

**Cedar Lodge, North Side, Steeple Aston**  
**19/01647/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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 range of elements of significance including

- Physical evidence of building that has evolved from its early 18<sup>th</sup> century origins and provides understanding of its development and the gentrification of the village from the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 3 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 a dressing room and study.

### 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.

It is understood that the history and development of the property had been misunderstood in my earlier comments on application 19/00703/LB (13<sup>th</sup> June 2019) which leads to concerns about whether the conclusion is correct.

A new version of the Heritage Impact Statement has been produced which states 'The SAVA Report (2013) concludes that what is now the service wing as a former farmhouse dating from pre1767 and only became absorbed as part of the service wing once 'The Lodge' was constructed around 1767-1780 to become a small Country Residence. It was subsequently extended in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The extent of survival of the earlier building is thought to be limited. Physical examination of the fabric tends to confirm the view that there is very little of the earlier building left'. It should be noted that I have not reviewed the SAVA report myself as it is anticipated that all relevant information should be contained within the Heritage Report.

The comments made on the previous application (19/00703/LB) should be read in conjunction with the following additional notes.

- The fundamental issue is that the proposed development breaches through two physically and functionally distinct areas of the building which causes harm to an understanding of the evolution of the plan form of the building. Regardless of the precise historic evolution of the building (it would be useful for a phasing plan to be included within the Heritage Report) the internal character of the 'service wing' is different to that of the principal property which is reflected in the change of levels, lower ceiling heights, relative size of rooms etc.
- The Heritage Report refers to the room which is the subject of this application as 'A former small box room, typical of a servant's bedroom has been extended when a small lean-to was added over a ground floor bay window'. The proposal to alter the function of this room to an ancillary dressing room by linking these two spaces creates a 'false history' for the building reflecting a property of historically higher status with a series of ancillary rooms more reminiscent of grand country houses rather than the smaller country home of local 'gentleman' status that Cedar Lodge represents.
- It is appreciated that there is no loss of architectural features and any that were lost would be replaced on the jib door. There would be a loss of historic wall which currently divides the

two separate areas of the building, but the harm relates to the significance of the physical division rather than the particular historic fabric.

- It is understood that the listed buildings need to adapt and change and a number of alterations to the building have been permitted in recent listed building and planning consents (19/00531/F and 19/00532/LB; 19/01124/F). In particular listed building consent (19/01411/LB) has been granted for an ensuite leading off the same bedroom in a more suitable area (which was identified in the Heritage Report as having potentially once formed a shared dressing room).
- The changes proposed in this application are considered to cause harm to the significance of this area of the building. An alternative solution for an ensuite for this bedroom has been agreed upon and granted listed building consent. There are no public benefits to this proposal to outweigh the harm caused. The benefits of the scheme are purely private and reflect the particular preferences of the current owners.
- The proposed development is recommended for refusal despite altered understanding of the development of the building.

## **Recommend**

Refuse

**Jenny Ballinger, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**