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STEVEN DUNN ARCHITECTS

T: 01526 860757 E: steve@stevendunnarchitects.co.uk
HADLEIGH HOUSE, HIGH STREET, WALCOTT, LINCOLN, LN43SN

Design & Access Statement & Heritage Impact Assessment

Project Name: 2735: Proposed change of use at The Bauble Barn to form residential units

Site Address: Doddington Hall, Doddington, Lincolnshire

Prepared by: Steven Dunn Architects Ltd.

Date Prepared: 01st September 2023 (Rev.B)



1.0 Introduction & Background

- 1.1 This statement is intended to accompany a Planning Application for the change of use from retail to residential at The Bauble Barn, Doddington Hall. Steven Dunn Architects has produced this statement to highlight the rationale behind the proposal and to assess the potential impacts on any heritage assets.
- 1.2 Doddington Hall is in need of additional accommodation space to serve its growing business, in order to be able house a greater number of guests overnight. This proposal seeks to introduce a number of rooms to accommodate this need.
- 1.3 Since 2007, the Bauble Barn, which sells Christmas decorations and lights, has moved a total of three times as this is only operational for 11 weeks per year during the festive season. The Bauble Barn will be moved to a new location to make the provisions for the proposed accommodation. The following are the reasons for this:
- 1) **The demand for more visitor bedrooms from the new café and rewilding.**
The demand for accommodation at Doddington continues to grow faster than the overall business. This appears to be more related to tourist visits than weddings which have been relatively stable. The new café, the Grain Store will be open for three or four evenings a week from 2024. This will give Doddington Hall the potential to operate as a small hotel. The additional seven rooms in the stable yard will increase the total room count to 37 double rooms on site. This excludes the bedrooms in the main hall that are not used. Additionally, as the rewilding becomes more extensive, rewilding safaris will be offered, and these will generate some visitors who wish to stay overnight.
 - 2) **Zoning improvement.**
The current location of the Bauble Barn causes disruption to overnight guests staying in the stable yard. This is especially intensive in the weeks running up to Christmas. By moving the bauble barn out of the stable yard, the area will become dedicated to overnight guests.
 - 3) **New roof for stable yard.**
The stable yard roof has not been replaced since its original construction in 1900 and is now in need of complete refurbishment. It makes sense to complete the conversion at the same time as the replacement the roof.
 - 4) **Fully accessible rooms and bathrooms**
At present, there is only one bedroom and bathroom suite that is fully accessible for wheel chair users. There is currently a good demand for accessible facilities and four of the new rooms would provide these facilities.
- 1.4 Doddington Hall is a Grade I listed late Elizabethan mansion, the gatehouse, outbuildings, and garden walls are all listed as Grade II*. The proposed site lies within the boundary of the listed Park & Garden, but outside the Doddington Conservation Area boundary.
- 1.5 A pre-application meeting to discuss the proposals at hand was held at Doddington Hall on Friday 2nd June with the following present:
- o Steve Watson, Planning Officer
 - o Alan Grey, Economic Development Manager
 - o Michelle Tasker, Economic Development & Project Officer
 - o Mark Williets, Development Manager
 - o James Birch, Owner of Doddington Estate
 - o Steve Dunn, SDA, Architect
 - o Alex Rendall, SDA, Architectural Technician

2.0 Relevant Policy

Historic Environment Policy

2.1 NPPF (paragraph 128) states that:

"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets in importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance".

2.2 NPPF (paragraph 131) states that:

"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness".

2.3 Historic England Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance 2008 states that:

"New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place; b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed; c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future; d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future" (p.59).

Local Policy

2.4 The 'Central Lincolnshire Local Plan' is the key document that is referenced to determine planning applications in this area.

2.5 Policy S57 of the Local Plan specifically references the approach to the historic environment. It is stated that:

"Development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire.

In instances where a development proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset (whether designated or non-designated), including any contribution made by its setting, the applicant will be required to undertake the following, in a manner proportionate to the asset's significance:

- a) describe and assess the significance of the asset, including its setting, to determine its architectural, historical or archaeological interest; and*
- b) identify the impact of the proposed works on the significance and special character of the asset, including its setting; and*
- c) provide a clear justification for the works, especially if these would harm the significance of the asset, including its setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits.*

Development proposals will be supported where they:

- d) Protect the significance of designated heritage assets (including their setting) by protecting and enhancing architectural and historic character, historical associations, landscape and townscape features and through consideration of scale, design, materials, siting, layout, mass, use, and views and vistas both from and towards the asset;*
- e) Promote opportunities to better reveal significance of heritage assets, where possible;*
- f) Take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing non-designated heritage assets and their setting."*

2.6 Policy S43: Sustainable Rural Tourism, states the following points, of which are relevant to the submitted proposal:

“Development proposals within villages named in the Settlement Hierarchy in Policy S1 that will deliver high quality sustainable visitor facilities including (but not limited to) visitor accommodation, sporting attractions, and also including proposals for temporary permission in support of the promotion of events and festivals, will be supported where they:

- a. contribute to the local economy;*
- b. benefit both local communities and visitors;*
- c. respect the intrinsic natural and built environmental qualities of the area;*
- d. are appropriate for the character of the local environment in scale, nature and appearance; and*
- e. would not result in highway safety or severe traffic impacts.”*

2.7 Policy S53: Design and Amenity states the following points, of which are relevant to the submitted proposal:

1. Context

- a) Be based on a sound understanding of the context, integrating into the surroundings and responding to local history, culture and heritage;*
- b) Relate well to the site, its local and wider context and existing characteristics including the retention of existing natural and historic features wherever possible and including appropriate landscape and boundary treatments to ensure that the development can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area;*
- c) Protect any important local views into, out of or through the site; Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – Adopted April 2023 Return to policy list page 117*

2. Identity

- a) Contribute positively to the sense of place, reflecting and enhancing existing character and distinctiveness;*
- b) Reflect or improve on the original architectural style of the local surroundings, or embrace opportunities for innovative design and new technologies which sympathetically complement or contrast with the local architectural style;*
- c) Use appropriate, high quality materials which reinforce or enhance local distinctiveness;*
- d) Not result in the visual or physical coalescence with any neighbouring settlement nor ribbon development;*

7. Uses

- a) Create or contribute to a variety of complementary uses that meet the needs of the community;*
- b) Be compatible with neighbouring land uses and not result in likely conflict with existing uses unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that both the ongoing use of the neighbouring site will not be compromised, and that the amenity of occupiers of the new development will be satisfactory with the ongoing normal use of the neighbouring site;*
- c) Not result in adverse noise and vibration taking into account surrounding uses nor result in adverse impacts upon air quality from odour, fumes, smoke, dust and other sources;*

4.0 The Proposal

General Description

- 4.1 The proposal seeks to convert the existing bauble barn into a two-storey accommodation building for guests to Doddington Hall. A total of 7 bedrooms with ensembles are proposed within the development. The use class of the development will be changed from Class E to Class C1.

Location and Layout

- 4.2 The Bauble Barn building is well suited to contain this additional accommodation as there are already accommodation suites in the south-west wing of the building; this wing will remain unchanged within this proposal. The development will be restricted to the north-east wing of the building. In terms of the wider Doddington Hall site, The Bauble Barn is the most appropriate building to house guests as it is furthest from the "busiest" areas on the estate such as the Hall itself, shops, and restaurants.

Scale and Proportion

- 4.3 The proposed alterations site within the existing footprint of The Bauble Barn building.
- 4.4 The proposed 7 residential units are all generously sized with separate ensembles and dressing/wardrobe areas.

Appearance

- 4.5 All existing openings are maintained and utilised within the scheme, albeit one door on the north-west elevation and a double door into the existing kitchen. In addition, doors and windows to match the existing have been added to the north-west elevation where required. As a result, the current appearance and character of the building will be maintained as far as practically possible.
- 4.6 The first floor of the building will be served by a number of proposed skylights to enable the bedrooms to have sufficient daylight levels; the sizes of which have been considered so that the scale is in-keeping with the character of the existing building. At the pre-application meeting on 2nd June, the principle of adding skylights to the building was discussed and it was deemed that these would not be contentious due to the skylights that are already present in the nearby Brew House building.

Access

- 4.7 The floor plans attached to the application show the individual access to each separate accommodation unit, four of which are accessible from a central circulation space with staircase, two being accessed from the outside, and the final room accessed via the south-west wing.
- 4.8 Parking is available at the adjacent Waggon Building or the existing public car park to the south to preserve the integrity of the courtyard to the Bauble Barn building. Visitors can be dropped off in this courtyard if required.

5.0 Heritage Impact Assessment and Mitigation

- 5.1 The proposal lies within the boundary of Doddington Hall Grade II* listed Park & Garden (Listing Number: 1000975), and is in the proximity of the following listed assets:
- o Doddington Hall, Grade I, Listing 1164612 (85m)
 - o Game House at Doddington Hall, Grade II, Listing 1164617 (50m) This is currently used as a private residence.
 - o Brew House at Doddington Hall, Grade II, Listing 1061960 (35m) This is currently used as a holiday let.
 - o The Old Rectory, Grade II, Listing 1164624 (85m) This is currently used as a private residence.
 - o Holly Farmhouse, Grade II, Listing 1317684 (220m) This is currently used as a private residence.
 - o Foresters Cottage, Grade II, Listing 1061962 (190m) This is currently used as a private residence.
 - o Home Farmhouse, Grade II, Listing 1317679 (120m) This is currently used as a retail establishment.
- 5.2 The site area is not defined within the boundary of Doddington Conservation Area, although within the boundary of the listed park and gardens.
- 5.3 Although the proposal is within a close proximity to the above listed assets and lies within the Doddington Hall Park & Garden area, there is very little amendment to the appearance of the building as the existing footprint has been fully utilised with no proposed built additions visible from the exterior. Additional doors and windows are fully in-keeping with the existing building and fenestrations.
- 5.4 The significance of the Doddington Hall building itself is apparent within the context of its Grade I listing status, as an example of a Late Elizabethan Midlands house by Robert Smythson (Pevsner, 1964). The Hall, Park & Gardens and various listed outbuildings are all a part of the Doddington Hall public offering and individually contribute to the character of the development as a tourist attraction and historic place, thus affirming their individual significance. Although the site boasts an abundance of historically sensitive assets, it is important to sustain the public attractions, accommodation, and supplementary areas by expanding the development when required and when a reasonable opportunity arises to maintain the quality of the offering at Doddington Hall. In turn, this maintains the visitor numbers to support the upkeep of the heritage assets.
- 5.5 In general, it is felt that the impact of this development on the significance of surrounding heritage assets is negligible. The key elevation viewed from the courtyard (the south-east) is unchanged albeit the additional skylights which were deemed uncontentious in the context of their surroundings at the pre-application meeting. The north-west elevation boasting additional doors and windows faces an open green space.

6.0 Overview

In summation, after critical appraisal of the proposals put forward and in full consideration of their impact, it is concluded that the designs would cause no negative impact on Doddington Hall, its Park & Gardens, or other neighbouring heritage assets. Instead, the proposals utilise the footprint of an appropriate existing building to provide the additional accommodation required to serve the Hall and its wedding and holiday let offerings and any additions are fully in-keeping with the character of the existing building.

Statement Ends.