



CEDAR LODGE STEEPLE ASTON OXFORDSHIRE

HERITAGE REPORT
OCTOBER 2019

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Eastern wall of the bedroom with the entrance door and a door to a narrow cupboard simple skirting, dado and cornice

ADDRESSING THE POINTS RAISED IN THE OFFICER REPORT ON LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION 19/01647/LB

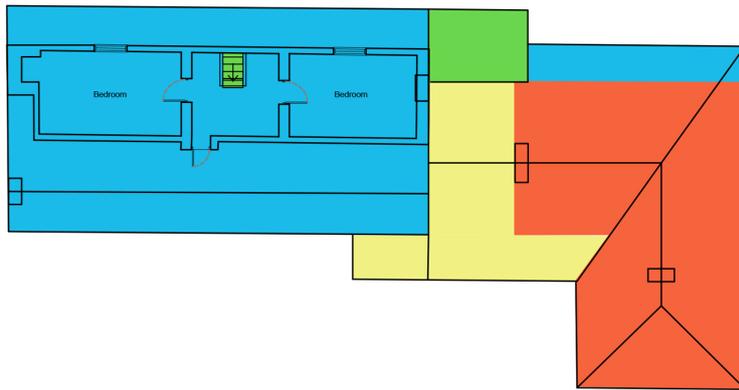
BACKGROUND HISTORY

This report should be read in conjunction with the earlier heritage report (Worledge Associates August 2019) that accompanied the withdrawn application for jib door (19/01647/LB). SAVA (Steeple Aston Village Archive) had previously prepared a history of the site (Cedar Lodge, North Side, Steeple Aston, Final Report on Architectural History, 2013). The findings of that report, referenced in the WA report, are included here to provide a summary of the evolution of Cedar Lodge.

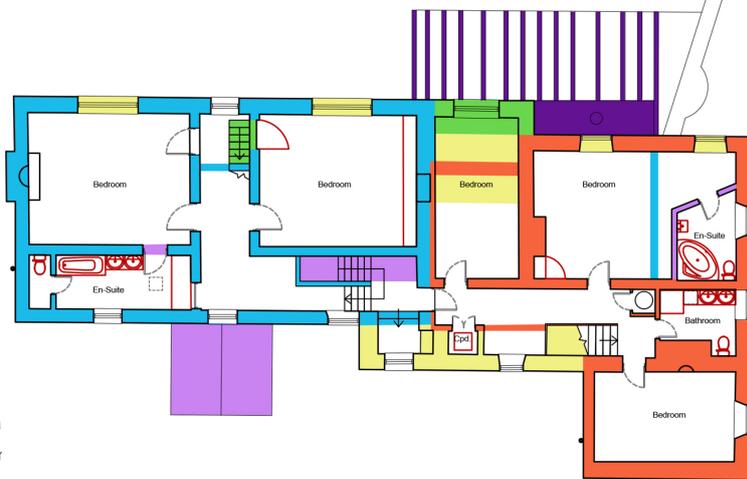
At the time of enclosure 1767 the site (that now comprises Cedar Lodge and its gardens) contained a number of buildings. These are likely to have included housing and farm buildings. A comparison of the 1767 enclosure plan and late 19th century 25-inch plans and inspection of the surviving fabric, including a recent inspection of roof spaces, suggest the following phases of the development:

- Post 1767 enclosure a number of portions of land on the south side of the street are amalgamated to form a single portion.
- A free-standing L-shaped small farmhouse is shown on the 1767 Enclosure map, accessed from the western side of the site. A barn lies along the western boundary.
- Late 18th or early 19th century, a new two-storey house is constructed abutting to the east of the existing farmhouse. It has two uneven parallel ranges; a narrow range to the north and wider range to the south. This range is constructed in line with the northern wall of the existing farmhouse.
- It has 3 rooms and central hall on the ground and a staircase bay providing access to the cellar and first floor and links through to the ground floor of the former farmhouse.
- At the first floor there are two principal rooms in the south range with a small, shared dressing room. The north range has a room on the east side with the west occupied by the staircase and hall linking through to the former farmhouse. There are two rooms in the roof space of the south range. How these spaces in the attic were historically accessed is unclear.
- The former farmhouse is adapted and pressed in to use as a service wing to the new house. Evidence of a now blocked external access to the cellar from the south west side of the main house, suggests that there was a small open service yard to the south-eastern corner of the former farmhouse.
- The new house with the former farmhouse, adapted to form a service wing dates from the late 18th or early 19th century and forms the basis of the current Cedar Lodge, which was subsequently adapted and extended
- Second quarter 19th century the service range remodelled. A small extension added to the north west corner of the main range and the existing in line northern wall of the former farmhouse pushed out and rebuilt. This provides a WC on the ground floor of the principal range, the relocation of the staircase to provide more direct access to the hall linking the two ranges, and additional storage.
- The open yard is infilled providing additional accommodation at ground and first floor. The eastern roof of the former farmhouse service range is also altered.
- Second quarter 20th century bay added to the south eastern corner of the service range. Later the first floor was extended out over the bay and a tripartite sash installed to match the main range.
- Other 20th century works included the removal of the shared dressing room to the first-floor principal bedrooms, blocking one door and adapting the other to a small cupboard, with a new staircase inserted to serve the attic.
- No evidence of live-in servants from mid 1930s onwards.
- Post 1956 the wall between the central hall and the south western principal room removed, and the wall between the staircase bay substantially removed to form a single room. Bottom flight of stairs turned to access into the altered space.
- New opening created between the new reception room and what is now the kitchen area. An internal wall and chimney breast were removed to create a larger space.
- 1980s ensuite added to a first-floor bedroom in the former service wing.
- 1988, the house is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, listed Grade II
- 1994 ground floor bay removed, and conservatory added.
- 2019 permission granted to replace the conservatory and undertake internal works.

The phasing plan illustrates this history.

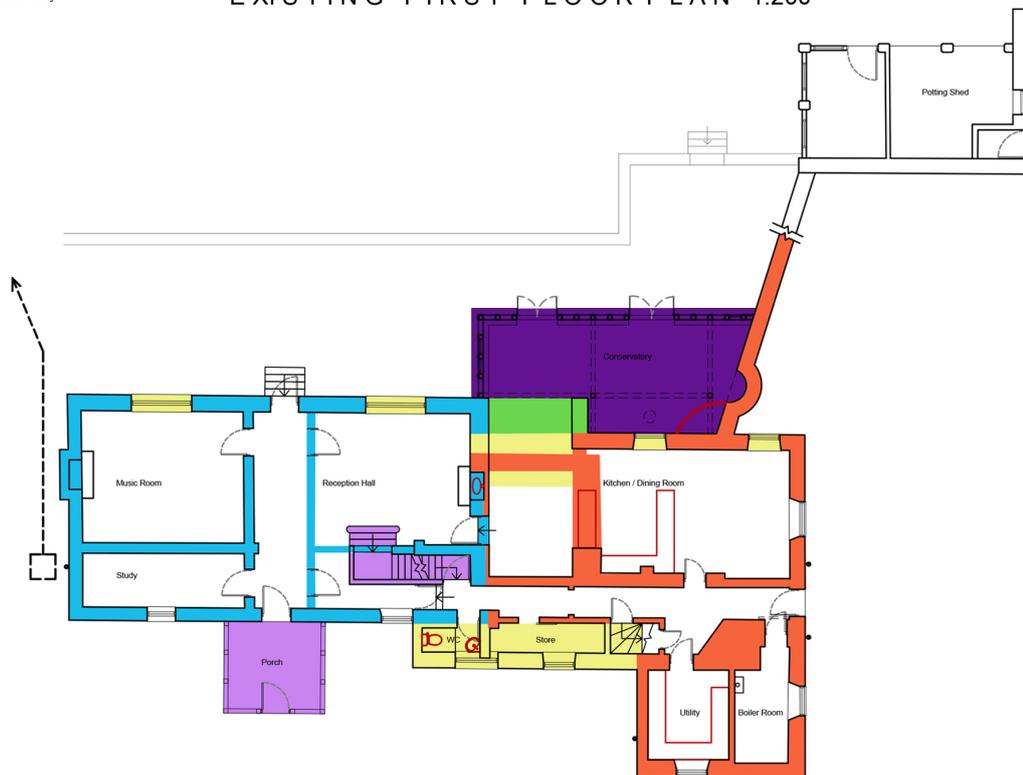


EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN 1:200



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN 1:200

- Fabric thought to be existing or
- New range added end 18th ear
- 19th century alterations
- Second quarter of 20th century
- 1956-80 alterations
- 1997



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN 1:200

OFFICERS COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED JIB DOOR

During the consideration of the previous, withdrawn application Council officers raised concerns about the proposed insertion of a jib door between a main bedroom and an adjoining room. This is reflected in the written response of the Council's conservation officer (dated 30th September 2019). The officer's conclusion was that the proposed works would result in less than substantial harm, for which there was no overriding justification. The concerns raised can be summarised as follows:

- Loss of functional separation between the principal and service range
- Harm to understanding of the evolution of the plan form
- Loss of internal character
- Altering the function of the room in the service range fakes history
- Loss of historic fabric
- Recent permissions allow reasonable adaptation

This application seeks to address the concerns raised, with additional evidence and analysis to demonstrate that the proposed works would not result in harm. Taking each point in turn it can be concluded as follows:

FUNCTIONAL SEPARATION

The two parts of the house are intrinsically linked, by design and as a consequence of changes through history of how the house was occupied and enjoyed. While the rooms are physically distinct and separated by a wall, they are not functionally separate as they all operate as part of a single dwelling. The two parts are no more functionally separate than say the kitchen and the hallway or hallway and sitting room. The place operates as one unit, with each part playing a role to fulfil the main purpose – as a large, high status residential property. Evidence has been provided to clearly demonstrate this. Furthermore, the way the building has been used and adapted reflects changes in and the needs of contemporary society and adds to the building's history and our understanding of it. There is no functional separation between the two parts of the house. It is lived in as one unit. That the ground floor of the 'service wing' provides the main (everyday) kitchen living area and upstairs of the 'service wing' provides family accommodation and facilities evidences this. The evidence in the earlier heritage report (WA Aug 2019) shows that the first floor of the service wing has been used as family accommodation (not staff) for the best part of the 20th century. Indeed if as suggested in the SAVA report that the attic of the later dwellinghouse was used as staff accommodation it demonstrates that there is not a functional division between the two parts and also would reinforce the argument that the first floor was almost certainly put into use as family accommodation, with no functional separation.

EVOLUTION OF THE PLAN FORM

It is very clear that the plan form of the house has evolved from early beginnings. The evidence produced in the Heritage Report and by SAVA show how the service range was adapted and remodelled from an earlier building and how it and the main range were subsequently altered again in the 19th and 20th centuries. To arbitrarily stop the clock on the history of the house is certainly not what government intends as part of its ambition for the intelligent management of change. Indeed, the council appears to embrace the approach that history should not be stopped, in recently granting permission for internal alterations and extensions. For this proposal, to insert a jib door between two existing rooms, the understanding of the evolution of the plan form will not be affected. The proposal – including the location of the door and its design is rooted in preserving understanding of the historic plan form, not harming it.



The attic space showing the line of the earlier roof and blocked opening



The partition wall to the service range, showing the chimney stack (removed on the ground floor) and the realigned and widened roof span.

THE INTERNAL CHARACTER OF THE 'SERVICE WING'

The internal character (and external appearance) of the service wing and its rooms is different from the high ceilinged spacious character of the rooms in the main range. These differing qualities (internally and externally) allow understanding of how the house operated. The proposed jib door will not confuse the physical evidence and relationship change nor change these qualities or our experience of them.

As illustrated in the phasing plan the service range has undergone several changes, the whole remodelled from a former farmhouse, then this room constructed out of a space that was part yard area and then subsequently extended with a tripartite sash bay window with an inserted ceiling (it was higher at purlin level) and then most recently under listed building consent (19/01411/LB) subdivided with an internal partition. Throughout each of these iterations the character of the space has and will, as a result of the proposal to insert a jib door, remain different from the character of main bedroom adjoining. The proposal, by preserving the difference in character between the two rooms, will not harm understanding of the historic evolution of the property.

CREATING A FALSE HISTORY

Approval has already been granted (19/01411/LB) for the room to be subdivided by a non-structural partition to form a home office and a walk-in wardrobe, which recognizes that it continues to function as part of the whole house.

It is not considered the proposal creates a 'false history' but adds a further layer to the ongoing evolution of the house, which is a process recognised in National Heritage Policy and Conservation Guidelines outlined in the heritage report. Historic buildings, such as Cedar Lodge, have and will continue to evolve to meet the reasonable demands and needs of contemporary society.

As previously noted, PPG, Historic Environment, paragraph 014 states:

'The vast majority of heritage assets are in private hands. Thus, sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation.' This reinforces the point provided in the Government and Historic England advice that effective conservation is not about preventing change and not about turning living places into museums. It is about recognising property owner's needs and seeking ways to meet those needs without compromising the heritage significance a place may hold.

The proposal to insert a jib door between the two spaces is designed in response to the architectural qualities the building exhibits and is consistent with its preservation, sustaining the heritage values it holds, not compromising them. Indeed the council accepts the jib door design is entirely appropriate. The officer's delegated report on the refused proposal (19/00703/LB)

States at paragraph 6.11

'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'..[..]..it would be a sensible solution to the issue'.

To now suggest that such a feature is only the preserve of grand country houses is factually incorrect and in conflict with earlier advice. As has been made absolutely clear throughout the spaces in the 'service wing' form part of the use of main house as a whole, both on the ground floor and first floor. Creating links between rooms reflects the changing uses of spaces, reflecting changing needs as a part of the evolving history of the place. It does not represent the aggrandisement of the property (it is not a 'series of ancillary rooms reminiscent of a grand country house'), but even if it did (which would be an interesting chapter in the history of the house), the proposed works subject to this application – the insertion of a jib door, would not undermine the defined significance the place holds.



Western wall showing the simple skirting, dado and cornice, and the centrally placed fire surround and bookshelves which are proposed to be removed. The opening is proposed to the right-hand side of the fireplace surround

The installation of a door let alone a jib door, between a bedroom and bathroom, walk-in wardrobe, study, nursery or other ancillary space is not creating a 'false history' but recognising that these are now part of modern living and not the preserve of the owner and occupiers of grand country houses.

The updating of facilities to meet reasonable modern lifestyle expectations, particularly to a house of the status of Cedar Lodge, will add another layer to its historical development, without harming its heritage significance. 'Jib doors' are not the exclusive preserve of the wealthy, but an ingenious way of inserting a door discreetly in a room to preserve its character. Rather than creating a 'false history' it is considered that it will be well understood aspect of modern society's needs. As Historic England recognises houses, need to evolve to remain relevant to the needs of the owners and occupiers, and through this process ensure ongoing investment and maintenance.

LOSS OF HISTORIC FABRIC

The officer suggests that whilst there will be some loss of existing fabric, this is not the cause of the harm she identifies. From this statement it is reasonable to conclude that the removal of some existing fabric will not result in harm to the significance of Cedar Lodge.

RECENT PERMISSIONS

Listed building consent is not quota based. That there have been recent consents for other works should not be the basis for resisting this application. Those permissions reinforce the fact that the main range and service range operate together as one, with the whole of the ground floor of the service wing (and as extended) forming a primary space within the house. There is no functional separation. Indeed, for the local planning authority to accept that a large kitchen extension to the service wing does not register the loss of functional separation, but a secret door does seems inconsistent and illogical. Those permissions were granted because the Council was satisfied that there was no harm or that the harm was justified. It has no valid reason to resist the insertion of a jib door now.

CONCLUSION

It is not accepted that the proposal will cause harm to the identified heritage significance of Cedar Lodge, let alone have a less than substantial harm.

With the 'jib door' design the spatial and architectural qualities of the bedroom are maintained, and the reading and understanding of the plan form, differing floor levels and physical relationship of the adjoining room is also maintained. The character of the spaces remains distinct and the subsidiary and ancillary qualities of the service range spaces on the first floor would remain. The proposed works retain change in levels, plan form, and architectural detailing and will allow for a clear reading and understanding of the evolution of Cedar Lodge from the mid-18th onwards.

Clearly, and importantly, externally the form of the two parts of the house will be preserved. The architectural qualities and fabric will not be affected by the proposed insertion of a jib door. This clearly allows an understanding of and experience of the design principles that underpin houses of this age and status to be preserved.

The claim that there would be no public benefits is fundamentally flawed and shows a misunderstanding of the advice in the NPPF and PPG. Paragraph 019 of the PPG makes it clear that benefits do not have to be visible to the public or accessible to be genuine public benefits. Works to a private dwelling that secure its future and sustain its significance would represent a public benefit. That the original owners were of sufficient status and means to require (and expect) a house of visible architectural quality and in-house staff with modern, up to date, facilities and equipment suggests in the 21st century that the equivalent level of accommodation would be entirely reasonable and consistent with the social and economic history attached to the house, and a part of its significance.

Historic England states: (Conservation Principles, 2008)

'Keeping a significant place in use is likely to require continual adaptation and change; but, provided such interventions respect the values of the place, they will tend to benefit public (heritage) as well as private interests in it.'

The new owners are investing in the long term repair and upgrading of the property committed to its long-term preservation. This represents a public benefit. As made clear earlier, conservation is not about stopping change, its about managing it so that historic building are allowed to contribute to our daily lives for present and future generations.