

[REDACTED]

From: Planning EConsultation
Sent: 17 August 2023 08:35
To: Heritage Conservation; PScan1
Subject: FW: FAO Mrs J Forder: Your ref: 23/1195/LB Tower Farmhouse, Station Road, Tower End, Middleton, Norfolk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 August 2023 11:17
To: Planning EConsultation <planning.econsultation@West-Norfolk.gov.uk>
Subject: FAO Mrs J Forder: Your ref: 23/1195/LB Tower Farmhouse, Station Road, Tower End, Middleton, Norfolk

[External Email]

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Dear Mrs Forder,

Thank you for informing the Georgian Group of an application to undertake works of demolition and alteration to the above grade II listed building. The Group wishes to register its formal objection to these proposals for the following reasons.

Tower Farmhouse is a substantial later eighteenth century Carstone structure of considerable character with early nineteenth century additions and minor later nineteenth century alterations. It has sadly been the subject of recent external and internal alterations, its exterior now lacking the most significant later nineteenth century features visible in the photographic image uploaded to Historic England's national heritage list website. The farmhouse forms part of a notable group with individually listed and curtilage listed farm buildings.

It is proposed to demolish a single storey nineteenth century wing and replace it with a much larger structure, also removing much of the original gable end wall of the farmhouse and a chimneybreast at ground floor level. Much of the remains of an historic internal partition would also be removed together with a further partition which the applicant describes as 'modern'. In their totality these proposals will cause a significant degree of harm to the historic fabric, planform, and significance of the listed building, adding to the cumulative detrimental impact of the alterations undertaken post 2015.

The Group has concerns about the proposed total demolition of the existing small single storey brick service wing as this will remove further evidence of how the building developed and functioned in the nineteenth century. We note that no evidence has been provided that the existing structure cannot be adapted to partially meet the applicant's needs for additional accommodation. The Group also has serious concerns about the proposal to remove the bulk of the gable end wall at ground floor level together with the chimneybreast. This aspect of the proposals will cause serious harm to the historic planform of the listed building and should be deleted from the scheme. The loss of the door opening into the early nineteenth century service wing will also further erode evidence of how the building functioned in the nineteenth century.

The Group has concerns about the size of the proposed replacement structure in relation to the existing farmhouse, and about its relationship to the adjacent outbuilding. Extending the new wing to the north will also lead to the loss of an historic window opening within the gable. The proposed roof lantern is a particularly assertive element of the proposed design which will detract from the setting of the original listed building.

Evidence should be provided that the partition within the living room which is to be removed is indeed of relatively recent date. Information should also be provided to explain the age and significance of the outbuilding to which the house is to be connected, and to explain the impact of the proposed alterations upon its significance. We also note that no information has been provided to explain the impact of the demolition of the wing and the erection of a larger new structure on the setting of the other historic buildings which form part of the former farmstead complex.

Applicants are required within paragraph 194 of the NPPF to provide an adequate assessment of the significance of any historic fabric which is to be removed or altered. Where historic fabric is to be removed a degree of harm will inevitably be caused to the significance of the listed building. The NPPF (2021), paragraph 200 also makes clear that 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.' In this case the applicants have singularly failed to make a convincing case for the works of demolition proposed.

When making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building, registered landscape, or their setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the heritage asset or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the special interest of the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged. This obligation, found in sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (1), applies to all decisions concerning listed buildings.

The Georgian Group must respectfully advise that these proposals would cause a degree of harm (at the higher end of less than substantial harm) to the significance of this listed building, and that a convincing justification has not been provided for these works. We would therefore recommend that listed building consent is refused.

Yours Sincerely

James Darwin (Head of Casework)

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