



ENGLISH
HERITAGE

**Heritage, Design and Access Statement
Baguley Hall, Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester
Proposed new aspirator system to 14th century hall**



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Introduction

1. Baguley Hall is a Grade I listed building. The hall is a multi-phase structure, however, the most significant elements date to the mid to late-14th century. The small township of Baguley was in north of the county of Cheshire; the former boundary with Lancashire at the River Mersey being just over 2km to the north-east. In the 14th century, the township consisted of scattered farmsteads, with no nucleated settlement. Baguley Hall is now surrounded by modern housing, 10km south of Manchester, in the borough of Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester.
2. Baguley Hall was once part of a large farm, with farm buildings to the west around a courtyard. What remains of Baguley Hall comprises a north-south aligned open timber framed hall with brick wings to either end. The south wing is 18th century whilst the north wing is an 18th century brick encasing of a medieval timber wing. The timber framed porch on the western side of the hall is a 16th century addition, later reconstructed/remodelled in the 19th century. The building is of exceptional significance as one of the few timber-framed manors of the date in the Greater Manchester area.

Proposed alteration – aspirator fire detection system

3. The proposed alteration, to which this statement relates, is the fixing of an aspirator sampling pipe in the roof of the 14th century hall, which would connect to a control panel in the 18th century north wing.
4. The proposed aspirator sampling pipe is 25mm diameter, and available in grey. Painting is possible, after install, if considered necessary. Any painting would need to be carried out after sampling holes are drilled at the required intervals, to ensure no contamination in the sampling pipe. The proposed aspirator pipe will run, out of sight, through the highest point in the roof space, at the apex. From below, the pipe will not be visible above the vast roof structure which consists of enormous, and rare, curved scissor braces with a large central purlin.



5. All Fixings will be into the modern ply, which was introduced during the re-roofing of the hall in the late-20th century, on the underside of the stone flag roof.
6. The aspirator pipe connects to the control panel in the eastern room of the north wing. There is a clear route through an opening in the timber frame at high level, which connects through to this space, currently utilised for cable runs.
7. The aspirator control panel is fitted to a timber framed wall, with a modern plaster finish. This room, at the east end of the north range, is thought to be low status accommodation. The room is of moderate significance, as it reflects the extension of the building during the 18th century, increasing the living accommodation available. This room is of some significance, and the Conservation Plan notes that '[t]he absence of fireplaces and the relatively austere appearance of the rooms suggest that they were intended either as very low-status accommodation or for storage.'
8. The installation of the aspirator system will enable the removal of white smoke detectors in the 14th century hall, and the removal of the large scaffolding which almost fills the 14th century hall. The large scaffold almost entirely fills the three-aisled hall, and exists only to service the smoke detector heads.
9. The plans and photographs are included in a separate document.

Heritage Impact Assessment

10. The proposed new aspirator system (or fire detection system) will be completely reversible with no fixings into historic fabric. The aspirator pipe will have no harmful visual impact; a discreet route has been identified through the significant 14th century hall, and 15th century wing, through to the 18th century north wing. The most discreet route is also the optimum route for fire protection, at the highest point.
11. Any harm will be minimised by; curatorial supervision of the installation, assessment of the impact of the grey pipe, and painting-in if considered necessary.



Principles and Policy

12. The proposals are in-line with the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of understanding the significance of Baguley Hall. The proposals will not harm the exceptional historic, archaeological or architectural interest associated with the site, and the 14th century hall in particular.
13. The proposals are considered to be in-line with 'Conservation Principles' (Historic England 2009). The proposals are 'capable of being reversed, in order not unduly to prejudice options for the future.' (Historic England 2009, 46). The proposals are also in-line with the principles on new work or alteration listed in paragraph 14 (Historic England 2009, 9):

'New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;*
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;*
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future; d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.'*

Design and Access Statement

14. The new aspirator system has been carefully designed to ensure no harmful impact on historic fabric. The new smoke detection system is fully reversible, and there will be no harmful visual impact.
15. There will be no change in the level of fire protection afforded to Baguley Hall, but the proposed new detection system makes maintenance more sustainable. The new fire detection system will not require regular access via the scaffold, with the control panel easily accessible in the east range.



The removal of the scaffold will better reveal the significance of the c.14th century hall.

Conclusion

16. It is felt that the proposed intervention will result in minimal harm to the heritage asset, which is justified by introducing a sustainable fire detection system and safe access. The proposal also results in the removal of the scaffold which restricts views of, and access to, the exceptionally significant 14th century hall.
17. The proposals are in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and Conservation Principles, maintaining the significance of the Grade I listed building.

References:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
- Historic England (2009) Conservation Principles
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/conservationprinciplespoliciesandguidanceapril08web/>
- Davison, A (2002) BAGULEY HALL CONSERVATION STATEMENT
- Douglas, M (2009) Baguley Hall, Statement of Significance
- Field Archaeology Specialists (2004) Baguley Hall Conservation Plan
- Historic England (2022) Baguley Hall, Listing
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1291962?section=official-list-entry>