historic association with the listed building, in my view, it makes neither a positive nor a negative contribution to the significance of the listed building.

Appeal proposal and effects

9. The proposed solar panels would be a modern insertion on a more recent structure detached from the listed building and where there is no evidence of a historic association with it.
10. Where seen, the proposed solar panels would have a low-key lightweight form and modest scale, which at the low roof level, would not draw attention from the larger and imposing listed building. The function of the solar panels would be readily understood, and although modern they would not appear inherently incongruous in this location with residential properties either side.
11. The verdant quality of the rear garden and its rural setting would be retained given the modest scale of the array and their location on the roof of the annexe. Therefore, the elements which contribute to the listed building's inherent special interest, including its setting, would be preserved and its significance would not be harmed.
12. Drawing the above together, the proposal would preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building and its setting. It would therefore satisfy the

requirements of section 66(1) of the Act and the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Moreover, there would be no conflict with the requirements of Policies 2 and 26 of the Council's Joint Core Strategy, when taken together and in so far as they relate to this matter. These say, amongst other things, that the distinctive North Northamptonshire historic environment will be protected, preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Other Matters

13. The Council has suggested that the appellant has not considered alternative less harmful options, such as ground mounted solar panels within the rear garden or land edged blue. However, I have found that the proposal would preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building and its setting. As such, any potential alternative locations are not determinative in my consideration. Nor is the need for, or the public benefits from, renewable energy.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time commencement condition (1), I have specified the approved plans on the planning permission (2) as this provides certainty.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development would not conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given and subject to conditions, the appeal is allowed

Mr R Walker

INSPECTOR