



Oak Lodge, New Road, Clondalkin

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

**Note in response to a Request for Further Information
Register Reference: SD21B/0530**

March 2022



This note has been prepared in response to a Request for Further Information issued by South Dublin County Council, and dated the 8th of December 2021, Register Reference: SD21B/0530. A planning application had been lodged in October 2021 for works to and the extension of Oak Lodge, New Road, Clondalkin, a Protected Structure, RPS No 156. In October 2021 ARC prepared an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment in relation to Oak Lodge that accompanied that planning application.

Oak Lodge

Oak Lodge is a 3 bay double pile villa with one main floor over a semi basement. The ground around the house falls to the rear where the semi basement is at ground level. Oak lodge has a shallow two storey return in poor condition that extend about two thirds the way across the rear of the house. About half of the return is modern and the other half, though older, is probably an addition to the house dating from towards the end of the 19th century. The house does not appear on the first edition Ordnance map of circa 1840 but does appear on the Ordnance map of circa 1910.

The detail of the house suggests that the house was built after 1860. The house is listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, where the date of construction is suggested to be between 1810 and 1840, but the evidence of Ordnance mapping does not support such an early date. The house is of only minor heritage significance, but is nonetheless worthy of care. The new owners of Oak Lodge, a young family are to be commended for their bravery in taking on a neglected and poorly maintained modest mid Victorian villa.

Proposed Works

I am now informed that, for reasons of cost and their urgent need to move into the house, the new owners of Oak Lodge now find themselves forced to reduce the scope of the works to exempt essential repair works and minor new works.

New works that were applied for but are now proposed to be omitted include:

- The construction of a new flat roofed two storey extension with roof lights at the rear of the house. (There may be a future application for a rear extension finance permitting)
- The installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof.
- A number of the internal alterations previously proposed.
- Some works to outbuildings

I understand that the proposed new works will now be confined to the following:

- The demolition of a small poor quality modern extension to the centre rear of the house and associate making good where this extension is attached to the original rear wall of the house.
- Minor works to an earlier extension at the north east corner of the rear of the house.
- The construction of a very small single storey extension (essentially no more than a bay window containing a door to the southern garden) at the south side of the semi basement of the house.
- The opening of a new doorway between two rooms on the north side of the upper floor of the house, at a location where there is an existing hatch between the rooms.
- The provision of a rooflight at the centre valley of the roof to provide maintenance access.
- The provision of a length of boundary wall where the existing fencing has failed.
- Minor landscaping works.

The removal of the inappropriate modern extension would be beneficial to the heritage of the house. Works to the older extension, which is in poor order, would also be beneficial, and would make the house more liveable.

The small bay on the south side of the house giving access to the southern garden would also make the house more liveable, and its simple modern form and detailing would properly identify it as a modern addition. The existence of the new bay will result in a local change in the character of the southern side of the house. It is noted that the existing doorway that the bay will replace is modern.

The new doorway between two rooms is a small change, again intended to make circulation in the house more practical. The new opening will result in a some change in the character of the two connected rooms but has the potential to be more visually positive than the existing hatch. The new roof light for maintenance access of the roof would be positive for the long term care of the building.

The proposed external works to the boundary and the minor landscape works are unlikely to result in any material impact on the heritage of the house.

In my assessment, the reduced new works now proposed, taken together with the exempt essential repairs to the house, will result in a very positive overall impact on the architectural heritage of Oak Lodge and its surroundings.

Notes on the Request for Further Information

Item 1(i)

Item 1(i) relates to underfloor heating. Where deficient modern floor slabs have to be replaced, I would urge that underfloor heating as part of the replacement of the deficient slab should be considered best practice and an exempted development, for a number of reasons, provided that the floor level is not raised resulting in impact on historic features. In the recent past, I have recommended the provision for underfloor heating as part of slab replacement in the case of a number of protected structures and treated the underfloor heating as an exempted development, with the full knowledge of the relevant Planning Authorities and Conservation Officers.

Underfloor heating is preferable to radiators because it is not visible and has no impact on historic features such as skirtings or window cases. The slow release of gentle heat from underfloor heating assists the slow drying out of walls suffering from rising damp. Underfloor heating is particularly suited to use in combination with air to water heat pumps and/or photovoltaics, and so has the potential to be climate positive and provide long term sustainable energy security.

Item 2(b)

Item 2(b) of the RFI suggests that the AHIA should have discussed the impact of each element of the proposed works individually. I do not agree. The approach to be taken in preparing an architectural heritage impact assessment is set out in Appendix B of the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines*; where it is suggested that the level of detail to be provided should bear a relation to the extent of works proposed and to the relative heritage significance of the protected structure. My assessment had regard to these matters. I concluded that Oak Lodge is a modest building of very modest heritage significance, and that there are no features in the building of sufficient heritage value to warrant individual discussion to a greater extent than is in the submitted AHIA.

Paragraph B1.1 of Appendix B - 'Requirement for a Report' gives the purpose of an AHIA as:

'a) as part of a development application in order to provide sufficient information for the planning authority to make an informed decision on the potential impact on the architectural heritage.'

The submitted AHIA provided, in text and annotated photographs and in combination with the lodged drawings, more than sufficient information for the Planning Authority to 'make an informed decision on the potential impact on the architectural heritage'. Extensive detailed discussion on my part would have given the impression that Oak Lodge and features in it have a higher heritage value than is the case, and would not have been appropriate.

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