

Adrian Neilson

From: Adrian Neilson
Sent: 27 July 2017 14:40
To: Chloe Buckingham
Subject: Sulis Manor 17/03304/DEM

Dear Chloe,

I am writing to you regarding the current application for the demolition of Sulis Manor and I can offer the following comments and advice. Whilst the building is not listed it is regarded as a highly important heritage asset and every effort should be taken to retain it. Taken together the historic house and garden form an important ensemble that not only make an important and positive contribution to the visual quality of the area and the historic environment but are also important in terms of undesignated heritage assets within Bath and North East Somerset. However, it is located in an area of Bath where a similar architectural language and spirit of the Arts & Crafts Movement has been adopted for many other buildings: for instance Brantwood in South Stoke and other examples on South Stoke Road and it may be because of the similarities in style (Cotswold vernacular) and period (late Arts & Crafts of the early C20) that the same architect or architectural practice may have been responsible and they may also be notable. Sulis Manor is an excellent example of Arts & Crafts domestic architecture and in a locally distinctive and indicative style and its location in the Cotswolds has clearly informed the architectural language and use of materials: local limestone for the walls, dressings and Cotswold tile roof. Furthermore, the quality of the building and attention to detail is also outstanding, particularly the external stone work and also internal and external joinery. Furthermore, unusually, all of the original metal lead light casements have survived. The building is clearly in an excellent state of preservation and condition. Whilst I believe its significance is local it is worth noting that this building is as a result of a shared national architectural language and artistic and cultural movement (Arts & Crafts) that also enjoyed international influence (Art Nouveau in France) and therefore should also be understood within this wider context and is of a style not well represented in Bath or the district. The 1930s inter-war period arguably represent the last vestiges of the Movement's influence and Sulis Manor is representative of this and this further increases its cultural and architectural interest and significance.

Section 12 of the NPPF places importance on undesignated heritage assets and the requirement to assess their significance during the planning process and any development that would affect this significance. In particular it states that:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.' (Para. 135).

Sulis Manor and its contemporaneous and complementary gardens are important and significant heritage assets within the local historic environment and possess considerable heritage value. In the event that the building was demolished this would also lead to the loss not only of the building but also of its gardens and this would constitute a substantial and unjustifiable loss.

It is also worth noting that Sulis Manor is a very large dwelling and possesses considerable embodied energy. Therefore its retention and continued use as viable and substantial housing is consistent with the Council's overarching aims and objectives of sustainability and the reduction of carbon emissions that result from the construction of new housing.

To summarise, the historic building and associated gardens are regarded as significant heritage assets that make an important contribution to the quality of the local historic environment and therefore should be retained and the application for demolition resisted.

Please do contact me if you require any further advice and assistance.

Kind regards

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Please note, this is only the opinion of an Officer and does not prejudice any future decision by the Council