

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PROPOSAL : REPLACEMENT WINDOWS & DOORS

**ADDRESS : DELL HOUSE, COTTON DELL, OAKAMoor,
ST10 3DJ**

APPLICANT : MR & MRS WHEAT

DATE : JANUARY 2022 JOB No. : 2021-2654

INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been asked to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment on behalf of Mr & Mrs Wheat to accompany a planning application for the replacement of windows and doors at Dell House, Cotton Dell, Oakamoor. This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings numbered 2021-2654-01, 2021-2654-03, 2021-2654-04 and the technical information contained in the Veka Group Flush Trade Brochure, the Rustique Flush Casement Style Window trade brochure and the Solidor Brochure which have also been submitted in support of the application.

This Statement demonstrates how design principles and concepts have been applied to the design of the proposal and how it has taken account of national and local historic environment planning policies, and in particular how the design preserves or enhances the historic and architectural importance of the application building; how the proposal has been designed to harmonise with the existing architectural style of the building and area; the application building's setting; and particular physical features of the building and area that contribute to its special interest or character.

THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Section 72 of the same Act is also relevant and states "in the exercise with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area. of any functions under or by virtue of any of the previous mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

The development plan for the area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September, 2020) and contains the planning and conservation policies that are relevant to this proposal.

Policy SS1 Development principles requires new development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the area and maintains its local distinctiveness.

Policy 1A encourages Sustainable Development in the area.

DC1 Design Considerations refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identify through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Policy DC2 which refers to the Historic Environment states that the Council will safeguard and where possible enhance the historic environment by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance; promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area; and preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate re-use and sensitive development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out clear guidance on the Historic Environment. If the planning authority / the decision maker judge the application building to be a "non-designated heritage asset" then the application will need to be judged against paragraph 197 of the NPPF, which states: "197 The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account 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

ASSESSMENT

The village of Oakamoor lies at 100 metres above sea level within the heart of the Churnet Valley. The main settlement lies within a valley formed by the River Churnet (flowing in from north west and out to south east) from Cheddleton to Denstone and Cotton Brook (flowing in from north). The village centre is compact and centred on a junction of five minor roads which lies on a steep incline which is surrounded by large expanses or pockets of woodland on all sides. A ribbon of dwellings follows the River Churnet and a cluster of dwellings lies between Cotton Brook and Star Bank. The townscape varies in character with variety of building materials of stone, brick and render.

The designation of a conservation area at Oakamoor is part of the Churnet Valley Masterplan. A Character Appraisal was published in July 2016 for the Conservation Area. The purpose of the Character Appraisal is to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area to guide decisions on planning proposals.

The Conservation Area encompasses both the valley bottom and the buildings and former industrial sites associated with the development of the early iron-foundries and later brass and copper milling and wire-working processes within the valley. It also incorporates detached houses, built by the industrialists, overlooking the valley and contained within a managed landscape of gardens, parks and woodland which borrowed aspects of the wider picturesque setting of the valley.

The key characteristics of the conservation area include the following:

- a scenic wooded environment, dominated by a dense tree canopy of mixed planting (native deciduous and conifers), sheltered and deep-cut within with a broad valley bottom
- dominated by the River Churnet, which is the focus of most historic industrial activity and has influenced the linear form of development
- 'humps and bumps' within the landscape provide evidence of historic industrial activity, ephemeral but highly significant reminders of bygone industries and transportation structures and corridors
- dramatic, memorable views and relationships between the River Churnet and engineered structures, such as the bridge / causeway and weir and the Churnet Valley Railway bridges and tunnel
- a loud environment along sections of the River, particularly at key times of spate, but a contrasting tranquil and quiet environment within the woodland walks
- an acute awareness of the natural beauty of the environment has influenced the design, orientation and location of buildings – picturesque groups of cottages and detached villas are scattered along the narrow lanes and occasionally placed carefully on levelled platforms to enjoy the dramatic views
- an estate identity which has evolved over several generations, built by different entrepreneurs; by adopting much earlier building styles during the second half of the 19th century and 20th century, Thomas Bolton and Sons ensured that they were both preserving the historic character of the village and reinforcing awareness of their ownership and influence
- large areas of recreational public open space, and a good public footpath network provide a high quality environment with generous access for walkers, cyclists and horse riding, and sporting leisure interest, such as cricket

The Oakamoor Conservation Area has been split into three character areas with the application site falling within the first of these which covers Carr Bank, Cotton Brook and Churnet View Road. The application building is not listed and there are no listed buildings within close proximity with the first world war memorial at the square being the closest (110m to the south west) followed by the Bolton Memorial Free Church (170m north west).

Heritage Assessment

Paragraph 189 of the Framework states that "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 asset's significance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. "

The Historic Context of the Application Building and Statement of Significance

The application site lies on the eastern side of Cotton Brook on the inner edge of the Conservation Area. The building is one of a number of more recent 20th century developments on this side of the Brook and in this regard has little historic context. The conservation area appraisal concentrates on the more central area of housing such as the Square and the Starwood Terrace which contain the early workers housing. A narrow lane leads from Star Bank and may have been created to provide a packhorse route for charcoal burners or bloomery sites in Star Wood or it may have been simply the most direct route into the valley from Cotton and pre-date the construction of the turnpike road. Buildings in the bottom of the little Cotton Dell Valley are well integrated into the surrounding historic settlement. These include a group of three modern bungalows. There is an ephemeral village charm to the back lane leading alongside Cotton Brook along which there are an assortment of garden sheds and individual timber garden buildings which contribute to the quirky character of the lane.

It is clear that the application building has limited historic value due to its age, hence the lack of any national or local listing presumably however its value is associated with the brook and the way in which this area has evolved.

This is a full application which seeks consent for the replacement of windows and doors. With the exception of windows in the lean to utility room at the rear of the house these are already uPVC and their replacement with high quality uPVC equivalents would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwellinghouse or the Conservation Area within which it is located as there would be very little noticeable change in their appearance. Whilst currently timber, the rear door is in a poor state of repair and its replacement with a uPVC equivalent would improve the thermal performance of the property. Notwithstanding the change in material the overall design of the windows have been retained with the glazing bar and mould detail matched to the existing. The double glazed replacements are required to help retain heat in the building and to better insulate it from noise. The use of uPVC will also reduce maintenance in the future.

The proposal meets planning policy 1A in that it represents sustainable development- it is using a sustainable material and is affording a higher level of sustainability (energy and sound) to the application building. In design terms, given the replication of the design of the existing windows, there is considered to be limited impact on the heritage asset.

In terms of the wider setting of the conservation area it should be noted that a number of properties within the immediate vicinity of the site already have uPVC windows installed. Certainly in the immediate vicinity of the application site this type of window treatment is a dominant design element. It is clearly widespread and sets the context for the use of white uPVC windows. The development sits within this context and would be consistent with it. The proposed development does not therefore conflict with the local context which has been set. It is consistent and in sympathy with the fenestration configuration and materials which exist in the surrounding properties.

CONCLUSION

This Assessment has, with the assistance of the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal, identified the elements of the character of the Oakamoor Conservation Area and examined the value of the application building within this context. The proposal has been assessed against the Council's Local Plan policies. It is considered that the replacement windows and doors would not detract from the character of the Oakamoor Conservation Area. The proposal therefore preserves the historic character of the Leek Conservation Area. In this respect it does not undermine the thrust of policy DC2 of the Local Plan which states that the Council will conserve heritage assets and ensure that proposals contribute positively to the character of the historic environment. Nor would it conflict with the Framework which requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.