The Old Vicarage, Churchtown, St Newlyn East, Cornwall, TR8 5LJ

Design, Access, and Heritage Impact Assessment in connection with installation of PV Solar Panels on 1 & 2 Old Vicarage Court

brief description

The Old Vicarage was listed in 1988 at Grade II. It is believed to date from the 18th century with later extensions and alterations. A symmetrical front block was added in 1840 and a scheme of remodelling of the whole took place at this time. These works are believed to have been carried out by the architect George Wightwick. The room plan and much of the internal fabric is well preserved. The house is quite rustic in appearance with fashionable touches of joinery externally and internally. Its principal interest is the survival of its historic form and fabric much of it from the late eighteenth or nineteenth century. The house derives additional group value from the original or early structures forming part of its curtilage. It is situated in a walled enclosure with garden to the south adjoining the churchyard and a service court to the north. Attached to the main house is a two storey wing projecting to the north and overlooking the court. This wing is thought to have been stabling and coach-house. The wing was converted to two dwelling-houses around twenty years ago. These cottages are not referred to in the list description of 1988. They are thought to be late eighteenth or early nineteenth century in date based on similarities of construction with the main house.

proposal

Installation of 16 solar panels to the roof areas of the cottages in the Old Vicarage Courtyard, with battery storage.

reasons for proposal

- The owners wish to lower the carbon emissions of the cottages, to enable the cottages to continue to be viable as a long-term letting proposition. Currently the cottages are heated by LPG gas, and it is hoped that electricity generated from the panels and the battery storage, coupled with a green electricity tariff, will provide all the heating and hot water requirements into the future. So effectively this proposal is removing the use of any fossil fuels by these dwellings. Generating an estimated annual output of 6300 KwH, the proposed

panels will ensure the cottages are able to produce 65% of the annual electricity usage. This will save 7500kg of CO2 emissions. (5000L LPG x 1.51).

impact of proposal

“Reversibility – Great care must be taken when planning the installation to think about the ‘reversibility’ and the ‘physical impact’ an installation can have on a building.“ Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings – Historic England

The owners are keen to engage with the Planning department on the best way to minimise the visual impact that the panels will have. At present the proposal is for matt black panels mounted on top of the existing tiles. This would have minimal impact on the roof covering that is already there, and allow for easy reversability, if that was ever required. However the current roof tiles are not of any significant historical interest The are believed to be standard brazillian tiles, installed approximately 20 years ago. They do no match the delabole tiles of the main house. A perhaps preferable option may be to integrate the panels into the roof covering. The panels would then be flush with the slates and less obtrusive.