COMBINED DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING LOW VALUE C20th GARAGE AND NEW REPLACEMENT AT THE MOOR HOUSE, OVERTON ROAD, BIDDULPH, STAFFORDSHIRE

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Introduction

This combined Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Prime Oak Ltd to accompany a planning and listed building consent application for the demolition of an existing timber clad garage and its replacement with a new oak framed garage. The new replacement building would provide private garaging and domestic workshop/storage facilities for The Moor House.

The Moor House is a Grade II listed building, occupied as a dwelling, located to the south-east side of Overton Road in Biddulph, a town in Staffordshire located approximately 8.5 miles to the north of Stoke-on-Trent and 4.5 miles to the south-east of Congleton.

The existing garage to be demolished falls within the curtilage of The Moor House but is not itself individually listed. It is a modern structure dating from around 1925.

Planning and listed building consent has already recently been granted to demolish the existing garage and replace it with a new one, although those permissions were not implemented and have now expired (application ref's. 13/00429/FUL and 13/00430/LBC). This latest proposal seeks consent for a replacement garage of a similar footprint size to that previously approved, but of a lower height.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings and documents enclosed with the accompanying applications, including:

- Location Plan at 1:1250 (drg. 34558/01);
- Existing Block Plan at 1:500 (drg. 34558/02);
- Proposed Block Plan at 1:500 (drg. 34558/03);
- Plan & Elevations of Proposed Garage at 1:100 (drg. MB/080517-1).

Photographs of the existing garage to be demolished are included in this statement below.

Prime Oak Ltd will be designing and constructing the proposal on behalf of the applicant. Prime Oak are one of the country's leading specialists in the design and construction of oak framed buildings for all kinds of domestic and other uses, utilising traditional mortise and tenon pegged joint carpentry and construction techniques.

The Proposal

The proposal is to erect a new detached oak framed garage to replace the existing garage. It would be located in the same position on the site as the existing garage, approximately 40m to the north of the main house and just to the north-east of an associated coach house.

The new building would provide four conventional garage bays and a smaller workshop/storage bay. The replacement garage previously approved following applications 13/00429/FUL and 13/00430/LBC had five garage bays plus a habitable area in the roofspace above. The latest proposal under consideration here does not include any habitable space at first floor and would therefore be lower in height than that previously approved.

The proposed garage would be an oak framed structure clad in horizontal weatherboard, apart from the rear elevation which would be finished in blockwork, although the rear elevation would sit against an existing retaining wall and bank so that it would not be seen. The garage would have a

pitched roof, gabled at each end, finished in plain tiles. There would be an open sided log store at its southern end. Garage doors would be in oak.

Heritage Statement

The Moor House is a large house built during the mid to late C19. It is finished in rough faced coursed stone, with smooth faced stone dressings to corners and window/door surrounds. It has a pitched tiled roof with dressed stone parapets, ornate chimneys and bell tower. The building is listed Grade II and the listing description, dating back to 1987, refers to it being occupied as flats, although it is now occupied as a single dwelling.

The building is a rather grand design, Italianate in style, historically built for and owned by a succession of wealthy individuals/families. The most notable past owner is Thomas William Twyford who took ownership of the property in the late C19, around the same time as he took control of the Twyford's pottery/sanitary ware business in nearby Stoke-on-Trent following his father's death in 1872. The property therefore has important historical associations with notable individuals from the area.

Architecturally it is also a significant building, being a fine example of Victorian design flamboyance whereby the wealthy elite classes demonstrated their wealth and status through the buildings they commissioned and occupied. The Moor House is built in an attractive and interesting loose Italianate style and displays a great deal of good quality Victorian craftsmanship including the stonework and classically influenced pediments around windows, the tall ornate chimney stacks, stone parapets, finials and the bell tower.

The Moor House was first listed Grade II on the 20th November 1987. The listing description reads as follows:

> *House, now flats. Mid-C19. Rock faced, coursed stone and smooth dressings; tiled roof with dressed verge parapets and finials; twinned, corniced ashlar side stacks. Irregular, loosely Italianate composition forming 'U' plan open to frontage. 2- and 3-storey entrance elevation on plinth of gabled two-storey projection (former service) wing to left and entrance wing to right; set-back to centre with gable to left; 4-stage campanile set back to right side; buttressed, strings at stages, dentil, corniced and brought-in to reduced 2-light bell chamber with pyramidal roof. Round-arch windows, transomed and corbel hooded to gables; 3- and 2-light to set-back, 2 to entrance and in a range of 2 single lights in cavetto reveals to campanile; flat-roofed single-storey tripartite balustraded, pilastered, projecting porch to entrance gable with flanking side-lights and round-arch entry to part-glazed doors. Commanding position in Parkland setting.*

The existing garage to be demolished is not mentioned in the listing description and is a more modern structure dating from around 1925, so it is not contemporary with the main house and is not specifically listed, although obviously it falls within the curtilage of the main listed building. As mentioned above, the garage is located some 40m to the north of The Moor House and there is an existing coach house between the two, so it is not easily read within the setting of the principal listed building.

The coach house is also not mentioned in the listing description and is a plainer, more functional design in comparison to The Moor House, and was originally built to house animals or servants. It also does not unduly influence the setting of The Moor House, being located in a part of the site

where it would not impose on views towards the grander architecture of the main house and where servants or animals could be kept separate to main household.

The existing garage to be replaced is a modern C20 structure which is now in a very poor condition, both structurally and aesthetically. It has brickwork laid to a modern stretcher bond, timber cladding and windows which are rotting, a profiled sheet roof which has failed, and remains of an ornate bargeboard which is largely missing. The structure holds no historical or architectural significance and is now well past its life expectancy. As such, the garage actually detracts from the appearance and setting of the site and is in urgent need of replacement.

The following photographs document the current appearance and condition of the garage.



Southern elevation of garage with coach house in foreground.



Southern elevation of garage showing condition of doors, cladding and missing bargeboards



Southern section of west elevation of garage showing damaged profiled sheet roof.



Central section of west elevation of garage.



Northern section of west elevation of garage.



Northern section of west elevation of garage showing failed covered storage area.

Having regard to the above, the following sections of this statement assess the impact of the proposal in further detail.

Use

The use proposed is domestic, entirely incidental to the use of The Moor House as a residential dwelling. The proposal is for an outbuilding with the principal purpose of providing domestic garaging and workshop/storage space, and which would replace an existing garage. Therefore the proposed use in itself is appropriate in principal for this existing dwelling and would have no impact in itself on the special architectural or historic interest of this listed building.

Amount

At 4.1m high to the apex of its pitched roof, the proposed garage would be approximately 0.4m lower in height than the existing garage to be replaced. And at 16.4m in length (including the open log store), the proposed garage would be 0.8m shorter overall in comparison to the existing garage, so would also provide a reduced footprint of development at this site.

The proposal would be similar in footprint size to the garage recently approved following previous applications 13/00429/FUL and 13/00430/LBC, but would not include a first floor so would be lower in height than the previously approved scheme by some 1.4m.

So the proposal would be smaller overall than the existing garage and significantly lower in height than what has previously been considered acceptable as a replacement. In terms of the amount of development proposed, therefore, the proposal would have a reduced impact in comparison to the existing situation and what has recently already been considered an acceptable amount of replacement development.

The Moor House is set within a large plot and generous areas of garden/amenity land would remain surrounding the property. The essential low density and open land setting of this property would not alter through the amount of development proposed.

The amount of development proposed would therefore have no detrimental impact on the character or setting of the listed building.

Layout

The proposed garage building would replace the existing garage in the same position within the site. The layout of the site would not therefore change. As explained in the 'Heritage' section of this statement above, this location does not unduly affect the setting of listed building, as it is a part of the site chosen to ensure principal views towards The Moor House were not affected and animals/staff would be kept away from the main household.

In this location the new garage would continue to appear as a subservient outbuilding positioned away from the main house on the opposite side of the existing coach house.

There are no neighbouring dwellings to this property that could be affected in terms of overshadowing or loss of outlook.

In terms of layout, therefore, the proposal would have no unduly detrimental impact on the character or setting of the listed building.

Access

There would be no alterations to the existing access arrangements to the property. The new garage would be sited in the same position as the existing garage.

There are no significant levels changes across the site and no particular impediments to those with reduced mobility.

Scale

As stated above, the proposed garage would provide a net reduction in the amount of built development at this site in comparison to the existing situation and in comparison to the scheme recently approved following previous applications 13/00429/FUL and 13/00430/LBC. The proposed garage would be lower in height than the existing garage and the garage previously approved, and it would remain very much subservient in scale to The Moor House itself, not only in terms of height but also in terms of its location some distance away beyond the existing coach house.

The timber framed and weatherboarded nature of the construction of the new garage would further reduce its perceived bulk and scale, providing a visually more lightweight structure than an alternative brick or stone garage. This would provide a contrast to the substantial bulk, height and solid stone construction of The Moor House and the existing coach house.

In terms of scale, therefore, the proposal would be entirely appropriate to the character and setting of this listed building.

Appearance

The new garage would be a traditional English oak framed construction, employing traditional mortise and tenon pegged joints, exposed beams/rafters and weatherboarded walls. Blockwork walls would be used to the rear elevation and one side elevation, but these elevations would be against an existing retaining wall/bank so would not be visible. An oak framed construction with weatherboarding was previously considered acceptable for the garage proposal approved following applications 13/00429/FUL and 13/00430/LBC.

The proposed pitched roof of the new garage would have plain tiles to reflect those of the existing coach house.

The quality of construction and appearance would provide a significant and substantial visual improvement over the existing garage to be replaced which, as described above, is in a very poor state of repair and has an unsympathetic profiled sheet roof. In this respect the proposal can only be described as having a positive impact on the character and setting of the listed building.

Landscape

No new landscaping is specifically proposed as part of this relatively minor householder development. The grounds to the property are already attractively landscaped and well maintained. No visually significant trees or areas of landscaping would have to be removed as a result of the

proposal. This is a large plot with generous areas of existing mature garden/amenity land which would remain.

Sustainable Development

The new garage building would be constructed using oak sourced from sustainable/renewable forests and using traditional timber carpentry techniques which place less reliance on the use of power tools. Therefore the construction method of the building is highly sustainable in itself.

Furthermore, the construction of the new building will improve the adaptability and longevity of the main house, providing additional/enhanced garaging/storage space for future occupiers, maintaining the appeal of this listed property as practical accommodation.

Surface water drainage will employ sustainable methods such as soakaways, should ground conditions allow, or the installation of water butts to collect rainwater for recycling.

Conclusions

The above demonstrates that the design, layout and appearance of this proposed replacement garage outbuilding would be entirely appropriate to this listed property. An existing garage which, because of its poor condition and unsympathetic roof materials, presently detracts from the setting of the listed building would be replaced by a structure of wholly more appropriate design and materials.

The proposal would actually provide a net reduction in the amount of built development at this site in comparison to the existing situation, as well as in comparison to what has already been considered acceptable through a recent alternative approval for a replacement garage.

This latest proposal would still appear as a wholly subservient outbuilding sited some distance away from the main house in a relatively discreet position. The more appropriate design and materials of the proposal, in comparison to the existing garage, would enhance the appearance of this site and the main house and would therefore make a positive contribution to the character and setting of this significant heritage asset.