

**HPK/2015/0233**  
**BUXTON METHODIST CHURCH**  
**BUXTON**

**DESCRIPTION:**

The Buxton Methodist Church lies within the Buxton Central Conservation Area but is not listed. It is a significant and prominent building built in the Gothic Revival Style constructed from coursed gritstone, slate roof and decorative and fretted stonework around parapet details.

The Character Appraisal for Buxton identifies the building as making a positive contribution to the character of the area, being an architectural and landmark building and providing a focal point by virtue of the Chapel window facing Torr Street. Relevant extracts from the Character Appraisal are as follows:

*There are very few exceptional true Gothic Revival buildings, the main exception being 195 Park Road (the former Vicarage, designed by Currey). The best examples were the churches and chapels, many of which have been lost. The best surviving example is the Methodist Church at the top of Fountain Street. (pg 47).*

*Looking north along Torr Street, the decorated Methodist Chapel window, with its fretted parapet, is a focal point. (pg71).*

*In Higher Buxton the views across to the landscape beyond are limited. The massive expanse of the market place spread across the broad belly of the limestone plateau, and lined in places by three and four storey buildings, creates an enclosed inward-looking space, with few opportunities for views beyond. Within this space, the buildings edging the space form the main landmarks – the main ones being the Town Hall, Buxton Methodist Church and Eagle Parade (pg76).*

The Methodist Church, by virtue of its architectural detailing, style and landmark status makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**PROPOSALS:**

It is proposed to install PV panels on part of the roof slope facing Chapel Street. There will be 44 in total and arranged in such a pattern that a cruciform shape is expressed by the existing slates. The PV panels are black panels with black edging and project from the roof slope by 150mm. Whilst it is not made clear in the application, I would assume that the panels are applied on top of the existing slates.

## **COMMENTS:**

There has been some pre-application discussion on the proposals in which the Council was resistant of the scheme.

Given the contribution that the Methodist Church makes to the character of the conservation area I would conclude that the erection of solar panels would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area that are not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals. (para 134 NPPF). I conclude this for the following reasons:

1. The installation of panels will erode and be detrimental to the architectural style and historic interest of the building.
2. The prominence of the building and its status as a land mark building mean that the panels will be highly visible from vantage points within the immediate surrounds.
3. The installation of the panels will disrupt the view of the Church from Torr Street and diminish the focal point as identified in the character appraisal.
4. The appearance of the panels and their projection will add an alien protrusion and addition to the simple and uncluttered roof pitch. The colour and shiny finish of the panels will be in contrast to the grey and flat appearance of the slates.

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