

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 10th March 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0085
Site Address: 1 Old Vicarage Cottage, Dimble Lane, Alton
Proposal: Single storey extension replacing an existing conservatory

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Alton and Farley Conservation Area 5 Dimble Lane – Grade II (listing ref: 1374690) 4 Dimble Lane – Grade II (listing ref: 1190975) - House adjoining Dimble Cottage to the South – Grade II (listing ref: 1037920) 1, 2 and 3 Dimble Lane – Grade II (1037919)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Alton and Farley Conservation Area and the immediate setting of a row of cottages, which are individually Grade II Listed Buildings.

Alton & Farley Conservation Area covers the hamlet of Farley to the north and the village of Alton south, along with Alton Towers parkland in the middle. The significance of the Conservation Area relates to the medieval origins of both settlements, historic association with the Talbot family, retention of 17th and 18th century buildings, predominant construction of buildings in stone, large areas of wooded slopes and the dramatic views of Alton Castle along the skyline. The cottage makes a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Listed Buildings along Dimble Lane are a mixture of early-18th and early-19th century cottages, the ones closest to the development site constructed in ashlar stone with herringbone tooling and plain tile roofs and the ones to the northern end of the land

constructed in painted brick and plain tile roofs. Their significance derives from their retention of historic fabric and plan form, association with the development of rural houses in North Staffs and development of post-medieval Alton village and illustrative vernacular and traditional construction.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve the removal of a modern conservatory to the side elevation and replacement with a single-storey side extension.

The extension would be constructed in red bricks and sandstone walling with a pitched plain Staffordshire blue tiles. The proposed form and materials would be more traditional and sympathetic than the existing glazed conservatory and would blend in with the overall vernacular character of the Conservation Area. In addition, the proposed scale and size of the extension would be subservient to the principal dwelling.

However, the proposed flue would be quite a substantial feature. Even though this would be situated on the elevation away from the roadside, it would still project approx. 1.2m above the ridgeline of the extension. It would be an industrial feature which would be very prominent within the streetscene of the Conservation Area, notably because this would be on a 1-storey extension but also due to the openness of the site to the north. It has the potential to distract from views and appreciation of the Conservation Area and setting of the row of Listed Buildings along Dimble Lane as a result. It would be recommended that this element is either removed or relocated/amended to be more visually discreet.

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 Buildings (s.66) 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
- Alton and Farley Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary the principle of the extension would likely be an enhancement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of the Listed Buildings as the style and materials are more in keeping with the historic context. This would comply with s.66 and 72 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework.

However, it is considered that there is a degree of harm arising from the large flue proposed which may be a distracting feature to the setting and significance of these designated heritage assets. This would result in ‘less than substantial harm’ (par.215 of NPPF). It would be recommended that the latter feature is removed from the scheme or amended/relocated to remove or minimise the level of heritage harm.

Notwithstanding the above suggestion, we would recommend the following conditions for any consent granted:

- Before any construction occurs above damp proof course (DPC), a brick and stone sample panel, showing the type of brick and stone, the bond pattern, the coursing and pointing technique, shall be provided on site for inspection and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed sample panel details.

Reason: To ensure the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Before the new roof of the extension hereby approved is installed, a sample or detailed specification of the new roof tiles shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed roof materials.

Reason: To ensure the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Before the windows and doors for the extension hereby approved are installed, details of their material, design, specification, method of opening, method of fixing and finish, in the form of drawings and sections of no less than 1:20 scale, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: Insufficient details of these matters have been submitted with the application and to ensure the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- The ridge, verge and eaves details of the extension shall match the design and detailing of the principal dwelling.

Reason: To ensure the development preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson