

Item No 07:-

19/03096/LBC

**Pigeon House
Church Road
Kemble
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6AE**

Item No 07:-

**Installation of solar panels to southern roof of outbuilding at Pigeon House
Church Road Kemble Gloucestershire GL7 6AE**

Listed Building Consent 19/03096/LBC	
Applicant:	Mr A Berry
Agent:	LPC (Trull) Ltd
Case Officer:	Hannah Rose
Ward Member(s):	Councillor Tony Berry
Committee Date:	13th November 2019
RECOMMENDATION:	REFUSE

Main Issues:

(a) Impact on Heritage Assets

Reasons for Referral:

The determination of the application has been referred to the Planning and Licensing Committee in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation because the applicant is Cllr. Tony Berry.

1. Site Description:

The application site comprises two individually listed buildings; the Pigeon House and 'barn and former stable'.

The Pigeon House is a Grade II listed residential barn conversion. The barn is a large stone threshing barn with a stone tile roof and an interesting dovecote above the southern porch. The building underwent substantial alteration during conversion including the insertion of domestic style window openings and chimneys, which have impacted on its character and significance as a historic agricultural building.

The barn and former stable outbuilding to the north east of the site is also Grade II listed and has been partially converted to ancillary accommodation. The building is much less altered and retains a strong agricultural character and many features of historic interest are preserved. The two higher ranges to the eastern end are stone with stone tiled roofs. To the left is a lower single storey range containing boarded door openings. Attached to its western end is a further structure, which is the subject of this application.

This structure forms part of this listed building. It is wider in plan depth with a slacker pitched roof and is covered in corrugated iron. There is a masonry stone wall to the rear and historic timber posts on straddle stones to the front. The structure is open fronted.

Between the outbuilding and dwelling is a detached modern garage building. Surrounding the site is modern residential development to the north and Grade II* listed All Saints Church to the south. Owing to intervening buildings, vegetation and the separation distance, the building subject to this application is considered not to be within the setting of All Saints Church. The site is located in Kemble Conservation Area.

2. Relevant Planning History:

15/04236/LBC - External and internal alterations to facilitate conversion of barn to residential annexe. Permitted 19/01/2016

3. Planning Policies:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

4. Observations of Consultees:

Conservation Officer: Views incorporated within the Officer's Report.

5. View of Town/Parish Council:

No comments received at the time of writing the report.

6. Other Representations:

No comments received at the time of writing the report.

7. Applicant's Supporting Information:

Design and Access Statement
Heritage Statement

8. Officer's Assessment:

Proposal and Background

The applicant is seeking listed building consent for the installation of solar panels on the southern slope of the corrugated iron roof to the lower western part of the outbuilding range. Two rows of ten panels are proposed. The overall projection from the plane of the roof would be 79mm and the panels would have a black finish.

Legislation and Policy

The outbuilding range that is the subject of this application (a former barn and stable), and the main dwelling itself (a barn conversion known as The Pigeon House), are both Grade II Listed Buildings. The Local Planning Authority is statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the buildings, their setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest they may possess, in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The site also lies within the Kemble Conservation Area, wherein the Local Planning Authority is statutorily obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area, in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that Local Planning Authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining or enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of the proposed works on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Assessment

Whilst any measure of renewable energy generation is welcomed in playing a part in mitigating climate change, in the case of a sensitive historic site like this, the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets must be fully taken into consideration. In weighing any harm against the benefits, great weight should be given to the conservation of the assets, in line with statutory requirements.

The proposal drawings show 20 solar panels installed across the roof slope. The product information supplied shows a black style of panel (minimising silver framing and surface lines), but the appearance would be a typical array of solar panels. The material, design and finish of such panels unavoidably gives a starkly modern, smooth appearance, when contrasted with the traditional materials of the listed building. It is considered that the solar panels would be visually intrusive and would appear incongruous against the traditional construction and character of this outbuilding range.

Despite this part of the building having a tin roof covering currently, this is a material that was used on some outbuildings and agricultural structures as far back as the nineteenth century. There are traditional precedents for it and, in character and appearance terms, the existing roof covering is not considered out of keeping or harmful to the significance of the building. The existing corrugated iron does not, in Officers' view, justify in itself a more starkly modern material applied to this roof.

Officers consider that the proposed solar panels would be harmful to the significance of the listed outbuilding range, and also to the setting and significance of the adjacent Pigeon House barn conversion. The traditional design, materials and features of these buildings are key to their significance, and to introduce an array of panels so starkly modern would in our view diminish that significance. The roof slope in question is very prominent within the garden setting of the Pigeon House, and seen in close relationship to that listed barn conversion. The panels would appear intrusive and incongruous and they would detract from the positive contribution the outbuilding range makes to the setting of the main barn.

In considering any impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, the solar panels are fairly discretely sited, not being prominent in public views. The public benefit of these renewable energy installations would outweigh the limited harm to the significance of the conservation area, so there are no objections on these grounds.

9. Conclusion:

The proposed development would result in harm to the significance of the listed outbuilding range and to the setting and significance of Pigeon House. The harm is less than substantial but is nevertheless considerable, given the nature of the proposals, the prominent location of the panels, and their impact on the fundamental character of this traditional outbuilding.

In weighing the public benefits of the solar array against the level of harm in this case, and giving the conservation of the heritage assets great weight, it is not considered that the public benefits would outweigh the harm. The proposals therefore do not meet the test at Paragraph 196 of the NPPF. There is also a failure to preserve the building and the setting of the adjacent listed Pigeon House, which is contrary to our statutory duties within the 1990 Act.

10. Reason for Refusal:

1. The outbuilding range and The Pigeon House itself are both Grade II Listed Buildings. The Local Planning Authority is therefore statutorily required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the buildings, their setting, and any features of special architectural or historic interest they may possess. The proposal is to fit solar panels to the southern roof slope of part of the outbuilding range. By virtue of their starkly modern appearance and prominent location, the proposed solar panels would appear intrusive and incongruous, detracting from the traditional materials and construction that are fundamental to the character and significance of the building. This outbuilding range also makes an important contribution to the setting of The Pigeon House, being seen in very close relationship to it. As such there would be both harm to the significance of the outbuilding range, and to the setting and significance of The Pigeon House. This harm is less than substantial but nevertheless considerable, and when weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, the harm is not judged to be outweighed by those benefits. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework,