

The Application is for full planning permission to rebuild a boat house.

The lake is within the Keele Hall Conservation Area and adjoins Keele Hall which is a Grade II* Listed Building. The application site is within the Grade II Registered Parkland and Garden of Special Historic Interest at Keele Hall. The application site is on land designated as Green Belt, an Area of Landscape Maintenance, and within the Springpool Wood (Keele Woods) Grade 1 Site of Biological as detailed on the Newcastle under Lyme Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The statutory period for the determination of this application expired on 3rd January 2014.

RECOMMENDATION

Permit subject to conditions relating to the following:

- i. Time limit**
- ii. Approved plans**
- iii. Approval of details of all woodwork; render infill including finished colour; roof tiles; and restoration of stone work if required.**

Reason for Recommendation

Whilst the proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, there are very special circumstances present that would justify an approval of such development. The proposal, through the reintroduction of a historic building that was lost about 30-40 years ago, would not harm the setting of the Grade II* Listed Keele Hall, and would enhance the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area and Grade II Registered Parkland and Garden. As such the development is in accordance with Policy CSP2 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026, and Policies B5, B9, B10, B13 and B14 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011. The benefits of this development are considered to outweigh the negligible additional harm that there would be to the openness of the Green Belt, and to the purposes of including land within a Green Belt.

Policies and Proposals in the approved Development Plan relevant to this decision:-

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) 2006-2026

Strategic Aim 16:	To eliminate poor quality development;
Policy CSP1:	Design Quality;
Policy CSP2:	Preserve and enhance the character of appearance of the historic heritage;
Policy CSP4:	Natural Assets.

Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan (NLP) 2011

Policy S3:	Development in the Green Belt.
Policy N17:	Landscape Character – General Considerations
Policy N19:	Areas of Landscape Maintenance;
Policy B5:	Control of Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building
Policy B9:	Prevention of Harm to Conservation Areas;
Policy B10:	The requirement to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area;
Policy B13:	Design and Development in Conservation Areas;
Policy B14:	Development in or adjoining the Boundary of Conservation Areas.

Other material considerations include:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History

In 2008 full planning permission was given for the dredging of the lake, the deposit of the dredgings, repairs to the weir and the provision of silt traps and interceptors to the lake inlets, reference 08/00595/FUL. The rebuilding of the boathouse sited on lake no. 1 was permitted in 2011 (reference 10/00619/FUL) and the current application is for the same development.

Views of Consultees

Natural England advises that the proposal is unlikely to affect any statutorily protected sites or landscapes and raises no objection.

The **Conservation and Urban Design Officer** has no objections to the renewal of this application

The views of **Keele Parish Council** and the **Garden History Society** have been sought and any comments received will be reported.

Applicant/agent's submission

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted in support of the application, the main points of which are outlined below:

- The site is situated within the grounds of Keele University it is accessed solely by footpaths from the Hall and surrounding grounds. The site is currently vacant with only the original stone walls of the boathouse base being present, the original superstructure either collapsed or was demolished.
- The proposal has been designed to replicate the size and scale of the original boathouse following photographs and the surviving stone base. The existing sockets in the stonework will be re-used.
- The new upper walls would comprise treated softwood with rendered infill panels finished with masonry paint. The roof would be finished in blue plain clay tiles. All new bargeboards, fascias, heads to opening etc would be treated softwood with a full paint finish.
- Heritage points are set out in a section of the statement.
- Works carried out on water features within the grounds from 2008 are noted.

The document is available for inspection at the Guildhall, and on www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning/BoatHouseKeele

KEY ISSUES

The application is a resubmission of Planning Permission 10/00619/FUL which was granted planning in permission in 2011 but not implemented and that permission is due to expire on 27th January. It is for a new boat house which is to be built on the footings of a previous one which was lost around 30-40 years ago. The stone base to the boat house was exposed during renovation works that have been undertaken at the lake, which were the subject of planning permission reference 08/00595/FUL referred to above.

The application site is adjacent to the uppermost of the ornamental lakes to the immediate south-east of Keele Hall. The lake is the largest of the system of lakes that descend from the Hall to the south-east.

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- Is this appropriate development in the Green Belt?

- Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings
- Impact on the Historic Park
- Do the very special circumstances exist to justify development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt?

Appropriate Development in the Green Belt?

The NPPF states that the construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for certain specified purposes. One of the specified purposes is the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation. In this case there is no indication that the boat house is to be functional and used in connection with boating activities on the lake; accordingly it is not appropriate development.

Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings

There is a statutory duty upon the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in the exercise of planning functions. Local and national planning policies seek to protect and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and development that is contrary to those aims will be resisted.

Policy B9 of the Local Plan states that the Council will resist development that would harm the special architectural or historic character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Policy B10 states that an important consideration in ensuring that the character and appearance of a Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced, is the protection of important views within, into and out of the area.

The application is for a boathouse which has been designed, using photographic evidence, to resemble the original buildings and is to be constructed on the same foundations and which are now visible. The reintroduction of this historic feature is considered to enhance the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.

The reconstruction of the boat house is part of the renovation of the parkland setting to the Grade II* Listed Keele Hall, which is sited approximately 30m to the north-west of the lake. The boat house will be visible from views from the Hall across the lake, but given the distance between the proposed boat house and the Hall, and that the proposed building is small in scale, it is considered that the proposal will not be harmful to the setting of the listing building.

Impact on the historic park

The site lies within the Keele Hall Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden. Historical evidence indicates that the landscape park was created in the mid 18th century, and improvements were undertaken to the grounds and gardens in early to mid 19th century. It would appear that the boathouse was constructed as part of these improvements, which involved the reconfiguration of the pool and the construction of an Italianate well-house which is a Grade II listed building. Given that the boathouse was part of the planned landscape park it is considered that a historically accurate replacement on the original stone base, as proposed, could only enhance its character and appearance.

Very Special Circumstances?

The decision maker is required, in the case of inappropriate development, to go onto consider whether there are material considerations which clearly outweigh any harm both to the Green Belt and any other interests to be acknowledged. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the interests of the Green Belt. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness and, any other harm, are clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

As indicated above the application seeks planning permission for the reinstatement of a boathouse that for many years formed part of the planned landscape park. The building will not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed hall, and will enhance the wider Conservation Area and Registered Historic Park and Garden and it is considered that this will outweigh the negligible impact on the openness of the Green Belt that will arise from this small building. This conclusion was reached when Planning Permission 10/00619/FUL was permitted under previous planning guidance. Accordingly it is considered that very special circumstances exist that outweigh the negligible harm to the Green Belt.

Background Papers

Planning file
Planning documents referred to

Date report prepared

13th January 2011

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED