

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 14th October 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0401
Site Address: The Old Parlour, Castle Hill Road, Alton
Proposal: Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of replacement building for use as holiday accommodation

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Alton & Farley Conservation Area - Townhead Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1374717)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Alton Conservation Area and within the wider setting of Townhead Farmhouse, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

Alton & Farley Conservation Area, the boundary of which 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. Many buildings are 2- and 3-storeys with modest scale and Neo-Tudor detailing, associated with Alton estate.

Townhead Farmhouse (Grade II) dates from late-18th century, with 17th century origins. The building is constructed in ashlar, with a plain tile roof. The building is 3-storeys, with symmetrical façade and 3-light mullioned windows. The significance of the building derives from its retention of historic fabric and plan form, association with the development of farmsteads in the 17th century, illustrative of vernacular construction with some polite architectural influence. The parlour historically was linked to the farmhouse, but has since been converted to residential use.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve demolition of an outbuilding and replacement with a single storey building for holiday accommodation. The existing building is a rendered linear range with a mono-pitch roof, positioned behind a stone wall facing Castle Hill Road.

The existing outbuilding is of no heritage value, and its demolition would not harm the significance of the Conservation Area nor the setting of the Listed Building.

The proposed replacement building would be approx. 15m (L) x 4.5m (W) x 4.3 (H). It would be a similar length and width to the existing building but would have a pitched roof which would increase the height of the outbuilding. The proposed materials would be natural stone walling and Staffordshire blue tile roof, which would be characteristic of the surrounding built heritage. The proposed elevations note the windows and rainwater goods would be upvc, which is not a traditional material. However, it is considered that these features would be on non-principal elevations and, if detailed well, could still be sympathetic to the appearance of the Conservation Area in this instance.

Whilst there would be an increase in height and potentially an increase in the visibility and prominence of the building from the street, the proposed roof form would be more sympathetic to the traditional and vernacular construction of buildings elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Its scale would still be subservient to other historic ancillary buildings in the historic Townhead farmstead and the increased height would not result in a visual dominating building.

Overall, the proposed development would be a slight enhancement to the appearance of the Conservation Area and would have a neutral impact on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building.

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).

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 & Farley Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposed replacement building would be a slight enhancement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and have a neutral impact on the setting of the Listed Building. This would satisfy the provisions of s.66 and 72 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. There are 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) of the replacement building hereby approved, a stone sample panel, showing stone type and finish, as well as its coursing, jointing and pointing technique, shall be provided on site for inspection and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed sample panel details.

Reason: In order to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- Before the new roof hereby approved is installed for the replacement building, samples or detailed specifications of the new roof tiles to be used, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter 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, fixing and finish in the form of manufacturer's specification or 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. The works shall thereafter be undertaken and retained for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the approved details.
 - i. External windows including roof windows, doors and their immediate surroundings, including details of glazing and glazing bars.

- ii. Treatment of window and door heads and cills
- iii. Ridge, verges and eaves
- iv. Extractor vents, flues and/or airbricks

Reason: In order to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson