

## See the light

**Getting enough light into a converted barn is always an architectural challenge, especially when it is a conservation area and the windows cannot be obtrusive. That is why property developers Dow Brandeston Ltd opted for rooflights as a solution for their renovation project, Hall Farm Barns.**

Located in Fornham All Saints, a few miles from the historic town of Bury St Edmunds, the dilapidated barn at Hall Farm has been transformed into what can only be described as a stunning conversion. The once agricultural barn is now the structure for five domestic properties and the village post office. Judith Kent of Dow Brandeston explains:

“When we discovered the barn it was in a complete mess and had obviously been standing there totally redundant for quite some time. The only real sign of life was the post office come village shop which was positioned at the end of the barn but even that was suffering from lack of custom and was very rundown. We decided to renovate it into two 2 bedroom houses and relocate the post office to the end of the barn as it was important that the villagers didn't lose their post office”.

However, before work could commence the whole barn had to be stripped back to the frame and the roof which was made of corrugated asbestos had to be removed and disposed of by a licensed specialist. To keep within the conservation guidelines terracotta pan tiles were used for the main barn and reclaimed slate for the former post office. Rooflights were the obvious choice to allow maximum light in but like many other barn conversions the rooflights were not allowed to sit proud of the cladding or intrude on the building's period character. Dow Brandeston Ltd sourced the rooflights from Tuscan Foundry Products.

“Once Judith had explained the project I knew that our steel rooflights would be the best option as they would sit flush with the roofline and can be manufactured with large opening sections” explained Paul Trace, Managing Director of Tuscan Foundry Products Ltd. “The steel rooflights were glazed to a high specification and incorporated a argon gas field unit with a low e coating. The biggest advantage for this particular property was that the steel rooflights could be specifically made to provide slender sections that will not detract from the character of historic buildings”

A total of 42 rooflights were used to provide ample light into each of the properties and this was further enhanced by using sun spots. Some of these rooflights have been motorised and hardwired to the alarm system for fire escape.

“This is the first time we have used sun spots as well as rooflights and we are really impressed” enthuses Judith, “it really has made a difference and lets in exactly the right amount of light”.

Judith has also received very positive feedback from the new residents of Hall Farm Barns. One couple that have moved into the biggest of the plots in January confessed the amount of light coming in to the property was its main selling point:

Before this we lived in a 1930’s house with bay windows which was really dark” they explain, “We cannot believe the amount of natural light that can be generated by having rooflights. We am really pleased with the rooflights and have even got used to using the pole to open them which we think adds to the whole character of living in a converted barn.“

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