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2647 – Thorpe House, Almondbury

Introduction

This heritage statement has been prepared in support of proposals for alterations at Thorpe House, Almondbury, a Grade II listed building.

The proposal comprises the internal conversion of an existing meeting room on the ground floor to form a bedroom, alterations to the existing window to create a door providing level access accommodation via a ramp designed at a gradient of 1:20, and the erection of appropriate fencing associated with the proposed access arrangements.

The purpose of this statement is to identify the significance of the listed building, assess the potential impact of the proposed alterations on its special architectural and historic interest, and demonstrate how the proposals have been considered in the context of the building's heritage significance.

The works seek to improve the accessibility and functionality of the existing accommodation whilst retaining the character and significance of the historic building.



Heritage significance

Thorpe House is a Grade II listed building dating from the mid-19th century. The building is constructed predominantly of stone, with an ashlar front elevation and hammer-dressed stonework to the other elevations, beneath a pitched stone slate roof.

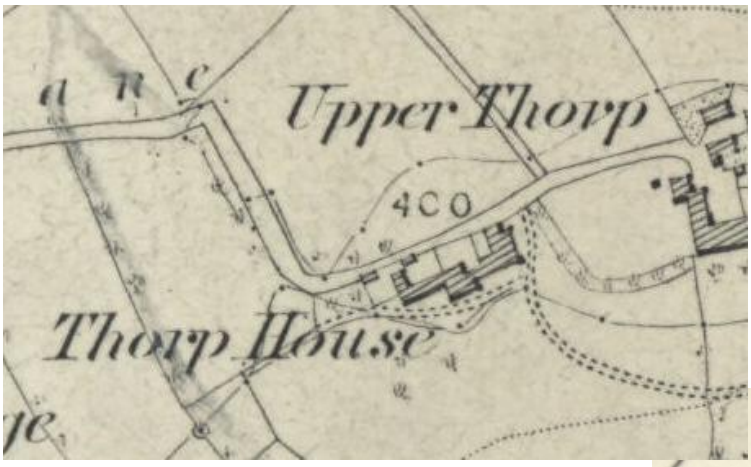
Gaining its listed status on 29/09/1978, the building reta8ins a number of architectural features characteristic of its period. Official list entry 1289678:

"FINTHORPE LANE 1. 5113 (South Side) Almondbury Thorpe House SE 1715 40/514 II 2. Mid C19. Ashlar front. Hammer-dressed stone elsewhere. Pitched stone slate roof. Coped gables on kneelers. 2 storeys. 5 ranges of sashes (1st floor), French casements (ground floor). Door in stone frame with Tuscan pilasters and moulded cornice. Rear has 2 ranges of bipartite sashes with glazing bars and round-arched staircase window with glazing bars. Various office extensions to rear."

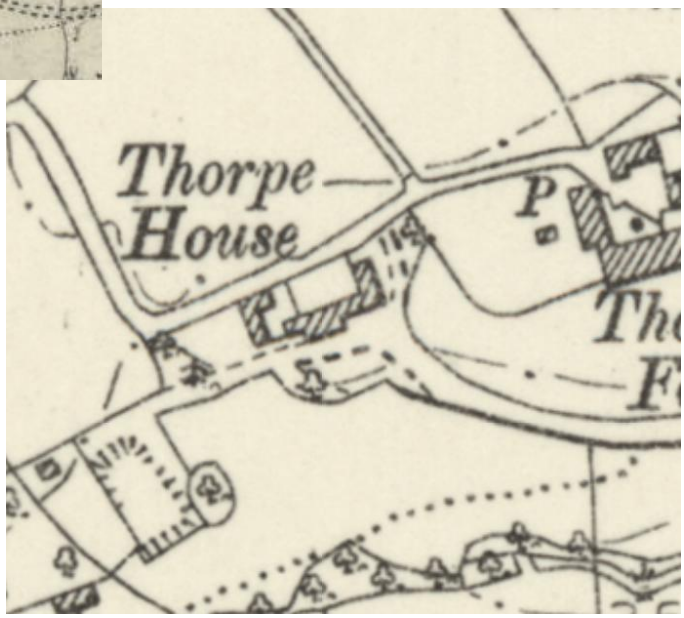
The building's special architectural and historic interest lies in its traditional stone construction, original architectural features, surviving historic fenestration and its overall architectural character.

The listing description also identifies office extensions to the rear, indicating that the building has undergone some adaptation to accommodate changing requirements over time.

The significance of Thorpe House therefore lies in the preservation of its historic architectural character and surviving historic fabric, whilst recognising that the building has evolved to accommodate continued use.



OS 1842-1952 – Thorp House



OS 1888-1915 – Thorpe House

Description of the proposed works

The proposed works comprise the following:

Internal conversion:
The existing meeting room is to be converted to form a bedroom. The works are intended to adapt the existing internal accommodation to meet the requirements of the proposed use.

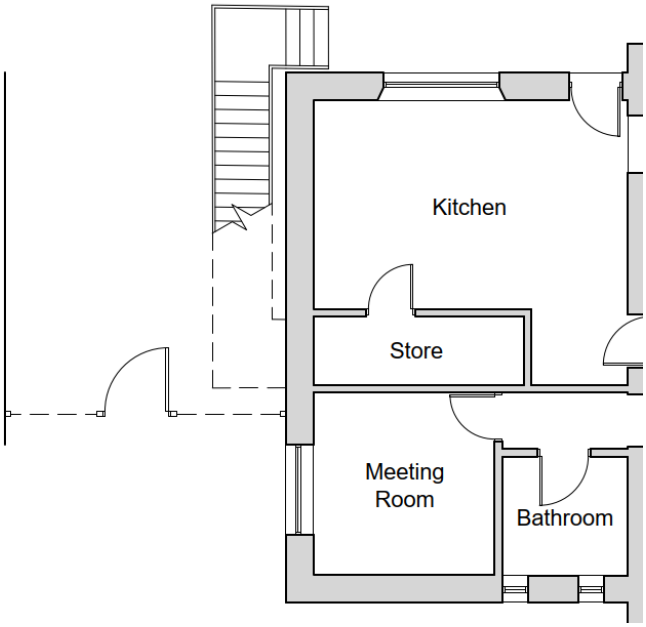
The conversion will utilise the existing room and is not intended to alter the external appearance of the building, other than the separately described alteration to the existing window.

The extent of any internal alterations will be limited to those necessary to facilitate the proposed accommodation, with the retention of historic features and fabric wherever practicable.

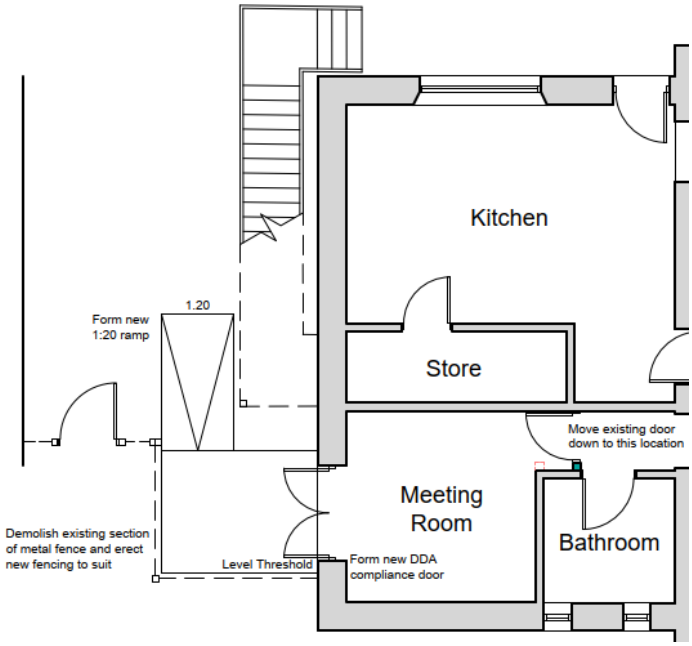
Alteration of existing window to form an accessible door:
An existing window is proposed to be altered to form a DDA compliant door, providing accessible access to the proposed bedroom.

The alteration will require the removal or modification of the existing window and associated works to form the new doorway. The detailed design will seek to minimise the loss of historic fabric and retain the proportions and character of the existing opening wherever practicable.

The appearance, materials and detailing of the new door will be carefully considered in relation to the existing building, ensuring that any alteration is sympathetic to the architectural character of Thorpe House.



Existing ground floor plan of the proposed area to be altered



Proposed ground floor plan following the alterations

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Installation of an Access Ramp:
A ramp with a gradient of 1:20 is proposed to provide an accessible approach to the proposed bedroom, via the new doorway.

The ramp will facilitate inclusive access and is proposed to be positioned on the side elevation of Thorpe House, seeking to minimise its visual impact on the listed building and its immediate setting.

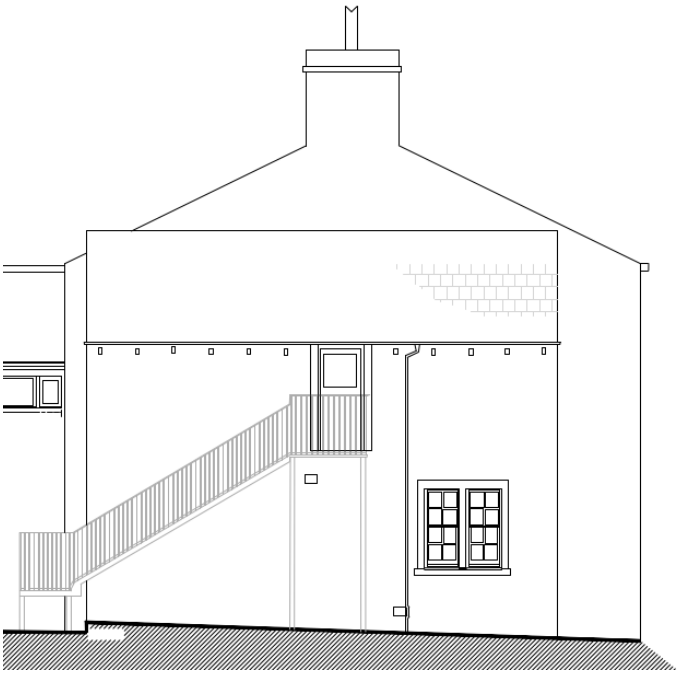
Its design, materials, dimensions and relationship with the existing ground levels will be considered to ensure that it remains subordinate to the historic building.

Erection of Fencing:
Appropriate fencing is proposed in association with the new access arrangements. The design, height, materials and positioning of the fencing will be selected to provide the necessary function whilst respecting the character and setting of the listed building, with existing fencing being repurposed where possible.

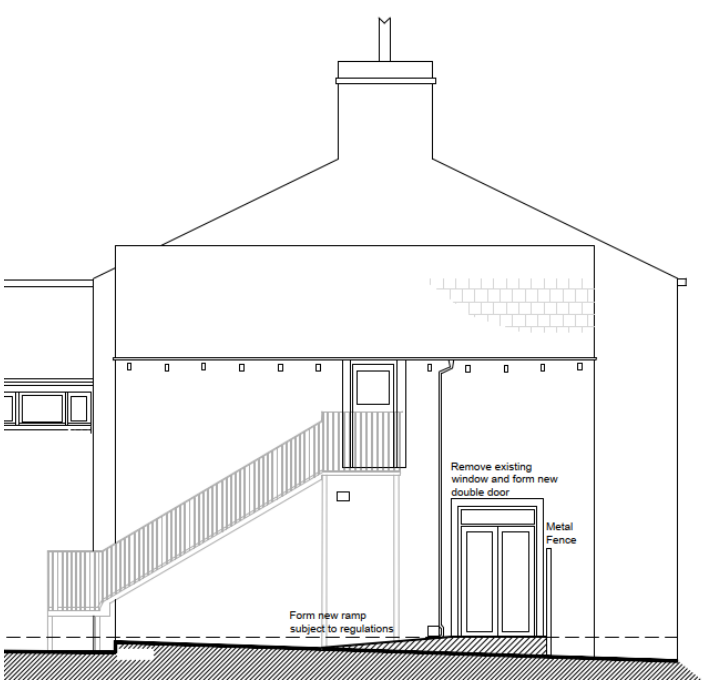
The fencing will be designed to avoid unnecessary visual prominence and to complement the surrounding environment.



Existing window proposed to be altered to form an accessible door and location of the proposed ramp area



Existing side elevation



Proposed side elevation

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Heritage impact

The conversion of the existing meeting room to a bedroom represents an adaptation of the internal accommodation to meet the requirements of the proposed use.

Existing elements of architectural or historic interest within the room such as mouldings and fireplaces etc are proposed to be retained and undisturbed reaffirming that the conversion is anticipated to have a limited impact on the significance of the listed building.

The works will be undertaken with consideration for the building's historic fabric, avoiding unnecessary removal or alteration of significant features.

The proposed alteration to the existing window represents the principal intervention to the historic fabric and external appearance of the building.

The impact will depend on the significance of the affected elevation, the age and character of the existing window, and the extent of masonry alteration required. The design will therefore seek to minimise the loss of original fabric and ensure that the new door is appropriately detailed in relation to the existing stonework and architectural character.

Where practicable, the existing opening will be utilised to minimise intervention in the surrounding masonry. Any necessary alterations will be carefully executed, with the retention of historic stonework and architectural detailing wherever possible.

The new door will be designed to provide the required accessibility whilst integrating naturally with the existing elevation and remaining in keeping with the character of the building.

The proposed ramp and fencing are intended to provide a safe, functional and compliant approach to the new doorway.

Careful consideration has been given to the design and positioning of the proposed alterations to minimise their visual impact on the listed building. The ramp and fencing will be positioned to preserve the character of the building and its principal elevations, ensuring that significant architectural features remain unobstructed.

The materials and design of the proposed alterations will be carefully considered to ensure they complement the existing building and do not detract from its character.

Conclusion

The proposals seek to adapt the existing accommodation at Thorpe House to provide a bedroom and improve accessibility through the formation of a new accessible doorway, the installation of a 1:20 access ramp and the erection of appropriate fencing.

The internal conversion is anticipated to have a limited heritage impact, provided that historic features and fabric are retained. The external alterations require careful consideration, particularly in relation to the existing window, surrounding stonework and the visual relationship of the ramp and fencing with the listed building.

Through sensitive design, the retention of historic fabric wherever practicable and the use of appropriate materials and detailing, the proposals aim to accommodate the required improvements whilst respecting the special architectural and historic interest of Thorpe House.

Overall, the proposed alterations have been carefully considered to improve accessibility and make better use of the existing accommodation, whilst preserving the character and special architectural and historic interest of Thorpe House. On this basis, it is considered that the proposals are appropriate, and planning permission and Listed Building Consent are respectfully sought.