

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

8 January 2014

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

| | |
|--|---|
| Application Number: | S/1427/13/FL |
| Parish(es): | Ickleton |
| Proposal: | Proposed New Boundary Wall |
| Site address: | Norman Hall, 21 Church Street, Ickleton, CB10 1SL |
| Applicant(s): | Mr Owen |
| Recommendation: | Refusal |
| Key material considerations: | Loss of historic features, associated character impacts upon the wider Norman Hall environment. |
| Committee Site Visit: | Yes |
| Departure Application: | No |
| Presenting Officer: | Dan Smith |
| Application brought to Committee: | At the request of Councillor Mick Martin |
| Date by which decision due: | 9 th July 2013 |

Executive Summary

1. The application seeks approval of a replacement boundary wall, following the collapse of a historic (Curtilage Listed) wall on the Eastern side of Norman Hall, alongside an access running from Mill Lane. The concerns relate to the proposed construction methodology for the wall, with the Local Authority detailing that insufficient evidence and justification has been provided to detail that the rebuilding of the wall in a traditional fashion would be structurally unsound, and therefore that the works fail to comply with adopted Local and National Policy in relation to works to historic buildings and associated structures, resulting in a loss of important aspects of its significance, and the harm to its long-term future.

Planning History

2. S/2039/12/FL – Erection of timber boundary fence - Refused
S/2310/12/LB - Erection of timber boundary fence & removal of remaining section of existing wall following collapse of existing boundary wall – Pending Determination
S/2484/11/F – Two Storey Dwelling and Garage - Approved

S/0704/11/F – Dwelling and Garage - Refused
 S/2214/07/F - Alteration and rebuilding of boundary wall and erection of tennis court fencing – Approved
 S/2213/07/LB - Alterations to Mill Lane boundary wall to create temporary access and subsequent rebuilding of wall to original height in flint. - Approved
 S/1562/07/LB - Alterations to Mill Lane Boundary Wall to Create Access with Pair of Boarded Timber Gates - Refused
 S/1563/07/F - Access Gates and Tennis Court Fencing - Refused
 S/0047/05/LB - Reconstruction of Collapsed Flint Wall with Flint Faced Blockwork Wall - Approved
 S/1105/04/LB - Alterations - Reduction in Height (by 1.2 Metres) of Flint Boundary Wall - Approved
 S/2504/03/F – Fence - Refused
 S/2503/03/LB - Alterations - Replacement of Collapsed Flint Wall by Close-boarded Fence 2 Metres High - Refused
 S/1651/01/F – Walls - Approved
 S/1650/01/LB - Alterations - Demolition of Internal Flint Wall to Garden, Section of Flint Wall to Mill Lane and Area of Flint Wall off Mill Lane to Rear of Garden (Retrospective) and Replace with Flint Faced Block work Walls and Fence. Replacement of Remaining Flint Wall to Mill Lane and Flint Wall to Church Street (adjoining House with Flint Faced Block work Wall - Approved

National Planning Policies

3. *National Planning Policy Framework*

129, 131, 132, 133, 134

Local Development Framework

DP/1 Sustainable Development

DP/2 Design of New Development

DP/3 Development Criteria

CH/3 Listed Buildings

CH/4 Development Within the Curtilage or Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings

CH/5 Conservation Areas

District Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010

Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD – Adopted January 2009

Listed Building SPD – Adopted July 2009

Consultations

4. **Ickleton Parish Council** - Recommends Approval, detailing support for the applicant's wish to reconstruct using modern techniques in accordance with similar works conducted elsewhere, and stating it would be unreasonable to insist on the use of traditional techniques and materials. Comments also detail a recommendation to rebuild the wall to its full original height.
5. **Conservation** – The boundary wall is listed in association with Norman Hall. The proposal involves the permanent loss of historic materials, replacement with unsympathetic materials and methods, loss of continuity and relationship of the substantial flint boundary wall to the listed building and confusion with the historically lowered wall detail.

The contribution of the wall to heritage significance is notable. English Heritage's advice makes clear that important aspects of its significance and its long term future will be harmed by the proposals.

The proposals need to be justified because of their harmful impact but the justifications provided are not accepted for the reasons given. A request for further information to support the structural case has been made and a meeting to discuss the issues with Building Control suggested. These have not been followed up by the applicant who has asked for the application to be determined.

There are no heritage, or other public, benefits that balance the harm and therefore the conservation objection is sustained

Representations

6. None Received

Planning Comments

7. The area of wall in question forms the eastern boundary of the original Norman Hall curtilage, located directly to the south of Mill Lane, in the village of Ickleton. The wider Norman Hall site has a series of prominent flint boundary walls, which provide a significant and notable contribution to the character of the local built environment, and the wider Conservation Area.
8. Norman Hall itself is a former farmhouse, and is a grade II listed building. It dates from 15th century and was altered in the 16th, 18th and 19th centuries. To the south-west of the building is the grade I listed Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene and its listed churchyard wall. It is also considered that the close relationship between Norman Hall and the Parish Church is an important part of the history, hierarchy and appearance of the village. There are a series of listed buildings to the north-west and south-east.
9. The section of flint wall which is the subject of the applications is part of the north-east boundary of the original plot. It is likely that this part of the wall dates from the 18th century. The wall, associated building, and neighbouring Listed Buildings are within the Ickleton Conservation Area. The conservation area boundary follows the north-east boundary of the wall, and includes the section of wall covered by the applications.
10. The boundary wall of the site is considered to be within the curtilage of the listed building and therefore the wall constitutes a 'listed structure' and is subject to listed building control. This is because it was in the same ownership as Norman Hall at the time of listing, has a historic functional relationship with it and was not divided from it. The wall is also physically connected to Norman Hall.
11. The key issues to consider in relation to this, Full Planning, application are: Design & Conservation Area Impacts.
12. The area of wall which is proposed for replacement has limited external visibility, and forms the link between an area of the Norman Hall curtilage which has been subject to recent modification, and a small area of more modern wooden fencing, intended to reference a former opening as detailed within the paragraphs below. The wall faces simple metal security fencing on the opposing side of the access towards 12 Mill Lane. That notwithstanding, it is considered that the wall is an important feature within

the streetscene, offsetting the less attractive modern fencing and providing an important visual link to the more historic arrangement of Norman Hall and the bold walling which form large areas of its perimeter. It is also noted that the visibility (albeit glancing) from Mill Lane enables the wall to have a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

13. It is noted that within the supporting documentation the applicant cites the recently approved dwelling within the Norman Hall grounds, and suggests that the wall would effectively serve this dwelling and therefore any argument for retention on the basis of the role the wall serves in relation to Norman Hall itself is inaccurate. It is not considered however that this argument is sufficient to remove the need for the retention of the wall, and the contribution this wall makes to the character of the Norman Hall curtilage and wider Conservation Area. It is also not considered that an argument for rebuilding in a more modern fashion is appropriate, as the wall remains one of the key character elements of the boundary treatment to the Listed Building, and a visually prominent and important feature within the Conservation Area.
14. The element of fencing in existence on site closes off a former viewpoint from Norman Hall, and was approved on the basis that the contrast would highlight the former opening, whilst enabling the character contribution of the neighbouring walling to remain. It is not considered that a wall of modern construction would offer a suitable replacement nor would it result in a comparable contribution to local character.
15. The proposal would mean that the historic wall would be rebuilt, re-using some of the materials, with a blockwork core and concrete foundations.
16. Such an approach has been used with some historic flint walls, including previously being accepted by the Local Authority on other walls around the site, as evidenced in the letter submitted by the applicant as part of the application. That notwithstanding, it is considered that the works must be assessed in relation to current legislation.
17. In a recent case, such a method of construction was not supported by English Heritage's Inspector and Structural Engineer. Following this, advice was sought from English Heritage's Historic Buildings Architect, who detailed that English Heritage does not support the 'modern method' of rebuilding using blockwork. This is because of the loss of authenticity with the replacement of traditional materials and construction with modern, and the impact on the preservation of the wall because of the incompatibility of materials. It was detailed that modern forms of conservation repairs should only be used where they are not damaging and where they are the only solution or will save more of the historic fabric than a traditional approach.
18. In this instance it is not considered that sufficient evidence has been provided to highlight that the proposed methodology is the only solution, nor evidence to detail that such an approach will save more of the historic fabric of the former boundary wall. It is not therefore considered that the works proposed would be in accordance with the guidance received from English Heritage, and that important elements of significance and preservation, and therefore its contribution to the Conservation Area and local built environment, will be detrimentally harmed as a result of the works proposed.
19. It is therefore considered that the loss of this wall would result in an unacceptable detrimental impact upon the character of the Conservation Area, and considered that the design and construction of the proposed replacement wall fails to respect the character of the site, and the importance of the historic walling in relation to the Listed

Building. It is therefore considered that the works proposed would neither preserve nor enhance the wider Conservation Area, and will fail to comply with the requirements of applicable local and national Planning Policy.

Recommendation

20. Refusal, for the following reasons:

Reasons for refusal

The proposed replacement wall, by virtue of the use of modern materials, construction methods, and the resultant permanent loss of original features would result in a detrimental impact upon the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of Norman Hall. The wall has a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, and is a consistent feature throughout the immediate local built environment. The loss of this character and continuity will unacceptably impact upon the Conservation Area, and the established relationship with the surrounding built environment. Insufficient evidence has been submitted to justify this loss and the associated impacts, and the works are therefore considered to be contrary to the requirements of Local Development Framework 2007 policies CH/3, CH/4, and CH/5, to advice detailed within the Listed Buildings Supplementary Planning Document 2009, and to advice provided by English Heritage.

Suggested conditions if minded to approve

None detailed

Background Papers

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (Delete as appropriate)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (Delete as appropriate)
- Planning File Ref: (These documents need to be available for public inspection.)
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

Report Author: James D'Arcy – Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713250