BYATT OLIVER
LIMITED



Sharpcliffe Hall

Swimming Pool Extension

Sharpcliffe Hall
Bradshaw Lane,
Ipstones,
Staffordshire
ST10 2LJ

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is a Heritage and Impact Statement prepared by Byatt Oliver limited on behalf of the owners of Sharpcliffe Hall, where the proposal is required.

Pre application advice has been sought from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, with a positive response, requesting a heritage statement assessing the significance of the proposals and the impact the proposal would have upon the heritage asset.

This statement outlines the historic significance and development of the building since its construction, following on-site measured building recording work and background historic information from desk-based research carried out earlier this year.

It provides a comprehensive preservation by record prior to the proposed demolition of the building and follows historic building recording as outlined in the Historic England (HE) *Understanding Historic Buildings. A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2016). This approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires that sufficient information is provided to the local authority concerning the significance of the heritage asset.

In early 2018 an application for listed building consent (SMD/2018/0069) was submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council by Robert McGuinness MRICS of RLM Associates on behalf of the present owner of Sharpcliffe Hall. This was for the restoration and conservation of the hall (which was then a building at risk) and included:-

'Flat roof repairs, replacement of some timber and solid floors, restoration of metal windows/ stone surrounds, replacement rainwater goods and miscellaneous like for like repairs to the fabric due to water penetration and rot including repointing, timbers and stone'

Desk based research was carried out for historic information to be included in the heritage statement for the listed building consent application, searching the National Heritage List for England and the Heritage Gateway.

Measured surveys and a photographic record taken to show the building in its setting was included in the existing and proposed drawings submitted with the application.

Listed building consent was granted on 06/04/2018 and since then the proposed works have been completed. The building has now been taken off the Buildings at Risk Register.

2.0 SHARPCLIFFE HALL LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The heritage asset as a whole is Sharpcliffe Hall, a large stone-built Grade II* Listed Building which dates from the 17th Century. The Sharpcliffe estate is situated in a very isolated rural location northwest of Ipstones village (Fig 1) and the hall is accessed via a long private driveway from Bradshaw Lane. The Staffordshire Moorlands Walk runs through and around the Sharpcliffe Estate.

Listings:
SHARPECLIFFE HALL LISTING SUMMARY
[Historic England National Heritage List]

Listed Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1374611
Date first listed: 02-May-1953
Statutory Address: SHARPECLIFFE HALL
District: Staffordshire Moorlands (District Authority)
Parish: Ipstones
National Grid Reference: SK 00859 52172

Details:
Large house. Dated 1673, possibly to earlier fabric, restored and enlarged late C19. Coursed dressed and squared stone, large quoins, raised cavetto strings at floor levels stepped over windows; tiled roof with crested ridge; verge parapets with ball finials; twin- and triple-shafted (some circular) end and ridge stacks; original plan of 2 parallel ranges. 2-storey and gable-lit attic, 3-window entrance front of 3 flush gables; all windows chamfered and mullioned; labelled 2-light windows to attics, originally 3-, 4-, 3-light to first floor, now with C19 four-light to right; 5:2:2:5 to ground floor, the right-hand deeper with a transom, the 2-light windows flank late C19 single-storey gabled porch with Tudor arch over a boarded door and low relief coat-of-arms above. The centre gable bears 2 labelled plaques at attic floor level, inscribed to the left: "THIS HOUSE BUILDED BY JOHN/WHITEHALL OF PARKHALL ESQ/SONNE TO JAMES GRANDCHILDE/T0 ROBERT GREAT GRANDCHILDE/TO JAMES WHITEHALL WHICH JOHN BY FRANCES HEIRS TO WILLIAM ASTON OF PARKHALL ES/Q HAD ELIZABETH & ANNE &/JAMES BY FRANCES CRESLEY". The right-hand plaque bears the date 1673. Set-back late C19 wing of 2 windows to right is of 2 storeys and with a dormer to upper floor. Well set-back late C19 wing to left. Further mullioned windows to paired gables on left, both with ranges of 2-, 3-, 4-light windows.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF SHARPCLIFFE HALL

The history of the hall and its development have been described to provide background information in order to understand the development and significance of the proposals.

Sharpcliffe Hall was first built as a timbered manor house following the inheritance of the estate by John Whitehall in 1642. The family owned and lived in the estate until it was sold to John Sneyd in 1845. Over a decade the house was altered considerably with the addition of the kitchen at the east elevation, the porch and the long barn. The estate was purchased by Hugh Sleigh in 1876. The historic map (Fig 2) shows the arrangement of the hall and associated buildings at that time.

The hall remained unchanged during this period and was sold to A S Boucher in 1904. Boucher made large scale additions to the hall and infilled the space between the nineteenth century kitchen and the barn with a generous residential wing with drawing room, dining room, hallway and service rooms and bedrooms above. It was at this time also that the squash court was built with a first-floor viewing platform. In 1929 R M Argles purchased the property and for twenty years was part of the Haregate estate. During the second world war the property was used by the Red Cross as a Convalescence Home/Auxiliary Hospital. In 1946 the Youth Hostels Association purchased the Hall, the drive and five acres of land but was closed in 1954. The hall laid empty for six years before it was purchased by Mr and Mrs Cartwright.



Fig 2: OS 6inch England and Wales - Staffordshire XIII.NE 1900
Ref: National Library of Scotland ; Ordnance Survey Maps https://maps.nls.uk

During the latter part of the 20th century the hall fell into a state of deterioration and decay and in November 2000 a fabric condition survey was carried out by Christopher Taylor Design (chartered architects) commissioned by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to identify the condition of the building and any problems associated with these elements.

The survey found that during the years of modification, alteration and extension, the process of adaption and development has resulted in 'some uncomfortable relationships' between parts of the original building and later extensions and additions and tragically in the loss/destruction of many original details and features. The most damage appeared to have been carried out during the eight years it was in the hands of the Youth Hostel Association and the following six years when it lay empty.

4.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ADJOINING BUILDING & PROPOSALS

In order to assess the significance of the proposals within its setting, this document adopts the methods outlined in Historic England's publication *"Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance."* The guidance describes four heritage values that may contribute to the significance of a place: Evidential, Historical, Aesthetic and Communal.

Evidential Value is described as "the potential of a place to yield evidence of past activity." The proposed swimming pool is an extension with a small, glazed link to the existing garage/outbuildings. A building contributes some value in that the size, form and materials of the structure have changed relatively little in its lifespan. However, evidential value is proportional to the amount of material evidence that has since been lost or altered, and in this respect the brick shell of the building remains.

Historical Value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. The proposed extension has very little impact on the existing historical value of the garage/outbuildings. The proposals serve to enhance and improve the accommodation offering at Sharpcliffe.

Aesthetic Value derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. In the case of the garage and outbuildings, the value sits more with the use that the building was originally built for. The simple building was purpose built for the accommodating vehicles with large garage doors to the courtyard elevation. The proposed extension is intended to be independent and unrestricting on the existing building, with a "lightweight" frame with expansive glass with clear visibility of the existing buildings, which embraces the wide expansive views of the countryside.

Communal Value is about the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it. The garage and outbuildings are of little value in comparison to the hall and to those who plan to reside there. The existing buildings form part in the history of the hall but are not connected directedly to the hall.

5.0 THE PROPOSAL

This phase of the development at Sharpcliffe Hall is now proposed to be undertaken in which the owner wishes to install a purpose-built single storey extension, which is to accommodate a swimming pool. The new building is linked to the existing garage and outbuilding via a small, glazed link. It does not require any demolition or significant removal of any of the existing building fabric.

This modernist new building, will be built with a lightweight steel frame structure, embracing the "less is more" principle. The roof is supported on elegant slim posts, and cantilevers beyond the main building footprint and it is intended to form subtle shadows over the enclosed section of the building throughout the day. The frame has been intentionally designed with structural honestly, but not to be intrusive on the existing buildings. The building footprint is to be enclosed with floor to ceiling glass which is intended to afford views not only of the existing buildings behind, but also views into the gardens and the wider landscape.

This new building would be for the sole use for the owners and positioning the modern accommodation within close proximity to the main house will help to safeguard and future proof the listed building providing accommodation and facilities that are desired for this type of property.

6.0 LOCAL AUTHORITY INVOLVEMENT & RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2003/0633 Change of Use, extension, and alterations (Refused 18/07/03)
SMD/2003/0634 and 0632 Listed Building Consent for part demolition and alterations (Approved 06/05/04).
SMD/2007/0963 Replacement of metal casement windows (Approved 25/07/07)
SMD/2010/0466 Listed Building Consent for replacement windows (Returned)
SMD/2018/0069 Listed Building Consent for repair and restoration of the external and internal fabric (Approved 06/04/2018)
SMD/2018/0615 Listed Building Consent for repairs and part replacement of building fabric (Approved 23/11/2018)
SMD/2018/0652 Demolition of rear two storey element forming squash court and part erection/demolished adjoining section (Approved 29/04/2019)
SMD/2018/0653 Listed Building Consent for Demolition of rear two storey element forming squash court and part erection/demolished adjoining section (Approved 29/04/2019)
DOC/2019/0040 – Discharge of conditions 3,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 (Approved 14/02/2021)
SMD/2021/0484 Listed Building Consent for refurbishment and repair of existing structure including replacement doors and windows and installation of Biomass Boiler (Approved 04/04/2022)

Informal Pre-Application advice has been sort from Emilly Holland, Conservation Officer, Staffordshire Moorlands DC who has been extremely helpful in discussing the works proposed including the future upgrading and new extension. The advice has been very useful and positive.

PLANNING POLICIES CONSIDERED

National Planning Policy Framework:-
Achieving Sustainable Development Paragraphs 1-17
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment Chapter 12
Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014):-
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DC2 The Historic Environment
Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
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.

7.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSAL

Sharpclife Hall has recently undergone a full scheme of refurbishment and renovation which has resulted in the building being taken off the Buildings at Risk Register.

Sharpcliffe Hall has been returned to its former glory as a traditional English Country house. County houses have played a significant part in rural communities and are a traditional part of the countryside landscape. Following increased taxation and the effects of World War 1 many country houses were demolished, those that remained had to adapt to survive.

Traditional Country houses in England served as retreats and places of oasis within the countryside and as such they almost always had leisure focus facilities such as, walled gardens, meandering walks through woodlands and orchards, lakes, ponds, tennis court and swimming pools.

It is the focus of the new custodians at Sharpclife Hall to guarantee its future and part of that process is to ensure that the well-considered improvements are implemented. An assessment has been undertaken and it is considered that a Swimming pool would be integral to improving the offerings at Sharpcliffe and thus safeguarding its future.

8.0 IMPACT ON THE HERITAGE ASSET

The proposals have been designed to have as little impact on the existing buildings as possible. The building is attached to the existing Garage and outbuildings and not the main Hall.
The location and position has been well considered, the proposal is designed to not impact on the existing building, and is purposely set away from the building to give a clear break in structure, the architectural style is contrasting to the existing buildings and whilst the light weight black steel frame carries through from the metal windows on the main hall, it is intended that the proposed building has its own identity.

We consider that the proposal would have a positive impact upon the heritage asset, with a modern, functional, aesthetically pleasing and useful facility as an extension of the garage and outbuildings.