

Heritage Statement

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

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

Please refer to the submitted design and access statement in respect of site, context and planning history.

This application for listed building consent concerns itself only with revisions to the scheme approved under 0664/06/LBC.

3.00 Heritage Impact

The building has been standing empty and unused since works came to a halt sometime in 2007. This has largely been due to the fact that works were carried out that are not in accordance with the approved drawings, and that the approved drawings were not compliant with the building regulations.

The works enshrined in this application primarily seek changes to the existing floor arrangement (installed post 2007) and the arrangement of new partitions etc to be installed. As such there is limited impact upon historic fabric, save for the removal of a single stud and section of sole plate to allow access between existing bays within the barn; whilst not noted within the original approval, this element of work was clearly also required as part of those works.

Other aspects of this submission seek to bring the proposed scheme in line with current building regulations. These matters include the addition of fire resistant and fire retardant materials to main elevations, to provide necessary fire and resistance to the spread of flame, as well as suitable compliant staircase access, and insulation strategy.

In respect of the later, this has been considered in conjunction with the necessary fire strategy. The addition of non-combustible fire protection to the outside of the frame means that a 'breathable' solution to the building fabric will not be possible. As such, it would appear sensible to utilise more thermally efficient insulation products, such as Celotex and Superfoil, rather than less efficient breathable materials, which will in any event not function within the wider fabric. The approach taken therefore is balanced, and proposes to maximise efficiency, in conjunction with background ventilation, and purge ventilation to remove moisture from the building, to protect the fabric.

Paragraphs 197, and 199 – 202 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'*.

4.00 Conclusion

Paragraph 197 notes that local authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation. Clearly the building in its current state is not being put to a viable use, its significance is not enhanced, and its conservation and preservation has stalled.

Whilst the works proposed within this application will create a level of harm due to a loss of historic fabric, this will be less than substantial. In accordance with the NPPF, this should therefore be weighed against the public benefits which will enabling the building to be put to a viable use, and reigniting its conservation and preservation.

The proposals set out in this application are firmly in line with the NPPF, and with MSDC policies as set out within the design and access statement. They seek only minimal changes to the already approved scheme, 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.