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HERITAGE ADDENDUM

In respect of

Chessington House, Spring Street, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1UG

On behalf of

Rachel Blackman

AHC REF: PM/9879

Date: November 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Addendum has been prepared and written by Patrick Christopher Maguire, IHBC, Associate Director at Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. ('AHC'), on behalf of Rachel Blackman, the owner-occupant of Chessington House.
- 1.2 This Heritage Addendum draws directly on the analysis in my July 2020 Heritage Appraisal & Impact Assessment, which accompanied applications 20/01000/FLH & 20/01001/LBA.
- 1.3 That report considered the historical development and significance of Chessington House, before providing a reasoned assessment of the impact in heritage terms of the proposals to extend the building to the rear, alongside some internal alterations.
- 1.4 Those applications were refused by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in September 2020, with the Council citing 'harm' to the listed building and conservation area.
- 1.5 As set out in the refusal reasons for those applications and the officers' accompanying reports, Council officers raised no objection to the internal proposals or demolition proposed as part that scheme. Equally, officers were clear in both their reports and informal discussions that they had no objection to the principle of a kitchen extension in this location (which is consistent with pre-application advice) but that their principal concern was with the scale of the extension, including its projection into the garden and towards the rear boundary wall.
- 1.6 As the formal feedback received by officers clearly indicates that the proposed internal works are not contentious and that they feel extension in this location is supportable in principle, in an attempt to behave in a constructive manner and respond positively to this feedback, the applicant's professional team has developed an alternative scheme that responds directly to the detailed concerns raised by Council officers and the perceived 'harm' to heritage assets.
- 1.7 This addendum, therefore, represents an update to my previous report, providing a heritage assessment of these revised application proposals.

- 1.8 As will be clear from the analysis below, it remains my firm view that the application proposals would serve to 'preserve' what is significant about Chessington House as a listed building (both through direct impacts and the effect on its setting), the settings of nearby heritage assets (notably the curtilage-listed garden wall), and the 'character and appearance' of the Ewell Village Conservation Area.
- 1.9 As such, it is my professional opinion that these revised proposals are compliant with both local and national policy on the conservation and enhancement of the historical built environment, including the guidance in the revised NPPF and its accompanying PPG, and, most importantly of all in heritage planning terms, pass the statutory tests at Sections 16, 66, & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.0 THE HERITAGE ISSUES

- 2.1 The focus of this section of the report is on the heritage implications of the application proposals, drawing on the findings of my July 2020 Heritage Appraisal & Impact Assessment, as well as the findings of Council officers during the determination of applications 20/01000/FLH & 20/01001/LBA.
- 2.2 Firstly, it should be noted that the previous application included demolition in the form of the removal of: the rear lean-to; the rear kitchen wall; the eastern kitchen wall, the rear, ground-floor wall of the closet wing; the iron pillar to the over-hanging Edwardian extension; material to provide a wider opening between the kitchen and dining room; and the modern greenhouse.
- 2.3 No concerns were raised by Council officers with any aspect of this demolition except for the loss of the iron column, with officers noting in their report that the removal of the lean-to had previously been advised by the Council at pre-application stage (paragraph 18) and that the widening of the kitchen/dining room door opening would, *'allow for some symmetry in terms of width with the window opening at the other side and is not considered to result in any significant damage to the historical fabric or structural integrity of the Grade II Listed Building'* (paragraph 21).
- 2.4 The demolition proposed as part of this revised application is much as proposed under the recent applications apart from two elements: a smaller proportion of the eastern kitchen wall and the closet wing walls are proposed for removal; and the iron column to the over-hanging extension is now to be retained.
- 2.5 As the applicant has responded positively and directly to the only element of demolition that officers raised any concerns with, it is anticipated that these elements of the scheme will remain uncontentious.
- 2.6 Regarding the over-hanging Edwardian extension, it is noted that Council officers raised concerns with the ground-floor infilling of this and the removal of the column (paragraph 17 of the officers' report) at application stage, while previous pre-application advice from the Council encouraged exploring the infilling of this area (referenced at paragraph 18 of the officers' report).

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- 2.7 As noted in my Heritage Appraisal & Impact Assessment, I am of the view that this over-hanging extension is one of the least successful elements of the building and of minimal heritage interest; however, seeking to reconcile both the Council's pre-application advice and the feedback received regarding the recent application, the applicant has revised their proposals affecting this area.
- 2.8 Indeed, the revised scheme seeks to extend beneath the over-hang in a manner that leaves the relationship between these elements clearly legible. This is to be achieved by setting the infill extension back from the building line of the first floor and behind the retained iron column and lintel.
- 2.9 While the use of brick facing on the infill element will allow it to retain a subtle character, similar to the existing elevation beneath the over-hang, the use of a recess combined with the retention of the iron column and lintel will mean that the first-floor element will remain clearly legible as an earlier, over-hanging extension. As such, the over-hang will remain traceable as a, '*feature characteristic of its time*' (paragraph 17 of the officers' report).
- 2.10 Moving onto the main element of the rear extension, the core of the Council's objection under the previous application was that the scale of the extension was too large. While noting that pre-application advice had confirmed the acceptability of extending in this location, the officers' report states that, '*it is considered that this should not be interpreted in a way that would indicate that an extension of the scale proposed would be supported*' (paragraph 18).
- 2.11 Crucially, while the refusal reasons do cite, '*design, mass, scale, siting and loss of traditional features*', it is clear from the officers' report that the concern is with these things in concert, as the report notes both that the siting has been informed by pre-application advice (paragraph 18) and that the design is considered acceptable: '*It is considered that a more contemporary design approach can help differentiate between the original and extended built form, however this is not considered to offset the harm identified above in terms of the overall size of the extension*' (paragraph 19 – my emphasis).

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- 2.12 The need to separate the 'old and new' is a consistent feature of most modern conservation philosophies and I agree with officers that a 'contemporary' design approach is an effective way of achieving this.
- 2.13 As such, the revised scheme continues this design idiom endorsed by officers in relation to the previous application (although incorporating a greater degree of glazing, to emphasise its relationship with the garden) but proposes an addition with a substantially reduced height and footprint.
- 2.14 The proposed extension is to be c.3.05m tall and will extend backwards c.3.65m (to the edge of its plinth) from the existing rear kitchen elevation, whereas the previous proposals were c.3.5m high at their highest point and extended c.6.10m (to the edge of its plinth) backwards from the existing rear kitchen elevation (all figures are approximate and scaled from application drawings).
- 2.15 These changes clearly represent a substantial reduction in the scale of the extension and a genuine effort on the part of the application to respond positively to the Council's principal objection to the previous scheme.
- 2.16 Crucially, it is no longer proposed that the extension should project westwards into the garden (with its width reduced from c.9.55m to c.7.6m), helping it to 'read' as a subordinate addition to the building, fitting comfortably into the hierarchy of the western 'garden front' of the listed building as a '*minimal contemporary design*' (see paragraph 17 of the officers' report for applications 20/01000/FLH & 20/01001/LBA).
- 2.17 While they did not elaborate as to the nature of their objection, the Council's conservation officer did note at application stage that they had concerns about the proximity of the previously-proposed extension to the boundary wall ('*The setting of the rear boundary wall would be harmed by the close proximity of the new very large extension*' – Conservation Officer's comments dated 26th August 2020, although these comments were not reflected in the subsequent officers' report).
- 2.18 The substantial reduction in the depth of the proposed extension also allows a far-larger separation between the extension and the rear boundary. Indeed, alongside the

removal of the existing glasshouse this will move built form (still in a largely-glazed form) further from the wall than under the existing situation.

- 2.19 While the Conservation Officer did not substantiate the nature of their concerns about the setting of the garden wall in their previous comments, it is anticipated that this change to the proposals should allay these. Indeed, in my view, the garden wall will continue to exist within a garden setting, with a residential building to the north. It will continue to be separated from the original 18th-century building (with which it is likely contemporary) by a variety of later extensions but the contribution that its setting makes to its significance (as an 18th-century garden wall) will be unharmed.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The applicant and their professional team have made a concerted and genuine effort to respond directly to the specific objections and concerns raised by Council officers regarding applications 20/01000/FLH & 20/01001/LBA.
- 3.2 With this in mind, the revised application draws on those elements considered acceptable to officers (i.e. design idiom, placement, and extent of demolition) while amending those elements of the scheme identified as unacceptable (removal of the iron column and, crucially, the scale of the proposed extension).
- 3.3 The revised proposals demonstrate a clear willingness from the applicant to behave constructively in an attempt to address the concerns of Council officers, seeking a more modest extension designed directly around officer feedback received at pre-application and application stages.
- 3.4 With this in mind, it is anticipated that officers will welcome these revisions and support the revised proposals.
- 3.5 Indeed, in my own assessment, the proposals would not result in 'harm' to what is significant about Chessington House as a listed building (including through the effect on its setting), the settings of nearby heritage assets, or the 'character and appearance' of the Ewell Village Conservation Area.
- 3.6 As such, it is my professional opinion that these revised proposals are compliant with both local and national policy on the conservation and enhancement of the historical built environment, including the guidance in the revised NPPF and its accompanying PPG, and, most importantly of all in heritage planning terms, pass the statutory tests at Sections 16, 66, & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.