

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 13th August 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2026/0172 & SMD/2026/0351
Site Address: Barn at Heaton Lowe Farm, Heaton Village Road, Heaton
Proposal:

- The application proposes a self build development involving the change of use and alteration of an existing barn to form a dwellinghouse.
- Listed Building Consent for the conversion and change of use of an existing agricultural barn to a single self-build dwelling within the curtilage of the adjacent Grade II listed building, including associated alterations

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Heatonlow Farmhouse – Grade II (listing ref: 1190277)
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

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Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in the curtilage of Heaton Lowe Farmhouse, which is a Grade II Listed Building. The farmhouse has a datestone of '1651' and has 17th century origins but was largely rebuilt in the mid-19th century. The building is constructed in coursed stone with a tiled roof. The principal façade is 4 bays with a central Tudor arched doorway and porch. The significance relates to historic origins as an upland farmstead and baffle-entry farmhouse in North Staffs, illustrative later phases of redevelopment and mixture of vernacular construction with polite architectural interest.

The barn to the south dates from late-18th or early-19th century, likely a cowhouse with hayloft above. There has been a modern floor inserted but it has retained its division for feeding passages. The building is visible on the late-19th century mapping and appears in the same ownership as the principal listed building, was historically ancillary to the farmhouse function and is in close proximity to the farmstead. Therefore, it is considered curtilage listed.

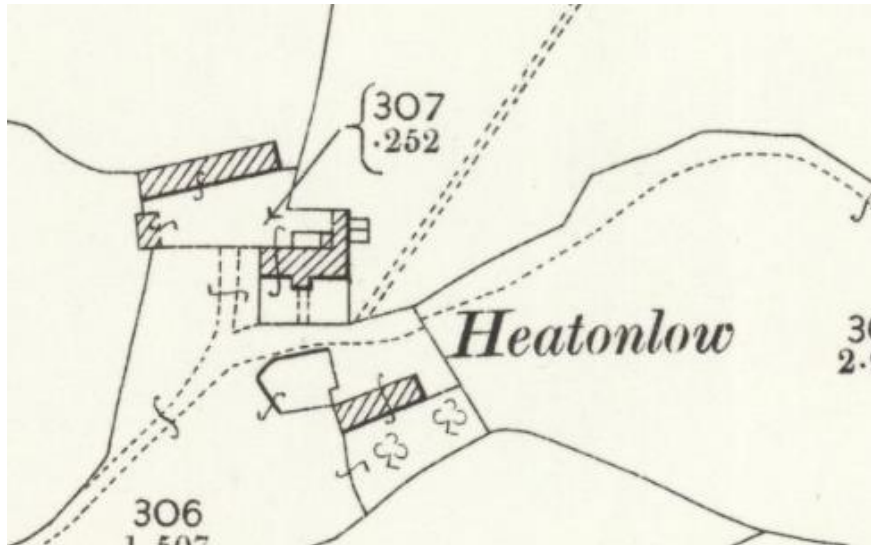


Fig.1 – c.1899 OS map [online] (National Library of Scotland)

Assessment and Impact

The proposal seeks permission to convert the barn to residential use, including alterations to the building to facilitate this.

External alterations

The proposed conversion seeks to utilise existing openings well. No new openings in the masonry are proposed, which would help maintain the historic legibility of the building. The proposed alterations include replacement of window and door joinery and installation of frameless glass to the cart door opening (set behind a timber slat screen) and glazing in hayloft opening and a door to the front elevation. The latter alterations would be contemporary, but their lightweight appearance and, if detailed appropriately, would still help to retain the impression of the historic appearance of the building.

The scheme does propose 4 new rooflights to the rear elevation which would introduce domestic features that would distract from the agricultural character of the building. These would, however, be located more discreetly in relation to the principal listed building. Nevertheless, it would be recommended these are reduced to 3 rooflights to minimise the visual clutter on the roof particularly if the farmstead is viewed from the footpath to the rear of the site.

Internal alterations

Internally, the main alteration would be the removal of historic gable end on the ground floor. This would result in loss of the historic plan form and legibility of this part of the building. As this particular wall likely represents the original footprint of the building, the total removal of this on the ground floor level would result in the loss of proportions of the room and the character of the building. It would negatively impact the appreciation and understanding of the historic function of the building. It would, therefore, be recommended that a larger section of this wall is retained to maintain a sense of the historic floorplan and layout.

The rest of the conversion seeks to utilise the historic plan form well. There would be some modern partitions inserted, but these would be minimal.

Works within the grounds

The proposed site plan does not indicate any proposed alterations to boundary treatments or subdivision of the surroundings, which would help maintain the historic character of the site. However, given that the proposed dwelling would be divorced from the principal farmhouse (i.e. the proposal isn't seeking to convert this to an annexe) it is likely that occupiers would require a degree of privacy and separation between the properties. Therefore, it would be recommended that consideration is given to how this would be sensitively detailed to respect the historic setting of the Listed Building and curtilage listed structures.

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 minor-moderate degree of harm to the setting and significance of the Listed Building and curtilage listed building. This 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 designated heritage asset (par.215 of NPPF)

and policy DC2 of the local development framework). There are likely public benefits arising in terms of securing a new use for the building (par.215 of NPPF) but, as noted above, it would be recommended there are some alterations to the design to reduce the level of heritage harm arising from the proposal and further clarification on boundary treatments to ensure the level of harm is fully assessed. There are no objections to the principle of the proposal from a conservation perspective, but we would suggest the following:

- Clarification on any boundary treatments to subdivide the properties
- Reduction in the number of rooflights to the rear to minimise the visual clutter
- Retention of more of the gable walling to the ground floor of the internal layout to better preserve the historic legibility of the building's footprint and former agricultural use

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