

Application No: W 11 / 1180

Town/Parish Council: Leamington Spa
Case Officer: Sunita Burke

Registration Date: 30/09/11

Expiry Date: 25/11/11

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Methodist Church, Dale Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 5HL

Installation of photovoltaic panels. Cladding of existing fascia boards, soffits & barge boards with white powder coated aluminium units FOR Methodist Church

This application is being presented to Committee due to an objection from the Town Council having been received.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Royal Leamington Spa Town Council: Objection.

The proposal is not conducive to the appearance of a historic building within the Conservation Area.

Conservation: Original concerns for the following reasons:

- This is quite a fine early 20th century building with a large south facing roof. The later church building and the side wings do, to an extent, obscure the full view of the sloping roof which does have some advantage in terms of masking any panels erected on to the roof.
- Information is requested on whether the church itself had been considered as a location to the panels, as it would be less obvious and would not affect the character of the building in the same way as on the church hall which is a fine building.
- Suggest that, the panels could be set back from the front part of the roof sufficiently to allow a section of the original roof to read with the rather fine triangular parapet at the front of the building. Subject to it being possible to condition this, in this instance panels are considered acceptable only if the church roof has been investigated first and found not to be suitable.
- This decision is based on the fact that a significant amount of the roof is partially masked by the church building and also the building is not a listed building. Further, consider that, the case for the use of such panels needs should be considered on its merit and there must be a limiting effect on the impact of the panels on the conservation area as a whole.

In terms of the powder coated aluminium eaves, I think that, subject to samples being submitted, this is acceptable. It is preferable to the use of UPVC in this location and it will avoid the need for painting of the existing high level timber fascias on this 1960s building.

Subsequent No objection on 9 Nov 2011 and agreed Revision 3 with CAAF.

CAAF: Objection for the following reasons (13 October 2011):

"It was felt that the panels would be too visible in the centre of the roof and would spoil this significant building in the conservation area. It was felt that if the panels are to go on the roof then they should be lined up along the gutter line of the roof where they would be less visible from the main elevation. It was also suggested that possibly the church roof be investigated as a location for the panels even if they do need to be slightly tilted. Concerns were expressed that, if consents are permitted to all buildings requiring panels, significant changes will take place to the conservation area. It was felt that this proposal needed further detailed discussion as to where the panels could be best located".

Subsequent No objection (9 Nov 2011):

"Following the previous presentation of the application for the photovoltaic panels on the roof of the Methodist Chapel, the applicant having read the CAAFs comments submitted 3 alternative schemes to the one originally considered. It was agreed by CAAF to support revision 3 which is to provide photovoltaic panels over the back part of the roof leaving a 3.5 metre gap between the panels and the front parapet at the front of the roof".

Ecology: Recommend that a note is attached to any approval granted.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- DP1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DAP8 - Protection of Conservation Areas (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- DP13 - Renewable Energy Developments (Warwick District Local Plan 1996 - 2011)
- Sustainable Buildings (Supplementary Planning Document - December 2008)

PLANNING HISTORY

Erection of two 3-panel non-illuminated sign boards on 2.2m poles was approved in 1979 under Ref: W/79/789. Repositioning of free standing sign board and display of a wall mounted sign was approved in 1988, under Ref: W/88/0886.

KEY ISSUES

The Site and its Location

The application site lies at the junction of Portland Place West and Dale Street. It fronts onto Dale Street. The car park is off Portland Place West.

Details of the Development

The application is for the installation of photovoltaic panels on the Church roof facing Dale Street covering an area of approximately 80sq.m. Cladding of the existing fascia boards, soffits and barge boards are proposed for all buildings with white powder coated aluminium units.

Assessment

The main issue in the consideration of this application is the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Photovoltaic panels

The original proposal to install photovoltaic panels on the existing south facing roof of Methodist Church facing Dale Street, covering an area of approximately 80sq.m extended up to the front part of the roof. Conservation Area Advisory Forum (CAAF) and Council's Conservation Officer considered that the location of the photovoltaic panels would be unacceptable in the street scene and in particular in the Conservation area. This is because a large area of the Church roof that would be covered by the photovoltaic panels would be visible from the street.

The scheme was subsequently revised, thus moving the panels away from the edge of the roof parapet by 3.5 metres. This revision was considered acceptable by both CAAF and Council's Conservation Officer for the following reasons:

- Firstly, the small part of the roof that is visible when walking or driving up the west-side of Dale Street will be largely free of panels.
- Secondly, the view from less-walked, east-side pavement is enhanced by there now being the uncovered slate roof seen behind the ridge of the main parapet rather than the panels.

This proposal benefits from the installation of the photovoltaic panels, in the sense that the Church is proactively seeking to reduce their energy costs by this proposal which allows them to take advantage of the Government's incentive of feed-in-tariffs. The proposed scheme would generate approximately 8,400 Kilowatt of carbon-free electricity per year, off-setting the typical consumption of 2.5 households. In addition to that, potentially over 10 or more years (till the 25 year point); the scheme would contribute towards the upkeep costs of the building which supports 25 community organisations.

As such, the proposal to install on the roof of the Church is considered in accordance with policies DAP8 and DP13 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996 – 2011 and the Council's Adopted Supplementary Planning Document, 'Sustainable Buildings' 2008.

Cladding

The proposal is to clad the existing fascia boards, soffits and barge boards of the Church building and other buildings on site with white powder coated aluminium units. The colour scheme and style is similar to the existing fascia boards, soffits and barge boards. The metal finish would give a clean and smooth appearance to the buildings, rather than the existing painted fascia, which shows the paint peeling off and run down appearance. The Conservation Officer considers that, in terms of the powder coated aluminium eaves, that, subject to samples being submitted, this is acceptable. It is preferable to the use of UPVC in this location and it will avoid the need for painting of the existing high level timber fascias on this 1960s building. The proposed new material would also help maintenance of the property. As such, the proposed cladding complies with policies DP1 and DAP8 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996 – 2011.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT, subject to the conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the application form, site location plan and approved drawing Block Plan, and Photos Revision 3: 3.5m from front parapet-end of roof specification contained therein, submitted on 16 September 2011, and 10 November 2011 unless first agreed otherwise in writing by the District Planning Authority. **REASON** : For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies DP1 and DAP8 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.
- 2 Samples of all external facing materials to be used for the cladding material hereby permitted, shall be submitted to and approved by the District Planning Authority before any constructional works are commenced. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. **REASON** : To ensure that the visual amenities of the area are protected, and to satisfy the requirements of Policy DP1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 1996-2011.

INFORMATIVES

For the purposes of Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the following reason(s) for the Council's decision are summarised below:

In the opinion of the District Planning Authority, the development would not cause unacceptable harm to the architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area within which the site is located. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the policies listed.
