

Date: 24 May 2021

Planning and Regulatory Services
West Suffolk Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3YU

Dear Sir/Madam,

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR PROPOSED WORKS ASSOCIATED WITH A GARDEN CENTRE FACILITY WITHIN THE WALLED GARDEN AT THE COUTYARD, ELVEDEN ESTATE, LONDON ROAD, ELVEDEN, IP24 3TQ

Overview

I write on behalf of our client, Elveden Farms Ltd, to submit an application for Listed Building Consent for works associated with a proposed garden centre within the grounds of the existing Walled Garden at The Courtyard, Elveden Estate. This application is associated with the Planning Permission (reference: DC/19/0470/FUL) granted on 23 December 2019 for the following development:

“Planning Application - (i) Garden centre (A1) with replacement farm shop, Restaurant/Cafe (A3) and ancillary facilities within the Elveden walled garden (ii) Provision of associated car parking and landscaping on adjoining land and ancillary service, delivery and refuse areas”.

Background

This application for Listed Building Consent is submitted to address discussions with the Council following the grant of planning permission DC/19/0470/FUL and their deliberations on curtilage listing in respect of the Walled Garden. The Council clarified their position with the granting of full planning permission for the construction of a garden centre within the Walled Garden on the basis that an application for Listed Building Consent would follow.

Following the grant of planning permission DC/19/0470/FUL, a detailed topographical survey was undertaken which revealed a south to north elevation change of approximately 3 metres. As a result of this, the consented proposals have been carefully considered and a number of minor alterations have been made to the approved design so that it continues to provide mitigation measures to reduce any impact of harm. The mitigation measures are set out in the section headed “conservation” below.

The full list of mitigation measures is set out within the Heritage Statement Addendum, prepared by RPS, dated April 2021 and further detail on the proposals is shown on the accompanying drawings and the document titled ‘Schedule of Works’.

A separate application will be submitted shortly to amend the list of drawings in condition 2 of the planning permission, in order to replace the approved elevation and site-section drawings by those being submitted for this listed building application, as set out below,

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises the existing Walled Garden adjacent to the existing Elveden Courtyard which is located at the eastern edge of the village of Elveden, Suffolk, approximately 3.5 km south-west of the town of

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Thetford. The site is largely surrounded by other buildings, including Elveden Church and Churchyard to the south, offices and agricultural buildings to the west and Cottages to the east.

The wider surrounding area comprises a patchwork of mixed and coniferous plantation woodlands, arable fields and parkland associated with the Elveden Estate. The site has two accesses, one off the B1106 Brandon Road close to the A11 Elveden interchange, and one to the south off the London Road (old A11).

Site Designations

The site is located within the Elveden Conservation Area and partly located within the Stone Curlew 1500 buffer zone and is surrounded by open countryside. Most of the site falls outside of, but adjacent to the Elveden Settlement Boundary.

Planning History

West Suffolk Council's online planning register identifies a number of planning history records associated with the site which are set out below.

Firstly, the most relevant permission and to which this application for Listed Building Consent relates, is Planning Permission Reference: DC/19/0470/FUL which was granted on 23 December 2019 for "*Planning Application - (i) Garden centre (A1) with replacement farm shop, Restaurant/Cafe (A3) and ancillary facilities within the Elveden walled garden (ii) Provision of associated car parking and landscaping on adjoining land and ancillary service, delivery and refuse areas*".

Further to this, the following have been granted at the site:

- **LPA ref: F/2001/451** – Planning permission was granted on 19 September 2001 for "*change of use from agricultural maintenance depot to retail shop (Class A1)*".
- **LPA ref. F/2003/1086/COU** – Planning permission was granted on 13 February 2004 for "*part retrospective application: change of use of agricultural maintenance depot to craft shops (A1), bistro (A3) and light industrial/sales (B1/A1)*".
- **LPA ref: F2013/0188/FUL – Planning permission was granted on 21 August 2013** for "*erection of single storey extensions and alterations to existing estate shop (A1) and café/restaurant (A3), including an additional conservatory dining area, new butcher and produce displays, ancillary office space, replacement WC facilities and a glazed walking line*".

Please see the following section for the Design and Access Statement which sets out full details of the proposals.

Design and Access Statement

Rationale of development

The key development principle of the proposal is for works in order to continue to enhance the offer of the Elveden Courtyard to create more local jobs, attract more visitors and counterbalance the loss of traffic and footfall directed to the estate caused by the opening of the Bypass.

Elveden Farms is working in a joint venture with Blue Diamond to create a high-quality garden centre with ancillary restaurant/café facilities that would have a significant beneficial impact on the local economy, the tourist economy and would create a new social and shopping attraction for the local community.

Amount of development

The proposed works to the existing Walled Garden sought in this application for Listed Building Consent comprise:

- Removal of existing copings and re-bed on fresh lime mortar incorporating high grip DPC. Where copings are damaged or missing replace with new / reclaimed copings to match existing.
- Widen existing gateway to south elevation, construct new arch header and reform quoins to jambs – all to match existing in lime mortar.
- Replacement of existing timber doors to external perimeter with new softwood painted timber doors
- Repair cracked / damaged bricks, replacing where appropriate, with reclaimed bricks to match existing in lime mortar.
- New roof abutments to be independently formed with new metal composite, insulated roof sheets. Junctions with existing brickwork to be provided with two-part flashing chased into existing mortar joints to form weather tight seal.

Layout

The layout of the proposals remains as per the existing and as approved under Planning Permission (reference: DC/19/0470/FUL). The internal layout of the Garden Centre will be finalised with the operator in due course and will comply with all the relevant building regulations, accessibility and fire safety measures required for this typology of commercial premises.

Scale

In-line with the approved planning permission (reference: DC/19/0470/FUL), the existing walls enclosing the garden centre will be retained.

The proposals sit comfortably within the walled gardens and would not protrude above existing structures, thus preserving the hierarchy of forms of the site and respecting the openness of the local context

Appearance

The proposed works do not significantly alter the appearance of the approved buildings. The setting of the walled garden and its relationship to other historic structures in the vicinity have been taken into consideration. The proposals preserve the character and appearance of the setting of the listed buildings, the majority of the Elveden Conservation Area and the Buildings of Interest within it. Although the new roof structure would alter the character of the Walled Garden's internal space, it would preserve the important internal views within it.

The Walled Garden is largely unused and the principle of its redevelopment as a market garden is considered by the Council to be a good alternative to its original kitchen garden use. Bringing this historic asset into re-use would be of major benefit and would outweigh the low level of harm, that any alterations and additions would cause.

Access/ Servicing and Parking

The main pedestrian access is located on the northern end of the garden centre, immediately to the south of the new car parking. Visitors will enter the garden centre via a small courtyard which would function as a break between the arrival point and the enclosed shopping area. The restaurant to the south will be accessed via the outdoor sales area and will directly face the rear garden.

Car parking

The car parking will remain the same as approved under the planning permission reference: DC/19/0470/FUL, comprising a total of 394 car parking spaces, 4 electric charging spaces and 2 bus parking spaces. Wheelchair user's car parking spaces are located directly opposite the main pedestrian entrance to facilitate access to the garden centre.

Servicing/Storage Arrangements

The storage/servicing arrangements will remain the same as approved under the planning permission reference: DC/19/0470. The service area is located between the main access road and the western wall of the garden centre. The goods yard, external storage area and waste recycling area serving the garden centre is located to the west of the garden centre.

Visitors' vehicles will access the site from the existing main entrance. Servicing vehicles will access the site from the existing alley. Larger delivery vehicles and refuse vehicles serving the garden centre will maneuver in the new hard standing located on the western side of the access road.

Landscaping

In accordance with the planning permission (reference: DC/19/0470/FUL) and the accompanying Planning, Design and Access Statement prepared by RPS, dated March 2019, the proposals will not result in a harmful impact and it is considered that no further survey work is required.

There will be no significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the landscape and Conservation Area, since the proposals are in- keeping with the scale, amount and appearance of the buildings neighbouring the site, and the characteristic features of the Conservation Area, as outlined in the Elveden Conservation Area appraisal.

Please see the following section which sets out the planning policy context and planning considerations.

Planning Policy Context

On 1 April 2019 Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were replaced by a single Authority, West Suffolk Council. The development plans for the previous local planning authorities were carried forward to the new Council by Regulation, therefore the planning policies applicable to the site are set out in the plans produced by the now dissolved Forest Heath District Council which are as follows:

- Forest Heath Core Strategy (Adopted May 2010);
- West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document (Adopted February 2015); and
- Local Plan Policies Map (Adopted February 2015)

Planning Considerations

The principle of the proposed development has been deemed acceptable through the grant of planning permission reference: DC/19/0470/FUL on 23 December 2019.

In summary, the Council found that the proposed retail use would not have a significant impact on the town centres of Brandon, Thetford and Mildenhall and that the sequential test as set out in the NPPF had been satisfied. On this basis the proposal accords with Joint Development Management Policy DM35 and the paragraph 89 of NPPF.

It was not considered that the proposal would result in adverse impacts on the Conservation Area, and whilst it was acknowledged there would be some harm to the setting of the walled garden, views of the proposed structure within this area from outside of the site have been kept to a minimum and the harm in this respect is not significant. It was therefore considered that in this regard the requirements of Joint Development Management Policies DM2, DM17 and Section 66 and 72 of the Town and Country Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) Act 1990 are satisfied.

The benefits of the development in terms of increased spend in the local area, employment and tourism were considered to significantly outweigh the identified minor harm in respect of the setting of the walled garden area and the impact on the Conservation Area. The proposal was considered to accord with Joint Development Management Policy DM2 and paragraph 127 of the NPPF in this regard.

The Council concluded that the proposed development accords with the development plan in all other regards, represents sustainable development and was subsequently approved.

Conservation

In terms of the impact of the proposal on the walled garden, the historic character, fabric and previous usage of the Walled Garden has already been considered by the Council in the planning permission DC/19/0470/FUL and although some necessary additions and minor alterations were considered to affect its character, mitigation measures had been implemented in order to reduce the impact of any harm and include:

- The ridges of the proposed new roof would sit below the height of the Walled Garden's high walls;
- Although a section of the walled garden is proposed to be enclosed, the entrance courtyard would be glazed, preserving an openness to the elements and the internal retail area would be left as open as possible.
- Any loss of historic fabric has been kept to a minimum level; additionally, the garden walls are proposed to be left fully exposed;
- Abutment of new to historic wall interfaces have been extensively considered and matching/appropriate materials have been proposed.

The setting of the walled garden and its relationship to other historic structures in the vicinity was also taken into consideration and it was found that the development proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the setting of the listed buildings, the majority of the Elveden Conservation Area and the Buildings of Interest within it. Although the new roof structure would alter the character of the Walled Garden's internal space, it would preserve the important internal views within it.

Conclusion

The Walled Garden is largely unused and the principle of its redevelopment as a market garden has been previously accepted by the Council and deemed to be a good alternative to its original use.

Following the grant of planning permission DC/19/0470/FUL, it has been proven that development within the Walled Garden can be delivered with very low adverse effect to this heritage asset and that the positive benefits of development would outweigh this low level of harm.

It is considered that the proposal accords with National and local planning policies and there are no heritage reasons indicated to justify refusal of listed building consent on the grounds of heritage impact.

Contents of Submission

The following documents have been submitted via the Planning Portal in support of this application for Listed Building Consent.

- Application Form for Listed Building Consent
- Ownership Certificate
- This Planning, Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement Addendum prepared by RPS, dated April 2021
- Schedule of Works_1720
- Ecology Note prepared by the Landscape Partnership, dated May 2021
- Application Drawings
- Site Location Plan (as per the planning permission DC/19/0470/FUL).
- Existing Plan-SURV1_1720
- Existing Elevations-SURV2_1720
- Proposed Plans_1720-02
- Proposed Elevations_1720-03
- Proposed Roof Plan_1720-04
- Abutment Details_1720-06
- Walled Garden Topographical Survey_TSES-20195-663-EGL-00

The application has been submitted via the planning portal (reference: PP-09739310). There is no fee payable for applications for Listed Building Consent.

I trust that you have all of the information that you require to register the application. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact my colleague, Sophia Hill (sophia.hill@rpsgroup.com) or myself at this office. We look forward to receiving confirmation of validation.

Our Ref: RT/SH/JCG5783



Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads 'Richard Tilley'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Richard Tilley

Director

richard.tilley@rpsgroup.com

for RPS Consulting Services Ltd

Enc.