

Heritage Statement

Sunnyhill, Smithy Bank, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4AD
Mr and Mrs Wilkinson

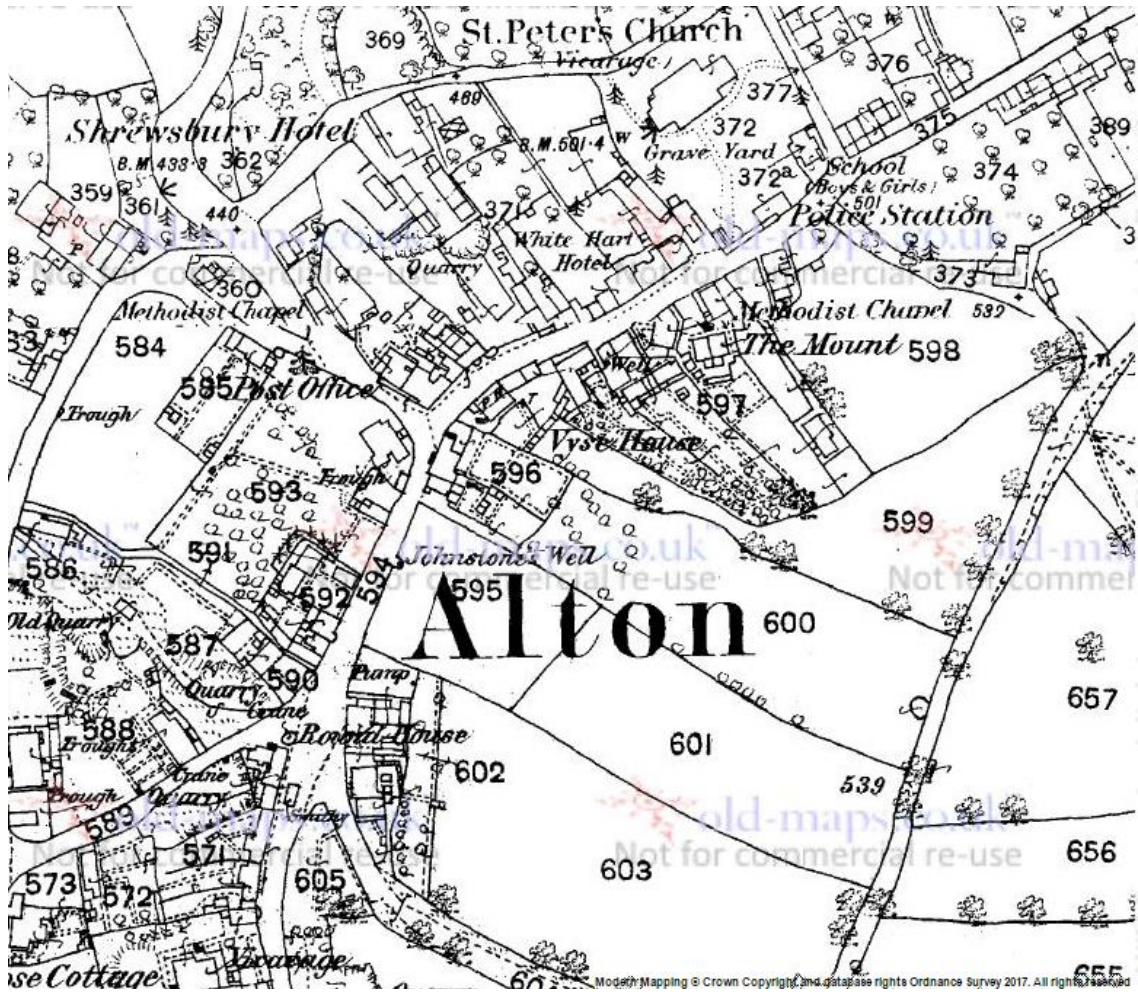
1.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for a proposed single storey side and rear extension with a balcony at Sunnyhill, Smithy Bank, Alton.
- 1.2. Sunnyhill is situated just off Smithy Bank, up a private drive.
- 1.3. Sunnyhill is in close proximity to various listed buildings, such as The White House, Old Grove Cottage, The Old Coffee Tavern and The Bull's Head, all grade II listed.
- 1.4. Alton & Farley conservation area was designated in 1971, and underwent a conservation area appraisal in 2008, following a period of public consultation by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. A Historic Character Assessment was also carried out in February 2013, by Staffordshire County Council, in conjunction with English Heritage (now Historic England).
- 1.5. The purpose of this statement is to assess the impact of the proposed works on both the heritage asset and the character of the conservation area. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), any design should seek to “conserve and enhance” the historic environment.

2.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Description of the Asset

- 2.1. Alton village lies to the south of the River Churnet and the Weaver Hills, in the northern uplands of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The village is most associated with Alton Towers Resort, a large theme park situated in the picturesque grounds of Alton Mansion.
- 2.2. Alton is an Anglo-Saxon name, and is mentioned within the Domesday Book as “waste” – an area without value for taxation. The medieval castle was built in the late 12th century by Betram de Verdun, who also founded the Cistercian abbey at Croxden. The vast estate was passed down through marriages to the Furnivals, and eventually the Talbots in the 15th century. The Talbots lived elsewhere until the 19th century, when the 15th and 16th earls set about a series of alterations and enlargements at Alton Lodge (now Alton Towers), under the supervision of renowned gothic revival architect A.W.N Pugin.
- 2.3. The village itself grew slowly. In 1666, a population of just 215 was recorded, increasing to 818 by 1801. However, the 19th century saw further expansion, increasing to 1,227 by 1901.
- 2.4. The conservation area appraisal identifies three elements of settlement – an early irregular phase relating to pastoral farming, the site of the past and present castles, and a later planned extension to the village. The Sunnyhill site falls within the latter, although on the edge of the former. The planned settlement is typical of those that accompany major castles, with the High Street running parallel to Castle Cliffs, “flanked by building plots with long rear gardens.”
- 2.5. The majority of the surviving buildings in Alton date from the mid-18th century onwards, which reflects increasing prosperity in these later years, particularly following the interests shown by the 15th and 16th earls. By the 19th century, much of the population was employed in the building trade, likely working at the nearby Towers estate. This is unusual for a market town in this area, as it relied heavily on work from the estate, rather than farming or industry. “Buildings in Alton village are diverse in character, date and spacing. This reflects the historic development of the settlement, the topography, and piecemeal construction by numerous owners in a variety of materials. Hollington sandstone jostles handmade brick, and render sits adjacent to painted surfaces, masking a variety of phases and walling materials.” (Conservation Area Appraisal 2008).
- 2.6. Sunnyhill has very little impact on the surrounding listed buildings. By being set back off Smithy Bank up a private drive, Sunnyhill cannot be seen from the road.



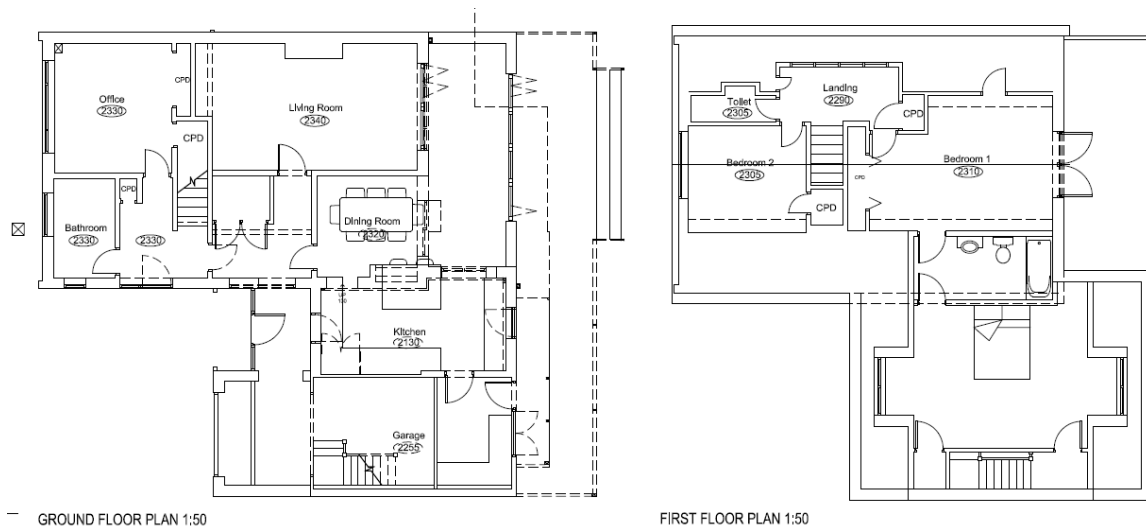
1: 1881 OS Map

3.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT Assessment of its Significance

- 3.1. Southwest of the High Street, is a large leaf-shaped area surrounded by lanes and divided by a narrow footpath with high stone walls. This all suggests an early pastoral enclosure with a long standing internal division.
- 3.2. Smithy Bank has a range of housing from the Red Lion Cottage, which is a typical 17th century yeoman farmhouse, and retains mullioned windows to a scatter of 18th and 19th century terraced housing, and the last phase is a collection of 20th century housing which blends unobtrusively into its historic setting.
- 3.3. Sunnyhill bellows to this 20th century housing and as a result has little significance to the conservation area of Alton. It is a bungalow, set back off Smithy Bank and can't be seen by the public due to the private road and the hedge row in front of the property.

4.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT The Design Concept

- 4.1. The concept proposes to add an additional bedroom to the property and also increase the living space at ground floor.
- 4.2. Externally, the building will be enhanced by removing the flat roof of the existing garage and being replaced with a pitch roof to match the existing. The pitched roof doesn't exceed the ridge line of the existing. To the rear, a balcony will sit on the ground floor extension, which will create a nicer space for bedroom 1, connecting the inside to the out.
- 4.3. Internally, the garage will become extra living space for the residents, as well as a utility room and will also be fitted with a stair case for access to the new bedroom. There will be a further extension to the front of the property allowing for a bigger hallway and an additional storage space, to replace the garage. To the rear there will be a single storey extension, further increasing the living and dining room spaces.



- 4.4. The proposed materials will be brick to match that of the existing.

5.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT The Impact

- 5.1. The aim of this report is to assess the impact of any proposals on the significance of the heritage asset in question. To this end, the history of the building and its setting i.e. the conservation area; has been researched and discussed earlier

within this document, together with an assessment of its significance, as outlined under the values put forward by Historic England.

- 5.2. Sunnyhill is not such an asset to the conservation area of Alton, but more unobtrusively blends in with the historic assets that are situated on Smithy Bank. Being set back, and hidden the proposal will have limited impact on the surrounding area and listed buildings that are near the site, however will have a positive impact on the living space and residents of Sunnyhill.
- 5.3. The designing of the proposal has meant that the new extensions will match the existing dwelling well, using materials and the new pitched roof and therefore also limiting the impact on the area.

References

Alton & Farley Conservation Area Appraisal (SMDC 2008)
Alton Historic Character Assessment (SCC 2013)
Vernacular Architecture: An Illustrated Handbook (R.W. Brunskill 2000)
Practical Building Conservation: Stone (English Heritage 2012)
www.old-maps.co.uk
www.historicengland.org.uk
www.buildinghistory.org/buildings/inns