

PLANNING, & DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSAL : INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS
TO DWELLING, EXTENSION OF DOMESTIC
CURTILAGE AND ERECTION OF A DETACHED
GARAGE AND CARPORT WITH ASSOCIATED
HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING WORKS**

**ADDRESS : GATE FARM, FOXT, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST10
2HN**

APPLICANT : MR & MRS WILBRAHAM

DATE : NOVEMBER 2025 JOB No.: 2024-2949

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted in support of a full planning and listed building consent application for internal and external alterations to a dwelling, extension of domestic curtilage and erection of a detached garage and carport with associated hard and soft landscaping works at Gate Farm, Foxt. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr & Mrs Wilbraham and is accompanied by the following drawings, technical reports and information, all of which should be read in conjunction with this statement:

- 2024-2949-02A – Existing conditions – Site Plan
- 2024-2949-05D – Existing conditions – Floor Plans and Elevations
- 2024-2949-06 – Existing Conditions Workshop – Floor Plans and Elevations
- 2024-2949-07K – Planning Proposal – Elevations
- 2024-2949-08E – Planning Proposal – Site Plan Garage and Outbuildings Plans and Elevations
- 2024-2949-09 – Planning Proposal – Central Fireplace Plans and Elevations Details
- 2024-2949-10C Planning Proposal – Floor Plans
- 2024-2949-11 – Planning Proposal – Floor Finishes and Joist Plans
- 2024-2949-12A – Planning Proposal – Drystone Wall and Gate
- 2024-2949-13 – Planning Proposal – Internal Doors
- 2024-2949-14A – Planning Proposal – Site Plan
- 2024-2949-15 – Cross Sections – Proposed and Existing
- 2024-2949-16 – Planning Proposal – Former Parlour Fireplace – Proposed and Existing
- 2024-2949-17B – Planning Proposal – Location and Block Plan
- Gate Farm Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report undertaken by Liz Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain Calculator undertaken by Liz Ecology
- Cold Roof Clay Tile Lead Soaker technical detail.pdf
- Narrow Time Gate technical detail.pdf
- Planting Schedule.pdf
- Post and rail fence technical detail.pdf
- Wide timer gate technical detail.pdf

This statement starts by providing a description of the application site and setting out the proposal. It then sets out the local and national planning policies which have been used to consider the proposal and sets out how design principles and concepts have been applied to the design of the proposal and how it has taken account of national and local historic and environment planning policies, and in particular how the design preserves and enhances the historic and architectural importance of the application building; how the proposal has been designed to harmonise with the existing architectural style of the building and area; the application building's setting; and particular physical features of the building and area that contribute to its special interest or character.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

Gate Farm is a detached two storey three bay dwelling which dates back to 1624. Constructed from coursed dressed and squared stone under a plain clay tile roof it has a simple rectangular plan form and sits gable end onto the highway. Perched on a gritstone outcrop and surrounded on two sides by public rights of way Gate Farm enjoys a prominent position on the south western edge of the village. It lies within the Foxt conservation area and is grade II listed. The listing description states:

“Farmhouse. Dated 1624 with minor mid-C19 alterations. Coursed dressed and squared stone; tiled roof; verge parapets on corbelled kneelers; brick end stack to left and cruciform ridge stack behind entrance. Single storey and attic, long 3-window front; gabled dormer marginally to right of centre with datestone; 2-light C19 mullioned casement window; similar windows to ground 4 floor centre and right, both labelled; miniature window to left end beyond entrance which has very heavy Tudor-arch lintel and C20 glazed door.”

3.0 PROPOSAL

The applicants purchased the dwelling in 2024 and wish to undertake a number of internal and external alterations which would preserve the historic fabric of the building but also ensure that it is fit for modern living and where possible adopt natural materials to enhance its energy efficiency.

Proposed internal and external alterations to the dwelling comprise of, but are not limited to the following:-

- the replacement of windows, and doors both internally and externally,
- removal of the 19th century fire surround to the former parlour
- restoration of the large 17th century fireplace
- restoration of 18th century fireplace surround to central room
- internal clockwork partitions
- repairs to oak beams, floor boards and floor joists
- new wattle and daub lime plaster
- first floor ceiling plaster
- repairs to the chimney
- installation of gas fired boiler and associated pipework and radiators to first floor and underfloor heating to ground floor
- provision of new services for waste, gas, electricity, ventilation and drainage.

In addition to the above the application seeks consent to reinstate the former domestic curtilage and erect a detached garage and car port.

The garden extension relates to a small wedge shaped parcel of land on the south western side of the dwelling and will be enclosed with a drystone wall to match the existing. The path is to be continued around the gable to link to the existing paths at the front and rear of the property.

The proposed garage and car port would be located to the north west of the dwelling adjacent to the existing detached workshop. It would essentially comprise of a simple building with a rectangular plan form providing a secure garage with adjoining car port and a small lean to at the rear forming a log store. It would be constructed from an oak timber frame set on a brick plinth clad with horizontal timber boarding under a plain clay tile roof. Access to the proposed garage and car port building would be via the existing gateway which lies contiguous with the northern gable of the adjacent workshop building. The existing concrete apron from the access track is to be broken out, removed and replaced with limestone hoggin and timber edging. The yard is to be separated from the wider field with a timber post and rail fence, which is to include pedestrian and field access gates, supplemented with a mixed native hedgerow. A series of natural stone slabs are to be laid linking the garage to the domestic curtilage.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied in decision-making. The NPPF constitutes a material consideration. Paragraph 38 states that local

planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision-makers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

The NPPF places strong emphasis on conserving and enhancing the historic environment (Paragraphs 207-216). It supports proposals that sustain viable uses for heritage assets consistent with their conservation and encourages development that brings heritage assets back into appropriate reuse.

Paragraph 116 states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if it would lead to an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or severe impacts on the road network resulting from residual cumulative impacts.

Paragraph 131 highlights that the creation of high quality, beautiful, and sustainable buildings. Is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 135 goes on to add that developments should amongst other things:

- function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the life of the development;
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, be, and be visually attractive in terms of its architecture, layout, and landscaping;
- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting;
- establish a strong sense of place;
- optimise the potential of the to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Section 72 of the same Act is also relevant and states "in the exercise with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area. of any functions under or by virtue of any of the previous mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

The purpose of the Character Appraisal is to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of the Foxt Conservation Area to guide decisions on planning proposals.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The development plan for the area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and contains the planning and conservation policies that are relevant to this proposal.

Policy SS1 Development principles requires new development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the area and maintains its local distinctiveness.

Policy SS 2 (Settlement Hierarchy) identifies Leek as a 'Town', which is the highest-ranking position in the hierarchy. Towns are defined as large settlements which contain services and facilities. Future growth in the District should be focussed on Towns, which have fixed development boundaries.

Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which 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. The policy goes on to confirm that the Local Authority will give priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

Policy DC 1 (Design Considerations) requires development to be well-designed so that it reinforces local distinctiveness and positively contributes to the character of the area. Design should be of a high quality, respect the site and its surroundings, and promote a sense of place. In addition, design concepts for buildings should reduce the impact of development, the amenity of the area must be protected, and the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geodiversity should be promoted where appropriate. There should be safe and satisfactory access, with a contribution towards meeting the parking requirement arising from the development. New developments should be well-integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle uses, with sustainable transport links.

Policy DC2 The Historic Environment requires heritage assets and their setting to be enhanced and gives protection to designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Policy DC3 of the Local Plan relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development.

Policy T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) notes that the Council will support development which reduces reliance on the private vehicle and the need to travel. Development should be located where the highway network can accommodate the traffic the scheme will generate, and appropriate parking should be made available.

Policy T2 (Other Transport Measures) states that the Council will support development proposals which encourage electrical battery powered vehicles.

In addition to the above the Council's Design Guide which is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document gives principles on good design is a further material consideration when determining all planning applications. The setting, character and context of a building/site should be considered, and the pattern for new development will be dependent on the nature of the settlement – new buildings should respect the settlement's "grain", i.e. the relationship buildings have to the street and to each other. The scale and proportion of surrounding buildings should be considered.

4.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The existing dwelling dates back to 1624 and is Grade II Listed. Research shows that when first built the dwelling had a thatched roof and a lower eaves level. Circa 1743 the eaves height was raised by two courses of ashlar and a sawtooth brick eaves, the thatched roof replaced with Staffordshire blue plain clay tiles and a principal brick chimney stack was added. The southern

gable of the building has been adapted several times and there has been several alterations to existing window and door openings which have been fitted with uPVC apertures prior to the listing description. Whilst there are a number of original features still evident within the building further 20th century alterations comprising new floorboards, plaster boarding, introduction of a new staircase and some rudimentary services have resulted in some rather unsympathetic alterations being undertaken.

Alterations and extensions to dwellings are permitted under both local and national planning policy and the proposal is therefore considered acceptable in principle subject to consideration of the following.

Design, layout and heritage impact

Prior to purchasing the property the applicants engaged a heritage conservation architect in order to assist them in determining what alterations could be undertaken. The current application is the cumulation of this work. The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment undertaken by Mel Morris Conservation. This document assessed the significance of the listed building and considered the impact of the proposal upon it. Whilst it is not the intention to repeat the findings of this assessment here it is pertinent to note that the alterations proposed are relatively minimal and most, if not all would contribute positively to the character and appearance of the building. The removal of uPVC windows and doors and their replacement with windows and doors more appropriate in terms of their style and materials will result in a significant positive enhancement to the building. Where modern interventions cannot be avoided, such as the provision of roof lights and flues etc these have all been carefully chosen i.e. heritage models and carefully sited to ensure that the historic significance of the property is maintained.

The approach will remove the harmful effects of cement mortar, concrete, and gypsum plaster and will involve best-practice conservation techniques and methods of repair, all of which are the desired outcome of the new owners, who see themselves as custodians and recognise the local and national importance of the listed building. Works which are required to install modern services to make the building habitable (with heating where there is currently none and to bring all parts into use with a second bathroom) are marked as low negative in the table and they are minor works which can be considered to be justifiable and benign in order that the building is brought into full use.

In addition to the above the application seeks to reinstate the original curtilage of the dwelling. A small level gravel dressed area would be provided for siting outside and would connect the front and rear garden paths. This modest alteration to the domestic curtilage supported by map evidence. The curtilage of the property was originally much larger and included a number of ancillary structures, a walled enclosure to the west and a series of pigsties which were attached to the farmhouse as evidenced on the 1181 Ordnance Survey Map. This is reinforced by the historic description of 1628 which refers to a “hempyard”, an “orchard” and a “garden” all as distinct elements and all which would be classed as curtilage. There is therefore documentary evidence that the curtilage was once much larger. It is a practical way off assisting with maintenance of the land and supporting the use of the listed building as a dwelling.

The detached garage and car port would be located adjacent to the existing workshop building. Whilst this is divorced from the dwellinghouse it was considered that this was the most preferable location having regard to the listed building and its setting. Consideration was given to converting the existing workshop building to provide dedicated and secure garage provision however the building is too short and too narrow to practically function as a garage for today’s cars.

The siting of the garage and car port means that the structure is read as part of the existing outbuilding and forms a group rather than appearing as a standalone and sporadic structure. It is also located on the site of a former building recorded in 1843 and 1967 OS map. The overall size

and scale of the detached garage and carport is modest and appropriate and its utilitarian form and design is in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. The use of timber provides the structure with a transient and lightweight appearance which is appropriate to its use and this edge of village rural location.

The reinstatement of the curtilage and the provision of a modest and appropriately designed garage and carport are considered to be acceptable having regard to the application building, its historic significance and its setting as well as the character and appearance of the wider area including the conservation area within which it is located. Accordingly the proposal is considered to comply with policies DC1, DC2, DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan as well as guidance contained within the NPPF.

Impact on residential amenity

National planning policy dictates that at the heart of its core principles, planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This is further re-iterated in CS Policy DC1, which seeks to protect residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping as informed by the Council's 'Space about Dwellings' SPG.

It is not considered that the proposed development would give rise to any adverse amenity issues having regard to the modest scale of the proposals, the existing use of the application building and its proximity to neighbour dwellings and surrounding land uses. On this basis it is considered that the proposal accords with such requirements in relation to Local Plan Policy DC1 and the NPPF.

Biodiversity

The application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Report prepared by Liz Ecology. The Biodiversity Net Gain Report established the baseline habitat unit position for the site and demonstrates that post development a 32% enhancement will be achieved. This is significantly in excess of the mandatory 10% statutory requirement set by the Government and exceeded the requirements set out within policy NE1 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states: 'Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe' (paragraph 116) as is reflected within CS Policy T1 'Development and Sustainable Transport'.

The application seeks to provide dedicated and secure parking provision and utilises an existing area currently used for this purpose. No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access point which is via a five bar field gate which lies contiguous with the north western gable of the application building. It is therefore considered that there would be no adverse impact on highway safety and accordingly there is no conflict with CS policy T1 or with the guidance of the NPPF.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes a number of alterations and extensions to this existing grade II listed building which is already in residential use. This form of development is considered to reflect the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

AMOUNT

The proposed garage and car port would have a floor area of 38 sq metres.

LAYOUT

The layout is shown on the submitted drawings accompanying the application.

SCALE

The proposed garage and car port building would have an eaves height of 2.4m and an overall ridge height of 5.2m.

LANDSCAPING

Additional landscape proposed as part of this proposal is shown on the submitted plans and detailed in the accompanying planting schedule.

APPEARANCE

The proposed alterations would result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the application building especially the removal of the rather poor and unsympathetic uPVC windows and doors and their replacements with ones much more appropriate in terms of style and materials. The proposed garage and carport would comprise of a modest structure of an appropriate size, scale, form, design and materials which are appropriate and respectful of the listed building, its setting and character and appearance of the wider area including the conservation area within which it is located.

ACCESS

The application seeks to utilise the existing access and no alterations are proposed as part of this application.

With the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF , it is clear that the present application will preserve the listed building and the conservation area within which it is located and are compliant with national and local planning policies.