



---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 September 2025

**by Juliet Rogers BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2025

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/Y/25/3366515**

**3 School Cottages, Village Road, Woodbury Salterton, Devon EX5 1PG**

- 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 Miss Joanne Nosworthy against the decision of East Devon District Council.
  - The application Ref is 25/0134/LBC.
  - The works proposed are solar panels on the main roof to the rear of the property.
- 

**This decision is issued in accordance with section 56 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended and supersedes that issued on 30 October 2025.**

### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. As the appeal site comprises a listed building, I have had regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
3. The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan and the Regulation 19 draft version of the East Devon Local Plan (2020-2042) (the Emerging Plan) was published for consultation earlier this year. Two policies from the Emerging Plan have been provided as being relevant to the appeal scheme. I have taken them into account during the determination of this appeal, albeit as the Emerging Plan is yet to be adopted, I attribute minor weight to them.

### Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 1-3 School Cottages<sup>1</sup> or its setting or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

### Reasons

5. The appeal site forms one part of a building dating from the 1600s which has now been converted into a row of three cottages. Collectively the three cottages form one listed building entry. The two-storey section of the cottages is constructed with white cob walls set on stone footings. This side of the building was the historic façade of the building. The main entrances to each cottage are now on the historic rear elevation and has been extended at single storey level, creating a cat slide

---

<sup>1</sup> Listing Entry Number: 1104162, date first listed 21 April 1986

slate tile clad pitched roof profile. While indicated by the appellant to have historically had a thatched roof, the evidence before me on this is inconclusive, although there are many properties with thatched roofs in the village.

6. As well as the single storey brick extensions, other contemporary modifications to the cottages have been undertaken, including replacement windows, the addition of brick chimney stacks and the insertion of a dormer window and a rooflight in the cat slide roof. Nonetheless, the rearward roof slope remains free from alterations or additions with a consistency in the arrangement and condition of the roof tiles. Therefore, the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to the proposal, comprises the age and traditional cob construction of the two-storey element of the building.
7. Despite the orientation of the historic façade of the cottages towards the rear gardens nevertheless, the regular arrangement of its diminutive openings combined with the modest size of the cottages is still appreciable from Village Road and from neighbouring private gardens. Due to the perpendicular relationship of the row of cottages to Village Road, the full length of its rearward facing roofscape is visible from the public domain over the boundary fencing of 1 School Cottages, including the appeal property despite it being the furthest cottage from the road. This contributes to the special interest of the listed cottages as a whole.
8. The proposal comprises the installation of six solar panels on the rear roofscape of the appeal property, occupying a significant proportion of its slope. The solar panels would, therefore, be an obvious and discordant addition to the otherwise consistent roofscape across the listed building. Despite having a similar colour to the existing roof tiles, the smooth finish of the tempered glass in the solar panels would jar against the texture of the slate tiles, emphasising their incongruity. The lack of alterations to the historic roof structure and reversibility or ability to remove the solar panels without damage to the historic fabric does not alter the effect they would have on the significance of the listed building as a whole, the appeal property and the setting of the other cottages in the row.
9. The proposal would result in an unsympathetic addition to a designated heritage asset which would detract from its importance and harm its significance. Hence I conclude that it would not preserve the Grade II listed building, or its setting, or the features of special or historical interest it possesses. It therefore conflicts with Policy EN9 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 (the Local Plan) insofar as it seeks to preserve the significance of designated heritage assets. As policies HE01 and HE02 of the Emerging Plan expand upon Policy EN9 of the Local Plan, the proposal is also in conflict with them.
10. Reference to Policy EN8 of the Local Plan is also made on the decision notice. However, as this relates to the need for an applicant to submit a statement of significance with a proposal involving a heritage asset and such a statement was submitted by the appellant, this policy is not determinative in this case.
11. The proposal, therefore, fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act. The level of harm in this case would be less than substantial. Taking into account the size of solar panels and their siting to one roof slope of the property, the magnitude of this harm would be towards the lower end of the less than substantial scale. In these circumstances the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that harm to or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and

convincing justification and should be weighed against the public benefits which would be derived from it. This includes securing its optimum viable use, where appropriate.

12. The installation of solar panels would provide economic benefits to the appellant's household through the reduction in energy costs. These would, however, be private, rather than public, benefits. While the use of renewable energy would be beneficial to the environment and is supported by the Framework, given the number of panels proposed and their use for a single dwelling, the scale of such benefits would be minor. Additionally, no evidence has been presented indicating that the continued residential use of the property is dependent upon the proposal.
13. As such, these benefits would not be of a scale sufficient to outweigh the level of harm identified to the significance of the listed building, and clear and convincing justification for this harm has not been demonstrated. The proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building. This carries considerable importance and weight, consistent with the statutory duty in the Act and reiterated within the Framework.
14. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed 1-3 School Cottages or its setting or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. It is contrary to Policy EN9 of the Local Plan and policies HE01 and HE02 of the Emerging Plan, insofar as they reflect the provisions of the Framework.

### **Other Matters**

15. Although reference is made to other solar panels installed on properties elsewhere in Woodbury Salterton, during my site visit, no solar panels were apparent to me within the Village Road street scene between The Diggers Rest public house and the junction with Sages Lea. Nevertheless, the presence of other solar panels within the local area is not a reason to permit development which would be harmful to the significance of a designated heritage asset.
16. My attention has been drawn to the fact that solar panels have been approved on much older and more significant buildings than 1-3 School Cottages, including at Gloucester and Chester Cathedrals, although specific details of these approvals are not before me. Notwithstanding this, given the public use of these cathedrals, their ecclesiastical status and historical, communal and faith value, the circumstances of these examples are materially different to the appeal scheme.

### **Conclusion**

17. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and material considerations, either individually or in combination, do not indicate that it should be determined other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above and having regard to all relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Juliet Rogers*

INSPECTOR