

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 26th February 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0054 & SMD/2025/0055
Site Address: Highfield House, 25 Hollow Lane, Cheddleton
Proposal: Retrospective application for replacement of 5 windows

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	25 Hollow Lane – Grade II (listing ref: 1038073) - Cheddleton Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would affect Highfield House, which is a Grade II Listed Building situated in Cheddleton Conservation Area.

Highfield House is a 3-storey 18th century house with mid-19th century alterations. The building is constructed in coursed stone, with brick to the second floor, a tiled roof with kneelers and coped gable. The significance of the building derives from its retention of historic fabric and plan form, illustrative vernacular construction and different phases of development in the 18th and 19th centuries, association with the development of rural house building in North Staffordshire and positive impact it makes to the streetscene.

Cheddleton Conservation Area boundary covers the village boundary and some outlying fields to the north and south. The settlement has a predominantly linear arrangement running east to west along Hollow Lane, with buildings tightly knit along the roadside around the church. Buildings are constructed in a mixture of stone and red brick, some limewashed, with tiled pitched roofs. The area is characterised by the vernacular and traditional construction with modest architectural detailing for many of the houses and public houses, with more ornate decoration reserved for higher status buildings such as the church. 25 Hollow Lane makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve the retention of 5 upvc windows to the side and rear elevation.

The windows to the front are modern timber top-hung casements with multi-pane glazing bar fenestration. Although these have modern top-hung opening mechanisms, the arrangement of the mullions, middle rails and glazing bars marries up with the traditional proportions of the historic openings and the windows have a traditional vertical emphasis.

In contrast, the upvc windows have bulky chamfered edged frames and are stormproofed with projecting trickle vents. The windows are a mixture of 2-over-2 design or a single pane of glazing. Their appearance has a more horizontal emphasis. The proportions and design are not reflective of a traditional or historic window design typically seen in the locality. In addition, modern features such as the bulky stormproof frames and projecting trickle vents are overtly contemporary features which diminish the vernacular architectural interest of the listed building and character and appearance of the conservation area. This harmful visual impact is particularly noticeable when viewing the principal elevation of the building as the windows to the side outrigger are visible in the context of those at the front and the contrast in design is quite apparent.

In addition to the visual harm, the material – upvc – is a modern product which does not relate to the vernacular palette of materials which characterises the building’s historic interest.

Whilst the existing timber windows to the front elevation are non-historic, they are much more sympathetic in their palette of material and design in comparison to the bulky framed and shiny appearance of the upvc alternatives. These timber windows make a neutral contribution to the significance of the building, however the upvc windows would detract from the vernacular character and interest of the listed building and conservation area.

Other examples of upvc windows in the vicinity of the development site are mentioned in the Planning, Heritage impact & Design & Access Statement. However, these appear to benefit from permitted development rights as they are not listed buildings and there is a greater degree of protection afforded to the preservation of the special interest of a listed building. Notwithstanding this, these other examples have in many instances tried to mimic a historic fenestration pattern for their context. It is recommended that these other examples should not be taken into consideration in the planning balance of determining this application as they are not directly comparable in their historic interest or design and, as mentioned above, likely benefit from permitted development rights.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the special interest of the Listed Building (s.16 and 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

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposal would result in moderate degree of harm to the special interest 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 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) and there is no clear and convincing justification for the level of heritage harm (par.213 of NPPF). As set out in par.212 of the NPPF, great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. We, therefore, object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend it is refused.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson