

**5g 3/10/2213/FP – Erection of 1 no Solar thermal collector on stable roof and erection of 10kWp ground mount solar PV system at Dassels Bury, Dassels, Braughing, SG11 2RW for Mr Martin Slack**

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**Date of Receipt:** 06.01.11

**Type:** Full – Minor

**Parish:** BRAUGHING

**Ward:** BRAUGHING

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. Approved plans (2E102) (FM1, FM2, FM3)
3. Hedge Retention and Protection (4P06)

**Summary of Reasons for Decision**

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular Policies SD3, GBC3, ENV1, PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment', and PPS22 'Renewable Energy'. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

\_\_\_\_\_ (221310FP.FM)

**1.0 Background:**

- 1.1 The application site is located within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt within the Category 3 Village of Dassels as shown on the attached OS extract. Dassels Bury is a Grade II Listed property, set in spacious, open grounds.
- 1.2 The application proposes the erection of 1 no. solar thermal collector on an existing stable roof and also the erection of 10kWp of ground mounted solar panels within a field to the south east of the listed building.
- 1.3 The proposed solar thermal collector panel would be sited on the south elevation of an existing stable block which is located 50 metres to the

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north east of the main Grade II Listed dwellinghouse. The proposed solar collector would have an area of 2 square metres and would supply hot water to the existing stables to facilitate the washing of the horses.

- 1.4 This application also proposes the erection of 10kWp of ground mounted solar panels. The proposed solar panels would be sited along the northern boundary of an existing field (but facing south), some 60 metres to the south of the main dwellinghouse. The proposed solar panels would measure 21.25 metres wide and 2.9 metres in depth. The array frame would hold 2 rows of 21 panels and would have an approximate height of 1.97 metres above ground level, sited behind open fencing and deciduous hedging. The proposed solar panels would be used in conjunction with the main dwellinghouse and will help to reduce its grid electricity use.

## **2.0 Site History:**

- 2.1 The site has an extensive planning history which can briefly be summarised as follows:

3/06/0382/FP	Erection of field shelter	Approved with Conditions 21-Apr-2006
3/02/2015/FP	2storey extension to main house, new stables in place of existing, new outbuildings in place of existing, new entrance gate and brick pier and increase in width of access.	Approved with Conditions 22-Apr-2003
3/00/0238/FP	Construction of manege 40 metres x 20 metres with post and rail fencing.	Approved with Conditions 28-Mar-2000
3/99/1782/FP	Erection of stable barn and garage; conversion of outbuilding to grooms unit and construction of manege.	Refused 17-Jan-2000

## **3.0 Consultation Responses:**

- 3.1 There are no statutory consultees in this case and therefore no representations received.

**4.0 Parish Council Representations:**

4.1 No representations have been received from Braughing Parish Council at the time of writing this report.

**5.0 Other Representations:**

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

**6.0 Policy:**

6.1 The main policies relevant to this application are East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 policies:

SD3	Renewable Energy
GBC2	The Rural Area beyond the Green Belt
GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality

In addition to the above it is considered that Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and PPS22: Renewable Energy form a material consideration in the determination of this application.

**7.0 Considerations:**

7.1 The determining issues in relation to this application are as follows:

- The principle of development within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt;
- The impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of Dassels Bury, the stable block and upon the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings;
- The impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers.

Principle of Development

7.2 The site lies within the Rural Area beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein inappropriate development will not be permitted. Policy GBC3 sets out what constitutes appropriate development, and the erection of ground mounted solar panels and the erection a solar thermal panel on

the roof of a stable block do not fall within any of these categories. Therefore, this proposal is considered to be contrary to policy GBC3 of the Local Plan. However, Officers must consider whether there are other material considerations in this case that should be weighed against this in the determination of this application.

- 7.3 Policy SD3 of the Local Plan supports the development of facilities for the harnessing of renewable energy sources in principle and it states that proposals harnessing solar power will be judged primarily on their visual impact, particularly where it affects Listed Buildings or other areas of visual quality or sensitivity.
- 7.4 The Government's renewable energy policy has been clearly set out in recent years in a number of key documents. These include The Energy White Paper 2007 which aspires to achieve 10% electricity from renewable sources by 2010, 20% by 2020, and also supports a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 60% by 2050. This White Paper also sets out that the planning process can be an especially difficult process for the deployment of renewable energy infrastructure in the UK. A clear steer is therefore given to local authorities to look favourably on renewable energy developments.
- 7.5 The Government's national planning policy advice for renewable energy projects is set out in PPS22 and its Companion Guide (both 2004), which support an increased deployment of renewable energy resources in order to meet Government targets. PPS22 also provides advice on considerations in determining applications for renewable energy infrastructure.
- 7.6 These factors are all considered to be material planning considerations in this case.

#### Visual impacts

- 7.7 With regards to the proposed solar thermal panel to be sited on the roof of the stable block that was granted planning permission in 2003, Officers consider that it would be limited in size and scale. Taking this into account and that it is of a design and materials that would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing building, Officers consider that the proposed solar thermal panel would have a limited impact upon the character, appearance and openness of the surrounding Rural Area.
- 7.8 Turning to the proposed ground mounted solar panels, these would have a width of 21.25 metres and Officers acknowledge that due to the

open nature of the site, these would be visible from various views from the surrounding area and from the rear of Dassels Bury. However, taking into account that the proposed solar panels would reach a modest height of 1.9 metres; that they would be screened on the northern side by fencing and hedging that reaches a height of 2 metres; together with the wider environmental benefits, Officers consider that the proposed development would have a limited impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would not represent significant encroachment into the open countryside. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy SD3 of the Local Plan and would not, in Officers' view, be harmful to the visual quality of the surrounding rural area. Again, this is a material planning consideration in this case.

#### Listed Building

- 7.9 Dassels Bury is a Grade II Listed, 2storey detached dwellinghouse, located on the edge of the Category 3 Village of Dassels and on raised and open land. The Barn is also a Grade II Listed Building and lies 10 metres to the north of Dassels Bury. The principal elevations of these properties face southeast and as such the proposed solar panels would be visible from the rear of these buildings. However, given the distance and orientation of these buildings in relation to the proposed ground mounted solar panels and the solar thermal panel and the modest size and scale of the proposed development, Officers consider that the solar panels would be seen as part of incidental views across the countryside and would not dominate or obstruct the historic features or the setting of these heritage assets. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

#### The impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers

- 7.10 Turning to the impact upon neighbour amenity, the proposed ground mounted solar panels and the solar thermal panel that would be sited on the roof of the existing stable block are sited some distance from nearby residential properties and therefore the proposal would not result in any impact on the occupiers of such properties.

#### **8.0 Conclusions:**

- 8.1 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to the openness or rural character of the surrounding Rural Area; the character and appearance of the existing dwellinghouse or stable block; the amenities of neighbouring properties or the historic setting of the adjacent Grade II

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Listed Buildings.

- 8.2 It is therefore considered that these material planning considerations are sufficient in this case to allow permission to be granted contrary to Policy GBC3 of the East Herts Local Plan and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions which are outlined at the head of the report.