

**[09]** Full Planning Permission

N/003/00997/ 24 **APPLICANT:** East Lindsey District Council

**VALID:** 11/07/2024 **AGENT:** Stem Architects

**PROPOSAL:** Planning Permission - Extension and alterations to existing coach house, which is within the curtilage of a listed building to provide a function room, provision of a canopy, workshop and alterations to the existing car park.

**LOCATION:** THE MANOR HOUSE, WEST STREET, ALFORD, LN13 9HT

## **1.0 REASONS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

1.1 The applicant is East Lindsey District Council and the application is included on the agenda for reasons of transparency.

## **2.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

2.1 The site is located in Alford which is defined as a town in the Core Strategy of the East Lindsey Local Plan. Located in the centre of town to the north side of West Street, which runs in an east to west direction, the site comprises of the grade 2\* Manor House situated towards the front (west) with a range of outbuildings leading back to the north. Directly behind the house is the formal walled garden. To the west side is a treed area with the river running to the side, to the rear of this area is a Hackett barn. The vehicular entrance is the middle of the site. The house, outbuildings and barn form a visitor attraction with the house being open for viewing with a cafe and marquee to the rear used for events and the outbuildings and barn containing a rural museum. There is a low wall with railings to the front southern boundary, a high wall to the side east boundary and part of the rear north boundary, the side western boundary is open to the river. The site is within Flood Zone 1 - Low Risk and Flood Zone 2 - Medium Risk and there is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) covering the site. Located within the conservation area there are several grade II listed buildings nearby including the adjacent Methodist chapel.

## **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 Planning Permission - Extension and alterations to existing coach house, which is within the curtilage of a listed building to provide a function room, provision of a canopy, workshop and alterations to the existing car park.

3.2 The application includes the demolition of the cart shed and erection of a function room connecting to the coach house to accommodate up to 100 people, minor works to the car park and construction of a canopy and workshop. Landscaping is also proposed.

- 3.3 The new function room would be rectangular in shape with large glazed openings on both long sides. It would be single storey in height with a simple gabled roof. The proposed workshop would be rectangular with a lean-to attachment on one side and would be of single storey height with a gabled roof. A simple pitched roof canopy on supporting poles would attach the workshop to the existing Hackett barn.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Set out below are the consultation responses that have been received on this application. These responses may be summarised and full copies are available for inspection separately. Some of the comments made may not constitute material planning considerations.

##### **Publicity**

- 4.2 The application has been advertised by means of a press notice and site notice and neighbours have been notified in writing.

##### **Consultees**

- 4.3 ALFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Support.
- 4.4 LCC HIGHWAYS AND LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY - No objection.
- 4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (Environmental Protection) - Conditionally acceptable.
- 4.6 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (Drainage) - No comments received at the time of writing this report.
- 4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (Contamination) - No comments received at the time of writing this report.
- 4.8 ELDC ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER - Mitigation set out provides suitable protection.
- 4.9 HISTORIC ENGLAND - No advice offered.
- 4.10 HERITAGE LINCS ARCHAEOLOGY - Application site is in an area of archaeological remains, appropriate conditions required.
- 4.11 HERITAGE LINCS - Initially requested the submission of additional information and following its receipt was satisfied with the proposal subject to the imposition of a suite of conditions.
- 4.12 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - No objection

##### **Neighbours**

4.13 E-mail of representation received from the following addresses on the grounds of:

- Noise and disturbance
- Location
- Design

Address List:

- 1 Park Lane, Alford

4.14 The Ward Councillor was made aware of the application via the Weekly List.

## **5.0 RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

5.1 1526/18 - Planning Permission - Erection of a building to provide a museum consisting of a volunteer centre, display areas and workshops, removal of extensions and construction of an extension to existing Hackett barn which is within the curtilage of a listed building, and the provision of footpaths. Approved.

## **6.0 PLANNING POLICY**

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises of the East Lindsey Local Plan (adopted 2018), including the Core Strategy and the Settlement Proposals Development Plan Document; and any made Neighbourhood Plans. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

### **East Lindsey Local Plan**

SP1 - A sustainable pattern of places

SP10 - Design

SP11 - Historic Environment

SP13 - Inland Employment

SP16 - Inland Flood Risk

SP22 - Transport and Accessibility

SP24 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

### **Alford Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031**

Policy 4 - Flood Risk

Policy 5 - Town centre vitality and viability

Policy 6 - Employment

Policy 10 - Heritage and design

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

## 7.0 OFFICER ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

### Main Planning Issues

- Principle of the Development
- Impact on heritage assets
- Impact on the street scene
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Impact of the Development on the TPO Trees, Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Highway Safety
- Flood Risk

7.1 The main planning issues in this case are considered to be:

### Principle of the Development

7.2 The site is situated in the centre of the town of Alford alongside the defined town centre boundary and is already a well established visitor attraction with the Manor House and rural museum, along with the cafe and event facilities. This proposal would enable the operator of the Manor House to provide enhanced and expanded facilities.

7.3 Strategic Policy 1 of the East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Local Plan) sets out the settlement hierarchy based on the range of services, facilities and employment available in them, which helps to guide the location of new development. Alford is classed as an inland town in the Local Plan and so new development here would be acceptable in principle. Strategic Policy 2 advises the Council will take a positive approach to new development that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Strategic Policy 14 offers general support for a variety of uses including leisure, tourism, cultural services and community services and facilities where they contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres. Strategic Policy 15 relates to inland tourism and the leisure economy. Point 1 of the policy is relevant in this case and states: *"The Council will support quality tourism facilities and attractions where they: Extend and diversify the tourism and leisure economy, and provide additional employment opportunities; Provide opportunities for the enjoyment of the District's wider countryside and historic towns and villages; Do not cause unacceptable harm to landscape, biodiversity or heritage assets; Are of a scale and intensity compatible with their surrounding."* Clearly in principle the proposed development would meet these policy objectives. The Alford Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) identifies that the application site sits directly alongside the identified town centre boundary and policies 5 and 6 offer general support for the increased employment opportunities that the proposal would offer and its role in helping to support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

- 7.4 In principle, therefore, the proposal would be acceptable. The details of the scheme are discussed in detail below.

### **Impact on heritage assets**

- 7.5 Strategic Policy 11 of the Local Plan aims to secure the continued protection and enhancement of heritage assets in the district and it supports proposals that preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting and the special character, appearance and setting of conservation areas. This advice is reiterated in paragraphs in the NPPF at chapter 16 which also provide guidance on considering potential impacts on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. Policy 10 of the NHP follows these principles, stating that development should reinforce character and quality, maintain distinctive character and support quality development that respects its immediate setting.
- 7.6 Section 66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 7.7 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes duties requiring special regard to be had to the desirability: at Section 72(1), of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 7.8 Alford Manor House is a distinctive and significant grade II\* listed building, open to the public, in a prominent location in the conservation area and is specifically mentioned in the Alford Conservation Area Appraisal. The application proposals involve the demolition of the cart shed and erection of a function room connecting to the coach house to accommodate up to 100 people, minor works to the car park and construction of a canopy and workshop which were previously approved under ref: 1526/18.
- 7.9 A Heritage Assessment has been submitted with the application. Concerns about the proposed development were expressed by Heritage Lincolnshire (HL). Whilst HL supported the principle of a new function room and its design it felt more in depth justification was required for the demolition of the cart store and the public benefits derived from this. HL also felt the applicant needed to identify the significance of the building and provide a more in-depth analysis of the features of the building in order to comply with paragraphs 200 and 207 of the NPPF.
- 7.10 HL also supported the principle of conversion of the Coach House but again felt there was not enough information provided to be able to offer support for the scheme as proposed. From the documentation provided HL felt the scheme did not preserve the features of special interest as required by the Act. HL felt There needed to be a more in depth account taken of the buildings

features, including photos, discussion regarding which features are significant to the building and how these are to be retained. The removal of any original features need to be justified and harm needs to be counterbalanced by public benefit and a more accommodating design in order to comply with section 16 of the Act and paragraphs 200, 205 and 208 of the NPPF. Following a request to the applicant further information was submitted and subject to the imposition of conditions HL no longer objects to the application. It is noted that Historic England has chosen not to provide direct comment on the application instead deferring to the Council's heritage advisor which in this case is Heritage Lincolnshire.

- 7.11 The existing cart shed would be demolished and replaced with a function room to accommodate up to 100 people. Connection from the function room to the former coach house would be achieved through the creation of two single door width openings on its north elevation with the primary access to the function room facilitated through the existing central brick arch in the west elevation of the former coach house. The north section of the former coach house would accommodate lavatories and the south section would accommodate a kitchen. The interior of the north section of the former coach house would be altered through the removal of fixtures and fittings relating to its former use as a stables. These include a timber stall partition, timber troughs and wrought iron wall mounted hay baskets. It is acknowledged that there would be the removal of a small amount of historic fabric on the north elevation through the opening of the doorways and the complete removal of stable related fixtures and fittings. These are considered harmful interventions due to the resulting loss of historic fabric, fixtures and fittings.
- 7.12 Whilst the cart shed is a historic structure and listed as a curtilage listed building, in itself it is of negligible significance and whilst the cart shed lies within the curtilage of the Manor House it is not considered to be a notable or positive contributor to the setting of the Manor House and so has a negligible contribution towards its significance. By contrast, the benefit of its demolition and replacement by a function room would allow for the removal of the marquee which is considered to be a negative and distracting intrusion on the north elevation of The Manor House causing a harm to its setting and hence significance.
- 7.13 The proposed workshop and canopy was granted permission back in 2018, with work commencing in 2021, however due to funding issues work ceased. This current application includes this workshop and open fronted building (canopy), but with some minor changes such as the introduction of a blacksmiths forge and simplification of the overall design. The Hackett barn and open machinery store will now also house photovoltaics on the roof slopes. The proposed location for these buildings is one that is considered to be appropriate. It seems a logical choice and indeed

may be the only location possible given the requirements of the proposal. This proposal also presents the opportunity to enhance this slightly neglected area and add a distinctive eye-catcher at the northern end of the Manor House grounds. The western part of the Manor House curtilage is more informal being a tree area with subservient outbuildings connected to the house and the barn, which is very different in character to the house with its enclosed formal gardens to the east. Given the rural theme of the museum, it is considered that the proposed development would strengthen the visual and functional relationship between the countryside to the north and the Manor House.

- 7.14 The proposed brick workshop will showcase exhibits from the Museum of Rural Life and provide space for volunteers to operate museum heritage agricultural artifacts. The open fronted building would be used to display farm implements some of which were formerly housed in a temporary structure which would be removed. The design of the buildings is rural in nature and will be in keeping with the former millwrights building and the existing Hackett barn on site. The proposed buildings have been pushed back to be against the rear boundary of the site. Traditional building materials have been suggested and these can be secured by condition to ensure they match the existing buildings along with the finer construction details such as brick bond, mortar mix, verge and eaves detailing and joinery details. Paths and hard surfaced areas are proposed to improve the visitor experience and accessibility.
- 7.15 The site lies in an area of archaeological interest and the Council's Heritage advisor, Heritage Lincolnshire, has advised that the proposed development has the potential to harm below ground archaeology and so further archaeological investigation is required, but HL is content that this matter can be dealt with by condition. HL has also asked for a condition to require building recording before existing buildings are demolished or altered. Such conditions can be imposed on any approval given.
- 7.16 It is considered overall that the proposal would result in some harm to the setting of the grade II\* listed Manor House and so indirectly on the setting of the conservation area, however, this harm would be "less than substantial harm". The NPPF requires that less than substantial harm "*should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*"
- 7.17 In this case the main aim of the proposal is to provide a suitable, functional workshop buildings and a functions building to be used for weddings, funerals and community events which would enhance and increase the facilities the Manor House can offer. The area to which the proposal relates is under used and the proposal would add to the visitor experience and help secure the future of the listed building and the removal of the marquee. It is also likely

to result in economic benefit to the town of Alford from increased visitor numbers and spending.

- 7.18 Taking all the above into account and with the statutory duty in mind, it is considered that the harm to the listed Manor House and indirectly to the Conservation Area is outweighed by the public benefit that will be derived from the improvement of the community focused space which in turn will enable the ongoing maintenance of a highly significant heritage asset. It is, therefore, considered that subject to appropriate conditions to ensure the detailing is carried out appropriately the proposal complies with SP11 of the Local Plan, Policy 10 of the NHP.

### **Impact on the street scene**

- 7.19 At present mature trees screen and soften the site in views from West Street, however during the winter months this screening effect is reduced. Also the way the site is experienced changes as you move from street, to under the canopy of trees, to the back of the site when viewed from the public footpath to the north. The experience is dynamic. The proposed buildings would have an impact, however that impact is not considered harmful, given the wider character of the street and mix of styles and designs of properties. The proposal would comply, therefore, complies with SP10 of the Local Plan and Policy 10 of the NHP.

### **Impact on neighbouring amenity**

- 7.20 Strategic Policy 10 of the Local Plan looks to safeguard residential amenity. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that developments should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.
- 7.21 The application site is in close proximity to a number of residential properties. In this case the proposal seeks an intensification of the use of the site for entertainment with an extended entertainment period. Historically the site has been the subject of noise complaints, and a letter of objection with a noise and disturbance concern has been received as part of this application.
- 7.22 An Acoustic report has been submitted in support of the application, colleagues in Environmental Health have agreed that the proposal will be acceptable subject to a number of conditions ensuring appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to ensure that neighbouring amenity is not unacceptably harmed.
- 7.23 In terms of outlook and overlooking, given the separation distance and intervening landscaping the proposed development is not considered to be harmful.

### **Impact of the Development on the TPO Trees and ecology**



- 7.24 Strategic Policy 24 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and buildings.
- 7.25 The trees across the site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. A tree survey has been undertaken and an assessment and method statement submitted with the application. The Council's Arboricultural officer has been consulted and is content that with appropriate conditions the proposal would be acceptable.
- 7.26 An ecology assessment has been submitted with the application. It concludes that there is the potential for adverse impacts on foraging/commuting bats and nesting birds, but with measures in place such impacts would be acceptably mitigated. This mitigation can be secured by condition.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

- 7.27 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat after development than there was before it.
- 7.28 The applicant has submitted details showing that the required 10% BNG can be achieved by a mix of on site and off site provisions, which is considered acceptable. This will be secured via the automatic BNG condition.

### **Highway Safety**

- 7.29 Strategic Policy 22 of the Local Plan sets out the criteria for transport and accessibility for development within the district. The proposal utilises an existing access. LCC as Highway Authority has been consulted. LCC notes that the proposal provides 15 parking spaces and whilst the proposal may result in demand for more spaces kerbside parking is available in the area and public car parks are nearby to provide for any additional demand.

### **Flood Risk**

- 7.30 Parts of the site adjacent to the river to the west are within the bank top and Flood Zone 2 - Medium Risk and part is within flood zone one. Policy 4 in the NHP advises that all developments within flood zone 2 and within an identified area alongside the town centre will be supported provided a list of criteria are met - the application site lies within the identified area. The area of the site where the development would be sited is within Flood Zone 1 - Low Risk so flood risk is not a determining factor for this application in terms of the Local Plan and NHP. Foul water is to be discharged to the main foul water sewer and surface water dealt with via a soakaway, thus satisfying Strategic Policy 16 in the Local Plan and Policy 4 in the NHP.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Whilst the proposed scheme would have some harmful impacts on the setting of the Manor House and on the conservation area the benefits provided by the scheme as set out above would outweigh those harms. Conditions are required to ensure the development is carried out as envisaged. All other matters can be dealt with by condition. Subject to conditions, the proposal would be acceptable and would comply with policy and the statutory duty.
- 8.2 This proposed development is subject to funding pressures and the application has been brought before committee for consideration at the earliest opportunity. Due to the lead in time for the production of the agenda the list of conditions (some of which will need to be agreed formally with the applicant as they are pre-commencement conditions) has not been finalised. However, this list will follow on the supplementary papers.
- 8.3 This conclusion has been arrived at having taken into account all other relevant material considerations, none of which outweigh the reasons for the officer recommendation made below.

## **9.0 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

Approve

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

subject to the following conditions: