Conservation Consultation

Proposal:	Location:
Retention of pool building, basement car park, lift and enclosure, external courtyards, pond and associated hard and soft landscaping (revised siting), phased alterations to pool building (reduction in height), removal of staircase, removal of glazed balustrade to pond and alterations to fenestration of main facade of pool building.	Hemingford Park Hall, Hemingford Park, Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots.

DC Case Officer:	Conservation Team	Application Ref.No:
Lewis Tomlinson	Nick Armour	24/02342/HHFUL & 24/02343/LBC

Introduction

The background, recent history and significance of the heritage assets have been covered in previous comments for the approved scheme 1400578FUL & 1400579LBC and for the 'as built' scheme (applications 23/01739/HHFUL and 23/01749/LBC). Concerns raised by the Conservation Team and Planning Officers have led to the submission of a revised scheme and additional drawings. A full assessment of the revised proposals has been undertaken.

24/02342HH/FUL

Submission:

The application descriptions refer to hard and soft landscaping but there are no drawings or schedules to indicate the scope, materials, planting of finishes of any hard and soft landscaping scheme. The submitted 'As Proposed Block Plan' shows only the built form. It is presumed that the hard landscaping referred to are the vehicular access and parking areas found to the front and sides of the pool building. It is assumed that the soft landscaping is the grass.

Impact to setting of Hemingford Park Hall

Variations from the approved scheme of the as built structure:

Overview

Moving the pool building 5.3m further away from Hemingford Park Hall has substantially mitigated the impact of its massing on the significance of the listed building.

Rear wall (west elevation)

The height of the original approved rear wall was 1.9m to top of coping, the actual height as built is 2.8m an increase in height of 90cm. This increase in height has partly been mitigated by the increased level of separation from the Listed Building which has, to a degree, limited the visual impact of the structure within its setting. The modern appearance of the structure could be further mitigated by the introduction of planting, although no comprehensive scheme of soft landscaping has been submitted.

While it is likely that the ground surface level has also risen this increase is not perceptible from within the walled garden.

It is considered that with further mitigation through a sensitive scheme of planting the massing of the building could be broken up and made acceptable.

Below ground level

Although the volume of the subterranean elements of the pool building are considerably larger than the approved scheme they do not form a part of the pool building that is experienced in conjunction with the listed building and therefore do not impact its setting.

It is agreed that the subterranean car park will not cause harm to the setting of the listed building as the car lift area is relatively small and has a limited visual impact.

Alterations to Pool Building frontage windows (east elevation)

The revised scheme responds to comments from Historic England which sees the omission of the central door and loss of of transom glazing bar. This will reduce the visual impact of elements infilling the open portico as intended in the approved scheme. The use of clear, rather than tinted, glass will further mitigate this impact.

As built, the window apertures do not reach to ground level as approved which gives the windows a foreshortened appearance and undermines the proportions of the approved scheme. However, the general arrangement of the east elevation of the pool building as built broadly reflects the architectural style and rhythm of fenestration of Hemingford Park Hall.

On balance the revised windows and apertures are acceptable.

Height of Pool Building

The revised elevations which now also show the main house indicate that the proposed reduction in height of the parapet wall will still lead to a taller structure than approved, being above the level of the tops of the ground floor windows by some 400mm. Although the height of the building could be reduced further this would compromise the proportions of the façade and further undermine the original design concept. The proposed reduction in height combined with the additional 5.3m offset from the listed building helps to mitigate the visual dominance of the east elevation of the pool building while maintaining the proportions of the approved scheme.

On balance the revised height is acceptable

External spiral staircase (north elevation)

The proposed removal of this visually inappropriate element is desirable and is therefore supported.

Glazed balustrading

The proposal is to remove all the glazed balustrading in the vicinity of the pond feature. Removal of this visually discordant modern feature within the setting of the listed building is desirable and therefore supported.

Impact of associated development: Access track and hard standing to front of the pool building.

I defer to Planning Colleagues to establish the lawful status of the access track and hard standing. I assess the impact to the significance of Hemingford Park Hall as the scheme has been constructed.

Decimus Burton built the Hemingford Park Hall in order that the parkland and house could be experienced in a harmonious relationship in which the house was an impressive structure within the landscape and the landscape added natural beauty for the occupants of the house. This philosophy is reflected in the 2014 approval for a pavilion building that sat comfortably within the setting of the main house.

When experienced close to the pool building the uncompromising urban appearance of the existing tarmac detracts from the neo classical architectural qualities of the pavilion and underlines the incongruous nature of the finish within the green setting to the Hall. Attention is also drawn away from the listed building towards the new development and therefore the hard standing visually reinforces the presence of the pool building while eroding the special relationship of the Hall with its parkland setting. In wider views this impact is made evident and intensified by the topography of the ground which falls away from the house and allows the full expanse of the Tarmac to be viewed.

The harm to the significance of the listed building is serious but less than substantial. The harm could be totally alleviated by removing the hard standing in front of the pool building and reverting to turf while redesigning the access to the car park to avoid the sensitive setting to the east of the listed building.

2402343LBC

The alterations made to the historic fabric of the listed building follow those previously granted consent. As discussed above the additional physical separation between the listed building and the main bulk of the pool building mitigates harm to the special interest of the building as the extension is broadly considered to be of a broadly acceptable scale and massing. Where the massing has been identified as being excessive (the western wall of pool building located within the walled garden) this could be mitigated by an approved scheme of planting secured by a condition applied to the accompanying planning application.

The proposed revisions to the scheme are generally positive and will re-establish the architectural quality of the pool building as an extension to the main house. As the existing hard and soft landscaping are not

alterations or extensions to the listed building they fall outside the scope of the LBC application.

CONCLUSION

On balance and with due regard to the comments from Historic England it is considered that the proposed revisions to the ‘as built’ scheme presented in these applications can be supported subject conditions to control landscaping.

Suggested Conditions

- Within three months of the appeal decision, a scheme for planting alongside the western wall of the pool building located within the walled garden including a timetable for implementation shall be submitted in writing for agreement by the local planning authority. The agreed landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.
- Within three months of the appeal decision, a scheme for an alternative finish to the hardstanding in front of the pool building and the track within the residential curtilage, including a timetable for implementation shall be submitted in writing for approval to the local planning authority. The submission details shall include the replacement or resurfacing of the tarmac with materials such as flagstone to match existing adjacent hard standing materials, gravel to match existing hard standing materials elsewhere on site and to specify areas that can be returned to grass. Should any submitted details be unacceptable to the Local Planning Authority, alternative information shall be submitted within 28 days upon request of the Local Planning Authority until a scheme has been agreed. The scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

Recommendation:

No objections subject to conditions.

Nick Armour - Conservation Officer - 05/02/2025