

68661 – Ainsworth Nursing Home, Knowsley Road, Ainsworth

Erection of a dwelling and associated access, parking and landscaping, provision of landscape buffer, and change of use and refurbishment of Gate House within the curtilage of the former Ainsworth Nursing Home.

The proposed dwellinghouse would be sited within the curtilage of the former hospital site. The former hospital buildings are considered to be a Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs). The site is not within a conservation area.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The above premises have been identified as non-designated heritage assets in accordance with Annex 2 of the NPPF and are considered to be buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). The 'Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking' published by Historic England (2015) clarifies non-designated assets as those "...that have been identified in a Historic Environment Record, in a local plan, through local listing or during the process of considering the application."

The proposal would not impact directly on the significance of the NDHAs but would be within their setting which if impacted negatively could cause harm to the significance of the NDHAs.

The proposed dwelling would be constructed from red brick and natural slate and as such would give an architectural reference to the existing buildings without challenging their architectural legibility. The siting of the dwelling would provide spatial mitigation with regard the sites' layout and form creating a visual separation. The proposal whilst two storey would have its first floor within the roof space ensuring its height is below that of the existing buildings and therefore would not dominate visually in terms of its height.

The alterations to the Gate House are very minor and would not represent a negative impact within the site.

The Submitted heritage assessment concludes as follows:

"With respect to the level of harm in relation to this proposed development the heritage assessment (HA) considers the buildings to be NDHA's and low/medium significance. The significance is modulated between building to building due to their degree of originality and alteration. The impact of the proposed development is generally upon the spatial layout of the site and given the new development is adding to the layout with a similar form of development and retaining and reusing the former gatehouse the overall level of harm of the works proposed are positive".

And

"The HA concludes that the crucial test contained within the NPPF is whether there is any harm to a heritage asset that is outweighed by the public interest and benefits of a proposal. It is concluded that the proposed works will result in a positive impact in that new development, which is spatially correct and if constructed in similar materials to existing forms, will enhance the site in addition to retaining the existing gatehouse. It will put the building to a viable use without harming its modest aesthetic".

In conclusion the proposal by virtue of its siting, size, scale, mass and materials would not cause harm to the setting of the former hospital buildings and as such would not cause any loss of their significance.

Mark Kilby PGDip (Building Conservation & Adaptation)

Conservation Officer