Design & Access Statement

Full Planning Application for Minerva House, Holbeach

Park Rd, Holbeach, Spalding PE12 7PT

April 2024

Amended 1 May 2024

EVANS
McDOWALL
ARCHITECTS

E21 Sparkhouse Studios, Rope Walk, Lincoln, LN6 7DQ
Tel: 01522 837280 Email: mail@emcdarchitects.com

Contents

1.0 Introduction
2.0 Existing Site Context
3.0 Design Statement
4.0 Transport
5.0 Flood Risk Assessment
6.0 Biodiversity Net Gain
7.0 Planning Statement
8.0 Conclusion

EVANS McDOWALL ARCHITECTS

RIBA Chartered Practice

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This design statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the Change of Use of Minerva House and the creation of external play areas.

Evans McDowall Architects have been appointed to explore the sub-division of the internal space, along with the creation of external play areas and fencing, working in collaboration with the professional team and representatives from Lincolnshire County Council.

This document outlines the process of analysis and design. The statement is intended to provide an explanation of the design and to demonstrate compliance with Planning Policy and should be read in conjunction with the submitted detailed planning drawings.

2.0 Existing Site Context

2. 1 Site Location

Minerva House is located off Park Road in the town of Holbeach. The northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the site are bounded by mature trees and hedgerow.

To the north of the site lies the A17, to the south of the site is the University Academy of Holbeach, to the west is the National Centre for Food Manufacturing and to the east is Penny Hill Road with residential properties beyond.



3.0 Design Statement

3.1 Use

Holbeach Minerva House has previously been occupied by the University of Lincoln and has been used for education and research purposes since at least 2009, with Lincolnshire County Council taking ownership of the site in 2019. The existing tenant has vacated the building and the proposed refurbishment will turn the building into a Children's Services hub with Early Years provision, Children's Centre, and Sixth Form accommodation all operating from one site.

The Children's Centre service will serve families with children and young people aged 0-19 years, with families visiting throughout the day to engage with LCC staff and services. The Early Years provision will be contracted to a provider and will offer 57 places for children aged 0-5. Holbeach University Academy wish to use the remainder of the building for laboratory and teaching space.

The building will be open from 7.30am – 6pm Monday to Friday to accommodate the Early Years provision. The Children's Centre will operate from 8.30am – 4.30pm. Weekend and evening use is very unlikely but access may be required occasionally for Early Years team meetings (once a month) or urgent Children's Centre use. The areas leased to the University Academy will be used during standard school hours.

3.2 Change of Use

Internally, the building will be subdivided into different areas for the various end-users. This will be carried out through the introduction of new fire doors and access control.

Specialist fixtures relating to the previous building use will be removed and will include the cold room wall linings, specialist services and food tasting bays.

Other internal works will include amendments to the toilets and kitchens, with various minor adaptations across the building.

3.3 Scale

The scale of the existing building will not be altered by the minimal external alterations.

3.4 Appearance

The existing building was originally two separate buildings that have been joined during several phases of previous construction. The result is a building with roofs at a number of different levels and a variety of external cladding and window styles.

Proposed works to the external elevations are limited. The wall below a side window will be removed to form a new door opening. This will be formed as a door-window set in aluminium, colour to match the existing windows. This will not be visible from a public highway

The rear elevations have had existing window openings overclad internally. These windows will now be brought back into use, see near windows in photograph to right. As indicated on the elevations, several of these will be fitted with louvres.



3.5 Access

Access from Park Road into the site will not be impacted by the works.

Access from the car park into the building will remain as the existing level access. It is proposed to bring an additional footpath from the public footpath into the building, where indicated on the Site Layout.

The lines from the existing car parking spaces will be removed and the parking layout rationalized as indicated on the Proposed Site Layout.

4.0 Transport

A travel plan has been submitted in support of this application.

The primary objective of this travel plan is to control the number of staff arriving for work at the site by car, as single occupants and to ensure that the constraints of the parking are taken into account within service delivery.

Additional objectives for the travel plan are:-

- To increase the number of staff walking and cycling
- To increase the number of staff car sharing
- To increase the number of staff using public transport
- To help control the impact of Service vehicle movements on staff and immediate neighbours.

Work towards these objectives will contribute towards Lincolnshire County Council's aim to reduce single occupancy car journeys.

The production of a specific travel plan for the Minerva House proposal compliments the work that is being undertaken by the Sustainability and Climate Change Team within Lincolnshire County Council and across the authority as a whole.

This outlines:

- The expected number of vehicle movements associated with the new usage
- Explains the measures being undertaken to reduce the usage of private cars
- How the travel plan will be implemented
- How the travel plan will be monitored

5.0 Flood Risk Assessment

A Floor Risk Assessment, prepared by Roy Lobley Consulting has been submitted as part of the planning application.

The report demonstrates that the proposed development is not at significant flood risk, and will not increase flood risk to others, subject to the recommended flood mitigation strategies being implemented.

- The proposed development is at a medium risk of flooding from fluvial/tidal sources.
- The existing land level is approximately 3.20m AOD adjacent to the building.
- The residual flood depths are between 0.25m and 0.50m.
- The 1st floor includes areas which can be used as a safe refuge, including toilet facilities.

Flood resilience measures will be included, where required, as follows;

- Water resisting airbricks.

- Backwater valves and non-return valves.
- New electrical installation to be above 3.70m AOD.

It is recommended that the future occupants sign up to the EA flood warning service and a flood evacuation plan be the subject of a condition which includes as a minimum;

- Potential sources of flooding and severity;
- Flood warning trigger level;
- Actions to be taken by staff on receipt of warning;
- Identification of escape routes and potential flood depths, (see below);
- Deploying flood protection and safe refuge;
- Reoccupation of the Site;
- Training and Exercising;
- Emergency contact information.

This report demonstrates that the proposed development is not at significant flood risk, and will not increase flood risk to others, subject to the recommended flood mitigation strategies being implemented.

6.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

All development should provide net gains for biodiversity and aim to secure wider environmental gains (as outlined in the NPPF).

At Minerva House there is very limited work the external facades of the building and no new floor space created. The planning application will mainly be for a change of use with external works limited to remarking car park spaces and a fence to part of the site perimeter.

The Government has provided a list of projects that will be exempt from BNG stating:

The biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development which meets the first and second conditions.

(1) The first condition is that the development does not impact an onsite priority habitat.

(2) The second condition is that the development impacts—

(a)less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero; and

(b)less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat.

We would consider that the development does not impact on onsite priority habitat.

The planning pre-app response agreed with this approach. "Based upon the information provided to support the pre-application advice, and taking into consideration the legislation, on this occasion it could be considered that BNG would not be applicable."

The client will however be keen to take opportunities to increase the biodiversity around the site as part of this early years learning environment.

7.0 Planning

Pre-application planning advice was sought from Lincolnshire County Council, under the reference PAD000179, with the response dated 16th April 2024.

The pre-application response comments on the key policies of the SELLP:

Policy 1 of the SELLP identifies Holbeach as a Main Service Centre, where development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the settlement itself, helps sustain existing facilitates or helps meet the needs of other local communities. In this case, the proposed refurbishment would facilitate more Early Years places within the town and relocating the Children's Centre from Holbeach Primary Academy could free up space to enable the academy to offer more primary school places. Therefore, this proposal would fit well in terms of compliance with Policy 1.

8.0 Conclusion

The applicant proposes to refurbish a building that has previously been occupied by Lincoln University. The University plan has now vacated the building and the applicant proposes to refurbish the building to create a Children's Services hub with Early Years provision, Children's Centre, and Sixth Form accommodation all operating from one site.

This application seeks to change the use of the building from it existing varied use to those noted above. Additionally, there will be amendments to the car park areas and new external play areas will be created and securely fenced.

This Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the proposals will have minimal impact on the building and its setting. All planning aspects as set out in the pre-application advice have been considered and the required reports submitted as part of the planning application.

EVANS
McDOWALL
ARCHITECTS

E21 Sparkhouse Studios, Rope Walk, Lincoln, LN6 7DQ
Tel: 01522 837280 Email: mail@emcdarchitects.com

RIBA
Chartered Practice