

**Heritage Statement
Statement of Significance and Impact Assessment
& Design and Access Statement**

Proposed installation of photovoltaic (solar) slates at 27 Langley Road, Chippenham



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Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage and design and access statement has been prepared to accompany listed building consent and planning applications submitted for the provision of solar slates in place of clay tiles on the southwest elevation of principal part of the roof of 27 Langley Road in Chippenham and the replacement of clay tiles with natural slate on the northeast elevation. A heritage statement is required as the building is grade II listed. The application is made on behalf of Mr and Mrs Sparrow who are the long term owners of the property.



Picture 1: The front (NE) elevation of 27 Langley Road

- 1.2 This report describes the listed building (heritage asset), including its history, design and wider setting. This is followed by an assessment of the architectural and heritage significance of the building with consideration as to how the house contributes to the built character of the area as well as its importance relative to other historic buildings in Chippenham. This assessment also includes an appraisal of the recent installation of solar slates on the side extension to the house – the above photograph with them in situ.
- 1.3 The design concept for the proposed development forms the second part of this report – in particular the reasons for the choice of location for the proposed solar slates following the success of the previous installation. The design of the installation informs the final element of the heritage statement which describes the impact of the proposed development on the listed

building. This proposal has been the subject of pre-application correspondence with the Council (reference ENQ/2025/00658) and addresses the helpful guidance provided within this.

- 1.4 The alterations proposed also require planning permission so a Design and Access Statement forms the last part of this document.

The Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal to which this submission relates is for the provision of solar slates on the southwest elevation of the principal part of the roof at 27 Langley Road and natural slates on the northeast elevation. This change would therefore see the removal of the existing clay tiles, which it is understood were installed on the roof in the mid-twentieth century (as discussed later in this statement).
- 2.2 The southwest elevation of 27 Langley Road is shown on picture 2, with the roof area where solar slates are proposed indicated with an arrow. This would clearly require the removal of the existing tiled roof and its replacement on this elevation with the solar slates – as described below – and with natural slates on the northeast elevation. What should be particularly noted about this photograph, is that the side extension to the house has solar slates in situ, thus illustrating how successfully they work in an historic setting.



Picture 2: 27 Langley Road from the southwest

- 2.3 In terms of how the work would take place, the existing clay tiles would be removed as well as any battening (which will not be historic given the roofing felt below them). New battens would then be fitted to the existing rafters and the solar slates installed onto these. New, natural, slates which are of a very similar colour to the solar slates are proposed to be installed around the edges of the roof slope, which is how this type of installation is typically fitted and

as is in situ on the side extension. On the northeast elevation the clay tiles would be replaced with natural slate only.

- 2.4 A cable from the roof would be run into the extension where the infrastructure is already in place and from there down to the inverter and batteries in the garage.

The Heritage Asset and its Setting

27 Langley Road, Chippenham

- 3.1 The listed building to which this proposal relates is a grade II listed stone built house dating from the mid to late 19th Century. As illustrated on the submitted site plan and the pictures within this statement, the house sits at right angles to the road, with its principal elements being a large double plan building with a lower, narrower and likely later wing on its eastern elevation.
- 3.2 Although now firmly part of the built up part of northern Chippenham, when it was built 27 Langley Road was on the edge of the countryside and would have been built as part of the northern expansion of the town, particularly generated by the coming of the railway with the station at Chippenham opening in 1841. This is illustrated on figure 1 which contains an extract of the 1st Edition of the OS (1844-1888). Although the area around the house has urbanised since the mid-nineteenth century, the house (then called Oxford Cottage) still retains a relatively large garden area to the south which helps provide its setting.

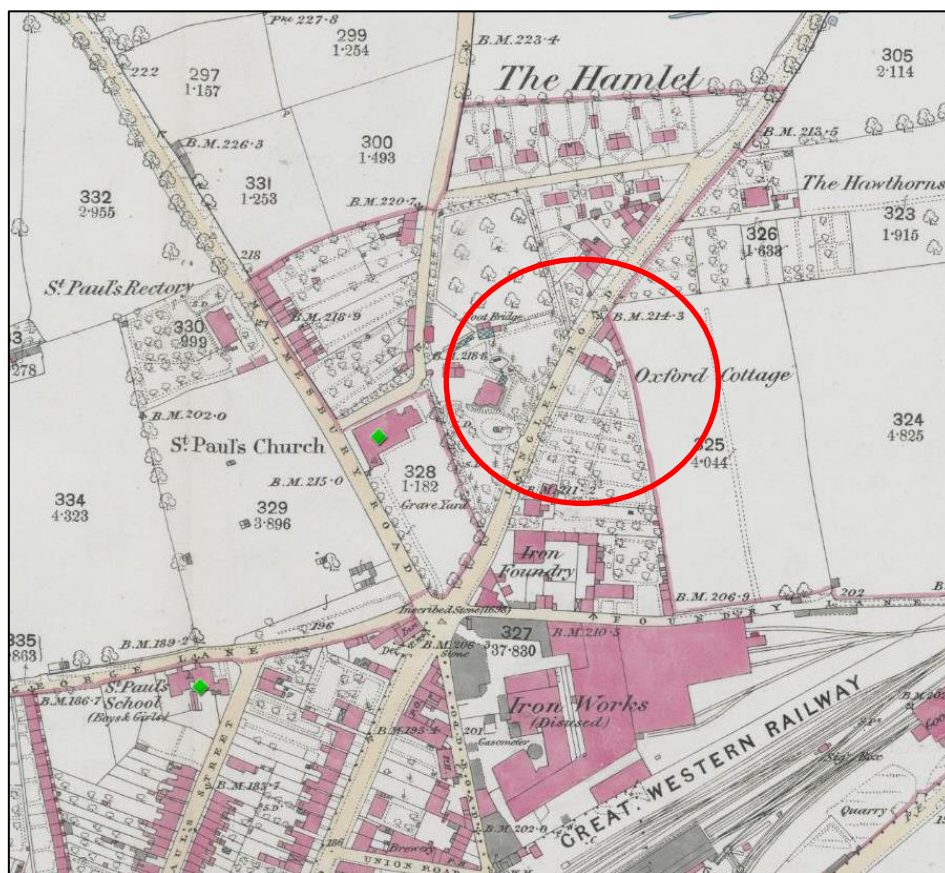


Figure 1: The site (then Oxford Cottage) from the 1st Edition OS

- 3.3 The section of the building where solar slates have recently been installed would have originally have been built as a coach house and stable with accommodation over. The use of stone and method of construction used appear contemporaneous with the main part of the house, although detailed elements of the design (the roof cutting across the sill of a small gable window and the use of slate rather than tiles) would suggest it was built shortly afterwards.
- 3.4 The solar slates on the side extension have both integrated well with the vernacular of the heritage asset and also been efficient at generating clean energy for the owners of 27 Langley Road. As such, the owners would like to install solar slates on the main part of the roof of their house and a pre-application submission proposing this change was submitted to the Council earlier this year. The advice provided within the Council's response to the pre-app is considered later in this report, however one aspect of the guidance which is helpful to consider as part of the assessment of 27 Langley Road, is as to whether the clay tiled roof is part of its original design concept, or a later change replacing what was likely to have been a slate roof.



Picture 3: Inside the roof where the solar slates are proposed

- 3.5 In this respect it's useful to consider historic images of the house to see what these can tell us, but also look at the roof itself. Picture 3 shows part of the inside of the roof of the main part of the house (where the solar slates are proposed). The presence of felt in good condition is a clear indication that the roof has been replaced and this is supported by what is relatively modern battening for the tiles, attached to what appears to be replacement rafters supported by an older frame.

- 3.6 The applicants consider that the roof was replaced post-war and this theory is supported by an examination of the clay tiles themselves. The tiles currently on the roof are machine made and are stamped with the name 'Sandstorm' on the rear – as picture 4. Sandstorm are a tile brand produced and popular from the mid to late twentieth century with two nibs and a sanded finish to provide a weathered appearance. These tiles would not have been manufactured when the house was built.



Picture 4: Sandstorm roof tile

- 3.7 This assessment that the current roofing is mid-twentieth century doesn't conclusively prove that the Sandstorm tiles didn't replace a previous tiled roof, but does support the comments made by the Council's Conservation Officer within the pre-application advice – as follows:

The Conservation Officer considers that a property of this age and design typically could have been constructed with a natural Welsh slate roof - given the design of the building and the pitches of the roof, these historically would be more associated with slate rather than clay tiles. This also given the proximity of the site to the rail network allowing for the materials to be transported in the 19th Century however these are vague assumptions. The agent must provide firm evidence to demonstrate that the existing covering of clay is not historic and does not make a significant contribution to the special interest of the building.

- 3.8 It's possible to show through examination of the existing roof covering that the existing clay tiles are not historic and do not make a significant contribution to the special interest of the building. As referred to in the above comments from the Conservation Officer, the age and

design of 27 Langley Road point more towards an original natural slate roof than one of tiles. Aerial imagery from the Historic England website would suggest that a change in roofing material took place between 1934 and 1953. In the 1934 image the roof has a light colour, similar to the side extension which has a slate roof and also number 29 Langley Road, which also has a slate roof. By 1953 (picture 6) the main roof is much darker than the side extension with a slate roof, suggesting a different and likely recently installed tiled roof.



Picture 5: 27 Langley Road in 1934



Picture 6: 27 Langley Road in 1953

- 3.9 These photographs don't conclusively prove a change in roofing materials in the mid twentieth century, however together with an understanding of the date of manufacture of the existing roof tile and the design of the roof in a form more suited to slate, the evidence strongly suggests that the house was built with a slate roof and changed to clay tiles at a much later date.

The Setting of 27 Langley Road

- 3.10 The setting of the heritage asset is very much different from when it was first built, with Langley Road now forming part of the urban landscape of Chippenham. From the south (as picture 7) the setting of 27 Langley Road is the mix of Edwardian and more recent buildings as well as an important group of trees. From this direction it is the roof of the house which can be seen, with the hedge above the boundary wall (picture 2) meaning that this remains the same as one approaches from this direction.
- 3.11 The setting of 27 Langley Road from the north is formed by another listed building at 29 Langley Road. This three storey ashlar fronted house and the line of trees on the opposite side of the road provide an attractive setting to the heritage asset subject of this application, the front of which becomes more visible to closer to it you are (picture 1).



Picture 7: 27 Langley Road from the south



Picture 8: 27 Langley Road from the north

Assessment of Significance

- 4.1 Significance can be considered in several ways. The building to which this submission relates has historic significance relating to its form and character and as part of the way in which Chippenham has grown – particularly since the mid-nineteenth century.

Historic Significance

- 4.2 In terms of the historic significance of the building, this is in respect of its importance as a surviving house from the nineteenth century – the form of which remains mostly intact. As such a building, its relevance to the history of Chippenham is as part of the northward expansion of the town, particularly following the arrival of the railway. The first edition OS Map from the late nineteenth century illustrates this.

- 4.3 On a wider scale, 27 Langley Road is by no means unique, with other houses of a similar age found within Chippenham and the wider north Wiltshire area.

Cultural Significance

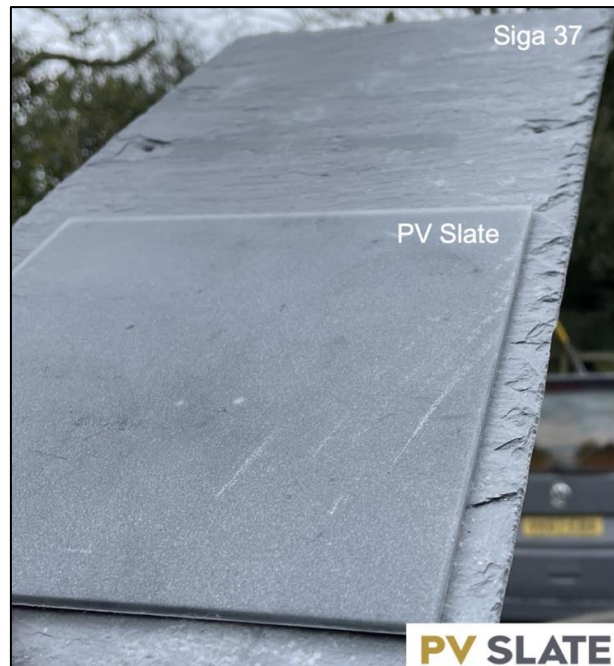
- 4.4 The cultural significance of the house is the part it plays in the historic development of Chippenham. As Chippenham expanded this was through a mix of houses, including larger detached buildings and smaller semi-detached and terraced units.

Architectural significance

- 4.5 At a national or regional level 27 Langley Road is not of remarkable architectural significance. On a wider scale, similar houses are found within many towns and villages within Wiltshire and are thus not an unusual or particularly rare form of building. The architectural interest in the building is in part its built form and in part the record it provides as part of the built history and development of Chippenham.

The Design Concept for the Proposed Development

- 5.1 The concept behind the design is that solar slates are provided in a way which minimises the impact on the listed building, both in terms of loss of fabric and the appearance of the house. The proposal is that the clay tiles be removed from the principal roof of the house and be replaced with solar slates with a fringe of new, natural slates around the outside on the southwest elevation and natural slates on the northeast facing roof slope. These natural slates closely match the colour of the solar slates so there is minimal distinction between the two. This can be seen on picture 9, which illustrates the solar slate next to the Siga 37 natural slate.
- 5.2 As such, the concept is that the appearance of the roof changes from the current weathered clay tiles (which is already relatively dark) to that of a slate roof which incorporates solar slates on the southwest elevation and natural slates on the northeast roof face. In respect of the southwest facing roof, this is therefore the same arrangement as installed on both elevations of the side extension to the house, where the solar slates are barely discernible from the natural slates neighbouring them.



Picture 9: The solar slate with the natural slate proposed

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.1 Guidance to local planning authorities within the NPPF relates to both how proposals for renewable energy should be considered as well as development relating to historic buildings. Section 168 states:

When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future;

Section 168 of the NPPF (extract)

- 6.2 Development relating to listed buildings is also considered within the NPPF. Section 215 is relevant as it sets out how 'harm' to a listed building should be considered (in this case the removal of a small section of roof).

Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Section 215 of the NPPF (extract)

Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015

- 6.3 Within the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy policy 41 relates to 'Sustainable construction and low-carbon energy'. This policy advises:

New development, building conversions, refurbishments and extensions will be encouraged to incorporate design measures to reduce energy demand. Development will be well insulated and designed to take advantage of natural light and heat from the sun and use natural air movement for ventilation, whilst maximising cooling in the summer.

Core Policy 41 (extract)

In all cases, including those listed above, proposals relating to historic buildings, listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas and world heritage sites should ensure that appropriate sensitive approaches and materials are used. Safeguarding of the significance of heritage assets should be in accordance with appropriate national policy and established best practice.

Core Policy 41 (extract)

- 6.4 Core policy 58 relates to the conservation of the historic environment. This policy requires that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

The Impact of the Proposed Development*Impact of exterior changes*

- 7.1 The exterior changes to the building will effectively be to return the main roof of 27 Langley Road to slate – which appears most likely to have been the original roofing material used. As such, the heritage asset will be closer to how it was originally designed. The applicants have had the clay tiled roof checked by a roofer who confirms that the tiles are nearing the end of their lifespan, meaning that the roofing materials will need to be changed in the near future in any case. It is thus submitted that a change to slate, to include solar slates, should be considered an appropriate replacement.
- 7.2 With the solar slates incorporated in the design, on close inspection they will be just visible on the southwest elevation, however for most people who see the building as part of the street scene in Langley Road they will not be discernible. This being the case the impact of the changes will be far less than many approved extensions or alterations to historic buildings which are more visible and have a greater impact on the heritage asset. Incorporating solar slates is also a reversible change that would have no long term impact on historic fabric.
- 7.3 The change in the roof will result in the loss of part of the fabric of the building, with the existing clay tiles removed. Particularly given the date of the clay tiles, this 'less than significant harm' must therefore be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal. In this respect the wording of section 168 of the NPPF is most pertinent with '*even small scale projects providing a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions*'.

- 7.4 In February 2019 the Council resolved to acknowledge a climate emergency and to seek the make Wiltshire carbon neutral by 2030. This end date is just over 4 years away and for it to be achieved requires both large and small scale projects to reduce carbon emissions. In the midst of such an emergency it is submitted that the limited 'harm' caused by removing the tiles is outweighed by the public benefit of the green energy generated by this proposal and thus a reduction from the existing carbon footprint of the house.

Impact of internal changes

- 7.5 Other than the existing tiles, the works as proposed would require the minimum of built fabric to be removed to allow development to take place and therefore have no demonstrable impact on the inside of 27 Langley Road. Any new cabling will be linked to the existing solar slate infrastructure connected to the freestanding equipment in the garage. This is shown on picture 10.



Picture 10: Equipment and batteries will link to existing system in the garage

Design and Access Statement

The Use of the Site

- 8.1 No change of use is proposed within this submission. The works are for changes to a single residential dwelling.

The Amount of Development

- 8.2 The amount of development proposed is illustrated on the drawings accompanying this planning application. The submission is for the change in materials to a section of the building's roof.

The Layout of Development

- 8.3 No changes to the layout of the house are proposed.

The Scale of Development

- 8.4 No changes to the scale of the house are proposed.

The Landscaping of the Development

- 8.5 No additional landscaping is proposed.

The Appearance of the Development

- 8.6 The appearance of the proposed development has been discussed previously within this report.

Access

- 8.7 Access to the house will not be changed as a result of this development.

Conclusion

- 9.1 In respect of heritage and design, the conclusion to the pre-application advice provided by the Council states:

In conclusion, the proposals may be supported subject to further justification to demonstrate that the tiles were not part of the original design and appearance of the building.

In considering visual impact, the solar tiles as shown in the photograph have a close appearance to slate. The proposed solar tiles would be on the main dwelling and roof slope to the rear. The dwelling is situated side on to the highway of Langley Road and the main dwelling is set back from the road. The solar tiles would not be obvious from the street or wider Conservation Area, and are not considered to cause an adverse impact in terms of visual amenity. It is not considered that the slate tiles on the front elevation would be harmful to the wider area. There are other examples of slate tiles within the surrounding area.

- 9.2 Further work has been undertaken to demonstrate that tiles were not part of the original design of the building. Clearly it's not possible to categorically prove this is the case, however several factors weigh in favour of slate being the original roofing material as follows:

- The built fabric of the building which suggests the roof was originally designed to have a slate finish (as theorised by the Council's Conservation Officer) and the fact that the most houses of similar early/mid 19th century design in Chippenham would have been built with and retain a slate roof.
- The fact that the roof was changed to 'modern' clay tiles in the mid twentieth century together with new battening and felt – thus meaning any older, historic building materials were lost.
- The aerial photographs which appear to illustrate the main house had a different roof in 1934 which looks similar to other known slate roofs in the area, whereby in 1953 it

had a much darker roof by which point it's suggested a clay tiled roof had been provided.

- 9.3 Alongside the change to what is likely to have been the original roofing material, there are clear environmental benefits to this proposal which are in conformity with the Council's acknowledgement of the climate emergency and its aim to be carbon neutral in 4 years. This benefit has to be weighed against the 'harm' of removing a section of clay tiles from the house and the minor change to the appearance of the building through the introduction of solar slates and new natural slates to surround them.
- 9.4 It is submitting that, in this instance given the very minor harm to the heritage asset which would result from this development taking place, that the balance must fall in favour of the public benefit of the proposal. When considered collectively, even small steps toward cutting greenhouse emissions make a valuable contribution to carbon neutrality and this is more important than seeking to preserve a clay tiled roof from change when the visual and heritage impact is so minimal.

Document 1: List Description**CHIPPENHAM**

ST9274SW LANGLEY ROAD 930-1/4/64 (East side) 22/06/78 No.27 and attached wall

II

House at a right-angle to the road. Early/mid C19. Squared coursed limestone rubble, freestone quoins and architraves, plain tile roof with coped gables, moulded kneelers and ashlar stacks to the main block, slate roof with carved bargeboards to the gable end of the left wing. Double-depth plan with lower wing to the left. EXTERIOR: 2 storeys; the main block is symmetrical 3-window range, the left wing 2-window range. Rusticated surrounds to the main block, plain surrounds to the wing; 1st-floor windows at eaves level. 6-panel door glazed to the top under a C20 porch and a semicircular-arched 8/8-pane sash window. 8/8-pane sashes to the ground floor, C20 glazing to the 1st floor. The main block is spanned by a cast-iron trellis to a former canopy extending from the platband. The wing has 6/1 pane sash windows to the 1st floor. INTERIOR: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: a rubblestone wall with stone coping extends forward (south) from the left corner.

Listing NGR: ST9204774014