

Committee Report

Item No: 7C

Reference: DC/21/00782

Case Officer: Mahsa Kavyani

Ward: Fressingfield.

Ward Member/s: Cllr Lavinia Hadingham.

RECOMMENDATION – GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION WITH CONDITIONS

Description of Development

Planning Application - Change of Use of Performance Studio to Office (Use Class E)

Location

Wingfield Barns, Church Road, Wingfield, Suffolk IP21 5RA

Expiry Date: 16/04/2021

Application Type: FUL - Full Planning Application

Development Type: Change of Use

Applicant: Mr Andrew Robinson

Parish: Wingfield

Details of Previous Committee / Resolutions and any member site visit: None

Has a Committee Call In request been received from a Council Member (Appendix 1): No

Has the application been subject to Pre-Application Advice: No

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason:

- This site is in the ownership of Mid Suffolk District Council.

PART TWO – POLICIES AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Summary of Policies

CL08 - Protecting wildlife habitats

CS02- Development in the Countryside

CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment

E06 - Retention of use within existing industrial/commercial areas

E09 - Location of new businesses

E11 - Re-use and adaption of agricultural and other rural buildings

E12 - General principles for location, design and layout

FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development
GP01 - Design and layout of development
HB01 - Protection of historic buildings
H16: Protecting existing residential amenity
T10 - Highway Considerations in Development
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG-National Planning Policy Guidance

Neighbourhood Plan Status

This application is not within a Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Consultations and Representations

During the course of the application Consultation and Representations from third parties have been received. These are summarised below.

A: Summary of Consultations

Town/Parish Council (Appendix 3)

Wingfield Parish Council - No comments were provided

National Consultee (Appendix 4)

None

County Council Responses (Appendix 5)

SCC Highways – No objections were raised

Internal Consultee Responses (Appendix 6)

MSDC Economic Development And Tourism – No comments were provided

MSDC Strategic Asset Management - No comments were received

B: Representations

None received.

PLANNING HISTORY

REF: DC/18/03949

Application for Listed Building Consent -
Erection of masonry buttress to provide
support to existing leaning wall.

DECISION: GTD

06.12.2018

REF: DC/18/04000	Planning Application. Erection of masonry buttress to provide support to existing leaning wall.	DECISION: GTD 06.12.2018
REF: DC/19/00733	Planning Application - Minor alterations to the Granary and change of use to (D1) to create a Day nursery.	DECISION: GTD 25.04.2019
REF: DC/19/00734	Listed Building Consent Application. Alterations to curtilage listed building including insertion of new internal staircase.	DECISION: GTD 25.04.2019
REF: DC/21/00782	Planning Application - Change of Use of Performance Studio to Office (Use Class E)	DECISION: PCO
REF: DC/21/02116	Planning Application - Change of Use of the Granary, Wingfield Barns, from occasional residential use to Use Class E.	DECISION: PCO
REF: 0339/15	Energy efficiency / renewable measures.	DECISION: REC
REF: 4017/14	Repair holes in boarding caused by jetwashing.	DECISION: REC
REF: 0059/13	Development of Wingfield Barns - please see 0306/07 and 2829/09	DECISION: REC
REF: 0993/12	Wingfield Barns and a recent green efficiency	DECISION: REC
REF: 1839/10	Proposed signage.	DECISION: REC
REF: 1934/09	Premises Licence application notification	DECISION: REC

REF: 0634/09/EQ	Erection of sign	DECISION: REC
REF: 0153/88	Conversion of redundant granary to dwelling, with provision of septic tank/treatment plant drainage	DECISION: GTD 18.04.1988
REF: 0259/88/OL	Conversion of redundant farm buildings to a centre for the visual and performing arts.	DECISION: GTD 03.02.1994
REF: 0024/88/LB	Conversion of redundant barn to dwelling	DECISION: GTD 01.07.1988
REF: 0306/07/EQ	PRE-APP : The Arts Centre is no longer in operation pending review by the Arts Council. Agents have been instructed to advise upon re-use potential. Refer also to Countryside Section regarding further study information.	DECISION: REC
REF: 0108/96/OL	CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT FARM BUILDINGS TO A CENTRE FOR THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS INCLUDING ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE ACCOMMODATION (PREVIOUSLY PERMITTED BY OL/259/88).	DECISION: GTD 03.07.1998
REF: 0583/98/	CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT FARM BUILDINGS TO A CENTRE FOR THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (SUBMISSION OF DETAILS UNDER OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION OL/108/96.)	DECISION: GTD 25.02.1999

REF: 0973/00/	USE OF LAND FOR GARDEN AND ERECTION OF DETACHED OUTBUILDING FOR DOMESTIC USE.	DECISION: GTD 31.10.2000
REF: 0219/97/LB	REPAIR, IMPROVEMENTS AND ADAPTATION OF WINGFIELD COLLEGE FARM BUILDINGS FOR ARTS USE	DECISION: GTD 09.01.1998

PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

1. The Site and Surroundings

- 1.1. Wingfield Barns is a complex of former farm buildings that were converted to form a visual and performing arts centre in the late 1990s. Previously part of Wingfield College to the immediate north, a Grade II* listed building and now a residential property, the barns are deemed to be curtilage listed with the exception of the large barn which is Grade II listed in its own right. The barns are located within mature grounds with established trees, including along the site boundaries. A gravel driveway off Church Road leads to the barns providing vehicular access for staff and a limited number of visitors requiring disabled parking, and pedestrian access. To the southwest of the barns and on a separate parcel of land is the visitor's car park. The site is in the Wingfield Conservation Area and is also located within the countryside for planning purposes. Beyond Wingfield College to the north is the Grade I listed St Andrew's Church and to the east of the site is a residential property known as Windwoods.
- 1.2. The subject building is a single storey traditional timber framed agricultural building built off a brick plinth with a pitched pantiled roof, the roof features two rooflights. Walls are weatherboarded and painted white.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1. The proposal consists of; "Change of Use of Performance Studio to Office (Use Class E)." The proposed use is for an office use which falls within remits of Class E.
- 2.2. It's been provided that the building is mainly currently used for general storage of materials related to the use of the other 3 studios/barns within the site.

3. The Principle Of Development

- 3.1. The determination of the planning application shall have regard to the material harm caused as a result of the proposed development. The 'tests' here are whether the material harm caused by such development are significant enough to cause adverse impact on the character and setting of the area, residential amenity enjoyed by occupants of neighbouring property as well as non-domestic uses of land and buildings nearby, highways access and parking, and finally environmental risk / harm arising (ecology, flood risk, trees, archaeology etc).
- 3.2. The application site is outside of any defined settlement boundary and is therefore classed as "Countryside" in policy CS2 of the Core Strategy. Development is normally resisted within

countryside locations. However, Wingfield Barns is an existing employment site, and the proposal is for change of use of an existing business.

- 3.3. The proposed change of use would continue the employment use of the site. The principle of proposal is therefore supportable in line with Local Plan Policies, The Core Strategy and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

4. Proposed change of use

- 4.1. The Local development policies, RT16, E09, E11 & E12, together with the guidance within the NPPF support expansion of commercial centres, as long as associated activities would not adversely impact the highways safety, environment, residential amenity, and character of the locality.
- 4.2. Use Class E of the Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) was introduced on 1st September 2020 and covers the former use classes of A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional), A3 (restaurants and cafes) as well as parts of D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) and puts them all into one new use class, Class E. This includes Commercial, Business and Service uses. As evident, recent changes to Class E are broad and cover a wide range of activities. Here the change of use will be limited to general office use and the applicant has provided that "Wingfield Barns CIC has been encouraged by the District Council to become financially self-sufficient and to achieve this it has decided to let some buildings to 3rd parties. It wishes to let studio 3 for office use". Office use is defined within Class E as *E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions*.
- 4.3. Wingfield barns site complex was initially subject of change of use under 0108/96/OL for conversion of redundant farm buildings to a centre for the visual and performing arts including artists in residence accommodation (previously permitted by OL/259/88). The permission is accompanied by a s106 agreement, which limits the future use of barns unless in pursuant of a planning permission specifically made in that regard. Please note below extract from s106 agreement.

<p>maximum permitted audience of 180;</p> <p>(2) studio facilities for the visual arts;</p> <p>(3) administration storage toilet catering sales car parking and similar facilities appropriate to the Centre's activities as described in (1) and (2) above and to its outreach programme;</p> <p>(4) artists in residence accommodation;</p> <p>and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987</p>

- 4.4. Subsequent to the initial approval of Wingfield barn as *A CENTRE FOR THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS*, the subject barn was subject to a more recent planning permission under 2590/09 which allowed its use for 'visual and performing arts including rehearsals, education, children's activities and uses associated with wedding ceremonies and receptions.' However, it

has been provided that the subject building is currently underutilised and is generally used as a storage for other barns within the complex.

- 4.5. Local Policy RT16 is particularly related to current proposal in that it outlines “the district planning authority will support proposals which provide local employment opportunities; in appropriate circumstances, bring about the reuse of farm or other rural buildings”. Upon site inspections by the Council officers, it became clear that the subject building is not currently achieving its full potential. The Planning statement also provides that the building is only used as a storage for other barns. It is evident that the building could be put to better uses, and it has the potential to become an income generating asset, contributing to continuity of Wingfield barns, as an important and successful art/commercial hub for the enjoyment of immediate and wider locality.
- 4.6. NPPF Para.81 states that “Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt;” Wingfield barns is already a small employment site and tourist attraction within the area (it benefits from a brown tourist sign), as well as being a historic tourist attraction within the vicinity, it also hosts venues and concerts. The proposal would utilise an otherwise underused building and create employment opportunities within the locality. As stated above, this is considered a positive contribution to the site, a sustainable and efficient use of the building, entirely in line with the local policies and the guidance contained within the NPPF.
- 4.7. Based on the above assessment, it is considered that change of use of Studio 3 to “*E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions*” is compatible with the current activities within the site and relates well to the current uses on site. Other material considerations will be discussed under related headings.

5. Site Access, Parking And Highway Safety Considerations

- 5.1. Policies T9 & T10 of the local plan require development to be delivered with safe and sufficient highways access and function.
- 5.2. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.3. Considerations have been given to access, parking, and layout. The layout and access would remain unaffected as a result of the proposed change of use. There is existing availability of an area on-site to accommodate staff car parking, visitor and disabled parking onsite. Also, there is availability of nearby car parking facilities, which leads to conclusions that the proposal would not have any adverse impact upon the existing access, parking, or layout in Wingfield barns. It is not anticipated that the number vehicles movements as a result of change of use would exceed that of a current permitted use on site.

6. Design And Layout [Impact On character of the locality]

- 6.1. The proposal is for a change of use with no external or internal alterations. No impacts have been identified to character and locality of the site.

7. Heritage Issues

- 7.1. No impacts have been identified, as no changes have been proposed internally or externally.

8. Impact On Residential Amenity

- 8.1. Policy H13 of the development plan seeks to ensure new housing development protects the amenity of neighbouring residents. Policy H16 of the development plan seeks to protect the existing amenity of residential areas.
- 8.2. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF sets out a number of core planning principles as to underpin decision-taking, including, seeking to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of developments and places
- 8.3. Wingfield barns is situated within a large plot, with some residential dwellings surrounding the site, however there is reasonable separation distances considered enough to reduce any potential impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, in terms of overlooking, noise, loss of light or loss of privacy. The proposed change of use and estimated noise generated in an office environment is considered very minimal, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any adverse impact upon general amenity of the locality and the neighbours.
- 8.4. The proposed would not significantly impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residential properties. The proposal, therefore, accords with the aspirations of development plan policies H13 and H16 and with paragraph 130 of the NPPF in this regard.

Note: Hours of operation/use are proposed to be controlled by way of a suitable condition.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

9. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 9.1. The LPA is obliged to consider whether the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policies contained within the NPPF are a material consideration and should be taken into account for decision-making purposes.
- 9.2. No significant planning harm has been identified, when assessed against local development policies and the guidance contained within the NPPF. The proposal constitutes sustainable development for which the NPPF carries a presumption in favour. In terms of balance, it is concluded to recommend the application for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Chief Planning Officer be authorised to GRANT permission, subject to conditions as summarised below and those as may be deemed necessary by the Chief Planning Officer:

- Standard time limit
- Approved Plans (Plans submitted that form this application)
- Hours of operation
- Specific restriction on use, (only to allow building as an office, as defined within Class *E(g)(i)* *Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions*)

