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| Application Number: | 2022/0584/RG3 |
| Site Address: | Church Grounds, St Mary Le Wigford Church, St Marys Street |
| Target Date: | 15th September 2022 |
| Agent Name: | None |
| Applicant Name: | Miss Taylor Whittaker |
| Proposal: | Reinstatement of boundary wall |

Background - Site Location and Description

Planning permission is sought to reinstate the boundary wall to provide enclosure to the churchyard which would then be grassed, replacing the existing hard landscaping.

St Mary Le Wigford is a grade I listed church sited on the corner plot with St Mary's Street to the north and the High Street to the west. The church is within the Cathedral and City Centre Conservation Area.

The church dates from the 11th century with successive centuries of works through to the 13th century. The South aisle was added in 1877 and the church was restored in 1872 with the tower restored in 1908. In 1975 another scheme of works included the porch to the north side. It is constructed in dressed stone and coursed rubble, with ashlar dressings and slate roofs.

The application is made by the City Council.

Site History

No relevant site history.

Case Officer Site Visit

Undertaken on 26/07/2022.

Policies Referred to

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – LP25 The Historic Environment

Issues

- Principle of Development
- Impact on the Conservation Area
- Trees
- Archaeology

Consultations

Consultations were carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, adopted January 2018.

Statutory Consultation Responses

| Consultee | Comment |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Historic England | No Response Received |

Public Consultation Responses

No responses received at the time of writing this report.

Consideration

The site is within the Cathedral and City Centre Conservation Area. Policy LP25 states that “Development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire. In instances where a development proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset (whether designated or non-designated), including any contribution made by its setting, the applicant will be required to undertake the following, in a manner proportionate to the asset’s significance”

Conservation Areas

Development within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should preserve (and enhance or reinforce it, as appropriate) features that contribute positively to the area’s character, appearance and setting. Proposals should:

- j. Retain buildings/groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces;
- k. Retain architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the area;
- l. Where relevant and practical, remove features which are incompatible with the Conservation Area;
- m. Retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, massing, scale, form, materials and lot widths of the existing built environment;
- n. Assess, and mitigate against, any negative impact the proposal might have on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape;
- o. Aim to protect trees, or where losses are proposed, demonstrate how such losses are appropriately mitigated against.

Archaeology

Development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance.

Planning applications for such development should be accompanied by an appropriate and proportionate assessment to understand the potential for and significance of remains, and the impact of development upon them. If initial assessment does not provide sufficient information, developers will be required to undertake field evaluation in advance of determination of the application. This may include a range of techniques for both intrusive and non-intrusive evaluation, as appropriate to the site.

Wherever possible and appropriate, mitigation strategies should ensure the preservation of archaeological remains in-situ. Where this is either not possible or not desirable, provision must be made for preservation by record according to an agreed written scheme of investigation submitted by the developer and approved by the planning authority.

Any work undertaken as part of the planning process must be appropriately archived in a way agreed with the local planning authority.

The Proposed Development

This proposal seeks to reinstate the boundary wall to provide enclosure to the churchyard which would then be grassed, replacing the existing damaged poor quality hard landscaping. This landscaping has been identified as a trip hazard by people cutting across the churchyard. The proposal would resolve the problems caused by the hard landscaping and encourage people to use the public highway leaving the newly grassed area within the boundary wall as a place of respite and much needed green space. Access into the church grounds would remain via the existing entrance on the High Street.

Design and Visual Amenity

Development within a Conservation Area should preserve (and enhance or reinforce it, as appropriate) features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting.

In terms of design, the wall would replicate the surviving section of historic wall to the west of the site adjacent to the High Street, reinstating the remaining lost section along High Street and carrying on down St Marys Street to the porch entrance on the north side. It is clear in historic maps, old photographs and the existing hard landscaping where the traditional wall alignment was.

By reinstating the historic wall design and redefining the historic church grounds as distinct from the public highway, the significance of the listed building would be enhanced, and lost significance of the old wall would be reintroduced due to the replica design. This accords with Local Plan Policy LP25 in terms of reintroducing an historic building line and historic feature.

The character and appearance of the conservation area would be enhanced by the improved appearance of this important site as would the setting of the nearby identified designated heritage assets.

The wall reinstatement would necessitate the removal of a 1975 stone collection box structure along the line of the wall to the north. Given the date of this structure this would have no adverse impacts.

The Principal Conservation Officer has confirmed that they support the scheme and consider it to enhance the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Trees

There are a number of trees on site, shown on all plans, which would be maintained and

protected. Root protection areas would be secured by condition and agreed prior to commencing works on site.

Archaeology

Development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance.

In order to ensure the preparation and implementation of an appropriate scheme of archaeological mitigation and then to ensure satisfactory arrangements are made for the recording of possible archaeological remains a condition would be imposed in accordance with the requirements of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework. A Written Scheme of Investigation would be required and agreed with the City Archaeologist.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable and would accord with national and local planning policy. The wall would enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area and would re-establish a historic feature in this location.

Application Determined within Target Date

Yes.

Recommendation

That the application is granted conditionally subject to no objections being received in the remaining consultation period.

Conditions

- Development to be carried out within 3 years
- Development to be carried out in accordance with the plans
- Sample of the materials
- Archaeology
- Tree protection