

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2007**

**REPORT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER**

(Author: Nick Moys, Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects))

**DEREHAM: ALTERATIONS/CONVERSION OF THE GUILDHALL TO FORM FOUR DWELLINGS**

**APPLICANT: Mr P Green**

**REFERENCES: 3PL/2004/1316/F & 3PL/2004/1317/LB**

SUMMARY – This report concerns proposals to convert The Guildhall in Dereham into four dwellings. It is recommended that permission be refused and that enforcement action be authorised.

1. This report concerns planning and listed building consent applications submitted in August 2004 for the conversion/alteration of The Guildhall in Dereham to form four dwellings.
2. These applications were considered by Development Control Committee on 27 September 2004 (see Appendix A attached), when it was resolved to grant permission subject to the receipt of a satisfactory schedule of works, providing full details and specifications of the proposed building works/alterations. Despite a number of requests, made over an extended period, the applicant has not provided the required schedule of works. It has not therefore been possible to issue the permissions. Recently, amended proposals for access/parking have been submitted, although, again, full details have not been provided.
3. Works for the conversion of the building are now underway. These works are in addition to repair works being undertaken by the applicant, including re-roofing of the building, which have been sanctioned by the Council. It has not been possible to date to establish the full extent of the unauthorised works, but it appears that significant alterations are being undertaken, including internal/external alterations and the installation of services. Without details of the works it is not possible to assess properly their impact on the listed building. However, on the basis of the information available, there are real concerns that the use of inappropriate materials and construction details is causing harm to the fabric of the building. The applicant has been requested to stop work, but as yet has not done so.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:**
  - a) It is recommended that the 2004 planning and listed building consent applications be refused on the grounds that, in the absence of a satisfactory schedule of works, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed conversions would properly conserve the character and appearance of the listed building.
  - b) In addition, it is recommended that enforcement action be authorised to require all unauthorised works to cease. This enforcement action could take the form of the service of enforcement and stop notices and/or an application for an injunction. It may also be appropriate to consider prosecution in relation to the breach of listed building control.

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE: 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004****REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER – MARK STOKES****(Author: Nick Moys)****DEREHAM: CONVERSION OF GUILDHALL INTO FOUR DWELLINGS****REFERENCES: 3PL/2004/1316/F 1317/LB 1321/F AND 1322/LB**

**Summary:** Two schemes have been submitted for the conversion of The Guildhall in Dereham into four dwellings. It is recommended that one of the schemes be approved, and the other rejected.

**1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Applications for planning permission and listed building consent have been submitted for two schemes for the residential conversion of the former council offices at The Guildhall, Dereham.
- 1.2 The differences between the two alternative schemes relate to access and parking arrangements. In the first scheme, parking for all four dwellings is proposed off the existing car park access. The second scheme, involves the creation of a new access onto St Withburga Lane through the existing garden wall.
- 1.3 The Guildhall is a Grade II listed building. The garden wall is also listed in its own right. The site falls within the Dereham Conservation Area.
- 1.4 In 2003, a proposal for the conversion of the Guildhall into four dwellings was refused consent on the grounds that it would result in harm to the character and appearance of the listed building. A subsequent appeal against this refusal was dismissed. The appeal inspector concluded that the access proposed through the garden wall would harm its historic and architectural character.

**2. KEY DECISION**

- 2.1 This is not a key decision.

**3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 3.1 The matters raised in this report fall within the following Council priorities:
  - A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities
  - A prosperous place to live and work

**4. ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 The Guildhall is situated within Dereham town centre, where both local and national planning policies permit new residential development, subject to certain criteria. Due to its domestic character, it is considered that The Guildhall is well-suited in principle to conversion to residential use.
- 4.2 The first conversion scheme, which does not include the creation of a new access, is considered to be acceptable subject to the submission and approval of a full schedule of all repair works/alterations. This schedule has been requested.

- 4.3 The second conversion scheme, which includes a new access onto St Withburga Lane, is not considered to be acceptable. It is considered that the proposed formation of a new opening and the insertion of wooden gates into the listed garden wall would detract from its character and appearance. Whilst the design of the opening has been revised from the previous proposal to make it less obtrusive, it is considered nonetheless that the access would interrupt the visual continuity of the wall.
- 4.4 Visibility for vehicles emerging from the proposed new access would be extremely limited due to the position and alignment of the garden boundary wall. Use of this access could therefore result in hazards for passing traffic and pedestrians.

## **5. OPTIONS AVAILABLE**

- 5.1 To approve the applications.
- 5.2 To refuse the applications.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The conversion of The Guildhall into four residential units is considered to be acceptable, subject to the submission of a satisfactory schedule of repair work and alterations. This use would ensure the long-term maintenance of this important listed building.
- 6.2 The creation of a new vehicular access through the garden wall would be harmful to the appearance of this listed structure and detract from the setting of The Guildhall. The new access would also be harmful to highway safety.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 It is recommended that planning permission and listed building consent be granted for the conversion of The Guildhall into four dwellings (as detailed in applications 3PL/2004/1316/F and 3PL/2004/1317/LB), subject to the submission of a full schedule of works.
- 7.2 It is recommended that planning permission and listed building consent be refused for the alternative scheme involving the creation of a new access (as detailed in applications 3PL/2004/1321/F and 3PL/2004/1322/LB).