

DECISION DELEGATED TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Application No: H04-0844-19 **Applicant:** Lincolnshire County Council

Proposal: Demolish cottage to allow 2 classroom block with wc's

Location: Thomas Cowley High School School Lane Donington

Terminal Date: 13th September 2019

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
29	The Historic Environment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
WARD MEMBER	0	2	0	0
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	0	1
RESIDENTS	0	1	0	0

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of a cottage (known as 'Mrs Abbott's Cottage') to allow for a 2-classroom block with associated WCs.

The replacement structure is planned to be as sympathetic to the qualities of the Holbeach Conservation Area and the Listing of the remainder of the Thomas Cowley High School's listing as possible. The proposals are planned to be constructed of red brick, with partial white render to match that of the current property. It is proposed that the new structure be roofed with slate tiles to be in keeping with the Historic main structure of the Thomas Cowley School. In addition, it is proposed that the new structure makes use of design features such as dentilated eaves and reconstituted stone buff cills to further maximise it's sympathetic nature.

Additionally, a 1.15m high wall, with reconstituted buff stone coping is proposed at the south west elevation of the proposals. This is to 'make good' the gap that would be left on the high street by the demolition of Mrs Abbott's Cottage, which is flush with the pavement, thus forming part of the boundary of the Thomas Cowley School. The proposed replacement structure is set back from the road, hence the need for a replacement boundary wall. Associated with the new boundary wall would be a 1.8m tall set of black railings, behind the perimeter wall.

Site Description

The proposed site, 'Mrs Abbott's Cottage' is an early c19 School Teacher's cottage. Whilst the property itself is not listed, it is a non-designated heritage asset, sits on the grounds of the Grade II listed Thomas Cowley High School and is within the Holbeach Conservation Area (HCA). This area of the Conservation is mainly characterised by the Tudor and Victorian architecture of the Thomas Cowley School, however, in addition to this, the area is characterised largely by residential properties of widely varying periods and designs. Finally, the large amount of open space, surrounding the site which currently is used as a playing field, must be considered to be characterful to the immediate area.

The property which it is proposed will be demolished is in an extremely dilapidated state, and has been boarded up for a significant period of time. The building has been deemed unsafe to enter and beyond economical repair. It is understood that the property does contain asbestos.

History

H04-0617-91 - Erection of dwellings. REFUSED on 16/07/1992

H04-0055-02 - Change of use from residential to educational. APPROVED on 21/02/2002

H04-1312-03 - New single storey library/museum and learning resource facility for community and school use and widen access road. REFUSED on 16/12/2003

H04-1313-03 - Demolition of existing derelict cottage and section of front wall (conservation area consent). REFUSED on 16/12/2003

H04-0519-07 - Single storey extension for use as IT room. REFUSED on 13/06/07

H04-0549-15 - Demolition and site clearance of cottage. REFUSED on 06/07/2015

Consultation Responses

Cllr Jane King - Ward Member

No objections. Demolition of building with no use will not impact the conservation area negatively. If any historically interesting materials are found in the process of the works, the local library would be happy to receive them for preservation.

Cllr Simon Walsh - Ward Member

Essential that the school be allowed to expand. These proposals do so, whilst making use of otherwise useless land.

Trees and Nature Conservation Officer

A protected species survey should be carried out on the property, due to potential of long-eared bats.

Trees which are to be retained should be protected throughout construction as described in the Tree Survey Report and related protected fences be positioned before construction begins.

Tree removal should be avoided if nesting birds are present.

Tree removal should be kept to a minimum and plant replacements should be used to compensate for loss of public amenity in the Donington Conservation Area - as outlined in the recommendations of the Tree Survey Report.

Local Residents

Abbott's Cottage is an eyesore with no amenities. The proposals would be a big visual improvement to the area and would provide much-needed classroom space.

Planning Considerations

Heritage Impact

The demolition of a non-designated heritage asset, would, of course, be regrettable and wherever possible we do seek to preserve such properties. However, the site has been unused, boarded up and fenced off for some time and its state of dilapidation is now causing it to be an eyesore, meaning it detracts from the character of the area. Various reports have determined that the property is currently unsafe to enter, meaning no further surveys can be undertaken, and the site has been judged to be beyond economical repair, meaning the likelihood of it ever being restored, by any party, are low.

The proposed replacement structure is deemed to be of a sympathetic design to the immediate surroundings in the Donington Conservation Area (DCA) and the remainder of the listed portion of the Thomas Cowley School. This is because the proposed structure makes use of appropriate materials and design features, such as red brick, slate roofing tiles, dentilated eaves and partial white rendering, all to remain in keeping with its historic surroundings and to relate to the design of the original cottage.

The Thomas Cowley High School has grade II listed elements and forms perhaps one of the most important historic elements of the DCA. The proposal to demolish the cottage on site, whilst causing the regrettable loss of a non-designated heritage asset, provides much needed classroom space. Permitting this development would allow the school to continue to be a viable educational facility. As such it can be argued that the demolition of the cottage will allow for the continued preservation of the Thomas Cowley site as an important, historic, functioning educational institution.

For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposals would, on balance, provide an enhancement to the character of the DCA and the nearby listed structures. Additionally, that the proposals preserve the qualities of the DCA by removing a structure which has come to be an eyesore and which will likely never see effective restoration.

Design and Layout

The design of the replacement structure is deemed to be acceptable. It is designed in such a way as to minimize any negative impact upon the DCA and any nearby listed structures. It presents no overlooking or overshadowing concerns as it is purely single storey and there are no residential properties within a reasonable distance.

Community Amenity

The proposals include the expansion of the classroom provision for Thomas Cowley High School. This is deemed to be of extreme interest to the residents of Donington, as allowing for further classrooms will expand the capacity of the school, which is currently oversubscribed.

Environment/wildlife impact

It has been raised to the attention of the case officer that there is a chance that the property could be inhabited by long-eared bats. It is advisable that the applicant takes the necessary steps to preserve any extant bat, or otherwise protected animal species', population on the site.

Conclusion

For the reasons listed above the Local Planning Authority seeks to make **NO OBJECTIONS** to the proposed plans as they appear to be in compliance with policies 1, 2, 3 and 29 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:

A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).

C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.