

IVY HOUSE FARM, STANLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE ST9 9LX
Heritage Statement to accompany proposals for new dwelling
in lieu of approved barn conversion



Cover: South side of existing building approved for conversion (see also Photo 2)

INTRODUCTION

1. The writer was commissioned by Mr. Conor McGuinness to prepare a heritage statement in conjunction with proposals to substitute a new dwelling for a recently-approved barn conversion at Ivy House Farm. A detailed site visit was made on Friday, 22nd January, 2021.

2. This statement is submitted in line with paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) which says:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”

3. The heritage assets in this case comprise:

- The Stanley Conservation Area, designated on 25/11/1972 and amended 27/2/1993.
- A number of unlisted buildings which may be deemed “non-designated heritage assets” by virtue of being buildings in a conservation area that contribute positively to its character. In this case, they include Ivy House Farm house and the adjacent former Mission Church, The Travellers Rest PH and the adjoining cottages, and Stanley House.

THE HERITAGE ASSETS

4. There is no character appraisal for the Stanley Conservation Area, so applicants and agents are left to draw their own conclusions about its particular qualities. They are not, in fact, difficult to appreciate.

5. The small village draws much of its undoubted charm from its jumble of buildings, predominantly vernacular and stone-built, arranged informally and picturesquely on the bank. Their irregular placing creates a variety of small spaces between and around them, which unfold successively into view. Boundary walls and trees make positive contributions to the streetscape in these spaces, complementing the buildings.

6. The central point of the village is a narrow part of the road with minimal or absent pavements, where two ranges of one-and-a-half storey farm buildings (now converted) face each other across the street (see **Photo 1**). They are characterised by their simple shape, with continuous rooflines and sparing fenestration. The scale of the conservation area overall is intimate, with an emphasis on cottages and former farm buildings.

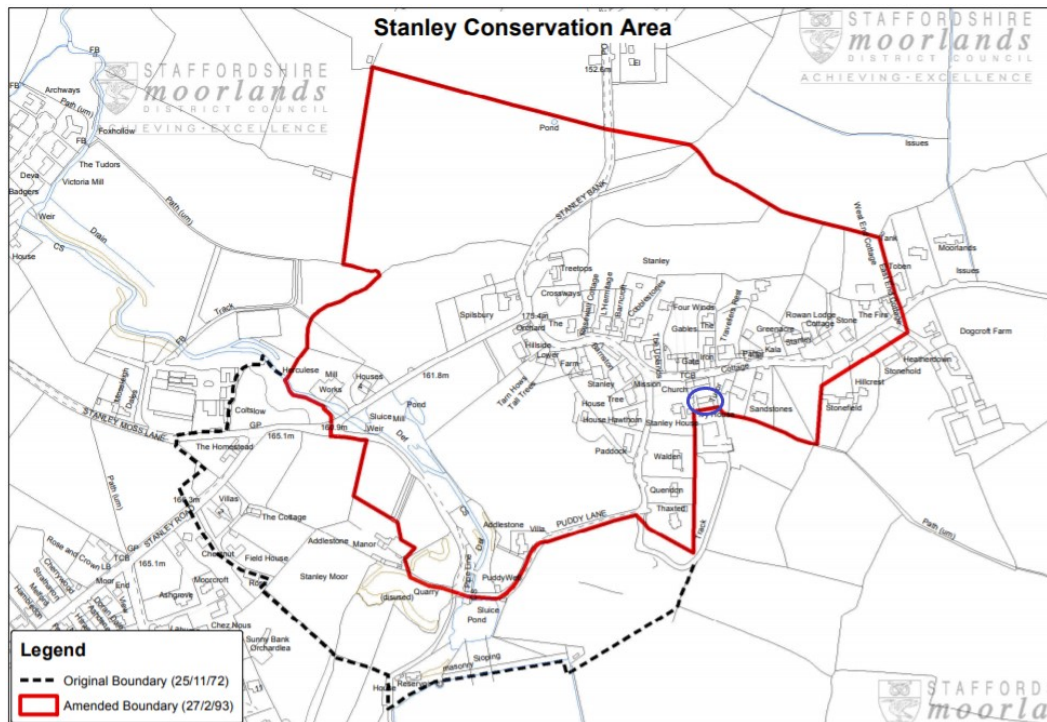


Figure 1. The Stanley Conservation Area, with the application building ringed in blue.

7. The upper end of the village is less irregular, with greater emphasis on “normal” frontage development. Ivy House Farm is part of this latter area, more or less at the point of junction with the more irregular development lower down. There are two online Historic Environment Record entries for the village, one being the settlement itself (MST4029) and the other being the “dispersed cluster plan” farmstead at Lower House Farm (MST21906). Neither entry is very informative.

8. On the site itself, the frontage building comprises Ivy House Farmhouse and the adjacent, recently-converted mission church. Ivy House farmhouse has been substantially rebuilt in the last few decades so that much of its fabric is now new, but its front elevation contributes positively to the street scene, including the lintel over the door with initials and the date 1872.

BACKGROUND

9. Residential conversion of the existing building was approved on 23/11/2020 under planning application ref/ SMD/2020/0518. The planning officer’s report offers many remarks which are pertinent to the current application.

10. The report notes the conservation officer’s comment that the building is of no particular quality that would make it deserving of conversion if it were outside a settlement. it is a milking parlour of the mid 20th century, built of concrete blockwork (see **Photo 2**). However, it has traditional bolted kingpost trusses and wooden windows, so is perhaps pre-war rather than post-war.

11. The saving graces of the building are:

- its relationship to the house on the street frontage, enclosing the south side of a yard of traditional size and scale.
- Its overall shape and proportions, which are typical of a traditional farm building.
- The tiles on the roof, which are commonplace plain clay Staffordshire blues, and help to assimilate this building into its setting despite the blockwork walls.

12. The planning report notes that this site would have been eligible as infill even if it had been disallowed as a conversion, because it would represent replacement of an existing building at a central location within the village of Stanley.

THE PROPOSAL AND ITS IMPACT

13. The proposal is to entirely demolish the current structure and erect a new dwelling in its stead, on the same footprint.

14. In order to make a usable first floor, the eaves and ridge have been raised by comparison with the present building, but the Staffordshire blue tiles will be re-used, and the opportunity has been taken of replacing the concrete block walls with natural stone. This is preferable to the approved scheme, which entailed cladding the building in stone slips and can cause detailing problems.

15. So although the volume is larger, the one-and-a-half-storey height is in tune with other agricultural buildings in the village, and the overall shape has been kept appropriately simple. The applicant has been mindful of the desirability of keeping the building subordinate in style, to reflect its backland location, with a “quieter” character than the house.

16. Subordination is often thought of in terms of size only, but there are other equally important factors. A building can be subordinate to its host by location, relative plainness, sparing fenestration, and handling of the space immediately around it, etc.

17. The building will not offend in my opinion and in any case is not specially prominent in the conservation area. Other buildings of the village limit the public visibility, and to the south it is partly obscured by the modern stable buildings. But most importantly, the new building is not out of place in terms of its materials, size and proportions.

CONCLUSION

18. The current building is of no individual merit, but does play a part in establishing the “grain” of the conservation area; the presence of a building in that spot is positive in my opinion. The existing building is not entirely ‘alien’, as its overall form is in scale with the local vernacular. The roof, which is the most prominent part of the building, is of Staffordshire blue clay tile and entirely in harmony with its surroundings. All these traits will be preserved by the new building.

19. The principle of a house here has been accepted, and during the processing of the previous application it was conceded that either a new house or a conversion would be acceptable in policy terms, subject to design. The proposed modest raising in height produces a scale that still does not exceed other traditional farm buildings of the village.

20. The design remains appropriately simple, with a gabled roof much like the present one, and with the added benefit of being walled in natural stone instead of concrete block clad in stone slips. The existing plain Staffordshire blue clay roof tiles will be re-used.
21. Fenestration has been kept simple, with mainly two-light windows on the side facing the street, and larger “cart shed” proportioned openings to the garden.
22. I therefore conclude that in principle there would be no adverse impact on the conservation area or any non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity.
23. Subject to control over the finer details via planning conditions, it appears to me that the proposal is acceptable in heritage terms.

Philip E. Heath, March 2021.



1. Traditional one-and-a-half storey converted farm buildings at a pinch point in the heart of the village (Google Streetview).



2. South side of the building proposed to be rebuilt.