

LEWIS & RUTH HOUGHTON
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30.05.17

**CLERK TO THE LOCAL REVIEW BODY
COMMITTEE TEAM,
COMMUNICATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES,
JOHN MUIR HOUSE,
HADDINGTON,
EH41 3HA**

**REF: COURTYARD COTTAGE, 2 REDSIDE FARM STEADING, EH39 5PE
PLANNING APPLICATION
ELC REF: 17/00158/P**

Dear Fiona Stewart,

Thank you for your letter dated 24th May and the Notice of Review form that we have completed and enclosed. Further to the refusal of our recent planning application I would like to commence the appeal process and raise the following points for consideration.

One of our main aims was to utilise the south facing rear roof of our property with the installation of solar PV panels in order to reduce our dependency on electricity and to be able to heat and light our house from a carbon neutral and sustainable energy source. Our house is off the gas grid and electricity is the only source of energy we are able to use so it made sense to apply for the solar panels to be fitted. We made the application fully aware that our house is a Cat B listed property and were happy to make the application in order to comply with ELC planning departments regulations for the said improvements.

When the farm Steading was developed in 1994 from a run down set of farm buildings into residential dwellings and given its Cat B listing one of the main stipulations given was that the main character and feel of the Steading should be kept in order, we feel that adding solar panels to the 'rear' of the property on the south facing roof that is only seen by a handful of the Steading residents would not in any way detract from the historic feel of the former agricultural buildings that housed livestock, farm machinery and crops. It should be pointed out that when the Steading was used as a working farm there were no Velux windows in place, roofs would have been a mix of tiles, slates and corrugated iron along with make shift lean to's for storing farm equipment. Also, there were no stainless steel wood burning stove flues that all the houses now have so the addition of solar panels would in no way create a nasty visual impact on the building in its current form. We were amazed that our application was refused and feel that ELC have totally overlooked the benefits to the environment and to us as home owners. We feel that in 2017 changes need to be

made to the way that we heat and light our houses and that the Policy 1B (Spatial Strategy: Development Principles) of the approved South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan and Policies (part 5), ENV3 and DP6 of the adopted East Lothian Local Plan 2008 is out of date with how we all live today and does not take into consideration the advancements in solar PV technology, the impact on the environment we have made since 1994 and the need for us all as home owners to not be so reliant on fossil fuels. As per the drawings that we had produced and following a consultation with the installer Everwarm our intention is to set the solar panels between the two existing Velux windows so they blended in well with the current roof line. A main part of the planning refusal states that the solar panels would be 'bulky and incongruous features on the roof of the house' and out of keeping with the character of the building, we feel that in 2017 a different view has to be taken when considering green energy improvements to buildings such as this. We fully understand that the fabric of the Steading needs to be kept in place and this is something we are very aware of and do not want to alter but it also needs to be economically viable for residents to be able to live in older less energy efficient buildings without the fear of massive electricity bills throughout the year. We are not planning to extend the house or change the structure, paint the property a vivid colour, add a conservatory porch or increase the height of the roof line all we are looking to do is add some solar panels that will enable us to tap into a free and green source of energy. Our heating bills are incredibly high due to the reliance on electricity so the addition of solar panels would not only improve our living standards, reduce our carbon footprint but also save us money every month. We have enclosed a copy of our latest electricity bill from Scottish Power and as you can see it is very expensive (£339.79 pm) for us to heat and light our two bedroom stone built cottage and we feel that this is an issue that needs to be addressed with the installation of the solar panels. To date we have had secondary internal glazing fitted, roof cavity insulation, new flooring and draft proofing in an attempt to trap the heat and reduce the heating bills the solar panels would make the property very cheap to heat and light and would be in line with ELC green energy obligations. As you can see by The Guardian article that I have included solar energy is fast becoming a very important source of energy for houses and thus easing pressure on the national grid and big energy suppliers.

In relation to the objections that were received about the solar panels I would like to point out that one of the most detailed objections came from a home owner at the Steading who only uses the property as a holiday house and is very rarely here so to say that the installation of the panels to our property would harm their view is rather off kilter. I also note that it was felt that if we were to have the solar panels fitted it would create a 'domino effect' for other Steading residents to proceed with installing them to their properties. However, when you look at the houses that have a south facing internal roof line worthy of making use of solar panels there are only two other properties that could benefit from this type of renewable energy source so no domino effect would happen. It was also mentioned that the solar panels would be 'out of keeping with the character and appearance of the listed building and to the visual amenity of the landscape of the area' however when you travel around the county of East Lothian there are a vast amount of stone brick built houses/cottages/steadings that all have solar panels fitted to them and in no way do they detract from visual impact of the original buildings. It should also be mentioned that the Cat B listed Farm House here at Redside has had solar panels in place for

the past 6 years following a successful planning application and in no way causes any eye sore to the occasional passer by or local residents.

The officers report (dated 27th April 2017) contained a few points that I feel need to be addressed.

(ii) the proposed solar panels will impact on views from the windows of a neighbouring residential property and could be sited within their garden so that they do not have a negative visual impact on the whole Steading;

With regards to the above comment the proposed solar panels would only be overlooked by a handful (6 in total) of the Redside residents and as they face onto the Courtyard to the rear of the Steading so the visual impact would be very limited. As the solar panels are to be fitted to the roof of our property viewing the panels by the neighbours is highly unlikely as the upstairs of each property has a velux window in the roof and are used for light into the bedrooms and ventilation rather than viewing the courtyard. Each property here at the Steading has a garden to the front and access and use of the courtyard to the rear, we are the only house to have an enclosed private garden so to describe the Courtyard as a garden is completely incorrect. The shared courtyards of the other houses are used mainly for access and clothes drying.

(iii) the proposed solar panels would harm the historic external fabric of the building and would be inappropriate and insensitive to its context;

The solar panels would not harm the historic external fabric of the building as they are only visible from the courtyard area and have no impact on the external outward aspect of the Steading. We also believe that the sensitive way the panels would be fitted and blend in with the Velux windows, cars, new fences, gates, abandoned vehicles, log piles, sheds, chainsaws, mowers, dustbins, recycling bins, wheel barrows, wood stores, garden furniture, clothes lines, ping pong tables, raised planters, decking, paving, BBQ's, trampolines, slides, house signage, exterior lighting fittings etc and would in no way be inappropriate and insensitive to the context of the Steading as it is in 2017.

(iv) the proposed solar panels would contravene title deeds which state that such infrastructure systems should not be seen; and

The panels are seen as an addition to the individual's property and with the feudal system now defunct the title deeds are out of step with how the Steading functions today and how we all live our lives.

In January 2011 ELCPP Working Group Meeting published the following statement.

A Statement of Intent was agreed by East Lothian Community Planning Board following a consultation exercise identifying what the Partnership aspires to achieve in the long term:

“We will work in partnership to build an East Lothian where everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life and which contributes to a fair and sustainable future for Scotland and the wider world.”

The meeting also highlighted the following points which we think are highly relative to the situation we now find ourselves in.

Reducing the use of energy was highlighted, along with encouraging more reliance on renewable energy sources.

The need for “energy security” was raised – i.e. the development of adequate local sources of energy.

Make sure information is available on energy efficiency – e.g. energy saving grants.

Encourage carbon neutral development.

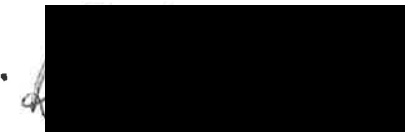
Encourage environmentally friendly business.

Personal responsibility for looking after the environment came out strongly.

We totally agree with these statements and as residents of this wonderful county East Lothian we all have a commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and to saving the planet for future generations. We felt we could do this with the solar panels whilst not changing or altering the feel and character of the building that once had been a working agricultural Steading.

We'd like you to reconsider our application and look forward to hearing from you in due course and thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,



LEWIS & RUTH HOUGHTON

Solar power breaks UK records thanks to sunny weather

Thousands of photovoltaic panels across the UK generate 8.7GW, smashing previous high of 8.48GW earlier this month



Solar energy has grown from almost nothing to 11GW in seven years. Photograph: Carl Court/Getty Images

Adam Vaughan

Friday 26 May 2017
16.09 BST

Solar power has broken new records in the UK by providing nearly a quarter of the country's electricity needs, thanks to sunny skies and relatively low summer demand.

National Grid said the thousands of photovoltaic panels on rooftops and in fields across the UK were generating 8.7GW, or 24.3% of demand at 1pm on Friday, smashing the previous high of 8.48GW earlier this month.

Experts said the unprecedented share for solar energy meant about 60% of the UK's power

was low carbon, taking into account Britain's wind farms and nuclear power stations too. That figure is normally around 50%.

National Grid, which is tasked with ensuring a match between supply and demand for electricity, said it was excited but unfazed by the challenge of accommodating "significant volumes" of renewables.

Duncan Burt, who manages day-to-day operation of the grid, said: "We have planned for these changes to the energy landscape and have the tools available to ensure we can balance supply and demand."

Hannah Martin, head of energy at Greenpeace, said: "Today's new record is a reminder of what the UK could achieve if our government reversed its cuts to support for solar, and backed the clean technologies that could provide jobs, business opportunities and plentiful clean energy for decades to come."

The milestone reached on Friday is the latest in a series of records for solar, which has grown from almost nothing seven years ago to 12GW of capacity today. Last summer it provided more power than the UK's last 10 coal-fired power stations.

In April this year, Britain achieved its first-ever full working day without coal power since it started burning the fuel in 1882, thanks in part to solar energy.

Solar's rapid growth is overturning conventions for the managers of the UK's power grid. In March, for the first time ever, the amount of electricity demanded by homes and businesses in the afternoon was lower than it was in the night, thanks to the cut in demand due to solar panels.

Alastair Buckley, a solar expert at the University of Sheffield, said of the latest record: "I think it's a positive sign. It's free electricity today, for the consumer, and we should make the most of it."

He said that with solar continuing to be installed despite the government's drastic subsidy cuts in 2016, further records will certainly be broken this summer and for years to come.

Buckley said the grid could handle a far greater proportion of solar power than currently seen, because gas power stations could be ramped down. For National Grid, periods of high pressure bringing lovely weather to the UK like this week were: "really predictable, so easy to plan for," Buckley said.

Robert Gross of Imperial College said: "This doesn't pose fundamental problem for the grid - many sunnier countries manage a similar proportion of solar on a much more regular basis."

Government statistics published on Thursday show that UK solar power capacity has grown from 11.3GW in April last year to 12.1GW this year, enough to power 3.8m homes.

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Topics

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- news

Our Ref: LRB/FS
Date : 24 May 2017

Mr and Mrs L Houghton
Courtyard Cottage
2 Redside Farm Steadings
NORTH BERWICK
EH39 5PE

Dear Mrs Scott

Planning Application 17/00158/P

Thank you for your letter of 22 May 2017 advising that you would like to lodge an appeal against the decision to refuse your planning application.

In order for me to begin the appeal process, please complete the enclosed Notice of Review form and return to me at the address above together with your supporting documents. Please note that the Notice of Review must be submitted within 3 months of the date on the Decision Notice.

If you find it more convenient, the Notice of Review Form can be completed online and can be accessed using the link below:

<https://www.eplanning.scot/ePlanningClient/CustomPages/PaperForm.aspx?formID=26>

Guidance notes can be located at:

<https://www.eplanning.scot/ePlanningClient/CustomPages/PaperForm.aspx?formID=27>

Please contact me using the details below if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Stewart

Committees Assistant
Direct Line: 01620 827249
e-mail: fstewart@eastlothian.gov.uk

24 MAY 2017

LEWIS & RUTH HOUGHTON
courtyard cottage, 2 redside farm steadings, north berwick eh39 5pe

e: [REDACTED]

w: [REDACTED]

22.05.17

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JOHN MUIR HOUSE,
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Development Plan and Policies (part5), ENV3 and DP6 of the adopted East Lothian Local plan 2008 is out of date with how we all live today and does not take into consideration the advancements in solar PV technology, the impact on the environment we have made since 1994 and the need for us all as home owners to not be so reliant on fossil fuels. As per the drawings that we had produced and following a consultation with the installer Everwarm our intention is to set the solar panels between the two existing Velux windows so they blended in well with the current roof line. A main part of the planning refusal states that the solar panels would be 'bulky and incongruous features on the roof of the house' and out of keeping with the character of the building, we feel that in 2017 a different view has to be taken when considering green energy improvements to buildings such as this. We fully understand that the fabric of the Steading needs to be kept in place and this is something we are very aware of and do not want to alter but it also needs to be economically viable for residents to be able to live in older less energy efficient buildings without the fear of massive electricity bills throughout the year. Our heating bills are incredibly high due to the reliance on electricity so the addition of solar panels would not only improve our living standards, reduce our carbon footprint but also save us money every month. To date we have had secondary internal glazing fitted, roof cavity insulation, new flooring and draft proofing in an attempt to trap the heat and reduce the heating bills the solar panels would make the property very cheap to heat and light and would be in line with ELC green energy obligations.

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We'd like you to reconsider our application and look forward to hearing from you in due course and thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area. To the right of the box, there is a small, faint handwritten mark that appears to be the number '4'.

LEWIS & RUTH HOUGHTON