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INTERIOR DESIGN | ARCHITECTURE | PROJECT MANAGEMENT

SPECIALISTS IN COTSWOLD RENOVATIONS

Heritage Impact Statement

The Manor, Great Rissington

New Treehouse

at

The Manor, Great Rissington, Cheltenham, Glos GL54 2LN

Date: 7th January 2024

1.0 Introduction

1.01 Purpose of the Statement:

This statement was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Bernstein, the current owners of The Manor, Great Rissington, to accompany a planning application submission to the Local Authority to make external alterations in the garden of the house to form a treehouse between two existing trees.

Heritage impact matters have been addressed at depth by previous submission from Pippa Paton Design in relation to alterations and extensions direct to the main house listed heritage asset. On that basis the assessment is based on the impact of the proposed treehouse on the main house and other closely related heritage assets on the site.

1.02 Planning Policy:

NPPF Chapter 16 Paragraphs 184-202
194 Providing Heritage Assessments
195 LPAs Assessment
196 Neglect and damage
197 Considering significance in decision making
199 Great weight to conservation of significance
200 Harm justification
201 Substantial Harm to designated asset
202 Less than substantial harm to designated asset
203 Non designated heritage assets

The Cotswold District Local Plan 2011-32 provides the local decision-making framework. Policy EN1 is an overarching policy looking to achieve the conservation of the districts historic environment. Policy EN2 covers design guidance and the requirement for high quality interventions within local areas and characters. The Cotswold Design Code is relevant. Policy EN10 echoes the NPPF in protection of designated assets.

1.03

This assessment addresses the effects of the proposed development on the historic environment at Great Rissington Manor, Gloucestershire. The historic environment is defined as all the aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed. Many of the physical remains of the past develop an important role in our cultural heritage and therefore the historic environment can also be defined by the role it plays in the culture of a society and place.

1.04

The tangible/physical components of the historic environment are heritage assets. Heritage assets can be designated or undesignated buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscape that have a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of their heritage interest (NPPF). Each heritage asset has its own individual value or level of significance, which can be broken down into evidential value, historic value, aesthetic value and communal value. The significance of an asset can be physically or visually apparent, or might be the result of less tangible qualities, such as associations with a particular person, family, work of art or community, or spiritual or symbolic meaning.

1.05

In addition to the asset itself, each heritage asset has a setting which can be important to its appreciation and values. Setting is defined as the surrounding in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surrounding evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may remain neutral (NPPF, DCLG). Setting can, therefore, vary from the immediate physical space around an asset to a much wider context, depending on the individual nature of a particular heritage asset. Whilst commonly referred to in visual terms, setting is often more complex. The three key aspects of setting area visibility, context and function.

1.06

Visibility is, perhaps, the most straightforward aspect of the three, being the reality of what can be seen from a heritage asset, what can be seen in views to it, and the consequent visual influences of how a historic site or building is perceived. Context is a less tangible aspect, relating to the physical, cultural and spatial values of the surrounding landscape in which a historic site is experienced, and includes inter-relationships with other assets.

1.07

The aim of this assessment is to establish how the heritage values of the historic environment at Great Rissington Manor would be affected by the proposed development of a new treehouse. The objectives are, therefore, to:

- identify the heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals;
- identify the effect of the development on the asset and/or its setting;
- assess the impact of the development on the heritage values of individual assets;
- assess the cumulative impact of the development on heritage assets and, therefore, the historic environment as a whole;

1.08

The development proposals are described further in the planning application but comprise the construction of a new treehouse around 2no. trees, connected by a bridge.

2.0 Planning Context

2.01 Planning History:

Planning submissions in recent relevant history are as follows:

21/02898/LBC | Alterations at detached barn including new doors & windows, roof and floor.

21/04735/LBC | Structural roof renovation to detached barn.

20/00113/FULL & 20/00114/LBC | Change of use of land to residential curtilage. Construction of tennis court with associated works and enclosure.

19/03859/FUL | Installation of ground source heat pump plant and associated subterranean pipe array (Retrospective).

18/01827/LBC | Replacement external doors to garden room.

17/04023/FUL | Installation of ground mounted solar PV panels and associated development.

17/03994/LBC | Internal alterations: to include removal of second floor in southern wing with the creation of gallery and walkway in its place and associated works; structural mitigation to the roof of the south wing and removal of partitions currently forming linen room.

17/02829/FUL & 17/02830/LBC | Replacement entrance gates.

17/02375/FUL & 17/02376/LBC | Provision of swimming pool and associated landscaping, including loggia, works to garage to provide changing facilities, and pump room.

17/01296/LBC | Internal alterations to North range.

15/04433/LBC | Proposed internal alterations.

Heritage Impact

3.0 Heritage Context

3.01 Site Heritage Assets:

There are four main elements at the site that are designated heritage assets which are directly, or indirectly, relevant to the proposed treehouse. They are all Grade II listed assets and their specific formal list descriptions are contained within Appendix 1 of this statement. Those assets are formally described as:

1. Barn circa 40 metres north of Great Rissington Manor
2. Great Rissington Manor
3. Wall incorporating dovecote and an open fronted store to the north of Great Rissington Manor.
4. Thatched summerhouse circa 40 metres west of Great Rissington Manor.

3.02 History:

Great Rissington Manor appears to have been a principal messuage rather than a manor house, recorded in 1309, but was probably a high status property in the medieval period, in close proximity to the parish church. Earthworks west of the gardens, including ridge and furrow, suggest some evidence of the medieval setting, but are not recorded on the Historic Environment Record (appendix 1).

3.03

In 1571, the Sandys family sold the manor to Edmund Brag of Great Barrington estate; the present farmhouse was begun in the seventeenth century, and remained part of the estate until 1920 (Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens entry).

3.04

On the sale of the house to Major WSP Marling, the architects Falconer, Baker and Campbell were appointed to design formal gardens, and restore the house, as described by Percy Cane in 1927, with a south wing added circa 1929. A date stone to a garden seat is inscribed 19M22, suggesting an early start on garden development by Major and Mrs. Marling. Three key structural components of the Arts and Crafts garden are individually listed, in addition to the house, namely, the thatched summerhouse; the dovecote, associated walls and open store; and the linked structures of the gate house, garden seat, pergola, and associated walls. The pergola originally extended along the southern edge of the formal gardens.

3.05

In 1958, Major Marling's widow sold the property to Desmond Godman, who substantially extended the gardens to the south-west with The Ornamentals, an arboretum, in place by 1978. He may also have built the swimming pool evident in an aerial photograph of circa 1990, apparently drained down, and reduced to a small ornamental pool as part of later garden restoration and redevelopment work by a following owner.

3.06

The most significant phase of development of the grounds of The Manor was the Arts and Crafts garden of 1922-1929. While the planting has been substantially reworked and replaced, and has therefore changed the more open and formal historic layout, the key ornamental structures remain, and continue to convey the original Arts and Crafts character to complement the 1920s reinterpretation of the seventeenth century farmhouse.

4.0 Appraisal

4.01

The impact of the proposals on the historic environment has been considered by an assessment of the seven heritage assets that have been identified as being affected by the proposals.

4.02

The assessment of heritage value has been based on the following criteria:

- **HIGH:** Nationally exceptional heritage assets, such as grade I and II* listed buildings and scheduled monuments, and assets with international heritage value or recognition.
- **MEDIUM:** Nationally or regionally important heritage assets, including grade II listed buildings, and assets with high significance in Cotswold District, including Conservation Areas and features with exceptional importance to the history, culture and development of the Cotswolds and of high value for the local community.
- **LOW:** Locally important heritage assets, of value to the understanding of the history, culture and development of the Cotswolds and important to the local community. The category also includes heritage assets which have lost much of their evidential value as a result of damage or alterations to the asset.

4.03

Heritage value has also been broken down into the categories recommended by Historic England in Conservation Principles (2008), namely:

- **HISTORICAL VALUE:** The illustrative or associative ways an asset or place connects with the people, events and aspects of life in the past.
- **EVIDENTIAL VALUE:** The potential of an asset or place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- **AESTHETIC VALUE:** The sensory and intellectual stimulation for people when they experience an asset or place. This includes conscious design and qualities that arise fortuitously from a historic building, landscape or place.
- **COMMUNAL VALUE:** The meanings of a heritage asset or place for people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. These can include commemorative or symbolic values, social value or spiritual value.

4.04

The impacts of the development on an asset's heritage values has been defined as follows:

- **HIGH ADVERSE:** The development severely erodes the heritage values of the heritage asset.
- **MEDIUM ADVERSE:** The development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage values of the heritage asset.
- **LOW ADVERSE:** The development erodes to a minor extent the heritage values of the heritage asset.

- IMPERCEPTIBLE/NONE: The development does not affect the heritage values of the heritage asset.

4.05

Summary of Impacts on Heritage Assets Three key issues have been identified that help to define and characterise the impacts of the proposals on the historic environment:

- Issue 1: direct physical impacts will be none, with no or imperceptible loss of significance.
- Issue 2: although adjacent to medium and high value listed buildings, the proposals have no or imperceptible impacts on the heritage values of views from these structures, comprising their settings.
- Issue 3: while the Registered Garden and Conservation Area are regarded as of medium significance, the impact of the proposals on historic character is considered to be imperceptible. These assessments are discussed further below.

4.06 Direct physical impacts:

Direct physical impacts on the fabric of heritage assets are limited to the excavation of 7no. small diameter (600mm x 600mm deep) pits in the area of lawn adjacent to the trees; potential effects upon two mature trees (addressed separately in the Arboricultural Report Sylva Consultancy October 2023;

The physical impacts primarily affect small pockets of soil/lawn within a small area of ground directly adjacent to the trees. The excavated pits are filled with gravel (no concrete) and used to locate timber posts to help support the treehouse structure. There are no direct physical impacts on any of the buildings (heritage assets or otherwise) and the works carried out will be wholly reversible, if so desired. Importantly, the proposals do not seek to remove the significance the role of this immediate area in the registered garden. Indeed, the 2no. trees do not form part of the formal garden but are located adjacent to the previously approved (and constructed) swimming pool loggia structure. The structural timber construction form of the approved loggia will be reflected in the similar use of structural natural timber to form the treehouse structure itself.

4.07

The main view from the grade II* listed church to the application area is from the top of the church tower, or over the church wall, to the service yard north of the house. There is, at present, only a narrow glimpse view to this area of lawn, which is largely screened by the hedge planting. The canopy of the Maple trees, and their foliage, will themselves limit views out or into the treehouse platforms and bridge. Since the use of the treehouse is a weather-dependent activity it is much more likely to be used at times when the foliage canopy is seasonally dense.

4.08

Views from the upper floors of the grade II listed Manor to the application site are prevented by the northwest wing of the house, created as part of the pre 1929 modifications.

4.09

Within the formal garden, the grade II listed thatched summerhouse is a primary viewpoint, as well as a key visual feature. Views from inside and just outside the summerhouse towards the application site are limited by the grade II listed garden wall. It is possible that the top of the treehouse may be visible beyond the wall and other buildings, likely subject to seasonal foliage variation, but the changes will not erode the overall significance of the view.

4.10 Impacts upon the character of the Registered Garden and Great Rissington Conservation Area:

4.11

The character of the original historic Arts and Crafts garden has been weakened by the loss of much of the historic planting, and some loss of parts of the structures. Similarly, the village Conservation Area has been subject to modernisation of building fabric, and new built development. However, neither of these changes has erased the historic, evidential, aesthetic and communal values of these areas. For the same reasons, the proposals do not give rise to perceptible impacts on the character of the Registered Garden or Conservation Area, within which the treehouse will sit. The treehouse is located between two established maple trees which sit outside of the formal garden area and in a part of the garden that was deemed suitable for the construction of a carefully considered swimming pool, patio and loggia.

4.12

The treehouse is constructed in sustainable materials wholly appropriate to the existing immediate context of the loggia and the garden. The treehouse will be constructed within the trees from 'tree' materials.

5.0 Residual Effects:

5.01 The effects of the proposals on the historic environment can be subdivided into two types:

- i. Imperceptible impacts on the physical fabric of heritage asset buildings & wall of medium to high value without loss of significance.
- ii. Imperceptible or no impacts on the historic character of the Registered Garden, Conservation Area, and on views from, and the setting of, medium and high value listed buildings nearby.

5.02

Overall, the proposals are considered to respect the significance and value of the heritage assets, including the Conservation Area, Registered Garden and Listed Buildings.

6.0 Heritage Summary

6.01

This application has been carefully based on a detailed understanding of the historic and architectural values of the Grade II listed assets at The Manor, Great Rissington. It has drawn on detailed assessment of the nature of the proposed use and how it fits directly into the context of the adjacent, recently reformed, outbuildings.

6.02

The setting of this treehouse also contributes to its special interest particularly in private family garden areas to the north-west of the gardens and contributes to the family enjoyment of this low-key relaxation area. The proposal is only possible in this unique location due to the position of the two substantial maple trees which make this structurally achievable without significant loss. The location of these two trees, shielded by adjacent structures, means that the impact of the treehouse on surrounding heritage assets (St John's Church) is controlled.

6.03

The proposed design relates directly to both form and materials approved by CDC in the planning consent for the adjacent pool area loggia. Therefore, the location, use and design are wholly led by a previously tested, and approved, set of design & conservation principles that were deemed appropriate for this location on the site.

6.04

The proposed extension makes no significant impact on the heritage. There is no loss of fabric. It makes no direct impact on the asset itself, preserving it without harm. Only a very slight alteration to the setting of the original asset is caused but no harm resulting.

6.05

This conservation led scheme is assessed as preserving the heritage values of these listed buildings and assets. Overall, no harm is identified. As no harm is identified, paragraphs 200-202 of the NPPF are not engaged and there is considered to be preservation for the purposes of the decision makers duty under section 16 of the Act.

Appendix 1:

Historic England List Entries for Heritage Assets at The Manor, Great Rissington.

BARN CIRCA 40 METRES NORTH OF GREAT RISSINGTON MANOR

GREAT RISSINGTON GREAT RISSINGTON VILLAGE SP 1917-2017 9/150 Barn c40m north of Great Rissington Manor GV II Barn. Late C18-early C19. Coursed squared and dressed limestone with dressed stone quoins. Stone slate roof. Rectangular plan with a projecting porch on the south side. Lean-to to the left of the porch. Projecting gabled porch off-centre right with a double-width entrance with a timber lintel. Access holes with landings to pigeon loft above. Single width doorway to the lean-to to the left of the porch. Former pitching windows each with an ovolo-moulded mullion and transom with diamond leaded panes in both gable ends. Interior; 3 bays. Original collar and tie-beam trusses with double purlins. Pigeon holes within roof space of the projecting porch.

GREAT RISSINGTON MANOR

GREAT RISSINGTON GREAT RISSINGTON VILLAGE SP 1917-2017 9/146 Great Rissington Manor (formerly listed as The Manor House) 25.8.60 GV II Former farmhouse, now a manor house. Marked as Manor Farm on the 1:2500 O.S. map. Mid C17-late C17 (probably in two phases), extended and restored by the Marling family 1929. Limestone rubble with dressed stone quoins. Stone slate roof with ashlar stacks. 'L'-shaped C17 main body. South wing added c1929. The north wing (built c1929) to the right of the main body was originally a range of farmbuildings including a barn (now converted) and forms a linear range projecting forwards from the entrance front and continuing back rear right. Mostly 2 storeys and attic. Facade; gable at centre of the entrance front, later C17 range to the left. Gable of early C20 south wing projects forwards to the left. Converted barn projects forwards to the right. Original single-light, 3 and 4-light stone-mullioned casements, with stopped hoods to the mid-late C17 ranges; king-mullions to the 4-light casements. C20 stone-mullioned casements to the north and south ranges. All windows with leaded panes, most with stopped hoods. Early C20 plank door with studded fillets with a roll-moulded 4-centred arched surround set off-centre right in the gable. Garden front cross-gabled west wing of the C17 range projects forwards at the centre. Small 2-storey turret with a pyramidal roof in the angle between the main body and the north range. Three-bay open-fronted store with rubble-built cylindrical columns to the right-hand return northern range. Varying rooflines throughout. Axial and gable-end stacks with moulded cappings and skirtings. One triple diagonally set lateral stack to the south range. Saddleback coping to the gables, kneelers and pierced pointed finials to the main body and the south range. Lead guttering probably dating from the early C20 restoration. Some rainwater heads decorated with either a single leaping fish or a castellated tower. Rainwater head with the initials 'M. H. M.' (Marling) on the garden front. Interior restored in 1929. Ground floor; two original Tudor-arched fireplaces with restored herringbone tiling at the back. Matching early C20 stone fireplace. Several probably original flat-chamfered basket-headed stone fireplace surrounds in bedrooms. One small Tudor-arched fireplace with a roll moulded surround. Small area of C17 wall painting (cl.5m x 1m) in an upstairs bedroom. The painting is intended to imitate wood panelling and has a yellow background onto which is painted the outline of 4 panels with a lozenge at the centre of each, imitation wooden peg fixings at the junction of the rails and stiles. Painted nulling forms a frieze at the top of the painted panelling which was probably once more extensive. Staircase early C20. (V.C.H. Vol VI, p 99)

WALL INCORPORATING DOVECOTE AND AN OPEN FRONTED STORE TO THE NORTH OF GREAT RISSINGTON MANOR

GREAT RISSINGTON GREAT RISSINGTON MANOR SP 1917-2017 9/149 Wall incorporating dovecote and an open-fronted store to the north of Great Rissington Manor GV II Wall and open-fronted store in the grounds of Great Rissington Manor. Probably built c1929 as part of garden designed by Falconer, Baker and Campbell. Limestone rubble wall. Corrugated iron roof to the open-fronted store. The wall c3m in height, runs west from the gable end of the north range for about 20m, at which point there is a pier c4m in height with a pagoda-shaped dovecote at the top of the wall then returns north towards for c3m to join the gable end of the open-fronted store. Another wall then runs away at right angles from about half-way along the rear wall of the store. The wall linking the north range to the dovecote has flat coping and an opening flanked by square piers adjacent to the gable end of the north range. Corner pier with pagoda-shaped dovecote with projecting moulded landing platforms and pyramidal finial with a small ball at the apex. The other sections of walling have saddleback coping. Four-bay open-fronted store facing east. Each bay is divided by a square stone-built pier. (P. Cane, *Modern Gardens, British and Foreign*, 1926, p70-72; and J. Sales, *West Country Gardens*, 1980, p65)

THATCHED SUMMERHOUSE CIRCA 40 METRES WEST OF GREAT RISSINGTON MANOR

GREAT RISSINGTON GREAT RISSINGTON MANOR SP 1917-2017 9/147 Thatched summerhouse c40m west of Great Rissington Manor GV II Summer house at the south-west corner of the upper terrace west of Great Rissington Manor house. Built c1929 for Major W.J.P. Marling, probably designed by Falconer, Baker and Campbell. Coursed squared and dressed limestone with dressed stone quoins, upper part of the upper floor timber-framed. Thatched roof. Square plan to the ground floor. Timber-framed upper part circular with moulded stone corbels where the circular part projects south over the square lower part. Four stone steps up to an early C20 plank door with strap hinges flanked by single timber-framed panes with curved decorative bracing. The side walls of the remainder of the circular upper part otherwise comprise metal casements with large leaded panes. Plank door set back within a pointed dressed stone reveal at ground floor level on the west side, opening onto the lower terrace. Conical thatched roof with a weathervane decorated with a single leaping fish at the apex. Interior not inspected. One of a group of garden buildings/features of the same period. (P. Cane, *Modern Gardens, British and Foreign*, 1926, p70-72; and J. Sales, *West Country Gardens*, 1980, p65)