

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 1st June 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2026/0125 & SMD/2026/0126
Site Address: Moor Court Hall, Farley Road, Oakamoor
Proposal:

- Renovation works to restore the property. Internal alterations to predominantly remove modern interventions. Removal of modern external door and reinstatement of window to East Elevation. Renovation works to Annex which is currently uninhabitable.
- Listed Building Consent for Renovation works to restore the property. Internal alterations to predominantly remove modern interventions. Removal of modern external door and reinstatement of window to East Elevation. Renovation works to Annex which is currently uninhabitable.

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 internal and external alterations to Moor Court Hall, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

Moor Court (Grade II) is a c.1861 country house with c.1878-80 (including the annexe) 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.

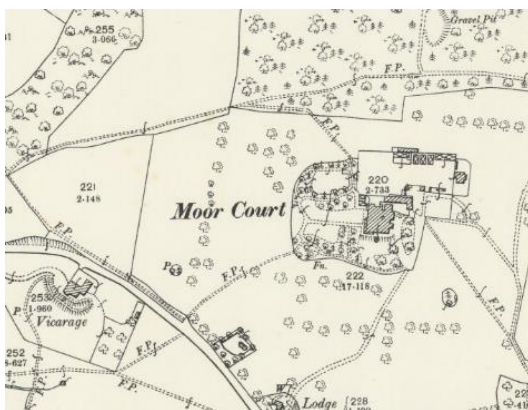


Fig.1 c. 1898 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

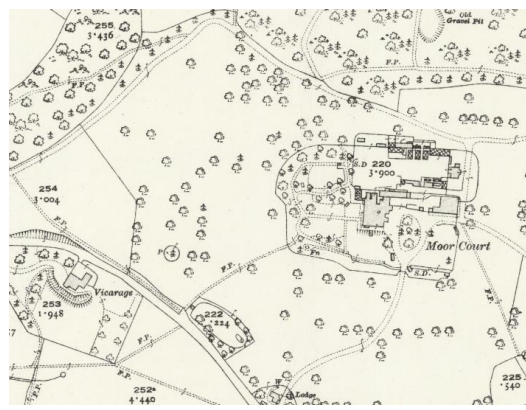


Fig.2 c. 1920 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

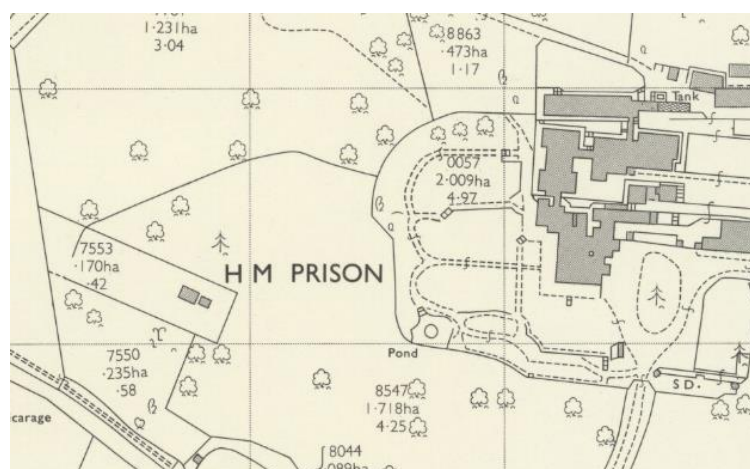


Fig.3 c. 1969 National Grid map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would alterations and refurbishments works internally and externally.

Internal alterations

The proposal internal works would involve alterations to the layout, removal of a modern staircase and thermal upgrades to the annexe.

The proposal seeks to open up the entrance hallway and archways infilled on the ground floor and one archway on the first floor. As noted in the Schedule of Works, these are 20th century alterations of low/no heritage significance. Therefore, the proposed works would unlikely harm the special interest of the Listed Building. However, for the entranceway/kitchen alterations, it would be useful to ascertain details of the floor covering in the existing kitchen area once the works have started as this may have implications on the historic tiled floor in the entranceway.

There are new doorway openings proposed on the ground and first floor – DG23, DG14, DF30a & DF2 – which would alter the floorplan and create a link between the 1861 and 1880 parts of the house. This would alter the historic plan form of the building and result in a minor degree of harm on the building's special interest. A new door would be formed through an existing cupboard which has an architrave, it is assumed that this would be retained with the proposed works but overall would likely have a negligible impact on the special interest of the building.

The proposal also seeks to remove a modern 20th century fire escape staircase and modern partitions on the first floor which would be an enhancement as this would allow the historic proportions of the rooms to be reinstated.

Some modern partitions and doors are proposed to be removed from the c.1914 part of the house, which would have a negligible impact on the significance of the building.

It is not clear what the existing internal finish of walling and flooring is in the annexe, but it is noted that the annotations on the proposed refurbishment works for the annexe include sand/cement screed for the ground flooring and gypsum plasterboard insulation, neither of which are breathable products. Although the annexe is a later addition, it still is traditionally constructed and the upgrade with non-breathable or permeable products will potentially negatively impact its performance. It would be recommended that breathable products such as limecrete and lime insulated plaster are used instead.

External alterations

The external works would involve repairs and refurbishments to the roof, chimney stacks and localised re-pointing. The external works would also involve the removal of an external door on the east elevation and reinstatement of mullioned window as well

as replacement of glazing within the existing window frames with slimline double glazing.

The door on the east elevation is a later insertion and the proposal seeks to remove this and reinstate the mullioned window, which would be a minor enhancement. Double glazing is usually discouraged in a listed building as it is not a traditional feature and can detract from the architectural interest. However, in this instance, the proposed works would involve the reinstatement of an original feature and the remaining window is a modern replacement. Therefore, the double glazing (if sensitively designed) would unlikely harm the building's special interest. In addition, the proposal would use timber for the frame which is a sympathetic material.

The schedule of works outlines the general principles for the refurbishment and repairs to be carried out externally, including replacing any cement mortar with lime mortar, replacing rainwater goods with cast iron and repairs to leadwork. There are no objections to the principle of these works, but it would be suggested some further technical details on the proposed lime mortar mix is provided.

The proposal outlines that windows would potentially be upgraded with Histoglass D12 or slimline (12mm) double glazing. However, it is not overtly clear from the submission which windows are proposed to be upgraded. Most of the windows in the property are modern later alternatives so it is likely that the upgrade of these modern windows would unlikely harm the special interest of the Listed Building, subject to the proposed detailing. This could potentially be agreed via a condition, but it would be useful to get an idea of the extent of possible alteration prior to determination.

Overall, there are some elements of the proposal which would cause a minor degree of harm the significance of the Listed Building but there are some enhancements that would likely balance or outweigh this (subject to suggested alteration to internal materials/lining of the annexe). The proposed works are also in the interests of securing the continued optimum viable use of the building.

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).

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, there would be a minor degree of harm arising from the proposal which would fail to satisfy s.16 and 66 of the Act. This would be ‘less than substantial harm’ to the designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework), but at the lower end of the scale of harm. There would, however, be some enhancements to the special interest of the Listed Building in terms of reinstating historic layout which would balance and outweigh this minor degree of heritage harm. In addition, the proposal has been sensitively designed with an understanding of the building’s phased historic plan form and internal décor and architectural interest. There are no objections to the principle of the proposal from a conservation perspective. However, as noted above, we would suggest further clarification/alteration to the proposed internal lining of the annexe building.

For any consent granted, we would suggest the following conditions:

External works

- Before the re-pointing hereby granted consent is carried out, details and a sample panel of the mortar to be used for re-pointing (including mortar mix, colour, texture and pointing finish) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed repointing and mortar details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

- Prior to the upgrade of any existing windows, a schedule of window works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The

schedule shall detail which windows shall be upgraded, outline any repair works to be carried out and provide sectional drawings of any alteration to double glazing (in the form of 1:20 sections). The works shall thereafter be carried out only in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the proposal takes the agreed form envisaged and to preserve the special interest of the Listed Building.

- Prior to the installation of any new windows and external doors hereby approved, details of their material, design, surrounds, colour and finish in the form of drawings and sections of no less than 1:20 scale, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

- Prior to the reinstatement of the window on the east elevation, details (and samples upon request) of the new stonework to be used in the works hereby permitted shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

Internal works

- No works shall be commenced in respect of the demolition of the staircase hereby approved until a methodology for undertaking repairs and reinstatement of the flooring, any cornicing, skirtings or other internal décor has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the proposal takes the agreed form envisaged and to preserve the special interest of the Listed Building.

- No new internal door openings hereby approved shall be inserted, until drawn details of their design including details of the door and any architraves or surrounds of a scale not less than 1:20 have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall thereafter only be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

- Following removal of partitions in the entranceway, a schedule of works shall be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The schedule shall detail and repairs, alterations or reinstatement of floor coverings to Room 01 on Detailed Ground Floor Plan (dwg no. 10). The works shall thereafter be carried out only in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson