

Design & Access Statement

St Anne's Church, Highgate – Installation of photovoltaic panels



Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by HMDW Architects Ltd in collaboration with information from the PCC and Joju Solar Ltd, and should be read in connection with the Heritage Statement.

The purpose of this Statement is to explain the rationale for the development and assess its impact in relation to the following criteria:

- Extent of the Proposals
- Site and scale
- The Design Principles and Concepts, which inform the Layout
- Appearance
- The Setting: its Context / Landscape
- Access

The project concerns the installation of a community-owned photovoltaic array to generate energy in partnership with the *Power Up North London (PUNL)* community energy project initiative.¹ The array will contribute towards the church's sustainable future, and the desire to generate renewable energy within the community.

Extent of the proposals

Installation of two arrays of photovoltaic solar panels, one of 50 in three rows on the south slope of the nave and one of 10 in two rows on the south slope of the chancel. Supporting electrical infrastructure will be located within the interior of the building. The installation will be connected to the local power grid and enable the applicant participate in the government's feedback tariff system. The panels would be mounted on frames secured to the roof by tile clips, so from a conservation point of view, the intervention is easily 'reversible'.



¹ PUNL was formed in 2014 after a public meeting of over 60 local residents, which demonstrated support for generating community-owned renewable energy.

Site and scale

The church forms a focal point within the local townscape, at the confluence of three Conservation Areas, as described in the accompanying Heritage Statement. The proposed panels would cover the majority of the upper nave roof and the chancel roof as shown in “layout” below.

Design Principles and Concepts

Layout

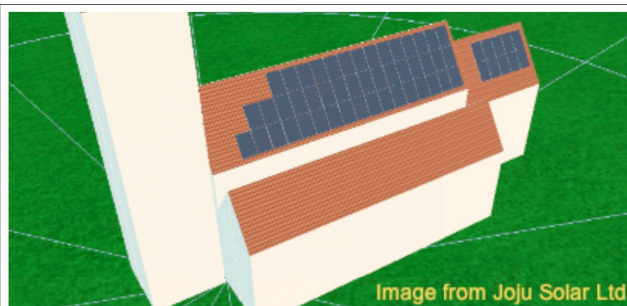
The proposed arrays will be formed by panels of either:

1640mm high x 992mm wide x 40mm deep
(Renesolar 146 Series)

or

1599mm high x 1046mm wide x 46mm high
(Sunpower E-Series)

The panels shown in the scaled plan and elevation drawings illustrate the 1640 x 992mm version.



Note: church roofing is in grey slate

The rationale for this size and location of the installation is to:

- meet in an environmentally sustainable and economical manner the increased electricity requirements associated with the expansion of the community centre activities that will soon be carried out
- address the challenge of climate change and contribute to locally generated renewable energy for the benefit of the community
- raise awareness of environmental issues within the community
- contribute to long term aims of reducing the need for imported fossil fuel supply, increased local energy resilience, and community cohesion

The installation will provide discounted electricity prices for St Anne's, which will benefit the funding for activities such as the weekly community lunches, and provide an estimated 16,500 kWh per year, equating to 8,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions. This will contribute towards Camden Council's 40% target for reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 2020². The proposal is being undertaken in partnership with Power Up North London (PUNL), which has access to grant funding for the initial feasibility study and will provide the discounted energy prices, with possible surplus income that the parish can spend on its community activities.

If the feasibility study is positive, PUNL will administer a community share offer to raise funds for the installation. The community share model is widely used by community energy projects in London and the UK. It enables members of the community to invest in a project for financial, environmental and social returns. Typically, community share offers into community energy offer annual financial returns of 3-5%. PUNL's rules as a Community Benefit Society limit the interest they can offer to a maximum of 5%. They would like investors to be as local as possible and are proposing a staged share offer with an initial window being open to members of the congregation, followed by opening up to the local community, and then more widely if required. According to recent research, North London is the area with the highest social investment in the UK, and community share offers are oversubscribed.

² London Borough of Camden. *Energy efficiency planning guidance for Dartmouth Park Conservation Area*. London, December 2012

Appearance

The photovoltaic panels are dark grey in colour, with a semi-sheen finish, with details shown in the accompanying product information. The drawing indicates the extent to which the affected roof slopes will be covered, the aesthetic consequences of which are described in the section below. An example of a similar installation, showing grey panels on a slate roof with roof hooks and rails holding the panels at the same angle, is illustrated here.



Setting

Conservation Areas

The church is located within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area. The immediate surroundings are characterised by the Italianate former Vicarage to the south, and St Anne's Close, with its mid twentieth-century Walter Segal designed houses, to the east. To the north (and east) lies the Holly Lodge Estate (a conservation area), and to the west a row of Grade II Listed nineteenth-century houses and the southern part of the Highgate Conservation Area.

The church is therefore juxtaposed between the semi-rural village character of Highgate, the garden suburb character of the Holly Lodge Estate, and the leafy suburban character of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area.

Immediately to the south is the open, leafy character area of Highgate Road, which opens out onto Parliament Hill Fields. The *Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement* identifies Highgate Road as an important road within the conservation area,³ and the view north towards the church is identified as a key view.⁴

Contextual Analysis

The proposed installation will have some impact on the appearance of the south roof slopes of the nave and chancel, mitigated by the grey colour of the panels being set over grey slates at the same incline, and the considerable degree of screening by mature trees. The screening varies according to the seasons, and the visibility of the nave roof is mostly cut off by limited viewing angles from within the site. The key views are considered below:

Wider view from the Heath	The roof slopes are screened by surrounding trees and buildings, and the landscape value of the spire within the setting would remain unaltered.
View from Parliament Hill Fields and Highgate Road – intersection of Swains Lane and Highgate West Hill	The dense vegetation around the site conceals the affected roof slopes, including during the winter.

³ London Borough of Camden. *Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement*. London, 2009. p6.

⁴ *Ibid.* p40.



The *Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement* identifies this as a key view.



The impact is therefore **low**.

View from Swains Lane



The upper part of the nave roof is partially visible during winter, and screened from spring to autumn. This viewpoint will soon be concealed by a new multi-storey development replacing the single storey shops giving rise to a **moderate-low** impact.



View from Highgate West Hill

The western end of the nave roof is visible through the trees during winter at the junction with St Anne's Close giving rise to a **moderate-low** impact. The panels step away from this area that is overshadowed by the tower, shown below right.



The view is obscured during spring-autumn.

View from St Anne's Close



The nave slope is visible from several properties on both sides of the private road St. Anne's Close. The degree of visibility varies according to the seasons, as shown here.

The upper nave roof is higher than sight-lines from inside the immediately neighbouring properties.

These photographs show the most exposed vistas available from outside the properties. The effect of vegetation in the foreground will be enhanced from the shorter angled views from within the private gardens.

Locally there will be a **moderate** impact.



View from the church grounds

The nave roof slope is not visible (i.e. **no impact**) due to the south aisle being in the



foreground, and the steep viewing angle towards the upper roof from the forecourt.

Summary:

The roof is heavily screened from the surrounding area during the summer months, and mostly screened during other times of the year. The addition of grey photovoltaic panels on a grey slate roof will therefore have a **low** impact on the character of the conservation area.

Access

The proposals are limited to a specialist rooftop installation, with no requirement for public accessibility. The nature of the installation dictates that only specialists with appropriate safe access equipment will be involved with future maintenance.

Sources consulted

- Population of St Anne Brookfield Highgate Rise - <http://www.cuf.org.uk/parish/230342>
- London Borough of Camden. *Energy efficiency planning guidance for Dartmouth Park Conservation Area*. London, December 2012
- London Borough of Camden. *Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement*. London, 2009.
- London Borough of Camden. *Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement*. London, 2007.
- London Borough of Camden. *Holly Lodge Estate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Statement*. London, 2012.