

# **Design and Access and Heritage Statement**

**Site: Marshborough House, Farm Lane, Marshborough**

**Proposed: Provision of internal stairs between the ground floor of the adjoining storeroom and the basement of the main house**



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## **1 Introduction**

This report will discuss the site and location; details of the proposal and justification; relevant legislation, policies and guidance; identify the significance of any heritage assets, and then evaluate the impact of the proposals on their significance.

The design of the current scheme has been an iterative process, which has been informed by the constraints and opportunities of the site, the needs of the applicant and the national and local policy guidance.

This statement takes into account the advice given by Historic England in their advice note 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' 2019. Additionally it complies with the requirement set out in paragraph 12.7 of the Draft Dover District Local Plan.

## **2 Planning History**

1 Planning Ref. DOV/15/00395: Installation of front gate. Planning permission granted 9/12/2015.

2 Planning Ref. DOV/15/00852: Retrospective application for a walled vegetable garden and associated outbuilding. Planning permission granted 19/12/2015.

3 Planning Ref. DOV/22/00835: Certificate of Lawfulness (existing) for the construction of a walled sunken garden, access stairway and erection of 2 towers. Certificate Existing Granted 31/08/2022.

4 Planning Ref. DOV/22/01138: Erection of a garden room (part retrospective). Planning permission granted 08/09/2023

### 3 Site and Location

The site lies on the northern side of Farm Lane at Marshborough.

Marshborough House (formerly known as Marshborough Farmhouse) is set back from the lane behind a high hedge and a substantial front garden. It is a two storey building with attic and basement, with a rendered front elevation under a steeply pitched hipped roof clad in Kent peg tiles. The front elevation has a classical Queen Ann facade, with two large multi-paned timber sash windows either side of the central front door under a Doric porch; five matching sash windows at first floor level and three dormer windows under lead flat roofs. To the left (south west) is a high red brick wall which restricts all views of the rear garden from the front of the house and from Farm Lane.

The rear of the house is a complete mixture of ages, styles and designs, having a far more informal appearance, as is so often the case with properties of this age, (see Figs: 1-6).

To the rear of the house is a substantial rear garden which incorporates a separate walled garden to the west with its associated outbuildings, potting sheds and glasshouse.

The building is Grade 2 listed.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3 The proposed stairs to the basement would be in the left hand outbuilding



Figure 4 The proposed stairs to the basement would be on the right hand side of this outbuilding.



Figure 5 Note the door which leads through to the outbuilding



Figure 6 Existing trap door in the library, which leads down to the cellar

#### **4 Details of the proposals and justification**

The detailed proposals are identified on the plans accompanying this application, and in summary they include the following;

At the moment the only access to the basement under the house is via a trap door in the library, (see Fig: 6). It is therefore proposed to insert new stairs in the adjacent storeroom, (see Fig: 4) down to the basement of the main house. As the storeroom already has a connecting door to the library in the house, this would better connect the house with its basement.

The works are justified on the grounds that they would provide better access to the basement, thus enabling the optimal viable use of this part of the building.

#### **5 Relevant legislation, policies and guidance**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that when considering listed building applications, special regard shall be had to preserving listed buildings and their settings.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places – This states that proposals should be ‘sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change’.

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – This highlights the need to conserve heritage assets ‘in a manner appropriate to their significance’.

### **National Planning Practice Guide**

The National Planning Practice Guide, offers more detailed advice on conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and states that ‘The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle’. ‘Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every-day use, to as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest’.

### **Historic England Advice**

Further national guidance is provided by Historic England in ‘Making Changes to Heritage Assets’ February 2016. This provides more detailed guidance on alterations to heritage assets, the aim of which is to ‘recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the change necessary to ensure that people can continue to use and enjoy them’.

### **Dover Heritage Strategy**

The Dover District Heritage Strategy 2013 (revise 2020), sets out a strategy for shaping and dealing with the District’s heritage assets, and proposals which have an impact on them. It states that ‘Heritage assets have been shaped by people responding to the local environment, but will also help to shape that environment in the future. They have a significant role to play in creating a sense of place and acting as a catalyst for regeneration’.

### **Kent Design Guide**

This sets out criteria to be taken into account, such as respecting the scale, local materials, style, details and colours of surrounding buildings. Context is of major importance and the positive features of the area should be identified and reinforced in any new proposal.

### **National Design Guide**

This highlights the importance of development responding to local history, context, heritage and the local vernacular.

### **Dover District Local Plan Core Strategy 2010**

This sets out policies and objectives for shaping development in the District. This includes the objective to ‘Ensure the intrinsic quality of the historic environment is protected and enhanced and that these assets are used positively to support regeneration, especially in Dover’.

## **Draft Dover District Local Plan**

The Consultation Draft Dover District Local Plan is a material planning consideration in the determination of this planning application. At this stage in the plan making process (Regulation 19) the policies of the draft can be afforded some weight, but this depends on the nature of any objections and consistency with the NPPF. The following policies are considered to be the most relevant;

PM1: This seeks to achieve a high quality of design in all new development,

HE1: Seeks to protect both designated and non-designated heritage assets,

### **6 Heritage assets and their significance**

The proposals would have an impact, to a greater or lesser extent, on the host building, which is Grade 2 listed, and is classed as designated heritage asset in the NPPF.

The NPPF defines significance as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from the heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’. Setting is defined in the Framework as follows:

‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

It should be noted that paragraph 194 of the NPPF, also states that ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by the 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’.

#### **Significance of Marshborough House**

The building is Grade 2 listed and its list description is as follows;

‘House. Early C18 altered C19. Rendered with plain tiled roof. Two storeys and attic on plinth with rusticated ground floor, plat band and cornice to hipped roof with 3 flat roofed dormers and stack to rear. Regular fenestration of 5 glazing bar sashes on first floor and 4 on ground floor. Central door of 6 raised and fielded panels in Doric porch. Earlier hipped wing to rear.’

The house is actually earlier than the list description suggests. The original house on the site was timber framed and probably of C16 origin with a cat slide roof to the rear. At that time it is thought that the front faced east. The house was subsequently remodelled in the early

C18th and C19th, resulting in the reorientation of the property, with the front elevation facing south east as it does today.

The significance of the house is a combination of a number of factors, including its classical and imposing front elevation; a wealth of historic fabric and architectural features; its layout, although this has been much altered over time, together with its rural location and association with the adjoining farm buildings.

Of lesser significance is the adjoining single storey outbuilding on the south west elevation. This is of brick construction under a lean-to modern pantile roof. This was at one time used as a wash house and wc. This structure incorporates a connecting door to the library in the main house, (see Fig: 5).

The library contains a trap door giving access to the cellar via some stone steps, (see Fig: 6). These steps would have risen up into the back part of the original house but they were cut off when the house was remodelled, hence the need for the trap door in the floor. The cellar has no particular important historic or architectural features, as would be expected in a property of this nature.

In conclusion, whilst the main part of the house, is of high architectural and historic importance, the parts of the property which this application relates to are of low significance.

## **7 Impact of the Proposals on the Host Building**

The proposals have been specifically designed so that they would have minimal impact on both historic fabric and the plan form.

The provision of the new stairs from the storeroom (outbuilding) down to the existing basement of the house, would have minimal impact on any historic fabric, and there would be no loss of any significant architectural features. The original stone steps, which lead up to the existing trap door in the library would be retained thus helping future interpretation of this part of the building.

In terms of impact on plan form, it is important to acknowledge that this has changed several times throughout its history. At some point in its history the access to the basement from the house has been altered, resulting in the provision of the trap door in the library in order to provide access to it from the house. This does not make it conducive to regular use. The existing plan form would remain unaltered, apart from the provision of the new stairs from the adjoining storeroom. There would be a clear division between the old and the new, and no confusion over the layout of the original basement.

In view of the above it is considered that the proposals would not detract from the historical and architectural significance of the building.



## **8 Wider Public Benefits**

The proposals would help to give the building its optimal viable use, thus helping to secure its long term future, for the benefit of the wider community.

## **9 Conclusions**

The house, and its outbuildings have been changed many times throughout its history by successive owners, and these changes now form an important part of the character and significance of the building. The current proposals merely form part of the continuing evolution and history of the site, responding to the needs and aspirations of the current owner.

The national and local planning policy context does not prevent all changes to historic buildings but moreover seeks to recognise what is truly significant about a particular heritage asset, whilst at the same time accommodating changes which allow people to continue to use them. This approach is stressed by Historic England in their publication 'Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2015). This states that 'An unreasonable, inflexible approach will prevent action that could give a building a new life: indeed it can eliminate that use. A reasonable and proportionate approach to owners' needs is therefore essential'.

These proposals would significantly improve the use and enjoyment of the house, without detracting from its significance or character. The proposals would secure the optimal viable use of the building, better connecting the basement with the rest of the house, which will help to secure the optimal viable use of this part of the building.

It is therefore considered that the proposed works meet the requirements of Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the requirements of the NPPF in relation to design and the historic environment; Policies PM1 and HE1 of the Draft Dover District Local Plan, together with national and local policy guidance on the issues raised by this application.

The Local Planning Authority is therefore invited to support this application.

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