

Brentham Society Advice Sheet:

Solar Panels



BACKGROUND:

Solar panels have the potential to alter the appearance of the conservation area, so it is a matter of how much impact they have on the original character of the architecture and setting. Brentham has Article 4 Direction on the rear of the houses, rear gardens and back lands so any alterations are controlled. Small extensions and dormers may receive approval but these need to use the same materials as the original building. As the traditional appearance of Brentham roofs and elevations are considered significant and solar panels obscure the tiles or slates or parts of walls with an alien material none have been approved for houses in Brentham as it would damage the character of the architecture. However, it may be possible to install a panel in another part of a property.

GROUND MOUNTED

If the panels are on the ground, they would be acceptable so long as they were only a small proportion of the garden footprint. This would be considered in relation to any other hard surfacing as there is a conservation requirement for a large proportion of garden space to remain verdant in character as it is a significant feature of the garden suburb setting. If the panelling was no larger than a normal bit of garden equipment such a garden table or satellite dish no application would be needed but if a large area of the garden is to be surfaced with panelling it would need an application as it changes the character of the garden setting.

GARAGE / GARDEN BUILDING ROOF OR WALL MOUNTED

If they are on the wall or the roof this would be an alteration to the appearance of the building so will need an application. The impact the panels would have on the character of the garage or garden building and the views from the houses and gardens will be considered as the design and materials of garden buildings in Brentham are considered important in conserving the character of the Edwardian garden suburb. The following details should be considered:

- Panels should not be any higher than 2.5 m from the ground.
- The area of panelling should be modest in size and not dominate the building roof
- Panels should not be adjacent to a boundary so neighbours would be able to screen their view of the panels with planting if they wish.
- Panels should cover an area that is rectangular in shape with no fragmented edges - multiple 'pepper potted' installations must be avoided
- Panels should be positioned to avoid causing glare to neighbouring properties
- Solar PV panels should be all black rather than crossed with metallic busbars

You will not be able to require a neighbour to remove a tree or shrub if it starts to overshadow your panel. If you are considering installing a battery the advice in the following link to the English Heritage document on solar batteries is useful.

www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/building-services-engineering/electrical-energy-storage-systems/#Reasons

For further advice contact advice@brentham.com