

19 March 2021

Mr Grant Heal
Planning Officer, East Suffolk Council,
East Suffolk House, Riduna Park,
Station Road, Melton,
Woodbridge,
IP12 1RT

Dear Mr Heal

**DC/21/0697/FUL Demolition of outbuilding, and reconstruction/extension of existing bungalow
42 Chapel Street Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 4NF**

I write on behalf of the Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) regarding the latest application to demolish the nineteenth century single storey cottage and replace it with a single storey two bed, detached dwelling. SPS previously objected to the loss of the building, which it has been agreed is a non-designated heritage asset, on the grounds that the demolition was not justified and the proposed redevelopment would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Woodbridge Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset. We attach our previous letter for your convenience.

We acknowledge, and welcome, that the latest application is supported by a more comprehensive structural survey, and find the conclusions that the condition is parlous and would require almost total reconstruction consistent with a pre-fabricated structure of this date that has not enjoyed regular maintenance or repair.

The adopted Conservation Area Appraisal which forms part of the Development Plan is explicit that the open character of the site, as well as the cottage, are significant and therefore worthy of protection. We are therefore disappointed that the conservation officer takes a different view and is prepared to support the principle of replacement with a structure that has similarities with the existing building. It is noted that the form of the proposal is similar to that of the existing cottage and that the footprint is not materially greater than the cottage and associated outbuilding combined. However, we note that the front building line of the proposals is forward of the existing, to permit an increase in floor area to the rear of the cottage, thereby, to some degree it will reduce the open character of this part of the conservation area.

The Design and Access Statement states at para. 6.2.3 *The 2011 Conservation Area Appraisal includes a photograph of the existing bungalow as it was at that time – see picture 11. However, as can be seen in more current photo's (see picture 7) the condition of the fabric has deteriorated significantly over the past 9 years. The bungalow has suffered from water ingress, lack of sufficient heating, and vegetation growth, which along with a lack of general maintenance and repair, has led to the remaining fabric being of very poor quality.*

Whist some original features remain, they could not be considered as high quality architectural/historical features. The vast majority of the existing fabric is now in need of reconstruction... and continues at para. 6.2.4 Due to the level of repair/replacement that the structural and asbestos reports have highlighted, restoration of this building is not considered financially viable, and reconstruction is therefore considered to be the only economic solution.

The report's conclusions make clear that the recent lack of investment in the fabric of this building has resulted in its deterioration and thereby resulted in its repair becoming unviable. It is well understood that the deteriorated state of a heritage asset (including non-designated heritage assets) should not be taken into account in any decision. (NPPF para.191). Therefore, we would expect to see the structural survey independently peer reviewed by a CARE Registered accredited Structural Engineer to confirm that demolition is justified and confirm whether there is evidence of deliberate neglect. Until this issue can be satisfactorily addressed SPS continues to object to the loss of this non designated heritage asset which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Woodbridge Conservation Area.

We trust that you find these comments helpful in the consideration of this case.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Cairns IHBC MRTPI
Director

Enc SPS Letter dated 29 June 2020

Cc:
Ward Councillors
Design and Conservation Team ESDC
Woodbridge Town Council