

NATURAL SWIMMING POOL | BASFORD HALL | BASFORD | LEEK | STAFFORDSHIRE

Proposed Natural Swimming Pool and associated landscaping
to the setting of Grade II Listed Basford Hall Farmhouse



HERITAGE STATEMENT and Design & Access Statement

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HERITAGE STATEMENT

1.0

INTRODUCTION

OUTLINE

This Heritage Statement and Design & Access forms supporting information for the planning application for the proposed natural pool and associated landscape works including garden structures and utilising the existing garage as changing facilities. All in the setting of a Grade II Listed Basford Hall Farmhouse. The listed building is not affected by proposals.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Local Planning Authorities should require applicants to *describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of the proposal on their significance.*¹

This document has been prepared to assess any potential impacts from the proposed natural pool on the historic context and the current setting of Basford Hall Farmhouse.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents that have been submitted to accompany the application:

- Architectural drawings 'as existing' and 'as proposed' (ctd architects)
- Planning Statement (Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Fauna Forest Ecology Ltd)
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Metric Calculator (Fauna Forest Ecology Ltd)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this report is to prove that the proposals fulfil the requirements set out in the NPPF, as outlined above, and to demonstrate that the application,

- contributes to the economic viability of the community by sustaining and enhancing the heritage asset and;
- makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness by responding to its setting in a manner which is respectful of conservation philosophy and setting²

This will be achieved by assessing:

- the significance of the heritage asset (Basford Hall Farmhouse) and its setting;
- the impact of the proposed works to the setting on the significance of the heritage asset.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024, para 207

² NPPF 2024 para 207

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SITE DESCRIPTION AND SUMMARY

THE SITE

The site of the proposed natural pool is approximately 35m to the north-west of the listed farmhouse on the Basford Estate. This site has been part of the farmyard of Basford Hall Farm since the early to mid-20th Century when the site expanded north with 2 phases of farm buildings built in the mid to late 20th Century. All former agricultural buildings on the site have since been demolished and the area left as waste ground and service yard.

LISTING

Basford Hall Farmhouse is of local sandstone construction, listed as a Grade II Listed Building on 15th December 1986 (List Entry Number 1038132) and is therefore of national significance. These proposals are in the setting of the listed building.

LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

Basford Hall Farmhouse lies on the Basford Hall Estate, approximately 3 miles south of the market town of Leek and just northwest of the Churnet Valley. The site is not in a Conservation Area. The Grid Reference for the site is SJ988513.

Basford Hall Farmhouse and the farmyard site are accessed off a private road on The Basford Hall Estate, comprising of Basford Hall, and its stables, The Bathhouse and folly, Rock Cottage and several other buildings. The estate is estimated to date back to the 17th century.

HISTORY

Basford Hall Farmhouse is a Grade II-Listed C17 Farmhouse building with C19 alterations, the building is 2 storey, inc. cellar and attic, it is built of coursed dressed stone with pitched verge parapets. The windows have chamfered stone mullions generally. Brickwork has been used as part of the C19 alterations including works to the north-west side of the building and chimneys.

The hamlet of Basford, which was one of the original 19 townships which made up the medieval parish of Leek, and later one of the townships of the parish of Cheddleton created in the 16th-century, is situated approximately four miles south of Leek and six miles north of Cheadle, in the county of Staffordshire.

The Basford Estate was bought by Thomas Hammersley from Francis Finney, in 1693 and was sold by his grandson Thomas Hammersley, to John Palfreyman in 1760. It afterwards became the property of Clement Kynnersley of Loxley-Park who sold it in 1804 to George Blount; who in 1810 transferred it to William Sneyd, of Ashcombe Park.

In the 1839 census, Basford Hall was a property of 31 acres and nine perches of land, owned by the Revd. John Sneyd³, who had taken the house over in a dilapidated state in 1824, before partially demolishing and rebuilding between 1827 and 1830 under the direction of celebrated Staffordshire-born architect James Trubshaw Junior⁴.

Basford Hall also served as a Special School between 1953-1955 and closed in 1962 when it was returned to use as a family house.

Today the estate is owned by the Scott-Moncrieff family (descendants of the Sneyd family) and is their family home.

³ Milner, p.125

⁴ Milner, p.135

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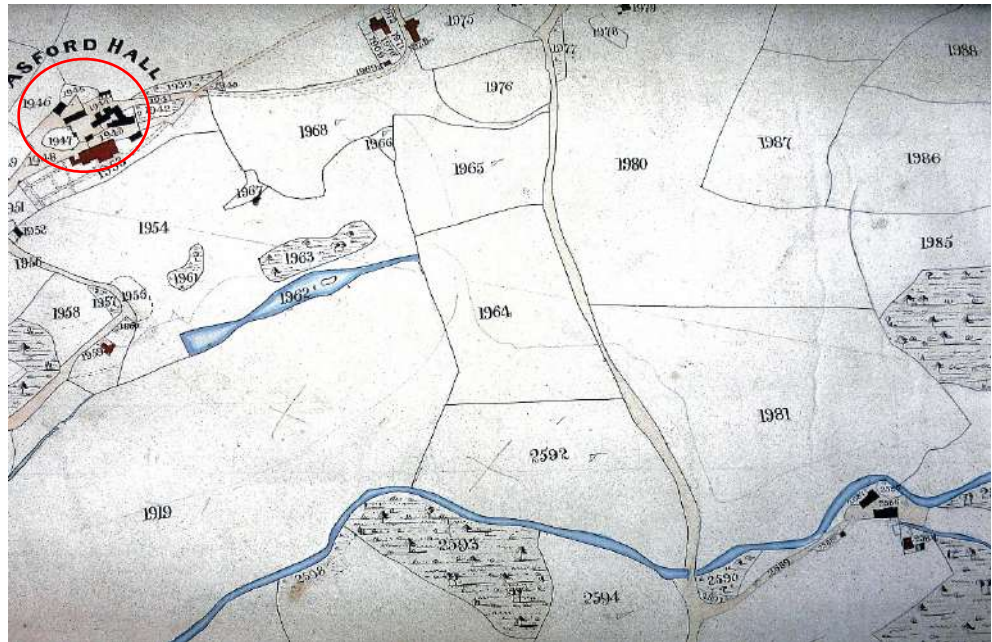


Fig.1 1839 Rating Map showing Basford Hall farmhouse. The farmyard at this point is much smaller than it is today, the current waste ground covers the area of fields 1945 & 1946.





Fig.3 Ordnance Survey Map 1944-1974. The farmyard has expanded with additional smaller buildings to the northwest of the farmhouse. These buildings have substantially been removed to make way for the large shed, as shown in figure 4.



Fig.4 Aerial photographic view 2006. With the small buildings removed 2 large farm storage buildings were built on the site in the 1990's dominating the former farmyard. Both of which were demolished by 2013.



Fig.5 Aerial photographic view 2021. With all the buildings to the north of the site demolished the site has become an open area store and waste ground.

Prior to the early 19th century, the farmyard did not extend beyond Consall View where the current farmyard and proposal site is now situated. This area was expanded with several small farm buildings by the 1970s. The addition of a large farm building to replace this group of buildings in the late 20th century and its' later removal around 2013 has left the north of the former farmyard as waste ground and open-air storage.

The mapping data reveals that the general layout of the buildings—Consall View, Coachman's Cottage, and Basford Hall Farmhouse—has stayed largely the same. With the number of buildings on the site now being similar to what it was there in the late Victorian times.

3.0

SIGNIFICANCE

Basford Hall Farmhouse is an important part of the historic Basford Green hamlet and Basford Hall Estate and are both considered significant historic buildings, both listed Grade II on 15 December 1986 to reflect this.

The historic building is constructed of coursed, dressed and squared rubble sandstone, with Staffordshire Blue plain clay roof tiles and clay Angle Capped ridge tiles, with stone coped gables and stone mullioned windows.

Basford Hall Farmhouse contribute positively to the historic character of Basford Green and the wider estate where it has heritage value and 'significance'⁵ through *historic association*, aesthetic value and *social/cultural value*⁶ from its history as a modest Staffordshire farmhouse. Basford Hall Farmhouse has a utilitarian appearance but nevertheless forms part of the setting of the nearby heritage assets. Consequently, the development must be of a considered design to ensure the aesthetic value and setting of the Listed Building is maintained and/or improved due to its proximity and association with the heritage asset.

⁵ NPPF, p.56

⁶ Historic England; Conservation Principles, 2017, para 37

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DESIGN & ACCESS CHARACTERISTICS

USE:

The proposed use of the site is a new communal natural pool for the use of the existing accommodation that is being used as holiday lets. In addition to the natural pool, a new gazebo and 'al fresco' eating area are provided for the ancillary use of the guests.



Fig.6 Aerial Visualisation View. Proposed layout of the site.

AMOUNT:

This application does not increase the number of buildings on the site, other than the inclusion of domestic scale garden structures, i.e. Gazebo and Pergolas.

The existing garage on the site will be utilised as a changing area for the pool, incorporating loose benches and hooks above, however no external alterations to the building are proposed.

All of the existing waste ground/hardstanding will be replaced with new lawned gardens, trees and planting beds.

A new 6 x 3m open-sided garden gazebo is proposed to the northwest of the site, in the form of a traditional timber framed structure with bitumen shingle roof.

The original material store will be repurposed as a covered outdoor seating/dining area. The existing concrete and steel structure will be painted and climbing plants added to soften the structure. A new open-sided 6x3m contemporary will be placed inside the existing structure to provide cover, the concrete floor will be replaced with new paving and gravel edging.

The principal focus of the former yard will be a natural swimming pool located in the centre of the site, with an appearance of a pond. The pool requires no chemical filtration using the natural filtration properties of the aquatic plants, Bio Filters and skimmer sieves. Water is pumped between the swim zone and the regeneration zone to keep the pool clear and safe. The natural pools are serviced yearly with only simple user maintenance throughout the year required. A timber deck overhanging the pool will house the plant equipment needed to pump and facilitate filtration of the pool water.

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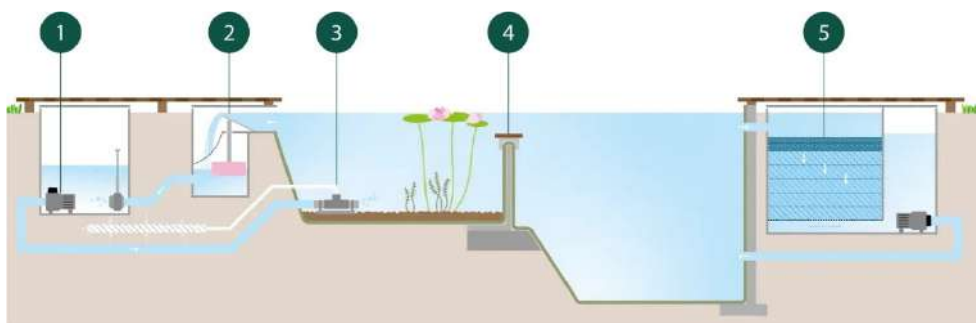


Fig.7 Example of natural filtration from Ellicar.co.uk. 1. Pump for filtrated water 2. Skimmers filter debris with a fine sieve 3. Carbonator to regulate pool's pH and CO² within regeneration zone. 4. Swim Area separated area with submerged walls. 5. Bio Filter flowing water through bio compact filters.

LAYOUT:

The development site is to the north of the listed building cluster formed of a proposed summer house, repurposed covered eating area and new buff gravel paths to the perimeter of the centrally positioned natural pool. Paths will provide access to the existing building, pool, deck, gazebo, changing area and covered eating area.

SCALE:

The size and scale of the existing site will remain 'as existing' with no above ground buildings proposed other than the garden structures which are both domestic scales. The pond and landscape soften the overall scale of the site by removing the waste ground. The proposals have little impact on the scale of the overall site and will have a minimal but positive visual impact on the landscape.

LANDSCAPING:

The landscape on the site will be vastly improved with the removal of the existing spoil hemp in the centre of the farm yard (waste ground) and the area soft landscaped with grass and planting beds. All new planting, including the pool oxygenators, will be British native plants.

A proposed wildflower meadow will be planted to the west of the site with cut grass paths only, no hard landscape is proposed in this area.

Permeable buff hoggins bound gravel pathways are proposed around the pond with access to the deck areas and gazebo; however, between the pool access and changing rooms, Indian sandstone stepping stones will be provided for comfort with bare feet.

Proposed small native trees will be planted along the line of the pathways and within the wildflower meadow to further soften the impact, naturalise and tie the overall proposals to the existing treeline beyond.

APPEARANCE:

The proposal endeavours to remake the site as a natural garden for the enjoyment of the users. The appearance of the site will be vastly enhanced by the new pond and landscaping, and as a result greatly improving the setting of the listed buildings. The natural edges of the pool give the feel of a pond and from a standing position, the pool will look much like a pond, as figure 8 over leaf.



Fig.8 From a standing perspective, with the filtration planting the pool looks like a natural pond.

ACCESS PROPOSALS: This area is ancillary to the existing accommodation for the use of the guests in the holiday lets, access via gravel paths will be provided to all the buildings in the farmyard cluster with additional paved stepping stones on the barefoot route between the changing area and the pool entrance. The site is flat and accessible by wheelchair users.

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PROPOSALS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

It is acknowledged by Historic England that,

*'The best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, or to find an appropriate new use if it has passed out of use, either that for which it was designed or an appropriate new use which would see its long term conservation'*⁷

The listed farmhouse is not affected by this application, no works are proposed and the use of the building as a holiday let will keep the building in use for the long term. This application provides ancillary facilities to help keep the farmhouse viable, providing major improvements to the setting of the listed building, which will have a positive impact on the existing cluster of farm buildings.

In brief, the proposals comprise:

- No work to the listed farmhouse. Landscaping in the setting only.
- The removal of hard standing and spoil heap from the site.
- A new nature pool designed to look like a pond with natural filtration.
- New buff gravel paths to link the existing buildings to and around the pool.
- New traditional timber summer house.
- Reuse of material store as covered 'Al fresco' eating area
- New wildflower garden
- New native specimen trees and planting
- Reuse of existing garage as pool house/changing
No external alterations to the garage are proposed.

Ecology

Please see the Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Phase 1 habitat survey by Fauna Forest Ecology Ltd. For details.

⁷ Making changes to Heritage Assets, Historic England Advice Note 2, p.1



Fig.9 View of from the main entrance path

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Due to the existing use of the site, these proposals will enhance the setting of the Heritage Asset because:

- No work is proposed to the listed building as part of the application.
- The existing poor-quality waste ground, spoil heap and hard standing will be removed.
- The proposals help to return the farmyard to its historic location with the last scars of the modern farmyard removed.
- Provide a new pool with natural filtration with the visual appearance of a pond.
- The site will be heavily landscaped with native planting beds, wildflower meadows and new specimen trees to line the paths

This application doesn't physically impact on the listing building and looks to improve the setting of the historic building significantly.

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SUMMARY

Basford Hall Farmhouse is an example of a 17th century stone agriculture structure with links to social and cultural heritage. The historic use and age of the building defines its significance. The setting of the building with the other farm buildings in the cluster has remained consistent, however, the farmyard generally expanded further north as the site has been built up. All of these modern buildings have been demolished in the last 20 years. These proposals return the farmyard to a pre-1914 level of development refocusing the farm cluster around the Basford Hall Farmhouse & Consall View securing future retention of the Grade II listed building for the enjoyment of generations to come. Through careful design the natural swimming pool will appear pond-like in appearance, the choice of a natural pool also means that there will be no chemicals required on-site for the filtration of the pool

In summary, this application can only be seen as a major improvement of the setting of a listed building, turning a waste ground and service yard, into a heavily landscaped garden and pond with ancillary garden buildings for the use of the guests using Basford Hall Farmhouse and other buildings in the cluster.

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