



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by Juliet Rogers BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E3335/Y/25/3370487

2 Manor Court, Tower Hill, Horsington, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0ET

- 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 Brett Dorney against the decision of Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00408/LBC.
 - The works proposed are the installation of an 18-panel roof mounted solar array.
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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. There is no accompanying appeal relating to the associated planning application¹ for the above development. Therefore, my considerations relate solely to the works that are the subject of the listed building consent application, notwithstanding any requirement for planning permission.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building identified as Block of stable buildings, 30 metres north of Manor Farmhouse², 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 former stone stable block built in 1875, comprising an F-shaped building footprint, which the official listing indicates may have been part of a stud farm complex associated with the adjacent Manor Farmhouse. The building is no longer used as stables, having been converted into nine dwellings circa 1989, resulting in fairly extensive internal and external works to the structure. Nonetheless, as recognised by the Planning/Heritage Statement³ submitted with the application for listed building consent, its principal architectural features and materials, including the existing roofline and archway into the central courtyard, remain.

¹ Council ref: 25/00407/HOU

² List Entry Number: 1238071; date first listed: 25 January 1985

³ Prepared by South Circle Planning and Design; dated February 2025

6. The roofscape of the listed building comprises an almost continuous expanse of slate tiles. On the courtyard facing side, the roof slopes are interrupted only by the hipped gable over the archway, two rooflights and an increase in ridge height, in response to the staggered building line and change in ground levels. The scale of the roof is notably greater than the height of the elevation which supports it as the building's eaves sit just above the stone window surrounds.
7. Despite the introduction of domestic features within the complex, such as additional window and doorway openings in the elevations and the use of the former court yard for parking, nevertheless the listed building retains a character which reflects its former agricultural function. The unbound surface of the courtyard also contributes to this aesthetic. Therefore, insofar as is relevant to this appeal, the special interest of the listed building is derived from the quality and condition of its architectural features and materials, in addition to its historical use as stables and association with the Manor Farmhouse with the wider farm.
8. The appeal dwelling is located at the end of the longer and deeper wing of the listed building. As the tiled roofscape of the appeal dwelling is devoid of any of the aforementioned features which interrupt the expanse of tiles, it makes a positive contribution to the special architectural interest of the listed building. Comprising an array of eighteen solar panels in three rows, the proposal would occupy a significant proportion of one side of the currently uncluttered roofscape. This would result in the introduction of an incongruous feature onto the heritage asset, interrupting the continuity and scale of the roofscape.
9. Despite being sited on what the appellant considers to be a relatively discrete section of the roof, nonetheless, the proposed solar panels would be highly visible from the semi-private courtyard which forms part of the listed building's setting. In any event, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and/or historic interest, irrespective of the availability of public views of it. Therefore, the lack of views of the proposal from the wider landscape, including from any public rights of way nearby, does not support the approval of harmful additions to a heritage asset.
10. A small number of screws would be required to attach the solar panel brackets to the property's rafters which, given the evidence before me, are not historic. However, whilst the proposal would have a minimal effect on its historic fabric, this does not alter the domineering effect the array would have on the listed building and its setting. Nor does the scale of the works already undertaken internally throughout the listed building, including the appeal dwelling, justify the acceptability of further works.
11. The proposal would result in an unsympathetic addition to the roofscape of the 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 historical interest it possesses. It therefore conflicts with policies EQ2 and EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan, insofar as they safeguard or, where appropriate, enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets whilst respecting the local context.
12. The proposal, therefore, fails to satisfy the requirements to the Act. The level of harm in this case would be less than substantial. Taking into account the currently largely uninterrupted roofscape of the listed building and the homogeneous use of

slate roof tiles, the magnitude of this harm would be moderate. 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.

13. The installation and use of the proposed solar panels would provide economic benefits to the appellant's household through the reduction in energy costs. However, these would predominantly be private, rather than, public benefits and of a small scale. Environmental benefits would also be derived from carbon dioxide savings, as advocated by the Clean Power Action Plan (December 2024). Additionally, the proposal would support the Framework's requirement for local planning authorities to give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, including through installation of solar panels. Despite this, given the solar panels use by a single dwelling, the environmental benefits which would be derived from them would also be at a minor level.
14. 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. Furthermore, the continued viable use of the property as a dwelling is not dependent on the proposal. As such, 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.
15. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed building identified as Block of stable buildings, 30 metres north of Manor Farmhouse, or its setting, or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Other Matters

16. Given the appeal site is located within the Horsington Conservation Area, section 72(1) of the Act is relevant. However, as I have found that the proposal would not preserve the listed building, or its setting, or any of the features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter further as it would not alter the outcome of this appeal. Similarly, it is not necessary for me to consider whether the proposal would preserve the setting of other listed buildings nearby⁴.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons the given above, having had regard to all relevant matters, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Juliet Rogers

INSPECTOR

⁴ Grade II Manor Farmhouse (List Entry Number: 1238070 and the Grade II Range of outbuildings attached to north of, and enclosing yard to west of, Manor Farmhouse (List Entry Number: 1238096); both first listed on 25 January 1985.