

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 5th November 2025
Application Ref: SMD/2025/0363 & SMD/2025/0365
Site Address: Moor Court Hall, Moor Court, Farley Road, Oakamoor
Proposal:

- Listed building consent for alterations to existing gated entry points and proposed new gated entry points
- Alterations to existing gated entry points and proposed new gated entry points

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	- Moor Court – Grade II (listing ref: 1374730) - Former stables approx. 18m west of Moor Court – Grade II (listing ref: 1037853) - West Lodge – Grade II (listing ref: 1037852)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations to entrances within the grounds of Moor Court, which is a Grade II Listed Building. There are two other Grade II Listed Buildings also within the vicinity of the proposed development.

Moor Court (Grade II) is a c.1861 country house with c.1878-80 and c.1913 additions and alterations, constructed in ashlar stone with fish-scale tile roof. The building was built for A.S. Bolton and designed in a Neo-Jacobean style with projecting Dutch gables and gablets, mullioned and transomed windows and decorative spiral chimney stacks. The significance derives from its association with the growth of country houses in the area as a result of the boom in industrial developments, association with the local notable architect W.Sugden of Leek and illustrative Jacobean Revival style which was popular in the Victorian period. The building and site was used as a women's prison in the 20th century but ceased use in the 1980s. The setting of the hall is provided by its surrounding landscaped gardens and rural context, both of which accentuate the designed grandeur and importance of the house.

The former stables (Grade II) is a c.1913 former stables, constructed in ashlar with fishscale tile roof. The significance of the building derives from its association with the principal hall and the later phases of development of the grounds.

To the south of the hall is West Lodge (Grade II), a c.1861 entrance lodge constructed in ashlar with plain tile roof. The significance derives from its historic association with the principal hall and its designed subservient and ancillary appearance.

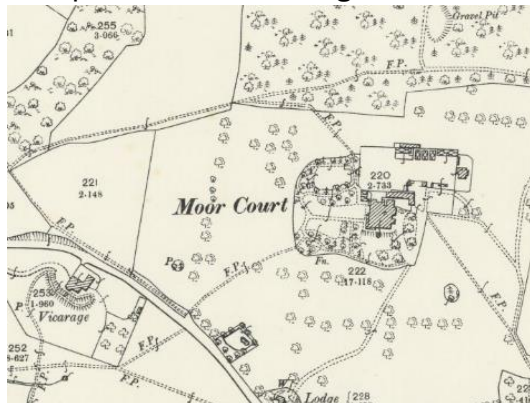


Fig. 1 c. 1898 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

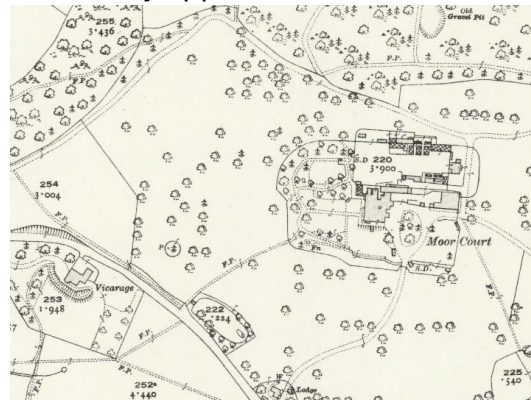


Fig. 2 c. 1920 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

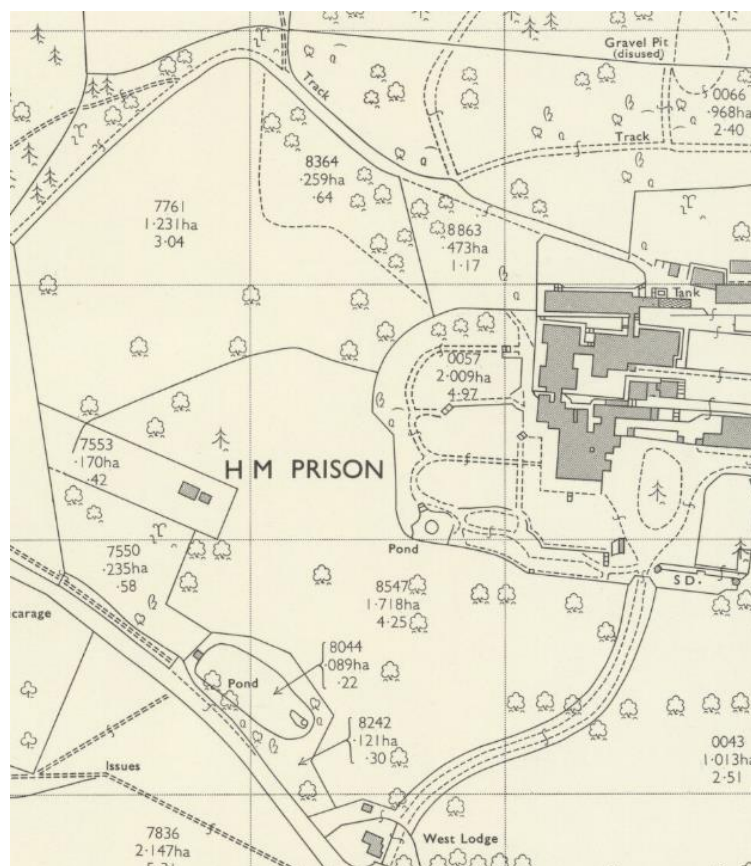


Fig. 3 c. 1969 National Grid map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

Assessment and Impact

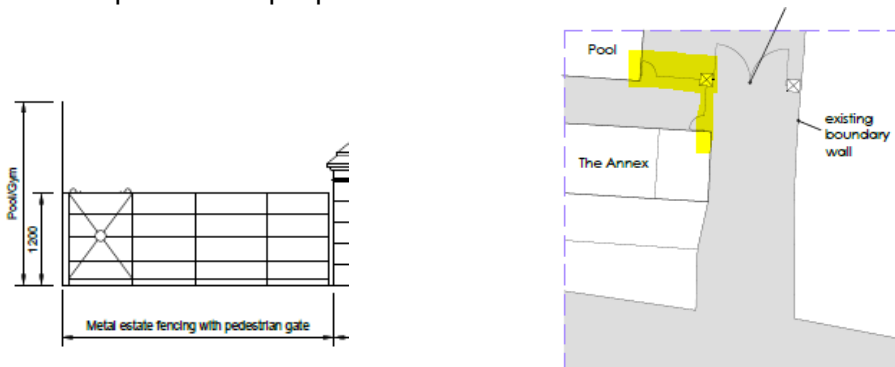
The proposal seeks consent to replace the gates to four entrance points to the hall. Some of the gates and entrances include stone gate piers, which are considered curtilage listed as they are ancillary structures within the grounds of the principal hall and pre-date 1948. Therefore, a corresponding Listed Building Consent application has been submitted.

Overall, there are some concerns from a conservation perspective with the demolition/alteration of the existing stone gate piers as these are of historic interest and are associated with the design of the wider estate to the country house. In addition, there are limited technical details on the proposed gate design as the proposed elevations state the design is to be confirmed.

Entry Point 1 - North-East of Moor Court Hall entry to the north courtyard

As noted in the Design & Heritage Statement, the gates at Entry Point 1 are modern metal gates of no heritage value. There are no concerns with the principle of replacing these as it would not involve the loss of historic fabric. Whilst there is no precedent for stone gate piers here, the style would match the ones elsewhere in the estate and these would unlikely harm the setting of the listed hall. The proposed elevation (dwg no. 06) indicates a metal fence with pedestrian gate – it is assumed this is for the area highlighted in yellow below as it is not overly clear?

As mentioned above, there are no detailed designs for the vehicular gate and the proposed elevation mentions the details are to be confirmed at a later date. This level of detail should be provided at the application stage as, without it, it limits the ability to assess the impact of the proposal.



Entry Point 2 – North of the site closing off the entry point from the north-west access road

This access road appears to be a modern track from the use of the site as a prison and is of no heritage value. The proposed alterations to this entry point would include a stone boundary wall along the access track and construction of approx. 2.15m stone piers and new wrought iron gates. The proposed elevations do not show the whole length of the wall, which probably needs to be updated for accuracy on what the

proposal entails particularly how it terminates at the other end as the proposal only shows it adjoining the gate piers.

There are no detailed designs for the vehicular gate and the proposed elevation mentions the details are to be confirmed at a later date. This level of detail should be provided at the application stage as, without it, it limits the ability to assess the impact of the proposal.

Entry Point 3 – the main access from the South Lodge

It is not overtly clear what the proposed increase in height of the existing piers would be as no existing elevation has been provided with the application. However, it is assumed this would be approx. 2m increase in height based on the proposed elevations. These works would result in a degree of heritage harm to the setting and significance of the listed structures as it would diminish the historic authenticity of the historic gatepiers. It is not clear what the justification is for this heritage harm. As above, there are no specific details of the gates provided.

Entry Point 4 – East entry point adjacent to the Coach House

The proposal seeks to increase the height of the gate piers immediately adjacent the coach house (Grade II). These works would result in a degree of heritage harm to the setting and significance of the listed structures as it would diminish the historic authenticity of the historic gatepiers. It is not clear what the justification is for this heritage harm. As above, there are no specific details of the gates provided.

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 Buildings (s.16 and 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).

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 and Recommendations

In summary, the level of detail provided for the replacement gates is limited which does hinder the ability to assess the level of impact of the proposed alterations. Nevertheless, it is likely that the proposal would have a minor-moderate harmful impact on the setting and significance of the Listed Buildings as it is proposed to increase the height and lose of historic authenticity of the existing stone piers to Entry Point 3 & 4.

The proposal would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.16 & 66 of the Act. With reference to 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). There does not appear to be clear and convincing justification for the level of harm caused by alterations to the gate piers (par.213 of NPPF) and, as set out above, there is a lack of detail on the specific design of the replacement gates so it is difficult to fully assess the impact of the proposal.

From a conservation perspective, we cannot support the proposal at this stage and would suggest the following:

- Clarification on the information provided for the pedestrian gate for Entry Point 1
- Further information on the wall to be constructed at Entry Point 2
- Retention of the height and siting of the existing gate piers at Entry Point 3 & 4
- Detailed designs for the gates for all entrances to be provided at the application stage

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