

# **Pumpkin Cottage, 6 St Andrew's Lane, Headington, Oxford**



## **Heritage Impact Assessment of Proposed Works to Create Office/Guest Room**

**Dr Kathryn Davies**

**BA (Hons), MA, DPhil, Dip TP, FSA, MRTPI, IHBC**

**May 2020**

## INTRODUCTION

Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in 2019 for alterations and extensions to Pumpkin Cottage, 6 St Andrews Lane, Headington. An amendment to the approved works is currently being sought to accommodate changing circumstances. A home office is now required and the opportunity is being taken to optimise the use of the space by creating guest accommodation as well. This report assesses the impact of the proposed works on the significance of this grade II listed building and on the surrounding Old Headington Conservation Area.

The works essentially involve the conversion and extension of the former garage to create an office/guest room with an en-suite shower room and a store to accommodate bins. The latter would be accessed from the existing garage doors. The works would involve the removal of a section of twentieth-century walling and the replacement of the existing flat roof. The front part of the existing garage would have a pitched roof, gable on to the road and the rear part and extension would have a pitched roof at right angles to this. The works would also include the creation of an opening in the garden wall.

This assessment should be read in conjunction with the Assessment of Heritage Significance, by Dr Kathryn Davies, dated April 2019 and the proposed plans by PCA, drawing numbers: 1053-AL01 A; 1053-AL02 A; 1053 AL03B; 1053-AL04 A. A plan from the Assessment of Heritage Significance indicating phases of development of the building as a whole is included below, in figure 1, for convenience.

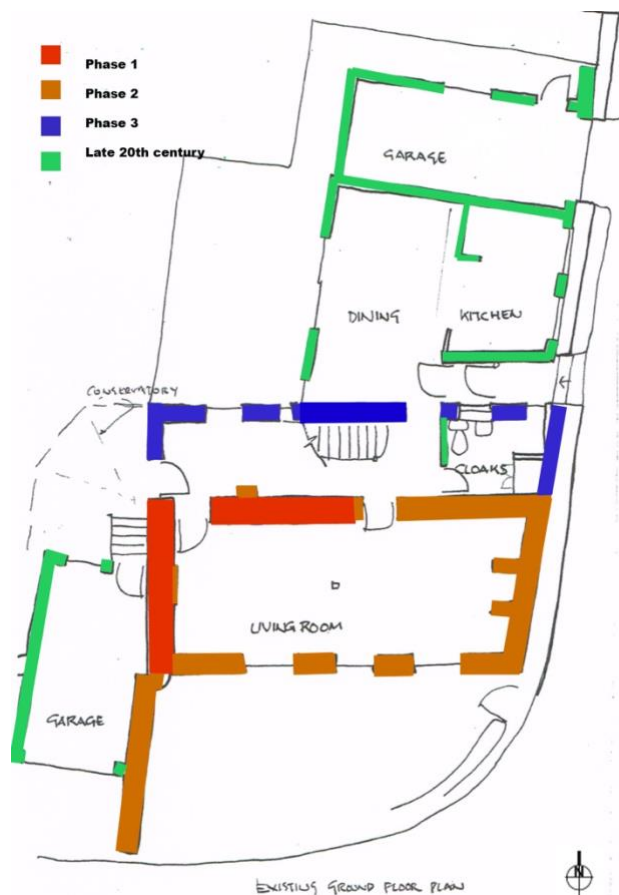


Figure 1 Phases of development

This impact assessment has been prepared by Dr Kathryn Davies, BA(Hons), MA, DPhil (Oxon), Dip TP, FSA, MRTPI, IHBC. Dr Davies is a heritage consultant who has been a Chartered Town Planner and qualified in conservation for over 30 years. She is a founder member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and was recently its Vice-Chair.

She has extensive experience of working in planning and conservation in local authorities and for Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as a Historic Buildings Inspector, Team Leader and as the Principal Historic Places Adviser in the South East. She is currently an independent consultant undertaking work in both the private and public sectors. She has been appointed by CABE as a Built Environment Expert to sit on design review panels, including the Oxford Design Review Panel, and is a member of the BOB-MK and Lewisham design review panels.

Dr Davies is a Visiting Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford. She has lectured widely on conservation and her specific area of research, early modern, secular wall paintings, on which she has published a book and several papers.

## METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of assessing the likely impact of the proposed development on the significance of the site and its setting, established criteria have been employed. If the proposed changes will enhance heritage values or the ability to appreciate them, then the impact on heritage significance will be deemed *positive*; however, if they fail to sustain heritage values or impair their appreciation then the impact will be deemed *negative*. If the proposals preserve the heritage values then the impact will be deemed *neutral*.

Within the categories there are four different levels that can be given to identify the intensity of impact:

*negligible* – impacts considered to cause no material change.

*minor* - impacts considered to make a small difference to one's ability to understand and appreciate the heritage value of an asset. A minor impact may also be defined as involving receptors of low sensitivity exposed to intrusion, obstruction or change of low to medium magnitudes for short periods of time.

*moderate* - impacts considered to make an appreciable difference to the ability to understand or appreciate the heritage value of an asset.

*substantial* - impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the resource.

Each element of the proposed works is described separately and then their impact on heritage values is considered. The overall impact of the proposed works is then assessed.

This impact assessment also considers the impact of the proposed works on the character and appearance of the Old Headington Conservation Area

This proposal is then assessed against the relevant national and local policies

### **IMPACT OF PROPOSED WORKS ON THE GRADE II LISTED PUMPKIN COTTAGE**

The proposed works relate only to the former garage and the garden area immediately adjacent to it, see figure 2.



*Figure 2 Former garage showing thicker east wall (to the right in the photo) which extends to form the boundary wall of the garden. Note unattractive bin storage in front of the garage.*

The documentary evidence in the Assessment of Heritage Significance demonstrates that a building occupied the site of this garage until some time after 1939, most probably after the mid-century, as little building work was undertaken during WW2 and immediately after. The demolished building was much larger than the existing structure. The north, south and west walls of this existing structure, therefore, date from some time after the demolition of the former building, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The east wall, however, is much thicker and is on the line of former building. It extends to form the boundary wall to the front garden. This is very likely to be the remaining wall of the former structure on this site. This is expressed internally and the junction between this wall and the west wall of the cottage can be clearly seen, see figure 3.

#### *1. Removal of part of the west wall and alterations to the north wall of the existing garage*

The north wall of the garage is partially enclosed within a conservatory which has consent for removal as part of the ongoing works. It is constructed of stone with steps leading up to a door and with evidence of a blocked-up window, see figure 4. The west elevation is of a similar construction and has a small window with a brick arch-head, see figure 5. The stonework all appears relatively modern and there are no features of historic interest internally or externally. The northern part of the west wall would be demolished. The north wall would be altered to make a window in the door opening and to insert another window.





*Figure 3 East wall of former building showing the junction with the west wall of house*



*Figure 4 North elevation of existing garage, proposed to be altered*



*Figure 5 West elevation of garage. The left half of the wall including the brick arch-headed window is proposed for demolition.*

The proposed works would not involve the loss of any historic fabric nor obscure the understanding of any historical value. **The proposed demolition and alterations would have a neutral impact on heritage values.**

### *2. The extension of the existing garage*

The proposed office/guest room would require an extension to the existing building of approximately 5.5 square metres to the west. This would adjoin the existing boundary wall. It would occupy an area of garden currently used for storing water butts. The office/guest room would be accessed from a door in the north elevation with steps leading up to it. These would replace the steps currently used to access the garage.

The excavation required to extend the garage may have some impact on evidential value, as the site lies within an area of archaeological interest. An archaeological watching brief may also reveal some information on the former building on the site. This would constitute a minor, beneficial impact. The extension to the garage would have a neutral impact on historical values. The scale and design of the extension would be visually low key and would be read as an ancillary structure. The proposed extension a neutral impact on aesthetic values. **Overall, the proposed extension would have a neutral to minor positive impact on heritage values.**

### *3. Reroofing with pitched roofs*

The existing flat roof of the garage would be removed and replaced with a pitched roof in plain tiles to match those on the existing house. The extension and northern part of the



garage would be roofed at right angles to the front section forming a T-shaped roof. The height would be around one metre below the ridge line of the principal building.

Aesthetically, the replacement of the flat roof with a traditional pitched roof would have a neutral impact on the listed building. The pitched roof would be more visually prominent than the existing flat roof, but its design and materials would be traditional in form and it would remain subservient to the principal building. **The proposed reroofing would have a neutral impact on heritage values**

#### *4. Creation of new opening in garden wall*



*Figure 6 Existing garden boundary wall viewed from William Orchard Close. The proposed new opening would be between the holly bush and the sapling in the centre left of the photo.*

An opening in the stone garden wall is proposed to provide pedestrian access with steps leading up from the rear garden. The stone garden wall, see figure 6, is on the site of the former building which survived until the latter part of the twentieth century. The wall does not demarcate the historic boundary of the plot and nor does it have any features of historic significance. A plain, high boarded gate would continue the line of the wall. The work would have a neutral impact on historical and aesthetic values. **The proposed new opening would have a neutral impact on heritage values**

**Overall, the impact of the proposals on heritage significance would be neutral-minor beneficial.**

#### **IMPACT ON THE OLD HEADINGTON CONSERVATION AREA**

Pumpkin Cottage makes positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Old Headington Conservation Area. Its traditional cottage appearance reinforces the predominant rural village character of St Andrews Lane. Its attractive front garden is particularly noticeable because it is set at right angles to the lane, at its junction with William Orchard Close, allowing a long view of it when approaching from the south, see

figure 7. The stone boundary wall surrounding the garden reflects a locally distinctive feature.



*Figure 7 View of Pumpkin Cottage looking north along St Andrew's Lane*

William Orchard Close is a cul-de-sac of three houses and a block of garages. It is not a pedestrian through route and consequently views along the close to Pumpkin Cottage are not key views within the conservation area. However, St Andrew's Lane is an important route through the conservation area both for vehicles and pedestrians. Views of Pumpkin Cottage are an important element in the experience of the conservation area at this point.

The proposed works will not affect the appearance of the front range, the main view of the cottage and its principal, positive, contribution. In this view, the traditional character of the conservation area is currently compromised to a degree by views of the adjacent house on William Orchard Close. This is a late twentieth-century house of contemporary brick and detailing which is not characteristic of the area. This detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposed pitched roof over the garage will obscure this view and replace it with that of a traditional plain tiled pitched roof.

Currently, recycling bins are located in front of the existing building, see figure 2. The creation of a bin store will remove this unattractive element from the street scene.

**The proposed works would have a minor, positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.**

## **POLICY COMPLIANCE**

**NPPF 2019:** *Paragraphs 127 and 128 are concerned with securing good design and high quality, recognising the importance of local character and history.*

The proposed works seek to reinforce the local character of the area by using traditional building form and materials. The proposed extension respects the typical scale of ancillary



buildings in the local area and remains subservient to the principal listed building.

*Paragraphs 189-199 are concerned with understanding the significance of heritage assets; and ensuring that proposals sustain or enhance this significance.*

The proposed development has been informed by an understanding of the significance of the site both in relation to the listed Pumpkin Cottage and also its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. No harm to heritage values would result from the proposed works. A minor enhancement of significance would result from the introduction of traditional plain tiled pitched roofs instead of the existing flat roof, which would obscure views of modern development.

**Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016:** *Policy HE2 requires an archaeological watching brief where the site is in an area of archaeological interest and significant breaking of the ground is proposed*

The site is known to have been occupied by buildings formerly, which could date back to the eighteenth century or earlier. There would be some ground disturbance for the construction of the extension and it is anticipated that an archaeological watching brief would be undertaken in accordance with a brief to be determined by the local authority.

*Policy HE3 is concerned with ensuring that development affecting a listed building is appropriate and respects its character, history and setting*

The traditional design and modest scale of the proposed works deliberately seek to create an appropriate and unassuming addition to the principal listed building.

*Policy HE4 concerns archaeological remains with a listed building.*

The archaeological remains within the existing garage, i.e. the east wall of the former building/ west garden wall would not be disturbed by the proposed works.

*Policy HE7 requires development in conservation areas to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance*

The site currently makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area featuring in a key view along St Andrew's Lane. One negative element in this view is the prominence of the late twentieth-century house adjacent on William Orchard Close. The introduction of traditional pitched roofs in materials to match those characteristically found in the conservation area would obscure views of this house. This would represent a modest but positive enhancement of the special character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

*CP1 is a general policy relating to all development proposals.*

The proposed works comply with all aspects of the general policy.

*CP8 requires development to take account of its context in order to strengthen, enhance and protect local character*

This policy requirement overlaps with policy HE3. An understanding of the local context has informed the proposed works, which seek to enhance setting and local distinctiveness.

**Oxford Core Strategy 2026:** *CS18 relates to Oxford's unique historic environment requiring proposals to respond positively to the character and distinctiveness of the locality, retaining important historic features, settings and including proposals for enhancement particularly where these address local issues identified in, for example, conservation area character appraisal or management plans.*

This updated, overarching policy encompasses some of the policies discussed above. The proposals have been developed to comply with all of this.

**Sites and Housing Plan 2016:** *HP9 relates to design, character and context in relation to housing development.*

Again, there is some overlap with policies already discussed. The criteria set out in this policy have all been taken into account in designing the proposed extension to Pumpkin Cottage

*HP14 relates to privacy and daylight*

The proposed works do not affect the privacy or daylight of any surrounding properties

**Emerging Oxford Local Plan 2036:** *DH1 relates to high quality design and placemaking, which enhances local distinctiveness. There is an emphasis on site and setting informing development and a contextual analysis to identify opportunities to reinforce existing character.*

The modest development proposed has been informed by a detailed assessment of the site and its context, including the Oxford City Council Old Headington Conservation Area Appraisal. It seeks to reinforce the existing character by using traditional scale, form and materials.

*DH3 relates to designated heritage assets, requiring development to respond positively to significance, character and distinctiveness of the heritage asset and the locality.*

The detailed assessment of the significance of Pumpkin Cottage has been undertaken and this impact assessment demonstrates that there would be no harm to significance as a result of the proposed works, which respect the character of the listed building and its setting.

## **CONCLUSION**

With regard to the listed building, the proposed works would cause no harm to heritage values. They would present an opportunity for some archaeological investigation and would result in a very modest improvement in the appearance of the building. In relation to the conservation area, the proposed works would preserve and to a small degree, enhance its character and appearance.

**Overall, the proposed works would have no adverse impact on heritage significance and would preserve and enhance to a minor degree the character and appearance of the Old Headington Conservation Area.**