

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0577
Valid 31/08/2021

**STONELOWE HALL LEEK
ROAD
LONGSDON**

**LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOR PROPOSED
FREESTANDING
ORANGERY/GARDEN ROOM**

**(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT -
ALTERATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Impact upon the special architectural and historic interest and setting of the listed building

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Stonelowe Hall is a grade II listed building listed (20 November 1987). The property is now a dwelling.

The listing description identifies:

LONGSDON C.P. LONGSDON SJ 95 NE 12/133 Stonelowe Hall - GV II

Farmhouse. C17 with restoration dated 1866 and late C19 additions. Ashlar; tiled roof; verge parapets; side and end stacks. Entrance front in 2 parts: C17 part to right of 2 flush gables set slightly apart with crenellated parapet across valley. 5 windows: two 3-light stone chamfer mullions within left-hand gable and one in link; 2 single-light windows set lower in right gable; ground floor with chamfer mullioned 5:2:2-light window to left gable with 2 king mullions, right gable, blind on second floor with projecting single-storey monopitch wellhouse to left; entrance set slightly to left of centre link, C20 door (made of floorboards re-used from attic) with corbelled steeply-pitched pediment over, inscribed in tympanum "Restored by Edith Piddock 1866". Massive side stack set back on right side with ridged link to main axis; 3 diagonally-set flues. 2-storey, mid-C19 wing set back to left side, 2 ranges of 2-light chamfer mullioned windows.

PROPOSAL

Listed Building Consent is sought for the erection of a free-standing garden room/orangery in the curtilage of the dwelling.

For clarity this assessment relates to the amended plans submitted by the applicant's agent on the 02.11.2021. The previously submitted drawings were considered to be inappropriate in terms of its design.

The building will be constructed with smooth ashlar hollington sandstone to garden pavilion bedded with lime mortar mix. The building will have hollington sandstone parapet wall and coping stones. The roof will be a Bauder intensive green roof style. The doors and frame to the front elevation will be double glazed metal/bronze.

A new retaining wall will be constructed with drystone sandstone.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan

SS1 Development Principles
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 16

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0576- Proposed Freestanding Orangery/Garden Room- undecided

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12.10.2021
Neighbour consultation period ends:N/A
Press Advert: 13.10.21

Public Comments

No representations received within consultation period.

Town / Parish Comments

Longsdon PC have no objection.

Conservation Officer (Faith Cleverdon)

No objection to the amended development. The development has been carefully sited and detailed to minimize its impact, the request for a garden room reflects a changing world in which new owners of ancient buildings need the flexibility to create a 21st century lifestyle both inside and outside, essential if such buildings are to have a long-term future away from the farming world in which they originated. It is

also considered that it has been designed to have the smallest possible impact in physical terms, its impact for the long-term viability of the house, like the addition of bathrooms and kitchen, should weigh in the balance and be considered a plus.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application is for the erection of an outbuilding in the curtilage of a Listed Building. The LPA has a duty under section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 have very special regard to maintaining or enhancing its special interest.

Assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF 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 states that 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.

As stated in the Heritage Statement 'Stonelowe Hall is among the finest and most substantial of North Staffordshire's early minor gentry houses'. Here the emphasis should be on the word 'minor' and comparison with garden buildings provided for the magnificent houses/palaces of the nobility, or the homes of wealthy industrialists are not relevant here.

Buildings in the Staffordshire Moorlands that are directly comparable to Stonelowe were built for either the local gentry (the Ashes, Harracles, Mosslee, Rudyard Hall, Sharpcliffe and Whitehough) or the steward of a series of manors (Horton Hall). Set in a pastoral area these were built for the largest and most prosperous of the local farmers, making the essential ingredient for a viable garden a stock-proof perimeter wall, and beyond this a generous selection of farm buildings. Conscious of status (their own and that expressed by their buildings) the quality of the walling varied: good quality well-finished work to the front or where visible from the main access roads, and with emphasis on the main entrance; simpler stonework to the rear and for parts of the garden that were out of the public eye. Divisions within this reflect a similar hierarchy.

Like Stonelowe, these houses have seen at least four centuries of life; none was built in a single episode and neither were their gardens. Independent structures within the gardens are relatively rare and added at widely differing dates: Whitehough had gazebos added in the 18th century; Sharpcliffe saw its gardens lavishly terraced, and tennis courts and walled gardens added in the 19th or early 20th centuries; Horton Hall saw its vast roadside barn removed and replaced by a

coach house and the addition of a (recently restored) revolving garden house in the 19th century, the gardens to the north remodelled in the 20th century, and a new-build dining extension set discretely into the bank behind its service wing in the 21st century. Harracles, given a classical brick façade at the start of the 18th-century, once had elaborate garden with numerous subdivisions to the rear and is the most likely to have had a formal garden in the sixteenth century, but the prominent buildings to survive are a small bakehouse immediately behind the service wing, and a series of massive barns. In their time such additions reflected new owners with specific lifestyle demands.

The earliest map to shed light on the use of the land immediately around Stonelowe Hall dates to 1816 when both front and rear gardens were already in their present form. The east wing of the house is of medieval date while the hall, parlour and cross-wing date to the sixteenth century. Probate documents show the seventeenth century owners to have been pastoral farmers. Given the scale of their house, and their designation as 'gentlemen' they were among the most successful in this part of North Staffordshire. The simple division between front and back gardens was a practical one, and allowed flexible use of the rear space which was instantly accessible from the cross-passage and thus from the kitchen quarters of the house. The presence of an orchard, and the relationship to the service areas suggest the most likely use for this area was as a kitchen garden. The proposed garden room is intended to occupy a similar position as this division and is intended to preserve its effect if not its substance.

The purpose of Listing is to ensure that Listed Buildings evolve under careful control, to allow continued use in a changing world which has higher expectations of comfort and cleanliness, a principle that also applies to their immediate curtilage. Here the land to the rear of the house has recently been dug away to improve drainage and since the rear garden slopes down towards the house new revetment walls and steps were required to secure the bank and give access to the main lawns – modifications covered by an earlier application.

While garden buildings are relatively rare in the comparable buildings it should also be realized that many of these have seen farmers struggling to cope with the upkeep of massive houses that are out of kilter with the income of the surrounding farm. The inevitable outcome is their sale to owners with alternative sources of income, the money to restore and maintain them, and expectations of a life-style unrelated to farming.

Here at Stonelowe the expectation includes extensive use of the garden. Where most owners with a house of this size would seek to add a conservatory, for this house that would be seriously damaging, and the present proposals represent a modest attempt at providing an alternative. The issues therefore are precedence, siting, scale and design.

Precedents

Both Whitehough and Horton Hall have permanent garden buildings, the former its gazebos, the latter its revolving garden house. Later houses like Ashenhurst had a plethora of built features but are not directly comparable in character to the earlier

houses which are solidly built vernacular buildings with little in the way of ornamentation.

Siting

The site has been carefully chosen to ensure views of the house remain clear and uncluttered. While it is at the expense of a wall known to have in place by 1816 the new building will fulfil the same function, that of dividing the two garden areas, a minor price to pay for considerable added amenity.

Scale

Given its position, set into a bank, partially screened by the higher sections of the garden wall, and the massive nature of the adjacent house its scale is relatively modest, keeping its visual impact on the house to a minimum.

Design

The current submission is for a plain building with rectangular openings, built of local stone to blend with that of the house, and metal work of a colour to blend with both old and new. No attempt has been made to create a pastiche, and as the house reads as a mixture of 17th, 18th and 19th century styles, a quiet statement from the 21st century is more appropriate.

Considering the above the proposed works are acceptable as the development is not considered to cause harm to the significance of the special architectural and historic interest and setting of the Listed Building.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Therefore, in giving considerable importance and weight to the duties at section 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and in consideration to NPPF, NPPG and Policy DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan it is recommended that listed building consent be approved.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :

That listed building consent be granted.

Case Officer: Rebecca Bowers

Recommendation Date: 07.12.2022

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

