

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 7th May 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0187 & SMD/2025/0188
Site Address: Higher Overton Farm, Overton Road, Congleton
Proposal: Listed building consent for the repairs to a small Barn including a full roof overhaul due to partial collapse. Part rebuild to spreading eaves and bowing wall. Existing tiles and materials will be reused where possible, some replacement required due to rot and damage.

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Barn approx. 30m to North East of Higher Overton Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1037813) - Higher Overton Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1037812) - Barn approx. 15m North West of Higher Overton Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1374749)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations and repairs to a Grade II listed barn, situated in the listed farm complex of Higher Overton Farmhouse.

Higher Overton Farmhouse (Grade II) is an 18th century farmhouse, with some earlier origins and mid-19th century alterations and additions. The building is 3-storeys, constructed in coursed squared stone with a tiled roof. The significance relates to its retention of historic fabric and plan form, illustrative vernacular construction, association with the development of agricultural buildings and holdings in the post-medieval period and prominence of the farmstead in the landscape.

The barn to the northeast is Grade II listed. This is constructed in ashlar rubble with tiled roof. There are two 2-light windows to the front and a forking hole to the gable. The barn to the northwest of the farmhouse is Grade II listed and has been converted to residential use. The building is constructed in coursed stone a tiled catslide roof. The

significance of these barns relates to their historic association with the development of the farm, illustrative vernacular construction and functional design as well as the retention of historic fabric and detailing.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve structural repairs to the barn to the northeast of the principal farmhouse. The works would include full replacement of the roof and structure as well as localised rebuilding and repointing of the masonry.

Roof replacement

The proposed works would involve overhaul of the roof structure and a schedule of proposed works is included in the annotations on the Existing & Proposed Plans (dwg no. A0-102_P 1). The schedule sets out that battens, rafters and a purlin may have to be replaced. Whilst the loss of historic fabric would have a degree of harm to the significance of the Listed Building, it is clear that structural repairs are required as this is in a very poor condition.

The schedule of works mentions that wherever possible, the existing materials, such as roof tiles, would be reused which would help maintain the character and integrity of the building's special interest.

Repairs and rebuilding to stonework

The works to the masonry would involve partial rebuilding of approximately the top 4 courses of stonework to the barn, stitching of cracks to the rear elevation and repointing where necessary.

The extent of proposed rebuilding is illustrated on the proposed elevation (dwg no. A0-103_P 1), with stonework above the blue line proposed to be rebuilt. The extent of repointing and stitching of cracks is illustrated in red on the above plan.

These works would potentially result in the loss of patina of age and potentially the loss of some of the original or historic fabric, which would cause a degree of harm to the building's significance. However, as set out in the building condition survey, there is clear and convincing justification for the need for these works to sustain the building in the long-term. In addition, the proposed schedule of works appears to be the minimum necessary to achieve structural stability whilst still maintaining a substantial part of the building intact.

Replacement windows

It is proposed to replace the two 2-light windows to the front elevation. Whilst they did not appear to be in a condition beyond repair, their replacement would unlikely harm the special interest of the Listed Building if replaced sympathetically.

Overall, the proposed works would be the minimum necessary to maintain the historic character and special interest of the Listed Building and the setting of the listed

farmhouse. There is clear and convincing justification provided for the extent of works and the works have been designed with careful consideration on their impact upon the architectural and historic interest of the heritage assets.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting and special interest 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

In summary, the proposed works would result in a degree of harm to the special interest and setting of the Listed Buildings. This 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 provided for the works (par.213 of NPPF) and the works would help sustain the heritage significance of the Listed Building for its long-term conservation. Therefore, there are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

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

- Prior to the commencement of the repair works hereby granted consent, details of the proposed protection of the datestone throughout the works shall be

submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall only be carried out in accordance with these agreed protection measures.

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

- The raking out of any loose mortar for the purpose of re-pointing shall be carried out by tools held in the hand and not by power-driven tools.

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

- Prior to the re-pointing hereby granted consent is carried out, a sample panel of the mortar to be used shall be provided on site, showing the proposed mortar mix and pointing technique. The details of the sample panel shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved sample panel.

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

- Prior to the reinstatement of the roof, details (and samples upon request) of any new rooftiles and the proposed ridge, verge and eaves details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall only be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

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

- All external joinery including windows and doors shall be of a timber construction only. Details of their 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 before the windows and doors hereby approved are installed. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed window and door 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