

DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING**DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING**

Application No: H18-0463-24 **Applicant:** API Ltd

Proposal: Change of use from hotel Class C1 to residential Class C3 including the creating of 15 residential units

Location: Bridge Hotel 4 Bridge Road Sutton Bridge

Terminal Date: 29th January 2025

Planning Policies**South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019**

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
06	Developer Contributions
18	Affordable Housing
28	The Natural Environment
29	The Historic Environment
30	Pollution
36	Vehicle and Cycle Parking

National Guidance**National Planning Policy Framework December 2024**

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision-Making
Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	1
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	1

PLANNING LIAISON OFFICER - FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT	0	0	0	1
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OFFICER	0	0	0	1
SOUTH HOLLAND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	2	1
OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	0	0	0	4
RESIDENTS	1	6	0	0

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

This is a full planning application for the change of use from hotel Class C1 to residential Class C3 including the creating of 15 residential units.

The building relates to an existing structure that last functioned as a hotel. The building which takes up a prominent town centre plot has parking to the fore and rear and is made up of red brick with sash openings. Though is in a dilapidated state.

The proposal would seek the conversion of the building to form 15 residential units. At basement level the proposal is made up of storage including a cycle storage room and 'basements' associated with some of the units.

The ground floor, first floor and 'attic' are all converted into primary accommodation for the remaining units. The proposed elevations show the reinstatement of windows and the general reinforcement and update of the existing buildings structure, including roof.

Extension and alterations to the building are proposed, with the main works occurring on the northern elevation.

The site plan shows parking provision (with 12 number spaces) and a bin store accessed through a private drive along the building's western elevation. Amenity Space is also shown to the rear of the building (the north).

Site Description

The application site relates to the Bridge Inn Hotel which is a vacant building last used in 2008. The building has recently been purchased and subsequently this application has followed. The application site is located within Flood Zone 3 in accordance with EA Mapping systems and shown on the 2115 hazard maps to be in an area with a danger for most.

The application site is within the town centre boundary for Sutton Bridge, as well as within the

primary shopping area.

The building is a large redbrick former hotel. With parking located to the rear. Whilst many of the openings are boarded up, it remains clear that they were sash openings with cill and lintel detailing. The building is built across 4 floors which includes the basement. The side of the property is along West Bank whilst the rear faces Wharf Street.

A Grade II listed building is located to the west.

History

H18-1234-16 - Redevelopment of site to provide 21 one-bed flats, parking and infrastructure. Non-determination 12-09-17

Consultation Responses

Parish

At a meeting on 11th June Sutton Bridge Parish Council resolved to make the comment that there is insufficient parking identified for the size of the development.

Anglian Water

Section 2 - Wastewater Treatment

The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Sutton Bridge Water Recycling Centre that will have available capacity for these flows. When assessing the receiving water recycling centre's (WRC) dry weather flow (DWF) headroom we take an average flow over the past 5 years to take account of changing weather patterns. Where the average exceeds the WRC's permitted allowance, we also take account of the following Environment Agency enforcement trigger - "has the DWF permit been exceeded in 3 of the last 5 years" - this must include non-compliance from the last annual data return. Based on the above assessment Sutton Bridge WRC is within the acceptance parameters and can accommodate the flows from the proposed growth.

Section 4 - Surface Water Disposal The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer.

EA

We have reviewed the amended proposed floor plan drawing and consider that it satisfactorily addresses our earlier concerns. Subject to the conditions below, we therefore withdraw our previous objection, dated 11 September 2024.

The EA have recommended conditions on finished floor levels, no habitable basement rooms and the removal of PD for any extensions or formulation of any additional accommodation.

Historic Environment Officer

Having reviewed the application documents and the updated available Historic Environment information for this application, the proposal is unlikely to have an impact on any archaeological remains. Consequently, no further archaeological input is necessary for this application. As noted in the Design and Access Heritage Statement, the site is located close to 8 and 10 Bridge Road, which are Grade II listed. Regarding any potential impacts to the Grade II listed building, I defer comments to the SHDC Conservation Officer.

LCC Education

Many thanks for the below consultation. LCC Education has no comments on this consultation in relation to education as there is sufficient capacity in the locality for the children generated by this scheme.

Highways & Suds

No Objections

Lincolnshire County Council does not have adopted parking standards and considers each application on its own merits. This proposal has 15no. spaces which will utilise the existing access arrangements, including cycle storage provision within the premises and whilst it is possible that the development site and the existing host dwelling may result in more parking demand than these spaces, there is parking available within the vicinity, and it is therefore not considered that this proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

It should be noted that the site is located in a central urban area where services and facilities are within a reasonable distance to be accessed via sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling and public transport. Future residents of the development and the host dwelling will not be reliant on the private car and therefore parking is not essential for this proposal. The applicant should be aware that the existing access arrangements require reconfiguring to accommodate the proposed parking provision. The applicant has provided an accessibility Assessment in support of this proposal, which would seem a fair and reasonable justification for the reduced parking provision.

As Lead Local Flood Authority, Lincolnshire County Council is required to provide a statutory planning consultation response with regard to Drainage on all Major Applications. This application for the change of use will not alter the existing surface water drainage. Therefore, the Lead Local Flood Authority does not consider that this proposal would increase flood risk in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Crime Prevention Officer

Access Control - Apartments Communal door sets that serve 4 dwellings or less that are more than two storeys in height should have a visitor door entry system and access control system. Communal entrance systems that serve 5-10 dwellings should meet industry specifications

Cycle Storage - (if applicable) Internal cycle storage should be accessed via a fire, smoke and security rated door set and specifically address concerns over the storage of e-bikes. Cycle storage facilities should be constructed of floor to ceiling dividing walls with no windows set in them, either internal or external units should have access doors fitted with thumb turns, or other system to allow emergency exit and prevent locking people inside the unit. Cycle parking should comprise bicycle stands, anchor points or other suitable security measures to secure cycles and /or mobility scooters or e-bikes. The cycle storage facility should benefit from restricted and controlled access for authorised users.

NHS

The contribution requested for the development is £9,900.00 (£660 x 15 dwellings). Please note that the expectation is that the appropriate indexation rate and any late payment penalties would also be paid on top of the value specified above.

Housing

Policy 17 of the Local Plan states that the provision of new housing will aim to meet the long-term needs of the Plan area, ensuring the development of mixed, inclusive, and sustainable communities. This includes meeting affordable housing needs where appropriate. Policy 18 specifies that on market housing sites with 11 or more dwellings, approximately 25% should be affordable housing in the South Holland district. The current application, which identifies 15 residential units, translates to 4 affordable units (25%).

Policy 18 also outlines that affordable housing on market sites should be a mix of 70% affordable rent and 30% intermediate housing for sale (such as shared ownership and First Homes). Considering the proposed site, we are open to collaborating with the developer on this mix.

Additionally, Registered Providers require properties to meet at least 85% of National Design Space Standards. Single bedrooms should be suitable for adult occupancy, with a floor area of at least 6.5m², in compliance with section 326 of the Housing Act 1985. If planning permission is granted, the applicant should secure a Registered Provider for the affordable dwellings as early as possible. The Housing Strategy Team can provide a list of RPs with stock in the local area if needed.

Environmental Protection

No comments

IDB

Thank you for your consultation on planning application H18-0463-24. The site is located within the Internal Drainage District of the South Holland Internal Drainage Board where the Board's Byelaws apply. We have reviewed the supporting information and the proposals do not meet our criteria for commenting as per our Planning and Byelaw Strategy. For this reason the Board has no comments.

Member comments

I have difficulty seeing how 15 units have sufficient on site parking, as parking seems to be for less vehicles. There needs to be sufficient parking on site for vehicles for 15 households, which probably means at least 30 spaces.

Representations

The application has been publicised in accordance with the DMPO. The application has received 6 number letters of support and one representation. Limited concerns are expressed but in general they refer to parking and construction works.

Positive comments include the brining back of a vacant building and the buoyancy it would bring to this part of Sutton Bridge especially in relation to character.

Planning Considerations

The main issues and considerations in this case are (but are not limited to):

- Principle of Development
- Planning Obligations
- Flooding Risk Considerations
- Highway Safety and Parking
- Historic Environment
- Layout, Design and Impact on the Character of the Area
- Environmental Issues
- Highway Safety and Parking
- Biodiversity
- Planning Balance

Evaluation

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, forms the development plan for the District, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above.

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

Furthermore, where a Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, this alongside the adopted Local Plan, forms part of the Development Plan for the District, and must be considered when assessing development proposals. In this instance, no relevant neighbourhood plans have been adopted.

The Authority is able to demonstrate a supply of deliverable sites equivalent to in excess of 5 years through the latest Housing Land Supply Assessment.

Planning Principle

SELLP Policy 1 Within the settlement boundaries of the Main Service Centres (as shown on the Inset Maps) development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the

settlement itself, helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities.

SELLP Policy 24 is concerned with the retail hierarchy. Part B relates to district and local centres, of which Sutton Bridge is one. The policy states:

In the District Centre of Holbeach and the Local Centres of Crowland, Donington, Kirton, Long Sutton and Sutton Bridge, town centre uses will be permitted where they, on their own or cumulatively with other permitted development, will generate no significant harm upon the vitality and viability of that centre or any other centre within the hierarchy, particularly with regard to their role for food shopping. The provision of markets and other appropriate initiatives that would enhance the vitality and viability of such centres will be supported. New development within the Sub-Regional, District and Local Centres will be expected to:

- 1. be physically integrated and have good pedestrian and cycle links, with the rest of the centre;*
- 2. generate a reasonable level of footfall and be open to the public;*
- 3. contribute to an appropriate balance of uses;*
- 4. achieve an acceptable level of amenity, including provision of refuse and recycling facilities; and*
- 5. achieve an acceptable level of highway access, parking and servicing.*

NPPF Paragraph 90f is relevant to this assessment. It states that:

recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites

Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should - define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre

Within Annex 2 of the NPPF (Glossary) main town centre uses are described. This is a more accurate definition of uses that are suitable within the Town Centre given that Local Plan pre-dates the changes made to the UCO that came into effect in 2021, the NPPF latest revision is December 2024. The uses that are identified as 'main town centre uses' are as follows:

Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Also key to this assessment are the changes to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order (1987) that came into effect in 2021, following the publication of the local plan. Traditional retail Uses 'Class -A1' were grouped under a new class (Class E) along with some other former A uses, such as cafes and professional services/offices. The class also absorbed other uses such as D2 uses, which relate to indoor recreation as well as B1 uses. These classes are generally considered now to represent 'town centre uses'.

The building currently has a C1 planning use (hotel), the NPPF glossary (definition of main town centre uses) considers that hotels are a main town centre use. Whilst the proposal which is for dwellings (a subdivision of this building) is not defined in these terms within the glossary, explicit direction is given under NPPF paragraph 90f that recognition to the effect that residential development would have in ensuring vitality of town centres should be given.

Whilst the submission does not make explicit argument of how this proposal would benefit Sutton Bridge Town centre, it is clear that the adaptive reuse of a building vacant for circa 16 years would clearly have a positive impact if only through an increase in footfall (both from residents as well as visitors). This time alludes to the notion that it is unlikely another adaptive reuse is likely to come forward, especially one having an 'E' use class. That said the existing use is already outside of that category and therefore the impact of the loss of hotel use (the effect it would have on town centre vitality) is diluted by the benefits that a residential scheme would have upon town centre vitality, giving weight to NPPF paragraph 90f.

The proposal which is in accordance with the overarching spatial strategy (SELLP Policy 1) is not wholly in conformity with SELLP town centre policies. Notwithstanding this, material weight is given to the fact that the existing use is C1 (and not Class E), the length of time this building has been

vacant, its current disrepair and the NPPF instruction to *recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.*

On this basis there can be support for such a use in this location.

Planning Obligations

SELLP Policy 6 sets out Developer contributions. It states that "Developments of 11 or more dwellings, or which have a combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 sqm, or non-residential development of 1,000sqm gross floorspace or more will be expected to mitigate their impacts upon infrastructure, services and the environment to ensure that such developments are acceptable in planning terms. The Local Planning Authorities will not accept any proposals that artificially reduce capacity or floorspace to circumvent the proper operation of this policy."

As part of the consultation Lincolnshire County Council have been consulted, Strategic Housing and the NHS. LCC have confirmed that there is school capacity in the area and so no requirement for contributions.

The NHS have requested a commuted sum to support local GP practices. The applicant has confirmed agreement with these terms.

Vacant Buildings Credit

Housing have stated that *Policy 18 specifies that on market housing sites with 11 or more dwellings, approximately 25% should be affordable housing in the South Holland district. The current application, which identifies 15 residential units, translates to 4 affordable units (25%).*

However, the building is vacant and has been for some time. The applicant has applied for vacant building credit. NPPF Paragraph 65 states:

Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount

In terms of the 'proportionate amount' footnote 31 expands stating "Equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of the existing buildings. This does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned".

The policy is intended to incentivise brownfield development, including the reuse or redevelopment of empty and redundant buildings. In considering how the vacant building credit should apply to a particular development, local planning authorities should have regard to the intention of national policy.

In doing so, it may be appropriate for authorities to consider:

*whether the building has been made vacant for the sole purposes of re-development
whether the building is covered by an extant or recently expired planning permission for the same or substantially the same development*

Planning practice guidance states under paragraph 27 (ref: ID: 23b-027-20190315) that **The existing floorspace of a vacant building should be credited against the floorspace of the new development**

The applicant has demonstrated that firstly, the building is vacant, not abandoned, furthermore given the length of time of this vacancy it is unlikely it was kept vacant for the purposes of this planning application. Lastly the amount of credit applied for (given it is an entire conversion) would result in no required provision for affordable housing.

On this basis only the NHS commuted sum will be captured through S106 and there is no requirement for an affordable housing contribution.

Flood Risk & Drainage

Section 14 of the NPPF sets out the national policy basis for making assessments in relation to flood risk.

SELLP Policy 4 sets out South Hollands approach to Flood Risk the application site is located within Flood Zone 3 in accordance with EA flood maps for planning, located due east to the River Nene. The South East Lincolnshire SFRA shows the area to have a present day hazard rating of 'danger for some' and projected 2115 hazard rating of 'danger for all'.

The proposed use (C3) has the same flood risk vulnerability classification as the existing use (C1). The proposal is for a change of use and would contribute to the sustainability of the town centre and so wider community. On this basis it is considered that in flooding principle terms the proposal is acceptable.

The applicant following multiple objections from the Environment Agency and many amendments now shows that no living accommodation will be located within the basement. This will be reinforced through planning condition and permitted development rights for this floor to be taken away. This is due to the SFRA and potential threat to lives from a serious flood event. This correlates with the applicant's own recommendation set out within the updated FRA.

In terms of the surface water drainage strategy the applicant has stated within the application form that surface water will be disposed of through both 'soakaway' and 'mains sewer'. No other information has been received as to whether or not this correlates with the existing solution or is a in part a new solution.

The LLFA have been consulted and have no objections. Anglian Water have been consulted and in part have stated *The surface water strategy/flood risk assessment submitted with the planning application relevant to Anglian Water is unacceptable due to lack of information pertaining to the existing arrangement and no surface water hierarchy evidence provided.* The IDB have also been consulted and have no comments.

Given the position set out by Anglian Water, and the request for a condition relating to surface water drainage as well as the limited information presented as regards surface water drainage. It is considered that conditionality is required in this instance. However, given that the building (with the exception of some demolition and rebuilding to the north) is in situ, a time phase to 'prior to occupation' may be appropriate.

In terms of the used water network Anglian have confirmed that the is capacity in the network to accept these flows, this would require the developer serving notice under the S106 Water Industry Act (1991). This will be attached as an informative to any permission achieved.

It is therefore considered that subject to the aforementioned mitigation that the proposal would accord with SELLP Policy 4.

Highway Safety

SELLP Policy 2 details that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to access and vehicle generation.

SELLP Policy 3 details that development proposals will demonstrate how accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways will be secured, where they are relevant to the proposal.

SELLP Policy 36 is concerned with Vehicle and Cycle Parking it states that "All new development, including change of use, should provide vehicle and cycle parking, in accordance with the minimum Parking Standards adopted by the Local Planning Authorities (in Appendix 6).

LCC Highways have been consulted and have no objections to the proposal. The state of the parking provision:

Lincolnshire County Council does not have adopted parking standards and considers each application on its own merits. This proposal has 15no. spaces which will utilise the existing access arrangements, including cycle storage provision within the premises and whilst it is possible that the development site and the existing host dwelling may result in more parking demand than these spaces, there is parking available within the vicinity, and it is therefore not considered that this

proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. AND

The applicant should be aware that the existing access arrangements require reconfiguring to accommodate the proposed parking provision. The applicant has provided an accessibility Assessment in support of this proposal, which would seem a fair and reasonable justification for the reduced parking provision. AND

You will note that there is a single yellow line along the edge of the main carriageway (leading to the port area) which indicates a Traffic Regulation Order. We are advised by our colleagues that this is to prohibit waiting of heavy goods vehicles at all times. It would, therefore, not apply to other vehicles, so private cars belonging to residents of Bridge Hotel or any member of the public could legitimately park in the area between the Hotel and the main carriageway. This area can accommodate approximately 8no. additional spaces.

It is therefore considered that given the sustainable central location of the application site, in that it is walkable to services and amenities located within Sutton Bridge the reliance on the car is minimised. Furthermore, the amount of parking proposed, along with the large amount of cycle parking and additional capacity to the front (see highways comments) then the proposal would be acceptable absorbed in highways terms into this location.

The proposal then based upon the above is considered to accord with SELLP Policies 2, 3 and 36.

Historic Environment

SELLP Policy 29 sets out the local policy framework in respect of assessment proposals that affect the historic environment. The policy states that "To respect the historical legacy, varied character and appearance of South East Lincolnshire's historic environment, development proposals will conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, such as important known archaeology or that found during development, historic buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, street patterns, streetscapes, landscapes, parks (including Registered Parks and Gardens), river frontages, structures and their settings through high-quality sensitive design."

The application site is located close to a listed building Nos 6 -1 01 Bridge Road, this is a Grade II listed structure. Part A of SELLP 29 is concerned with Listed buildings, Paragraph 3 states "Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will be supported where they preserve or better reveal the significance of the Listed Building"

It is considered that given the building that forms this application is already in situ and that any works of demolition (or rebuild) are located on the north elevation, well away from the listed building (and its setting) then the proposal is acceptable in these terms.

The LCC Historic places team have been consulted and have no objections in terms of archaeology.

On this basis the proposal is considered to accord with SELLP Policy 29.

Character and Landscape

Policy 2 of the SELLP states that design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable.

Policy 2 point 1 states that proposal should meet with sustainable development considerations specifically in relation to 'size, scale, layout, density and impact on the amenity, trees, character and appearance of the area and the relationship to existing development and land uses'.

The proposal would represent a betterment, in that the adaptive reuse and general update of this dilapidated building would have an aesthetic gains to the town centre. Furthermore, the proposed works of demolition and construction of additions represent a sympathetic approach, that would not undermine the overall character of the existing building.

Openings which are a key feature of this building are shown to be a continuation of sash style, materials are confined to match that of the existing building. Given the scope of these works and the large amount of openings located on the building, a schedule of materials, which show the exist tile, brick and openings to be used will be conditioned as the effect (if inappropriate materials are used) would be harmful to the character of the area including the nearby listed building.

On this basis the proposal is considered to accord with SELLP Policies 2 and 3.

Environmental Issues Amenity

NPPF Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December, 2023) states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

SELLP Policy 2 sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

SELLP Policy 30 is concerned with pollution and places impacts in relation to noise, disturbance and air quality as important consideration when considering proposals for planning.

The proposal would not result in an over proliferation of openings. The openings proposed on the west elevation are kept to a minimum and located on ground and first floor. Due to the arrangement of neighbouring buildings, it is considered that this would not lead to an unacceptable level of overlooking. The north elevation does look across toward the rear of residential properties fronting Wharf Street, however the angle of opportunity for overlooking does dilute this impact as well as the separation distance with parking located in between. Furthermore, weight is given to the fact that these rooms previously operated as hotel rooms (and have the ability to do so without permission).

Acknowledging this fall back and then these opening are considered to be located in acceptable positions. The east and south elevations look onto West Bank and Bridge Road respectively and are likely to give rise to limited harm.

In terms of the additional built form, this is of an appropriate scale that would not result in giving rise to unacceptable impacts in relation to overshadowing/overbearing. As regards operational impacts the fall-back use as a hotel is considered to allow for similar noise and disturbance levels and so the proposal is considered acceptable in those terms.

On this basis the proposal would accord with SELLP Policies 2 and 30.

BNG

NPPF Paragraph 187d is also relevant requiring net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

SELLP Policy 28 is concerned with the Natural Environment point 3 is relevant to this assessment, point 2 is concerned with Nationally or locally designated sites and protected or priority habitats and species and point 3 with addressing gaps in the ecological network.

The applicant has stated that the scheme is exempt from BNG. In that the extension works are under 25m² and the staircases are external. The rest of the works relate to demolition.

Whilst the 25m² exemption may not be wholly accurate, given that other works are involved, considering the existing environment (hard standing to the rear) it is clear that there is a very limited amount on existing onsite BNG. A di minimis exemption (given predominantly that the proposal is for change of use) is therefore appropriate.

On this basis the proposal would accord with SELLP Policy 28.

Planning Balance

As detailed above, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal whilst not for town centre uses is complementary to the existing town centre and would contribute to the vitality and viability of Sutton Bridge through increased footfall. The adaptive reuse of this building would also have character benefits and would offer the building, which is a well-established fixtures a future purposes and a continued contribution to the area.

In this instance, there are no material considerations that weigh against the proposal and as such, the planning balance is in favour of the development.

Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 28, 29 and 36 (including Appendix 6) of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) (2019), along with the identified sections contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024). There are no significant factors in this case that indicate against the proposal and outweigh the consideration in favour of the proposal and the policies referred to above.

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.