

Design & Access and Heritage Impact Assessment

Project	Replacement main entrance gates including external lighting, recessed entry panel, recessed letter box relating to the conversion currently being undertaken. Woodstock House, Rectory Lane, Woodstock, OX20 1UF
Job no.	18150
Date	June 2023
Revision	A

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment accompanies the application to West Oxfordshire District Council to obtain Listed Building Consent for the replacement main entrance gates including external lighting, recessed entry panel and a recessed letter box as part of the ongoing restoration and extension works to Woodstock House, a Grade II Listed building in the Woodstock Conservation Area.
- 1.2 This statement will explain and justify the approach to ensuring that the listed building preserves or enhances its special historic and architectural importance. It aims to provide a brief background to the site and surrounding context including the design philosophy.
- 1.3 The proposals are in addition to the existing Planning and Listed Building Consents which form part of the ongoing restoration and extension works to Woodstock House.
- 1.4 The proposals to the existing approved scheme have evolved through careful consideration to the significant importance of the building and its proximity to the Blenheim Estate.

2.0 Proposals

- 2.1 The principal proposals to the existing approved scheme primarily focus on the replacement main entrance gates including external lighting, recessed entry panel and a recessed letter box.
- 2.2 The proposal for the entrance gates are to remove the existing gates including the timber structure built from the original stone piers.
- 2.3 The proposal for the new entrance gates are shown to be sympathetic to the original stone piers and positioned directly between the stone piers as originally intended.
- 2.4 The external appearance of the entrance gates are traditionally painted timber with vertical boarding to both sides including a swept head detail. The appearance will be appropriate and sympathetic to the character of Woodstock House.
- 2.5 Traditional cobble sets are to be laid between the original stone piers, demarcating the threshold for vehicle users when entering and exiting the property.
- 2.6 Traditional lantern lights are proposed for each of the stone piers, appropriately lighting the vehicle entrance to the property, maintaining security and safety for passing pedestrians.
- 2.7 A recessed entry panel and letter box are proposed for the side flanking stone walls with a traditional brass finish.
- 2.8 The proposals described above are compatible with the 'special interest' and character of Woodstock House as a Grade II listed building, and what is significant about its setting.

3.0 Pre-application discussion

- 3.1 No pre-application discussion has been held with the Council's Conservation Officer Bryan Martin.

4.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

- 4.1 Woodstock House is Grade II Listed, the main interests relating to the earliest surviving parts of the building and the early 19th century details.

The Listing Entry 1252573 is as shown below:

WOODSTOCK RECTORY LANE SP4416NW (South side) 9/233 Woodstock House
22/09/75 GV II

House. c.1730, with alterations of early C19. Coursed limestone rubble with ashlar front; hipped concrete tile roof; mid C19 yellow brick stacks. L-plan with rear right wing. 3 storeys; symmetrical 6-window range.

Fine Doric portico: 6-panelled door with overlight set in mid C18 moulded wood architrave. Flat stone arches over 6-pane sashes. Raised storey bands; early C19 wood brackets to eaves. Right side wall, of 6-window range; has early C19 doorway with large bracketed hood over beaded 4-panelled door with flanking lights and decorative fanlight; semi-circular arch over mid C18 six-panelled door with fanlight; flat stone arches over 6-pane sashes, with thick glazing bars to 5 mid C18 sashes on first floor. Interior: mid C18 and C19 panelled doors. Room to right has mid C18 fielded panelling. Room to right has mid C18 panelled dados. Stair-hall to rear has early C19 dog-leg with landing staircase with wreathed handrail and wrought-iron balustrade, panelled door architraves with paterae, and double doors with decorative fanlight to hall on right with stone flag floor. House owned by wealthy London goldsmith John Morse between 1727 and 1737, who gave it to Pryse family in 1737. The early C19 alterations date to after 1803 when they amalgamated 2 properties on the site. (Information from VCR)

- 4.2 The purpose of this Historical Impact Assessment is to provide the proposals at Woodstock House, a Grade II listed building situated in the Woodstock Conservation Area directly adjoining the Grade I Historic England Registered Park & Garden and World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace, with a cogent and sustainable justification in heritage terms.
- 4.3 As such, this assessment should be read in conjunction with the Statement of Significance, prepared by Asset Heritage in April 2017, which provides a full analysis and understanding of the significance of the listed building in heritage terms, and which taken together with this assessment will enable the Council to assess the impact of the application proposals on that significance.
- 4.4 As made clear in the Statement of Significance, Woodstock House is an important historic building and despite the fact that it has been unused and sadly neglected for several years, there can be no doubt that it fully merits its Grade II statutory listed status. As such, every effort is being made to 'preserve' and where possible improve its character and 'special' interest.
- 4.5 For the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the application proposals meet the important objective of 'preserving' Woodstock House's 'special' interest as a Grade II listed building.
- 4.6 The proposal also serves to 'preserve' the contribution the house and its grounds currently makes to the character and appearance of the Woodstock Conservation Area and to the directly adjoining registered parkland and Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site.

- 4.7 The proposals do not impact on the character of the listed building or should be seen in any way contentious. The overall design for the entrance gates are therefore carefully and sensitively designed to integrate the proposals into the grounds of the house as seamlessly as possible.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposals for the replacement main entrance gates including external lighting, a recessed entry panel and a recessed letter box actively improve and enhance the historical importance of the building and its wider surrounding context.
- 5.2 It is clear the proposals are compatible with the 'special interest' and character Woodstock House has a Grade II listed building, and in certain significant respects actively enhances the legibility of its historic form and features.
- 5.2 The proposals are sensitive and appropriate to the overall restoration of Woodstock House as a single dwelling. The proposals as a whole greatly benefit the building in terms of preserving its Grade II Listed Building status and ensure the longevity of the building is maintained for future generations.