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From: Martyn White <Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 August 2021 17:17
To: Amy Myer <Amy.Myer@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: AL/85/21/PL & AL/86/21/L

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Norton Farm House Norton Lane Norton PO20 3NH

Listed building consent for the subdivision of existing building to create 2 bedroom dwelling, construction of detached garage/workshop, external & boundary works.

Subdivision of existing building to create 2 bedroom dwelling, construction of detached garage/workshop, external & boundary works. This application affects the setting of a listed building, affects the Norton Lane, Norton Conservation Area & is in CIL Zone 3 & CIL Liable as new dwelling

Norton House is a Grade II Listed Building. It is also located within in the Norton Conservation Area.

As part of paragraph 194 of the NPPF, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected as part of their proposals, including any contribution made by their setting, in determining applications. It does not appear that such information has been submitted as part of this application, which ideally should be submitted at the same time as the application. In light of this some comments are provided based on my own assessment/observations.

Norton Farm House is identified as being a late C18, two storeys (and attic), detached house. It is faced with flints with red brick dressings and quoins with a tiled roof. There is an earlier wing at the back of the house along with a modern late C20 extension as well. It is of aesthetic significance.

The house is located within the Norton Conservation area which has an informal rural character with materials such as brick and flint being prevalent in the street-scene. Although generally street fronted, there is an informality of layout; some of the larger buildings, e.g. Norton House and East Norton Farmhouse being set well back in their own extensive grounds.

The Proposal

The proposal is for the subdivision of existing building to create a 2 bedroom dwelling, construction of detached garage/workshop, external & boundary works. It is worth noting that a previous consent was granted on the site for the sub-division of existing building to create 1 No. 1-bed dwelling and construction of a 4 bay oak framed outbuilding as a garage.

I note that development has commenced but that it does not correspond to the approved plans. It is also clear that no Discharge of Condition application has been approved either. This is extremely disappointing, especially as the LPA has not been able to understand the nature of the works, nor assess their impact prior to their construction.

Based on the information provided it would appear that the following works are proposed:

- The subdivision of existing building to create 2-bedroom dwelling and associated various internal and external alterations
- construction of detached garage/workshop
- external & boundary works

Each of the above shall be discussed separately below.

The subdivision of existing building to create 2 bedroom dwelling and associated various internal and external alterations

A review of our historic mapping indicated that the majority of this element of the proposal affects a late C.20 extension which is located to the side of the main listed building. The historic mapping indicated that the west elevation would have been present earlier.

Previous consent was granted for the creation of a one bedroomed unit, whereas the current application requests a 2 bedroomed unit. The proposed floor plan indicates that, unlike the previous application, the intention is for the new residential unit to be completely separate from the existing property (i.e. no connecting door remains to the main building). Further, the plan indicates that the main entrance would be via the west elevation, utilising the proposed new porch. The internal alterations are such that they appear to affect the modern built fabric and do not substantially alter the previously approved layout and are therefore acceptable.

The proposed porch is in itself acceptable, and the success of this element will relate to the quality of the materials used and details such as the design of the door. All new flintwork and works of making good of the flintwork shall match the original flint walls in the type of flints, coursing, density of stones, and the mortar's colour, texture, composition, lime content and method of pointing. The pointing of the brick dressings shall match the colour, texture, lime content and style of the original brick pointing. I am of the opinion that no development shall take place until a sample panel of flintwork has been constructed on the site and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will be required as a condition, if you are minded to approve the application. The flintwork comprised within the development shall be carried out and completed to match the approved sample flint panel.

The northern elevation is altered in order to remove one window and replace it with two. I am not unduly concerned about the introduction of an additional window as it affects a modern extension, and if executed to a high standard, would have a neutral impact. As with the other elevations all of the windows are of a different design and dimensions to the existing ones. The infilling of the garage door is acceptable, subject to the quality of the flintwork that is to be used. Details of this would be required by way of condition, if you are minded to approve the application (as per above).

The eastern elevation also would be altered, partly through alteration to the two existing windows, but also the creation of a set of French windows. The latter requires an existing opening to be enlarged, which is unfortunate, but if undertaken sensitively, could be acceptable (the success will be subject to the quality of joinery and materials). This would require the existing Brick quoining pattern to be followed around the new opening. Further, the existing flints which are removed for this opening should be used to infill the window opening that the applicants wish to close. I should also point out that it would be a good idea for the opening which is to be infilled to be slightly recessed so that this element of the design can be read as a 'blind window'. This would need to be confirmed.

The south elevation on the current plans does not provide the entire elevation, nor are existing plans provided, which is unfortunate and hinders the review of the plans! However, I note that three velux rooflights are proposed. These are not of a conservation design and would be clearly visible from the lane to the side of the building. Whilst the idea of rooflights might be acceptable, their current design is not. I would expect to see ones of a conservation standard in this location: flush with the roof slope and with a vertical glazing bar.

The west elevation involves the creation of a large new opening to enable some bi-fold doors as well as a smaller opening for a casement window. As this elevation would appear to be modern fabric, I am of the opinion that this element is acceptable. However, as before, the success will relate to the quality of the joinery and materials used.

I would also want all of the flint work to be removed to create the new/larger openings on any of the elevations to be re-used elsewhere in the development e.g. the new porch. Maybe this could be controlled by condition.

It would also appear that the intention is to replace all of the windows in the new unit as part of the proposal. The existing windows in both the potential new unit and the existing house are multi-paned and contribute towards its character/appearance. The replacement windows would be and be single paned which would be out of character with the listed building. It is also not clear how they would be treated i.e. painted, and what colour?

construction of detached garage/workshop

Work has already commenced on the construction of the detached workshop garage. This building is different to the previously approved plans which consisted of a simple timber framed structure, which reflected the character of the local area, and was considered to be more appropriate and acceptable.

The building as constructed, and which forms part of this application is of a completely different design with alternate materials to that previously approved. The entire building is of brick construction with a tiled roof, as opposed to timber boarding. The northern elevation of the building as built and proposed essentially looks like a standard garage with two large fibreglass doors. These garage doors are of an inappropriate design and materials which do not reflect or suit the context of the application site i.e. listed building and conservation area. A more traditional timber garage door as already present in the single storey part of the listed building is considered to be more appropriate.

The building also appears to be taller than that of the neighbouring building i.e. the element of the listed building which would become a separate unit, and is therefore more prominent when looking towards the listed building. This would appear to be in conflict with the 'proposed' elevations which shows that the garage is only slightly higher than the neighbouring element of the building. The current design is of a more suburban appearance, is out of character and harmful.

External & boundary works

In order to create the separate unit, the applicants consider it necessary to install a new boundary between the two properties. This boundary was demarcated as part of the previous application, but no details were forthcoming. The current application provides details of the preferred approach.

The style, materials, and height of any boundary treatment could affect the setting and character of the Listed Building. When determining a new boundary, it is important to look at the character of the surroundings along with details on the Listed Building and historical evidence (e.g. archive photographs) to ascertain what is appropriate. For example, a post and rail fence might be appropriate in one situation but cast iron railings or a wall may be appropriate in another.

Boundary treatments such as stone, brick and flint walls, indigenous hedging or post and rail fencing are traditional styles of boundary treatment that are potentially suitable for a location such as this. Whereas coniferous hedging, walling/timber panel fencing, and timber panel fencing would not be appropriate for the grounds of this listed building/conservation area. Such styles will appear out of place in traditional settings.

It is clear from the plans that the intention is for the northern boundary is to be a mixture of brick walling and timber panel fencing. This style is elaborate in appearance, very modern and something normally seen in suburban locations as opposed to more rural ones. No details are provided regarding its treatment. This form of boundary treatment is not at all appropriate for either the grounds of a listed building, nor a location within a rural conservation area. As such it would be out of character and harmful. It is suggested that if a new boundary treatment is required that it takes a much simpler design and appearance. This could either be a traditional hedge or brick wall, with an appropriate brick and brick bond. The later could be achieved through the use of a condition and sample panel.

It is also not clear from reviewing the plans how the western and southern boundaries will be treated. This is especially important when considering the views of the building from the neighbouring lane. At present, the southern boundary is timber fencing, with an area with some shrubs to the front of it. This area could be improved and better planting/landscaping provided. Likewise, a drawing of the proposed gates would be beneficial.

Conclusion

As you are aware, any harm to the historic environment is 'harm'. I am of the opinion that the proposal is such that the impact can be described as causing less than substantial harm in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021). As such, you will also need to consider the public benefits that the development may achieve as part of your assessment of the application, along with the contents of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Martyn White
Principal Conservation Officer,
Planning Services



Please note: I work on Conservation for half of the working Week (all day Monday and Friday and Tuesday Afternoons)

T: 01903 737717

E: Martyn.White@arun.gov.uk or Conservation.officer@arun.gov.uk

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www.arun.gov.uk

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