

Conservation Officer comments for: 23/00761/FUL

Proposal: Partial demolition and conversion of existing building to form new dwelling and construction of 3 new dwellings

Site: Little India, 7 Main Street, Peckleton

Date Submitted: 12/09/2023

This proposal seeks the partial demolition and conversion of 7 Main Street to form a new dwelling and the construction of three detached dwellings to the rear. It is a resubmission of the approval reference 21/00761/FUL.

Site context and significance

The footprint of the present building known as 7 Main Street and its associated rear range is evident on the earliest Ordnance Survey extract from 1885 with the main frontage building having a largely mid-19th century appearance. Given its location within the historic settlement core of Peckleton (Leicestershire Historic Environment Record MLE16887) development on the site may even have preceded this period and it is likely that any such development would have been for agricultural purposes given the proximity of the site to the countryside and farming being the predominant reason for the growth of Peckleton. Evidence suggests that since at least the turn of the 20th century that the buildings were in use as the Brown Horse Inn (an Inn is identified on Ordnance Survey extract from 1904) until their change of use to the Little India restaurant towards the end of the 20th century.

Taking into account the above it is considered that the building has an illustrative historic interest that contributes to the character of Peckleton by allowing people to understand the social, economic and cultural development of the settlement over time.

Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723 of the Planning Practice Guidance (Historic Environment section) defines that heritage assets with historic interest can provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place. In addition to the historic interest offered by its former purposeful use as a public house according to consultation comments received as part of the application a communal function had continued to be offered by its use as a restaurant, so up until the recent closure the building has been a source of social interaction for an considerable period of time, offering a communal value for the local community through their collective experience of the village. Given the limited number of public comments made on this aspect and the communal use being more closely associated with its former use as a public house rather than restaurant such communal value is considered to make a minor positive contribution to the historic interest of the building only.

The building does also have some limited aesthetic interest and retains some architectural features and construction materials typical from the mid-19th century including brick eaves detailing, glazing bar sash windows to the upper floors, a gable end stack and Welsh slate roof covering. Other features including its render finish and bay windows to the ground floor front elevation are likely later alterations and additions.

It is therefore considered that the building is of moderate historic value and some limited communal and aesthetic value ensuring it is of heritage interest. Despite some modern alterations and additions its limited aesthetic value remains appreciable, the attached rear range and its relationship to the main building remains legible, and the position of the building at the back edge of the pavement and location on the main route through the village it has a visual prominence which singles out the building as a landmark within the local scene. Such integrity and landmark quality ensures that the local significance of the building is special and it stands out within the surrounding environment.

As a result 7 Main Street should be identified as a locally important heritage asset (a non-designated heritage asset in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework), with this conclusion being based on assessing the building against the Borough Council's adopted selection criteria for local heritage assets.

National and local policies

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the national policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of paragraph 197 of the NPPF and:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 203 states that "the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

Policies DM11 and DM12 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP) Development Plan Document seek to protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets. Policy DM11 states that the Borough Council will protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment throughout the borough. This will be done through the careful management of development that might adversely impact both designated and non-designated heritage assets. All development proposals which have the potential to affect a heritage asset or its setting will be required to demonstrate:

- a) An understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, and
- b) The impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset and its setting, including measures to minimise or avoid these impacts; and
- c) How the benefits of the proposal will outweigh any harm caused
- d) Any impact on archaeology in line with Policy DM13

All development proposals affecting the significance of heritage assets and their setting will be assessed in accordance with Policy DM11 and will require justification as set out in this policy. Policy DM12 requires all development proposals to accord with Policy DM10:

Development and Design. Policy DM12 also states that development proposals should make every effort to retain the significance of locally listed heritage assets.

Impact of the proposal

The proposal seeks to demolish the rear single storey range to 7 Main Street and convert the frontage range into a single dwelling. Three single detached dwellings are proposed to the rear of 7 Main Street on a similar north-south alignment to the range to be demolished. The existing vehicular access to the site is to remain with an access road serving the dwellings.

The attached rear range to the building is to be removed, although this is of far less interest than the frontage range so the impact of its removal is considered negligible. A timber lean-to of no interest upon the side elevation is also to be removed. Where the attached range is a replacement two storey range is proposed, rendered to match with a limited amount of appropriately styled fenestration proposed. Overall proposed alterations to the external elevations of 7 Main Street are limited so its associated historic and aesthetic value will largely be retained through the conversion and extension of the building into a dwelling.

In my opinion the three new proposed detached dwellings appear to be of an appropriate design and due to their siting along a similar linear orientation as the rear range to be demolished this follows the traditional urban grain of development upon the site, so overall the new dwellings will sit comfortably within the setting of the local heritage asset. Details should also be provided to secure additional planting and continuation of the front boundary hedgerow to ensure the presence of a high quality and traditional semi-rural characteristic feature within the street scene.

The permanent change of use of the original building to a residential use will result in the loss of the longstanding community value of the building, so it is considered that this aspect of the proposal would have an adverse impact upon its historic interest. Given the minor contribution the historic communal use of the building makes to the significance of the local heritage asset the level of adverse impact arising from this loss is also considered to be minor.

Summary

The permanent change of use of 7 Main Street resulting in the loss of its longstanding community use and associated historic interest does have an adverse impact upon its significance. Due to the minor contribution this aspect makes to the significance of the building the level of harm is also considered to be minor.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF requires a balanced judgement when weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Policy DM12 of the SADMP states that development proposals should make every effort to retain the significance of locally listed heritage assets.

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the NPPF (paragraph 8). Public benefits may include heritage benefits as specified in the Planning Practice Guidance (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – paragraph 20), such as:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Considerations to take into account in this judgement would be the minor of the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, the sustaining of many aspects of the significance of the heritage asset, and the likely non-heritage public benefits arising from the provision of dwellings to meet housing requirements and some short-term employment during construction. The above list is not exhaustive and additional social, environment and economic public benefits resulting from the proposed development could be identified. The previous consent for the conversion of the building is of course also likely to be a material consideration. The ultimate outcome of this overall judgement and a determination as to the whether the proposal complies with paragraph 203 of the NPPF and Policies DM11 and DM12 of the SADMP is one for the decision-taker.