

Heritage Statement

Proposed Installation of Solar Photovoltaic Panels
Marsden Mechanics Hall, Marsden, West Yorkshire

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at Marsden Mechanics Hall, Marsden, West Yorkshire. The building is Grade II listed and is located within the Marsden Conservation Area. The purpose of this statement is to describe the heritage significance of the asset and to assess the impact of the proposed works on that significance.

2. The Listed Building

Marsden Mechanics Hall (also known historically as the Mechanics' Institute) is included on the National Heritage List for England as a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number: 1274926). The statutory listing description can be viewed at:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1274926>

The building is listed for its architectural and historic interest as a mid-19th century mechanics' institute, reflecting its social and educational role within Marsden. The significance of the asset derives principally from its historic function, overall form, and architectural composition.

3. Roof Covering and Significance

While the building itself is a designated heritage asset, not all elements of its fabric contribute equally to its significance. The existing slate roof covering is not identified within the statutory list description as a feature of special architectural or historic interest. The slates are later replacements and do not represent original or rare historic fabric.

The roof covering is therefore considered to be of neutral heritage value. Alterations affecting this element can be undertaken without harm to the building's significance, provided the works are carefully designed and reversible.

4. Conservation Area Context

Marsden Mechanics Hall lies within the Marsden Conservation Area, designated for its historic character and townscape value. Information on the Conservation Area can be found via Kirklees Council:
<https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/conservation-areas.aspx>

The front roof slope of the building is visible from public viewpoints at a distance of approximately 60 metres. As such, consideration has been given to visual impact on the character and appearance of both the listed building and the wider Conservation Area.

5. Proposed Works

The proposal comprises the installation of 36 no. JA Solar 450W N-Type bifacial all-black photovoltaic panels. The panels will be mounted on rails positioned approximately 75mm above the existing slate roof covering.

Panels will be fixed using retrofit roof hooks located beneath the panels and secured into existing rafters. The rafters are not of historic significance and the roof structure has been subject to a structural survey confirming that no strengthening or alteration is required to accommodate the installation. All fixings are reversible, allowing the roof to be reinstated in the future without loss of historic fabric.

6. Impact Assessment

The installation will introduce a modest visual change due to the panels being rail-mounted rather than flush. However, this change is limited to a roof covering that is not of heritage significance and does not affect the principal elevations, architectural detailing, or historic form of the building.

The panels are all-black in colour to reduce visual contrast, and the rail height is kept to the minimum required for performance and ventilation. No historic fabric of significance will be removed, obscured, or altered.

In heritage terms, the proposal results in no harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved.

7. Policy Context and Guidance

Historic England guidance confirms that renewable energy installations may be acceptable on listed buildings where impacts are carefully managed and public benefits are clear.

Relevant guidance can be found at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/saving-energy/adapting-historic-buildings/>

The proposal aligns with this guidance by minimising intervention, ensuring reversibility, and supporting the long-term sustainable use of the building.

8. Conclusion

The proposed installation of solar photovoltaic panels at Marsden Mechanics Hall will preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building. The roof covering is of neutral heritage value, the works are reversible, and the visual impact is proportionate and justified by sustainability benefits.

From a heritage perspective, the proposal is considered acceptable and suitable for the granting of Listed Building Consent.