

19/01101/LB

Stickleys House, Main Street, Sibford Gower

Relocation of staircase, minor internal alterations associated with staircase and alterations to a single window and external door

Understanding the heritage assets affected

Stickleys House is a grade II listed building which lies within the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area.

Significance

The list description (first listed 20 September 1988) was for identification purposes only and merely describes the building 'House. 3 builds. C17 with later additions and alterations'.

The building is of significance for its vernacular form, its unusual plan form and development and the survival of historic fabric.

The Hertiage Statement of Significance identifies an approximate phasing plan for the building with phases relating to 17th century, late 18th / early 19th century, later 19th century and 20th century. The earlier elements are of greater significance.



Ground floor plan showing the sequence of construction. (17th century red; late 18th/early 19th century green; later 19th century orange; 20th century purple).

The Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area Appraisal describes the building as being higher status and larger in scale as a 'statement of wealth and status in the 17th century'.

The Conservation Area Appraisal also recognises the specific contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area 'Streetscape of exceptional quality remains in pockets within the village, for example the grouping looking east from the cross roads and the cluster around Stickleys House'.

Proposals

The proposals are for a number of alterations to the house including the removal and reinstatement of the staircase, the provision of an additional window and the change in location of a 20th century widow and French door.

Appraisal of issues

Staircase

The proposal relates to the 17th century, and therefore most significant phase of the building.

The proposals were subject to a pre-application consultation where concerns were raised about the removal of the existing ground to first floor staircase due to the existence of historic fabric.

The Heritage Impact Assessment claims that the staircase is not in its historic location (and in fact was inserted in the late 20th century) citing that this is not the expected location for an historic stair. It is appreciated that the majority of the existing stair is of modern fabric, but it is considered that the 3 treads are historic and that the stair is potentially in its original location. Stairs are located in a wide variety of locations and there are examples of stairs located immediately adjacent to entranceways (including Park View Cottage, Bletchingdon pictured below). The stair at Stickleys also continues in the same location from first to second floor which indicates it may be in its historic location. The current stair does not have the expected dimensions or pitch of a modern stair.



Park View Cottage, Bletchingdon

No evidence has been presented about the suggested location of the historic stair and unless further information is submitted it will be assumed that the location is historic. There are objections to this proposal.

Reconfigured downstairs toilet

The proposal relates to the 17th century, and therefore most significant phase of the building.

There are concerns with the reconfiguration of the downstairs toilet, which is necessitated by the removal and relocation of the staircase.

No information has been submitted about the significance of the historic stone nib around the existing entrance to the WC (as requested during pre-application discussions / comments).

There are also concerns about the subdivision of the existing historic window, which no doubt impacts on the requirement for an additional window in this area of the building. (whilst there are examples of such partitioning of windows in the district these tend to be thin simple boarded partitions with no soundproofing and this is not a precedent we would encourage to be repeated)

No information is provided about the implications for plumbing and drainage, but it is anticipated that this could re-use existing routes.

Relocation of window and French door

The proposed development relates to the late 19th century phase of the building.

There are no objections to the principle of the relocation of the window and French doors on the south and west elevations. This proposal was informally discussed during pre-application discussions and in general terms is considered to enhance the aesthetic appearance from the street frontage and therefore the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are, however, concerns with the proposed scale of the French doors and it is considered that the existing doors (or those of similar dimensions should be used).

Provision of additional window

There is insufficient justification for the provision of an additional window in this location. It is noted that the plan shows an alcove in this location, but this could have had an alternative function (which may have significance in its own right). It does not necessarily mean there was an opening here. Are there any historic photographs? Is there any evidence of a former opening on either the interior or exterior of the stonework? Further justification is required before this part of the application could be supported.

Summary

The majority of the proposals relate to the oldest, 17th century phase of the building, which is of greatest significance. Further information and justification is required before these alterations could be supported.

There is greater scope and less sensitivity with later phases of the building and consideration should be given to whether there is scope for alteration to these less significant areas of the building as an alternative.

There are no objections in principle to the change in location of the window / French door on the west façade of the building, subject to a reduction in scale of the proposed French door.

Level of harm

Uncertain whether substantial or less than substantial (depending on further information in relation to staircase), but to area of highest significance within listed building .

Recommendation

Objection pending additional information / justification.

Jenny Ballinger, 1st August 2019