

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 22nd April 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0144
Site Address: Old Vicarage, Dimble Lane, Alton
Proposal: Proposed extension to form a Living / Kitchen and Utility room

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 (listing ref: 1037919)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Alton and Farley Conservation Area and the wider setting of a row of cottages along Dimble Lane, 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 former vicarage is a c.1800 house which makes a positive contribution to the 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 lane 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 a single-storey side extension, the principal part of which would be approx. 6.9m (H) x 6.8m (W) x 6.8m (L). There would also be a smaller addition 3.7m (H) x 1.7m (W) to the rear.

The proposed design, whilst contemporary in its frontage, would mimic the external finishing materials, roof pitch, overhanging eaves and decorative vergeboard which are distinctive features of the main building. This would be a large extension in height and scale, but its stepped down ridge would help make it a subservient addition.

Overall, the proposed extension would likely result in a complementary modern addition to the building that would not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It would, however, be suggested that the rooflights to the front elevation of the extension are removed as these would create a slightly cluttered appearance to the front elevation which has the potential to distract from the architectural interest of the 19th century part of the building and, given the elevated position of this property, has the potential to be prominent in wider views within the Conservation Area. There is also large expanse of glazing to this frontage so there is not clear justification for the need for these features to the front elevation.

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) 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

Subject to the removal of the rooflights to the front elevation, the proposed extension would unlikely harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings which would comply with s.66 and 72 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. With the removal of the rooflights to the front elevation, there would be no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

For any consent granted, we would suggest the following conditions:

- Before any construction occurs above damp proof course (DPC) level, samples or detailed specifications of all external materials to be used on the development hereby permitted 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 materials.

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

- No works shall be commenced in respect of the features identified below, until details of their design, specification, fixing and finish in the form of drawings and sections at a scale of not less than 1:10 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Works shall thereafter be undertaken and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Windows

External Doors

Heads, cills and surrounds to windows and doors

Roof lights

Ridge, verges and eaves

Rainwater goods

Any flues or vents

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

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson