



FAO: Planning Department,
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2019/0218/LB & 6/2019/0217/MAJ
Date: 28/05/2019

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: *Northaw House, Coopers Lane, Northaw, Potters Bar, EN6 4NG*

The application is for the conversion of Northaw House to form 11 apartments (including refurbishment of existing single caretaker's flat) and underground parking area, the Ballroom Wing to form 2 dwellings, the Stable Block to form 1 dwelling, refurbishment of existing dwelling at Oak Cottage, construction of 2 Gate Lodge dwellings, 3 dwellings within the Walled Garden, 7 dwellings within the Settlement Area, refurbishment of the Walled Garden, refurbishment of access routes and reinstatement of old route, provision of hard and soft landscaping, car parking and supporting infrastructure.

Northaw House is grade II listed and dates from 1698 (list entry no. 1100970). It is of red brick construction with rendered elevations under a slate mansard roof. The main house is two storeys with attics and a cellar. The original part is formed of the middle five bays, with extensions and additions made throughout the 18th and 19th centuries to enlarge the house. To the north west of the house is an 18th century service wing (now known as the Ballroom Wing) and to the south western corner a three storey Edwardian service block. To the east is the stable block, also grade II listed, and dating from the mid-late 18th century and constructed in red brick under slate roofs with a prominent cupola (list entry no. 1100971). To the west of the house is a group of dilapidated former farm buildings and beyond these a walled garden and gardeners' cottage (Oak Cottage).

The house has most recently been in use as offices and is now empty. The other buildings within the site, including the grade II listed stables, are also empty and falling into a poor state of repair. Lengthy pre-application discussions have taken place regarding the conversion and reuse of the main house and its outbuildings, and the erection of new dwellings to off-set the conservation deficit presented by the adaptation and repair of the heritage assets on site. It is proposed to convert the house into 11 flats, convert the Ballroom Wing into two dwellings, convert the stables into a single dwelling and refurbish Oak Cottage. To balance the costs associated with the works to these heritage assets, it is proposed to construct a further 12 houses (three within the walled garden, seven within the old 'home farm', described as the 'settlement area', and two gate lodges). The principle of this amount of development and the approach to design, adaptation and reuse was agreed at pre-application stage.



The proposed conversion scheme for Northaw House and the Ballroom Wing raises no objections. The proposed floorplans have been amended following meetings on site and see the retention of more historic fabric and greater legibility of the historic layout than the previous floorplans. The scheme largely follows existing divides and circulation spaces within the building and avoids the division of principal rooms. The demolition of the poorly constructed corridor extension to the Ballroom Wing and the single storey additions to the west are uncontentious and beneficial in improving the appearance of the house.

The proposed conversion and extension to the stable block raises no objections. The design of the extension has been revised following a site meeting to omit the dormer windows by heightening the eaves level. The extension is detailed to match the existing building but with a lower ridge height to provide some distinction between the original block and the new extension. Internal access into the building was limited due to its poor condition and structural concerns and so the survival and potential for the retention of internal finishes, fixtures and fittings is unknown. The retention and reuse of these can be reserved by condition.

The refurbishment and extension of the existing early 20th century gardener's cottage (Oak Cottage) is uncontentious. The proposed single storey hipped roof extension is an improvement on the existing flat roofed addition. The three proposed houses within the walled garden have been designed to occupy three of the four quadrants of the garden, with the fourth retained as a communal garden. A distinctly contemporary design approach has been adopted with the flat roofs keeping the new houses as low as possible and minimising views from outside the garden. Within the garden, the landscaping scheme and the retention of the fourth quadrant as a garden aids the preservation of the character of the space. Details of the landscaping, both hard and soft, and the quality of external materials and detailing are vital to the success of this part of the scheme and can be reserved by condition. Any repairs to the wall can also be reserved by condition on the listed building consent.

The seven proposed houses within the 'settlement area' are located on land between Northaw House and the walled garden. The existing former agricultural buildings, including a piggery and brick-built 'apple store' (currently in use as an office), are to be demolished. The loss of these buildings has been agreed at pre-application stage as they are of limited significance. The design approach taken to the proposed houses creates the appearance of a former farmstead. The 'farm house' is a brick built, detached house and the other six buildings have the appearance of converted traditional agricultural buildings. Historic maps and the surviving buildings show that this site did contain buildings in agricultural use. The proposed design approach ensures the new houses do not visually compete with the existing historic buildings and create a 'home farm' group, including a farm house, barns and dairy, which is not incongruous within the wider estate setting of the listed buildings.

The proposed lodges are located to the far west and east of the site in positions alongside the access driveway appropriate to their 'lodge' appearance. They are single storey with slate roofs and rendered elevations and are detailed to reflect Northaw House, although simplified, as is expected of gate lodges. As discussed at pre-application stage, they raise no objections.

The scheme sees the retention, repair and reuse of the grade II listed Northaw House, grade II listed stable block and curtilage listed walled garden and secures a viable long-term use to ensure their future maintenance and conservation. The conversion of the house and the stable block does result in some 'less than substantial harm' as the subdivision of the house results impedes its historic layout and its original use a large single dwelling. The loss of historic fabric, although minimised as far as possible, also causes some harm. Development within their setting also causes some degree of 'less than substantial harm' although efforts have been made to mitigate this harm through the location of new buildings and their detailing and design. However, there are notable

heritage benefits arising from the scheme, namely the repair and reuse of the grade II listed buildings. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF should be used in assessing the applications and, whilst no comments are made on any potential public benefits arising from the scheme, the heritage gains are considered to be of particular benefit. As the heritage benefits are vital to the scheme, it is recommended that the repairs to the fabric of the listed buildings and structures are secured through a planning obligation.

If listed building consent and planning permission are granted, the below conditions are recommended:

Conditions – Listed Building Consent

General

- Samples of all external materials shall be made available on site and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to their first use on site.
- Full details of the upgrading required to meet Building Regulations, including fire protection, acoustic insulations and thermal insulation, including new wall, floor and ceiling build up, shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their first installation on site.
- The position, type and method of installation of all new and relocated services and related fixtures, including communications and information technology servicing, shall be specified and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority wherever these installations are to be visible, or where ducts or other methods of concealment are proposed. The works shall be implemented only in accordance with such approval.
- A schedule of repairs to the windows and external doors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works to the windows taking place.
- Additional drawings that show details of new windows and doors, by section and elevation at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 as appropriate, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to their first installation on site.
- Details and colours of all external pipes, extracts, grilles, flues, lights, alarm boxes or satellite dishes to be fixed to the fabric of the building shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to their first installation on site.

Northaw House

- A schedule showing the retention of and any necessary repairs to internal doors and doorcases, fire surrounds, decorative plaster work, tiled flooring, panelling and so forth, within Northaw House and the Ballroom Wing, shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works to internal features taking place.

Stables

- A schedule showing the retention, repair and reuse of internal finishes, fixtures and fittings within the stable block shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works to internal features taking place.
- Additional drawings that show details of the junction between the new extension and the existing building shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to the construction of the extension.
- [In addition to the general condition regarding external materials above] A sample panel of brickwork, minimum size 900 x 900 mm, to show the brick, bond, mortar mix and pointing profile of the new extension, shall be built on site prior to the commencement of the building of the new extension and shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Walled Garden

- A schedule of repairs to the wall of the walled garden, including mortar mix, pointing profile and details of replacement bricks, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any works to the wall taking place.

Conditions – Planning permission

General

- Samples of all external materials shall be made available on site and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to their first use on site.
- Additional drawings that show details of new windows, doors eaves, verges, fascias and cills, by section and elevation at scales between 1:20 and 1:1 as appropriate, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to their first installation on site.
- Details and colours of all external lights, alarm boxes or satellite dishes to be fixed to the of the new buildings shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to their first installation on site.
- Details of hard and soft landscaping across the site, including samples of hardstanding, details of boundary treatments, other fencing and retaining walls, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing prior to implementation on site.

Yours sincerely



Maria Kitts BA (Hons) MA PGCert
Senior Built Heritage Consultant
Place Services

Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter