

Ribble Valley Borough Council

DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT - REFUSAL

Ref: CB

Application No:	3/2013/0126/P
Development Proposed:	Retrospective application for the installation of solar pv panels to south facing roofslope at no.3 Horton Lodge, Horton-in-Craven, Skipton, BD23 3JX.

CONSULTATIONS: Parish/Town Council

Horton Parish Council - No comments or observations received.

CONSULTATIONS: Highway/Water Authority/Other Bodies

N/A

CONSULTATIONS: Additional Representations

No formal representations have been received, however, a number of residents have telephoned expressing concern about the visual impact of the panels, the harm to the building, and the precedent their allowance set.

RELEVANT POLICIES:*Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan*

Policy G1 – Development Control.

Policy G5 – Settlement Strategy.

Policy ENV3 – Development within the Open Countryside.

Policy H17 – Building Conversions – Design Matters.

Policy ENV24 – Renewable Energy.

Policy ENV25 – Assessment for Renewable Energy.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy (Regulation 22 Submission Draft)

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations.

Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection.

Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets.

Policy DME5 – Renewable Energy.

Policy DMH4 – The Conversion of Barns and Other Buildings to Dwellings.

National Planning Policy Framework

Achieving Sustainable Development.

Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

POLICY REASONS FOR REFUSAL:

DWLP – G1, ENV3, H17, RVCS (Reg. 22 Sub. Dr.) – DMG1, DME2, DME4, and DMH4 – harmful to character and appearance of traditional property and visual amenity setting a dangerous precedent for the acceptance of similar proposals.

COMMENTS/ENVIRONMENTAL/AONB/HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES/RECOMMENDATION:

Retrospective permission is sought for an array of 15 aluminium framed solar panels on the south facing roofslope of no.3 Horton Lodge. Number 3 to which this application relates is one of the units accessed through the central courtyard and the rear elevation of the property where the solar panels have been installed face towards the A59 road. The area is designated as Open Countryside, as defined by the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan

(adopted June 1998).

Horton Lodge is a development of seven properties at the former Coronation Hotel, Horton (planning permission 3/1998/0789), a traditional stone property with blue slate roof, which stands in an isolated and prominent location on the A59 to the north of its junction with Horton Road (C595). At the time of approval for its conversion permitted development rights (Classes A-H of the GPDO) were removed in order to protect the property from harmful development and to protect visual amenity.

This substantial building could be classed as a non-designated heritage asset due to its age and the contribution it makes to the rural character of the area in which it is set. The NPPF requires LPA's to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and states:

“permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions”.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF relates to the historic environment and requires new development to make *“a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”*.

The benefit of small-scale renewable energy installations is recognised in Policy ENV24 and ENV25 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan and the preceding Policy DME5 in the emerging Core Strategy, in that the Council will support their development. However this is provided it can be shown that such developments would not cause unacceptable harm to interests of acknowledged importance in the local environment and have particular regard to the following issues: -

the immediate and wider impact of the proposed development on the landscape; and ... in particular the need to protect features and areas of natural, cultural, historic and archaeological interest.

Policy DME2 of the emerging Core Strategy states, *“the council will seek wherever possible, to enhance the local landscape”*. Policy DMH4 relates to the conversion of barns and other buildings, such as this and requires the conversion of buildings to be *“of a high standard and in keeping with local tradition”*. It also required development not to *“harm the appearance or function of the area in which it is situated”*.

Policy H17 of the Local Plan concerns itself with the design details associated with barn conversions, however as Policy DMH4 of the emerging Core Strategy relates to the conversion of other buildings as well as barns, reiterates this policy, I consider the design criteria of this policy to be equally applicable. This policy recognises the roofslope of traditional rural buildings are often the most dominant and prominent feature of these buildings which should be protected.

The prominent features of the building, formerly a Public House converted into seven properties, is its traditional and dominant roofslope, and its stonework. Whilst the panels are installed on a low roofslope, this roofslope faces onto the A59 and is clearly visible when stood on the bridge which crosses over Stock Beck and when travelling along this carriageway. It is considered that the installation of these aluminium solar panels on the roofslope facing the A59 highway is detrimental to the character and appearance of this former public house, detracting from its relatively unadorned roofslopes, and subsequently the visual amenities of this area of countryside. Their placing on this low roofslope, made worse by their shiny finish and aluminium frames, results in disjointed, unsympathetic, and prominent additions. Thus, in the interests of visual amenity and protecting the historic environment and landscape in which the building is situated, I recommend that the application be refused and proceedings commence seeking the removal of the panels.

I also consider the allowance of these panels would make similar proposals on this south facing roofslope extremely difficult to resist and would set a dangerous precedent for the acceptance of similar unsympathetic proposals destroying the character and appearance of other conversions which would be both contrary to policy and to the detriment of the visual amenities of the open countryside.

For these reasons I thus recommend the application accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION: That permission be refused and the matter be passed to the Council's Enforcement section.