

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 240423/HOU

Address: 75 Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RQ

Proposals: Install solar panels onto existing flat roof of garage. Installation of electric car charger.

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Applicant: Mr David Cottam

Date received (valid from): 3 April 2024 **Target Decision date:** 29 May 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey mid-terrace property on the east side of Watlington Street. The application relates to the single garage at the rear of the site which is accessed from Prince's Street. The garage has a simple form with a mono-pitch flat roof with a brick parapet at the front. The property itself is a Building of Townscape Merit within the Eldon Square Conservation Area, within the setting of Grade II listed "The Oval" at 14 St John's Road, and the Grade II listed Polish Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart on Watlington Street.



The garage as seen from Prince's Street, the Church can be seen in the background. Image taken by case officer.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the installation of 12 solar panels on the roof of the garage. The solar panels are to be installed at a tilt to maximise their exposure to the south, resulting in the panels having a total height of 0.4m above the roof. To compensate for this, installation of timber trough planters is proposed on both north and south sides of the garage along the roof edge to obscure the solar panels from view. The application form also describes the installation of an electric car charger - the applicant has confirmed that this would be located internally within the garage and has therefore not been assessed within this application, as it would constitute permitted development.

Plans considered:

Location Plan, dated 3 April 2024

17/WSR/10 - Site Plan, dated January 2018

1-1 Rev A - Roof Plan, dated 3 April 2024

1-2 Rev A - Side Elevation, dated 3 April 2024

Solar Energy System Proposal, Sphere Energy Solutions Ltd, dated 7 March 2024

Received by the LPA on 4 April 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

180345 - Construction of single storey rear extension and alterations to existing rear first floor fenestration following removal of existing non original single storey rear extension. - Application permitted

190920 - Non-material amendment to permitted application 180345 - amendment to 'square off' the end of the proposed single storey rear extension and add a roof light - NMA agreed

4. CONSULTATIONS

Non-statutory:

RBC Conservation Officer - No objections subject to screening solution due to concern over impact on the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings.

Public:

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

4 St Johns Road, Reading, RG1 4EB

6 St Johns Road, Reading, RG1 4EB

8 St Johns Road, Reading, RG1 4EB

73 Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RQ

77 Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RQ

No letters of representation received.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy

framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)

Other documents

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal 2007

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy EN3 states *“The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”* Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

The main concern arises with regards to the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. The solar panels have to be installed at a 20 degree tilt to maximise their efficiency and the proposed installation of trough planters sufficiently compensates for this. The use of timber planters will also not be a negative addition to the character of the conservation area due to the use of natural materials, and will ensure that the appearance of the solar panels would not have a detrimental impact on the conservation area nor detrimentally affect the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

Overall, the proposal is considered in accordance with Policies CC7 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 states development will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

- Privacy and overlooking;
 - Not relevant/no change
- Overbearing effects;
 - No identified risk
- Sunlight and daylight;
 - No identified risk, low risk of glare.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time Limit Standard
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials As Specified