

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2020**PART 3**

Report of the Head of Planning

PART 3Applications for which **REFUSAL** is recommended

3.1 REFERENCE NO - 20/503596/FULL & 20/503597/LBC			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Installation of a 6.8kW in-roof mounted PV array on the garage roof at Pheasant Barn			
ADDRESS Pheasant Barn Church Road Oare Faversham Kent ME13 0QB			
RECOMMENDATION - Refuse			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Parish Council support and called in by Councillor Valentine			
WARD Teynham And Lynsted	PARISH/TOWN Oare	COUNCIL	APPLICANT Susan and Paul Vaight AGENT Invicta Clean Energy Ltd
DECISION DUE DATE 09/10/20		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 17/09/20	

Planning History

SW/98/0570

Listed Building Consent for conversion of redundant agricultural barn in to single dwelling.
Approved Decision Date: 08.12.1998

SW/98/0569

Conversion of redundant agricultural barn into single dwelling.
Approved Decision Date: 08.12.1998

SW/97/0949

Conversion of barn and outbuilding to dwelling and erection of garage - adjustment of boundaries to approved application no: SW/97/0383.
Approved Decision Date: 18.12.1997

SW/97/0384

Listed building consent for demolition of modern farm shed, conversion of redundant farm buildings to a house and erection of garage.
Approved Decision Date: 15.09.1997

SW/97/0383

Conversion of barn and outbuildings to dwelling and erection of garage
Approved Decision Date: 15.09.1997**1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

1.1 Pheasant Barn is Grade II listed barn. It is now in residential use, and it is joined to two conjoined single storey garage and storage buildings built/re-used as part of the barn

conversion 20 years ago, which all now form part of an 'L' shaped range of interconnected buildings.

- 1.2 The site sits to the east of Church Road, to the west of Oare Creek and to the southwest of St Peter's Church in the village of Oare. There is a public footpath to the south of the site, as well as a public footpath (part of the Saxon Shore Way) along Oare Creek, from where the site can be seen. The separately listed farmhouse is located to the west of the northern end of the range but is not part of the same land demise.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 These applications seek planning permission and listed building consent for a two part solar panel array with 20 modules, fourteen on the garage in two rows (eight above and six below) with a further six modules on the adjoining roof. In total they would create 34square metres of solar panels. The panels would be set flush with the roof slates on the south facing roofslopes of the outbuildings, making them invisible from the barn itself but visible in public views towards the barn from the south. The applications are supported by a comprehensive Design and Access/Heritage Statement which suggests that the solar installation could generate 7,743kWh of electricity annually, saving as much as 4.24 tonnes of carbon di-oxide compared to mains electricity.
- 2.2 The applicants have introduced the application as follows:

'As set out in detail in the accompanying Design Statement, we are hoping to install solar panels to generate electricity for our own use with a storage battery and to export excess back to the grid. It would also include a car charging point to catalyse our early switch to an electric vehicle. We think the minimal visual impact of an in-roof system is worth the green credentials, making the property significantly greener and contributing to the national aim of getting towards zero carbon emissions.

As the barn is grade II listed, this proposal would need listed buildings consent and so we sought pre-application advice. In response, the planning officer asked that we consider the alternatives of a ground mounted array or imitation slates.

Our strong preference is for in-roof panels. The roof is dark grey slate and the panels will be black and in-roof mounted, not on legs above the roof plane. This area of the roof is outside the enclosed courtyard that once was the farmyard and so is not visible against the full aspect of the main barn building nor from the windows of neighbouring Pheasant Farm. Nor would it be visible from the footpath along Oare Creek where the barn can be seen at the top of the hill. It would however be visible from a portion of Church Rd directly outside our entrance gate. 75 Church Rd is our nearest neighbour at the village side and here the view of the roof is obscured by trees, as shown at the left side of a photo submitted with the pre-application enquiry. The garage itself is a new timber building constructed when we renovated the barn some 20 years ago and the adjacent roof section is on a brick stable/cart building not dating from the same time as the main timberframe barn that is the focus of the listing.

I can assure you that we did consider both alternative possibilities before submitting the request for advice as we are very conscious of the need for visual sensitivity. We were responsible for the original conversion of the buildings, Mr Bell was the conservation officer at the time and supported our design. It subsequently won a Civic Trust Award, not many residential projects do. I mention this to reassure you of our bone fides as careful custodians of the visual.

We are advised that slates would be about three times more expensive to install, not as efficient as panels, and with significant work required should one slate fail, as they are connected in strings and a complete string would have to be stripped. In the absence of grants previously available for green projects, the economics of the scheme have to be a factor and the time taken to recoup capital outlay in terms of reduced bills might well be beyond our lifetimes. The slates would be shiny black and even though the geometry might be better than panels, a fringe of normal slate around the array is required to fit the array to the roof edges, so it still would not read as a continuous surface. Overall we considered the appearance of imitation slates to be a minimal improvement over panels relative to cost and we would not take this route.

A ground mounted system would have to be within our meadow area external to the buildings. It would be mounted on legs on concrete bases and inclined to give best exposure to the sun, probably involving excavation to create a suitably aligned terrace on the sloping site. There would be trenching to install connecting cable back to the garage block. Both involve disturbance to the landscape and carefully nurtured habitat.

Such an array would then be at eye level whereas the roof is above one's direct line of sight. It would be a significant visual intrusion into the landscape. It could not be closely screened by trees or shrubs as any shade adversely affects the function of the panels, we are told that even long grass could be a problem. Generally a plant barrier is laid on the surrounding ground to obviate the growth of shading vegetation, making it even more unsightly and causing loss of habitat. In the years since we did this conversion we have planted various trees and shrubs in the meadow, flowering, fruiting, nut and berry bearing in order to increase the biodiversity for insects, birds, reptiles and small mammals such as harvest mice. We leave the grass uncut for the summer and have increased significantly the ratio of wild flowers to grass, again to benefit insects and birds (Kent Wildlife Trust gold award). There are many hundreds of resident meadow butterflies, marbled whites, meadow browns, gatekeepers, skippers and bees including the endangered shrill carder bee, all dependent on the long grass and nectar that our micro ecosystem provides; it has become a miniature nature reserve and so is a biodiversity public benefit.

We open annually in the National Gardens Scheme for the benefit of its charities which we submit is also a public benefit and get favourable remarks from visitors on the special atmosphere of our personal nature reserve. We receive regular visitors from Europe as well as locals, and even from places as far away as Korea and Uruguay, thus contributing to the tourist attractiveness of Faversham. We believe the atmosphere of the meadow would be badly impacted by a solar array mounted within it and that roof panels would be much the more discrete option, so that is our strong preference.

The primary public benefit is of course the reduction of CO2 emissions by solar generation, as well as the local job support we shall provide to the installers.

We therefore concluded that a ground mounted array would be so intrusive that the resultant detriment to the environs of the barn would be greater than the visual impact of in-roof panels on the roofs of ancillary buildings of no special architectural significance themselves aside from their proximity to the main timber framed barn. We strongly believe the benefits of climate change mitigation, biodiversity and landscape integrity outweigh the minimal change in appearance of a slate roof on basically nondescript ancillary buildings, and that future generations will also see it this way.'

2.3 The applicants have also explained the benefits of the proposal as follows:

'All electricity that is generated renewable locally rather than relying on combustion of fossil fuels at a central generating plant provides a benefit to both our local and our global community. The impact that carbon emissions from combustion of fossil fuels is having upon our climate globally is incontrovertible. This is recognised both by local and national government policies which promote investment in low carbon technologies. This application provides a public benefit by displacing carbon intensive electricity generation, thereby contributing to the goal of reducing carbon emissions.'

For most of the length of Church Road any view of St Peters Church steeple is impeded by the pole mounted electricity sub-station and another pole next to it. This is considerably more prominent than the garage roof. Proceeding along Church Road, once past the sub-station the unimpeded view towards the steeple lasts for than 30m during which time the garage roof is only visible at an oblique angle fro Church Road i.e. the Church steeple and the garage roof cannot be held in the same view simultaneously. Normally installation of a roof mounted PV array would be a permitted development, so the reason for this application for listed building i.e. Pheasant Barn. If Pheasant Barn were not listed then there would be no requirement for LBC or indeed a planning application at all.'

2.4 In response to published comments from the Council's Conservation & Design Consultant dated 7th September 2020 (see paragraph 7.2 in Appraisal section below), the applicants have sent the following comments:

'1. When making the application, it had not crossed our minds that the listed church would be a factor. The conservation officer implies that there is a clear view of the church and our roof slope from Church Rd, we believe that this is an overstatement since the church is barely visible. Only a portion of the spire above the right hand slope of Pheasant Farmhouse roof is ever visible from Church Rd in conjunction with our buildings. Please see the photo below taken from the gate of Pheasant Barn and corresponding to photo 2 in the Design submission but with a shift to the left, I believe this is the worst case scenario view containing our proposed PV roof site with the rooftop views of the barn, the farmhouse and the church. When walking along Church Rd there is only a momentary view of all the roof slopes simultaneously, whilst at the gate as shown in this photo. After passing the gate this view disappears, nor is the Church spire visible when walking from 75 Church Rd, photo1, until reaching the gate. I could try to send you a video of the walk along the road if you think that useful'

2. We would like the respond to the statements "the PV panels would provide a small amount of for the users" (bottom page 2) and "without any public benefits" (Summary and Recommendation page 3). The implication here is that the electricity is just for our own private gain. This is far from the truth, in fact the proposed panels will exceed our current demand by some 50% and any excess will be exported to National Grid, both the reduction in our demand and the input to the grid will contribute at the margin to a lowering of the carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel burning power stations; carbon dioxide remains in the atmosphere for about a hundred years so any reduction now, no matter how small, is a benefit to this and future generations. Because we have chosen more expensive solar panels to replace the slates and maintain the existing roofline, the payback time for the initial capital outlay is likely to be beyond our probable lifetimes as we are in our mid 70s. Our driving motivation for the proposed installation was twofold: to enhance sustainability into the future of the agricultural barn that we sympathetically restored (Civic Trust Award) and to make a contribution to Government's aim of making the UK carbon neutral by 2050. The

latter will require very substantial change in how people heat their homes in the coming three decades and will not be achieved without many difficult compromises. The current proposal comes down to a matter of priorities; whether the retention of the appearance of the existing slate roofs on the outbuildings outweighs the making of a contribution to the very real global challenge of climate change. However if, even for the outbuildings of Listed Buildings, SBC deem that visual considerations override the public benefit of combatting climate change then it should make this clear on the website to prevent unnecessary effort and expense.

3. Both Oare Parish Council and our neighbours at 75 Church Rd have written in support. Also, we informed our neighbours in Pheasant Farm and they have no objection. So the change in appearance of our roof slope is not a worry to any of them, and they are the local people who daily see the buildings. They prioritise the improvement in sustainability. There are no objections currently on the portal.

4. Historic England replied to say they did not need to be consulted.'

2.5 The applicant's agent has also responded, as follows:

'I have a number of points to make with respect to the comments made by the Conservation and Design Manager, dated 7th September.

Public Benefit

All electricity that is generated renewably locally rather than relying on combustion of fossil fuels at a central generating plant provides a benefit to both our local and our global community. The impact that carbon emissions from combustion of fossil fuels is having upon our climate globally is incontrovertible. This is recognised both by local and national government policies which promote investment in low carbon technologies. This application provides a public benefit by displacing carbon intensive electricity generation, thereby contributing to the goal of reducing carbon emissions.

The officer's conclusion that, with respect to the views of the church, the application would "harm their significance without any public benefit" is unjustifiably dismissive and at odds with the council's own policies which recognise that all investments in generation of electricity using low carbon technology provide a public benefit. It remains the opinion of the applicants that this public benefit outweighs the small disbenefit on distant, partial views of the church steeple along a short section of Church Road.

Array Output

The officer states that the "PV panels would provide a small amount of electricity for the users". This statement is ill-informed and has been made without evidence or due consideration.

The capacity of this proposed array (6.8 kW) is larger than average for a residential system and is estimated to generate 7,473 kWh of power pa. Average annual household electricity consumption in the UK for a detached house is 4,153 kWhs (source: OFGEM). Overall this installation is expected to provide a net contribution to the local electricity grid over and above what is used by the applicants' household.

Views of St Peter's Church

The conservation officer's report references views of St Peter's Church roof and steeple from Church Road. For most of the length of Church Road any view of St Peter's Church steeple is impeded by the pole mounted electricity sub-station and another pole next to it. This is considerably more prominent than the garage roof at Pheasant Barn. Proceeding along Church Road, once past the sub-station the unimpeded view towards the steeple lasts for less than 30m during which time the garage roof is only visible at an oblique angle from Church Road, i.e. the Church steeple and the garage roof cannot be held in the same view simultaneously. The officer's report seems to suggest that views of a pristine roofscape would be despoiled by the introduction of in-roof mounted PV panels on the garage at Pheasant Barn. Because of the incursion of the sub-station this is not the case.

Normally installation of a roof mounted PV array would be a permitted development, so the reason for this application for listed building consent (LBC) is that the garage and adjoining building lie within the curtilage of a grade 2 listed building, i.e. Pheasant Barn. If Pheasant Barn were not listed then there would be no requirement for LBC or indeed a planning application at all. In that instance the installation would be a permitted development, and would proceed without any consideration of its impact on views of St Peter's Church from Church Lane.

In my opinion it is the impact of the installation on views of Pheasant Barn that should be the subject of the officer's consideration. St Peter's Church is not the subject of this application so why should views of a building that is not part of the application have any relevance in its determination? Surely consideration can only be given to those views of the listed building within whose curtilage the garage and adjoining building lie, and that any other buildings within whose curtilage they do not lie are therefore not a material consideration since they are not included in the listed building consent ?

Also I note that neither the St Peter's Church nor Pheasant Barn lie within an existing conservation area. So again I am not sure why views of the Church are relevant in determining this application. Please could you clarify whether views of the church are a material consideration in the determination of this application, and if so why.

Thermoslate

Please be aware that the Thermoslate product you have identified is a solar thermal system, i.e. it generates hot water, not electricity. In this context hot water is of limited usefulness because of the occupancy of the main house and the distance it would need to be transferred from the garage to a point of use in the house. For best results to avoid losses in distribution in most cases a solar thermal system should be mounted on the building containing the hot water storage vessel that it serves. In this case that would be the roof of the grade 2 listed house itself rather than the garage, which would be unacceptable for obvious reasons.

Mr and Mrs Vaight's application is for a solar photovoltaic system, i.e. one that generates electricity. For residential applications the output of a solar photovoltaic system (electricity) is much more versatile (i.e. useful) than the output of a solar thermal system (hot water). The estimated output of the proposed photovoltaic system is 7,473 kWhs of renewable energy, whereas the useful contribution to domestic hot water requirements from a typical solar thermal collector installed in a residential setting is unlikely to be greater than 2,000 kWhs.'

3. PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- 3.1 Listed Buildings MBC and SBC Ref Number: 1265/SW Description: G II PHEASANT BARN, CHURCH ROAD, OARE, FAVERSHAM, ME13 0QB

4. POLICY AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Development Plan: Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 policies: CP4: Requiring good design, CP8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, DM14: General development criteria, DM19: Sustainable design and construction, DM20: Renewable and low carbon energy and DM32: Development involving listed buildings.

- 4.2 The Local Plan, at paragraph, 7.6.13 states:

The NPPF also explains how applicants for energy developments do not need to demonstrate the need for renewable and low carbon energy and that local planning authorities should approve applications if impacts are acceptable as even small-scale projects make a contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

- 4.3 Policy DM20 directly relates to renewable energy development, and states:

Renewable and low carbon energy

Planning permission will be granted for the development of renewable and low carbon energy sources where:

- 1. Analysis of all impacts and methods to avoid and mitigate harm from these impacts is fully addressed in any planning application for such proposals;*
- 2. Demonstrating how opportunities highlighted in the Borough's Energy Opportunities Map have been exploited, in particular in the delivery of district heating, where shown to be financially viable and technically feasible;*
- 3. Priority will be given to development on previously developed land or buildings and proposals which incorporate renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy as integral to new commercial or residential schemes;*
- 4. For schemes on agricultural land, it has been demonstrated that poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality. In exceptional cases, where schemes are demonstrated as necessary on agricultural land, that they fully explore options for continued agricultural use;*
- 5. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity are exploited;*
- 6. Landscape, visual and heritage impacts as well as impacts on geology, soils and flood risk, including cumulative impacts, are minimised and mitigated to acceptable levels;*
- 7. Impacts on residential amenity and safety, including noise, air quality, tranquillity and transport are minimised and mitigated to acceptable levels;*
- 8. Applications demonstrate evidence of local community involvement and/or leadership;*
- 9. All relevant plans, policies, appraisals and associated guidance, including landscape appraisals and designations and biodiversity management plans, are referenced in any planning application to ascertain the appropriate type and scale of development for any particular location; and*
- 10. In cases of temporary planning permission, detailed proposals for the restoration of the site at the end of its functional life are set out as a part of any application.*

4.4 Paragraphs 152 to 154 of the NPPF state:

152. Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.

153. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:

a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and

b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

154. When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and

b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable . Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.

5. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 A neighbour fully supports their neighbours plan to add solar panels to the roof of the garage as it will make an important contribution to essential reductions in carbon emissions both directly and by example. The proposed siting of the panels is done with sensitive regard to their visibility and the special characteristics of the property.

5.2 Another neighbour supports integrated renewable energy and supports the application.

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Oare Parish Council supports the application, saying:

It is well thought out and could be an exemplar for solar close to listed buildings. The applicants sympathetically converted the barn and have won awards. This work will be done using a local installer who has experience of listed settings and historic buildings.

6.2 Historic England does not consider that it is necessary for this application to be notified to Historic England under the relevant statutory provisions.

6.3 Natural England raises no objection.

6.4 The Council's Climate Change Officer is in support of the application, saying that although the barn is listed I think in this case there are strong reasons to approve the application. Installing solar pv will reduce the applicants' carbon emissions – something that we as a Council are encouraging our residents to do. There is the opportunity for this to be an exemplar site showing others what is possible.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to have special regard to preserving the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. In this case, although the installation of solar panels has clear climate change benefits, it will be important that any harm is minimised, and that if roof mounted solar units are installed, the installation is as visually sensitive as possible. I also consider a key issue in this case is whether the proposal meets the aim and objectives of policy DM32 of Bearing Fruits 2031.

7.2 My Conservation & Design Consultant made the following comments on 7th September 2020, and these were uploaded to the Council's website. This resulted in the applicants responding as set out above at paragraph 2.5 above.

'The Design and Access and Heritage Statement has far too much information on the technical aspects and environmental benefits of the proposed solar panels and less information on the heritage aspect of the application and the heritage constraints of the site. In particular there is no section on the heritage significance of the site and the surrounding listed buildings. The photographic impact assessment is useful but omits the mention or views of the Grade I church together with the proposed roof slopes as seen from Church Road.'

The proposed solar roof panels would be highly obtrusive when set against certain key views from Church Road, towards the listed barn, the listed farmhouse and the listed church. The views of each designated heritage asset would include views of the largest roof slope on the building nearest to the roof slope. Had the views in Photo 1 been taken closer to the proposed location the view of the highly significant Grade I church would have been highlighted. Photo 2 shows a view towards the roof without any intervening tree foliage or buildings. The view of the Grade II barn is directly visible on this photograph. Photo 1 shows a view of the listed farmhouse.'

The resulting detriment to the views of and towards these significant heritage assets would harm their significance to a level considered to be less than substantial as regards the Grade II listed buildings and on the lower level of substantial as regards the Grade I church of St Peter's. Without any public benefits being gained from the proposal, the application should be considered for refusal.'

The proposed PV panels would also harm the appearance of the host buildings in their own right since they would be overly dominant on the roof slope and would detract from the rather austere and very modest character of the structures.'

7.3 In the light of the applicant's response to the above initial views, my Conservation Officer looked at this site personally, and concluded that site is visible from various vantage points along the PROW that runs along the west bank of Oare Creek. He noted that the church is reasonably well screened at this time of year, although you can still see its roof

poking through the trees, and the proposed arrays would very clearly be in full view in important views of the grade II listed barn and the grade II listed farmhouse. Notwithstanding that there would be some limited public benefit from the proposal, it seemed to him that inadequate effort has been made to mitigate the harm to the setting of the three listed buildings, as required by the NPPF and our Local Plan policies.

- 7.4 His view was that the applicants needed to put forward the previously suggested solar slate option, a possible ground mounted array (if feasible), or face a refusal, as the limited public benefit arising is not sufficient to outweigh the harm to the setting of these heritage assets, particularly when there is a near harm-free alternative option available.
- 7.5 In the light of the exchange of correspondence that has occurred and a thorough assessment of the proposals and their likely impact, my view is that the applicants have not fully grasped the planning issues that need to be taken into consideration around managing the setting of heritage assets which in this case, include the nearby grade I listed parish church. I accept that there would be some public benefit from the proposed solar panels, but this has to be balanced against the greater visual harm they create in relation to the setting and associated appreciation of the listed buildings.
- 7.6 The solar slate product that has been suggested as an alternative would have less public benefit in that it wouldn't allow a contribution of energy to the grid, but it seems that this possible alternative has not been fully explored and perhaps ought to be. There would still be some public benefit in terms of more energy created from sustainable means and less pressure on the national grid. The biggest plus of the solar slate system is that in terms of installing it onto a roof that already has a natural slate covering, the visual impact of the change would be next to nothing, particularly once the energy generating slates have weathered a little.
- 7.7 The part of the farm buildings range on which the proposed solar panels would be mounted currently contributes very positively to the setting it shares with the grade II listed barn, adjacent farmhouse, and the parish church. Planning guidance and associated case law tell us that it is not just views of listed buildings and conservation areas that need to be taken into account in decision making, but whether the proposed change is harmful to the character of the building or area, regardless of whether it can be seen in public view.
- 7.8 Notwithstanding the above, views which provide an appreciation of the heritage assets in question and their setting are clearly important and in this respect, it seems that the agent has only taken into account how the proposed development would be perceived from Church Road, whereas there are important views of the application site from the PROW running alongside the west bank of Oare Creek – views which notably show the church, the farmhouse and the barn range as a group of individually distinct, but complementary historic buildings in a relatively isolated rural scene context.
- 7.9 I consider that the church is clearly appreciable in certain views and furthermore, it is also necessary to take into account the different levels of natural screening to this building that will apply as the seasons change, as it does not appear that the trees partially screening the church to its east side are evergreen species.
- 7.10 We have a finite number of heritage assets, and whilst efforts should be made to move those in active use to a more sustainable footing in energy consumption terms, this should not be at the expense of what makes them special and something that can be

appreciated for current and future generations. Listed buildings makes up less than 1% of the building stock at local and national level, and notwithstanding these buildings typically have some potential for improvement in sustainability terms, given their finite level and the special contribution they make in so many ways, my view is that it is not unreasonable that the prime focus for maximising energy efficiency is aimed at new-build and on buildings that are less sensitive to change.

- 7.11 In light of the above, I do not support these applications based on the current information we have available. In accordance with paragraph 193 of the NPPF, it is incumbent on the applicant to show what effort has been made to minimise harm to the heritage assets (in the plural in this case) in relation to the proposed development. This would include, but would not be limited to, a serious exploration of the alternative options, in order to show that the necessary weight has been attached to the conservation of the heritage assets in question. I would suggest that only once a proper exploration has been carried out in this respect should the Council be prepared to potentially support a scheme of this nature, and it shouldn't be assumed that the net result of this additional work would be an approval. The Council's desire for greater levels of sustainable development and renewable energy production is not lost on me, but the green agenda isn't the only priority in planning terms, and it has to be balanced against other factors, and that is what I have attempted to do here. I am though very mindful of the Council's current commitment at a corporate level to managing the Borough's historic environment more effectively and sensitively off the back of the information set out in the Council's adopted Heritage Strategy.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Having weighed up the conflicting factors here, I consider that the specific nature of this proposal and its impacts on heritage assets outweigh the benefits that would be derived. I am also mindful that alternatives ways of achieving renewable energy both here and elsewhere exist, and that the loss of the potential renewable energy from this installation can be recouped elsewhere with less harm on irreplaceable heritage assets.

- 9. RECOMMENDATION** - Refusal of planning permission and listed building consent for the following reason:

REASON FOR REFUSAL (both applications)

- (1) The proposed installation of solar panels would be an intrusive and harmful alteration to the outbuildings which would harm the character and the appearance of the host buildings and would harm the setting of the listed building and the setting of nearby listed buildings, harm which would outweigh the public benefits that would arise from the installation, and so the installation would be contrary to policies CP4, CP8, DM14 and DM32 of Bearing Fruits 2031.

The Council's approach to the application

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2018 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

