

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0567 AND SMD/2024/0569 Valid 07/01/2025	HORTON HALL TOLLGATE ROAD HORTON	PLANNING APPLICATION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR PROPOSED NEW GATES AND ALTERATIONS TO STONE PIERS TO EXISTING VEHICULAR ENTRANCE TO HORTON HALL
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(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Impact on the preservation of the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which the Listed Building possesses, in line with Section 66(1) of the Town & Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Heritage and Design
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Horton Hall is a Grade II* Listed Building thought to have been built in the 17th Century, with additions and alterations throughout the 18th and 19th Centuries. Horton Hall is a large dwelling constructed of local sandstone with minor brick extensions. The Main Hall and North Wing Annex have upstand parapet gables with stone copings and Staffordshire blue plain clay tiled roofs with overhanging eaves. Within the site, there are separate former outbuildings known as the Gardener's Cottage and the Coach House. The outbuildings form a courtyard to the rear (North) of the Hall. The site is located on greenbelt, countryside land within the Horton Ward.

Horton Hall has very well-defined garden boundaries; to the South, immediately adjacent to the Hall along Heath House Lane, there is a low height formed stone wall with iron railings and a hedge, which is Grade II Listed in its own right. A set of double gates with an iron arch between stone piers aligns with the central South entrance door. The remaining Southern boundary comprises a tall sloping brickwork wall which wraps around the perimeter of the garden on the East side and returns to meet the outbuildings to the North of the site.

To the West, the stone wall returns along Tollgate Road at a greater height with a roll top coping stone. The main vehicular access to the Hall is from the West off Tollgate Road, over cobbled setts through an iron gate. The stretch of wall North of the gate

along Tollgate Road is a low height wall with a mature hedgerow growing behind. A second established vehicle entrance is positioned a few metres further North.

Whilst map regression indicates that there has been an entrance from Tollgate Road in its current location since at least 1879, the gates are suspected not to be original. The Western stone wall boundary along Tollgate Road and the stone piers to the entrance are estimated to have been constructed in the late 1800's following the demolition of a roadside barn.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development comprises of the removal of the existing steel gate and electric gate opener and the installation of two new powder coated steel gates to the existing main vehicular entrance to Horton Hall. The new gate hinges shall be located on the rear / East of the gate piers, with a new electric opening motor attached. A new entry system shall be installed using the existing openings within the stone pier.

Notably, the proposed scheme comprises an amendment to the initially proposed scheme. The widening of the vehicular access has been removed from the proposal.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14
Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places, 16 -
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section(s) 16 – Decision on application, 66 – General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions, 72 – General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

4. Access Space and External Works

Horton Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1999/0812 – Change of use of outbuildings to form holiday accommodation. Approved.

SMD/1999/0813 – Listed building consent in respect of change of use of outbuildings to form holiday accommodation. Approved.

SMD/2000/1000 – Amendments to barn conversion 1st floor conservatory over garage, 2 new windows and roof lights. Approved.

SMD/2004/0349 – Conservatory. Refused.

SMD/2004/0359 – Listed building consent for a conservatory. Refused.

SMD/2014/0721 – Orangery extension, new dormer roof and internal alterations to existing Grade II* Listed dwelling. Approved.

SMD/2014/0722 – Listed building consent for orangery extension, new dormer roof and internal alterations to existing Grade II* Listed dwelling. Approved.

SMD/2014/0728 – Erection of a 5-bay garage. Withdrawn.

SMD/2014/0729 – Listed building consent for erection of a 5-bay garage. Withdrawn.

SMD/2015/0429 – Variation of conditions 2, 4, 5 and 7 to approved application

SMD/2014/0721. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 07/02/2025

Neighbour consultation period ends: 19/02/2025

Press Advert: 19/02/2025

Public Comments

No public comments have been received.

Town / Parish Comments

No comments have been received from Horton Parish Council in relation to the revised scheme.

In relation to the initially proposed scheme, Horton Parish Council commented that they *“have no objections to proposals to widen the gate but would suggest that metal gates are more in keeping.”*

Conservation Officer

Final Comments

Assessment and Impact

These comments are based upon the following amended plans and further information received:

- *Site Block Plan ‘as proposed’ – dwg no. AL419 Rev A*
- *Entrance Gates Plan and Elevation ‘as proposed’ – dwg no. AL421 Rev B*
- *Gate Details as proposed – dwg no. AL422 Rev C*
- *Heritage Statement – Revision A (July 2025)*

Previous conservation comments (dated 28th January 2025) raised concerns with the design of the proposed close-boarded gate and alterations to the boundary wall, the latter of which forms a separate listed structure to the principal hall. Amended plans have, subsequently, been provided.

The proposed amendments would now maintain the existing opening without removal or alteration to the stone boundary wall, which would help maintain the historic fabric of the listed structure. In addition, the proposed design has been amended to a flat profile metal gate with spearhead railing heads.

The amended plans have also included some detailing on an entry system to be attached to the wall. Due to the size of the system and its placement on a subsidiary entrance to the grounds, this would have a negligible impact on the appearance of the listed buildings.

Whilst there is limited evidence of what style of gate was in this location historically, the proposed amendments have been designed sympathetically to the grander detailing of the hall but are still respectful of the historic hierarchical arrangement of the site in terms of scale and height. The proposed amendments have removed the harm to the designated heritage assets previously identified.

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 Building (s.16 and 66) and preserving and 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).

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*
- *Horton Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)*

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposed amendments have removed the heritage harm previously identified and the setting and special interest of the Listed Buildings and character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be preserved. This would satisfy the provisions of s.16, 66 and 72 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. Therefore, there are no objections to the proposed amendments from a conservation perspective.

Historic England

On the basis of this information, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Final Comments

The application is to install new gates.

Initially it was proposed to install new double wooden gates, relocate gate post A and widen the existing vehicular entrance off Tollgate Road.

This application has now been modified; the relocation of gate post A and the widening of the existing vehicular access has been removed from the proposal. It is now proposed to keep the gates in their existing location and the vehicular access at 3m wide (shown on Drawing No. AL420 Rev B).

The current single gate will be replaced by new double steel gates with an electronic opening system. The new gates will continue to open inwards away from the highway.

The proposal seeks to improve vehicular access to Horton Hall. I have no objection (application number SMD/2024/0567) subject to the following being conditioned;

OFFICER COMMENTS

Policy Context

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in assessing planning applications the Local Planning Authority has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest.

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development

plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. A more limited focus on future growth is to be directed to smaller villages, including the rural area of Horton. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application site is located in the Open Countryside and Green Belt whereby Policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

Part (3) of policy SS10 seeks to protect the quality and character of the area and requires all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

The site is located within the Green Belt. Part (6) of Policy SS10 states that the Council will “maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.”

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024) outlines that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets an exception. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) states that ‘inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances’.

It is not considered that replacement metal gates and minor associated works would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Impact on the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building

Policy DC2 states that the Council will safeguard and where possible, enhance the historic environment by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance; promoting development which sustains,

respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area; and preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate reuse and sensitive development.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF (2024) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 214 of the NPPF (2024) states any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

The gates would be in a key view of the Listed Buildings and visually prominent within the Conservation Area, thus it is important that they are designed in a sensitive manner, compliant with the character of the site and wider area. Initially, it was considered that the proposed development would cause a degree of harm to the setting and significance of the Listed Building and character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer of the Council objected to the proposed development.

As referenced by the Conservation Officer, the existing gates are constructed from metal and designed with a relatively ornate appearance. However, they are of a more modern style and not of historic interest; the height and proportions are not sympathetic to the scale of the wall and gate piers along this section of the boundary. Thus, the removal of this gate would have a neutral impact on the heritage significance.

Based on the initial plans submitted, it was concluded that the proposed demolition and relocation of the existing gate pier would result in a degree of heritage harm through the loss of some historic fabric and authenticity of the boundary wall. The initially proposed replacement close-boarded timber gate was considered very suburban and contemporary in character. Its style, design and materials would be at odds with the polite architectural design of the principal hall and the more vernacular character of the listed outbuildings.

Therefore, the overall proposal resulted in a moderate level of harm to the setting and significance of the Listed Buildings and minor-moderate level of harm to the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer could not support the proposed development based on the reasons above, recommending either refusal of the application or submission of a revised design proposal.

Consequently, a revised scheme has been submitted to the Council, changing the initially proposed close-boarded timber gates to powder coated steel gates. The existing hinges and sensors would be removed from the internal face of the stone piers and new hinges would be installed to the rear elevation of the gate piers. A new

entry system shall be installed, reusing the existing opening within the stone. Widening of the vehicular access has been removed from the proposal.

The Council's Conservation Officer believes that the revised gates are designed sympathetically to the grander detailing of the hall but are still respectful of the historic hierarchal arrangement of the site in terms of height and scale. The amended scheme retains the existing opening without the removal or alteration of the stone boundary wall, thus the historic fabric of the Listed structure would be retained. Due to the smaller size of the new entry system, and its placement on a subsidiary entrance, this would not have a harmful impact on the Listed buildings. Therefore, it is considered that the harm to the designated heritage asset previously identified has been removed.

Overall for the above reasons the proposed development would sustain the importance of the heritage asset in compliance with Policy DC2 of the Local Plan, Section 16 of the NPPF and the provisions of s. 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Heritage and Design

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. Development shall positively contribute to and complement the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD outlines that insensitive alterations to boundary walls can cause significant harm to the character of a street or public domain.

The existing boundary treatment of the site comprises of well-defined garden boundaries; comprising of low height formed stone walls with iron railings, stone walls of a greater height with roll top coping stone and mature hedging growing behind and tall sloping brickwork walls. Site entrances comprise iron / steel gates between stone piers.

Initially, close-boarded timber gates were proposed under the application. Close-boarded timber fencing would have appeared uncharacteristic and incongruous amongst all the existing boundary treatment, having a stark visual impact. The impact was exacerbated by its solid construction completely contrasting with the existing gates at the site. Whilst it has been noted that a paddock to the North of the site is bounded by timber post and rail fencing, this appears a lot less prominent, solid and stark than close boarded fencing. Therefore, the initially proposed scheme was considered to result in street scene harm.

Upon receipt of Council feedback, a revised scheme was submitted, changing the close-boarded timber fencing to powder coated steel gates. The proposed steel gates under the revised scheme are considered characteristic of other gated entrances at the site and are designed more sympathetically to the grander detailing of the hall. Their height and scale are considered appropriate in the context of the site. Thus, the proposed replacement gates are now considered to be of an acceptable design.

The other proposed works consisting of the new entry system and the new gate hinges being relocated on the rear / East of the gate piers are considered di minimis and would not have a detrimental visual impact on the site or the surrounding street scene.

The proposal, by virtue of its size, scale and siting maintains the character of the existing dwelling and area. The proposal would therefore accord with the provisions of local plan policy DC1, DC2 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

Staffordshire County Council Highways department have confirmed that they do not object to the proposed development. As the new gates will continue to open inwards away from the highway and the proposal seeks to improve vehicular access to Horton Hall, the proposed development is considered an improvement to highway safety from a Highways perspective, in compliance with Policy T1.

Thus, the proposed new gates and associated alterations would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2024). Although the initially proposed scheme posed issues relating to Listed building impact and design, these issues were solved through submission of a revised scheme. As such the application is recommended for approval, subject to compliance with all conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Hannah Varley

Recommendation Date: 25/07/2025

X *J. Colley*

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council