



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr P Norman
Head of Planning
South Holland District Council
Priory Road
Spalding
Lincs PE11 2XE

10 April 2024

Dear Phil,

Further to our recent discussions about the site of the former Bull & Monkie public house in Spalding, I write concerning planning application H16-0767-23.

In essence, it is good news that a plan to develop this long redundant site is being brought forward and considered, particularly given its salience at the heart of the town.

Nevertheless, given that this is amongst the most important sites in the District and, by extension, one of the most important developments, there are a number of critical matters pertinent to its consideration.

At the outset I should make clear that, as you know, I have no objection, in principle, to the site being used for residential purposes and, in particular, for a care home.

However, the scale of any development **must** respect the existing built environment. To which end, the application in its current form does not. As Spalding Civic Society has said, it is 'monolithic', so out of keeping with what surrounds it. As I have made clear previously, this echoes my own view. Because the building proposed is just too large for the plot, neighbouring and nearby buildings - a number of which are significant and consequently listed - would be overwhelmed. Similarly, the size of the proposed home, as it occupies so much of the site, leaves inadequate space for car parking or landscaping, the consequence being that staff and visitors will, doubtless, use on road parking making it unavailable to others.

In my view, there is scope to address these problems by means of an adjustment to the application which reduces the size of the building by say 10 or 15 per cent.

Just as important, the character of the building **must** reflect the prevailing built environment and so, while the design is not without merit, much more should be done to improve it through strict planning conditions [REDACTED]



These strict conditions should include, amongst other things, very specific requirements for appropriate wooden sash windows; brick types, colours and bonds (I suggest reclaimed bricks and Flemish bond); slate roofing; and appropriate stonework. It is disappointing that the submitted application does not provide sufficient detail of this kind, with uncertainty about the proposed window treatment being a particularly serious concern.

As you know, planning law now makes good design a key planning matter which the Committee is obliged to consider. Indeed, the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear planning authorities should refuse consent to poorly designed buildings. Furthermore, every application must now be gauged on the basis of its own design quality and its role in beautifying its environs.

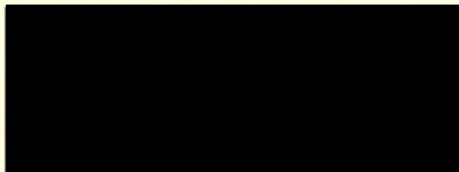
Without a reduction in the building's scale and the strict conditions I have detailed (along with others we have discussed) I am not convinced that this application meets those statutory requirements.

I do, however, believe it represents a good basis for further discussions with the applicant, which a deferment would allow.

As you know, I have suggested to Cllr Nick Worth that Nicholas Boys Smith, Chairman of the Office for Place, the non-departmental Governing body missioned to advise Ministers on planning matters etc, takes a look at this application and I am aware that you have spoken to him recently, following his visit to South Holland last year. Again, a deferment would allow such further considerations to take place with a view to addressing concerns, including representations made to me by the Civic Society and a number of my constituents.

Finally, may I thank and commend you for the way in which you have involved me in this matter throughout.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt Hon Sir John Hayes CBE MP
South Holland and The Deepings

cc Cllr James Avery, Chairman Planning Committee