

01.03.2022

Ms Rose Wolton
Planning Officer
Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House
Ipswich IP1 2BX

Dear Ms Wolton

DC/20/03083 Full Planning Application – Conversion, repair, and extension of existing farm buildings to form 5no dwellings, erection of garage, the demolition of buildings (including the metal clad barn), provision of new vehicular access to The Street and associated landscaping.

Erwarton Hall Farm Yard, The Street, Erwarton Ipswich Suffolk IP9 1LQ

Thank you for reconsulting the SPS on the latest amendments to the conversion scheme at Erwarton Hall Farm. Having reviewed the revised drawings and supporting letter from the agent, the Society continues to strongly object to the scheme. The retention of the barn and continuation of the equine/agricultural storage raises concerns about the negative implications for residential amenity of the new units. Furthermore, the amendments do little to address the fundamental concerns previously raised by the SPS. Accordingly, we would like to make the following points:

1. Despite the retention of the Dutch barn and removal of two units, it is important to highlight that the previous refusal DC/19/02206 was for five units. In the opinion of the SPS, the amended scheme continues to result in a suburbanising impact upon the setting of the highly graded Hall and gatehouse together with other harmful impacts including: loss of tranquility, light pollution and erosion of landscape character within an AONB designated landscape.
2. Since the previous refusal the unique Tudor Gatehouse has been upgraded from grade II* to grade I. It is now within the top 1.5% of the nation's listed buildings and one of only 32 grade I secular buildings in Babergh district. Erwarton Hall itself is also highly graded at grade II* and the objection from Historic England due to the impact of the proposals on both assets must be given significant weight. The statutory duty to pay special regard to the special interest of designated heritage assets (S66 PLBCA 1990) has only been brought more sharply into focus as a consequence. The higher the grade of heritage asset the greater the level of justification is required to cause heritage harm.
3. The site remains outside of the development boundary and within the countryside. The emerging local plan policies on Sustainable Development, AONB Policy, Development in Countryside, and Heritage Assets all seek to restrict harmful development. There has been no

material change to these environmental policies in the emerging local plan since 2019. Therefore reason 2 for the previous refusal must stand:

it is considered that the unsustainable location, in relation to its connectivity to services and facilities, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development when considered against the Framework as a whole.

4. The District Council can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, unlike at the time of the 2019 decision. Accordingly, the tilted balance of weighing in favour of approving planning applications without delay is not engaged (NPPF para 11d).

5. The application has very little support from statutory and non-statutory consultees, nor the local community. The Parish Council, Historic England and the AONB Partnership have all raised objections to the scheme. There are 13 other objections from a wide range of expert national and local stakeholders. The controversial nature and level of objection raised in response to this scheme should be given significant weight in the decision-making process.

Finally, if officers are minded to recommend this scheme for approval, then it very important that all members of the planning committee should be strongly encouraged to visit the site. Decision makers must take into account the impacts of the proposed housing on the setting of Erwarton Hall and Gatehouse, the visual impacts upon the landscape, especially the proposed access across the adjoining meadow within the AONB landscape, as well as the overtly suburbanising character of the scheme, in particular the degree of new build, extent of hard landscaping, including parking areas, fences and extent of glazing.

We thank you for taking the time to consider these important points.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Cairns IHBC MRTPI
Director

CC: Erwarton Parish Meeting
Ward Councillors – Derek Davis, Peter Patrick
Beverley McClean, AONB Partnership
Heritage Team
Rose Wolton, Case Officer