

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 23rd February 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2026/0029 & SMD/2026/0030
Site Address: The Old Engine House, Biddulph Road, Mow Cop
Proposal:

- Conversion of garage to living accommodation and change of use of stable building to incorporate garage within part of the building
- Listed building consent for the conversion of garage to living accommodation and change of use of stable building to incorporate garage within part of the building

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	• Engine House at SJ 866 568 – Grade II (listing ref: 1189878)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would involve alterations within the setting of a former Engine House, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

The building, which has been heavily restored, is a former engine house serving a coal mine. The building dates from the early- to mid-19th century with 20th century alterations and restored in the 21st century. The building is constructed in squared rubble stone, now with a tile roof. The significance relates to its industrial heritage associated with coal mining in the area, example of technological advancements of coal mining in the 19th and 20th centuries, rural character and vernacular construction influenced by the availability of local materials.



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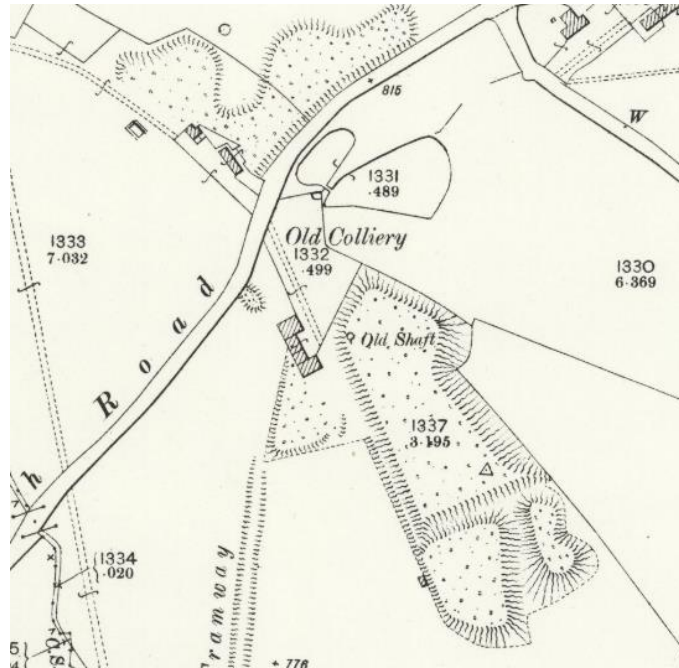


Fig.1. c.1897 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)



Fig.2 - Historic photograph of Engine House

Assessment and Impact

The proposal seeks alterations to the wing addition to the engine house (Grade II) and a stable block (approved under: SMD/2020/0490).

Householder planning permission has been applied for the conversion of the stables; however, this building appears to be outside the domestic curtilage of the principal dwelling so it would unlikely benefit from being within the scope of householder permission.

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed alterations to the Listed Building consist of changing the design of two external doors previously approved under the reinstatement of the east wing (application ref: SMD/2020/0283) and minor internal layout alterations to the previously approved integral garage area. In addition, the proposal seeks permission for the conversion of part of previously approved stable block (application ref: SMD/2020/0490) to a garage for domestic use.

Alterations to the listed building

The proposed alterations to the principal building are relatively minor and, given these works would be situated in the recently reinstated eastern wing of the building the works would unlikely harm the historic interest of the building. It is noted that the proposed detailing of the change of garage door to a bi-fold door is relatively domestic feature which not reflective of the building's industrial and technological heritage. However, this would be a relatively minor change to the appearance of the building, and it is noted that this is still reflective of the shape of the opening in Fig.2. The materials for the doors would be timber, which is sympathetic to the character of the building.

The proposed alterations to the internal layout would likely have a negligible impact on the special interest of the Listed Building as this eastern wing was recently rebuilt.

Alterations to the stable block

It is noted that the approved plans for the stable block (ref: SMD/2020/0490) indicated that the external facing materials would be timber treated boarding and blue/grey plastic sheeting roof to maintain an agricultural character. There was also proposed landscaping to be completed prior to the first use of the building under condition 4 of the SMD/2020/0490 permission, in order to minimise the visual impact of this development on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. On site visit (02/02/26) it was noted that the external finish of the stable block had not been completed and was exposed concrete breezeblock. In addition, the landscaping had not been completed in accordance with condition 4 of the 2020 approval. The building was, therefore, fairly prominent in views and appreciation of the listed building and in its current state has a harmful impact on the setting of the designated heritage asset.

As noted in previous conservation comments on the 2019 and 2020 permissions, from a conservation perspective we would wish to avoid seeing a domestic ancillary building in the setting of the engine house as this would diminish the historic appreciation and setting of the listed building. This view remains the same, but it is noted that the proposed elevations of the stable block would be minimally altered by the current scheme. This would unlikely increase or alter the level of impact on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. If the principle of the proposed conversion is considered

acceptable from a planning perspective, we would request that external materials are conditioned to ensure the external facing materials of the building are completed, landscaping conditioned to ensure the visual impact is minimised and permitted development rights removed to limit the scope of further impact on the setting of the listed building without consideration from the local planning authority.

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 Building (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).

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 proposal would likely result in minor harm to the setting and significance of the Listed Building which would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.16 and 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 asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework).

Notwithstanding this, it is noted that the proposal would unlikely increase the level of harm identified in the previous approvals. Subject to the principle being considered acceptable from a planning perspective, we would have no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective. As noted above, we would recommend the following for any consent granted to ensure that the impact on the setting is minimised:

- Landscaping to be completed around the stable block/garage
- Cladding of the stable block/garage to be completed
- Permitted development rights for external alterations to the garage/stable block to be removed

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson

