

F/25/99185 – Bradgate Manor, Abbey Hill, Netley Abbey, SO31 5FB.

Context.

Bradgate Manor (listed Grade II) is located against the north-eastern edge of the western arm of the Netley Abbey Conservation Area, approached by a long drive from the Fountains Park estate road which runs along the north boundary of the Cisterrian Netley Abbey remains, now an Ancient Monument. Other listed buildings in the vicinity include Netley Castle (Grade II*) and its Abbots Lodge some 300 metres to the south, its West Lodge 350 metres west and the Church of Edward the Confessor 400 metres south-east, all Grade II.

This Grade II listed building is virtually surrounded by trees, so it appears to be situated in a romantic glade in the forest, generally known as West Wood. The south and east elevations are the original with more modern extensions added to the east and north elevations, together with a swimming pool at the other side of the north-east lawn.

The Proposal.

A range of 20 solar panels in two rows of 10, one in front of the other standing on the ground 1.575m (5'3") at the highest point, are proposed to be sited near the north-west boundary behind the house between the rearmost extension and the swimming pool. This position is about the least shaded while being on the side of the house with the modern extensions and virtually out of sight as one approaches the building along the entrance drive.

A building of this nature is energy hungry to achieve modern day comfort standards, so an energy source of this type is a very sensible solution, which is to be encouraged. Obviously placing them on the building itself is quite out of the question, so this proposal makes eminent sense and managing to site them quite close to the building but on the 'compromised' side of it will not increase what might be considered harm to the original building.

Conclusion.

Running and maintaining a heritage asset of this nature is neither cheap nor easy, so any help to ease the pain and keep it in good order is to be applauded. The two main elevations of the original building on the south-east and south-west sides remain as original with the modern extensions to the north of the south-west and north-east sides, the latter of which is where the solar panels will to be near. This will represent minimal harm and is acceptable in the light of the benefits gained for the health of the building. No objection.

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Tim J S Dyer, B.Sc.,Dip.Arch.(Birm), Grad.Dip.Conservation(AA), RIBA. [Built Heritage Consultant](#).