

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0773
Valid 25/11/2021

THE SWISS COTTAGE
ALTON TOWERS
FARLEY LANE
FARLEY

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOR REMEDIAL REPAIR AND
MAKING-GOOD WORKS TO
THE SOUTHWEST (REAR)
ELEVATION OF THE SWISS
COTTAGE

(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT -
ALTERATION)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises The Swiss Cottage, a two-storey detached Grade II Listed Building, constructed of orange brick with steeply pitched roofs covered in Staffordshire blue clay tiles. The building is constructed in a Tudor-Gothic style and dates from 1835. The front elevation of the building is double-fronted with a centrally positioned projecting front door.

The building was formerly used as a tearoom, as a restaurant and for offices, storage and venue space. However, the building currently remains largely vacant, apart from being used for storage over the winter months.

The building is sited within the Grade I Registered Gardens of the Alton Towers Resort, the Alton Conservation Area and the Open Countryside.

PROPOSAL

In 2019, following the collapse of the modern felted flat roof to the rear kitchen extension, a decision was taken (in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority's Conservation Officer) to remove the rear extension completely and to repair and restore the original rear elevation. The kitchen extension was removed and the repair proposals form this Listed Building Consent application. Temporary plywood has been erected to protect the exposed walls whilst Listed Building Consent is sought.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14
Section(s) 4, 12, 16

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1983/0591	Proposed alterations Approved
SMD/1993/0404	Listed Building Consent in respect of alterations to the Swiss Cottage Restaurant Approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 04/01/2022
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: 29/12/2021

Public Comments: None

Town/Parish Council: Farley Parish Council has no objection.

Historic England: Do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest you seek the views of your specialist conservation advisor.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Policy Context

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.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in assessing planning applications the Local Planning Authority has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest.

Principle of Development

The principle of development can only be deemed acceptable if the character and appearance of the Listed Building will be preserved or enhanced.

Impact on the Heritage Asset

Policy DC2 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.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF (2021) 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 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.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2021) states 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 grade II listed buildings should be exceptional.

Paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021) states that where a 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.

Listed Building Consent is sought for:

- The reinstatement of the former doorway with a new vertical boarded painted timber door and frame.
- The reinstatement of a former window opening by rebuilding the elevation back up to cill height using salvaged bricks bedded in lime:sand mortar and the installation of a new 12-light painted timber, opening casement window.
- Internally, the window reveals and new brickwork to cill height will be finished with a lime plaster.
- The missing and damaged Hollington sandstone plinth will be reinstated to match existing.
- Eroded brickwork will be re-pointed in lime:sand mortar, and missing and damaged bricks replaced to match existing.

- Redundant extract ventilation ducting and grilles, electrical fittings, cables and brackets will be removed and the brickwork cleaned using a specialist DOFF/TORC system to remove previous paint finishes etc. and the brickwork repaired to match existing.
- Missing timber glazing bars to the rear first floor window will be reinstated and new glass fitted.
- Three smaller windows will be repaired and overhauled to match existing and damaged bricks to the cills replaced.
- Defective timber lintels will be replaced with new to match existing.
- An area of defective roof tiles to the southeast elevation will be repaired using salvaged Staffordshire blue plain clay tiles with new treated timber battens, and new black-painted cast iron rainwater goods fitted.
- All existing rainwater goods and roof coverings will be cleaned of leaves, silt and moss/organic growth.

Full details of the proposed works are contained within the submitted 'Scope of Remedial Repair Works' document dated September 2021 and the comprehensive annotations contained on the submitted drawings.

The proposed works to the Listed Building will enhance the rear elevation of the building by reinstating the original doorway and window opening; repairing damaged brickwork and defective roof tiles; reinstating missing and damaged Hollington sandstone plinths; replacing missing glazing bars to a window; replacing damaged cills and lintels; and replacing and installing new cast iron rainwater goods. The removal of all redundant kitchen equipment, ventilation and electrical fittings from the building's former use as a café/restaurant will also enhance the appearance of the Listed Building.

Subject to conditions requiring the works to be undertaken in accordance with the submitted drawings and the 'Scope of Remedial Repair Works' document, for materials to match, and for joinery details to be provided of the proposed door, window and missing glazing bars, it is not considered that the proposals will harm the significance of the designate heritage asset. It is therefore not necessary to consider the public benefits of the proposal. The proposed development will therefore comply with policy DC2 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed works to the Listed Building will not harm the significance of the designed heritage asset, on the contrary, it will enhance its character and appearance and will reinstate features that have been lost due to the building's former uses. The proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021) and as such, the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to Conditions

Case Officer: Ailsa Berry

Recommendation Date: 20/01/2022

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council