



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 4 September 2012
DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2012/0623: Change of use of walled garden to use for wedding receptions and other functions, together with the erection of marquees at Delapre Abbey.

WARD: Delapre and Briar Hill

APPLICANT: Northampton Borough Council
AGENT: Northampton Borough Council

REFERRED BY: Scheme of Delegation
REASON: Council application and Council owned land

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 APPROVAL subject to conditions and for the following reason:

On a temporary basis the proposal would have no adverse impact on the character and setting of the listed building and any impact on adjoining occupiers can be satisfactorily controlled under the premises licence. The proposal will assist in ensuring the viability of the listed building in the long term.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Use of the walled garden for the holding of wedding receptions, including the erection of marquees (only one marquee at any one time).

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The site comprises the Walled Garden of Delapre Abbey, a Grade II* listed building. The Walled Garden is located to the east and north of

the main Abbey building.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The most significant planning applications for the Abbey site are two separate applications for a change of use to a conference centre and to a hotel which were approved in 1988. These consents have now lapsed.
- 4.2 An application in 2010 enabled the temporary use (to 2015) of the stable block as a tea rooms.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 National Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework.

5.3 Northampton Borough Local Plan

Policy E26 - Conservation Areas: development and advertisements
Policy D6 – Development Site Policy for Delapre Abbey

6. CONSULTATIONS / REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **Conservation** - The walled garden forms a key space within the Delapre Abbey complex and therefore the proposal to enable the erection of a marquee needs careful consideration. It is considered that the proposal to erect a marquee will intrude on the specialness of the space and therefore will have an adverse impact on the significance of the walled garden as a space and the setting of the heritage assets within the vicinity of the application site. However, it is understood that the number of events is to be restricted to 12 during the course of a year, which will assist in minimising the impact. The impact could be further minimised by the dismantling of the marquee following each event. It is not clear from the details submitted if this is to be the case [*this has now been clarified as being the case*]. It is also important to be aware of the Council's long-term aspirations for this site and whilst weddings may form an important part of the events hosted at the site, a marquee in this location may not be appropriate in the longer term and therefore I would recommend that only a temporary consent be granted. No objection is raised subject to consent being granted for a maximum period of three years and to conditions being applied relating to the total number of events hosted being restricted to

a maximum of 12 events annually and that the marquee be dismantled following each event. Only one marquee is to be erected.

6.2 **Regeneration and Development** - Delapre Abbey, a Grade II* listed building which is registered 'At risk', is the Council's priority heritage project. The principle consideration will be the impact the proposed development may have on the emerging Heritage Lottery Application and the associated emerging Business Plan for Delapre Abbey. It is important to be aware of the Council's long-term aspirations for this site. Weddings may form an important part of the events hosted at the site. The ability to hold weddings and other events in a marquee at Delapre in the immediate future may help generate a market interest in the Abbey, which can be built upon once the Abbey is restored. This development may therefore be beneficial to the financial sustainability of the Abbey. However a marquee in this location may not be appropriate in the longer term. In the future there is likely to be a mixed number of uses for the main Abbey building including hiring out main rooms for events and functions. Therefore any use of marquees for income generation and events once Delapre Abbey is fully operational needs to be carefully considered as part of the overall operation of the site so that there is no competition or duplication. Therefore I would recommend that only a temporary consent be granted.

6.3 **Environmental Health** - The proposals could give rise to noise problems due to music being played loudly out of doors. However, the site already has a Premises Licence that allows and controls such activities and provides a mechanism to prevent Public Nuisance. Therefore, it is assumed that it will not be necessary to duplicate these controls under Planning. Regulatory Services have no objections to the proposal.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues to consider are the impact on the setting of this important listed building and on the amenities of adjoining residents.

7.2 The marquee would be erected within the existing walled garden. Although the description of development states "marquees" in the plural there would only be one marquee in place at any one time and in order to control this a conditions is recommended.

7.3 The walled garden is an important historical feature of the Abbey and includes the original and restored glasshouses as well as planting beds. A marquee in this area is clearly not a feature which would have existed historically and could, therefore, be detrimental in visual terms to the setting of the building. However, the marquees would only be in place for one day at a time and only for 12 days in any year. Coupled with the temporary nature of the permission it is considered that the visual impact would be limited. Conditions are proposed to ensure that

these limits are adhered to.

- 7.4 The proposed use would provide an economic use for the Abbey in the short term, whilst the historic buildings are restored. It would also help to establish the Abbey as a venue for weddings and other similar functions to the benefit of its long term viability and maintenance.
- 7.5 As referred to by the responses of consultees, in the long term it is hoped that functions such as wedding receptions and other similar functions will be held within the Abbey buildings and as such it would not be appropriate for this use to continue within the marquee in addition to this planned use. Therefore it is recommended that a three year temporary permission is required by means of a condition.
- 7.6 In respect of the impact on adjoining and nearby residents, clearly a wedding reception or other such uses has the potential to cause some noise and disturbance. However, such events will require a licence and this will control hours of operation and noise levels.
- 7.7 The proposed conditions limiting the number and length of events will also reduce the impact on residents. Subject to the recommended conditions and with reference to the advice of the Council's environmental health service it is considered that the use would be reasonably controlled to prevent undue impact on residential amenity

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Subject to the controls to be secured by the recommended conditions the proposal would have no adverse impact on the character and setting of the listed building and any impact on adjoining occupiers can be satisfactorily controlled. The proposal will assist in ensuring the viability of the listed building in the long term.

9. CONDITIONS

- (1) The use hereby permitted shall be discontinued on or before 5th September 2015.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure the long term viability of the listed building, in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework.

- (2) The total number of events hosted shall not exceed a maximum of 12 events annually. Each event shall be limited to one day only. Events shall take the form of a wedding reception or similar function only. The dates of events past and proposed shall be provided on request to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining residents and to minimise the adverse impact on the listed building, in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework.

(3) The marquee shall be dismantled and removed from the site on the day following each event unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining residents and to minimise the adverse impact on the listed building, in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework.

(4) Only one marquee shall be erected at any one time and only during the course of an event as specified under condition 2 and shall be within the area as delineated on the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of adjoining residents and to minimise the adverse impact on the listed building, in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 N/2012/0623.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Name: BG
 Date: 23rd August 2012
 Scale: 1:1250
 Dept: Planning
 Project: Location Plan

Title
Delapre Abbey

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