

Highdown

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1157071>

statement

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Heritage Statement

1.1. Nature of the Asset:

- The Highdown School and curtilage has a Grade II listing. It is not in Conservation Area.
- There are approximately 19 listed buildings in the Tudor Ward Area of Caversham, one Grade II* listed, and 18 Grade II listed. In Caversham as a whole there is a total of thirty listed buildings'
- Highdown was established as a comprehensive school in 1971. Currently it has in the region of 1350 students on roll from 11 to 18 years of age. The school includes three grade II listed buildings within its 32 acre grounds. Highdown was awarded academy status in 2010.
- National Listing entry Number: 1157071
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1.2. Extent of the Asset:

- Highdown School is situated on the North side of Reading in Emmer Green surrounded entirely by a residential area.
- The school is bounded by ancient deciduous hedges which have now formed into a lines of trees that effectively screen the entire site. Apart from the main entrance it is almost impossible to see any of the buildings though it is possible to catch a glimpse from Surley Row see Fig 1 The proposed solar arrays are to be sited directly behind the large domed grey roof.



- The panels will only be visible from first floor classrooms and as they are sited on a building on the Northern side of the site solar reflection will never be a problem during the day. Figure 2 shows an aerial photo of Highdown School and it's neighbouring buildings



· Adjacent to the Highdown School curtilage is Surley Row, a fairly narrow residential street.

1.3. Relevant Planning History

- 170756 12/05/2017 Reinstatement works to Manor House roof, including replacement of plasterwork to ashlar studwork and ceilings patch repairs, replacement of tiled roof coverings, over coating of lead roof and refurbishment of cloakrooms
- 161149 23/06/201 Internal and external repairs to roof of Manor House building
- 160443 08/03/2016 Installation of solar PV panels to flat rooftops on the new dining room and technology blocks - *application withdrawn during 2016*
- 161753 06/10/2015 Application for removal or variation of a condition following grant of planning permission. (11 /00925/FUL)

See Ref 1 [here](#)

1.4. Impact on the Asset

- The proposed solar array is to be installed on a modern (1970's) flat roof classroom block which although within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building is itself of no special significance.
- The installation will NOT entail any works to the listed buildings nor any of the items mentioned in the listing.
- The only reason for entering these buildings will be isolate the electrical supplies to the classroom block for reasons of electrical safety and possibly to change or add an electricity meter. The equipment in question is all installed in the cellar of the main house where there are no listed items.

- At Highdown School they understand the need to balance the benefits to society of responding to climate change with impact on the heritage asset. In the case of the solar panel array, this will be installed in such a way that the long-term impact on the roof will be minimal. The installation of solar panels is reversible. In the unlikely case that the solar panels were no longer needed for microgeneration they could be removed with no lasting damage to the roof on which they will be installed which is a 1970 technology building with a large flat roof.
- A structural engineer would be appointed to confirm suitability in term of roof structure.
- We consider the principle viewpoint to be the entrance to the school - both by car and by pedestrian. From this viewpoint the panels will not be visible until approaching the technology block and even then they will be difficult to see, from various first floor classroom windows and from some places on the playing fields to the north and west of the technology block.
- Architecturally the Highdown School Centre juxtaposes the old with the new. From the entrance, modern buildings make it difficult to see the original Grove House which holds a position in the centre of the site with other of the older buildings lying to the Southeast of the main house.
- The significance of a solar panel array to those who may notice them from the one viewpoint possible, if anything only enhances the role of the School in the community and alerts people to our striving to reduce our impact, to generate renewable energy for our own use and as result help to protect the environment.

A note from the author - The proposed solar array will be installed on a 1970's classroom block within the curtilage of a listed building at a sufficient distance away from the building of special interest. The solar panels do not present a major visual impact on the site as a whole and their benefit to the school and Reading will outweigh any minor impacts. It is noted that Reading Borough Council policies strongly encourage the use of renewable energy and in particular solar PV as can be seen in [this document](#)².

Refs

1 <http://planning.reading.gov.uk/> search Highdown

2 http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/3516/item08a-Carbon-PlanJUN15/pdf/item08a_Carbon_Plan_JUN15.pdf