

Application Number

P/2011/0905/HA

Site Address

Farnaby
7 Rydons
Brixham
Devon
TQ5 8QF

Case Officer

Mrs Alison Read

Ward

Berry Head With Furzeham

Description

Installation of solar panels on flat roof.

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The proposal is to add 10 solar or photovoltaic (PV) panels to be mounted in 3 rows above the ridgeline/highest part of the roof of the dwelling, on the front and rear flat roofed box dormers. There was a pre-application enquiry concerning this proposal and it was advised that it would be likely to be refused. Various other suggestions were made which have been rejected, although a note has been added to the submitted drawing in this application to move the front row of panels back by 900mm i.e. towards the centre of the front box dormer.

Recommendation

Committee Site Visit; Refusal.

Site Details

The property is a detached dormer bungalow with large box dormers to the front and rear elevations and a projecting gable to the front, which has resulted in limited space for the siting of PV panels on the front roof slope. There are other properties in the vicinity with box dormer extensions and a flat-roofed property.

The property is on an elevated site off The Rydons a private cul-de-sac on the edge of the built up area of Brixham within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with open fields/land within the countryside zone on the opposite side of the road.

Whilst there are some trees to the boundary of the field opposite which provide some screening of the property, they are deciduous and in any case are not necessarily a permanent feature and are outside the control of the applicant.

Detailed Proposals

The Schuco PV panels are to be in three rows, that nearest the front of the

property, to be set back by 900mm from the front of the box dormer (note added to drawing only), consists of 4 panels, the middle row is to be above the ridgeline and also consists of 4 panels and the back row, to the rear of the rear box dormer, consists of 2 panels. The panels are to be mounted at a relatively steep angle on a framework, such that the top of the panels would be 574mm above the top of the roof.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

None.

Summary Of Representations

Brixham Town Council; Recommend approval – Summary sheet from the meeting held on 03.10.11 reproduced at Page B.200.

Relevant Planning History

Pre-application enquiry ZP/2011/0332 Refusal advised 20.07.11.

N.B. Other less damaging suggestions were subsequently made such as mounting some panels on the plane of the roof below the front box dormer or mounting the panels set back on the rear box dormer only and also at a less elevated angle. Ground mounted panels were also suggested.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

Principle and Planning Policy – Impact on the built environment

Whilst the planning department fully support the principle of PV panels in the interests of sustainability, energy efficiency, long term running costs etc (issues associated with climate change) it also has a duty to protect the built environment from damaging development.

The proposal is for three rows of PV panels to be mounted above the highest part of the roof on the flat-roofed box dormers at a relatively steep angle to the roof; two of the rows being close to the front/central ridgeline of the property and would be particularly open to view from a distance (as previously stated there is open countryside to the front and the trees on the opposite side of the road are deciduous and in any case are not necessarily a permanent feature or within the control of the applicant) and when the property is approached from the side, as the framework/panels project well above the roof.

This proposal if approved would set a precedent for the siting of PV panels in very conspicuous locations above the highest part of the roof, for example on flat roofed properties or on properties with flat-roofed box dormer extensions as in

this case, in close proximity to the front of the property and prominent in the streetscene, both within this road, where there are other properties with box dormer extensions as well as a flat-roofed property and throughout Torbay.

No history has been found for any similarly prominently sited panels being approved. The majority of PV panels can be sited relatively inconspicuously on the roof slopes of dwellings and do not require planning permission as they constitute permitted development as long as they do not project above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney) and 200mm from the plane of the roof slope.

Suggestions were made for less damaging alternative siting of the panels in a pre-application enquiry (see Relevant Planning History) but these have not been taken up and the only alteration to the scheme has been the marginal setback of the front row of panels.

It is considered that the proposal would be contrary to the objectives of Local Plan policies, in particular H15- House extensions, BES- Built environment strategy and BE1- Design of new development, which seek to conserve or enhance the built environment from inappropriate, out of character or over-dominant alterations or development which would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the original property or the streetscene. The property is also adjacent to the countryside zone and within an AONB where Policy L1 applies, which seeks to ensure that development proposals will not damage the natural beauty of the area.

Climate change -

The proposal would be of benefit in terms of sustainability, energy efficiency, long term running costs etc. but this benefit is considered to be outweighed by the harm to the built environment.

Environmental Enhancement -

The proposal would be damaging in terms of impact on the built environment and if approved would set a precedent for similar proposals in the vicinity and throughout Torbay.

Conclusions

Committee Site Visit and refusal.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. 1. The proposal, by reason of the number, method of mounting and siting

of the panels in a prominent location above the highest part of the roof towards the front of the property, would be contrary to the objectives of policies of the saved adopted Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011, in particular H15- House extensions, BES- Built environment strategy and BE1- Design of new development, which seek to conserve or enhance the built environment from inappropriate, out of character or over-dominant alterations or development which would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the original property or the streetscene.

2. The property is also in a prominent, elevated location on the edge of the built up area of Brixham, adjacent to the countryside zone and within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where Policy L1- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty applies, which seeks to ensure that development proposals will not damage the natural beauty of the area.

3. If approved the proposal would also set an undesirable precedent for similar proposals to the detriment of the built environment both within the vicinity and throughout Torbay.

Relevant Policies

H15 House extensions
L1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BES Built environment strategy
BE1 Design of new development