

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0229
Valid 17/05/2024

ABBEY INN ABBEY GREEN
ROAD
LEEK

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM
PUBLIC HOUSE TO A SINGLE
DWELLING

(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT -
ALTERATION)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impacts on Historic Assets
- Design

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site relates to a Grade II* Listed Building known as Abbey Inn. It is a distinctive tall stone building which stands in an elevated and prominent position overlooking what has become altered and made-up ground which serves chiefly as a car park at the front. The building is set against steeply rising ground to the rear with some associated amenity land and field and further unconnected farm fields beyond. The drive entrance comes in front of the building from the C195 Abbey Green Road which climbs the hill just to the left of the Inn. The drive sweeps around on a level then drops down the further side of the land to the front of the Inn to re-emerge down a steep slope back on to Abbey Green Road. There is a linear single storey detached stone out building to the right of the Inn (east) which has been converted to bedroom accommodation.

Internally, the bar counter is located central of the ground floor service area behind the historic timber staircase that leads up to a three-bed room apartment over two floors. The snug room is to the east and the dining area is to the west of the building with the commercial kitchen located behind the dining area.

Within the wider surrounding area, a public footpath also passes across the front of the Inn and in front of the adjacent converted outbuilding before heading up across fields rising to the north east. There are some four detached dwellings and associated outbuildings in a disparate group either side of Abbey Green Road to the west of the Inn but these are largely cut off by topography and tree cover so as not generally to be seen in conjunction with the Inn. The main and dominant views of the Inn are from the south or south east from along Abbey Green Road. Gently rising in the middle ground is the front garden of Choir Cottage, the gable end of the which is on the right. Choir Cottage is Grade II Listed.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks listed building consent for the change of use of the former public house to a single dwelling. No external changes have been proposed.

The applicant intends to remove the ground floor bar counter and to knock down two partition walls to create an open plan between the living room and snug room on the ground floor. A fire door is to replace the existing internal timber door. An external flue is also to be removed.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIE

Staffs Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

DC1 Design Considerations

DC2 The Historic Environment

H1 New Housing Development

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment

RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1983/0379 Conversion of barn to dwelling and alterations to first floor of inn to provide restaurant facilities Approved

SMD/1985/0801 Conversion of outbuilding into bedroom accommodation Approved

SMD/2019/0727 – Proposed construction of a terrace of 3 traditionally built dwellings Withdrawn

SMD/2019/0728 – Listed building consent for proposed construction of a terrace of 3 traditionally built dwellings Withdrawn

SMD/2020/0671 Construction of 3 Low Energy, Low Carbon Homes Refused

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 09/07/24

Neighbour consultation period ends: 13/06/24

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Historic England

No comment to add

Conservation officer

No objection subject to condition

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Section 66(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Impacts on Historic Assets

Policy DC2 of the adopted local plan seeks to safeguard, and where possible, enhance the historic environment which includes designated heritage assets and listed buildings and conservation areas. In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, development is required to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a heritage asset.

Paragraph 205 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. Paragraph 208 states that where a development 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.

The proposed alterations are to a Grade II* Listed building, a building of particular importance. According to the statutory list description, formerly known as Bowling Green Inn, now inn, dated 1702 has been altered and extended that dates back 20th Century. The building is decorated with coursed squared sandstone with ashlar dressings with some replacement in brick to gables. The roof is welsh slated roof. The interior has not been inspected. The materials and architectural detailing are all indicative of a historic building and are important aspects of its special interest.

The Conservation officer has raised no objection to the scheme subject to condition ensuring the works are to be limited to as outlined in the approved document: Heritage Statement at 5.0 The Proposal and 6.0 Impact upon the Heritage Asset. This condition is not considered to be reasonable because any works above and beyond the scope of this application would need to be the subject of a separate consent(s) including that of which would be Listed Building Consent.

The works are internal to function as a dwelling with the intention to remove external flue. The central serving bar is to be removed in order to create an open liveable space and the washroom fittings are removed to create a utility and store on the ground floor. The external flue is also removed which is not integral of the historic building. The works are considered to be minimal changes to make the use of the building for a single household.

There would be no harm arising from the works. The works would represent the optimal viable option use of the building and therefore would safeguard the historic building. Also the impact under class C3 use is deemed less than the impact of a public house under A4 (drinking establishment) where the foot-traffic is, generally speaking, less due to the numbers of visitors on site.

The outline of the curtilage/ planning unit as per the red edge is deemed acceptable as any less than what has been proposed would be a diminution of the listed estate, particularly as it was once called Bowling green inn in reference to the bowling green on the land to the front such that the land is internal to the historic significance.

There were initial concerns that the car park to the front would appear somewhat of an eyesore due to the mass of hardstanding against the Grade II* Listed building and without a re-landscape condition, there would be a permanence of this concrete pad. However, the car park was already existing prior to Abbey Inn being listed as a Grade II* building and to retain the car park as part of the domestic curtilage would have limited impact to the current setting of the listed building. Therefore, I am of the opinion that a landscape condition would be unreasonable on this basis.

Commented [LL1]: Tricky one. Do you agree? Ideally yes as it would enhance the scheme but may not be reasonable to require as the car park already exists prior to listing.

Given that the fabric of the building will not be harmed and does not affect the setting of the listed building, the balance is in favour of supporting this part of the scheme. The proposal is in accordance with policy D1 and D2.

CONCLUSION

The development would not harm the Grade II* Listed Abbey Inn or its setting. The conversion would provide an optimum viable use of a heritage asset and would be in accordance with the NPPF and the Local Plan. It is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve**

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 5/07/24

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council