Staffordshire County Council

Rural County (Environmental Advice)

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FAO: Chris Johnston
Development Services
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Please ask for: Mr Shane Kelleher

22 August 2019

Our Ref: HoEC/EC3210/SM/SK/CST7342 **Your Ref:** SMD/2019/0394 and SMD/2019/0390

Dear Mr Johnston,

Hermitage Farm Froghall Road, Froghall, Staffordshire

Thank you for your consultation request regarding the above planning and listed building consent applications which relate to the demolition of three agricultural (storage/cattle) sheds and creation of enclosed garden areas to serve the cottages in the adjacent stone barn conversion, together with creation of a 12-bay car park with access track, manoeuvring area and stone retaining walls, and Listed building consent for the Insertion of six doorways on the rear (north) elevation, including reinstatement of three former (blocked up) openings; removal and/or re-positioning of internal partition walls on ground floor; removal of attached (unlisted) modern farm sheds to rear and 12 no. car parking bays; re-creation of stone retaining walls, at the above site. This letter represents the response from Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Service regarding historic environment issues associated with the proposals.

Historic Environment/Archaeological Interest
The application has been assessed in light of the information held by the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and associated datasets, in addition to the information contained in the Heritage Statement (which disappointingly hasn't made use of a Historic Environment Record search as advised in the NPPF) provided in support of these applications. The application site forms part of Hermitage Farm, which the HER records as a loose courtyard farmstead of probable late 17th century origin, which was expanded or redeveloped in the early 18th century. This farmstead contains two Grade II listed buildings, the Hermitage, which is a late 17th or early 18th century farmhouse, and a Grade II listed barn (i.e. the barn that is the subject of the listed building consent application), which was built in the early 18th century with 20th century alterations. The HER notes that prior to its conversion to holiday lets the barn comprised a hay loft over cattle shed. Approximately 170m to the northwest of the farmstead is another Grade II listed barn, which is late 17th century in date, and was part of an outfarm of probable 17th century origins. To the immediate north of this is the course of a former tramway, which ran to nearby mineral workings, and is one of many reminders of the rich industrial past of this area in the wider vicinity of the

proposal site recorded on the HER including collieries, ironstone mines, and Froghall Wharf, which is approximately 670m to the southeast.

Recommendations

The Heritage Statement provides a very useful understanding of the historic development and ownership history of the farmstead, in addition to utilising a map regression exercise to provide an insight into when the modern buildings which are proposed for demolition were constructed. This examination of Ordnance Survey maps concludes that up until at least the 1988 OS maps no modern agricultural buildings were shown at the site, and that during the 1990s a number of modern metal and concrete farm sheds were erected to the north of barn that has been converted to holiday lets, i.e. some of the buildings that are proposed to be removed to create a garden and car parking area. The Heritage Statement further notes that these are all modern in character and of no special architectural or historic interest. This situation is generally supported by historic mapping held by the HER. Taking this into account I do not wish to raise any historic environment/archaeological concerns with regards to the demolition of these later buildings. However, as noted by your Conservation Officer, the Heritage Statement fails to describe the significance of the listed building to be affected, and the impact of the proposals on it and the setting of the other listed buildings in the area. Furthermore, I agree with the Conservation Officer that more information regarding the proposed new external doorways and internal changes to the building will be required in order to form a suitably informed opinion on the impact of the proposals. I would also be keen for more details regarding the wall which is proposed to be demolished to the north east of the converted barn, which is required to enable the creation of the new parking area. As such I would be grateful if you kept me informed should any further information be provided by the applicant so I can provide a more informed response.

Should permission be granted, I would anticipate that a programme of historic building recording will be required (the level and location of which will be dependent on further details being provided). This work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced archaeologist/historic environment professional working in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance or equivalent.

This approach is supported by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 199 which states that '… they [Local Planning Authorities] should also require developers to record and advance understanding of significance of any heritage asset to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.'

Suggested Condition

This work would most appropriately be secured via a condition being attached to any permission issued. This condition should state:

A) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation ('the Scheme') shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-fieldwork reporting and appropriate publication.

B) The archaeological site work shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the written scheme of archaeological investigation approved under condition (A).

C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post-fieldwork assessment has been completed in accordance with the written scheme of archaeological investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured."

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Shane Kelleher
Shane Kelleher

County Archaeologist