



Development and Conservation,
North Hertfordshire District Council,
PO Box 10613,
Nottingham,
NG6 6DH

Date: 26th November 2024
Our ref: 19/010/A/mc
Your ref:

Dear Sirs

**RE: PLANNING AND CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT APPLICATION FOR REROOFING
WORKS AT THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE, 4 MARKET HILL, ROYSTON,
HERTFORDSHIRE. SG8 9JL**

Please be advised that we have, today, submitted a Planning and Conservation Area Consent Application for the reroofing of the above property using the Planning Portal. For the sake of clarity, the application comprises the following information:

- This Covering Letter (including Design and Heritage Statement)
- The Application Form
- The Application fee of £293.00 which has been paid to the Planning Portal and will be forwarded to you in due course
- Drawings
19/010/A/001 – Location and Block Plans
19/010/A/005 – EXISTING – Plans and Elevations
19/010/A/006 – PROPOSED – Plans and Elevations
- Product Information: Marley Photovoltaic Panels
Cedral 'Rivendale' Fibre Slate Roofing.

Design and Heritage Statement:

The Old School House (4 Market Hill)

The Old School house comprises part of the Former Royston National School which was built in 1886 for the children of Church of England families of Royston and is classed, by North Hertfordshire District Council, as a Building of Local Historic Interest.

The building comprises two distinct elements; the part of the application site which fronts Fish Hill is predominantly a single storey flint building with gault brick dressings, chimneys and a small bell tower whilst the remainder comprises a tall, gable ended, building in yellow brick with red feature brickwork which fronts both Fish Hill and Market Hill.

The Conservation Area Townscape Analysis dating from March 2017 states that:

“...Fish Hill (named after the fish market originally held there) and Market Hill are parallel streets situated to the east of the High Street. The streets are relatively narrow, creating an intimate character which is maintained for the length of Fish Hill, however, Market Hill

is tapered in shape and becomes wider as the hill rises to the south and then opens into the Market Place. The Market Place is at a lower level than the A10, which separates the Market Place from The Boars Head and The Green Man public houses which are on the south side of Market Hill and close the view at the top of the Market Place. There is also an open space at the bottom of the hill to the North enclosed by buildings of mixed age and appearance...

...Royston National School Building (1886-1944) is situated behind the Old Court building between the two streets. It is a single storey flint building with regularly positioned chimneys situated close the eaves. The School provides a strong building line to both Fish Hill and Market Hill and has an enclosed courtyard facing onto Market Hill..."

The Brief:

The Applicants have carried out significant internal improvements in recent years to facilitate the use of the building as a community asset with various local groups, charities and businesses making use of the facilities, however, the existing roofing slates on both parts of The Old School House are well overdue for replacement and there are now signs of significant water ingress internally, particularly in the Meeting Hall.

In order to ensure the continued viability of the building and prevent the building deteriorating the applicants have decided to replace the existing roof finishes and, to improve the suitability of the building, introduce flush mounted photovoltaic panels whilst carrying out the reroofing works.

The Challenge:

Approved Document Part L2 of the current Building Regulations states that any existing thermal elements being renovated (or renewed) should meet minimum 'limiting' standards with regards thermal performance. The require minimum standard for roofs in existing buildings of this type is 0.18w/m2K.

The existing single storey block along Fish Hill has had the thermal performance of its external walls improved and some insulation introduced under the existing roof structure during a previous internal refurbishment but its roof only achieves a U-value of 0.258 w/m2K. the roof of the Meeting Hall is uninsulated and achieves a U-value of 1.536 w/m2K.

The single storey flint building which was previously the Royston National School Building has, at some stage, been sub-divided with part of that building being occupied by the adjacent Dentist Practice and part being within the application site and, therefore, any roof replacement works must ensure that the existing roof plane is preserved. This will require any additional insulation to be introduced between and under the existing rafters, an approach which was anticipated during the previous refurbishment works with insulation being introduced to the underside of the rafters.

The roof over the Meeting Hall is unaffected by any adjacent roofs and, therefore, is not constrained in the same way as the lower-level roof and it is, therefore, possible to introduce insulation either between and below the existing rafters as in the lower building or over and between the existing rafters.

Internally this part of the building benefits from exposed collar tied timber roof trusses and diagonal timber boarding fixed to the underside of the existing rafters, all of which contributes to the historic character of the building.

Installing insulation below and between these rafters would result in the removal of the timber boarding and the partial obscuring of the trusses whilst insulating over and between the same rafters would preserve these elements but would result in an increase in the height of the existing roof.

The solution:

The solution to the requirement to thermally upgrade the roof to the single-storey building along Fish Hill is dictated by the nature of the building itself and the fact that The Applicants do not have control over the whole of the original building.

These constraints limit the options to those articulated above and, therefore, it is proposed to introduce insulation between the existing rafters, once the existing roof finishes have been removed, to complement the insulation which has already been placed under the rafters and allow the replacement roof finishes to continue within the same plane as the existing finishes of the adjoining part of the building.

This approach will improve the U-value of this part of the thermal envelope from 1.536 w/m²K to 0.134 w/m²K which is substantially better than the required 'limiting' U-value stated in Approved Document Part L2.

The preferred solution for the high-level roof over the Meeting Hall is driven by the desire to preserve the visibility of the existing historic fabric inside the building.

Whilst this will require an increase to the ridge height of the existing building, it is our view that the increase is minor considering the overall height of the existing building and will not result in an adverse impact upon the character of the building nor the surrounding conservation area.

This approach will improve the U-value of this part of the thermal envelope from 0.258 w/m²K to 0.159 w/m²K which is better than the required 'limiting' U-value stated in Approved Document Part L2.

Policy Context:

Paragraphs 9.2 and 9.3 of North Herts District Council's Sustainability SPD states that:

"The NPPF (para. 164) states that LPAs "should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights)."

Where proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, the NPPF requires the consideration of additional considerations as set out in Chapter 16 of the NPPF (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)."

Whilst paragraph 9.24 states that:

Listed building consent will always be required for the installation of photovoltaic and solar thermal panels.

- *Panels should avoid harm to the historic fabric. Careful consideration should be given to the location and the impact of associated infrastructure on the historic fabric, external and internal appearance.*
- *The implications of additional loading (due to weight of panels) may need to be considered (consult a structural engineer).*
- *Avoid significant alternation to roof structure.*
- *Panels should be located so that they are not overtly visible in short and medium distance views and in longer distance views blend, through product type into the roofscape. This can be achieved by:*
 - *Avoiding prominent and highly visible roof slopes of primary elevations*
 - *Considering roof slope of rear and secondary elevations*
 - *Considering inner roof slope of double pitched, M style roof*

- *Avoiding reflective materials and match the colour of the existing roof covering...*

Paragraph 209 of the NPPF states that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

Whilst the application site is not a Listed Building we recognise that, as a Building of Local Interest, The Old School House has an important role to play in the story of the social and educational history of the town.

In choosing the proposed roofing materials we have selected a modern roof slate which combines modern slate technology with the look of a natural slate.

In selecting the proposed photovoltaic panels we have been mindful of the external appearance of the roof of the building and it's visibility from within the Conservation Area.

In order to maximise the efficiency of the Photovoltaic Array, the proposed panels should be installed on the South Eastern facing part of the high-level roof, facing towards Market Square.

Whilst this particular roof slope is reasonably prominent, the Market Hill Surgery Building and Library directly to the South East of the site obstruct any medium and long-range views of the roof slope and it is, therefore, considered that this is a suitable location which balances the technical requirement for efficiency with minimal impact upon the character of the Conservation Area.

To further reduce any adverse visual impact, the proposed Photovoltaic panels have been chosen as they offer a system solution which sits flush with the proposed roof finishes, avoiding any unsightly protrusions within the roof slope, and a finish which is similar to the proposed roof slates in both colour and reflectance.

The proposed approach to introducing insulation over the existing high-level roof will have an impact upon the gable ends of the Meeting Hall part of the building, increasing both gables by approximately 210mm (3 courses of brick). It is proposed that the existing red feature brickwork along the gable edge of the roof be extended in brickwork selected to match the existing with the verge of the roof being reinstated as the existing detail. Any cut bricks in the existing detail will be removed with the new brickwork being toothed into the existing.

Conclusion:

The applicants are aware of their responsibilities to maintain and preserve The Old School House as a heritage asset of local significance within Royston and, faced with the immediate need to replace the existing roof coverings to ensure that further water ingress does not occur, have sought to balance the technical and legislative requirements around the replacement of the roof coverings with the need to ensure that any proposed works do not have an unacceptable impact upon the historic character of the building and the wider Conservation Area.

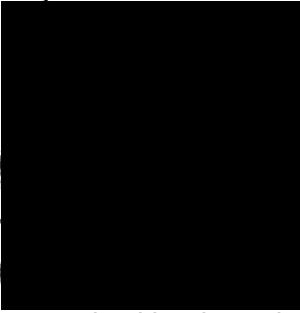
The proposed works to the lower-level building are of little visual impact with additional insulation being introduced to meet the technical requirements of the Building Regulations without the need to alter the external appearance of the building.

The proposed alterations to the high-level roof strike a sensible balance between minimising the impact upon the appearance of the non-designated heritage asset, particularly internally, and the character of the Conservation Area with the need to replace the failed roof covering whilst achieving appropriate levels of insulation and improving the sustainability of the building as a whole.

We trust that you will share our view of the proposed works and granted Planning Permission in due course.

Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us using the details at the top of this letter.

Yours faithfully



Mark Cotton BA (arch); Dip Arch. RIBA Chartered Architect

Director

For and on behalf of

architecture & design services ltd.

