

**Cedar Lodge, North Side, Steeple Aston
19/00703/LB**

Creation of a jib door between bedroom and bathroom to create an en-suite with associated works

Understanding the heritage assets affected

Cedar Lodge is a mid 18th century house of substantial size which is listed grade II. It lies within the Steeple Aston Conservation Area.

Significance

The listed building description is for identification purposes only (as was usual at the date of listing in 1988) and does not give an indication of significance.

The building is of mid 18th century date with some later extensions and alterations.

The heritage report for the site provides a basic description of the building *'The north (front elevation to the house) whilst imposing is relatively plain, in comparison to what appears to be a more refined and architectural south (garden elevation). The main range is 'double pile' with a central valley and gable ends, the west service range is single span, hipped and with a slate roof.'*

The heritage report suggests there a rang of elements of significance including

- Physical evidence of building that has evolved from its early 18th century origins and provides understanding of its development and the gentrification of the village from the 19th century.
- It exhibits evidence of several phases of change, reflecting the needs and aspirations of new occupiers and shows how the demands of contemporary society are reflected in the building's fabric and setting.
- Its history as a large detached house and its ownership by wealthy landowners contributes to understanding of the social and economic structure of the village and the impact of the wealthy middle and upper classes.
- The 'chapters' in the building's history have resulted in a change to the house, adding interest but sometimes losing part of the history and earlier evidence. Changes to the building's setting also contribute to its historical interest with evidence of the amalgamation of the closes to create the extensive garden setting.

The Heritage Report also provides a conjectural summary of the changing role of the service wing. The report indicates that the loft area would not have been used as accommodation with servants instead being housed in the service wing of the building. The report also states that guests and members of the family would also have used this same area. *'Census information indicates that there are usually about 3 or 4 family members and 3 or 4 servants at any one time. Two of the servants (the Groom and the Gardener) very possibly lived in ancillary accommodation to the house, leaving just two servants occupying the service range. This means that there were likely only 2 or 3 servants needing accommodation in the service range and t3 or 4 members of the family plus guests needing 'main' accommodation. As there are only 2 principal bedrooms for the heads of the household and their guests, at least one more 'main' room is required for the children'*

Proposals

The proposal is to create a door between one of the principal bedrooms in the main house into a small room within the service wing to create an ensuite and dressing room.

Assessment of issues

Breaching through two separate areas of the building

The core concern with the proposed application is the loss of functional separation between the 'principal' and 'service' areas of the building, which were constructed at different times and are on different levels. It also involves the loss of historic fabric associated with the original building.

Cedar Lodge is understood to have its origin as a farmhouse *'Cedar Lodge was the home of the Lamley family, wealthy farmers in Steeple Aston who also owned property elsewhere in the county'*. Part of the history of the building is the evolution of the building from farmhouse to a larger country residence *'In the 18th century, the Lamleys styled themselves gentlemen, redeveloping existing pre-enclosure plots to construct a house befitting their status' and 'Post enclosure it seems clear that several plots were amalgamated and the existing buildings replaced to create a larger country residence'*

The recent report states *'Cedar Lodge is a smaller country house and it is evident that the service wing was absorbed as a part of the main living of the house, with no staff in service. To argue that the use of the adjoining room in the service range to the main bedroom would undermine understanding of the historic function of the service range would ignore the 20th century history of the country house and that in particular of Cedar Lodge, which shows that the service range is now part of the main living spaces with opening made through at ground floor level and first floor circulation altered.'* It is appreciated that the house has been through a long ongoing period of evolution, but it is now a listed building and there is a duty for the local authority to consider whether works to the listed building retain the special architectural or historic interest which the building possesses.

The historic evolution of the building from farmhouse to country house is considered to form part of the core significance (or special interest) of the building, It is considered that the proposed development which would breach through between the original farmhouse and into the later service wing, which was added during its transition to a small country house residence would undermine part of this core significance and lead to a loss of evidence about the development of the property over time.

The original Heritage Report on the property as a whole acknowledges that *The 'chapters' in the building's history have resulted in a change to the house, adding, but sometimes losing part of the history and earlier evidence'*. It is considered that this particular element of the proposed developments would lose part of the history and evidence from a significant period in the building's evolution.

It is appreciated that buildings need to change and adapt to suit new circumstances, but it is considered that no convincing evidence has been put forward about the requirement for this alteration, particularly given the fact that there is already a large bedroom with an existing en-suite which could function as the master bedroom. The Heritage Report states *'Introducing a private*

bathroom to this bedroom reflects the status of Cedar Lodge and is a necessary part of 21st century living. It would be a requirement of any new owner.' , but there is not a public benefit to this proposal. The property is capable of functioning as a single domestic residence without this proposed alteration.

Provision of jib door

There are no objections in principle to the use of a jib door and the use of jib doors in different historic contexts has been well documented within the report. It is also acknowledged that *'The use of a jib door would preserve the architectural proportions and detailing of the room.'* If the application were considered to be acceptable in principle it would be a sensible solution to the issue.

Recommend

Refuse

Jenny Ballinger, 13th June 2019