

For the Attention of Ms Michell Lyon
Senior Planning Officer
Development & Environment
South Norfolk District Council
Swan Lane
Long Stratton
Norfolk

3rd January 2013

Dear Madam

Application Number 12/2080

Church of St Mary and St Thomas, Church Street, Wymondham, Norfolk Abbey

Two new single storey extensions to southeast and northeast of the church, with new railings and path within the east monastic tower

We are grateful to you for allowing the Society an extension of time in which to submit our comments.

The Society has been involved with proposals for the church for a number of years, most recently in April 2009.

We consider that there is much to welcome in these latest proposals but we remain deeply concerned about the proposed extension to the southeast.

Single story extension to northeast of the church

The Society has no objection to the proposed extension which we consider to be simple, elemental and appropriate and which responds admirably to the existing building.

East Monastic Tower

We accept that there is a need for iron railings of a simple, modest design along the east side of the tower in order to discourage those misusing the area and, similarly, we have no adverse comments about the proposed path within the tower.

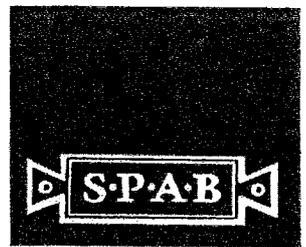
Extension to southeast of church

The church is normally approached from the east, the north and the west, but the view from the south seen across the meadow is the iconic view which is widely known and publicized. It is very beautiful.

We consider that the broad expanse of the base of the east monastic tower gives it great strength and presence in the composition of the south elevation. The existing masonry, flint, lead and the proportion of the window openings are elemental, and harmonious. While we appreciate that the design is in a modern idiom we consider that the proposed southeast extension is not sympathetic to

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the essential character of the building – to its architecture, its texture and its visual appearance and that the large areas of glass would not be in consonance with it.

We consider that the proposal will have a major and detrimental impact on the character and significance of the building and its visual appearance.

We have previously advised that any extension at the east end of the south aisle should relate to the grain of the building and its existing architectural language. The line of an extension should, in our view, follow the line of the west wall of the east monastic tower and should not cross the base of the tower. We believe that the design approach should be similar to that given to the northeast extension so that the treatment of the two sides would be commensurate, and, importantly, that the design proposals should seek to respond to the genius loci.

For these reasons we urge that Council not to grant planning permission for the proposed extension to the southeast of this nationally important and well known building.

Yours faithfully

Catherine Cullis
Churches and Cathedrals Officer

Cc by email Mr Henry Freeland, RIBA
Mrs Jean Gosling, DAC Secretary
Mr David Eve, English Heritage
Mr Matthew Saunders, Ancient Monuments Society
Mr Nicholas Warns, Joint Committee DAC Nominee