HIGH PEAK
15 MAY 2013
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Design and Access Statement

Including Heritage Statement

Bowden Hall Bowden Lane High Peak Derbyshire SK23 0QP

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement including Heritage Assessment, with site plan, plans and forms constitutes applications for listed building consent and planning permission for alterations and extension to provide a lift and other elements of access for a disabled resident.

Context

Bowden Hall is the centrepiece of a group of related buildings all listed Grade 2 set around a grassed and stone surfaced yard with semi-formal gardens, entered off Bowden Lane. The access brings visitors into the operational 'rear' of the property. The front of the Hall faces South East and has a formal gravel apron.

Beyond the immediate gardens, the land around the Hall is used for recreation (use of the lake is licenced to a local fishing club), vegetable garden, light grazing and accommodation of horses. Part of the land is a currently vacant plant nursery.

The Hall has been the subject of internal alterations and re-ordering through time. Externally a wing on the North West corner was partially demolished and remodelled in the mid-C20th, including an extension and the introduction of some heavy duty structural elements. A great deal of the fabric in this area is of little historic value, hence concentrating the proposed alterations at this point.

Heritage Assessment Summary

The Hall and group are listed Grade 2 and constitute a heritage asset in their own right. The grounds are perfectly adequate for the setting of the asset, and recent LBC/planning permission for changes to the other listed elements are in keeping. The wider parkland grounds are part of the historic entity, but have been grazed on licence for many years and managed as grassland in that manner, to the benefit of the whole.

Change where it has occurred had been largely organic, although more intense, it is suggested, in the latter half of the C20th. The area of the building around the NW wing has been the subject of quite drastic intervention in this period, the majority of the form and fabric is either C20th or local/original material reclaimed and reused at that point. In detail, whereas materials and proportions of this element are not discordant the C20th screen glazing to the N elevation is incongruous in its design and appearance, and structural interventions are unsubtle. The heritage value of this part of the asset is much less than the remainder or the whole.

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Proposals would constitute less than substantial harm to the historic asset.

Policy

The prevailing policy background to all planning proposals now is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012. As of April 2013, Regional Plans are defunct and it is debatable whether 'saved' Local Plan and other local policies such as SPDs and SPDs are still relevant.

In the introduction to NPPF, paragraph 7 lists the '*3 dimensions of sustainable development*' thus:

- **an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- **a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

In this instance, the 2nd of these 'dimensions' is the most apt; by making the building accessible it will contribute to the range of housing available at present in the area.

Appendix 1 below is an extract from NPPF 2012 setting out policy in relation to the historic environment. It is considered that the proposal, by virtue of comprising a mixture of enhancements and temporary interventions in a part of the asset much altered in the past, constitutes a level of harm to the historic entity that is likely to be less than substantial overall.

The key paragraph in Chapter 12 for this proposal therefore is:

134. 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 securing its optimum viable use.

It is argued that the improvement in access for the disabled resident constitutes a public benefit (i.e. the resident will be able to stay in his own home for longer, thereby avoiding the burden on the public purse that the cost care would incur) and also the proposal will help secure the optimum viable use – a fully functional residence.

Advice

Although Planning Policy Statement No 5 *Planning for the Historic Environment* was superseded by NPPF in 2012, its accompanying *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (2010) is still a credible document for Development Control purposes.

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This sets out the methodology for consideration of development in relation to heritage assets; the policy principals guiding decisions are listed as:

- Identifying the heritage assets affected
- Assessing the application
- Using appropriate expertise
- Expert advice: general points
- Weighing-up the proposals
- Heritage benefits
- New development: design in context
- Condition of the asset and deliberate neglect and damage

The heritage asset has been identified; an assessment has been made of the proposal and it is considered to be acceptable; I am appropriately qualified and experienced to carry out the work; general points have been considered; then proposal have been weighed harm v benefits; heritage benefits are demonstrated; the design is appropriate; and there is no evidence of neglect of any kind that needs be addressed.

It is concluded that the proposal meet the requirements of policy in all respects.

Design Principles and Concept

Use

Bowden Hall is in use a residence. It is proposed to remodel the area around the NW corner to facilitate disabled access for one of the residents whilst in the meantime effecting beneficial alterations and changes to remove some of the less desirable developments of the previous era and replacement with more characteristic details, also creating more rational useable spaces within that part of the building.

Accommodation, amount and type

The proposal results in the creation of a shaded room facing out onto the courtyard, the temporary loss of WC area, the installation of a lift, again a temporary and reversible insertion, the improvement of disabled access to the building and remodelling of the screen glazing onto the yard into a more satisfactory design detail.

Highways and other related issues

The site is served off Bowden Lane, itself joined to the A6T at a roundabout some 500m away. The proposal will have no impact on the current situation

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Access and Accessibility

Change to the surfacing in general will be minimal; any new hard-standing will be surfaced in permeable rolled stone with haunching to match existing. The ramp will be purpose built, in timber with gripping surfacing, to 1:16 gradient maximum, and will be demountable on ceasing to be of use.

Building Form and Design Generation

The proposal is as shown on the submitted plans.

In arriving at this solution, various alternatives were considered in depth, including reopening the original staircase to the E side and inserting a stair lift at that point (discounted as impractical for the user); a stair lift up the main staircase (discounted in terms of appearance and dignity of the user); inserting a 'bridge' through the staircase window (impractical and ugly); and demolishing the C20th extension and rebuilding the original NW wing (Very costly and virtually impossible technically given the presence of so much C20th beam work and concrete).

A permanent solution was sought, originally. On further reflection however it was decided to pursue a scheme that is functional, light in touch and ultimately reversible, as the practical reason for the improvement of access will be finite, albeit hopefully not too proximate.

Logically, the area to concentrate these new changes upon is the area of most alteration previously - i.e. the NW corner - and for the following reasons:

- The proposal will have the least impact on historic fabric;
- The work is in the best part of the building for practical operational purposes;
- It would afford the easiest access to the resident's rooms; and
- It represents the most discrete arrangement from the point of view of the appearance of the remainder of the listed building, and the dignity of the user.

In due course, when no longer required, the lift and the access ramp are reversible works; the replacement of the uncharacteristic C20th elements will then represent an enhancement overall.

Sustainability Assessment, including transport choice

Management, maintenance and the beneficial continued use of a listed building; also the careful adaptation of a building to extend the usability for a wider cross-section of the community represents sustainability in general terms

In detail, materials as far as possible will be reclaimable from site or sourced locally. Other materials including the lift and housing will be sourced from local suppliers as far as is practicable. Every effort will be made to improve the thermal and environmental performance of the building in the process, albeit commensurate with its listed status. The work will be carried out by N G Webb Ltd, employing a wholly local team of trades and labourers.

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In terms of transport choice, the site is very near the National Park, and the extensive network of public footpaths and bridleways therein; the grounds of the Hall are linked to the town of Chapel en le Frith via a public footpath at its southern boundary - crossing the A6T. (Chapel is a sustainable location, with the full range of public transport and amenities within easy reach). There is, therefore, currently opportunity for transport choice although the proposal will have no material impact on this either way.

Landscape and relationship to the Public realm

There will be no impact on the wider landscape or the public realm attendant on this proposal.

Conclusions:

1. Proposals in detail would constitute less than substantial harm to the historic asset.
2. The proposal in principle meets the requirements of policy in all respects.
3. It is proposed to remodel the area around the NW corner to facilitate disabled access for one of the residents whilst in the meantime, effecting beneficial alterations and changes to remove some of the less desirable developments of the previous era and replacement with more characteristic details, also creating more rational useable spaces within the building.
4. The development will be sustainable, accessible and fit for purpose.
5. When no longer required, the lift and ramp will be removable and the works necessary to facilitate them will be reversible. The remaining alterations of a permanent nature will constitute an enhancement.

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