

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 14th March 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0048 & SMD/2025/0049
Site Address: Folly Tower, Basford Green Road, Cheddleton
Proposal:

- Listed Building Consent and Change of Use to 'annex' accommodation to existing dwelling 'Bath House'; conversion fabric repairs, replacement windows and installation of new handrail and balustrade at roof level. Internal fabric repairs, installation of new partition, internal doors and sanitaryware.

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Basford Hall and attached stable wing and carriage entry – Grade II (listing ref: 1188589) - The Bath House approx. 400m southeast of Basford Hall – Grade II (listing ref: 1294651) - Folly approx. 50m southwest of Bath House – Grade II (listing ref: 1374605)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to the Folly Tower, which is Grade II listed and situated in the setting of other Grade II Listed Buildings including: Basford Hall and the Bath House.

The Folly Tower (Grade II) is an early-19th century circular folly constructed in rock-faced stone with crenelated parapet. The significance relates to development of follies for ornament in country estates and English garden landscaping from the 18th century, its designed Tudor style and its historical association with Basford Hall and estate.

Basford Hall (Grade II) is a c.1830s country house, extended c.1850s. The building is constructed in coursed stone and slate roof. It is designed in a Tudor style with asymmetrical frontage, large chimney stacks and mullioned windows. The significance derives from its retention of historic fabric and plan form, association with Sneyd family, illustrative Tudor revival style from the early-19th century, association with the growth of small country estates in North Staffordshire during the Victorian period.

The bath house (Grade II) dates from the early-19th century and is constructed in rock-faced stone with a slate roof. The building is designed in a vernacular Tudor style imitating elements from the main house. The building once houses a heated swimming pool for Basford Hall.

Assessment and Impact

Summary of proposed works

The proposed works would involve the conversion of the folly tower to be an annexe to the bathhouse. The works would involve the installation of partitions internally, lining of walls, floors and ceilings, replacement windows, installation of woodburners and flue, replacement of roof finish and installation of metal railing behind the parapet.

There is a corresponding application submitted for the works to the adjacent bathhouse (application ref: SMD/2025/0058).

Internal works

Internally, the building is in a state of disrepair and there are modern paint finishes to the walls and the intervening floors appear to be modern replacements. The primary internal significance derives from its circular plan form, retention of stone spiral staircase and exposed chimney breasts on either floor.

The proposed conversion would result in the subdivision on the ground floor to create a lobby. This would negatively interrupt some of the appreciation of the internal proportions and character of the tower. However, the scale of this would be relatively limited and the circular plan form would still be mostly retained with the conversion. In addition, it is proposed to use a lime-based plaster rather than plasterboard to the walls which would help maintain this tower character internally.

The works would involve plaster boarding ceilings, but these appear to be relatively modern and of no/low heritage significance and this would unlikely affect the building's special interest. The plans illustrate wood burners would be installed and flues routed through existing chimney flues, which would help minimise the visual impact of these alterations.

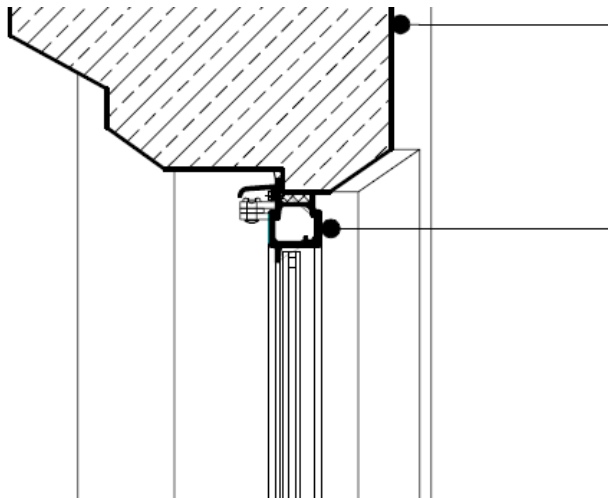
External works

The principal part of the building's significance derives from its external design and prominence in the landscape. The proposed works would involve the replacement of all windows with slimline double glazed units (4-4-4mm), replacement of the roof

structure, installation of chimney pots and flues and installation of a railing behind the parapet.

The plans state that the external doors would be repaired and reused. However, it was noted on site (13/03/25) these were in quite a poor condition. A sectional drawing of the external doors has been provided (dwg no. AL12) but either an elevational drawing or manufacturer's specification of the design of any replacements would be required to ensure they would be sympathetic to the building's design.

The proposal would involve the replacement of windows with slimline double glazed units (4-4-4mm). Usually double glazing is discouraged in Listed Buildings as its installation may result in the loss of historic glazing and it is not a traditional feature which can often negatively impact the historic architectural detailing of the property. In this instance, the existing are modern replicas and in a poor state of repair. Whilst the works would not result in the loss of historic fabric, the replacement with double glazed alternatives would still cause a degree of visual harm as this is not a traditional feature. The technical drawing (dwg no. AL11) illustrates that these replacements would be discreetly designed. However, it is not clear if a projecting trickle vent detail is shown on one of the sections if clarification can be provided:



It is recognised that there are likely some public benefits in terms of climate change and energy efficiency arising from these proposed window works (par.167 of NPPF) and, in this instance, the proposed replacement would not result in the loss of historic fabric. The proposed replacements have also been designed to be a slim profile (4-4-4mm) to minimise the visual impact.

The proposed replacement roof structure, whilst intrusive, would likely have a negligible impact on the architectural interest of the building as this appears to have been a modern replacement.

The proposed railings would be positioned in a prominent area of the listed building and distract from the designed Tudor and crenelated aesthetic. It is recognised that these would be required for Building Regulations and they appear to have been designed relatively sympathetically. A sectional drawing has been provided for their construction (dwg no. AL13) but no technical drawings for the elevational treatment of the railings has been provided. Whilst they are shown on the proposed elevations, they are limited in their detail. Further details of this would be required.

Works within the grounds

It is noted that the proposed site plan (dwg no. AL07) indicates a shed and log store to the terrace within the red edge of the development. No details of these features have been provided with the application, but it is likely there would be concerns with outbuildings and structures in a prominent and elevated position in regards to principal views of the two listed buildings on the site. It is also noted that a shed is indicated on the existing site plan, but there was no shed in situ on site visit (13/03/25). It would be recommend that these features are removed from the plans.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of the Listed Buildings (s.16 and 66).

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

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposed conversion would likely result in a moderate degree of harm to the listed folly tower, which would be contrary to s.16 and 66 of the Act. With reference to the planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage assets (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). There has been clear and convincing justification in terms of the conversion works as this would help secure the continued conservation of the designated heritage asset and help secure an optimum viable use for the building (par.213 and 215 of NPPF). There are no objections to the principle of the conversion works from a conservation perspective.

However, as mentioned above, we would require the following:

- Further clarification on details of sheds and log store shown on the proposed site plan
- Details of elevational treatment/design of the railings
- Clarification on any trickle vents for the window replacements
- Details of colour of window replacements

Notwithstanding the above, we would suggest the following for any consent granted:

- Before the re-pointing hereby granted consent is carried out, details of the mortar to be used for re-pointing (including mortar mix, colour, texture and pointing finish) and details of the method of removal of existing pointing shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed repointing and mortar details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

- No trickle vents to be installed on any replacement windows hereby approved.

Reason: To minimise the visual impact on the designated heritage and to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

- Before any external doors are installed, details of their design and material, in the form of scale drawings or specifications, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed door detail.

Reason: To preserve the architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

- Before they are installed, full details of the siting, appearance and materials to be used in the construction of all extractor vents, flues, airbricks, soil and vent pipes, rainwater goods or any other external accretion shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: Insufficient details of these matters have been submitted with the application and in order to ensure that the works preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson