

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 20th April 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2206/0117
Site Address: Garage to rear of 1a Town Head, Alton
Proposal: Change of use of existing garage to form a 1 bedroom dwelling

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Alton & Farley Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

Alton & Farley Conservation Area 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. 1a Town Head is a positive unlisted building in the Conservation Area which is visible on late-19th century mapping. Immediately adjacent to the site is a graveyard which is enclosed by a historic stone boundary wall and screened by mature vegetation.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve alterations and extension to a garage to the rear of no.1a Town Head to convert to a single dwellinghouse.

The existing garage is of no heritage value; it is a pitched roof constructed of red brick (render to the rear) and plain tile roof with a lean-to finished in black timber cladding.

The proposed works would involve a pitched roof extension, which would be clad in vertical timber and a blue clay tile roof. In addition, the works would involve infilling the garage door with a window and domestic door.

From a conservation perspective, there are no objections to the proposed extension of the building as this would still be relatively modest in scale to the existing building and would not dominate or distract from any positive buildings in the Conservation Area. It would increase the visibility and prominence from the graveyard, but if detailed

sympathetically this would not harm the appreciation and experience of this part of the Conservation Area.

The proposed blue clay tiles mentioned in the application form would be sympathetic to the surrounding built heritage. However, the proposed vertical stained timber cladding would unlikely be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would be a visually distracting feature. Whilst it is acknowledged the lean-to extensions are black timber clad, these are much more subservient in scale and appearance than the proposed extension. It would, therefore, be recommended that the external facing materials of the extension are altered. For example, a brick or rendered appearance would be more appropriate to the heritage context.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of 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).

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
- Alton & Farley Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposed timber cladding of the extension would have a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would fail to satisfy s.72 of the Act. With reference to planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to the designated heritage asset but at the lower end of scale of harm (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework). There are no objections to the principle of the development, but it would be recommended that the external facing materials of the extension are altered to be more sympathetic and remove the heritage harm.

Subject to the suggested amendments above, it would be recommended that the following details are conditioned for any approval granted:

- No development 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. Development shall thereafter be undertaken and retained for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the approved details.
 - i. Any new rooftiles to be used
 - ii. Ridge, verge and eaves details
 - iii. External facing materials for the extension
 - iv. New brickwork for the infill
 - v. External windows and door details
 - vi. Any external vents and flues

Reason: To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson