

# **Heritage Statement - External and internal alterations to a listed building.**

**Blackbrook Farmhouse, London Road, Lichfield.**

External and internal alterations to listed building – Blackbrook Farmhouse, Lichfield

Project	Blackbrook Farmhouse, London Road, Lichfield, WS14 0PS
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Version	1.0
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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this statement, Claire Preston, has 13 years' experience as a planner in the private sector and she is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 1.3 This statement accompanies an application for listed building consent and includes the necessary requirement of a Heritage Statement as required by the Local Planning Authority.

## 2 Site and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site comprises a two-storey gable dormer Grade II listed property known as Blackbrook Farmhouse. The building is currently empty. Historic England note the site's listing description to be as follows:  
  
*Farmhouse. Mid C18. Red brick; tiled roof on corbelled and dentilled eaves band; verge parapets with end stacks. Double range plan. Two storeys and attic, five-window front; 3 gabled dormers over glazing bar sashes with painted, wedged segmental heads, the centre with a raised keystone, set over the entrance. Projecting painted brick door surround with pediment; radial fanlight and 6-panel door. James Wyatt, the architect, was born here in 1747.*
- 2.2 The site is located 0.3km south of the village of Weeford, located on the eastern side of the A38 dual trunk road and benefits from an existing access and large car park. There are a number of brick and tile former agricultural buildings which are curtilage listed in association with Blackbrook Farmhouse. These have been converted to provide workshop accommodation and an antiques showroom.

2.3 The site is located within the West Midlands Green Belt.

2.4 Figure 1 below shows the application site and surrounding area.



Figure 1 – Google Earth image of the application site and surroundings

2.5 The most relevant planning history to the site is as follows:

**21/00055/FUL** – Removal of Condition 2 (Use of building) of permission 07/00033/COU to allow for the use of buildings for uses falling within Class E (except for uses E(d) and E(f)) The use of the buildings labelled A, B and C on the approved plan (see Figure 2) – Approved October 2021.

**07/00033/COU** – Change of Use of redundant farm buildings to workshop accommodation/ antiques village – Approved April 2009.

**07/00034/LBC** – Internal and External refurbishment works to former barns and reconstruction/ refurbishment of former barn to the east of the Farmhouse - Approved April 2009.

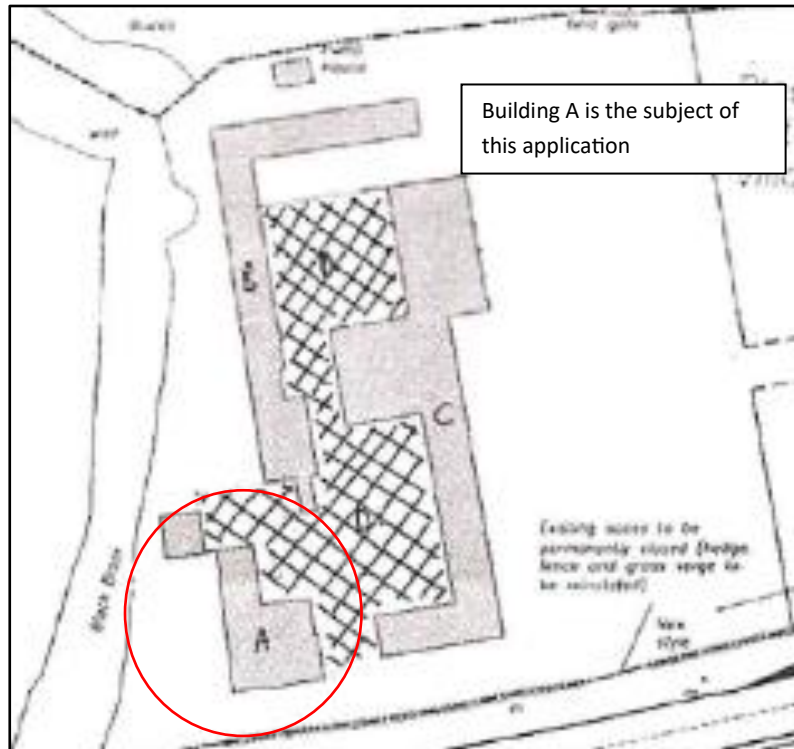


Figure 2 – Approved Plan to planning permission 07/00033/COU in relation to planning permission 21/00055/FUL for the removal of condition 2.

### 3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application seeks permission for minor external and internal alterations to the listed building to facilitate the approved use of ancillary office space.
- 3.2 To do so, minor internal works are required to provide a better configuration for the approved use. Minor external works are proposed comprising of the refurbishment to the frontage of the building. Please refer to accompanying drawings.
- 3.3 External alterations consist of:
  - External windows and doors painted black
  - Restoration of the window to the northern elevation
  - New window box planters

3.4 Internal ground floor alterations consist of:

- Removal of door to B1

3.5 Internal first floor alterations consist of:

- Form new drop ceiling to accommodate new tea area point (102)

3.6 Internal second floor alterations consist of:

- Existing wall and door to bathroom removed and replaced with new wall and two doors, plus a new dividing wall in bathroom to create 2 WC's, one with shower facility.

3.7 No other alterations are proposed to any other part of the building.

## 4 Planning Policy Context

### National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's policies in relation to development and the following section is most relevant to this proposal:

**Section 16** Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The following paragraphs should be considered with regard to this proposal:

**Paragraph 190** advises that in the determination of planning applications local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

- c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

**Paragraph 194** of the NPPF requires that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

**Paragraph 197** of the NPPF advises that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

**Paragraph 199** of the NPPF goes on to say that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential



harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

**Paragraph 201** of the NPPF sets out that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

**Paragraph 202** of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

#### [Lichfield District Council Local Plan](#)

- 4.2 The Development Plan comprises the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (2015) and Lichfield District Local Plan Allocations (2019) and features policies relevant to this application. These are outlined as follows:

## [Lichfield District Council Local Plan Strategy \(2008-2029\)](#)

**Policy CP14 Our Built and Historic Environment** aims to protect and conserve designated heritage assets. The sustainable re-use, maintenance and repair of listed buildings and other heritage assets will be supported.

## [Lichfield District Local Plan Allocations \(2029\)](#)

### **Policy BE2 Heritage Assets**

*Development proposals which conserve and enhance our historic environment will be supported where the development will not result in harm to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting. To enable the effect of an application on the historic environment to be assessed, any application which could impact on a heritage asset (designated or non-designated) including its setting should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement which should include an assessment of its significance, and an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the significance. It should also include an archaeological assessment where relevant. Clear and convincing evidence will be required for any harm or loss to the significance of a heritage asset. The loss of, or harm to, a heritage asset will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the ensuing harm and loss of significance of the heritage asset is necessary to achieve public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss in accordance with the NPPF. In this case the areas affected should be recorded and the information submitted to the Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Record as a minimum.*

## 5 [Statement of Significance](#)

- 5.1 The following paragraphs will cover the heritage considerations in accordance with local and national policy and Historic England guidance.

## Significance of the listed building

5.2 The application site is a Grade II listed building which sits with a group of brick and tile traditional former agricultural buildings as a courtyard arrangement, set in a rural location, with woodland surrounding three sides.

5.3 The Staffordshire HER reveals further detail as to the significance of the building which full description reads:

*An eighteenth to nineteenth century model farm complex that was built by B. Wyatt and Sons and formed part of their estate. The farmhouse is a Grade II listed building and was the family home of the Wyatts; the farm has been described as part of a larger coaching complex.*

5.4 The special interest of the building is derived from its form, fabric, historical and archaeological development, and architectural detailing. The setting of this building is limited to its immediate context.

## Assessment of Impact

5.5 The application seeks permission for minor internal and external alterations to the listed building to facilitate the approved use of ancillary office space.

5.6 The minor alterations proposed are considered to result in impacts of a negligible scale to the setting or significance of the listed building.

5.7 The external alterations proposed, as refurbishment to the frontage of the building, consist of the restoration of the windows and new window boxes. These minor alterations would create a positive impact to the listed building, complying with Policy CP14 and BE2 of the Local Plan.

- 5.8 There will be no changes to views of the listed building from public vantage points which, due to the building's rural location, are limited to views from the A38 when travelling at speed. The refurbishment will be sympathetically carried out, therefore would not affect the character of the building.
- 5.9 The proposal is the sustainable re-use and repair of a listed building which would bring the building back in to viable use, making a positive contribution to the preservation of the building to ensure it is fully and beneficially used, therefore the proposal is supported by Policy CP14.
- 5.10 The impacts on the listed building are therefore considered to be negligible and it is concluded that there will be no harm to the identified heritage asset as a result of the alterations.
- 5.11 In concluding there is no harm, there is not therefore a requirement to demonstrate any public benefits as set out in Paragraph 202 of the NPPF. However, the re-use of the building as serviced office space is clearly a benefit to the local area.

## 6 Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposal is for minor alterations to the listed building to provide a better-quality layout to ensure the space is suitable to accommodate serviced office space. The proposal will ensure the building can be put to a viable, optimal use and maximise the offering of the building.
- 7.2 The proposed alterations are sympathetic to the listed building therefore comply with guidance set out in Policy BE2 and CP14 of the Local Plan.
- 7.3 It is therefore concluded that the proposal will not result in any harm to the identified heritage asset and is therefore in accordance with relevant policies of the Lichfield District Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework.