

## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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| <b>SMD/2025/0048</b>    | <b>FOLLY TOWER BASFORD</b> | <b>CHANGE OF USE TO</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>SMD/2025/0049</b>    | <b>GREEN ROAD</b>          | <b>ANCILLARY</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Valid 27/01/2025</b> | <b>CHEDDLETON</b>          | <b>ACCOMMODATION TO 'BATH<br/>HOUSE'; CONSERVATION<br/>FABRIC REPAIRS,<br/>REPLACEMENT WINDOWS<br/>AND INSTALLATION OF NEW<br/>HANDRAIL AND<br/>BALUSTRADE AT ROOF<br/>LEVEL. INTERNAL FABRIC<br/>REPAIRS, INSTALLATION OF<br/>NEW PARTITION, INTERNAL<br/>DOORS AND SANITARYWARE<br/>AND INSERTION OF<br/>HANDRAILS AND CONCRETE<br/>AND STONE STEPS WITHIN<br/>THE RESIDENTIAL<br/>CURTILAGE OF 'BATH<br/>HOUSE'.</b> |
|                         |                            | <b>(FULL - MINOR)<br/>(LBC)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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### MAIN ISSUES

The principle of the proposal  
The impact on the setting of a listed building  
The impact on the character and appearance of the area  
The impact on residential amenity  
The impact on the ecological value of the site

### DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies within the open countryside about a mile to the south-east of Cheddleton village and is within the Basford Hall estate. It comprises a Grade II listed dwellinghouse, The Bath House, just over 100m to the south-east of Basford Hall and which is within the same ownership. It is at the end of the long driveway which weaves around the estate and connected to Basford Green, a country lane to the north. This is being used as a holiday let along with a number of other buildings on the Basford Hall estate. There is also a circular folly tower, also Grade II listed, within the application site and a short distance to the south of The Bath House. There is a pond to the north-east with "cascade" running along the south-west

boundary of the site. To the south-west of the site is another dwelling, Rock Cottage, also within the same ownership as the Basford estate. Both the Bath House and Rock Cottage are being advertised as holiday lets and may previously have been rented out as dwellings under longer term tenancy agreements. The site is otherwise surrounded by open land forming part of a country estate and is on land which slopes downwards towards the south-east from Basford Hall.

The site is not in the Green Belt.

## **PROPOSAL**

This is a full planning application and corresponding Listed Building Consent application for the change of use of the vacant folly tower into an annex to The Bath House holiday let. The ground floor would provide the entrance into a small hall with bathroom and wood burning stove. The first floor would be accessed via an existing spiral staircase protrusion and would provide a double bedroom. Above this would be an outdoor terrace at the top of the tower. There would be a number of external alterations described in a submitted Conservation, Design & Access statement and include the insertion of a painted metal safety handrail around the perimeter of the roof terrace, re-roofing, re-pointing and the insertion of new windows. A more detailed description of all works is provided on the application drawings.

Amendments to the works were submitted in late March 2025. The plans were also amended to include works to the grounds between the folly tower and The Bath House which include the insertion of black painted handrails and stone steps (comprising concrete and Indian stone) up an existing grass embankment and along the edges of existing hard-surfaced terraces immediately to the south of the Bath House, marked "Lower Terrace" and "Upper Terrace" (which would have new paving added). These works were added to the application Description of Development.

The amended site plan and block plans also shows the removal of an existing timber log store/shed from the plans and adds mitigation measures for swallow nests (found inside the tower) in the form of four bird boxes in the woodland to the west of the site. There are also bat mitigation measures shown in the form of four bat boxes in the woodland, six bat tiles on The Bath House and two bat tubes on The Bath House.

A Bat & Bird Survey Ecology Report was submitted with the original application (dated Nov 2024). In late April 2025, an amended Bat & Bird Survey Ecology Report was submitted.

## **RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

### **Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)**

- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC2 The Historic Environment
- NE1 Biodiversity
- E4 Tourism & Cultural Development

## **National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2025)**

Sections 6 (Economy), 12 (Design), 15 (Natural Environment) and 16 (The Historic Environment).

## **SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS**

SMD/2024/0427: Full planning application for small swimming pool and landscaping works within the curtilage of The Bath House. Approved and built.

SMD/2025/0058: Listed Building Consent for works at The Bath House. Pending.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 11.03.25

Neighbour consultation period ends: 11.03.25

Press Advert: 12.02.25 (Development Affecting a Listed Building).

### **Public Comments**

None.

### **Parish Council Comments**

Cheddleton Parish Council have no objection provided it meets the Conservation legislation.

### **Historic England**

We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.

### **Conservation Officer**

#### Original Consultation Response

The Folly Tower (Grade II) is an early-19th century circular folly constructed in rock-faced stone with crenelated parapet. The significance relates to development of follies for ornament in country estates and English garden landscaping from the 18th century, its designed Tudor style and its historical association with Basford Hall and estate.

Basford Hall (Grade II) is a c.1830s country house, extended c.1850s. The building is constructed in coursed stone and slate roof. It is designed in a Tudor style with asymmetrical frontage, large chimney stacks and mullioned windows. The significance derives from its retention of historic fabric and plan form, association with Sneyd family, illustrative Tudor revival style from the early-19th century,

association with the growth of small country estates in North Staffordshire during the Victorian period.

The bath house (Grade II) dates from the early-19th century and is constructed in rock-faced stone with a slate roof. The building is designed in a vernacular Tudor style imitating elements from the main house. The building once houses a heated swimming pool for Basford Hall.

The proposed works would involve the conversion of the folly tower to be an annexe to the bathhouse. The works would involve the installation of partitions internally, lining of walls, floors and ceilings, replacement windows, installation of woodburners and flue, replacement of roof finish and installation of metal railing behind the parapet.

Internally, the building is in a state of disrepair and there are modern paint finishes to the walls and the intervening floors appear to be modern replacements. The primary internal significance derives from its circular plan form, retention of stone spiral staircase and exposed chimney breasts on either floor.

The proposed conversion would result in the subdivision on the ground floor to create a lobby. This would negatively interrupt some of the appreciation of the internal proportions and character of the tower. However, the scale of this would be relatively limited and the circular plan form would still be mostly retained with the conversion. In addition, it is proposed to use a lime-based plaster rather than plasterboard to the walls which would help maintain this tower character internally. The works would involve plaster boarding ceilings, but these appear to be relatively modern and of no/low heritage significance and this would unlikely affect the building's special interest. The plans illustrate wood burners would be installed and flues routed through existing chimney flues, which would help minimise the visual impact of these alterations.

The principal part of the building's significance derives from its external design and prominence in the landscape. The proposed works would involve the replacement of all windows with slimline double glazed units (4-4-4mm), replacement of the roof structure, installation of chimney pots and flues and installation of a railing behind the parapet. The plans state that the external doors would be repaired and reused. However, it was noted on site (13/03/25) these were in quite a poor condition. A sectional drawing of the external doors has been provided (dwg no. AL12) but either an elevational drawing or manufacturer's specification of the design of any replacements would be required to ensure they would be sympathetic to the building's design.

The proposal would involve the replacement of windows with slimline double glazed units (4-4-4mm). Usually double glazing is discouraged in Listed Buildings as its installation may result in the loss of historic glazing and it is not a traditional feature which can often negatively impact the historic architectural detailing of the property. In this instance, the existing are modern replicas and in a poor state of repair. Whilst the works would not result in the loss of historic fabric, the replacement with double glazed alternatives would still cause a degree of visual harm as this is not a traditional feature. The technical drawing (dwg no. AL11) illustrates that these

replacements would be discreetly designed. However, it is not clear if a projecting trickle vent detail is shown on one of the sections if clarification can be provided

It is recognised that there are likely some public benefits in terms of climate change and energy efficiency arising from these proposed window works (par.167 of NPPF) and, in this instance, the proposed replacement would not result in the loss of historic fabric. The proposed replacements have also been designed to be a slim profile (4-4- 4mm) to minimise the visual impact.

The proposed replacement roof structure, whilst intrusive, would likely have a negligible impact on the architectural interest of the building as this appears to have been a modern replacement.

The proposed railings would be positioned in a prominent area of the listed building and distract from the designed Tudor and crenelated aesthetic. It is recognised that these would be required for Building Regulations and they appear to have been designed relatively sympathetically. A sectional drawing has been provided for their construction (dwg no. AL13) but no technical drawings for the elevational treatment of the railings has been provided. Whilst they are shown on the proposed elevations, they are limited in their detail. Further details of this would be required.

It is noted that the proposed site plan (dwg no. AL07) indicates a shed and log store to the terrace within the red edge of the development. No details of these features have been provided with the application, but it is likely there would be concerns with outbuildings and structures in a prominent and elevated position in regards to principal views of the two listed buildings on the site. It is also noted that a shed is indicated on the existing site plan, but there was no shed in situ on site visit (13/03/25). It would be recommend that these features are removed from the plans.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposed conversion would likely result in a moderate degree of harm to the listed folly tower, which 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 in terms of the conversion works as this would help secure the continued conservation of the designated heritage asset and help secure an optimum viable use for the building (par.213 and 215 of NPPF). There are no objections to the principle of the conversion works from a conservation perspective. However, as mentioned above, we would require the following:

Further clarification on details of sheds and log store shown on the proposed site Plan

Details of elevational treatment/design of the railings

Clarification on any trickle vents for the window replacements

Details of colour of window replacements

Notwithstanding the above, we would suggest the following for any consent granted:

Before the re-pointing hereby granted consent is carried out, details of the mortar to be used for re-pointing (including mortar mix, colour, texture and pointing finish and details of the method of removal of existing pointing shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed repointing and mortar details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

No trickle vents to be installed on any replacement windows hereby approved.

Reason: To minimise the visual impact on the designated heritage and to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

Before any external doors are installed, details of their design and material, in the form of scale drawings or specifications, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed door detail.

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

Before they are installed, full details of the siting, appearance and materials to be used in the construction of all extractor vents, flues, airbricks, soil and vent pipes, rainwater goods or any other external accretion shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed 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.

#### Response to the amended drawings received in March 2025

The log store and shed have been removed from the existing and proposed site plans and the details of the terracing and railings between the Folly Tower and Bath House have been included in this application. In addition, it has been confirmed that windows would not have trickle vents, and these would be coloured black.

Overall, the proposed further information has clarified some of the impact on the heritage assets, although it is noted that no detailed elevations or specifications have been provided for the design of the railings to the roof of the tower. The specific details of which could be agreed via condition.

The proposed conversion would likely result in a moderate degree of harm to the listed folly tower, which 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 in terms of the conversion works as this would help secure the continued conservation of the designated heritage asset and help secure an optimum viable use for the building (par.213 and 215 of NPPF). There are no objections to the principle of the conversion works from a conservation perspective.

Approve subject to conditions requiring further details of repointing, railings, external doors plus any extractor vents, flues, airbricks, soil and vent pipes, rainwater goods or any other external accretions

### **Staffordshire Wildlife Trust**

Dated 19.8.25:

No objection subject to conditions which request further details of lighting, bat and bird mitigation measures design and a CEMP.

### **SMDC Waste Collection Service.**

No issues regarding waste collections.

### **OFFICER COMMENTS**

Policy SS10, the strategy for the countryside, allows the conversion of rural buildings into residential uses where the building is physically, architecturally and in character terms suitable for such a change of use. I consider the building falls into that category. The proposal in changing the use of a vacant Grade II listed folly tower, which could potentially otherwise fall into disrepair if remaining vacant and redundant, into further floorspace for an existing holiday let, would in principle be acceptable subject to any associated works respecting the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area.

In this respect, the Conservation Officer, recognises that a “moderate” degree of harm would result from the proposed works, due to cumulative impacts of the insertion of double glazed windows, an externally visible handrail placed on the roof and the interruption of the internal space with the provision of a partition wall to separate the lobby from the bathroom. However, cumulatively, the harm is considered to be “less than substantial” and the NPPF allows such a level of harm if the proposal would provide benefits which are considered to outweigh the level of harm identified. It is considered that a suitable and viable new use for a building to prevent a building falling into continued disrepair, in this case an annex to a holiday let, would provide such a benefit, including public benefit outweighing the harm. The change of use of the building and proposed works applied to it would therefore comply with policies SS10, DC1 and DC2 of the Local Plan, would be in line with Policy E4 of the Local Plan and would also therefore be in line with the guidance in Sections 6 and 16 of the NPPF.

The works to the grounds comprising new concrete and stone stairs up the grass bank and the provision of black metal safety handrails for the lower and upper terraces adjacent to The Bath House, are also considered to not amount to significant harm to the setting of the listed buildings. The works would comply with policies DC1 and DC2 of the Local Plan.

With regard to other impacts, there would be no harm to residential amenity as although there is a neighbouring dwelling to the south, Rock Cottage, this is also

used as a holiday let in conjunction with the same owners holiday accommodation business at Basford Hall. In this respect, Policy DC1 is complied with.

Finally, with regard to ecological impacts, the Bat Report reveals that bats were discovered using the folly building during the summer months and there is also potential for bats to use the building during the hibernation phase and also for use by nesting birds. However, subject to conditions, the proposed works would not harm such protected species and the applicant is providing appropriate mitigation measures around the site in the form of bat and bird boxes in the nearby trees and also bat tiles and bat tubes attached to The Bath House. The measures are approved by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust which does not object subject to condition which would secure the measures in order to protect the ecological value of the site.

There is no requirement for BNG as the proposed development would not involve the loss of more than 25 sq.m of potential habitat and therefore qualifies as an exemption to BNG.

Due to the ecological value of the site and protected species not being affected, with the safeguard of appropriate conditions, the proposal would comply with policies NE1 and Section 15 of the NPPF.

## **CONCLUSION**

The amended proposal would not harm the character and appearance of a listed building or the setting of listed buildings or the environment in general with the safeguard of further appropriate conditions and would help restore a fairly unique Grade II listed building preventing further disrepair. The proposal would comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :    APPROVE FULL AND LBC APPLICATIONS**

**Case Officer: Chris Johnston**  
**Recommendation Date: 8.9.25**

X 

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Signed by: Jane Curley

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

