

Online Comment

Application H09-0918-19
Location Park Hall 6-10 Park Road Holbeach PE12 7EE
Proposal Demolition of existing storage buildings and erection of 8 dwellings including associated gardens and off-road parking provisions

Name Ian Marshman, Historic Environment Officer
Address Lincolnshire County Council Lancaster House 36 Orchard Street LN1 1XX

Date Submitted 10-01-20
For/Against Comments

Thank you for reconsulting this office on the newly submitted Heritage Impact Assessment. This contains a substantial amount of historical research about the site, and there is some consideration of potential impacts on the setting of nearby heritage assets, however the document lacks a proportionate assessment of the significance of the building that it is proposed to demolish (consisting of its aesthetic, historical, communal and archaeological/evidential interest). There is also insufficient assessment of the contribution that Park Hall makes to the "special architectural or historical interest" for which this part of Park Road was designated part of the Holbeach Conservation Area in order to protect and enhance.

Despite the local planning authority's most recent Holbeach Conservation Area Appraisal having highlighted this building as being of particular local interest, the impact of complete demolition on the Conservation Area is considered as minor negative/neutral without adequately assessing the building's contribution. This office cannot agree with the conclusion that "the removal of an older building in a prominent position within the Conservation Area will be noticeable but the regeneration of the site should mitigate its loss."

This conclusion takes no account of the building's significance or its contribution to the Conservation Area, and it also presupposes that 'regeneration' of any form on this site would be positive without any consideration of the impacts from the design of the new buildings. The latter forms a separate additional potential impact that needs to be fully addressed.

It is also stated that an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching will be carried out to provide site specific information on the potential impacts on archaeological remains of the possible medieval hospital, but to our knowledge this has not taken place.

There remains insufficient information provided to allow the local planning authority to make any reasoned decision on the impacts of this proposal on the historic environment. This is not in accordance with either the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 189) or the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Policy 29). It is therefore recommended that this application not be considered further until this has been addressed.

As stated in our initial advice, the building in question has already identified as being of local importance (a non-designated heritage asset) in the Conservation Area, and the Local Plan states that only in "exceptional circumstances" will the demolition of such buildings be permitted.

No justification has been provided for the building's demolition, and there is no indication that "all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset;" as is required of development proposals by Policy 29 (F.4) of the Local Plan. It remains unclear why this prominent historic building's demolition should be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

It is recommended that due consideration be given to the conversion of the Park Hall, to which it appears to be readily suitable with minimal need for new openings if original ones were reopened. There are many examples of successful conversions of similar historic industrial and agricultural buildings that have been completed in Spalding, Sutton Bridge and surrounding area. Such a conversion would put this prominent historic building within the conservation area to a viable new use consistent with its conservation that would enhance its contribution to the Conservation Area as promoted by national and local planning policy.