

HERITAGE, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT, CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL and LISTED BUILDING JUSTIFICATION for PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION TO:

The Warren Lodge 1 St Peter's Hill Caversham READING RG4 7AX

INTRODUCTION

1. This heritage, design and access statement has been prepared in support of a re-submission for permission to erect an extension to the West elevation of The Warren Lodge. The property is a Grade II listed building the curtilage of which forms part of the Western boundary of St Peters Conservations Area (SEE MAP IN APPENDIX B)
2. This Statement is written to conform with Section 128 of the NPPF (March 2012), which requires a level of detail proportionate to the importance of the building in identifying and describing the significance of the historic asset under discussion.
3. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings **1037 – 1B, 2, 3 & 8A** submitted with the application.

HERITAGE

APPRAISING THE CONTEXT

4. Details of Listing:

Early C19. Cottage ornee, picturesque. 2 storeys squared and knapped flint with ashlar quoins and bracket cills. Jettied 1st floor, stuccoed with applied timbering. Tiled roof. Scalloped bargeboards with brackets to verges and pendants. 3 bays to east, on ground floor 2 cross windows flank 2 storey tower porch whose 1st floor is jettied and supported on octagonal columns with moulded caps, 3 lancets (one replacing door); pointed window 1st floor. To north: gable to left with 3 light bay under jetty. 1 1/2 storey 1938 replica 2 bay extension to right with gabled dormer and central door. South gable also has jetty, supported on thin cast iron colonettes. 2 chimneys with paired octagonal shafts with raised diaper patterning. Formerly thatched with lower eaves.

5. Historical Context : Warren Lodge appears on the 1882 Ordnance Survey Map (See Appendix B) at the mouth of The Warren, a road created around 1600 as a level route to Mapledurham House and Estate. There is anecdotal, but not direct evidence linking the Lodge to AW Pugin. Sidney Gold in his *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Reading*¹ dates the Lodge at 1840 and attributes it to Pugin , although T J Brittain-Catlin points out that similar Lodges confirmed to have been designed by Pugin (such as those sketched for Scarisbrick Hall in Lancashire) are dissimilar, and he casts doubt on the attribution, noting that misattributions to Pugin are frequent and commonplace².

The attribution, therefore, is likely to be on the basis of the appearance of the building, and as a result of a number of books and online resources, including Gold, ascribing the 1840 remodelling of the adjacent Caversham Court to Pugin. However, this

¹ Gold 1999 p144

² Brittain-Catlin 2004 p134

interpretation appears to be based solely on the recorded recollections of former leaseholder Marianne Loveday (d.1918) many years after the event³.

No further information was available on the Heritage Gateway website beyond the listing.

6. Aesthetic Context The property is built in a distinctive and unusual Gothic Revival style, with a jettied upper storey, leaded windows of varying designs, and a symmetrical aspect onto The Warren.
7. Communal Context: The Lodge stands apart from other buildings, but is partly overlooked by a modern house further up the hill, and its associated garage. As a local landmark on the corner of the Warren and St Peters Hill, it forms part of the streetscape, and marks part of the boundary of St Peters Conservation Area. The aspect onto The Warren is the oldest, and most significant in terms of its appearance.

ASSESSMENT

THE PROPERTY

8. Summary: The property is a detached cottage with a large garden on various levels. The accommodation comprises three Bedrooms, a small Bathroom, Sitting, Dining, a modest Kitchen and downstairs WC.
9. History and Development The main part of the property, which faces on to The Warren, is thought to date from 1830-40. It is unclear whether it was built on behalf of The Simonds of Caversham Court, or for the benefit of the Blounts of Mapledurham, as a lodge for The Warren itself. There appear to be two other subsequent Lodges on The Warren that may have taken over the function of the Lodge as the Mapledurham estate contracted.

The property has been altered and extended on several occasions; over the last century, and certainly after c1910 when postcard pictures of the Lodge were published (See Appendix B), a previous thatched roof has been replaced with clay tile, windows have been altered as has the timber detailing, the original door onto the Warren has been removed and the overhang infilled, and the property has been extended by one and a half stories to the West⁴, to form the distinctive T-Shape as seen in similar properties (eg Tudor Cottage in Surley Row) and again with a single-storey lean-to to the North.

10. External Features : The listing notes the Lodge is built in a harmonious Cottage Ornee style, with napped flint infills and a jettied upper storey.

Where the incline of the hill was excavated to provide the footprint of the house, retaining walls have been formed by dry-stacked blocks inclined into the hill (See Appendix B). Some of these are thought to have come from the demolished Caversham Court; a number are concrete, suggesting that the walls have been rebuilt relatively recently and are therefore of limited heritage significance.

³ S Markham, A History of Caversham Court, via List Entry 113446 for Grade II Listing for Caversham Court Screen Wall

⁴ Perhaps in 1938 as per the listing.

11. Internal Features: Little remains of the original internal features; fireplaces are in keeping but relatively modern. The oak-panelled Hall is said to have been completed in the 1930s, with Panelling reclaimed from the demolished Caversham Court, but there is no evidence for this. The dining room has exposed beams of uncertain age.

SIGNIFICANCE

12. It is recognised that the building is a local heritage asset, partly by virtue of its external fabric, but principally through its contribution to the streetscape of Caversham and specifically St Peter's Conservation Area. Although there have been significant alterations to all elevations to the building over the last century, the scale of the building, its design and function, and its presence on the corner of the Warren make it a significant local building, particularly with regard to the visibility of its East, South and to an extent North elevations.

Paragraph 54 of the PPS5 Practice Guide advises us to consider the significance of the asset; in the case of Warren Lodge, that significance can be said to rest both in its position within the historic landscape of Caversham, the fabric (principally the exterior of the original East, North and South elevations), and its relative scarcity.

As the lodge has been much altered, its listing and significance may reasonably said to rest on the distinctive architectural features, and its place in the built environment. Neither of these are at all altered by the current proposals.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

13. The intention is to create accommodation containing, in particular, a new kitchen and bathroom of appropriate and proportionate size of the property, whilst retaining the character and appearance of the original building in and of itself, and as a heritage asset within the built environment of the Conservation Area.

Although the Lodge is relatively large in comparison with buildings of similar age and use, having been extended a number of times over the last century, both the bathroom and kitchen are small in relation to the overall footprint (see Paragraphs 17 and 18 below), and can be said to limit the utility of the building as a home, as well as its attractiveness, flexibility and utility to current and future occupants.

The current layout of the building therefore makes it sub-optimal for full occupancy as a family home, as a three-bedroomed house would normally be. The current owners struggle with this and it is likely future owners would also. The overall approach therefore aims to improve the viability of the property as a home without degrading its significance.

14. The applicants would therefore like to improve the accommodation by creating a single one and a half-storey extension to the West side of the house, thereby creating a new kitchen and a new upstairs bathroom (en suite to the principal bedroom) both of which would be larger than the current provision and more suitable to a three-bedroom house.

15. Further:

- a) The extension, with a door from outside into the new kitchen, would enable level access into the house from outside.
- b) The provision of these new rooms outside the current footprint, and of services to them, would ensure the least possible interference with the existing fabric of the building,
- c) The existing flint-faced wall at first-floor level would be retained in the interior of the new Kitchen.
- d) Breaching of the existing fabric for access will be minimal. On the ground floor it would be through an arched window set in the existing arched recess, (See Appendix B) which will form the opening into the Kitchen. On the first floor the access is through the recess alongside the chimney breast.
- d) Windows displaced by the works would be appropriately reused within the new structure.
- e) Earthworks to create space for the enlarged footprint would remain on site.
- f) Stone blocks from the existing retaining walls would be used to replace loose concrete blocks elsewhere, improving the appearance and safety of the remaining walls.

16. The extension proposed is on the least architecturally significant, and also least visible, West elevation, and will be smaller than and subordinate to the existing structure, meaning the visible impact of the works would be minimal either from St Peter's Hill or the Warren parts of the Conservation Area and would not reduce the significance of the Lodge as a historic asset.

CURRENT PROVISION

17. The current Kitchen, with access from the hall to the south and open through to the North door and cloakroom to the West, measures 11'6 x 8'3, with the chimney stack from the main room taking up a further 3'3" x 15" "bite" out of the room. This makes it the smallest room on the ground floor, and meaning there is insufficient space for the normal range of modern appliances, with the tumble dryer having to be housed in a temporary structure outside.

The access to the downstairs cloakroom, which was originally via a covered but not enclosed porch and therefore accessed from outside, is now via the kitchen from the rest of the house and is not by modern standards appropriate as an adjunct to a food preparation area.

18. The current upstairs bathroom measures 9'4 x 4'7, with a single narrow access door measuring 23". Access is therefore restricted, and the room provides space only for an unusually short bath, at 1400mm, smaller than both a 1700mm "standard" bath and a 1500mm "compact" size.

IMPACT

19. The proposals aim to preserve and enhance the character of the Listed Building and the St Peters Conservation Area taking account of the building's setting and importance. As significant changes to the appearance of the building have taken place over the years, it is felt that further modest changes and adaptations can be made without compromising the overall character of the building, or the setting in the Conservation Area and wider streetscape, especially if these are completed in an architecturally sensitive and traditional manner.
20. The design as outlined is therefore suggested to be appropriate for the context, and sustains and maintains the building in its current setting, while securing its future as an appropriately-serviced family home.

INVOLVEMENT/CONSULTATION

21. The applicants have discussed the proposals with neighbours.
22. The design principles and concepts are in accordance with the relevant Reading Borough Local Plan policies and Planning Policy Guides including:
- PPS5 Planning For the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (2010) Policy HE10
 - National Planning Policy Framework: Historic Assets
 - Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) Policy CS7, CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) CS36
 - Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policy Document (2012) Policy DM 9
 - Reading Planning: A Design Guide to House Extensions (Supplementary Planning Guidance)
23. The proposals are a further re-submission of the previously withdrawn applications 12/01881/FUL and 12/01882/LBC taking account of the comments made by the Planning and Conservation Officers in the responses dated 9 January 2013 and 29 May 2013. The amendments initially included:
- omission of parking area
 - omission of terrace
 - omission of extension to North elevation
 - omission of doors and roof window to existing building

24. In respect of the pre-application advice sought in April 2013, amendments now also include:

- omission of revised extension to North elevation
- relocation of planned kitchen from within existing footprint to the new ground-floor extension

POLICY

25. Relevant parts of the NPPF (Part 12, Conserving and Enhancing The Historic Environment) are further informed by the pre-existing PPS5 guidance. Paragraphs 88 - 90 of that guidance suggest:

- *88 Proposals for the development of a heritage asset will ideally be for its optimum viable use.*
- *89. It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner but also for the future conservation of the asset. Viable uses will fund future maintenance.*
- *90. Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, provided that the harm is minimised.*

26. Further, paragraph 131 of the NPPF itself notes, regarding taking into account Government objectives on sustainable development:

- *131. The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of all heritage assets (whether designated or not) and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*

27. Within the terms of the NPPF and the applicable guidance, it is suggested that these proposed alterations to the building cause minimal or no loss of significance of the building as a historic asset, and do not amount to substantial harm to either the building or its setting, but rather tend towards the optimum viable use of the building for its size, which is as a family home.

Within living memory, Warren Lodge has been principally occupied by couples or elderly single tenants. During that time, alterations have been made that have been unsympathetic to the structure of the building, and have led to historic fabric being lost or deteriorating. The long term security of the building is best served by it being fully occupied by owners who are able to fully use and preserve it, reducing the risk of neglect or deterioration in future.

28. Paragraphs 121, 178 and 182 of the PPS5 guidance further suggest:

- *121. The design of a development affecting the setting of a heritage asset may play an important part in determining its impact. The contribution of setting to the historic significance of an asset can be sustained or enhanced if new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting by virtue of their scale, proportion, height, massing, alignment and use of materials.*

- 178. *The main issues to consider in proposals for additions to heritage assets, including new development in conservation areas, are proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, use, relationship with adjacent assets, alignment and treatment of setting.*
- 182 *New openings need to be considered in the context of the architectural and historic significance of that part of the asset*

These considerations inform the design principles outlined in sections 29 to 36 below.

USE & AMOUNT

29. The proposals include a one and a half storey extension to the West, together with a limited number of internal and external alterations, including doorways in existing alcoves, and earthworks to allow the footprint to be extended.

LAYOUT

30. The extension to the West has been set in a relatively inaccessible and little used part of the garden (See Appendix B). It is considered to have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and was discussed with the Principal Planning Officer as a possible location for an extension after the initial application.

SCALE

31. The one and a half storey extension will have a relatively small projection and lower roof lines, following the outline of the existing gable, and will nestle into the bank minimising the impact on the building and the street scene. It will be set back from the existing facades and has a considerable set-down in the ridge to maintain the existing bargeboard features untouched. This will give a clear distinction between the existing and new and enable the proposals to be totally subservient to the main dwelling, having little impact on the street scene.

The size of the extension has been chosen to provide a useful, usable floor area in both Kitchen and Bathroom, while not encroaching sufficiently towards the boundary to necessitate the removal of any existing features or planting.

LANDSCAPING

32. The space is not overlooked by neighbours, but is partly overshadowed by a neighbouring brick garage built on the boundary. There is a stone bench, flower beds and a mature tree close to the boundary, all of which will be retained. An existing path round the property at the lower level will be incorporated by the works, with existing flags relaid elsewhere, but there will still be access round the West of the Lodge at the higher level.

APPEARANCE

33. The finishes match the existing with render quoins and flint panels to the walls and clay plain tile roof. The salvaged timber window is reused and the new door and window will be of similar design and materials to the existing.

ACCESS COMPONENT

34. The property is not currently wheelchair accessible, as both the front and rear doors feature steps. Relaying the path up to the new doors into the extension will allow new level access to the building from the garden via the kitchen.
35. The current bathroom has a narrow door at 32". The new bathroom would have a standard width door and improved access.
36. New electrical socket and new electrical switch installations (as opposed to replacements in place for existing fittings) will comply with the guidance in Part M.

EVALUATION

37. The applicants feel that the proposals meet their requirements in an appropriate way, giving additional accommodation to improve facilities. The current kitchen and bathroom size and layout adversely affect the current utility of the building as a family home, and will continue to do so in the future, while the proposed extension creates improved accommodation to meet the reasonable needs of the applicants and future occupants, uniting the old and new.
38. As required in Paragraph 80 of the guidance on PPS5, and taking into consideration the advice and feedback of the Principal Planning Officer on previous applications and consultations, the current proposals take appropriate account of the significance, character, fabric and distinctiveness of the existing building and the wider setting and street scene; and by use of appropriate materials and scale, and in altering the fabric of the existing building as little as possible, these plans mitigate the effect on the Lodge itself and the wider visual and physical landscape.

The parts of the existing building which are most historic and of architectural significance are protected, and the addition will have little or no impact on the 'country lane setting' of the Conservation Area and The Warren in particular. In this way the significance of the asset, as referred to in the NPPF, previous relevant guidance, and the Council's Core Policy CS33, is not adversely affected.

Appendix A:

OUTLINE SCHEDULE OF WORKS

Carefully remove existing windows and door; set aside for reuse.

Construct single storey extension and two storey extension using wall profiles to minimise cutting into existing structure. Utilise existing window openings/recesses as access.

Make good adjacent internal and external surfaces in materials, specification and workmanship as existing.

Appendix B:
PHOTOGRAPHS



Views from St Peters Hill and The Warren



Location Proposed
Extension



Internal Features Existing Dining Room



Historic Photographs and Postcards.