

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 27th April 2016
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
DIRECTOR: Steven Boyes

APPLICATION REF: N/2016/0130

LOCATION: Delapre Abbey, London Road

DESCRIPTION: Listed building application for alterations to G54 Visitor Reception to include removal of existing boxing to entrance door, self levelling screed applied to existing floor, area of excavation to floor for insertion of new flush entrance matting, new glazed entrance lobby, installation of 2no. new stores either side of the stairs, demolition of existing stairs to be replaced with new timber stair and landing, removal of door DG.103, infilled with stone

WARD: Delapre & Briar Ward

APPLICANT: Northampton Borough Council
AGENT: Purcell

REFERRED BY: Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
REASON: NBC owned land

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to the conditions as set out below and for the following reason:

The proposal has no adverse impact on the character, appearance or historical significance of the listed building and Delapre Conservation Area. The proposal thereby accords with Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies E20 and E26 of the Northampton Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal entails alterations to the 18th Century stables within Delapre Abbey grounds to provide a glazed partition inside the doorway to the building and also provide a new staircase, lift and storage areas. These represent amendments to the previous proposals in this building, other alterations shown are as previously approved. This area would be used as a visitor reception area rather than as exhibition space as previously proposed.

2.2 Within the Coach House building an education and community room would be provided within the main part of the building, rather than this being the visitor reception as previously proposed. In

order to facilitate this use, a toilet facility is proposed to the rear of the building, in an area which was to be an office and in order to allow access to this it is now proposed to raise the floor level within the rear part of the Coach House and also break through the wall to provide access. To the rear a doorway would be blocked up as the new floor would cut across this.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The proposal relates to the 19th Century Stable block and Coach House, both forming part of Delapre Abbey.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 An application for Listed Building Consent for the works for the repair and refurbishment of the Abbey, including works to the Coach House and the 18th Century Stables was approved under reference N/2013/0613.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Statutory Duty

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) and Northampton Local Plan (1997) saved policies.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving a listed building or its setting and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

5.2 National Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent social, economic and environmental roles of the planning system. The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

Paragraph 17 that states that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

Paragraph 126 goes on to say that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

5.3 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014)

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making as it has been prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. Policies of particular relevance are:

Policy BN5 “The Historic Environment”, which sets out that heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced and that where heritage assets are at risk they will be appropriately conserved and managed.

5.4 **Northampton Local Plan 1997 (Saved Policies)**

Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to the aims and objectives of this document are diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

Policy E20 “New Development” which states that the design of any new building or extension should adequately reflect the character of its surroundings in terms of layout, siting, form, scale and use of appropriate materials and that development should be designed, located and used in a manner which ensures adequate standards of privacy, daylight and sunlight.

Policy E26 “Conservation Areas” which states that development must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, and not include the demolition of any building which makes a significant contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

6. **CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

Comments received are summarised as follows:

- 6.1 **Historic England** – The application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your expert conservation advice.
- 6.2 **NBC Conservation** – No objection. Stables: The proposed internal alterations have an acceptable impact and are justified as a means of bringing the building into use as the visitor reception area to Delapre. The alteration to the floor is necessary to create a level surface for full access. The proposed glazed draught lobby is reversible and will not harm the character of the building or affect historic fabric. The existing partition lobby and boxing to the door surround that are to be removed detract from the building and their removal will not result in loss of historic fabric. The replacement of the staircase will not affect historic fabric and provides a less intrusive solution to provide access to the upper part of the building than was previously approved. The proposed store rooms will not harm the character of the building. Coach house: The insertion of the suspended timber floor is justified as providing level access and has a reversible impact. The removal of the door and infilling of the opening will result in less than substantial harm to the character of the building and is justified by the wider benefit of securing a viable public use. The recessed infill panel on the north side will enable the existence of the former opening to be “read”.

7. **APPRAISAL**

- 7.1 The main issues to consider are the impact of the proposals on the character, appearance and historic significance of the listed building and the conservation area.
- 7.2 The proposed works represent amendments to the previously approved scheme for works to the building and result from a reconsideration of the way the site will function as a visitor attraction.
- 7.3 As a result of these amendments, the visitor reception area would now be within the 18th century stables, in an area which was previously intended as interpretation space. To allow for the new function it is proposed to install an internal glass lobby, this would enable the solid outer door to be retained but to be left open, thereby allowing visitors to clearly understand the position of the entrance, whilst heating to the building can be maintained. To install this lobby, the proposal requires the removal of internal plasterboard stud walls which are a modern and inappropriate addition to the building. No permanent damage to the building would result from this installation.

- 7.4 The previous approval of listed building consent included the removal of a staircase in this room, and the installation of a lift. The staircase has now been removed and the lift installed. In addition the current proposal now includes the addition of a short staircase to provide access to the adjacent room, which requires a small change in level. Also proposed is the installation of storage cupboards. This short staircase is clearly required due to the change in level and would have a limited impact on the fabric of the building, as would the storage cupboards which have been designed around the location of the staircase and lift. A self-levelling screed would be applied to the floor, this is necessary to provide a safe access and would not harm historic fabric.
- 7.5 The Coach House was originally to form the visitor reception but as this has been moved to the stables, this would now be used as an education and community room. To facilitate this use a toilet would be provided in a room in the rear part of the coach house, in a part of the building which was built with a lower floor, having been previously accessed from the rear. This room would now be accessed from the room to the front and therefore this would require the introduction of a raised floor, the infilling of a window to the rear and the breaking through of the existing rear wall of the coach house main room. This alteration is considered to be necessary to allow the main room to function as now intended and it is considered that any harm from this would be limited and would be mitigated by the wider benefit of bringing the site as a whole back into a viable use.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed alterations would not have any significant detrimental impact on the historic fabric of the buildings and would have the advantage of removing some inappropriate modern additions and would also serve to allow the site to be brought into a viable use in the long term. Any potential harm would be less than substantial and the public benefits to bring this listed building into active and viable use would outweigh any potential impact in line with the guidance contained in the NPPF.

9. CONDITIONS

- (1) The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 233554 316 A, 236554 110 D, 233554 332, 233554 050, 233554 236D, 233554 210 H, 233554 100 B, 233554 329 A, 233554 051 A, 233554 400 B.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the listed building consent application.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

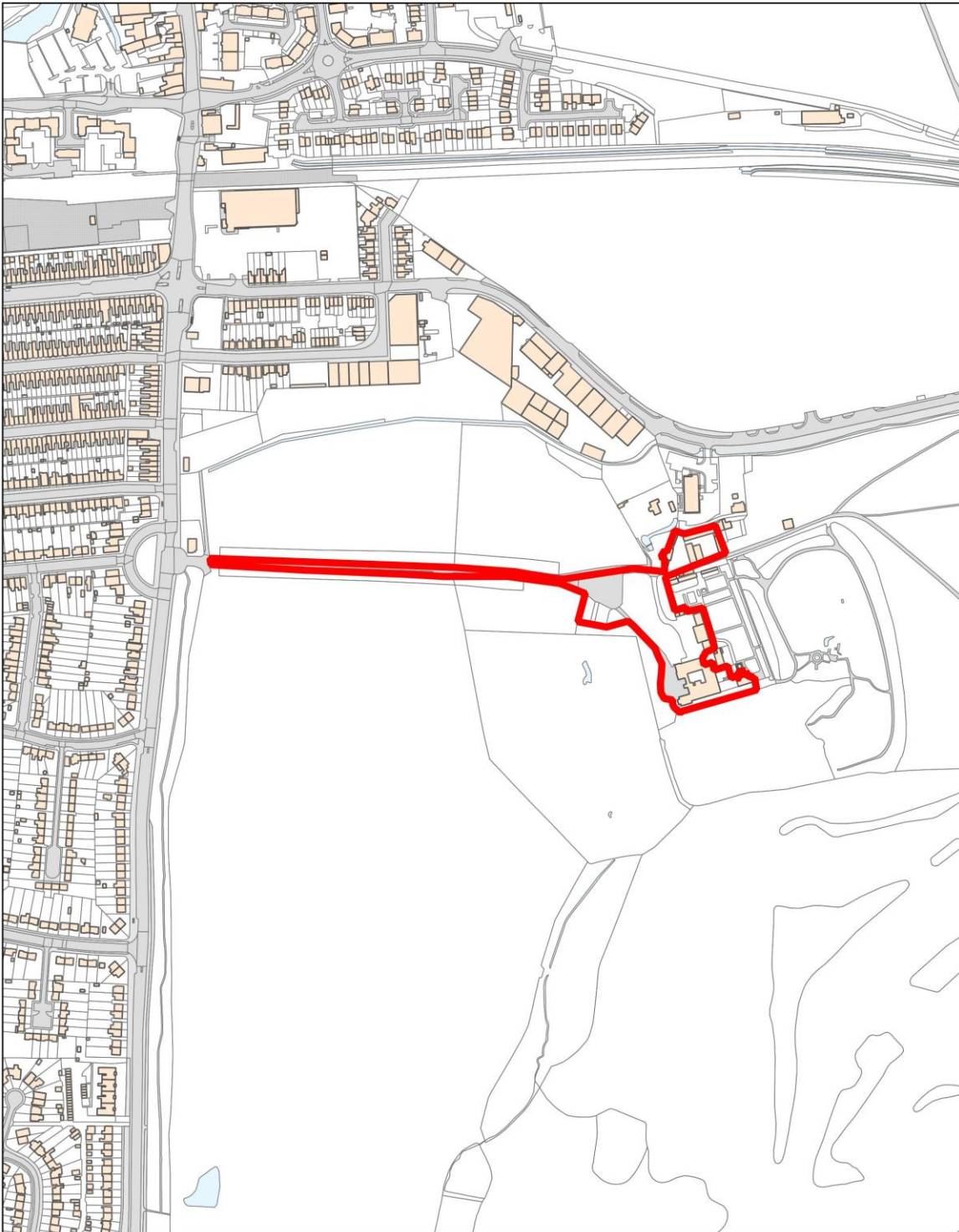
- 10.1 Application File N/2016/0130.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Title: **Delapre Abbey, London Road**

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