

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2026/0269
Valid 26/06/2026

HERMITAGE FARM
FROGHALL ROAD
FROGHALL

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOR A REPLACEMENT OF
THE CURRENT ROTTING
SINGLE GLAZED WINDOWS
WITH HISTORICALLY
ACCURATE WOOD-EFFECT
DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS.
REPLACEMENT OF ALL
WINDOWS WITH WOOD-
EFFECT SMALL PANE
DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS.

(LISTED BUILDING CONSENT -
ALTERATION)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Impact upon the special architectural and historic interest and setting of the listed building

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The Hermitage – Grade II (listing ref: 1038049) listed late-17th century to early-18th century farmhouse, with mid-19th century alterations and additions. The Hermitage appears in a farmstead adjacent to two separately Grade II listed barns.

The building is constructed in coursed dressed and squared stone, M-plan tiled roof with stone copings and verge parapets. The significance of the building relates to its association as a rural dwelling, association with the development of farmsteads in the post-medieval period in North Staffs, continued phases of development, prominence as an isolated farmstead on a knoll along the lane and illustrative vernacular construction with some polite architectural influence.

List description:

Farmhouse. Late C17 or early C18 with mid-C19 alterations and additions. Coursed dressed and squared red sandstone of ashlar quality; tiled roof; verge parapets with pitched copings. Brick stack in centre valley. Plan of 2 parallel ranges, entrance front of 2 storeys and 2 windows; 3-light block mullioned small-pane casements, entrance marginally to left of centre with heavy lintel incised into an ogee arch with a circle in the tympanum. Garden front has 5- and 3-light chamfered mullion windows (5-light to first floor left) labelled to ground floor, French casement inserted to right and lower

addition to right end. The house appears of reasonably homogenous construction; the entrance front obviously making an attempt at C18 fashion, whilst the rear has the more typical and archaic details of C16 derivation.

The existing windows are a mixture of timber, metal and upvc casement windows, which appear to be modern replacements. In any effect, the windows in the building do not make a contribution to the significance of the Listed Building as they are not historic.

PROPOSAL

The proposed work is described on the application form as:

to replace the current rotting single glazed windows with historically accurate wood-effect double glazed units. Currently the farmhouse has a mixture of newer white UPVC double glazed windows, timber double glazed windows with large panes, timber single glazed windows with small panes, and a small number of metal single glazed windows.

The statement submits that

The replacement proposed windows will comprise:

- Heritage-style flush sash composite casement windows.
- Double-glazed sealed units.
- Traditional side-hung casement openings.
- Mechanically jointed frame and sash detailing.
- Slimline frame profiles.

Flush external sash appearance.

All windows throughout the farmhouse will adopt a consistent traditional casement design in order to create a unified and coherent appearance across all elevations.

The proposed windows will be finished in a Heritage Sage Green wood-effect finish.

A technical drawing is provided in the submitted statement that shows a typical cross section of the proposed frames.

The statement submits that:

The proposal represents a heritage enhancement when compared with the existing situation. The removal of the various modern and inconsistent window types will reduce visual clutter and restore a greater degree of architectural coherence to the farmhouse. The proposed windows have been carefully selected to respect the building's historic significance whilst remaining readily distinguishable from original historic fabric upon close inspection, in accordance with recognised conservation principles.

In addition to the heritage benefits, the replacement windows will provide improved thermal performance, increased weather resistance and reduced maintenance requirements. These improvements will assist in securing the long-term viable use and occupation of the listed building, thereby supporting its continued preservation and stewardship.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

07/00059/BOC Historic windows to rear of property have been
SMD/2022/0312 Listed building consent for replacement windows historically
accurate wooden double glazed units. APPROVED.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 21/08/2026
Neighbour consultation period ends: 21/08/2026
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Ipstones PC: No response within consultation period

SMDC Conservation Officer

upvc windows are usually discouraged in historic buildings as they are not a traditional material associated with historic building construction. This is particularly the case in Listed Buildings which are designated for their architectural interest of national importance. The significance of this Listed Building in particular derives from its vernacular construction influenced by the availability of local materials and historic craftsmanship, therefore, upvc is an alien and unsympathetic material.

In addition to the above, upvc window construction typically have a bulky frame which is unable to authentically replicate the finesse and quality of traditional historic joinery or metal window details. A technical sectional detail has been provided in the Heritage Statement which illustrates these would be flush fitting casements but also emphasises the bulkiness of their construction as a result. This bulkiness would be further exacerbated by the proposed standard double-glazed unit proposed which, again, is not a traditional detail. Features such as spacer bars between the panes of glass would emphasise the inauthenticity of the window details.

In summary, the proposal would result in a moderate degree of harm to the special interest and significance of the Listed Building and setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings. This would fail to satisfy the provisions of s.16 of the Act. With reference to planning policies, this would be 'less than substantial harm' to 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 this level of harm (par.213 of NPPF) and there would be no heritage-related public benefits arising from the proposal which would balance or outweigh this level of harm

(par.215 of NPPF). Great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage (par.212 of NPPF). We, therefore, object to the proposal from a conservation perspective and recommend it is refused.

The Society for the protection of Ancient Buildings

The application fails to meet the requirements of national planning policy and would cause unjustified harm to the significance and special interest of The Hermitage. We therefore object to the application. We recommend that it is withdrawn and revised, or otherwise that it is refused.

Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that 'local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected' by proposals, to a level of details that is 'proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'. The application does not currently satisfy this requirement. It contains no meaningful assessment of the windows that are to be removed, other making the erroneous assumption that a diaspora of window types and / or designs is implicitly problematic or undesirable. Even if some of the existing windows have no heritage value, the fact that they do not match others is not, in and of itself, problematic. In any case, the significance of all of the windows must be examined and communicated as part of the application.

The application also fails, in our view, to correctly assess the impact of introducing composite 'wood-effect' windows. The material and design of these windows is deeply inappropriate in the context of an historic listed building, and this is not offset or mitigated by any perceived benefit resulting from a unified or standardised appearance. Whilst terms such as 'historic design', 'heritage-style design' and 'historically accurate' are used in the application, the proposed windows are not traditional or sympathetic in form, design, materiality, repairability or performance. Where current uPVC windows are in place, their replacement as proposed may not exacerbate existing harm. However, the replacement of traditional timber-framed windows with the proposed design certainly would.

In the first instance, a revised Heritage Statement is required which should meet the requirements of the NPPF and include a full window schedule. This is key to establishing a heritage baseline, which should then inform sensitive, conservation-led intervention(s). The applicant may find Historic England's Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets to be useful when preparing a revised HS.

Revisions to the application should then be made to incorporate proposals which better recognise and respond to the building's significance and character. Historic England's Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency and their Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading offer clear guidance on how this can be achieved. Importantly, historic traditional windows should be retained and conserved whenever possible, and new windows should be of appropriate design, specification and quality.

Any revised scheme should be accompanied by an impact assessment that thoroughly examines the effect of the proposed changes on the building's significance. Any harm identified should not be granted consent unless it is

supported by the 'clear and convincing justification' required by paragraph 213 of the NPPF.

We would ask to be notified of any revisions or new documents supplied to this application, so that we can review these and return constructive feedback. However, if this is not forthcoming then we must strongly recommend that the application is refused.

Historic England

Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.

The Georgian Group

The Group has concerns about these proposals for the following reasons. Hermitage Farmhouse is a GII listed structure of late seventeenth or early c18th date with mid c19th alterations and additions. The dwelling presently has a mixture of historic, and relatively recent casement window frames. Whilst the Group has no objection to the sympathetic replacement of the relatively recent units, we do have concerns regarding the proposed wholesale replacement of the surviving historic frames especially as very little information has been provided relating to their age and significance.

Historic England's 'Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading' (2017) advises that 'the loss of traditional windows from our older buildings poses one of the major threats to our heritage. Traditional windows and their glazing also make an important contribution to the significance of historic areas. They are an integral part of the design of older buildings and can be important artefacts in their own right, often made with great skill and ingenuity with materials of a higher quality than are generally available today.

The distinctive appearance of historic hand-made glass is not easily imitated in modern glazing.' The loss of historic fabric such as window frames will inevitably result in a degree of harm to the significance of the listed building, the loss of crown or other early glass can also cause harm to the significance of a listed building. Historic England's 2017 advice (see above for reference) recommends that 'an assessment of the significance of a window or windows and the contribution they make to the overall significance of a building is the key first step in deciding the right course of action. Surviving historic fenestration is an irreplaceable resource which should be conserved and repaired whenever possible.'

Where historic fabric is to be removed or replaced a degree of harm will inevitably be caused to the significance of the affected listed building. The NPPF (2024), paragraph 213 makes clear that 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.' In this case as little information has been provided regarding the condition of the surviving historic window frames or of the costs associated with their repair, a clear and convincing justification for their removal has not been provided.

When making a decision on all listed building consent applications or any decision on a planning application for development that affects a listed building, registered landscape, or their setting, a local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the heritage asset or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the special interest of the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged. This obligation, found in sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (1), applies to all decisions concerning listed buildings. The installation of non-wood framed units within a listed building is not acceptable on heritage grounds.

The applicant urgently needs to provide additional information to explain the significance of the historic frames and their present condition, and also to explain which frames are historic ones and which are of relatively recent installation. Without this information your authority may be unable to fully meet its obligations under paragraph 208 of the NPPF. If this information is not provided, then listed building consent should be refused.

The Victorian Society

Object to the proposal in its current form.

Hermitage Farm is a late C17th-C19th farmhouse which is Grade II-listed, meaning that it is recognised for its national significance and special interest. It has undergone historic alterations, and we recognise that the windows in particular, which are the subject of this application, now represent a variety of historic and modern periods. We also recognise that not all of these interventions will represent sympathetic additions to the character of the building, but this variation of window-design is not inherently a detractor from the building's significance and represents material evidence of the building's historic use.

We raise concerns to the inadequate heritage statement in this application, which does not meaningfully assess the impact that the proposed 'wood-effect' windows will have on the character and significance of the building. As a listed building, any proposed alteration must be accompanied by the 'clear and convincing justification' that is central to the National Planning Policy Framework and a heritage impact assessment that reflects the significance of the building and level of proposed alteration (2024, paras. 212-215). We emphasise that the alteration of windows can have a significant impact on the character of a building, and an unsympathetic replacement can have a detrimental effect if it has not been thought about carefully.

We also raise concerns to the lack of assessment as to the current windows, whose date and style remain largely unknown. The proposed plans show loss of what appear to be historic windows and the proposed alteration of window size. We strongly recommend that a full and detailed window schedule is supplied as a part of this application, which will help demonstrate the age of the windows and assess the harm of the proposals. We emphasise the guidance that Historic England have published:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/find/a-z-publications/#ptoc>

Only with this added information can this application be meaningfully assessed for approval by your Authority. If you could keep the Victorian Society updated on your decision in due course, I would be very grateful.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Introduction and Background

There are a variety of different window types installed at The Hermitage, where the historic windows have been replaced this has been done post 1953 listing. In 2007 enforcement complaint pointed to the replacement of historic windows to the rear, with some upvc casement, the notes on file suggest that an example window casement was provided as a means of resolving that breach. It is not clear that the breach was resolved with the benefit of consent or any agreement of detail, the windows at the rear, however, do appear to be timber but of varying types.

More recently, in 2022, Listed Building Consent was granted to replace all of the windows with 'historically accurate' timber frame double glazed units. In effect, an in principle consent was granted subject to a condition that required full details be provided for approval. There was no follow up on the condition and that consented work has not been carried out. This current application, represents a step back from that consented proposal and proposes to replace all windows with double glazed upvc windows as an alternative.

Principle of Development

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)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026

Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of the policy (HE6 par. 3.).

Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed (HE6 par. 4.).

Assessment and Impact

The existing windows are a mixture of timber, metal and upvc casement windows, which appear to be modern replacements. It is unclear if the upvc windows on the front elevation benefit from permission. In any effect, the windows in the building do not make a contribution to the significance of the Listed Building as they are not historic.

Notwithstanding the above, upvc windows are usually discouraged in historic buildings as they are not a traditional material associated with historic building construction. This is particularly the case in Listed Buildings which are designated for their architectural interest of *national importance*. The significance of this Listed

Building in particular derives from its vernacular construction influenced by the availability of local materials and historic craftsmanship, therefore, upvc is an alien and unsympathetic material.

In addition to the above, upvc window construction typically have a bulky frame which is unable to authentically replicate the finesse and quality of traditional historic joinery or metal window details. A technical sectional detail has been provided in the Heritage Statement which illustrates these would be flush fitting casements but also emphasises the bulkiness of their construction as a result. This bulkiness would be further exacerbated by the proposed standard double-glazed unit proposed which, again, is not a traditional detail. Features such as spacer bars between the panes of glass would emphasise the inauthenticity of the window details.

It is noted that the application refers to 'wood-effect' upvc windows, but no specific details of this have been provided. Even if a wood-grain effect was applied to the upvc, the proposed windows would still be a poor replica of a traditional window in terms of its design and construction.

The Heritage Statement argues that the upvc windows would enable uniformity across the design of all the windows and help to achieve thermal improvements in the property. This does not provide clear and convincing justification for the harm arising from unsympathetic materials and inauthentic detailing. The historic and architectural interest of this Listed Building derives from its multiple phases of development, in which uniformity is not a key characteristic. In addition, it is not been clearly demonstrated that thermal improvements and energy efficiency could not be achieved with a more sympathetic design and material window. Particularly, consent has previously been granted for replacement timber framed casements.

It is acknowledged that the existing windows are modern, but many of the windows have attempted to replicate historic detailing or are modest in their design so they do not detract from the overall architectural interest of the building. It is considered that a uniform appearance upvc window, with bulky proportions and unsympathetic detailing, would worsen the visual appearance of the Listed Building and cause harm to its special interest and significance as a designated heritage asset.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

There would be harm to the special interest of the Listed Building. That harm is a matter of considerable importance and weight. There would be no public benefit that would outweigh that harm to the designated heritage asset. There would be conflict with the duties under the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act and the terms of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 21st August 2026

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council