

Heritage Design and Access Statement

Heritage Statement

Briarcourt is a substantial Grade II listed villa designed by the architect Edgar Wood, constructed in 1894-5 in the Arts and Crafts style and set in extensive grounds surrounded by mature trees, and within the Edgerton Conservation Area. This three-storey house is built from natural hammer dressed stone with ashlar dressings and a pitched stone slate roof. The most significant elevations are towards the southern end of the building, where the façade looks over the formal gardens. The rear elevations to the north are simpler in design, with the northernmost bay understood to have been constructed in 1904 and designed by Willie Cooper of Huddersfield. This elevation is a simple stone gable facing north with a wide timber and glazed entrance. The proposal site is north of this elevation and is separated from the house by large rockeries, low garden walls, mature shrubs and trees.

Several utilitarian outbuildings were added to the site in the early 1900s. These included a stone-built garage (for two cars) with workshop, a stone-built live-in-laundry bungalow and three greenhouses with a potting house. The map of 1922 suggests that the garage, gardener and chauffeur's houses, and the laundry bungalow were located at the northern end of the site to the south of Daisy Lea Lane and some distance from the house, with the three greenhouses and potting shed directly north of the house and roughly in the location of the proposed site. At that time, the Briarcourt grounds extended to over 6 acres and in the intervening years, land has been sold off and used for neighbouring housing developments. The laundry house still exists as a significantly extended private residence on land that no longer comprises part of the Briarcourt site, but the other outbuildings have long-since been demolished.

A faux-stone garage with a metal door and a prefabricated roof, and a block of two steel storage buildings currently stand on the site of the proposed ancillary building development. It is assumed they were erected in the late 20th century by Kirklees Council.

We originally applied to Kirklees Council to request permission to demolish the garage and the steel storage buildings and to erect a new ancillary building (2021/91422) in 2021. This request was granted with the following feedback: "the Conservation and Design Team support the demolition of these structures as they are in poor condition, piecemeal and of no architectural interest, causing harm to the setting of Briar Court. As there is a precedent for historic outbuildings in this location, we have no objections in principle to the construction of a new ancillary building on this site"

Design and Access

Our application to replace the garage and steel storage buildings was passed by Kirklees Council in January 2022, so the permission is still current. However, in the intervening time, the cost for constructing the original 2-storey ancillary building design has increased beyond our budget. We have therefore worked with Paragon Oak to explore alternatives that can still support the functions we consider important for an outbuilding to service on this site.

We have taken on board concerns voiced by the conservation officer that the original design did not read as sufficiently subservient and ancillary to the main house. Her preference was

for a simpler utilitarian scheme which either took a clearer cue from the northern elevation of the house or from traditional Victorian ancillary structures.

We now wish to propose constructing a single-storey, timber-framed outbuilding on the footprint of the area currently approved with planning permission; and erecting a wooden greenhouse where the steel storage buildings currently stand.

This new proposal more directly references traditional outbuilding architecture and in spreading the practical functions we require across more simple, lower-lying structures, we have taken particular care to signal that the outbuildings exist to serve ancillary functions for the main house. As such, we hope that it will be more acceptable to the building conservation officers than the original proposal they passed.

The timber-framed building has been designed to support flexible use as a workshop/garage/storage space. As we would currently look to make the fullest use of it as a workshop, we have requested that Velux windows are included to maximise natural light and an accessible toilet is incorporated for the sake of practicality. Electric car charging points are also proposed to support the choice for more sustainable vehicles in the future.

In the early twentieth century when the additional stone buildings were constructed within the curtilage, neighbouring properties were sited significantly further away. To further delineate the outbuilding from the main house and the neighbouring modern housing development on Daisy Lea Lane, we have chosen an oak frame with larch cladding and cedar shingles instead of stone and slates as the principal materials. This seems appropriate for a building set in a mature garden with woodland. The original design that was granted also incorporated wood and cedar shingle roofing, and there is a precedent for the construction of a wooden outbuilding at 32 Occupation Road.

On the south elevation of this workshop building, the doors have been designed to echo the design of the doors on the north elevation of the main house – with simple square glazing detailing incorporated to lend more natural light.

The greenhouse we propose for the steel storage buildings site would measure 20ft x 12ft. We have a recycled high quality cedar greenhouse which we propose for use as a sustainable option which would mirror materials used in the workshop building. This would help to create a sense of coherence within this outbuilding cluster. As a temporary structure, there are obviously no foundations to excavate, and the greenhouse could sit on the hard standing that already exists underneath the steel storage buildings.

In fitting the new workshop footprint within that of the outbuilding that was originally approved, this scheme would not require any additional trees to be removed. We believe, therefore that the original arboricultural survey and recommendations should stand without amendments (we have attached the relevant documents)

The development we are proposing is not visible from any public roads or footpaths, so there are no issues connected with how these buildings would impact on the general street scene. 32c Daisy Lea Lane abuts the site but has no windows that overlook the proposed workshop building. Their south elevation has windows that overlook the existing steel storage buildings. However, it has already been established that these steel storage buildings are extremely unsightly, and we would consider their replacement with a wooden greenhouse a marked visual improvement.

