



Planning Committee Report

Application Number: WNN/2023/0116

Location: Delapre Lodge Delapre Park
London Road A508
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN4 8AJ

Development: Refurbishment and alteration of existing building to form offices and meeting room and parking area and paths.

Applicant: West Northamptonshire Council

Agent: West Northamptonshire Council

Case Officer: Andy White

Ward: Delapre and Rushmere Unitary Ward

Reason for Referral: WNC is the applicant

Committee Date: 3 August 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS as set out below with delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Planning and Development to approve any amendments to conditions as deemed necessary.

Proposal

Refurbishment and alteration of existing building to form offices and meeting room and parking area and paths.

Consultations

No consultees have raised objections to the application.

The following consultees are **in support** of the application:

- WNC Archaeology
- WNC Conservation Team
- Battlefields Trust

The following consultee **does not object to** the application:

- WNC Ecology

2 letters of support have been received and 1 letter of observation.

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Ecological Considerations

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions.

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1 APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 The application site is located to the west of London Road, Northampton. Delapre Lodge is curtilage listed to Delapre Abbey, a Grade II listed building. The Lodge is situated in a prominent position at the entrance to Delapre Abbey from London Road and is situated within Delapre Conservation Area and within the Northampton Battlefield Site, a Registered Battlefield.
- 1.2 The Lodge is similar in style to the C18 west front of the abbey. The main complex of buildings at Delapre Abbey is situated in excess of 400m from The Lodge and comprise of a number of Grade II listed buildings, with Delapre Abbey being Grade II listed.

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The proposal is the refurbishment and alteration of the existing building to form offices and a meeting room and parking area and paths.. The building has been vacant for some time having previously been in domestic use. The works to the building require Listed Building Consent but the external works require planning permission.
- 2.2 Four car parking spaces are shown including one accessible parking space. These are proposed to be constructed above the existing soil surfacing in accordance with the submitted Arboriculturalist's report. The tarmac surfacing is proposed to be porous to eliminate run off and to ensure that the soil continues to receive a steady water supply. External vegetation and loose material is to be cleared.
- 2.3 Paths are to be brick paved, brindled colour and are to be laid over the existing ground to provide a level access to the meeting room door and main entrance door. The proposals seek to provide access for all visitors with the entrance points required to be level and any ramp to these to have a maximum of 1:12 slope. The ground levels around the path will be raised with topsoil to allow grass to be planted.
- 2.4 The existing metal railing fences are proposed to be repaired and alterations made to accommodate the new parking access point.

3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

Application Ref.	Proposal	Decision
N/2016/0450	Listed Building Application for the external repairs of the lodge	Consent Given
WNN/2023/0447	Listed Building Consent Application for refurbishment and alteration of existing building to form offices and meeting room.	Decision Awaited

4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Duty

4.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development that affects the setting of a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

4.3 Development Plan

- West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1):
Policy S10 Sustainable Development Principles
Policy BN5 The Historic Environment and Landscape
- Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (2011-2029):
Policies Q1 Placemaking and Design
Policy ENV6 Protection and enhancements of designated and non – designated heritage assets

4.4 Material Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Paragraph 199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 206 Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 207 Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Delapre Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan
- The site of the Battle of Northampton, 1460 Conservation Management Plan
- Northampton Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document
- Northamptonshire Parking Standards

5 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

5.1 Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website.

Consultee Name		Comment
WNC Conservation Team	Support	No harm to heritage assets. No objections to repair and replacement works proposed, but additional details required by condition. There are no objections to: works proposed to the roof and elevations; the removal of later, self-set trees; the provision of car parking (consideration will need to be given to appropriate materials. The surface will need to be porous and mindful of the setting of the listed building); and no objections to the provision of a ramp to the door, but further details will be required including gradient / slope.
WNC Archaeology	Support	Bringing building back into use is a positive step and to be encouraged. Recommend programme of archaeological building recording by condition
Battlefields Trust	Support	We support work to repurpose this building and have no objections to this planning application. From what we can see, there does not seem to be any intention to disturb the ground around the building, with pathways and parking being laid above ground level. However, if in the event it is necessary to dig into the top soil to undertake these works then we recommend a watching archaeological brief on such development given that the site forms part of the nationally important registered battlefield at Northampton (1460).
WNC Ecology	No objection	Confirmed that the ecology report appropriately addresses the need to protect bats and that this should be subject to an appropriate condition.

6 RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report.

6.1 There have been 2 letters of support raising the following comments:

- Strongly supports. As a local resident I would like to see The Lodge being used as an artist in residence space or something for the community to use. It would be a shame if it was just an office, it could be so much more, an interactive space which welcomes you into the grounds of the abbey.
- Welcome the proposed refurbishment. Notes the proposed car parking spaces will be accessible from the Archery Field side of the security gate, which restricts unauthorised vehicles onto the field. Concerned that the increased use arising from the car parking may lead to revised arrangements regarding the gate keys. The Northampton Society of Model Engineers asks to be kept informed by the

council of any proposed changes regarding the current security arrangements to the gate or height barrier.

6.2 There has been one other observation received which was made in relation to WNN/2023/0447 (Listed Building application) but is of more relevance to this application

- Is the non-accessible car parking really needed? Delapre Park already has a large car park & overflow car park, and there's a bus stop right by the entrance. It seems to lack consideration for the park as a green space and wider net zero aspirations to remove trees and hedging to put in more space for driving

7 APPRAISAL

Principle of Development and Impact on Heritage Assets

- 7.1 The building has been unoccupied for a number of years and is now boarded up. The supporting information identifies that the inside of the building has suffered water damage due to dilapidations of the roof. The slate roof has been repaired following the granting of Listed Building Consent in 2016 but is in need of some additional works to ensure its future stability and weather tightness. The stonework to the original building has suffered weather damage and is in need of repair and restoration.
- 7.2 The main issues for consideration are the impact of the proposed works on the character, appearance and historic significance of the curtilage listed building and the surrounding conservation area, and the preservation of the setting and historic significance of surrounding listed buildings within Delapre Park and the Registered Battlefield.
- 7.3 In considering the proposed development, regard must be paid to the importance of the heritage asset and the historic surroundings. The site lies within Delapre Park Conservation Area and within the registered battlefield site of the Battle of Northampton. The Delapre Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2007) refers to character of the area as that of a historic house with associated formal and informal gardens, and secondary buildings, such as the gatehouse (The Lodge) and the stable block. The Lodge is identified within the Delapre Park Conservation Area Leaflet as a 'building making a positive contribution'.
- 7.4 Planning policy places considerable weight on the conservation, preservation and, where possible, enhancement of heritage assets. The proposed works to The Lodge are required in order to make the building weathertight and improve the appearance of the lodge which is falling into disrepair. Subject to agreeing certain details of the proposed materials, the proposed works would assist in enhancing and preserving the heritage asset and enable the use of the building by the Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council which will further secure the heritage asset going forward.
- 7.5 The repair and restoration work to Delapre Lodge would enhance the setting of listed buildings within Delapre Park and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would have a neutral impact on the historic significance of the Registered Battlefield. As such the proposal accords with the statutory duties of the Planning Authority as set out in Section 4 above which require the preservation of heritage assets and the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the NPPF.

- 7.6 The proposed parking, paths and ramps are required in association with the proposed use of the building as offices and meeting rooms. There is no objection from conservation, or archaeological consultees to these elements. However one letter of objection raised the issue of whether the parking is necessary given that there is substantial public parking close to the Grade II listed Delapre Abbey. It is considered that this parking is remote from Delapre Lodge and providing the new parking can be provided without harm to the heritage assets then it is justified as it makes the proposed use of Delapre Lodge more desirable for both Far Cotton and Delapre Community Council in carrying out its functions or other users and will therefore be beneficial to the building in the long-term. The amount of parking is not so large that it will encourage journeys and those people who wish to travel by bus are able to do so.

Ecology (Bats and Trees)

- 7.7 As there would be works to the roof of the building in an area of known bat activity, the applicant provided a bat survey that indicated that there is a bat presence in the area and that the poor quality of the roof slates may have provided opportunities for bats to access the building with 3 bat droppings found in a room indicating the possible presence of a roost. Bat surveys carried out on three occasions found no bats entering or emerging from the building. The response from WNC Ecology accepted the findings of the report and supported the use of a condition to protect bats during the construction and maintenance works. Consequently, the applicant will need to apply for a Bat Mitigation Class Licence before any repair works can take place. The works to the roof and stonework repairs will have to be supervised by a bat licensed ecologist. The roosting features will be stripped by hand only. All areas within the roof/wall tops will have to be checked for bats. If bats are found these will need to be removed by hand and placed in bat boxes that will need to be in place before works begin. Bat boxes will be installed on trees to the rear of the Lodge and within the grounds of the main house) that can be used for this purpose and only low-level lighting would be appropriate. A condition is proposed to require the above.
- 7.8 The application is supported by an arboricultural report which identifies that 8 trees or stumps would be removed to accommodate the access to the parking to the east of the lodge. These are not quality specimens, a majority are sycamores (T29 – 34), T35 is a hazel and T27 and 36 are stumps. The report identifies that the parking may impact the roots of a mature English oak (T37) if appropriate protection measures are not implemented. Methods of protecting the tree are identified in section 4 of the report and a Tree Protection Plan identifies appropriate locations for protection fencing. Consequently, a tree protection condition is proposed to ensure that T37 and the other retained trees are not put at risk by the proposed development.

8 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 CIL is not applicable

9 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The development proposed would not lead to any detrimental impact on the character, appearance or historic significance of the curtilage listed building, or surrounding heritage assets and would assist in the preservation and conservation of this heritage asset. The works are considered to be essential to the preservation and long-term conservation of the curtilage listed building. The proposed works to the building can be undertaken with appropriate protection and mitigation measures for bats and trees. The application is, therefore, recommended for approval.

10. CONDITIONS

Time Limit

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Approved Plans

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PR055-01 Proposed site plan, PR055-03 Proposed Elevations, PR055-04 Proposed Floor Plans & Roof Plan, PR055-06 Location plan and AA TPP 01 Tree Protection Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to accord with the terms of the planning application.

External Works

3. No development shall take place outside the Lodge building until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed scheme of the proposed materials to be used in the construction of the path, ramps and parking area.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the heritage assets and to secure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with Policies Q1, ENV6 of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 .

Archaeology

4. No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

The written scheme shall include the following components, completion of each of which will trigger the phased discharging of the condition:

(1) fieldwork in accordance with the agreed written scheme of investigation;

(2) post-fieldwork assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the LPA);

(3) completion of post-fieldwork analysis, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store (Northamptonshire ARC) approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report and submission of a publication report to be completed within 2 years of the completion of fieldwork, unless agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded and the results made available in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 205, Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and Policy ENV6 of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2.

This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Trees

5. In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree, which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of (1 year) from (the date of the occupation of the building for its permitted use).

(a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted, damaged or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be pruned other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Any approved pruning shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

(b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted in such location at such time, as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and the Arboricultural Method Statement by Apical Arbor before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purposes of the development including soil stripping, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Within the fenced area no alteration shall be made to existing ground levels, no excavations shall be made, no vehicles shall be driven nor plant sited, no materials shall be stored and no bonfires shall be lit.

In order to ensure adequate protection of existing trees on the site in the interests of achieving a satisfactory standard of development and maintaining the amenity of the locality in accordance with Policy BN3 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

Mortar

6. The details of the mortar mix to be used in the repointing and replacement of stone should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any works to the building. The works shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the works sustain, protect and enhance the heritage asset in accordance Policies Q1 and ENV6 of the NLPP2 and Policies S10 and BN5 of the JCS through protecting, conserving and enhancing a heritage asset.

Stonework and Repairs

7. A schedule of stonework and stone repairs shall be produced by the stone mason / contractor, submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed in writing prior to commencement of any works to the building. The schedule shall allow an opportunity for the Local Planning Authority to inspect sample stone repairs on site during the course of the project.

Samples of stones to be used as replacement for those that cannot be repaired shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the

commencement of any works to the building. The works shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the works sustain, protect and enhance the heritage asset in accordance Policies Q1 and ENV6 of the NLPP2 and Policies S10 and BN5 of the JCS through protecting, conserving and enhancing a heritage asset.

Windows and Doors

8. A schedule of retained / repaired / replaced windows and doors, together with details of roof repairs and insulation, chimney pots and vents shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the works to or replacement of any of these parts of the building. The approved details shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the agreed schedule.

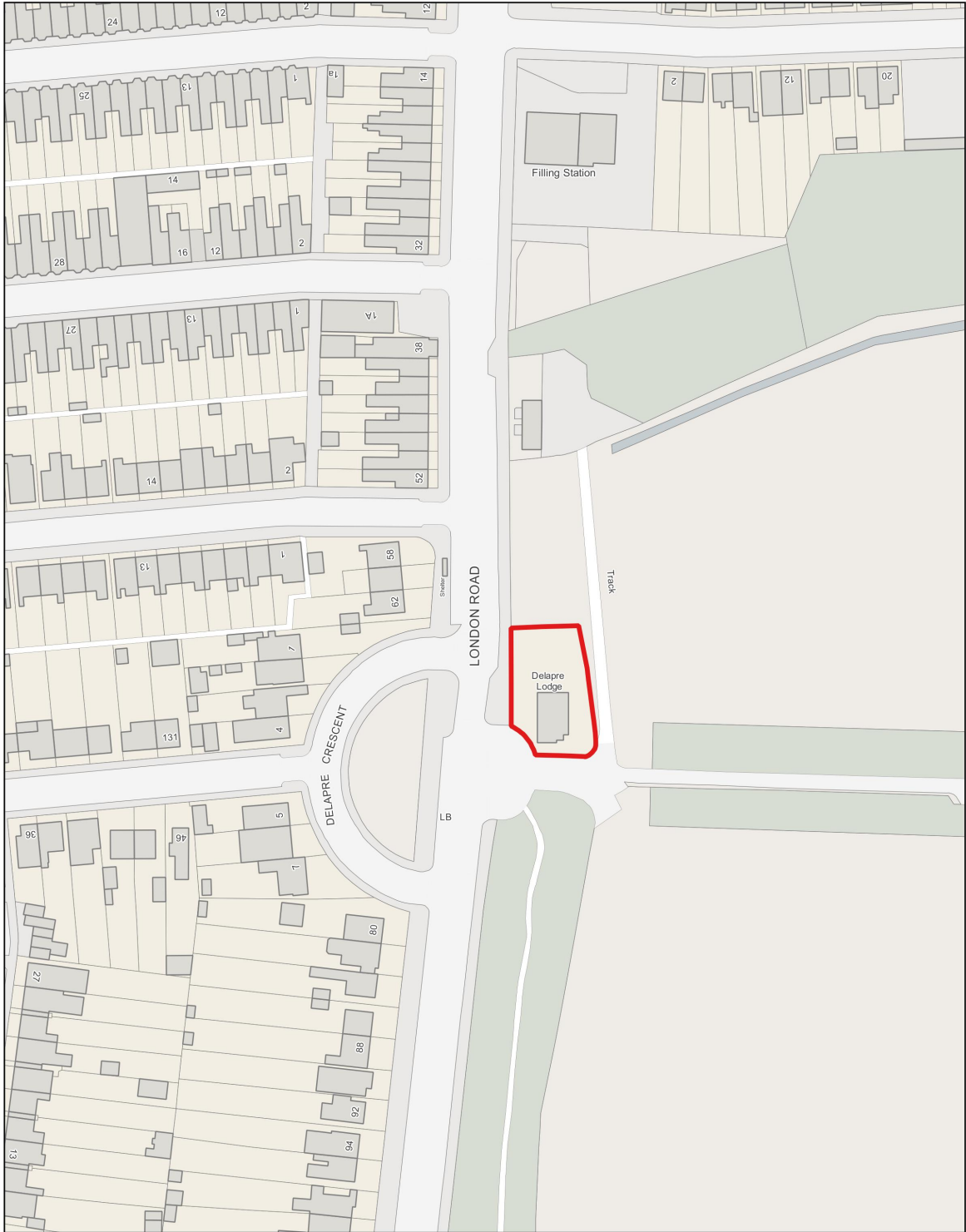
Reason: To ensure that the works sustain, protect and enhance the heritage asset in accordance Policies Q1 and ENV6 of the NLPP2 and Policies S10 and BN5 of the JCS through protecting, conserving and enhancing a heritage asset.

Bat Mitigation

9. Prior to the commencement of any repair or construction work on site, a Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) shall first be obtained from Natural England and proof of receipt of the BMCL provided to the Local Planning Authority. The re-roofing/repairs to stonework shall be undertaken under the supervision of a bat licensed ecologist. Any roosting features will be stripped by hand only. All areas within the roof/wall tops will be checked for bats using an endoscope (where possible). If bats are found these will be removed by hand and placed in bat boxes that will be in place before works begin.

Bat boxes, that accord with the details within the ecological assessment provided by Cherryfield Ecology in support of the application, will be installed on retained trees and trees within the grounds of Delapre Abbey that can be used for this purpose. The precise locations of the bat boxes shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any repair or construction work.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife and nature conservation in accordance with Policy BN2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Title: **Delapre Lodge, London Rd. Npton**

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