Statement of Need

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

Introduction

This Statement of Need has been prepared by Power Up North London in collaboration with information from the PCC, and should be read in connection with the Statement of Significance/Heritage Statement, and the Design and Access Statement.

Section 1. General information

The legal name of the Parish of St Anne's, Highgate, is St Anne Brookfield Highgate Rise. It is within the Deanery of South Camden in the Archdeaconry of Hampstead and the Edmonton Episcopal Area of the Diocese of London, within the Province of Canterbury in the Church of England. The population of the Parish is of 5,030 people.

The usual services are:

- Sundays: 8am, for Holy Communion, attended by 5 people on average
- Sundays: 10.30 am, for Parish Eucharist and Children's Church, attended by 50 people on average, of which 15 are children
- Thursdays: 8am, for morning Prayers, attended by 4 people on average, where the age profile of the congregation is 0-88 years, with average of c. 40 years.

Community lunches are also organised on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 12-1pm, attended by 17 people on average.

There are 108 people on the Electoral Roll and the church is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11am to 13pm for Community Lunches, on Thursdays from 8am to 8.30am for a service and for bell-ringing from 7pm to 9pm, and on Sundays from 7.45am to 1pm for church services.

This project will provide a local, community-owned renewable energy source for the benefit of the local community and the church. The project has been proposed by St. Anne's Church as a partnership with a local community energy group, Power Up North London (PUNL). Power Up North London was formed in 2014 after a public meeting of over 60 local residents which demonstrated considerable support for generating community owned renewable energy in the North Camden area.

Section 2. What do you need?

Installation of two arrays of photovoltaic solar panels will:

- meet the increased electricity requirements associated to the proposed expansion of the community centre in an environmentally sustainable and economical manner;
- address the challenge of climate change and contribute to locally generated renewable energy;
- raise awareness of environmental issues within the community;
- and contribute to long term aims of reducing the need for imported fossil fuel supply, and increased local energy resilience.

Note that implementation of the project is subject to the parochial Church Council's final agreement after the Feasibility Study currently being led by PUNL with the involvement of Joju solar and others, is completed. The PCC and PUNL will also need to agree the terms (particularly the financial structure) of the project.

Section 3. 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 to participate in the government's feedback tariff system. The panels would be mounted on frames secured to the roof by fixing hooks for slate roofs. From a conservation point of view, the intervention is easily 'reversible'.

Section 4. Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

The proposal will ensure that the increased electricity needs in the coming months are met in the most environmentally sustainable and economical way:

- PUNL will provide discounted electricity prices for St Anne's, which will result in savings for the church that could be used to increase the number of attendees to their weekly community lunches. Given the difficulties to fund these initiatives, the installation of solar panels could help in this point
- Local residents in the Parish will benefit from the initiatives prioritised in the community consultation exercise, funded through a Community Energy Fund. These initiatives could potentially range from reducing fuel poverty through community lunches, to other community events. PUNL forecasts this amount to be circa £300 in year one. PUNL would want the congregation and local residents to be able to decide on how these funds are spent.
- The proposal will contribute to the need for environmental sustainability, with St Anne's solar panels producing circa 16,500 kWh per year (NB: this is close to twice the current electricity consumption of the church). This renewable generation has the potential to save 8 tonnes of CO_2 per year, contributing towards the local targets set by Camden Council of 40% carbon reduction targets by 2020, and resultant reduction of negative impacts on the natural environment in the long term.
- Local generation can help to secure security of supply, reducing the dependence on imported natural gas.
- It can bring wider social and economic benefits, such as increasing community cohesion. In the long-term PUNL intends to have local paid staff undertaking the administrative tasks, contributing to the creation of local green jobs.

Recent changes which have taken place which have led to the need arising:

- In the church congregation: Due to the success of the existing community centre, work is in progress to increase the space allocated in the church to carry out community related activities. These will result in a substantial increase in electricity consumption in the coming months.

- In the local area: Camden has set its own borough wide carbon dioxide emissions reduction target of 40% by 2020 (*Energy efficiency planning guidance for Dartmouth Park Conservation Area*, December 2012)
- Financial incentives: The proposed increase of community centre activities creates a case for seeking the electricity cost savings offered by the installation of solar panels. The installation is due to be cost-neutral for St Anne's. The local community energy group Power Up North London (PUNL), has access to a c. £20k grant from the Urban Community Energy Fund, awarded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), in order to conduct the current feasibility study for the installation of solar PV panels on the church.
  If the feasibility study is positive, PUNL will administer a community share offer to raise the funds for the installation. The community share offer model is widely used by community energy projects in London and the UK.

  A community share offer 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. PUNL is confident that they will be able to raise the funds needed for the installation in this way.

Section 5. Justification

The works are confined to the provision photovoltaics to the south roof slopes. The church building is well-screened by mature trees, and the roofs are therefore not visible from much of the surrounding area. The provision of photovoltaics will have a low-moderate impact because they will be easily reversible.

The photovoltaics will be installed via hooks designed to be retrofitted to tiled roofs. The hooks will support the framework that the photovoltaic panels are mounted on to. By using the system, the photovoltaic array may be easily reversed or upgraded to a different system without harm to the fabric.

The scheme will provide benefits to:

- the church, through reduced electricity prices and increased sustainability standards;
- the local residents in the Parish, through the portion of the funds arising from the government Feed-in Tariff scheme that will be allocated towards the Community Energy Fund (e.g. used towards community lunches);
- the local community, providing green jobs to local architects and solar installers;
- the environment, reducing the amount of CO_2 emitted to the atmosphere through the production of renewable energy;
- and Camden Borough, helping to achieve the carbon dioxide emissions reduction target of 40% by 2020.

The installation of solar panels is in line with the support for such panels on the Diocesan website.

In summary, the benefits associated to the proposal substantially outweigh the limited visual and material impact of the installation of solar panels on St Anne's.

Sources consulted

- Population of St Anne Brookfield Highgate Rise - http://www.cuf.org.uk/parish/230342
- Energy efficiency planning guidance for Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, December 2012

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