



Mr Craig Beech
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Direct Dial: 01223 582751

Our ref: PA01138205

26 July 2021

Dear Mr Beech

Pre-application Advice

MONKS HALL, SYLEHAM, SUFFOLK

Thank you for meeting with me on site on 7th July 2021. It was good to see Monks Hall and understand the impacts of the proposal upon the significance of the building. Thank you also for sending over revised plans which I can confirm are an accurate indication of what was discussed on site.

Advice

Monks Hall appears to be a very special complex of buildings of varying dates. The main manor house and barn are now combined to form one building which appears to of been undertaken in the mid 16th century according to the Grey drawing provided within your pre-application documentation. Much of the house seems to of been remodelled in the 17th century when mullioned windows were inserted on the first floor and other windows were further inserted in the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite these alterations, the building retains much of its early fabric including timber framing.

According to historic maps, Monks Hall has close associations with the farm buildings that surround it and the farm and the house appear to always have had their main frontage facing the main road. The rear of Monks Hall seems to of faced substantial lawn with tree planting , much like a mini parkland landscape leading down to the River Waveney. The garden was separated from the fields close to the river by a track, the remnants of which still survive today. Although the immediate surrounds of Monks Hall have more tree cover than the historic maps indicate, the relationship to the barns and the river is still evident in the landscape.

The building was added to the statutory list at grade II* on 29th July 1955.

Impact of the Proposals on the Significance of Monks Hall

Since our previous advice and following on from our site visit of 7th July 2021,



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changes have been made to the scheme which have reduced the harm upon the historic fabric of the building.

- The bedhead has been removed from the first floor bedroom allowing this space to be appreciated;
- The two bathrooms have been changed to one on the first floor resulting in less services and the avoidance of a dividing wall; and,
- The flue has been removed from the proposed new extension.

These changes have improved the scheme as far as the physical alterations to the Listed Building are concerned nevertheless, as expected, Historic England still have some concerns.

- Configuration of the existing kitchen

Our site visit has shown that the kitchen is a rather strange configuration consisting of elements of different dates, It is heartening that the historic fabric is to be kept. The wall to be removed is a modern plasterboard addition that does not contribute to the buildings significance. It currently contains the infill to a modern doorway and two coffee machines.

While there is some advantages to the loss of this modern wall the insertion of a cupboard space here and further walls to create a hallway through which to access the new extension effectively closes off the historic building from the new extension. It creates a space through which one merely passes through on the way to the more modern living space beyond. Perhaps this cupboard could be removed creating a larger, more pleasant access - should the principle of the extension be acceptable.

- Insertion of a bathroom on the second floor

This was discussed at length on site and we had concerns relating to extraction, impact of moisture upon the timber frame and the running of service pipes and external soil pipes. Insulation and breather membranes were also considered at length. Historic England would not wish to see any increase in the height of the roof and therefore insulation would need to be inserted between the rafters. This should be breathable insulation and breathable membranes should be used. There is no evidence of lathe and plaster within this room although it is clear that this would historically of been the case. It was suggested that a breathable board such as that available from The Lime Centre and others could be used as an alternative and Historic England would not object to this in this instance.

A full structural survey should be carried out that indicates that the floor is able to take this extra load and what additional support may be required if any. Should it become apparent that additional support is required then this should be brought to our





attention preferably before a listed building consent is submitted. Also, any building regulations that may need to be complied with such as fire regulations or sound insulation should also be considered prior to an application being submitted.

- Removal of partitions on the first floor

From our site visit it was clear that the partitions within the proposed master bedroom are modern plasterboard. It would be advantageous to the significance of the building to remove them. The en-suite bathroom lies in the position of an existing bathroom.

- The proposed rear extension

This element of the proposal has changed since the initial proposal which was wider and linked to the adjacent outbuildings. The long thin and modern nature of this proposal aims to have minimal visual impact upon the historic building and, through the provision of a fully glazed box will have minimal contact with the building. The removal of the flue from the 'nose' end of the proposal has improved the visual impact of the proposed extension. The materials proposed are modern metal cladding from VMZINC in Pigmento with the same colour seamed roof.

The proposal is strikingly different to the historic building in terms of its form and materials but it does not follow that this should mean it impacts negatively upon the building's significance. This will be determined by how it relates to the building and whether it can be accommodated without harm from other elements. Aside from the entrance to the space as raised above, the extension would provide single storey, kitchen and everyday dining facilities, sleeping and bathroom arrangements are retained within the historic space. The success of the scheme would hinge on the quality of the design and materials and whether a fully glazed link can be properly and appropriately designed and detailed.

The loss of the existing lean to extension and chimney should be appropriately justified and all comments above are dependant on this being able to be done.

Next Steps

Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage. We are broadly content with your proposals, subject to you addressing the issues as outlined above before any statutory approval is sought. We recommend that further advice is sought from the Local Planning Authority in relation to your proposals and Historic England would be happy to be part of ongoing discussions should you feel this is appropriate or necessary.

This letter now marks the end of our initial pre-application advice, Should you require any further advice from us following this letter (notwithstanding brief comments on the



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further revisions requested), this would form part of our enhanced advisory service, the details of which can be found here; <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/enhanced-advisory-services/extended-pre-application-advice/> . Charges are made on a cost recovery basis only and vary depending on the level of engagement envisaged by yourselves. Please contact me if this is something you would like to pursue and I will put you in touch with the relevant business officer.

Yours sincerely

Lynette Fawkes
Inspector of Historic Building and Areas
E-mail: lynette.fawkes@historicengland.org.uk



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