Springwells House

9 High Street, Steyning, West Sussex

Planning and heritage Statement. Revision A.

The existing house

Springwells house is a Grade 11* listed building.

The property is largely 18th century, possibly on the site of earlier buildings and has been extensively altered and extended in both Victorian times and later periods.

The building has been in both residential and hotel use and is currently a house providing limited bed and breakfast accommodation.

There is an adjacent cottage to the north of the main building which is Grade11 listed and may have originally been stables or other out building; now converted to a dwelling.

The subject of this Listed Building application is the main house which is currently served by a small and narrow staircase.

Whilst there are no plans or other material illustrating the original house this staircase does not appear appropriate for a property of this size and quality. Whether this was a servants staircase is not known, although these are usually behind doors and therefore not visible, whereas this is located directly off the main hall.

As the staircase is historic, it is not subject to current regulations. However it is narrow, has poor handrails and no intermediate landing. As a result it is both tight and difficult to use;particularly for elderly/infirm persons; or anyone carrying anything.

The proposal.

The purpose of this proposal has been to investigate the possibility of incorporating a staircase between the ground and first floors which meets current building regulations: is adequate for a house of this extended size [nine bedrooms] and is of a design and style in keeping with the quality of Springwells House.

In doing so the opportunity of incorporating a lift serving the first floor has been considered to further improve accessibility.

The footprint of the original C18 house can be identified clearly from the existing building plan, although the use and configuration of some of rooms has changed.

From an assessment of each room on the ground and first floors, the games/family room with Bedroom 5 over [see Sk 01]are considered to have been significantly altered and to have the least historic value. In particular the games room; part within the original footprint and part within a more recent single story extension; has had extensive alterations. Most recently the change from a kitchen serving the hotel to it's current use.

The existing building photographs show the games room, bedroom 5 and the hall/landings.

From an initial survey both a staircase and adjacent lift can be incorporated within the external wall and internal partitions of the original building foot print, without disturbing the window to bedroom 5.

Following submission of the listed building application[DC/26/1425], opening up works were agreed to both the stud wall at ground and first floor and the floor construction at first floor.

Photographs of the opening up work were submitted and the work reviewed on site.

After consideration of both the submitted design and an alternative, it was considered that amended proposals [in line with the alternative design], should be substituted in the application.

The original external wall line, [within the games room], will be reinstated, separating the ground floor extension from the main house. Access to the remaining area of the study/games room will be by reintroducing a doorway within a pre-existing location, as identified on the drawings.

The openings to the hall/landing will be altered, with removal of the lath and plaster adjacent to the current door opening, but retaining the historic structural stud framework. This will allow views through to the stair whilst retaining and exposing the original fabric.

It should be noted that the stud work to be retained cannot be shown on the application drawings until the lath and plaster have been removed.

All architraves/mouldings to the openings will match those existing.

The detail of the staircase will be subject to further design, consideration of appropriate materials and opening up works; however the stairs, spindles and handrails will be in hardwood from a sustainable source and follow Georgian principles.

The overall existing and proposed plans [Sk 01], are for information only to identify the location of the proposals. These are not to scale.

The detailed part plans and sections show the areas affected by the work; both existing and as proposed.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposals:

Address existing issues with the current staircase.

Improve accessibility.

Comply with current regulations.

Provide a design in keeping with and enhancing, the listed building.

Minimise lost of historic fabric.