

Heritage Statement

Formalisation of access to serve existing dwelling
Field House Cottage, Dilhorne Road, Forsbrook, ST11 9DL
Mr Ward

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Architects have been instructed by Mr Ward to prepare a Heritage Statement to accompany a retrospective planning application for a proposed new vehicular access at Field House Cottage, Forsbrook.
- 1.2. The proposal does not involve any alterations to the interior or exterior of the property, only a new gravel access road to the dwelling. However, the development sits within the curtilage of the Grade II listed Field House Farm, and therefore potential heritage impact must be assessed, as per relevant local and national planning policy.
- 1.3. Field House Cottage was originally a relatively modern, purpose-built cowshed. The building was the subject of planning application SMD/2003/0229 for use of the building for B1 Light Commercial use, though this was never implemented.
- 1.4. A Lawful Development Certificate was issued under application SMD/2017/0020 for conversion to provide ancillary accommodation to the main building, Field House Farm. The Ward family owned Field House Farm for much of the 20th and 21st centuries. However, the property has been used as a supported housing unit, operated by local charity Walk Ministries, since 2016. The farmhouse has since been sold and Field House Cottage has been retained by Mr Ward.
- 1.5. Planning Permission was issued under application SMD/2023/0536 for the change of use from ancillary accommodation to full dwelling. To serve this dwelling, new vehicular access is proposed within this retrospective application.

2. Planning Policy

- 2.1. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014-2033 (adopted 2020), of which the Policy DC2 'The Historic Environment' is of particular relevance.
- 2.2. Policy DC2 states that "the Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment."
- 2.3. Policy DC2 goes on to state that "all applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate."
- 2.4. Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that "in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the

potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

- 2.5. The site lies just within Forsbrook Neighbourhood Plan boundary (designated 2018). However, the plan appears to still be in development.

3. Assessment of Historic Significance

- 3.1. Field House Farm lies to the west of Dilhorne Road, in an isolated position north of the village of Forsbrook. It is described within the Staffordshire HER as a "small late-18th century farmstead with a listed L-shaped farm building and attached farmhouse. The farm is still in use and extended to the west with an extension to the south of the west facet of the farmhouse and detached elements north of the elevation.
- 3.2. The farmhouse was Grade II listed in 1986, with the following description:

"Farmhouse. Late C18 with minor C20 alterations. Red brick; tiled roof; end stacks. Two storeys and gable-lit attic, three-window front; 3-, 2-, 3-light segmental-headed casements; central entrance with C20 lintel over glazed door. (HE List Entry 1253687)
- 3.3. Consultation of the Staffordshire HER shows there are other sites of historic or archaeological interest in the area, such as an old brick works and other historic farmsteads, but none within 250m of Field Farm.
- 3.4. To assess the significance of any affected heritage assets, 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.
- 3.5. Evidential value is moderate in this case. Given the remote location of the farmstead, it's unlikely to yield archaeological deposits as there doesn't appear to be any evidence of a previous farmstead or other development on the site.
- 3.6. There have been numerous alterations to the farmyard, which no longer provides an extant example of a small-scale farmstead. The house retains higher value as an example of a late-18th century farmhouse, though the property has clearly undergone many changes and modernisations.
- 3.7. Historical value is also moderate for the property. The farmstead no longer retains its agricultural use, though the original plan form is still somewhat discernible. There has been some detrimental loss of interior features, such as original fireplaces and joinery.

- 3.8. Aesthetically, Field House is an attractive and imposing property, with a fine Georgian façade set within formal gardens, though the loss of the original sash windows and front door has diminished its value. The rear aspect is less appealing, having suffered from various modern interventions.
- 3.9. As a private residence, communal value is relatively low in this case.

4. Impact Assessment

- 4.1. Having regard to the considerations set out above, it is clear that, while Field House Farm may be considered moderately significant as a heritage asset, its value lies predominantly within the history of the developing farmstead together with the farmhouse plan form.
- 4.2. Field House Cottage was a relatively modern purpose-built agricultural building, which does not make any positive contribution to the historic or evidential value of Field House Farm. The proposed new vehicular access for the cottage will provide further detachment from the farmstead and will therefore have very little impact in this regard.
- 4.3. The property has previously shared access with Field House. To better serve the cottage as a dwelling, private access is welcomed. This is situated to the north of the property, beyond an existing fence boundary, which provides better separation of the two dwellings. The proposed material of gravel matches the existing access to Field House and therefore has a very limited impact on the historic farmhouse and its setting.
- 4.4. As the proposal requires no alterations to the exterior of the building, it is felt that it will have no impact upon the heritage significance of Field House Farm. The proposed vehicular access is located to the north side of the property, adjacent to the existing garden area and will therefore have no impact upon the setting of Field House.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 In conclusion, and having regard to paragraph 194 of the NPPF, the proposed new vehicular access should lead to no substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset.
- 5.2 Similarly, the proposals are in line with policy DC2 of the Local Plan, which states that "the Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance."

SOURCES

Historic England
Staffordshire HER
Staffordshire Records Office
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Staffs Past Track
National Heritage Gateway
Historic Farmsteads & Landscape Character in Staffordshire – Bob Edwards & Jeremy Lake (2012)
Farm and Rural Building Conversions – Carole Ryan (2013)
Houses and Cottages of Britain – R.W. Brunskill (1997)
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