

LIGHTOAKS, OAKAMOOR

HERITAGE STATEMENT & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Prepared on behalf of Purple Circle Homes Ltd.

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LIGHTOAKS - STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Light Oaks is a moderately-sized Georgian villa designed as a true Cottage Ornée, with integral service buildings, coach-house and stabling, with a number of late Victorian additions. It is set within extensive landscaped parkland and gardens which were adapted and shaped to manipulate the views and the approaches and these are integral and inseparable from its significance.

It is situated to the south of Oakamore Road, at grid reference 404668, 344459 but it is not visible from the main road network and this was deliberately planned and views were manipulated to give it great privacy.

This Statement of Significance is proportionate to the importance of the building and is designed to inform all parties about the building and its development so that informed decisions can be made.

Care will be needed to ensure that alterations do not lead to adverse impacts on the building or its setting. However, it is recognised that some degree of intervention should be feasible, given that the building has been significantly altered internally to create multiple flats.

Mel Morris is an architectural historian and a full member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and abides by the Institute's code of conduct and ethics. She has worked with historic buildings for 27 years, making assessments of significance, undertaking detailed analysis of building development and advising on their conservation.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

It is proposed to alter and adapt the rear three-storey service wings of Light Oaks to improve and simplify the layouts and create larger rooms and fewer flats. This adaptation will reduce the total number of residential flats from 9 to 7.

This will involve carrying out works of internal alteration to remove partitions dating from 1940, inserting additional staircases and creating new openings and removal of incongruous additions such as an external fire escape on the north elevation.

Mel Morris Conservation has been asked to provide a statement of significance and to carry out a brief Impact Assessment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, in order to establish the significance of the designated heritage asset affected by the proposals. Paragraph 128 states:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary."

This report sets out the historic development of the building and assesses the special architectural and historic interest of the building. Documentary and cartographic research has been used to inform the assessment.

3. DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

The following sources have been consulted: Census Returns, HER Record, Staffordshire Record Office Tithe records and parish records, Trade Directories and deed packets held by the current owner. A previous resident, Jean Bolton, who lived in the house with her parents from 1918, has provided a short oral account of the rooms at that time.

Assessment of the building in its historic context has been informed by various publications (see Bibliography) and by English Heritage listing guidelines and the National Heritage List database.

There are no historic plans of the house and the deeds reveal very little about the two major phases of development. The current owner has several photographs in his possession of the house, before it was refurbished and extended circa 1895.

The deeds contain estate maps showing how the estate had been formed by the time it was sold in 1874. These and the house footprint have been compared with the Ordnance Survey first and second edition maps, which are also quite revealing, and the Cheadle Tithe map of 1844. The map regression is included in Part 2.

The 19th century census returns reveal a considerable amount about the use of the buildings and its lack of occupation and changing role.

Assessment of the building in its historic context has been informed by various publications (see Bibliography) and by English Heritage listing guidelines and the National Heritage List database.

4. SHORT HISTORY OF OWNERSHIP

The first record that is available related to the Light Oaks estate is a deed dated 1816 which indicates that the site was acquired as part of a large landholding that included Oakamoor Lodge, although neither the present house nor the name 'Lightoaks' are mentioned in those papers.

John Wilson Patten was born John Wilson on 26 April 1802, the second of the two sons of Thomas Wilson of Bank Hall, Warrington, Lancashire. His father, whose original name was Patten, had in 1800 assumed the sole surname of Wilson in accordance with the will of Thomas Wilson, son of Thomas Wilson (1663–1755), bishop of Sodor and Man, to whose estates Thomas Patten succeeded. The family altered the surname to Wilson-Patten in 1823.

In 1819 John Wilson (1802–1892), became heir to the family industrial wealth and church livings of Warrington and land in Lancashire, Cheshire and Staffordshire.



John Wilson Patten at a young age

In 1823, when he came of age, he adopted the name of Wilson Patten, and in 1827, following his father's death in December, John Wilson Patten became a partner in the family firm, the patent roller manufacturers, and the company changed its name to John Wilson Patten and Company.



John Wilson Patten in old age

John Wilson Patten inherited the Lightoaks estate when he came of age although it appears that it was only in use as a family residence when he was occasionally visiting the works in Oakamoor. The census returns during the 19th century indicate that it was mainly occupied by servants and gardeners. His main residence was at Bank Hall, Warrington. The house remained in the 'Wilson Patten' family until the estate was sold at auction in 1874 to Alfred S Bolton.

John Wilson Patten married in 1828 and in 1832 he returned to Parliament as representative for the newly created constituency of North Lancashire, a seat he would hold for the next 42 years. In 1874, in recognition of his services, he became the 1st Baron Winmarleigh. In 1828 John Wilson Patten was ordering liveries for a domestic servant, a groom, at Lightoaks¹.

¹ Letter from John Wilson Patten staying at Lightoaks, Cheadle, Stone, Staffs, to Mr Hardwick of Walker & Co (late Lingham), tailors, Strand, London. Has engaged groom, for whom, in previous post, they made his last suit. Orders livery from him - in more lasting cloth than the last ones. 14 Oct [1828] ref. William Salt Library - S. MS. 478/16/32

In 1874 Light Oaks was acquired by Alfred Sohier Bolton at auction and he must have lived in the property for a short time as he was resident at the time of the 1881 census. It was a number of years before any work was carried out on the building, as there was a tenant resident in 1891. Thomas Bolton (A S Bolton's oldest son) was living in the house in 1901 with his family and this would have been shortly after he had carried out a phase of extensive refurbishment, which took two years to complete.

The house passed down to Michael Bolton (Thomas Bolton's son) in 1918 and he lived there with his family including his son Thomas, who lived in Flat 4 until his death in 2002.

In 1940 the rear part of the house started to be divided into flats in an effort to avoid requisition during WWII. The first flat was built over the garages (coach-house). Further flats followed. There are now 9 separate dwellings.

Thomas Bolton (1914-2002) inherited the house in the 1940s and he gave the house to his great friend Michael Brooks. Michael Bolton's daughter Jean still lives in the area and has memories of living in the house.

5. CENSUS RETURNS

The Census returns are informative and demonstrate how the house and land was used:

- In **1841** the house was unoccupied but there were a few servants living on the estate – an agricultural labourer, Thomas Collier; and his son and a female servant of 50, Harriet Dilks. The Tithe award of 1842 identifies John Wilson Patten as the landowner.
- In **1851** – the house was again unoccupied but the site had a farm labourer, Joseph Wright, and his family, a groom and a dairy maid.
- In **1861** - the house was occupied by Henry J Morley, a Dividend Holder, and his wife, a Butler, a Cook, two housemaids and a kitchen maid, in a separate dwelling there was a Coachman, his wife and 2 children one of whom was working as a footman.
- In **1871** - James Chisholm was the gardener and Person in Charge, with his wife and three children and a Dairy Maid. One of John Wilson Patten's sons, Eustace John Wilson Patten, who died at the age of 37, was recorded as resident at Light Oaks in 1873 (Warrington parish church records).
- In **1881** – following the acquisition of the Lightoaks Estate by A S Bolton at auction in 1874, Alfred S Bolton was resident with his wife, Rebecca, five children, including his son Thomas and his son's wife, Nina, a tutor, a nurse/ domestic servant, a Cook, three housemaids, a kitchen maid, a nurse, a Butler, a Groom and a Page. In a separate dwelling at Light Oaks Yard, there was a Launderess and her two children.
- In **1891** – Major General Thomas William Sneyd was living at Lightoaks (54) with his wife, three children, Governess, Nurse, Cook, 2 housemaids and a nurse maid, a Coachman and in the "Yard" a Launderess and her two children.
- In **1901** - the house was occupied by Thomas Bolton, his wife Nina and their three children, a Nurse, 4 housemaids, a Cook, a Launderess, a Kitchen maid. Living in separate accommodation was a Butler and his wife, and in another separate dwelling a Blacksmith, his wife and daughter and in another separate dwelling a Coachman and his family. There were four separate dwellings, of which two must have been the outlying cottages / lodges.

The census returns reveal that the house was used as a temporary residence for the first 30 years and only became a permanent residence for a large family circa 1860. It appears that the building was extended and adapted, circa 1840, with the addition of a few service rooms. These include a Butler's Pantry or a Store Room and a bedroom above.

6. DATING EVIDENCE

In the absence of documentary evidence of the date of construction, there are a few factors to take into account in order to establish the date of key phases. John Wilson Patten is documented as the owner in 1828. He was married in 1828, the year after his father's death and the year he inherited the Oakamoor estates and interests outright. He came of age in 1823 and with his inheritance may have had the ability to develop Lightoaks at this time. It is unlikely that he would have had any interest in developing the house before 1823 and it is unlikely that his father Thomas Wilson Patten, would have had any interest in building a Cottage Ornée at Lightoaks at this time in his life.

- 3 A date of 1823-27 would tie in with the date of cast iron windows which, although introduced into industrial buildings in the early 1800s, were rarely used in domestic buildings until the second decade of the 19th century.

The gothick-headed leaded-light windows are an early 19th century detail and continued to be used on less significant elevations during the mid 1820s.

From the evidence we can say that Lightoaks was probably built between 1823 and 1827. It is a purpose-built retreat or holiday residence for occasional use, a late Georgian villa in the Cottage Ornée style.

Light Oaks was developed as a house around 1823-27, with later additions of ca. 1895. It appears on the Cheadle Tithe map and apportionment of 1842-1844.

7. PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Phase I – ca. 1823-27.

The construction of the house is not documented but there are a number of stylistic details which point to date of circa 1820-1830.

The house sits up high on a raised platform, with a high basement, designed to accommodate kitchens, scullery and service rooms. The basement and cellar accommodation is really very extensive although largely hidden from view and disguised by the topography. The provision of internal guttering and pipes leading down from the roofs into the basement (as it continues to do) would have filled butts / water tanks to provide soft water for various laundry functions. There are very few of the original fittings in this high basement.

There are no indications that the house was part of an earlier farmstead, as has been suggested, or that the site had any association with monastic use.

A coach-house and stabling were purpose-built in tandem with the house to accommodate a number of coaches / gigs and incorporated four separate coach bays, although one of these was a passage. The coachman and groom who occupied this range during most of the 19th century were important individuals retained by the Patten estate with a skeleton staff in order to keep the house clean and accommodate intermittent, large social gatherings.

The pointed arched windows at first floor level, with their oak frames and leaded-lights, is typical of late Georgian Gothick architecture. These rooms were habitable and there are chimney breasts in-situ indicating that the outer bays of the coach-house range were heated and functioned as two independent sets of accommodation, probably served by separate staircases in each end bay. When the flues were extended, and the roofs raised to create attic bedrooms, extra flues were added, so that each stack had four flues. By the early 20th century the large room in the southern section of the coach-house block was being used as the main kitchen (pers. comm. Jean Bolton) so this may have had multiple flues for cooking hearths. The stack for this chimney breast has been removed at roof level but the chimney breast and flues survive intact at all levels.

The window details within the main body of the house were different, with bespoke cast-iron lattice windows. These are nevertheless contemporary with the leaded lights. Cast iron was not really prevalent for glazing in domestic buildings until the second decade of the 19th century. The combination of a purpose-built late Georgian coach-house and the contemporary ranges of courtyard buildings all point to a construction date during the second or third decade of the 19th century, but no earlier.

The house was designed as a villa. To all intents and purposes a Cottage Ornée was a villa designed in a particular style. The scale of the building is that of a villa and it contained a large number of the reception rooms that would be expected for a building of this status: Drawing Room, Morning Room, Dining Room and Staircase Hall. Other names appear on the service bell panel, including Vestibule and Verandah. The service rooms were ranged in a parallel range to the north-west but detached from the coach-house, which was a detached and independent two-storey building facing the courtyard. The coach-house had a row of four coach bays and a separate heated chamber at ground floor level and two rooms above, which provided accommodation for a groom and coachman and their families. The central building in the stable yard was later adapted as the coachman's house.

The floor plan of the first phase of the building is best seen from the cellar. This reveals that the northern part of the cellar was used in a traditional way by servants, primarily providing storage for food and wine and cheese. This was approached via a flight of steps which is still in-situ. The front of the house, however, has a high basement storey,

which may have had independent access. This space has high ceilings and a lowered floor level and some of the rooms contain a range of cooking hearths and heated chambers indicating that the kitchens were probably all located originally in the basement.

The service range was a low, two-storey, hipped-roof building, which can be seen in the early photograph. Map regression is informative as it demonstrates that the site once had a much larger footprint, with further development on the north side of the house, including a separate block attached to the north side of the coach-house of roughly the same footprint. We know that this was not contemporary with the coach-house because there is a large arched through-passage (now blocked) in the second bay of the coach-house, which has hinge pins in-situ for boarded gates and rebated sections of brickwork which are located on the inside of the arch, indicating clearly that coaches were driven through the coach-house building into the courtyard in one direction of travel, with the gates behind pinned open within the rebates to remove any potential obstructions and for ease of passage.

Phase 2 – Service Extensions ca. 1840

A few alterations were carried out which were undertaken shortly after the original construction phase. These can be seen most clearly on plan and in the 1890s photograph, particularly in the differences between the basement floor plan and the ground floor plan. The brickwork is similar to the first phase of brickwork and the windows all contain small-paned sashes which were outmoded after ca. 1850. These alterations introduced service rooms in the north-west corner of the building, including a heated ground floor room, which was probably a Butler's Pantry, there being no housekeeper identifiable in the records. In addition to this room, which still retains in-situ its original cupboards, the gap between the coach-house and the service rooms was filled in and roofed over to create a slightly larger lobby / internal porch off the courtyard and the odd, narrow passage was turned into a larder or similar store room and further adapted after 1940 as a staircase.

Phase 3 ca. 1895

Alterations and extensions were carried out circa 1895 to create a third attic storey with servants' bedrooms throughout the ranges, expressed with dormer windows and raised brickwork and the construction of a purpose-built Billiard Room and Gun Room. The roofs were raised, reconstructed and turned 90 degrees so that they run parallel with the main roofs.

It is unlikely that Thomas Bolton, who undertook the majority of the alterations to the property, would have done so and then immediately tenanted the property, as in 1891 the house was occupied by 'Major Sneyd'. It is far more likely that he would have moved into Light Oaks following his refurbishment and the census identifies that he was resident in 1901.

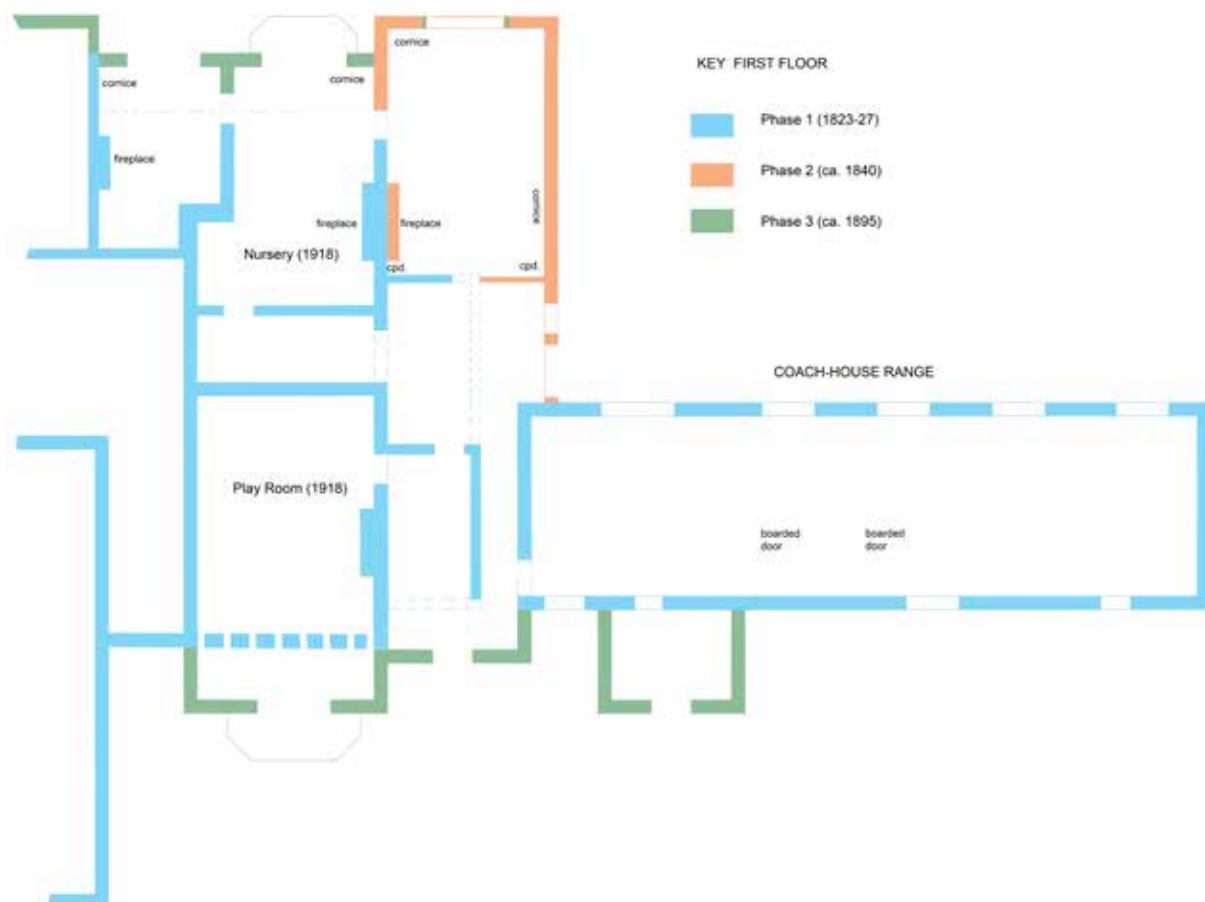
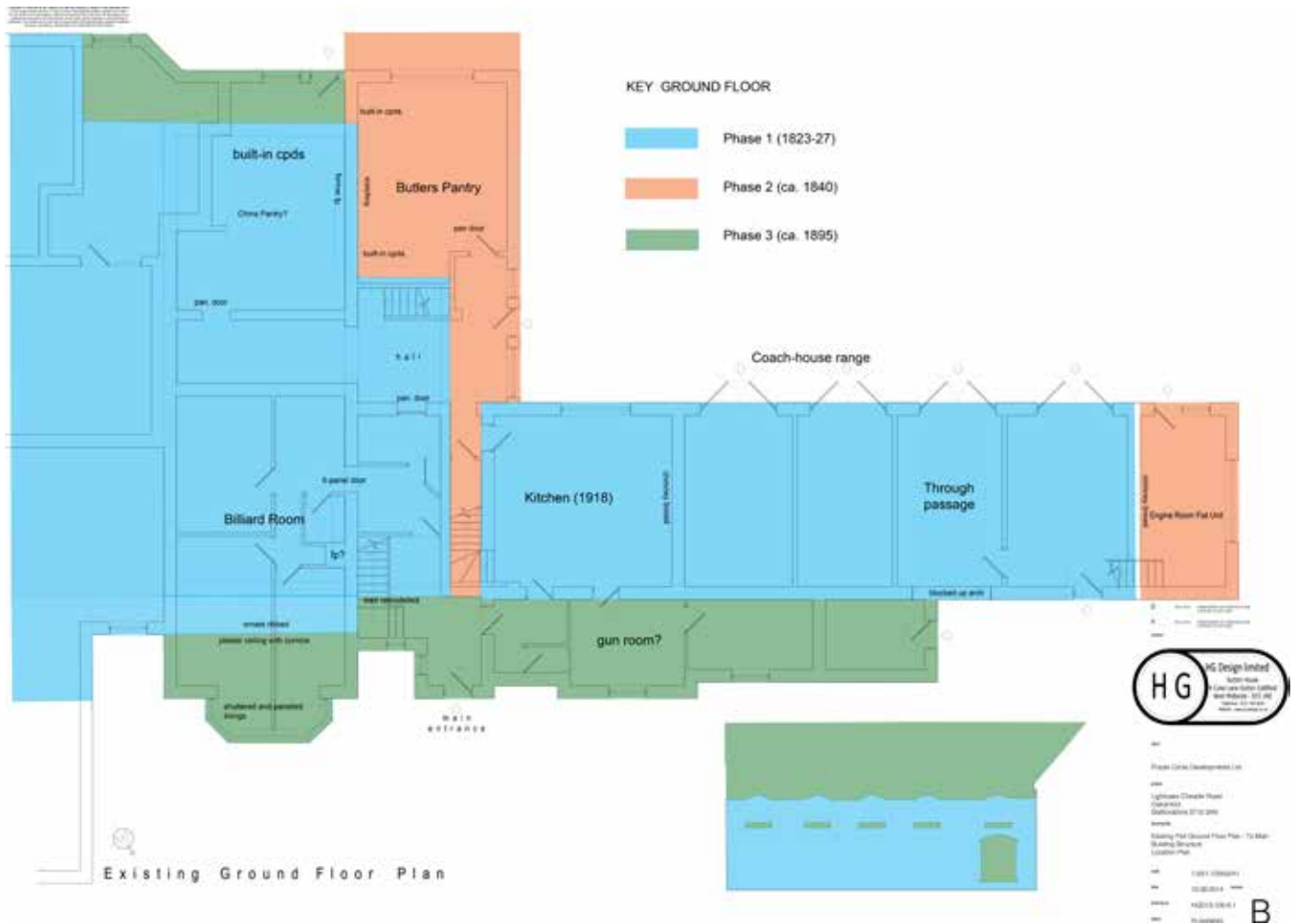
The rear range of adaptations of ca. 1895 were carried out at a time when there was a general consciousness of the concept of 'preservation'. The SPAB and its Manifesto had been established in 1877. With this in mind, it is easy to see why some of the alterations may be conceived as old-fashioned. There was considerable effort to add details which were sympathetic, by adopting certain old patterns such as mid 18th century joinery details.

During the amalgamation of the 1820s and 1895 phases, attempts were made to replicate details and also retain certain features intact, such as the pointed arched coach-house windows which were carefully re-set a few courses higher. The distinction between the old and new has become blurred in other places so that now only the photographic evidence reveals the original appearance of the villa proper.

Internal modifications were quite comprehensive but also very broad brush, adopting the same cornice mouldings and the same details for fireplaces and doors, with one or two exceptions. This suggests that a joiner was given an order for a set number of fireplaces, with little thought given to the location. The attic bedroom fireplaces seem oddly elaborate for servants' bedrooms and some of these rooms have plaster cornices, another unusual detail at this level.

Phase 4 – 1940 onwards

Modifications were made to convert the back of the house into a number of flats from 1940 onwards. This piecemeal process resulted in 7 flats of odd proportion, varying size and detail and a rather illogical subdivision. Partitions and separation are inadequate and do not provide adequate fire separation.



8. ELEVATIONS AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

The photographs of the house dated circa 1880-1890 illustrate the house before it was refurbished and extended circa 1895. These reveal that the house was first designed as a true Cottage Ornée. It was built with roughcast walls, cast-iron lattice casements, ornate scalloped bargeboards and a deep overhanging roof, which was supported in part by timber posts. The original brick walls were rendered and chimney stacks were also rendered in roughcast.

The rear service buildings were also built from brickwork, with large overhanging, hipped, slate roofs, but this brick may have been originally limewashed rather than rendered and the evidence suggest that this was applied uniformly to all elevations without render. The later remodelling of the building of ca. 1895 incorporated a variety of different bricks, according to location and on the formal elevations this was covered up with new render and the whole building was re-rendered. Unfortunately, some of this render has been painted a very strong red colour, which is inappropriate in its use of bold colour, as it was designed to be rustic, mellow and have an air of rustic simplicity and authenticity. Later remodelling of windows involved creating large stone architraves (or panels) around the windows, to match those on the south-east garden elevation, and removing the timber posts, truncating the eaves slightly and supporting the first floor on decorative timber braces. Many of the original cast iron windows are still in-situ or re-used but there are also very good copies in the new cast-iron windows. There are subtle differences in the fixings and fittings, such as closing mechanisms.



On the service ranges there was no attempt to disguise the new brickwork and the details are a little clumsy with a harder and more mottled brick flettons chosen for the attic floor. The bond is the same with three courses of stretchers to one of headers on the northern courtyard elevations and other bonds matching the coursing elsewhere. The attic dormer windows introduced as part of this refurbishment are a uniform pattern with cast-iron lozenge-shaped lattice casements, some of which are flat-headed and some of which incorporate pointed arched tracery. Each dormer has decorative scalloped bargeboards to match those on the original 1820s building.

9. INTERIORS

For details of interiors, this section should be read in conjunction with the photographs in Part 2.

The interiors in the main part of the Cottage Ornée contain a large number of details which were adapted and introduced in 1895, when the spaces were remodelled. We have not carried out an assessment of these interiors, as they are not part of the current application.

The Service Extensions

The rear service areas are not true wings, as they were amalgamated into the main part of the house and share some functions.

The first phase of extension was carried out circa 1840 and was in the form of a small extension designed to accommodate a Butler's Pantry. It was heated with a large fireplace. This was in use as a Store Room in the early 20th century when the adjoining room located between the Dining Room was in use as the Butler's Pantry (pers. comm. Jean Bolton).

A Billiard Room and Gun Room were both added to the main villa in 1895. The Billiard Room, despite modern

partitions and some suspended ceilings, has high historic and architectural interest. Further bedrooms were added in 1895 to provide additional high quality bedrooms for members of the family and guests, as distinct from servants. The suite of rooms at first floor level on the south-west side of the house incorporated a Nursery connecting with children's bedrooms and may have also contained the room for the children's Nurse. These rooms also contain original cornices and fireplaces of 1895. The first floor room over the Billiard Room was in use as a Play Room during the early 20th century (pers. comm. Jean Bolton).

The basement rooms within the part of the house affected by this application are largely complete as designed in the 1820s, with most period fittings in-situ.

The coach-house wing was adapted in 1895, or earlier, to contain the kitchen and this overlooked the courtyard (pers. comm. Jean Bolton). At the same time the original kitchens in the basement storey would have been decommissioned. There are no surviving fixtures or fittings in the later kitchen.

10. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The basis of this written appraisal follows the English Heritage Conservation Principles applied to understanding a building and its setting. The English Heritage guidelines for assessing significance include the following values, any one or more of which may be contained within a building or historic site; evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

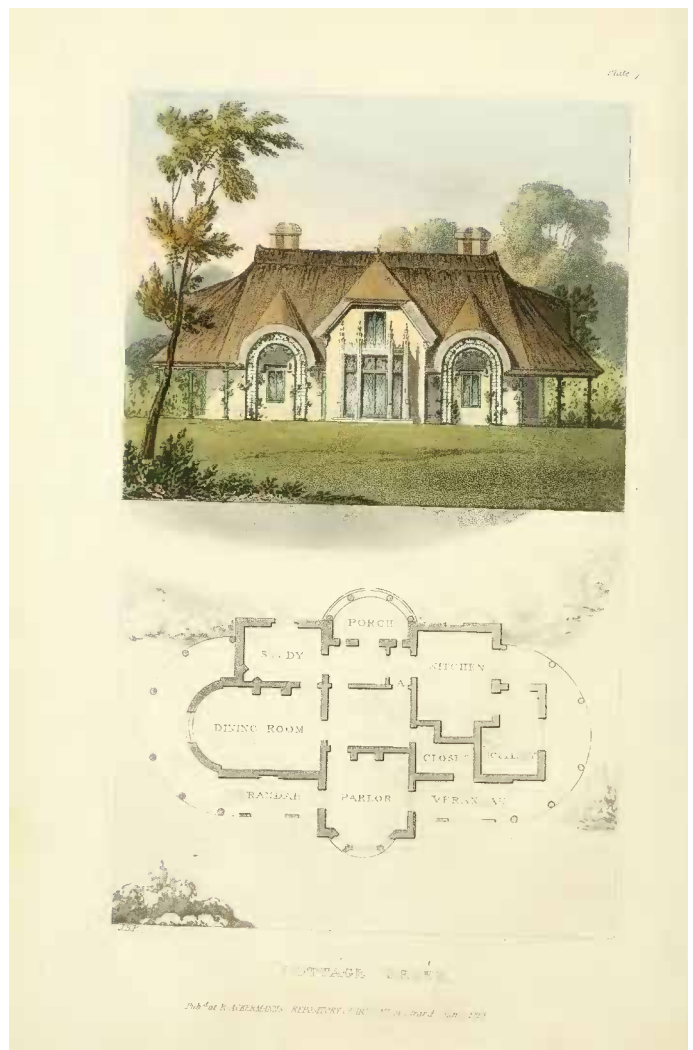
The term Cottage Ornée is used ubiquitously to describe any type of picturesque house of the early 19th century, but this was not its original meaning.

Lightoaks is a true Cottage Ornée, which was originally a gentleman's retreat, not a picturesque estate cottage for a tenant. As a true Cottage Ornée it is quite a rare building type and has not been recognised as such. A search of this building type on the English Heritage database reveals 377 listed building entries, but the majority of these are cottages and lodges and not a true Cottage Ornée. Lightoaks is not included in that search term.

The Cottage Ornée is an early 19th century phenomenon. It was popularised by pattern books of the time and was inspired by the Picturesque movement in England. During the first decades of the 19th century the Cottage Ornée was often an outwardly symmetrical building, with an irregular plan. By the 1840s the Cottage Ornée had evolved, influenced by the Gothic Revival movement, to have a highly asymmetric form.

The Cottage Ornée was popularised by the royal lodge in Windsor Great Park (1814) and the Duke of Bedford's Endsleigh Cottage, Devon, (listed Grade I) built in 1810 as a fishing retreat to the designs of Sir Jeffry Wyattville.

This building was, in terms of its size, closer to a villa, but it mocked small-scale traditional buildings. In the *Essay on the Villa* by Jo. Wood Jr, he spent considerable time explaining the differences between the cottage and the villa; "my cottage is a species of villa and my object is to point out what ornaments and accompaniments may be introduced to mark it as the residence of a gentleman without destroying its character as a cottage.The cottage of a labourer may occupy many situations but that of a gentleman must be secluded".



Design for a Cottage Ornée "adapted to receive trained foliages" from Papworth's Rural Residences (1818)

Further contemporary publications were also influential in the design of a Cottage Ornée – John B. Papworth's *Rural Residences* (1818) and John Plaw's *Sketches for Country Houses, Villas and Rural Dwellings* (1800). Papworth's Cottage Orne "adapted to receive trained foliages" is the closest patternbook design to Lightoaks. There were many other publications which discussed the concept of the "Picturesque."

Earlier influences came from Charles Middleton's *Country Villas* of 1795 and Robert Lugar's *Architectural Sketches in the Grecian, Gothic and Fancy Styles* of 1805. A little later there was P.F. Robinson's *Designs for Ornamental Villas* of 1827, which contained designs for villas in the Norman, Gothic, Tudor and Swiss Chalet style, as well as more conventional types.

Light Oaks is an early example of this genre, of which many examples have been lost, and in common with the early examples adopts symmetry, with multiple dormer windows, latticework cast-iron casements, deep overhanging eaves, ornate scalloped bargeboards and roughcast render. The original form of the building was slightly smaller, with the bracketed first floor supported by columns, to create wide Verandahs, similar in form to those at the Swiss Cottage, Old Warden. It was positioned to take full advantage of its superior, high-level location, with long views from the south-east elevation, channelled by trees, towards Alton Towers, which is a prominent landmark on the horizon, an eye-catcher and part of the borrowed landscape.

The original plan form of the Cottage Ornée can still be identified and this is of very high significance. However, it does not conform with other examples of this genre, where a thatched roof and rustic poles / tree trunks were adopted, and this may represent a remodelling. Later alterations to the building, including the extensions and alterations of ca. 1895 are of moderate historic and architectural interest. They were designed to complement the earlier building but by introducing full, two-storey gables and removing the large overhanging roof, they did engulf the building and strip it of much of its unique identity and unusual scale, particularly in approaching from the north. The best preserved elevation is that overlooking the lawned garden towards Alton Towers. Internal alterations to adapt the building in 1895 are of only moderate to low interest, with a few exceptions where there are a high degree of surviving fixtures and fittings, such as in the Billiard Room and Butler's Pantry. The alterations of 1940 to create flats are of no interest.

Architectural Character and Aesthetic Significance

English Heritage Conservation Principles states - "Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Aesthetic values can be the result of the conscious design of a place, including artistic endeavour. Design value relates primarily to the aesthetic qualities generated by the conscious design of a building, structure or landscape as a whole. It embraces composition (form, proportions, massing, silhouette, views and vistas, circulation) and usually materials or planting, decoration or detailing, and craftsmanship."

The house has high aesthetic value which is a result of adopting a style of architecture based entirely on its aesthetic qualities and setting. This concept and the relationship between the house, its ancillary buildings, the topography and wider landscape is well-preserved and of very high significance.

Selected Bibliography

John B. Papworth's *Rural Residences* (1818)

English Heritage Listing Selection Guides, *Domestic 3 - Suburban and Country Houses*

11. CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

The gardens and ground of Lightoaks were developed during the early 19th century, circa 1823-27, as part of an estate initially for the Patten family and later, after 1874, for the Bolton family. The garden setting is laid out with a mature garden, which has developed over almost 200 years with planted beds and borders to the east and south, mature parkland below this and to the south of the gardens, and a large kitchen garden on the south side of the stableblocks. To the north curves the private carriage drive, which is separated from the turnpike road by a broad expanse of landscaped shrubberies. The private carriage drive, which falls within the landscape setting of the house, was originally built for Oakamoor Lodge, the house in the valley bottom occupied by George Wragge in 1816, and is probably late 18th century in origin. But following the sale of the estate in 1874, A S Bolton acquired the exclusive rights to the private carriage drive and the area around the main entrance from Oakamoor Road was re-landscaped so that the drive related directly to Light Oaks. The drive still snakes past the site of Oakamoor Lodge.

There is no point at which the house has a view of the Tinning Mill and this was deliberate, to enhance the privacy of the site – Oakamoor Lodge, which stood at the bottom of the hill, and later Light Oaks both adopted this private, long, winding carriage drive, leading between the house and the works, even though there was the public turnpike road to the immediate north of the bluff.

The range of buildings developed on the site survives largely complete in its late Victorian form, with a Victorian Winter Garden and outside plunge pool.

The main elevation of the house is approached via a gate lodge, with timber gates added by the Bolton family circa 1895 which leads to the northern (front) entrance of the house, between ornamental early Victorian rockeries, where there is a later Victorian *porte cochère*, designed so that those alighting from a carriage would not get wet. There is a secondary entrance to the west, which served the ancillary buildings of the estate and the service yard.

The house was originally built as a Retreat, for which privacy was an essential criterion, and is completely hidden from the turnpike road (Oakamoor Road); it has private views across the landscape of the Churnet Valley, enhanced by using the borrowed landscape features, such as a direct line of sight view to Alton Towers in the distance. The measures taken to prevent the owners from seeing any of the villagers or the works were rather extreme and extravagant; the land was shaped in a dramatic series of level changes and platforms. The view looking towards Alton Towers (pictured above) still survives largely as originally designed, although trees have encroached to narrow and filter the view. This is the most important aspect of the setting of the house, but others areas, which contain mature landscaping, such as the Cedar of Lebanon tree on the upper lawn, the kitchen gardens and the northern shrubberies which were deliberately planted to complement and disguise the northern extensions of the house are all important to the setting of the house and contribute to its Victorian character and the sense of seclusion and privacy.



There have been relatively few alterations to the landscape; a 20th century tennis court and an extended terrace were added to the earlier planted borders and lawns and an early 20th century greenhouse was added to the kitchen garden. On the functional side of the kitchen garden walls, a number of the potting sheds were altered, adapted and extended to provide larger capacity storage.

The significance of the landscaping and gardens is that they provide a well-maintained and lush setting for the house, making an important contribution to its character.

The site currently incorporates a few unsightly structures / elements, which are harmful to the setting of the listed building:

- Modern detached corrugated iron garage block for four cars
- Aviaries against the kitchen garden wall
- Tarmac surfaces
- Neglected potting sheds and storage

12. ADDENDUM FOLLOWING SITE INVESTIGATION

Areas of 'opening up' were agreed with the conservation officer, Gill Bayliss, and identified in the previous report. This section of the report presents the findings of 'opening up'.

Billiard Room

The investigation of the Billiard Room has found that the ornate plastered and ribbed ceiling remains completely intact. The southern end of the room contains evidence within the plasterwork that the whole of this wall was fitted with shelving, designed in conjunction with the plasterwork. The shelving has been removed in its entirety but there are curved console brackets surviving in the plasterwork at either end of the wall. The shelving broke forward in

the centre of the wall and the cornice within the plasterwork repeats this detail, creating an articulated design. This formal arrangement was probably designed to provide fixed bookshelves and cupboards underneath. There are no indications that this room was approach via another doorway off the central hallway. The original entrance doorway from the Gun Room lobby still survives intact.



Ornate plasterwork and evidence of former library built-in bookshelves to the Billiard Room

The floor of the Billiard Room is also largely complete with an oak parquet floor but has been damaged by the later alterations to create a kitchen and shower room. The original fireplace has been removed but within the parquet floor the position of the fireplace and the hearth can be clearly seen (pictured right). It will be feasible to reinstate a fireplace at some point in the future, but whether it can be made a working fireplace needs further investigation and is uncertain.

As a consequence of these findings, the plans have been amended (see impact assessment).



Former Kitchen

The investigation of the former Kitchen has found that the west wall contains a complete sequence of arched openings, flues and fixtures which are typical of high quality Georgian kitchens. This includes a central fireplace with very large cast-iron range and a previous arched opening connecting the kitchen with the coach-house; the fixtures survive largely in their form of the 1890s. This is of very high significance.



The kitchen flue wall was divided into three plastered bays divided by four sandstone pilasters with plain impost bands, which survive across the whole wall.



Arches spring from the impost bands and there are three different type of arch:

- the central hearth has a large segmental-arched brick opening, which was plastered over and the arch infilled at the time that a cast-iron range was installed, which survives in a poor condition, with partially collapsed register plate and plate warming rack, but the remainder of the fittings largely intact,
- the arch to the right is a shallow basket arch and this is decorative, as the plasterwork creates a shallow recess which is part of the design and does not represent an infilled arch; there is a later infilled section of brickwork, which was inserted when the original copper or warming oven was removed. The presence of a flue behind this brickwork cannot be discounted. This rebated recess with a basket arch is typically Georgian.
- The third arch to the left is a semi-circular masonry arch which supports the large flue and masonry above, deeply set. The straight joint in the brickwork within the garage reveals that this was once a vaulted doorway connecting the kitchen with the room / coach-house beyond.



Details of the cast-iron range: Above - double ovens. Below left - chimney flue with iron bands lining large circular flue. Below centre - the wall to the rear of the former doorway, with straight joints. Below right - collapsed plate warming rack



The date of the range is not possible to identify at present but, following renovation, it may be feasible to find name plaques and date the fittings. It is a 'closed range' with cast-iron plates over the ovens and separate rack for warming pans or plates, and may date from the 1890s refurbishment. The presence of cast back panels with reeding seem to indicate late Georgian fittings but common styles of casting were adopted throughout the 19th century. To either side of the central open fire basket are ovens.

As a consequence of these findings, the plans have been amended (see impact assessment).

13. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

13.1 Overview

Lighotoaks was built as a gentleman's residence, serviced by a number of servants living on-site, and was adapted and extended ca. 1895 to cater for a large number of residents, both members of the family and several families of servants, all living on the site in a variety of locations. It is too large to contain one family, to 21st century standards of living and accommodation requirements, and was never designed to do so, even by 19th century standards. The principal of adaptation and remodeling to accommodate a number of dwellings and families is one that can be supported on both historic grounds and economic viability grounds.

Any works which unpick some of the more damaging insertions, partitions and suspended ceilings of the 20th century should be seen in a positive light and will form part of the balancing exercise required in assessing any alterations that might remove any elements of historic fabric or works which may affect the setting of the listed building.

Mel Morris Conservation has been appointed to produce a document to understand the significance of Lighotoaks, to consider the phasing of the building and how the setting of the listed building contributes to its significance.

Since writing the Heritage Statement, Mel Morris has also advised the owner of Lighotoaks as part of the development of plans. This has resulted in a number of modifications to the internal layouts and a reduction in the number of interventions to historic fabric, including the retention of all original chimney breasts and the relocation of staircases to minimise impact. The revised scheme is one that has taken on board the findings of the site investigation and opening up and is one which Mel Morris Conservation can fully support.

The key spaces affected by the current proposals are: the former Billiard Room, the Butler's Pantry, the original floor plan of the 1820s service wing and the remains of the early coach-house.

Alterations have each been lettered on the proposed floor plans and new partitions and dry-lining is colour-coded, and these are itemised at the end of this Impact Assessment, with a description of their significance, purpose and the level of impact.

The proposed vertical subdivision of the coach-house wing into "town houses" (duplex flats Units 1 and 2) works well, as a vertical split with two staircases was the original plan arrangement of the 1820s two-storey building. The main alteration to Units 1 and 2 is the creation of full vertical fire separation down the central core of this wing of the building, but there is no demolition involved in this process. A new staircase will be inserted into Unit 2 and this replicates the plan form of the first phase of the coach-house and ensures the retention of most internal partitions, so is fully justifiable. Critical to the viability of the coach-house units is the ability to glaze some of the ground floor arches. A view through the building, through the original open carriage arch, is another opportunity to enhance an understanding of the original 1820s building.

The proposed subdivision of the remainder of the house is more challenging and this has been done so that Unit 4 retains access to the basement, without any need for tanking or alteration, and the ground floor service rooms with all of their fixtures and fittings are preserved intact. Unit 4 will be a large, well-lit and spacious house.

The advantage of inserting vertical fire separation in a listed building of this size and complexity is that this has less impact overall on floors and ceilings and creates very effective fire breaks in the building, which help with risk management. There are a large number of internal masonry walls, some originally external walls, which makes this feasible without significant alterations. The only space which will require greater intervention to create fire separation is the attic floor and fire separation should aim to be achieved by upgrading floors from above, within the attic, so avoiding any impact on cornices, although ceilings may need an additional layer of plasterboard at first floor level. This detail will need to be conditioned.

The division of the remainder of the service areas into Unit 3 and Unit 5 has been done to retain the Billiard Room in its original form. The retention of the Billiard Room ceiling, which is complete, and the space as one large open-plan living area makes this a more viable and attractive unit. The result of the proposed subdivision is a variety of sizes of unit, which works within the existing constraints and will help with viability.

12.1.1 Billiard Room

The Billiard Room is the most significant room in the current application, followed by secondary spaces such as ground floor service rooms which retain historic fittings; e.g. Butler's Pantry. The scheme (now amended) preserves the important Billiard Room ceiling intact and retains the shape and proportions of the room, as one large living space. The removal of the existing suspended ceiling is also a very positive outcome. Following site investigation, it has been decided to simplify the layout to remove the internal partition between the proposed living room and kitchen. Instead, a sliding screen will be provided which can be pulled back to reveal the whole of the space. This will also provide more light to the kitchen area. In order to create this more open and spacious arrangement, a new doorway will need to be inserted within the masonry (see A9 on plan). This will be a discreet opening within the plasterwork, without a door or frame. The original large panelled door will be preserved in-situ and will serve the kitchen. This minor alteration can be justified on the grounds that it enables the room to be largely restored to its original form and proportions.

12.1.2 Northern Lobby / Entrance Hall

The lobby and entrance hall, which is currently approached from the north side of the building, and which originally served a Gun Room and the Billiard Room, had been heavily modified during the alterations to create flats. The current staircase is a later adaptation and is of no value, positioned close to the alignment of an earlier staircase, although the precise orientation is not certain. It did not extend to the attic floor in this location. This stairwell space is one that has been altered several times during multiple phases in the 19th century and the original arrangement is now obscure, although a cornice of circa 1895 survives partially intact at ground floor level. A second staircase was inserted along the line of a former open lightwell between the coach-house and the service buildings during the time that the building was adapted to create independent flats and this currently creates a peculiar internal circulation arrangement. This second staircase is of no intrinsic value. The solid outside wall of both the service block and the coach-house are now internal walls and when this lightwell was enclosed and incorporated into the building circa 1895, it seems to have been adapted to contain a larder / pantry at ground floor level and either cupboards at first floor level or a staircase from first floor level to attic floor level. It has no specific value, the masonry will be retained as part of the plan evidence, and the space will become part of the proposed internal circulation and the staircase reconfigured to serve the attic floor flat. The slight alterations to modify the existing staircase (of no value) and to insert a partition within this back lobby can be supported on the grounds that the space is of little value, the floor plan has already been altered, the Billiard Room is preserved intact and the internal circulation, spatial quality, management and maintenance of all flats is much improved, all helping with the viability of these flats. The attic floor flat will be reached by an independent stair and each flat will have its own entrance.

Specific areas of detail recommended in the previous report, have been addressed. The partition inserted within the lobby has been off-set, to avoid disturbing the mullioned window. This partition may require a high-level internal glazed panel, to provide additional light to the corridor.

Full details will be required as a condition of LBC to show how the cornice will be retained intact, and new partitions scribed, whilst ensuring full fire separation.

12.1.3 Attic Floor Flat

The attic floor is generally of low significance, dating entirely from 1895, although there are a few fireplaces, doors and details of interest at this level. The revised scheme is nevertheless more sensitive to the 1895 planning. The attic floor plan has now been preserved, providing evidence of the original circulation pattern and central corridor and taking into account existing headroom constraints. Overall, this has resulted in a simplified layout, with fewer interventions and the original partitions are largely retained intact.

12.1.4 Glazing Coach-house doors

The proposed glazing of the coach-house doors will create large, spacious and viable houses. The flats in the coach-house are currently quite small. The north-east side of the coach-house is overshadowed by trees, and it is desirable that this area continues to be partially screened by trees and shrubs to protect the setting of the listed building and the northern side of the coach-house which is subservient in design and detail to the main house. On the courtyard elevation, none of the timber coach-house boarded doors are original and the openings can be carefully glazed at the back of the existing brick reveals, whilst retaining the rebated brickwork, hinge pins and evidence for the location of the original doors. Retention of all of the boarded doors is not achievable as part of the scheme because of the need to provide light and ventilation to each habitable room (there being no alternative opening), but they have been retained in one opening to Unit 1 where there is a second glazed opening which can also provide light and ventilation, and here they can be closed for security. On practical grounds it is also not possible to retain the paired doors, as it

will create obstructions if left permanently ajar and a potential risk in high winds. The option of maintaining one or more garages to the courtyard has been considered but eventually discounted on operational management grounds, safety and the high potential conflict between multiple users. See justification in HIA - Stableblocks and Grounds.

12.1.5 Staircases to Coach-house

The original coach-house was originally split vertically into two living areas for two separate families. Each side was served by a chimney stack with at least one hearth at first floor level. These flues and stacks were heightened when the second floor was added. The chimney breasts were partially covered over when the buildings were remodelled in the 1940s and the southern stack was removed at roof level. Chimney breasts, fireplaces and a complete kitchen range survive in different degrees of preservation. Where these are retained is described on the drawings.

The remodelling proposed for Units 1 and 2 will restore the original 1820s floor plan with a staircase reinstated along the back wall to Unit 2. This will enable a large part of the original partition wall currently separating the rooms from the corridor to be retained. Small areas of floor joists will be removed to permit a new staircase, but the majority of these are likely to be late 19th century - see F1 and F2 in table.

12.1.6 Separation of Main House and Flats at Attic Floor Level

The staircase within the main house rises to the attic floor in the service range. The service range was blocked off at this level when the flats were created in the service wing in the 1940s, although the partitioning is flimsy and does not provide fire separation. The proposal will restore an attic bedroom to the main house at this level, making sense of the presence of a staircase rising to this level. The first floor bedroom underneath this attic bedroom is currently contained in the main house, as is the ground floor room. Fire separation will then be simplified vertically through the building in a single alignment, avoiding any alterations to floors and ceilings in these rooms.

12.1.7 Separation of Main House and Flats at all levels

Works to separate the main house from the service wings can be achieved simply by following the masonry walls which form a natural division. Whilst these have already been altered, the partitions are flimsy and do not provide fire separation. Areas affected are D1, the main corridor at all levels (not illustrated), D9 and D18. In order to provide complete fire separation, it is proposed that the panelled doors are not retained in-situ or made reversible and instead be re-used within the development (see doors in general - below).

12.1.8 Doors in General

None of the proposed doors have been designed in detail and a schedule will be required, as a condition of LBC, to identify both internal and external doors to be retained in-situ, doors to be relocated, such as D1 and D9, any historic doors to be blocked up from one side, and the proposed pattern of new doors; a number of original doors survive in-situ and the proposed new doors should reflect the status of the location and maintain .e.g the main hall will require 6-panel doors, whilst the attic floor to the coach-house will require 4-panel doors. In other locations boarded doors may be appropriate. Several new external doors are proposed along the north elevation. At this stage they have not been designed in detail and this should be a condition of LBC to ensure any original doors are retained and new doors reflect the building historic hierarchy.

12.1.9 Windows in General

The majority of windows are retained and repaired. There are a few exceptions (M2 and M3), for which detailed drawings will be required. Detailed drawings of the repair of the first floor Gothick windows overlooking the courtyard will also be required, as these have been remodelled. It is recommended that a condition is applied to just these windows.

12.1.10 Ceilings and Floors in General

Full details of the repair or replacement of ceiling plaster (which may contain ornate plasterwork) and floor finishes (which may contain tiled or parquet floors) has not been designed in detail. This will only become clear when the demolitions have taken place to remove 20th century partitions, dry-lining and suspended ceilings. A hierarchy of finishes and retention of original or important plaster or floor finishes will need to be prepared for each proposed space and finishes should be required as a condition of LBC to ensure that any historic floors and ceilings are retained and repaired or relaid.

Removal of External Fire Escape staircase and door

The external fire escape will be removed and the door replaced with a window opening, with details to match adjoining windows designed ca. 1895. It will not be feasible to produce cast-iron windows to match, so full details will need to be provided to ensure a sympathetic treatment.

Windows to the coach-house will be refurbished and repaired so that the original 1820s leaded-lights are preserved.

Table of Lettered Alterations - refer to annotated floor plans

Alteration on Plan	Purpose	Significance & Impact
C – partial demolition of brick lean-to	This will enable the original carriage arch and natural daylight to be restored	No interest Low impact. Mitigation – carefully make good exposed brick end wall and re-face brickwork with reclaimed bricks from demolished section, if appropriate
A1 – insertion of new door opening into masonry wall	Required to improve circulation area and create independent staircase to attic floor	No interest and no features Low impact
A2 – creation of larger opening to create living room	Required to integrate spaces at ground floor level. Block up existing doorways and remove internal partitions	Low interest Low impact. This is off-set by the blocking up of modern doors (D4 and D5) and the restoration of the fireplace / hearth and kitchen range
A3 – creation of small doorway in the back wall of the coach-house	Required to create a workable floor area	No interest. Low impact
A4 - insertion of doorway in former blocked doorway	Required to connect two living rooms at ground floor level	Low impact; investigate restoration
A5 - removal of small section of brick wall	Door-sized opening created in end wall of coach-house (now internal), to connect ground floor living space	Low interest. Low impact. Proposal has been reduced to enable retention of full chimney breast
A6 - New opening for stairwell, removal of masonry	To incorporate the existing staircase into a 'townhouse' with accommodation at ground level, a dog-leg is required at the bottom of the stair	Low interest. Low impact.
A7 – removal of infilled brickwork to former open carriage arch	Reinstatement of original opening, which was blocked when the coach-house was first extended	Moderate interest Moderate positive impact Mitigation – glazing should be set back behind the brickwork behind the existing rebate and the hinge pins retained if possible Detailed drawing required as a condition of LBC
A8 - restoration of original arched doorway	To reconnect ground floor spaces, bring into use the former Georgian arched doorway	High significance as a feature of the Georgian house

Alteration on Plan	Purpose	Significance & Impact
A9 - insertion of opening into Billiard Room	To create direct access into living room, separation of kitchen and enable retention of room proportions and detail and some borrowed light into the hall/lobby	This small opening is justifiable on the grounds that the Billiard Room will be fully restored, all modern partitions & suspended ceiling to be removed, and there is sufficient space for a large fireplace to be reinstated at some point in the future
A10 – insertion of new doorway opening within Billiard Room to create access to remodelled staircase	Required to connect ground floor and first floor and avoid alterations to Billiard Room ceiling	No impact on architectural detail. Enables retention of complete Billiard Room ceiling.
A11 – insertion of doorway to connect ground floor rooms	Required to reconnect rooms on south side of family room and kitchen, which are currently separated from main house by passage	No interest. No impact on architectural detail. Existing doorway into the main house to be blocked up (D1). Re-use door in A11.
A12 – insertion of doorway into bedroom wall and blocking up of doors to partitions	Creation of small doorway off a lobby makes separate bedrooms (not walk-through bedrooms) more viable	Low interest. Mitigation – re-use door D9 in A12.
A13 – removal of masonry to create doorway to serve new staircase	To adapt existing staircase to serve three-storey dwelling, without impacting on spatial quality of original principal rooms	Low interest – no features. Minor alteration to create a doorway is fully justifiable as part of overall benefit of avoiding a staircase within the Billiard room and bedroom above
A14 - creation of doorway at head of staircase to first floor	Circulation pattern requires minor modifications to the masonry	No interest, low impact.
A15 – insertion of doorway to serve bedroom	Required in conjunction with new staircase to Flat 2 and fire separation	Low impact. No impact on architectural detail.
A16 - Removal of wall partition	Creation of a bathroom within the first floor of Townhouse 1. There is no alternative	Low interest - partition is part of the 19th century floor plan.
A17 – removal of partition	Creates a viable living space with natural daylight	Partition may be part of 1895 phase but has no value. Removal helps with viability of flat and space. Low impact
A18 & A19 - creation of doorways at attic level	Required to separate Attic flat (Unit 5) from the Townhouse (Unit 3)	No interest. Part of 1895 attic floor extension
A20 - A23 inclusive A20 – removal of internal partition A21 - removal of internal partition A22 and F2 – removal of partition and insertion of staircase	Loss of some partitions at attic level to create viable bedrooms A20 - This is required to create a viable second bedroom at this second floor level (Bedroom 3 overall) A21 - Part of the 1895 rooms. Low interest. The fireplace is preserved intact for bedroom 1. A22 - The removal of the partition and area of floor joists provides access to the second floor and makes the circulation area viable for the bedrooms.	Low interest - part of the 1895 alterations A21 - options to retain the corridor walls were considered in conjunction with relocating the staircase into the north projecting 'wing' but there was insufficient headroom. It would be feasible to retain a small section of this wall but it could only function as a long cupboard. The removal of modern internal partitions elsewhere at this level and retention of the original plan form off-sets the minor damage. Low impact overall. This adaptation is justifiable to create a lobby space at the head of the stairs.
B1 - removal & re-organisation of internal partitions	Removal of modern partitions of Billard Room	Very high positive impact. High significance

Alteration on Plan	Purpose	Significance & Impact
B2 - removal of partitions	Part of creation of living room space	Part of former Gun room - no surviving fixtures or fittings. Very low interest
B3 - removal of modern partitions to WC	To improve the space and provide light to the hallway	Positive impact on quality of space
B4 – removal & re-organisation of internal partitions	The position of internal partitions can be adjusted here with no impact on significance	No impact on significance, as has already been modified and no original fittings
D1 - D4 - block up openings for fire separation		Some original panelled doors to D1 and D2. Mitigation: relocate doors D4 - modern C20 opening - no interest
D5 - block up opening for new staircase		No interest
D6 - block up opening for fire separation		Low interest - part of 1895 floor plan
D7 and D8 - separation of bedrooms to have independent access to the corridor.	Important for viability of this Duplex. to not have walk-through bedrooms	Low interest - part of 1895 phase of refurbishment and adaptation
D9 - block up opening for fire separation		High interest. Mitigation: re-locate to A12
D10 - block up door for fire separation	Blocking up of door between Unit 3 & Unit 4 required to provide fire separation	No impact on significance Mitigation - re-use door. On balance, loss of door is considered acceptable.
D11 – door blocked to main landing for fire separation	Required to provide fire separation	Door is a modern replacement for a 19th century door. No interest.
D12 & D13 - block up opening for fire separation		part of 1895 modifications. No historic doors affected
D14 - block up corridor for fire separation		No interest
D15 - block up doorway for fire separation		No interest
D16 - block up corridor for fire separation		No interest
D17 - block up doorway to create bathroom		No interest
D18 - block up the wall currently within an attic bedroom	Required to provide full fire separation from the main house. An unusual floor plan has meant that this space overlaps the room below.	Low interest as part of the 1895 attic additions
F2 – insertion of staircase to first floor	Required to ensure stair is contained within the rear corridor	Low impact No impact on architectural detail. Small area of floor joists of 1895 removed
F3 - independent staircase within former stair lobby	Require as part of the creation of the stairwell to the attic floor	No interest at this level
E - dry-lining	Selectively applied to outside walls where there is no surviving historic plasterwork or fittings	No interest where this is applied. Required to upgrade central wall to the coach-house to provide continuous fire separation
I - new partition	Creation of staircase lobbies and ensuite bathrooms	Low interest or no interest. Partitions are limited to the minimum necessary to

GI - Former kitchen floor	Condition of late C19 quarry tiles unknown.	Low intrinsic interest but part of the evidence of the use as a former kitchen. Full details of proposed floor finish and treatment of existing tiles should be a condition of LBC
M - full length glazed window	The design of each glazed window to the courtyard elevation will need to match and will need to incorporate openings as means of escape	The openings form a row of former openings for coaches. Continuity of treatment is important. Loss of the doors removes C20 fittings in early C19 openings.

14. CONCLUSIONS

Lighttoaks has undergone some significant alterations at the turn of the 20th century (ca. 1895). Whilst the alterations on the whole provide a picturesque exterior, and there are some high quality contemporary fittings, there has been significant loss of internal fixtures and fittings and ornamental plasterwork during the 1940s refurbishment to create self-contained flats. These introduced partitions and suspended ceilings in an ad-hoc manner and no thought was given to fire separation or how to create habitable rooms with good light and circulation patterns. The current proposal to reduce the density of the residential use provides an opportunity to undo some of the more damaging works of the 1940s, provide larger spaces and to better reveal the significance of key elements of the building, such as the original kitchen and the Billiard Room.

The proposed works to the main house and coach-house will reconfigure the existing layout to make a more logical division into three townhouses, one Duplex and one attic flat. This is not straightforward, as the building has an unusual floor plan, having subsumed several generations of adaptation and extension. However, following an analysis of the building phasing and evidence, the plans have taken into account the need to preserve the spatial quality, fixtures and fittings of the important spaces: Billiard Room, central hallway, Butler's Pantry and Kitchen, have retained the original fireplaces where they survive in other rooms, have retained all of the fixtures and fittings of the Georgian phase and have made better and more full use of the spaces.

Following detailed discussion and options appraisal, the plans have been altered to simplify the staircases and to reflect the 19th century layouts, using the masonry walls to provide vertical fire separation. We are fully satisfied that the scheme represents the best internal adaptation achievable within the existing constraints and involves the minimum amount of alterations to the historic fabric of the listed building. Whilst there are a large number of small alterations to either block doorways or create new openings, the vast majority of these affect either modern openings or areas where there is no intrinsic value and any losses are off-set by the improvements being made to the most important rooms. We are satisfied that details which are currently unknown for replacement windows and doors can be controlled by condition, as the impacts on significance are known and understood. Details of plasterwork repair or replacement and floor finishes cannot be understood fully until the 1940s partitions and suspended ceilings have been removed, so we recommend that these areas be controlled by condition. Schedules would be an appropriate way of controlling these elements.

Lighttoaks is too large to contain one family, to 21st century standards of living and accommodation requirements, and was never designed to do so, even by 19th century standards. The principal of adaptation and remodelling to accommodate a number of dwellings and families is one that can be supported on both historic grounds and economic viability grounds. The scheme produces a viable subdivision which is less intensive on the site than the existing use and will result in most importantly the full repair of the buildings, securing its future and the future of the Lighttoaks 'estate'.

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31.7.15