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STICKLEYS HOUSE, SIBFORD GOWER

Proposed alteration to ground floor kitchen window

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

The intelligent management of change is a key principle to sustaining and conserving the historic environment. Historic England and successive government agencies have published policy and advice that extends our understanding of the historic environment and develops our competency in making decisions about its management.

Paragraphs 4-10 of Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2 (Managing Significance in Decision- Taking in the Historic Environment) explains that applications (for planning permission and listed building consent) have a greater likelihood of success and better decisions will be made when applicants and local planning authorities assess and understand the particular significance of an asset, the extent of the asset's fabric to which the significance relates, and the relative importance of that significance.

The National Planning Policy Framework, in paragraphs 189 and 190, expects that both applicant and local planning authority take responsibility for understanding the significance of a heritage asset and the impact of a development proposal. Local authorities should, the NPPF explains, consider the significance of the asset in order to 'minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'.

It has never been the intention of government to prevent change or freeze-frame local communities. Current policy and good practice show that change, if managed intelligently, can be successfully accommodated within the historic environment. This not only sustains significance but can add to the way we experience and understand historic places.

This report has been prepared to assess the impact of a proposal to relocate a window on the ground floor of the north elevation on the heritage significance of Stickleys House, a grade II listed building in the village of Sibford Gower, Oxfordshire.

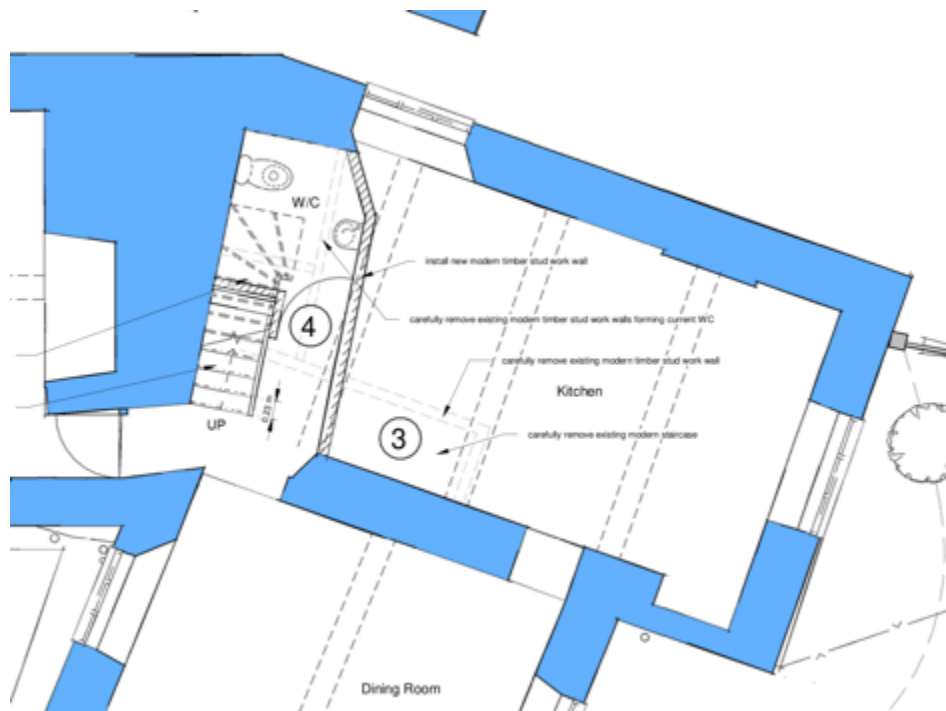
This minor proposal follows on from a recent Listed Building Consent granted on 9 October 2020 (ref: 20/02076/LB) for the 'relocation of staircase, minor internal alterations associated with staircase and alterations to a single window and external door.'

This report should be read in conjunction with the previous Heritage Impact Report (June 2020) submitted with Listed Building Consent Application 20/02076/LB (copy attached)

## PROPOSAL

### CONTEXT

The Listed Building Consent (ref: 20/02076/LB) approved the following layout for the relocated staircase and kitchen, with the partition for the relocated staircase and WC, being canted to avoid the window in the northern elevation.



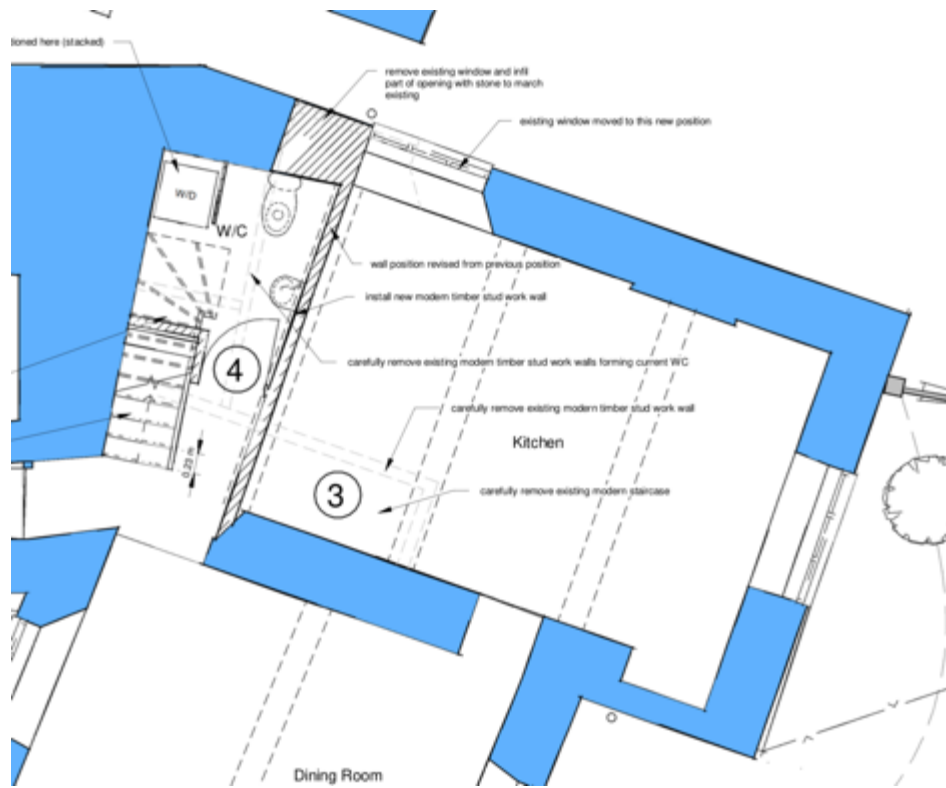
Extract from plan approved under 20/02076/LB

### PROPOSAL

The proposal is seeking to relocate the triple casement window on the north elevation a maximum of 60 cm to the east using the stone removed to infill the space left by the relocation.

This proposal would increase the level of light to the kitchen, which is currently only lit by the window to the east elevation, and a straightening of the partition between the relocated stairs and the kitchen, which will allow a shower to be fitted in the increased floor space.

The current window, with a central fixed light and two opening casements is a modern reproduction, reflective of historic windows on the eastern elevation.



Extract from the revised layout showing the proposed relocation of the window



Existing modern window. The proposal would relocate it 60 cm to the east maintaining the existing internal aesthetic



Detail of the window with modern fixed and opening timber casements



View of the windows from the garden of the adjoining Pond Cottage clearly showing the window is a modern reproduction

## ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

The north elevation forms the southern boundary of the garden of the adjoining house Pond Cottage. The window is currently obscured by shrubs within the rear garden of Pond Cottage. Notwithstanding, this elevation is not generally visible from public spaces within the village.



View of the north elevation of Stickley House from the garden of Pond Cottage, both the ground and first floor windows on this elevation are modern



View of the north elevation. Even with the shrubs removed the remaining vegetation screens the elevation from any public views

As noted in the June 2020 Heritage Impact Assessment, Stickleys House demonstrates a history of adaptation and change, with the thatch replaced by a stone tiled roof, dormers inserted into the roofs, windows inserted and altered.

It is considered the current proposal to relocate a modern windows 60 cm and reuse the removed stone to infill the opening, will not impact on the heritage significance of the building, and is part of the continuum of change, a process which is recognised by Historic England in 'Conservation Principles' (April 2008) paragraph 86:

'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. Many places now valued as part of the historic environment exist because of past patronage and private investment, and the work of successive generations often contributes to their significance. Owners and managers of significant places should not be discouraged from adding further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process'.

It also points out in paragraph 92:

'Retaining the authenticity of a place is not always achieved by retaining as much of the existing fabric as is technically possible'.

It is not proposed to remove the fabric from the building but relocate it, thus maintaining the authenticity of the place. The proposal will result in a minor change to the current (non-public) presentation of the elevation, and even if the proposed works are through careful observation visible, they will be read and understood as part of the historic layering and evolution of the building which has stood in the village since the 17th century.

## CONCLUSION

Stickley House is a grade II listed building lying in a prominent position in the village of Sibford Gower and through its traditional vernacular form, materials and detailing visually contributes to the Conservation Area, which is recognised in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

A Listed Building Consent has recently been given for some works to the house (ref: 20/02076/LB). The current application seeks some additional minor works consisting of moving an existing but modern window in the north elevation 60 cm to the east to provide for a more rational internal layout and an increased level of light into the kitchen. The stone removed would be re-used thus not resulting in the loss of any significant fabric, and thus maintaining the authenticity of the place.





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It will result in a minor change to the visual presentation of the existing elevation. The north elevation, however, marks the boundary of the private garden to the adjoining Pond Cottage. Due to this location, and also trees and shrubs within the private garden, the elevation is not generally visible by the public. Notwithstanding, even if the change, on close inspection, was visible, it would be read and understood as part of the historic layering of the evolution of the house.

The proposal will have no impact on the heritage significance of Stickleys House nor on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.