

16 June 2011

Mr Steve Milligan  
Senior Planning Officer  
Suffolk Coastal District Council  
Melton Hill  
Woodbridge  
Suffolk  
IP12 1UA

Dear Mr Milligan

**Model Farm at Chillesford Lodge Estate – C/11/1123 Conversion of agricultural buildings to create 20 residential units, 2 holiday lets, swimming pool and management office, ancillary store and flood defences**

1. Thank you for consulting the Suffolk Preservation Society ('The Society') on this significant application for a change of use in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. This model farm group is an outstanding example of its type and deserves every effort to achieve a viable new use that is compatible with this sensitive landscape location.
2. The Society has given the scheme detailed consideration and I am writing on behalf of the Society to submit the following representations that are intended to assist the council in their consideration of these extensive proposals. I can confirm that the Society is supportive of the re-use of this important model farm group. The Society would have preferred to have seen the incorporation of a mixture of employment and residential uses, especially 'live-work' units to minimise travel to work trips and expand employment opportunities in the local economy. However, it is accepted that the provision of flood protection measures and conservative repair of the buildings does justify the proposed number of units on the basis that the valuation of the completed project is robust. Indeed, the submitted scheme would not present an attractive commercial investment on a speculative basis, based on an industry norm of 20% return. The estimated return of 5.6% appears very modest and does not provide for resilience in the event that the market value was to decline even marginally.
3. The scheme is well supported by documentation and analysis. The Society is keen to ensure that the conversion makes adequate provision to mitigate the loss of potential roost areas for Barn Owls and bats as a permanent part of the scheme as opposed to temporary applied boxes.

4. Most importantly the Society is concerned to ensure that the proposed flood protection measures and handling of proposed residential curtilages do not serve to harm the setting of the group or wider landscape. Whilst it is accepted that this is capable of initial control through the appropriate use of conditions, in the longer term an affective management plan will be essential together with long term monitoring by the planning authority. It is essential that further areas of private curtilage are not created within the areas surrounding the buildings and that the planting of hedges or other means of enclosure within these areas is precluded. It is suggested that these objectives might best be achieved and sustained via a s.106 agreement, this would ensure that the communal areas are subject to effective management in perpetuity.

5. In terms of the detailed scheme, the handling of the conversion is conventional in form and the number of new openings has clearly been subject to appropriate restraint. The Society has some concern regarding the excessive use of roof lights, particularly when these are sited on the prominent two storey elements of the group. It is requested that consideration be given to whether there is any potential to secure a reduction in the number of these roof lights. Internally, the scheme inevitably involves more intensive vertical and horizontal subdivision than is generally considered optimal for listed buildings characterised by large open spaces that allow the volumetric qualities to be immediately appreciated. However, accepting the limitations imposed by the need to achieve a minimal number of units and financial viability, some interesting internal voids are retained that will help to recall at least some of the original internal character of the listed buildings. Large scale architectural details need to be agreed to ensure that the detailed form of new openings (including lintels and reveals), doors, windows (including finishes, sill and lintel), glazed screens, extract and boiler flue terminals, stove pipes, roof lights (including flashing kit), eaves, verges and aerials are appropriately controlled. It is also suggested that a uniform external estate paint livery scheme is agreed and maintained by condition.

13. In conclusion, subject to satisfactory resolution of the above issues, the Society wishes to register its support for the scheme.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Cairns', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Simon Cairns  
MRTPI IHBC  
**Director**

CC: Felicity Cambridge SPS District Chair, Jo Rogers – Hon. Sec Suffolk Coastal SPS District, John Paton Esq. Robert Scrimgeour, Anne Westover - SCDC