



# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (INCLUDING HERITAGE ASSESSMENT)

In respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent for alterations to:

Lawford House, Grange Road, Lawford, CO11 2JD

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## **1.0. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent for alterations to Lawford House, Grange Road, Lawford.
- 1.2. It is prepared in accordance with the Design Council document *“Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them”* and should be read in conjunction with the drawings prepared by Medusa Design which accompany the planning application.
- 1.3. An assessment of the heritage impacts of the proposal is also set out within the relevant section of this statement.

## **2.0 Site Context**

- 2.1. Lawford House is a Grade II Listed building set in significant grounds to the southern edge of the village. The listing describes the building as:

*“House. C17 rear range, C18/C19 front range. Front range of gault brick, rear range timber framed with brick facing. Hipped grey slate roofs. Front range has parapet, 7 window range of small paned vertically sliding sashes, moulded flat lintels, moulded surrounds, internal shutters. Central double panelled doors. 2 pairs of fluted columns with moulded capitals and bases on a low plinth support the flat canopy. The lower forward bases support a pair of dolphins. Rear range has lodged side purlin roof with pegged rafters and circa 1800 inserted circular open-well stair”.*

- 2.2. The site is accessed from a long access road which adjoins the highway at the junction of Grange Road and Bromley Road. The access sits just within the 20mph zone.
- 2.3. To the north are existing residential properties facing Grange Road and School Lane, with open countryside to the south, east and west.

### 3.0 The Design Approach

3.1 Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's aims to achieve well-designed places.

3.2 It states (paragraph 131) that:

*"131. The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this".*

3.3 The above has formed the basis of the design approach taken in respect of this proposal. The applicant, supported by Medusa Design, has given consideration to a number of material considerations in the design of these proposals with the overall aim of achieving a high standard of design that would secure and preserved the special character of this building. Indeed, the applicant believes that the work would benefit the property, would provide significant upgrade to the subject building and responds to the character, scale and form of the elements of the building that are being altered.

3.4 The following sets out how each of the various design matters have been addressed.

#### Use

3.5 The proposal seeks to make efficient use of land, in line with the aims of paragraph 119 of the NPPF which identifies that *"Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions".*

3.6 The existing dwelling is set within a significant plot whereby the changes to the building would bring no conflict with existing land uses. All of the proposed works would enable the continued use of the building as a dwellinghouse, providing improved and enhanced accommodation for

the needs of the occupants. Indeed, the works facilitate additional accommodation for family members to live in the dwelling in association with the occupation by the applicant.

#### Layout

3.7 In developing the layout of these proposals, due consideration has been given to the surroundings and the amenity of the wider area. The architect has gained a detailed understanding of the property through their surveys and visits to the property so as to fully inform the design proposal hereby presented for consideration. Indeed, they have been involved with a number of recent works to the property and thereby recognise the importance of the building as a heritage asset, and the need to recognise the setting and significance of the asset in designing any proposals that affect its form or fabric.

3.8 The proposed changes have been designed to respect the character and form of the dwelling, and to ensure that important features within the respective areas of the building are retained. The submitted Heritage Statement considers how the changes to the building would be accommodated in a manner that would not cause harm to the character of the building and the manner in which the layout is proposed helps to secure this.

3.9 The design of the proposal respects the character, form and details in the main house. For all of these reasons, the proposed layout is considered to have been developed following a detailed appraisal of the site and its surroundings, and thereby constitutes good design.

#### Amount

3.10 The proposal seeks works of alteration and renewal that do not change the footprint of this substantial dwelling.

#### Landscaping

3.11 Given the nature of the proposals, there is limited opportunity for new soft landscaping to be incorporated in the application. However, the proposal does not remove any of the landscaped areas of the property which are, in themselves, significant.

### Appearance

- 3.12 The proposed alterations to the building are of minor scale and traditional form. They do not give rise to significant change to the appearance of the building and thereby demonstrate good design.
- 3.13 The proposal is, therefore, of an appearance that would respect the character of the dwelling and, through the use of appropriate materials, do not intrude into its setting.

### Access

- 3.14 The proposal makes no changes to the pedestrian or vehicular access to the site.

## **4.0 Heritage Impacts**

- 4.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas (Section 72).
- 4.2 Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government's position on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage asset to a level of detail proportionate to the assets' importance. This should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential of that impact on the significance.
- 4.3 Paragraph 201 requires local planning authorities to 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.

4.4 Paragraph 203 sets out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.5 Paragraph 205 of the NPPF apportions great weight to a designated asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The NPPF highlights that significance can be harmed or lost through physical change and any harm requires clear and convincing justification.

4.6 Paragraphs 207 and 208 address how local planning authorities should deal with situations where the assessment of impacts has identified harm to a heritage asset.

4.7 At the local level, Policy PPL9 of the Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond (Section 2) identifies that:

*“Proposals for new development affecting a listed building or its setting will only be permitted where they will protect its special architectural or historic interest, its character, appearance and fabric. Where a proposal will cause harm to a listed building, the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF should be applied dependent on the level of harm caused. Proposals will be treated favourably where they:*

*a. are explained and justified through an informed assessment and understanding of the significance of the heritage asset (including any contribution made to that significance by its setting); and*

*b. are of a scale, design and use materials and finishes that respect the significance of the listed building (including any contribution made to that significance by its setting).*

*Within the District the Council keeps a record of listed structures and buildings that are at risk of degradation. The Council will support proposals that bring heritage assets into viable use.*

- 4.8 These legislative and policy provisions thereby identify a need to assess the significance of the heritage asset in a proportionate manner, identify the impact of the proposed development on that significance, balance any harm arising against the public benefits and ensure that the special character of the building is preserved and, where possible, enhanced.
- 4.9 It is clear that the primary impacts to be taken into account here are the impact on the listed building in terms of both its setting and how any works affect the fabric of the building. The assessment to be made here is, therefore, both a visual one and in respect of the areas of the building that are being affected also.
- 4.10 An understanding of the significance of a heritage asset should result in the development of a proposal which avoids or minimises harm. It is widely understood that the most appropriate use for a building will very often be that for which it was originally designed. The best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, either that for which it was designed or an appropriate new use which would see to its long-term conservation. In this regard, works that facilitate the continued use of the property as a dwelling can be seen to be a benefit in heritage terms.
- 4.11 A detailed appraisal of the impacts of this proposal on the heritage asset is set out through the Heritage Statement (HS) prepared by John Selby, which accompanies the application. The conclusions of the HS find that:

*“No harm to or loss of the significance of the heritage asset results from this proposal. It benefits the setting and retains a viable use for the outbuilding. Consequently, in this case the balance is in favour of the proposed development. It satisfies both national planning guidance and local planning policies which seek to protect the historic environment and encourage local distinctiveness in design”.*

- 4.12 The applicant relies upon the content of the HS in this regard. It can be seen that the provisions of paragraphs 207 and 208 of the NPPF are not engaged in this case. The proposal meets the



tests of “preservation or enhancement” of the asset and thereby complies with policy PPL9 as well as the national policy requirements.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The applicant is seeking consent for works of alteration and upgrade to Lawford House. It is recognised that there is a need to ensure that the proposal would be delivered in a manner that constitutes good design and which would not give rise to harm to this heritage asset.
- 5.2 The proposed works will enhance the available space within the property and enable its continued occupation as a home. The proposed works would thereby make best use of the site without causing harm to the character of the house or harming the living conditions of neighbours. The proposal comprises good design in the terms envisaged by the NPPF and the respective development plan policies.
- 5.3 The proposal has been robustly assessed in respect of the impacts on this important heritage asset. No harm is found to occur to the character or setting of this building, and the proposal thereby responds positively to the heritage of this building and its significance.
- 5.4 For all of these reasons, it is respectfully requested that the local planning authority grant planning permission and listed building consent in the terms requested.