

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 30th October 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2024/0077
Site Address: Basford Hall, Basford Green
Proposal: Erection of Agricultural and Woodchip Storage Building

Conservation Advice – Amendments

Assessment and Impact

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

- Woodchip Shed Floor Plans & Elevations (dwg no. AL03)
- Site Section 'as proposed' (dwg no. AL02 Rev A)
- Proposed Storage Building Site Plan 'as proposed' (dwg no. AL01 Rev B)

A site section has been provided from the development site towards Basford Hall and its listed farmhouse. It would have also been useful to have a site section towards the listed lodges to the southeast as these are located in a prominent location on the entrance to the estate's parkland and are in closer proximity to the development site than the farmhouse.

Nevertheless, the visualisations provided in the site section plan illustrate the development would be quite an incongruous structure in the landscape. Its scale, form and palette of materials would be at odds with the surrounding traditionally constructed buildings primarily finished in stone. The dark green cladding would help reduce some of the visual impact in the rural landscape, but this would be limited by the use of concrete to the base of the building which starkly contrast to the surrounding built form. In addition, its scale and form would contrast with the estate architecture and the more traditionally constructed buildings in the hamlet of Basford Green. The hardstanding of the track would also diminish the verdant rural character of the setting of the heritage assets.

The proposed site plan indicates there would be trees planted to the north and south of the new access track. This screening would limit some views of the development but as shown in the visualisations, it would not completely remove views of the structure. As noted in previous comments, the proposal would encroach upon the historic parkland which is an NDHA and the setting of the listed hall and estate.

Historic England's 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' outlines that 'screening [of a development] may have a part to play in reducing harm. As screening can only mitigate negative impacts, rather than removing impacts or providing enhancement, it ought

never to be regarded as a substitute for well-designed developments within the setting of heritage assets. Screening may have as intrusive an effect on the setting as the development it seeks to mitigate, so where it is necessary, it too merits careful design. This should take account of local landscape character' (par.40).

The building itself would have a harmful impact on the setting and significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets. And, in this instance, the proposed screening would also have a harmful impact as it would alter the parkland estate character. The undulating topography of wider views of the surrounding rural landscape forms part of an important vista on the approach to the listed hall. The building and its proposed screening would encroach upon this openness and, the screening in particular, would create a more enclosed copse/woodland character where it was not designed to be. This would alter and diminish the wider setting of the listed building and the estate buildings.

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).

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).

The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications and a balanced judgement will be required in regard to the scale of harm or loss of significance of the non-designated heritage asset (par.216).

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

In summary, the proposal would have a harmful impact on the setting of several Grade II Listed Buildings within the vicinity and the significance of the parkland which is a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. This would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.66 of the Act.

With reference to the planning policies, this would be ‘less than substantial harm’ to the setting and significance of the designated heritage assets (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). This would not result in the total loss of significance of the NDHA and would only affect a small portion of the parkland (par.216 of NPPF). However, great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset (par.212 of NPPF). There does not appear to be clear and convincing justification provided for this level of harm (par.213 of NPPF), for example whether other less visually intrusive options have been considered such as a smaller structure and/or alternative locations in the estate. Therefore, we object to the proposal from a conservation perspective.