

DESIGN AND ACCESS AND STATEMENT

THE CASTLE HOUSE, SEVENOAKS ROAD, OTFORD, TN14 5PD

roposed Works to: Stairwell, Staircase, Enlargement of Window, Velux Window and Remedial Works to Internal Gutter & Outlet

1. Preamble

The Castle House is located in the Kent Downs AONB and the Otford Conservation area, close to the remains of the Archbishops Palace. The house itself is listed Grade II and lies within grounds forming part of a Scheduled Monument.

A comprehensive historic building appraisal has been carried out by historic buildings consultant James Weir previously submitted in 2015 with an application for a single storey extension for which planning permission was granted. A Heritage Statement has been provided as an addendum to this appraisal specifically for the works proposed.

Proposed Works

1 The removal of a small cupboard area under the second-floor eastern staircase. The proposed plan aims to open up the stairwell, removing some of the ceiling outside the kitchen door, and allowing more light from the large landing window on the first floor into the windowless space beneath. Further details and photographs are provided in the Heritage Statement.

A Planning Officer following a site visit to the property in her email stated that, ‘she did not consider the removal of some of the Victorian historic fabric to provide light to the area below to be harmful to the significance of the building, subject to the amount of structural intervention required to enable the works and the proposals to make good’(details contained in preapplication advice noted on application form). The loss of historical fabric is discussed further in the Heritage Assessment provided and states that, ‘the proposed loss of ceiling and under-stairs space will not be detrimental to the special architectural or historical interest of the building. Both staircase and under-stairs storage are a late addition to the premises, dating from the nineteenth century at the earliest’.

2 Whilst carrying out these works, improvements would be undertaken to the banister on the second flight of stairs and landings with the aim of replacing the modern spindles with something more in keeping with the character of the house as a whole, such as those present on the main seventeenth-century staircase in the north range. Further details and photographs are provided in the Heritage Statement.

3 Enlargement of second floor gable window on northern elevation to lower ceiling height to better reflect hierarchy of the space in the attic room. Replacement window to match existing windows and materials on northern elevation. The current window is a C20 replacement and of limited significance.

4 Skylight window facing southern elevation to rear of property. The skylight window is not visible from any elevation. Proposed skylight window for ensuite bathroom will be a Velux Conservation roof window 780 x 1400mm.

5 Remedial works to increase capacity of an internal gutter and outlet into external gutter at front of property. The capacity of the existing gutter is insufficient to cope with the more recent heavy summer rains and as a result there have been two serious water leaks at the property causing significant damage to both the fabric of the building and contents.

These works are therefore urgently required to resolve the water leaks and prevent further damage to second floor and ground floor rooms of the property. Further details and photographs are provided in the *Works to Gutter & Outlet document* attached