

Supporting Statement
Heritage
Policy

Middle House
The Street
Chelsworth
IP7 7HU

Listed Building Application
Ensuite bathroom installation

May 2023

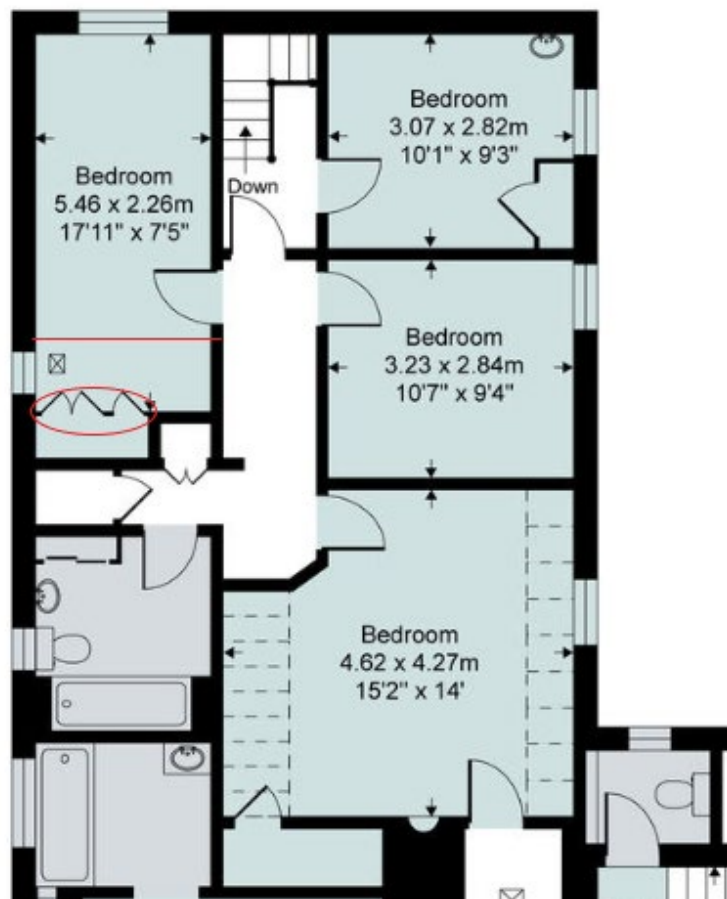
Middle House, Chelsworth

Introduction

This statement has been submitted to support a listed building application for the installation of an ensuite by dividing one of the bedrooms on the first floor.

One of the bedrooms is disproportionately long and forms part of the later extensions. There are two bathrooms sited on that elevation of the building and so the majority of pipework will be internal and a link can be made into the adjacent soil pipe externally.

The proposal includes the removal of the existing modern cupboard doors and the erection of a partition wall, with negligible impact to the historic fabric. Due to the size of the cupboard, the new wall will be installed at 1.02m, maintaining good proportions to the room. The windows and the roof light will be retained, for natural light into both rooms.



Sketch showing indicative new wall and cupboards to be removed (NTS)

Middle House, Chelsworth

Heritage

Middle House is located on The Street, in the village of Chelsworth. Overlooking The Street (B1115) and the riverside gardens of Princhetts (grade II*) next door to the West. The house is semi-detached adjoining The Old Manor, which shares the overall listing of Grade II.

Chelsworth (from the Anglo Saxon "ceorl" the lowest rank of freeman, and wyrthe meaning home or place) and was first documented in 962CE when King Edgar gave the village to Queen Aethelflad. Though archeological investigations have shown evidence of Iron Age and Roman habitation. In more recent years the village has gained praise and admiration for its old-world charm and character from many including the grandson of writer Lord Tennyson. The grandson, Julian Tennyson, waxed lyrically about a "*perfect village of my own finding. It is Chelsworth*" in his book "Suffolk Scene". Littered with listed buildings and structures including the grade I Grange and the scheduled bridge that crosses the river Brett on Hall Road. The village is also covered by an extensive Conservation Area.

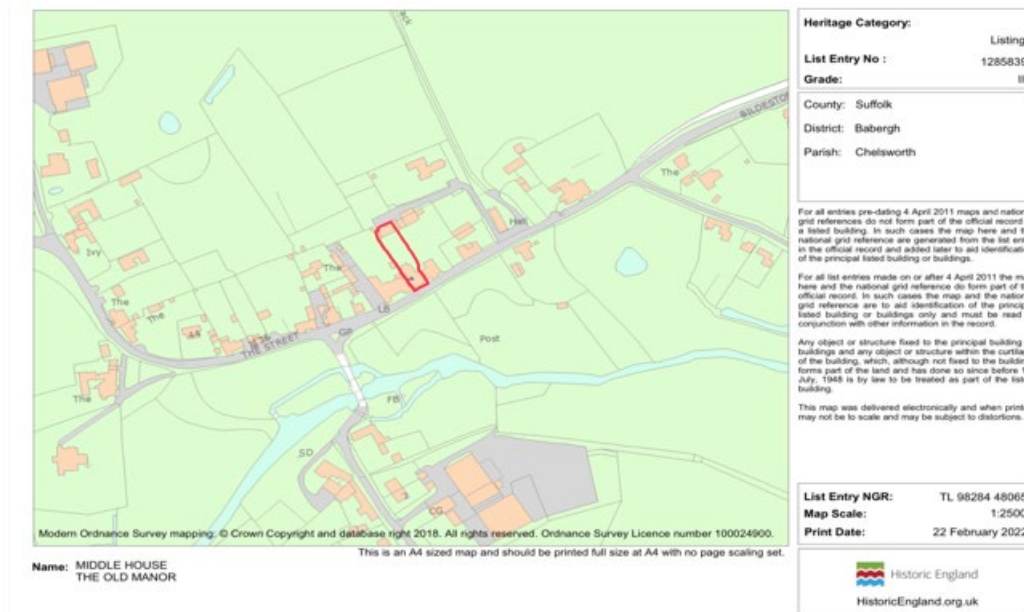
Middle House is thought to have originated as a timber framed dwelling sometime in the 15th century. The original building has seen a number of alterations and extensions, including the erection of the scullery, pantry and extension of the garret area on the first floor, with the addition of a further gabled roof to the Western end of the house possibly in the 18th century. The largest extension was believed to be built in the late 19th century, which was divided from the rest of the building to form the current Old Manor.

Middle House, originally called the Old Manor, was divided into two separate dwellings prior to the buildings listing in January 1958, with the name The Old Manor and the porch mentioned in the listing being transferred to the newer section of the partitioned building.

The building is grade II listed, entry number 1285839. Described in the listing as:

CHELSWORTH THE STREET 1. 5377 (north side) Nos 14 (The Old Manor) and 16 (Middle House) TL 9848 52/223 23.1 58 II GV 2. Originally may have been a C15-C16 timber-framed and plastered building with cross wings at the east and west ends but much altered and renovated in the C19. The west cross wing was altered and a second gable added and the east cross wing was extended to the north. The hall block is one storey and attics and the cross wings are 2 storeys. Modern casement windows. There is an early C19 porch with cast iron clustered "Gothic" columns. Roof tiled, with 2 gabled dormers to the centre block and 3 gabled dormers on the east side of the east cross wing. Listing NGR: TL98284480

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Historic England map of Chelsworth with Middle House highlighted in red

“Chelsworth. The Story of a Suffolk Village” was written by one time village resident Geoffrey Pocklington and includes reference to the Old Manor. The manor to the village was bought by Robert Pocklington in 1737, who then purchased the now Middle House in 1755 and it may be at that time that the “courtesy title” of the Manor House became associated with the property. It was during the ownership of Col. Frederick Pocklington that the East wing, later to take the name the Old Manor, was built. Geoffrey Pocklington has taken the history of the home back as far as the 1580s, noting it was at that time acquired by one Robert Clover, the village miller. The family did not own the mills they operated but did own other houses and held “copyhold” land in the village. Known as Bonds after the family of the previous owners, the property remained in the ownership of the Clover family until it was bought by the Pocklingtons.

The association between the house, its various custodians and the arguably key role those people played in village life over its more than 500 years in existence adds weight to the historic importance of the property. The mark those people made on the property, adapting and expanding the building from its probable two room origins to larger country house, to the two semi-detached family homes of today, should not be under played. The various phases each constructed using the methods and techniques contemporary to each owner’s era are visible across the property. The building’s development can also be seen as highlighting the changing tastes and needs of owners over time.

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Policy

As stated on the English Heritage website:

Listing is not a preservation order, preventing change. Listing is an identification stage where buildings are marked and celebrated as having exceptional architectural or historic special interest, before any planning stage which may decide a building's future.

Listing does not freeze a building in time, it simply means that listed building consent must be applied for in order to make any changes to that building which might affect its special interest. Listed buildings can be altered, extended and sometimes even demolished within government planning guidance. The local authority uses listed building consent to make decisions that balance the site's historic significance against other issues such as its function, condition or viability.

National Policy - National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was last updated in July 2021 and is the primary reference for national policy. The key area of this document for this proposal is Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 194 highlights the applicant should “*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.*”

Paragraph 195 states that the “*local planning authority should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*”

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Local Policy

Local Plan 2011-2031 Core Strategy & Policies (February 2014)

Paragraph 3.3.6.1 states that the key policy is *“To continue to conserve and enhance the heritage assets throughout the district for the benefit of all to enjoy and to enrich the quality of life and learn from local knowledge and understanding of the past through these assets and ensure they are safeguarded for future generations to enjoy and learn from.”*

Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (June 2006)

The key policy with the adopted plan is CN06 - *Proposals for the alteration (including part demolition), extension or change of use of buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (including curtilage structures), or for the sub-division of, or new work within the curtilage or setting of a listed building should:*

- a) *preserve the historic fabric of the building, and ensure that all proposals to remove by demolition, or alter any part of the building are justified in terms of preserving the special character of the building and will cause the minimum possible impact.*
- b) *retain all elements, components, and features which form part of the building’s special interest and respect the original scale, form, design and purpose of the architectural unit.*
- c) *not conceal features of importance or special interest.*
- d) *be of an appropriate scale, form, siting and detailed design to harmonise with the existing building and its setting.*
- e) *retain a curtilage area and/or setting which is appropriate to the listed building and the relationship with its surroundings.*
- f) *include fenestration which respects the character of the building.*
- g) *retain traditional thatch roof coverings.*
- h) *use materials and components which are natural or handmade, and which complement or harmonise with those on the building and the area. This will include lime plasters and lime mortars; natural clay or slate roofs; bricks; handmade timber windows and doors.*
- i) *use appropriate detailing, finishes, and colours, both internally and externally.*
- j) *respect those features which contribute positively to the setting of a listed building including space, views from and to the building and historic layout; and*
- k) *comply with Annex C of PPG 15*

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Assessment against Policy

Externally there will be minimal work as the majority of pipework will be internal and linked into the existing adjacent bathroom. The external waste pipes will be integrated with the existing configuration, as shown in the photograph below, which is sited on the small alley between Middle House and Princhetts and not visible from outside the site.



Photos to show positioning of the window in relation to the position of proposed waste pipes.

The waste pipes will not materially impact the exterior of the building and accord with all criteria included within CN06 *will continue to “preserving the special character of the building and will cause the minimum possible impact; “*

The main part of the works are internal, with the erection of a partition wall and key reference is made to Paragraph 3.3.6.1 of the Local Plan 2011-2031 Core Strategy & Policies (February 2014), which highlights the importance *“To continue to conserve and enhance the heritage assets throughout the district for the benefit of all to enjoy and to enrich the quality of life and learn from local knowledge and understanding of the past through these assets and ensure they are safeguarded for future generations to enjoy and learn from.”*

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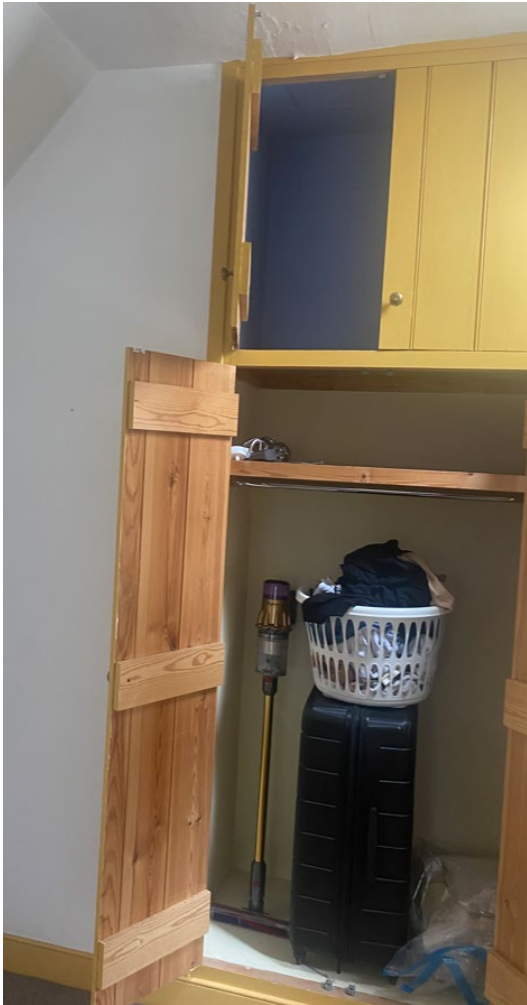
Middle House has five bedrooms and currently has one family bathroom and an ensuite to the Master bedroom. In the current housing market, it would seem more appropriate to have three bathrooms with five bedrooms and thus evolving the house in line with current trends, policy and continuing to conserve and enhance the heritage asset.



The photos above show the retained area for the bedroom and the area highlighted for the ensuite bathroom.

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The removal of the cupboard doors will minimize the amount of space needed for a new ensuite, with the retention of the window and skylight, as shown in the photos below.



The existing door into this room will also be retained as it is sited in the middle of the room.

Our main objective is to preserve the heritage asset and this opportunity works with the heritage asset and allows for an additional shower room to be installed for the future enjoyment of the building.

The proposal falls within the parameters of national and local policy and in light of the above, we trust officers are able to support the application.