

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 28th January 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2024/0567 & SMD/2024/0569
Site Address: Horton Hall, Tollgate Road, Horton
Proposal: Proposed new gates and alterations to stone piers to existing Vehicular Entrance to Horton Hall

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Horton Hall – Grade II* (listing ref: 1374778) - Boundary wall and railings, gates and gatepiers to front of Horton Hall - Grade II (listing ref: 1037791) - Outbuilding attached to north of Horton Hall – Grade II (listing ref: 1374779) - Outbuildings approx. 20m to north of Horton Hall – Grade II (listing ref: 1037792) - Horton Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to the Grade II listed boundary wall and would be in the immediate setting of Horton Hall (Grade II*), and two outbuildings (Grade II) to the rear of Horton Hall. The proposal would also be situated in Horton Conservation Area.

Horton Hall (Grade II*) is a mid-17th century house with earlier remains. The building was altered in the mid-18th and late-19th century. The building is constructed in ashlar stone, with tile roofs. It is designed in a H-plan with three gables to the frontage. There are a mixture of stone mullioned windows to the upper floors and timber sash windows to the first and ground floors. Its significance derives from the historic association with wealthy Yeoman, impressive design and grandeur within the village, and illustrative phases of historic development.

The surrounding boundary wall, gatepiers and railings (Grade II) date from the 17th and 19th century. They are constructed in coursed stone with cast and wrought iron metalwork. The significance of the boundary arises from the association with the listed hall and the high quality craftsmanship and architectural detailing of its features. The outbuildings to the rear are former stables and dowerhouse, dating 17th and early-19th century. They are both constructed in stone with tiled roof. Their significance derives from association with the main hall and illustrative vernacular design.

Horton Conservation Area was designated for its medieval origins as a planned settlement, its linear arrangement along a ridge, retention of predominantly 17th century large houses and yeoman farmhouses. Buildings are typically constructed in stone and tiled roofs, with some brick walling. Buildings are arranged in sporadic clusters along Tollgate Road and Heath House Lane, with large areas of open fields in between. Horton Hall makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is a landmark building within the village.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve alterations to the gatepier and gate facing onto Tollgate Road. The proposed works would involve widening the access with a slight relocation of the stone gatepier, removal of the modern gate and replacement with a timber boarded gate.

The demolition and relocation of the gatepier would result in a degree of heritage harm through the loss of some historic fabric and authenticity of the boundary wall.

The existing gates are metal and designed with a relatively ornate appearance. However, they are not of historic interest and the height and proportions are not sympathetic to the scale of the wall and gatepiers along this section of the boundary. The removal of this modern gate would have a neutral impact on the heritage significance.

The proposed replacement close-boarded timber gate would be very suburban and contemporary in character. Its style, design and materials would be at odds with the polite architectural design of the principal hall and the more vernacular character of the listed outbuildings. The gates would be in a key view of the Listed Buildings and visually prominent within the Conservation Area.

Overall, the proposal would result in moderate level of harm to the setting and significance of the Listed Buildings and minor-moderate level of harm to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

It would be recommended that the design is revised, for example metal gates with sympathetic height and proportions to the boundary wall. If the design of the gates were revised, potentially the slight widening of the access could be justified.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting of the Listed Building (s.66), the special interest of the Listed Building (s.16) and preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).

Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (par.215).

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment
- Horton Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the proposal would cause a degree of harm to the setting and significance of the Listed Building and character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would be contrary to s.16, 66 and 72 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets (par.213 and Policy DC2 of the local development framework). There does not appear to be clear and convincing justification for this level of harm (par.210 of NPPF). And as set out in par.212 of the NPPF, great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Given that this is within the immediate setting of a Grade II* Listed Building, greater weight should be given to the conservation of the setting and significance of the heritage asset (par.212 of NPPF).

In summary, we object to the proposal from a conservation perspective. As set out above, it would be recommended that the design and materials of the replacement gate is altered or the application is refused.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson