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17 St Mary Street
Chippenham

Heritage Impact Assessment



July 2023

Introduction:

Artel31 have been asked to apply to install Solar Panels on to 17 St Mary Street, Chippenham. Various locations were evaluated for their impact and efficiency before a final location was proposed as is covered below.

The Asset:

17 St Mary Street is located within Chippenham Conservation Area, within "Area 15 St Mary Street and The Butts": St. Mary Street is one of the oldest and most attractive streets in the conservation area and is also archaeologically important.

Number 17 is not specifically mentioned within the Conservation Character Analysis, however the terrace it is a part of area mentioned and Wiltshire Council stress the importance of views along St Mary Street.

It's listing is as follows:

GV II

House. Early C19. Limestone ashlar, plain tile roof with ashlar stack to left of centre. Double-depth plan. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys and basement; 3-window range. Cornice, parapet and plinth, 4/8-pane sash windows to the 2nd floor, 8/8-pane sashes to the 1st floor and 2 6/6-pane tripartite windows to the ground-floor left. To the ground-floor right is a roll-edged semi-circular arch to a carriage entrance with full-height double doors to the rear; the house entrance is a 6-panel door glazed to the top with a cast-iron wreath knocker, toward the rear of the arch. INTERIOR: not inspected.

The house was previously renovated through the upgrading and extension of the rear outbuildings in 2021.

The Proposal:

We looked at various sites but placing the PV on the lower rear extensions meant a huge drop in efficiency to the point of not being sustainable to install them. The main roof has already been altered historically with tiles being changed to a concrete imitation double roman roof tile. The rear elevation of the roof is south facing and is not overshadowed so we are proposing to install and in roof solar panel in full black which would be more akin to the likely historic slate roof.

Impact on the asset and wider Conservation Area:

The roof has contemporary battens and felt, with modern concrete replica double roman roof tiles. However its roof structure is considered significantly more historic. As such an appraisal was sought from a Structural Engineer to check that any installation would not impact the historic portions of the roof. This is included with the application and confirms that because of the removal of the concrete roof tiles to install the in roof system no improvements would be needed in the historic fabric.

All mechanical fixings for the panels and in roof trays would be to the modern battens and as such there is no impact to the fabric of the asset itself.

The cable run can use existing service routes for the central heating to move from the roof/loft to the basement where a battery storage is proposed. No new service penetrations are needed in historic or new fabric.

Externally they are in roof to minimise visibility and are sited on the rear elevation for the best efficiency. As such there is no impact on the wider conservation area or the setting of adjoining listed assets. They are visible from the garden of the property but are screened by high walls and planting from all other homes and the public realm in the churchyard.

The roof itself is considered a negative to the listed asset itself with concrete roof tiles of a very unsympathetic nature. Their removal is seen as a benefit to the asset and would likely be replaced with something more sympathetic if the panels were removed for any reason in the future.

As such we believe the sustainability benefits for the house to more than offset any harm caused to the asset or the setting of neighbouring properties.