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Report from the Head of Development Management to Development Control Committee

Application number: 7/2026/5215

Application type: Full Planning application

Applicant: Dr J Hiley, St Anne's Church, Ings

Location: St Annes Church, Ings, Kendal, LA8 9PY

Grid reference: 344607, 498634

Proposal: Installation of solar panels to roof

Report prepared by: Kelsey Blain, Area Planner

Report agreed by: Kevin Richards, Planning Manager

Recommendation: REFUSE

1 About this report

- 1.1 The case planner has prepared this report, assessment and recommendation taking into account our policies (known as the Development Plan), written representations we have received, and any other material considerations.
- 1.2 Material considerations are things that are relevant to our decision making and which we are able to take into account – for example site specific factors, or Government planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework) and Government planning guidance (the National Planning Practice Guidance).

- 1.3 The Development Control Committee will determine the application at its meeting having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, representations we have received, and all other material considerations, following a verbal and visual summary of the application by the case planner and, where applicable, after hearing any verbal representations made in accordance with our Policy for Public Speaking at Meetings.
- 1.4 Most applications are decided under powers delegated to the Head of Development Management. A small number of significant or more contentious applications are considered by our Development Control Committee as set out in our Scheme of Delegation.

2 Background and proposals

- 2.1 This application is being reported to Committee as my recommendation of refusal is contrary to the support of Staveley with Ings Parish Council and more than five representations.
- 2.2 St Anne's Church is a Grade II* listed building within the settlement of Ings. The church is located to the south-western corner of the churchyard. The churchyard is bound by the A590 to the north and Church Lane to the east, south and west.
- 2.3 Planning permission (7/2023/5474) was refused in November 2023 for the installation of a 28-panel array of solar PV panels on the south facing roof. An appeal against this refusal was lodged but dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate in October 2024 (see Appendix A).
- 2.4 This application now seeks planning permission for the installation of 22 surface mounted PV solar panels on the south facing roof.
- 2.5 As an ecclesiastical building, the proposed works are exempt from the requirement to obtain Listed Building Consent. Instead, a Faculty was

granted by the Diocese of Carlisle (Application reference 2023-087670) in May 2024. A condition of this judgment is that the works cannot take place until planning permission is granted.

3 Representations

3.1 Staveley with Ings Parish Council support the application for the following reasons:

- Solar panels are important to tackle climate change and would not be out of place on the roof.
- The Church at Orton in the YDNP is similar and had solar panels approved on the roof.

3.2 Historic England raised concerns about the proposal on heritage grounds which can be summarised as follows:

- The proposals would visually detract from, in an obvious way, the authenticity of the church's original design and appearance.
- As a grade II* listed building, St Anne's is defined as being of more than special architectural and historic interest to the nation and, is within the top eight percent of listed buildings. Therefore, the conservation of its special architectural and historic character should be given considerable weight in determining the proposal.
- It is often the case that more could be done to advance the cause of climate change, as set out in this application, but there remains the requirement to consider the public benefit of conserving heritage also. A compromise is sometimes required, limiting the number and nature of measures that can be made.
- The proposal's impact on the special architectural and historic character of this grade II* listed building as the proposal would adversely affect the special character of the listed building to a moderate degree.

- The reduction in number of solar panels from twenty-eight to twenty-two, is not materially different enough to change our position or advice on the harm caused by the proposals.
- The reversibility of the panels is less of a mitigating factor considering the long duration of their use.
- The application does not meet the requirements of paragraphs 202, 208, 212, 213, 215 and 167 of the NPPF.

3.3 We have received 44 representations of support which can be summarised as follows:

- The number of solar panels proposed has been reduced.
- Negligible damage to the roof.
- Minimal visual impact.
- Public benefit through reduced heating costs for the church and renewable energy.
- Solar panels have been installed on other listed buildings.
- The benefits of the scheme outweigh the harm.
- The surrounding area is of a less attractive character with a variety of roofing materials.

3.4 We have received one comment which can be summarised as follows:

- Solar panels are unattractive, particularly on an old church.
- Would support the application if the panels were on the north-west roof or east roof.

3.5 The Design and Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application includes a summary of a petition opened in February 2025 in support of the proposed development containing 215 responses.

4 Development plan policies and other relevant guidance

4.1 The relevant Development Plan comprises:

- The Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035

4.2 The following Lake District National Park Local Plan policies are relevant to this application:

- Policy 01: National and international significance of the Lake District
 - Policy 02: Spatial strategy
 - Policy 04: Biodiversity and geodiversity
 - Policy 05: Protecting the spectacular landscape
 - Policy 06: Design and development
 - Policy 07: Historic environment
 - Policy 20: Renewable and low carbon energy
 - Policy 23: Community facilities and Local Green Space
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- Design Code Supplementary Planning Document
 - Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.4 Policy 7 within the Staveley with Ings Community Plan seeks to take positive action on climate change, working together to respond to the climate emergency. This involves supporting social, educational and practical activities which focus on nature, our environment and climate change. The Staveley with Ings Community Plan is not an adopted Neighbourhood Plan and we are now outside of the action period for the Plan. As such, very limited weight can be placed on the Plan. Nonetheless, the objectives of Policy 7 are very similar to the overall aims of Policy 20 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035.

5 Main issues and assessment

5.1 The proposals are in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in Policy 02 and are acceptable in principle. The main issues in this assessment are:

- Impact on the listed building
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on the World Heritage Site
- Renewable and low carbon energy
- Protected species

Impact on the listed building

5.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Section 66(1)).

5.3 Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035 Policy 07 states that development proposals will seek to conserve and enhance the character, authenticity, integrity, setting and views of the historic environment. Proposals which would harm a heritage asset will not normally be permitted.

5.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF confirms that Listed Buildings are designated heritage assets at Annex 2, and states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight

should be). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

- 5.5 Where less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset would arise, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.6 As a Grade II* listed building St Anne's Church is defined as being of more than special architectural and historic interest to the nation and, is within the top eight percent of listed buildings. For the purposes of the NPPF, Grade II* listed buildings are recognised as assets of the highest significance.
- 5.7 The church dates from 1743 and is of high historical value, being an attractive and characterful example of eighteenth century ecclesiastical architecture. It is a relatively rare example of a rural Anglican place of worship from the mid Georgian period and its architectural interest derives primarily from the simplicity and elegance of its design which is broken only by some embellishments, including the flaming torches that surmount the west tower and corner of the nave, and the pediment and entablature over its west door.
- 5.8 Despite historic alterations, the symmetry and classical formality of the building remain evident and the building continues to possess high historical and aesthetic value. Alterations to the road layout within Ings has meant that the relationship of the Church with its setting has altered over time, however in determining the appeal against application 7/2023/5474 the Inspector concluded that:

“the southern aspect of the Church acts as a focal point for the intimate environment centring on Church Lane. Here, the Church, in its slightly

elevated position, both commands attention and also complements the local vernacular present in the stone-built Parish Hall and cottages lining Church Lane. In this sense the immediate setting of the Church adds to its heritage interest and significance in terms of aesthetic, evidential, and communal values.”

- 5.9 As such, while modern development in the form of the A591 and Ings filling station, with associated contemporary buildings has undoubtedly altered and detracted from the setting of the listed building, the significance of the church as a building of special architectural and historic interest is still readily experienced from within its most immediate setting along Church Lane as a result of the use of vernacular materials, simple architectural style and prominence of the principal elevation.
- 5.10 The existing local green slate roof was added as part of a Victorian restoration of the building but is a prominent vernacular feature that is referenced in the listing description and makes an important contribution to the aesthetic value of the building.
- 5.11 The high communal value of the building is evident through its continued use as a church, as well as a community facility used by several local groups.
- 5.12 Like the previously refused scheme, this application proposes the installation of a large solar array on the building’s south facing roof elevation with the only difference being a reduction in the number of proposed solar panels from 28 to 22.
- 5.13 In refusing application 7/2023/5474 the Authority concluded that:
“The proposed solar panels would obscure the majority of the existing weathered local slate roof and replace this with the modern, functional, engineered and often reflective appearance of a solar panel array, its associated framing and installation fixings.

This would represent a visual intrusion, disruption and contrast in the consistency of materials displayed in the building and surrounding local area resulting in harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed building”

- 5.14 This view was shared by the Inspector when dismissing the subsequent appeal, stating that:

“The addition of this substantial solar array would largely obscure the existing greenslate roof from view. It would mask the visibility of this traditional, natural material, with its inherent uneven and weathered appearance, with a solid expanse of uniform panels with an engineered and artificial appearance. Whilst the level of Church Lane is somewhat below that of the churchyard, and in this slightly elevated position the views of the roof are not as direct as if it had been at road level, the roof nonetheless remains clearly visible. As such, the installation of the array would significantly disrupt the coherence of this elevation, from which the heritage qualities of the Church are most readily appreciated. In this way the proposal would undermine the special interest and significance of the Church.”

- 5.15 Finally, in reaching their judgement on the Faculty application, the Diocese also concluded that the proposals would result in harm to the listed building, stating that:

“The Proposals entail the introduction of a modern, engineered set of black panels onto a readily visible roof. That will be to change one of the listed features of the Church (viz. the “graduated greenslate roof”) by altering its characteristic simple, unornamented design and by covering the weathered slate with solar panels. It is also a measure that has the capacity to interfere with the symmetrical character of the southern elevation of the building: although this is point to which I shall return.”

- 5.16 The Authority’s assessment of the harm that would occur as a result of installing a large solar array in this location has not altered and it is not

considered that the reduction in the number of solar panels by six would be sufficient to overcome the harm identified under the previous scheme. This view is shared by Historic England.

5.17 The current proposals would still result in the installation of a large solar array which would obscure the majority of the south facing roof elevation. This harm would be experienced in close range views from Church Lane, where the proposals would appear visually prominent and incongruous, obscuring the vernacular slate and harming the authenticity of the church's original design and appearance.

5.18 Given the long duration of time over which it is proposed the solar panels would be sited on the roof, I do not consider that the reversibility of the proposals would mitigate the identified harm, nor would the absence of views from the A591 and wider landscape, given the identified significance and sensitivity of views of the building from Church Lane.

5.19 In particular, the presence of unsympathetic development within the surrounding area only places greater weight on the need to conserve views of the building's principal elevation from Church Lane, where the intimate, simple, vernacular character of the building is still legible within a context that reflects this character.

5.20 The proposals would therefore fail to conserve and enhance the character, authenticity, integrity, setting and views of the Grade II* listed building and for the purposes of the NPPF would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building.

5.21 In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the application has sought to demonstrate that there is clear and convincing justification for this harm. In this instance, the justification for the proposals lies in the Church's desire to reduce energy costs and assist the Church of England in its 'Net Zero by 2030' aims. The solar panels would form the

latest phase in improvements in the energy efficiency of the building which have previously comprised the installation of an air source heat pump with underfloor heating, secondary glazing and improvements to the fabric of the building. The supporting information states that the proposed location for the solar panels was selected to limit the visual impact of the development and maximise solar gain.

5.22 The application also makes reference to pre-application discussions with the Authority's Historic Environment Advisor. These were informal discussions in which the applicant was encouraged to identify alternative sites for the solar panels, including utilising non-traditional roof spaces within the surrounding area. A comprehensive assessment of the suitability of alternative sites has not been submitted in support of this application and therefore while the need to improve the energy efficiency of the church and support its continued use by reducing energy costs is understood, I do not consider that clear and convincing justification has been provided for siting the solar panels in the location proposed within this application.

5.23 Had I considered that clear and convincing justification for the identified harm had been demonstrated, this harm would still need to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. In this instance, and as set out above the public benefits of the scheme lie in the provision of renewable energy technology and a reduction in the church's energy costs.

5.24 In acknowledgement of the public benefits resulting from the installation of renewable energy technologies, Historic England have provided guidance on the instances in which the installation of solar panels on a heritage asset may be acceptable (Historic England Advice Note 18). The guidance is explicit in stating that "Installation of panels will generally not be acceptable on principal roof slopes, if they would be visible and would detract from the building's special interest." In relation to Grade II* listed buildings it is advised that the installation of panels on

roof slopes of less prominence is still unlikely to be appropriate given the significance of the building.

5.25 In this instance, the panels would be installed on a prominent elevation and would be highly visible from Church Lane. The assessment of the proposals undertaken by the Authority, Planning Inspectorate and Diocese of Carlisle have all been consistent in concluding that such development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of this Grade II* listed building. Historic England's guidance is clear that in instances such as this, the public benefits of renewable energy technologies are unlikely to outweigh the identified harm, given the great weight that should be applied to conserving heritage assets of the highest significance. Indeed, within their consultation response Historic England acknowledged the benefits that have already been achieved by the energy efficiency works undertaken at the church, but that compromises and limitations to this should be recognised given the need to conserve the significance of the listed building, which is in itself a public benefit.

5.26 Reducing the church's energy costs would also provide some public benefit by supporting the continued use of a community facility. Some representations have highlighted the need for this reduction in energy costs to prevent the church from falling out of use. However, the submitted evidence demonstrates a well-used church, supported by various streams of funding which is supplemented by donations and fundraising activities and while it is acknowledged that reducing energy costs would help to support the continued running of the church, it has not been demonstrated that this continued use is dependent upon the installation of the solar panels.

5.27 In dismissing the previous appeal, the Planning Inspectorate also acknowledged the public benefits of the scheme, which when taken together would be of some significance, but concluded that these did not outweigh the harm to the designated heritage asset.

- 5.28 The public benefits associated with the current application are no greater than those considered under the previous refusal and are still not considered to outweigh the identified harm to the listed building.
- 5.29 Some representations have referred to the approval of solar panels on other listed ecclesiastical buildings in other parts of the country, however these are not considered to be comparable to this application. The buildings referred to were predominantly significantly larger, with greater capacity to accommodate a large array and due to their height and location of the arrays behind parapet walls, did not have the same visual impacts as the development proposed under this application. Regardless, each application must be considered on its own merits and the approval of solar panels on other listed buildings by other Local Planning Authorities does not set a precedent for their approval in this instance.
- 5.30 For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development would fail to conserve and enhance the historic environment and result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed building, contrary to the requirements of Local Plan Policy 07 and the NPPF.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

- 5.31 Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035 Policy 05 states that we will conserve and enhance the extraordinary beauty and harmony of the Lake District landscape, its Special Qualities, and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. We will achieve this by supporting development that ensures the highest level of protection is given to the landscape, maintain local distinctiveness and sense of place. Decisions will be guided by the Lake District Landscape Character Assessment recognising the distinctive characteristics identified in the Landscape Character Types and Areas of Distinctive Character, the World Heritage

Site Nomination Document, and the Historic Landscape
Characterisation.

- 5.32 Policy 06 states that we want to achieve design excellence in all development, to be inspired by and contribute to local distinctiveness, to be resilient to climate change and extreme weather events and reduce carbon emissions.
- 5.33 The application site is located within the Kentmere Fells Area of Distinctive Character as set out within the Landscape Character Assessment. The site is within the Landscape Character Type H – Upland Valley. Ings is a relatively busy settlement next to an A road which is at contrast to the very strong sense of tranquillity and an almost complete lack of settlement within most of the area.
- 5.34 However, the Church and its immediate setting along Church Lane sit in contrast to this, retaining an intimate and locally distinctive character, utilising vernacular materials and forms. As identified by the Inspector, St Anne's Church forms a focal point within this historical core of Ings, reflecting the vernacular character of the area through its drystone boundary walls and local slate roof.
- 5.35 The proposed development would obscure the majority of the existing weathered local slate roof on the most prominent elevation in this historic core, and replace it with the modern, functional, engineered and often reflective appearance of a solar panel array, its associated framing and installation fixings. Such development would detract from the visual coherence and local distinctiveness of this part of the village in views along Church Lane, adversely impacting on the character of the building and surrounding area, and failing to reinforce local character and distinctiveness contrary to Policies 05 and 06.

Impact on the World Heritage Site

- 5.36 The NPPF recognises World Heritage Site's as being designated heritage assets of the highest significance.
- 5.37 The application site displays attributes of the English Lake District World Heritage Site's Outstanding Universal Value associated with themes one and two. As a vernacular building the site contributes to the components of theme one: 'a landscape of exceptional beauty, shaped by persistent and distinctive agro-pastoral and local industry which gives it special character'. The Church's connection to Wordsworth forms a component attribute of theme two: 'a landscape which has inspired artistic and literary movements and generated ideas about landscapes that have had global influence and left their physical mark', through association with significant writers and poets.
- 5.38 It has been established that the proposed development would detract from the significance of the listed building and the contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the area. By harming the significance of such a prominent Grade II* listed building, particularly by obscuring and detracting from its vernacular character and historic authenticity, the proposed development would also detract from the contribution the site makes to the significance of the English Lake District World Heritage Site, resulting in less than substantial harm.
- 5.39 For the reasons outlined above, I do not consider that the public benefits of the development would outweigh the harm to a heritage asset of the highest significance.

Renewable and low carbon energy

- 5.40 Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2035 Policy 20 supports renewable development and encourage energy provision from local scale generation.

- 5.41 Policy 23 seeks to sustain community and cultural facilities and local services, and ensure communities have improved availability and access to high quality greenspaces and recreation facilities.
- 5.42 The applicant states that the proposed solar panels, in conjunction with the heat-pump, good levels of insulation and LED lighting, provides St Anne's Church with a well heated, energy efficient, low carbon space for worship and community uses.
- 5.43 There are public benefits from the proposed renewable energy source in tackling climate change and financial benefits, however as outlined above, these are not considered to outweigh the identified harm or overcome the conflict with Policies 01, 02, 05, 06 and 07, and the NPPF.

Impact on protected species

- 5.44 Under Article 12 of the EC Habitats Directive and Regulation 9(3) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 we have had regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive. The applicant commissioned a bat survey which was submitted with the application. The survey found evidence of a brown long-eared roost and maternity roost located within the main roof void of the building. While during the activity survey, bats were found to have emerged from the northern pitch of the roof, where there are a greater number of openings, not the southern pitch, where the roof is backed with timber sarking and is therefore more sealed than the northern pitch.
- 5.45 Providing that the proposed development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations as set out in the submitted bat report, the development is considered of low risk in respect of disturbance of protected species, satisfying the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan Policy 04.

6 Conditions

- 6.1 Had the development been acceptable and the application recommended for approval I would have attached the standard time and plans conditions for the avoidance of doubt. I would also have attached a condition requiring the solar panels be removed and roof made good should the solar array no longer be required, to prevent the retention of a harmful feature which no longer provides any public benefit.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposals would result in harm to the significance of a Grade II* listed building, would adversely impact on the outstanding universal values of the English Lake District World Heritage Site and would adversely impact on the character of the local area.
- 7.2 The public benefits of the proposals in terms of providing income and more viable future for the public building, together with the benefits to tackling climate change are noted and weigh in favour of the application.
- 7.3 However, on balance, it is not considered that the public benefits are sufficient to outweigh the harm and impacts identified. The application has failed to overcome the reason for the refusal of application reference 7/2023/5474 and the subsequently dismissed appeal and the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Local Plan Policies 01, 02, 05, 06 and 07, the Design Code SPD and the NPPF.

Recommendation: REFUSE

Conditions/Reasons

- 1 St Anne's Church is a prominent Grade II* listed building of high historic significance that contributes to the character of the area, special qualities of the Lake District National Park and attributes of outstanding universal value of The English Lake District World Heritage Site.

The southern roof slope of the application building is currently covered in weathered local slate. The proposed solar panels would obscure the majority of the existing weathered local slate roof and replace this with the modern, functional, engineered and often reflective appearance of a solar panel array, its associated framing and installation fixings.

This would represent a visual intrusion, disruption and contrast to the consistency of materials displayed in the building and surrounding local area resulting in harm to the significance of the Grade II* listed building, an adverse impact on the outstanding universal values of the English Lake District World Heritage Site and adverse impact on the character of the local area.

It is considered that this harm amounts to less than substantial harm in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, but is not outweighed by the public benefits of the development.

The proposals would fail to conserve or enhance the significance of the listed building, the special qualities of the National Park and the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. They would fail to reinforce the importance of local character, fail to maintain local distinctiveness and sense of place and would be of an inappropriate nature for the location in which they are proposed, contrary to Policies 01 (National and international significance of the Lake District), 02 (Spatial Strategy), 05 (Protecting the spectacular landscape), 06 (Design and development), 07 (Historic Environment) and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

NPPF decision notice requirements

The Authority has reached its decision based on the following information comprised in the application submission:

- Application form
- Location plan
- Proposed elevations - Drawing no. 01
- Proposed roof plan and section - Drawing no. 01 A
- Design and Heritage Statement
- Statement of Significance
- Faculty Judgement
- Technical Details
- Letter to Planning Officer dated 30th June 2026
- Summary of work required
- Bat survey ref. J538-D01 and Addendum ref. J538-D02

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)
(England) Order 2015 Article 35(2) statement.

The Local Planning Authority were unable to identify solutions to the problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

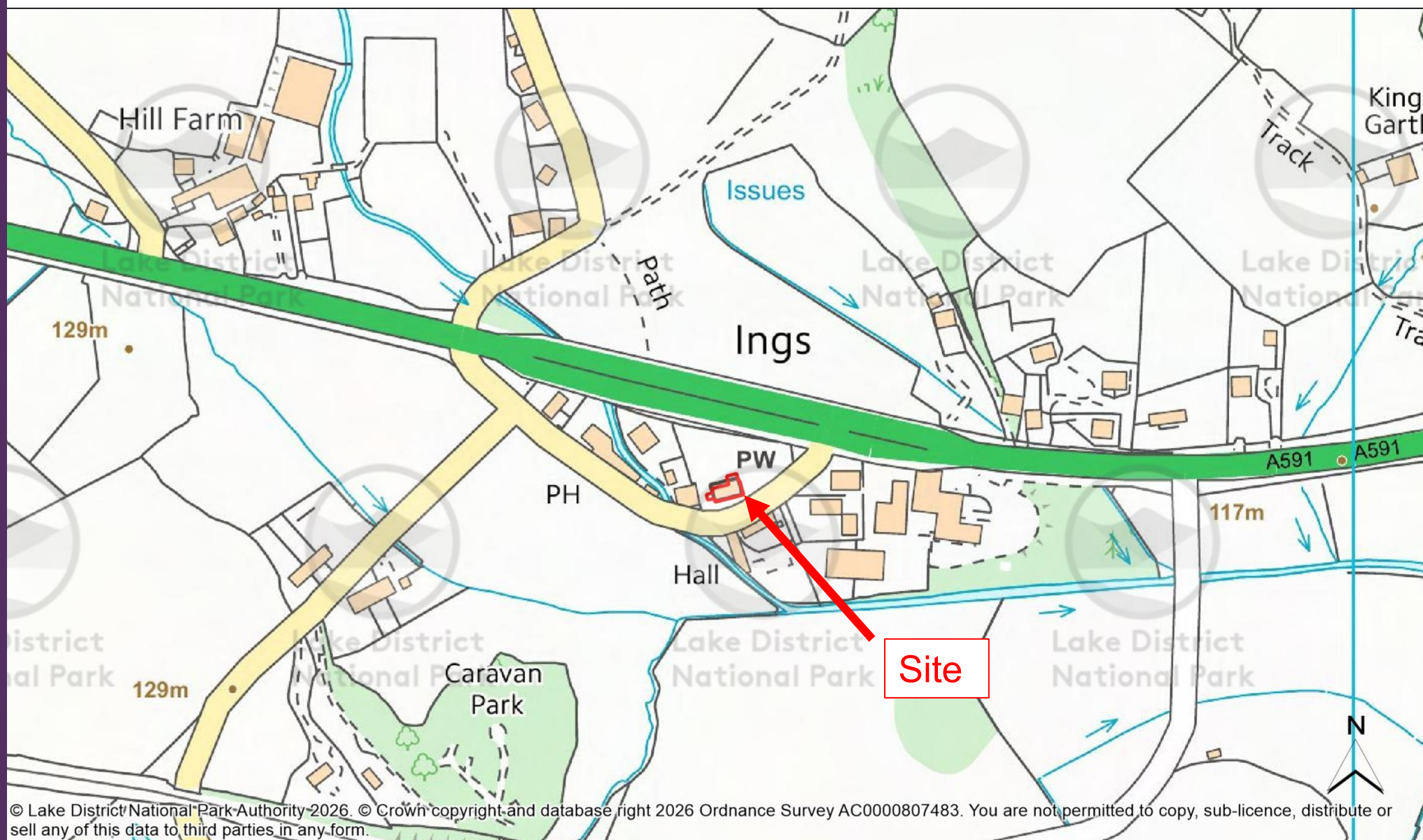
Background papers

Background papers are available for inspection on the planning application file unless otherwise specified on that file as confidential by reasons of financial/personal circumstances in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

7/2026/5215

St Annes Church, Ings

Installation of solar panels to roof



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Lake District
National Park Authority

Application Site





A591

Ings, England



Google Street View

Sept 2024 [See more dates](#)

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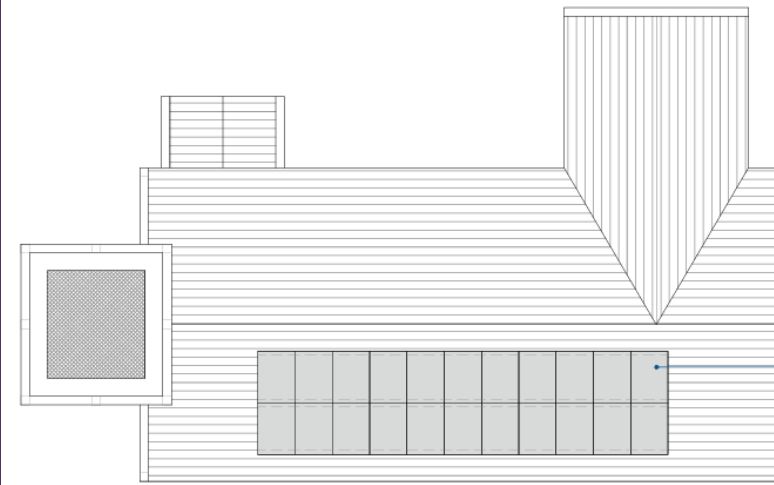
Google Maps



Proposed Plans



South Elevation
Scale 1:100



22 Non intergrated
panels to be installed
to roof.

Roof Plan
Scale 1:100

