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Subject: Marlow House DM/25/1103 and 1104

Hi Sue

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications.

Marlow House is a Grade II listed house dating originally from the 15th century and located on Lindfield High Street, within the Conservation Area. The house, which is attached at either side to its neighbours, both of which are also listed buildings, is at its core a timber framed building dating from the 15th century.

As understood from the Heritage Statement submitted with previous, eventually approved applications, the original house appears to have been a jettied building of four bays, with a cross passage, and had an open hall, evidence for which survives in the form of soot blackened timbers within the roof and upper part of the frame. However it appears to be unclear as to whether the open hall was recessed as part of a Wealden house, or whether it was more centrally placed. The original building had a stone lined cellar beneath it to the northern end.

During the 16th century, a substantial brick chimney stack was introduced at the centre of the building, and the 15th century roof structure altered by the insertion of a crown post. By the 17th century the building was floored throughout, including the open hall- floor structures, and in some areas floor boards, from this period survive (or survived until the recent works in some cases) at both first and attic floors. Also during this period an enclosed timber winder staircase was introduced against the rear wall of the building, in the position of the former cross-passage. This staircase ran from ground to attic floors, and survived until the recent works which are the subject of this application.

The building also underwent later alterations and extensions, including refronting during the 18th or 19th centuries, the extension of the cellar and creation of a new steps sitting under the 17th century stair and accessed via the stair enclosure, and the addition of a two storey rear wing c.1830. These additions and alterations demonstrate the later evolution of the domestic provision of the house, and its partly commercial use, which included in later years use at ground floor as a shop and then a tea room, before becoming fully residential again during the 1980s. As part of the previous commercial use, a single storey bakehouse was constructed to the rear of the building during the 18th century- originally a detached structure, this was later linked to the main house by more modern extensions.

Marlow House is of national importance due to its still legible 15th century origins, and early phases of development during the 16th and 17th centuries. It is a good example of a multi-phase building of this period, and the surviving evidence of its development from a building with an open hall, to a fully floored house with central masonry chimney stack is indicative of the evolution of timber framed buildings of period in the Sussex area, although it does exhibit some

interesting anomalies, such as the fact that the crown post roof appears to postdate and have been built around the chimney.

To quote the Heritage Statement submitted with the current applications, *'Having stood for almost six hundred years the building displays fabric, features and detailing which illuminate particular building practices and fashions that were in play from the mid-15th century onwards. All surviving historic fabric which dates from the original construction and subsequent phases has intrinsic heritage value of a high order.'*

During the 20th century further, not entirely sympathetic, alterations and extensions were made in particular to the rear of the building.

Planning permission and listed building consent were recently granted for alterations and extensions to the building, in part to replace the existing modern additions to the rear (DM/22/3694 and 3695). Unfortunately, the works carried out on site have not been in accordance with these permissions, and whilst elements of the scheme as built may not be considered contentious, including any part of the work which is in accordance with the approvals, there are very significant areas where the scheme as built has resulted in harm to the special interest of the listed building. This includes loss of significant historic fabric, and works which have adversely impacted the historic plan form of the building and the legibility of the original flow of the spaces within it. There has also been significant harm to the narrative of the building- how its form and functioning developed over time- and how this can be appreciated.

The current applications seek to regularise the position, including in some elements of reversal or amendment of the existing work.

Firstly, I would note that the current application documents including in particular the DAS, and subsequently received documents from the applicant, make reference to documents not included with this application or with the original applications for the site. These documents, which the Council has not had sight of, include a report by Gould Baxter architects. We have no idea of the circumstances or remit of this report, or its full contents, and I am therefore currently unable to respond to any points made in respect of it.

I also note that it appears that in several places within the DAS photographs taken during the course of the works, after stripping out had taken place, are included and represented as pre-existing. This is misleading as it gives a falsely negative impression of the condition and state of repair of the building prior to the commencement of work, and should be rectified.

To consider the various elements of the current proposal which are at variance with the approved scheme in turn:

1. 17th century staircase and enclosure

Most significantly, the 17th century staircase and stair enclosure, which previously connected the ground, first and attic floors of the historic house, has been removed in its entirety. Although altered in part, this early fabric was of a high level of significance, and the stair in itself was one of the principle historic features of the house. Its removal has been highly damaging not only in terms of the loss of the fabric to both the stair and stair enclosure, but of the adverse impact on the historic plan form and flow of the building, and how this is appreciated, as there is currently no way to move vertically between the

floors of the historic core of the building. This is exacerbated by the removal of the access to the cellar stairs, which formed part of the stair enclosure at ground floor, and its replacement with a trap door, which has impeded easy access to the cellar space and make the existence of this entire floor of the building less apparent.

The current proposal to attempt to address this situation is described in the submitted Heritage Statement as *'The removal of the ground to first floor winder staircase, but with legibility retained, though the removed first to attic level staircase is to be reinstated using the original treads, risers and carriage pieces removed without consent and with lath and plaster applied to the soffit.'*

In principle, this the removal of the staircase in part or whole is unacceptable, as was made very clear to the applicant and his agents during the course of the original applications, both during in person meetings and in written comments. Indeed, the applicant's own historic building adviser advised that this would be the case in the context of the original historic building survey supplied with these applications.

Although the lower part of the stair case was altered, its position was unaltered from the original. The original enclosure appears to have survived at this level. The 17th century staircase and enclosure survived in the upper section between first and attic floors. Both elements of the staircase, and the enclosure, have been removed at both levels.

Ground to first floor: The current proposal is not to reinstate a stair at ground to first floor. This does nothing to address the harm caused in terms of the loss of fabric from the stair and original enclosure, neither does it address the harm caused to the historic plan form and flow of the building. The submitted DAS suggests that *'the staircase outline is to be reinstated'* at ground floor, *'to create a reference to the historic feature'* (p. 114). The plans suggest that the previously existing staircase stringer has been retained (although the Council has no evidence to substantiate this) and will be refixed to the remaining walls adjacent to the stair trap, with markings routed into the fabric of the stringer to suggest the former presence of steps. A similar approach will be taken to the ceiling to create an indication of an opening where this has been infilled. Notwithstanding the loss of historic fabric, this is in my opinion wholly inadequate as mitigation for the loss of the stair at this level- it does not replicate the full form of the stair trap, which was an enclosed feature typical of its period, or the form of the winder staircase in any meaningful manner. This work would not provide the same contribution to the special interest of the building as the retention, in this position, of the altered 17th century stair.

Furthermore, the proposal not to reinstate access between the ground and first floors of the historic core of the building is unacceptable due to the impact this has on the plan form and flow of the building- at present anyone standing in either of these floors within the original house would have no idea that the building had an upper/lower storey (as appropriate), which was part of its functional whole.

It should also be noted that this work has removed the door which was to the southern side of the stair trap, and gave access to the cellar stairs. These stairs are now only accessible by a trap door, over which furniture was placed on our recent visit, and therefore the existence of this entire floor of the building is much less apparent.

According to the Heritage Statement submitted with the original applications, the cellar dates in part from the earliest phase of the house's development, but was extended to

the south during the 18th or 19th centuries, when this previously existing access and steps were added. The evidence pertaining to this important aspect of the house's plan form and its evolution is therefore compromised by the work which has been carried out here. See below w.r.t. the cellar itself.

The submitted DAS suggests that the cellar trap door has been formed from '*historic floor boards*'. These 17th century boards have been taken, without consent, from their original position in the attic, and cut up. Please see below with respect to works to the attic space, and further information required in this respect.

First to attic floor: With respect to the upper part of the removed stair, which had previously survived since the 17th century, the current proposal according to the DAS is to reinstate a 'staircase' to serve as shelving, giving no access to the attic floor. This would be built into a cupboard with cupboard door. Again, this does not in any way adequately mitigate for the loss of the original fabric, and in failing to reconnect the building vertically would also significantly detract from its plan form and flow, and how this can be appreciated by anyone standing in either of this floors. In particular, it detracts from an appreciation of the manner in which the attic was clearly regularly used as part of the domestic accommodation. All of these factors are significant to the special interest of the listed building.

The submitted Heritage Statement suggests that the contractor who carried out the demolition of the staircase has retained some of the fabric of the staircase, and that this would be re-used to construct the shelving. However, it should be stressed that:

- The Council has had no sight of this fabric.
- We would require confirmation by an appropriately qualified and experienced third party, identity to be agreed by the Council, that the fabric apparently in the contractor's possession is indeed the remnants of the 17th century stair from Marlow House.
- Even if the fabric can be shown to be remnants of the staircase, it is highly unlikely that the fittings and fixtures of the stair can have been retained in their entirety during the process of demolition, so that an unacceptable loss of historic fabric remains likely in respect of the staircase itself, which is likely to be particularly damaging in respect of the detail of its original construction.
- Indeed, the submitted detailed drawing 5008 suggests that not all of the fabric to the staircase has been retained, and notes that there will also be 'new timber to match existing' required.
- There is no indication that any of the fabric to the historic stair enclosure has been retained, or can be reinstated. The damage and loss to this important element of the house's 17th century fabric and plan form would therefore remain unacceptable.

The applicant's justification for these works is to suggest that the approved plans were misleading. This is not my understanding, as the approved plans clearly show the retention of the staircase on both levels. For example, the approved first floor plan PL03.C shows the staircase and trap in place, and is annotated '*6. Existing attic staircase to be retained unmodified*'. Based on this and on our extensive discussions with the applicant and his agents during the course of the previous applications, during which it was made clear that the removal of any part of the staircase would not be

supported, it is very surprising that it is now suggested that they were under the impression that the Council had approved these works.

Please see below with respect to the creation of an alternative loft access hatch within the south east bedroom.

2. The opening between stair hall and central room at first floor.

As approved, after negotiation, it was agreed that the existing door between the stair landing and the central room at first floor was to be retained and locked shut, rather than being removed and the opening blocked. This was considered important to avoid adverse impact on the plan form and flow of the original house and how this can be appreciated, as blocking of this opening would not allow any possibility of movement between the two ends of the house at first floor, and would harm an appreciation of the original layout and extent of the house.

Unfortunately, as implemented the door has been removed and the opening infilled. This is highly damaging to the special interest of the listed building because of its impact on the plan form and flow of the historic core of the house. The current proposal is to reinstate the opening with a locked door, but also to retain the sink unit which has been installed to the northern side of the opening, within the central room (this room has been subdivided without consent to create an ensuite and dressing room- see below for discussion of this). Although the reinstatement of a door would allow some appreciation of the previous interconnection of the two ends of the building, the sink unit would mean that in practice no access would be possible.

Therefore, although an improvement on the current unauthorised works, this aspect of the proposal remains unacceptable in terms of its impact on the special interest of the listed building.

3. Partition within the central room at first floor to create an ensuite and dressing room

This partition, which has been installed without consent, subdivides the central room at first floor. As approved, a previously existing partition to western side of the room was to be partly removed, but the floor plan otherwise remained open. A second partition in the approximate position of the partition which has been installed was proposed in the initially submitted scheme, but was removed on Officer advice due to adverse impact on the extent to which the original room plan and volume could continue to be appreciated. The partition as installed is considered contentious for this reason. The position of the shower cubicle within the ensuite is also of concern- early advice in respect of the original applications was not to position fitted furniture against this northern wall of the room, due to obscuring or adversely impacting historic framing within this wall.

4. Fitted wardrobes between the central and southern rooms at first floor

The previously existing cupboard which sat within the space between the chimney stack and the east façade of the building, and which was shown as retained on the approved drawings, has been removed in its entirety including the shelving and the rear wall (facing onto the southern room), and replaced with back-to-back fitted wardrobes. We have no evidence before us regarding the date or level of interest of this fabric, and therefore it is not possible to comment meaningfully on this aspect of the current proposal.

5. Partial removal of partition wall at first floor between the northern and central rooms.

This work, which was not part of the approved scheme, has removed part of the framing to the eastern end of this partition, adjacent to the front elevation of the building, in order to create a doorway, and has also removed the infill to the adjacent panels of the frame. This work has resulted in an acceptable loss of historic fabric, and an adverse impact on the historic plan form of the building, and is therefore unacceptable.

6. Original floor boards at first floor overlaid with new oak flooring.

The original historic 17th century floor boards which survived to the affected rooms at first floor were attractive and characterful, making a strong contribution to the special interest of the building, giving a sense of patina and age to the space. At present, although the proposal suggests that they have been retained, we have no evidence to support this, which should have been provided with these applications in the form of photographs of the works in progress and/or photographs of lifted sections of the new flooring showing the retained historic floorboards beneath.

However, even if the continuing survival of the original flooring can be demonstrated, the proposal to conceal this important part of the building's character from view is considered unacceptable in terms of its impact on the historic character of the rooms affected. I also note that the new flooring has in theory been screwed down into the retained 17th century floor boards beneath, which, as this appears to have taken place over the extent of the rooms affected, will have had a cumulatively potentially significantly damaging physical impact on the original timber.

The submitted DAS contains a statement from the flooring contractor who carried out the work stating that he and the applicant had agreed that the existing flooring was beyond repair. This statement would not appear to be borne out by their appearance during the Council's pre-commencement site visit, or the photographs taken during that visit. Furthermore, the condition of the floorboards was not raised as an issue during the course of the approved applications, and neither was any approach made to the Council during the course of works to suggest that this was an issue, or to discuss remedial works. Given that the floorboards are now concealed, and in the absence of a detailed condition survey by an appropriately qualified and experienced historic building specialist, it is difficult to give any weight to this statement.

This part of the application is therefore considered unacceptable.

7. Removal of ceiling/attic floor structure above south-east bedroom and creation of a vaulted ceiling.

The entirety of the attic floor structure above the south east bedroom (i.e. the ceiling to this room and attic floor structure above) has been removed and a new skelling introduced to create a vaulted roof within this room. Photos within the original HS show that this was the location of original 17th century floorboards at attic level, which have consequently been lost. These boards have been chopped up to make the cellar hatch mentioned above and doors elsewhere in the building including the WC at ground floor and two adjacent positions (ref. p. 135 of the DAS). This is an unacceptable loss of fabric, not just in terms of the attic flooring, but equally importantly in terms of the underlying historic floor structure, which is presumed to have been 17th century or earlier in date. It also has an unacceptable impact on the proportions of the bedroom below, where the vaulted ceiling created gives an entirely false impression of the actual historic form of the roof structure above.

It should be noted that the re-use of the floorboards for other purposes does not mitigate this harm- their value lay in the survival in their original position, and continuing use for their original purpose, not only in terms of the character of the attic space, but also of the manner in which this demonstrated the timeline of the development of the building, the introduction of flooring to the attic space during the 17th century with the loss of the original open hall, and the use of the attic as part of the domestic accommodation of the house. This value is now lost.

This element of the proposal is therefore considered unacceptable.

8. Works to southern room and to rear of hallway at ground floor.

At the rear of the ground floor hallway the partition to the southern side has been removed to create access to a WC which has been created by subdividing the southern room of the historic core of the house. This work appears to have resulted not only in the potential loss of historic fabric- although this is refuted by the submitted DAS (p. 116) and Heritage Statement, given that the fabric is now lost and the photograph provided is only of one very small area, we can place little weight on this, particularly in the context of the different conclusion drawn by the Heritage Statement submitted with the approved applications- but also, importantly, in adverse impact on the previously surviving historic floor plan of this part of the building. This therefore has an adverse impact on the special interest of the building, and is in my opinion unacceptable.

I also note that the door to the WC created has been formed from repurposed floor boards- these are the original 17th century floorboards which have been removed without consent from the attic and chopped up. This aspect of the proposal is also unacceptable, and highly damaging to the special interest of the building. See below with respect to works to the attic.

The applicant has stated that a ground floor WC is required for accessibility reasons, however, as was discussed during the course of the application this could have been provided within the extensive replacement rear ground floor extension, or potentially within the adjacent bakehouse, subject to detail. There was no necessity for the WC to be located within the much more sensitive historic core of the building.

9. Removal of a partial partition wall within the ground floor lounge area, to the north of the building.

This was fabric was removed without consent. It is now suggested that the fabric was in part modern, specifically the infill which is stated to have been of gypsum plasterboard with a planted vertical timber batten. However, as the fabric has been removed it is impossible to confirm this, and it is accepted that the adjacent timber door jamb and the horizontal timber attached to this were historic timbers (DAS p. 118). Also, reference to the Heritage Statement submitted with the original applications comments on this fabric and notes that the doorway in question was in its original position (p. 16).

In addition to the removal of the fabric concerned, the work also adversely affects the legibility of the original or early floor plan of this part of the building, including its flow, as the door frame and adjacent partial partition were important, tangible evidence of the earlier, cellular layout of this part of the building, which has otherwise been opened up as one large space. This aspect of the proposal is therefore considered unacceptable.

The submitted justification that the proposal is necessary for the space to be '*conducive to modern living*' cannot be accepted- the space with the retained partition was eminently usable and indeed largely open plan, which appears the desired aim. Nor can the suggestion that the work was necessary to facilitate the adjacent, approved work to replace a steel post with a timber one be given any weight. We have no supporting statement from a structural engineer to suggest that this was necessary, nor was it raised during the extensive discussions during the course of the applications, which had involvement from a structural engineer, regarding the replacement of the post.

10. Works to the main entrance passageway at ground floor.

The DAS suggests that the original framing to the southern side of this passageway where it is adjacent to the front door (as opposed to the partition to towards the rear of the house which has been removed, see above) has been retained and exposed, with renovations. Whilst this may not be contentious in principle, dull details of the works carried out by the contractor including methods and materials used should be provided to the Council.

11. Changes to the layout of the utility room and store to the rear extension, ground floor.

The previously existing 20th century rear extensions to the building, while less than ideal in some ways, were however quite carefully considered in terms of their relationship with the rear elevation of the 15th century house at ground floor, in that with the exception of the stairs to first floor, partitioning and built form was kept away from the elevation so that the extension adjacent to the to the original house was retained as one large open space, allowing at least internal views of the full width of the building. During the course of the recent applications which gained approval, revisions were made on Officer advice to the layout of the store and utility to the northern end of the extension, between the retained bakehouse and the original dwelling, to ensure that a sense of openness, and a clear view across the rear of the 15th century timber framing was retained. As constructed however the space adjacent to the house is closed off with partitioning and a sliding door, which truncates the views across the rear of the original elevation. This is retrograde step, contrary to the discussions during the course of the previous applications, and harmful to the manner in which the form and fabric of the original house is appreciated. This aspect of the proposal is therefore considered contentious.

12. Exposure, with a glass cover, and relining of well shaft to the rear of the house

This well was apparently discovered during the course of works and retained as an internal feature within the rear extension. A glass cover was added, and the shaft re-lined with brick. Whilst exposing the well to view adds interest to the rear extension internally, and reveals an aspect of the house's history, as the Council was not made aware of or consulted on the relining works prior to them being completed, it is impossible to assess whether these works may have resulted in any harm or loss to historic fabric which may potentially have been present prior to their commencement. Photographs of the well prior to works taking place would be helpful.

13. Infill of window openings to internalised rear wall at ground and first floors

As previously existing, the original 15th century timber framed rear wall of the historic house retained a number of window openings at ground and first floor which had become internalised by the 20th century additions, but retained modern glazed casement

windows. These openings have now been infilled with lime plastered panels. Although the heritage statement submitted with the current application suggests that the previously existing window openings were not in the position of original openings, I would like to see further evidence to substantiate this.

14. Refacing of main chimney breast at ground and first floor with brickwork, and installation of fireplace to ground floor study wall

To the ground floor chimney breast to the living room the previous facing has been hacked off, and new facing brickwork installed with a contemporary raised fireplace set into this. This would have been the principle hearth at ground floor to the 17th century chimney stack.

Firstly, it should be noted that the DAS submitted with the current applications is misleading in including a photograph showing the previous facing removed and suggesting that this was the chimney breast in its previously existing state, whereas in fact this shows the area following stripping off of the previously existing finishes.

The statement submitted from the contractor who carried out this work (included in the DAS) suggests that the original inglenook fireplace to this room had been previously reduced in size, and this is supported by the presence of blockwork in the photograph included in the DAS. However, a traditional hearth opening did remain, which at least reflected the proportions if not the scale of the original opening in the stack. The raised contemporary fireplace and its brick surround bear no relationship to the original, or reduced hearth openings, and from its appearance could be an entirely modern introduction- no indication remains of the historic nature of this chimney breast and hearth. Further, the new brick facing and raised contemporary fireplace are out of keeping with the historic character of the core of the house. This aspect of the proposal is therefore in my opinion contentious.

We don't appear to have details of the work to the first floor, which should be provided.

Also, I believe a modern fire insert has been installed within the study at the southern end of the building at ground floor. Again, no detail of this has been provided?

15. Cellar

The heritage statement submitted with the original applications described the cellar which sits beneath the historic core of the building as follows:

'The cellar is partly at least as old as the oldest elements of the above ground structure. The present arrangement has a considerable extension to the cellar accommodation, but originally, the cellar extended under the northern high end bay only. The cellar structure is dressed stone and ample remains are still in situ. In the 18th, or early 19th century, the cellar was extended under the more central part of the house with brick masonry retaining walls and a new staircase leading from the far end of the cross passage.'

There has been an extensive loss of historic fabric and finishes to this area of the building. The 'as built' photographs included at p. 45 of the DAS demonstrate that the cellar has suffered from an almost complete loss of character. This has resulted in significant harm to the special interest of the listed building.

The current proposal is to retain the cellar as constructed, with no remedial works. There is no indication as to whether historic fabric survives beneath the render which has been applied to the walls, or beneath what appears despite comments within the DAS to be a new cement screed to the floor, but no attempt is made to re-expose or repair these finishes as part of the current application.

This part of the application is therefore considered harmful to the special interest of the listed building, and is not acceptable.

16. Floor structure above cellar, i.e. between cellar and ground floor

This has been removed and replaced with new fabric. The approved scheme did allow for some structural work within the cellar area to address an issue with the support given to the upright steel then situated within the main living space at the northern end of the house, which was to be replaced by an oak beam. However, the extent of the work which has taken place is in excess of that approved, in particular with respect to the replacement of the floor structure.

The submitted DAS suggests that the removal of the floor structure was necessary on structural grounds, but this was not something which was suggested by the structural engineer who commented on the works forming the original approvals. Again, no contact was made by the applicant during the course of works to suggest structural issues had been identified with the floor joists, and no attempt was made to discuss potential repairs or remedial works, before the floor structure was removed and replaced.

We have no compelling evidence before us to justify this element of the works, and only limited information on the nature of the fabric which has been removed, as it is not discussed in the earlier Heritage Statement, and there was no opportunity for a targeted inspection prior to its loss. This aspect of the proposal must therefore be regarded as contentious.

17. 'Improvement' of the timber frame throughout

Page 143 of the submitted DAS refers to the 'improvement' of the timber frame through removal of some overlying more modern finishes, and restoration. Whilst this may not be contentious in principle, a full schedule of the works which have taken place should be provided to the Council. It should be noted that the 'before' photographs included here are misleading in showing the building during the course of strip out works, rather than prior to commencement.

I would specifically like confirmation as to whether the frame has been cleaned, and in particular, confirmation by photographic evidence that the areas of the timber frame identified at pages 6 and 8 of the Heritage Statement accompanying the original, ultimately approved, applications as exhibiting soot blackening have not been affected, and that this highly significant evidence of the building's earliest phase remains unharmed.

18. The replacement extension to the rear of the house

This extension has not been constructed in accordance with the approved drawings. As approved, the bulk and form of the extensions were subject to negotiation to ensure that the scale of the additions to the rear remained appropriately subordinate to the historic building (in the context of the existing 20th century extensions which were to be

replaced), including the surviving 19th century rear wing, which had a gabled roof with attractive arched Gothic window at first floor overlooking the garden, and the single storey bakehouse, which was an important contributor to the narrative of the house's development, as surviving tangible evidence of an earlier, part commercial role. The form and massing of the first floor of the extension were particularly important in achieving a scheme which was considered, in its final approved form, to achieve on balance an acceptable relationship with the listed house.

As built, the rear extension at first floor exceeds the approved dimensions in width, depth and height, and extends across almost the full width of the building to both south and north, engulfing the historic rear wing, which has been either internalised or demolished, and resulting in a significant increase in bulk at this level both in relation to the approved scheme and the pre-existing situation. The current proposal is to retain this extension as built. The historic bakehouse has also been demolished and rebuilt to different dimensions- see below.

As approved, the scheme for a replacement first floor extension retained the existing 19th century rear wing to the southern end of the elevation, with the roof form and west elevation, including the attractive, original Gothic window, exposed, so that this aspect of the building's development could be clearly read. As constructed, all but the very top ridge of the roof of the extension has been lost to view (the remainder of the structure either internalised or demolished). This is considered detrimental to the fabric of the building, and to how the narrative of its development over time can continue to be appreciated. The potential to reinstate the Gothic window as an internal feature of the applicant's bedroom does not compensate for the adverse impact on the external appearance of the building (ref. drawing number 2001). The adverse impact on its special interest is not considered acceptable. Indeed, extending around and the rear wing was one aspect of the earliest submissions with respect to the ultimately approved applications which was designed out of the scheme as it developed on Officer advice, in order to achieve an ultimate approval.

The extension as built also includes a flat roofed element sitting above the first floor bathroom, to the northern side of the rear of the house, behind the reconstructed bakehouse. On the approved elevations, the northern side of the rebuilt rear extension had a hipped roof, which reduced its bulk, and also allowed some continuing appreciation of the original rear roofslope of the house behind.

In my opinion, this element of the proposal is contentious both in terms of the increased bulk of the rear addition, which has as a result (even when viewed in the context of the previously existing modern extensions) an inappropriate relationship of scale with the historic core of the building, and of its impact on the historic fabric, and narrative of the building, through the loss or internalisation of the 19th century rear wing and its window.

Given that the approval for the rebuilt extension was very much 'on balance', and that concerns had been expressed throughout the process about the scale of the proposed replacement addition (as noted above), which was amended during the course of the applications, this is considered contentious. The flat roof adds further high level bulk to an already very substantial addition, and obscures yet more of what little of the original house remains appreciable.

The cumulative impact of the variations from the unauthorised work at the rear of the building, including the increased scale of the additions, the loss or concealment of historic fabric to the rear wing, the demolition of the original bakehouse, and the demolition of the 19th century rear chimney, is that when standing in the rear garden of the property one would now struggle to realise that Marlow House is a historic building, let alone a listed one (see for example Fig. 6 page 6 of the Heritage Statement). This is notwithstanding the previously existing, less than ideal situation, which despite the arguably poor design of the 20th century extensions, preserved some prominent elements of the building's historic rear plan form and fabric, and allowed better views towards the rear of the core of the house.

19. Demolition and rebuild of the bakehouse.

The 18th century bakehouse to the rear of the building was to be retained with some alterations, but instead has been rebuilt to a different design, including with respect to the form, design and extent of the fenestration, and the height of the chimney stack. The submitted DAS also appears to suggest that the roof of the bakehouse has been raised to allow for a concealed gutter. The current proposal is to retain this as constructed, with no amendments.

During the course of the approved applications extensive discussions took place regarding the treatment of this part of the building, which was regarded as being of historic and architectural interest, and contributing positively to the significance of the listed building. Concern was raised at that time regarding the impact of the originally received proposal on the fabric and character of the bakehouse- this original proposal did not involve the rebuilding of the structure, or the heightening of the chimney, but was similar in appearance in terms of the fenestration to the as built scheme. The proposal was amended on Officer advice to reduce the size of the openings to the elevations of the building and amend the design of the new windows and doors, so that the fabric and character of the range and its contribution to the narrative and special interest of the house was appropriately preserved in the approved drawings.

Although the current application suggests that the bakehouse was in some way structurally unsound, we have no evidence before us to support this, and no approach was made to the Council during the course of works to highlight potential issues in this respect, or to discuss remedial works. There is therefore no convincing justification for the loss of this structure, and this aspect of the current applications (i.e. the demolition of the historic bakehouse) is therefore considered unacceptable.

Furthermore, the amendments to the approved design in terms of the fenestration and elevational treatment of the reconstructed structure are considered contentious- again this aspect of the previous applications was carefully considered and subsequently amended prior to approval. As constructed, the scale and form of the windows are considered to detract from the previously surviving historic character of the bakehouse, as an ancillary service range. As noted above, these considerations were extensively discussed with the applicant and his agents during the course of the previous applications.

20. Demolition of the rear 19th century chimney stack.

This was a later addition to the building, but none-the-less part of its narrative, illustrating a particular phase of its development, and was of some interest. It has been demolished

in its entirety. In my opinion, this is harmful to the special interest of the listed building, and therefore unacceptable. There is no intention to reinstate the stack.

The submitted DAS suggests that the stack was structurally unsound, however we have no evidence before us that that was the case, and no contact was made by the applicant during the course of works to raise this as an issue or to discuss potential remedial actions. The DAS quotes a section of a Debruslais Statement of Heritage Significance, however I cannot currently find this version of the statement including this text within the previous application documents- this requires clarification. Notwithstanding this, this section does not contain any seemingly serious structural issues, highlighting the need for only relatively minor repair works. There is therefore no compelling justification for the loss of this historic feature of the building.

21. Works within the rear garden and to rear access

The current applications also seek to regularise landscaping works within the rear garden of the property and to the access from Hickman's Lane, which are also not in accordance with the approved scheme. In particular the landscaping includes new structures such as a substantial timber pergola, a corten archway, and an irrigation tank and timber enclosure. A patio and terracing have also been created directly to the rear of the house, surfaced with a black slate. The rear access from Hickman's Lane, including the vehicle gates, are also to a different design to the approval.

In general, although these works have a contemporary aesthetic which might not be appropriate in all circumstances in the context of a listed building, given the contemporary design of the replacement rear extension as approved, these works are not considered contentious.

I do however consider that the design of the vehicle gates as installed is not sympathetic to the traditional context of Hickman's Lane, within which they appear out of place. They are of an unusual contemporary design with open metalwork at the base of solid timber gates, which gives an awkward, top-heavy appearance and is at odds with the more conventional approach of solid gates with an open top, which might have been considered more appropriate if an alternative to the approved simple, solid timber gates was sought. This aspect of the landscaping is therefore in my opinion unacceptable, and detracts from the setting of the listed building and in particular from the street scene of Hickman's Lane, and the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

Works not included or detailed in the current applications:

During a recent revisit to the site further works have come to light to the attic floor of the building. Unfortunately there has been a significant loss of historic fabric and character to this part of the house. This is partly in connection with the works to the ceiling of the south-east bedroom noted above.

- In addition to the loss of floor structure and floor boards directly above the south-east bedroom, there appears to have been further loss of floor boards from other areas, including 17th century boards to the south west corner of the attic- this needs clarification- certainly no historic flooring remains visible to any part of the attic floor, which appears to have been entirely covered with shipboard and Antinox plastic sheeting.

- Areas of the attic floor appear to have been built up to support services such as the water tank.
- The underside of the roof itself has been clad with silver insulation material. We would require further information on these works, but I have concerns regarding the breathability of this material and of the Antinox sheeting, and their suitability for use in the context of historic timber framing. Impermeable materials can cause a build up of moisture and decay, causing damage to historic fabric.

If the applicant's intention is to attempt to regularise the entirety of the works to the house which have taken place in excess of or at variance with the consents previously granted, we will require further plans and amended supporting statements to address the above works to the attic and south east bedroom. The revised and further plans should include details of the loss of fabric from the attic, further detail of the creation of the vaulted ceiling above the bedroom (including existing and proposed sections), and a full schedule of works which have taken place within the attic space in addition to the loss of fabric, including new or built up flooring, insulation, installation of services*, and any other works. Full details of materials used should be provided. The supporting statements including the DAS and Heritage Statement should also be amended.

*The inclusion of a boiler flue to the rear roofslope above the attic space suggests a new boiler has been installed. If this is the case, we may also require details of any new or altered pipe runs. I would prefer to comment on these works (including the flue, which is detailed in the submitted DAS) in their entirety, once we have the full information in front of us.

Further information required:

- See above in relation to the partition to the south side of the entrance hall.
- Further detail of the date and level of interest of the joinery which has been removed to the previously existing cupboard between the northern and central rooms of the historic house at first floor.
- See above in relation to the south east bedroom.
- See above in relation to the attic.
- See above in relation to the well shaft.
- See above in relation to works to the timber frame throughout.
- See above re first floor bedroom and ground floor study fireplaces.

Sustainability

The points made in the submitted DAS regarding the sustainability of the construction of the rear extension as built are noted. However, the measures incorporated could equally have formed part of the approved rear addition, and this provides no mitigation for the harm caused by the extension as built.

Summary

It is pertinent to note that of the dozens of ways in which the approved scheme deviates from the approval, many of which as above are considered contentious, and many of which in fact reflect aspects of the originally submitted applications which were designed out of the approved scheme following discussions with MSDC, the applicant is offering to attempt to address only a handful by making alterations to the completed works. Certainly, the current application does not offer any convincing mitigation for the significant loss of historic fabric which has taken place, including in particular the historic staircase and its enclosure, the 17th century attic floor boards which have been removed and cut up, the underlying 17th century or earlier attic floor structure which has been removed and lost, the elements of timber framing to partitions which

have been removed and apparently discarded at ground and first floor, the damage to the (hopefully, but not confirmed as) retained but concealed 17th century floorboards at first floor, and the demolition of the 19th century bakehouse and chimney. Neither do the current proposals address the other equally significant harms caused to the special interest of this Grade II listed building which have been caused through changes to historic plan form and features, including in particular a loss of any direct connectivity between the floors of the historic house, and between the two ends of the house at first floor, and through the adverse impact of the changes in scale and form to the extensions to the building, which are such that as noted above in rear view the house has now suffered an almost complete loss of historic character.

Whilst remaining mindful that we do not in some areas have complete application before us for all of the works which have taken place, the current proposal is therefore considered significantly harmful to its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated.

District Plan Policy DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) states that:

'Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:...

- Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric...

- Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building.'

The current proposal is, for the reasons set out above, contrary to the requirements of this policy.

Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that:

'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'

In my opinion, based on the information that we currently have in front of us, and noting that further submissions are required in some respects, the current applications amount to less than substantial harm at the higher end of that scale. This high level of less than substantial harm stands, under paragraph 215 of the Framework, to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This balancing exercise must be mindful of the great weight that must be given to the conservation of the asset, and also of the requirement of paragraph 213 that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), requires clear and convincing justification.

District Plan Policy DP35 (Conservation Areas) states that:

'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

• New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;...

• Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected.'

Marlow House, as a listed building in a prominent position on the High Street, will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Lindfield Conservation Area. Whilst the majority of the external works to the building are to the rear, private as well as public views (including for example views from neighbouring properties and

their gardens) will be considered relevant to the manner in which this character and appearance is appreciated. For the reasons given above, the external works to the rear of the building (not including the landscaping or garage but including the vehicle gates onto Hickman's Lane, which are also publicly viewable) are considered to detract from its historic character and appearance and its contribution to the Conservation Area. This will be contrary to DP35.

In terms of the NPPF, the harm to the Conservation Area will be less than substantial, at around the mid range of that scale. The same provisions as set out above with respect to paragraphs 212, 213 and 215 will apply.

Notes on other aspects of the application submissions:

The submitted DAS contains a lengthy discussion on the development of the original scheme, and highlighting potential inconsistencies within the approved plans. I have not commented on this here other than where directly relevant to the merits, in heritage terms, of the current application.

At p. 31 the DAS discusses the retrospective approval for the partial rebuilding of the main chimney stack to the building, and states that *'The approved chimney treatment is not the same as the original chimney, which was masonry, not lime plaster / render. This non-original treatment to the chimney was requested by Conservation Officer.'* This is not correct, and is misleading. The application before us was retrospective, as the applicant had not sought consent prior to undertaking the works. Neither had he approached the Council to raise the apparent issue with the stability of the stack, or to discuss remedial work, prior to its demolition. There was no opportunity prior to the completion of these works to discuss the finish to the chimney, and although it may historically have been of facing brickwork, at the time prior to its demolition, it was faced with cement render. The approval was for a lime render, but this was again installed without prior discussion or consent.

P. 33 of the DAS suggests that the applicant was not offered guidance by the Planning Officers during the course of the original applications. This is also incorrect- extensive guidance on revisions to the scheme was offered both in person and by exchange of email throughout the progress of the applications to approval. The lengthy emails passed from Susan Dubberly and myself to the applicant and his agents will be available on file to demonstrate this.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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