

**PROPOSED ORANGERY & LANTERN**

**MANOR FARM, LITTLE ROLLRIGHT, 0X7 5QA**

**Design & Access Statement**

**Heritage Appraisal and Justification Statement**

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Applicants acquired Manor Farm and the surrounding farming estate at Little Rollright in 2015. They seek consent to build an orangery and to alter the existing conservatory. These works only affect parts of the house built within the past 15 years.

1.2 The orangery is intended to provide an additional living space off the kitchen which will connect visually and functionally with the garden. The lantern proposed on top of the existing conservatory, which acts as the entrance hall to the house, will enhance that space and reflect the elegant fenestration.

1.3 The house is listed Grade II and has been subject to many alterations over a period of nearly 400 years. Much of the architectural richness of the house is the result of these alterations. The Applicants understand their duty of care and intend to show proper respect for the historic building fabric and carry out works in a sympathetic and informed manner so as not to detract from the character and appearance of the property. In doing so they propose to make modest changes and we hope that these are seen as part of a continuing evolution of the house and judged in that context.

1.4 The site does not lie within any of the designated Flood Zones so a Flood Risk Assessment is not considered necessary.

1.5 The site lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

2.0 **HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION**

2.1 The Statutory List provides a useful brief description of the house, thus :

ROLLRIGHT LITTLE ROLLRIGHT SP23SE 1/138 Manor Farmhouse and attached outbuilding 27/08/57 (Formerly listed as Manor Farmhouse) GV II

Farmhouse, probably a manor house. 1633 (or 1655?) on datestone; extended C18 and mid C19. Coursed limestone rubble with some ashlar dressings and some wooden lintels; Stonesfield-slate and concrete plain-tile roofs with ashlar stacks. L plan, infilled. 2 storeys plus attic. 3-window front is probably mostly C17, but has large 3-light C19 casements in the outer bays, except for a canted bay window to right of the central doorway; above the door is an early-C19 round-headed window with margin lights. 2 ridge stacks with plinths and moulded caps are aligned either side of the entrance. Left gable wall has two 3-light leaded casements set below the labels of their stone-mullioned predecessors, and in the gable has a 2-light casement below the datestone. Contemporary rear wing, returning from it, has further leaded casements and may have been extended in C18; it has a further ridge stack plus a

bellcote. C19 infill range has sashes, taller at ground floor, and in the gable wall has a tripartite sash above a large canted bay window with a stone cornice. A short single-storey range extending to left of the earlier wing, with a rounded oven projection to rear, links to a stable and coach-house range which has a leaded 3-light ovolo-moulded wood-mullion window in the gable wall, and also incorporates a small blocked 2-light C13 window; the coach house door has a brick depressed arch and the rear wall has a single-row dovecote below the eaves. Interior not inspected. (Buildings of England : Oxfordshire : p690)

- 2.2 Manor Farm is a handsome country house set in rolling farmland. It lies in a small settlement with a long and rich history that encompasses the megalithic Rollright Stones, which still provide a focus for Contemporary Paganism and activities by other Esotericists, as well as the diminutive medieval Church of St Philip. The earliest part of the house dates to the C17 and there were substantial additions to the house in the C18 and C19. The house was repaired and updated in 2004-5 and a large extension added simultaneously against the south elevation.
- 2.3 Further works were carried out by the Applicants in 2016. These works mainly related to modest adjustments to the layout and fitting out of the 2004-5 extension, all consistent with the quest for a lighter aesthetic which refers to the dignified C19 work in the older part of the house.
- 2.4 The Statutory List description summarises the architectural development of the house. The description does not note the recent alterations or the addition of the extension which will be affected by these proposals.

### 3.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Manor Farm is approached by a private road through its farmland and lies in an unspoilt rural location surrounded by its own grounds, orchard and meadows. The proposed orangery would run parallel to the south elevation of the 2004-5 extension where it would be barely visible from any public viewpoint except the public footpath which runs about 100m away to the east.
- 3.2 The design is intentionally subdued with tall sash windows on an ashlar base and one pair of external doors all under a flat lead roof with a central lantern. Elements in the design give a nod to John Soane's Pitzhanger Manor as well as our earlier conservatory here. There would be no effect on historic fabric nor do we consider that there would be any adverse effect on the character of the house or its setting.
- 3.3 The proposed lantern would sit on the roof of the conservatory which is attached to the south elevation of the earlier part of the house. It was built in 2004-5 and altered in 2016 to its current form. The conservatory is not visible from any public viewpoint.
- 3.4 The design is similar to that proposed atop the orangery and would provide an appropriate visual connection between these parts. There would be no effect on historic fabric nor do we consider that there would be any adverse effect on the character of the house or its setting. Like the doors and sidelights facing south which were altered in 2016, there is a hint of late-Georgian romanticism which will soften the overall effect and be consistent with other elements.

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS

4.1 The existing layout will not be affected by the proposals. The existing landscape will be unchanged. The overall scale and volume will be marginally affected by the proposals. All external materials proposed are described on the drawings.

4.2 The house has a secluded setting that it is barely visible from any public place.

4.3 The existing driveways, turning and parking areas will be unchanged and are suitable for the proposed use. Existing access arrangements to the site will be maintained. These are convenient for all purposes anticipated including emergency services.

4.4 No trees will be affected by the proposed works.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY AND JUSTIFICATION

5.1 This statement describes various phases in the evolution of this house. This should provide sufficient understanding of the history and development of the house to judge that the construction of the proposed orangery extension and the lantern on the existing conservatory will not result in an unacceptable loss of significance.

5.2 The development of this part of the house demonstrates the changing significance and practical requirements of different spaces in the home over time. The kitchen would benefit from the adjoining space which would have better natural light and improved access, functionally and visually, to the garden. The conservatory would benefit from better top light which would enhance the space. We consider that we have provided a sensitive design to overcome these deficiencies and to provide the additional accommodation which is required.

5.3 One test to be considered is whether the proposals would cause harm. In my opinion they would not do so because both the fabric and the setting of original part of the house would be unchanged and so the changes should be allowed. NPPF refers to several principles which are relevant when judging development proposals including the following :

- + alongside scrutiny, the requirement for creativity in finding ways to enhance and improve the places where people live;
- + the aim of securing high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of buildings;
- + energy efficiency in the interests of a transition to a low carbon economy; and
- + conservation in a manner which is appropriate to the significance of the asset so that it can be enjoyed for its contribution to the quality of life for present and future generations.

We would submit that ultimately these particular alterations would accord with these principles and that, in simple terms, the change should be seen as part of the continuing evolution of the house and judged in that context.

If there were harm, which would certainly be less than substantial, we would seek to balance such harm by enhancements elsewhere such as improved energy efficiency.

- 5.4 Although no longer formally part of current planning guidance, the spirit and intention of Historic England's Conservation Principles are still relevant. They said that not all change is necessarily harmful and advised that:

*“New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if: There is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;*

*The proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;  
The proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*

*The long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future” (paragraph 14).*

The design of the proposed alterations has been very carefully considered in the light of the building's character and significance and is within the spirit of late-Georgian architecture.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Materials and elements used in the proposals will match and blend in with the historic structures alongside. The Applicants intend to demonstrate their commitment to using high quality materials throughout in both the conservation of the historic fabric and the development of the new elements.
- 6.2 The Applicants wish to carry out modest alterations to a building which they cherish. These would overcome its deficiencies in terms of accommodation by creating spaces that are better suited to their use. They understand its special qualities and are sensitive to the need to preserve and enhance this historic building. These proposals represent the minimal scope of work which we consider necessary to achieve the stated aims. Our proposals have been designed to have minimum impact on historic fabric.
- 6.3 The works to the house will provide a viable use in the form of improved domestic accommodation so these proposals will provide the catalyst for further investment which will help to conserve this heritage asset. The extension and alteration will improve the appearance of these parts of the house.

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