



DATE: 5TH FEBRUARY 2024

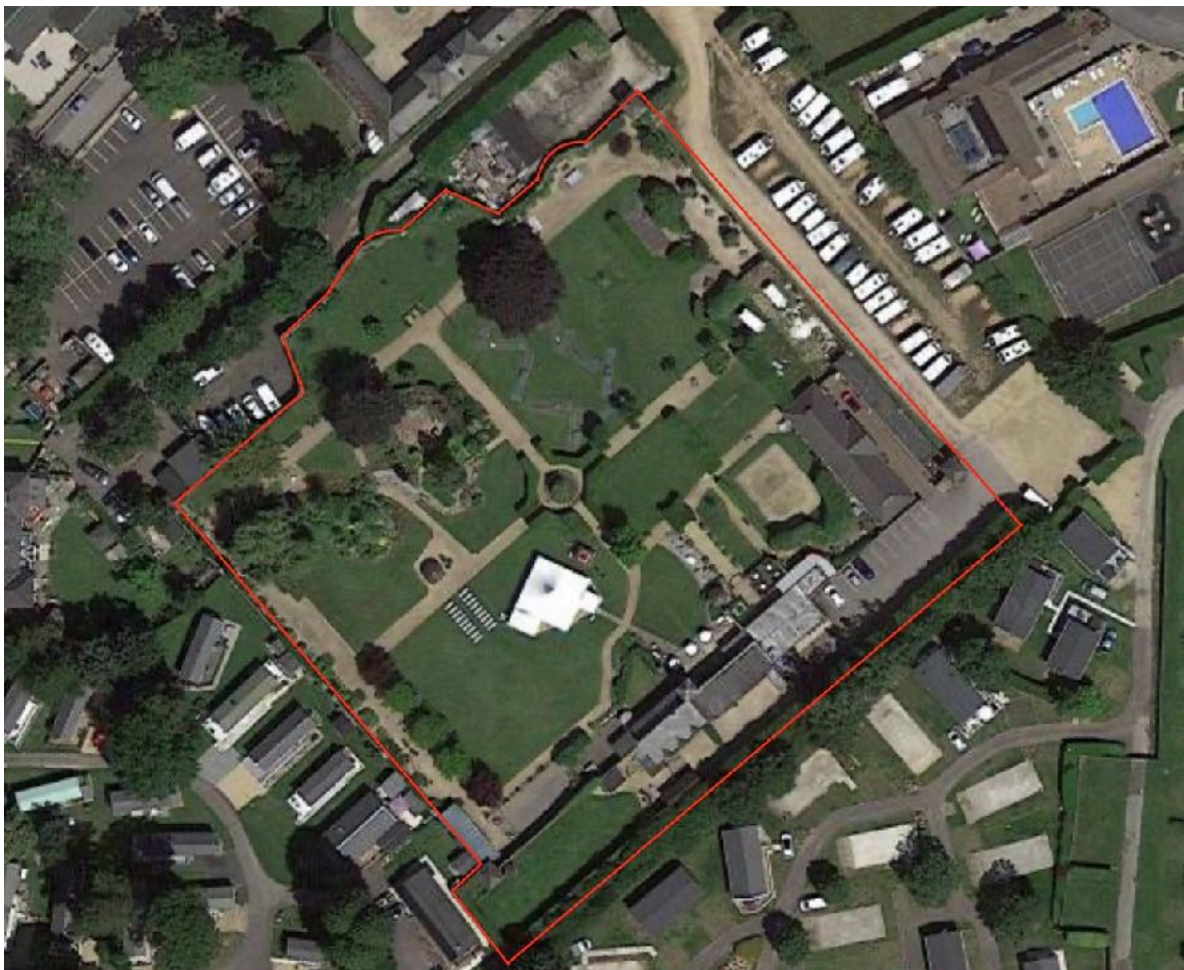
OUR REF: 2303- 520

THE ORANGERY SUITE– REPOINTING PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS, AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Site Description

The Orangery Suite is an exclusive and unique garden marquee venue for weddings, team building, business meetings, training courses, corporate and charity events, birthday bookings, baby naming ceremonies, parties, children's birthdays, hen parties, baby showers and other social functions.

The Orangery Suite is set within a 18th Century Grade II listed walled garden that once was part of Merley House.



History and Site Context of Adjacent Merley House*

Merley House (originally spelt Myrle) was an ancient manor belonging to the Lords of Canford. In 1751, Ralph Willett purchased the estate and is responsible for the building of the larger and much grander house adjacent to the application site.

Willett's great enthusiasm for architecture led to the design of the three storey building, rendered on the north side in Portland stone, featuring three balconies and four ionic pilasters supporting the entablature. In 1772 two wings were added one of which contained the new library as Willett's vast collection had outgrown the existing library in the house. Unfortunately these two wings were demolished in the early 1800s following an auction of the books and paintings they housed by the then owner, John Willett.

A walled garden was built to the North East of the house with an Orangery on the south side. This has survived to this day and used to be known as the Merley Bird Gardens, home to many exotic bird species. Merley Bird Gardens (Merley Tropical Bird Gardens) was opened in 1969 and remained open until 1997. It is now the Orangery Suite; a unique venue for conferences and events.

In 1875 the whole estate was sold by auction but there is little information as to whom it was sold until it was bought by Ivor Guest, 1st Lord of Wimborne. In 1927, the MP for South Dorset, Angus Valdemar Hambro purchased the estate in a dilapidated condition, spending two years renovating it.

In 1939 the out break of war meant that the house was requisitioned by the War office. When they left in 1946 the house was again sold at auction. Now down to just 270 acres it was sold in 14 lots and the house was converted into flats.

During the 1960s a holiday park was started to help finance the restoration of the house.

We note the Orangery Suite is a separate ownership to Merley House and separate business.



*Kindly from "The History of Merley House" by Merley House Events

Historic Listing

Grade:II

List Entry Number:1224647

Date first listed: 30-Jun-1980

List Entry Name and Address:

GARDEN WALLS AND ORANGERY APPROXIMATELY 100 METRES SOUTH EAST OF MERLEY HOUSE

Garden wall with 2 corner pavilions, central doorway and orangery. Late C18. Brick with stone caps, and tiled roof. Roughly square plan, with rectangular plan orangery to S side with splayed corners and large sash windows with flat heads. 2 corner pavilions with pyramidal roofs. N boundary projects in a series of convex curves and has in the centre a segmental-arched doorway with rusticated brick jambs. Doorway in the W wall. Groups with Merley House (qv). (RCHME: County of Dorset (South East): London: 1970-: 209).

Application Site

The application site comprises of areas to the most prominent elevation of the walled garden to address repairs and repointing to the existing walls.





Heritage Statement

Repointing is the process of taking out and replacing the mortar ('pointing') from the face of a masonry joint. This helps exclude the weather and retard deterioration of the wall.

The existing mortar has weathered back to a depth equivalent to the joint width or is very loose in many areas across the length of the walls shown.

The lime mortar used widely for pointing on older (pre-c1919) buildings is more permeable than the brick or stone, concentrating frost and salt action in the joints. Unlike hard cementitious pointing, this protects the masonry units because the mortar erodes preferentially (ie is sacrificial). Irregular weathering has meant that localised repointing is required along with more significant areas of the wall due to poor maintenance by previous owners of the site.

Conclusion

The proposal has been sympathetically considered with advice from Rose of Jericho to ensure the mortar and methodology for repair will enhance and preserve the existing walls.