DESIGN & ACCESS,
PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Erection of Detached Garaging on land at The Pool House, Newtown Linford Lane, Groby

for Mr & Mrs J Everson Crane

April 2011

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 This combined statement has been written to inform and support a revised planning application for the erection of two detached garage blocks on land at Pool House, Newtown Linford Lane, Groby. This application is also supported by a separate Arboricultural Survey that should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.2 This statement seeks to provide an assessment of the proposed development having regard to the relevant national and local planning policies and its potential impact on the local heritage assets.

2. Description of the Proposed Scheme

2.1 This application relates to the erection of two detached garage blocks on land at Pool House to provide a total of 4 garage spaces, with one garage space allocated to serve the occupants of each of the four properties on the site (namely Pool House Cottage, Maids Cottage, Pool House Barn & Pool House Lodge).

2.2 It is therefore proposed to erect a single garage on the site of the present flat roof garage alongside Pool House Lodge, with a cat-slide roof to the rear to provide a log store. A second, triple garage block is to be constructed on land presently occupied by an existing car port within the courtyard in front of Pool House Cottage. This garage will be cut into the existing bank between the access drive and the courtyard.

2.3 The garages are to be of a timber frame construction and clad in timber (materials to be agreed) and the roofs covered in a Welsh slate and all will drain to the existing mains drainage system. It is also proposed to remove three trees, two of which are currently protected by a tree preservation order (TPO), to construct the triple garage.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

3. Site Context & Description

3.1 The site is located on the western side of Newtown Linford Lane on the southern edge of Groby Pool, about 500 metres to the north of Groby village.

3.2 The application site is situated within a larger complex of buildings associated with Pool House and is accessed via a secure, gated private drive off Newtown Linford Lane. The principal building on the site is Pool House, a Grade II listed building and now vacant. Attached to its rear elevation is Maids Cottage (also vacant) and together these two properties define the eastern side of the site. Along the northern side of this complex is Pool House Cottage (currently occupied by the applicant) and Pool House Barn, to the front of these properties is a large cobbled courtyard. At the western end of the complex is the detached Pool House Lodge.

3.3 The proposed garages are to be located on the land along the southern edge of this complex of buildings, between the access drive and the central courtyard.

3.4 To the south of the site is an extensive belt of trees, a number of which are covered by TPOs.

4. Recent Planning History

4.1 Proposals to convert Pool House Barn, Maids Cottage and Pool House Lodge into 3 independent dwellings have recently been granted planning permission (ref: 10/00213/FUL) and listed building consent (ref: 10/00214/LBC).

4.2 More recently an application for the erection of four garages was submitted on 10 February 2011 (ref. no. 11/00075/FUL), however this application was withdrawn on 24 March following a number of objections.

5. Local Heritage Assets

5.1 The site of the proposed garages falls within the curtilage of Pool House which is a Grade II listed building. The list description provides an extensive description of the historical development of Pool House.

5.2 The historic building survey submitted to address conditions attached to the previous planning approvals also provides an appraisal of the historical development of the site and the range of ancillary buildings.

5.3 It is considered that these two documents provide sufficient information to understand the significance of the heritage assets and their setting.

6. Social & Economic Context

6.1 The social and economic value of the proposed development is naturally limited, however the proposals will have no impact on any local residents or the surrounding countryside.

7. Pre-Application Discussions

7.1 Planning Policy Statement 1 highlights the importance of pre-application discussions and prior to the submission of the withdrawn application the applicant met with Richard Wright and Julian Simpson to discuss the proposals and their potential impact on the site. Whilst the outcome of these discussions did not appear to raise any fundamental objections to these proposals objections were raised when the planning application was submitted.

7.3 Following the withdrawal of that earlier planning application the proposed garages were discussed on site with Barry Whirrity on 30 March 2011. Mr Whirrity raised concerns regarding the overall length of the triple garage block and the nature of the roof materials. To address these concerns it was agreed on site that the overall length of the triple garage block would be reduced by 1.5m (taking out 0.5m from each garage unit) and that Welsh slate would be used on the roofs. The revised plans now reflect Mr Whirrity's requirements and it is therefore anticpated that they will now fully address the Council's previous concerns.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

8. Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment

8.1 Policy HE6 notes that an assessment of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting, that is proportionate to the importance of the asset and with sufficient detail to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance, should be provided with an application. The assessment of significance of any element of the historic environment should then be taken into account when determining planning applications (Policy HE7).

8.2 Policy HE9 notes that the significance of a heritage asset can be harmed or lost by development within its setting, defining setting as '*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced*', recognising that elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset or may be neutral.

9. Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan

9.1 Of those saved Local Plan policies the following are considered to be relevant for the

purposes of determining this application:

Policy BE1 – this seeks to secure attractive development that safeguards and enhances the existing environment and complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area.

Policy BE5 – this seeks to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings through the design of new development, and having regard to the preservation of trees.

Policy NE12 – this states that development proposals should take into account the existing features of the site and make provision for further landscaping where existing landscaping features cannot be retained.

EVALUATION

10. Amount & Scale of Development

10.1 The proposal relates to the erection of a two detached garage blocks, consisting of a single garage, some 6m x 4.5m x 4.1m to the ridge, on the site of an existing flat roof garage and a second, triple garage block, some 13.6m x 6m x 5.2m to the ridge, that will replace an existing timber frame, double width car port. The proposals will provide a total of 4 garage spaces, one for each of the four properties on the site.

10.2 The scale of the proposed garaging reflects the existing garaging on the site and has been designed and laid out to maintain the character of this area and to minimise the potential impact on the setting of the existing buildings.

11. Layout

11.1 The proposed garages are situated on land along the southern side of the existing courtyard to the front of Pool House Cottage and Pool House Barn.

11.2 The proposed single garage is to occupy a relatively level plateau situated above the courtyard between Pool House Lodge and an existing yew tree, that is protected by a TPO.

11.3 The proposed triple garage is to occupy a small finger of land to the west of Pool House that slopes down by some 1.5m between the access drive and the courtyard. The proposed garage is to be cut into this bank, with a retaining wall built behind the garage, so that its floor level is at the same level as the courtyard.

12. Landscaping & Trees

12.1 The site is contained by the existing built development and peripheral tree planting such that the garages will be hidden from any public view.

12.2 The aboricultural survey conducted in support of these proposals has identified four trees within the vicinity of the proposed garages. The survey's assessment of the trees notes that of the trees protected by TPO, two yew trees (notated as T1 & T2) are given a Moderate (B) classification and a third yew tree (notated as T3) is given a Low (C) classification. A further tree, a hornbeam notated as T4, is described as a bedraggled specimen of little visual merit and given a Low (C) classification.

12.3 These proposals retain T1 but seek to remove T2, T3 & T4. The aboricultural survey anticipates that there will be no interference with the roots or crown of T1 whereas the removal of trees T2, T3 and T4 will not detract from the broad public amenity of the area and their relatively small size will ease any sense of loss to the immediate vicinity, **concluding that their removal *'is bearable in arboricultural terms'*.**

12.4 In commenting on the withdrawn scheme the tree officer, Julian Simpson, commented that '*...to enable retention...of all three yews...is suggested that the proposed construction could be relocated in the open space to the west of Pool House Lodge*'. In our view this is not a practical planning solution, these proposals are designed to replace existing buildings and overall it is more desirable to keep these ancillary structures within the general confines of the existing development.

13. Appearance

13.1 It is intended that the proposed garages should appear as secondary buildings and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the overall site. The overall scale and form of the garages is therefore modest, reflecting the existing garaging on the site and the use of high quality, vernacular materials reflects a traditional style of construction in keeping with the context of the site.

14. Access

14.1 The site is served by an existing private drive off Newtown Linford Lane, no changes are proposed to that access.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

15 Impact on the Surrounding Area

15.1 This is a private secluded site that is hidden from public view. As such the proposed development will not have any impact on the wider surrounding area.

15.2 Within the site the proposed garages will replace existing structures that are of little architectural merit and generally detract from the overall visual amenity of the site. The replacement of these existing structures with the new garages offers an opportunity to improve the character and appearance of their immediate surroundings. Consequently the proposed development will comply with objectives of Policy BE1.

16. Impact on the Existing Trees

16.1 As noted above there are four trees within the vicinity of the proposed garages and whilst they have no public amenity value, given the private secluded nature of the site, three of the trees are protected by a TPO.

16.2 To build the triple garage requires the removal of three of these trees. The aboricultural survey has classified two of these trees, one of which is protected by a TPO, as falling within Retention Category - C (Low), indicating that they are of low quality and value. The removal of these two low value trees will not harm the character or visual amenities of this area.

16.3 However one of the trees proposed for removal and also protected by a TPO is classified as falling within Retention Category B (Moderate) and is of moderate quality and value. The aboricultural survey notes that this tree is a relatively small specimen that has previously been topped and its contribution to the visual amenity of the area is therefore limited.

16.4 As noted above the aboricultural survey undertaken on behalf of the applicant has concluded that that the removal of these trees ***'is bearable in arboricultural terms'.*** Given this assessment it is our view therefore that the removal of these trees will not harm the overall character of the surrounding area and, with the opportunity to make provision for replacement tree planting elsewhere in the Pool House grounds, the proposals would not be contrary to the objectives of Policies NE12 and BE1.

17. Impact on the Setting of the Listed Building

17.1 The objective of the relevant planning policies is to protect listed buildings and their settings. The most important building on this site is Pool House, the importance of the remaining buildings lies in their association with Pool House.

17.2 The existing setting of Pool House is defined by the historic, functional and spatial relationships between it and the cluster of ancillary buildings. Within this overall setting the most important aspect of Pool House is of its front elevation; its side and rear elevations are less important and, other than a ground floor projecting bay window within the (west) side elevation, are relatively plain and undistinguished.

17.3 Within this context the proposed single garage alongside Pool House Lodge is a replacement for an existing brick-built, flat roof garage that dominates the views of Pool House Lodge from Pool House. The design and appearance of the proposed garage is more sympathetic to this location, it is less likely to dominate the view of Pool House Lodge and will improve the overall setting of this ancillary building.

17.4 The proposed triple garage lies within a finger of land alongside Pool House and it replaces an existing timber frame car port. Following discussions on site with the Planning Officer to consider ways of reducing the potential impact of the proposed garage block on Pool House, the building has been situated as far from the side elevation of Pool House as possible in order to leave a distinct break between it and the listed building and the garage will also be cut into the existing bank to reduce its apparent height, particularly its relative height against Pool House. As a result the views of Pool House from Pool House Lodge, particularly of the side bay window, will not be interrupted and the views of the front elevation of Pool House Cottage and Pool House Barn will be maintained.

17.5 The proposed development will therefore not harm the significance of the listed buildings or compromise their overall setting or any key views and will comply with the objectives PPS5 and Policy BE5.

18. CONCLUSION

18.1 For the reasons set out above it is considered that the proposed development will maintain the character of this site and preserve the significance and setting of the listed building in accordance with the objectives of the relevant planning policies set out above.

Stephen Bradwell MA RTPI IHBC
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