

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0060
Valid 20/05/2024

HIGHER OVERTON FARM
OVERTON ROAD
CONGLETON

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOR A FULL ROOF
OVERHAUL AND ROOF
SPREAD CORRECTING

(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT -
ALTERATION)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the special interest of the listed building relative to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990
- Impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Barn approximately 30 metres to the north east of Higher Overton Farmhouse. Grade II listed building. List entry number 1037813, date first listed 20 Nov 1987.

Barn. Dated 1740 with later alterations and additions. Ashlar quality rubble, blue machine-tile roof. Stable and loft over. Two-window front of two two-light block mullioned casements flanking central boarded door with dated lintel. Circular pitching eyes to left gable and single- storey addition to right.

The barn is one of a group of outbuildings on the East side of the farm courtyard. The south side of the courtyard is fronted by the Grade II C18 Farmhouse, and a further outbuilding constructed in 1939 used as ancillary residential accommodation.

PROPOSAL

- Reinstatement re-roofing
- Replacement of 1no Purlin and repair to joints
- Replacement of rotten roof battens and ridge board
- Replacement of rotten floor joists
- Replacement of 1 or 2 rotten timber lintels
- Reconstruction of walls where mortar no longer exists, is friable or receded beyond 50mm depth
- Inspection of the King Post truss to determine any damage
- Reconstruction of walls which have spread and have cracks
- Rectification of dampness and water leaks
- Replacement timber windows , reinstatement of stone dressings which are sound but dislodged
- Inspection of timber where embedded or covered to determine any further timber decay
- Reinstatement rainwater goods

- Adjustment of ground level against field wall – prevent earth building up against wall
- Removal of stacked stones from rear wall to provide a breathing and maintenance walkway
- Surface water drainage away from the building.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
 SS1 Development Principles
 SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
 DC1 Design Considerations
 DC2 Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 10th July 2024
 Neighbour consultation period ends: 10th July 2024
 Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Biddulph Town Council: No Objection

Historic England

No Comment

SMDC Conservation Officer

Object. Recommend Refusal.

The proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building contrary to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990. The scheme looks to unnecessarily exacerbate the fragility of the building, with no justification, clear steer or details in securing its longevity. Currently the project does not demonstrate concise understanding. In the interim, this roofing clearly requires a temporary cover.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The proposed repair and alteration that includes replacement of structural elements and the complete rebuilding of external walls would ultimately affect the listed buildings character as a building of special architectural and historic interest. The works therefore, definitely require listed building consent and where rebuilding is proposed development requiring planning permission would also be carried out (an application for permission has not been submitted).

The Council's conservation officer critiques the detail of the application and ultimately objects and recommends refusal.

The officer considers the status of the barn to be stable, with the walling also stable and some mortar loss evident (both elements are settled and are age related in movement and deterioration).

The application identifies a need to address the roof. The officer comments that it does not appear that any attention has been paid to protect the roof or prevent it from coming to this point by way of covers, tarps, sheeting or support. They do not consider there to be evidence to suggest there is substantial splaying of the walling nor is it shown in the photographs, and the officer comments that it should not be expected to be plumb by modern standard when of this age, and historic movement settles for equally the amount of time the building has been stood for. Walling of that thickness and type of masonry would be expected to move and settle in this manner. Currently there is only superficial mortar loss at the lower levels, and a deteriorated roof.

In order of the heritage statement:

Going from : 4.2 external walls condition. Page 13.

'given the depth of erosion and friability...' – this section doesn't seem to be finished and ends at *'...and would not adequately...'*. The statement comment does not appear to be complete and it is not clear.

The next piece regarding two 'longer walls'... 'moving the external walls further out of line as time passes'. This doesn't seem to be correlated by anything substantial at the moment, and further so as it has been said that this section wasn't surveyed due to some loose ground.

It is not clear how long any movement has been monitored for. An obvious bow in a wall can be photographed clearly, and at 4.13 mortar cracks are discussed. One photograph shows loose eaves and former eaves line, but not a bowing wall. With single leaf masonry of this primitive construction type it would be clear and in addition to this the two stone lintels and two stone cills at the front windows are also not dislodged from any bowing.

The likely cause of mortar cracks is that it is currently cementitious and has simply come away from the masonry. This is because cementitious mortar is harmful and creates these issues such as mortar damage/loss and moisture ingress. Despite this the main core of the external walls are dry, with some moisture at the lower areas due to land levels. Looking at the photograph at point 4.13 some cementitious mortar is in

situ. Moving on from this – the existing mortar is not identified at all despite ‘inspection with a bradawl’ (which ultimately where there isn’t any mortar there would not be anything to use a bradawl on), nor is there any mention of lime mortars which a building of this age and listing status is expected to have or have proposed as part of remedial works.

Point 4.6 the building would never have had fascia’s in infancy as it is a listed vernacular barn, not a domestic modern building. The lower storey alterations to the side contain fascia’s as they are clearly later and modern additions. Later it is said that fascia’s should be reinstated – this is unsupported as this is a listed barn and they are not traditional.

Gaps in the masonry, referred to at point 4.7, are noted as being present in the gable however again the wall appears to be stable and age related as all of the quoins both sides are plumb (as they can be for an ancient barn). Photograph not entirely clear as obscured by a row of equidistant refuse bins subsequently point 4.8 noting four courses of the plinth cannot be viewed.

It is suggested that all of the stones are numbered and taken down and set aside on the yard to allow the wall to be reinstated with new mortar and pointed up. This would amount to the rebuilding of the wall, which appears unnecessary and excessive simply to achieve repointing. If there is any bowing in the front wall any attempt to take down the gable end, just to repoint, would risk the integrity of the entire building.

Point 4.16 of the statement goes on to discuss some areas again that have missing mortar. A suggestion that it would be better if large sections, if not all of this elevation were rebuilt, just to address 2-3 of the top courses and repoint, would be unjustified and excessive.

Point 4.17. Rebuilding sections of wall where there are small pieces of masonry paired with larger pieces would not respect the listing status and there is no justification for this. This is annotated as well for example on the photographs, where simply rebuilding the wall with similar sized stones ‘find adequate stones of an equivalent age’ to simply to suit perhaps present day views does not have the listing status or integrity in mind. It is simply contriving this building with no justification and is wholly inappropriate.

Point 4.23 it is not clear whether this pile of stone has any relation to the building or forms part of other unrelated other works on site.

Point 4.11 again with regard to lead flashing, this is not found on a building this age or status, it seems to have been placed in situ due to the lower storey outshot building. We now have again the possibility of taking down and rebuilding gables with no clear prescription for this or path forward.

On the face of it, the barn is realistically in very good condition - save the roof, and some internal hay floor timbers - and does not require for example props, accrows, helibars, braces, Prop Pal needle, scaffold or anchored boards. The information is presented in broad terms and does not successfully prioritise or create a staged approach to the scheme. The project does not have the listing status or integrity of the fabric in mind. The proposal is to risk completely taking down the building, and totally

rebuilding it in an imagined and inaccurate form. This for example would be substantial harm.

In the consideration of the Conservation Officer, the building's roof requires attention and associated pieces such as eaves and gutters, and the top 2-3 courses of stone require repointing. There are too many elements not thoroughly detailed such as fascias, soakaway, replacement lintels, and windows. For example, some items such as lintels are mentioned last and remain ambiguous. There are no photographs to provide the lintels are wood when the remainder demonstrate they are cut sandstone. In a barn this age there would unlikely be both, doing the same 'job' or are perhaps later frames. Cut stone surrounds are typically accompanied by metal windows, or nothing, as ancillary farm buildings of this age often didn't have glass and simply had an aperture. Leading on from this there is no assessment into the windows, joinery, age, glass type or anything to make a clear determination for this.

Point 5.20 is also a concern as it is stated a builder will determine what is of no historic interest. This is not appropriate and very vague, and does not demonstrate the listing status is in mind during the scheme. There is no inventory or schedule of historic fabric to be able to begin to approach this.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Essentially the proposed work involves the replacement of original parts of the roof structure and the rebuilding of existing walls. There is no justification for the extent of such work and it risks the entire collapse of the building. The proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building contrary to Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 and it would cause substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset without obvious public benefit. There would be conflict with Policy DC2 of the SMDC Local Plan and the terms of the NPPF in these regards.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 15/07/2024

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council