

Consultation Response from KC, Conservation & Design**2024/91128 St Lucius Church, Butts Road, Farnley Tyas, Huddersfield, HD4 6TZ****Installation of solar panels and batteries (Listed Building within a Conservation Area)****Date Responded: 4.10.2024****Responding Officer: Sue Brooks****Responding Ref: KB 5/13**

St Lucius Church is a substantial Grade II listed Church situated within the historic village of Farnley Tyas and within the Farnley Tyas Conservation Area. This Gothic Revival Church dates to 1840 and is constructed in natural stone with a steeply pitched stone slate roof and a west tower with a spire. It is set within a churchyard which is bounded by mature trees. The northern elevation faces Butts Road, and the southern elevation faces south across the fields where the roof pitch can be seen from Farnley Road and Moor Lane, as well as the historic track which runs alongside the churchyard and leads south towards Moor Lane. The view of the southern roof pitch is limited from outside the site during summer months when the trees are in full leaf, but in the winter when the leaves have fallen it is much more noticeable.

The application proposes a solar PV array of 22 black PV panels in two rows on the south facing roof pitch. These are fixed onto the existing stone slate roof covering with fixings that lap under the slates to avoid damage to the roof covering.

With regards to the listed building, the proposal has ecclesiastical exemption, and the applicant has confirmed that a faculty application has not been submitted yet. The assessment by the Conservation and Design Team is on the impact on the character of the conservation area and not the impact on the listed building.

A statement of significance has been submitted with the application. Following a request for further information, a supporting statement, energy opportunity survey and energy performance recommendations have also been submitted.

The supporting statement states that every other potential system for sustainable energy has been exhausted.

The energy opportunity survey recommends energy saving measures which include PV panels amongst other measures such as heating controls and secondary glazing.

The energy performance recommendations include passive measures as well as renewable energy measures and this report recommends air source heat pumps for this building.

Given the visibility of the southern roof pitch during the winter months, the introduction of a large PV array on the south roof pitch of this large building will harm the character and appearance of the conservation area as black PV panels have very different characteristics to the existing roof covering in terms of size, finish, material and colour, and they do not replicate the look of traditional stone slates.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that '*with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

Given the prominence of the roof pitch during the winter months, the proposal is not considered to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, which is in a rural setting and can be

viewed from some distance.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states that: *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, (in this case the conservation area) this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'*

The proposal is considered to lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area by covering the existing roof with a prominent PV installation as discussed above. There are clearly public benefits in reducing energy costs in this community building and complying with climate change requirements. However, based on the information submitted we remain unconvinced that a PV array on this prominent roof is the most suitable option given the alternative measures outlined in the submitted reports. A balance needs to be made between the harm to the conservation area and the public benefits of the proposal. The supporting documents investigate various energy saving measures, and as alternative measures including ASHP's and internal improvements have been recommended we feel that the justification for a large PV array is not convincing. On balance, we do not feel that the public benefits outweigh the harm and would suggest that alternative options are explored further.