



CEDAR LODGE STEEPLE ASTON

APPEAL STATEMENT
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WORLLEDGE ASSOCIATES

Worledge Associates is an Oxford-based heritage consultancy, committed to the effective management of the historic environment. Established in 2014 Nicholas Worledge came to private practice with over 35 years' experience working in heritage management for local authorities. This intimate knowledge and understanding of council processes, and planning policy and practice, helps us to work collaboratively with owners and decision-makers to manage change to the historic environment.

Our team of dedicated researchers and specialists believe in the capacity of the historic environment to contribute to society's collective economic, social, and cultural well-being. We aim to identify what is significant about places and spaces in order to support their effective management and sustain their heritage value. We have worked with a wide range of property-owners and developers including universities and colleges, museums and libraries, large country estates, manor house, farmsteads, cottages, town houses and new housing sites.

Worledge Associates has been instructed by the appellants to prepare this appeal against Cherwell District Council's refusal of listed building consent for the insertion of a jib door on 27th January 2020.

SUMMARY

1. The appeal proposal is for the insertion of a jib door to give access between two rooms and involves the installation of a short set of steps and adjustment to a ceiling to allow headroom to the stairs.
2. This appeal is the result of several applications submitted with the purpose of addressing the council officer's concerns and, in a bid, unsuccessfully, to avoid the appeal process.
3. The proposal has been informed by extensive research and analysis to understand the building's history and significance and forms part of more extensive consented works of alteration and extension. Together the significant investment demonstrates the new owners' commitment to secure the long-term future of the building and to sustain its special interest. The Government has expressed, in the NPPF, its clear commitment to sustain the historic environment for present and future generations to enjoy (physically and intellectually). Contrary to the local planning authority's assertion the commitment to maintain and improve a historic building and its setting is in the public's interest and would be a public benefit.
4. The reason for refusal asserts that the insertion of a jib door will erode the differing functional areas of the building and would cause less than substantial harm with no compensating public benefit.
5. It is argued that there are no longer differing functional areas within the building i.e. the service range and main range function as one and have done so since the middle of the 20th century when it ceased to have in service staff. The continuing adaptation of the building reflecting its use as a single household and to meet the needs of contemporary society has been sanctioned by the local planning authority in permitting the ground floor of what was historically the service range to function as the primary family space, as an integral part of the whole, with no functional or physical separation between the two parts. In addition to this the evidence suggests that, historically, the first floor would not have functioned separately and that, for the best part of the 20th century, the whole of the service range was used as a contiguous part of the family accommodation.
6. The evidence that exists to allow understanding of how the house operated historically, how it evolved and to enjoy its aesthetic value will be preserved. The proposed works will not undermine the building's significance.
7. The proposed works resonate with how the building has been altered and updated over time and of themselves evidence the continuing changes in contemporary society.
8. The use of a jib door is an entirely consistent feature with the architectural treatment of houses of this status and age. The function, to allow access to subsidiary rooms without disturbing the architectural treatment of the principal space, is also entirely consistent with history of use of such features.
9. The introduction of the jib door would not undermine understanding of the historic plan form, or even result in the loss of the plan form. The rooms remain the same (apart from where consented works allow for the insertion of a partition), the stairs remain in the same position (consented works involve some upgrading) and the external building envelope (and thus those visual clues that inform the history of the place) remains the same (apart from the consented extension).



10. It is considered that the Council's reason for refusal is not justified, deriving from an inaccurate assessment of how the building has developed historically, how it currently operates and the nature and extent of the impact of the proposed jib door.
11. It is considered that the proposed jib door would not result in any harm and that the heritage significance of the listed building would be preserved. The local planning authority officers conclude that the use of a jib door would be acceptable in principle and that the loss of some fabric (stone) to make the opening would not be the cause of the harm they identify. The adjustment to the existing ceiling was not raised as a concern by officer's on earlier applications for the same works, but in any event is not the original ceiling. If it is concluded that the works would result in harm, then that harm would be at the bottom end of the 'less than substantial' scale. It is argued that benefits of significant investment, updating the property and the commitment to long term maintenance of the fabric and its garden setting, would represent heritage and public benefits to outweigh any harm.

BACKGROUND

12. Cedar Lodge has changed hands recently and the new owners have embarked on a programme of significant investment to repair and update the property. In developing the design solutions, a key priority was to ensure that the history of the place and the heritage significance it holds was properly understood and respected. Given that it is those attributes of history, architecture and setting that have attracted the new owners to the place it is in their own interests to ensure that the way the building is altered and extended respects those heritage values. This understanding of the building's significance was then used to inform the approach to adapt the property so that it could function effectively as a family home, with the main family living space centring around the kitchen and involving the introduction of other minor alterations on the ground and first floor to make optimum use of the rooms.
13. Following pre-application advice from officers at Cherwell District Council a planning and listed building consent application was submitted for the proposed extension and a internal alterations. Concerns were raised in the pre-application advice about forming a doorway through from the main bedroom into the adjoining room in the service range, to provide en-suite accommodation, so a separate listed building consent application was submitted for those works. This would ensure that the main works of extension could proceed (with officers' support) without delay. The officer's concerns about the ensuite proposals centred on a concern that the new doorway would "interfere with the proportions of one of the principal rooms in the property". (see Appendix 1). Thus the proposals were amended to install a jib door, on the basis that this would overcome the officer's concerns. However, further pre-application advice carried out in advance of the submission of the listed building consent application for the jib door resulted in additional and more detailed concerns about the jib door. Nevertheless, it was considered that the proposed work was justified and so an application was submitted.
14. The listed building consent application (reference 19/00703/LB) was refused. In refusing the application the Council's specialist heritage adviser commented.

'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.' (see Appendix 2)

15. This informed the single reason for refusal which states:

'That the proposed breach through between the original farmhouse and the later service wing would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset through the erosion of the distinction between the principal and service accommodation. In the absence of identified public benefit to outweigh the less than substantial harm, the proposal is contrary to Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 and saved Policy C18 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.' (See Appendix 3)

16. This clearly is a different concern from that raised during the first pre-application advice letter. Furthermore, the heritage report accompanying the application (Worlledge Associates April 2019 Appendix 4) identifies that the service wing pre-dates the main range (page 10). The officers' assert that the service wing is a later addition to the 'original farmhouse', but without any evidence to support that conclusion. The officer's delegated report (see Appendix 5) draws attention to the fact that there is already a bedroom with an ensuite. It is presumed that this is used as a basis to conclude (paragraph 8.12) that the family's wish for an additional ensuite bedroom would not justify the harm she identifies would be caused by putting a room in the service wing to a use associated with a bedroom in the main range.

17. This is the conclusion drawn since the council's heritage specialist states that she does not object to the principle of the use of a jib door stating:

'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 (heritage) 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.'
(See Appendix 2)

18. Thus it would be a reasonable conclusion from this that it is the use of the room as an ensuite to the main bedroom, rather than the physical works of inserting a jib door that lies at the heart of the officers' concerns – eroding the 'distinction between principal and service accommodation'. Consideration was given to submitting an appeal at this stage. However, this risked considerable delays in delivering the construction works on site, at considerable additional costs. Thus, as a matter of expediency an alternative location for an ensuite was identified and listed building consent secured for the necessary alterations (19/01411/LB).
19. The owners still wished to have access between the principal bedroom and the adjoining room and to have the flexibility to use it as ancillary accommodation. Given also that the council's decision was based on its incorrect analysis of the phases of development of the house it was decided to make a further application for a jib door only, and to take the opportunity to clarify the site's history and to make clear how this has informed understanding of the site's heritage significance.
20. This further application (ref:19/01647/LB) was submitted on 14th August 2019. With the additional heritage evidence and revised proposal it was hoped that officers would be supportive, but in the event that officers were still opposed the strategy was to ask for the application to be determined by the planning committee (rather than a delegated decision taken by officers). Late in the application process the conservation officer expressed her continuing objection to the proposed insertion of a jib door and as a result of the late comments the opportunity for 'calling' the application to committee was missed. Officers were proposing to refuse the application under delegated powers. To avoid this and to give the opportunity for the proposal to be considered in the local public forum of a planning committee this application was withdrawn and a further application submitted (this appeal application). It should be noted that the appellants wished to avoid appeal route and only revert to that as a matter of last resort. This was because all involved from the appellant's side believed that to make best and most appropriate use of the local decision-making process and avoid the public (and private) costs and time of challenging a decision at appeal was the right thing to do. The decision to follow the approach of local resolution was taken after consultation with the appellant's local ward councillor who had offered to help and support them through the process. Yet again, and as expected, officers were minded to recommend refusal. Disappointingly though, the Ward Councillor's request to have the application determined at Planning Committee was unsuccessful and rejected by officers. The application was refused under delegated powers. This appeal route is thus now the only available opportunity left, despite wishing to avoid it, to be able to challenge the officers' assessment of the nature and extent of impact of this proposed jib door on the site's heritage significance.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

21. The building's heritage significance is assessed in two heritage reports (WA Aug 2019, page 7-18,21 **Appendix 6**; WA Oct 2019 pages 2-4 **Appendix 7**). These reports also refer to the findings of the SAVA study. It appears that the conclusions are not challenged by the Council with its officers referring to the heritage reports' key findings in their assessment of the appeal proposals.
22. The heritage significance of the site can be summarised as follows:
 - Physical evidence provides understanding of the development of the house and the village;
 - The architecture and plan form help understanding of the way the house operated;
 - Phases of change show how the demands of contemporary society are reflected in the building's fabric and setting, adding to its history and interest;
 - Some changes have eroded significance;
 - Its history and history of its owners contributes to understanding of the social and economic structure of the village and the impact of the wealthy middle and upper classes;
 - The garden setting is closely interrelated to the architectural composition of the house;
 - The sense of enclosure to the front and sides with high stone walls and mature trees and the openness of the rear garden impart a sense of seclusion and exclusion, curating and controlling what is seen and by whom;
 - The house, set in large grounds, contrasts with the smaller domestic properties situated along the rest of the street, establishing it as a 'high status' house;
 - The siting and arrangement of the outbuildings and garden compartments help understanding of the operation of the household and the roles of those 'in service' at the house;
 - The garden pavilion helps to illustrate earlier generations enjoyment of the gardens and garden setting, placing objects within the garden, designed to be seen, and from which to enjoy the gardens;
 - The house is recognised by the local community, but also nationally and internationally, through books and articles, as the home for 30 years (1956-1986) of Dame Iris Murdoch, an internationally acclaimed author and her husband John Bayley. During this period Iris Murdoch and John Bayley entertained Oxford Intellectuals and the writers of her generation, as well as villagers.



The main bedroom. Note the straight joint in the skirting and dado rail to the right of the fireplace, which would be representative of the visual impact of jib door

DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

23. The listed building consent application (19/02465/LB) is for the formation of a door (a jib door) between two rooms, and involves the insertion of a small flight of steps to manage the difference in floor levels and adjustment to the ceiling height within the smaller room to accommodate headroom on the stairs.
24. The application was accompanied by a heritage report (WA October 2019) that focused on explaining the phases of change to the house and addressing the officers' objections to the previous applications. The submitted report was part of a series of reports submitted to the Council and should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Report (WA August 2019) which provides a fuller description of the history of the place, its significance and sets out relevant government policy and advice.

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT POLICY AND ADVICE

25. This appeal is for internal works to a listed building and triggers the requirement for listed building consent to be obtained. The works do not constitute development within the terms of section 55 of the Planning Act 1990. This means that any decision does not have to be made in accordance with the development plan. Historic England explains:

'Listed building consent decisions do not have to be determined in accordance with the development plan. They should be determined in accordance with the law and the relevant policies in the NPPF. The objectives of the development plan and its policies may, though, be a material consideration in those decisions.' (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/decisionmaking/ldp/>)

26. The law in this case would be section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the 1990 Act, referred to in the officer's delegated report (8.2) relates to 'development' within conservation areas and is not relevant.
27. The Government's policy and advice set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance is explained in the Heritage Report (WA August 2019). Briefly, the NPPF provides a framework for managing change in a way to sustain the significance of the historic environment for present and future generations to enjoy. It is not about stopping change or 'stopping the clock', to freeze heritage assets solely as memorials of the past. For decision making It explains the importance of understanding the significance of a heritage asset, using that early on in the design process to inform the development of detailed proposals and to use that evidence base to assess the impact of the proposals on the site's identified heritage significance.
28. Importantly, it should be noted that the Planning Practice Guide explains that development may not necessarily result in harm stating:
- 'Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 194-196) apply.'* (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723).
29. It is considered that this appeal proposal, to insert a jib door, will not result in harm.
30. In the section 7 of the officer's delegated report on the appeal application (**Appendix 8**) it is explained that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The officer identifies what she considers to be the relevant policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031, the saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan are listed.
31. This is an application for listed building consent, not planning permission; the works do not constitute development and therefore, as explained by Historic England, the application does not have to be determined in accordance with the development plan policies. As a material consideration the local plans and neighbourhood plan set out the council's approach to the management of the historic environment and should be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England advice.
32. Quickly looking at those policies:

33. **Policy ESD15 Local Plan 2011-2031.** This is a strategic policy that seeks to:
- sustain the quality of the historic environment;
 - protect designated and non-designated heritage assets;
 - ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the environment and the quality of our lives;
 - address climate change; and
 - deliver buildings that 'can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions'.
34. The proposal would sustain the quality of the historic environment and secure the protection of a designated heritage asset. The last bullet point is also pertinent to the proposals which form the subject of this appeal, representing the opportunity to build resilience, to allow it to be sensitively adapted to meet changing needs and conditions of contemporary society. The policy also refers to further detailed guidance, but this has yet to be produced by the local planning authority.
35. **Policy C18 Local Plan 1996.** This policy states that the council will normally only approve works of alteration or extension if they are minor and consistent with the historic and architectural character of the listed building. Whilst this policy does not reflect the advice in paragraphs 195 and 196 of the NPPF it is considered that the insertion of a jib door is a 'minor alteration' consistent with the historic and architectural character of the building.
36. **Policy PD4 Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031.** This is a policy designed to safeguard identified views and skylines, seeking to resist development that would have an unjustified harmful impact. The policy is not relevant to this proposal and it will be noted that whilst it is referred to in the officer's report it is not included in the reason for refusal.
37. The officer's report also refers to two Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes – 'Managing Significance in Decision Taking' and the 'Setting of Heritage Assets'. The latter Advice Note (GPA3, 2017) is not relevant to this appeal proposal which is for internal alteration only.
38. Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment (GPA2, 2015) (**Appendix 9**) offers good practice advice on the preparation of heritage assessment and the steps to follow to ensure that significance is properly taken into account and that decisions made can be justified, are transparent and consistent. In particular it is worth noting paragraph 6 which sets out the approach:
- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
 - Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
 - Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;
 - Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.



The view from the service yard with the service range in the foreground and the main range beyond, the gable end of which was probably built off the wall of the earlier building on the site. Note the blocked window to the attic with the remodelled roof below, added when that room was extended and the tripartite sash inserted.

39. This approach is discussed in more detail in paragraph 6 of 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets', Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019) (**Appendix 10**) and is an approach that has been followed in this appeal proposal and which, as explained elsewhere, forms part of a committed long term investment in caring for this historic building and its garden setting.
40. Historic England has produced a range of publications aimed at promoting good practice in the management of the historic environment, for both decision makers and property owners. 'Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2' (2015) (**See Appendix 11**) encapsulates the aims and objectives of the advice and the thrust of government policy. Paragraph 2 states:

'This advice promotes positive, well-informed and collaborative conservation, the aim of which is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure that people can continue to use and enjoy them. Change to heritage assets and their settings is, of course, acceptable where it is sustainable in terms of the NPPF; change is only unacceptable where it harms significance without an appropriate balance of public benefit.'



Garden view showing the stable and outbuilding ranges and pre-existing conservatory, now replaced by an extension

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

41. The proposed works have been amended to reflect advice and feedback in pre-application advice from Council officers. The evidence and analysis in the accompanying heritage reports seeks to address officers' concerns and to demonstrate that the proposed works to install a jib door would not result in harm to the building's heritage significance:
42. Understanding of the way the house operated historically will be preserved, through preservation of its internal and external architectural form and detailing, its character and layout;
43. Part of the building's significance lies in how it has been adapted to meet the needs and aspirations of its owners, during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (not least including the historical association with Iris Murdoch). The insertion of a jib door would not undermine the heritage significance of these earlier adaptations, alterations and extensions;
44. The house is no longer used in the way that it was once designed to. It has been adapted and altered in the way it is used to reflect changing needs. The evidence for that history survives, but its use now reflects modern demands and fashions. Indeed the local planning authority has endorsed the current 'functional unity' of the house in granting listed building consent and planning permission for an extension to the historic service wing, to replace a 20th century conservatory with a new family room, increasing the ground floor accommodation and focusing the centre of modern living on the current kitchen and new family room. By comparison if the local planning authority considers that approval of these works of extension and alteration preserve the historic functionally and physically distinct areas of the building it is not clear how the insertion of a jib door would not.
45. That there is now a consent regime in place to manage changes to historic places does not dilute any significance previous alterations may hold and does not preclude further changes being carried out to add to this history.

COMMENT ON THE REASON FOR REFUSAL

46. There is a single reason for refusal that states:

'The proposed breach through the building would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the grade II listed Cedar Lodge through the erosion of the distinction between the differing functional areas of the building. In the absence of identified public benefit to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified, the proposal is contrary to Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, saved Policy C18 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.'

47. The concern about the erosion in the distinction between the differing functional areas of the building is explained in the officer's delegated report (**See Appendix 8**), in particular in paragraph 6.5:

Regardless of the specific phasing and development of the building the following fundamental issues remain.

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 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.

48. The proposed jib door does not 'breach' through two physically and functionally distinct areas of the building. The two 'parts' of the building operate as one, connected already at both ground and first floors and used as one. Historically, one range provided for the essential functioning parts of the house and on the first floor provided some accommodation for both staff and family/guests. The main range contained the principal bedrooms and principal and formal living spaces. Externally the two parts are distinguishable by design and size and scale. Throughout the best part of the 20th century the house has been occupied without any live-in staff with the family occupying all parts of the house. The way the house has worked, serving 20th century needs has been consolidated in two subsequent phases of change, one where the ground floor of the 'service' range was opened up, with a chimney stack removed and rooms joined to create a family kitchen living space. This also involved a new opening from the reception room adjoining into the new kitchen. This primary role as the 'heart of the house' is also made clearly visible, internally and externally with the addition of a large timber framed conservatory. There is no doubt that there is no functional distinction between a service role as once historically existed and main family's use of the spaces. However, there are sufficient and clear visual clues to help understand how the house once operated and physical evidence to illustrate the traditional role of the service wing providing 'support services' for the house. The architectural form and detailing (internally and externally) help to sustain evidence and understanding of the evolving role of the various parts of the house. The fact that the two ranges are connected by doorways creates 'thresholds' that reinforce the cellular nature of the spaces. As pointed out in the heritage reports and as noted by the Council's conservation officer, some of the earlier changes to the house have resulted in some loss of fabric, affected the historic integrity of the plan form and aesthetic of the spaces. For example, the removal of the hall corridor to the back door and the loss of the wall separating the stairs from the reception room has affected the historic plan form and changed the way we experience that part of the ground floor. What is proposed here would not undermine the plan form, nor result in change to the spatial qualities of the spaces involved. The difference in floor levels would remain, the relative difference in size of the room would remain and the ceiling, which is a 20th century insertion would remain at the current height.

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.

49. The historic analysis in the heritage report (WA Oct 2019) and the evidence within the SAVA report (Steeple Aston Village Archive: Cedar Lodge, Final Report on Architectural History, 2013, **Appendix 12**) show that this part of the building has undergone change, in external appearance and internal form. The insertion of the tripartite window gives a visual prominence to this part of the building in views from the back garden and results in an appearance that relates well to the scale and detailing of the tripartite windows in the main range. Internally, the room, which formally once formed part of the earlier building that stood on the site, has had its roof raised and reconfigured (see photos) and then a modern ceiling inserted beneath the purlins. It has undergone changes that reflect the changing demands on the use of that space as well as reflecting the aspirations of its occupants, evolving the former farmhouse into a small 'country house', with later alterations to the elevation with the tripartite window that is most probably consistent with a change in the way that space was to be used. These changes are interesting and add to the evolving story of the house.

50. None of these existing features and evidence of change would be lost. The proposed jib door is intended to optimise the way the rooms can be used, creating a link through to an ancillary space, which could be used as a dressing room, nursery, study seems entirely appropriate for the use of a house of this status in the 21st century. The history of change is real; it is not fake, and it is part of what gives this building its historic and architectural interest. The argument that the proposed insertion of a jib door would have the effect of 'dressing the building up' as something akin to a grand country house has no substance. What is proposed would not, as the officers assert, create a 'series of ancillary rooms'. It is almost as if the officers are objecting to how the rooms in the house are to be occupied using the control regime to impose pre-determined notions about how people should inhabit their property, even though works to use the room as a dressing room/study have already been consented. Most probably this is not the intention but the effect of the officers' approach to impose control is in excess of the law and policy. To take this approach to a logical conclusion would mean that in lesser (i.e. vernacular) buildings it would not be appropriate to insert additional bathrooms or ensembles because this would result in a 'false history' based on an assertion that the gentrification of such buildings that would not have had internal WC facilities, if any at all, would harm their heritage significance.

51. Furthermore, this assertion of faking history appears to contradict the same officer's own advice on the earlier refused application (19/00703/LB, **Appendix 2**) about which she confirmed that a jib door would be entirely appropriate stating "If the application were considered to be acceptable in principle it would be a sensible solution to the issue" the principle being (I believe) objection to the use of the adjoining room in the service wing in connection with the main bedroom.

52. In any event the local planning authority has already given consent to alterations within this room to create a home office and walk in wardrobe, suggesting that use of the room as one of a series of ancillary spaces to the 'main living' is acceptable and would not 'fake history'.

In previous applications it was thought that the only historic fabric to be lost was the walling in the gable end, however the return visit to the site revealed that it would also involve the loss of part of the lath and plaster ceiling (which had already been taken down without consent) and ceiling joists in the service wing in order to allow for headroom above the stairs between the two phases of the building.

53. This ceiling is 20th century and does not hold any heritage significance. The photographs (WA Oct 2019) show that the ceiling previously extended up to the purlins. The proposed removal of ceiling joists to allow for headroom to create the access would not cause harm. Indeed, it may be an opportunity to reveal the former height of the ceiling and enhance significance.

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).

54. The consent regime is not based on quotas, but an assessment of the impact of proposed works on the building's significance. If works of alteration, extension or demolition would not cause harm then the local planning authority should give consent for those works, irrespective of how many previous consents may have been granted.
55. In this case there is good reason why there have been a series of different applications. Originally submitted as one single proposal various elements were removed and made subject to separate applications because the Council officers were raising objections that risked delaying other key works and leading to an escalation in costs. The decision to seek separate applications for other works derives entirely from the officers' resistance to the insertion of a jib door in the main bedroom. It is certainly not as asserted by the conservation officer that the owners are trying to be 'greedy' in the degree of change being pursued.

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 therefore no public benefits and the purely private benefits of the particular preferences of the current owners are not considered to outweigh the harm caused.

56. It is entirely correct that an alternative location has been secured for the formation of an ensuite. This was as much to do with expediency as well as finding a solution to the Council officers' so that at least key 'infrastructure' works can be progressed. Without a solution important parts of the larger project would have been on hold and the house standing empty, a situation that was untenable. This does not mean that there are no good reasons for creating the doorway through to the adjoining room, which would give a purpose and flexibility to the way that room could be used – as a study, a nursery, a dressing room/wardrobe space.
57. Paragraph 8.5 and 8.6 of the officer's delegated report discusses the officers' understanding of the building's history, identifying that the main range and service range were 'connected via the hallway at ground floor level and landing at first floor level'. The report also accepts (paragraph 8.6) the evidence that the phases of the building's development were not as they had assumed.
58. It will be noted that there is a ground floor connection from the principal ground floor room though to the existing kitchen as well as a link to the corridor next to the stairs and that this current arrangement derives from alteration during the 19th and 20th centuries and demonstrates that the two parts of the building now operate as one. This evidence of the understanding of 'the original connection between these two elements' will not be affected by the appeal proposal.



59. It was always the appellant's understanding that the service wing predated the main range. The heritage report (WA Oct 2019) sought to clarify earlier analysis so that it was clear to officers what the main phases of development were. Photographs following some initial stripping of finishes (and included in the heritage report) were able to confirm the documentary evidence and analysis and show an earlier gable end, with a blocked opening and raised ridge and eaves heights. Paragraph 8.8 of the officer's report suggests this blocked opening would not have been a window. Given that this wall predates the main range that is attached to, it is possible the blocked opening was a window, blocked up when the new main range was added. If not that then what would have been the purpose of an opening through between the main range and service range and why was it blocked? Could it have been an opening to the attic space in the main range, accessed via a staircase from the room? This seems unlikely because floor levels do not line up with the opening. The blocked window is not 'an issue'. It shows that the house is a product of change, adapted and repurposed to meet contemporary needs. The appeal proposal is entirely consistent with that history and historic precedents.
60. At paragraph 8.9 the officer asserts that removal of part of the ceiling to provide the head height over the stairs access was not part of the earlier application. Such alteration would always have been necessary to facilitate access. Site analysis would have made clear that such work was necessary as part of the works to create the opening. However, as discussed earlier the existing ceiling is of 20th century origin inserted under what was a previously higher ceiling level (the finished plaster work above the existing ceiling evidences the height of the former ceiling level).
61. Contrary to the assertions in paragraph 8.10 of the officer's report and to reiterate, understanding of the evolution of the plan form of the building will not be undermined. The story remains intact; indeed, the proposed jib door becomes a part of that story. The ceiling heights (albeit that it is a later inserted ceiling) and the differing architectural treatment would remain. The differences in room sizes would also remain.

CONCLUSION

62. The Council officers in correspondence define the harm as being “harm to an understanding of the evolution of the plan form of the building”. The decision notice describes the harm as less than substantial and deriving from “the erosion of the distinction between the differing functional areas of the building”.
63. As explained above and as set out at some length in the heritage reports accompanying the appeal application our findings are that the proposed works would not erode the distinction between differing functional areas of the building and would not harm our understanding of the evolution of the plan form.
64. Officers do not appear to question the analysis of significance, in particular that there is interest in the history of the building’s adaptation and alteration, reflective of the aspirations of its owners and the needs of contemporary society. This is what is represented in this appeal application.
65. In allowing a large extension to the existing kitchen area the council has already endorsed the continuing evolution of the place and endorsed the way in which the historic service wing is now used, as a main component of the family living area, no longer as a ‘service range’. Indeed, the Council had previously sanctioned this change from service use to primary use in consenting to the previous works to open up the ground floor and construction of the timber conservatory. The appeal proposes no more than to continue using the service wing in a way that historically it had been used for much of the 20th century and into the 21st century. The insertion of a jib door helps to optimise the way the family can use the building without undermining our understanding of the way the house historically operated, however that may have been and without undermining the physical evidence of the distinction between the architecture and character of the main house and former service wing.
66. Given that the way the building was originally designed to be used no longer exists, then we rely on the physical evidence that does survive to help us interpret its history and to reconstruct a memory of how the household operated. That physical evidence will not be lost, and our understanding and experience of the house will not be lost. Indeed, the idea of inserting a jib door to make use of an adjoining space would add to the historical interest illustrating the next the chapter in the evolving story of the house. It is the change that a place undergoes that helps to give meaning to the building and to connect people and their memories with places.
67. Thus, there is physical evidence to show how the place evolved from farmhouse to country house, with a sequence of subsequent alterations that illustrate how the service wing was re-purposed in the 20th century, reflecting the effects of two world wars and ongoing changes in contemporary society. These physical changes thus are important because they can help to explain history. There is no arbitrary cut off point at which the clocks stop. The history of the house continues to evolve.
68. A key component of the design of the jib door is that it maintains the status quo, preserving the architectural form and detailing (whether plain or elaborate) of the rooms involved. It would not undermine the distinction between the (historically) differing, functional areas.
69. Interestingly Country Homes magazine in discussing the history and use of jib doors states “Jib doors, historically used to hide entrances to service quarters” (<https://www.theenglishhome.co.uk/in-these-walls-secrets-hide-1-2294265/>. Accessed 31st March 2020). Similarly, the Regency Reading Note about jib doors states:



The jib door connection is proposed through the wall to the left in this picture. The downstand ceiling beam shows where the room was extended with the tripartite sash following the pattern of the main windows

70. *'The purpose for installing a jib-door was much less artistic and significantly more unfeeling and petty. Though a substantial number of servants were required in order to keep a great house running smoothly, there were some householders who did not care to have those servants in evidence any more than necessary. Therefore, jib-doors were installed in the family spaces of some homes primarily in order to obscure the means by which servants entered those areas to do their work.'* (<https://regencyredingote.wordpress.com/2019/05/03/jib-doors-through-the-regency/>. Accessed 31st March 2020)
71. This suggests that the appeal proposal is, historically, an entirely consistent design feature, reinforcing the distinction between the main range and service range, contrary to the Council officers' assertions that it is an inconsistent feature to see between a main range and service range. In contrast, the doors to the dressing room from the two main bedrooms are expressed very clearly as such, with an architectural detailing and hierarchy that amplifies the status of the two principal bedrooms.
72. The proposed jib door would preserve our understanding of the evolution of the plan form, preserve the functional differences between the two ranges (including the history of use) and enhance our experience of the house's significance. It is considered that the evidence produced here and in the earlier heritage reports demonstrates that the proposed works to install a jib door are sensitive to the building's special interest and would not result in any harm to justify refusing listed building consent. The Inspector is respectfully requested to allow this appeal and grant listed building consent.