

a) 3/09/0829/FP – Replace roof and insert 8 no. rooflights (4 per side), 1 no. north elevation window, 2 no. south elevation windows & installation of new wood burner and flue at Lower Farm, Cottered, SG9 9PS for Mr. Snell.

b) 3/09/0830/LB – Replace roof and insert 8 no. rooflights (4 per side), 1 no. north elevation window, 2 no. south elevation windows & installation of new wood burner and flue at Lower Farm, Cottered, SG9 9PS for Mr. Snell.

Date of Receipt: 01.06.2009

Type: a) Full
b) Listed Building Consent

Parish: COTTERED

Ward: MUNDENS & COTTERED

Reason for report: Requested by Councillor Ranger

RECOMMENDATION

a) That planning permission 3/09/0829/FP be **REFUSED** for the following reason:-

1. The proposed rooflights, by reason of their design, number and siting, would be detrimental to the appearance and character this building and to the setting of the listed farmhouse on the site, contrary to policy BH12 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

b) That listed building consent 3/09/0830/LB be **REFUSED** for the following reason:-

1. The proposed rooflights, by reason of their design, number and siting, would be out of character with this curtilage Listed Building, which comprises a simple and traditional building form. It would thereby be contrary to policy BH10 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review 2007.

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1.0 Background

1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. The site comprises the Grade II Listed Lower Farm, a thatched farm house dating from the 16th Century, with a large traditional barn in front of it that dates from pre-1948 and so is curtilage listed. It is this barn that forms the subject of this application.

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- 1.2 The barn is a large structure, measuring 18.3m in length, 6.6m in width and 7.5m in height. It is formed of black painted corrugated metal sides and roof on a brick plinth. The main opening to the east elevation has been glazed, and there are single small windows existing in each gable end. The building is currently used ancillary to the residential use of Lower Farm, but also for occasional village and charity functions.
- 1.3 The building suffered fire damage in December 2008. This application therefore proposes to restore the building and replace the roof, but at the same time incorporating 8 no. rooflights, 3 no. ground floor windows, and a new wood burner with external flue. Works have already commenced on site at the owner's risk.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 There is no planning history relevant to the barn. The dwelling itself was granted a two storey extension with alterations to the bathroom and new glazed doors in 1986 (under references 3/86/0805/FP and 3/86/0804/LB).
- 2.2 Officers were approached for pre-application advice on 30th April 2009 following the fire in December 2008. A Duty Officer had advised that consent would not be required as it was understood at the time that the building was unlisted. Once it became apparent that the barn was in fact curtilage listed, the applicant was made aware of the need to submit both planning and listed building consent applications.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre do not have records of bats being present at Lower Farm. However, the building is of an age (listed) and structure that makes it attractive to bats as a potential roost site. In addition the farm is in a rural location. HBRC are therefore of the opinion that there is a reasonable likelihood of the building being used by bats. A condition is therefore recommended to determine whether bats are present, and if so then to require a survey and mitigation measures to be agreed.
- 3.2 The Council's Conservation Officer recommends refusal on the grounds that the rooflights will be visually intrusive and out of keeping with the existing character of the barn. There is no reason why high level windows could not be provided under the eaves in a strip form. No objection is made to the insertion of gable windows or the flue, provided it is painted black.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

4.1 No comment has been received from Cottered Parish Council.

5.0 Other Representations

5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 An email has been received from Cllr Ranger in support of the proposal. The idea is to keep the barn looking like a barn whilst providing sufficient light. The Barn is frequently used for village meetings and the villagers are keen to see it rebuilt following the fire as soon as possible.

6.0 Policy

6.1 The relevant Local Plan policies in this application include the following:-

GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
BH10	Extensions or Alterations to a Listed Building
BH12	Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

In addition to the above it is considered that Planning Policy Statement 1, (Delivering Sustainable Development), Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) and Planning Policy Guidance 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) are considerations within this application.

7.0 Considerations

Principle of Development

7.1 This application proposes only external alterations to an existing barn within a residential curtilage. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. The main issue in this case therefore relates to the impact of the alterations on the character and appearance of this curtilage listed building, impact on the surrounding area, and neighbouring amenity.

7.2 Full planning permission is required as the proposal relates to the alteration of a building within the curtilage of a listed building, which is exempt from permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E.1(f) of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended).

Impact on Listed Building

- 7.3 The Conservation Officer has raised no objection to the replacement of the corrugated iron roof, the proposed ground floor north and south elevation windows, or the proposed wood burner with external flue. However, it is required that the external flue be painted black so as to match the existing barn. A condition would also be recommended to require details of the proposed windows in order to preserve the character and appearance of this curtilage listed building.
- 7.4 However, the Conservation Officer recommends refusal of the application on the grounds of the proposed rooflights. It was originally proposed to insert 12 no. rooflights (6 on each roofslope), sited close to the eaves, in groups of 3. This has subsequently been reduced to 8 no. rooflights (4 on each side, in pairs) following discussions with Officers. The applicant was advised that, having regard to the particular circumstances of the case, up to 4 no. rooflights would be considered acceptable on the west elevation, which is less visually prominent and facing away from the main listed building. However, Officers would not support the insertion of rooflights in the principal, east elevation. Whilst the applicant was willing to proceed with a reduction to 4 no. rooflights on this west elevation, he resolved to also pursue the insertion of 4 no. rooflights on the east elevation.
- 7.5 Rooflights are generally discouraged on listed buildings and in particular on historic barns as set out in the Council's published design guidance. They interrupt and complicate the roof form and invoke a more domestic appearance compromising the character of what is a traditional farm building. Officers initially suggested high level side windows as an alternative, but this approach was not favoured by the applicant.
- 7.6 The 4 no. rooflights on the east elevation will be visible from the driveway of Lower Farm, and partly visible from the A507, which forms the main road through Cottered. This visibility would increase during the winter months when the trees are not in leaf. The barn is located in close proximity to the main dwelling at Lower Farm, and as this is already a rather dominant structure, the insertion of rooflights in the principal east elevation would draw attention to the building and interrupt its simple roof form.
- 7.7 Overall, Officers consider that the proposed rooflights, particularly those on the east elevation, would compromise the simple appearance of this traditional barn, and would appear out of character. The proposal would thereby fail to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of

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this building, as required under policy BH10 and national guidance in PPG15. The proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the setting of the listed farmhouse as set out in policy BH12.

- 7.8 The applicant sets out that the barn is dark inside, and natural light is required for their use of the building, particularly for Mrs. Snell who only has sight in one eye. Whilst Officers are sympathetic to the requirement for light, this should not override or compromise the design or character of an historic building. It is also noted that the building is used for various charity and village events; however this is not considered to amount to a special reason why these rooflights should be granted. Finally, it is noted that the applicant is under time constraints to restore the barn given an on-going insurance claim; however this is not a reason to allow development that will harm a listed building. Works have therefore commenced on site at the owner's risk.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Overall, Officers consider that the proposed rooflights will appear visually intrusive and out of character on this barn and would thereby fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this curtilage listed building. Whilst Officers have sympathy with the applicant's wish for light for charity and village events, and their time constraints to restore the barn, these are not considered to be reasons to outweigh harm caused to the fabric and setting of a Grade II curtilage listed barn.
- 8.2 The applications are therefore both recommended for refusal for the reasons set out above.