

Design and Access Statement

Proposed new Heating System and Solar Panels, St Paul's Church, Norden

1.0 Introduction

The application relates to the proposed alterations to renew the heating system and instal solar panels and a heat pump at St Paul's Church, Norden. The proposed development is detailed in drawings and technical information prepared by Storah Architecture Ltd and John R Book.

The statement has been prepared to address the requirements of the The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013. It should not be used for any other purpose.

The statement considers the proposals in relation to the National Planing Policy Framework (NPPF) and local plan policies.

2.0 Site Context

St Paul's Church, Norden is a church constructed in 1859-61 to designs of George Shaw of Oldham. The church is built in coursed local stone, with ashlar details and dual pitched slate roofs. The church sits at a higher level off Edenfield Road within an active graveyard which retains space for burials.

The building occupies an elevated site above Edenfield Road in Norden. The spire is prominent within the landscape. The main body of the church is screened by trees to the majority of its elevations.

The church remains in use as a church, its optimum viable use. It is listed, grade II.

3.0 Requirements of the Brief

The existing heating system is obsolete and inefficient. The boiler is gas fired and conventionally flued via the original chimney, due to its age spare parts are difficult to source. The boiler is considered to be at the end of its serviceable life.

There is a need for a new heating system in the church. There is also the need to improve the efficiency of the system, both for cost savings in the long term and also carbon saving.

Design and Access Statement: Replacement of heating, St Paul's Church, Norden.

It is proposed to renew the heating system, providing a new hybrid system with an air source heat pump (ASHP) feeding a wet heating system of pipes & radiators, supported by a new, small, condensing flued gas boiler. Solar panels & battery storage will offset the cost of running the ASHP. The electrical costs associated with running the ASHP are not considered affordable without the offset to the costs provided by the solar panels.

4.0 Design

4.1 The Scale of the Development

The proposals introduce solar panels to the south, roadside elevation of the church. There will be also be an external air source heat pump. The ASHP will be located to the rear of the building to reduce its visual impact

4.2 Layout and Visual Impact

The solar panels are located on the south pitch of the roof, the only roof with the correct orientation as the south pitch of the north aisle is shaded by the nave roof and the tower for a large proportion of the day.

The view of the roof is restricted by trees from the east and west, the panels being visible principally from the pavement and houses immediately opposite the church on Edenfield Road and from Shepherd Street opposite the church. From Shepherd Street the vestry shields part of the roof from view.



View approaching the church from the east.



View approaching the church from the west.



View approaching the church from Shepherd Street.

To further minimise the visual impact of the panels, they will be dark coloured with an anti-reflective coating and will be fixed close to and pitched with the roof.

4.3 Public and private spaces

The design and access statement should explain the proposed layout in terms of the relationship between buildings and public and private spaces within and around the site, and how these relationships will help to create safe, vibrant and successful places.

4.4 Accessibility

The proposals will increase the comfort levels within the building and provide background heating to raise the general level of the church above dew point temperature as a constant. This will improve comfort levels for users, particularly the frail elderly and those with circulatory issues who require higher ambient temperatures for comfort.

Design and Access Statement: Replacement of heating, St Paul's Church, Norden.

4.5 Crime Prevention

It is not considered that the proposals will impact on crime within the area.

4.6 Flood Risk

The church is not in an area of flood risk. Levels of surface water run off are unaffected. The proposals will not therefore affect the risk of flooding elsewhere.

4.7 Scale

The volume of the building will be largely unchanged, with panels being fixed close to the southern roof slope.

4.8 Structure

The structural loadings and fixings are considered in the panel design, with both implied and wind loadings being considered and spread by the supporting framework.

5.0 The Context and Impact of the Proposals

The proposals will be visual externally, with the introduction of the solar panels to the south elevation, the installation of the air source heat pump and the installation of a new balanced flue to serve the boiler. The visual harm is offset by the carbon saving and reduced environmental impact in the operation of the church.

Internally it is proposed to remove and replace radiators and heat emitters. This is considered of benefit in allowing improved background heating of the building and is of conservation benefit to the historic fabric.

The installation the solar panels and heat pump will allow constant low level heating of the church with the gas boiler providing a boost to heating if required when the building is in use. This will provide improved conservation conditions and help to protect the fabric of the church.

6.0 Use of the Building

The church is underutilised, as although the space is available for activities the cost of heating and running the building restricts its use particularly during the autumn and winter months. This is despite the use of the parish hall nearby being over subscribed and bookings being let go due to insufficient space.

The introduction of a heat pump will increase the ambient temperature in the building, improving comfort levels and decreasing the warm up time and cost for users. To offset the greater energy use of the heat pump (which is more costly to run than a gas boiler) solar panels are required to provide economic power for the heat pump.

The new heating system will ensure greater mid-week and secular use of the building improving its viability and use. This will make the building more sustainable in the future both in terms of energy use and financial viability.

Design and Access Statement: Replacement of heating, St Paul's Church, Norden.

7.0 Heritage Impact

The heritage impact is considered in greater detail in the heritage statement.

The church is architecturally and historically significant at regional or national level as reflected in its listing. It is a local focus for events in the community and the spire in particular is a prominent local landmark.

The proposals are for the renewal of building services, with no significant loss of historic fabric.

The solar panels in particular have a visual impact from specific local view points. This is difficult to fully mitigate against, although the dark colour will reduce their impact. They and the supporting frame, together with all other aspects of the proposals are considered to be fully reversible. Hence there is no long term impact or loss of historic fabric as a result of the proposal.

8.0 Planning Policy.

8.1 National Planning Policy.

Guidance on planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

Para 167 of the NPPF states that *'Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.'* The proposal introduces renewable low carbon heating improvements through installation of heat pumps and solar panels and should be supported by the Local Authority. The impacts on the historic building as recognised and discussed below.

Chapter 16 discusses the historic environment. Para 212 of the NPPF states *'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'* The installation of the solar panels and heat pump will allow constant low level heating of the church with the gas boiler providing a boost to heating if required when the building is in use. This will provide improved conservation conditions and help to protect the fabric of the church.

8.2 Rochdale Local Plan

Local plan policies are set out in the Rochdale Local Plan Core Strategy.

Para. 10.3 of the Local Plan seeks to *'To help tackle climate change and its impacts, as well as addressing fuel security and fuel poverty issues, our policies seek to...Encourage renewable energy developments...and ... Help achieve national goals for zero carbon development'*

Policy G3 of the Local Plan relates to Renewable and low carbon energy developments. It states *'The Council will promote renewable, low and zero carbon energy generating developments, including wind power, biomass, Combined Heat and Power (CHP), hydro and heat pumps in order to help meet CO2 reduction targets and contribute towards energy security for Greater Manchester and the North West.'* The policy notes that *'The setting of heritage assets including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.. must be minimised and appropriately mitigated'*

8.3 Rochdale Council declaration of a Climate Emergency

In July 2019, Rochdale Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency. The Council resolved to work towards ensuring that the borough is carbon neutral by 2050, in line with the Mayor and the Government's targets... and Council hopes it would be achieved earlier than 2050. This proposal will help the Council move towards this aim.

9.0 Conclusion

The installation the solar panels and heat pump will allow constant low level heating of the church with the gas boiler providing a boost to heating if required when the building is in use. This will provide improved conservation conditions and help to protect the fabric of the church. The proposals will be visual externally, particularly the introduction of the solar panels to the south elevation. There are other visual impacts in the installation of the air source heat pump and the installation of a new balanced flue to serve the boiler. This visual harm is offset by the carbon saving and reduced environmental impact in the operation of the church.

The proposals are considered acceptable in terms of the NPPF in that Para 167 of the NPPF states that 'Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings and Para 212 of the NPPF states 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The proposals improve the conservation conditions of the heritage asset and help maintain it in its original and optimum viable use.

The proposals are considered acceptable in terms of the Rochdale Local Plan in that they help tackle climate change, and that the impact on the heritage asset is mitigated against to the extent that its conservation is enhanced. They also help the Council meet its aims for a carbon neutral Borough.

The proposals have consent through the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order 2010, Listed Building Consent is covered under the Faculty Regulations. Listed Building Consent is not required.

Design and Access Statement: Replacement of heating, St Paul's Church, Norden.

The proposals are considered reversible and though they impact to the appearance of the building whilst installed, result in no long term harm to the heritage asset, but assist in its conservation.

It is considered the proposals meet the aims of the NPPF and Local Plan policies.

Prepared by

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