

Design & Access Statement

Project Title: 2 Bridge Street, Needham Market
Project Number: 1782 / 17.01
Date / Revision: 20.12.22 / A

1.00 Introduction

This statement has been prepared to assist with the understanding of proposals for the above site as currently submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council for planning (NMA) and listed building approvals. This document should be read in conjunction with the further supporting documentation submitted for consideration.

2.00 The Site and Context

The proposal site comprises the former barn attached to the rear of 2 Bridge Street, Needham Market. The property is listed at Grade II.



Contemporary aerial view of the application site in wider context



Barn viewed from the south east, looking towards Bridge Street



Barn viewed from Bridge Street, looking east along the flank wall of No. 2



Barn viewed from within the site access, looking east along the flank wall of No. 2



Northern wall of the barn with adjacent lean to structures

3.00 Planning History

Planning and listed building approvals were granted in 2006 under references 0666/06/FUL and 0664/06/LBC, with work commencing in January 2007, as confirmed by Building Control application 07/FP/00387 (status confirmed on line as works having commenced).

Although works commenced under these approvals, some of the works carried out are not in accordance with the approved scheme, in relation to internal layout. The layout as currently constructed is set out on the attached drawing 1782/10.

Since the previous approvals were granted, and works commenced, the building has changed hands. The current owner (the applicant) is seeking approval of a revised scheme as set out below.

The previous planning approval 0666/06/FUL contained a number of conditions which we feel are addressed within the attached submission documentation, although condition 5 required submission of a bat survey. This is currently being instructed and will be submitted in due course (prior to any additional works being carried out) under a discharge of condition application.

The previous listed building approval 0664/06/LBC contained a number of conditions which we feel are addressed within the attached submission documentation, although condition 3 required submission of an historic record of the building. This is currently being instructed and will be submitted in due course (prior to any additional works being carried out) under a further listed building application.



Image of the roof interior looking west, illustrating repaired and replacement timbers, and new floor as inserted



Floor / stairwell as installed



Ground floor as installed, uninsulated, and wall lining



Existing northern wall, with blockwork compartment wall to adjacent lean-to structures



Existing south wall where approved window to be cut in



Existing south wall



Replacement sole plates, and northern blockwork wall

4.00 Proposal

The proposal comprises a number of elements as set out below:

4.01 Revised internal layout

The previous approved layout was not functional, and could not be made compliant with the building regulations. It is believed that this is the reason that the layout was amended as works progressed on site, however the proposed revisions are similarly compromised.

The proposed scheme seeks to reorder both the ground and first floor layouts to create a more useable plan arrangement, and one which responds better to the form and character of the listed building, whilst also addressing building regulations issues around means of escape, and the design of stairs.

The proposed revisions will require some amendment of the structure and floor plates installed in 2007 onwards, and removal of an existing stud, and section of sole plate.



Stud and plate to be removed for access

4.02 Revisions to fenestration

The approved window to be inserted on the south elevation has been amended slightly in size to respond to the layout and spacing of existent studs internally.

Other windows on the south elevation have been amended in form only (existing openings retained) to create where possible, undivided glazing, which better reflects the agricultural nature and heritage of the building, diminishing the domestic character of the previously approved scheme.

The proposed front door is illustrated as glazed, rather than as a solid door, in order to allow a greater ingress of natural light into what would otherwise be a rather dark and dingy interior, and one which relies overly heavily on artificial light.

An additional heritage rooflight is also proposed within the existing rear roof slope.

5.00 Planning Context

Applicable planning policy would appear to be contained within the JLP Part 1, dated November 2023, as well as National Policies contained within the NPPF and NPPG documents.

Applicable local policies would appear to comprise LP19, however, consideration must be given, that the original scheme which is currently proposed to amend, was approved some time ago, in the life of previous local plan. With regard to the previous plan, the following policies were relevant;

HB01; The DPA places a high priority on protecting the character and appearance of all buildings of architectural or historic interest. Particular attention will be given to the setting of listed buildings.

HB03; Confirms that proposals for the conversion of, or alteration to, listed buildings or other buildings of architectural or historic interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and will be required to meet high standards of design, detailing, materials and construction. Listed building consent will be granted if the district planning authority is satisfied;
that the proposal would not detract from the architectural or historic character of the existing building or its setting

HB04; Listed Building consent will be granted for the extension of listed buildings if the DPA is satisfied that;
the proposed extension will not dominate the original building by virtue of its siting, size, scale or materials;
the proposal does not detract from the architectural or historic character both externally and internally for which the building is listed.

With regard to the current JLP, LP19 notes that the Councils will:

- a. *Support the re-use/ redevelopment of a heritage asset, including Heritage at Risk and assets outside settlement boundaries, where it would represent a viable use, and the proposal preserves the building, its setting and any features which form part of the building's special architectural or historic interest;*
- b. *Support development proposals that contribute to local distinctiveness, respecting the built form and scale of the heritage asset, through the use of appropriate design and materials;*
- c. *Support proposals to enhance the environmental performance of heritage assets, where the special characteristics of the heritage asset are safeguarded and a sensitive approach to design and specification ensures that the significance of the asset is sustained; and*
- d. *Take account of the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality*

With regard to the above, it is clear that as it stands, the building has no viable use, as the approved scheme will not comply with the Building Regulations, and is therefore to all intent and purpose redundant. The proposals submitted represent a viable amendment to the approved scheme, which will allow the building to be brought back into beneficial use. The proposed scheme will not create any additional harm to the building as currently stands.

In all, the proposal represents a dramatic benefit to the building, and public, as it allows the building to be brought back into beneficial use, thereby also retaining its economic viability as indicated in the policies above.

In addition, paragraphs 194 – 208 of the NPPF (2021) set out the manner in which Local Authorities should assess any potential for harm to heritage assets, and weigh this against the public benefits of the proposal.

Further guidance from Historic England notes that *'listing is not a preservation order, preventing change. It does not freeze a building in time'*, and that *'listed buildings are to be enjoyed and used, like any other building. Listed buildings can be altered, extended and sometimes even demolished'*. Overall though local authorities are to *'make decisions that balance a site's historic significance against other issues, such as function, condition and viability'*.

6.00 Conclusion

The proposals set out in this application are firmly in line with the above stated MSDC policies. They seek only minimal changes, with minor loss of historic fabric. The clear intent of the scheme is to benefit the long term viability and preservation of the asset, whilst replacing some previously approved, or completed works which were out of character or otherwise ineffective.

As a whole, the proposed works will not impact detrimentally on the heritage asset, and will arguably only enhance it.