

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

3 August 2011

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/ Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

S/0912/11/F – LITTLE GRANSDEN

Variation of condition 12 of application reference S/1956/10 to allow insertion of rooflights in south elevation, Fullers Hill Farm, Fullers Hill for J Jefferies

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 29 June 2011

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination at the request of the local member Councillor Mrs Bridget Smith

Members will visit this site on 3rd August 2011

Site and Proposal

1. This application, received on 4 May 2011, seeks a variation of Condition 12 of planning consent S/1956/10 to allow the insertion of three rooflights in the south facing elevation of a barn at Fullers Hill Farm, Little Gransden.
2. Fullers Hill Farm is located to the west of the road leading from Little Gransden to Gamlingay. It comprises residential dwellings, agricultural buildings, and buildings and land used in association with Little Gransden Aerodrome.
3. The buildings the subject of this application are located at the main entrance to the site, to the north of Fullers Hill Farmhouse, a 19 Century red brick Grade II listed building, with slate roof and end stacks. The buildings, which are curtilage listed, comprise a two storey red brick and slate roofed stables with a hayloft above and an attached single storey range constructed from the same materials, a three bay brick barn with a slate roof and a timber framed and pantiled outbuilding formerly a dairy, which is attached to the west gable of the barn. The buildings are contemporary with the farmhouse. In more recent times a common brick lean-to was added to the rear elevation of the stables and a modern corrugated open fronted lean-to attached to the north elevation of the dairy. Attached to the south elevation of the former dairy is a large modern corrugated open fronted structure.
4. The buildings benefit from extant consents for planning and listed building permission for change of use to B1 business units and 4 holiday lets.
5. The proposal shows the insertion of three conservation style rooflights, two single units and one double, in the south facing elevation of the three bay brick barn. The single units measure 1021mm x 1180mm and the double unit measures 1021mm x 2300mm. The rooflights will serve an open plan office area which will occupy the whole of the first floor of the main barn. The approved scheme includes a similar arrangement of rooflights in the north facing roofslope of the barn, a full height central

glazed opening in the north elevation and narrower full height opening in the west facing gable, all of which light the office area.

History

6. Planning and Listed Building consent was granted in December 2010 for the change of use of farm outbuildings to B1 business use (office) and 4 holiday lets (**Ref: S/1956/10 and S/1957/10**).
7. Condition 12 of the planning consent stated 'Notwithstanding the annotations on Drawing Nos SU-A202 and SU-A203 this notice does not grant consent for conservation rooflights with solar panels on the south elevation or a new catslide dormer.' The reason for condition stated 'the approved elevations do not show these details, which have been omitted in order to preserve the character of the building and to safeguard the setting of the adjacent listed building.'
8. **S/0736/10** – Change of Use and conversion of farm building into 4 holiday lets and B1 business units – Withdrawn
9. **S/0737/10/LB** – Alter and convert barn and outbuildings into Bi business use (office) and 4 x 2 bed holiday lets – Withdrawn
10. **S/1067/07/LB** – Internal and external alterations to barn and outbuildings to offices and 4 two bedroom holiday homes – Approved
11. **S/0957/10** – Change of use of barn for B1 business use and 4 holiday lets - Approved

Planning Policy

12. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Polices adopted July 2007: DP/1 Sustainable Development, DP/2 Design of New Development, DP/3 Development Criteria, Space Standards, NE/1 Energy Efficiency, CH/3 Listed Buildings, CH/4 Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building.**
13. Listed Buildings SPD, District Design Guide SPD.
14. **Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment**

Consultation

15. **Little Gransden Parish Council** recommends approval.
16. The **Conservation Manager** comments that the most significant building on the site is the farmhouse and although the barn is not listed in its own right it is a building of historic merit and makes a positive contribution to the setting of the listed farmhouse, together with the other outbuildings.
17. Following lengthy pre-application discussions a scheme for the conversion of the group of former agricultural buildings was approved in December 2010 (S/1956/10 & S/1957/10) but the rooflights on the south elevation were omitted from the approval on the planning permission as they would result in a domestic appearance and cause notable harm to the setting of the listed farmhouse and the simple character and appearance of the barn.

18. As this elevation is seen in conjunction with the farmhouse in views from it, it was considered to be more significant and important that the character and appearance was retained and openings kept to the minimum. There was particular concern about the view from the farmhouse garden where the unaltered roofscape of the existing farm buildings and farmhouse are seen as a group. In the approved scheme the only visible alteration on the south elevation is the glazed door in the existing opening. Rooflights were approved on the north elevation as this faces away from the listed farmhouse onto an area that is occupied by more modern buildings and is therefore of less significance.
19. The Design, Access & Heritage Statement states “a balance needs to be achieved between securing the objectives of creating an acceptable working environment, a well converted attractive scheme which respects the character of the building and an energy efficient and sustainable conversion. It is argued that the provision of rooflights on the southern roof slope will enable the scheme to achieve all these objectives”. It goes on to state that “there is a need to ensure that the building is well ventilated and naturally lit both to meet Building Regulations and to create a good working environment”. Building Regulations stipulate that the amount of natural light should be equivalent to 10% of the floor area and natural ventilation 5%. The approved conversion to an office barn retains the open plan of the building on the first floor with the first floor set back above the entrance to create a full height void. The large opening on the north elevation will be fully glazed. The ground floor is partly enclosed to provide a plant room and toilets but the majority of the space is retained as one large office. If additional light and ventilation is required this could be provided artificially but the Design, Access & Heritage Statement argues that the use of artificial light and ventilation would have a greater impact as this would require more plant and machinery which would detract from the simple open plan character. However, a large plant room has been approved and no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that this will be inadequate. The approved layout and openings should be sufficient to comply with Building Regulations and while it may be desirable to increase the amount of natural light and ventilation this is not a requirement and the justification does not outweigh the harm.

Conclusion

20. There is some public benefit in finding a suitable new use for the buildings that will ensure their long-term viability and maintenance and while the approved conversion will cause some harm it is considered that the benefits will outweigh the harm. The proposed rooflights are not considered to be necessary in order to implement the approved scheme and the justification for additional natural light and ventilation is not considered to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of this curtilage listed building.
21. It is recommended that the application is refused for the reasons set out at the end of this report.

Representations

- 22... None received

Applicants Representation

23. The application is accompanied by a Heritage and Planning Consent. The full document can be viewed as part of the background papers however the summary is set out below:

24. 'The Local Planning Authority has accepted the office and holiday let conversion scheme secures a suitable reuse of the outbuildings. The buildings are redundant and this secures them being brought back into viable economic use. The works will ensure that the historic interest of the site is retained and significantly enhanced. The key elements of importance which contribute to the heritage value of the building are the brickwork to the external walls and the internal timber framing.
25. The issue being considered here is whether the installation of three roof lights to the southern roof slope of the building will significantly harm the historic significance of the building to warrant refusal. The barn building is not listed in its own right; it is a curtilage building to the Listed farmhouse. The principle of having rooflights on the out buildings has been accepted with three roof lights approved to the northern elevation. The approved roof lights are argued to be to the principal elevation of the building. The provision of matching roof lights to the southern roof slope will not have any greater harm than those already granted permission.
26. Any potential harm caused by the roof lights has to be balanced against the benefits they give of allowing the building to be lit and vented naturally thus removing the need for mechanical ventilation and less reliance on artificial lighting. This is argued to be far more sustainable. Equally the alterations to the roof are argued to be far less harmful than the intervention approved in the 2008 scheme whereby windows were formed to the north western side brickwork. The need to provide mechanical ventilation would be far more intrusive to the internal character of the barn and harmful to the appearance and appreciation of the timber framing.
27. The Councils SPG guidance acknowledges that roof lights to slate roofs are less intrusive than to roofs with alternative roof coverings. The visual impact of the roof lights proposed have been minimised by them being to a traditional 'conservation' form and having flush detailing. It is therefore argued that the works can be shown to accord with local and national policies and guidance and the condition should be amended to allow the installation of these three rooflights.'

Planning Comments – Key Issues

28. The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are the impact of the proposed rooflights on the character of the barn and setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building.
29. Planning and listed building consent exists for the proposed change of use. The scheme originally submitted under application references S/1956/10 and S/1957/10 contained the three rooflights in the south facing roof slope of the brick barn, however these were deleted during the consideration of the application, at the request of officers, to allow the consents to be granted.
30. The Conservation Manager's comments quotes a section from the applicant's Design and Access Statement which refers to the need to achieve a balance between securing the objectives of creating an acceptable working environment, a well converted attractive scheme which respects the character of the building and an energy efficient and sustainable conversion.
31. In the officer's view the approved scheme achieves this by allowing a number of openings to be inserted in the less sensitive elevations of the existing simple brick barn form to serve the proposed first floor open plan office area. This included a range of rooflights in the north facing roof slope. The Conservation Manager has

emphasised the importance of retaining the character of this barn, which makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse, the most important building on the site. The existing south facing roof of the barn is viewed from the garden of the listed farmhouse and the current simple plain form of the roof adds to its setting and the grouping of buildings. In officer's view the insertion of the proposed rooflights into the south facing roofslope would disrupt this simple form and materially detract from the existing character of the building and the setting of the Grade II listed building.

32. Officers note the arguments put forward by the applicants agent in support of the proposal but in this case do not feel that they outweigh the resultant identified harm to the character of the building and setting of the listed building.

Recommendation

Refusal

1. The proposed installation of rooflights on the south elevation of this 1840 curtilage listed barn will harm the special character and appearance of this simple former agricultural building. While it may be desirable to increase the amount of natural light and ventilation there is no evidence that the approved arrangements will not comply with Building Regulations and the justification does not outweigh the harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CH/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 (DPD) and policies HE7 and HE9 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (including 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 9.1, 9.2 and 9.4) and PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Policy Practice Guide (including 78, 79, 80, 85, 87, 95).
2. The alterations to the curtilage listed barn will materially detract from the simple rural agricultural character of the building and harm the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed farmhouse. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CH/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 (DPD) and Policy HE10 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Policy Practice Guide (including 113 and 114).

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Planning File Ref: S/0912/11, S/1956/10 and S/1957/10

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