DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2018/0401 **Valid 22/06/2018**	**ALTON CASTLE CASTLE HILL ROAD ALTON**	**LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO THIRD FLOOR TO ACCOMMODATE SHOWER PROVISIONS (FOR DORMOTORIES), AND EN-SUITES FOR THE TWO EXISTING STAFF ROOMS. INSTALLATION OF W.C. FACILITY ON GROUND FLOOR** **(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT - ALTERATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises the 'St Jones Preparatory School' building (also known as Alton Castle), which is designated as a Grade II* Listed Building, and sits within a cluster of listed buildings including the Castle (Grade I) and the Catholic Church of St John the Baptist (Grade II*).

This building is currently in use as an educational activity centre for young school children with the ground floor chapel operating as a dining room and the upper floors used for children and staff sleeping accommodation.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to the building. The original plans showed proposed these internal alterations to include the introduction of a ground floor WC. However following comments and a site visit from the Conservation Officer, this aspect of development was removed, as shown on revised plans.

As such, the application seeks consent for the following alterations at third floor level:

- Refurbishment of the shower room
- New stud partition walls introduced to Bedroom 1 to create two small shower rooms
- New openings to original solid wall to Bedrooms 2 and 3 to allow for en-suite bathrooms to be created to serve staff accommodation

As detailed on the submitted plan (Drawing No: 3339-02 Rev B) the stud partition walls would consist of plasterboard with timber skirting of a painted finish. The new openings to Bedrooms 2 and 3 would be timber doors in a style to match existing doors on that corridor.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Section 66(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 requires local planning authorities, in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The local development plan for this site comprises the Saved Policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998); Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (adopted 26th March 2014) and any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2018 sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As stated in paragraph 2 of the NPPF, the document is a material consideration which must be taken into account in planning decisions.

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DC2 Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Achieving Sustainable Development	Chapter 2
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Chapter 16

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The building has a long planning history which dates from 1994. However no applications are specifically relevant to this application.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 6th August 2018

Neighbour consultation period ends: 24th July 2018
Press Advert: 8th August 2018

Public Comments

No public comments received

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council – No comments received to date

Historic England

On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation advisor.

It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like detailed advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

Severn Trent Water

No objections and do not require a drainage condition to be applied

SMDC Conservation Officer

Initial Response – 25th July 2018:

Although called Alton Castle the building is actually Listed under the entry 'St John's Preparatory School' and is Listed Grade II*. The remains of the Normal castle are alongside and probably extend beneath this structure (Grade 1 Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument). Both structures are of national interest and form part of a larger group of Listed Buildings attributed to the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury and his architect Augustus Pugin.

Notifications

Notification to Historic England must be given (Grade 11* LB and possibly SMC required). The National Amenity bodies should also be consulted as demolition to create door openings is proposed. Notification to the Secretary of State is not required provided that Historic England and National Amenity bodies do not object.

Significance

The Heritage Statement does not evaluate the historic/architectural significance of the building or rooms proposed for alteration. There is no information about the original purpose of the rooms or historic floorplan. This can then be used to assess the proposed changes (subdivision of rooms to create en-suites and relocating

doorways in historic stone walling). I am particularly interested in the proposal to install a WC on the ground floor where more information is required to evaluate the historic fabric as the proposed changes are significant.

Further Response following Site Visit – 30th July 2018:

Following a site visit I can confirm that the proposed ground floor toilet is a controversial element of the scheme. From a brief inspection it is possible that the existing room is a remnant of the earlier castle on the site and is likely to be of significant archaeological value. If a proposal is to be pursued in this location then the archaeology needs to be fully understood and the proposals adapted accordingly. I have discussed this on site and it is likely that this element will be withdrawn from the scheme whilst they look for other locations on the ground floor for the staff toilet.

On the third floor there is no objection to the provision of en-suite facilities but I do have concerns about the relocation of the two doorways to Bedroom 2 & 3. Is there any potential to accommodate the en-suite without relocating the doors? The relocation of doors in the stone walling will disrupt the historic floorplan and interfere with the historic fabric of this Grade II* Listed Building.

Doors must be faithfully replicated and skirting boards must be adapted to suit.

Updated Response following Revised Plans – 8th August 2018:

The amended plans are fine. They have demonstrated that the doors need to be re-positioned for bedrooms 2 & 3. Can discuss conditions if I have not already suggested some.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Policy DC2 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to safeguard and where possible enhance the historic environment by promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance.

Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the most important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Paragraph 195 states that where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent unless there are substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm.

Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The original plans to incorporate a ground floor WC into the original walls of the earlier castle in an area of potentially significant archaeological value raised concerns from the Conservation Officer. Following these comments, the applicant agreed to withdraw this aspect of development from the scheme and revised plans have been submitted accordingly which demonstrates this.

Whilst it would be desirable for the openings in the original wall of Bedrooms 2 and 3 to remain, it has been demonstrated by the applicant in a sketched drawing and a supporting email that it is not possible to achieve the necessary living space (staff needing separate toilet facilities to children) without creating a new opening. The Conservation Officer has confirmed that following this justification there are no objections to the proposed alterations, subject to appropriate conditions.

In light of the Conservation Officer's revised comments and revised plans being submitted by the applicant's agent, it is considered that the proposed alterations would not result in any adverse harm to the special architectural character and appearance of the Listed Building and is therefore compliant with policy DC2 of the Core Strategy and restrictive policies contained within Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

As such, the application is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development and in line with policy SS1a of the Core Strategy and paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the application is recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: Approve with Conditions

Case Officer: James Stannard
Recommendation Date: 13th August 2018

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council