



FOREFRONT

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Statement of Significance for Heritage Assets

Proposed Manege at Bagnall Green Farm,

The Green, Bagnall, Staffs. ST9 9JR

Introduction

This statement forms part of the justification for the proposal which demonstrates that consideration has been given to the protection of the heritage asset and its setting. Its purpose is to identify important characteristics or significance of the existing heritage asset, explain how the proposals would affect these aspects and justify why this is necessary or desirable. This will help to ensure that care is taken to preserve the special appearance and character of the building or area which is affected.

The level of detail is proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

This statement has been prepared although the proposed Manege does not lie within Bagnall Conservation Area.

Description of Development

The manege proposed is an all weather horse riding area with dimensions 45m x 25m. It would be surfaced with mixed sand and crumbed rubber and enclosed by post and rail fencing 1.5m in height

The illumination is proposed

The manege would be located approximately 30m south of Bagnall Green Farmhouse which is not a listed building. To the north of the proposed manege are the buildings at Old Hall Farm which are identified as buildings of historic significance in the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal.

Heritage Setting

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies Old Hall Farm and the land to the south as Close 1 (Close meaning the pastoral land associated with farms). This includes the application site. The council's Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the Closes as significant archaeological features with field boundaries, holloways and footpaths. These are characteristic of early settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands, where small clusters of irregular leaf shaped enclosures, each containing a farmstead and outlined by local driveways.

Bagnall lies on high ground on the fringes of the Pennines. South of the village long straight roads, the product of Parliamentary Enclosure, provide distant glimpses of the hilltop settlement. Entering the village from the south the surviving portion of Close 1 creates an essential barrier between old buildings and new, and gives an unbroken view of Old Hall Farm.

Although Old Hall Farm is not a listed building it is identified by the LPA as the most important unlisted building in the Conservation Area. The farmhouse and farm buildings were rebuilt around 1800 and are a strong reminder of the village's past.

Effect on heritage

In heritage terms the main principle is the effect the proposed manege has on the heritage asset, i.e. the Conservation Area.

The plans propose a surfaced riding area surrounded by post and rail fencing. As a result there is little effect on views due to the lack of built form. The setting of the conservation area is likely to be little affected by the nature of the development. Similarly, there is negligible effect on adjacent historically important buildings.

In archaeological terms, the proposals will involve little excavation. The works would be sufficient only to create a level area of sufficient depth to create a free draining area deep enough for a layer of sand/rubber crumb for a riding area. Similarly the proposed post and rail fencing will involve insignificant below ground works.

Significance of effect

Significance is one of the guiding principles running through the historic environment section of the NPPF. The NPPF defines significance as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest'. Such interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic' and it may derive 'not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'. Significance is what conservation sustains, and where appropriate enhances, in managing change to heritage assets.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms 'special architectural or historic interest' of a listed building and the 'national importance' of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposal

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

Level of Harm

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

Works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms 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 more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional, as follows

199. 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 more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional⁶⁸.

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be considered in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

Conclusion

The three categories of harm recognised in the NPPF are clear. There is substantial harm, less than substantial harm and no harm. There are no other grades or categories of harm, and it is inevitable that each of the categories of substantial harm, and less than substantial harm will cover a broad range of harm.

The proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. This reflects the fact the plans involve little above ground development, in the form of a simple timber post and rail fence. Minimal ground works are involved and as such archaeological interests are unlikely to be harmed.

The all weather riding area will be located outside of the Conservation Area and in close proximity to Old Hall Farm which is an unlisted but locally important historic building. However the type and scale of development proposed is insignificant in terms of its

visual impact on those heritage assets. This reflects its modest size and limited visual impact. There would be a negligible effect on the surrounding landscape and heritage assets.

As a result it is considered that the proposed manege would have less than significant harm on the heritage asset.