

Planning and Heritage Statement

**PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS TO
ANNEXE ROOF**

at

**THE THATCHED COTTAGE
SMITHS END LANE
BARLEY
ROYSTON
SG8 8LH**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Swords on behalf of the Applicant, in support of a householder planning application to fix solar panels to the roof of an existing detached annexe building at The Thatched Cottage, Barley.
- 1.2 The house is Grade II listed, but the annexe was constructed in 2008 pursuant to planning permission 07/02570/1HH, following demolition of an earlier garage. It is therefore not curtilage listed. The annexe is set back in the northeast corner of the plot, approximately 20 metres away from the house, and comprises an L-shaped, single storey, white timber clad building, with a gable pitched pantile roof.
- 1.3 The site is located just south of Barley, approximately 5km southeast of Royston. To the north of the site lies Barley Cricket Ground, and to the south and west are other neighbouring properties. There is a paddock to the east of the house that is also under the Applicant's ownership. A public footpath (Barley 010) runs along the southern boundary of the site, then turns north to follow the east elevation of the annexe before cutting diagonally across the Cricket Ground. An application is currently underway to divert this, as discussed later.
- 1.4 The site lies outside the settlement boundary of Barley, and within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. The front part of the site, and a small part of the western end of the annexe building lie within the Barley Conservation Area.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The most relevant planning history is as follows:
 - 07/02570/1HH – Erection of detached annexe building following demolition of existing garage building. Approved 25 January 2008.
 - 07/02814/1CAC – Demolition of garage building. Approved 25 January 2008.
 - 01/00797/1LB – Two storey rear extension following demolition of existing sun lounge: canopy porch and side entrance door: front entrance porch (as amended by drawing nos. 183/04A and 06A received on 25th July 2001). Approved 28 August 2001.



- 01/00798/1LB – Demolition of sun lounge, erection of two storey rear extension, canopy porch, external door, front entrance porch and internal alterations (as amended by drawing nos. 183/04A and 06A received on 25th July 2001). Approved 28 August 2001.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application proposes 18 no. panels to be fixed to the roof – with 9 facing south, and 9 facing west. The panels will be fixed externally to the existing tiles, on a frame, projecting some 300mm beyond the roofslope. No other works are required.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The Development Plan comprises the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted in November 2022, along with the Minerals and Waste Local Plans for Hertfordshire which are not relevant in this case. There is no Neighbourhood Plan for Barley.
- 4.2 The most relevant Local Plan policies for determination of this application are as follows:
- CGB1 – Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt
 - CGB4 – Existing buildings in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt
 - D1 – Sustainable Design
 - HE1 – Designated Heritage Assets
 - NE12 – Renewable and low carbon energy development
- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) is also a material consideration, with the most relevant sections being Section 14 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change', and Section 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'.



- 4.4 In respect of renewable energy, NPPF Paragraph 168(a) requires local planning authorities to *“give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal’s contribution to a net zero future.”* Paragraph 168(b) goes on to require local authorities to recognise that even *“small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.”*
- 4.5 In respect of the historic environment, NPPF Paragraph 212 states, *“when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.”* Paragraphs 213-218 then consider varying levels of harm and how to balance this against the significance of the asset.

5.0 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The site lies outside the settlement boundary of Barley, and within the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. However, there should be no objection to the principle of fixing solar panels to an existing building. Policy CGB1(d) allows for development that relates to an existing rural building, and Policy CGB4 provides for the re-use, replacement or extension of existing buildings.
- 5.2 Support for renewable energy is also clearly set out in Policy NE12, with the Council required to give significant weight to the benefits of renewable energy, in accordance with the NPPF. Policy NE12 sets out a number of criteria – the most relevant of which relates to consideration of the historic environment, including any impact on the setting of historic assets as discussed below.

6.0 IMPACT ON HERITAGE ASSETS

- 6.1 The building subject of this application is located within the setting of a Grade II listed thatched cottage, but is not listed in itself, or curtilage listed. A copy of the listing is enclosed at Appendix 1. The significance of the listed building derives from its special architectural character, and historic contribution of 16th century design.



- 6.2 The annexe building is set back approximately 20 metres from the thatched cottage, and located in the northeast corner of the site. The solar panels will face towards the listed building, but at an oblique angle, with the driveway in-between. The panels will be seen within the context and setting of the listed building in limited viewpoints, but will not be visible or prominent from the road or surrounding Conservation Area.
- 6.3 Although the panels will introduce a modern material to the setting, they will be positioned on a contemporary building, and read in that context. It is therefore determined that no harm will arise to the setting or significance of the listed building as a result of this proposal.
- 6.4 Should the Council believe otherwise, and deem some less than substantial harm to arise to the setting of the listed building, then it is argued that this would fall at the lower end of the spectrum, and the public benefits of significant weight to be given to the benefits of renewable energy would more than outweigh any limited harm.
- 6.5 There are a number of other Grade II listed buildings in the vicinity of the site, including Rose Cottage, Blythe Cottage, and South Cottage to the south, and The Cottage and Rayments Cottage to the west. However, given the distance to these buildings, and the nature of the proposal, no harm will arise to their setting.
- 6.6 In terms of the Barley Conservation Area, it appears that a small part of the western end of the annexe building falls within the CA boundary, whilst the rest of the annexe and the proposed solar panels will be positioned outside the CA. Regardless, given the location of the annexe building set back from the street, with frontage screening, there will be limited views of the solar panels, and therefore no harm to the setting or significance of the CA.
- 6.7 There will be no impact on any archaeological remains, as the associated solar panel equipment will be located within the annexe building, and connections to the house already exist. No excavations are therefore required in this case.



7.0 SCALE, DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

- 7.1 The panels have been positioned so as to maximise solar energy generation – therefore on the south and west facing roofslopes. The panels will not cover the entire roof, and will leave a meaningful gap at each end to ensure the panels do not dominate the roof. Further, the panels will be raised above the roofslope by some 300mm, ensuring that the pantiles remain evident beneath. The development is therefore entirely reversible.
- 7.2 Although the NPPF makes it clear that Applicants should not demonstrate any overall need or justification for renewable energy, the proposed solar panels are essential to ensure long-term viable heating costs for the listed building.
- 7.1 There will be public views of the building from public footpath Barley 010 that currently runs along the southern boundary of the site, and turns north to follow the east elevation of the annexe. However, an application is currently underway with HCC to divert this footpath to follow the southern boundary of the paddock, before turning north to follow the eastern boundary of the paddock and Cricket Ground to join existing footpath Barley 009. A copy of the Diversion Plan is enclosed at Appendix 2. The Cricket Club are wholly on board with this proposal as Footpath 010 currently crosses diagonally over the cricket ground.

8.0 OTHER MATTERS

- 8.1 The proposal will have no impact on neighbouring amenity, parking or highway safety, nor will there be any further environmental implications.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 In summary, this is a modest proposal to secure much needed energy upgrades to an existing residential property. The solar panels are positioned in the best possible location to maximise renewable energy generation – there are no other alternatives.
- 9.2 It has been determined that no harm would arise to the setting of any designated heritage assets. However, should the Council deem some less than substantial harm to arise to the



setting of The Thatched Cottage, then this is more than outweighed by the public benefits of moving towards a net zero future, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 215. Both the NPPF and LP Policy NE12 confirm that this should be afforded **significant** weight in the overall planning balance.

- 9.3 Officers are therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission, subject to conditions as deemed reasonable and necessary.



APPENDIX 1

The Thatched Cottage listing description (1308281)

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The Thatched Cottage

THE THATCHED COTTAGE, SMITH END

Listed on the National Heritage List for England. Search over 400,000 listed places

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>)

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1308281

Date first listed: 03-Jun-1987

List Entry Name: The Thatched Cottage

Statutory Address 1: THE THATCHED COTTAGE, SMITH END

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries](#)

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

[Corrections and minor amendments](#)

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

Location

Statutory Address: THE THATCHED COTTAGE, SMITH END

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Hertfordshire

District: North Hertfordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Barley

National Grid Reference: TL 40067 37774

Details

BARLEY SMITH END TL 43 NW (Northeast side)

4/122 The Thatched Cottage

GV II

House. C16, altered C17. Refronted, extended and altered C20. Timber frame. Weatherboarded with red brick refronting. Thatched roofs with some pantiles. Originally probably a small single-ended hall house. 3 hall bays now 1 storey and attic with 2 bay 2 storey crosswing to right. C20 casements to front, 1 dormer in steeply pitched thatch. C17 ridge stack to left of centre. Crosswing to right has a taller ridge with steeply pitched gable to front with a small pane casement. Projecting forwards a pantiled lean-to addition with a 2 light casement, entrance in left return. Right return of wing has a horizontal sliding sash and casements, half hip to rear. Hipped roof to left front returns to later 2 storey wing with scattered casements and an eyebrow dormer. Interior: exposed framing, altered and partially rebuilt. Curved tension braces. Jowled posts with arched braces to cambered tie beams. Curved windbraces.

Listing NGR: TL4006737774

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **162579**

Legacy System: **LBS**

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. This copy shows the entry on 21-Jan-2026 at 11:22:04.

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APPENDIX 2

Barley 010 diversion plan

Diversion Plan Barley 10

