

Application Number: 2023/5249/LBC
Location: Dodford Manor, London Road, Dodford
Development: Change of use from C3 to C1 and associated internal works to include additional en suites, window repair, an additional staircase and log burner (part retrospective)

Applicant: Unique Venues
Agent: Roger Coy Partnership
Case Officer: Rachel Booth

Ward: Woodford & Weedon

Referred by: Assistant Director, Planning and Development
Reason for Referral: Call in by Cllr Gifford on the grounds that the application refers only to the alterations to the main house and a detached two storey brick outbuilding and does not cover the other items of unauthorised work which remain unresolved under this current application.

Committee Date: 15th May 2024

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

Internal works to include additional en suites, window repair, an additional staircase and log burner (part retrospective) required in connection with planning application 2023/5247/FULL for Change of use from C3 to C1 (considered separately on this agenda)..

Consultations

The following consultee raised objections to the application:

- None

The following consultees have raised no objections to the application:

- None

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

- Dodford Parish Council

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework, and other relevant guidance as listed within the report.

The key issues arising from the application are:

- Impact of proposed alterations on the significance of the designated heritage asset

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and officers conclude that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions (as set out at the end of this report).

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 – and that for the accompanying planning application.

MAIN REPORT

1 APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 Dodford Manor is a grade II listed farmhouse situated at the western edge of the village of Dodford, and immediately south of the grade I listed church of St. Mary. The house itself is constructed in red brick with stone elements and a clay plain tile roof. It is of two-storeys with attic with a two-storey wing to the rear. There is a long linear range of outbuildings (formerly thatched, now under corrugated tin) extending to the north, and a collection of largely brick buildings arranged around a yard, including a two-storey stable and coach house with hayloft above. A second enclosed animal yard lies beyond to the west, comprising a range of brick and stone agricultural buildings and animal sheds has been converted to a wedding and hospitality venue, with associated car parking and hard and soft landscaping.
- 1.2 The site is accessed from the south via a private drive from the A45, and from the north-west through the village of Dodford.

2 CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1 Dodford Manor is a grade II listed building.
- 2.2 The grade I listed parish church of St Mary is situated immediately to the north of the application site.

3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposal is illustrated on the submitted drawings. The application relates to a proposal for change of use and associated internal alterations to the dwelling house of Dodford Manor and a two storey brick outbuilding situated immediately to its north-

west, to create holiday let/overnight bed and breakfast accommodation associated with the existing wedding venue business at Dodford Manor.

3.2 The internal alterations to the house comprise:-

- installation of back staircase from ground to first floor
- creation of ground floor bathroom in former study (shown as bedroom on survey plans)
- installation of ensuite bathrooms in 2 no. first floor bedrooms
- installation of 2 no. ensuite bathrooms in second floor bedrooms.
- installation of log burner in second floor bedroom

3.3 The outbuilding has been extensively repaired. The accommodation comprises a single open plan room at ground and first floor, each with an ensuite bathroom in the north-west corner.

4 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application Ref.	Proposal	Decision
DA/2010/0997	Change of use of land and buildings to a high-quality country hospitality venue with associated works including alterations and extensions to buildings. Demolition of existing portal framed building. New fencing, car parking and new driveway (revised scheme)	Approved
DA/2010/998/LB	Change of use of brick and stone outbuildings to hospitality venue with associated alterations, extensions, and demolitions	Approved
DA/2012/0006	Variation of Condition 2 (relating to approved drawings) of planning permission DA/2010/0997 for amended internal timber frame design and Banqueting Barn	Approved
DA/2012/0007/LB	Variation of Condition 2 (relating to approved drawings) of planning permission DA/2010/0997 for amended internal timber frame design and Banqueting Barn	Approved

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Duty

- 5.1 Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities when considering development that affects 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.

Material Considerations

- 5.2 The Development Plan comprises: the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was formally adopted by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 15th December 2014 and which provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2029; and the adopted Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) (2020). The relevant planning policies of the statutory Development Plan are set out below:

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (2014) (Part 1) (LPP1)

- 5.3 The relevant policies in the LPP1 are:

- SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- BN5 – Historic Environment

Daventry District Settlements and Countryside (Part 2) Local Plan (2019) (LPP2)

- 5.4 The relevant policies of the LLP2 are:

- ENV7 – Historic Environment
- ENV10 – Design

- 5.5 Below is a list of other the relevant material Planning Considerations:

West Northamptonshire Emerging Local Plan – Consultation Draft April 2024

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 12 – Design
- Chapter 16 – Historic Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (as revised)

National Design Guide (2019)

Historic England Guidance

6 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report.

Dodford Parish Council	Support the application, which enhances an already successful and well established local business. Historically, the applicants have consistently engaged with the villagers of Dodford during the establishment and development of their successful business, respecting both the character of our village, and the interests of our parishioners at all times. The applicants have issued specific directions to their clients to enter the establishment from the A45, and under no circumstances to enter via Dodford village, due to the narrow lanes into, and through the village. This would be the only condition of our support, however we have every confidence that nothing in this application would fundamentally change that policy. A significant investment has also been made recently by the applicants to upgrade the sewage treatment plant at Dodford Manor to meet both the existing and anticipated increase in output arising from this application.
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7 RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

- 7.1 Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report.
- 7.2 One neighbour response has been received, which supports the proposal on the understanding that any members of the public intending to make use of the additional facility would be required to enter the property from the A45 entrance and not through the single track road through the village.

8 APPRAISAL

The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II Listed Building of Dodford Manor and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset and the character and appearance of the area

- 8.1 The relevant policies are BN5 of the Joint Core Strategy (The Historic Environment and Landscape) which requires development proposals to sustain and enhance the heritage and landscape features that contribute to the character of the area by demonstrating an appreciation and understanding of the impact of development and seeking to minimise harm to those assets. This advice is echoed in policy ENV7 of the Settlements & Countryside Local Plan (Historic Environment), which states that, in decision making, great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets irrespective of the level of harm. The more important the asset, the greater the weight will be. Any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. These policies are consistent with the guidance in paragraphs 203, 205, 206 of the NPPF.
- 8.2 Policy ENV7 states that the Council will seek to sustain and enhance the historic environment by supporting high quality proposals which respond positively to their context by reinforcing local distinctiveness including street pattern, siting, form, scale,

mass, use, materials and architectural features. ENV10 (design) similarly requires development to be of a high quality and design that reflects and integrates with the surrounding area and creates a strong sense of place. These policies are consistent with the advice in paragraphs 135 and 139 of the NPPF.

- 8.3 The buildings of Dodford Manor are of interest for their historic, architectural and archaeological significance both as individual assets and as a group within their historic landscape setting. The Manor House is a good example of a substantial farmhouse constructed in the vernacular style with a more formal 18th century frontage. The associated outbuildings and courtyard walls, which provide important linkage and enclosure, are of various phases (spanning several centuries) and are typically of vernacular construction and materials. They are considered curtilage listed by virtue of their association with the Manor. The present-day arrangement of buildings and structures reflects the development of the site over time, the evolution of the agricultural unit and its relationship to its working landscape. The long history of occupation of the site can be appreciated through the fabric of the existing buildings, documentary evidence and archaeological remains (above and below ground).
- 8.4 The works of internal alteration to the house and the brick outbuilding are substantially complete. The applicant has provided limited information to show the internal arrangement and the character and appearance of the internal spaces prior to the works being carried out. However, the proposed change of use is described as including lightweight additions, which have no impact on the historic fabric of the building, and are easily reversible such that they would not prevent the use of the building reverting to its previous residential use. It is considered that the proposal would secure a viable use for the historic buildings and provide a revenue stream, which would aid their ongoing maintenance and long-term retention. The change of use to bed and breakfast accommodation would not cause any intensification of use of the site as it supports the existing visitors to the wedding venue. There would be no changes to the external layout of the site or provision of additional vehicular access or parking provision.
- 8.5 Whilst listed building consent should not be granted simply to recognise a *fait accompli* for alterations that have already been carried out, in this case there is no reason to disagree with the applicant's conclusions for most aspects of the work. The ensuite bathrooms that have been installed in the first and second floor bedrooms of the farmhouse have been sensibly sited to minimise their impact upon the character and proportions of each room, and make use of existing services connections/routes above and below where possible. The location of the new timber staircase does not affect principal rooms of the house. The positioning of this secondary staircase of simple design and modest size/scale is not out of keeping with traditional house plans. The windows in the house have all been repaired using traditional materials and methods. Their appearance is improved by the repairs without any loss of character.
- 8.6 The applicant has been asked to provide clarification regarding the extent of the replacement and/or overboarding of traditional lath and plaster ceilings and the installation of new lighting within the ceilings in the house. This was not shown on the original application drawings, but it was apparent from the case officer's site inspection that a large number of spot lights have been installed throughout the building. This modern style of lighting can drastically change the character and appearance of a space within a historic building and cause damage to traditional or historic ceilings. In this case, the additional information submitted by the applicant on 02 & 03 November 2023, is not sufficient to overcome officers' concerns that the extent of the alterations

is excessive. The applicant has now agreed to omit this item from the current application to allow for further negotiation regarding the number and design of light fittings that would be acceptable. A new application for listed building consent for a revised lighting schedule can then be submitted, to include measures for removing any unnecessary and/or inappropriate lights and making good the fabric of the ceilings within an agreed specified timescale. It is considered that this one outstanding item should not affect determination of the current applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

- 8.7 The brick stable/coach house was in poor condition. The 2010 applications for change of use of part of site to a wedding venue did not include proposals for the house and domestic outbuildings. However, a statement prepared by the applicant's heritage consultant described certain of these buildings – including the coach house - as being in very poor condition and at risk of '*extreme loss of significance through catastrophic failure*' and accelerating diminution of significance unless a viable new use is found in the very short-term. The application was also accompanied by a 'Schedule of Conservation Repairs to Coach House/Stables' (appendix E of the Conservation, Design & Access and Planning Statement), which briefly listed the works that would be required to consolidate the building fabric, including repairs to collapsed brick arches and south elevation; repointing in lime mortar; repair to softwood floor and roof structures, etc.
- 8.8 During a site visit with the planning enforcement investigator in September 2022 the case officer observed that the fabric of the outbuilding has been fully repaired. The works appear to have been carried out on a like for like basis with existing architectural features retained. Internally, the new ensuite bathrooms have been constructed using lightweight partitions which do not extend the full height of the internal spaces, so are legible as discrete additions to the historic rooms without materially detracting from their character. The applicant points out that the ensuites have been able to be provided without the requirement for rooflights. This has avoided any change to the external appearance of the outbuilding.
- 8.9 It should be noted that the current applications do not cover certain other items of work that were identified by the council's conservation and enforcement officers during their visit in September 2022 as having been carried out without the benefit of listed building consent. These are:-
- Barn extending to north of main house
Extensive works of alteration have been carried out to convert to storage and office accommodation (including structural roof repairs and alterations, knocking through central dividing wall with new steps up, openings infilled with new windows, doors and glazed screens)
 - North wall of courtyard
Timber clad open-fronted lean-to shed constructed against wall
 - North and west side of courtyard
Now enclosed by timber boarding and solid timber gate
Lean-to covered storage structure installed against west wall of brick outbuilding range.

These items are not directly related to the current proposals. They remain the subject of an ongoing enforcement investigation. The agent acting on behalf of the site owner

has confirmed that an application relating to these works will be forthcoming. That application will be assessed on their own merits.

9 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 CIL is not applicable.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The proposed change of use to holiday let/overnight bed and breakfast accommodation would secure a viable use for the historic buildings and allow the buildings within the Dodford Manor complex to remain as a single entity. The works of internal alteration to the house, and the repair and conversion of the outbuilding, have limited impact upon historic fabric, features of architectural interest and the character and appearance of the buildings. The significance of the designated heritage assets is not materially harmed by the proposals. Any outstanding issues as there may be can be controlled by suitably worded conditions. As such, it is considered that the proposal should be approved in line with the principle of sustainable development.

11 RECOMMENDATION

11.1 It is recommended that the application be **APPROVED** subject to conditions as set out below with delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Planning and Development to approve any amendments to those conditions as deemed necessary.

12 CONDITIONS

Time Limit

1. The works to which this consent relates shall be begun within 3 years from the date of this consent.

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

Approved Plans

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the submitted drawings ref. 4569/02, 4569/03, 4569/04 A, 4569/05 A, 4569/07 A and 4569 20, received by the local planning authority and made valid with the application on 30 March 2023.

Reason: To ensure development is in accordance with the approved drawings and to enable the LPA to consider the impact of any changes to the approved drawings.

Internal Lighting

3. The number, position and type of lighting that has been installed within existing and replacement ceilings within the farmhouse is not authorised by this consent.

Reason: The submitted details do not overcome concerns regarding the impact of the proposed alterations on the fabric, character and appearance of the listed building.

External Fittings

4. No new external services or fittings (including pipework, electrics, soil pipes, vents, flues, extractor fans, aerials or satellite dishes, meter boxes or external lighting) beyond those shown on approved drawings ref. 4569/03, 04 A, 05 A & 07 A shall be installed anywhere on the application buildings until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall then be carried out strictly in accordance with approved plans.

Reason: To minimise disturbance to the fabric and appearance of the listed building.