**HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**CHANGE OF USE FROM AN OFFICE TO A MEDITATION CENTRE INCORPORATING RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION FOR VISITORS AND STAFF**

**GEDLING HOUSE, WOOD LANE, GEDLING, NOTTINGHAM NG4 4AD**

**PLANNING APPLICATION BY KADAMPA MEDITATION CENTRE NOTTINGHAM LIMITED**

**Introduction**

1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Richard Ling & Associates, town planning consultants, and Franklin Ellis, architects on behalf of the applicant. The applicant is submitting a planning application for the change of use of Gedling House from an office to a Meditation Centre and an application for Listed Building Consent.
2. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement and plans and drawings that accompany the applications.
3. This Statement has been produced to assess the significance of the building in accordance with paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] which states: -

“*In determining applications, local planning authorities should*

*require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage*

*assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.*

*The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’*

*importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the*

*potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”*

1. The application site is on Green Belt land on the edge of the suburb of Gedling and Gedling House is a Grade II Listed Building.
2. The details of the listing in 1950 include the following statements: -

* Brick, stuccoed, with hipped slate roof.
* Ashlar plinth, first floor band, balustrades and parapets, deep modillioned eaves.
* South front has central full height parapeted bow with curved steps to central tail sash.
* Panelled entrance hall has geometrical cantilevered wood staircase with scrolled and tamped handrail, stick balusters.
* Late nineteenth century ballroom has plaster wall panels and Baroque Revival style fireplace.
* Other principal rooms have moulded wall panels and cornices.

**The Location**

1. The site lies to the east of Gedling Village which has now become part of the Nottingham conurbation. When built, the House would have been in the countryside with a drive from Wood Lane. The House sits on land which is elevated above the Trent floodplain to the south along which would have been the road connecting Nottingham to Lowdham and Southwell.
2. Gedling House is very visible from views from the south and is a striking feature in the landscape with its white walls and central bow on the southern elevation. There are floodlights for the main elevations of the building.
3. From the south, the House is viewed with a background of woodland. These woods prevent clear views of the northern elevation from beyond the application site. Trees on the western edge of the ground screen the building from views from the west. Views from the east are limited by topography but the southern elevation can be seen obliquely with the central bow visible.
4. Gedling House is a distinctive building and heritage feature in this part of the County in the present day.

**Historical Background**

1. The House was built for Thomas Smith (1743-1817) – of the Smith banking family – in part of a wider estate. For the next 230 years, the House was owned by a succession of wealthy families with other notable families renting the building as their main home.
2. The House also provided a home and place of employment for many generations of servants and for estate workers.
3. During the Second World War, the House was used for war cabinet meetings, and marked the end of the residential use of the building.
4. From 1955, the House has been in local government ownership and was for many years used by the Education Department of the County Council as a resource centre and wedding venue.
5. The House was converted to an office use with its occupation by Gedling Homes.
6. Since the interwar period, elements of land that used to form part of the estate around the House have been sold. The buildings to the north have been converted to residential use and the attached building to the House is now a Day Nursery. A commercial enterprise has been established to the east of the Nursery and he walled garden has been largely tarmacked and used as a car park with 66 spaces.
7. A secondary school has been built to the south and south-west of the House with playing fields on the land immediately to the south of and below the House.

**Existing Building and Grounds**

1. The existing building has stuccoed walls with windows and doors made of wood.
2. The previous owners of the property sub-divided the ballroom and altered the reception room so that the cantilevered staircase was partly screened from view. A lift has been installed from the ground to the second floor and changes were made to the provision and location of toilets and bathrooms.
3. The main rooms in the building have been retained apart from the Ballroom and the names of the rooms have been retained on the entrance doors.
4. The previous owners maintained the grounds to the south and west of the building but do not appear to have managed the trees.
5. The previous owners used 60 of the 66 car parking spaces available in a tarmacked part of the walled garden. The walled garden itself has been affected at the eastern end by the construction work for the Gedling Access Road.

**Proposed Development**

1. The proposed development arising from the change of use application are as set out in paragraph 9 of the Design and Access Statement which accompanies the application.
2. Externally, there would be little change to the principal elevations. The main change would be the provision of a ramp with railings to the external door on the west elevation. Some windows which are currently obscured glazed would be fitted with clear glass whilst other windows currently clear-glazed would be obscure glazed reflecting the changing disposition of toilets and bathrooms in the building.
3. Previous alterations to the building allowed for new drainage runs from the upper floors (currently boxed in and hidden above false ceilings) and a ducted mechanical extract system that terminates through the roof.
4. The current proposals have been designed to reuse these existing drainage and ventilation systems wherever possible. It is proposed to provide additional ventilation ducts with new slate type inline extract terminals located on the inner slope of the pitched roof and a through wall vent on the east elevation where available space restricts the option of a vent in the roof.
5. The principal driver of the design is to provide the applicants with a building that not only suits their needs but respects the building and its heritage significance.
6. The design intends to make minimum impact on the historical fabric of the building and where practicable reveal parts of the original building that have been hidden by later changes and alterations. All removals will be sensitively undertaken and all existing doors, architraves, skirting boards and features put aside for reuse. All new partitions will be lightweight and carefully installed so that they can be removed at a later date. Walls, coving and skirtings will be scribed round existing features so that the presence of these installations will be reversible. Where openings are infilled, the new wall will be set back from the face of the existing wall to reflect the previous arrangement.
7. The principal rooms on the south facing elevation will be kept to their existing proportions as much as possible and especially on the ground and first floors.
8. In terms of interior finishes and fittings, the applicants are committed to retaining the classical feel of the building and its grounds.
9. Regarding the ground floor, this is the operational part of the Centre and needs to accommodate all the functional spaces required by the applicants. It is important to the applicants to maintain a clear separation of the operations spaces from the residential spaces in the building.
10. On this floor, the primary space is the reception area. This area is the welcoming point for the public and guests visiting the Centre. The proposals to remove the existing glazed screen and the later added lowered ceiling to the corridor will reveal the soffit for the feature cantilevered stair. The stone floor will be uncovered, and the lighting changed to something more appropriate for the space.
11. The servery has been relocated to this area to connect more easily into adjoining services and drainage systems. The original position for the servery was in the bay-fronted principal room but this would have required new drainage and ventilation systems to be installed.
12. These measures provide clear heritage benefits in opening up this currently subdivided space.
13. A new fire door is required in the corridor in an existing opening before the lift to provide the requisite protected space.
14. To the west of these spaces is the former ballroom, now sub-divided. The dividing walls will be removed to re-establish the original proportions of the ballroom. The function of this room will be for quiet meditation, so to control external noise the windows in this room will be secondary glazed.
15. On the east side of the ground floor, an office is proposed for administration and meetings, and this room is combined with a prep room for offerings to the shrine. It was decided that locating the prep room close to the meditation room would not be desirable as it would require a new opening to be made in the original masonry wall.
16. Areas such as the existing kitchen will remain but be modified to suit the new use.
17. A key concern throughout the design process was the location of the toilets on the ground floor and various locations were considered – adjacent to the meeting room, within the accessible wc area or retained in their current position by the lift. The proposed location retains toilet accommodation behind the lift.
18. On the upper floors, the proposals reflect comments made by the Council’s Conservation Officer and the sub-division of rooms on these floors is mainly for the rooms on the northern elevation.
19. On the second floor, it was felt that there was greater scope for modifications to the principal rooms as these rooms were most likely to have been servant’s quarters when the building was a House. This floor accommodates the live-in accommodation for the teacher’s suite. This space utilises two existing linked rooms and relocates an existing electrical distribution board to an existing cupboard. A previous proposal was to create a new cupboard and opening off the corridor. The existing cupboard and doors will require upgrading/replacing to match existing examples and provide fire protection.
20. The proposed layout on this floor which included a freestanding en suite pod was changed following comments from the Conservation Officer.
21. The area on this floor behind the lift currently is split into toilet accommodation and is heavily sub-divided. The application proposal removes much of this sub-division and returns the space for the most part to a bedroom. The obscure glazing can be replaced in this space.
22. Two of the bedrooms on this floor had on first design a jack and jill en suite arrangement but this was considered to affect the proportions of the rooms and it was decided to propose the arrangement whereby each bedroom has its own en suite.
23. On the first floor, the area marked kitchen/dining (for residents) on the proposed floorplans had been split into bedrooms with a jack and jill en suite arrangement. Following discussions with the Conservation Officer, the layout was reconsidered, and the toilets moved elsewhere to preserve the original proportions of the room.
24. The accessible bedroom proposed for this floor was originally considered for the second floor. The enlarged en suite requirements required an encroachment into the principal room. Following discussions with health and safety and fire consultants, it was decided to relocate the accessible bedroom to the first floor. The provision of the en suite still requires an encroachment into the principal room but the partition wall to the en suite was cut back to the line of the chimney breast. The section of internal wall removed to create the en suite is noticeably a later infill to the original wall.
25. Externally, the ramp and rails on the western side of the building are not attached to the building.
26. In the grounds, a bin store is proposed close to the trees near the small car park at the western end of the building. This location does not visually impinge upon wider views of the building and will improve the area to the north of the building through the removal of unsightly refuse bins.
27. A small, paved area will be created outside the proposed café and would be set up with tables and chairs. The paving would match existing paving around the house.
28. A secure cycle store is proposed in the main car park. This location has no impact upon the character and setting of Gedling House.
29. In summary, internally, changes have been kept to a minimum though more modern alterations to the former Ballroom and the reception area would be removed to restore more of the House as it was. The principal rooms would be retained though some sub-division of rooms particularly on the top floor are proposed mainly to provide en suite facilities.
30. There is sufficient space between the floors to provide ducts and services. Indeed, this space is already used for these purposes.

**Assessment of the Proposals on the Significance of the Heritage Asset**

1. The importance of the building in heritage terms has been set out in this Statement. The proposals do not materially affect the external features of the building which will continue to be highly visible from the Trent Valley.
2. The internal changes will improve parts of the building that have been altered through commercial use – notably the reinstatement of the former Ballroom as a Meditation Room and the removal of bulkheads in the reception area. The other alterations have been designed to make minimal change to the character of the rooms whilst providing residential accommodation to modern standards.
3. The proposals for the first time enable the public to enter parts of the ground floor of the building and appreciate its architectural and historical significance from within and close up, rather than having a distant view whilst travelling along the Trent Valley.

**Conclusions**

1. Gedling House is an important heritage asset in this part of the Borough. The building is currently vacant and has been affected internally by alterations made when it was in a commercial use.
2. The proposed change of use to a Meditation Centre would be an appropriate use which would rectify some of the unsympathetic internal changes that have been made since the building ceased to be a residence and would only make minimal changes to the interior which are required to enable residential use on the upper floors.
3. The proposals would also open up parts of the ground floor to the public who would gain a greater appreciation of this heritage asset.

**List of Photographs**

**Gedling House showing the South and West Elevations**

**Gedling House showing the South Elevation**

**Gedling House showing the South and East Elevations**

**Gedling House - the Cantlilevered Main Staircase**

**Gedling House – the Existing Reception Room**

**Gedling House – Interior View of Part of the August Suite**

*The photographs are in a separate attachment*