

Solar Panels and Listed Buildings in B&NES

As Bath is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and contains around 5,000 Listed Buildings, installing Solar Panels on Listed Buildings requires Planning Permission/Listed Building Approval. For more information about this requirement, check this B&NES Council webpage <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/solar-panels-planning-permission>.

One of the main concerns, when it comes to installing Solar Panels on Listed Buildings, is the “*visual impact*” that such an installation could have. So, in order to try to make things easier for Local Households who live in a Listed Building, and are interested in installing Solar Panels, Go Green Widcombe have done research into the number of Planning Applications that have been made for installing Solar Panels on Listed Buildings across B&NES, and have been Approved. Then we also checked how many have actually been installed.

The easiest way to try to find out which Listed Buildings have had Solar Panels installations Approved by the Council is to carry out an “*Advanced Search*” using this link to the Council’s website:- <https://app.bathnes.gov.uk/webforms/planning/#advancedSearch>

In the section titled “*Keyword*” we searched for various options, including “*Solar PV*”, “*Solar Panels*” and “*Photovoltaic*”. At the same time we specifically looked for the following “*Application Type*”... “*Listed Building Consent (Alts/exts)*”. One thing that we soon discovered was that not all Listed Buildings that were looking to install Solar Panels, and who had made a Planning Application, would be found in these “*targeted*” searches. So Go Green Widcombe contacted the B&NES Conservation & Planning Dept, and discovered that Listed Building Applicants don’t have to include specific details about any forms of Retrofit that they are aiming to carry out as part of the “*Summary*” on their Application... as long as the specific details are in attached documents. The Council also sent Go Green Widcombe their local “*Listed Building Consent Checklist*”, which had 6

separate items that B&NES Council have added to the National Planning Application Requirements. So Go Green Widcombe asked that the Council include a 7th item on the Checklist, and that was to request that Applicants include key words about any specific Retrofit Plans (eg. Solar Panels, Heat Pumps etc) so that other Listed Building occupants/owners can access applications for different types of retrofit and understand how they are assessed and determined. The Council eventually agreed to this request from Go Green Widcombe (see <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/listed-building-consent-checklist>). This has the potential to make it easier for Households to check on previous Listed Building Planning Applications for Solar Panels etc, and discover what was Accepted and what was Refused.

The most successful approach to getting Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels installed on Listed Buildings in the B&NES area is to get them fitted inside a double pitched roof, so they're not visible from street level. B&NES Council have given examples of such installations as "*Case Studies*", in particular in a document titled "*Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Guidance: For Listed Buildings and Undesignated Historic Buildings*" that was published in 2013... see below.

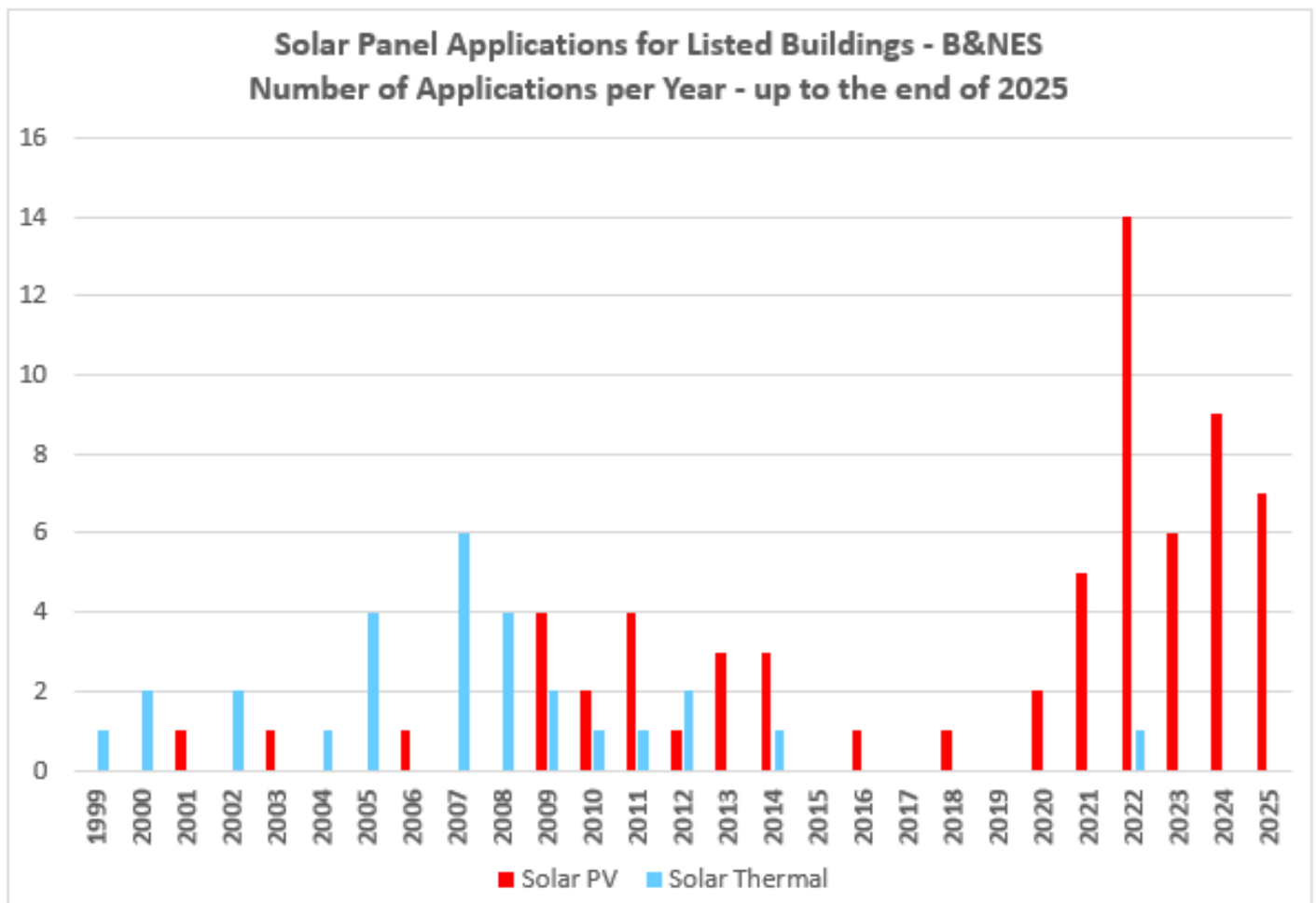


Southerly Facing Solar Panels inside the pitched-roofs of Listed Buildings.

Go Green Widcombe also keeps a regular check on the number of Listed Building Applications for certain projects, including Solar Panels. Using the "*Keyword*" search option mentioned earlier, Go Green Widcombe have uncovered 108 separate Listed Building

Approval (LBA) Applications for Solar Panels (Photovoltaic and Thermal) on the Council Records. However, these 108 Applications were from 100 separate Properties, as 8 Properties made more than 1 LBA Application. Of these 108 Applications, 70 were for Solar Photovoltaic (ie. providing electricity), 30 were for Solar Thermal (ie. Water Heaters) and 10 were for other forms of “Solar” materials (eg. Solar Vinyl, Solar Reflective Coating on the roof). Of the 70 Applications for Solar PV, 53 have been Approved for installation. What is interesting about the LBA Applications for the two different types of Solar Panels (Photovoltaic and Thermal) is that over the years (from 1999 to 2026) the initial interest in Solar Thermal Water Heating panels has dropped significantly, while the number of Applications for Solar Photovoltaic (PV), to generate green energy, has increased considerably (peaking in 2022).

As the graph below shows, between 1999 and 2007, Solar Thermal Water Heaters were the main Solar projects that Listed Building Houses were interested in. Then in 2010, the Government introduced the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) which was designed to encourage the uptake of small-scale renewable and low-carbon electricity



generation by paying generators for the electricity they produce and export to the grid. As this applied to Households installing Solar PV Panels, more LBA Applications for Solar PV were being made. However, in 2016, the Government slashed renewable energy subsidies with a significant cut to the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT). So for the next few years, up until 2020, the number of LBA Applications for Solar PV Panels remained low. Then, in late 2021, two local Solar PV Bulk Buy schemes were launched, more or less simultaneously. These sought to offer Households discounts on Solar Panel installations if a significant number of Households in the same area engaged in these Bulk Buy Projects. One was a local scheme launched by Go Green Widcombe, and the other was called Solar Together, and was launched by WECA (the West of England Combined Authority).

Unfortunately the Go Green Widcombe scheme had to close when the Installer we worked with went into Administration. However, the WECA project, called Solar Together (see this link... www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/retrofit-sustainable-buildings-and-places/solar-together/) has now been rolled out on 3 separate occasions since 2021/2022, although it is currently “Closed”. It is possible that this will be reopened again later in the year.

The actual number of Listed Buildings in the B&NES area that obtained LBA Approval and have had Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels installed has also been investigated. The total number of Approved Applications is now at 53, of which 32 have had Solar Panels installed (according to National Grid/NGED map). 18 installations are in the city of Bath (of these 16 are Households, and 2 are other buildings, including Kingswood School and the Curo Offices). This doesn't mean that we've found every Listed Building in the B&NES area with Solar Panels, because, as was mentioned earlier, not all LBA Applications have included the Key Words in the Application Proposal Summary. Thus, our targeted searches won't find applications that don't

mentioned Solar PV (or similar) in that Summary. Nevertheless, within the Widcombe & Lyncombe area of Bath, using National Grid Map data, we have identified that there are 66 Solar Panel installations, of which 3 are on Listed Buildings and have LBA Approval.

The complete list of 32 Listed Building Applications for Solar Panels that were Approved and have had installations is given below.

	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Address</u>
1	06/03478/LBA	05/10/2006	Middle Hill Lodge , Ralph Allen Drive, Lyncombe, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA2 5AF
2	09/04453/LBA	23/11/2009	19 Devonshire Buildings, Bear Flat, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA2 4SP
3	09/04501/LBA	26/11/2009	142 High Street, Bathford, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA1 7TN
4	10/01743/LBA	20/04/2010	The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Newton St. Loe, Bath, B&NES, BA2 9BU
5	11/04251/LBA	30/09/2011	174 Bradford Road, Combe Down, Bath, B&NES, BA2 5DA
6	12/02337/LBA	28/05/2012	Somer Community Housing Trust, The Maltings, Rivers Place, Twerton, BA2 1EP
7	13/02978/LBA	12/07/2013	Valley Spring, Southstoke Road, Combe Down, Bath, B&NES, BA2 5SP
8	13/03814/LBA	05/09/2013	4 Alexander Buildings, Lambridge, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA1 6AT
9	13/04220/LBA	1/20/2013	19 Sion Hill, Lansdown, Bath, BA1 2UJ
10	14/00891/LBA	25/02/2014	The Maltings, Mill Hill, Wellow, Bath, B&NES, BA2 8QJ
11	14/05469/LBA	27/11/2014	Beaufort House , London Road, Walcot, Bath, B&NES, BA1 6PZ
12	18/02640/LBA	15/06/2018	Methodist Church , 50 Upper Bristol Road, Clutton, BS39 5TD
13	20/00397/LBA	31/01/2020	Manor Barn, Farm Lane, Wellow, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA2 8QU
14	21/00379/LBA	27/01/2021	Church Farm, Church Lane, East Harptree, Bristol, Bath And North East Somerset, BS40 6BD
15	21/03966/LBA	23/08/2021	Manor House, Watery Lane, Burnett, Keynsham, Bristol, B&NES, BS31 2TF
16	22/00735/LBA	18/02/2022	Kingswood School, Lansdown Road, Lansdown, B&NES, BA1 5RG
17	22/00802/LBA	21/02/2022	16 Springfield Place, Lansdown, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA1 5RA
18	22/01172/LBA	07/03/2022	18 Devonshire Buildings, Bear Flat, Bath, BA2 4SP
19	22/01202/LBA	16/03/2022	Widcombe Villa, 2 Church Street, Widcombe, Bath, BA2 6AZ
20	22/01713/LBA	25/04/2022	Kilowatt House , North Road, Bathwick, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA2 6HW
21	22/01852/FUL	05/05/2022	7 Alexander Buildings, Lambridge, Bath, Bath And North East Somerset, BA1 6AT
22	22/02458/LBA	16/06/2022	Crossleaze Farm, Woolley Lane, Charlcombe, BA1 8AU

