Dear Ms Beeby

Home Farm, Nottingham Road, Nuthall, Nottinghamshire, NG16 1DP. Application No. 18/00844/LBC

Thank you for consulting the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) on the above case. Based on the information supplied with this application, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

The CBA objects to this application because, in its present form it will result in substantial harm to the significance of the Listed Grade II Home Farmhouse and attached Coach House; the Listed Grade II Farm Buildings to the rear of Home Farm; the setting of the Listed Grade II* Gothic Summerhouse at number 9 The Yews; the character and appearance of the Nuthall Conservation Area; and the significance of the surviving elements of the Nuthall Temple Historic Park and Garden, as recorded by the Nottinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project and the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record. The application therefore fails to satisfy the requirements of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Significance

The Listed Grade II Home Farmhouse and attached Coach House and the Listed Grade II Farm Buildings to the rear of Home Farm comprise substantial evidential and historical value (building fabric, fixtures and fittings) relating to their use as agricultural buildings and estate buildings associated with the former Nuthall Temple Estate and Designed Landscape as well as subsequent development through to the present day. The South Range and West Range incorporate building fabric that may relate to a 17th century or earlier manor house, with the northern part of the west range a possible rare example (for Nottinghamshire) of a 17th century threshing barn. The South Range comprises a farmhouse (18th century adaptation) and two cottages (20th century adaptations) together with a little altered attached 18th century stable block. The south elevation incorporates architectural detail (including clock) of high aesthetic value that originally related to...
the designed views from the main 18th century Nuthall Temple house and within its associated pleasure grounds.

The Home Farm complex lies within the Nuthall Conservation Area which incorporates the majority of the Nuthall Temple parkland and pleasure grounds that survives to the west of the M1 motorway. 18th century parkland and pleasure ground features that survive include the Listed Grade II Lake Bridge to the north of Verge Wood and the Listed Grade II* Gothic Summerhouse at number 9 The Yews.

The Statement of Significance (Heritage Statement 2017 accompanying the application) prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology records Evidential Value as high significance; Historical Value as high significance; Aesthetic Value as moderate to high significance and Communal Value as high significance. These values therefore make a substantial contribution to the overall significance of the Home Farm complex and its wider setting. Any interventions relating to conversions or adaptive re-use of these structures that result in changes to their legibility or significance would result in substantial harm as defined by Section 16 of the NPPF.

Comments

General
In principle, the CBA is supportive of the adaptive re-use of redundant heritage assets and there is no doubt that much of the Listed Grade II Home Farm complex is in an advanced state of decay. However, the significance of the site is such that great care needs to be exercised by anyone wishing to re-use and re-purpose these Listed Grade II structures. The guiding principle should be to seek a conservation led approach that clearly minimises harm to the significance of the heritage assets and seeks to conserve the agricultural nature of the buildings and their setting. The CBA is not convinced that the current application achieves an appropriate balance between adaptive re-use and conservation. We consider the extent of demolition of historic structures to be extreme and we consider the overall design proposals excessively domesticate both the buildings and their setting to the extent that significance is substantially harmed. Paragraph 194 of the NPPF is clear, “...Substantial harm to or loss of...grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional...”.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF also requires there to be “…clear and convincing justification…” for any harm to significance and the CBA is again not convinced that this has been achieved in a way that satisfies an overarching requirement to conserve significance. The application provides no viability assessment of alternative options which the CBA considers necessary for a site as complex and archaeologically significant as this. For instance, a mixed-use scheme may both better reveal the significance of this important site and minimise harm through more sympathetic design parameters. The CBA notes from the Planning Statement that planning approval and listed building consent was granted in 2008 for the restoration, extension, and conversion of the
farmhouse and agricultural buildings to offices within Use Class B1 but that the permission was never implemented.

Statement of Significance
The CBA is pleased to see that the applicant has commissioned a professionally prepared desk-top assessment of the heritage context and a more detailed statement of significance on the heritage interest of the site. Both these documents are comprehensive and allow for a considered assessment of development impacts. It is particularly useful to have a good photographic survey of the assets contained within them. However, the CBA notes a contradiction between an assessment of significance based on values in the Statement of Significance and the assessment of significance based on building phases (section 7, pg. 39-41). Although we acknowledge that the earlier and more complete structures may hold more significance than later, less complete elements we consider the use of ‘moderate significance’ and ‘low significance’ to be misleading. We consider that a detailed phase plan of the site would have helped resolve this difficulty.

That said, we agree that the Statement of Significance clearly articulates the overall significance of Home Farm very well. It states, “Home Farm is a unique farmstead, of high regional importance, both in terms of the evidence it represents of the history and social fabric of the Nuthall Temple estate, its architectural quality and the contribution which it makes to the character of the area.”. It concludes, “…The proposed renovation of the farm outbuildings, if undertaken sensitively, can have a beneficial effect on their listed building status, returning them to a maintained and sustainable condition…”.

Although both these documents have largely met the requirements of paragraphs 189 and 190 of the NPPF, we consider that further detailed information is still required to sufficiently “…understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance…” (Paragraph 189, NPPF), and therefore “…avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal…” (Paragraph 190, NPPF). We note for instance that the interiors of the farmhouse and the two cottages have not been examined internally by either the original English Heritage (now Historic England) listing team in 1989 or by PCAS Archaeology Ltd as part of this application. The CBA considers this essential information. We also consider that more detailed examination of the West Range should be conducted. These two elements of further work are necessary to fully understand the significance of the potentially earlier fabric and therefore understanding the impact of development on that significance. This work should be undertaken by an historic buildings specialist.

There are references throughout both documents to gypsum plaster floors, sandstone flagged floors and brick paviour floors. The CBA considers these surviving features to be key elements of evidential value and therefore significance and their removal should have, “…clear and convincing justification…”. We strongly advise that options to conserve these features in situ should be more actively explored by the applicant. If this is not possible, then “…clear and convincing justification…” as required by the NPPF should be evidenced. We do not consider that the text
contained within the Heritage, Design and Access Statement is sufficient. Suspended floors and raised floors are all potential options.

South Range Former Coach House
The CBA considers this building to have the greatest potential for adaptation to residential use and we are broadly supportive of the proposals subject to details on fenestration and materials being agreed with the local planning authority’s conservation advisor. We are particularly pleased to see that the clock face framework will be repaired and reinstated.

South Range Farmhouse and cottages
As stated above, it is essential that a detailed internal survey of this structure is undertaken by a historic buildings specialist to properly assess significance and impact.

Central Range
These buildings, although later than the main complex (late 19th and early 20th century) make a major contribution to the overall significance of the site and help define the former agricultural function of the Home Farm complex. They represent the latest in several developments of the site that are linked to farming innovations and therefore part of the historical and evidential values that contribute to overall significance. Whilst these structures are seriously dilapidated, the CBA objects to wholesale demolition and removal. We remind the Local Planning Authority that this range is Listed Grade II along with the rest of the Home Farm complex. We note that the Heritage, Design and Access Statement refers to the creation of several single storey timber structures outside the courtyard for bike storage and communal refuse collection points and consider the Central Range could be used for the same purpose and storage generally. We urge the Local Planning Authority to seek the retention of these structures, repaired and rebuilt as necessary.

East Range
The original East Range (at least 1849) is largely demolished to ground level apart from the structure immediately butting the east gable of the North Range. The current proposal is to demolish all surviving structural evidence of this building and construct a new build East Range connected to the South Range and on a different alignment to the original. The CBA strongly objects to this proposal. Although the reasons for the odd alignment of the North Range end gable and subsequent alignment of the East Range are not presently known, it is clearly part of the evidential value of the site and therefore contributes to overall significance. Departure from this alignment will harm significance. Attachment of the new build to the South Range introduces a non-historic physical relationship that obscures the historic relationship between coach house and courtyard and therefore also substantially harms significance. The new build itself introduces a building form that is alien to the site. The height, massing, scale and design of this building with its ordered fenestration is both industrial and domestic and therefore highly damaging to the significance of the site, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the significance of the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets. A more modest proposal utilising the footprint and alignment of the mid-19th century East Range may be more successful.
North Range
The North Range incorporates some of the earliest external and internal building fabric, fixtures and fittings on the site. The CBA has several concerns regarding the proposed interventions in this range. Externally, the proposed conversion to residential involves eight new openings including one new door at the east end of the south facing elevation as well as a part glazed and part timber panelled front at the west end of the south facing elevation. The latter introduces two new materials, the timber panelling and large areas of glazing into an otherwise stone and brick construction.

The north facing elevation comprises six proposed new openings including four new doorways, two of which are raised and accessed via external steps. These will impact on the agricultural aesthetic and domesticate this elevation to the extent that significance is harmed.

The overall effect is the creation of a terrace of domestic properties resulting in the loss of significance of this important range. The CBA considers that the amount of proposed fenestration is excessive. Internally, it would appear from the limited material attached to this application, that all fixtures, fittings and surfaces will be lost. The CBA considers this will result in substantial harm and requires clear and convincing justification. We strongly advise that other options for the re-use of this Range are considered.

West Range
This range incorporates structural elements that may be associated with an earlier 17th century manor house and outbuildings as well as later 18th and early 19th century additions. The extensively dilapidated state of this range and the lack of detailed assessment of significance has resulted in development proposals that incorporate substantial new structural elements. There are at least eighteen new openings or re-imagined old openings that together constitute a virtual new build. The CBA **strongly objects** to this aspect of the application and urges the Local Planning Authority to seek further evidence relating to the heritage significance of this range.

New Farm and barn
The CBA has found it difficult to find information on the proposed new farm house and barn other than the seven sets of plans and elevations and short sentences in the Planning Statement and the Heritage, Design and Access Statement. We understand from the brief text mentions that the applicant seeks permission for this as enabling development. The CBA considers that the proposed new builds and associated access and landscaping will impact on the character and appearance of the Nuthall Conservation Area; the setting of non-designated heritage assets including the Nuthall Temple historic park and garden. This therefore requires justifying against the requirements of Section 16 of the NPPF.

Landscaping
The CBA **strongly objects** to the proposals for vehicle parking in the Home Farm courtyard and the potential amount of asphalt surfaces implicit in the application detail such as it is. We consider it
essential that the applicant seeks to minimise the use of asphalt on heritage grounds as well as on environmental grounds. The retention of the central range and use of more natural materials and the creative use of geotextile surfaces will go a long way to creating a more harmonious setting for the Listed Grade II ranges of buildings. We urge the LPA to seek changes to the overall landscaping proposals and site access and to seek more detailed landscape plans.

**Recommendation**

The CBA strongly objects to this application because it fails to meet the requirements of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and will result in substantial harm to the heritage significance of the multiple designated and non-designated heritage assets affected by the development proposals. We strongly recommend that the Local Planning Authority seek further information and evidence from the applicant on the issues we have raised in our comments so that a more considered scheme is developed for this exceptional site. The significance and importance of this site and its wider setting cannot be overstated. Despite the advanced dilapidation of many structural elements, the CBA firmly believes that a less harmful and sustainable re-use is possible that will meet the needs of the applicant and the needs of conservation.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Bob Sydes MCIfA  
Listed Buildings Caseworker for England

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in ODPM Circular 09/2005 and in Welsh Office Circulars 61/96 & 1/98.