
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 September 2025

by **B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/Y/24/3355578

Park Farm House, Newton St. Margarets, Hereford HR2 0QW

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Neville Fleet against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 240122.
 - The works proposed are the installation of 16 x solar PVs on south east facing roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. An associated application for planning permission, 240121, was also refused, but is not a matter for the appeal before me.
3. Park Farm House is Grade II listed. In reaching my decision, I have considered the statutory duty under section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (the Act).
4. The appellant has suggested an 're-consideration' of 'integrated or in-roof solar panels', however no details have been provided. I will therefore assess the works before me which the Council considered and consulted on.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the listed building, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

6. Park Farm House is a Grade II listed detached property. It was added to the statutory list in 2000 and consists of a two storey with attic former farmhouse building of late 16th century origin, with 17th and 18th century extensions and alterations.
7. The building has a slate roof, which the Council describe as having likely replaced an earlier stone slate covering. Whilst not shown on the submitted plans, three velux rooflights are inserted into the south-eastern roof pitch.
8. I find that the special interest and significance of the listed building to be primarily associated with its historic and architectural interests in exemplifying a vernacular late 16th century domestic property which has evolved over time. Pertinent to the appeal, the mostly undisturbed roofscape is a key feature of the building. It

provides a simple and plain vernacular character and an element of authenticity that is a positive contributor to the architectural integrity of the property and therefore its special interest and significance.

9. The proposed works would add 16 solar panels on the south east facing roof. The submitted plan shows that the solar panels would cover over half of the main roof plane.
10. This would therefore be a substantial addition to the roof, and the size of the array, in combination with the three existing rooflights, would leave very little of the rear roof slope as a simple expanse of exposed slates. The quantity and position of the panels would detract from the aesthetic value of the property, be read as a starkly modern intrusion and stand out as an atypical feature. It would be at odds with the historic vernacular roof form and character of the wider elevation, diminishing its significance.
11. Proposals should be accompanied by drawings and specifications of sufficient detail to illustrate and/or describe the proposed works in order to avoid any uncertainty over what is proposed, and to allow a robust assessment of any consequent effects. Detailed drawings (in elevation and section) of the solar panels and elevational drawings of the entirety of the property, including the existing rooflights, have not been provided. No detail is provided on how they would be fixed and their projection (if any) from the pitch of the roof, nor whether they would be matt or gloss in appearance. This means that it is not possible to make any comparisons and meaningfully assess any changes to the appearance of this prominent element of the listed building nor the amount that the solar panels would be distinguished from the traditional roof slate.
12. This gives rise to ambiguity and doubt regarding the dimensions of the solar panels, effect on the existing roof and their overall appearance. This is highly undesirable in general terms but especially given that the property is a Grade II listed building of national importance.
13. Whether or not this elevation, facing away from the highway, would be visible or prominent or not, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether changes to them are apparent from public vantage points.
14. I conclude that the proposed works would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, Park Farm House and would harm its significance as a designated heritage asset.
15. Given the fairly localised nature of the works relative to the building, I find the harm to the heritage asset to be at a moderate level of 'less than substantial'.
16. The use of solar panels to help reduce carbon emissions would be both a private benefit to the appellant, and a public one. I have however not been provided with specific evidence on the net carbon reduction that the proposal would realise. Nor am I persuaded that the only way of securing such benefits would be via the particular works proposed. As such, this benefit carries modest weight in favour of the appeal.
17. There would be some economic benefits brought about through the investment into the property and the construction phase. Also, social benefits would be gained

through improvements to the local housing stock. Given the scale of the works, these benefits would each be small. There is no substantive evidence before me that the works are required to secure the optimum viable use of the listed building.

18. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) indicates that, when considering the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. On balance, in giving considerable importance and weight to the harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset, I find that this would not be outweighed by the public benefits that the proposal would generate.
19. Consequently, the harm identified to the significance of the designated heritage asset has not been supported by clear and convincing justification. The works therefore would conflict with the statutory presumption set out in section 16(2) of the Act and fail to satisfy the historic environment conservation and enhancement policies of the Framework. There is also conflict with Policy LD4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 and Policy 1 of the Vowchurch and District Group Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011 to 2031 insofar as these require development to protect and enhance listed buildings.

Other Matters

20. I note the appellants comments regarding the lack of communication from the Council; however, this is a matter for local government accountability. The lack of an objection from the Parish Council does not alter my conclusions.

Conclusion

21. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Phillips

INSPECTOR