



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 30 March 2023

by David Prentis BA BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 April 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1570/W/22/3305091

Cowlands Barn, Collops Road, Stebbing CM6 3SZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Shani Hinton against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/22/1115/HHF, dated 20 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is installation of 8 no. photovoltaic panels on connecting corridor/garage roof.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/C1570/Y/22/3305093

Cowlands Barn, Collops Road, Stebbing CM6 3SZ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Ms Shani Hinton against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/22/1116/LB, dated 20 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2022.
 - The works proposed are installation of 8 no. photovoltaic panels on connecting corridor/garage roof.
-

Decision – Appeal A

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for installation of 8 no. photovoltaic panels on connecting corridor/garage roof at Cowlands Barn, Stebbing CM6 3SZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref UTT/22/1115/HHF, dated 20 April 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 21006_01; 21006_02; 21006_03; specification for photovoltaic panels.

Decision – Appeal B

2. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for installation of 8 no. photovoltaic panels on connecting corridor/garage roof at Cowlands Barn, Stebbing CM6 3SZ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref UTT/22/1116/LB dated 20 April 2022, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works to which this consent relates shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.

- 2) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 21006_01; 21006_02; 21006_03; specification for photovoltaic panels.

Preliminary Matters

3. As Appeal A affects listed buildings, I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). As Appeal B relates to an application for listed building consent, I have had special regard to section 16(2) of the Act.

Main issues

4. The main issues for Appeal A are the effect of the proposal on the special interest of Cowlands Farm Barn and Cowlands Farm Outbuilding, which are Grade II listed buildings, and on the setting of Cowlands Farmhouse, which is also a Grade II listed building.
5. The main issues for Appeal B are the effect of the proposal on the special interest of Cowlands Farm Barn and Cowlands Farm Outbuilding.

Reasons

6. The appeal relates to a property that is now known as Cowlands Barn. The property includes two elements that were listed separately. Cowlands Farm Barn is described in the listing description as an eight-bay, timber-framed barn dating from the 18th century. The listing description notes that it had a corrugated iron clad gambrel roof with two gabled midstreys. Cowlands Farm Outbuilding is described as a former stable block, also dating from the 18th century.
7. The buildings were converted to residential use as a single dwelling comprising the main barn and two ranges of single-storey outbuildings, which together enclose a courtyard in front of the barn. I have no doubt that the conversion required significant works to the listed structures. The main barn now has a tile roof. The weatherboarding appears to date from the time of the conversion. Nevertheless, the scheme of conversion has retained the historic form of the barn, including the distinctive roof profile and gabled midstreys. Although the interior has been subdivided, the timber frame can still be appreciated. The historic function of the structure can still be understood. These features contribute to the special interest of the listed building and to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
8. There is a range of outbuildings on the south-west side of the property, backing on to the garden of Cowlands Farmhouse. These are modern structures which are attached to the historic fabric of the barn. They are single-storey buildings, with a simple linear form. They have a tiled roofs and are clad in black weatherboarding. As such, they are clearly subservient to the main barn. Although they are an obviously modern feature, their scale, design and materials are such that they are sympathetic to the historic barn.
9. The proposed solar panels would be located on the rear (south-west) elevation of the modern outbuildings. Consequently, they would not result in the removal of any historic fabric, nor would any such fabric be obscured. Moreover, they would not be visible in views of the principal elevation of the barn, as seen

from the courtyard. Whilst these are the most important views of the listed buildings, it is also necessary to consider other views.

10. The south-west flank elevation of the barn can be seen from a small part of the appeal property. It can also be seen from Collops Road and from the garden of Cowlands Farmhouse. The detailing of the flank elevation is restrained, with black window frames set in black weatherboarding. The most striking feature of the barn, as seen from these viewpoints, is the imposing profile of the gable end. The long, low, linear form of the modern outbuilding is subservient to the tall gable end of the barn. The solar panels would form a linear feature, related to the scale and horizontal emphasis of the outbuilding, below the eaves level of the barn.
11. This would be a discreet location, partially screened by an outbuilding. Insofar as the panels could be seen in views of the south-west flank of the barn, they would be associated with the modern outbuilding and clearly distinguishable from the historic structure. The height and location of the panels would not compete with or distract from the ability to appreciate the profile of the gambrel roof of the historic barn.
12. I have had regard to guidance provided by Historic England on adding solar panels to historic buildings. I do not consider that the proposal would alter a "*main elevation*" of the listed building, as that term is used in the guidance. To my mind the proposal is consistent with the guidance.
13. The works would be separated from Cowlands Farm Outbuilding by intervening built form and would have no impact on that listed building.
14. I conclude that the proposal would not result in any harm to the special interest or the significance of Cowden Farm Barn. Nor would there be any harm to Cowden Farm Outbuilding. The special interest of both listed buildings would be preserved.

Cowden Farmhouse

15. The building is now known as Cowden House. The listing description states that it dates from the 18th/19th century. It is constructed of gault brick with a hipped grey slate roof and a central front door. The house has a symmetrical front elevation which is best appreciated in views from the junction of Collops Road and Porters Hall Road, directly in front of the property. The proposed solar panels would not be visible in these views.
16. It would be possible to glimpse the panels in views of Cowden Farmhouse from a little further along Collops Road. In such views the panels would be seen in the context of garden structures and boundary walls, set well back from the listed building. They would be a minor element in such views and would not harm the ability to appreciate the significance of the listed building.
17. Whilst the solar panels would be visible from upper floor windows in the rear elevation of Cowden Farmhouse, they would be seen in the context described above and would not detract from the relationship between the house and its own gardens. For the same reasons, any views of the panels from the back garden of Cowden Farmhouse would not harm the ability to experience the listed building.

18. I conclude that there would be no harm to the setting or the significance of Cowden Farmhouse. The setting of the listed building would be preserved.

Other matters

19. The appellant has questioned the accuracy of the listing description for Cowden Farm Barn and has suggested that it may no longer merit being listed. However, as a matter of fact, the barn is a listed building. I have therefore applied the relevant statutory and policy tests on that basis.

20. The proposal would contribute to national and local objectives relating to carbon reduction and climate change through the provision of renewable energy. In my view the generation of renewable energy is a public benefit that weighs in favour of the proposals.

Conditions

21. The Council has suggested conditions for both appeals which I have considered in the light of Planning Practice Guidance. I agree that conditions requiring the development/works to be carried out in accordance with the plans are necessary in the interests of clarity and certainty.

Conclusion – Appeal A

22. I conclude that the proposal would not result in any harm to the special interest of Cowden Farm Barn or Cowden Farm Outbuilding. There would be no harm to the setting or the significance of Cowden Farmhouse. The proposal would accord with Uttlesford Local Plan Policy GEN2, which seeks to ensure that development is compatible with the appearance of surrounding buildings, and with Policy ENV2 which seeks to protect listed buildings. The appeal should therefore be allowed.

Conclusion – Appeal B

23. I conclude that the proposed works would not result in any harm to the special interest of Cowden Farm Barn or Cowden Farm Outbuilding. Consequently, I consider that the works would preserve the special interest of the listed buildings, thus satisfying the requirements of the Act, the National Planning Policy Framework and Uttlesford Local Plan Policies GEN2 and ENV2, insofar as they are relevant to this appeal. The appeal should therefore be allowed.

David Prentis

Inspector