

STUART MARTIN ARCHITECTS

STEDCOMBE HOUSE:
PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

LEWCOMBE WOODS FARMHOUSE EVERSNOT DORCHESTER DORSET DT2 0PH

Tel: 01935-83543 Fax: 01935 83774 stuart@stuartmartinarchitects.com
S P Martin Ltd, Registered in England No: 5868173 VAT: 750 5815 33



1. Context & Policy

- 1.1. This application covers the proposed alteration and extension of Stedcombe House, Axmouth, EX12 4BJ
- 1.2. Contact was initially made in the summer of 2021 with East Devon District Council, who advised that in the current circumstances, the best course of action would be to prepare a Listed Building Consent Application covering all the work the applicants wish to carry out, rather than seek advice by means of a site meeting in advance.
- 1.3. The relevant local plan policies are EN8 and EN9, contained in the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031, adopted January 2016
- 1.4. The site lies within the East Devon AONB and Coastal Preservation Area

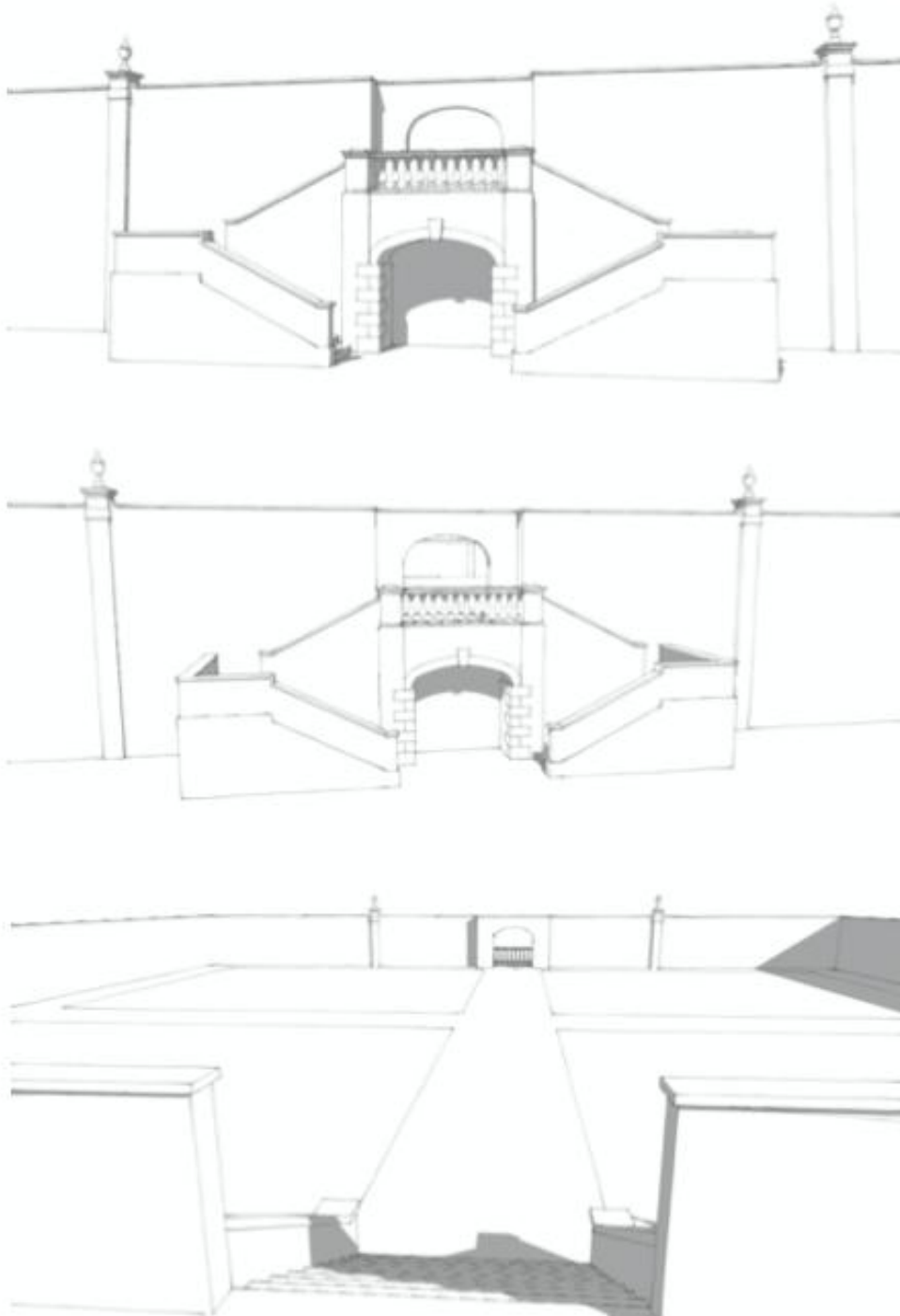
2. Site Assessment

- 2.1. Stedcombe House stands in its own land, in a west-facing valley just outside Axmouth.
- 2.2. It is grade I listed, and forms a group with the separately grade II* listed stable yard outbuildings, together with various walled gardens and surrounding terraces. At the bottom of the drive there is a late 19th century lodge, listed grade II. The house is a rare surviving example of a gentry house of the late 16th century.
- 2.3. The house is surrounded by its own land and gardens, screened from distant views by the extensive woodland, most of it planted c.1990 by the previous owner.
- 2.4. The house and gardens stand above what is now known as Stedcombe Vale, a group of dwellings converted from the buildings of Stedcombe Farm in the later 20th century.
- 2.5. The currently proposed works consist almost entirely of internal alterations, with minor alterations proposed to 2 flights of existing garden steps. The sole major item of external works is the proposal to construct a new flight of garden steps from the upper to the lower walled garden.

3. Description of proposed works

- 3.1. The proposals for internal alterations are covered in detail in the Heritage Statement that has been submitted separately in support of this application

- 3.2. The only element of external work requiring planning permission is the proposed new flight of steps from the upper to the lower walled garden, shown on drawing 1233-06, and in the CAD sketches below:



Views of the proposed steps

- 3.3. The wall here is a reconstruction of c.1990 of the surviving historic wall to the upper walled garden just to the south of Stedcombe House. It has a modern elliptical arched opening that forms a window in the wall. We propose to modify this opening to form a door giving access to the proposed new steps.

- 3.4. On the south side of the wall the new steps will be constructed in handmade brick to match the original, with Purbeck stone copings and salvaged stone balusters used for the landing balustrade, which will be visible from the house through the archway.
- 3.5. The steps are to be built from good quality materials, to a design and scale appropriate for the setting, but adopting simple details so as not to compete with the historic work.

4. Amount of development

- 4.1. The proposed steps are of a double flight design, approximately 12 x 3m in footprint overall, and 4m tall, giving access over the 3m drop from the upper to the lower walled garden.

5. Layout

- 5.1. The proposed double flight layout of the steps is shown on drawing 1233-06.
- 5.2. The layout is dictated by the position of the existing opening through the wall, and the drop in level between the gardens.
- 5.3. A symmetrical layout is believed to be appropriate to both the nature, scale and history of the site and setting.

6. Scale & Setting

- 6.1. The scale of the proposed steps is dictated by the existing structures and topography of the site.
- 6.2. At 12 x 3m the steps are large in size, but not out of scale with the garden setting. Each garden is some 37 x 40m, so the steps are less than a third of the width of the wall against which they are set.

7. Materials

- 7.1. The materials are to be:
 - Walls and parapets - handmade red bricks to match existing
 - Copings, treads, paving and details - Natural Purbeck Cap Stone

8. Access

- 8.1. The steps will provide direct access from the upper to the lower walled garden, which is not currently possible. The improved access will mean the lower garden is more frequently visited and enjoyed, and therefore better maintained. Over the last 30 years the garden had become very overgrown, full of brambles and with over-grown Leyland Cypress. The improved access made possible by these steps and the widened gate through the wall (see Heritage Statement) will mean the gardens are better maintained now and into the future.

Stuart Martin, Architect

22 December 2021